





Fáilte from the Director of the UCD Ad Astra Academy

I am delighted to welcome you to the 2026 UCD Ad Astra Academy Prospectus. The Academy was created in 2011 and is UCD's flagship scholarship programme. It is an expression of the mission of UCD as a whole; to provide a community in which students of the University displaying exceptional potential in academic pursuits, elite sports or performing arts are encouraged and supported to develop their talent further.

We believe in creating an environment where students with exceptional ability, creativity and drive will be motivated, challenged and inspired. The Ad Astra Academy nurtures exceptional students by offering them unique supports and opportunities to further develop their talents and allowing them to achieve at the highest levels. Our scholars benefit from a bursary, mentoring and discipline-specific supports, as well as personal and professional development opportunities.

The scholars in turn are expected to make a significant contribution to the Academy, the University and when they graduate, to society at large. The Academy is supported by alumni and friends of the University through donations to UCD Foundation.

On behalf of the University, I would like to express my deep appreciation for their generosity and support.

As Director of the Academy, I am delighted to witness these remarkable scholars develop their potential during their time at UCD and as they progress with their careers and become our Ad Astra Alumni.

Regina Uh Chollatain

An tOllamh Regina Uí Chollatáin Ad Astra Academy Director Príomhoifigeach agus Déanach UCD Coláiste na nEalaíon agus na nDaonnachtaí



At the UCD Ad Astra Academy we are proud to have helped some of Ireland's greatest talents from all across the country to excel. We are currently looking for exceptional students to join our programme for 2026 and reach new heights. We need your help to find them.



Applications for Elite Sports Scholars and Performing Arts Scholars will be accepted 1st November 2025 - 31st January 2026.

Applications for Academic Scholars will be accepted 1st February - 24th August 2026.



Andrew has earned 75 caps representing Ireland. As part of the Irish squad, he has won the Six Nations Championship three times (2018, 2023, 2024), achieved Grand Slam victories in 2018 and 2023, the Triple Crown three times and been part of the British & Irish Lions in 2021 and 2025.



Elite Sports Scholars

UCD Ad Astra Elite Sports Scholars

The UCD Ad Astra Elite Sports programme supports students who are competing and succeeding at the highest sporting levels. Athletes in the Academy compete at international level. In the case of GAA, they compete at inter-county level. At any one time, there are 60 Elite Sports Scholars in the programme with an average intake of 15 each year.

Students must apply online via the Academy website before 31st January 2026. The applications are reviewed by a selection panel and suitable candidates are selected for interview.

Following the interview stage, placement offers will be made to successful applicants subject to an offer and acceptance of a course in UCD. Points concessions can be made for successful candidates who can show evidence of ability to undertake their chosen course.

Please visit ucd.ie/adastraacademy for full details of eligibility and application process.

Benefits

- €3,000 scholarship allowance each year a scholar is in the Academy
- Guaranteed on-campus accommodation, the cost of which may be offset by the scholarship allowance
- Access to a high performance gym with expert training and coaching
- Physiotherapy and medical assistance, nutritional and fitness monitoring, and sports psychology
- The support of an academic mentor to help scholars excel in both academia and their chosen sport
- Networking and team building events with all strands of the Academy
- Access to the Ad Astra Scholars' Room

Applications Open	Applications Close	Interviews
1st November 2025	31st January 2026	March/April 2026





Rory in conversation with retired Academy Director, Professor Barbara Dooley about his route to becoming the Special Adviser to the Attorney General of Ireland at the annual Ad Astra Academy Breakfast.

After graduating from UCD, Rory pursued further studies at the University of Oxford where he achieved a Distinction in a Bachelor of Civil Law. During his time there, he undertook research with Professor Ariel Ezrachi whilst continuing to undertake research for Dr Niamh Howlin, Dr Noel McGrath and Dr Mark Coen at the UCD Sutherland School of Law before joining the Office of the Attorney General of Ireland.

Academic Scholars

UCD Ad Astra Academic Scholars

The UCD Ad Astra Academic programme is looking for students who have a proven track record of academic excellence, leadership and a desire to continue to achieve at the highest level. Up to 15 scholarships are awarded to incoming students each year.

Scholarships for school leavers entering UCD in September 2026 will be awarded based on a combination of the academic criteria of 6 H1s, an online application via the Ad Astra Academy website and an interview.

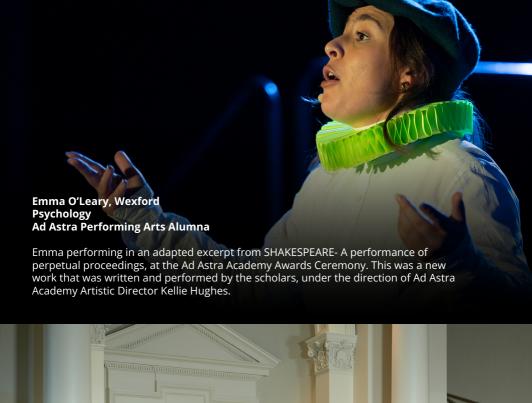
Applicants with 6 H1s will be called for interview based solely on their application, with a 60% weighting on extra-curricular achievements and a 40% weighting on the personal statement.

Please visit ucd.ie/adastraacademy for full details of eligibility and application process.

Benefits

- A €3,000 scholarship allowance each year a scholar is in the Academy
- The support of a dedicated academic mentor in the scholar's area of study
- Guaranteed on-campus accommodation, the cost of which may be offset by the scholarship allowance
- Workshops and seminars to develop the scholar's academic and personal potential
- Networking opportunities and team building events with all strands of the Academy
- Access to the Ad Astra Scholars' Room.
- The opportunity to undertake the Ad Astra Academy Academic elective module *Ad Astra Professional and Personal Development* in Stage two

Applications Open	Applications Close	Interviews
1st February 2026	24th August 2026	After CAO offers





Performing Arts Scholars

UCD Ad Astra Performing Arts Scholars

The UCD Ad Astra Performing Arts programme offers opportunities to students who excel in theatre performance (actor, playwright, director, designer etc.)/classical music and wish to develop their performance talents while pursuing a degree in UCD. At any one time, there are 20 Performing Arts Scholars in the programme with an average intake of 5 each year.

Students must apply online via the Academy website before 31st January 2026. Candidates will be chosen for audition on the basis of the information provided on the application form, covering their musical or dramatic studies, past experiences and any information that might support the application.

Successful candidates will be offered a place in the Academy subject to an offer and acceptance of a course in UCD. Points concessions can be made for successful audition candidates who can show evidence of ability to undertake their chosen course.

Please visit ucd.ie/adastraacademy for full details of eligibility and application process.

Benefits

- €3,000 scholarship allowance each year a scholar is in the Academy
- Access to the new Performing Arts Building which features a state-of-theart studio with sprung floor, a grand piano and an area for alumni and current members to rehearse and create.
- Guaranteed on-campus accommodation, the cost of which may be offset by the scholarship allowance
- The opportunity to work with experienced professionals in seminar and workshop settings
- The opportunity to perform in concerts, recitals and theatre productions
- Access to the Ad Astra Scholars' Room

Applications Open	Applications Close	Interviews
1st November 2025	31st January 2026	April/May 2026



UCD AD ASTRA Academy

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Visit ucd.ie/adastraacademy for more details