

# University College Cork

## Annual Institutional Quality Assurance Report 2018

Based on the reporting period 1 September 2016 – 31 August 2017



The Cyclical Review Process

## Part 1

# Overview of internal QA governance, policies and procedures

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## 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.*

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**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/governingbody/documents/Principal-Statute-October-2017.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\\_Oct2017.pdf](https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/academicsecretariat/Handbook_Oct2017.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/>.

Detailed assessment and progression criteria for taught academic programmes are published in Marks and Standards. <http://www.ucc.ie/admin/registrar/marksandstandards/>

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](http://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 <http://www.ucc.ie/en/graduatestudies/policies/>. The UCC model of structured PhD education <http://www.ucc.ie/en/graduatestudies/structured/> 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 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 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](http://www.ucc.ie/prospectus)
- [www.ucc.ie/en/study/undergrad/courses](http://www.ucc.ie/en/study/undergrad/courses)
- [www.ucc.ie/en/study/undergrad/entryregs](http://www.ucc.ie/en/study/undergrad/entryregs)
- [www.ucc.ie/caolive](http://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 starts to communicate with them by email, providing 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/](http://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. 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, 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/](http://www.ucc.ie/en/study/undergrad/orientation/first-year/)
- [www.ucc.ie/en/study/undergrad/orientation/](http://www.ucc.ie/en/study/undergrad/orientation/)

UCC is fully compliant with the QQI Access, Transfer and Progression Policy. Information on policies applicable to transfers is available at <http://www.ucc.ie/calendar/general/info013.html>. Extra support is provided by the UCC Plus+ Office offering support to students entering via the HEAR route and by the Disability Support Service for those entering via the DARE routes. The corresponding websites and admissions policies for the HEAR and DARE schemes are published online at:

- [www.ucc.ie/en/uccplus/](http://www.ucc.ie/en/uccplus/)
- [www.ucc.ie/en/dss/dare/](http://www.ucc.ie/en/dss/dare/)
- [www.ucc.ie/en/dss/dare/preentry/](http://www.ucc.ie/en/dss/dare/preentry/)
- [www.ucc.ie/en/uccplus/hear/](http://www.ucc.ie/en/uccplus/hear/)

Support for students is also provided by our International Office, Mature Students Office, Graduate Studies Office and the Centre for Adult and 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](http://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 (previous version; updated version about to be published:

<http://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/hr/briona/StrategicPlanforTeachingandLearning2013-2017.pdf>.

The Office of the Vice President for Teaching & Learning (OVPTL) 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 inaugural EUA Learning & Teaching Forum 2017. <http://www.eua.be/activities-services/events/event/2017/09/28/default-calendar/european-learning-teaching-forum>

The Office's quarterly newsletters, issued to all UCC staff (and beyond) are just one of the ways that it disseminates information on good practices (<https://www.ucc.ie/en/teachlearn/ovptlnews/>).

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/](http://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/](http://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/](http://www.ucc.ie/en/hr/research/devhub/)). 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 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.

The Instructional Design Team within OVPTL 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. OVPTL 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 Office of the Vice President for Teaching & Learning celebrates excellence in Teaching and Learning through annual institutional Staff Awards ([www.ucc.ie/en/teachlearn/staffawards/](http://www.ucc.ie/en/teachlearn/staffawards/)), and it plays a pivotal role in providing support for the development of online learning and instructional design (Instructional Design Team), lifelong learning provision inclusive of continuing professional development for professionals (Centre for CPD), and Quercus the Talented Students Programme.

The Office of the Vice-President for Teaching and Learning, in collaboration with the Student Experience Office and the Quality Enhancement Unit, is responsible for a review of student surveys at UCC. This project on '*Connecting, Listening and Enhancing: placing student perceptions of their educational experience at the heart of decision making at UCC*' reviewed student surveys at UCC, including the Student Experience Survey, the Irish Survey of Student Engagement, individual Module Surveys and surveys related to quality reviews of academic and support departments. This review considered the policy context; governance; survey tools; data storage and dissemination; closing the loop and associated resources. This review is informing the development of an institutional policy on student surveys aimed at minimising duplication of effort and survey fatigue and at enhancing the effectiveness of student involvement and engagement, thus ensuring that student surveys at UCC are

coherent and meet the needs of all stakeholders in the feedback landscape. Parallel with this, the Office is co-ordinating an institution-wide mapping of student engagement (non-curricular) opportunities at UCC.

One way in which UCC has responded to feedback provided via student surveys is in the establishment in 2017 of the [Skills Centre](http://skillscentre.ucc.ie/) 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 <https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/academicsecretariat/adsc/ADSC-Terms-of-Reference-AC-July-2017---Web.pdf>. Examples of policy that the Committee developed in 2017 include a University-wide policy on student group work.

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\\_Jan2018.pdf](https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/academicsecretariat/Handbook_Jan2018.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 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. They place a high value on student feedback, and the UCC Student Experience survey is conducted every 2 years. Data from this survey is used to inform on-going development of the student experience.

The Student Experience Office coordinates an array of supports for students and encompasses Disability Support, the Mature Students Office, the UCC Plus+ Office, Student Counselling & Development, Careers, Peer Support, Chaplaincy, the Granary Theatre, Student Health, Sport & Physical Activity and Clubs and Societies, all of which provide a range of specialised services to students.

