



School of Medicine Research & Postgraduate Affairs Committee

Annual Report for 2021

The mission of the School of Medicine Research and Postgraduate Affairs Committee [hence, Committee] is to promote research and approve postgraduate taught programmes and research degrees. Seed research funding programmes support basic science, translational medicine, clinical medicine and epidemiology within the School of Medicine.

A strong emphasis is placed by the Committee on the fostering of research as an integral component of education among all students and faculty within the School of Medicine (<http://www.ucc.ie/en/medical/research/committee/>)

The goal of this Annual Report is to summarise the activities of the Committee and outline future opportunities and possible threats to the workings of the Committee.

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Research Report

Lead: Dr John MacSharry (RPAC Co-Chair)

Undergraduate Research Supports

1. Registration/Travel Scholarship

Between January and August 2021, €383.00 was awarded on a competitive basis to undergraduate students to attend a range of conferences online in 2021 (see list outlined in Appendix 1.)

2. Medical Research Supplement Award

The School of Medicine, through the Committee, supports early engagement in research by undergraduate medical students through the Medical Research Supplemental Award. Applicants are funded to a maximum of €500 in any one academic year. In 2021, through the Medical Research Supplement Award, the Committee approved 3 students to a total of €760.00 with awards ranging from €150 to €500. The total sum paid out was €760.00 to 3 approved projects. The 3 topics presented by these students is outlined in Appendix 2 and all are marked with an ** as these are the applicants who progressed and received payments. The feasibility of some proposed projects was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The breadth of disciplines funded by the undergraduate Medical Research Supplemental Award endorses the ongoing commitment by the School of Medicine to fostering early career research activities for undergraduate medical students.

3. SURE Awards 2021

A total of 27 applications were reviewed by RPAC during 2021. 5 projects were approved, and 5 projects were funded to the sum of €8,000 by the College of Medicine and Health.

Postgraduate Research Supports

1. TRAP – Translational Research Access Programme – no 2021 round of funding.

This funding stream has been stopped as it was assigned as a developmental fund and not permanent and is no longer available. The TRAP award was highly successful, and this initiative has now been mirrored by the COMH Research committee in the CISA awards.

2. Postgraduate Travel Scholarship

Recipient awarded Postgraduate Travel Funds 2021 was the following:

There were no postgraduate travel fund applications received.

New Horizons Medical Research Conference

Due to the unprecedented circumstances relating to Covid-19 and limited administrative support in the School of Medicine the 8th New Horizons Medical Research Conference was cancelled for 2021.

Atlantic Corridor Medical Student Research Conference

RPAC funded the UCC attendance at the Atlantic Corridor Medical Student Research Conference. The 7th Annual Atlantic Corridor Medical Student Research Conference was hosted by NUI Galway School of Medicine on November 10th, 2021. This interuniversity undergraduate research conference provides an opportunity to enjoy presentations on a diverse range of clinical and translational medical research projects completed across two of the 'Atlantic Corridor' medical schools – NUI Galway and UCC.

This year's varied and exciting programme consisted of 12 oral and 33 poster presentations, in addition to a keynote presentation from Prof Sean Dinneen, NUI Galway, and graduate of UCC School of Medicine.

The conference concluded with a prize-giving ceremony, where two awards were distributed for best oral and best poster presentation.

The prize for best oral presentation was awarded to Ms Natalie Krakoski, UCC, for her project titled "Defining the Therapeutic Potential of Class Specific Histone Deacetylase Inhibitions in an In Vitro Neuroinflammation Model of Parkinson's Disease." This project was completed under the supervision of Professor Gerard O'Keefe, Department of Anatomy and Neuroscience.

The prize for best poster was awarded to Mr Michael Vaughan, UCC, for his project titled "Outcome Predictors for Oral Food Challenges in Children", which was completed under the supervision of Dr Ioana Maris, Clinical Senior Lecturer at Department of Paediatrics and Child Health & Consultant Paediatrician, Bon Secours Hospital Cork.

Congratulations to all UCC medical students who presented at this year's conference.



