

The Connected University

# ACADEMIC STRATEGY 2018 - 2022



**UCC**

University College Cork, Ireland  
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh









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# Foreword



The world is changing, and our society, environment, economy and labour market are transforming at a rapid pace. These are exciting times, but they make for an uncertain future for which our students must be prepared. When I took up the role of Deputy President and Registrar in February 2018, I undertook, as my primary priority, to advance the collaborative development of our Academic Strategy. The process was deeply consultative and presented opportunities for us to listen, to learn and to engage with our students and alumni, our staff and our external stakeholders.

University College Cork (UCC) has a long-standing commitment to outstanding research that is connected to learning, and to educating graduates who are locally and globally impactful. This Academic Strategy sets out six priorities and thirty-five leading actions to guide our academic direction in the years ahead. To successfully implement the strategy, we are creating enhanced systems, spaces and services. However, it is our innovative staff who initiate, implement and support the university's academic mission. They do so in partnership with our diverse body of outstanding students who are central to successful implementation. The plan is ambitious and by focusing our collective energies on its implementation we can deliver a unique education.

A renewed academic mission will meaningfully connect our research excellence to our curriculum. It will also connect diverse learning experiences to

facilitate students' holistic development of distinctive values and attributes.

The implementation of this strategy is complemented with a commitment to delivering enhanced administrative processes and systems. This will result in reduced administrative burdens for staff and in turn liberate time for staff and students to engage in more creative academic endeavours that will advance the university's strategy. This will ultimately mean better outcomes for students and staff and better skilled graduates who can meet local and national skills needs, and moreover, who can solve global challenges and lead us towards a cleaner environment, a stronger economy and a fairer society.

Throughout the implementation phase of this Academic Strategy, I am committed to actively monitoring our progress against plans by continuing deep engagement with stakeholders, learning from experience and adopting a planning approach that is responsive to any emerging challenges over the lifetime of the plan. I look forward to the exciting times ahead.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'John O'Halloran'.

Professor John O'Halloran  
Deputy President and Registrar



# Introduction

This Academic Strategy provides a framework to support and guide our university in shaping our curriculum offering, in enrolment planning and in academic governance for the years ahead.

Grounded in Goal One of the university's Strategic Plan (2017-2022), the Academic Strategy sets out a range of priorities and actions that are designed to deliver an outstanding, student-centred teaching and learning experience, with a renewed, responsive and research-based curriculum at its core. It encompasses the full spectrum of curriculum offerings, across all levels of the National Framework of Qualifications.

The underlying vision inspiring its direction is that of a *Connected University*, with enhanced synergy between teaching, research and innovation, that offers a distinctive educational experience, promoting lifelong and life-wide learning. This vision is being met with transformative investment in our people and our technological and physical infrastructure. Our commitment to developing our staff and our digital and physical infrastructure will put UCC at the forefront in delivering a world-class educational experience.

In embarking on this journey, we are coming from a place of strength, on which we will build. UCC is ranked in the top 50 universities for learning and teaching in Europe. We are the leading Irish university for securing investment in research and development from the enterprise sector.

UCC has long been recognised nationally and internationally for our excellent student retention and employment rates - which are testament to the effectiveness of our programmes of study (first-year retention rates currently stand at over 93%). Employment rates of our graduates are at an historic high: 94% of our undergraduates are in employment or further study within nine months of graduating.

UCC is the only university outside of the United States and Canada to be awarded a Gold STARS rating for the advancement of sustainability. Our ethos of equality, diversity and inclusion for all is evident in our leading role in developing fair access to higher education, with traditionally under-represented students comprising 25% of our undergraduate intake.

While the university has made great strides, when we listen to our stakeholders it is clear that there is more to do. In recent decades the university has grown to be considerably more complex. This was an unintended consequence of the force of rapid expansion during a period of austerity. The student population has trebled since 1990, growing from 7,293 students to 21,147 students in 2017. The curriculum has seen a 65% increase in full- and part-time offerings since 2005.

The decline in funding of the higher education system during a decade of recession and economic turmoil has resulted in some disconnections in the way that we operate.





The implementation of this Academic Strategy, which includes the development of a *Connected Curriculum*, endeavours to restore and build connections by putting the academic mission at the centre of what we do. The strength of our disciplines is core to the success of our strategy and the combination of disciplinary excellence and transdisciplinarity will enable our students and staff to seek solutions to global challenges.

The core principle of a *Connected Curriculum* is that students, at all levels of study, from undergraduate to doctoral levels, can benefit in multiple ways by engaging actively in research and enquiry [1]. The *Connected Curriculum* at UCC will engage students in a distinctive education, where the curriculum is visibly linked to research, employability, civic engagement, sustainable development goals, other disciplines and the wider world. Curriculum principles and a programme architecture that support the development of a *Connected Curriculum* will be designed with a view to preparing students for their future, developing academic excellence, character, professionalism and the capacity for critical, creative and independent thinking. The curriculum will facilitate students to develop values, skills and aptitudes that promote civic participation, social inclusion, sustainability, digital fluency and impactful, global citizenship.

Through a quality enhancement approach and a culture of transparency and accountability, we will preserve our institutional autonomy, thus enabling the diversity of our activities. To enhance our competitiveness, we will be more effective at raising our profile, at evidencing and promoting our excellent practice in research and teaching and at extending this excellence throughout our curriculum.

An important objective of this strategy is to make connections so that isolated pockets of good practice become institutional good practice. For example, students and staff will be facilitated to make meaningful connections within and between disciplines, by integrating on-campus and off-campus learning experiences and by engaging in research-based learning at all levels. This will improve the development of students' capacity to deepen, connect and integrate their learning in a variety of situations within and beyond their university experience, and prepare them for the challenges of the future, as citizens and problem-solvers.

UCC is a research-intensive, globally-focused, internationally competitive knowledge institution that is committed to the civic role of higher education. Our Academic Strategy is ambitious but the priorities at its core are connected: curriculum development; modes of teaching, learning and assessment; graduate attributes; a future-proofed enrolment plan and enhanced academic governance. The implementation of this strategy, complemented by the enhancement of our administrative systems and processes, is intended to give back time to students and staff to nurture creativity and initiative, and transform the learning experience. Achieving the ambitions and priorities of this strategy should enable the university to fulfil its potential and take its place as a truly global university, distinctive internationally for the quality and standing of its activities.



**94%**  
**GRADUATES IN  
EMPLOYMENT OR  
FURTHER STUDY**

**93%**  
**STUDENT  
RETENTION RATE**

[1] Fung, D. (2017) *A Connected Curriculum for Higher Education*. London: UCL Press.







# Policy Context

Higher education is situated in an increasingly interconnected and internationalised world. Our academic planning has taken place within the current national and European policy context.

