UCC

University College Cork, Ireland
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

PRESIDENT'S REPORT
2023/2024

OCTOBER 2023 - SEPTEMBER 2024

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President's Foreword

With over 25,000 registered students, University College Cork is a leading research-intensive university recognised for its diverse academic offerings and outstanding student experience. While most of our students (79%) are from Ireland, UCC attracts a significant number of international students from EU and non-EU countries. In line with our strategic objectives, this year we saw an 11% increase in international undergraduate students and a 32% increase in international postgraduate students, while the number of Irish students remained stable.

As we approach our 180th year in 2025, our sights are set on achieving the goals set out in our Strategic Plan 2023 – 2028: Securing our Future to deliver our vision to connect and empower people to create knowledge that shapes a sustainable and inclusive world. This year marked the first full academic year of the Plan's implementation, and we advanced our research and innovation by completing the launch of all ten UCC Futures thematic areas. This organisational research framework provides a creative, inclusive and transformative platform breaking down boundaries between disciplines to deliver solutions to the world's biggest challenges. Our researchers have been immensely successful, securing record research funding, launching new spinout companies, and driving innovation in ways that contribute directly to student success and societal impact.

We continue to make significant progress in enhancing student success, and this year launched a Work Integrated Learning initiative to consolidate activities across the university that aim to enhance students' employability. We also launched UCC's first ever apprenticeship programme in Social Work, linked directly to recognised recruitment barriers to the profession. This year, we surpassed our target for philanthropic income to support the delivery of our mission. Our QS World University Rankings position rose to 273, an impressive climb of 19 places from last year. This year, two departments secured Athena Swan awards. Together with advancements in our Bystander Intervention Programme and Inclusive UCC work, the launch of the Race Equality, Disability & Neurodivergence Network, and Proud Ally Student Network, and a meaningful partnership with My Canine Companion, these achievements strengthen our commitment to fostering a fully inclusive campus community.

This year marked the conclusion of UCC's largest-ever investment in digital transformation - a six-year project to modernize and enhance student services. It delivered digital-first solutions to meet the expectations of students, reduced reliance on paper, and introduced new systems for curriculum and research management, and for student administration from application to placement, and a co-designed digital Student Hub. This successful project underscores UCC's commitment to sustainability, efficiency, and a people-focused approach, delivering a seamless, accessible, and future-ready student experience.

We continue to make meaningful progress in emissions reduction and have achieved a 32% reduction in total CO2 emissionsrelative to 2016 levels in line with our commitment to ambitious sustainability goals, which include achieving a zero-waste campus by 2030 and carbon neutrality by 2040. We also achieved a remarkable saving of over 2 million disposable cups since the start of the disposable cup ban across campus in January 2023. UCC was recognized as the sixth most sustainable university by the UI GreenMetric World University Rankings in December 2023, and has consistently placed in the top ten universities in this ranking and remains the leading Irish university for sustainability.

The new Economic and Societal Impact Report 2024 details UCC's significant contributions to the local and national economy, society and global research initiatives. Annually generating €1.18 billion, UCC delivers a €6 return for every €1 of state investment and supports over 21,000 jobs in Cork. UCC's extensive research, with over €100 million in funding annually, drives innovation across fields such as sustainable energy, health, and AI. The report highlights UCC's commitment to social responsibility, diversity and sustainability, as well as its global recognition for green initiatives and educational access, and impact in fostering innovation and partnerships that impact sectors from healthcare to technology.

UCC underwent its National Institutional Quality Review (CINNTE) in 2023 and the report was published in October 2023. The Review Team found the culture of UCC to be supportive and firmly grounded in principles of fairness, transparency and collegiality. The third cycle of UCC's Quality Review process (2016 - 2024) was completed this year, with the completion of eight Quality Reviews.

This was a challenging financial year for UCC, following the identification of a financial deficit for the previous year. This shortfall was a decisive call to action to which we responded across all areas of our operations. We took the necessary steps to restore financial stability, centred on a comprehensive evaluation of our systems and processes and the identification of areas for improvement aimed at regaining financial sustainability. This proactive approach has been instrumental in ensuring we continue to deliver on our mission across teaching, learning, research and the student experience.

The implementation of governance reforms in line with the Higher Education Authority Act 2022, and the associated establishment of a new Governing Authority in November 2023, brought fresh perspectives to our leadership as we navigated this period of transition and recovery. Through strategic initiatives aimed at financial sustainability, governance enhancement, and operational efficiency, we have fortified our foundation for future success. I am confident that these efforts will ensure that a prosperous and impactful future for our university.

I am proud of how far we have come this year, and as we look to 2025 and beyond, our focus will be on strengthening our financial sustainability and on harnessing the potential of our community to create meaningful impact.

Professor John O'Halloran
President
University College Cork

About University College Cork

University College Cork (UCC) is a comprehensive research-based globally oriented university with over 25,000 students, 3,500 staff and over 220,000 alumni worldwide. UCC is a vibrant hub of teaching, research and engagement, and is Ireland's most sustainable university campus.

Established in 1845 and opening its doors to students in 1849, University College Cork was then called Queen's College Cork as it was one of three colleges established by the Queen's Colleges (Ireland) Act 1845. University College Cork was founded with the bold vision (at the time) of providing high-quality education, rooted in the principles of excellence, inquiry and equality. These principles remain as relevant today as they were 180 years ago. From those early days, our university has blossomed into an institution of international repute, known for its academic rigor, groundbreaking research, and its unwavering commitment to the betterment of society.

UCC is a leading research institution, known for its strength in food and the microbiome, sustainability and climate action, digital technologies, photonics and quantum physics. UCC has close links with the community, industry and government and its research and teaching have a strong engaged focus.

UCC's diverse educational and research programmes are delivered across 27 Schools within four Colleges as follows:

College of Arts, Celtic Studies & Social Sciences
- School of Applied Psychology
- School of Applied Social Studies
- School of Education
- School of English & Digital Humanities
- School of History
- School of the Human Environment: Geography, Archaeology & Classics
- School of Languages, Literature & Cultures
- School of Irish Learning
- School of Film, Music & Theatre
- School of Society, Politics & Ethics

College of Business & Law
- Cork University Business School
- School of Law

College of Medicine & Health
- School of Public Health
- School of Clinical Therapies
- School of Pharmacy
- School of Medicine
- Dental School & Hospital
- School of Nursing & Midwifery

College of Science, Engineering & Food Science
- School of Biological, Earth & Environmental Sciences
- School of Biochemistry & Cell Biology
- School of Chemistry
- School of Computer Science & Information Technology
- School of Engineering & Architecture
- School of Food & Nutritional Sciences
- School of Mathematical Sciences
- School of Microbiology
- School of Physics

The University Leadership Team (ULT) comprises: (back row left to right) Professor Cathal O'Connell, Head College of Arts, Celtic Studies & Social Sciences (interim); Mr Rory Condon, Chief Financial & Operating Officer; Dr Gerard Culley, Director of IT Services; Professor Stephen Byrne, Deputy President & Registrar; Professor Thia Hennessy, Head College of Business & Law; Professor Paul McSweeney, Vice-President Learning & Teaching; Mr Mark Poland, Director of Buildings & Estates; Professor John Cryan, Vice-President Research & Innovation; (front row left to right) Dr Jennifer Murphy, Advisor to the President (interim); Ms Ashley Flaherty, Chief People & Culture Officer; Professor Sarah Culloty, Head College of Science, Engineering & Food Science; Professor John O'Halloran, President; Professor Ursula Kilkelly, Vice-President Global Engagement; Professor Helen Whelton, Head College of Medicine & Health; Ms Nora Geary, Corporate Secretary.

A Year in UCC

25,254 Registered Students	**17,655** Undergraduate Students	**7,599** Postgraduate Students	**1,548** Adult and Continuing Education Students
5,284 International Students from 123 Countries worldwide	**21%** of UCC Students use Access Pathways	**91.5%** Student Retention (First Year Students)	**7,162** Graduations
220k+ Alumni Worldwide	**3,638** Academic, Research and Administrative Staff	**28%** of Academic Staff from Overseas	**6th** most Sustainable University in the World
€531.9m Total Annual Income	**€121m** Direct Research Income	**118** Student Societies	**44** Student Clubs

A Year in UCC

Rankings

273rd	Globally in QS World University Rankings
67th	In the Times Higher Education World University Impact Rankings
6th	Most Sustainable University in the World (UI GreenMetric)
301-350	Band in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings

Subjects/Disciplines in Global Subject Rankings

QS World University Rankings by Subject	
Subject/Discipline	Global Rank
Nursing	32
Law	73
Agricultural & Forestry	79
Pharmacy & Pharmacology	94
Performing Arts	51-100

Shanghai Global Subject Rankings	
Subject/Discipline	Global Rank
Dentistry & Oral Sciences	51–75

US News Subject Rankings	
Subject/Discipline	Global Rank
Agricultural Sciences	51–75
Microbiology	101–150
Food Science & Technology	101–150
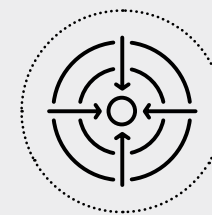
Strategic Plan 2023–2028: Securing our Future

Our Vision

UCC connects and empowers people to create knowledge that shapes a sustainable and inclusive world.

Our Mission

UCC's mission is to create and sustain an inclusive environment and culture to enable transformative research and learning for the enrichment of society and stewardship of our planet.

Our Values

Our core values guide and underpin our actions and our processes:

- **C**ompassion
- **A**gility
- **I**ntegrity
- **R**espect
- **D**iscovery
- **E**quity
- **A**ccountability
- **S**ustainability

In February 2023, UCC launched its five-year **Strategic Plan 2023 - 2028: Securing our Future.** This plan articulates a framework for sustained excellence as we work to secure the future for our university, our people and our planet. The first full academic year of implementation has now been completed, tracked against 14 measures of success, as we work together to ensure its success. UCC's Strategic Plan to 2028 aims for UCC to be:

- **globally recognised for its distinctive research in niche areas of excellence;**
- **a digitally enhanced learning environment delivering a research-based curriculum;**
- **the university of choice for postgraduate study in signature areas of excellence;**
- **an internationally linked university, amplifying global impact;**
- **a place of embedded fairness, equality and inclusivity;**
- **a connected university that is effectively engaged with all stakeholders.**

Read more about our
**Strategic Plan 2023 – 2028:
Securing our Future**

What We Have Done This Year:

Goal 1 aims to deliver impactful research and innovation that builds a distinctive research reputation. Notable accomplishments in the first year included commencing two new European Research Council (ERC) grants, reaching 146 Horizon Europe awards valued at €108 million, and the launch of four spin-out companies.

Goal 2 aims to provide a student-centred, inclusive and digitally enhanced learning environment, a Connected Curriculum and an outstanding student experience, positioning UCC as the university of choice for postgraduate education. Significant progress has been made this year including a reduction in student-staff ratio of one point to 20.5:1. Over 94% of primary degree graduates from UCC are now employed or in further study nine months after graduation. Two signature postgraduate programmes were introduced this year: the MSc Microbiome Science and the MA in Migration, Mobility & Culture. UCC now has 21% of its undergraduate intake from under-represented groups.

Goal 3 aims to grow UCC's international reach to amplify global impact. This year we continued drafting the Global Engagement Plan and undertook a comprehensive review of Marketing and Communications operations. There was an increase in the proportion of students who have travelled from overseas to attend UCC to a historical high level of over 21%. We improved our position in the QS World University Rankings to 273, up 19 places on last year. This year, the philanthropic income target of €12 million was exceeded, with €13 million received or committed.

Goal 4 aims to implement a progressive and inclusive People & Culture Plan to attract, develop and retain talent. This year we continued our development of Plan. Significant progress was made with the advancement of the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion strategic objectives, with the establishment of a new EDI Sub-Committee of the University Leadership Team, and the awarding of new Athena Swan Programme awards to two Departments.

Goal 5 aims to radically reform practices and use of space and technology to meet our climate action goals. This year saw a 32% reduction in total CO_2 emissions relative to 2016-2018 levels. New governance arrangements for sustainability were implemented to further embed sustainability in research, practice and teaching. We improved our position in the UI GreenMetric World University Rankings for sustainability to 6th in the world, and 67th in the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings which assesses universities' contribution to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Strategic Goals

Goal One:
Research and Innovation

Deliver impactful research and innovation that addresses global grand challenges in signature areas of excellence through the *UCC Futures* framework, resulting in a distinctive research reputation.

Goal Two:
Student Success

Provide a student-centred, inclusive and digitally enhanced learning environment, a *Connected Curriculum*, and an outstanding student experience, to prepare UCC graduates to make a positive impact.

Goal Three:
Global Engagement

Grow UCC's international reach to amplify our global impact.

Goal Four:
Our Staff, Our Culture

Implement a progressive and inclusive People and Culture Plan to attract, develop and retain our talent.

Goal Five:
Our Place, Our Footprint

Radically reform our practices and use of space and technology to meet our ambitious sustainability and climate action goals.

Strategic Enablers

People, Wellbeing and EDI	Effective Communications	Resources	Philanthropy and Stakeholder Engagement	Operational Excellence	Strategic Partnerships	Digital Capabilities and Quality Data	Governance

Student Success

Academic Affairs

Student Community
In total there were 25,254 registered students at UCC in 2023/24, an increase of 3.6% on the previous year. 19,970 (79%) were domestic students, 1,827 (7%) were from other EU countries and 3,457 (14%) were non-EU. Our 5,284 international students represented 123 different countries and nationalities, with the largest numbers coming from China, USA and India. A total of 17,568 students (70%) were registered on undergraduate courses and 7,360 students (30%) were registered on postgraduate courses, similar to the breakdown the previous year. Of the registered postgraduate students, 1,095 were doctoral students. The number of students who progressed to the second year of their original course was 85%. Those who repeated first year stands at 4% with 3% repeating first year of a different course giving an overall retention rate of 91.5%.

Undergraduate Admissions
The total intake of first-year undergraduates to UCC via the CAO (Central Applications Office) this year was 3,831, representing a 1.3% decrease compared with 2022, although most programmes maintained or increased CAO intakes. UCC experienced decreases in both overall demand and first preferences compared with 2022, in line with the national trend where a slight decrease in demand was observed in national CAO applications relative to the previous year. UCC continued to hold 13% of the overall demand for Level 8 applications this year. The cut-off points for many programmes remained high, and while most programmes saw decreases in cut-off points compared with 2022, most programmes still had higher cut-off points than pre-pandemic levels. There were 4,441 applications from the EU (non-Leaving Certificate) cohort, representing further growth in demand from this sector.