Photo 1 (L-R): Michael Vaughan (Poster Prize Winner), Dr Eileen Duggan (Medical Education Unit, UCC), Natalie Krakoski (Oral Presentation Prize Winner), Fionn Daly (Oral Presentation Prize Runner-Up).



Photo 2: UCC and NUI Galway oral and poster presenters at the 7th Annual Atlantic Corridor Medical Student Research Conference, which was held at the Clinical Sciences Institute, University Hospital Galway.

As described above RPAC has facilitated research supports at undergraduate and postgraduate level in the School of Medicine. On review of activities over the past year the Committee is concerned with the limited funds available for research stimulus and is hoping that the launch of UCC Futures may be able to stimulate further School and College funded initiatives to capture and stimulate research within the School.

Postgraduate Affairs Report

Lead: Dr Collette Hand (RPAC Co- Chair)

Summary of activities:

1. Review and approve student applications for postgraduate degrees

- Applications were reviewed monthly, now bi-weekly (see workflow changes below) and reported to the School Exec/HODs.
- There were 100 Postgraduate student applications processed by Dr Hand and Ms Madani on behalf of the Committee in 2021.

2. CRM Recruit and Changes to SoM Postgraduate Approval Workflow

A new online system for Postgraduate applications called CRM Recruit was introduced in December 2020. This system replaces the Postgraduate Applications Centre (PAC) system and offers an online, streamlined and more efficient application and approval process for new postgraduate applications.

As a result, a change has been implemented in process, moving from monthly review and approval at Executive/Head of Department meeting to bi-weekly review by Dr Hand and Ms Madani with Prof O’Leary taking Chair’s Action to approve. Applications are then processed on the CRM system. All applications are presented at Executive/Head of Department meeting for noting.

There are technical limitations of the new system whereby only 2 steps in the approval process can be automated. Therefore, Dr Hand and Ms Madani engaged extensively with the CRM project team to identify and develop an appropriate workflow modification to allow retention of the School-level approval of all postgraduate research applications. A trial of 3 months of the modified workflow (Appendix 3) was commenced in October 2020.

To date it is evident that these changes have resulted in an increase in the speed of approval of applications. The trial workflow process will be reviewed in early 2022 with the CRM project management team.



Figure 1. The numbers of postgraduate applications approved by date in 2021. The change in workflow from monthly approval to bi-weekly cycle is seen from October 2021 onwards.

Research Registration Change Requests are still processed outside of the CRM system. These requests include changes to Full Time / Part Time status, Start Date, Number of Years, Supervisors / Advisors, Thesis Title, Leave of Absence, Extension and Programme. PG Taught applications including Equivalency, Leave of Absence and Exemption applications are also processed outside of the CRM system.

Of the 100 applications processed in 2021, approximately 65 were new research apps and 35 were change requests or PG taught applications.

3. Review and approval of changes to PG modules in 2021

RPAC reviewed and approved postgraduate module changes via DMIS, programme changes and CPD changes in 2021.

4. Review and approval of new taught PG programs in 2021

- a. Postgraduate Certificate in Child Health
- b. Postgraduate Diploma in Child Health
- c. MSc in Child Health
- d. Postgraduate Certificate in Allergy and Clinical Immunology

- e. Postgraduate Diploma in Allergy and Clinical Immunology
- f. MSc in Allergy and Clinical Immunology

5. Survey of Taught Postgraduate Programmes offered by School of Medicine

In 2021 RPAC carried out a survey of the PG Taught programmes on offer by SoM in 2021/22. The objective was to identify all active courses, the numbers of students enrolled in each and to ensure up-to-date information was available on the relevant contact person(s). Also requested was information on the External Examiner for each programme to ensure that this requirement was in place. Each programme director / course contact person was emailed an excel file with fields for completion. The results were compiled and are presented in Appendix 5. This review is conducted annually since 2018.

Communication

1 Communications regarding Student Applications

Communication to all HoDs, and department administrators on the changes to the approval process on CRM.

Annual reminder of the SoM policy that no retrospective applications will be approved beyond calendar year.

Processing of applications requires engagement and discussion of applications with a number of units within the school and wider university including SoM departments, CoMH Vice-Dean for Graduate Studies, Graduate Studies Office, International Office and CRM Recruit project management Team.

