

CONNECT Newsletter

AHECS - Association of Higher Education Careers Services

AHECS is the voice of higher education careers and employability professionals across Ireland.

Representing 26 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



SOUTHEAST Regional Gathering



Tuesday 9th December 2025

South East Technological University Waterford

ERASMUS+ Initiatives Showcase

Save the date!

Thursday 30th April 2026

Royal College of Surgeons, Dublin



In person event for the wider AHECS membership.....
more details to follow!

Biennial 2026

Wednesday 20th and Thursday 21st May 2026

Hosted by University College Cork



Planning is well underway and will be shared as soon as the programme is finalised.



AHECS Employability Awards 2026

Submissions will be accepted from:
Monday 26th January until Monday 16th March 2026

Submissions are invited over four categories:

1. Building Effective Partnerships
2. Supporting Student/Graduate Employability
3. Strategic Innovation
4. Research Informed Practice

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 30th April 2026.**

More information on the [AHECS website](#)

Photos from last years awards night [here](#)



All member AI Workshops

The AHECS CPD Subgroup are delighted to share details of the all members training offering for 2026:

GenAI Careers Bootcamp Series.



Delivered by Danny Mizra, this **online** course will run over 3 dedicated training sessions of 2 hours each. Each session is capped at 40 attendees. As we anticipate high demand, there will be two sessions each day, morning and afternoon.

Tuesday 20th January 2026 - beginners
Tuesday 27th January 2026 - intermediate
Thursday 5th February 2026 - advanced

Registrations will commence in early December via your Head of Service.



Beginner Level – “AI 101 for Careers Professionals: Getting Started with Generative AI”

Welcome to your first step into the world of Generative AI! This introductory workshop demystifies the buzz around AI and gives you the confidence to start using tools like ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, and Copilot in your daily work. Learn how to craft effective prompts, explore the ethical use of AI in careers and employability, and see real examples of how your peers are already applying AI to enhance student engagement and service delivery.

You'll Leave With the Skills To:

- Understand what Generative AI is and how it's transforming higher education and employability.
- Use prompting frameworks to get meaningful, accurate, and ethical results.
- Identify simple use cases for AI in CV feedback, career resource creation, event marketing, and report writing.
- Navigate key AI platforms confidently (ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, Copilot).

Who Should Attend:

Perfect for careers and employability professionals who are curious about AI but unsure where to begin. No prior AI experience needed; just curiosity and an open mind!



Intermediate Level – “AI 201: From Prompting to Practice – Applied GenAI for Careers Teams”

Move beyond the basics and start mastering AI as your daily co-pilot. This session dives deep into advanced prompting techniques, platform comparisons, and 10+ applied careers-specific use cases; from job-market analysis and student comms to creating AI-generated workshops, visuals, and data dashboards.

You'll Leave With the Skills To:

- Design advanced prompts and chaining techniques for more nuanced outcomes.
- Compare and evaluate AI tools for research, content creation, and data analysis.
- Apply 10+ practical GenAI use cases in your careers practice (e.g. careers curriculum design, resource development, careers data insights, mock interview simulation).
- Work ethically and confidently with AI while understanding limitations, biases, and privacy considerations.

Who Should Attend:

Designed for senior careers leaders, managers, and careers practitioners already using AI who want to deepen their skills, boost productivity, and create smarter workflows across the service. Ideal for advisors, coaches, placement officers, and employability leads ready to level up.



Advanced Level – “AI 301: Building Agentic Workflows – AI at Scale in Careers Services”

Ready to transform your practice? This advanced 2-hour masterclass is for professionals who want to embed AI into entire workflows, not just tasks. We'll explore 15+ advanced, real-world use cases from creating student comms chatbots to designing end-to-end employability campaigns powered by AI agents. You'll see how to integrate multiple AI tools into cohesive systems that scale your team's impact.

You'll Leave With the Skills To:

- Build complete AI-assisted workflows (e.g. student journey mapping, resource creation pipelines, impact reporting).
- Experiment with Agentic AI (multi-tool collaboration and auto-tasking).
- Apply 15+ advanced use cases for AI-driven curriculum enhancement, employer engagement, and data storytelling.
- Develop your AI strategy for your service, balancing innovation, risk, and ethics.

Who Should Attend:

Designed for senior careers leaders, managers, and advanced practitioners already comfortable with AI who want to build service-wide systems, frameworks, and toolkits that scale.



