

University College Dublin  
(UCD) 2026

---

**Annual Quality Report**  
**University College Dublin (UCD)**  
**Reporting Period 2024-2025**

**Annual Quality Report (UCD)**  
**PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM**  
**Reporting Period 2024-2025**

# PREFACE

The **Annual Quality Report (AQR)**; formerly AIQR) forms part of Quality and Qualifications Ireland's (QQI) quality assurance (QA) framework of engagement with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The AQR provides documentary evidence of the development and evolution of each institution's internal quality system. It provides QQI with assurance that internal QA procedures have been established and are being implemented consistent with regulatory requirements.

The AQR, particularly part A, should assist with **document management** in the institutional review process and will facilitate institutions in providing review teams with procedural QA documentation in preparation for the external review process. It is an important part of the evidence base considered by external **review teams** as part of QQI's CINNTE cycle of institutional reviews, demonstrating that the institution's internal QA system is aligned with QQI's Core and relevant Sector- and Topic-specific Statutory QA Guidelines, and with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area 2015 (ESG). It enables the review team to satisfy itself of compliance with these requirements for the purpose of the institutional review process.

Each AQR is **published in full on QQI's website**, providing transparency on the HEIs' assurance and enhancement of quality to external stakeholders. (As such, institutions should ensure that their submissions do not contain any data that they consider to be commercially sensitive.) Collectively, the AQRs comprise a single national repository of quality assurance practice in Irish higher education institutions.

Each year, QQI produces a synthesis report of the key themes highlighted across the AQRs, primarily arising from Part B of the reports.

## Contents

PREFACE .....	3
<i>Guidelines on Completing the Report</i> .....	5
<i>Links to Reference Documents Cited in this Template</i> <sup>1</sup> .....	6
Legislation.....	6
QQI Documents.....	6
Other National/International References.....	6
<b>PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM</b> .....	7
<i>Introduction and Overview of Institution</i> .....	8
<b>1.0 Internal QA Framework</b> .....	10
1.1 Governance and Management of Quality .....	10
1.2 Linked Providers, Collaborative and Transnational Provision .....	20
<b>2.0 Programme Development and Delivery</b> .....	23
2.1 Programme Development and Approval .....	23
2.2 Admission, Progression, Recognition & Certification .....	26
2.3 Procedures for Making Awards .....	32
2.4 Teaching, Learning and Assessment .....	34
<b>3.0 Learner Resources and Support</b> .....	40
<b>4.0 QA of Research Activities and Programmes</b> .....	50
<b>5.0 Staff Recruitment, Development and Support</b> .....	55
<b>6.0 Information and Data Management</b> .....	62
<b>7.0 Public Information and Communication</b> .....	68
<b>8.0 Monitoring and Periodic Review</b> .....	72
<b>9.0 Details of Arrangements with Third Parties</b> .....	75
9.1 Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies .....	75
9.2 Collaborative Provision .....	77
9.3 Articulation Agreements .....	79
<b>Part B: Internal Quality Assurance Enhancement &amp; Impact</b> .....	82
<i>Guidelines on Completing Part B</i> .....	82
<b>1.0 Quality Implementation and Developments</b> .....	84
1.1 Strategic QA Updates.....	84
1.2 Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR.....	86
<b>1.3 Governance and Management</b> .....	87
1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule.....	87
1.3.2 QA Leadership and Management Structural Developments.....	87
In the reporting period (1 September 2024 – 31 August 2025) the following leadership and management developments occurred: .....	87
1.4 Internal Monitoring and Review .....	89
1.4.1 Overview of Periodic Reviews.....	89
<b>2.0 IQA System – Enhancement and Impacts</b> .....	92
2.1 Initiatives within the Institution related to Academic Integrity .....	98
<b>3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period</b> <b>100</b>	
3.1 QA and QE supporting the Achievement of Strategic Objectives .....	100
3.2 Reviews planned for Upcoming Reporting Periods.....	101
3.2.1 Reviews planned for Next Reporting Period .....	101
3.2.2 Reviews planned beyond Next Reporting Period .....	101
See Quality Review Schedule on the UCD Quality Office website. ....	101
<b>4.0 Additional Themes and Case Studies</b> .....	102

## Guidelines on Completing the Report

The AQR is aligned with QQI's Core, Sector and Topic-specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines and with the ESG (2015). A mapping of the ESG to QQI Core QA Guidelines is included in Table 1 below; the structure of Part A of this report template aligns with the first column of the table. Additional guidance on completing this template and reference material is included in each section. Institutions should adhere to this guidance and have regard to QQI Core, Sector and Topic-specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines. **The guide text within each section should be deleted before submission of the report.**

### Submission Process and Timeline

The deadline for submission of the AQR each year is in February of the relevant year, with the call for submission sent to institutions in November of the preceding year. Once the call for submission has been made, QQI will provide access to QQI's provider portal, QHub, to the designated institution contact(s) to facilitate submission of the report. Through QHub, each institution will have access to an editable version of its AQR for the previous reporting period. This document can then be amended/updated to reflect any changes or developments that occurred during the current reporting period before submitting the final report to QQI.

### Completing the AQR

- When completing the AQR template, all relevant colleagues in the institution should be consulted.
- Consider whether external audiences will be able to understand the terminology used (particularly local abbreviations and acronyms); it may be helpful to include a glossary.
- Aim to avoid duplication in the report – where information is relevant to more than one section, the first mention may be referenced in subsequent sections.
- Provide reflections on what worked well, but also what may have been tried but did not work.

### Report Structure

#### Part A: Internal QA System

Part A of the AQR comprises a record of each institution's current QA policies and procedures and should provide links to those policies and procedures. Private HEIs may provide links to the policies and procedures approved by QQI during initial access to validation (IAV) or reengagement. It is the responsibility of each HEI to ensure before submission of the AQR that all links are correct and functional, and that the policies and procedures referred to are the most up-to-date versions available. Given that the AQR is submitted in respect of a discrete reporting period, it may be helpful for institutions to establish a SharePoint/OneDrive folder (or similar) for each reporting period that contains the current versions of their policies and procedures, and that hyperlinks to these versions of the documents be provided in the AQR

Part A is to be completed only if there have been **material** changes to QA policies and procedures during the reporting period. Such changes may include the approval and implementation of new policies or procedures, or significant amendments to existing ones.

#### Part B: Quality Assurance (QA) and Quality Enhancement (QE)

Part B of the AQR documents and captures QA activities, developments and enhancements undertaken by institutions **during the reporting period** and their **impact**. Insofar as is possible, institutions should demonstrate in Part B how plans set out in the previous AQR were progressed during the reporting period – these may be plans linked to strategic objectives, to reengagement advices, or to institutional review recommendations.

#### Case Studies

In each reporting period, QQI may request updates on specific thematic areas or may invite the institution to submit case studies in response to specific topics. Further, institutions may include case studies to share good practice on topics of their choosing, demonstrating QA and QE in action. In formulating case studies, institutions are encouraged to reflect on and highlight areas that may be of interest to other institutions and would benefit from wider dissemination. Further guidance is provided in Part B.

# Links to Reference Documents Cited in this Template<sup>1</sup>

## Legislation

- [Qualifications and Quality Assurance \(Education and Training\) Act 2012](#) (as amended)
- [Regional Technical Colleges Act 1992](#) (as amended)
- [Technological Universities Act 2018](#)
- [Universities Act 1997](#)

## QQI Documents

### [Statutory QA Guidelines \(QAG\)](#)

- [Core QAG](#)
- [Sector-specific QAG for Independent/Private Providers](#)
- [Sector-specific QAG for Designated Awarding Bodies](#)
- [Sector-specific QAG for Institutes of Technology](#)
- [Topic-specific QAG for Providers of Statutory Apprenticeship Programmes](#)
- [Topic-specific QAG for Providers of Research Degree Programmes](#)
- [Topic-specific QAG for Blended Learning](#)

### [Other QQI Policy Documents](#)

- [QQI's Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes, and Joint Awards, 2012](#)
- [QQI's Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Education and Training to International Learners, 2015](#)
- [QQI Policy Restatement on Access, Transfer and Progression, 2015](#)

## Other National/International References

- [European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area \(2015\)](#)
- [IHEQN Guidelines on Collaborative Provision](#)
- [National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland](#)
- [Ireland's Framework of Good Practice for Research Degree Programmes, 2019](#)
- [HEA National Framework for Doctoral Education](#)
- [The Salzburg Principles](#)
- [The Salzburg II Recommendations](#)
- [SOLAS Code of Practice for Employers and Apprentices](#)
- [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#)

---

<sup>1</sup> These links will be updated as further guidance documents are published.

# PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM

Table 1

Table 1 Mapping of ESG (2015) to QQI QA Guidelines (QAG)				
AQR Part A Section	QQI QAG Core Sub-section No	QAG Core Sub-section Title	ESG Standard No.	ESG Standard Title
1.0 – Internal QA Framework	2.1	Governance and Management of Quality	1.1	Policy for Quality Assurance
	2.2	Documented Approach to Quality Assurance		
2.0 – Programme Development and Delivery	2.3	Programmes of Education and Training	1.2	Design and Approval of Programmes
4.0 – QA of Research Activities and Programmes			1.9	On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes
8.0 – Monitoring and Periodic Review				
5.0 – Staff Recruitment, Development and Support	2.4	Staff Recruitment, Management a Development	1.5	Teaching Staff
2.3 – Teaching, Learning and Assessment	2.5	Teaching and Learning	1.3	Student-centred Teaching, Learning and Assessment
	2.6	Assessment of Learners		
	3.0 – Learner Resources and Support	2.7		
6.0 – Information and Data Management	2.8	Information and Data Management	1.7	Information Management
7.0 – Public Information and Communication	2.9	Public Information and Communication	1.8	Public Information
2.0 – Programme Delivery and Development	2.10	Other Parties Involved in Education and Training	1.9	On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes
8.0 – Monitoring and Periodic Review			1.2	Design and Approval of Programmes
9.0 – Details of Arrangements with Third Parties				
2.0 – Programme Development and Delivery	2.11	Self-evaluation, Monitoring and Review	1.9	On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes
8.0 – Monitoring and Periodic Review			1.10	Cyclical External Quality Assurance
4.0 – QA of Research Activities and Programmes	QAG for Providers of Research Degree Programmes			

# Introduction and Overview of Institution

This is the AQR for **University College Dublin (UCD)** for the reporting period **1 September 2024 – 31 August 2025**.

It is to be submitted by **Friday, 27 February 2026**.

The AQR is submitted by Bronwyn Molony, UCD Director of Quality and has been considered by the [Academic Council Quality Enhancement Committee \(ACQEC\)](#) and the [University Management Team \(UMT\)](#).

## The Institution

UCD traces its origins to the foundation of the Catholic University of Ireland (CUI) by John Henry Newman in 1854. UCD is a leading research-intensive and global university and is Ireland's largest university. There are currently nearly 40,000 students, including over 2,000 PhD students, over 5,000 international students in overseas operations, and over 11,000 international students on the main UCD campus, with 151 nationalities in total represented in the student body. There are over 2,000 Academic staff (FTEs) and over 2,200 Professional Staff (FTEs). More than 13,000 awards are conferred each year. UCD plays a key role in the national system of higher education and in the wider Irish society, and is distinguished by its scale, its diversity of programmes, the quality of its graduates, its focus on research and innovation, and its global engagement.

UCD is globally recognised for its excellence in teaching and learning with 16 subject areas ranked within the top 100 in the world and four in the top 50 ([World University Ranking by Subject](#)). The [QS World University Rankings](#) place the University at 126, among the best higher education institutions in the world.

The University's main Dublin campus at Belfield occupies an estate of 133 hectares and offers world-leading facilities. These include the [UCD O'Brien Centre for Science](#), [UCD Sutherland School of Law](#), [UCD Veterinary School](#), [UCD Lochlann Quinn School of Business](#), [UCD Student Centre](#), [UCD Village Residences](#), [UCD Sport](#) and the [UCD Library](#). UCD's [Michael Smurfit Graduate Business School](#) is located on the Blackrock campus, and the [Lyon's Research Farm](#) provides teaching and research facilities for the Schools of Agriculture and Food Science and Veterinary Medicine.

Through its national and international outreach and its links with alumni, government, industry and society in Ireland, UCD continues to respond to the ongoing and future global challenges. UCD combines its distinctively Irish outlook with its powerful global impact.

As the University approached the end of its UCD Strategy 2020-2024: Rising to the Future, work commenced in 2024 to develop the new [UCD Strategy to 2030](#), which was formally launched on 19 November 2024. The key aim of the new strategy is for UCD to be a university of influence, impact and excitement, making a clear positive difference to the lives of its students, to Ireland and to the wider world. The development of the new UCD strategy in 2024 was a collaborative process that included extensive consultation with World Cafés, Town Hall meetings, Open Feedback Platforms, Student Engagements, College, School and Unit Engagements, and External Engagements.

Further information about UCD is available at <https://www.ucd.ie>.

## Process for Development and Approval of the AQR

This Report has been developed by the UCD Quality Office, following consultation with and input from relevant stakeholders from across the University. Part A: Internal QA System of the report has been updated to reflect current quality assurance policies and procedures and ensure UCD's alignment with regulatory requirements. Part B: Internal QA System of the report has been developed to reflect updates and changes within the reporting period pertaining to internal quality assurance implementation and developments, institutional analysis of IQA enhancements and impacts including activities undertaken in respect of academic integrity, institutional monitoring of the University's Cinnnte report implementation of its recommendations, IQA developments and plans for the next reporting period and Case Studies.

The draft report was considered by the Academic Council Quality Enhancement Committee (ACQEC) at its meeting on 4 December 2025 and by the University Management Team (UMT) at its meeting on 16 December 2025. Feedback received following both meetings led to further updates, and the final version of the report was approved by the ACQEC at its meeting of 12 February 2026 and submitted to QQI by its deadline of 27 February.

## 1.0 Internal QA Framework

### 1.1 Governance and Management of Quality

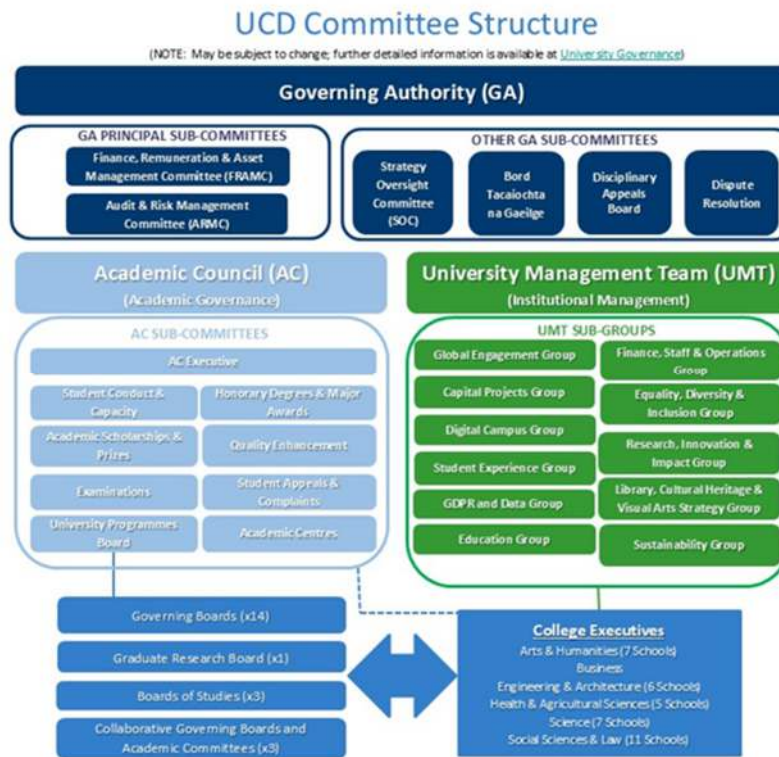
#### **Overarching Governance and Management Structures for Quality Assurance**

Within UCD there are governance structures in place to oversee the education and training, research, and related activity of the institution to assure and enhance the quality of provision that include University Statutes, committee framework, policies, procedures and processes. The institutional governance arrangements ensure that operational objectives are aligned with its strategy, and that quality assurance is embedded throughout all levels of the governance infrastructure.

Governance and oversight on quality assurance activity is the responsibility of the [UCD Governing Authority](#) as required under the *Universities Act 1997* (Section 35). The primary function of the UCD Governing Authority is to guide the strategic direction of the University and it is the principal decision-making body in the University.

[Academic Council](#) ([UCD Statute 25, Chapter 6, Section 2](#)) has responsibility for advising Governing Authority on procedures for quality assurance aimed at improving the quality of education and related activity. Responsibility for academic oversight includes directing the educational matters of the University such as curriculum, education provision, academic policy and regulatory oversight through approval of [Academic Regulations](#) and student codes, guidelines, procedures and academic policies. Academic Council also advises and makes recommendations to the University on academic, institutional and sectoral initiatives and strategic priorities such as the education strategy, Higher Education Authority (HEA) policy and other institutional and national initiatives. Academic Council oversees an academic governance framework which is made up of several sub-committees and it has a key role in setting the annual work programme and reporting requirements for its sub-committees, and it includes responsibility for quality oversight within its functions. The terms of reference for these committees are published on the [Governance and Management Committees](#) section of the UCD website and an outline of the UCD Governance Committee Structure is set-out in Figure 1 below:

**Figure 1 – UCD Governance Committee Structure**



The [Academic Council Quality Enhancement Committee \(ACQEC\)](#) provides oversight of the university's quality processes as delegated by Academic Council. The [ACQEC Terms of Reference](#) outline the committee's responsibilities in the following areas:

- Governance
- Strategic Planning
- Quality Assurance and Standards
- Strategic Enhancement relating to the Quality Assurance Framework
- Engagement and Compliance with external legislative requirements on Quality

The [University Management Team](#) is responsible for strategic, financial and management decision-making and there are a number of groups which support and report to UMT, including:

- Global Engagement Group
- Capital Projects Group
- Digital Campus Group
- Student Experience Group
- GDPR and Data Group
- Education Group
- Finance, Staff and Operations Group
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group
- Research, Innovation and Impact Group
- Library, Cultural Heritage & Visual Arts Strategy Group
- Sustainability Group

The University takes a multi-layered approach to quality assurance and quality enhancement through key decision-making points and delegated authority at University, College and School levels in relation to quality assurance of both its academic and support functions. There are a wide number of roles at senior management level within the University which play a role in monitoring and enhancing quality in their respective domains, including:

- UCD President and the President's Office
- UCD Registrar, Deputy President and Vice-President for Academic Affairs and the Office of the Registrar and Deputy President
- Chief Financial Officer/Bursar
- Vice-President for Research, Innovation and Impact
- Vice-President for Global Engagement
- Vice-President for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Vice-President for Sustainability
- Vice-President for Strategy and External Engagement
- Chief People Officer and Director of SIRC, Legal Services and Transformation

At College and School level there are several key roles through which oversight and management (including resourcing) of the quality of teaching, learning, research and student experience is managed, including:

- College Principals
- Vice-Principals for Teaching and Learning
- Vice-Principals for Internationalisation
- Vice-Principals for Research and Innovation
- Vice-Principals for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- College Finance Managers
- College Office Directors
- Programme Deans/Associate Deans/Heads of Governing Boards
- Heads of School
- Subject Area Heads
- Module Co-ordinators

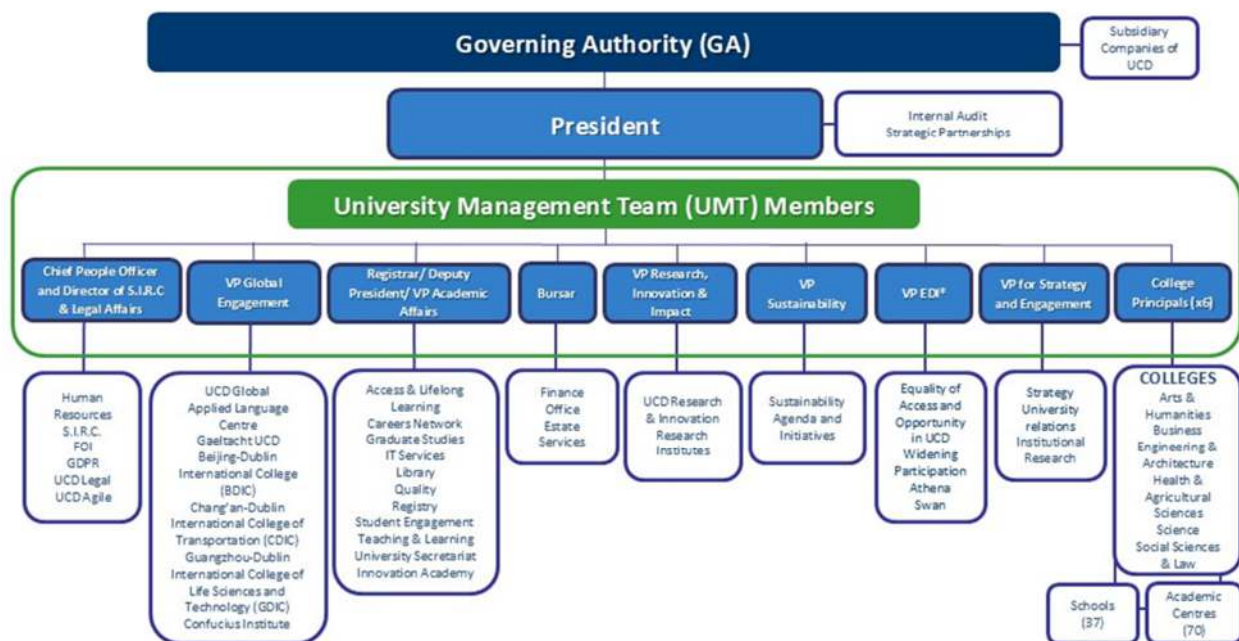
Reporting to the UCD Registrar, Deputy President and Vice-President for Academic Affairs, the UCD Director of Quality is responsible for ensuring that the University is compliant with its legislative requirements in relation to quality assurance and quality enhancement, overseeing a formal quality process and seven-year cycle of reviews, and responsibility for developing, implementing and promoting quality across the University, working with stakeholders to ensure that a culture of enhancement is embedded in all activities of the University.

The UCD Management Structure is outlined in Figure 2 below:

**Figure 2 – UCD Management Structure**

## UCD Management Structure

(NOTE: May be subject to change; further detailed information is available at [University Governance](#))



\*Role currently held by one of the College Principals

### Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures within the Institution related to the Institution's Strategy

The seventh Governing Authority of UCD, which commenced its term of office on 7 November 2023, is comprised of a total membership of 19: 10 external members that include an external Chair (1), external members (6) and Ministerial Nominees (3) and 9 internal members that include the Chief Officer/President (1), academic staff (3), professional, technical and research Staff (2) and student members (3). Further information is provided at [UCD Governing Authority](#).

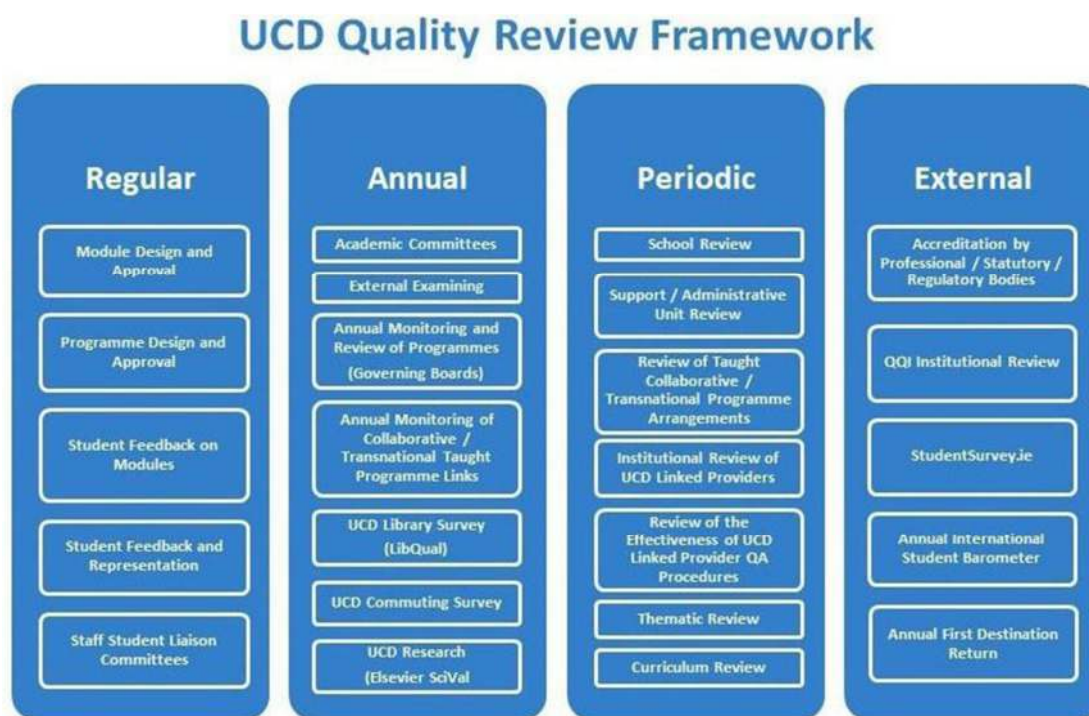
The UCD Governing Authority is responsible for approving the University's strategic development plan as required under Irish Statute. It also has a responsibility, in consultation with Academic Council, to ensure that procedures for quality assurance are in place to improve the quality of education and related services provided by the University. The University operates an integrated system for quality assurance and enhancement which contributes to the achievement of the [UCD Strategy](#).

The aim of the [UCD Quality Assurance and Quality Enhancement Policy](#) is to enhance the effectiveness of the institution's core activities of learning, teaching and research and their effective management. This policy is also applicable to UCD's collaborative and transnational

arrangements, its Linked Providers (referred to as Recognised Colleges within UCD) and its professional support units supported by appropriate handbooks and processes. The policy addresses all areas of university activity taking cognisance of their contribution to, and alignment with, the University's strategic goals. It also recognises the University's commitment to integrating Equality, Diversity and Inclusion into its policies and decision-making structures.

The [UCD Quality Framework](#) is supported by a combination of university-wide policies and procedures ([University Secretariat – Document Library](#)) and a seven-year schedule of periodic quality review of all activity that is enhancement focused, led by the UCD Director of Quality and supported by the [UCD Quality Office](#). UCD's approach to quality assurance and enhancement is underpinned by, inter alia, the *Universities Act, 1997*, the *Qualifications and Quality Assurance Act (2012)*; the *European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (2015)*; and informed by the *QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines* as well as other QQI related guidance. UCD engages on an ongoing basis with QQI on quality matters that includes its representation on the IQQF, policy development, Green and White Paper consultations, and in relation to other sectoral issues.

