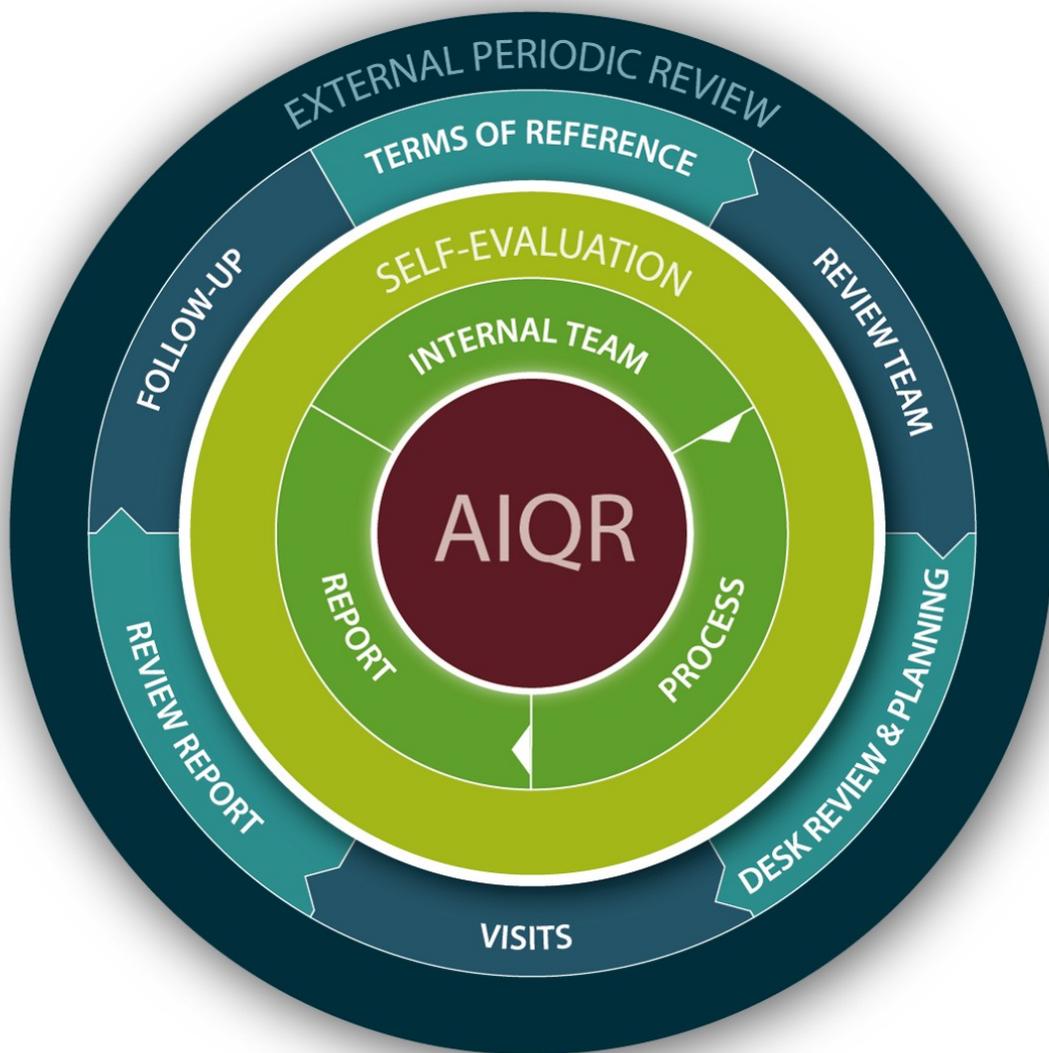


University College Cork

Annual Institutional Quality Assurance Report 2019

Based on the reporting period 1 September 2017 – 31 August 2018



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/geu/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.

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

2. Programme Delivery and Assessment (ESG 1.3)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Policies regarding research support for postgraduate students are detailed on the following page <https://www.ucc.ie/en/study/postgrad/currentresearchstudents/guidelines/>
The UCC model of structured PhD education <https://www.ucc.ie/en/study/postgrad/research/> is comprised of a programme of supportive and developmental elements with a stated minimum level of 15 credits of coursework and training. In addition, all students will be supervised by a supervisory team or have a sole supervisor and a PhD advisor. [The UCC Structured PhD - Compulsory Requirements](#).

