

ANNUAL REPORT

Quality Enhancement Committee

2018- 2019



UCC
University College Cork, Ireland
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

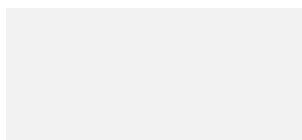
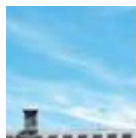


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Executive Summary

Section A

This report details the quality activities for the academic year 2018/19 up to January 2020. The report highlights ongoing work related to:

- Design of a methodology for Research Quality Review
- Irish Student Survey
- Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP)

Section B

Published Quality Review Reports for 2018/19 and details of Quality Review Reports in preparation are provided for information.

Recommendations

That the Governing Body approves this report and its publication on the University web site.

That the Governing Body refers this report for discussion and consideration of any actions to be taken to the Academic Council and other University bodies.

Section A: UCC Quality Activities

1. Design of Research Quality Review Methodology

Under the Qualifications and Quality Assurance Act 2012, each institution must 'establish procedures in writing for quality assurance for the purposes of establishing, maintaining and improving the quality of education, training, research and related services'.

QAI Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016) state that each institution 'is responsible for organizing an integrated system of quality assurance in relation to its research activities. These should build upon the peer review mechanisms widely employed in research funding and publication and incorporate relevant metrics.'

UCC's approach to this has been to conduct institution-wide Research Quality Review (RQR) exercises and the RQR Technical Group (henceforth TG), after due consideration of the alternatives, saw no reason to deviate from this.

The TG was established by the Quality Enhancement Committee (QEC), chaired by the President, in order to design the outline principles and approach for the next RQR. QEC agreed that the focus of the TG's work would align with both the UCC Research and Innovation Strategy with an emphasis on research quality enhancement, and with the UCC Academic Strategy with an emphasis on research-based education.

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

Objectives & methodology

Prevailing approaches in higher education for the review of research quality in a national and international context, and practices/expectations of funding agencies for the quality of research;

UCC's strategic context as a research-intensive university with a research-based curriculum at its core;

The University's commitment to enhancement as articulated in the University Strategy, the Research & Innovation Strategy and the Academic Strategy.

Technical attributes

The scope and reliability of available quantitative and qualitative data to underpin description, analysis and review of research quality;

Attributes of research quality and impact both internal and external;

Administrative and technical infrastructure inclusive of accessibility of financial information, reliability of IT platforms and document repositories.

Membership

Membership of the TG has been by nomination of President Patrick O'Shea, in his capacity as Chair of QEC.

- Prof Chris Williams (Head, CACSSS) – Chair
- Prof Anita Maguire (VPRI)
- Prof Paul McSweeney (VPLT)
- Dr Helena Buffery (CACSSS – QEC representative)

- Prof Alan Kelly (SEFS – QEC representative)
- Prof Sarah Culloty (SEFS – as Chair of ACRIC)
- Prof Mathias Beck (COBL – ACRIC)
- Prof Patricia Kearney (M&H – initially as College representative, subsequently as Chair of ACRIC)
- Dr Maria Cahill (School of Law – College representative)
- Dr Caitriona Ni Laoire (ISS21 – RICU representative)
- Prof Eoin O’Reilly (Tyndall – RICU representative)
- Dr Ger Culley (Director of IT Services)
- Cormac McSweeney (Finance)
- Eoghan O Carragáin (Library)
- Dr David O’Connell (OVPRI)
- Dr Niamh Connolly (President’s Office)
- Elizabeth Noonan (Director of Quality Enhancement)
- Education Officer, Students’ Union
- Postgraduate Student Officer, Students’ Union
- Deirdre O’Brien (QEU, Secretariat)

Process

The TG has met on seven occasions: 14 March 2019, 15 May 2019, 6 June 2019, 10 September 2019, 22 October 2019, 6 December 2019 and 20 January 2020. Initially the TG focused on scoping the objectives and parameters of the RQR, subsequently identifying the administrative and logistical infrastructure required as well as settling on a series of recommendations for the design of the process.

Reports on the TG’s progress were submitted to Academic Council on 28 June 2019, to the Academic Leadership Forum on 26 September 2019, and to ACRIC on 18 December 2019.

The final report of the Technical Group will be received by Quality Enhancement Committee at its meeting of 30th January 2020, after which a period of University-wide consultation will follow.

Overall Approach: Key Principles

The RQR is an objective evaluation of the quality of research, university-wide, involving the participation of all units. Operating in accordance with disciplinary norms it is based on expert peer review of research output using transparent indicators, both qualitative and quantitative, to support an evaluation of research quality.

The RQR methodology will take account of the evolving national and European contexts for research in higher education. It will align with open science developments including issues of research integrity and the use of responsible metrics for evaluation of research quality.

The TG agreed the following key principles as guiding its approach to the design of the next RQR:

- To recognize research excellence wherever it may be found, embodying a broad definition of eligible research outputs, guided by disciplinary practices and norms, as well as respecting the integrity and importance of inter- and trans-disciplinary research;
- To evaluate research quality based on disciplinary peer review and in accordance with standards that can be read globally, following international best practice;
- To evaluate research quality based on the overall research profile, achievements and strategy of the research unit;
- To apply a definition of research impact which encompasses its social, cultural, educational, economic and public dimensions;
- To ensure that the evaluation of research quality is equality-sensitive, and that the RQR assesses the extent to which research policies and practices are aligned with EDI principles;
- To ensure the transparency of the RQR process and of its outcomes;
- That RQR scoring (at all stages, including at overall panel level) be based on clear arithmetical principles;
- That there be consistency of practice across UCC and that all units be included in the RQR and assessed equally;
- That the results of the RQR have to have clear implications for resource allocation (see b. below);
- That there be a decoupling of assessment in the RQR from the individual academic, combined with strict confidentiality of assessment outcomes.
- That there be no conflict between the research priorities articulated by the RQR and those embedded in UCC's promotion criteria

Timetable

The current proposed timetable for the implementation of the RQR is as follows:

January 2020: TG reports to QEC

February – August 2020: Communication and finalisation phase

September 2020: Establishment of RQR Implementation Steering Group

September 2020 – August 2021: Pilot exercise, including opportunity to review and revise

September 2021 – December 2022: Preparations for review

January – July 2023: RQR 2023

August 2023 – May 2024: Reporting

2. Irish Student Survey

StudentSurvey.ie is a rebrand of the Irish Student Survey of Engagement¹. It was first conducted in 2013 and has been run in the spring of every year since. It consists of 67 questions, most of which can be grouped into various engagement indices, plus others which address broader issues of engagement. In addition, there were specific UCC questions.

The Student Survey tool looks at how engaged students are with learning and their learning environments. A total of nine factors feed into the data, together with a number of open ended questions which are used to reflect the broad strength of institutions. The metrics, which focus on student teaching and learning environment and student outcomes, have been designed to answer the questions that matter most about their experiences of higher education.

A final report of the results of the findings from an analysis of ISSE 2019 data for taught programmes, is presented for information in Appendix 1 to indicate the potential for this data to enrich the University's understanding of student engagement. The results of the survey reveal a positive experience for the majority of UCC undergraduates, with most students report a strong sense of belonging, and would recommend UCC to others, which are both strong indicators of a positive overall experience. Some key messages from the data include:

- Although the response rate is growing year by year, at 18% it is the lowest among the university sector.
- The most usual respondent is female, studying in the College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences, and in first year.
- In general index scores are higher for students in taught post graduate courses, then students in their final year, compared to first years. There are some exceptions, where students in their final year have higher scores.
- In general, the results for this year are consistent with results from previous years. In addition, they are broadly similar to the averages for the other universities who took part in the survey.
- An exception to this is the Collaborative Learning Index, which is lower than the average compared to other universities. This pattern is consistent with previous years. Within UCC there is evidence of higher scores in the College of Business and Law. Examples of good practice here could be a fruitful avenue to explore.

¹ It should be noted that following a recent rebrand, which was launched at the Student Success Symposium on 24th October 2019 along with the national report, ISSE will be referred to as Student Survey going forward.

Update on key actions to enable ISSE engagement in 2020

Feeding back to students the responses to their feedback and the outcomes of any meetings is a vital part of successfully closing the feedback loop. Additionally, as part of the work of the Survey Board:

- Student Survey project team representatives presented to the Academic Class representative's workshop around the work of the Survey Board and the planning for *Student Survey 2020*. The rationale for this activity is to promote a sense of dialogue between staff and students from the earliest stages.
- There will be a University Student Survey staff workshop taking place end-January with representatives from the Teaching and Learning community at UCC. This will facilitate engagement with the data and to ensure it is accessible and relevant to a wide range of staff groups and decision-making fora across the University.
- Summary reports utilising the disaggregated College data are currently being finalised and will be circulated to the Colleges by end-January to open discussion and explore the uses of the data within the local context.
- Further analysis of the new Postgraduate Research data will be completed in the coming weeks. Summary data can be found in appendix 2 for information.
- Following on from identification of the potential of a staff survey on student engagement as an interesting mechanism to distinguish UCC's interaction with the internal dialogue on Student Survey data, the Survey Board has partnered with our HR colleagues to devise a proof of concept to determine its practical potential.

3. Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP) European University Association

The QQI Institutional Review of UCC will take place in 2021. In preparation for this Review and in accordance with our Strategic Plan (2017-22) action “to achieve and maintain international accreditation” ..., President O’Shea commissioned a preparatory institutional accreditation exercise by the European University Association, through its Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP).