**Figure 3 – UCD Quality Framework**



**The University places importance and value on student involvement in its processes and seeks to promote student engagement in quality activity wherever appropriate.**

### Overview of the System for Quality Assuring Research Activity

The system for quality assuring research activity, which includes governance, development of policies, procedures and processes, their management, resourcing, monitoring and review is

embedded in all research activities across the institution, and is overseen by the Vice-President for Research, Innovation and Impact. Research, innovation and impact are central to the UCD strategy, and the [Office of the Vice-President for Research, Innovation and Impact](#) provides support for researchers and faculty and is responsible for developing and meeting UCD's strategic objectives for research, specifically for:

- Governance and development of research in UCD
- Development and implementation of research policy and ethics
- Supporting a positive research culture
- Strategic management of major research programmes and institutes
- Development and implementation of research impact and engaged research
- Research support services (including support for proposals and grants)
- External partnerships (including academic, government and industry partnerships)
- Infrastructure development
- Commercialisation of research through NovaUCD

The [UCD Strategy to 2030](#) includes three pillars:

1. Transforming Learning
2. Advancing Research and Innovation
3. Engaging for Impact

To drive change in these three pillars, UCD is investing in and focusing its activity through six cross-cutting initiatives:

1. Learning for Life
2. UCD Student Experience
3. Irish Roots, Global Reach
4. Research with Ambition
5. One UCD
6. Physical and Digital Campuses

Within the Research with Ambition strategic initiative, UCD Research and Innovation will draw on the breadth and depth of its expertise to deliver knowledge and solutions that includes advancing sustainability and interpreting cultural heritage, transforming healthcare, and designing our digital world.

Through the Strategy to 2030, UCD will support its researchers to combine their expertise across disciplines to explore new frontiers of knowledge and to build at scale in areas where UCD can deliver the most significant impact. This will be achieved through deep and diverse collaboration nationally and globally, convening clusters for impact, with a continuous flow of ideas, knowledge and expertise between partners. UCD's thought leadership will derive from the voices of its academics based on their research and scholarship, not through taking institutional positions, and UCD will always respect and uphold academic freedom. By collaborating with ambition and delivering world-class research and innovation grounded in rigour and integrity, UCD will be a dynamic research environment where people thrive, bold ideas are realised, and impact is delivered for the benefit of society, economy and environment.

Through its Research Pillar, UCD will:

- Establish an institute for AI and digital technologies research, education, ethics and policy, bringing together the diverse and growing interdisciplinary and cross-sector AI and digital technologies research and innovation community at UCD to deliver significant impact (RA1).
- Grow its capacity to inform public policy through its research (RA2).
- Support existing large-scale cross-cutting research areas of excellence and impact, such as One Health and Sustainability, to grow with ambition, and identify and support key emerging areas (RA3).
- Embed innovation in all its forms throughout its research and education and develop innovation across its campus (RA4).
- Improve the researcher experience through an integrated service that is researcher-centred and reduces research bureaucracy (RA5).
- Identify the critical infrastructures, facilities and digital technologies needed to support its researchers, seek the resources to support them, and ensure that they are integrated and accessible (RA6).
- Attract outstanding researchers and faculty members, including through the Ad Astra fellowship programme, and support them to realise their ambitions at UCD (RA7).
- Advance best practice in UCD's research culture, underpinned by academic freedom (RA8).

Support for the research activities of the University is provided by the UCD Research and Innovation. This is enabled through the [UCD Research & Innovation Services Portal](#), which provides an online portal of resources for UCD staff.

The [UCD Research Finance Office](#) also provides support for the financial administration and compliance across the wide variety of research activities that University staff are engaged in. The main functions of the office are:

- Overall financial administration of all university research activity at the post-award stage;
- Ensuring that research expenditure is compliant with both the funding agencies' terms and conditions and the University's own financial policies and procedures;
- Assessment of VAT status of research accounts;
- Financial Review of Grant Registration documents;
- Overall financial control of the University research accounts;
- Financial enquiries from researchers relating to research accounts;
- Collection of research balances owed to the University;
- Assisting researchers in the preparation of cost statements/statements of expenditure;
- Management of financial audits conducted by funding agencies.

The internal periodic review process for schools incorporates an assessment of the quality of the research activity within the school. It includes an assessment of the school's research strategy and management of research activity, research outputs, how research links with teaching activity, assessing research performance with regard to research productivity, research income and recruiting and supporting doctoral students and research staff. 'Quality of Postgraduate Research Education and Research Activity' is a dedicated section in both the school self-assessment report (SAR) and in the review group report. To assist schools in their preparation for periodic quality review, the [UCD Research Analytics and Impact Team](#), in conjunction with the [UCD Library](#) and

[UCD Institutional Research](#), provides support to schools, such as the provision of data analytics, and works with schools to develop appropriate metrics for monitoring at all stages of the review process.

A Research Assessment process is available to schools as a resource to assist those who wish to benchmark their research quality internationally and inform their school strategic planning. The research assessment framework does not form part of the formal UCD quality assurance process but is an additional resource for schools.

UCD Research and Innovation is also subject to periodic quality review. The most recent [Review Group Report](#) and the associated [Quality Improvement Plan \(QIP\)](#) are published on the UCD Quality Office website under [Reports and Publications](#).

For more information on postgraduate and postdoctoral research training, see Section 4: QA of Research Activities and Programmes.

### **Representation of Learners and External Stakeholders in the Governance and Management of Quality**

As indicated in the previous section the Governing Authority has an external Chair and 53% external members, and 16% student members, representing a broad range of stakeholders.

The [UCD Student Charter](#) outlines roles and responsibilities and expectations of the UCD community. The University works in partnership with the [Students' Union](#) to ensure that students are represented at all levels of the University and facilitated in engaging as part of the University community. Students are represented on many of the University's senior committees by [Students' Union Sabbatical Officers](#) and other elected student representatives such as the [College Student Officers](#). This includes the University's most senior academic and institutional governing bodies: Academic Council, Governing Authority and many of the University Management Team sub-committees. This includes three Students' Union representatives who are *ex officio* members of the [Academic Council Quality Enhancement Committee](#), a sub-committee of Academic Council. [Class Reps](#) are elected at the beginning of each academic year by their peers to represent different courses, schools, and stages across the UCD student journey. They are trained to ensure that the student voice is at the heart of life in UCD, both inside and outside the classroom. Class Reps also sit on UCDSU Union Council (which meets every 2 weeks during term) to represent the views of their classmates and help to steer Union policy.

The [UCD Widening Participation Committee](#) provides the formal mechanism to oversee, monitor and promote the University's achievement of a diverse and inclusive student community, including the 'University for All' initiative. The UCD Widening Participation Committee is composed of 31 representatives from the University's various programme boards, policy and professional units, and students.

Over a third of UCD's incoming undergraduates are from underrepresented groups. The [University for All](#) initiative is sponsored by the UCD Registrar, Deputy President and Vice-President for Academic Affairs, and supported and led by the UCD Widening Participation Committee and UCD Access and Lifelong Learning. Critically, University for All is a whole-institution, evidence-based approach to mainstreaming inclusion in UCD, ensuring that all

students feel welcome, belong and are valued. Grounded in the University strategy, University for All recognises, promotes and values the breadth of talent, experience and contribution of all students, and creates an inclusive educational experience for all. Reflecting both the UCD and EDI strategies, the University for All initiative embeds inclusion across the University further developing UCD's capacity to attract, retain and develop our diverse student population. This work relies on engagement and collaboration with students.

The University's leadership in [Universal Design for Learning \(UDL\)](#), under the umbrella of the University for All initiative, provides a framework that benefits all students and fosters an inclusive educational environment by promoting access and inclusion across classrooms, facilities and student supports. UCD offers three digital badges to staff; the first of these is the Universal Design in Teaching and Learning, which has been integrated in the Teaching and Learning programme. All staff are encouraged to take the introductory one-hour badge, and the newest badge is focused on Beyond the Classroom, promoting professional development for professional staff and an emphasis on student support. The [Faculty Partnership Programme](#) is designed to support and accelerate the implementation of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) throughout the University. By funding academics to be Faculty Partners for University for All projects, the University has fostered a strong cohort of committed staff who can assist in getting real progress to occur – for example by mentoring other staff to help them obtain their UDL digital badge.

The [Student Partnership Programme](#) directly involves students in the work of breaking down barriers to inclusion in UCD through Universal Design. Recognising “Nothing About us, Without us”, the Programme seeks to foster genuine and meaningful partnership with students; empowering them to advocate for a more inclusive university experience for all. Student Partners are appointed for a full academic year.

The goals of the Programme are:

- To develop training materials for students that introduces them to diversity, inclusion and Universal Design, and their role in creating an inclusive university.
- To deliver this training to a variety of students across campus, particularly those who directly work with and support their fellow students such as class reps, peer mentors, student ambassadors, etc.
- To highlight to students the potential barriers some students may face in university and work together to brainstorm how these challenges can be overcome.
- To create communications materials and resources such as posters, social media content, flyers, etc. to raise awareness of Universal Design and University for All in a student focused format.
- To support the implementation of Universal Design in UCD, working in particular with the Faculty and Professional Staff Partnership Programmes.

The Role of Student Partners

- Develop and co-facilitate student workshops focused on Universal Design and inclusion.
- Actively communicate the message of University for All and Universal Design through social media and other communications channels.

- Support the development, planning and delivery of the University for All Roadshow.
- Generate, create and organise resources for students, explaining diversity, inclusion and Universal Design.
- Work with the members of the Faculty and Professional Staff Partnership Programme in rolling out the implementation of Universal Design across the University.

The University Management Team [Student Experience Group \(UMT SEG\)](#) provides high-level oversight and development of the student experience. It articulates key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure the student experience and links its activities to supporting the development of the student experience by providing high-level oversight and co-ordination of student supports. The group leads the development and operationalization of University activities, processes and procedures related to the student experience. The Student Activities Committee is the "umbrella body" which oversees the allocation of capitation funds to the various areas of student activities, including sport, and it also provides an opportunity for clubs and societies, as well as the Students' Union to air their views on matters relevant to student life.

The [UMT Student Experience Group](#) has introduced a Student Representation and Partnership Agreement and [Student Partnership Forum](#). This Agreement expands and strengthens the University's commitment to student partnership outlined in the Student Charter and sets out a shared vision for student representation. It includes principles to guide a shared approach and outlines the responsibilities of both the University and the Students' Union in relation to student representation. The purpose of the Forum is to provide a platform to advance, support and operationalise the student partnership.

Student feedback is an important mechanism for the University. It helps identify opportunities to improve and enhance student services and engagement and plays an important role in quality assurance processes. Students are among the wide range of stakeholders that review groups meet during periodic quality reviews of schools and professional support units. Formal survey mechanisms include [StudentSurvey.ie](#) or University programme or module feedback, or through liaising with student representatives, such as Class Reps, who participate in staff-student committees, so that they can represent their views or concerns at relevant school or programme meetings and other staff/student fora. UCD operates an anonymous, online student feedback system to ensure that students are given a voice in the module enhancement process as part of UCD's evidence-based quality assurance of modules. The [UCD Student Feedback system](#) provides students with an opportunity to voice their opinion and provide constructive feedback to the University. All feedback received is confidential. Some examples of annual student surveys include but are not limited to the [Start of Term Survey](#), [StudentSurvey.ie](#) (national), the [EDI Survey](#) and the UCD Commuting Survey.

In relation to additional external stakeholder input in the governance and management of quality, several schools and colleges throughout the University have established advisory boards which are typically comprised of individuals based outside of the University and in some instances, outside of Ireland. These advisory boards provide input and guidance to the respective areas in relation to programme development, student recruitment and research. Some examples of these include the [UCD Michael Smurfit Graduate Business School Irish Advisory Board](#) and the 3D-NET research project [External Advisory Boards](#).

A significant number of UCD programmes, schools and institutes are also accredited by national and/or international Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs). This external accreditation complements the various internal quality assurance and enhancement processes, as articulated through the [UCD Quality Framework](#). The [UCD Policy for Internal Reporting on Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body \(PSRB\) Accreditation of UCD Programmes and Units](#) ensures that the University quality assures its PSRB provision. The policy enables the consideration of the outcomes of professional accreditation exercises by governing boards, the Academic Council Quality Enhancement Committee and periodic quality Review Groups. The policy enables the provision of support in relation to the preparation for professional accreditation reviews and periodic quality reviews.

#### **Links to Relevant Governance Policies and Procedures/Regulations**

A full list of the University's policies, procedures and guidelines is available on the [University Secretariat – Document Library](#).

## **1.2 Linked Providers, Collaborative and Transnational Provision**

### **Collaborative Provision of Programmes**

UCD engages in a wide range of collaborative arrangements, including access/feeder, articulation, exchange, franchise, joint degree awards and off-campus delivery, and these are subject to the appropriate quality assurance policies and procedures for the development, approval, implementation, monitoring and review of university programmes. A number of institution-wide decision-making fora are involved in quality assurance procedures for engagement with third parties for the provision of programmes, including the [University Management Team \(UMT\)](#), [UMT Global Engagement Group](#), [University Programmes Board \(UPB\)](#), [Academic Council](#) and its relevant sub-committees.

The University has a [Programme Development, Approval and Review Framework \(PDARF\)](#) which provides guidance on establishing new programmes and changes to programmes. Further information regarding this is provided under Section 2.0 Programme Development and Delivery. A dedicated set of resources is in place that are specific to collaborative provision. These include guidance on various topics from initiating a new programme, to development of the programme, as well as its implementation, monitoring and review phases. UCD's framework for collaborative provision is benchmarked against international best practice and comparator institutions and complies with relevant policies and guidelines.

### **Transnational Delivery of Programmes**

The [Vice-President for Global Engagement](#) is responsible for the development and implementation of the 'Irish Roots, Global Reach' initiative which is part of the UCD Strategy to 2030, and oversees the [UCD Office of Global Engagement](#) comprising UCD Global, UCD Centre for English and Global Languages, UCD Irish Institute for Chinese Studies, UCD Confucius

Institute and Gaeltacht UCD. The UCD Office of Global Engagement supports UCD's aim to bring the best of the world to Ireland and the best of Ireland, including its distinct cultures, to the world. Within [UCD Global](#), the [UCD Global Partnerships Team](#) provides guidance and support to University staff on the development and management of global partnerships.

The [International Student Recruitment Team](#) has responsibility for international student recruitment and their support, managing inbound and outbound student mobility and the provision of international elements of the student experience. UCD also has a network of [Global Centres](#) that support its activities.

The [UMT Global Engagement Group \(UMT-GEG\)](#) is responsible for reviewing and making recommendations to the [University Management Team \(UMT\)](#) regarding the strategic case for new international partnerships and reviewing existing memorandums of agreement. Following UMT approval, the [University Programmes Board \(UPB\)](#) separately considers the programme elements. Typically, new partnership proposals are initiated at a Governance Board or school level and are subject to a due diligence assessment. A Memorandum of Agreement setting out partner responsibilities is in place for each collaborative taught programme arrangement.

Quality assurance arrangements for major collaborative taught programme partnerships are subject to the same academic governance, Academic Regulations, policies, and processes that apply at UCD, including analysis of student progression, student evaluation of modules, student consultative forums, programme monitoring, and external examiner feedback. UCD also recognises the challenge and potential risks associated with transnational provision. Major collaborative arrangements that deliver UCD taught programmes are, therefore, required to undergo [Periodic Quality Review of Collaborative Programme Partnerships](#). New Partnership development and renewal of existing MOUs undergo review by the University. The procedures regarding the internal approval, monitoring and review of collaborative taught provision are reviewed on an ongoing basis.

Periodic quality review of these arrangements is undertaken within a seven-year cycle and provides another key quality assurance mechanism by which UCD assures itself of the quality of its awards delivered through collaborative partnerships. An evaluation of the student experience is undertaken as part of this review. A similar approach is undertaken to the internal periodic quality review of Schools and Professional Support Units i.e. self-assessment report, on-site visit by a peer review group; review group report and recommendations for enhancement; a quality improvement plan (QIP), and a progress report that monitors ongoing implementation of the QIP. These also cover all modules and programmes that a School contributes to or delivers.

### **Linked Providers**

Under the Qualifications and Quality Assurance Act 2012 (2012 Act) UCD in its role as a designated awarding body has in place a formal agreement, academic governance oversight, academic regulations and a review process that ensures its linked provider has in place quality processes and procedures.

Under the 2012 Act each DAB has three core responsibilities concerning a Linked Provider:

1. To review and approve the Linked Provider Quality Assurance Framework;
2. To monitor the implementation of the Linked Provider Quality Assurance Framework;
3. To periodically review the effectiveness of the Linked Provider Quality Assurance Framework.

UCD is the DAB for the [National College of Art and Design \(NCAD\)](#) and the [Institute of Bankers \(IOB\)](#). UCD has formal agreements with each Linked Provider, has reviewed and approved the Linked Provider Quality Assurance Procedures for both, and each Linked Provider is separately reviewed prior to the renewal of the partnership, typically every seven years.

Approved Linked Provider Quality Assurance Procedures:

- [Approved NCAD Quality Assurance Procedures \(2024\)](#)
- [Approved IOB Quality Assurance Procedures \(2024\)](#)

UCD institutional review of the effectiveness of its Linked Provider Quality Assurance Processes:

- [National College of Art and Design \(NCAD\) Institutional Review Report \(02/2022\)](#)
- [Institute of Bankers \(IOB\) Institutional Review Report \(11/2018\)](#)

The [UCD Governing Authority](#) is required to approve the establishment of a new Linked Provider, and UCD has clear governance arrangements for Linked Providers that are aligned with the wider University structures. For example, Linked Providers are represented on the University's Programme Board and must adhere to the University's Academic Regulations.

## 2.0 Programme Development and Delivery

### 2.1 Programme Development and Approval

#### Academic Governance

The roles and responsibilities of [Academic Council](#) are defined by University Statute which requires it to oversee the University's academic activity. This includes an advisory role on the University's education strategy and other academic initiatives. The Academic Council also maintains regulatory oversight on academic policies, regulations and the Student Code. It is also responsible for maintaining the integrity of the curriculum including oversight of programme development and approval. It also oversees the academic governance framework which is made up of several sub-committees and has a key role in setting the annual work programme and reporting requirements for its subcommittees.

Under the delegated authority of [Academic Council](#), the Governing Boards are responsible for overseeing the development of a Programme Specification. In accordance with the University's regulations, a Governing Board's responsibilities in relation to the programmes it governs, and the students registered to these programmes, include the following:

- Ensuring the implementation of University strategy, policies, and procedures;
- Design, development, regulation, delivery, and quality assurance and enhancement;
- Assuring outcomes-based emphasis in programme design and assessment;
- Ensuring that assessment strategy is appropriate and measures achievement of programme outcomes;
- Approving the structure and content of the programme and any special regulations relating to the programme;
- Oversight of the admission of students;
- Oversight of internships;
- Oversight of study abroad opportunities;
- Adjudication on student applications for leave of absence and transfer between programmes;
- Academic welfare of the students registered to the programmes and identifying students whose academic welfare is of concern;
- Consideration of extenuating circumstances and approval of appropriate actions;
- Progression of students within the programme;
- Where a student's academic performance is deemed to be unacceptable by the Governing Board, the Governing Board will follow policies and procedures approved by Academic Council or its relevant sub-committee;
- Overseeing and enhancing the academic quality of programmes and the student learning experience; and
- Where applicable, ensuring appropriate supervisory arrangements are in place for research students.

Governing Boards appoint a member of faculty as Programme Director, reporting to the Chair of the Governing Board, for each taught programme it governs.

The [University Programmes Board \(UPB\)](#) reviews, approves and monitors the design, delivery, assessment and quality of the educational programmes within its remit and provides University level oversight for all programmes governed by Undergraduate and Graduate Taught Programme Boards, the Graduate Research Board, Joint Academic Programme Boards and

Boards of Studies established by the University.

The [University Management Team – Education Group \(UMT-EG\)](#) provides high-level oversight and coordination of the development and implementation of the University's education strategy. It reports to UMT with progress updates and advises on oversight and review of existing education activity and proposals for new education activity within UCD.

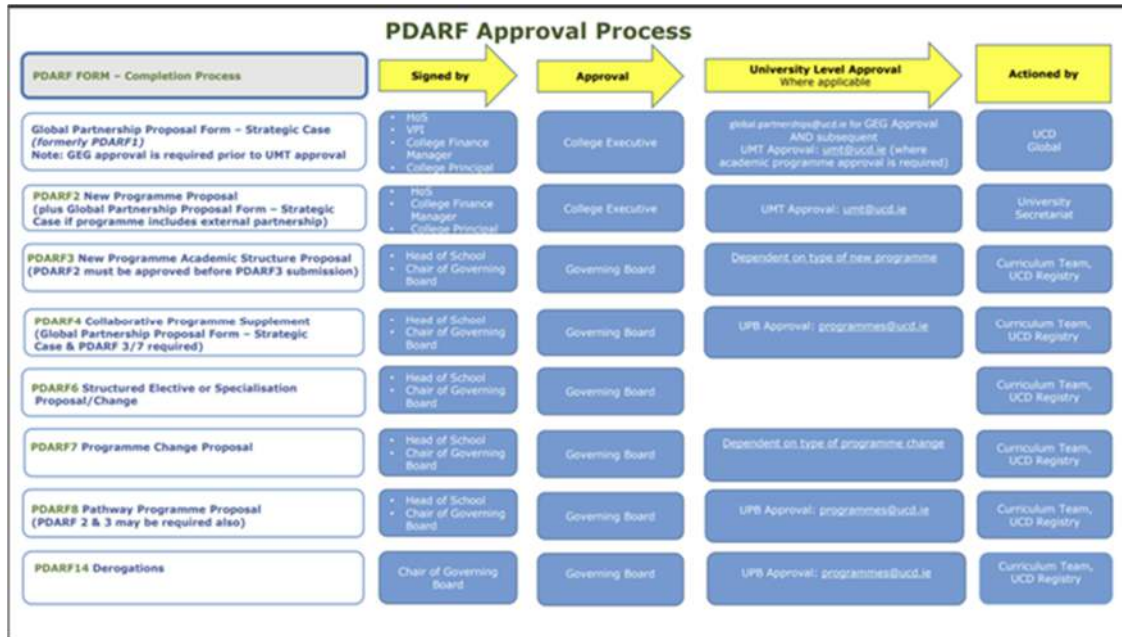
### **Academic Regulations and Policies**

The procedures and requirements relating to programme design are contained in the [Academic Regulations](#), which is a high level, overarching framework governing the University's educational offerings and which define the parameters within which programmes may be designed and developed. This includes support for a modularised and trimesterised curriculum, utilising the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) for all programmes. All of the degree award programmes offered by UCD are mapped to the National Framework of [Qualifications \(NFQ\)](#) and Irish Register of Qualifications through articulation of learning outcomes and their alignment with the relevant NFQ level. This includes international and transnational programmes with an award on the NFQ.

### **Process Operationalisation and Quality Assurance**

The [Programme Development, Approval and Review Framework \(PDARF\)](#) sets out the formal institutional approval process by which new programmes, programme changes and derogations from the Academic Regulations are developed, approved and implemented through the University's academic governance structures, including [Academic Council](#) and its relevant sub-committees.

**Figure 4 – Programme Development, Approval and Review Framework (PDARF) Flowchart**



The [Curriculum Team](#) in UCD Registry Customer and Curriculum Operations unit provides support and advice to staff and faculty on [curriculum management](#) and [programme approval](#). The [Curriculum Team](#) is responsible for the management and enhancement of the Curriculum Management System of curricular information at module, major and programme level, and Curriculum College Liaisons who are part of the Curriculum Team are the key point of contact for staff and faculty. The team also manages the [Current Students Course Search](#) which enables users to see current curriculum information as well as an archive from previous academic years. The team is responsible for the creation of programme and major codes on foot of formal approval processes (outlined in Figure 4), the assignment of module codes on behalf of schools and the set-up of new registration terms. The remit of the team includes support for the implementation of [Academic Regulations](#) as they relate to programmes, majors and modules, and operational support for the University's Programme Development, Approval and Review Framework (PDARF) process.

Extensive support for programme and module design and enhancement is available through [UCD Teaching and Learning](#), including accredited courses, workshops, self-help online guides, [resources](#) and customised support for programme teams. A six-stage [curriculum design process](#) is advocated which addresses issues of programme context, support for staff and students, and ongoing monitoring and evaluation. The wide range of dedicated projects, resources and tools supported by and available through [UCD Teaching and Learning](#), which help to underpin programme design, include:

- Module and Programme Design
- Assessment and Feedback
- Technology Enhanced Learning
- Teaching Toolkit
- Review and Research your Teaching
- Inclusive and Intercultural Learning

[Universal Design in UCD](#) is the core component of the University for All initiative in UCD. Using

the framework and principles of Universal Design it is possible to create an inclusive educational environment to benefit all students. There are several resources and training opportunities available to staff involved in teaching, support, technical, policy or any other role. Individuals can complete the short [Introduction to Universal Design in UCD](#) training on Brightspace to examine how Universal Design impacts all work in the University. Over 400 UCD colleagues have completed the [Digital Badge for Universal Design in Teaching and Learning](#).

Professional or experiential learning continues to be an integral component of many academic programmes in UCD. During the reporting period, UCD maintained robust procedures to ensure the quality and consistency of internships and work-based learning experiences, guided by the [Policy on Internships/Work Practice Experience: Guidelines and Good Practice](#). This policy provides a framework to support ongoing activities and facilitate the development of future experiential learning opportunities. UCD activities include professional clinical practice placements, industry-based internships, and fieldwork experiences that constitute planned and assessed components of academic programmes, ensuring that students receive credit for their learning. This approach promotes parity and alignment across the University, maintaining consistent quality assurance practices. Oversight of these programmes, including those with apprenticeship or work-based learning components, remains the responsibility of the relevant [Governing Board](#), which review and approve arrangements to ensure compliance with academic standards..

[UCD Global](#) also offers extensive information and support for students who are interested in learning abroad during their studies. UCD has over 400 university exchange partners in more than 50 countries across the globe. These provide a wide range of opportunities for our students to experience studying within Europe and outside of Europe. UCD also welcomes incoming students from partner universities each year, adding to the vibrant international student community on the Dublin campus.