The rapidly-evolving societal, political and economic landscape has led to increased demands on universities to make their contribution and benefit to society more visible. Policy developments call for the university to embrace a transformation process and to be more proactive in strengthening our critical stance and role as a knowledge institution and champion for truth, evidence and science. There is a new emphasis on the need for higher education institutions to listen, learn and engage on issues of common concern [2]; to cooperate and cohere with the European Higher Education Area; to welcome the UNESCO Global Convention on the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications and to contribute to the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

This Academic Strategy articulates our response as a community of learners to these important issues and to the concerns and needs of our wider community, our students, alumni and staff.

[2] Among other places, these needs were emphasised in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) Ministerial Conference Paris 2018, comprising Ministers for Higher Education from across the European Union.

A wide range of national and EU policies and strategies have informed the priorities and actions for this Academic Strategy including the following:

- 20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010-2030
- National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030
- High-level Group on the Modernisation of Higher Education: Reports to the European Commission, June 2013, and October 2014
- ICT Skills Action Plan 2014-2018
- Further Education and Training Strategy 2014-2019
- Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (2015)
- National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2015-2019
- National Skills Strategy 2025
- Action Plan for Education 2016-2019
- International Education Strategy 2016-2020: Irish Educated, Globally Connected
- HEA National Review of Gender Equality in Irish Higher Education Institutions (Report of the Expert Group, 2016)
- Innovation 2020: Ireland's Strategy for Research and Development, Science and Technology
- Action Plan for Jobs 2017
- Creative Ireland Programme 2017-2022
- Languages Connect: Ireland's Strategy For Foreign Languages In Education 2017-2026
- Higher Education System Performance Framework 2018-2020







# Planning & Consultation Process

The planning process for the development of this Academic Strategy commenced in October 2016, when an extensive consultation, research and benchmarking process was launched. The planning period included active strategic dialogue with UCC students and staff, the Higher Education Authority, employers and other stakeholders. It was informed by analysis of national higher education policy and objectives, European and international educational developments, benchmarking exercises and data analytics. Relevant institutional, regional and national data pertaining to demographics, student feedback and societal and economic indicators formed part of the evidence base. Geopolitical factors, in particular discussions surrounding the impact of Brexit, were also considered.

The Academic Strategy is effectively aligned with, and supports, the synergistic delivery of the university's Strategic Plan (2017-2022) [3], Research & Innovation Strategic Plan (2017-2022) [4], Strategy for Teaching and Learning (2017-2022) [5] and Civic Engagement Plan (2017-2022) [6].

In the implementation phase of this Academic Strategy, there is a commitment to ongoing engagement and consultation with stakeholders. Furthermore, data analytics, from a range of sources, will continue to provide an evidence base to guide the work as it evolves over the lifespan of the strategy.

# Vision

This Academic Strategy envisages a restoration and building of connections to provide curricular coherence and to enhance the student and staff experience. Understanding education in its holistic sense, this strategy espouses scholarly teaching, which connects student learning experiences with the development of core values and attributes. It will result in a distinctive university experience that promotes lifelong and life-wide learning. It is a vision for a university that listens, learns and engages on issues of common global concern, for example, supporting diversity and social inclusion, ethics and social responsibility, climate change and sustainability, mental health and wellbeing and the realisation of our wider civic engagement role.

By enhancing and strengthening our long-standing connections with stakeholders and alumni, we will provide greater opportunities for innovation and creativity in our students and staff.

Just as ecological diversity begets stability, this plan recognises that diverse learning experiences are vital to students' holistic development and to their ability to tackle the world's greatest challenges. The implementation of the *Connected Curriculum* will ensure that these connected experiences are named and visible in the course descriptions and learning outcomes. It will emphasise the synergies between research excellence and teaching excellence, and the vital contribution that independent, critical thinking makes to society. Varied and appropriate assessment practices will connect learning outcomes with graduate attributes and with timely, formative and summative feedback empowering students to become self-regulated learners. The alignment of our curriculum with the research and teaching priorities of the university, and with demand from students and stakeholder needs, will result in a strong and attractive academic portfolio. Through service and process redesign, optimisation of systems and more effective academic governance, the administrative workload will be reduced, liberating more time for academic engagement in creative endeavour, collaborative enquiry and the pursuit of knowledge.

[3] University Strategic Plan (2017-2022) <https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/strategicplanning/UCCStrategicPlan2017-2022.pdf>

[4] Research & Innovation Strategic Plan (2017-2022) [https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/research/researchatucc/documents/UCCResearchInnovationStrategicPlan\(2017%20-%202022\)proof5.pdf](https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/research/researchatucc/documents/UCCResearchInnovationStrategicPlan(2017%20-%202022)proof5.pdf)

[5] Strategy for Teaching and Learning (2017-2022) <https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/ovptl/documents/StrategicPlanTeachingLearning2017.pdf>

[6] Civic Engagement Plan (2017-2022) [https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/centralmedia/UCC\\_Civic\\_Engage\\_2017a.pdf](https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/centralmedia/UCC_Civic_Engage_2017a.pdf)



# Priorities

*The core principle of our Academic Strategy is that student learning and research will be facilitated through a Connected Curriculum that aligns with demand, university priorities and effective assessment practices.*

The following six priorities and their associated thirty-five leading actions will form the basis of an implementation plan to deliver on this principle:

- 1** **Develop a *Connected Curriculum*, building on existing strengths and best practice globally.**
- 2** **Align curriculum offerings with demand and with teaching and research priorities.**
- 3** **Constructively align effective assessment practices with learning outcomes.**
- 4** **Facilitate students' development of core values and graduate attributes.**
- 5** **Establish a student enrolment plan that aligns with student recruitment targets.**
- 6** **Reform academic governance such that innovation is enabled, coherence is restored and risk is reduced.**

Each of these priorities and their associated actions are now outlined.



# Priority One

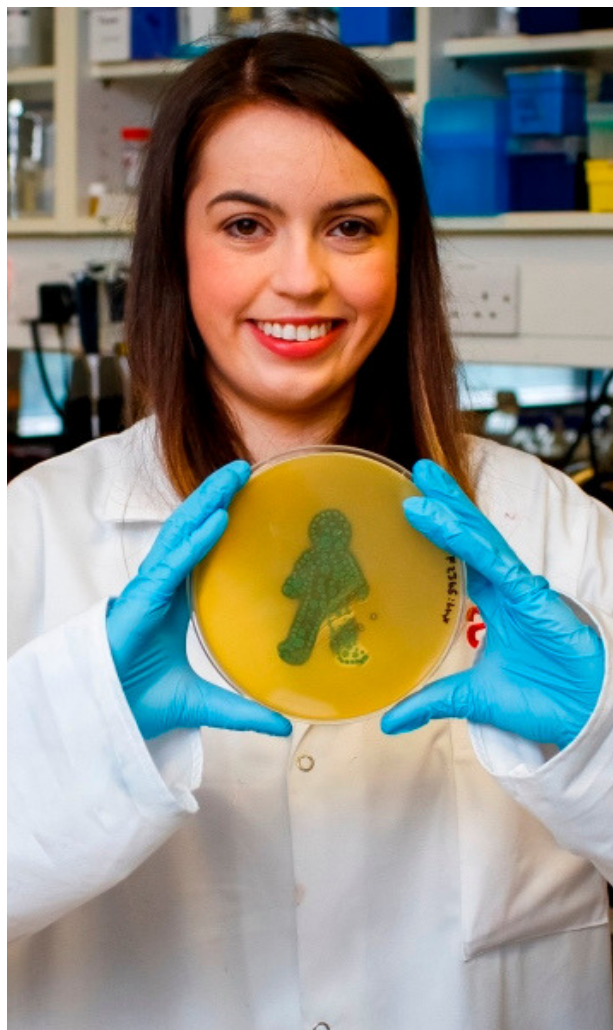
Develop a *Connected Curriculum*, building on existing strengths and best practice globally.

