

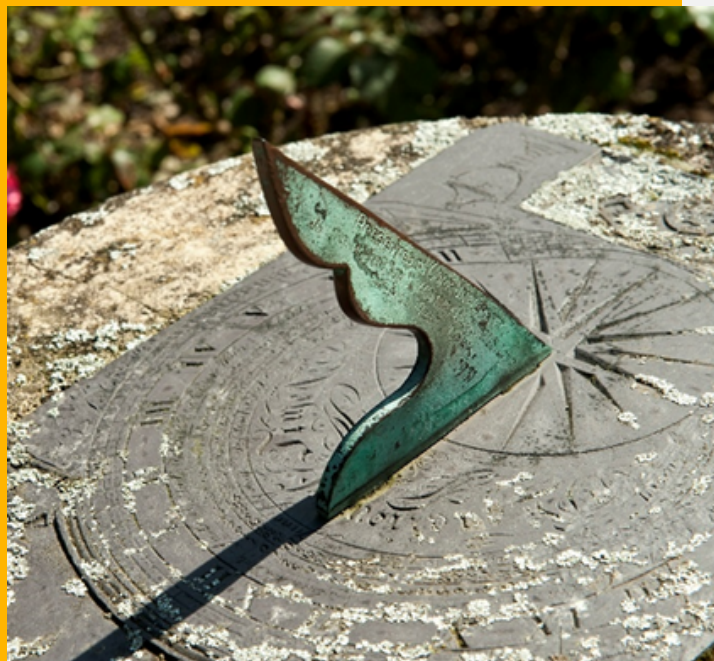


**UCC**

University College Cork, Ireland  
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

University College Cork  
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

# University College Cork Institutional Profile 2022/23



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Professor John O'Halloran  
President

## Foreword

Founded in 1845, University College Cork is an award-winning university, ranked in the top 1.1% of universities world-wide. UCC has an over 177 year-long tradition of creativity, discovery and innovation which continues to this day and is illustrated throughout this report.

UCC is home to over 24,000 students, of which 3,900 are international students representing more than 138 countries.

UCC is a comprehensive university offering programmes from Level 8-10 on the National Framework of Qualifications. Our Connected Curriculum emphasises a diverse teaching and learning approach exposing learners to

experiential, research-based teaching and learning that nurtures the holistic development of learners and enables life-long, life-wide and life-deep learning.

This is underpinned by UCC's core graduate attributes that strive to develop graduates who are creators, evaluators and communicators of knowledge, independent thinkers, digitally fluent and socially responsible global citizens, who recognise and challenge inequality.

UCC is the top higher education institution in Ireland for Graduate Employability, with 92% of our honours degree graduates in employment or further study within 9 months of graduation.

UCC is a research-led university with research excellence, discovery, innovation and impact at its core. UCC has established an ecosystem of centres of excellence and several of the leading Irish Research Centres and Institutes are based in UCC including Tyndall National Institute, APC Microbiome Ireland, Environmental Research Institute (ERI), and the Centre for Marine Renewable Energy Ireland (MaREI).

The university has had significant success in securing funding from competitive research grants and through our close collaborations

with industry. Our approach enables UCC to be ambitious and realise our potential in spite of a challenging national funding landscape.

UCC leads the drive towards sustainability. As the first university in the world to be awarded Green Campus status over ten years ago, we proudly fly our Green Flag over the magnificent quadrangle following continued successful renewals. UCC has held a top ten place in the UI GreenMetric World University Rankings since 2010 and is now ranked 8th in the world for sustainability. UCC has held a bronze Athena SWAN award since 2016, and thirteen Schools, Departments and Centres hold departmental-level awards at bronze level.

Our people are the bedrock of UCC and the experience of our students and staff is paramount.

I am grateful to all our staff, students and stakeholders who contributed so generously with their time in developing this profile and the continued success of this university.

I hope that this Institutional Profile shines a light on who we are, what we do and what we stand for.

Is sinne Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh – We are UCC.

## Executive Summary

1. A **research-intensive** university that values knowledge creation, discovery and transfer for wider societal impact through renowned researchers and centres of excellence finding answers to real problems.
2. An **innovative, connected learning and teaching curriculum** that supports and develops student attributes and values.
3. **Excellent student experience** as learners **transition into, through and out of UCC**.
4. World-class university built on excellent staff and support services.
5. Leading a more **sustainable** future for everyone.
6. An **inclusive and open** university with **strong connections** to local and international communities.

These key points are illustrated in a short accompanying video on the report, accessible by clicking the play button below:



Originally established in 1845 as Queen's College Cork, University College Cork (UCC) has a tradition of independent thinking and creative discovery spanning over 177 years history. The university is a €450 m organisation, with a population the size of Kilkenny city. It contributes enormously to the economic well-being of the city and region. Its societal contribution is as wide as the economic contribution is deep.

Since first opening its gates to welcome the original 115 students on 30th December 1849, UCC has grown to become home to 24,195 students and 3,400 staff. Today, it is a comprehensive university committed to providing high quality education across its portfolio of programmes at undergraduate, graduate taught and graduate research level in the Arts, Business, Engineering, Science, Food Sciences, Mathematics, Healthcare, Law and Social Sciences.

All programmes are positioned on Ireland's National Framework of Qualifications. UCC's academic structure for the delivery of its research and education consists of four Colleges within which there are 27 Schools.

In addition to the portfolio of major awards offered, a wide range of life-long and life-wide learning opportunities are available for students on a part-time, flexible or online basis.

UCC's Centre for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) provides credit and non-credit bearing CPD programmes to support academic and professional development of learners.

Through the Human Capital Initiative, UCC is working alongside other national higher education bodies to develop a national framework for micro-credentials. These provide accredited, flexible learning programmes driving life-long learning to a wide audience.

UCC's beautiful main campus is set on 42 acres with an internationally accredited arboretum containing 2,500 trees and is very much connected to the heart of Cork City, which is only a 10-minute walk away, a proximity recognised in Cork's designation as a University City.

Beyond the main campus, UCC has a number of dedicated locations across Cork. These include the Tyndall National Institute based in UCC's Lee Maltings Complex, which is a European leader in the field of photonics; and UCC's maritime and energy research building, the Beaufort Research Laboratory, based in Ringaskiddy which houses the Lir National Ocean Test Facility.

Proudly ranked in the top 1.1% of universities in the world as per QS methodology, UCC is a key attractor for investment and growth in the Munster region. Ready access to UCC's talented students, staff and world-class research centres is a key reason why seven of the world's top pharma companies and world-leading companies in the health and technology sectors are based in Cork.

Through its established business and innovation ecosystem, UCC fosters an entrepreneurial culture across its campus, students and staff that further deepen this connection with large companies, supports local business and SMEs, and enables the creation of new spin-out companies.



## UCC at a Glance



### Delivering an excellent student and staff **experience**

24,195 students:  
3,900 international

23.5% students from  
alternative access routes

91.6% Student retention rate  
(2020/21)

92% graduates in employment  
or further study



3,429 staff:  
28% academic  
42% support  
29% research

81% of academic staff with a  
PhD

21:1 student staff ratio



### Internationally recognised for research and impact

15.9% publications in top 10% most  
cited publications worldwide

UCC publications have highest field-  
weighted citation impact score  
nationally (Scival 2022)

51.5% research publications in Open  
Access Journals



€104m research income

€13.4m industry research funding

23 European Research Council  
awardees

Top university for industry  
collaboration (Scival 2022)



### Driving a more **sustainable** future for everyone

1<sup>st</sup> Irish university to be awarded  
Green Campus Flag

Only Irish university ranked in top  
10 globally for both impact and  
sustainability



### Connected curriculum supporting **graduate** **attributes and values**

UN Sustainable Development Goals  
embedded in curriculum

Comprehensive offering across arts  
and sciences with 60+ programmes

## UCC's Academic Profile

UCC's Academic Profile is shared across the four Colleges and ACE:

### [Arts, Celtic Studies & Social Sciences](#)

The College of Arts, Celtic Studies & Social Sciences offers an outstanding range of exciting programmes for those interested in human societies past, present and future. UCC students can explore the beginnings of civilisation or the future of work, from the treasure trove of literature in many different languages to how political decisions are made. Its taught programmes train a suite of readily applicable soft and hard skills, ranging from translation and creative writing to digital humanities, and offering both theoretical and practical training across its subjects. It is the home of diverse innovative, outward-looking and world-leading interdisciplinary research and research centres of the Radical Humanities Institute and the Institute for Social Sciences in the 21st Century (ISS21). It has a track record of offering outstanding transdisciplinary research training, with a tradition of cross-cutting summer schools and master classes that have provided a valuable space for training for researchers across the university, enhanced by recent developments in creative and arts practice-based research training.

### [Business & Law](#)

The College of Business & Law consists of two Schools – Cork University Business School (CUBS) and the School of Law – and also has academic responsibility for the Irish Management Institute, the university owned provider of executive education. CUBS consists of five departments – Accounting and Finance, Business Information Systems, Economics, Food Business and Development, and Management and Marketing – and has achieved international accreditation from AMBA and AACSB.

The School of Law is ranked in the Top 100 (QS 2022) Law Schools in the world. Both Schools offer undergraduate and postgraduate programmes across general and specialist areas, including the joint Law and Business degree, with emphasis throughout on study abroad and placement opportunities. The School of Law and the Department of Business Information Systems both hold Bronze Athena Swan awards. The College has committees in Research, Learning and Teaching, and Internationalisation to support strategic developments in these areas.

### [Science, Engineering & Food Sciences](#)

The College of Science Engineering & Food Sciences is a dynamic and diverse College, with approximately 5,800 staff and students. It is a significant driver of research, academic and external engagement activity at UCC. Activity takes place across nine academic units and the research centres, and institutes in which the College leads or plays a significant role. The breadth of activity ranges across STEM through the life, natural and environmental sciences, engineering and ICT including cybersecurity, climate change, photonics, food, astrophysics, architecture, and sustainability to waste minimisation.

### [Medicine & Health](#)

The College of Medicine & Health has six Schools and two large research centres (APC and INFANT). It offers the most comprehensive suite of healthcare programmes in the country to its 3,500 students. These students are all required to achieve competency in clinical areas and so spend a significant part of their programme in the hospitals and clinics in the region. Similarly, much of the research is patient focussed and is undertaken in the hospitals. Alignment with the healthcare system is thus an imperative for the College and the College believes that is best done as part of an Academic Health Sciences Centre (AHC). Achieving an AHC is a key strategic goal for the College.

