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AND MEDIA
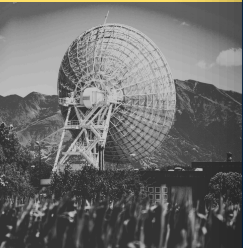
2025/2026
MEDIA MANAGEMENT PROJECT

Handbook

UCD School of Information and Communication Studies | UCD iSCHOOL

How to Use This
Handbook

This handbook has been created as a resource for two key audiences:

- Students who are preparing to take the Media Management Project (MMP).

- Potential clients and partners who may wish to collaborate with our students or connect with the programme.

It is designed to provide practical guidance, answer common questions, and showcase the opportunities and impact that the MMP can generate for all involved. Whether you are a student embarking on your capstone project or an organisation considering partnership, you will find the information you need to understand the scope, process, and benefits of participation.

Part 1: Module Information

Key details about the MMP including module content, assessment, timelines, and expectations.

01

Part 2: Working with Partners

Guidance on finding and working with a client, including the process of securing a partnership, conduct with clients, and partner expectations.

02

Part 3: Project Impact and Successes

Profiles of past student projects, feedback from clients, and examples of the tangible impact generated through the MMP.

03

Part 4: Resources

Templates, relevant documents, lists of potential client partners, and other resources.

04

Introduction

The Media Management Project (MMP) is the capstone module of the MSc in Communication & Media at University College Dublin. Unlike a traditional thesis, the MMP requires students to design and deliver a media-related project in partnership with an external organisation.

This partnership can be with:

- A Not-for-profit organisation

- A Community group

- A Public or private organisation

- An initiative, campaign, or network

The project is developed through negotiation with the client and tailored to address a real-world need. The work must hold clear value for the organisation while also supporting the student's professional growth.

" ... universities are also a part of our societies. What's the point unless the accumulated knowledge, insight and vision are put at the service of the community? With the privilege to pursue knowledge comes the civic responsibility to engage and put that knowledge to work in the service of humanity."

Michael D. Higgins

President of Ireland (2011 - 2025)

The purpose of the MMP is threefold:

1 To give students hands-on experience in developing and managing a media project.

2 To allow students to take ownership of their career path and professional identity within a chosen specialisation.

3 To help students deepen their understanding of the media and communications industry by applying academic knowledge in practice.

The Media Management Project (MMP) requires each student to complete **a minimum of 150 hours of work** with a client organisation. In most cases, this work is carried out during the Summer Trimester. However, students may begin earlier if the client requests support for a specific project or campaign. As a guideline, project work can usually begin any time from April onwards. The way the 150 hours are completed is negotiated directly between the student and the client. This flexibility allows for a variety of arrangements, such as:

Full-time placement

Working full-time over several consecutive weeks (e.g., 4–6 weeks).

Part-time placement

Spreading the hours across a longer period, such as a few days per week over several months.

Blended arrangement

Combining full-time work during a key campaign or event with part-time hours before or after.

Remote or hybrid working

Completing some or all hours online, depending on the client's needs and the nature of the project.

Project-based work

Completing hours around the delivery of specific outputs, milestones, or deadlines, rather than set weekly schedules.

Event-focused work

Concentrating hours around a particular event or campaign (e.g., festivals, awareness weeks, or launch activities).

The MMP is designed to be flexible, provided the arrangement supports the client's needs and enables the student to meet their learning objectives.

Flexibility &
Scope

The MMP is intentionally flexible. Projects can range from developing a communication strategy, producing media content, designing a social media campaign, or conducting applied research that supports a client's communication goals.

What matters most is that:

- The project is mutually beneficial for the student and the client.

- To allow students to take ownership of their career path and professional identity within a chosen specialisation.

- The work demonstrates critical thinking, creativity, and professional application.

- The project reflects the civic responsibility central to the ethos of the programme.

Benefits of the MMP

For Students

Gain practical, real-world experience

Students work directly on live projects with external partners, applying classroom knowledge to meaningful challenges and building confidence in professional practice.

Enhance career progression and employability

The MMP acts as a bridge to future career opportunities, equipping students with concrete experience and connections that strengthen their CVs and professional profiles.

Strengthen skillsets

From project management and client communication to content creation and strategic planning, students refine transferable skills that will serve them across multiple career paths.

Advance professional development with industry leaders

By collaborating with clients, students are mentored, guided, and exposed to current industry practices, standards, and expectations.

Develop a strong professional network

Students meet and collaborate with industry professionals, community leaders, and other stakeholders, establishing valuable connections for future opportunities.

Build a professional portfolio

The project provides tangible outputs—such as reports, campaigns, or media artefacts—that can be showcased in future applications or interviews as evidence of ability and achievement.

Benefits of the MMP

For Industry Partners

Access to low-risk consultancy

Organisations gain fresh perspectives and applied research from postgraduate students, without the financial or operational commitments associated with external consultancy.

An opportunity to trial new ideas

Students bring innovative approaches and up-to-date academic insights, offering partners a chance to explore creative solutions or test concepts in a low-risk setting.

Opportunities for mentorship

Industry partners can provide guidance, advice and support to students, gaining recognition for their leadership while also benefiting from reciprocal learning.

A pipeline of emerging talent

By working with UCD students, organisations engage with motivated professionals at the early stages of their careers, with the potential to identify future collaborators or employees.

Meaningful community engagement

Collaborating with students aligns with an organisation's social responsibility, contributing to educational development and fostering community-university partnerships.

Enhanced brand reputation and goodwill

Visible partnerships with higher education institutions demonstrate a commitment to civic engagement, talent development and innovation, strengthening an organisation's reputation.

Community-Engaged Learning (CEL)

> *"Community engaged learning is a form of experiential education with a civic underpinning. In practice, what this means is that students gain academic credit for the learning they derive from participating in and reflecting on an experience within community and society."*

McIllrath and McDonnell (2014)

Community-Engaged Learning (CEL)

At its core, the MMP is founded on Community-Engaged Learning (CEL), which is recognised as transformative for both students and community partners. CEL is defined as a form of experiential education underpinned by civic engagement. It bridges the gap between academic study and the lived realities of society.

Key features of CEL in the MMP:

- Reciprocal partnerships - The university, students, and community organisations collaborate and learn from one another.

- Societal impact - Projects are designed not only for academic credit but also to address real needs within society.

- Reflective learning - Students must engage in structured reflection to draw lessons from their practical experiences.

- Professional development - CEL allows students to test their future professional roles in real-world contexts.

