



GAA Graduate Programme

Creating a professional starting point for the GAA's next generation...

Cumann Lúthchleas Gael is Ireland's leading sporting and cultural organisation with more than 500,000 playing participants at all levels, not to mention a large non-playing member base. Inspired by its amateur status and supported by the voluntary efforts of all its members, the GAA devotes its entire resources to the development of Gaelic Games and Culture nationally and in local communities.

Home of the GAA, Croke Park Stadium is Ireland's foremost sporting and entertainment venue. Over 1,500,000 visitors are welcomed annually to national and international events and the Croke Park campus also features Croke Park Meetings & Events and GAA Museum & Tours.

What is the GAA Graduate Programme?

This is a new learning and development initiative established in 2018 by the GAA Marketing Department in Croke Park. It seeks to challenge students, who have completed third level education and are interested in pursuing a career in the sports marketing, communications or commercial industry through real-life work scenarios and experiences. In simpler terms, it is a programme within the GAA - Ireland's largest sporting organisation - that will see 3 graduates rotated around the Marketing, Communications and Commercial Departments in Croke Park Stadium.

At the end of the cross-departmental programme, participants should have gained sufficient exposure to the various elements associated with working within a major national sporting body and stadium environment and be in a position to decide whether working in a sports related environment is something they wish to pursue as a future career.

Duration & Location:

The programme will run for a period of 9 months with the successful applicants getting an opportunity to work in each of the participating departments for 3 months at a time.

Participants will work a maximum of 35 hours per week. The hours of work will normally be 9am-5pm Monday-Friday, but will include some occasional weekend and evening work for which the graduates shall receive time off in lieu.

They will share an office space with GAA and Croke Park stadium employees and may, on occasion, find themselves working off-site in external agency offices, match day venues or other marketing and promotional event locations.

What will Programme Participants learn?

A lot. The GAA has over 2,000 clubs on the island as well as a growing international footprint and over 500,000 registered playing members who engage with the GAA as part of their daily lives in some shape or form. To help sustain and engage with what is essentially a national passion, it is imperative that the GAA Marketing and Communications Departments operate efficiently together and present our games in the best possible manner. Indeed, the Commercial arm of the Association must also continuously grow their capabilities and output to support GAA club, county and provincial units in their respective endeavours nationwide.

With these responsibilities laid firmly at the feet of the GAA staff base, the programme participants will learn to appreciate and, moreover, contribute to this essential and expansive service delivery. Gaining an appreciation for, and involving themselves in, both long-term strategic plans and, more evidently, the immediate operational elements of such a setting, will form a major part of the programme learning.

Marketing: Successful applicants will gain first-hand experience across traditional (TV, Radio, Print, Outdoor) and new (online) marketing platforms. They will be involved in marketing campaign research, concept ideation, branding / design, media planning, content & multi-media distribution and match day experiential activation. Local community initiatives ran by the stadium will also form part of the marketing module.

Communications: How, why, where and when the GAA communicates with its stakeholders is an important part of maintaining an engaged administrative, supporter and media base. The graduates will learn how to write press releases, arrange media briefings and photo-calls, engage with the public on any queries they have and execute a digital communications plan across web and social channels.

Commercial: National GAA sponsorship arrangements are a vital source of revenue for the Association but tied to this is a significant rights and benefits service delivery commitment. Participants will learn how to build and sustain client relationships with brands such as AIB, SuperValu, eir, Bord Gáis Energy Littlewoods Ireland, Centra, Allianz and Electric Ireland as well as how to identify, approach and engage with potential new partners.

'Learning by doing' is at the heart of this programme. To live by this mantra, the 3 graduates will be involved in real campaign roll-outs (from idea generation to planning to execution and review) for competitions and initiatives including the GAA Senior, U20 & Minor Championships, GAA Museum & Tours, Croke Park Meetings & Events, and Stadium sustainability planning. As Ireland's largest sports body, based in Europe's 3rd largest stadium, this programme offers a unique learning experience that very few can replicate.

They should conclude the programme with a fundamental understanding of how a national sports organisation runs its marketing, communications and commercial units. Each participant will understand the function of each unit and how they service the GAA and Croke Park Stadium's members and patrons. They should be able to establish what they subsequently need to do on a short, medium and long-term basis if they wish to pursue a career in a sports related environment, and be well positioned to do so!

Graduate consultation & feedback:

Ongoing guidance and feedback are a critical part of the programme and indeed the learning and development process for graduates. Informal feedback will be provided to the graduates on an ongoing basis, with a formal review taking place at the end of the 9 months with the Programme Co-ordinator. Other line managers working with the graduates on live projects will ensure they also receive ongoing, informative and constructive feedback.

On-boarding:

On day one, the on-boarding managers will bring their new Department member through the various functions, provide a tour of the stadium and adjoining office space, and introduce them to the rest of the staff.

Programme Co-Ordinator/Steering Group:

Participants will report to the Programme Co-Ordinator - the GAA Senior Marketing Manager - or a designate of his/her choice. While on rotation outside of the GAA Marketing Department (in either the GAA Communications or Commercial Department), participants will report on a day-to-day basis to the Director of Communications and the Commercial & Sponsorship Manager respectively. Mentoring will also be provided by other GAA Marketing, Commercial and Communications employees.

Payment:

The programme participants shall receive payment for the duration of the period. In return, it is anticipated that they will work at a level befitting of their experience and enjoy being a member of one of the hardest working teams in Irish sport!

Applicant Criteria:

2019 will be the programme's second year and, as part of the recruitment process, we are now inviting applications from any interested parties with a third level degree in marketing, communications, business or a related field. Applications will also be considered from individuals who are currently pursuing degrees in the above-mentioned areas and are due to complete such studies in May 2019.

Successful applicants must be available to start the programme in Croke Park by Monday, 17th June 2019 at the latest. Please note that, to be considered, applicants must have completed their studies before the programme start date and should not apply if they have any outstanding semesters, modules or exams after that date.

Essential Criteria:

- Hold a third level degree (or be close to completing a degree) in marketing, communications, business or a related field;
- An in-depth knowledge of, and interest in, the GAA and Croke Park;
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills; with a demonstrable ability to work well as part of a team;
- Enthusiastic, creative and energetic, with an ability to act on own initiative;
- Strong organisational and IT skills;
- Available to commence the programme on Monday, 17th June 2019 at the latest.

Desirable Criteria:

- Experience in both old and new media, digital content and storytelling.
- An interest in domestic and international sports marketing and commercial practices / trends.

Application Process:

To be considered, interested individuals can apply by email to jobapplications@gaa.ie with the subject title clearly marked as '2019 GAA Graduate Programme – [+ your full name]'.

Applications can be in the form of a CV, cover note, slide presentation or any other format, which the applicant feels best presents his/her 'fit' for the programme and ability to undertake the associated challenges.

Aside from details of qualification(s), applicants are advised to include in their application details of any other experiences or interests that they feel would be of relevance to the programme and, as a result, lead to a positive contribution to the GAA as a whole.

The deadline for submission of applications in respect of the 2019 GAA Graduate Programme is 3pm on Monday 27th May 2019.

The GAA is an equal opportunities employer.