



**ANNUAL REPORT**

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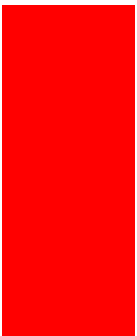
**Quality Enhancement Committee**

**2021/22 and 2022/23**

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**UCC**  
University College Cork, Ireland  
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh



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## Context

UCC is an autonomous degree-awarding body under the terms of the Qualifications & Quality Assurance (Education & Training)(Amendment) Act 2019<sup>1</sup> and is responsible for assuring and enhancing the quality of education, research and allied services offered by the University through its internal quality assurance and enhancement procedures. The Quality Enhancement Unit, working through the Quality Enhancement Committee, is responsible for developing and enabling the University's processes for external peer review of its activities in accordance with prevailing national Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines<sup>2</sup>, published Codes of Practice for quality in higher education and the European Standards Guidelines (2015). The Universities Act (1997) section 35 sets out the obligations for the establishment of quality procedures and the functions of the Governing Body in respect of the application and outcomes of quality procedures.

This report of the Quality Enhancement Committee serves to:

- Provide assurance to the Governing Body on the effectiveness of the scope and application of the University's quality procedures as required under the relevant Acts
- Demonstrate that the quality assurance and enhancement process supports and maintains the University's reputation through dissemination, exchange and adoption of good practice arising from peer review.

### **Recommendation**

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.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2019/act/32/enacted/en/html>

<sup>2</sup> Quality & Qualifications Ireland is responsible for the development of national Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines which Universities must have regard to <https://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/QA-Guidelines.aspx>

## Executive Summary

This report provides a comprehensive account of internal quality enhancement activities in the University for the period 2021/22 & 2022/23.

### **Section 1 National Institutional Quality Review (CINNTE)**

UCC underwent its Institutional Review site visit by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) in March 2023, details of the objectives and timing of the CINNTE review is provided.

### **Section 2 Internal Periodic Quality Reviews 2021/22 & 2022/23**

This section outlines the reviews undertaken during this time period, full text of the Peer Review Panel Reports are provided, as well as links to each published report on the University website. This meets the requirements of current QQI Core Statutory Guidelines.

### **Section 3 Student Feedback Ecosystem Project**

This section outlines the UCC-wide Student Feedback Ecosystem Project (SFEP) which was co-designed and led by the Quality Enhancement Unit and CIRTl in 2021-23. It was rolled out in 2022-3 by the Quality Enhancement Unit, with the support of a cross-functional team, having been awarded SATLE funding by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education.

### **Section 4 QEU Activities**

This section outlines the successful inaugural Good Practice Symposium held in October 2022 and the contribution of UCC Quality Enhancement Unit to the National Quality Offices Network meeting, held in May 2023.

### **Section 5 QQI Matters**

This section details relevant QQI matters, including the UCC Annual Institutional Report which is a statutory submission to QQI and a link to the published report is provided.

### **Section 6 International Quality Projects**

The Quality Enhancement Unit is involved in a number of international projects and the work undertaken as part of these projects is outlined.

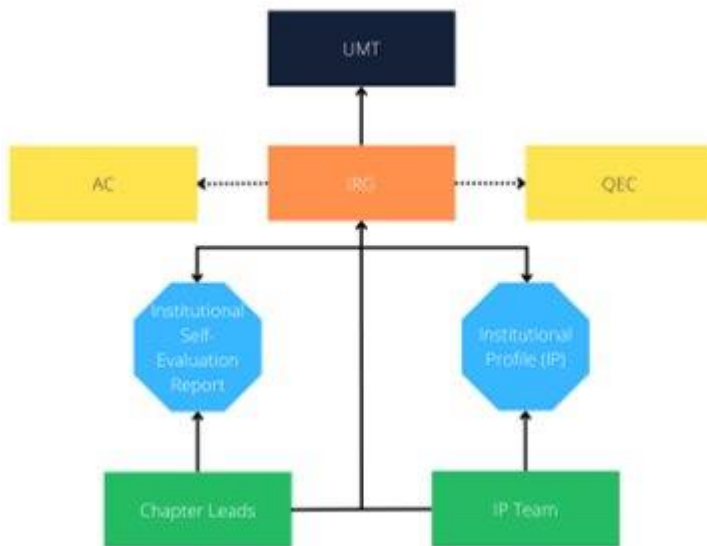
### **Section 7 Looking forward to 2023/24**

This provides a short summary of the areas of activity for the coming academic session, foremost amongst is the conduct of scheduled Periodic Quality Reviews, the development of the Institutional Action Plan arising from Institutional Review and engagement with the International Education Mark.

## Section 1 National Institutional Quality Review (CINNTE)

### Process

UCC underwent its Institutional Review as required by the policy for [Cyclical Review of Degree Awarding Bodies](#). Preparation for the Review was managed by the Quality Enhancement Unit and carried out under the governance structure of an Institutional Review Group established for the purpose as outlined below.



Two key outputs were required: an Institutional Profile for UCC (November 2022) and an Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (December 2023). The overall process of self-evaluation and internal communication is represented below.

# CINNTE Institutional Review

### CINNTE Institutional Review (IR) Process

### Stakeholders Involved

- Students
- Staff
- External Advisors
- External Stakeholders
- Governing Body
- University Leadership Team
- Academic Council
- Academic Board

### Key Outputs

Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER\*)

Institutional Profile (IP\*)

Coordinating Groups

### 'Institutional & Review You' Video Series

Available on QEU webpage.

### Road To Review

Pre-Site Visit				Site Visit	Post-Site Visit	
June 2022	October 2022	November 2022	December 2022	February 2023	March 2023	April 2023 onwards
ISER* draft submitted.	IP* draft developed.	ISER* sign-off.	Case Study Symposium.	IP* final sign-off.	ISER* final sign-off.	ISER* submitted.
			ISER* to external Review Panel.	Planning Review Site Visit.	Main Review Site Visit by CINNTE Review Panel.	Review Report submitted.
						Implementation Plan submitted.



### Site Visit



The site visit for the Review took place during the first week of March 2023, over the 5 day site-visit, the Review Team met with UCC staff, students and both internal and external stakeholders of the University to discuss key aspects arising from the Institutional Self Evaluation Report (ISER).

## Outcome

The University achieved a very satisfactory outcome to the Review, in accordance with the Cyclical Review approach and objectives, the review team was unanimous in its conclusion that:

- UCC has demonstrated the effectiveness of its QA procedures & the extent of their implementation;
- UCC has made progress towards the development & implementation of a unified institutional QA infrastructure;
- UCC procedures are compliant with ESG and have had regard to QQI QA Guidelines;
- UCC has demonstrated the enhancement of quality through governance, policy and procedures;
- UCC has implemented procedures for Access, Transfer & Progression in keeping with the QQI policy restatement.

Overall the Institutional Review identified:

- 39 areas of Commendation
- 17 areas of Recommendation

### **Areas of innovative and effective practice for quality enhancement identified were:**

**Student Reviewers in the Internal Quality Review Process** and the Review Team noted that: *“the way students are trained, rewarded and supported makes UCC’s approach sector leading. The ‘Quality Peer Reviewer’ digital badge and the Student Digital Space are great examples of quality enhancement innovation”* .

**Good Practice Symposium** and the Review Team noted that: *“this was an innovative way to share best practice and to recognise and celebrate excellent performance and commends the university for it”*.

## Next Stages

The Draft Institutional Review Report was provided to UCC by QQI in June 2022 for factual accuracy check. The draft report was shared with those who met the Review Team, Institutional Review Group (IRG) and Academic Council (AC).

UCC also provided an Institutional Response which will accompany the Final Report in late September 2023. The Final Report will be published on QQI and the QEU’s website in October 2023.

## Section 2 Internal Periodic Quality Reviews 2021/22 & 2022/23

<b>Review of:</b>	<b>Dates:</b>	<b>Link to Peer Review Reports:</b>
Department of Human Resources	17 <sup>th</sup> – 18 <sup>th</sup> May & 1 <sup>st</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> June 2022	<a href="#">Peer Review Panel Report</a>
MSc in Integrative Counselling & Psychotherapy, Turning Point Institute	1st – 2nd November 2022	<a href="#">Peer Review Panel Report</a>
Finance Office	21 <sup>st</sup> – 22 <sup>nd</sup> & 28 <sup>th</sup> – 29 <sup>th</sup> June 2023	To be published following approval by QEC. It will be on the agenda for their meeting on 23 <sup>rd</sup> November 2023



## Peer Review Panel Report – Department of Human Resources



# UCC

University College Cork, Ireland  
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

## Fheabhsú Cáilíochta Quality Enhancement



### QUALITY REVIEW

### PEER REVIEW PANEL REPORT

### DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN

### RESOURCES

May/June 2022

*“By embedding a strong quality-enhancement ethos, we will use our quality processes to ensure a culture and experience of best practice in the delivery of our academic mission, demonstrating our commitment to continuous evolution and improvement”*

(UCC's Strategic Plan 2017 –  
2022, p.23)

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## Peer Review Panel Members

Name	Position/Discipline	Institution
Mr John Fitzgerald	Director of Information Services and University Librarian	University College Cork
Professor Patrick Gibbons <i>(Chair)</i>	Jefferson Smurfit Professor of Strategic Management	University College Dublin
Mr David Giles <i>(Student Reviewer)</i>	College of Business and Law	University College Cork
Dr Karen Vandeveldde	HR Director	Antwerp University
Ms Karen Terry Weymouth	HR Strategy Director	Warwick University
<b>Review Coordinator</b>		
<i>Ms Deirdre O'Brien</i>	<i>Quality Enhancement Unit</i>	<i>University College Cork</i>
<b>IT and Logistics Coordinator</b>		
<i>Ms Sheila Ronan</i>	<i>Quality Enhancement Unit</i>	<i>University College Cork</i>

## Part 1 - Overall Analysis

### 1.1 Context

The Department of Human Resources at UCC is comprised of 50 members of staff and is subdivided into several sections.

HR Business is the central pillar for the provision of Human Resource expertise, support and advice to the University. It provides the primary point of contact for HR within the relevant College or Functional Area, providing strategic HR support to business units within the University and acting as the interface between the Colleges/Functional Area and the Department of Human Resources.

HR Central Services (HRCS) has responsibility for the management and administration of all Recruitment, the Professional and Technical Services Staff promotion schemes, Employment Contracts (excluding research contracts), Leave Management and the University Switchboard. HRCS supports the effective implementation of all UCC HR policies, practices and University initiatives relating to the employee life cycle.

Employee Relations deals with industrial relations issues/dispute resolution, University-wide issues, national agreements, redundancies, employment legislation, issues regarding terms and conditions

and compliance.

HR Information Systems (HRIS) have responsibility for the management of the digital services that underpin the HR Strategy, consistent with the University strategic goals and objectives. HRIS ensure that the HR and Payroll processes, systems and data are maintained and further developed to provide UCC with the digital services required in a modern University. HRIS have overall responsibility for all University HR reporting to external bodies and the UCC community.

HR Pensions have responsibility for the management of all University Pension Schemes including the UCC Statutory Pension Scheme, the UCC Model Pension Scheme and the Single Public Sector Pension Scheme with a totality of active membership across all schemes in excess of 3,200 individuals. In addition to the management of benefits of active scheme members, the pensions team also manages benefits in respect of over 1,000 retired staff members and former University employees maintaining an entitlement to benefit under a UCC scheme.