Engagement is further differentiated across Schools and Departments which represent the breadth of disciplinary activity that exists in UCC across the Arts and Humanities to the Sciences, Medicine, Health and Business (Figure 1).

### Adult Continuing Education

ACE (Adult Continuing Education) at University College Cork (UCC) has been offering part-time education programmes to Cork, Munster, and beyond since 1946 and is proud to celebrate 75 years of educational services to the community. ACE promotes both lifelong and life-wide learning for over 3,000 students each year. ACE provides a distinctive offering of programmes for part-time adult learners in collaboration with all four of UCC's Colleges (Figure 1), in addition to collaborative courses with external organisations (e.g. the Health Service Executive (HSE); Mental Health Ireland (MHI)) as well as bespoke courses with numerous industry partners.



**Figure 1:** UCC College structure



## UCC's Strategy, Mission, Values

At the time of preparing this report, UCC was in the process of developing its new [Strategic Plan 2023-28 Securing our Future](#). Following the submission of this Institutional Profile in November 2023, the new strategy was launched in February 2023, outlining a vision that “...connects and empowers people to create knowledge that shapes a sustainable and inclusive world.”

Driving a mission of creating, understanding and sharing knowledge and applying it for the good of all.

UCC's core values are Compassion, Agility, Integrity, Respect, Discovery, Equity, Accountability and Sustainability and are represented in the mnemonic *CAIRDEAS*, the Irish for ‘friendship’. These values underpin UCC's actions and processes guiding our everyday behaviours and decision-making.

UCC 2023-28 identifies five Strategic Goals, under which key strategic objectives are grouped and the Key Enablers that will be required to implement them (Figure 2).

This new strategy builds on UCC's previous [Strategic Plan 2017-2022 Independent Thinking - Shared Ambition](#) and the pivot that replaced this entitled [UCC 2022: Delivering a Connected University](#) which represented a reprioritisation of “...activities to best position UCC for a secure and sustainable future...”

This Institutional Profile highlights the successes and progress to date across both strategies, delivered through un-precedented global challenges and realised through the fortitude, resilience and commitment of our students, staff and stakeholders.



**Figure 2:** UCC 2023-2028 Strategic Goals

Moving into the future, armed with our ambition, our tradition of creation and discovery and our people - we look forward to what that future brings, how we will shape it, develop those who will lead it and drive a better tomorrow.

## 1. A research-intensive university that values knowledge creation, discovery and transfer for wider societal impact - through renowned researchers and centres of excellence finding answers to real problems

23 European Research Council award holders	197 PhD graduates (2021)	15 active spin-out companies
€104 m Research income (2021)	20 research projects with Civic Group collaborators	45 LOA*s (2021)
16% Horizon 2020 funding success rate exceeding EU average rate of 12%	51.5% publications in Open Access Journals	1.83 Field-weighted Citation Impact (2022)
Top in Ireland for publications with industry	15.9% publications in top 10% most cited publications worldwide	€11.3 M industry research funding (2021)

Data above are the cumulative amount from 2017-2021 unless otherwise indicated.

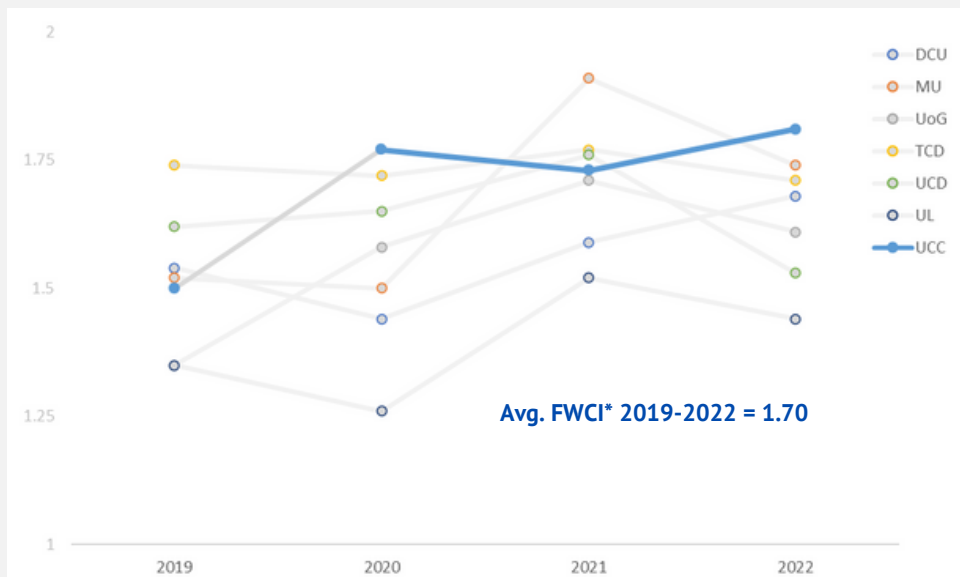
\*LOAs: License, Option or Assignment

UCC is an internationally competitive research-intensive university where the excellence and impact of our research outputs is a priority and plays a key role in developing Ireland's knowledge-based economy. Whilst also informing learning and teaching within the university, strategic development of research is focused on the creation and development of world-leading clusters of researchers, building on the research strengths of the university and in alignment with key strategies of the Irish Government. The quality and range of research activities carried out at UCC can be evidenced by the level of publications output, recognised citation metrics for significance and impact, as well as the internationally recognised expertise of research staff.

### Research-active

UCC's research activity has seen a consistent rise over the last ten years in terms of the number of its research outputs with 2,859 research articles published by UCC researchers in 2021, representing an increase of 20.3% in this period (source SciVal).

The performance of these outputs, as measured through journal publisher's field-weighted citation impact scores, demonstrates the significance of UCC research publications internationally. Standing above that global average in this measure, UCC publications delivered the highest citation impact in 2020 compared to other HEIs (Figure 3).



**Figure 3:** Field-weighted Citation Impact\* Performance – Irish University Comparative Analysis (Source SciVal Analytics May 2022)

\*Field-weighted Citation Impact: The ratio of citations received relative to the expected world average for combined subject fields, publication types and publication year. Score >1 indicates citation impact greater than the world average.

### THE Citation Impact Score

UCC’s success in this regard was also reflected in the recent announcement of the Times Higher Education (THE) World University Ranking for 2022 which revealed that UCC is the leading University in Ireland for research impact as measured by citation performance (Table 1):

**Table 1:** Times Higher Education (THE) Citations Impact Score (2022)

University	THE Citation Impact Score (2022)
<b>UCC</b>	<b>88.1</b>
RCSI	84.0
TCD	79.5
UCD	71.8
UoG	66.7
MU	61.5
DCU	54.9
UL	52.8
TUD	30.8

### Impactful Research

UCC is home to some of the most talented researchers in the world. Of the 35 Ireland-based researchers included in the Highly Cited Researchers 2021, 13 are based in UCC’s APC Microbiome Ireland Research Centre.

### U-Multirank

UCC has been awarded the most ‘A-score’ ratings in Ireland from the international higher education comparator U-MultiRank consecutively for 2021 (16) and 2022 (17). Some of the areas ranked highly under research include:

- 37.46% female authors on research publications.
- 14% of UCC research publications are the most cited in their discipline globally.
- The average citation rate of UCC publications.
- Of the total headcount of academic positions in UCC, 15.84% are postdoc positions.

### Peer Review and Research Quality

UCC uses an internationally referenced peer review methodology to provide an independent strategic assessment of the quality and level of research activity, including measures of international comparability to support the strategic planning and development of research across the institution. To date UCC has conducted two institution-wide peer reviews of research quality (2009 and 2015), both of which have demonstrated increased attainment in research output over time and have been externally commended. The methodology for the next peer review exercise is currently in development.

### Research Centres of Excellence

UCC is an international university with research excellence, discovery, innovation and impact at its core. The university's focus is on the challenges and opportunities that are shaping the future of our nation and the wider world. Research is prioritised in areas that are recognised as significant at the highest international levels, thus creating real impact and uptake beyond the institution.

UCC has established an ecosystem of centres of excellence and scale in the areas where UCC has demonstrated expertise and leads internationally. The success of this approach is demonstrated in the number of centres based in and led by UCC, funded through large national and international funding programmes as well as industry investment and collaboration. Listed below are some of these major centres; a complete list of the various research centres and institutes in UCC can be found [here](#).

- [Environmental Research Institute](#).
- [Tyndall National Institute](#) – global research leader in the areas of photonics and electronics.
- [Health Innovation Hub](#).
- [APC Microbiome Ireland](#).
- [MaREI](#) – Centre for Energy Climate and Marine Research.
- [Insight](#) – Centre for Data Analytics.
- [I-PIC](#) – Centre for Photonics Research.

### UCC Futures Programme

The UCC Futures Programme is a recent cross-institutional and ambitious research programme that enables “...a dynamic enhancement of research, support of innovation and translation of research to tangible solutions to address emerging societal needs and global challenges, to secure a better future for all.” The necessary expertise and people will be recruited through a cluster hiring approach.

