

**WE'RE LOOKING FOR
EXCEPTIONAL TALENT
THROUGH YOUR EYES**



**UCD AD ASTRA
ACADEMY**

ASPIRE. ACHIEVE. EXCEL.





Fáilte from the Director of the UCD Ad Astra Academy

I am delighted to welcome you to the 2026 UCD Ad Astra Academy Prospectus. The Academy was created in 2011 and is UCD's flagship scholarship programme. It is an expression of the mission of UCD as a whole; to provide a community in which students of the University displaying exceptional potential in academic pursuits, elite sports or performing arts are encouraged and supported to develop their talent further.

We believe in creating an environment where students with exceptional ability, creativity and drive will be motivated, challenged and inspired. The Ad Astra Academy nurtures exceptional students by offering them unique supports and opportunities to further develop their talents and allowing them to achieve at the highest levels. Our scholars benefit from a bursary, mentoring and discipline-specific supports, as well as personal and professional development opportunities.

The scholars in turn are expected to make a significant contribution to the Academy, the University and when they graduate, to society at large. The Academy is supported by alumni and friends of the University through donations to UCD Foundation. On behalf of the University, I would like to express my deep appreciation for their generosity and support.

As Director of the Academy, I am delighted to witness these remarkable scholars develop their potential during their time at UCD and as they progress with their careers and become our Ad Astra Alumni.

Regina Uí Chollatáin

An tOllamh Regina Uí Chollatáin
Ad Astra Academy Director
Príomhoifigeach agus Déanach
UCD Coláiste na nEalaíon agus na nDaonnachtaí



Scholars' Room

At the UCD Ad Astra Academy we are proud to have helped some of Ireland's greatest talents from all across the country to excel. We are currently looking for exceptional students to join our programme for 2026 and reach new heights. We need your help to find them.



High Performance Gym



Ad Astra Performing Arts Scholars
rehearsing in the Academy's
Performing Arts Studio with our Artistic
and Theatre Director, Kellie Hughes

**Applications for Elite Sports Scholars and Performing Arts Scholars
will be accepted 1st November 2025 - 31st January 2026.**

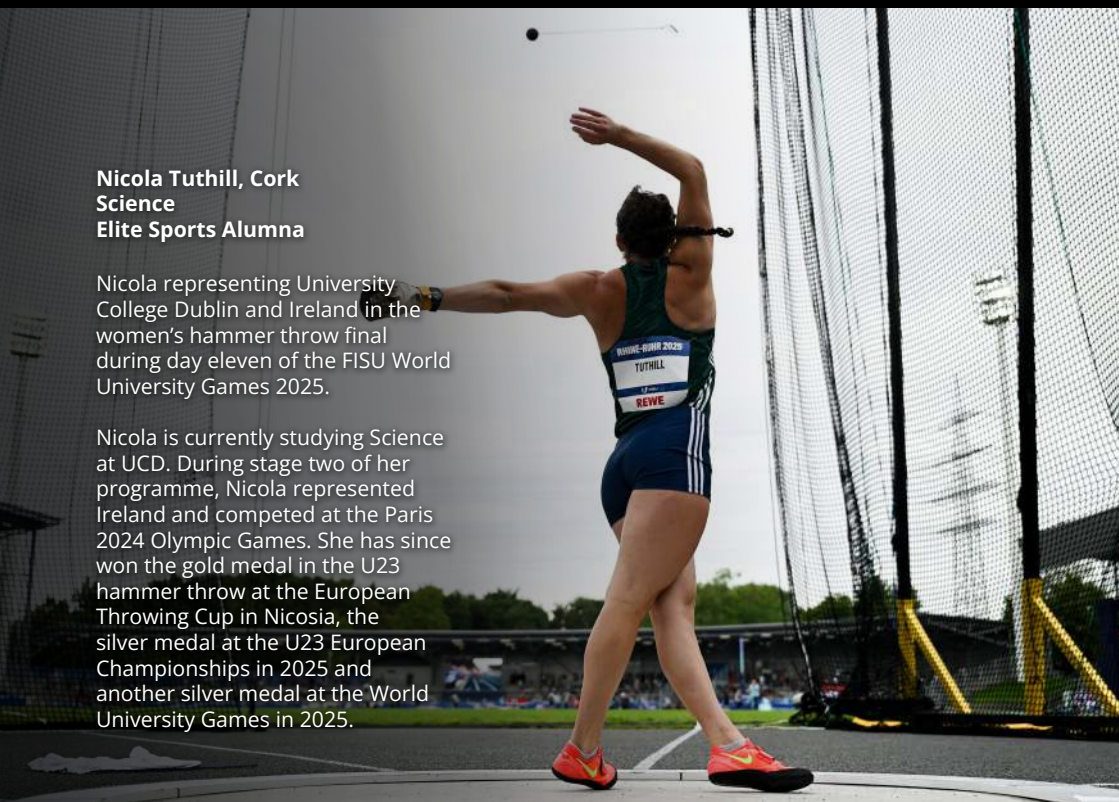
**Applications for Academic Scholars will be accepted
1st February - 24th August 2026.**