Why It Matters

The MMP is more than just an assignment—it is an opportunity to:

- Contribute meaningfully to society by applying your academic skills to real-world challenges.

- Develop a professional portfolio of work that can support future career opportunities.

- Strengthen connections between the university and the wider community, leaving a tangible impact.

- Gain insight into how communication and media work in practice, beyond the classroom.

By participating in the Media Management Project, students embrace both the privilege and responsibility of higher education: to create, share, and apply knowledge in the service of humanity.

Module
Information
01

Module Overview

Module Co-ordinator: Dr. Páraic Kerrigan

Email: paraic.kerrigan@ucd.ie

The Media Management Project (MMP) module is worth 30 credits and is required for the MSc Communication and Media degree programme. It is to help students develop the research, reflective, writing and practical skills that are critical to careers in the media and communication's industry along with associated career paths. While placing an emphasis on professional development, this module aims to provide students the skill-set and portfolio to prepare them for various career pathways. In doing so, the module requires students to develop a media project in collaboration with a not-for-profit organisation, initiative or network. In negotiation with an appropriate client, students should develop a project which is of value to the client in their ongoing work.

This will enable students to take ownership of their emerging career and professional identity in a specialisation of their choice, while deepening their understanding of the media and communications industry.

Learning Outcomes
- Demonstrate the range of knowledge acquired throughout the course and how that can be applied in the context of the agreed project with the client.
- Apply creative solutions and strategies in an endeavor to solve the client's problem or meet the agreed brief.
- Demonstrate effective communication skills when interacting with staff from the host organization.
- Manage a project from pre-planning, to agreeing on a brief to following through on delivery.
- Acquire a basic skill-set and knowledge of the media and communications industry and develop a professional profile to prepare for an entry level position.
- Complete a profession report on the research process.

Project Suggestions

The MMP includes a diverse range of project types. Below, we outline each type, the kinds of tasks it may involve, and the key skills you can expect to develop.

Strategic Communication & Campaign Development

Design and implement a social media or awareness campaign for a client; create marketing and advertising materials such as posters or slogans; develop a communication strategy.

Skills developed: Campaign planning, strategic communication, creative thinking, stakeholder management.

Digital & Social Media Analytics

Track and analyse audience engagement across platforms; produce an analytics report; extract insights from social data to guide client strategy.

Skills developed: Data interpretation, digital literacy, analytical reasoning, report writing.

Content Creation & Multimedia Productions

Produce short videos, podcasts, or photo series promoting a client's initiative; create multimedia content for social media or websites.

Skills developed: Storytelling, video/audio editing, creative direction, content strategy.

Media Relations & Public Engagement

Write and distribute press releases; plan a media event; coordinate interviews or secure press coverage for a client.

Skills developed: Media liaison, event management, writing for different audiences, communication ethics.
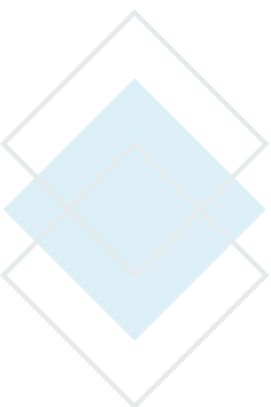
Publishing & Editorial Work

Write a series of articles or blogs highlighting a social issue or organisation; fact-check and proofread client materials; edit newsletters or reports.

Skills developed: *Editorial precision, writing, research accuracy, content curation.*

Web & Digital Management

Develop or redesign a client website; manage online content; conduct an accessibility or SEO audit.

Skills developed: *Web design, digital strategy, project management, user experience.*

Research, Evaluation & Policy Support

Conduct applied research or stakeholder analysis; review communication policies; produce a short report translating academic insights into recommendations.

Skills developed: *Research design, analytical thinking, policy awareness, professional reporting.*

Community & Advocacy Projects

Support a local campaign or community group with digital storytelling, promotional materials, or outreach; document a cultural event or festival.

Skills developed: *Community engagement, advocacy, participatory communication, cultural awareness.*

Custom or Student-Proposed Projects

Develop an original project idea that addresses a client's specific need—e.g., developing a podcast series, digital exhibition, or awareness toolkit.

Skills developed: *Independent initiative, innovation, adaptability, project management.*

Assessment Timeline

The assessment requirements for this module consist of five components that make up the total grade:

April 1, 2026
20%

Professional Development Plan

May 31, 2026
10%

Project Proposal

May 31, 2026
N/A

Agreed Brief with Client

*Summer
10%

Client Report

August 20, 2026
60%

Portfolio and Learning Journal

The submission date for the client report will be co-ordinated over the Summer Trimester by the academic mentor.

Professional Development Plan (20%)

One of the first tasks new professionals have as they enter the field is to establish a professional presentation of themselves, and what they offer in the workplace. To that end, it is essential that new professionals develop a personal professional development plan which will help guide them in their new careers. In addition, applying for positions requires a professional curriculum vitae (CV) and cover letter, which will enable them to stand out from the competition. The purpose of this assessment component is to develop these competencies.

- Professional Development Plan (PDP): Prepare a professional development plan that outlines your career goals and the steps you need to take to achieve them. Identify your professional skills and strengths, as well as areas requiring improvement. Consider how you can contribute to the media and communications industry through participating in or volunteering at events. Include plans for continuing professional development, participation in professional bodies, presentations/publications, and other potential professional activities. This statement should be approx. 1,200 words in length. A template for the plan is provided on BrightSpace.

- Curriculum Vitae: Prepare a professional standard CV that showcases the knowledge and skills you have acquired during your programme. Include past achievements as well, particularly knowledge or skills that you have gained through education or the Media Management Project. Advice on how to create a professional CV can be viewed here:

  https://www.ucd.ie/careers/students/findajoborinternship/cvsandapplications/

- Cover Letter Sample: Identify an advertised job that matches your current career goals and qualifications. Prepare two items to help you apply for this position:

  a) cover letter b) an email message you might use to submit your application.

Recruitment websites include:
- Jobs Ireland (https://jobsireland.ie/)
- Recruit Ireland (https://www.recruitireland.com/), and
- GradIreland (https://gradireland.com/).

You are also invited to join our Facebook group "UCD School of Information & Communication Studies Alumni & Students" where job advertisements are posted regularly.

Media Management Project Proposal (10%)

A robust proposal, including your planned Media Management Project, your supervisor and your shortlisted client. The proposal should include specifics on the type of media project being carried and over what period. It should include reasons as to why the project is necessary and how the client will benefit along with a robust action plan and timeline as to how the project will be implemented.

