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Quad, Clock Tower  
(Photo by Tomas Tyner, UCC)

## WELCOME

Welcome to the inaugural issue of OVPTL News, the quarterly newsletter of the Office of the Vice-President for Teaching & Learning (OVPTL).

The Office of the Vice-President for Teaching & Learning supports UCC staff in delivering the UCC strategic goal of research-inspired teaching and learning. Our office has recently undergone a period of intense change, which was required to deliver the services necessary for a modern university in a rapidly changing learning landscape. The OVPTL is responsible for a range of activities, including the provision of staff development opportunities for the enhancement of teaching and learning, the provision and support for technology enhanced learning, the Quercus talented students programme, the development of policies and support for outward facing Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and the support of Adult Continuing Education (ACE).

The focus in recent months has been to understand how each of these activities can be optimised and to evolve the support structures to enable the best teaching and learning possible in collaboration with individual colleagues, schools and colleges across the university. The key priorities in the past year have been to build our digital capacity which was greatly informed by our staff digital literacy survey this time last year, to launch UCC online, to increase our online offerings, to launch the Quercus talented students programme, and to develop our teaching and learning centre, now entitled CIRTl - Centre for Integration of Research, Teaching

& Learning. The activities at ACE continue to grow and details can be found at [www.ucc.ie/en/ace/](http://www.ucc.ie/en/ace/).

This is the beginning of a programme of work which will continue to support teaching and learning at UCC. We are currently undertaking an evaluation of teaching space across the university as part of a review of the way in which we provide space. We are also developing a policy on outward facing CPD which has been constructed over the last number of months. This will be informed *inter alia* from the university wide workshop held in May 2015, which was attended by a large number of colleagues from across the university. We have other ambitious plans which we will roll out over the coming months and I look forward to supporting you in creating the best teaching and learning experience for students at UCC.

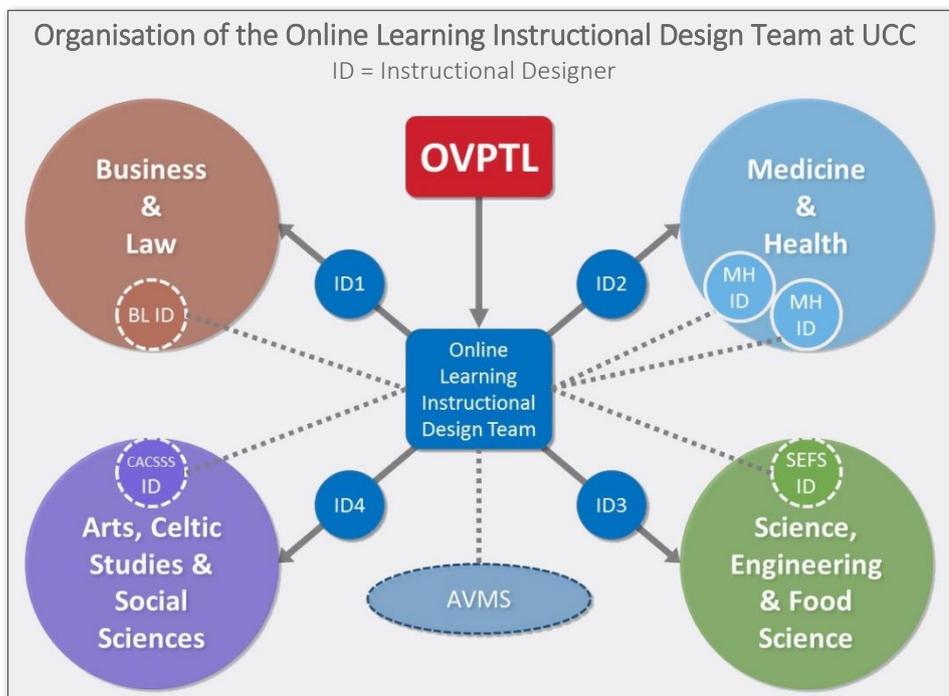
The mission of the Office of the Vice-President for Teaching & Learning is to encourage a research enhanced teaching and learning environment for the benefit of our staff and students. I hope that you will enjoy our first newsletter and I hope you learn more about some of the great things that are going on in teaching and learning at UCC.

