University College Cork

2023

Annual Quality Report (Institution)

Reporting Period 2021-2022

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PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM

Reporting Period 2021-2022

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Introduction and Overview of Institution

This is the AQR for **University College Cork** for the reporting period **1 September 2021 – 31 August 2022.**

The AQR has been approved by the **University Management Team** on the recommendation of the **Quality Enhancement Committee.**

University College Cork (*Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh*) is a constituent university of the National University of Ireland, and located in Cork. University College Cork, five-time winner of the Sunday Times Irish University of the Year and Ireland's premier university for sustainability, has a tradition of independent thinking stretching back over 170 years. We are one of Ireland's leading universities with amongst the highest postgraduate or graduate employment rates of 94% for undergraduate studies and 95% for postgraduate studies.

Proud to be ranked in the top 2% of universities in the world, a degree from UCC ensures that graduates are 'World Ready and Work Ready'. UCC is unrivalled in the quality of its academic programmes and research, its collaborations with industry, the beauty of its campus and its vibrant student life, enjoyed by over 22,000 students from over 104 countries. With over 3,400 students and one third of our staff from overseas, UCC is a true place of international learning.

1.0 Internal QA Framework

1.1 Governance and Management of Quality

Quality at UCC

The University Strategy confirms an institutional commitment to a quality culture based on enhancement: *"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

The University has a published Quality Enhancement policy which guides its activities:
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)*.

Governance of Quality: Quality Enhancement Committee

The Quality Enhancement Committee (QEC), chaired by the President, reports to the University Management Team and annually to 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. The Committee has oversight and acts as a reference point for the work of the Quality Enhancement Unit.

In fulfilling its remit, the Quality Enhancement Committee advises UMT 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. Governing Body refers the report to Academic Council for consideration and review of relevant issues.

Management of Quality

The Director of Quality Enhancement reports to the President and is responsible for planning and implementing the University's periodic quality assurance and enhancement procedures and related quality projects University-wide. The Director is supported by a 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, 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 Director of Quality is a member of Academic Council, Academic Board and its sub-committees to ensure that relevant quality considerations arising from internal or external quality processes are taken account of.

Quality Assurance and Enhancement policies and procedures

University-wide there are a range of quality policies and procedures which link to, and support quality assurance and enhancement of the university's activities. 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:

- Periodic quality review by external peers of academic, support and research activity;
- External examiner system and reports;
- External stakeholder engagement in the design and review of educational provision;
- Student engagement and participation in University decision-making processes and student representative structures within programmes;
- Student participation as reviewers in periodic quality review;
- Policy and procedures for programme, module approval and curriculum review;

- Policy and procedures for approval, review and enhancement of doctoral programmes;
- Procedures for the appointment and on-going professional development of staff;
- Internal monitoring, review and evaluation of key quality processes through the University's Academic Council committee structure;
- 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.

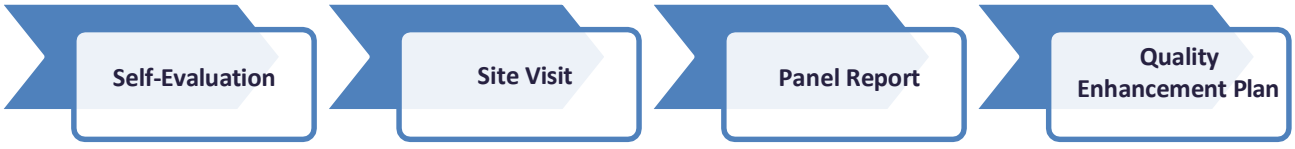
Periodic Quality Review

The University's periodic quality review process is comprehensive of education, research and support areas and follows a periodic seven-year cycle. The overall quality review process operates in accordance with the expectations of the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality (ESG). 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 with the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (2015)*. Our guidelines are comprehensive and include our objectives, principles and process. https://www.ucc.ie/en/qeu/

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 self-assessment and 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. Periodic review takes account of national and European guidelines as well as good practice in higher education quality. The methodology for the periodic review process follows the 4-stage process of:

- Self-evaluation
- Appointment of a peer review panel and site visit
- Publication of a peer review panel report
- Follow-up and quality enhancement

Four Stage Model of Review



In addition to periodic quality reviews of education, research and services, Thematic Reviews are also undertaken. The function of Thematic Review is to support the development of priority strategic actions through peer review and benchmarking. These reviews take an enhancement-led strategic evaluation of a topic encompassing University-wide processes, practices or policies to assess their current stage of effectiveness and identify international good practices that can inform future developments.

Strategic Plan and UCC Context

UCC 2022: Delivering a Connected University

The current *Strategic Plan 2017-22 Independent Thinking – Shared Ambition* finishes in December 2022 and work is underway to develop the new Strategic Plan.

UCC 2022: Delivering a Connected University replaces the final two years of the *Strategic Plan 2017-2022* It sets out a thematic prioritisation of our strategy, as well as the transformative changes to our core operations in response to geopolitical challenges, the escalating climate crisis and accelerating societal and economic pressures associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. This strategic pivot identifies our key strategic priorities for the period 2021-2022, clustered within five interconnected thematic pillars: Learning and Teaching; Research and Innovation; Student Success; People and Organisational Culture; and Infrastructure and Resources. Deeply rooted in extensive collaboration both within and outside UCC, this two-year plan builds on our strengths in student focus, sustainability, and community and global engagement, to identify actions to respond to the current crisis and position UCC for long-term success.

Academic Governance and Policy Development

At the organisational level, the University has established an Academic Policy and Document Portal which brings together in one place all University policy on academic matters. This development ensures that the correct policy version is being used across the University and allows easy access and consultation. The portal is maintained by the Office of Academic Affairs & Governance (which also manages Academic Council and its subcommittees) and is part of the ongoing development of academic governance provided for in Priority 6 of the University's Academic Strategy. This has seen a strengthening of representation and expertise on Academic Council through a new panel of 30 co-opted members to provide a strong central policy framework. Central academic policies are given effect at the School and College level through the principles of subsidiarity, assurance and central oversight. As an example, work has commenced on establishing formal academic governance at the programme level to allow more local and responsive curriculum change (subsidiarity) within a new University-wide system and structure of Programme Boards of Studies (assurance and oversight). These developments will be underpinned by the introduction of a new Curriculum Management System across the University.

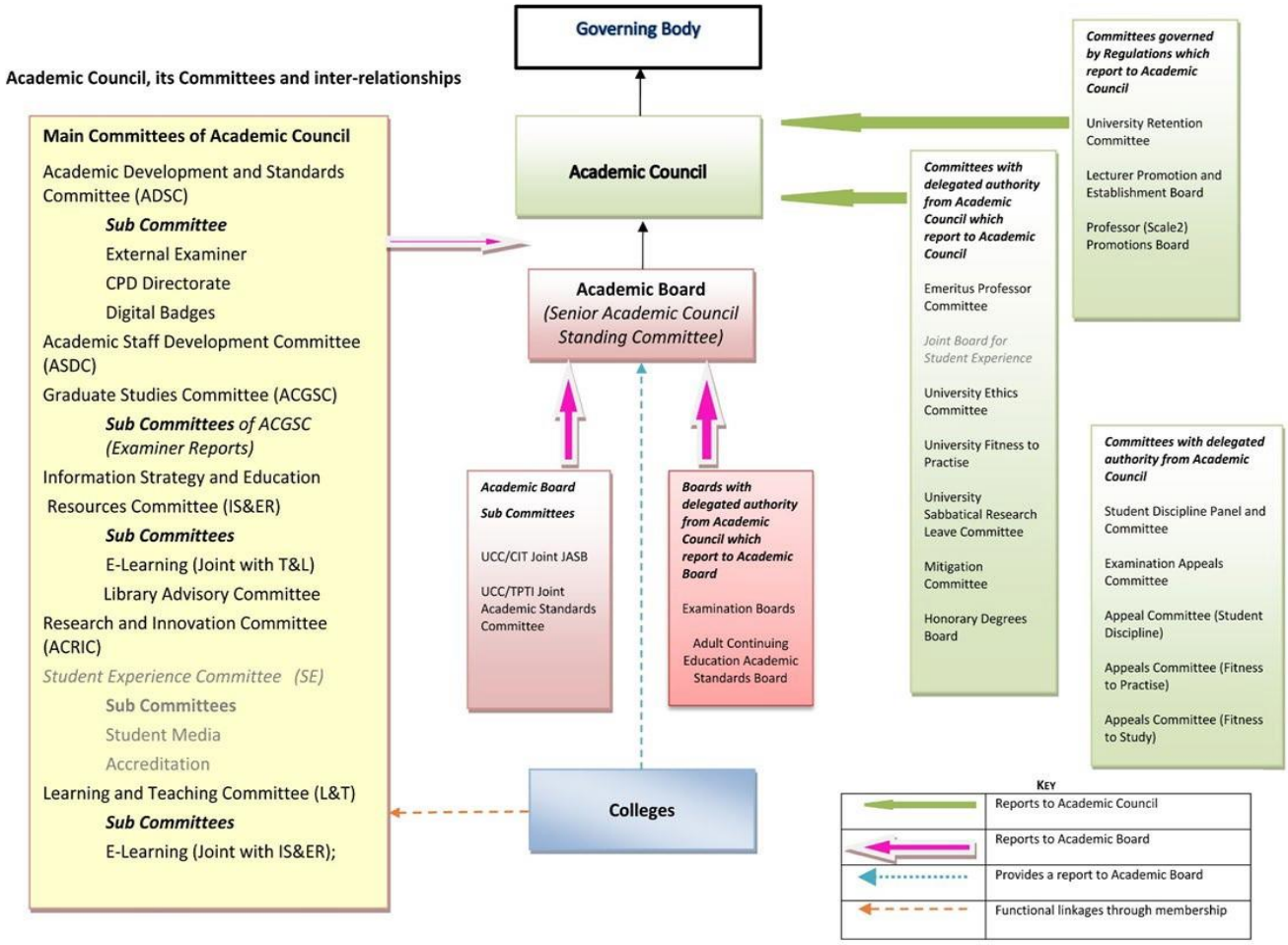
Academic Council and Academic Board

The responsibilities of Academic Council Academic Council | University College Cork (ucc.ie) for managing and controlling the academic affairs of the university including curriculum, instruction and education are defined by statute. Academic Council, in law, is the primary internal authority responsible for academic affairs. Internal revisions in academic governance must not undermine the legal powers granted to Academic Council but must enable it to discharge its responsibilities effectively and, in practical terms, must enable the alignment and integration of University/College academic governance arrangements with an appropriate balance being struck between accountability and autonomy. Operationally this

means that Academic Council retains authority on policy matters with University-level Committees and College Councils advisory to Academic Council, whilst in fact undertaking much of the preliminary work for purposes of efficacy.

Academic Council is supported by an Academic Board Academic Board | University College Cork (ucc.ie) 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 the Office for Academic Affairs and Governance and the governing procedures for the conduct of committees is set out in the Academic Council Committee Handbook

UCC Organisational Structure | University College Cork



During the COVID-19 pandemic 2 additional committees were established: It was agreed by Academic Council on 09-04-2020 that ALF would become an executive subcommittee of AC empowered to make decisions on behalf of Academic Council. The Examinations Business Continuity Group (EBCG) was similarly empowered in relation to urgent decisions on examination matters.

1.2 Linked Providers, Collaborative and Transnational Provision

UCC engages with other educational institutions in the development of research, staff and student mobility and the provision of education. It also engages with appropriate professional statutory bodies, sectoral and industry representative and learned organisations in accordance with its objectives as a research intensive and comprehensive university.

Educational collaboration

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 or other suitable 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. Under the Signing Authority and Approval Policy, the MOA signing authority is the Deputy President & Registrar (with the Academic Secretary deputising). The President may also sign MOAs, where appropriate.

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.

All Academic Agreements must be approved at University level and signed off as appropriate. The University Signing Authority Policy is here: https://www.ucc.ie/en/ocla/policy/

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 handbook governing curricular approval. A Linked Providers procedure was previously approved by the Quality Enhancement Committee.

Collaborative Programmes

Collaborative programmes offered in partnership by UCC and MTU (formerly CIT) are governed by a MTU-UCC Joint Board. The Cork Institute of Technology and University College Cork Joint Board formally changed its name to the MTU-UCC Joint Board at their meeting of 15 November 2021. This was subsequently ratified by the MTU Academic Council and UCC Academic Board.

The MTU-UCC Joint Board is a Joint Board of the Academic Council of Munster Technological University (MTU) and the Academic Board of University College Cork (UCC). Its primary purpose is to ensure that the academic standards and procedures applying to collaborative and joint programmes delivered in partnership between MTU and UCC satisfy the requirements of both institutions. It also functions to

encourage further cooperation between the two universities including the development of new programmes. The Board reports by way of minutes to the Academic Council of MTU and the Academic Board of UCC in the case of programme issues. The Board reports issues relating to resources by way of submission of relevant document(s) and Joint Board minute(s) to the MTU Executive Board, UCC Academic Council and/or UCC University Management Team. 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 University College Cork-Turning Point Institute (UCC-TPI JASC) Joint Academic Standards Committee is responsible for the governance and academic quality of the programmes offered under this partnership. The primary purpose of the JASC is to ensure that the academic standards and procedures applying to deliver the programme by TPI fully satisfy the requirements of UCC.

Transnational Education

The situation regarding collaborative provision with universities in China has changed as the Chinese Ministry of Education promote models with less outward mobility for Chinese students and more time spent in the home institution. The global pandemic has accelerated this trend. As a result, a number of articulation programmes have come to an end and new models of collaboration are underway. The first of these is the agreement with Minzu University of China (MUC) for a dual degree programme (BSc (Hons) Environmental Science and Management with the UCC of School of Biological, Earth and Environmental Sciences.

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 and in the maintenance of high professional standards. The outcomes of professional accreditation inform on-going programme development, monitoring and review processes through curriculum committees at School and College level. Enhanced monitoring of accredited programmes has been introduced with information being held centrally in the Office of Academic Affairs & Governance and quarterly reports are provided to the Heads of Colleges. During the pandemic, the University worked closely with PRSBs to ensure that they were kept informed of curriculum and assessment changes. UCC also worked with QQI and IUA on national initiatives in this area.

2.0 Programme Development and Delivery

2.1 Programme Development and Approval

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 a sub-committee of Academic Council, the Academic Development and Standards Committee and the Office for Academic Programmes and Regulations (APAR).

New Academic Programmes

The University adopts a strategic approach to the introduction and approval of new academic programmes. The main components of the approval process for new academic programmes includes the clear articulation of Stage 1 and Stage 2. Stage 1 comprises initial consideration of an outline of the proposed programme by the lead College. The proposal is assessed against the College Strategy, its alignment to the University's Strategic Plan and the management of its overall portfolio of programmes as well as financial viability. Once endorsed by College, outline programme proposals are forwarded to Academic Board for review. Academic Board, as the body with responsibility for the management and oversight of the University's academic portfolio, is the ultimate authority for the approval of outline programme proposals for any new programme. Membership of Academic Board includes representation from all Colleges and ensures University-wide consultation of the proposed new programme. Academic Board considers the outline proposal for the new programme, requests (as appropriate) additional information or consultation, approves the proposed programme title and NFQ Level and recommends the appropriate review panel for Stage 2. Following Stage 1 approval, the programme team progresses to full programme development, designing the programme with reference to the relevant award type descriptors and in accordance with institutional policies and procedures.

Stage 2 – Full Programme Approval - is specifically configured to ensure the quality and standards of the programme, its adherence to institutional policies and procedures, confirmation of its positioning at the appropriate level on the NFQ and consideration of academic and pastoral support for students. The remit and authority of the programme approval event includes, for example, the requirement to ensure that the aims and programme learning outcomes are clear and coherent and the proposed NFQ level of the award is in accordance with National Framework of Qualifications. The full remit of the panel is enabled through peer review by external subject experts, internal academic and professional services expertise and employer/industry and student involvement. Stage 2 has been designed specifically to facilitate Programme Team engagement with external peers and industry/employers to promote good practice from elsewhere in the higher education sector nationally and internationally. In the case of collaborative provision, due diligence of the proposed curriculum to be delivered by the partner institution must be performed as outlined in the UCC handbook governing curriculum approval.

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 handbook governing curriculum approval and the policies and guidelines governing curriculum approval.

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.*

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 title, NFQ level; 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 options; 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, 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; Pass Standard for the programme, Exit Awards, 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.

2.2 Admission, Progression, Recognition & Certification

Student Journey

The student journey through UCC is of key concern to the University. The Office of Recruitment and Admissions leads the strategic development and direction of policy and practice related to student recruitment, admission and retention. The development of the Graduate Attributes Programme (GAP) is an initiative advancing the development of students' academic, specialist and technical competencies, equipping them with transferrable skills that can be applied in different environments. With a focus on developing core values and graduate attributes, these initiatives are integrating with the academic curriculum, taking a holistic educational approach to develop character, professionalism and the capacity for critical and creative thought.

UCC graduates will be recognised as well-rounded, curious, self-aware, individuals who continually learn new skills, are open to new ideas, and make things happen.

Programmes are created to nurture students in advance of attending UCC and throughout their time in the University. **Nurturing Bright Futures** is a six-module course that has been designed to equip potential students with the information they need to prepare to transition into third level education. It is especially helpful for those who cannot access our campus easily, for a range of different reasons. Through the use of video lessons, podcasts, articles, exercises, quizzes and other helpful resources, these six modules will give potential students the opportunity to engage with a variety of resources and introduce them to ways and approaches to college life and college degrees.

This course is also a resource for Guidance Counsellors, teachers and parents/guardians, to help them to help students with this transition. It is designed to provide information and stimulate conversations with these key people in their lives, and to get them thinking in a structured way so that they can consult and make informed decisions about their post-secondary school options. Regardless of whether they are considering coming to UCC or elsewhere, Nurturing Bright Futures will give them insights, skills and knowledge that they can apply in any third level context.

Downloadable publications have been produced to accompany the Nurturing Bright Futures programme:
Guide for Parents and Guardians

Guide for Guidance Counsellors and Teachers

Compendium of print-friendly worksheets and infographic posters Year Planner booklet

Delivery of a suite of initiatives within the GAP focuses on the different stages of students' Transition In, Through and Out of the university. The overarching objective of the GAP is to enable a successful student journey, which will prepare students for their future through three main projects.

- **Transition In** initiatives are guiding students into the right programme of study for them, whilst simultaneously widening access of under-represented cohorts and improving first year retention rates.

- **Transition Through** initiatives are providing targeted supports, delivering skills training and developing graduate attributes that go beyond disciplinary content knowledge and can be applied in life-wide contexts.
- **Transition Out** initiatives are preparing final year students to transition into professional environments, delivering on the ambitions of our Institutional Employability and Employment Guide.

Admissions Policies

All of UCC's Admission policies can be found at the following link: Admissions | University College Cork (ucc.ie). This includes links to our HEAR, DARE, Mature Student and QQI FE Widening Participation routes, as well as advanced and deferred entry policies.

UCC's Overarching Admissions policy: Overarching Admissions Policy

UCC admits students to accredited programmes from NFQ level 6 to level 10 and also to Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Modules. This Policy applies to applicants and UCC staff involved in the admissions process for UCC programmes/modules and CPD programmes/modules. This Policy does not currently apply to the Language Centre/Irish Management Institute (IMI) / Adult Continuing Education (ACE).

