Meeting skills and employability demands

Dr Catherine O'Mahony
University College Cork, Ireland

Irma Grdzelidze
Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Georgia

Tinatin Gabrichidze
Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Georgia

Prof. Wyn Morgan
University of Sheffield, United Kingdom
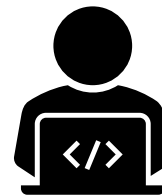
HOW YOU CAN INTERACT

Post comments in the chat area.

Keep microphone muted when you are not speaking.

Mentimeter

Start your comment or question by stating your name.

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

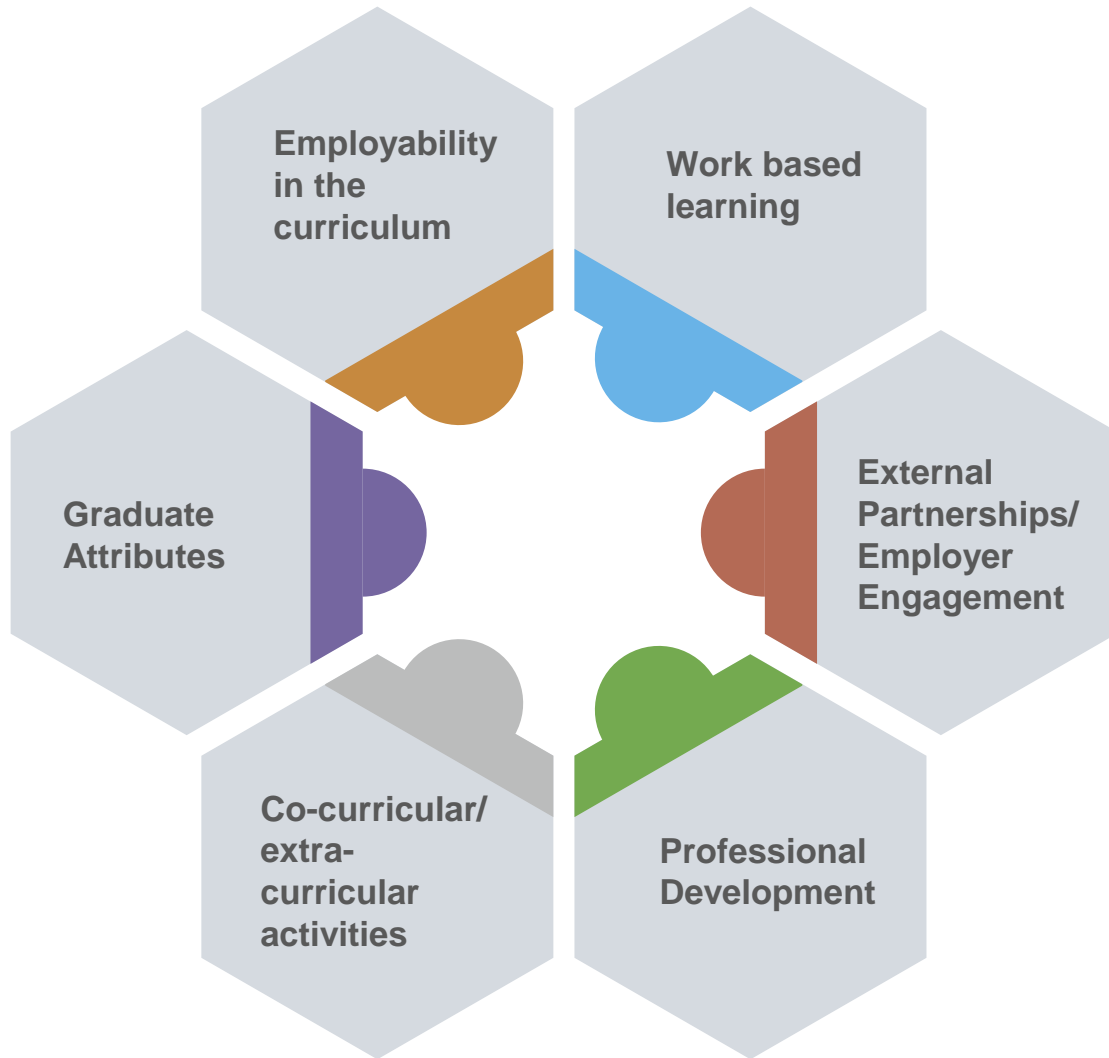**Employability in Higher Education**

Future focus

Challenges

Institutional Case Studies

EMPLOYABILITY

- Employability in the curriculum
- Work based learning
- External Partnerships/ Employer Engagement
- Professional Development
- Co-curricular/ extra-curricular activities
- Graduate Attributes

WHAT IS EMPLOYABILITY?

Not only defined from a labour market or employer point of view, but also from the perspective of what a graduate will become in the future, through her/his learning journey

interplay between professional, technical, and transversal skills

Curriculum offers the possibility to work on learning outcomes, graduate attributes and pedagogy, in an integrated or "connected" approach.

