



A TRADITION OF INDEPENDENT THINKING



UCC

University College Cork, Ireland
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2019/2020

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Foreword



This was a very successful year at UCC despite the many challenges and uncertainties faced by our university and our community during the COVID-19 pandemic. Following a sharp pivot to online teaching, assessment and working and continuing research, we have also made great progress to advance our strategic goals. UCC students, staff and alumni have made significant contributions to the global response to the pandemic. During this time, I was honoured to be appointed Interim President following the departure of outgoing President Professor Patrick O'Shea. On behalf of the entire UCC community I would thank him for his significant contribution to this university during his period of office and wish him the very best for the future.

This was a strong year for student recruitment, and we welcomed 6,488 first year students from more than 100 different countries. It gives me great pride that this year 23% of CAO admissions to UCC were via access pathways. Following this very successful student recruitment campaign, we also achieved a first-year retention rate of 94%, which is our highest on record and we continue to be the leader in Irish higher education in this area. For the first time in history UCC was unable to host its conferring ceremonies on campus this year and in April our virtual conferring model was rolled out in a successful acceleration of the assessment and conferring of final-year medical students and to accommodate the needs of students who were working on the front line. In total 7,476 students were conferred this year at online ceremonies which saw strong engagement from graduands, their families and friends and the UCC community.

We continue to invest in improving our student experience and this year UCC was awarded Best Student Experience Award at the Education Awards 2020. As a socially-minded, civically-engaged university, our core values and graduate attributes are the bedrock of our student experience and our hugely successful Graduate

Attributes Programme continues to support our students as they transition in, through and out of university. In January we opened a bespoke Hub building following a €20m refurbishment, providing a new and inclusive social dynamic at the centre of the campus which will facilitate learning communities, social engagement, and student-friendly service provision.

This year our research income reached €100m, enabling us to continue to build our reputation as a research-intensive university and increase our global impact. This represents a 68% increase over the last 10 years driven by increases from EU programmes and enterprise sources. We continue to build on our effective collaboration with industry partners and are the highest performer in Ireland for enterprise income. Our global ambition is driven by our staff who collaborate with more than 4,000 research-performing entities across 140 countries globally and are ideally positioned to leverage future exchequer and non-exchequer funding.

Despite a very challenging funding environment UCC secured significant Human Capital Initiative (HCI) funding this year to support graduate upskilling, and to increase capacity designed to meet priority skills needs. These new programmes will enhance agility and

innovation, advance our research and translational capacity and modernise our micro-credentialing and recognition of prior learning.

UCC has continued to lead the drive towards sustainability in higher education and was recognised this year as being the Irish higher education institution most committed to sustainability by the global UI GreenMetric Rankings taking 9th position among more than 900 universities in the world. This comes as we celebrate 10 years since becoming the first university in the world to be awarded a Green Flag from the Foundation for Environmental Education.

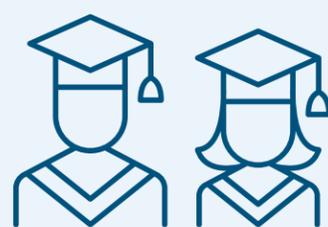
As Interim President and UCC alumnus I am incredibly proud of the resilience and agility that the UCC community has demonstrated in addressing the many challenges of the past year and I would like to pay tribute to everyone who has contributed to our progress this year.

Professor John O'Halloran
Interim President
University College Cork

UCC at a Glance 2019/20



22,650
Students



7,476
Graduates

94%
first year
retention rate



€100m
Research Income



200,000
Alumni
Worldwide

23%
of undergraduate
students entered UCC
via access pathways

RANKINGS

QS World Ranking	286
Times Higher Education World University Rankings	301-350
Times Higher Education World Impact Ranking	32
UI Green Metric Ranking	9
QS Graduate Employability	251-300
Sunday Times Irish University Ranking	2

SUBJECT/DISCIPLINES MAKING THE TOP 150 IN 2020 GLOBAL SUBJECT RANKINGS

Subject or Discipline	Global Rank
QS World University Rankings by Subject	
English Language & Literature	101-150
Nursing	51-100
Pharmacy & Pharmacology	101-150
Law	101-150
Shanghai Global Subject Rankings	
Food Science & Technology	43
Biotechnology	101-150
Clinical Medicine	101-150
Public Health	101-150
Dentistry & Oral Sciences	76-100
Nursing	51-75

Vision, Mission and Values

All the activities of UCC are governed by our mission statement. The mission statement encapsulates and reflects the university's core values.

OUR VISION

To be a leading university of independent thinkers.

OUR MISSION

Creating, understanding and sharing knowledge and applying it for the good of all.

OUR VALUES

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

- Creativity
- Transparency
- Freedom of expression
- Equality
- Respect
- Responsiveness
- Scholarship
- Integrity
- Diversity



Strategic Goals

Goal One: Implement an academic strategy to deliver an outstanding, student-centred learning and teaching experience with a renewed, responsive and research-led curriculum at its core.

Goal Two: Be a leading university for research, innovation, entrepreneurship, commercialisation and societal impact.

Goal Three: Create value for our community through an international outlook and informed and creative engagement on local and global issues.

Goal Four: Attract, develop, support and retain staff of the highest quality, thereby ensuring a diverse staff who are enabled to reach their full potential.

Goal Five: Strengthen our infrastructure and resource base.



GOAL ONE

Learn

Implement an academic strategy to deliver an outstanding, student-centred learning and teaching experience with a renewed, responsive and research-led curriculum at its core.

GOAL ONE

Learn



Deputy President & Registrar's Functional Area

From mid-July Deputy President & Registrar Professor John O'Halloran continued in his role as well as performing the role of Acting President. He continued in this dual role until being appointed as Interim President by UCC's Governing Body on 15 September 2020 following the departure of outgoing President Professor Patrick O'Shea.

Responding to Challenges

From the announcement of the Human Capital Initiative (HCI) in late 2019, UCC proactively engaged with all three pillars. In June 2020, UCC was awarded funding of €5.6 million for six new postgraduate programmes under Pillar 2 (727 student places over three years), which were co-developed with enterprise partners responding to skill needs in the region. €300,000 was awarded to increase the intake in undergraduate engineering programmes under Pillar 2. During 2020, UCC worked closely with enterprise partners on the development of Pillar 3 projects, resulting in UCC participation in 10 proposals and the award of €14.4 million across five collaborative projects.

In July 2020, as part of the government's announcement of the stimulus package an additional funding allocation was provided for higher education skills-related programmes. UCC was awarded funding for places on existing programmes and modules in identified skills areas. 363 additional students were recruited to existing taught postgraduate programmes and 285 on skills-based modules with a total value of €3 million.

Academic Strategy

UCC's **Academic Strategy 2018-2022** was launched in December 2018 and has enjoyed great support across the university in the collaborative implementation of the six priorities. The implementation of the strategy is on track, with all 35

actions now underway, and 26% already completed across the priority areas of the Connected Curriculum, the Academic Portfolio, Assessment Practices, Graduate Attributes, Enrolment Planning and Academic Governance.

A short online digital badge course on *The Connected Curriculum and You* was launched by the Deputy President & Registrar in April 2020. This online course is aimed at embedding the Connected Curriculum across all activities and roles at UCC and provides an overview of the Academic Strategy and its Connected Curriculum, how these operate in UCC and how they are related to individual roles across all academic and professional service departments. This course is one of the success stories of the online pivot and despite the closure of the physical campus a large number of staff from across the university engaged with the material and connected with each other via live online workshops which were developed in response to the campus closure. This course provided a much-needed point of connection for staff at a time of displacement and showcased the possibilities of Canvas and Microsoft Teams as platforms for online learning and teaching. The course content was also repurposed for incoming international students as part of the online Transitions-In programme that was launched in response to the COVID-19 restrictions.

The *Academic Strategy 2018-2022* has supported UCC in delivering its academic mission and safeguarding student success in the face of challenges posed by the COVID-19 crisis and the associated closure of the campus in March 2020. This led to an unprecedented requirement for academic decision-making at pace and at volume to ensure that students were enabled to complete the academic year 2019/20 amid rapidly evolving circumstances. Some of the adjustments, modifications and innovations developed in response to the COVID-19 restrictions will endure post-crisis. These will be incorporated into the implementation of the Academic Strategy and will support innovations in learning, teaching and the student experience, particularly in the areas of student recruitment, assessment and mitigation and academic governance.



Academic Affairs & Governance

Academic Readiness Plan

A sub-committee of the Academic Leadership Forum was established in May 2020 to develop a structure and plan to transition from *emergency management* to the planning and implementation of *academic recovery*. The Academic Readiness Plan covered the following operational matters:

- Structure of the Academic Year
- Recruitment, Admissions & Registration
- Learning and Teaching
- Curriculum and Assessment
- External Accreditation
- Mobility and Placement
- The Academic Strategy
- Work Placement

The plan was underpinned by the Academic Strategy, Academic Recovery Plan Principles and Academic Governance and Quality Assurance. The plan was presented and approved by Academic Council in June 2020.

Representation, Balance and Expertise on Academic Council

On foot of recommendations made by the Genovate Project and inspired by the aims of the Athena Swan Charter, the Office of Academic Affairs and Governance led an ambitious initiative to enhance representation and diversity on Academic Council (the university's primary academic decision-making body). Having secured relevant amendments to the university's Principal Statute, the Academic Secretary launched a call in September 2020 to form a panel of up to 30 self-nominated academic staff members who shared protected characteristics and wished to make a positive contribution to academic governance. Academic staff were invited to apply for membership of the panel on the basis of under-representation in one or more of the following categories: Gender, Age, Disability, and Ethnicity. The UCC community showed significant interest in the scheme and

submissions were of a very high standard, reflecting the depth and breadth of institutional experience and expertise. Applications were reviewed by a sub-group of Academic Council, and subsequently 30 academic staff members from diverse backgrounds were chosen to become full members of Academic Council for a period of three years. The panel members bring fresh and unique perspectives to policy development and decision-making and enable Academic Council to give greater consideration to equality, fairness and differences in its work.

Academic Programme Governance

A proposal to introduce a Programme Board of Studies (PBS) as the means of governing all academic programmes in the university was brought to Academic Board early in 2020. This approach is modelled on the existing Interdisciplinary Programme Governance Policy. The rationale for introducing the PBS is to simplify the process of programme governance, to provide clear guidance on the expectations around programme governance, to ensure academic decisions are made locally, to avoid duplication of decision-making at various levels of the institution, to simplify flows of information between the four colleges and the schools, and to enable the development of technical solutions to assist in the administration of academic programmes in a comprehensive way.

Academic Services

All offices within Academic Services have played a key role in responding to the challenges of COVID-19. Immediately prior to the campus closure in March 2020 and the onset of the COVID-19 crisis an Exams Business Continuity Group was established to respond to the requirements posed by the COVID-19 campus closure on examinations and assessments. The group is chaired by the Director of Academic Services and comprises over 40 staff from across the university including the Students' Union Education Officer. The group reports to the Academic Leadership Forum and has met weekly since the onset of the crisis. The group has supported the pivot to online assessment, the formulation and introduction of the 'No Academic Disadvantage' measures and communication of assessment policy and procedure through a newly developed online assessment hub resource. Over 50,000 online assessments were successfully held during

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the summer examination period. External examiners and examination boards operated online for the first time ever, ably supported by our technology platforms and colleagues in IT Services. Special arrangements were made to facilitate the assessment and conferring of final-year medical students and to accommodate the needs of students who were working on the front line. The Student Records and Examinations Office played a vital role in ensuring all facets of exams and assessments continued as scheduled.

The establishment of Student Central and the continuous innovation and improvement of our online service delivery to students, which commenced prior to the COVID-19 campus closure, meant that student-facing staff were able to continue delivery of online services to our students throughout the crisis. Between 13 March and the end of the academic year almost 15,000 student cases were received and processed. Investment in our student administration system continued apace during the year. Significant work was completed in preparation for the rollout of a new postgraduate application engine in November 2020, while a new student placement system went live in Career Services in September; additional phases in both projects are planned. Meanwhile, the Digital Hub stream delivered additional features and services for our students which proved especially useful during the COVID-19 crisis.

Recruitment and Admissions

The Recruitment and Admissions Function now incorporates the following eight offices: Recruitment Office, Admissions Office, Graduate Studies Office, International Office, Centre for Continuing Professional Development, Scholarships and Prizes, the Quercus Talented Students' Programme, and the Graduate Attributes Programme.

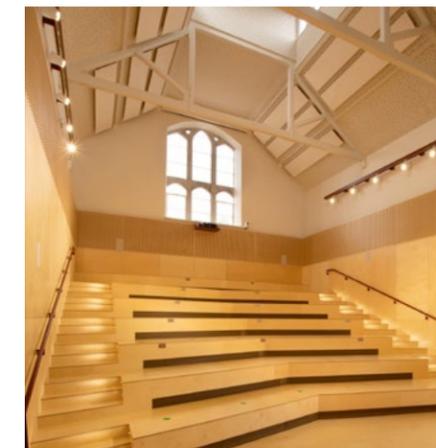
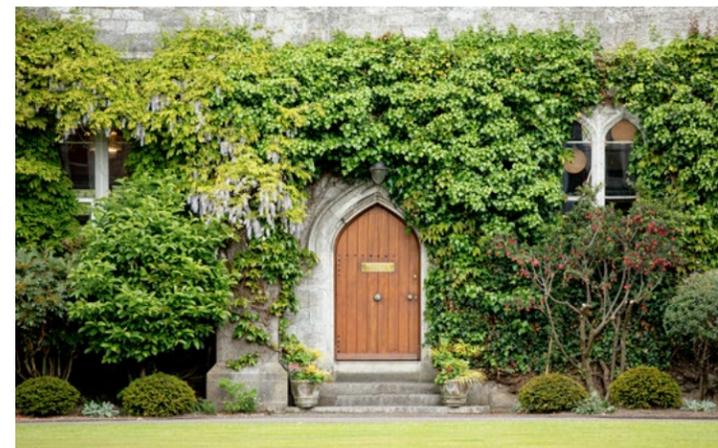
Student Recruitment

Student recruitment is a university-wide effort, coordinated by the Recruitment Office, and the recruitment work is crucial to maintaining our success in attracting high-achieving students.

For the undergraduate CAO target audience, physical recruitment activities in this period included the October Open Day, school visits, Guidance Counsellors Conference, and schools to campus visits. The production of the undergraduate prospectus and other recruitment material, digital and hard copy, encompasses a large body of work for the central recruitment team. Enhanced efforts were made to recruit non-EU undergraduate applicants in this recruitment cycle. The closure of the UCC campus under COVID-19 restrictions in March 2020 led to the transitioning of all student recruitment activities to online platforms. A wide range of virtual recruitment activities were executed, and continued throughout the CAO change of mind period. Online activities included a successful live Q&A event on 12 May, which was visited by over 3,000 individuals and during which 600 questions were answered. Further virtual college-specific live Q&As were scheduled from 22 to 25 June. Despite the challenges, the recruitment cycle was very successful, with a rise in CAO first-preference applications and, most notably, an 8.5% increase in non-EU undergraduate registrations.

Postgraduate recruitment physical efforts included global fairs and events as well as a dedicated On-Campus Open Day in February 2020. From March 2020 the recruitment activities pivoted online. A wide range of virtual recruitment activities continued throughout the season, in collaboration with university-wide stakeholders. A live Q&A event ran very successfully on 3 June, where over 1,000 individual visitors posed almost 497 questions. Global fairs ran throughout the season, in collaboration with Education Ireland and other global stakeholders. The recruitment efforts led to significant increases in applications from EU and non-EU applicants, which ultimately resulted in 410 additional postgraduate students on the previous year. EU postgraduate intake increased 32% year on year. The challenges of COVID-19 took a greater toll on international students' plans, with a consequent 31% decrease in their registration numbers.

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Admissions Highlights

Undergraduate Admissions

The headcount of first-year undergraduate students was 105 more than what was projected for 2019/20 (Table 1). An increase in the intake of international undergraduate students has been identified as a strategic target by the University Management Team.

Table 1. Projected versus actual headcount of undergraduate students

	Projected Headcount 2019/20	Actual Headcount 2019/20	First-Year Intake 2019/20
EU	3,771	3,858	3,636
International	177	195	163
Total	3,948	4,053	3,799

Postgraduate Admissions

The total postgraduate EU intake for 2019 was 1,781 students, an increase of 14% on the previous year. A total of 4,163 international applications were processed, representing a 23% increase on the previous year. At 643 students, 2019 saw the highest number of non-EU student registrations for taught postgraduate programmes to date, representing a 19% increase on the previous year's intake. The most successful international markets are India, China and the USA.

While significant increases were achieved in the intake of postgraduate students, across EU and international cohorts, the actual headcount of postgraduate students is 172 students fewer than what was projected for 2019/20 (Table 2). The growth targets for postgraduate student intake are ambitious, in line with the objective of rebalancing the undergraduate to postgraduate ratios.

