



University College Dublin
An Coláiste Ollscoile, Baile Átha Cliath



University College Dublin

Career Development & Employability Strategy 2015–2025



No.1
for education

No.1
for global
community

No.1
for international
student care

No.1
for research

No.1
for staff

No.1
for global
connections

No.1
for students

No.1
for sport



Ireland's **Global**
University



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“For over 150 years, we have produced the leaders in politics, business, industry, the judiciary, the public sector and not-for-profit organizations. UCD graduates are educated intellectually, personally and professionally, possessing the resilience to cope in a changing, technology-enabled world.”







Welcome

A university with a long-standing tradition of an education that makes no apology for its intellectual challenge, we take pride in developing the personal and professional capabilities of students across the most diverse curriculum in Ireland. We value teaching and research, a global outlook, social responsibility and preparing students for success beyond the classroom.

The UCD Career Development and Employability Strategy is grounded in the University Strategic Plan and brings with it a commitment to existing and prospective students that we will provide an educational experience that will define international best practice, enabling UCD students to fulfil their career potential. For over 150 years, we have produced the leaders in politics, business, industry, the judiciary, the public sector and not-for-profit organizations. UCD graduates are educated intellectually, personally and professionally, possessing the resilience to cope in a changing, technology-enabled world. They have the creativity to find solutions and new approaches and the determination to succeed anywhere in the world.

Today's career landscape is a changing one. Graduates are likely to work in many roles and not have linear career progression. Career commentators' debate the role of robots and people in the future with predictions that many established professions may disappear or change beyond recognition. Through our curricular and co-curricular activities, UCD students are imbued with the skills, aptitudes and qualities that allow them to embrace and not fear change and to thrive in careers that do not yet exist. Through our wide choice of subjects, UCD graduates will continue to be global leaders in this evolving vocational landscape.

In setting out this strategy, we recognize that UCD is not only a leader in research and education but in graduate employability also. We fully appreciate the need to build upon an established tradition of graduates leading fulfilling and rewarding careers. We will be dynamic in approach, moving to meet the changing needs of society and the economy, staying connected to the needs of prospective and current students and encompassing the expectations of government on graduate skills, employability and economic prosperity. To our community of students, faculty, staff and alumni we state our commitment to career development and progression.

Over the period of the strategy, we aim to develop a holistic educational experience that facilitates students' personal and professional development, leveraging the expertise of our faculty, our professional staff, and the excellent relationships with alumni and national and international employers. Our students will have opportunities to excel personally and professionally both within and outside of their Programmes of study.



Professor Mark Rogers
Deputy President, Registrar and
Vice President for Academic Affairs

UCD Career Development and Employability Strategy 2015–2025

The UCD Career Development and Employability Strategy focusses on graduate identity which is shaped through the provision of a diverse range of appropriate supports and learning opportunities that allow students to progress on a developmental journey from the start of their studies in UCD. Aligned with our mission, we will support our students in developing the skills, competencies and attitudes they will need to succeed in the dynamic and global world we live in.

UCD students can choose from a portfolio of embedded supportive initiatives. These supports and learning opportunities include those aimed at developing students' employability skills and competencies, understanding the graduate recruitment process, relationship building with employers, internships/work/research placements (enhancing graduates' chances at remaining in that employment area after graduation) and acquiring and practicing skills through volunteering opportunities.

Students are encouraged to enhance their personal development by acting as peer mentors, student ambassadors, student union representatives, career development ambassadors or student tutors and becoming active members of student societies and clubs and other related activities. Students are also encouraged to avail of international exchange opportunities.

This range of provision allows students' to reflect on their experiences which they can translate into compelling personal narratives. This approach meets the needs of students at appropriate times during their journey and allows UCD to engage with students in a meaningful way. The strategy recognises the agency of students, their diversity, the social constraints that can impact on employability, and the importance of close working relationships with employers so that students can reflect on their identities and deepen their understanding about career development and employability.

The priorities identified in this strategy will also be actioned and achieved through policy and process directives arising from:

- The UCD Strategic Plan.
- The UCD Education Strategy: Our Students' Education and Experience 2015-2020.
- The Academic Council, the University Management Team and the Governing Authority.
- The Higher Education Authority (HEA), Quality Qualifications Ireland (QQI), the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), and relevant Professional Statutory and Regulatory Body requirements.

Cognisance will also be taken of:

- Ireland's National Skills Strategy 2025
- Government Action Plans for Education
- Irish Survey of Student Engagement

Details of how these five priorities will be achieved are summarised through the actions that follow.





Our five priorities are:



1. Incorporate **career development and employability related activities** in disciplinary appropriate ways within programmes.



2. Enhance and develop **employability attributes** in our students and graduates.



3. Establish and maintain **excellent working relationships** with our key stakeholders.



4. Provide opportunities for students who want to **develop their creativity, innovation, enterprise and entrepreneurial interests**.



5. **Communicating our strategy** to prospective students and key stakeholders.







