

University College Cork

2026

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**Annual Quality Report (UCC)**  
**Reporting Period 2024-2025**

University College Cork

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**Annual Quality Report (UCC)**  
**PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM**  
**Reporting Period 2024-2025**

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## PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM

Table 1

Table 1 Mapping of ESG (2015) to QQI QA Guidelines (QAG)				
AQR Part A Section	QQI QAG Core Sub-section No.	QAG Core Sub-section Title	ESG Standard No.	ESG Standard Title
1.0 - Internal QA Framework	2.1	Governance and Management of Quality	1.1	Policy for Quality Assurance
	2.2	Documented Approach to Quality Assurance		
2.0 - Programme Development and Delivery	2.3	Programmes of Education and Training	1.2	Design and Approval of Programmes
4.0 - QA of Research Activities and Programmes			1.9	On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes
8.0 - Monitoring and Periodic Review				
5.0 - Staff Recruitment, Development and Support	2.4	Staff Recruitment, Management and Development	1.5	Teaching Staff
2.3 - Teaching, Learning and Assessment	2.5	Teaching and Learning	1.3	Student-centred Teaching, Learning and Assessment
	2.6	Assessment of Learners		
3.0 - Learner Resources and Supports	2.7	Supports for learners	1.6	Learning Resources and Student Support
6.0 - Information and Data Management	2.8	Information and Data Management	1.7	Information Management
7.0 - Public Information and Communication	2.9	Public Information and Communication	1.8	Public Information
8.0 - Monitoring and Periodic Review	2.10	Other Parties Involved in Education and Training	1.9	On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes
9.0 - Details of Arrangements with Third Parties			1.2	Design and Approval of Programmes
2.0 - Programme Development and Delivery	2.11	Self-evaluation, Monitoring and Review	1.9	On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes
8.0 - Monitoring and Periodic Review			1.10	Cyclical External Quality Assurance
4.0 - QA of Research Activities and Programmes	QAG for Providers of Research Degree Programmes			

# Introduction and Overview of Institution

This is the AQR for University College Cork for the reporting period **1 September 2024 - 31 August 2025**. It is to be submitted by **Friday, 27 February 2026**.

The AQR has been approved by the **University Leadership Team** on the recommendation of the **Quality Enhancement Committee**.

**University College Cork** (*Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh*) is a constituent university of the [National University of Ireland](#) and located in Cork, Ireland. University College Cork, five-time winner of the Sunday Times Irish University of the Year and Ireland's premier university for sustainability, has a tradition of independent thinking stretching back over 170 years. We are one of Ireland's leading universities with amongst the highest postgraduate or graduate employment rates of 94% for undergraduate studies and 95% for postgraduate studies.

Proud to be ranked in the top 2% of universities in the world, a degree from UCC ensures that graduates are 'World Ready and Work Ready'. UCC is unrivalled in the quality of its academic [programmes](#) and [research](#), its collaborations with [industry](#), the beauty of its campus and its vibrant [student life](#), enjoyed by over 22,000 students from over 104 countries. With over 3,400 students and one third of our staff from overseas, UCC is a true place of international learning.

# 1.0 Internal QA Framework

## 1.1 Governance and Management of Quality

### Quality Enhancement Policy

The University has a published [Quality Enhancement policy](#) which guides its activities. University College Cork is committed to excellence in serving learners, stakeholders and its wider community through education, research and contribution to society nationally and globally.

Enhancement is a cornerstone of UCC's quality culture promoting the success and reputation of the university through an active commitment to critically assessing and refining institutional activities to better meet the diverse needs of learners, stakeholders and wider society. Strategically aligned with UCC's vision, mission, values and institutional goals, the university's quality enhancement processes form an ongoing cycle of systematic self-evaluation, and engagement with peer review to derive outcomes that help augment and develop the quality of the University's academic and service activities through effective implementation pathways and the sharing of good practice.

The University's quality enhancement approach is committed to:

- Building and embedding a culture of quality which is engaged, reflective and connected
- Working collaboratively to develop effective evaluation approaches that allow critical reflection on achievement of strategic goals and objectives and an appraisal of the known and anticipated needs of stakeholders
- Engaging students as active partners in the quality enhancement process to embed a student-centred approach
- Developing quality processes that promote creativity, excellence and innovation
- Using peer review as an important reference point for confirming and developing the quality of the University's activities
- Undertaking institutional reflection on the outcomes of quality review processes to contribute to ongoing institutional planning, resource allocation and institutional development
- Ensuring that quality processes facilitate the sharing of good practice internally and externally
- Developing our evidenced-based approach to quality enhancement informed by relevant research and good practice nationally and internationally.

The quality assurance and enhancement policy at UCC is informed by international best practice and has regard to the requirements of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act, 2012 (Revised 2019) and with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (2015) as well as the Higher Education Authority Act (2022, Section 76).

### Governance of Quality: Quality Enhancement Committee

The [Quality Enhancement Committee](#) (QEC), chaired by the President, reports to the University Leadership Team (ULT) and annually to Governing Authority. The QEC's role is to support the University's mission and strategy for excellence in learning, research and related services through developing and embedding a culture of quality enhancement based on the outcomes of robust expert peer review and informed by ongoing analysis of key quality indicators. The Committee has oversight and acts as a reference point for the work of the Quality Enhancement Unit.

In fulfilling its remit, the Quality Enhancement Committee advises ULT and Academic Council on key quality issues arising with implications for strategy or policy development. It provides an [Annual Report to Governing Authority](#) to meet the requirements of the Universities Act 1997 and the Qualifications and Quality Assurance Act 2012. Governing Authority refers the report to Academic Council for consideration and review of relevant issues.

### **Management of Quality**

The Director of Quality Enhancement reports to the President and is responsible for planning and implementing the University's periodic quality assurance and enhancement procedures and related quality projects University-wide. The Director is supported by a team of professional staff who work with oversight from the Quality Enhancement Committee to ensure that quality processes support the University's strategic mission and are fit for purpose. Overall, this helps to ensure that the University's quality processes are informed by, and developed in light of, international good practice for quality in higher education policies for the European Higher Education Area including, Bologna, the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG) and national policies and procedures as outlined in Quality and Qualifications Ireland's (QQI) Guidelines. The Director of Quality is a member of Academic Council, Academic Board and its sub-committees to ensure that relevant quality considerations arising from internal or external quality processes are taken account of.

### **Quality Assurance and Enhancement policies and procedures**

University-wide, there are a range of quality policies and procedures which link to, and support quality assurance and enhancement of the University's activities. These approaches are based on the principles of expert external peer review, external stakeholder engagement, internal stakeholder engagement and robust internal approval, review and monitoring approaches. Such approaches are exemplified by:

- Periodic quality review by external peers of academic, support and research activity;
- External examiner system and reports;
- External stakeholder engagement in the design and review of educational provision;
- Student engagement and participation in University decision-making processes and student representative structures within programmes;
- Student participation as reviewers in periodic quality review;
- Policy and procedures for programme, module approval and curriculum review;
- Policy and procedures for approval, review and enhancement of doctoral programmes;
- Procedures for the appointment and on-going professional development of staff;
- Internal monitoring, review and evaluation of key quality processes through the University's Academic Council committee structure;
- Strategic review and monitoring of key outcomes of quality processes through the University Leadership Team.

Implementation of these approaches allows the University to assure the quality and standards of its awards as specified by the Qualifications and Quality Assurance Act 2012.