Education

Training

Skills acquisition and training also takes place through informal or non-formal learning, outside the classroom, or in a mix of co-curricular and extra-curricular situations.

EMPLOYER/SOCIETY NEEDS

CO-/EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

CURRICULAR INTERVENTIONS
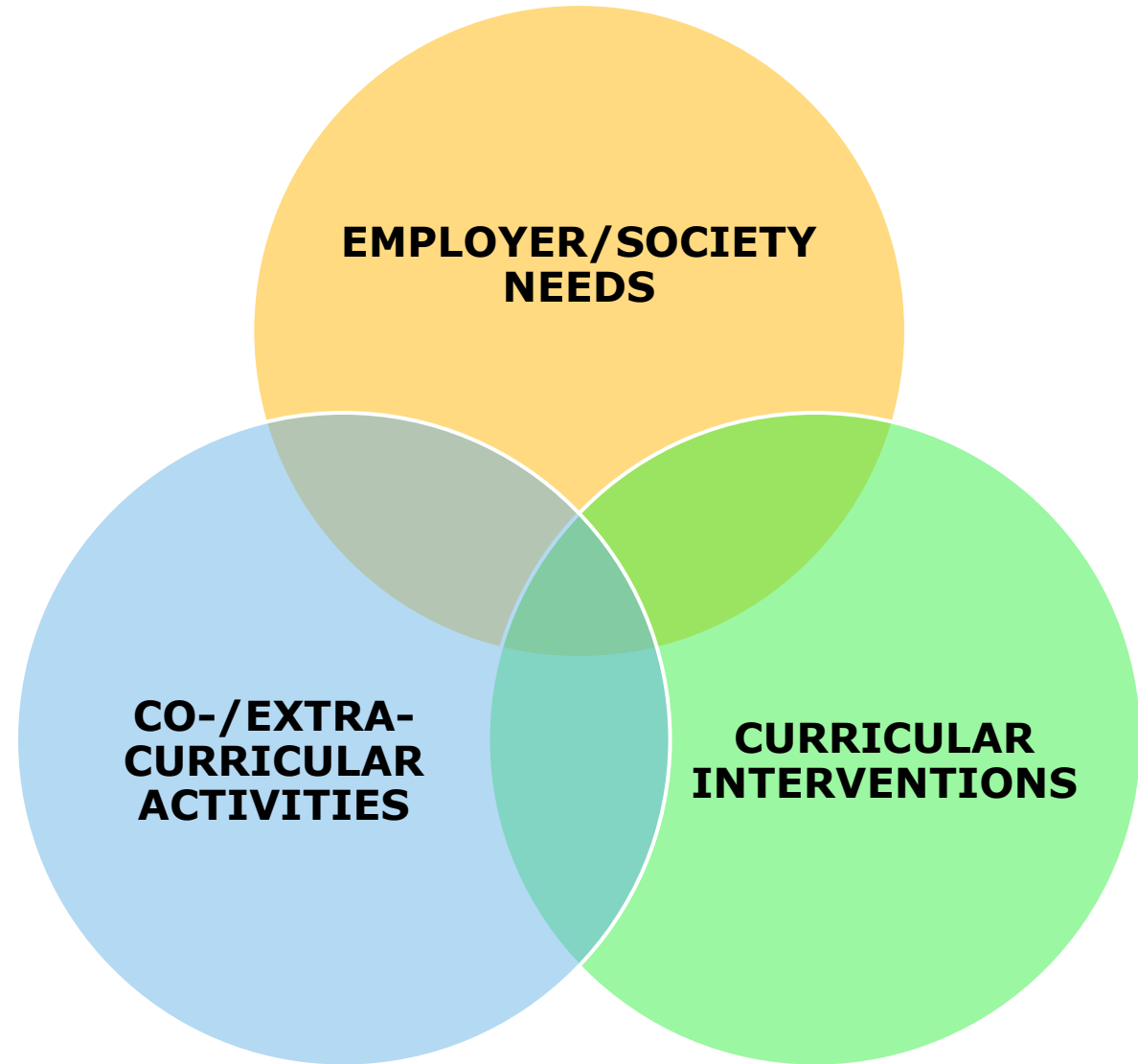
Indicate the extent you agree or disagree with the following statement:

"The degree is no longer enough. Employers want lifelong learning and skills development which does not end once you leave formal education."

Click on Mentimeter link in the Chat area or go to **menti.com** and type **36 47 55 0**

Move the slider to indicate whether you 'Strongly agree' or 'Strongly disagree' or the gradients between.