Recognition of Prior Learning

UCC is engaged in a national sectoral project on RPL. The UCC RPL policy is available at: https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/ovptl/documents/RecognitionofPriorLearningPolicy.pdf
There is a separate RPL policy for research students:
https://reg.ucc.ie/curriculum/calendar/live/postgraduate/Doctor/Recognition%20of%20Prior%20Learning%20Policy%20for%20Admission%20to%20Research%20Degrees.pdf

The Office of Recruitment and Admissions

The Office of Recruitment and Admissions comprises a suite of eight Professional Services, namely: Admissions Office, International Office, Graduate Studies Office, Student Recruitment Office, Quercus Talented Students' Programme, Graduate Attributes Programme, Centre for Professional Development (CPD), and the Scholarship and Prizes Unit.

The **International Office** has responsibility for coordinating strategy and administering operational processes to deliver on UCC's strategic internationalisation goals. The International Office manages the admission of Non-EU undergraduate (full time as well as Visiting and Exchange Programme Students) and postgraduate taught and research students. The Office supports applicants from initial enquiry stage, through to application, registration and orientation. The International Office also provides a dedicated support service from pre-departure stage and throughout the student journey for international students.

It also facilities the logistics of visiting delegations, in addition to coordinating Staff Teaching/Training exchanges and placements.
International Office webpage: https://www.ucc.ie/en/international/

The **Graduate Studies Office** manages the admission of EU postgraduate taught and research students. It supports applicants through the full recruitment cycle from initial enquiry stage, through to application, registration and orientation. Furthermore, it manages the examination and record keeping for all research students.
Graduate Studies Office webpage: https://www.ucc.ie/en/study/postgrad/

The **Student Recruitment Office** has responsibility to develop and implement the strategy for student recruitment of all undergraduate and postgraduate students. The office supports and coordinates the cross-functional operational service delivery of all student recruitment activities in close collaboration with the four Colleges, Marketing and Communications and other Central Professional Services.
Student Recruitment Office

The **Quercus Talented Students' Programme** supports and promotes excellence in academia, sport, creative and performing arts, active citizenship and innovation/entrepreneurship. In addition to administering the prestigious scholarships in these areas, it also manages the three Quercus Academic Scholarships. It nurtures talent through the provision of a deep programme of supports, challenge and mentoring.
Quercus Talented Students' Programme webpage: https://www.ucc.ie/en/quercus/

The **Graduate Attributes Programme** delivers a suite of initiatives focussing on the different stages of students' Transition Into, Through and Out of university and has a parallel focus on students' development and acquisition of core values and graduate attributes. These initiatives are integrating with the academic curriculum as well as with student support services, to enable a successful student journey, to foster and embed a holistic educational approach, and to equip our students and graduates with real-world transferable transversal skills that can be applied in different contexts and environments throughout their lives.
Graduate Attributes Programme webpage: https://www.ucc.ie/en/graduateattributes/

The **Centre for Professional Development** manages the admission of students onto CPD modules, both credit and non-credit bearing. It supports applicants from initial enquiry stage, through to application and registration.
Centre for Professional Development webpage: https://www.ucc.ie/en/cpd/

The **Scholarships and Prizes Unit** brings a coordinated and streamlined approach to the more than 1,000 scholarships and prizes in the UCC portfolio. It supports the policies, procedures, workflows and systems to administer university, and external, scholarships and prizes. The Unit affords greater clarity, coherence and cohesion to university staff with responsibility for managing the administration of individual scholarships and prizes.
Scholarships and Prizes webpage: https://www.ucc.ie/en/scholarships/

The **Admissions Office** oversees the recruitment and admission of EU undergraduate students and the

support of first year students.

Pre-Entry Information Provision for UG EU

Prior to entry, the Admissions Office supports prospective students through the provision of information regarding all undergraduate programmes, entry requirements and application procedures and policies. This information provision is done through close collaboration with the Student Recruitment team who oversee the production of relevant literature in print and online, through events such as Open Days and Parent Information Evenings, and school visits. Following are links to the online resources used to disseminate information on the programmes offered:
www.ucc.ie/prospectus
www.ucc.ie/study/undergrad/courses
www.ucc.ie/study/undergrad/entryreqs
www.ucc.ie/cao
www.ucc.ie/openday

Once prospective students have become applicants to undergraduate programmes, either via CAO or via the local applications process, 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, fitness to practice, etc. These are clearly published in the Academic Policy Portal and on the Admissions webpages. These can be found on the following links:
www.ucc.ie/en/academicgov/policies/admissions-policies/
www.ucc.ie/en/study/undergrad/admissionspolicies/

First Year Support

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. These supports include (but are not limited to) the distribution of the First Year Guide to Success to all offer holders following CAO offers, 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, and various academic and pastoral support workshops and seminars. Details of these events and activities can be found on:
https://www.ucc.ie/en/study/undergrad/firstyear/

UCC is fully compliant with the QQI Access, Transfer and Progression Policy. 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/dss/dare/
www.ucc.ie/en/uccplus/
www.ucc.ie/en/uccplus/hear/
www.ucc.ie/en/study/undergrad/entryreqs/matureapplicants/

www.ucc.ie/en/mature/matureprospective/
www.ucc.ie/en/study/undergrad/fetac/
www.ucc.ie/en/cpd/

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

Advanced Entry

First year students who have completed undergraduate modules prior 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 the Advanced Entry process (to a year beyond first year). Information regarding such transfers is available at www.ucc.ie/en/study/undergrad/entryreqs/transferadvancedentry/.

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

Access

Access in University College Cork comprises of three core services who work with the wider university, students, teachers, communities, families, businesses, and advocacy groups to ensure that all students who have the interest and motivation to access higher education are enabled to do so.

The core access services are the UCC PLUS+ Programme (students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds), the Mature Student Office and the Disability Support Service. A comprehensive range of outreach programmes, dedicated admissions pathways and post admission supports are in place to ensure that students have equal opportunities to progress and succeed in University College Cork. The support of non-traditional students in UCC is not confined to the core access service; strong working relationships have been established between access services and professional services and academic departments https://www.ucc.ie/en/accessforall/

University College Cork is recognised as a leader in the area of Access to Higher Education in 2019/20 over 23% of undergraduate admissions were through Access Admissions routes

The key services delivered by Access & Participation include:

Disability Support Service (DSS): The Disability Support Service works to increase access and retention of students with disabilities and specific learning difficulties and does this by delivering a very proactive and innovative pre entry programme to engage with primary and secondary schools as well as students with disabilities and their parents. The DSS also provide a post entry support programme to identify reasonable accommodations to support student to undertake their studies in UCC. Supports extend to students on placement, Erasmus or mentoring/internship programmes.

UCC PLUS+ Programme: The UCC PLUS Programme, aims to increase the number of young people from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds accessing and succeeding in University. There are three central strands to the work of the UCC PLUS+ Programme:

- an outreach programme
- a special admissions route - HEAR, and
- a post entry support programme in UCC

Mature Student Office: The Mature Student Office (MSO) works with full-time undergraduate students who are over the age of 23 on 1 January on the year of entry to third level, in addition to supporting first year students entering via QQI/Further Education route. The role of the MSO is twofold:

- Recruitment - to promote and encourage mature student entry to UCC and
- Retention & Progression - to support registered mature students to stay on their course of study.

Student Financial Support and Advice: Providing financial support to students is key to enabling participation and success for students from low-income background. A range of funds are administered by the Student Assistance Fund office. The Student Budgetary Advisor is on hand to provide advice, guidance and support to students experiencing financial challenges.

The SOAR Project is an inter-institutional collaboration on Access, which is led by Access & Participation in UCC. It brings together the South Cluster – Munster Technological University, Institute of Technology Carlow, Institute of Technology Tralee, University College Cork and Waterford Institute of Technology together with community partners to collaborate on devising and delivering strategies to increase access to higher education for under-represented groups. The Project is funded by the Programme for Access to Higher Education (PATH) Strand 3.

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 access third level education. In partnership with the Tomar Trust and other private donors, bursaries will also be provided to successful students.

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2.3 Procedures for Making Awards

All academic programmes and modules are aligned with the ECTS and published in the University Calendar and Book of Modules. Assessment details for individual modules are recorded in the Book of Modules.

The criteria required to pass a particular module and progress to the next stage of a programme are detailed in the Marks and Standards for each programme http://www.ucc.ie/admin/registrar/marksandstandards/ and in the Book of Modules for each module (https://www.ucc.ie/admin/registrar/modules/). The Marks and Standards describe the timing of assessment, the total credits and marks required at each year of a programme, the pass standard and the criteria that must be met for students to progress to the next stage of a programme. The Marks and Standards also describe the conditions where Supplemental Examination and/or Repeat Year Examination is appropriate, and additional conditions such as the awarding of honours by year and/or for the programme, requirements for exit awards, exemptions and rate of progression limits.

Changes to Marks and Standards require approval by the relevant College. The Marks and Standards for each year of each programme are applied by the University's Student Records and Examinations Office. Application of Marks and Standards generates a provisional final mark and award for each student. University Appointed External Examiners participate in Internal School/Department Examination Boards. These provisional marks and awards are presented for ratification by a University Examination Board, where the Examination Officer or nominee acts as Secretary; the University Examination Board make the appropriate final approval recommendations to the University's Academic Board.

Regulations governing the preparation for and the execution of examinations can be found at: www.ucc.ie/en/exams/procedures-regulations. This includes information on the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders, regulations and procedures with respect to the monitoring and evaluation of examination processes and outputs and the retention of data. The assessment process for each discipline also makes provision for mitigating circumstances https://www.ucc.ie/en/exams/procedures- regulations/. There is also provision for examination rechecks and Appeals.

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. The Guidelines for External Examiners https://www.ucc.ie/en/academicgov/externs/ includes information on the role of the Extern Examiner and the role of the Head of School/Department/Discipline.

UCC has a clearly defined process for the development of programme learning outcomes for new academic programmes and modifications to the programme learning outcomes for existing programmes. For new programmes, the programme team proposes programme learning outcomes which are reviewed as part of the programme approval process. Individual module learning outcomes and the assessment strategy for the programme collectively contribute to the overall programme learning. This review by

internal and external peers ensures they are appropriate to the level of the award within the National Framework of Qualifications, are comparable to equivalent awards internationally and are in-line with the programme aims and content. Changes to programme learning outcomes for existing programmes require approval by the relevant School(s)/Programme Board of Studies and the anchor College (in liaison with participating College(s), where appropriate).

2.4 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Policies, Procedures and Governance

The delivery of research-based teaching and learning with a world class student experience is a key strategic goal ('Pillar 1') for UCC as outlined in the University's recently revised strategic plan, *UCC 2022: Delivering a Connected University* and is further articulated in UCC's *Academic Strategy 2018-2022*. The *UCC 2022* roadmap contains five thematic pillars, of which Learning & Teaching is Pillar 1, with each Pillar being divided into sub-Actions, assigned to named individuals/teams and with dates for delivery. There are seven Actions under Pillar 1. Each Action owner provides regular periodic updates to executive staff and to the relevant Governing Body sub-committee – in this case, the Governing Body for Student Experience.

In June 2021, the University's Academic Board approved the University's first *Assessment Framework*, developed by the Vice President for Learning & Teaching (VPLT) and the Head of Student Records & Examinations, and the Framework is implemented across the University. The development of an assessment policy and operations guidance was one of six key priorities identified by the *Academic Strategy 2018-2022*. It supplements and incorporates existing UCC regulations such as the *Guide to Examinations and Assessment for Staff and Students* and it provides a coherent anchor for relevant policy development. Similarly, UCC is developing a whole suite of policy and resources on Academic Integrity which is being led by the Skills Centre, a unit that reports to the Vice President for Learning & Teaching. This literacy enhancement work builds on established policies and procedures such as UCC's *Plagiarism Policy* ; *Fitness to Practise* policy, and UCC's *Guide to Examinations and Assessment for S*tudents and Staff

The following link provides an A-Z list of all UCC policies and regulations in respect of academic governance, including teaching and learning related policy and guidelines such as UCC's *External Examiners*. Further policy continues to be generated by relevant standing committees of UCC's Academic Council such as its Learning & Teaching Committee (AC-LTC), its Academic Development and Standards Committee and various sub-committees such as the Digital Education Advisory Group (DEAG). The Students' Union is very well-represented on committees such as the AC-LTC, and the Vice-President for Learning & Teaching and the Students' Union Education Officer meet monthly. The purpose and Terms of Reference for the above-mentioned committees are set out in the Academic Council Committee Handbook https://www.ucc.ie/en/academicgov/secretary/council/academic-council-handbook/. The VP for Learning & Teaching and several Office of the Vice President for Learning & Teaching (OVPLT) staff are committee members and/or secretariat for many of the Academic Council standing committees.

In 2020, the Vice-President for Learning & Teaching initiated a Thematic Quality Review of digital education at UCC whereunder an external evaluation panel of national and international experts were invited to offer recommendations for improvement of UCC's approach to digital education from an organisational structures point of view. A recommendation that a senior management level forum of the key individuals heading units that provide digital education infrastructure and digital education training be established to ensure cohesion and communications. A Digital Education Leadership Forum (DELF) was established in September 2021 and is chaired by the VPLT. A key policy currently undergoing revision,

with oversight from DELF, is the University's Lecture Recording Policy.

Operations and Staff Professional Development

The Office of the Vice President for Learning & Teaching (OVPLT) advises and contributes to the development of policy for learning and teaching and, through national and international engagement, ensures that policies and practices at the University are appropriately benchmarked and informed by good practice. In tandem with other quality assurance controls and procedures (such as extern reports, external professional bodies accreditations and standards, policies such as "Fitness to Practice" etc.), OVPLT is actively engaged in the promotion and elevation of a culture across the University of developing, disseminating and celebrating quality and excellence in teaching – for example its annual President's Awards for Excellence in Teaching, the oldest such scheme amongst Irish HEIs. In November 2021, it ran a university-wide, week-long showcase of learning & teaching highlights across UCC under the inaugural national 'Valuing Ireland's Teaching & Learning (VIT&L) Week'. The programme of talks, workshops, tours etc. can be read at https://www.ucc.ie/en/cirtl/events/vital2021/

The role of OVPLT 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 learning and teaching approaches are fostered and supported and a student-centered approach to research-based teaching is rooted in the culture (https://www.ucc.ie/en/teachlearn/abouttheovplt/). OVPLT issues a weekly short email to all staff on teaching 'tips and tricks' as well as links to further reading and internal and external resources/supports, highlighting for example national seminars provided by the IUA/QQI/National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning. OVPLT's quarterly e-newsletters issued to all UCC staff (and beyond) is another way that it disseminates information on good practices locally and elsewhere (https://www.ucc.ie/en/teachlearn/ovpltnewsevents/). During the pandemic, it developed and promoted a new 'Teaching Today' webpage which has become a one-stop shop for staff seeking information on relevant policies and guidance on training and 'how to'.

UCC's reputation in the area of learning and teaching is recognised internationally as UCC is regularly selected to participate in EUA projects and Erasmus+ capacity-building projects. For example, UCC (through OVPLT) has participated in the 2017, 2018, 2020 and 2021 EUA Learning & Teaching Thematic Peer Groups (TPGs) around such theme as "Improving the link between research and teaching", "Promoting active learning in universities", and "Meeting skills and employability demands". The TPGs gather a selected group of EUA member universities each year to discuss and explore practices and lessons learnt in organising and implementing learning and teaching at the institutional level. They also identify good practices on the given theme, and support quality enhancement in learning and teaching. The groups' work feeds into EUA's ongoing policy work and debates on learning and teaching by providing direct feedback from an institutional perspective on the key challenges in the area, as well as recommendations. UCC (through OVPLT) was also selected as one of 29 HEIs to participate in the EUA's Leadership and Organisation for Teaching and Learning at European Universities (LOTUS) programme. The LOTUS project's purpose was to contribute to capacity building and strategic change management for

learning and teaching at higher education institutions across Europe. UCC (through OVPLT) continues as a partner in numerous Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership and Capacity Building Initiatives. These initiatives focus on a range of topics related to Learning and Teaching in Higher Education and are transnational projects designed to develop and share innovative practices and promote cooperation, peer learning, and exchanges of experiences. As a programme partner in these projects, we support eligible Partner Countries (e.g., Haiti) to modernise, internationalise and increase access to higher education, and address the challenges facing their higher education institutions and systems.

OVPLT 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. Credit bearing programmes in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education up to and including NFQ level 9 (Postgraduate Certificate/Postgraduate Diploma) are available online and free of charge to 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 programme are an institutional performance measure through the HEA Compact process. The Postgraduate Certificate programme is UCC's largest – as measured by enrolment numbers – postgraduate programme, and over 70% of all staff have successfully completed the certificate. The Centre staff also run regular seminar workshops on Teaching and Learning and Assessment theories and practices and these are advertised to all staff.

The Centre for Digital Education (within OVPLT) provides support to UCC staff around the application of educational technology to education. It offers bespoke training sessions to academic and other staff across the University around their digital skills, confidence and competence, to enhance the learning and teaching experience. Members of the CDE team sit on many committees across UCC including the academic-led Digital Education Advisory Group, a sub-committee of Academic Council, and is heavily involved with cognate units such as IT Services in procurement and fitting of hard and software technologies. The CDE team also publishes regular newsletters, blogs and FAQs and runs regular training sessions on topics informed by staff feedback on their needs. As well as group training sessions open to all staff, the CDE also offers 1:1 consultations for individual staff members and departmental-level advice/bespoke training.

The Centre for Adult Continuing Education (ACE) within UCC provides lifelong learning opportunities (credit and non-credit bearing) 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, and well beyond the Munster region. ACE also designs and delivers bespoke training courses for local industries (such as Pharma companies) and manages UCC's Springboard+ involvement through which several programmes at NFQ levels 7, 8 and 9 are delivered to jobseekers and workers who wish to upskill and increase their employability chances. ACE has an extremely strong working relationship with counterpart education providers across Cork city (such as MTU, Cork ETB, Cork City Council) through the 'Learning Cities' network.

The University's Language Centre (housed within OVPLT) is an accredited ACELS English language provider and as such conforms to the regulations and guidelines of its recognition scheme

https://www.acels.ie/acelsregulations in respect to teaching, learning and assessment. The Centre's credit-bearing modules and courses are validated by the University. The Centre's suite of pre-sessional courses provide direct entrance to UCC undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. A special standardisation and moderation calendar ensures student performance is mapped to marking criteria and outcomes. Teacher training courses leading to a qualification are accredited by an external awarding body. The Centre complies with the awarding body regulations and complies with their requirements for internal and external verification regulations: https://www.cambridgeenglish.org/teaching-english/professional-development/cambridge-english-teaching-framework/

The student-facing Skills Centre (housed within OVPLT) is an additional resource available to all students offering group and 1:1 assistance in such areas as "Transitioning into College Life" "Developing your academic writing" etc. A number of its resources are available to students 24/7. More on the Skills Centre here https://www.ucc.ie/en/skillscentre/about/

Since 2018, the Exams Appeals Officer reports to the VP for Learning & Teaching (and OVPLT provides all Exams Appeals administrative function). The learning that OVPLT has gained from the incorporation of this function has been invaluable and has contributed to (through the identification of gaps) the development of previously absent policy frameworks such as a "Reasonable Accommodations" policy and set of procedures for DSS students. The articulation of practices (e.g., Reasonable Accommodations) at UCC hithertofore undocumented is a further shift towards greater coherency and transparency. The Exams Appeals Officer also prepares annual reports for Academic Board.