The HR Strategy and Organisation Development function has responsibility for Human Resource strategic planning and for developing, implementing and evaluating University wide organisation development systems and initiatives. HR Strategy and Organisation Development is responsible for Academic Promotion, Academic Probation & Establishment, Sabbatical Research Leave and the University's Performance Management System.

Staff Wellbeing & Development covers a number of broad areas relating to staff wellbeing and development. They produce an annual schedule of development opportunities responding to training needs identified through the Performance and Development Review System, the University's Strategic and Annual Operational Plans and in response to national and international developments. Staff Wellbeing & Development provides development opportunities to all staff, irrespective of contract status or hours of work.

HR Research. Research staff comprise one third of the total cohort of staff in UCC. HR Research provides support in the following areas: Personal & Professional Development of Research Staff, UCC Career Management Structure for Research Staff, Recruitment, Contract Management and Salary Administration.

HR Tyndall. The HR team in Tyndall consists of the HR Manager, two HR Generalists, one Recruitment Specialist and three HR Administrators. The team provides the full range of HR support services from recruitment through to exit interviews for a complement of 400 highly skilled and qualified research and support staff and over 150 post graduate students.

## **1.2 Methodology and Site Visit**

To enable completion of Quality Reviews under the prevailing public health restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a model for conducting site visits virtually was developed in 2020 which ensured continuity in the operation and delivery of quality review and enhancement activities. In 2022 this model moved to a hybrid review comprising of a 2 day on-campus site visit and 2 half-day virtual meetings.

This review took place under the hybrid review process, spread out over 3 weeks during May/June 2022. During the site visit the Panel met with HR staff, senior members of UCC staff and relevant stakeholders. During the virtual meetings the Panel focused on writing the Report with a particular emphasis on the commendations and recommendations. The sequencing of meetings was organised

so as to ensure coherence and progression in the conduct of the review. The platform used for the virtual meetings was MS Teams.

The timetable for the site visit is included in Appendix B. The Panel brought together national and international peer reviewers. Internal reviewers provided knowledge of institutional and organisational structures with the external Panel members contributing their peer expertise. The student Panel member brought valuable insights and perspectives on student issues. At the end of the site visit, the Panel presented its initial findings, both commendations and recommendations, to the staff of HR.

To support the Peer Review Panel and facilitate effective engagement throughout the site visit, additional guidance and support was provided by staff of the Quality Enhancement Unit (QEU) in UCC. This included technical support, as well as briefing and advisory support prior to and throughout the review. Review coordination was provided throughout by a Review Co-ordinator from QEU to facilitate the review process and to support the Peer Review Panel in formulating and agreeing the final Panel Report. The Report was compiled collaboratively, and the entire Panel contributed to the production of the final Report.

The Panel appreciated the direct assistance provided by the QEU in supporting their meetings, note-taking and ensuring the logistics of the meetings ran smoothly during and after the site visit. In addition, the timetable afforded appropriate time to engage with the broad variety of stakeholders. The Panel also considers that the interval between the site visit and the subsequent virtual meetings afforded an appropriate time for Panel members to reflect on and consider their commendations and recommendations.

### **1.3 Objectives of Quality Review**

The overarching objectives of quality review at UCC are to enable units, through evidence-based self-evaluation, to:

1. Reflect on and promote the strategic enhancement of their activities (enhancement dimension);
2. Evaluate the effectiveness of their processes, in line with the University's mission and strategy (assurance dimension).

Thus, peer review goes beyond quality assurance to also embrace continuous quality enhancement. The Peer Review Panel's Report reflects these objectives in the recommendations and commendations outlined to support HR in reviewing its strategic priorities and optimising its activities.

### **1.4 Overall Analysis of Self-Evaluation Process**

#### **1.4.1 Self-Evaluation Report (SER)**

The self-evaluation report was clearly written and presented. It provided an appropriate balance of factual representation, profiling activity and reflection, evaluating activity, for the Panel to understand the context and the operations of the HR function. The Recommendations for Enhancement are appropriate; however, they tend to be internally focussed and might speak to community/institutional impact more broadly.



#### 1.4.2 SWOT Analysis

The SWOT analysis was externally facilitated, as appropriate. This was further enhanced with systematic data collection from stakeholder groups. The analysis and implications drawn from these inputs were clearly communicated in the SER.

#### 1.4.3 Benchmarking

The ability to conduct the benchmarking exercise in as comprehensive a manner as HR would have wished was limited due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular this restricted the ability to engage in site visits that undoubtedly limited the learning and transfer of practice that could have occurred. In future, and as part of this Review, we recommend that benchmarking occur for certain activities (e.g., Recruitment). An ongoing challenge in this context is to identify what could be called “best-in-class” institutions to benchmark against, acknowledging that it is unlikely that a single institution will represent “optimal” practice, so a variety of institutions and other organisations (outside the third level sector) might provide useful benchmarks.

#### 1.4.4 Developments since last review

The Panel found that the main recommendations from the last review have been operationalised by the Department of HR.

#### 1.4.5 Case Study of Good Practice

The Recruitment process was the subject of the HR Case Study of Good Practice *‘The move to online recruitment practices as a result of COVID-19 and associated learnings to inform the “next normal”’*.

The COVID-19 pandemic posed unprecedented challenges for in-person interviews and Central Services redesigned the recruitment process and shifted to online interviews with immediate effect in March 2020. Existing processes, practices, policies and procedures were reviewed, at a pace that one could not have envisioned prior to the onset of the pandemic. Indeed, many of the most important learnings stemmed not from entirely new ideas but rather from the intensity of the pandemic and the speed at which HR had to change and adapt. Those attending from HR spoke to the Panel on the lessons learnt during COVID-19 and the implications and ramifications for the recruitment processes.

The Panel welcomed the HR Case Study and noted that recruitment represents a significant investment and risk for the University and requires rigorous and robust procedures to be followed. The Panel addressed recruitment in its first recommendation below and further to this, it could be instructive for UCC to look at good practices in other academic institutions operating in similar circumstances in terms of resources, size and recruiting power. Recruitment & Selection is a complex process that requires a balancing act between various concerns (time, money, quality, to name but a few). UCC could examine in particular (1) how the workload and responsibility are shared amongst stakeholders (e.g., planning, logistics, composition of selection committees, reporting: which is done centrally, which is done at School/Central Admin level); (2) to what extent University Regulations enhance or hinder efficiency; and finally (3) what is the relative weight of the candidate experience versus organisational needs versus compliance in defining the process.

While not every alternative approach would suit UCC, an examination of the alternatives may help to prioritise which elements of the current process would benefit most from change. In addition, such analysis will provide valuable arguments necessary to ensure buy-in of stakeholders within the University for the proposed changes.

### *1.5 Facilities*

The Panel undertook a tour of all the HR facilities, currently split across three separate locations. It might be useful, in due time, to consider how these can be rationalised to a single location.

## Part 2 – Findings of the Panel

### 2.1 HR Overview

The Panel was impressed with the calibre of staff in HR; staff are very committed, both to HR and to the University and conscious of the ambassadorial element of their roles. There appeared to be a constructive action-orientated work environment in place, and it was clear that, during the COVID-19 pandemic in particular, staff maintained a very high level of service throughout despite the pressures. The fulsome and cooperative engagement of HR staff with the process was appreciated by the Panel. The external stakeholders were very positive and it is clear that HR has a positive professional perception externally.

All sections of HR came in for praise during the meetings with internal and external stakeholders. Wellbeing and Development was singled out for particular approval along with the HR Business Partners, HR Research and Tyndall. If criticism was expressed, it was aimed at a process rather than at staff and indeed it was clear that the staff of HR are held in high regard across the University.

Stakeholders in the University were anxious to make their views on the recruitment process known to the Panel. There was consensus across all stakeholder groups that the recruitment process, a University process laid down in regulations, is neither agile nor fit for purpose despite the best efforts of the staff involved. The Panel considers the recruitment process to be a significant risk for the University and have recommended that the University review the recruitment process as a matter of urgency.

Human Resources operates in a challenging sectoral environment which is fast changing and requires a lot of adaptability and agility. It also occupies a position where competing stakeholders vie for dominance, and it can be difficult to accommodate all expectations. It was clear to the Panel that HR is a unit that is populated with enthusiastic, professional people, but feeling quite beleaguered, under-appreciated and under-valued by the wider University for their contribution. The Panel has recommended that a People Strategy be developed by the University to ensure direction on the purpose of HR and the expectations of the University of HR. Based on the recommendations of this Panel, HR will need to undergo a significant transformation while maintaining business as usual. The University may need to consider whether it requires additional resourcing in order to fulfil all these expectations.

The Panel developed a sense that the level of collaboration and quality of working relationships across the University Management Team and among other senior managers, with respect to HR issues, needs to be developed and strengthened.

### 2.1 Commendations

1. The HR staff are dedicated, enthusiastic, professional and committed to the highest standards and the mission of the University.
2. There is a positive work climate in HR.
3. University IR issues are generally handled well.

4. HR has demonstrated great flexibility and delivered good service during the pandemic.

5. There is a strong commitment of the University to EDI and staff well-being recognised by both internal and external stakeholders.
6. Strong training and development programmes were mentioned across many interviews.
7. Stakeholders appreciate the effective delivery of the revived academic promotion programme.
8. The view that good “people management” is an imperative for the University, as well as the realisation that it transcends the HR Department, is shared by all stakeholders.
9. The HR Business Partner (HRBP) role and their performance is commended and appreciated by stakeholder groups.
10. The HR teams dedicated to research (HR Research and Tyndall) were cited as effective and supportive, with particular mention of the effectiveness of the Odyssey programme.

## 2.2 Recommendations

1. Recruitment represents a significant investment and risk for the University and requires rigorous and robust procedures to be followed. However, stakeholders were very exercised about the recruitment process, particularly the elapsed time between hiring need and commencement of employment. The size of Interview Boards, the amount of re-work completed at HR, the number of references required in advance of interview, the lack of communication throughout the process were all identified by HR and stakeholders alike as issues of concern, among many others. Undue delay in this process creates both an operational risk because positions remain unfilled and a lack of competitiveness in the employment market.

The Panel recommends that the recruitment process be reviewed by a Working Group chaired by the Deputy President, comprising HR, OCLA, EDI, the academic community and change management experts and concluded within 6 months of receipt of the Panel Report. Substantial recommendations have been made under UCC22 Pillar 4 in addressing recruitment process redesign. These should be reviewed by the Working Group in the first instance.

As part of this review, the recruitment process should be externally benchmarked and redesigned, including its regulatory basis, with a view to revising the process to ensure speedier recruitment while not compromising its legitimacy and integrity. Ensuring clarity of roles and responsibilities (Central HR/HR Business Partners/hiring managers et. al.) at all stages of the process will be critical. The Panel categorises this recommendation as urgent, given the current strategy of Cluster hiring, which is a more complicated and therefore riskier activity.

2. The Panel recommends that a “People Strategy” be developed and owned by UMT, identifying and agreeing core values and related behaviours, clarifying the purpose of HR and the expectations of the University around people management. This purpose should clearly identify the balance between the compliance vs developmental roles that HR functions are expected to play. This should be completed concurrently with the new UCC Strategic Plan.

To deliver this People Strategy, HR under the leadership of the HR Director should, within 6 months of the adoption of UCC's Strategic Plan, develop a HR Vision and Strategy based on broad consultation with key stakeholders.