<http://www.ucc.ie/en/studentexperience/areas/>. The UCC Strategic Plan for the Student Experience is available at:

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/hr/briona/StrategicPlanfortheStudentExperience2013-17.pdf>

Students are also well served by the 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.

Opening in the Boole Library in February 2017 is a Skills Centre which will provide a range of tutorials and workshops, complimenting those offered by the Colleges, to all students. This student centred learning environment, along with the provision of development supports, will facilitate and promote social and academic integration for students, enhancing their student engagement.

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.

The [Careers Office](#) provides a professional service in supporting students in the identification of employment destinations and opportunities.

## 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  
<http://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/ocla/universityarchives/documents/RecordsManagementPolicyDocument.pdf>

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 are presently under review, 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, it is intended to publish the following new documentation:

- Records and Data Management Policy (to replace the existing Records Management Policy and Data Management Policy);
- procedures and guidelines;
- records retention schedules (to replace the general disposal authority documents referred to above).

[The DRM Project is governed by a University-wide steering group, led by UCC's Corporate Secretary and involves collaboration with staff and offices throughout the University, and close cooperation with IT Services.]

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

Data Management Policy;

<http://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/itpolicies/policies/DataManagementPolicy.pdf>

Research Data Management Policy;

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

Acceptable Usage Policy;

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

Externally Hosted Personal Data Policy;

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

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

#### Records maintenance and retention - Quality

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

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

#### Information Technology

University College Cork has a distinguished digital legacy stretching back to the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. George Boole, the architect of Boolean logic, was Professor of Mathematics. Ireland's first website was [www.ucc.ie](http://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 21<sup>st</sup> century student, one that is centred around 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 51 IT professionals. We provide services and support for 20,000 students and 5,000 staff. Our campus spans over 100 acres at the centre of Cork City. We are focused on building and developing our digital services to support our students' journey from application to graduation.

The IT Services department in UCC is part of Information Services. This unit was formed in 2007 when the Library, IT Services and Audio Visual Services were merged. IT Services also manage the IT and Audio Visual services across UCC. It is comprised of 51 staff with additional contract resources. We support the 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 University is embarking on a number of strategic projects to help transform our digital services. Enhancing and modernising the services to our students is central to these proposals. We want to develop agile, intuitive IT solutions. Embracing concepts such as DevOps, Agile Product Development, Infrastructure as a Service as key enablers to achieving this suite of IT Systems. A full list of IT policies in UCC can be found at <https://www.ucc.ie/en/it-policies/>

### 9. Self-evaluation and Monitoring (ESG 1.9)

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

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

#### Academic Council

Academic Board is an executive committee of Academic Council and has delegated authority and an oversight function which encompasses regular periodic monitoring and self-evaluation of academic affairs activity. Its specific responsibilities are outlined in the Academic Council Handbook available at [https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/academicsecretariat/Handbook\\_Jan2018.pdf](https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/academicsecretariat/Handbook_Jan2018.pdf)

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

#### Quality Enhancement Committee

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

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

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

Strategic Planning

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

Student evaluation and feedback

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

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

### 10. Stakeholder Engagement (ESG 1.1)

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

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

#### Southwest Regional Skills Forum

As part of the Government's Action Plan for Jobs strategy, a national network of Regional Skills Fora has been created to provide a more systematic way for employers and the education and training system to work together to build the supply of skills to support job creation and the growth and development of each region. Participating organisations in the South West are:

**Education and Training partners:**

- CIT, UCC, IT Tralee, Cork Education and Training Board (ETB), Kerry ETB, Skillnets

**Business/employer organisations:**

- IBEC, Cork Chamber, Cork Business Association, ISME, Small Firms Association, Tralee Chamber Alliance, Killarney Chamber of Commerce, Network Cork, Kerry Women's Network

**Agencies/ Local Authorities:**

- IDA, EI, Local Enterprise Offices, SOLAS, Faille Ireland, City/County councils

The Regional Skills Forum will:

- Provide a cohesive structure for employers and the further and higher education system to work together in building the skills needs of their regions;
- Help employers better understand and access the full range of services available across the education and training system;
- Enhance links between education and training providers in planning and delivering programmes, reduce duplication and inform national funding decisions.

Since July 2015, the South West Regional Skills Forum has been established, funding secured for a Regional Skills Forum Manager, who has been hired, and steady-state operation of the Forum has been achieved. Steering Group meetings are held quarterly at alternate locations in Cork and Kerry and a series of industry workshops are underway. Two sector-focused subgroups have been established to date: manufacturing/engineering and bio-pharma.

### 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.

### 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/>

### 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.”

### **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](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)<sup>1</sup>. 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. The academic governance arrangements concerning programme development, approval and delivery under the Alliance is outlined in Appendix 1 of the IMI handbook <https://www.ucc.ie/en/apar/curriculumapproval/handbook/>. A merger between UCC and IMI was announced on 19 January, 2017.

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](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 approved by the Quality Enhancement Committee in November 2016. Under the Linked Providers procedure, the first review of Turning Point Training Institute will commence in 2018.

This procedure will form part of the Framework for Collaborative Provision which is currently being developed.