2 Engagement with Postgraduate Taught Programme Coordinators

Ongoing communication of matters from UCC and CoMH through RPAC. Issues raised by this group are brought to CoMH Graduate Studies Committee as relevant. Regular communication with regard to teaching and assessment models with changing public health and UCC guidance.

3 Engagement with Chairs of Departmental Graduate Studies Committees

Ongoing communication of matters from CoMH through RPAC. Issues raised by this group are brought to CoMH Graduate Studies Committee as relevant. Regular communication with regard to support and training for research students and supervisors provided by Graduate Studies Office, Office of Dean of Graduate Studies etc. A list of the current Chairs is provided in Appendix 4.

4 College of Medicine and Health Graduate Studies Committee

RPAC disseminate information to Postgraduate programme coordinators and the Chairs of Department Graduate Studies committees on behalf of the College of Medicine and Health's Graduate Studies Committee. Dr Collette Hand & Dr Dervla O'Malley currently represent the School of Medicine on this committee.

Administrative support

The School of Medicine provides administrative support for student applications, module changes and new programs. At present, this support is provided by Szemira Madani & Brid O'Neill.

A significant number of applications require considerable administrative support before final approval, examining matters related to language proficiency, clarification of supporting documentation, amongst other metrics. The Committee notes and acknowledges that module changes, program changes and new program review, require a significant and often onerous amount of administrative support.

The sustainability and lack of knowledge sharing within the relevant administrative support structures is of concern to the Committee.

An analysis of the postgraduate activities of the Committee indicates the following:

- Changes to existing programmes, applications for new programs and modules are reviewed by the Committee and enables the early identification of problems and issuing of corrective actions.

Committee Membership

The Committee would like to recognise the contribution of all committee members in the completion of the Committee responsibilities and tasks.

Membership changes in 2021

Professor Yvonne Nolan completed her term of membership on the committee in April 2021. Professor Liam Fanning concluded his membership and position as Co-Chair of the committee in August 2021.

The committee acknowledge and extend appreciation for their considerable and invaluable contributions.

Dr Aileen Houston joined the committee as the representative of the Department of Medicine replacing Prof. Fanning.

Dr John MacSharry has taken on the role of Co-Chair and Lead for Research replacing Prof. Fanning.

Committee Members	Role
Dr Collette Hand	Co-Chair & Lead for Postgraduate Affairs
Dr John MacSharry	Co-Chair & Lead for Research
Dr Gerard Clarke	Quorate Committee Member
Dr Aislinn Joy	Quorate Committee Member
Dr Aileen Houston	Quorate Committee Member
Dr Olivia O’Leary	Quorate Committee Member
Dr Dervla O’Malley	Quorate Committee Member
Dr Colm O’Tuathaigh	Director of Stream 4
Dr Catherine Sweeney	Quorate Committee Member
Prof. Suzanne Timmons	Quorate Committee Member
Dr Orla Barry	Quorate Committee Member
Rose Mary Walsh	Medical School Manager
Rachel Hyland	Committee Member
Michael Vaughan	PG Student Representative
Ciara O’Donoghue	UG Student Representative.

Committee administrative support structures

The Committee would like to acknowledge the work of Rose Walsh (Manager, School of Medicine) and her team who worked with the committee during 2021. The Committee wishes to note with special thanks, the sterling contributions of Brid O’Neill and Szemira Madani to the successful workings of RPAC.

Summary

A broad assessment of the work performed by the Committee indicates the following:

Strength

- Commitment by the Committee membership

Opportunities

- Ongoing support for staff, postgraduate and undergraduate activities.