Learners also have an opportunity to upskill in highly specialised areas with short, flexible, industry-aligned courses that are fully accredited through non-credited or credited CPD such as [UCD Micro-Credentials](#). Developed at a sectoral level through Human Capital Initiative (HCI) funding they aim to address many of the barriers to life-long learning and enable learners to successfully balance further study with work and other commitments. When a learner completes a UCD micro-credential they acquire university credit (ECTS).

## 2.2 Admission, Progression, Recognition & Certification

### Recruitment, Pre-Entry and Admission

UCD admits students to programmes from NFQ level 6 to level 10 and at various stages within these programmes. The [Admissions Policy](#) outlines the University's framework on how it admits students, who has responsibility to do so, the overarching general principles for admission, and the policies and procedures related to the Admissions policy. Co-dependent related policies and procedures are in place to align with the Admissions Policy and include:

- [Academic Regulations](#)

- Admissions Privacy Statement
- Applicant Appeals
- Asylum Seekers and Refugees
- Recognition of Prior Learning
- Relevant Offence Risk Assessment Policy
- Student (Garda) Vetting
- Student Fitness to Practice Policy
- Taught Programme Transfer and Re-Admissions Policy
- Child Protection Policy and Guidelines
- Entry requirements criteria for EU/EFTYA/UK Applicants

UCD Registry - Admissions has overall responsibility, acting under delegated authority from Academic Council, for the admission of students to the University and for ensuring compliance with published entry criteria and enrolment plans. For undergraduate Level 8 national/EU/EFTA/UK students' application is via the Central Applications Office (CAO). The Admissions team reviews and/or assesses all non-standard applicants (e.g. mature, EU examinations). In particular, there is a growing volume of EU applications.

For graduate entry, UCD Registry - Admissions manages the [UCD direct application system](#) which, to date, is used primarily for applicants to graduate taught programmes. The University is transitioning to having all graduate research programmes available to apply to via the application system in early 2026. In addition to graduate applicants, application for certificate and diploma programmes, international (non-EU students) for undergraduate programmes, exchange and occasional students (e.g. Erasmus), transfer applicants and applications for modular study/microcredentials are also made via the direct application system. Decisions on graduate applications are made by the relevant school/college or UCD Global. UCD Registry - Admissions together with UCD Global audits application decisions based on established and published entry criteria and manages the checking of qualifications. UCD Registry - Admissions also carries out a process to verify applicants' documents and qualifications.

UCD Registry - Admissions, together with UCD Student Recruitment and UCD Global, provides comprehensive information and advice to prospective, current, and other stakeholders on the admissions process. Specific programme requirements are published on the [UCD Admissions](#), [UCD Student Recruitment \(MyUCD\)](#) and [UCD Global](#) websites. Prospectuses for undergraduate and graduate programmes are also available with digital versions hosted on the [MyUCD](#) and [Graduate Admissions](#) websites and all programmes are included in the course catalogue which is managed by Student Recruitment.

For undergraduate recruitment & admissions, the [MyUCD portal](#) provides extensive information including:

- Admissions process
- UCD Course Catalogue
- CAO application information
- Summer schools
- Open evenings and career fairs

- UCD Open Day microsite
- UCD Undergraduate Prospectus
- UCD Undergraduate Directory
- UCD Horizons (the modular and credit-based structure for taught degrees at UCD)
- UCD Peer to Peer chat platform
- UCD Schools Liaison and Campus Tour Programme
- Dedicated resources for Guidance Counsellors and Parents
- Information on Campus Life
- Virtual Campus Tour, supported by programme information videos

UCD Global provides information about [study at UCD for international students](#) (non-EU) which includes details regarding pre-entry, [entry requirements](#) and the UCD student experience as required under the [QQI Code of Practice for the Provision of Education and Training to International Learners](#).

For graduate applicants, there is extensive information for prospective students on the [UCD Graduate Studies website](#) and in the Course Catalogue on taught and research programmes that includes advice and guidance on the application process and coming to UCD, Campus Life (Virtual Campus Tour, Open Days and events, international student supports, accommodation) the student experience and future careers. A digital copy of the Graduate Prospectus is also made available.

As part of the University's commitment to widen student participation, ensure equitable access to education, and to create a diverse and inclusive community on campus, the '[University for All](#)' initiative is a whole-institution, evidence-based approach to mainstreaming inclusion in UCD, ensuring that all students feel welcome, belong and are valued.

The University has systematically enhanced and mainstreamed supplemental entry routes to all programmes, including, Higher Education Access Route (HEAR), Disability Access Route to Education (DARE), Quality and Qualifications Ireland Further Education and Training (QQI-FET), Mature, Graduate Entry, University Access, and Open Learning. Each programme has set targets for the individual access pathways. Unassigned places on any programme are reallocated within the access quota to maximise participation of under-represented groups. Under-represented groups are targeted through UCD's outreach programme, through linked DEIS schools, Further Education Colleges, and community groups. The University has a widening participation target of 33% which includes entrants via the above pathways and other students identified post-admission.

The [UCD Widening Participation Committee](#) plays a key role in supporting the University to recognise, promote and value diversity, foster the spirit of inclusion, appreciate the breadth of talent, experience, and contribution of all students, and strive to remove the barriers to access, participation and success. The Committee reports to the [UMT Education Group \(UMT-EG\)](#). Membership is drawn from all governing boards, policy, and student supports, in addition to Student Access Leaders and the UCD Students' Union. The Committee is provided with policy advice, expertise and operational support by [UCD Access & Lifelong Learning](#) and the Committee has a three-year term with meetings taking place five times per year.

UCD has put in place a range of [financial supports and scholarships](#), offering the largest scholarship programme in Ireland. The [UCD Cothrom Na Féinne \(meaning justice and equality\) Scholarship Programme](#) is the overarching brand for UCD scholarships for access students and is now Ireland's largest access scholarship scheme at undergraduate level. These scholarships are awarded to students who demonstrate motivation to pursue higher education and offer leadership in their communities while overcoming significant socio-economic and educational barriers. These awards are named after UCD's commitment and historical connection with justice and equality, or in common parlance - level the playing field. The Cothrom na Féinne scholarships awards are made to students who experience significant financial, social, and educational barriers.

UCD has also been accredited as a University of Sanctuary since 2018. The [Sanctuary Programme](#) is offered to students who are asylum seekers/refugees.

### **Progression**

Following admission to UCD, there is extensive information and support available to students to assist them in their transition to university life and their programme. This is available through the [New Students](#) website and it includes a broad range of advice and guidance, as well as detailed information about peer mentoring, [Orientation Week](#) events and schedule which is compulsory for all new students. Detailed and specialised information is provided to undergraduate students, graduate students, and international students.

For current students, there is a dedicated [UCD Current Students](#) website. This includes information on registration, term dates, fees, assessment, and student services with a view to providing a 'one-stop-shop', holistic and student-centred set of resources. Support for international learners is provided through [UCD Global](#) and [UCD Student Services and Support](#).

A peer mentoring system - [Peer Mentors at UCD](#) - is in place to support new students transition to university. Additional supports are provided by Student Advisors, College and School Offices.

A full list of the University's policies, procedures and guidelines, including in relation to student access, transfer and progression, is available on the [University Secretariat – Document Library](#).

### **Recognition**

UCD is responsible for making its own awards as a Designated Awarding Body. UCD's academic awards are linked to the [National Framework of Qualifications \(NFQ\)](#), and on the Irish Register of Qualifications (IRQ) which in turn is matched to the [European Qualifications Framework \(EQF\)](#). An agreed process is in place to provide UCD programme and award information to QQI who manage the IRQ – this typically takes place in November each year and UCD has submitted the information to QQI by the relevant deadlines. Each NFQ level is based on nationally agreed standards of knowledge, skill and competence. This enables clarity on the qualifications held or on the current programme of study, provides confidence that NFQ qualifications are quality assured, and enables a comparison of Irish qualifications with national and overseas

qualifications. It supports student and graduate mobility, a recognition of prior learning, both formal and informal. The list of UCD awards are aligned to an NFQ level and their ECTS credit values are included in the [Academic Regulations](#) (see Figures 5a and 5b below).

**Figure 5a – UCD Academic Regulation 2.5, University Awards Table – Taught Programmes**

	Award Type	Credit Range	Minimum UCD Level Requirements	GPA Award Classification
<b>NFQ Level 6</b>				
Certificate of Continuing Education	Special Purpose	5-15		Greater than or equal to 3.68 <b>Distinction</b>
Diploma of Continuing Education	Special Purpose	20-30		
<b>NFQ Level 7</b>				
Certificate of Continuing Education	Special Purpose	5-15		Greater than or equal to 2.48 and less than 3.68 <b>Merit</b>
Diploma of Continuing Education	Special Purpose	20-30		
Professional Certificate	Special Purpose	5-15		
Professional Diploma	Special Purpose	20-30		
University Certificate	Minor Award	20-40	20 credits at UCD Level 1 or above	
University Diploma	Minor Award	60-120	45 credits at UCD Level 1 or above	
<b>NFQ Level 8</b>				
Certificate of Continuing Professional Development	Supplemental	5-10		Greater than or equal to 2.00 and less than 2.48 <b>Pass</b>
Professional Certificate	Special Purpose	5-15		
Professional Diploma	Special Purpose	20-30		
University Certificate	Minor Award	20-40	20 credits at UCD Level 3 or above	
Higher Diploma	Major Award	60-120	30 credits at UCD Level 3 or above	Greater than or equal to 3.68 <b>First class honours</b>
Honours Bachelor's Degree	Major Award	180-360	40 credits at Level 3 or above	Greater than or equal to 3.08 and less than 3.68 <b>Second class honours, Grade I</b>
				Greater than or equal to 2.48 and less than 3.08 <b>Second class honours, Grade II</b>
				Greater than or equal to 2.00 and less than 2.48 <b>Pass</b>
<b>NFQ Level 9</b>				
Certificate of Continuing Professional Development	Supplemental	5-10		<b>Distinction</b> <b>Merit</b> <b>Pass</b> As above
Professional Certificate	Special Purpose	5-15		
Professional Diploma	Special Purpose	20-30		
Graduate Certificate	Minor Award	30-40	20 credits at Level 4 or above	Greater than or equal to 3.68
Graduate Diploma	Major Award	60-80	45 credits at Level 4 or above	<b>First class honours</b> Greater than or equal to 3.08 and less than 3.68
Master's Degree / Professional Master's Degree	Major Award	90 - 180	70 credits at Level 4 or above	Greater than or equal to 2.48 and less than 3.08 <b>Second class honours, Grade I</b>
				Greater than or equal to 2.00 and less than 2.48 <b>Second class honours, Grade II</b>
				<b>Pass</b>

Figure 5b – UCD Academic Regulation 7.2, University Awards Table – Research Programmes

	Award Type	NFQ Level	Registration Period	Taught Credit Requirements
Research Master's Degree	Major Award	NFQ Level 9	3-6 trimesters (FT) 6-12 trimesters (PT)	No taught programme requirement
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy Degree (PhD)	Major Award	NFQ Level 10	9-12 trimesters (FT) 15 – 18 trimesters (PT)	Minimum 30 taught credits
Doctor of Medicine Degree (MD)	Major Award	NFQ Level 9	6 trimesters (FT) 12 trimesters (PT)	Maximum 20 taught credits
Doctor of Governance Degree (DGov)	Major Award	NFQ Level 10	12-18 trimesters (PT)	Minimum 90 taught credits
Doctor of Veterinary Medical Specialisation Degree (DVMS)	Major Award	NFQ Level 10	9-12 trimesters (FT)	Minimum 20 taught credits
Doctor of Educational Psychology Degree (DEdPsych)	Major Award	NFQ Level 10	9 trimesters (FT) 15 trimesters (PT)	Minimum 60 taught credits
Doctor of Clinical Psychology Degree (DPsychSc)	Major Award	NFQ Level 10	9 trimesters (FT)	Minimum 60 taught credits

## Certification

[Academic Regulations](#) (regulations 2.5 and 7.2) outline the awards made by the University. The University confers major awards, minor awards, special purpose awards and supplemental awards and provides ECTS credits for micro-credentials. All learning achievements are measured and described in terms of acquiring knowledge, skills, and competencies. Each award requires an accumulation of credits as per Figures 5a and 5b above. Programme Offices ensure degree compliance for all students prior to degree award. Awards are classified based on an award Grade Point Average (GPA), with the exception of grade neutral awards. The award GPA is determined by the Programme Examination Board applying one of the four Award GPA Rules articulated in the [Academic Regulations](#).

Following completion of a UCD programme of study, the [UCD Conferring Unit](#) manages the University process for awarding degrees including the graduation ceremony. A meeting of the University to confer degrees takes place at the conferring ceremony designated for the degree immediately after passing the degree examinations.

The [Student Desk](#) in UCD also provides an integrated service for online provision of all [official documents](#) required by students such as academic statements, certificate of attendance, statement of results, academic transcripts, diploma supplement.

## 2.3 Procedures for Making Awards

All programmes leading to awards in the University are overseen by an Undergraduate or Graduate Taught Programme Board, Graduate Research Board, Board of Studies, or Joint Academic Programme Board (collectively referred to as Governing Boards), which are responsible for approval of programmes (including their National Framework of Qualifications level), monitoring the overall performance and progression of students registered to programmes

and ensuring their academic welfare. Governing Boards are established by [Academic Council](#).

Extensive support for programme and module design and enhancement, including the development and implementation of programme learning outcomes, is available through [UCD Teaching and Learning](#), including accredited courses, workshops, self-help online guides, [resources](#) and customised support for programme teams. A six-stage [curriculum design process](#) is advocated which addresses issues of programme context, supports for staff and students, learning outcomes and assessment, and ongoing monitoring and evaluation. The wide range of dedicated projects, resources and tools supported by and available through UCD Teaching and Learning, which help to underpin programme design, include:

- Module and Programme Design
- Assessment and Feedback
- Technology Enhanced Learning
- Teaching Toolkit
- Review and Research your Teaching
- Inclusive and Intercultural Learning

Furthermore, the University has developed an online system to support curriculum teams to engage in periodic curriculum review and enhancement activities. Developed in UCD InfoHub, this system incorporates a repository for Programme Vision and Values statement and Programme Outcomes for all taught programmes and an interactive curriculum mapping tool to facilitate programme teams to examine alignment of individual modules to programme outcomes; understand the nature and amount of assessment across a programme stage; and ensure coherence within and between programme stages. The tool provides visual maps to aid programme teams to review and enhance an aspect of their programme or the entire programme on a periodic basis. Guidelines, including discussion prompts and resources, are provided by [UCD Teaching and Learning](#) to support programme teams to undertake a curriculum mapping and enhancement process.

The quality of the learning experience at UCD is monitored on an on-going basis, primarily by the Governing Boards, on delegated authority from Academic Council. The Governing Board prepares annual academic operational programme plans in consultation with the Head of School, College Principal and College Executive. Agreed plans are subject to review/approval at the University level for their alignment to the programme and University strategic plans. The Governing Board is also required to prepare strategic academic programme plans, at such intervals as the University may require. The Governing Board shall also, within the resources made available by the University and the relevant College, ensure that appropriate supports are in place to meet the welfare, pastoral and academic administrative needs of students registered to the programmes. Module development is the responsibility of individual schools. The University has in place an external examiner process that supports the quality assurance of its programmes.

The University policy on the [Role of the Head of Subject](#) outlines the role of Subject Head in supporting the Head of School by providing academic leadership in the relevant Subject area. The Head of Subject is, for the duration of their appointment, *primus inter pares*, the academic leader for the subject within the University. The role is normally held by a senior member of academic staff from within the relevant School.

The measurement and assurance of the achievement of learning outcomes by learners is principally mediated through the system of assessment in UCD. Section 4 of the [Academic Regulations](#) outlines the regulations with reference to assessment, grading, and feedback. Colleges, schools and UCD Registry ensure that information for students on all aspects of their assessment is explicit, transparent, targeted towards students, up-to-date, readily available, and emphasised at the outset of a module to guide student learning. The principles that underpin assessment in UCD aim to promote consistency across the University, and parity in student experience of assessment; and act as an important reference point for setting and maintaining UCD's academic standards. These academic standards are also assured through input from [Extern Examiners](#), student surveys including the [Start of Term Survey](#), [StudentSurvey.ie](#) (national) and student [Module Feedback surveys](#). The Review Group Reports for each School (and Linked Provider) within the University as part of the [Periodic Quality Review Process](#) also include a dedicated section on the Quality of Programmes and the Student Learning Experience, which ensures that school (and Linked Provider) approaches to ensuring that learners acquire the relevant standard of knowledge, skill and competence are reviewed and evaluated externally.

Customer and Curriculum Operations, a Unit within UCD Registry, provides direct support to staff, faculty, and students. This unit oversees several essential administrative functions in the University, including curriculum management, programme approval, and the handling of official documents. Within this unit, the Student Desk gathers analytics for planning and quality assessment.

## 2.4 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

### [UCD Teaching and Learning](#)

The mission of UCD Teaching and Learning is to foster a culture of continuous enhancement of teaching and learning - supporting faculty and teaching staff to deliver inclusive, innovative and research-informed teaching that leads to engaging and meaningful learning experiences for all UCD students. The Unit has six high-level objectives:

- Lead and contribute to strategic educational initiatives in response to current institutional needs and priorities.
- Provide a suite of professional development offerings for those who teach and support student learning.
- Recognise and reward those who demonstrate excellence in teaching and supporting student learning.
- Promote, learn from and extend the reach of exemplary and innovative teaching practices.
- Support evidence-based approaches to the enhancement of teaching and learning through research and scholarship.
- Expand and maintain networks of leaders and enthusiasts of teaching and learning to extend and shape practice across the university community.

Areas of current focus for UCD Teaching and Learning, agreed in consultation with University Senior Management, include:

- [Academic advising](#) to support student success.
- Designing [inclusive assessment and feedback](#).

- [Generative AI in Teaching and Learning](#).

UCD Teaching and Learning reports to the [UCD Registrar, Deputy President and Vice-President for Academic Affairs](#). The [Teaching and Learning team](#) adopts an evidence-based enhancement approach to all aspects of its work. The development of the Assessment for Inclusion framework is a good example of this evidence-based approach in action. This was an action research project undertaken by member of the Teaching and Learning team. The framework is the result of interviews with UCD students and staff and external experts, workshops and iterative cycles of research; the comprehensive framework is designed for staff, working in partnership with their students. In 2024-25 the focus shifted to implementation of the framework through a series of workshops and presentations to schools and programme teams and by embedding the framework in the University Teaching and Learning academic programmes. The team has also disseminated the framework through conference and journal publications.

UCD is committed to the holistic development of each student to their full potential. Academic advising is at the heart of a holistic approach to a student-centred, equitable, transparent and inclusive learning experience. UCD Teaching and Learning plays a central coordination role for UCD Academic Advising initiative. A working definition, objectives and principles of academic advising have been developed for UCD, and an IT system has been implemented to support the academic advising process. In 2024-25 five schools participated in the first year of a pilot for taught undergraduate students. UCD Teaching and Learning has developed a new resources section to support the provision of effective academic advising. A further five schools will join the pilot in September 2025, bringing the total to nine.

The UCD Teaching and Learning team works in partnership with Colleges, Schools, and academic administrative units, liaising closely with the Vice-Principals for Teaching and Learning (College-level), Associate Deans and School Heads of Teaching and Programme Directors. UCD Teaching and Learning provides an extensive number of online [resources](#) and also facilitates the sharing of knowledge and expertise across the institution through an online [Teaching and Learning Community](#). The Teaching and Learning Community (hosted in Google Spaces) is for sharing and discussing any information relating to Teaching and Learning. Members of this community can post information, resources, reports, and notifications across a range of topics. It complements face-to-face events, workshops and lunch-time fora organised by UCD Teaching and Learning.

The rapidly evolving developments in Generative AI (GenAI) continue to have an impact on education with the potential to change the way we teach and learn. UCD Teaching and Learning has developed a series of [online resources](#) to help educators navigate their use (or non-use) of GenAI. These continually evolving resources provide context, support for understanding GenAI tools broadly, the GenAI landscape at UCD and support for GenAI and assessment. A comprehensive programme of activities has been designed to engage UCD staff in conversations, research, innovation and professional development activities around the theme of GenAI and education.

UCD Teaching and Learning also provides a [Teaching Toolkit](#), which is designed to offer immediate, intermediate and long-term opportunities for developing teaching practice; the core aim is to provide practical advice and resources to all faculty, regardless of their longevity,

discipline or class size. The Teaching Toolkit Thursdays series offers lunchtime webinars to explore popular topics from the UCD Teaching and Learning website. These sessions are open to all and take the format of a short presentation followed by open conversation and sharing with colleagues. The presentation element is recorded and shared via the units YouTube channel. A new resource section was added to the toolkit in 2024-25 about teaching in active and collaborative learning spaces. Key benefits of active and collaborative learning include (i) supporting students to develop skills for the global workforce and lifelong learning and (ii) enabling more social learning and developing students' sense of belonging in their class, programme and university. The new resource section has been developed to coincide with the completion of the new O'Connor Centre for Learning building in UCD Belfield, which has been designed with active learning at its core.

UCD Teaching and Learning also issues a regular Teaching and Learning Newsletter to all faculty and staff which highlights events and developments relating to the enhancement of teaching and learning within the University, including the dissemination of outputs from enhancement projects and examples of teaching practice from across the University. UCD Teaching and Learning also hosts an annual Teaching and Learning Symposium.

### **UCD Assessment**

[UCD Assessment](#) (a unit within UCD Registry), in consultation with the [Academic Council Committee on Examinations \(ACCE\)](#), publishes the [UCD Assessment Code of Practice](#). This procedural document draws from the [Academic Regulations](#) and other assessment related policies to provide guidance to staff around the general principles, responsibilities, norms and standards required to ensure appropriate conduct of assessment in the University. The University has also adopted a [Framework for Programme Assessment and Feedback](#) to support programme teams to take a programmatic approach to addressing the well-documented challenges associated with diversity of assessment and assessment load in modular curricula.

UCD offers a wide variety of assessment opportunities to students underpinned by the following principles:

- Clear and high standards are communicated through assessment tasks that address learning outcomes and motivate students, and address learning outcomes. Assignments should be challenging, but achievable, and reflect appropriate work and effort. Assessment requirements should be clearly understood. Summative assessment load should be the minimum required to sample the students' learning.
- Assessment is central to curriculum design and learning where assessment guides and encourages effective approaches to learning; where assessment is valid and reliably measures expected programme outcomes and where grading defines and protects academic standards.
- Alignment between expected programme outcomes and assessment where each school has a clear policy that guides assessment and where module assessment is integrated into programme assessment.
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: All students shall have equal opportunity to effectively demonstrate their learning and be assessed by different, appropriate and applicable methods across their programme, subject or major. UCD upholds the principle of

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in Assessment ensuring that assessment does not bear more heavily against any group and no bias, either conscious or unconscious impacts upon the assessment process.

- Variety of assessment approaches: A variety of methods should be used so that there is not over reliance on specific methods of assessment, tasks assess generic skills as well as subject specific knowledge and there is a clear progression in the complexity and demands of assessment requirements over the sequential levels of modules and stage programme outcomes. A variety of assessment approaches will mitigate against inherent biases that may disadvantage particular student groups.
- A comprehensive assessment design framework which operates at programme level; takes into account student and staff workloads when scheduling and designing assessment tasks and provides students with defined periods for examination remediation opportunities and the resubmission of assignments; where assessment tasks are balanced between formative, summative and self-assessment approaches; and where grades are calculated and reported on the basis of clearly articulated programme outcomes and criteria for levels of achievement.

There is also a defined [Grade Approvals Process](#) which articulates the process by which the University formally reviews, audits and ratifies its grades and degree awards each trimester.

The process includes:

- Grading and grade entry;
- School review, audit and assurance of the grades for the modules coordinated by the School, and students individual performance in the modules coordinated by the School;
- Programme review, audit and assurance of students individual performance on the programmes governed by Programme; consideration and approval of grades submitted by Schools; progression; and recommendation of degree awards and honours classifications;
- Publication of grades and degree awards to students;
- The responsibilities of faculty and staff with respect to grading and grade approvals, and functions of examination boards and committees, are defined in the [Academic Regulations](#). All grading activities are expected to be delivered in accordance with the principles set out in the Academic Regulations and the Assessment Code of Practice.

[Subject Extern Examiners](#) provide an important consultative and advisory function in supporting and quality assuring subjects' development that contribute to UCD programmes as well as the enhancement of teaching, learning and assessment practices. Subject Extern Examiners play a vital role in assisting the University in fulfilling its obligations to assure the academic standards and integrity of its awards and form part of the University's broader system of quality assurance and enhancement. Subject Extern Examiners are appointed to subjects at undergraduate or graduate level, as appropriate. Each subject on the University's Subject Register shall have an Extern Examiner. Some subjects may require more than one Subject Examiner while some Subject Extern Examiners may be given responsibility for more than one subject. The key principles that underpin the role of the Subject Extern Examiner are academic expertise, quality, equity, enhancement, objectivity, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

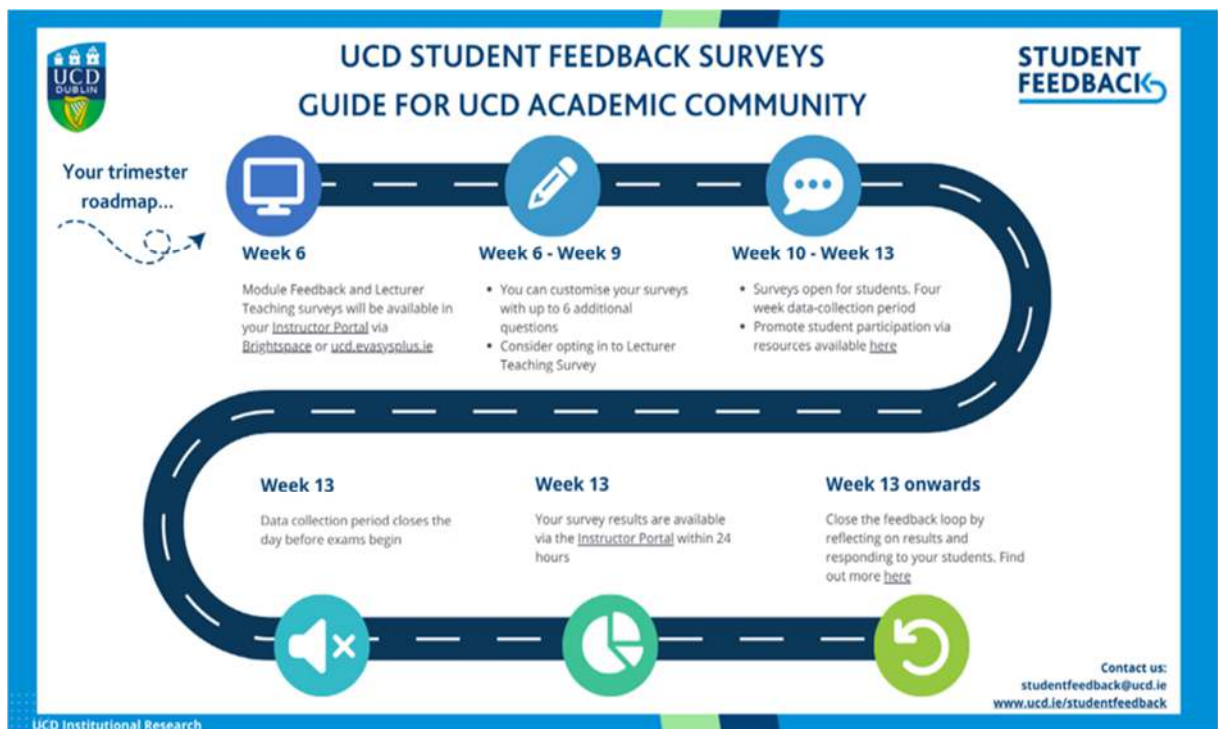
UCD Assessment also publishes online information and guidance for staff and information for

### [Special Extern Examiners \(Research Degrees\).](#)

A key element of the teaching and learning process is feedback. Students receive feedback on their work within 20 working days of submission as stipulated by the [Academic Regulations](#). Students have the opportunity to offer feedback on their module experience at the end of each trimester. UCD Teaching and Learning provides further guidance on [Assessment and Feedback](#).