4. Student Lifecycle (ESG 1.4)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5. Teaching Staff (ESG 1.5)

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

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

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

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

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

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

University College Cork is committed to working towards equality of opportunity in all aspects of its business for staff and students. <https://www.ucc.ie/en/hr/equality/>

Equality of opportunity is the right of all persons to receive fair, equal, and non-discriminatory consideration in access to and the processes of education and employment, irrespective of characteristics including, but not limited to, gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race or membership of the Traveller community.

There are a number of family friendly policies available to all staff.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

access to appropriate CPD within their disciplinary or professional domains to support their teaching as well as access to the wider national seminars through the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Office of the Vice President for Learning and Teaching celebrates excellence in Teaching through annual institutional Staff Awards (www.ucc.ie/en/teachlearn/staffawards/), and in early 2018

advertised and managed a competitive call in-house for small grant funding (max. €2,000 per funded project) to facilitate the design and delivery of small projects at UCC which have since had an institution-wide impact through dissemination events for other/all staff.

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

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

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

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

7. Resources and Support (ESG 1.5)

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

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

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

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

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

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

Disability Support Service

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

1. Disability Access Route to Education (DARE)

UCC is part of the national third level admissions scheme for school leavers with disabilities and specific learning difficulties known as **Disability Access Route to Education (DARE)**. DARE utilises a multi-indicator approach to assessing applications from such students. (Further information on the DARE scheme is available on www.accesscollege.ie). A special quota of places is reserved in all

undergraduate degree programmes in UCC for students deemed eligible under the DARE scheme, who have the academic ability to perform well in university, but who may not have the points required through the CAO system. This ensures students with disabilities and specific learning difficulties are able to compete for places along with their peers. A total of 247 students who applied to UCC under DARE accepted places in 2018/2019, while overall our entrants were 270.

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

2. Assistive Technology (AT) Outreach Programme

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

All of the workshops had a fun element and give the prospective student an introduction to the UCC campus and supports available through the Disability Support Service. Current students with similar disabilities act as mentors during the workshops and provide incoming students with role models they

can emulate. In addition, an Information Session was provided for parents on the day which outlined the supports the students can avail of when progressing to 3rd level.

Mature Student Office (MSO)

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

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

Mature Student can enter UCC through four distinct pathways:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Information Events which covered topics such as:

- How to choose the correct degree programme
- How to make a CAO Application
- How to write a Personal Statement / prepare for interview / prepare for MSAP

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

New Transition Initiatives: June – September 2018

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

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

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

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

UCC PLUS+

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

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

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

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

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

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

A new Access Partnership Established in 2017/18:

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

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

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

Access

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

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

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

HEAR

UCC is part of a national admissions scheme for school leavers from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds known as the Higher Education Access Route (HEAR). HEAR has been established by a number of higher education institutions to provide access to higher education for students from socio-economic disadvantage backgrounds. HEAR utilises a multi-indicator approach to assessing students for financial, social and cultural disadvantage (further information on the HEAR

scheme is available on www.accesscollege.ie). A special quota of places is reserved in all undergraduate degree programmes in UCC for students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, deemed eligible under the HEAR scheme, who have the academic ability to perform well in university, but who may not have the points required through the CAO system. This ensures students from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds are able to compete for places with students from advantaged backgrounds.

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

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

Sanctuary Scholarships Scheme

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

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

Student Health

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

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

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

Student Counselling & Development

Student Counselling & Development (SCD) is a free confidential service to all students. The Service provides individual counselling and support to students with emotional, psychological, academic or personal development needs. The Service also provides psycho-educational classes and workshops

including *Understanding & Managing Stress*. In addition to interventions focused directly at students, SCD acts in an advisory capacity and contributes to the development of student welfare policies within the University. SCD provides training to staff for the purposes of resourcing them as mentors of students and in responding to at risk and distressed students. SCD contributes to the learning and teaching mission of the University and to student retention and performance by reducing student distress which has an adverse impact in these areas.

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

In addition to individual counselling, SCD provides:

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

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

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

Peer Support programme

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

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

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

For 2018/2019 we have 313 Peer Support Leaders across every course in the university and linked to every new undergraduate student, both 1st year and international. The first representative of the

university each new student meets on their orientation day is their Peer Supporter Leader. This Leader takes responsibility for ensuring these new students are given a good grasp of everything they would need to begin their journey at UCC (campus tour, IT workshop, library tour, etc.)