3,831 CAO Intake

Postgraduate Admissions
There are 224 postgraduate taught programmes in the UCC Portfolio, and this year registration for these programmes saw an overall increase of 11% to 3,970 students in line with UCC's strategic priorities. Postgraduate students (research and taught programmes) make up 30% of the student body, and this year 309 new doctoral students were registered, with total doctoral registrations remaining static at 1,282 students.

30% of UCC students are postgraduates

Access Admissions
In 2023, 817 students were admitted to UCC via Access routes, accounting for 21% of the total intake - an increase of 1% compared with 2022. However, admissions for HEAR (Higher Education Access Route) and Mature students have declined, reflecting the growing challenges these groups face due to the rising cost of Higher Education. To address these barriers, Access UCC delivered €2.4 million in direct financial support, providing crucial assistance to students. Furthermore, 953 students benefited from the Laptop Loan Scheme, improving access to essential digital study tools. In the summer of 2024, the Access UCC EmployAbility Programme supported 63 students with disabilities to secure paid internships, collaborating with 16 employers to offer valuable work experience and foster professional growth. This initiative highlights Access UCC's commitment to promoting equity and inclusion in both education and employment.

In April 2024, over 100 Access Practitioners and community partners from around the country assembled in UCC for the SOAR Project's national conference - Access to Higher Education: Emerging Practice and Professional Challenges in a Changing Access Context. This event facilitated the sharing of new models of practice developed nationally, exploration of the challenges and opportunities of the National Access Plan 2022-2028 as well as fostering a community of practice and professional development amongst Access Practitioners to enhance Access knowledge and service.

Numbers Registered with Access Services in 2023/2024	
Disability Support	2,123
Mature Students	701
QQI/FE Students	521
UCC PLUS Support	704

21% of UCC students admitted through access pathways

Tertiary Education Pathway
A new social work tertiary degree pathway was launched this year. It offers a new route to obtaining an undergraduate degree in Social Work outside the CAO system, making it more accessible for a wider range of students and is co-delivered by UCC and Cork Education and Training Board. Students spend the first year of this programme at the College of Further Education, Morrison's Island Cork Campus. The second year is university based and the third and fourth years a mix of university and professional placement. This new pathway was developed in line with the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS) Policy on Progressing A Unified Tertiary System for Learning, Skills and Knowledge.

Apprenticeships

In 2024, UCC launched its first apprenticeship programme as an alternative route to achieving a Level 9 qualification in Social Work. The apprenticeship allows participants to gain invaluable on-the-job experience while earning a salary and at the same time equipping graduates with both theoretical knowledge and practical skills essential for their careers. It aligns to the National Action Plan for Apprenticeship 2021 to 2025 and the Public Service Apprenticeship Plan 2023. The first intake of 47 apprentices employed by Tusla and the HSE commenced their off-the-job learning at UCC in September 2024. Prompted by the acute shortage of Social Workers nationally, and in response to the urgent societal need to address current recruitment barriers to the profession, the apprenticeship aims to open the social work profession and to widen access to education from minoritised and economically disadvantaged communities in line with the HEA National Access Plan 2022-2028.

UCC launched its 1st apprenticeship programme

id+ Project

In February 2024 UCC secured €1.7 million from DFHERIS, under PATH 4, to continue the work of the id+ Project providing inclusive Higher Education and progression pathways for students with intellectual disabilities. The project welcomed its third cohort of students in September 2024, supporting them to be meaningfully included in 27 existing co-learning modules from a range of disciplines, as well as a variety of student clubs and societies. UCC continues to show leadership in this area, building capacity nationally by delivering an online microcredential to 58 staff from 13 Higher Education institutions around the country on the topic of inclusive Higher Education for people with intellectual disabilities.

Student Administration Systems Improvement

The Student Administration Systems Project to digitise student services was successfully completed in September 2024. The project was the University's most ambitious and largest ever investment in Information Technology.

The implementation of new systems and enhancements to policies and procedures for student administration have helped to significantly enhance the student and staff experience in UCC. A portfolio of new systems has been delivered across the student lifecycle and has transformed the delivery of services to our applicants, students, graduates and staff.

The Research Student Administration Project delivered a new Graduate Education Manager, digital platform for the research student journey. The project revised policies and simplified processes, providing an enhanced and efficient experience for research students and staff.

id+ Class Conferrings November 2024.

Barr na gCnoc Project

Barr na gCnoc, a HEA funded Irish language community project of the Ionad na Gaeilge Labhartha, launched Gaeilge Stretch this year. This weekly programme supports 80 children from primary schools in the Hollyhill and Knocknaheeny areas of Cork. It positively engages children with the Irish language and bridges the gap between primary and post primary Irish language education. In May 2024, the Barr na gCnoc Gaeltacht Residency Programme provided 42 students from Gaelcholáiste Mhic Shuibhne, Knocknaheeny, with the opportunity to visit the Gaeltacht Corca Dhuibhne and Gaeltacht na nDéise.

Scholarships

UCC's portfolio of Scholarships and Prizes continues to grow. With the ongoing support of generous donors, these scholarships are transforming the lives of many students, broadening access and supporting them to excel in their chosen fields. Their generosity also plays a key role in helping students from underprivileged backgrounds, who are often underrepresented in Higher Education, to succeed both academically and in their extracurricular pursuits.

The **Quercus Talented Students' Programme** continues to play a significant role in the recruitment and support of a diverse range of talented students across academia, sport, creative and performing arts, active citizenship and entrepreneurship. The Programme admitted 17 new students in September 2024 bringing the total number of Quercus Scholars to 50. We were immensely proud when Quercus alumnus Paul O'Donovan and UCC alumnus Fintan McCarthy winning their second Olympic Gold medal in August 2024 in the lightweight double sculls, making medical graduate Paul the only Irish athlete ever to have medalled in three successive Olympic games.

Student Recruitment

The Undergraduate Open Day in October 2023 saw a record number of visitors to the campus in one day, with over 9,000 attendees participating in 240 talks and workshops and visiting more than 100 stands. The Postgrad Expo in January 2024 had a record number of attendees also, and a new weekly Postgrad Pop-Up initiative was launched to keep postgrad offerings in the minds of prospective students. International student recruitment efforts by many across all the University helped to achieve an increasingly diverse student population from all around the world.

Student Experience

Career Services

UCC Career Services works to foster employability and skills development through a wide range of initiatives. Over 300 employer engagement meetings were held this year, focussed on building relationships, securing placement opportunities for students, and creating job opportunities for graduates. The results of the 2023 Graduate Outcomes Survey indicated that 94.7% of graduates were in employment or further study within nine months of graduation.

94% of UCC graduates were in employment or in further study, 9 months after graduation.

Quercus Talented Students' Programme new student orientation September 2024.

Undergraduate Student Recruitment.

A total of 545 hours of employability skills workshops were delivered supporting 1,446 students across 32 credit-bearing work placement modules. This was complemented by the launch of a suite of digital and AI-driven solutions designed to enhance career readiness for students and graduates.

In January 2024 formally transitioned from a traditional focus on work placement for students to the internationally recognised approach of Work Integrated Learning (WIL), arising from the recommendations of a Thematic Review of work placements which took place in 2020. You can watch the launch video here. Work Integrated Learning provides a collaborative educational approach to workplace learning involving the student, the educational institution and an external stakeholder. It provides authentic work-focussed experiences as an intentional component of the curriculum. July 2024, The Quality Enhancement Unit hosted international expert, Dr Karsten Zegwaard, Waikato University New Zealand, who provided masterclasses and a series of open clinics for the WIL community at UCC.

The Graduate Careers Fair in October 2023 was a three-day event that attracted almost 150 employers from diverse industry sectors and engaged approximately 3,000 students. The Careers for Sustainable Futures showcase in March 2024 highlighted the dynamic growth of the green sector, emphasising UCC's role in preparing students for opportunities in emerging sustainable industries. In partnership with the UCC Graduate Attributes Programme, the EmployAgility Awards Programme celebrated the achievements of 239 students in April 2024.

Student Forum
The second UCC Student Forum took place in November 2023. The question posed to the students on this occasion was "How might we create an inclusive, sustainable and smart sport and physical activity experience for the wellbeing of current and future students at UCC?". Nine teams of students were tasked with developing projects and answers relevant to the topic through open dialogue and iterative refinement.

Student Activities
It was a busy year for UCC Clubs, Societies, Peer Support and Students' Union, ensuring a vibrant on-campus experience for new and returning students. There were 44 active clubs with over 6,000 members and 118 societies with over 23,000 members providing students with a myriad of opportunities to engage in activities, develop new and existing skills and make new friends. Societies raised €228k for charities during the year and won four awards at the National Society Awards. There were 240 Peer Support Leaders this year, with over 9,000 volunteer hours worked contributing directly to the retention of first year students and enabling a sense of belonging to the university.

44 UCC clubs with over 6000 members. **118** student societies with over 23,000 members

UCC held the official launch of Work-Integrated -Learning on 18 January 2024.

Professor Paul McSweeney, Vice-President for Learning & Teaching; David Jones, UCC Career Services; Ghufran Al-Bander, Excellence in Social Responsibility Award winner; Adel Coleman, Graduate Attributes Programme Manager; Professor Stephen Byrne Deputy President and Registrar (Photo: Max Bell).

UCC Student Science Society at Orientation Day 2024.

Student Sport

Sport is a key part of the student experience at UCC. UCC Sport is a strong and recognised brand in Irish sport with athletes and teams participating at global, national regional and local levels. In early 2024, the Sports Leadership Team was re-invigorated with new membership and has made major progress on the capital plan for the development for outdoor sport facilities.

Departmentof Sport and Physical Activity	
Club Sports	45
Coaches	160
Volunteers in Clubs	400
Student Members	8,500
Use of Mardyke Arena by UCC Clubs	8000 Hours
Mardyke Arena Student Users	13,000

The UCC Sports Performance Programme is focused on supporting students achieve their full potential. There are 118 athletes on the programme, 22 Quercus Scholars, 86 UCC Sports Scholars and 11 Cork City Scholars. UCC Sport retained its accreditation from Sport Ireland as a recognised centre for Accredited Student Athlete Support (ASAS), which is a key service to dual career athletes. UCC athletes and teams achieved outstanding success at many different levels this year. Two UCC and Quercus scholarship athletes, Mags Cremen and John Kearney represented Ireland at the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris in August 2024, where UCC alumni Paul O'Donovan and Fintan McCarthy won gold in the men's lightweight double sculls.

UCC students participated in 163 Third Level leagues and competitions and have an outstanding track record of participation and representation of UCC. UCC Rugby retained their AIL Division 1B status and the U20's retained the Donal Walsh U20 Trophy. UCC Rugby Bulldogs won the Tier 2 Cup in the SSI competition. UCC Juniors were crowned Munster Junior Cup Champions for the first time in 45 years. John Kearney won a silver medal at the European U23 Rowing Championships and Ronan Byrne won a gold medal at the World Coastal Rowing Championships. Margaret Cremen won a silver medal in the Women's Lightweight Sculls at the European Championships. UCC rowers had their most successful National Championships so far, winning six national titles. At the IUAA National Indoor Championships the UCC Athletics Women's Team secured 3rd place overall with Eimear Maher coming home with first place in the 1500m at a record time. In Basketball, Lauryn Homan won a national senior cup medal with her home club Brunell. She is also a member of the Irish Senior Women's Basketball squad. UCC Sport partner club UCC Demons were crowned National Senior Basketball champions in January 2024. Ayla O'Sullivan was crowned All-Ireland Karate Champion and Conor McGlinchey was crowned World Kickboxing Champion. UCC Senior Soccer won the Farquhar Cup, the

Women's novice quad, D. Winter, B. Smiddy, S. O'Donovan, A. McCarthy & E. Barrett, Women's novice coxed quad national champions with Taoiseach Micheál Martin.

Juniors won the Duggan Cup, and the Freshers team won the CUFL Division 4 League Final. UCC Senior Women's Hockey team were promoted from EY Division 2 to EY Division 1 for 2024/25. They were beaten Munster Senior Cup Finalists and runners-up in the Munster Senior League. At the Intervarsity's Championships, the Archery, Canoeing, Golf, Mountaineering and Sailing Clubs came home with several gold medals and numerous PBs to finish off a very successful year for UCC Sport.

UCC Clubs Awards 2024	
Individual Winners	Aimee Sheeran Caoimhe Nolan Elena Behan Ben Cudmore Donnchadh Hughes Conor Sexton Rhona Lennox
Event of The Year	Trampoline and Tumbling Club
Best Video	Canoe Club
Special Achievement Award	Dance Club
Inclusivity Award	Trampoline and Tumbling Club
Charity Champion	Trampoline and Tumbling Club
Best Photo	Sailing Club
Most Improved Club	Swimming and Waterpolo Club
Club of the Year	Mountaineering Club
Best Social Media	Canoe Club

UCC Students participated in **163** **Third Level Leagues and competitions**

Learning and Teaching

UCC's Office of the Vice-President for Learning & Teaching (OVPLT) comprises the main office; the Centre for the Integration of Research, Teaching & Learning (CIRTL); the Centre for Digital Education (CDE); the Centre for Adult Continuing Education (ACE); the Language Centre; the Library (incorporating Cork University Press); the Skills Centre; and Exams Appeals Administration.

Global Engagement

Hosted by ACE, the 2024 Global Lifelong Learning Week took place at UCC in May 2024. This week-long global event included the ASEM Lifelong Learning Hub Conference and the 54th annual EUCEN (European University Continuing Education Network) meeting. The 46th Annual European Higher Education Society Forum, 'Sustainability, Resilience and Wellbeing', was hosted by CIRTL and UCC in August 2024. These events offered opportunities for researchers, teaching and professional services staff, students, policymakers, educators and stakeholders from Asia, Europe and beyond to gather, network, share insights and discuss opportunities for collaboration.

