


ANNUAL REPORT

Quality Enhancement Committee

2017 - 2018



UCC

University College Cork, Ireland
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

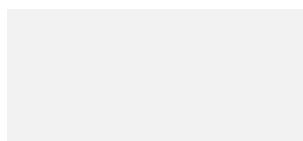
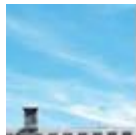


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Executive Summary

Section A

This report details the outcomes of quality activities for the academic year 2017/18 up to January 2019. The report includes: a 360° evaluation of the academic review method undertaken by the Quality Enhancement Unit as an important part of our own commitment to enhancement. This review was an evaluation of the effectiveness of the current academic review process in advancing an enhancement agenda consistent with institutional strategic objectives. An analysis of the strategic outcomes of academic review from 2017/18 identifies key issues for consideration at management levels. Student-centred quality approaches are reflected in the Digital Badges initiative and the University Surveys Board which both give a focal point to enhancing student engagement and feedback processes institutionally.

Section B

Published Quality Review Reports for 2017/18 and details of Quality Review Reports in preparation are provided for information.

Section C

Provides for noting the penultimate draft of UCC's Annual Institutional Quality Report (AIQR) (Part 1) to Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). This report is a requirement as part of the national quality framework for quality monitoring, it serves to confirm alignment with national and European quality requirements and is a public document published on the QQI website following submission in February 2019.

Recommendations

That the Governing Body approves this report and its publication on the University web site.

That the Governing Body refers this report for discussion and consideration of any actions to be taken to the Academic Council and other University bodies.

Section A: Quality Enhancement Strategy Developments

1. Summary & Overview

The Annual Report of the Quality Enhancement Committee provides the Governing Body with an account of the operation of the University's quality assurance procedures as required by the University's Act (1997) and in accordance with the Qualifications & Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 (paras 28 & 29). These requirements include: procedures for quality assurance and enhancement of education, research and services; the application of these procedures on a cycle of at least every seven years; the identification of actions arising from evaluation required to improve the quality of education, research and services and the provision of public information on the outcome of quality evaluations. In particular sections B and C provide information on the quality assurance procedures in operation.

The University Strategic Plan 2017-2022 states clearly the University's commitment to a quality enhancement approach:

By embedding a strong quality-enhancement ethos, we will use our quality processes to ensure a culture and experience of best practice in the delivery of our academic mission, demonstrating our commitment to continuous evolution and improvement (p.23)

Quality Enhancement Unit as the executive arm of the Quality Enhancement Committee has been working steadily to advance an enhancement led approach to quality and the work reported in Section A of this report speaks to that endeavour. The reference point for this focus is the Quality Enhancement Policy <https://www.ucc.ie/en/geu/quality-enhancement-policy/> :

Our approach to quality is founded on openness, systematic self-evaluation, engagement with peer review processes and a commitment to enhancement-based outcomes that are responsive, creative, enabling and student-centred.

The evaluation of the academic review process conducted in 2018, which involved all key stakeholders including Heads of Academic Units, Student Reviewers, External Peer Reviewers, Internal Peer Reviewers and Review Chairs allowed a systematic and evidence based assessment of the effectiveness of the current model. The outcomes of that review point confirm the value of embedding the aims and needs of the unit under review in the objectives for review, the provision of support from QEU and others customised to the needs of the unit under review as part of realising further an enhancement approach in our periodic review method.

Analysis of the outcomes from peer review and in particular the strategic dimensions of some of the recurring themes has provided valuable information to support management level discussion within academic units, and at UMT level. As part of the overall institutional performance strategy and management approach it has been agreed that an Analysis of Quality Review outcomes will be integrated into the UMTS annual planning approach. Furthermore the refinement of the academic review method and integration of review outcomes into strategy and performance planning is reflected in UCC's Mission Based Performance Compact with the Higher Education Authority.

In terms of student-centred activities, the development of Digital Badges for Student Reviewers provides a unique way for the University to recognise student contribution to quality enhancement. The quality of student engagement has been commended by external peer reviewers who have viewed it as an innovative and effective feature of UCC's quality review methodology. Importantly

the participation of students in this way, which is based on effective partnership with the Student's Union sabbatical officers allows a vibrant student-centred focus in the conduct of quality review. The work of the University Student Surveys Board, provides an important focal point for furthering student engagement and the development of a distinctive academic experience.

Some excellent foundations for quality enhancement have been laid down to date and the next stage is to build further upon these working collaboratively with colleagues across the University, with students and with external stakeholders. Some of the key actions for quality enhancement include:

- further development of resources and supports to facilitate the educational quality objectives of academic units
- contributing to the implementation of the Connected Curriculum particularly where quality processes intersect, in areas such as academic-decision making; curricular and programme developments and student feedback
- identifying a key strategic enhancement project, arising from review outcomes, with a thematic institutional focus
- continuing to build student engagement in quality and strengthen student-focused approaches

The overall goal is to ensure that the Committee's work and that of Quality Enhancement Unit advances the quality and standing of the University's activities against national and international benchmarks. Our commitment is to a quality culture which supports institutional learning and development to encourage responsiveness across all our activities.

2. UCC Quality Activities

1. *Evaluation of Academic Quality Review Process*

Introduction

This evaluation explores the effectiveness of the current academic review process at UCC in advancing an *enhancement* agenda. The aim of the evaluation was:

To ensure that the methodology for Academic Review, the experience of review participation and all aspects of the implementation of review is evaluated taking account of: feedback from a range of participants (Reviewers, Heads of Schools, and Students); benchmarking of review methods; external national and European policy requirements; administrative process review; governance review and models of good practice.

The anticipated outcome was:

A re-focussed Academic Review model which is aligned strategically with UCC's strategic commitment to *an outstanding student-centred teaching and learning experience with a renewed, responsive and research-led curriculum at its core.*

1. Methodology

Initially, a literature and policy review, and a desk-based benchmarking exercise of other institutions' approach to quality review in Ireland and the UK were undertaken. An opportunity to follow up with peers from Irish universities arose at a meeting of the Irish Universities Association (IUA) Quality Offices Workshop in May 2018, which discussed the strengths and weaknesses of the Quality Review method.

The data collection phase involved focus groups and questionnaires with: Heads of Schools/Departments (n = 10 of 10 participants); Chairs and internal reviewers (n = 10 of 14 participants); and student reviewers (n = 4 of 7 participants). The focus groups were externally facilitated by local and international experts. A questionnaire featuring open-ended questions was emailed to external reviewers for qualitative feedback (n = 12 responses of 20 participants).

2. Findings and Discussion

2.1 *Benchmarking exercise*

The following points summarise the outcomes of benchmarking against Irish universities:

- Most institutions acknowledge the dual roles of assurance and enhancement
- The mechanics of quality review are similar in most universities i.e., a 4-stage model: SER; Site Visit; Panel Report; follow-up
- UCC is the only Irish university which includes a student as a full Panel Member at all reviews
- Some institutions publish commendations (as well as recommendations) arising out of the review process
- The most commonly cited challenge is "buy-in" to a quality culture at school/unit level

- Most quality units cite overseas and linked-provider programmes as a key change/challenge in recent years
- Quality units generally have a role in strategic planning through data analytics; institutional research; curriculum research; ISSE etc.

The following key points arose from a comparison with the Scottish system:

- There is a strong “enhancement” focus in the Scottish system, which centers on student experience, and teaching and learning (in line with the ESG)
- There is a strong emphasis on student voice, participation and engagement – including training for students involved in quality processes (*“switching the power dynamic”*)

2.2 Focus Group with Head of Schools

All seven reviewed schools were represented at this focus group, which was facilitated by Professor Alan Davidson. The experience of some Heads of Schools correlated with those highlighted in the literature review (Cheng, 2016; Cardoso, 2018). Comments referred to a *“burdensome”* and *“time consuming”* process, because staff were often simultaneously engaged in restructuring, programme development and/or external accreditation etc. Head of Schools reported a latent cynicism towards the process, due to staff perceptions of inaction, on the part of the University, in relation to recommendations of previous reviews.

On the other hand, there were positive points, including acknowledgement that the recent QR was *“constructive, fair and balanced”*, and *“appropriate to the discipline”*. The externality of the process was welcomed and it was considered a useful moment to consider strategy - some reported that the process *“prompted recognition that what we are trying to do is unsustainable”*. Another commented that there was *“not enough looking at academic programmes”*.

The following recommendations emerged from the focus groups with Heads of School; in general, the thrust was towards enhancement rather than a compliance-oriented, judgmental review process.

1. Focus on, and support, enhancement through:
 - Sustaining local cultures of enhancement, guided by clear, simple precepts
 - Include focus at programme/module level – to understand what the student goes through
2. Focus on learning and teaching, considering both student learning experience *and* academic standards and achievement
3. Use a common set of core data, to be provided by the University
4. Contextualise the process to deal with complex, multi-disciplinary schools and to recognise layers and configurations i.e. programmes; disciplines; departments; schools
5. Consider how to support and increase engagement by school staff
6. Enable schools/units to have greater say in establishing the terms of reference – based on their needs and priorities
7. Use the opportunity for collective engagement: i.e. opportunity to come together as a school; share learning and insights; look for synergies; showcase pedagogies; discuss teaching processes

8. Address the timetable in relation to common issues, such as: too many meetings; rushed meetings; focus of meetings

2.3 Focus Group with Chairs/Internal Reviewers

10 internal reviewers and Chairs, representing 6 review panels, were present. In relation to the purpose of quality review, some internal reviewers focused on issues of accountability and assurance. Comments included: *“assurance for the institution”*; *“accountability to students”*; *“external assurance for the discipline”*; *“governance”*; *“external monitoring”*.

Others took a more enhancement perspective stating the it allowed *“space for impact and reflection”* and *“an opportunity to celebrate the actions and work of a unit”*. An enhancement-led process was viewed by one colleague as:

“enabling departments to be the best they can be – ensuring they have the structure to achieve this. The process is about partnership – the external observer is important – bringing the international context.”

There was acknowledgement that the quality review *“does not go deep in to the programmes”* and there was a perceived need for this to change – especially for programmes which are not externally accredited.

There was a strong sense that the expectations of QR needed to be managed at unit level; it is about enhancing and developing good practice and not only about additional resources. There was a consensus that a body of work needed to be done to engage and educate units to wholeheartedly engage with the process – because there is currently *“resistance and pain involved”*.

The concept of quality as a corporate asset was discussed. There is an opportunity to develop a fabric of quality culture through linking with the Strategic Plan 2017 – 2022 and an opportunity to re-emphasise dialogue around academic excellence. The quality process needs to be *“connected”* across the institution, through the Unit engaging strategically with College and University Plans – with clear responses from the College and University post-review.

2.4 External Reviewers’ Questionnaire

Feedback was received from 12 external reviewers representing 5 review panels. Comments relating to the process, focus and outcomes of the review were very positive, indicating that it *“worked well”*, was *“fit for purpose”*, *“excellent”*, *“very professional and of an overall high quality [serving] the needs of the unit and University”*.

Other comments included

- *the Review was one of the most thorough and best supported that I have experienced*
- *very impressed at the Academic review process and indeed felt it permitted the School to truly reflect on its academic standards, quality of student learning*

In relation to the self-evaluation process and engagement at School level, comments were mixed ranging as follows:

- *The [unit] and its Head engaged positively with the review and provided high quality data and commentary that was reflective, pertinent and constructive*
- *the SER [had] insufficient information about how the programmes were actually organized and also the teaching specialisms and research interests of the staff*
- *the peer review process conducted by the school was not as expected, it was not a peer review rather an opportunity to highlight issues and complaints that were outside my remit*

Recommendations arising from the feedback of external reviewers included:

1. Ensure clarity around the terms of reference for all participants in the review process from the outset
2. Work proactively with Schools in advance of the review to ensure that they have a more positive, enhancement-focused perspective of the process
3. Provide more support for the Schools undergoing review *“so they see it as an opportunity to highlight excellence rather than a ‘Spanish Inquisition’”*
4. Ensure there is sufficient time and scope in the Site Visit for disciplinary dialogues for all discipline areas
5. The follow-up process needs to ensure that recommendations are acted upon and that this is communicated to all relevant actors
6. Good practice should be highlighted and celebrated

2.5 *Student Reviewers’ Perspectives*

Four of seven student reviewers attended a focus group and further information from student reviewers was obtained from their reflections submitted as part of the Digital Badge process. The students viewed the quality process as providing an opportunity for the student voice to be heard and recorded in a formal process; the role of the student reviewer was perceived as facilitating independent and objective student representation, at a remove from the School under review.

The key points from this focus group were:

- Staff-student committees at school level vary in effectiveness – there should be standardised data on communication processes and other student issues in the SER
- The role of the Students’ Union – particularly the Education Officer – and other student committees could be leveraged to greater effect to increase awareness amongst the student body around the quality review process
- Student reviewers need more preparation for the quality review process
- There should be more engagement with student stakeholders from the School in advance of the review process
- More time should be allocated for Panels’ meetings with students
- There should be more focus on academic issues which impact students: e.g. curriculum; assessment; grading; digital learning; learning and teaching in general
- Student experience on general programmes, which span a number of Schools (e.g. the BA), should be considered in the quality process

3. Conclusions and Implications

The majority of the stakeholders involved in quality review at UCC acknowledged the benefits of an enhancement-led process; the challenge therefore, is to shift the widely-held perception of a “compliance” or “tick-box” exercise towards a shared, connected and supportive quality process. Such an approach would enable the School to highlight and share good practice, to reflect collectively on the current practice and challenges, and plan for future development. The review is also an opportunity to take advantage of and learn from the expert, but collegiate, advice of highly experienced disciplinary peers; as outlined by one external reviewer:

“we went on something of a journey with the school. It [was] an iterative process, in which we learnt and were able to respond to a dynamic situation. This I hope [built] the trust of the school and [enabled us] to come to a better and more realistic set of conclusions and recommendations ... In the end, I felt my time had been well used.”

There was a strong indication that the reviews are currently focused on strategic and resource issues, as opposed to curriculum, and learning and teaching. Many of the key issues that arose in this evaluation correlate strongly with those outlined in the recently presented Academic Strategy. There is now an opportunity to refocus the review process towards academic issues – particularly in line with the Academic Strategy principles – with more focus on programmatic-level review. There is also an opportunity for the quality process to be of service in communicating and embedding the Academic Strategy principles across the University, in particular:

- 1. Develop a Connected Curriculum, building on existing strengths and best practice globally*
- 2. Align Curriculum offerings with demand and teaching and research priorities*
- 3. Constructively align assessment practice with learning outcomes*
- 4. Facilitate students’ development of core values and graduate attributes*

In relation to the QEU’s role in the quality process, it was clear that considerable engagement and support for Schools was required, across the continuum of the quality process; particularly during the planning phase and the follow-up. Heads of Schools and external reviewers, in particular, recognised the necessity of negotiating and clarifying the terms of reference, and engaging in a dialogue with Schools around their own particular requirements – for example, aligning with other activities within the School. The necessity to recognise the multi-layered, complex configurations of different schools was identified; consequently, it is important to consider an *agile* review process which can respond to local contexts.

Annex: Customised Support for Schools undergoing Review

Development Plan for School Supports				
Support Topic	With	Facilitated by	When/Duration	Comments
Preparing an Effective SER	Coordinating Committee and Head of School	QEU	Month 1/ (1.5 hours)	
SWOT Analysis Workshop	All staff, Coordinating Committee and Head of School	HR or external facilitator	Month 2/ (1/2 day)	
Student-focused TLA* – Case Study of Good Practice	Coordinating Committee and selected staff	QEU, CIRTL & TLA Head	Month 3/ (2 hours)	Concurrent training for student participants will be organised, with potential for peer-to-peer discussions
Programme Focus: curriculum/delivery/structure/distinguishing features/placement/strengths/ challenges	Programme Directors and Programme Committees	QEU, CIRTL, TLA Head	Month 4/ 2 hours	
Expert Seminar	All interested staff	School & QEU – (possible external expert)	Month 5/ 1.5 hours	
Action Planning	Coordinating Committee and Head of School	QEU and School	Month 6	Engage with College; high level issues
Data Gathering	Benchmarking	School	Months 7,8,9	Data informs self-evaluation
	Student focus groups/surveys	QEU and School		
	External surveys/employers/placement	School		
	Externs examiners' reports	School		
SER Submission			Month 10/11	6 weeks before the Site Visit

*Teaching, Learning and Assessment

II. Analysis of Academic Review Recommendations

1.1 Introduction:

This report provides an analytical summary of the academic Periodic Reviews undertaken during the period 2017 – 2018. In total seven academic reviews were undertaken. The report summarises the primary recommendations and provides an overview and analysis of the findings arising from the Panel Reports at School/Department, College, and University level.

The following Schools and Departments were reviewed:

- School of Chemistry (CH)
- School of Clinical Therapies (CT)
- School of Food and Nutritional Science (FNS)
- School of History (HIS)
- School of English (ENG)
- School of Music & Theatre (MT)
- Department of Government & Politics (GP)

1.2 Method of Analysis:

An analysis of the academic Panel Reports was undertaken with particular focus on the outputs of the Reviews. In total the seven Panel Reports generated 162 recommendations. These qualitative data were systematically organised, analysed and thematically coded by highlighting or underlining 'significant statements', 'meaning units' and 'textural descriptions' (Creswell, 2007, p.170). The analysis process enabled clusters of statements and meanings to evolve into broader categories. Further classification enabled the emergence of themes.

1.3 Summary Findings by Theme

1.3.1 Strategic:

1. The impact of austerity on resources and staffing still dominates at reviews
2. The impact of schoolification has not been fully resolved from a strategic perspective and divisions remain in Schools along legacy discipline and departmental lines, which is impacting on overall Strategic Planning at School level
3. Programme/curriculum development has continued in the absence of strategic planning
4. Issues around space remain – especially in the context of merging departments – and this impacts on the development of School identity, on the potential for collaboration, inter- and transdisciplinarity, and resource-sharing

1.3.2 Staff:

5. There remains considerable concern around staff work-load – and this is frequently linked (in the Panel Reports) to the “proliferation” of modules and programmes; focused consideration of module and programme offerings is necessary, for curricular purposes and for efficiencies

6. Issues around succession and academic leadership emerged in the aftermath of the Employment Control Framework and a perceived need for the University to develop an ambitious strategy for attracting and retaining top quality researchers and teachers

1.3.3 Learning and Teaching:

7. The theme receiving the fewest recommendations related to Learning and Teaching (L & T)
8. The Good Practice Case Study has had an impact in highlighting strengths across the University – the focus of the recommendations is now, therefore, mainly on dissemination and sharing of this good practice
9. Issues relating to Technology Enabled Learning (TEL) and digital learning do not feature at all in the reports

1.3.4 Curriculum

10. On-going programme review is critical to monitoring student experience and workload (contact hours and assessment congestion etc.); to avoid proliferation and/or duplication of curriculum content (programme cohesion); and for sustainable staff resources

1.3.5 Student Issues:

11. Formal School-level communication structures with students need to be prioritised (around assessment, placement, practice education, etc.), along with opportunities for student evaluation and feedback processes at module and programme levels
12. Employability remains a key issue for students, and graduate attributes should be made explicit on all programmes, through the identification of transferable skills and through work-placement (including for Arts students)

1.3.6 External and International:

13. International students often remain segregated through separate modules/programmes with few opportunities for integration or cultural exchange with their Irish peers
14. There is scope to expand collaborative programmes with local and international partners
15. Schools should leverage their industry and community-based external stakeholders more, in expert and advisory roles, and to support student placement and career development

1.4 Summary

As well as a numerical count of codes and themes, a mean score and ranking order for each theme was calculated on the basis that the recommendations were presented “in order of importance.” The ranked order indicates that strategic, space and resources, and staffing issues were highest in order of importance; with student issues, and learning and teaching, ranking last. In the aftermath of reduced state investment in Higher Education, and an embargo on recruitment and promotion, this is unsurprising. The trend to forefront strategic and resource issues correlates with the findings of a QQI publication (2016)¹ which looked at national trends in quality reports “in an era of diminishing resources”. In the context of pressure on resources, there could be a concern that student experience, and learning and teaching, could receive less focus as other areas are prioritised at reviews.

¹ Quality Qualifications Ireland (QQI), (2016) ‘Quality in an Era of Diminishing Resources’: Irish Higher Education 2008 – 15, Dublin: QQI

In the context of the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG, 2015) (which strongly emphasise a student-centred approach to quality), and in the light of UCC's Academic Strategy 2018 - 2022, it is an opportune time to refocus the quality agenda towards a more enhancement-led approach which supports the University's goal *"to deliver an outstanding, student-centred teaching and learning experience with a renewed, responsive and research-led curriculum at its core to deliver"*.

III. Student Reviewer Digital Badges

UCC's Peer Review process aligns with UCC's strategic commitment of delivering "*an outstanding student-centred teaching and learning experience with a renewed, responsive and research-led curriculum at its core.*" UCC continues to lead in the area of **student engagement in quality review**. The Quality Enhancement Unit has trained students to engage as full members of Peer Review Panels and feedback from Panel members has been overwhelmingly positive regarding the valuable input of student reviewers to the process and the impact of their role in maintaining a student-centred focus throughout the review process. During 2018, QEU developed a Digital Badge to provide a micro-credential for student reviewers to acknowledge their contribution and the learning arising from participating as a Student Reviewer. This initiative embodies UCC's values of *responsiveness, transparency, integrity, equality, diversity* and *respect* by committing to student participation and providing a platform for the student voice at the highest levels of representation within the institution.