A *Connected Curriculum* emphasises the holistic development of students and staff through research-based, collaborative enquiry. It is designed to prepare students for their future, combining academic with professional, community-based, field-based and inter-professional learning to develop values, skills and aptitudes that promote civic participation, social inclusion, sustainability and impactful global citizenship. A commitment to excellence and the integrity of the discipline is a core design principle of a *Connected Curriculum*.

The framework for UCC's *Connected Curriculum* comprises six distinct interconnected components, which can be made visible in our expression of the curriculum. Each of these components can overlap, such that an example of good practice in research-based teaching might also serve as an exemplar of inter-disciplinarity and employability. Each of the connections is briefly described in the next section, using an example of current practice in UCC from a range of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.

Curriculum design is a key aspect of embedding a *Connected Curriculum* and defines the learning possibilities of each module taught, conceiving of them holistically and relationally. It is at the curriculum design stage that decisions are taken that impact how and where learning will happen, how it will be facilitated and how it will be assessed. The *Connected Curriculum* draws on the vision behind each programme and relies on the integrity of each module through its anatomy, its history or evolution, and its investigative nature [7].

A *Connected Curriculum* invites coherence, lateral thinking and integrative learning. Every module is an investigation where students explore what it is to learn in a connected way. At the heart of a *Connected Curriculum* is the practice of active learning where students are partners in the learning process, given opportunities to represent and demonstrate their



learning in different ways and in a variety of contexts that take account of their holistic experience [8].

A *Connected Curriculum* embraces diversity and lifelong learning and helps connect teaching with workplace engagement. Such a curriculum facilitates critical, creative, independent thinking where learning is authentic in its problem-solving and its contribution to society.

Making connections across the curriculum is an intentional act that must be planned and well designed; it will not happen haphazardly. Several models of good curriculum design can be usefully utilised to establish connections for example Multiple Intelligences approaches and Entry Points to Learning [9].

[7] Shulman, L. (1998) Course anatomy: The dissection and analysis of knowledge through teaching. In P. Hutchings (ed.) *The Course Portfolio: How Faculty Can Examine Their Teaching to Advance Practice and Improve Student Learning* (pp.5-12). Washington DC: The American Association for Higher Education.

[8] EUA Active Learning Project, (2018). See <https://eua.eu/101-projects/540-learning-teaching-thematic-peer-groups.html>

[9] Gardner, H. (1999a) *The Disciplined Mind: What All Students Should Understand*. New York: Basic Books; Gardner, H. (1999b) *Intelligence Reframed: Multiple Intelligences for the 21st Century*. New York: Basic Books.



# UCC's Connected Curriculum framework



These and other models of curriculum design such as Teaching for Understanding [10] and Universal Design for Learning [11] already inform curriculum design at UCC. They can be used to embed integrative thinking and learning in pursuit of a *Connected Curriculum* [12].

Each model provides a map of how we might set out the parts of our curriculum (for example, its vision, design, goals, key performances or actions and ongoing assessments or expressions of learning) and how we might align and integrate them [13].

The Bologna process and its Learning Outcomes model also speak to the connected nature of learning and its outcomes and impact [14]. Key to all of these models is their student-centred nature and their real context for learning which is owned, actioned and voiced by the student.

Ultimately, it is the student who connects the curriculum. However, it is how that learning is designed and constructed that enables connected thinking to link curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular experiences. This challenges students to be the best they can be as scholars, entrepreneurs,

citizens and people who fulfil their potential in a world of infinite possibilities.

Several examples of good practice of *Connected Curriculum* approaches were surfaced and supported through the work of the National Academy for Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning (NAIRTL) (2006-2012). Many UCC staff have successfully published details of their innovative approaches to teaching. It is timely now to re-examine the landscape of teaching and research practices in UCC, to shine a light on excellent practice and to promote its extension across all our curriculum offerings.

[10] Wiske, M.S. (ed.) (1998) *Teaching for Understanding: Linking Research with Practice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass; Wiske, M.S. (2005) *Teaching for Understanding with Technology*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

[11] Meyer, A. and Rose D.H. (2000) 'Universal Design for Individual Differences' in *Educational Leadership*, 58, 3, 39-43; Novak, K. and Thibodeau, T. (2016) *UDL in the Cloud: How to Design and Deliver Online Education using Universal Design for Learning*. Wakefield, MA: CAST Professional Publishing.

[12] Hyland, A. and McCarthy, M. (2009) *Multiple intelligences in Ireland*. In J. Q. Chen, S. Moran and H. Gardner (eds) *Multiple Intelligences Around the World*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

[13] Blackshields, D., Cronin, J., Higgs, B., Kilcommins, S., McCarthy, M. and Ryan, A. (eds) (2015) *Integrative Learning: International Research and Practice*. Oxon: Routledge;

[14] Kennedy, D. (2007) *Writing and Using Learning Outcomes: A Practical Guide*. Cork: NAIRTL





## Research-based Teaching

Research-based teaching engages students in research activity to promote collaborative, active enquiry-based learning. Research-based teaching and learning values the distinctive teaching and research cultures of disciplines and can also learn from interdisciplinary activity. In line with our university's Strategy for Research and Innovation (2017-2022), undergraduate and postgraduate students at UCC will benefit from the unique research activity of its leading researchers, across all disciplines, who will be engaged in the design and development of curricula. Furthermore, the curriculum will provide structured opportunities for student investigations while placing enquiry at the centre of the students' learning experience.

There are innumerable ways to engage students in research and there are many examples of good practice across all programme levels at UCC.

Our new undergraduate programme BSc Medical and Health Sciences is one such example where

research-based teaching is evident. In this course of study, students are taught by academics who are research leaders in the medical and translational sciences and they are given hands-on opportunities to undertake research projects in world-class research laboratories.

It is the latter that underpins the impact of this approach, where 'students as enquirers' are producing results that they can present at research conferences and publish in research journals and beyond as appropriate. For this approach it is important that enquiry-based learning begins from the first year of study so that there can be a developmental approach to undergraduate research.

