Reflections on our first semester of Vertically Integrated Projects at the University of Galway and plans for upscaling our programme

VIP Consortium Meeting
Georgia Institute of Technology
11th May 2023

Dr. Oonagh Meade
Lecturer in Transdisciplinary Research
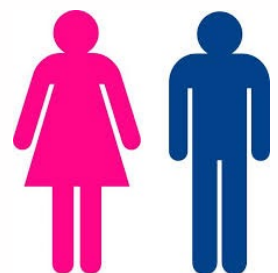Deputy Director of VIP at the University of Galway

University
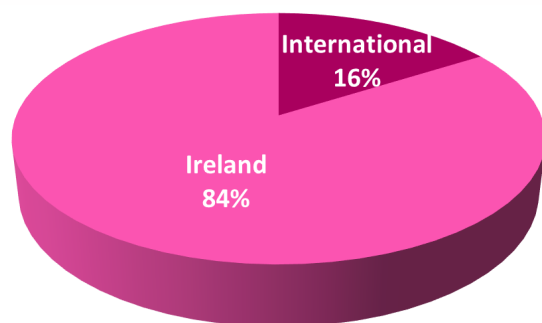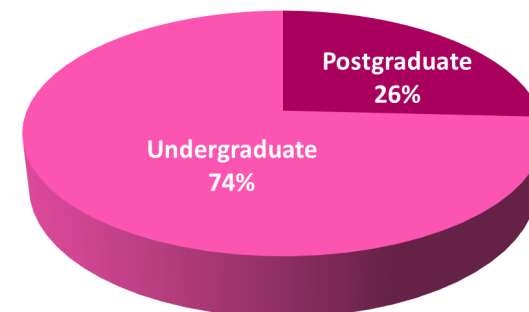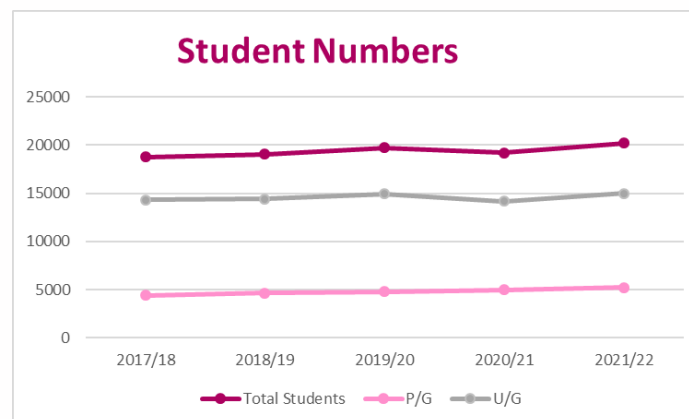*of*Galway.ie

Student Demographics

59% **39%**

2% other gender/prefer not to say

Student Numbers

25000

20000

15000

10000

5000

0

2017/18   2018/19   2019/20   2020/21   2021/22

—●— Total Students   —●— P/G   —●— U/G

Postgraduate
26%

Undergraduate
74%

International
16%

Ireland
84%

Traditional: 77%
Non-traditional: 23%

1st Generation: 31%
2nd>Generation: 69%

College of Science
and Engineering
26%

College of Arts,
Socsial Sciences
and Celtic Studies
38%

College of Medicine,
Nursing & Health Sciences
16%

College of
Business, Public
Policy and Law
20%

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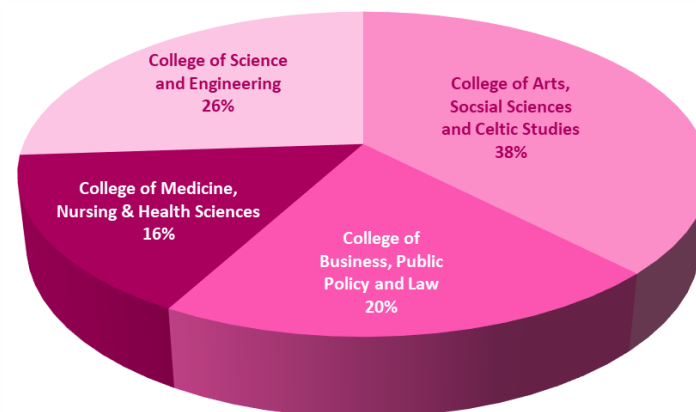
Designing Futures

Designing Futures is transforming the University of Galway student experience.

