



FOUNDATION

UCD Champions '*Opening Doors*' Alumni Fund

IMPACT REPORT

2024
2025



Thank you



On behalf of UCD Foundation, I would like to present your UCD Champions impact report for 2024-2025. This report is the culmination of a truly incredible year of support by the UCD Champions community.

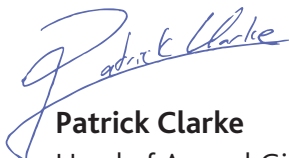
I am delighted to update you on the progress of our *Cothrom na Féinne* scholars. This year, I invite you to read testimonials from three amazing students: Sophie, Ben and Julia who are all thriving in UCD thanks to your generosity. Their dedication, passion and resilience epitomises what a student can achieve with the right support. Your belief and commitment to our students is empowering them to earn a university degree and create a brighter future for themselves.

This year has seen significant developments in our UCD *Cothrom na Féinne* scholarships. Together with UCD Access and Lifelong Learning, the decision has been made to increase the value of our scholarships to a minimum of €2,500 per year. This increase is essential to respond to the growing barriers impacting students in accessing education. The rising cost of living represents the most significant challenge facing students, and by increasing the value of the scholarships, we can continue to make a transformative impact on the lives of students.

Recognising the need to provide students with equal opportunities, our UCD community has supported the development of learning resources across campus, helping to provide all students with access to the materials they need to study on a level playing field. Many alumni have also chosen to support specific areas through the establishment of named scholarships, as well as extending their giving through legacy or in memory gifts.

Your generosity gives students a powerful opportunity to transform their lives and I cannot thank you enough for your support. There are still many challenges facing our students and we need the continued support of UCD Champions like you to help secure their future.

Thank you for being a UCD Champion.


Patrick Clarke
Head of Annual Giving - UCD Foundation

Your impact in numbers

We are immensely grateful for your unwavering generosity. Your incredible kindness, along with other UCD Champions, has made a profound impact, transforming the lives of UCD students who might otherwise face significant challenges in accessing higher education. Thanks to your support, alongside that of fellow UCD alumni and friends, **110 new *Cothrom na Féinne* scholarships** were awarded in the academic year 2024/2025, bringing the total number of scholarship students currently being supported by you, our UCD Champions, to **578**.

This life-changing support doesn't just help students access education — it empowers them to dream bigger, achieve more, and to give back and inspire their communities. With your continued generosity, we can ensure that even more students receive the opportunity to succeed.

110 New Scholarships

- ▲ 110 new *Cothrom na Féinne* scholarships awarded
- ▲ Alongside 468 *Cothrom na Féinne* scholars already being supported

27 New UCD Sanctuary Scholarships

- ▲ 27 new UCD Sanctuary Scholarships funded through dedicated donor contributions and central UCD funding, bringing the total number of Sanctuary Scholars to 50

3,483 UCD Champions
directly transforming
students lives

Over **€3.9 million** raised to support student scholarships and to enhance the student experience.

Enhancing the Student Experience

€189,000 was allocated to improve the student experience at UCD through targeted donor support. This funding has helped to enrich student life through initiatives such as:

- ▲ UCD Ad Astra Academy
- ▲ UCD Choral Scholars
- ▲ The Library and Academic Writing Centre

€411,000

€411,000 was dedicated to student mental health services. This funding specifically includes provision for two dedicated student advisors.

UCD Cothrom na Féinne Scholarships

A university education is a transformative force, allowing students to pursue dreams they might never have thought possible.

Cothrom na Féinne scholarships, supported by UCD Champions, aim to provide students with the support they need to excel at UCD.

Sophie, Ben, and Julia are three students who overcame adversity to earn their place at UCD, and are now working hard towards achieving their degrees.

Each of our student scholars is immensely grateful for your support, and we are immensely grateful to them for sharing their experiences with us. We hope that the stories they have shared will demonstrate to you the life-changing impact of your support.

Thank you for being a UCD Champion and transforming lives.