The stated mission of the IEP is to “support higher education institutions and systems in developing their strategic leadership and capacity to manage change through a process of voluntary institutional evaluations”.

IEP is listed on the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) and is a full member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA).

- IEP is based on Institutional Self-Evaluation and review through site visit by an **International Review Panel**.

- The International Review Panel assigned to UCC’s IEP is:

Professor Dr. Jurgen Kohler, Greifswald University, Germany (Chair)

Dr. Andree Sursock, Senior Advisor, European University Association (Team Coordinator)

Professor Jordi Villà Freixa, Universitat de Vic – Universitat Central de Catalunya, Spain

Professor David Vincent, previously Deputy Vice Chancellor, Keele University, UK

Mr Alexander Susnjar, Centre for Quality Assurance & Enhancement, Rijeka University, Croatia

- The process will involve two visits to campus in March Wednesday 25 March - Friday 27 March 2020 and in April Monday 27 April - Wednesday 29 April 2020;

- A Steering Group and a Self-Evaluation Report Drafting Group, both to be Chaired by Deputy President & Registrar have been established;

- A SWOT Workshop took place in early January to inform development and drafting of the institutional Self-Evaluation Report which will be submitted in mid-February 2020 to the IEP Panel;

- The preparation for Review and Self-Evaluation Report will be coordinated by the President's Office, including Quality Enhancement Unit, working closely with the Office of the Deputy President & Registrar.

4. International Projects

EMINENT Project, Haiti

The Kick-off Meeting for the EMINENT Erasmus+ Project took place on 26-27th February, 2019, in the University of Alicante. At the meeting Elizabeth Noonan presented on Workpackage 5 – Self-Assessment (SER) of Study Programmes - where she described the aims, summary of tasks, work methodology and deliverables.

As part of the scheduled activities of the EMINENT Project, a study visit by Haitian HEI representatives to partner universities in Europe took place. The delegation of approximately 15 x representatives, drawn from 5 x Haitian HEIs, comprised mainly Rectors of the partner universities in Haiti. As part of the European trip, the delegates from the Haitian institutions (many of which have been established in the last 10 years), visited both the Austrian Quality Assurance Agency (27-28th May, 2019) and UCC (30-31st May, 2019). Elizabeth Noonan and Sheila Ronan represented QEU in Vienna and, from there, travelled back with the Haitian and Austrian delegates for the UCC section of the visit. During the Cork visit, the delegates met UCC staff and gained further knowledge on programme design and evaluation, learning & teaching, employability services, adult learning as well as experiencing some of Cork's culture and sights.

At the end of November 2019, Elizabeth Noonan, Eleanor Fouhy (APAR) and Martin Howard (School of Languages, Literatures and Cultures) participated in a Training Event in Cuba. The purpose of the training was to assist the Haitian institutions involved in the EMINENT Project to pilot a process of programme self-evaluation. The week-long event involved extensive trainings by Elizabeth, Eleanor and Martin on principles of self-evaluation through group-work and practical application.

NQF-J Project, Jordan

2019 also marked the final year of the NQF-J Erasmus+ Project which finished in April. The Final Conferences in PSUT, Amman, Jordan took place from 5-6th March, 2019. Quality Enhancement was represented by Dr Kay Taaffe.

EQUAM Project, Latin America

QEU will also represent UCC as partners in a new Erasmus+ Project, called EQUAM-LA. QEU received news of the successful funding of the EQUAM Project in October 2019. The Kick-off Meeting for this project will take place in early 2020. The general aim of this project is to improve Quality Assurance in Latin America and to promote an understanding of European tools and standards for quality enhancement and recognition in the LA higher education system.

Section B: Quality Review Reports

Published Review Reports: 2018/2019

Cork University Business School Panel Report

List of Panel Members

Name	Position/Discipline	Institution
Mr Noel Brennan [Student Reviewer]	Medicine and Neuroscience	University College Cork
Ms Melanie Currie	Deputy Dean, Nottingham Business School	Nottingham Trent University
Ms Kate O'Brien	School Manager, College of Science, Engineering and Food Science	University College Cork
Professor Bob O'Keefe	Vice Principal and Dean of Management	Royal Holloway, University of London
Professor Metka Takavčič	Professor and Member of the Academic Unit for Management and Organisation	University of Ljubljana
Professor Helen Whelton [Chair]	Head, College of Medicine and Health	University College Cork
Dr Kay Taaffe [Secretariat Support]	Quality Enhancement Advisor	University College Cork

Site Visit

The site visit was conducted from 20-22 November 2018.

Context and Overview

Founded as the Faculty of Commerce, teaching and research in business at UCC has a long history dating back to the foundation of the University; however, the School, in its current structure, has only been in existence since December 2014. This review takes place in the context of the relatively recent formation of the Cork University Business School (CUBS) which brought together the existing individual Departments of Accounting, Finance & Information Systems; Economics; Food Business & Development;

and Management & Marketing. The Panel found that there is a demonstrable commitment to the creation and progression of CUBS as an integrated School comprising the former Departments.

Because of the alignment of the School's strategic plans with those of the University, the School enjoys and receives excellent support from the College and University for its strategic ambitions through, for example, support for international accreditation; internationalisation; and academic recruitment. In January 2017, following a number of years of association, University College Cork (UCC) formalised its strategic alliance with the Irish Management Institute (IMI), which has provided opportunities for the expansion of the School's programme offerings, particularly in industry-facing executive education.

Review Methodology

UCC provides a customised approach to the internal review process for academic areas which have professional accreditation, to allow alignment and to reduce duplication. For the purposes of the CUBS review, a customised approach was adopted to align the University's internal quality review with the School's AACSB² accreditation process in terms of documentation, sequencing, and standards. The AACSB standards were mapped against UCC's internal quality review standards and, with the exception of the AACSB standard relating to financial arrangements (which is not part of the UCC model), there is broad comparability between the rest of the standards and those guiding UCC's quality review process (see Appendix 2 for an outline of the mapping).

The composition of the Panel, which included international expert peers from AACSB accredited institutions, provided good coverage across the disciplines within CUBS and brought extensive experience in relation to professional accreditation for Business Schools. Internal reviewers provided knowledge of the institutional and organisational structures within the University. The Student Representative, who had considerable experience on School and College committees, ably represented the student perspective. Secretariat support from the Quality Enhancement Unit (QEU) was provided to the Peer Review Panel throughout, to facilitate the conduct of the review and to support the Review Panel in formulating and agreeing the final Panel Report.

Site Visit and Timetable

The Site Visit was well-organised and enabled consultation with key stakeholders. The Panel agreed to focus on the AACSB standards and ensured, at the outset, that the various stakeholder meetings addressed each of these standards. There was extensive engagement with School staff and good attendance at meetings; the round table format of the staff meeting worked particularly well – particularly given the large numbers in attendance. The Panel met with Programme Directors for most of the flagship programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate level; however, it was noted that the executive MBA, which would be considered a significant programme within the School's portfolio, was not represented at the meeting with Programme Directors.

The Self-Evaluation Process

Self-Evaluation Report (SER), SWOT Analysis and Benchmarking

Much of the documentation for the Panel was generated as part of the AACSB submissions. These included: an Initial Self-Evaluation Report (iSER), dated June 2017; an updated iSER, dated September 2018; and an Executive Summary outlining the School's recent history, structures and academic activities. In line with the University's internal process, a Good Practice Case Study was presented.

The School undertook a SWOT analysis in 2018 as part of their AACSB process, however, the detail and outcomes of that exercise were not explicit in the documentation. In future, the information provided to the Panel would benefit from the inclusion of some additional key data in relation to the School's core activities e.g., FTEs; student data; organisational chart etc. – these could be provided in the form of electronic links. The Panel appreciated that the School's Business Plan was made available on request and this did provide additional context.

The Panel held the strong opinion that the School needs to extend its international benchmarking to move beyond current points of reference. This is required to gain greater understanding of activity within internationally renowned Business Schools and to learn from international peers, competitors and aspirants.

Developments since last review

Because this was the School's first review in its current structure, and the focus was forward-looking in terms of building a coherent School structure, the Panel did not look at historical reports on the individual Departments.

Good Practice Case Study

The Panel commended the case studies, which gave an insight into the breadth and quality of the student learning experience, and highlighted excellent examples of interdisciplinarity within the School. The examples evidenced the staff's engagement with CIRTL³ programmes and their commitment to innovative approaches to learning and teaching. The QEU will liaise with the authors to have these Case Studies published on the QEU website.

Link for the full Panel Review Group Report:

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

School Computer Science and Information Technology Panel Report

List of Panel Members

Name	Position/Discipline	Institution
Professor Jean Bacon	Professor Emerita of Distributed Systems	University of Cambridge
Professor Danny Crookes	Professor Emeritus of Computer Science	Queen's University Belfast
Professor Ursula Kilkelly [Chair]	Head, College of Business and Law	University College Cork
Mr Jack Hickey [Student Reviewer]	Biological and Chemical Sciences II	University College Cork
Dr Martina Scallan	School of Microbiology	University College Cork
Dr Kay Taaffe [Secretariat Support]	Quality Enhancement Advisor	University College Cork

Site Visit

The site visit was conducted from 26-28 February 2019.