Designed to empower, educate and support students to lead better lives and succeed in the complex world we live in. Designing Futures will ensure University of Galway's position as a leader in innovative, student-centred and enterprise-engaged education internationally.
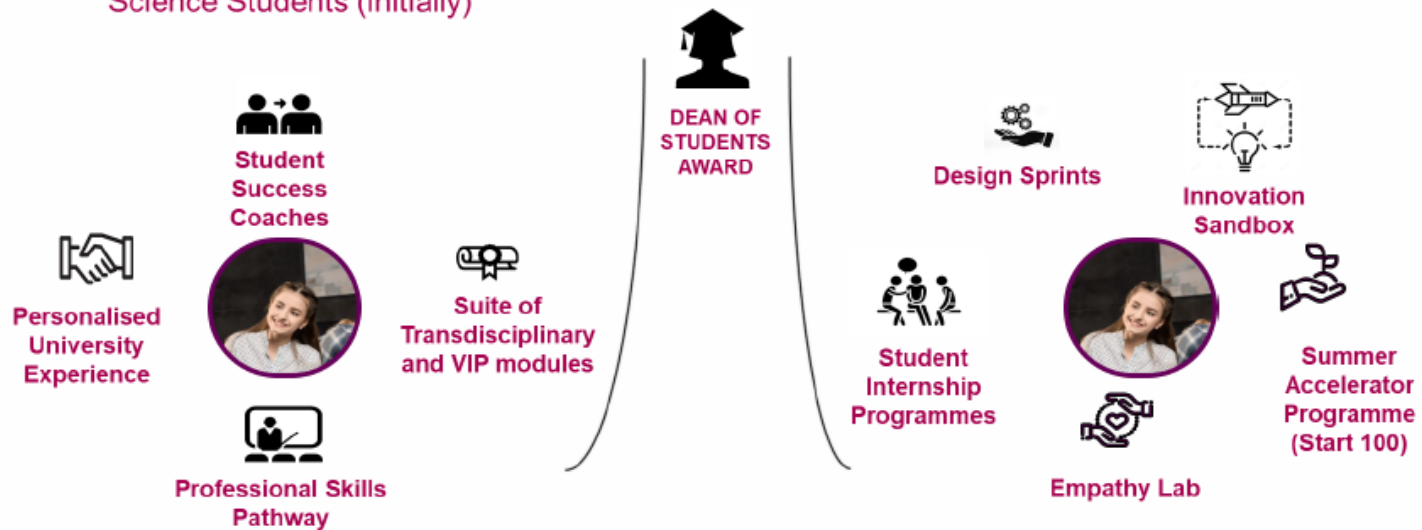
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Designing Futures In Action

Designing Your Life
Undergraduate Undenominated Arts and Science Students (initially)

Designing with Others

DEAN OF STUDENTS AWARD

Student Success Coaches

Personalised University Experience

Suite of Transdisciplinary and VIP modules

Professional Skills Pathway

Design Sprints

Innovation Sandbox

Student Internship Programmes

Summer Accelerator Programme (Start 100)

Empathy Lab

Designing With Systems, Project Management & Evaluation

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Vertically Integrated Projects

VIP students earn 5ECTs per semester by working with research teams to advance their research efforts in transdisciplinary research projects. Students can take up to two VIP modules.

Teams	Academic PIs, graduate student mentors, approximately 5 students
Students	Students from a range of levels and disciplines Returning students take on additional responsibilities
Project Based	Students work together to advance the project, taking on different roles/responsibilities Weekly teaching and support from VIP lecturer

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VIP Module Structure at the University of Galway

VIP 1 - Introductory Module - Learning Outcomes

1. Describe the VIP programme and its relevance to your development.

2. Plan workload in order to deliver research tasks on time and within budget.

3. Interact with others to understand their research-related requirements.

4. Record work in a way that meets professional research standards.

5. Present research in a variety of forms to a professional standard.
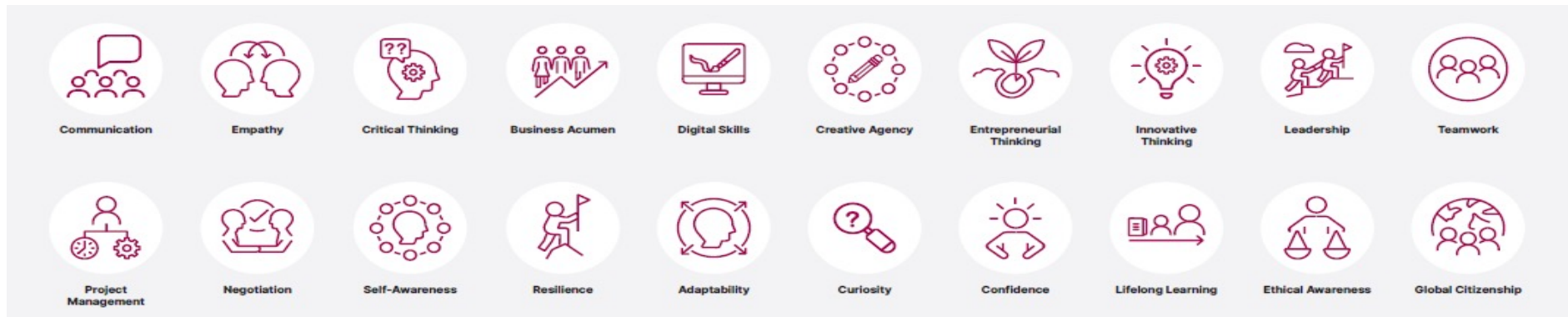
VIP 2 – Leadership Module - Learning Outcomes

1. Take responsibility for leading a team to complete a series of research-related tasks that interface with a larger research project.