The HR Vision and Strategy should include the following:

- a. Key performance indicators agreed with UMT;
- b. Initiatives to support any proposed cultural transformation, to embed the values and behaviours of the institution;
- c. Service level agreements (SLAs) with key stakeholders, particularly the four colleges, the main research institutes and professional services;
- d. The acknowledgement that workforce planning should be enhanced throughout UCC and while supported by HR, is a critical line managerial function;
- e. The enhanced use of technology to improve processes, enhance security, improve management information and track SLAs.
- f. An implementation plan for managerial training (see recommendation 4 below).
- g. Clear and consistent policies for those UCC staff on CID, part-time and hourly contracts (see recommendation 6 below).

3. The Panel recommends that the HR Operating Model/Organisation Design be reviewed. The combination of centralised HR services and Business partners is designed to ensure consistency in delivering HR service centrally and tailored advice locally. The Panel recommends that the role of the HRBPs and their relationship with HR be reviewed to ensure client service and the deployment of HR policies and initiatives are both delivered in the optimal manner.

This review should be led by HR in consultation with client Units and would form part of the implementation plan for the HR Vision and Strategy and therefore be addressed in the HR Vision and Strategy.

4. Given the fact that "people" management is a managerial responsibility as opposed to a HR responsibility, the Panel recommends that all people managers receive regular formal managerial training in areas such as goal setting, feedback, performance management/development, EDI, critical conversations and compliance with HR standards, etc.

This recommendation should be endorsed by UMT and incrementally developed and delivered by HR. In advance of delivery, HR should develop an implementation plan as part of the HR Vision and Strategy.

5. Feedback from stakeholders was that the system of promotions for administrative staff is not fit for purpose since it ignores the leadership role of line managers in the development as well as the appraisal of staff. The Panel recommends that the assessment process and criteria should be reviewed by HR in consultation with senior management, staff and unions within a year of receipt of the Panel Report to ensure fitness for purpose. If relevant Government Departmental approval is required for this review it should be sought. This review should

consider how a personal development conversation with line managers, feedback from line managers and candidate prior achievement, among other things, could inform the process and provide appropriate recognition and reward.

6. The Panel recommends that UMT, as part of its People Strategy, develops a clearer vision for those UCC staff on CID, part-time and hourly contracts. Their contribution to the mission of the University requires recognition, they deserve clarity about role and contractual obligations and their ongoing contribution should be enhanced with opportunities for growth and development.

This vision should then be operationalised in the HR Vision and Strategy, in conjunction with OCLA and EDI, with a suite of clear and consistent policies. If such policies exist, they should be communicated more extensively.

The Panel also recommends that the HRIS records for all part-time and occasional staff of UCC should be managed by HR in the same proper and comprehensive manner as all other cohorts of staff.

7. The Panel recommends that the HR Director, in consultation with his team, review the communications within the HR Department. Communication needs to be enhanced within HR to further:
  - a. Enable exchange of knowledge, expertise and insights;
  - b. Ensure the entire HR function is kept up to date with HR developments and direction;
  - c. Reduce the potential for siloed thinking;
  - d. Enhance the sense of community and teamwork;
  - e. Improve the capacity of HR to be agile in response to urgent priorities affecting distinct teams and services within HR.
8. The Panel recommends that an internal HR Working Group is established within a year of receipt of the Panel Report, tasked with ensuring that HR's initiatives are more consistently communicated across UCC, and that HR's achievements are acknowledged and recognised.



## Appendix A – Peer Review Panel Profiles

<p><b>Mr John Fitzgerald</b></p>	<p>John FitzGerald is a graduate of University College Cork, University College Dublin and the University of Wales at Aberystwyth. He was awarded the Italian Government/Council of Europe Scholarship for 1986, based at the European University Institute, Florence.</p> <p>John’s career as a professional librarian commenced in Trinity College Dublin Library. This was followed by positions in the private sector as an R&amp;D librarian and as a documentation specialist in the electronics manufacturing and pharmaceutical sectors. He has worked as a Project Manager in the software industry in the UK, and as a full-time researcher in the Department of Library and Information Studies (now SILS), University College Dublin.</p> <p>John was appointed University Librarian at University College Cork in 1995, having joined UCC in 1990 as Head of Library Automation. In 2010, he was appointed inaugural Director of Information Services and University Librarian, assuming overall responsibility for the University’s IT Services, Audio Visual Media Services, and Cork University Press, in addition to the Library. He has successfully overseen the integration of these services into one cohesive unit. He has been heavily involved in national and international library and IT activities. He has served as Chairman of the Consortium of National and University Libraries of Ireland, Chairman of the Irish Universities Association Librarians’ Group, Chairman of the Cork Archives Institute, and as Board Member and Chairman of the Audit Committee of HEAnet Ltd, Ireland’s education and research data provider.</p> <p>John is currently the Irish Universities Association representative on the European Universities Association Expert Group on Open Science. He represents University College Cork on a range of local, national and international committees and regularly acts as a reviewer, evaluator, and observer of EU-funded R&amp;D projects on behalf of the European Commission in the areas of Digital Culture and Cultural Heritage. He has overseen successful completion of many large capital IT and buildings projects at UCC. As a member of the University Management Team at UCC, he is also active in institutional strategic planning and fund-raising for development projects associated with the sustainability of the Cork University Press and enhancement of library buildings and collections. John acts as commissioning editor for the Cork University Press <i>Atlas</i> Series and as executive producer of a growing number of UCC-sponsored film documentaries.</p>
<p><b>Professor Patrick Gibbons</b> <i>(Chair)</i></p>	<p>Patrick is the Jefferson Smurfit Professor of Strategic Management at UCD. Formerly, he was Vice-President of Staff and Administrative Systems at UCD, a member of UCD's Governing Authority, Associate Dean at the UCD Business School and a Department Head of Management. He previously worked at Universities in Asia and the U.S.</p>

<p><b>Mr David Giles</b> (Student Reviewer)</p>	<p>David Giles is a third year Law and Business student at UCC from West Cork. During the 2020/21 academic year, David was the college representative for Business and Law on the Students' Union - a college of over 5,500 students. This involved electing a network of 100+ class reps and voicing their views at the highest level of academic and strategic decision making within the college. He is a previous EU youth delegate and recognised as the All-Ireland Youth volunteer of the Year.</p> <p>David contributes to student life in UCC substantially, as a writer for the student newspaper, <i>the UCC Express</i>, and as the current Chairperson of the Free Legal Advice Centre. He also sits on the Governance subcommittee of the Board of Community Creations (the parent company of Spunout.ie and 50808) as the youth representative.</p>
<p><b>Dr Karen Vandeveld</b></p>	<p>Karen Vandeveld is an expert in HR management as well as research policy. In August 2018 she became Head of HR at Antwerp University. Before, she was a research policy advisor at Ghent University from 2006 to 2018.</p> <p>At Antwerp University, Karen oversees the implementation of HR policies as well as the operational processes linked to these, including recruitment &amp; selection, career development, appraisal &amp; rewards systems and academic leadership. She represents Antwerp University in the HR Working group of the Flemish Rectors' Conference (VLIR), in the Research Policy working group &amp; Academic Careers working group of YERUN, and in the formal national negotiation committee of the government, union representatives and institutions.</p> <p>Many of Karen's initiatives are to be situated at the intersection of research policies and HR policies, in particular in support of researchers' careers. She has taken on the role of Advisor or Expert in a number of working groups for the Flemish Council for Science and Innovation, the Flemish Royal Academy of Science and the Arts, the OECD (Careers of Doctorate Holders project), the European Commission (DG RTD) and a number of consultancy-led projects related to research policy, HR and researchers' careers.</p> <p>She holds an MA Degree from Ghent University (1996) and a PhD Degree in Arts (2001) from the National University of Ireland, Galway.</p>
<p><b>Ms Karen Terry Weymouth</b></p>	<p>Karen joined Warwick as HR Strategy Director in January 2020. In addition to leading on our People strategy, Karen is responsible for Talent &amp; Recruitment, Reward &amp; Recognition, Academic Processes (academic career pathways), Organisation Design and staff Equality, Diversity &amp; Inclusion. Shortly after joining, in response to the pandemic, Karen set up and led the first University wide voluntary leavers scheme, which generated £10+m cost savings.</p> <p>Prior to moving to the University of Warwick, Karen joined BT Group HR in 2010 as Change Director, having spent three years building an internal</p>

	<p>change consultancy within Openreach, the BT division that owns telephone wires and exchanges which connect nearly all homes and businesses in the UK to the national broadband and telephone network.</p> <p>Whilst with BT Group HR, Karen led a pan-BT organisation design and culture change initiative -'Space to Lead'- building clear leadership accountabilities and empowerment by implementing a simplified organisation structure; led a programme to develop a 10-year understanding of strategic workforce demand and supply challenges based on technological and social trends and future skills availability; and transformed BT's Internal Communications to build a pan-BT function and the communications capability required to support BT's transformation and growth agenda.</p> <p>Prior to joining BT, Karen was a management consultant, working for EY and Capgemini Consulting, leading transformational change with large, complex organisations including Kellogg's, Motorola, DWP and HMRC. Both at BT and as a consultant, she's built strong internal and external relationships, working with senior leaders as a trusted advisor and coach on all aspects of organisational change. She has been a member of the judging panel of the Business Culture Awards for the last four years.</p> <p>Karen is motivated by making a difference and passionate about developing capability, delivering a great employee experience and building high performance teams.</p>
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## Appendix B – Peer Review Panel Timetable

Prior to site visit – online meeting

<b>Tuesday 10 May 2022</b>	
11.30 – 13.00	Briefing by Ms Elizabeth Noonan, Director of Quality Enhancement, Dr Stephen Hammel, Quality Enhancement Manager, Ms Deirdre O’Brien, Review Co-ordinator and Ms Seugnet Kritzinger, QE Advisor.  Panel discussion – initial thoughts on SER.

Site Visit to UCC – first week

<b>Monday 16 May 2022</b>	
During the day	Panel members arrive in Cork
19.00	Dinner for members of the Panel and Director of Quality

<b>Tuesday 17 May 2022</b>	
09.00 – 10.00	Private meeting of Panel <i>Panel agree issues to be explored in forthcoming meetings.</i>
10.00 – 10.45	Mr Barry O’Brien, Director, Human Resources <i>Discussion regarding developments to date and strategic priorities of HR</i>
10.45 – 11.10	Private meeting of the Panel (coffee break)
11.10 – 11.15	Panel move to venue for next meeting

11.15 – 12.15	<p>HR Management Team</p> <p>Ms Tracy Eagles, Central Services Manager</p> <p>Dr Anne Gannon, Staff Wellbeing &amp; Development Manager</p> <p>Ms Marie Murphy, Pensions Manager</p> <p>Ms Angela O'Donovan, Strategy &amp; Organisational Manager</p> <p>Mr Tom O'Grady, Tyndall</p> <p>Ms Mary O'Regan, Research Manager</p> <p>Ms Suzanne Power, HR Information Systems Manager</p> <p>Mr Paul Ryan, Deputy Director of HR and Employee Relations Manager</p>	<p>HR Business Managers</p> <p>Mr Kieran Creedon, Central Services</p> <p>Ms Maeve Doyle, College of Arts, Celtic Studies &amp; Social Sciences</p> <p>Ms Niamh Healy, College of Medicine &amp; Health</p> <p>Ms Helen O'Donoghue, College of Science, Engineering &amp; Food Science</p> <p>Ms Mags Walsh, College of Business &amp; Law</p> <p>Ms Mary Ward, Central Services</p>
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12.15 – 12.30	Panel return to Tower Room 2		
12.30 – 13.15	<p>Meeting with College Heads</p> <p>Professor Sarah Culloty, Head, College of Science, Engineering and Food Science</p> <p>Professor Ursula Kilkelly, Head, College of Business and Law</p> <p>Professor Helen Whelton, Head, College of Medicine and Health</p> <p>Professor Chris Williams, Head, College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences</p>		
13.15 – 14.00	Lunch		
14.00 – 15.00	<p><i>Tour of HR facilities – Food Science Building</i></p> <p>Panel members: Pat Gibbons and David Giles</p> <p>HR staff: Barry O'Brien, Helena Burns, Tracy Eagles</p>	<p><i>Tour of HR facilities – Tyndall Institute</i></p> <p>Panel members: Karen Vandavelde and John Fitzgerald</p> <p>HR staff: Tom O'Grady</p>	<p><i>Tour of HR facilities – Sheraton Court</i></p> <p>Panel member: Karen Terry Weymouth</p> <p>HR staff: Suzanne Power</p>
15.00 – 16.30	<p>Meeting with staff of Human Resources</p> <p><i>Discuss issues such as communications, staffing, structures and staff development.</i></p>		
16.30 – 17.15	Private meeting of the Panel		
19.00	Dinner for members of the Panel.		