Andrew Porter, Dublin
Economics & Geography
Ad Astra Elite Sports Alumnus

Andrew representing the British & Irish Lions during the second test match against Australia at the Melbourne Cricket Ground in Australia in July 2025.

Andrew has earned 75 caps representing Ireland. As part of the Irish squad, he has won the Six Nations Championship three times (2018, 2023, 2024), achieved Grand Slam victories in 2018 and 2023, the Triple Crown three times and been part of the British & Irish Lions in 2021 and 2025.



Nicola Tuthill, Cork
Science
Elite Sports Alumna

Nicola representing University College Dublin and Ireland in the women's hammer throw final during day eleven of the FISU World University Games 2025.

Nicola is currently studying Science at UCD. During stage two of her programme, Nicola represented Ireland and competed at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games. She has since won the gold medal in the U23 hammer throw at the European Throwing Cup in Nicosia, the silver medal at the U23 European Championships in 2025 and another silver medal at the World University Games in 2025.

UCD Ad Astra Elite Sports Scholars

The UCD Ad Astra Elite Sports programme supports students who are competing and succeeding at the highest sporting levels. Athletes in the Academy compete at international level. In the case of GAA, they compete at inter-county level. At any one time, there are 60 Elite Sports Scholars in the programme with an average intake of 15 each year.

Students must apply online via the Academy website before 31st January 2026. The applications are reviewed by a selection panel and suitable candidates are selected for interview.

Following the interview stage, placement offers will be made to successful applicants subject to an offer and acceptance of a course in UCD. Points concessions can be made for successful candidates who can show evidence of ability to undertake their chosen course.

Please visit ucd.ie/adastraacademy for full details of eligibility and application process.

Benefits

- €3,000 scholarship allowance each year a scholar is in the Academy
- Guaranteed on-campus accommodation, the cost of which may be offset by the scholarship allowance
- Access to a high performance gym with expert training and coaching
- Physiotherapy and medical assistance, nutritional and fitness monitoring, and sports psychology
- The support of an academic mentor to help scholars excel in both academia and their chosen sport
- Networking and team building events with all strands of the Academy
- Access to the Ad Astra Scholars' Room

Applications Open	Applications Close	Interviews
1st November 2025	31st January 2026	March/April 2026

A photograph of Tess, a young woman with dark hair pulled back, wearing a red one-shoulder dress, standing next to Professor Barbara Dooley, an older woman with short grey hair wearing a white shirt and a black vest. Professor Dooley is holding a small black box with 'UCD AD ASTRA' printed on it. They are both smiling at the camera. In the background, another woman with blonde hair and glasses is partially visible.

**Dr Therese Meade, Meath
Medicine
Ad Astra Academic Alumna**

Tess with the retired Ad Astra Academy Director, Professor Barbara Dooley at the 2024 Academy's Graduation Evening.

Tess graduated first out of the 277 students on the Medicine programme. In addition, she was awarded three medals: the 1941 Medal which is presented annually to the graduate with the highest grade point average (GPA) in the Medicine Programme; the DK O' Donovan Medal and the Brian McGovern Perpetual Medal. Tess pursued her intern year at the Mater Misericordiae University Hospital Dublin.

A photograph of Rory Clarke, a young man with short brown hair wearing a light blue button-down shirt, sitting and holding a microphone. He is looking towards Professor Barbara Dooley, who is seated next to him. She is wearing a white shirt and a black vest and is gesturing with her hands while speaking. The background is a dark blue curtain.

**Rory Clarke, Dublin
Business & Law
Ad Astra Academic Alumnus**

Rory in conversation with retired Academy Director, Professor Barbara Dooley about his route to becoming the Special Adviser to the Attorney General of Ireland at the annual Ad Astra Academy Breakfast.