Figure 4 illustrates the ten indicative areas identified:

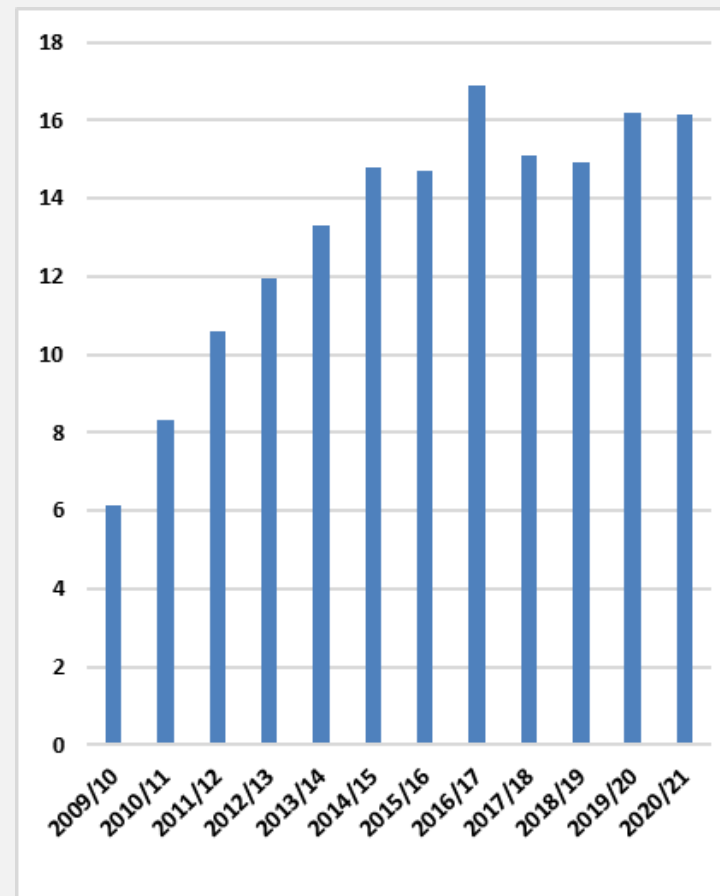


**Figure 4:** UCC Futures Programme indicative areas

For each area, there will be a global call to attract the best researchers to create real and impactful solutions to future societal and global challenges. In 2021, a call under the Future Humanities was launched to establish a Radical Humanities Laboratory. Associated with the initiative were 12 new positions, advertised internationally, generating significant interest.

**Funding success**

Rising to the challenge of stagnation in the national research funding envelope, and following the development and implementation of a wide range of supports and supporting policies, 32% of UCC’s research income is now secured from non-exchequer sources, primarily Europe and Industry. This is the highest proportion ever achieved from non-exchequer sources.



**Figure 5:** UCC Research Funding Profile (€/million)

**EU Funding**

In the most recent EU funding programme, Horizon 2020, UCC researchers secured over €118 million across 237 awards, representing a 16% success rate for UCC, above the EU average of 12%. This surpassed UCC’s already ambitious target of €110.3 million as set out in UCC’s institutional Horizon 2020 Action Plan. This will bolster an even more ambitious approach to the next EU funding programme, Horizon Europe.

In 2021, UCC researchers held 7 prestigious European Research Council Grants (3 Starter, 2 Consolidator and 2 Advanced), and have held 33 cumulatively between 2016/2017 and 2021.

UCC's comprehensive research employment and career management structure is internationally recognised as excellent, it received the EU's HR Excellence in Research Award in 2013, 2018 and 2021. UCC now proactively shares its expertise with other universities across Europe in their efforts to attain this same recognition.

### Collaborative research

Research that is relevant and drives impact for both the economy and society is of critical importance at UCC along with the ambition to be an innovation leader. UCC's approach to delivering innovative and impactful research is rooted in interdisciplinarity and active partnership with international, enterprise and societal stakeholders.

### International collaboration

Demonstrating UCC's focus on growing and maintaining global reach, UCC researchers now collaborate with over 5,000 research-organisations across 140 countries. From 2017-2021, 56.5% of UCC publications were co-authored with an international collaborator (Figure 6).



**Figure 6:** UCC co-authored publications with national and international collaborators from 2017-2021. Proportion of co-authored publications per region illustrated by bubble size (yellow). Source SciVal

**Table 2:** Top-10 countries involved in co-authored publications with (Source: SciVal)

Co-authored Publications 2017-2021	
<b>United Kingdom</b>	<b>3309</b>
Australia	967
United States	945
Netherlands	781
France	725
Spain	657
Canada	609
Denmark	403
Sweden	360
Italy	344

### Industry collaboration with Research

In the 2020/21 academic year, a total of 840 postgraduate research students and 244 postdoctoral research staff were engaged in research projects aligned to enterprise and other national needs.

For this same period, industry funding for UCC research amounted to €11.3 million, an 11% increase from the previous year, and saw 476 active research projects with an enterprise partner.

UCC is the leading Irish university for academic-industry research publications, accounting for 6.6% of UCC's total publications (source SciVal).

### Civic/societal collaboration

Equally important is the engagement with societal and civic groups as partners in research. UCC has set an annual target of completing twenty projects with civic groups, and since 2017 has completed a total of 97.

### Innovation and entrepreneurial activity

UCC has an established innovation and entrepreneurial ecosystem that supports students, staff and recent graduates in realizing their ambitions and developing impactful outputs from their creation and discovery. Many of those who have participated in the supports below, were assisted and fostered in the development of their initial entrepreneurial and innovative ideas within their undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, particularly whilst undertaking placements and final year projects, through support of relevant student societies and other externally supported initiatives.

### Ignite programme

The Ignite programme in UCC is a start-up incubation programme open to all graduates from any 3rd level institution in Ireland. It offers training, mentorship, funding and workspace for new graduate entrepreneurs looking to create a start-up and, unlike some similar programmes, does not take an equity stake in any of the start-ups it supports.

Since 2011, a total of 166 Founders have completed the Ignite programme resulting in the creation of 138 start-up ideas. Ignite alumni have secured €18 million in investment and have generated €40 million in salaries from the 315 jobs they support.

### Gateway UCC

Gateway UCC offers a comprehensive support and work environment for research-led start-ups and spin-outs. Within its c. 1400 sqm footprint, it contains 25 incubation units, 'wet-lab' space for biotechnology companies and hot-desking facilities.

Gateway UCC supported companies have created 480 jobs and raised over €50 million from public and private investment. The Gateway UCC's SPRINT Accelerator programme is designed to support a pipeline of early-stage start-ups led by researchers, helping to set them up for success.

### UCC innovation metrics

These programmes are continuously growing, demonstrating UCC's position as an innovation leader. In a recent Knowledge Transfer Ireland Report from 2021, UCC is ranked among the top universities across all metrics and is the leader in research industry funding, and LOAs\* executed (Table 3).

**Table 3:** Cumulative numbers associated with Knowledge Transfer metrics across Irish Universities for 2021 (Source Knowledge Transfer Ireland 2021)

HEI	Research Expenditure €m	Research Industry €m	Collaborative agreements Industry	Invention/ Software disclosures rec'd	Patents Filed (new)	LOA* executed	Spin outs (per year)	Spin outs (active)
<b>UCC</b>	<b>96.2</b>	<b>11.5</b>	115	<b>66</b>	<b>13</b>	11	45	4
TCD	109.3	6.5	75	53	11	12	26	5
UCD	89.6	6.9	164	79	19	10	25	5
UoG	77.7	4.6	53	43	5	10	19	5
UL	38.6	6.2	50	37	12	13	12	1
MU	32.1	1.2	30	14	5	1	7	1

^Granted patents filed prior to 2021

\*LOA – License, Option or Assignment



## 2. An innovative, connected learning and teaching curriculum that supports and develops student attributes and values

> 5,000 modules	21:1 student-staff ratio
Diverse learning programmes	Connected Curriculum
20.2% students studying part-time or through flexible learning	Programmes across Levels 6-10 on the National Framework of Qualifications

Data above are the cumulative amount from 2017-2021 unless otherwise indicated.

As a research-intensive university, UCC is committed to excellent research that is connected with teaching and learning.

Through its innovative Academic Strategy, UCC has extended the internationally recognised Connected Curriculum model (Fung, 2017) to provide the basis for a transformed and outstanding student learning experience through a Connected University approach. This approach takes a holistic view of the learning experience which involves enhanced synergy between teaching, research and innovation coupled with transformative investment in people, technological and physical infrastructure. The Connected University approach provides the basis for delivering a world-class student learning experience by educating students to make impactful changes both nationally and internationally.

Under the Academic Strategy, UCC has identified six priorities (Figure 7):

1. Connected Curriculum significant outcomes.
2. Align curriculum offerings.
3. Constructively align assessment.
4. Graduate Attributes.
5. Student enrolment plan.
6. Reform of academic governance.

Each Priority has specific actions that, when completed, will achieve each Priority and its goals. Further information on the Academic Strategy and the progress to date for each of the Priorities can be found [here](#).



**Figure 7:** Connected Curriculum Framework

### Graduate Attributes Programme

UCC's Graduate Attributes Programme reflects UCC's academic and strategic vision. This initiative is 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. Since its launch, great strides have been taken in achieving the programme's objectives:

- A student self-assessment tool titled 'Your UCC Graduate Attributes and Value Compass' (GAP) was launched in 2022 and aims to assist student learning and to develop attributes and values that reflect their individual goals.

Further information on the UCC Graduate Attributes Programme can be found [here](#).

### Lifelong and Lifewide Learning

#### Adult Continuing Education (ACE)

UCC's ACE has supported lifelong and life-wide learning for adult learners for over 70 years. ACE offers part-time, flexible programmes that are more accessible to non-traditional learners who may be unable to pursue higher education due to other commitments or circumstances. ACE offers progression opportunities through the provision of qualifications from Level 6 to Level 9 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) enabling learners to further their studies at a level and structure that is more accessible, develop new skills and enhance their employment potential.

### The Irish Management Institute (IMI)

The IMI as part of UCC and aligned to Cork University Business School, offers a suite of executive educational programmes that includes Professional Diplomas, short programmes and customised solutions. The IMI campus is located in Sandyford in Dublin.

### Human Capital Initiative

Under the Government's Human Capital Initiative (HCI) Pillar I, UCC has collaborated with enterprises to co-design six new postgraduate skills-based programmes. These new offerings were developed in collaboration with industry partners to meet skills gaps in the local region and are heavily subsidised (up to 100%).

### Micro-credentials

UCC is a partner in an exciting Irish Universities Association (IUA) project funded through the HCI, to establish a structured framework for assuring quality and recognition of learning through micro-credentials. Micro-credentials can be used to recognise completion of shorter learning experiences. They are also stackable and portable, providing flexibility for learners to learn at a time that suits them. UCC currently offers nine micro-credential courses across diverse topics from bio-pharmaceutical technologies to digital innovation.

UCC also offers a number of Digital Badges, which are a form of validated micro-credentials awarded for non-accredited learning in a specific skill or topic. Digital Badges support the values, attributes and skills in areas of priority for the university and undergo a comprehensive quality approval process to ensure they meet the high educational standards applied to all learning activities in UCC.