**Professor John O'Halloran**  
Vice-President for Teaching & Learning  
@johbees

Find out more about us at [www.ucc.ie/teachlearn](http://www.ucc.ie/teachlearn)

## DIGITAL LEARNING AT UCC

Digital learning refers to all learning that is facilitated through the use of information and communications technology. This ranges from the use of technology, as part of a blended approach, to learning that is delivered entirely online. The field of digital learning is developing at a dramatic pace at present as universities seek to exploit the benefits of online delivery for students. Some of the documented benefits include improved access and flexibility, and greater personalization of content.



The Online Learning Instructional Design Team (OLID) at the OVPTL supports UCC staff in developing and offering online content, the development of blended modules and programmes and the innovative use of learning technology. The new academic year will see 18 blended/online courses being supported by the OVPTL, with numbers of online learners increasing. The OLID team has recently been restructured to adapt to the changing requirements at UCC. The job title of Learning Technologist has changed to Instructional Designer (ID) and a diagram of the organisational structure of this team is provided (left) for your information. If you would like to find out how the OVPTL can help you to develop online learning content, please contact UCC's Online Learning Project Manager, Tom O' Mara at [tom.omara@ucc.ie](mailto:tom.omara@ucc.ie).

## UCC Online

2015 has been a busy year for the OVPTL, as we continue to work with academic staff to develop online and blended learning courses at UCC. Up to date information in these courses is available through the newly updated web portal <http://www.ucc.ie/en/online>. The table below lists the online courses at UCC.

### Online courses at UCC

BSc Credit Union Business	MA Digital Cultures	MA Strategic Studies
MSc Co-operative & Social Enterprise	MComm Government Public Policy	PG Cert Oncology Nursing
MEngSc Marine Renewable Energy	PG Dip Health Economic Practice	PG Dip/MSc Gerontological Nursing
MPH Public Health	PG Cert in T&L in Higher Education	PG Cert Medical Surgical Nursing
PG Cert Health Protection	MA Work Organisation Behaviour	PG Dip Oncology Nursing
MSc Occupational Health	Masters in TEL for Health	PG Cert Gerontological Nursing
MCh Surgical Science	MA in Gaelic Literature	MSc Clinical Pharmacy
MSc Mathematical Modelling & Scientific Computing	MA Digital Music & Media Composition	MSc Pharmaceutical Technology & Quality Systems



UCC has recently signed a strategic collaboration with internationally recognised educational services company Wiley Global Education, ramping up our strategy to build its eLearning capacity. Operational planning has started on the delivery of the enhanced Masters in Public Health programme which will commence in May 2016. A number of other programmes, including MScs in Occupational Health, Nursing and Business and a BSc Nursing (Top Up), are also in development.

## IN PROGRESS: TRANSITION OF IONAD BAIRRE AND NAIRTL TO CIRTL

UCC has a strong tradition of integrating the core activities of research, teaching and learning. This has earned the institution national and international recognition. Within UCC, staff development in teaching and learning started in earnest in 2000 when government grants became available. The resulting activities demonstrated a need for formal accredited courses, which began in 2004. By 2006, as a natural development, Ionad Bairre, The Teaching and Learning Centre, was established. The approach of the Centre for almost a decade has been one of scholarly enquiry into teaching and learning practice.



The National Academy for the Integration of Research Teaching and Learning (NAIRTL) was funded by the HEA between 2006 and 2012, with UCC as the lead partner in this national collaborative project.



The goal of NAIRTL was to enact a series of activities and initiatives to support students, researchers and staff to implement and advance effective research-informed teaching and learning practices throughout the Irish Higher Education sector. This was achieved through staff development initiatives such as national conferences, small grants, and teaching excellence awards. NAIRTL is currently transitioning from an academy to a national network,

linked through contact points in each of the partner institutions.

Looking to the future, and continuing evolution, the approaches of NAIRTL and Ionad Bairre are being combined to form a new centre in UCC. This is the Centre for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning (CIRTL). This new centre will continue to provide a range of staff development events and support the professional needs of staff who strive to give students the very best learning experiences. The UCC CIRTL Manager will act as a custodian of the NAIRTL resources and website, ensuring that these remain available, and will also be the UCC contact point for the new national network.