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

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

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

UCC Niteline

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

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

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

Chaplaincy Services

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

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

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

Students' Union

President

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

Deputy

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 Raise and Give Week.

Student Financial Supports

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

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

the Students Union Welfare Officer or via the UCC Chaplains Office to the Finance Officer. The maximum amount available to students under this fund is €1,500.

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

Student Budgeting Advice Service

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

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

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

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

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

- **Information workshops**

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

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

- **Training**

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

- **Information events**

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

- **fRED: financial Resources for Education**

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

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

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

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

Student Societies

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

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

Department of Sport & Physical Activity

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Student Residential Services and Community Relations Office

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

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

UCC Library

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Library Strategy is focused on the delivery of an excellent service that is proactive, innovative, timely and responsive to user needs. Central to this is a clear commitment to enhancing the student experience thereby inspiring teaching and learning. Providing the opportunity to discover and use

high quality information resources will contribute to creativity and innovation, especially in supporting leading-edge research. Contributing to society, both nationally and internationally, will enhance the University's reputation and add to the intellectual capital in the region and globally. All this is predicated on developing and optimising our staff, financial and physical resources.

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

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

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

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

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

UCC Skills Centre

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

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

Critical Thinking Skills

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

Writing Skills

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

Presentation Skills

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

Podcast - Write Here, Write Now

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

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

Careers Services

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

- Providing one to one careers advice and coaching.

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

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

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

Employability and Employer Engagement Team

The main activities of this team are to:

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

Work Placement Team

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

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

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

Careers Advisory Team

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

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

Careers Education

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

Additional Policies for Career Services

Student Placement Policy

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

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

8. Information Management (ESG 1.7)

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

Records and Data Management

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

<http://www.ucc.ie/en/ocla/univarch/records/disposal/>

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

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/ocla/univarch/records/rm-policy/>

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

<http://www.ucc.ie/en/ocla/univarch/records/bestpractice/>

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

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

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

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

while protecting the security and integrity of records and data, including personal data. The review is informed by the EU's new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which takes effect on 25 May 2018.

In 2018 as part of the GDPR compliance process, UCC developed an intuitive online GDPR resource for staff, detailed of our GDPR policies, process and services are available on

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

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

Data Classification

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

Research Data Management Policy;

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

Acceptable Usage Policy;

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

Externally Hosted Personal Data Policy;

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

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

Records maintenance and retention - Quality

Records and archives are maintained by the Quality Enhancement Unit (QEU) for quality review-related records inclusive of quality reports, improvement plans, operation of the Quality Enhancement Committee including agendas, papers and minutes since the inception of the quality review processes. Early records are retained in hard copy and electronically; more recently records are archived wholly electronically. Reports for all quality reviews conducted are published on the University website at <https://www.ucc.ie/en/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 is embarking on a Digital Strategy and a Data Strategy, which is University lead and Technology enabled. These strategic initiatives will transform the UCC over the next 4 years and will support the development of a more Digital University. Enhancing and modernising the services to our students is central to these proposals. We partner with key administration, academic and research units to develop agile, intuitive IT solutions. Using concepts such as DevOps, Agile Product

Development, Infrastructure as a Service as key enablers to achieving this suite of IT Systems. A full list of IT policies in UCC can be found at <https://www.ucc.ie/en/it-policies/>

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

9. Self-evaluation and Monitoring (ESG 1.9)

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

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

Academic Council

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

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

Quality Enhancement Committee

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

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/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 and provision of education, as well as appropriate professional statutory bodies or learned organisations in accordance with its objectives as a research intensive and comprehensive university.

External peer review

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

Educational collaboration

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

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

The CIT-UCC Joint Board is a joint Board of the Academic Council of the Cork Institute of Technology (CIT) and the Academic Board of University College Cork (UCC). The Joint Board supersedes the Joint Academic Standards Board [JASB] following a review of the governance of Joint Programmes during 2016. Its primary purpose is to ensure that the academic standards and procedures applying to collaborative and joint programmes delivered in partnership between CIT and UCC satisfy the requirements of both institutions. The Board reports by way of minutes to the Academic Council of CIT and the Academic Board of UCC in the case of programmes issues. The Board reports issues relating to resources by way of submission of relevant document(s) and Joint Board minute(s) to the CIT Executive Board, UCC Academic Council and/or UCC University Management Team (Operations). The Board is kept informed by the appropriate Officers and management bodies of the institutions of strategic and policy issues relevant to collaborative and joint programmes. The CIT-UCC Joint Board Operations Group reports to the Joint Board.