Process and Procedures for External Examining

External Examiner Sub-Committee

The External Examiner Sub-Committee (EESC) is a sub-committee of the Academic Council's Academic Development and Standards Committee (ADSC).

The EESC's role is:

- to approve nominations of External Examiners for undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes.
- to prepare an annual report on matters identified by External Examiners in their reports to the University.
- to oversee policy on the appointment and role of taught External Examiners and to report to ADSC and Academic Board (AB)/Academic Council (AC) as appropriate.
- The EESC is responsible for processing nominations and reviewing Externs' reports from:
    i. the four Colleges (College of Medicine and Health [CoMH], College of Business and Law [CBL], College of Science, Engineering and Food Science [CSEFS] and College of Arts, Celtic Studies & Social Sciences [CACSSS]);
    ii. the Office of the VP for Learning and Teaching (OVPL&T) academic units (Adult Continuing Education [ACE], Centre for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning [CIRTL] and the Language Centre);

iii. the Irish Management Institute (IMI).

Nomination and Appointment of External Examiners

External Examiners for undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes are nominated and appointed in accordance with the procedure and criteria set out in the Guidelines for External Examiners Primary Degree and Taught Postgraduate Courses and the Briefing Note to Colleges (June 2017).

These procedures are designed to ensure that UCC's Externs are highly qualified and experienced and have no conflicts of interest that would undermine, or be seen to undermine, their independence as examiners.

Externs are appointed for a three-year term, with the possibility of a one-year extension. Externs may not be re-appointed unless there is a gap of at least five years. Former UCC staff and students are not eligible for appointment until 10 years after their departure from the University but in exceptional circumstances nominations of those with a gap of 5-10 years will be considered by the EESC.

Externs are nominated by Heads of Academic Units. If the nomination is in order and in accordance with prescribed criteria the nomination is approved by the Chair of the EESC or by another committee member if there is a conflict of interest (such as if the nomination originates from the Chair's own Academic Unit).

Duties of External Examiners at UCC

The role of External Examiners at UCC is:

- to assure academic standards and advise on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- to ensure that the academic standards of programmes, modules and awards are consistent with the academic outcomes specified and are comparable to those achieved in the subject area in equivalent universities internationally.
- to guarantee the fairness, validity, and rigour of assessment at the University.
- to provide feedback on the quality of programmes and modules and the overall learning experience in the subject area, and on how teaching, learning and assessment may be enhanced.
- to review and enhance the assessment process. They will not however routinely act as an additional examiner alongside internal examiners.
- to exercise their functions with due regard for professional standards and the requirements of regulatory bodies.

External Examiner Report

Each year of term External Examiners are required to provide a report on their findings to the University. Reports from External Examiners are received by the designated officer in the Academic Affairs & Governance and distributed to the relevant Head of Academic Unit.

The Academic Unit Response

The Head of Academic Unit or a designated nominee is obliged to provide a written response to the Registrar and to the External Examiner on the recommendations arising from the External Examiner's Report. These Academic Unit Responses include a summary of the key points raised in each report and

information on how the academic unit intends to progress any issues raised by the External Examiner. As part of the feedback on their comments and recommendations, all responses also automatically sent to the external examiner who submitted the original report. This process enables Schools/Colleges/Units and the University's External Examiner Sub-Committee (EESC) to monitor how external examiner feedback is processed.

Optional Confidential Report to Registrar

Where the External Examiner has significant concerns, they may provide a confidential report to the Registrar via Academic Affairs and Governance. The Academic Unit is then obliged to provide a formal response to the Registrar in a timely manner indicating what actions if any are being taken in response to this report of the External Examiner. The University advises the Registrar of the National University of Ireland where such a circumstance arises.

EESC'S Annual Report to Academic Board

On behalf of Academic Board the EESC prepares an annual consolidated report based on the External Examiner Reports and Academic Unit Responses returned for each College or Unit (OVPLT, IMI, etc.) and, in consultation with the Registrar, as a result of quality improvement processes in UCC proposes policy or procedural adjustments as appropriate.

All External Examiner Reports and Academic Unit Responses for the College/Units are divided between the EESC's members for review, ensuring that members are not assigned to review their own College or Unit. These members are then tasked with writing a College-level Review Report. These College-level Review Reports are reviewed by the EESC Chair and form the basis of the Chair's own University-wide Annual Report which is submitted to Academic Board. The College- level Review Reports are also provided to the individual College Heads and Managers (or their equivalent in the other Units) to close the feedback loop and ensure that action is taken on the ground as appropriate.

Reporting to the NUI

Each year, the designated officer within Academic Affairs & Governance forwards collated External Examiners Reports, Academic Unit Responses and a list of new appointments for the year to the National University of Ireland.

3.0 Learner Resources and Support

UCC Library

UCC Library is a contemporary university library containing rich collections and archives, multi-media, information and knowledge management systems. Its mission is to deliver excellent information services to meet the needs of the University and regional scholarly community; to support the University's mission which is *'creating, understanding and sharing knowledge and applying it for the good of all.'* and to contribute to the preservation of the cultural heritage of the region. It delivers on this mission by providing extensive information resources, high quality spaces and excellent services.

The Library has three locations, the Boole Library located on main campus, the Boston Scientific Health Sciences Library located in the Brookfield complex, and an offsite repository at Pouladuff Road, Togher, Cork. In addition, UCC Library partners with the Mercy University Hospital Library in assisting with professional Librarian support.

The Library Strategic Plan is user focused and central to this is a clear commitment to enhancing the student experience by creating supportive spaces, acquiring top-quality information resources, supporting digital and information literacy, and providing an inclusive environment to inspire learning. UCC Library prides itself on having an excellent service that is proactive, innovative, timely and responsive to user needs. Librarians collaborate with users and guide them in the use of high-quality information resources which contributes to creativity and innovation and provides evidence in leading-edge research.

The Library provides learning supports and training resources to students through webinars, online modules, and one-to-one research support. The Digital & Information Literacy Framework guides the development of a comprehensive and coherent approach to digital and information literacy within UCC Library, and determines the appropriate infrastructure required to develop consistently high-quality, equitable programmes and resources. The Framework enables future collaborations with university colleagues so that learning opportunities on offer are enriched by a diverse set of skills and expertise that will reach more students, teaching staff and researchers.

The Library Learning and Teaching Team provides self-directed Information Literacy courses on Canvas (UCC's VLE) with live follow-up Q+A sessions, and general Training Courses such as Citing, Referencing & Plagiarism.

The Ask Us team offers an online query service for students, using a comprehensive knowledge base of FAQs, ticketing service, and live chat function. The service acts as a first level of support for students with general research/ library related queries, such as locating and searching online resources, and citing & referencing.

The Academic Success Librarian offers a second level of student support and allows for more in-depth support at point of need. Individual research consultations are available online or face-to-face and are bookable online. The Research Data Coordinator offers training and support to researchers in the area of Data Management. Staff & students can book an appointment.

More focused support is available online through Subject Support guides (LibGuides) and through website

links to topical information. The guides act as a one-stop-shop and gather all subject-based information resources together and cover general library topics too. The website links are to topics such as "Access Assignment Help" or "Learn the Basics".

A snapshot of Library facilities:

- The Library provides a variety of student social and study facilities and has a stock of over 900,000 volumes. Currently, it has the longest opening hours of any academic library in Ireland. Hours increase even more around exam time.
- The Boole Library has a total of 2,233 study spaces and Boston Scientific Health Sciences Library has 200. These spaces are configured to optimise user experience.
- The Creative Zone offers a flexible technology-rich space for all students and staff in UCC. The space can be re-configured easily to suit presentations, group work or study. A wide range of events organised in association with the schools, societies, and student services, take place there and the facility is available to all the student body.
- There is some evidence that relaxing or napping for short periods of time can increase alertness and productivity. With this in mind, the Library purchased an Energy Pod which can be used by all students for 20 minute sessions.
- In support of UCC's commitment to creating an inclusive environment, the Library, in collaboration with the Disability Support Service (DSS) provides a Study Pod. This is a bookable sound-proofed booth that offers a stress-free study environment for students.
- Supporting students in their digital experience is a key component of the Library strategy.
- The Library provides Laptop Loans. 72 Chromebook laptops are available for students to borrow in the Boole Library and 24 in Brookfield Library.
- The Library Studio is available to all students and staff and offers a bookable state-of-the-art video and audio recording facility.
- 3D printing supports a wide variety of projects and is available in the Boole Library.
- A Virtual Reality Lounge has been developed in the Boole Library where students can immerse themselves in a virtual world. This resource provides support for students of all disciplines as students can "visit" the International Space Station, Titanic, White House etc.

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.

By collaborating with other UCC student services, the Library has been able to host a range of services to offer a more inclusive student experience. The DSS runs the Assistive Technology Unit supporting students with a disability, which is located within the Library. The laptop loan system was established in partnership with the Access Office, and some laptops are reserved for use by their students and the DSS.

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 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. This is in support of the Library's community outreach Strategic Theme.

Cooperation between libraries offers dividends for UCC students as it provides physical access to primary materials in other institutions. UCC Library is an active participant in all available schemes namely SCONUL Access, ALCID, Cork PAL and Music PAL. Inter Library Loans supports students who don't need physical access but need materials from elsewhere.

The student-facing Skills Centre in the Library (also housed within OVPLT) is an additional resource available to all students offering group and 1:1 assistance in such areas as "Transitioning into College Life" "Developing your academic writing" etc. A number of its resources are available to students 24/7. More on the Skills Centre here https://www.ucc.ie/en/skillscentre/about/

IT Infrastructure

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 digital services to support the 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 led and Technology enabled. These strategic initiatives will transform UCC and will support the development of a more Digital University. Enhancing and modernising the services to students is central to these proposals. IT Services 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 IT unit has been a pivotal part of UCC throughout the COVID-19 pandemic with so many University services now running online. There has been a phenomenal 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. We have recognised the impact our services now have on our students, and the University Management Team therefore approved a new Digital Master plan to support the priorities identified in UCC 2022.

https://www.ucc.ie/en/news/ucc-launches-digital-master-plan.html

The Digital Master plan also contains a revised update on the Universities digital Roadmap which is available at the following link, https://www.ucc.ie/en/digitalroadmap/

Student Supports

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 https://www.ucc.ie/en/studentexperience/ co-ordinates student support 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 for Staff, Student Alcohol Policy, Fitness to Continue in Study Policy, Support for Pregnant Students Policy, Procedure for Responding to Reports of Missing Students, Protocol for Responding to the Death of a Student and Code of Practice for Students with Disabilities are available on: https://www.ucc.ie/en/academicgov/policies/

The Student Experience Office uses a thematic approach to supporting and developing the student experience. Student Supports are grouped under five headings: Student Life, Access, Career Services, Sport & Physical Activity and Student Health & Wellbeing. There is a focus on a collaborative approach to 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 UCC which includes Disability Support, Mature Student Office, PLUS Programme, Student Budgetary Advisor and SOAR Projects; Career Services which includes Careers Advisors, Employer Engagement and Work Placement; Student Health & Wellbeing which includes Student Health, Student Counselling & Development, Chaplaincy, Peer Support and Niteline; Sport & Physical Activity and Student Clubs; Student Life which includes Accommodation & Community Life (encompassing Campus Watch), Health & Safety

for Student Activities, Radio & Student Media, Student Societies; Students' Union, all of which provide a range of specialised services to students.

The full range of student supports available across UCC is displayed in the Student Support Tree.

Student Central

The onset of COVID-19 expedited a re-design of student administration services in UCC. A successful pivot to online service delivery was made possible through the recently established *Student Central* and the development of a *Digital Student Hub. Student Central* provides both in-person and remote service delivery to prospective and current students. This service provides a single-entry point to an effective triage and routing function for all incoming enquiries. The *Digital Student Hub* delivered a range of new and innovative service to support students which included the following features:

- Self-Service Attendance Letters
- Web enquiry forms for current and prospective students with in-built routing to back-office subject matter experts
- The ask.ucc.ie knowledge bases articles
- Online Deferred Entry forms
- Online Garda Vetting Process
- Online First Year Change of Course
- Online Payment Plans
- Online Mitigation and Deferral Application forms
- Online Examination Appeals Request
- Online ID verification
- Upload of Student Photo ID for ID Cards

Student Health

The Student Health Department provides a comprehensive range of student health care services to all registered students, during office hours operating a blended service of both telephone, video and onsite consultations 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.

Student Health provide the following services:

- Primary care of acute and chronic illnesses that present in the community
- Contraception service including insertion of Long-Acting implants and IUCDs "Coils"
- Women's Health, Cervical smear screening services.
- Screening and immunisation against infectious diseases.
- Consultant Psychiatrist Service.

- Sexual Transmitted Infection screening
- Sexual Transmitted Infection diagnosis and treatment
- Travel Advice and Vaccinations.
- Health Promotion Programmes.
- Hospital referral service.
- Ante Natal Care.
- Injury assessment, treatment and referral service
- Physiotherapy Service

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. The service has also developed a set of Guidelines for Supporting Distressed Students in addition to providing training in this area. 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.

Individual Counselling: In addition to individual counselling, SCD provides online and telephone counselling to students:

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. Digital Offerings: SCD provides comprehensive evidence-based online resources to students.
4. Designated Liaison Point for Transgender and Non-Binary Students: SCD has been deemed the designated liaison point for transgender and non-binary students.
5. Staff Consultations: SCD provides support for staff in managing and responding to concerns about student well-being.
6. Student Consultations: Students are also offered consultations, both individually and in groups, to explore concerns about fellow students who are experiencing difficulties and may need support.

Peer Support programme

The Peer Support programme is a support service for students, by students. The 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.

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.) 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. Peer Support Leaders are 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. All student volunteers receive a UCC Works Award upon completion of their duties. They provide a non-judgmental, 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 5 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.

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 two full-time chaplains, two visiting chaplains, and an administrator, the 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. Chaplaincy takes a lead role at times of trauma and bereavement and acts as a point of reference for follow up support to families and students after such events.

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 55 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 skills outside of the classroom. With 55 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 (e.g., Olympics).

Accommodation and Community Life

The Office of Accommodation and Community Life has responsibility for:

Student Accommodation

- Accommodation advice and advocacy service for UCC students
- Support all current and incoming students with their search for safe and affordable accommodation
- International Student Accommodation Placement Service – Full year and single semester EU and non-EU students
- First Year Student Accommodation Placement Service

Campus Watch

- First and second stages of student discipline

- Promoting respect and responsibility in the local community

Community Relations

- Engaging with the local community, relevant stakeholders and resident groups to actively and positively engage with neighbourhood issues

UCC Student Media

UCC 98.3FM, UCC Express and Motley magazine aim to promote balanced student programming and writing, encouraging access to and involvement in radio and online resources for individuals and groups to present their ideas and views while being a trusted and informed voice for the student body of UCC.

Students' Union

UCC Students' Union is a democratic organization run by 6 fulltime officers elected by the student body. The principal officers are the President, the Communications and Engagement Officer, Welfare Officer, Education Officer, Commercial and Finance Officer and Entertainments Officer. There are also eleven non sabbatical officers contributing to the organisation. The SU's main functions are to offer academic assistance to students, to provide pastoral and financial support to students in need, to lobby the University and the government on issues affecting students, and to facilitate entertainment on campus. The SU also runs a Common Room on campus and in Brookfield, and a reception desk in the Hub.

Student Societies

Student Societies provide a fantastic environment for students to develop their skillset outside of the lecture halls. With over 100 societies in UCC ranging from academic, charitable, creative, debating, political, religious, and social student societies aim to produce a variety of interests to get involved in.

Career Services

The UCC Career Services facilitate students' professional development and successful career transition through and out of UCC by providing access to careers advice and coaching, employability skills development classes, industry-led workshops and events, work integrated learning opportunities and postgraduate opportunities, both nationally and internationally. Students are provided with access to online, digital, self-serve resources to support them in making job applications and securing their first graduate role.

The UCC Career Services helps UCC students to achieve their career objectives by:

- Working in partnership with university colleagues to deliver customised employability workshops and events to meet the bespoke needs of students.
- Offering a personal, bespoke service to create employer-student connections that form exciting futures for learning, living and working in a global society.
- Working collaboratively with students, academic departments, and industry representatives as partners.
- Managing work placement accredited modules in collaboration with almost 40 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.
- Providing one to one advice and coaching to students.

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

- Employability and Employer Engagement Team
- Work Integrated Learning Team
- Careers Consultancy Team
- Cross-Collaborative Working Groups

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 EmployAgility Award in which Student Volunteering and Community Engagement activities are a core part.
- 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 Integrated Learning 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 work placement selection process until they successfully get an offer of a role 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 Integrated Learning officers have a joint reporting relationship to the Head of Career Services and the Head of their respective College.

Careers Consultancy 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:

- 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.
- One to One Careers advisory consultations by appointment with a careers consultant 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.
- Profiling for Success: administer a range of psychometric tools designed to improve self-awareness in students, thereby supporting their transition to professional life.
- Career Set: Artificial Intelligence algorithms have been configured to generate personalised CV feedback and the tool has been designed using recognised best practices, applicable across industries and academic disciplines. All current students and recent graduates of UCC can access the tool to score the impact, style and brevity of their CV. The tool can also help applicants target their CV to a specific job description.
- Big Interview: An AI-based Practice Interview Tool is also supporting students. Once registered on the platform, students and recent graduates can use the 'Learn' option to undertake short courses to help them understand the interview process and STAR technique. Users will also get hands-on practice with interactive mock interviews tailored to specific industries, jobs, and experience level.

Careers Education

Career consultants also work closely with academic departments and other UCC units to deliver bespoke employability and career related workshops and events to their students within the curriculum.

Additional Policies for Career Services

- 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)

Access

UCC is committed to ensuring that all students entering via Access pathways (HEAR, DARE, Mature and QQI/FET admissions routes) are afforded every opportunity to succeed. A wide range of post-admission supports have been developed by a dedicated team of Access practitioners in collaboration with students and staff.

- A range of financial supports are available for students from low-income households. A dedicated student budgetary advisor is also on hand to provide support, guidance and advice to students

experiencing hardship.

- Extensive reasonable accommodations and supports are available for students who are registered with a disability. Students are invited to meet with a disability advisor for a needs assessment at the start of semester 1 where reasonable accommodations and any other supports required will be agreed.
- Additional academic support in the form of small group or one-to-one tutorials and academic skills sessions are delivered in collaboration with the UCC Skills Centre.
- Coffee mornings, breakfast clubs, group meetings are run on a regular basis to provide social support for students.
- Access students have dedicated student advisors who are available to meet with students for a face to face or virtual consultation at any stage during the academic year to discuss any issues they may have and seek advice and assistance.
- Laptop Loan service is available to students from low-income households who do not have the resources to purchase their own device. Students are given a laptop for the duration of the academic year.
- UCC has committed to being an Autism Friendly University by making the physical, social and academic environments of the campus more 'autism-friendly' by undertaking a multi-year project to achieve these aims. There is an Autism & Uni Student Toolkit along with a new dedicate space of calm and respite for students – the Calm Zone.
- An employability programme for students with Disabilities has been expanded. The programme aims to increase the number of students with disabilities securing post-graduation employment.