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

Work Placement

The CoP recently prepared a response on behalf of AHECS for the Consultation on Draft Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines on Programmes Involving Work-integrated Learning

If you would like to join this group please contact:

Oonagh Sweeney, Breda Kenna or Clodagh Kerr

International Student Employability

The first meeting of this new CoP was last September with 33 in attendance.

Michael McDonnell, UCD will deliver a presentation in December around developing student employability followed by a February presentation by UCC around an online support module.

If you would like to get involved with this group please contact:

Grainne Carey



AI – Augmented Careers Education

In 2026 we are calling for another institution(s) to become involved in Chairing the CoP and for institutions to contribute/share their local practice as Bernie will need to step away due to study commitments.

If you are interested in getting involved and taking over this CoP please contact:
Bernie Burke or Michelle Coen

IT Systems Information Exchange

Thanks to Fionnuala Rahilly for establishing this CoP with Jillian, Fionnuala has now stepped down from the role of co facilitator.

If you are interested in getting involved please contact:
Jillian O'Mahony

LinkedIn Learning

ATU no longer has a LinkedIn Learning licence so unless another HEI has the licence and would like to take over, this CoP will be closed off with immediate effect We would like to thank Deborah Seddon and Adette Ring, ATU Sligo, for all their work on this over the last few years.

If any other member institution would like to take over, contact Adette or Deborah

Psychometric Assessments

This CoP has now retired and we would like to thank Michael McDonnell and Deirdre Parker for all their work on this over the last few years.



An Associated College of
Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin

New Member Welcome

The Executive Committee are delighted to welcome Marino Institute of Education to the community and look forward to the contributions they will bring to the Association.



**QUEEN'S
UNIVERSITY
BELFAST**



Dundalk Institute of Technology set to become college of Queen's University Belfast

Queen's, alongside Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT), are proud to announce a major new partnership that will establish Dundalk Institute of Technology as a University College of Queen's University Belfast.

The partnership will see DkIT embedded within our academic and quality assurance frameworks, ensuring students in Dundalk receive the same standard of education and award as those studying in Belfast.

This is a hugely significant and exciting development for both institutions. Queen's and Dundalk Institute of Technology share a strong commitment to widening access, enhancing research and supporting regional growth, and Dundalk University College will allow us to deliver high-quality education to more people and strengthen our shared ambition for the wider region.



**QUEEN'S
UNIVERSITY
BELFAST**



The partnership will:

- Expand high-quality undergraduate and postgraduate provision in the North-East region;
- Integrate DkIT's academic programmes within Queen's academic framework, with shared quality assurance and programme approval;
- Work to establish a Joint Research and Innovation Centre (Hub) on the Dundalk campus, with yet to be agreed lead projects in areas such as health and life sciences, energy and sustainability;
- Create new opportunities for student mobility, skills development and shared learning across the island;
- Support enhanced research collaboration, industry partnerships and access to new funding opportunities;
- And contribute to the competitiveness and strategic development of the Dublin-Belfast Corridor.

The Institute will retain its financial, staffing and governance autonomy, consistent with the collegiate model through which St. Mary's University College and Stranmillis University College operate in partnership with Queen's, and it will continue to play a vital role as part of the Technological Sector in Ireland, to include the delivery of essential educational provisions such as apprenticeships.

The Governing Body of DkIT and the Senate of Queen's University Belfast have formally approved the development of the strategic partnership. We look forward to signing the Heads of Agreement in December and to welcoming the first cohort of students next year.

It is our intention that students enrolling from September 2026 will graduate with a Queen's University Belfast degree or postgraduate qualification.



Co-funded by
the European Union

Lunch and Learn Series

GENDER + EQUALITY IN STEM: ADVANCING INCLUSIVE CAREER PATHWAYS



Wednesday 17 December, 12pm CET.

Online

Open to EU-CONEXUS members and their university staff community



Petroula Mavrikiou

Associate Professor, Dep. of Business Administration, Director Gender Equality and Inclusion Research Unit, Frederick University

The SETU Careers Development Centre and EU-CONEXUS Career Network are pleased to invite you to our final Lunch and Learn session for 2025

“Gender+ Equality in STEM: Advancing Inclusive Career Pathways”
taking place on December 17th at 11am Irish time (12pm CET).

Why do inequalities in STEM careers still persist, and what can each of us do to change that?

In this session, we will explore these questions through a Gender+ (intersectional) lens, looking at how factors such as race, age, and disability shape career experiences in STEM.

You will gain insights into current barriers faced by under-represented groups, evidence on the gender gap across education and career stages, and practical strategies that universities can use to foster more inclusive and equitable pathways in research, innovation, and career development.

[Register here.](#)