Risks

- Changes of administrative support staff reducing corporate/administrative knowledge.
- Delay in recruitment of administrative support staff due to central university recruitment challenges and the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Reduced research funding for stimulus within School to expand research avenues



Co-Chair of Committee and Lead for Postgraduate Affairs: Dr Collette Hand



Co-Chair of Committee and Lead for Research: Dr John MacSharry

Date: 03 February 2022

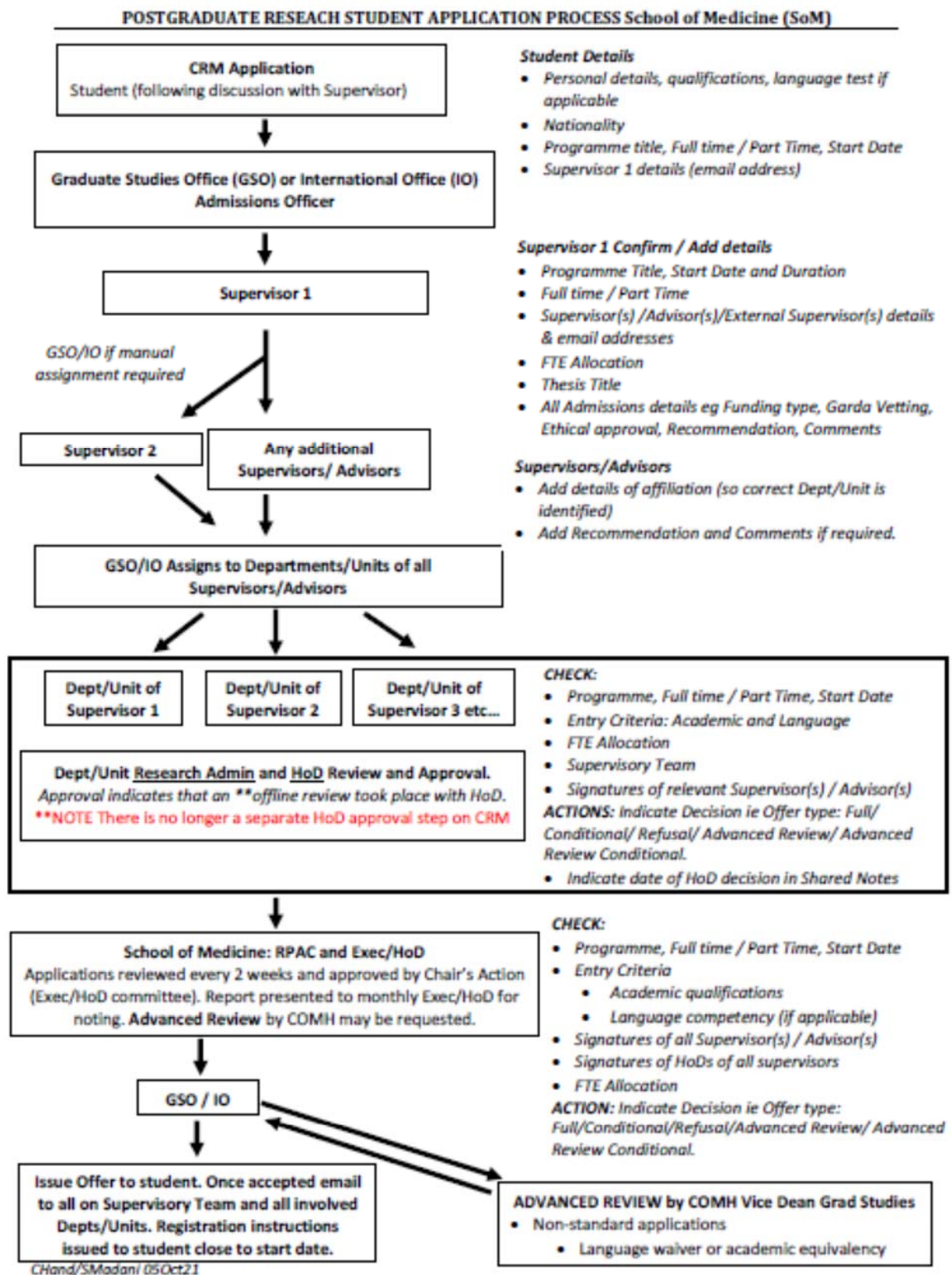
Appendix 1 Undergraduate Travel award Conferences 2021

Conference Title	Location
Fetal Neonatal Neurology Congress	Online - March 2021
FIGO World Congress of Gynecology and Obstetrics https://figo2021.org/	Online – October 2021
EAACI Hybrid Congress	Online - July 2021