Context and Overview

Computer Science at UCC enjoys a proud lineage which can be traced back to George Boole, who laid the mathematical foundations for modern digital technology. Computer Science as a distinct Department in UCC was introduced in the late 1970s. Renamed as the School of Computer Science and Information Technology (CSIT), within the College of Science, Engineering and Food Science, the first Head of School was appointed in September 2018. The School is still in transition in terms of adopting School structures, regulations and operations, and anticipates that this process will be completed by mid-2019.

Methodology, Site Visit and Timetable

The Panel met over three days and the timetable enabled engagement with staff, students, stakeholders and senior management at School, College and University levels (see Appendix 1 for a copy of the timetable). The composition of the Panel ensured broad coverage with external Panel Members selected for their disciplinary expertise, while internal reviewers provided knowledge of the institutional and organisational structures within the University. All Review Panels at UCC include a Student

Representative as a full Panel Member and the student member ably represented peer interests. The Site Visit was well-organised with a very full schedule. The Panel was based mainly in the Western Gateway Building and had the opportunity to take a tour of the impressive CSIT facilities. Secretariat support from the Quality Enhancement Unit (QEU) was provided to the Peer Review Panel throughout, to facilitate the review process and to support the Review Panel in formulating and agreeing the final Panel Report. The Panel wishes to thank the staff and management of the School for their engagement with the review process before and during the Site Visit

Overall Analysis of Self-Evaluation Process

Self-Evaluation Report (SER)

A coordinating committee was established within the School to facilitate the self-evaluation process and to author the Self-Evaluation Report (SER). The self-evaluation process was very comprehensive and inclusive, and involved extensive engagement with staff, students and external stakeholders. The high quality of the presentation of the SER was complemented by the Panel and University senior management as an exemplar of good practice for other Units undergoing review.

SWOT Analysis

The SWOT analysis took place off-site over a half day and was externally facilitated. All staff were invited and attendance was high. Amongst the key strengths identified were: the state of the art building; effective leadership and collegiality; strong graduate employment; well-established programmes; and good student experience (which include high levels of industry engagement and work-placement). The SWOT acknowledges over-reliance on traditional methods of teaching, and slow adaptation to IT developments. Challenges included gender imbalance, high dependency on international postgraduate (PG) students, and cumbersome university processes for programme development.

Benchmarking

Benchmarking took place against Schools of Computer Science at UCD and the University of Aberdeen, the former being larger and the latter smaller than the School at UCC. There were similarities in terms of the structure of flagship programmes. The industrial placement in the undergraduate programmes emerged as a particular strength of the School of CSIT at UCC. A key aspect that differentiated UCD to UCC was the significant non-academic support for PG programmes: e.g. dedicated programme managers; less reliance on individually supervised projects; and use of blended learning for high demand modules.

Developments since last review

The School has actively followed up on recommendations from the 2010 review. These developments include the move to a School structure; addressing the quota and retention for the flagship programmes; developing student feedback processes; growing numbers on the MSc programmes; and increasing the student-staff ratio – this has changed from 14:1 to 22:1.

Good Practice Case Study

The Good Practice Case Study involved the Munster Programme Training, which exemplifies the School's external engagement. The project was set up to promote Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to primary and secondary school pupils and over 1,300 primary and secondary students have graduated from this programme. The School tracks the impact of the programme through student awards and progression to STEM/ICT programmes at third level. The Case Study was commended by the Panel and the QEU will engage with the School to publish it on their website.

Link for the full Panel Review Group Report:

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

Scoil Léann na Gaeilge Panel Report

List of Panel Members

Name	Position/Discipline	Institution
Dr Marian McCarthy (Chair)	Interim Vice-President for Teaching and Learning	University College Cork
Dr Orla Ní Dhubhghaill	School of Chemistry	University College Cork
Professor Gearóid Ó hAllmhúráin	Johnson Chair in Québec and Canadian Irish Studies	Concordia University Montreal, Canada
Professor Ruairí Ó hUiginn	Director, School of Celtic Studies	Dublin Institute of Advanced Studies
Professor Roibeard Ó Maolalaigh	Professor of Gaelic, Vice Principal and Head of the College of Arts	University of Glasgow, Scotland
Ms Grainne Ryan [Student Reviewer]	Sports Studies and Physical Education	University College Cork
Dr Kay Taaffe [Secretarial Support]	Quality Enhancement Advisor	University College Cork

Site-visit

The site visit was conducted from 12-14 February 2019.

Context

Scoil Léann na Gaeilge (the School of Irish Learning) was formed in 2008 and comprises three Departments: Roinn na Nua-Ghaeilge (Department of Irish Learning); Roinn an Bhéaloidis (Department of Folklore and Ethnology); and Roinn na Sean- agus na Meán-Ghaeilge (Department of Early and Medieval Irish). The School (formerly under the auspices of the individual Departments) has a long and august history, and globally, is recognised as a rich synergetic field of scholarly activity; the School and University should recognise and acknowledge the world-leading aspects of Scoil Léann na Gaeilge. The Panel was struck by the strong sense of affirmation for the Irish language and was of the opinion that there is an opportunity to strengthen the cultural identity of the University, and proactively embrace the significant opportunities to enhance its global reputation, by building on the highly successful initiatives of Scoil Léann na Gaeilge.

Review Methodology, Site Visit and Timetable

The Site Visit took place over three days. The timetable was comprehensive and enabled consultation with key stakeholders, including senior management of the University, students, and external stakeholders (see appendix 1 for a copy of the timetable). There was extensive engagement with the Head of School and with School staff. The Head of College, who was unavailable to meet with the Panel in person, provided a contextual written submission for consideration by the Panel, in response to the School's Self-Evaluation Report. The schedule facilitated a thoroughly engaging visit to the Cork Folklore Project in Shandon, which exemplifies the innovative external engagement of the School.

The Panel brought together a range of national and international expertise within the discrete fields of the School of Irish Learning. Internal reviewers provided knowledge of the institutional and organisational structures within the University. The Panel commented on the calibre of the students they met, as being excellent ambassadors for the School and the University; they particularly commended the Student Reviewer on the Panel for her insightful contributions, both in terms of representing student interests and her evident passion for the discipline. Secretariat support from the Quality Enhancement Unit (QEU) was provided to the Peer Review Panel throughout to facilitate the review process and to support the Review Panel in formulating and agreeing the final Panel Report. The Panel was satisfied that it had the opportunity, through the SER and the site-visit, to garner a sufficiently comprehensive understanding of the activity of the School to develop a set of commendations and recommendations which it is hoped will be enabling and empowering.

Overall Analysis of Self-Evaluation Process

Self-Evaluation Report (SER)

The introduction to the Self-Evaluation Report describes the School as “a federation of three departments”. This is borne out in the SER which comprised three separate Departmental self-evaluation reports, with an overview by the Head of School. The Panel acknowledges the distinctive and discrete (though cognate) areas of scholarship of the School and commended the comprehensiveness of the self-evaluation process undertaken by each Department – in particular, the many examples of imaginative and innovatory practice which could be held as exemplars for other Schools. However, the individualised reports posed some challenges for the Panel in that the unit of review was the School; consequently, while data and information were provided for each Department, it was not always easy to apply these metrics to the School – particularly given the lack of consistency in the information provided and the relative scales of different Departments. The SER raised some issues around consistency of structures and processes across the School – for example, in relation to administration, staff development, research, teaching etc. – and this was a consistent theme throughout the Site Visit.

SWOT Analysis and Benchmarking

A facilitated SWOT analysis took place in June 2018 and was inclusive of staff from all three Departments. The key strengths of the School include diversification in Teaching and Learning, excellent research and publications, and community engagement.

Each Department conducted its own benchmarking process. Roinn na Nua-Ghaeilge benchmarked with NUI Maynooth and identified some particular divergences: specifically, there are more undergraduate

(UG) and postgraduate (PG) programmes delivered at the School in UCC – and consequently, more modules (39 as opposed to 26 UG). The resources of Nua-Ghaeilge are therefore more “compressed” to provide this breadth of modules. Roinn na Sean- agus na Meán-Ghaeilge benchmarked with the Department of Celtic and Scottish Studies at the University of Edinburgh. There were some key similarities between the two Departments: both teach through the mediums of English and Gaelic; and both have comparable research and publishing profiles. The key issues emerging were lack of funding for sabbaticals and lack of dedicated space at the Department at UCC. Roinn an Bhéaloidis conducts on-going benchmarking as part of their work; the Department most comparable in Ireland is at UCD, where the National Folklore Collection is housed. The Department at UCC has recently developed its own archival and research resources and it is the only Department in the country delivering programmes in Folklore/Béaloideas in two languages.

Developments since last review

The Panel noted that considerable advancement had occurred in relation to assessment, and teaching and learning. However, some recommendations from the previous review had not been implemented. It became evident from speaking with staff that some of the same issues were again being raised – in particular some recommendations around School structures, space and appointments from the 2011 Panel Report had not been realised. The Panel noted that the 2015 Research Quality Review recommended the exploration of collaborative research possibilities; a cross-School research committee; funding and research space provision for PG students; removal of structural barriers / constraints to enable access to more modules across Departments; a structured rota system to facilitate sabbatical research leave.

In its deliberations, the Panel takes account of the special place of Irish, and the commitment to the development of Irish language and heritage as set out in the University’s Strategic Plan 2017 – 2022, *Independent Thinking Shared Ambition* (p. 14). Development of inter- Departmental structures would integrate the School as a whole and provide considerable opportunity for all three Departments to leverage their collective expertise, international profile and resources within and beyond the University. The Panel recognised the need for the School and the College to work together to embed a School culture taking a lead from existing College or University guidelines on the structures, rules and operation of Schools. Furthermore, to support the process of developing School structures and cohesion - which in turn will enable an environment in which the Irish language can flourish - the Panel recommends that, as central space becomes available, the School is prioritised to recognise the special status of Irish language and heritage within the University.

