

## **UCC's IGNITE lights flame for early-stage business ideas**

### **UCC's IGNITE has a proven track record in sparking successful early-stage companies and is looking for a new cohort of founders it wants to make investor-ready within 12 months.**

Graduates with start-up ideas who want to join a proven list of ventures that include ApisProtect, AnaBio Technologies, TrustAp and more are being encouraged to apply to join by 5 June. Founders bursting with ideas can [apply here](#).

Founded in 2011 and supported by Bank of Ireland, IGNITE is a joint initiative by UCC, Cork City Council, Cork County Council and the Local Enterprise Offices of Cork City and County. Since 2011, IGNITE has supported 12 cohorts, with almost 130 individuals working on 110 start-up ideas. Almost 2/3rd of the start-ups continue to trade.

The programme is designed for very early idea-stage start-ups. The aim is that start-ups are revenue generating and/or investor ready within 12 months. The programme is customer-focused – participants must engage early with prospective customers to identify market needs.

#### **Learning by doing: The IGNITE way**

The approach is 'learning by doing', participants directly apply what they are learning to developing their start-ups.

The programme is cohort based with 10 start-ups in each cohort. Successive cohorts overlap by six months to provide for practical support and collaboration between cohorts.

There is a strong emphasis on business networks and strong ties to business community. Up to 100 entrepreneurs and business owners contribute to the programme every year as guest speakers, mentors, members of review panels and in other roles.

"IGNITE supports recent graduates in any discipline from any third level institution in Ireland turn start-up ideas into scalable businesses over a 12-month period," explained Michelle Dorgan, programme manager.

"IGNITE is specifically designed for recent graduates. They are passionate and enthusiastic, they are generally subject matter experts, and they have few financial obligations so they can go far on relatively little finance.

"But they are often overly product focused, have poorly developed business networks and struggle

to raise early seed funding. IGNITE addresses these weaknesses with a strong focus on early customer engagement, development of business networks and access to small ideas stage seed funds.”

Dorgan said that participants benefit from a flexible programme of workshops, seminars and guest speakers designed to develop essential start-up skills, provide business information and engender entrepreneurial attitude. Participants can access mentors, coaches and consultants for one to one supports as required.

“Participants set goals and objectives and report progress at fortnightly update sessions. They draw on the workshops, seminars and guest speakers and one-to-one supports to help them achieve their goals.”

## **IGNITE alumni**

### **AnaBio Technologies**

Dr Sinead Bleiel (Doherty): AnaBio Technologies Ltd, a developer of encapsulation technologies for food and pharma market. AnaBio Technologies Ltd employs almost thirty staff at a product development facility in Carrigtwohill and was recently named SME Company of the Year 2020 at the Cork Chamber Awards. [www.anabio.ie](http://www.anabio.ie).

### **ApisProtect**

Dr Fiona Edwards-Murphy: [ApisProtect](#) uses Internet of Things (IoT) technology to monitor honey bee colonies. The company raised €1.5M in 2018 to deploy the system worldwide and is currently monitoring 20 million honeybees worldwide.

### **Traxit**

Conor Walsh and Luke O’Mahony: [Traxsit](#) has developed miniature, low power tracking devices for asset management in construction and agricultural sectors.

### **Trustap**



Conor Lyden: [Trustap](#) provides low risk online transactions through escrow payments. The product is used by a number of online marketplaces.

### **UrAbility**

James Northridge: [UrAbility](#) provides online courses to allow parents and educators working with children with learning needs to better understand how assistive technology can be used to support their learning.

### **Vconnecta**

Brendan Finucane: [Vconnecta](#) offers eCanvasser, a political campaign management platform and Voxcitio, a community engagement platform.

### **Yooni**

Nathan Mayes and Darragh Lucey: [Yooni](#)'s mission is to get the right student to the right course. It does so by using artificial intelligence and aims to reduce the high drop-out level from college courses. The company was founded in 2018 by Nathan Mayes and Darragh Lucey and plans to launch nationwide this year to all 180,000 senior cycle students in Ireland.

***Pictured at top: Michelle Dorgan, programme manager, UCC Ignite, with Eamon Curtin, director, UCC Ignite***

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