The digital badge is designed to enhance student citizenship and leadership and is the University's way of acknowledging the valuable contribution of individual students to quality enhancement at UCC. The requirements for attaining the Digital Badge involve approximately 30 hours of student effort in five stages: training; critically appraising review documentation; participation as a full Panel Member; contributing to the Panel Report; and submission of an artefact/report in the form of a briefing/reflection on the process which is assessed by QEU. All Student Reviewers met the requirements for the Digital Badge and were awarded.

IV. University Student Surveys Board

At the May 2018 meeting of Academic Council the proposal to establish a University Student Surveys Board (USSB) was endorsed, and the Board commenced in July 2018. The Board is Chaired by the Director of Quality Enhancement and membership includes Student Union Education Sabbatical, representatives from all Colleges, VPLT, senior professional staff and expert technical staff. <https://www.ucc.ie/en/student-surveys/>

The Board serves as the university-wide body for developing policy and practice on student surveying and feedback activity, and to manage UCC participation in the Irish Survey of Student Engagement. Its overall goal is to manage and shape student engagement and feedback practices University-wide the underpin the delivery of an excellent student experience. The Board reports to the Deputy President and Registrar and three main priorities for the future development of surveying at UCC to be progressed through the Survey Board are to:

i. Create and maintain a University Student Survey Board and Student Survey Policy

The USSB would serve as the university-wide body for developing policy and practices on student surveying activity University-wide, and would develop and co-ordinate UCC's student survey strategy across all organisational levels. The Board would report directly to the Senior Vice-President Academic and Registrar.

The USSB's scope of responsibility would extend to all internally and externally originating university-wide student surveys i.e. where the target survey respondents are current UCC students originating

from more than an agreed number of Schools, or the survey involves university-wide activities or services. Surveys may be administered on paper, online, or by telephone.

ii. Create and maintain a Student Survey Support Unit

While the USSB would be responsible for the academic oversight of student surveying activity at UCC, a dedicated student survey support unit would also be required. The support unit would essentially be responsible for the project management of university-wide student surveys within the university.

iii. Create and maintain a Student Surveys Ethics Committee

It is envisioned that the support facility would operate in tandem with a dedicated Student Surveys Ethics Committee, who would assess requests for university-wide student surveys in terms of their adherence to relevant legal and research requirements.

Outcomes from the early meetings of the Board included a policy statement² and set of principles³ for the development of the Code of Practice for University Student Surveys inclusive of a section of the Code outlining ethical considerations⁴. Working in partnership with Students Union the Board will seek to raise significantly UCC participation in ISSE 2019 through an awareness and student engagement campaign. ISSE will open at UCC on 4th March 2019.

² <https://www.ucc.ie/en/studentsurveys/principles/#principles>

³ <https://www.ucc.ie/en/studentsurveys/principles/#student-survey-policy-statement>

⁴ <https://www.ucc.ie/en/studentsurveys/general-ethical-principles>

V. Quality Review Schedule

Quality Enhancement Schedule

2016/17 to 2022/23

Periodic Review 2016/17

- Department of Chemistry
- School of Clinical Therapies
- School of Food & Nutritional Science
- School of History
- School of English
- Department of Government

Periodic Review 2017/18

- Language Centre
- OCLA (including Health & Safety)
- School of Engineering
- Office of Marketing & Communications
- Glucksman Gallery
- School of Music & Theatre
- Information Services

Accreditation Aligned Review 2017/18

- Cork University Business School (CUBS)

Periodic Review 2018/19

- Development & Alumni Office
- Buildings & Estates
- Department of Computer Science
- School of Sociology, Philosophy, Criminology, Government & Politics
- Scoil Léann na Gaeilge
- Ionad na Gaeilge Labhartha
- Office of VP for Teaching & Learning
- Centre for Adult & Continuing Education

Thematic Review 2018/19

- Academic Decision-Making

Enhancement Projects 2018/19

- Programme Approval Process
- Academic Review method

Accreditation Aligned Review 2018/19

- Department of Physics

Periodic Review 2019/20

- Cork Centre for Architectural Education
- School of BEES
- School of Mathematical Sciences
- School of Education
- School of Languages & Literatures
- School of Law
- ASSERT

QQI Institutional Review 2020/21

- Institutional Self-Evaluation Report - Q2 2021
- Planning Visit - Q3 2021
- Main Review Visit - Q4 2021

Thematic Review 2020/21

- A programme of thematic reviews arising from implementation and analysis of revised Academic Review Method

Periodic Review 2021/22

- School of Applied Social Studies
- Finance Office
- Human Resources
- Office of the VP Research & Innovation

Accreditation Aligned Review 2021/22

- School of Nursing

Periodic Review 2022/23

- Academic Affairs
- Student Experience
- School of Asian Studies
- School of the Human Environment
- School of Medicine
- School of Applied Psychology
- School of Biochemistry
- School of Pharmacy
- School of Public Health

Research Quality Review 2022/23

3. External Quality Developments

I. Institutional Review of UCC by Quality & Qualifications Ireland:

CINNTE Institutional Review for Degree Awarding Bodies (2021)

Introduction

The new model for Institutional Review was launched by Quality & Qualifications Ireland (QQI) in September 2017, and a copy of the Handbook setting out the objectives and methodology for review can be accessed at:

<http://www.gqi.ie/Publications/Publications/CINNTE%20Review%20Handbook%20DAB%20website.pdf>

In particular see sections 1.3 (Purposes of Review) 1.4 (Objectives & Criteria for Review). The first DAB Reviews have taken place in October/November 2018.

UCC Institutional Review 2022

- Submission of Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (Q2, 2021)
- Planning Visit for Review (Q3 2021)
- Main Review Visit (Q4 2021)
- Report (Q1 2022)

Institutional Review and the National Quality Assurance Framework

Institutional Review (CINNTE) sits in a wider national quality assurance framework of external and internal quality assurance practices including: Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines, Annual Reporting and Dialogue and institutions' cyclical quality assurance activities. The overall framework is outlined in the diagram overleaf (p 5 Review Handbook).

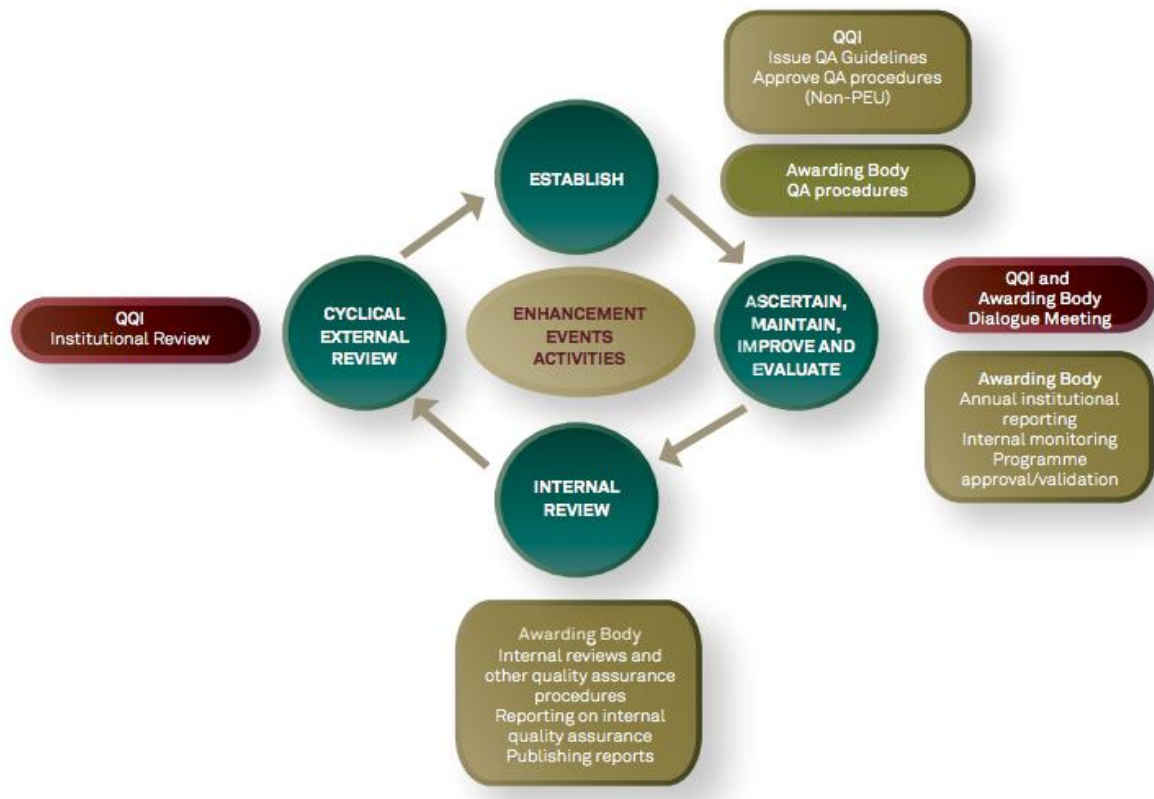
Documentation Requirements

Documentation requirements include ISER, and additional documentation to be available to the Review Panel in the course of the site visit will also be identified as indicated by the extract from the Review Handbook detailed overleaf. These documents should provide evidence of quality assurance policies operating in practice.

Preparation for Institutional Review

Preparation for Institutional Review will be coordinated through QEU and overseen by the Quality Enhancement Committee. A series of working groups with representative membership will be established to facilitate the self-evaluation process University-wide, the identification of exemplars and development of the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report.

Figure 2 The Quality Assurance Framework for Awarding Bodies



3.4.3 Agreeing documentation requirements for the Main Review Visit (pp22-23 Handbook)

Internal Reviews

An example of one academic and one non-academic internal review – including a paper trail of the internal review guidelines, self-assessment documents, review visit timetables, review reports, follow-up plans, minutes of relevant committees that discussed the reports (including the governing authority), examples of how and when the reports and action plans were published or shared with internal and external audiences. Examples of the use of data and quantitative sources of information to inform findings and decision making may also be provided.

External Examiners

An example of the paper trail relating to the external examination of one undergraduate and one postgraduate programme – including a paper trail of guidelines on the appointment of external examiners, a copy of any guidance/briefing notes given, review reports completed by the examiners, copies of how the departments responded to comments from these externals, and minutes showing how the external examiner comments were fed through the internal governance system.

Student Feedback

Perhaps one example of feedback at module level and one at programme or departmental level – including a paper trail to show student feedback structures and how the feedback loops are closed, including examples where students are kept advised of actions taken as a direct result of student comments.

Programme Approval and Review

Perhaps a series of documents tracing the trajectory of a programme from initial design through approval, monitoring and review. This may include a programme descriptor document, programme feedback, external examiner documents, other sources of feedback and papers relating to the various governance fora through which the programme has progressed. Documents recording the application of NFQ and Bologna policies and instruments could also be included. Examples of the use of data and quantitative sources of information to inform findings and decision-making may also be provided. A separate series of documents may also be provided for the evolution of a research degree programme.

Research Approval and Review

Perhaps a series of documents tracing the trajectory of a programme of research from initial proposal through to review might be included. Alternatively, documents relating to the review of research within schools or departments may be more appropriate. Notes or minutes relating to the quality assurance and/ or review of research activities at a cross-institutional level may also be included. Examples of the use of data and quantitative sources of information to inform findings and decision making may also be provided.

Committee Papers

A selection of Committee Papers (Agendas and Minutes) from key committees including: Quality Committee, Teaching and Learning Committee, Research Committee, Academic Decision-Making body, Governing Authority etc. A briefing document that outlines the relationship between the Governing Authority and Academic Decision-Making body might also be helpful here, if available, to show how the two bodies interact. In particular, it is helpful to emphasise the link between quality assurance, decision-making, the stated mission of the institution and the use of evidence to inform decision making.

II. International Projects

HICA Project, Central America

The principal aim of the HICA Project is to support the innovation of higher education curricula in Central American universities as well as the alignment of such curricula under a regional qualifications framework for higher education.

The HICA Project has reached the end of its 3rd and final year. Some minor administration and budgetary elements are still awaiting finalisation.

The end stages of the project were marked by a Final HICA Event in Costa Rica from the 5th – 7th September, 2018. Ms Elizabeth Noonan, Director, Quality Enhancement, represented UCC at this event and gave a PowerPoint presentation entitled: ‘Qualification Frameworks, curricular reform and quality enhancement in higher Education and international academic harmonisation: The European Experience’. Elizabeth was also invited to sit on a panel to discuss ‘HICA and its contribution to cooperation between Central America/Latin America and Europe’.

NQF-J Project, Jordan

The objective of the NQF-J project is to support the structural reform of the higher education system in Jordan, develop a qualifications framework for higher education in line with national priorities, and to implement same at different institutional levels. NQF-J provides a qualification framework in higher education for implementation at institutional level and sets up the basis for a comprehensive NQF, establishing a model that identifies the generic expectations of all levels of higher educational programmes. These are to be expressed as learning outcomes, mainly based on knowledge, skills and competences. The standards of qualifications at each level are to be created and established through a number of activities in which descriptors will be determined, along with appropriate QA processes, by all stakeholders in higher education. The methodology for setting and assuring the qualification standards are to be disseminated among academic institutions, government agencies responsible for QA and accreditation, and a wide spectrum of stakeholders. The project endeavours to clearly demonstrate the standards of Jordanian higher education awards and their national comparability. Additionally, through rigorous comparison with other national QFs, the project is to demonstrate comparability of Jordanian higher education wider awards with international norms and expectations, thus supporting mobility and employability.

Following the development of a National Qualifications Framework in Jordan, six Jordanian Universities conducted pilot projects to phase in the implementation of the NQF across a number of selected disciplines. Dr Kay Taaffe, QEU, attended a three-day study visit, designed to support this pilot process (July 2nd – 4th), at the Ministry for Higher Education in Amman. The primary purpose was to facilitate discussion on the adaptation of the selected study programmes to the recently established NQF, and evaluate the results of the compatibility study conducted by Jordanian partners.

A group of approx. 24 people from Jordan visited UCC from the 26-28th Sept. 2018. The trip by the Jordanian partners was seen as a natural follow-on to further develop this process. This Study Visit included talks on implementing the NFQ (policy and practice), on academic development and Governance and there was also a number of workshops on Learning Outcomes made available to the visiting delegation.

The NQF-J Project is also nearing its final stages – it was due to finish in Oct. 2018 but an extension of a further 6 months has recently been granted.

EMINENT Project, Haiti

In early August 2018 the Quality Enhancement Unit received confirmation that a project proposal that it had been invited to participate in as a partner was successfully funded. This project is coordinated by the University of Alicante and is concerned with Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Haiti.

The general objective of the EMINENT project is to ‘foster the enhancement of the Haitian Higher Education Quality Assurance (QA) system and processes’. In addition, the project is aimed at promoting harmonisation and awareness-raising of Haitian QA procedures in line with EU standards by:

- Setting up 5 Quality Assurance units at participating HEIs
- Establishing EMINENT Network on Quality Assurance

The EMINENT Project also seeks to implement pilot exercises of:

- 5 Internal Quality Assurance System manuals at Faculty level
- 5 Self-assessment exercises of study programmes

The Kick-off Meeting for the EMINENT Project is currently being organised

Section B: Quality Review Reports

1. Published Review Reports: 2017/2018

School of Music & Theatre Studies Panel Report

Panel Review Group Members

- Professor Michael Alcorn, Professor of Music and Dean of Graduate Studies, Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, Queen's University Belfast
- Dr Máire Leane (Chair) Dean, Office of Senior Vice President Academic and Registrar University College Cork
- Dr Marian McCarthy Director, Centre for the Integration of Research, Teaching & Learning (CIRTL) University College Cork
- Dr Dick McCaw Senior Lecturer, Drama and Theatre Royal Holloway, University of London
- Mr Rory O'Donnell (Student Representative) Students' Union Education Officer (2016-2017) University College Cork

Site-visit

The site visit was conducted from 14 – 16 November 2017.

Overall Analysis

Within the School of Music and Theatre, the two discrete departments have very different histories and profiles. The Department of Music has a long and distinguished history over 100 years, with eminent progenitors of national and international standing such as Fleischmann, Bax and O'Riada remembered within the culture of the Department. A key asset for the University is this unique history and the on-going cultural significance and impact of the Department on the life of the city. The Department of Theatre (formerly Drama and Theatre Studies) has a more recent history, with the undergraduate programme having had its first intake in 2001 – 2002 under the Department of English, but it became an independent Department shortly after the last Peer Review in 2008. Nonetheless, the Department of Theatre has in this period "*boxed above its weight*" in terms of community and cultural engagement across the city, as was evidenced by the stakeholders who met with the Panel.

The difference in size of the Departments is also notable with staff and student numbers much greater in Music than in Theatre.⁵ Notwithstanding these differences, the commitment to collaboration and cooperation across the disciplines was noted. Consequently, in this report the Panel addresses the issues at School level, except where expressly noted, to support the School in the structural integration of the disciplines and to support the mission for knowledge-sharing and interdisciplinarity across the School.

The Panel, in the first instance, commends the enormously hardworking, dedicated and talented staff, including part-time staff who are taking on roles of significant responsibility within the School. The staff gave testimony to the positive impact of the strong leadership in both Departments provided by current Heads. The constructive and collegial engagement across the School is

⁵ Total Staff FTE (Music) = 10.70 (8 full-time, 4 part-time [3 X 0.5 + 1 X 0.2] and one vacancy); Total Staff FTE (Theatre) = 6; Staff : student ratio (Music) = 12.29; Staff : student ratio (Theatre) = 15.31.

evidenced by the on-going development of school-level administrative structures and strategic priorities. The curriculum across the School takes an innovative approach, which foregrounds the scholarship of creativity and practice. Through the case-studies of good practice and the presentations made during the Site Visit, the Panel saw evidence of highly considered, research-led approaches to teaching, learning and assessment.

The School has strong relationships with external professional and cultural stakeholders. There is evidence of excellent community and practitioner engagement across the city and region, e.g. with Music Generation Cork City, Cork Community Gamelan, Graffiti and the Everyman. There is an on-going commitment to high profile performance and scholarly activity, facilitated through Fuaim and Perforum, which enhances cultural life and informs professional arts practice within the city.

On the other hand the School in recent years has had, and continues to have, some serious challenges. A key concern of the Panel, which echoes those of previous Review Panels (including the RQR) and External Examiner Reports, is the lack of sufficient progress on the part of the University and College to respond to previous recommendations. There was particular concern around the provision of adequate teaching and performance spaces for the Department of Theatre (as indicated in the last two quality reviews). In addition, the lack of a security presence in the Music building compromises the safety of staff and students, and the security of valuable equipment. Furthermore, the Panel was of the strong view that there is a risk of significant reputational damage due to the lack of recurrent investment in resources and facilities.

Staff across the School reported high workloads. Within the Department of Music this was most acute for colleagues who are frequently working full-time hours on part-time contracts. The inadequacy of the part-time teaching budget in the Department of Music to meet the needs for sessional instructors (e.g. instrumental tutors) negatively impacts on the non-pay budgets available for equipment and essential instrument maintenance.

Despite the serious challenges faced by the School, the Panel was of the view that there are also huge opportunities for these Departments within the context of the University's Strategic Plan 2017 – 2022, which places "*creative scholarship and understanding*" at the centre of its vision and mission.⁶ This commitment would appear to be borne out in the appointment of a Professor of Creative Practice, who is now also Head of School. The School is central to realising the University's commitment to Creative Practice and the Creative Hub. At College level, the School is well placed to be a cohesive focal point for creative practice, potentially leading to a School of Creative Arts or Creative Practice. The Panel would, for example, see significant opportunities for academic and research synergies with Film and Screen Media particularly in relation to practice.

Externally, there are opportunities for the School to work collectively to maximise opportunities that exist in the creative industries, both regionally and nationally, and consequently an opportunity to explore philanthropic support for such possibilities in conjunction with the College and University.

Self-Evaluation Report (SER)

The SER was presented in two parts, representing the two discrete departments within the School, with a separate overview from the Head of School, Professor Jools Gilson. Despite this divide in presentation and the geographical distances across the University, a drive for increased cooperation across the School was evident, with the Head of School and Heads of Department collaborating and coordinating the final submission of the SERs. For future reference, it would be helpful for Panels if

⁶ UCC Strategic Plan 2017 – 2022, *Independent Thinking Shared Ambition*, p.3

standardised data sets were agreed and a common structure for the submission of the SER is adopted across the University.

The Panel particularly noted the evaluative thrust and comprehensiveness of the report from the Department of Music, and the unusual but effective approach of having different staff members write a section, reflecting a “commitment to democratisation”. The appendices provided comprehensive evidence of a reflective approach to teaching and learning, and demonstrated effective and progressive teaching, learning and assessment practices, which are research-informed, student-centred and practice-based.