Good Practice Case Study

The Panel drew attention to internationally excellent and world-leading aspects of the activity of the School at UCC, and how it is a beacon for Gaelic studies internationally. This was borne out through a number of case studies of Good Practice (one from each Department), all of which demonstrated imaginative and innovative initiatives and practice. These included the Gaeltacht Semester (Nua-Ghaeilge), performative pedagogy and reflective practice (Béaloideas), and the highly valuable Celtic Digital Initiative (CDI) (Sean- agus na Meán-Ghaeilge) – a resource which is widely used across the world. The QEU will work with the School to publish a Good Practice Case Study.

Link for the Good Practice Case Study:

https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/qualityenhancementunit/goodpractice/ScoilL%C3%83%C2%A9annnaGaeilge_CaseStudy.pdf

Ionad Na Gaeilge Labhartha Panel Report

List of Panel Members

Name	Position/Discipline	Institution
Ms Nicole Ní Laodhcha [Student Reviewer]	MA Student – Modern Irish	University College Cork
Ms Clár Ní Bhuachalla	Irish Language Officer, Bord na Gaeilge	University College Dublin
Dr Triona Ní Shíocháin	School of Music and Theatre	University College Cork
Dr Rónán Ó Dubhghaill [Chair]	Vice-President for External Relations	University College Cork
Professor Boyd Robertson	Former Principal, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig	Ex. University of the Highlands and Islands (Scotland); Honorary Professor, Edinburgh University
Dr Kay Taaffe [Panel Secretariat]	Quality Enhancement Advisor	University College Cork

Site-visit

The site visit was conducted from 9-11 April 2019.

Overall Analysis

Ionad na Gaeilge Labhartha makes a unique contribution to the University and the wider community in relation to Irish language development, and it constitutes a leader in the fields of applied linguistics, language activism and language planning. It is evident to the Panel that the value of an t-Ionad to the overall mission and strategy of the University far exceeds any quantifiable cost. The breadth of the reach of an t-Ionad to such diverse communities – local, national and international – is striking and commendable. The Director spoke eloquently of a “corridor of Gaeltachtaí” from An Rinn in Co Waterford, through the Muscraí Gaeltacht to Corca Dhuibhne, with UCC centrally positioned along the route. A particularly important aspect therefore is an t-Ionad’s engagement with the Gaeltachtaí of Munster and the associated economic benefits and socio-cultural impact that accrue from such interaction with marginalised communities. The cooperation between an t-Ionad and Scoil Léann na Gaeilge was noted and should be encouraged; this should be continued into the future, while recognising the respective distinct missions of each of these units.

There was a palpable and vibrant team spirit amongst the staff cohort that demonstrated loyalty, collegiality and a strong commitment towards a single common purpose. The Panel was impressed by the passion and enthusiasm that the staff bring to bear, and their positive influence and strong advocacy, for the Irish language. The Panel acknowledges the very significant contribution and commitment of a busy Head of School & Department in undertaking extra responsibilities for the oversight of an t-Ionad during a hiatus period after the retirement of the Director in 2015, and in the intervening period during which the Director’s post has not been filled.

The physical offices of an t-Ionad and its central location is a positive asset to the work and presence of the unit on the University campus. The Panel noted a significant interest and commitment to the Irish language on the part of individuals within the Senior Management Team of the University – further expressed at institutional level in UCC’s Strategic Plan “Independent Thinking, Shared Ambition” – and the opportunity to leverage this good will and influence towards Irish language and culture with the support of UCC’s leadership team.

Methodology and Site Visit

The Site Visit for Ionad na Gaeilge Labhartha (IGL) took place over three days in April 2019. The timetable was comprehensive and enabled consultation with key stakeholders, including senior management of the University, students, and external stakeholders (see appendix 1 for a copy of the timetable). There was extensive engagement with the Professor of Modern Irish (who is also acting as Director of the Ionad), with Ionad staff, and with the Deputy President and Registrar.

The Panel brought together national and international peer expertise in the field of Gaelic and minority language learning. Internal reviewers provided knowledge of institutional and organisational structures within UCC and were invited on the basis of their interest in, and passion for, the Irish language. The student reviewer, who is immersed in the scholarship of Irish language, brought experience of Irish language learning both within UCC and externally to UCC. Secretariat support from the Quality Enhancement Unit (QEU) was provided to the Peer Review Panel throughout to facilitate the review process and to support the Review Panel in formulating and agreeing the final Panel Report.

Self-Evaluation Report (SER)

The SER was presented in Irish with an English translation. A key objective stated on p.17 is: “to promote the Irish Language among the UCC community, its surrounding community in the city and county, as well as supporting presentation and growth of the language in the Munster Gaeltacht regions”. The relationship with the Corca Dhuibhne Gaeltacht is identified in the SER – particularly with Dún Chíomháin, which is a UCC centre for Irish learning situated close to the town of Baile an Fheirtéaraigh, and managed by Ionad staff. The Ionad identified excellence in teaching and administration, international renown, public relations and presence in city and surrounding areas as key strengths. The fact that Irish is viewed favourably by UCC is acknowledged as an opportunity. Benchmarking was against Lárionad na Gaeilge (LG) at NUI Maynooth. A key difference is that IGL offers accredited modules; LG however, has developed Teastas Eorpach na Gaeilge (TEG) which is a standardised tool based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

Unit details including staff profile

Centrally located in the O’Rahilly Building, an t-Ionad has eleven staff, including three at Dún Chíomháin (two managers in Kerry are job-sharing). Seven staff combine teaching with other functions (administration, computer assisted learning (CAL), and translation). An t-Ionad also has a number of part-time teachers (5 – 10 variably). The SER states that “over half of UCC’s international student body use the services of an t-Ionad”. IGL uses Erasmus+ programmes to run courses in Spain and Germany. A number of staff are proficient in the adaptation of ICT for teaching and learning – with the recent developments at Dún Chíomháin providing an example of a “Next Generation Learning Space”.

Developments since last review

The Panel could not find any significant evidence that the recommendations of the previous review in 2011 had been implemented. The Panel suggests that an t-Ionad considers implementation of the recommendations of the previous review. It should, for example, undertake international benchmarking against an institution in Wales (as recommendation in the previous Panel Report).

Link for the full Panel Review Group Report:

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

Office of the Vice-President for Learning & Teaching Panel Report

List of Panel Members

Name	Position/Discipline	Institution
Dr Louise Crowley	Senior Lecturer	University College Cork
Professor Dr Daniel Halter	Vice President for University Development	Northwestern University of Applied Sciences and Arts, FHNW, Switzerland
Ms Beatrice McCarthy [Student Reviewer]	Final Year BSc (Government)	University College Cork
Dr Fiona Strawbridge	Head of Digital Education	University College London
Professor Chris Williams [Chair]	Head of the College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences	University College Cork
Professor Philip Winn	Research Professor of Neuroscience	University of Strathclyde
Dr Kay Taaffe [Panel Secretariat]	Quality Enhancement Unit	University College Cork

Site-visit

The site visit was conducted from 26-28 March 2019

Context and Overview

The Office of the Vice-President for Learning and Teaching (OVPLT – hitherto referred to as the Office) comprises six units or functions: Adult Continuing Learning (ACE); the UCC Language Centre; Centre for the Integration of Research, Teaching & Learning (CIRTL); Centre for CPD (CCPD); Centre for Digital Education (CDE); and the University Exams Appeals Unit (EAU). Four of these units come under the remit of this review, namely CIRTL, CDE, CCPD and EAU. ACE is undergoing a separate quality review in the coming months, and the Language Centre underwent a quality review in early 2018, an outcome of which was its integration into the OVPLT in December 2018. It was noted that the EAU is a recent addition to the portfolio having come under the Office’s remit as recently as 2018.

The review of the OVPLT is taking place during a period of transition, with a new Vice-President for Learning & Teaching (VPLT) in place since December 1st 2018. The self-evaluation process was initially led by the interim VPLT, who led the authorship of the Self-Evaluation Report (SER). In formulating this Report, the Panel wishes to situate the peer advice and recommendations arising from the review in the

context of the current transitional period of the OVPLT, to enable the key issues for strategy and capacity building for the Office to be addressed going forward.

Methodology, Site Visit and Timetable

The Panel met over three days and the timetable enabled comprehensive engagement with staff, students, stakeholders and senior University management (see Appendix 1 for a copy of the timetable). There was significant complementarity in the composition of the Panel which facilitated broad coverage of the key functions of the Office; external Panel Members were selected for their disciplinary expertise, while internal reviewers provided knowledge of the institutional and organisational structures within the University. All review panels at UCC include a Student Representative as a full Panel Member and the student member ably represented peer interests. The Panel was impressed by the enthusiasm and engagement of the undergraduate and postgraduate students they met during the Site Visit.

The Panel experienced a very welcoming atmosphere throughout the whole visit. The Panel met with a broad variety of stakeholders in what was a tight, full schedule. The schedule took in a tour of some of the Office's facilities which are across several locations of the campus. The Panel suggests that, for the future, more time is built in to the schedule for private Panel discussion and reflection between meetings. Secretariat support from the Quality Enhancement Unit (QEU) was provided to the Peer Review Panel throughout, to facilitate the review process and to support the Review Panel in formulating and agreeing the final Panel Report. The Panel wishes to thank the staff and management of the Office for their engagement with the review process before and during the Site Visit.