<b>Wednesday 18 May 2022</b>	
09.00 – 09.30	Convening of the Panel – preparation for the day ahead
09.30 – 10.15	Professor John O’Halloran, President ( <i>reporting linemanager</i> )
10.15 – 10.30	Private meeting of the Panel
10.30 – 11.15	Meeting with University Management Team Professor Stephen Byrne, Deputy President and Registrar Dr Martin Galvin, UCC Civic and Community Engagement Officer ( <i>deputising for Dr Rónán O Dubhghaill, Vice President for External Relations</i> ) Ms Nora Geary, Corporate Secretary Professor Paul McSweeney, Vice President for Learning and Teaching Mr Mark Poland, Director, Buildings and Estates
11.15 – 11.45	Private meeting of the Panel (coffee break)
11.45 – 12.15	Meeting with Mr Diarmuid Collins, Bursar
12.15 – 12.30	Private meeting of the Panel

12.30 – 13.10	Meeting with College Managers Ms Kate O’Brien, College Manager, Science, Engineering and Food Science Ms Majella O’Sullivan, College Manager, Arts, Celtic Studies, Social Sciences Dr Kay Taaffe, Manager, School of Law ( <i>deputising for Mr Colman Quain, College Manager, Business and Law</i> )
13.10 – 14.00	Lunch break (meeting with Tracy Eagles, Central Services Manager)
14.00 – 14.40	Meeting with Union Representatives Dr Miranda Corcoran, IFUT Dr Finola Doyle-O’Neill, IFUT Mr Dermot Houston, SIPTU Mr Gary Hurley, SIPTU Dr Edward Lahiff, IFUT Ms Lorna Moloney, SIPTU Dr Stephen O’Brien, IFUT Ms Ann O’Donovan, SIPTU Dr Eoin Sheehan, IFUT

14.45 – 15.30	<p><i>UCC Stakeholders</i></p> <p>Mr Desmond Beynon, Finance Office Ms Maria Carroll, Office Manager, President’s Office</p> <p>Dr Avril Hutch, Director, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion</p> <p>Dr Jennifer Murphy, Director of Recruitment and Admissions</p> <p>Dr Tara Singleton, School Manager, School of Education</p> <p>Ms Mary Steele, Retired Staff Association</p>	<p><i>UCC Stakeholders</i></p> <p>Professor Gerald Fitzgerald, Staff Ombudsman</p> <p>Professor Carol Linehan, Head, School of Applied Psychology</p> <p>Professor Anthony McDonnell, Head, Management and Marketing</p> <p>Dr David O’Connell, Director of Research Support &amp; Policy</p> <p>Professor Mark Poustie, Dean, School of Law</p>
15.30 – 16.00	Private meeting of the Panel (coffee break)	
16.00 – 16.30	<p>Meeting re Case Study of Good Practice</p> <p>Ms Anne Dennehy            Ms Tracy Eagles Ms Gemma Hayes            Ms Carol O’Dwyer</p>	
16.30 – 17.15	<p><i>UCC Stakeholders</i></p> <p>Mr Darragh Beecher, Oral Health Services Research Centre Ms Kathy Bradley, Head of UCC Skills Centre</p> <p>Dr Laurence Davis, Department of Government and Politics Ms Noreen Moynihan, School Manager, School of Pharmacy Professor Nicole Muller, Head, School of Clinical Therapies Mr Tom O’Mara, Head of Digital Information</p>	
19.00	Informal dinner for members of the Panel	



## Online Meetings – second week

<b>Wednesday 1 June 2022</b>	
09.00 – 09.15	Convening of the Panel – preparation for the day ahead
09.15 – 10.00	<p>Meeting with External Stakeholders</p> <p>Ms Cathy Buffini, Senior HR Partner, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland            Ms Deirdre Casey, HR Manager, Munster Technological University, Cork            Ms Sophie Crosbie, Regional Director, Ibec</p> <p>Professor John Gallagher, Chief Medical Officer, Cognate Health            Ms Anne Hennessy, Chartered Psychologist, Vitae Consulting            Ms Ameer Massey, Willis Towers Watson</p> <p>Mr Tony McMahon, Associate Director HR &amp; EDI, Irish Universities Association            Mr Ray O’Leary, Cornmarket</p>
10.00 – 11.00	Panelmeeting to draft the recommendations and commendations
11.00 – 11.30	Break for Panel
11.30 – 13.00	Panelmeeting to draft the recommendations and commendations

<b>Friday 3 June 2022</b>	
09.00 – 10.30	Meeting of Panel to finalise recommendations and commendations
10.30 – 11.15	<p>Mr Barry O’Brien, Director, Human Resources</p> <p><i>Clarification and discussions of main findings by Panel</i></p>
11.15 – 11.45	Break for Panel
11.45 – 12.30	Panelmeeting to discuss feedback from Director/consider the closing presentation
12.30 – 13.00	<p>Closing presentation</p> <p><i>Closing presentation to allstaff, to be made by the Chair or other member(s) of Panel as agreed, summarising the principal findings of the Panel. This presentation is <u>not</u> for discussion at this time.</i></p>
13.00 – 13.30	Panel – wrap up meeting



## Fheabhsú Cáilíochta Quality Enhancement



QUALITY REVIEW  
PEER REVIEW PANEL  
REPORT  
MSC INTEGRATIVE COUNSELLING AND  
PSYCHOTHERAPY UNIVERSITY COLLEGE CORK,  
TURNING POINT INSTITUTE

November  
2022

*“By embedding a strong quality-enhancement ethos, we will use our quality processes to ensure a culture and experience of best practice in the delivery of our academic mission, demonstrating our commitment to continuous evolution and improvement”*

(UCC's Strategic Plan 2017 – 2022, p.23)

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## Peer Review Panel Members

Name	Position/Discipline	Institution
Professor Ewan Gillon	Clinical Director	First Psychology Scotland
Ms Aisling McKenna <i>(Chair)</i>	Director of Quality and International Research	Dublin City University
Professor Laura Rascaroli	Head, School of Film, Music and Theatre	University College Cork
Mr Barry Sheerin <i>(Student Reviewer)</i>	College of Science, Engineering and Food Science	University College Cork
Review Coordinator		
<i>Dr Stephen Hammel</i>	<i>Quality Enhancement Unit</i>	<i>University College Cork</i>
IT and Logistics Coordinator		
<i>Ms Marie O'Regan</i>	<i>Quality Enhancement Unit</i>	<i>University College Cork</i>

The profiles of the Peer Review Panel are included in Appendix A.

## Part 1 - Overall Analysis

### 1.1 Context

Turning Point Institute (TPI), formerly known as 'Turning Point Training Institute' was founded in 1986 and formally constituted in 2001. The partnership between TPI and University College Cork (UCC) began in 2013 with an application by TPI to offer a MSc in Integrative Counselling and Psychotherapy, which would be accredited by UCC. This application was approved by the University Programme Approval Panel (UPAP), for implementation in September 2014. The underlying relationship, responsibilities and obligations of both parties (UCC and TPI) were agreed and outlined in a Memorandum of Agreement signed in 2014. A UCC-TPI Joint Academic Standards Committee (JASC) was established to oversee the academic integrity, quality and standards of the Programme. This committee is responsible for the governance and academic quality of the MSc in Integrative Counselling and Psychotherapy Programme.

The JASC membership includes representatives from UCC and TPI:

- Director of TPI (Co-Chair)
- UCC Academic Secretary (Co-Chair)
- Programme Director (TPI)

- Registrar (TPI)

- Head of UCC School of Applied Psychology or nominee
- TPI staff member teaching on the Programme
- UCC Academic Programmes & Regulations Unit representative
- UCC Student Records representative
- UCC Academic Board/Academic Development and Standards Committee representative

A proposal on the sustainability of the continued relationship between UCC and TPI was considered in 2020. Following this proposal, it was decided that the partnership would continue.

Under the statutory guidelines developed by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), the state body responsible for “...*promoting the quality, integrity and reputation of Ireland’s further and higher education system.*”, the relationship between UCC and TPI for the delivery and accreditation of programmes such as the MSc in Integrative Counselling and Psychotherapy can be defined in one of two ways:

Linked-provider - “...*a linked provider is a provider that is not a designated awarding body but enters into an arrangement with a designated awarding body under which arrangement the provider provides a programme of education and training that satisfies all or part of the prerequisites for an award of the designated awarding body.*”<sup>1</sup>

Collaborative provision – “...*two or more providers being involved by formal agreement in provision of a programme of higher education and training.*”<sup>2</sup>

Each category has different requirements and responsibilities expected of the different parties involved in the programme and are particularly relevant as the original MoA for the Programme does not clearly identify it as either a linked provider or collaborative provision.

## 1.2 Methodology and Site Visit

At the commencement of the Peer Review Site Visit, the Panel had an opportunity to discuss the identified themes and areas for further exploration based on a review of the documentation received by the Panel in advance of visit. Working together, these themes were cross-referenced with the stakeholder groups identified in the visit timetable, to ensure that identified areas were scheduled for discussion during the site visit. Ahead of each stakeholder meeting, the Panel agreed a respective area of focus for questions for each member at each meeting. Summary notes were collated by an administrative support from the Quality Enhancement Unit (QEU) and subsequently reviewed and discussed by the Panel throughout the

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<sup>1</sup> [Qualifications and Quality Assurance \(Education and Training\) Act 2012](#) (Part 1 (3))

<sup>2</sup> [QQI Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes and Joint Awards](#) (Part 2 (2.1.1))

site visit. In conjunction with continued reference to the Review's documentation, this approach ensured an opportunity to triangulate and verify the findings of the Panel.

During the site visit, the timetable, included in Appendix B, provided the Peer Review Panel (Panel) with opportunities to meet with stakeholders, including staff from both University College Cork (UCC) and Turning Point Institute (TPI), students of the MSc in Integrative Counselling and Psychotherapy (the Programme), and a member of the Tertiary Education Monitoring and Review department of Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). While acknowledging the breadth and relevance of the stakeholder groups scheduled within the timetable, the Peer Review Panel would have additionally welcomed an opportunity to meet with relevant employers of the graduates of the Programme. The Panel noted the positive engagement by stakeholders during all meetings held during the Peer Review Visit. The Panel also noted their gratitude for the comprehensive support provided by the QEU, which ensured the effective conduct of all aspects of the Review Visit. The QEU Review Coordinator accompanied the Peer Review Panel throughout to facilitate the review process. All Panel members contributed to the drafting of the report, with members taking individual responsibility for initial drafting of specific sections, prior to an overall review and agreement of the content of the report.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Quality Review**

The overarching objectives of quality review at UCC are to enable those undergoing quality review to:

Reflect on and promote the strategic enhancement of their activities (enhancement dimension);

Evaluate the effectiveness of their processes, in line with the University's mission and strategy (assurance dimension).

