

CONNECT Newsletter

AHECS - Association of Higher Education Careers Services

AHECS is the voice of higher education careers and employability professionals across Ireland. Representing 25 Universities, Technological Universities, Higher Education Institutes and Institutes of Technology, we enable careers teams to develop their own skills and share best practice approaches and resources.

Together, our members and partners are helping over 400,000 students to get ahead.
www.ahecs.ie

Dear Colleagues,

As we enter the latter half of the semester, I'd like to take a moment to highlight the many ways you, as valued members of AHECS, can engage with our community in the months ahead.

We have a number of interesting Lunch 'n' Learn sessions coming up including "The Write Stuff – A Collaborative Writing Journey", led by Aoife Prendergast, Careers & Employability Manager with TUS and a member of the AHECS Executive Committee. We also have a selection of insightful recent talks available for playback.

If you haven't already, take a look at our Communities of Practice, including the newly launched AI – Augmented Careers Education group. The Placement Community of Practice is actively seeking suggestions for their next discussion topics, so if you have ideas to share, please get involved.

Finally, we can't wait to see many of you at our upcoming Showcase Event in Dublin on Thursday, 25th April at NCI where we will discuss "Is AI Revolutionising Careers and Employability in Ireland?". Your participation is what makes AHECS a strong and dynamic community, and we encourage you to continue engaging, sharing, and contributing.

Best wishes,

Marie Laffey, Chair





AI – Augmented Careers Education

The focus of this CoP is on augmented intelligence and the purpose is to provide its members with a collaborative forum to:

- share knowledge, current approaches and capture skill levels across AHECS member institutions
- identify, agree and collaborate on prioritised strategic initiatives to the benefit of all AHECS members
- explore how AI tools can be used to augment career education teaching and practice
 - The first meeting took place on 14th January. The next meeting is scheduled for 08th April, where members will share current AI led initiatives from their institutions.
 - Members are also invited to join the AHECS [COP group on LinkedIn](#) where we can share relevant resources, information and articles of interest.
 - AHECS Member Survey Update: Thank you to the 81 members who completed the survey...and we will be back to you in due course with the themes and insights!

If you would like to join the group please contact:

[Bernie Burke](#) or [Michelle Coen](#)

IT Systems Information Exchange

Off to a flying start in January thanks to our presenters from DKIT, DCU and UL where the focus was on “Systems used in support of Graduate Outcome Surveys”. Each highlighted features and pros/cons of: Qualtrics, Banner, Email, MS Forms, LinkedIn with an interesting conversation on the relevance and use of Telephone calls. Each shared how the survey results are compiled, communicated (internally, externally) use of bespoke dashboard systems, MS Power Bi along with broader university website publications. Great insight and knowledge shared.

Our next virtual meeting is planned for Tuesday 25 March 12-1pm.

Interested in joining our group, please contact:

[Jillian O'Mahony](#) or [Fionnuala Rahilly](#)

Healthcare

If you are interested in joining a collaborative community to focus on Healthcare careers related topics and supports please contact:

[Orla O'Dwyer](#)



Arts & Creative Industries Employability

Building Resilience for Creative Career Success

What are the top challenges facing emerging artists? How can final year students in creative degrees prepare for the transition to life after college and a look at some strategies and supports that students can adopt and take from college into their working life.

If you would like to join this group please contact:

Mary Rose O'Sullivan

Employer Engagement

The Community of Practice for Employer Engagement is committed to fostering a collaborative space for sharing information, offering support, and building a strong network. We meet four times a year. Dates our 2025 meetings have been sent out to all members. Before each meeting, we invite attendees to submit agenda items to ensure discussions remain relevant and engaging. If you would like to join the group please contact:

Caroline Pierce or Hester Jackman

LinkedIn Learning

The LinkedIn Learning CoP is essentially a community evidencing and sharing good practice in relation to LinkedIn & LinkedIn Learning. In conjunction with the AHECS CPD subgroup, the LiL CoP are currently organising a visit to the LinkedIn office, open to all AHECS members, on 8th May. This visit will primarily focus on how careers & employability teams can support their cohorts to maximise LinkedIn, but included is the option for members (from HEI's with LiL licences) to attend a breakout session in relation to leveraging LinkedIn Learning in their institutions. Anyone interested in getting involved with this CoP, please contact:

Deborah Seddon or Adette Ring



Work Placement

Work Placement Community of Practice (CoP)

New members are always welcome to join.