Mentimeter

www.menti.com/zjkxqia5gt
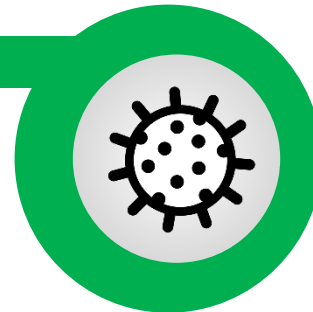
FORCES SHAPING EMPLOYABILITY

Impact of digitisation and rapid changes in jobs market

Emergence of micro-credentials

New modes of employer-university collaboration

Post-Covid work environment

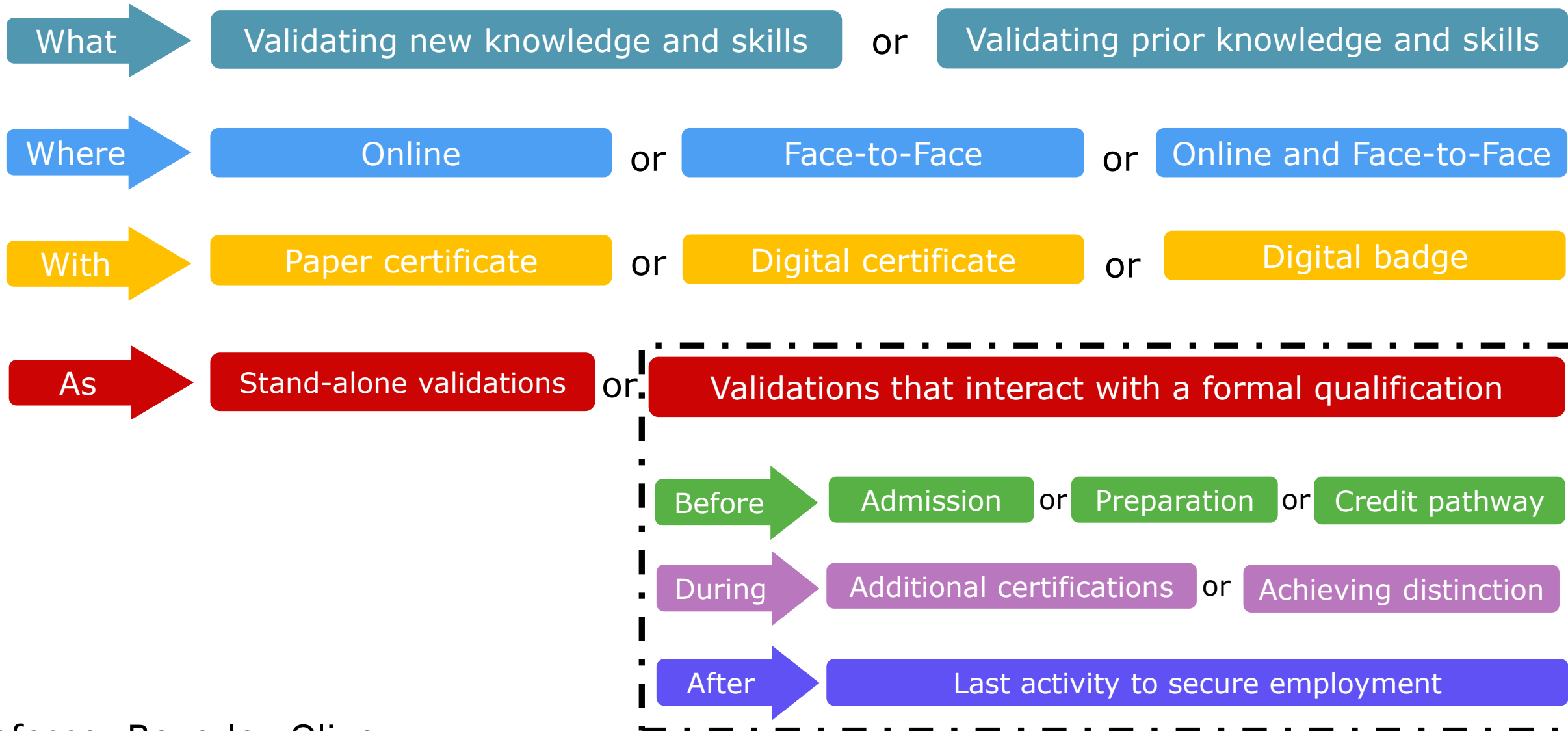# DIGITISATION AND RAPID CHANGE IN JOBS MARKET

Change in traditional models of employment
→ 'boundaryless' or 'portfolio'.