Community Engagement

Building on the transformative Cork Penny Dinners and UCC Food for Thought partnership programme, MSc Food Business & Innovation students collaborated with Cork Penny Dinners to co-create an innovative food experience, as part of their Service & Experience Design module. Designed by CIRTL, Cork University Business School and Cork Penny Dinners, the community-engaged learning collaboration enabled students to gain in-depth insights into the service experiences provided by the charity through volunteering and other activities.

Business Engagement

ACE and BioPharmaChem Skillnet launched a new microcredential this year to support the continued growth of the domestic BioPharmaChem sector. The Certificate in Continuing Professional Development: An Introduction to BioPharmaceuticals & Advanced Personalised Therapies was developed by ACE in collaboration with the School of Biochemistry & Cell Biology.

Innovation in Teaching & Learning

The CIRTL Learning & Teaching Showcase took place in December 2023. The one-day showcase highlighted the diversity of learning and teaching initiatives across UCC and facilitated the exchange of ideas. Themes included digital education, academic integrity, universal design for learning, education for sustainable development, and student engagement. The event included the President's Awards for Excellence in Teaching.

President's Awards for Excellence in Teaching

These awards recognise and celebrate staff who have made an outstanding contribution in the pursuit of teaching excellence, and who demonstrate innovative and creative forms of teaching, learning and assessment that enhances student learning and student outcomes. The 2023 recipients were:

Award Category	Winner
Lifetime Contribution	**Dr Frank Burke**, Dentistry
Postgraduate Tutor / Demonstrator	**Daniel O'Callaghan**, Applied Psychology **Noreen Kane**, Italian
Early Career Teaching Staff (<5 years teaching in HE)	**Cathal McCarthy**, Medicine/Pharmacology **Theresa O'Donovan,** Medicine/Medical Imaging & Radiation **Stephen McCarthy**, BIS
Established Teaching Staff (>5 years teaching in HE)	**Carol Condon**, Nursing & Midwifery **Marie Ryan**, Economics **Siobhán Mortell** Language Teacher, German **Team:** Dave Alton, Helen McGrath, Conor Drummond, Sean Tanner, Management & Marketing **Team/pair:** Frank van Pelt & Gerardene Meade-Murphy, Department of Pharmacology and Therapeutics, School of Medicine **Team:** Guangbo Hao, Briony Supple, Alex Pentek, Nico Lorenzutti, School of Engineering and School of Education
Professional Services / Student Support / Technical Staff or equivalent	**James Northridge,** Inclusive UCC, ODPR **Laura Lee**, CIRTL/OVPLT **Team:** Library's Academic Technology Team – Martin O'Driscoll, Stephanie Chen, William Ruane, Declan Synott, David Hackett, Library, OVPLT

President's Awards for Excellence in Teaching recipients 2023.

Student Success

A new Academic Integrity Fundamentals course for students was launched by the Skills Centre. This course ensures that students have a clear understanding of academic integrity, academic misconduct, and the relevant supports available to them in UCC. The Toolkit on the Ethical Integration of Generative Artificial Intelligence was launched in October 2024, and is the culmination of the (AI)[2]ed: Academic Integrity & Artificial Intelligence research project, which paired students and staff across UCC's four Colleges to experiment with using ChatGPT in their assessment design.

The Skills Centre had 19,826 student engagements this year with a notable 40% increase in demand for services in the first six weeks of Semester One. The Skills Centre also launched The Kit, a new resource on the online learning platform Canvas for incoming students to make the transition to university life easier and the first Skills Centre Catalogue for staff, enabling them to better supports our students.

19,826 **Student engagement with The Skills Centre.**

Research in Teaching & Learning

The Strategic Alignment of Teaching & Learning Enhancement (SATLE) open call for Teaching & Learning Enhancement funding was launched in June 2024. Administered by CIRTL, SATLE is a joint initiative of the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching & Learning and the Higher Education Authority. Following a rigorous review process, 26 projects were selected for funding from 67 submissions, with more than €170k dispersed.

UCC Library

The UCC Library continued to be UCC's busiest building with 1.52 million visitors this year, and 1.5 million views of its website. The **Library's Vision & Plan** was launched in March 2024 to guide the Library's growth and transformation over the next five years.

The Centre for Digital Education launched UCC's new audience engagement software, Vevox, in December 2023. Vevox is an award-winning, live-audience engagement platform that uses real-time polling to capture the student voice.
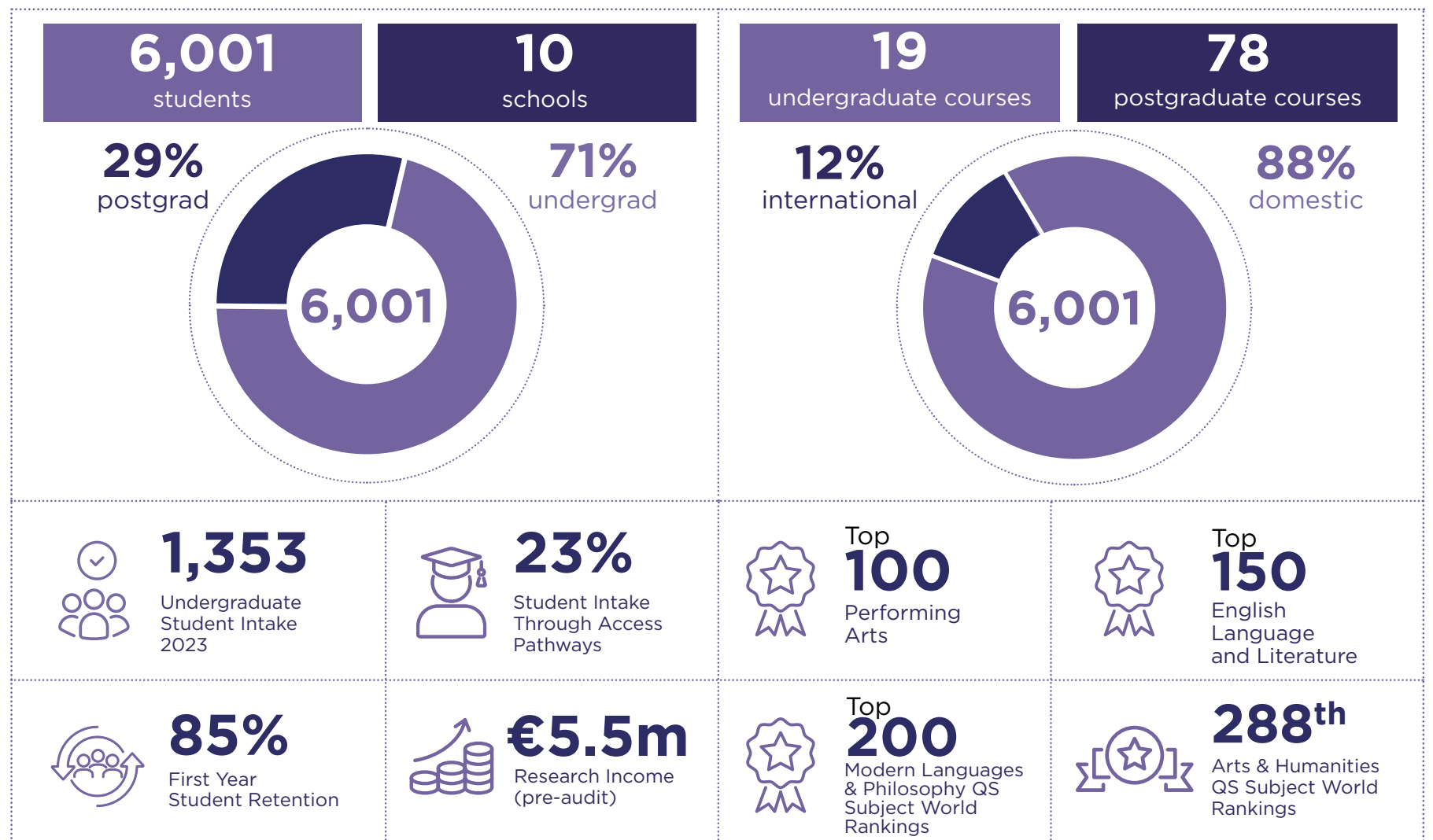
College of
Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences

The College of Arts, Celtic Studies & Social Sciences (CACSSS) undergraduate intake remained steady this year. Employability is a key focus in our recruitment strategy as we continue to review our programme offering. Twenty-nine programmes offer work and professional placements, and several programmes are externally reviewed for accreditation by external and professional bodies. The College performed well in its postgraduate EU and non-EU intake, with year-on-year incremental increases, in line with the University's ambition to grow its number of international students. While CACSSS has a large portfolio of postgraduate programmes, over half of postgraduate students continue to be registered on a limited range of programmes. In terms of non-EU recruitment, while the US and China represented 75% of international intake, there was increased diversification in non-EU international recruitment in terms of sending countries. These trends point to scope for expansion across a fuller range of programmes. The new Pathways into Social Work was launched by Minister O'Donovan in June 2024, with registrations for the Social Work Apprenticeship for September 2024 exceeding expectations.

The College enjoyed exceptional research funding success this year, with over €9.1 million secured. Awards were secured across a number of funding schemes, both national and international, including two Irish Research Council Advanced Laureate awards, Three Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Postdoctoral Fellowships, Three Science Foundation Ireland – Irish Research Council Pathway Projects, Five Irish Research Council Postdoctoral awards and eight Irish Research Council PhD awards. In line with the University's strategic priorities, CACSSS has invested significantly in the two UCC Futures areas within the College – Collective Social Futures and Future Humanities. The research highlights of the College year now include the Festival of Social Sciences, organised by Collective Social Futures, and the Future Humanities Showcase. The Radical Humanities Laboratory also held its first international conference in May 2024.

The College continues to grow its ranking status, as evidenced in the 2024 QS World University Rankings by Subject. While Arts & Humanities decreased by 37 places from 251 to 288, this is line with other broad subject areas across the university. For specific subject rankings, there have been notable improvements in subjects aligned with CACSSS: Performing Arts has improved its ranking this year moving from 101-120 category to 51-100. With English Language & Literature (101-150), Politics & International Studies (151-200), and Philosophy newly ranked (151-200), CACSSS subjects continue feature prominently in the University's highest ranked subjects.

6,001 students	**10** schools	**19** undergraduate courses	**78** postgraduate courses

29% postgrad — **71%** undergrad — 6,001

12% international — **88%** domestic — 6,001

1,353 Undergraduate Student Intake 2023

23% Student Intake Through Access Pathways

Top **100** Performing Arts

Top **150** English Language and Literature

85% First Year Student Retention

€5.5m Research Income (pre-audit)

Top **200** Modern Languages & Philosophy QS Subject World Rankings

288th Arts & Humanities QS Subject World Rankings

Other highlights this year included the New Pathways into Social Work, launched by Minister O'Donovan in June 2024, with registrations for the Social Work Apprenticeship for September 2024 in excess of expectations. A landmark research project on Civil War Fatalities was launched in March 2024. Inclusive Dance Cork won an Accessibility and Inclusion award at Business to Arts Awards 2024. The Cable that Changed the World premiered on RTE and ARTE in August 2024. Ireland's Coast, a three-part documentary series, inspired by the Coastal Atlas of Ireland, aired on RTÉ in September. CACSSS Choctaw Scholars Skylee Glass and Aurianna Jewell graduate from UCC in June 2024.

Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport & Media, Catherine Martin TD is pictured with Dr Andy Bielenberg, School of History, and John Dorney, Research Assistant and Historian, at the launch of The Irish Civil War Fatalities.
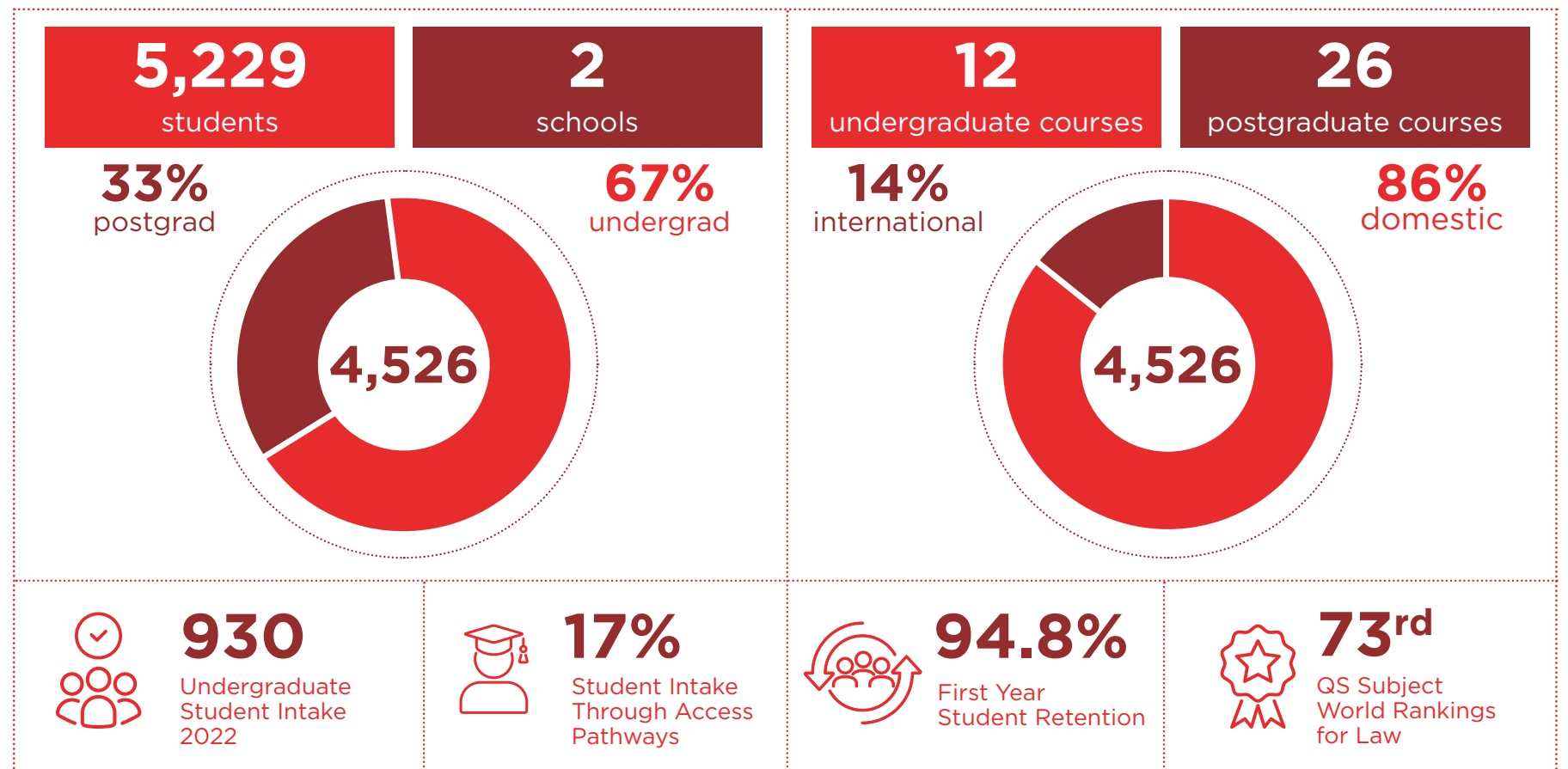
College of
Business and Law

The College of Business & Law (CoBL) recorded an increase in student demand for its programmes; significantly increased research output and research funding; broad professional, corporate and community engagement; and substantial academic recruitment aligned to UCC Futures. The School of Law launched the new LLM in Alternative Dispute Resolution in September 2024.

