



Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin



IMPACT
BELONGING
INCLUSION
ABILITY



**BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS WITH TRINITY CENTRE
FOR PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES**

Marie Devitt and Barbara Ringwood



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About the TCPID



The Trinity Centre for People with Intellectual Disabilities (TCPID) is situated within the School of Education in Trinity College Dublin. The TCPID provides a post-secondary accredited Level 5 Certificate in Arts, Science and Inclusive Applied Practice for students with intellectual disabilities.

The core mission of the TCPID is to address the significant educational and societal barriers experienced by people with intellectual disabilities through the provision of an innovative high-quality higher education programme, enabling the transition to meaningful employment and/or further education after graduation.



Figure: 1 TCPID Mission

Bridge to Business

The TCPID works closely with a core network of business and philanthropic partners who provide us with essential financial and practical support, helping to promote inclusion in the workplace for people with intellectual disabilities. Our partners are key to helping us to create greater opportunities for meaningful employment and independent living and a greater sense of inclusion within society for people of all abilities.

A key element in engaging the support of businesses has been the personal introductions to Senior Management by Hugo MacNeill, our TCPID Ambassador. This secured essential support for the programme from the top level within each organisation.

Our Business Partners

GROWTH IN
PARTNERSHIP
NUMBERS
EACH YEAR

Over 93% of all TCPID
partnerships renewed

Our business partner numbers have increased steadily each year since we launched the TCPID Business Partners programme in 2016.

At the time of writing this report, over 93% of partners have renewed their partnership with the TCPID.

How we nurture our Business Partnerships

- > Careful nurturing of each partnership and development of trust.
- > Bespoke engagement with every partner as each company is unique in their structures and requirements.
- > Link partners with each other for support as needed – experienced partners can support new partners.
- > Work to maintain relationships after changes in key personnel.
- > Stay informed on changes within the business community and adapt as necessary.
- > Ongoing communication with all partners.

How we communicate

- > Publication of TCPID Business Partners Update twice a year
- > Annual TCPID Business Partners Meeting
- > Regular meetings with main contacts within each company
- > Invitation to annual SciFest@TCPID student exhibition

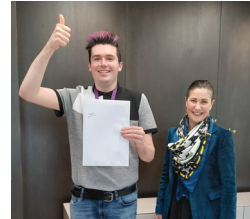


Stages of becoming a TCPID Business Partner





STAGE ONE SIGN UP AS OFFICIAL PARTNER



€5,000

per year for 3 years

TCPID Business Partner

€10,000

per year for 3 years

TCPID Business Patron

Sign TCPID Gift Agreement – Sign TCPID Internship Agreement – Transfer Funds for Year 1

If companies are interested in joining our TCPID Business Partners Network, they sign a one page partnership Agreement with the TCPID and commit to a donation of either €5,000 or €10,000.

This donation goes through the Trinity Foundation / Trinity Development and Alumni which is the registered charity body within Trinity College Dublin.

New partners also sign a TCPID Graduate Internship Agreement if they are interested in taking on one of our graduates for a paid internship.



STAGE TWO ENGAGEMENT OPTIONS FOR BUSINESS PARTNERS

There are a number of ways in which our TCPID Business Partners choose to engage with us:

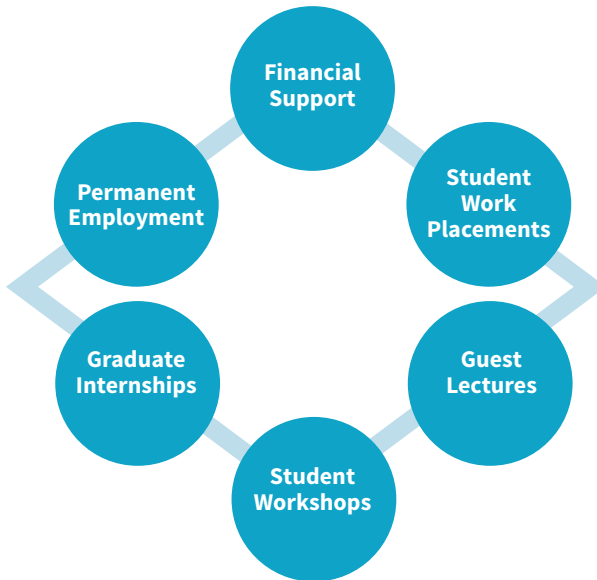


Figure: 2 Engagement Options for TCPID Business Partners

Student work placements

One morning per week for 8 weeks starting February

The student work placements take place in semester two of the 2nd year of the ASIAP course. Our students go to work with one of our partner companies for one morning per week for a period of 8 weeks. The student placements are unpaid as they are part of the student curriculum. This means that from a HR perspective there is no requirement for an employment contract or new hire onboarding processes, unless this is required as part of the company's own policies.

Student workshops

Daily during the month of May

Our TCPID Business Partners have been providing tailored student workshops each year during May since 2017.

These workshops are delivered by our business partners and designed in collaboration with the team at TCPID. They are designed to help students to develop key skills which help them as they progress further with work placements and graduate internships. They are an opportunity for businesses to meet with our students and for our students to visit business partners. In addition to the fantastic learning from each of the workshops they are also great fun for all involved.

Sample Topics

- > Communication skills
- > Presentation skills
- > Office administration skills
- > Teamwork skills
- > Research skills
- > Professional behaviour
- > Interview skills
- > Your first employment contract
- > Budgeting skills
- > Website design skills



Guest lectures

As there are a number of business-related modules on the Certificate in Arts, Science and Inclusive Applied Practice, our business partners have also provided guest lectures during some modules. This is a wonderful opportunity for students to get the insights of industry experts to build upon what they have learnt in the classroom.

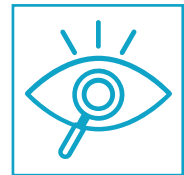
Some modules where a guest lecture could be appropriate would be:



Introduction
to Business



Marketing



Entrepreneurship

Graduate Internships

Paid contract for 6 months for up to 20 hours per week

Graduates can choose to take part in the TCPID Graduate Internship Programme once they have successfully completed the two year Certificate in Arts, Science and Inclusive Applied Practice.

Our graduate internships are typically for a duration of 6 months and are always paid roles. Our graduates work for up to a maximum of 20 hours per week. The aim of the internships is to provide graduates with experience in a real work environment. The internships are carefully selected by the TCPID team and each graduate is matched to the company and to the role. Each internship involves very close collaboration between the TCPID and the business.

