Assessment Framework:
Principles and Plan

Document owners:	Approved by:
Vice President for Learning & Teaching, and Head of Student Records & Examinations	Academic Board,16 June 2021

Contents

INTRODUCTION

Executive summary

This document sets out the framework (assessment principles and plan for assessment) that underpins the University's approach to supporting student success through assessment, regardless of the discipline or type of assessment. It addresses Priority 3, Action 13 of the University's *Academic Strategy 2018-22* "[a]n assessment policy will be developed".[1] Action 13 incorporates Actions 12, 14, 15, 16, illustrated below.

Initially developed to meet the ambitions of the *Academic Strategy,* this assessment framework has been refocused to align with and support the priority activities outlined in *UCC 2022 – Delivering a Connected University*[2]. It specifically supports Pillar 1 (Learning and Teaching), particularly Action 1.1.1 ("[a]ccelerate the actions in the Academic Strategy innovative assessment…") and Pillar 3 (Student Success).

This document describes not only the University's principles of assessment, but also sets out a plan or framework for assessment practice. Its objective is to guide and encourage staff and students. It is intentionally not a prescriptive policy.

Purpose and intent

The **purpose** of this document is:

- to establish and publish a university-level set of **guiding principles** for assessment of and feedback on student learning at UCC
- to create a **plan** of specific actions to enhance our assessment practice and approaches to assessment

The **intent** in developing and publishing this document is to promote greater clarity for students and staff on assessment purpose, principles and practices at UCC. Simultaneously, the university

---

[1] See https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/regsa/dpr/academicstrategy/AcademicStrategy2018-2022.pdf specifically, pp.20-21.

[2] See
https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/strategicplanning/UCC_2022_Delivering_a_Connected_University.pdf

recognises the need to remain sensitive to subject-specialist needs and professional and statutory body requirements. Individual disciplines are well placed to determine the best assessment types and practices for that discipline; the publication of university-level guiding principles and guidance on approaches to assessment will enhance transparency, coherency and adoption of best practice approaches for all engaged with assessment of student learning.

Supporting policies and guidelines will be developed to provide greater detail as to the underpinning operational, policy and systems requirements for each of the principles and priorities for change outlined below. Such changes will be made following established consultation and decision-making approaches.

Scope

The intended audience for the policy is academic and learning support staff, including those involved in the design, approval, application and review of learning opportunities. The framework will be freely available to all staff and students. Whilst the majority of the University's programmes are subject to the provisions of the Assessment Framework, some programmes, primarily related to the requirements of professional, statutory or regulatory bodies, may operate with approved variations to assessment approaches. All derogations from standard assessment approaches may only occur following approval from Academic Council.

This document is **effective from 16 June 2021** (the date on which it was approved by Academic Board).

This document should also be read in conjunction with the university's *Guide to Examinations and Assessment for Staff and Students* which contains much supplementary information on operations, roles, responsibilities and assessment practices.

Review, including context and influence of COVID-19

The Assessment Framework will be published on UCC's website and feedback from staff and students is welcomed and encouraged.

This is a long-term project (being the first Assessment Framework introduced at UCC) which requires on-going review and revision. Approval for any proposed revisions to this document will be sought from Academic Board.

This document draws on the extensive learning gained through the 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 academic years, when the COVID-19 pandemic forced a radical and rapid rethink of the way learning, teaching and assessment is designed, delivered and quantified. The forced transition to remote learning, teaching and assessment has provided invaluable technical and pedagogical upskilling, driven innovation, provided evidence as to the feasibility – or otherwise – of approaches and concepts initially considered under the Assessment Framework process. It demonstrated the practical, pedagogical, financial and cultural considerations that underpin engagement not only with learning and teaching but also with assessment as, for and of learning.

Experiences during the pandemic, from across the University have been collated and inform this document. They have provided the pathway towards tangible short-term goals and medium/longer-term ambitions, as set out below. The pandemic demonstrated the need for this document to act as a framework for assessment that will provide the context for discussion and exploration of best practice and innovation, while being reactive to prevailing circumstance and potential to exploit

opportunity as it presents. As the University transitions back towards greater in-person activity, this Assessment Framework will be the guide to maximising the knowledge, experience skills and expertise within the UCC community to best provide robust and beneficial assessment approaches that support our students in achieving their academic ambitions and realising their full potential.