Table 2. Projected versus actual intake of postgraduate students

	Projected Headcount 2019/20	Actual Headcount 2019/20
EU PGT	1,819	1,781
International PGT	679	643
EU PGR	268	207
International PGR	95	58
Total	2,861	2,689

The majority of the postgraduate intake is to taught programmes, with just 10% being registered for research programmes. An increase in the intake of postgraduate research students has been identified as a strategic target by the University Management Team.

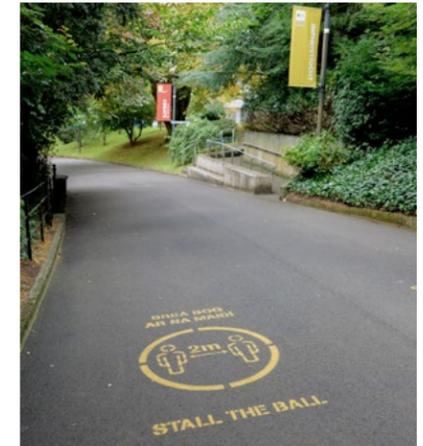
Orientation, First-Year Support and Retention

Orientation programmes are coordinated by the Admissions Offices for all incoming students, undergraduate and postgraduate, taught and research. Successful orientation is a university-wide responsibility, which contributes to the potential of students to progress and advance in their studies. The successful retention and progression of first-year students in higher education is a priority objective for the Recruitment and Admissions Unit. The UCC Strategic Plan 2017–2022 sets out a target of 92% retention of first-year students. Forty-four undergraduate programmes (70%) have a retention rate of more than 90%. UCC continues to be the leader in Irish higher education with a first-year retention rate of the 2018 intake being 92.3%. The retention rate of the first-year intake in 2019 was 94%, which is arguably the best first-year retention rate nationally, if not internationally.

Graduate Studies

As a research-intensive university, postgraduate research students and their experience are a key priority. UCC was a pioneer in developing a range of

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workshops and modules to support doctoral and master's students in their postgraduate journey and beyond. Our research students are based not only close to UCC, but elsewhere in Munster, Ireland and abroad and include both full-time and part-time postgraduates. In alignment with the Strategic Plan, exploring the flexible delivery of the courses had been identified as a priority by the Dean of Graduate Studies, which was brought to the fore with the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic. Hence in 2020, all new postgraduate research students were able to partake in 'live' research orientation via MS Teams, while those nearing completion could undertake 'live' workshops remotely on 'Surviving the Viva Voce'. Furthermore, a range of credit-bearing postgraduate research modules can now be undertaken remotely through Canvas, with 'live' interactive sessions to enhance the student learning experience. This pivoting to a different mode of delivery has significantly increased the participation of research students in these workshops and modules.

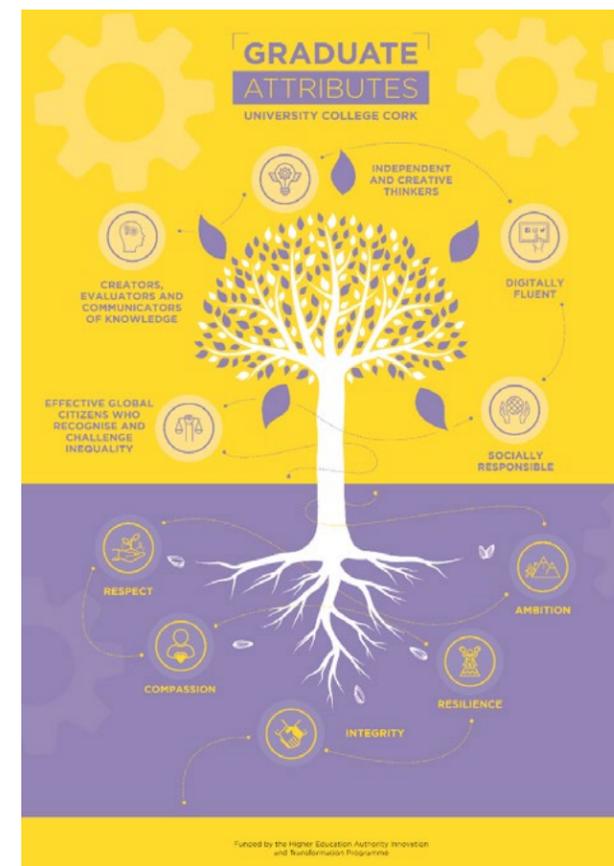
Quercus Talented Students' Programme

This scholarship programme is now in its sixth year and received a total of 217 applications across its four strands for the 2019-2020 academic year. In total there were 19 new Quercus scholars: eight Sports Scholars; five Creative and Performing Arts Scholars; one Innovation/Entrepreneurship Scholar as well as five University Scholars. Highlights from the 2019-2020 academic year included the following:

- Quercus Sports Scholar Paul O'Donovan won gold in the men's lightweight double sculls at the World Rowing Championships in Austria, with fellow Quercus scholar Ronan Byrne taking silver in the men's double sculls. Ronan subsequently won gold at the European U-23 Rowing Championships the following week.
- Active Citizenship Scholar Vera Stojanovic was awarded the Talloires Network COV-AID Student Engagement Award, and two Creative and Performing Arts Scholars, Kyle Macaulay and Nicole Delaney, released their debut album entitled *Barra Taoide*.

Graduate Attributes Programme

Since the successful launch of the **Graduate Attributes Programme** (GAP) in September 2019, much work has been done collaboratively with students and staff from right across the university to increase awareness of the programme and to align the five graduate attributes and five core values with the academic curriculum as well as with co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. The overarching objective of the programme is to enable a successful student journey, which will prepare students for their future through three main projects:



- **Transition In initiatives** are guiding students into the right programme of study for them, whilst simultaneously widening access of under-represented cohorts and improving first-year retention rates.
- **Transition Through initiatives** are providing targeted supports, delivering skills training and developing graduate attributes that go beyond disciplinary content knowledge and can be applied in life-wide and life-deep contexts.
- **Transition Out initiatives** are preparing final-year students to transition into professional environments, delivering on the ambitions of UCC's Institutional Employability and Employment Guide.



Key **highlights** from the academic year include:

- The launch of the Success Zone, a virtual learning 'one-stop-shop' for UCC students. Led by the Skills Centre, this was as a collaborative initiative with GAP, IT Services and the Library.
- The development of a series of Virtual Reality Campus Experience 360 degree videos following a highly collaborative process with colleagues from across the university. This fully immersive experience allows anytime, anywhere, any device access to our beautiful campus.
- The translation of Graduate Attributes and values into different languages. Students were involved as co-creators both on and off camera. The first video in Mandarin was released in October 2019 to coincide with the visit of a delegation to a number of Chinese partner universities. The second video in Irish was released on St Patrick's Day 2020.
- In collaboration with the Graduate Studies Office and Blackstone LaunchPad, GAP was honoured to support a two-day multidisciplinary Postgraduate Showcase and Challenge which was the brainchild of Michael B. Vaughan, a PhD student in the College of Medicine and Health.
- The release of two videos during the summer period: 'Developing a Growth Mindset', which was made in collaboration with Dr Eithne Hunt, Academic Advisor to the Graduate Attributes Programme, and 'Tips for Minding Your Mental Health', with colleagues in Student Counselling and Development.
- GAP facilitated a collaborative project between the UCC Career Services and the College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences to develop a complete set of 30 discipline-specific employability and employment guides.
- A series of eight workshops was developed by Career Services on thematic areas relating to employability skills in collaboration with GAP.

Student Experience

The Education Awards 2020 – Best Student Experience Award for UCC

UCC won the Best Student Experience Award at the Education Awards 2020. These awards recognise, encourage and celebrate excellence in the third-level education sector on the island of Ireland from both state and privately funded institutions. The award categories highlight the key areas that impact on student performance and provide opportunities for educational institutions to have their achievements recognised across the various important facets of their operations.

The Hub

The **Hub**, designed by architects O'Donnell and Tuomey, opened its doors to students on 6 January 2020. The Hub creates an inclusive social dynamic at the centre of the campus which will facilitate learning communities, networking, student interaction, internationalisation, and student-friendly service provision. The building will be a key enabler for the Academic Strategy and will provide new places for creativity, innovation, and collaboration across disciplines, in a supportive environment. It delivers on Goal 5 of the UCC Strategic Plan 2017–2022 by supporting the creation of 'a seamless student-centred administrative, academic and extracurricular experience'. The contemporary building design includes a range of different types of space over four floors. The Atrium is a large multi-purpose event space that makes up most of the ground floor. The Maker Space, also on the ground floor, provides room for students to work on creative projects. The Global Lounge on the first floor is a unique space for people to relax and work together in a dynamic environment. The 'Shtepps' is a flexible space for people to work on projects, and to give talks and run events, and is located on the first floor. The third floor has a range of different workspaces, including different-sized study rooms and open learning spaces. The fourth floor is home to the Dr Dora Allman Room, as well as the Dr Lucy E. Smith Room and the Viewing Window, which provides a beautiful panoramic view across UCC's main campus and the city beyond.

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The Hub will transform the way the university supports student life and will make services more accessible and convenient. It is home to a range of student services and activities, learning and teaching spaces and facilities. These include: Student Societies; Student Clubs; Student Central, Career Services; Disability Support Services; Mature Students Office; Scholarships and Prizes; Campus Radio; *University Express* and *Motley* magazine. The new building represents an important investment in the university's future, as we improve our facilities and spaces to support the student experience and enhance academic excellence.

Career Services

As with other colleagues in the university, the Career Services team pivoted to remote working, with all stakeholders compiling a fresh and interactive bank of digital assets for supporting students. Pivoting to digital has widened the scope for innovation and capacity to deliver to a larger student audience – online webinars, one-to-many workshops, virtual events, employer-led workshops, extensive bank of recorded careers content for student convenience.

Final-Year Hub

Shortly after the government-imposed lockdown, the advisory team collaborated in the production of a new section of the Career Services website dedicated to supporting final-year students in meeting the challenge of the dramatically transformed post-COVID-19 job market.

This section provides practical, proven advice to final-year students on ways to develop their career, despite the recent downturn. Students can access self-paced, self-service educational resources that teach creative work search skills, and can learn new ways of developing work-relevant skills through voluntary roles, community work, remote working and alternative career trajectories.

Supporting Transition to Work and Further Studies

The following is a summary of activities which took place to support students with their career and academic planning in 2019-20:

- 3,101 one-to-one careers advisory consultations were provided to UCC students in 2019/2020.
- 566 of those consultations were delivered remotely through MS Teams and Google Meet.
- 259 group workshops, clinics and presentations were delivered to current students, prospective students, and staff and external audiences in 2019-2020.
- A new Career Services Learning Hub was developed on the Canvas platform in 2020 and is a learning space for all students to access career-relevant material.
- 1,819 graduate job and internship opportunities were advertised from 736 companies.
- 742 volunteering opportunities have been advertised from not-for-profit, civic and social organisations on the system in 2019-2020.
- Career Services undertook an intensive social media campaign focusing on employer engagement to promote work placement for AY 2021 in the summer of 2020.

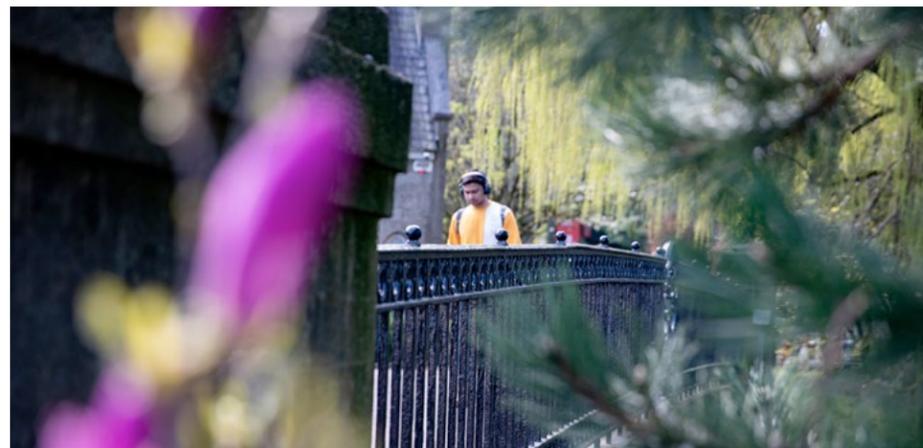
Finally, the full Career Services team relocated to The Hub from Brighton Villas in December 2019, which has significantly enhanced our service delivery, accessibility and visibility to students with our centralised on-campus location and access to new and improved student consultation facilities.

Chaplaincy

The Chaplaincy provided pastoral and spiritual support to large numbers of UCC students, staff, alumni and retired staff. The Chaplaincy responded to trauma and bereavement, providing support to the bereaved on a regular basis. Chaplaincy worked closely with other departments in the offer of support for health and wellbeing of students and staff. The Chaplaincy continued to promote the ethos of a multi-faith environment where a welcome is accorded to all users irrespective of their faith background or otherwise. The visibility of chaplains has increased by means of presence on campus and highlighting the services provided.

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During the COVID-19 campus closure, the Chaplaincy department continued to offer a full service – transferring activities predominantly online. The Chaplaincy team continued to provide an on-campus presence as far as practicable during the period.

Student Life

Student Life, a new thematic area encompassing UCC Student Societies, health and safety for student-led activities, accommodation and community life, Campus Watch, Students' Union administration, Campus Radio and Student Media, was established in 2019 as part of the strategic re-structuring within the Student Experience area. This new area, under the leadership of Seamus McEvoy, is responsible for delivering key functions which support students in their journey through UCC.

Student Societies

In 2019–2020 societies evolved and continued their tremendous work online with regular activities, campaigns, festivals, outreach programmes, seminars, and social events for their members.

Highlights include:

- 2,069 society events were held both in person and online in 2019/2020.
- €200,000 was raised for various charities by UCC societies this year, despite regular fundraising activity being suspended in March 2020.
- 1,196 volunteer committee members dedicated their time to societies.
- 327 society events moved to an online platform between March and September 2020.
- 106 active UCC societies cater for a diverse and varied student community.
- 23 training sessions were available to committee members, giving them the

toolkit necessary to run their society well and learn transferrable skills for the future (including SafeTALK Suicide Prevention, 'dealing with conflict' and Irish Sign Language).

- Five new societies were established this year: Translational Medicine; Data & Analytics; Co-Operative; Association of Medical Students in Ireland (AMSI); and Consulting.
- UCC societies won five awards at the National Society Awards 2020, making them the biggest winners for the second year in a row.
- Two societies were honoured at the Union of Students' Ireland Achievement Awards: UCC Cancer Society won the Best Charity Champion award and UCC Surgeon Noonan Society won the Best Overall Society award.

UCC Students' Union

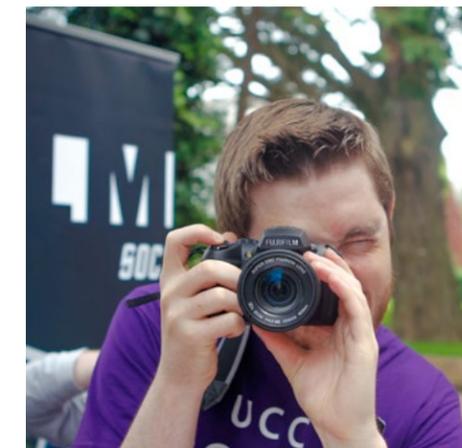
In March 2020, UCC students voted by referendum to approve a new Students' Union constitution, at the same time as the Students' Union elections 2020, where six sabbatical officers were elected prior to the beginning of the first lockdown in March.

Campaigns and Events

The Students' Union undertook a number of campaigns to promote the interests of students throughout the year, including:

- Working with UCC students in August 2020 to lobby the Department of Higher Education for increased mental health funding, culminating in the hiring of four additional staff in UCC Counselling and Development. This has reduced waiting times from four to five weeks on average to just a few days, with additional emergency supports available for students at immediate risk.
- The UCC Students' Union Voter Registration, in collaboration with An Garda Síochána, getting 683 additional students registered to vote in the General Election 2020 in just one day.

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- Playing a key role in preventing the deportation of a UCC student, Hamza Khan, with the UCC Students' Union petition getting almost 7,000 signatures in just a few days.

Student Welfare

The Students' Union has been increasingly proactive in tackling issues of financial hardship and poverty within the student community. The union, in conjunction with the St Vincent de Paul, established a food bank in 2019 to assist students who were challenged by issues of food poverty, providing hundreds of food packages to students. A concerning trend noted was the increasing prevalence of international and mature students seeking support of this kind. The union also distributed over €20,000 in aid to students who were experiencing serious financial difficulties, and subsidised childcare costs for students with children. These measures have helped to retain a greater number of students within the university. Our efforts to assist students in financial hardship was stepped up in response to the ongoing pandemic with the creation of the UCC COVID-19 Hardship Fund in March.