The CoP held a meeting on November 7th, where the topic International Internships – Encouraging and supporting students to apply, as well as engaging with international hosts was covered by the University of Galway, Global Galway Team. This excellent presentations covered areas such as Internationalisation – HEA Strategy, Challenges for Career Services, Student Support and Resources and Industry Engagement.

Based on feedback, the following key areas were identified as topics to cover and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are encouraged to share their experiences:

- Best Practices in Risk Assessment
- Alternatives to Traditional Internships – Exploring Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) experiences within modules.
- Managing Unpaid Internships – How different HEIs navigate this challenge.
- Widening Participation – Enhancing access and inclusivity in work placements.
- Business Development & Marketing – Effective strategies for promoting internships.
- Professional Development – Recommended conferences and training opportunities.

We invite your input now via this [Survey](#) on preferred topics for our next meeting and the best time for these meeting to suit members of this CoP.

For more information contact:

[Oonagh Sweeney](#), [Breda Kenna](#) or [Clodagh Kerr](#)

Psychometric Assessment

Open to any person with an interest in the use of psychometric assessments in their work, or their use by graduate employers.

Next meeting Tuesday 25 March from 11am -12.30pm.

If you would like to join this group contact:

[Deirdre Parker](#) or [Michael McDonnell](#)



"The Write Stuff – A Collaborative Writing Journey"

Wednesday 9th April - 1pm - 2 pm - Microsoft Teams

Join us for a lunchtime discussion with Aoife Prendergast as she shares insights into the writing process and publication of the new textbook, "Social Care Practice Placement: An Essential Guide."

This engaging session will offer a glimpse into the challenges and rewards of writing a textbook, from conceptualization and research to publication. Aoife Prendergast will discuss the motivations for writing the book, the research process with co-authors, and the key themes explored in the textbook.

Recent Sessions:

AHECS Employability Awards 2025 - What makes a winning Submission?

This session provided guidance and insights for aspiring participants by showcasing the qualities and strategies behind successful entries.

Recording of this session [here](#).

DETAS Project: Enhancing Erasmus+ Internships through Digital Innovation

The DETAS Project (Digitalising Erasmus Traineeship Application Support) is an EU-funded project that aims to:

- Increase the numbers of students participating in Erasmus+ traineeship placements/internships
- Improve access to resources and information for both students and university partners
- Streamline the recruitment process for students and employers
- Provide universities with innovative tools to support student participation in Erasmus+ traineeships/internships

The project will address specific challenges for students and employers such as pre-departure support, and integration into the local environment, ensuring a beneficial experience for both students and host organisations. The University of Limerick is one of the consortium partners, including, for example, the European University Foundation and the Erasmus Student Network.

Recording of this session [here](#).



All member Canva Training

We were delighted to have 112 delegates from across 23 member HEI's registered for the recent Canva Training. Such was the demand the CPD Subgroup funded a second session to accommodate all. We have heard nothing but positive feedback and praise for Tamara who was so engaging and professional in her delivery of each session.

Thank you to each Head of Service for facilitating the attendance of your staff and of course thank you to all who participated over the three weeks.

Accreditation Workshops in the Strengths Profile

Led by the University of Limerick, AHECS are delighted to be supporting and sponsoring the delivery of Strengths Profile training to 36 delegates from across 17 member HEI's.

The Strengths Profile Questionnaire has been widely used in educational establishments to support students to increase their self-awareness and to guide them on potential career paths.

The training will consist of a hybrid approach with an initial online component followed up with a 1- day classroom component. The classroom component will be led by the accredited trainer, Anne Hennessy, Vitae Consulting.

The in person sessions will be hosted in the University of Limerick on Wednesday 14th and Thursday 15th May.

Thank you to University of Limerick for hosting again this year.

We want to hear from you....the CPD Subgroup are in the process of creating a Training Needs Analysis to help inform our plans around training and CPD. This will be circulated once finalised.

In the meantime, if you have any suggestions please feel free to reach out to any member of the AHECS CPD subgroup, contact details can be found [here](#).



Women in STEM Summit 2025

We are delighted to announce that Marie Laffey, Chair of AHECS was asked to deliver a presentation at the upcoming Women in STEM Summit which takes place in Croke Park on Thursday 13th March 2025.

In addition, AHECS have been given a discount code for their members who may like to attend.

Use code **AHECS** for 10% off. Bookings can be made [here](#).