This document is divided into three parts, to be read in conjunction with this Introduction section:

Part 1	Assessment Framework: Principles
Part 2:	Assessment Framework: Plan
Part 3:	Appendices:

- Appendix 1: internal enabling policies and other informing documentation
- Appendix 2: external/national regulations and guidance
- Appendix 3: glossary of terms, and list of supports available for staff and students

PART 1
Assessment Framework: Principles

Philosophy of assessment

For students to be successful in an evolving world, they need to demonstrate that they can critically analyse information, collate and interrogate information from diverse sources and generate solutions for real-world problems. Assessment, as a driver and evaluator of learning for each student, is, thus, central to the student experience and effective assessment practices are crucial to the achievement of the university's stated ambitions.

> *UCC's philosophy of assessment is that assessment should at all times be transformative*

Such an approach supports the development of critical, analytical and creative thinking skills; skills that are embedded in fairness and academic rigour. Our inclusive approach to assessment will integrate formative and summative assessment profiles that best demonstrate assessment for, as and of learning and harness the holistic power of integrated approaches. Student-centred, responsive and formative feedback will inform and shape learning, assisting students in conceptualising and pursuing their learning pathway[3]. A focus on the reciprocity of learning will also foster learning with and from students, influencing teaching approaches across the university. Self-directed learning and appropriate peer-assessment initiatives will be welcomed, in addition to the inclusion of the student voice in collaborative assessment design.[4] Experimentation with novel and creative forms of assessment is emphasised and marks a move away from overreliance on formal terminal written examinations.

> *Feedback on assessment performance is critical to student learning*

Feedback on assessment performance is critical to student learning. It fosters a growth mindset, supporting iterative progression in addition to achievement of deeper learning and is, thus, critical to the enhancement of learning and teaching design and practice. UCC is committed to delivering responsive, formative, student-centred feedback that enhances learning, shapes teaching and informs programme development.

---

[3] *UCC 2022*, Action 3.3.2.
[4] Ibid., action 3.3.1.

Alignment with other guiding values and other University strategies:

This Assessment Framework is predicated on the continued delivery in UCC of:

Excellence in *Learning*	Excellence in *Teaching*	Excellence in *Knowledge Generation and Dissemination*	Excellence in *Innovation*	Excellence in *Connectivity*
• Acquisition of Knowledge	• Delivery of Knowledge	• Research	• Student-led knowledge delivery, acquisition and generation	• Agile, sustainable and responsive connected curriculum, with global reach

The Assessment Framework is informed by the university's core values of **transparency, integrity, creativity, respect** as expressed in UCC's *Strategic Plan 2017-22*, and aligns with the core principle of the University's *Academic Strategy 2018-22* "*that student learning and research will be facilitated through a Connected Curriculum that aligns with demand, university priorities **and effective assessment practices**.*" It also seeks to cultivate in students the **intended graduate attributes**, as articulated in the *Academic Strategy,* of **respect, ambition, resilience** and **integrity**. 'Pillar One' ('Learning & Teaching') of the more recent *UCC 2022* urges for "*personalised education for every student*" to enable lifelong, life-wide learning.

Assessment Framework

Assessment is part of the learning ecosystem which enables a connected community to thrive and flourish; it encourages responsive teaching in and across unrestricted real and virtual spaces. Our focus on assessment of, for and as learning is grounded in:

Reciprocity of learning – **Fostering learning with and from students**	Integrating formative and summative assessment – the **holistic power of integrated approaches**	Providing room for **creativity within assessment approaches**	Driving **inclusion, collaboration, engagement** and **empowerment**	Integration of **assessment aims** with **Learning Outcomes** and the development of **Graduate Attributes**

Our approach to assessment will provide a modern, robust, transparent and reliable way to underpin and validate academic rigour, academic standards and inspire appropriate alternate pathways of learning. This Assessment Framework is the foundation upon which a responsive and proactive curriculum that meets current and emerging academic, economic and societal needs will be enabled.