Just note, if you have not firmed things up with your client, then that is okay, you can put a hypothetical proposal together. What is in your proposal does not need to directly translate into what appears in your final piece.

Submission of Agreed Brief with Client (Grade Neutral)

Building on from the proposal, this will be a submission of the agreed brief, project, timescale and completion date, as agreed on with the client.

Client Report (10%)

To be submitted directly to project supervisor after completion of project. A report form will be forwarded directly to the client, at the address specified by you. The client will be asked to complete the form and email it directly back to the supervisor. The form will cover the following areas:

Working with UCD students:

- Ability of students to work with client to identify client needs, and willingness to meet client requirements. Willingness and ability to present constructive and creative ideas; ability assimilate feedback.
- Punctuality and dependability; general professionalism of conduct.
- Packaging and presentation of final project.
- Any other comments relating to the process of working on the project.

Usefulness of the final project

- Did it meet their requirements?
- Was it technically of a standard that will allow them to use it
- How useful do they predict that it will be?
- Any other comments relating to the final project.

Suggested mark

Based on a brief description of the UCD marking scheme, clients are invited to suggest a mark. This mark may be adjusted in light of some of the comments above.

Media Management Portfolio and Reflective Essay (60%)

Portfolio

The final component of your grade is awarded for the submission of your Media Management Project. This is the submission of a portfolio tracking your project. This portfolio can be submitted in varying formats. This portfolio should be submitted alongside your reflective essay.

A lot of you will be doing varying different projects across different organisations, so we would have a number of recommendations as to how you can compile this portfolio:

- Host elements of your work on a WordPress site dedicated to your MMP.
- Develop a scrapbook that documents the trajectory of your project. In particular, this could encompass screenshots of your social media campaigns, user interactions, etc.
- Compile project pieces in video format, talking us through each piece of work. A Vimeo or YouTube link must be provided.
- Compiling a dossier of completed tasks and benchmarks with media management organisation.
- Your portfolio must include the tracking sheet of all the clients you approached. This is at the bottom of this handbook in section 4.

The reason why we recommend these varying formats is due to the disparate elements to the project, so often, a WordPress site serves best, and you can have separate tabs to indicate specific parts of the project. In other instances, students have previously developed a report booklet. Bundling the MMP portfolio for submission like this would make the project more cohesive, but this is not compulsory and you are free to submit separate files also, just as long as everything is clear and that there is no room for confusion.

So to clarify, there is no specific one way for you to do this, just choose what you feel is right for the kind of project that you have completed.

Feel free to include as much information as you like in your portfolio, such as timelines reflecting your time with the organisation and so on. The more information included, the better. Each portfolio is going to be different, so just try and reflect the work you have done and the key objectives you have achieved.

The Reflective Essay

Each individual student is asked to submit a 1000-word reflective essay, describing their experience of the MMP, and what they learned from it. Reflective essays can include the following components:

▮   Introduction:

Where you indicate what the reader can expect in the piece, without revealing all the details. For instance, you might say "In this essay, I will discuss how completing a MMP has led to a complete re-evaluation of my assumptions about professional life" or similar. It should offer the reader a preview of the piece, highlighting the major themes.

▮   Personal Experiences:

In this section, you can consider several questions to guide you. For example, what were the major challenges you encountered in your MMP, and how did you handle them? What did you enjoy most about the process? How did you manage your workload around all your other life responsibilities? What did you learn from completing your MMP? How will this translate into other areas of your life?

▮   Strengths and Areas for Improvement:

Here, you can indicate the areas in which you feel you performed well and made significant progress. What are you most proud of? In what areas do you feel you can improve, and what steps will you take to achieve this? What skills would have helped you with the MMP?
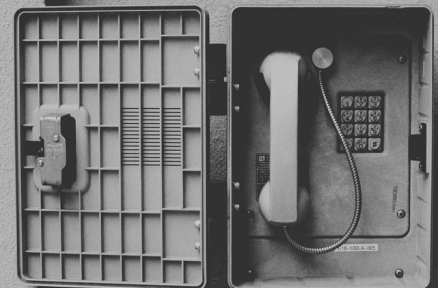
▮   Conclusion:

In this section, you can describe, if applicable, how the experience of the MMP has enabled personal and professional growth. In what ways have you changed during the year? Or have you not changed noticeably? Has the process led to any decisions about your career path? How will what you have learned be useful in your future life?

Working with Partners

02

Securing a Client

The Media Management Project (MMP) is **a student-led and self-directed** initiative. It is each student's responsibility to **identify, contact, and secure** a client organisation with whom to complete their project. The process of sourcing a client is designed to mirror professional practice in the communications and media industries, requiring initiative, professionalism and effective communication skills.

While the module team provides guidance, support, and resources, it is ultimately up to the student to take ownership of this process. The ability to independently secure a client is an important component of the learning experience, reflecting the independence and confidence expected at postgraduate level.

Searching for & Securing a Client

Finding the right client takes time and persistence. You are encouraged to begin your search early (from now) and use Trimester 2 to finalise details and secure approval before project work begins in the Summer Trimester.

Steps to Find and Secure a Client

To support you in the process of finding and confirming a client, the following steps are recommended:

Identify your interests, values, and strengths.

Reflect on the areas of communication, media, or digital policy that align with your goals. Think about causes, industries, or communication challenges that genuinely interest you, such as climate action, digital inclusion, health communication, arts and culture, social justice, and so on.

Research potential organisations.

Explore not-for-profits, media outlets, agencies, campaigns, or cultural initiatives that could benefit from your expertise. Use the databases and resources [listed below] to identify relevant NGOs, charities, and community groups.
- Visit their websites or social media accounts.
- Learn about their mission, ongoing projects, and communication activities.
- Ask yourself: Could my skills add value here? Are they working on campaigns or communication challenges I could contribute to?

█ Make contact professionally.

Send a brief, well-written email introducing yourself, explaining the purpose of the MMP, and how collaboration could be mutually beneficial. (see sample email in Page 19)
- Keep your message polite and concise.
- Always use your UCD email address.
- If possible, address the email to a named individual (e.g., Communications Officer, Project Manager, Director).

█ Follow up.

If you haven't heard back after 7–10 days, send one polite follow-up email. Many NGOs are small and under-resourced, so delays in response are normal. Persistence and professionalism are key.

After finding and making contact, to secure the client partnership:

█ Arrange a discussion or meeting.

Be prepared to outline what you can offer, potential project ideas and how your work could support the organisation's goals.