The Theatre SER opened with a strong statement on the challenges it faces and the limited institutional response to critical operational issues highlighted in the previous panel reports for Drama and Theatre Studies (DTS)⁷. Despite the serious issues identified in relation to succession planning, space issues, etc. the Department noted that it has responded ...

constructively to the recommendations of previous review panels, engaged with a thorough review of the DTS curriculum, formed closer links within the School with Music, reached out to the wider community, made DTS more visible, generated additional income (for example, through our new Evening Courses) and develop new admin protocols⁸.

The overview from the Head of School contextualises the developments and challenges that the School has faced in recent years. The main thrust of this overview lies in legacy staffing and space issues. However it also highlights many significant successes for both Departments, articulates a philosophy which “embod[ies] the *doing* of art practice as a way of being in the world, as research, as pedagogy⁹”, and presents a vision for the future which reflects a commitment to community engagement, including a ten-year partnership with Cork Opera House and the development of a Creative Hub within the University.

SWOT Analysis

The SWOT analysis was conducted independently of this formal review process, and in line with good practice for integrating quality processes, involved dedicated planning and review “away days” held in 2015-16 and 2016-17”. Findings of the SWOT were analysed and integrated appropriately into both SERs.

Benchmarking

The benchmarking for the Department of Theatre was with Sussex University in the UK, chosen because of its similar size to the Department at UCC; and with the National University of Ireland, Galway (NUIG) with whom the Department at UCC would be competing for students. It was noted that “soft” benchmarking is on-going with staff visiting other universities and Departments. The benchmarking highlighted that “UCC is significantly under-resourced in particular with regard to space. However, in spite of this, DTS continues to deliver comparable programmes to both Sussex and NUIG”.¹⁰

⁷ The Department of Drama and Theatre Studies (DTS) was recently renamed as the Department of Theatre, therefore the School is now referred to as the School of Music and Theatre. This report will refer to the School and Departments by their new titles other than when citing direct references.

⁸ Theatre SER, p.3

⁹ Overview of the Head of School, p.1.

¹⁰ Theatre SER, p.19

The institutions chosen for benchmarking by the Department of Music were Columbia College Chicago (CCC) and Northwestern University (Illinois) – the former chosen for its similar size to the Music Department at UCC, and the latter to compare and contrast with a more richly resourced organisation to which the Department at UCC could aspire. Comparisons with CCC and NU highlighted a significant gap in support within the Department at UCC for all administrative functions, with a particular shortfall in the organisation, management, PR and communication around artistic events which are run, not only by and for the School, but on behalf of the wider University and the broader community of Cork.

Developments since last review

The Departments were reviewed separately on previous occasions – Drama and Theatre in 2008, and Music in 2010. As noted above, both Departments have engaged constructively in implementing the recommendations of these Review Panels at Departmental and more recently, at School level. However, both Departments have expressed frustration at the inaction at College and University level to implement previous recommendations. While a Professorial appointment was made for Music, there have been significant losses at senior academic level through staff taking up positions in other universities and early retirement, which has meant that early career staff and part-time staff are required to fill these breaches. On a positive note however, nine staff from the School of Music & Theatre applied for progression across the bar in 2017 (two in theatre and seven in Music), and all have been successful.

The SER for the Department of Theatre highlighted a number of recommendations at University and College level that were made in the previous review in 2008, which have not been completed: namely issues around succession planning for the Department and access to specialised spaces for performance. The University's Research Quality Review (RQR) report for the Department is cited as follows: "*the theatre facilities at UCC are among the worst – possibly the worst – [the RQR Panel] had seen at any university.*"¹¹

Link for the full Panel Review Group Report

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/qualitypromotionunit/reports/cacss/SchoolofMusicTheatrePeerReviewPanelReport1718.pdf>

¹¹ UCC Research Quality Review Report (2015) p.192.

Department of Government & Politics Panel Report

Panel Review Group Members

- Professor Kathy Hall, School of Education, UCC (Chair)
- Professor Gail McElroy, Department of Political Science, Trinity College Dublin
- Dr David O’Connell, Director of Research Support Services, UCC
- Professor John Peterson, Professor of International Politics, University of Edinburgh
- Ciara Quinlan, Business Information Systems UCC (Student Reviewer)
- Dr Kay Taaffe, Quality Enhancement Unit, UCC, (Secretariat Support)

Site Visit

The site visit was conducted from 28-30 November 2017.

Overall Analysis

The history of the Department of Government and Politics, which will celebrate its 20th anniversary in 2018, has been somewhat contested and fragmented. Having resided for many years within the Commerce Faculty and latterly the College of Business and Law, the Department has recently relocated from the Cork University Business School (CUBS) to the College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences (CACSSS), and now sits within the School of Philosophy, Sociology, Criminology, Government and Politics. The Department has been renamed to include “Politics” in the title, which opens up opportunities for programming, visibility and marketing.

Currently the Department’s main undergraduate programmes are the BSc in Government (which the Department now plans to relaunch as the BSc Government and Political Science) and the BA in Politics (through CK101), which is taught jointly with History and Philosophy. The Department also contributes to a number of programmes in Commerce and Arts, including the BComm and the BComm (International); and to modules in the BSc International Development and Food Policy; BSc Public Health and Health Promotion; and BA Asian Studies.

Student numbers fell during the years of austerity (a factor which the Department attributes to reduced employment opportunities in the public sector) but began to pick up after 2014. The MSc in Government and M.Comm have had mixed fortunes with enrolments falling in both recently. On the other hand, numbers on the MSc in International Public Policy Diplomacy (IPPD) have been on an upward trajectory in recent years and the Panel sees opportunities for increased enrolment on this programme. The restructured MComm (previously by research) now includes online modules and is to be renamed as MRes in Government and Public Policy.

The Panel highly commended the Department’s comprehensive work-placement practices, which are unique when compared to similar undergraduate programmes within Ireland and beyond. The Department contributes widely to public policy and debate and has strong community engagement as evidenced by the links to CARL (Community Action Research Links). It has three established research clusters with staff having focused research agendas and dedicated research days. The Department’s performance in the University’s Research Quality Review (RQR) (2015) would indicate

that research activity is of a very good standard by international standards and likely to have a significant impact on research and on policy agendas.

Like other areas of the University, the Department has been impacted by the public sector employment control framework, which has hugely curtailed new recruitment and promotion for staff. Other challenges highlighted by the Department include “ambivalence” towards the discipline within CUBS and the protracted issue of the Department’s relocation within the University, the decision on which has taken several years. However, the move to CACSSS is envisaged as an opportunity for increased autonomy for the Department, with the potential to leverage the sense of optimism, energy and enthusiasm in relation to the Department’s future.

Because of the recent move to CACSSS, the central issue for the Department over the next numbers of years will be the integration of Government and Politics into the new School and College. This review is therefore coming at a good time with the opportunity for expert peer advice to support and guide the Department in constructing and evolving a stronger political science identity within the University and across the island of Ireland.

Peer Review

Methodology and Timetable

The Panel met over three days and the timetable enabled comprehensive engagement with staff, students, stakeholders and senior management at University, College and School levels (see Appendix 1 for a copy of the timetable). The composition of the Panel provided good coverage across the disciplines of International Relations and Political Science. Internal reviewers provided knowledge of the institutional and organisational structures within the University, while the student reviewer brought valuable insights and perspectives on student issues. The Panel commented on the great value of having the involvement of a Student Representative as a full Panel Member. Secretariat support from the Quality Enhancement Unit (QEU) was provided to the Peer Review Panel throughout, to facilitate the conduct of the review and support the Review Panel in formulating and agreeing the final Review Report.

Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and SWOT

The Self-Evaluation Report (SER) was well-structured and succinct, providing clear and helpful information, evidence and analysis. The process of developing the SER involved comprehensive consultation with Department staff (including facilitated away-days), and with internal (UCC) colleagues, students and external stakeholders. The SER provided clear insights into the recent history of the Department in terms of its relocation within the University, and the challenges and opportunities that this new phase brings. The document would have benefitted from additional data relating to finances, staff/student ratios, non-EU students and so on, especially in relation to comparative performance measures across the University. The detail provided on the SWOT was descriptive and would have benefitted from more specific identification of, and analysis of, KPIs (Key Performance Indicators).

Benchmarking

The benchmarking exercise took place against the University of New South Wales. While it was ambitious and aspirational, the Australian institution operates in a significantly different funding environment. The Department at UCC would have benefitted from an additional exercise with a more comparable institution, operating in a similar environment, although the Panel acknowledges the limited resources available for such an exercise.

Developments since last review

The steps taken since the last review have been well summarised in the conclusion of the SER and supported by information in the appendices, namely:

- the structural position of the Department has been resolved;
- the rebranding of the Department is on-going;
- the administration support has been increased¹²;
- the appointment of a work-placement officer has been achieved;
- processes are in place to regularly review modules (although the Panel would view the aftermath of this Review as an opportune time to revisit the module delivery).

Some issues in the previous review are still live and merit revisiting, for example, the shortage of physical space (including space and facilities for postgraduates and postdocs), and the appointment of a Professor for Government and Senior Lecturers, the absence of which has led to a flat organisational structure within the Department.

Link for the full Panel Review Group Report

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/qualitypromotionunit/reports/cacsss/GovernmentPoliticsPeerReviewReport1718.pdf>

¹² Note that the 0.7 FTE administrator for the Politics programme is currently on 1 year leave of absence and has not been replaced

Lewis Glucksman Gallery Panel Report

Panel Review Group Members

- Dr Marie Bourke, Former Keeper and Head of Education, National Gallery of Ireland
- Mr Diarmuid Collins, Bursar, Finance Office, UCC, (Chair)
- Professor Stephen Foster, Former Director of John Hansard Gallery, University of Southampton, UK
- Mr John FitzGerald, Head, Library and Information Services, UCC
- Dr Declan Jordan, Department of Economics, UCC
- Ms Kate Moriarty, Postgraduate Applied Psychology, UCC (Student Reviewer) UCC
- Dr Kay Taaffe, Quality Enhancement Unit, UCC (Panel Secretariat Support)

Site-visit

The site visit was conducted from 12-14 December 2017.

Overall Analysis

The Glucksman Gallery is a subsidiary company of the University, overseen by a Board operating according to a defined Memorandum and Articles of Association. This structure is considered by the Panel to be effective in enabling both the University and the Gallery to operate distinct complementary strategic and operational plans. For this structure to succeed, careful Board composition is required, as well as clear and open communication between Gallery and University.

The Glucksman Gallery “is its people” who form a highly motivated, hardworking, creative, and effective team. The Gallery has benefitted from excellent creative leadership vested in the Director who enjoys the support of an exceptionally talented and committed team and an active and enabling Board, especially the current Board. The Panel commends highly the performance of the Gallery especially when compared with much larger and better-resourced organisations. The Panel found unequivocal admiration on the part of all stakeholders for the Gallery staff. It was noted that, as with other areas of the University, restrictions in finance and employment have curtailed development and expansion, particularly in relation to staff numbers.

The Gallery is still at an early stage of development, having been founded only 13 years ago. Nevertheless, in this period, it has established a distinct identity as a contemporary gallery with a defined mission to represent and interpret contemporary art in an academic context. The Gallery’s engagement with the University is through a transdisciplinary approach which engages Schools and units across the University through co-curation and other innovative modes of collaboration. The Gallery has become highly responsive to the transdisciplinary agenda of the University; in the words of the Director “What was once perceived as a huge challenge has been an extraordinary moment of development, enabling bigger and more ambitious projects”. Many exhibitions receive substantial publicity, providing excellent opportunity for public dissemination of sometimes complex research findings. The Gallery also mounts a rich programme of activities around its exhibitions, often achieving strong successful civic and public engagement.

The Gallery has established a significant local, national, and international reputation. It received full accreditation on the Museum Standards Programme for Ireland in 2011 and retained this status in 2017. The MSPI guides its work in managing collections according to a recognised external quality framework.

The Panel found that the particular mission of the Gallery was clearly and convincingly enunciated by the Director and firmly supported by the Board. However, some stakeholders believed that the mission is too selective and unreceptive to the student body at UCC and the general public. The Panel believes that the Gallery needs to articulate its mission and adapt its programming, of exhibitions in particular, to accommodate greater student and public accessibility. The Panel believes that this can be achieved while maintaining the Gallery's reputation for and compelling focus on the interpretation of contemporary art in the academic context.

While the Gallery has a strong external focus, the *raison d'être* of the University is to serve the student population – present and future. It was evident to the Panel that, while there is significant depth of engagement with those UCC staff and students who are directly involved in the various collaborative projects, there is scope for more effective engagement with more, and a broader selection, of students. This view was voiced by some representatives of senior University management. The Panel believes that the Gallery and the University need to agree and clearly articulate the objectives and mission of the Gallery with a particular focus on improving engagement with students.

It was noted that a number of factors and opportunities are likely to impact positively on the Gallery over the coming years, including: closer alignment to the University's Strategic Plan 2017 – 2022 which views the Glucksman as contributing to "cultural and artistic life [and] strengthening research, practice and learning in the creative arts"¹³; the imminent opening of an actual and symbolic bridge at the Lower Grounds which links with other cultural institutions, such as Cork Public Museum; and new leadership at other major cultural institutions which will provide opportunities for renewed cross-city cultural partnership. This confluence of events provides the ideal moment for reflection and re-engagement.

Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and SWOT Analysis

The SER provided by the Director was comprehensive and very well assembled and presented a clearly expressed mission and vision for the Gallery. The SER evidenced a comprehensive body of policies and information which enabled the Panel to gain a clear understanding of all aspects of the operation and governance of the Gallery. The SER also demonstrated extensive external engagement by the Gallery across a broad ecosystem of stakeholders (local, national and international). All full-time staff were involved in the benchmarking and SWOT processes, which identified strengths (e.g. achieving the Museum Standards Programme of Ireland (MSPI) accreditation) and challenges for the Gallery *viz.* recognising and responding to a new generation of digital native learners. Particularly evident from both the SWOT and benchmarking exercises was the issue of capacity: the small team in the Gallery is clearly stretched to full capacity as it fulfils many roles and functions. Each team member operates an extensive range of skills and this demands considerable flexibility, adaptability, and personal dedication in each case.

Benchmarking

International benchmarking took place with the Whitworth Museum at the University of Manchester and the M Museum, a city museum in Leuven, Belgium. Staff at the Glucksman were both inspired and frustrated by this process, which demonstrated that the Gallery at UCC was performing very favourably despite being significantly under-resourced in comparison with the galleries visited (the Whitworth, for example, has 65 employees in contrast to the Glucksman's

¹³ University Strategic Plan 2017 - 2022, P. 14

five core staff and 10 part-time or casual staff). The benchmarking process with the Whitworth Museum identified a number of areas which are comparable to the Glucksman mission, such as diversity of audience, visibility of learning, emphasis on visitor experience, and using the spaces beyond the museum walls (such as the gardens of the Gallery).

Link for the full Panel Review Group Report

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/qualitypromotionunit/reports/admin/GlucksmanGallery-PanelReport.pdf>

Marketing and Communications Panel Report

Panel Review Group Members

- Mr Barry O'Brien, Director, Human Resources, UCC (Chair)
- Ms Michele Power, Manager, Quercus Talented Students Programme, UCC
- Miss Rachel Sandison Executive Director, External Relations, University of Glasgow
- Mr Alan Ferns, Associate Vice-President for External Relations, University of Manchester
- Ms Kirsty Ellen Hayes, Social Science, UCC, (Student Representative)
- Dr Kay Taaffe, Quality Enhancement Unit, UCC (Quality Enhancement Advisor),

Site Visit

The site visit was conducted from 16-18 January 2018.

Overall Analysis

The Panel was impressed with the commitment and professionalism of staff who bring a wealth of experience and a dedication to serving the University across the fields of activity. OMC identified its outward facing remit as their primary KPI (Key Performance Indicator) and there was evidence of highly successful external engagement and partnership-working with principal stakeholders in the city and beyond. Both internal and external stakeholders commented on the quality of many of the OMC's outputs which are of a very high standard.

The Panel sought to establish who has ownership for strategic planning for M & C and for the institutional brand and reputation. In meetings with Senior Management of the University, the Panel established that the responsibility for developing the vision, mission and strategy for the brand and reputation of the University, and associated KPIs, resides with Senior Management of the University.

It was evident that some resources for M & C are devolved and dispersed to different academic and professional service units across the University, and consequently there appears to be a somewhat disconnected approach in how these resources are utilised for maximum impact and the delivery of KPIs.

The Panel therefore recommends that, in the first instance, an audit of the marketing, media and communication resources across the University is undertaken, and that this audit should include expenditure on external suppliers in these areas. A key objective of this audit will be to discover and then optimise and unlock investment across the University in the area of M & C. This audit should provide oversight of the M & C resource and inform the development of an optimal model for ensuring greatest impact of this investment across the institution. The outcomes of this audit should then inform the Office's strategic planning and resource allocation. The Panel anticipates that this audit could satisfactorily be carried out without any additional spend, but rather be extracted from information already held by the Finance Office in the form of a "desk audit". It suggests that levels of activity in the area of M & C could be tracked by looking at the expenditure by cost code and by supplier (PR companies, graphic designers, press photographers, printers etc.) It might also be possible to search for relevant key words in UCC job advertisements over the past few years which would indicate the spread of the responsibility for the activity across UCC staff.

While stakeholders commended the responsiveness of the teams in the OMC – and this was an identified key strength in the SER – the Units appear to be operating predominantly at a

transactional/operational level without strategic scaffolding. This means that the Office is often functioning in reactive mode rather than supporting a considered institutional agenda for the brand and M & C, in line with the agreed goals in the University's Strategic Plan. This can result in competing demands, a drain on resources and possible diversion from more strategic M & C activity. Consequently, there is a need to develop and implement an Operational Plan for M & C, to give effect to the University's Strategic Plan, with the OMC taking a lead role, but in partnership with other academic and professional services (principally but not exclusively: Admissions; Graduate Office; International Office; Development and Alumni).

The Panel was of the view that the OMC should play the key role and be encouraged to be ambitious and creative in developing an Operational Plan for M & C for the University. The findings of the Panel outlined in the following paragraphs are, therefore, intended to support the OMC in leading this initiative.

Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and SWOT Analysis

The SER is detailed, providing clear information, evidence and analysis of the operations of the individual Units and functions within the OMC. Preparation involved a consultation process with OMC staff and external stakeholders, an internal (UCC) staff survey, and a SWOT analysis. Findings from these consultations were integrated in the SER and contributed to the overall self-evaluation and recommendations.

Benchmarking

Benchmarking took place against 6 other universities (4 UK and 2 Irish). The Panel questioned the appropriateness of some of the institutions chosen as they were not comparable in terms of scale and resources to the OMC at UCC. The objectives for the benchmarking exercise were not very specific; consequently, the outcomes did not provide useful data in relation to the effectiveness of the OMC by comparison with other national competitors. The Reputation Audit did undertake benchmarking in relation to sentiment and reputation versus national competitors, which was of more value. The Panel would recommend that the OMC continues to undertake on-going benchmarking of a more focused nature which provides data in relation to the comparative brand performance of UCC nationally and internationally.

Link for the full Panel Review Group Report

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/qualitypromotionunit/reports/admin/MarketingandCommunicationsPeerReviewPanelReport1718.pdf>

OCLA Panel Report

Panel Review Group Members

- Dr Peter Coulahan, Safety, Insurance, Operational Risk and Compliance (SIRC) Manager, University College Dublin
- Mr John L. Duffy, Chief Operating Officer, London Metropolitan University
- Ms Kate Moriarty, School of Applied Psychology Postgraduate, UCC (Student Reviewer)
- Ms Kate O'Brien, College Manager, College of Science, Engineering and Food Science, UCC
- Professor Patrick O'Donovan (Chair) Professor of French, School of Languages, Literatures & Cultures, UCC
- Dr Veena O'Halloran University Secretary & Compliance Officer, Strathclyde University
- Ms Deirdre O'Brien, Quality Enhancement Unit UCC, (Panel Secretariat)

Site-visit

The site visit was conducted from 30 January – 1 February 2018.

Overall Analysis

The Panel was impressed with the professionalism of the staff of OCLA and heard much evidence that staff are to be commended for their dedication and work ethic, and for the informed expertise they bring to bear on the work of the University. Senior officers and staff from across the University were warm in their praise for the commitment, sensitivity and professionalism of staff; OCLA staff are respected and trusted by the University community. The Panel also received eminently satisfactory evidence of productive working relationships with external stakeholders, some of whom testify to standards of performance and expertise at the forefront of peer institutions nationally.

Much of the work of OCLA straddles the spheres of management and governance. The Panel would urge that across OCLA as a whole the distinct responsibilities that arise from this dual role be kept closely in view, both from a strategic and an operational point of view.

The University has a relatively large management team, a factor that allows the full range of relevant considerations to be brought to bear on deliberation and decision making. OCLA has a central role in facilitating informed assessment of context and risk and in the effective appraisal of the balance between innovation and the protection of the institution. The contribution of OCLA spans several kinds of counsel, e.g. legal advice, as distinct from risk assessment. OCLA has a many-sided role: it supports and participates in decision-making; it also plays a part in recording and formalising decisions, and in facilitating engagement between Governing Body and the leadership and management of the University. OCLA can be self-confident in its engagement with the other main parts of the University: this is a good basis on which to engage with the priorities and points of view that others in the University Management Team (UMT) and further afield bring to bear, as they must, on deliberation and decision making. Self-monitoring on the part of OCLA is important: the office serves the University well when its advice carries the right weight in context, the quality of good decision-making being a collective responsibility, notably so at UMT level. It is indeed important to give due weight to context when giving advice, given that judgement calls, whether on

the part of UMT as a whole or its individual members in their areas of responsibility, are rarely entirely clear-cut. The role of OCLA to advise and guide should not be confused with the separate functions of senior management to make decisions and drive innovation.

