

University College Cork

Annual Institutional Quality Assurance Report 2020

Based on the reporting period 1 September 2018 – 31 August 2019



The Cyclical Review Process

Part 1

Overview of internal QA governance, policies and procedures

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

1. Overarching Institution Quality Policy

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

Quality at UCC

Vision, Mission and Values

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

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

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

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

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

Goal One

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

Goal Two

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

Goal Three

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

Goal Four

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

Goal Five

Strengthen our infrastructure and resource base.

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

Strategic Plan 2017 – 2022, p. 23.

Quality Enhancement Policy Statement

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

In our quality enhancement approach, we are committed to:

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

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

The practical realisation of the goals outlined in our vision, mission and values statement is made apparent in the University’s Priority Actions which set out priority activities and projects over the

period of the strategic plan. Progress and development against Priority Actions are managed by, and reported on, through the University Management Team Strategy (UMTS), a forum of all senior university managers which is chaired by the President of the University. UMTS adopts an Annual Plan approach to monitor progress internally. Through UMTS members, the strategic goals are embedded and operationalised in the quality procedures and processes University-wide, both horizontally and vertically, for education, research and services.

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

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

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

2. Quality assurance decision-making fora

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

The main strands of institution-level decision-making fora for quality are the Quality Enhancement Committee and Academic Council both of which are under oversight of Governing Body. (<http://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/ocla/universitygovernance/documents/OrganisationalStructure.pdf>)

Quality Enhancement Committee

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

Academic Council

The responsibilities of Academic Council for managing and controlling the academic affairs of the university including curriculum, instruction and education are defined by statute (<https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/ocla/statutesregulations/documents/PrincipalStatuteApril2018.pdf>)

Academic Council is supported by an Academic Board with delegated authority on certain matters; established standing committees and a range of sub-committees to manage academic affairs across the scope of the University's education, research and related services. The work of these sub-committees is engaged in coordinating and implementing governing structures, policies and procedures. The work of the Academic Council is supported by an Academic Secretariat and the governing procedures for the conduct of committees is set out in the Academic Council Committee Handbook (https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/academicsecretariat/Handbook_Aug2018.pdf)

Management of Quality

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

the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG) and national policies and procedures as outlined in Quality and Qualifications Ireland's (QQI) Guidelines.

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

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

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

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

Confirmation of QA Policy and Procedures

1. Programme Design and Approval (ESG 1.2)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*Curriculum and examination related information for programmes offered through Adult Continuing Education may be found on the Adult Continuing Education Website

(<https://www.ucc.ie/en/study/courses/?courseType=AdultContinuingE>)

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

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

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

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

2. Programme Delivery and Assessment (ESG 1.3)

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

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

Assessment details for individual modules are recorded in the Book of Modules (<https://www.ucc.ie/admin/registrar/modules/>).

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 University Calendar (<https://www.ucc.ie/admin/registrar/calendar/>). 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, 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. 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 (<https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/recordsandexaminations/RecheckApplicationForm2017.pdf>) and Appeals (<https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/recordsandexaminations/AppealApplicationForm.pdf>).

External Examiners play a vital role in the assessment of programmes, assuring academic standards and advising on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. The External Examiner confirms that the academic standards of programmes, modules and the awards to which they lead are consistent with the academic outcomes specified and are comparable to those achieved in the subject area in

equivalent universities internationally. [Guidelines for External Examiners](#) includes information on the role of the Extern Examiner and the role of the Head of School/Department/Discipline.

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

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

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

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

To ensure alignment with national 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 [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 will be piloted, with the aim of improving collaboration and engagement between Schools, Centres and Institutes.

UCC undertook its second institutional Research Quality Review (RQR) in 2014/2015. The majority of units in UCC, including research centres, were reviewed by 15 panels comprising more than 300

international peer reviewers. All Panel reports have been published in the [Report of the Research Quality Review 2015](#).

Building on the experience garnered from the first two rounds of this institutional-wide initiative, planning for the next RQR to commence in 2022/23 is underway, with the objective of continued enhancement of research quality across the University.

To provide oversight and monitoring of research project deliverables on an ongoing basis during the life-time of the project, prior to institutional sign-off on project reports to funding agencies UCC have introduced measures to ensure that project deliverables are being met as agreed with the relevant funding agencies, that relevant T&Cs are being complied with, and that potential issues arising are identified and resolved on a timely basis.

Supports and policies for postgraduate research students are detailed on the following pages: <https://www.ucc.ie/en/study/postgrad/currentresearchstudents/>

The [UCC model of structured PhD education](#) is comprised of a programme of supportive and developmental elements with a minimum level of 15 credits of coursework and training. All PhD students are supervised by a supervisory team or have a sole supervisor and a PhD advisor and are required to undergo a progress review each year.

4. Student Lifecycle (ESG 1.4)

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

The Admissions Office and the Recruitment Unit together oversee the recruitment and admission of EU undergraduate students and the support of first year students. Prior to entry, the Admissions Office supports prospective students by providing clear information regarding all undergraduate programmes, entry requirements and application procedures. This is mainly done through the publication of relevant literature in print and online, through events such as Open Days and Parent Information Evenings, and through school visits. Following are links to the online resources used to disseminate information on the programmes offered:

- www.ucc.ie/prospectus
- www.ucc.ie/en/study/undergrad/courses
- www.ucc.ie/en/study/undergrad/entryreqs
- www.ucc.ie/caolive
- www.ucc.ie/en/study/undergrad/yourcao/

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, etc. These are clearly published in the university calendar and on the Admissions webpages. These can be found on the following links:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

www.ucc.ie/en/study/undergrad/entryreqs/transferadvancedentry/.

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

- www.ucc.ie/en/uccplus/
- www.ucc.ie/en/dss/dare/
- www.ucc.ie/en/dss/dare/preentry/
- www.ucc.ie/en/uccplus/hear/
- 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](#).

First year students who have completed undergraduate modules previous to commencing their studies in UCC may be eligible for an exemption from the corresponding UCC module or for Advanced Entry to a year beyond first year. Exemptions are approved at School/Department level after the student has registered. Module exemption most often comes into consideration for students who

have come into UCC through the Advanced Entry process (to a year beyond first year). Information regarding such transfers is available at www.ucc.ie/en/study/undergrad/entryregs/transferadvancedentry/.

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

5. Teaching Staff (ESG 1.5)

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

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/registrar/theconnecteduniversity/academicstrategy/>

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

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

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

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

UCC has well developed [recruitment and appointment procedures](#) and all academic posts are advertised publicly. 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.

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.

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/hr/wellbeingdevelopment/training/plan/uccmentoringschemes/>

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 is committed to staff wellbeing and has been awarded the Ibec Keepwell mark, an evidence-based accreditation in workplace wellbeing. <https://www.ucc.ie/en/hr/wellbeingdevelopment/>

The University is committed to the support and promotion of [staff development and training](#). There is also an [employee assistance programme](#) in place.

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

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

UCC has signed up to the [Athena SWAN](#) Charter for gender equality. Participation in the Athena SWAN Charter supports UCC to identify areas for positive action on gender equality and equality issues more broadly, and to recognise and share good practice

UCC holds a Bronze institutional Athena SWAN award and applied for a second Bronze award in November 2019. Five Schools (Pharmacy, Chemistry, BEES, Food and Nutritional Sciences and Business Information Systems) have achieved a Bronze departmental award. The School of Nursing and Midwifery and the Dental School and Hospital will apply for Bronze awards in April 2020, while the Tyndall National Institute and the School of Law are preparing applications for November 2020 submission.

The [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion](#) unit supports the University's commitment to fostering an inclusive culture that promotes equality, values diversity and supports initiatives designed to maintain a working, learning and social environment in which the rights and dignity of all staff and students are respected. Athena SWAN connects to range of equality initiatives already underway within UCC, such as the Gender Identity and Expression Policy and Guidelines, the Race Equality Forum, the LGBT+ Staff Network, and the [Aurora Leadership Development Programme](#) UCC's commitment to an internationally recognised gender equality initiative allows UCC an opportunity to demonstrate our commitment to equality in specific, measurable ways.

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

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

The delivery of research-based teaching and learning with a world class student experience is a strategic goal (Goal One) for UCC as outlined in the University's Strategic Plan 2017-2022 (<https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/strategicplanning/UCC-Strategic-Plan-2017-2022.pdf>) and is further articulated in UCC's Academic Strategy 2018-2022.

The Office of the Vice President for Learning & Teaching (OVPLT) advises and contributes to the development of policy for teaching and learning and, through national and international engagement, ensures that policies and practices at the University are appropriately benchmarked and informed by good practice. In tandem with other quality assurance controls and procedures (such as external reports, external professional bodies accreditations and standards, policies such as "Fitness to Practise" etc.), OVPLT is actively engaged the promotion and elevation of a culture across the university of developing, disseminating and celebrating quality and excellence in teaching. The role of the Office is to enhance the staff and student learning experience through staff development opportunities and through engagement in innovative research-informed teaching to ensure that

innovative teaching and learning approaches are fostered and supported and a student-centered approach to research-based teaching is rooted in the culture (www.ucc.ie/en/teachlearn/abouttheovptl/). It supports a wide range of CPD activities for staff through the Centre for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning (CIRTL) www.ucc.ie/en/cirtl/ which provides support for all staff and postgraduate students in their teaching and learning roles. Accredited programmes in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education up to and including NFQ level 9 (Postgraduate Certificate/Postgraduate Diploma/Masters) are offered for all categories of staff who support student learning, along with tailored modules for postgraduate students engaged in teaching. All newly appointed staff are required to enrol in and complete the Postgraduate Certificate programme, and participation rates in the accredited programme are an institutional performance measure through the HEA Compact process. The Centre staff also run workshops on Teaching and Learning and Supervisory practices for research staff via the PostDoc Development Hub (www.ucc.ie/en/hr/research/devhub/) and supports the Graduate Studies Office to run tailored workshops for staff on research supervision.

CIRTL also delivers highly successful international programmes (of varying durations) for visiting scholars. A range of seminars on teaching, learning and assessment topics are available on an open basis to all staff, and are provided on main and satellite campuses. University staff have access to appropriate CPD within their disciplinary or professional domains to support their teaching as well as access to the wider national seminars through the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning. Staff of the Centre also support the development of new and innovative pedagogies which underpin different modes of delivery. The Office's quarterly newsletters issued to all UCC staff (and beyond) are just one of the other ways that it disseminates information on good practices locally and elsewhere (<https://www.ucc.ie/en/teachlearn/ovptlnews/>).

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

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

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

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/teachlearn/designoflearningspaces/hubresearch/>

The [Centre for CPD](#) plays a significant role in the governance of ECTS and non-ECTS CPD activities, ensuring curriculum quality and consistency through its policies and procedures. These policies and procedures ensure that the Office of the Vice President for Teaching and Learning has visibility of the full portfolio of CPD activities throughout the University. From a teaching and learning perspective, these CPD activities ensure that we support our graduates in their chosen profession, continuing the University's commitment to lifelong learning.

