

*UCD Champions - Changing Futures*

# IMPACT REPORT

2021  
2022



**UCD CHAMPIONS**  
*CHANGING FUTURES*

# Welcome



I am delighted to have this opportunity to share with you the amazing impact of your support for our students. The *UCD Champions* Impact report for 2021-2022 is your report. It is a tribute to your generosity and the amazing results that can be achieved when our alumni family comes together in support of our University and our students.

This year, we are so happy to share not only the stories of some of our incredible students, who are striving to complete their studies and earn their degree, but also the story of one of our recent scholarship graduates, who is now pursuing the career he worked so hard for thanks to your support. As more and more scholars graduate, we are thrilled to be able to take stock of the extraordinary impact of your generosity, and showcase how truly life-changing your support has been.

Aisling, Shane, Caroline and Lara are four immensely talented young people from communities across Ireland who are blazing a trail. Their success demonstrates that with the right support, a university education is possible for anyone, no matter who you are or what your circumstances may be. Lara is at the forefront of women's cycling in Ireland and competing internationally. Aisling is beginning her journey studying Law. Caroline has just completed her final exams as a mature student, and Shane, who graduated recently, is now pursuing a career as an accountant. It is because of your wonderful kindness that so many students like Shane, Aisling, Caroline and Lara have the opportunity to fulfil their potential.

It has been a remarkable year. Thanks to you and your fellow supporters support 152 new *Cothrom na Féinne* Access scholarships were awarded. You and over 4,500 of your fellow alumni and friends have helped us raise over €4.43 million in cash and future pledges, including a record €690,000 towards mental health services. Your generosity has made an enormous difference to UCD and our work to promote equality in education.

As we look to the future, we are striving to realise our ambition to ensure that all students, regardless of their circumstances, have access to a university education. Your support will be instrumental in achieving this goal. It is only thanks to the continuing generosity of UCD Champions like you that next year a new group of young people will have the chance to attend UCD and take an important step towards securing their future.

I want to extend my deep thanks for your ongoing support of your alma mater and its students. You truly are transforming lives and enhancing UCD's global reputation as an institution of academic excellence, dedicated to the education of all. Thank you for your belief in our students and in the power of education to change lives.

Thank you for being a UCD Champion.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark McDonnell'.

**Mark McDonnell**

Director of Alumni Development (acting)  
Executive Director, UCD Foundation (acting)

# Your impact in numbers

Your support over the past academic year has been nothing short of incredible and the figures below are a testament to your impact. Thanks to your generosity and that of your fellow alumni, we were able to award a record **152 scholarships** for students most in need this year. Your unwavering support is inspiring the next generation of students to reach for the stars and achieve beyond what many thought possible.

## 152

- 152 Cothrom na Féinne Access Scholars
- 5 Ad Astra Scholars;
- 3 Postgraduate scholarships;
- 3 additional undergraduate scholarships.

## €4,434,245

Together with your fellow alumni and friends of UCD you raised **€2,635,019** in cash and **€1,799,226** in future pledges of support.

## €306,136

was also allocated to help support the student experience here at UCD through specific donor requests. The initiatives funded last year include the Sports Development Fund, the UCD Boat Club, UCD Choral Scholars, Research, the Library and Academic Writing Centre, and UCD Foundation's College Support Funds from which individual Colleges can allocate funds directly to students in need.

## €690,907

Spent on mental health services to ensure our students have the support they need, including funding for student advisors to help meet demand.

**YOU** and over **4,500 UCD Champions** supported UCD students in the last academic year.

# Cothrom na Féinne Scholarships

A university education can be the key to a better future. UCD Champions Scholarships aim to ensure that no student is denied the opportunities provided by a university education, simply because of their background or financial circumstances. Shane, Aisling and Caroline are three students with incredible potential who are excelling in UCD thanks to your generosity. I hope that while reading about the impact their UCD Champions Cothrom na Féinne Scholarship has made, you will see just how much your generosity has changed lives.

We would like to say thank you to every one of our supporters for being a UCD Champion.