OCLA, Finance and Human Resources comprise an important group of central services, all of which provide advice and support to UMT. The Panel recommends that these offices jointly consider the optimal approach to the range of advice, collectively and separately, to be provided and its impact, to support UMT and the University more widely in effective decision-making and strategic risk-taking in context. A shared framework of understanding on how these areas interact with the Colleges and other central functions would also be beneficial.

The Panel received strong positive feedback from Governing Body (GB) members and GB remains constructively engaged with OCLA. The quality of support provided was commended. The Panel recommends that OCLA takes a role in educating the voting constituency on the role and responsibilities of the elected internal representatives within GB. The Panel also recommends that training be expanded to include targeted training for members who take up position during the course of the GB term of office (for example, Students' Union officers) and mandatory training for Chairs of GB sub-committees. The Panel was informed that a new IUA code of governance is being developed and this will be taken as an opportunity to evaluate and review GB structures. The Panel noted the view of some of the external members that GB should consider externalising their focus; working with other offices as appropriate, OCLA should work to anticipate the kinds of support GB may require in pursuing this objective.

Areas such as Risk Management and Health and Safety are culturally well embedded within the University and the opportunity now exists to leverage this cultural receptiveness and utilise the expertise of OCLA to move risk management and health and safety operations to the next level, where the assessment of safety, risk and opportunity are seamlessly embedded in strategic deliberation and action. There is evidence that at some levels in the University, Risk Management is heavily weighted towards compliance, a factor that may unduly limit risk appetite. The advice of the Panel is that the risk register could be balanced with an opportunity register and that the concept of risk management as a tool to identify and exploit uncertainties and the associated opportunities be communicated to the wider University community.

The Health and Safety Office is to be commended for its role in fully embedding a culture of occupational health and safety compliance and awareness within the University. The Panel was cognisant of the fact that this is an under-resourced area and extra resources may be required to enable the office to service the complete health and safety needs of the University community, including the student body. The Panel recommend that Health and Safety expand and move from a focus on compliance towards a focus on the enabling, guidance and support functions that are required across the University.

The Panel noted the level of dissatisfaction among UCC staff regarding the annual health and safety reporting process currently in place and recommend that it is reviewed against LEAN principles. This will also facilitate effective use of reporting procedures in sustaining and developing leadership across the University in this key area of responsibility. A development of the Health and Safety service is required also to ensure that the health and safety needs of the student community are being met, a particular concern for the Panel. The Panel heard of plans to secure a post focused on the health and safety needs of students and recommends that this resource is integrated into the current H&S Office. This resource would ensure continuity between fixed-term sabbatical Students' Union officers.

The Panel noted that differing opinions on both the status of student groups and their activities within the University were expressed during the course of the review. It is recommended that the status of student groups and activities within the university be clarified in the context of OCLA interaction and involvement in areas such as risk management, insurance, health and safety, etc. This is recommended for the purpose of clarification but also to ensure a focus on a whole community approach to staff and student matters.

Self-Evaluation Report (SER)

The Panel found the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) to be an excellent example of a methodical and clearly laid-out SER. It provided clear information on the operations of the distinctive functions within the Office of Corporate & Legal Affairs (OCLA). The Panel commended the frank and informative nature of the SER and the supportive nature of the appendices provided. The Panel did note that there was a mainly staff and research operational focus to the SER and the strategic and student dimension of the work of the OCLA could have been developed and reflected upon further in the SER narrative.

The SER Committee appeared to be well-coordinated; preparation was done on a project management basis and involved a consultation process with OCLA staff, a UCC staff survey, a previous Governing Body (GB) effectiveness review, SWOT and benchmarking analysis. The GB effectiveness review was commended by the Panel as extremely informative. Findings from all these consultations were integrated in the SER and contributed to the overall self-evaluation and recommendations. The recommendations are considered and offer scope to strengthen OCLA's engagement with students and staff across the University and to support units across the University in pursuit of enhanced strategic readiness and improved operational capacity.

UCC Staff survey

The Panel commended OCLA for their UCC staff survey which produced a wealth of information. The inclusion of all responses to the staff survey in an unadulterated form is also to be commended.

Benchmarking

OCLA engaged in a comprehensive desktop exercise in order to identify a suitable benchmarking institution. Following an extensive analysis of many different Universities based within Ireland, the

UK and in Europe, the University of Dundee was selected, as it has very similar functions and structure to OLCA, with similar staffing levels, and because of its international ranking. The outcomes of the benchmarking were comprehensive and used to good effect in the SER.

SWOT Analysis

An away day was held off-campus and facilitated by an external, experienced facilitator. A previously filled-in staff questionnaire helped proceedings. The Panel commended the work done to produce a comprehensive and searching SWOT analysis.

Link for the full Panel Review Group Report

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/qualitypromotionunit/reports/admin/CorporateLegalAffairsPeerReviewPanelReport1718.pdf>

Language Centre Panel Report

Panel Review Group Members

- Professor Nuala Finnegan, Head, Department of Spanish, Portuguese and Latin American Studies, UCC, (Chair)
- Ms Anne Gallagher, Director of the Centre for Irish Language: Research, Teaching and Testing and Head, School of Celtic Studies, Maynooth University
- Ms Beatrice McCarthy, Department of Government, UCC, (Student Reviewer)
- Ms Colette McKenna, Director of Library Services, UCC
- Professor Ray Satchell, Director, Sussex Centre for Language Studies, University of Sussex
- Ms Deirdre O'Brien, Quality Enhancement Unit, UCC (Panel Secretariat)

Site-Visit

The site visit was conducted from 20-22 February 2018.

Overall Analysis

The process of review has come at an opportune time for the Language Centre, particularly in light of its clear potential to contribute to the University's key strategic mission and priority actions. Moreover, its activity is clearly aligned with one of the key priority actions of the University's new Strategic Plan (action point 5) which emphasises the University's aim to strengthen international engagement and recruit additional international students. It was evident to the Panel that the Language Centre has a critical strategic role to play in delivering this University priority. The Panel strongly believes that the Language Centre is an asset for the University that is currently under-utilised. It was also clear to the Panel that the Language Centre is prepared for change and that there is a strong view among staff that change is both welcome and necessary.

The Panel heard from stakeholders, both internal and external, of the professionalism of staff and the respect in which they are held across the University. The Panel was impressed with the commitment and enthusiasm of staff which was apparent in their passion for their work and in the breadth and depth of activity and training. Both administrative and teaching staff have made important contributions in the University. These include participation in the academic mission in terms of the development and delivery of academic programmes, the crucial integration of the international student community, as well as the generation of important external income.

Innovation and entrepreneurship are both evident among staff, and the Panel was impressed by the foresight and strategic thinking displayed by all staff members. The Summer School is a model of good practice and students are particularly positive about its vibrant cultural programme. Across all programmes there is evidence of outstanding commitment to the student experience. Students of the Language Centre are ambassadors for UCC and indeed the Panel heard evidence from current students that they had chosen UCC on the recommendation of past students.

It was apparent to the Panel that visibility across the University is a crucial issue that requires some consideration. While there was widespread evidence of excellent activity, it was less clear how this was communicated and perceived by the university community more widely. The Panel

recommends that the Language Centre should collaborate more closely with other offices across the University, particularly the International Office given the synergy of operations. There are also many offices that provide a service to students and pastoral resources that are under-utilised by the Language Centre (for example, the Admissions Office, the Student Experience Office). Collaboration with these offices may reduce the pastoral care workload for staff members and further integrate the Language Centre into the wider operations of the university.

The Language Centre appears to have many different streams of revenue but not all potential income reaches the Language Centre. For example, staff teach on degree programmes across the University, however, the corresponding FTE income does not directly benefit the Language Centre. Given its designation as an administrative unit, it cannot, under current structures be allocated income on the basis of FTEs. The Panel believes that there is scope for a clearer financial model and recommends that financial modelling is undertaken to reflect the entire extent of the Language Centre activity. This should provide the basis for a meaningful cost benefit analysis and ultimately lead to the development of a sustainable business plan.

Staff in the Language Centre appear to be operating under difficult conditions; individuals are unclear on their employment status; some staff have no contracts or job security. There is a lack of transparency with regard to workload models and there appear to be different models in use. There is also a lack of clarity around the duties involved in hourly paid work. Greater clarity is needed for staff on these and other related issues, such as administrative loads and exemptions from teaching and/or other duties. The employment status of staff is a matter of grave concern to the Panel and a clear risk for the University. The Panel recommends that the Deputy President and Human Resources work together to review current contractual arrangements and recruitment procedures.

The Panel found that general working conditions are poor, offices are overcrowded and there is a chronic shortage of space. The Panel heard that even simple measures such as securing a UCC email address and accessing rooms appear to be beyond the reach of certain staff members. It was clear to the Panel that staff are somewhat demoralised, which makes their continued and enthusiastic contribution to the education of the students all the more commendable. The Panel would urge that immediately solvable issues, for example, ensuring that all staff have a UCC email address, are resolved forthwith.

Self-Evaluation Report (SER)

The Self-Evaluation Report (SER) was comprehensive and informative and clearly laid out the Language Centre's aims and objectives. The SER provided clear evidence of the wide range of activities undertaken in the Language Centre. The majority of staff engaged with the process and student focus groups were consulted. A co-ordinating committee met regularly as part of the centre planning meetings. The SWOT exercise was wide-ranging and edifying in its analysis. The University of Liverpool was chosen for the benchmarking visit due to the similarities between the Language Centres in both institutions. The outcomes of the benchmarking analysis were useful to the Panel in their deliberations.

The Panel would like to commend the management team of the Language Centre for the substantial body of work undertaken since the previous quality review; there is evidence of considerable

progress since the last review took place in 2001/02. Given the length of time elapsing since then, as well as the considerable structural changes in the unit, the Panel did not think it relevant to comment on the substance of the previous review report.

Link for the full Panel Review Group Report

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/qualitypromotionunit/reports/admin/LanguageCentrePanelReport1718.pdf>

Information Services Panel Report

Panel review Group members

- Ms Therese Collins, School of Arts and Celtic Studies, UCC, (Postgrad Student Reviewer)
- Mr Donnacha Fitzgerald, School of Pharmacy, UCC (Undergrad Student Reviewer)
- Dr Patrick Harrison, Department of Physiology, UCC
- Dr Kieran Hickey, Head of Department of Geography, UCC
- Ms Liz Jolly, Director, Student & Library Services, Teeside University
- Professor Anita Maguire, Vice-President for Research and Innovation, UCC (Chair)
- Ms Gonnait O’Riordan, Director of Library and Information Services, University of Limerick
- Mr Seamus Shaw, Chief Information Officer, Oxford Brookes University
- Dr Kay Taaffe, Quality Enhancement Unit, UCC (Secretariat Support)

Site-Visit

The site visit was conducted from the 6-8 March 2018.

Overall Analysis

Although converged, the two distinct functions of IS are not in any way diminished and at present the division operates a “federated” structure with individual leaders. IS holds a key strategic and infrastructural position within the University, with the Library being a central physical, digital and symbolic locus of enquiry and learning. IT Services plays a strategic role in enabling the University to achieve its ambition as a Digital University. A key strength for the University is the highly effective management team within IS, bringing very different strengths which collectively deliver an outstanding service to the institution. The successful partnership is the product of highly engaged visionary leadership with a culture of collaboration and cooperation, which enables multi-professional teams to function within the convergence.

Despite diminishing resources during the years of austerity, there was evidence of continual development as evidenced by the many achievements in Library spaces which provide a highly engaged, embedded and supportive environment for the academic enterprise of the institution. Stakeholders also provided clear evidence of an improved communications and IT service across the University in recent years. Both services were highly commended by colleagues for their hardworking, dedicated and committed staff and the excellent customer service focus; to that end the Panel was of the opinion that the whole IS service has reason to pause and celebrate its staff and achievements.

The openness to engage with the wider academic and research community was clearly articulated by colleagues. IT Services reports that its department has changed dramatically over the past ten years with the change accelerating in the last five years. Its role has moved from systems operations to one of enabling strategic change within the University. The synergies and collegial collaboration between IS and the Office of the Vice President for Teaching and Learning (OVPTL), Technology Engaged Learning (TEL), Instructional Design and the Skills Centre are to be commended and this can be leveraged further as a model of good practice to replicate across the University, including delivery on the Student Hub.

A key issue which emerged is the need to address the perceived lack of clarity around ownership and priority of the Digital Strategy for the University. The senior management of the University has undergone significant change in recent times and developing the academic strategy and operationalising the Digital Strategy will take time to embed; however, it was clear to the Panel that, at senior management level, there is a clear vision for the realisation of a Digital University which will cascade outwards in coming months. This digital ambition for the University needs to be clearly articulated and addressed at senior management level. There is a window of opportunity for IS to inform this strategy and equally to draw on the vision at senior management level through their demonstrated skills in leveraging alliances. It is intended that the findings of this Panel Report will support the division at this critical stage in its development.

Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and SWOT Analysis

Both the Library and IT Services established working groups to develop their SERs, each with its own Chair. Drafts of the SERs were returned to the Directorate and an overview was compiled by the Director of Information Services and University Librarian. The SERs were presented in three volumes: the first volume, prepared by the Director of Information Services, provided an overview of the converged Information Services division; the second was the SER for IT Services; the third, a SER for the Library. While the documents were detailed they did focus, understandably, on resources given the curtailment on investment in the period since the last review and in the context of the institution's vision for integrating the division within the academic mission of the University. The data presented in the appendices was of very high quality and will facilitate data-enabled decisions.

Benchmarking

Since the converging of the services, IS has maintained a connection with Queens University of Technology, Brisbane, whose IS services operate under a similar structure as IS at UCC, incorporating Technology, Information and Library Services (TILS). IT Services undertook a survey with a number of UCC's benchmarked Universities and "focused on areas of UCC strategic importance, many of which arose as queries from the SWOT analysis and also the stakeholder conversations with our Steering committee".¹⁴ The outcomes of the IT Services benchmarking exercise were integrated throughout the SER. The Library used "the LibQUAL survey tool, Sconul Statistical reports and also developed and conducted their own benchmark survey".¹⁵ While the Panel noted that the data presented was of very high quality, the analysis was often selective and used more as a case for resources. The Panel was of the opinion that the SCONUL statistics present a rich source of data, the interpretation of which could be used and applied most effectively by the Library in the future.

Link for the full Panel Review Group Report

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/qualitypromotionunit/reports/admin/InformationServicesPeerReviewPanelReport201718.pdf>

¹⁴ IT SER page 26

¹⁵ Library SER page 15

2. Recent Peer Reviews (2018)

School of Engineering

Panel Review Group Members

- Professor Bruno Allard, Director of Ampère Laboratory, INSA Lyon (France)
- Ms Jennifer Chadwick, School of Law, UCC, (Student Reviewer)
- Professor Mary Horgan, School of Medicine, UCC (Panel Chair)
- Professor Per Larsson-Edefors, Professor of Computer Engineering Chalmers, University of Technology (Sweden)
- Professor Lisa Looney, Dean of Engineering and Computing, Dublin City University
- Ms Michèle Power, Manager, Quercus Scholarship Talented Students Programme, UCC
- Dr Kay Taaffe, Quality Enhancement Unit, UCC (Secretariat Support)

Site-Visit

The site visit was conducted from 9-11 October 2018.

Report Status

Draft with the School for factual accuracy check.

Cork University Business School

Panel Review Group Members

- Mr Noel Brennan, Medicine and Neuroscience, UCC, (Student Reviewer]
- Ms Melanie Currie, Deputy Dean, Nottingham Business School, Nottingham Trent University
- Ms Kate O'Brien, School Manager, College of Science, Engineering and Food Science, UCC
- Professor Bob O'Keefe, Vice Principal and Dean of Management, Royal Holloway, University of London
- Professor Metka Takavčič, Professor and Member of the Academic Unit for Management and Organisation, University of Ljubljana
- Professor Helen Whelton Head, College of Medicine and Health, UCC, (Chair]
- Dr Kay Taaffe, Quality Enhancement Unit, UCC (Secretariat Support)

Site-Visit

The site visit was conducted from 20-22 November 2018.

Report Status

Draft with the School for factual accuracy check.

Section C: Annual Institutional Quality Report (AIQR)

Part 1

Overview of internal QA governance, policies and procedures

Overarching institution-level approach and policy for QA (ESG 1.1)

1. Overarching Institution Quality Policy

A brief synopsis of the overarching institution quality policy which sets out the links between QA policy and procedures and the strategy and strategic management of the institution.

Quality at UCC

Vision, Mission and Values

Our **Vision** is to be a leading university of independent thinkers.

Our **Mission** is to create, understand and share knowledge and apply it for the good of all.

Our core **Values** guide and underpin our actions and our processes:

- creativity
- responsiveness
- transparency
- scholarship
- freedom of expression
- integrity
- equality
- diversity
- respect

Our key strategic aim is to deliver an innovative academic mission. The following goals will inform that mission:

Goal One

Implement an academic strategy to deliver an outstanding, student-centred teaching and learning experience with a renewed, responsive and research-led curriculum at its core.

Goal Two

Be a leading university for research, discovery, innovation, entrepreneurship, commercialisation and societal impact.

Goal Three

Create value for our community through an international outlook and informed and creative engagement on local and global issues.

Goal Four

Attract, develop, support and retain staff of the highest quality, thereby ensuring a diverse staff who are enabled to reach their full potential.

Goal Five

Strengthen our infrastructure and resource base.

“By embedding a strong quality-enhancement ethos, we will use our quality processes to ensure a culture and experience of best practice in the delivery of our academic mission, demonstrating our commitment to continuous evolution and improvement.”

Strategic Plan 2017 – 2022, p. 23.

Quality Enhancement Policy Statement

An enhancement ethos both challenges and supports the systematic examination of what we do as a University to enable excellence in serving learners, stakeholders and our wider community in terms of our education, research and other activities. Our approach to quality is founded on openness, systematic self-evaluation, engagement with peer review processes and a commitment to enhancement-based outcomes that are responsive, creative, enabling and student-centred. Through our quality enhancement approach, we seek to: preserve our institutional autonomy through accountability and transparency which will enable the diversity of our activities; recognise and share good practice; increase our reflexive capacity; support institutional learning and development to encourage responsiveness across all our activities.

In our quality enhancement approach, we are committed to:

- Building and embedding a culture of quality which is engaged, reflective and connected
- Working collaboratively to develop effective evaluation approaches that allow critical reflection on achievement of strategic goals and objectives and an appraisal of the known and anticipated needs of stakeholders
- Engaging students as active partners in the quality enhancement process to embed a student-centred approach
- Developing quality processes that promote creativity, excellence and innovation
- Using peer review as an important reference point for confirming and developing the quality of the University’s activities
- Undertaking institutional reflection on the outcomes of quality review processes to contribute to on-going institutional planning, resource allocation and institutional development
- Ensuring that quality processes facilitate the sharing of good practice internally and externally
- Developing our evidenced-based approach to quality enhancement informed by relevant research and good practice nationally and internationally.

Quality assurance and enhancement policy at UCC is informed by international best practice and has regard to the requirements of the *Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act, 2012* and the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (2015)*.

The practical realisation of the goals outlined in our vision, mission and values statement is made apparent in the University’s Priority Actions which set out priority activities and projects over the period of the strategic plan. Progress and development against Priority Actions are managed by, and reported on, through the University Management Team Strategy (UMTS), a forum of all senior university managers which is chaired by the President of the University. UMTS adopts an Annual Plan approach to monitor progress internally. Through UMTS members, the strategic goals are embedded

and operationalised in the quality procedures and processes University-wide, both horizontally and vertically, for education, research and services.

University-wide there are a range of quality policies and procedures which link to, and support, progression of the strategic goals. These approaches are based on the principles of expert external peer review, external stakeholder engagement, internal stakeholder engagement and robust internal approval, review and monitoring approaches. Such approaches are exemplified by:

1. Periodic quality review by external peers of academic, support and research activity;
2. External examiner system and reports;
3. External stakeholder engagement in the design and review of educational provision;
4. Student engagement and participation in University decision-making processes and student representative structures within programmes;
5. Student participation as reviewers in periodic quality review;
6. Policy and procedures for programme, module approval and curriculum review;
7. Policy and procedures for approval, review and enhancement of doctoral programmes;
8. Procedures for the appointment and on-going professional development of staff;
9. Internal monitoring, review and evaluation of key quality processes through the University's Academic Council committee structure;
10. Strategic review and monitoring of key outcomes of quality processes through the University Management Team.

Implementation of these approaches allows the University to assure the quality and standards of its awards as specified by the Qualifications and Quality Assurance Act 2012.