The [Centre for Adult Continuing Education \(ACE\)](#) within UCC provides lifelong learning opportunities (accredited and non-accredited) at a number of outreach centres in Cork and beyond, including at Cork Prison and through the municipal library network and the credit unions network, 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 NQF levels 7, 8 and 9 programmes are delivered to jobseekers and workers who wish to upskill and increase their employability chances.

The university's [Language Centre](#) 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 comply with university awarding body regulations. 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 Office of the Vice President for Learning and Teaching celebrates excellence in Teaching through annual institutional Staff Awards (www.ucc.ie/en/teachlearn/staffawards/), and in early 2019 advertised and managed a competitive call in-house for €0.5m in small to medium grant funding. 26 projects were shortlisted (by an evaluation panel of internal and external academics and student representation) to facilitate the design and delivery of small projects at UCC which have since had and will continue to have an institution-wide impact through dissemination events for other/all staff.

The 2017/18 academic year introduced the Skills Centre to UCC's community for the first time. The Skills Centre is a dedicated, active learning space that helps students improve their academic communication, so they can independently discover their own needs and improve their scholastic work and assessment outcomes with confidence. This interactive student-centred learning environment, along with the provision of development supports, facilitates and promotes social and academic integration for students, enhancing their student engagement. Group sessions and one to one appointments, facilitated by peer tutors and staff members, are available to students so they can address their study needs. Throughout the year sessions in academic communication are available to the students. These include areas such as academic writing skills and presentation skills. In addition, students can develop critical thinking skills to further enhance their engagement in their chosen degree. There has been a 45% increase in the number of student engagements since inception.

The UCC Skills Centre is committed to excellence in learning and teaching. Our dedication to exceptional student engagement makes the Centre more approachable to students and ensures that they are always made feel welcome and comfortable. Our curriculum design is based on a constructivist model of learning that is underpinned by a core set of tutorials to enhance written and verbal communication. We benefit from a unique collaboration between a wide range of stakeholders across the University, and our reach continues to grow. Unlike other areas of the University that operate within subject boundaries, teaching to students who have achieved specific entry requirements to study at UCC, the Skills Centre team facilitates the learning of a more diverse, heterogeneous group of students who come seeking guidance through a myriad of personal and academic challenges. We are also in a unique position that enables us to harness expertise across a wide range of disciplines and come together in a cross disciplinary way to create excellent resources for our students.

Our community-based approach to learning and teaching means that communication, coupled with reflection, is our central pedagogical foundation. All our group sessions and approaches therein are generic, meaning that they can be applied to any subject area and are fully transferable to all other areas of learning. The core team, which is overseen by the Skills Centre Coordinator, is responsible for the design and development of this curriculum, which continues to evolve and improve, based on the feedback and emerging needs of attending students. The learning materials themselves are created using inductive methods of learning that are differentiated by task and outcome. Dedicated sessions equip students with the skills needed to master their assignments and the potential pitfalls common to University settings, as they transition through higher education. In addition to our scheduled sessions we are invited to take part in dedicated interventions with schools and departments. These programmes are always planned utilising design thinking, problematising the skills gap, seeking effective, bespoke solutions. Current Digital Badges, UCC’s newest micro-credential include [SPEAK](#), our six-week presentation skills programme.

We engage with our part-time and blended learners through our [3 hour Saturday sessions covering Academic Writing and Academic Development](#) for our Adult Continuing Education students.

The Skills Centre utilises a variety of digital channels to communicate with students. These include [Youtube](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#) and [Spotify](#). An excellent suite of digital assets has been created to enable our virtual channels to be harnessed for education as well as communication. The [Gimme 2 Minutes](#) series helps student explore writing conventions, introduces the concept of [SPAG](#)ing your work, [Notetaking](#) systems and [Time Management](#), which all play a role in unlocking their potential. In addition, the [Write Here, Write Now](#) podcast series facilitates the development of the academic writer. This high-quality six-part podcast series, funded by the Broadcasting Authority Ireland (BAI), offers third-level students an accessible yet entertaining introduction to common issues that they might experience in academic communication. [Write Here, Write Now](#) focuses on the most frequent issues students encounter in their written assignments in a portable and, most importantly, easily digestible format. Each of the six episodes explores one academic writing skill and offers students helpful tips and advice for improving their own academic writing.

Skills Centre Attendance	2017/18	2018/19
Sessions	1,856	3,480
One-to-one	917	923
Drop-in	865	865
Total student interactions	3,638	5,268

Table 1: Skills Centre annual student engagement

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

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

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

The VP for Learning & Teaching and several OVPLT staff are committee members and/or secretariat.

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, itself a sub-policy of the emerging "Assessment Strategy" (expected approval date June 2020). The articulation of practices (e.g. Reasonable Accommodations) at UCC heretofore undocumented is a further shift towards greater coherency and transparency.

7. Resources and Support (ESG 1.5)

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

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

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

Student policies and procedures include: Student Charter, Student Mental Health: Policy 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 & Participation, Careers, 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 & Participation which includes Disability Support, Mature Students Office, UCC PLUS⁺, 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; and the Granary Theatre, all of which provide a range of specialised services to students. <https://www.ucc.ie/en/studentexperience/>

Access

A key strategic priority for UCC is ensuring that the student body in University College Cork reflects the diversity and social mix of Ireland's population.

A new structure for Access and Participation was established in January 2019. A Head of Access and Participation was appointed to lead and oversee the University’s Access Services, the Disability Support Service, Mature Student Office and UCC PLUS+ Programme. The Access services are fulfilling the objective of the Strategic Plan to ‘continue our commitment to widening participation and enhancing access for all students’.

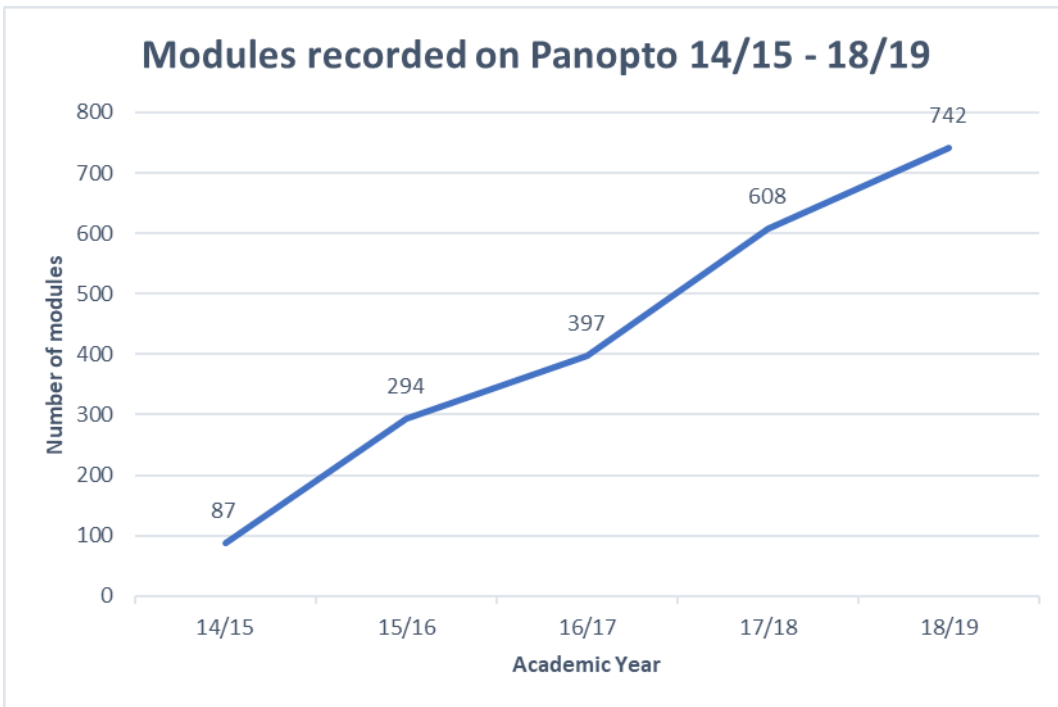
The work of Access and Participation services span the student life cycle, commencing with outreach work to primary schools and supporting students right through to employment. An estimate of 7,000 prospective students, teachers and parents engaged with the services on an annual basis. In 2019/20 **23.5 %** of first-year undergraduate students entered University College Cork via Access pathways. UCC’s current Strategic Plan 2017-2022 aims to achieve 26% of the student intake from these areas.

An overview of the work of each of the Access services is outlined below.

Disability Support Service

The Disability Support Service provides support to over 1,500 students with disabilities and is a core element of the Access Programme in UCC.

Students registered with the Service have the support of a Disability Advisor who will work with the student to identify the appropriate accommodations that the student will need to access during their time in UCC. This will vary depending on the student’s disability but also the course of study. For example, in the last 5 years DSS has worked very closely with Audio Visual Media Service and Academic Departments to promote Lecture Capture in UCC. The software used for Lecture Capture in UCC is Panopto. Staff support for this accommodation continues to grow which can be seen by the increase in the number of modules being recorded. The diagram below shows the upward trend over the past 5 years.



As with all students transitioning into to UCC and progressing to employment are difficult, but for students with disabilities these are a lot more challenging so as a Service we have specific programmes Pre-Entry Outreach Programme and the Employability Programme that support students looking to come to UCC and also those moving to employment which are outlined below.

Pre-Entry Outreach Programme

The Service works to increase access and participation of students with disabilities and specific learning difficulties by delivering a very proactive and innovative pre-entry programme. There are three strands to the Pre-Entry Outreach Programme all aimed at increasing the access for students with disabilities to Higher Education. They are as follows:

1. Disability Access Route to Education (DARE)

UCC is part of the national third level admissions scheme for school leavers with disabilities and specific learning difficulties known as Disability Access Route to Education (DARE). DARE utilises a multi-indicator approach to assessing applications from such students. (Further information on the DARE scheme is available on www.accesscollege.ie). 5% of places are reserved in all undergraduate degree programmes in UCC for students deemed eligible under the DARE scheme, who have the academic ability to perform well in university, but who may not have the points required through the CAO system. This ensures students with disabilities and specific learning difficulties are able to compete for places along with their peers. A total of 248 students who applied to UCC under DARE accepted places in 2018/2019, while overall our entrants were 288 in 2018/2019.

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

2. Assistive Technology (AT) Outreach Programme

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

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

The partnership with the Cork Education Support Centre (CESC) is ongoing and continues to deliver a range of evening training sessions to meet the needs of SNAs and teachers who cannot otherwise access training. In July two a week long CPD courses in Assistive Technology were delivered to teachers in in the Assistive Technology in UCC.

The Outreach programme has also further developed links with CRANN and Enable Ireland Children's Services educational psychology service to target more students with physical difficulties who are currently under represented in Higher Education.

PATH 3 - SOAR Enabling Transitions strand

Following on the AT Outreach Programme we have developed specific training in technology to make learning easier for Transition Year students, there is also an element for teachers and SNAs as they support these students. This training focuses on freeware and free accessibility features and students are invited to bring in and use their phones and their own devices.