International Students

The international Office provides both pastoral and practical support to international students through a variety of services outlined below.

Before Arrival

- Nurture Emails
- Welcome Email/ Preparation Email/ Final Countdown Email
- Dedicated web support https://www.ucc.ie/en/international/studentinfohub/beforeyouarrive/
- Visa and Immigration
- Fees and Cost of Living
- Accommodation
- Key Dates
- Getting to Cork
- Health Insurance
- In Person Advisory Sessions

On Arrival

- Airport meet & greet *for some
- Bespoke Orientation

- Bespoke Welcome Programmes
- Assistance with Registration
- How to Thrive when you Arrive – GAP Sponsored Infographic
- Dedicated web support https://www.ucc.ie/en/international/studentinfohub/afteryouarrive/
- Orientation and registration
- Opening a Bank Account
- Working in Ireland
- Immigration Information
- Welcome Programme
- Getting Connected
- Essential Information Sessions
- Visa and Immigration
- Snapshot of UCC Supports and Services
- Practical Tips
- Culture and Transitions
- Live sessions recorded for playback viewing on Canvas.
- Canvas Internationalisation Module

Ongoing Support

- Nurture Email every 2nd week
- Facebook Community - https://www.facebook.com/groups/449676442673958
- In Person Appointments with Staff
- Booking System for online Appointments with Staff
- Immigration & Visa Advice and Advocacy
- Dedicated Website - https://www.ucc.ie/en/international/studentinfohub/living/
- Practical life
- Student Services
- Irish Culture
- Student Support Tree SupportTreeInfographic.pdf (ucc.ie)
- Keep Well Website - https://www.ucc.ie/en/keep-well/
- Silvercloud – wellbeing support https://www.ucc.ie/en/keep-well/silvercloud/
- After Hours on Call Emergency Contact Service for students
- Dedicated COVID-19 webpage
- Skills Centre for academic mentorship

<u>Online/Blended Learning</u>

The following supports are provided in regard to online/blended delivery programmes:

- Teaching Today in UCC is an internal SharePoint Communications site for those who teach in UCC, providing advice on options to consider for engaging students in a blended context during COVID-19

- Centre for Digital Education website, where staff can access training and information and request one to one consultations with Instructional Designers to enhance the online learning experience. The vision of the CDE is to empower staff to improve student learning through the best practice application of technology.
- The Teaching with Technology Canvas course. All staff are enrolled and this is our one-stop location for information on how to use Canvas, Panopto and Teams to teach online. This resource bank is maintained by the CDE and IT Services so it is kept current.
- The Teaching with Technology MS Team is a live forum where any staff member can ask a question about any aspect of their online teaching and receive a prompt response from a dedicated team who monitor the channel.
- Canvas's 24/7 help system ensures that any student or staff member in UCC can request assistance from a dedicated Canvas support team around the use of Canvas in teaching and learning. Where this team cannot answer a question, it is referred back to the appropriate UCC office.
- The Teach Digi project has been running since 2019. This is UCC's contribution to the HEA-funded national Enhancing Digital Teaching and Learning project. In Teach Digi, the five pillars of UCC student feedback are used to inform discussion and support for teaching staff around student engagement.
- UCC's Lecture Recording policy sets out how this approach should be used by teaching staff to ensure greater and timely access to learning by students.
- The Success Zone Canvas course is managed by the Skills Centre within the Office of Vice President for Learning and Teaching. All UCC students are enrolled in this student-facing course which provides guidance around a myriad of topics, including online learning.

4.0 QA of Research Activities and Programmes

Research Activity

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 2020, the institution launched *UCC 2022: Delivering a Connected University* to replace the final two years of the institutional Strategic Plan (2017-2022). This strategic pivot set out a thematic prioritisation of our strategy, as well as the transformative changes to our core operations in response to geopolitical challenges, the escalating climate crisis and accelerating societal and economic pressures associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

A key element of the plan from the perspective of research and innovation was recognising the strength in diversity of UCC research expertise and activity, but also acknowledging that a distinctive characteristic of high performing universities globally is regular and responsive priority setting, enabling the enhancement of key areas of strength, while also identifying and empowering emerging areas. This prioritisation process was initiated in the *Research & Innovation Strategic Plan 2017-2022* and has been continued under *UCC 2022.* A key output of this work is the development of a Research Charter that will differentiate UCC as a research-intensive university.

UCC has formally endorsed the revised version of the National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland. To ensure alignment with this policy and international developments in the key area of research integrity, and informed by UCC's Vice President for Research & Innovation role as Chair of the National Forum on Research Integrity, the UCC Code of Research Conduct (updated October 2019) provides a robust framework for the proper conduct of research and provides guidance for researchers on the standards expected at UCC. The Code details 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. In the light of the revised European Code and National Policy, Statement of Research Integrity, and taking on board experience in its use, the UCC Code of Research Conduct was revised in both 2018 and 2019 to ensure that the Code is up to date with the pace of national and international developments in the field. The UCC Digital Badge in the Responsible Conduct of Research has been widely recognised as a very impactful initiative to raise awareness among the research community of current policies and approaches in ensuring the highest standards in the conduct of research.

The UCC Policy on the Governance of Research Centres and Institutes provides clarity on how research institutes centres and units interface with academic Schools and Colleges. In 2020, a new approach to the annual reporting process was successfully piloted in the College of Business & Law and, as a reporting mechanism, has proven highly effective. The EUA Institutional Evaluation Report (IEP) highlighted the importance of ensuring effective engagement between RICUs and academic schools, as enabled by this policy, to foster research excellence and maximise synergies and impact. To ensure that the policy continues to remain 'fit for purpose' in the context of a rapidly evolving external research environment, the document is currently under review, with an updated policy scheduled to be launched in Q1 2022.

The development and implementation of a comprehensive employment and career management structure for research staff, including a career development programme for the *circa*. 1000 researchers employed in UCC, was one of the most substantial change management projects undertaken in recent years, initiated in 2011 as a partnership between HR and the OVPRI. Indeed, UCC has influenced national thinking in this area through implementation of this career structure, including a research support track to complement the traditional postdoc / senior postdoc / research fellow path.

On the basis of this and supporting initiatives, and reflecting the progress made to support researcher career development within the University, UCC received the European Commission's *HR Excellence in Research Award* at first attempt in 2013. Since then, the institution has successfully renewed the award on two occasions – in 2018 and, most recently, in 2021. UCC now proactively assists other universities throughout Europe in their efforts to attain the *HR Excellence in Research* award.

Similar to the challenges it has brought to bear at all levels of society, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a very significant impact on UCC research and our research community. The Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS), through the Higher Education Authority (HEA), provided funding to UCC to support research activities that were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. In a process managed by UCC Research, three calls to distribute this funding to postgraduate students and contract researchers impacted by the pandemic, have been completed. Following panel evaluation, 446 awards were made to the most affected UCC researchers and students with a combined value of €6.2 million.

The positive impact that this funding has had on UCC researchers and, in particular, early career researchers whose work was severely compromised by the pandemic has been enormously beneficial. A sector report on the significant benefits of these interventions, including contributions from UCC, is available here: https://www.iua.ie/COVID19/positive-impact-of-the-hea-COVID-19-fund-on-researchers-in-the-university-sector/.

Research Quality Review

UCC has procedures for the quality assurance and enhancement of research and a method for review via the Research Quality Review. UCC has undertaken two Research Quality Review exercises with reports published for both exercises in 2009 and 2015 (RQR Reports). In the 2015 RQR all units in UCC, including research centres, were reviewed by 15 panels comprising more than 300 international peer reviewers.

Building on the experience garnered from the first two institutional-wide initiatives, and cognisant of very significant changes as to what constitutes best practice in relation to research/researcher assessment in the open research era, planning the methodology for the next RQR is underway, while maintaining the overall objective of continued enhancement of research quality across the University.

Research Programmes

The Graduate Studies Office supports our postgraduate student body throughout their time in UCC. Research students, doctoral and Masters, are a key component of the research community in UCC. As an autonomous university, UCC has developed its own internal policies, having regard to the Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Research Degree Programmes (2017), the National Framework for Doctoral Education, Ireland's Framework of Good Practice for Research Programmes, and the HEA's Principles of Good Practice for Research within Irish HEIs (2020). UCC's Academic Council Graduate Studies Committee are actively reviewing and updating UCC's Graduate Studies' policies.

In UCC there is oversight from when each research student applies to the university and has a supervisory team appointed, to peer review as part of the panel for Annual Progress Reviews, to the appointment of External and Internal examiners for the examination of the research thesis. From 2020, an Independent Chair became a compulsory member of the viva voce for doctoral students and a viva voce has been introduced for MD students. The reports of the Examiners for every research student are examined by UCC's Academic Council Graduate Studies Committee and recommendations are sent to Academic Council for approval.

Research students are supported in the research journey by workshops run by the Dean of Graduate Studies, from orientation at the start of the research degree through to training for the viva voce. Orientation for new research postgraduates is held twice per year (April and October), highlighting policies and procedures, an overview of the Structured PhD modules, the Irish Universities Doctoral Skills Statement, as well as the range of supports available in UCC. Similarly, a range of workshops and webinars are run to support supervisors. A digital badge is available to supervisors who undertake the supervisor training workshop and assessment which is run by UCC's Centre for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning (CIRTL). Responsible research conduct and integrity is an integral part of the training of research students, including a dedicated 5-credit module.

5.0 Staff Recruitment, Development and Support

University Recruitment and Post Approval

University recruitment is subject to a comprehensive framework of regulations, policies and guidelines underpinned by the provisions of the University Principal Statute and subject to relevant external guidelines and legislation in this regard. Detailed appointment regulations relating to individual grades and cohorts of staff and a policy on conflict of interest in relation to recruitment and promotions act as the foundation of the day-to-day management of all recruitment activity. A fundamental principle of university recruitment practice is equality of opportunity for all applicants and all recruitment regulations have a mandatory training requirement for all internal committee members with a specific focus on unconscious bias. UCC has an e-recruitment system in place for core funded positions since August 2017 and for research funded positions since August 2019. E-recruitment has significantly improved our capacity to analyse and report on all recruitment activity including gaining a deeper understanding of pattern of application and a detailed breakdown of proportional representation at shortlisting and interview.

UCC has completed calls for promotion for professional services staff (2016/2017 & 2019/2020). The Administrative Promotion Scheme is a cross University scheme where candidates are assessed within a grade. The scheme is highly competitive with all eligible applicants provided with an opportunity to meet with the nominated interview board. Interviews are competency-based focussing on the six competencies identified for each grade in line with best practice in the public and civil service. All interview boards are gender balanced and all members undergo training in competency-based interviews. The University also provides a series of supports for staff including education and guidance generally on a competency based promotional process.

The regulations for the appointment of adjunct staff can be found here https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/ocla/statutesregulations/documents/RegulationonVariousAppointmentProcedures-April2020.pdf

Probation and Establishment Process – Academic Posts

A probation period applies to provide a reasonable period 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. 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. There is an establishment period of progress review and support by a senior academic board chaired by the President. Therefore, there is a minimum of one-year support during probation and, where the appointment is permanent there is a three-year period of support in total.

Staff Training and Development

UCC is committed to the support and promotion of staff development and training. There is also an employee assistance programme in place.

Performance Management: Performance enhancement support for all staff and teams via dedicated resources and workshops complementary to the PDRS process is available. 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/

New staff are assigned a named mentor on appointment and there is a mentoring programme in place to support academic staff with less than five years' experience as an academic. UCC has conducted a review of academic promotion schemes and competitive calls have been processed for promotion to Senior Lecturer and Professor (Scale 2). UCC has an Academic Mentoring panel which will mentor on a diverse range of topics/ areas of need relevant to academic life.

The Office of the Vice President for Learning and Teaching 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. Credit bearing programmes in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education up to and including NFQ level 9 (Postgraduate Certificate/Postgraduate Diploma) are available online and free of charge to 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 programme are an institutional performance measure through the HEA Compact process. The Postgraduate Certificate programme is UCC's largest – as measured by enrolment numbers – postgraduate programme, and over 70% of all staff have successfully completed the certificate. The Centre staff also run regular seminar workshops on Teaching and Learning and Assessment theories and practices and these are advertised to all staff.

Staff Wellbeing and Development

UCC has a strong tradition of investment in Staff Wellbeing and Development and we are proud of the work that has been achieved in supporting and enhancing staff wellbeing and development over several years. As set out in our strategic plan *UCC 2022 Delivering a Connected University*, UCC strives to deliver an inclusive and respectful environment where staff and students can all progress and develop. We are committed to enhancing our policies and procedures to provide the conditions and opportunities for undertaking quality work and creating impact which connects with our strategic goals. We seek to facilitate career progression by acknowledging and rewarding staff for their endeavours and creating opportunities for colleagues to enhance their skills to achieve excellence. We are committed to equality, diversity and inclusivity at all career stages and maintain a strong focus on wellbeing. We work actively to foster a dynamic and inclusive culture by investing in staff to help recognise and maximise their contribution to the collective success of UCC.

Staff Wellbeing & Development produces a broad and extensive annual schedule of development

opportunities and wellbeing initiatives, activities, workshops, talks, UCC events and programmes. We work actively to respond to development and wellbeing needs identified through the Performance and Development Review System, the University's Strategic and Annual Operational Plans, feedback from our annual survey and in response to local, institutional, national and international developments. We provide advice, guidance and support in the area of professional development planning across the university. We oversee personal development initiatives including coaching and mentoring which are available to all UCC staff members.

Staff Wellbeing supports are offered to staff through training, activities, talks and events to assist them meet their personal and professional goals and to provide additional assistance during life's planned and unplanned challenges. Work in the area is ongoing in particular to create a localised culture of employee engagement in development and wellbeing and to promote and develop further initiatives facilitated by staff members for UCC staff. UCC is proud of our achievements in being the first Irish university to attain the national IBEC Keepwell Accreditation standard, of being shortlisted for awards in three areas in the first national IBEC Keepwell awards in 2019 and of winning the award for Physical Activity.

Further details of the work of Staff Wellbeing and Development can be found at https://www.ucc.ie/en/hr/wellbeingdevelopment/ UCC's Employee Assistance Programme is provided by Spectrum.Life.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

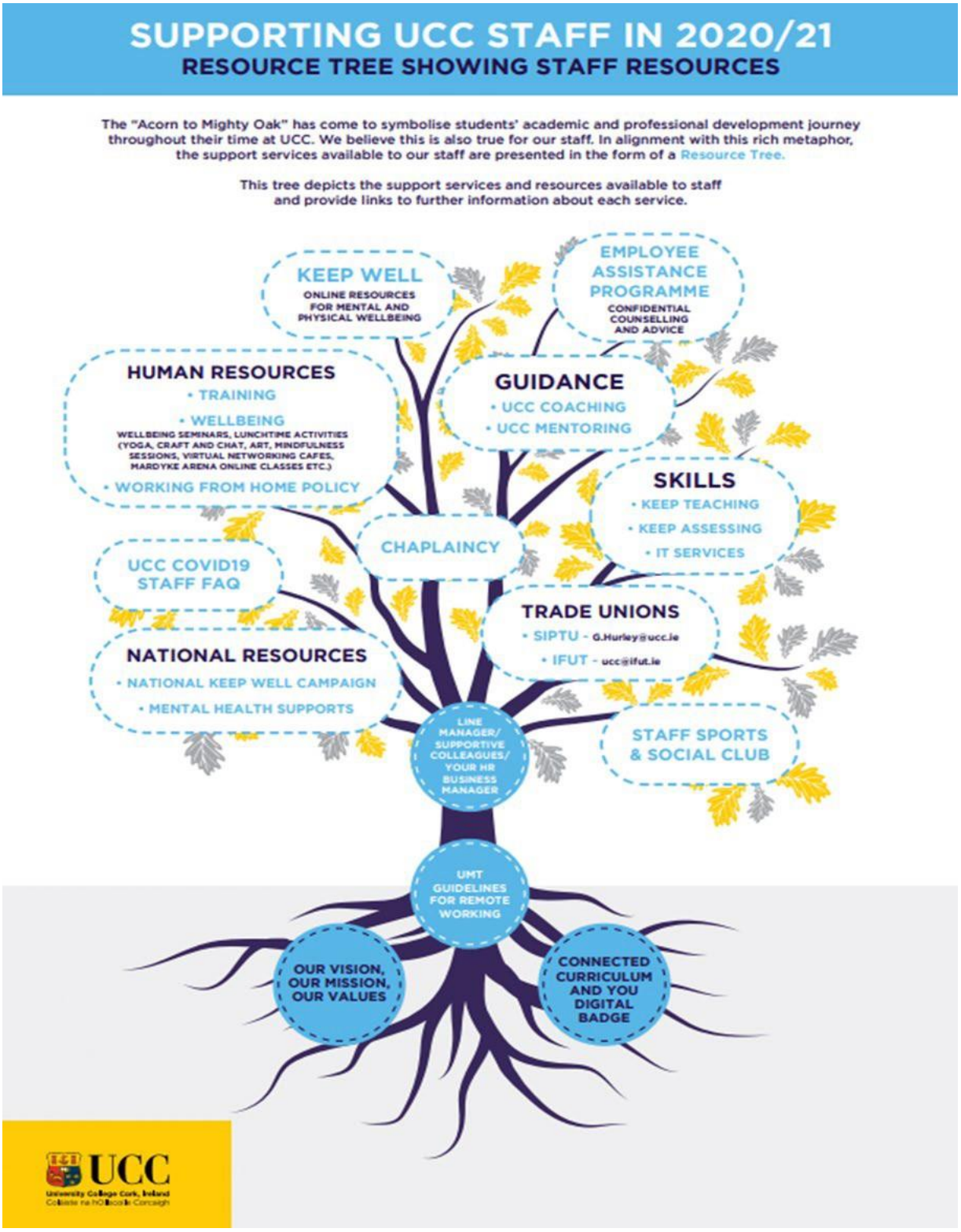
UCC has been a signatory to the Athena Swan Charter since its launch in Ireland in 2015. In 2020/2021, UCC's Schools of Pharmacy, Chemistry and Biological, Earth & Environmental Sciences became the first UCC Schools to successfully renew their bronze Athena Swan accreditation. First-time bronze UCC awardees in 2021/2022 included the School of Microbiology and the School of Biochemistry & Cell Biology. Tyndall National Institute also become the first research institute in UCC to receive a bronze award. The School of Mathematical Science and the School of Applied Psychology submitted applications in 2021/2022 and await results, with Applied Psychology the first School applicant from CACSSS. UCC now holds 12 institutional awards and an institutional Bronze award. A new Athena SWAN Charter was launched in November 2021 - UCC is a signatory of same and is committed to enacting the new Athena SWAN principles.