Affects availability of work so roles becoming obsolete
Constantly changes content of jobs
More flexible working opportunities

MICRO-CREDENTIALS

e.g. MOOCS, certifications, short courses, bootcamps, intensives, masterclasses etc

What → Validating new knowledge and skills or Validating prior knowledge and skills

Where → Online or Face-to-Face or Online and Face-to-Face

With → Paper certificate or Digital certificate or Digital badge

As → Stand-alone validations or Validations that interact with a formal qualification

Before → Admission or Preparation or Credit pathway

During → Additional certifications or Achieving distinction

After → Last activity to secure employment

Professor Beverley Oliver

NEW MODES OF COLLABORATION

Course co-creation and co-delivery

connect industry and universities to co-design & co-deliver courses

Experiential learning

embedding industry experience in the form of project- based learning in academic programmes

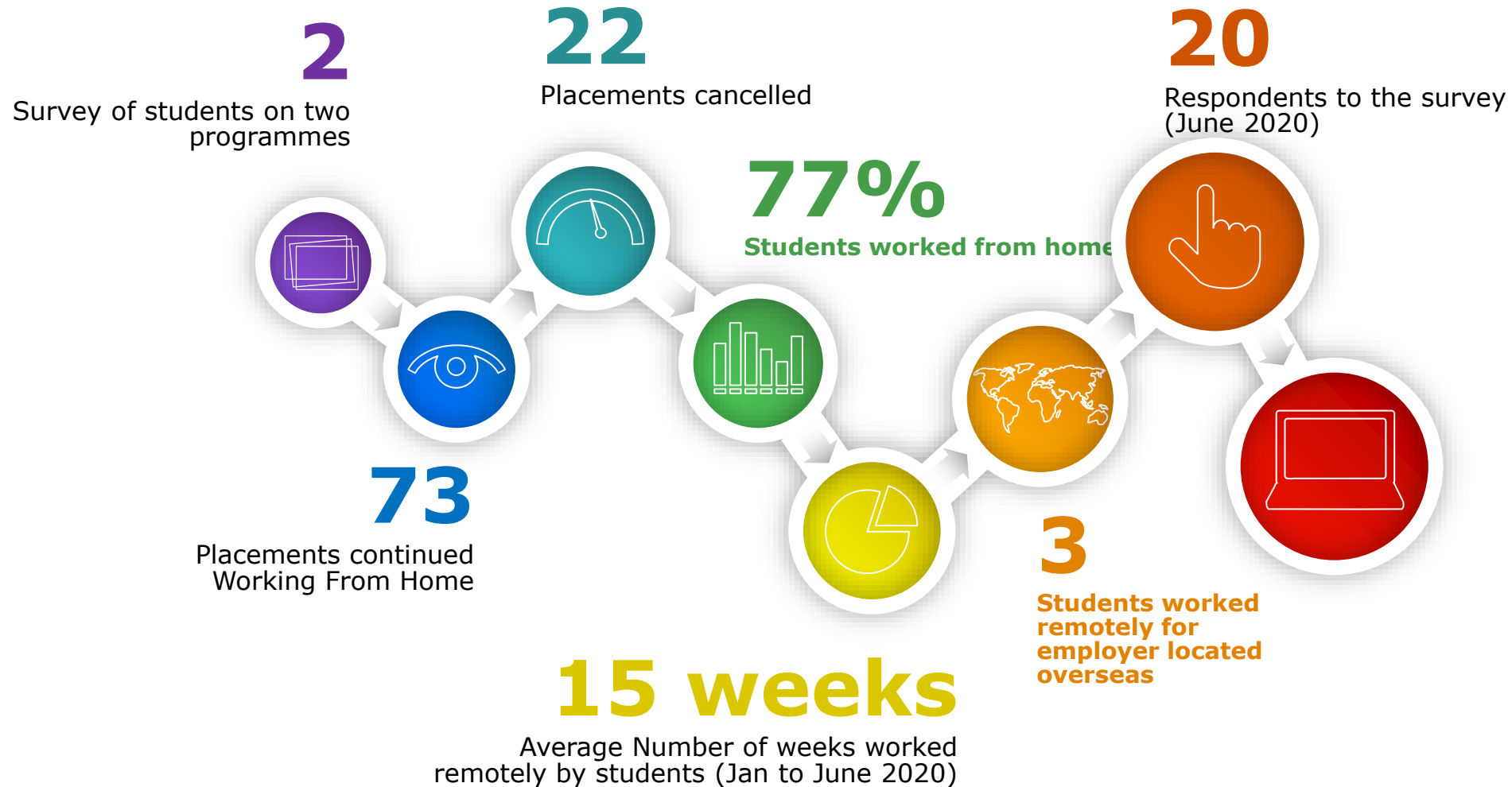**Education as a work benefit**

aggregate demand for online courses through a network of employers

Career navigation and application support

provide better access to internship and job opportunities for learners

IMPACT OF COVID

2
Survey of students on two programmes

73
Placements continued Working From Home

22
Placements cancelled

77%
Students worked from home

15 weeks
Average Number of weeks worked remotely by students (Jan to June 2020)

3
Students worked remotely for employer located overseas

20
Respondents to the survey (June 2020)

"Covid 19: Working From Home Survey"
Aileen Waterman, Work Placement Manager

EMPLOYABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

Mentimeter

www.menti.com/zjkxqia5gt

What are the main challenges in employability from your perspective?

