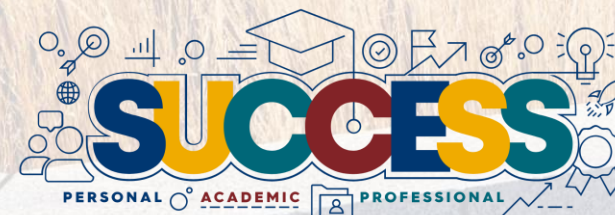


“From Participation to Partnership: Enhancing Student Engagement in Higher Education”

Careers and Employability Service
Upskill Initiatives

Rebecca Boyle, Máire Buckley, Seamus O'Neill
Maynooth University



Our Purpose

The **Careers and Employability Service** is dedicated to **enabling students to develop the skills to excel professionally**, whether that means exploring future career paths, upskilling, securing a placement, or networking with potential employers.



Our Offering



Tailored 1:1 Career Advice and Guidance

Our team offer high quality careers education, information, advice and guidance advice to MU students through 1:1 Appointments, Email Guidance and Queries.



Faculty Liaisons

Our faculty liaisons are available to work with our academic colleagues to deliver high impact careers and employability information, talks, workshops and events.



Co-Curricular UpSkill Programmes

Our suite of co-curricular UpSkill programmes enhance belonging and provide professional skills development opportunities for MU students. Students can explore research through SPUR, get recognised with MUSE, gain real-world work experience with Micro Internships and develop insights and network with Career Mentoring.



Careers Resources and Tools – Online 24/7

Our online resources offer 24/7 careers help, ranging from interactive learning activities to help students develop workplace skills, virtual work experiences, psychometric tests to CV and Interview AI tools. With hundreds of graduate opportunities listed every year on our CareersConnect and PlacementConnect portal.



Accredited Work Placement

Our Team coordinates and manages the seamless integration of our students into professional work environments, aligning with the accredited requirements of their degree programmes. This integral process is cultivated through the collaborative engagement of Students, Faculty, and Employers.



Events and Workshops

Our team provide bespoke Careers and Employability talks and workshops, alongside annual Careers Fair.

Today

Student Success Micro Internship Programme

Student-Staff Collaboration



SPUR Supporters Programme

Sustainable Engagement Models



UpSkill Team | Careers and Employability Service



Máire Buckley

**Experiential
Learning Officer**



Seamus O'Neill

**Employability and Skills
Development
Coordinator**



Rebecca Boyle

**Employability and
Skills Development
Coordinator**

Eddie Corr
**Student Success
Officer**
THRIVE initiative

**Human
Resources**

Students

**Professional
Service Units**

**Graduate
Research
Academy**

**Academic
Departments**

Today

- Background
- Process
- Stats
- Feedback
- Learning

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Background

Background

What?

- Paid, short-term opportunities (up to 100 hours) between students and professional service staff
- Students and staff working together on defined student success projects or activities
- Projects are not repeated annually/one time opportunity
- Internships 50% funded by Host Office, 50% by THRIVE Initiative

Why?

- Provides students and staff with insights and development opportunities
- Administration managed by the Careers and Employability Service – (Marketing, applications, Set-Up, Training, Payment, Support)
- Beneficial to all stakeholders

When?

- First launched 2022
- Currently in 4th intake (Summer 2025)
- Takes place from Jan - Sept



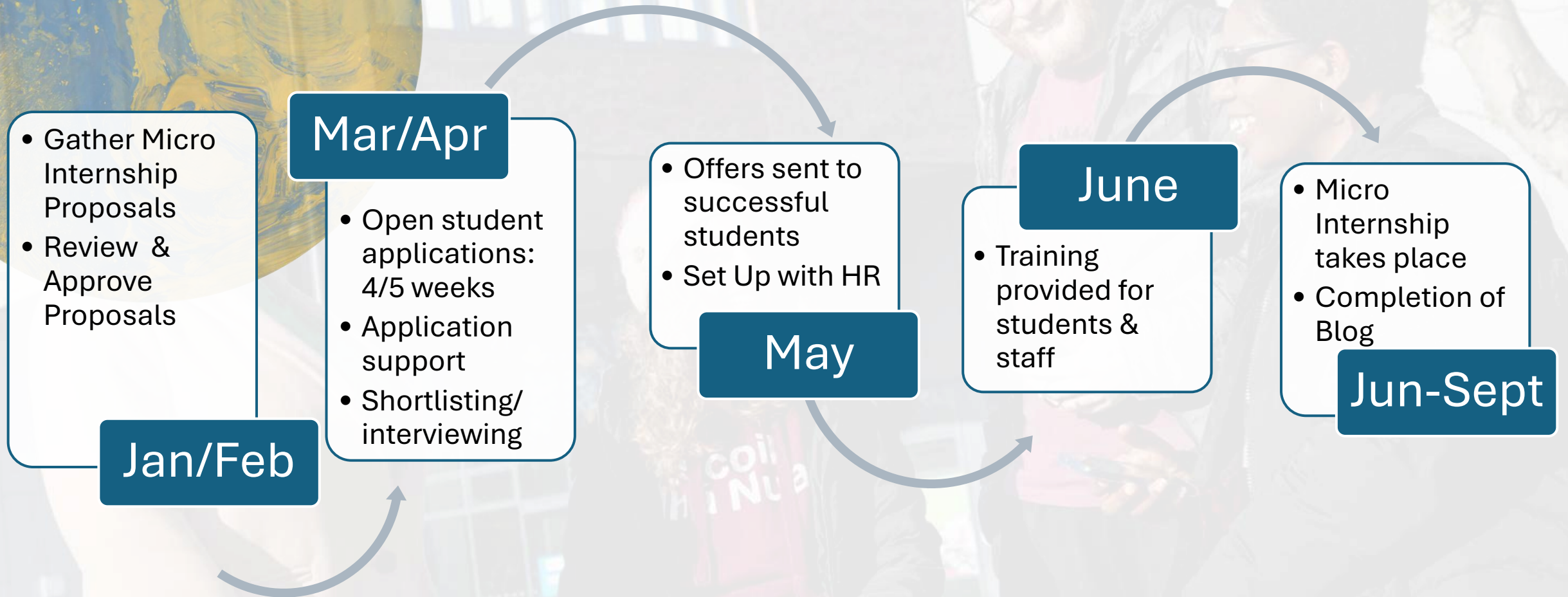
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Process



