PRINCIPLES

GENOVATE
Transforming Organisational Culture for Gender Equality in Research and Innovation

Guiding Principles on Gender Equality and Research excellence assessments

University College Cork (UCC) is positioned high in global University rankings. Key to sustaining this position is developing the University's potential for research excellence. Gender diversity is recognised as a propeller of research and innovation by the European Union, among others. However, international research suggests the most commonly used indicators of research excellence favour men more than women. Or in other words, unconscious bias in the assessment of research excellence may be limiting the creative potential of Universities across the globe. Thus ensuring gender equality 'in' and 'through' the University's processes of assessing research excellence is (i) the right thing to do and (ii) key to creating a competitive advantage.

These guiding principles provide guidance on this process and are designed to support the implementation of the seventh of GENOVATE's eight gender equality actions for University College Cork. It proposes the University establish a Code of Practice on Gender Equality and Research Excellence Assessments; see respective action briefing note, research note and working paper. The contents of the guiding principles are based a) an institutional gender equality assessment and b) international research undertaken by GENOVATE@UCC. They are complemented by the GENOVATE Consortium's 'Guiding Principles on Gender Equality and Diversity Competence in Research Excellence Standards'. These guidelines and related resources are accessible via The GENOVATE HUB.

DEFINING AND CONTEXTUALISING RESEARCH EXCELLENCE AT UCC.

'Research excellence' (or 'research quality') is an established criterion for assessing merit in research and academia recruitment, promotion, selection and research funding/ recognition decision-making processes. As noted in the introduction, the process and criteria used for such assessments and determinations commonly favour men over women. The table below identifies some of the relevant institutional processes in UCC that incorporate assessments of research excellence.

Relevant process	Responsible body
Staffing processes	
Recruitment, progression, promotion and retention processes.	Department of Human Resources Lecturer Promotion & Establishment Board Associate Professor Promotions Board
Sabbatical or other research leave schemes	Sabbatical leave committees
Research quality and support processes	
Internal research funding, research award and prize schemes; e.g., UCC Strategic Research Fund and UCC Research Awards Scheme College, School or Institute-level internal research funding schemes	Office of Vice-President for Research and Innovation (OVPRI) and Strategic Research Fund (SFI) Evaluation Committees Heads of College, School or Research Institute, Vice-Deans for Research, College or School-level Research Committees
Research quality review	Quality Promotion Unit and Academic Council Research and Innovation Committee (ACRIC)
Others	

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GUIDING PRINCIPLE 1

Criteria used to assess research excellence, including the weight to be attached to each criterion, should be transparent, published and subject to a periodic review.

1.1. The criteria used to assess research excellence should be based on agreed standards for assessing research excellence.

1.2 The criteria should reflect diverse forms of research excellence (see Guiding Principles 2 and 3).

1.3. The criteria, and the weight to be attached to each criterion, should be precise, transparent, accessible and published.

1.4. Criteria should be precise, specifying what quality is to be judged, for example, 'impact', 'peer-recognition', 'quantity', 'mentorship of early-career researchers', rather than simply 'high achievement' or 'satisfactory record' in relation to different activities.

1.5. Each criterion should be periodically reviewed to ensure it is relevant, verifiable, gender-proofed and time-bound.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 2

Criteria used to assess research excellence should have due regard for diversity, quality and impact.

2.1. Criteria used should include qualitative as well as quantitative indicators of research excellence. The two should be clearly differentiated. Qualitative indicators could include, for example, quality of 'best three' publications regardless of quantity.

2.2. The criteria, and the weight to be attached to each criterion, should be differentiated, identified and documented in the process of assessing research excellence (see also Guideline 1.3).

2.3. Indicators based on number and type of citations should be reviewed to ensure they are subject to the following rules: self-citation is documented; variations in bibliometric standards between disciplines are identified and duly considered in the assessment.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 3
Criteria used to assess research excellence should have due regard for non-traditional indicators of research excellence

3.1 Criteria used to assess research excellence could include, for example, originality, impact, creativity, innovation, collaboration, teamwork, mentorship and interdisciplinarity.

3.2. Where teamwork is being evaluated and/or teamwork is considered as part of an individual's assessment, the assessment should incorporate criteria such as the following:

- Documented evidence of collaborative structures including illustrations of coordination of individual and group efforts;
- Documented evidence of recognition of all team positions, roles and performance;
- Evidence and assessment of co-working and co-authoring strategies.