### **Periodic Quality Review**

The University's periodic quality review process is comprehensive of education, research and support areas and follows a periodic seven-year cycle. The overall quality review process operates in accordance with the expectations of the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality (ESG). Quality assurance and enhancement policy at UCC is informed by international best practice and has regard to the requirements of the Qualifications

and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act, 2012 and with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (2015). UCC's quality [guidelines](#) are comprehensive and include our objectives, principles and process.

The key components of the periodic quality processes include review methodologies for: academic quality, research quality, support quality, thematic and topic specific issues. Review methodologies are based on self-assessment and an expert assessment model involving external peer review, national and international benchmarking and analysis of good practice. They are underpinned by key data and indicators emerging from internal approval, review and monitoring mechanisms. Periodic review takes account of national and European guidelines as well as good practice in higher education quality. The methodology for the periodic review process follows the 4-stage process of:

- Self-evaluation
- Appointment of a peer review panel and site visit
- Publication of a peer review panel report
- Follow-up and quality enhancement

In addition to periodic quality reviews of education, research and services, Thematic Reviews are also undertaken. The function of Thematic Review is to support the development of priority strategic actions through peer review and benchmarking. These reviews take an enhancement-led strategic evaluation of a topic encompassing University-wide processes, practices or policies to assess their current stage of effectiveness and identify international good practices that can inform future developments.

## **Strategic Plan**

[Securing Our Future: UCC Strategic Plan 2023–2028](#) has been developed to position the University optimally in an environment of rapid change and reflects our commitment to a sustainable future for our people, planet and university.

## **Academic Governance and Policy Development**

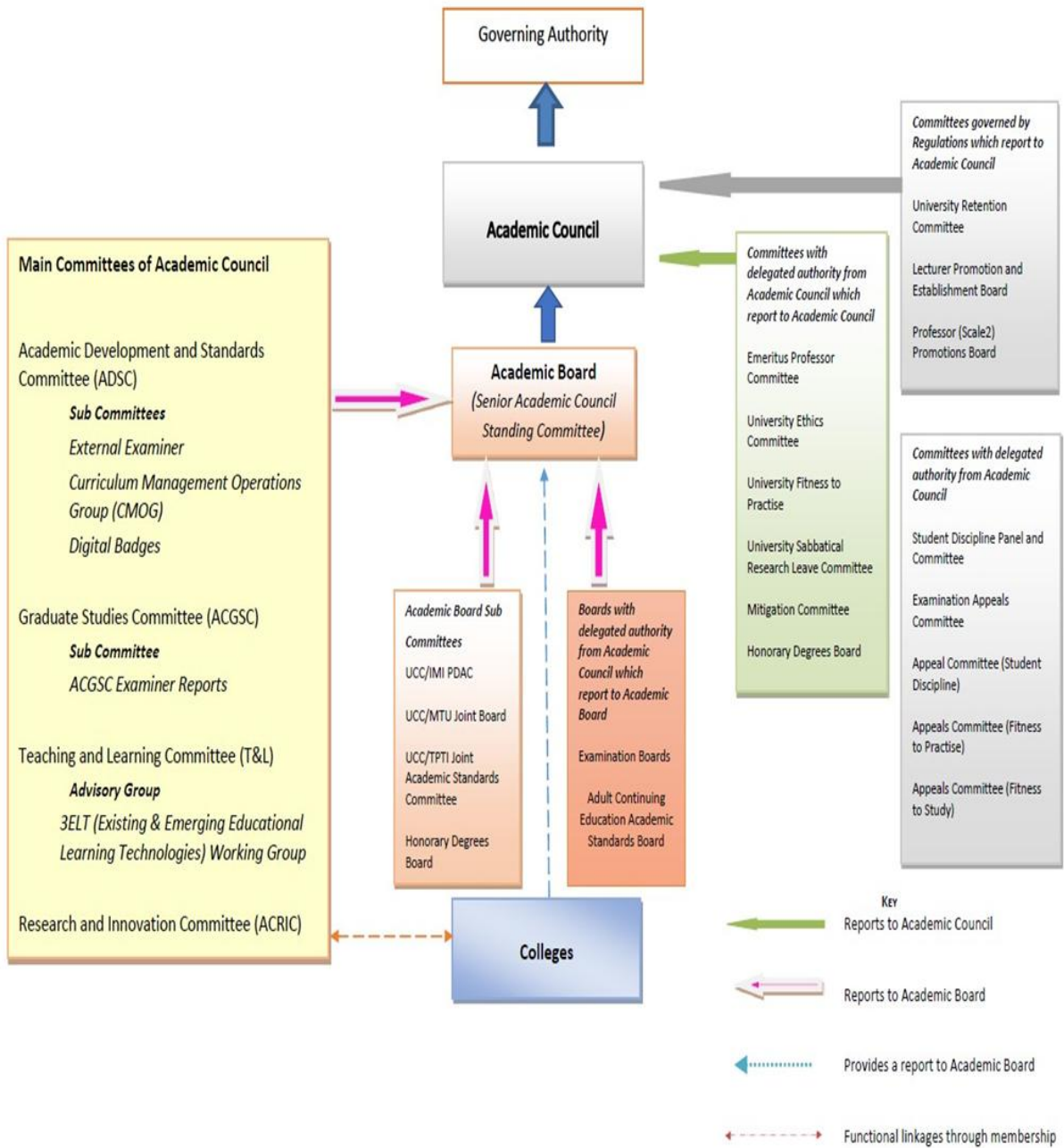
At the organisational level, the University has established an [Academic Policy and Document Portal](#) which brings together in one place all University policy on academic matters. This development ensures that the correct policy version is being used across the University and allows easy access and consultation. The portal is maintained by the Office of Academic Affairs & Governance (which also manages Academic Council and its subcommittees) and is part of the ongoing development of academic governance provided for in Priority 6 of the University's Academic Strategy. This has seen a strengthening of representation and expertise on Academic Council through a new panel of 30 co-opted members to provide a strong central policy framework. Central academic policies are given effect at the School and College level through the principles of subsidiarity, assurance and central oversight. As an example, work has commenced on establishing formal academic governance at the programme level to allow more local and responsive curriculum change (subsidiarity) within a new University-wide system and structure of Programme Boards of Studies (assurance and oversight). These developments will be underpinned by the introduction of a new Curriculum Management System across the University.

## **Academic Council and Academic Board**

The responsibilities of Academic Council [Academic Council | University College Cork \(ucc.ie\)](#) for managing and controlling the academic affairs of the university including curriculum, instruction and education are defined by [statue](#). Academic Council, in law, is the primary internal authority responsible for academic affairs. Internal revisions in academic governance must not undermine the legal powers granted to Academic Council but must

enable it to discharge its responsibilities effectively and, in practical terms, must enable the alignment and integration of University/College academic governance arrangements with an appropriate balance being struck between accountability and autonomy. Operationally this means that Academic Council retains authority on policy matters with University-level Committees and College Councils advisory to Academic Council, whilst in fact undertaking much of the preliminary work for the purposes of efficacy.

Academic Council is supported by an Academic Board [Academic Board | University College Cork \(ucc.ie\)](#) with delegated authority on certain matters; established standing committees and a range of sub- committees to manage academic affairs across the scope of the University's education, research and related services. The work of these sub-committees is engaged in coordinating and implementing governing structures, policies and procedures. The work of the Academic Council is supported by the Office for Academic Affairs and Governance and the governing procedures for the conduct of committees is set out in the [Academic Council Committee Handbook](#).



