

Ad Astra Academy Blog - Alanna Lally, 800m Track Athlete.

Here we are at the end of a 4 year journey! It seems like a lifetime ago I sat in front of the Ad Astra board for my scholarship interview. There has been so much growth between then and now and I am so lucky I have had the opportunity to do this under the guidance and support of the Academy. I'm so grateful to have been a member of the Ad Astra family. Not only have I progressed and achieved within my athletic endeavours through supports of DEXA scanning, nutrition appointments, physiotherapy interventions and S&C excellence in the HPG but I've also been able to balance my academic endeavours in physiotherapy alongside this, which wouldn't have been possible without Ad Astra. Simple additional assistances such as access to on campus accommodation and financial backing have been integral in ensuring my ability to train around classes and my ability to target international races abroad. The outcome of this support has resulted in National Un23 titles indoors and outdoors, my first National Senior title, a 4th place finish in the Un23 European Championships and my recent participation at the World University Games in Italy this month.

As I sit here now, starting a new chapter at Temple University in Philadelphia, I do so with a highly accredited degree in physiotherapy behind me as well as 4 years of being part of one of the best sporting Academy's nationally. Despite the fact that I will now venture to embark on new adventures I will always consider the Academy as family and hope to be able to give back in the future for everything they have done for me over my time in UCD.

I want to extend specific thanks to Ann and to Darina. The behind the scenes work that's done in an effort to continue smooth running and development of the Academy is unmatched. I, personally, will never forget my first year in UCD. Naivety of country life in Galway saw my phone stolen here within my first few months and it was Ann who was first to come to my aid, offering support and anything else she could do. It was from then that I really knew what the Academy was about and I can never thank you enough for allowing me to be a part of it. I also want to thank Maria Monaghan of the UCD High Performance Gym. Above and beyond she has gone in my S&C development and so many other times outside her scope of practice she has been there for me through injury and disappointments. She has put 110% into everything to do with my program, my progression and my well-being, on and off the track and I couldn't be more grateful for her counsel, her support and her friendship.

Further to my participation at the World University Games in July, I saw no better way to close a memorable 4 years. After the support and assistance Ad Astra has provided in my balance of athletic and academic endeavours, I was proud to have one last opportunity to represent UCD, Ad Astra and Ireland in such a prestigious event in Italy. Considering the calibre of UCD Ad Astra athletes who have attended the Games in the past such as Ciara Everard and Sarah Lavin, I was honoured to continue the legacy of UCD representation at the Championships this year! Cost of attendance for the Games required a self-funded payment of 900 and it is with immense gratitude that I thank the Academy for their contribution of full coverage toward my representation.

Below I have attached some pictures from my time as an elite Ad Astra athlete, those of which I will cherish in times to come. Again, I just want to reiterate my gratitude to the Academy for the past 4 years. It has been an honour to be an Ad Astra Sports Scholar and I will fondly hold and remember my time as such.

Collage of the Highs in the Blue and Yellow Vest!



The amazing experience of the World University Games - only made possible through the support of UCD and the Ad Astra Academy!

