

## Free legal advice for startups

### UCC has become the first university in Ireland to offer free legal advice to startups with the launch of its new IT Law Clinic.

How does this free legal advice service work? Twelve postgraduate law students will work together with academic staff and law firms, including McCullagh Wall, Ronan Daly Jermyn and O'Dowd Solicitors, and will answer legal questions from startups.

"The new IT Law Clinic at UCC provides a much-needed resource for technology startups in the region. Legal issues are unfortunately something that many startups avoid in their early days because of perceived cost and complexity issues," said DC Cahalane, founder of BUILTINCORK, a community initiative to aid the development of Cork tech startups.

The clinic's co-directors, Dr Darius Whelan and Professor Maeve McDonagh from UCC's School of Law, want to bring together the talent within the Irish startup scene and the university.

"Startups don't have the funds to pay for expensive legal services, so by providing free information we save them that extra expense. We hope that this service will reduce legal barriers for innovative startups and drive startup growth," said Professor McDonagh.

#### The IT Law Clinic

[The IT Law Clinic](#) at UCC, part of iLINC, the European Network of Law Incubators, collaborates with successful, established IT clinics in cities including Amsterdam, Hamburg and New York.

"We saw that the model of free legal information for startups works really well in other countries and decided to apply that model in Ireland here at UCC," says McDonagh.

#### An opportunity for postgraduate law students

The clinic also provides a valuable opportunity for UCC's postgraduate law students to apply abstract legal knowledge to real-life situations.

"Startups need help avoiding problems which can arise in complying with laws concerning data protection, selling online and copyright. The clinic can help them with free legal information in those crucial early stages of the business when pressing legal issues affecting the business need to be resolved," says Whelan.

Startups can contact the clinic on (021) 490 3452, [itlawclinic@ucc.ie](mailto:itlawclinic@ucc.ie), or on Twitter @ITLawClinicUCC.

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