**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 approved by the Quality Enhancement Committee in November 2016. 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             | Chemistry<br>Clinical Therapies<br>English<br>Food and Nutritional Sciences<br>Government<br>History<br>Lewis Glucksman Gallery |
| Number                  | 7   |
| Link(s) to Publications | <a href="https://www.ucc.ie/en/qeu/qualityreviewreports/">https://www.ucc.ie/en/qeu/qualityreviewreports/</a>                   |

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Year                    | 2017/18  |
| Areas/Units             | Language Centre<br>OCLA (inc. Health and Safety Office)<br>School of Engineering<br>Marketing & Communications Office<br>School of Music & Theatre Studies<br>CUBS<br>Library & Information Services |
| Number                  | 7  |
| Link(s) to Publications |  |

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| Year        | 2018/19   |
| Areas/Units | Development & Alumni Office<br>Buildings & Estates<br>Computer Science<br>School of Sociology, Philosophy & Criminology<br>Scoil Léann na Gaeilge<br>Ionad na Gaeilge Labhartha |

## Annual Institutional Quality Assurance Report

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
|                         | Department of Physics<br>VP Teaching & Learning<br>Centre for Adult & Continuing Education |
| Number                  | 9  |
| Link(s) to Publications |  |

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| Year                    | 2019/20   |
| Areas/Units             | Cork Centre for Architectural Education (CCAЕ)<br>School of BEES<br>School of Mathematical Sciences |
| Number                  | 3   |
| Link(s) to Publications |   |
| Year                    | 2020/21   |
| Areas/Units             | UCC Institutional Review 2021   |
| Number                  | 1   |
| Link(s) to Publications |   |

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| Year                    | 2021/22   |
| Areas/Units             | School of Nursing<br>School of Applied Social Studies<br>Finance Office<br>Human Resources<br>VP Research & Innovation<br>School of Education<br>School of Languages & Literatures<br>School of Law<br>ASSERT |
| Number                  | 9   |
| Link(s) to Publications |   |

## Annual Institutional Quality Assurance Report

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Year                    | 2022/23  |
| Areas/Units             | Academic Affairs<br>Student Experience<br>School of Asian Studies<br>School of the Human Environment<br>School of Medicine<br>Applied Psychology<br>School of Biochemistry<br>School of Pharmacy |
| Number                  | 8  |
| Link(s) to Publications |  |

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Year                    |  |
| Areas/Units             |  |
| Number                  |  |
| Link(s) to Publications |  |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Overview of internal QA governance, policies and procedures</b>  | <a href="#">AIQR-Part-1-UCC.docx</a>   |
| <b>PRSBs</b>  | 18   |
| <b>Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies</b> | First Set of Records   |
| <b>Type of Arrangement</b>  | PRSB   |
| <b>Name of the Body</b>   | Nursing & Midwifery Board of Ireland   |
| <b>Programme Titles and Links to Publications</b>                   | § BSc Nursing General; BSc Nursing Intellectual Disability; BSc Nursing Psychiatric; BSc Nursing Integrated General/Children's; BSc Midwifery; |
| <b>Date of last review or accreditation</b>                         | 24-09-2012   |
| <b>Next review year</b>   | 2017   |
| <b>Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies</b> | Second Set of Records  |
| <b>Type of Arrangement</b>  | PRSB   |
| <b>Name of the Body</b>   | The Medical Council  |
| <b>Programme Titles and Links to Publications</b>                   | Bachelor in Medicine; Bachelor in Surgery and Bachelor in the Art of Obstetrics;   |
| <b>Date of last review or accreditation</b>                         | 01-03-2015   |
| <b>Next review year</b>   | 2020   |
| <b>Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies</b> | Third Set of Records   |

|   |                                   |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Type of Arrangement</b>                        | PRSB                              |
| <b>Name of the Body</b>                           | Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland |
| <b>Programme Titles and Links to Publications</b> | BPharm                            |
| <b>Date of last review or accreditation</b>       | 16-02-2013                        |
| <b>Next review year</b>                           | 2018                              |

**Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies** Fourth Set of Records

|   |                                  |
|---|----------------------------------|
| <b>Type of Arrangement</b>                        | PRSB                             |
| <b>Name of the Body</b>                           | Psychological Society of Ireland |
| <b>Programme Titles and Links to Publications</b> | BA Applied Psychology            |
| <b>Date of last review or accreditation</b>       | 01-01-2016                       |
| <b>Next review year</b>                           | 2018                             |

**Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies** Fifth Set of Records

|   |                            |
|---|----------------------------|
| <b>Type of Arrangement</b>                        | PRSB                       |
| <b>Name of the Body</b>                           | Dental Council of Ireland  |
| <b>Programme Titles and Links to Publications</b> | Bachelor in Dental Surgery |
| <b>Date of last review or accreditation</b>       | 01-03-2012                 |
| <b>Next review year</b>                           | 2017                       |