Find out more about CIRTL at [www.ucc.ie/teachlearn/cirtl](http://www.ucc.ie/teachlearn/cirtl)

## TEACHING EXPERT AWARDS 2015

### Learning Impact Awards

National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching & Learning call for nominations for the Teaching Expert Awards is now open.

A maximum of 5 nominations can be put forward by UCC. All nominees must be nominated by a member of staff who is in a formal position of responsibility (e.g. Registrar, HOD, HOS or VP of Teaching and Learning or equivalent), and endorsed by the President of UCC.

Further information can be found at <http://www.teachingandlearning.ie/priority-themes/learning-impact-awards/teaching-expert-awards/>

## NATIONAL FORUM FUNDING FOR DIGITAL LEARNING PROJECTS

The National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching & Learning has recently launched a call for proposals under its 'Driving Enhancement of Digital Capacity for Impact in Irish Higher Education' initiative. University College Cork secured funding for a number of projects under the 2014 call for proposals, and hopes to be successful again this year. This fund aims to stimulate collaboration and innovation across the Higher Education sector in the area of digital enhancement, with an emphasis on discipline-specific pedagogies for the enhancement of learning. Projects will run for 18 months from January 2016, must be led by Heads of Colleges, Schools or Departments, and have a budget of between €100,000 and €200,000. The fixed deadline for the submission of the first round proposals is September 9th 2015 and the full proposal submission

date is 4th November 2015.

The Office of the Vice-President for Teaching & Learning has overall responsibility for UCC's response to this call and will coordinate submissions from UCC staff. As individual Higher Education Authorities are limited in the number of projects for which they can apply, a call for Expressions of Interest has been issued by the Office of the Vice-President for Teaching & Learning. For further information contact [vp-teachingandlearning@ucc.ie](mailto:vp-teachingandlearning@ucc.ie) or visit the dedicated OVPTL research project web page at: [www.ucc.ie/en/teachlearn/tel/research](http://www.ucc.ie/en/teachlearn/tel/research)



## QUERCUS NEWS

The Quercus Talented Students Programme (<http://www.ucc.ie/en/quercus>) is now in its second year and a number of our scholars are writing blogs about their experiences from as far afield as Boston and Shanghai, which you can read at <http://quercusblog.ucc.ie/>.



*Ciara O'Connell in action in the recent intersites football*

The 2015 World University Games were held in Gwangju, South Korea from 3rd to 14th July 2015. The Irish delegation to the Games was led by Head of Delegation Cathy Gallagher, and we are delighted that Quercus Sports Scholar, Ciara O'Connell, represented Ireland on the women's soccer team.

Ciara was a member of the Irish U19 women's team that qualified for the European Championships for the first time last summer in Norway, reaching the semi-final stage. The Irish women's football team ended their World University Games campaign with a penalty shoot-out victory over South Africa in the decider for places 13-14, on Sunday July 12th.

Quercus Scholar Jacqui Walsh, a student of Asian Studies at UCC, was one of 35 young people who won EIL (Experiment in International Living) Travel Awards in 2015. The EIL Travel Awards allow people the opportunity to apply for a fully funded cultural adventure and volunteering opportunity to locations such as China, Japan, Ecuador, Mexico and Thailand, among others. The aim of the EIL Travel Awards is to support people who have a history of voluntary involvement in their school, college or community. The Travel Awards are for people who have demonstrated, or who believe they can demonstrate, leadership potential. Jacqui has been an active citizen for many years; she spearheaded the 'Forget-me-not' campaign, a school project that looked for missing persons, and went on to be involved in the establishment of the National Missing Persons Day in December. Jacqui is in Shanghai for 10 weeks on an internship with the China Next Foundation where she is working on community development and capacity building projects, while also studying Mandarin.



*Quercus scholar Jacqui Walsh*

## INTERNATIONAL TEACHING & LEARNING CONFERENCE AT UCC



*Photographed at the inaugural European Conference on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, EuroSoTL2015, held in UCC, were L-R: Dr Catherine O Mahony, Dr Marian McCarthy, Dr Bettie Higgs, Dr Sandra Irwin and Professor John O Halloran, Vice-President for Teaching & Learning, UCC. (Photo by Tomas Tyner, UCC).*

The Office of the Vice-President for Teaching & Learning was proud to host EuroSoTL2015, the inaugural European Conference on the scholarship of teaching and learning. This was a regional event of The International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching & Learning (ISSOTL). Through its annual global conference (most often held in North America), the Society fosters inquiry into teaching approaches and student learning in Higher Education, and encourages dissemination of findings.