“ My experience in UCD would be so different without this scholarship. I am forever changed by and thankful for your kindness and generosity. ”

Sophie Byrne

Commerce International, Stage 4, *Michael Byrne Accommodation Bursary*

"My studies are going very well this year! My quality of life has drastically increased as a result of this scholarship, and I could not be more grateful to the donors supporting me. I have made so many new friends, which allowed me to create so many memories. I even started up my first savings account, something I could never have dreamed of doing before this scholarship. Previously, all my expenses left me living payslip to payslip and it was a given that every holiday and free minute was to be spent working.

Before I obtained my scholarship, I was working 24-hour weekends at a bar in order to scrape the surface of monthly rent payments. I come from a first generation immigrant single-parent household, and I have always had to pay for my own things since I got my first job at 13. So when I came to college, the cost of rent, groceries, transport costs and day-to-day living became impossible.

I had no time to study for my exams due to my workload, little time to participate in college activities, and I constantly felt under pressure. I could not afford anything more than the bare essentials. **In December 2022, I received this scholarship. I remember calling my mum in floods of tears, and the next time I visited her we danced and jumped in the kitchen in disbelief.** With this life-changing scholarship, I was able to find a job closer to home, working just 14 hours each weekend. I had so much more time to spend with my family and friends, time to study, and the means to join extracurriculars on campus.

As a result of my scholarship, I have become more motivated and passionate about my studies. **Before, I dreaded college as I had a case of imposter syndrome, and I did not feel that I belonged in third-level education. Now, I know that I do.** My grades have improved hugely, and I have more time to study and appreciate my classes and lectures. My experience in UCD would be so different without this scholarship. I am forever changed by and thankful for your kindness and generosity."



“

I would like to let the donors to this scholarship know that this opportunity has turned my entire life upside down in the best way possible.

”

Ben Neary

Medicine, Stage 1, *Cothrom na Féinne* Scholar

"I always knew I wanted to do Medicine, ever since 2nd year of school. All my CAO choices were Medicine, so I was over the moon when I received my offer from UCD. My classmates are some of the most amazing people I've ever met, and there is so much more to my studies than I could have expected.

Receiving this scholarship has genuinely been life changing. Before this scholarship, I was living at home, which is a 2 hour commute up and back every day. I was also working nights, which meant I would not get home some nights until 5 or 6 am. I did not realise how much time I was losing until suddenly I could not engage in society events, sports, or even get a chance to hang out with my friends. I remember one Halloween, I had a 9am lecture after a shift at work. I finished work at 3:30am, and didn't have time to get home, so I waited on campus from 5 am until 9 am, and attended my lecture.

Words cannot describe how I felt when I got the email. I truly felt like I could do anything, and that a major burden had just fallen off my shoulders. I used the scholarship money to move out of home into digs nearby campus, which has allowed me the free time to engage more completely with university life. Every day, I get to go and learn about things I am passionate about. I have also recently gotten involved with the Music Soc. When I lived at home, I couldn't have taken part, as I couldn't commit to being on campus that late. Now, I can't wait to get more involved and audition again!

I would like to let the donors to this scholarship know that this opportunity has turned my entire life upside down in the best way possible. College no longer feels like a battle I need to slog through. It's become something that not only I can enjoy, but also begin to contribute to. Thank you so much for the opportunity you have provided to me, and to so many other students like me."

Julia Szarota

History and Drama, Stage 4, *Cothrom na Féinne* Scholar

"I chose UCD because it is one of the few universities in Ireland to provide this subject combination, and I was so excited to get the opportunity to delve into both of these interests of mine. Coming from Kerry, I knew accommodation was going to be the main barrier to me attending UCD. My mother is a single parent and cannot fully support me financially.

Before coming to UCD, housing was a main concern of mine. Renting in Dublin is becoming increasingly hard and I knew that the prices of on-campus accommodation would be totally out of my budget. The scholarship really helped in easing some of this stress and letting me take full advantage of the college experience, allowing me to attend plays as part of my drama studies without worrying about how this would affect my monthly budget. Receiving this scholarship took such a weight off my shoulders financially. I am immensely grateful for that, and for the UCD counselling services for always being an immense help in times of need.