█ Confirm the project scope

Once a client expresses interest, agree on the nature of the work, expected outputs, timeframe and communication methods.

█ Submit for approval

Provide your module coordinator with the organisation details and a short project summary for approval before commencing work.

█ Formalise the agreement.

Once approved, document your arrangement (email confirmation is sufficient) to ensure clarity on expectations from both sides.

Managing the Search Process
- Expect to contact multiple organisations. Students reach out to 20 organisations on average before receiving a positive response. Do not be discouraged, this reflects the realities of the non-profit and media sectors, where staff may be working part-time or managing multiple priorities.
- Keep a shortlist and track your outreach. Create a simple spreadsheet or list noting who you have contacted, when, and any follow-up actions.
- Be flexible. Some organisations may not have capacity to host a student, but may still offer a project on a smaller scale or remotely. Adapt your proposal to fit their needs where appropriate.
- Leverage your networks. Think about community organisations, volunteer groups, or professional connections you already know. Personal introductions often yield faster results.

Search Strategies & Resources

I. Check our collated database

The following online resources are excellent starting points for identifying potential client organisations across a range of sectors:

- Register of Charities (input keywords of your interests to the search): https://www.charitiesregulator.ie/en
- Database of nonprofits in Ireland: https://benefactslegacy.ie/
- FLAC (list of NGOs in Ireland): https://www.flac.ie/publications/links/independentnongovernmentalorganisationsireland/
- Refugee NGOs in Ireland: https://www.unhcr.org/ie/non-governmental-organizations-ireland
- HSE - Homelessness Partners: https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/primarycare/socialinclusion/about-social-inclusion/partnerorganisations/homelessness.html
- HSE - Substance Use Partners: https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/primarycare/socialinclusion/about-social-inclusion/partnerorganisations/substance-use.html
- HSE - Traveller and Roma Partners : https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/primarycare/socialinclusion/about-social-inclusion/partnerorganisations/travellers-and-roma.html
- HSE – Intercultural Health NGOs: https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/primarycare/socialinclusion/about-social-inclusion/partnerorganisations/intercultural-health.html

II. LinkedIn

Search LinkedIn using keywords such as communications officer, media coordinator, digital campaign, or public engagement.

III. Volunteering Websites

Explore volunteering websites such as Volunteer Ireland (https://www.volunteer.ie) and identify organisations that match your interests.

IV. University Networks

Look at university and alumni networks—many previous MMP clients come through personal connections.

V. UCD Events

Attend UCD events, seminars, and guest lectures, where organisations often present their work or collaborate with the university.

VI. Local Authority & Cultural Listings

Explore local authority or cultural listings (e.g., Dublin City Council, Arts Council, Creative Ireland) for public initiatives in need of communication support.

Common Challenges and Advice

- Non-response is normal, so don't take silence as rejection. Many small NGOs simply lack capacity to respond quickly.
- Be proactive and patient. Send polite follow-ups and keep reaching out until you secure a client.

Sample Client Outreach Email Template

Subject: Collaboration Opportunity — UCD Media Management Project

Dear [Client Name],

My name is [Your Name], and I am a postgraduate student on the **MSc in Communication & Media** programme at **University College Dublin**. As part of my final capstone module, the **Media Management Project (MMP)**, I am required to collaborate with an external organisation on a project that applies my academic learning to a real-world communication or media challenge.

I am reaching out to explore the possibility of partnering with [Organisation Name] for this project. The MMP involves completing approximately **150 hours of work**, which can be arranged flexibly (e.g., part-time, full-time, or remote) to suit your organisation's needs. The goal is to deliver a project that provides meaningful value to the client while helping me develop professional experience and practical skills in media and communication practice.

Based on my background and interests in [insert relevant area, e.g., social media strategy, content production, media research, communication campaigns, etc.], I believe I could contribute to [briefly describe how you could support or add value to their organisation, e.g., assist with digital storytelling, audience analysis, campaign planning, or communications strategy].

If this sounds of interest, I would be delighted to arrange a brief meeting to discuss possible collaboration and explore how we might tailor a project that benefits both you and the organisation.

Thank you for considering this opportunity. I look forward to hearing from you.

Warm regards,
[Your Full Name]
MSc Communication & Media
University College Dublin
[Your UCD Email Address]
[Optional: LinkedIn Profile or Professional Website]

Download Template

https://www.ucd.ie/ics/t4media/Sample%20Client%20Outreach%20Email%20Template.docx

Tips for Students
When Sending Outreach Emails

- Personalise each message — show you've researched the organisation and understand their mission.
- Be professional, concise, and polite.
- Avoid overly formal or academic language; keep the tone approachable.
- Follow up once if you do not receive a reply after a week.
- Save all correspondence for your project records.

The Right Way to Approach Potential Clients

All students are expected to contact potential clients directly via email. This is the most professional and efficient way to introduce yourself, outline the MMP, and propose a collaboration.

- Do not send generic mass emails — tailor each message to the organisation.
- Do not solely apply through job boards or internship listings. The expectation is that you reach out to organisations directly. You will have very little success applying via this route to jobs because you are aiming for a 150 hour placement. You will generally not be hired via this route because you are still a student on a full-time programme.
- Clearly state that you are a UCD postgraduate student undertaking a 150-hour academic project as part of your degree.
- Be proactive but courteous — organisations are often open to collaboration when the approach is respectful, professional, and clearly explained.

If the organisation expresses interest, arrange a short meeting to discuss how you could contribute to their work and agree on project scope, outputs, and timeline.

Approaching Different Types of Organisations

Each sector has its own expectations, tone and opportunities. Below are tailored guidelines for how to approach and communicate with various types of potential clients.

I. Community and Cultural Organisations

Examples include local arts groups, media collectives, community radio stations, or cultural festivals. These organisations often value creativity, civic engagement, and storytelling.

- Focus on how your skills can support their outreach, documentation, or storytelling goals.
- Highlight your enthusiasm for their mission and your ability to bring media and communication expertise to enhance their impact.
- Be flexible — these groups often operate with limited resources, so adaptability and initiative are highly valued.

> **Example:** *"I would love to assist with your upcoming festival by helping to document and promote the event through digital storytelling or short-form media coverage."*

II. Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Advocacy Groups

Examples include human rights organisations, sustainability networks, youth initiatives, and social justice campaigns. NGOs are typically mission-driven and interested in how communication can strengthen their advocacy or community engagement.

- Emphasise your ability to contribute to **strategic communication**, **digital campaigns**, or **impact storytelling**.
- Show an understanding of their values — align your interests with their cause.
- Many NGOs have strong communication goals but limited staff capacity, so well-defined short-term support is often appreciated.

