

PA 7 – Support for Underrepresented Groups Supporting Information

Underrepresented groups are groups who have been denied access and/or suffered past institutional discrimination and/or have been marginalized and are currently underrepresented.

UCC has many supports in place to support and prepare students from underrepresented groups. Education plays a crucial role in the social, intellectual, cultural, economic and political life of Ireland. Third level education is seen as increasingly necessary for a good quality of life and broader and more exciting career opportunities.

1. UCC PLUS Programme

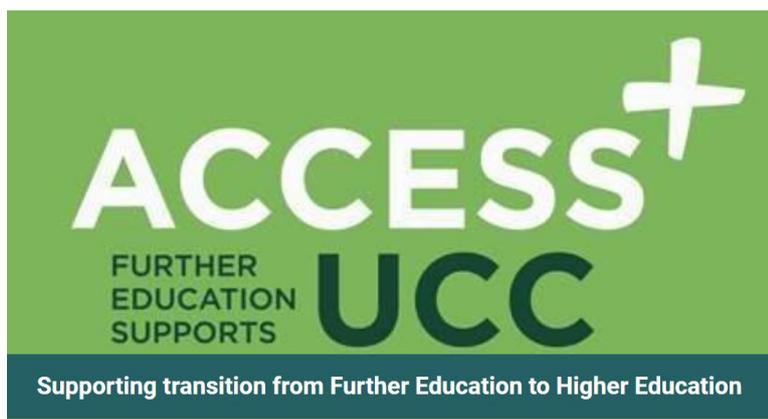


UCC Plus Programme works with secondary schools seeks to target students and to provide motivational and educational assistance to them throughout their secondary schooling to enhance their ability to compete for third level places.

These groups may include, but are not limited to,

- Racial
- ethnic
- immigrant populations
- people with disabilities
- lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals
- adult learners
- veterans
- individuals from different religious groups and economic backgrounds

2. UCC ACCESS+



This is an initiative of the UCC PLUS⁺ office. The UCC ACCESS⁺ programme is specifically for the following:

- students who have attended one of the [Cork city DEIS Schools](#) that are linked to UCC PLUS⁺ or Youthreach centres (see list below)
- students who are [members of the Traveller or Roma Community](#)
- students from [Cork Life Centre](#)
- students who are under 23 years old at the end of the calendar year in which they commence their Further Education studies

It involves working with students during secondary level education as they make decisions about their future. If they pursue the Further Education pathway of progression, i.e. in College of Commerce, Colaiste Stiofain Naofa (CSN) or St. John's College, ACCESS⁺ will work with these students throughout their time in FE and on towards Higher Education.

ACCESS provides a range of supports that include:

Pre-entry :

- Meetings with 6th Years, Q+A in schools to be fully informed about the FE options, future progression routes and requirements
- attendance at Careers Events, Parent evenings, open days
- HEAR Advisory sessions
- Traveller and Roma outreach in Junior Cycle
- Course shadowing support at FE Colleges

Post entry:

- Induction event: meet fellow UCC ACCESS⁺ students, visit the FE college, familiarise yourself with rooms, names and timetables, attend social events
- One to one meetings to discuss challenges, progress and goals
- Advocacy between you and your tutors and course director
- Signposting and referral to internal and external support agencies
- Connection to UCC and MTU and opportunity to visit campus and lectures
- Course shadowing opportunity in UCC
- Info and support to apply for CAO and HEAR
- Study skill supports and signposting
- Access to resources
- Welfare and budgeting information
- Social events

The ACCESS UCC, PLUS Programme recognises that Travellers may experience additional obstacles and difficulties in realising their education potential and therefore require more specialised responses. Consequently, UCC PLUS has identified the Traveller Mentoring Programme as an appropriate means of supporting Traveller students in second level.

3. HEAR SCHEME



University College Cork participates in the two schemes that are available under the ACCESS route to University. The Higher Education Access Route to Education (HEAR) is a third level alternative admissions scheme which offers places on reduced points, and extra college supports to school leavers (who are resident in the Republic of Ireland) from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

4. DARE SCHEME

The Disability Access Route to Education (DARE) is a third level alternative admissions scheme for school-leavers whose disabilities have had a negative impact on their second level education. <https://www.ucc.ie/en/dss/dare/>

5. Mature Entry Students

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/mature/>

The Mature Student Office supports all Mature and QQI/FE students in UCC studying full-time undergraduate degrees, as well as those of you considering and contemplating full-time study. We offer a wide range of supports and initiatives specifically designed for enhancing your experience.

