



Volume 1, Issue 1. Winter/Spring 2010-2011

# UCD Access Centre News

Hello and Welcome to the first edition of the UCD Access Centre newsletter!

Building on UCD's success with widening participation and supporting lifelong learners, the UCD Access and Lifelong Learning unit has undergone a restructuring process, which has resulted in the decision to establish UCD's Access Centre. Working together with UCD's Adult Education, the UCD Access Centre will build on the experience gained to facilitate the mainstreaming of access issues throughout the University.

This Centre will provide the University with technical and specialist expertise and advice on access related and diversity issues. Specifically, the UCD Access Centre will provide pre and post-entry personal and academic supports to non-traditional students, and will also assist UCD Schools and Programmes to embed best practice in accommodating and supporting a diverse range of students.

The UCD Access Centre will continue to implement an extensive outreach programme to linked secondary schools. The UCD Access Centre also has responsibility for two admissions schemes; the Disability Access Route to Education (DARE) and the Higher Education Access Route (HEAR).

Facilitating students regardless of their background, disability or age to succeed in their UCD career will continue to be the primary focus of the UCD Access Centre.

Read on to find out how the summer schools and our new initiative, Peer Assisted Learning, went this year. Key dates and helpful tips are provided on the HEAR and DARE schemes. Access Librarian Julie Trimble introduces readers to the Access Librarian Service for students with disabilities. Ronan Murphy, Mature Student Adviser outlines some interesting facts about mature learners. And finally Wendy and Tom, our Learning Support Tutors, describe their Study Skills Workshops.

## UCD Access Centre: WHAT WE DO

### OUTREACH

- DARE (Disability Access Route to Education)
- HEAR (Higher Education Access Route)
- Outreach Programme for Schools and Communities

### HEAR and DARE Orientation

Exam and academic accommodations for students with disabilities

Learning Support

1st Year Study Skills Workshops

Assistive Technology Support

Access Librarian

Critical Writing Academy for Mature Students

Mature Student Orientation Day

Peer Mentoring

Peer Assisted Learning

Mature Student Adviser

New ERA Student Adviser

Disability Adviser

### STUDENT SUPPORT

## IN THIS ISSUE

**Study Skills Workshops for New Students Librarian Service for Students with Disabilities Disability Access Route to Education (DARE) & Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) UCD Access Centre gives Stage 1 students a PAL Mature Student Adviser Summer Schools 2010**



## The Mature Student Adviser

The Mature Student Adviser supports over 1,000 mature students engaged in a wide range of undergraduate degree programmes within UCD.

Mature students are the largest cohort of non-traditional degree students in UCD and comprise close to 10% of the UCD undergraduate degree student population. The Mature Student Adviser offers advice, support and referral in relation to personal, social, academic, financial and practical issues.

While mature students may enter university from a different perspective and with somewhat larger lives than their traditional colleagues, they persist to degree level and graduate with the same consistency as the student who enters straight from the Leaving Certificate. Close to a quarter of mature students will enter UCD based on their own Leaving Certificate results with the remainder entering based on a mature years application. While many mature students have completed a Leaving Certificate not all who enter have.

As one mature student noted:

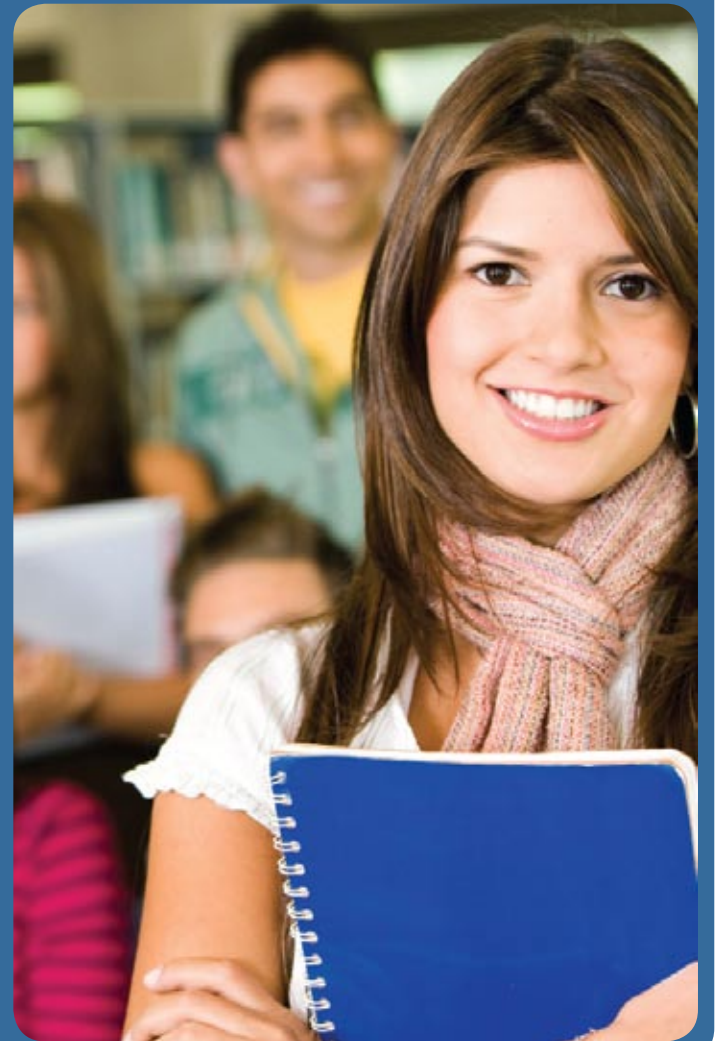
*'I was worried that I was going to be inhibited entering UCD as a mature student without a Leaving Certificate. In the end my own motivation was a replacement. I have been pleasantly surprised. I have felt very welcome at UCD and I find the academic and social inclusion for mature students very positive and the support provided by the Mature Student Adviser invaluable.'*

The Mature Student Adviser is also part of Mature Student Ireland, a nationwide network of mature student officers who support mature students in all of Ireland's Higher Education Institutions.

## UCD Access Centre gives Stage 1 students a PAL

UCD Access Centre has introduced a new Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) programme for New ERA students and students with a disability, to Social Science, Arts and Science.

Nine New ERA students signed up to work as PAL Leaders during Semester 1, facilitating group peer sessions on study skills, academic discussions and learning strategies to 54 stage 1 participants. Each PAL leader organised their own peer sessions for one hour each week. Leaders brought their own experiences and guidance to the group meetings, while students were encouraged to discuss difficult topics in their subject areas and look for solutions together. The completion of the first PAL programme was celebrated on Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> November, with PAL leaders being presented with a certificate of participation.



Congratulations to Jenny Murphy, New ERA Student Adviser, on being awarded a UCD Teaching and Learning Award for Supporting Student Learning (2010) for the PAL Programme.

# Disability Access Route to Education (DARE) & Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) 2011

All potential DARE and HEAR applicants are now able to apply through the CAO website, [www.cao.ie](http://www.cao.ie).

Applicants should now be starting to gather their documents which will support their online application. The closing date for submission of these documents is 1st April 2011. Submitting supporting documents is a mandatory part of the application process and an application is not complete until this step is completed correctly. Applicants are encouraged to get proof of postage for everything sent. All supporting documents for DARE/HEAR applications should be sent to:

CAO,  
Tower House,  
Eglinton Street, Galway

Supporting documents that are received later than 5:15pm on 1st April 2011 will not be accepted.

## DARE and HEAR Key Dates

Application closing date	1 February 2011
Supporting documentation closing date	1 April 2011
Notification of eligibility	Late June 2011
Application recheck	July 2011
DARE/HEAR offers to successful applicants	22 August 2011
Attend Mandatory Orientation	Late August/ September 2011

All the information you need on the HEAR and DARE schemes is available at [www.accesscollege.ie](http://www.accesscollege.ie)

Nationwide Application Clinics: Saturday 22 January 2011

Come speak to a representative of HEAR and DARE at one of our nationwide application clinics. We will be on hand to offer one-to-one help. See [www.accesscollege.ie](http://www.accesscollege.ie) for details of your closest clinic.

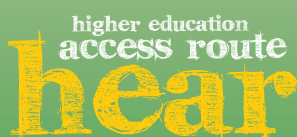
If you are unsure about any aspect of the Disability Access Route to Education (DARE) or the Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) schemes, please contact the UCD Access Centre. Good luck!