Shane Bermingham, UCD *Cothrom na Féinne* Scholar

**“I hope I will be able to do the same and support someone from a background like mine...”**



# Shane Bermingham,

UCD Commerce graduate and

*Cothrom na Féinne* Scholar

"I come from rural Ireland. I wasn't used to a big city like Dublin. My time at UCD really shaped who I am today. It really influenced every aspect of my life. I had to move up for college because I lived too far away to commute. The scholarship made such a huge impact for me. I was worried about being able to stay up in Dublin because it was so expensive. I wasn't sure what way I was going to fund myself and how much I was going to have to work. The scholarship fund just gave me security. That was huge. I could devote my time to college and not worry so much about the financial side of it.

To be honest I was really stressed for my parents. In second year, I was worried about staying up in college because my sister went to DCU, and having 2 children in college isn't easy. My older sisters are twins and they were only just out of college when we were going in."

One memory that really stood out for Shane demonstrated the small changes a scholarship can make:

"I remember thinking one day I have some left over money and I'm going to get myself a pair of jeans because I needed a new pair. It seems so insignificant, but I still have them to this day and it's really just so meaningful to me because it gave me that autonomy. Something as simple as a pair of jeans, it just, I can't explain it, it just meant the world to me to be able to do that.

**You're investing in someone's future. I hope in a few years I will be able to do the same and support someone from a background like mine because of that support I received.** It could mean the difference between someone dropping out and actually getting a degree. For someone like me, that support is basically enabling someone to reach their full potential."





**Aisling Maloney**

Law and Politics, Stage 1  
*Cothrom na Féinne* Scholar

“...alumni that donate, it's an amazing thing. It gives people like me this opportunity they wouldn't have otherwise.”

“I'm from Tipperary, so I have to rent in Dublin. The cheapest place is 8 thousand euro for the year. That's a lot, especially coming from a low-income background. My scholarship gave me the security that I didn't have to budget so scarcely like I did before I got the scholarship. I was working a part-time job at the start of the year to try and help out with the costs but even that was affecting my studies. I was working 13-hour shifts Saturday and Sunday and during reading weeks instead of studying for exams.

It meant a lot to my dad when I got the scholarship. He's not the kind of man who would say it but I know he was really relieved. He has been so supportive. He would have found a way to keep going but he's in his 60's and it's just not fair on him. That's why I took on the part-time job, because I knew wherever I went in September we'd have to deal with those financial barriers.

Balancing my time when I was working was probably the most challenging part of this year. Trying to socialise and fit in with other first years was really challenging. I wouldn't go out with friends because I couldn't afford it, and in first year it's really the only way to make friends.

I think the alumni that donate, doing that, it's an amazing thing. It gives people like me this opportunity they wouldn't have otherwise. It takes so much weight off my shoulders and gives me a higher quality of education.”



# Caroline Doyle

Law, Stage 4 *Cothrom na Féinne* Scholar

"This scholarship is literally life-changing - I can't state it enough. I come from a low socio-economic area and I'm a mature student. My family couldn't afford college. They really couldn't. On top of that, the secondary school I went to had a really bad turn out for third-level education, so the odds were massively stacked against me. If the scholarship didn't exist, my college experience would have been totally different. I would have definitely had issues keeping up or even getting in.

I'm really glad I went back as a mature student; it took adulthood for me to realise what I actually wanted to do. If the scholarship wasn't there and the support of the access programme and mature student pathways, I wouldn't be in college today. I know my experience wouldn't have been as enjoyable without the scholarship and I'm not sure I would have been able to go on and learn and keep up with my course.

Even something like printing, and little things like coffee, everything adds up and has a significant impact on your finances. It is just amazing being able to grab a coffee with friends between classes and not having to say "sorry, I can't, I'm too poor". It takes over an hour for me to get to UCD so I can't go home on those breaks. It's a world of difference being able to afford those little social breaks.