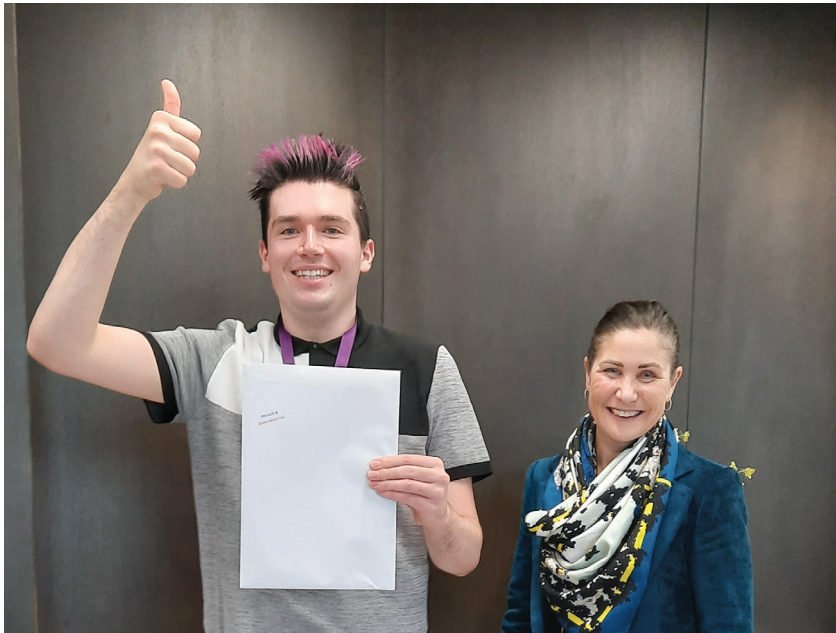


Figure 3 Stakeholder Input



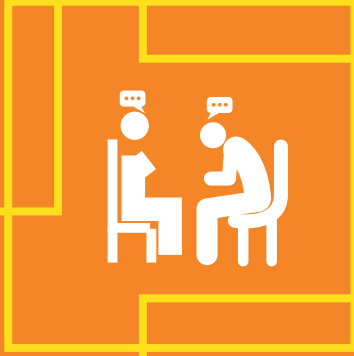
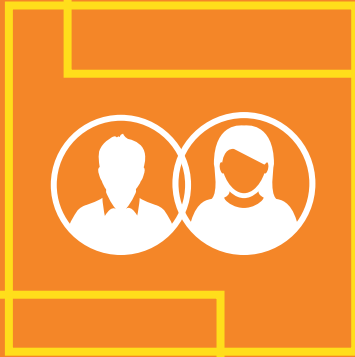
Our graduates can work for a limited number of hours per week (typically no more than 20), due to the fact that they are all in receipt of a Disability Allowance which limits the amount that they can earn per week. The link to the Citizens Information website where you can find the most up to date information about the Disability Allowance is here:

http://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/social_welfare/social_welfare_payments/social_welfare_payments_and_work/disability_payments_and_work.html



TCPID Support

What do TCPID
Provide?



1



Online Mentor Training programme

In advance of every placement and internship, companies will be given access to our TCPID Online Mentor Training programme. We would recommend that all members of the team who will be working with our graduate complete this training.

2



Preparatory Meetings

Multiple meetings take place between the company and the TCPID team before an internship starts as there is very careful planning involved in every case.

- > Initial discussion with Pathways Coordinator (typically multiple meetings / conversations).
- > Meeting with Pathways Coordinator and Occupational Therapist to discuss the proposed role once internship has been agreed.
- > Meeting with TCPID (PC and OT) and wider team to prepare for internship.
- > Meeting with the TCPID Pathways Coordinator, Occupational Therapist and graduate.

3



Graduate CV

Following the decision on a proposed role that is available within the company, TCPID will forward the CV for a graduate who we feel would be the best fit. This decision is informed by the fact that we have an in-depth knowledge of our graduates, following their two years as students with us in Trinity College. The TCPID team match the individual to the role based on a variety of factors:

- > Type of role – people-facing vs primarily computer based.
- > Geographical location.
- > Level of computer skills required.
- > Layout of office – open plan / hot desking etc.
- > Type of industry – if the graduate has an interest in a particular industry.

4



Occupational Therapy Support and Skills Profile

In addition to the CV, the TCPID Occupational Therapist will work with each graduate to develop a personalised Skills Profile.

The role of the Occupational Therapist is crucial to the planning and support for each internship.

Occupational Therapy can offer:

- Professional consultation with the company, including an environmental assessment and training on neurodiversity and intellectual disability.
- A skills profile completed by the graduate and occupational therapist in tandem which highlights their strengths, skills sets, areas of support and accommodations required.
- A check in after the graduate has started to support with work role development and plans to progress the graduate's skill development within the company.
- Follow up with the team to further develop learning and answer questions that may be coming up related to supporting graduate participation.

Skills Profile

- > Developed with the student/graduate
- > Its purpose is to support the transition into the workplace
- > Used by mentor as a guide to on how to structure the work role
- > Outlines student/graduate strengths
- > Outlines accommodations needed if required

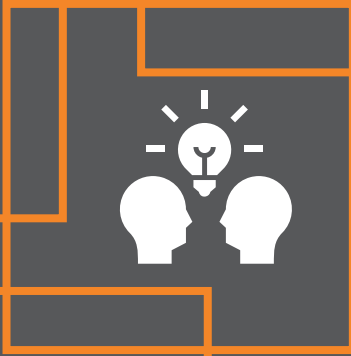
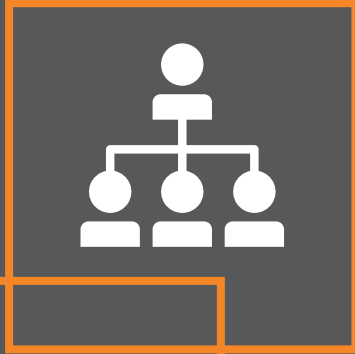
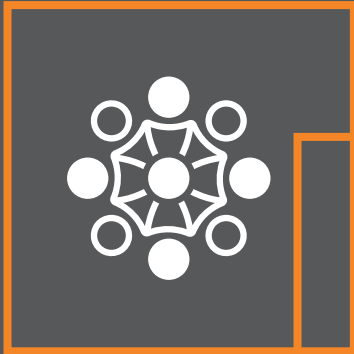
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Ongoing Support from TCPID team