Click on Mentimeter link in Chat area or go to menti.com & type 36 47 55 0

NOTE!!
Up to 3 responses are permitted.
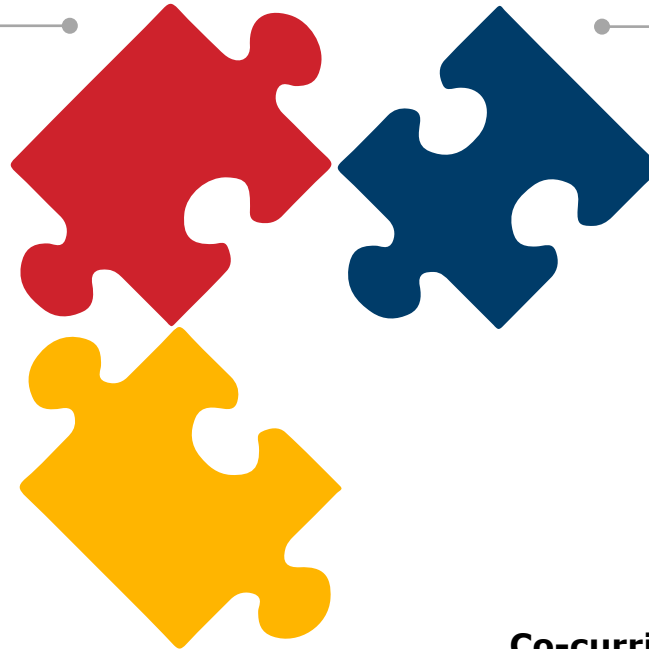Please limit each response to a 2 word phrase.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Employer – societal needs

How identify?
Lack of alignment

Curricular interventions

Time lag
Integrate or separate?
Assessment of non-cognitive skills.

Co and extra curricular activities

What works?
How ensure is inclusive?

Co-curricular = learning experiences that complement curricular learning for example entrepreneurship modules or skills sessions

Extra-curricular = activities separate from the curriculum that develop valuable skills and attributes, for example membership of clubs, caring duties, part-time work etc.

CHALLENGES

tension between stakeholders needs and what the university can deliver

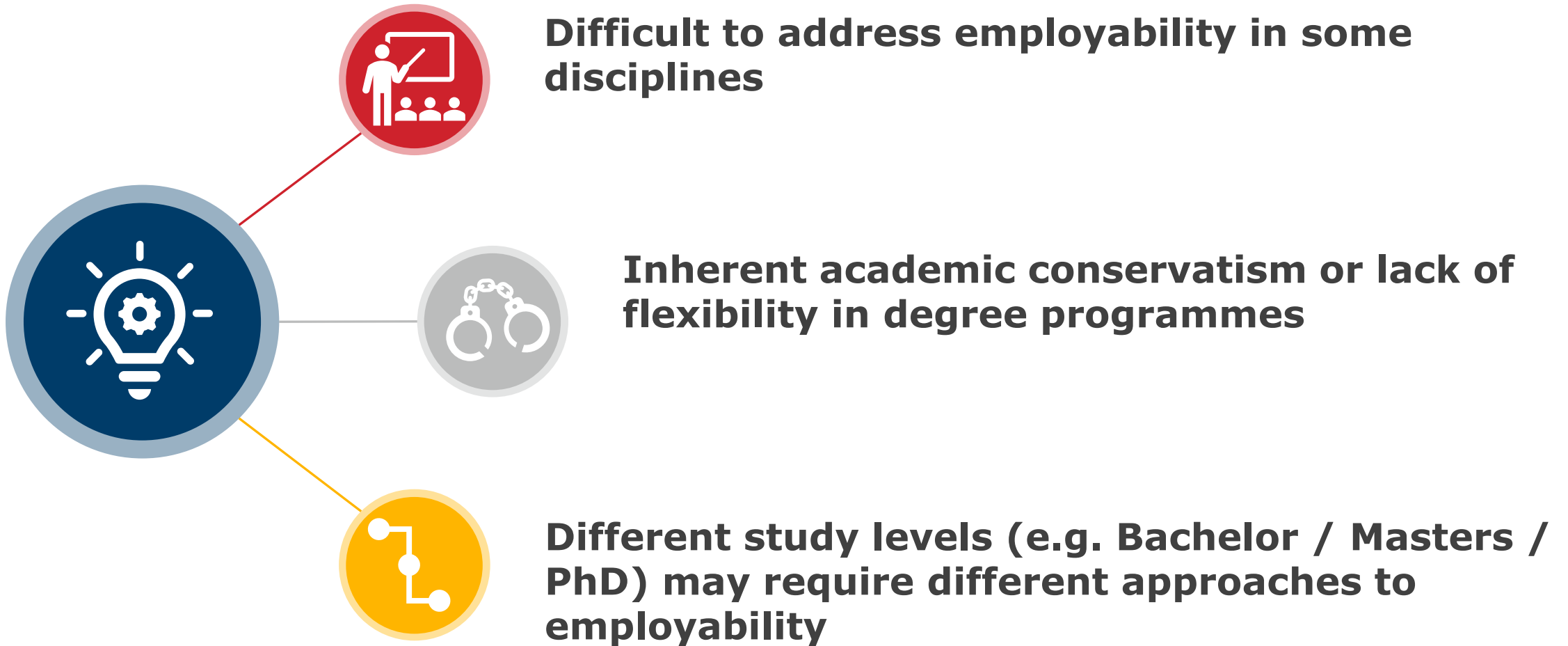Meeting skills demands requires differentiated approaches

Issue of equity and equality

MEETING STAKE-HOLDERS NEEDS

Who are the Employers?