The scholarship has had a huge impact on my time in university. Without this scholarship, renting just would not have been viable for me. The scholarship money has mostly gone towards my rent, and social and educational activities, like seeing plays and going to museums. I have been involved in some sports clubs, as well as being heavily involved in UCD Dramsoc. I was Events Officer for the society last year, and was part of the cast and crew of multiple plays. This scholarship has given me the opportunity to fully immerse myself in these activities, and spend time on extracurricular activities as opposed to working constantly.

This scholarship fosters the next generation of artists, leaders, and innovators. I can personally say the past four years **have changed me and my worldview fundamentally.** I think everybody should have this amazing opportunity to grow, meet people, and develop skills for life."



“Receiving this scholarship took such a weight off my shoulders financially.”

Why your support matters

The most significant challenge facing students today in accessing education is the rising cost of living. The estimated cost for a student living out of home and studying in Dublin is **€16,100 per year***. For students already in financial hardship this is a barrier which cannot be overcome without help.

With less accommodation available and living expenses continuing to rise, students are forced to live further away or make unsustainable commutes. Faced with so many barriers and unable to work enough hours to support themselves, too many students who have earned their place in university are simply unable to consider accepting it due to the cost that would be placed on them and their families.

Scholarships are essential to students, and there is an urgent need to ensure that financial support keeps up with the costs students face.





€2,500

The minimum value of a UCD *Cothrom na Féinne* scholarship has increased to €2,500 per year.

We are delighted to announce that in response to the cost-of-living crisis, UCD Access and Lifelong Learning have made the essential decision to increase the value of a standard UCD *Cothrom na Féinne* scholarship. This will help to ensure that these scholarships continue to make a meaningful impact in supporting students' living expenses.

The minimum value of a scholarship is now €2,500 per year. However, for students with the greatest need, a scholarship can be increased up to €7,000 per year to meet their specific circumstances.

Increasing the value of a scholarship is necessary, but without additional funding, fewer scholarships will be available to students. **We need the support of our UCD Champions community to meet the growing demand for scholarships.**

With my scholarship, I CAN...

UCD *Cothrom na Féinne* scholarships help students to afford the living expenses associated with studying at UCD. Students in financial need often face costs that most students may not have to worry about but can be a significant barrier to attending university.

Your support enables our student scholars to cover these costs with the help of a scholarship.

... afford to cover my bus fare

"My scholarship is a great help in paying for transport to all the different hospitals for my placements and has given me the chance to take some days off from my part-time job without worry."

... pay my rent

"I knew when deciding to come to UCD that finding accommodation was going to be my greatest challenge, on top of my studies. My scholarship helps me to pay rent in Dublin which I would ordinarily not be able to afford. This takes so much pressure off me and allows me to pay full attention to my learning."



... afford my course materials

"We need a lot of materials in my course, and having my scholarship set aside for school stuff has allowed me to buy better quality supplies and equipment. I'm able to pay for my subscription to Adobe which is a vital programme for my course. Having that on my laptop has been a godsend as it freed me from school opening hours."

... experience university life

"My *Cothrom na Féinne* scholarship has been so helpful as it has allowed me to be more selective in how I spend my free time. Receiving this scholarship helps to lower the amount of hours I need to work throughout my degree to cover my cost of living. I am able to maintain my academic achievements while optimising my college experience through internships and volunteer opportunities."

... pay my bills

"My *Cothrom na Féinne* scholarship has been a tremendous support. So far it has really assisted me in my daily living expenses, and providing help towards paying for my bills that were extremely high this winter."

Change a life with a named scholarship

A named scholarship is a deeply impactful way to make a unique commitment to what matters most to you. It is an opportunity to empower students to achieve extraordinary things while ensuring that your values, passions, and priorities are supported.

When establishing a named scholarship, you can champion an individual student who is in need of additional financial support, or you can choose to tailor your support for a student in a specific school, college or discipline. Supporting in this way allows you to open the door for students to follow in your footsteps.