Professor Tom Garavan (Cork University Business School) has been ranked 1st nationally and in the top 2% globally of business and management scholars based on H-Index (research.com). The Long-Range Planning (LRP) Journal has advanced from a 3 to 4-star rating by theChartered Association of Business Schools. Professor Louise Crowley's (School of Law) leadership in Bystander Intervention continues to address the issues of sexual misconduct and violence at UCC and nationally. This includes the recent All Right All Night national campaign, funded by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport & Media, to ensure social nights out are free from intimidation, violence and fear for all.

Significant research funding success included a €8.8 million Horizon Europe grant; a €3.4 million Horizon Europe grant; a €1 million Horizon 2020 Research & Innovation grant; and a €214k Higher Education Authority Entrepreneurship Education Initiative funding.

The School of Law retained its top 100 ranking by subject for the fourth consecutive year in the 2024 QS World University Rankings by Subject coming in at 73. The MBA programme was successfully re-accredited and AACSB accreditation was maintained. The BSc Accounting is the first Irish undergraduate degree to secure CAP2 exemptions from Chartered Accountants Ireland.

Cork University Business School (CUBS) was awarded the Athena Swan Bronze award, now achieved by both Schools in the College. generating the 'All Right All Night' national campaign to ensure social nights out are free from intimidation, violence and fear for all.

| **5,229** students | **2** schools | **12** undergraduate courses | **26** postgraduate courses |

33% postgrad — **67%** undergrad — **4,526**

14% international — **86%** domestic — **4,526**

930 Undergraduate Student Intake 2022

17% Student Intake Through Access Pathways

94.8% First Year Student Retention

73rd QS Subject World Rankings for Law

Bystander Intervention Week 2024.

College of
**Medicine
and Health**

The College of Medicine & Health (CoMH) maintains the highest CAO demand ratio at 2.7. The first students graduated from four new programs in 2024: PhD in Occupational Science; MSc in Industrial Pharmaceutical Sciences Operations & Management; Postgraduate Diploma in Paediatrics & Child Health; and Postgraduate Certificate in Health & Wellbeing. Fifteen new programs were introduced over the last three years, many of which are stackable, progressing from Postgraduate Certificate to MSc level.
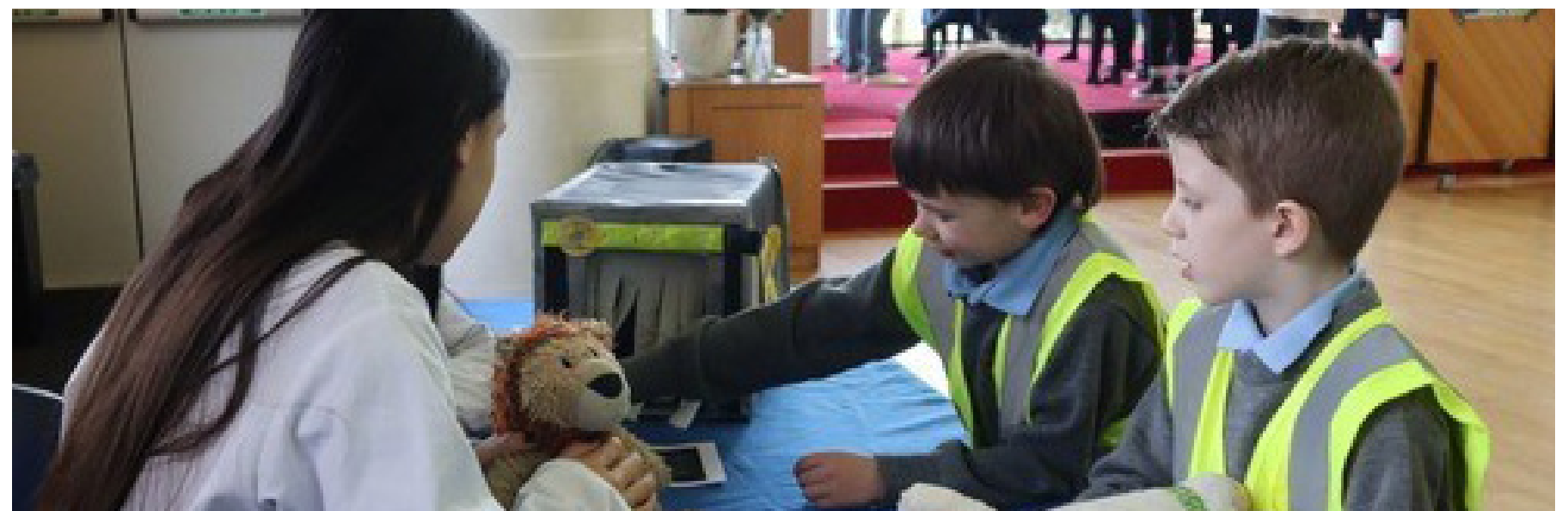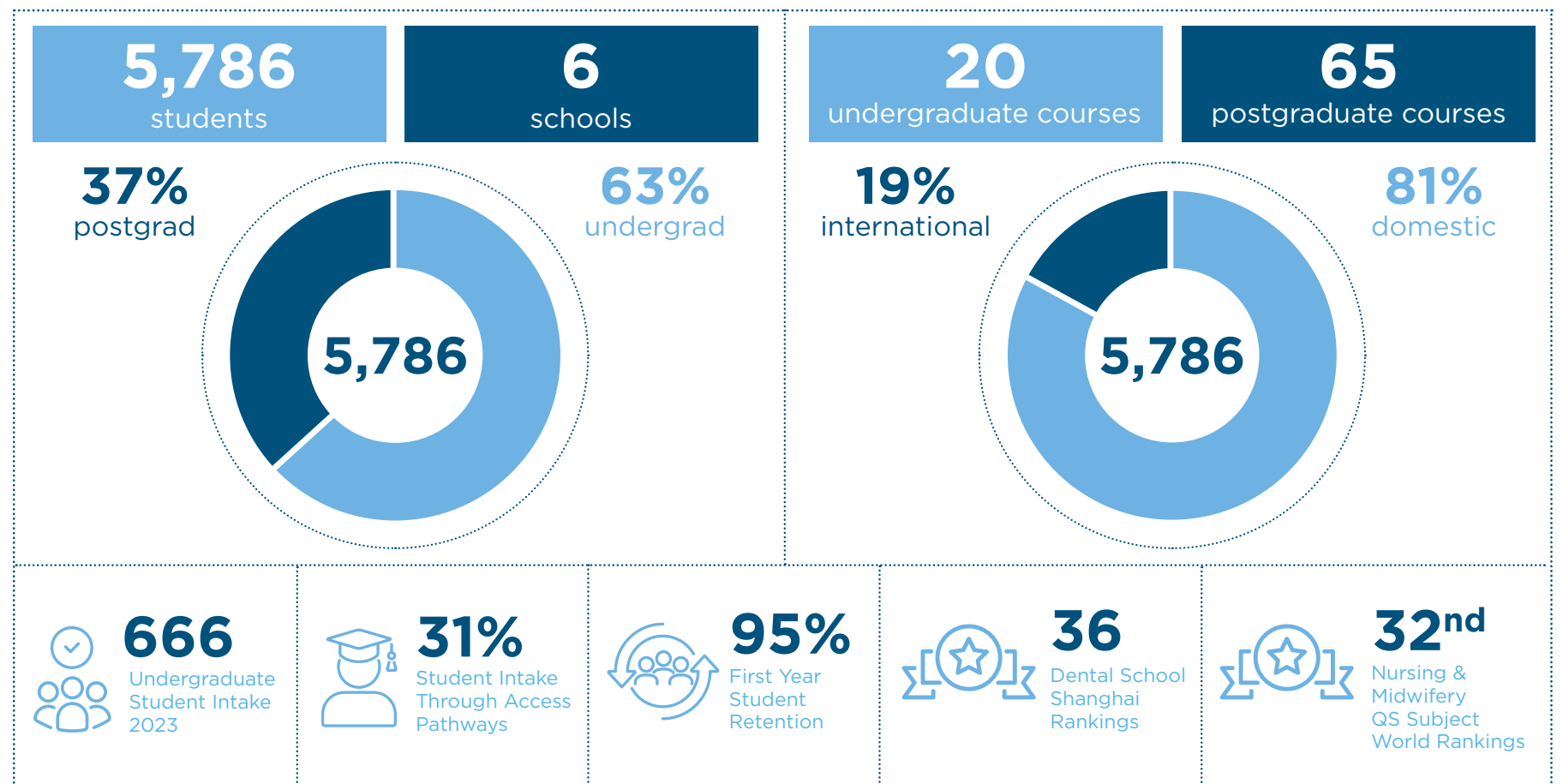
The College was very successful this year in research publication in scientific journals, with 14 of our researchers (APC and INFANT) featured in the Clarivate Highly Cited Researchers 2023. APC Director, Professor Paul Ross, received SFI Researcher of the Year 2023. CoMH researchers competitively competed for grants including an EU €7.5 million award for Schools of Medicine and Nursing & Midwifery; Cerebral Palsy Foundation award of €1.6 million for the UCC Chair in Early Brain Injury & Cerebral Palsy.

The College awarded 16 Doctoral Bursaries to sustain support for doctoral students to travel to international conferences and to benefit from training and networking activities. We celebrated our postgraduate researchers through the Postgraduate Research Student Awards, acknowledging contributions in various disciplines, spotlighted exemplary work in fields such as obstetrics, gynaecology, and pharmacology

Our Inaugural Professorial Lecture Series offered opportunities to showcase academic excellence and share research breakthroughs. The College in collaboration with Alumni & Development launched the Philanthropic Lecture series in March 2024. The Teddy Bear Hospital, an event designed to introduce young children to healthcare professions in a comforting manner, successfully fostered community engagement.

Professor Leonie Heskin was appointed as Director of the ASSERT where she is developing educational course offerings for both the undergraduate and working professionals in the multiple disciplines in Medicine and Health. ASSERT is also engaging with the medical device industry using simulation solutions for research and development, validation and user interaction of their products in healthcare.

All six Schools in the College have now attained Bronze Athena Swan awards, reflecting our dedication to promoting equality and inclusivity.

5,786 students	6 schools	20 undergraduate courses	65 postgraduate courses

37% postgrad — **63%** undergrad — **5,786**

19% international — **81%** domestic — **5,786**

666 Undergraduate Student Intake 2023

31% Student Intake Through Access Pathways

95% First Year Student Retention

36 Dental School Shanghai Rankings

32nd Nursing & Midwifery QS Subject World Rankings

The "Teddy Bear Hospital" is designed to introduce young children to healthcare professions in a comforting manner, successfully fostered community engagement.

College of
**Science,
Engineering
and Food
Science**

Student numbers in the College of Science, Engineering & Food Science (SEFS) increased by 136 to 5,230 of which 26% are now postgraduates and 22% international. This year 11 of 15 CAO entry courses in SEFS required over 500 points. 50% of the university's PhDs were registered in SEFS.

The BSc (Hons) in Nutritional Sciences was accredited by the Association for Nutrition. A new European Joint Masters in Architecture, RePIC, commenced. A new framework agreement was signed with BTBU Beijing, building on the current 2+2 programmes with Maths and Food Science. The UCC Sustainability Academy was established this year to provide sustainability training. Ireland's first Science Studio opened in UCC's Kane Building and ten companies supported the redevelopment of the Power Lab in Electrical Engineering.

Grant capture increased this year to €54 million across 223 projects – the main funders included Science Foundation Ireland / Research Ireland (32%) and Horizon Europe (18%) including involvement in the Climate+ and Sustainable and Resilient Food Systems co-centres; funding for Floating Offshore Wind & Quantum technologies; fatal bloodstream infections; micronutrient deficiencies in Europe; and optimisation of a vaccine for malaria. A new strategic partnership was agreed with National Parks & Wildlife Service (NPWS) for postgraduate and postdoctoral training. A Royal Society - Science Foundation Ireland University Research Fellowship was awarded.