UCD operates a confidential, online [Student Feedback](#) system to ensure that students are given a voice in the module enhancement process as part of UCD's evidence-based quality assurance of educational offerings. See Figure 6 below for information on the UCD Student Feedback Surveys.

**Figure 6 – UCD Student Feedback Surveys**



### **Academic Integrity and Freedom Among Staff and Students**

Academic integrity is fundamental to teaching and learning. UCD has developed a number of standards and guidelines to support students, ensuring that academic integrity is at the heart of what they do in their assignments and assessments. [UCD Student Engagement, Conduct, Complaints and Appeals](#) has published a [Student Guide to the Plagiarism Policy](#) and the UCD Library has also published a [Library Guide on Academic Integrity – Referencing, Citation & Avoiding Plagiarism](#) as well as offering an [Academic Integrity Course - Brightspace Explore Module](#) which provides a comprehensive basic understanding of academic integrity to all students. The interactive course teaches students the principles of citing, referencing, and avoiding plagiarism. The focus is on the principles and includes examples of different referencing and citation styles. It is composed of an interactive tutorial, a quiz, and a certificate. The course

is available to all students for the duration of their study in UCD. UCD Teaching and Learning has developed resources to assist faculty in supporting the development of academic integrity literacy in the context of assessment. The resource focuses on developing an understanding of academic integrity, ethical practice and academic misconduct; assessment design approaches to support academic integrity; and specific advice on different forms of academic misconduct. This comprehensive resources, with embedded links to University policies and regulations relating to academic integrity, is presented in the form of a website at [How Do I Support My Students' Academic Integrity?](#)

Academic integrity is one of the three key principles of the [UCD Student Code of Conduct](#). According to the [Student Plagiarism Policy](#), "*Academic Integrity is one of the core values of the UCD Education Strategy and includes adherence to the highest ethical and academic standards. Students, researchers and staff achieve academic integrity through sound academic writing, avoiding plagiarism, and use of appropriate referencing and citation*". This policy reflects the legislative changes brought in by the *Amendment Act 2019* to the *Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012*.

In May 2024, the Academic Council approved the new [Academic Integrity Policy](#). This policy has been developed through consultation with faculty, students and the wider community of stakeholders in the University. It reflects current research and best practice nationally and internationally in academic integrity in higher education. In particular, this policy is informed by relevant national legislation<sup>1</sup> and is consistent with the principles and guidelines produced by the [National Academic Integrity Network \(NAIN\)](#), including the [National Principle and Common Lexicon of Terms](#) for academic integrity (NAIN, 2021); the [National Academic Integrity Guidelines](#) (NAIN, 2021) and the [National Framework for Academic Misconduct Investigation and Case Management](#) (NAIN, 2023).

The [Brightspace Virtual Learning Environment \(VLE\)](#) is used to support teaching, learning and assessment activities, facilitating communications between lecturers and students, guidance and resources to help students to navigate the module, a space for discussion, reflection, formative assessment and feedback. UCD has in place an originality checker (Turnitin) in Brightspace so that students can ensure that their work is original and properly cited.

The University has a [Statement on Academic Freedom](#) which has been endorsed by Academic Council and Governing Authority of UCD, and is contained in Chapter 1, Statute 25 of the University Statutes.

## 3.0 Learner Resources and Support

### Library, Student Social and Study Facilities

[UCD Library](#) supports overall University strategy in the areas of student experience, education, research, innovation, and promulgation of Irish cultural heritage. The Library plays a critical role in the life of the University supporting students, researchers and faculty.

UCD Library provides services from five libraries across two campuses, and online. Across these sites, the facilities and services provided include in-person information and support services, access to collections, study spaces, laptop loans and group study facilities. Library spaces support a range of learning activities. The Writing Centre and the Maths Support Centre connect students to a range of learning services and supports in one place.

The Library is currently undergoing a phased Capital Development Programme of refurbishment in the James Joyce Library. The programme will create more modern library facilities, supporting a range of study modalities and needs, and meeting the expectations of a twenty-first century university library. The first phase of this delivered a 10% increase in the number of student study spaces on that floor. It also delivered significant enhancements to the quality of student study spaces including improved lighting, furniture to support varied study modes, power on all desks, enhanced welfare facilities and bilingual signage. Additional features include two Silent Study Rooms, bookable video conferencing rooms and a Sensory Study Room and Sensory Transition Room to support students with additional sensory needs.

The James Joyce currently has the following space capacity:

Library Name	Campus	Number of Reader Stations
James Joyce Library	Belfield	2,036
Health Science Library	Belfield	446
Veterinary Medicine Library	Belfield	133
Richview Library	Belfield	87
Blackrock Library	Blackrock	151

UCD Library also lends noise cancelling headphones and provides free charging facilities for laptops and mobile phones. During the academic term, all five libraries remain open in the evenings and throughout the weekend. Furthermore, in the weeks preceding and during exam time, the James Joyce Library extends its opening hours further to facilitate students' revision.

UCD Library's online services include an [integrated platform that is fully searchable](#) and provides access to an extensive e-book collection and a wide range of online journals and databases. Students can seek support and advice from the Library via the online chat service. There are a number of roles in the Library dedicated to support the new and emerging needs of students – these include a Student Experience Librarian, an Academic Integrity Librarian and a Digital Learning Librarian who are all focused on supporting students throughout their studies.

Through its website and through UCD's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) students and faculty have access to a [range of guides and tutorials](#) that support the development of students' study skills such as conducting literature reviews, developing critical thinking skills, evaluation skills, understanding and avoiding plagiarism and how to reference correctly. In addition, the Teaching and Learning Librarians deliver a range of bespoke classes and tutorials, both online and in person within specific modules and programmes. These support the development of critical literacies, including digital literacy, and the librarians work closely with Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Boards, Teaching and Learning Committees, Research Committees and Schools and Colleges.

UCD Library hosts three major cultural heritage repositories: UCD Library Special Collections, UCD Archives (UCDA) and the National Folklore Collection (NFC) which is one of only two items in Ireland inscribed in the UNESCO Memory of the World. The material held in each repository is accessible to readers in each of the cultural heritage reading rooms under staff supervision. These unique and distinct collections are of national and international significance and form the basis of research for internal and external scholars. Material from the Cultural Heritage repositories have been integrated into the undergraduate and postgraduate curriculum and the collections are promoted through a series of [webpages](#), social media, liaison with the University community and regular exhibitions. Over recent years, UCD Library has engaged in creative ways to actively build new cultural heritage collections in areas not developed nationally. Examples of this include the [Irish Poetry Reading Archive \(IPRA\)](#). Each of the Cultural Heritage Units is also actively engaged in collaborations with external bodies and has been successfully awarded a range of grants for these activities.

The UCD Library is also subject to Periodic Quality Review and it supports academic schools undergoing quality review through the provision of subject data and reports. The most recent [Review Group Report](#) and the associated [Quality Improvement Plan \(QIP\)](#) are published on the UCD Quality Office website under [Reports and Publications](#).

In relation to social activity, the [UCD Student Centre](#) provides a range of student facilities that include:

- [Venues](#) – includes the Astra Hall, FitzGerald Debating Chamber, Seminar Rooms, Meeting Rooms, UCD Cinema and DramSoc Theatre
- [Student Services & Support](#) – includes Health Service, Student Support, Pharmacy, Students' Union Shop, The Clubhouse Bar, Poolside Café and UCD Sport and Fitness
- [UCD Student Societies](#)
- [UCD Students' Union](#)
- [UCD Sports Clubs](#)
- [University Observer newspaper](#)
- [Belfield FM radio](#)

The [UCD Village](#) provides additional student supports and activities, in particular for those living on campus. Located on the Belfield Campus, the UCD Village offers state-of-the-art student accommodation in a safe, communal environment, and is only a short walk from UCD's world-class academic and sports facilities. The Village Centre contains ultra-modern self-contained

studios and a mix of social and retail spaces, alongside a gym, Student Health Centre, bank point, a bookable auditorium, eating facilities, a small supermarket and an ongoing programme of activities.

## **IT Services: Infrastructure & Supports for Students**

[UCD Connect](#) provides inclusive access to all the central applications available such as Brightspace (virtual learning environment - VLE), Google Mail, SISWeb (Student Information System), Calendar/Timetable and Google Drive. A range of software applications are available to download free of charge, as well as other services such as a library account, online file storage, UCD noticeboard and UCD news. UCD Connect is available 24/7. Wireless access to the UCD network is available campus-wide including student residences 24/7.

Regular communication with students via Brightspace VLE and their UCD Connect email account provides University and programme information from College/School Offices, the Dean of Students, and the Registrar, Deputy President and Vice-President for Academic Affairs.

Google Workspace enables users to log-in with their UCD Connect details to communicate and collaborate through an integrated range of apps, accessible across multiple devices. As well as accessing UCD email (Gmail), Google Calendar, Google Drive, Google Chat, Google Spaces and Google Keep. Zoom has been fully integrated with Brightspace VLE and is the Virtual Classroom service for teaching, allowing students to attend lectures that are online and collaborate with peers remotely.

The [Student IT Guide](#) is designed as a user-friendly introduction for students to the key IT services available at UCD. The Support Hub has been designed as a solution orientated tool to help students easily find answers to a broad range of questions, supported by a series of quick Knowledge Base guides to enable a speedy solution to student queries. Furthermore, a wide range of technologies to assist with learning difficulties, teaching, research and career development are also provided (e.g. e-Portfolios, High Performance Computing, etc.)

Incoming students have access to a free UCD Mobile App that provides useful information on orientation and the range of IT services and supports available. They are also encouraged to check out the IT Services website and the Discover IT section in the 'Introduction to UCD' module when they first log into Brightspace VLE. The Student IT Guide provides detailed information in relation to core services, including:

- UCD Connect – the gateway to IT Services' supports
- Brightspace – UCD's Virtual Learning Environment
- IT Accounts at UCD (e.g. email, etc.)
- IT Facilities (e.g. Computer labs, Google Drive, etc.)
- IT Support Hub – solution focused self-help system
- IT Security, keeping students and devices safe online
- Software Applications Downloads (e.g. Office 365, etc.)
- Wireless Services across campus

Students can follow UCD IT Services updates on Twitter ([@ucditservices](#)) for the latest news and service announcements, to keep them engaged with ongoing technology enhancements impacting them. UCD IT Services has also published an extensive list of [Policies and Guidelines](#). Knowledge Base and Virtual Agent are available to further assist students and live chat is available at [ucd.ie/ithelp](#).

### **Student Supports/Welfare**

The University makes available an extensive range of support for all learners from pre-entry through to graduation and beyond. UCD recognises that studying at university can be challenging at times for students. There is a strong support network for students at UCD, from health services to specific programme-based Student Advisers responsible for student welfare and support, including a dedicated Student Adviser for postgraduate research students. The [UCD Current Students](#) website includes information on registration, term dates, fees, exams, and student services with a view to providing a 'one-stop-shop', holistic and student-centred set of resources. The [Student Support webpage](#) on the UCD Student Centre website provides additional information and links to student supports and services on campus. The [Student Advisers' website](#) hosts a series of student guides which are a helpful resource to support students during their time in UCD.

### **UCD Dean of Students**

The Dean of Students has responsibility for the student experience in UCD and is committed to the continued enhancement of UCD's programmes and educational environment so that every student is fully supported in reaching their potential. The Dean of Students also acts as the University Child Protection Officer.

### **College/School Offices**

The College/School Office is the main point of contact for most of the academic services students require during their studies. Programmes have a dedicated Programme Manager available to assist and support students throughout their time at UCD. Among the range of support provided by the College/School Office are assistance with general queries, module registration, timetable queries, advice on extenuating circumstances, leave of absence and withdrawals, visa queries and collection of visa letters, out-of-hours access forms, and official form signing and stamping, as well as sign-posting to the University's range of student supports such as the Student Advisers, the Student Health Service and the Student Counselling Service, the Chaplaincy, and Disability Services offered through the Access and Lifelong Learning Centre.

### **Student Desk**

The Student Desk in UCD helps students with questions that they might have, whether they are a student (current, former, or prospective), parent, third party or staff member and are typically the main contact for students for most administrative services. Assistance may include information on admissions, registration, fees, funding, grants, official documents, form stamping, thesis submission, examinations, and assessment. Students can contact the Student Desk by email, phone, chatbot or in person.

### **UCD Access and Lifelong Learning**

UCD Access and Lifelong Learning helps to accommodate different learning contexts and fosters

a university culture that is inclusive and responsive to all including school leavers, regardless of socio-economic background or disability, adults beginning their higher education, those wishing to study flexibly and people who wish to continue learning and pursue intellectual enrichment and fulfilment. UCD Access and Lifelong Learning's primary function is to be the bridge to inclusion; offering connections, engagement and building relationships between communities that are distant from higher education and the University community. This is achieved by:

- Developing and implementing a range of responses to widen access and ensure participation by diverse student cohorts, including students with disabilities, mature students, part-time learners, and students from communities experiencing socio-economic disadvantage.
- Supporting and enabling the University to integrate and embed the principles of equity of access and universal design throughout the institution.

Once admitted to UCD, there is extensive information and support available to students to assist them in their transition to university life and their programme. This is available through the [New Students website](#) and it includes a broad range of advice and guidance, as well as detailed information about UCD Orientation events and schedule which is compulsory for all new students. Detailed and specialised information is provided to undergraduate students, graduate students, and international students. There has been a significant and welcome increase in the diversity of the student population, with over 38% of undergraduates coming from under-represented groups.

UCD Access and Lifelong Learning also promotes and facilitates digital inclusion in UCD. Through Brightspace, Ally generates feedback to staff on the overall accessibility of their modules and related learning materials, as well as instant feedback on quick adjustments which can be made to ensure digital materials are accessible. The introduction of Ally to Brightspace and SensusAccess to the UCD website conveys how digital accessibility is a collective responsibility. The adoption of the universal design concept of 'plus one' encourages UCD staff to make incremental changes to make their teaching, support and communications accessible and inclusive.

### **UCD Global**

UCD Global signposts on a range of support for international students, such as the Student Advisers, the Student Health Service and Student Counselling Service, the Chaplaincy, and Disability Services offered through the Access and Lifelong Learning Centre. The UCD Global Experience Team provides information, guidance, and support on the international elements of the student experience. This could include support with complex immigration queries, cross-cultural advice, assistance during a crisis, or settling into life in Ireland and integrating into the UCD student community. Students are encouraged to engage with other international students through the [UCD Global Lounge](#) and ongoing support is provided by UCD Global. In addition to the UCD Global supports, international students also have access to mainstream student academic and student supports as required in the [QQI Code of Practice for the Provision of Programmes of Education and Training to International Learners](#).

### **Peer Mentoring in UCD**

The UCD Peer Mentoring Programme helps new students to make friends, settle into university life, and adjust to their academic programmes. Each year, more than 600 senior students from

across all undergraduate programmes volunteer as Peer Mentors. Supported by their Student Adviser or Student Progression Manager, Peer Mentors welcome incoming students, encourage them to get involved in social activities and provide guidance on academic matters and study skills. Drawing on their own experience and knowledge of UCD's supports and services, they help new students to navigate challenges that can feel overwhelming at the start of university life. The programme not only enhances the overall quality of the first-year experience but also helps Peer Mentors to develop key skills such as communication, organisation and leadership. Peer Mentors offer the reassuring voice that helps new students to feel at ease in their new environment, laying the foundation for them to grow into confident, resilient UCD graduates.

### **Student Advisers**

UCD provides a comprehensive support system through its network of Student Advisers. Each programme has a dedicated Student Adviser, with an additional Adviser supporting postgraduate research students. The Student Advisers are easily identifiable, approachable and knowledgeable student affairs professionals who assist students with a wide range of personal, financial and social matters. Typically based in student buildings, they offer accessible, person-centred support, and possess in-depth knowledge of the university support ecosystem, guiding students to relevant services when needed. This early-intervention service empowers students to develop skills and confidence to manage challenges effectively throughout their UCD journey.

### **Chaplaincy**

The Chaplaincy Team offers student support, pastoral care, spiritual direction and the opportunity to be part of a community of understanding, respect and dialogue. The team is available to support people from all denominations and religions and to students from all faiths and none. The UCD Chaplaincy values are Compassion, Conversation, Contemplation and Companionship. [St. Stephen's Chaplaincy Centre](#) at UCD welcomes all students who wish to explore, nurture or celebrate faith and spirituality. It hosts a variety of student society and faith-based events, and its facilities include a function room, a contemplation room, a small library and a private room for pastoral care.

### **Student Engagement, Conduct, Complaints and Appeals (SECCA)**

SECCA delivers fair, impartial, and transparent procedures for responding to student complaints and appeals to a range of university decisions relating to student assessment, progression or standing. SECCA also delivers the University's Student Discipline Procedure. Processes are accessible to staff and students through the SECCA website and are detailed in the following policies and procedures: [Student Complaints Policy](#), [Student Appeals Procedure](#), [Assessment Appeals Policy](#), [Student Code of Conduct](#) and the [Student Discipline Procedure](#). The SECCA team provides advice to students and staff in relation to their application. Learning from complaints and appeals processes supports the enhancement of the student experience. The SECCA team also supports the [Student Partnership Forum](#), established to provide a platform for students and staff to work together towards the development of an annual plan of agreed priority projects or objective and act as a consultative forum for discussion on emergent issues or evolving University proposals impacting students.

### **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Supports**

Under the remit of the Dean of Students, and together with [UCD Equality, Diversity and Inclusion \(EDI\)](#), a range of initiatives are available such as the [UCD ESHTe \(Ending Sexual Harassment](#)

[and Violence in Third Level Education](#)), a staff/student group that has led to a proactive and coordinated approach to the consideration of sexual assault and harassment and most recently leading on actions in response to the [Framework for Consent: Ending Sexual Violence and Harassment in Irish Higher Education Institutions](#). In addition, SECCA and EDI established a [Report and Support Tool](#) for students and staff to report incidents of bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct. This initiative has led to UCD representation on several national groups focused on ending sexual violence in third level education, including the project and steering group established to develop a sector version of a reporting tool. The University also has a published [EDI Policy](#) which is applicable to all members of the UCD Community.

EDI also oversees a [Dignity and Respect Support Service](#) which works proactively with employees and students who disclose issues of bullying, harassment or sexual misconduct, and those who are reported for such issues. The Dignity and Respect Support Advisers, who are experienced and trained to support, respond, and advise on all reports of a dignity and respect nature, provide a supportive, confidential environment in which to discuss the issues and will support students and employees in making decisions that are right for their situation.

### **[Healthy UCD](#)**

Healthy UCD is a thriving health-promoting campus initiative, established following publication of UCD's 2016 health promotion strategy. A cross-university Steering Committee includes representatives from student sport and societies, the Students' Union, UCD Culture and Engagement, UCD Estates, UCD Student Health, UCD Student Counselling, UCD Registry, UCD Residences, the University Management Team and faculty from a number of Schools. Healthy UCD's vision is to establish UCD as a model for a healthy campus, advancing the health and well-being of all members of the UCD community. The goal is to embed health and well-being as an integral part of the University's culture and everyday life and to ensure that UCD is a healthy place to study, work and visit, creating an environment that accommodates and promotes well-being, nested in social relations and community. The Healthy UCD work programme supports service learning for students, such as Healthy Eating Active Living Week (HEAL) and Smoking Cessation programmes, and through extensive engagement with the Students Union, Student Services and UCD Estates.

A key milestone reached within the reporting period was the Platinum Status awarded to UCD by the Fédération Internationale du Sport Universitaire (FISU) Sports. The award recognises Universities that promote opportunity and access for students and staff to engage in healthy lifestyle behaviours as part of campus life.

### **[Student Financial Supports](#)**

Students may encounter financial difficulties during their time at university for a variety of reasons. UCD provides financial support to students experiencing temporary hardship as well as to those facing ongoing low-income challenges. The [Student Advisers' website](#) has helpful information on some of the financial supports available to UCD students.

### **[Student Health Service](#)**

The Student Health Service offers a range of healthcare services to support our students in their journey through UCD. These include doctor and nurse appointments, blood tests, contraception, STI tests, HPV vaccination, cervical screening, mental health and psychiatric appointments, and

information on medicals and medical records,

### **[Student Counselling Service](#)**

The Student Counselling Service is a confidential service available to all registered students, free of charge. The aim of the service is to provide easily accessible professional psychological support to assist students with personal challenges that affect their lives as university students.

### **[Alumni Buddy Programme](#)**

The UCD Alumni Buddy Programme links incoming international graduate students with local UCD Alumni. The programme provides friendly support for students, especially just after they arrive in Dublin.

### **[Students' Union](#)**

All UCD students are members of the Students' Union (UCDSU) which supports all UCD students during their education by providing a voice and space for them to enhance their college experience as well as welfare support. The UCDSU consists of six sabbatical officers working full-time for the union (President, Entertainments Officer, Campaigns and Engagement Officer, Graduate Officer, Welfare Officer, and Education Officer) and nine elected College Student Officers.

The **[Maths Support Centre \(MSC\)](#)** is an informal drop-in centre available as a free service to all UCD students registered to a level 0, 1 or 2 module, irrespective of their programme of study. Students receive one-to-one or small-group maths tuition during drop-in service hours. Students can attend during these hours to use the MSC as a maths study space, where they can work at their own pace with a tutor on-hand if they have any questions. Outside of these hours, the MSC is open as a group study space for mathematics (and other students) during library opening hours. The MSC aims to enhance students' knowledge of mathematics and guide them to becoming more self-directed learners. Most importantly, the MSC is staffed by dedicated and experienced tutors who can offer individual support in Mathematics, Statistics, Applied and Computational Maths (ACM), or any other numerate subject such as Architecture, Economics, Engineering or Nursing.

The **[Writing Centre](#)** offers high-quality tuition in writing to all undergraduate and postgraduate students interested in improving their writing skills. It offers one-to-one tuition and a range of workshops/seminars. The Centre strives to ensure that students are helped to communicate, structure, and present their knowledge and ideas in a written format, and develop their subject expertise and critical thinking skills. Students can drop-in without an appointment or they can book 50-minute or 30-minute sessions.

Following completion of a UCD programme of study and conferring, student interaction with the institution is through **[UCD Alumni](#)** that offers a varied programme of reunions, events, communications, and membership benefits. In particular, UCD engages with its alumni through the annual **[UCD Festival](#)**, which draws alumni back on to campus for a wide range of activities and links UCD with the surrounding community.

## **Supports for International Learners**

For international students, there is a dedicated website supported by UCD Global for [study at UCD for international students](#). UCD offers a range of academic and student supports for international learners as required under 2012 Legislation that includes a network of Student Advisers, the Student Health Service and Student Counselling Service, the Chaplaincy, and disability services offered through the Access and Lifelong Learning Centre. The UCD Global Experience Team provides information, guidance, and support on the international elements of the student experience. This could include support with complex immigration queries, cross-cultural advice, assistance during a crisis, dealing with culture shock or settling into life in Ireland and integrating into the UCD student community. Students are encouraged to engage with other international students through the [UCD Global Students Facebook group](#) and [UCD Global Lounge](#) as well as the wide variety of student clubs and societies within the University. Students can also submit any query they may have via the [UCD Global Student Connector](#). Further support and information is also provided such as Campus Support, Student Advice, Academic Support, Campus Life, UCD Global Lounge, Global Guides, Visas and Immigration, Working in Ireland and Orientation.

### **Supporting Student Engagement**

In addition to the supports outlined in the previous section, the University has put in place a [Student Experience Group \(UMT-SEG\)](#) that reports to the University Management Team (UMT). This group leads the development and operationalisation of university activities, processes and procedures related to the student experience and university strategy.

#### **UCD Leap Project**

The UCD LEAP Project focuses on developing a dynamic student engagement model that enables tailored, effective interventions by Student Advisers based on real-time insights. By leveraging Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) data, the project enhances UCD's ability to identify and proactively support students who may be facing challenges, facilitating a more responsive approach to student wellbeing. The project also emphasises knowledge sharing to broaden the impact of successful strategies across UCD and beyond. Ultimately, this research aims to create a model applicable across higher education, supporting other institutions in optimising student support and easing students' transition into university life.

#### **UCD Micro-credentials**

UCD micro-credentials are an exciting new innovation developed and delivered by UCD's world-class academic faculty. Learners will have the opportunity to upskill in highly-specialised areas with short, flexible, industry-aligned courses that are fully accredited. Micro-credentials give learners the opportunity to upskill in highly-specialised areas. Micro-credentials aim to address many of the barriers to life-long learning and their flexible design enables learners to successfully balance further study with other commitments. Each micro-credential is a fully standalone upskilling opportunity, but learners also acquire university credit in the form of ECTS.