A scholarship is extremely beneficial to the people who receive it. I couldn't actually begin to show how impactful it is. **I hope that as time goes on, scholarships like mine continue so that other disadvantaged students can have the same kind of experience I've had - where you're going to college but you're not completely isolated, socially, and educationally, by a financial barrier."**



A photograph of three young adults sitting on concrete steps outside a modern building with large glass windows. On the left, a young man with dark hair and a beard, wearing a white long-sleeved shirt and jeans, is smiling and looking towards the woman in the center. The woman in the center has dark curly hair, is wearing a red top and a light-colored jacket, and is smiling back at the man. On the right, a young woman with short blonde hair and a pink shirt is partially visible, looking towards the other two. The background shows the building's glass facade reflecting the sky and other buildings. A teal-colored text box is overlaid on the lower left portion of the image.

**“This scholarship literally  
is life changing. I can’t  
state it enough.”**

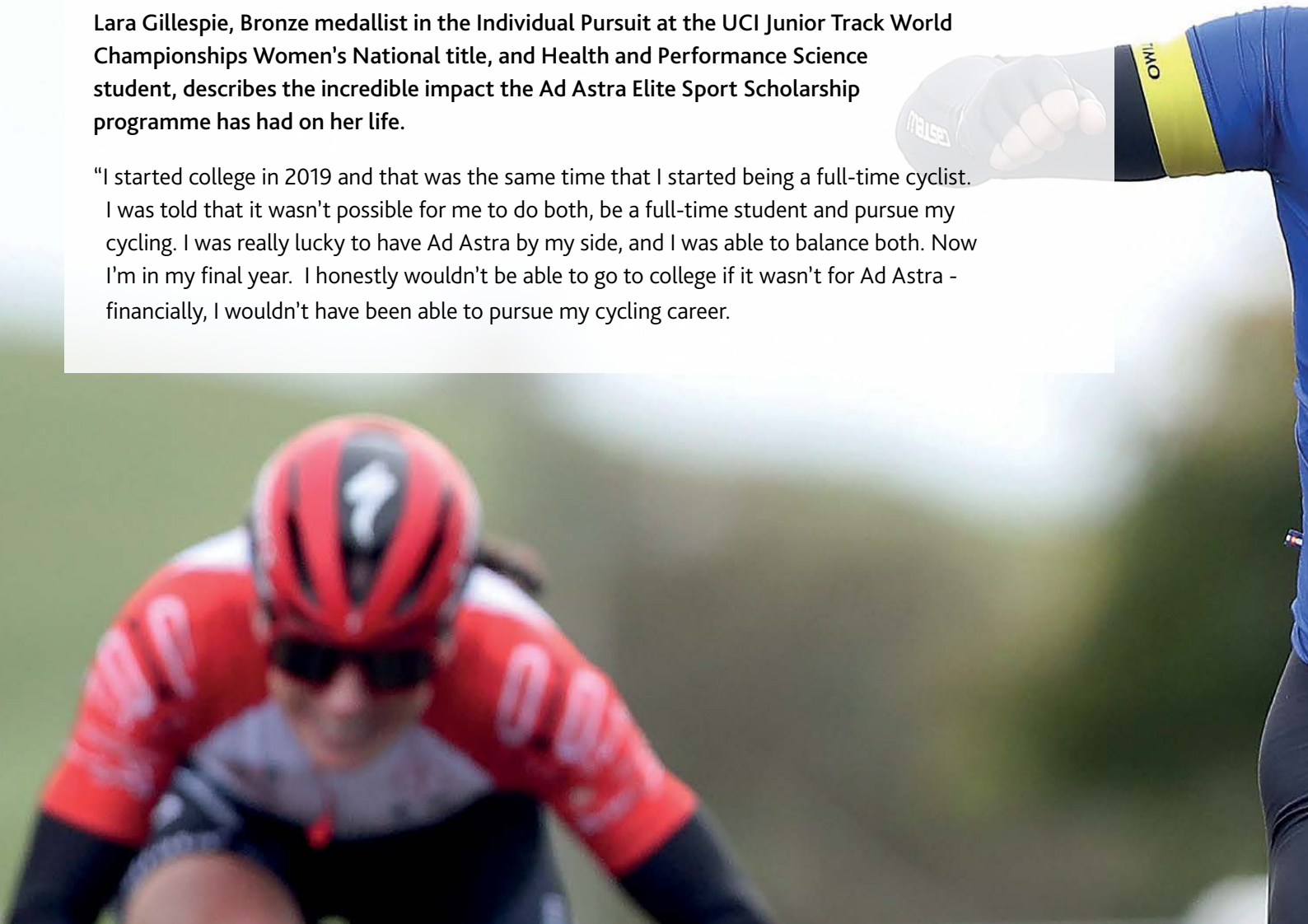
# Ad Astra Scholarships (Elite Athlete)