Throughout the internship the TCPID Pathways Coordinator and Occupational Therapy team will provide full support as needed, both for the company and for the graduate. Regular review meetings take place. These can be brief check-ins / calls, or longer reviews with the team as needed.

What do Partner Companies Provide?



20 Business Partner Support

1

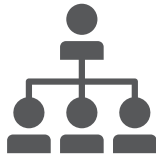


Mentors

Our internship model is based upon having mentors within the business supporting our graduates. The mentor is the key person in the entire process. Mentors should ideally volunteer to support rather than being assigned. They should do this in the knowledge that there will be a time commitment involved which may have an impact on their own work in the short-term. Mentors have a number of key attributes to help them to support our graduates, but the most important attributes are to have patience and empathy.

Mentors should help the graduate to settle in and to feel comfortable within their new work environment. They will help the graduate to get familiar with the tasks that they have to complete but they should not do the work for them. They should ideally meet with the graduate for regular check-ins and should work with them to set goals throughout the internship.

2



Management

It is essential to have management support to allow the mentor to be given the time to support the graduate, particularly in the early weeks of the internship. Management should ensure that the mentor does not feel under pressure with their own workload for this settling in period.

3



HR Team

HR teams are a key part of each internship. They are responsible for issuing the employment contract and for organising all the initial new hire onboarding. The TCPID team works closely with the HR team to support with the onboarding documentation if necessary.

4



Team

In addition to the mentor, the wider team is also involved in supporting the graduate. Some companies organise 'Coffee Buddies' to support the graduate to socialise and meet other colleagues.

Critical Factors for Success



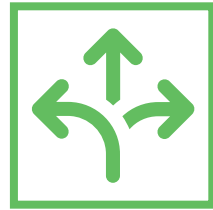
There are some critical elements of our relationships with our partners that are crucial to the success of each placement and internship.



Honest communication



Development of trust



Flexible approach

Figure: 6 Critical Factors for Success

Honest communication

It is essential that we maintain very honest communication for every internship. There is no question that cannot be answered and no question that is inappropriate. The TCPID team are available to support at every stage of the process as our goal is to ensure that every internship is a success. The measure of success is not that an internship is converted into a permanent role, but that the graduate and the business both benefit and learn from the experience.

Development of trust

Trust is a key factor in the success of every internship. This involves building trust between the TCPID team and our graduates, as well as building trust between the TCPID team and our business partners. This develops over time and each of the relationships is carefully nurtured.

Flexible approach

Due to the ever-evolving working world, we have to have a flexible approach to each internship. We have seen significant changes in companies which have led us to adapt our preparations for the internships.

Statistics of TCPID Graduate Internships

OVER **25%** OF INTERNSHIPS
HAVE CONVERTED INTO A
PERMANENT ROLE

Of the internships that have taken place since we started the Graduate Internship programme in 2017:

- > Many internships have been extended beyond the original 6 months.
- > The number of internships has increased each year (*with a temporary decline in 2022 due to the Covid pandemic*).
- > Over 25% of internships have converted into a permanent role.
- > 25.5% of graduates were offered a permanent role after their first internship.
- > The average number of internships per graduate is 2.
- > At any one time, we can have over 20 internships in progress.

Some ideas for Internship Roles

Based on the roles that our graduates have had to-date, here are just a few ideas for existing roles, or tasks within most businesses that could be suitable for an internship. It is however important to remember that each individual is matched very carefully to a role that suits his or her skills.