### Quality of Programmes

The quality of UCC programmes is guaranteed by external accreditation nationally and internationally. UCC programmes across the university are accredited by professional, regulatory and statutory bodies which attest to the quality of learning and provide assurance to learners and wider society regarding the quality of graduate outcomes. This includes over 40 external accreditation bodies (statutory and professional bodies) including internationally recognised accreditation bodies of the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) and the Association of MBAs (AMBA) bodies.

UCC also assures the quality of its programmes through the input and oversight from external experts to assess the quality of new programmes under development as well as external examiners to evaluate the quality of current programmes and assessment. Additionally UCC has a comprehensive periodic quality review process, based on international peer review to enable ongoing quality assurance and enhancement of all programmes.

The Student Staff Ratio across the higher education sector has been impacted in recent years by national policy and the requirement to take on additional students in 2021 and 2022 in particular (Table 4). UCC is focussing on reducing its SSR over the next five years, with the creation and launch of the Research Futures programme and cluster hiring of new positions aiding this endeavour.

**Table 4:** Reported Student-Staff Ratio across Irish Higher Education Institutions for 2018/19 (Source: Higher Education Authority 2022)

Student-Staff Ratio 2018/19	
<b>UCC</b>	<b>21.3</b>
TCD	17.0
UCD	19.9
UoG	18.5
UL	21.9
MU	25.3

### Enabling Technologies

UCC's Connected University Programme has, at its core, the active engagement of students at all levels with research and enquiry to enhance the student learning experience and set them up for success.

### CourseLeaf Curriculum (CIM)

UCC has rolled out a new curriculum management system called CourseLeaf to provide the necessary curricular flexibility for the programmes it delivers. This required the migration of UCC's modules (>5,000 in total) from the previous system to one that can support the implementation of the objectives of a connected curriculum such as improving overall efficiency, facilitating review and enhancing user experience for our students and staff.

A two-stage approval process was implemented for all modules. We are now working on the programme level offerings and providing greater clarity for our students.

### Canvas

Canvas is UCC's dedicated virtual learning environment (VLE) where students can access the learning content for their modules, submit assignments and other assessments as well as engage with other students and lecturers through an online module forum.

Canvas came online in the 2019/2020 academic year. Since then, there has been over 1,770,000 assessment submissions, 656,942,429 page views, 660,571 submissions of assessments to Turnitin (tool for testing the originality of assessment to protect against plagiarism) and 92,239,609 minutes of recorded lecture content watched.

### UCC Centre for Digital Education

UCC's Centre for Digital Education (CDE) supports the Connected Curriculum by "...empower[ing] staff to improve student learning through the best practice application of technology."

This vision is at the core of the four CDE priorities:

- Deliver student-centred, research-based learning.
- Expand lifelong and life-wide learning opportunities.
- Enhance staff development.
- Unlock the potential of technology.

### TeachDigi

UCC's TeachDigi programme offers a series of responsive digital educational training supports for UCC staff. This, delivered in conjunction with the IUA's 'Enhancing Digital Teaching & Learning' project (IUA EDTL), aims to support UCC staff in their digital education professional development along with existing university wide supports. TeachDigi was an integral part of the institutional response to the pandemic, assisting staff in their online teaching in a way that maintained the highest quality student experience.

### 'InPlace'

UCC is supporting higher education students with work placement and work integrated learning and building towards workforce readiness by using InPlace.

This system connects students with the workplace through flexible management software. InPlace is a complete placement solution for allocating, administering and managing students in work placements, providing benefits to all system users.

### [Pandemic Response](#)

The Pandemic was a challenging time for everyone. Prior to the closure of campuses across Ireland, UCC had already put a continuity plan in place at the core of which was ensuring the safety and wellbeing of our students and staff.

UCC's future-focused approach for IT strategy and agile business continuity plan, enabled by the collective and extraordinary efforts of staff, meant that UCC was in a strong position to rapidly pivot to online delivery of its teaching and research thereby maintaining continuity of its core academic mission and services.

Staff moved immediately from in-person delivery to on-line education, ensuring no interruption to UCC programmes. Their shouldering of the concomitant increase in workloads is illustrative of the vocational commitment of our staff. The immediacy with which the necessary adaptations for online delivery were undertaken reflects the pedagogical abilities of our teaching staff, many of whom have benefitted from UCC's pre-pandemic commitment to CPD in pedagogical practice, which gave teaching staff the toolkit for this pivot.

Alongside this, significant work enabled the continuation of placements and work-integrated learning switching from physical to remote in collaboration with industry partners.

UCC's IT Services team provided increased support for students and staff demonstrated by the numbers of support for 2021 as follows:

Online support – responding to 4,000 calls made and over 7,000 logged cases from students and 25,000 emails, over 8,000 cases logged and 3,700 calls received from staff.

Canvas – 797,295 online submissions.

Microsoft Teams – 300,000 online meetings.

Lectures recorded – 47,407,535 minutes.

Cybersecurity – 120,000 average weekly cyber attacks.

### [UniCov](#)

The UniCoV study is a collaborative randomised clinical study to support the further development of testing, screening and surveillance of Covid-19. The study is led through NUI Galway in partnership with UCC, Trinity College Dublin and University College Dublin.

In UCC, from August 2021 to April 2022, there were 2,220 volunteers participating in the programme. Each performed self-sampling with kits provided through UniCoV and reported their results through the dedicated mobile application as well as dropping of samples to the campus UniCoV collection points.

During this time, over 20,000 tests were completed, representing ~55% of all tests completed across all partner sites of the study. Further information on the UniCoV project can be found [here](#).

### 3. Excellent student experience as they transition into, through and out of UCC

24,195 Registered Students:		60% Female
16,849 Undergraduate	7,346 Postgraduate	39% Male
<b>Transition In</b>	<b>Transition Through</b>	<b>Transition Out</b>
4,010 (23.5%) students from alternative access routes	17% student membership in UCC Clubs	92% primary degree UCC graduates in employment or further study
6,938 1st Preference CAO applications	Over 160 active societies and clubs	>90% of student graduation rate for under and post-graduates
> 1,000 in scholarships and bursaries awarded annually	91.6 % student retention rate (2020/21)	3,494 student placements

#### Transition In

UCC's students are at the core of the university's activities. With over 24,000 registered students in 2021/22 (Table 5), UCC is committed to delivering a world-class learning experience that is accessible to and inclusive of everyone.

As part of its commitment to inclusion across the diverse programmes it offers, UCC supports student access via a number of alternative access routes. For instance, in the 2021/22 academic year, 23.5% students registered through non-traditional access routes including the Disability Access Route to Education (DARE), the Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) and others (See Table 6).

This represents an important waystage on route to the target of reaching 25% student entry via these routes, thereby widening access to further education.

All data from 2021/22 Academic Year where not otherwise indicated

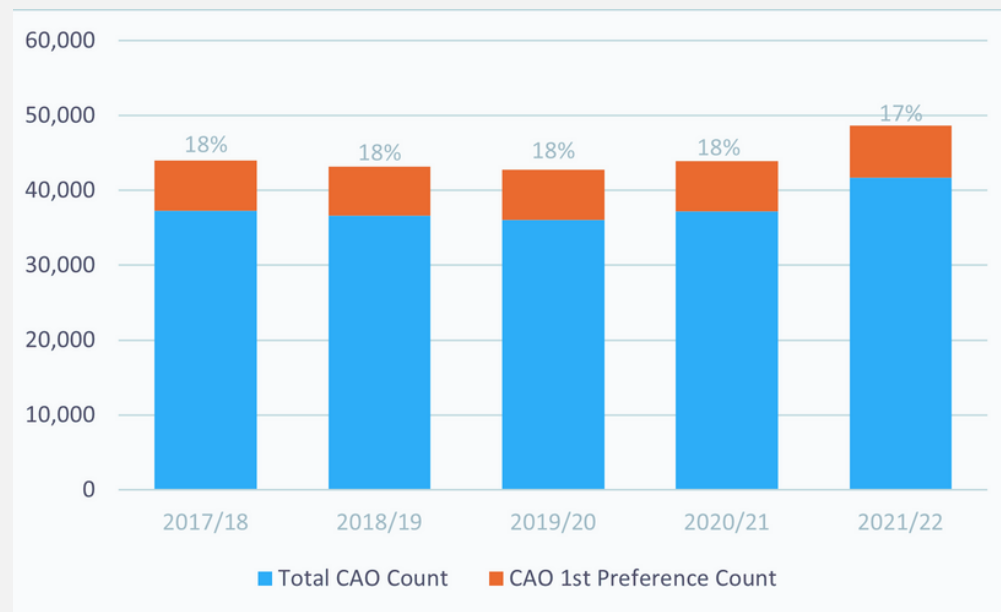
**Table 5:** Total student headcount across all student types by academic year

		Headcount				
Academic Year		2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
UG/PG	Qual Method					
<b>Total</b>		<b>21,204</b>	<b>21,894</b>	<b>22,650</b>	<b>23,137</b>	<b>24,195</b>
UG	Taught	16,255	16,552	16,800	15,881	16,849
PG	Research	1,266	1,278	1,269	1,284	1,424
PG	Taught	3,683	4,064	4,581	5,972	5,922

**Table 6:** Total student headcount across all student types by entry route

Academic Year	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Total
<b>Total Intake</b>	<b>3,796</b>	<b>3,754</b>	<b>3,836</b>	<b>4,042</b>	<b>4,010</b>	<b>19,438</b>
School Leaver	2,588	2,606	2,644	2,729	2,681	13,248
HEAR	243	222	214	191	209	1,079
DARE	204	214	233	226	251	1,128
FETAC	236	199	188	224	162	1,009
EU Applicant	36	35	33	33	87	224
Mature	183	175	156	180	170	864
Other Entry Paths	306	303	368	459	450	1,886

UCC has seen a rise in the numbers of students applying to UCC programmes through the CAO application process, with a 12% increase in overall CAO UCC applications for the 2021/22 academic year, of which 17% were first preferences (Figure 8).



**Figure 8:** Student CAO application counts for UCC programmes by Total Count (blue) and proportion of 1st Preference application count (orange) across academic years

The three most popular UCC programmes selected as CAO 1st preference for the incoming 2021/22 academic year were:

- Arts – 3 years.
- Medicine.
- General Nursing.

The student demand ratio by programme is also very positive and can be used as an indicator of programme viability.