Assessment principles

In addition to the general, foundational principle that **assessment must be reliable, robust and fair, and linked to intended learning outcomes and graduate attributes**, the university's Assessment Framework has _eight general principles_ which should inform and underpin assessment and feedback practices

These eight principles are adopted from and align with the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching & Learning's guidance for HEIs on principles of assessment and feedback:

1	**Assessment and feedback loads should be manageable for staff and students** • The assessment workload and timing should be manageable for students. A programme mapping exercise may help determine the appropriate load • Time allocated by staff to assessment design, correcting and provision of feedback must be manageable
2	**Assessment and feedback are critical to student learning and engagement, and students will be supported to become self-regulated learners** • Appropriate, constructive and timely feedback will be an integral part of the assessment process • Students will be enabled to develop their critical evaluation skills through tasks such as self and peer-review and by comparing their work with exemplars
3	**Assessment and feedback should be clear and understandable by staff and students** • Information about assessment including assessment purpose, criteria and marking schema will be explicit and transparent to students, staff and external examiners • The language of assessment will be accessible (e.g., terms such as "formative" and "summative" are explained to students), and expectations of staff and of students in specific assessment tasks is clear and explicit
4	**Decisions on assessment and feedback approaches should be developed at programme level** • Assessment should be designed at both programme and module levels to ensure load and timings are manageable for students, to achieve appropriate variety of assessment tasks, and to measure progression through the programme • The design and positioning of feedback within a programme is key to the integration of learning from different modules in ways that prepare students to apply their learning successfully within their lives and work
5	• **Assessment and feedback approaches should foster responsible partnership between staff and students** Assessment measures student learning according to professional academic judgement and quality, professional body and regulatory assurance frameworks. Students should at all times practice academic integrity, avoid academic misconduct and be aware of the consequences. Students should be open to fair criticism of work and act on the feedback provided. Staff and students can work together to encourage greater student

		involvement in appropriate aspects of assessment, e.g., sometimes providing some choice from a prescribed range of methods used to assess them
6		**Students should experience a diverse range of assessment methods and assessment must be inclusive, supporting a diverse learning community**
7		**Assessment and feedback should be enhanced through staff engaging in related professional development, including scholarship in this area** • Accredited and non-accredited professional development opportunities for teaching and assessment will be provided by central units such as CIRTL and CDE • Students' assessment literacy will also be developed through central units such as the Skills Centre
8		**Assessment and feedback should be supported by enabling policies**

PART 2
Assessment Framework: Plan

The Assessment Framework will focus on **key priority actions, supported by medium and longer-term initiatives**, to provide a rounded approach to improving or exploring the opportunities across key areas of assessment, specifically:
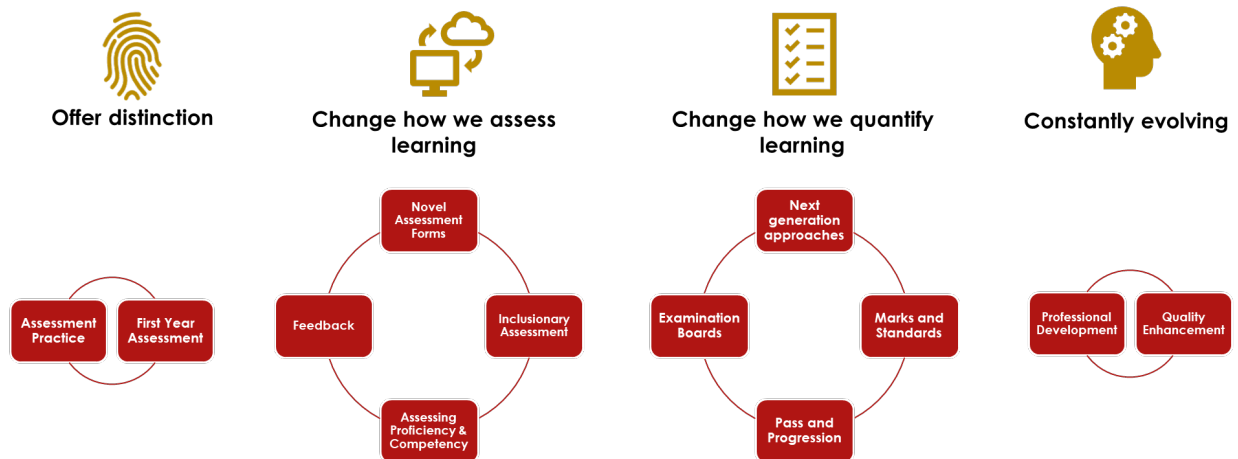
The following is a summary of the priority areas of consideration and proposed actions of the Assessment Framework, divided in to the four broad themes illustrated above:

	How we offer distinction	1. Assessment Practice & Systems 2. First Year Assessment
	How we assess learning	3. Novel Forms of Assessment 4. Student Feedback 5. Inclusive Assessment 6. Assessing Proficiency and Competency
	How we quantify learning	7. Marks and Standards 8. Pass and Progression 9. Examination Boards
	How we continually evolve	10. Quality Enhancement 11. Staff Development

How we offer *distinction*

To enable implementation of a more agile, responsive and enabling Assessment Framework underpinning the Academic Strategy and *UCC 2022*, a corresponding transformation of assessment practice, aligning with current and anticipated operational, policy and systems upgrade and development initiatives, will be explored.

1. Assessment Practice and Systems	
Priority Focus	**Medium/Longer Term Initiatives**
Examination Scheduling software	Facilitating increased participation by External Examiners in providing feedback on the alignment of programme learning outcomes with assessment of student learning
Framework for assessment equivalency by credit weighting	Strengthening detection of academic integrity breaches in all forms of assessment
Access to trends in marks distribution at module level and across multiple years	Explore the feasibility of a 'Fit to sit' examination policy
Groupwork Guidelines	Groupwork guidelines to be revised to provide the most appropriate resource for staff and students
Enhance the suite of academic integrity resources available to further inform and educate students and staff	

In recognition of the inherent challenges faced by students transitioning to their first year of tertiary education, UCC will tailor assessment approaches that support students during this critical transitionary period and encourage the development of the skills required for independent learning. UCC will build on the success of the UCC Skills Centre (https://www.ucc.ie/en/skillscentre/), enhancing training in the fundamental skills required for academic writing, critical thinking and transitioning towards self-reliant learning. Learning to learn and academic integrity will thus be supported so that students are aware of their preparedness, motivations and good practices in learning, thus supporting the presentation of their best selves on assessment.

2. Making First Year Assessment Distinctive	
Priority Focus	**Medium/Longer Term Initiatives**
Exploring the discipline-specific potential for 100% continuous assess in the first semester of first year	
Continued expansion of the activities delivered by the UCC Skills Centre, including the introduction of specific research initiatives in this space	

How we *assess* learning

Traditional assessment focus has led to a predominance of terminal, formal, written examinations. The diversity of learning opportunities supported by this Assessment Framework calls for a concomitant diversity in assessment types that encompass assessment for, as and of learning. Novel and creative forms of assessment will be encouraged throughout the University, building on the exemplary innovation and ingenuity generated during the periods of remote learning and assessment in the 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 academic years.

3. Novel Forms of Assessment	
Priority Focus	**Medium/Longer Term Initiatives**
Identify and collate best practice approaches to novel and creative forms of assessment that have been created across the University, providing a shared suite of resources in support of novel assessment formats	The opportunity for students to self-direct learning and act as partners in assessment design, grounded in open-inquiry, new knowledge creation, with the potential for peer- and self-assessment, will be explored
Support the transition to increasingly research-based, outward-looking and formative assessment formats	Enhancement of formative assessment with complimentary summative assessment will be encouraged to ensure students fully realise specified programme learning outcomes
Linking learning outcomes and graduate attributes across a programme of learning with assessment will be explored.	Explore the inclusion of students as partners in assessment design

Feedback on assessment performance is critical to student learning. It fosters a growth mindset, supporting iterative progression in addition to achievement of deeper learning and is, thus, critical to the enhancement of learning and teaching design and practice. UCC is committed to delivering responsive, formative, student-centred feedback that enhances learning, shapes teaching and informs programme development. Varied means of providing feedback, such as written, audio, video, group-based or tutorials, will support provision of an explanation of the mark awarded with reference to learning outcomes and the marking criteria or broader learning opportunities for a specific cohort. The challenges inherent in providing meaningful feedback are recognised; supportive structures will be provided to enhance the opportunity for the provision of feedback to students within acceptable limits of application.