The training can be adapted in each school to align with the technology that the school uses. The focus of term 1 is to look at a range of software such as text to speech and mind mapping and in term 2 target SEN students with AT specific to their needs and assessments with more specialised, individualised training and support.

3. Summer Schools for students with Sensory Disabilities, Physical Disabilities and Autism.

In 2018/19 the DSS linked with the Visiting Teacher Service and Special Educational Needs Organisers as well as Disability Organisations to identify students with disabilities in both primary and second level who would benefit by participating in workshops the DSS that run annually during the Summer. This events are aimed at creating a culture of ambition amongst young students with disabilities. Current students with similar disabilities are involved in the workshops and act as mentors providing incoming students with role models they can emulate. A key element of these events is an Information Session for parents on the day which outlined the supports the students can avail of when progressing to 3rd level.

Employability Programme

- *DSS Mentoring Programme*

In the academic year 2018/19 a total of 54 students took part in the DSS Mentoring Programme. These students were mentored by professionals from companies including Apple, Janssen, Boston Scientific, Dell EMC, Morgan McKinley, and Stryker. Feedback from mentors and mentees was very positive, and the programme is set to grow further in 2019/20.

- *DSS Internship Programme*

In the academic year 2018/19 a total of 16 students undertook paid summer internships with the following employers: Apple, Janssen, HedgeServ, DePuy, & Eli Lilly. The application process was very competitive with over 200 applications received. For some of the students, the internship represented their first experience of a professional work environment.

- *DSS Employability Forum*

The DSS EmployAbility Forum is an initiative developed by UCC Disability Support Service in collaboration with partner companies in March 2019 and is aimed at supporting employers to develop diversity in the workplace. The purpose of the forum is to enable employers to develop an expertise through the sharing of advice and information on employing staff with disabilities. The aim is to develop best practice around the recruitment and selection, training and development of students and graduates with disabilities.

The Forum meets 3 times a year for a series of workshops and group discussion events that focus on specific challenges faced by employers and applicants throughout the recruitment and selection process. To date, two events have been successfully hosted by Janssen (May 2019) and VMware (September 2019) and the next Forum will be hosted by Boston Scientific in February 2020. Forum Member Organisations include Aldi, Amazon, Apple, Boston Scientific, Care Choice, DellEMC, Eli Lilly, Hovione, HubSpot, Janssen, DePuy, Kingsley Hotel Group, Stryker, UCC, VMware, Crann Centre.

Mature Student Office (MSO)

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

The Mature Student Office (MSO) works with full-time undergraduate students who are over the age of 23 (on 1 January of the year of entry to third level) and with QQI-FET students. In 2018/19 there were 1165 mature and QQI-FET (FETAC) students registered in UCC. UCC has a quota of places set aside for the mature student entry route on all undergraduate degree programmes. There is a separate quota for the QQI-FET (FETAC) cohort.

Mature Student can enter UCC through four distinct pathways:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Information Events which covered topics such as:

- How to choose the correct degree programme
- How to make a CAO Application
- How to write a Personal Statement / prepare for interview / prepare for MSAP
- Finance / Grants / Scholarships
- Visits to Colleges of Further Education

- Participation in the UCC Open Day
- Scheduled one-to-one appointments with prospective students
- Career Fairs at regional and national level
- Scheduled Campus Tours from June to August 2019
- Collaborative workshops with the Skills Centre
- Lifelong learning Festival
- Learning Neighbourhoods
- A Social Media / printed media / radio campaigns in conjunction with Marketing & Communication encouraging mature students to (a) consider third level education and (b) ensuring that those who were offered places in 2018/19 accept their CAO offer.

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

- One-to-one support meetings
- One-to-one tutorial support
- Group tutorials
- Skills Workshops (in collaboration with the Skills Centre)
- Coffee Mornings

465 Mature and QQI-FET students registered in 2018/19.

UCC PLUS⁺

The UCC PLUS⁺ programme strives to enable students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds maximise their potential while studying in UCC. In 2018/19 the UCC PLUS⁺ programme provided support to 852 registered UCC students.

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

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

As students' progress through their studies the level of support required decreases with group sessions being held for students post first year. All registered students can avail of an informal 'Drop

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

Academic support is also provided to UCC PLUS⁺ students where required; small group tutorials are organised for students who are finding a subject or subject area difficult. All UCC PLUS⁺ students progressing in their studies received an annual bursary, in 2018/19. The bursary amounts were tailored to need with each student receiving a minimum of €500, up to a maximum of €2,000, based on individual circumstances and level of need. A large proportion of the funding available to give students financial bursaries is received from donors to the Programme.

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

HEAR

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

In 2018/19, UCC admitted 245 students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds eligible under the HEAR scheme.

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

Student Financial Supports

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

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

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

Student Budgeting Advice Service

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

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

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

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

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

- **Information workshops**

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

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

- **Training**

The Student Budgeting Advice Service facilitates training to Peer Support leaders in relation to student finances and supports that are available for students who may be in financial difficulty. The

training is complimentary to the fully trained peer support leaders who act as a student referral and support service within the University. The training is run by the Student Budgeting Advisor with workshops from MABS, the Students' Union and the Saint Vincent de Paul to equip student leaders with knowledge of the student financial sphere to successfully refer students that may be in difficulty to a service.

- **Information events**

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

- **fRED: financial Resources for Education**

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

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

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

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

Regional Access Collaboration

In 2017/18 UCC initiated and lead a cluster of Higher Education Institutions in the South of Ireland in securing funding from the Higher Education Authority to implement a new Programme for Access to Third Level (PATH) for students from socio-economic disadvantaged areas. The outcome of this successful collaboration is the SOAR Project, an inter-institutional collaboration on Access, bringing together the South Cluster – Cork Institute of Technology, 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 successful outcome will result in the delivery of additional supports to increase the number of students from the most marginalised backgrounds accessing higher education.

THE SOAR Project is operationalised through 5 Work Streams. In all aspects of work stream implementation the SOAR Project communicates the value of participation in higher education and promotes access routes and post entry supports. The five work streams are:

- Travellers in Education
- Enabling Transitions
- Connecting Communities, Connecting Curriculum
- 1916 Bursary Fund
- Partnership for Access

Key UCC SOAR initiatives in 2019/20:

- A successful collaboration between the Southern Traveller Health Network, Adult and Continuing Education and Access & Participation has resulted in the delivery of a Leadership in the Community Programme for 27 Traveller Women.
- The Travellers in Education work stream hosted a very successful Assembly in March 2019. Supporting Travellers in 2nd Level Education: Progress through Partnerships key stakeholders working together to explore how best to support Travellers in second level education in Cork and Kerry. Recommendations from the assembly are being implemented to enhance the UCC PLUS+ Traveller Mentoring Programme.
- The Disability Support Service has expanded its Assistive Technology Outreach Initiative which aims to build assistive technology competency and adoption in schools.
- A 1916 Bursary Fund regional assessment unit was established in UCC in 2019 to assess applications from across the cluster. 1038 student applied for the 35 available bursaries. Each bursary is valued at €5,000 per annum for the duration of a student's undergraduate degree.
- Desk and field research on mentoring initiatives was conducted to identify existing models of best practice, and a draft mentor training programme has been designed. Work is ongoing in the development of a Community Based Learning module for UCC students.

The SOAR project is developing community-embedded and culturally sensitive models for increasing educational aspiration and achievement, a key strength of the project approach is the sharing of best practice across institutions resulting in synergies in the development of new initiatives.

Sanctuary Scholarships Scheme

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

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

Student Health

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

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

Services include doctor-led diagnosis and management of illnesses and problems presented by the students themselves, facilitated by a nurse-led triage system. A comprehensive contraception and sexual health service is available on-site. An on-site physiotherapy clinic provides expert care of musculoskeletal problems and a Consultant Psychiatrist clinic address complex mental health issues. There is also a dedicated comprehensive vaccination programme offering immunisation

against Hepatitis B, Tuberculosis, Measles, Mumps, and Rubella to students exposed to these illnesses during their course as well as travel medicine immunisation clinics.

Student Counselling & Development

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

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

In addition to individual counselling, SCD provides:

1. Support for Acute Exam Stress: SCD provides on call support for students in acute distress during the exam period, to enable them to successfully complete their exams.
2. Anxiety Management Workshops: Proactive intervention to provide students with strategies for recognising and managing stress.
3. ASD Assessment: In collaboration with Disability Support Service and Student Health, care pathways for students on the Autistic Spectrum have been enhanced this year.
4. SCD has been deemed the designated liaison point for transgender and non-binary students.
5. Staff Consultations: SCD provides support for staff in managing and responding to concerns about student well-being. Students are also offered consultations, both individually and in groups, to explore concerns about fellow students who are experiencing difficulties and may need support.

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

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

Peer Support programme

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

Students are welcomed into the UCC community on their first day by an experienced student volunteer from their own course. Each of these volunteers is trained thoroughly with information about the university and how to support those incoming peers who may find transitioning to their new life confusing or difficult.

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

For 2019/20 we have 308 Peer Support Leaders across every course in the university and linked to every new undergraduate student, both 1st year and international. The first representative of the university each new student meets on their orientation day is their Peer Supporter Leader. This Leader takes responsibility for ensuring these new students are given a good grasp of everything they would need to begin their journey at UCC (campus tour, IT workshop, library tour, etc.)

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

UCC's Peer Support Programme is one of the most successful and comprehensive in the country. Each Peer Support Leader receives extensive initial training and is offered on-going continuing personal development to ensure they can provide their students with the smoothest transition possible. Peer Support Leaders volunteered 14,538 hours on a voluntary basis during the 2018/19 academic year. They are also rewarded for their voluntary work representing the university with each Leader receiving a UCC Works Award and being presented a Peer Support Certificate by the Deputy President & Registrar.

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

UCC Niteline

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

The service operates 9pm-1am 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.

There were 72 volunteers in the programme in the 2018/19. All student volunteers receive a UCC Works Award upon completion of their duties.

Chaplaincy Services

As one of the oldest service departments in the university, UCC chaplaincy engages with students and staff of all faiths and none. With a team of two full-time chaplains, two visiting chaplains, and an

administrator the continuous need for outreach by our team continues to be a high priority. While the nature of chaplaincy is pastoral in nature, it also provides opportunities for developing social awareness through spirituality and liturgy.

UCC chaplaincy accompanies many students who may feel isolated in their environment – creating a safe space for them to encounter community and friendship. It is noticeable that many who use the service have confidence in chaplaincy and that their various spiritual, human and pastoral needs are met. To this end, chaplaincy engages with all other relevant services within the student experience area to create a holistic approach to the needs of students and staff. 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.

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

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 skill 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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Accommodation and Community Life

The Office of Accommodation and Community Life was established in August 2017. This office has responsibility for:

- Student Accommodation
 - Accommodation information service for current and prospective students searching for suitable accommodation throughout the academic year
 - Advocacy service for current students experiencing issues with their accommodation
 - StudentPad – responsible for the administration of an online student accommodation portal for owner occupied and landlord owned properties
- Campus Watch
 - Considers formal complaints against all registered UCC students o Involved in the First and Second stages of student discipline
 - Liaises with local residents, community Gardai, local government and the wider community
- Community Relations
 - Representative at local resident groups and city council district management groups to promote the positive engagement by UCC and its students in the local community

- Residential Life
 - Student lead community building and pastoral support network for International and 1st year students

Health and Safety for Student Activity

A recent development in the UCC student experience was the addition of the health and safety officer for student activity role (Oct 2018).