SUPERCHARGING THE DRIVE FOR A MORE DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE WORLD

Women lead the way in many areas of STEM but still represent only 25 per cent of science, technology, engineering and mathematics jobs in the State. There is an even greater under-representation of female senior executives at management levels. Prioritising a sustainable approach to STEM is an ongoing effort for successive Irish governments in order to address demand outstripping supply of tech workers.

The Business Post Women in STEM Summit 2025 sponsored by Fidelity Investments bring together thought leaders, educators, policy makers, innovators and pioneers in industry to discuss how to address the gender imbalance in STEM in order to meet the needs of industry. It will provide a platform where they can constructively challenge current ways of thinking and offer new perspectives.

The Summit will showcase some of Ireland's leading companies in financial services, healthcare, technology, manufacturing, construction, transport and energy, who are supercharging their efforts to create diverse, equitable and inclusive workplaces that allow every employee to thrive, regardless of their background. Expert speakers will discuss the next steps for businesses and employers and how best they can embrace equity to inspire all future women of STEM including those with disabilities, members of the LGBTQIA+ community, ethnic and religious groups as well as those from less well-off socio-economic backgrounds.



Eileen Patton, Careers Adviser, ATU Donegal

Eileen will be leaving her position as Careers Officer and Head of Service at ATU Donegal in the coming weeks. While her time as a member with AHECS has been brief, she would like to convey her sincere thanks to all the AHECS members for their support during her short tenure and acknowledge how everyone was so welcoming and kind to her.

Wishing Eileen every success for the future.

REMINDER!

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AHECS Employability Awards 2025

The closing date for submissions into the AHECS Employability Awards is **Friday 14th March @ 5pm.**

Don't forget to email an image that will represent your submission on social media to admin@ahecs.ie

Late entries will not be accepted.



Recording of 'What Makes a Winning Submission' [here](#).

Awards will be presented at the gradireland Graduate Recruitment Awards in the Mansion House on Thursday 24th April 2025.

Global Careers Summit 2025

The Global Career Services Summit (GCSS) 2025 will take place in Belfast hosted by Queen's University. The Summit will take place 9th – 12th March and it brings together thought leaders, including global employers, from around the world to discuss important current and future issues that impact careers services university recruiting of early careers talent.

This year the Programme Committee will be led by Sue Harbour, Associate Dean & Executive Director of Berkeley Career Engagement (BCE) at the University of California, Berkeley and the programme will be available nearer the time. It is going to be an amazing conference with outstanding sessions, networking conversations, and evening events.

Trevor Johnston, Head of Careers, Employability and Skills at Queens University Belfast is a former Co -Chair of AHECS and we wish him and his team every success with the summit.



AHECS in person event for all members:

Is AI Revolutionising Careers and Employability in Ireland?

We invite you to attend this panel discussion which will provide an opportunity for all attendees to engage, discuss and explore innovative ideas that can shape our service delivery and best practice.

PLEASE NOTE VENUE CHANGE.

Location: National College of Ireland, Spencer Dock, North Wall Dublin

- **Thursday 24 April 2025, 10am - 3pm**
- All are welcome attend - registration via your Head of Service, booking form will be circulated in the coming weeks
- Collective intelligence discussions
- Networking
- Lunch included

Keynote Speaker Danny Mizra



Danny, The Lead Consultant of Talent Team at Coventry University (London Hub) and is a Tech-Savvy Career Development Professional in the UK Higher Education Sector, known for his expertise in career branding, marketing, and engagement through innovative technologies like GenAI tools and applications. The AI Guy in the HE Careers sector right, with webinars/sessions for nearly 13+ universities in the UK around the topic of Gen AI X Careers. Hence, he is one of the leading voices on the use of Gen AI for Career Development not just in the UK but has also done workshops with Research Impact Canada (RIC) and Careers Industry Council of Australia (CICA) on the same topic.

Thank you to Caroline Kennedy, Head of Career Development and Employability for hosting. We look forward to seeing everyone on the day!



INEUCS invites you to the next webinar in our series:

From Awareness to Action: Advancing Employment for Students with Disabilities
BROUGHT TO YOU BY CACEE

SYNOPSIS:

Closing the employment gap for students with disabilities requires more than just awareness—it demands intentional action. This session will showcase innovative research and applied strategies from the Accessibility Institute at Carleton University, designed to support both career services professionals and employers in fostering inclusive hiring practices.