#### **Ally accessibility tool**

The Ally accessibility tool has been integrated with Brightspace. It is a content accessibility tool that helps build a more inclusive learning environment and improve the student experience by helping students take clear control of course content with usability, accessibility, and quality in mind. Ally will assist both with the University's objective of University for All and the Universal

Design principles for Teaching & Learning, providing the student population with alternative options to receive their learning materials.

UCD Teaching and Learning also provides expert supports and guidance on core [UCD Educational Technologies](#) which are focused on the pedagogical application of educational technologies, demonstrating how they can be used effectively to support learning in face-to-face, blended or online teaching and learning contexts. It also provides resources for staff in relation to designing, developing and reviewing [Assessment and Feedback](#) approaches.

[UCD Institutional Research](#) oversees, coordinates and analyses a wide range of UCD surveys, including [StudentSurvey.ie](#), [Student Feedback on Modules](#), Graduate Outcomes, UCD Equality, Diversity and Inclusion student and staff surveys, [International Student Barometer](#), [Eurostudent](#) and the [Irish National Digital Experience \(INDEX\)](#) survey.

## 4.0 QA of Research Activities and Programmes

This section is focused on UCD's research programmes; section 1.1 above addresses the University's research activities.

The [Academic Regulations](#) include regulations on a variety of research degrees, including Research Masters, PhD, MD, Doctor of Nursing (DN) and Doctor of Midwifery (DM), Doctor of Governance (DGov), Doctor of Veterinary Medical Specialisation (DVMS), Doctor of Educational Psychology (DEdPsych) and Doctor of Clinical Psychology (DPsychSc). These regulations, together with the [Programme Development, Approval and Review Framework \(PDARF\)](#) and the resources provided by [UCD Graduate Studies](#), set out the procedures for the design, approval, delivery, assessment and monitoring of research programmes, which are all aligned with the [QQI Statutory QA Guidelines for Providers of Research Degree Programmes](#).

The [UCD Graduate Research Board \(GRB\)](#) is the academic governance board for all graduate research students within the University and meets monthly to consider policy and strategic matters impacting on postgraduate researchers. Membership of the GRB includes academic representatives from across all Colleges as well as student representatives and allows for discussion with the Graduate Studies team. The GRB plays a role in quality assurance of all postgraduate research programmes at UCD. It works to embed relevant policies within the UCD community and ensure that these policies support students, supervisors and all other staff involved in supporting graduate researchers. The GRB monitors, analyses and reflects on data relating to students and uses this information to develop initiatives to enhance the postgraduate research student experience.

The [UCD Structured PhD programme](#) is characterised by a significant original contribution to scholarship, based largely on a major research project which is also complemented by the development of a range of transferable and professional skills. Promotion of and support for the quality assurance and enhancement of the Structured PhD programme is provided through UCD Graduate Studies, which has published a number of resources online for students including resources and good practice for supervising PhD candidates, via the [UCD Research Student Hub which has been re-designed in 2025 to improve accessibility for users](#). This includes resources for:

- Research Programmes
- Research Student Handbook
- Thesis Submission
- IUA PhD Graduate Skills Statement
- Register for Taught Modules
- Research and Professional Development Plan (RPDP)
- Training and Development
- Promote Your Research
- Research Integrity Training
- Student Supports
- Working with your Supervisor
- Graduate Research Board
- Dean of Graduate Studies Award for Excellence in Doctoral Supervision (student driven)

An in-person Research Student Induction Day is delivered for all September-start and January-

start postgraduate research students. The purpose of the induction sessions is to provide information on the research degree in UCD i.e. the regulations, the expectations the students can have of the University, and supports available to the student; and to develop a postgraduate research student community.

Each postgraduate research student will have a Principal Supervisor, and Co-supervisor if appropriate, assigned to them who will provide quality supervision, mentoring, guidance, and advice throughout their programme of study. In addition to Supervisor(s), Schools will appoint a Research Studies Panel for each research student within the first trimester. The purpose of the Research Studies Panel is to support and enhance the supervisor-student relationship, to monitor student progress during the course of their doctoral studies and to provide advice and support both to the student and their supervisor(s).

The UCD Structured PhD programme, which is aligned to the [National Framework for Doctoral Education](#), comprises two stages: Stage 1 is a period when the student defines their research plan, develops their research skills and initiates original research work for their doctorate. Stage 2 is primarily dedicated to continuing original doctoral research but may also include some advanced education and training. In order to progress from Stage 1 to Stage 2 of the doctoral programme students must undergo a Stage Transfer Assessment to establish that they are making progress and have the competence and capacity to complete the proposed research. The information regarding this is outlined in the University's [Policy on Progression in Doctoral Programmes](#).

Research and professional development planning is integral to the Structured PhD programme at UCD. The purpose of such planning is to ensure that a student's work is clearly focused on achieving their research and professional development goals. This will play a major part in informing the trajectory of their PhD research and in their training and development as a researcher. To this end, each student, supported by the Research Studies Panel must document their educational, training and personal and professional development needs which along with the proposed programmes of research and training generates a [Research and Professional Development Plan \(RPDP\)](#). [This is now an online process](#). Review of a student's RPDP is an essential part of the student's Stage Transfer Assessment.

For UCD PhD graduates, their skill set will naturally include the advanced research and analytical techniques required to undertake high level research in their field. Students are also expected to possess a range of transferable skills, relevant to the successful completion of their research project and to broader career development, and these are benchmarked against the [Irish Universities Association \(IUA\) PhD Graduate Skills Statement](#). Graduate Studies have developed a portfolio of Transferable Skills workshops aligned with the IUA skills recommendations and have grouped these workshops into those which are relevant for Stage 1 and Stage 2 doctoral students. Workshops which assist students in navigating the structured elements of the PhD and also the key relationship with their supervisors are provided by UCD Graduate Studies (Navigating your PhD @ UCD, Mind the TAP, Working with your Supervisor). Workshops are also developed internally with colleagues in the Writing Centre (Doctoral Week and WOW - Writing on Wednesdays), UCD Library (Research Tool Kit), UCD Careers Network and Student Advisors. External experts in doctoral training are also incorporated into the annual programme (e.g. Thesis Boot Camp, Turbocharge your Writing, Imposter Syndrome).

PhD students are also required to gain 30 credits through core and optional modules during their PhD programme. There is a large selection of modules available across the University, both discipline-specific modules to broaden and deepen a student's knowledge of their discipline and research skills modules to provide advanced training in relevant research methodologies. All modules are selected in consultation with the Principal Supervisor, and students are advised to talk to their School about any School-specific requirements. UCD Graduate Studies provides further information about, and useful directory of, [Discipline Specific Modules for PhD students](#).

Graduate Studies has systematized the student experience quality enhancement process at UCD, utilizing data from the National PGR Student Survey, which reported a 33% response rate for UCD in 2025. This demonstrates that students feel their voices are heard and that schools respond to feedback on research and learning experiences. Each Head of School receives tailored reports from Graduate Studies based on the latest survey data, covering the themes of Supervision, Research Culture, Progress and Assessment, and Personal Development Planning. UCD Graduate Studies has established a cycle of data-led quality improvement, an online platform for best practices, and productive engagement with the postgraduate research student community to address their needs.

Through the development of the university-wide Research Supervisor Support and Development Framework (RSSDf), Graduate Studies delivers online and in-person professional development supports for research supervisors, which number approximately 1000 in UCD. The [UCD Fundamentals of Research Supervision online programme](#) was designed with senior UCD supervisors and research students and is mandatory for all new academics. A Refresher Programme has been developed for more experienced academics who would like to revisit international developments in supervisory practice, pedagogy and governance. Both courses are available on Brightspace.

The in-person [Research Supervisor Support and Development Programme](#) (RSSDp) which is run in collaboration with TCD, RCSI and [U21 partners](#) supports research supervisors who are new to supervision and those who are more experienced and wish to refresh their practice. As of 2022, the RSSDp is part of the Development Framework for Faculty. The Dean of Graduate Studies Award for Excellence in Doctoral Supervision captures and recognises excellent practice and is driven by nominations from doctoral students. Graduate Studies supports research supervisors with a dedicated [Supervisor Hub](#) on the Graduate Studies website. UCD successfully joined RSVP (Next Generation Research Super Vision Project) in 2024. RSVP is a UK-funded project examining supervision in different disciplines and contexts, team supervision, supervision of different doctoral degrees and understanding and combating poor supervisory practice. RSVP is the largest collaborative, cross-disciplinary, translational research project into doctoral education. In 2024-25, UCD introduced the new role of Assistant Supervisor on a five-year pilot. An Assistant Supervisor is a postdoctoral researcher formally approved by the Graduate Research Board as a mentor to a specific graduate research student, providing intellectual insight and guidance. This title recognises the important contribution of postdoctoral researchers to the University research community.

These resources, initiatives and collaborations, illustrate the University's commitment to enhancing the quality and experience of its research programmes and supporting students and

academics in their career and professional development. There are also several policies and codes of practice that are particularly focused on ensuring the quality of UCD's research programmes and the research student experience. These include:

- [Research Degree Examination Policy](#)
- [Policy on Progression in Doctoral Programmes](#)
- [Policy for Supervision of Research Degree Students](#)
- [Policy for Conflict Resolution for Supervisors and Research Degree Students](#)
- [Policy for the Recruitment, Support & Development of Graduate Research Students Supporting Teaching & Learning](#)

Graduate Studies have also developed resources to support the diversity of postgraduate research student in the university:

- [Managing Graduate Study with a Disability](#)
- [Health and Wellbeing for graduate research students](#)
- [Open Online Courses](#)

[UCD Library](#) provides a range of services to support researchers and research activity in key strategic areas including Open Access and Open Science; Publication Strategy and Dissemination; Research Data Management; GIS & Mapping and Citizen Science. In January 2024, two new specialist roles were developed to increase support for researchers in emerging areas: a Citizen Science and Geospatial Support Librarian, and a Research Engagement Librarian with expertise in Systematic and Evidence-based Reviews. The UCD Library has also enhanced its orientation programme for research staff and students working in partnership with UCD Graduate Studies, UCD's schools and colleges, and other units across campus. Training and capacity-building is delivered through the Library's annual Build your Research Skills programme of workshops which is open to all researchers, staff and students.

Open Science and Open Access are key drivers of research impact, uptake and innovation, and help increase the transparency and reproducibility of research. As a member of [IReL](#), UCD Library provides access to Open Access Publishing Agreements, which allow UCD researchers to publish their research openly at no cost to authors, enabling greater access to UCD research for those outside the academic community, including policy-makers, practitioners and the general public.

The Library also maintains and provides access to three trusted digital repositories – [Research Repository UCD](#), the [Irish Social Science Data Archive \(ISSDA\)](#), and [UCD Digital Library](#) - to enable UCD researchers to share, archive and preserve their publications, data and other research outputs in line with best practice and international standards.

The Library is also an active member of key organisations including the [Research Data Alliance](#), the [Digital Preservation Coalition](#) and the [Digital Repository of Ireland](#), which ensures UCD and its researchers are connected with national and international research networks and best-practice knowledge and guidance.

UCD has a dedicated and professionally qualified Career and Skills Consultant for Graduate

Research Students, who works in partnership with UCD Graduate Studies to support students to explore and plan their career options beyond the PhD programme. This includes coaching and guidance sessions, group and individual career planning workshops and seminars, employer networking opportunities, and applications, CV and mock interview support.

The [UCD Student Advisory Service](#) acts as a point of contact, support and referral for all UCD students throughout their studies. Every academic programme in UCD has a dedicated Student Adviser who offers students time and space to explore issues of concern to them. UCD has a dedicated Student Adviser for postgraduate research students. Student Advisers work closely with academic and administrative staff as well as with the other student support staff to ensure a positive student experience. The Students' Union also has a dedicated Graduate Officer.

The [UCD Writing Centre](#) supports graduate research students to communicate their knowledge and ideas in a written format, training them how their writing should be structured, developed, presented, and phrased. This will aid the research student in preparing papers for publication in periodical journals and for the writing up of their research. The Writing Centre offers workshops on different topics as well as individual writing sessions.

Support for the next phase of researcher development, beyond completion and award of a UCD graduate research degree, is provided through the set of resources available via [UCD Research Careers and Professional Development](#). UCD Research Careers and Professional Development provides Post-Doctoral Researchers with access to training and development opportunities across various areas. As part of this, the [UCD Research Careers Framework](#) establishes a structured and supportive skills and early-career development model for Postdoctoral Researchers at UCD, as recommended in the sectoral Advisory Science Council policy document 'Towards a Framework for Research Careers'. The UCD Framework represents a joint initiative between UCD HR People & Organisation Development and UCD Careers Network, both working closely with UCD Research, which directly supports UCD in achieving its research goals. The team is committed to building innovative and practical supports to better embed the framework within the University and refine the delivery of its activities and systems in line with the arising needs of our Early Career Researcher community. [Training and Development](#) is available in the areas such as research and research management, personal and professional excellence, teaching, learning and mentoring, innovation and transferable skills.

All Post-Doctoral Fellows are encouraged to engage with the [Research Skills and Professional Development](#) process with their Principal Investigator. This process provides a road map that helps identify both professional development needs and career objectives supported through the provision of key resources.

The [UCD Centre for Support and Training in Analysis and Research \(CSTAR\)](#) operates as an independent not-for-profit centre based in UCD. CSTAR offers a consultancy and training service to individuals, institutions and companies carrying out health research in Ireland. The mission of CSTAR is to enhance the quality and increase the quantity of health research in Ireland.

Research student feedback is captured through local school/programme committees, the periodic quality assurance process and through the graduate survey.

## 5.0 Staff Recruitment, Development and Support

### UCD Human Resources Strategy

The [UCD Human Resources Strategy 2022-2024 – The Revolution of Work](#), builds on successes and progression already achieved through its previous iteration. It seeks to create a supportive, developmental environment and culture based on four established strategic pillars, which provide a framework for the University's work programme for the Human Resources teams so as to help enable the implementation of UCD's vision, ambition and strategic initiatives as detailed in their [Breaking Boundaries Strategy 2025-2030](#). This strategy commits to the achievement of specific and measurable deliverables and it is designed to provide a supportive community in which every member of the University is enabled to achieve their full potential. It is aligned with best practice and focuses on all employees: leaders, people managers and individual colleagues. The four key pillars are:

1. Transforming Service Partnership
2. Building Organisational Capability
3. Enhancing our Performance Culture
4. Becoming an Employer and University of Choice

The [HR Partners](#) team has a pivotal role to support local leadership across Schools, Colleges and Professional Units to deliver on the objectives set out in the UCD Strategy. As a member of the School Executive or senior leadership team in most areas, the HR Partners build a deep understanding of the strategic and operational challenges, including workforce planning, organisational structure, employee engagement, and necessary change management.

This enables the team to provide comprehensive and flexible support by navigating [Human Resources policies and processes](#) and proactively collaborate with specialist colleagues including experts in Resourcing, Employee Relations, HR Operations, People and Organisational Development, Legal, SIRC and EDI. This approach ensures the timely delivery of effective solutions and interventions.

### Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Inclusion is highlighted in the University's strategy as one of the core values of UCD and Fostering Inclusion is one of three key attributes. The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Unit, as part of Culture and Engagement, supports the achievement of the University's strategic priorities through the delivery of activities under the EDI Action Plan 2025 - 2030. In addition, the [Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty](#), [Gender Equality Action Plan \(GEAP\) 2024-2029](#), the [Dignity and Respect Framework](#) implementation, new EDI Anti-Racism Action Plan 2025 - 2030 and the HEI Framework for Promoting Consent and Preventing Sexual Violence all support the achievement of the University strategy and creation of an inclusive and respectful environment.

Awareness raising is undertaken through running events to mark different EDI celebrations throughout the year, initiatives such as the EDI Calendar, policy and guidance development such as new policy on Domestic Violence for Employees and Students, a dedicated EDI training programme including a pilot digital EDI Ambassador Badge initiative which recognises those who

engage with EDI training. A broad range of EDI groups, including new groups focusing on areas such as Neurodiversity, Carers, Engaging Men in EDI, and Faiths and Religions, contribute to cultural change and an inclusive environment. EDI continues to collaborate with the sector on initiatives including leading on successful funding applications.

## Recruitment

The Resourcing Team is responsible for supporting the recruitment and selection of all faculty and staff at UCD. The University seeks to attract, retain, and develop an excellent and diverse cohort of faculty and staff that reflects the University's values of excellence, creativity, collegiality, engagement, integrity, and diversity.

UCD continues to support the Central Pool Academic Appointments strategic initiative, which has contributed significantly to the growth of the University community and aligns with the goal of increasing the quality, quantity and impact of the institution's research, scholarship and innovation. The UCD Ad Astra Fellows programme, one of the streams within the Central Pool scheme is a collaborative effort between the Resourcing Team and key stakeholders to attract a strong, diverse pool of candidates. The programme has successfully hired hundreds of high potential early-stage academics with a strong research focus, positively impacting our faculty:student ratio.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is a priority for the University. Resourcing was one of four workstreams in UCD's successful Athena Swan Silver Award and emphasis is now being placed on achieving project outcomes to ensure UCD remains an employer of choice. UCD is committed to attracting diverse applicants, including underrepresented groups aligned to the University strategy and values. The [UCD Recruitment and Selection Policy](#) informs the University's recruitment practices and it reflects best practice and UCD's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion agenda.

Resourcing has been a key champion in promoting the Official Language Act and the UCD Strategy to enhance the prominence and use of the Irish Language in the university.

UCD is committed to the principle of appointment on merit and its [wide range of policies](#) set out a fair, rigorous and transparent process which is applied consistently, ensuring the best candidate for the job is selected. All decisions relating to recruitment and selection must be consistent with the criteria advertised for the post and the Resourcing Team works closely with Hiring Managers to ensure these standards are maintained. Standardised questions have been developed for interview boards to ensure consistency for applicants.

The Resourcing Team works closely with colleagues in People Development to provide training for university staff engaged in the recruitment process, presenting annually to groups such as new Heads of School and Researchers, and delivering Interview Skills Training throughout the year including online interview skills training which hiring managers can access as needed.

To ensure a positive and inclusive recruitment process the [Work at UCD website](#) provides candidates with all the relevant information on the recruitment process along with an overview of staff benefits in one location. The website also provides information on living and working in Ireland

to assist candidates moving from overseas. A dedicated onboarding page has been developed which brings all the key information together for new staff joining UCD. A number of follow up welcome emails have been introduced along with the development of a buddy programme to support integration into UCD. The onboarding page also houses a number of useful checklists for managers.

The role of [Resourcing Consultant](#) continues to provide a single point of contact for candidates and hiring managers and the team offers support and guidance on any aspect of the recruitment process. Further information is available at [UCD Human Resources \(Resourcing\)](#).

## Staff Management

UCD has a comprehensive policy framework for assuring, and enhancing, the quality of its staff. This is provided for through policies and procedures for the recruitment, appointment and ongoing professional development of faculty and staff which is supported by its organisational and management structures and [UCD Human Resources](#). UCD Human Resources has an extensive range of relevant documentation which is published on the online [Employment @ UCD Policy Directory](#), and covers areas such as induction, promotion, career development and leadership, mentoring, recognition, training, access to personal support and training for the University's wide cohort of faculty and staff.

The University is committed to creating an environment where diversity is celebrated and everyone is treated fairly regardless of gender, age, race, disability, ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation, civil status, family status, or membership of the travelling community. It is fully committed to meeting and exceeding its obligations under current legislation. A University Management Team [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group](#) is in place, supported by an EDI Unit and dedicated website for [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion](#). A University [UCD Dignity and Respect Policy \(and related framework\)](#) with additional supplementary procedures is in place to support staff and students.

## Staff Development – Faculty and Research Staff

UCD has in place a range of supports for faculty development. This advances UCD's commitment to build on our development supports for faculty and grow our capacity as an organisation that analyses, reflects and learns, as expressed in the *Learning for Life* strategic initiative in our Breaking Boundaries Strategy to 2030. The [Faculty Promotions Policy](#) operates alongside the [UCD Development Framework for Faculty](#), a tool used by faculty to reflect both personally and within the context of a development conversation on their strengths and opportunities for growth. The framework identifies several dimensions under each of the categories of Faculty achievement:

- **Research, Scholarship, and Innovation**
  - Qualifications
  - Publication, Outputs and Profile
  - Research Funding
  - Research Supervision and Management
  - Research Culture

- Innovation and Impact
- **Teaching and Learning**
  - Facilitating Student Learning
  - Curriculum Design, Assessment and Development
  - Scholarship of Teaching and Learning
  - Enhancement of Practice: Personal and Professional Development
- **Leadership and Contribution**
  - Administration and Leadership
  - Recruitment and Outreach
  - Building Community
  - Building Support
  - Professional/Clinical Service
  - Public and Professional Engagement

Faculty can assess their current position on the framework across the various dimensions.

The Newly Appointed Assistant Professor (NAAP) Development Programme continues to support the newly appointed members of faculty in UCD. Since 2020 this Programme has been mainstreamed, offering dedicated development seminars, mentoring opportunities, and networking events to support early career faculty. It also encompasses the Assistant Professor Ad Astra Fellow population. In addition to these development opportunities, the new Faculty Induction programme continues to support new academic employees of UCD which gives an overview of the services and key personnel and provides opportunities to build networks with faculty and colleagues across UCD at an early stage.

The University also provides the [Leadership in Research Development Programme \(THRIVE\)](#) which provides development for 15 Faculty members at Lecturer/Assistant Professor and Associate Professor level each year. The programme is built around personal engagement with the strategic aims of UCD.

[UCD Teaching and Learning](#) serves a critical function in the ongoing professional development of faculty, including through three [accredited programmes in University Teaching and Learning](#). These NFQ Level 9 programmes equip faculty with the knowledge and skills to effectively plan, innovate, evaluate and research their teaching. The offerings are designed to be flexible, research-informed and practice-based. Faculty can choose their preferred modality with modules delivered in-person and online. There are three programmes on offer:

- The Certificate of Continuing Professional Development, University Teaching & Learning, is a single 7.5 ECTS module programme taking place over one trimester. This programme is offered biannually, and participants can choose their start time depending on their schedule and their choice of module.
- The Professional Certificate, University Teaching and Learning, which carries a credit volume of 15 ECTS is awarded to those candidates who successfully complete any two modules. This programme is also offered twice a year.
- The Professional Diploma, University Teaching and Learning, which carries a credit volume of 30 ECTS may be undertaken by participants who have completed the

### Professional Certificate.

The University celebrates the achievements of colleagues who make an outstanding contribution in the pursuit of teaching excellence and the enhancement of student learning through the biennial [Teaching and Learning Awards](#). The scope of these awards is broad, covering all aspects of teaching and learning. There are two award schemes:

- Teaching Excellence Awards recognise individual faculty and staff in teaching roles for sustained commitment to teaching excellence and student learning.
- Awards for Exceptional Contribution to Learning recognise individual UCD employees who are engaged directly in teaching and/or facilitating student learning, for their exceptional contribution to the enhancement of the learner experience. Examples of employees that this award may apply to include tutors, teaching assistants and laboratory demonstrators, occasional lecturers, fieldwork instructors, teaching fellows, clinical tutors, language assistants/instructors, researchers, career and skills consultants, educational technologists, librarians, technical officers and entrepreneurial specialists.

Both schemes are tiered with awards at College and University level. The scheme allows the UCD community, including students, faculty and staff, to nominate colleagues engaged directly in teaching for an award. All nominees are invited to apply for a Teaching and Learning Award at college level. College application and selection procedures are carried out by each college, culminating in a celebration of college-level awardees university-wide. College adjudication panels also make recommendation from their pool of awardees for consideration for university-level awards. This final stage of the awards process is adjudicated by a panel led by the Deputy President and Registrar, and up to 15 prestigious university awards are made.

UCD Teaching and Learning also provides training and support for [Tutor and Demonstrator Development at UCD](#) including induction sessions, online tutor resource pack, and a 5 ECTS module on 'Introduction to University Teaching and Learning for Tutors, Demonstrators and Teaching Assistants'. Several schools deliver local Graduate Teaching Assistant modules to support the development of disciplinary teaching strategies.

UCD Research Skills & Career Development provides Postdoctoral Researchers with access to [training and development](#) opportunities across four core competency areas. This work directly contributes to the element in *Learning for Life* relating to our ambition to grow our development programmes and career supports for postdoctoral researchers, enhancing the sense of belonging and community for these cohorts, and creating new opportunities for knowledge-sharing and interdisciplinary engagement. The bespoke programme includes technical and transferable skills training, such as Grant Writing and Project Management, as well as career coaching, interview preparation and more. The initiative enhances researchers' mobility across sectors and supports postdoctoral researchers in proactively developing skills aligned with their research area, experience, and long-term career goals.

Additional [UCD Research Skills & Career Development](#) support for researchers includes resources relating to:

- Career Consultations
- Orientation & onboarding for new postdoctoral researchers
- Access to career planning handbooks, documents and tools (MyCareer, LinkedIn Learning)
- PI/Mentor Development
- Training and Development Opportunities
- Events Calendar
- Networking and employer engagement

## Staff Development – All Staff

[UCD HR People and Organisation Development](#) offers and promotes opportunities for the professional training and development of all members of staff. This further progresses UCD's ambition to build on our development supports for staff and grow our capacity as an organisation that analyses, reflects and learns, as asserted in the *Learning for Life* strategic initiative in our Breaking Boundaries Strategy. The training course schedule for new and existing staff and faculty offers over fifty sessions aligned with UCD core competencies, providing development opportunities to improve skills and expand areas of expertise. Information workshops to support organisational awareness competency are also provided. Developmental coaching and mentoring relationships are facilitated and supported by the team.

[UCD's Leadership and People Management Programme \(RISE\)](#) aims to enhance the quality of leadership and management within the University through the development of skills, knowledge, and behaviours while recognising the continued need for leadership agility. 525 leaders and managers have commenced RISE with over 1300 attendances across the programme suite since 2022.

Everything DiSC® workshops continue to be facilitated across the institution. These sessions are designed for colleagues to discover more effective ways of communicating and working together. Half-day workshops where teams collaborate to create their own Team Charter are also offered, along with additional bespoke sessions designed to meet the needs of individual teams as necessary.

The University also continues to engage Advance HE in support of the Aurora Leadership Development Programme for women. It aims to encourage those in academic and professional roles to think of themselves as leaders, to develop skills and to help institutions like UCD optimise the leadership potential of women supported by individual mentors.

Aligning with the University's *One UCD* strategic initiative to enhance supports from hiring to retirement for our employees, the UCD Orientation suite of events for new employees supports commencing faculty and staff via formal orientation sessions, faculty and Postdoctoral inductions and networking campus tours.