The first Irish Management Institute (IMI) programme was approved in July 2010. The Joint UCC/IMI Programme Development and Approval was established to advise the Academic Boards of both

institutions on matters concerning programme development, approval and delivery and to oversee the implementation of agreed procedures governing quality assurance and the academic standards of UCC awards. UCC, as the degree-awarding body, retains final authority on all academic-related matters concerning UCC accredited programmes delivered through the UCC/IMI Alliance. A merger between UCC and IMI was announced on 19 January, 2017. An IMI Integration Project has been established covering corporate governance, communications and engagement; academic quality and standards; academic operations and finance.

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

Professional Registration & Statutory Bodies / Recognition Bodies

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

Relevant bodies

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This section is not applicable to UCC.

15. Collaborative Provision (ESG 1.1)

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

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

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

16. Additional Notes

Any additional notes can be entered here.

Internal Review Schedule

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

Collaborative Programmes

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

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

17. Internal Review Schedule

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

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

Year	2017/18
Areas/Units	Language Centre OCLA (inc. Health and Safety Office) School of Engineering Office of Marketing & Communications School of Music & Theatre Cork University Business School (CUBS) Information Services Glucksman Gallery
Number	8
Link(s) to Publications	

Year	2018/19
Areas/Units	Development & Alumni Office Buildings & Estates School of Computer Science School of Sociology, Philosophy & Criminology

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

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

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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	

AIQR - PART 1

Overview of internal QA governance, policies and procedures	AIQR-Part-1-UCC 17-18.docx
PRSBs	20
Awarding Bodies	0
QA Bodies	0
Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies	First Set of Records
Type of Arrangement	PRSB
Name of the Body	Medical Council
Date of last review or accreditation	11-03-2015
Next review year	2020
Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies	Second Set of Records
Type of Arrangement	PRSB
Name of the Body	Nursing & Midwifery Board of Ireland
Date of last review or accreditation	12-10-2017
Next review year	2022
Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies	Third Set of Records
Type of Arrangement	PRSB
Name of the Body	Teaching Council of Ireland

Next review year	2020
Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies	Fourth Set of Records
Type of Arrangement	PRSB
Name of the Body	CORU
Next review year	2023
Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies	Fifth Set of Records
Type of Arrangement	PRSB
Name of the Body	Dental Council of Ireland
Date of last review or accreditation	20-09-2017
Next review year	2022
Joint/double/multiple awards	1
Collaborative programmes	27
Linked providers (DABs only)	0
Section: Collaborative Provision	First Set of Records
Type of arrangement:	Joint/double/multiple awards
Name of the Body (Bodies)	Cork Institute of Technology (CIT)
Date of last review	14-09-2017
Next review year	2027
Section: Collaborative Provision	Second Set of Records
Type of arrangement:	Collaborative programmes
Name of the Body (Bodies)	Irish League of Credit Unions
Date of last review	20-12-2012
Section: Collaborative Provision	Third Set of Records
Type of arrangement:	Collaborative programmes

Name of the Body (Bodies)	Turning Point Training Institute
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	MSc in Integrative Counselling & Psychotherapy
Date of last review	21-01-2014
Next review year	2018
Articulation Agreements	9
Section: 1 Articulation Agreements	First Set of Records
Name of the Body	Beijing Technology and Business University (BTBU)
Date of last review of arrangement/agreement	10-07-2017
Next Review Year	2015
Section: Articulation Agreements	Second Set of Records
Name of the Body	Henan University of Economics and Law (HUEL)
Date of last review of arrangement/agreement	19-04-2011
Review year for agreements	2019
Section: Articulation Agreements	Third Set of Records
Name of the Body	Beijing Information Science and Technology University (BISTU)
Date of last review of arrangement/agreement	14-04-2011
Review year for agreements	2019
Do you wish to make a final submission?	Yes, this is my final submission
On behalf of the President/Provost/CEO I confirm that the information submitted in this AIQR is accurate and correct.	Confirmed
Overview of internal governance, policies and procedures (Word Template).	Confirmed

Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies.	Confirmed
Collaborative Provision.	Confirmed
Articulation Agreements.	Confirmed
Date of Final Submission	20-02-2019

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.