Agriculture & Forestry ranked 79 the 2024 QS World University Rankings by Subject, and Electrical Engineering, Chemistry and Physics increased by 50 places. Three subjects were in the Top 100 in the US News Global Rankings: Agricultural Sciences (82); Microbiology (87); and Food Science & Technology (94). Food Science & Technology ranked 46 in the Shanghai Subject Rankings. In the THE World University Rankings by Subject, Engineering and Technology improved by 200 places.
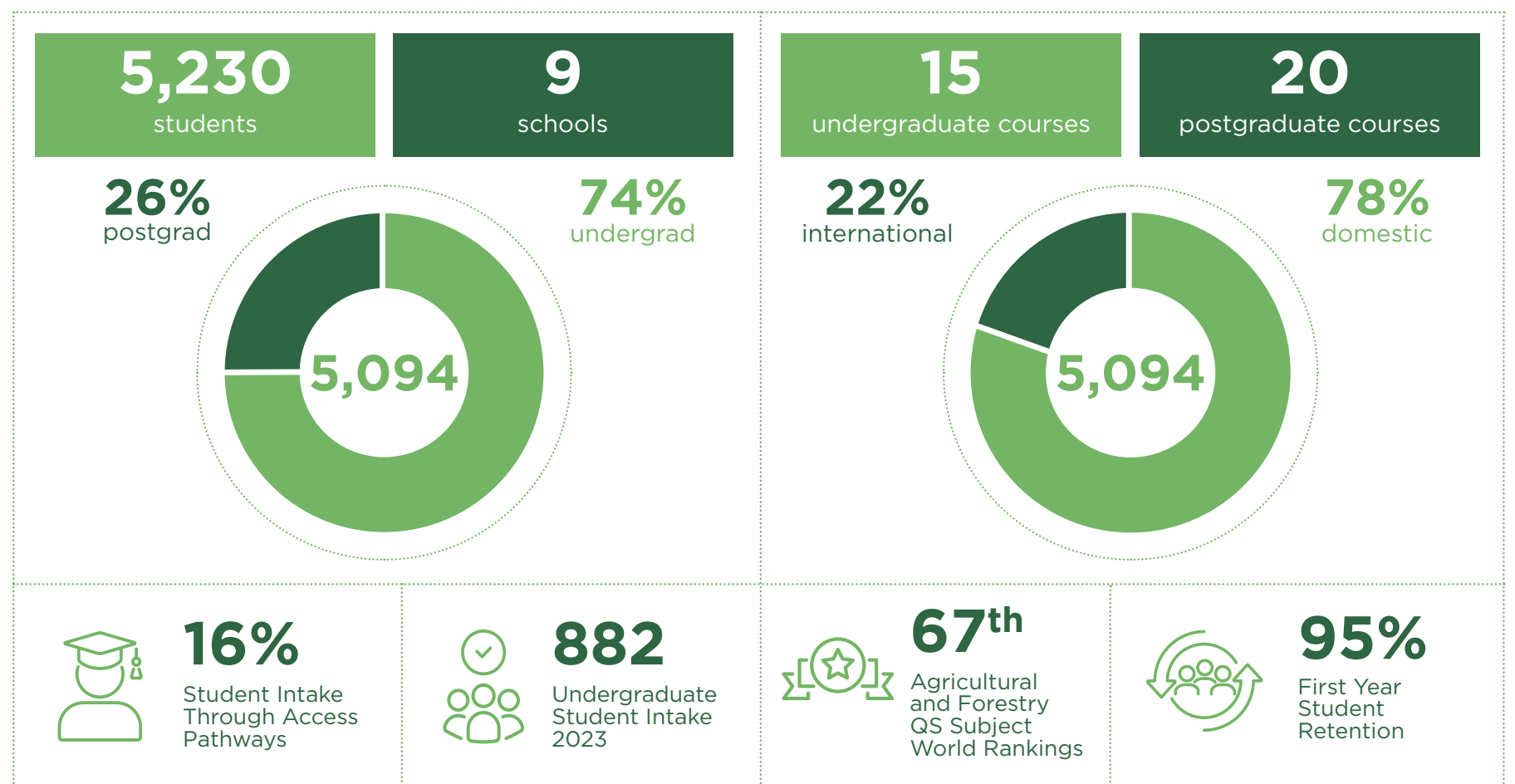
Former President of Ireland, Mary Robinson, delivered the keynote address at the UCC Sustainable Futures Forum in November 2023. SUSFERM, a fermentation research centre was launched, focused on accelerating bioeconomy innovations and has now established the Cork Biomanufacturing Park initiative with Cork County Council. Thom Huppertz was appointed as Professor of Dairy Research & Innovation, supported by external funding from the Dutch Dairy Association (NZO). The AI Quest organised by INSIGHT, School of Computer Science and sponsored by Cadence attracted 60 teams. Five microbiologists were featured in the Clarivate Highly Cited Researchers 2023 list. Three Computer Scientists were ranked highly in Ireland by Research.com.

The School of Biochemistry and the National Institute for Bioprocessing Research & Training (NIBRT) appointed two joint Professorships in biologic-based medicines. MaREI and ERI, researchers provided evidence to the Oireachtas Committee on Ireland's Climate Change Assessment Report and Dr Linda Daly, Maths, was involved in an actuarial report on excess deaths during COVID which received significant media attention.

Professor John O Halloran, President, and Marguerite Nyhan, Professor of Engineering for Sustainability at the inaugural UCC Sustainable Futures Forum.

5,230 students	9 schools	15 undergraduate courses	20 postgraduate courses

26% postgrad — **74%** undergrad
5,094

22% international — **78%** domestic
5,094

16% Student Intake Through Access Pathways

882 Undergraduate Student Intake 2023

67th Agricultural and Forestry QS Subject World Rankings

95% First Year Student Retention

Research and Innovation

UCC Futures

UCC Futures is a bespoke programme of research prioritisation coupled with an innovative academic recruitment strategy across ten indicative areas of strategic importance that will build a foundation for economic, societal and cultural resilience and prosperity. Launched in December 2021, the implementation of the UCC Futures framework has continued this year, informed by smart specialisation and the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and all thematic areas are now operational. A framework Embedding Research and Innovation in Academic Recruitment places research and innovation at the core of all academic recruitment, ensuring that candidates are demonstrably research active, with clear strategic alignment to a UCC Futures.

- ✓ **Sustainability**
- ✓ **Collective Social Futures**
- ✓ **Food, Microbiome & Health**
- ✓ **Future Medicines**
- ✓ **Future Humanities**
- ✓ **Future Pharmaceuticals**
- ✓ **Future Ageing & Brain Science**
- ✓ **Children**
- ✓ **Quantum & Photonics**
- ✓ **Artificial Intelligence & Data Analytics**

The UCC Futures Way training programme, led by Dr Seán McCarthy (Hyperion), was established this year to target specific European funding opportunities, enhancing proposal preparation and potential for success and including intensive mentorship for high potential researchers. This has already been completed by five thematic areas.

Together, UCC, who were awarded €6.2 million, and Tyndall, who were awarded €9.5 million, secured approximately 75% of Science Foundation Ireland's Research Infrastructure programme funding. This funding will support key institutional priorities including offshore wind energy, quantum materials, semiconductor performance and integrated electronics. UCC also secured approximate €1.6 million in

the Higher Education Authority Higher Education Research Equipment Grant programme. These funds are distributed across the UCC Futures areas and are aligned with priority needs. €250k was allocated to key IT research infrastructure, complementing recently acquired dedicated research infrastructure (further information below) improving services and access for researchers across UCC

10 UCC Futures thematic areas

Our People
We are working to improve strategic hiring, retention and development of our people at all career stages, supported by a research ecosystem and career framework, in line with UCC's strategic priorities. The expanded and redesigned UCC Research Skills Training Programme offers 17 sessions and 10 new topics. It aligns with national and European policies, enhancing researcher skills and competitiveness at all career stages. Professor John Morrison of the Boole Centre for Research Informatics donated Data Centre space in UCC's Western Gateway Building for dedicated on-campus research infrastructure, with advanced tools and resources enhancing IT services for the research community.

Student Experience
It is a strategic priority for UCC to increase PhD enrolment numbers, enhance the research student experience, and embed research and innovation into our curriculum. The 2023/24 PhD enrolment exceeded the target intake for the academic year. A new Higher Education Professionals PhD programme has had its first intake. The programme broadens access to doctoral education, further embedding research and innovation in the curriculum. Postgraduate representation in UCC's Students' Union for next year has been agreed and will provide a platform for engagement and enhancement of the research student experience.

UCCFUTURES

Securing **Our Future** Through Research Excellence

Research Culture

We are working to transform UCC's research culture through the implementation of engaged research and open research, underpinned by academic integrity, and ethical and responsible practice. Three senior academics were elected to the Royal Irish Academy, the highest academic honour in Ireland, highlighting UCC's research excellence and culture of high-quality, engaged, research. The National Suicide Research Foundation at UCC was redesignated the only Irish WHO Collaborating Centre for Surveillance and Research in Suicide Prevention, demonstrating UCC's commitment to ethical and responsible research practices with real-world impact.

Two of the three research transformation pillars of UCC's Digital Master Plan 2023 - 2028 have been launched. ResearchBox, a UCC-owned and managed secure research data management platform, and PGR Education Manager. These underpin the entire postgraduate academic journey at UCC, encompassing and integrating policy, processes, student systems, data recording and reporting, to support a world class graduate experience. In addition, the third pillar, Research Information System (RIS) project has made significant progress, with the first phase of this transformational systems uplift scheduled to being in 2025.

Innovation and entrepreneurship

Our strategic vision includes an innovation culture and entrepreneurial campus, underpinned by an ethos of creativity and discovery. In May 2024 we published the inaugural **UCC Innovation Impact Report 2023**, highlighting the achievements of UCC researchers as they work to develop economic impact from their expertise, research and creativity. A new Entrepreneur in Residence (EIR) programme was launched to support the creation of 50 new ventures over two years, directly influencing an entrepreneurial culture on campus. The five EIR have been appointed as Adjunct Professors within Cork University Business School (CUBS), enhancing entrepreneurial support for students and staff. UCC's first ever Innovation Week was introduced, showcasing entrepreneurial talent and encouraging innovation culture across the university ecosystem. Over 300 researchers engaged with the events, many of which were co-organised with the four Colleges.

UCC researchers generated 48 innovation disclosures, four spin-out companies, and 11 patent applications this year. UCC also put in place 52 agreements with industry to allow them access UCC technologies.

48 Inventions disclosed

4 UCC spin-out companies launched

Research Funding

At €121 million, UCC secured a record-breaking research income this year. Reflecting efforts to diversify sources of funding, the proportion of income secured from non-exchequer sources remains at >30%. Since 2004, UCC researchers have secured more than €1.6 billion in research funding.

Two ERC projects commenced at UCC this year, as Dr Aoife Daly commenced an ERC Consolidator Grant project and Professor Paul Ross commenced an ERC Advanced Grant project . UCC researchers have secured 146 Horizon Europe awards since 2021, and UCC is coordinator of 51 of these projects. Together these projects are worth €108.4 million, equating to 83% of UCC's Horizon Europe funding target to 2027.

With 55% of the Horizon Europe programme already completed, the current trajectory to meet UCC's institutional target for Horizon Europe is well ahead of schedule.

2 New European Research Council Awards

Professor Caitriona O'Driscoll, School of Pharmacy; Professor John O'Halloran, President; and Professor Maria McNamara, School of Biological, Earth & Environmental Sciences, who were elected to the Royal Irish Academy.

Excellence in research and innovation celebrated at Research and Innovation Awards.

Supported by the dedicated UCC Research team and underpinned by an extensive suite of training and development initiatives led by the Office of the Vice-President for Research & Innovation, UCC researchers submitted 38 applications to ERC programmes this year. This represents a significant increase on the previous year. This robust foundation underpins a development pipeline that supports increased likelihood of success in future ERC programmes.

€120.9m Direct Research Income

Research Policies
An Export Control Internal Compliance Programme, with supporting training and resources, has been developed and implemented. UCC's export control 'readiness' had a very successful compliance inspection (Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment). A new Research Data Management Policy was introduced following extensive consultation led by UCC Research, UCC Library and IT Services. This provides clear principles to support the creation and storage of research data, reflecting broader sectoral, national, and international research data management and access developments.
A major transformational exercise to develop new and to revise existing research policies, including the Code of Research Conduct, Open Research, Responsible Research Assessment, AI in Research, Research Security, Overhead Allocation, Consultancy and the structure of Patient-Focussed Research, was initiated, with a targeted completion in 2025.

Research and Innovation Awards
The Research and Innovation Awards in May 2024 recognised excellence in research, innovation, and entrepreneurial activity from all disciplines across the university.

Research and Innovation Awards		
Award Category	Winner	Affiliation
Researcher of the Year	Professor Thomas Garavan	Cork University Business School
Early-Stage Researcher of the Year	Dr Tatiana Vagramenko Dr Aaron Lim	School of Society, Politics & Ethics Department of Geography
Research Career Achievement Award	Professor Elke Arendt	School of Food & Nutritional Sciences
Research Team of the Year	UCC Dementia Palliative Care Research Team	School of Nursing & Midwifery, School of Medicine, Centre for Gerontology & Rehabilitation, Department of General Practice, Cork University Business School, South/Southwest Hospital Group, St. Luke's Nursing Home
Research Collaboration of the Year	Professor Maria Cahill	School of Law
Research Supervisor of the Year	Dr Helena Buffery	Department of Spanish, Portuguese & Latin American Studies
Research Communicator of the Year	Dr Olive McCarthy	Centre for Co-operative Studies; Cork University Business School
Research Image of the Year	Dr Richard Unitt and Ms. Emma Murphy	School of Biological, Earth & Environmental Sciences
Research Support Person of the Year	Dr Sonia Monteiro	Environmental Research Institute
Research Support Team of the Year	Office of Research Grants & Contracts	UCC Finance Office
Vice-President for Research & Innovation Award for Interdisciplinary Research	Professor Ciara Heavin	Department for Business Information Systems; Cork University Business School
Best Publication of the Year Involving an Undergraduate Author	Ms Allanah Neff	School of Mathematical Sciences
Research Award for Open Science	The Scenario Project - Performative Teaching, Learning & Research	Department of German and Department of Theatre
Creating a Culture for Responsible Conduct of Research	Professor Christian Waeber	Department of Pharmacology & Therapeutics Biological Services Unit	OVPRI
The President's Award for Research Impacting the Sustainable Development Goals	CEAB Project led by Professor Nuala Finnegan, Escudero Fontán, Dr Céire Broderick, Dr Carlos Garrido Castellano and Dr Cara Levey	School of Languages, Literatures & Cultures
Engaged Research of the Year	Dr Katharina Swirak Professor Patricia Leahy-Warren	Department of Sociology & Criminology School of Nursing & Midwifery
Innovator of the Year	Professor Holger Claussen, Dr Senad Bulja, Dr Lester Ho	Tyndall National Institute
Licence of the Year	Dr Conor O'Mahony, Carlo Webster, Andrea Bocchino, Ryan Sebastian, Fjodors Tjulkins	Tyndall National Institute
Spin-out of the Year	CergenX (Professor Geraldine Boylan)	INFANT Research Centre
New Spin-out of the Year	David Cashman, The WellSchools Network	School of Education
Consultancy Project of the Year	Professor Louise Crowley	School of Law
Start-up of the Year	Shannen O'Reilly	TrustDish

Global Engagement

This is the first full year of the Vice-President for Global Engagement, Professor Ursula Kilkelly, and important progress has been made in the delivery of University strategy focused on global engagement.