At UCC, learning is approached as a continuous process of self-development, requiring different types and levels of support depending on the student's background, personal context and other considerations. UCC is committed to a 'no-one left behind' approach and provides many types of supports aimed at levelling the educational playing field. These already come into play during the application stage, guiding students towards the right programme of study for them.



In addition to the student support offered at Department, School and College level, the following supports are also embedded to support students:

- [UCC PLUS Programme](#) – provides motivational and education assistance to second-level students to enhance their ability to compete for third-level places.
- [UCC ACCESS+](#) - supporting transition of school leaving students from Cork City DEIS schools.
- [Disability Support Services](#) – guides and supports students with Disabilities and entering via alternative access routes .
- [Scholarships and prizes](#) – UCC awards over 1,000 scholarships and bursaries with a total value over €1m. These include entrance scholarships, sports scholarships and access bursaries e.g. UCC Traveller Success Fund.
- [Student Records & Examinations Office](#) – supporting UCC's incoming and current undergraduate student community of 16,849 students (Table 5).
- [Graduate Studies Office](#) – supporting UCC's incoming and current postgraduate student community of 7,346 students (Table 5).
- [International Office](#) – supporting UCC's international community of 3,900 students from over 104 countries, while making an application, before arrival, after arrival and throughout their time in Ireland and UCC (Table 7).

#### [Nurturing Bright Futures Programme](#)

In March 2021, UCC launched its Nurturing Bright Futures Programme, a pre-entry programme aimed at all students to assist their transition to third level.

This online programme offers students who are preparing to pursue third-level education the resources and tools to help them better understand who they are, what they are interested in studying and what to expect as a future student in UCC. It also offers resources to key support figures in the lives of second-level students such as secondary-school guidance counsellors, teachers, parents and guardians. These types of pre-entry programmes are considered good practice from international research on student retention and student transition into higher education (York 2000 & 2004, Tinto 2002).

#### [Quercus Talented Student's Programme](#)

UCC's Quercus Talented Student's Programme aims to support and promote excellence in academia, sport, creative and performing arts, active citizenship and innovation/entrepreneurship. This is for both prospective undergraduate or level 8 students and students already registered in UCC. Since its launch in 2014, this programme has supported 141 scholars.

#### [Supporting and Recognising Student Excellence](#)

UCC awards a large number of scholarships, prizes and awards to students to recognise their achievements and support their learning. Table 8 below provides a breakdown of the scholarships and prizes awarded to UCC students in the 2020/21 academic year.

**Table 7:** Total student headcount by student type and student domicile

			Headcount				
		Academic Year	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
UG/PG	EU/Non-EU/Ireland						
<b>Total</b>			<b>21,204</b>	<b>21,894</b>	<b>22,650</b>	<b>23,137</b>	<b>24,195</b>
UG	Ireland	Ireland	13,832	13,998	14,262	14,502	14,440
UG	EU	International	875	873	901	358	987
UG	Non-EU	International	1,548	1,681	1,637	1,021	1,422
PG	Ireland	Ireland	4,013	4,213	4,598	6,122	5,855
PG	EU	International	245	268	285	320	403
PG	Non-EU	International	691	861	967	814	1,088

**Table 8:** Number of scholarships and prizes awarded in 2020/21 academic year

Type	Total
College Scholars	3,646
Quercus College Scholars	153
Entrance Scholarships*	239
Other Awards	201

\*Entrance Scholarships include: Quercus Entrance Scholarships, BEd Gaeilge Scholarships, Mary Ryan Scholarships, Keliher Scholarships, Kavanagh Celtic Civilisation Scholarships

### Transition Through

UCC's mission is to facilitate a world-class student experience and to empower and support students so they can achieve their goals, every step of the way. From student life, health and wellbeing, to student learning and the infrastructure underpinning all of this, UCC continues to invest in delivering the best student experience possible.

### Skills Centre

The UCC Skills Centre provides a space for all UCC students to build the confidence and skills they need to thrive as a 21st century student. In the dedicated, active learning space students improve their academic communication, so they can independently discover their own needs and improve their scholastic work and assessment outcomes with confidence. The Skills Centre utilises an interactive, student-centred approach that engages collaborative learning and skills development, which is confidential and non-judgmental, so students can work towards improvement in a comfortable environment. The Skills Centre uses the language of positive psychology to engender in all students the conviction of their ability to become critical, confident communicators.

Further information can be found [here](#).

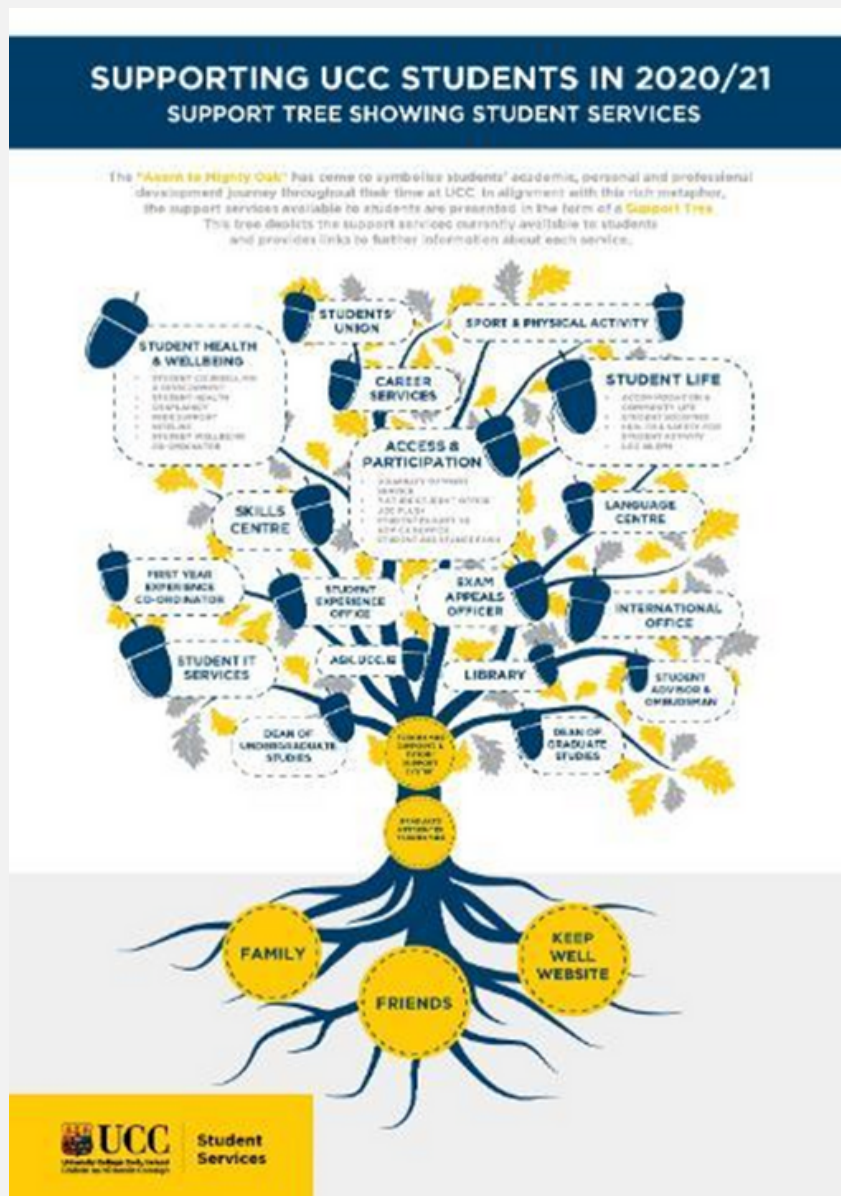
### Student Life

UCC offers a vibrant and active community environment that provides opportunities, key to the student experience from music and arts, sport, special interest activities or volunteering.

- UCC Student's Union is the central representative body, offering a voice to all students on all student matters.

- There are over 100 societies to choose from in UCC.
- Longstanding traditions in clubs with UCC sports dating back to 1911, with over 50 active clubs today.
- UCC 98.3 FM is UCC's award-winning radio station, based on campus and hosted by students. It is the only 24/7 college radio station in Ireland.
- Range of student supports as illustrated in the UCC Support Tree (Figure 9).





**Figure 9:** Student Support Tree Illustration of the different student supports and services available to UCC students. A digital version can be accessed [here](#).

### Student Health and Wellbeing

The mental and physical health and wellbeing of UCC students is paramount. UCC takes a holistic approach to the wellbeing needs of both staff and students and provides training and support for staff in supporting students.

In UCC there is a variety of resources to provide students with the appropriate help and guidance.

- [Chaplaincy.](#)
- [Peer Support.](#)
- [Student Counselling and Development.](#)
- [Student Health.](#)
- [Bystander Intervention.](#)
- [Student Budgetary Advice.](#)

### Supporting Student Learning

#### UCC Boole Library

UCC’s library is one of the focal points of the student experience, functioning not only as a space for learning and study, but also as an important repository of materials for third-level education and research, as well as a site of national importance for creation and discovery.

UCC’s library is an archival treasure trove and vital national repository of knowledge, host to 320 collections in its Special Collections & Archives. Five of these collections are being held on behalf of others, including the Burgess Collection from St. Fin Barres Cathedral and the most recently donated Richard Harris Collection.

The UCC Boole Library is home to both the Skills Centre and Disability Support Services. It is open 7-days a week and has the longest access hours of any academic library nationally. Across UCC's libraries there are over 2,400 study spaces, as well as 96 laptops for loan. UCC library is an innovative and flexible space that supports staff and students with its:

- [Creative zone](#) - a flexible area that can be used for collaboration and group work especially in an entrepreneurship context.
- [Energy pod](#) - a reclining chair with a privacy visor to offer a space for users to relax and refresh.
- [Study spaces](#) - 2,400 spaces available. 'Fishbowl' study area open 24 hours to students.
- [Laptop loan](#) - 96 laptops available for students.
- [Study pod](#) - a sound-proofed space for study or listening to online lectures.
- [Library studio](#) - a fully automated video recording studio.
- [Virtual Reality lounge](#) - an immersive virtual tool that offers users virtual educational, creative and gaming experiences.
- [Digitised course readings and Scan and Deliver services](#) - providing enhanced access to collections.
- [Digital Scholarship Studio](#) - opening for the 2022/23 academic year, this service will provide access to the MakerSpace, 3D printing and design for up to 25 users.
- [Research Services Centre](#) - open for Academic Year 2022/23.