**Joint/double/multiple awards** 1

**Collaborative programmes** 27

**Linked providers (DABs only)** 2

**Section: Collaborative Provision** First Set of Records

**Type of arrangement:** Linked providers (DABs only)

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Name of the Body (Bodies)</b>                  | Irish Management Institute (IMI)  |
| <b>Programme Titles and Links to Publications</b> | MBS (Business Practice); MSc (Business Practice); MSc Data Business; MSc Management Practice; Pg Cert in High Performance Leadership; Pgrad Cert in Business Finance; Pgrad Cert in Cloud Strategy; Pgrad Cert in Data Business; Pgrad Cert in Mkt & Digital Strategy; Pgrad Cert in Org Behaviour; Pgrad Cert in Regulatory Management; Pgrad Cert in Strategic HR Management; Pgrad Cert in Strategy & Innovation; Pgrad Cert in the Mgmt of Compliance; Pgrad Certificate in Executive Coaching; Pgrad Certificate in Int Business Dev; Pgrad Certificate in Leadership Dev; Pgrad Diploma in Int Business Dev; Postgraduate Certificate in Leadership; Postgraduate Certificate in Management |
| <b>Date of last review</b>                        | 12-05-2014  |
| <b>Section: Collaborative Provision</b>           | Second Set of Records   |
| <b>Type of arrangement:</b>                       | Collaborative programmes  |
| <b>Name of the Body (Bodies)</b>                  | Irish League of Credit Unions   |
| <b>Programme Titles and Links to Publications</b> | § BSc(Credit Union Business); Diploma in Credit Union Governance; Diploma in Credit Union Operation; Certificate in Credit Union Governance; Certificate in Credit Union Operations   |
| <b>Date of last review</b>                        | 20-12-2012  |
| <b>Section: Collaborative Provision</b>           | Third Set of Records  |
| <b>Type of arrangement:</b>                       | Joint/double/multiple awards  |
| <b>Name of the Body (Bodies)</b>                  | Cork Institute of Technology (CIT)  |
| <b>Programme Titles and Links to Publications</b> | BSc (Hons) Architecture; MArch Master of Architecture; BSc (Hons) Biomedical Science<br><br></span></p>   |
| <b>Date of last review</b>                        | 27-02-2006  |
| <b>Section: Collaborative Provision</b>           | Fourth Set of Records   |
| <b>Type of arrangement:</b>                       | Collaborative programmes  |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Name of the Body (Bodies)</b>                  | Beijing Technology and Business University (BTBU)  |
| <b>Programme Titles and Links to Publications</b> | BA (Economics); BE (Electrical & Electronic Engineering); BSc (Food Science and Technology); BSc (Food Science); BSc (Accounting Studies); BSc (Business Economics); BSc (Business & Financial Economics); BSc (Financial Economics); BSc (Risk & Actuarial Studies); BSc (Computer Science) Single Honours; Diploma in Accounting Studies; Diploma in Arts and Social Sciences; Diploma in Business Economics; Dip in Business & Financial Economics; Diploma in Financial Economics; Diploma in Food Studies |
| <b>Date of last review</b>                        | 14-04-2011   |
| <b>Next review year</b>                           | 2019   |
| <b>Section: Collaborative Provision</b>           | Fifth Set of Records   |
| <b>Type of arrangement:</b>                       | Linked providers (DABs only)   |
| <b>Name of the Body (Bodies)</b>                  | Turning Point Training Institute Ltd.  |
| <b>Programme Titles and Links to Publications</b> |  |
| <b>Date of last review</b>                        | 21-01-2014   |
| <b>Section: Collaborative Provision</b>           | Sixth Set of Records   |
| <b>Type of arrangement:</b>                       | Collaborative programmes   |
| <b>Name of the Body (Bodies)</b>                  | Athlone Institute of Technology, CIT, DCU, NUIG, UL  |
| <b>Programme Titles and Links to Publications</b> | PhD Engineering Science  |
| <b>Date of last review</b>                        | 15-06-2011   |
| <b>Section: Collaborative Provision</b>           | Seventh Set of Records   |
| <b>Type of arrangement:</b>                       | Collaborative programmes   |
| <b>Name of the Body (Bodies)</b>                  | Institut Supérieur du Commerce de Paris; University of Applied Science, Utrecht  |
| <b>Programme Titles and Links to Publications</b> | MBS Innovation in European Business  |
| <b>Date of last review</b>                        | 20-07-2010   |
| <b>Section: Collaborative Provision</b>           | Eighth Set of Records  |
| <b>Type of arrangement:</b>                       | Collaborative programmes   |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Name of the Body (Bodies)</b>                       | NUIG, TCD, NUIM, QUB, University of Ulster   |
| <b>Programme Titles and Links to Publications</b>      | PhD Digital Arts and Humanities  |
| <b>Date of last review</b>                             | 08-06-2011   |
| <b>Section: Collaborative Provision</b>                | Ninth Set of Records   |
| <b>Type of arrangement:</b>                            | Collaborative programmes   |
| <b>Name of the Body (Bodies)</b>                       | University of Montana  |
| <b>Programme Titles and Links to Publications</b>      | BSc (Env Sc) Int Field Geosciences   |
| <b>Date of last review</b>                             | 15-05-2008   |
| <b>Section: Collaborative Provision</b>                | Tenth Set of Records   |
| <b>Type of arrangement:</b>                            | Collaborative programmes   |
| <b>Name of the Body (Bodies)</b>                       | TCD, RCSI  |
| <b>Programme Titles and Links to Publications</b>      | PhD SPHeRE   |
| <b>Date of last review</b>                             | 15-03-2012   |
| <b>Articulation Agreements</b>                         | 7  |
| <b>Section: 1 Articulation Agreements</b>              | First Set of Records   |
| <b>Name of the Body</b>                                | Beijing Technology and Business University (BTBU)  |
| <b>Name of the Programme and Links to Publications</b> | BA (Economics); BE (Electrical & Electronic Engineering); BSc (Food Science and Technology); BSc (Food Science); BSc (Accounting Studies); BSc (Business Economics); BSc (Business & Financial Economics); BSc (Financial Economics); BSc (Risk & Actuarial Studies); BSc (Computer Science) Single Honours; Diploma in Accounting Studies; Diploma in Arts and Social Sciences; Diploma in Business Economics; Dip in Business & Financial Economics; Diploma in Financial Economics; Diploma in Food Studies |
| <b>Date of last review of arrangement/agreement</b>    | 14-04-2011   |
| <b>Next Review Year</b>                                | 2019   |
| <b>Section: Articulation Agreements</b>                | Second Set of Records  |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Name of the Body</b>  | Beijing Information Science and Technology University (BISTU)   |
| <b>Date of last review of arrangement/agreement</b>  | 14-04-2011  |
| <b>Review year for agreements</b>  | 2019  |
| <b>Section: Articulation Agreements</b>  | Third Set of Records  |
| <b>Name of the Body</b>  | Henan University of Economics and Law (HUEL)                    |
| <b>Name of the Programme and Links to Publications</b>   | BSc (Business & Financial Economics); BSc (Financial Economics) |
| <b>Date of last review of arrangement/agreement</b>  | 19-04-2011  |
| <b>Review year for agreements</b>  | 2019  |
| <b>Do you wish to make a final submission?</b>   | Yes, this is my final submission                                |
| <b>On behalf of the President/Provost/CEO I confirm that the information submitted in this AIQR is accurate and correct.</b> | Confirmed   |
| <b>Overview of internal governance, policies and procedures (Word Template).</b>   | Confirmed   |
| <b>Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies.</b>  | Confirmed   |
| <b>Collaborative Provision.</b>  | Confirmed   |
| <b>Articulation Agreements.</b>  | Confirmed   |
| <b>Date of Final Submission</b>  | 23-02-2018  |