Overall Analysis of Self-Evaluation Process

Self-Evaluation Report (SER)

The presentation of the SER, with electronic clicks to appendices, was an innovative one and a useful approach for the presentation of substantial amounts of information and documentation which could be replicated for other reviews. The self-evaluation process was inclusive and a coordinating committee was established with representation across the four units involved in the review. A number of Office staff contributed to writing the SER and engagement with a range of stakeholders was evidenced through the qualitative data contained therein.

There was a lack of quantifiable data in the SER relating to the Office's impact. The Panel was of the opinion that there was an overreliance on completion figures for the Office's accredited programmes as a measure of impact, and the Office should look also to other metrics and mechanisms to measure impact and ensure agility into the future. There was a missed opportunity to conduct a University-wide survey with all staff which could have provided more concrete data on the numbers of current staff who hold CIRTL qualifications and/or engage with the OVPLT. The Panel noted an absence of student voice in the SER which was an omission of a key stakeholder group.

The SER provided considerable detail of the history of the development of the Office but it didn't make clear at the outset what the functions of the individual units were. This presented particular challenges for the external panel members who needed more clarity and explanation of the 'as is' structure and remit. There was a reliance on the strength of the past record, with unnecessary detail relating to the

history dating back beyond the period of the last period of review (2012), and a reluctance to look forward and outward where local and national strategic initiatives should be prominent.

SWOT Analysis

An externally facilitated SWOT analysis was held in September 2018 and was representative of all the units who were part of the Office at that time. The SWOT identified key strengths as: the Units' shared value system; connectivity and engagement across the University; and innovation and creativity. Challenges included insufficient resources and space; incoherent systems and processes in certain units; and a lack of specialist skills in certain areas, such as financial management, website maintenance, marketing and sales. The OVPLT continues to respond to the priorities of the Academic Strategy; there is an opportunity for the OVPLT to build on UCC's internationalisation objectives and to engage in "ground-breaking change initiatives and transitions at UCC",⁴ particularly in the light of the Academic Strategy.

Benchmarking

The benchmarking, referred to in SER as "organic" and desk-based was effective in identifying potential models to adopt into practice; TCD's Assessment Framework; UCD's Teaching Fellows to advance connectivity; and UCL in terms of the "Connected Curriculum", research-based education and learning spaces.

Good Practice Case Study

The Good Practice Case Study presented was entitled: *Learning Spaces: physical, virtual and metaphorical*. The Case Study content had already been presented as part of the SER. It left the Panel with the impression that there was a missed opportunity to show-case other areas of good practice within the Office. The QEU will work with the OVPLT to publish the case-study on their website.

Link for the Good Practice Case Study: Learning Spaces: physical, virtual and metaphorical

https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/qualityenhancementunit/goodpractice/OVPLT_QR_CaseStudy_Learning_Spaces.pdf

Link for the full Panel Review Group Report:

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

Adult Continuing Education Panel Report

List of Panel Members

Name	Position/Discipline	Institution
Dr Niamh Connolly	Director of Projects, President's Office	University College Cork
Mr John FitzGerald <i>[Chair]</i>	Director of Information Services & University Librarian	University College Cork
Dr Cliona Hannon	Director, Trinity Access 21	Trinity College Dublin
Mr Eamon Nash <i>[Student Reviewer]</i>	MSc in Voluntary and Community Sector Management	University College Cork
Ms. Christina Paulus	Head of Lifelong Learning	University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences (Vienna)
Professor Bernhard Schmidt- Hertha	Professor in Educational Science	Institute of Education, University of Münster (Switzerland)
Dr Kay Taaffe <i>[Secretariat Support]</i>	Quality Enhancement Advisor	University College Cork

Site-visit

The site visit was conducted from 30 April -2 May 2019.

Context and Overview

Review Context: Adult Continuing Education (ACE) reports to the Office of the Vice President for Learning & Teaching (OVPLT). The recent quality review of OVPLT included ACE in terms of the overall organisational structure; a separate review of ACE was undertaken to focus on its academic programme portfolio for adult and continuing education.

Overview of The Centre: ACE has a long history at UCC, having been founded over 70 years ago by the then President Alfred O'Rahilly, with a vision to provide adult and community-based educational services for people in Cork city and the region who might not otherwise have access to Higher Education (HE). ACE maintains a strong mission of social inclusion, through expanding access to and participation in Lifelong Learning (LLL). Partnership is a key mode of action by ACE, which has internal collaborations

across all four Colleges of the University and 52 outreach centres in 15 towns around Ireland. All ACE programmes⁵ are anchored within a relevant UCC academic school or department. Currently, approximately 1,770 ACE students currently take accredited programmes, with a further 930 on non-accredited programmes. ACE offers seven Springboard programmes, one online and one distance learning programme. It also has an international focus and an international student cohort through its online programmes (e.g. Autism Studies, Trauma Studies). ACE has a broad range of collaborative partnerships with other providers, industry, community, professional and statutory bodies. ACE has 29 core staff members and between 2,600 – 2,800 full-time and part-time students variably registered across its suite of programmes. ACE delivers programmes across Levels 6 to 9 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). It currently has 96 different cohorts of students; the majority of its delivery is at Certificate/Diploma (L6 – L7) and Higher Diploma levels (L8). Since 2001, 16,760 students⁶ have graduated from ACE programmes, with over 1,500 progressing from ACE to mainstream programmes within UCC.

Methodology, Site Visit and Timetable

The Panel met over three days and the timetable enabled comprehensive engagement with staff, students, internal and external stakeholders, and senior University management (see Appendix 1 for a copy of the timetable). There was significant complementarity in the composition of the Panel which facilitated broad coverage of the key functions of ACE; external Panel Members were selected for their expertise and experience in comparative units within Irish and European universities, while internal reviewers brought knowledge of institutional and organisational structures within UCC. All Review Panels at UCC include a Student Representative as a full Panel Member; the student representative brought experience as an adult learner, but also had considerable professional insight into community education.

The Site Visit was well organised with a full schedule and included a tour of the Centre's main offices at The Laurels on Western Road. Secretariat support from the Quality Enhancement Unit (QEU) was provided to the Peer Review Panel throughout, to facilitate the review process and to support the Review Panel in formulating and agreeing the final Panel Report. The Panel wishes to thank the staff and management of ACE for their engagement with the review process before and during the Site Visit. The excellent external engagement of ACE was evident throughout the process and a recurring theme of the meetings with various stakeholders. The Panel wishes to thank the management at UCC for their excellent preparation and hospitality throughout.

Overall Analysis of Self-Evaluation Process

Self-Evaluation Report (SER)

The Panel commended the extensive self-evaluation process engaged in by ACE as part of the quality review process and the comprehensiveness of the documentation which was presented. A coordinating committee was established to manage the self-evaluation process; the SWOT, which was externally facilitated, encapsulated a design-thinking approach (including Lightning Decision Making). The

⁵ The terms “programme” and “course” are used interchangeably to reflect the breadth of ACE’s offerings which incorporate a range of accredited and non-accredited programmes and courses

⁶ Student headcount

comprehensiveness and high standard of presentation of the SER was noted by the Panel; it provided appropriate detail on the activities of ACE, with clarity around the mission, delivery, partnership, staff development etc., along with data on students and programmes.

Benchmarking

Benchmarking was undertaken against University of Oxford and National University of Ireland Maynooth (NUIM). The key findings from the benchmarking with University of Oxford centred around the following themes: ACE as a centre for “intellectual incubation” (developing new areas of study, interdisciplinarity); ACE leveraging the UCC brand more; increasing online delivery and developing increased access through blended learning models.

NUIM’s Department of Adult and Community Education was selected for benchmarking by virtue of being “the only specialist academic department for the education of adults in Ireland”. The key learning from this benchmarking exercise was around fostering internal collaboration; cultivating staff development and cultivating ACE as a centre for scholarly assessment in the area of adult and continuing learning.

Developments since last review

The Panel noted significant advances within ACE since the last quality review in 2012 – 2013. These improvements spanned areas from financial to programme development which will be outlined below. The Panel noted that ACE now implements rigorous quality processes, which have led to good practices in relation to curriculum development, programme delivery and assessment.

Good Practice Case Study

The Case-Studies of Good Practice presented to the Panel were interesting and engaging, and demonstrated highly innovative practices; the Panel agreed that these transferable practices could be piloted for other initiatives across the University and beyond. Amongst the examples of good practice presented were the West Cork Dairy Farmers’ Project, which implemented group RPL (Recognition of Prior Learning) recognising the farmers’ acquired knowledge, skills and competences as evidenced through the Carbery Greener Dairy Farms Project (CGDF). This was an excellent example of ACE’s contribution to implementing and fulfilling the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). An example of partnership was demonstrated through a joint initiative with Mental Health Ireland in delivering a Certificate in Mental Health in the Community.

It was agreed that the QEU will work with colleagues in ACE with a view to publishing the Good Practice Case Studies on the QEU webpage.