### [Student Hub](#)

In 2016, work began on the new six-storey Student Hub in the center of UCC Campus. Built by extending and conserving the historic Windle Building, this c. 4,000m<sup>2</sup> major capital project was completed in late 2019. Its function is to further enhance the student experience. The vision for the Hub was to create a space that is transformative,

connective and supportive of and for students. The Hub is home to over 150 student clubs and societies, dedicated MakerSpace to nurture creativity and discovery across different mediums and disciplines, flexible learning areas to support student interaction and independent thinking, as well as the core student support services that assist them on their journey.

### [Centre for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning \(CIRTL\)](#)

The Centre for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning (CIRTL), co-ordinates a range of accredited developmental opportunities in the area of teaching and learning for staff and students. This includes flexible forms of learning such as digital badges up to Masters level courses. CIRTL conducts research on Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, actively leading and collaborating on a number of national and international projects.

There are currently 155 students in CIRTL completing Post Graduate courses including:

- Post Graduate Certificate in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (75 students).
- Post Graduate Diploma in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (24 students).
- Masters in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (10 students).
- Teaching and Learning Module for Graduate Studies (29 students).
- Postgraduate Training Module in Scholarly Approaches to Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (17 students).

Further information on CIRTL, the resources it provides related to teaching and learning, current research projects and development opportunities can be found [here](#).

### Transition Out

UCC strives to develop students who are ‘world ready and work ready’ as outlined in UCC’s Institutional Employment Guide and implemented through the learning and teaching approach in UCC. This approach offers diverse exposure to experiential learning, research-based teaching and primes students for success.

In the 2021/22 academic year, 95% of UCC programmes contained a work-integrated learning component through student placement with an external employer. There were over 3,400 placements in that period, giving students a practical experience, a real-time insight into an area of professional interest, and further enhancing their learning (Table 9).

**Table 9:** Number of undergraduate and postgraduate students undertaking a placement in 2021/22 academic year

UG/PG	Qual. Method	2021/22
<b>Total</b>		<b>3,494</b>
UG	Taught	2,807
PG	Research	28
PG	Taught	659

### Career Services

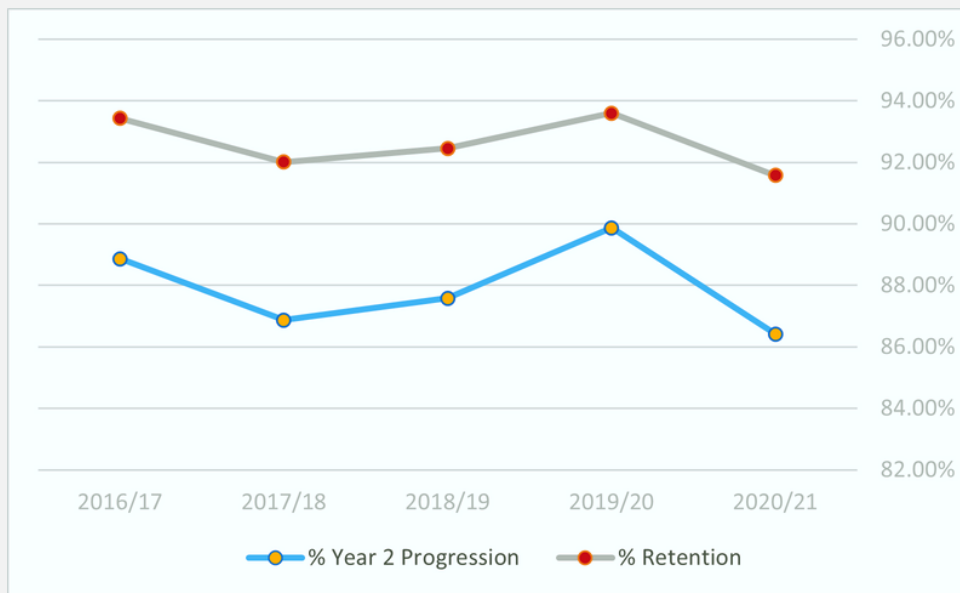
The UCC Career Services mission is to “...help UCC students achieve their career objectives...” through one-to-one career advice and coaching, delivering thematic career workshops to meet the needs of different students, administering over 31 work placement modules in collaboration with UCC academic programmes. This is in order to create opportunities for potential employers to meet UCC students and graduates, and many more supports and services.

These structures and approaches combine to position our students for success as they progress along through their studies and out into the world of work or further study.

UCC Career Services is the second only Irish university service to receive the AGCAS Quality Standard which was achieved in 2022 for excellence in careers education provision” (AGCAS, Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services, UK and Ireland).

### Student Retention and Progression

UCC’s undergraduate retention rate is the highest nationally with 91.6% of students in the 2020/21 academic year continuing within their programme of study. Equally high is the progression rate of UCC undergraduate students from first to second and subsequent academic years which stood at 86.4% in the same period (Figure 10). In the 2022 Higher Education Authority report, covering the 2018/19 academic year, UCC had the joint-lowest non-progression rate of undergraduates from year 1 to year 2 with TCD, reflecting UCC’s sustained efforts and commitment to supporting student success (Table 10).



**Figure 10:** % of UCC undergraduate progression to Year 2 (blue) and retention (red) across academic years

**Table 10:** Undergraduate student non-progression rates for Level 8 programmes from the 2018/19 academic year across Irish universities (Source: HEA System Performance Framework 2022)

HEI	Student non-progression %
<b>UCC</b>	<b>7</b>
TCD	7
UCD	8
UoG	10
UL	9
MU	13

**UCC Graduate employment**

Upon completion of their primary degree programmes, UCC graduates have demonstrated significant success, with 92% of graduates in employment or further study, nine months following graduation and 91.1% three years post-graduation. More than 50% of UCC graduates find full-time employment within nine months after graduating, with the next largest portion (>20%) pursuing further study or training. Compared with other Irish universities in terms of the graduate outcomes of students nine months post-graduation, UCC ranks third overall (Table 11). This is a good result but has been identified as an area for increased commitment. Overall, UCC leads Irish institutions in enabling student success as they transition out of higher education.

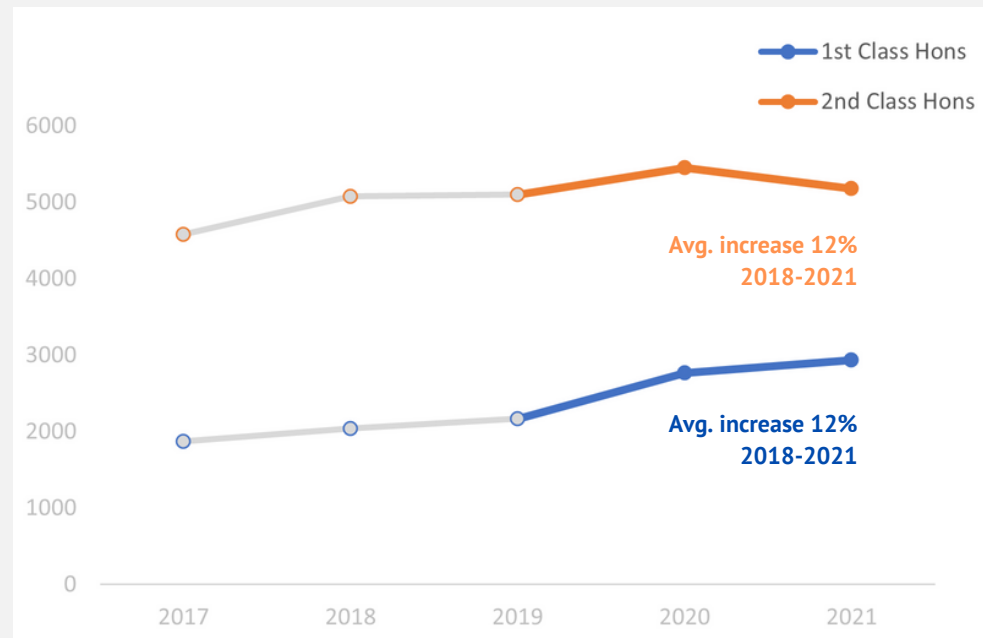
**Table 11:** Honours Degree Graduate outcomes for 2020 (9-months post-graduation) across Irish universities (Source: HEA System Performance Framework 2022)

HEI	Employment/Further Study %
<b>UCC</b>	<b>92.1</b>
TCD	90.8
UCD	92.6
UoG	91.8
UL	94.8
MU	90.8

### UCC Student Graduation

Since 2017, UCC has graduated over 9,000 students annually via each of our colleges or ACE. In the three-year period from 2018 to 2021, the average number of students graduating with a First Class (1.1) or Second Class (2.1) Honours degree has increased by 12% and 3% respectively (Figure 11).

In the 2021 graduation year, a total of 197 PhD students graduated, representing a 10% increase on the previous year. For the same academic year, over 90% of final-year undergraduates and master-level postgraduates graduated successfully.



**Figure 11:** UCC 1st Class Honours (blue) and 2nd Class Honours 2.1 (orange) graduates from 2017-2021





## 4. World-class university enabled through excellent staff and support

3,429 Staff	28% Academic 42% Support 30% Research	Female 56.6 % Male 43 % Undisclosed 0.5 %
81% Academic Staff with PhD	70% Staff in Leadership positions completed leaders training	Top 150 in world for proportion of UCC staff from outside Ireland (33% of total)
24.7% staff at most Senior Academic Grade are female		

University College Cork is committed to being a fully inclusive global university which actively recruits, supports and retains colleagues from all sectors of society. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) is a Key Enabler under UCC’s 2023-2028 Strategic Plan. UCC recruitment practices have equality of opportunity for all applicants at their core. In Tables 12-14, the staff profile can be seen illustrating a large community distinguishing between the different staff categories, the cumulative headcount and full-time equivalency and gender distribution.

**Table 12:** Cumulative FTE and Headcount in 2021 of UCC staff, by staff category

Staff Category	FTE	Headcount
Academic Staff	906	965
Research Staff	941	1013
Professional Services/Support Staff	1304	1451
<b>Total</b>	<b>3151</b>	<b>3429</b>

### Developing our Staff

People are UCC’s principal resource. Their support and development is underpinned through a defined performance management process (Figure 12).