This event was the first European regional event of the Society and attracted more than 300 delegates who enjoyed two and a half days of

stimulating debate on many aspects of teaching and learning in Higher Education, with more than 100 oral presentations and 43 poster presentations. Delegates travelled from not only Europe, but from 22 countries worldwide, as far afield as New Zealand, South Africa, Australia and Western Canada. All had a common focus – to improve student learning. The delegates included a number of postgraduate and undergraduate students who presented the results of their own emerging research into challenges in teaching and learning. During the conference, keynote speakers and senior scholars shared their expertise with those new to the field, and encouraged open dialogue.

## INNOVATIVE LEARNING SPACES

Ongoing changes in pedagogy and developments in digital technology are changing the requirements of an effective learning environment. Teaching and learning is moving from the exclusively passive learning of the traditional lecture theatre, which is focussed on information delivery, to include collaboration and interaction in an active learning process.

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*We know that space, whether physical or virtual, can have a significant impact on learning.*

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We can improve the learning experience and promote student engagement by optimising space, technology and pedagogy. We also know that there are empirical connections between learning spaces and teaching practice. Recent advances in this field have shown that the effectiveness of learning spaces in universities can be improved through effective planning and design.

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*The most meaningful and impactful learning experience is achieved in classrooms that incorporate flexible space and innovative technology.*

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The ease of reconfiguration of furniture and technology are both critical in this regard, as is the opportunity for greater interaction. In modern educational architecture there is increasing focus on flexible learning

spaces, more use of blended learning and more personalised learning opportunities.

An impressive example of a bespoke learning hub is one recently built at Nanyang Technological University (NTU) in Singapore which will open its doors to students in August 2015. The new Learning Hub stems from a simple idea: that people learn best from one another. By bringing students together in a university environment, they can collaborate to develop their thoughts further and faster than would be possible alone. This building will push the frontiers of innovation in learning and will serve a public university with 33,000 students. The learning hub at NTU houses 56 smart classrooms complete with flexible clustered seating for small group discussions, multiple LCD screens and wireless communication tools. Classrooms support the “flipped classroom” where knowledge transfer from teacher to students takes place before class through various online materials which students can access in their own time. Class time is then used for active engagement. Clustered seating is designed for students to discuss their ideas in small groups, before sharing and presenting their ideas with the rest of the class. This building was designed on the premise that in the information age, the most important commodity on a campus is social space to meet and to engage in collaborative learning.



*Learning Hub at Nanyang Technological University (Photo by Hufton and Crow)*

The Office of the Vice-President for Teaching & Learning has recently embarked on a journey to better understand how we provide learning space at UCC. The first in a series of related events, a workshop on the Future University took place on May 14<sup>th</sup> 2015. Further to this workshop, we are currently undertaking a survey of teaching space across the university to help us collect the data and information for the development of policies and investment proposals that are evidence based so that our students and staff can have the best teaching space to create a rich learning environment.

## CIRTL SUMMER SCHOOL 2015

Staff from Anhui University of Finance and Economics (AUFE) in China are visiting UCC to participate in a four week Summer School from July 21 to August 14, 2015. This programme is coordinated by Dr Marian McCarthy, CIRTL, in collaboration with the Language Centre and the International Education Office. During their time at UCC these Chinese scholars will take two foundation courses: one on Academic English, and the other on Integrating Research, Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, while also enjoying guest lectures on a variety of topics from Quality Assurance to PhD Supervision. The Language Centre will provide a programme of cultural visits and events to enhance the visitors' experience. The group will also network with colleagues from the School of Economics and from the School of Asian Studies.