[Performance for Growth \(P4G\)](#) is the UCD performance and development framework that provides the opportunity for all UCD employees to review achievements and challenges from the previous year, agree performance objectives and develop a plan for the year ahead. Engagement with P4G has remained consistently high, with strong completion rates. This reflects the widespread commitment to meaningful conversations across the institution, recognising the valuable

contributions of faculty and professional support staff. This collaborative effort is essential for fostering a culture of continuous improvement and planning for the year ahead to ensure purposeful impact in support of our Breaking Boundaries strategy.

## 6.0 Information and Data Management

Decision-making across the University is informed by data and UCD has developed a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) embedded against each of the themes in its strategic plan and are directed towards the set of designated objectives.

Benchmarking is embedded in various quality assurance and enhancement activities throughout the University. UCD is regularly benchmarked as an institution and subject area level through its participation and inclusion in the various ranking agencies, for example the [QS World University Ranking](#). To support the University Strategy, UCD makes annual submissions for the [Times Higher Education Impact Rankings](#). This ranking assesses universities against the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and enables UCD to benchmark its activities against other comparable institutions in this important area. UCD also makes a submission to the QS World University Rankings for Sustainability. In addition, the University's [Periodic Quality Review](#) process – which involves external, independent evaluation of all Schools and Professional units – and the [Subject Extern Examiner system](#) supports the University in enhancing the quality of its provision and services.

In relation to the provision of support for management of resources, [UCD Institutional Research](#) provides data support for University planning and management activities directed toward fulfilling the goals and objectives of the University. Institutional research is a support function within UCD which aims to inform decision making and planning at senior management level. The Director of Institutional Research reports to the Director of Strategic Planning and their activities also inform the work of the UCD Quality Office. The Director of Institutional Research, for example, provides statistical data and information for use in the Periodic Quality Review process which includes information on applications, student registrations, graduations, and retention rates along with school-level analysis from relevant student and staff surveys such as [StudentSurvey.ie](#). This suite of reports is shared with self-assessment teams via a secure Google Drive and gives each school under review a consistent and reliable source of information to inform their self-assessment process. A suite of reports is also made available to Heads of School via InfoHub, to assist planning and quality assurance processes; these management-level reports include but are not limited to:

- Student Recruitment Reporting - reports relating to CAO Applications to UCD including application and conversion trends, entry points and current year information
- Student FTEs - information on FTEs for taught and research students
- Retention, Progression and Completion Rates – for reporting on student retention and progression through programmes
- Module Enhancement and Student Feedback Report - information to support the module enhancement process including registration and de-registration counts, grade distribution and student feedback
- Access and Lifelong Learning Students - information on students who enter through the various access pathways including students from low-income households, students reporting a disability, part-time students, mature students and those who entered with a QQI-FET award

- Research Information - information on school research projects, including financial status, staff and publications
- HR Staff Management Report - report providing details of staff associated with each unit

The [UCD Research Analytics and Impact Team](#) provides Heads of Schools, College Principals and their nominees with access to a [Research Activity Dashboard](#). This online report provides a view of research activity at College, School and Institute level, showing information and metrics on research funding, staff and publications. The report is available through InfoHub. This report provides a view of research activity at School level, showing information and metrics on research funding, staff and publications, using a combination of the university business systems and Bibliometrics data.

### **Research Funding**

- Proposals and Awards: Volume, value, and % overhead for past 5 years
- Active Grants: Current volume, value, average duration
- Research Grants: Budget Vs actual expenditure

### **Research Publications**

- Volume and Citation Impact for past 5 years

### **Research Staff**

- Total Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff (including Academic staff FTE, and Research staff FTE)
- % Research Active Academic Staff

### **Innovation Metrics**

- Consultancy contracts
- Inventions Disclosed
- Patents Filed and Granted
- Licences
- Spin-outs

The [UCD Finance Office](#) also provides resources and support for University, College, School and other unit planning and management processes, such as:

- Payroll Office
- Research Finance Office
- Staff Expenses
- Non-Staff & Student Expenses
- Accounts Payable
- Procurement & Purchasing Unit
- Accounts Receivable
- Finance Technology and Continuous Improvement
- Accounting and Financial Reporting
- Fixed Asset Register
- Strategic and Financial Planning, including annual 5-year Budget Preparation

- Quarterly Management Accounts
- Fee Income census
- Financial Review of new initiatives, including review of new programmes and commercial activities and large capital projects
- Financial Statements
- Financial Policies & Procedures
- Taxation
- Forms
- Maintenance of Management Reporting Structures Post Authorisation

For additional internal reporting and information management purposes, and accessed via [UCD Connect](#), the InfoHub online reporting system delivers fast access to information in UCD's business systems e.g. student information, Human Resources reports and up to June 2025 Finance reports. It provides high-level summaries. Furthermore, the Enterprise Applications Group (EAG) in UCD IT Services provides access to Tableau, which is a modern, cloud-based analytics and reporting tool which helps to empower business users to create reports and analyse data themselves. Across UCD, it gives managers and teams increased access to ad hoc reporting and analytics to support their decision-making. Key institutional data is considered as part of the Periodic Quality Review of schools and professional units. UCD implemented Workday as its primary financial Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system in July 2025, this system is now primary source of all financial reports.

Governing Boards have primary responsibility for monitoring the progress of students on the programmes for which they are responsible, and have access to extensive reporting tools within the InfoHub Report Catalogue available through [UCD IT Services Analytics & Reporting](#). These provide important tools to collect, monitor and act on information on student progression, as well as other important student-related metrics. These include:

- Current Applications School Summary
- Application Trends
- Conversion Trends
- Reasons for choosing UCD - University Summary
- Reasons for choosing programme - University Summary
- School Class Lists
- Major Class Lists
- Programme Class Lists
- My Grading Class Lists
- School Grading Summary
- Student Support Statistics by Area
- Student Engagement by School
- Student Registrations - University Summary
- Student Demographics - University Summary
- Curriculum Trends
- Graduate Research Students School Summary
- Registered Students by International Indicators
- Clubs & Societies Membership Statistics

- Postdoc Tracking System

UCD receives the outputs from the annual [StudentSurvey.ie](#), and these data are further analysed by UCD Institutional Research at institutional, College, School and programme level, ensuring there is direct feedback of students feeding into the quality assurance and enhancement of UCD's programmes and the student experience as a whole. Module feedback and Extern Examiners' reports are also reviewed annually by Governing Boards and the University.

Student feedback on modules and teaching is gathered through surveys delivered at the end of the teaching trimester and hosted in a new UCD Student Feedback system. This feedback and Extern Examiners' reports are also reviewed annually by Governing Boards and the University.

Every year the [UCD Careers Network](#) conducts, on behalf of the University, a [Graduate Outcomes Survey](#). Issued to graduates of all full-time and part-time courses at NFQ levels 8, 9 and 10, this survey captures whether UCD graduates are in employment, in further study or training, seeking employment or doing something else, nine months after graduation. The data collected is submitted to the HEA for use in publications and league tables, and it is also available internally to staff. This can be found on the UCD Careers Network intranet, via their interactive dashboards on Tableau. This data also helps to inform the ongoing implementation of the [UCD Career Development & Employability Strategy 2015 – 2025](#).

Graduate Outcomes data can also be made available to UCD staff via reports should it be useful/relevant to their roles (for example College Principals, Deans, Heads of Schools, Heads of School Teaching and Learning, Vice Principals and Associate Deans of Teaching and Learning, Marketing/Recruitment Managers etc.).

Career Registration Data is collected annually from all students at the point of registration. Students answer three questions on: 1) Career Readiness; 2) Extent of work-related experience; and 3) Employment sectors of interest. Data is collected to inform the development of career and employability interventions and students receive an email in response to question 1 on career readiness with suggested next steps. Career Registration data is now embedded into the academic planning cycle and reports into the UMT Education Group. Career Registration data is also now available via the UCD Careers Network intranet. Career Registration data is used by the Careers Network to inform an evidence and data informed approach to delivering, reviewing and planning activities around career development and employability.

[QS Employment Outcomes](#) - the UCD Careers Network continues to collect data which contributes to other ranking mechanisms. In its second year, the QS Employment Outcomes ranking demonstrates the impact of a UCD education with a ranking of 88 in the world.

[UCD IT Services](#) also provides resources for [Research IT](#) - this range of services is designed to support and facilitate researchers in their use of IT as an enabler for their research activities. The range of services provided is tailored to support the needs of the research community and includes access to a High Performance Computing (HPC) environment ideal for researchers who need access to substantial computing resources, allowing them to greatly reduce the time required to perform large scale calculations. The [UCD Sonic HPC cluster](#) is a group of high

powered servers networked together to tackle large computational tasks. The Sonic HPC nodes are networked together using InfiniBand and connected to a parallel storage system that allows files to be read from, and written to, at much greater speed than standalone storage. A software scheduler (SLURM) runs on top of all this hardware to ensure fairness among the users. The Sonic HPC cluster is a shared campus resource open to all researchers. Brightspace training modules make access to the Sonic cluster easier by allowing researchers to take a series of short training videos which will aid them in using the UCD Sonic HPC.

IT Services operates the Cyber Security programme of work that ensures the University's information and data are protected from malicious cyber-attacks. This programme controls access, monitors resilience and takes actions to prevent data breaches as required. This is a cyclical programme of work that increasingly makes UCD's operating environment more secure every year.

IT Services also supports [Curriculum Management & Reporting](#) which incorporates the systems that support UCD Registry and Schools and Colleges in their endeavour to maintain UCD's curriculum. These include Curriculum Archive, Curriculum Browser, Curriculum Management System, Module Access Management, the Programme Register, Student Feedback Survey Management and Timetable Management.

IT Services continues to work closely with the University's Senior Management Team to maximise the provision of relevant, timely data and information, thereby facilitating the rapid progression and successful impact of UCD's digital transformation programmes.

To safeguard individuals and to ensure the integrity and reliability of information services, UCD has a number of 'Use Policies'. These are designed to ensure that the University can offer the widest possible range of services to its community, while at the same time ensuring that such services are used in a compliant manner. The policies are not intended to limit use of the University's information services. The relevant issues are addressed in the [UCD Information Technology Services Acceptable Use Policy](#). This policy provides all users with clear guidance on the acceptable, safe, and respectful use of the University's IT resources. A [Device Protection Policy](#) provides guidelines on the users' responsibility on ensuring that any device used to access University's IT resources is appropriately secured and protected. [Multi-Factor Authentication \(MFA\)](#) is also mandatory on all UCD staff accounts.

UCD Library has published the [UCD Library – General Information Resources Policy](#). The aim of this policy is to direct and guide the provision of effective, high-quality collections and appropriate electronic access to information resources for the University College Dublin academic community. The policy is developed in the context of the University's mission and goals, as published in strategic planning and policy documents at University, College and School levels.

The University has a number of policies and procedures relating to information and data management, including:

- [UCD Data Privacy Statement](#)
- [UCD Data Protection Policy](#)

- [UCD Cookie Policy](#)
- [UCD Data Subject Access Request Form](#)
- [UCD Exceptional Account Access Policy](#)

**UCD Office of the DPO** – the functions of this office include assisting and advising the University on matters concerning the application and implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018, and the European Communities (Electronic Communications Networks and Services) (Privacy and Electronic Communications) Regulations 2011. In addition, this office serves as a contact point for requests from individuals regarding the processing of their personal data and the exercising of their rights. It is also the interface between the Data Protection Commission (DPC) and UCD.

**UCD Data Protection Road Map** – A supporting framework is in place to ensure that everyone in the UCD community is aware of their rights and obligations under these legislations with mandatory training on data protection and security for all staff. UCD has appointed a Data Protection Officer (DPO), established an Office of the DPO and developed a university-wide internal network of ‘GDPR Champions’ to promote data privacy throughout the entire academic and administrative structure.

**UCD Records Management and Freedom of Information** – the functions of this unit are to ensure organisational compliance with the University’s statutory obligations pursuant to the Freedom of Information and Access to Information on the Environment regulations. Its role is also to advise the University in the management of university organisational records, including the formulation of corporate standards and practices in records management in keeping with best practice. Provision of information, assistance, and training to staff is also a responsibility of the unit.

## 7.0 Public Information and Communication

Information is delivered through various channels, including advertising, recruitment and career fairs, publications, the University's website and social media channels. The [UCD University Relations Office](#) manages, *inter alia*, the external communications functions of the University through its engagement with stakeholder groups. The office manages the University's brand positioning, marketing to prospective students, media relations, and the management of the University's online channels.

### Education and Training Programmes

For prospective students, there is a wide variety of guidance, information and other supporting documents relating to the student lifecycle, included on the [Study At UCD](#) website and in hard copy. For undergraduate applicants from Ireland and the EU, the '[MyUCD](#)' portal provides extensive information on a range of topics, such as:

- [Courses](#)
- [Applying to UCD](#) (includes admissions criteria, policies and procedures)
- [Visiting UCD](#)
- [UCD Prospectus](#)
- [Open Evenings & Career Fairs](#)
- [My UCD on Facebook](#)
- [Virtual Tour](#)
- [Scholarships](#)
- [UCD Schools Liaison & Outreach Programme](#)
- [Parents webpage](#)
- [Guidance Counsellor Resource Pages](#)
- [UCD Horizons](#) (the modular and credit-based structure for taught degrees at UCD)
- [CAO – Think Bigger UCD](#)
- [Campus Life](#)
- [Summer School](#)
- [UCD Open Day](#)
- [Peer to Peer Chat platform](#)

This information is collated and managed by the UCD Registry units of Student Recruitment and Admissions. These units work with Schools, in co-ordination with the UCD Registry Curriculum Team to ensure all programme and module information is correct and up-to-date, including information about collaborative and transnational programmes.

Information for prospective and incoming non-EU international students is provided by [UCD Global](#), including information on:

- Why UCD?
- What Can I Study?
- Coming to Ireland Student Life
- Meet UCD

For graduate taught degree admissions, and other non-CAO applicants, from Ireland and the EU, UCD operates an online [UCD Applications](#) system with information for these prospective students

detailed on the [UCD Graduate Admissions](#) website. There is also information about programmes available via online and distance learning through the [UCD Online Learning](#) website. Non-EU international applicants at graduate taught apply through a dedicated website supported by UCD Global for [study at UCD for international students](#). Information about on-campus accommodation is also available on the [UCD Residences](#) website.

Once admitted to UCD, there is extensive information available to students to assist them in their transition to university life and their programme. This is available through the [New Students](#) website and it includes a broad range of advice and guidance, as well as detailed information about the [Orientation](#) events and schedule which is compulsory for all new students. Detailed and specialised information is provided to undergraduate students, graduate students, and international students.

For current students, there is a dedicated [UCD Current Students](#) website. This includes information on registration, term dates, fees, exams and student services with a view to providing a 'one-stop-shop', holistic and student-centred set of resources. Included in this is the following:

- [Course Search](#)
- [Exams](#)
- [Fees](#)
- [New Students](#) (includes orientation information, key dates, the Welcome to UCD guide and video, new students' checklist, UCD Career Guide, Library information for new students)
- [Registration](#)
- [Student Desk](#)
- [Student Services Directory](#)
- [UCD Term Dates](#)

The [Student Desk](#), College Offices, Programme Offices and School Offices provide public information and support for students and an integrated service for all admissions, registration, fee and assessment issues.

Additional policies and procedures and other guidelines which support the student learning journey include:

- [Academic Regulations](#)
- [Taught Programme Transfer and Re-Admission Policy](#)
- [Policy on Recognition of Prior Learning](#)
- [Policy on Progression in Doctoral Programmes](#)

## Research and Related Services

Section 1.1 provides information on the University's research activities; and section 4 provides information on UCD's research programmes.

## Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures

The University has in place a [Quality Framework](#) that enables it to assure the quality of its teaching and learning, research and other activities. Quality is embedded across the University, and this is

reflected in its governance structures and oversight, policies and procedures. The aim of the [UCD Quality Assurance and Quality Enhancement Policy](#) is to enhance the effectiveness of its core activities of learning, teaching and research and their effective management. It addresses all areas of university activity taking cognizance of their contribution to, and alignment with the University strategic goals. The policy is aligned with the *European Standards and Guidelines* (2015) and related documents, and its implementation ensures the University's compliance with the *Universities Act, 1997*, *Qualifications and Quality Assurance Act (2012)*, and the *QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines* (2016). A key feature of the quality process is a commitment to involving staff, students and other stakeholders in the process.

The various quality assurance and enhancement mechanisms used by the University include an organisational and academic governance structure that provides oversight on the University's Quality Framework. This includes:

- Regular peer review of academic and professional units
- Peer review of the University's Linked Providers
- Programme approval and curriculum review processes
- Approval, monitoring and review of collaborative taught programme provision
- Module evaluation
- Extern Examiner reports
- Procedures for faculty and staff appointments
- Oversight of Continuing Professional Development (CPD)
- Policies and procedures to support quality processes
- An Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy
- Embedded student representation on university committees
- Systematic student representation in the quality processes
- Student participation in the Academic Council Quality Enhancement Committee (ACQEC)

The UCD Quality Office is responsible for managing the Periodic Quality Review process and contributing to university academic governance and the development of policies and procedures. Further information and guidance on the review process, its guidelines, procedures and review schedule is published on the [UCD Quality Office website](#). A wide range of internal supports such as those from Human Resources, Equality Diversity and Inclusion, Library, Teaching and Learning, Research, and Institutional Research are also available to support schools and units undergoing review and these are published at [UCD Supports & Resources for Quality Review](#).

## **Evaluation and Findings from Quality Assurance Evaluations**

Evaluation of findings or recommendations are implemented at the level of the school/unit within agreed timelines. A sub-committee of ACQEC considers all Review Group Reports prior to their consideration by ACQEC, UMT and Governing Authority. A process for monitoring the implementation of recommendations is in place and embedded into the University's annual planning cycle. Each unit is required to complete a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) to address the recommendations and must be approved by the relevant College Principal/Vice-President.

Each QIP is considered by the University Management Team. Review Group Reports for Periodic Quality Review, as well as the Quality Improvement Plans, are published on the [Reports and Publications](#) of the UCD Quality Office website.

Units must also provide a one-year Progress Report on the QIP implementation which is considered by the UCD Registrar, Deputy President and Vice-President for Academic Affairs. As well as incorporating implementation of the QIP into their annual and five-year plan, units are requested to provide an updated report as part of their next quality review.

A number of additional reports are produced annually for ACQEC such as thematic analyses of review reports and their recommendations.

## 8.0 Monitoring and Periodic Review

### Self-Evaluation

Self-evaluation and monitoring of the University's activity is a key component of the [Periodic Quality Review Process](#). Quality Enhancement/Quality Assurance at UCD is not a static but a dynamic process that enables a school/unit under review to reflect on its activity. Guidelines and procedures are in place to conduct reviews and are approved by ACQEC. Oversight on implementation and monitoring is at the levels of the unit, its relevant College, and the University through ACQEC, UMT and Governing Authority.

The University's strategic and holistic approach to Periodic Quality Review acknowledges the various aspects of a school/unit's operations and their mutual dependency. Separate guidelines have been developed for academic schools, professional units, Linked Providers, and transnational programme provision and these are available on the [UCD Quality Office website](#). These guidelines cover areas such as:

- Planning in Support of the UCD Strategy
- Organisation, management and staffing of the school/unit
- Management of resources and facilities
- Communication and engagement
- Quality of programmes and student learning experience
- Quality of postgraduate research education and research activity
- Management of quality and enhancement
- Support services
- External relations

Quality review involves consideration of a wide range of data information using the University's InfoHub data system, feedback from students, staff and other stakeholders, reports such as external examiners, accreditation reports, etc. It ensures that members of the school/unit come together to reflect upon what they are trying to achieve in all aspects of their work, and how these different areas of activity impact upon one another. All members of the school/unit, both faculty and staff, participate in the review and have an opportunity to contribute to the Self-Assessment Report and site visit. The primary focus of the review is on quality enhancement.

### Periodic Quality Review of Schools, Professional Units, Transnational Collaborative Provision and Linked Providers

Periodic Quality Review is a cyclical process which is carried out in academic schools, professional units, transnational programme provision and Linked Providers. Periodically, thematic reviews will also be undertaken at a cross institutional level such as curriculum review, student services and research institutes. The overall aim of the review process is on-going enhancement of all relevant activities. The key stages are:

- Drafting of the Self-Assessment Report (SAR).

- Site Visit - consideration of the SAR by a Review Group and meetings with stakeholders.
- Review Group prepares a Report incorporating recommendations for quality improvement.
- Preparation of a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) by the area under review for on-going improvement.
- Follow-up by the University - to consider progress against the QIP.

Review Group Reports for Periodic Quality Review are typically finalised 6 weeks after the Review Group site visit, and are published on the [Reports and Publications](#) section of the UCD Quality Office website following consideration by ACQEC, UMT and the UCD Governing Authority. The report provides the findings of the Review Group and outlines their commendations and recommendations. Following the review, the area under review prepares a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) to address the Review Group recommendations. The QIPs are considered by UMT and published on the UCD Quality Office website. The Review Group recommendations are also reported in the University's annual planning process. Progress on the implementation of the QIP is provided one year after the agreement of the QIP.

## **Criteria used for Recruitment of External Independent International Experts**

### **External Reviewers/Evaluators**

The University has approved the criteria for the appointment of external reviewers for quality review and these are published in the [Handbook for Internal Periodic Quality Review \(Academic School\)](#), the [UCD Quality Review Guidelines \(Support\)](#) and the [Collaborative Partnerships Guidelines for Periodic Review](#).

### **Extern Examiners**

For **Subject Extern Examiners**, the University has published ([Subject Extern Examination Policy](#)) the criteria for appointment of Subject Extern Examiners, which includes:

- They should have the appropriate academic expertise, experience and, where necessary, professional qualifications relating to the subjects to which they are appointed.
- They should have up-to-date knowledge of international best practice in the design, development, and assessment of relevant curricula.
- They should be adequately experienced to adjudicate on comparability of academic standards with peer Universities.
- They may not be a staff member or be involved in teaching or assessment in any capacity at the University. Care should be taken to ensure that no other possible conflict of interest may arise. Any potential conflicts of interest should be made known to the ACCE upon nomination or as may arise during the term of appointment.
- They should not be appointed from the same institution as their predecessor. Exceptions may, on occasion, be permitted in cases where no other option exists.
- Former members of UCD staff may not be appointed as Subject Extern Examiners for a period of at least five years after they have left the University. Once a Subject Extern Examiner has completed their duties, a three-year time interval is required before a Subject Extern Examiner can be reappointed as an Extern Examiner in the University in any capacity.

For **Special Extern Examiners**, who are involved in the examination of research degrees, the criteria is defined in the [Academic Regulations](#) as follows: *“The special extern examiner is a person who has been approved by the Academic Council or its relevant committee on the nomination of the Head of School to participate in the examination of a research degree as a recognised expert in the area of research of the relevant thesis.”*

Furthermore, the [UCD Policy for Theses in Research Degree Programmes](#) provides an outline of the responsibilities of the Special Extern Examiner.

## **Engagement with External Quality Assurance**

As a Designated Awarding Body, UCD is required under the *Qualifications and Quality Assurance Act, 2012* to undergo external review of the effectiveness of its institution-wide quality assurance procedures for the purposes of establishing, ascertaining, maintaining, and enhancing the quality of its provision of education, training, research and related services. These reviews are co-ordinated by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) on a cyclical basis. UCD last underwent review in 2019 with the [Review Team Report](#) published in 2020 and co-ordinated by the UCD Quality Office. The University prepared its institutional Quality Improvement Plan which was submitted to QQI in June 2020. A one-year progress report was submitted to QQI in June 2021. Following the conclusion of the formal institutional quality process ACQEC provides ongoing monitoring of the QIP implementation supported by the UCD Quality Office. An annual update on progress is provided to UMT and GA.

The University engages with QQI on an ongoing basis through the Annual Quality Report, Quality Dialogue Meetings, Irish Universities Association (IUA) committees, projects, and through contributions to the development or review of policies. The UCD Director of Quality is responsible for managing the University’s compliance with legislative requirements and reporting to QQI and is also the designated UCD representative on QQI’s IQQF. The University also engages with the professional, statutory, and regulatory bodies that accredit professional programmes.

## 9.0 Details of Arrangements with Third Parties

### 9.1 Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies

Type of arrangement	Total Number
PRSBs	75
Awarding bodies	0
QA bodies	1

1. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	National Social Work Registration Board (CORU)
Programme titles and links to publications	Professional Masters in Social Work (Prof. MSW); Masters in Science Social Work (MSc Social Work) <a href="https://www.coru.ie/about-us/registration-boards/social-care-workers-registration-board/">https://www.coru.ie/about-us/registration-boards/social-care-workers-registration-board/</a>
Date of accreditation or last review	01/09/2023
Date of next review	01/09/2029

2. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA)
Programme titles and links to publications	School of Veterinary Medicine - Undergraduate; MVB Veterinary Medicine (5 Yr); Graduate Entry Veterinary Medicine (4 yr); <a href="https://www.avma.org/">https://www.avma.org/</a>
Date of accreditation or last review	01/09/2020
Date of next review	01/09/2027

3. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Engineers Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	<a href="https://www.engineersireland.ie/listings/resource/1205">https://www.engineersireland.ie/listings/resource/1205</a>
Date of accreditation or last review	01/09/2025
Date of next review	01/09/2026

4. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI)
Programme titles and links to publications	All programmes delivered in the UCD School of Nursing, Midwifery and Health Systems were awarded NMBI accreditation for five years from July 2023. The approval and site inspection can be found here: <a href="https://www.nmbi.ie/education/site-inspection-reports">https://www.nmbi.ie/education/site-inspection-reports</a>
Date of accreditation or last review	01/07/2023
Date of next review	01/07/2028

5. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Irish Medical Council
Programme titles and links to publications	Undergraduate Entry to Medicine (UEM); Graduate Entry to Medicine (GEM); <a href="https://www.medicalcouncil.ie/">https://www.medicalcouncil.ie/</a>
Date of accreditation or last review	01/09/2020
Date of next review	01/09/2026



## 9.2 Collaborative Provision

### Definitions:

QQI's Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes, and Joint Awards, 2012 defines collaborative provision as a process that occurs where two or more providers are involved by formal agreement in the provision of a programme of higher education and training.

The Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 (as amended) defines 'joint award' as a single award made jointly by two or more awarding bodies

The Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 (as amended) defines 'linked provider' as a provider that is not a designated awarding body but enters into an arrangement with a designated awarding body under which arrangement the provider provides a programme of education and training that satisfies all or part of the prerequisites for an award of the designated awarding body.