2. Quality assurance decision-making fora

A brief description of institution-level quality assurance decision-making fora

The main strands of institution-level decision-making fora for quality are the Quality Enhancement Committee and Academic Council both of which are under oversight of Governing Body.

(<http://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/ocla/universitygovernance/documents/OrganisationalStructure.pdf>)

Quality Enhancement Committee

The Quality Enhancement Committee (QEC), chaired by the President, is a committee of the University Management Team Strategy and reports annually to the Governing Body. The QEC's role is to support the University's mission and strategy for excellence in learning, research and related services through developing and embedding a culture of quality enhancement based on the outcomes of robust expert peer review and informed by ongoing analysis of key quality indicators. In fulfilling its remit, the Quality Enhancement Committee advises UMTS and Academic Council on key quality issues arising with implications for strategy or policy development. It provides an Annual Report to Governing Body to meet the requirements of the Universities Act 1997 and the Qualifications and Quality Assurance Act 2012 (<http://www.ucc.ie/en/qeu/qec/>). Governing Body refers the report to Academic Council for consideration and review of relevant issues.

Academic Council

The responsibilities of Academic Council for managing and controlling the academic affairs of the university including curriculum, instruction and education are defined by statute

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/ocla/statutesregulations/documents/PrincipalStatuteApril2018.pdf>

Academic Council is supported by an Academic Board with delegated authority on certain matters; established standing committees and a range of sub-committees to manage academic affairs across the scope of the University's education, research and related services. The work of these sub-committees is engaged in coordinating and implementing governing structures, policies and procedures. The work of the Academic Council is supported by an Academic Secretariat and the governing procedures for the conduct of committees is set out in the Academic Council Committee Handbook

https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/academicsecretariat/Handbook_Aug2018.pdf

Management of Quality

The Director of Quality Enhancement reports to the President and is responsible for planning and implementing the University's quality assurance and enhancement procedures University-wide on a periodic basis. The Director is supported by a small core team of professional staff who work with oversight from the Quality Enhancement Committee to ensure that quality processes support the University's strategic mission and are fit for purpose. Overall, this helps to ensure that the University's quality processes are informed by and developed in light of international good practice for quality in higher education policies for the European Higher Education Area including Bologna and the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG) and national policies and procedures as outlined in Quality and Qualifications Ireland's (QQI) Guidelines.

The key components of the periodic quality processes include review methodologies for: academic quality, research quality, support quality, thematic and topic specific issues. Review methodologies are based on an expert assessment model involving external peer review, national and international benchmarking and analysis of good practice. They are underpinned by key data and indicators emerging from internal approval, review and monitoring mechanisms. The methods of review are in accordance with international good practice and the requirements of the ESG and include:

- Self-evaluation
- External peer review visit
- Publication of a peer review report
- Follow-up and quality enhancement

All review reports and recommendations are considered by the Quality Enhancement Committee and senior management. Recommendations arising from review are responded to by the area under review and are subject to a follow-up process. Key issues arising from review are analysed and reported to the Quality Enhancement Committee and the University Management Team Strategy as part of the integration between quality and strategic planning actions and processes. Annually, the QEC reports on the key issues, improvements and themes from University-wide periodic review to Governing Body, which then refers the report to Academic Council for consideration and action. <https://www.ucc.ie/en/qeu/>

Confirmation of QA Policy and Procedures

1. Programme Design and Approval (ESG 1.2)

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance policy and procedures for the design and approval of new programmes.

New academic programmes: UCC has a clearly defined process for the approval of new academic programmes and modifications to existing programmes at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. Policies and procedures for the development and approval of programme design are regulated by Academic Board via the Academic Development and Standards Committee and the Office for Academic Programmes and Regulations (APAR).

For new academic programmes, the main components of the approval process include the clear articulation of Stage 1 and Stage 2. Stage 1 comprises Outline Programme Approval and the approval of the new programme title by Academic Board. Stage 2 comprises the quality assurance procedures for full programme approval. Stage 2 is specifically configured to enable employer and peer review by external subjects, student involvement to ensure appropriate input from potential applicants and Programme Team engagement with external peers to promote good practice from elsewhere in the higher education sector nationally and internationally. The two-stage programme approval process is followed in the case of all collaborative provision. Due diligence of the proposed curriculum to be delivered by the partner institution must be performed as outlined in the UCC curricular approval handbook <https://www.ucc.ie/en/apar/curriculumapproval/handbook/>.

Changes to existing programmes: Changes to existing approved academic programmes are classified as either major or minor. All changes require approval by the relevant School(s)/Programme Board of Studies and the anchor College (in liaison with participating College(s), where appropriate). Certain major changes require final approval by Academic Board. Major and minor changes are regulated by the Office for Academic Programmes and Regulations.

Information on the Academic Council approved process, policies, guidelines and procedures governing new programme approval and change may be found in the Approval and Policies and Guidelines handbook <https://www.ucc.ie/en/apar/curriculumapproval/handbook/>

The output from the new academic Programme Approval and Change processes is recorded annually in four separate, but inter-linked publications, namely:

- [University Undergraduate Calendar*](#)
- [University Postgraduate Calendar](#)
- [Book of Modules](#)
- [Marks and Standards](#)

**Curriculum and examination related information for programmes offered through Adult Continuing Education may be found on the Adult Continuing Education Website (<https://www.ucc.ie/en/study/courses/?courseType=AdultContinuingE>)*

These are published annually on the University web page and contain the curriculum and examination related information which form the basis of the University's contract with the student and fulfils the University's obligation to students in this regard.

The *University Undergraduate and Postgraduate Calendars* contain information on: Programme/Qualification Title; Programme Entry Requirements; the groupings of core and elective modules that make up each year of a programme and their associated credits values; Regulations governing Selection and Change of Modules, Information on Subject Quotas, Transfers within and across Faculties/Colleges, Work Placement Regulations; Regulations governing Admission, Supervision and Examination of Research Degrees.

The *Book of Modules* contains information on each module listed in the University Calendar. Module Descriptions contain data on: Module Title, Credit Value, Teaching Periods; Maximum no. of Students, Pre-requisites, Co-requisites; Teaching Methods/Student Workload; Module Co-ordinator, Lecturers, Learning Outcomes, Module Objective; Module Content, Assessment type and weighting, Compulsory Elements, Penalties, Pass Standard and any Special Requirements for Passing Module, End of Year Written Examination Profile, Requirements for Supplemental Examinations (where applicable).

The *Marks and Standards Book* contains the assessment rules and standards at academic programme level and govern whether or not a student may progress to the following year of study or graduate and the parameters that define the class of the degree to be awarded. It contains information including: Time of Examination Boards, Credits, Modules; Marks Maxima, Distribution of Marks and Assessment Details for Modules; Pass Standard for Modules, Pass and Progression/Calculation of Honours Rules; Carrying Forward of Marks Towards Final Degree Result; Eligibility for Honours at Programme Level, Conditions Governing Supplemental and Repeat Year Examinations; Exemptions, Time-limiting Rules.

UCC developed a semester-based system as part of the on-going development and improvement in the quality and the experience of teaching and learning in UCC and in conjunction with the goals of the University's Strategic Plan for 2013-17. Semesterisation was a strategically important University-wide project and was implemented in the academic year 2014/15.

2. Programme Delivery and Assessment (ESG 1.3)

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance policies and procedures for the ongoing delivery and assessment of programmes.

All academic programmes and modules are aligned with the ECTS and published in the UCC Book of Modules <http://www.ucc.ie/modules/>.

Assessment details for individual modules are recorded in the Book of Modules (<https://www.ucc.ie/admin/registrar/modules/>). Details around progression criteria for taught academic programmes are published in Marks and Standards <http://www.ucc.ie/admin/registrar/marksandstandards/> and in the University Calendar (<https://www.ucc.ie/admin/registrar/calendar/>).

Changes to Marks and Standards require approval by the relevant College. Marks and Standards are applied by the University's Student Records and Examinations Office.

Regulations governing examinations at programme level can be found at: www.ucc.ie/en/exams/procedures-regulations. The assessment process for each discipline makes provision for mitigating circumstances <https://www.ucc.ie/en/exams/procedures-regulations/>. There are also examination Rechecks (<https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/recordsandexaminations/RecheckApplicationForm2017.pdf>)

and Appeals mechanisms

(<https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/recordsandexaminations/AppealApplicationForm.pdf>) in place.

External Examiners play a vital role in the assessment of programmes, assuring academic standards and advising on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. The External Examiner confirms that the academic standards of programmes, modules and the awards to which they lead are consistent with the academic outcomes specified and are comparable to those achieved in the subject area in equivalent universities internationally. [Guidelines for External Examiners](#) includes information on the role of the Extern Examiner and the role of the Head of School/Department/Discipline.

3. Research Quality (ESG 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.9)

Links and/or text relating to any specific quality assurance procedures for the design, approval, delivery, assessment and monitoring of research programmes, if they exist.

University College Cork (UCC) is an internationally competitive, research-led University that plays a key role in the development of Ireland's knowledge-based economy. Our institutional research strategy focuses on creating and supporting world-leading clusters of researchers, building on the research strengths of the University and is aligned with key Government strategies including the *Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 (Hunt Report)*, and *Ireland's Strategy for Research and Development, Science and Technology, Innovation 2020*.

The [UCC Strategic Plan for Research and Innovation, 2017-2022](#) details performance targets for research and economic development that seek to position UCC as Ireland's leading research-performing institution to be a premier European research university, and to be a key national contributor to the ongoing development of Ireland's knowledge-based society.

In line with national and international developments in this area, the recently revised UCC [Code of Research Conduct](#) (April 2017) provides a robust framework for the proper conduct of research and provides guidance for researchers on the standards expected at UCC. The Code captures the responsibilities of the University and the research community with respect to the conduct of research including; principles of good practice, ethical approval, competence, responsibility, integrity, rights and dignity of research participants, data management and dissemination. New additions to the Code regarding procedures in the event of suspected research misconduct are of particular note, as are the role and responsibilities of the Research Integrity Officer (Section 10). The UCC [policy on the governance of research centres](#) provides clarity on how research institutes' centres and units interface with academic schools and colleges.

UCC undertook its second institutional Research Quality Review (RQR) in 2014/2015. The majority of units in UCC, including research centres, were reviewed by 15 panels comprising more than 300 international peer reviewers. All Panel reports have been published in the [Report of the Research Quality Review 2015](#). The reports are currently under consideration at College level; Colleges will produce a Quality Improvement Plan along with, and making reference to, the College Strategic Plan.

Policies regarding research support for postgraduate students are detailed on the following page <https://www.ucc.ie/en/study/postgrad/currentresearchstudents/guidelines/>

The UCC model of structured PhD education <https://www.ucc.ie/en/study/postgrad/research/>

is comprised of a programme of supportive and developmental elements with a stated minimum level of 15 credits of coursework and training. In addition, all students will be supervised by a supervisory team or have a sole supervisor and a PhD advisor. [The UCC Structured PhD - Compulsory Requirements.](#)

4. Student Lifecycle (ESG 1.4)

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures that are encompassed by the student lifecycle.

The Admissions Office is the focal point for the recruitment and admission of EU undergraduate students and the support of first years. Prior to entry, the Admissions Office supports prospective students by providing clear information regarding all undergraduate programmes, entry requirements and application procedures. This is mainly done through events such as Open Days and Information Evenings, through school visits and online. Following are links to the online resources used to disseminate information on the programmes offered:

- www.ucc.ie/prospectus
- www.ucc.ie/en/study/undergrad/courses
- www.ucc.ie/en/study/undergrad/entryreqs
- www.ucc.ie/caolive
- <https://www.ucc.ie/en/study/undergrad/yourcao/>

Once prospective students have become applicants, either via CAO or via local applications systems, the Admissions Office provides information regarding important dates (offer dates etc.), accommodation, registration and orientation.

The policies pertaining to admission include entry requirements, deferred entry, student Garda vetting, infectious disease policy, etc. These are clearly published in the university calendar and on the Admissions webpages. These can be found on the following links:

- <http://www.ucc.ie/calendar/general/info013.html>
- www.ucc.ie/en/study/undergrad/admissionspolicies/

Other important policies and procedures pertaining to students, including the student charter and rules, are published online at: <http://www.ucc.ie/en/students/policies/>.

A fitness to practise and fitness to continue in study policy also applies to students. These policies and procedures are published on:

- <https://www.ucc.ie/en/academicsecretariat/fitnesstopractise/>
- <https://www.ucc.ie/en/academicsecretariat/fitnesstocontinueinstudy/>

The Admissions Office provides a comprehensive range of supports for first year students which are managed and developed by the First Year Experience Co-ordinator and Retention Support Officer. These supports include (but are not limited to) one-to-one meetings with first year students throughout the year and a range of events including Orientation, Freshers' Fest, the Open Door Welcome for Family and Friends, QQI FE entrants events, tailored academic and pastoral support workshops and seminars. Details of these events and activities can be found on:

- www.ucc.ie/en/study/undergrad/orientation/first-year/
- www.ucc.ie/en/study/undergrad/orientation/

UCC is fully compliant with the QQI Access, Transfer and Progression Policy. Information on Transfers (Advanced Entry) to UCC is available at:

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/study/undergrad/entryreqs/transferadvancedentry/>.

Students entering UCC on Access routes are also supported in UCC and information on these routes can be found at the following pages:

- www.ucc.ie/en/uccplus/
- www.ucc.ie/en/dss/dare/
- www.ucc.ie/en/dss/dare/preentry/
- www.ucc.ie/en/uccplus/hear/
- <https://www.ucc.ie/en/study/undergrad/entryreqs/matureapplicants/>
- <https://www.ucc.ie/en/mature/matureprospective/>
- <https://www.ucc.ie/en/study/undergrad/fetac/>
- <https://www.ucc.ie/en/cpd/>

Support for students is also provided by UCC's [International Office](#), [Graduate Studies Office](#) and [Adult Continuing Education](#).

First year students who have completed undergraduate modules previous to commencing their studies in UCC may be eligible for an exemption from the corresponding UCC module or for advanced entry to a year beyond first year. Exemptions are approved at School/Department level after the student has registered. Module exemption most often comes into consideration for students who have come into UCC through an Inter-Institutional Transfer (to a year beyond first year). Information regarding such transfers is available at www.ucc.ie/en/study/undergrad/entryreqs

Data relating to retention and progression is compiled annually by the Admissions Office and considered at University Management Team meetings and by Academic Council.

5. Teaching Staff (ESG 1.5)

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for assuring the competence of teaching staff, including staff recruitment and staff development.

UCC has well developed [recruitment and appointment procedures](#) and all academic posts are advertised publically. All staff undergo a [probation period](#) to provide a reasonable period of employment during which the new appointee can benefit from additional support and guidance in order to establish teaching and appropriate academic administrative activities and to establish research activity. There is a mentoring programme in place to support inexperienced academic staff (with less than five years' experience as a university academic staff member). The probation period also allows the University to be assured as to the quality of the appointment and that the new appointee will be able to carry out all responsibilities required and to an appropriate high standard.

UCC has [promotion schemes](#) in place for academic staff. UCC has a [staff training and development](#) policy and is committed to the support and promotion of staff development and training for all staff. [Wellbeing](#) is also an important initiative on campus with an [employee assistance programme](#) in place.

UCC has a Performance Management Policy and Capability Policy as a means of local and individual discussion on the role of performance and staff development:

<http://www.ucc.ie/en/hr/performance/pdrs/forms/>

UCC is a participant in the [Athena SWAN](#) programme and recently gained a bronze award. Three Schools (Pharmacy, Chemistry and BEES) have applied for a bronze award this year. The Athena SWAN programme allows UCC to identify areas for positive action, and to recognise and share good practice. It provides focus and impetus for equality initiatives already underway within UCC, such as the [Aurora Leadership Development Programme](#) and the GENOVATE EUFP7 Project, and will draw upon proposals developed in GENOVATE's [Gender Equality Action Plan](#) for UCC, and upon the learning of the GENOVATE consortium project. UCC's wholehearted commitment to an internationally recognised gender equality initiative allows UCC an opportunity to demonstrate our commitment to equality in specific, measurable ways. A new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion unit has been set up in UCC to support the University's commitment to fostering an inclusive culture that promotes equality, values diversity and supports initiatives designed to maintain a working, learning and social environment in which the rights and dignity of all staff and students are respected.

University College Cork is committed to working towards equality of opportunity in all aspects of its business for staff and students. <https://www.ucc.ie/en/hr/equality/> Equality of opportunity is the right of all persons to receive fair, equal, and non-discriminatory consideration in access to and the processes of education and employment, irrespective of characteristics including, but not limited to, gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race or membership of the Traveller community.

There are a number of family friendly policies available to all staff.
<https://www.ucc.ie/en/hr/policies/family/>

6. Teaching and Learning (ESG 1.4, 1.5, 1.6)

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for assuring the quality of teaching and learning.

The delivery of research-based teaching and learning with a world class student experience is a strategic goal for UCC as outlined in the University Strategy 2017-2022 (<https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/strategicplanning/UCC-Strategic-Plan-2017-2022.pdf>) and this goal is elaborated further through the University's Strategy for Teaching and Learning: <https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/ovptl/documents/StrategicPlanTeachingLearning2017.pdf>

The Office of the Vice President for Learning & Teaching (OVPLTL) advises and contributes to the development of policy for teaching and learning and, through national and international engagement, ensures that policies and practices at the University are appropriately benchmarked and informed by good practice. The Office is engaged in a number of projects with international universities including the EUA Learning & Teaching Forums, at which staff will be presenting papers at the 2019 conference in Warsaw <https://eua.eu/events/24-2019-european-learning-teaching-forum.html> and is actively engaged in both a partnership and advisory capacity with several universities through the Erasmus+ scheme, including the staff mobility strand of Erasmus+. At a national level, OVPLT is highly engaged with the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning. The current Vice President for Teaching & Learning is also a member of the NUI Senate and staff in OVPLT work closely with the City of Cork and cognate partners (CIT, CETB, the HSE, Cork City Council etc) through the city-level Growing Lifelong Learning in Cork City (GLLiCC) forum.

The role of the Office is to enhance the staff and student learning experience through staff

development opportunities and through engagement in innovative research-informed teaching to ensure that innovative teaching and learning approaches are fostered and supported and a student-centered approach to research-based teaching is rooted in the culture (www.ucc.ie/en/teachlearn/abouttheovptl/). It supports a wide range of CPD activities for staff through the Centre for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning (CIRTL) www.ucc.ie/en/cirtl/ which provides support for all staff and postgraduate students in their teaching and learning roles.

CIRTL also delivers highly successful international programmes (of varying durations) for visiting scholars. Accredited programmes in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education up to and including NFQ level 9 (Postgraduate Certificate/Postgraduate Diploma/Masters) are offered for all categories of staff who support student learning, along with tailored modules for postgraduate students engaged in teaching. All newly appointed staff are required to enrol in and complete the Postgraduate Certificate programme, and participation rates in the accredited programme are an institutional performance measure through the HEA Compact process. The Centre staff also run workshops on Teaching and Learning and Supervisory practices for research staff via the PostDoc Development Hub (www.ucc.ie/en/hr/research/devhub/) and supports the Graduate Studies Office to run tailored workshops for staff on research supervision. A range of seminars on teaching, learning and assessment topics are available on an open basis to all staff, and are provided on main and satellite campuses (see <https://www.ucc.ie/en/cirtl/staff/seminars/#d.en.110685>) and University staff have access to appropriate CPD within their disciplinary or professional domains to support their teaching as well as access to the wider national seminars through the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning.

Staff of the Centre also support the development of new and innovative pedagogies which underpin different modes of delivery. The Office's quarterly newsletters issued to all UCC staff (and beyond) are just one of the other ways that it disseminates information on good practices locally and elsewhere (<https://www.ucc.ie/en/teachlearn/ovptlnews/>).

The University has significant strength and depth in the research-teaching nexus, building on the prior work of UCC's National Academy for the Integration of Research & Teaching (NAIRTL). Research-based teaching and learning is informed and further strengthened by on-going work to explore and evaluate the extent to which undergraduate students are engaged in research and inquiry in their programmes. This work informs approaches to enhancing curriculum design, organisation, delivery and staff development, and provides a baseline measure for institutional achievement in this area. CIRTL staff also work collaboratively with the University's Quality Enhancement Unit, in supporting the University's periodic quality review process to facilitate engagement with, and on-going enhancement of, the student learning experience, and to support the development of case studies of good practice.

The Centre for Digital Education within OVPLT offers bespoke training sessions to academic and other staff across the university around their digital skills, confidence and competence. The team publishes regular newsletters, blogs and FAQs and runs regular 30-minute Byte Size sessions on topics informed by a staff survey such as blogging, use of social media in learning, running effective discussion boards online and so on. The topics are based on staff identified needs.

<https://instructionaldesign.ucc.ie/training/> The Instructional Design team is also co-ordinating research into and funding for 'Next Generation Learning Spaces' at UCC and runs regular seminars on the topic as well as demonstrations on new learning spaces (physical and virtual) such as the recently launched self—service video and audio recording facility available free of charge to all UCC staff and students. OVPLT is also leading research (by staff and by students) into the study of space design in the new 'Student Hub' building on UCC's campus <https://www.ucc.ie/en/teachlearn/designoflearningspaces/hubresearch/>

The [Centre for CPD](#) plays a significant role in the governance of ECTS and non-ECTS CPD activities,

ensuring curriculum quality and consistency through its policies and procedures. These policies and procedures ensure that the Office of the Vice President for Teaching and Learning has visibility of the full portfolio of CPD activities throughout the University. From a teaching and learning perspective, these CPD activities ensure that we support our graduates in their chosen profession, continuing the University's commitment to lifelong learning.

