



OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHE  
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY

Date:  
1/1/2023

Min. Time  
Commitment:  
23 Hours

Expiry Date:  
31/12/2025



## Breda O'Brien

### *Special Olympics FitFeet Programme*

#### *Secondary description example*

Student volunteers on the Fit Feet Programme provide podiatric assessments for athletes participating in the Special Olympics. The student evaluates ankles, feet, lower extremity biomechanics and the suitability of shoe and sock gear, all with the aim of ensuring athletes can move comfortably, perform effectively on the playing field and enjoy improved mobility in everyday life. Working with this athletic population, students develop both clinical and communication skills tailored to individuals with intellectual disabilities.

#### **To earn this badge the student must:**

- Complete shoe assessments: Measuring feet and checking footwear suitability.
- Perform dermatological assessments: Evaluating nails, skin, and hair conditions.
- Joint assessment: Identifying foot deformities or abnormalities.
- Gait assessment: Observing and analysing walking patterns.
- Education and check-out: Providing feedback and advice to athletes and caregivers.

### *Skills*

Communication | Digital Skills | Empathy | Global Citizenship | Teamwork

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Ciarán Ó hOgartaigh  
President,  
University of Galway





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### *Skills*

**Communication:** Developed the ability to adapt language and interaction styles to suit individuals with intellectual disabilities. This included using clear, simple language, maintaining a patient and supportive tone and employing non-verbal cues to enhance understanding. Active listening and sensitivity to individual needs were also strengthened through direct engagement with athletes.

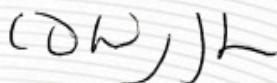
**Digital Skills:** Accurately entered and managed data within an international database, ensuring athlete information was recorded efficiently and securely. Developed skills in using digital tools collaboratively, adhering to data protection protocols and maintaining attention to detail in a fast-paced clinical environment.



**Empathy:** Learned to recognise and respond empathetically to the unique needs and challenges faced by individuals with intellectual disabilities. An increased awareness of the emotional and physical experiences of others was fostered through respectful and patient interactions. Understanding was deepened by observing and addressing discomfort or anxiety during assessments and by creating a supportive environment that promoted trust and dignity.

**Global Citizenship:** Working with Special Olympics Ireland increased cultural awareness, respect for diversity and a deeper understanding of inclusion and equity. Collaborative work in a diverse environment also strengthened a sense of social responsibility and commitment to community well-being on both local and global levels. Clinical exposure to individuals with intellectual disabilities highlighted the importance of healthcare initiatives tailored to their needs and demonstrated how such experiences can contribute to the improvement of these resources.

**Teamwork:** Collaborative screening work done in pairs developed effective communication, cooperation and task-sharing to ensure assessments were conducted efficiently. The ability to coordinate roles, offer support and adapt to the needs of both the team and the athletes was strengthened. Mutual respect, active listening and problem-solving were also enhanced to maintain a smooth and professional workflow.



**Ciarán Ó hOgartaigh**  
President,  
University of Galway