Disability Access Route To Education

**DARE**

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(01) 7161658



**HEAR**

Anne Lavelle  
[HEAR@ucd.ie](mailto:HEAR@ucd.ie)  
(01) 7161653

Here are some tips for students when gathering and submitting their supporting documents;

## DARE 2011

- ❑ Applicants must indicate their wish to be considered for DARE by ticking 'Yes' to Question 5.
- ❑ Very often it can take a number of months to get verification of a disability. It is essential that applicants start gathering the supporting documentation as soon as possible.
- ❑ Applicant information: Remember to answer all questions!  
Personal Statement: Complete your personal statement carefully, it is an opportunity for you to tell us your experience of being in school and some of the challenges you may have faced.
- ❑ Second Level Academic Reference  
The form must be **stamped and signed** by the **School**. It is recommended that **the applicant posts** the Second Level Academic reference to the CAO.
- ❑ **Evidence of Disability:** The form must be printed off and stamped & signed by the accepted Medical Consultant/ Specialist.  
Check [www.accesscollege.ie](http://www.accesscollege.ie) for guidelines on report **timeframes and accepted Medical Consultants/Specialists**

## HEAR 2011

- ❑ The year of assessment for the HEAR scheme is 2009. All financial documents must be for 2009.
- ❑ Apply for supporting documents as early as possible – it can take up to 8 weeks to get some documents from Revenue.
- ❑ When applicants receive their supporting documents in the post they must make sure that they are correct. They must be for the correct year (2009) and have the correct contact details for applicant and/or parent/guardian.
- ❑ **Include ALL pages of your supporting documents.** Some of the documents that applicants will be sending will have more than 3 or 4 pages so make sure they send every page to the CAO.
- ❑ **Applicants can send a photocopy of their supporting documents to the CAO. Keep originals** and an extra photocopy of every document sent as you may need these for applying to other access schemes.





Pupils take part in the 5th Yr Summer School Art Workshop

## Uni4U, Take 5 & 5th Year Summer Schools 2010

UCD was host to over 150 students over the month of June last year. The students took part in a range of summer schools which include the Uni4U Summer School, Take 5 Summer School and 5th Year Residential Summer School. Read on to find out about the fun packed activities enjoyed by students from UCD Access Centre New ERA link schools.

### Uni4U Summer School

On the third week of June last year 65 second year secondary school pupils made the journey to UCD to participate in the week long Uni4U Summer School. The week kicked off with team building games and a campus tour giving participants the opportunity to get to know each other a bit better and meet their student leaders. Taster talks in Philosophy, Computer Science and Archaeology took place over the week and gave students an idea of what classes are like for a college student. Throughout the week participants took part in project work exploring themes based around college life. The projects included a newsletter, photo project and a college project. Google also talked to the group about college and careers (while also giving out some goodies!). Sports activities included archery, trampoline, Ultimate Frisbee, lacrosse and climbing. The UNI4U participants finished off the week with the presentation of certificates and a closing ceremony in UCD. We hope that each one of the Uni4U participants has been left with lasting memories of UCD!

They got to experience everything that these institutions have to offer from exploding chemistry experiments in NUI Maynooth to hands on medical experience in UCD

### Take 5 Summer School

The Take 5 Summer School is a collaborative summer school where UCD joins forces with DCU, DIT, NUI Maynooth and TCD to deliver 5 fun-filled days for participants. Last Year, UCD was able to offer places to 20 students from Dublin and Bray based linked schools on the Take 5 Summer School. These 20 students joined another 60 students from other schools in TCD on June 9<sup>th</sup>. On each day of the five day programme the 80 Take 5 participants visited a different campus. They started in TCD, then visited UCD, NUI Maynooth, DIT and finally DCU. Throughout their time on the summer school they experienced everything that these institutions have to offer from exploding chemistry experiments in NUI Maynooth to hands on medical experience in UCD. Participants also took part in project work including marketing, photography, music and drama. The Take 5 Summer School ended in a project showcase and celebration in the Presidents Hall of Blackhall Place. The work of the participants was tremendous and was a testament to their creative abilities!