Student Community Support

Student Community Support (SCS) is a panel of 50 students who are employed by the Students' Union on three occasions in the academic year: Freshers Week, Arts Ball and Raise and Give Week. In Freshers and Raise and Give Weeks, teams of three students patrol the streets/roads adjacent to campus from 8 p.m. to 4 a.m. Sunday to Thursday inclusive. Their core duties are:

- To assist students in distress;
- To help residents having difficulty with students engaged in anti-social behaviour;
- To notify the Gardaí of antisocial behaviour;
- To rectify rubbish bins that have been knocked over and to remove bottles, cans and food wrappers, etc., from the streets.

With each passing year the number of anti-social incidents recorded has declined

significantly, due in part to the increased level of SCS activity, especially since 2018 when the number of staff was doubled nightly from an average of 18 to 36.

Accommodation and Community Life

Accommodation and Community Life (ACL) is responsible for student accommodation advice and advocacy, the StudentPad online search platform, Campus Watch, Residential Life and Community Relations.

ACL works with internal and external partners to offer relevant advice and, where necessary, find suitable accommodation for all students. In particular, ACL provides an accommodation placement service to incoming international and incoming first-year students:

International Accommodation Placement Service

- 1,414 international fulltime undergraduate and postgraduate students sought help through the service, an increase of over 33% from the previous year.
- 957 students were offered accommodation by this service, an increase of 51% on the previous year.
- 466 students accepted accommodation sourced by ACL.

All international students were offered, or found, safe accommodation.

First-Year Accommodation Placement Service

- 575 first-year students declared themselves without suitable accommodation in the first three days after the CAO offers were released (1% increase from previous year).
- 785 first-year students declared themselves without suitable accommodation in the first six days after the CAO offers were released.

ACL communicated with all students to ensure everyone received an offer of, or found, suitable accommodation for the academic year.



StudentPad

In 2019, ACL acquired an online accommodation search platform which helps current and prospective UCC students find private rentals and digs. The site is administered by ACL and is only available to those registered, or about to be registered, in UCC.

Residential Life Programme

In 2019, ACL, along with the Peer Support Programme, piloted a Residential Life Programme. The programme was designed as a pastoral support by students, for students. The aim of the programme was to build communities and long-lasting friendships between students who were living away from home in UCC-owned properties. These students were primarily international students. Although the programme was cut short due to the pandemic, an average attendance of 50 students per event was recorded.

Campus Watch

Campus Watch considers formal complaints against registered UCC students where a breach of the UCC student rules may have occurred.

- 79 complaints were made about UCC students during the academic year 2019/20 from local residents, Gardaí, staff and students. This translated to a reduction in complaints of 18% from 2018/19 to 2019/20 and a reduction of over 50% since 2017/18.
- Due to ongoing collaboration between UCC, the Students' Union, residents, Gardaí and other key stakeholders:
 - Complaints in Freshers Week 2019 decreased by 30% from Freshers Week 2018 and by over 71% from Freshers Week 2017.
 - Complaints in Raise and Give Week 2020 decreased by 12% from Raise and Give Week 2019 and by 33% from Raise and Give Week 2018.

- €6,350 was collected for the Student (Benefaction) Hardship Fund in the 2019/20 academic year from charitable contributions and fines through Campus Watch.

Community Relations

ACL acts as a link between the local neighbourhood and the university. ACL engages with all stakeholders through:

- Resident association meetings
- South Central Safety Forum
- Anglesea Street District Management meetings

In 2019, ACL delivered 1,500 Community Life booklets to all local houses in the area, which highlighted 'Respect and Responsibility', the students' obligations both in and out of their rental properties, and tenancy rights, while also highlighting UCC support services.

Impact of COVID-19 from January 2020 to September 2020

ACL worked closely with the International Office and the 'Transitions-In' programme team to develop a guide for restricting movements. This guide allowed incoming international students to understand their responsibilities while they returned to Cork. ACL also worked closely with the International Office to inform the 'Meet and Greet' programme over the summer months, while helping students to identify suitable accommodation for their restricted movement period.

UCC 98.3FM

UCC 98.3FM moved into its new home in The Hub in June 2020. The station also undertook a review process at this time which highlighted that the station is flexible and adaptable to pedagogical and technological developments and is a valuable resource for students and staff. UCC 98.3FM, *Motley* magazine and UCC Express (Student Media) have been brought together under the roof of The Hub, and the design and philosophy of this building, which is to be a flexible learning

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Learn



space and be student centred, will be reflected by Student Media by utilising the framework and the core values of the graduate attributes programme, which will help UCC Student Media realise its ambition to support extra-curricular and co-curricular activities, and which will enhance the student experience and help students to be creators, evaluators and communicators of knowledge.

Access and Participation

Despite the challenges presented by COVID-19, 2019–2020 was a very successful and productive year for Access and Participation. In December 2019, the Access team relocated to the newly opened Hub building in the heart of campus. The move to purpose-built offices was a key moment for the newly restructured Access team. Located on the first floor of The Hub, the space brings together the team of 30 staff in a central and more accessible location. The central location on-campus has positively increased the visibility of Access services, and the co-location with other student support services in The Hub has afforded greater opportunities for collaboration and engagement, ultimately enhancing the student experience for all our students.

In 2019/20 23% of first-year CAO admissions were via Access Pathways:

Admissions via Access Pathways 2019/20	
Mature Route	193
DARE Route	251
HEAR Route	208
QQI FE	195
Total Access Intake	847
Total UCC EU CAO Intake	3,637
Access %	23%

New developments

- UCC has diversified its approach to outreach based on the low participation rates in certain geographic areas within the city. A Further Education to Higher Education co-ordinator was appointed in November 2019 to lead out on a collaborative initiative with Cork Education and Training Board. Strengthening the connection between Further Education and Higher Education with a focus on students from DEIS schools is a key priority.
- The PATH 3-funded Leadership in the Community programme was successfully delivered to Traveller Women from Cork and Kerry by UCC Adult and Continuing Education in partnership with the Southern Traveller Health Network (STHN). 22 participants completed their level 6 course, with most students indicating a desire to continue their studies and complete a level 7 in 2020/21.
- The Disability Support Service received funding from the Ability to Work fund from RETHINK Ireland to expand their very successful mentoring programme. The programme matches students with disabilities with a professional mentor for an academic year and provides students with a meaningful opportunity to develop their employability skills.
- Autism Friendly University: The Old Bar has been redesigned as an accessible, autism-friendly **Calm Zone**, offering social and respite facilities for a range of students, in particular students on the autism spectrum. The space contains a reception and open plan area, sensory rooms, respite and eating spaces, workshop spaces. Accessibility and autism-friendly design principles were applied in the design of this state-of-the-art space in the centre of campus.
- **Autism & Uni Toolkit:** UCC has adapted the EU-funded Autism & Uni Toolkit for the UCC context. The toolkit aims to give clear guidance to students on all aspects of college life and ultimately reduce anxiety.

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Equality, Diversity and Inclusion



UCC holds a bronze institutional Athena SWAN award, having successfully renewed its accreditation under the expanded charter in November 2019. Eight schools currently hold bronze departmental awards: Pharmacy, Chemistry, BEES, Food & Nutritional Sciences, Nursing and Midwifery, the Dental School and Hospital, Public Health and the Department of Business Information Systems.

Since its launch, **UCC's Gender Identity and Expression Policy** has been accessed by more than 30 students. Seven more Sanctuary Scholars entered UCC in September 2019 through the second year of the Sanctuary Scholarship scheme for asylum-seeker and refugee students, which is run by the EDI Unit in conjunction with the University of Sanctuary Working Group with the assistance of UCC Plus+, the Mature Student Office and the Admissions Office. The EDI Unit working with the University of Sanctuary Working Group worked on initiatives such as the **Sanctuary Fund**, which subsidised a number of refugee-related initiatives, like the award-winning Sanctuary Masks Initiative.

Significant university-wide events also included our annual Equality Week 2020 – which included the annual Athena SWAN President's Symposium and Equality Award, which went to Dr Naomi Masheti in 2020 – and Refugee Week 2020, talks from which are available on our website. The EDI Unit led on the redesign of the Irish Universities Association Equality Network LEAD (Living Equality and Diversity) online training programme, due to be launched imminently.

Ionad na Gaeilge Labhartha

Ionad na Gaeilge Labhartha continues to develop and advance in line with the university's Strategic Goals 2017–2022. In line with Goal One, all credited courses continue to be developed and delivered across all four of UCC's colleges to both Irish and international students of Medicine, Public Health, and Computer Science.

Existing credited courses for overseas students continue to be enhanced. The voluntary noncredited courses for both students and staff enjoy great popularity across the entire university among those who wish to improve their spoken Irish. The learning experience of students is greatly enhanced by the opportunities offered to engage with the living language in Corca Dhuibhne. A notable example is the continued contribution of our colleagues in Dún Chíomháin to the success of An Seimeastar Gaeltachta, which enabled second-year students of Irish and History to spend the first semester living and learning in Corca Dhuibhne. This work has been at all stages underpinned by best international practice in learning and teaching.

Through our engagement with community groups such as Gaeltaca, our membership of boards of management, and through our provision of a broad range of courses for members of the public, we have made a creative and productive contribution to the growth and development of the Irish language in Munster. In 2019–20 we further expanded our international reach to add Kwansai Gakuin University in Japan to our collaborations in Spain and Germany. Staff attended international conferences and functioned as external examiners in universities in Derry and Spain.

The outreach activities of the Ionad continued in teacher upgrading, in response to the shortage of teachers in Gaelcholáistí capable of teaching specialist subjects (sciences, etc.). To this end the weekly two-hour night classes in Irish for qualified teachers continued over the two semesters. A second class is dedicated to supporting teachers in the newly established Gaelcholáiste Mhic Shuibhne in Knocknaheeney and has been running for two years in order to enable the teachers to upskill to teaching subjects through Irish. It has been a great success.

Despite the impact of COVID-19 in the latter half of the year, staff remained actively engaged with our learners and quickly transitioned to the online environment. In the spirit of *Ní neart go cur le chéile*, staff on the main campus collaborated closely with colleagues in Modern Irish to deliver online assessment while our staff in Dún Chíomháin contributed their wealth of knowledge and

GOAL ONE

Learn



Pictured left: Dr Aoibheann Nic Dhonnchadha (Hon. Librarian, Col. na Rinne), Dr Caitríona Ní Churtáin (Modern Irish, UCC), Prof. Pádraig Ó Macháin (Modern Irish, UCC), Prof. John O'Halloran, Aonghus Ó hEocha (Cathaoirleach, Coláiste na Rinne), Anne Marie Cooney (Deputy President & Registrar's Office, UCC), Treasa Nic Dhiarmada (Col. na Rinne), Dr Micheál Ó Drisileáin (Stiúrthóir, Col. na Rinne)



Pictured left: David Donoghue (centre) at launch of UW 1201 module, with participating students and lecturers

experience to second-level colleagues in creating quality Irish-language material across the full range of Leaving Cert subjects.

On the 14th of February 2020 UCC and Coláiste na Rinne signed an MOU regarding cooperation in the areas of education, culture, and language. This was an historic occasion that confirmed UCC's commitment to outreach with Gaeltacht communities.

Centre for Global Development

The Centre for Global Development (CGD) engaged in a range of activities aimed at implementing the CGD Strategic Plan 2019–22 which was launched in June 2019. The CGD's activities are to a large extent aimed at supporting UCC's ambition to address major global societal challenges as expressed by the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). A number of initiatives were undertaken in the area of learning and teaching. These included the launch of two university-wide modules: UW 1201 'Global Sustainable Development – Interdisciplinary Perspectives', and UW 0012 'Development and Global Citizenship Education'. UW 1201 was launched in January 2020 by David Donoghue, former Irish ambassador in the Permanent Mission to the United Nations, who was co-chair of the UN process culminating in the agreement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the finalisation of the SDGs. UW 0012 is funded by the Development Education Unit of Irish Aid. Both modules have attracted considerable interest from students and staff.

As part of its engagement activities, the CGD also continued to run a lunchtime seminar series focused on SDG-related research across several SDGs being conducted by UCC staff and external development organisations. In the second half of 2020 this seminar series continued online.

In addition, the CGD ran a number of webinars, including two webinars focused on the impacts of and responses to COVID-19 in Mexico and India, in collaboration with universities in those countries. The CGD also compiled information on COVID-19-related development research being conducted by UCC staff. A third webinar

was held with the European office of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), with an emphasis on career opportunities for UCC graduates with the ADB.

The CGD is also focusing on providing information and facilitating networking to encourage trans-disciplinary research focused on major global societal challenges. A forum was held in December 2019 with UCC staff from a range of disciplines on developing inter-disciplinary research on SDGs. Further development of this initiative was delayed due to COVID-19 but has set a foundation for exploiting new research opportunities, for example through Horizon Europe.

UCC Learning and Teaching

Excellence in Learning and Teaching

In the *Times Higher Education Europe Teaching Rankings 2019*, UCC maintained its position in the top 50 universities in Europe for teaching and learning. This ranking relates to teaching and learning at UCC spanning 14 indicators across four key areas: engagement, resources, outcomes and the teaching and learning environment.

In 2019–20 the Centre for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning (CIRTL) experienced the highest ever registration for its various staff and postgraduate student professional development programmes with 144 registered for the Postgraduate Certificate and 45 for the Postgraduate Diploma. CIRTL's Postgraduate Certificate programme continues year on year to be UCC's largest postgraduate programme of study. In February 2020, 10 graduates for the MA in Teaching and Learning programme and over 100 from the Certificate and Diploma programmes were conferred. These are the only online programmes of their kind in the NUI and Ireland.

UCC staff, students and alumni were once again invited to submit nominations for the annual President's Awards for Excellence in Teaching. The short-listed awardees attended an awards ceremony on 10 October 2019 in the Aula Maxima.



OVPLT Distributed €0.5 million in Learning and Teaching Enhancement Funding

Through a competitive internal application process in UCC, 26 initiatives received funding based on their potential for significant and sustainable impact on student learning. The Strategic Alignment of Teaching and Learning Enhancement Funding is a joint initiative of the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching & Learning and the HEA. The funding aims to enable the development of a strong foundation for future enhancement of learning and teaching within Irish HEIs in line with local priorities.

Teaching and Learning Research Fellowship

UCC's Professor Chris Lynch was awarded Ireland's most prestigious national individual teaching and learning award in higher education. Professor Lynch, a professor and consultant in Restorative Dentistry at UCC, was announced as a recipient of Ireland's inaugural Teaching and Learning Research Fellowships, in June 2020. The fellowships, introduced by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, in partnership with the Irish Research Council, were presented to a total of five recipients from Irish universities.

A new Director for CIRTLL was appointed in 2019 – Dr Catherine O'Mahony joined UCC in 2015 as Manager of the Centre for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning. There she coordinated the CIRTLL's International Programme for Visiting Lecturers, its research projects and non-accredited staff and student professional development offerings.

The inaugural *Learning Connections* conference took place in UCC on 5 and 6 December 2019. This conference brought together over 200 learners, teachers, architects, designers and all who support teaching, from across third-level institutions – from universities; institutes of technology; community; industry; government agencies; policy makers; and regulators – under the frame of 'learning connections'.

CIRTLL Successful in Erasmus+ Capacity Building and Strategic Partnership Initiatives

UCC was one of five universities to share in nearly €7 million of European funding under the Erasmus+ Programme Key Action 2 Capacity Building in Higher Education. CIRTLL will partner on the QuarSU project funded under this initiative. QuarSU will investigate best European practices in recognition of educational and professional qualifications and learning outcomes at Ukrainian universities. CIRTLL is also a partner on the 'UNI-CO-leaRN: University-Community Learning' project, funded under the Erasmus+ Strategic Partnerships for Higher Education initiative. UNI-CO-leaRN will design and test a new mobility scheme for HE students that combines international mobility with a service-learning experience in the community.

CIRTLL continues to be very active in leading and collaborating on multiple research projects. One highlight was the kickstart of CIRTLL and School Education Erasmus+ project on *Alliance of Universities to Reform Curricula that Outcasts Radicalism in Asian Societies (AURORA)*. This three-year project involves partners from HEIs in India, Nepal, Spain, Romania and the Czech Republic.

Lifelong Learning

The Adult Continuing Education (ACE) Diploma in Substance Misuse and Addiction Studies programme was nominated for an Aontas Star Award in the 'Social Inclusion – Large Organisation' category. Representatives of the programme attended the ceremony in the Law Society in Dublin on Monday, 2 March 2020. This initiative takes place each year as part of AONTAS's Adult Learners' Festival and celebrates the achievements of adult learning projects.

