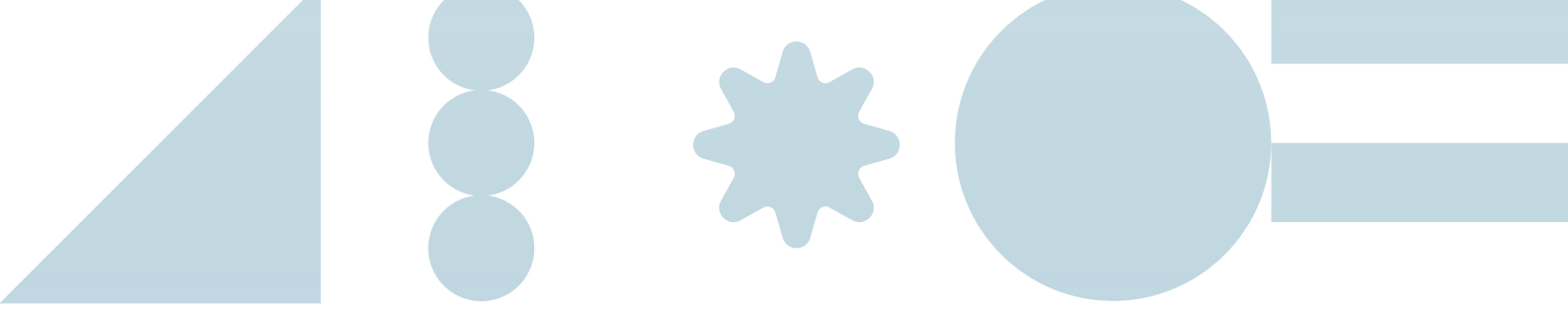


Cork University Business School

Strategic Vision 2026–2030

Making a Difference: **Vision to Impact**



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Dean's Foreword

I am immensely proud to introduce Cork University Business Schools' (CUBS) Strategic Vision - Making a Difference: Vision to Impact. This builds on CUBS' successes to date whilst ensuring that we continue to be well positioned to continue thriving in a period of global turbulence and in a world that needs business, workers and citizens to change and do better.

As a Triple Crown Accredited Business School, something held by less than 1% of global schools, we are a school centered on excellence, continuous improvement and generating greater value and impact for our communities. This requires our research and educational offerings to be more focused on assisting organisational managers and leaders to evolve and transform to enable greater social and economic benefits for all.

Our ambitious new strategy has been shaped extensively by the University College Cork's Strategic Plan 2023-2028 and through extensive engagement and collaboration with our stakeholders. It builds from our consultative approach to revising our mission and vision statements with our values represented in the mnemonic CAIRDEAS, the Irish for 'friendship'. We see these as underpinning all our engagements and relationships with our local and global UCC community and partners. My thanks to all colleagues who engaged in these consultations.

Business can be a better force for the greater good. Through better serving our communities and satisfying societal needs more sustainably, we all benefit. We firmly believe in the need to innovate for a better world and that we must better protect our environment whilst enabling profitable and sustainable businesses and economies that deliver decent work and quality of life for our communities.

However, as a school we also recognise the dilemmas, the challenges and the greyness that typically encompass the decisions that organisational leaders must make. We want to ensure all individuals in society have more equal access to opportunities, resources, benefits regardless of background or identity. We seek to make a difference by ensuring organisational leaders more explicitly consider the wider impacts of decisions and engage with the dilemmas regularly faced.

We recognise that we can and must play a key role in shaping the leaders required to deliver a sustainable future for our communities. This also requires greater understanding of the responsible use of artificial intelligence and emerging technologies.

We will continue our commitment to undertaking and supporting the highest quality research whilst focusing our efforts towards signature areas and global challenges. This will include the advancement of a new Future of Work and the Economy strategic research centre and strong engagement in UCC Futures especially

Sustainability; Food & Health; and AI & Data Analytics. Our research demonstrates momentum, but we have the ambition and drive to further enhance and strengthen our role as a business school delivering critical, impactful research and learning experiences that make a difference.