Links for the Good Practice Case Studies:

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/qualityenhancementunit/goodpractice/ACEGoodPracticeCaseStudyCertMentalHealthintheCommunity.pdf>

Link for the full Panel Review Group Report:

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

Buildings and Estates Panel Report

List of Panel Members

Ms Beatrice McCarthy <i>(Student Reviewer)</i>	School of Arts and Celtic Studies Administrator UCC Society's Office (part-time)	University College Cork
Mr Paul Moriarty	Director of Student Experience	University College Cork
Mr Declan Daly	Deputy Chief Executive and Divisional Manager (South)	Cork County Council
Ms Nora Geary <i>(Chair)</i>	Corporate Secretary	University College Cork
Ms Stella A. Matko	Director of Estates	University of Strathclyde
Dr Ghazwa Alwani-Starr	Director of Property and Facilities Management	University of London
Dr Yvonne Clune <i>(Secretariat Support)</i>	Office for Academic Programme and regulations	University College Cork

Site-visit

The site visit was conducted from 21 – 23 May 2019.

Overall Context of the Unit

Buildings and Estates (B & E) is one of the largest service providers within the University in terms of staff headcount and annual budget. Reporting to the President, the Director of Buildings & Estates has operational responsibility for both the current and future development and maintenance of the University estate. Key to this is strategic planning and long-term development of the estate, both through implementation of the University's Masterplan⁷ and key acquisitions of estate for future expansion.

B & E consists of 6 distinctive areas (see summary in section 1.7 below). University College Cork is the smallest estate size of any University in Ireland, with related restraints on development within the main campus. The University continues to seek development opportunities to extend the existing campus. The total staff number within B & E is 128: 96 male and 32 female. Of these, 46 are security staff. 12% are due for retirement in the next 4 years, and a further 12% in the next 9 years (including 50% of the current Management Team). The University's high ratings and awards in a number of sustainable, Green university rankings is highly commendable, and it is evident that UCC is world-leading in this respect.

The Panel wishes to acknowledge the overall positive outcome of this review. In particular it draws attention to the integral role played by Buildings and Estates in maintaining and enhancing the fabric of the campus and the quality of the UCC experience for students, staff, stakeholders, visitors and the community. The work of the function, in leading and collaborating on strategic estates related projects (e.g. Green Campus, sustainability etc.) and the hard-work and dedication of its staff, both of which have been central to maintaining and enhancing the quality of the campus, which is loved by all, and delivers a welcoming, friendly atmosphere. Commitment to the University and to the B & E mission is exemplified

by the high level of engagement from all B & E staff and the Co-ordinating Committee in the self-evaluation process.

The Buildings and Estates staff are held in high regard across the University and amongst stakeholders and their open door policy is particularly appreciated. The warmth of the response of the students to all B & E staff, but in particular the Duty Officers, is striking. The Panel observed a strong sense of team, connectivity and support of each other. The Panel wishes to commend this excellent team, its resilience and empathy, and its key roles in making UCC what it is.

It is clear that a strong Health and Safety culture is embedded in Buildings and Estates. The critical role of B & E in the Emergency Response Team and their willingness to go *above and beyond* particularly in times of crises is acknowledged.

Methodology and Site Visit

The Panel met over three days and was based mainly in Tower Room 1. The Site Visit was well organised and although the schedule was full, adequate time was allowed for engagement with a wide range of stakeholders (see Appendix 1 for a copy of the timetable). The Site Visit incorporated a bus tour of some of the University estate and provided the Panel with an indication of the breadth of the physical estate under the remit of the function. Although time would not permit the tour to extend to more distant parts, the integration of the University estate with the community in both the city and county was commended. The investment by the University in obtaining, conserving and maintaining public access to historical buildings is impressive in light of the significant financial and time costs associated with such projects and is evidence of the integration of the University with the city and its surrounds. The tour was a broad overview of the University estate and external Panel Members would recommend that, in future, a visit to a number of selected buildings would be of benefit, to get a sense of the issues that were raised during the review, such as the varied and distributed nature of the University's estate and the associated issues with its management.

The Panel was most impressed with the large attendance and engagement in the workshop session with staff of Buildings and Estates on day 1 of the Site Visit. Staff engaged in a design thinking activity (Roses, Buds, Thorns) to facilitate active reflection and identification of positive (rose), potential (bud), or negative (thorn) aspects of communication (which had been identified as a common theme in earlier discussions with stakeholders and the SER). The Panel noted that the staff were well engaged in the session and contributed effectively to identifying issues that were in most cases common across the function. The camaraderie across the function was evident and was noted to be positive in regard to a common team spirit.

Panel Membership

In line with practice for international peer review, a Panel of national and international peer experts within the domain of Estates and Facilities Management was assembled to carry out the review (see Appendix 2 for Panel Member profiles). Internal reviewers provided knowledge of the institutional and organisational structures within the University, while the student reviewer brought valuable insights and perspectives on student issues. The entire Panel contributed to the production of the final Panel Report and commended the process for facilitating the Panel to use their experience in a constructive way which enabled structured feedback. Panel members noted that a clear vision of recommendations and commendations had emerged at the end of day two and that Panel discussion tested these outcomes and ensured Panel confidence around its conclusions. The Panel was unanimous in its commendations and recommendations and there was no discord. Secretariat support from the Office for Academic Programmes and Regulations (APAR) was provided to the Panel throughout the process, and this greatly facilitated the Panel in formulating and agreeing the final Review Report.

Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and SWOT analysis

A coordinating committee was established within the function to facilitate the self-evaluation process and to author the Self-Evaluation Report (SER). The self-evaluation process was very comprehensive and inclusive, and involved extensive engagement with stakeholders. The SER was well prepared, researched and wide-ranging and the high level of staff engagement in the SWOT analysis and report preparation is noteworthy.

Due to the large workforce and time constraints of different rotas, three SWOT analyses were undertaken in order to facilitate optimal staff engagement. The rich, positive and open outputs from the SWOT were reported verbatim and although informative to a certain extent, a more analytical approach to the outcomes of the SWOT process would have been welcome.

Benchmarking

Benchmarking was performed against National University of Ireland, Galway and Queens University Belfast. Dublin City University was benchmarked for sustainability only. The Panel noted that the benchmarking was highly focused and targeted. The benchmarking exercise would have benefitted from a summary analysis of the key lessons learned through the exercise and the potential for transference and adaptation of practices from the site visits. For future benchmarking exercises the Panel recommends that benchmarking to comparator institutions should focus on yielding comparative data that can inform KPIs and the strategic management of the function.

Comparison with the Russell Group showed UCC in a very good light with regard to efficiency in the context of staff/student ratios and reduced funding. It was noted that, by 2019, the maintenance budget had dropped significantly when compared with the 2009 budget, despite a growth of 30% in the estate. This trend was recognised by the Panel to be common across the HE sector, where prioritisation was regularly given to Capital spend for new build or large refurbishment projects at the expense of maintaining the Estate. The reduction in CO₂ emissions from 25,000 tonnes to 20,000 tonnes despite the increased size of the estate was highlighted as a significant achievement by the Panel and has resulted in UCC meeting its 2020 energy reduction targets in 2015. This was commended by the Panel. The University's Sustainably Strategy was noted to be an excellent document which unpinned a well-planned series of University wide initiatives, which were each being delivered with Annual Reports recording good progress.

Unit Organisation and Planning

Given the vast range of detailed services provided by the function, the strategic growth of the University coupled with ambitious plans for the University estate, ensuring the alignment of the units of B & E, along with strategic management and service delivery, is critical. Buildings and Estates consists of six main units outlined below.

1. The Office of the Director has overall responsibility for strategic planning, management of the University Estate, management of space, property management and budget. The Senior Management Team consists of the heads of all the other key functions. The Director is a member of UMTS, Risk Management, Space Sub-committee, Asset Naming, and meets with the President regularly.

2. The Buildings Office has responsibility for maintaining and upgrading the physical infrastructure included 177,965 m of buildings, 30 hectares of grounds and 120 buildings in 20 locations. Annually, the Buildings Unit responds to 10,000 maintenance requests, and 100 major upgrades projects.

3. The Capital Projects Office manages the capital development programme and the Commuter Plan.

4. The General Services Office delivers services 365 days per year that assist students, staff and visitors including: mail, car parking, cleaning, room bookings etc. along with management of services provided by external contractors. Staff include 46 security personnel (of which 9 are located in the Western Campus – see below) and external contracted security company.

5. The Western Campus Facilities Management has responsibility for the Brookfield and the Western Gateway buildings, with 9 General Services staff located in the Western Campus.

6. The Heritage Office occupies the role of University Curator with responsibility for the care and display of 9,000 items in the curatorial collection, including The Honan Trust.

Part 2 Findings of the Panel

Developments since last review

The Panel recognised the direction of travel in addressing and moving ahead with recommendations of the previous quality review in 2011 and noted that some progress had been achieved. Since the last review, processes for the management of the Helpdesk services had been advanced through the introduction of a Customer Relationship Management (CRM), extended opening hours and online query provision. In addition, a Building & Estates Newsletter has been introduced recently which was widely appreciated by colleagues across the University.

A number of issues that were identified in the previous quality report have however surfaced again in this review; for example, the issue of communications, both internally within the function and across the University, remain relevant. There remain some key strategic issues, which have again been identified by this Panel, which should receive priority; namely related to strategic planning, space management and allocation and project prioritisation.

The Panel acknowledges that the type, age and heritage of the buildings in the estate present a specific challenge with regard to the maintenance of the assets. Heritage buildings require additional support, plus specific skillsets in regard to their upkeep, which puts a strain on the maintenance budgets.