The official launch of *Skellig CRI* took place on Friday, 1 November 2019 in Cahersiveen. The Minister of State for Transport, Tourism and Sport, Mr Brendan Griffin carried out the official launch which was attended by a number of UCC academics and staff. *Skellig CRI* in its role as an outreach campus of UCC based in Cahersiveen wanted to offer the community support during the current crisis and subsequently had 100 participants weekly, learning from home.

GOAL ONE

Learn



In response to COVID-19, ACE's James O'Herlihy and Belinda Gascoigne organised the *COVID-19 Return to Work courses* which took place in line with the phased roadmap for reopening society and business. These courses, for both employers and employees, introduced how the workplace has changed, the procedures and protocols of social distancing, hygiene and PPE and how new work layouts and procedures and the role of the compliance officer support these transitions as we return to the workplace.

For the 2019/2020 academic year, ACE in collaboration with academic schools and departments across all four colleges succeeded in securing almost €700,000 in income to support 220 part-time students on Springboard+ courses. Following the second registration of these students in semester two, ACE had an unprecedented retention rate of 94% of students. ACE also recently led the university's response to the Springboard+ 2020 call where we submitted 16 proposals from all four colleges targeting places for over 450 part-time learners and income of approximately €1.4 million. Industry support for these proposals was extensive, with over 36 businesses from around the region providing more than 80 letters of support for UCC proposals.

Despite the challenging circumstances of working remotely, 80,000 copies of the ACE newspaper were delivered to homes around Cork in late May 2020. In addition, it also appeared as a full supplement in the *Irish Examiner* on 29 August 2020.

UCC Skills Centre

The Skills Centre has proven its outstanding dedication and commitment to student engagement, learning and wellbeing. In October 2019 the centre was awarded in the Staff Recognition Awards for *Enhancing the Student Experience*, a nomination which stemmed from the academic community. The Skills Centre was also a finalist in two categories at the Irish Education Awards in February 2020 – the Student Engagement and Communication Award and Best Student Experience.

To support our students through this COVID-19 pandemic a three-part series detailing the learning of the **Everyday Matters: Developing healthy habits for university life** was developed. With oversight from Skills Centre manager Kathy Bradley, Digital Humanities student Yasmine Radwan brought Dr Eithne Hunt's messaging to life. This series received national attention, and three new versions are now circulating to audiences that include second-level students, guidance counsellors and third-level institutions affiliated with Student Affairs Ireland.

Examinations Appeals Function

A new **website** for mitigation, re-checks and appeals was launched which provides students with information about the different remedies available to students, eligibility to apply and how to navigate the process.

Centre for Digital Education (CDE)

Canvas has now replaced Blackboard as our institutional virtual learning environment. 7,571 Canvas courses with 31,099 student enrolments is being delivered by 5,293 staff. We have delivered 98 training courses to over 892 different participants and presented at over 80 meetings across all four colleges. All of this has been achieved via close collaboration between the Centre for Digital Education and the Learning Technologies Unit in IT Services.

The CDE team also manages the development and administration of digital badges in UCC, provides advice to colleagues on best practice in the application of technology to education, pilots and evaluates new learning technologies, and advises on development of next-generation learning spaces. The demand for digital badges within the university has increased year on year, with 46 unique badges issued to date and 1,220 earners in receipt of these.

The CDE continues to support two National Forum projects: *Disciplines Inquiring into Societal Challenges (DISCs): Enhancing Teaching and Learning for Active Citizenship* and *A Profile of Skills for Teachers of Language in Higher Education*.

GOAL ONE
Learn



Tom O'Mara, Head of Digital Education, represents UCC on the IUA project *Enabling Change: Enhancing Digital Capacity in Teaching and Learning* funded under the HEA's Innovation and Transformation Call 2018.

This project has two overall objectives:

- To enhance the digital attributes of all Irish university graduates.
- To enhance the educational experiences of all Irish university students through the mainstreamed and integrated use of digital technologies, including social media where appropriate, as part of the teaching and learning process.

In December 2019 Clíodhna O'Callaghan began her role as the Digital Education Officer in the Centre for Digital Education, within the OVPLT. Clíodhna's role is to lead out on an exciting IUA (Irish Universities Association) project on Enhancing Digital Teaching & Learning in UCC. This project is funded through the HEA's Innovation & Transformation programme with a project lead in each of the seven universities in Ireland.

CDE has been centrally involved in supporting staff to increasingly do more online in terms of delivery of learning content, assessment and administration. The CDE has been largely involved in supporting the rapid transition to online learning and assessment in UCC following the COVID-19 lockdown in March 2020. Key tools developed by CDE during this period include:

- **Keep Teaching website**
- **Keep Assessing website**
- **Keep Learning website**

Irish National Digital Experience Survey

Between 11 November and 1 December 2019, UCC staff and students took part in the INDEX Survey. This was managed nationally by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education and co-ordinated within UCC by the Centre for Digital Education in the Office of Vice President for Learning and Teaching.

300 staff and 1,463 students took part in the survey and our findings are largely in line with national results.

Language Centre

UCC Language Centre hosted the very successful EAP (English for Academic Purposes) in Ireland Annual Conference in October 2019 in the Western Gateway Building. The theme of the conference was English in Academic Contexts: Drivers of Collaboration, Innovation and Creativity and it was attended by delegates from around the world.

The Language Centre supports general internationalisation of the campus, working with approximately 1,300 students (both fee-paying and 'free' UCC students) from over 25 countries every year.

The Language Centre operates to a hybrid academic and commercial model and has been able to maintain continuity of service on both fronts since campus closure. The centre has been fully operational online since 16 March 2020. Between March and August 2020, the centre delivered general, academic and professional English courses, Irish culture workshops, teacher training and development and support for international recruitment and student experience in UCC.

OVPLT staff member Dr Rosarii Griffin developed and coordinated a new university-wide module with Dr Claire Dorrity (Applied Social Studies) on *Global Sustainable Development: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, which began in early 2020. With an uptake of 45 students, half took it for examination, the remainder for CPD purposes.

OVPLT continues to develop and deliver online content and staff development opportunities. It also issues once-weekly (Mondays) emails to staff and continues to build and promote resources on its website, including the new (in response to COVID-19) 'Keep Teaching' website.

GOAL TWO

Create

Be a leading university for research, innovation, entrepreneurship, commercialisation and societal impact.

GOAL TWO
Create



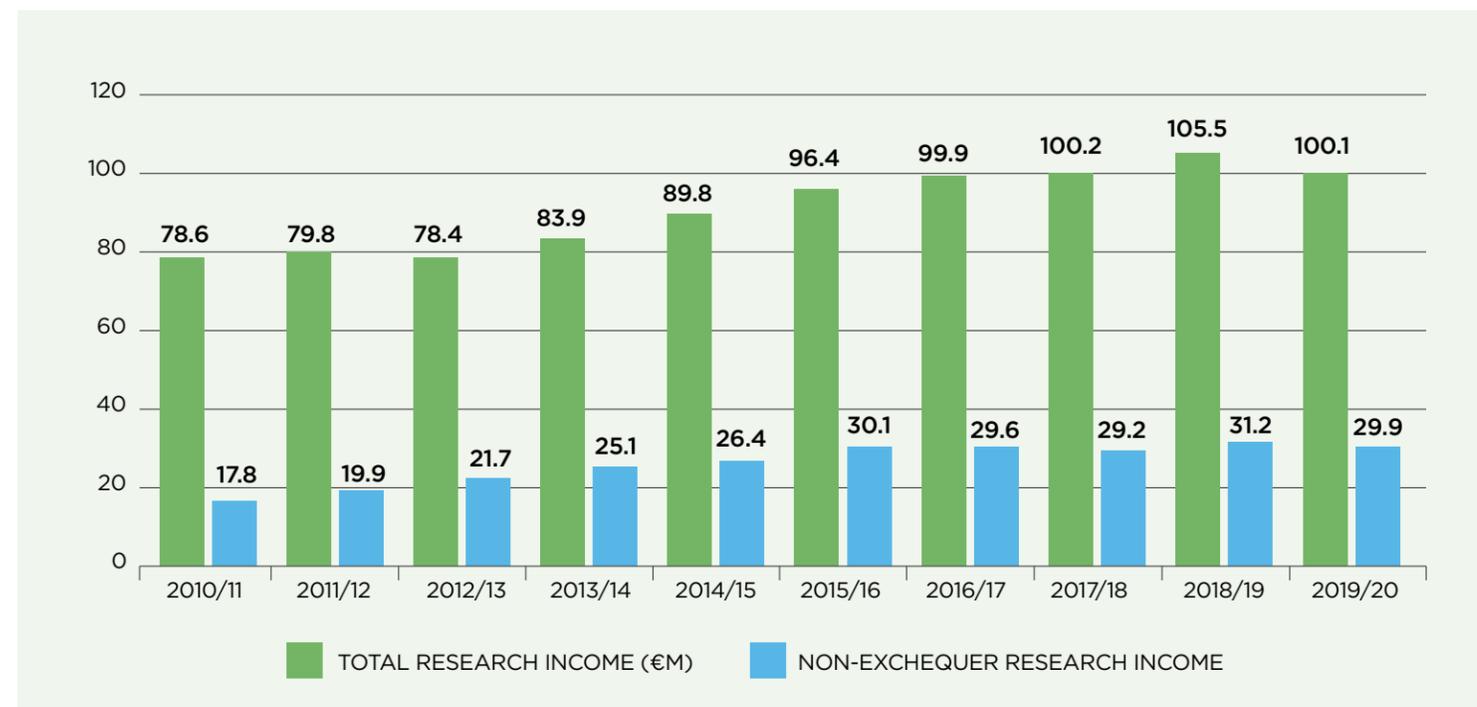
As a research-intensive university, UCC pursues truth and knowledge in both the basic and applied research domains and, in doing so, economic and societal impact is generated in the community beyond the organisation.

A fundamental enabler of this vision is securing sufficient levels of funding that supports excellent researchers across all disciplines to conduct innovative collaborative research with the highest potential to deliver impact.

Research income figures for the academic year 2019/20 reveals that UCC achieved an R&D investment of **€100 million** (Figure 1). Although this represents a 5% decrease from 2018/19, the level of research income secured this year is a 27% increase over the last decade, significantly exceeding the Strategic Plan target. It is reasonable to assume that the COVID-19 pandemic and its effect on the national and international economic environment has impacted on the 2019/20 research income, in particular on investment secured from industry sources (Figure 2B).

Since 2005, UCC researchers have secured over **€1.3 billion** in research funding investment.

Figure 1: Overall Research Income - 10 Year Profile (€/million)



GOAL TWO
Create



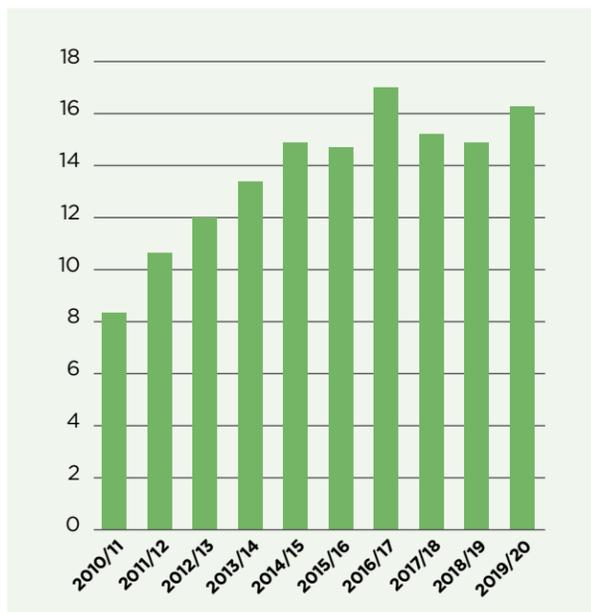
Reflecting the ongoing pressures on government funding, almost **€30 million** of 2019/20 research income was generated from non-exchequer sources, maintaining the 30% contribution to overall research income achieved in recent years and set out as a target in the Strategic Plan – the reduction of income secured from enterprise sources was compensated in part by an increase in funding from the European Commission.

This represents a **68% increase** over the last 10 years and was primarily driven by a **95% increase** in funding from EU programmes (to €16.2 million) and a **99% increase** in funding from enterprise sources (to €10.2 million) (Figure 2).

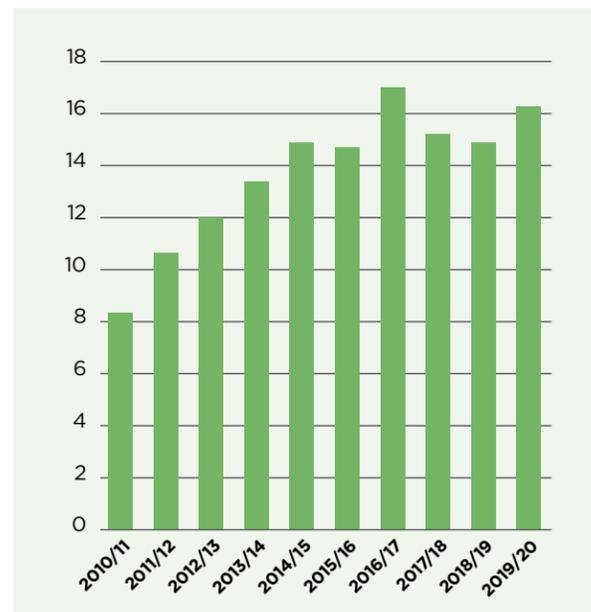
With regard to research income sourced from the enterprise sector, UCC's performance is the best in Ireland, reflecting the institution's long track record of effective and sustained collaboration with key industry partners.

Figure 2: Non-Exchequer Research Income - 10 Year Profile (€/million)

A. European Funding



B. Enterprise Funding



A key action was the establishment of **Prime-UCC**, Ireland's first university-based European project management service. The success rate for submitted proposals supported by Prime-UCC is over 33%, significantly higher than the EU average (12%), and projects bringing €13.8 million of research income into UCC have been secured.

Since its establishment in 2007, success in European Research Council (ERC) funding programmes is recognised as a global, as well as European, benchmark of research excellence. The strategic importance of increasing UCC success in securing ERC awards is very clear. To help improve UCC's performance in ERC funding calls, an *ERC Enhancement Strategy Implementation Plan* was developed by UCC RSS, approved by university management in February 2020, and is currently in the implementation phase. In 2020, the institution delivered its best performance in an ERC funding call, securing three Consolidator Awards to the value of €6.4 million.

Running from 2021 to 2027, *Horizon Europe* is the new European Union research and innovation programme, and the first calls are expected in March/April 2021. During 2020, as part of the development of a *Horizon Europe* Engagement Strategy and Action Plan, UCC RSS were proactive in preparing our researchers for the new programme.

To support this process, in 2019, UCC Research Support Services (RSS) announced the appointment of Dr Sean McCarthy, a leading expert on European research funding programmes, to work closely with the UCC RSS team. Working with 30 schools and centres, a key initiative of the strategy was the development of 'bottom-up' school-level plans that were focused on positioning groups to engage effectively at the EC policy level, ensuring optimal alignment of institutional priorities with Commission research funding priorities. Specific actions included the identification of key call opportunities and potential strategic European partners, maximising the competitiveness of UCC-led proposals, increasing the proportion of UCC researchers that engage with EU funding programmes, and broadening the diversity of programmes that we engage with.

GOAL TWO
Create



At the commencement of Horizon 2020, to improve the value of our networks across Europe, UCC became the first Irish member of **CrowdHelix**.

This initiative is an Open Innovation Network that connects businesses, universities and research organisations from across the world, so that together they can develop project concepts, target funding, and deliver cutting-edge projects under the EU Horizon programmes.

Numbering over 400 members, the network has secured €5.4 billion of funding to deliver 9,323 collaborative international projects.

Originally set up and based in London, and partly in response to Brexit, *CrowdHelix* sought to expand into Europe and, after considering several alternatives, chose UCC to host its European office. The physical presence of this organisation in UCC promises to provide the institution with significant additional opportunities to leverage its networking power in helping to deliver on our ambitious *Horizon Europe* targets.

It is now well understood that to effectively address the key research challenges and deliver real impact, taking both a multi-disciplinary and a global approach is critical.