4. Feedback	
Priority Focus	**Medium/Longer Term Initiatives**
Development of guidelines for the delivery of timely, clear, formative feedback on all forms of assessment, to ensure students can	Defining a Feedback culture – Developing initiatives and resources that support feedback

identify where they are succeeding and where improvement/development is required	literacy and provide guidelines for staff and students on best practice approaches

Equality, diversity and inclusion is inherent in teaching and assessment practice across UCC, with students bringing a divergency of approach to learning across all disciplines. In recognition of this, UCC will build on the established foundation of diversity in learning and teaching currently employed to strengthen focus on facilitating diversity in assessment practice – from design and implementation to evaluation.

5. Inclusive Assessment	
Priority Focus	**Medium/Longer Term Initiatives**
Encourage diversity of assessment to support all learner types	Encourage diversity of assessment and expand commitments to the universal design of learning
Build on current practice to develop a more comprehensive *Reasonable Accommodations* policy	Explore limited provision of individualised assessment method to support all types of learners demonstrate their learning

Not all assessment types are readily moderated by examiners, particularly remotely-located External Examiners. Such assessment types include those interrogating professional and practical competencies, proficiency in practice, performance and other applied demonstrations of discipline-specific learning and achievement.

6. Assessing Proficiency and Competency	
Priority Focus	**Medium/Longer Term Initiatives**
Development of guidelines for proficiency/competency-based skill assessment (e.g., Oral, OSCE, performance, etc.) which cannot easily be moderated	Development of clear assessment rubrics in the assessment profile of research/project modules, whereby multi-faceted research/project assessments align with representative, discipline-specific, outputs

How we *quantify* learning

The progressive development of programme-specific Marks and Standards has led to an unmanageable degree of variety, complexity and subjective interpretation in their application. This has led to significant confusion, delay in the determination of student judgements and error/unanticipated outcomes where the Marks and Standards have not been clear or reflective of activity on the ground. The process to rationalise Marks and Standards successfully piloted within the College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences will be expanded to encompass all programmes offered across the University.

7. Marks and Standards	
Priority Focus	**Medium/Longer Term Initiatives**
Build on activities to date to define a consolidated approach to major principles of academic regulations governing assessment across all programmes/disciplines, including defined options for calculation of honours, compensation, class rankings, etc.	Development of a Web-based workflow, incorporating selection from approved options where such options are allowable, to support the development of Marks and Standards for new programmes
Derogations from established Marks and Standards will be approved by Academic Council's Academic Development and Standards Committee (ADSC)	Development of robust, web-based, workflow and approval processes to facilitate those occasional valid requests for derogation from the established Marks and Standards

There are currently a multitude of methods used to calculate pass and progression through UCC programmes, however, these methods do not incorporate the flexibility required to support the learner-centred approach envisaged by the Academic Strategy.

To create flexibility in modes of progression, while also maintaining discipline-specific integrity, pass and progression rules will be rationalised and revised to provide a framework for support of all student learner types in achieving their potential.

8. Pass and Progression	
Priority Focus	**Medium/Longer Term Initiatives**
Benchmarking UCC against best practice in year-on-year progression approaches	Investigation of non-traditional progression through a programme of study where feasible, specifically accelerated progression, carrying failed modules, stacking of additional credit-bearing activities (e.g., microcredentials), etc.

Consideration as to whether introduction of a programme threshold to allow progression to the Supplemental Examination would best serve student learning	Developing the facility for students to easily access data regarding their progress through a programme of study

Examination Boards provide a platform to present the individual learning achieved by a student and an opportunity for the University to review and verify the quality and standards of an academic programme. The approval of marks achieved by students by means of an Examination Board will be retained. The learnings achieved from the highly successful move to a virtual format in the 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 academic years will be used as a basis to (i) further develop the potential arising from blended in-person or fully virtual Examination Boards and (ii) fully exploit this platform to ensure best practice approaches in quality assurance and delivery of this vital and core function.