*"challenging students to be  
the best they can be as  
scholars, entrepreneurs,  
citizens and people"*



# Employability

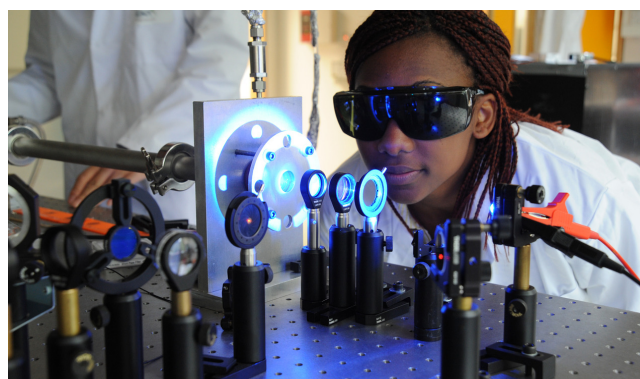
The World Economic Forum has suggested that more than 60% of today's students will work in jobs that don't currently exist. The US Bureau of Labour Statistics postulates that these students will have held an average of 10 to 12 jobs by the time they have reached 38 years of age. It follows that students need to be equipped with new types of skills and aptitudes to prepare them for a changing society and an unpredictable future.

Embedding employability in the curriculum promotes life-wide learning, where a holistic approach is taken to the development of professional skills. Academic learning can be connected to the workplace through work-based learning opportunities or a range of pedagogies including problem-based learning, work-related project learning, field-based, inter-professional and collaborative learning.

A holistic, multi-stakeholder approach to employability is encouraged, where educators, employers and students closely collaborate in facilitating individuals' development and articulation of employability skills, and where employability is embedded in curriculum design, delivery and assessment.

In UCC we have an award-winning example of employability connected to the curriculum in our BA Economics (through Transformational Learning) programme. Through a multi-stakeholder partnership between the Career Services, the Department of Economics, industry partners, employers and external champions, this programme has integrated a suite of modules on Transition to Professional Life into the curriculum. Using this model, students explore how disciplinary understanding is shaping who they are becoming as they move into and through university in preparation to transition out to professional environments.

Business Information Systems is another excellent example of where intentional efforts are made through the six-month work placement to ensure that students develop career management skills, self-awareness, self-efficacy, creativity, curiosity and related workplace skills, such that they are equipped to evolve and manage their careers throughout their lives.





# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



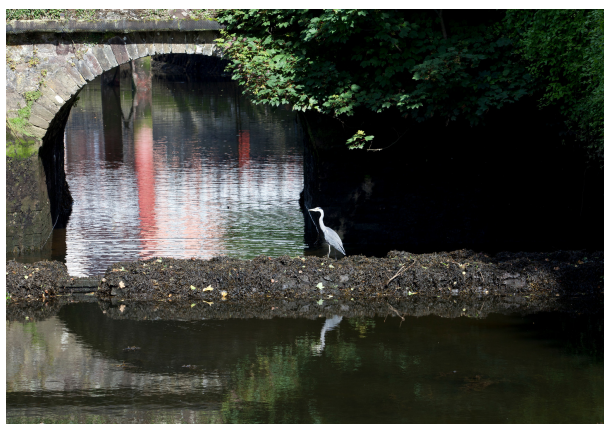
## Sustainability

The sustainability connection represents the university's commitment to the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (above). Curricula that connect to social, environmental and economic development principles help us to create and live in a society that meets the needs of the present without compromising future generations. The objective of this connection is that a UCC education is recognised as one that prepares students to contribute in a meaningful way towards a thriving, equitable and ecologically healthy world.

UCC has a Gold rating award under the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education's STARS programme. UCC is the only institution outside of the US and Canada to be awarded a Gold STARS rating and joins the likes of Princeton, Cornell, and UC Berkeley in this achievement. This accolade speaks to the priority that UCC places on sustainability, enabling our university community to work towards solving the global challenges of the 21st century.

UCC is engaged in a wide range of sustainability initiatives that can be connected more intentionally to the curriculum [15]. Teaching that connects to SDGs is often inter- or transdisciplinary.

Degree programmes such as the BSc International Development and Food Policy and the BE Process and Chemical Engineering are good examples of curricula that connect deeply with SDGs. The BSc International Development and Food Policy engages students with major global development issue. The BE Process and Chemical Engineering achieved the Institution of Chemical Engineers Sustainability Teaching Award in 2016 for successfully integrating sustainability teaching across the curriculum.



[15] For instance, the GEMS/Water programme is the implementing partner for SDG Indicator 6.3.2 for Water Quality, see: <https://www.ucc.ie/en/gemscdc/gemswaterproject/>.



# Inter- and Transdisciplinarity

Inter- and transdisciplinarity describe learning experiences that seek to engage students with enquiry, between and across disciplines, to investigate grand societal challenges. Interdisciplinary programmes bring information, tools, concepts and/or theories from two or more disciplines or bodies of knowledge to advance fundamental understanding or to solve problems. Interdisciplinarity is evidenced by learning experiences that answer a question, solve a problem, or address a topic that is too broad or complex to be dealt with adequately by a single discipline or profession.

The BA in Digital Humanities and Information Technology and the BA in Psychology and Computing are two recent examples of degrees that combine areas of study uniquely to give students the breadth of knowledge needed to thrive in digital industries.

In the BA in Psychology and Computing for instance students examine the ways in which interactive digital technologies and systems (e.g. social media, mobile devices and apps) impact upon our lives, and in doing so gain the skills necessary to design, develop and evaluate those systems. It contributes to their understanding of the user experience of technology and equips them with the skills to craft hypotheses about what might work for these groups. Students can then develop solutions and test them with people toward whom the solutions are directed.

Transdisciplinarity seeks to develop in students the ability to connect and situate knowledge and to give context to their disciplinary skills and perspectives in order to understand the complexity of a global issue, for example, climate change.

There are several examples of transdisciplinary teaching practices in UCC. For example, UCC's innovative university-wide Sustainability module unites perspectives and research from staff across a wide range of disciplines.

Biomedical Design is another example of a transdisciplinary module, where the School of Medicine and the Department of Electrical Engineering bring together local doctors and UCC engineering and medical students to develop new medical devices and healthcare solutions. The transdisciplinary nature of this clinical immersion experience focuses students on solving real-life clinical challenges.



The UCC Indian Society hosts its Diwali celebration in the Devere Hall, 2017.

## Global Reach

The connection to Global Reach embraces the international dimension of our programmes of study. Learning experiences that bring transnational perspectives to our curriculum can include: incorporating a diversity of cultures and nationalities in learning spaces, development of linguistic competence beyond English, opportunities for students to study abroad or engage in an international work placement. It connects the curriculum to the frontiers of knowledge, wherever in the world that it is being generated.