To this end, UCC researchers now collaborate with **4,492** research-performing entities across **140 countries**, generating over **8,800 publications**, and are ideally placed to leverage these collaborations for success in future exchequer and non-exchequer funding programmes (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Institutions Collaborating with UCC (2015-2020)



GOAL TWO
Create



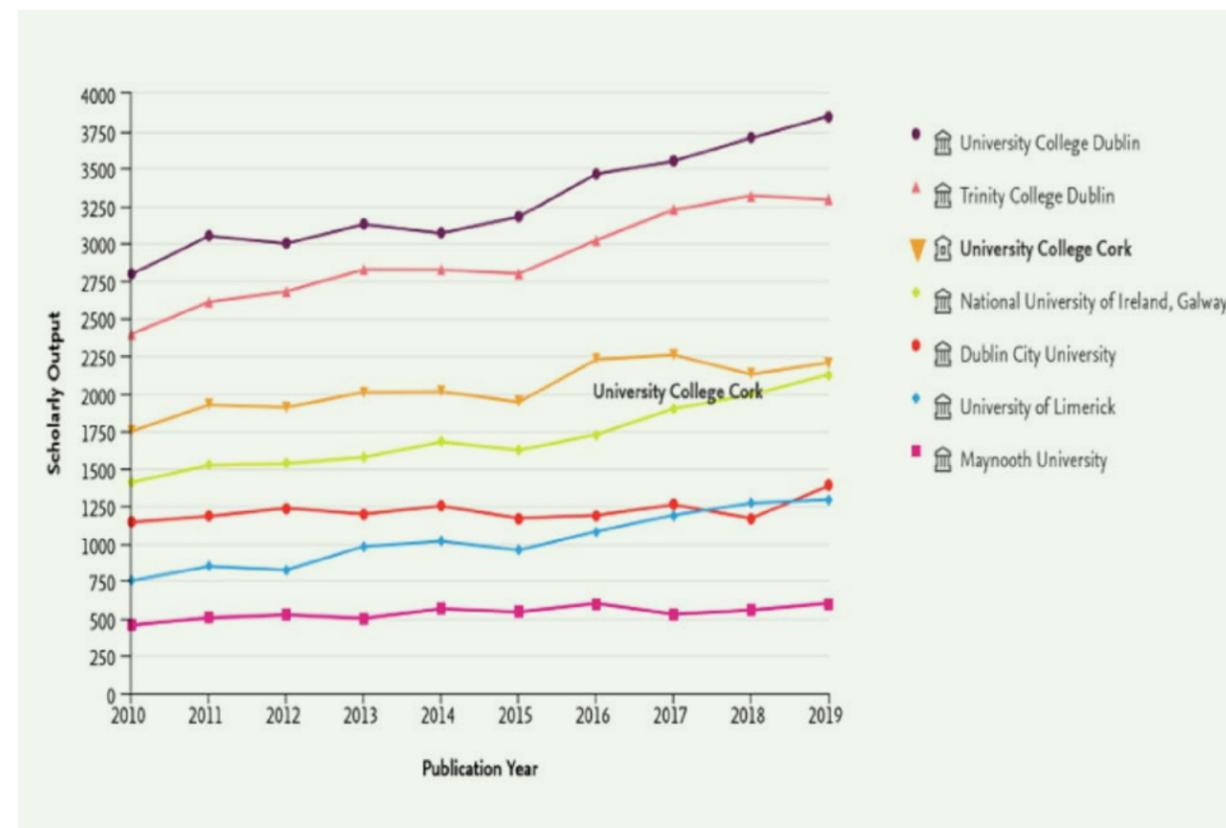
Research Publication Outputs

As highlighted in UCC's Research & Innovation Strategic Plan, 2017-2022 is a period of renewed focus on increasing the excellence and impact of UCC research outputs. The strategic plan sets out a commitment to support our research community in the pursuit of academic excellence, recognising high-impact publication and research excellence across all disciplines. To this end, a key target of the plan was to increase measures of research output and performance, including citation impact, monographs and non-traditional outputs in all areas of research activity. More specifically, it was envisaged that performance in key strategic activities would be increased to a level greater than the average global impact for the relevant disciplinary areas.

A key, fundamental metric of university research activity that supports these goals is increasing the citation impact of UCC research outputs.

Analysis of scholarly output generated from UCC research activity reveals a steady increase over the last 10 years, in line with other Irish institutions (Figure 4). **2,205 research articles** (as indexed by the Scopus database) were published by UCC researchers in 2019 (the last fully indexed year), a **26% increase** over the last decade.

Figure 4: Research/Scholarly Publication Output (10 Year Profile) - Irish University Comparative Analysis



Source: SciVal Analytics. All publication types included.

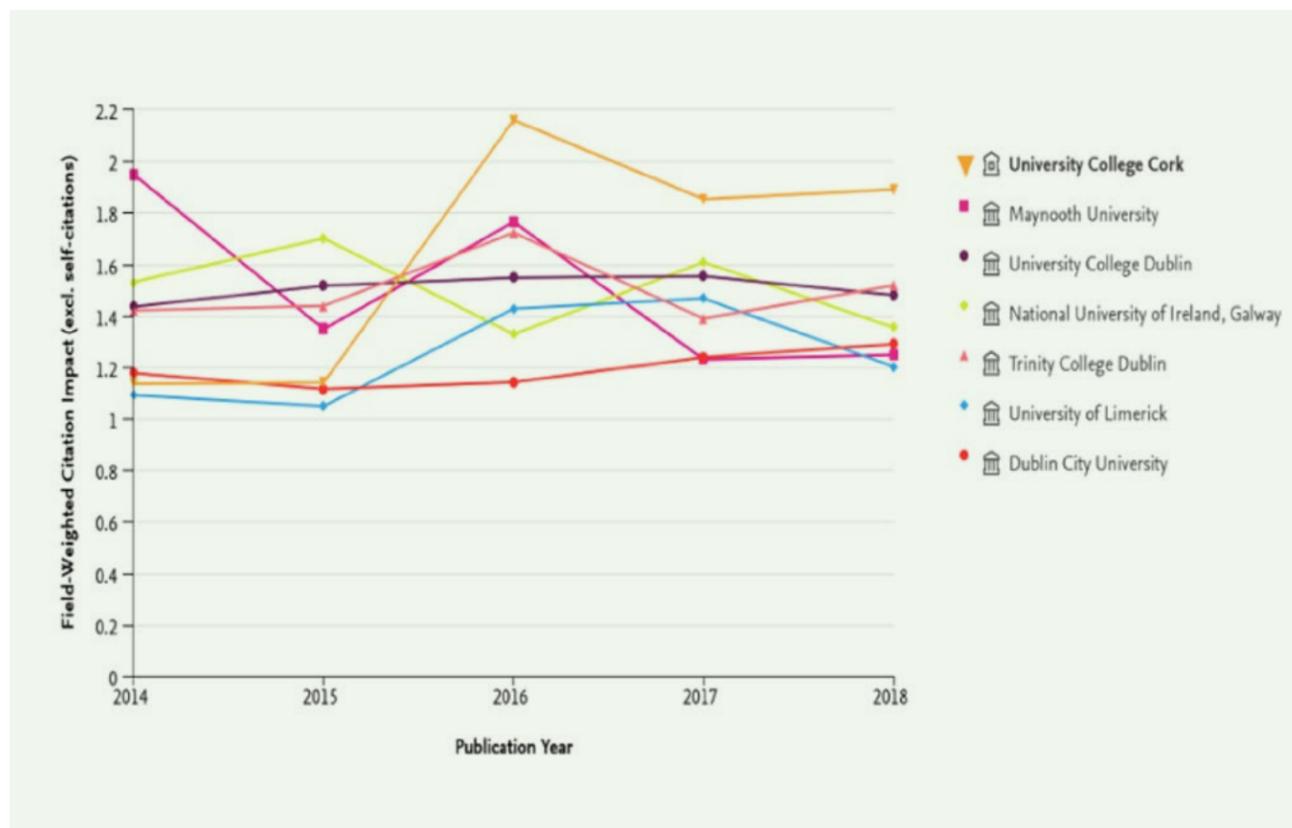
Comparative analysis of the citation impact performance of scholarly outputs, combined across all disciplines and over the five-year period 2014-2018, indicates that all Irish universities have consistently performed above the world average, with UCC publications delivering the highest citation impact since 2016 (Figure 5). Later publication years were not included to allow sufficient time for citations to accrue (as some disciplines have slower citation accrual rates than others).



GOAL TWO
Create



Figure 5: Field-weighted Citation Impact* Performance - Irish University Comparative Analysis



*Field-weighted Citation Impact: The ratio of citations received relative to the expected world average for combined subject fields, publication types and publication year. Score >1 indicates citation impact greater than the world average.

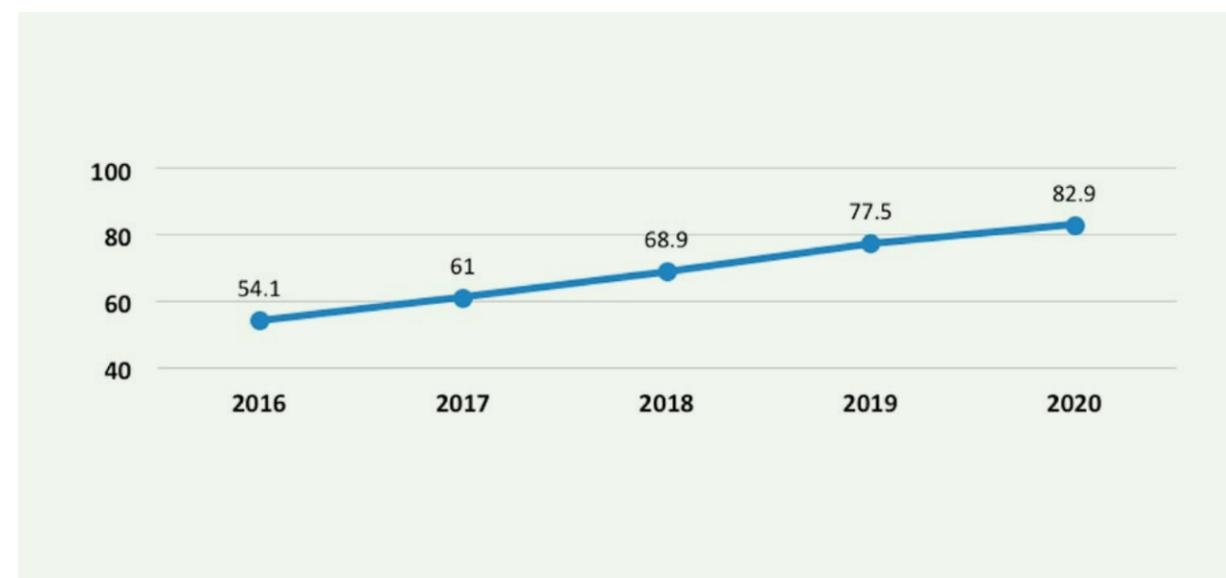
UCC's performance in this regard was also reflected in the recent announcement of the Times Higher Education (THE) World University Ranking 2020, which revealed that UCC is now the leading university in Ireland for research impact as measured by citation performance (Table 1):

Table 1: THE Citation Impact Score (2020) - National Comparison

University	THE Citation Impact Score (2020)
UCC	82.9
TCD	78.3
UCD	73.3
NUIG	69.6
NUIM	66.4
DCU	55.1
UL	52.2
TUD	36.4

This outcome is the culmination of a significant year-on-year improvement in the citation impact metric over the last five years (Figure 6).

Figure 6



GOAL TWO

Create



It is also noteworthy that of the 33 Ireland-based researchers included in the *Highly Cited Researchers 2020 List*, 13 are Principal Investigators from APC Microbiome Ireland. This prestigious list recognises pioneers in their field whose citation records position them in the very highest strata of research influence and impact and includes 26 Nobel laureates.

UCC's success in this regard has been supported by the implementation of a series of ongoing university-wide initiatives led by UCC Research Support Services (RSS), in collaboration with the Library, with the objective of improving the excellence and citation impact performance of our research outputs, and raising awareness of bibliometric analysis as a measure of research impact and importance of open access.

Ongoing example initiatives include:

- Workshops focused on measuring and maximising citation performance, delivered as part of the *UCC Research Skills Training Programme* and which have been rolled out more widely across the institution.
- The launch and mainstreaming of the *Nature Masterclasses Online Resource* which provides training, delivered by Nature journal editors, to help UCC researchers publish in top-ranked journals.
- Implementation of an institutional *High Citation Impact Recognition Scheme (UCC outputs in the Top 1% FWCI percentile ranking)* – the scheme was launched this year as part of the UCC Research Awards 2020.
- The adoption of an Open Access to Publications Policy in 2016 and the systematic archiving of research publications in the Cork Open Research Archive (CORA) and in reputable external open-access repositories. To recognise achievement in this space, a new category of award was introduced to the annual UCC Research Awards programme. The *Open Researcher of the Year* recognises researchers who have embraced the principles of open science in their research process and in the dissemination of their research outputs.

- The launch of an annual President-hosted reception to honour researchers who have published in very prestigious journals including *Science*, *Nature*, *The Lancet* and the *Nature* research titles.
- Development of 'Best Practice' Publishing Guidelines for UCC researchers. This resource will be launched shortly.

UCC Research Awards 2020

Recognising the achievements of UCC's research community is a hugely important activity and is highlighted as a key action in UCC's Research and Innovation Strategic Plan.

Through an online ceremony, UCC honoured staff for their outstanding contributions to university life including advancing the research mission of the institution. The Research Awards 2020 acknowledged excellence in research activity across 10 categories (Table 2).

In addition, UCC also acknowledged those researchers who were authors of research articles and conference papers (indexed by Scopus) that fell within the top 1% of the most cited publications world-wide in their field.



GOAL TWO
Create



Table 2: 2020 Winners of the UCC Research Awards

Research Award	Awardee
Best Publication of the Year involving and Undergraduate Student as an Author	Rachel McCarthy – Digital Humanities, College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences Patrick O’Toole – Digital Humanities, College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences
Creating a Culture for Responsible Conduct of Research	Elizabeth Kiely & Liz Hales – School of Applied Psychology, College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences & UCC Research Support Services
Early-Stage Researcher of the Year	Dr Gillian Murphy – School of Applied Psychology, College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences Giovanni Pietro Vitali – Department of Italian, School of Languages, Literatures and Cultures, College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences
Open Researcher of the Year	James Louis Smith – School of English & Digital Humanities, College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences
Research Communicator of the Year	Alan Kelly – School of Food and Nutritional Sciences, College of Science, Engineering & Food Science
Research Supervisor of the Year	Paul Hurley – Tyndall National Institute Silvia Ross – Department of Italian, School of Languages, Literatures and Cultures, College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences
Research Support Person of the Year	Eileen Hurley – Tyndall National Institute
Research Team of the Year	Spatial and Regional Economics Research Centre – College of Business & Law
Researcher of the Year	Claire Connolly – School of English & Digital Humanities, College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences
Career Achievement Research Award	Colin Hill – School of Microbiology, College of Science, Engineering & Food Science, and APC Microbiome Ireland

Leadership and Impact in 2019/2020 – Selected Highlights

UCC Researcher Stepping Up to the Challenge of COVID-19

Across the institution, UCC researchers have pivoted their research expertise to focus on the many challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

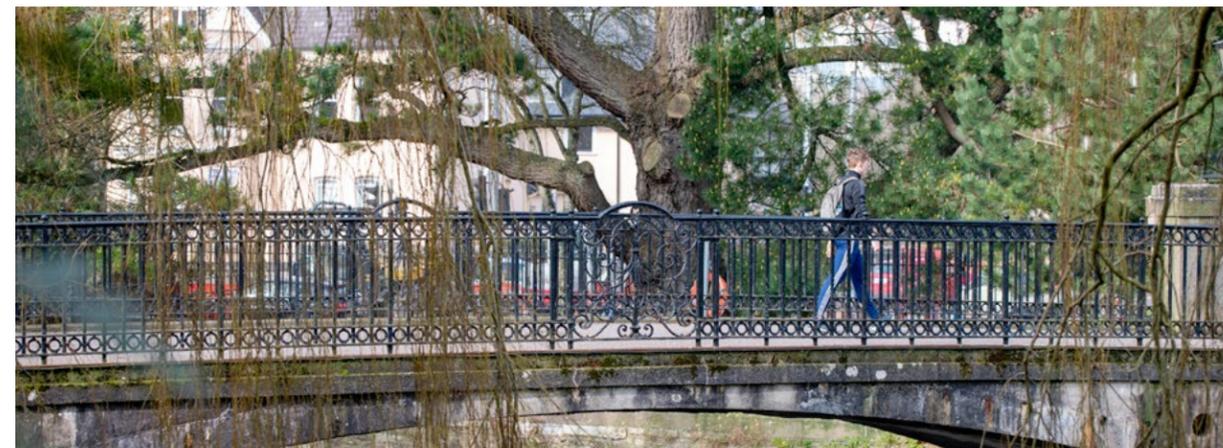
In March 2020, the Irish government launched the *National Action Plan in Response to COVID-19* and a key action in this plan was a coordinated research funding programme to enable the Irish researcher community to respond to the immediate and pressing needs of society arising from the pandemic.