Safety Training

A high-level risk assessment of each club and society was carried out and a training needs analysis based on the number of members, type of activity and other factors.

Training provided to student representation groups in 2019 includes; Safety Statement & Chairperson safety / overview (135 students), risk assessment for student activity training (142), hazard and incident reporting for student activity (142), first aid for student activity (91) and manual handling (13). Over 400 personnel have been trained on hands only CPR since August 2019.

An application to create digital badge entitled “Safety Champion for Student Activity” has been made in September with plans for rollout in early 2020. The badge aims to reward students who have committed time to the completion of safety training / risk assessments and other safety related tasks.

Safety Statements

The template previously in use for club safety statements was updated for 2019. Safety statements were also rolled out to all societies in September 2019 for the first time, in line with best practice across other Irish Universities.

Safety suggestions and hazard reporting

An online reporting form for accidents / incidents / near misses / hazards (safety concerns) was rolled out in September 2019 to the student’s union and to the club and society club captains / chairpersons. This was done with the aim of increasing the level of reporting, to gain data on where the sources of hazards were and to identify early any Accidents or Dangerous Occurrences which need to be reported through the university channels.

Risk assessments

In 2019, 3 different event plan and risk assessment templates were created and made available for student led activities.

Safety Committee for Student Activity

In 2018, the UCC Student Activity Safety Committee was established, with staff and student representation from UCC Societies, UCC Clubs and the UCC Students Union.

The committee meets approximately once every 6 weeks to review the processes for maintaining and improving student safety in UCC.

Policy and Manual

A policy entitled “UCC Student Activity Health and Safety Policy” and an accompanying manual “Health & Safety for Student Activity Manual” is currently being developed

UCC 98.3 FM

Established in 1995 and licenced by the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland UCC 98.3FM Broadcasts to a 40 Km radius around Cork city and county 24 hours a day 7 days a week. Going live in the morning at 08:00 with original live programming throughout the day until 17:00 which is then repeated in the evening. With over 50 students involved each week producing a 60% speech/ 40% music ratio this makes UCC 98.3FM primarily a talk radio station.

UCC 98.3FM aims to promote balanced student programming by encouraging access to and involvement in radio for individuals and groups involved with UCC and empower them to present their ideas and views and inspire creativity and independent thinking through quality training and freedom of expression while being a trusted and informed voice for the student body of Cork.

The training provided is based on Learning & Teaching principles, students and staff can develop Interdisciplinary media skills which can help find their narrative voice within their own education. A radio studio is a wonderful place to express yourself and to listen to others, you'll never see a group of students more engaged as when they are behind a microphone. We have developed a teaching framework which can hopefully take this level of engagement and enquiry and transfer it to the classroom to help students to think in an interdisciplinary fashion and to develop critical thinking in the context of their formal education. The level of activity during the year between the volunteers and the station is quite high with over 50 regular volunteers actively taking part in programme production each week and a further 20 volunteers who contribute each year to the station output on a casual basis. The perception amongst the student and staff body is that the station is a valuable resource tool for their community and provides opportunities to enhance communication skills and gives everyone a platform to voice their ideas.

The station's programming is not commercially driven and we pride ourselves on doing what other stations don't do, one such example being a one hour-long programme conducted by, and with, students with disabilities and programmes that explore diversity and multiculturalism. UCC 98.3FM continues to promote involvement in radio for individuals and groups to express their ideas and views, many of whom are often not represented by mainstream media.

Students' Union

President

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

Deputy

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

Education

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

Welfare Officer

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

Communications & Commercial Officer

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

Entertainments Officer

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

Student Societies

Student Societies provide a fantastic environment for students to develop their skill outside of the lecture halls. With over 100 societies in UCC ranging from academic, charitable, creative, debating, political, religious and social. In 2019 there were over 1400 elected officers of societies who held positions such as chairperson, finance, and public relations along with other roles. The theme and subject range is as diverse as the societies themselves - from Drama to International Relations, Science to Science Fiction and Medieval Renaissance to Mythology to name but a few. Each year societies run almost 2,000 events per year and there is always something to get involved in. There are also many opportunities to travel through student's involvement with societies to countries such as USA, Africa, Canada, India and much of Europe. The Societies Office and Executive run training courses each year across a number of areas.

Each week societies and their members engage with fellow students, staff, schools, community groups through their various activities and over €250,000 is raised each year for a number of local and international charities. Further, UCC Societies engage with the community and local organisations in promoting diversity, equality and inclusion, benefiting the student welfare of the students and enhancing the student experience in UCC. Our Societies have a history of making meaningful change through their innovative and creative campaigns, events and student engagement projects. From running consent workshops, to a mental health week or even working with College staff in providing a University of Sanctuary, UCC Societies are at the forefront of creating a University for all. UCC prides itself on students being work ready and world ready and joining its alumni in shaping the world around us. Students through their involvement in societies support this vision and enhance the student experience for all.

Career Services

The [UCC Career Services](#) helps UCC students to achieve their career objectives by:

- Providing one to one careers advice and coaching.
- Delivering employability related workshops and lectures.
- Collaborating with academic departments and other UCC units to deliver bespoke employability and career related workshops and events to their students.
- [Managing work placement](#) modules in collaboration with almost 38 academic programmes.
- Organising Career and [Graduate Recruitment events](#) such as recruitment fairs, jobs roadshows etc. which facilitate graduate employer and student interactions.
- Providing UCC students with access to high quality employment opportunities in Ireland and internationally.
- Making UCC students aware of a wide range of postgraduate study opportunities.

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

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

Employability and Employer Engagement Team

The main activities of this team are to:

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

Work Placement Team

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

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

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

Careers Advisory Team

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

- [One to One Careers](#) advisory consultations by appointment with a careers advisor where students can discuss a wide variety of topics from CV's to interviews to general advice on career paths. Where a visit to the Career Service is not practicable (e.g. student is abroad) we endeavour to facilitate students by the use of phone or video calls.
- Small group workshops on topics such as CVs and job applications, interview technique,
- Sector specific talks such as careers in teaching, Study in EU/US etc. as well as employability related workshops and lectures.
- [Profiling for Success](#): administer a range of psychometric tools designed to improve self-awareness in students, thereby supporting their transition to professional life

Careers Education

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

Additional Policies for Career Services

Student Placement Policy

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

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

8. Information Management (ESG 1.7)

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

Records and Data Management

Records and Data Management policies and procedures have been updated 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

The records management policy assigns responsibilities and provides practical instructions to University staff to ensure the efficient management of records

Best practice guidance is also provided on related areas, e.g., filing systems, email guidelines.

Schedules, policy, and guidance will be accessible to staff on the University Archives and Records Management section of the Office of Corporate and Legal Affairs (OCLA) website, which is presently being updated: <https://www.ucc.ie/en/ocla/>

The data protection policy details how the University performs its responsibilities under the legislation in accordance with the Data Protection Acts and EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) <https://www.ucc.ie/en/ocla/comp/data/dataprotection/>.

In 2018 as part of the GDPR compliance process, UCC developed an intuitive online GDPR resource for staff. 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/gdpr/DataSubjectRightsProcedure-5Oct2018.pdf>

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

Data Classification Procedure:

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

Research Data Management Policy;

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

Acceptable Usage Policy:

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

Externally Hosted Personal Data Policy:

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

Records maintenance and retention - Quality

Records and archives are maintained by the Quality Enhancement Unit (QEU) for quality review-related records inclusive of quality reports, improvement plans, operation of the Quality Enhancement Committee including agendas, papers and minutes since the inception of the quality review processes. Early records are retained in hard copy and electronically; more recently records are archived wholly electronically. Reports for all quality reviews conducted are published on the University website at <https://www.ucc.ie/en/geu/>.

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

Information Technology

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

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

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

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

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

9. Self-evaluation and Monitoring (ESG 1.9)

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

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

Academic Council

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

The [Academic Development & Standards Committee](#) is a standing committee of [Academic Council](#) which is responsible for bringing forward policy and procedures to maintain the quality and standard of UCC awards and for ensuring internal and institutional compliance with the National Framework of Qualifications. The Committee also advises Academic Board on the impact of national and international developments on UCC arrangements underpinning academic standards. It is responsible for the efficient conduct of the University External Examiner Sub Committee which develops an annual monitoring report for Academic Council on the key issues arising from External Examiner Reports. The Committee provides an important forum for debate on the National Framework of Qualifications, the Bologna Process and their impact on UCC awards and standards and on curriculum innovation at UCC.

Quality Enhancement Committee

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

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

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

Strategic Planning

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

Student evaluation and feedback

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

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

10. Stakeholder Engagement (ESG 1.1)

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

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

Quality processes

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

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

Regional Skills Forum

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

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

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

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

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

Community Engagement

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

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

UCC and Cork Opera House Launch Strategic Partnership

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

- *Placement and Internships*

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

- *MA in Arts and Cultural Management*

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

- *PhD Studentship*

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

- *Theatre Artist in Residence*

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

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

Strategic Planning

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

- The Alumni Board
- IDA
- Enterprise Ireland
- Business organisations (IBEC, Cork Chamber, American Chamber of Commerce)
- Arts, Culture & Heritage organisations
- Community & voluntary organisations
- Local Authorities (Cork City and County Councils, Kerry, Tipperary, Waterford and Limerick County Councils)
- Parents and representatives of second level school
- Cork and Kerry Education & Training Boards
- HEA, IUA and Institute of Technology partners
- Science Foundation Ireland

- Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Department of Education and Skills and other government departments
- Public Representatives

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

11. Engagement with Other Bodies (ESG 1.1)

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

The University engages with other educational institutions in the development of research, 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.

External peer review

External peer review is a central part of the University's overall approach to quality and in this regard the University engages extensively with other higher education institutions, nationally and internationally. Objectivity of external peer review for periodic quality review and external examining is preserved through the rigorous application of criteria to ensure that peer reviewers have appropriate expertise and experience to fulfil their roles. All peer reviewers must be free of any conflicts of interest including current or recent prior close association with the University including as a student, staff member, or peer. The Extern Examination procedures for taught programmes is found here: <https://www.ucc.ie/en/academicgov/externs/> and the policy is found here: <https://www.ucc.ie/en/academicgov/policies/standards/#external-examiners>

Educational collaboration

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

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/media/support/ocla/policies/SigningAuthorityandApprovalPolicy.pdf>

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

The CIT-UCC Joint Board is a joint Board of the Academic Council of the Cork Institute of Technology (CIT) and the Academic Board of University College Cork (UCC).