TY AND SCHOOLING
education

boys see their identities?
views of schooling?

the centre of current social and educational
been associated with global terrorism,
urban riots, and suffer from disproportionately
and low rates of achievement and post-16



By establishing a named scholarship, you will have a profound and transformative impact on a student's life. You will give a talented young person the chance to overcome financial hardship and get a great education.

The total cost of establishing a named *Cothrom na Féinne* scholarship is €28,000 over four years. This provides the recipient with €7,000 per year of their degree.

A named scholarship is personal to you and your priorities, and however you choose to support, you will be leading the way in ensuring greater equality in access to education.

You can also learn more about establishing a scholarship or gift in memory of a loved one on the next page.

If you'd like to find out more, I'd love to hear from you and answer any questions you might have about setting up a named scholarship. You can contact me, Gracy Nasralla at the details below:

Phone: +353 1 716 1065 Email: gracy.nasralla@ucdfoundation.ie



How you can honour a loved one

In memory giving

Making a gift in memory of a loved one, colleague, or friend is a unique and heartfelt way to honour them and their connection to the UCD community. When making an in memory gift, you may decide to support a cause close to their heart. You can establish a scholarship in their name, fund a research area, support a School or College, or direct your gift to go where needed most.

Making in memory gifts in support of student scholarships have been particularly impactful in recent years, allowing new generations of students to follow in the footsteps of a loved one. It acknowledges the personal commitment many of our alumni have made to ensuring equal access to education and supporting future generations of UCD students.

If you would like to learn more about in memory giving at UCD, or to make your own in memory gift, please get in touch with Evan Shinkwin.

Phone: +353 1 716 1406 Email: evan.shinkwin@ucdfoundation.ie



McShea family gift in memory of Martin McShea

Martin was educated in Buckingham and Manchester qualifying as a teacher in the early-1960s. He later studied for an MA at UCD graduating in 2009.

Martin saw himself as a front-line soldier on the education battlefield of London, teaching at a comprehensive secondary school for 33 years, becoming the Head of Physical Education. In the 1990s, Martin and his wife Anne moved to Dunmore East in County Waterford, Anne's county of birth, where Martin taught for a further 11 years.

Martin was a long-time UCD Champions supporter and his generosity enabled a new generation of students to attend and thrive in UCD.

Giving young people opportunities in life, through education, was one of Martin's lifelong passions. After Martin's passing in 2023, Anne, and other members of the McShea family, decided to make a further donation to The UCD Champions "*Opening Doors*" Alumni Fund in memory of Martin.

Improving the student experience

Thanks to the generosity of our alumni, the UCD Champions 'Opening Doors' alumni fund provides vital support to students by funding UCD *Cothrom na Féinne* scholarships. The fund also supports the provision of resources to enhance the student experience and level the playing field for all students, so that every student has the opportunity to thrive and succeed at UCD.

Two priorities that will be funded by additional UCD Champions support are the development of the James Joyce Library and UCD Sports Centre.

Providing support to enhance the student experience is essential in ensuring we can cater for the needs of a diverse student population.

UCD Sports and Amenities Precinct

Life outside the classroom is central to the student experience at UCD. The UCD Sports Centre gives students the opportunity to get involved in extracurricular activities on campus and fully engage with their time at UCD.

Driven by student input and partially supported by the student body via the Student Legacy Project, UCD is now developing a new sports and amenities precinct that will consist of a multi-sport hall, performance building for performing arts, examination centre and a tennis centre. In addition to providing new facilities for UCD sports clubs, the development of a new examination centre will be a game changer for students. It will save students time, stress and the cost of travelling to off-campus centres during exam time.

This new development will have a profound impact on students' overall time at UCD, helping to improve their mental health and foster a sense of community.



UCD James Joyce Library Development

The James Joyce Library is the central learning facility in UCD, providing a space for students to engage fully with their studies. Almost every student at UCD in the past fifty years has spent time in the library, and the resources it provides are essential to life at UCD.

UCD's student population has tripled since the library was built, and planned refurbishments will transform how the library is used by our growing UCD community.

