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# A Department Model of Academic Advising

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## Background

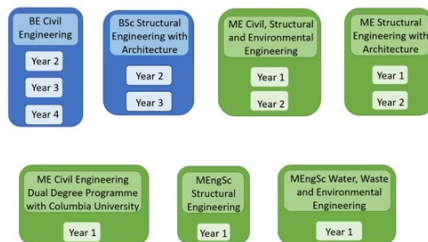
We completed a project to formalize and expand academic advising practices in the UCD School of Civil Engineering. Due to the pandemic, many of our students had spent very little time on campus, so we were keen to ensure they had a positive settling-in experience.



Our Academic Advisors included those acting as year heads, programme directors and other student facing roles.

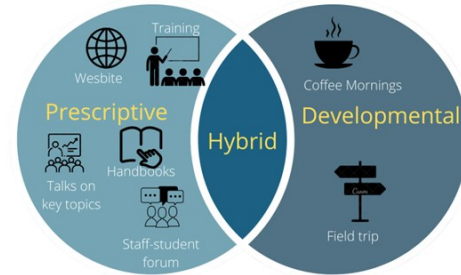


We have a range of programmes at both undergraduate and post-graduate level. A student from each year in each programme was selected to serve as a link between their class and the academic advisors, ensuring a student-centred approach.

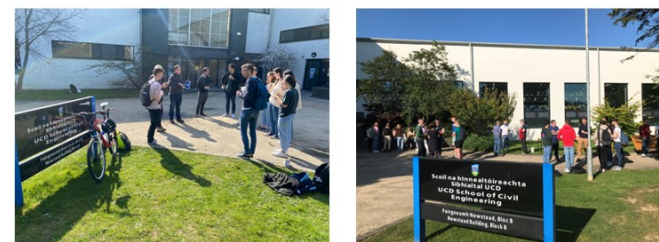


## Hybrid Model

We developed and evaluated a hybrid-model combining elements of both prescriptive and developmental approaches. Some elements engaged just the student participants, and others were targeted at the entire cohort of students.

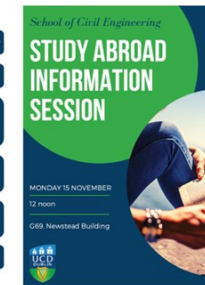


Coffee Mornings provided a regular, informal environment for students and faculty to interact, communicate and build rapport outside of the formal lecture theatre.



We organised a series of talks throughout the year to inform students on key topics in relation to their studies.

- Sept 15<sup>th</sup> 2021 Work placement opportunity
- Oct 4<sup>th</sup> 2021 CV preparation
- Nov 8<sup>th</sup> 2021 Making choices related to specialization for 1<sup>st</sup> Year Students
- Nov 15<sup>th</sup> 2021 Erasmus/ Study Abroad opportunities
- Mar 3<sup>rd</sup> 2022 Navigating Program Structures for 3<sup>rd</sup> Years
- Apr 8<sup>th</sup> 2022 Research career options



We organised a field trip to the enabling works of a new building site to support students making links between their studies and their professions.



We facilitated a staff-student forum that met regularly for formal engagement between student participants and academic advisors. Workshops for faculty were held on a variety of topics to support the significant number of new colleagues that had joined the department.

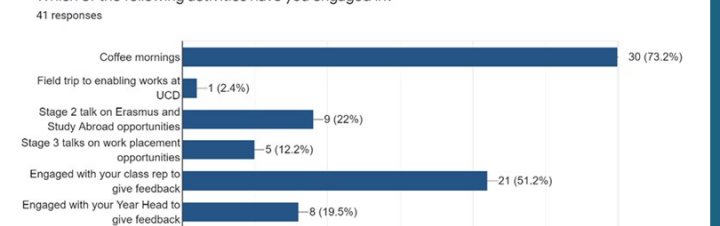


Subsequently, a shared folder was created to ensure this information remained easily available and accessible for both current and future staff. An Academic Advisor handbook was produced to support all faculty members and assist the handover of roles in the future. Another output of the project included the production of a webpage highlighting the names and contact details of academic advisors, and signposting students to relevant information: <https://www.ucd.ie/civileng/study/academicadvice/>.

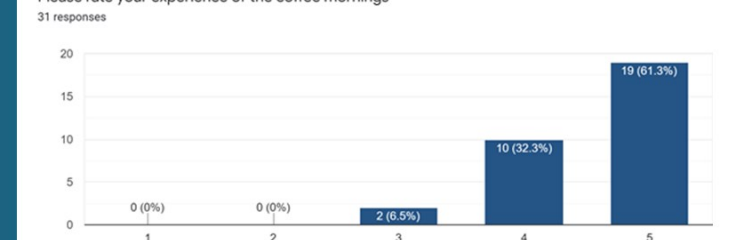
## Evaluation

Evaluation of the project was carried out through questionnaires and focus groups which highlighted very positive feedback from both staff and students.

Which of the following activities have you engaged in?



Please rate your experience of the coffee mornings



To learn more about this work, see our publication in the Journal of Education Sciences: <https://www.mdpi.com/2227-7102/12/5/326>.