## 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).

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#### 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.

The evolution of the University's approach to quality assurance and enhancement during the reporting period has centred on reviewing the role of the Quality Committee and on the implementation and evolution of the periodic academic review process to place a growing emphasis on the quality of the student learning experience. During 16/17 the University Strategic Plan for the period 2017-2022 was in development and the process of development involved extensive internal and external consultation, review of achievements of the previous strategic cycle, analysis of strategic performance outcomes and benchmarking. Development of the University's quality assurance and enhancement arrangements took place in that context and informed the internal strategic dialogue process.

##### **QEC Terms of Reference**

The Quality Enhancement Committee's role and authority was reviewed. The status and authority of the Committee was confirmed as a committee of the University Management Team Strategy, with an annual reporting line to the Governing Body, which refers relevant items to Academic Council. The Remit and Terms of Reference were updated to reflect a stronger emphasis on quality enhancement based on the outcomes of robust expert peer review and informed by ongoing analysis of key quality indicators. The link between quality and the University strategic and annual planning process was also reflected in the committee's remit. It was also agreed that the Quality Promotion Committee would change its title to the Quality Enhancement Committee. To reflect this change, it was also agreed that the Quality Promotion Unit would change its title to the Quality Enhancement Unit and that the Director's title would change to Director of Quality Enhancement.

##### **Periodic Academic Review Process**

The revised methodology for review of academic units, agreed in 2015, was piloted for academic areas undergoing review in April/May 2016. The revised method had been developed to take account of the European Standards Guidelines (2015). Building on the new review method, a number of changes and developments were initiated and were rolled out during academic year 2016/17.

- Ongoing monitoring of periodic academic review approach based on feedback from Peer Review Panels during the course of review to ensure that review guidelines and operating procedures for service users are accessible and effective. This allowed ongoing operational refinement to the process in practice.
- Development of the annual monitoring was advanced in conjunction with the Systems Administration Office to best achieve the most accurate way of synthesising and reporting on the data necessary for annual monitoring, within the constraints of the current ITS system and taking account of the flexibility of omnibus programmes. A pilot exercise was conducted and the lessons learned will be applied to further development of reporting formats and tools.
- A process of updating the review method to develop a clear enhancement focus commenced, with a number of policy and operational changes:
  - Secretariat support for all Peer Review Panels
  - Case Studies of Good Practice (embedding and development)
  - Preparatory support for units engaging in self-evaluation
- Secretariat support to Panels was established to manage and coordinate Reviews to ensure: effective liaison between University and peer reviewers; on-going liaison with Schools/Units undergoing review; advisory support for the Peer Review Panel during the course of Reviews; secretariat support for the preparation of the Peer Review Report. Case Studies of Good Practice were implemented and provided an opportunity for Schools to reflect on and identify instances of good practice in enhancing the student learning experience. This Case-Study will form part of the Self-Evaluation Report and will be published as part of the follow-up to academic quality review. All Schools/academic units engaged in periodic review developed Case Studies, these will be developed for internal dissemination and for publication.
- Preparatory support for units during the self-evaluation stages of periodic review was developed and implemented on an elective basis with Schools/ units. QEU working with Human Resources, Systems Administration, Centre for the Integration of Research, Teaching & Learning coordinated School/unit workshops to enable SWOT analyses preparation, data and information, Case Studies of Good Practice. In addition, QEU provided some support to Schools in the development of Self-Evaluation Reports.

