Having the Open University, my fellow students and the academic staff has been vital to me over the 8 years I have been an OU student. Just knowing that whatever struggles I am having with study and work life balance that there is someone at the end of a phone, email or test makes things easier.

There is no doubt that ‘We are all in this together’.

In order to strengthen this feeling of community I would aim to increase the presence of Irish students on module welcome forum.

I would ask the university to improve and advance the buddy system on more modules. I have found this to be very hit and miss at present and it can be a very useful resource for new students.

Combined with the sense of community within the Open University student body is the drive to further life long learning. I left academic study in my early 20s and only returned to it as I entered my 40s. There is no doubt that the Future is Flexible and I pledge to support the University in their campaign to make study more flexible.

I would support all initiatives to make paying for study as accessible as possible.

Part-time study can be the answer to many societal problems and a statutory right to lifelong learning is vital to that. I pledge to work hard to make that a reality.

- We are All in This Together!
- Easier accessibility to funding for study
- Support for a statutory right to lifelong learning
- Better access to a student buddy system on all modules
- Higher representation of Irish students on module forums

Area Representative Ireland