Appendix 2 Medical Research Supplement award topics 2021

MEDICAL RESEARCH SUPPLEMENT AWARD TOPICS 2021
** Cost effectiveness analysis of immunotherapies in lung cancer in the Irish setting**
** Mood Changes Associated with High-Dose Corticosteroids in Adults with Glomerular Disease**
** Primary care physician's attitude towards the prescription of analgesics in elderly patients with chronic non-cancer pain.**

Appendix 3 Postgraduate Research Student Application Process SoM workflow



2021_10_05 SoM CRM PG Flowchart_CH&SM

Appendix 4 Chairs of Departmental Graduate Studies Committees (DGSC)

Department	Chair of DGS
Anatomy & Neuroscience	Dr Olivia O'Leary
General Practice	Prof. Colin Bradley
Gerontology	Prof. Willie Molloy
Medical Education Unit	Dr Deirdre Bennett /Dr Colm O'Tuathaigh
Medicine	Dr Aileen Houston
Obstetrics and Gynaecology	Dr Keelin O'Donoghue
Paediatrics & Child Health	Prof. Geraldine Boylan
Pathology	Dr Collette Hand
Pharmacology & Therapeutics	Dr Orla P. Barry
Physiology	Dr Niall Hyland
Psychiatry	Dr Ger Clarke
Surgery	Dr Jiang Huai Wang