We'll explore key insights from the David C. Onley Initiative (DCOI)—a multi-year research project in collaboration with seven Ontario post-secondary institutions, funded by the Ministry of Colleges and Universities. This initiative has identified practical ways to bridge the transition from post-secondary education to meaningful employment for students with disabilities. The session will also introduce two key resources:

● **#AbleTo Tap Into the Talent** – A free online resource for employers, providing courses and tools to build disability-inclusive workplaces.

● **#AbleTo Prepare Students for Work Field Guide** – A practical tool for career services professionals supporting students with disabilities in their job search.

Whether you support students in career services or hire post-secondary talent, this session will equip you with actionable strategies to drive real change and create more inclusive employment opportunities.

Date & Time: 25 March 2025 - 15:30 UTC

The webinar will be recorded and shared with those who have registered.

Duration: 90 minutes

Location: Zoom

Registration: Via - [Event webpage](#). **All attendees are required to login to the INEUCS website to be able to access the registration page.**

WEBSITE LOGIN

Username: AHECS

Password: 2025@AHECS



TheInterna: www.theinterna.com - free platform for placements abroad

Michael Durante, Founder of theInterna, has been working closely with the DCU INTRA Team to help and support individual students secure a placement abroad. This is done through theInterna, a new platform designed to connect students with placements in start-ups across the globe, including Spain, Italy, France, Germany, Portugal, the US and even Japan. Michael is open to extending the service and opportunities to students in other HEIs and there is no cost involved. If you are interested in learning more or discussing with Michael please contact him at michael@theinterna.com.

Free Squiggly Careers Toolkit

Podcasts Archive



Helen Tupper and Sarah Ellis are the founders of Amazing If, an award-winning company with a mission to make squiggly careers better for everyone. Together they are the authors of two Sunday Times bestsellers, *The Squiggly Career* and *You Coach You*. Their TEDx talk *The best career path isn't always a straight line* has been watched by almost 2m people and their weekly Squiggly Careers podcast has had around 4m downloads. Amazing If work with organisations, including Microsoft, Levi's, BBC, Danone and Visa, to support people with the skills to succeed in a squiggly career.



Lunch and Learn Series

MOVE BETTER, FEEL BETTER: POSTURE & ERGONOMICS
FOR WORK WELLNESS



March 12th 2025, 12pm CET

Online

Open to EU-CONEXUS member and their university staff community



Dr Mireia Yeste

Doctor of Physiotherapy | Professor at Universidad Católica | National Judo Team Physiotherapist | Specialist in Musculoskeletal & High-Performance Sports Physiotherapy.

Sitting at a desk all day? Your posture and workspace setup could be affecting your wellbeing!

Join the SETU Careers Development Centre & EU-CONEXUS Career Network on March 12th at 11 AM (Irish time) for "Move Better, Feel Better: Posture & Ergonomics for Work Wellness". Learn simple tips from Mireia Yeste, Dr of Physiotherapy, to improve posture, reduce pain, and boost productivity with practical adjustments and easy exercises.

📌 Live attendees will receive a certificate of attendance! Can't make it live? Register to receive the recording.

[🔗 Sign up here today!](#)



Survey about doctoral degrees in languages in the UK and Ireland

Have you (or do you know anyone who has) completed a doctoral degree in the field of languages and subsequently moved into a different field of research or employment?

Dear all,

I'm conducting a study that aims to explore how doctoral graduates from the field of languages perceive the broad value of their doctorate following graduation and moving into another area. This includes those whose degrees are in subjects such as, but not limited to, Arabic, BSL (or other sign languages), Celtic, Chinese, French, Hispanic, German, Irish, Italian, Japanese, Slavic, Eastern European and Russian Studies, Modern Languages, Comparative Literature, and Intercultural Studies.

The aim is to develop findings that support aspiring and current doctoral researchers in languages, and the humanities more broadly.

If you are in contact with anyone who might be eligible to take part (perhaps a former peer, colleague or supervisee), I would be very grateful if you would forward them the link to the Participant Information and the survey link.

Participant Information for survey respondents: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1a-jcP1oJJn6Fo_1VacqNt4e-6fubi2od/edit

Survey link: <https://forms.office.com/e/kZCtYVSn8t>

The survey takes around 30 minutes to complete. It will remain open for around a month - if you would like to take part, or know others who might do, don't delay!

Any questions, please get in touch via email: el.crabtree@tcd.ie.

We want to hear from you....share what you are listening to, reading, a project you are working on, an event that is coming up that might interest the AHECS community, spotlight on someone to follow in the industry.

Please send your suggestions to admin@ahecs.ie and we will share them in the next newsletter.

Thank you for reading!
Executive Committee