The emphasis on global reach recognises that deep understanding emerges from learning experiences that bring transnational perspectives to our curriculum. It values the flow of cultures and nationalities that populate our learning spaces, the development of intercultural communication skills and competence and deeper connections with our alumni globally. It also embraces our global partnerships and supports our ambition to extend our reach to like-minded institutions around the world.

Many of our UCC programmes have visible global reach. One such example is Law International, where students are offered the opportunity to immerse themselves in an international experience, spending their third year studying at a law school in China, the US, Canada or Europe. An international work placement is a common feature of many of our programmes.

UCC is also an active participant in the ERASMUS programme, which facilitates student exchange with partner institutions across the European Economic Area.

# Civic and Community Engagement

Civic and Community Engagement is evidenced in the curriculum through opportunities that facilitate students to develop social responsibility and civic attributes, where ultimately they strive to create more value than they consume. Through our Civic Engagement Plan (2017-2022), we seek to prepare our students to contribute fully to society as reflexive, civically-engaged leaders who will make a difference to society. Civic and community engagement is demonstrated through active enquiry connected to local communities and Gaeltacht regions, as well as national and international communities. This pedagogical approach requires an environment of open inquiry, inclusivity, transdisciplinary thinking, and supportive learning spaces. It requires that researchers incorporate a reflection on inclusion and gender representation in their design and conduct of research. By connecting civic and community engagement to our curriculum, across community-based research, community-based learning and volunteering, we will enrich the student learning experience, deepen our societal impact and develop students' citizenship.

UCC are pioneers in community-based research and learning, where research is informed by working "with people", as opposed to "on people". There are excellent examples of this approach to be found throughout the curriculum. For example, in UCC we have the Community-Academic Research Links initiative (CARL), where research projects are pursued by students in response to concerns raised in the community. An impressive range of CARL research projects, which are undertaken by undergraduate and postgraduate students, are already having an impact. Furthermore, many of our programmes of study are deeply connected to civic and community engagement, for instance Youth and Community Work, Social Work and Public Health Sciences, to name a few.

## Actions

In summary, a *Connected Curriculum* sets out to prepare students for their future by instilling in them a collaborative, enquiry-based approach to lifelong and life-wide learning. As a community of learners in a research-intensive university, we share a global and social responsibility to tackle society's greatest challenges.

We help students to develop the skills of independent thought so that they can make sense of and participate in a world with an uncertain future. There are many examples of good-practice *Connected Curriculum* approaches in UCC, but they are not always evident in our expression of the curriculum, that is in programme descriptions, in the module descriptors, and in the learning outcomes. A range of actions are proposed to make these connections more visible, to deepen them, and to extend them to all curriculum offerings.

The following actions are proposed to strengthen and enhance the *Connected Curriculum* at UCC during this strategic planning cycle:

### Priority One: Actions

- 1 Incorporate peer-review approaches to review current curriculum offerings and surface and document good practice in connected approaches.
- 2 Recognise and promote good practice.
- 3 Develop and extend good practice through staff development efforts and optimisation of existing UCC initiatives that can support the delivery of a *Connected Curriculum*.
- 4 Create opportunities for students to be co-creators of and partners in curriculum design and development to maximise their learning.
- 5 Encourage curriculum revision and review of learning outcomes to embed the components of a *Connected Curriculum*, as relevant to the discipline.
- 6 Develop new curriculum offerings using the *Connected Curriculum* framework.
- 7 Develop Global Networks with like-minded universities.





## Priority Two

### Align curriculum offerings with demand and with teaching and research priorities.

In the last decade, UCC has seen a proliferation of programmes and modules. Much of this growth is indicative of academic staff innovation, research strengths and a dynamic response to market demands and national skills shortages. While some of these new curriculum offerings have been really successful, there are a number of programmes that are not attracting sufficient demand to make them viable. The pace of growth has brought a high level of complexity to our academic portfolio, such that it has become difficult to manage and to market. Furthermore, there is some evidence of inconsistencies in relation to where the academic administration of programmes is channelled. This issue of complexity in our academic portfolio was recognised in UCC's Institutional Review (2013) [16] and the university was encouraged to explore opportunities for rationalisation of academic programmes.

It is timely now to take steps to ensure that we have a coherent academic portfolio and that the curriculum on offer is successful. A minimum viable demand will need to be achieved in order for a programme of study to be retained in our academic portfolio. The title of a programme of study should reflect its content.

The internal logic for the different award types, at all levels of study, will need to be clarified. Curriculum offerings should demonstrably align with the teaching and research priorities of the university and they should contribute to the achievement of national objectives. For all students, the first few weeks of each semester are critical to their successful progression. Clarity in relation to their study timetable and pathway options is fundamental in setting them up for academic success. Following registration for their chosen study pathway, a personalised timetable, which takes account of ease of travel between classes, for both students and staff, should be generated in their student portal. Where possible, all aspects of a student's formal learning – including lectures, seminars, workshops, tutorials, laboratory sessions, etc. – should be included in the timetable.

The objective of this priority is to ensure that our university has a strong, distinctive academic portfolio, which is coherently timetabled and is successful in attracting a diverse range of applicants.

### Priority Two: Actions

- 8 Review existing programme and module offerings to identify opportunities for rationalisation, and potential for part-time and flexible delivery modes.
- 9 Align programmes and modules with demand, university priorities, national objectives and organisational structures.
- 10 Revise and enhance the regulatory framework to facilitate opportunities for credit accumulation and transfer, as well as a range of new academic pathways, including a BPhil pathway and Professional pathways.
- 11 Operationalise a feasibility study on the potential for centralised, personalised student timetables.

[16] The report of UCC's Institutional Review (2013) is available at: [https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/qualitypromotionunit/iriu/UCC\\_Summary\\_Report.pdf](https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/qualitypromotionunit/iriu/UCC_Summary_Report.pdf)

# Priority Three

## Constructively align effective assessment practices with learning outcomes.

Assessment is central to the student experience and is an important driver of learning. Effective assessment practices are crucial to the achievement of the university's *Connected Curriculum* ambitions. Students need to demonstrate that they can make a critical assessment of information, and that they can connect information from a range of sources to solve real-world problems.

While UCC's current assessment practices are robust and are consistently praised by external examiners, scope for improvement has been identified. A working group on assessment, established as part of the consultation phase to inform our Academic Strategy, highlighted a range of concerns and issues in relation to assessment including:

- the greater need for assessment to stimulate learning as well as to evaluate it;
- an absence of an overarching assessment framework and assessment strategy;
- the growing importance of online modes of assessment;
- the impact of semesterisation on assessment loads;
- an over-assessment, particularly of first-year students; and
- the necessity for Autumn examinations.

In light of these concerns, a review of assessment practices was initiated and the first stage of this review has been completed. Stage one of the review of assessment has identified that connections between assessment tasks, graduate attributes and learning outcomes are rarely made explicit in the expression of our curriculum at UCC. Some programmes have yet to express their programme learning outcomes, and the extent to which some modules have aligned their learning outcomes with assessment and teaching and learning activities is unclear.