Thus, peer review goes beyond quality assurance to also embrace continuous quality enhancement. The Peer Review Panel report reflects these objectives in the recommendations and commendations outlined to support Turning Point Institute in further refining its priorities and optimising its activities in the pursuit of its ambitious drive for excellence within the field of Counselling and Psychotherapy studies while providing an excellent student learning experience.

The key objectives of this programmatic review were to evaluate, through an expert peer panel with internal, external and student representatives, the overall quality of the programme, its overall effectiveness and appropriateness for student learning. The panel were asked to determine whether the Programme, in its current form, complies with the national legislative definition of such arrangements set out in the Quality and Qualifications Act 2012 and identify if it is a Linked-provider or Collaborative provision.

## **Section 3 Overall Analysis of Desktop Stocktake**

Prior to the site visit, the Panel were provided with a range of documentation for review which comprised



of a “Desktop Stocktake” document and an extensive accompaniment of relevant appendices. The following appendices were included;

- 464 Memorandum of Agreement between UCC and Turning Point 2014 for the provision of a taught MSc in Integrative Counselling and Psychotherapy
- University Programme Approval Panel (UPAP) Application and Approval
- 465 Memorandum of Agreement between UCC and Turning Point 2016 for the provision of a MSc by Research in Integrative Counselling and Psychotherapy
- Sustainability of Relationship Proposal
- The Joint Academic Standards Committee (JASC) Terms of Reference
- UCC Nomination and Appointment of External Examiner Guidelines
- UCC External Examiner Guidelines
- UCC Guide to Examinations and Assessment
- UCC Handbook Governing Curriculum Approval 2018
- Summary of key points relating to quality from JASC; Terms of Reference, Student Autumn Repeats, Student Handbook and Teaching Staff Expertise.

Having reviewed both the supporting evidence and the Desktop Stocktake Report, the Panel was of the view that the Stocktake Report represented a comprehensive overview of the Programme, and provided key evidence relating to the academic governance and oversight of the Programme. The Stocktake Report further provided a fair assessment and summary of key issues raised in the implementation of current quality assurance processes by external examiners and feedback from students.

## Part 2 – Findings of the Peer Review Panel

### 1.1 Status of relationship

This review sought to consider the definition of the nature of the relationship between UCC and TPI, in particular, if the current relationship constituted a Linked Provider relationship between UCC and TPI, or alternatively that of Collaborative Provision. In addressing this element of the review, the Panel reviewed the definition of a Linked Provider relationship, as defined in the QQA Act (2012, amended in 2019)<sup>3</sup> and Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for Designated Awarding Bodies<sup>4</sup>.

In considering the definition of the current UCC-TPI relationship, the work of the Panel was further supported through an opportunity to discuss the Programme and institutional relationship with a senior representative from Quality and Qualifications, Ireland (QQI). This meeting provided an opportunity for the Panel to receive input from the national quality agency and the most appropriate definition of the

<sup>3</sup> <https://revisedacts.lawreform.ie/eli/2012/act/28/front/revised/en/html>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/2021-11/qg-4-sector-specific-qa-guidelines-for-universities-and-other-designated-awarding-bodies.pdf>

relationship, mindful of the Programme's current quality assurance and academic oversight arrangements.

Following the Panel's review of current academic governance policies and procedures, and discussions with the QQI representative, the Panel concludes that the status of the relationship between UCC and TPI therefore constitutes one of Collaborative Provision. A number of factors have contributed to the Panel's findings in defining the relationship

- Currently, UCC academic governance policies and procedures are principally applied to underpin the management and academic oversight of the Programme, with some aspects of policies amended by TPI to reflect particular local contexts
- Academic oversight of the Programme is collaboratively led through a programme-specific Joint Academic Standards Committee (JASC), chaired on a rotating basis by UCC and TPI representatives
- Students registered on the Programme are currently registered as students on the UCC student information system rather than system managed by TPI.
- As registered UCC students, TPI students have access to UCC Library Services

As a collaborative programme, quality assurance arrangements underpinning academic oversight of the programme should be developed and monitored through internally developed QA governance procedures. It is the view of the Panel that these should in all but exceptional cases see the application of relevant UCC policies and should be characterised by,

A strong model for ongoing academic governance of the Programme, overseen through the work with the JASC

The inclusion of the Programme within UCC's procedures for cyclical programme monitoring and review

The work of JASC to include oversight of clear information provision for prospective and current students, and other stakeholders

To ensure the future effective management of this collaborative arrangement, the Panel have identified opportunities for enhancement of academic governance of the Programme, which is hoped will contribute to the continued successful management of this relationship. These are discussed further in the proceeding sections.

## **1.2 Management of the relationship**

The Panel were impressed by the warm and strong relationship shared by UCC and TPI and noted many positive examples of collaborative working throughout the process. Although the UCC-TPI provision has some features of a linked programme structure, the Panel determined that it would be most accurately characterised as a collaborative programme based on the points highlighted in the previous section.

Whilst the Panel were encouraged by the significant sharing of UCC academic policies and procedures, it was observed that some areas of TPI were more advanced in this regard than others. Hence further development is required to bring these fully into line with UCC academic policies and procedures. The collaborative programme model requires a full alignment to UCC policies and procedures as a default with any exceptions

to this agreed and documented through the JASC. This has implications for staff support and training within TPI which is an area that appeared to require some consideration and planning by the JASC. Finally, the Panel noted that there were ongoing issues for TPI staff and students in accessing UCC systems and resources (such as Turnitin). There is a lack of clarity around the status of TPI staff and students in relation to UCC. This will require resolution in order to ensure the full implementation of UCC policies and procedures from an academic perspective as well as to ensure equity for UCC-TPI students with their peers within the UCC student body.

As part of the usual processes of programme review and development the Panel noted the updating of the course in areas such as trauma and diversity. The Panel were particularly impressed by the enhancement of provision in research, something commented on by a number of students in very positive terms. It did not appear that the current enhancement process is systematised in any formal way that ensured the identification and inclusion of all appropriate developments (academic and professional) on an ongoing basis. The Panel took the view that the JASC must consider how the programme will be cognisant of contemporary developments within the disciplinary area, including potential future CORU programme approval requirements.

Finally, the Panel noted the lack of a clear financial model of the costs (including support costs) borne by UCC in the operation of the collaborative programme with TPI. Such a model is important to ensure transparency and accurate apportionment of all costs arising. It would be helpful to both parties that the future MOA should involve a transparent Finance model that recognises the cost of programme administration and oversight by UCC.

#### Commendations:

- The PRP commends the strong ethos of collaboration between the School of Applied Psychology at UCC and TPI in conduct of this collaborative programme.

#### Recommendations

- The PRP recommends that the future MOA provide an updated terms of reference for JASC with regards to membership (to include student representation) and frequency of meetings. This will ensure the effective oversight of the collaborative programme, and programme policy alignment to UCC policies and procedures.
- The PRP recommends that JASC consider the development of an academic-led collaborative programme board to support the work of JASC, with a nominated contact from each institution. This board will focus on programme management, curriculum development and knowledge exchange on the implementation of policies.
- The PRP recommends that the revised MOA provides clarity on the status of TPI staff and TPI students and their access to UCC systems, resources and supports, to ensure the full and effective implementation of UCC policies and academic standards.

### 1.3 Compliance

The Panel noted the work carried out by TPI to produce extensive student information and a robust procedural framework for the programme, but also identified several potential discrepancies between UCC and TPI policies.

TPI's grievance procedure, for instance, establishes that the Grievance Panel be made up of three people: the Programme Director, the student's Tutor, and an External Grievance and Complaints Adjudicator. In UCC procedures, conversely, the Grievance Panel is wholly external, to exclude any potential conflict of interest, and is composed of three members: a Head of School and another member of staff not from the same area from which the complaint originates, plus a student representative. Other examples include the TPI Appeals Policy, which specifies an appeal fee that is double the current appeal fee at UCC; the imposition of a monetary fee for late submission of student work, which does not exist at UCC; and the adoption of paper-based student feedback forms that are not wholly anonymous. In adapting UCC policies to a TPI context, then, some of the resulting documents, particularly the plagiarism policy, come across as unclear, incomplete, or lacking robustness.

The Panel further noted that there is scope for TPI to strengthen its periodic reappraisal of the programme via systematic cyclical reviews that should consider curriculum content and its alignment to learning outcomes and to the delivery model, including programme contact hours, with a view to respond to evolving international best practice and key stakeholders' feedback.

#### Commendations

- The Panel commends the clarity and coherence through which the programme defines itself and communicates its identity to its student and other stakeholders via all programme literature.
- The Panel notes the positive feedback from TPI students on the extensive information provided to them through the programme handbook.

#### Recommendations

- The Panel encourages TPI leadership and staff to maintain knowledge and awareness of evolving national best practice on key policies in education and training, e.g. plagiarism, academic integrity, and the management of academic misconduct; on international education provision; and on the alignment of programme outcomes to the NFQ.
- The Panel recommends JASC to consider, at next available opportunity, the appointment of a new external examiner to the programme, to provide an opportunity for fresh perspectives on the curriculum and on student attainment.

### 1.4 Enhancements

Throughout the process, the Panel identified many areas of positive interaction between the teaching staff and students of TPI. In addition to these findings, the Panel also discovered areas of concern regarding student feedback policy, student IT and social infrastructure throughout the programme.

An example of this can be found within TPI's feedback procedure, during which there is no standardised, anonymous platform through which students can provide feedback of their module experience. Instead, TPI relies on the approach of "open conversation" and a friendly conversation. This framework does not provide the students with a platform where they are assured an anonymous forum through which they can voice

their true opinions or concerns. Other UCC registered students are provided with standardised, anonymous feedback questionnaires upon the completion of a given module or teaching period. Another area of concern was found regarding the enforcement of late-submission fees and an increased appeals fee. The TPI appeals fee was found to be €200, whereas the university wide appeals fee in UCC is set at €70.

Upon meeting with past and current students of TPI, the Panel noticed that there was an apparent lack of clarity regarding what online and on-campus facilities were available to them as registered students of University College Cork. In addition to these findings, the Panel also noticed a disconnect between year groups of the MSc. In UCC, students enrolled in every course can meet and engage with students from years above, and below them in the University through involvement in extra-curricular activities organised by the academic faculty and student led organisations. These relationships and friendships are vital to a well-rounded university experience.

## Commendations

- TPI are to be commended on the quality of training provided within the programme and its contribution to the student experience. Student feedback to the Panel provided evidence of the programme team working diligently to deliver a student-centred learning experience.
- The Panel commends the commitment to and investment in the current training model, which supports students' learning experience and provides a coherent training experience and solid foundation to students and their professional aspirations.