Our new mission commits to delivering an inclusive environment that enables our staff to undertake the impactful research and teaching required to develop the leaders who can transform organisations and businesses to deliver a more sustainable and responsible society. While some world leaders renounce EDI, we believe it is incumbent on us to continue to celebrate and draw on the strength that diversity offers.

We will enhance our inclusive working environment to better attract and retain an increasingly global workforce where everyone will be supported to realise their potential. We want our students to view their experiences with us as among the most satisfying, rewarding, challenging, and safe periods of their lives for learning, personal development, and intellectual growth.

We need to embrace the complexity that exists and move past oversimplification and short-termism. This will see us expanding and deepening our global engagement in our partnerships and our exchanges to foster greater connections, and cross-cultural understanding.

We will not rest on our laurels of the past decade but continue to focus on where we can positively reform how we operate so that our practices are efficient and sustainable. The need to improve our physical and digital infrastructure has never been so great to ensure we have the facilities that our staff and students deserve and need. We look forward to making this need a reality.

This strategic vision centres on 'Making a Difference: Vision to Impact' and we look forward to working with you all in enabling this.



Professor Anthony McDonnell
Dean,
Cork University Business School



Cork University Business School over the last 5 years

In 2025, the school
has achieved **triple
crown accreditation**



Achieved **Bronze
Athena Swan
accreditation** and
Amber Pieta Flag



2900+

Undergraduate students
for 2025/26 and

700+

Postgraduate students

Since 2020, CUBS
has raised over

€5m

in philanthropic funding

Appointed

17

sustainability-focused
academic positions,
including an **AIB-funded
Professorship & Lectureship**

114%
increase in international
students between 2020-2025

140+
Core Faculty

45+

Professional Staff



International
students represent

62 countries

across **6**
continents



380+
corporate partners

162%
Growth in International
Postgraduate Intake

32,000+
strong alumni across

42
countries

Programmes with
93+%
Graduate Employment
Within 6 Months

Decarbonisation of the
O'Rahilly building heating
system, **reducing the
heating load by**

by **49%**
& carbon
emissions
by **40%**



Generating over
€600,000

annually in strategic
partnerships

€8M+
in Research Income

300+
Quality Journal Outputs

Complex Times, New Realities!

Cork University Business School (CUBS), University College Cork is a Triple Crown accredited global business school. We are amongst less than 150 schools globally that hold AACSB, AMBA and EQUIS Accreditation which places us in the top 1%. CUBS is the most influential and ambitious centre of business research and education in our region with increasing recognition of our impact and reach internationally.

We are a crucial part of the Irish higher education system continuing to deliver on the world stage through providing challenging, evolving and innovative programmes to our students, delivering focused internationally excellent, relevant and impactful research, with established strong links with business and industry across all sectors. 2025 marked the conclusion of our last strategic plan, the ten-year anniversary of the formal launch of CUBS and the realisation of our ambition to be a triple accredited school.

We reflect with much pride on our successes and collective achievements. We also look to the future with confidence that our foundations are strong and that these will enable us to continue evolving and

transforming as the challenges disrupting communities, economies, business and workers can only be expected to continue over the coming years. We have been investing resources in how we can better deliver positive impact to our stakeholders with our research agenda and educational provision continuing to evolve in this way. The sale of the Irish Management Institute in 2025 was a major decision and presents new opportunities for CUBS to explore and imagine a new approach to executive education and lifelong learning.

The role of AI and other digital technologies alongside desire for more flexible and lifelong learning opportunities further reflect areas of necessary critical reflection and action to ensure we make more impactful differences for our communities. Our graduates are highly sought after by employers, our programmes in high demand globally, and we see greater evidence of national and international commendation of our research. The progress to date informs our Triple Crown accredited global business school as per our new mission and vision and which we build out here to make a difference.