## Scholarship recipient: Lara Gillespie

Through Ad Astra Scholarships, UCD recognises exceptional talent across three strands, Academia, Performing Arts and Sport. The Ad Astra Academy provides these extraordinary students with the necessary support to develop their talents and reach their full potential in their chosen field. We would like to thank the generous donors who have chosen to support the Academy.

Lara Gillespie, Bronze medallist in the Individual Pursuit at the UCI Junior Track World Championships Women's National title, and Health and Performance Science student, describes the incredible impact the Ad Astra Elite Sport Scholarship programme has had on her life.

"I started college in 2019 and that was the same time that I started being a full-time cyclist. I was told that it wasn't possible for me to do both, be a full-time student and pursue my cycling. I was really lucky to have Ad Astra by my side, and I was able to balance both. Now I'm in my final year. I honestly wouldn't be able to go to college if it wasn't for Ad Astra - financially, I wouldn't have been able to pursue my cycling career."







The facilities are amazing; the gym, the coaches, and being able to work with them alongside nutritionists while being so close to my lectures. I really love the community and the energy at the gym. It's actually really helped my mental health throughout college the last few years.

I've applied for a Master's in positive psychology and coaching and I'm through the interview stage. The scholarship has made me realise that I've been so lucky that I can get my degree done in under three years and with minimal stress, while at the same time, I've been able to get lots of results on the bike as well. I come from a single-parent family where I'm the only income earner. I wouldn't have been able to go to UCD without the scholarship. I would have had to postpone college until I was older and could afford it..

I just want to say thank you so much. It's almost hard to put into words because it's been so valuable in all parts of my life. I think it's really helped me progress, not just as an athlete or as a student, it's made me a really well rounded individual and I've learned so much because of your support. I remember when I was younger I knew that my only option to get to college, because of my family situation, was to get a scholarship. It was always my goal, since I was in primary school. I just hope that the people who have supported this scholarship know that there are young kids who really see the value in it and are working towards it."



# Why I became a UCD Champion

Without UCD Champions like you, we would not be able to continue to support deserving students on their journey through UCD. Your support has made all the difference in ensuring that we are able to keep up with the increased demand for financial support. The impact you make on the lives of students in need cannot be overstated, and it shows the selfless drive of our alumni to give back and support those around them.

**We asked some of our alumni what inspired them to first donate and why they continue to support students as UCD Champions.**

"I left school at 16 and had the chance to come back to UCD as a mature student after receiving a scholarship. I got a lot out of my university experience and I want to give back to another student so they can have a similar experience."

Susan P, Bachelor of Social Science

"I grew up in a family which was not well off and I was not able to avail of any grants. I was lucky to receive guidance and support from my mother's boyfriend at the time and this helped me get through college. I want to help another student in a similar situation."

Paul M, Bachelor of Arts

"I was the first person in my family to go to college, but despite working throughout the semester there were constant worries relating to finding money for basic necessities like food or transport. I know first hand what it is like to have to face daily challenges as a student. If I can play a part in reducing the stress in the life of a student, then I am more than happy to do so."

Emma H, Bachelor of Arts

"I believe education is a number one priority, it is essential to allow people to progress and develop in a way that shapes our society for the better. I have worked for many years in the charity sector, so I understand the daily hardships people can face".

Austin C, Bachelor of Engineering

# Updates from Campus



## UCD's Ukrainian Support



University College Dublin stands in solidarity with the people of Ukraine. In response to the ongoing crisis, UCD's focus has been on supporting those students, staff and researchers affected. In particular ensuring that students from Ukraine studying and living in Ireland are offered the right protection and support as well as supporting Ukrainian refugees coming to Ireland.