UCC's four-year institutional Athena SWAN gender equality action plan (UCC GEAP) aims to ensure that values of equality and diversity inform University policies and practices for the recruitment, development and support of University staff. For example, UCC GEAP includes commitments to revise UCC's recruitment materials to encourage historically underrepresented groups to apply for roles across all staff categories (Action 5.1.1), to ensure gender balance on recruitment selection committees (Action 5.1.2), to build our capacity for equality monitoring in recruitment (Action 5.1.5) and in promotion schemes (Action 5.1.9). Work is underway to develop an EDI Digital Badge (free micro-credential) available to all staff (Action 5.3.3). UCC is developing guidelines to set standards for the ethical recruitment and employment of staff on casual ("hourly occasional") contracts (Action 4.1.4). While progress has been impacted by the pandemic, implementing UCC GEAP AP is an explicit priority in UCC 2022, the University's

Strategic Plan.

In addition to the Athena SWAN Charter, UCC's Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Unit supports a range of equality initiatives to support both staff and students. UCC's Gender Identity and Expression Policy and Guidelines offers supports to UCC's transgender and non-binary staff and students. The EDI Unit supports the work of UCC's Equality Committee and Race Equality Forum, and also UCC's LGBT+ Staff Network, which provide an extensive range of outreach and support to UCC staff and students and help create and sustain a working environment that values equality, embraces diversity and promotes inclusion. All policies can be found here.

Resource Tree Showing Staff Supports



6.0 Information and Data Management

Records and Data Management

Records and Data Management policies and procedures have been updated and continue to evolve through UCC's ongoing Digital Records Management (DRM) Project. 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.

Records retention schedules, based on functional areas (academic and administrative), set out what records the University maintains in order to function and carry out its responsibilities. They detail how long those records have to be retained, and the final disposition of those records, through controlled destruction, review, or permanent retention as University archives as appropriate. The layout and structure of electronic records storage for units within the University will align to the unit's records retention schedule on completion of the DRM project.

The records management policy assigns responsibilities and sets out the structures for University staff to ensure the efficient management of records.

Policy is supported by procedures providing practical instructions and by best practice guidance on related areas, e.g., version control, email management.

Schedules, policy, and guidance are accessible to staff on the University Archives and Records Management section of the Office of Corporate and Legal Affairs (OCLA) website, which was updated in 2021 to include additional internal guidance and training materials on records management: https://www.ucc.ie/en/ocla/archives-and-records/

The UCC data protection policy details how the University meets its responsibilities under relevant data protection legislation such as the Data Protection Acts and EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) https://www.ucc.ie/en/ocla/comp/data/dataprotection/. The University also ensures researchers are supported to meet the requirements of the Health Research Regulations made under the Data Protection Acts. In 2021, the University added additional staff resources to its Information Compliance Unit including a Deputy Data Protection Officer for Research. Full details of our GDPR policies, process and services are available on https://www.ucc.ie/en/gdpr/

Like all public bodies, access to records held by the University is available under the Freedom of Information Act, 2014, (the procedure for this is available at: https://www.ucc.ie/en/ocla/comp/freedom/howfoi/.

In addition, individuals can seek access to their own personal data under data protection legislation: https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/ocla/compliance/DataSubjectRightsProcedurev5.0.pdf

Records management at UCC informs and is also informed by relevant/related policies (and procedures)

throughout the University. These include:
Data Classification Procedure: 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/

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 the Office for Academic Affairs and Governance and held on the Academic Policy Portal. https://www.ucc.ie/en/academicgov/policies/

As part of the *Connected University* programme of work, UCC is currently in the midst of an ambitious multi-year investment in its core student and curriculum management systems. This investment will further enhance how the University manages its information and data. Highlighted below are some of the expected benefits from this investment.

- The establishment of an intuitional Data Hub will better support enrolment planning and analysis of student retention and performance data.
- Usage of the full capabilities of a recently implemented Virtual Learning Environment (Canvas) will create new opportunities for learning analytics.
- A new curriculum management system will allow the capture of new curriculum meta-data and attributes and further enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the programme approval process.
- A new best-of-breed student placement system is being implemented across the university and will bring with it additional institutional level oversight of placement as a key form of student assessment.
- Collectively, all of the above will provide the University in a better place to explore and support the introduction of more flexible learning such as micro-credentials.

The University tracks and measures the availability and integration of its information records using agreed Key Performance Metric's. Each year, information technology KPI's are considered and discussed by the management team.

7.0 Public Information and Communication

Website and Social Media Communications

UCC operates a significant digital estate for communications (the various digital platforms and channels that we use to communicate) for both internal and external communications. This includes:

- The https://ucc.ie domain (which at last count encompasses over 500 individual websites)
- Official University Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn pages and profiles
- Social media profiles across various platforms for Individual School, department, research institutes, research centres, research units, and other UCC organisational units
- Internal SharePoint websites
- Internal Workvivo comms platform
- Digital signage
- Individual newsletters from various parts of the organisation

These channels allow us to communicate to our various audience groups that include:

- Prospective students (including undergraduate, postgraduate, adult continuing education, international, continuing education)
- Parents and Guidance Counsellors of prospective undergraduate students
- Current students
- Current Staff
- Prospective staff
- The wider academic community
- The wider community in general
- Business and Enterprise
- Our alumni
- The research community

UCC website

The UCC website has been in existence since 1993 and was the 1st website in Ireland (and the 9th website in the world). The website is overseen by the Web Content Team in the Office of Marketing and Communications in close collaboration with the Digital Services team in IT services through a collaborative working group called the "Digital Estate for Communications Group". Governance of the website is underpinned by the University's Web and Social Media policy. The Office of Marketing and Communications provides content for the upper levels of the website while individual organisational units (Colleges, Schools, Departments, Centres, Units and Institutes) provide content for their local websites. Strategies, reports, governance, quality assurances and policies and procedures for staff, students and the wider public are all accessible from the website. The UCC domain has received over 5 million visits over the last year with over 9 million individual page views.

Education and Training Programmes

Our prospective student portion of the website covers:

- Courses
- Undergraduate
- Postgraduate
- International Office
- Adult Continuing Education
- UCC Online
- Continuing Professional Development
- Scholarships and Prizes
- Transition-In Programme
- Graduate Attributes
- Ask
- Incoming First Year Students
- Apply to UCC
- Collaborative Programmes

This information is collated and managed by the Recruitment and Admissions offices, who work with Schools and Colleges, to get all programme and module information up-to-date, Graduate and International students can apply through the dedicated UCC Apply website.

Social Media

The university operates a number of official pages and presences on:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- LinkedIn
- YouTube

The official channels are managed by the Marketing and Media teams from the Office of Marketing and Communications and provides regular news, information and updates from UCC to current students, alumni and interested parties.

Outreach and General Public

The Visitors' Centre engages with the public in the following ways:

Revisit UCC Podcasts: This is a series of podcasts produced by the Visitors' Centre which looks at different aspects of life, research and history at UCC. The podcasts are available on all podcasting platforms and are advertised regularly on social media.

We also run public, private and school tours which communicate the university, story, messaging and gives a top line view of the Universities research priorities.

Other channels for and public dissemination activities include:

- regular news and press releases on research stories, student success, rankings, partnerships and key announcements from UCC which are published on the home page of our website, through social media channels and media outreach.
- Independent Thinking digital magazine which contains a round-up of high impact stories from across teaching and learning, student experience, research and alumni.

Quality Processes

Quality assurance policies and procedures and the evaluation and findings from quality reviews are published in full on the Quality Enhancement Unit website. https://www.ucc.ie/en/qeu/

8.0 Monitoring and Periodic Review

Periodic Review

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 with the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (2015)*. Our guidelines are comprehensive and include our objectives, principles and process. https://www.ucc.ie/en/qeu/

UCC's approach to peer review is informed by the Quality Enhancement Policy; the University is committed to institutional reflection on the outcomes of quality review processes to contribute to on-going institutional planning and development. In light of this the University has taken the enhancement decision to have senior university officers as Chairs of Panels to further augment their connection into the quality review process. Chairs are, for the most part, members of UMT (University Management Team). UMT is the senior executive management committee whose membership includes senior university officers, Vice-Presidents and Heads of College and its purpose is to assist and support the President in leading the development of the University and the delivery of University Core functions in accordance with the strategic plan and the Universities Act. This is part of the Quality Enhancement strategy for shared engagement and shared responsibility for quality across the University.

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 self-assessment and 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. Periodic review takes account of national and European guidelines as well as good practice in higher education quality. The methodology for the periodic review process follows the 4-stage process of:

- Self-evaluation
- Appointment of a peer review panel and site visit
- Publication of a peer review report
- Follow-up and quality enhancement

All review reports and recommendations arising from periodic review 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 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/

Thematic Review

In addition to periodic quality reviews of education, research and services Thematic Reviews are also undertaken. The function of Thematic Review is to support the development of priority strategic actions through peer review and benchmarking. These reviews take an enhancement-led strategic evaluation of a topic encompassing University-wide processes, practices or policies to assess their current stage of effectiveness and identify international good practices that can inform future developments. Each review has a customised scope which is developed by the Quality Enhancement Unit in consultation with the senior sponsor and the Quality Enhancement Committee.

Specific features of Thematic Review include:

- A holistic policy to practice approach to a strategic theme
- A horizontal scope which transcends units and includes multiple stakeholders across an activity
- External expert panel
- Strategically aligned and sponsored

The conduct of Thematic Reviews follows broadly the same methodological steps as periodic review, with some adaptation to the self-evaluation report to reflect the strategic and University-wide scope of the review process.

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, external examining and new programme approval 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.

Role of the External Assessor in new programme approval:
https://www.ucc.ie/en/apar/curriculumapproval/handbook/

Extern Examination procedures for taught programmes: https://www.ucc.ie/en/academicgov/externs/

Extern Examiner policy: https://www.ucc.ie/en/academicgov/policies/standards/#external-examiners

Supporting Self-Evaluation

The University's Quality Enhancement Unit provides advice and guidance to units engaged in self-evaluation as part of the periodic quality review processes and guidelines are accessible and available through the University website: https://www.ucc.ie/en/qeu/guidelines/. As part of the self-evaluation process, all academic units prepare a Case Study of Good Practice https://www.ucc.ie/en/qeu/casestudiesofgoodpractice/ to highlight existing practices which are effective in supporting and enhancing student learning.

Through partnership with Staff Development & Well Being support is provided for SWOT Workshops for all units at the outset of the self-evaluation process. Ongoing work with the Centre for Integration of Research, Teaching & Learning (CIRTL) and Research Support Services provides ongoing support and connection to self-evaluation and review methodologies for education and research.

Each unit undergoing review is assigned a Review Coordinator from the QEU. The Review Coordinator works with the unit from the outset to the conclusion of the process; this role provides dedicated support, advice and guidance on all aspects of the periodic review process. The Review Coordinator also works with the Panel for each review, acting as a key point of liaison between the Peer Review Panel and the University, supporting the Panel throughout the site visit, facilitating the development of the Peer Review Report and coordinating follow-up.

9.0 Details of Arrangements with Third Parties

9.1 Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies

Type of arrangement	Total Number
PRSBs	40
Awarding bodies	0
QA bodies	0

1. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	CORU
Programme titles and links to publications	MSc Diagnostic Radiography CKX26 (new programme)
Date of accreditation or last review	13-10-2021
Date of next review	Re-accreditation can actually be sought at any time the Registration board requests, but typically 5 years.

2. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	CORU
Programme titles and links to publications	MSc Radiation Therapy CKx26
Date of accreditation or last review	06-12-2021
Date of next review	Re-accreditation can actually be sought at any time the Registration board requests, but typically 5 years.

3. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	CORU
Programme titles and links to publications	MSc Diagnostic Radiography CKX26 (new programme)
Date of accreditation or last review	13-10-2021
Date of next review	Re-accreditation can actually be sought at any time the Registration board requests, but typically 5 years.

4. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	PSI
Programme titles and links to publications	BA Psychology and Computing CK121
Date of accreditation or last review	18-01-2021
Date of next review	Accreditation application submitted Jan 2020 and panel visit held September 2020. Accreditation approved on 18/1/21. Re accreditation documents to be resubmitted in Dec 2024.

9.2 Collaborative Provision

Type of arrangement	**Total number**
Joint research degrees	4
Joint/double/multiple awards	16
Collaborative programmes	7
Franchise programmes	0
Linked providers (DABs only)	0

1. Collaborative provision	Collaborative Programme
Name of body:	Riga Medical College of the University of Latvia
Programme titles and links to publications	The Combat Medical Simulation and TCCC instructor Curse
Date of last review	24-09-2021
Date of next review	24-09-2022

2. Collaborative provision	Joint Research Degree
Name of bodies:	Queen Margaret University Edinburgh Lulea University of Technology, Sweden, Zurich University, Switzerland
Programme titles and links to publications	Joint PhD (addition to existing agreement) PhD in Occupational Science new programme which was launched in 2021 https://reg.ucc.ie/curriculum/calendar/live/postgraduate/Doctor/page027.html
Date of last review	27/09/2021
Date of next review	27/09/2024

3. Collaborative provision	Joint Research Degree ID
Name of body:	Skolkovo Institute of Science and Technology
Programme titles and links to publications	Joint PhD Degree
Date of last review	20/12/2021
Date of next review	21/12/2025

4. Collaborative provision	Collaborative Programme
Name of body:	Munster Technological University
Programme titles and links to publications	BEng(Hons) in Biomedical Engineering and a Certificate in Biomedical Device Manufacture - MTU Programmes UCC provides teaching support on MTU Modules
Date of last review	18/05/2021
Date of next review	18/05/2023

5. Collaborative provision	Collaborative Programme
Name of body (/bodies):	Institute of Health Sciences, Universiti Brunei Darussalam
Programme titles and links to publications	Medicine – BMBB
Date of last review	11/11/2021
Date of next review	01/09/2025

9.3 Articulation Agreements

Articulation agreements - Total number	**15**

1. Articulation agreement:	
Name of body:	Munster Technological Univeristy (MTU)
Programme titles and links to publications	BA (Hons) Home Economics & Business
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	19/05/2022
Date of next review	19/05/2027
Detail of the agreement	MTU offers UG degree, for students who wish to become post-primary teachers of Home Economics. UCC offers a professional masters in education designed to qualify graduates as post-primary secondary school teachers

2. Articulation agreement:	
Name of body:	Efrei Paris, Engineering School of Digital Technologies (Efrei Paris)
Programme titles and links to publications	Multiple programmes
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	17/06/2021
Date of next review	17/06/2027
Detail of the agreement	Mobility, Collaborative provision. Extension to Two Degrees Track Programme: a student may study for a Taught Master programme at the partner University. Students of Efrei Paris may be awarded two distinct degrees: a one year Taught Masters award from UCC and a five year engineering degree award (diplome d'ingenieur), from Efrei Paris.

3. Articulation agreement:	
Name of body:	Henan University of Economics and Law (HUEL)
Programme titles and links to publications	DBFE 3+1 Diploma in Business and Financial Economics
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	18/01/2022
Date of next review	18/01/2030
Detail of the agreement	Renewal of existing arrangement with long standing partner (2+2 Economics and occasional Computer Science applicants, scope for expansion)

4. Articulation agreement:	
Name of body:	King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi (KMUTT)
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc (Hons) Computing Science
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	01/01/2021
Date of next review	01/01/2026
Detail of the agreement	Addition to Existing Agreement, Articulated 2+2 Programme.

5. Articulation agreement:	
Name of body:	Ocean University China (OUC)
Programme titles and links to publications	BFDSCT CK505 2+2 BSc (Hons) Food Science food
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	20/12/2021
Date of next review	20/12/2026
Detail of the agreement	Exisiting partner with potential to grow student mobility onto existing SEFS pathways, e.g. 2+2/3+1 Food Studies

6. Articulation agreement:	
Name of body:	Beijing Institute Science and Technology University (BISTU)
Programme titles and links to publications	DBFE 3+1 Diploma in Business and Financial Economics CK605 2+2 BE (Hons) Electrical & Electronic Engineering
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	03/07/2022
Date of next review	03/07/2030
Detail of the agreement	Continuation of collaboration which has been in place since 2006, facilitating small but consistent numbers into CUBS and Computer Science

7. Articulation agreement:	
Name of body:	Yangzhou University (YZU)
Programme titles and links to publications	MSc Nursing
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	03/01/2022
Date of next review	03/01/2027
Detail of the agreement	New partner to facilitate funded Chinese students to transfer to School of Nursing for PG

[Higher Education Institution]

2022

Annual Quality Report (Institution)

PART B: INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE ENHANCEMENT & IMPACT

Reporting Period 2020-2021

Part B: Internal QA System

1.0 Quality Implementation and Developments

1.1 Strategic QA Updates

UCC 2022 – Delivering a Connected University

UCC 2022 – Delivering a Connected University was developed in 2020 to prioritise and renew UCC's strategic priorities in response to fundamental changes to the higher education landscape, particularly geopolitical challenges, the escalating climate crisis and accelerating societal and economic pressures associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. During the 2021/22 Academic Year this plan mobilised the UCC community to simultaneously focus on "crisis response" and "crisis recovery". This dual focus enabled the University to be agile and productive in preparing for the post-pandemic years. This plan set out five interconnected thematic goals: Learning & Teaching, Research & Innovation, Student Success, People & Organisational Culture, Infrastructure & Resources. A Steering Group was established for each of the Pillars to ensure timely delivery of each of the 57 key actions. These actions were continuously reviewed to ensure that they responded to the dynamic provision of higher education and research in Ireland and globally. During 2022, the University also initiated the process to develop a new Strategic Plan for the period 2023-2028, which will incorporate key elements identified during *UCC 2022 – Delivering a Connected University*.

Pillar 1 – Learning & Teaching aims to provide a personalised education for every UCC student through the delivery of future-ready programmes enabling life-long and life-wide learning. Over the past four years UCC's *Academic Strategy 2018-2022* has guided the delivery of student learning and research through a Connected Curriculum that aligns with demand, university priorities and effective assessment practices. As the conclusion of the first Academic Strategy approaches, work is now underway to prepare the next Academic Plan – the *Academic Roadmap 2023-2028*. UCC pivoted and adapted quickly to online learning and teaching in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, offering high-quality teaching in a safe and accessible way and the development of a Digital Education Plan for UCC has recently commenced in order to enhance digital capabilities to safeguard student success.

Under *Pillar 2 – Research & Innovation* UCC is working to excel in collaborative research areas and reimagine how we advance research excellence to deliver benefits to society and promote knowledge transfer. We have made an important investment in *UCC Futures*, an ambitious new programme of research prioritisation coupled with an innovative academic recruitment strategy across ten indicative areas of strategic importance that will build a foundation for economic, societal and cultural resilience and prosperity. This Pillar also sets out UCC's ambition to address the descriptive metrics of global rankings bodies and UCC has recently been placed in the top 5% of universities around the world in the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings and now has 4 subjects ranked in the top 100 in the QS Subject Rankings. UCC is consistently listed as Ireland's greenest university and has once again retained its position in the top 10 universities in the world by the *UI Greenmetric Rankings*.