## Recommendations

- Implement an enhancement-led process of cyclical programme review that facilitates a consideration of the programme curriculum and delivery, and that is reflective of the wider context and best-practice in field.
- Enhance the current process of programme-level student feedback to include an institute-wide, systematic, anonymous, and preferably online process of student feedback at programme level. The Panel further suggest key themes are captured and TPI responses to this feedback are monitored at JASC.
- Consider the establishment of regular staff-student committee to formally gather, discuss, and progress student feedback on the student experience.
- Improve the clarity of information on access to UCC learning supports available to TPI students, e.g., library services, academic-writing support resources etc.
- Provide opportunities for student peer support through inter-cohort dialogue and networking.

# Appendix A – Peer Review Panel Profiles

<p>Professor Ewan Gillon</p>	<p>Professor Ewan Gillon is currently the Clinical Director/Chief Executive of First Psychology, an independent provider of psychological therapies and counselling based in Scotland which he established in 2009. They are a pluralistic practice spread over 11 sites with around 150 practitioners from applied psychology, CBT and counselling/psychotherapy professions. He is also Emeritus Professor of Psychology at Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU). He worked at GCU for many years during which time he set up and ran a doctorate in counselling psychology, evolving this to become a doctoral framework in applied psychology. He has been a Fitness to Practice Panel Member and Visitor for the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), a General Member of the Mental Health Tribunals (Scotland), Vice Chair of Relationships Scotland and a Lay Member of the Employment Tribunals. He has held numerous external examining appointments mostly in the areas of applied psychology and counselling/psychotherapy and been involved in many quality reviews in HE settings. He is currently External Examiner for the DPsych in Counselling Psychology at the University of Manchester. His main research interests are in the field of person-centred therapy and in working therapeutically with men. He continues to practice as a counselling, health and coaching psychologist. On personal-level Professor Gillon tends to like outdoors activities, sports and the visual arts. He also has an affection for classic cars and alt/rock music.</p>
<p>Ms Aisling McKenna <i>(Chair)</i></p>	<p>Aisling McKenna is the Director of Quality and Institutional Research at Dublin City University. Her work is focused on promoting, supporting and facilitating continuous quality improvement activities across academic and administrative units throughout the University. Her office also leads the university’s approach to applying an evidence informed approach to institutional planning, strategy development, and quality enhancement at Dublin City University. She has worked within the higher education sector since 2007, and previous to her current role, was Institutional Research and Analysis Officer for Dublin City University.</p>
<p>Professor Laura Rascaroli</p>	<p>Laura Rascaroli is Professor of Film and Screen Media and Head of the School of Film, Music &amp; Theatre at University College Cork, where she lectures on film theory, on documentary, and on</p>



	European and World Cinema. Her research interests span European
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	<p>and World cinemas; experimental nonfiction, the essay film, and first-person cinemas; artist film and the post-medium moving image; film space and geopolitics; and the politics of form.</p> <p>She is the author of two monographic studies on essayistic and first-person nonfiction: <i>The Personal Camera: Subjective Cinema and the Essay Film</i> (Wallflower Press, 2009) and <i>How the Essay Film Thinks</i> (Oxford University Press, 2017). She has also co-authored books on the postmodern cinematic city, on the European road movie, and on the cinema of Nanni Moretti. Among her edited collections are <i>Antonioni: Centenary Essays</i> (British Film Institute, 2011) and <i>Theorizing Film Through Contemporary Art: Expanding Cinema</i> (Amsterdam University Press, 2020). She has delivered over eighty invited lectures internationally in universities, film festivals and cultural institutes, and has taught courses in Cuba, Italy, and Spain. Her work has been translated into languages including Farsi, Chinese, Korean, Czech, Polish, Spanish, Italian. She is General Editor of <a href="#">Alphaville: Journal of Film and Screen Media</a>.</p> <p>She is a member of the editorial boards of the <i>Journal of Italian Cinema and Media Studies</i>; <i>[in]Transition: Journal of Videographic Film and Moving Image Studies</i>; and the <i>International Journal of Film and Media Arts</i>, and of the advisory boards of <i>Screen</i>; <i>Comunicazioni Sociali</i>; <i>Aniki: Portuguese Journal of the Moving Image</i>; <i>L'Avventura: International Journal of Italian Film and Media Landscapes</i>; <i>Studies in Arts and Humanities</i>; <i>Research in Film and History</i>; <i>Kino: International Journal of Film and Media Arts</i>; and <i>Mediapolis: A Journal of Cities and Culture</i>. She has been Vice-Chair of the ECREA Film Studies Section (2012–2018), and currently sits on the advisory boards of AIM (Associação de Investigadores da Imagem em Movimento), and of the Documentary Film Cultures Book Series (Peter Lang).</p> <p>Laura Rascaroli completed a Laurea in Modern Letters at the Università Cattolica of Milan in 1992, specialising in Social Communications, and with a dissertation in Film Studies. She was awarded a Higher Doctorate by the NUI in 2014.</p>
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<p>Mr Barry Sheerin <i>(Student Reviewer)</i></p>	<p>Barry Sheerin is a final year BSc Chemistry student at University College Cork. He is from Tramore (Co. Waterford) but has called Cork home for the last four years. Since joining UCC as a student, Mr Sheerin actively contributed to student life, by serving as Chairperson of the UCC Science Society for the 2020/21 Academic Year and, the following year, as Engagement, Development &amp; New Societies Officer on the UCC Societies Executive. Barry Sheerin is a member of the UCC's PortAir research group, which was set up to</p>
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	<p>monitor and determine sources of air pollution within Dublin Port using a low-cost sensor network, as well as providing policy recommendations to mitigate pollution in Ireland. Alongside his studies, Mr Sheerin works remotely as a video producer and editor for the online educational content provider Studyclix. Prior to this, he worked for 4 years as Head Beach Lifeguard on Tramore Beach. Mr Sheerin's interests include aviation, emergency response, documentary filmmaking and environmental chemistry.</p>
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## Appendix B – Peer Review Panel Timetable

Prior to site visit – online meeting

Tuesday 11 October 2022	
14:00 – 15:00	Briefing by Dr Stephen Hammel, Quality Enhancement Manager, Ms Marie O’Regan, Projects Assistant and Ms Seugnet Kritzinger, Quality Enhancement Advisor.  Panel discussion – initial thoughts on Desktop Stocktake Report.

Site Visit to University College Cork (UCC)

Monday 31 October 2022	
During the day	Panel members arrive in Cork
19:00	Dinner for members of the Panel hosted by Ms Elizabeth Noonan, Director of Quality Enhancement  <b>Venue: River Lee Hotel</b>

Tuesday 1 November 2022	
<b>Venue: Tower Room 1</b>	
09:00 – 10:00	Private meeting of the Panel <i>Panel agree issues to be explored in forthcoming meetings.</i>
10:00 – 10:45	Meeting with Professor Carol Linehan, Head, School of Applied Psychology <i>Discussion of programme background, significant changes from initiation and major developments</i>
10:45 – 11:10	Private meeting of the Panel (coffee break)

11:10-12:45	<p>Meeting with Ms Kay Conroy, Programme Director, Geraldine Green, Registrar and Executive Manager, Ms Ger Matthews, Clinical and Assistant Programme Director, Ms Eve Watson, Director of Research (remotely via Ms Teams), Turning Point Institute</p> <p><i>Discussion of Turning Point delivery of programme</i></p>
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12:45 – 13:00	Private meeting of the Panel
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch break
14:00 – 14:30	<p>Meeting with Professor Chris Williams, Head, College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences (CACSSS)</p> <p><i>Discussion on position of programme within CACSSS, overall College Structure and future academic plan</i></p>
14:30 – 15:30	<p>Meeting with Students and Graduates (remotely)</p> <p>Ms Eimear Deighton, 4th Year</p> <p>Mr Gerald Fitzgerald, Graduate</p> <p>Ms Annick Hedderman, 2nd Year</p> <p>Ms Ana-Kirsten MacLachlan, Graduate</p> <p>Mr Ashley Morgan, 4th Year</p> <p>Ms Maeve O’Sullivan, 3rd Year</p> <p>Ms Gill Wall, 3rd Year</p>
15:30 – 16:30	<p>Meeting with Teaching Staff (remotely)</p> <p>Ms Geraldine Cooney</p> <p>Ms Sharon Cunningham</p> <p>Ms Virginia Kerr</p> <p>Ms Diane McDonald</p> <p>Ms Ailbhe O’Reilly</p> <p>Mr Alan Rodgers</p> <p>Ms Suzanne Walsh</p> <p><i>Discuss issues such as communications, staffing, structures and staff development.</i></p>

16:30 – 17:15	Private meeting of the Panel (coffee break)
19:00	Dinner for members of the Panel. <b>Venue: River Lee Hotel</b>

**Wednesday 2nd November 2022****Venue: Tower Room 1**

09:00 – 10:30	Convening of the Panel – preparation for the day ahead
10:30 – 11:00	Private meeting of the Panel (coffee break)
11:00 – 11:45	Meeting with Mr Paul O'Donovan, Academic Secretary and Assistant Registrar, UCC <i>Discussion on;</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Joint Academic Standards Committee (JASC) governance of programme;</i></li><li>• <i>UCC's view of the partnership and its position with overall academic strategy (on behalf of UCC's Registrar, Professor Stephen Byrne, Chair of the Academic Board);</i></li><li>• Programme approval process on behalf of Academic Programmes and Regulations (APAR)</li></ul>
11:45 – 12:15	Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) Presentation/Discussion – Ms Andrea Durnin, Senior Quality Assurance Manager, Tertiary Education Monitoring and Review <i>Discuss linked provision and collaborative programmes as defined in national guidelines</i>
12:15 – 12:40	Follow up meeting with Mr Paul O'Donovan, Academic Secretary and Assistant Registrar <i>Clarifications on points raised in earlier meeting</i>
12:40 – 13:40	Lunch break
13:40 – 15:30	Presentation design meeting <i>Discussion on key points to be covered in presentation and overall report</i>
15:30 – 16:00	Private meeting of the Panel (coffee break)
16:00 – 16:45	Presentation of findings to Ms Kay Conroy, Ms Geraldine Green, Ms Ger Matthews, Turning Point Institute, and Mr Paul O' Donovan, University College Cork (remotely via Ms Teams). <i>Presentation to be made by the Chair or other member(s) of Panel as agreed, summarising the principal findings of the Panel. This presentation is <u>not</u> for discussion at this time.</i>

## Schedule of periodic Quality Reviews 2023/2

The following units will undergo periodic Quality Review in 2023/24, this represents the final stage of Cycle 3 of periodic Quality Review.

<b>Periodic Review 2023/24</b>	
<b>Name of School/Unit</b>	<b>Date</b>
School of Applied Social Studies	October 2023
School of the Human Environment	October/November 2023
School of Nursing & Midwifery	January/February 2024
School of Medicine	February 2024
Registrar's Office (all Directorates)	March 2024
School of Public Health	April 2024
Office of the Vice-President for Research & Innovation	April 2024
School of Applied Psychology	The Quality Review will take place in October 2024 to accommodate its professional accreditation by Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI).

## Section 3 Student Feedback Ecosystem Project

The UCC-wide Student Feedback Ecosystem Project (SFEP) was co-designed and led by the Quality Enhancement Unit and CIRTL in 2021-23. It was rolled out in 2022-3 by the Quality Enhancement Unit, with the support of a cross-functional team, having been awarded SATLE funding by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education. It culminated in the development of a new integrated student module surveying tool – combining consistency of core questions with module-specific inputs. Such ‘Proof of Concept’ student feedback survey was piloted in late 2023 by virtue of an IT integration of Canvas and Qualtrics, thus offering an opportunity to test the technical application of a potential systematic student feedback approach, which integrates with Canvas and utilises the newly acquired and preferred Qualtrics survey software. After an initial call for pilot modules, 21 were identified. The Module Co-ordinators for each module received a briefing on the objectives, as well as receiving some guidance materials they could share with their students on the pilot.