Ground-breaking studies undertaken by the UCC research community that supported this national ‘call to arms’ included:

1. Professor Joe Eustace, Director of UCC’s Clinical Research Facility (CRFC), is the National Lead on the WHO Solidarity Trial, an international collaboration led by the WHO to evaluate potential COVID-19 treatments. The study has recruited patients in over 400 participating hospitals and across 35 countries, with many other countries awaiting approval to participate in the trial. On 26 June, the Minister for Health signed an Agreement on behalf of the government of Ireland to enable Ireland’s participation in the WHO COVID-19 Solidarity Trial.
2. With a €200,000 award from the Health Research Board (HRB) and the Irish Research Council (IRC), Professor Ivan Perry of UCC’s School of Public Health is leading a study estimating the burden of symptomatic disease in the community, and the impact of public health measures on physical, mental and social wellbeing.
3. Professor Frédéric Adam and Dr Fergus McCarthy (CUBS & Infant Research Centre) are leading a Science Foundation Ireland (SFI)-funded study that uses remote technology to monitor blood pressure in pregnant women in the COVID-19 pandemic, including inpatients and outpatients and COVID-positive and COVID-negative mothers.

GOAL TWO

Create



4. A project led by Professor Paul Cotter (Teagasc and APC Microbiome Ireland) was also awarded funding to determine the genetic makeup of the viruses circulating in Ireland, so as to support efforts to respond to clusters of infections as they arise, and minimise the spread of the virus. The €379K award is funding a National Coronavirus Sequencing Consortium that will read and analyse the genetic makeup of the SARS-CoV-2 virus in patient samples in Ireland.

5. Professor Barry O'Reilly and Dr Patrick Henn (ASSERT Centre) are leading the COVID-19 Remote Early Warning System (CREW) project, a quarantine management platform that will allow the remote identification of healthcare staff who may be developing a temperature that may be symptomatic of COVID-19.

6. Professor Joe Eustace (CRFC) is the National Lead on a recently awarded €15 million EU grant under the Horizon 2020 COVID Call on Advancing Knowledge for the Clinical and Public Health Response to the 2019-nCoV Epidemic. This grant is coordinated by the Institut National de la Santé et de la Recherche Médicale (INSERM) to support the implementation of the *DisCoVery Trial* that aims to investigate several treatment options for COVID-19 patients.

7. Professor Liam O'Mahony (APC Microbiome Ireland) has secured funding from SFI for a project that will identify and rapidly develop diagnostic biomarkers to predict the progression to severe inflammatory disease (sepsis) following COVID-19 infection, and to also determine whether gut barrier failure contributes to this process.

8. Professors Paul O'Toole and Colin Hill (APC Microbiome Ireland) were also successful in securing funding from SFI to help understand the microbe-host interaction at the immune level following COVID-19 infection, specifically by mining microbiome populations for biomarkers of disease risk and clinical severity.

Following the closure of labs and infrastructure in March 2020, UCC established the Research Business Continuity Team (RBCT) in April 2020 and, under the guidance of this committee, research activity started to recommence on a phased basis from May 2020. By the last week of August, over 1,000 researchers were on campus in full compliance with government guidelines. To support this process, the RBCT produced a comprehensive set of documents that provided guidelines on reopening that were in line with all government guidelines and protocols. In addition, experience and best practice was shared through extensive consultation with the research community.

European Research Council (ERC) Success

Since its establishment in 2007, success in ERC funding programmes is recognised as a global, as well as European, benchmark of research excellence. The strategic importance of increasing UCC success in securing ERC awards is very clear. Successful engagement with the ERC is essential to ensure a continued flow of top research talent into the institution, and to attract and retain leading researchers from overseas, as well as from within our indigenous community.

To help improve UCC's performance in ERC funding calls, an *ERC Enhancement Strategy Implementation Plan* was developed by UCC Research Support Services, approved by University Management Team Operations in February 2020, and is currently in the implementation phase.

As the current European funding programme, Horizon 2020, draws to a close with just a few calls outstanding, UCC researchers have secured **€114 million** of investment from **224 awards** – this represents a significant milestone in that it surpasses the very ambitious **€110.3 million** target set out in our institutional Horizon 2020 Action Plan.

GOAL TWO

Create



APC Researcher to Lead a Major Chronic Disease Research Programme

Professor Jens Walter will lead a €3.7 million research programme at APC Microbiome Ireland (APC) enabled by the award of a prestigious Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) Research Professorship grant announced in December.

His research will investigate the impact of a modern lifestyle on the gut microbiome and its relationship to increased chronic diseases.

The SFI Research Professorship programme was established to attract outstanding research talent to Ireland and to enhance the country's reputation as a location to conduct high-impact and high-quality research.

Professor Walter is the third SFI Research Professor appointment at UCC in recent years.

UCC Researchers Awarded Medals of Excellence at Irish Research Council (IRC) Researchers of the Year Awards

Researchers from UCC landed two of the four Medals of Excellence at the *IRC Researchers of the Year Awards 2020*.

Shane Somers was awarded the *Jane Grimson Medal of Excellence* for the top-ranked postgraduate researcher in the STEM category. Shane's research seeks to determine the drivers of variation in the gut microbiome of a wild bird, the great tit.

Dr Edward Molloy was awarded the *Maurice J. Bric Medal of Excellence* for being the top-ranked postdoctoral researcher in the AHSS category. Edward's research explores the nature and form of Irish separatism and the ideas that informed radical Irish nationalism in the nineteenth century.

Strengthening our Focus on Spin-out Company Establishment

Appointment of Mr Micheál Collins as UCC Innovation Spin-out Manager

In May 2020, UCC graduate Micheál Collins was appointed to the newly created role of UCC Innovation Spin-out Manager. Micheál will lead the commercialisation of patentable deep tech research through start-ups. This is a key area of economic growth as part of the BRIDGE network including Teagasc and Munster Technological University. In creating this role UCC is further enhancing supports for spin-out companies and entrepreneurship. Furthermore, UCC is boosting engagements with Irish venture capitalists and the venture support community through this new role.

UCC's New Intellectual Property Policy Launched

UCC launched its new Intellectual Property (IP) Policy on 1 October 2019. The policy was co-launched with the accompanying Conflicts of Interest Policy and provides a robust framework within which to manage UCC IP. The policy complies with the recommendations made following a review of IP management and conflicts of interest commissioned by the Higher Education Authority in association with Knowledge Transfer Ireland.

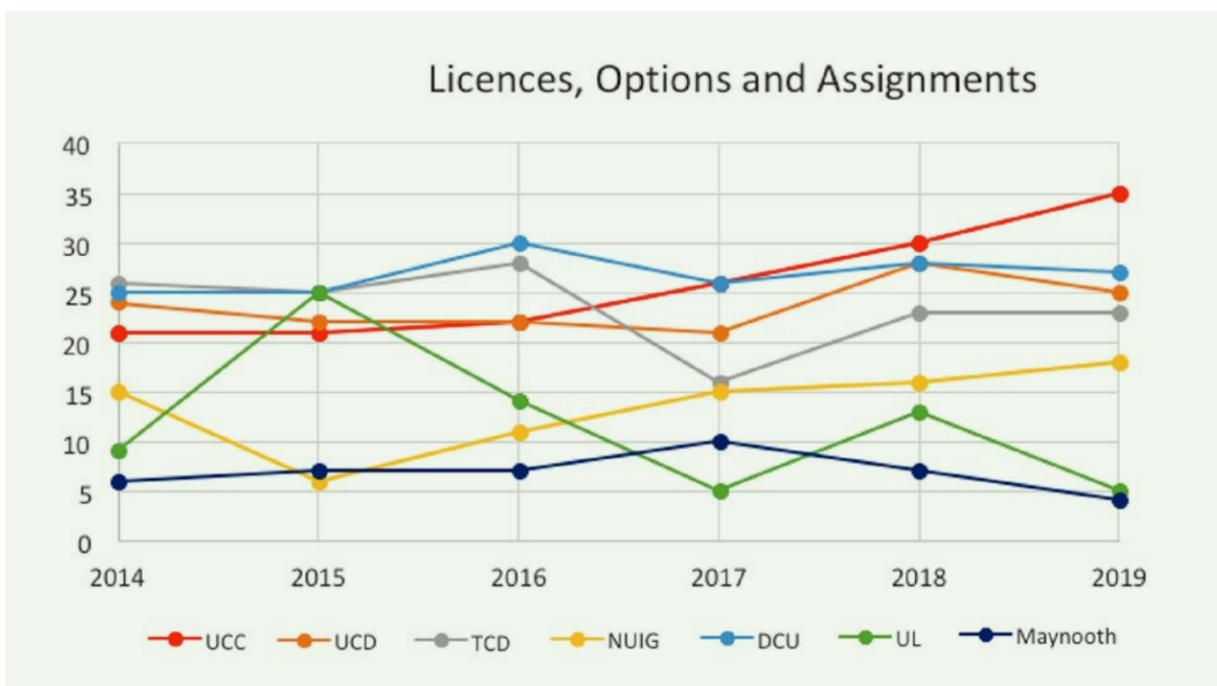
Strong Performance in Knowledge Transfer Survey by UCC

Knowledge Transfer Ireland published its 'Annual Knowledge Transfer Survey' in September 2020 for 2019. Within this UCC reported its highest ever number of licences, options or assignment (LOA) agreements with industry (35 – Figure 7) to transfer UCC-created IP into the commercial arena. This represented a further 15% increase on the previous year. This was the third record-breaking year for UCC in this category. UCC has executed the highest number of LOAs of all higher education institutions in Ireland since 2017. This is a strong endorsement for UCC's successful track record of collaboration with industry across the university research community and the work done at the university-business interface.

GOAL TWO
Create



Figure 7



Hexagon Technology Pipeline Fund

The Hexagon Technology Pipeline Fund was created this academic year by UCC Innovation to provide funding to advance ideas that have the potential to develop into spin-out companies.

UCC Innovation successfully applied to lead a consortium with UCD, NUIG, CIT, IT Tralee and GMIT to distribute Enterprise Ireland funding to selected projects. The distribution of funds was based on the recommendations of a review panel drawn from within the institutions and independent experts. In total 25 projects from across all six institutions were considered. Of the nine projects selected for funding, six were from UCC's research community. This will strengthen the spin-out pipeline for UCC for the years ahead.

GatewayUCC Business Incubator: Delivering for SMEs during COVID-19 Lockdown

The COVID-19 lockdown has had a significant impact on all commercial activity. Within UCC, significant steps were taken to ensure that GatewayUCC was available as much as possible for client companies conducting essential research. Following initial restrictions imposed by the pandemic, UCC Innovation worked with the Office of Corporate and Legal Affairs to put in place a protocol that would allow companies to access the facility where the work was falling within national guidelines.

To minimise the impact of the pandemic on the pipeline of spin-out companies, GatewayUCC continued to run the Sprint accelerator programme for the year using UCC on a virtual basis. Attendance and participation within the programme was as high as for previous programmes. There were 10 participants this year who received insight in 10 modules related to company establishment and business development. The successful continuation of Sprint ensures UCC Innovation maintains our guidance and support for new spin-out CEOs and leadership team members.

Highlights this year included the launch of BioPixS, one of the Sprint participants, and its subsequent success in securing funding from the COVID-19 H2020 EU Emergency Call. The company is focused on fast-tracking photonic instrument development, particularly in the biotechnology space.

UCC Consulting

UCC Consulting is the managed consultancy service for UCC academics to provide their expertise to commercial and non-commercial entities, for example Gas Network Ireland and MaREI.

During 2019/2020, 23 consultancy agreements have been signed supported by UCC Consulting. The contract values accumulate to approximately €360,000 for the year.

GOAL TWO

Create



IGNITE Programme

The IGNITE Graduate Business Innovation Programme is designed to support recent graduates to develop new businesses. The programme has supported 136 founders working on 111 start-up ideas since 2011. Successful start-ups employ 230 people and have raised over €15 million in funding. A further 18 start-ups joined IGNITE this year across two overlapping 12-month programmes. The programme received international recognition as finalist in the Global Consortium for Entrepreneurship Centres Conference Awards in October 2019.

In 2019/2020, IGNITE provided 44 half-day workshops, 22 seminars and 22 guest speakers. Seminars are delivered by subject matter experts. IGNITE guest speakers are entrepreneurs and business owners who talk about their start-up journeys, and offer practical tips and advice based on their own experience. In total over 100 entrepreneurs and business owners contributed as workshop facilitators, trainers, mentors, guest speakers and reviewers over the course of the year. All IGNITE workshops, seminars, guest speakers and reviews moved online in March 2020 to comply with COVID-19 restrictions. Ignite also ran two 'Start-Up Labs' programmes. Start-up labs are a seven-evening innovation programme, designed to develop start-ups ideas.

IGNITE Alumni Highlights

The Academic Year 2019/2020 saw great success for Ignite Alumni:

- Dr Fiona Edwards Murphy, founder of ApisProtect, won the Start Up Awards at the annual Silicon Valley Forum Women in Tech Festival 2020.
- Dr Sinead Bleiel, founder of AnaBio Technologies, was a finalist in the EY Entrepreneur of the Year Awards.

Research Collaboration with Industry – National Leader in Investment

UCC has had a long track record of collaboration with industry. The research community continues to value the benefits of working with companies both regionally and internationally. The success of UCC's research centres funded by Science Foundation Ireland or Enterprise Ireland is predicated on strong and enduring partnerships with industry. The Annual Knowledge Transfer Survey indicated that UCC's performance in this area is the best in Ireland. Based on the relevant comparable data, UCC has earned between 40 and 50% more industry income than any other institution in Ireland for the last five years at least. In this academic year almost 75% of licensing activity was with research collaborators.

UCC Spin-out Acquired by Multinational for €80 Million

UCC spin-out company PrecisionBiotics Group Ltd has been acquired by the leading Danish bioinnovation company Novozymes. PrecisionBiotics Group Ltd discovers, develops and markets probiotics (live bacteria), which can improve gut health in animals and humans. Its products include Alflorex® and Zenflora® and it employs 33 staff at its sites at Cork Airport Business Park and Teagasc Moorepark Fermoy. Novozymes is the world leader in biological solutions and the world's largest provider of enzyme and microbial technologies. In June 2020, Novozymes acquired PrecisionBiotics Group Ltd in an €80 million deal.

PrecisionBiotics Group Ltd started as Alimentary Health Ltd, spun out of UCC in 2001 to commercialise intellectual property created from research in microbiology, gastrointestinal medicine and surgery. Since then, it has become a long-term collaborator with UCC primarily through its APC Microbiome Ireland SFI Research Centre. This work was initially led by Professor Fergus Shanahan, with funding support from a number of Irish government institutions, the European Union and several other sources. This research and knowledge transfer partnership with UCC has supported PrecisionBiotics' successful growth to hold a leading position within probiotics for human gut health.

GOAL TWO

Create



Two decades of research and support has contributed to the development of products which have improved the quality of life for so many people. The jobs created by PrecisionBiotics will remain in Cork. Cork is globally recognised as having a world-leading academic community engaged in gut health research and this acquisition will allow PrecisionBiotics to further grow its presence in this region.

UCC Innovation Wins Two National Awards

UCC Innovation was short-listed in three categories in the national Knowledge Transfer Ireland Impact Awards which took place in November 2019:

- UCC, Teagasc and Suntory for their Collaboration in the APC Microbiome Institute;
- Seamus O'Mahony (UCC) and Abbott Nutrition for Consultancy Relationship;
- Anthony Morrissey has also been nominated for KTI Achiever of the Year.

UCC Innovation was successful in two categories, winning both the Consultancy Impact award and the Knowledge Transfer Achiever of the Year. This success is a further mark of the performance of UCC Innovation and its contribution to the delivery of UCC's strategic goals.

GOAL THREE

Engage & Act

Create value for our community through an international outlook and informed and creative engagement on local and global issues.

GOAL THREE

Engage & Act



UCC is part of a global movement of civically engaged and socially responsible higher education institutions. Our aim is to establish the university as a leading university for Civic and Community, Regional, National and International Engagement.

Global Leader

UCC's Civic and Community Engagement activities have been successfully reviewed by the international Carnegie Foundation, whose Community Engagement Classification is the leading international benchmark. Community Engagement successes in 2019/20 include:



- UCC ranked 32 in the world in the Times Higher Education (THE) University Impact rankings in 2020, demonstrating the depth of our impact on addressing societal challenges.
- UCC is a leading signatory of the Talloires Declaration on the Civic Roles and Social Responsibilities of Higher Education, and as an Engaged Member of the Talloires Network, the university works with a global coalition of 402 other community-engaged universities, across 78 countries, with a combined enrolment of over 6 million students.

- In 2019 UCC was the winner of the international MacJannet Prize for community engagement from the Talloires Network.
- UCC is a leading member of the European Living Knowledge Network, alongside some of the highest-ranked universities in Europe and worldwide.