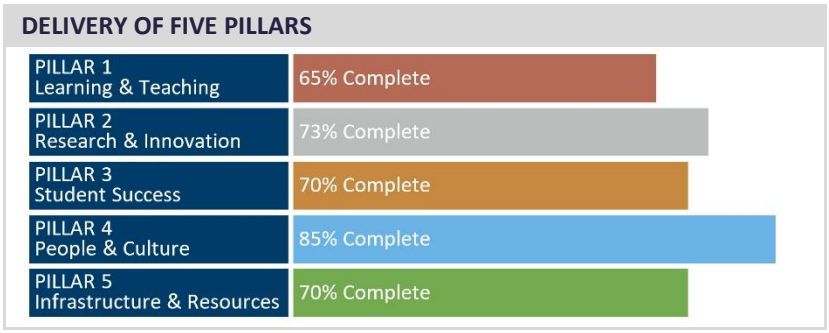
Student success is a key strategic priority for UCC and *Pillar 3 – Student Success* aims to deliver a high quality and flexible student experience, supporting students to achieve their desired career and personal development outcomes. The bespoke *Graduate Attributes Programme* consistently delivers successful outcomes, including the 'Nurturing Bright Futures' programme for prospective students and the 'GAP Compass' Self-Assessment Tool for students. A sustainable framework has been developed and implemented to ensure staff have access to a programme of content to respond to student needs including the 'Connect with...' series, and a new

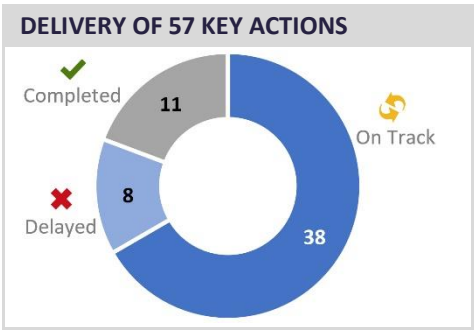
staff/student mentoring pilot is in place. Supporting student wellbeing and resilience is fundamental to maximising the opportunity for our students to excel and this is supported by several complementary plans at UCC, including the Mental Health & Wellbeing Strategy, the Sports Strategy and the Arts & Culture Plan. The adoption of the Healthy Campus Charter and the Healthy Campus Framework by UCC is underway and will be key to delivering on our targets in this area. UCC's very successful *Bystander Intervention Programme* has recently launched a new suite of learning packages which will be available to all Irish HEIs. This programme, developed by UCC empowers students to combat sexual harassment, and to build a culture of zero tolerance of sexual harassment and violence in higher education settings.

Pillar 4 – People & Organisational Culture focusses on delivering an inclusive and respectful environment where staff and students can progress and develop. Work to date has delivered enhanced staff promotion and progression schemes and reward and recognitions systems as well as recommendations to enhance appointments procedures including the interview process. Leadership development training programmes have been enhanced together with an inter-institutional peer mentoring programme and a coaching collaboration with Queens University Belfast. A university wide equality, diversity and inclusion survey examined the experiences of values and behaviours by UCC staff, and the outcomes will be used to inform future training needs. UCC has held a bronze Athena SWAN award since 2016, and progress continues on the implementation of the Athena SWAN action plan and in supporting diversity and inclusivity.

Financial sustainability, the digital estate and the physical estate are the focus of *Pillar 5 – Infrastructure & Resources*. Future income challenges will be addressed to secure financial stability and safeguard the future of the University as we recover from the financial shock presented by Covid-19 and global inflation. Change management and leaner processes, the optimisation of data and the reduction of operational waste will help support more responsive and agile decision-making based on simpler, streamlined reporting within the University. Digital services and technology connect the critical services and strategic priorities at UCC, and the new *Digital Masterplan* sets out how digital services will support the teaching, learning, and research needs of our vibrant 21st century campus. The *2021 UCC Masterplan* reviews UCC's physical footprint and infrastructures, and explores opportunities to use them in new ways, and will support UCC to place itself at the forefront of a new globally focused Irish economy, particularly in the areas of learning, teaching, research and innovation.

Strategy Implementation Dashboard (August 2022)





Reversal of COVID-19 Adaptations

Academic Council (AC) controls the academic affairs of the University including the curriculum of instruction and the education provided by the University. Its powers, procedures and functions are laid out in Chapter C of the Principal Statute. Its delegates some of its functions to Academic Board (AB), which is the senior standing committee) and to other AC executive committees. These structures are laid out in the AC Handbook. AC may establish committees to which it may delegate such of its functions as it sees fit. Membership of such committees is at the discretion of AC.

Following the closure of the University campus in March 2020 and the extraordinary circumstances around the global pandemic, it was necessary to change the ordinary academic operations of the University and to take certain urgent decisions between the scheduled meetings of AC and AB. A special meeting of Academic Council was held on 09 April 2020 and approved a proposal to formally establish two subcommittees as executive committees of Academic Council and empower them to take urgent but limited decisions necessary for the academic functioning of the University.

Decisions in relation to academic affairs were taken as follows:

- The Examinations Business Continuity Group (EBCG) – for operational issues relating to the organisation of examinations and assessment; related curriculum changes; accreditation; extern examining; mitigation; breaches and discipline; progression; graduation and conferring.
- The Academic Leadership Forum (ALF) – for all other urgent academic matters

Academic Council further approved the continuation of these measures on several occasions as required by the prevailing public health situations. The temporary governance measures ended on 01 October 2021. Some decisions on policy and operations were in nature temporary for the duration of the pandemic. However, some policy and operational changes became established as good practice and Academic Council undertook a review of these to decide which should be formally adopted as ongoing University Policy. At its meeting of 01 December 2021, Academic Board permanently adopted changes prompted by the Covid-19 pandemic in the following areas of operations and policy:

- Guidelines for Viva Voce Examinations
- UCC Lecture Recording Policy
- Conduct of University Examinations Boards
- External Examining

UCC Digital Plan

UCC launched its first Digital Master Plan in 2021/22. UCC's Digital Plan leverages the complementarity between pedagogy, space and technology to reimagine UCC's future as a deeply connected and sustainable university. UCC's innovative Digital Master Plan will unlock transformative benefits for the entire UCC community. It will equip graduates with the capacity to maximise their potential in the future world of work and learning, improve equality of access to education and promote innovative learning and research. A digitally enriched campus will eliminate barriers to communication by transforming services and strengthening connectivity.

This is UCC's first Digital Master Plan, sharing how digital services and technology connect the critical services and strategic priorities of the University in the following ways:

- Connecting our research to teaching;
- Connecting our curriculum to the needs of a 21st century society;
- Connecting our students to the digital services they need to live, learn and work in today's world;
- Connecting locally and globally through our business, alumni and research partnerships.

The plan sets out how digital services at UCC will support the teaching, learning, and research needs of our vibrant 21st century campus. The measures outlined in the plan include:

- The development of world class digital education services, to support staff and student needs for flexibility and accessibility, including further developments on Microsoft Teams, Canvas, Panopto, and classroom technology.
- The development of tools to support remote working and the future of work, to support staff flexibility and accessibility needs, including Office 365, Citrix, and cloud business services.
- Data Solutions to help UCC unleash the power of data to improve teaching services using learning analytics, and improve business services using data-driven continuous improvement.
- Using Artificial Intelligence and 24x7 monitoring to help us protect the University from growing threats from cyber-attacks.

1.2 Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR

Guide:

An update should be provided on objectives/planned actions for the year as outlined in the last AQR. If these have not been completed or are no longer applicable this should be indicated.

The table is designed to assist in this process and should include headline information only.

Please delete guide text before submission.

No.	Planned objectives (Previous AQR)	Update on Status
1	EUA Institutional Review	A progress report, outlining how EUA-IEP report recommendations are being addressed by the University, was sent to the EUA IEP secretariat on 08 December 2021. This is now complete – the recommendations will be addressed on an ongoing basis through the Strategic Plan and Institutional Review process.
2	Thematic Review - Teaching and Assessing with Technology	Following this review in 2020/21 at which the international review panel looked at options for maximising the organisational, governance and decision-making structures required for strategic steering and overall coordination for teaching and assessing with technology, a Quality Enhancement Plan was developed in 2021/22. The QEP is linked to the development of a new Digital Education Strategy which is led by the VP for Learning & Teaching.
3	Programme Review	A pilot programme review approach will form part of the self-evaluation for periodic academic quality review in 2022-24. The development of a new Curriculum Management system (CIM Project) has focused on review, redesign and approval of modules as part of a broad-based curriculum review and curriculum systems implementation during 2021/22 (Part 1). Part 2 will focus on systems development and implementation for CIM programmes review.
4	Thematic Review - Work Placement	A Quality Enhancement Plan was developed in 2021/22; this will lead to a Strategic Enhancement Project. The work placement review as it relates to employability is linked to the Academic Strategy.

1.3 Governance and Management

1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule

Body	Meeting dates
Quality Enhancement Committee	17 September 2021 09 December 2021 18 February 2022 28 April 2022
Governing Body	14 September 2021 19 October 2021 07 December 2021 08 February 2022 15 March 2022 (Special Meeting) 12 April 2022 14 June 2022
Academic Board	22 September 2021 13 October 2021 01 December 2021 02 February 2022 06 April 2022 01 June 2022
Academic Council	01 October 2021 05 November 2021 14 January 2022 04 March 2022 06 May 2022 17 June 2022

1.3.2 QA Leadership and Management Structural Developments

There were no structural changes during the time period.

1.4 Internal Monitoring and Review

1.4.1 Overview of Periodic Reviews

Schedule for reviews included in previous AQR

Unit to be reviewed	Date of planned review	Date of last review
Department of Human Resources	May/June 2022	May 2013
Office of the Vice President for Research and Innovation	June 2022 (Rescheduled for April 2023)	April 2013

Reviews completed during reporting period

Unit of review for which report has been published during reporting period	Date of completion/reason for conducting review (if not planned) or non-completion (if planned but not conducted)	Links to relevant publications
Department of Human Resources	17 & 18 May (site visit) 1 & 3 June (virtual meetings)	

1.4.2 Expert Review Teams/Panels[1] involved in IQA

Guide:

As the external QA agency responsible for oversight of institutional IQA system, QQI collects and makes a range of data available, including diverse data relating to internal QA processes through the AQR. The criteria for the engagement of peer reviewers (both internal and external) is part of the internal institutional-led QA process. The information in this section provides data and transparency in relation to peer reviewers/evaluators and their involvement in institutional-led internal QA systems.

Please delete guide text before submission.

(i) Expert Review Team/Panel Size and Related Processes

Guide

Details in respect of review/evaluation processes that concluded during the reporting period should be set out below.

Please use whole numbers rather than percentages.

	Total	Academic Schools/ Department	Professional Services/Support Unit	Approval/Review of Linked Provider	Programme Approval	Programme Review	Other
Number of review/ evaluation processes	1		1				
of those:							
On-site processes	1						
Desk reviews							
Virtual processes	1						
Average panel size for each process type*	5						

* excluding secretary if not a full panel member

[1] QQI acknowledges that the terminology used to describe the groups of individuals that conduct peer review/evaluation varies from institution to institution.

(ii) Composition of Expert Review Teams/Panels involved in IQA

Guide

Details in respect of the composition of the panels convened by the institution for review/evaluation/approval processes that concluded during the reporting period should be set out below. Panel composition should be represented as whole numbers rather than as percentages.

'Similar institution' denotes an institution with a similar scope and mission – for an IoT, this might be another IoT or a university of applied science, for example.

Please delete guide text before submission.

	Total	**Gender**			**National**	**National**					
Type of Expert/ Role on Panel		*Male*	*Female*	*Other,*			*UK, incl. NI*	*Other European*	*Outside of Europe*	*Similar*	*Different*
Chair	1	1								1	
Secretary	1		1		1					1	
Academic/Discipline Specific	2		2				1	1		2	
Student Representative	1	1			1					1	
QA	1	1			1					1	
Teaching & Learning											
External Industry /Third Mission											

2.0 IQA System – Enhancement and Impacts

Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Connected Curriculum

UCC is committed to the personalised education of every member of its student community. We prioritise the provision of life-long and life-wide education to equip students with the skills, discipline and intellectual rigour that can be adapted to their requirements and challenges throughout their lifetime. With this in mind, UCC's *Academic Strategy 2018-2022* was launched in December 2018 and includes a commitment and plan to deliver a *Connected Curriculum*. UCC's *Connected Curriculum* ensures that six key elements are embedded across the curriculum: Research-Based Teaching; Employability; Sustainability; Inter- and Transdisciplinarity; Global Reach; and Civic and Community Engagement.

To integrate a Connected Curriculum the following activities have been carried out to enhance staff capacity to deliver their programmes in line with the *Connected Curriculum* framework.

- A short course for staff on *Learning and Teaching with the SDGs* was developed and launched in May 2022. This course built on existing toolkits and workshop series to provide a more scaffolded support for staff seeking to integrate sustainability in their learning and teaching. It drew on an evidence base relating to the challenges and opportunities of integrating education for sustainable development in Higher Education as expressed through structured consultation via the national Green Campus network. This course also demonstrated practically how to utilise the self-evaluation tool for the Connected Curriculum, thereby further enhancing its use.
- A nationally offered course on Community Engaged Learning (CEL) was redeveloped to highlight connections with responding to sustainability challenges, building on the short course on Learning and Teaching with the SDGs and the SDG toolkit. The resources created in support of this new Community Engaged Learning course included six videos showcasing national good practice in Community Engaged Learning aligned with the SDGs and graduate attributes. These videos were developed as a partnership with the national Campus Engage network. The CEL course was run in June 2022.
- A rationale has been developed for how to prioritize existing University partnerships to advance the development of global networks relating to the Connected Curriculum. Through this approach, partners have been identified and approached with a view to working on a joint initiative, e.g. dual degree, digital badges etc, predicated on the Connected Curriculum framework, and this work will be expanded in 2022/23.
- A series of workshops have been organised for staff on how to integrate virtual exchange in teaching which serves to activate the information shared in the *Handbook on Physical and Virtual Mobility*. Both of these initiatives serve to enhance staff capacity regarding the Global Reach element of the Connected Curriculum and included networking events with staff across the UNIC European University Alliance to encourage future partnership based on intercultural learning and virtual exchange.
- A report was created on Students as Partners approach to curriculum development drawing on international examples and learning from the Connected Curriculum Design sprint. A detailed video case study demonstrating one Students as Partner approach in UCC has been developed and both will form

part of a future staff development resource on this topic to be added to the *Connected Curriculum and You* online course.

- The new Courseleaf CIM Modules system now includes a field for describing how modules incorporate the *Connected Curriculum*. Two workshops have been held at departmental level to familiarise staff with the range of resources available to them relating to integrating the *Connected Curriculum* as to provide prompts to uncover immediate disciplinary connections with the framework. These workshops will be rolled out further in 2022/23.
- The '*Connected Curriculum and You*' online course continues to attract participants with close to 600 staff engaged to date and more than 200 completing the full course to attain a digital badge. The course was updated in 2021/22 to incorporate new resources and to update guidance on how to utilise the self-evaluation tool based on a comprehensive review and re-development of this tool.

To ensure that we continue on this positive trajectory, an evaluative workshop was held with members of the *Connected Curriculum* working group to gather feedback on what worked well in advancing the *Connected Curriculum*, and to gather suggestions on the potential focus of the future Academic Plan for UCC. A similar consultation exercise was undertaken across the UCC community. These inputs will inform our journey to evolve and embed the *Connected Curriculum* successfully during the next strategic planning cycle.

Programmes of Education and Training

Graduate Attributes

As a socially-minded, civically-engaged institution, our core values and graduate attributes are the bedrock of our student experience. Graduate attributes refer to the skills, knowledge and abilities of our graduates, beyond disciplinary content knowledge, that are applicable in a range of contexts in their lives. They advance the development of academic, specialist and technical skills. The following core values are being prioritised for the lifecycle of this Academic Strategy: Respect, Ambition, Compassion, Resilience and Integrity.

A successful application to support our Graduate Attributes Programme was made to the HEA Innovation and Transformation Programme 2018, and a successful financial commitment from the Tomar Trust in 2020 has allowed us to widely develop this programme.

The Graduate Attributes Programme (GAP) is approaching the end of its fourth year and the end of its non-exchequer income. Action 3.1.4 in Pillar 3 (Student Success) of UCC 2022 is concerned with resourcing and embedding the Graduate Attributes Programme across all four colleges. The programme has already delivered a suite of initiatives focussing on the different stages of students' Transition In, Through and Out of the university. The overarching objective of the programme is to enable a successful student journey, which will prepare students for their future. We deliver on this objective through three main projects:

- ***Transition In*** initiatives are guiding students into the right programme of study for them, whilst simultaneously widening access of under-represented cohorts and improving first year retention rates. Highlights include:
    - A focus group with Regional Officers from the ISSU was held to gain insights into the relevance and usability of the content and layout of the *Nurturing Bright Futures (NBF) programme*.
    - In lieu of the annual Guidance Counsellor event on campus, we hosted a series of lunchtime CPD sessions on NBF which was essentially a *Train the Trainer* series to showcase how to get the

most out of the course. To coincide with this, a limited number of hardcopy Workbooks and A2 Posters were sent to over 700 secondary schools to promote the programme. In line with UCC's sustainability agenda, interactive digital copies are available online for download.

- A series of Virtual Reality Campus Experience 360° videos were created as an agile pivot and response to the closure of campus, due to COVID-19. Following a highly collaborative process with colleagues from across the university, a suite of videos were produced to assist the transition in process.

- ***Transition Through*** initiatives are providing targeted supports, delivering skills training and developing graduate attributes that go beyond disciplinary content knowledge and can be applied in life-wide contexts. Highlights include:

  - GAP co-funded the second year of **SilverCloud**, the mental health platform which is freely accessible to all registered students to provide support with their mental health and wellbeing. This software is a key element of the recently launched *UCC Mental Health Strategy*. Success, it's in your nature showcases all the ways students and staff can engage with nature on our campus to enhance mental and physical health and wellbeing, enhance their academic and personal success and build their graduate attributes and values. Looped walks of our three campuses were developed. In collaboration with multiple stakeholders, an animated video on Finding Your Tribe at UCC has been devised and developed. Finding one's tribe is fundamental to that all important sense of belonging and feeling part of the UCC community.

  - *Your UCC Graduate Attributes and Values Compass (Your Compass):* This is the signature project of the Graduate Attributes Programme and is the focus of Action 17 of our Academic Strategy. All registered UCC students will be invited to complete this self-assessment at annual registration, and this will provide key data sets to inform and shape UCC's current and future strategy. A cohesive narrative and bespoke visual identity have been created for the GAP Compass (which integrates all five graduate attributes and five values). This strong concept and brand will strengthen students' identification with the GAP Compass and the suite of learning activities and resources that are signposted within it. Students will be signposted to resources ranging from an infographic poster to videos, podcasts, and books to digital badges and university-wide modules. A digital badge to accompany this tool is in development. Your Compass will launch on the 20 September 2022.