## 1.2 Linked Providers, Collaborative and Transnational Provision

UCC engages with other educational institutions in the development of research, staff and student mobility and the provision of education. It also engages with appropriate professional statutory bodies, sectoral and industry representative and learned organisations in accordance with its objectives as a research intensive and comprehensive university.

### **Educational collaboration**

UCC adopts a systematic process for the approval of all new collaborative academic programmes offered in collaboration with other degree awarding bodies or programmes involving external partners. This aligns with the process followed for UCC wholly owned awards, namely Stage 1 which comprises Outline Programme Approval by Academic Board and Stage 2 which comprises the quality assurance procedures for full programme approval by a Programme Approval Panel. In addition, a Memorandum of Agreement or other suitable agreement in relation to academic cooperation for inter-institutional joint programmes or programmes involving external partners (inclusive of annexes/consortia agreements concerning detailed programme management arrangements), is considered during Stage 2 of the approval process. Under the Signing Authority and Approval Policy, the MoA signing authority is the Deputy President & Registrar (with the Academic Secretary deputising). The President may also sign MoAs, where appropriate.

Current activities for programme collaboration are guided by the overarching principles of the [IHEQN Guidelines for the Approval, Monitoring and Review of Collaborative and Transnational Provision](#). All Academic Agreements must be approved at University level and signed off as appropriate. The University Signing Authority Policy is here: <https://www.ucc.ie/en/ocla/policy/>

There is a systematic process for the approval of new academic programmes developed and delivered by UCC and a partner degree-awarding body. Due diligence of the proposed curriculum to be delivered by the partner institution must be performed as outlined in the [UCC handbook governing curricular approval](#). A [Linked Providers procedure](#) was previously approved by the Quality Enhancement Committee.

### **Collaborative Programmes**

Collaborative programmes offered in partnership by UCC and MTU (formerly CIT) are governed by the [MTU-UCC Joint Board](#). The Cork Institute of Technology and University College Cork Joint Board formally changed its name to the MTU-UCC Joint Board at their meeting of 15 November 2021. This was subsequently ratified by the MTU Academic Council and UCC Academic Board.

The MTU-UCC Joint Board is a Joint Board of the Academic Council of Munster Technological University (MTU) and the Academic Board of University College Cork (UCC). Its primary purpose is to ensure that the academic standards and procedures applying to collaborative and joint programmes delivered in partnership between MTU and UCC satisfy the requirements of both institutions. It also functions to encourage further cooperation between the two universities including the development of new programmes. The Board reports by way of minutes to the Academic Council of MTU and the Academic Board of UCC in the case of programme issues. The Board reports issues relating to resources by way of submission of relevant document(s) and Joint Board minute(s) to the MTU Executive Board, UCC Academic Council and/or UCC University Leadership Team. The

Board is kept informed by the appropriate Officers and management bodies of the institutions of strategic and policy issues relevant to collaborative and joint programmes.

The University College Cork-Turning Point Institute (UCC-TPI JASC) Joint Academic Standards Committee is responsible for the governance and academic quality of the programmes offered under this partnership. The primary purpose of the JASC is to ensure that the academic standards and procedures applying to deliver the programme by TPI fully satisfy the requirements of UCC.

### **Transnational Education**

The situation regarding collaborative provision with universities in China has changed as the Chinese Ministry of Education promote models with less outward mobility for Chinese students and more time spent in the home institution. The global pandemic has accelerated this trend. As a result, a number of articulation programmes have come to an end and new models of collaboration are underway. The first of these is the agreement with Minzu University of China (MUC) for a dual degree programme (BSc (Hons) Environmental Science and Management with the UCC of School of Biological, Earth and Environmental Sciences).

### **Professional Registration & Statutory Bodies / Recognition Bodies**

The University engages with a range of professional, statutory, and other bodies in the provision of the educational portfolio and in the maintenance of high professional standards. The outcomes of professional accreditation inform on-going programme development, monitoring and review processes through curriculum committees at School and College level. Enhanced monitoring of [accredited programmes](#) has been introduced with information being held centrally in the Office of Academic Affairs & Governance and quarterly reports are provided to the Heads of Colleges.

## 2.0 Programme Development and Delivery

### 2.1 Programme Development and Approval

UCC has a clearly defined process for the approval of new academic programmes and modifications to existing programmes at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. Policies and procedures for the development and approval of programme design are regulated by Academic Board via a sub-committee of Academic Council, the Academic Development and Standards Committee and the Office for Academic Programmes and Regulations (APAR).

#### **New Academic Programmes**

The University adopts a strategic approach to the introduction and approval of new academic programmes. The main components of the approval process for new academic programmes includes the clear articulation of Stage 1 and Stage 2. Stage 1 comprises initial consideration of an outline of the proposed programme by the lead College. The proposal is assessed against the College Strategy, its alignment to the University's Strategic Plan and the management of its overall portfolio of programmes as well as financial viability. Once endorsed by the College, outline programme proposals are forwarded to Academic Board for review. Academic Board, as the body with responsibility for the management and oversight of the University's academic portfolio, is the ultimate authority for the approval of outline programme proposals for any new programme. Membership of Academic Board includes representation from all Colleges and ensures University-wide consultation of the proposed new programme. Academic Board considers the outline proposal for the new programme, requests (as appropriate) additional information or consultation, approves the proposed programme title and NFQ Level and recommends the appropriate review panel for Stage 2. Following Stage 1 approval, the programme team progresses to full programme development, designing the programme with reference to the relevant award type descriptors and in accordance with institutional policies and procedures.

Stage 2 – Full Programme Approval - is specifically configured to ensure the quality and standards of the programme, its adherence to institutional policies and procedures, confirmation of its positioning at the appropriate level on the NFQ and consideration of academic and pastoral support for students. The remit and authority of the programme approval event includes, for example, the requirement to ensure that the aims and programme learning outcomes are clear and coherent and that the proposed NFQ level of the award is in accordance with National Framework of Qualifications. The full remit of the panel is enabled through peer review by external subject experts, internal academic and professional services expertise and employer/industry and student involvement. Stage 2 has been designed specifically to facilitate Programme Team engagement with external peers and industry/employers to promote good practice from elsewhere in the higher education sector nationally and internationally. In the case of collaborative provision, due diligence of the proposed curriculum to be delivered by the partner institution must be performed as outlined in the [UCC handbook governing curriculum approval](#).

#### **Changes to existing programmes**

Changes to existing approved academic programmes are classified as either major or minor. All changes require approval by the relevant School(s)/Programme Board of Studies and the anchor College (in liaison with

participating College(s), where appropriate). Certain major changes require final approval by Academic Board. Major and minor changes are regulated by the Office for Academic Programmes and Regulations.

Information on the Academic Council approved process, policies, guidelines and procedures governing new programme approval and change may be found in the [handbook governing curriculum approval](#) and the policies and guidelines governing curriculum approval.