Its redevelopment will ensure that it offers appropriate spaces, resources, technologies, and inclusive facilities to support diverse learning needs. The development of the library is essential to ensuring that all students, regardless of circumstances, have access to the resources they need.



Create a legacy for future generations

Learn more about including a gift to UCD in your will

Including a gift in your will to a cause close to your heart has become an increasingly popular way to ensure that what matters most to you is supported well into the future. It is a uniquely impactful way to create an enduring legacy and leave a lasting expression of your values and priorities.

What causes can I support?

You can support any area you choose, whether it is student hardship scholarships, research programmes, a School or College, or simply direct your support to where it is needed most. We can provide advice on how your gift can support the causes you are most passionate about.

Do I have to give a certain amount?

This is completely up to you. UCD Foundation can provide information on how gifts of various sizes can create an impact at UCD. No matter the size of your gift, it will make a transformative impact.

How do I make a legacy gift?

There are two ways in which you can leave a gift to a charity in your will. Your solicitor will be able to provide you with advice on which option best suits your wishes.

- ▲ A **residuary bequest**, which means that the remainder or part of the remainder of your estate is bequeathed to the charity.
- ▲ A **pecuniary bequest**, which is a specific sum of money or property you would like to donate.

What information do I need to include?

We would be honoured to work with you and provide some sample language for your solicitor, to specify the purpose of your gift.

What do I do if I have already left a gift to UCD?

We would love to be in a position to acknowledge your gift during your lifetime and show you the impact it will make in the future. If you have already included a gift to UCD in your will, please let us know so we can keep you up to date on the causes you wish to support.

Does UCD have an endowment fund?

We are in the process of establishing an endowment fund. The endowment will enable UCD Foundation to grow the impact of donations and create greater stability for the projects and students it supports. In practice, the principal amount of your gift will be added to the endowment, while the interest generated will be used to support your chosen area. In this way your support has the potential to be awarded indefinitely.

If you'd like to find out more, I'd love to hear from you and answer any questions you might have about legacy giving at UCD. You can contact me, Evan Shinkwin at the details below:

Phone: +353 1 716 1406 Email: evan.shinkwin@ucdfoundation.ie



Help even more students – *without spending*

Your generosity has already made such a significant difference in the lives of hardworking and deserving students.

Did you know that your support can go 45% further, at no extra cost to you?

If you have given €250 or more in a calendar year between 2021 and 2025, we can claim an additional 45% top-up on the value of your gift from Revenue.

This will not affect your tax status.

+44.93%
in ROI

Together, we can achieve so much more through tax-efficient giving.

Have you donated €250 or more between 2021 and 2025?

If you are an Irish tax-payer and you have not returned your Enduring Cert, simply scan the QR code, follow the prompts to fill in your details, and digitally sign the form. Our finance team will take it from there! 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.

If everyone returns this form, we could claim **10 times more.**



If you are not sure if you qualify, need help filling out the form or would like to request a Gift Aid form for UK-based donors, please contact Maeve Kelly.
Phone: +353 1 716 1314 Email: maeve.kelly@ucdfoundation.ie

an extra cent!

Help turn
6 into **62**

The funding from supporters who returned tax certificates so far this year can potentially provide enough funding for an extra 6 scholarships.

However, if every UCD Champion who gave €250 or more completed this form, **we could potentially have enough funding for an additional 62 scholarships.**

**Take a minute to
change someone's life**



Affinity Cards



We want to extend a huge thank you to all our incredible credit card holders.

When you become a UCD Affinity Credit Card holder, Bank of Ireland donates €50 to support the University's students. Additionally, a percentage of your card's annual spending goes towards the UCD Champions Access Scholarships, the UCD Sports Development Fund, and the UCD Alumni Fund, at no additional cost to you.

With a Bank of Ireland UCD Affinity Credit Card, you can help change lives. What better way to show your support for UCD?

To apply or learn more, call Bank of Ireland at 0818 200 412 or scan the QR Code.





Your support can help us to ensure that equal access to education is available to all, regardless of background.

Donate today by scanning the QR code, or online by visiting ucdfoundation.ie/donate



FOUNDATION

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