- ***Transition Out*** initiatives are preparing final year students to transition into professional environments, delivering on the ambitions of our Institutional Employability and Employment Guide. Highlights include:

  - The UCC EmployAgility Award relaunched with the support of GAP in 2021. This is a professional skills development programme, and demonstrates that students have engaged in, and developed professional skills through extra-curricular activities and work experience. To meet award criteria all participants must submit a reflective report focusing on the values and attributes they have developed. With the support of GAP, UCC Career Services launched the CareerSet CV Review tool and the Big Interview AI Interview preparation tool. The tools' Artificial Intelligence algorithms have been configured to generate personalised CV and interview performance feedback and the tools have been designed using recognised best practices, applicable across industries and academic disciplines.

- GAP partnered with UCC Career Services and IT Services to secure MS Career Coach licenses to support the shift to a Work Integrated Learning Model for students going on work placement. Career Coach will provide personalized guidance for our students, will help them with the transition out to the workplace and will help them to harness the power of LinkedIn to answer career-related questions.
- A series of 12 videos supporting a successful transition out of university were developed in collaboration with UCC Career Services and UCC Academy.

Award winning partnerships

At the Irish Education Awards the Graduate Attributes Programme and UCC Career Services won the 'Best Career Impact Strategy' Award. The submission provided an in-depth analysis of our connected curriculum and the importance of employability in same. It also highlighted our drive as a university to ensure our graduates are exposed to engagement opportunities that support them in developing core values and attributes.

UCC was also awarded the AHECS (Association of Higher Education Career Services) Building Effective Partnerships Award in recognition of the collaboration between the Graduate Attributes Programme and UCC Career Services.

Supports and Resources for Learners

Careers Service - Awards

The Careers Service objective is to lead the development, integration, and delivery of *UCC's Employability Framework*; to be known for their expertise, agility, and strategic significance, as employability is a paramount outcome from the university experience. They aim to drive innovative, transformative employability projects within the university and work with academic leaders, employers, and the Graduate Attributes Programme to ensure successful work-integrated learning and transversal skills are embedded in the curriculum to enable students to be digitally fluent, agile, and resilient.

The Career's Service priorities are integrated in an Employability Framework. This framework is derived from and aligned fully to the Connected Curriculum, the University KPIs and the UCC 2022 strategic pivot. Five pillars of this framework make up 25 key actions to lead to

- Embedding employability in the curriculum in disciplinary appropriate ways
- Fulfilling successful student transitions, empowering students to develop and articulate the skills and attributes needed to make a successful transition from university
- Building meaningful partnerships, establishing, maintaining, and expanding an eco-system of inter-connected working relationships with our stakeholders, including academics, employers, and alumni to support student career development
- Increasing employment opportunities where we expand meaningful connections for all students to gain local, national, and global employment opportunities, through placements, internships, work-integrated learning, and work-based projects
- Communicating and enhancing UCC's role as leader for graduate employability, and actively communicate, promote, and enhance student employability as delivered through strategic initiatives

UCC Careers Service gained several awards in 2021/22 which recognised both their strategic thinking and the level of support given to students:

- The AGCAS (Association of Graduate Career Advisory Services) Membership Quality Standard 2022-25
- The AHECS (Association of Higher Education Careers Services) Employability Award for 'Building Effective Partnerships'
- The Education Awards 2022, 'Career Impact Strategy Award'
- The UCC President's Award, 'Enhancing the Student Experience Award'

The Careers Service embarked on the **AGCAS Membership Quality Standard (MQS)** journey last year and was awarded the Quality Standard. Achieving the standard has led to stronger partnerships, an increased sense of strategic importance across the institution and a multitude of national awards. Undertaking the MQS provided the Career Service with the opportunity to reflect deeply on their objectives, priorities and challenges.

The initial phase of the project involved the development of an Employability Framework collaboratively with staff across the university. All UCC staff were invited to feed into the development of the framework and encouraged to reflect on how employability is defined within their context and what they would like to see prioritised. The Careers Service analyzed the stakeholder data and a focus group was formed to consider how they could flex their services and offerings. The focus group also found gaps in service provision and opportunities for close collaboration with academic and professional service colleagues to successfully embed the framework. The processes of undertaking the MQS allowed the Careers Service to not only reflect how they led the development, integration and delivery of the framework but also brought their expertise to the fore within the University. The Employability Framework is now being consulted to inform the development of the University Strategic Plan 2023-27.

Feedback from the judges of the **AHECS Employability Award for 'Building Effective Partnerships'**[2] praised the clear evidence of strategic thinking in the development of this initiative and the alignment to the employability framework. Judges were impressed with the internal partnerships between UCC Career Services & UCC Graduate Attributes Programme (GAP) to ensure initiatives are being designed & delivered that support students. At a time when the world of work is changing post pandemic an initiative such as this established to support students on their Transition Through & Transition Out of UCC are important to ensure students are work & world ready. The delivery of the UCC EmployAgility Awards – formal recognition of students' development of employability skills, values, and attributes - has allowed students to identify areas for personal development.

The **Education Awards 2022 'Career Impact Strategy Award'** was presented to UCC for "outstanding Careers Services with a proven partnership model between the university, students, and employers. UCC are doing superb work in the area of preparing students for their careers"[3].

The **UCC Presidents Award for 'Enhancing the Student Experience'** was given in recognition of the steps the Careers Service took to support students in a time of crisis during COVID-19. The approach involved creativity and innovation within every initiative, but it was the passion of approach together with genuine interest in the students that provided the impact.

- Virtual Consultations were launched within 2-days of campus closure to provide additional career support.

[2] AHECS Employability Awards 2022 – Judges' Feedback
[3] EDU 2022 Performance Benchmark Report

- 428.7 teaching hours were delivered through digital webinars, workshops and skills clinics aligned with the Graduate Attributes Programme objectives.
- 6000+ words of content were transcribed to support the creation of a Final Year/ Recent Graduate web portal in response to the impact of the pandemic on the graduate recruitment landscape and digital climate of increasing virtual interview formats.
- A 'Tech Buddy' initiative was developed as a peer support system to help support student needs at crucial times.
- A suite of virtual programmes, never previously delivered, was launched in response to anxiety that students/graduates felt regarding their career development and "Conquer Your Career Anxiety" workshops were developed.
- A series of Boot Camps were created to support students whose opportunity to gain a placement was significantly reduced last year.
- The team went above and beyond preparing students for attending virtual events developing 'Creative Job Seeking Skills' and "Developing a personal brand online."
- 40K euro was donated to deliver 'CareerCoach' a new online tool and CS were early adopters of InPlace to support placements.
- The team also created a new self-help area on Canvas VLE entitled "Careers Services Learning Hub" to enable students access content in place of physical support – all while learning to adapt and adjust themselves.

Information and Data Management

Student Survey

For the purposes of StudentSurvey.ie, student engagement reflects two key elements. The first is the amount of time and effort that students put into their studies and other educationally beneficial activities. The second is how institutions deploy resources and organise curriculum and learning opportunities to encourage students to participate in meaningful activities linked to learning. Development and implementation of StudentSurvey.ie is driven by the intention to inform, support, and encourage enhancement discussions and activities throughout institutions. UCC undertakes the StudentSurvey.ie annually and our participation rate has been gradually increasing.

- 4,083 UCC students responded to StudentSurvey.ie in 2022 (2,781). This represents a response rate of **29.1%** which is our highest participation rate to date in StudentSurvey.ie (compared to **20.2%** in 2021) and for the first time, exceeds the national average (**28%** Other Universities in 2022). This provides a large and robust evidence base to inform policy and institutional actions.

- As part of the work of the University Student Surveys Board, reports on the results by college, programme and by cohort are prepared and considered by the Heads of College and shared with the Learning and Teaching representatives for each college to discuss and reflect on key outcomes and thereafter to provide to the University Student Surveys Board, a summary of planned actions in semester one. Building on this, a university level report will also be prepared and presented to Academic Council in October 2022.

Enhancing the student voice

Through our University Student Surveys Board, we work in partnership with student representatives to close the feedback loop through visible reporting on the findings of the previous years' surveys, coupled with ensuring strategies for optimizing uses of the data is included on agendas of appropriate meetings, specific briefings, internal publications and across popular social media platforms. Some approaches used by UCC to enhance the student voice in our quality enhancement processes include:

- Continuing the wide communication of results, feedback is shared with colleagues across all support areas i.e., IT Services, UCC's Societies, UCC Library, UCC Skills Centre etc. so that the data can be used to improve and enhance facilities, supports, and the learning environment for all students.
- Data are provided to key offices in support of submissions for the Education Awards 2022. UCC were successful winners in the following three categories: Career Impact Strategy Award, Best Student Campus Award and Overall Excellence Award
- As part of the Trends Over Time Research 2016-2021 originating from feedback gathered by StudentSurvey.ie, we asked colleagues to reflect upon 6 years of StudentSurvey.ie and sought institutional case studies showcasing the impact of StudentSurvey.ie locally.
- In conjunction with the National Analysis and Impact group, incremental improvements to the data visualisation dashboard ***In Touch*** were made. The key objective being to offer additional support to institutions to gain the most value from the data.

Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review

Work Placement Thematic Review

Following the Thematic Review of Work Placement in 2020 and the 14 recommendations provided by the International Review Panel, an opportunity has been provided for the future of work placement and work integrated learning to be more closely aligned with the strategic ambitions of the University.

A Strategic Quality Enhancement Project was proposed and approved under the sponsorship of the Interim Registrar. This project will speak to the transformative change, the strategic importance of Work Integrated Learning, Placement and employ-agility and raise awareness across the University.

A number of activities are included to engage stakeholders in a planned, strategic set of actions which closely align with the actions in Pillars 1 and 3 of UCC 2022.

Projected Positive Outcomes for Work Placement

This Strategic Enhancement Plan will function to provide a meaningful roadmap on the sequencing and implementation of actions. Some possible positive outcomes from this project will include:

- Giving institutional visibility, a call to arms and commitment to support efforts to advance the recommendations from the Thematic Review, and provide a way to mitigate risk to placement in any future pandemic
- Providing a strategic link between this work and the rankings work given the recent publication of the employability rankings
- Creating a more sustainable plan for Work Integrated Learning (WIL) and Work Placement which would provide more equity of access to experiential learning for students (and provide sustainable continuation of student experiential learning if we ever were affected by a pandemic)

- Forming a Community of Practice which would support delivery of the actions identified in the QEP, particularly those related to academic programme design and delivery
- Creating a Lean/Continuous Improvement Plan for student engagement with employability/placements

Quality Enhancement

Indicators of Quality Project

The UCC Strategic Plan and objectives are underpinned by a commitment to a quality culture, based on enhancement that is shared across the institution. This quality culture is driven by an ethos of an open and systematic examination of everything we do, to highlight what works well and what needs further enhancement and how we can continue to foster excellence in the research, learning and support activities of our staff, students and wider community. The Quality Enhancement Unit (QEU) is working on a project to include indicators of quality as part of the quality review process as a means to support this commitment to a quality culture.

Underpinning a quality culture, is the ability to track and measure performance towards a quality threshold which identifies something as being of high-quality. To do this, we will first define what our indicators of quality are and the required data that they are based on. This can be achieved by using the wealth of existing data that is generated and collected in the University as measures against specific indicators of quality for different categories that align with the objectives and goals of the University Strategic plan.

To date QEU has completed the initial scoping work and identified opportunities to express the relevant quality indicators and their relevance in terms of periodic review. QEU has begun engagement with the Quality Enhancement Committee to develop a conceptual model for QI's, data compilation has been undertaken and we anticipate that a better articulated QI framework will underpin reviews in a replicable and consistent manner from 2023/24 onwards. The development of the Curriculum Management System (CIM Project) which is running concurrently will be an important underpinning part of this development.

Integration of UN sustainable development goals (SDG)

In 2016, UCC launched its Sustainability Strategy, which was framed around the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The sustainability strategy focuses on themes of

- Citizenship (SDG 10, SDG 16, SDG 17)
- Teaching & Learning (SDG 4)
- Research, Food, Health & Wellbeing (SDG 2, SDG 3)
- Landscape, Heritage & Natural Resources (SDG 11, SDG 14, SDG 15)
- Waste Management (SDG 12)
- Energy, Water & Climate (SDG 6, SDG 7, SDG 9, SDG 11, SDG 13)
- Procurement & Contracts (SDG 8, SDG 9, SDG 12)
- Commuting & Business Travel (SDG 11, SDG 13)

UCC publishes an Annual Sustainability Report each year outlining progress against each of the 9 key areas. In 2021/22, a draft "Sustainability and Climate Action Plan" has been developed which will supersede the Sustainability Strategy. The Plan sets a target of being net zero carbon by 2040.

UCC consistently performs well in international sustainability rankings:

- The first university outside of North America to be awarded a Gold STARS rating from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education. In 2021/22 this Gold rating was renewed, with an improvement of 13 points (from 66 to 79). The University is on track to achieve a platinum rating by our next submission. STARS (The Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System) is the most comprehensive, transparent, self-reporting framework for HEIs to measure their sustainability performance across all their activities. All data submitted to STARS is publicly available.
- In 2021/22 UCC ranked 8th globally in the UI Green Metric. The UI Green Metric ranks over 900 HEIs according to their performance in environmental sustainability, incorporating metrics relating to twelve of the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals.
- The Times Higher Education Impact Rankings assess universities against the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal, using carefully calibrated indicators to provide comprehensive and balanced comparisons across three broad areas: research, outreach and stewardship. In 2021-2022 UCC was ranked 62nd globally.
- In April 2022, UCC was named most sustainable large business at the PWC Sunday Business Post Sustainable Business Awards.

Through our Connected Curriculum and Graduate Attributes Programme (Priorities One and Four respectively of our Academic Strategy 2018-2022) we are championing the development of values, skills and aptitudes that promote civic participation, social inclusion, sustainability, and impactful, global citizenship in all academic courses.

- All 17 SDGs are covered within the formal curriculum at UCC, with 6% of the university's modules including direct sustainable development teachings. These modules are spread across 60% of the university's academic departments meaning that 17% of our students graduate having taken one of these modules in the course of their degree.
- In 2021, thanks to funding from the National Forum for Teaching and Learning, UCC launched an SDG Toolkit designed to enable educators to integrate the SDGs further into the curriculum, enhancing teaching and learning both within (SDGs of relevance to the discipline) and across (cross-cutting competencies and skills) disciplines. The toolkit is an open-source resource available for use by any HEI.
- In May 2022, we launched the "Learning and Teaching with the SDGs" Digital Badge course. This course was the result of further collaboration between Green Campus and UCC's Centre for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning.

UCC 2022 prioritises impactful research and innovation that are curiosity driven, seeking breakthroughs that will address global societal grand challenges including the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The most recent estimate found that 15% of all researchers in UCC are engaged in research that is directly related to the SDGs. UCC's sustainability researchers are found across a variety of disciplines throughout the University.

- The Environmental Research Institute (ERI) brings together over 400 researchers from 20 different scientific disciplines with expertise in the five broad research platforms of Environment, Sustainable Energy, Marine, Sustainable Agri-Food, and Sustainable Materials.
- The Centre for Global Development aims to support, enhance and promote UCC's commitment to addressing the challenges of the Sustainable Development Goals.

- Other examples of research institutes conducting research on the SDGs include Institute for Social Sciences in the 21st century (ISS21), Tyndall National Institute, MaREI, APC Microbiome, the Food Institute and more.
- In excess of €20m is secured annually for environmental and sustainability research. In June 2022, 27 full time academic posts in Sustainability were advertised as part of the UCC Futures initiative.
- Over the course of 2021/22, UCC's research Office in collaboration with the ERI and Green Campus, have delivered workshops across all school and research centres focused on mapping UCC's research to the SDGs.
- AY2021/22 also saw a second round of applications to our Green Campus Living Laboratory fund. More information on the projects is available here.

Each year, our University Wide Module in Sustainability (UW0005) is offered annually as a Digital Badge to all staff or as additional University Credit to all students. It is designed to nurture sustainability citizenship amongst staff and students and takes a co-created interdisciplinary approach to the SDGs with contributions from 20 different staff from across all colleges. The module was awarded UCC's "Excellence in Teaching" award for 2021. In addition, three other university wide modules that speak directly to the Sustainable Development Goals ran:

- Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Social Justice, Equality, Diversity and Health (UW0011)
- Development and Global Citizenship Education (UW0012)
- Global Sustainable Development: Interdisciplinary Perspectives (UW1201)

In 2021/22 the first cohort of students completed the Sustainable Futures PGCert/Masters programme which is jointly run by UCC, NUI Maynooth and IT Sligo, and funded through HCI Pillar 2. This complements the Higher Diploma in Sustainability and Enterprise, part of the flagship "Sustainable Futures" programme funded through the HCI Pillar 1, which launched in 2020.

UCC is particularly active with regard to SDG 13:

- In November 2021, UCC was the only Irish University to have Observer Status at the UNFCCC COP 26 meeting in Glasgow.
- A delegation of 8 researchers and students attended the event in Glasgow, while on campus a Model COP event was hosted for students and a Climate Change mural was unveiled on main campus.
- Following the COP 26 meeting in Glasgow, the British Ambassador visited UCC and was presented with a President's Declaration, on how the two countries could better work together to address this challenging issue.
- Green Campus are in the process of developing a Carbon Literacy Course for UCC students and staff. The course is being developed in consultation with the "Carbon Literacy Project", an international organisation that develops toolkits for various sectors. The project is a collaboration between Green Campus, CIRTL and MaREI.
- 2022 also saw UCC host a second "UCC Climate Assembly", the assembly was organised by the Student Union and structured around the themes of the UCC sustainability officer.

UCC is a member of the EAUC, Alliance for Sustainability Leadership in Higher Education and are signatories of the SDG Accord, higher education's collective response to the UN Sustainable Development Goals. UCC is also a member of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network, an organisation set up under the auspices of the UN to mobilise knowledge institutions around the SDGs. In 2022, UCC (together with Queen's University Belfast) were successful in our bid to host an All-Ireland SDSN.

Throughout the year, UCC Green Campus hosted numerous events and created content around sustainability and climate action at UCC.

- Our podcast series of 12 episodes features interviews with students and staff from across campus.
- Our Green Zone lunchtime talks series provided staff with an opportunity to learn more about operational aspects of sustainability including energy upgrades and urban farming.
- In the Spring of 2022, the Glucksman hosted an exhibition on biodiversity in collaboration with the ERI, which included a Green Campus commission where artist Amber Broughton created drawings of the various species of animals found on campus.
- In collaboration with the Graduate Attributes programme, a "Success: It's in your Nature" Canvas space was launched, with the aim of engaging students with campus green space. Following on from this, a post has been approved with funding from the Student Charges and Fees Forum to specifically focus on student engagement with campus green space.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

University of Sanctuary

In January 2022, UCC successfully renewed its University of Sanctuary status with Universities of Sanctuary Ireland. To date, 28 people have been awarded Sanctuary Scholarships by UCC for undergraduate degrees through a competitive process, designed and facilitated jointly by the EDI Unit and the University of Sanctuary Working Group, which helps finance their undergraduate studies in UCC. The first UCC Sanctuary Scholarship recipients to be conferred with undergraduate degrees graduated in November 2021.