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Process





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Stats



Building Awareness

Yearly Statistics

	Offices Engaged	Roles Offered	Applications
2022	6	8	44
2023	6	9	49
2024	10	18	208
2025	13	15	256

Project Areas Include:

- EDI Race Equality Micro Intern
- Health Promotion Social Media Micro Intern
- Data Analytics Micro Intern
- Tutor Recruitment Micro Intern
- Green Campus Micro Intern
- Career Insights Micro Intern
- External Relations Micro Intern
- MAP Micro Intern
- Market Research Micro Intern

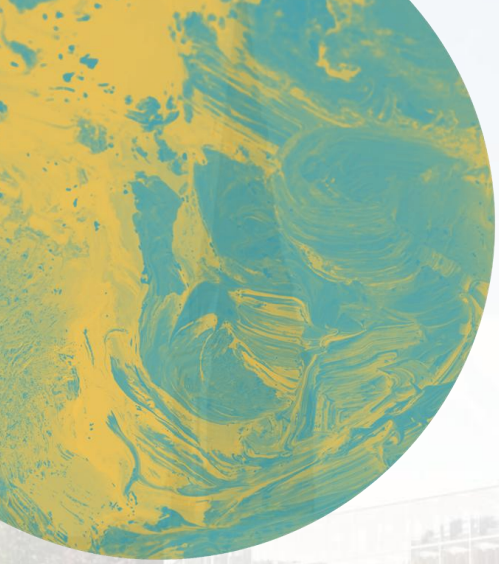
Impact on students

	Pre	Post
Knowledge of the skills needed to succeed in their career area	3.0	4.0
Confidence in making conversation with professionals employed in a field of interest	3.4	4.2
I believe I can deliver a challenging project that meets stakeholder requirements	3.4	4.4
I am confident I can work collaboratively with others and can present my work effectively	4.1	5.0
I am confident in my abilities to identify and articulate my skills to future employers	3.6	4.6



**Micro
Internships**





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Feedback



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The Student Experience

“The experience was not without its challenges, but overcoming them only added to the sense of accomplishment”

“Within the team I wasn’t treated as a student, I was treated as a co-worker and given real and meaningful jobs.”

“My time at DARO has been the most beneficial time I have spent at university so far.”

“I no longer believe I am the opposite of the ideal candidate.. neither do employers; my Micro-Internship aided me in securing my work placement...”

The Staff Experience

“Highly professional programme lead and managed by excellent colleagues. Well done!”

“An invaluable asset that should be a permanent fixture within MU, it gave both students and staff alike an opportunity to work alongside each other for a common goal that would not have happened otherwise”

“My overall experience of the Micro Internship Programme was good and our department benefited greatly. The programme highlights the importance of mentorship and collaboration.”

Student-Staff Collaboration/Mutual Learning

	Student	Staff
Students on review panel:	Be the student voice	Is this a suitable / interesting role for students? Student expectation of the role.
Recruitment Process:	Application/Interview Support for student	Recruitment experience for staff / Insight into student life
Training:	Setting expectations and making connections	Setting expectations and making connections
Throughout the Micro Internship:	Professional skill development / Insight into the University, its supports, outside the classroom	Managerial and mentoring experience / Insight into students', their knowledge, their expertise as service users
Micro Internship End:	How to articulate my Micro Internship / Sharing new knowledge with fellow students	Improved project outcome

CES learning through all of these steps!