Following a benchmarking process with peer universities, the structure of the Office of Global Engagement was revised. The Office has responsibility for Media & Communications; Marketing & Brand Impact; Arts & Culture (with the appointment of our new Arts & Culture Officer Sean Kelly in April 2024); UNIC, the European University Alliance; The Confucius Centre; University of Sanctuary; and The Language Centre.

The University's first Global Engagement Plan was developed, through extensive consultation with staff, students and external stakeholders. Based on four goals – Global Excellence; Impact; Partnership; and Citizenship, the Plan aims to take a global perspective to the University's key priorities in order to deliver diversity and excellence in both our international reputation and our campus. The Plan identifies three enablers – strong and integrated governance; a new resource model; and good data – and it sets out a range of actions in the accompanying implementation plan necessary to achieve on these goals. Throughout the year, the Plan was presented across campus and is now going through the formal approval process.

In addition, as Vice-President for Global Engagement now has responsibility for partnerships, mobility and international student recruitment, in 2024, work was undertaken to transition relevant staff from the Functional Areas of the Deputy President & Registrar and the Vice-President for Learning & Teaching to the Office of Global Engagement in the creation of the new UCC Global team. Work continues to complete this process of transition and to establish the Office with the adoption of new leadership and oversight processes.

Communications & Marketing Review

Following the establishment of the Office of Global Engagement, the Vice-President for Global Engagement commissioned a review of the operations and structure of Communications and Marketing across the University to enable delivery of UCC's strategic objective to significantly improve UCC's external reputation and brand impact. This review was completed in the first half of 2024 and, together with the recommendations of the University Brand Refresh Project, led to the development of a University Communications Plan, and a separate Recruitment Plan.

Global Collaboration

In addition to the student recruitment and outreach activity in all five territories, several high-profile international trips took place to UCC partners in China, North America and Latin America in 2024. Separately, and building on a visit by President O'Halloran to San Francisco earlier in the year, the Vice-President for Global Engagement joined the Cork City delegation to San Francisco in March 2024 in celebration of the 40th anniversary of the city twinning. Multiple events at the Irish Consular Office with Consular General Micheál Smith, a meeting with the Mayor of San Fransisco and a visit to University of California (Davis) a long-standing high-ranking partner of UCC enabled networking with alumni, industry leaders and high-level partnership discussions. The Vice-President also visited key partners in Latin America while attending the St Patrick's Day celebrations in Sao Paulo, Brazil in the company of Minister for the Environment Eamon Ryan and Consul General Eoin Bennis. On this trip, agreements were signed or renewed with Latin America's most high ranked Universities including University of Sao Paulo, Tecnologico de Monterrey in Mexico and the Universidad de Los Andes in Colombia. UCC staff also attended NAFSA, the world's largest association dedicated to international education and Exchange in New Orleans, and met key global partners as well as Consul General Robert Hull, based in Austin Texas.

Conferrings

We celebrated the conferrings of 7,162 students this year, with additional honorary awards to James Corr, Lesley Buckley, Anne O'Leary and Tomás McCarthy.

7,162 Student Conferrings

Arts & Culture

As part of our refreshed arts and culture focus, our first Arts & Cultural Assets register was completed and UCC presented its biggest-ever Culture Night – the first time that UCC presented a cohesive, university-wide series of events. UCC was shortlisted for two awards in the annual Business to Arts awards, winning the award for Creative Access. This is a major awards ceremony in the Arts & Cultural sector and greatly helped to focus attention on our position as a major pillar of the national arts and cultural ecology.

Language Centre

This year was the Language Centre's most successful year ever in terms of students enrolled for pre-sessional courses. There were 74 students (up from 30 in 2022/23), and the majority (88%) of students came from China.

European Universities Alliance

This year, the UNIC European Universities Alliance adopted the Engaged Research Strategy developed by UCC, and established three centres: City Futures (co-led by UCC); Teaching & Learning; and Capacity Building. Of the 170 staff involved in UNIC across campus, 23 utilised Erasmus+ mobility funding to travel to UNIC partner universities for teaching, staff weeks or job shadowing. UCC co-leads UNIC in the areas of 'Sustainability' and 'Arts, Culture & Creativity' and collaborates in the other five priority academic areas of UNIC, developing summer schools, joint teaching initiatives, CityLabs, Engaged Research and other collaborations.

The UNIC joint Master programme RePIC (Redesigning the Post-Industrial City MSc) concluded its first year and received 1,389 applications for 2024. A second joint programme, SEOS (Superdiversity in Education, Organisations and Society MA), will commence in 2025.

The UNIC for Engaged Research Project (UNIC4ER, Horizon2020, 2021-2024) concluded, delivering 52 engaged research initiatives across the consortium. UCC's Vice-President for Global Engagement was appointed as the first Chairperson of the UNIC Council, bringing together students, professional and academic staff, and city representatives from all partners to advise on the strategic priorities of UNIC.

Palestine Solidarity Plan

In May 2024, the University identified a series of major commitments brought together as our Palestine Solidarity Response. These included the work of the Palestine Emergency response to identify short term measures of support, the Palestine and Israel Working Group which aims to bring transparency to our institutional links with universities in the region and a range of other student and scholar supports, awareness raising and capacity building measures.

JP Quinn, Head of Visitor Services, Office of Marketing & Brand Impact hosts a walking story time reading of A Bee at UCC and A Tree at UCC on Culture Night.

University of Sao Paulo agreement signing.

Jennifer Chadwick, Consul General of Ireland, with Professor Ursula Kilkelly, UCC's Vice-President for Global Engagement, at the Consulate General of Ireland in San Francisco.

Our Staff, Our Culture

UCC's Strategic Plan 2023–2028: Securing our Future places people at the heart of what we do and commits to implementing a progressive and inclusive People & Culture Plan.

The new post of Chief People & Culture Officer was created to lead the delivery of strategic objectives in this area and Ashley Flaherty took up this post on 1 November 2023. To develop and implement a progressive and inclusive People & Culture Plan to attract, develop, and retain our Talent, the focus this year has been on exploring our organisational effectiveness to ensure that we are intentionally designed to deliver our strategic objectives and are financially sustainable. The work undertaken this year has provided the foundation blocks on which to develop the People & Culture Plan initiatives over the coming years.

Strategic Workforce Planning
Following the exploration of whether we are intentionally designed to deliver the UCC Strategic Plan, a UCC approach to Strategic Workforce Planning has been introduced to ensure that we have the right workforce and skills, at the right time, and right cost, to deliver the Strategic Plan not only today but also in the future. Operational Workforce Planning commenced this year, where financial and people data are more closely aligned, and this approach is maturing.

Culture Evolution
At UCC we are committed to creating a high performing environment built around an inclusive culture of Equality, Diversity, & Inclusion so that everyone across the University feels a sense of belonging and can thrive. We have embarked on a Discovery Stage to understand the current culture and opportunities to strengthen it further.

Leadership
Delivering the UCC Strategic Plan and bringing about the necessary change and achievement of goals requires great leadership. To support great leadership at UCC and provide the necessary vision and drive to deliver the Strategic Plan, the University Leadership Team attended a bespoke Leadership Development Programme. The aim was to identify both collective and individual leadership strengths and areas for development. This is an on-going programme with a follow up session scheduled in 2025. In addition, over 290 leaders attended the various UCC Leadership Programmes that form part of our leadership pipeline strategy. The focused programmes are: First Steps into Management; Continuing Steps into Management; Successful Team Leader; Aurora; and Current Leaders.

Developing our People
We continue to invest in the skills of our people and this year over 2,259 staff attended the 156 workshops provided to support learning and development. Over 350 coaching hours were delivered by UCC's Coaching Panel. In addition to the individual development opportunities, team-based programmes were provided to support local needs.

156 staff developments workshops

Staff Wellbeing and Development
As part of our culture evolution, we are committed to fostering a culture of wellbeing to support our people and create a safe and healthy work environment. This year 1,697 staff attended 69 wellbeing sessions. We have developed new work life balance policies which include Domestic Violence Leave, Fertility Treatment Leave, Surrogacy Leave and a Menopause Policy, all with supporting information sessions. This year we introduced a series of health screenings available through our Embark Portal.

Long Service Awards
The 35th Long Service Awards Ceremony took place in December 2023 where 64 staff received a Long Service Award. Nine staff were recognised for 35 years' service and fifty-five staff recognised for 25 years' service. These annual awards are an opportunity to recognise the many significant contributions made by staff of the University.

Staff Recognition Awards
The 2023 annual UCC Staff Recognition Awards took place in October 2023. This is an annual joint award ceremony, and this year included the Office of Corporate & Legal Affairs and their Campus Companies Staff Recognition Awards, which recognise the valuable contribution the staff of subsidiary companies operating on campus make to the UCC community.

Research
On behalf of The Higher Education Authority (HEA) UCC has designed and is rolling out a national programme, called the Odyssey programme, that supports final-year PhD students and research staff to prepare for diverse careers in Higher Education. The programme directly links with the Irish Government's Impact 2030: Ireland's Research & Innovation Strategy, and aims to improve career pathways into diverse sectors, so that researchers and doctoral graduates can maximise their impact in all types of organisations throughout Ireland and beyond, while realising their own potential. To date over 98 participants across six universities have attended the UCC programme.

Our Place, Our Footprint

Digitally Connected Campus

IT Services work to advance UCC's strategic digital priorities through the **UCC Digital Master Plan**.

Digital Transformation of Research
Funding of €750k per annum, secured by the Research Office, has enabled significant progress this year, supporting high-performance computing and AI research services. Graduate Education Manager launched in September 2024, providing postgraduate research students and staff with a fully digitized and transparent research journey. This system has significantly improved efficiency and currently serves over 3,000 users. Research Box, a research storage solution was rolled out in June 2024, offering a fit for purpose secure storage solution for active research data. Pure was selected as UCC's new Research Information System in 2024 and will be rolled out by the project team in IT Services and the Research Office in 2025.

Student Success
The technology in over 190 teaching rooms was upgraded over the Summer, enhancing the teaching experience and strengthening the security of our teaching technology. This year, 14 million minutes of recorded lectures were watched, supporting the continued deployment of universal design for learning. In March 2024, Student IT Services ran a survey which received 473 responses and showed a 94% satisfaction rate in UCC Student IT Services, with 80% of students regularly reading the Student IT Tips and Tricks email. 80% of respondents reported a preference of the Boole Library for printing; 88% found the self-service portal easy to use, 38% preferred to use their own device at an on-campus docking station; 33% preferred to use a provided device; and 29% reported using their own laptop at an empty desk space.

190 learning spaces digitally upgraded

Global Engagement
Developed from the Student Administration Systems Project, the UCC Data Lake has processed over 4 million automated system calls, saving thousands of person-hours. Each month, 500 users generate 5,700 queries and reports, automating tasks like student recruitment, HEA returns, financial dashboards, KPIs, and gender pay reporting.

Our People
The Digital Advisory Centre (DAC) ran 20 Learn Live training sessions with 664 staff attendees. The M365 and more for a Digital Workplace Digital Badge was rolled out and was completed by 54 UCC staff. The project team kicked off phase 1 of migrating the UCC finance system, Agresso, to the cloud. The upgrade will take place in 2025. The staff recruitment process was optimised and digitised, led by the UCC Focus Team.

Our Digital Campus
Cyber Security events averaged at 165 million weekly this year, an increase of 400% compared to the previous year. In September 2024, IT Services moved its Security Operations Centre to a new national 24x7 monitoring platform supported by HEANET. IT Services and the Office of Corporate & Legal Affairs hosted workshops for academic and central services staff in March and May to align each area's Business Continuity Planning with IT Services' cyber response. To optimise device management, over 85% of UCC digital devices have been migrated to the cloud, offering improved business continuity in the case of a major incident. Cyber Security Awareness Month in October 2023 engaged over 1,000 staff and students in events and training to raise Cyber Security awareness.

1,000 staff engaged in Cyber Security awarness training.

Capital Developments

The Buildings & Estates Office is responsible for the development and maintenance of the University's physical estate. UCC's Capital Development was paused in December 2023 because of UCC's financial challenges. It is hoped that the programme which includes key projects (Tyndall, CUBS, Kane and the Medical School at Cork University Hospital (CUH)) will recommence as our financial position improves. It is also planned to commence refurbishment of the Dental School at the CUH Campus and to invest in our outdoor sports facilities funded through the recent capitation vote by the student body.

UCC has a public sector target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 51% by 2030 and to continue to improve the energy efficiency of our buildings from the 33% target in 2020 to 50% by 2030. UCC has availed of support for these ambitions through the HEA & SEAI Pathfinder Programme. Phase 1 works were completed successfully during the summer of 2023, with the remaining Phase 2 works progressing during the summer of 2024. The second phase of this involves the Deep Retrofit of the Enterprise Centre (works to fabric and installation of a heat pump) is now nearing completion. Other projects progressed this year include the installation of a heat pump in the Pharmacy Building and a number of initiatives as part of our ISO50001 accreditation commitments. The Buildings Office ensures that the physical infrastructure of the University is maintained (supported by the annual devolved grant from the HEA). Some recent minor capital projects have included universal access and toilet upgrades to St. Vincent's building, and a continuing programme of laboratory upgrades.

A new riverside walkway linking Castlewhite to the Western Gateway developed in conjunction with the Bon Secours was opened in January 2024. It offers a safe and pleasant route linking the main campus to Western Gateway Building and Brookfield Health Sciences Complex.

Two major Space Surveys of undergraduate teaching rooms and laboratories were undertaken this year and reports submitted to the HEA. The use of space in light of blended working etc. is a major focus as we continue to rationalise our property portfolio.

A strategic review of student accommodation provision was undertaken with the Board of Campus Accommodation (CAUD). Recommendations include a target of 500 additional student beds under UCC control.

A remembrance bench on the lower grounds of the UCC campus was completed in December 2023 and offers a place where staff and students can reflect and remember those who have gone before us. In memory of the students, staff and alumni of UCC who have passed, this new bench will serve as a lasting reminder and celebration of their life on campus and provide a place to honour their memory and legacy.