The off-site storage facility at Pouladuff houses a significant trove of University heritage and legacy, which is catalogued but not on display. Given the significant cultural and historical value of this collection, along with the potential of the historical buildings at UCC, there is a major opportunity for the University to exploit the benefits of its Heritage collection, by the preparation of a Heritage Conservation Plan, building on the 2003 Conservation Plan, and working in partnership with the Council, and with Academics stakeholders.

Link for the full Panel Review Group Report:

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

Thematic Review of Academic Decision-Making in UCC – Panel Report

List of Panel Members

Name	Position/Discipline	Institution
Dr Sinéad Critchley	Director of University Governance	University College Dublin
Mr Gerard Madill	International Education Consultant/Policy Advisor	Madill International Consulting (previously EUA/Universities Scotland)
Dr Esther Stiekema	Director of Policy	Utrecht University

Site-visit

The site visit was conducted from 2 – 4 October 2018.

Background

University College Cork has a long-standing commitment to outstanding research which is connected to learning, and to educating graduates who are locally and globally impactful. The university's Academic Strategy 2018–2022 sets out a range of priorities and actions designed to deliver an outstanding, student-centred teaching and learning experience, with a renewed, responsive and research-based curriculum at its core.

To achieve its goals, the university needs to ensure that appropriate policies and frameworks are in place to enable academic innovation. In its Academic Strategy 2018–2022 UCC specifies that reviewing and reforming academic decision-making is an important priority for the university.

In October 2018 a review panel visited University College Cork to assess the process of academic decision-making and the conduct of academic business within the university. The members of the review panel are listed in Appendix I. The review panel spoke with many staff and students involved in different stages of the academic decision-making process (see Appendix II). The review panel was provided with a Self-Assessment Report completed by the Offices of Academic Affairs & Registry, a staff survey on academic-decision making and a large volume of background documentation (see Appendix III).

The purpose of the review was to assess academic decision-making and the conduct of academic business at University, College, and School levels to ensure appropriate assurance and governance, and clarify roles and responsibilities, and streamline procedures. The self-assessment report listed a number of questions UCC wished the review panel to consider. The review panel focused on the question as to whether the University's organizational and decision-making structure is optimised for transparent academic policy making and the transaction of academic business, in other words whether it is effective and under sufficient control.

The members of the review panel were impressed by the open discussions in each of the sessions, and by the commitment and dedication of staff and students. The panel was also struck by the broad consensus within the university community that the current system of academic decision-making is

cumbersome and inefficient, despite the best efforts of all involved. The university seems to be at a pivotal time in its history, with many members of the community committed to modernising the academic governance system within the university, to increase levels of transparency, accountability and effectiveness.

The findings of the review panel are presented in the body of this report. Observations and recommendations which have been grouped under four key headings are based both on the documentation studied and on dialogue with staff and students. The recommendations have been framed in such a way as to indicate a way forward for UCC, rather than be unduly prescriptive in their level of detail. The review panel (or a nominee thereof) are willing to engage with the University through the Quality Enhancement Committee as appropriate, should the basis for or intent of any of the recommendations that follow require further clarification or contextualisation.

Observations

While the main focus of this review was on identifying opportunities for quality enhancement, it is important to reflect the review panels finding that the overarching culture, custom and practice at UCC are widely seen as collegiate, inclusive and building upon strong foundations. The observations that follow are grouped under four key headings to assist the reader in understanding the rationale for the recommendations that follow in the next section of this report.

Decision-making models

There is an almost universally held view that academic decision-making structures at UCC are complex and time-consuming, meaning that it can take an inordinately long time for academic decisions to be taken and for policies to be finalised and put in place. Concerns were raised that the cumbersome decision-making process can prevent the university from being agile enough to respond to opportunities, e.g. in relation to responding to external tenders for programme offerings, or conducting business efficiently, e.g. responding to student applications quickly enough.

The sheer number of committees and other groups meeting across UCC was a common theme arising in meetings with staff and students. Duplication of these complex structures at University and College level can lead to many staff and student representatives seeing the same policy papers multiple times in various settings.

Concern was expressed regarding the extent of scrutiny at higher levels (mostly Academic Council) of issues previously well considered by expert sub-committees as well as instances of decisions being revisited without reasonable grounds. The volume of routine business undertaken impinges upon Academic Council's ability to focus on strategic matters of interest to the academic community.

Both Governing Body and Academic Council appear to operate largely on the basis of consensus, with votes at either body reportedly extremely rare. This is however perceived by some staff to reflect a fear of making final decisions, manifested in decisions being delayed or referred back to another committee for re-consideration.

Several interlocutors reported a disconnect between academic decisions and resource allocation decisions. Some reported a lack of expertise in considering the resource implications of academic decisions, others were concerned that it simply was not clear whether or not resource implications were considered early enough in the decision-making process.

Some staff believe that there is a lack of transparency in the decision-making process and in particular in the appointment of committee chairs. There seems to be a blurring of the lines between consultation and decision-making, which may contribute to a perceived lack of trust.

A widely-reported concern was inconsistency in the recording and dissemination of decisions or policies, as well as significant delays in decisions or minutes of meetings being made available after meetings. This may simply be a result of the sheer volume of business currently conducted, combined with a lack of clarity as to when decisions become final.

While there have been previous attempts at devolution of responsibilities, specifically to Colleges, this is not generally perceived to have succeeded. Some have indicated that the process was not properly resourced or supported and that there was insufficient guidance as to how devolution was intended to operate. There is a widely-held view that operational matters relating to curriculum planning and delivery should be devolved to School level, with principle-level frameworks defined at university level.

There was wide agreement that College Councils are not working as they ought to, witnessed by very low attendances and a lack of engagement in particular by academic staff.

Despite broad levels of engagement with the quality review process, the review panel did note a certain level of disengagement from a number of staff who failed to attend scheduled meetings with the panel, some but not all of whom sent their apologies to the Quality Enhancement Unit at the last minute.

Institutional culture

The University's Strategic Plan for 2017-22 articulates as a goal the desire to 'implement an academic strategy to deliver an outstanding, student-centred teaching and learning experience...'. It is clear that the university is strongly committed to putting students at the centre of its academic mission.

Students are well represented on committees across the university (with the exception of UMT0) and are viewed as valued participants, although examples were cited where on occasion the attitudes of staff towards student representatives may be perceived as patronising or tokenistic. Equally there are 'student champions' in committee meetings who are supportive of and see the value of student engagement.

Indications are that there is a very positive relationship between the current leadership of the student union and university senior management, although the impression gained by the panel is that this relationship might be vulnerable to changes in personnel on either side of the equation. Some instances of a lack of consultation with student representatives over decisions which would significantly impact the student body, plus instances of decisions being announced by the university during the 'crossover' period between student union sabbatical officers might give the impression that students are not yet seen as full members of the university community.

There is a recognition in many quarters that UCC is emerging from a very difficult period for the Irish HE sector, particularly in relation to public funding and severe external restrictions on staff recruitment. This has led to increased emphasis on activities which generate income, perhaps to the detriment of resources for academic activities and some administrative and policy functions. Some also perceive an increase in 'managerialism' and/or in layers of governance and concomitant paperwork.

We note elsewhere in this report the commitment and a feeling of ownership towards UCC of all the staff and students we met, as well as the generally collegial atmosphere. However, there is a perceptible

division between academic staff and professional services staff. In some instances, this is simply a difference in perspective or priority, but in other instances there seems to be a lack of partnership or mutual respect. The former issue can be addressed by better communication of the underpinning institutional strategy, so that different categories of staff have a better appreciation of their respective roles but also of the implications that their decisions or practices have for their colleagues. The latter aspect is more difficult to address, but at a minimum we believe that it is important for university leadership to take steps to foster a culture of mutual respect between academic staff and professional services staff, as well as a better understanding of how their respective roles contribute to achievement of the University strategy. The core mission of the University requires the combined energy of each member of its community to ensure success.

It was reported that the university has invested significantly in recent years in staff development and training particularly in relation to corporate business areas such as budgeting, performance review, health and safety, but perhaps less so on developing and embedding academic leadership models. This gap manifests at a number of levels in the academic decision-making process.

Concern was widely expressed about the varying capacity of committee members and chairs to effectively discharge their responsibilities, arising from a lack of role-specific training other than for members of the Governing Body. A commonly reported issue is that the role of committee membership seems to be unclear, such that staff with apparently representative roles do not necessarily understand or accept this aspect of their role. This is reflected in widely expressed concerns that members of committees often do not report back and/or consult with their colleagues between meetings.

Although academic staffing and promotion issues are explicitly beyond the remit of this review, it is worth reporting that several staff suggested that the promotion system seems to have had unintended and negative consequences for committee engagement. Several staff suggested that some colleagues volunteer for committees in order to demonstrate 'engagement', not necessarily out of interest in the work of the committee. The review panel notes however the dedication and commitment of the three Academic Council committee chairs whom we met and the sterling work that they undertake in the absence of effective decision-making structures or any apparent incentive or reward, beyond demonstrating their commitment to the University.

The issue of trust was raised a number of times by staff, albeit from differing perspectives. In respect of the role of representatives on academic committees, it was reported that some staff do not believe an individual can represent the view of a whole College.

In the context of academic business, while managers felt that it was important to trust people with their responsibilities and allow them do their jobs, some academic staff reported a culture of micro-management which, combined with the fact that policies or other documents are often checked at several levels, could lead to what one contributor described as 'infantilising' staff.