Its primary purpose is to ensure that the academic standards and procedures applying to collaborative and joint programmes delivered in partnership between CIT and UCC satisfy the requirements of both institutions. The Board reports by way of minutes to the Academic Council of CIT and the Academic Board of UCC in the case of programmes issues. The Board reports issues relating to resources by way of submission of relevant document(s) and Joint Board minute(s) to the CIT Executive Board, UCC Academic Council and/or UCC University Management Team (Operations). The Board is kept informed by the appropriate Officers and management bodies of the institutions of strategic and policy issues relevant to collaborative and joint programmes.

The first Irish Management Institute (IMI) programme was validated by UCC in July 2010 and the merger between UCC and IMI was announced on 19 January 2017. An IMI Integration Project was established covering corporate governance, communications and engagement; academic quality and standards; academic operations and finance. UCC retains final authority on all academic-related matters and the Registrar of the IMI now sits on UCC's Academic Board.

The University College Cork-Turning Point Training Institute (UCC-TPTI) Joint Academic Standards Committee is responsible for the governance and academic quality of the programmes offered under this partnership.

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 which in turn report to Academic Council. The University Quality Committee has agreed as a matter of policy that, wherever possible, alignment between external professional quality processes and internal periodic quality review processes should be achieved with an emphasis on streamlining and rationalisation whilst maintaining robust external peer review processes.

Relevant bodies

The University is actively engaged with a range of higher education institutions, bodies and agencies internationally and nationally. University staff engage nationally and internationally in peer esteem activities through their participation in disciplinary networks for education and research, and through acting as external examiners, external peer reviewers and external advisers. The University engages with international, European and national agencies for education, research and funding purposes. The University is a member of the IUA, EUA and Utrecht Networks, a founding charter member of Erasmus, and a constituent member of the National University of Ireland.

<https://www.iua.ie>

<https://eua.eu>

<http://www.nui.ie>

<http://www.utrecht-network.org>

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This section is not applicable to UCC.

15. Collaborative Provision (ESG 1.1)

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

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

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

16. Additional Notes

Any additional notes can be entered here.

Internal Review Schedule

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

Collaborative Programmes

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

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

17. Internal Review Schedule

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

Year	2018/19
Areas/Units	Development & Alumni Office Buildings & Estates School of Computer Science School of Society, Policy & Ethics (previously Sociology, Philosophy & Criminology) Scoil Léann na Gaeilge Ionad na Gaeilge Labhartha Department of Physics Office of the VP Teaching & Learning Centre for Adult & Continuing Education Academic Decision-Making – thematic review
Number	10
Link(s) to Publications	

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

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	2-6
Number	
Link(s) to Publications	

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

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

18. Engagement with Third Parties Section

Details of engagement with third parties, including:

1. Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies
2. Collaborative Provision
3. Articulation Agreements

1. Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies

Type of Arrangement	Total Number
PRSBs	20
Awarding Bodies	0
QA Bodies	0

First Type of Arrangement (PRSB/Awarding Body/QA Body):	PRSB
Name of Body:	Irish Medical Council
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	Direct Entry Medicine; Graduate Entry Medicine
Date of Accreditation or Last Review	2017
Next Review Year	2022

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Second Type of Arrangement (PRSB/Awarding Body/QA Body):	PRSB
Name of Body:	Nursing & Midwifery Board of Ireland
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BSc Midwifery • BSc Nursing General • BSc Nursing Integrated General/Children's • BSc Nursing Intellectual Disability • BSC Nursing Mental Health • Certificate Nurse Midwife Prescribing • Higher Diploma in Midwifery • Postgraduate Diploma in Public Health Nursing
Date of Accreditation or Last Review	2016
Next Review Year	2020

Third Type of Arrangement (PRSB/Awarding Body/QA Body):	PRSB
Name of Body:	Teaching Council of Ireland
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BEd (Sports Studies and Physical Education) • BSc (Science Education) • Professional Master of Education • Professional Master of Education (Art and Design)
Date of Accreditation or Last Review	2016
Next Review Year	2020

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Fourth Type of Arrangement (PRSB/Awarding Body/QA Body):	PRSB
Name of Body:	CORU
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor of Social Work • Masters of Social Work/ Postgraduate Diploma in Social Work • BSc Occupational Therapy • BSc Speech and language therapy • MSc Diagnostic Radiography • MSc Physiotherapy
Date of Accreditation or Last Review	2018
Next Review Year	2023

Fifth Type of Arrangement (PRSB/Awarding Body/QA Body):	PRSB
Name of Body:	Dental Council of Ireland
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor in Dental Surgery • Diploma in Dental Hygiene • Diploma in Dental Nursing • Doctor in Clinical Dentistry Oral Surgery/ Orthodontics
Date of Accreditation or Last Review	2016
Next Review Year	2021

2. Collaborative Provision

Type of Arrangement	Total Number
Joint Research Degrees	5
Joint/double/multiple awards	5
Collaborative Programmes	28
Franchise Programmes	0
Linked providers (DABs only)	0

First Collaborative Provision	Joint Awards
Name of Body (bodies):	CIT
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BSc (Biomedical Sciences) • BSc (Architecture) • BSc (Industrial Physics) • Master of Architecture • Professional MEd (Art & Design)
Date of Last Review	2017
Next Review Year	2027

Second Collaborative Provision:	Collaborative
Name of Body (bodies):	Irish League of Credit Unions
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BSc Credit Union Business • Diploma in Credit Union Governance • Diploma in Credit Union Operations • Certificate in Credit Union Governance
Date of Last Review	2012 – programme now terminated

Third Collaborative Provision:	Collaborative Programmes
Name of Body (bodies):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institute Supérieur du Commerce de Paris, France • HU University of Applied Sciences, Utrecht, NL
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	MSc Innovation in European Business
Date of Agreement/Arrangement or Last Review	2011
Review Year for Agreement	2019 Programme terminated

Fourth Collaborative Provision:	Collaborative Programmes
Name of Body (bodies):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Lille (France) UL • Free University of Brussels (Belgium) ULB • Babes-Bolyai University (Romania) UBB • University of Wrocław (Poland) UW • University of Szeged (Hungary) SZTE • University of Grenada (Spain) UGR
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	Mitra Joint Masters https://www.master-mitra.eu/en/
Date of Agreement/Arrangement or Last Review	2011
Review Year for Agreement	

Fifth Collaborative Provision	Joint Research Degree
Name of Body (bodies):	SPHeRE consortium with RCSI, TCD
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	Postgraduate Diploma in Population Health and Health Services Research
Date of Last Review	2016
Next Review Year	

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Sixth Collaborative Provision	Joint Research Degree
Name of Body (bodies):	EMBL
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	PhD Microbial Biotechnology
Date of Last Review	2018
Next Review Year	2021

Seventh Collaborative Provision	Joint Research Degree
Name of Body (bodies):	Universidade do Minho, Braga, Portugal (YEASTDOC consortium)
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	PhD yeast biotechnology
Date of Last Review	2018
Next Review Year	2021

Eighth Collaborative Provision	Joint Research Degree
Name of Body (bodies):	Universidade do Minho- Bicocca, Milane (YEASTDOC consortium)
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	PhD yeast biotechnology
Date of Last Review	2018
Next Review Year	2021

Ninth Collaborative Provision	Joint Research Degree
Name of Body (bodies):	University of Leicester, England (YEASTDOC consortium)
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	PhD yeast biotechnology
Date of Last Review	2018
Next Review Year	2021

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Tenth Collaborative Provision	Linked Provider
Name of Body (bodies):	NASC
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	Diploma Paramedical Science
Date of Last Review	2018
Next Review Year	2020

3. Articulation Agreements

If you have data for the 'Articulation Agreements' section please indicate below the TOTAL number of formal articulation arrangements you have in place.

Provide details of 3 programmes linked to articulation agreements with other bodies. These should be the TOP 3 programmes based on the number of students currently enrolled in them.

Articulation Agreements - Total Number	4
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First Articulation Agreement:	
Name of Body (bodies):	Beijing Technology & Business University (BTBU)
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BA Economics; BSc Accounting Studies • Diploma in Accounting Studies • Diploma in Business & Financial Economics • Diploma in Financial Economics • BSc Food Science & Technology • BSc Risk and Actuarial Studies • Diploma in Food Studies
Date of Agreement/Arrangement or Last Review	2019
Review Year for Agreement	2027

Second Articulation Agreement:	
Name of Body (bodies):	Henan University of Economics and Law (HUEL)
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	BSc Business & Financial Economics; BSc Financial Economics
Date of Agreement/Arrangement or Last Review	2014
Review Year for Agreement	2022

Third Articulation Agreement:	
Name of Body (bodies):	Beijing Information Science and Technology University (BISTU)
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BSc Business & Financial Economics • BSc Financial Economics • Diploma in Financial Economics • BSc Computer Science • Diploma in Computer Studies
Date of Agreement/Arrangement or Last Review	2011
Review Year for Agreement	2019 (renewal in progress)

Parts 2-6

Institution-led QA – Annual Information

Parts 2-6 are completed annually with information pertaining to the reporting period (i.e. the preceding academic year only).

Part 2: Institution-led QA – Annual

Part 2 provides information relating to institution-led quality assurance for the reporting period.

Section 1: Quality Assurance and Enhancement System Developments

1.1 The evolution of quality assurance and enhancement systems in support of strategic objectives in the reporting period.

In order to address topics of university-wide significance, the efficacy of thematic reviews to the institution has immense strategic value. As an example, one such thematic review undertaken during the reporting period was a review of Academic Decision-Making.

The landscape for academic decision-making is complex in breadth and scope in UCC and is perceived to have become somewhat overcomplicated. This complexity has emerged organically over time in response to the continued growth and evolution of the University. The Academic Strategy (2018-2022) for UCC, centred on the concept of a Connected Curriculum identified a review of the current academic decision-making structures, policies and processes as a key enabling activity to support achievement of strategic objectives for, teaching, learning, research and engagement. The objectives of the review were to serve to enable academic innovation supported by institutionally coherent and effective frameworks for academic decision-making, and associated policy implementation approaches.

The University Quality Enhancement Committee approved a proposal for a thematic review of academic decision-making. A thematic approach was chosen to enable a holistic review at multiple levels: University, College, Adult & Continuing Education and School levels. It was agreed that the conduct of the review would be guided by the principle of subsidiarity to ensure appropriate governance; clarify roles and responsibilities, and streamline procedures. It would also consider the applicability of good practice from other comparable institutions.

A review team of senior national and international experts was appointed and the methodology for review followed the accepted model as defined by the European Standards Guidelines, which included documentary submission, external review by nominated peers, site visit and report

publication and action planning. The resulting report was comprehensive and included recommendations under the headings of decision-making models, institutional culture, policy development and implementation, and information systems. The outcomes are being carried forward in the action plan (priority 6) of the Academic Strategy.