#### UCC COLLEAGUE PERFORMANCE CYCLE – A CONNECTED JOURNEY



**Figure 12:** UCC staff recruitment, probation, performance and development journey

**Table 13:** Cumulative Headcount in 2021 of UCC staff, by staff category and gender

Staff Category	Male	Female
Academic Staff	513	452
Research Staff	524	486
Professional Services/Support Staff	447	1004
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,484</b>	<b>1,942</b>

**Table 14:** Cumulative Headcount in 2021 of UCC staff, by academic category and gender

Academic Category	Male	Female
Professor (incl Scale 2)	131	60
Senior Lecturer	110	73
Lecturer	262	308
<b>Total</b>	<b>503</b>	<b>441</b>

### SALI Initiative

University College Cork successfully competed for posts under the Senior Academic Leadership Initiative (SALI). The SALI initiative aims to strengthen gender diversity at the senior academic leadership level within HEIs and to encourage the benefits that such diversity can deliver. To date UCC has made three appointments under this initiative.

### Health and Wellbeing

UCC provides an extensive range of development opportunities and wellbeing supports to enable individuals and teams to contribute fully to the achievement of goals and objectives in the context of the University.

In the 2021-22 academic year, UCC Staff Wellbeing & Development facilitated 231 training and development workshops, offering 2,492 training places to UCC staff members. Over a third of all UCC staff (1,081) have attended development/training workshops, undertaking an average of two training courses each. The rate of uptake by individual attendees represents an increase of 2% on the previous year.

UCC has also invested in leadership development training across both academic and professional staff cohorts, enabling staff to progress and enhance their abilities in terms of roles of responsibility.

The University also provides a Fee Concession Scheme for staff, the level of which will vary depending on the staff contract, aids in widening the access to further, continuous development of UCC staff to pursue courses in and outside UCC.

### Leadership training

All staff newly appointed to management/leadership positions undertake leadership development. A revised and extended Leadership Programme was introduced for 2021/22 in collaboration with the IMI, resulting in a 187% increase in leadership engagement. This programme includes participation in a peer-support network and a coaching discussion.

### EDI

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

All policies can be accessed [here](#).

### Aurora Programme

The Aurora Programme is a women-only leadership development programme, originally developed by Advance HE in the UK to address the decreasing numbers of female leaders in senior positions. A dedicated programme was created by Advance HE for UCC, targeting women in lecturer, research and professional services roles (administrative & technical) across all academic disciplines and university administration. It is designed to introduce key leadership topics and skills in the workshops and action learning sessions. 160 women at UCC have participated in the Advance HE Aurora – Women's Only Leadership Ignition Programme since its launch nine years ago.



## 5. Leading a more sustainable future for everyone

Gold Rating Award from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education	Teaching connected to UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	Mapping our research activity to the UN SDGs
1st Irish HEI to receive Green Campus Flag	Ranked 8th globally for sustainability as per UI Green Metric	1st in world to achieve ISO certification in energy management
Annual 4% reduction in energy usage		

Sustainability and care for the environment are prominent topics on the university curriculum. They feature on a range of programmes, including civil engineering, energy engineering, chemical sciences, biological sciences, environmental science, geography, spatial planning, geology, sociology, medicine, law and philosophy.

Complementary and parallel to this teaching, substantial and varied environmental and sustainability related research is being undertaken by all of UCC's colleges and schools. Of particular note in this regard are a number of the university's flagship institutes e.g., the Environmental Research Institute, the Institute for Social Science in the 21st Century, the Tyndall National Institute, the APC Microbiome Institute, and more.

The University has adopted the UN Sustainable Development Goals and integrated them into the activities as expressed in the University's Sustainability Strategy, which aims to:

'Increase the sustainability of the university through the embedding of sustainability goals and targets into all aspects of the university's educational, research, ancillary operations, infrastructural developments and interactions with the community. And by doing so to maintain and improve our position as one of the leading green universities in Ireland and the world' ([Sustainability Strategy 2016](#), p7).

In 2010, UCC was the first Irish HEI to be awarded a Green Flag from the Foundation for Environmental Education. This award is reassessed every three years by an external panel of experts and since this first award, UCC has successfully renewed its Green Flag status four times, the only Irish HEI to achieve this thus far.

### Green Rankings

UCC utilises available, objective measures to track progress towards our sustainability targets. For example, in 2021 UCC was the only university ranked in the top ten in the world for both impact and sustainability.

Similarly, in 2018, UCC was the first HEI outside of North America to be awarded a Gold Star from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability Higher Education STARS Programme.

UCC is also the first HEI in the world to achieve the International Standards Organisation (ISO) certification standard ISO 50001 in energy management.

### Actions towards a more sustainable future

UCC has consistently taken steps to reduce its energy consumption and significantly reduce its carbon footprint.

UCC tracks energy consumption across campus and has set a target KPI of reducing total energy usage per m<sup>2</sup> by 3% annually. Over the period from 2017 to 2021, UCC has achieved an average energy usage per m<sup>2</sup> reduction of 4%.

Following the pandemic era, additional energy consumption is expected as a result of the gradual return to normal operations. UCC is actively managing emerging challenges to minimise the potential impact of this.

### UCC Sustainability Strategy

In June 2016, UCC launched its first Sustainability Strategy outlining nine strategic areas with defined performance indicators to measure progress. These areas include:

- Sustainability Citizenship.
- Teaching and Learning.
- Research.
- Food, Health and Well-being.
- Landscape, Heritage and Natural Resources.
- Recycling and Waste Management.
- Energy, Water and Climate Change.
- Procurement and Contracts.
- Commuting and Business Travel.

The conception of this strategy and its subsequent implementation were undertaken by UCC's Green Campus Forum which consists of representatives from across UCC, including staff and students.

### Green Campus Podcast

Sustainability and the impacts of climate change are global challenges which require a global response. Initiating discussion of these topics and making them open and accessible is an effective way to raise broad awareness of and encourage active engagement with the issues. UCC's Green Campus Podcast provides insights into UCC's environmental ethos and activities, as well as providing information on what listeners can do at an individual level. All podcast recordings are freely accessible on the UCC website [here](#).

### Living Laboratory Seed Fund

UCC's Living Laboratory Seed Fund Programme provides funding for research projects that,

"...utilise the knowledge and research capabilities of an Institution's students and staff to solve issues relating to its infrastructure and practices."

The programme funds Research Masters projects and demonstration projects which set out to solve a real-life problem, is aligned with UCC's Sustainability Strategy, and is ideally inter/trans disciplinary involving multiple stakeholder groups including the local community.

UCC has launched two Living Laboratory calls, one in 2018/2019 and one in 2021. A total of six projects have been funded by this initiative, details of which are available [here](#).

### UN Sustainable Development Goals

In 2015, United Nation Member States adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. At its core are 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that identify those areas that require the most urgent and immediate action to improve the quality of life for everyone.

Embedding these SDGs within teaching, research and professional services aligns with UCC's objectives of solving the significant current and emerging challenges faced by society globally. Further equipping students with the skills, attributes and values required to be the independent thinkers and future leaders that will continue this tradition.

### UN SDGs in teaching

Following a 2018 report by the Sustainability, Assessment and Rating System ([STARS Report](#)), that identified a gap in UCC's core curriculum in relation to the UN SDGs, UCC took targeted steps to expand sustainability offerings and developed tools to assist staff in integrating SDGs into the programmes offered.

The UN SDGs have been integrated into UCC's curriculum management tool CourseLeaf. This will provide added utility in the form of reviewing how the SDGs are incorporated across UCC's portfolio of over 5,000 modules.

### UN SDG Toolkit

The SDG Toolkit was funded through the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education and the Higher Education Authority.

This web-based toolkit provides clear guidance on how best to map research, teaching and student learning to the different SDGs. It also hosts a resource library that provides relevant information and reference material to support teaching staff.

### UCC Digital Badge

UCC provides a Digital Badge in Learning and Teaching with the SDGs. This course is available to all UCC staff who are engaged in supporting the student learning experience.

Participants learn how to link the content of their teaching module to the SDGs and to position it within the SDG framework. It offers a chance to reflect on the student's perspective of the SDGs and ways to embed them further in their curriculum.

## 6. An inclusive and open university with strong connections to local and international communities

Inclusive	Open	Connected
University of Sanctuary  Athena Swan Bronze medal holder	>10,000 volunteer hours completed by UCC students	7 academic positions funded by philanthropy
1st Irish HEI to appoint female professors (1910)	137 student research projects with community organisations	€4.6 M received for Cork University Foundation
57 Digital Badges in Universal Design awarded to UCC Staff	Community week	5 active UCC Alumni Chapters

Bunghné de phearsantacht agus d'fhéiniúlacht na hOllscoile, agus den gcaidreamh a bhíonn aici ar an bpobal, is ea an Ghaeilge. Tá aitheantas tugtha dó sin i bPlean Straitéiseach na hOllscoile.

Bíonn ár dteanga le clos go laethúil i measc an phobail mhóir ar an gcampus. Cuireann an Ghaeilge go láidir le meon ilteangach uileghabhálach na hOllscoile. Glacann ar a laghad dhá dtrian de mhic léinn idirnáisiúnta páirt i rang éigin Gaeilge. Tá cuid de bhuíochas na féiniúlachta láidre sin ar a oiread Gaeltachtaí is atá i limistéar na hOllscoile.

A central aspect of the personality and identity of UCC, and of its connection to the wider world, is the Irish language. This is recognised in UCC's Strategic Plan.

Irish is to be heard daily on the campus. The Irish language contributes greatly to the multi-lingual, inclusive ethos of the university. At least two thirds of all visiting students take courses in Irish. Contributing to this healthy profile is the variety of Gaeltacht areas within UCC's catchment area.

### University of Sanctuary

UCC has a proud tradition of supporting learners and people at risk. UCC was granted 'University of Sanctuary' status in 2018 in recognition of its efforts in making UCC an open and welcoming university for all including asylum seekers, refugees and other migrants. UCC's established University of Sanctuary Working Group, has representatives from UCC staff, students and external stakeholders who work with and for asylum seekers in Cork.

In 2019, this group was awarded the prestigious MacJannet Prize by the Talloires Network in recognition of their exceptional student community initiatives.