After graduating from UCD, Rory pursued further studies at the University of Oxford where he achieved a Distinction in a Bachelor of Civil Law. During his time there, he undertook research with Professor Ariel Ezrachi whilst continuing to undertake research for Dr Niamh Howlin, Dr Noel McGrath and Dr Mark Coen at the UCD Sutherland School of Law before joining the Office of the Attorney General of Ireland.

UCD Ad Astra Academic Scholars

The UCD Ad Astra Academic programme is looking for students who have a proven track record of academic excellence, leadership and a desire to continue to achieve at the highest level. Up to 15 scholarships are awarded to incoming students each year.

Scholarships for school leavers entering UCD in September 2026 will be awarded based on a combination of the academic criteria of 6 H1s, an online application via the Ad Astra Academy website and an interview.

Applicants with 6 H1s will be called for interview based solely on their application, with a 60% weighting on extra-curricular achievements and a 40% weighting on the personal statement.

Please visit ucd.ie/adastraacademy for full details of eligibility and application process.

Benefits

- A €3,000 scholarship allowance each year a scholar is in the Academy
- The support of a dedicated academic mentor in the scholar's area of study
- Guaranteed on-campus accommodation, the cost of which may be offset by the scholarship allowance
- Workshops and seminars to develop the scholar's academic and personal potential
- Networking opportunities and team building events with all strands of the Academy
- Access to the Ad Astra Scholars' Room
- The opportunity to undertake the Ad Astra Academy Academic elective module *Ad Astra Professional and Personal Development* in Stage two

Applications Open	Applications Close	Interviews
1st February 2026	24th August 2026	After CAO offers

A close-up photograph of a young woman, Emma O'Leary, performing. She is wearing a white historical-style dress with a large, bright green ruffled collar and a blue beret. Her mouth is open as if singing or speaking, and her hands are raised in a dramatic gesture. The background is dark with some blue stage lighting.

**Emma O'Leary, Wexford
Psychology
Ad Astra Performing Arts Alumna**

Emma performing in an adapted excerpt from SHAKESPEARE- A performance of perpetual proceedings, at the Ad Astra Academy Awards Ceremony. This was a new work that was written and performed by the scholars, under the direction of Ad Astra Academy Artistic Director Kellie Hughes.

A wide photograph of a performing arts ensemble in a grand, classical hall with large columns and a staircase. The ensemble consists of about ten people in various historical costumes. On the far right, a woman (Isolde O'Loughlin) is seated and playing a double bass. Other members are standing, some holding instruments like violins. The lighting is warm and focused on the performers.

**The UCD Ad Astra Performing Arts Ensemble, including Alumna Isolde O'Loughlin
(far right), Dublin, Physiotherapy**

Ad Astra Performing Arts Alumni performing in G.B.S. at the National Gallery of Ireland, which was created by our Artistic Director Kellie Hughes, in collaboration with Dr. Lucy Collins, Ad Astra Music Director Thérèse Timoney and the National Gallery of Ireland to commemorate the life and work of George Bernard Shaw.

Performing Arts Scholars

UCD Ad Astra Performing Arts Scholars

The UCD Ad Astra Performing Arts programme offers opportunities to students who excel in theatre performance (actor, playwright, director, designer etc.)/classical music and wish to develop their performance talents while pursuing a degree in UCD. At any one time, there are 20 Performing Arts Scholars in the programme with an average intake of 5 each year.

Students must apply online via the Academy website before 31st January 2026. Candidates will be chosen for audition on the basis of the information provided on the application form, covering their musical or dramatic studies, past experiences and any information that might support the application.

Successful candidates will be offered a place in the Academy subject to an offer and acceptance of a course in UCD. Points concessions can be made for successful audition candidates who can show evidence of ability to undertake their chosen course.

Please visit ucd.ie/adastraacademy for full details of eligibility and application process.

Benefits

- €3,000 scholarship allowance each year a scholar is in the Academy
- Access to the new Performing Arts Building which features a state-of-the-art studio with sprung floor, a grand piano and an area for alumni and current members to rehearse and create.
- Guaranteed on-campus accommodation, the cost of which may be offset by the scholarship allowance
- The opportunity to work with experienced professionals in seminar and workshop settings
- The opportunity to perform in concerts, recitals and theatre productions
- Access to the Ad Astra Scholars' Room

Applications Open	Applications Close	Interviews
1st November 2025	31st January 2026	April/May 2026



UCD AD ASTRA ACADEMY

ASPIRE. ACHIEVE. EXCEL.

UCD Ad Astra Academy, Student Centre, University College Dublin,
Belfield, Dublin 4, Ireland. T: +353 1 716 3105

Visit ucd.ie/adastraacademy for more details