> **Example:** *"I'm particularly interested in how [Organisation Name] uses digital storytelling to promote [issue]. I believe my skills in social media strategy and audience engagement could contribute to that effort."*

III. Public Sector and Policy Organisations

Examples include government agencies, local authorities, or public media outlets.These organisations value clarity, structure, and professionalism.

- Use formal, concise language in your emails.
- Emphasise your research and analytical skills as well as your understanding of public communication, audience analysis, or policy engagement.
- Be clear that your role would be limited to a specific project and timeframe.

> **Example:** *"I am seeking to collaborate with a public organisation on a short-term communication project that bridges research and public engagement. I would be delighted to discuss how this might support [Organisation Name]'s work."*

IV. Private Companies and Media Organisations

Examples include production companies, PR agencies, media outlets, or marketing firms. These organisations are often fast-paced and commercially driven.

- Position yourself as a professional collaborator, not an intern.
- Highlight your skills in content creation, social media, audience research, branding, or communication strategy.
- Be clear that this is a university project and not a request for paid employment.

> **Example:** *"As part of my postgraduate programme in Communication & Media, I am seeking to collaborate on a short project (approximately 150 hours) that applies my academic learning to real-world media practice. I would be keen to support your team in areas such as audience engagement or campaign analysis."*

Working Internationally with Clients

While the Media Management Project (MMP) encourages students to think globally, it is generally expected that students will undertake their projects with clients based in Ireland. The module is grounded in community and industry engagement within the Irish media and communication sectors, and projects conducted in Ireland ensure strong supervision, local relevance, and accessible collaboration between students and clients.

Exceptional Circumstances

International projects will only be approved under exceptional circumstances, such as where:

- The student already has an established professional connection or relationship with an international organisation;
- The proposed project clearly demonstrates unique academic or professional value not available through an Irish-based partnership; or
- The student is based abroad for personal or professional reasons during the MMP period.

NB: All students are required to make every reasonable effort to secure an Irish-based client in the first instance. Any proposal to work internationally must be discussed with, and formally approved by, the module coordinator before any agreement is made with an overseas partner.

Remote and Hybrid Arrangements

In the rare cases where international collaborations are approved, they will typically be conducted **remotely**. Students may work online using platforms such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, or Google Workspace to coordinate and deliver project outcomes. This arrangement allows students to meet their client's needs while remaining connected to the academic supervision provided at UCD. Hybrid arrangements (part-remote, part-in-person) may be considered where students are already located abroad.

Visa and Legal Requirements

Students are fully responsible for ensuring compliance with any visa, tax, or employment regulations associated with international work. The university cannot provide visa sponsorship, legal support, or administrative assistance for overseas placements. Students should confirm that their work can be completed safely, ethically, and within legal boundaries in the country of operation.

Language of Work

All MMP projects are expected to be conducted in English to ensure consistency in supervision, assessment, and reporting. In limited cases, projects may be carried out in another language if the student is fluent and the client relationship requires it. However, approval must be sought in advance, and all submitted materials (reports, summaries, outputs) must include English-language documentation.

Maintaining Academic and Professional Standards

Even in international contexts, students must adhere to the same professional and ethical standards as domestic projects, including maintaining communication with the supervisor, completing reflective work, and ensuring project outcomes meet the learning objectives of the module.

Key Takeaways

- All students must seek an Irish client first before considering international options.
- International projects are exceptions, not the norm, and require prior approval.
- Approved international work will usually be remote and conducted in English.
- Students bear responsibility for any visa or legal requirements.

Finding a Client

Media Management Project
Class of 2024/2025

I chose the media management project instead of conducting a thesis as I felt it would provide me a more practical, hands-on experience that would equip me with the confidence to enter the communications workforce after completion of the course. When choosing the Media Management Project pathway, I actively reached out to potential clients within industries I was most interested in, including tv/film production, government departments and arts organisations (theatre, drama and music).

Julia Brennan

The process of seeking a client could be slow at times and time-consuming. At the beginning of my second trimester, I reached out to several prospective clients via email, to which the majority were met with either a resounding no or no reply at all. It was a major learning curve, teaching me both patience and persistence. Following this, on advice from my tutor, I consulted the MMP list of charity and community organisations within Dublin and thus discovered Dublin Youth Theatre, a fantastic youth arts community based in Temple Bar.

Immediately, I jumped at the chance and emailed their office straight away. Two weeks later, I received an email organising a phone interview to discuss the Media Management Project in bigger detail. During the phone call, the Executive Director and I talked over the important work of Dublin Youth Theatre organisation and how my skillsets could best serve their needs as an organisation. She told me about their annual big show that was occurring in August and that they would like to offer me an opportunity to work as a 'Media Intern'. The role involved creating social media content, reels, stories and posts whilst scheduling and managing the social media calendar for LinkedIn, Facebook, TikTok and Instagram. Furthermore, the role allowed me to meet and network with some of the most talented young actors and theatre makers within the Dublin area at events such as the launch of the Dublin Theatre Festival and a play by theatre makers of the Primadonna Collective.

The advice I would give to students considering the MMP pathway for their masters would be to research potential clients as soon as possible. I would hit the ground running and begin your journey searching for work placements. Call or email organisations whose work or ongoing projects are of interest to you. Additionally, use LinkedIn as a contacts tool to build your network of connections, you never know who you could reach out to for a potential placement!

Finding a Client

Hi, I'm Kopal, and for my Media Management Project, my client was Friends of the Elderly in Dublin.

Kopal Mehta

Before I secured my placement, I had initially interviewed for a role with TASC, but unfortunately, the position did not work out. But this is an entirely normal part of the process, so don't fret. Since I was running out of time, I felt a bit of pressure to find another client quickly. While searching, I came across an internship role with Friends of the Elderly on their website and decided to apply. The process from there was smooth and encouraging. I was invited to a one-on-one Zoom interview with the manager, where she asked me personal questions about my character, my background, and my experience working with older people. The conversation gave me space to highlight both my communication and media skills, and how they could support the organisation's work. Shortly after, I was offered the internship, and everything moved forward from there.

During my month with Friends of the Elderly, I was able to gain a wide variety of experiences. I created social media content for their charity shop Ritzy Rags, managed their TikTok account, and photographed events. I also worked in the shop, helped organise activities in the club, went on day trips with members, and made friendly phone calls to reduce loneliness. On top of that, I learned to use Salesforce and developed a deeper understanding of how charities operate behind the scenes. It was a busy but highly rewarding experience, and it allowed me to apply my studies in a practical, community-focused way.