The output from the new academic Programme Approval and Change processes is recorded annually in four separate, but inter-linked publications, namely:

[University Undergraduate Calendar\\*](#)

[University Postgraduate Calendar](#)

[Book of Modules](#)

[Marks and Standards](#)

*\*Curriculum and examination related information for programmes offered through Adult Continuing Education may be found on the [Adult Continuing Education Website](#).*

These are published annually on the University web page and contain the curriculum and examination related information which form the basis of the University's contract with the student and fulfils the University's obligation to students in this regard

The *University Undergraduate and Postgraduate Calendars* contain information on: Programme title, NFQ level; Programme Entry Requirements; the groupings of core and elective modules that make up each year of a programme and their associated credits values; Regulations governing Selection and Change of Modules, Information on Subject Quotas, Transfers within and across Faculties/Colleges, Work Placement options; Regulations governing Admission, Supervision and Examination of Research Degrees.

The *Book of Modules* contains information on each module listed in the University Calendar. Module Descriptions contain data on: Module Title, Credit Value, Teaching Periods, Maximum no. of Students, Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, Teaching Methods/Student Workload, Module Co-ordinator, Lecturers, Learning Outcomes, Module Objective; Module Content, Assessment type and weighting, Compulsory Elements, Penalties, Pass Standard and any Special Requirements for Passing Module, Examination Profile, Requirements for Supplemental Examinations (where applicable).

The *Marks and Standards Book* contains the assessment rules and standards at academic programme level and govern whether or not a student may progress to the following year of study or graduate and the parameters that define the class of the degree to be awarded. It contains information including: time of Examination Boards, credits, modules, marks maxima, pass standard for the programme, exit awards, pass and progression/calculation of honours rules, carrying forward of marks towards final degree result, eligibility for honours at programme level, conditions governing supplemental and repeat year examinations, exemptions, time-limiting rules.

## 2.2 Admission, Progression, Recognition & Certification

### Student Journey

The student journey through UCC is of key concern to the University. The Office of Recruitment and Admissions leads the strategic development and direction of policy and practice related to student recruitment, admission and retention. The development of the [Graduate Attributes Programme](#) (GAP) is an initiative advancing the development of students' academic, specialist and technical competencies, equipping them with transferrable skills that can be applied in different environments. With a focus on developing core values and graduate attributes, these initiatives are integrating with the academic curriculum, taking a holistic educational approach to develop character, professionalism and the capacity for critical and creative thought. UCC graduates will be recognised as well-rounded, curious, self-aware, individuals who continually learn new skills, are open to new ideas, and make things happen.

Programmes are created to nurture students in advance of attending UCC and throughout their time in the University. **Nurturing Bright Futures** is a six-module course that has been designed to equip potential students with the information they need to prepare to transition into third level education. It is especially helpful for those who cannot access our campus easily, for a range of different reasons. Through the use of video lessons, podcasts, articles, exercises, quizzes and other helpful resources, these six modules will give potential students the opportunity to engage with a variety of resources and introduce them to ways and approaches to college life and college degrees.

This course is also a resource for Guidance Counsellors, teachers and parents/guardians, to help them to help students with this transition. It is designed to provide information and stimulate conversations with these key people in their lives, and to get them thinking in a structured way so that they can consult and make informed decisions about their post-secondary school options. Regardless of whether they are considering coming to UCC or elsewhere, Nurturing Bright Futures will give them insights, skills and knowledge that they can apply in any third level context.

Downloadable publications have been produced to accompany the Nurturing Bright Futures programme:

[Guide for Parents and Guardians](#)

[Guide for Guidance Counsellors and Teachers](#)

[Compendium of print-friendly worksheets and infographic posters](#) [Year Planner booklet](#)

Delivery of a suite of initiatives within the GAP focuses on the different stages of students' Transition In, Through and Out of the university. The overarching objective of the GAP is to enable a successful student journey, which will prepare students for their future through three main projects.

- **Transition In** initiatives are guiding students into the right programme of study for them, whilst simultaneously widening access of under-represented cohorts and improving first year retention rates.
- **Transition Through** initiatives are providing targeted supports, delivering skills training and developing graduate attributes that go beyond disciplinary content knowledge and can be applied in life-wide contexts.
- **Transition Out** initiatives are preparing final year students to transition into professional environments, delivering on the ambitions of our Institutional Employability and Employment Guide.

## Admissions Policies

All of UCC's Admission policies can be found at the following link: [Admissions | University College Cork \(ucc.ie\)](#). This includes links to our HEAR, DARE, Mature Student and QQI FE Widening Participation routes, as well as advanced and deferred entry policies.

UCC's Overarching Admissions policy: [Overarching Admissions Policy](#)

UCC admits students to accredited programmes from NFQ level 6 to level 10 and also to Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Modules. This Policy applies to applicants and UCC staff involved in the admissions process for UCC programmes/modules and CPD programmes/modules. This Policy does not currently apply to the Language Centre/Irish Management Institute (IMI) / Adult Continuing Education (ACE).

## Recognition of Prior Learning

UCC is engaged in a national sectoral project on Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). The UCC RPL policy is available at: [Recognition of Prior Learning | University College Cork](#)

## The Office of Recruitment and Admissions

The Office of Recruitment and Admissions comprises of a suite of Professional Services, namely: Admissions Office, International Office, Graduate Studies Office, Student Recruitment Office and the Quercus Talented Students' Programme,

The **International Office** has responsibility for coordinating strategy and administering operational processes to deliver on UCC's strategic internationalisation goals. The International Office manages the admission of non-EU undergraduate (full time as well as Visiting and Exchange Programme Students) and postgraduate taught and research students. The Office supports applicants from initial enquiry stage, through to application, registration and orientation. The International Office also provides a dedicated support service from pre-departure stage and throughout the student journey for international students. It also facilitates the logistics of visiting delegations, in addition to coordinating Staff Teaching/Training exchanges and placements.

International Office webpage: <https://www.ucc.ie/en/international/>

The **Graduate Studies Office** manages the admission of EU postgraduate taught and research students. It supports applicants through the full recruitment cycle from initial enquiry stage, through to application, registration and orientation. Furthermore, it manages the examination and record keeping for all research students.

Graduate Studies Office webpage: <https://www.ucc.ie/en/study/postgrad/>

The **Student Recruitment Office** has responsibility to develop and implement the strategy for student recruitment of all undergraduate and postgraduate students. The office supports and coordinates the cross-functional operational service delivery of all student recruitment activities in close collaboration with the four Colleges, Marketing and Communications and other Central Professional Services.

[Student Recruitment Office](#)

The **Quercus Talented Students' Programme** supports and promotes excellence in academia, sport, creative and performing arts, active citizenship and innovation/entrepreneurship. In addition to administering the prestigious

scholarships in these areas, it also manages the three Quercus Academic Scholarships. It nurtures talent through the provision of a deep programme of supports, challenge and mentoring.

Quercus Talented Students' Programme webpage: <https://www.ucc.ie/en/quercus/>

The **Admissions Office** oversees the recruitment and admission of EU undergraduate students and the support of first year students.

### **Pre-Entry Information Provision for UG EU**

Prior to entry, the Admissions Office supports prospective students through the provision of information regarding all undergraduate programmes, entry requirements and application procedures and policies. This information provision is done through close collaboration with the Student Recruitment team who oversee the production of relevant literature in print and online, through events such as Open Days and Parent Information Evenings, and school visits. Following are links to the online resources used to disseminate information on the programmes offered:

[www.ucc.ie/prospectus](http://www.ucc.ie/prospectus)

[www.ucc.ie/study/undergrad/courses](http://www.ucc.ie/study/undergrad/courses)

[www.ucc.ie/study/undergrad/entryreqs](http://www.ucc.ie/study/undergrad/entryreqs)

[www.ucc.ie/cao](http://www.ucc.ie/cao)

[www.ucc.ie/openday](http://www.ucc.ie/openday)

Once prospective students have become applicants to undergraduate programmes, either via CAO or via the local applications process, the Admissions Office provides information regarding important dates (offer dates etc.), accommodation, registration and orientation.