Trust in institutional systems and policies may also be an issue, to the extent that it was reported on more than one occasion that staff sometimes circumvent the proper channels for decision-making out of frustration with its inflexibility and inefficiency. This can leave colleagues, often professional services staff, in a difficult position, either having to 'say no' to an initiative, or then having to undertake considerable remedial work to allow something to move forward.

Policy development and implementation

A range of concerns were raised in meetings and in responses to the questionnaire issued as part of this review, regarding the processes and capacity for policy development within the university as well as aspects of implementation of policy.

The issue of ownership of policies was raised by several staff. One concern is that ownership of a policy is seen to lie with the committee where the policy originated, which, given reported variation in approach and styles of different committees can mean that policies lack consistency of format or scope. On the other hand, we heard from other sources that there is generally no single owner of a policy, in the sense of having responsibility for driving it forward or for ensuring its implementation.

Unsurprisingly, given the widely-expressed reservations about the inordinate time taken in some instances to develop university policy, concern was also expressed about the fact that, despite wide and lengthy consultation across the institution, a policy might then be rejected by a College or School and not implemented university-wide.

Reported skills gaps suggest a lack of policy development capacity within the university. There is a general sense that there needs to be greater investment in and training of a professional secretariat unit to co-ordinate and support this function.

Information Systems

The current student management information system is widely seen as less than fit for purpose, in terms of its functionality and restrictions on access to information. There is a general sense of the urgent need to upgrade technology systems within the university. UCC is in the process of replacing its current virtual learning environment (Blackboard) with a more up-to-date system (Canvas). This has been widely welcomed and there is a wide expectation that this replacement will make a significant improvement in terms of the student learning experience.

The common concern regarding communication of information and the difficulty of finding current versions of policies, latest decisions, etc., is being addressed via the proposal to create a single policy portal, which could be regarded as a 'one-stop shop' for policy information within UCC. Again, this proposal seems very welcome to staff and students and there will be significant expectations of this development.

Recommendations

Having reflected on the meetings held with staff and students and the documents reviewed, drawing upon a breadth and depth of experience which is informed by national and international perspectives, the review panel has developed a set of recommendations which if translated into a corresponding set of actions should allow UCC to address the key issues and enable effective and efficient academic decision-making. For ease of reference, the recommendations are categorised below under the same four key headings used to describe our observations.

Decision-making models

- *Reconsider the role of Academic Council to ensure it has a more strategic focus*

The review panel recommend that Academic Council review the types of decision it is spending time on, and map same to the functions as specified in the Universities Act 1997. Where academic business may more effectively be conducted through a subcommittee, Academic Council should delegate same with associated annual reporting obligations. Where academic business is strategic in nature, it should be retained by Academic Council.

- *The types of decision considered at university level should be to establish principles-based frameworks which allow flexible implementation at College or School level.*

The review panel notes the current level of complexity, time and effort involved in academic decision-making and recommends that such detail is best delegated to local level (College/School). University level academic decision-making should focus on the establishment of principles-based frameworks (the University Policy Framework is a good example) which can then be translated at College Council/Executive Board level to meet local needs. Delegation of such decision-making authority should be mapped formally in advance of implementation, for example in the form of an academic authority schedule.

- *Clear structures should be put in place for Colleges or Schools to account to Academic Council for the exercise of delegated authority.*

With delegation comes responsibility and accountability, and so any such devolved model while restoring local autonomy and removing duplication of effort at university level must be supported by a robust system of annual reporting, to ensure consistent application of University level frameworks and to provide a mechanism for identification of implementation challenges and/or any need to revisit decisions in light of unintended consequences or changes in the sectoral environment.

- *Reduce by around a half the number of committees, using a principles-based approach.*

The review panel finds the UCC academic decision-making structures to be particularly complex and onerous, without any apparent sense from the community that the associated pain is worth the gain. The review panel recommend that Academic Council (through the Deputy President) undertake a principles-based review of academic decision-making structures at peer institutions and reflect on whether a considerably more streamlined model could be applied at UCC. This review should not be constrained by the academic decision-making structures currently in operation at UCC. At a minimum, the review panel recommend that university level committees be reduced by 50%, and that the mirroring of these structures at College level be abolished and replaced by leaner structures and effective representation on university level committees by College Council/Executive Board nominees.

- *Rationalise consultation process to become more inclusive and less rigid.*

The review panel commends the University's efforts to be wholly inclusive in its academic decision-making process, but notes that this practice has evolved over time into a fear of making final and binding decisions. To ensure that all voices are heard but also that all participants are clear on the final decision taken, the rationale for and the obligation to engage with and give effect to same, the review panel recommends that consultation be conducted through the use of more agile and inclusive fora. Good practice examples which may be built upon include town hall meetings and establishment of time limited task forces to undertake specific initiatives. Committees may then take decisions safe in the knowledge that proposals have already been through a robust consultation process which does not need to be re-visited.

Institutional culture

- *Ensure parity of esteem for all members of the university community (students, professional service staff, academic staff).*

The review panel noted that not all members of the university community were equally confident that their voice would be heard and their feedback on policy issues taken into account. The panel recommends that consultation takes place in such a way that all members of the community have the opportunity to comment on policy issues and have access to the (background) information required to do so. In particular, student union representatives need time to get acquainted with procedures and current state of affairs, and the university should avoid scheduling important decisions during the 'crossover' period. Further, the university should ensure that professional service staff with expertise of the practical consequences of policy measures under discussion are involved in the decision-making process and that their expertise is taken into account at the earliest possible stage. The university should ensure that such discussions take place in an atmosphere of mutual respect and open communication.

- *Invest in induction and training of staff (including academic leadership) and students involved in decision-making.*

Although some academics in leadership roles were offered training focussed on developing business skills, the review panel found that on the whole very little training was available to staff and students involved in different roles in the academic decision-making process. The panel recommends that all those involved in the academic decision-making process are appropriately trained for their roles. Training should include a clarification of what is expected of those involved in academic decision-making, an introduction to current UCC strategy and the considerations that led to adopting this strategy, as well as addressing important external developments driving UCC strategy.

- *Academic leaders should be prepared and equipped to bridge the gap between the university-level and the college or school level and to implement the principle-based frameworks to meet local need, and should be held accountable for same.*

Academic staff in senior management roles play a central position in the university, however an academic career may not fully prepare academics for all aspects of leadership roles. The review panel recommends that UCC initiates academic leadership training aimed at preparing academic staff for leadership roles, thereby making academic leaders more aware of what is expected of them and more effective as leaders. Training should differentiate between the different leadership roles within UCC and address understanding of UCC strategy, both short-term and long-term, understanding of important external developments driving UCC strategy and development of managerial skills.

- *Ensure that staff in representative and management roles are accountable for attending, participating and facilitating two-way communication.*

The review panel recommends that all members of staff who participate in academic decision-making processes are made aware of the importance of their role. They should be aware that they are expected to represent the interests of their college or their school, which entails being well-informed on how proposed policy measures will affect their college or school. Council and sub-committee members should be held accountable for the way they fulfil that role, including through attendance, active participation and ensuring that information on policy decisions reaches those responsible for implementation.

Policy development and implementation

- *Each policy should be sponsored by a senior academic leader*

The review panel recommends that all policy proposals have a designated sponsor who is a senior academic leader and also a member of the University Management Team. Policy sponsors are responsible for overseeing the drafting of policy proposals, for guiding proposals through the decision-making process, and for initiating policy implementation. Professional services staff in the relevant offices of University Management should be equipped to support this process through policy training initiatives and access to policy development and review toolkits.

- *Each policy should have an implementation plan, including a communications strategy which would depend on the scope and impact of the policy*

The review panel recommends that every policy proposal is accompanied at approval stage by an implementation plan. The implementation plan should specify what resources are necessary, including HR and financial resources. Decision-making should include a decision on freeing up the resources necessary. Further, an implementation plan should include a communications strategy which differentiates between the different target audiences of the policy, such as professional services staff involved in the implementation, academic staff impacted by the policy, and students impacted by the policy. Policy should be reviewed on an agreed cycle, aligned to the requirements of the University Policy Framework.

Information systems

- *Portal for policies/information*

The review panel notes and strongly endorses plans underway within the Academic Secretariat to develop a centralised portal for all university level policies. This repository should provide both a central repository for approved policy, so that the version in operation and its status is clear to all members of the university community. Consideration should be given to creating a one stop shop which provides toolkits for all users engaged in policy development and review. Such a portal should directly reference the Governing Body approved University Policy Framework developed by OCLA, with the two offices pooling resources to collaborate on its immediate roll out.

- *Access to management information, including student records*

The review panel strongly endorses the University's plans to invest in a student record system, with associated reporting tools. UMTO should as a priority review existing data access controls, and develop a data management hierarchy which ensures that all members of staff have access to the dataset required to effectively and efficiently implement academic business decisions. Roll out of the new system must be underpinned by training and ongoing support for all users, if it is to replace current work practices including creative but labour-intensive work around solutions.

Conclusion

The review panel wishes to express its gratitude to all members of the University community who engaged in the quality review process. Through your open and enthusiastic contribution, you afforded us the unique privilege of seeing the University through the eyes of its community. We were struck by the high levels of commitment and pride that exist at UCC, the genuine desire to strive towards quality enhancement through a shared understanding and collegiate partnership, and in this context, sincerely hope that our report will assist you in enhancing how academic decision-making operates into the future.