Looking back, my advice to future students would be to start early when searching for a client. Even if you think things are secure, unexpected changes — like what happened with my initial TASC interview — can create unnecessary stress. Applying early through official channels, like I did with Friends of the Elderly, gives you more options and peace of mind.

Most importantly, choose a client whose mission resonates with you. When there's a good fit, the work feels meaningful and the project becomes truly fulfilling.

Impact & Successes

We welcome opportunities to collaborate with industry, cultural, and community partners. If your organisation would like to explore collaboration with Media Management students, we'd be delighted to hear from you. Together, we can turn ideas into impact and insight into success.

Impact Through
Collaboration

Partnerships with organisations are at the heart of the Media Management Project experience. Clients and collaborators benefit from working with our students, who bring fresh perspectives, research-informed approaches and creative solutions to real communication challenges.

These collaborations allow organisations to:

- Access new ideas and data-driven insights.
- Engage and widen networks with future media leaders.
- Build visibility within the UCD community, creating a reputation of excellence in communication and innovation.
- A low-risk, high-reward opportunity to test fresh ideas, creative campaigns, or new audience strategies, supported by research insight and academic mentorship, without the high costs or risks of a full campaign.
- Collaboration with our students can provide organisations with the chance to identify emerging talent and future hires. This is a low-risk way to see how potential recruits think, work, and contribute.
- Collaborations also encourage reflective practice from both sides. Providing both professionals and students to test, learn, and refine approaches to communication management.

Projects have included the development of a database for research within charities, such as the Alzheimer's Society of Ireland, helping to programme and manage a film festival, managing social media content and curation of NGOs to development and managing consciousness-raising campaigns.

Connecting Theory and Practice
Prior to undertaking the Media Management Project, our students engage in a full suite of media and communication management modules. From research and communication theory to digital policy, UXD, project management and AI ethics. As part of the Media Management Project, students arrive in a strong position to provide advice and assistance on digital strategy, campaign development and branding.

Some impacts of the
Media Management Project

Over the past five years, the Media Management Project has delivered significant, measurable impact for organisations across Ireland and internationally. Through high-quality, client-focused work, students have contributed meaningfully to public communication, digital engagement, media production, community outreach, and organisational visibility. For many partners, engaging with an MMP student has functioned as a low-risk, high-benefit opportunity to advance key projects that might otherwise remain under-resourced.

Some outcomes from our previous partnerships:

ANIMAL WELFARE AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

Students have collaborated with a wide range of animal welfare charities, including MADRA Dog Shelter, Dogs Trust, Nantucket Island Safe Harbor for Animals, and the Cat and Dog Protection Association of Ireland (CDPA).

These campaigns have directly contributed to securing permanent homes for numerous cats and dogs, demonstrating how student work has tangible, lasting social impact.
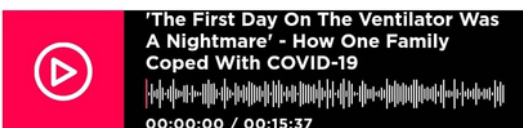
Through targeted social media campaigns, content strategies, and data-informed audience engagement, students have:

- Significantly increased visibility of available animals for adoption
- Designed creative campaigns that spotlight hard-to-home animals
- Developed volunteer-driven video and photography content
- Improved online engagement, leading to higher reach and interaction rates

https://www.newstalk.com/news/the-first-day-on-the-ventilator-was-a-nightmare-how-one-family-coped-with-covid-19-1141374

'The First Day On The Ventilator Was A Nightmare' - How One Family Coped With COVID-19

00:00:00 / 00:15:37

Listen on Apple Podcasts

Listen on Google Podcasts

LISTEN ON Spotify

PROFESSIONAL MEDIA PRODUCTION AND BROADCASTING

Students have made substantial contributions to Irish radio and audio journalism. MMP participants have produced original programming and high-quality radio packages for Babylon Radio, Dublin South FM, Dublin City FM, etc

Several projects have reached national broadcast standard. A notable example is Rebecca Mahon's radio package: "'**The first day on the ventilator was a nightmare' — How one family coped with COVID-19**", which was broadcast on *Newstalk*, one of Ireland's leading national stations.

DIGITAL CAMPAIGNS, WEBSITES, AND STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

Many students have designed and delivered:

- Fully functional websites
- Branding and visual identity updates
- National or regional awareness campaigns
- Digital communication strategies tailored to organisational goals
- Community outreach initiatives
- Internal and external communication audits
- Social media analytics and platform management

These projects have supported partners ranging from local community groups to national NGOs and international networks.

Home / What We Do / Special Projects

Word Warriors

An after-school creative writing program for primary school students, created in partnership with City Connects and Dublin City Council's North East Inner City.

Graduate Employability
& Client Retention

The MMP is not only an academic exercise—it is a pipeline of emerging professional talent.

- 100% of MMP students have progressed into employment, internships, or further postgraduate study.
- 40% of students have been directly retained by their client organisations for graduate roles or extended project work.
- Many others have leveraged their MMP experience and the portfolio they developed during it into their first graduate job, often within weeks of completing the programme.

For clients, this means the MMP acts as a **low-risk talent identification opportunity**, offering early access to skilled, motivated graduates trained in contemporary media and communication practices.

Success Stories

TASC: Think-Tank For Action on Social Change

Partnering with a UCD MMP student was an enormously valuable experience for TASC. As a public education charity, we rely on clear, accessible communication to share our research on inequality and inspire action. Working with a UCD student gave us the chance to translate complex research into accessible messaging that resonated with communities and policymakers alike.The student brought energy, fresh thinking, and strong communication skills, helping us to shape outputs that were both accurate and engaging - from clear summaries of our research to media-ready content and engaging reports. For them, this was an opportunity to connect academic learning to real-world impact and to see how communication is central to social change.

When we work with students, we value curiosity, reliability, and a genuine interest in tackling inequality. We look for someone willing to listen and engage, who can see communication not as an afterthought but as a key driver of change. Our advice to other students would be to take time to understand the community context and focus on making the research meaningful for others.

Community-engaged learning like the MMP is vital to TASC's mission. It ensures that research does not just sit on a shelf but reaches the people who can use it to create fairer outcomes. This collaboration demonstrated how research, communication, and community partnerships can come together to make a tangible difference.