6. RACE

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/edi/grounds/raceethnicity/>



UCC takes racism and racial incidents very seriously and aims to create a campus free from such occurrences.

Since 2018, UCC has been running in-house Race Consciousness workshops and @AdvancceHE RaLet's talk about Race Equality training and now has online Let's Talk About Race training available to all staff. [Complete our online Race Equality Training here.](#)

UCC established the first Race Equality Forum in an Irish HEI in 2019 with the purpose of listening to Black, Brown and Ethnic Minority staff and students, learning from their experiences and ensuring UCC a welcoming space. <https://www.ucc.ie/en/edi/about/projects/raceequalityforum/>

In 2022, UCC launched [Speak Out](#) on campus, a national anonymous online platform to report any and all incidents of bullying, harassment and discrimination, including racism and racial incidents.

Since its inception, many members of the Traveller Community have completed the Leadership in the Community programme with ACE, better equipping participants to provide effective leadership for their own community and within the voluntary sector. See here: <https://www.ucc.ie/en/ace-dlc/>

The Traveller Equality and Justice Project is an innovative collaborative project between the School of Law, the CCJHR and FLAC. It aims to highlight ongoing levels of discrimination experienced by Travellers in Cork and Kerry. The TEJP has established Munster's first Traveller-specific legal clinic, providing access to justice for Travellers who have experienced discrimination. For more details see: <https://www.ucc.ie/en/tejp/>

The Glucksman Gallery's Creative Agency project aims to empower young asylum seekers, refugees and migrants to participate in imaginative projects that enable them to present their voices and views in the public realm. <https://www.glucksman.org/projects/creative-agency>

And modules such as [SC2066 Race, Ethnicity, Migration and Nationalism](#) help embed this into the curriculum here in UCC.

7. UCC #ProgressWithPride?



UCC's **#ProgressWithPride campaign** encourages the UCC community and visitors to support our LGBTI+, black, brown and ethnic minority communities, raise awareness of the meaning of the colours and how they represent different facets of the community and also highlight intersectionality. We want to ensure everyone feels they belong, are part of our community and that allyship is informed.

#ProgressWithPride symbolises the progress we have made since the first LGBT+ networks were established here in UCC in the 1980s, our own progress as a country, the personal progress of each individual, and the progress we still need to make towards becoming a truly inclusive community.

Rainbow walkway unveiling

As part of this campaign a UCC rainbow walkway was unveiled between the Boole Library and O' Rahilly Building). The walkway is based on the Progress Flag design by Valentino Vecchietti. The rainbow walkway was proposed by the LGBT+ Network and is a joint initiative in partnership with the Student Union, Buildings and Estates and the EDI Unit.

8. Speak Out



Speak Out

We as a UCC community will not stand for bullying, discrimination,* harassment, sexual misconduct or sexual violence. Speak Out is an online and anonymous reporting tool for staff and students in higher education institutions in Ireland, including UCC. It is a platform to report incidents including bullying, cyber bullying, harassment, discrimination, coercive behaviour, control, stalking, assault, sexual harassment, sexual assault or rape.

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/edi/speakout/whatispeakout/>

Speak Out is an online and **anonymous** reporting tool for higher education institutions in Ireland. It provides a platform for University College Cork ("UCC") **students and staff** to voluntarily and anonymously report, in a safe and secure way, incidents of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, discrimination, hate crime, coercive behaviour or control, stalking, assault, sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape that you have either experienced or witnessed.

Speak Out is a national initiative led by the Psychological Counsellors in Higher Education Ireland (PCHEI), funded by the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, and supported by the HEA Centre of Excellence for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

Reporting anonymously using Speak Out means that you will not be asked for your name or any other personal details about you or another person and the University will not take any specific action or commence any formal complaint process. However, we want to assure you that there is **support** available to you as set out below.

The Speak Out site collects information on your experiences and that information allows us to develop and deliver initiatives aimed at raising awareness of, and taking steps to eliminate, this type of behaviour in the UCC community. Speak Out also allows the University to direct you to helpful supports and provides information relating to a range of options that can assist you in dealing with incidents of discrimination, bullying, harassment and/or sexual misconduct.