The [Centre for Adult Continuing Education \(ACE\)](#) within UCC provides lifelong learning opportunities (accredited and non-accredited) at a number of outreach centres in Cork and beyond, including at Cork Prison and through the municipal library network and the credit unions network. ACE also manages [UCC's Springboard+](#) involvement through which several NQF levels 7, 8 and 9 programmes are delivered to jobseekers.

The Office of the Vice President for Learning and Teaching celebrates excellence in Teaching through annual institutional Staff Awards (www.ucc.ie/en/teachlearn/staffawards/), and in early 2018 advertised and managed a competitive call in-house for small grant funding (max. €2,000 per funded project) to facilitate the design and delivery of small projects at UCC which have since had an institution-wide impact through dissemination events for other/all staff.

OVPLT chairs the academic steering group for UCC's [Skills Centre](#) which provides workshops, one-to-one appointments and drop-in sessions for students in presentation skills, critical thinking skills, note-taking organisation etc.: <http://skillscentre.ucc.ie/>

An Academic Council Standing Committee on Teaching and Learning is responsible for bringing forward strategy and policy in support of the University's learning and teaching agenda and for advising on national and international good practice in these matters. The Committee provides a general forum for debate on learning and teaching and for developing the University's overall approach to assuring high quality research-informed teaching within the context of the University's Strategic Plan. The Committee is therefore the lead body with oversight responsibility for learning, teaching and good practice in assessment. The purpose and Terms of Reference for the Committee are set out in the Academic Council Committee Handbook below.

An Academic Council Academic Staff Development Committee is responsible for overseeing and advising on academic staff development and policies in accordance with international good practice. The Committee provides a forum for debate on current issues relating to staff development in line with international standards and for the proposal and support of initiatives that enhance staff development. The Committee is therefore the lead body with oversight responsibility for staff, the formation and/or review of academic and research staff development strategies and policies to ensure that the provision of staff development is high quality, relevant and informed by international good practice. The purpose and Terms of Reference for the Committee are set out in the Academic Council Committee Handbook

https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/academicsecretariat/Handbook_Aug2018.pdf

7. Resources and Support (ESG 1.5)

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for assuring funding and resources for learning, teaching and research. Also, links and or text relating to the quality assurance procedures for learning resources and student support.

The UCC Strategic Plan states that “UCC is committed to delivering strong student-focused support services which address the physical, psychological, spiritual, social, cultural and welfare needs of students by focusing on the students’ transition into UCC, time in UCC and transition out of UCC.”

The Student Experience Office <http://www.ucc.ie/en/studentexperience/welcome/> co-ordinates student services and leads the strategic development and direction of policy and practice related to the UCC Student Experience in a wide range of functions and activities.

Student policies and procedures include: Student Charter, Student Mental Health Policy, Student Alcohol Policy, Fitness to Continue in Study Policy, Support for Pregnant Students Policy, Procedure for Responding to Reports of Missing Students, and Code of Practice for Students with Disabilities are available on: <http://www.ucc.ie/en/studentexperience/policies/>

The Student Experience Office uses a thematic approach to supporting and developing the student experience. These themes include developing cross-service projects (such as improving the use of technology across all services), supporting transition into UCC, supporting students to progress and achieve their potential, facilitating high levels of engagement in student life, providing a focus on employability and transition to the world of work, and supporting student health and wellbeing.

The Student Experience Office coordinates an array of supports for students and encompasses Access & Participation which includes Disability Support, Mature Students Office, UCC PLUS⁺ ; Career Services; Chaplaincy; Sport & Physical Activity; Student Counselling & Development, Peer Support, Niteline; Student Health; Student Residential Services & Community Relations Office; Student Societies; Students’ Union; UCC Skills Centre and the Granary Theatre, all of which provide a range of specialised services to students. <http://www.ucc.ie/en/studentexperience/areas/>.

Disability Support Service

The Disability Support Service provides support to over 1,400 students with disabilities and is a core element of the Access Programme in UCC. The Service works to increase access and participation of students with disabilities and specific learning difficulties by delivering a very proactive and innovative pre-entry programme. There are three strands to the Pre-Entry Outreach Programme all aimed at increasing access of students with disabilities to Higher Education. They are as follows:

1. Disability Access Route to Education (DARE)

UCC is part of the national third level admissions scheme for school leavers with disabilities and specific learning difficulties known as **Disability Access Route to Education (DARE)**. DARE utilises a multi-indicator approach to assessing applications from such students. (Further information on the DARE scheme is available on www.accesscollege.ie). A special quota of places is reserved in all undergraduate degree programmes in UCC for students deemed eligible under the DARE scheme, who have the academic ability to perform well in university, but who may not have the points required through the CAO system. This ensures students with disabilities and specific learning difficulties are able to compete for places along with their peers. A total of 247 students who applied to UCC under DARE accepted places in 2018/2019, while overall our entrants were 270.

As a member of the DARE/HEAR working group the Disability Support Officer works with staff in the DSS to deliver Pre-entry DARE Advice Clinics. In 18/19 a number of Advice Clinics were hosted in Cork, Tralee, Killarney, Waterford and Tipperary.

2. Assistive Technology (AT) Outreach Programme

This programme aims to enhance access and transition to third level education for students with disabilities/learning difficulties by:

- Increasing awareness of the role of AT in enabling students to maximise their potential.
- Providing the hands-on training and support to students, parents, teachers and SNAs to support and encourage students to use AT in school, when completing homework and for exams.

The programme actively works with all the relevant stakeholders in the field of education and disability in UCC's catchment areas to realise the objectives. AT training sessions for students, parents and for educators are held in UCC. For those who cannot attend hands on training in UCC they have the option of attending online webinars as well as viewing a variety of training videos on assistive technology hosted on the DSS website. School based training is also provided to try to encourage a whole school approach to assistive technology in secondary schools.

The AT Outreach Programme connected with the UCC+ homework clubs to facilitate mind mapping homework clubs in DEIS schools. The aim of this was to target students with disabilities who also experience socioeconomic disadvantage to raise their aspirations and to enable them to engage better with their curriculum using free AT.

The programme has developed a partnership with the Cork Education Support Centre (CESC) to deliver a range of evening training sessions to meet the needs of SNAs and teachers who cannot otherwise access training. This year, in further collaboration with CESC, AT workshops for students with dyslexia and dyspraxia/DCD and their parents have been held in the support centre. In July a week long CPD course in Assistive Technology was delivered to teachers in UCC.

The Outreach programme is working with the Occupational Therapy (OT) Department in UCC and OTs in the community to connect with students and parents. This relationship and connections developed with CRANN and Enable Ireland Children's Services educational psychology service aims to target more students with physical difficulties who are currently under represented in Higher Education.

For further information please visit our website: <https://www.ucc.ie/en/dss/atoutreach/>

3. Summer Schools for students with Sensory Disabilities, Physical Disabilities and Asperger's syndrome

In 2018/19 the DSS linked with the Visiting Teacher Service and Special Educational Needs Organisers to identify students with disabilities in both primary and second level who would benefit by participating in workshops the DSS run during the Summer. A number of events were hosted aimed at creating a culture of ambition amongst young students with disabilities.

All of the workshops had a fun element and give the prospective student an introduction to the UCC campus and supports available through the Disability Support Service. Current students with similar disabilities act as mentors during the workshops and provide incoming students with role models they can emulate. In addition, an Information Session was provided for parents on the day which outlined the supports the students can avail of when progressing to 3rd level.

Mature Student Office (MSO)

UCC is the most successful university in Ireland in providing access to undergraduate programmes through admission from Further Education colleges (termed the QQI-FET (FETAC) route) and there is substantial annual increase since 2013. UCC now provides a path for students from Further Education colleges to access 43 undergraduate programmes (70% of all undergraduate programmes).

The Mature Student Office (MSO) works with full-time undergraduate students who are over the age of 23 (on 1 January of the year of entry to third level) and with QQI-FET students. In 2017/18 there were 1016 mature and QQI-FET (FETAC) students registered in UCC. UCC has a quota of places set aside for the mature student entry route on all undergraduate degree programmes. There is a separate quota for the QQI-FET (FETAC) cohort.

Mature Student can enter UCC through four distinct pathways:

1. Mature Student Entry Route
2. QQI-FET Links (Further Education route)
3. Leaving Certificate Points
4. UCC Adult Education Progression: (Cert in Arts / Cert in Languages/ exempt from MSAP and exempt from 15 credits in first year of the BA Programme. Also, progression to year 2 of Social Science in 2019/20.

The **Mature Student** entry route affords prospective learners, over 23 years of age, access to the University on criteria other than their Leaving Certificate results. Areas such as work, educational experience, hobbies and interests, voluntary work and general suitability are taken into consideration when allocating places. The MSO promotes this alternative entry route widely and assists people in their applications where needed.

The **QQI-FET** route allows prospective students, of all ages, who have completed, or are currently completing, Level 5 and 6 QQI-FET qualifications to compete for 43 full-time degrees programmes (70% of all undergraduate programmes) available in UCC. Applicants must achieve the minimum number of distinctions required in their specific QQI-FET programme of study in order to be considered for access through this route.

Leaving Certificate points entry is based on achieving the required points for the degree programme, and meeting specific matriculation requirements.

UCC Adult Education Progression. Mature students who achieve a 2:1 grade in a participating part-time study programme can progress to a full-time Bachelor of Science degree in Youth and Community Work.

The MSO engaged in a wide range of **recruitment events** in order to engage, support and empower prospective mature students. These included:

Information Events which covered topics such as:

- How to choose the correct degree programme
- How to make a CAO Application
- How to write a Personal Statement / prepare for interview / prepare for MSAP
- Finance / Grants / Scholarships
- Visits to Colleges of Further Education
- Participation in the UCC Open Day
- Scheduled one to one appointments with prospective students
- Career Fairs at regional and national level
- Scheduled Campus Tours from June to August 2018
- Collaborative workshops with the Skills Centre
- Lifelong learning Festival
- Learning Neighbourhoods
- A Social Media / printed media / radio campaigns in conjunction with Marketing & Communication encouraging mature students to (a) consider third level education and (b) ensuring that those who were offered places in 2018/19 accept their CAO offer.

New **Transition Initiatives:** June – September 2018

- **JumpStart Programme** – 196 students attended academic workshops and tours of campus from July to August
- **Transition to UCC (T2UCC)** 318 students (Mature + QQI-FET) registered for workshops and tours as follows:
 - College specific Academic Presentations
 - Life Skills Workshops which were facilitated by professional staff in the College of Medicine & Health
 - Library Tours
 - IT Workshops
 - Careers Presentation
 - Using Multiple Intelligences in the College Classroom which was delivered by the Director of Teaching & Learning.
- **Screening for Dyslexia** (in conjunction with Disability Support Services) July 2018
- **Orientation:** Mature and QQI-FET students attended a dedicated orientation programme in addition to JumpStart and T2UCC
- **Vision Workshop** was scheduled during Fresher's Fest which was targeted specifically at mature and QQI-FET students
- **IT Workshops** scheduled Saturday mornings in the Boole Library Resource Room throughout September.

The MSO offers a wide range of supports to prospective and current students as follows:

- One-to-one meetings
- One-to-one tutorial support
- Skills Workshops (in collaboration with the Skills Centre)
- Coffee Mornings
- SUSI Applications (appeals etc.)

461 Mature and QQI-FET students registered in 2017/18.

UCC PLUS⁺

The UCC PLUS⁺ programme strives to enable students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds maximise their potential while studying in UCC. In 2017/18 the UCC PLUS⁺ programme provided support to 834 registered UCC students.

All students who enter UCC via the HEAR scheme attend a compulsory orientation programme prior to the start of term. The orientation programme is designed to support students in their transition from second level to third level education. Parents are also invited to attend a workshop to demystify the process and to provide practical advice and assistance to parents who are navigating the University system for the first time. Throughout the orientation programme students are encouraged to establish friendships and social networks. The student's comprehension of how college works increases over the duration of the programme and upon completion they are familiar with all of the services and supports available. A high level of contact is maintained with first year students by the Student Support Officers throughout year one.

One-to-one meetings with Student Support Officers are a crucial support. At these meetings enquiries are made concerning their accommodation, personal finance, confirmation of SUSI grant, delivery of course work, individual academic progress and the wellbeing of the individual and extended family. Any difficulties concerning a single or combination of these factors is known to impede a student's progress in first year and time spent supporting student concerns is rewarded by reduced risk of withdrawal particularly in semester 1. Where a student demonstrates some area of concern or anxiety, extra support or referrals to other services are provided as required.

As students' progress through their studies the level of support required decreases with group sessions being held for students post first year. All registered students can avail of an informal 'Drop In' to UCC PLUS+, throughout the week; flexible opening hours are operated to facilitate same. Specific-focus support sessions are also undertaken when required, for example, in the area of study timetabling, help with scholarship applications, course-placement related enquiries and help with graduate study application processes are examples of the type of general supports given. All students are informed of any notable events or important announcements by varied modes of communication such as Blackboard announcements, individual/group emails, telephone calls and web text.

Academic support is also provided to UCC PLUS+ students where required; small group tutorials are organised for students who are finding a particular subject or subject area difficult. All UCC PLUS+ students progressing in their studies received an annual bursary, in 2017/18. The bursary amounts were tailored to need with each student receiving a minimum of €500, up to a maximum of €2,000, based on individual circumstances and level of need. A large proportion of the funding available to give students financial bursaries is received from donors to the Programme.

UCC PLUS+ has an extensive outreach programme linked to primary schools in Cork City, and 32 second level schools in Cork, Kerry and Waterford. The programme works with DEIS schools, identified as having low progression rates to third level, offering a wide range of targeted attainment and aspiration raising activities, designed in consultation with schools. These activities and events take place on the University campus and in schools.

A new Access Partnership Established in 2017/18:

In 2017/18 UCC initiated and lead a partnership with Cork Institute of Technology, IT Tralee, IT Carlow and Waterford Institute of Technology in securing funding from the Higher Education Authority to implement a new Programme for Access to Third Level (PATH) for students from socio-economic disadvantaged areas. The successful outcome will result in the delivery of additional supports to increase the number of students from the most marginalised backgrounds accessing higher education. The details of the increased supports are as follows:

- Widening access to Teacher Education (PATH 1): There are three elements to the programme:
 - The provision of scholarships and bursaries to aid students in financial need
 - A Junior Teacher Programme to focus on both recruiting students from target groups into teaching and supporting them academically in this journey
 - Personal support: there will be a dedicated New Avenue to Teaching (NAT) project officer within UCC's School of Education whose job it will be to guide and support these students while they are studying education at UCC.
- Funding (PATH 2) was secured for '1916' Bursaries. UCC will now award 7 students with a bursary worth €5,000 per annum for each year of their degree.
- PATH 3 – SOAR (Scaffolding Aspirations, Achievement and Access through Evidence-Based, Peer-to-Peer, Community-Embedded Mentoring), has three key strands:
 - Travellers in Education
 - Enabling Transitions and
 - Connecting Communities Connecting Curriculum.

The SOAR project will develop community-embedded and culturally sensitive models for increasing educational aspiration and achievement. The project will be delivered in partnership with Cork Institute of Technology, Institute of Technology Tralee, Waterford Institute of Technology and Institute of Technology Carlow. One of the key outcomes of the SOAR project is the development of cluster structures which will enable the sharing of best practice across institutions resulting in synergies in the development of new initiatives.

Access

UCC has a strategic priority and a policy of widening access and awarding places to students from schools and areas with a poor record of sending children to higher education.

In 2017/18 a quarter of UCC's undergraduate intake (905 students, 25% of the total CAO intake) came from these under-represented areas. UCC's current Strategic Plan 2017-2022 aims to achieve 26% of the student intake from these areas despite a strong planned growth of 2,000 student numbers by 2022.

As an example of how this policy has enabled students from underrepresented backgrounds to be successful in making the transition to higher education through to graduation, over 1,250 students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds supported by the UCC PLUS⁺ Programme have graduated from UCC since the programme commenced in 1996. 96% of these students have graduated with honours.

HEAR

UCC is part of a national admissions scheme for school leavers from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds known as the Higher Education Access Route (HEAR). HEAR has been established by a number of higher education institutions to provide access to higher education for students from socio-economic disadvantage backgrounds. HEAR utilises a multi-indicator approach to assessing students for financial, social and cultural disadvantage (further information on the HEAR scheme is available on www.accesscollege.ie). A special quota of places is reserved in all undergraduate degree programmes in UCC for students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, deemed eligible under the HEAR scheme, who have the academic ability to perform well in university, but who may not have the points required through the CAO system. This ensures students from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds are able to compete for places with students from advantaged backgrounds.

In 2017/18, UCC admitted 256 students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds eligible under the HEAR scheme.

The University recognises that students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds need targeted support while undertaking their studies. Accordingly, it has designed a comprehensive package of support services including financial, academic, personal and social supports. UCC has found that retaining UCC PLUS⁺ Programme students in University is significantly enhanced by providing them not only with continuous guidance and mentoring but also with a financial bursary each year; these bursaries are financed considerably by private donations to the University. The retention and success rate of UCC PLUS⁺ students remain on par with the general student population.

Sanctuary Scholarships Scheme

An exciting initiative that has been developed as part of UCC's University of Sanctuary Status is the Sanctuary Scholarships scheme. This scheme provides free tuition to 7 asylum seekers and/or refugees living in Ireland annually who would otherwise have to pay international student (non-EU) fees to enter access third level education. In partnership with the Tomar Trust and other private donors, bursaries will also be provided to successful students.

See <https://www.ucc.ie/en/edi/universityofsanctuary/>.

Student Health

The Student Health Department provides a comprehensive range of student health care services to all registered students, during office hours, Monday to Friday, 12 months of the year. The Department has an FTE staff of 6.6 covering doctors, nurses, psychiatrist, physiotherapists and administration.

A combination of pre-booked appointments and emergency appointments facilitates appropriate access, according to clinical need. For those students not registered with a doctor locally, provision is made for out of hours care and home visiting for emergencies through a local general practitioner.

Services include doctor-led diagnosis and management of illnesses and problems presented by the students themselves, facilitated by a nurse-led triage system. A comprehensive contraception and sexual health service is available on-site. An on-site physiotherapy clinic provides expert care of musculoskeletal problems and a Consultant Psychiatrist clinic address complex mental health issues. There is also a dedicated comprehensive vaccination programme offering immunisation against Hepatitis B, Tuberculosis, Measles, Mumps, and Rubella to students exposed to these illnesses during their course as well as travel medicine immunisation clinics.

Student Counselling & Development

Student Counselling & Development (SCD) is a free confidential service to all students. The Service provides individual counselling and support to students with emotional, psychological, academic or personal development needs. The Service also provides psycho-educational classes and workshops including *Understanding & Managing Stress*. In addition to interventions focused directly at students, SCD acts in an advisory capacity and contributes to the development of student welfare policies within the University. SCD provides training to staff for the purposes of resourcing them as mentors of students and in responding to at risk and distressed students. SCD contributes to the learning and teaching mission of the University and to student retention and performance by reducing student distress which has an adverse impact in these areas.

Student Counsellors provide expertise in leading responses to critical incidents as well as providing follow up support for those impacted.

In addition to individual counselling, SCD provides:

1. Support for Acute Exam Stress: SCD provides on call support for students in acute distress during the exam period, to enable them to successfully complete their exams.
2. Anxiety Management Workshops: Proactive intervention to provide students with strategies for recognising and managing stress.
3. ASD Assessment: In collaboration with Disability Support Service and Student Health, care pathways for students on the Autistic Spectrum have been enhanced this year.
4. SCD has been deemed the designated liaison point for transgender and non-binary students.

SCD's training for front-line University staff: *Identifying & Responding to Distressed and At Risk Students* is a student mental health, suicide prevention intervention and has now been adopted by PCHEI (Psychological Counselling in Higher Education Ireland). It is delivered regularly to UCC staff. SCD has trained PCHEI members to deliver the training in HEIs across Ireland.

SCD also maintains a comprehensive website that provides a wide variety of information and supports for students, staff and parents. This includes an on-line Mindfulness Course as well as CBT (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy) programmes on topics such as Social Anxiety (Participate in collaboration with NUIG); Coping with Depression; Procrastination; Improving Self-Esteem; Shyness & Social Anxiety and Improving Your Assertiveness.

Peer Support programme

The Peer Support programme is a support service for students, by students. Our programme runs on the principle of student-to-student support as we believe that many students feel more comfortable making initial contact with a fellow student for advice.

Students are welcomed into the UCC community on their first day by an experienced student volunteer from their own course. Each of these volunteers is trained thoroughly with information about the

university and how to support those incoming peers who may find transitioning to their new life confusing or difficult.

We are aware that shifting into a university mind-set will be one of the greatest changes the majority of our students have ever experienced and so we aim to provide the best possible support from those who have first-hand experience of what this transition is like – the students themselves.