Priority 1

Incorporate **career development and employability related activities** in disciplinary appropriate ways within programmes.

Actions

- 1.1 Offer a curriculum that prioritises critical, analytical and creative thinking and the development of enduring, life-long skills and attributes in disciplinary appropriate ways within programmes.
- 1.2 Expand the range of opportunities to facilitate students' engagement with personal and professional development and reflection on their future employment options in evolving work situations.
- 1.3 Offer students a variety of opportunities to develop their language skills and intercultural competencies, raising awareness across the university about funded supports, such as Erasmus +, to facilitate students securing internship and work experience in international contexts.
- 1.4 Provide supports for students at appropriate points in advance of and during each cycle of the internship and work experience activities that are part of UCD programmes.
- 1.5 Review UCD Academic Regulations to facilitate the inclusion of employability statements within programmes as appropriate.
- 1.6 Introduce a Career Development process for PhD students and continue to enhance the Researcher Career Framework for Post-doctoral fellows to ensure provision of career development support and the provision of transferable skills modules.





Priority 2

Enhance and develop **employability attributes** in our students and graduates.

Actions

- 2.1 Engage students with the career development process at an early stage in their studies as appropriate to their discipline.
- 2.2 Provide all students with opportunities to engage with personal and professional development, career counselling, Graduate Recruitment, Internship Fairs and skills and employer led workshops, using social media and regular electronic communication.
- 2.3 Enhance the employability of our students by offering a wide variety of opportunities to enhance their options in the world of work through internships, placements, entrepreneurial activities, volunteering, as active members of student societies, as student union representatives and through the development of co-curricular skills awards: the UCD Embark Award and the UCD Advantage Award.
- 2.4 Ensure that students have multiple opportunities to engage with the Career Development Centre (within and outside the curriculum) for personal and professional development through a range of professional services and interventions that build students' skills, self-efficacy and self-confidence, leading to effective career development planning.
- 2.5 Develop a structured Career Ambassadors Programme within the Career Development Centre where students can serve as key liaisons to their student constituency. This programme will provide support to Careers Ambassadors through orientation and review meetings.
- 2.6 Ensure that the Career Development Centre, Access and Lifelong Learning and the International Office work closely with Colleges to guide the development of support services and learning opportunities to better meet the differing career needs of our diverse student body.
- 2.7 Ensure that all students have equal access to impartial career counselling and opportunities for personal and professional development.









Priority 3

Establish and maintain **excellent working relationships** with our key stakeholders.

Actions

- 3.1 Establish an internal UCD Advisory Board to plan for an annual Employers' Fora to discuss new developments and initiatives.
- 3.2 Utilise targeted approaches to data analysis and conduct institutional research using longitudinal graduate data to inform the strategic planning of career provision, both centrally and within schools and units across the university.
- 3.3 Develop a coherent and streamlined institutional approach to securing internships and work experience opportunities for students.
- 3.4 Expand the current Career Development Centre / Alumni Relations Careers Mentors' Programme so that students have access to mentors in a relevant field.
- 3.5 Build upon and leverage the depth and breadth of the Career Development Centre's employer database to support programme content and outcomes.
- 3.6 Establish a consultative forum with strategic partners, employers, professional, voluntary and public service bodies to input into future strategy development.





Priority 4

Provide opportunities for students who want to **develop their creativity, innovation, enterprise and entrepreneurial interests.**

Actions

- 4.1 Promote opportunities for undergraduate and postgraduate students to develop their entrepreneurial interests in the creative industries in national and global contexts.
- 4.2 Expand the role of The UCD Startup Stars, our annual entrepreneurial support programme for UCD students who want to work together to build startup companies.
- 4.3 Extend the Nova UCD Mentoring panel to provide workshops, projects and placement opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students.
- 4.4 Widen participation on the UCD Commercialisation Bootcamp Support Programme to equip both staff and postgraduate students with the knowledge, skills and understanding of the commercialisation process.
- 4.5 Provide opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students to experience the work of innovation-led companies located on UCD campus at NovaUCD, the Centre for New Ventures and Entrepreneurs, NexusUCD and the Industry Partnership Centre through guest lectures, case studies and other activities.
- 4.6 Extend and develop the Supporting Partnership and Realising Change (SPARC) initiative, to create more student-staff and faculty partnerships and further enhance social entrepreneurship.









Priority 5

Communicating our strategy to prospective students and key stakeholders.

Actions

- 5.1 Ensure that student recruitment and promotional material includes clear career pathways appropriate to disciplines and programmes.
- 5.2 Include actions and activities that are linked to the career development and employment strategy as part of the broader UCD communications strategy.
- 5.3 Use effective channels of communication across relevant UCD professional units/offices and faculty in support of student engagement with personal and professional development activities.
- 5.4 Maintain our leadership role in this area both nationally and globally, working closely with government departments, agencies, IBEC, and the IUA to influence and lead in the formulation of national policy.





“We will be dynamic in approach, moving to meet the changing needs of society and the economy”





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