### 5<sup>th</sup> Year Summer School

The 5<sup>th</sup> Year Summer School is a residential summer school taking place over two weeks in June with students staying in on-campus accommodation. This year we had 75 pupils participating in this summer school. It's designed to give participants a real experience of what college life is like. Each morning started off with Leaving Certificate classes and peer learning in subjects chosen by the participants. Afternoon activities included taster talks, sports and art, and classes that helped participants to get to know UCD and explore their options at third level. In the evening, social events such as karaoke, debating with the L&H Society, comedy, films and karaoke helped the group to bond and get to know each other. Throughout the summer school, participants were accompanied by student leaders who gave them a firsthand insight into college life. Next year when UCD's new First Years come through our doors we hope to welcome back many of our 5<sup>th</sup> Year Summer School alumni.

# Access Centre Study Skills Workshops for new students

Learning Support Tutors, Wendy and Tom, have just completed a series of lunchtime workshops for new students with disabilities.

The aim of the workshops was to help new students develop their skills and settle into university life.

We hope to repeat the series in Semester Two and invite all Access Centre students to attend.

The six workshop themes were:

- Transition to third level
- Understanding course outlines and developing reading skills
- Improving note-taking and core vocabulary
- Writing skills
- Referencing and time management skills
- Exam techniques and preparation

Keep an eye on the UCD Access Centre website for more details on the Semester Two workshop series:

[www.ucd.ie/access](http://www.ucd.ie/access)



## Access Librarian Service for Students with Disabilities

Julie is a member of the UCD Access Centre team and ensures that students with disabilities have full access to UCD Library's resources and services.

She is based in the James Joyce Library and co-ordinates a variety of supports which include:

- Help with module reading lists and finding resources in the Library
- Alternate format books and documents for students who find it difficult or impossible to use printed materials
- Retrieval of books and other items from the Library shelves
- Help with the Library's electronic resources

Julie also contributes to the development of library policies and procedures to ensure that the Library is an accessible and inclusive environment.

If you would like to find out how Julie can support you in the Library, or wish to find out more about the supports available you can call in and ask for Julie at any of the Library desks. Alternatively send her an email or give her a ring - she will be very happy to hear from you.



**Julie Trimble**

Access Librarian

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## Welcome to First Years and congrats to Grads

New ERA welcomed 132 Stage 1 students in September 2010. All students participated in the New ERA Orientation Programme, providing them with an opportunity to make new friends, connect with New ERA staff and students, and also to get to know the academic staff of their new degree programmes.

We extend big congratulations to our 101 new graduates. During the 2009/10 academic year 101 New ERA students graduated with excellent results from degree programmes right across UCD. They join our 504 New ERA alumni from previous years bringing the total of New ERA Alumni to 605 since 2000.

# Thank You

The UCD Access Centre could not operate without the support of private donors and State funders. Your contribution to it ensures that we can provide a high quality service to our linked schools, as well as effective supports and financial assistance to our undergraduate students.

The UCD Access Centre receives significant State funding through the Higher Education Authority and the NDP/ESF Student Assistance Fund and the Fund for Students with Disabilities.

A number of key private donors also contribute. They include:

- ARUP Consulting Engineers
- UCD Alumni (UCD/AIB Affinity Credit Card Scheme)
- Citibank International (Citigroup Foundation)
- Women Graduates' Association
- Boylan Sisters Limited
- AIB Bank
- Irish Life and Permanent
- UCD Alumni Arts and Science Scholarships
- Phyllis Purcell (A New ERA scholarship in the name of her parents, James & Marie Purcell)
- Bank of Ireland for the Bank of Ireland | UCD New Irish Communities Scholarship

If you would like to support any element of The UCD Access Centre, please contact Fiona Sweeney, Access Centre Manager, at 01 716 1658.

## Current & Upcoming Events

### HEAR/DARE/CAO CLOSING DATE

1st February 2011

### NEW ERA SHADOWING DAYS

8th & 15th February 2011

### 5TH YEAR SUMMER SCHOOL

June 2011 – exact dates to be confirmed

### UNI4U SUMMER SCHOOL

June 2011 – exact dates to be confirmed

### TAKE 5 SUMMER SCHOOL

June 2011 – exact dates to be confirmed

### UCD ACCESS CENTRE ORIENTATION

27th August to 1st September  
(Residential & mandatory for incoming First Years)

#### Credits

Anne Lavelle, Margaret MacDonagh & Julie Trimble

# UCD Access Centre Team

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce you to all the members of the UCD Access Centre Team!

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