

European Policy Statement 2014 - 2020

Overall Strategy

Internationalisation is a strategic priority of University College Cork (UCC) and is accorded a particularly high status in terms of the university's academic planning and development. This commitment to internationalisation is clearly articulated in UCC's Strategic Plan (2013-2017): "We will enhance internationalisation by strengthening our partnerships with universities of similar vision and by embedding a global perspective in all our activities."

UCC's international strategy is based on four key pillars:

- A pluralist, multicultural, yet Irish campus community nurtured through the provision of a supportive environment and a research led, education experience that prepares graduates and alumni alike for the multiplicity of global, socio-economic, political environments and cultures in which they must operate.
- A series of international strategic alliances and partnerships in targeted global areas (Europe, North America, Latin America, China, India and ASEAN) which supports and builds the university's global capacity and capability in research, teaching and learning, external engagements and in technology transfer.
- The bi-directional mobility of our campus community (students and staff) to undertake collaborative projects, research and education within other international institutions including our strategic partners.
- An international, intercultural educational ethos based on international student recruitment, internationally informed curricula contributing to a positive internationalised student experience for the largest cohort of our students as possible.

UCC is a committed participant in the Erasmus programme and currently has institutional agreements with 209 partner universities. Erasmus (and other) partner universities are selected on the basis of a number of criteria including complementarities of academic interests and disciplines, reputation, quality, personal contacts, excellence of student support services and transparency of recognition procedures.

The provision of student mobility opportunities across the EU will remain a core activity of the Erasmus programme at UCC. An increasing number of Bachelor programmes offered at the university incorporate a mandatory study or work placement abroad element. It is anticipated that the demand for mobility opportunities will continue to grow and UCC will encourage and support more students as they take up the challenge of adding an international dimension to their studies. Due to the structure of Master programmes at UCC (usually one year in duration) mobility opportunities have been limited but with a move to a semesterised system in 2014 more flexibility will be possible. With the introduction of a structured PhD model doctoral students will have the opportunity to become increasingly mobile and earn credits by engaging in study and research in partner universities or through traineeships in enterprises.

While much of the mobility to date has been to participating countries, an increasing number of students are studying or undertaking work placements in third countries in areas such as Asia and the Americas. Such mobility prepares students for the multiplicity of global, socio-economic, political and cultural environments in which they must operate when they graduate. UCC will encourage its students to take advantage of mobility opportunities to institutions and enterprises in third countries if available under the Programme. UCC will continue to welcome students at all levels from participating countries (545 in the 2012/2013 academic year) and will proactively seek out new partners in third countries which will permit the establishment of exchanges on a reciprocal basis.

UCC has placed a strong emphasis on the strategic development of staff exchanges as a means of accessing specialised expertise found in partner institutions. This approach will continue. The teaching staff element of the Erasmus programme has provided opportunities for UCC teaching staff to engage with academic counterparts and students across a range of disciplines in partner institutions. In addition, since 2007 some 59 UCC administrative staff have benefited from professional development opportunities through the staff training element of the programme. The institution will continue to engage in bi-directional staff mobility and welcomes the extension of staff training opportunities to third countries and to enterprises.

Drawing on its experience of participation in the AGRISMUNDUS and MITRA programmes under Erasmus Mundus UCC is committed to engaging with partner institutions in the provision of high quality joint degrees at Master's level. UCC's membership of the Utrecht Network (a representative European-wide network of 31

universities in 28 countries) provides the institution with a pool of reliable and experienced partners from which to draw. This will allow for the development of sustainable joint Master degrees over the lifetime of the Programme.

UCC's strategy for the organisation and implementation of international cooperation projects

UCC has a track record of collaboration and partnership to meet local/regional/national/ international needs. The institution is active in a broad range of cross-sectoral education/ research/ knowledge transfer/ enterprise/shared services/ mission based clusters. Within the new Programme opportunities to allow for the strengthening of cooperation with stakeholders such as enterprises/ local and regional authorities/ education and research institutions/ other relevant actors will be exploited.

In alignment with national strategy recent developments at UCC have seen the creation of international knowledge alliances with institutions in countries such as China, Malaysia and Singapore. Further opportunities for participation in this type of international cooperation project will be available under the Programme. Strategic decisions in this regard will be taken by the international steering group and 6 regional working groups while the International Education Office will provide technical assistance in the application stage and management support in the implementation stage.

Through its innovative teaching and learning centre and through NAIRTL (National Academy for the Integration of Research, Teaching Learning) UCC has been a leading university in developing good practice in teaching and learning. The institution is regarded internationally as a reference site for the learning outcomes approach to teaching and learning which is central to the implementation of the Bologna Process. UCC has a global reputation in the professional development of staff from international universities. The Quality Promotion Unit provides international leadership in Quality Assurance and Strategic planning. UCC has been selected as a flagship university in QA and a model for several non-EU universities under the Tempus IV Project. The institution is committed to supporting the modernisation/ internationalisation of higher education in partner countries and it will be a priority for UCC under the new Programme.

Expected impact of participation in the Programme on the modernisation institution in terms of the policy objectives intended to achieve

The original Erasmus programme, established in 1987, acted as a catalyst for the development of an international agenda at UCC. During the 25 years of Erasmus (and its successors) UCC has undergone a fundamental transformation as it has evolved from an institution operating primarily at local/regional/national levels to one which now has a clearly defined international strategy. UCC has:

- developed cooperation with partners in other EU and non-EU countries
- has promoted student and staff mobility
- has established a number of transnational joint degree programmes
- has strengthened the quality of its programmes by focusing on excellence in teaching and learning under the framework of the Bologna Process
- has forged strategic research partnerships nationally and internationally

UCC is committed to the EU's modernisation and internationalisation agenda in higher education in the context of the 5 priorities of this agenda. The institution, through the provision of professionally and internationally accredited undergraduate and postgraduate programmes across the full spectrum of disciplines, will respond to labour market needs at regional/national/EU levels. It will continue to interrogate its programme provision in the context of the need to increase attainment levels in order to provide the researchers and graduates that Europe requires to service the knowledge economy. Mobility, which enhances the employability of graduates by providing them with the skills required for the globalised economy in which they will operate, will continue to be an institutional priority. UCC is committed to the provision of joint Masters on a transnational basis and will take advantage of the opportunities available under the new programme to attract high calibre students from third countries.

The quality agenda has been a major priority for UCC and the commitment to quality assurance and excellence in teaching, learning and service provision will continue under the new Programme. The development of quality indicators, benchmarks, KPIs etc. will be supported at institutional level and UCC will implement policies under the Programme aimed at improving governance in the higher education sector. In addition, the commitment to

capacity building and cooperation with third country institutions, which was reflected in UCC's involvement in Tempus and Erasmus Mundus programmes such as AGRISMUNDUS, will continue.

UCC recognises its role and responsibility as a focus for regional, economic development and has a track record in collaborating with business/industry to drive such development. The institution will exploit complementarities between the Programme and Horizon2020, especially for the creation of knowledge alliances and strategic partnerships at regional, national and international levels.

As was the case with Erasmus and its various successors the new Programme is expected to be one of the key driving forces in relation to the continued internationalisation and modernisation of UCC.