Currently UCD is housing 240 Ukrainian women and children on campus as well as ensuring there is dedicated support for all those in need. Through *UCD in the Community*, English language lessons are being provided 5 days a week to Ukrainian refugees.

# 50

Sanctuary  
Scholarships  
Awarded



## New Opportunities through Sanctuary Scholarships

UCD is a university that welcomes all. Every year, Sanctuary scholarships are awarded to asylum seekers and refugees seeking sanctuary in Ireland. These scholarships ensure that young people have access to higher education and resources, regardless of background, age or circumstance. The programme currently supports 50 students, who all receive individualised and practical guidance as well as financial support throughout the academic year. A scholarship offers the student the opportunity to pave their own future path and to excel in their chosen field of study.

**UCD was awarded University of Sanctuary status in 2018 and is proud to welcome so many incredible young people into the university community.**

# Mental Health



Supporting our students' wellbeing and mental health is central to UCD's ethos and core values. Many of our students and alumni know how difficult it can be to navigate through university. Our job is to facilitate and enable students to thrive as they embark on their journey here at UCD. This includes taking our students' mental health into account. Maintaining good mental health is, as we know, just as essential as taking care of your physical health. The UCD Student Counselling Service provides an invaluable network of support for those students who need it the most. Every student deserves access to this essential service.





## The Impact of Wellbeing and Mental Health Supports

Matylda Gruszevska, Stage 4 Veterinary Nursing student talks about the difference mental health supports can make to a student.

"The biggest barrier for me throughout college was my mental health. I really struggled with it through the Leaving Cert. I would consider myself quite an academic student, but it always really impacted my grades. Being at UCD, I really had a chance to stabilise my mental health. I simply all of a sudden had access to so many resources designed to help people like me. UCD was so accommodating, being able to go to the Access Centre, having my needs assessed and having a conversation about how to help me navigate through college, and really thrive in that environment.

I had a couple of meetings with Access and they went through all the forms with me and I can't describe the relief of sharing that burden with someone who actually knew my options. Consequently, I had a person that I could always reach out to.

My mental health was a big thing. Having this scholarship money meant that I could still afford the medication that was essentially keeping me stable and keeping me where I needed to be. Because at times, college was extremely stressful. I found it quite difficult at times. Being able to see a counsellor as well was a big game changer. Covid didn't make things easy, it was really difficult. I lost my job and couldn't afford to pay for the medication I need. Because of this scholarship, I was able to not skip on those necessities."

# Our Plans for the Future

Thanks to a great year in 2021, together we have the opportunity to build on our success. We want to take this opportunity to let you know our ongoing priorities and how you can continue to shape the future of your university and our students.

## Supporting Student Scholarships

Last year, our alumni and friends funded a record 152 scholarships to support students. While this is an incredible result, there is still more to do. Demand for financial support is at an all-time high. Our foremost priority is to meet this demand and continue to increase the number of scholarships available. Only with your continued support can we make this a reality.

## Additional support for those living outside of Dublin

With the return to on-campus learning, more students now require accommodation in Dublin. For many outside the Dublin area, commuting is not feasible and the rising cost of living in Dublin poses a major barrier to attending university. A UCD Champions scholarship includes an additional bursary for those students who live outside of the Dublin area. We need to continue to ensure that additional financial support is available to those students renting in Dublin.

## Increased Mental health supports

Last year, €690,907 was raised for mental health services by our alumni. With your continued support, we can provide funding for counsellors and increase the level of dedicated mental health supports available to students. Remote counselling services have grown in popularity during the pandemic. Now that students are back on campus in numbers, we aim to provide the necessary funding to maintain in-person services, while continuing to support remote counselling for those students who need it.

