

UNIVERSITY SPACE ALLOCATION & UTILISATION POLICY

JULY 2025

The purpose of this document is to set out policy guidelines for the allocation and utilisation of University space.

1. General Principles

Space is an expensive resource to provide in the first instance and requires ongoing maintenance, utilities, and refurbishment over its life cycle. Space must be used efficiently, allocated fairly, shared as appropriate and used for the maximum benefit of the University as a whole.

All space is owned by the University, not by individual Colleges/Units. Space is allocated to Colleges/Units based on needs at a particular time (see Section 2 for more detail). The Heads of College/Senior Officers have overall responsibility for the efficient utilisation of the space allocated to the College/Unit. All allocations are therefore “conditional” in the sense that they are subject to review should circumstances change.

The introduction of the UCC Remote Working Policy in 2025 for staff requires that space needs are optimised where possible (see section 3.3 for more detail). The policy can be found here: [Work Life Balance Policies | University College Cork](#)

Space allocation will be monitored on an on-going basis: allocations will be based on up-to date needs only and not on historical allocations. Current space allocation will be appraised as part of University Strategic Space Utilisation Group (USSUG) activities, with any future allocations and/or reconfigurations being reviewed through this group (see Section 2 for full process).

2. Process of Space Allocation

Space allocation is the responsibility of the University Leadership Team (ULT), and the Buildings and Estates Office is responsible for the management and implementation of overall University space. The ULT are assisted in this task by the University Strategic Space Utilisation Group (USSUG) that focuses on space policy, the overall efficient use of space, new capital projects and one-off requests for allocation of space. See Appendix 1 for the terms of reference and membership of the USSUG.

The allocation of space will be based on a detailed room-by-room assessment of space requirements and on relevant space indicators, such as:

- Office space/staff FTE
- Research output
- HEA Survey Results and other audits
- Relevant Space norms/metrics

2.1 Space Usage

Colleges/Units are responsible for the efficient use of space allocated to it. The Head of College/Senior Officer may devolve the day-to-day allocation of space within the College/Unit to the Head of individual School/administrative units. Requests for additional space/change of use of space from School units (e.g., laboratory to office space etc.) must be through the relevant Head of College and from other units through the relevant Senior Officer. Colleges should engage with Buildings and Estates as required, and every effort should be made to resolve the issue locally before bringing the matter to USSUG. Administration of this process will be through Microsoft Forms.

2.2 New Building Projects

The briefing process, funding availability and relevant norms inform the allocation of space for new projects. Space schedules will be informed by this policy. It is desirable that new projects, where possible, should provide some wider benefits to the University as a whole.

In planning all new Capital developments, office space will take into account the move towards more blended working arrangements, and will typically be comprised of shared offices/agile open plan space with the provision of cellular offices provided generally for key leadership roles.

2.3 Space Data

The Buildings & Estates Office will maintain a database of all university space. This will record the location and size of space and details of the current allocation. The Buildings & Estates Office will make this information available as required by Colleges/Units etc. It will also provide data for use by the Finance Office in the Resource Allocation Model which distributes estates costs based on space occupied.

3. Space Practices

3.1 Academic Scheduling Practices

- **Teaching Rooms:** All teaching rooms must be centrally allocated with no prioritisation for specific departments to maximise utilisation. Room bookings are viewable through the Resource Booker system.
- **Laboratory Spaces:** All non-centrally allocated rooms (i.e. Teaching laboratories/PC laboratories but excluding offices/dedicated research laboratories etc.) are to be booked by each home School using Syllabus Plus. All Colleges/Schools/Depts must use this system to schedule laboratory-based activities.
- **Meeting Rooms:** Larger meeting rooms (10+ capacity) will be limited to one room for large Schools/Units and otherwise shared between Schools/Units, in as far as is practicable. These rooms will also be made available to the wider UCC community through the Resource Booker facility, with local approval available to ensure accessibility for Schools/Units.