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/registrar/theconnecteduniversity/academicstrategy/reform/>

1.2 Significant specific changes (if any) to QA within the institution.

UCC's Academic Strategy 2018-2022 was launched in December of 2018 and has enjoyed great support across the university, as colleagues and students have participated in the collaborative implementation of the 35 individual actions. This strategy delivers on Goal One of the UCC Strategic Plan 2017-2022 to implement an academic strategy to deliver an outstanding, student-centred teaching and learning experience with a renewed, responsive and research-led curriculum at its core. UCC has been successful in securing over €2M to support the implementation of the strategy objectives to date. Currently, the implementation of the strategy is on track with 91% of the 35 actions underway, and 20% completed.

The development of a Connected Curriculum is a signature project of the Academic Strategy which aims to ensure that the six key elements of research-based teaching; employability; sustainability; inter- and trans-disciplinarity; global reach; and civic and community engagement are embedded across the curriculum at UCC. This work has focussed on documenting and sharing good practice in courses offered at UCC. Research is underway to identify existing Connected Curriculum practice to support the articulation of the Connected Curriculum in future course development. To promote good practice a short course is being developed which will enable all staff to gain an understanding of the Connected Curriculum and how it operates in UCC. The Connected Curriculum is now included in accredited teaching and learning programmes for staff.

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/registrar/theconnecteduniversity/academicstrategy/curriculum/>

A framework for an Assessment Strategy has been developed, and consultation across the University is underway. A review of assessment practices informed the framework, which outlines how UCC will offer distinction and lay the foundation for change in how we assess and quantify learning. This will underpin the evolution of processes and practice that will ensure the sustainability and progression of our assessment practices to meet existing, and anticipate emerging, needs and priorities. At the end of the first year of implementation, 7 of the 35 individual actions of strategy have been completed and 91% of 35 actions have been initiated, are ongoing or have been completed.

UCC acquired the Irish Management Institute (IMI) in November 2016 and a strategic imperative identified in the University's latest Strategic Plan is to '*maximise the integration of the Irish Management Institute within UCC*'. As part of the programme of work integrating IMI into UCC (the 'IMI Integration Project'), appropriate academic governance arrangements are being refined and defined. This aims to ensure overall alignment of IMI's academic governance with the requirements of

UCC, QQI and to enable AACSB accreditation as appropriate. Through a consultation process with key stakeholders in UCC and IMI, a number of academic governance matters were identified for particular consideration in this context. These matters are:

1. Referencing the pre-existing IMI Diploma to the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) as a designated special purpose award: Professional Diploma.
2. The application of UCC's regulation on independent enquiry on Taught Masters programmes to IMI's Master of Business Framework.
3. The application and alignment of UCC academic policies to IMI.
4. Registration on UCC's student records system of IMI participants.
5. Academic governance arrangements and decision-making.
6. Oversight by UCC of IMI's non-credit bearing programmes.

Proposals around the six academic governance related topics outlined above were developed via an extensive consultative process involving key stakeholders in UCC and IMI. These proposals were considered by the UCC-IMI Academic Governance Working Group, the UCC IMI Joint Programme Development and Approval Committee, the Board of Cork University Business School and the College of Business and Law College Council as well as by the IMI Integration Steering Committee⁴. Almost 100 individual and group meetings took across the two institutions to reach consensus on these and related issues. The resulting proposals were presented to and approved by Academic Board in June 2019.

1.3 The schedule of QA governance meetings.

Governing Body

5 February 2019 (consideration of QEC Annual Report)

Quality Enhancement Committee

25 September 2018

29 November 2018

1 February 2019

2 April 2019 (sub-group)

2 May 2019

25 June 2019

Academic Council (consideration of QEC Annual Report)

3 May 2019

Section 2: Reviews in the reporting period

2.1 Internal reviews that were completed in the reporting period.

Cork University Business School

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/qualityenhancementunit/reports/buslaw/CorkUniversityBusinessSchool-PeerReviewPanelReport2018-19.pdf>

Academic Decision-making in UCC

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/qualityenhancementunit/reports/admin/ReviewGroupReport-AcademicDecisionMakinginUCC.pdf>

Adult Continuing Education

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/qualityenhancementunit/reports/admin/FinalACEPeerReviewPanelReport.pdf>

Buildings & Estates

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/qualityenhancementunit/reports/admin/PeerReviewPanelReportBuildingsEstates2018-19.pdf>

School of Computer Science & Information Technology

https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/qualityenhancementunit/reports/sefs/CSIT_Panel_Report_QE_C.pdf

Ionad na Gaeilge Labharta

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/qualityenhancementunit/reports/cacsss/IonadnaGaeilgeLabhartaPanelReport2018-19.pdf>

Office of the Vice President for Learning & Teaching

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/qualityenhancementunit/reports/admin/PanelReportOVPLTforQEC.pdf>

Scoil Léann na Gaeilge

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/qualityenhancementunit/reports/cacsss/ScoilLeannaGaeilge-PeerReviewPanelReport.pdf>

2.2 Profile of internal approval/evaluations and review completed in the reporting period.

Number of new Programme Validations/Programme Approvals completed in the reporting year	21 new programmes were approved in the reporting period
Number of Programme Reviews completed in the reporting year	2 IMI programmes were reviewed in the reporting period. This also takes place through the periodic academic review process. Curricular changes (major and minor) are overseen and managed through the Academic Programmes and Regulations Office (APAR). The policy on major and minor changes to curriculum are available at: http://www.ucc.ie/en/apar/curriculumapproval/majorminor/
Number of Research Reviews completed in the reporting year	All academic units were reviewed in 2014/15 as part of the Research Quality Review https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/qualityenhancementunit/rqr/ReportoftheResearchQualityReviewUCC2015.pdf
Number of School/ Department/ Faculty Reviews completed in the reporting year	3
Number of Service Unit Reviews completed in the reporting year	4
Number of Reviews of Arrangements with partner organisations completed in the reporting year	Ongoing monitoring and review of collaborations takes place in the following ways: UCC-CIT Joint Academic Standards Board. The Joint Academic Standards Board [JASB] is a joint board of the Academic Council of the Cork Institute of Technology (CIT) 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 CIT and UCC satisfy the requirements of both institutions. UCC-Turning Point Training Institute Joint Academic Standards Committee. The committee is responsible for the governance and academic quality of the MSc in Integrative Counselling and Psychotherapy Programme and reports jointly to the Board of Directors of TPTI and Academic Board.

2.3 Profile of reviewers and chairs internal approval/evaluations and review for reviews completed in the reporting period.

Composition of Panels	%
Internal	33%
National	14%
UK	23%
EU	12%
Student	16%
Other	2%

Chair Profile	%
Internal	87.5%
Similar Institution	12.5%
Different Institution	
International	

Section 3: Other Implementation Factors

3.1 A description of how data is used to support quality assurance and the management of the student learning experience.

Qualitative and quantitative data is used to support quality assurance and management of the student learning experience, including:

- Student feedback data at institutional, module and programme level;
- Student entry data (inclusive of CAO points, programme preferences, demographics and geographical origin);
- Student performance and completion data including progression, retention and award.

Student evaluation and feedback policies and procedures are in place. These include ISSE and a range of local feedback processes including lecturer customised surveys, in-class feedback and student fora.

External Examiner reports are used to confirm the standards of the student learning experience and its management and enhancement.

Major service areas adopt and implement processes for gathering student feedback which in turn informs service development. Indicatively: based on the biennial LibQUAL survey and regular meetings with the Student's Union the Library has implemented the three most requested services viz. increased opening hours including a 24/7 pilot at examinations time, increased numbers of electrical and USB charging points and enhanced WIFI coverage.

Student evaluation and student data feeds into annual and periodic monitoring processes at University, School and programme level.

Academic Council through its sub-committees and Colleges review regularly student profile data. In addition, Academic Council annually receives the report of the Student Ombudsman which identifies recurring themes and identifies actions to be taken.

An analysis of themes arising from periodic quality review reports is undertaken by QEU and reviewed by University senior management as part of the annual strategic planning cycle.

3.2 Factors that have impacted on quality and quality assurance in the reporting period.

Revenue have advised that the arrangements for payments to reviewers and external examiners will be changed shortly. All fees paid must be processed through the payroll system and accordingly an Irish PPSN will be required. An application for PPSNs for these categories of individuals will have to be made using the Client Identity Services (Department of Social Protection). Reviewers will have to provide sensitive information (a copy of their passport, date of birth, mothers name, proof of address) and sign consent forms. Revenue also require that we tax reviewers based on their Irish workdays and not as a % of a day that had been agreed with revenue in the past.

These changed arrangements with Revenue on payments will adversely affect the recruitment of reviewers and there is concern in terms of our continued ability to secure reviewers from Europe and further afield as a result of these changes.

3.3 A description of other implementation issues.

In reference to 2.3 Composition of Panels, specifically the Chair Profile: 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 UMTO (University Management Team, Operations). UMTO 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.

Part 3: Effectiveness and Impact

Part 3 provides information relating to the effectiveness and impact of quality assurance policy and procedures for the reporting period.

1. Effectiveness

Evidence of the effectiveness of QA policies and procedures during the reporting period.

Through our quality enhancement approach, we seek to: recognise and share good practice; increase our reflexive capacity; support institutional learning and development to encourage responsiveness across all our activities. The review of QA policies and procedures has resulted in an update of the review method to develop a clear enhancement focus, with a number of policy and operational changes. These changes have been in place for the past 24 months and are now fully operational and embedded in the academic review process. We continue to carefully monitor and evaluate these aspects of review procedures.

Secretariat support for all Peer Review Panels

Secretariat support to Panels was established to manage and coordinate reviews to ensure: effective liaison between the University and peer reviewers; on-going liaison with Schools/Units undergoing review; advisory support for the Peer Review Panel during review; secretariat support for the preparation of the Peer Review Report.

In terms of effectiveness, the feedback on secretariat support has been wholly positive with an improved timeframe for the finalisation of the report and a greater willingness on the part of potential reviewers to commit to review given the reduced workload that the secretarial support enables.

Case Studies of Good Practice

The Case Studies of Good Practice provide an opportunity for Schools to reflect on and identify instances of good practice in enhancing the student learning experience. Case-Studies form part of the Self-Evaluation Report and are published as part of the follow-up to academic quality review.

All academic units engaged in periodic review developed Case Studies of Good Practice. The case studies have been discussed by QEC and widely disseminated. Schools have reported that the emphasis on good practice in review is a welcome and positive initiative.

Preparatory support for units engaging in self-evaluation

QEU is working with central services across the University to enable SWOT preparation and facilitation, data analysis, Case Studies of Good Practice and facilitation of student focus groups. In addition, QEU now provides enhanced support to Schools in the development of Self-Evaluation Reports.

A schedule of support for units under review has been developed and implemented and Schools are now receiving enhanced support in their preparation for review and a corresponding reduction in workload.

2. Impact

Evidence of the impact of QA policies and procedures during the reporting period.

The impact of quality review and the analysis of themes arising from review resulted a decision to undertake two reviews, a thematic review of Academic Decision-Making and an enhancement project focused on the Programme Approval Process. Both reviews include international benchmarking, undertaken to support strategic objectives and the enhancement and redesign of critical processes.