The review has highlighted that a great majority of UCC's more than 5,000 modules are single-semester, five-credit modules. It suggests that modularisation and semesterisation may have contributed to an increase in the number of assessments as students do proportionately more assessments for five-credit modules than for 10- or 15-credit modules.



Nationally, the average number of assessments for a 10-credit module is 2.8. For two five-credit modules, the combined average number of assessments is 5.2.

During the cycle of this plan a number of actions are proposed that will encourage appropriate formative and summative assessment practices that are balanced across the semesters. These actions align closely with the university Learning and Teaching Strategy (2017-2022). Statements of programme-level assessment schemes, that are in line with the grade descriptors of the National University of Ireland, will become a common feature of the learning landscape. The timelines within which marked assessments are returned to students should be appropriate to encourage assessment for learning.

The objective of this priority is to ensure that assessment is aligned in an effective and visible way with module and programme learning outcomes and with graduate values and attributes. In this way assessment and feedback will be used to empower students to become self-regulated lifelong and life-wide learners. The first stage of the review of assessment practices has made 10 recommendations. In addition to the actions within this priority, these recommendations will be progressed to enhance assessment practice throughout our academic portfolio.



## Priority Three: Actions

**12** Undertake a review of existing assessment practice (Stage 1 completed).

**13** Effective assessment and feedback practices will be supported by enabling policies. An assessment policy will be developed with a view to increasing the diversity of assessment methods, to include research-based and work-based assessments that align with the development of graduate attributes. Furthermore, it will

encourage the optimisation of technology in assessment, as relevant to the discipline.

**14** Groupwork guidelines will be implemented and will form a part of the overall assessment policy.

**15** Marks and Standards will be reviewed and simplified to achieve consistency in how regulations are observed.

**16** Exam timetabling will be enhanced and the necessity for Autumn examinations will be reviewed.

## Ten recommendations arising from the Assessment Review - Stage One

- UCC should adopt a statement on Principles of Assessment that sets out its philosophy and approach and provides a framework for the design and evaluation of schemes and strategies of assessment.
- All programmes should devise an overall assessment strategy and scheme that is aligned to programme learning outcomes (PLOs).
- Approval documentation for new programmes should include a section on the assessment strategy and its alignment with PLOs.
- Programmes (and/or disciplines/subject areas) should consider the desirability of programme-wide assignments or capstone assessments that will enable students to showcase their learning achievements.
- Programmes should be reviewed with a view to the introduction of more 10 credit units and large-scale assignments that will facilitate deep learning and the spread of enquiry-led, research-based learning.
- Module assessment schemes should be reviewed to ensure that they align with module learning outcomes. Where possible formative as well as summative assessment should form part of the module design.
- Assessment requirements of different modules within programmes should be broadly similar and any anomalies should be ironed out.
- Staff should consult with students about the design of assessment schemes and consider ways to incorporate elements of student self-assessment and peer-assessment.
- A working group should examine the first-year experience from the assessment point of view and the Academic Council Committee on Teaching and Learning should be asked to review the policy on feedback.
- Colleges should consider the appointment of Assessment Champions – staff with expertise and experience in assessment – to assist programme redesign and to foster the extension of enquiry-led, research-based methods of assessment.

# Priority Four

## Facilitate students' development of core values and graduate attributes.

As a socially-minded, civically-engaged institution, our core values and graduate attributes are the bedrock of our student experience. Graduate attributes refer to the skills, knowledge and abilities of our graduates, beyond disciplinary content knowledge, that are applicable in a range of contexts in their lives. They advance the development of academic, specialist and technical skills. A breadth of learning equips students to transfer these skills to different environments, critically analyse problems and respond to changing demands and people.

Our core values and graduate attributes endeavour to capture the uniqueness of a UCC education, which includes a breadth of learning that develops character, professionalism and the capacity for critical, creative and independent thinking.

Wherever UCC graduates are in the world, they will be guided by the core values and attributes they have developed to become well-rounded, curious, self-aware individuals with an ambition to continually learn new skills, be open to new ideas and make things happen.

UCC's Strategic Plan 2017-2022 sets out core values and qualities that underpin the actions and



processes of the university. The core values and attributes that have been selected for priority development in our students closely align with these institutional values and qualities.

The development of students' core values and attributes is supported by the *Connected Curriculum*, which has considered the gender dimension [17]. They are also developed through co-curricular offerings and the richness of extra-curricular activities that comprise university life. Opportunities for students to learn and develop through course work, volunteering, work placements, social experiences and engagement in sports are connected. Regardless of their field of study, these core values and attributes will underpin students' success throughout their lives.

[17] HEA Gender Equality recommendations (2016)  
[http://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2017/04/hea\\_review\\_of\\_gender\\_equality\\_in\\_irish\\_higher\\_education.pdf](http://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2017/04/hea_review_of_gender_equality_in_irish_higher_education.pdf)

### GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES

**Creators, evaluators and communicators of knowledge**

**Independent and creative thinkers**

**Digitally fluent**

**Socially responsible**

**Effective, global citizens who recognise and challenge inequality**

### VALUES

**Respect:** For self, other and the environment

**Ambition:** Aims high, displays exemplary work ethic and strives to succeed

**Compassion:** Empathic, demonstrates care for self and others

**Resilience:** Perseveres, shows grit with a capacity for problem-solving and personal well-being

**Integrity:** Trustworthy, ethical and dependable



## Priority Four: Actions

**17** At annual registration, students will submit a self-assessment to determine the extent to which they have developed these values and attributes through their educational and life experiences. A digital application will generate a spikey profile, or computer-generated graph, that illustrates students' starting point within each attribute and value. Students will be pointed in the direction of further ways to develop their core values and attributes, as relevant to their performance in the self-assessment.

**18** Assessment of work placements, field-work, problem-based learning, group-work and other relevant learning activities that are guided by the *Connected Curriculum* framework will prompt students to explore new ways to further develop values and attributes.

**19** Learning outcomes will be constructively aligned with the development of graduate attributes, as relevant to the discipline.

**20** Digital Badges and the Skills Centre will be optimised to facilitate student engagement with a breadth of learning experiences that will expose them to the critical mass of research expertise across all disciplines in UCC. Transdisciplinary approaches will be promoted in these activities, which will be designed to encourage an appreciation of differing disciplinary perspectives on grand societal challenges.

**21** A space for students to reflect and develop their thoughts and ideas will be established. This space will serve as an ideas lab, or house of thought, where students will be supported to advance their curiosity, creativity and critical thinking skills.