Thank You

Oilecoil Mhá Nuad
Maynooth University
Seirbhís na nGairmeacha agus na
hInfhostaitheachta
Careers and Employability Service

WE ARE HIRING!


**Micro
Internships**
Advance Your Skills With a
Micro Internship This Summer!

**10 OPPORTUNITIES LIVE NOW -
APPLICATIONS OPEN UNTIL FRIDAY 12 APRIL**

01 Market Research Micro Intern	06 Social Media Research Micro Intern
02 Equality, Diversity, Inclusion Micro Intern	07 MU Library Teaching & Engagement Micro Intern
03 International Office Content Creation Micro Intern	08 MU MAP Micro Intern
04 Moodle Accessibility Micro Intern	09 Career Insights Research Micro Intern
05 External Relations Micro Intern	10 Online Orientation Programme Micro Intern

www.mu.ie/upskill

 **Apply Today!**



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WE ARE HIRING!


**Micro
Internships**
Advance Your Skills This Summer!

**10 paid opportunities
are now live -
Apply by Friday 12 April**


www.mu.ie/upskill


The programme is funded by the THRIVE Initiative's Student Engagement through Partnership (StEP) Fund

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**CLOSING
TODAY!!!**


**Micro
Internships**
WE ARE HIRING!



Enhancing Student Engagement in Higher Education

The SPUR Supporter Initiative

Seamus O'Neill, Máire Buckley, Rebecca Boyle
Maynooth University



Background

Why?

- Compliments the Summer Programme for Undergraduate Research (SPUR)
- Designed to enhance employability and professional development for PhD students

What?

- Collaboration between undergraduates and PhD students in a mutually beneficial partnership
- Undergraduate students gain an insight into the research process and life as a researcher
- PhD students develop supervisory and mentorship skills
- Both benefit from building and expanding their research network within the academic community
- PhD students volunteer their time – approximately 15 hours during the summer
- Open to current MU PhD students of any discipline or year

When?

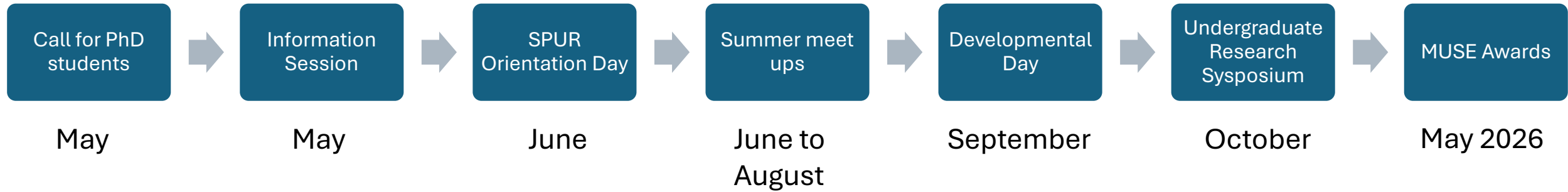
- First launched in 2022
- Currently in 4th intake (Summer 2025)
- 9 PhD students participated in summer 2024

Process and Timeline



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Process and Timeline



Feedback

“What stands out for me when I think of this programme is the emphasis on collaboration. This included the encouragement of networking amongst students and peers, the frequent SPUR meet ups, and the constant support given by the SPUR supporters, Máire, and Séamus.”

“SPUR managed to give me the experience of a Chemistry PhD student and swayed my opinion on it. Before my SPUR experience I was against doing a PhD, however now I am trying to begin my PhD application with the help of my supervisors. I believe that the SPUR experience in the chemistry synthetic laboratory is a great taste of what it is like to be a researcher/PhD student in Chemistry.”

“I got to learn about networking, and built a community of friends, who were helpful and gave advice on anything I needed. From SPUR, I developed my understanding of how to apply for postgraduate studies and am happy to say I am applying for a PhD scholarship. SPUR gave me the experience I needed and opened the door to postgraduate study, and for that I cannot recommend it more.”



Feedback

"I thought that the SPUR Programme was a great opportunity to share my passion for academic research with undergraduate students while providing a general level of support and expertise based on my experience. It is very rewarding and inspiring to see the motivation and enthusiasm of some of those students in conducting their research project, as well as how they value the advice of PhD students who are more advanced than they are in pursuit of academic research."

"Participating to the programme gives a good insight into the variety of existing research projects in academia and the prospects linked to them. For instance, I thought that the development day at the end of the programme was very helpful in terms of helping me orient myself as an academic researcher in the making, and devise a career plan based on the competence and skills associated to it."



Key Learnings

- The initiative significantly benefits undergraduates by boosting their confidence and preparation for postgraduate studies
- PhD students develop valuable supervisory skills and enhance their professional profiles
- The initiative fosters a collaborative academic environment, benefitting both undergraduates and PhD students
- Continuous feedback and evaluation ensure the initiative remains relevant and effective