The final stage of activity and output entailed an independent, user-focused evaluation, carried out by a post-doctoral researcher from May to June 2023. Its overall objective was to assess the effectiveness of the survey tool based on information gathered from user experiences. The ensuing report of the key findings is expected to be presented in the academic year 2023/24.

On the basis of this report, together with other key relevant considerations, UCC will deliberate on the future of student module and programme surveying institution-wide and, hence, make substantial progress towards closing the student feedback loop.

Overall, the outputs of this project strongly align with the objectives of Goal Two - Student Success Pillar of UCC 2023-28 supporting student success and enhancing student experience informed by the student voice and supporting students as co-creators of their learning experience.

### Background and rationale

While there are a range of formal and informal student feedback mechanisms in operation, UCC currently does not have a systematic process for gathering student feedback following the suspension of the SysEval survey in 2016.

This has been a consistent point raised across different institutional reviews of UCC, including the EUA Institutional Evaluation Programme 2020<sup>3</sup>, UCC’s Institutional Quality Review in 2012<sup>4</sup> and within analysis of the outcomes of periodic review at UCC.

As a response to this, the main aim of the project was to develop a set of principles and approaches to gathering student feedback informed by current good practice nationally and internationally in higher education, developed through a comprehensive consultation with UCC students, staff and external colleagues.

### Module Survey Pilot

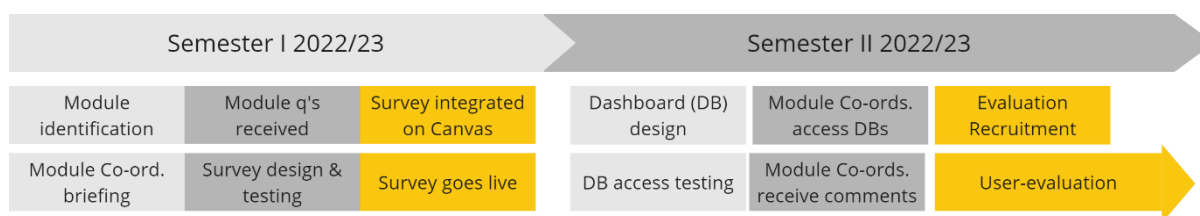
#### *Stages of Student Module Pilot Survey*

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<sup>3</sup> [https://www.iep-qaq.org/downloads/publications/iep\\_ucc\\_report\\_2019-2020\\_final.pdf](https://www.iep-qaq.org/downloads/publications/iep_ucc_report_2019-2020_final.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/qualityenhancementunit/reports/qqi/iriU/IRIU\\_UCC\\_Full\\_Report.pdf](https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/qualityenhancementunit/reports/qqi/iriU/IRIU_UCC_Full_Report.pdf)





## Pilot Survey Completion Statistics

The pilot modules consisted of 1,137 registered students (1,095 individuals, 42 were registered for more than one pilot module) across each of the four Colleges and included both undergraduate and postgraduate modules.

After the survey deadline on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2022, 527 submissions were received, of which 393 were fully completed representing a total submission rate of ~35%.

Submission rates across each of the modules ranged from 17.5% to 100% with an average across all modules equalling 50.9%.

## User-focussed Evaluation

The final stage of activity and output entailed an independent user-focused evaluation. Its overall objective was to assess the effectiveness of the survey tool based on information gathered from user experience. More specifically, its remit considered:

1. Overall user experience of survey
2. Campus-wide survey future requirements
3. Different approaches that best serve the requirements identified by users

To provide an appropriate level of objectiveness to the evaluation, a postdoctoral researcher was recruited for three months, completing the evaluative task by the end of June 2023. The ensuing report of the key findings is expected to be presented in the academic year 2023/24.

## Section 4 QEU Activities

### Good Practice Symposium

The inclusion of Good Practice Case Studies in periodic quality reviews was introduced by the Quality Enhancement Unit (QEU) in 2016. Since then, the QEU has been committed to recognising and sharing good practices as well as publishing the case studies on their website. The inaugural Good Practice Symposium was launched on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2022 with the call for entries being extended to all staff. Thirty-four case studies were presented by academic and Professional Services colleagues and students, illustrating existing good practices in various areas ranging from education, training, research, professional/support services and students University-wide. The aim of the Symposium was to highlight and share the remarkable work being done by the UCC community, as instances of Good Practice from which others can learn from. The event offered a unique opportunity for professional networking, peer exchange of professional ideas, practices and, hopefully, emerging future collaborations. It also allowed the QEU to open a dialogue on the collective and dynamic definition of good practices a UCC. Following the symposium, the posters were transformed into digital artefacts and displayed on our [webpage](#), making them available to the wider university community. The QEU plans to host the Symposium on a biannual basis with the next one scheduled for May 2024.

### IUA National Quality Offices Workshop

The Quality Enhancement Unit (QEU) represented UCC at the IUA National Quality Offices Workshop, which was held in Portlaoise on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2023. The theme of the day was 'Quality Assurance and Enhancement in a Digitised World'. The QEU presented a poster to demonstrate their ongoing engagement with innovative digitalised practices and digital tools, firstly in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, and going forward, as a Quality Enhancement approach to the delivery of its operations. The poster highlighted the QEU's plans of further expanding its digital toolkit and practices which will contribute to the ongoing evolution and enhancement of practices. UCC was one of eight universities that attended the workshop, engaging in roundtable discussions on hybrid reviews, digitisation of processes, the role of external examiners, the use of dashboards for quality enhancement and sharing good practice. The event offered a welcomed opportunity for establishing more regular team networking practices, for peer sharing, collaboration and exchange. Following the workshop, the External Peer Review of Assessment, known as the 'ExPeRA project', was developed. The ExPeRA project aims to review the purpose and practice of external examination of taught programmes across nine degree awarding bodies, including University of Limerick (UL), University of Galway (UOG), Dublin City University (DCU), Maynooth University (MU), Trinity College Dublin (TCD), University College Dublin (UCD), Technological University Dublin (TU) and National University of Ireland (NUI), with a view to informing future practice. Phase one of the data collection comprised of a survey. The QEU disseminated this survey to UCC's external examiners, who had consented to take part in the project. In addition, the survey was also shared with UCC's academic and research staff, who may act as external examiners outside the University.

# Quality @ UCC

*From Covid-19 challenges to digitally enhanced working*

## 05. Looking Ahead

- Sharing good practice
- Peer learning
- Openness to growth
- Expanding resources & digital tools

## 03. Digital Tools

- **Padlet** engagement platform
- **Mentimeter** live feedback
- **Qualtrics** digital survey
- **Canva** graphic design
- **Powtoon** video creation

## 01. QR Digitalisation

- Covid-19 response action plan
- Site Visit transformation
- MS Suite; Teams & SharePoint
- 5 virtual unit Quality Reviews (QRs); 1 Thematic Review completed

## 04. Student Digital Space

- Student-centred digital engagement platform
- Suite of digital resources
- Student Digital Badge
- Co-creation with students

## 02. QR Hybrid Operations

- Surveys conducted to identify strengths of virtual QRs
- Integrated key learnings arising from QR digitalisation
- Sustainability matters considered
- Hybrid Quality Review approach developed

Connect with us on our [webpage](#)  
or on Twitter [@QualityUCC](#)

## Section 5 QQI Matters

### Annual Quality Report to QQI 2021/22

[UCC's Annual Quality Report \(AQR\) 2021/22](#) was approved by QEC in **September 2022** and submitted to QQI (Quality and Qualifications Ireland) as part of the documentation for UCC's Institutional Review 2022/23. The AQR is the University's formal statement of its institutional level approach and policy for the quality of its education, research, training and related services as defined under the 2012 Quality Assurance & Qualifications Act. The AQRs for all higher education institutions are published by QQI and are used for sectoral analysis and benchmarking, including institutional profiling leading into the Institutional Review. The Annual Quality Report is structured in two main parts: Part A comprises a record of each institution's current QA policies and procedures. Part B covers an extended discussion of the issues arising from quality activities, planned enhancements as well as an evaluation of the impact of previous enhancements. The AQR also includes a Case Study, which is thematically focused.

### Draft QQI Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (Blended, Hybrid and Online Programmes)

Quality & Qualifications Ireland commissioned the development of Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Blended, Hybrid and Online Programmes. UCC participated in sectoral consultation for a, contributed to the IUA deliberations on the draft Guidelines, following a process of internal consultation UCC also submitted a response to the draft guidelines. The final version of the guidelines await publication.

### International Education Mark (IEM)

The International Education Mark (IEM) is a new quality mark and part of a suite of legislative measures designed to protect international learners. The new mark will be awarded to higher education and English language education providers who have demonstrated that they meet national standards to ensure a quality experience for international learners from enrolment through to the completion of their programme of education and training.

Consultation on the IEM has been ongoing throughout 2022/23 and a Code of Practice along with Guidelines for the Assessment of IEM are awaited.

### Honours Classification Project

QQI is initiating a research project on Honours Classification trends and practices across the higher education sector, taking a 10 year snapshot across a range of undergraduate programmes. Six programmes from each institution will be included in the sample, with Nursing and Midwifery programmes for each institution being included within the sample.

### Irish Quality and Qualifications Forum (IQQF)

The Irish Quality and Qualifications Forum was established to be a key driver of an integrated approach to quality and qualifications across the further and higher education and training sectors. Its functions are to encourage and stimulate system-wide collaboration, engagement and insight-sharing on issues of quality and qualifications. The Director of Quality Enhancement is a member of the Forum.

## Section 6 International Quality Projects

### EQUAM-LA Project

QEU was a partner in the recently completed Erasmus+ Project, EQUAM-LA – ‘Enhancing Quality Management & Recognition in Latin American universities to underpin the Latin American Higher Education Space’. This project’s aim was to enhance Quality Assurance in Latin American higher education while also fostering an understanding of European quality enhancement tools and standards within the Latin American higher education system. The project involved 14 universities from four Latin American countries: Colombia, Argentina, Nicaragua, and Panama. QEU’s inputs to EQUAM-LA included managing quality assurance procedures and contributing to the development of a Quality Assurance (QA) toolkit to facilitate international qualifications recognition.

The EQUAM-LA Project aligns with the University’s strategic priorities, already embraced in the previous strategic plan and emphasised even more strongly in the new Strategic Plan 2023-2028 (Goal Three - ‘Global Engagement’). Indeed, it constitutes an important instance of UCC’s strategic alignment to Global and European partner collaboration as well as emphasising the overall goals of capacity building across several national HE systems.

Throughout the duration of this project (January 2020 - Jul 2023), the QEU participated to two virtual study visits (due to Covid-19-related health and safety arrangements), as well as to a range of plenary meetings. The two virtual Study Visits to Madrid and Brussels took place on separate occasions in March 2021. Elizabeth Noonan, Sheila Ronan and Silvia Brandi attended both virtual events, whereas Marita Foster, from the International Office presented on behalf of UCC at the Brussels event. Her presentation, entitled ‘Internal Procedure for Recognition of Foreign Qualifications’, was delivered to the 14 partner universities from Latin America as well as the participating EU partners.