# Priority Five

## Establish a student enrolment plan that aligns with student recruitment targets.

The student population at UCC has trebled since 1990, growing from 7,293 students to 21,147 students in 2017. This significant expansion was driven by demographic growth and by UCC's response to demand, primarily from the domestic market. In the last decade, the importance of the internationalisation of our student body has been recognised and significant investment has been made in enhancing our global relationships. In recent years, our approach to postgraduate and international student recruitment has been overly influenced by income imperatives. This strategic planning cycle will see a new approach to enrolment planning, one that will start from the premise of our academic mission and what kind of university we want to be.

A diverse, inclusive classroom gives the best educational experience. It is timely now to take stock of the size and shape of our student body and to set out clear recruitment targets to achieve the desired balances of undergraduate versus postgraduate students, of EU versus international student intake, of full-time versus part-time students, of well-represented versus under-represented students. The central driver for international student recruitment will be our internationalisation ambitions.

A review of entry requirements and admissions policies will be carried out and new policies developed, as appropriate, to ensure that our strong ethos of equality, diversity and inclusion for all is reflected in our admissions process.

A new approach to enrolment planning will see the newly established Recruitment and Admissions function working in close collaboration with the four colleges, Adult Continuing Education and the Centre for Professional Development. Achievable and desirable recruitment targets will be established for a coherent and marketable academic portfolio.

The process will take into account issues concerning student-staff ratios, the university's physical capacity

## Priority Five: Actions

- 22 Review and further develop a student enrolment plan in close collaboration with academic units.
- 23 Develop a recruitment strategy that is in line with the student enrolment plan.
- 24 Increase capacity for student recruitment in areas of strategic importance.
- 25 Carry out a review of admissions policies and entry requirements for all student cohorts.
- 26 Undertake a strategic review of internationalisation and implement its recommendations as appropriate.
- 27 Review and consolidate Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policies.

to deliver teaching and learning, and capacity and financial constraints related to student accommodation.

Additionally, the enrolment planning process will work towards advancing opportunities for flexible delivery and part-time delivery as appropriate.

The objective of this priority is to establish an enrolment plan that will be designed to achieve the desired size and shape of our student body through adopting a more strategic approach to recruitment. This priority links very closely with Priority Two of this plan, which is focused on bringing greater coherence to our curriculum offering. In the implementation phase of this strategy, enrolment planning and curriculum alignment exercises will be carried out simultaneously.







# Priority Six

**Reform academic governance such that innovation is enabled, coherence is restored and risk is reduced.**

The role of Academic Council in controlling academic affairs is established in the Universities Act (1997). The term academic affairs is broadly defined to include programmes of study; structures; teaching and learning; research; advancement and dissemination of knowledge; selection, admission, retention and exclusion of students; student discipline; the conduct of examinations; and the awarding of fellowships, bursaries and prizes.

The university is grouped into four colleges with each college further subdivided into schools and departments. Colleges have a governance structure and set of rules in a format prescribed by the Principal Statute and approved through Governing Body, Academic Council and the University Management Team. According to the Principal Statute, each college's academic responsibilities are "owed" to Academic Council. Activity in the area of academic decision-making also takes place in Adult Continuing Education, the Irish Management Institute and with linked and collaborative providers (e.g. Cork Institute of Technology joint programmes; Turning Point Institute Ltd.). This is a complicated landscape for decision-making and is further complicated by the continued growth and evolution of the university.

A recurring theme in the planning and consultation phase of developing this Academic Strategy was the absence of clarity on where the right of initiative lies with regard to academic policy. There is a perception that decision-making has become overcomplicated, that policy ownership and lines of authority can be unclear and that decisions are revisited due to lack of clear decision-making authority. The recording and communication of decisions, and the maintenance of up-to-date policy documents and registers, is generally acknowledged to be underdeveloped. The rapid expansion and pace of change in the structures and systems of the university in recent decades resulted in some disconnections and inefficiencies in our processes and procedures.

Some of these were mentioned in UCC's Institutional Review (2013). Recent experience has highlighted significant operational, financial and reputational risks for the university in relation to maintaining programme accreditation, overseas collaborations, linked providers, and non-standard provision. The university needs to provide the appropriate guidance, policies and frameworks to enable academic innovation, while reducing the levels of risk therein.

The objective of this priority is to ensure that the university provides clarity and coherence on academic policies and regulations, that work optimally, and that are observed consistently.

## Priority Six: Actions

- 28 Review and reform academic decision-making authority.
- 29 Review and enhance the programme approval process.
- 30 Redesign and optimise the exam appeals and mitigation processes.
- 31 Undertake a review of semesterisation and address any challenges identified.
- 32 Create a register of programmes subject to accreditation to facilitate oversight of associated criteria.
- 33 Capture and regulate non-standard academic arrangements.
- 34 Develop a policy for the withdrawal of academic awards.
- 35 Develop an online Academic Policy Portal.



# Enabling Factors



The Academic Strategy has set out an ambitious programme of work for the years ahead. Five key enablers to its success have been identified – Staff, Students, Systems, Spaces and Services.

The primary enablers of the implementation of the Academic Strategy are the hugely committed body of staff, who have consistently demonstrated excellence, innovation, resilience and optimism in challenging times. Our impressive body of more than 20,000 students, and our global body of alumni, will need to be engaged as active partners in the implementation of the thirty-five leading actions. The delivery of the Academic Strategy will be enabled also by enhanced digital and physical infrastructure and learning spaces. The ongoing enhancement of our physical spaces is a necessary enabler to support the Academic Strategy. The transformation of our technological systems will establish a digital education environment that can support networked, research-based and interdisciplinary approaches in support of the *Connected Curriculum*, effectively meeting the digital experience needs of staff and students.

Our investment in digital transformation, and world-class physical spaces, provides the catalyst to enhance our services through redesigning processes and procedures and upskilling staff, ultimately producing better outcomes for staff and students in support of our Academic Strategy.

## Staff

A core principle of this Academic Strategy is to enable staff to fully exploit their potential through the alignment of staff development opportunities with institutional priorities. It is intended that the successful implementation of this Academic Strategy will result in an environment where staff have more time and opportunities to engage in activities that better support the strategic objectives of the university in teaching, learning, research and engagement.

The university's strategic plan has prioritised a number of items related to staff recruitment and development.



The work that is underway in these priority areas will also enable implementation of our Academic Strategy. These priorities include a more strategic approach to staff recruitment; the enhancement of our student-staff ratio; the advancement of gender equality in academic staffing through achievement of the Athena Swan Action Plan and Charter; and the enhancement of staff support and rewards. Further initiatives that will support the academic mission include reviews of the academic workloads model and the academic promotions policy.

## Students

The engagement of our students, past and present, as partners and co-creators in delivering on our academic mission is key to the success of this strategy. Consultation and engagement with students will take place throughout the implementation stage and the full diversity of student voices will inform the evolution of our direction. A University Student Survey Board has recently been established which will place student perceptions of their educational experience at the heart of decision-making at UCC. We will continue to strengthen our student-centred approach through the greater participation of students, as partners and co-creators, in decision-making structures and in curriculum vision and design.