Type of arrangement	Total Number
Joint research degrees	23
Joint/double/multiple awards	14
Collaborative programmes	44
Franchise programmes	0
Linked providers (DABs only)	2

1. Collaborative provision	Collaborative programme
Name of body (/bodies):	RCSI and UCD Medical College (RUMC)
Programme titles and links to publications	Specific details of all RUMC programmes are available at <a href="https://www.rcsiucd.edu.my/programmes/">https://www.rcsiucd.edu.my/programmes/</a>
Date of last review	01/12/2023
Date of next review	01/09/2029

2. Collaborative provision	Joint/double/multiple award
Name of body (/bodies):	Beijing-Dublin International College (BDIC)
Programme titles and links to publications	Specific details of all BDIC programmes are available at <a href="https://www.ucd.ie/bdic/">https://www.ucd.ie/bdic/</a>
Date of last review	01/06/2020
Date of next review	01/09/2026

3. Collaborative provision	Joint/double/multiple award
Name of body (/bodies):	University of Ulster
Programme titles and links to publications	Specific details of programmes are available at <a href="https://www.ucd.ie">https://www.ucd.ie</a> and <a href="https://www.ulster.ac.uk">https://www.ulster.ac.uk</a>
Date of last review	01/04/2023
Date of next review	01/09/2027

4. Collaborative provision	Linked provider
Name of body (/bodies):	National College of Art & Design (NCAD)
Programme titles and links to publications	Specific details of all NCAD programmes are available at <a href="https://www.ncad.ie/students/programme-information/">https://www.ncad.ie/students/programme-information/</a>
Date of last review	01/10/2021
Date of next review	01/09/2027

<b>5. Collaborative provision</b>	<b>Linked provider</b>
Name of body (/bodies):	Institute of Banking (IoB)
Programme titles and links to publications	Specific details of all IoB programmes are available at <a href="https://iob.ie/programmes">https://iob.ie/programmes</a>
Date of last review	01/11/2025
Date of next review	01/11/2032

<b>6. Collaborative provision</b>	<b>Joint/double/multiple award</b>
Name of body (/bodies):	Chang'an-Dublin International College of Transportation (CDIC)
Programme titles and links to publications	Specific details of all the CDIC programmes are available at <a href="https://www.ucd.ie/cdic/">https://www.ucd.ie/cdic/</a> *No reviews to date - CDIC opened in September 2020*
Date of last review	01/09/2020
Date of next review	

<b>7. Collaborative provision</b>	<b>Joint/double/multiple award</b>
Name of body (/bodies):	Guangzhou-Dublin International College of Life Sciences & Technology (GDIC)
Programme titles and links to publications	Specific details of all CDIC programmes are available at <a href="https://www.ucd.ie/gdic/">https://www.ucd.ie/gdic/</a> *No reviews to date - GDIC opened in September 2020*
Date of last review	01/09/2020
Date of next review	

<b>8. Collaborative provision</b>	<b>Joint/double/multiple award</b>
Name of body (/bodies):	Trinity College Dublin
Programme titles and links to publications	MSc Comparative Social Change Specific details of programmes are available at <a href="https://www.tcd.ie/sociology/postgraduate/msc-comp-social-change/">https://www.tcd.ie/sociology/postgraduate/msc-comp-social-change/</a> Reviewed by UCD under the School of Sociology quality review, 2020-21
Date of last review	01/09/2020
Date of next review	

## 9.3 Articulation Agreements

### Definition:

Per the IHEQN Guidelines for the Approval, Monitoring and Review of Collaborative and Transnational Provision, an articulation agreement may be defined as a process whereby all students who satisfy academic criteria on one programme are automatically entitled (on academic grounds) to be admitted with advance standing to a subsequent stage of a programme of a degree awarding body. These arrangements are subject to a formal agreement between the parties.

<b>Articulation agreements - Total number</b>	<b>8</b>
---	----------

<b>1. Articulation agreement</b>	<b>Articulation agreement</b>
Name of body (/bodies):	Xiamen University (China)
Programme titles and links to publications	1+3 (Business)
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	18/07/2022
Date of next review	17/07/2027
Detail of the agreement	UCD reserves the right to keep the agreement confidential given commercial sensitivities.

<b>2. Articulation agreement</b>	<b>Articulation agreement</b>
Name of body (/bodies):	South China Agricultural University (China)
Programme titles and links to publications	2+2 (Business)
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	17/04/2023
Date of next review	17/04/2028
Detail of the agreement	UCD reserves the right to keep the agreement confidential given commercial sensitivities.

<b>3. Articulation agreement</b>	<b>Articulation agreement</b>
Name of body (/bodies):	South China Agricultural University (China)
Programme titles and links to publications	2+2 (Health & Agricultural Sciences)
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	12/10/2022
Date of next review	11/10/2027
Detail of the agreement	UCD reserves the right to keep the agreement confidential given commercial sensitivities.

<b>4. Articulation agreement</b>	<b>Articulation agreement</b>
Name of body (/bodies):	Beijing University of Technology (China)
Programme titles and links to publications	1+2+1 (Interfaculty)
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	22/09/2022
Date of next review	21/09/2027
Detail of the agreement	UCD reserves the right to keep the agreement confidential given commercial sensitivities.

<b>5. Articulation agreement</b>	<b>Articulation agreement</b>
Name of body (/bodies):	Beijing Foreign Studies University (China)
Programme titles and links to publications	1+3 (Business)
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	25/04/2023
Date of next review	25/04/2028
Detail of the agreement	UCD reserves the right to keep the agreement confidential given commercial sensitivities.

<b>6. Articulation agreement</b>	<b>Articulation agreement</b>
Name of body (/bodies):	Abu Dhabi University (United Arab Emirates)
Programme titles and links to publications	Business
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	15/11/2021
Date of next review	14/11/2026
Detail of the agreement	UCD reserves the right to keep the agreement confidential given commercial sensitivities.

<b>7. Articulation agreement</b>	<b>Articulation agreement</b>
Name of body (/bodies):	Southwestern University of Finance and Economics (China)
Programme titles and links to publications	2+2/2+1 to BSS2 Economics and Finance
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	25/06/2027
Date of next review	25/06/2029
Detail of the agreement	UCD reserves the right to keep the agreement confidential given commercial sensitivities.

<b>8. Articulation agreement</b>	<b>Articulation agreement</b>
Name of body (/bodies):	Taylor's University (Malaysia)
Programme titles and links to publications	1+2 (Science)
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	18/07/2022
Date of next review	12/06/2030
Detail of the agreement	UCD reserves the right to keep the agreement confidential given commercial sensitivities.

**Annual Quality Report (Institution)**  
**PART B: INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE**  
**ENHANCEMENT & IMPACT**  
**Reporting Period 2024-2025**

## Part B: Internal Quality Assurance Enhancement & Impact

### Guidelines on Completing Part B

As outlined in the general guidelines for this template (p.6), **Part B** of the AQR focuses specifically on the effectiveness and impact of the IQA framework on the QA activities and developments across the institution during the reporting period.

Here, the institution is invited to document the quality enhancements adopted and implemented during the reporting period and describe concisely the impact of these across a selected range of activities. Part B should also be used to demonstrate how plans set out in the previous AQR were progressed during the reporting period. These plans may be linked to strategic objectives, to QQI reengagement advices, or to Cinnte review recommendations.

Part B of the AQR is an opportunity for self-reflection and critical evaluation of the effectiveness of QA activities over the reporting period. The institution is encouraged to reflect on what worked well and what did not, and to consider impact measures, using both quantitative and qualitative evidence (metrics, benchmarks and feedback/judgement) and detail how they led to specific improvements of and enhancement in QA activities.

Part B provides evidence of quality improvement and enhancement and impact<sup>1</sup> of QA activities within the totality of the institution's QA system.

**Section 1** pertains to internal quality assurance implementation and developments since the previous reporting period.

**Section 2** considers the institutional analysis of IQA enhancements and their impact on a range of activities including academic integrity.

**Section 3** relates to IQA developments and plans for the next reporting period.

**Section 4** provides an opportunity for institutions to showcase IQA in action through case studies in relevant thematic areas.

Institutions are invited to use case studies to demonstrate quality in action and to highlight areas of practice for dissemination at any point in this part of the report.

#### Case Studies

QQI recommends that written case studies should:

- Be between half a page and two pages in length;
- Relate to a specific time- and subject-bound issue;
- Include an introduction that sets out a brief overview of contextual matters;

---

<sup>1</sup> The National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education have considered impact and measures leading to development and improvement specifically in terms of teaching and learning. See: <https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/wp-content/uploads/NF-2020-Insights-from-Practice-About-Impact-in-Teaching-and-Learning-web-ready.pdf>. This is a very useful reference, though impact in the context of this report should be considered

- Include any relevant supporting data and data analysis;
- Include links to any sources cited;
- Include a clear and concise concluding paragraph with an overview of the key outcomes/learning.

Although case studies will generally be in written form, institutions may also provide links to audio-visual/multimedia case studies. QQI does not prescribe a format for case studies.

## 1.0 Quality Implementation and Developments

### 1.1 Strategic QA Updates

#### Institutional Strategic Objectives

The University operates an integrated system for quality assurance and enhancement which contributes to the achievement of its strategy.

The [UCD Strategy to 2030](#), formally launched on 19 November 2024, sets out an objective to 'increase the quality, quantity, and impact of our research scholarship and innovation', and includes three pillars:

1. Transforming Learning
2. Advancing Research and Innovation
3. Engaging for Impact

To drive change in these three pillars, UCD is investing and focusing activity through six cross-cutting initiatives:

1. Learning for Life
2. UCD Student Experience
3. Irish Roots, Global Reach
4. Research with Ambition
5. One UCD
6. Physical and Digital Campuses

The strategy reflects a dynamic and engaged university that is global, inclusive and sustainable, delivering positive transformation through mutually reinforcing research, educational and engagement actions and a commitment to excellence. It will guide the institution in supporting new skills formation, industrial competitiveness, and the use of Artificial Intelligence and other digital technologies. It will also support the institution to enhance the sense of belonging and community across the university and among its alumni, and to build pride in what the entire community can achieve together.

Ongoing monitoring by the University on implementation of the new strategic plan will be undertaken through UMT, GA, the Extended Leadership Group and the Vice-President for Strategy and External Engagement, UCD colleges, schools and professional support units.

#### Key University Appointments

Within the reporting period, the following key university appointments were made:

October 2024, Dipti Pandya was appointed to the role of Director of Research.

January 2025, Professor Emma Sokell appointed to the role of UCD Dean of Graduate Studies.

June 2025, Liam Cronin appointed as Director of Innovation at UCD.

July 2025, Vona Groarke appointed as the new Professor of Poetry for Ireland in UCD.

August 2025, Noya Fernandez Del Coterero appointed as Director of Student Recruitment and Recognition Events.

On 25 August 2025, Professor Regina Uí Chollatáin, Principal of the College of Arts and Humanities appointed as the new Director of the UCD Ad Astra Academy.

## **Campus Development**

There are a number of campus development projects currently underway, including:

- The Centre for Future Learning
- Science Phase 3
- Sports and Student Amenity Precinct
- Newman and James Joyce Library Projects
- UCD Residence Masterplan
- Lyons Farm project
- UCD Archives Reading Room re-location

These projects are contained within the UCD Strategic Campus Development Plan 2016-2021-2026. The purpose of this plan is to communicate the broad direction of future physical development of the Belfield Campus in terms of the facilities required to support the University's vision of being a global top 100 university. Further information on all capital development projects is available at [UCD Campus Development](#).

## **1.2 Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR**

### **UCD Institutional Review**

Implementation of the recommendations from the 2019 Institutional Review of UCD has continued with ongoing monitoring and reporting of progress by ACQEC, with annual reports to UMT and GA.

The University actioned 16 recommendations for implementation with 50 associated actions within its Quality Improvement Plan. During the reporting year implementation of the recommendations has continued and reported to UCD's Governing Authority. 96% of the University's associated actions are now complete. Three actions remain across two recommendations that includes 1. work projects on HR in relation to the role of the head of school; 2. postgraduate research in relation to mandatory training for new research supervisors and 3. the certification of supports for research supervisors (RSSDp).

## 1.3 Governance and Management

### 1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule

Body	Meeting Dates
Governing Authority	19 September 2024, 24 October 2024, 13 December 2024, 30 January 2025, 20 March 2025, 14 May 2025, 26 June 2025
Academic Council	20 September 2024, 23 October 2024, 12 February 2025, 30 April 2025
Academic Council Quality Enhancement Committee	14 October 2024, 5 December 2024, 5 February 2025, 22 April 2025
University Programmes Board	10 October 2024, 20 November 2024, 13 February 2025, 3 April 2025, 7 May 2025
University Management Team	27 August 2024, 10 September 2024, 24 September 2024, 8 October 2024, 22 October 2024, 05 November 2024, 19 November 2024, 3 December 2024, 17 December 2024, 21 January 2025, 4 February 2025, 18 February 2025, 4 March 2025, 18 March 2025, 1 April 2025, 15 April 2025, 29 April 2025, 13 May 2025, 27 May 2025, 10 June 2025, 24 June 2025

The full schedule of University governance meetings is available at [Governance and Management Committees](#).

### 1.3.2 QA Leadership and Management Structural Developments

**In the reporting period (1 September 2024 – 31 August 2025) the following leadership and management developments occurred:**

The new Academic Council commenced its term on 1 September 2024.

- A new Director of Research was appointed.
- A new Dean of Graduate Studies was appointed.
- A new Director of Innovation was appointed.
- A new Professor of Poetry for Ireland was appointed.
- A new Director of Student Recruitment and Recognition Events in UCD Registry was appointed.
- A new Director of the UCD Ad Astra Academy was appointed.
- New Heads of School took up their roles in the following Schools:

- o UCD School of Biology & Environmental Science
- o UCD School of Civil Engineering
- o UCD School of Economics
- o UCD School of English, Drama & Film
- o UCD School of Psychology
- o UCD School of Public Health, Physiotherapy & Sports Science
- o UCD School of Social Policy, Social Work & Social Justice
- o UCD School of Sociology

## 1.4 Internal Monitoring and Review

### 1.4.1 Overview of Periodic Reviews

Unit of review	Date of completion/reason for conducting review (if not planned) or non-completion (if planned but not conducted)	Links to relevant publications
UCD School of Architecture, Planning & Environmental Policy	7-10 October 2024	<a href="#">UCD Quality Office – Reports &amp; Publications</a>
UCD School of Languages, Cultures & Linguistics	21-25 October 2024	As above
UCD School of Computer Science	4-7 November 2024	As above
UCD School of Classics	11-14 November 2024	As above
UCD School of Earth Sciences	3-6 March 2025	As above
UCD School of Social Policy, Social Work & Social Justice	24-27 March 2025	As above
UCD School of Economics	24-27 March 2025	As above
UCD School of Physics	31 March-3 April 2025	As above
UCD University Secretariat	7-10 April 2025	As above
UCD School of Art History & Cultural Policy	7-10 April 2025	As above
UCD Careers Network	14-17 April 2025	As above
UCD School of Biosystems & Food Engineering	22-25 April 2025	As above
UCD Student Advisors & Student Engagement	22-25 April 2025	As above
UCD Estate Services	9-12 June 2025	As above

## 1.4.2 Expert Review Teams/Panels<sup>2</sup> involved in IQA

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

	Total	Academic Schools/ Department	Professional Services/Support Unit	Approval/Review of Linked Provider	Programme Approval	Programme Review	Other
<b>Number of review/ evaluation processes</b>	14	10	4	0	12	0	
<i>of those:</i>							
<b>On-site processes</b>	14						
<b>Desk reviews</b>	12 <sup>3</sup>						
<b>Virtual processes</b>	0						
<b>Average panel size for each process type*</b>		4	4	N/A	N/A	N/A	

\* excluding secretary if not a full panel member

<sup>2</sup> QQI acknowledges that the terminology used to describe the groups of individuals that conduct peer review/evaluation varies from institution to institution.

<sup>3</sup> Considered by Academic Council and its sub-committees



## 2.0 IQA System – Enhancement and Impacts

### Governance and Management of Quality

In June 2024, elections were held for membership of the new Academic Council, the term of office for which is 1 September 2024 to 31 August 2027.

#### International Education Mark (IEM)

In March 2025, UCD submitted its application for the QQI International Education Mark (IEM), known as TrustEd Ireland under the [QQI Code of Practice for the Provision of Education and Training to International Learners](#).

UCD's application was developed through extensive consultation across the University, led by the UCD Director of Quality with input from the University Management Team (UMT), Academic Council committees, UCD Global, and UCD Registry, colleges, schools and professional support units from across the University, and documented the academic and student supports for international learners. It was reviewed and approved by the Academic Council Quality Enhancement Committee (ACQEC) on 27 March 2025. External engagement with Quality Qualifications Ireland (QQI) and the Irish Universities Association (IUA) informed the both the process and development of the University's application.

The submission evidenced compliance with the applicable criteria across marketing and recruitment, admissions and qualifications recognition, fees and refunds, student supports, English language provision, and transnational education. UCD's application demonstrated a well-embedded approach to international student recruitment that included its strong quality assurance framework, robust governance structures and alignment with QQI and European Standards, ensuring a transparent, inclusive, and high-quality experience for our international learners.

In developing its application, the University reviewed its policies and procedures that included enhanced clarification of its supports and information provided to international learners, the documentation of existing devolved English language requirements at the programme level into a University [English Language Policy](#) which was reviewed and recommended by the University Programmes Board (UPB) in February 2025 and approved by the Academic Council Executive Committee (ACEC) in March 2025.

#### World University Rankings

University College Dublin is ranked 118th in the latest QS World University Rankings, up eight places from last year. This year's climb, up from 126, marks the third year in a row of upward movement for the University. For its World University Rankings, QS uses nine weighted indicators including: Academic Reputation (30%), Citations per Faculty (20%), Employer Reputation (15%), Faculty Student Ratio (10%), Sustainability (5%), Employment Outcomes (5%), International Faculty (5%), International Students Ratio (5%), and International Research Network (5%).

For the latest QS World University Rankings edition, the most improved indicators for UCD are Citations per Faculty, up 26 places, International Research Network, up 24 places, International Students Ratio, up 18 and Academic Reputation, the most heavily weighted individual metric, up nine. Citations per faculty is a measure that captures the quality of a university's research outputs. The upwards trajectory UCD has seen in its International Students Ratio and International Research Network metrics are an indication of how much the University has benefited from international networking opportunities and global research partnerships.

#### Key Leadership Changes

Changes in leadership in the University within the reporting period, include the appointment of a new Academic Council, a new Director of Research, a new Dean of Graduate Studies, a new Director of Innovation, a new Professor of Poetry for Ireland, a new Director of Student Recruitment and Recognition Events in UCD Registry, and a new Director of the UCD Ad Astra Academy. There was also a total of eight new Head of School appointments in addition to faculty and professional support staff appointments.

## Programmes of Education and Training

During the reporting period, twelve new programmes were approved by the [University Programmes Board \(UPB\)](#) including four Bachelor's Degree award programmes, six Masters of Science programmes and two Masters Pathway programmes.

## Internal Periodic Quality Review Process

Fourteen Periodic Quality Reviews took place within the reporting period, including ten schools and four professional support units. These reviews were conducted in accordance with the Handbooks for [Academic Schools](#) and [Professional Support Units](#) respectively. These units are currently implementing their review group recommendations.

## Supports and Resources for Learners

The [UCD Student Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Project](#), which commenced in 2021, concluded during the reporting period. The project undertook a thorough and consultative process to develop a robust road map for enhancing student wellbeing and mental health supports in UCD. The project's in-depth consideration of the current landscape, engagement with diverse stakeholders (particularly students), and alignment with national and international best practice have resulted in comprehensive proposals for organisational, physical, and digital infrastructure, alongside strategic resourcing of student support services. The outcomes of this project position UCD strongly to deliver a sustainable and significantly enhanced wellbeing landscape for its students, marking a significant step towards achieving the goals outlined in the National Framework and the UCD Strategy to 2030.

## Information and Data Management (including analysis and impact of information gathered via [StudentSurvey.ie](#))

In January 2025, UCD Institutional Research announced the development of a Tableau Dashboard to assist University, College, and School Management in tracking their performance against key performance indicators (KPIs) using census data. These reports are in addition to existing InfoHub reports. The College and Schools Profile dashboard provides an overview of student and staff population. Key metrics and visualisations include:

- FTE (Full-Time Equivalent) Trends: Line graphs illustrating the evolution of EU and Non-EU student FTE, alongside total student and staff FTE, over a seven-year period.
- Student-Faculty Ratio: Bar charts displaying the student-faculty ratio for each College and School within UCD.
- Entry Route Analysis: Enables users to analyse the distribution of students across various entry routes (e.g. Asylum Seeker, FETAC, HEAR) and understand how this distribution has changed over time.
- Student FTE by Citizenship: A map indicating the distribution of student FTE by citizenship.

### Potential Benefits

- Data-Driven Insights: Explore and understand key trends and patterns related to UCD's student

and staff population.

- Informed Decision-Making: Gain insights into areas such as student enrolment trends, staff resource allocation, and the international student composition.
- Performance Monitoring: Track progress towards strategic goals and identify areas for improvement.

Target	Audience
Key stakeholders with a vested interest in student and staff planning data have readily available access to the insights and visualisations provided by the dashboard for their decision-making and planning processes.	
Access	is
automatically granted to:	

- College Finance Managers & Accountants
- College Principals
- Directors of College Offices
- Directors of School Offices
- Heads of School
- Quality Office
- Registrar's Office Management
- School Managers
- University Management Team
- Vice

Presidents

In February 2025, the UCD Registrar, Deputy President and Vice-President for Academic Affairs announced that the University Management Team (UMT) has decided to transition from Google Workspace to the Microsoft 365 platform as the primary platform for digital communication and collaboration for all UCD students and staff and will be implemented over a two-year period, supported by colleagues in IT Services and People and Organisation Change.

## Public Information and Communication

The UCD Library announced Open Education Week from 3-7 March 2025. Open Education Week is a time to promote open educational resources (OER) that make learning more accessible, inclusive, and engaging. The UCD Library is committed to the principles of open education – collaboration, accessibility, and student-centered learning. The UCD Digital Skills for Success in the Workplace module is an example of this philosophy in action. Designed in partnership with students and faculty across UCD, this open-access module empowers learners with essential digital literacy skills for academic and professional success. The module follows Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles, ensuring accessibility for all students by providing content in multiple formats, including interactive tutorials, audio, and plain text. Students describe the module as a valuable bridge between education and the professional world.

## UCD Public Engagement

UCD continues to engage beyond the University through its leadership and staff engagement through its media channels, publications, external examining, research and partnerships both professionally and within the community. The University's community engagement report for 2024/25 is currently in preparation and will be available through the [University's community website](#).

## Other Parties Involved in Education and Training

### Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs)

The University continues to engage with 75 Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies that professionally accredit UCD programmes, schools, and institutes. A directory of such bodies and the programmes/schools/institutes that they accredit is published at [UCD Quality Office – Professional Accreditation](#). The University continues to work with these bodies and considers their reports in the context of the Periodic Quality Review process.

## Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review

### Institutional Review

UCD continues to make progress in relation to the recommendations which arose from the Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) CINNTE quality review of UCD which took place in October 2019. Ongoing, annual reporting is provided to the Governing Authority against the [UCD Institutional Quality Improvement Plan \(IQIP\) \(July 2020\)](#). See also Section 3.1, QA and QE supporting the Achievement of Strategic Objectives, for further details on progress on the IQIP.

### School Review

In the reporting period 1 September 2024 – 31 August 2025, the following School reviews took place:

- UCD School of Architecture, Planning & Environmental Policy (7-10 October 2024)
- UCD School of Languages, Cultures & Linguistics (21-25 October 2024)
- UCD School of Computer Science (4-7 November 2024)
- UCD School of Classics (11-14 November 2024)
- UCD School of Earth Sciences (3-6 March 2025)
- UCD School of Social Policy, Social Work & Social Justice (24-27 March 2025)
- UCD School of Economics (24-27 March 2025)
- UCD School of Physics (31 March-3 April 2025)
- UCD School of Art History & Cultural Policy (7-10 April 2025)
- UCD School of Biosystems & Food Engineering (22-25 April 2025)

The approach to the quality review of schools covers areas such as Organisation, Management and Staffing of the School; Quality of Programmes and Student Learning Experience; Quality of Postgraduate Research Education and Research Activity; Management of Quality and Enhancement; Support Services; and External Relations.

### Professional

### Unit

### Review

In the reporting period 1 September 2024 – 31 August 2025, the following Professional Unit reviews took place:

- UCD University Secretariat (7-10 April 2025)
- UCD Careers Network (14-17 April 2025)
- UCD Student Advisors & Student Engagement (22-25 April 2025)
- UCD Estate Services (9-12 June 2025)

The approach to the quality review of professional units covers areas such as Planning in Support of the UCD Strategy, Organisation and Staffing, Communication and Engagement, and Management of Quality and Enhancement.

## Extern Examiners & Assessment

The fundamental role of the extern examiner is to assure academic standards and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. The extern examiner confirms that the academic standards of courses, modules and the awards to which they lead are consistent with the academic outcomes specified by the University and are comparable to those achieved in the subject area in equivalent universities internationally.

In relation to Subject Extern Examiners, Schools send them information on the subject(s) and associated modules under examination, including any relevant materials such as Module Descriptors and the Programme Outcomes of Programmes in which subjects or modules are involved. All Subject Extern Examiners are required to submit an annual report online using the InfoHub Extern Examiner system. The content of each report is reviewed by the Registrar, Deputy President and Vice-President for Academic Affairs of the University and feeds into future planning, quality reviews and curriculum planning.

Special Extern Examiners are appointed by the University to examine a thesis for a PhD, Research Masters, MD, or other Doctoral degree. A Special Extern Examiner participates in an examination committee for a research degree with an Internal Examiner and a Chair from UCD, examines a research thesis, and plays a leading role in a viva voce examination (for all PhD degrees and Doctoral Degrees except MD).

## Programme Boards

UCD Programmes are governed and managed by Programme Deans, Programme Boards and Programme Offices. Programme Deans, who Chair the relevant Programme Board, oversee the operation of Programme Offices, which play a crucial role in the co-ordination of academic and support staff in relation to the management of UCD programmes. Programme Boards are responsible for overseeing and enhancing academic quality and the student learning experience for the programmes they are responsible for, as outlined in their Terms of Reference. Programme Offices are dedicated to supporting students throughout their programme of study, and UCD Student Advisers are also attached to every programme area. Programme Boards also undertake ongoing annual review of modules based on student feedback and feedback from Subject Extern Examiners

At University-level, Programme Boards report to the [University Programmes Board \(UPB\)](#) and the Programme Deans liaise with the Registrar, Deputy-President and Vice-President for Academic Affairs.