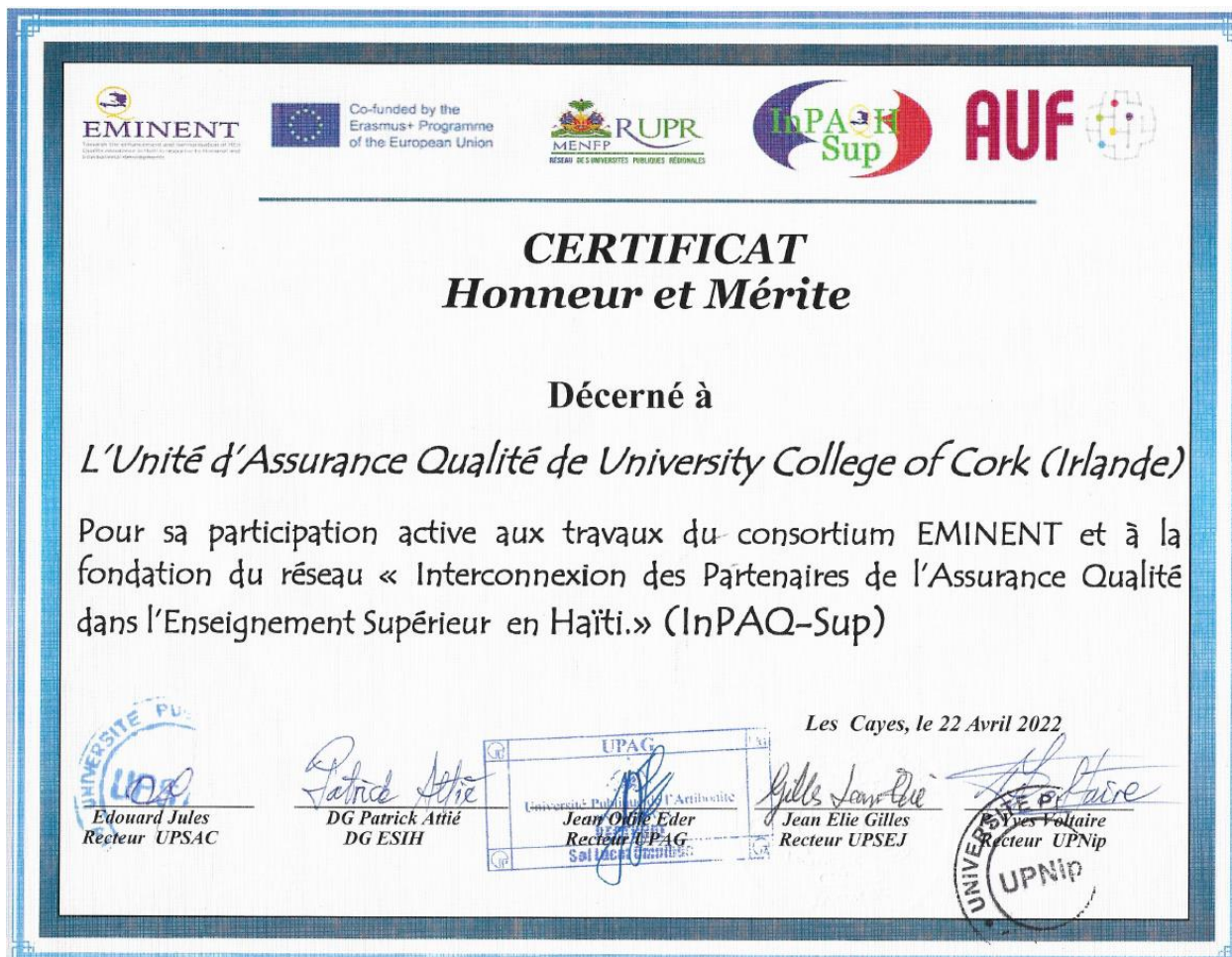
The second plenary meeting of the project, which took place in Madrid from 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> November 2022, represented a significant milestone for the project towards the development of quality assurance systems in Latin American universities, aligning them with European standards. Notably, the quality assurance agencies of the respective countries also joined EQUAM-LA, expanding the project's participation to 21 institutions. Ms Michelle Nelson represented Academic Services at UCC at this event. At the following plenary meeting, which took place at the Universidad de Murcia in May 2023, the QEU participated remotely by offering its expertise and support in the development of a QA toolkit for the partnered universities. The closing plenary meeting took place at the Universidad Nacional del Litoral in Santa Fe, Argentina, from 12<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> June 2023, with UCC supporting the meeting remotely. During this event, the project's results were presented, accompanied by lectures on Quality Assurance, discussions on good practices in internationalisation and roundtable sessions aimed at brainstorming and debating strategies to enhance internationalisation through quality assurance. The project concluded on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2023, following a 6-month extension due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which necessitated adjustments to the project timeline. Currently, the final report for the project is in progress, summarizing the achievements and outcomes of our engagement in EQUAM-LA.

### EMINENT Project

The EMINENT Erasmus+ Project (2018-2022) was established to support the Haitian Higher Education sector in its efforts to enhance and harmonise Haitian institutions’ Quality Assurance systems and processes in response to national and international developments and in line with European Union Standards. This programme was led by the University of Alicante, in partnership with two EU institutions



namely, University College Cork and the Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation, Austria. Five Haitian higher education institutions (UPNIP, UPAG, UPSEJ, UPSAC and ESIH) were involved as the beneficiaries of the EMINENT Project. The project began with a kick-off meeting in the University of Alicante in February 2019 and was shortly followed by two study visits in May/June 2019: one to the University of Vienna and the second to University College Cork. A series of online Masterclasses and tutorial meetings were also led by several institutions including AQ Austria, University of Alicante and University College Cork in 2021. Notwithstanding the challenges posed by natural disasters, political and social unrest, the work continued virtually during the Covid-19 pandemic. QEU engaged in online training via a series of Masterclasses in July 2020. The EMINENT Project came to a successful conclusion in 2022, though one year after the originally scheduled end date (October 2021). A Colloquium was held in April, 2022 to showcase the developments in Quality Assurance practices within higher education in Haiti, that have evolved over the course of this project. This event was an important celebration of the achievements of the collaboration which had required considerable adaptation and agility in light of the impact of the Covid pandemic on the practicality of partners meeting coupled with the political and environmental challenges faced by Haitian institutions. UCC received a certificate in recognition of its contribution to the project.



## Section 7 Looking forward to 2023/24

Looking ahead to academic year 2023/24, the main priorities for quality work will include:

- Completion of the Third Cycle of Periodic Quality Review, with the following units scheduled for review:
  - School of Applied Social Studies (Oct 2023)
  - School of the Human Environment (Oct 2023) inclusive of a Programme Review Pilot
  - School of Nursing and Midwifery (Jan 2024)
  - School of Medicine (Feb 2024)
  - Registrar’s Office - all Directorates (Mar 2024)
  - School of Public Health (April 2024)
  - Office of the Vice-President for Research & Innovation (Apr 2024)
  - School of Applied Psychology (Oct 2024)
- Thematic Review: Research Degree Student Experience
- Transnational Education Review: Minzu University of China (collaborative partnership offering a dual degree with the School of Biological, Earth and Environmental Sciences, UCC)
- The development of UCC’s Action Plan in response to the Institutional Review (March,2023)
- Conclusion of the Student Feedback Project and Phase 2 development
- Good Practice Symposium in May 2024
- Engagement with the International Education Mark

# Appendix 1: Quality Enhancement Committee

## Section 8

### Section 9 QEC Membership

#### QEC Membership: April 2021 – Sept 2025

##### Ex Officio:

- Professor John O'Halloran, Interim President (Chair)
- Professor Stephen Byrne, Interim Registrar
- Mr Diarmuid Collins, Bursar
- Dr Niamh Connolly, Director of Projects (President's Office)
- Ms Elizabeth Noonan, Director of Quality Enhancement (Secretary)
- Ms Asha Woodhouse, President, Students' Union (2021/22 & 2022/23)
- Ms Sinead Roche, (2021/22) / Mr Stephen O'Riordan (2022/23) Education Officer, Students' Union

##### Nominated Members:

##### *4 academic staff members – 1 representative from each College*

- Professor Maggie O'Neill, College of Arts, Celtic Studies & Social Sciences
- Professor Chris Lynch, College of Medicine & Health
- Professor Pdraig Cantillon-Murphy, College of Science, Engineering & Food Science
- Professor Maria Cahill, College of Business and Law

##### *3 staff members – representatives of administrative and support services*

- Ms Kathryn Neville, College of Medicine and Health
- Mr David Hogan, Institutional Research Officer, Office of the Vice President for External Relations
- Ms Helen O'Donoghue, HR Business Manager, College of Science, Engineering & Food Science

##### *2 members of Academic Council*

- Dr Rachel MagShamráin - Head, Department of German
- Dr Mohamad Saab – School of Nursing and Midwifery

##### *1 Doctoral Student representative*

- Ms Niamh O' Mahoney, PhD Researcher, College of Science, Engineering & Food Science



## Section 10 QEC Terms of Reference

**Aim:** To support the University's mission and strategy for excellence in learning, research and related services through developing and embedding a culture of quality enhancement based on the outcomes of robust expert peer review and informed by ongoing analysis of key quality indicators.

The Terms of Reference of the Committee are to:

- foster a quality culture throughout the University, that is supportive of innovation, the sharing of good practice and development of excellence in teaching, learning, research and related services;
- oversee the development of University quality assurance and enhancement policies and procedures, informed by national and international policy developments, that support strategic goals for excellence and the identification of good practice;
- facilitate student engagement in quality assurance and enhancement activities;
- ensure that University quality review policies and procedures have regard to prevailing national and European requirements: the Qualifications and Quality Assurance Act 2012, published national quality assurance guidelines and European Standards and Guidelines (ESG);
- recommend policy and procedures for ensuring the integrity of various forms of academic association with external organisations including collaborative provision and linked providers;
- review and analyse systematically the outcomes of quality processes and relevant quality indicators to confirm the on-going maintenance of quality and identify any required strategic enhancement activities;
- ensure the methodologies for expert peer review are evaluated as required in order to maintain a focus on both fitness for purpose and fitness of purpose;
- review and propose revision to the terms of reference, where appropriate and necessary.

In fulfilling its remit, the Quality Enhancement Committee will advise the University Management team and Academic Council on key quality issues arising with implications for strategy or policy development. It will also provide an Annual Report to Governing Body to meet the requirements of the Universities Act 1997 and the Qualifications and Quality Assurance Act 2012.

### Constitution

#### Ex Officio Members

- President (Chair)
- Senior Vice-President Academic & Registrar
- Bursar
- Director of Quality Enhancement (Secretary)
- Director of Projects (President's Office)
- President, Students Union
- Education Officer, Students Union

### **Nominated Members**

- 4 academic staff with experience of participation in quality review and/or knowledge of quality systems – one from each College, nominated by the President.
- 3 administrative & support services staff with experience of participation in quality review and/or knowledge of quality systems from administration and services, nominated by the President.
- 2 members of Academic Council
- 1 Doctoral Student representative

### **Quorum**

The quorum necessary for the transaction of business shall be 6 at least one of whom shall be the President or the Senior Vice-President Academic. A duly convened meeting of the Committee at which a quorum is present shall be competent to exercise all or any of the authorities, powers and discretions vested in or exercisable by the Committee.

### **Sub-Committees**

The Committee shall establish such sub-committees and working groups, with specific briefs, as are deemed necessary for the efficient operation of the Committee.

### **Term of Office**

The term of office for the Committee is four years, with the current Committee's period of office ending June 2025.

### **Casual Vacancies**

The Committee has the authority to fill any casual vacancies that arise during the lifetime of the Committee.