Receptionist – welcoming people to building / accompanying visitors to meeting rooms / preparing visitor badges / assisting with sign-in to building / organising couriers

HR – emailing candidates for interviews / scheduling interview dates / preparing interview packs / organising employee events and initiatives / graduate recruitment events / updating staff database with new hire information and additional information for existing staff

CSR and Communications – organising charity events / fund-raising ideas / administrative support for partner projects

Finance – scanning receipts / assisting with expense reports / data entry

Facilities – setting up rooms for meetings and events / checking stock levels of stationary / checking printers and technology throughout the building are working correctly / assisting with building management tasks / assisting with incoming and outgoing post

Marketing – assisting with marketing projects / assisting with branding / preparing packs for events and conferences

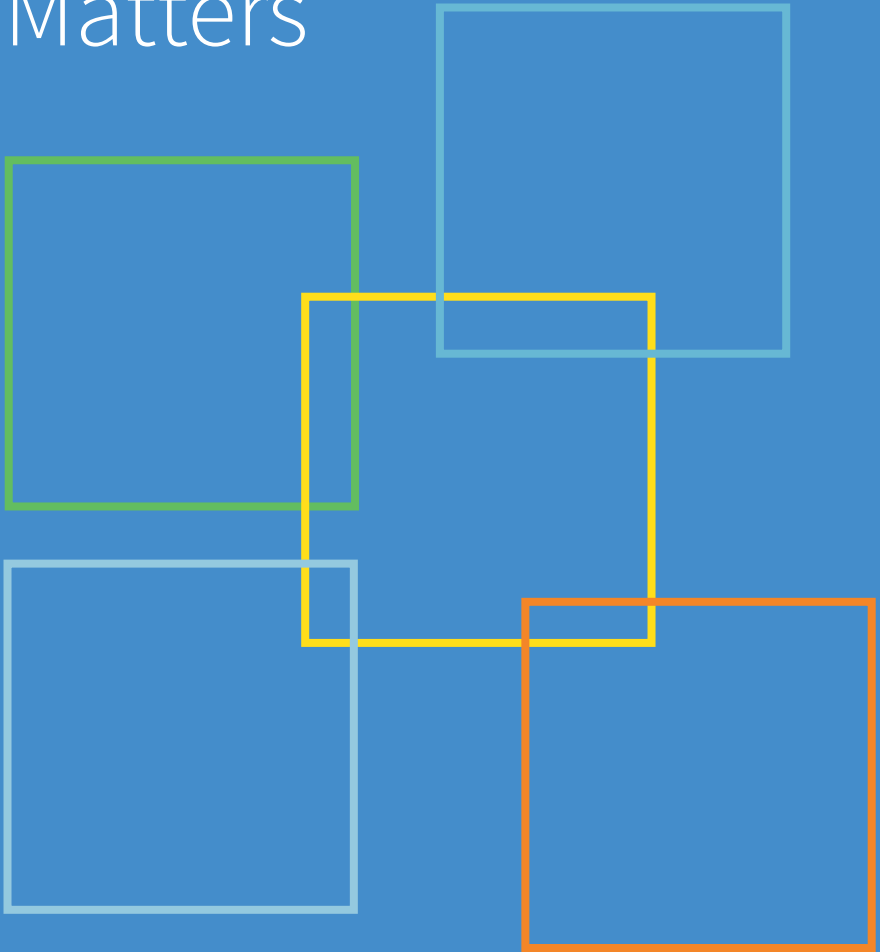
IT – accessibility design support / assistance with computer hardware delivery to employees and managing the return of items to the office /

Laboratory – assisting with the management of samples in and out of laboratory / data entry / scanning codes

Catering – working on various tasks in company canteen / barista / taking payments / checking stock levels

Other – creation of content for company newsletters and material for intranet / interview segments with staff / posts to encourage staff engagement