2. Play a leading role in planning team workloads in order to deliver research tasks on time and within budget.

3. Play a leading role in team Interactions with others to understand their research-related requirements.

4. Take responsibility for ensuring that the research team records their work in a way that meets professional research standards.

5. Lead the team to present their research in a variety of forms to a professional standard.

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VIP Assessment

Individual Contribution to Oral Presentation	10%
Individual Reflection on Skills	50%
Team Report	40%

https://www.universityofgalway.ie/designingfutures/aboutdesigningfutures/frameworkforstudentdevelopment/

Principal Investigator Recruitment

Promotion campaign September-November 2022

- All staff e-mail
- Newsletter feature
- Website updates
- Twitter promotion
- Individual meetings with Principal Investigators
- EOI form for staff
- 13 VIPs developed

Student Recruitment for AY22/23 Semester 2

Promotion campaign September-November 2022

- Presentation at student induction week
- All student e-mail to relevant programmes (science and psychology)
- Twitter promotion
- Information sessions for students
- EOI form + manual registration of students (module not open to all)
- 10 students registered on two projects

University of Galway Vertically Integrated Projects - Student Interests Form

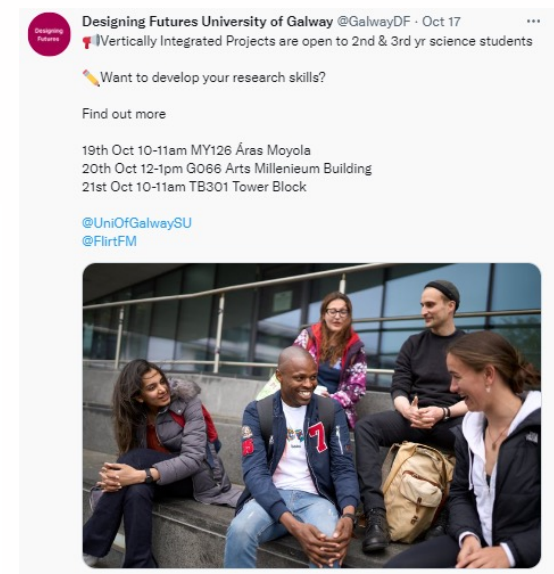Thank you for your interest in Vertically Integrated Projects (VIPs)!

The first step in taking part in VIP is to fill in this form. We will use the information you provide to register you on the VIP module and to connect you with one of the ongoing VIP projects. You can learn about the projects here:
https://sway.office.com/Evuh1mKyNJWJeaZm?ref=Link

In order for us to pair you up with the right VIP, please fill in this form to tell us about you and your research interests. This will help us to place you in a relevant Vertically Integrated Project team for the semester.

As a reminder, Vertically Integrated Projects (VIPs) are research projects addressing important societal challenges in which undergraduate students work in teams under the supervision of academic Principal Investigators.

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Designing Futures University of Galway @GalwayDF · Oct 17

📍Vertically Integrated Projects are open to 2nd & 3rd yr science students

✏️Want to develop your research skills?

Find out more

19th Oct 10-11am MY126 Áras Moyola
20th Oct 12-1pm G066 Arts Millenium Building
21st Oct 10-11am TB301 Tower Block

@UniOfGalwaySU
@FlirtFM

VIP in Focus – Bench to Bedside

PI: Dr Sinéad King

College: College of Arts, Social Sciences, and Celtic Studies

This project focuses on basic and translational neuroscience, discovering biomarkers and translating them into novel interventions for people suffering from neuropsychiatric and neurodevelopmental conditions. There are opportunities within the project to work on further developing a patient and public involvement community for this research, interviewing participants, working with industry and preparing research publications.