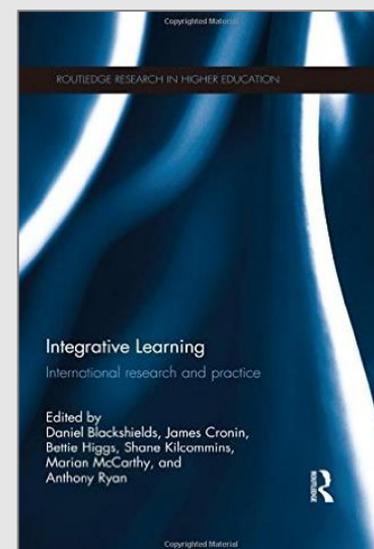


*The group are pictured at the Opening Ceremony in the North Wing Council Room, with Prof. John O' Halloran, Vice-President for Teaching & Learning (centre) who opened the Summer School. Members of staff present were (L-R) Ms Carolyn O' Brien, with colleagues from the Language Centre, Dr Marian McCarthy, Dr Bettie Higgs, CIRTL, with Ms Emma Connolly, International Office, Ms Mary Clohessy, CIRTL and Mr Terry Tang, (right -2nd row).*

## Scholarship of Teaching & Learning BOOK LAUNCH

A number of UCC staff have come together to edit a new book on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning which has recently been published by Routledge, the world's leading academic publisher in the Humanities and Social Sciences. *Integrative Learning: International Research and Practice*, edited by academics from University College Cork and the University of Limerick, includes contributions from international authors and explores the areas of teaching, learning and educational research.

*Integrative Learning* draws on international research and vast studies to provide the reader with the resources to ensure access to a unified learning experience. The book discusses conceptual and technical tools necessary for facilitating integrative learning across a range of disciplines as well as providing learning pedagogies and considers integrative learning in the context of the relevance of Higher Education in the complexity and uncertainty of the 21st century. It will appeal to academics and researchers in the field of Higher Education, as well as those generating Higher Education curriculums. ISBN-13: 978-0415711074



## CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR UCC STAFF

CIRTL offers the following part-time certified programmes to staff which are designed to give teaching staff, and postgraduate students who teach, an opportunity to develop their teaching in support of student learning.

### **Online Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (30 Credits)**

TL6003: Theories of Teaching, Learning and Assessment

TL6004: Practice Approaches to Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Application deadline: 15<sup>th</sup> August 2015. Further details: <http://www.ucc.ie/en/ckb02>

### **Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (30 Credits)**

TL6005: Disciplinary Approaches to Teaching and Learning in Higher Education

TL6006: Diversity in Student Learning

Teaching staff who successfully complete the Postgraduate Certificate can progress automatically to the Diploma.

Calendar: <http://www.ucc.ie/calendar/postgraduate/PGDiplomas/arts/page28.html>

Book of Modules: <http://www.ucc.ie/modules/descriptions/page085.html>

### **Masters Degree in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (60 Credits)**

TL6001: Research Methodologies Relating to Teaching and Learning in Higher Education

TL6002: Teaching and Learning Dissertation

Calendar: <http://www.ucc.ie/calendar/postgraduate/Masters/arts/page80.html>

Book of Modules: <http://www.ucc.ie/modules/descriptions/page085.html>

Application deadline: 1<sup>st</sup> September 2015. Further details: <http://www.ucc.ie/en/cke86>

### **Courses offered to Postgraduate Students:**

PG6003 Teaching and Learning for Graduate Studies (5 credits): <http://www.ucc.ie/modules/descriptions/PG.html#PG6003>

PG6012 Scholarly Approaches to Teaching & Learning in Higher Education (5 credits): <http://www.ucc.ie/modules/descriptions/PG.html#PG6012>

CIRTL also offers a bespoke course for research staff: [www.ucc.ie/en/teachlearn/cirtl/staff/researchers/](http://www.ucc.ie/en/teachlearn/cirtl/staff/researchers/)

Information on CPD courses for UCC staff can be found at <http://www.ucc.ie/en/teachlearn/cirtl/staff>.



Dr Séamus Ó Tuama

Dr Séamus Ó Tuama, Director of Adult Continuing Education (ACE) at UCC, has been nominated by EUCEN (European University Continuing Education Network) as its Ambassador at the 64th Annual Conference of the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education (AAACE) to be held in Oklahoma City, USA from November 15th – 20th. The theme of this year's conference "*Evolutions and Revolutions in Adult Learning!*" encompasses the vision and mission of AAACE. AAACE is dedicated to the belief that lifelong learning contributes to human fulfilment and positive social change.

Further information at <http://www.aaace.org/2015-conference>.