Why Inclusive Employment Matters

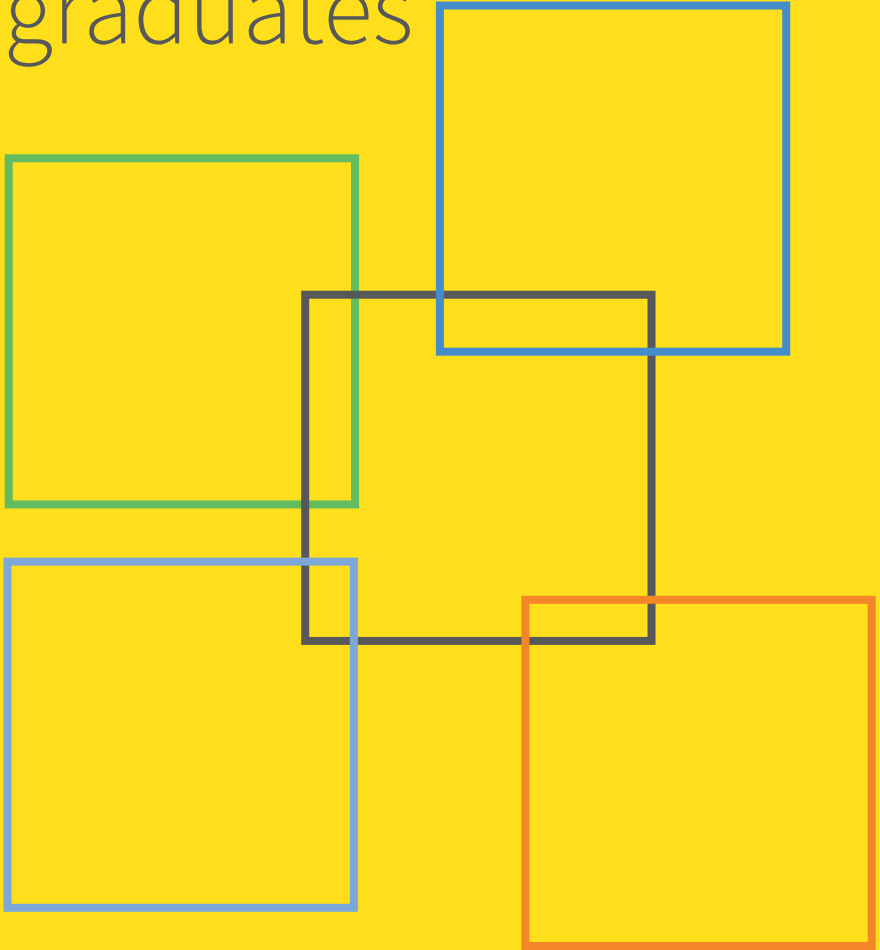


We have seen first-hand the importance and value of employment for our graduates. Many have come from a background of limited educational and employment aspirations, due to a lack of opportunities open to them.

Real and meaningful employment opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities are transforming lives – the life of the person themselves, the lives of their families, the lives of the mentors and teams within the businesses and the lives of the wider community.

Having people of all abilities in the workplace helps to create a greater reflection of the world around us and helps to encourage greater inclusion in all aspects of society.

Why inclusion matters to our graduates



Dairine O'Rourke – Fidelity Investments



Dairine O'Rourke

"I am really happy about my permanent job at Fidelity. I like having a job because now I am the same as my friends and my cousins that have jobs too. My work colleagues like me working at Fidelity with them. They make me feel included in the team."

I really like getting paid every month, because I have my own money and I can pay for my own clothes and meals out and holidays.

I love going out with my work colleagues on the nights out they are always fun."

Mark Hogan – EY



**Neil Byrne, Tax Partner
EY with Mark Hogan**

"Since I was a kid I really want to work in an office and now my dream came true and I am happy to be in EY. I work with the Global Trade team alongside my fellow colleagues. I got a permanent contract in April of 2019 and my role now in EY is Staff/Assistant."

We have to be equal and show respect to people, both those who have a disability and those who don't. Thanks to Trinity College for getting me this job in Ernst & Young. That's all I ever wanted now my dream job has come true."

Marian O'Rourke – Cpl Resources



**Marian O'Rourke with
Cpl CEO Anne Heraty**

"I was welcomed when I started in Cpl Everyone is lovely to me. I am very happy in Cpl & proud to work there. I enjoy the work I do on excel and with the post & invoices. I am confident with what I do.

I am now a permanent staff member & I am very delighted about this. I am included in everything that happens in Cpl - the Ball, Christmas party & all thanks to the team in the TCPID.

I learnt a lot from the 2 years in Trinity College. The course made me very independent. I made lots of new friends."