As an important part of our own commitment to enhancement, the Quality Enhancement Unit undertook a 360° evaluation of the academic review method. This review was an evaluation of the effectiveness of the current academic review process in advancing an enhancement agenda consistent with institutional strategic objectives.

Now in the third round of academic quality review, this evaluation was conducted to examine the continued appropriateness of the existing methodology of review and all aspects of its implementation. The review involved a number of elements: feedback, benchmarking and an analysis of recommendations. The review focused on quality reviews undertaken during the academic year 2017-18.

Feedback was drawn from the full range of participants involved in academic quality review during the 2017-18 academic year including: internal and external reviewers, Heads of Schools, and student reviewers. Focus Groups with Heads of Schools and internal panel members were conducted by an external facilitator. The review process was benchmarked against national and European policy and practice. A detailed analysis of the recommendations from the academic quality reviews was also undertaken.

The benchmarking process identified many common practices with Quality Units at Irish Universities; for example, the employment of a four-stage review model of: Self-Evaluation; Site Visit; Panel Report; and Follow-Up. Common challenges included cultivating general institutional “buy-in” to a quality culture, and the growth of overseas and linked-provider programmes. On the other hand, the Quality Enhancement Unit at UCC is unique in having “enhancement” in its title, and UCC is the only university that involves student reviewers as full panel members on the Peer Review Panel.

There was acknowledgement of a change in emphasis in the review process, with a shift towards peer enhancement rather than a judgmental approach. Nonetheless, there is still work to be done to

facilitate and support wider engagement at School level in the self-evaluation process. In developing the review process, there is scope for a connected approach, through dialogical input into the self-evaluation process across the School, the College, the QEU and the wider support services within the University.

It is important to retain appropriate balance between quality assurance (QA) and quality enhancement (QE) in the review process. A critical aspect will involve Schools employing quality assurance processes at programme and modular level, to enable appropriate reference to QA outcomes and data, in evidencing and informing their self-evaluation processes and their enhancement foci.

The current stated objectives of academic quality review, which focus on *academic standards* and the *quality of the student learning experience*, need to be reestablished and maintained as the central precepts of the review process.

The complexity and multi-disciplinary nature of Schools, and the increasing external regulatory environment, point to a requirement for a more customised approach and the need for focused supports for Schools, which take account of a School's current situation or status.

The learning from this evaluation process indicates a need for an annual appraisal of the review process to ensure the continued effectiveness and enhancement of academic review at UCC.

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

A significant strategic and academic enhancement development in the university was the launch of the new **Academic Strategy** for 2018-22. This Academic Strategy provides a framework to support and guide our university in shaping our curriculum offering, in enrolment planning and in academic governance for the years ahead. Grounded in Goal One of the university's Strategic Plan (2017-2022), the Academic Strategy sets out a range of priorities and actions that are designed to deliver an outstanding, student-centred teaching and learning experience, with a renewed, responsive and research-based curriculum at its core. It encompasses the full spectrum of curriculum offerings, across all levels of the National Framework of Qualifications.

The underlying vision inspiring its direction is that of a Connected University, with enhanced synergy between teaching, research and innovation, that offers a distinctive educational experience, promoting lifelong and life-wide learning. This vision is being met with transformative investment in our people and our technological and physical infrastructure. Our commitment to developing our staff and our digital and physical infrastructure will put UCC at the forefront in delivering a world-class educational experience. In embarking on this journey, we are coming from a place of strength, on which we will build. UCC is ranked in the top 50 universities for learning and teaching in Europe. We are the leading Irish university for securing investment in research and development from the enterprise sector. UCC has long been recognised nationally and internationally for our excellent student retention and employment rates - which are testament to the effectiveness of our programmes of study (first-year retention rates currently stand at over 93%). Employment rates of our graduates are at an historic high: 94% of our undergraduates are in employment or further study within nine months of graduating. UCC is the only university outside of the United States and Canada to be awarded a Gold STARS rating for the advancement of sustainability. Our ethos of equality, diversity and inclusion for all is evident in our leading role in developing fair access to higher education, with traditionally under-represented students comprising 25% of our undergraduate intake.

