

Three Graduate Stories

Outdoor Education graduates follow a wide variety of career paths. Here are some of their stories

Ged Dowling

Ged runs an eco-tour company Co Mayo. He is passionate about the benefits of outdoor education and, in particular walking for wellbeing and the benefits of free play, which he researched whilst studying at GMIT Mayo. In 2018 he was approached by Venture Trust Scotland to bring a pilot Outdoor Learning course to Ireland. He is now working on the implementation and delivery of the FOLM (From Outdoors to Labour Market) project, funded by the European Union and managed by Limerick IT.

“My whole career has been transformed since undertaking the BA Hons in Outdoor Education at GMIT Mayo. There is no other course in Ireland quite like this, it really is unique. One of the reasons I chose it was because I have always enjoyed the outdoors, however, the course provided much more than practical skills based learning. As a mature student, I began to appreciate a deeper understanding of the personal development impacts that the outdoors can have on people and I knew then this was something I wanted to pursue further.

Anyone who is lucky enough to attend this course will be in the capable hands of an inspirational team of lecturers/outdoor educators, who will bring out the best in the students no matter what their interest or skill base.”



Georgia MacMillan

Georgia is a freelance hillwalking guide, trainer and project manager. Based in Newport, Mayo, Georgia and her partner run [Terra Firma Ireland](#); offering small group hiking tours, dark sky safaris and training courses in navigation, stargazing, wilderness and outdoor education. She is currently a voluntary director on the Irish Uplands Forum, project manager for Mayo Dark Skies and other community environmental projects.

Georgia graduated from GMIT Mayo with a first class BA Honours Degree in Outdoor Education, Mountain Leader Award, Beach Life Guard, Windsurfing Instruction and a number of outdoor qualifications. Her 4th year dissertation at GMIT led her to research the benefits of dark skies and submit the application for Mayo International Dark Sky Park. *“Applying for the BA Hons in Outdoor Education at GMIT Mayo as a mature student was my best decision ever. This diverse and stimulating course is far broader than its name suggests and has opened up opportunities for me to collaborate with organisations such as NPWS, Mountaineering Ireland, Fáilte Ireland, Leave No Trace and Mayo County Council. The lecturers are extremely knowledgeable and highly skilled in a variety of disciplines, they are also incredibly supportive to students and continue to be so to past graduates. The course offers students the potential to follow a career path into a variety of sectors such as environmental management, conservation, tourism and adventure sports. I cannot recommend it enough.”*



Mark O Connor- Outdoor Education Graduate

Since graduating in 2013, Mark has had a rewarding and exciting career. As an Operation Manager at Delphi Adventure Resort he designed and delivered a range of adventure activity courses and organised staffing. He then moved to Park Academy Nature Kindergarten in Wicklow where he coordinated nature and outdoor learning experiences to young children. He now works as the Education Officer with the Field Studies Council based both at Tollymore, Co Down and Lissadel, County Sligo. He runs Biology and Geography fieldtrips, flora/fauna courses, wildlife tracking and bush craft for both schools and adult learners such as teachers and outdoor leaders.

Mark says

“My Outdoor Education degree gave me the knowledge, skills and confidence to use the outdoors as an inclusive and stimulating classroom, in all seasons and environments, for the broadest range of learners. The course improved my technical skills in adventure sports but more importantly it opened my mind to all the outdoors can offer. I can highly recommend this course.”