Our Vision

We shape leaders for a sustainable future for all

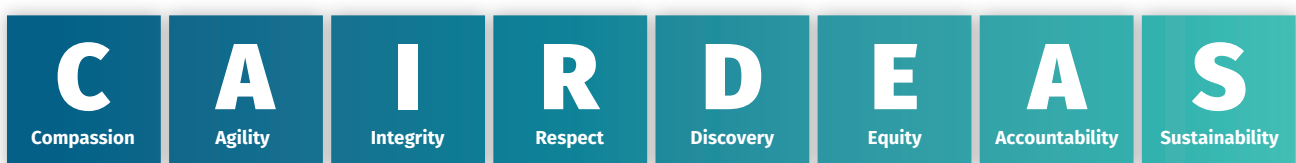
Our Mission

To cultivate an inclusive environment where knowledge thrives through impactful research and learning. Together we develop future leaders to transform business for the advancement of a more sustainable society for all

We will realise our mission through:

- Providing a dynamic, supportive, and inclusive work and learning environment that encourages the exploration and exchange of ideas, empowers our staff to reach their full potential, and prepares our students to innovate and lead responsibly.
- Producing impactful research that addresses real-world business challenges and contributes to sustainable development.
- Working within and across disciplines to foster meaningful partnerships with industry, community, and global stakeholders to enable positive change.
- Instilling a strong sense of social responsibility and ethical decision-making in our students, graduates, faculty and community.
- Regularly assessing and enhancing our programmes to meet evolving business needs and accreditation standards.

Our Values – CAIRDEAS







Strategic Commitments

In line with the strategic ambitions of UCC's **Strategic Plan Securing our Future: 2023-2028**, we have five strategic commitments in support of our mission and vision



Commitment 1: Elevating Research Quality and Impact

We will strengthen the quality and impact of our research through enhancing our focus signature areas of excellence.



Commitment 2: Curating Learning Experiences for Student Success

We will enhance our students digital, critical thinking, ethical leadership, sustainability, and entrepreneurial skills to enable them to be responsible, digital savvy leaders and global citizens.



Commitment 3: Amplifying our Global Engagement and Impact

We will amplify our global influence by leveraging our industry connections and practice integration to deepen engagement with our global alumni network and expand strategic international partnerships.



Commitment 4: Investing in our People, our Culture

We will create a global, vibrant, inclusive and high-performing workplace where diverse talented people choose to build their careers.



Commitment 5: Regenerating our Place and Footprint

We will regenerate and increase our physical and digital spaces to meet university climate action goals and enhance our flexible research, learning and working environments.



Commitment 1: Elevating Research Quality and Impact

We will strengthen the quality and impact of our research through further enabling supports to colleagues and enhancing our focus on signature areas of excellence. Drawing from a critical mass of interdisciplinary researchers, we will build our Future of Work and the Economy strategic research centre that will focus on addressing the major economic, organisational, and societal transformations shaping work, organisations, and regional development in the 21st century. We will also enhance our established contributions and research leadership aligned with UCC's signature areas of Sustainability, Food & Health, and AI & Data Analytics. We will seek to move the dial on the impact of our research whilst retaining our emphasis on quality and rigour. Building research capacity will also be a central focus with a particular emphasis on transforming our approach to doctoral education. All things considered, we will need to continue fostering international collaborations and enabling supports for staff to achieve our objectives.

Strategic Objectives

1. Grow and leverage our existing and emerging research strengths by advancing our new strategic research centre the Future of Work and the Economy.
2. Continue to build disciplinary-led research capacity of international excellence and deepen inter-disciplinary collaborations in Sustainability, Food & Health and AI & Data Analytics.
3. Expand the global impact of our research by fostering strategic international collaborations and increased success in securing prestigious national and international funding.
4. Increase the impact and dissemination of our research through staff development, strengthening industry partnerships and engagement in applied and practice-oriented projects, and advancing open research practices.
5. Transform doctoral education to increase enrolment and learning pathways.