Common Language

DIFFERENTIATED APPROACHES

Difficult to address employability in some disciplines

Inherent academic conservatism or lack of flexibility in degree programmes

Different study levels (e.g. Bachelor / Masters / PhD) may require different approaches to employability

EQUITY AND EQUALITY

- ✓ Students with a caring role
- ✓ Students with part-time jobs
- ✓ Students with a significant daily commute
- ✓ Students with strict stipend rule
- ✓ Some international students

RECOMMENDATIONS

1: Recognise and give value to employability as an institutional endeavour

2: Articulate curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular interventions in a meaningful way

3: Make learning visible, self-reflected, and part of a lifelong perspective

RECOMMENDATIONS

1: Recognise and give value to employability as an institutional endeavour

- Make graduate attributes meaningful
- Adopt a flexible, nuanced approach at institutional level
- Ensure coordination between/within different programmes, departments and support units
- Enact structures and supports

Employability Action Plan

EMPLOYABILITY ACTION PLAN (EAP)

- EAP developed in 2019/20 and is integral to the *Learning and Teaching Strategy* which emphasizes graduate attributes through a Programme Level Approach (PLA) to all taught courses

- The EAP aims to provide a whole institution focus on employability rather then off-loading to academic departments

- Championed by the VP for Education but devised by the Careers Service

- Scaffolding to support activity within & beyond academic departments

- All begins with the attributes that a graduating student should be able to recognize, demonstrate and embody

SOME EXAMPLE ACTIVITIES

mySkills: A new student skills and personal development portfolio

Digital Careers Pathways
Developed by the Careers Service a structured range of information and activities to guide student learning and engagement in careers research, job search skills and personal development

Medical School - Community Partnership Placements programme

Fitting in with the Faculty's aim of being 'socially accountable' our students are sent on placement to community organisations all over the South Yorkshire region.

Placements in Arts and Humanities with Office for Students & Research England funding

RECOMMENDATIONS

2: Articulate curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular interventions in a meaningful way

- Design internships within curriculum
- Assessment frameworks for internships
- Mix of curriculum interventions
- Coordinate co and extra curriculum activities centrally