For 2018/2019 we have 313 Peer Support Leaders across every course in the university and linked to every new undergraduate student, both 1st year and international. The first representative of the university each new student meets on their orientation day is their Peer Supporter Leader. This Leader takes responsibility for ensuring these new students are given a good grasp of everything they would need to begin their journey at UCC (campus tour, IT workshop, library tour, etc.)

The links formed during orientation enables each incoming student to have a direct point of contact with whom they can interact, from the smallest query of how to read a timetable, to the larger issues of settling in and using the professional support services. Our leaders are incredibly knowledgeable about everything UCC and if they cannot help students themselves they will be able to point them in the right direction.

UCC's Peer Support Programme is one of the most successful and comprehensive in the country. Each Peer Support Leader receives extensive initial training and is offered on-going continuing personal development to ensure they can provide their students with the smoothest transition possible. They are also rewarded for their voluntary work representing the university with each Leader receiving a UCC Works Award and being presented a Peer Support Certificate by the Deputy President & Registrar.

The Peer Support Programme ensures all of our students gain a sense of belonging to the UCC community.

UCC Niteline

UCC Niteline is a listening service run by student volunteers. They provide a non-judgemental, non-directive and confidential listening service via a free phone number and anonymous instant messaging chat. All student volunteers go through 6 training sessions with the Cork Samaritans prior to interacting with callers.

The service operates 9pm-1am 4 nights a week during term time. The caller remains anonymous throughout their conversation and can raise any issue, concerns or worries that they have in a confidential manner.

There are currently over 50 volunteers in the programme. All student volunteers receive a UCC Works Award upon completion of their duties.

Chaplaincy Services

As one of the oldest service departments in the university, UCC chaplaincy engages with students and staff of all faiths and none. With a team of 10 (four full-time chaplains, one part-time, four student interns and an administrator) the continuous need for outreach by our team continues to be a high priority. While the nature of chaplaincy is pastoral in nature, it also provides opportunities for developing social awareness through spirituality and liturgy.

UCC chaplaincy accompanies many students who may feel isolated in their environment – creating a safe space for them to encounter community and friendship. It is noticeable that many who use the service have confidence in chaplaincy and that their various spiritual, human and pastoral needs are

met. To this end, chaplaincy engages with all other relevant services within the student experience area to create a holistic approach to the needs of students and staff.

On a daily basis, a lounge in the chaplaincy building is the heart of all activities and provides a base for those who wish to develop community. A 'no appointment – drop in service' is unique to chaplaincy in the context of the services of the university and provides students and staff with a listening ear at all times by the constant availability of chaplains. UCC chaplaincy partners with other entities within the university to provide a place and space where all are welcome – irrespective of their affiliations or backgrounds.

Students' Union

President

The SU President leads and manages the Students' Union, representing the students and lobbying the University and government on issues affecting students

Deputy

Deputy President is responsible for organising campaigns in UCC and on a national level to raise awareness about the various issues which affect students

The

Education

The Education Officer, represents students on a number of college committees concerning academic issues and is also available to assist and support individual students with specific problems.

Welfare Officer

Welfare Officer is also available to support individual students as well as raising awareness and providing information on health promotion, finance, and accommodation.

The

Communications & Commercial Officer

The Comms Officer is in charge of public relations and social media . He/she also is responsible for sourcing revenue and sponsorship for the Union to assist with the running of services.

Entertainments Officer

The Entertainments Officer organises a variety of events to suit all students and is also concerned with running Raise and Give Week.

Student Financial Supports

UCC has a number of financial support programmes available to eligible students:

- **Student Assistance Fund (SAF)** – Through funds allocated from the European Social Fund and distributed to UCC via the HEA, the Student Assistance Fund (SAF) provides financial support to students who are experiencing financial difficulties while attending college. The resources made available are targeted at helping disadvantaged students most in need of financial support.
- **HEAR/UCC PLUS⁺** students receive funding from Philanthropy and the Honan Trust Fund to supports students from groups who are deemed to be under-represented in Higher Education due to socio-economic factors.
- The **UCC Benefaction Fund** is a fund for students facing extreme financial hardship. Students in need of support from that fund are referred by the Student Finance & Budgetary Advisor or the Students Union Welfare Officer or via the UCC Chaplains Office to the Finance Officer. The maximum amount available to students under this fund is €1,500.

In the last academic year, over €1.1m was provided to 1,450 students in direct financial support.

Student Budgeting Advice Service

The Student Budgeting Advice Service provides budgetary and financial planning advice to the general UCC student population, at both undergraduate and postgraduate level.

In this regard, there are six primary types of student interaction with Student Budgeting Advice Service:

- **“One to one” meetings with the Budgetary Advisor**

UCC students can make an appointment to meet with the Budgetary Advisor via www.ucc.ie/en/studentbudget/ where they provide an outline of their situation in terms of managing their finances and the financial obstacles they face.

The Budgetary Advisor will then advise the student on relevant budgeting skills and also on sources of available funding. Students are also advised on how best to overcome any obstacles they are experiencing. The Budgetary Advisor also refers students to relevant UCC student support services and appropriate external agencies. The financial obstacles encountered by students include issues with student grants, fees issues, Department of Social Protection issues, placement costs and poor financial awareness and budgeting skills.

- **Information workshops**

Information sessions are held by the Student Budgeting Advice Service, by the Budgetary Advisor, throughout the academic year, covering topics such as “budgeting tips and tools for UCC students”, “financial information for mature students” and “funding your postgraduate course”.

These sessions are advertised on the service website, the UCC student newsletter, via digital signage around campus and also via social media.

- **Training**

The Student Budgeting Advice Service facilitates training to Peer Support leaders in relation to student finances and supports that are available for students who may be in financial difficulty. The training is complimentary to the fully trained peer support leaders who act as a student referral and support service within the University. The training is run by the Student Budgeting Advisor with workshops from MABS, the Students’ Union and the Saint Vincent de Paul to equip student leaders with knowledge of the student financial sphere to successfully refer students that may be in difficulty to a service.

- **Information events**

The Student Budgeting Advice Service, through the Budgetary Advisor and Money Mentors, attends and presents at information events for current and prospective UCC students (and parents), Guidance Counsellors and UCC staff outlining the student financial landscape and available supports.

- **fRED: financial Resources for Education**

fRED is an online student finance information resource, developed by the Student Budgeting Advice Service, for UCC students, where students, parents and guidance counsellors are able to access information regarding student finances in a user friendly, interactive and fun way.

More information can be viewed at www.ucc.ie/en/fred/

- **Student Assistance Fund (SAF) advice and support**

The Budgetary Advisor is available to meet with students to support them in making a complete application to the Student Assistance Fund. The students are also provided with advice and guidance on the relevant supporting documentation that is required for a complete application and where the students can source same.

Student Societies

Student Societies provide a fantastic environment for students to develop their skill outside of the lecture halls. With over 100 societies in UCC ranging from academic, charitable, creative, debating, political, religious and social. In 2018 there were over 1000 elected officers of societies who held positions such as chairperson, finance, and public relations along with other roles. The theme and subject range is as diverse as the societies themselves - from Drama to International Relations, Science to Science Fiction and Medieval Renaissance to Mythology to name but a few. Each year societies run over 1500 events and there is always something to get involved in. All UCC societies events are student run and open to all students. There are also many opportunities to travel through student's involvement with societies to countries such as USA, Africa, Canada, India and much of Europe. The Societies Office and Executive run training courses each year across a number of areas.

Each week societies and their members engage with fellow students, staff, schools, community groups through their various activities and over €170,000 is raised each year for a number of local and international charities. Further, UCC Societies engage with the community and local organisations in promoting diversity, equality and inclusion, benefiting the student welfare of the students and enhancing the student experience in UCC. Societies has a history of making meaningful change through their innovative and creative campaigns, events and student engagement projects. From running consent workshops, running a mental health week or even working with College staff in providing a University of Sanctuary, UCC Societies are at the forefront of creating a University for all. UCC prides itself on students being work ready and world ready and joining its alumni in shaping the world around us. Students through their involvement in societies support this vision and enhancing the student experience for all.

Department of Sport & Physical Activity

UCC Sport is run by full-time Department of Sport and Physical Activity staff with the support of students in the form of Clubs Executive committee which represents **58 clubs** within University College Cork.

The Department of Sport and Physical Activity in UCC aims "to provide high quality facilities and services to students, graduates, staff and the wider community".

The Department enhances and supports UCC student's development and university experience, by promoting positive health and well-being, leadership and activities from social participation to elite.

The Department focuses on supporting student clubs who provide invaluable experience both on and off the "field of play". UCC sports clubs are run by the students for the students.

Student Clubs provide a fantastic opportunity for students to develop their skill outside of the classroom. With 58 sports clubs in UCC ranging from water sports, to outdoor pursuit type activities, to martial arts, to indoor and outdoor team sports, UCC students have a great opportunity to get involved in some form of sport and recreation activity whilst at UCC. The clubs help foster lifelong friendships and provide opportunities for students to learn valuable life skills by becoming administrators within their club. Each year clubs appoint officers and administrators to run their clubs & these operations are overseen by the Clubs Executive and the Sports Department. There are many opportunities for students to represent the university in their chosen sport throughout their time in UCC either locally, provincially, nationally or even internationally.

All students are encouraged to get involved in some form of sport or physical activity whilst at UCC – both from a physical and a mental health point of view.

Through the Club Executive clubs are encouraged to fund raise for local charities and engage with local communities on sporting initiatives. Each year the Clubs Executive partners with a local charity and clubs are encouraged to fundraise for this or any other charity of their choice.

UCC sports clubs train daily at the UCC sports facilities at the Mardyke Sports Grounds and at Curraheen Sports Grounds and represent their sports clubs in matches, events and tournaments throughout the year.

The Sports Department manage the outdoor sports facilities at the Mardyke & Curraheen Sports Grounds & assist the UCC clubs with event management & organization throughout year.

The Department organizes and manages the annual UCC sports Scholarship scheme where it awards sports scholarships to aspiring UCC sports athletes who will wear the skull & bones. It also organizes the annual UCC Sports Star Awards where it recognizes its best sports persons for that academic year.

The Department works closely with the Mardyke Arena, our indoor sports centre to ensure that there are plentiful “recreational activities” available for the non-sports club student. State of the art indoor facilities facilitate student engagement in recreational activities & promote student wellbeing.

Club administrators and even club personnel are encouraged to apply for the annual UCC Works Award in recognition of their involvement in UCC sports clubs throughout an academic year. This is an award where students are recognized for their role in a non-classroom type setting – club administrator, team player, etc.

Involvement in sport and physical activity enhances the student experience and the Department of Sport & Physical Activity actively encourages & supports all students in their endeavours to get involved.

Student Residential Services and Community Relations Office

The Student Residential Services and Community Relations Office was established in August 2017. This office has responsibility for:

- Student Residential Services
 - Accommodation Information service for current and prospective students searching for suitable accommodation throughout the academic year
 - Advocacy service for current students experiencing issues with their accommodation
- Campus Watch
 - Considers formal complaints against all registered UCC students
 - Involved in the First and Second stages of student discipline
 - Liaises with local residents, community Gardai, local government and the wider community
- Community Relations
 - Representative at local resident groups and city council district management groups to promote the positive engagement by UCC and its students in the local community

UCC Library

The mission of UCC Library is to deliver excellent information services to meet the needs of the University and regional scholarly community; to support the University’s mission to contribute to society through the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence; and to contribute to the preservation of the cultural heritage of the region.

In addition to the main Boole Library, the Library has four off campus locations; the Boston Scientific Health Sciences Library located in the Brookfield complex, the Libraries located in the Cork University Hospital and Mercy Hospital, and an offsite repository at Pouladuff Road, Togher, Cork.

The Library has a stock of 900,000 volumes and fulfils 2.5 million full text article requests and 300,000 electronic book requests per year.

The [Assistive Technology Unit](#), supporting students with a disability, is located within the Library. The innovative and flexible Creative Zone opened in the Boole Library in late 2015 and offers a technology-rich space for all students and staff in UCC. A wide range of events organised in association with the schools, societies and Blackstone Launchpad, is fully available to all the student body.

The Library Studio has recently opened in Boole Library. This self-service studio offers a new video and audio recording facility and is fully bookable by all students and staff.

Service to all library users is at the core of the Library strategy. This strategy has at its heart a clear focus on, and commitment to, the provision of high quality information resources and achieving excellence in the delivery of highly valued services in our physical and virtual spaces and their continuous improvement.

The Library Strategy is focused on the delivery of an excellent service that is proactive, innovative, timely and responsive to user needs. Central to this is a clear commitment to enhancing the student experience thereby inspiring teaching and learning. Providing the opportunity to discover and use high quality information resources will contribute to creativity and innovation, especially in supporting leading-edge research. Contributing to society, both nationally and internationally, will enhance the University's reputation and add to the intellectual capital in the region and globally. All this is predicated on developing and optimising our staff, financial and physical resources.

The Library maintains active links with a range of local public, voluntary, and private organisations, many of whose information and preservation requirements we readily support through advice and helpful intervention.

Cork Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) is a cooperative agreement between all the main libraries in Cork city and county, with a view to ensuring wider access to learning materials for all the people of Cork and beyond.

Cooperation and collaboration includes developing programmes of formal cooperation with European and Chinese libraries in support of the international students who come to UCC from these countries. The Library invokes the excitement of learning and discovery through the interpretation of both the University and the Library's heritage collections.

The Library provides a number of learning supports and training resources to students. The [College Liaison Librarians](#) provide a suite of face-to-face and online classes for students and staff throughout the year. Approximately 13,000 person-hours of information literacy training was received by users. The dual role of [Special Collections](#) is to facilitate research and to ensure the care and conservation of UCC Libraries' unique and distinctive materials.

The [Archives](#) service provides access to archival collections and facilities which have been developed to satisfy the research and information needs of the Library's users.

UCC Skills Centre

The 2017/18 academic year introduced the Skills Centre to UCC's community for the first time. The Skills Centre is a dedicated, active learning space that helps students improve their academic communication, so they can independently discover their own needs and improve their scholastic work and assessment outcomes with confidence. This interactive student-centred learning environment, along with the provision of development supports, facilitates and promotes social and academic integration for students, enhancing their student engagement. Group sessions and one to one appointments, facilitated by peer tutors and staff members, are available to students so they can address their study needs. Throughout the year sessions in academic communication are available to the students. These include areas such as academic writing skills and presentation skills. In addition, students can develop critical thinking skills to further enhance their engagement in their chosen degree.

The UCC Skills Centre is committed to excellence in learning and teaching. Our curriculum design is based on a constructivist model of learning that is underpinned by a core set of tutorials to enhance written and verbal communication. The core team, which is overseen by the Skills Centre Coordinator, is responsible for the design and development of this curriculum, which continues to evolve and improve based on the feedback and emerging needs of attending students. The learning materials themselves are created using inductive methods of learning that are differentiated by task and outcome. Additionally, the curriculum adheres to the principle of multiple intelligences, using visual, textual, kinaesthetic, interpersonal and aural activities to suit all learning styles and needs.

Critical Thinking Skills

The critical thinking sessions have been designed and are delivered in collaboration with PhD and Masters students of the Department of Applied Psychology. The sessions introduce students to the skills and strategies that enable critically thinking about the resources and information they use as part of their studies.

Writing Skills

Writing skills are a fundamental academic skill. UCC students have the opportunity to (re)visit the structures of essay writing that will allow them to engage with their chosen field of student in a more confident manner. The Skills Centre tutor team have developed a suite of academic writing skills sessions which encourage students to develop their writing processes. These sessions include *Unpacking the Question, Editing and Proofreading* along with the structural elements of writing, including *Grammar and Punctuation, Sentence and Paragraph Structure* and *How to Build an Argument*. One to one exploratory writing clinics are also facilitated through this team, allowing the students personalised feedback regarding the structure and clarity of their writing.

Presentation Skills

The Skills Centre's presentation skills programme delivers in two separate ways; a single overview session on giving presentations, sessions on the technical building of PowerPoint and academic posters and a 6 week SPEAK Programme (Successful Presentations- Effectively Articulating Knowledge). SPEAK has been developed in conjunction with the Department of Theatre. Students who take part in this course develop specific techniques to enhance presentation skills and visual communication. These techniques include the development of an expanded range of physical and vocal expressivity, expanded approaches to audience awareness and enlarged awareness of non-verbal and non-physical communication. Storytelling, improvisation, scripting, messaging and digital skills are all be explored in the sessions allowing for the development of the skills required for successful dissemination.

Podcast - Write Here, Write Now

A pod cast series is due for release in 2019 following the success of the Skills Centre's radio show, *Write Here, Write Now*. This platform allows for faculty engagement with the Skills Centre and enables a more in-depth discussion around some of the skills that are taught at the Skills Centre. The Write Here, Write Now podcast series will be launched in the first semester of the 2018/19 academic year and will be accessed through the Skills Centre website <http://skillscentre.ucc.ie/study/>.

Skills Centre Attendance	2017/18
Sessions	1,856
One-to-one	917
Drop-in	865
Total student interactions	3,638

Careers Services

The UCC Careers Service helps UCC students to achieve their career objectives by:

- Providing one to one careers advice and coaching.
- Delivering employability related workshops and lectures.
- Collaborating with academic departments and other UCC units to deliver bespoke employability and career related workshops and events to their students.
- Managing work placement modules in collaboration with almost 30 academic programmes.
- Organising Career and Graduate Recruitment events such as recruitment fairs, jobs roadshows etc. which facilitate graduate employer and student interactions.
- Providing UCC students with access to high quality employment opportunities in Ireland and internationally.
- Making UCC students aware of a wide range of postgraduate study opportunities.

To deliver these services to students, the Service is organised around the following team structure

- **Employability and Employer Engagement Team**
- **Work Placement Team**
- **Careers Advisory Team**

Employability and Employer Engagement Team

The main activities of this team are to:

- Organise initiatives and events that support UCC students to develop their employability skills in preparation for entering the world of work. This is achieved through initiatives such as Graduate Recruitment activities, the UCC Works Award Programme and the Student Volunteering and Community Engagement activities.
- Ensure that UCC students and graduates can avail of a wide range of employment opportunities both in Ireland and internationally. This is achieved by sourcing and promoting graduate employment opportunities to UCC students and graduates using a range of communication platforms including web based vacancy databases, social media and traditional on-campus events.
- Support the other Career Services teams in the day-to-day administration of their responsibilities.

Work Placement Team

This team supports the delivery of accredited work placement modules in Academic Programmes in the Colleges of Business and Law, SEFS and CACSSS. Responsibilities include

- Support each individual student through the placement selection process until they successfully get an offer of a work placement with a partner employer.
- Deliver class contact hours to prepare students for work placement, interviews, workplace skills, etc.
- Contact employers to identify and acquire suitable work placement opportunities for students

Work Placement officers have a joint reporting relationship to the Head of Career Services and the Head of their respective College:

Careers Advisory Team

Careers advice is a key element of our service where we aim to provide accurate, impartial careers advice and coaching based on the student's needs, qualifications and circumstances. A number of options are available to students:

- One to One Careers advisory consultations by appointment with a careers advisor where students can discuss a wide variety of topics from CV's to interviews to general advice on career paths. Where a visit to the Career Service is not practicable (e.g. student is abroad) we endeavour to facilitate students by the use of phone or video calls.
- Small group workshops on topics such as CVs and job applications, interview technique,
- Sector specific talks such as careers in teaching, Study in EU/US etc. as well as employability related workshops and lectures.

Careers Education

Careers advisors also work closely with academic departments and other UCC units to deliver bespoke employability and career related workshops and events to their students.

Additional Policies for Career Services

Student Placement Policy

Please note the Student Placement Policy and Procedures are being gradually implemented in the University and will be fully applicable in September 2019.

- [Student Placement Policy](#)
- [Placement Risk Assessment](#)
- [Preparation of Students Going on Placement \(Procedure\)](#)
- [Monitoring and Communication During Student Placement \(Procedure\)](#)
- [Management of Critical Incident \(Procedure\)](#)

8. Information Management (ESG 1.7)

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for collecting, analysing and using relevant information about programmes and other activities.

Records and Data Management

UCC's records management programme details what records the University maintains in order to function and carry out its responsibilities. It details how long those records have to be retained, and the final disposition of those records, through controlled destruction, permanent retention, or transfer to the University Archives. UCC has 9 general disposal authority documents representing the main functional areas of activity of the University. <http://www.ucc.ie/en/ocla/univarch/records/disposal/>

The records management policy assigns responsibilities and provides practical instructions to University staff to ensure the efficient management of records <https://www.ucc.ie/en/ocla/univarch/records/rm-policy/>

Best practice guidelines are also provided on related areas, e.g., filing systems, email guidelines. <http://www.ucc.ie/en/ocla/univarch/records/bestpractice/>

The data protection policy details how the University performs its responsibilities under the legislation in accordance with the Data Protection Acts.