3.3. Develop indicators of research excellence which recognise the value to research and scholarship of strong achievement in the mentoring or supervision of early-career researchers, research students and other research roles. Indicators may incorporate duration and scope of mentoring relationships, outcomes for mentees, etc.

3.4. Ensure a balance is maintained between use of traditional criteria (such as quantity or consistency of output) and non-traditional criteria (see 3.1-3.3).

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 4
Assessments of research excellence should accommodate different types of research career paths.

4.1 Assessments of research career records should incorporate documented procedures for taking account of non-traditional career paths, and should address any disadvantages arising from these, specifically to take account of:

a. Periods of statutory leave
b. Part-time working
c. Workload and time available for research

4.2. In competitive processes, there should be guidelines on how to compare the records of candidates who have varying (standard and non-standard) career paths on the basis of a, b or c, to facilitate equal comparisons.

4.3. In benchmarking processes, there should be guidelines on how to assess the records of candidates with non-standard career paths on the basis of a, b and c above.

4.4. There should be transparent, consistent and documented procedures, available to assessors and applicants, to be followed in putting these principles into practice. Procedures could include, for example, one or more of the following:

- Periods of statutory leave are accounted for by assuming that if the candidate had not been on leave, their research performance would have been the same as during the 6-12 months (or as appropriate) prior to taking leave.
- The six-month period after returning from statutory leave is treated in the same way as the period of leave, to allow for a period of transition.
- Candidates who have been working part-time are assessed on a pro-rata basis.
- Performance of all candidates could be compared on the basis of assessments of research records relative to time available for research (taking account of a, b and c above).

4.4. The possibility of considering disadvantages that may accrue as a result of other personal individual circumstances in processes involving assessments of research excellence should be considered. For example, procedures could be developed to allow for circumstances relating to family, health or other factors. (See Research Quality Review for an example).

4.4. Where a designated time-period for assessment is specified:

- This time-period should be limited and should not over-emphasise unbroken career-long achievement in research.
- It should be adjusted for individual candidates to take account of 4.1 above.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 5
The process of assessing research excellence should have integrated human rights protections where appropriate and be subject to a periodic review.

5.1 In all processes that involve assessments of research careers, the responsible body should ensure that:

- The privacy of the member of staff being assessed is protected;

- Safe disclosure of personal circumstances is ensured (as required for accommodating disadvantage, for example, as a result of statutory leave and differences in workload); and
- Feedback is provided — in the form of reasoned justification for decisions with reference to applicable standards.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 6
Decision-making bodies responsible for assessing research excellence should be gender-balanced.

6.1 All decision-making bodies, for example, committees or selection panels responsible for assessing/evaluating research excellence should have gender-balanced membership. This includes, for example, recruitment/promotion panels, sabbatical leave committees, research support committees, review panels, evaluation committees, among others.

- All efforts to achieve gender balance (at least 40 per cent of each gender) should be documented; Reasons that gender balance cannot be achieved should be documented;
- Staff from cognate disciplines should be considered in efforts to achieve gender balance;
- Staff with relevant experience or expertise, if not necessarily in the relevant positions, should be considered for membership of panels.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 7
Membership of decision-making bodies responsible for assessing research excellence should be conditional on periodic gender equality training.

7.1 Gender equality training should be required for, or incorporated into existing required training for, members of recruitment selection committees as well as committees responsible for decisions relating to progression and promotion and sabbatical leave.

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GUIDING PRINCIPLE 8
Internal competitions for research funding or awards should be inclusive of all academic and research staff.

8.1. This may include: contract research staff, fixed-term academic and research staff, and part-time academic and research staff.

8.2. Where possible, early-career researchers should be treated separately in such processes to address disadvantage relating to career stage.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 9
Internal competitions for promotion, research funding or awards should be accessible to all eligible and widely disseminated.

9.1 All processes that require submission of individual applications or nomination of individuals (such as for promotion, for research awards, prizes or grants), should:

- be advertised and accessible to all those eligible;
- incorporate as long a time-period as possible between advertisement and closing date;
- be flagged in advance of the initial call/advertisement;
- be communicated to staff who are on statutory leave and incorporate mechanisms to enable them to apply after their return if they wish to do so.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 10
Gender ratios among applicants and successful candidates should be monitored.

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