Participatory approach to curriculum development

IVANE JAVAKHISHVILI
TBILISI STATE UNIVERSITY
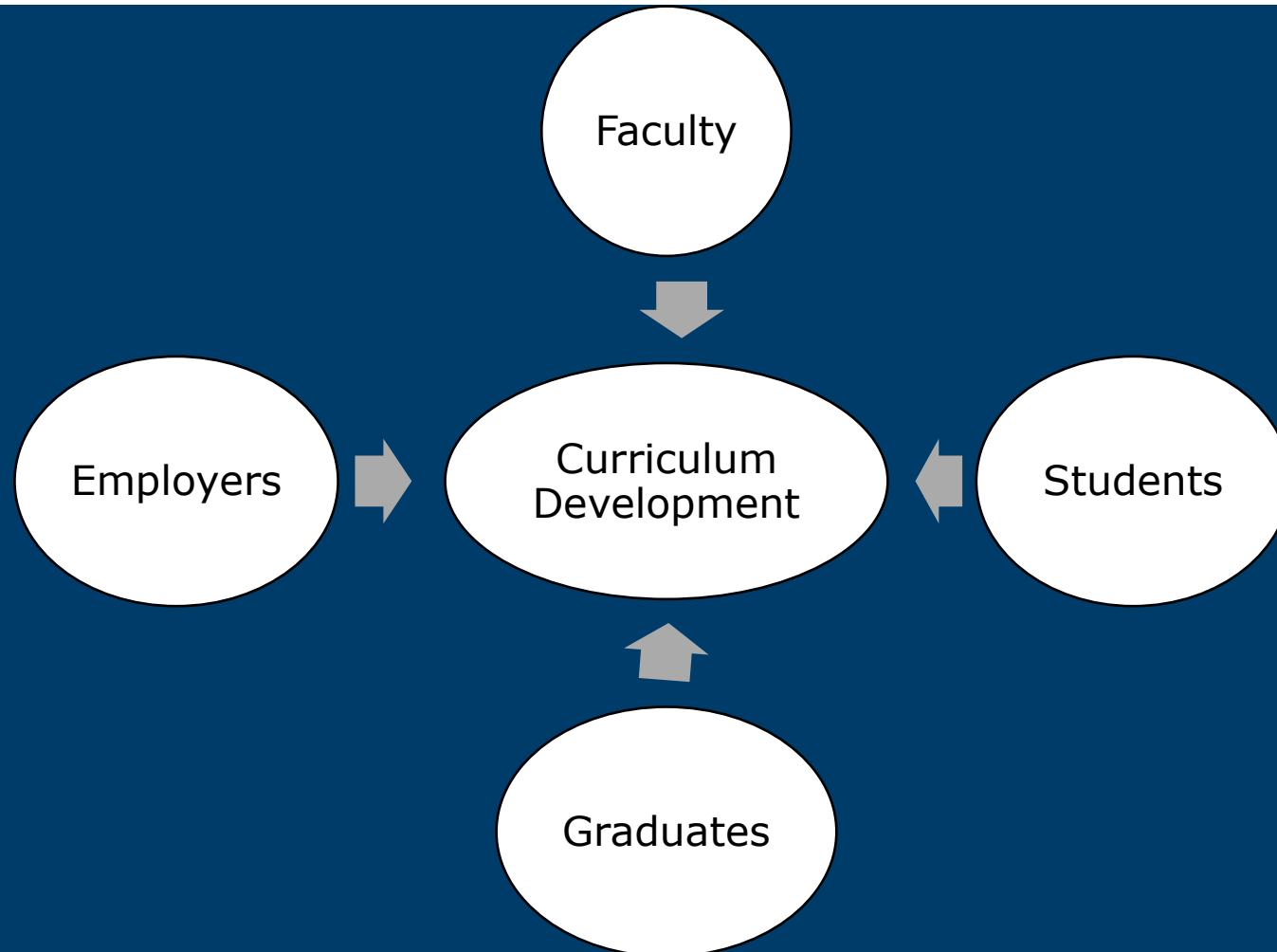1918

Integration of employability

UCC
University College Cork, Ireland
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

Participatory Approach to Curriculum Development

IVANE JAVAKHISHVILI
TBILISI STATE UNIVERSITY

Fostering
- **Identification**
- **Connection**
- **Collaboration**

Identifying skills gap
- **Needs of WoW**
- **Surveys of Employers**

Study Programme Coordinators
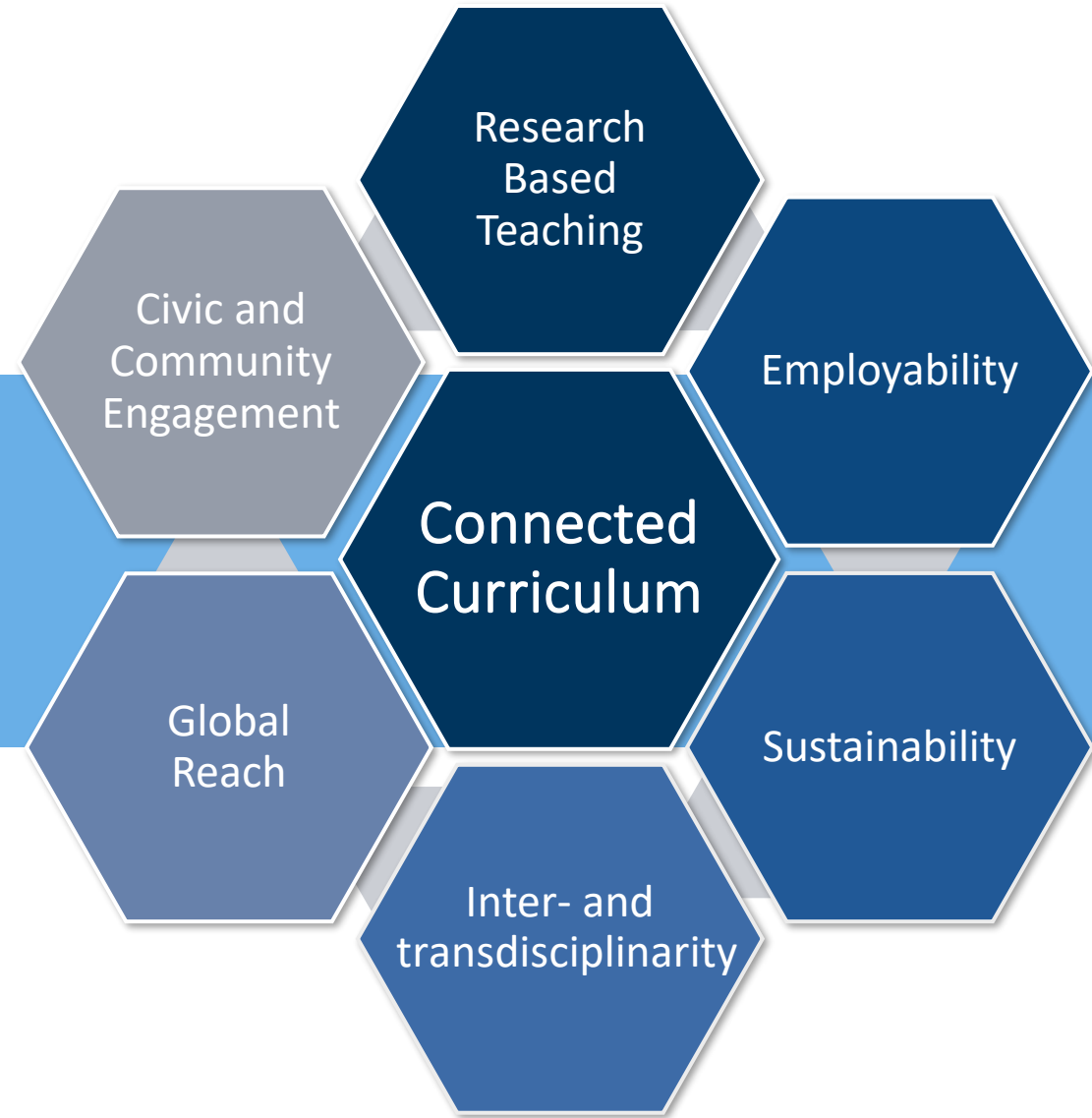
Central QA Office Representatives