9. Gender Identity and Expression Policy & Supports

University College Cork is committed to equality and will aim to provide all staff and students with a positive working and learning environment free from discrimination, harassment or victimisation. The University recognises that there can be differences between physical sex and gender expression and identity.

The University will not discriminate against people on the grounds of transgender or gender non-binary expression or identity. Additionally, the University will not discriminate against people on the grounds of any process of gender transition (social, physical, or medical) begun or completed.

[UCC Gender Identity and Expression Policy](#) does not anticipate every situation that might occur with respect to transgender or non-binary gender staff/students, and the needs of each transgender or non-binary staff member/student must be assessed on a case-by-case basis. UCC's Gender Identity and Expression Guidelines should also be read as a procedural support in conjunction with this policy.

Gender Identity and Expression Guidelines

[UCC Gender Identity and Expression Guidelines](#) provide a range of guidance designed to support UCC staff and students, ensuring the successful implementation of UCC's Gender Identity and Expression Policy.

The following supports are in place for Students and Staff.

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/edi/giep/#supports-and-resources-for-students-and-staff>

Citizens Information: Changing to Your Preferred

Gender http://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/birth_family_relationships/changing_to_your_preferred_gender.html

Counselling and Development (for UCC Students) <https://www.ucc.ie/en/studentcounselling/>

Duty of Respect and Right to Dignity Policy

UCC <https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/hr/equality/DocumentFile-35110-en.pdf>

Employee Assistance Programme UCC <https://www.ucc.ie/en/hr/eap/>

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Unit UCC <http://www.ucc.ie/en/edi>

Gender Recognition Act Ireland

(2015) <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2015/act/25/enacted/en/pdf>

Glossary of terms from Transgender Equality Network Ireland

(TENI) <http://www.teni.ie/page.aspx?contentid=139>

Garda Vetting (see 'Vetting for Transgender persons') <https://vetting.garda.ie/Help/FAQ>

Gendered Intelligence Resource List: <http://genderedintelligence.co.uk/professionals/resources>

Staff Ombudsman UCC <https://www.ucc.ie/en/staffombudsman/>

Student Advisor and Ombudsman UCC <https://www.ucc.ie/en/studentombudsman/>

Supporting Black and Minority Ethnic Trans People by Gender Identity Research and Education Society: <https://www.gires.org.uk/inclusivity-supporting-bame-trans-people/>

Supporting Transgender Inclusion in the Workplace: Guidelines for Employers and Employees by TENI: <http://www.teni.ie/attachments/422b4a34-78af-4b62-9818-aced13ed58ca.PDF>

Teaching Beyond the Gender Binary in the University Classroom: <https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/teaching-beyond-the-gender-binary-in-the-university-classroom/>

10. Sexual Violence and Harassment Framework

The Framework for ending Sexual Violence and Harassment in Irish Higher Education Institutions was launched on 5 April 2019. The Framework is a policy document from the Department of Education & Skills that sets out expectations in terms of institutional culture, organisational procedures and structures, and targeted initiatives for students and staff.

Framework implementation in UCC

UCC's Framework Action Plan was submitted to the HEA in March 2021. Read the [Sexual Violence Framework Action Plan UCC](#).

11. ATHENA SWAN

UCC Athena SWAN Action Plan 2019 - 2023

Figure 7: Our Ecology of Athena SWAN Actions



UCC has held a bronze Athena SWAN award since 2016, and successfully renewed our institutional accreditation in 2019 under the expanded Athena SWAN Charter. 9 Schools and Departments now

hold departmental-level awards at bronze level, and UCC plans to renew our institutional accreditation in 2023 at Silver level.

Registrar and Deputy President Professor Stephen Byrne chairs UCC's Athena SWAN [Steering Group](#) that oversees UCC's Athena SWAN work and the implementation of UCC's Action Plan. Steering Group members represent a diverse cross section of the university community, including those in STEM and non-STEM disciplines, academic and administrative roles, students, and early to mid and late-career roles.