European Universities Initiative

In 2020, UCC became part of a pilot project funded by the European Commission to establish **The European University of Post Industrial Cities (UNIC)**. This is an alliance of eight universities from eight European countries, the others being: University of Deusto (Spain), Ruhr University Bochum (Germany), Koç University (Turkey), University of Liège (Belgium), University of Oulu (Finland), University of Zagreb (Croatia) and Erasmus University Rotterdam (coordinator, the Netherlands). The UNIC partners have united to enhance and extend regional, high-quality education and research through inter-European cooperation to offer students truly European learning, teaching, and working experiences.

The European Commission has provided support of €5 million to conduct this pilot initiative over a three-year period.

Together with Community through COVID-19

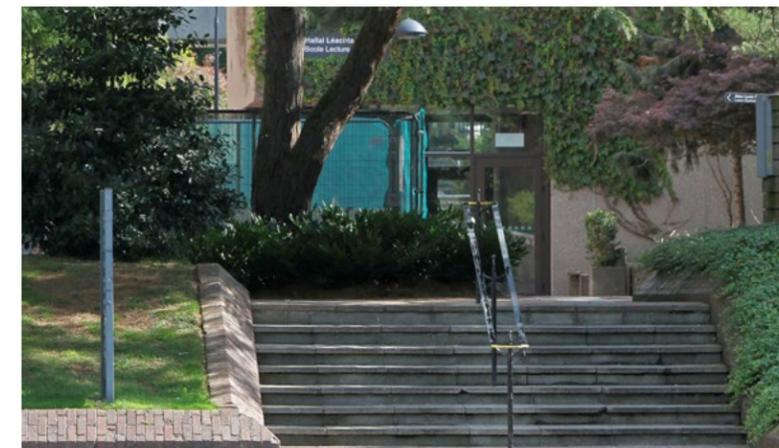
UCC has enacted a mission-driven response to COVID-19, focused on delivering meaningful support and impact for people, communities and organisations. The university has mobilised our human and intellectual capacity, to openly share resources and knowledge, and provide the opportunity to tackle scientific and societal challenges presented by COVID-19 in a research and evidenced informed manner. Nationally, we are working together as a sector with the **Irish Universities Association** and other Irish universities to help the fight against the pandemic.

Full details of the university's response to COVID-19 may be found via our dedicated [website](#).

In June 2020 Dr Máire Leane (School of Applied Social Studies) and Quercus Scholar Vera Stojanovic addressed the international Talloires Network of leaders from over 300 community-engaged universities, on how UCC is responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

GOAL THREE

Engage & Act



Engaged Learning

In a first for Ireland, and unique in Europe, UCC's Academic Strategy, Connected Curriculum and Graduate Attributes Programme (GAP) integrates community engagement across all our academic programmes and courses. The university's priority is to engage students at all levels of the curriculum in authentic real-world research and enquiry. The approach partners our staff and students with the wider community to address societal challenges together, providing value to our region and international partners through learning that makes a difference for people, communities and organisations. This approach to student learning creates space for institution-wide reflection and critical dialogue about educational values, including graduate attributes, and the unity of research, teaching and engagement for the public good. Initiatives include:

- A series of bespoke community-based 'service learning' courses are being integrated across our undergraduate curriculum, with support from the European Union through the EU Erasmus+ programme.
- An engaged learning module in Applied Psychology collaborates with the Cork Migrant Support Centre to co-investigate challenges faced by refugees and asylum seekers in Cork City. A module in Occupational Therapy called Becoming a Healthcare Professional involves OT students supporting local school-based homework clubs over two semesters.
- UCC's Bystander Intervention Module is a national exemplar of learning for societal impact. The programme, available to all 22,000 students on campus, is a targeted response to the issue of sexual respect and broader consent awareness.

Engaged Research

UCC's 'Engaged Research' approach develops policy and practice impact, and results that matter for people, communities and organisations. Our research strategy has a distinct focus on addressing societal challenges and advancing

social and scientific research within society. We are supporting the integration of engaged research within our research institutes, which are advancing a broad range of initiatives specific to their disciplinary focus:

- UCC's Institute for Social Science in the 21st Century (ISS21) has a distinct focus on co-creating knowledge with society, bringing together interdisciplinary teams that focus on impactful social science research that benefits and includes lay people, communities and organisations.
- The SFI-funded *MaREI Centre* has established an Engagement Advisory Board. The MaREI-led RING network for Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) is providing support to research staff locally and internationally to engage with societal actors (citizens, policymakers, business) during the research and innovation process.
- APC Microbiome Research Centre has appointed Civic Engagement expertise on its Scientific Advisory Board and is prioritising engaged research as part of its education and public engagement mission. Our INFANT Centre is a respected global leader in advancing and influencing national and international health and maternal care policy.

Public Engagement and Outreach Delivers Societal Benefit

Each year UCC engages in dialogue with citizens, communities and organisations. Building on the success of our existing outreach activity, this academic year saw the launch of two new public events: *UCC Relevance to You* and *UCC Community Week*.

Hosted by Dr Jean Van Sinderen Law, the first *UCC Relevance to You* series ran for three nights during October and November 2019 at Cork University Business School's Centre for Executive Education at Lapps Quay during which 13 UCC academics shared the work which they are doing and how it impacts on society to a public audience.

GOAL THREE

Engage & Act



UCC's inaugural **Community Week** took place in October 2019. Through a programme of free public and community events, Community Week celebrated community engagement with UCC across campus and beyond. The event demonstrated how UCC and its linkage with community organisations is working for a more inclusive, ethical and sustainable society.

Contributing to Public Debate

UCC researchers actively contribute to **RTÉ Brainstorm** and **The Conversation**, providing the public with independent research informed analysis on key societal challenges, thus contributing to an active civil society discourse.

Alumni and Development

The investment in two key transformative objectives was successfully realised during 2019–2020. Alumni and Development increased digital capacity to connect with alumni, supporters and friends effectively, and efficiently, through the implementation of a new alumni engagement and alumni fundraising platform. In addition, a significant alumni data-enhancement initiative was completed.

The new platform, iModules, launched on 21 July 2020, is the premier, all-encompassing alumni and alumni fundraising solution for higher education institutions. It replaces the previous alumni and fundraising platform used by UCC, which was in place for 10 years.

As a result, UCC is equipped with the digital tools needed to make a profound impact in the area of alumni relations. The new channel enables a professional and fully integrated alumni experience in connecting and maintaining relationships with UCC and with fellow alumni.

The department has demonstrated the substantial increase in alumni relations activities, and a five-fold increase in communications activity, together with a new focus on presenting the office as a professional functional area, both within UCC and to its alumni and stakeholder audiences.

The winning of a CASE (Council for Advancement and Support of Education) Circle of Excellence Award for a digital communications strategy was a highlight for the team, and demonstrates the significant impact in this area.

The communications strategy, including a complimentary COVID-19 impact campaign, ensured the university's stakeholders were informed and kept up-to-date on key university messages. Alumni and Development successfully implemented a COVID-19 stewardship campaign, 'A University Response to a Universal Emergency', where bespoke digital assets and targeted communications were disseminated to donors, supporters and alumni.

The data enhancement project to substantially improve the number of UCC alumni records is due to conclude in December 2020. This project will enable the creation of better-quality analytical reports, and supports the needs and requirements of the university and its community.

The inaugural *UCC Philanthropy Impact Awards* was launched in March 2020 just before the first COVID-19 lockdown commenced. This high-profile biennial event recognised three successful awardees for their philanthropic support, one from each of the following categories: Corporates; Trust and Foundations; and Individual. This event also showcased the hugely enabling impact that philanthropy is making on University College Cork. The next UCC Philanthropy Impact Awards will take place in March 2022.

Despite the loss of a key leadership development role at the beginning of the 2019–20 academic year, fundraising KPIs for 2019–2020 were well on track up to mid-March, with indications that they would be exceeded by year end. However, the arrival of COVID-19 in March had a negative impact on the momentum and timely delivery of a number of large gifts that were being progressed. The pandemic also delayed the strategic recruitment of a number of key leadership and fundraising roles within the Development function. However, the team continues to work strategically with donors, despite the challenges of fundraising in a worldwide pandemic environment.

GOAL FOUR

Recruit & Develop

Attract, develop, support and retain staff of the highest quality, thereby ensuring a diverse staff who are enabled to reach their full potential.

GOAL FOUR

Recruit & Develop



UCC employs approximately 3,000 staff across a range of functional groups: academic, research, teaching, management, administrative, technical and services. The university attracts staff from all over the world and we currently have over 50 countries represented in our staff profile.

Whilst our day-to-day focus remains on attracting, developing, supporting and retaining staff and ensuring a diverse workforce, the move to remote working in the academic year 2019/20 result in the significant engagement of the Department of Human Resources in supporting line managers and employees in adapting to remote working.

Supporting and Developing Staff

Following the closure of campus and the move to remote working due to COVID-19, the focus of the university was to ensure that staff wellbeing programmes were in place to support this transition. The Department of Human Resources provided staff with opportunities to join peer support networks, coaching, group workshops and programmes in addition to wellbeing activities and referral to our Employee Assistance Provider.

Launch of Spectrum.Life – Employee Assistance Provision (EAP)

UCC is now partnering with Spectrum.Life, the new EAP providers. Spectrum.Life are the largest provider of employer health and wellness services in Ireland and the only workplace wellbeing company that offers digital and onsite wellbeing. UCC staff now have access to free phone advice and counselling sessions together with a customised Wellbeing Platform and App including access to online cognitive behavioural therapy. The Wellbeing Platform and App covers topics in the three core areas of mental wellbeing, nutrition and exercise. The confidential counselling service provides support to employees, in addition to their spouse, civil partner or dependant.

Associate Membership of the Healthy Universities Network

During the 2019–2020 academic year, the university examined other collaborative models in the area of staff wellbeing of relevance to UCC. UCC has been successful in our application to be an Associate Member of the Healthy Universities Network. Engagement with this free network will assist in ensuring that wellbeing remains a high priority for staff engagement in UCC and enables benchmarking our work in this area against similar institutions.

Leadership Development

Aurora Female Leadership Programme

49 applications were received for the Aurora Female Leadership Programme, the highest number since its inception in 2014, and UCC has again awarded places to 20 staff members. This will bring the number of UCC participants to 126 in total.

UCC Internal Coaching Panel

Following a rigorous and competitive application process, a coaching panel of 15 staff members was formed in 2019/20. In September 2019 staff members undertook the Postgraduate Certificate in Personal and Management Coaching with Adult Continuing Education. The aim of the programme is to generate and embed a culture of coaching in the wider, connected UCC community. At the end of the programme, internal coaches will be required to make themselves available to provide coaching to at least two internal UCC staff members at any one time. This is an exciting new initiative and a welcome first step toward building a diverse and dynamic coaching panel in UCC.

Online Training and Development Workshops

During May 2020, Staff Wellbeing and Development facilitated several new online workshops and programmes for managers and colleagues across UCC. Topics included:

- Adjusting to working remotely in a team – communicating and engaging differently with colleagues

GOAL FOUR
Recruit & Develop



- Managing your working time – working effectively, remaining focused and dealing with distractions
- Managing online meetings for team leaders and managers
- Demonstrating leadership – adjusting your leadership style while working remotely
- Managing change
- Confidence skills, career development and communications programmes are also being facilitated.

There is real engagement by staff in all programmes and initiatives, with colleagues highlighting the connections, perspectives and shared experiences being of considerable benefit.

Key Appointments

Senior Academic Leadership Initiative

In June 2019 the Higher Education Authority launched a new initiative to address under-representation in senior leadership roles within higher education institutions (HEIs). The Senior Academic Leadership Initiative (SALI) is aimed at supporting HEIs to take positive action to accelerate and achieve their gender equality and diversity goals and objectives. It has been developed in collaboration with a working group of representatives from HEIs.

Two SALI posts were approved in UCC in the areas of Irish Gender History and Microbiome and Health Science by the Higher Education Authority.

Professor Dagmar Schiek as Synnott Family Chair in EU Law

Professor Dagmar Schiek was recruited as the Synnott Family Chair in EU Law, part of a strategic initiative to develop EU Law as an area of strength in the school. The aim is to develop a world-leading research centre in an area of EU law under the leadership of this chair in order to take advantage of the opportunities presented by BREXIT and Ireland's growing significance as a common law state in the EU.

CoreHR Roadmap Project (2017–2020)

The CoreHR Roadmap Project is a key strategic project aligning with Goal 5 of the university's Strategic Plan which is to strengthen our infrastructure and resource base. The first phase of this project included the delivery of e-recruitment; Online Leave Requests on Employee Self Service (ESS); Online Training Requests on ESS and timesheet entry for departmental users on the Human Resources Information System (HRIS).

The next phase of the project will see the upgrade of the CoreHR platform, which supports the university's HR and Payroll systems, to the latest version available and move to CoreHR's hosted cloud service and will be completed in March 2021. The completion of this phase will provide the following benefits to the university community:

- Allow UCC to fully utilise and optimise the latest product to deliver at scale a suite of complex and changing business demands
- Improve the user experience and provide for a more modern user interface
- Allow for the automation and support of more HR & Payroll processes on Core Portal
- Provide a viable data integration solution that meets UCC system reporting requirements
- Compliance with the CoreHR N-2 software rollout strategy on the CoreHR SAAS solution
- Provide frequent delivery of automated software patching that fixes bugs and supports functionality
- Enhance UCC's position as an early adopter/influencer in the shared services payroll project
- Reduce operational risk.

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Strengthen our infrastructure and resource base.

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Capital Developments

The university's capital programme continued during 2019–20 with significant progress on a number of active projects despite the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The capital programme is financed primarily through the European Investment Bank loan facility which supports a €250 million programme. Support for the Cork University Business School project was secured via the Higher Education Strategic Infrastructure Fund in late 2019.

Cork University Dental School and Hospital

The existing Dental School is based on the Cork University Hospital campus. The new proposed Dental School and Hospital on the site of the Cork Science and Innovation Park at Curraheen will allow for more efficient teaching of a higher number of undergraduate and postgraduate students. The project is a key component of the EIB-financed projects.



The Reddy Architecture and Urbanism led design team was appointed in July 2018. Planning permission for the five storey, 8,710m² facility was granted in August 2019. While the detailed design stage of the development was impacted by the pandemic and draft changes to ventilation standards, it is anticipated that tenders for the construction of the facility will be sought in early 2021. Construction on site could commence as early as June 2021, with completion expected in July 2023.

Tyndall National Institute

Plans are progressing for a major new development on the North Mall site directly across the north channel of the River Lee from the existing Maltings site. A design team led by Scott Tallon Walker has been appointed to develop a major landmark building in line with the masterplan for the site developed with co-owners of the site, Mercy University Hospital. The project is a key component of Project Ireland 2040 (National Planning Framework) and the National Development Plan (2018–2027). Planning permission for the facility (including a detailed Environmental Impact Assessment Report) is expected to be lodged in early 2021.

Several other projects were completed or underway at Tyndall in 2019/2020:

- Laboratory spaces for new equipment in Blocks A and C were completed in early 2020.
- A new space for equipment under the 'Disruptive Technologies Innovation Fund' was completed in Q3 2020.
- The Phase 3 building refurbishment, while impacted by the pandemic, is due for completion in late 2020.
- The design associated with the relocation of two labs from Block C to Block A has progressed, with tenders received in September 2020.

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Cork University Business School

Following on from the successful acquisition and redevelopment of the former Cork Savings Bank, plans are progressing for a new CUBS building in the centre of Cork City. The development will incorporate the existing academic departments in business and will deliver an integrated facility for undergraduate, postgraduate, research and innovation activities. A cost benefit analysis has been completed for the project and a 1.46-acre site for the project was acquired at Union Quay. UCC was successful in 2019 in achieving support towards the overall cost of the project under the HEA's Strategic Infrastructure Fund (HESIF) competition. Potential design teams have been shortlisted following a prequalification process and it is planned to issue requests for tenders from these shortlisted teams in early 2021.

Cork University Clinical and Medical School

A new Clinical Medical School facility is planned for the CUH campus in collaboration with the HSE. A design team led by Avanti Architects was appointed by HSE/UCC to progress the design of this facility which is planned to be located adjacent to the main entrance of the hospital. It will provide critical support and teaching facilities for the medical students based in the hospital. The building will also include a HSE facility targeting the other allied health professionals. The feasibility study was completed in February 2020 with the planning application being progressed during 2020.

Discussions have been held with various stakeholders regarding similar medical school educational facilities in both South Tipperary General Hospital and University Hospital Waterford, which are part of the South/Southwest Hospital Group.