Faculty QA Office

Career Development Office

Meeting the market and society demands is a shared responsibility

SELF EVALUATION TO INTEGRATE EMPLOYABILITY

UCC's Academic Strategy 2018-2022

- Civic and Community Engagement
- Research Based Teaching
- Employability
- Connected Curriculum
- Global Reach
- Inter- and transdisciplinarity
- Sustainability

SELF EVALUATION TO INTEGRATE EMPLOYABILITY

Introductory element	Structured inclusion	Main focus of learning activity	Main focus of assessment	Design feature
Employability related skills, competencies and attributes are embedded in the students' **'Transition to university'.** The curriculum will facilitate students to map their individual employability goals to employer needs, via an **annual graduate attributes profile and audit.** Professional development planning will be integrated with experiential employability opportunities.	Curriculum explicitly **cultivates environments** for students to **develop and be able to represent their developing employability competencies** and capacities. These competences are integrated with their developing disciplinarian competences and embedded within students' developing values and attributes.	Student-centred **experiential learning** (work placement, industry- research, professional development modules, workshops, networking, alumni mentoring). This enables students to become aware of and **connect their professional and personal competencies**, capacities and lived experiences, to **design unique graduate employment plans.**	Curriculum assessment is designed as Assessment as Learning -> self-aware Students draw together their lived experiences inviting them to become **critical of the professional possibilities** open and integral to their future graduate career plans.	Curriculum explicitly integrates employability competencies, capacities and experiences through **specific professional development modules** and/or **work-based learning initiatives.**

RECOMMENDATIONS

3: Make learning visible, self-reflected, and part of a lifelong perspective

- Enable students to integrate and explicitly identify skill development,
- Promote project-based, real life-based teaching approaches
- make students more aware of their own learning
 - develop a lifelong relationship with their graduates

ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN PHDs AND POSTDOCS

ENTREPRENEURSHIP: PHDs & POSTDOCS

Three projects on the development of entrepreneurial skills for PhDs and postdocs

Each of these projects includes training in entrepreneurship, followed by:

- individual work on business project proposals,
- training in different companies,
- modules on valorisation of scientific results
- Feedback on doctoral programmes curricula from companies and employers

In your break out rooms, reflect on the case studies presented and the recommendations shared. Then answer the following question:

"What are the small changes you could make that are a stepping stone towards this?"

CONCLUSIONS

✓ Way to connect higher education to society
  → educating & training future graduates as professionals and citizens

✓ Find balance between what society (including employers) might need, what students want and what universities may deliver.

✓ Important to make employability a central agenda in institutions
  → coordinated across areas and specific responsibilities

✓ Work on interplay between curricular, co-curricular and extra curricular activities

✓ Empower students to make learning visible, self reflected and part of lifelong perspective

CONTACT DETAILS

Dr Catherine O'Mahony

catherine.omahony@ucc.ie
@cath_omahony

Irma Grdzelidze

irma.grdzelidze@tsu.ge

Tinatin Gabrichidze

tinatin.gabrichidze@tsu.ge

Prof. Wyn Morgan

w.morgan@sheffield.ac.uk

ADDITIONAL READING

Kornelakis, A. and Petrakaki, D. (2020). "Embedding employability skills in UK higher education: Between digitalization and marketization". *Industry and Higher Education*, 35, 5, 290-297.

Oliver, B. (2019). Making micro-credentials work for learners, employers and providers. https://dteach.deakin.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/sites/103/2019/08/Making-micro-credentials-work-Oliver-Deakin-2019-full-report.pdf.

O'Mahony, C. and Morgan, W. (2020) Reimagining Employability. EUA Expert Voices series. https://eua.eu/resources/expert-voices/202:reimagining-employability.html