<http://www.ucc.ie/en/ocla/comp/data/dataprotection/#d.en.333432>

Records and Data Management policies and procedures were recently reviewed and updated, as part of UCC's Digital Records Management (DRM) Project. In response to a rapidly changing digital environment, this project seeks to ensure that records and data in all formats are managed effectively through policies, procedures, and systems which

- support business processes,
- enable legal and regulatory compliance and
- preserve archives of the University's history,

while protecting the security and integrity of records and data, including personal data. The review is informed by the EU's new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which takes effect on 25 May 2018. In 2018 as part of the GDPR compliance process, UCC developed an intuitive online GDPR resource for staff, detailed of our GDPR policies, process and services are available on <https://www.ucc.ie/en/gdpr/>

Records management at UCC informs and is informed by relevant/related policies (and procedures) throughout the university. These include:

Data Classification

Procedure; https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/itpolicies/procedures/DataClassification_V1_2.pdf

Research Data Management Policy;

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/research/researchatucc/policiesdocuments/ResearchDataManagementPolicy.docx>

Acceptable Usage Policy;

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/it-policies/policies/au-pol/>

Externally Hosted Personal Data Policy;

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/it-policies/policies/>

(scroll down to the third last section of the page)

Records maintenance and retention - Quality

Records and archives are maintained by the Quality Enhancement Unit (QEU) for quality review-related records inclusive of quality reports, improvement plans, operation of the Quality Enhancement Committee including agendas, papers and minutes since the inception of the quality review processes. Early records are retained in hard copy and electronically; more recently records are archived wholly electronically.

Reports for all quality reviews conducted are published on the University website at

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/qeu/>.

Records related to the quality policies and procedures for the academic affairs of the University governed by Academic Council are managed by Academic Secretariat and held on the University intranet.

Information Technology

University College Cork has a distinguished digital legacy stretching back to the mid-18th century. George Boole, the architect of Boolean logic, was Professor of Mathematics. Ireland's first website was www.ucc.ie and one of the first international networks in Cork, was built in UCC. Building on this tradition of innovation

and value creation, IT Services in UCC wants to enable and develop a digital University for the 21st century student, one that is centred on the needs of our present and future students. IT Services in UCC is focused on building exciting digital products and services to support the student experience and student learning outcomes.

The current team within IT Services is one of the largest in the region, with over 60 IT professionals and almost 40 Students helping to provide support and develop new digital products and services. IT Services provide services and support for 20,000 students and 5,000 staff. Our campus spans over 100 acres at the centre of Cork City. This service portfolio includes the UCC corporate systems (Finance, HR, Student), the largest private network in Cork (Wi-Fi, VOIP), 2 data centres, over 7000 desktops and we support 300+ websites and social media presence, 190 large classrooms, including the teaching technology and also research infrastructure. The clip in the attached link explains our services and ambitions, <https://www.ucc.ie/en/it/about/>

IT Services are focused on building and developing our digital services to support our students' journey from application to graduation. A full list of services is available IT Services in UCC is listed in the URL, <https://www.ucc.ie/en/it/services/> .

The University is embarking on a Digital Strategy and a Data Strategy, which is University lead and Technology enabled. These strategic initiatives will transform the UCC over the next 4 years and will support the development of a more Digital University. Enhancing and modernising the services to our students is central to these proposals. We partner with key administration, academic and research units to develop agile, intuitive IT solutions. Using concepts such as DevOps, Agile Product Development, Infrastructure as a Service as key enablers to achieving this suite of IT Systems. A full list of IT policies in UCC can be found at <https://www.ucc.ie/en/it-policies/>

The University is currently in the process of finalising its Digital Strategy and its data strategy, which will be published on the UCC website under <https://www.ucc.ie/en/is/> once they are approved by University management team. These will drive a transformation in the services provided to the staff and students of UCC over the period of our strategic plan and will form the backbone of our plans over the years to come.

9. Self-evaluation and Monitoring (ESG 1.9)

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for self-evaluation and internal monitoring.

Self-evaluation and monitoring takes place at many levels throughout the university, under the direction of the Quality Enhancement Committee in respect of periodic quality processes and under the direction and oversight of the Academic Council for academic affairs of the University.

Academic Council

Academic Board is an executive committee of Academic Council and has delegated authority and an oversight function which encompasses regular periodic monitoring and self-evaluation of academic affairs activity. Its specific responsibilities are outlined in the Academic Council Handbook available at https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/academicsecretariat/Handbook_Jan2018.pdf

The [Academic Development & Standards Committee](#) is a standing committee of [Academic Council](#) which is responsible for bringing forward policy and procedures to maintain the quality and standard of UCC awards and for ensuring internal and institutional compliance with the National Framework of

Qualifications. The Committee also advises Academic Board on the impact of national and international developments on UCC arrangements underpinning academic standards. It is responsible for the efficient conduct of the University External Examiner Sub Committee which develops an annual monitoring report for Academic Council on the key issues arising from External Examiner Reports. The Committee provides an important forum for debate on the National Framework of Qualifications, the Bologna Process and their impact on UCC awards and standards and on curriculum innovation at UCC.

Quality Enhancement Committee

All periodic quality review reports and recommendations are considered by the Quality Enhancement Committee and senior management on an on-going and annual basis. On an on-going basis, recommendations arising from periodic quality review are responded to by the area under review and are subject to a follow-up process. On the recommendation of Peer Review Panels, certain key issues are reported on an ongoing basis to the senior management team. On an annualised basis, key issues arising from all reviews are analysed and reported to the Quality Enhancement Committee and the University Management Team Strategy as part of the integration between quality and strategic planning actions and processes. Annually, the QEC delivers a report to Governing Body, this report is referred to Academic Council for further consideration and review. The annual report outlines all recommendations and improvements made arising from quality reviews.

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/geu/qec/>

The University conducts a periodic, whole institution, Research Quality Review process (2009 & 2015). The outcomes of the Research Quality Review process are subject to internal monitoring and follow-up through the preparation and monitoring of Quality Improvement Plans at College and University level. These reports inform the development of strategy and the annualised strategic plan process. The key recommendations arising from the Research Quality Review are analysed and published in Section A of the [Report of the RQR](#).

Strategic Planning

The Strategic Planning cycle ensures that UCC is supported in decision making and planning at University and College levels through the provision of information on Key Performance Indicators [KPIs]. The Strategic Planning process analyses performance comparators with other institutions to monitor and highlight national and international trends in higher education and to ensure that decisions in UCC are consistent with best international practice.

Student evaluation and feedback

Student evaluation and feedback policies and procedures are in place; these include:

- a University-wide module survey;
- a biennial University student satisfaction survey;
- a range of local feedback processes including lecturer customised surveys, in-class feedback and student fora.
- Student evaluation feeds into annual and periodic monitoring processes at University, School and programme level.

10. Stakeholder Engagement (ESG 1.1)

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for the involvement of external stakeholders in quality assurance.

Stakeholder engagement takes place at a wide range of levels within the University and in the spirit of the University's mission for knowledge creation to enhance the intellectual, cultural, social and economic life regionally, nationally and internationally. Across a wide spectrum, these engagements occur at intra- and inter-institutional level, as well as through the institutional and disciplinary processes. Indicatively, examples of stakeholder engagement include: participation in the South West Regional Skills Forum; strategic engagement with city and region; research and knowledge transfer; formal institutional processes such as strategic planning, quality review and programme approval, and community engagement.

Quality processes

Stakeholder consultation and engagement is a vital facet of the quality of the University's educational provision and all quality processes, including periodic quality review, programme approval and review and monitoring processes involving stakeholder feedback and participation. During periodic quality review, stakeholders meet with Peer Review Panels.

<http://www.ucc.ie/en/geu/guidelines/>

Regional Skills Forum

UCC is a partner in the South West Regional Skills Forum together with:

- Education & Training partners: CIT, IT Tralee, Cork ETB, Kerry ETB, Skillnets
- Statutory Agencies: Enterprise Ireland, IDA, Cork City & County Councils & Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs), Kerry County Council & LEOs, Dept of Social Protection, South West Action Plan for Jobs
- Industry Associations: Cork Chamber, Cork Business Association, Ibec, Construction Industry Federation, Irish Hotels Federation

In 2017/18 four industry-led Sector Specific Regional Skills Groups were established and active:

- Manufacturing/Engineering [chaired by P. Buckley, MD, EPS Group]
- Pharma/Biopharma [chaired by K. Johnson, GM, Janssen]
- Tourism/Hospitality [chaired by A. Mansworth, Director, Trigon Hotels]
- Construction [chaired by J. Phillips, HR Director, Dorrnans Engineering]

The approach of the Regional Skills Forum is to develop sector specific industry-led partnerships with multi-national companies and high growth SMEs to meet skills needs. Employer driven sector groups work with education and training provider representatives to tease out existing/projected skills priorities, agree regional skills priorities and plans to address the identified priorities.

Community Engagement

It is UCC's mission to prepare students to contribute fully to society as globally engaged civic leaders. This will be achieved through engaged teaching, engaged research and engaged service. In 2016 UCC achieved the significant milestone of completing 50 community engagement projects under the CARL (Community Academic Research Links) programme. UCC also completed a UCC-wide staff survey to research the level of engagement across the University to inform the future roadmap for enhanced future community engagement practices. This research focused on mapping activities of UCC staff members in the realm of Community Engagement (CE), including Community-Based Research (CBR) and Community-Based Learning (CBL). The online survey received 1,129 responses from across all parts of the university (academic, technical, administrative and research), with a total of 902 valid responses (33% response rate). Nearly two-thirds of respondents (64%) reported that they had been involved in activities relating to CE as part of their role as a UCC employee in the last 2 years. Almost a third (29%) indicated that they had not undertaken such activity. Specific recommendations from the survey are now being addressed.

In 2016 UCC also submitted a self-evaluation of its Community Engagement activities for external assessment under the framework of the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification. The report from Carnegie found that “University College Cork has embraced a vision of community engagement in a way that is both contextualised to its deep and renowned research culture and as a way of creating innovation in that culture. At the same time, as was described in the application, Community Engagement (CE) at UCC is currently a bottom-up form of piecemeal, voluntary activities that needs to be fostered and supported from the top-down (senior management) and embedded within the strategy and institutional culture, fabric and identity of UCC, with each academic and research unit producing its own CE strategic plan (global, national and local) – defined around its own understanding of CE – that informs school, college and university strategic thinking and planning.” UCC is poised to become a model of a community engaged research university in Ireland.”

UCC and Cork Opera House Launch Strategic Partnership

UCC and Cork Opera House announced and launched its strategic partnership on Tuesday 20 February 2018. The announcement of this 8-year partnership will see the two organisations working together to educate the next generation of arts managers, creative practitioners and professionals. The partnership establishes Cork Opera House as a Learning Theatre and provides UCC with an immersive learning environment which enriches and elaborates the student experience. There are four key pillars to this partnership:

- *Placement and Internships*

Cork Opera House will mentor students through internships in the areas of Organisational Management, Marketing, Production, Business Development, Stage Management, Lighting Design, Sound Design and Costume Design. This aspect of the partnership supports the national target of providing all higher education students with the opportunity to undertake work placement as part of their course by 2025.

- *MA in Arts and Cultural Management*

Cork Opera House & the School of Music & Theatre at UCC will collaborate on the research and development of a new MA in Arts & Cultural Management for delivery in 2019.

- *PhD Studentship*

A jointly funded PhD programme will explore the impact of Cork Opera House in Cork city and our region for 163 years.

- *Theatre Artist in Residence*

Cork Opera House and UCC will co-fund a *Theatre Artist in Residence*. The *Theatre Artist in Residence* will undertake development work at Cork Opera House, which will inform his / her contribution to teaching in the School of Music & Theatre as well as to the broader university population.

This partnership also represents a smart utilisation of the city’s assets. The Cork Opera House provides UCC with access to a 930 seat capacity at preferential rates. UCC will use the Opera House facility for large student events and to increase the university’s conferencing offering.

Strategic Planning

External stakeholder groups are engaged in consultations underpinning the development of the University’s Strategic Plan. These include:

- The Alumni Board
- IDA
- Enterprise Ireland
- Business organisations (IBEC, Cork Chamber, American Chamber of Commerce)
- Arts, Culture & Heritage organisations
- Community & voluntary organisations

- Local Authorities (Cork City and County Councils, Kerry, Tipperary, Waterford and Limerick County Councils)
- Parents and representatives of second level school
- Cork and Kerry Education & Training Boards
- HEA, IUA and Institute of Technology partners
- Science Foundation Ireland
- Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Department of Education and Skills and other government departments
- Public Representatives

External stakeholders are also engaged in an audit of UCC's reputation amongst key stakeholders locally, nationally and internationally. These consultations allow structured exploration of external needs/perceptions/requirements of such important groups to be integrated into the formulation of the Strategic Plan.

11. Engagement with Other Bodies (ESG 1.1)

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for engagement with professional, statutory and regulatory bodies and other quality assurance and awarding bodies (details of specific engagements should be provided in the online section of the form).

The University engages with other educational institutions in the development of research and provision of education, as well as appropriate professional statutory bodies or learned organisations in accordance with its objectives as a research intensive and comprehensive university.

External peer review

External peer review is a central part of the University's overall approach to quality and in this regard the University engages extensively with other higher education institutions, nationally and internationally. Objectivity of external peer review for periodic quality review and external examining is preserved through the rigorous application of criteria to ensure that peer reviewers have appropriate expertise and experience to fulfil their roles. All peer reviewers must be free of any conflicts of interest including current or recent prior close association with the University including as a student, staff member, or peer.

Educational collaboration

Current activities for programme collaboration are guided by the overarching principles of the IHEQN Guidelines for the Approval, Monitoring and Review of Collaborative and Transnational Provision http://www.iheqn.ie/fileupload/File/IHEQN_Guidelines_Collaborative_Provision_FINAL_21May13_55218605.pdf

There is a systematic process for the approval of new academic programmes developed and delivered by UCC and a partner degree-awarding body. Due diligence of the proposed curriculum to be delivered by the partner institution must be performed as outlined in the UCC curricular approval handbook <https://www.ucc.ie/en/apar/curriculumapproval/handbook/>

The CIT-UCC Joint Board is a joint Board of the Academic Council of the Cork Institute of Technology (CIT) and the Academic Board of University College Cork (UCC). The Joint Board supersedes the Joint Academic Standards Board [JASB] following a review of the governance of Joint Programmes during 2016. Its primary purpose is to ensure that the academic standards and procedures applying to collaborative and joint programmes delivered in partnership between CIT and UCC satisfy the requirements of both institutions. The Board reports by way of minutes to the Academic Council of CIT and the Academic Board of UCC in the case of programmes issues. The Board reports issues relating to resources by way of submission of relevant

document(s) and Joint Board minute(s) to the CIT Executive Board, UCC Academic Council and/or UCC University Management Team (Operations). The Board is kept informed by the appropriate Officers and management bodies of the institutions of strategic and policy issues relevant to collaborative and joint programmes. The CIT-UCC Joint Board Operations Group reports to the Joint Board.

The first Irish Management Institute (IMI) programme was approved in July 2010. The Joint UCC/IMI Programme Development and Approval was established to advise the Academic Boards of both institutions on matters concerning programme development, approval and delivery and to oversee the implementation of agreed procedures governing quality assurance and the academic standards of UCC awards. UCC, as the degree-awarding body, retains final authority on all academic-related matters concerning UCC accredited programmes delivered through the UCC/IMI Alliance. A merger between UCC and IMI was announced on 19 January, 2017. An IMI Integration Project has been established covering corporate governance, communications and engagement; academic quality and standards; academic operations and finance.

The University College Cork-Turning Point Training Institute (UCC-TPTI) Joint Academic Standards Committee is responsible for the governance and academic quality of the programmes offered under this partnership https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/academicsecretariat/Handbook_Jan2018.pdf

Professional Registration & Statutory Bodies / Recognition Bodies

The University engages with a range of professional, statutory and other bodies in the provision of the educational portfolio. The outcomes of professional accreditation inform on-going programme development, monitoring and review processes through curriculum committees at School and College level which in turn report to Academic Council. The University Quality Committee has agreed as a matter of policy that, wherever possible, alignment between external professional quality processes and internal periodic quality review processes should be achieved with an emphasis on streamlining and rationalisation whilst maintaining robust external peer review processes.

Relevant bodies

The University is actively engaged with a range of higher education institutions, bodies and agencies internationally and nationally. University staff engage nationally and internationally in peer esteem activities through their participation in disciplinary networks for education and research, and through acting as external examiners, external peer reviewers and external advisers. The University engages with international, European and national agencies for education, research and funding purposes.

12. Provision and Use of Public Information (ESG 1.8)

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for the provision of clear, accurate, up-to date and accessible public information.

The [undergraduate prospectus](#) contains a comprehensive range of information on the full range of undergraduate programmes. Detailed information on all modules is available in the [Book of Modules](#). The [Graduate Studies](#) website provides information on all available postgraduate courses.

The University [Guidelines for Periodic Review](#) and the [peer review reports](#) arising from the reviews are published on the Quality Enhancement Unit website.

Further public information is provided on the [UCC website](#) and via the [Marketing and Communications](#) Office.

13. Linked Providers (for Designated Awarding Bodies) (ESG 1.1)

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for assuring engagement with linked providers including the procedures for approval, monitoring, review, withdrawal of approval and appeal for linked providers.

A Linked Providers procedure was previously approved by the Quality Enhancement Committee. This procedure will form part of the Framework for Collaborative Provision which is currently being developed. <https://www.ucc.ie/en/qeu/guidelines/>

14. DA Procedures for use of QQI Award Standards (IoTs only)

Links and/or text relating to the specific procedures for the approval of programmes in keeping with Core Policy and Criteria for the Validation of Education and Training Programmes by QQI, the Sectoral Protocols for the Awarding of Research Master Degrees at NFQ Level 9 under Delegated Authority (DA) from QQI and the Sectoral Protocols for the Delegation of Authority by QQI to the Institutes of Technology to make Joint Awards, May 2014.

This section is not applicable to UCC.

15. Collaborative Provision (ESG 1.1)

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for engagement with third parties for the provision of programmes.

UCC adopts a systematic process for the approval of all new collaborative academic programmes offered in collaboration with other degree awarding bodies or programmes involving external partners. This aligns with the process followed for UCC wholly owned awards, namely Stage 1 which comprises Outline Programme Approval by Academic Board and Stage 2 which comprises the quality assurance procedures for full programme approval by a Programme Approval Panel. In addition, a Memorandum of Agreement in relation to academic cooperation for inter-institutional joint programmes or programmes involving external partners, (inclusive of annexes/consortia agreements concerning detailed programme management arrangements) is considered during Stage 2 of the approval process. The MOA signing authorities are the Deputy Vice President and Registrar and the Academic Secretary.

A Linked Providers procedure was previously approved by the Quality Enhancement Committee. This procedure will form part of Framework for Collaborative Provision which is being currently developed.

16. Additional Notes

Any additional notes can be entered here.

Internal Review Schedule

The internal review schedule may be revised to ensure that all programmes are reviewed, including those that do not belong to any one school.

Collaborative Programmes

The date of last review as given is the date on which a programme was approved. As there is insufficient space in the template to insert numerous dates for co-related programmes we have given the date when the largest programme in a cluster of programmes was approved. Dates are available for all programmes and are held internally.

In accordance with UCC's Due Diligence Policy governing collaborative programmes, changes to the participating institutions' and UCC's curriculum are reviewed annually by the relevant College. The quality of the programmes is reviewed as part of UCC procedures for periodic quality review (academic) which includes all taught provision on campus, off campus and collaborative.

17. Internal Review Schedule

The internal reviews schedule or cycle at the level of unit of review within the institution. The units of review can be: module; programme; department/school; service delivery unit; faculty. The cycle will usually run over a 5-7 year period and all units should be encompassed over the full period of the cycle.

Year	2016/17
Areas/Units	Department of Chemistry School of Clinical Therapies School of Food & Nutritional Science School of History School of English Department of Government
Number	6
Link(s) to Publications	

Year	2017/18
Areas/Units	Language Centre OCLA (inc. Health and Safety Office) School of Engineering

	Office of Marketing & Communications School of Music & Theatre Cork University Business School (CUBS) Information Services Glucksman Gallery
Number	8
Link(s) to Publications	

Year	2018/19
Areas/Units	Development & Alumni Office Buildings & Estates School of Computer Science School of Sociology, Philosophy & Criminology Scoil Léann na Gaeilge Ionad na Gaeilge Labhartha Department of Physics Office of the VP Teaching & Learning Centre for Adult & Continuing Education Academic Decision-Making – thematic review Programme Approval Process – thematic review
Number	11
Link(s) to Publications	

Year	2019/20
Areas/Units	Cork Centre for Architectural Education (CCAIE) School of BEES School of Mathematical Sciences School of Education School of Languages & Literatures School of Law ASSERT
Number	7
Link(s) to Publications	
Year	2020/21
Areas/Units	UCC Institutional Review 2021 Programme of thematic reviews
Number	2-6

Link(s) to Publications	
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Year	2021/22
Areas/Units	School of Nursing School of Applied Social Studies Finance Office Human Resources Office of the Vice President for Research & Innovation
Number	5
Link(s) to Publications	

Year	2022/23
Areas/Units	Academic Affairs Student Experience School of Asian Studies School of the Human Environment School of Medicine Applied Psychology School of Biochemistry School of Pharmacy School of Public Health Research Quality Review
Number	10
Link(s) to Publications	