Health Innovation Hub Ireland Building

UCC plays a lead role in the proposed development of the Cork Science and Innovation Park (CSAIP) at Curraheen. The CSAIP offers an opportunity for the region to grow knowledge-based employment through the communication of

research, high-potential start-ups, grow-on facilities through to full high-end manufacturing. Following the development of a Framework Masterplan for the overall park, a Precinct Masterplan for the UCC lands in Precinct 2 was prepared. One of the first buildings proposed for the park is the Health Innovation Hub Ireland building. The project provides a high-quality building with core facilities and space for companies growing on from existing incubation facilities in the region. Full planning approval was granted on 4 March 2016. A revised application was granted approval in June 2018. The project offers significant job creation and economic development for the region in line with the National Planning Framework and the National Development Plan. Detailed design of the building was advanced in 2017 and tenders were sought in late 2018. UCC is currently working with other partners to develop the Cork Innovation Corridor of which this project will be a key initial component.



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Student Accommodation

The Crow's Nest site was acquired in 2016 and a design team was appointed in August 2016. Planning permission for the four-tower, 255-bed student accommodation development plus a student medical facility was granted in March 2018. Construction commenced in November 2019. The pandemic has impacted on site progress, and it is now expected the project will be complete in early 2022.

Three of the five blocks of Victoria Mills were refurbished/upgraded during the summer of 2019. We expect to continue the phased refurbishment of the remaining two blocks in the next couple of years.

Kane Building

A major refurbishment and expansion of the 1970 Kane building is a priority project for the university. A design team has been appointed and has developed an overall masterplan and phasing strategy for the refurbishment project. It is hoped to finance this project through a combination of state support/philanthropy. Preliminary works were undertaken during summer 2019. Works are also underway on a new high-tech, ultra-low-vibration laboratory in the basement of the northern end of the building. The construction works are due to be complete in October, with the acoustic pods due for completion in December.

UCC Sport

The university plans significant investment in its outdoor sports facilities. It is proposed to develop a new Centre of Excellence for Sport at our lands on Curraheen Road (adjacent to Munster Agricultural Society). The project will incorporate new all-weather and grass pitches and a modern pavilion with changing rooms, team rooms, catering facilities, etc. An overall strategy for sports has been prepared which will inform the scope of the development at both the Mardyke and the new Curraheen site.

In the short/medium term, options for developing facilities in the Mardyke (stand redevelopment, dressing room facilities, synthetic pitch, etc.), the Farm (dressing

room refurbishment, synthetic pitch, floodlights, etc.) and the Marina (rowing facilities in conjunction with Presentation Brothers College and Cork City Council) are being considered.

Backlog Maintenance

The university estate consists of recently constructed modern buildings and buildings of varying ages and condition. A condition survey identified that c. 25% of our buildings are in need of major investment with a long-term programme of c. €150 million required to address the building and infrastructure deficiencies. Recognising the need for investment, a key project in the initial EIB programme was a Phase I of a backlog maintenance programme. This addressed five thematic areas (health and safety, building services and fabric, access, energy, and insurer requirements) under which a broad range of projects have been successfully completed. In addition, as part of the capital programme, a number of refurbishment/infrastructure projects were progressed in 2019/2020. We were also successful in achieving support for several energy improvement projects through SEAI's Better Energy Workplaces scheme. The university had met its Public Sector 2020 Energy Reduction target of 33% ahead of schedule.

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Additional Projects

UCC Development Masterplan Overview

A review of the UCC Development Masterplan is underway, following on from previous reviews of the original 1972 plan in 1993, 2004 and 2011. The review is due to be complete in late 2020, in time for submission to Cork City Council as part of their development of the new City Development Plan 2022–2028.

UCC made strategic submissions as part of the public consultation process to both the Cork City and Cork County Development Plans in August and July respectively.

The support of Cork University Foundation for the university's physical development plan is crucial to our capital programme. UCC has a relatively small land bank compared to other Irish universities. This creates significant pressure in accommodating the future development needs of the university. UCC is looking forward to a major injection of state funding to support the university's infrastructure through Project Ireland 2040 and the National Development Plan (2018–2027). UCC continues to work with both the HEA and the local authorities to ensure the university is well positioned to meet its future development needs in a sustainable way.

Creative Hub

UCC has plans for other major capital developments including a Creative Hub for the College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences. UCC partnered with Cork City Council to apply for funding under the Urban Regeneration Development Fund (URDF) in March 2020.

St Mary's Primary Care Centre

Fit-outs of space in the new St Mary's Primary Care Centre in Gurrabraher were completed in 2020 to cater for GP Practice, GP Training and Health and Wellbeing. A feasibility study for the fitout of the Preventative Dentistry Hub was completed in September 2020.

Commuter Planning

UCC's Commuter Plan was updated in summer 2020 – the first update since the original plan was developed in 2005. The updated plan has a wider-reaching scope than the original as it emphasises the significance of sustainable travel modes for environmental, climate and health reasons as well as for reasons of accessibility of the campus.

Planning and procurement for the upgrading of the carparking infrastructure commenced in spring 2020. Tenders were sought for a new carpark management system in summer 2020 and it is hoped that the new system will be up and running in spring/summer 2021.

A new bicycle cage was installed in the Biosciences underground carpark. This cage, which is access controlled, has capacity for 45 bikes and includes lockers.

Five individual bike lockers were installed on the south elevation of the Kane building. This is a pilot scheme and it currently serves e-bike users.

Discussions were held with Cork City Council representatives with regard to additional public bike stations on College Road (extension of the Coke Bike scheme). Works have begun on installing a station on Connaught Avenue. Preliminary designs of a possible station in BHSC are underway.

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Highlights of the Financial Year 2019/2020

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on all areas of university activity posed significant financial challenges. The overall group deficit of €2.26 million was achieved through robust budget management and the continued improvement of certain non-exchequer income-generating strategies – specifically international student recruitment. However, revenue from other commercial sources (on-campus retail, concessions and commercial subsidiaries) was severely impacted by the public health restrictions imposed.

During 2019/20, the university sold its shareholding in a former university spin-out company, Alimentary Health Ltd, now PrecisionBiotics Group Limited, to Novozymes A/S, a Danish pharmaceutical company. Based on the university's level of equity at the date of sale, the university's immediate share of the initial consideration was €4.16 million, with the potential to rise to €6.48 million by 2023 pending any claims against the amount held in escrow and satisfactory performance of the company in meeting certain targets, post-acquisition.

Cork University Foundation (CUF) is included for the first time in the group consolidated financial statements for the year ending 30 September 2020. The purpose of the foundation is to support the furtherance of education and research carried out by the university, and its mission is further clarified in the Charity's Donor Charter as the raising of support, funding and advice for the maintenance of the university as an internationally recognised world-class university. CUF net assets at 30 September 2019 were €3.4 million.

Statement of Comprehensive Income

Total Income for the year fell by €11.7 million to €421.1 million. Earnings before Interest, Tax, Depreciation and Amortisation (EBITDA) was €16 million, an increase of €4.8 million on 2019 performance. The net outturn for the year was a deficit of €2.26 million.

Exchequer revenue streams continue to decline as a proportion of overall income. While state grants increased to 14.6% of total income, this increase reflects additional once-off COVID-19 funding received from the state to offset costs arising from the transition to remote learning and the requirements of infection control/prevention measures on the campus. This underlying trend of declining exchequer funding is expected to continue in the absence of certainty around the future funding model for the sector.

To compensate, the university continues to diversify and grow non-exchequer income sources. Revenue from international students at €37.1 million performed strongly, an increase of €1.6 million year on year. The university continues to focus on improving this position to ensure it generates sufficient resources for long-term sustainability.

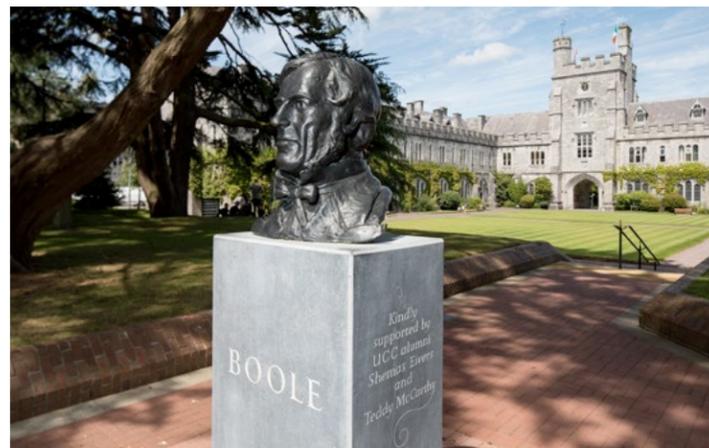
Income

Student fees increased in 2019/20 due to the continued growth in student numbers attending the university and the consequent increase in the amount of fees received.

Of the €151.2 million academic fee income, a total of €46.3 million was paid by the Higher Education Authority (HEA) on behalf of EU undergraduate students, an increase of 2% on the previous year. The remaining €104.9 million was generated by the university from higher student numbers on both international undergraduate and EU/international postgraduate programmes. These self-generated fees were €3.1 million/3% higher than the prior year outturn, reflecting the university's continued priority to generate its own resources to secure financial sustainability.

Research activity delivered €100 million of income in the year, a decrease of €5 million/5% from 2018/19. This reflects the reduction in research activity brought about by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Other operating income stands at €41.2 million, a reduction of €19.6 million/32.2% on the previous year, reflecting the challenging external economic environment for the university's commercial operations due to the pandemic. As a result of the extended public health restrictions, income from subsidiary companies, concession agreements and summer business were significantly impacted, with enforced redundancies and a need for state supports to be availed of where appropriate. Included in other operating income is €1.36 million of government wage subsidies received, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Expenditure

As student numbers continue to grow, there was a corresponding increase in permanent and fixed-term staff numbers, employed by the university to ensure staff student ratios are not further compromised and to meet the minimum staffing requirements of professional accreditation bodies. However, overall staff costs across the UCC group fell by €1 million/1%, reflecting enforced redundancies across all subsidiary company operations and a reduction in occasional staff pay due to online teaching and examinations.

Other operating expenses at €81.7 million are €17.7 million/17.8% lower than the previous year. This reflects the reduced activity on campus from March 2020 when the public health restrictions commenced, with corresponding reductions in business travel, research expenditure, on-site hospitality and other day-to-day expenditure.

Statement of Financial Position

Fixed assets

A significant portion of the additions to Land and Buildings during 2019/20 relates to the ongoing expenditure on the Crow's Nest student accommodation project. Expenditure on equipment, primarily research related, during 2019/20 was €13.6 million. The depreciation charge for the year was €26.3 million.

Investments

The investments relate primarily to the investments held by the University College Cork Trust Fund as at 30 September 2020. The fund provides a valuable source of income to fund prizes and scholarships across a wide range of programmes. The fund has increased in value over the past five years by €6.9 million, representing an annualised growth of 10.4%.

Debtors

Year-on-year debtors have reduced by €3 million/6%. This is due to a reduction, due to COVID-19, in overall group activity in the year ended 30 September 2020.

Current Asset Investments and Cash at Bank

Cash at bank and short-term investments are at €84.6 million, a reduction of €5.6 million/6% from 2019.

Creditors Amounts Falling Due Within One Year

Creditors falling due within one year have increased from €213.9 million to €223.7 million. The main reason for this increase is income received in advance from both state (for COVID-19 support) and non-state sources. Trade creditors have declined from 2019 to 2020, reflecting the previously mentioned reduction in overall group activity. Short-term bank borrowings have increased slightly in the year.

Creditors Amounts Falling Due After More Than One Year

This balance has decreased year on year by €7.4 million/2%. This is due in the main to a reduction through scheduled repayment of long-term bank loan balances during the year. Full details of all bank loans and balances at 30 September 2020 are set out in Note 23.

Restricted and Unrestricted Reserves

The restricted and unrestricted reserves at 30 September 2020 of €234.7 million are €1.1 million higher than 2019. This increase is due to the consolidation of Cork University Foundation (CUF) and the deficit incurred in the year ended 30

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September 2020. Unrestricted reserves of €216.2 million comprise a Fixed Asset Revaluation Reserve of €134.2 million, former non-exchequer related deferred capital grants of €100.8 million included in reserves since conversion to FRS102, offset by unrestricted revenue reserves and unrestricted Trust Fund and CUF reserves of (€18.8 million).

Summary and Outlook

The unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic made 2019/20 a very difficult operating environment for the higher education sector. University College Cork, in line with so many other HEIs, had to fundamentally pivot its delivery and business model from March 2020. In response to the challenges and uncertainties presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, the university took comprehensive measures to protect the health and safety of its students and staff. These measures included moving as much as possible of its academic and research activities online and the implementation of remote working arrangements for university staff.

As a consequence, 2019/20 resulted in a split year in terms of performance. While student numbers at undergraduate and postgraduate levels continued their growth path throughout 2019/20, research activity was restricted by the need to work remotely where possible. Significantly, the impact of the pandemic on commercial revenues from ancillary operations declined in the second half of the year, undermining the university's ability to maintain its revenue growth in these areas, a key component necessary to support the overall group financial performance.

As part of its response to COVID-19, the Irish government allocated an additional funding package for the third level and further education sectors totalling €168 million in 2020. This funding is a reflection of the increased costs that the sector incurred arising from the pandemic. The university secured in excess of €21 million of this funding, of which approximately €6 million is reflected in the 2019/20 financial statements.

The university expects that COVID-19 will continue to have an adverse financial impact in 2021, and while the full scale of the impact is difficult to predict at this time, the Irish Universities Association has calculated revenue reductions of €374 million across the sector in the 2020 and 2021 financial years. The university has prepared financial projections and forecasts and is confident that its ongoing activities can be sustained in the current environment. Having applied budgetary savings of €20 million in the 2020/21 financial year, the university will continue to monitor and manage the situation as it evolves during 2021 and adjust its forecasts as appropriate.

Post COVID-19, the absence of a decision on the long-term funding model for the Irish third level sector has now crystallised, where the over 50% dependency on non-state income, that UCC and other Irish universities have become dependent on to subsidise and deliver teaching for Irish students, now threatens the sector's ability to deliver such services in a sustainable manner.

The ongoing decline in capital support, as outlined last year, continues to be of major concern. The existing recurrent funding model assumes continued exchequer support for ongoing refurbishment, maintenance and infrastructural capacity needs. While the reintroduction of devolved capital grants in 2020 to support the maintenance of the physical campus is welcome, the absence of capital grants will be a real barrier to meeting future demographic demand, as the level of recurrent funding provided for students will not sustain borrowings to fund essential infrastructural investment.

Irish higher education has shown resilience in the face of many challenges over the last decade. Demand remains high, with student participation at record levels. The provision of financial aid against the coronavirus impact is welcomed, and the positive early work of the new Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science is encouraging in difficult times. The university looks forward to being given an opportunity to engage with the new department through the Irish Universities Association (IUA) to ensure that adequate funding is allocated to third-level education in Budget 2022 and beyond, thereby ensuring it will play a pivotal role in Ireland's future recovery.



Membership of Governing Body, 2019-2024

1 July 2019 – 30 June 2020

Chief Officer:

Professor Patrick O’Shea,
President

Chairperson:

Dr Catherine Day

Senior Officers:

Professor John O’Halloran,
Deputy President & Registrar

Professors/Associate Professors:

Professor Frédéric Adam
Professor John Cryan
Vacant
Professor David Kerins
Professor Eileen Savage

Academic Staff

(other than Professors/Associate Professors):

Dr Louise Crowley
Mr Michael Delargey
Dr Angela Flynn
Dr Heather Laird
Dr Brian O’Flaherty

Staff (other than academic staff):

Ms Sinead Hackett
Mr Gary Hurley
Mr J.P. Quinn

Students:

Mr Ben Dunlea, President, Students’ Union
Ms Ciara Kealy, Deputy President, Students’ Union

Postgraduate Student:

Mr Rory O’Donnell, Postgraduate Officer,
Students’ Union

Nominees of External Organisations:

Mr Dermot Breen (IBEC)
Mr Colm Leen (Cork Chamber of Commerce)
Mr John Fitzgibbons (Cork Education & Training Board)
Ms Margaret Lane (Cork Opera House)

Nominees of the Minister for Education and Science:

Awaiting Ministerial nominee
Awaiting Ministerial nominee
Awaiting Ministerial nominee
Awaiting Ministerial nominee

Graduates:

Mr Owen Dinneen
Ms Michelle Healy
Ms Jennifer O’Sullivan

Lord Mayor of Cork:

Cllr. John Sheehan

Mayor of the Metropolitan District of Waterford:

Cllr. John Pratt

Nominees of the National University of Ireland:

Dr Valerie Mannix Boyle
Dr Dermot O’Mahoney

Nominees of the Councils of the administrative Counties of:

Cork – Cllr. Bernard Moynihan
Waterford City & County – Cllr. Breda Brennan (Mayor of the City & County of Waterford)
Kerry – Cllr. John Francis Flynn
Limerick – Cllr. Jerry O’Dea
Tipperary – Cllr. Michael Fitzgerald