The policies pertaining to admission include entry requirements, deferred entry, Student Garda Vetting, infectious disease policy, fitness to practice, etc. These are clearly published in the Academic Policy Portal and on the Admissions webpages. These can be found on the following links:

[www.ucc.ie/en/academicgov/policies/admissions-policies/](http://www.ucc.ie/en/academicgov/policies/admissions-policies/)

[www.ucc.ie/en/study/undergrad/admissionspolicies/](http://www.ucc.ie/en/study/undergrad/admissionspolicies/)

### **First Year Support**

The Admissions Office provides a comprehensive range of supports for first year students which are managed and developed by the First Year Experience Co-ordinator. These supports include (but are not limited to) the distribution of the [First Year Guide to Success](#) to all offer holders following CAO offers, one- to-one meetings with first year students throughout the year and a range of events including Orientation, Freshers' Fest, the Open-Door Welcome for Family and Friends, and various academic and pastoral support workshops and seminars. Details of these events and activities can be found on:

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/study/undergrad/firstyear/>

UCC is fully compliant with the QQI Access, Transfer and Progression Policy. Students entering UCC on Access routes are also supported in UCC and information on these routes can be found at the following pages:

[www.ucc.ie/en/dss/dare/](http://www.ucc.ie/en/dss/dare/)

[www.ucc.ie/en/uccplus/](http://www.ucc.ie/en/uccplus/)

[www.ucc.ie/en/uccplus/hear/](http://www.ucc.ie/en/uccplus/hear/)

[www.ucc.ie/en/study/undergrad/entryreqs/matureapplicants/](http://www.ucc.ie/en/study/undergrad/entryreqs/matureapplicants/)

[www.ucc.ie/en/mature/matureprospective/](http://www.ucc.ie/en/mature/matureprospective/)

[www.ucc.ie/en/study/undergrad/fetac/](http://www.ucc.ie/en/study/undergrad/fetac/)

[www.ucc.ie/en/cpd/](http://www.ucc.ie/en/cpd/)

Support for students is also provided by UCC's [International Office](#), [Graduate Studies Office](#) and [Adult Continuing Education](#).

## Advanced Entry

First year students who have completed undergraduate modules prior to commencing their studies in UCC may be eligible for an exemption from the corresponding UCC module or for Advanced Entry to a year beyond first year. Exemptions are approved at School/Department level after the student has registered. Module exemption most often comes into consideration for students who have come into UCC through the Advanced Entry process (to a year beyond first year). Information regarding such transfers is available at [www.ucc.ie/en/study/undergrad/entryreqs/transferadvancedentry/](http://www.ucc.ie/en/study/undergrad/entryreqs/transferadvancedentry/).

Data relating to retention and progression is compiled annually by the Office of Recruitment and Admissions and considered at University Leadership Team meetings and by Academic Council.

## Access

Access in University College Cork comprises of three core services who work with the wider university, students, teachers, communities, families, businesses, and advocacy groups to ensure that all students who have the interest and motivation to access higher education are enabled to do so.

The core access services are the [UCC PLUS+ Programme](#) (students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds), the [Mature Student Office](#) and the [Disability Support Service](#). A comprehensive range of outreach programmes, dedicated admissions pathways and post admission supports are in place to ensure that students have equal opportunities to progress and succeed in University College Cork. The support of non-traditional students in UCC is not confined to the core access service; strong working relationships have been established between access services and professional services and academic departments <https://www.ucc.ie/en/accessforall/>

The key services delivered by Access & Participation include:

**[Disability Support Service \(DSS\)](#)**: The Disability Support Service works to increase access and retention of students with disabilities and specific learning difficulties and does this by delivering a very proactive and innovative pre-entry programme to engage with primary and secondary schools as well as students with disabilities and their parents. The DSS also provide a post entry support programme to identify reasonable accommodations to support students to undertake their studies in UCC. Supports extend to students on placement, Erasmus or mentoring/internship programmes.

**[UCC PLUS+ Programme](#)**: The UCC PLUS Programme, aims to increase the number of young people from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds accessing and succeeding in University. There are three central strands to the work of the UCC PLUS+ Programme:

- an outreach programme
- a special admissions route - HEAR, and
- a post entry support programme in UCC

**Mature Student Office:** The Mature Student Office (MSO) works with full-time undergraduate students who are over the age of 23 on 1 January on the year of entry to third level, in addition to supporting first year students entering via QQI/Further Education route. The role of the MSO is twofold:

- Recruitment - to promote and encourage mature student entry to UCC and
- Retention & Progression - to support registered mature students to stay on their course of study.

**Student Financial Support and Advice:** Providing financial support to students is key to enabling participation and success for students from low-income background. A range of funds are administered by the Student Assistance Fund office. The Student Budgetary Advisor is on hand to provide advice, guidance and support to students experiencing financial challenges.

**The SOAR Project** is an inter-institutional collaboration on Access, which is led by Access & Participation in UCC. It brings together the South Cluster – Munster Technological University, University College Cork and the South East Technological University together with community partners to collaborate on devising and delivering strategies to increase access to higher education for under-represented groups. The Project is funded by the Programme for Access to Higher Education (PATH) Strand 3.

#### *Sanctuary Scholarships Scheme*

An exciting initiative that has been developed as part of UCC's University of Sanctuary Status is the [Sanctuary Scholarships scheme](#). This scheme provides free tuition to 7 asylum seekers and/or refugees living in Ireland annually who would otherwise have to pay international student (non-EU) fees to access third level education. In partnership with the Tomar Trust and other private donors, bursaries will also be provided to successful students.

## 2.3 Procedures for Making Awards

All academic programmes and modules are aligned with the ECTS and published in the [University Calendar](#) and [Book of Modules](#). Assessment details for individual modules are recorded in the [Book of Modules](#).

The criteria required to pass a particular module and progress to the next stage of a programme are detailed in the [Marks and Standards](#) for each programme and in the Book of Modules for each module. The Marks and Standards describe the timing of assessment, the total credits and marks required at each year of a programme, the pass standard and the criteria that must be met for students to progress to the next stage of a programme. The Marks and Standards also describe the conditions where Supplemental Examination and/or Repeat Year Examination is appropriate, and additional conditions such as the awarding of honours by year and/or for the programme, requirements for exit awards, exemptions and rate of progression limits.

Changes to Marks and Standards require approval by the relevant College. The Marks and Standards for each year of each programme are applied by the University's Student Records and Examinations Office. Application of Marks and Standards generates a provisional final mark and award for each student. University Appointed External Examiners participate in Internal School/Department Examination Boards. These provisional marks and awards are presented for ratification by a University Examination Board, where the Examination Officer or nominee acts as Secretary; the University Examination Board make the appropriate final approval recommendations to the University's Academic Board.

Regulations governing the preparation for and the execution of examinations can be found at: [www.ucc.ie/en/exams/procedures-regulations](http://www.ucc.ie/en/exams/procedures-regulations). This includes information on the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders, regulations and procedures with respect to the monitoring and evaluation of examination processes and outputs and the retention of data. The assessment process for each discipline also makes provision for [mitigating circumstances](#). There is also provision for [examination rechecks](#) and [Appeals](#).