In February 2022, the fifth annual UCC Refugee Week was successfully held on campus with a new Refugee week flag raised over the Quad. In April 2022, in response to conflicts across the world, UCC announced that it had created a Sanctuary Fellowship Scheme. Through this scheme scholars and staff members from universities, and other third level institutes outside of Ireland, who are at risk as a result of conflict or other serious human rights violations can apply for a six-month fellowship in UCC. It is the first fellowship of its kind in Ireland's higher education sector. Under the fellowship UCC will provide 6 fellows a support package including a start-up grant and a monthly salary for six months. Each fellow will also be linked to a UCC mentor who will act as a focal point to provide social and professional support on a peer-to-peer basis.

In response to the humanitarian crisis unfolding in Ukraine, the UCC Centre for Adult and Continuing Education rallied students and colleagues across the campus to create a six-week course, 'Introduction to Student Life in Ireland' which was open to any student from refugee or asylum-seeking backgrounds.

Athena SWAN

UCC has been a signatory to the Athena Swan Charter since its launch in Ireland in 2015. In 2020/21, UCC's Schools of Pharmacy, Chemistry and Biological, Earth & Environmental Sciences became the first UCC Schools to successfully renew their bronze Athena Swan accreditation. First-time bronze UCC awardees in 2021/22

included the School of Microbiology and the School of Biochemistry & Cell Biology. Tyndall National Institute also become the first research institute in UCC to receive a bronze award. UCC now holds 12 institutional awards and an institutional Bronze award. A new Athena SWAN Charter was launched in November 2021 - UCC is a signatory of same and is committed to enacting the new Athena SWAN principles.

Other highlights from EDI in 2021-22 include:

- *Staff and Student Values & Culture/EDI Consultation:* The EDI Unit developed and rolled out the Values & Culture/ EDI consultation with UCC students and staff in 2021/22. This also informed the UCC 2022 Action 4 cultural barometer. Information provided in the survey will be used to inform the next UCC Strategic Plan, EDI Framework and forthcoming Athena SWAN applications.

- *LGBT+ Support:* In October 2022, UCC unveiled a rainbow walkway on campus, becoming one of the first universities in Ireland to do so. In April 2022, the UCC LGBT+ Staff Network partnered with a number of national organisations to host the Lesbian Lives Conference at UCC. In July 2022, UCC also officially sponsored Cork Pride for the first time, with the President hosting a UCC Together With Pride Afternoon Tea Party.

- *Speak Out Anonymous Reporting Tool Launch:* In February 2022, the Speak Out anonymous reporting tool for staff and students was launched at UCC. Speak Out is an anonymous online tool which provides a safe and secure platform for both staff and students to anonymously report incidents they have experienced or witnessed. The information that is collected through the Speak Out tool will be used to develop trauma informed policy and identify additional educational initiatives to benefit the entire university community.

- *Race Equality:* In October 2022, the HEA published the first Race Equality in Higher Education report. UCC staff and students were invited to participate in the survey which informed the report in early 2022. The authors of the report were invited by the Race Equality Forum and EDI Unit to present the report's findings/key recommendations. In February 2022, UCC celebrated the life and work of Frederick Douglass during Douglass Week. In March 2022, Cork Traveller Women's Network and Cork Traveller Visibility Group presented University College Cork with a Traveller Ally Award, one of the first ever awarded by these groups. The UCC diploma course in leadership in the Community developed in collaboration with the Southern Traveller Health Network which saw over twenty Traveller women complete a higher education course was particularly commended.

- *Gender Equality:* In November 2021, UCC announced approval for a new post under the Senior Academic Leadership Initiative (SALI) for a Professor in Quantum Technology. This announcement is being made under Cycle 2 of the Senior Academic Leadership Initiative (SALI), the goal of which is to accelerate progress in achieving gender balance at the senior academic level in Higher Education Institutions and brings the total number of posts awarded under SALI to 30. In November 2021, UCC also hosted its first panel discussion to mark International Men's Day. On *International Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day*, UCC announced that its current Civil Engineering Building was to be renamed as the Iris Ashley Cummins building, in honour of UCC's first female engineering graduate; the first building to be named after a woman on the UCC campus. To mark International Women's Day in March 2022, UCC hosted a panel on EDI x Sustainability with experts from Ireland and Malawi.

Research

UCC Futures Initiative

A key element of *UCC 2022: Delivering a Connected University* from the perspective of research and innovation was also recognising the strength in diversity of UCC research expertise and activity, but also acknowledging that a distinctive characteristic of high performing universities globally is regular and responsive priority setting, enabling the enhancement of key areas of strength, while also identifying and empowering emerging areas. This prioritisation process was initiated in the *Research & Innovation Strategic Plan 2017-2022* and has been continued under *UCC 2022.*

To this end, in December 2021, the UCC Futures initiative was launched as a major output of *UCC 2022: Delivering a Connected University.* The overarching goal of this programme is to connect research across disciplinary boundaries, provide an environment of creativity, curiosity and critical thinking that generates knowledge and translates research into sustainable benefits and value for society. This initiative will seek to build a foundation for economic, societal, and cultural resilience and prosperity, creating – and securing – our future through excellence in research.

Beginning with the cluster hiring of up to 12 researchers of excellence to the *Radical Humanities Laboratory, t*hese transformative, disruptive Research Leaders will work across disciplinary boundaries and UCC's four Colleges to explore the roots of global societal crises, defining the fundamental challenges and developing holistic, transformative, solutions. Recruitment to the *Radical Humanities Laboratory* is the first in a series of ambitious academic recruitment events across the ten indicative research areas of UCC Futures.

A key additional output of this work is the development of a *UCC Research Charter* (Appendix) that will differentiate UCC as a research-intensive university. The Charter sets out 12 commitments that define the core principles, culture and values that support our researchers in creating – and securing – the future through excellence in research. A detailed implementation plan to deliver on the commitments set out in the Charter, including a series of specific enabling actions, is currently in the consultation phase.

2.1 Initiatives within the Institution related to Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity is at the heart of all academic endeavour and is critical to the reputation of the University; the integrity of awards and qualifications; the assurance of quality and standards; good research quality; ethics, and institutional academic leadership. The University has clear policy on plagiarism and provides support and advice to students on academic integrity across all aspects of their academic work. The Students' Union also provide advice and update to their members.
https://www.ucc.ie/en/academicgov/policies/student-policies/#plagiarism-policy
https://www.ucc.ie/en/skillscentre/academic-integrity/
https://libguides.ucc.ie/academicintegrity/referencing
https://www.ucc.ie/en/research/support/integrity/researchintegritytraining/epigeumonlineresearchintegritytraining/

UCC is an active member of the National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN), established by QQI (Quality and Qualifications Ireland) in November 2019. The University participated in National Academic Integrity Week in October 2021, including contributing to the national series of webinars with a moderated discussion "Co-Producers not Consumers: A Conversation between Faculty and Students-as-Partners on Implications of Academic Integrity in the Academy and Beyond".

UCC also has an ongoing Academic Integrity Project that seeks to foster a culture of academic integrity across the University, primarily by providing additional educational opportunities for staff and students in the area of academic integrity. This project, funded by Strategic Alignment of Teaching and Learning Enhancement (SATLE) Funding 2020 from the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, is being run jointly between the UCC Skills Centre and the Centre for the Integration of Research, Teaching, and Learning (CIRTL), with a Research Support Officer leading out on project developments. Additional guidance is provided by a project advisory group consisting of representatives from across the University, and from student and staff Academic Integrity Champions that were recruited as part of this project and who collaborated on some of the resource development for it.

This project had several outputs in 2021/22, including:

- Development and delivery of an hour-long Academic Integrity Workshop for students to introduce them to the fundamental values of academic integrity, demonstrate the importance of doing their own work, and explain various types of academic misconduct and the risks associated with these. This is now regularly available to students through the UCC Skills Centre.
- A second workshop developed in collaboration with UNIC partner Koç University that applies these values and forms of misconduct in scenarios, followed by policy discussion. This workshop, bringing an international perspective to the topic, was held in March 2021 with plans to repeat the workshop in 2022/23.
- An Academic Integrity Bingo session designed to encourage conversations about the topic in a fun, engaging, and supportive environment. This was held as a staff event as part of VIT&L Week in November 2021 to positive feedback and will be rolled out to students in 2022/23.
- Several asynchronous resources, including a Canvas module for students containing material covered in the workshop along with short videos and quizzes, and a dedicated web page on the Skills Centre website

containing information on academic integrity, academic misconduct, and additional resources, including an academic integrity video series.

- An Academic Integrity Worksheet to prompt students to consider their goals, obstacles they might face, and any questions they have so that they can create a plan for themselves.
- Academic integrity resources are embedded in the 'Integrity' strand of the new Graduate Attributes Compass for students.
- Finally, a Digital Badge micro-credential course for staff on "Fostering Academic Integrity in Learning and Teaching" has been developed. This course introduces staff to concepts of academic integrity, highlights key points of intervention along the student learning journey where they can support academic integrity (including setting clear expectations, providing actional feedback, and rubric and assessment design to support academic integrity), demonstrates how to evaluate reports from text-matching software and use these as a teaching tool, explains appropriate procedures regarding plagiarism, and, finally, showcases resources in UCC that they can use to support the development of students' academic skills.

Several of the student resources were launched during National Academic Integrity Week in October 2021 along with a social media campaign (81 posts, 1,025 engagements, 25,261 impressions) and pop-up stands across campus that increased the visibility and awareness of academic integrity across the University. Since then, nearly 1,500 students have engaged with the workshops through the Skills Centre and requested delivery to specific cohorts. The Digital Badge for staff was piloted in August 2022 and will be officially launched during National Academic Integrity Week in October 2022.

The work undertaken in this project to strengthen the culture of academic integrity at University College Cork aligns with the implementation of UCC's *Academic Strategy (2018-2022)*, particularly Pillar 1- Learning and Teaching, and Pillar 3 – Student Success of *UCC 2022 – Delivering a Connected Curriculum*, by:

- encouraging teaching and assessment practices that promote academic integrity,
- underpinning the necessity of an equitable experience for all students,
- fostering a sense of belonging and providing the tools for success and academic development,
- supporting the changing needs of a diverse student body with timely resources, and encouraging staff and student collaboration.

3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period

3.1 QA and QE supporting the Achievement of Strategic Objectives

No.	Relevant objectives	Planned actions and indicators
1	CINNTE – Institutional Review	Preparations in 2021/22 for Institutional Review focused on the engagement of the University community in the Self-Evaluation process and led to the development of an inclusive institutional ISER and Institutional Profile.
2	Thematic Reviews	Thematic reviews are now a planned feature of the programme of reviews in the institution to enable an enhancement-led outlook on topics of institutional significance.
3	Quality Review	Streamline and align periodic quality review processes with professional and statutory accreditation: the application of the QQI principles for accreditation (2020)
4	Programme Review	Pilot process for the cyclical integration of programme management and monitoring with periodic academic quality review – to be piloted in 2022-24
5	Student Feedback Ecosystem Project	Enhancement of the Student Feedback Ecosystem (joint QEU/CIRTL project, funded by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching & Learning). The Student Feedback Ecosystem Project will result in a student feedback survey that will create an informative method for gathering student feedback for the purposes of enhancing learning and teaching across UCC – the student feedback survey will be rolled out in 2022/23
6	Indicators of Quality Project	The use of indicators of quality as part of the quality review process as a means to support this commitment to a quality culture.
7	Research Quality Review	The Research Quality Review implementation pathway, including consultation, will be reactivated in 2022/23.

3.2 Reviews planned for Upcoming Reporting Periods

3.2.1 Reviews planned for Next Reporting Period

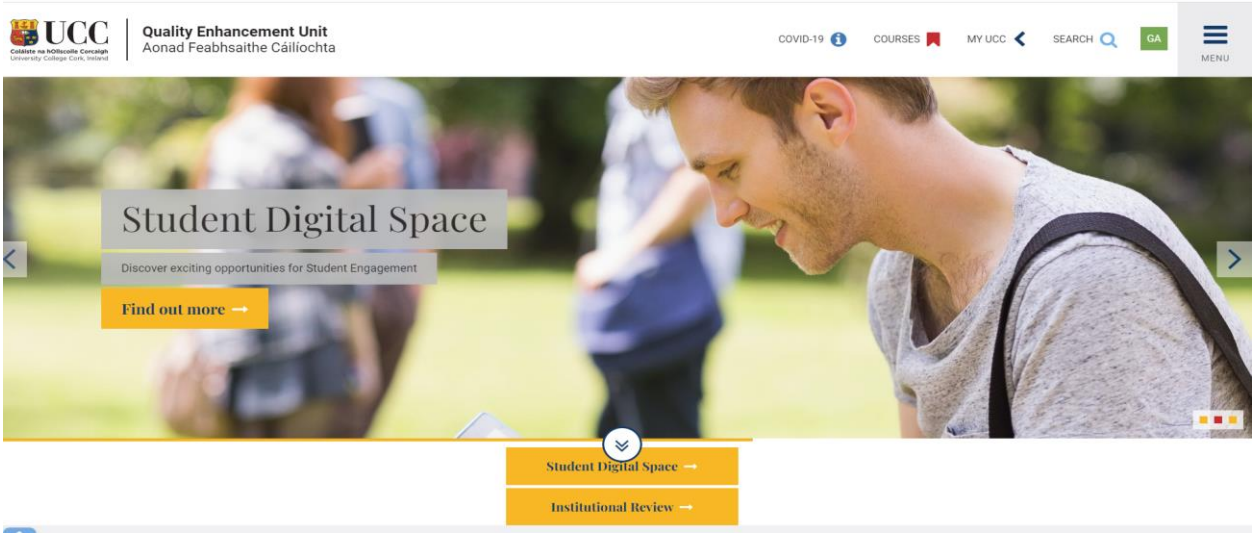
Unit to be reviewed	Date of planned review	Date of last review
Office of the Vice President for Research and Innovation	2022/23	April 2013

3.2.2 Reviews planned beyond Next Reporting Period

The reviews planned beyond the next reporting period can be found on our published schedule at the following weblink: Quality Review Schedule | University College Cork (ucc.ie)

4.0 Case Study

The Quality Enhancement Unit's Student Digital Space
Enhancing student digital engagement and partnership in QE



Theme
Student Engagement; Student Partnership (Phase II); Digital Communication (Phase I)

Introduction
Over the last decade student engagement in higher education has been recognised as a priority goal within the European Higher Education Area (ESG, 2015; Bologna with Student Eyes, 2020) and, more specifically, Ireland and its Higher Education Institutions, including UCC. At a national level, this led to the development of new policies, initiatives and structures to support the enhancement of partnership practices, such as the National Student Engagement Programme (2016), with the subsequent production of the 'Steps to Partnership Framework'. The homonymous first 'Steps to Partnership' open course for HE staff (2021/22) nationwide was successfully completed by two UCC PS staff members (one from the QEU).

UCC as an institution has adopted an explicit student-centred approach with student success and partnership placed among its top strategic priorities (e.g. *UCC 2022*, Pillar 3). As part of this, UCC has been implementing strategic initiatives, such as the 'Students as Partners' Actions 3.3.1 to 3.3.3, including its first Student Forum, which will be launched in Autumn 2022. The Quality Enhancement Unit (QEU)'s student engagement and partnership approach (see Quality Enhancement Policy) is aligned with the institutional student-centred mission. Furthermore, the importance of digital engagement in HEIs has emerged very strongly with the sudden outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, which forced all institutions to adapt their practices and maximise the benefits of digital engagement as a parallel and complementary means of communication and engagement with their key stakeholders.

Project Overview

This case study focuses on the development of a Student Digital Space by the Quality Enhancement Unit (QEU) on its website. The first stage of this project was completed in Spring 2022 with the publication of the Student Reviewers Section of the Student Digital Space, which is directly accessible from the QEU's landing page.

The principal target group of the Student Digital Space is students, especially those interested in collaborating with the QEU on QA and QE processes, either as Student Union Officers or representatives.

However, the site is also relevant for staff, the general public, other HEIs and national regulatory bodies interested in finding out more about our student engagement in QE and QE initiatives, including Student Reviewer recruitment, training, resources and testimonials.

Specifically, the SDS' Student Reviewer section covers quality review-related topics from a Quality Enhancement approach within the UCC context with a focus on their relevance to students and their involvement in the quality review processes of the University. The following sections are included in the SDS 'Student Reviewer' webpage:

- *Welcome message from the UCC Director of QE*
- *The role of the Student Reviewer*
- *Student Reviewers' Testimonials*
- *What is a Quality Review?*
- *What is Quality? A Student Perspective*
- *What is a Student Reviewer expected to do?*
- *Student Resources*

The development of a student-targeted digital space within the QEU website responds to the QEU's key overarching goal of broadening, diversifying and enhancing its student engagement practices, reaching out to the whole student body, through various approaches, both digital and on-campus.
More specifically, it pursues the following three objectives:

Objective 1

To broaden the QEU communication with students through the establishment of a Student Digital Space (Phase I and Phase II) responding to the following functions:

a) *Student Reviewer-dedicated area (information and resources)*
b) *Information for students on QE/QA processes, initiatives and developments at QEU and University level*
c) *Awareness-raising on QE benefits for the student experience*
d) *Digital comment box for student feedback and perspectives*
e) *Increasing local visibility of national initiatives/resources on quality and student engagement*
f) *Other functions identified by students*

Objective 2

To design and implement Phase II of the Student Digital Space through an inclusive staff-student partnership approach.

Objective 3

To provide a successful example of inclusive student partnership in QE, from the design stage to the realisation, launch and evaluation of the initiative so that it can be celebrated and disseminated across the Institution and beyond.

Overarching Goal		
To broaden, diversify and enhance the QEU's student engagement practices, reaching out to the whole student body		
Objectives		
One	**Two**	**Three**
To broaden the QEU's communication with students through the establishment of a Student Digital Space	To design and implement the SDS's Phase II through an inclusive staff-student partnership approach to be maintained for its periodical reviews and updates	To provide a successful example of inclusive staff-student partnership in QE for dissemination & duplication university-wide
Functions		
A) Information on QE/QA processes, initiatives and developments at QEU and University level		
B) Student Reviewer-dedicated area (information and resources)		
C) Awareness-raising on QE benefits for the student experience;		
D) Increasing local visibility of national initiatives/resources on quality and student engagement		
E) Digital comment box for student feedback and perspectives (Phase II)		
F) Other functions identified by students (Phase II)		

Table 1: Overarching Goals – traffic light table

No	Milestone/Task	Target Date	RAG Status
1	Brainstorming exercise	April 2021	Completed
2	Project plan development, approval & implementation timeline scheduling	March 2022	Completed
3	Implementation SDS Phase One: Student Reviewer Section development and publication	April 2022	Completed
4	SDS Phase Two: co-planning and development in partnership with student stakeholders	April 2023	Not Started
5	SDS Official Launch	October 2023	Not Started
6	SDS Periodic review and update	Every 6 months	Not Started

Table 2: Lifecycle of the Project - milestones & timeline

Conclusion

The design and publication of the Student Digital Space within the QEU website represent a significant output towards the advancement of the QEU digital communication with students on quality assurance and quality enhancement matters, in line with Section 9 of the Core Statutory QA Guidelines (QQI, 2016). It also increases the visibility of the key role played by student reviewers in contributing to the quality processes of the University and to the enhancement of the quality of student experiences at UCC. Simultaneously, it demonstrates the personal and professional development benefits for students, who are involved in the quality review process of the University.