### **Student Learning Experience**

The UCC mission commits to 'Delivering research-inspired teaching and learning with a world class student experience', this provides the educational context for the University's taught provision. This ethos also informs the approach to student engagement and focus in quality assurance and enhancement activities, a number of relevant examples include: the role of Student Reviewers; Student participation in decision-making and integration of research and teaching.

- Student Reviewers. Students Union working in collaboration with Quality Enhancement Unit identified a panel of potential student reviewers that underwent training to familiarise them with the purposes of review and their role as a reviewer. This training was supplemented by one to one briefings in advance of each Review, by staff of QEU.
- Student are represented on University Committees and at a local level within Schools a range of fora are in place which support student engagement and participation in decision-making.

A project was initiated in light of the HEA principles of Student Engagement, this mapped current practices across the 3 domains of Quality; Teaching & Learning; Governance, in addition it also benchmarked existing practices against comparator institutions.

- An internal analysis of the published curricula was undertaken by the Centre for the Integration of Research, Teaching & Learning (CIRTL) to evaluate the extent to which research/teaching linkages are articulated explicitly. During the self-evaluation phase, all academic units under review will be encouraged to work with the CIRTL to examine research/teaching linkages in their taught provision. The CIRTL is grounded in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) research and practices. SoTL promotes teaching as a scholarly activity that makes it a worthy subject for research, producing a public body of knowledge open to critique and evaluation. Its rationale is not only to improve teaching but to create a community of “scholarly teachers” who add to the body of knowledge about teaching and learning as well as benefitting from the SoTL research of others.

In addition, a number of other developments which have a quality enhancement dimension were initiated these included:

- Institutional preparation and submission for Athena Swan.
- Governance and policy changes examples of change include:
  - Review of the Operation of Academic Council – ongoing.
  - Amendments to the Regulation on Various Appointment Procedures, AC Jan 2016 from GB.
  - Approval of HEAR and DARE allocations admissions policies.
  - Streamlining the QQI Further Education Entry Route.

The developments outlined in this section will be further developed and informed in the implementation of the 2017-22 Strategic Plan.

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

As per 1.1 above the new University Strategic Plan under the leadership of Professor Patrick O Shea (Appointed 1<sup>st</sup> February 2017) was a significant strategic piece of work which was ongoing throughout the reporting period. The implementation of the Plan going forward will have significant influence on the implementation and development of quality matters within the institution.

**1.3 The schedule of QA governance meetings.**

**Governing Body**

20 September 2016(consideration of QEC Annual Report to GB)

**Quality Enhancement Committee**

3 October 2016

22 November 2016

17 January 2017

23 March 2017

23 May 2017

**Academic Council (consideration of QEC Annual Report to GB)**

3 March 2017

## Section 2: Reviews in the reporting period

### 2.1 Internal reviews that were completed in the reporting period.

UCC School of Chemistry

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/qualitypromotionunit/reports/sefs/PRG-Report-Chemistry---FINAL.pdf>

UCC School of Clinical Therapies

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/qualitypromotionunit/reports/comh/School-of-Clinical-Therapies-Panel-Report.pdf>

UCC School of Food and Nutritional Sciences

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/qualitypromotionunit/reports/sefs/Food-and-Nutritional-Sciences-PRG-Report-201617.pdf>

UCC School of History

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/qualitypromotionunit/reports/cacsss/School-of-History-PRG-Report-201617.pdf>

UCC School of English

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/qualitypromotionunit/reports/cacsss/School-of-English-PRG-Report-201617.pdf>

Department of Government and Politics

The Panel Report is not yet finalised.

Lewis Glucksman Gallery

The Panel Report is not yet finalised.

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

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Number of new <b>Programme Validations/Programme Approvals</b> completed in the reporting year      | 16 new programmes were approved during the reporting period.  |
| Number of <b>Programme Reviews</b> 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:<br><a href="http://www.ucc.ie/en/apar/curriculumapproval/majorminor/">http://www.ucc.ie/en/apar/curriculumapproval/majorminor/</a>  |
| Number of <b>Research Reviews</b> completed in the reporting year                                   | All academic units reviewed in 2014/15<br><a href="http://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/qualitypromotionunit/rqr/ReportoftheResearchQualityReviewUCC2015.pdf">http://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/qualitypromotionunit/rqr/ReportoftheResearchQualityReviewUCC2015.pdf</a>   |
| Number of <b>School/Department/Faculty Reviews</b> completed in the reporting year                  | 7   |
| Number of <b>Service Unit Reviews</b> completed in the reporting year                               | 1   |
| Number of <b>Reviews of Arrangements with partner organisations</b> 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-IMI Programme Development and Approval Committee Annual Report 2015 (AB 2 June 2016). Work to complete the incorporation of the Irish Management Institute was on-going throughout 15/16 and conducted in parallel with the agreed joint academic governance structures for UCC/IMI programmes.</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. The Institutional Review of Turning Point as a linked provider has begun and is at a preliminary stage.</p> |

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

| <b>Composition of Panels</b> | <b>%</b> |
|------------------------------|----------|
| Internal                     | 35.7     |
| National                     | 14.3     |
| UK                           | 30.95    |
| EU                           | 2.38     |
| Student                      | 16.67    |
| Other                        | 0        |

| <b>Chair Profile</b>  | <b>%</b> |
|-----------------------|----------|
| 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.**

During the academic session, progression of the UCC/ Irish Management Institute (IMI) merger was on-going. Governance of existing programmes was through a Joint Academic Standards Board, which reported to Academic Board & Academic Council.