While the university has made great strides, when we listen to our stakeholders it is clear that there is more to do. In recent decades the university has grown to be considerably more complex. This was an unintended consequence of the force of rapid expansion during a period of austerity. The student population has trebled since 1990, growing from 7,293 students to 21,147 students in 2017. The curriculum has seen a 65% increase in full- and part-time offerings since 2005. The decline in funding of the higher education system during a decade of recession and economic turmoil has resulted in some disconnections in the way that we operate. The implementation of this Academic Strategy, which includes the development of a Connected Curriculum, endeavours to restore and build connections by putting the academic mission at the centre of what we do. The strength of our disciplines is core to the success of our strategy and the combination of disciplinary excellence and transdisciplinarity will enable our students and staff to seek solutions to global challenges.

The core principle of a Connected Curriculum is that students, at all levels of study, from undergraduate to doctoral levels, can benefit in multiple ways by engaging actively in research and enquiry. The Connected Curriculum at UCC will engage students in a distinctive education, where the curriculum is visibly linked to research, employability, civic engagement, sustainable development goals, other disciplines and the wider world. Curriculum principles and a programme architecture that support the development of a Connected Curriculum will be designed with a view to preparing students for their future, developing academic excellence, character, professionalism and the capacity for critical, creative and independent thinking. The curriculum will facilitate students to develop values, skills and aptitudes that promote civic participation, social inclusion, sustainability, digital fluency and impactful, global citizenship.

Through a quality enhancement approach and a culture of transparency and accountability, we will preserve our institutional autonomy, thus enabling the diversity of our activities. To enhance our competitiveness, we will be more effective at raising our profile, at evidencing and promoting our excellent practice in research and teaching and at extending this excellence throughout our curriculum.

An important objective of this strategy is to make connections so that isolated pockets of good practice become institutional good practice. For example, students and staff will be facilitated to make meaningful connections within and between disciplines, by integrating on-campus and off-campus learning experiences and by engaging in research-based learning at all levels. This will improve the development of students' capacity to deepen, connect and integrate their learning in a variety of situations within and beyond their university experience, and prepare them for the challenges of the future, as citizens and problem-solvers. UCC is a research-intensive, globally-focused, internationally competitive knowledge institution that is committed to the civic role of higher education. Our Academic Strategy is ambitious but the priorities at its core are connected: curriculum development; modes of teaching, learning and assessment; graduate attributes; a future-proofed enrolment plan and enhanced academic governance.

The implementation of this strategy, complemented by the enhancement of our administrative systems and processes, is intended to give back time to students and staff to nurture creativity and initiative, and transform the learning experience. Achieving the ambitions and priorities of this strategy should enable the university to fulfil its potential and take its place as a truly global university, distinctive internationally for the quality and standing of its activities.

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/regsa/dpr/academicstrategy/AcademicStrategy2018-2022.pdf>

1.3 The schedule of QA governance meetings.

Governing Body

6 February 2018 (consideration of QEC Annual Report)

Quality Enhancement Committee

12 September 2017

7 December 2017

23 January 2018

20 March 2018

22 May 2018

Academic Council (consideration of QEC Annual Report)

2 March 2018

Section 2: Reviews in the reporting period

2.1 Internal reviews that were completed in the reporting period.

Language Centre

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

Information Services

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

Office of Marketing & Communications

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

School of Music & Theatre

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/qualityenhancementunit/reports/cacsss/SchoolofMusicTheatrePeerReviewPanelReport1718.pdf>

Office of Corporate & Legal Affairs

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

Glucksman Gallery

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

Cork University Business School

Report not finalised

School of Engineering

Report not finalised

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	17 new programmes were approved during the reporting period.
Number of Programme Reviews completed in the reporting year	This 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 reviewed in 2014/15 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	5
Number of Reviews of Arrangements with partner organisations completed in the reporting year	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>

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

Composition of Panels	%
Internal	28.7
National	14.2
UK	28.7
EU	8.5
Student	20
Other	0

Chair Profile	%
Internal	100
Similar Institution	
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 University Student Satisfaction Survey;
- 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.

The acquisition of the Irish Management Institute (IMI) was on-going throughout 15/16 and conducted in parallel with the agreed joint academic governance structures for UCC/IMI programmes. The acquisition of IMI was completed on the 21st of November 2016 and IMI is now a wholly-owned subsidiary of UCC. The UCC/IMI Integration Committee continues to work on all aspects of the merger, including programme approval processes and system integration issues.

3.3 A description of other implementation issues.

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 internal staff members as Chairs of Panels. Chairs are, for the most part, members of UMTO (University Management Team, Operations). Membership of UMTO is for senior members of staff 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 12 months and are now fully operational and embedded in the academic review process.