9. Examination Boards	
Priority Focus	**Medium/Longer Term Initiatives**
Facilitating greater connectivity with External Examiners to support in person and virtual input at module- and programme-level Examination Boards	On the consolidation of Marks and Standards, the potential for anonymous Examination Boards will be explored, cognisant of the need to ensure students with, for example, mitigating or other circumstances are considered appropriately
Building on the success of the remote Examination Board process to accommodate a future blended in-person/remote approach	
Development of easily accessible data to highlight trends/other relevant information for Examination Boards and External Examiners and provide for traceability of decision making and mark changes	

How we *evolve*

A major objective of this Assessment Framework is to ensure that assessment is aligned in an effective and visible way with module and programme learning outcomes and with graduate values and attributes. In this way, assessment and feedback will be used to empower students to become self-regulated lifelong and life-wide learners. This ambition anticipates the introduction of a process of regular programmatic review of awards.

10. Quality Enhancement	
Priority Focus	**Medium/Longer Term Initiatives**
Embed a proposed programme assessment strategy and its alignment with module and programme learning outcomes in the programme approval process	A published assessment matrix to be included in programme approval documentation to support reasonable distribution of assessment (type and deadline) across a programme
Inclusion of commentary by External Examiners in their reports on the alignment of assessment with module- and programme-level learning outcomes	Review of 5 credit and 10 credit modules during the programme approval/review process, providing the best profile to enable students to engage deeply in inquiry and research-led study and also to best showcase learning achievements
Development of guidelines for assessment and appropriate credit weighting of placement modules	Development of guidelines to support consistency of assessment requirements across modules of comparable credit weighting
Further resources and training - for External Examiners, new academic staff and Chairs of Examination Boards - on academic policies and procedures will be developed by the Office of the Registrar and VPL&T	Introduction of *Assessment Champions* to assist in the programmatic review of assessment

Good practice in assessment is an integrated aspect of all levels of teaching and learning qualifications in UCC. Staff engaging with these programmes undertake a critique of their own learning and teaching practice to support development of assessment that is authentic to the discipline/profession, based on their disciplinary/professional expertise and informed by student feedback.

Alumni of these programmes have developed the capacity to reflect on assessment design and enactment, and are, therefore, potential change-agents for implementing different forms of assessment, authentic to, and appropriate for, differing disciplinary and professional cultures. Alumni have the potential to feed back into ongoing professional development approaches for improving assessment across the university, e.g. *via* local level committees or CIRTL seminar series, with College and departmental support promoting curriculum change.

The development of assessment is specifically supported within UCC by CITRL (www.ucc.ie/en/cirtl/) and CDE (https://www.ucc.ie/en/digital-ed/) and CIRTL will showcase examples of good practice case studies and approaches in discipline-specific and assessment practice more broadly.

11. Staff Development	
Priority Focus	**Medium/Longer Term Initiatives**
Build on established initiatives for the professional development of staff who teach in the areas of assessment design and implementation	Development of assessment rubrics at disciplinary and professional programme level to guide authentic assessment

Future focus

Like many aspects of academic life, assessment practice is dynamic and constantly evolving. Thus, this strategy will react to a changing environment to ensure best practice approaches are continually identified and implemented. This would include further investigation of established practices in other universities.

This document is intended to encourage discussion of assessment and feedback is encouraged. Ideas from staff and from students for enhancing this strategy should be emailed to vplearningandteaching@ucc.ie

Staff of OVPLT/CDE/SREO have designed and continue to develop and enhance an 'Assessment Hub' webpage which contains information and guidance on assessment design and delivery from the practicalities to the pedagogy. Suggestions for additional content and other constructive feedback on https://www.ucc.ie/en/keep-teaching/assessmenthub/ should be emailed to cde@ucc.ie

PART 3
Appendices

Appendix 1: Internal enabling policies; plus other informing documentation

Existing policies:

- Guide to Examinations and Assessment for Staff and Students
- Plagiarism Policy
- Examinations Appeals, Mitigation and Rechecks Procedures
- Marks and Standards
- Designing, Delivering and Assessing Groupwork Policy
- Records Management Policy

Policies in development:

- Reasonable Accommodations Policy and Framework
- Guidelines for Staff and Students on Giving, Receiving and Managing Feedback on Assessment
- More to follow – see Part 2

Appendix 2: External/national regulations and guidance

- NUI Grade Descriptors
- National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching & Learning – assessment resources

Appendix 3: glossary of terms

Note: these terms apply as they are used in this document and they are not intended to be definitive or prescriptive.

