



UCC

Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh
University College Cork, Ireland

People, Culture, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee

Terms Of Reference

People, Culture, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee

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1. Purpose

The People, Culture, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee (the Committee) is established to advise and assist the Governing Authority (GA) on all matters relating to its People. The Committee has an oversight role in the delivery of a thriving, inclusive, and high-performing university by aligning people strategies with university goals.

The Committee will ensure that the People and Culture Strategy will develop the workforce and workplace of the future, fostering a positive workplace culture, support staff wellbeing and development, ensure compliance, and help UCC attract and retain exceptional talent to achieve its mission. The Committee aims to ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion are embedded in all policies, practices and procedures.

The Committee will also ensure that the University's legal and compliance requirements in relation to People are met.

2. Authority

The Committee advises and makes recommendations to the GA on any matter within its remit. The Committee has the delegated authority from GA to fulfil its functions.

3. Membership

The membership of the Committee will be competency based and shall be appointed by the GA on the recommendation of the Nominations Committee. Any gaps in terms of skills required for the Committee may be filled by utilising section 18(4) of the Universities Act 1997 (as amended by the HEA Act 2022) which permits members external to the University to be appointed by the GA.

The Committee shall consist of seven members including:

- three external members of GA.
- two internal members of GA.
- two members external to the University with appropriate skills and competencies.

Diversity of gender, age profile, ethnicity and experience should be considered in the composition. Membership of the Committee should not be comprised of more than 60% of any one gender where possible.

One of the three external members of the GA shall be appointed by GA as the Chair and the other as Deputy Chair.

Members are required to attend all meetings of the Committee. In the event a member does not attend 3 consecutive meetings, they may be replaced.

4. Functions and Responsibilities

The Committee will on behalf of, and under the delegated authority of, the GA:

- I. Oversee the implementation of the People & Culture & EDI Strategy and plans arising from Goal Four (Our Staff, Our Culture) of the University's Strategic Plan.

- II. Oversee the development and implementation of policies and procedures related to the welfare, wellbeing and conditions of employment of its employees.
- III. Oversee the development and implementation of the University's equality diversity and inclusion plans.
- IV. Oversee compliance with relevant employment law requirements in the overall context of the University's governance framework.
- V. Oversee the development and implementation of health and safety measures, policies and procedures to ensure the safety of staff in compliance with the Safety Health and Welfare at Work (SHWW) Act and Regulations.
- VI. Oversee the People and Culture Risk Register and associated mitigation plans.
- VII. Receive an annual update on the People and Culture strategy and plans of the University's Subsidiary Companies.
- VIII. Review and approve People and Culture policies and procedures. The Chair of the Committee will notify the GA of these approvals. The Chair of the Committee, the Chief People and Culture Officer and the Corporate Secretary, acting together, will determine whether any policy presented to the Committee for approval requires the approval of the GA. Should approval of the GA be required, the Committee will recommend the policy for approval to the GA.
- IX. Perform any other duties related to these terms of reference at the request of the Chair of the GA.

5. Rights

The Committee may:

- procure specialist ad-hoc advice, subject to UCC's Purchasing Policy, at the reasonable expense of the University, subject to budgets agreed by the GA; and
- request additional reporting/information from staff/units within the University, or its subsidiary Companies under the remit of the University to enable it to perform its duties and responsibilities.

6. Conduct of Business

The Committee shall meet at least six times per year, usually three weeks in advance of a GA meeting. GA may ask the Committee to convene further meetings to discuss particular issues on which they seek the Committee's advice, or the Chair of the Committee may convene additional meetings if they deem it necessary.

A minimum of four members of the Committee will be present for the meeting to be deemed quorate. A duly convened meeting of the Committee at which a quorum is present shall be competent to exercise all or any of the authorities, powers and discretions vested in or exercisable by the Committee.

At any meeting the Chair, if present shall take the chair. If the Chair is not present, the role of the Chair shall be assumed by the Deputy-Chair and the meeting can proceed.

The following should attend for all or part of Committee meetings as required:

- Chief People and Culture officer; and
- Chair of the Equality Committee;

The following may attend for all or part of meetings at the invitation of the Committee:

- University Officers;
- Staff; or

- Students' Union representatives.

The Chair of the Committee will meet with the Chair of the GA at least twice per year.

The Regulation on the Conduct of GA Business will apply to the conduct of business of the Committee.

Private Sessions, meeting time without executives present, should be scheduled on the Committee's work programme to be a standing item at the start or the end of the agenda of every meeting and utilised if requested by any Committee member.

The Committee will meet with other relevant Committees of GA as required on an annual basis.

Committee members and any other person in attendance at meetings of the Committee will be expected to treat all information, commercial or otherwise with due confidentiality.

The Office of Corporate and Legal Affairs shall provide the Secretariat to this Committee.

7. Information Requirements

The Committee will be provided with all information to enable it to discharge its duties in a timely manner and to ensure that decisions are made based on robust data.

The Committee will also be provided with information/reports/presentations on:

People and Culture

- Strategic updates on People and Culture initiatives
- Culture evolution
- People and Culture Policies and Procedures
- Employee Relations updates

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

- Key developments in EDI
- Work of the Equality Committee
- Athena SWAN progress and submissions
- Gender Pay Gap Reporting

Workforce Wellbeing and Engagement

- People Wellbeing & Development;
- Health & Safety Action Plan;
- Employee relations (e.g. grievances, disciplinaries)

Talent and Performance Management

- Leadership development
- Performance management
- Strategic Workforce Planning
- Talent metrics and workforce dashboards
- Promotion Scheme Data

Any other matters which the Committee require e.g. Quality Enhancement plan, Quality Enhancement plan, Internal Audit Reviews as they arise

Management shall also ensure that matters of material concern that are relevant to the Committee's responsibilities are brought promptly to the attention of the Committee.

In addition to the above, the Committee will be provided with any other information that may be pertinent to the functioning of the Committee.

8. Conflict of Interest

Committee members shall take personal responsibility to declare any potential conflict of interest arising in relation to any items on the agenda or tabled during Committee meetings.

Where a conflict of interest arises, a Committee member shall bring this to the attention of the Chair and where necessary absent themselves from the meeting for the duration of the discussion and shall not take part in any decisions in relation to the matter in question. Similar arrangements apply in relation to relevant meeting documentation where such documentation should not be made available to the Committee member, once a potential conflict of interest has been declared. This shall be noted in the minutes of the Committee meeting.

9. Terms of Office

The period of office for members of the Committee shall be for a four-year period for a maximum of two consecutive terms (eight years).

10. Reporting

The Chair of the Committee will submit a report to the GA one week prior to each GA meeting. This will include:

- any recommendations for decisions to be approved by GA, on matters considered by the Committee since the previous meeting of the GA and the basis for such recommended decisions;
- any other issues of importance arising from the discussions at the Committee which should be brought to the attention of the GA.

11. Committee Review

The Committee will review these terms of reference at least annually and will make recommendations on updating or amending them to the GA as appropriate.

The Committee shall periodically review its own effectiveness as a Committee of the GA Annually.

12. Version History

Version	Changes	Date	Approved by
1		18/04/2024	Governing Authority
2	Change to Functions & Responsibilities – Committee to approve People & Culture policies and procedures and subsequently notify GA of approvals	21/10/2025	Governing Authority