As part of the Academic Strategy implementation, a key priority was a review of academic decision-making, configured as a thematic review. The review process involved the development of a Self-Evaluation Report (SER) to provide an overview of academic decision-making at UCC and a series of mini case-studies outlining examples of decision-making. In addition, Chairs of Academic Council Committees, Heads of Colleges, College Managers and Heads of School were surveyed for their perspectives on current academic decision-making processes and this information augmented the SER. An external review group visited the University in October 2018 and met with staff engaged in academic decision-making at all levels. The resulting Report has been discussed at UMTO and Academic Council and the recommendations are being implemented as part of the ongoing implementation of the Academic Strategy.

The development of a new Academic Strategy for the Connected Curriculum and the procurement of a new curriculum management system made it timely to consider how issues of programmes and student learning are captured in periodic review. To address this topic a collaborative enhancement project between the Quality Enhancement Unit and the Office for Academic Programmes and Regulations was agreed by the Quality Enhancement Committee. This exploratory and analytical piece of work, with a focus on enhancement, draws on analysis of our own institutional practices as evidenced through PAP reports, benchmarking with practices at other institutions and consultation with College Managers.

A thematic analysis of Programme Approval Reports was undertaken, followed by an analysis of the current Programme Approval Handbook in light of the themes arising, a comparison of the Handbook against practices elsewhere and a benchmarking against practices at UCD, Vienna University of Business & Economics, Otago University, Nottingham Trent University and the University of Nottingham. The outcomes represent directions which can be taken in the context of the Academic Strategy, the development of a new Curriculum Management System and the introduction of annual monitoring and programmatic review. The final report was approved by ADSC in May 2019. Recommendations were endorsed by the University and fall into three categories: recommendations

to Enable Effective Programme Approval (Phase 1), recommendations for Strategic Enhancement (Phase 2) which are in-line with priorities identified in the Academic Strategy and recommendations for Immediate Process Enhancements. In the academic year 2019/20 a framework for programme review which would articulate with periodic review will be piloted.

3. Themes

Analysis of the key themes arising within the implementation of QA policies and procedures during the reporting period.

Transnational partnerships and activities was a key theme for Quality Enhancement during the reporting period. A new transnational programme development in Environmental Science for a dual bachelors award between the School of Biological, Earth & Environmental Sciences and Minzu University of China was developed. The programme which will commence in September 2019, is based on a new and emerging model of programme collaboration, reflecting the objectives of the Chinese Ministry of Education to develop deeper cooperation with international partners in educational delivery of programmes.

Consequently, in contradistinction to the existing and well-understood “2 +2” model whereby Chinese students articulate in to the latter stages of UCC programmes, this new programme has a more emergent form, which involves UCC input of 15 credits in both Year 1 and Year 2 of the programme delivered in China, with Year 3 wholly delivered at UCC and Year 4 delivered in China with joint supervision of Final Year projects by UCC. This emergent approach, whereby UCC’s delivery of the collaborative programme occurs at a much earlier stage and in a more elongated way (110 credits of 240 credits) raised new issues for UCC in terms of the joint management of quality and standards of the student experience for the dual award.

A peer evaluation of the proposed partnership and delivery site was undertaken to assess the comprehensiveness of the partnership quality arrangement in place to support the successful delivery of the programme and a high-quality student learning experience taking account of the quality attributes identified above. Professor C F A Bryce (Emeritus Professor, Edinburgh Napier University) undertook a site visit to Minzu University. The site visit enabled a review of the partner delivery site including physical resources; learning infrastructure and supports available to students; meetings with senior representatives of Minzu University, members of the teaching team, students of the existing programme and staff supporting students’ learning. A series of pre-site visit Skype briefings with relevant UCC staff also took place.

Professor Bryce provided a written report outlining recommendations on the partnership and presented these findings to the University Programme Approval Panel. In summary the report of the site visit identified: the Minzu University’s strong commitment to, and enthusiasm for, the joint collaborative venture, the quality of the staff and range of expertise available to underpin the programme, along with excellent facilities. At a strategic level, the orientation of the University towards access and inclusion, as well as evidence of pedagogical approaches to support the

development of students' critical thinking was seen to be indicative of potentially good strategic fit for the collaboration.

A tailored quality assurance and enhancement protocol to support the ongoing implementation of the programme will be developed in consultation with the Quality Enhancement Committee and will run concurrently with the programme implementation from 2019/20 onwards. Further, it has been recommended that the experiences gained from this development will be codified to provide a good practice template to support and enable future collaborative arrangements of this form.

A new university committee has been established – the Collaborative & Transnational Task & Finish Group (CAT) to oversee work in this area. CAT is tasked by Academic Board to undertake an assessment of the current state of transnational and collaborative provision and make recommendations on future University strategy and processes for Collaborative and Transnational Education. This work ties in with Priority 6: Action 33 of the Academic Strategy, "Capture and regulate non-standard academic arrangements"

CAT will have a series of meetings early in 2020 with a view to a stocktake of provision, national QA considerations, competitor analysis and first draft proposals. Internal consultations will take place and recommendations will be presented to Academic Board in April 2020.

Part 4: Quality Enhancement

Part 4 provides information which goes beyond the description of standard quality assurance procedures. Quality enhancement includes the introduction of new procedures but also extends the concept of quality assurance to other initiatives, activities and events aimed at improving quality across the institution.

4.1 Improvements and Enhancements for the Reporting Period

Improvements or enhancements, impacting on quality or quality assurance, that took place in the reporting period.

See Part 2, Section 1: Quality Assurance and Enhancement System Developments

4.2 Quality Enhancement Highlights

Analysis of quality enhancement activities that were initiated during the reporting period and which would be of interest to other institutions and would benefit from wider dissemination.

UCC continues to lead in the area of **student engagement in quality review**. The Quality Enhancement Unit has trained students to engage as full members of Peer Review Panels and feedback from Panel members has been overwhelmingly positive regarding the valuable input of student reviewers to the process. Since 2016, students have been involved as key participants in the academic quality review process at UCC, with each Review Panel including a student reviewer as a full Panel Member. The valuable impact of the student reviewers has been referred to in many Panel Reports, not only in relation to the quality of their contributions, but significantly, their role in maintaining a student-centred focus throughout the review process.

Training of Student Reviewers

The training and selection of student reviewers takes place in collaboration with the Students' Union. Training sessions are facilitated in a group setting and are followed by individual training in advance of the review. Peer-to-peer training has also been facilitated. The QEU collaboration with the Students' Union has been enhanced and facilitates student engagement and participation in review.

Digital Badge

UCC has developed a Digital Badge for its student reviewers. UCC's Peer Review process seeks to align with UCC's strategic commitment of delivering "*an outstanding student-centred teaching and*

learning experience with a renewed, responsive and research-led curriculum at its core.” Having student representation on the Review Panel is critical to this mission and is in line with codes of good practice outlined in the European Standards and Guidelines (ESGs). UCC was the first Irish University to incorporate student reviewers as full Panel Members of the review process, and the digital badge responds to UCC’s values of *responsiveness, transparency, integrity, equality, diversity* and *respect* by committing to student participation and providing a platform for the student voice at the highest levels of representation within the institution. The digital badge is designed to enhance student citizenship and leadership within the University.

The ‘Quality Peer Reviewer’ Digital Badge is the University’s way of acknowledging the valuable contribution of individual students to quality enhancement at UCC. As full Panel Members, student reviewers are required to engage fully with the review process, in line with the professional standards expected of all Panel Members. The requirements for attaining the Digital Badge involve approximately 30 hours of student effort in five stages: training; critically appraising review documentation; participation as a full Panel Member; contributing to the Panel Report; and submission of an artefact/report in the form of a briefing/reflection on the process which is assessed by QEU. All student reviewers who participated as Panel members in 2017/18 and 2018/19 applied for and were awarded a ‘Quality Peer Reviewer’ Digital Badge.

Chairs report to QEC

All Panel Chairs now present the Panel report to the Quality Enhancement Committee for approval. The Chair presents the report, giving a summary of themes and recommendations followed by a detailed discussion with the Committee. QEC, chaired by the President, has the authority to refer matters of strategic importance to UMTO (University Management Team, Operations).

Ongoing monitoring of operations

In terms of the ongoing monitoring of the operation of review there is an informal debriefing process after every review and operational adjustments can be discussed and made on the basis of this debriefing. Panel members are asked to provide feedback and QEC also make recommendations as to the operation of review.

Part 5: Objectives for the coming year

Part 5 provides information about plans for quality assurance in the institution for the academic year following the reporting period (in this instance 1 September 2017 – 31 August 2018).

5.1 Quality Assurance and Enhancement System Plans

Plans for quality assurance and quality enhancement relating to strategic objectives for the next reporting period.

A key objective for UCC for the next reporting period is the institutional Research Quality Review. QQI Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016) state that each institution 'is responsible for organizing an integrated system of quality assurance in relation to its research activities. These should build upon the peer review mechanisms widely employed in research funding and publication and incorporate relevant metrics.'

UCC's approach to this has been to conduct institution-wide Research Quality Review (RQR) exercises and preparations are underway for the next RQR scheduled to take place in 2022/23. The Quality Enhancement Committee (QEC), chaired by the President, established the RQR Technical Group which met during the 2019 calendar year.

The RQR Technical Group was established in order to design the outline principles and approach for the next RQR. The RQR Technical Group's work aligns with both the UCC Research and Innovation Strategy with an emphasis on research quality enhancement, and with the UCC Academic Strategy with an emphasis on research-based education.

The purpose of the RQR Technical Group has been to explore and develop a model of internal research quality review framed in light of the following:

Objectives & methodology

- Prevailing approaches in higher education for the review of research quality in a national and international context, and practices/expectations of funding agencies for the quality of research;
- UCC's strategic context as a research-intensive university with a research-based curriculum at its core;
- The University's commitment to enhancement as articulated in the University Strategy, the Research & Innovation Strategy and the Academic Strategy.

Technical attributes

- The scope and reliability of available quantitative and qualitative data to underpin description, analysis and review of research quality;
- Attributes of research quality and impact both internal and external;
- Administrative and technical infrastructure inclusive of accessibility of financial information, reliability of IT platforms and document repositories.

Following extensive consultation, the RQR Technical Group compiled a report which outlined the scope and objectives for the next RQR; this will be considered for approval by QEC in Jan 2020. A communications phase will follow and the RQR Steering Implementation Group will be established in Sept 2020.

5.2 Review Plans

A list of reviews within each category (module, programme, department/school, service delivery unit or faculty), as per the internal review cycle, planned for the next reporting period.

Quality Reviews 19/20

Academic Review

Department of Physics
Cork Centre for Architectural Education
School of BEES
School of Education
School of Languages & Literature
School of Law
School of Mathematical Sciences
School of Society, Politics and Ethics

Professional Services Review

Alumni and Development

5.3 Other Plans

Arising from an enhancement project on Programme Approval, Monitoring and Review pilot programme reviews will be undertaken in 2019/20. The primary objective is the development of an effective and agile mechanism for periodic review and self-evaluation of programmes to enable programme enhancement and development in the context of the University's Academic Strategy and the University's responsibilities for quality assurance and enhancement. An effective programme

review approach should articulate **efficiently** with the periodic Academic Quality Review cycle to provide appropriate granularity between quality assurance and enhancement mechanisms. Its **agility** should allow context specific models to be operationalised across the University, depending on programme type, delivery mode and accreditation status.