Strategic management of the relationship with IMI takes place through the University management team and an executive project steering structure. This is supported in turn by project committees addressing academic and administrative matters.

A joint working group on academic matters updated the UCC IMI Programme Quality Assurance Handbook during the year.

**3.3 A description of other implementation issues.**

- (i) A new University President took up post on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2017. Analysis of performance and priorities was ongoing to September 2017 culminating with the development of a new Strategic Plan for the University 2017-2022.
- (ii) Academic structural changes including the transition of a School from one College to another, the formation of a new School incorporating two previously separate departments and change of Heads of School led to the completion of the 16/17 review cycle in October/November 2017.
- (iii) A number of QEU staffing changes: secondment and leave of absence in the period March-August 2017 reduced the staff complement by almost 50% during the reporting period with a consequent impact on the outcomes delivered by the unit.
- (iv) A new Director of Quality was appointed in May 2016, following an extended period of interim management arrangements for the Unit. During the reporting period an important focus of work has been to carry through revisions to the periodic review method agreed in 2015 and analysis of the effectiveness of existing quality arrangements.

## 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.

The revision of QA Guidelines detailed in Section 1: Part 2 reflect the University's aim to ensure the continued effectiveness of its QA policies and procedures which are designed to allow an opportunity for reflection by academic units on:

- Academic standards.
- The quality of the student learning experience provided to ensure that students have the best chance of achieving those standards.
- The continuing relevance of courses to both internal and external needs
- Alignment with national and international expectations.
- Good practice or innovation.

Implementation of revised academic review occurred on a pilot phase in 2015/16, the learning from the pilot phase has informed further refinements for implementation in 16/17 which are outlined earlier in Part 2 Section 1 and Section 3.3.

In terms of effectiveness, the outcomes of internal monitoring processes and periodic review indicate that the University safeguards the quality and standards of the student learning experience, its research and other services provided in accordance with its responsibilities set out in the 2012 Quality Assurance & Qualifications (Education & Training) Act.

On-going analysis of the outcomes of periodic review processes point towards a need to reinvigorate the periodic review processes to enable engagement and alignment with internal cycles such as annual and strategic planning at University and College and Unit levels, and external cycles of accreditation including institutional initiatives such as Athena Swan and professional body accreditations. This development and alignment will be the primary focus of developing the next phase of UCC's quality approach in the next Strategic Planning phase 2017-2022.

## 2. Impact

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

Consideration of the recommendations of the 2013 Institutional Review (IRIU) at the University Management Team (Strategy) had led to the initiation of a project to examine the overall institutional framework for student feedback, to examine processes for the governance, gathering and acting on student feedback with a view to rationalising and making more effective the processes. The University has had an institution-wide Student Experience Survey (SES) since 2009, which is conducted biennially, along with a University-wide Student Module Survey since 2011.

Academic Council had agreed to pause the university-wide module survey, following analysis of the current system by the AC Teaching & Learning Committee. A university-level project was established to examine best practice and develop a proposal for a new student feedback system. In the interim, schools have continued to gather student feedback with the freedom to use locally defined instruments. The UCC Student Experience Survey is well established and has to date received a higher response rate than the ISSE. However, the opportunity to use optional institutional questions on ISSE may provide a means to integrate the SES and ISSE which was piloted in February/March 2017. The Student Feedback project is currently shared and managed by the Office for the VP T&L/Quality Enhancement Unit and Student Experience, the recommendations of the project will be reported to Academic Council in May 2018.

There is early and anecdotal evidence that the commitment to an enhancement focus to periodic review provides a positive basis for quality activities. However, at this early stage it is too early to draw substantive conclusions without more sustained examination. An evaluation of the UCC Quality Review process will commence in 2017/18, focussing on the reviews taking place in 2016-2018, to re-orient the overall methodology and focus in light of the new Strategic Plan and our commitment to an enhancement approach. This work will include process feedback from all who have been involved in the current cycle of Reviews (Colleges, Heads of Schools, internal and external Reviewers) and benchmarking against national policy requirements and international good practice.

### 3. Themes

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

The University is currently engaged in managing the quality enhancement processes from the Research Quality Review (RQR)

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/qualitypromotionunit/rqr/ReportoftheResearchQualityReviewUCC2015.pdf> which is aligned to the strategy and planning activities underpinning the development of the next University Strategic Plan from 2017-2022.

An evaluation of the UCC Quality Review process will commence in 2017/18, focussing on the reviews taking place in 2016-2018, to re-orient the overall methodology and focus in light of the new Strategic Plan and our commitment to an enhancement approach. An analysis of key themes arising from Panel Reports will be included in this evaluation process.