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 during 2017/18. 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 is a review of academic decision-making which will be configured as a thematic review. The review process will involve the development of a short Self-Evaluation Report (SER) to provide an overview of academic decision-making at UCC and a series of mini case-studies which will outline examples of decision-making. In addition, Chairs of Academic Council Committees, Heads of Colleges, College Managers and Heads of School will be surveyed for their perspectives on current academic decision-making processes and this information will augment the SER. An external review group will visit the University in October 2018 and during that period the review group will meet with staff engaged in academic decision-making at all levels.

The development of a new Academic Strategy for the Connected Curriculum and the procurement of a new curriculum management system makes 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. The approach taken will involve a thematic analysis of the Programme Approval Reports, 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/Otago and Nottingham Trent University.

3. Themes

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

The Quality Enhancement Unit analysed the reports from reviews undertaken during 2017-18. An analytical report was generated which summarised the primary recommendations and provided an overview and analysis of the findings arising from the Panel Reports at School/Department, College, and University level. In total seven academic reviews were undertaken generating 162 recommendations.

The analysis of the academic Panel Reports was undertaken with particular focus on the outputs of the reviews. This qualitative data were systematically organised, analysed and thematically coded by highlighting or underlining 'significant statements', 'meaning units' and 'textural descriptions'. The analysis process enabled clusters of statements and meanings to evolve into broader categories. Further classification enabled the emergence of themes. The main themes are outlined below.

Strategic:

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

Staff:

- There remains considerable concern around staff work-load – and this is frequently linked (in the Panel Reports) to the “proliferation” of modules and programmes; focused consideration of module and programme offerings is necessary, for curricular purposes and for efficiencies.
- Issues around succession and academic leadership emerged in the aftermath of the Employment Control Framework and a perceived need for the University to develop an ambitious strategy for attracting and retaining top quality researchers and teachers.

Learning and Teaching

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

Curriculum

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

Student Issues

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

External and international

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

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

In the context of the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG, 2015) (which strongly emphasise a student-centred approach to quality), and in the light of UCC’s Academic Strategy 2018 - 2022, it is an opportune time to ensure that the enhancement-led approach continues to support the University’s goal “to deliver an outstanding, student-centred teaching and learning experience with a renewed, responsive and research-led curriculum at its core to deliver”.

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

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 applied for and were awarded a ‘Quality Peer Reviewer’ Digital Badge.

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.

The strategic approach and objectives will centre on embedding the UCC/HEA compact and in particular objective 5 ‘demonstrate consistent improvement in the quality of the learning environment with a close eye to international best practice through a strong focus on quality and academic excellence’. We will substantially revise and review our method of evaluation with the aim of embedding student-led processes and refining the review method. ISSE data will be developed and the use of ISSE data will inform a range of activities across the institution.

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

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

The new University Student Survey Boards (USSB) will serve as the university-wide body for developing policy and practice on student surveying and feedback activity and will develop and coordinate UCC’s student survey strategy across all organisational levels. It enables an enhancement led approach to quality, and student engagement in supporting the delivery of an excellent student experience. Crucially, the USSB will ensure appropriate and timely action is taken in response to any issues raised.

The University will begin strategic planning for the next iteration of the Research Quality Review (RQR). A Technical Group will be established in early 2019 for one calendar year to explore and develop the proposed methodology for the next internal review of research quality which is scheduled to take place in 2022/23. The remit of this Technical Group is to develop a model for internal review of research quality which is framed in light of UCC’s strategic context as a research-intensive university with a research-based curriculum at its core and the University’s commitment to enhancement as articulated in the University Strategy, the Research & Innovation Strategy and the Academic Strategy.

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 18/19

Academic Review

School of Computer Science & Information Technology

Department of Physics

Scoil Leann na Gaeilge

School of Sociology, Philosophy, Criminology, Government & Politics

Professional Services Review

Buildings & Estates

Centre for Adult & Continuing Education

Ionad na Gaeilge Labhartha

Office of the Vice President for Teaching and Learning

Development & Alumni Office

Thematic Reviews 18/19

Academic Decision Making

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

5.3 Other Plans

Part 6: Periodic Review

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

The following section (Part 6) is not relevant to UCC at present.

6.1 The Institution and External Review

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

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.

6.3 Themes

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