As part of its Sanctuary mission, UCC provides a number of scholarships and supports for scholars at risk including:

- Adult Continuing Education Sanctuary Scholarship.
- Language Centre Sanctuary Scholarship.
- UCC Sanctuary Scholarship for undergraduates.
- UCC Sanctuary Fellowship for researchers, academics and professional services staff who are fleeing conflict.

In response to the recent influx of refugees fleeing from Ukraine, and in line with its Sanctuary ethos, UCC established a short-term working group to address this crisis from the point of view of the university. Part of the response has been to facilitate students and scholars from Ukraine by adapting existing and developing bespoke measures to allow a smooth transition into the university community. Initiatives include the provision of external reader access to scholars from Ukraine as well as the development of a targeted ACE course, “An Introduction to Student Life in Ireland” which was designed to help Ukrainian scholars joining the university community and provide them with orientation on Irish university life, as well as an introduction to Irish politics, culture and society more broadly. The course culminated in a special graduation ceremony; further information can be found [here](#).

### [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion](#)

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion for all is at the heart of UCC’s policy in its teaching, research and community today with strong linkages to the past. In 1885, UCC was a leading Irish HEI in the admission of female students and was the first university to appoint female professors in 1910.

UCC’s approach is evidence-based and informed by current good practice and expertise and is supported by dedicated functions that have existed in UCC since 1998 to 2002 in the form of its Higher Education Equality Unit and including the establishment of the UCC EDI Unit in 2017.

### [EDI Unit](#)

UCC’s EDI Unit is leading the development of the UCC EDI strategy as part of the overall university Strategic Plan, ensuring that what we do as a university is aligned with EDI principles. In 2018 the EDI Unit surveyed UCC Staff and students in relation to their EDI experiences and needs, feeding the findings into the EDI action planning and the EDI Strategy. Across both surveys, a total of 765 staff and 2,100 students participated, with provisional summary reports on the results available online [here](#).

### [EDI Training Hub](#)

On its online EDI Training Hub, UCC’s EDI unit provides training resources and information on an array of EDI-related topics including Race and Racism, Neurodiversity and LGBTI. The hub can be accessed [here](#).

### [Universal Design](#)

As part of their continuous professional development, UCC staff can attain a Digital Badge upon completing a Universal Design (UD) course. This course covers the core principles of and good practice in UD when designing modules in higher education so that they are more inclusive and accessible. During the period 2018 to 2021, 57 staff were awarded the Digital Badge in UDL.



More information on UDL and the wider approach of ‘Inclusive UCC’ can be found [here](#).

### Athena Swan

The Athena Swan Charter was created to support HEIs and their academic departments and professional service units in taking steps to enhance gender equality in an impactful and sustainable way. In recognition of reaching a number of milestones and targets, units can be awarded an Athena Swan medal.

UCC has held a bronze Athena Swan award since 2016, which was successfully renewed in 2019. As part of its 2023 institutional renewal, UCC is planning to renew at Silver level.

At departmental level, a total of ten UCC Schools and Departments hold an Athena Swan bronze medal (Table 15).

**Table 15:** Athena Swan Status across Irish universities by number and type (Source: HEA System Performance Framework 2022)

HEI	Athena Swan Award Type	
	Institutional	Departmental
<b>UCC</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10</b>
TCD	1	14
UCD	1	14
UoG	1	8
UL	1	13*
MU	1	5

\*UL has one silver Departmental award. All other awards are bronze.

### UCC Pride

UCC has made considerable progress since the first LGBT+ networks were established in UCC in the 1980’s while recognizing that more needs to be accomplished. This was the focal point of its #ProgressWithPride campaign during Cork Pride week 2021, which included events like the Coming Out Day panel discussion and other initiatives to show support for our LGBTQIA+ peers like UCC’s Rainbow Walkway, the first university to do so (Figure 13). In 2022, UCC was proud to be the official sponsor of the Cork Pride Festival.



**Figure 13:** Unveiling of UCC’s Rainbow Walkway as part of Cork Pride Festival 2021

### [Gender Identity and Expression Policy](#)

UCC endeavours to provide its staff and students with an open and welcoming environment that is free from discrimination, harassment or victimisation. In accordance with this principle and recognising the differences that exist between physical sex and gender expression and identity, UCC developed its Gender Identity and Expression Policy and associated guidelines on its implementation.

### [UCC Cork Traveller Ally](#)

In February 2022, the Cork Traveller Women's Network and the Cork Traveller Visibility Group presented UCC as one of the first Ally Awards in recognition of "...UCC's ambition to increase the number of Traveller graduates at the university and improve Traveller education outcomes in general."

The group highly commended UCC's Leadership in the Community Diploma that was co-developed with the Southern Traveller Health Network and funded through the SOAR project. In April 2022, 21 traveller women graduated from the course.

### [Open University](#)

UCC's historic campus is not just for UCC's staff and student communities but for anyone who is interested in connecting with and discovering what UCC has to offer.

In its Civic and Community Engagement Plan 2017-2022, UCC set out to advance its engagement with and enhance its deep-rooted connection to the outside community.

### [Community Week](#)

UCC celebrates its close connections with the surrounding area each year during the UCC Community Week which holds free public and community events open to anyone.

### [Neighbourhood Grant Scheme](#)

The scheme provides seed funding to neighbours of UCC who are involved in community projects together with UCC students and/or staff. The scheme is available to anyone with an idea that contributes to community life, 'neighbourliness' and building connections between people in the area.

### [The Glucksman Gallery](#)

UCC is home to the Lewis Glucksman Gallery, a cultural and educational institution that promotes visual arts research, creation and exploration. It is a place where ideas, research, education and art meet in a socially engaged and participatory environment working for the community. The Glucksman also works with children living in direct provision, hosting a dedicated exhibition of their artwork in 2015 and again as part of UCC's Refugee Week in 2022.

### [Community-Academic Research Links](#)

The Community-Academic Research Links (CARL) initiative at UCC matchmakes UCC students' expertise with the research needs of Civil Society Organizations in the Cork region. Under this initiative, students from a range of disciplines collaborate with community and voluntary sector partners using a "participatory research" model, presenting their findings as part of their undergraduate final-year project or postgraduate Masters research. Based on the 'Science Shop' model, CARL collaborations have resulted in the completion of 132 research reports to date, details of which can be accessed publicly online [here](#).

### Outreach

UCC Plus provides outreach activities to 28 DEIS primary schools in Cork and 31 DEIS secondary schools in Cork, Kerry and Waterford. Between 2017 to 2021, UCC Plus supported 22,500 primary and secondary school students in these schools.

UCC Plus also supports under-represented school leavers and students who join UCC through the HEAR programme. Over 4,100 UCC Plus students have been supported over the 2017 to 2021 period.

### Student Volunteering

UCC students completed 10,528 volunteer hours during the 2019/20 academic year. One UCC volunteer, Vera Stojanovic, a Social Science student and founder of 'BetterTogether', a local charity offering education opportunities to women in direct provision, was awarded the Cork Volunteer of the Year in 2020 by Minister Joe O'Brien.

### UCC Visitor's Centre

Since 2005, the Visitors' Centre has welcomed over 80,000 primary school children, 50,000 post primary students, run daily public tours and dozens of tours for departments weekly. With the lifting of the pandemic restrictions, their services are fully booked way in advance, with visitor numbers steadily increasing to pre-pandemic numbers.

The Visitors' Centre runs daily tours from Monday to Saturday, and also runs Admission/Recruitment style tours for prospective and overseas students and their families. For the last year, in collaboration with the Recruitment office, the Visitors' Centre has run mini open day style tours for secondary schools on Fridays. UCC is ranked 5th on TripAdvisor among destinations to visit in Cork, with regular strong endorsements and recommendations from visitors.

In recent years, the Visitors' Centre has risen to challenges including particularly those presented by the pandemic by creating new ways of bringing the university story to the public, including by offering virtual tours, podcasts and publications. During the lockdown, the centre produced UCC's first ever children's book "A Bee at UCC", now on its 3rd print. The book is available in every public library in Ireland, used as a teaching resource in schools, charities and Direct Provision Centres, and is available at most tourist destinations and bookshops in Cork city.

### Connected University

#### Alumni

UCC has a large and diverse alumni population of c. 200,000 people. With the support of UCC's Alumni and Development Office, Alumni Chapters and special interest groups can stay connected with each other and UCC long after graduation. In the 2020/21 Academic Year, there were a total 5 active UCC Alumni Chapters, slightly short of UCC's annual target of eight, moving in the right direction.

#### Cork University Foundation

Established in 1996, the Cork University Foundation is a registered charity (No. 11831) that supports the educational and research activities of UCC through generous contributions from UCC Alumni and other benefactors. The Foundation is an integral source of support for cross-university strategic initiatives and in realising UCC's mission.

The Foundation has had significant success in its fundraising activities, raising €4.6 million in the 2020/21 academic year, a 35% increase from the previous year.

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## Abbreviations

ACE	Adult Continuing Education	IMI	Irish Management Institute
AHC	Academic Health Sciences Centre	IUA	Irish Universities Association
AY	Academic Year	KTI	Knowledge Transfer Ireland
CACSSS	College of Arts, Celtic Studies & Social Sciences	LOAs	License, Option or Assignments
CAO	Central Applications Office	MaREI	Marine Renewable Energy Ireland
CDE	Centre for Digital Education	MHI	Mental Health Ireland
CIM	CourseLeaf Curriculum	MU	Maynooth University
CIRTL	Centre for the Integration of Research, Teaching & Learning	NFQ	National Framework of Qualifications
CoMH	College of Medicine & Health	PG	Postgraduate
CPD	Continuing Professional Development	SEFS	College of Science, Engineering & Food Sciences
CUBS	Cork University Business School	STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics
DARE	Disability Access Route to Education	TCD	Trinity College Dublin
EDI	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion	THE	Times Higher Education
ERC	European Research Council	UCC	University College Cork
FETAC	Further Education & Training Awards Council	UCD	University College Dublin
FWCI	Field-weighted Citation Index	UG	Undergraduate
FTE	Full-time Equivalence	UL	University of Limerick
HCI	Human Capital Initiative	UN SDGs	United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
HEA	Higher Education Authority	UoG	University of Galway
HEAR	Higher Education Access Route		
HEI	Higher Education Institution		
HSE	Health Services Executive		
ICT	Information Communication Technologies		