Securing a Sustainable Future

In December 2023, UCC placed 6th globally in the UI GreenMetric World University Rankings, and in June 2024 was placed 67th in the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings. In April 2024, we were the first university in the world to raise a 5th Green Flag (awarded by the Foundation for Environmental Education).

UCC achieved a 32% reduction in Greenhouse Gas emissions for heat (natural gas) and electricity relative to 2016-2018 levels. The Enterprise Centre Deep Retrofit was completed in September 2024, bringing the building to a B1 BER rating and reducing its carbon emissions by over 80%. UCC was the only public sector body to develop and deliver (in November 2023) its own Climate Leadership Training course in response to the national Climate Action Plan. We also achieved a remarkable saving of over 2 million disposable cups since the start of the disposable cup ban across campus in January 2023.

2 million
Disposable cups saved from landfill

32%
reduction in Greenhouse Gas Emissions

In November 2023, the inaugural UCC Sustainable Futures Forum was held on campus, with former President Mary Robinson attending as a special guest. In December 2023, UCC sent a delegation to the annual United Nations COP28 climate change meeting; for the first time UCC redistributed some of its badges to MAPA delegates.

Sustainability research contributed €14 million to UCC's annual income this year. Sustainability researchers secured funding for projects including UCC's Floating Wind Testbed integrated with Energy System Observatory, bolstering UCC's leadership in offshore wind energy research. UCC signed a Memorandum of Understanding with EirGrid in September 2024 to deepen our collaboration on ensuring Ireland's smooth, secure and rapid transition to a zero emissions electricity system powered by wind energy.

€14 million
Funding secured for sustainability research

UCC's research excellence in sustainability was evidenced this year through number of citations of UCC researchers, for example securing first place globally in Google Scholar in the three sustainability topics of offshore wind energy, energy modelling and electro-fuels.

UCC's sustainability researchers delivered significant societal impact including empowering children and young people aged 8-16 on biodiversity, leading on two volumes of Ireland's Climate Change Assessment, presenting to the Oireachtas Committee on Climate Action and participating in the new Climate Neutral Cork Leadership Group established by Cork City Council and informing a just transition in agriculture and land use.

UCC's continued innovation in sustainability practice was demonstrated by the Living Lab funded Sustainable Website Pilot Project which saw the University's Web Content Team evaluate the sustainability of the UCC website in terms of environmental and social impact and work to develop sustainable content practices for UCC websites to address these impacts. This year 12 departments participated in this project to implement the new sustainable practices, and an average decrease in data usage of approximately 50% for each site was observed. An average improvement of two letter grades for their Digital Carbon Rating (equivalent of a BER but for websites) was also recorded. The Web Content Team will continue to work to embed sustainability practices in website operations across the University.

Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) Ireland, co-hosted by UCC and Queen's University Belfast, grew its membership to 14 institutions north and south of the border. In April 2024, the network hosted its first event in Belfast, the REACH '24 Sustainability and Arts Festival. In addition, SDSN Ireland participated in the UN Summit of the Future in New York in September 2024, including co-organising the 'Peace not War' official side event.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Gender Equality
This year Cork University Business School and the School of Medicine achieved **Athena Swan** awards. As part of Athena Swan new policies on surrogacy, fertility, menopause and fostering were launched. Two new departments secured Athena Swan awards this year and in November 2023 UCC hosted the national Athena Swan Annual Awards Ceremony. To increase representation of female leaders in portraiture, we launched an open call for subject nominations as part of Accenture's UCC Women on Walls in July 2024 and we look forward to unveiling the selected portraits in 2025. In December 2023, UCC succeeded in securing funding for ENGAGE: Empowering New Generations, Advancing Gender Equality through Reverse Mentoring in Higher Education, an innovative scheme funded by the HEA Gender Equality Enhancement Funded 2023 that will implement a reverse mentoring initiative across four Higher Education Institutions in Ireland.

2 Departments secured Athena Swan Awards

Staff Networks
In July 2024, we launched a new Staff Disability & Neurodivergence Network, which followed from the launch of the staff Race Equality Network last year.

Ending Sexual Harassment and Violence
In January 2024 a new Sexual Violence and Harassment Prevention and Response Manager was appointed. In March 2024 a new Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedure was approved, and in June 2024 we launched the Safe and Sound project to increase awareness of harmful sexual behaviour, reporting procedures, policy and support services.

Carers
We hosted the exhibition "Fostering a Sense of Belonging for Higher Education Staff and Students with Caring Responsibilities: What Works" in February 2024 in connection with the President's Athena Swan Symposium which focused on Caring and discussed the Carers' Amendment ahead of the Irish referendums on Family and Care in March 2024.

Sanctuary
We made seven offers of Sanctuary Scholarships to incoming undergraduates for 2023/24. In February 2024, we held the seventh annual UCC Refugee Week, engaging for the first time with the UNHCR (Ireland), the UN Refugee Agency, in launching their new annual **Open Book Day: Celebrating Refugees in Education**.

LGBT
In July 2024, at UCC's annual Together With Pride event, the EDI Unit coordinated the creation of Rainbow Murmurations as part of Cork Pride in UCC. This image is a visualisation of us all coming together in synchronicity, connected, adaptive, to change the view of the horizon towards a more inclusive, welcoming future.

Training and Education
This year we released two online training programmes for students, TiLT: The University Game, an EDI role-playing game and **Equality and Diversity for Students**, a more traditional online programme. We are developing a Digital Badge in Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging, and in November 2023, a toolkit, **Ten Tips for Inclusive Events** was released. We held Athena Swan workshops and information sessions and ran Intro to Irish Sign Language classes.

Consultation, Awareness Raising and Events
We coordinated the 7th Annual Equality Week in collaboration with an ever-widening sweep of the UCC community and beyond. We sought to more actively engage with the student body though targeted campaigns and engagement with Clubs and Societies via Instagram. In March 2024, we opened the second Values & Culture Staff Survey, and in June 2024 held the first annual EDI Gathering.

Alumni and Development
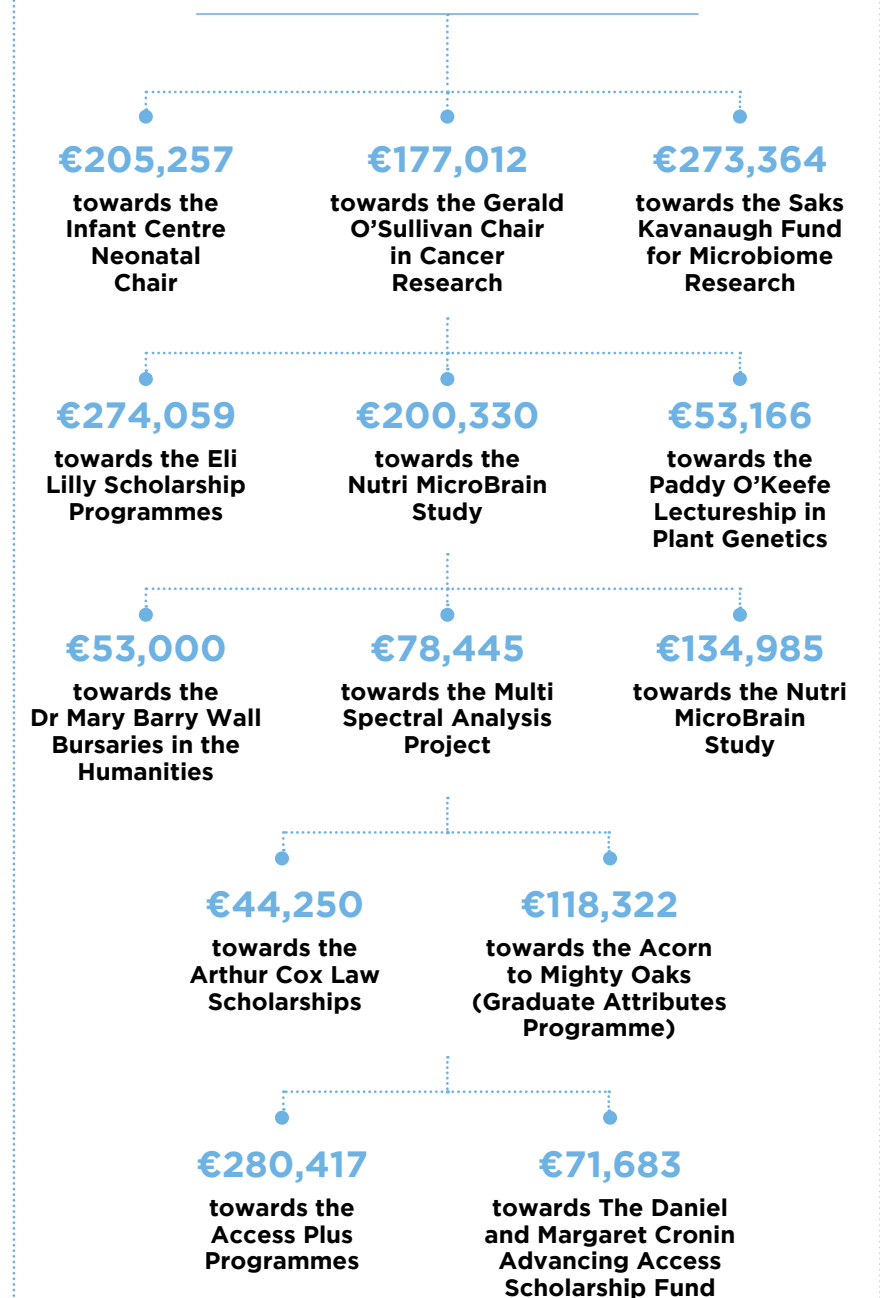
Philanthropy Success

Despite cancelled activities and concerns from supporters regarding the financial deficit, €13m was achieved in new donations and pledges this year. Philanthropy through Cork University Foundation is enabling many projects aligned with our Strategic Plan. For example, donations from Philanthropic Trusts, Donor Advised Funds, Individuals and engagement with Company Giving Schemes were received in support of research into Chron's Disease, Cancer Research, Microbiome Research and Children's Rights. In particular, the Cerebral Palsy Foundation gift for INFANT was significant as it secured matched funding from the SFI Strategic Partnership Programme. Philanthropy is funding projects aligned to our Students Success including the Graduate Attributes Programme and scholarships to support entrepreneurs and women in STEM and postgraduate students. Philanthropy supports 25% of our ACCESS programme and the Mary Barry Wall Scholarships together with the Daniel and Margaret Cronin Advancing Scholarship Fund support graduate students from a disadvantaged background.

A crucial part of Ireland's hidden heritage are the hundreds of hand-made books and manuscripts written in Irish that have survived from medieval to modern times. Padraig Ó Macháin, Professor of Modern Irish has been to the forefront internationally, in the spectroscopic and microscopic investigation of material elements of the Gaelic manuscript tradition. We secured funding from the McCarthy family for Multi-Spectral equipment and the employment of two postgraduate students for 4 years to pursue the work of image-capture and analysis.

€13 million New donations and pledges

€2,856,833

dispursed as follows

€205,257 towards the Infant Centre Neonatal Chair

€177,012 towards the Gerald O'Sullivan Chair in Cancer Research

€273,364 towards the Saks Kavanaugh Fund for Microbiome Research

€274,059 towards the Eli Lilly Scholarship Programmes

€200,330 towards the Nutri MicroBrain Study

€53,166 towards the Paddy O'Keefe Lectureship in Plant Genetics

€53,000 towards the Dr Mary Barry Wall Bursaries in the Humanities

€78,445 towards the Multi Spectral Analysis Project

€134,985 towards the Nutri MicroBrain Study

€44,250 towards the Arthur Cox Law Scholarships

€118,322 towards the Acorn to Mighty Oaks (Graduate Attributes Programme)

€280,417 towards the Access Plus Programmes

€71,683 towards The Daniel and Margaret Cronin Advancing Access Scholarship Fund

Fundraising Campaign

More Partnership, a leading HE fundraising-consultancy firm, was selected to undertake a feasibility study the first half of 2025 to test the Fundraising Campaign objectives, our institutional readiness and the fundability of proposed projects with potential donors. The Naming Policy for University Assets and the **Fundraising Policy** were updated; a fly through for the CUBS building was created and Superlative progressed conversations with US-based philanthropists; two of the required six donations for medical equipment were received through the Department of Justice's IIP Programme. Chapel & York Foundation, a 501(c)3 entity, were engaged to enable tax-efficient smaller donations from mass alumni appeals. **Cork University Foundation** collaborated with the Ireland Funds on an event, to remember Dr Tony Reilly, and to cultivate US major gift donors. The **Philanthropy Impact Report 2022-23** and Benefactors' Lunch were augmented with bespoke stewardship activities and the opening of the **Cavanagh Way**, a riverside walkway and biodiversity trail on UCC's campus.

Stakeholder Engagement

Deloitte sponsored four Global Speaker Series hybrid events, and to celebrate the 25th Alumni Achievement Awards we honoured **eleven inspirational alumni**. Aligned with Minister Harris' Trade Mission in February 2024, we hosted a stakeholder event in San Francisco in advance of the 40th anniversary twin-city celebration, and the Minister spoke at the Boston alumni chapter event.

When the fonathan could not be delivered there was a pivot to #Giving Tuesday, a Global Day of Philanthropy which achieved over 170 donors; and in March 2024 a fundraising event with UCC GAA Alumni Club raised funds for student GAA activities. We thanked 525 donors compared to 359 donors in the previous year, and 271 in 2021/22. Donors funded an in-memorial bench to remember alumni, staff and students lost too soon; and the **UCC Alumni Fund** disbursed grants to student mental health, student safety, the makerspace and hush pods in the Boole Library.

Over 8,725 alumni responded to a survey detailing their preferred channels of communication, areas of interest, volunteer opportunities, readiness to make a gift or leave a bequest in their will. Informed by these insights, the Stakeholder Engagement Plan was drafted around six priorities and enabled by four Key Performance Indicators (number of alumni donors; two-way communications; volunteering; and events/experiences).

Eleven alumni celebrated at the 25th Alumni Achievement Awards, November 2023.