Molly Newell,

Technology Researcher at TASC

Success Stories

Fighting Words

> *Fighting Words has been delighted to welcome MSc Communication & Media students from UCD as Digital Content Interns for several years. These placements, offered through the Media Management Project (MMP), have been hugely rewarding for both the students and our organisation.*

What interns do

Our interns bring fresh skills and creativity to help strengthen our presence across social media and our website. Working closely with staff, interns identify programmes, projects and initiatives to highlight and then design tailored content and campaigns. This might mean:

- Designing fun, engaging reels on Instagram to recruit new volunteers
- Celebrating grants and funding partners on LinkedIn
- Showcasing the completion of a major project on Facebook

Interns have the opportunity to put their academic learning into practice in a real-world communications setting.

What we look for

As a registered charity providing free creative writing opportunities for children and young people, we seek students who are inspired by our mission and eager to tell our stories. All Digital Content Interns are also trained as writing mentors, so an interest in working with children in a creative environment is welcome. Strong visual imagination, confidence with digital tools, and a willingness to experiment are also key. Every intern brings something unique—and we value that individuality.

Advice for MSc students:

Internships at Fighting Words offer valuable community-based learning. Students gain hands-on professional experience, from creating and scheduling content to tracking engagement and analysing audience response. You'll see in real time how your work has an impact on communities. In turn, Fighting Words benefits from your fresh thinking and new approaches, which help us connect more deeply with the audiences we serve.

Why it matters

Use your imagination. You have a unique voice, and only you can tell stories your way. Learn as much as you can about your client's goals, but don't be afraid to contribute your own ideas—you may see opportunities others haven't considered.

Why Partner with an
MMP Student ?

Partnering with a Media Management Project student is an opportunity to:

- Gain **fresh perspectives** and academically informed insight
- Access **specialist skills** in media, communication, and research
- Support work that organisations often lack capacity to deliver
- Benefit from **professional-quality outputs** without consultancy costs
- Build relationships with UCD's postgraduate talent pool
- Contribute to community-engaged learning and civic impact

For many organisations, MMP involvement has enabled progress on strategic goals that had been postponed due to staffing, resource constraints, or time pressures.

To partner with us or learn more about partnership opportunities, please contact:

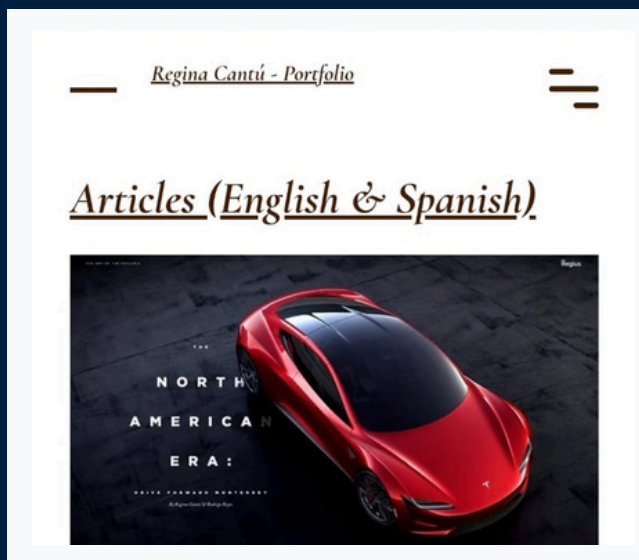MMP Co-ordinator: Dr. Páraic Kerrigan
Email: paraic.kerrigan@ucd.ie

or

Program Administrator: Edward Moore
Email: edward.moore@ucd.ie

Sample Student Portfolio

An example portfolio submission from a previous student:

Regina Cantú
Partner - Dublin City FM

https://reginacn007.wixsite.com/reginacantuportfolio

Remember:

A lot of you will be doing varying different projects across different organisations, so we would have a number of recommendations as to how you can compile your portfolio:

- Host elements of your work on a WordPress site dedicated to your MMP.
- Develop a scrapbook that documents the trajectory of your project. In particular, this could encompass screenshots of your social media campaigns, user interactions, etc.
- Compile project pieces in video format, talking us through each piece of work. A Vimeo or YouTube link must be provided.
- Compiling a dossier of completed tasks and benchmarks with media management organisation.
- Your portfolio must include the tracking sheet of all the clients you approached. This is at the bottom of this handbook in section 4.

# Student Testimonials

Srushti Deotale

Digital Program Analyst, SSE Airtricity

I am extremely grateful to University College Dublin for enabling me, to take the first step towards the career my dreams. I am currently working at SSE Airtricity as a Digital Program Analyst in their Graduate Program, and the MSc Communication and Media was central for me in getting where I am today.

The modules were carefully curated to help students find suitable options for their respective career choices and develop their own pathways in learning. I also appreciated the choice between writing a thesis or working on a real-life project for our final trimester at the University. Since I wanted to gain some practical experience, I decided to choose a media management project which proved extremely beneficial in terms of developing practical skills for my future career. The degree is the perfect mix of practical and theoretical.

**Media Management Project
Class of 2019/2020**
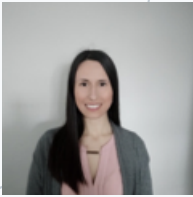
Noemi Chimisso

ICT & Communications Officer,
Environmental Protection Agency

Following a BA in Translation Studies and an MA in Applied Linguistics, I realised that I wanted to pursue a career in communications. Compared to similar courses, I chose the MSc in Communication and Media offered by UCD because the modules perfectly blended theory and practice.

Apart from all the exciting assignments such as developing an episode of a podcast, students can choose to carry out a Media Management Project with a non-profit organisation as opposed to a dissertation. It's not an exaggeration when I say that attending this master's degree was one of the best decisions of my life. I found all modules stimulating, the professors extremely competent and supportive, and the classroom atmosphere positive, and productive. The course always had something pragmatic to offer and was always giving you key skills from its modules. I started this course with the hope of working in the charity sector or for an environmental organisation, and I truly appreciated the flexibility of tailoring assignments around my interests and career goals. Moreover, I had the fantastic opportunity to carry out a social media campaign for the UK-based charity Give a Book for my Media Management Project.

Shortly after completing my degree, I had a number of job interviews: potential employers were very impressed with my portfolio developed as part of the course. Thanks to this degree, I now work as an ICT and Communications Officer for the Environmental Protection Agency, where I deal with both external and internal digital communications.