3.2 Student Space Practices

As part of space reallocation activities and during the design process for new buildings, consideration will be given to informal learning spaces for students, with an aim of providing these spaces throughout the campus. This will be in addition to more formal spaces such as provided in the Library, and spaces for self-study and group discussions.

3.3 Office Space Practices

Through the introduction of the Remote Working Policy and as part of USSUG working group activities, there will be a reduction in the number of single occupant offices across campus, as the focus moves to providing more shared office and agile collaborative open plan workspaces. Provision will be made for collaboration and social spaces as part of the overall environment.

All staff will vacate their workspace/office on retirement. Schools can allocate some shared space to retired staff under their existing allocation in exceptional circumstances (such as Emeritus Professors with active research profiles), subject to approval from their respective College.

Offices allocated to staff appointed to a leadership role for a defined period must be vacated at the end of the term, as part of the handover process.

Workspaces/offices of staff on sabbatical research leave must be made available for re-allocation for the duration of the sabbatical, unless there are particular reasons for retaining the office over the period.

3.4 Research/Postgraduate Space Practices

The requirements of full-time research/postgraduate staff will vary for laboratory and non-laboratory-based students. For non-laboratory-based students it is recommended that shared space be provided at a College or School level. Priority in the allocation of dedicated desk space should be given to Senior Research Staff. Space should be set out on a 'hot desk' basis. For laboratory-based Schools, the research/postgraduate staff will be mainly laboratory based. Write up areas should be provided adjacent to the laboratory on the same basis as above.

3.5 Specific Purpose Space Practices

- **Computer Laboratories:** The allocation of space for Computer Laboratories will be reviewed on an ongoing basis in the context of the investment required to sustain and upgrade these laboratories. The University will progressively move to maximise provision of wireless access for laptop use and reduce reliance, where possible, on fixed computer laboratories.
- **Paper Based Storage Rooms:** As a matter of principle, rooms on campus should not be dedicated for paper storage. A rigorous approach to the disposal of materials needs to be adopted and any excess storage should be located off site in specialist facilities. Storage required under the Records Management Policy should be accommodated digitally in the first instance, and through specialist off-site storage if hard copies are required. The Procurement Office has these facilities in place which can be accessed at relatively low costs.
- **Photocopying Rooms:** Photocopying facilities should be shared and provided in separate spaces as necessary.

4. Policy Review

Given the changing nature of space requirements, this policy will be reviewed annually to ensure a fair and consistent approach to space allocation.

Appendix 1

University Strategic Space Utilisation Group Terms of Reference, Membership and Working Groups

Terms of Reference

- To review the existing policy on space allocation and to recommend any changes
- To ensure optimum utilisation of space across the campus
- To assess and make recommendations to ULT on space requests
- To undertake space audits as required
- To review reports for Room Booking on utilisation/monitoring etc.
- To oversee the annual HEA Survey process and consider implications
- To consider space allocation in new Capital Projects
- To make recommendations on the allocation of space as space becomes available through the completion of capital projects or in newly acquired (purchased or rented) properties.
- To oversee work programme addressing all aspects of space utilisation as agreed by ULT (August 2024).

Membership:

- Deputy President & Registrar (Co-Chair)
- Director of Buildings & Estates (Co-Chair)
- Heads of College (or nominees)
- Corporate Secretary (or nominee)
- Vice President for Research & Innovation (or nominee)
- Vice President for Learning & Teaching (or nominee)
- Administrative Manager (Buildings & Estates)
- Advisor to the President
- Chief Financial Officer
- Students Union President (or nominee)

Working Groups

- Review of Rented Property
- HEA Survey Preparation Group
- Room Bookings Process Review
- UG Lab Scheduling on Syllabus Plus
- Teaching and Learning Implications of HEA Survey
- Research Space Review
- Academic Office Space Policy Review
- Professional Services Space Review
- Technology to Support Utilisation
- Commercialisation of Space