The university disburses in the region of €1 million annually in student scholarships and prizes and it is envisaged that this investment can be optimised to enhance student engagement. To better serve the objectives of our Academic Strategy, a project will be undertaken to ensure that the full range of student scholarships and prizes in UCC is better coordinated and that its potential is optimised. The insights gained from our Quercus Talented Students' Programme, which has been hugely successful, will be used to inform our approach. As part of this endeavour, there is a commitment to examine the opportunity to extend the range of scholarships and prizes available to postgraduate students.

## Systems

The transformation of our student and staff experiences are at the heart of the Connected University vision. In order to deliver on this ambition, the university has committed itself to its largest ever capital investment in student administration systems. This is a large-scale university-wide programme of change and transformation. New technologies will enhance both staff and student experiences and bring increased levels of automation and efficiency to our business processes. The new infrastructure will allow us to offer prospective students more flexible and innovative programme types. It will also serve as an opportunity and stimulus to look afresh at how we govern, manage and analyse our student and curriculum datasets. An enterprise data system is envisaged that will enable a stronger evidence-based approach to our decision-making.





Our Academic Strategy will be enabled by our digital transformation. The following projects are underway and will be approached and managed holistically. They will maximise integration and collaboration in the spirit of the Connected University vision:

- *Digital Student Hub*: This project will incrementally increase the number of services that can be availed of online, thereby reducing the need for unnecessary queuing, emails and counter visits. Many of our student-facing services will adopt and use a single customer relationship management system that will help track and manage all student and applicant enquiries and interactions. This project is closely aligned with the opening of the new Student Hub building, “Student Central” within the building and re-design of our student services.
- *Student Records System*: The student records system supports the full student lifecycle from application through examination and onward to graduation. The university has initiated procurement of a new system and over the next three-to-five years, we will implement a new student records system. This presents us with the opportunity to review and improve the performance and efficiency of core administrative business processes.
- *Curriculum Management System*: The curriculum management system will make the process of introducing changes to the curriculum easier to operate and manage. It will capture a richer and more complete representation of all facets of the curriculum and will help instantiate enhanced approval processes and academic governance arrangements.
- *Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)*: UCC's current VLE will be replaced with a modern, intuitive system offering a significant uplift in how we support our students' learning. Canvas will become the main online platform to support our teaching and learning, giving our academic staff the tools to teach in innovative ways, and offering the flexibility to deliver a *Connected Curriculum*.
- *Enhanced lecture recording facilities*: These will be deployed across teaching rooms offering an engaging and seamless way to support the traditional classroom environment, and allowing students to view lectures, watch live streams, take interactive quizzes, and submit video assignments.



## Spaces

The university's Strategic Plan 2017-2022 is prioritising a range of capital projects and investments in facilities that will complement the implementation of our Academic Strategy. For example, in 2019, the new Student Hub will open. This flagship building will provide a transformative space for student services to sit beside teaching and learning. It will facilitate teamwork, innovation and creativity in a learner-led environment. The building will provide up to seven innovative learning spaces that are interactive, flexible and adaptable to current and future learning needs. Several student services will relocate to the Hub, including the Access Programme offices, the Career Services, Clubs, Societies and Student Media. The co-location of these services will create a truly supportive space in the centre of campus that respects, protects, inspires and promotes our diverse community of students and staff in an inclusive and meaningful manner.



UCC Library is a key partner in enabling the university's Academic Strategy. The library provides high-quality information services to all students and staff through its research collections, archives and highly competent staff. As a central space for research, study and collaboration, the library provides facilities such as the exhibition space, assistive technology lab and technology-rich collaborative study rooms, to enhance the student learning experience. Ongoing developments include the opening of the Skills Centre, Library Studio and the Creative Zone. These further contribute to our ambition of transforming the student and staff experience. In line with the Academic Strategy, the library promotes sustainable development through its highly visible and award-winning 'Love our Library' campaign.

The plans for further development of existing learning, teaching and research spaces are also recognised as important enablers of the Academic Strategy. Students of today and next generation students expect to engage with the construction of learning, as opposed to being passive participants. This requires teaching spaces to adapt to student learning needs. Technology enables students to engage with learning material in ways that were previously impossible.

UCC is working towards the development of comfortable learning and discovery spaces that lend themselves to diverse learning styles and that meet the needs of a generation of students that are accustomed to receiving and sharing information digitally, through a diverse range of technological devices.

These future-proofed spaces will be technologically advanced, accessible, secure, adaptable and engaging and they will inspire next generation student learning.

## Services

Our physical and digital transformation efforts have provided a catalyst to enhance the services we provide at each point of the student journey and the processes we use to carry out our work.

The Connected University vision incorporates a service redesign project to optimise the benefits of our investments in systems and facilities. The implementation of lean methodologies with a view to continuous improvement, will simplify processes, eradicate duplication of effort, and result in savings in time and budget that can contribute to the achievement of university strategic priorities.



# Implementation



UCC's Academic Leadership Forum [18] will be responsible and accountable for the sponsorship, planning and delivery of the six priorities within the Academic Strategy. The Academic Leadership Forum was established in 2018 as a non-executive forum for academic leadership and academic strategy at UCC. Some actions within the plan call for new commitments in physical, digital and human resources and opportunities to resource these necessary investments will be actively pursued.

The implementation of the strategy will be organised into six strands, reflecting the six priorities set out. A lead individual, who will be a member of the Academic Leadership Forum, will be assigned to each priority. The leads of the six priorities will ensure that each of the actions associated with their priority is assigned to an appropriate individual or task group to take responsibility for its collaborative implementation. The lead of each priority will ensure that the work associated with their actions and objectives is coordinated in a synergistic way, ensuring its alignment and integration with university-wide strategies and projects, such that there is overall coherence in its delivery.

For each of the priority strands in the Academic Strategy, an annual operational plan will be prepared, which will set out the timeline of steps

that will be taken to deliver on objectives. The operational plans will outline associated targets, milestone achievements, performance indicators, opportunities, challenges and risks, as relevant to the priority.

The Academic Leadership Forum will keep the Academic Strategy as a standing item on its agenda and will closely track progress against plans. The plan will be implemented in a spirit of shared ownership, and prompt delivery, involving all stakeholders in ongoing consultation. Regular updates on progress will be published on the website of the Office of Deputy President and Registrar ([www.ucc.ie/en/registrar](http://www.ucc.ie/en/registrar)) as a means of communicating the dynamic, consultative nature of the ongoing work.

The Academic Strategy will remain as a standing item on the agenda for Academic Council where the Chair of the Academic Leadership Forum will report regularly on progress. Progress will also be reported to the University Management Team.

[18] Membership of the Academic Leadership Forum comprises the Deputy President and Registrar; Heads of College; Vice-President for Learning and Teaching; Vice-President for Research and Innovation; Head of Information Services; Academic Secretary and Assistant Registrar; and Business Development and Finance Manager.





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