**Media Management Project
Class of 2020/2021**
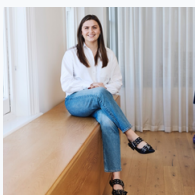
Emer Healy

PR at Reymond Communications (Australia),
formerly of Virgin Media Ireland

Following on from my BAInt (French & Spanish) degree at UCD, I realised my career ambitions lay within the communications landscape. Having researched multiple Master' s programmes, I decided to study the MSc Communication and Media course at UCD because it allowed me to explore theoretical modules alongside more practical ones. For example, the Media Production Cultures module gave me the opportunity to create a podcast, interview media specialists and produce a video essay. I subsequently used these video and audio editing skills in my Media Management Project with the non-profit, Mother Tongues, and continue to use these, alongside interviewing skills, in my current role as Internal Communications Executive at Virgin Media. Moreover, the research methods modules on the MSc course gave me a solid understanding of analytical research, which I currently use to measure and analyse our Virgin Media communications strategy.

A key benefit of the MSc course was the flexibility to shape assignment topics around our own interests. On several occasions I explored topics relating to my undergraduate degree, more practically with my 'English Language Remakes of Foreign Language Films' video essay and more theoretically with my literature review of translation and interpretation of humanitarian crises. Gaining experience with a not-for-profit organisation (instead of writing a dissertation) introduced me to the world of work and facilitated making lasting relationships with individuals working in the comms and media sphere.

Importantly, I found all my MSc classes engaging and the curriculum extremely relevant and stimulating. The constant support from my lecturers and their genuine interest in my academic progress and wellbeing was second to none. Without studying this course, I would not have had the necessary skillset to get to where I am today, so I am forever grateful to the coordinators. It really is a great course!

04

Resources

Templates & Documents

Click the links to download the MMP template documents below.

Client Tracking Sheet

All students must use a tracking sheet as shown below and it must be included alongside their portfolios. You will be asked regularly to show this to your academic mentor

Sample

Organisation Name	Sector / Area of Work	Contact Person & Role	Email / Contact Info	Date of Initial Contact	Follow-Up Date	Response Received? (Y/N)	Outcome / Notes	Approved by Academic Mentor(Y/N)
Example: Fighting Words	Creative Writing / Education	Jane Murphy, Communications Manager	jane@fightingwords.ie	10 Oct 2025	18 Oct 2025	Y	Meeting arranged for 22 Oct. Discussing potential storytelling projects.	Pending
Example: Dublin City Council Arts Office	Arts & Culture	N/A (General Enquiries)	arts@dublincity.ie	12 Oct 2025	20 Oct 2025	N	No response yet — will send follow-up email.	N/A
Example: TASC — Think Tank for Action on Social Change	Policy / Advocacy	Mark O'Brien, Media Officer	mark@tasc.ie	15 Oct 2025	23 Oct 2025	Y	Client confirmed interest; proposal to be drafted.	Y
Example: The Digital Hub	Technology / Media	Maria Santos, Projects Lead	maria@thedigitalhub.ie	20 Oct 2025	28 Oct 2025	N	Considering contacting alternative clients in the same sector.	N/A

https://www.ucd.ie/ics/t4media/MMP%20Client%20Tracking%20Sheet.docx

Other Templates & Documents

I. Agreed Brief

To begin the project, both students and the client need to sign an agreed brief. This includes conditions of the agreement and the nature of the student's work for the duration of the project.

https://www.ucd.ie/ics/t4media/IS41170%20-%20Agreed%20Brief%20with%20Client%20(2).doc

II. Client Report

At the end of the project, client partners will be asked to complete a brief report form and email it directly to the supervisor. This form accounts for 10% of the final grade.

https://www.ucd.ie/ics/t4media/IS41170-%20Client%20Report.docx

III. Sample Client Outreach Email

https://www.ucd.ie/ics/t4media/Sample%20Client%20Outreach%20Email%20Template.docx

Alternatively, you can visit the UCD School of Information and Communication Studies website to access these documents.
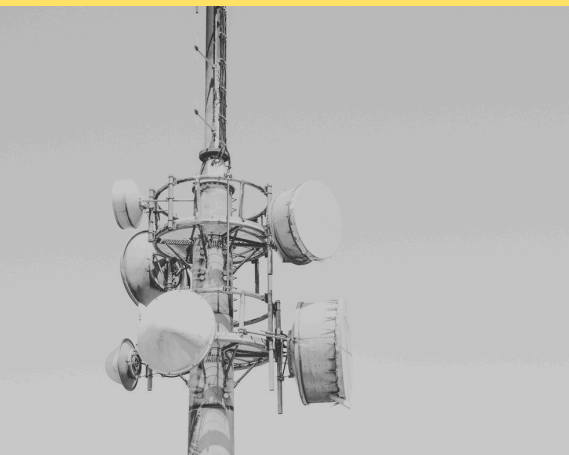
Client Database

List of Clients who have taken on our students

- Vision Sports Ireland
- Dublin Youth Theatre
- Dublin City FM
- Women's Collective Ireland
- Irish Traditional Music Archive
- Friends of the Elderly
- Teen-Turn
- Think Tank for Action on Social Change (TASC)
- Extratime.ie
- Love Actually CHarity
- MADRA Dog Shelter
- Fighting Words
- Kerrang!
- Friends of Suicide Loss
- AUNUA Global
- Literature Ireland
- Cosmos.ie
- Aphasia Ireland
- World Vision Ireland
- Headline
- Galway Film Fleadh
- Irish Society for Chartered Physiotherapists
- Give a Book UK
- Irish Independent
- Grow
- The Kids Coach
- Moonlight PR
- Herstory

Some sites where you can find a client partner

- Register of Charities (input keywords of your interests to the search): https://www.charitiesregulator.ie/en
- Database of nonprofits in Ireland: https://benefactslegacy.ie/
- FLAC (list of NGOs in Ireland): https://www.flac.ie/publications/links/independentnongovernmentalorganisationsireland/
- Refugee NGOs in Ireland: https://www.unhcr.org/ie/non-governmental-organizations-ireland
- HSE - Homelessness Partners: https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/primarycare/socialinclusion/about-social-inclusion/partnerorganisations/homelessness.html
- HSE - Substance Use Partners: https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/primarycare/socialinclusion/about-social-inclusion/partnerorganisations/substance-use.html
- HSE - Traveller and Roma Partners : https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/primarycare/socialinclusion/about-social-inclusion/partnerorganisations/travellers-and-roma.html
- HSE – Intercultural Health NGOs: https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/primarycare/socialinclusion/about-social-inclusion/partnerorganisations/intercultural-health.html

If you have any questions or need further information, please feel free to reach out to paraic.kerrigan@ucd.ie or edward.moore@ucd.ie

MSC COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA