

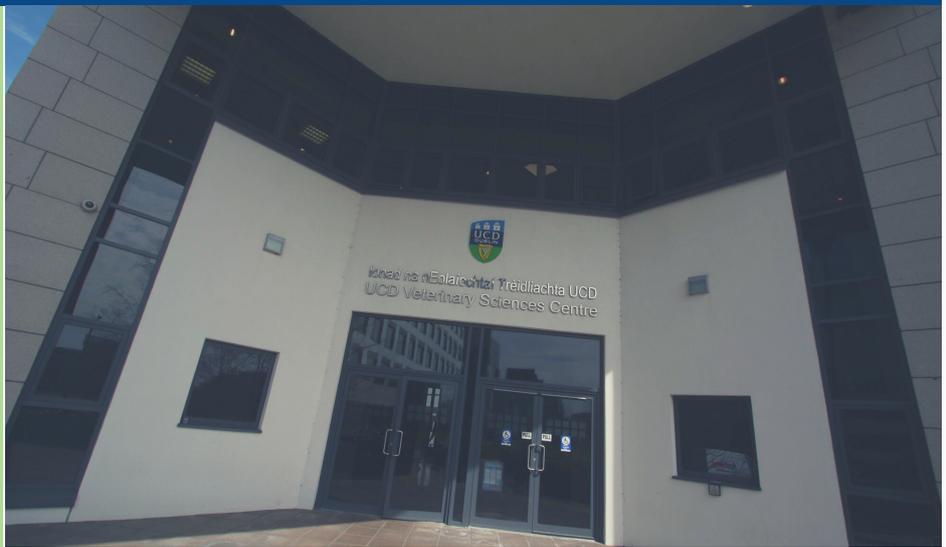


STUDENT NEWSLETTER

Scoil an Leighis Tréidliachta UCD | UCD School of Veterinary Medicine

WELCOME

Welcome to Issue 5 of our newsletter. This issue *should* have been out back in August, and we send our apologies for the delay! As you can imagine, things have been busy in the background preparing for year-start! In this issue, we bring you some more adventures and stories from the last few months. Meghan writes about her experiences on an Irish farm, and Alison gives us an insight into teaching during lockdown and the rapid adjustment that was needed in March. Niamh talks about doing yoga during a pandemic, and Emma writes about her Lipizzaner gelding, Mossy. Catherine lets us into her world of shark-fascination, and (another!) Niamh tells us what she did this summer (while she should have been in Malaysia). Finally, check out the sections on supports available to you, from the UCD Maths Support Centre to some Koru Mindfulness courses. Enjoy!



School News

We are very much looking forward to welcoming back our continuing students and welcoming our new students, despite the fact that things are going to be different this trimester. Don't forget to keep an eye on [the School website](#) for up-to-date information on your learning this coming trimester.

UCD Libraries: Many of you are asking about study spaces and [the UCD Libraries](#). [This video from the Library](#) is very helpful and tells you about what you should know before you visit the Library this trimester. During 2020/2021, the number of study seats available will be reduced in each library, and all study seats in all UCD libraries must be booked online and in advance. Go to [this link](#) to book your seat. Important to note is that students will also be able to enter the libraries to browse the shelves, borrow books or seek assistance.

Working on an Irish farm

Meghan McIlwain, 2nd Year Grad Entry

As a Canadian, I arrived at UCD last fall knowing only one person in the entire country and I never would have expected what 11 months here would bring: the vast amount of learning opportunities, the life-long friendships formed both at UCD and away on placements, and the general fun and excitement from starting life in a new place. My best advice to anyone is to talk to people! It is so important to network and make connections as you never know who you'll meet, what help you can provide and what you might learn from them. My story at Ballyherberry Farm began in just that way: a friend I'd made on farm placement in Cork reached out to me asking for student help on behalf of another farmer in Tipperary this past calving season. She put me in contact with Veronica and Ray, and I was able to help coordinate EMS placements for other students in my class and visit for a weekend myself with three other girls. Calving season is possibly the busiest and most demanding time of the year, and I'm glad UCD students were able to ease the burden for this family. We milk around 180 cows in the dairy herd, have a small additional herd of pedigree Polled Herefords and a Belgian Blue and her calf. What began as volunteering doing something I love has turned into a life-long friendship as Veronica and Ray agreed to have me back for the summer months milking and learning more about Irish grass-based systems.



The "milk train" coming in for milking - 180 on the mooove



Goulding Polled Lucy, Herberry 1 Lucy Lou, and Herberry 1 Lucy May

I'm well known in my class for my love of cows, but I didn't grow up on a farm and only started working with cattle in the last 3 years so I still have much to learn! The wealth of knowledge Ray and Veronica have is astounding, and I'm so thankful that they are sharing it with me. From learning to halter train calves for showing to choosing AI bulls, regimes to get cows ready for embryo flushing or implantation, to pasture management and the importance of grass measuring, I have a whole new appreciation for farming. One of my favourite chores besides milking is doing the weekly grass walk. I'm learning to accurately estimate, measure and calculate grass cover to plan our grazing or silage cutting. Building on my knowledge base from nutrition class, I'm learning when paddocks are the most palatable and best to graze, animal behaviour on when they have enough or too little grass and supplementing with concentrates.

That said, I have also picked up helpful tips and tricks across my work experiences and placements elsewhere that I could teach Veronica and Ray just as they have different backgrounds and experiences to teach me. Just because you're a student doesn't mean that you don't have something valuable to bring to the conversation! For example, I was able to pass on my cheap and cheerful mastitis test to help confirm borderline cases. Essentially, it's a California Milk Test without the plate and reagent but with a detergent everyone has on hand. It's as simple as a few drops of fairy dish-washing liquid with a small bit of suspected milk in any small, clean container and swirling for a few seconds until you see that it either stays liquid or becomes a gel. The gel is indicative of mastitis. Prevention is, of course, best practice, but catching cases early and treating them quickly is the next best scenario. All in all, being excited about your placements and open to building on what you already know and learning new methods will benefit everyone in the long run. Don't be shy to take on more than the required two weeks' experience as well! There is always more to learn on a farm, and the longer you spend, the more chances of seeing something new there are.

If you're interested in grass management and measuring, I've included these helpful resources to get you started: [How to Measure Grass Right](#) (PDF) and [PastureBase Ireland](#) (website).



Meghan milking in the parlour



Veronica with Herberry 1 Lucy Sky and Herberry 1 Lucy Belle



Meghan and Ray after a hard day's work

Veronica and Ray welcome students for placements!

If you have any questions about their farm, please contact Veronica at herberry1@gmail.com.

They try to accommodate as many students as they can in Dualla near Cashel, Co. Tipperary.

COVID-19 and a New Normal

Alison Reynolds, Assistant Professor in Veterinary Biosciences and Stage 1 Vet Nursing Coordinator

I am fortunate to have made it through the last few months untouched by the sadness and sickness that has affected many others. Instead, life has become an intricate balancing act - trying to fit work and family life side-by-side. I live in Dublin city with my husband and two daughters aged 9 and 6. Life pre-COVID was organised chaos: a busy whirl of school, work, commuting, homework, GAA, gymnastics, parties and constantly rushing.

Like most people, I had lots of plans for 2020: be a bridesmaid at my brother's wedding, buy a house, go on holidays with family and friends somewhere hot and sunny involving the Mediterranean. And then everything just stopped - well, not the work or the home life - but the constant business and moving from place to place. I missed work, chats with colleagues, teaching, coffee made by someone else, even my commute; and my daughters really missed their friends and routine. Things which kept me sane were daily walks with my family (within 2 km) - it felt like we watched each individual plant in the area bloom - and the daily hour of RTE's Homeschool Hub. I found the lockdown difficult. Home schooling while simultaneously working from home is an impossible challenge; there are not enough hours in the day to do both competently. We live in a small space and when you live where you work, it seems like there is never any getting away from work - it was always there waiting for you. In addition, as a scientist, I felt kind of useless, as teaching and family commitments meant I couldn't work on research.

Moving to distance teaching and changing anatomy practicals to online e-practicals involved a lot of extra work, which I was happy to do, particularly as feedback from virtual Zoom coffees with my classes suggested that the effort was worth it. Meetings turned into multiple Zoom calls which can be exhausting, especially when the calls are back-to-back. The longest call has lasted about 6 hours, and there have been a few of them.

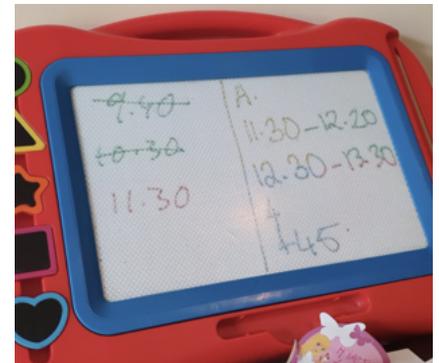
I manage a research team and my researchers had to move to doing online courses, learning more about the background of their work. This caused some stress as there were no data to be generated. I now run weekly lab meetings and individual meetings with all my students via Zoom and I hope this has helped me to grow into a better supervisor.

As many of you know, I also try and encourage vet students to partake in summer research projects and I am really proud of the fact that 20 vet students worked with staff to pivot their projects into online, remote, desk-based projects this summer. Seeing such enthusiasm for research is a joy, and I am extremely thankful to my colleagues for being so flexible.

Advantages of the lockdown included spending more time with my family, Zoom calls with friends on different continents and not having to commute. I have not learned a new language or read a library full of books or taken up any amazing new hobbies, although I did make a few nice banana breads. The only thing I have learned is how to fly a kite successfully, thanks to a windy day on a Donegal beach.



Alison back in her lab



Balancing daily Zoom calls with my husband's schedule in the absence of a whiteboard



Kite-flying in Donegal

Life has started to move to a new normal. I can see my parents, GAA training has resumed, and I am now (after many trainings, inductions, risk assessments and with extra PPE) back in the research lab working with zebrafish and training research students. Having made several contingency plans, I've prepared classes and e-practicals for the new students starting Veterinary and Veterinary Nursing in September.

On a personal level, I am delighted that my daughters can return to school full-time. They have really missed the social element of being with their friends, and I think it will benefit us all to spend a little time apart. The lockdown has made me evaluate which elements of my old life I want to take with me - spending more time at home with my family and speaking with friends more will feature in the future, and I hope time on Dublin bus will feature less. I anticipate that life will be different for quite a while as we learn to live alongside COVID-19, but I am hopeful for the future - and still looking forward to my brother's wedding.

Pandemic Yoga in the Vet School

Niamh Nestor, Vet School Student Adviser

Before the campus closure in March, a group of Vet staff members used to meet every Wednesday morning at 8am in one of the rooms in the Vet School to do a thirty-minute yoga session. We were very lucky to have been supported in this both by UCD Sport and Fitness, who provided us with a brilliant instructor every week, and the Vet School itself, which allowed us to use some space to run the yoga group. Under the umbrella of our Athena SWAN Sense of Community Working Group, the idea behind the yoga sessions was to bring people together to do some sort of activity early in the morning before the workday started in earnest. It's not easy being put through your paces that early in the day, but, like any physical activity, once we'd finished the session and had those endorphins buzzing, we felt well set up for the day. Full disclosure: We followed our yoga with breakfast in Pi – maybe this brought us together more than the activity?! Whatever the reason, we created a lovely community, and we cherished our Wednesday mornings and the chance to see each other.

Lots of things radically shifted mid-March, and one of those things was our regular yoga. Once we got through the initial stages of the crisis, a few of us knocked our heads together and figured out that we could still meet virtually via Zoom. Now, we meet twice weekly at lunchtime. One of us chooses a short yoga video from YouTube ([Yoga with Adrienne](#) is a big hit), shares it via Zoom, and off we go.



Yoga on the small screen: Adrienne and her doggie Benji virtually putting us through our paces!

If you're a staff member and would like to join us this term for some virtual yoga on Wednesdays at 12noon, please contact niamh.nestor@ucd.ie.



The sense of togetherness might not be the same – virtual meetups just can't replace face-to-face (read: breakfast in Pi!) – but we've maintained our little community; in fact, we've even expanded it as more colleagues have gotten the opportunity to join virtually. We have a lot of laughs, largely at ourselves because what we see on the yoga videos is often not replicated in reality, but the exercise is actually only one part of why we've continued with our yoga meetups. Seeing others, having a chat, and staying in touch is what the real benefits are. Namaste!

Maestoso Master

Emma Golding, Equine Clinical Studies, Diagnostic Imaging and Anaesthesia, and Vet School PhD candidate

Maestoso Master, otherwise known as Mossy, is my 10-year-old Lipizzaner gelding. And yes, he is definitely a Lipizzaner, despite his colour! Some are non-grey, and they are also being bred smaller in Hungary due to their popularity for carriage driving. Like all sports, driving was pretty much cancelled this year due to Covid, but I wanted to make use of the time in a productive way so I started working on developing our trust with each other. I am in a somewhat more vulnerable position than most people when dealing with horses on the ground; they need to learn that I move in different ways to other people, that I can't get quickly out of the way and that the space I occupy is shaped differently to everybody else. I have done this with a few ponies but with Mossy there's the added issue of him having no eye on one side!



Emma and Mossy have recently starting driving again!

I started by spending time with him in his stable, hanging out with him, grooming him and moving up and down his sighted side. I then moved on to his blind side, always talking to him and touching him, so he'd know exactly where I was. Whenever he'd start moving around, I'd stay still and just keep a hand out touching him so he could learn that I don't move out of his way, and that it's his responsibility to not bump into my chair. Once we were comfortable with each other, I moved on to picking up his feet on both sides too, something he needs to be accommodating with as there's not much I can do if he just says no!

Although we were doing lots of "back" and "over" in the stable, I wanted to focus on the back as the rein back is important both in the dressage test and if we go wrong in an obstacle and need to reverse to avoid penalties! Repetition of walk, stand and back in hand aided by lots of praise and he was soon going back off just my voice something that will hopefully transfer to when we're back driving. Trust between driver and horse is really important as our only means of communication are our hands and voice so despite the unplanned time off competing it was actually nice to have the opportunity to develop that in a really relaxed way.

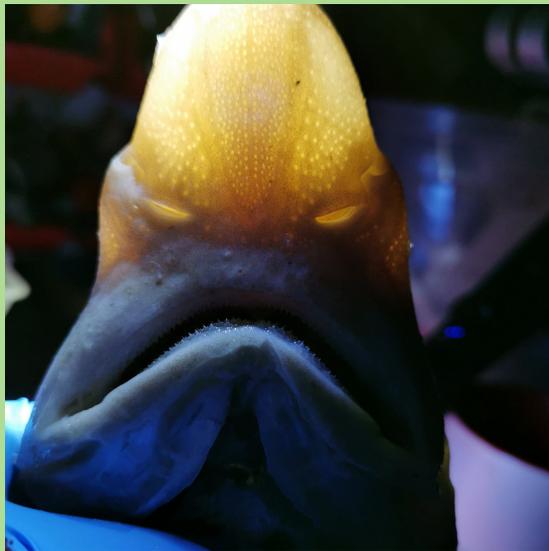
A Project to Get Your Teeth Into

Catherine McCarney, Senior Technical Officer in the Vet School

Working in the anatomy teaching lab is always interesting and busy. During the summer months I decided I would try and prepare some new specimens as part of an ongoing diploma in anatomical techniques I am undertaking with the Institute of Anatomical Sciences. I have always adored the ocean, spending summer days rock-pooling on the beach and in the water. Later, I studied Zoology and also completed a Masters degree in Marine Ecology, specifically in fisheries management. This involved spending weeks at sea, which only resulted in deepening my passion for all things marine. So, it was not surprising that I choose marine creatures to develop my knowledge of specimen preparation techniques for this course.

Fish provide interesting subjects for practising and learning different anatomical specimen-preparation techniques. Sharks, however, are a group of fish which have many unique challenges. After a fateful encounter with a man who prepares and renovates shark jaws, and with his ever-present encouragement and support, I made my decision that I would try my hand at preparing some shark jaws for display. With my background and contacts in the Marine Institute, I sourced some small Irish sharks which are part of the national fisheries management programme; I cleared a small space in the corner of the garden shed and dove in. I have spent many a happy hour in my garden shed during lockdown learning about the onerous and often-frustrating task of working with cartilaginous fish. Sharks are magnificent and captivating creatures, and I am having lots of fun trying (and often failing) to produce specimens worthy of honouring these beauties.

Alien Invasion: To your right, check out the awesomeness of the Ampulae of Lorenzini which form a part of the sharks electroreceptor system. They can help sharks sense prey in the ocean and beneath the substrate by detecting the electrical fields generated by activities of prey animals.



Above, a completed jaw of a Lesser Spotted Dogfish. Look at those teeth! Sharks constantly lose their teeth and replace them with a new set that rolls forward from behind!!



UCD Maths Support Centre

Anthony Cronin, Maths Support Centre Manager and Assistant Professor of Mathematics at UCD

The UCD Maths Support Centre (MSC), located in the James Joyce Library, offers free maths and stats support to any first- or second-year student of UCD. You can simply drop by at any time during our opening hours or you can make a booking for an online appointment where you can avail of one-on-one support with a maths support tutor. With 100 hours of tutor support available each week during the teaching trimester and revision weeks, we hope you will find some time to pop in and say hello to our friendly staff. Whether it is nursing or medicine, a strong knowledge of statistics is an essential skill, so don't let it hold you back and visit the MSC.



The photo on the left shows a typical tutor-student interaction in the MSC



You can't miss the MSC banner as you walk past the JLL!

Want to know more about how the MSC works? YouTube is a mine of information! In [this video](#), you'll hear from students who have used the MSC and from the tutors who work there to support students. [This video](#) explains to you how to book an appointment to meet with a tutor and how the whole process works.

Lockdown in Mayo

Niamh Larkin, Final-year MVB Student

These past months have been the most bizarre few months we have ever lived through, but luckily for me I got to spend them in my beautiful home county of Mayo. The shock of having to do exams in May at home quickly turned to pure joy as my family provided me with regular cups of tea, and, of course, delicious dinners that I didn't have to cook myself! It was the most relaxing exam season of my life. Of course, our pet lambs Séamus, Evelyn and Treasa provided entertainment, and their feeding schedule matched up with my tea breaks perfectly. Once exams were over I went back to full-time work in a local pharmacy, which is also a veterinary pharmacy, so I didn't feel like I was missing out on CEMS because I was learning new things every day there.



Evelyn

Unfortunately, one of the events that got cancelled due to lockdown was the UCD Relay for Life. I am on the committee for RFL, and as we were short of our target fundraising amount by €1,500, we as a committee decided to run 1,500km between us to raise the money. Now, running is not my thing at all, but the whole committee were up for it, so I said I'd challenge myself. With football training put on hold, I replaced football boots with runners and ran 80km in the month of June. We exceeded our target which now means that in the past nine years in UCD, Relay for Life has raised over €100,000 for the Irish Cancer Society.

Another cancelled event was a holiday I had booked to visit my uncle in Malaysia. I was then to go on to travel Thailand and also do placement in a neuter clinic in Chaing Mai. I was devastated when we had to cancel it, as was my uncle, but at least I had a job and plenty of running to do to keep me occupied.



Lucky the Calf



Niamh and Annie



Niamh embracing a brand new hobby!

All in all, I had such a wonderful lockdown experience. I have spent lots of quality time with my family and my animals, helped Dad out on the farm, taken up a new hobby, and just enjoyed myself in general. I am glad, however, that football is now back and that final-year rotations have started. I can't wait to see what the next year has in store for me.

UCD Koru Mindfulness

There are two upcoming Koru Mindfulness Courses for students via Zoom.

Course 1: Starts Monday, Sep. 28th, 12.15-1.30pm. Register [here](#).

Course 2: Starts Tuesday, Sep. 29th, 12.15-1.30pm. Register [here](#).

Each course runs over 4 consecutive weeks and is suitable for those new to Mindfulness as well as those familiar with the practice. The Koru course is designed to teach mindfulness in a way that is accessible and relevant to UCD students' lives, based on the [Centre for Koru Mindfulness programme](#).

There is no charge for the course and it is open to anyone currently registered as a student of UCD. If you feel it might be of interest and you are available to attend all 4 classes, we would be delighted to have you join us on the course! If you have any questions in advance please feel free to get in touch and we'll do our best to answer them for you: themindfulstudent@ucd.ie.



NB: Please note if you are attending a professional for a mental or physical health issue, please check in with your provider prior to sign-up to ensure that the mindfulness course is suitable for you at this time. It is necessary to attend all 4 sessions, so please check your schedule to be sure you're available. We also ask that students attend the sessions using video as well as audio connection.



Tips for Wellbeing

Sleep is one of the three 'pillars of health': Nutrition, physical activity and sleep. So, yes, you got it - sleep is fairly important! How much sleep do you need? How does it work? What is 'sleep debt'? What roles do light and darkness play in sleep? What about caffeine?

For all your burning questions and more, have a watch of [this video](#) hosted by the VHI Health Squad.

"No Stigma" Campaign

During the summer, St Patrick's Mental Health Services launched a very timely "No Stigma" campaign, which 'reimagines a society without mental health stigma and discrimination by showing the positive effect on life when they are not experienced'. The [press release](#) tells us that this campaign 'serves as a reminder that life without stigma means we all get to live it'. Powerful stuff, which we're all about here at the Student Newsletter.

Check out [this link](#) to find out more about the campaign and how you can support it, and also to find out more about maintaining good mental health. The COVID-19 pandemic has been going on now for what feels like forever, and all of our lives have been upended. No one has been left untouched. We all have good days and bad days at the best of times, but at the moment the bad days may be more frequent and may feel more intense. Remember that there are [lots of supports available at UCD](#) should you need them. Just reach out.