Term	Definition
Assessment	A coursework assignment or examination (practical/oral/performative/written etc.) which evaluates student learning and performance against specific learning outcomes and assessment criteria. Assessments can be either formative or summative.
Assessment marking schema/rubrics	A rubric is a scoring tool that explicitly represents the performance expectations for an assignment or piece of work. A rubric divides the assigned work into component parts and provides clear descriptions of the characteristics of the work associated with each component, at varying levels of mastery. Rubrics can be used for a wide array of assignments: papers, projects, oral presentations, artistic

	performances, group projects, etc. Rubrics can be used as scoring or grading guides and/or to provide formative feedback. CIRTL (see "list of supports" below) provides staff development opportunities in designing and utilising rubrics.
Anonymous marking	Anonymous marking is where students' work is marked without the marker having access to the students' names. Some assessment tasks cannot be anonymously marked, for example artistic performances, the production of artefacts, clinical skills proficiency etc., or in cases where the student is registered with the Disability Support Service and where it is documented that markers must be aware of same when grading the work.
Academic integrity	An academic offence is where a student commits any act which is intended to evade and undermine the university's processes for rigorous and fair assessment. Academic offences include plagiarism, cheating, collusion, copying work and reuse of your own work, among others.
Appeal	A student is entitled, under specific and limited grounds, to appeal the results of an examination or assessment. More information is available at https://www.ucc.ie/en/exams/
Examinations Boards	Staff and students can access information on how local-level (e.g. Department/School) and university-level Examinations Boards operate in section 14 of the Guide to Examinations and Assessment for Staff and Students 2020
External Examiner	The role of the External Examiner is to assure academic standards and advise on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. They are formally appointed by the Senate of the National University of Ireland. Full detail on the roles and duties of the External Examiner are outlined in the Guidelines for External Examiners: https://www.ucc.ie/en/academicsecretariat/externs/
Feedback	Comments (oral, written etc.) given to students either about their performance and progress to support their learning and academic development.
Formative assessment	An assessment which is designed to be developmental and supportive and which usually concentrates on helping a student to improve rather than on what mark a piece of work deserves.
Grade Descriptors	Describe in broad terms the typical performance required to achieve a particular mark or degree class, and are linked to assessment criteria. The NUI publishes generic grade descriptors as a reference point or benchmark in establishing specific course, subject or assignment related criteria and descriptors (see Appendix 2 for details).
Learning Outcomes	Statements of what a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after a completion of a process of learning (e.g., module and programme).

Marks & Standards	Regulations governing assessment for each year of each programme can be found in the "Marks and Standards" document for the relevant College or School, all available at the following link: https://www.ucc.ie/admin/registrar/marksandstandards/
Plagiarism	Plagiarism is when a student intentionally or unintentionally presents another person's work as their own, without properly acknowledging the source, with or without the creator's permission. Plagiarism is an assessment offence that carries potentially serious consequences for students found in breach of UCC's Plagiarism Policy (see Appendix 1).
Summative assessment	An assessment which is designed to evaluate the standard of a student's work and give a grade that reflects level of achievement. Summative assessments are always given a mark which is included in the calculation of a student's end of year result.
Turnitin	UCC's online plagiarism prevention service uses 'Turnitin' and is integrated with UCC Canvas. It operates by checking submitted work against online internet sources and previously submitted work. Turnitin also allows students to peer review work, using a feature called Peermark.

Appendix 4: List of supports available for staff and students

The table below is not intended to be an exhaustive list of supports for staff and students involved in assessment activity, but a sample of some of the main supports available).

Name	Function
Academic Council standing committees (Learning & Teaching; Academic Development and Standards; Academic Staff Development Committee)	Fora for staff and student representatives: information sharing; feedback; policy generation etc. Details on the committees' functions and memberships can be found at https://www.ucc.ie/en/academicgov/secretary/council/#committees
Academic Policy and Document Portal	Repository of UCC's academic policies, maintained by the office of Academic Affairs and Governance https://www.ucc.ie/en/academicgov/policies/
Assessment Hub	Webpage maintained by CDE staff, containing information on the practicalities of assessment (such as lists of key dates and policies) and guidance on assessment design and delivery https://www.ucc.ie/en/keep-teaching/assessmenthub/
Audio-Visual Media Services (AVMS)	Provides technical support with some technologies associated with teaching, learning and assessment e.g. lecture recording software such as Panopto https://www.ucc.ie/en/avms/

