**Funded PhD Studentships**

Applications are invited from a suitably qualified candidate for a full-time PhD (Structured PhD programme) in Biology and Environmental Science as part of a larger project on Irish Blue Carbon ecosystems (‘BlueC’) funded by the Marine Institute. We seek to recruit a motivated early-stage researcher with a keen interest in saltmarsh ecology and biogeochemistry. The PhD position will be based in the School of Biology and Environmental Sciences, University College Dublin for 48 months and will contribute to the multi-institutional Blue Carbon (‘[BlueC’](https://www.bluec.ie/)) project in collaboration with University of Galway and University College Cork. **Anticipated start date: January 2024.**

**Blue Carbon background, and intro to wider project**

Ocean and coastal marine systems play a significant role in the global carbon cycle, representing the largest long-term sink of carbon. Two Blue Carbon habitats occur in Ireland’s coastal ecosystems; saltmarshes and seagrass meadows. Specifically for Ireland, there is a paucity of data on the carbon storage capacity of these ecosystems, and a lack of coherent management strategies hampers the ability to integrate these ecosystems into climate policy frameworks. The BlueC project addresses carbon dynamics in Irish coastal and marine environments, whilst simultaneously improving management and harnessing their potential for climate mitigation, adaptation and other ecosystem services to underpin policy development.

**This PhD project** will contribute to the establishment of a long-term monitoring site and will focus on experimental manipulation of climate change factors, namely establishing a passive warming experiment. Latitudinal gradient studies suggest that warming will increase both tidal wetland productivity and decomposition, with the net effect of enhancing carbon storage initially. This project will investigate changes in productivity, decomposition, and elevation in response to warming in both saltmarsh habitat and intertidal seagrass habitat.

The successful candidate will undertake extensive fieldwork in remote saltmarshes across Ireland, employ a wide range of field and lab-based techniques, assist with the set-up of a long-term monitoring site, and interact with the wider project team, whereby some travel to partner laboratories (Galway/Cork) may be required.

**Requirements**

Applicants should have a good primary degree (First or Second Class Honours) in an appropriate discipline (Environmental Science/Biology, Botany/Plant Science, Ecology, Marine Biogeochemistry).

The successful candidate should be highly self-motivated and have some background and particular interest in saltmarsh biology, biogeochemistry and ecology. In addition to a relevant degree(s), the successful candidates will ideally have some additional research experience (e.g. MSc) in marine/coastal fieldwork, analysis of water quality, blue carbon methodologies, habitat mapping and GIS. The successful candidate will be a very strong communicator. In addition, a driving licence valid in Ireland is essential to access remote field sites.

**Award**

The successful candidates will be enrolled for a 48-month Structured PhD programme ([https://www.ucd.ie/graduatestudies/)](https://www.ucd.ie/graduatestudies/)%20)

**Stipend**: The student will receive a tax-free stipend of **€25,000** per year, full coverage of tuition fees (both EU and non-EU) and funds for conference travel.

**Equality and diversity:** UCD is committed to creating an environment where diversity is celebrated and everyone is treated fairly regardless of gender, age, race, disability, ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation, civil status, family status, or membership of the travelling community (<https://www.ucd.ie/equality/>). Applications from all suitably qualified candidates will be considered.

**Informal enquiries are welcome and should be made to Dr Grace Cott (grace.cott@ucd.ie).**

**To apply please e-mail grace.cott@ucd.ie by 19th November, 2023 a single pdf document with a detailed curriculum vitae describing any previous research experience, a cover letter detailing your research interests and goals, and the contact details (e-mail and phone number) of at least two academic referees.**