



My name is Ellen Curran and I'm an Irish senior and Under 21 hockey player and an Ad Astra Elite Sport Scholar. This summer, I travelled to Valencia with the Irish U21 team to compete in the Division 1 European Championships. There, I played alongside 3 of my UCD teammates Hannah, Niamh and Michelle who are also Ad Astra Scholars. Temperatures reached up to 36°C in our games. To mitigate against these extreme heat conditions, we had a warm weather training camp in Alicante a couple weeks prior to the tournament. We quickly

learned the importance of staying hydrated and staying out of the sun as much as possible! This has led to some awful tan lines that perfectly outline our Irish Hockey kit.

In our group, we played against the Netherlands, Spain, Russia and France. The experience of playing against such high-quality opposition was invaluable for my development and very enjoyable. Although finishing the tournament as 7th was not where we would like to be, we bonded as a team, made some amazing memories and learned some invaluable lessons as young athletes. Hopefully this tournament will serve as a springboard for my future ambitions to play in the Olympic games and Hockey World Cup.



Being an Ad Astra athlete allowed me to prepare as best I could for this tournament. Access to the High-Performance gym, my S&C coach Orlaith and physio from DBC played a big part in my physical preparations for the tournament. Having just completed my undergraduate in Biomedical Engineering, I can now also reflect on the importance of having an Academic mentor to allow me to balance my hockey and academics. In addition, a new hockey pitch has recently been built in UCD and it is so exciting to have as a base for both club

and international training!



U21 Squad