## Third-Mission Activities, Societal and Community Engagement

### Athena SWAN Institutional Silver Award

In September 2024, UCD was awarded the Athena Swan Institutional Silver Award. The implementation of the GEAP will not only support gender equality but will enhance inclusion across all equality grounds as UCD works towards an intersectional approach to EDI. Over 70% of UCD Schools now have Athena Swan awards and are leading a step-change through implementation of ambitious gender equality action plans. These activities are contributing to a downward trend in the gender pay gap.

UCD has been named 49<sup>th</sup> in the 2024 QS World University Rankings for Sustainability, achieving the highest result in Ireland and ranking 24<sup>th</sup> in Europe. The QS World University Rankings: Sustainability

2024 Report compares 1,397 of the world's universities against a range of metrics, to see which institutions are doing the most to tackle the world's greatest environmental, social and governance (ESG) challenges. UCD's achievement follows on from the establishment of a new role of Vice-President for Sustainability, with responsibility for positioning sustainability at the heart of the University's education, research, governance, operations, and engagement activities.

## 2.1 Initiatives within the Institution related to Academic Integrity

The Academic Council approved the new [Academic Integrity Policy](#) in May 2024.

Academic integrity requires every member of the academic community at UCD to act ethically, honestly and fairly. Every member of the UCD community shares responsibility for upholding the academic integrity values that underpin our scholarly practice in teaching, research, and student learning; activities that underpin the foundations of our intellectual community at UCD.

This policy has been developed through consultation with faculty, students and the wider community of stakeholders in the University. It reflects current research and best practice nationally and internationally in academic integrity in higher education. In particular, this policy is informed by relevant national legislation and is consistent with the principles and guidelines produced by the [National Academic Integrity Network \(NAIN\)](#), including the [National Principle and Common Lexicon of Terms](#) for academic integrity (NAIN, 2021); the [National Academic Integrity Guidelines](#) (NAIN, 2021) and the [National Framework for Academic Misconduct Investigation and Case Management](#) (NAIN, 2023).

This policy reflects the University's commitment to supporting and promoting academic integrity through:

- b) The development of a collective culture of responsibility around academic integrity fostered by all faculty, staff and students;
- b) A clear framework of education, prevention, detection, sanctioning and record keeping so that UCD can both mitigate and respond appropriately to academic misconduct.

This policy applies to all individuals engaged in academic work at UCD.

A new [Student Academic Misconduct Procedure](#) also became effective from 1 September 2024. Breaches of academic integrity are known as academic misconduct which may involve students submitting work that is not their own, wholly or partly. Examples of academic misconduct include plagiarism, unauthorised use of generative artificial intelligence, contract cheating, collusion, cheating during examinations. For all categories and definitions of Academic Misconduct see section 2 of the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

Students are expected to:

- Attend lectures and engage in all other learning activities of their programme;
- Abide by the [Examination Regulations](#), the [Student Academic Integrity Policy](#) and [Student Code of Conduct](#) policies that the University may establish to ensure a fair and equitable assessment system for all students;
- Ensure that their work that they present for assessment is their own and that the use of work and / or ideas of others is acknowledged using a recognised referencing system. For information on referencing, citation and how to avoid plagiarism see [UCD Library Guidelines](#).

See the [Student Academic Misconduct Procedure Process Map \(School Investigation\)](#) for further information.

Additional resources provided by the University in relation to academic integrity include the following:

- [Academic Integrity - Referencing, Citation & Avoiding Plagiarism](#) (UCD Library)
- [Academic Integrity Course](#) (available through Brightspace) (UCD Library)
- [Technology Enhanced Learning](#) (UCD Teaching and Learning)

- [Generative AI](#) (UCD Teaching and Learning)
- [UCD's AI-powered digital services](#) (UCD IT Services)
- [AI and Machine Learning](#) (UCD Research and Innovation)

In relation to the impact of AI, the following additional events took place within the reporting period:

- In September 2024, the UCD College of Engineering and architecture launched a podcast series on “The Student Voice on AI and Assessment”.
- In December 2024, UCD Research and Innovation conducted a survey to gather insights, ideas, and concerns on the use of AI in research training, research & innovation at UCD, across all disciplines, and the full research lifecycle.

## 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period

### 3.1 QA and QE supporting the Achievement of Strategic Objectives

The Academic Council Quality Enhancement Committee (ACQEC) approves quality assurance initiatives aligned with university strategy, policy, and external requirements. It also offers strategic guidance on both institutional and national quality assurance developments to university staff and relevant committees. During the reporting period UCD launched its new strategy in November 2024 – 'Breaking Boundaries - Strategy to 2030'. The committee ensured documents were reviewed and updated to ensure their continued alignment with the new strategy. A newly established Office of Strategy is being developed to guide and monitor the delivery of the University's strategy informed by schools and professional support unit work plans.

During the reporting year ACQEC will continue to oversee and report progress against the agreed actions in the University's Institutional Quality Improvement Plan as part of the Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) CINNTE external institutional review. This included engaging on a cross-institutional basis with institutional stakeholders and/or sponsors as well as monitoring the implementation of quality specific recommendations.

Key areas of focus within the reporting period will include ongoing work in relation to the University's application for the International Education Mark (IEM), alignment of quality processes with the new UCD Strategy to 2030, delivery of the schedule of periodic quality reviews and related activity, and review of current processes in relation to linked providers, a review of the University's Quality Assurance and Quality Enhancement Policy, a review of current collaborative guidelines for quality review incorporating IEM requirements and tailored to the specific area of provision, a review of current guidance for writing a quality improvement plan.

The ACQEC workplan for 2025-26 includes the following:

- Management of Periodic Quality Reviews
- Oversight of the appointment of Review Groups for Periodic Quality Reviews
- Review of the annual feedback from units and review groups
- Preparation of the ACQEC Annual Report on Quality to the Academic Council
- Subcommittee on review groups reports will continue to consider finalised RGR's reporting to ACQEC
- Oversight on UCD's Annual Quality Report (AQR) submitted to QQI
- Provide feedback on the development of ongoing monitoring of the IEM and other requirements by QQI
- Engage with governing boards on the IEMAS and required criteria on new and existing programmes
- Consideration and approval of annual updates to IOB and NCAD Quality Assurance Procedures
- Review of the UCD Quality Assurance and Quality Enhancement Policy to make it clearer, more user-friendly, and fit for purpose
- Review of the UCD Policy for Internal Reporting on Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) Accreditation of UCD Programmes and Units (approved by Academic Council Executive Committee (ACEC) in May 2018)
- In relation to Linked Providers, develop documented process/protocol for new recognized colleges for wider consultation, and consideration of the development of a LP framework and/or Policy

## 3.2 Reviews planned for Upcoming Reporting Periods

### 3.2.1 Reviews planned for Next Reporting Period

Unit to be reviewed	Date of planned Site Visit	Date of last review
Institute of Bankers (IOB)	3-6 November 2025	2018-2019
UCD School of Biomolecular & Biomedical Science	10-13 March 2026	2018-2019
UCD School of Chemical & Bioprocess Engineering	10-13 March 2026	2016-2017
UCD Access & Lifelong Learning	30 March - 2 April 2026	2018-2019
UCD School of Education	13-16 April 2026	2018-2019
UCD School of Archaeology	14-17 April 2026	2017-2018
UCD College of Business	14-17 April 2026	2018-2019
UCD School of Psychology	20-23 April 2026	2018-2019
UCD Human Resources	21-24 April 2026	2018-2019

### 3.2.2 Reviews planned beyond Next Reporting Period

See [Quality Review Schedule](#) on the UCD Quality Office website.

## 4.0 Additional Themes and Case Studies

### CASE STUDY 1

**Title:** Bridges & Bytes – The Student Voice on AI and Assessment

**Theme:** Student Engagement

**Keywords:** Student Voice, Assessment, Artificial Intelligence (AI), Digital communication

**Short Abstract:**

The College of Engineering and Architecture at UCD has launched a new podcast series called *Bridges and Bytes*, with a first season on “The Student Voice on AI and Assessment”. This student-driven podcast takes a deep dive into the evolving role of artificial intelligence (AI) in academic assessments, providing a unique and much-needed student perspective on the topic. It explores how AI is influencing academic assessment, using student perspectives alongside interviews with a range of contributors (including academics, librarians, students and industry professionals). The season is structured as a trailer followed by six episodes, each centred on a different assessment type, and it concludes with a review episode reflecting on the key themes that emerged.

The podcast is available on major podcast platforms, including Spotify and Apple Podcasts, as well as the UCD webpage here: [Bridges and Bytes – The Student Voice on AI and Assessment](#).

**Project Summary:**

The rapid advent of generative AI has created challenges in higher education, with an urgent need to understand how these tools affect different assessment formats. Of particular concern was that, in response to fears around plagiarism, educators who had previously embraced alternative, inclusive assessment approaches could be pushed back towards timed, invigilated exams, representing a potential backwards step for inclusion and accessibility. At the same time, student perspectives have been largely absent from much of the emerging discourse on AI in assessment, despite students being primary stakeholders. A podcast format was an authentic way to capture student voice in real time - through student-led research, scripting and hosting - while also creating a resource intended to inform and inspire staff as they rethink assessment design in an AI-shaped environment.

The project was designed to create a practical, student-driven space for thoughtful discussion about assessment in an AI-shaped context, with the explicit intention of amplifying student perspectives in institutional conversations about fair and effective assessment design. Each episode focuses on a different assessment format (lab reports, individual assignments, group projects, closed-book exams, reflective assignments, and online assessments), enabling the series to address AI-related opportunities and concerns.

Student participation was recruited through a structured competition, with groups of 4-5 students invited to apply via an expression of interest at the start of the Spring term 2024. Groups were supported through a series of seminars delivered by industry professionals on podcast content creation/production and the future of AI, alongside ad hoc training in audio production ahead of recording. Each student team then researched, scripted, and hosted one episode aligned to an assigned assessment type, with clear roles encouraged within groups (for example, editor, scriptwriter, host, researcher, and production coordinator), and a monetary prize offered as an incentive for participation.

Some quotes from student episodes:

- “I have this paranoia that... other students may be cheating.”
- “I wouldn’t even consider it cheating because everyone else is doing it.”
- “There is definitely a lack of understanding... of how much AI-use constitutes plagiarism.”
- “I’ve started to rely on it a bit too much... I’ve seen myself become lazier.”
- “If your policy is that students can’t use AI... you’re putting the honest students at a disadvantage.”

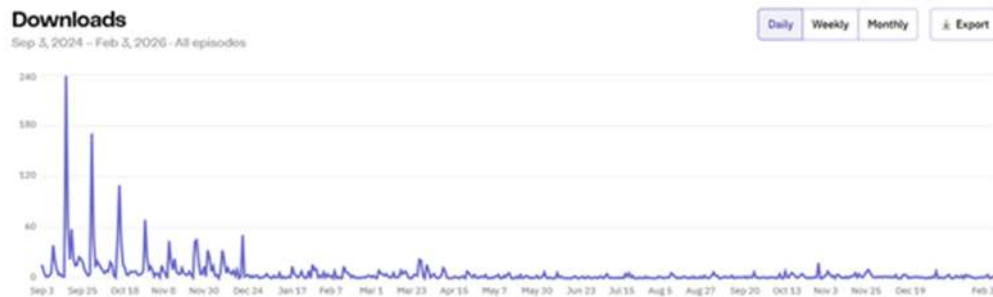
#### **Impact/Outcomes:**

The project’s external reach was evidenced by an invitation to contribute a keynote session at the [Assessment Horizons conference hosted at Cambridge University](#) on 29<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> April 2025. This keynote, delivered by Amy Lawrence, Mairead O’Reilly and Jennifer Keenahan, brought student perspectives on generative AI and assessment into an international professional forum of teachers, learners, policymakers and assessment practitioners.

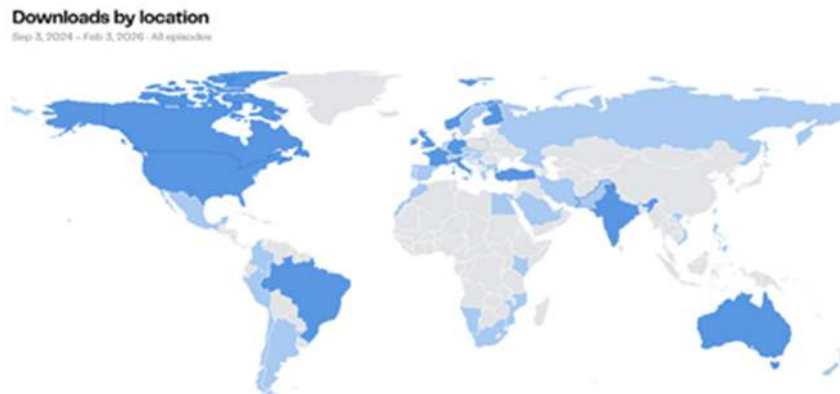
The team was also invited to contribute to a [Royal Irish Academy Conference on 'The future of AI and education'](#) which took place on Tuesday 23 September 2025. Tara Cullinane, one of the student contributors, represented the student perspective on Panel 1, sharing insights on what effective AI literacy looks like in practice for learners and what supports are needed in teaching, learning and assessment. This engagement strengthened the project’s wider networks and positioned student voice as an essential input to national conversations on AI and education.

Another impact was the publication of the transcripts in a book entitled "[\*The Student Voice on AI and Assessment: Student insights on re-imagining educational evaluation in the age of Artificial Intelligence\*](#)" (first published in Ireland, December 2024). By translating the series into a structured written resource, the project created a tangible, accessible and durable artefact that can be shared, referenced, and reused across cohorts and contexts.

The diagram below shows how the overall listens (2000+) have been distributed over time. It's still gaining listeners - with 44 new downloads in the last 30 days.













Remarkably, only 60% of the 'listens' have been in Ireland, and the rest very much a global spread.



**Locations** Export

Search

Country	Downloads	% of total
 Ireland	1,722	59.5%
 United Kingdom	533	18.42%
 United States	147	5.08%
 India	60	2.07%
 Canada	59	2.04%
 Turkey	54	1.87%
 Brazil	41	1.42%
 Germany	37	1.28%
 France	30	1.04%
 Italy	30	1.04%

## CASE STUDY 2

**Title:** Global Opportunities for Access Students

**Theme:** Student Support

**Keywords:** Students, Accessibility, Universal Design, Study Abroad, Global Engagement

**Short Abstract:**

The Global Opportunities for Access Students initiative was led by UCD Global and supported by the UCD Access Professional Staff Partners Fund.

Aligned with the UCD Global Strategy (2021–2024) and European Commission targets, the project investigated student decision-making regarding international mobility—ranging from traditional year-long exchanges to short-term blended programmes. Following UCD's "University for All" framework, the study prioritized the voices of underrepresented students to refine institutional guidance. Funding also facilitated the recruitment of a UCD Access student as a research assistant.

A literature review and data collection phase highlighted significant disparities in global mobility. Current participants are often characterized by:

- High Privilege: Greater financial and "mobility capital."
- Demographics: Disproportionately younger, female, and high-achieving.

These findings suggest that traditional study abroad models remain inaccessible to a broad segment of the student body.

The second phase analysed the experiences of UCD Access students to develop inclusive strategies. The ultimate goal is to broaden participation and ensure international opportunities are accessible to students across all demographic backgrounds.

**Project Summary:**

Three focus groups of students were recruited by UCD ALL and UCD Global (Learning Abroad/Global Networks & Projects) comprised of:

- First year students

- Second or third year students who did not participate in mobility opportunities
- Third year Students who did participate in outbound mobility

Students were asked a range of questions during the focus groups to ascertain their level of interest in spending time abroad, their knowledge of the various types and modes of participation, how they learn about opportunities, concerns about spending time away from home and levels of support they require to make decisions prior to application. Focus group material was supplemented by an online survey and email contributions from students who could not attend focus groups.

#### **Impact/Outcomes:**

Qualitative data from open-ended responses was evaluated using thematic analysis. To ensure an objective exploration of the data and facilitate the emergence of new insights, an inductive approach was employed, whereby no pre-existing theoretical framework was used for coding.

The analysis identified three primary considerations influencing student decision-making regarding international mobility:

- **Financial Strategic Planning:** The necessity of identifying grant opportunities, projecting cost-of-living expenses, and mitigating the potential loss of domestic income during the period abroad.
- **Information Acquisition:** Challenges associated with navigating available opportunities and the requirement for bespoke, country-specific advisory services.
- **Logistical and Personal Welfare:** Practical concerns regarding the management of physical health and mental wellbeing while in a foreign environment.

Students identified five key areas to enhance the global mobility experience:

- 5) Timely and early information such as a campaign targeted at first year students.
- 5) Peer information capture to share the experiences of students who have participated previously and shared with students considering studying abroad. Students, particularly those with physical disabilities cited peer advice critical ahead of the application cycle.
- 5) A mechanism in which students could easily identify offices/units in which to discuss their ideas about studying abroad, such as individual mobility 'coaching'
- 5) More short-term opportunities such as summer schools or week long trips so that students could try study abroad before applying for a semester or year-long exchange.

- 5) Information on demand from a single source to avoid having to seek advice from UCD Access, UCD Global and various internal academic units on campus and relevant units off campus (such as SUSI, AHEAD, etc)

The project team has ratified the following action items:

- Integrated Collaboration: Foster closer integration between UCD Global and UCD Access to streamline communication and enhance the quality of advisory services regarding global opportunities.
- Targeted Engagement: Deliver "Lunch and Learn" information sessions specifically for Stage 2 undergraduate students identified via UCD ALL contact lists.
- Professional Development: Support the enrolment of two additional UCD Global staff members in the *Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Beyond the Classroom* Digital Badge programme to further embed inclusive practices within the project.
- Digital Resource Development: Develop a comprehensive digital brochure detailing the full UCD Global portfolio, including long-term, short-term, hybrid, and virtual mobilities, as well as summer programmes offered through UCD Volunteers Overseas and European University Alliance partners.

## CASE STUDY 3

**Title:** UCD FocusHub Pilot

**Theme:** Student Engagement

**Keywords:** Accessibility, Neurodiversity, Universal Design, Student Support

### Short Abstract:

UCD FocusHub -- a pilot project developed in response to the May 2024 report '[Making UCD A Neurodiversity-Friendly Campus](#)' – aims to enhance student focus, motivation and accountability with free, supervised, neuroinclusive weekly study sessions. It aims also at broader EDI-based goals of enhancing inclusion and belonging on campus, which furthermore contributes to UN sustainable development goals.

FocusHub was developed following a presentation at the 2023 Student Affairs Ireland Summer Seminar by DCU Occupational Therapist Susan Madigan. Its organisers in UCD also collaborated with ADHD Ireland (who run their own online FocusHub sessions for the general public) in developing the format of the sessions. It was finally launched by two Student Advisers during the 2024/2025 academic year. Since then, eight additional Student Advisers and UCD staff have joined the project to help facilitate sessions, book rooms and promote FocusHub on campus.

### Project Summary:

At its core, the project promotes healthy and productive study practices through guided Pomodoro study sessions in which body-doubling is a core element.

Body-doubling is a practice whereby two participants, aiming at productivity in perhaps separate tasks, sit and work side by side in a practice of mimicking each other's movements and holding each other accountable.

The Pomodoro technique involves working according to a timer: 20-25 minutes on, followed by a 5-minute break. These work sessions fit into the format of a FocusHub session as follows:

- **5 mins:** student participants and facilitator (a staff member) make and chat about their goals for the session. Reflection is encouraged; for example, participants may be asked "What specific work will, once completed, make you feel satisfied with the session?" or "Why is it important for you to complete this work?"
- **20-25 mins:** first focused work session (with timer on display)
- **5 mins:** break

- **20-25 mins:** second focused work session (with timer on display)  
[repeat once or twice more until]
- **final 5 mins:** The facilitator asks the participants to reflect on their work and goals. They are furthermore asked to fill out a feedback form, which helps FocusHub organisers to measure and enhance the success of the sessions.

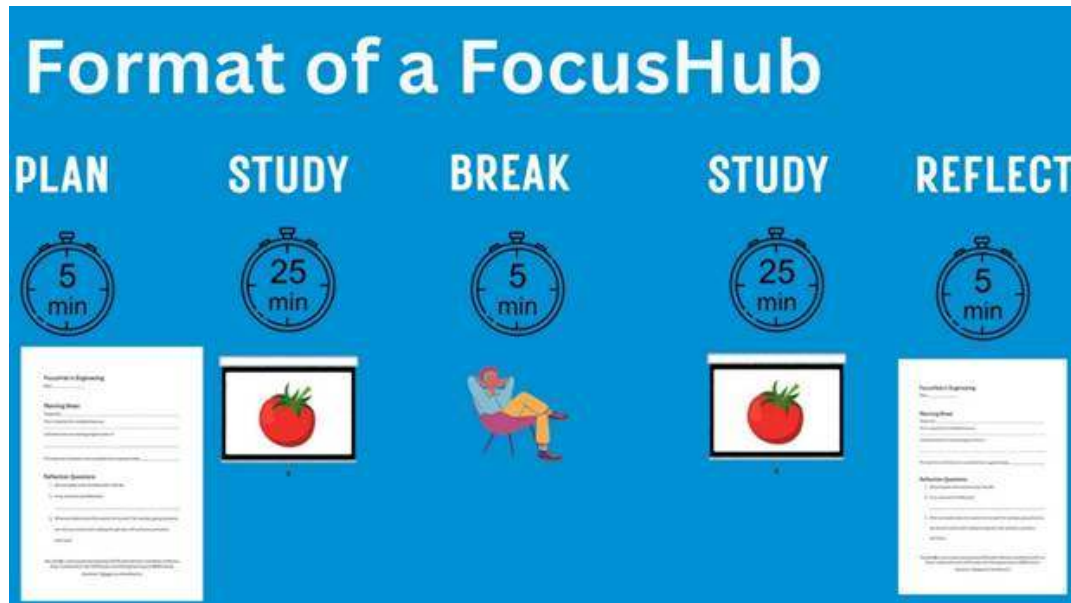


Figure 1: visual representation of a short FocusHub session

FocusHub sessions take place in a neuroinclusive study environment and are open to all UCD students. Organisers are highly selective about the spaces on campus that are booked for FocusHub sessions. Organisers prioritise rooms with natural light, space and moveable furniture.

This selective approach is the result of extensive collaboration within UCD: occupational therapists advised organisers on creating neuroinclusive spaces; having identified such spaces around campus, organisers collaborate with UCD Estates in order to book the room.

Collaboration is a hallmark of the FocusHub project. Aside from the above activities, the project has earned intellectual and emotional buy-in from several schools/units on campus, including staff in Access & Lifelong Learning, the EDI Neurodiversity Sub-group, and School/College offices across the university.

FocusHub encourages full participation through principles of [CAST Universal Design](#) (which organisers studied in UCD's Universal Design Beyond the Classroom course). Multiple methods are utilised, with both online and in-person sessions on offer.

FocusHub organisers have created [video directions](#) to assist students (especially those with dyspraxia) in finding each of the spaces used for FocusHub sessions.

UD principles are further implemented in the design, layout and wording of the promotional posters, sign-up form and associated documents.

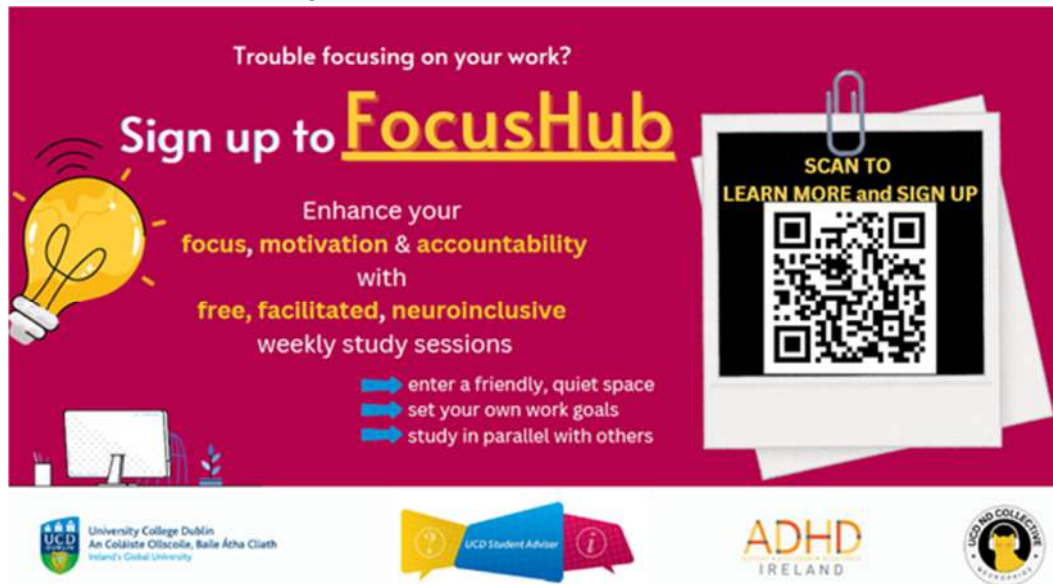


Figure 2: promotional poster for FocusHub (25/26 academic year)

FocusHub is advertised through Student Adviser team email newsletters, posters on campus, social media, word of mouth promotion by the UCD Occupational Therapist, and is offered to Schools and Colleges throughout UCD.

### Impact/Outcomes:

FocusHub remains a small project as of spring-26, but is set to expand and offer if not actual assistance to students then the assurances of a campus where belonging and inclusivity are promoted.

In the 2024/2025 academic year, approximately 120 students attended sessions and benefited two-fold: each student was able to get short-term work done, and also had the opportunity to reflect on and improve their long-term productivity techniques.

In 2025/2026 so far (i.e. as of February 2026), approximately 167 students have attended and enjoyed the same benefits.

In the same year so far, 285 students have responded to advertising for FocusHub, with uncountable others having seen it. Thus, another impact of FocusHub (beyond work and self-improvement) is the knowledge that UCD can be an inclusive learning environment. Research shows that students feel an enhanced sense of belonging in an environment which demonstrably embraces inclusive practices like FocusHub (see Bentrim EM & Henning GW, 2022, *The Impact of a Sense of Belonging in College*).