# Alumni like you make a difference to current students in so many ways

One of our alumni volunteers, Grainne, has been involved as a mentor to undergraduate students over the past few years. She reflects on the impact of her role as a mentor:

*"Mentoring is very much a two way process, both the mentor and the mentee get out of it what they put in. I have found that it is very energising to be able to share experiences and knowledge which I have gained over my life and see how it helps the mentee to reflect and consider their potential career options. It is just lovely to have the opportunity to engage with the mentee and in a very small way to be part of their journey."*

**Grainne Burke**

UCD Alumna and Volunteer Mentor



\*Photo from Career Mentoring Programme launch event in February 2020. Mentoring has taken place online over the past 2 years and will continue in a hybrid format to remain inclusive for alumni based overseas.

Volunteering can be enriching and rewarding. To learn how you can get involved, follow us on social media, join the UCD Alumni Network at [www.ucdalumninetwork.com](http://www.ucdalumninetwork.com), email Ria & Niamh at [alumnivolunteer@ucd.ie](mailto:alumnivolunteer@ucd.ie), or give the team a call on +353 1 716 1064



# Your Legacy — Leave a mark

Did you know that with a planned gift, a living legacy or a gift in memory, you can ensure that the University continues to grow and flourish for generations to come?

17

In the last year, 17 scholarships were supported by legacy gifts.

By leaving a special gift, you can play a part in shaping UCD's future, and ensure that what matters most to you is protected, and your values are imparted to the next generation of students.

Thanks to the generous contributions of our alumni and friends, the lives of a new generation of students have been transformed, and the University has seen continuous development in research, innovation, and community engagement.

Including a gift to UCD in your will or establishing a memorial gift in honour of a loved one, colleague or friend is a very easy thing to do. Every legacy gift

is precious to us, no matter how small, and can make a long-lasting difference to our students and our University.

If you would like to know more, please get in touch using the form below and we will contact you. You can use the Freepost envelope provided to return the form to me.

Alternatively, you can contact me in complete confidence on +353 1 716 1286 or email: [mark.mcdonnell@ucdfoundation.ie](mailto:mark.mcdonnell@ucdfoundation.ie)



Mark McDonnell  
Executive Director, UCD Foundation (acting)

Please send me information about Leaving a Legacy to UCD

Name

Address

Phone

Email

# Help even more students – for free. *One form is all it takes!*

We really value your support; this is why we want to ensure that every cent you donate will work as effectively as possible to support our deserving students and the meaningful work of the University.

# 14

Last year, Tax Cert returns from Revenue provided enough funding to support 14 full scholarships.

You can increase your donation by 45% without it costing you a single cent more! If you have given €250 or more in a calendar year, we can claim an additional 45% of the value of your gift from Revenue. This has no effect on your tax status.

If everyone who gave €250 last year did this, we could raise over €1.5 million – this could almost double the number of scholarships awarded this year!

**Together, we can achieve even more through tax efficient giving**

**+44.93%**  
in ROI

To take part in the scheme, which is available to PAYE and self-assessed supporters, you simply complete one form – the CHY3 tax form – which takes just a few minutes to do. Then return it to us and we do the rest. Your form will cover a period of up to 5 years and can be backdated to cover gifts you made over the last 4 years.

To receive a CHY3 form or a Gift Aid Declaration form, please contact us on (+353) 1 716 1406 or email [info@ucdfoundation.ie](mailto:info@ucdfoundation.ie).

**Don't forget to post your form back to us in the FreePost envelope.**

**UK taxpayer? Your gifts can be worth 25% extra for 0% extra!**

If you are a UK taxpayer, we can claim an extra 25p on every £1 you donate from HMRC. A Gift Aid declaration form covers you for life and there is no minimum amount you need to donate; the only requirement is that you are a UK taxpayer.

**+25%**  
in UK

## UCD Affinity Credit Card

We'd like to say a huge thank you to all our fantastic credit card holders. They truly are UCD Champions. Our scholarship and student support programmes and the UCD Sports Development Fund benefit every time they use their Affinity cards.

**You can change lives too with a Bank of Ireland UCD Affinity credit card. What better way to show your support for UCD?**



Talk to Bank of Ireland about supporting UCD with a Bank of Ireland UCD Affinity Credit Card - call 0818 200 412.



FOUNDATION

## UCD FOUNDATION

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