Priority Actions

- Review and reposition research within our new Future of Work and the Economy strategic research centre, and UCC Futures framework.
- Enhance the numbers and consistency of faculty regularly publishing in leading academic journals and presenting at key international conferences.
- Develop greater funding expectations amongst faculty and enhance our targeted support mechanisms to increase successes especially in Horizon Europe, Research Ireland and the European Research Council schemes.
- Improve the numbers and consistency of academic staff taking sabbatical research leave across the school and enhance international experience.
- Create an Impact and Engagement Officer role to lead and manage the translation of research into beneficial insights for non-academic stakeholders, and to direct and support broader stakeholder engagement.
- Enhance thought leadership emanating from our research and examine the use of altmetrics to measure wider reach.
- Develop enabling structures for academic staff to more effectively build impact into their research and build a suite of internationally excellent impact case studies that showcase this.
- Develop and operationalise a doctoral education recruitment plan to build research capacity.



Commitment 2: Curating Learning Experiences for Student Success

We have an ambitious vision for an inclusive, globally connected learning experience that prepares our students to succeed in a rapidly changing world. Through the learning experiences we offer, we will enhance our students digital, critical thinking, ethical leadership, sustainability, and entrepreneurial skills to enable them be digitally savvy responsible leaders and global citizens.

We are committed to widening access to higher education and creating flexible and inclusive learning pathways. We will enhance how we incorporate meaningful international components in our students' learning journeys and continue refining our teaching and assessment approaches to meet the evolving needs of students, industry and society. To enable this, we will expand and enhance our staff capability in emerging technologies and innovative pedagogy to aid our students gain not only practical skills in AI but its responsible use.

Strategic Objectives

1.	Deliver more globally orientated programmes that enhance digital literacy e.g. AI, entrepreneurial skills and competencies in critical thinking, responsible leadership, and sustainability.
2.	Expand equitable access to third-level education for underrepresented learners and enhance student diversity on our undergraduate, postgraduate and executive MBA programmes.
3.	Reinforce our responsiveness to student voices by delivering more equitable, flexible and inclusive learning experiences, and appropriate technological integration (e.g. artificial intelligence).
4.	Strengthen the holistic development of students by introducing a coordinated suite of initiatives that promote academic success, personal resilience, and overall well-being.
5.	Refine our teaching and assessment pedagogies to ensure we evolve as educators and better meet individual, industry and societal expectations to enhance critical skills and the learning experience of students.

Priority Actions

- Systematically enhance the international components of our curriculum through greater use of international case studies, cross-cultural perspectives, and global business context development.
- Enhance how AI, critical thinking, ethics, sustainability, and responsible leadership and citizenship are embedded within our curriculum.
- Accelerate the digital literacy of students and staff with a particular emphasis on the ethical and practical use of AI.
- Expand international experiences across our undergraduate programmes through enabling greater study abroad opportunities, international placement roles, and meaningful virtual collaborations.
- Achieve greater diversity in our student population across programmes.
- Deliver a suite of evidence-based student engagement initiatives that promote personal resilience and holistic wellbeing.
- Continue the roll-out of Universal Design and Inclusive (UDL) assessment and accessibility approaches across programmes.
- Foster continuous pedagogical improvement through peer observation, collaborative teaching, and the sharing of evidence based good practice.



Commitment 3: Amplifying our Global Engagement and Impact

We will amplify our global influence by leveraging our industry connections and practice integration to deepen engagement with our global alumni network and expand strategic international partnerships.

Global relevance commences by being strongly rooted in place which we will continue to foster but enhance its reach and depth. We will grow a more internationally diverse and inclusive community by embedding practice-integrated, cross-border learning experiences that develop cultural intelligence and future-ready power skills. We believe in internationalisation because it enhances global awareness, builds cultural intelligence, and strengthens the skills and networks needed to thrive in an interconnected world.

Internationalisation gives opportunities and will continue to be central to addressing complex global challenges. We want to pursue strategic international partnerships with universities and industry to expand opportunities for students, staff and collaborators worldwide.

Strategic Objectives

1. Intensify our strategic international university and industry partnerships to deliver impactful research, student recruitment and outcomes, and industry engagement.
2. Enhance the international positioning of the school through deepening our distinctiveness for innovative industry-connected education and research.
3. Expand and diversify international perspectives across our school community through practice integrated, cross country collaborations that build essential cross cultural and transversal skills.
4. Enhance our global reputation through triple crown accreditation and strategic ranking engagement.
5. Revitalize and leverage our alumni engagement to create a more connected local and global community.