The Centre for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning (CIRTL)	CIRTL supports staff and students who are engaged in teaching and assessment. CIRTL provides accredited and informal professional development opportunities in a range of areas including assessment design. https://www.ucc.ie/en/cirtl/
Centre for Digital Education (CDE)	CDE provides training sessions and 1:1 consultations for staff in all aspects of digital education including how and where to deliver online assessments. https://www.ucc.ie/en/digital-ed/
Learning Technologies Unit (LTU)	LTU is part of IT Services and while it works closely with CDE, is a separate unit. LTU provides access to and technical assistance with Canvas and Turnitin. https://www.ucc.ie/en/ltu/
National Forum for the Enhancement of Learning & Teaching ('the National Forum')	The HEA-funded national body responsible for leading and advising on the enhancement of teaching, learning and assessment in the Irish higher education landscape. Its website contains sections on assessment and assessment-themed events such as workshops https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/
Skills Centre	The Skills Centre is student-facing, and delivers training and developmental opportunities for students on aspects of academic study and learning, including academic integrity matters such as referencing and avoiding unintended plagiarism. https://www.ucc.ie/en/skillscentre/
Student Records and Examinations Office (SREO)	Assessment-related information, policies, procedures, forms, etc. for staff and students https://www.ucc.ie/en/records-exams/
Students' Union Education Officer	Students may wish to contact the Education Officer and/or refer to the relevant sections of the Students' Union website which contains some relevant information https://www.uccsu.ie/your-union/uccsu-executive/

Appendix 5: Consultation process

Date	Who/What
Q4 2019	An 'Assessment Strategy' Steering Group (SG) convened and drafted the first version of an Assessment Strategy. The SG included academics, professional services and Students' Union members. Students' Union representatives are full members of AC-LTC and AC-ADSC (see below).
07 January 2020	Joint workshop/meeting of Academic Council Learning & Teaching Committee (AC-LTC) and Academic Council Academic Development & Standards Committee (AC-ADSC) to discuss the first draft. Discussions informed the production of a revised first draft.
10 February 2020	Draft Assessment Strategy emailed to all Colleges, ACE and Library with request for feedback by 17 April 2020. Colleges/ACE invited to ask VPLT and Head of SREO to attend any relevant College-level committee/Assembly/Council etc.

27 February 2020	VPLT & Head of SREO attended CoMH Teaching and Curriculum Development Committee and presented on the draft Strategy. CoMH submitted further written feedback on 20.04.20.
11 March 2020	VPLT & Head of SREO scheduled to attend SEFS APCD Committee meeting but meeting was postponed.
20 March 2020	VPLT & Head of SREO attended CoBL Learning & Teaching Committee meeting via MS Teams. CoBL submitted further written feedback on15.04.20.
08 April 2020	CACSSS submitted written feedback on the first draft.
15 April 2020	Library submitted written feedback on the first draft.
22 April 2020	ACE submitted written feedback on the first draft.
24 April 2020	SEFS submitted written feedback on the first draft.
18 June 2020	VPLT and Head of SREO updated ALF. Decision, in context of pandemic, to decelerate the process of introducing an Assessment Strategy. Feedback on the first draft was used to inform a second/revised draft of the Assessment Strategy. Regular updates provided to AC-LTC.
24 November 2020	ACE + Colleges emailed with an update – version 2 will be circulated shortly, and request for attendance at College level committees/Councils to present version 2.
18 January 2021	Draft two of the Assessment Strategy circulated to ACE + 4 Colleges.
18 January 2021	VPLT and Head of SREO attended ACE Academic Standards Board. Written feedback received from ACE ASB on 9 April 2021.
01 February 2021	Emailed to members of AC ADSC for feedback.
09 February 2021	Emailed to members of AC L&T Committee for feedback.
16 February 2021	VPLT and Head of SREO attended SEFS College Council. Written feedback also submitted on 30.04.21.
19 March 2021	Written feedback received from CACSSS.
29 April 2021	Written feedback received from CoMH.