External Examiners play a vital role in the assessment of programmes, assuring academic standards and advising on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. The External Examiner confirms that the academic standards of programmes, modules and the awards to which they lead are consistent with the academic outcomes specified and are comparable to those achieved in the subject area in equivalent universities internationally. The [Guidelines for External Examiners](#) includes information on the role of the External Examiner and the role of the Head of School/Department/Discipline.

UCC has a clearly defined process for the development of programme learning outcomes for new academic programmes and modifications to the programme learning outcomes for existing programmes. For new programmes, the programme team proposes programme learning outcomes which are reviewed as part of the programme approval process. Individual module learning outcomes and the assessment strategy for the programme collectively contribute to the overall programme learning. This review by internal and external peers ensures they are appropriate to the level of the award within the National Framework of Qualifications, are comparable to equivalent awards internationally and are in-line with the programme aims and content. Changes to programme learning outcomes for existing programmes require approval by the relevant School(s)/Programme Board of Studies and the anchor College (in liaison with participating College(s), where appropriate).

## 2.4 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

### Policies, Procedures and Governance

The delivery of research-based teaching and learning with a world class student experience is a key strategic goal (Goal 2 Student Success) for UCC as outlined in the University's recently revised strategic plan, [Securing our Future - UCC Strategic Plan 2023-2028](#).

In June 2021, the University's Academic Board approved the University's first *Assessment Framework*, developed by the Vice President for Learning & Teaching (VPLT) and the Head of Student Records & Examinations, and the Framework is implemented across the University. The development of an assessment policy and operations guidance supplements and incorporates existing UCC regulations such as the *Guide to Examinations and Assessment for Staff and Students* and it provides a coherent anchor for relevant policy development. Similarly, UCC is developing a whole suite of policy and resources on Academic Integrity which is being led by [the Skills Centre](#), a unit that reports to the Vice President for Learning & Teaching. This literacy enhancement work builds on established policies and procedures such as UCC's [Plagiarism Policy](#); [Fitness to Practise](#) policy, and UCC's [Guide to Examinations and Assessment](#).

[This link](#) provides an A-Z list of all UCC policies and regulations in respect of academic governance, including teaching and learning related policy and guidelines such as UCC's [Guidelines for External Examiners](#). Further policy continues to be generated by relevant standing committees of UCC's Academic Council such as its Learning & Teaching Committee (AC-LTC), its Academic Development and Standards Committee and various sub-committees such as the Digital Education Advisory Group (DEAG). The Students' Union is very well-represented on committees such as the AC-LTC, and the Vice-President for Learning & Teaching and the Students' Union Education Officer meet monthly. The purpose and Terms of Reference for the above-mentioned committees are set out in the [Academic Council Committee Handbook](#). The VP for Learning & Teaching and several Office of the Vice President for Learning & Teaching (OVPLT) staff are committee members and/or secretariat for many of the Academic Council standing committees.

Following a Thematic Quality Review of digital education at UCC initiated by the Vice-President for Learning & Teaching an external evaluation panel of national and international experts were invited to offer recommendations for improvement of UCC's approach to digital education from an organisational structures point of view. A recommendation was made that a senior management level forum of the key individuals heading units that provide digital education infrastructure and digital education training be established to ensure cohesion and communications. A Digital Education Leadership Forum (DELFL) was established and is chaired by the VPLT. A key policy currently undergoing revision, with oversight from DELFL, is the University's Lecture Recording Policy.

### Operations and Staff Professional Development

The Office of the Vice President for Learning & Teaching (OVPLT) advises and contributes to the development of policy for learning and teaching and, through national and international engagement, ensures that policies and practices at the University are appropriately benchmarked and informed by good practice. In tandem with other quality assurance controls and procedures (such as external reports, external professional bodies accreditations and standards, policies such as "Fitness to Practice" etc.), OVPLT is actively engaged in the promotion and elevation of a culture across the University of developing, disseminating and celebrating quality and excellence

in teaching – for example its annual President’s Awards for Excellence in Teaching, the oldest such scheme amongst Irish HEIs.

The role of OVPLT is to enhance the staff and student learning experience through staff development opportunities and through engagement in innovative research-informed teaching to ensure that innovative learning and teaching approaches are fostered and supported and a student-centered approach to research-based teaching is rooted in the culture (<https://www.ucc.ie/en/teachlearn/abouttheovplt/>). OVPLT issues a weekly short email to all staff on teaching ‘tips and tricks’ as well as links to further reading and internal and external resources/supports, highlighting for example national seminars provided by the IUA/QQI/National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning. OVPLT’s quarterly e-newsletters issued to all UCC staff (and beyond) is another way that it disseminates information on good practices locally and elsewhere (<https://www.ucc.ie/en/teachlearn/ovpltnewsevents/>). During the pandemic, it developed and promoted a new ‘Teaching Today’ SharePoint site which has become a one-stop shop for staff seeking information on relevant policies and guidance on training and ‘how to’.

UCC’s reputation in the area of learning and teaching is recognised internationally as UCC is regularly selected to participate in EUA projects and Erasmus+ capacity-building projects. For example, UCC (through OVPLT) has participated in the 2017, 2018, 2020 and 2021 EUA Learning & Teaching Thematic Peer Groups (TPGs) around such theme as “[Improving the link between research and teaching](#)”, “[Promoting active learning in universities](#)”, and “[Meeting skills and employability demands](#)”. The TPGs gather a selected group of EUA member universities each year to discuss and explore practices and lessons learnt in organising and implementing learning and teaching at the institutional level. They also identify good practices on the given theme, and support quality enhancement in learning and teaching. The groups’ work feeds into EUA’s ongoing policy work and debates on learning and teaching by providing direct feedback from an institutional perspective on the key challenges in the area, as well as recommendations. UCC (through OVPLT) was also selected as one of 29 HEIs to participate in the EUA’s Leadership and Organisation for Teaching and Learning at European Universities (LOTUS) programme. The LOTUS project’s purpose was to contribute to capacity building and strategic change management for learning and teaching at higher education institutions across Europe. UCC (through OVPLT) continues as a partner in numerous Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership and Capacity Building Initiatives. These initiatives focus on a range of topics related to Learning and Teaching in Higher Education and are transnational projects designed to develop and share innovative practices and promote cooperation, peer learning, and exchanges of experiences. As a programme partner in these projects, we support eligible Partner Countries (e.g., Haiti) to modernise, internationalise and increase access to higher education, and address the challenges facing their higher education institutions and systems.

OVPLT supports a wide range of CPD activities for staff through the Centre for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning (CIRTL) [www.ucc.ie/en/cirtl/](http://www.ucc.ie/en/cirtl/) which provides support for all staff and postgraduate students in their teaching and learning roles. Credit bearing programmes in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education up to and including NFQ level 9 (Postgraduate Certificate/Postgraduate Diploma) are available online and free of charge to all categories of staff who support student learning, along with tailored modules for postgraduate students engaged in teaching. All newly appointed staff are required to enrol in and complete the Postgraduate Certificate programme, and participation rates in the programme are an institutional performance measure through the HEA Compact process. The Postgraduate Certificate programme is UCC’s largest – as measured by enrolment numbers – postgraduate programme, and over 70% of all staff have successfully completed the certificate. The Centre staff also run regular seminar workshops on Teaching and Learning and Assessment theories and practices and these are advertised to all staff.

