

## The best colleges in Ireland for student entrepreneurs

### **So, you want to go to college, but you also want to be an entrepreneur. Why not do both?**

Below is a list of the top Universities and colleges in Ireland that offer students programmes, grants and supports to start and grow their business ideas, while still finishing their studies.

#### **University College Cork – IGNITE**

[IGNITE](#) at UCC supports recent graduates that have viable business ideas. The programme aims to turn original ideas into new products and services, accelerate business startups, and create jobs by nurturing entrepreneurship.

IGNITE has a comprehensive start your own business programme with many useful supports. It's one of the best in Ireland.

#### **Trinity College Dublin - Blackstone LaunchPad**

The [Blackstone LaunchPad](#) entrepreneurship programme for students at Trinity College Dublin aims to “foster student entrepreneurs, connecting them with business and provide them with the skills to succeed as entrepreneurs”.

Based at the renowned Berkeley Library, the Blackstone LaunchPad facility is accessible to all Trinity students across all disciplines.

“We will inspire students to grow their ideas into viable businesses through mentoring, support, ideation and venture creation,” says the executive director, John Whelan.

### **NUI Galway - Blackstone LaunchPad**

NUI Galway also houses a [Blackstone LaunchPad](#), a multidisciplinary programme that supports a “culture of entrepreneurship”.

For student entrepreneurs, there is individual coaching, seminars and practical training in building a business. “If students have an idea or want to pitch something, or want to build out some skills or they are just curious, they can just come in and talk to us, and we’ll help them to figure out what’s next in their journey,” says Mary Carty, executive director.

## **Dublin City University**

The [DCU UStart student programme](#), as part of the Ryan Academy, helps students accelerate their business, from idea to product or service.

The free programme runs part-time during the summer months June to September, allowing students to focus on college during school terms.

The programme offers free office space as well as business development funding which is allocated based on the student's progress.

Mentoring is also provided, and full-time support is available from the DCU UStart manager.

## **University College Dublin**

[UCD Startup Stars](#) is an entrepreneurship programme for UCD undergraduate and postgraduate students from all disciplines. It is run by NovaUCD in collaboration with the UCD Innovation Academy and the UCD Michael Smurfit Graduate Business School.

Successful applicants will participate in an intensive four-week programme at NovaUCD. They will be given a cash stipend, office space, a structured set of workshops and mentoring sessions. A cash prize of €3,000 will be granted to the overall winner.

## **National College of Ireland (NCI) Business Incubation Centre**

The NCI says enterprise is ‘a fundamental element of the curriculum’ across all its third-level educational programmes. The college has an active programme of events, including the ‘Entrepreneurs Uncovered’ series and its leadership seminars.

A business [incubation centre](#) on campus supports knowledge intensive startups.

## **Trinity Technology and Enterprise Campus, Trinity College Dublin**

The [Trinity Technology and Enterprise Campus](#) is there to help students develop knowledge-based enterprises. It provides business incubation space in the form of hot desks, office space and laboratory facilities. It also provides access to supports, like meeting rooms, links to research in Trinity College and access to seed and venture capital.

The Trinity Entrepreneurship Training Programme is for postgraduates and postdocs.

## **GatewayUCC, University College Cork**

[GatewayUCC](#) supports knowledge-based indigenous companies that emerge from the University's research. The idea is to turn research ideas into commercial businesses. To date, 40 technology startups have been supported which have gone on to employ more than 250 people.

The centre offers a supportive work environment for new startups, spinouts and spin-in knowledge-based companies.

## **Nexus Innovation Centre, University of Limerick**

[Nexus](#) is a hub where entrepreneurs can develop, collaborate and grow. The centre aims to help entrepreneurs start and grow businesses and have an international trading focus.

At Nexus, startups are challenged to move past conventional ideas around business development. The centre encourages them to become highly connected, agile, and smart.

## **DIT Hothouse**

[DIT Hothouse](#) has launched a new ‘monthly inventor competition’, offering a €250 prize voucher to the best invention proposal received each month.

The competition is open to all staff and students of Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT), the Institute of Technology Tallaght, Dublin (ITTD), the Institute of Technology Blanchardstown (ITB), the Institute of Art, Design & Technology, Dun Laoghaire (IADT) and the National College of Ireland (NCI).

DIT Hothouse is a centre of innovation for new business ideas and offers a range of supports to students, staff and outside companies.

### **Hartnett Enterprise Acceleration Centre, Limerick Institute Of Technology**

[The Hartnett Enterprise Acceleration Centre](#) is Limerick Institute of Technology's on-campus incubator for new businesses in the growth phase.

The New Frontiers (Phase 1) programme offers free training and business advice to entrepreneurs to help them develop concrete business plans.

### **Learning & Innovation Centre (LINC) Blanchardstown Institute of Technology**

[The LINC](#) (Learning and Innovation Centre) is ITB's link between the Institute and the business community.

Facilities, training and support for new high growth, knowledge-based businesses are on offer.

### **CoLab - Letterkenny Institute of Technology**

[CoLab](#), based on the Letterkenny campus at LYIT, is a supportive incubation centre.

Whether you're a one-person startup or a small company, CoLab has a range of facilities to help you develop your idea, including high-spec office and research units, shared reception services, meeting and training rooms.

### **Other colleges that offer incubation services include:**

- M50 Enterprise – Tallaght IT and Blanchardstown IT.
- South East Enterprise Platform Program – Waterford IT.
- Innovation Centre, NUI Maynooth (centre is under construction).
- Tyndall Incubation Centre, Tyndall National Institute Cork (centre under construction).
- Midlands Innovation & Research Centre (MIRC), Athlone Institute of Technology.
- Enterprise & Research Incubation Campus, Carlow Institute of Technology.
- Rubicon Centre, Cork Institute of Technology.
- Regional Development Centre (RDC), Dundalk Institute of Technology.
- Innovation in Business Centre (IIBC), Galway, Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology.
- Innovation in Business Centre (IIBC), Castlebar, Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology.
- The Media Cube, Institute of Art, Design and Technology Dun Laoghaire.
- ITSBIC, Institute of Technology Sligo.
- Synergy Centre, Institute of Technology Tallaght.
- Tom Creen Business Centre, Institute of Technology Tralee.

- Arclabs Research and Innovation Centre, Waterford Institute of Technology.

*Article by Catherine Devine and Stephen Conmy.*

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