The UCC Athena SWAN Action Plan 2019-2023 may be viewed here:

[Athena SWAN UCC Action Plan 2019 - 2023](#)

The 2021 Athena SWAN Charter Framework Principles

1. *adopting robust, transparent, and accountable processes for Athena Swan work, including:*
 - a. embedding equality, diversity, and inclusion in our culture, decision-making and partnerships, and holding ourselves and others in our institution/department/professional unit accountable.
 - b. ensuring active leadership from senior staff, with those in senior roles at the forefront of taking action, and inspiring and fostering dedication and involvement from staff at all levels.
 - c. collecting equality monitoring data to measure, understand and publicly report on challenges and progress, taking steps when necessary to support and encourage disclosure.
 - d. undertaking transparent self-assessment processes to ensure priorities, interventions and actions are evidenced-based and inform our continuous development.
 - e. distributing tasks appropriately, formally recognising and rewarding work and ensuring there is not a disproportionate burden on underrepresented groups.
2. making and mainstreaming sustainable structural and cultural changes to remedy the effects of structural inequalities and social injustices, which manifest as differential experiences and outcomes for staff and students.
3. tackling behaviours and cultures that detract from the creation of an institutional campus culture that is safe, respectful and supportive, including condemning sexual violence and harassment, bullying, discrimination, unfair treatment, or exploitation of staff, students or partners.
4. addressing unequal gender representation across academic disciplines and professional, managerial and support functions, including examining gendered occupational segregation, and elevating the status, voice, and career opportunities of under-valued and at-risk groups.
5. fostering collective understanding that intersectional inequalities must be accounted for in the development of effective equality analysis and actions.
6. mitigating the equality impacts of short-term and casual contracts for staff seeking sustainable careers.
7. supporting flexibility and the maintenance of a healthy 'whole life balance' and mitigating the equality impact of career breaks and caring responsibilities.

8. fostering collective understanding that individuals have the right to determine and affirm their gender, and to implementing inclusive and effective policies and practices that are cognisant of the lived experiences and needs of trans and non-binary people

12. UCC's Roots café - training and employment for Cope Foundation adults with intellectual disabilities.

In January 2020 Roots opened their second Cork Cafe in University College Cork's main campus in the UCC Student Hub.

Roots cafés train adults with an intellectual disability in barista skills, customer service, communication, and cash handling.

They serve Java Republic Fairtrade coffee, local goodies from The Natural Foods Bakery. Many of the current young people on the staff at Roots are students at the Cope Foundation's Bonnington Training Centre. Working at the café helps staff who have learning difficulties to develop their confidence, learn customer service skills and progress to secure other jobs in similar businesses.

Roots is an eco-friendly cafe only serving hot drinks in reusable coffee cups to minimise waste and reduce its carbon footprint. Customers bring their own cups or buy a Roots coffee cup and get your first coffee free. Roots focus on training and employment for the people Cope Foundation support.

<https://www.cope-foundation.ie/>

13. University of Sanctuary



Cork Sanctuary Singers Youth Choir (CSSYC) at the Sanctuary Gig @ the Glucksman

In January 2018, UCC was granted University of Sanctuary status. "UCC's Sanctuary Status is a marker not just of what has been achieved in UCC, but an indicator of the need for sustained and creative work to support asylum seekers and refugees locally and internationally.

UCC's University of Sanctuary mission is to ensure that UCC is a place where (a) people learn about what it means to seek sanctuary; (b) develop a sustainable culture of welcome for asylum seekers, refugees and other migrants and (c) share good practice with other institutions.

The work has progressed through the efforts of the University of Sanctuary Working Group (USWG) executive and its sub-groups and committees. Membership of the group comprises staff and students in UCC as well as external stakeholders who are working with and for asylum seekers in Cork.

In 2019, the UCC USWG was very pleased to be awarded the prestigious [MacJannet Prize by the Talloires Network](#), which is given to recognise exceptional student community engagement initiatives.

SANCTUARY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMME FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES

Adult Continuing Education Sanctuary Scholarship

UCC offers ACE Sanctuary Scholarships. Applications are welcomed from refugees and asylum seekers whose status in Ireland has not been determined and who are not eligible for typical social welfare requirements.

The University Language Centre Sanctuary Scholarship

The University Language Centre provides English language tuition, academic support and teacher training in the field of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL).

In support of UCC's status as a University of Sanctuary, the Language Centre is offering four free places on courses that will directly or indirectly have a positive impact on the educational or career prospects of asylum seekers and refugees living in the Cork area.