Appendix 5 RPAC review of 2021/2022 SoM Taught PG programmes

RPAC Review of 2021/22 SoM Taught PG Programmes															
Award	Name of Programme <i>Calendar 2020-21</i>	Code	Contact person	contact email addresses	Duration	Credits	Research Credits	Predicted Recruitment as per FPP	2021/22 No. Students in Year 1	2021/22 No. of international students in Year 1	2021/22 No. Students in Year 2	2021/22 No. of International students in Year 2	2021/22 External Examiner	In 2021/22 how many years has external examiner been in place?	Notes
Masters	MCh (Surgical Science)	CKX20	Prof May Cleary Dr Aislinn Joy <i>Dept of Surgery</i>	may.cleary@gmail.com a.joy@ucc.ie maryahern@ucc.ie	2 yrs	90	30	10-18	10	3	14	4	Prof Seamus Morris	2	
Masters	MMedSc (Sport and Exercise Medicine)	CKX02	Dr Orla Duggan <i>Dept of Medicine</i>	oduggan@ucc.ie o.frawley@ucc.ie				5 - 20	13	0	5	0	Professor Nick Webborn	4	
Masters	MSc (Dementia) FT	CKX21	Dr Suzanne Timmons <i>Centre for Gerontology and Rehabilitation</i>	S.timmons@ucc.ie l.crossan@ucc.ie	1 yr	90		5 - 12	nil	0	0	0	Prof Geraldine McCarthy	4	request to allow 4 year term sent
Masters	MSc (Dementia) PT	CKX25	Dr Suzanne Timmons <i>Centre for Gerontology and Rehabilitation</i>	S.timmons@ucc.ie l.crossan@ucc.ie	2 yrs	90		5 - 12	5	0	6	0	Prof Geraldine McCarthy	4	request to allow 4 year term sent
Masters	MSc Health Professions Education	CKU16	Dr Catherine Sweeney <i>School of Medicine</i>	c.sweeney@ucc.ie				12		0	12	0	Dr Mike Eaton	3	
Masters	MSc Human Anatomy	CKX52	Dr Mutahira Lone Dr Gerard O Keeffe <i>Dept of Anatomy and Neuroscience</i>	m.lone@ucc.ie g.okeeffe@ucc.ie	1 year	90	30	20	13	3	0	0	Dr Peter Dockery - outgoing Dr Denis Barry TCD	4 outgoing and 1 for incoming	For the MSc in Human Anatomy the programme exten for AY20/21 is Prof Peter Dockery who has completed his fourth and final year as exten. The forms to appoint a new exten have been submitted and we are awaiting confirmation of his approval. Subject to this happening, our new exten is Dr. Denis Barry from TCD who will be in place 1 of this role in AY20/21/22.
Masters	MSc (Older Person Rehabilitation) FT	CKX14	Dr Suzanne Timmons <i>Centre for Gerontology and Rehabilitation</i>	S.timmons@ucc.ie l.crossan@ucc.ie	1 yr	90			3	1	0	0	Dr Graham Hughes outgoing Prof. Marie Therese Cooney	3 outgoing and 1 for incoming	Prof Hughes is finishing for the OPR programme. We have nominated Prof Marie Therese Cooney to replace him for 2021/2022 (form sent earlier this week).
Masters	MSc (Older Person Rehabilitation) PT	CKX18	Dr Suzanne Timmons <i>Centre for Gerontology and Rehabilitation</i>	S.timmons@ucc.ie l.crossan@ucc.ie	2 yrs	90			8	0	4	0	Dr Graham Hughes outgoing Prof. Marie Therese Cooney	3 outgoing and 1 for incoming	Prof Hughes is finishing for the OPR programme. We have nominated Prof Marie Therese Cooney to replace him for 2021/2022 (form sent earlier this week).
Masters	MSc Diagnostic Radiography	CKX26	Prof Mark McEntee <i>Dept of Medicine</i>	mark.mcentee@ucc.ie marguerite.reardon@ucc.ie	2 years	120	30	16	16	0	16	0	Maryanne Hardy	3	
Masters	MSc Radiation Therapy	CKX29	Prof Mark McEntee <i>Dept of Medicine</i>	mark.mcentee@ucc.ie marguerite.reardon@ucc.ie	2 years	120	30	12	7	0	0	0	Cynthia Eccles	2	
Masters	MSc in Specialist Paramedic Practice		Mr Dave Hick Prof. Conor Deasy <i>School of Medicine</i>	dhick@ucc.ie conor.deasy@ucc.ie	1yr	90		24	8	0			Dr Tony Joy	1	
PG Dip	Postgraduate Diploma in Dementia		Dr Suzanne Timmons <i>Centre for Gerontology and Rehabilitation</i>	S.timmons@ucc.ie l.crossan@ucc.ie		60			0	0	0	0	Prof Geraldine McCarthy	4	request to allow 4 year term sent
PG Dip	Postgraduate Diploma in Older Person Rehabilitation <i>[For students who entered the Postgraduate Certificate in Older Person Rehabilitation in prior to 2018/19]</i>	CKX16 (FT) CKX17 (PT)	Dr Suzanne Timmons <i>Centre for Gerontology and Rehabilitation</i>	S.timmons@ucc.ie l.crossan@ucc.ie		60			0	0	0	0	Dr Graham Hughes outgoing Prof. Marie Therese Cooney	3 outgoing and 1 for incoming	Prof Hughes is finishing for the OPR programme. We have nominated Prof Marie Therese Cooney to replace him for 2021/2022 (form sent earlier this week).
PG Dip	Postgraduate Diploma in Health Professions Education	CKU16	Dr Catherine Sweeney <i>School of Medicine</i>	c.sweeney@ucc.ie				20 - 30	0	0	20	0	Dr Mike Eaton	3	
PG Cert	Postgraduate Certificate in Health Professions' Education	CKU16	Dr Catherine Sweeney <i>School of Medicine</i>	c.sweeney@ucc.ie				30 - 50	70	0	0	0	Dr Mike Eaton	3	
PG Cert	Postgraduate Certificate in Older Person Rehabilitation	CKU06	Dr Suzanne Timmons <i>Centre for Gerontology and Rehabilitation</i>	S.timmons@ucc.ie l.crossan@ucc.ie		30			8	0	2	0	Dr Graham Hughes outgoing Prof. Marie Therese Cooney	3 outgoing and 1 for incoming	Prof Hughes is finishing for the OPR programme. We have nominated Prof Marie Therese Cooney to replace him for 2021/2022 (form sent earlier this week).
PG Cert	Postgraduate Certificate in Dementia (PT)	CKU09	Dr Suzanne Timmons <i>Centre for Gerontology and Rehabilitation</i>	S.timmons@ucc.ie l.crossan@ucc.ie		30			5	0	0	0	Dr Graham Hughes outgoing Prof. Marie Therese Cooney	3 outgoing and 1 for incoming	Prof Hughes is finishing. We have nominated Prof Marie Therese Cooney to replace him for 2021/2022 (form sent earlier this week).