The [Centre for Digital Education](#) (within OVPLT) provides support to UCC staff around the application of educational technology to education. It offers bespoke training sessions to academic and other staff across the University around their digital skills, confidence and competence, to enhance the learning and teaching experience. Members of the CDE team sit on many committees across UCC including the academic-led Digital Education Advisory Group, a sub-committee of Academic Council, and is heavily involved with cognate units such as IT Services in procurement and fitting of hard and software technologies. The CDE team also publishes regular newsletters, blogs and FAQs and runs regular training sessions on topics informed by staff feedback on their needs. As well as group training sessions open to all staff, the CDE also offers 1:1 consultations for individual staff members and departmental-level advice/bespoke training.

The [Centre for Adult Continuing Education \(ACE\)](#) within UCC, provides lifelong learning opportunities (credit and non-credit bearing) at a number of outreach centres in Cork and beyond, including at Cork Prison and through the municipal library network and the credit unions network, and well beyond the Munster region. ACE also designs and delivers bespoke training courses for local industries (such as Pharma companies) and manages [UCC's Springboard+](#) involvement through which several programmes at NFQ levels 7, 8 and 9 are delivered to jobseekers and workers who wish to upskill and increase their employability chances. ACE has an extremely strong working relationship with counterpart education providers across Cork city (such as MTU, Cork ETB, Cork City Council) through the 'Learning Cities' network.

The University's [Language Centre](#) (housed within OVPLT) is an accredited ACELS English language provider and as such conforms to the regulations and guidelines of its recognition scheme <https://www.acels.ie/acelsregulations> in respect to teaching, learning and assessment. The Centre's credit-bearing modules and courses are validated by the University. The Centre's suite of pre-sessional courses provide direct entrance to UCC undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. A special standardisation and moderation calendar ensures student performance is mapped to marking criteria and outcomes. Teacher training courses leading to a qualification are accredited by an external awarding body. The Centre complies with the awarding body regulations and complies with their requirements for internal and external verification regulations: <https://www.cambridgeenglish.org/teaching-english/professional-development/cambridge-english-teaching-framework/>

The student-facing Skills Centre (housed within OVPLT) is an additional resource available to all students offering group and 1:1 assistance in such areas as "Transitioning into College Life" "Developing your academic writing" etc. A number of its resources are available to students 24/7. More on the Skills Centre here <https://www.ucc.ie/en/skillscentre/about/>

Since 2018, the Exams Appeals Officer reports to the VP for Learning & Teaching (and OVPLT provides all Exams Appeals administrative function). The learning that OVPLT has gained from the incorporation of this function has been invaluable and has contributed to (through the identification of gaps) the development of previously absent policy frameworks such as a "Reasonable Accommodations" policy and set of procedures for DSS students. The articulation of practices (e.g., Reasonable Accommodations) at UCC hithertofore undocumented is a further shift towards greater coherency and transparency. The Exams Appeals Officer also prepares annual reports for Academic Board.

## Process and Procedures for External Examining

### *External Examiner Sub-Committee*

The [External Examiner Sub-Committee \(EESC\)](#) is a sub-committee of the [Academic Council's Academic Development and Standards Committee \(ADSC\)](#).

The EESC's role is:

- to approve nominations of External Examiners for undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes.
- to prepare an annual report on matters identified by External Examiners in their reports to the University.
- to oversee policy on the appointment and role of taught External Examiners and to report to ADSC and Academic Board (AB)/Academic Council (AC) as appropriate.
- The EESC is responsible for processing nominations and reviewing Externs' reports from:
  - i. the four Colleges (College of Medicine and Health [CoMH], College of Business and Law [CBL], College of Science, Engineering and Food Science [CSEFS] and College of Arts, Celtic Studies & Social Sciences [CACSSS]);
  - ii. the Office of the VP for Learning and Teaching (OVPL&T) academic units (Adult Continuing Education [ACE], Centre for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning [CIRTL] and the Language Centre);
  - iii. the Irish Management Institute (IMI).

### *Nomination and Appointment of External Examiners*

External Examiners for undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes are nominated and appointed in accordance with the procedure and criteria set out in the [Guidelines for External Examiners](#).

These procedures are designed to ensure that UCC's Externs are highly qualified and experienced and have no conflicts of interest that would undermine, or be seen to undermine, their independence as examiners.

Externs are appointed for a three-year term, with the possibility of a one-year extension. Externs may not be re-appointed unless there is a gap of at least five years. Former UCC staff and students are not eligible for appointment until 10 years after their departure from the University but in exceptional circumstances nominations of those with a gap of 5-10 years will be considered by the EESC.

Externs are nominated by Heads of Academic Units. If the nomination is in order and in accordance with prescribed criteria the nomination is approved by the Chair of the EESC or by another committee member if there is a conflict of interest (such as if the nomination originates from the Chair's own Academic Unit).

### *Duties of External Examiners at UCC*

The role of External Examiners at UCC is:

- to assure academic standards and advise on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- to ensure that the academic standards of programmes, modules and awards are consistent with the academic outcomes specified and are comparable to those achieved in the subject area in equivalent universities internationally.
- to guarantee the fairness, validity, and rigour of assessment at the University.
- to provide feedback on the quality of programmes and modules and the overall learning experience in the subject area, and on how teaching, learning and assessment may be enhanced.
- to review and enhance the assessment process. They will not, however, routinely act as an additional examiner alongside internal examiners.
- to exercise their functions with due regard for professional standards and the requirements of regulatory bodies.

### *External Examiner Report*

Each year of term, External Examiners are required to provide a report on their findings to the University. Reports from External Examiners are received by the designated officer in the Academic Affairs & Governance and distributed to the relevant Head of Academic Unit.

### *The Academic Unit Response*

The Head of Academic Unit or a designated nominee is obliged to provide a written response to the Registrar and to the External Examiner on the recommendations arising from the External Examiner's Report. These Academic Unit Responses include a summary of the key points raised in each report and information on how the academic unit intends to progress any issues raised by the External Examiner. As part of the feedback on their comments and recommendations, all responses are also automatically sent to the external examiner who submitted the original report. This process enables Schools/Colleges/Units and the University's External Examiner Sub-Committee (EESC) to monitor how external examiner feedback is processed.

### *Optional Confidential Report to Registrar*

Where the External Examiner has significant concerns, they may provide a confidential report to the Registrar via Academic Affairs and Governance. The Academic Unit is then obliged to provide a formal response to the Registrar in a timely manner indicating what actions, if any, are being taken in response to this report of the External Examiner. The University advises the Registrar of the National University of Ireland where such a circumstance arises.

### *EESC'S Annual Report to Academic Board*

On behalf of Academic Board the EESC prepares an annual consolidated report based on the External Examiner Reports and Academic Unit Responses returned for each College or Unit (OVPLT, IMI, etc.) and, in consultation with the Registrar, as a result of quality improvement processes in UCC proposes policy or procedural adjustments as appropriate.

All External Examiner Reports and Academic Unit Responses for the College/Units are divided between the EESC's members for review, ensuring that members are not assigned to review their own College or Unit. These members are then tasked with writing a College-level Review Report. These College-level Review Reports are reviewed by the EESC Chair and form the basis of the Chair's own University-wide Annual Report which is submitted to Academic Board. The College-level Review Reports are also provided to the individual College Heads and Managers (or their equivalent in the other Units) to close the feedback loop and ensure that action is taken on the ground as appropriate.