Finance and Resources

Statement of Comprehensive Income - Consolidated View

	30/09/2024
	€'000
State Grants	101,265
Academic Fees	170,393
Research grants and contracts	120,946
Amortisation of state capital grants	11,564
Other operating income	61,517
Interest income	2,169
Investment income	35
Deferred funding for pensions	58,316
Donations and endowments	5,710
Total income	531,915
Staff and pension service costs	321,729
Other operating expenses	113,013
Pension and other interest expense	67,330
Depreciation/Amortisation	25,026
Total Expenditure	527,098
Surplus/(deficit) before other gains/losses	4,817
Profit on disposal of fixed assets	23
Profit on disposal of investments	-
Gain/(loss) on investments	1,938
Surplus/(deficit) before taxation	6,778

Statement of Comprehensive Income 2023/2024

2024 was a challenging but successful year financially for UCC. The UCC group recorded a surplus of €6.8m in the year ended 30th September 2024. The main reasons for the Group surplus were the impacts of:

- ✓ **State Grants income growth of €12.3 million (14%)** driven by support for Government Pay Awards.

- ✓ **Academic Fee income growth of €8 million (5%)** driven by student volume, price and mix.

- ✓ **Other Operating Income growth** of €10.2 million (20%) driven in part by *Project Alpha* but also by strong subsidiary performance.

- ✓ **Interest income growth of €1.6 million (287%)** driven by *Project Alpha* focus on optimising treasury yield.

- ✓ **Other Operating Expenses reduction** of €2.1 million (2%) driven by *Project Alpha*, and

- ✓ The University's Trust fund returned an investment **gain of €1.9 million.**

The Financial Year 2023/24 saw the execution of a robust deficit recovery plan, *Project Alpha*, which has returned the University to a surplus position. Strong income growth offset cost growth for the first time since COVID year 2020, delivering a positive results. *Project Alpha* has embedded strong policy responses and robust internal controls to ensure that UCC returns to a sustainable surplus position over the long term. The University continues to prioritise research as evidenced by continued strong research output during the reporting period. The University anticipates that the cost of living crisis and related inflationary challenges will continue to impact in some areas, however to a lesser extent to previous years. Following the successful deficit reduction plan, the University is confident of its ability to deliver positive financial results, whilst strengthening our infrastructure and resource base, and ultimately deliver on our strategic plan.

Total income of €531.9 million constituted a €52.3 million (11%) increase on the previous year. State grants are higher by €12.3 million (14%), driven by support for Government Pay Awards. Academic Fee income increased by €8 million (5%), driven by increased student numbers, price and student mix. Research income continued to perform well this year with a €1.8 million (2%) year on year bringing total research income to €120.9m. Other operating income of €61.5 million reflected an increase of €10.2 million compared with the previous year, driven by the focus on other income generation both at the University and at its subsidiary companies. As a result – year-end 2024 saw an overall group surplus of €6.8 million.

Statement of Financial Position

Statement of Financial Position Year ended 30 September 2024

	Consolidated	
	2024	**2023**
	€'000	**€'000**
Non-current Assets		
Fixed Assets	673,792	684,396
Intangible Assets	8,231	8,156
Heritage Assets	3,219	3,094
Investments in subsidiaries	-	-
Investments	30,810	28,567
	716,052	**724,213**
Current Assets		
Inventory	701	500
Receivables	70,172	53,909
Investments	50,728	15,726
Cash at Bank	122,604	134,706
	244,205	**204,841**
Payables: Amounts falling due within one year	**(329,136)**	**(343,368)**
Net current liabilities	**(84,931)**	**(138,527)**
Total assets less current liabilities	**631,121**	**585,686**
Payables: Amounts falling due after one year	**382,850,**	**(347,418)**
Retirement benefit liability	1,619,723	(1,383,565)
Retirement benefit receivable	1,613,336	1,380,403
Total net assets	**241,884**	**235,106**
Restricted reserve		
Income and expenditure - restricted reserve	28,972	25,079
Restricted reserve		
Income and expenditure - unrestricted reserve	212,912	210,027
Total	**241,884**	**235,106**

- **Net assets of €241.9 million.**

- **Cash position €173.3 million at year-end 2024 –** is inclusive of fees received in advance and payment in advance for Research and Capital Funding in advance.

- **Bank borrowings reduced** in 2023/2024 by €9.1 million.

- **Year on year receivables have increased by €16.4 million,** 30% higher than the previous year. This increase is primarily due to the growth in Research Grant receivables.

- **Payables falling due within one year have decreased from €343.4m to €329.1m, a decrease of 4.1%.** The main reason for the decrease is the reduction in short term bank borrowings in 2024. Research grants and contracts in advance have increased due the timing of payments arising from certain Research activities. Trade creditors have increased to €7.1m, from €4.7m in 2023. This increase is due to the timing of trade creditor payments near year-end.

- **Statement of Financial Provision Unrestricted Reserves include FA revaluation reserves €134 million,** FRS102 related non-exchequer capital grants €101 million – offset by Revenue Reserves/Trust Fund and Cork University Foundation Reserves, totalling €22 million.

Subsidary Companies

Subsidiary Companies

Campus Accommodation UCC expanded the student accommodation offering and now has 1,536 beds of affordable housing for Irish and international students close to campus aligning with UCC's commitment to accessibility and sustainability. UCC Summer Beds offers additional short-term accommodation, supporting summer programmes and contributing to the University's financial sustainability. UCC Summer Beds welcomed 64,000 visitors from 62 countries during Summer 2024.

1,536 beds for Students

The Mardyke Arena plays a central role in UCC's mission to foster a dynamic, inclusive, and healthy campus. This year a new website was launched to ensure efficient access to information, making it easier for students to engage with Arena's diverse offerings. A significant increase was recorded in social media interactions this year highlighting the Arena's growing digital presence. This included a 376% increase in Instagram interactions and a total of 64,700 Facebook users. A Mardyke Arena Student Ambassador was appointed to bring the Arena's facilities, events, and opportunities closer to the student community. This year the Arena delivered 1,680 hours of strength and conditioning sessions to 341 elite student-athletes and sports clubs, with an estimated direct contribution of €160k in services. 4,125 club activity hours were provided in the Sports Hall, supporting a wide range of training and events for UCC sports clubs.

The Irish Management Institute and **Cork University Business School** secured first place in Ireland for the quality of teaching faculty in the Financial Times Global Rankings announced in May 2024. It retained its 60th place position in the prestigious Custom category (global) and re-entered the Open category (Global) in 67th position (this category includes Non-Masters Graduate Studies and Open Enrolment).

In Student Facilities and Services, the General Manager retired this year, and the Finance Manager was appointed as Interim General Manager. Devere Hall in Áras na Mac Léinn (The Student Centre) underwent a full refurbishment. Turnover was maintained with some areas showing slight increases.

The Glucksman welcomed over 100,000 visitors this year to view pioneering exhibitions on climate action, study of religions and radical humanities, as well as a cultural exchange with Cork's twin city of Rennes. The Glucksman was awarded full accreditation on the Museum Standards Programme for Ireland. Access and outreach programmes included creative engagement with thousands of school children across Ireland, and targeted initiatives for refugees and migrants, families experiencing homelessness, and the Traveller community through the museum's innovative Art Library programme

100,000 visitors to the Glucksman

A new CEO was appointed to **UCC Academy** in December 2023. UCC Academy pricing was reviewed to drive further utilisation and reduce funds leaving UCC group through external suppliers and new conferencing processes to enhance customer experience were introduced.

Governance

Governance

The new Governing Authority (GA) was established which included: appointment of a new Chair; election/selection process for five internal members; expressions of interest for six new external members; establishment of committees which were skill based; and revised Terms of Reference for all committees. Three new committees were established: Digital Strategy; Procurement and Purchasing; and Physical Assets.

This year the Office of Corporate & Legal Affairs transitioned to the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies. Through Governing Authority and related committee meetings and subsidiary meetings we delivered on key matters to ensure the effective operation of the University both operationally and strategically, including: Year-end financial statements; Annual Governance Statement; HEA Oversight agreement; Spin-Outs; Capitation/tuition fee matters; and Charities Regulator Reporting. Ancillary work related to appointment of Directors of subsidiary companies including CRO and RBO registrations.

Enterprise Risk Management (ERM)

The new ERM helpdesk provides a more efficient and integrated service benefiting customers. Helpdesk queries remain at a high level, with over 1,351 requests this year (approximately 140 per month). We have collaborated and consulted widely, embedding Health and Safety (H&S) and ensuring legal compliance. For example: Safety Representatives increased from eight to 23, the Chemical Steering Group conducted 21 Inspection and visits with the Office of the Vice-President for Research & Innovation, and 895 independent statutory inspections of university work equipment. The H&S audit programme was introduced, replacing the Annual Safety Report, with 37 audits completed this year. Work commenced to streamline the Risk Management process with bow-tie risk assessment methodology introduced.

Legal and Information Compliance

Legal worked on 888 legal matters and the top two areas supported were research and student matters. Legislation updates were provided on: EU AI Act; Official Languages Act; Export Control; Charities Act; NIS2 (General Scheme of the National Cyber Security Bill). The University Archives unit focused on re-establishing a full archival service, clearing the existing backlog, facilitating 14 researchers and dealing with 123 queries.

Policies

The following policies were comprehensively updated this year: Data Protection; Disclosures; Freedom of Information guide for decision makers; and Personal Data Security Breach Management Procedure.

Training

Induction and training sessions were provided to GA, Committees and Subsidiary Directors. A total of 906 attended H&S courses, increase of 11% from the previous year, with a 400% increase in attendance on e-learning courses to 7,200. Two interactive workshops to raise awareness and help reduce cyber risk were organised. Risk Management Workshops and Freedom of Information training were provided to the University Leadership Team. Town Halls were provided on GDPR and bite-size videos were created and shared on Freedom of Information and Data Protection.

Membership of Governing Body
1 October 2023 - 30 September 2024

Chairperson:
Mr Sean O'Driscoll

Internal:
Professor John O'Halloran,

Internal Elected:
Professor Josephine Hegarty
Dr Edward Lahiff
Mr Brian Bugler

Internal Selected:
Professor Geraldine Boylan
Professor Stephen Byrne

Students' Union*:
Ms Katie Halpin-Hill, President
Mr Alex Angland, Commercial and Fundraising Officer
Mr Shah Kamal, Postgraduate Representative

External Selected:
Ms Barbara Creagh
Mr John Fitzgibbons
Ms Sylvia Fouhy
Ms Margaret Lane
Dr Francis O'Sullivan

Ministerial Selected:
Ms Rose McHugh
Professor Maeve Conrick
Professor Brendan O'Leary

*Term of office of student representatives shall not exceed one year.

Official Languages Act [Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla]

This is the first UCC President's Annual Report to include a summary on performance of our obligations under an Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla / the Official Languages Act (2003 & 2021) (An ATO), providing an update on our work towards achieving compliance with this important legislation.

1.   Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh (COC) is committed to meeting its obligations under An ATO.

2.   Ms Nora Geary, Corporate Secretary, has been appointed to oversee performance and report on COC's obligations under An ATO.

3.   The following compliance actions were taken by COC during 2023-24:

a.   The corporate questionnaire and staff survey issued in March on behalf of the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport, and Media were completed and returned.

b.   One complaint, concerning an automated email response, was received, and was resolved to the satisfaction of An Coimisinéir Teanga.

c.   During 2023, new obligations under section 10A. concerning advertising in the Irish language came into effect. In March 2024, COC submitted the required returns to An Coimisinéir Teanga for 2023. COC continues to engage positively with An Coimisinéir Teanga regarding compliance.

d.   In April 2024, the Corporate Secretary submitted a paper to the University Leadership Team (ULT) regarding An ATO and the University's obligations. ULT approved the taking of a project management approach to addressing compliance.

e.   An assessment process was initiated to inform development of a prioritised plan of action for improving and achieving compliance and will be concluded in November 2024.

Select Media Coverage

According to media monitoring platform Vuelio, UCC received 20,408 mentions in print, online and broadcast media this year with a reach of 258 billion. The estimated advertising value equivalent of this was €34,928,080. The geographic spread of UCC's coverage is 50% from Irish outlets, 18% from the USA and 16% from the UK.

Selected media highlights include:

- **November 2023:** A UCC delegation attended COP 28 with delegates appearing across RTÉ, The Irish Times, Irish Examiner, **Irish Independent** and other outlets. This campaign was combined with a promotional media campaign on UCC's Sustainable Futures Forum, which featured former **President Mary Robinson** as keynote speaker, which featured on **RTÉ Brainstorm**.

- **December 2023:** UCC was ranked sixth most environmentally friendly university globally in the UI GreenMetric World University Rankings and was featured in the print edition of the Irish Examiner on 6 December and in an online article on **5 December**.

- **January 2024:** The State's acquisition of the Bonar Law Collection, and decision to host the archive at UCC, was covered by **RTÉ**, **Irish Times**, **Irish Examiner**, **Irish Independent** and others.

- **February 2024:** Research by Dr Valentina Rossi which proved that a celebrated fossil found in the Alps in 1931 is partially a forgery received worldwide coverage. It featured on the homepage of **The Wall Street Journal**, while **CNN**, **The Washington Post**, **Forbes**, National Geographic and **The Guardian** were among the outlets to follow up on the story.

- **March 2024:** UCC's conferring ceremonies were featured on the front page of **The Irish Examiner**, featuring Choctaw Scholar Skylee Glass visiting the Kindred Spirits monument and UCC graduate Rachel Quaid celebrating with her partner at UCC. The graduation of Choctaw-Ireland scholars Skylee Glass and Aurianna Jewell Joines was also covered by **The Irish Independent**.

- **March 2024:** UCC Ladies' Gaelic football team reached the final of the O'Connor Cup for the first time since 2017 and this was featured in **The Irish Examiner**.

- **September 2024:** The posthumous award of Masters to Michael Cowhig, victim of the 1968 Tuskar Rock air crash 56 years after his death was featured in **The Irish Examiner**.

- **September 2024:** An **interview** and **opinion piece** by Mr Sean O'Driscoll, Chair of UCC's Governing Authority, was the lead story in the Irish Examiner on 9 September. Mr O'Driscoll also spoke on Newstalk and the RTÉ Claire Byrne Show, and his intervention prompted a debate on the subject on RTÉ's Drivetime. A number of national editorials occurred on the subject.

UCC's Kellyann Hogan, Abigail Ring, and Aine O'Neill celebrate the university reaching the O'Connor Cup final for the first time since 2017. Photo by Stephen Marken/Sportsfile. The Irish Examiner, 08 March 2024.