The format of review will use a Programme Dialogue approach, a one-day facilitated workshop with: core members of a Programme Team; an external academic peer; a graduate and an employer representative. The focus of the workshop will be based on discussion and critical evaluation of key data, stakeholder feedback and perspectives with the overall goal of generating by conclusion an action plan of issues. This action plan will provide the foundation for the continued academic development and enhancement of the programme and will be monitored through School structures and will articulate with the 7- year periodic Academic Quality Review cycle. The Programme Dialogue structure will be informed by the academic governance processes from Objective 6 of the Academic Strategy for The Connected Curriculum.

A variety of programme contexts will be used through the pilot approach: embedded within Academic Quality Review (Sociology); standalone BSc Physiology programme; as a summative exercise for accredited programmes using annual monitoring(Cork University Business School); curriculum and programme review Centre for Integration of Research Teaching & Learning (CIRTL) programmes; and a programme with professional accreditation.

The effectiveness of the pilots as a process will be evaluated based on:

- feedback from Programme Team on the objectives, process and outcomes of the workshop
- observations from Facilitator and external participants on process
- technical aspects including availability of data and self-evaluation template
- any policy or governance implications emerging from process

The outcomes of the Pilot cycle will be analysed and presented to Quality Enhancement Committee at the beginning of the 2020/21 academic year.

Part 6: Periodic Review

Part 6 provides information that acts as a bridge between the AIQR and periodic external review.

6.1 The Institution and External Review

A description of the impacts of institutional review within the institution.

UCC underwent an institutional (IRIU) review in 2012. The Quality Enhancement Committee is appraised of the progress made in implementing the recommendations to date.

6.2 Self-Reflection on Quality Assurance

A short evaluative and reflective summary of the overall impact of quality assurance in the reporting period or, over a more extensive period, in the review.

In the period since the last IRIU review a Research Quality Review (RQR) took place which covered the period 1 January 2008 to 31 December 2014. Following completion of the RQR, periodic quality review of units recommenced at the end of academic year 2015/16. We are now at the mid-point of the 3rd cycle of reviews; we will take the opportunity of identifying themes and conduct thematic reviews in 2020/21 with a view to revising and fine-tuning the periodic review methodology.

6.3 Themes

Developmental themes of importance to the institution which will be relevant to periodic review.

The successful implementation of the Academic Strategy and the transformation of the student learning experience.

UCC Case Study

Theme 6: Assessing the impact of research // Case study: Development of an Assessment Strategy

A central ambition of University College Cork's Academic Strategy, 2018-2022¹, is the development of a *Connected Curriculum* that will ground student learning in active research and enquiry. Essential to the achievement of this ambition are effective assessment practices which will drive the learning and teaching experience of both students and staff. Priority Three of the Academic Strategy - *Constructively aligning effective assessment practices with learning outcomes* – highlights actions that will frame the evolution of learning and teaching approaches at University College Cork. These actions build on already robust approaches to assessment, bringing to the fore best practice, innovation and novelty that currently exist across the institution.

A review of institutional assessment practices has highlighted the benefits of encouraging more creative, collaborative and dynamic assessment practices. Incorporating recommendations arising from this review, and the actions of Priority Three of the Academic Strategy, a draft *Assessment Strategy*, has been developed. Currently under consultation, the *Assessment Strategy* provides a high-level vision of proposed future assessment practices at University College Cork. It prioritises the alignment of assessment with module and programme-specific learning outcomes, Graduate Attributes² and values in a clear and effective manner. It will deliver excellence in learning, teaching, knowledge generation and dissemination, innovation and connectivity. The *Assessment Strategy* will support transformative learning experiences, developing essential critical, analytical and creative learner skills, all of which will be grounded in academic rigour and fairness. It will provide learners with the tools to become life-long and life-wide learners with the ability to generate solutions for real-world problems.

The proposed *Assessment Strategy* is anchored in:

- **Reciprocity of learning**, fostering learning with and from students
- Recognising the **holistic learning power** of integrated formative and summative assessment
- Recognising the value of providing room for **creativity** within assessment approaches
- **Inclusion, collaboration, engagement and empowerment** of all stakeholders
- **Integration** - the tangible realisation of ideas and activities, including assessment aims, learning outcomes and the development of Graduate Attributes

The *Assessment Strategy* encourages innovation, creativity and novelty across the learning ecosystem, generating a responsive and proactive curriculum that inspires alternate, inclusive and progressive pathways of learning. It provides for:

- **Distinctive Learning** through innovation in assessment practice, particularly in first year
- **Changes in how we Assess Learning**, focusing particularly on novelty in assessment, inclusion and iterative learning across all assessment approaches
- **Changes in how we Quantify Learning**, focusing on operational facilitators that will underpin delivery of the *Connected Curriculum*
- **Evolution**, continual professional development

This framework is built on a foundation of **Quality Enhancement** – practice review, the identification of best practice locally and/or globally, its implementation, continual review, evaluation and evolution. The *Assessment Strategy* will provide authentic assessment of, for and as, learning for the entire learning community. It will support development of an agile, sustainable and responsive *Connected Curriculum* with global reach which will support learners in realising their potential and impact.

¹<https://www.ucc.ie/en/registrar/theconnecteduniversity/academicstrategy/>

²<https://www.ucc.ie/en/graduateattributes/>

UCC Case Study

Theme 6: Assessing the impact of research // Case study: Research-based Teaching

University College Cork has a long tradition of research-led teaching whereby teaching staff draw connections between the cutting-edge research in their area and their teaching. Furthermore, learning through research and enquiry, a practice known as research-based teaching and learning, is a cornerstone of a UCC education and this has been reaffirmed in UCC's new Academic Strategy (2018-2022).

The research-based mode of learning more closely mirrors the ways in which knowledge is created within disciplines. Here students are engaged in authentic research activities in their area of study and consequently become inculcated into their discipline and develop ancillary skills such as critical thinking, complex problem solving, project management and communication.

The *Connected Curriculum* pillar of UCC's Academic Strategy provides a framework for the relationship between research and teaching, and supports the development of connections between researchers, students and wider communities. UCC is the first HEI in Ireland to implement a *Connected Curriculum* approach to support students to become engaged learners and to prepare them for the future world of work. Staff are also bringing this inquiring mindset to bear in the development of the curriculum and are encouraged to problematise and critique the other elements of the *Connected Curriculum*, and how these intersect with their discipline or profession.

Student involvement in research-based learning is largely shaped by the discipline or area of study. However, there are generic approaches that can optimize student learning and are more effective in terms of teaching. These include the following six approaches:

1. ensuring learning through inquiry and research is a design feature of the curriculum;
2. taking a whole programme approach to the incremental development of students' capacity to engage in research;
3. providing opportunities for students to work collaboratively with staff and peers to introduce them to the wider research community;
4. providing authentic learning experiences in the curriculum which mirror research in practice, including work beyond disciplinary boundaries to tackle common or global challenges;
5. enabling students to work/study beyond the walls of the university, in keeping with the driving purpose of research to make a difference in the world;
6. providing opportunities for students to communicate the outcomes of research to diverse audiences which might include other students, academics, external partners, local communities and employers.

A self-evaluation tool has been developed to provide guidance to staff on how to integrate the various elements of the *Connected Curriculum*. Figure 1 describes approaches for integrating research-based teaching in a module or programme. While the six elements are separated out in the full self-evaluation tool to provide greater clarity, many modules and programmes combine these elements in a range of different approaches and activities.


	Introductory element	Structured inclusion	Main focus of learning activity	Main focus of assessment	Element is a design feature
Research based teaching 	Staff reference their own research and cutting-edge research in the discipline as part of the curriculum. Students engage in final year projects or produce dissertations.	Research methods training for students incorporated into study programme from first year on. Research integrity discussed and developed.	Students engaged in research and inquiry from first year on.	Assessments are designed to model authentic research outputs in the area.	Learning through inquiry is structured throughout the programme culminating in students engaging in open-enquiry projects to advance knowledge in the area.

Figure 1: Draft self-evaluation tool

There are many examples of good-practice in research-based teaching, such as the BSc Medical & Health Sciences on which students are taught by academic who are research leaders in the medical and translational sciences and are given hands-on opportunities to undertake research projects in world-class research laboratories. UCC's Research Centres and Institutes are also instrumental in advancing the Connected Curriculum and staff within the Research Centres and Institutes lecture on programmes across several disciplines.

A curriculum review was carried out in UCC in 2015/2016 and subsequently in 2019/20 to identify the extent to which learning through research and inquiry is evident in undergraduate programmes. It was found that 63% of undergraduate programmes in 2015/16 and 71% of undergraduate programmes 2019/20 had evidence of research-based learning.

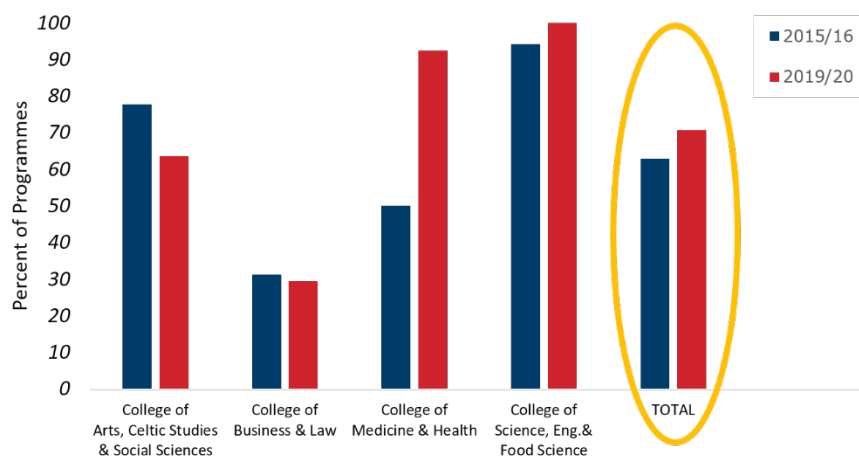


Figure 2: Review of undergraduate programme Learning Outcomes relating to research-based learning in 2015/16 (n=54) and 2019/20 (n=58)

A further module-level review in 2015/2016 showed that 44% of undergraduate programmes exposed students to research-based teaching across the duration of their programme. This provides an important baseline of existing research in the undergraduate curriculum, it uncovers exemplar activities across a range of subject areas and disciplines, and extends the vocabulary around research and inquiry to include discipline-specific approaches and understandings.

We have developed a robust methodology that captures evidence of research integration in the curriculum. This attests that research-based teaching is well established in UCC and is a distinct feature of a UCC education. As well as developing crucial research skills, disciplinary insights and

graduate attributes amongst learners, the focus on research-based teaching helps connect the cutting-edge research in our research institutes and centres to the teaching activities and enhance student learning. This work builds on a long tradition of UCC for integrating research, teaching and learning.