Niamh Biddulph – An Post



Niamh Biddulph

"What I enjoy most about working for An Post, is that I can help in hiring people for many positions through competitions, because part of my job as an HR Clerk in the recruitment side of the HRSU team, I am responsible for processing job applications for positions such as Postal Operatives or Clerical work, which then includes aptitude tests, interview preparations and Garda vetting.

I found it hard to believe that I got a permanent contract with An Post. I was so happy with joy and surprised at how good this news was, I started crying, because having a permanent part-time job was something I always dreamed of from when I first started in Trinity College in 2016."

Stephen Ryan – EY



Aidan Walsh, EY with Stephen Ryan

“In 2019 I did my graduate internship in EY. I had a great time during my internship and I liked to believe I worked hard and I think I did do enough to impress them because on my birthday I got the best news I could have possibly hoped for. I was offered a permanent position in EY! I now have an exciting new career in EY.

I want to say to any person who has a disability keep working to learn and to achieve your true potential. It might take you a bit longer but people with disabilities have what it takes to succeed and to try different things as you never know where your talents lie.”

Shane McGilton – Arthur Cox and Grant Thornton



Shane McGilton

“Arthur Cox: Everybody in Arthur Cox is so friendly, supportive, patient and helpful. It’s a great place to work and I enjoy meeting the different people. I feel included in all the activities and proud to work in Arthur Cox.

Grant Thornton: Everybody in Grant Thornton has been so welcoming. I work closely with my colleagues who support and help me every day. It is also a great place to work.

I feel so lucky to work in two great companies with such inclusive cultures and I have fun at work every day.

The people I work with are so lovely and they make me feel really welcome every day.”

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Some quotes from our TCPID Business Partners:

It's been a pleasure having the TCPID graduate as part of our team over the past 6 months. He is currently working in our busy facilities management department, helping out in areas such as room set-ups, courier deliveries and the post, to name a few.

"Another value of the internship was uncovering a hidden talent that the graduate has as she demonstrated a real aptitude for IT and we hope that she will develop this skill in order to reach her full potential and broaden her career opportunities in the future."

"The graduate has been fantastic to work with as part of the TCPID internship program. Kind, compassionate and a fast learner. He brings great value to the team. He never says no to a challenge and completes tasks when assigned. For me a call with the graduate is the highlight of my day, and it has been a career highlight to see him progress, and learn from him"

"It's a pleasure to have the graduate on board as part of the team. He is always willing to help and has a positive attitude towards everything that he does. He really enjoys working as part of a team and interacting with his colleagues."

“Having the graduate as part of our team and seeing her grow and develop in her role has given us all an opportunity to reassess how we think about people with intellectual disability and to challenge some widely held preconceptions.”

“The graduate helps us all be more aware of how we can make our workplace more inclusive and accessible. He is such a positive person to have as part of the team and he helps us every day to be a more friendly, collaborative and team-orientated place to work.”

“The graduate is a great addition to the team here. Not only does his bubbly nature have a domino effect on the team but he’s positive and enthusiastic about the work that’s given to him on a daily basis.”

TCPID Ambassador Hugo MacNeill



“I have been so privileged to work with the TCPID team. I see on a daily basis how it has transformed the lives of so many of our most vulnerable fellow citizens and to also transform the lives of their families by helping develop and show the remarkable abilities that their children possess. It has been such a positive experience for the companies involved and their employees. We have so many great stories and feedback from people within our partner organisations. We have gone from 4 partners 5 years ago to over 40 today and we now have great momentum.”

The really exciting thing is that we are only scratching the surface. The potential is enormous. We now have a proven model that combines a top ranked course together with a strong and growing business partner network. The TCPID programme was recently recognised internationally as one of the best models globally in its ambition for its students. We want to take this beyond the walls of Trinity and share it with universities and colleges all over the country. Thank you to all our partners for providing key components for this success and we look forward to continuing to build these partnerships over the coming years.”

NOTES

TCPID WORKING WITH BUSINESS PARTNERS TO PROMOTE AND SUPPORT INCLUSIVE EMPLOYMENT

NOTES





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The University of Dublin

To learn more about the TCPID

If you would like to learn more about the TCPID
Business Partners programme, please contact us at:

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Therapist bringwoo@tcd.ie