



UCD Career and Skills Statement

Introduction

This statement is written to provide readers such as prospective and current students, parents and families, guidance counsellors and employers of graduates with a broad perspective on UCD's approach to the educational experience as it relates to students' employability skills and career development. This aspect of the educational experience is important and reflected in how UCD develops, delivers and evaluates academic programmes at undergraduate and graduate levels. Programme outcomes enable students to recognize the attributes, skills and competencies developed through life at UCD. Opportunities such as internships significantly enhance employability by allowing students to apply and develop skills such as critical thinking, communications and working with others within the workplace.

The importance of preparing students for the future is reflected in university strategies, including the UCD Strategy 2015-2020, the UCD Education Strategy 2015-2020 and the UCD Career Development and Employability Strategy 2015-2025. UCD seeks to deliver an educational experience that defines international best practice. Embedding career development and employability into the curriculum is a part of that ambition. This institutional level Career and Skills Statement will be supplemented in due course with programme level Career and Skills Statements that will provide information at a more granular level.

University College Dublin has a longstanding tradition and reputation for high quality teaching and research. Academic programmes are rigorous, respected nationally and internationally. At UCD, the academic experience includes opportunities to develop from a career and professional development perspective at all levels of the student experience. To achieve this, UCD has undertaken a comprehensive review of the curriculum, ensuring students' intellectual, personal and professional development remain core to the institutional mission. Increasingly, students may expect to experience, for example, higher levels of teamwork in class, more opportunities to develop and deliver presentations and more internships opportunities.

UCD Faculty and professional staff encourage students to think about their future early in academic studies and many programmes are closely connected to professional bodies for accreditation purposes and to graduate recruiters more generally. UCD's commitment to students' career development and employability is evident in the QS University World Ranking for Graduate Employability in which UCD has been ranked number one in Ireland for 2018 and 2019. UCD graduates perform well in securing jobs and places on programmes of graduate study. The annual Graduate Outcomes Survey takes place nine months after programme completion and 90%+ of UCD graduates are consistently in employment or pursuing further study and training.

Career Development and Employability

Faculty and professional staff at UCD work closely with employers, organizations, professional associations and bodies to ensure professional accreditations are achieved and maintained. In response to a changing world, UCD encourages students to develop personally and professionally in acquiring intercultural competencies and awareness. This is achieved through curriculum content, through global language electives, and by way of a range of programmes including international exchange, internships and volunteering. As Ireland's Global University, UCD not only welcomes a large

cohort of international students each year but encourages and supports Irish students in undertaking international study or global internships.

Career development and employability at UCD is complemented by a range of professional supports, including UCD Careers Network (Belfield and Blackrock) for whom students' career development is the primary function and mission. A team of Career professionals offers career coaching, personal and professional development opportunities and support for progressing into graduate study and graduate employment. Career professionals may be aligned to a UCD School (Blackrock) or to UCD Colleges (Belfield). Employability initiatives and interventions may be credit bearing or offered in parallel to academic studies (co-curricular). UCD Careers Network reaches across the student experience, from year one of undergraduate studies to final year of doctoral degrees. Graduates may continue to make use of the full range of Careers Network services for up to two years post-graduation and thereafter may access on-line support. A bespoke service for Postdoctoral Researchers extends support to this group for up to six years beyond graduation with a PhD.

The work of the Careers Network is informed by the student voice. For example; results of a survey of UCD students in May 2018 around their career and employability needs. Students at UCD expressed most interest in:

- Developing transferable skills, practical skills and experience.
- Getting help in establishing what is needed/wanted by employers.
- Developing skills, attractive to employers, rather than choosing a career path.

A daily career consultation and coaching service complements group work, enabling students to formulate a career strategy, develop and manage their CV and prepare well for graduate recruitment and graduate study.

UCD has an extensive network of partnerships and relationships with employers and organizations. These feed into UCD's detailed understanding of employer requirements around the knowledge, skills, attributes and competencies students should possess. This intelligence informs curriculum review, current practice and future academic development. Close relationships with employers bring more internship and graduate job opportunities to UCD each year. Along with academic colleagues and Internship Managers, UCD Careers Network facilitates employers in recruiting UCD students and graduates. This is achieved by advertising job opportunities, organizing opportunities for students and employers to meet, recruitment presentations and workshop along with large-scale Recruitment Fairs.

Developing Employability through Internships

Increasingly, employers are growing the number of internships they offer. A Student who performs well on an internship is likely to be offered a graduate job with the host employer. As the number of interns being offered graduate jobs increases, there is a corresponding decrease in the number of graduate jobs advertised on the open market. The importance of securing an internship and performing well once in the workplace is important. At UCD, many academic programmes include internships as either compulsory or optional features of the educational experience. Opportunities for students to undertake an internship are increasing. For example, programmes in the Humanities and Social Sciences that commenced in September 2018 now offer an optional internship.

Professionally accredited programmes in areas such as Engineering and Architecture, Medicine, Nursing, Veterinary Medicine, Education and Clinical Psychology enjoy excellent relationships with their respective professional bodies, ensuring UCD students are educated to the highest possible levels and prepared for professional practice.

Developing Employability through getting involved

Graduate recruitment is a competitive process. Many employers have an academic baseline they expect from students applying for internships and graduate positions. Academic grades are therefore important. Often academic grades are the first thing an employer will consider when selecting applicants to interview. Once academic baselines are met, it is critical to stand out from other applicants. One way to achieve this is through involvement in co-curricular activities. These activities do not accrue academic credits; however, they form a valuable part of the personal and professional development of students, and as such are highly valued by the University. In support and recognition of the value of co-curricular activities, UCD has developed an infrastructure, support and funding for a wide range of Clubs, Sports and Societies. Students are supported in accessing voluntary work opportunities in Ireland and overseas. Students may develop their employability through engaging in co-curricular activities and reflecting upon how the experience affects the development of certain skills, attitudes and self-awareness. At UCD, students are supported in recognizing skills they have acquired, accessing opportunities to enhance skills they seek to develop and around explaining to employers how their skills translate to the workplace. UCD has developed the UCD Advantage, a co-curricular award that assists students in this regard. UCD Advantage may be taken over the course of a calendar year during the student experience at UCD. Advantage has core pillars that students need to evidence to achieve an award: (i) Personal and Professional Development, (ii) UCD and the Wider Community, (iii), Cultural Engagement and (iv) Health and Well Being.

Above all, UCD wants students to succeed and encourages all to be active in the educational experience. It is important that students engage in, recognize and are confident in talking to others about their personal, career and professional development. It is critical that students can effectively present their experiences and skills in applications for employment or further study. UCD strives to facilitate students' career progression by providing a range of personal and professional development opportunities that enables each student to achieve their career goal.

For further information on career development and employability, please refer to the UCD Careers Network, your Academic Programme Director and Programme Manager located in your School and/or College.