

Inclusive Assessment: A Whole-of-Institution Approach

id+futures

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Our Story

The Inclusive Assessment Project at University College Cork (UCC) is a work package under the id+futures project funded by PATH 4: Phase 2.

The project aims to develop a whole-of-institution approach to inclusive assessment by embedding Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles into assessment practices across the university.

The project was developed in response to the growing diversity of the UCC student population and the increasing importance of creating equitable, transparent, and flexible assessment approaches for all learners.

In 2024/25, 23% of students starting at UCC entered through Access pathways, with 2,524 students registered with Disability Support.

The project began with the appointment of Inclusion Facilitators across the four colleges, followed by a large-scale mapping exercise examining over 1,400 assessments across 477 first-year undergraduate modules.

This work highlighted significant variation in assessment volume and weighting for modules with equal credit value, widespread use of in-class tests, and inconsistencies in the level of assessment information available to students.

The project also included:

- A literature review exploring inclusive assessment in higher education.
- Benchmarking of national and international assessment approaches.
- One-to-one consultations with Module Coordinators.
- Staff and student consultation workshops and fora.
- Development and revision of a draft Assessment Policy.
- Development of Staff Guidelines for designing inclusive assessment.
- Design of programme assessment mapping tools.
- Student Guidelines to Assessment.

These activities informed the creation of an institutional approach designed to support more inclusive, consistent, and transparent assessment practices across UCC.

Key Impacts (current and envisaged)

- Established a university-wide conversation on inclusive assessment and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) through seminars, workshops, consultation fora, and webinars involving over 460 staff and students across the institution.
- Mapped 1,477 assessments across 477 first-year undergraduate modules to better understand assessment diversity, workload distribution, transparency, and the overall student experience.
- Identified key institutional challenges relating to assessment weighting, workload balance, transparency in module information, and the increasing use of in-class testing practices without consistent supports.
- Delivered 3 inclusive assessment knowledge-sharing workshops and webinars, and 7 policy consultation fora with staff and students across all four colleges.
- Engaged staff, students, professional services, and support units through institution-wide consultations, including 62 staff participants across 28 disciplines and 19 student participants across 14 disciplines in dedicated consultation workshops.
- Recorded strong engagement across research and consultation activities, including 220 participants in inclusive assessment workshops, 240 participants in staff and student policy fora, 81 participants in research consultation workshops, and 54 students participating in focus groups.
- Strengthened collaboration between Disability Support, Access UCC, Student Records and Examinations (SREO), Centre for Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning (CIRTL), Centre for Digital Education (CDE), id+futures, the Library, the Students' Union, and academic staff across all four colleges.
- Supported the development and ongoing revision of a draft Assessment Policy for UCC, the related implementation planning and institutional consultation processes.
- Created foundations for policy embedding, programme-level assessment mapping, implementation supports, and future inclusive assessment practices across the institution.