Priority Actions

- Diversify our student body in line with recruitment plan.
- Build staff supports and expectations to develop more culturally responsive pedagogy, diverse learning approaches, inclusive assessment practices and inclusive assessment practices.
- Increase the international diversity of our staff community and their international experiences and connections.
- Develop a student mobility plan that creates enhanced international experiences for all students.
- Develop and implement a tiered international partnership framework distinguishing strategic, active and associate partners.
- Integrate greater international academic and industry leader profiles within the school's governance and decision-making structures.
- Review and redesign our executive MBA and wider executive and lifelong education offering to best meet the evolving needs of professionals and industry.
- Develop and implement an alumni plan to better capture, expand and engage connections nationally and internationally to create measurable value for our community.
- Engage with local communities for societal impact.



Commitment 4: Investing in our People, our Culture

We will create a more global, vibrant, inclusive and high-performing workplace where diverse talented people choose to build their careers.

We will increase our academic capacity and global diversity through targeted staffing and building an employee value proposition that attracts and retains outstanding global talent.

We will demonstrate our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion by progressing towards an Athena Swan Silver Award.

We will continue investing in our people through enhancing our staff development framework to support growth at all career stages, encourage staff to take up roles of responsibility, and better support staff to excel in their roles.

Strategic Objectives

1. Attract and retain a more global workforce through implementing a progressive and inclusive people and culture plan.
2. Further embed our workplace culture of equality, diversity and inclusion.
3. Enhance our supportive and high-performance culture by investing more in staff development and career progression.
4. Build greater leadership capacity within our school and enhance how we recognise and support those in roles of responsibility.

Priority Actions

- Develop and secure support for an academic staffing plan aimed at reducing staff student ratios and enhancing the international diversity of our faculty.
- Build and communicate a clear employee value proposition to aid the attraction and retention of global talent.
- Continue the implementation of the Athena Swan Bronze Award Action plan and move to applying for a Silver Award.
- Implement a school wide professional and academic staff development plan that strengthens staff capability, engagement and provides opportunities to advance the school's strategic priorities.
- Build greater expectations amongst staff in taking up roles of responsibility within our school to build leadership capacity.
- Review and enhance the supports available to those taking on roles and how we recognise contributions.



Commitment 5: Regenerating our Place and Footprint

We will increase and regenerate our physical and digital spaces to meet university climate action goals and to enhance our inclusive, high-performance and flexible research, learning and working environments.

This includes advancing plans for the new on-campus business school building and refurbishing existing facilities which will have a telling impact on our journey of carbon reduction and the net zero carbon impact by 2040.

We will enhance digital infrastructure and data systems to streamline reporting, improve decision-making, and support innovative and accessible teaching and learning, and facilitate more ambitious research agendas. We will continue to be dynamic in our educational portfolio to ensure our offerings are relevant to our community, explore other revenue avenues to facilitate continued financial sustainability and success.

Strategic Objectives

1. Deliver better physical infrastructure including a new school building to enable the required quality working, learning and research environments and which delivers for UCC's carbon neutral goals.
2. Enhance our digital infrastructure to enhance the on campus and flexible experience of students, staff and our external community.
3. Continue to enhance the deployment of our finite resources for optimal value and improve the school's financial sustainability.

Priority Actions

- Advance the new business school building project to construction stage.
- Audit existing facilities to identify priority areas for refurbishment and progressively update rooms that enable more flexible, inclusive and technology-enabled teaching and research spaces.
- Develop and implement a more systematic and process driven approach to data collection and analysis that meets all reporting requirements and enables more evidence informed decision-making.
- Develop and implement a CUBS digital strategy.
- Enhance our university's position as an international thought leader for environmental sustainability.
- Review our educational portfolio to ensure its relevance for our community needs and to diversify and sustain our income streams.
- Continue to pursue philanthropic and corporate sponsorship to support the school's strategic goals and maximise the value creation for our community.
- Review spending across the school to ensure it is aligned with sustainable procurement approaches.



Cork University Business School:
Shaping Leaders for a
Sustainable Future



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