A Strategic Implementation Group will be set up in 2017/18 to follow-up on key recommendations and themes arising from the Research Quality Review 2015.

## 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.

As part of UCC's on-going participation in the Erasmus + funded project, the University hosted a delegation of senior academics and administrators from higher education institutions and agencies from El Salvador, Panama, Costa Rica, Honduras, Nicaragua, Guatemala, 21-23 June 2017. The purpose of the visit was to support capacity building and curricular reform in Central America through engagement with practices for these processes in Europe. The delegation spent two days in Dublin visiting the Irish Universities Association, UCD, and the National Forum for Teaching & Learning. Whilst at UCC, the delegation learnt about a range of internal quality assurance processes supporting the development and enhancement of the curriculum, as well as provisions for academic staff development. The delegates were also given presentations by a number of Central American students. The visiting delegates found these presentations to be insightful and informative, bringing to life the student experience at UCC.

Case studies of Good Practice continue to be developed and endorsed through the Quality Review process, the potential to use these internally as local resources for good practice is being developed in conjunction with the Office of the Vice-President for Teaching and Learning.

Student reviewers – training students to engage in Quality Review has been impactful, with Panel members increasingly positive regarding the valuable input of student reviewers to the process.

## 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 overall strategic approach will centre on developing and embedding an enhancement culture for quality. In this regard the work of the Quality Enhancement Committee, under the leadership of the new President will have an important role to play in the development of an enhancement policy and its translation into quality approaches.

The following areas are identified for development:

1. Evaluation of periodic academic review based on: feedback from all participants; evaluation of effectiveness of aims and objectives; process benchmarking; internal and external policy mapping. This will lead to a redefined review method for academic units in the first instance for pilot in academic session 2018/19.
2. Developing student –focus to quality activities, including the possibility of recognising student reviewer activity, training and development for student engagement in quality activities.
3. Ongoing development and embedding of the procedures for periodic review and annual monitoring of academic units:
  - Joint training & development with Students Union for Student Reviewers;
  - Aligning cycles of review and monitoring;
  - Systematic identification of good practice;
  - Exploration of research/teaching linkages;
  - Enhanced opportunities for institutional learning based on the outcomes of review and monitoring;
  - Efficiency in the operation of review and monitoring activity, including alignment with external professional /accreditation bodies;
  - Managing any quality requirements arising from IMI integration.
4. Enhancement of existing internal codes/ practices and approaches for collaborative provision.
5. Participation in the Student Feedback and implementation of recommendations project due to complete May 2018.
6. Analysis of Research Quality Review outcomes and completion of QIP cycle.
7. Ensure that the on-going development and embedding of quality assurance and enhancement activities take account of national policies, guidelines and initiatives for quality inclusive of QQI/HEA/National Forum for Enhancement of Teaching & Learning.

## 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 2017/18 = 7 in total

School of Music & Theatre Studies

Marketing and Communications

OCLA

Language Centre

Library & Information Services

School of Engineering

CUBS

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

### 5.3 Other Plans

#### **University Strategic Plan 2017-2022**

The term of UCC's current Strategic Plan 2013-17, will end on 30 September 2017. The process of developing UCC's new Strategic Plan has commenced. With this process, the direction, scope and the priority actions of the University for the 5-year period 2017-2022 will be identified. The plan is to be finalised in June 2017 for launch in September 2017.

The University Management Team – Strategy (UMTS), chaired by the President, is the strategic planning committee of the University and it is responsible for developing the Strategic Plan in consultation with students, staff and key internal and external stakeholders. A series of UMTS workshops is scheduled through 2016/17 to ensure timely development of the plan to include inputs from across the University.

The Governing Body Committee on Strategy and Innovation will ensure adherence to the process. The details of this committee are available at <http://www.ucc.ie/en/ocla/govbod/committees/strategy>

#### **Academic Strategy Plan**

University College Cork is in the process of creating an Academic Strategic Plan that will enhance the academic mission of the University as a world-class, globally-oriented, research-intensive higher education institution. The Academic Strategy will be central to the University Strategic Plan 2017-2022.

The Academic Strategy will define and differentiate the institutional academic mission in the light of UCC's unique position in the Southern Cluster as the region's largest comprehensive university. The project will reflect UCC's pivotal role in the Regional Skills Forum, Horizon 2020, the National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education and the university's contribution to the Transitions agenda. The project began in November 2015 and is benchmarked against best practice in the consultation, creation and implementation of Academic Strategies at numerous Irish, European, US and Australian universities.

As part of this process, the University community is articulating how best to consolidate strengths and increase its responsiveness to the regional, national and international needs best served by research-led teaching. The University anticipates prioritising flexible learning, interdisciplinarity and greater synergy between its research strengths and learning opportunities. This will create new pathways for learning and greater scope for individually defined, student-centred, flexible educational journeys that are lifelong.

Several strands have already been identified that will differentiate and consolidate the university's future programme mix and student profile in terms of entry routes, flexible modes of study, interdisciplinary skills, graduate attributes and contribution to the region's industry needs and skills deficits. In addition, implementation of the Transitions agenda is ongoing: in 2016 the entry routes for Law, Law Clinical and Law International were collapsed into Law (Pathways) CK301.

## 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.