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https://bench-bedside.com/

VIP in Focus – Worlds of Sound

PI: Dr Denis O'Hora & Dr Eoin King

Colleges: College of Arts, Social Sciences, and Celtic Studies & College of Science and Engineering

This VIP explores the physics of sounds, our subjective experiences of sounds and our responses to sounds. We are particularly interested in investigating environmental sounds, how they promote or inhibit wellbeing and the role our experience of sound plays in these effects. Some sounds help us relax, but some distract and annoy. We are particularly interested in the sounds of traffic, wind turbines, the waves and different forms of music. We also hope to identify Zones of Tranquillity in our cities. The work of this VIP will feed into an international research initiative coordinated by the IEA (international Energy Agency), in which Dr King and Dr O'Hora are collaborating with world leading researchers to accelerate the development and deployment of quiet wind turbine technology and consolidate understanding of wind turbine sound emission, propagation, and ultimately its perception by residents. Student opportunities include developing focus group discussions, ethics applications, research proposals, recruitment, mapping sound experiences, press releases, testing apps, videos, podcasts, and blogs.

www.iea-wind.org/task39

Introductory VIP class structure 22/23

Class timetable developed to address our learning outcomes, PI requests and students suggestions for skills they would like to learn.

Week		Class Topic	Meetings with PIs
1	Tuesday 10th January	VIP module orientation	
2	Tuesday 17th January	Preparing for team work with Denise McBride, Student Success Coach	Meeting 1
3	Tuesday 24th January	Project management - Working effectively with your team members and Principal Investigators	
4	Tuesday 31st January	Introduction to research design	Meeting 2
5	Tuesday 7th February	Developing research presentation skills	
6	Tuesday 14th February	Facilitating Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) in research	Meeting 3
7	Tuesday 21st February	**Assessment 1 – Group Presentation in class time**	
8	Tuesday 28th February	Team troubleshooting and problem solving with Denise McBride, Student Success Coach	Meeting 4
9	Tuesday 7th March	Finding and appraising evidence	
10	Tuesday 14th March	Academic and Reflective Writing	Meeting 5
11	Tuesday 21st March	Reflection on skills and research careers **Individual meetings?**	
		Assessment 2 due – Team report **Friday 24th March @ 17.00**	
12	Tuesday 28th March	Wrap-up, feedback and planning	Meeting 6
		Assessment 3 due – Individual reflection **Friday 31st March @ 17.00**	

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Student Experiences

What students liked:
- ✓ meeting students from other disciplines
- ✓ learning the nuts and bolts of how research works
- ✓ hands-on experience
- ✓ tailoring of class timetable
- ✓ enhancing skills
- ✓ preparation for further study

Student challenges:
- ➢ Timetabling across Colleges/courses
- ➢ Group work opportunities
- ➢ Understanding/negotiating expectations with PI

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Temitayo Adededi | BA JOINT HONOURS STUDENT

❝ Participating in the VIPs as a psychology student has been immensely beneficial to me. Not only has it given me the opportunity to gain hands-on experience in seeing the conduction of research in action, but it has also allowed me to develop important skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication. Through working on a research project, I have learned how to formulate research questions, design outreach methods, and interpret findings. Furthermore, being involved in research has given me a deeper understanding of the scientific process and has helped me to appreciate the complexity and nuance involved in conducting research. It has also shown me the great importance of involving the public and spreading information about research in as many ways possible. Overall, participating in the VIPs has not only enriched my academic experience but has also prepared me for future career opportunities in the field of psychology ❞

Noel Fahy | 2ND YEAR BSC STUDENT

❝ As a student of the first ever VIP programme in University of Galway I can firmly say that this module has exceptional potential. It combines learning with practicality. It does this by teaching the processes behind a research project, and then as a student you get to implement those processes in the same semester. At this module's core, students become part of a transdisciplinary team headed by one of the university's Principal Investigators. Anyone who has any interest in academic research should take an opportunity like this with both hands. I have learned more about the world of academic research from this one singular module than every-other module I've taken combined. ❞

Preparing for 23/24

Student recruitment

- Capacity for approximately 65 students on 13 projects
- Expansion approved to new programmes/subjects
    - BSc Business Information Systems
    - BSc Geography and Geosystems
    - Performance and Screen Studies
- Potential need to expand to further subjects (e.g. Law)

Preparation for module delivery

- Shared learning event for new PIs – 29th May 2023
- Adapt approach based on evaluation led by Dr Connie O'Regan

VIP Projects 2023/2024
Worlds of Sound
Bench to Bedside
Sustainability advancement in SMEs
Democratising Knowledge through Comedy
Figuring out Y
Recycling of E-waste
Theia Eye Care
Data and Artificial Intelligence for the Knowledge Society
Theatronomics: the business of theatre, 1732-1809
Songs of Travel
Futures of Law: Robots or Humans?
Cardiovascular Health for All
Understanding Minds

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Longer Term Planning

Key challenge - resourcing the continuation of VIPs after current funding cycle

Plans:

- Seek funding to support VIP programme

- Expansion to new undergraduate programmes

- Develop opportunities for postgraduate and PhD students to join VIP modules and get credit

- Develop international co-operations with VIP partners for student placements

Thank *you*

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https://www.universityofgalway.ie/designingfutures/personalisedstudentjourney/verticallyintegratedprojects/

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