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**CONNECT**

**Issue 4.0 February 2019**

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## Welcome to the February edition of Connect...

Where ever you are in the academic year, the evenings are getting slightly brighter and spring is just around the corner. The AHECS Executive Board meets again at the end of the month and we will update further on the work of the Board in the next edition. As many of you know AHECS has been built on collaboration where we as Careers Services share best practice with one another. With that in mind, we would welcome your inputs and ideas for sharing through this newsletter and other events. If you are on a Task Group or a member of a Service we would love to hear from you with your ideas to share so please email us on [admin@ahecs.ie](mailto:admin@ahecs.ie)

Best wishes

Trevor Johnston & Gavin Connell

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## Appointment of AHECS Administrator

We are delighted to announce the appointment of Kate Doyle who will join us on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2019 to take up the post of Administrator. You will hear from Kate in the coming weeks and I trust you will join with us welcoming Kate to the AHECS family.

## supporting students with disabilities for work based learning

A key objective of NUI Galway's Vision 2020 sought to increase to 24% the number of students from traditionally under-represented groups such as students with disabilities entering full-time undergraduate study. This aim is also reflected nationally with the Association for Higher Education Access and Disability (AHEAD) 2017 report identifying that the numbers of students with disabilities entering higher-level education had increased by 14%. The increase drives a need for dedicated support processes for this cohort of students particularly where students are enrolled on academic programmes with work based learning options.

Research has shown the value of work based learning in increasing students' employability, however for students with disabilities, work based learning can be daunting with fear of disclosure a factor for many students. Disclosure is one of the most challenging aspects of having a disability especially in relation to employment (AHEAD, 2013). It's complex and students do not disclose due to the fear of the negative repercussions of the stigma associated with having a disability.

Recognising this challenge for students, the Career Development Centre (CDC) in NUI Galway sought to foster a positive climate for disclosure through the establishment of best practices to support students with disabilities going on placement. Such practices incorporate scaffolding support measures in collaboration with the Disability Support Service. The best practice is a three tiered approach which comprises of the following;

- Promotion of disability awareness through the provision of training for placement officers in how to support students with disabilities. Placement officers are aware of topics such as disclosure, employment legislation and reasonable accommodations.
- Collaboration with the Disability Support Service to prepare second year students for their third year placement through the attendance of placement advisory sessions and facilitation of multiple one-to-one placement planning meetings to define accommodations. Planning meetings are inclusive towards discussing disclosure and seek to empower the student to develop their disclosure plan.
- Development of a Placement Planning report for students to outline necessary accommodations for the placement process to ensure the student is not disadvantaged because of their disability.

university (disability office/placement coordinator) and the employer is held to ensure a seamless transition to the workplace.

Since the introduction of the best practices, the disclosure of disability by students has increased significantly and has led to a positive discourse around disclosure. In addition, it has enhanced disability awareness among placement officers and promoted a joined up service provision where students are supported during their career journey.

#### References

AHEAD (2017), Number of Students with Disabilities Studying in Higher Education in Ireland 2015/16. Dublin: AHEAD Educational Press.

<https://ahead.ie/userfiles/files/shop/free/Rates%202016-17%20-%20ONLINE.pdf>

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## Dates for your Diary

### **26 February:** [An Audience with Queen's University](#) - Dublin

Come along to meet some of our leading academics, hear from our current postgraduate students and learn more about the market-attuned programmes we offer.

### **25 April: AHECS Employability Awards 2019 & Gradireland Awards Night - Mansion House, Dublin.**

AHECS Employability Awards aim to encourage, reward and share good practice amongst Higher Education careers practitioners and employers by promoting high-quality, creative, innovative and collaborative projects and high professional standards across the full range of HE careers work. The annual gradireland Graduate Recruitment Awards 2019 and the AHECS Employability Awards evening will be held in the Mansion House in Dublin on the 25th of April 2019.

Further details on how to submit your entry will follow in the next couple of weeks, in the meantime start to think about entries for the awards.

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## Partnership with Gradireland

Gradireland has been working hard on updating the job descriptions on gradireland.com over the past few weeks, and will continue adding to them,

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## Job Opportunities

If you have job opportunities to advertise in the next Connect, please email [admin@ahecs.ie](mailto:admin@ahecs.ie)

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## Article Submissions

We are keen to receive your suggestions for content for the next edition.

Please email [admin@ahecs.ie](mailto:admin@ahecs.ie) with your content and items for next edition by 15th March, 2019.

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