### *Reporting to the NUI*

Each year, the designated officer within Academic Affairs & Governance forwards collated External Examiners Reports, Academic Unit Responses and a list of new appointments for the year to the National University of Ireland.

## 3.0 Learner Resources and Support

### UCC Library

[UCC Library](#) is a contemporary university library containing rich collections and archives, multi-media, information and knowledge management systems. Its mission is to deliver excellent information services to meet the needs of the University and regional scholarly community; to support the University's mission which is *'creating, understanding and sharing knowledge and applying it for the good of all.'* and to contribute to the preservation of the cultural heritage of the region. It delivers on this mission by providing extensive information resources, high quality spaces and excellent services.

The Library has three locations, the Boole Library located on main campus, the Boston Scientific Health Sciences Library located in the Brookfield complex, and an offsite repository at Pouladuff Road, Togher, Cork. In addition, UCC Library partners with the Mercy University Hospital Library in assisting with professional Librarian support. The [Library Vision and Plan](#) is user focused and central to this is a clear commitment to enhancing the student experience by creating supportive spaces, acquiring top-quality information resources, supporting digital and information literacy, and providing an inclusive environment to inspire learning. UCC Library prides itself on having an excellent service that is proactive, innovative, timely and responsive to user needs. Librarians collaborate with users and guide them in the use of high-quality information resources which contributes to creativity and innovation and provides evidence in leading-edge research.

The Library provides learning supports and training resources to students through webinars, online modules, and one-to-one research support. The [Digital & Information Literacy Framework](#) guides the development of a comprehensive and coherent approach to digital and information literacy within UCC Library, and determines the appropriate infrastructure required to develop consistently high-quality, equitable programmes and resources. The Framework enables future collaborations with university colleagues so that learning opportunities on offer are enriched by a diverse set of skills and expertise that will reach more students, teaching staff and researchers.

The [Library Learning and Teaching Team](#) provides self-directed [Information Literacy courses](#) on Canvas (UCC's VLE) with live follow-up Q+A sessions, and general [Training Courses](#) such as Citing, Referencing & Plagiarism. The [Ask Us](#) team offers an online query service for students, using a comprehensive knowledge base of FAQs, ticketing service, and live chat function. The service acts as a first level of support for students with general research/ library related queries, such as locating and searching online resources, and citing & referencing.

The Academic Success Librarian offers a second level of student support and allows for more in-depth support at point of need. Individual research consultations are available online or face-to-face and are bookable online.

The [Research Data Coordinator](#) offers training and support to researchers in the area of Data Management. Staff & students can book an appointment.

More focused support is available online through [Subject Support](#) guides (LibGuides) and through website links to topical information. The guides act as a one-stop-shop and gather all subject-based information resources together and cover general library topics too. The website links are to topics such as "[Access Assignment Help](#)" or "[Learn the Basics](#)".

A snapshot of Library facilities:

- The Library provides a variety of student social and study facilities and has a stock of over 900,000 volumes. Currently, it has the longest [opening hours](#) of any academic library in Ireland. Hours increase even more around exam time.
- The Boole Library has a total of 2,233 study spaces and Boston Scientific Health Sciences Library has 200. These spaces are configured to optimise user experience.
- The Creative Zone offers a flexible technology-rich space for all students and staff in UCC. The space can be re-configured easily to suit presentations, group work or study. A wide range of events organised in association with the schools, societies, and student services, take place there and the facility is available to all the student body.
- There is some evidence that relaxing or napping for short periods of time can increase alertness and productivity. With this in mind, the Library purchased an Energy Pod which can be used by all students for 20 minute sessions.
- In support of UCC's commitment to creating an inclusive environment, the Library, in collaboration with the Disability Support Service (DSS) provides a Study Pod. This is a bookable sound-proofed booth that offers a stress-free study environment for students.
- Supporting students in their [digital experience](#) is a key component of the Library strategy.
- The Library provides [Laptop Loans](#). 72 Chromebook laptops are available for students to borrow in the Boole Library and 24 in Brookfield Library.
- The [Library Studio](#) is available to all students and staff and offers a bookable state-of-the-art video and audio recording facility.
- [3D printing](#) supports a wide variety of projects and is available in the Boole Library.
- A [Virtual Reality Lounge](#) has been developed in the Boole Library where students can immerse themselves in a virtual world. This resource provides support for students of all disciplines as students can "visit" the International Space Station, Titanic, White House etc.

The dual role of [Special Collections](#) is to facilitate research and to ensure the care and conservation of UCC Libraries' unique and distinctive materials. The [Archives](#) service provides access to archival collections and facilities which have been developed to satisfy the research and information needs of the Library's users.

By collaborating with other UCC student services, the Library has been able to host a range of services to offer a more inclusive student experience. The DSS runs the Assistive Technology Unit supporting students with a disability, which is located within the Library. The laptop loan system was established in partnership with the Access Office, and some laptops are reserved for use by their students and the DSS.

Cooperation and collaboration includes developing programmes of formal cooperation with European and Chinese libraries in support of the international students who come to UCC from these countries. The Library maintains active links with a range of local public, voluntary, and private organisations, many of whose information and preservation requirements we readily support through advice and helpful intervention. Cork Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) is a cooperative agreement between all the main libraries in Cork city and county, with a view to ensuring wider access to learning materials for all the people of Cork and beyond. This is in support of the Library's community outreach Strategic Theme.

Cooperation between libraries offers dividends for UCC students as it provides physical access to primary materials in other institutions. UCC Library is an active participant in all [available schemes](#) namely SCONUL Access, ALCID, Cork PAL and Music PAL. [Inter Library Loans](#) supports students who don't need physical access but need materials from elsewhere.

The student-facing [Skills Centre](#) in the Library (also housed within OVPLT) is an additional resource available to all students offering group and 1:1 assistance in such areas as "Transitioning into College Life" "Developing your academic writing" etc. A number of its resources are available to students 24/7.

### IT Infrastructure

University College Cork has a distinguished digital legacy stretching back to the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. George Boole, the architect of Boolean logic, was Professor of Mathematics. Ireland's first website was [www.ucc.ie](http://www.ucc.ie) and one of the first international networks in Cork, was built in UCC. Building on this tradition of innovation and value creation, IT Services in UCC wants to enable and develop a digital University for the 21<sup>st</sup> century student, one that is centred on the needs of our present and future students. IT Services in UCC is focused on building exciting digital products and services to support the student experience and student learning outcomes.

The current team within IT Services is one of the largest in the region, with over 60 IT professionals and almost 40 Students helping to provide support and develop new digital products and services.

IT Services provide services and support for 20,000 students and 5,000 staff. Our campus spans over 100 acres at the centre of Cork City. This service portfolio includes the UCC corporate systems (Finance, HR, Student), the largest private network in Cork (Wi-Fi, VOIP), 2 data centres, over 7000 desktops and we support 300+ websites and social media presence, 190 large classrooms, including the teaching technology and also research infrastructure. The clip in the attached link explains our services and ambitions, <https://www.ucc.ie/en/it/about/>

IT Services are focused on building and developing digital services to support the students' journey from application to graduation. A full list of services is available IT Services in UCC is listed in the URL, <https://www.ucc.ie/en/it/services/>

The University is embarking on a Digital Strategy and a Data Strategy, which is University-led and Technology enabled. These strategic initiatives will transform UCC and will support the development of a more Digital University. Enhancing and modernising the services to students is central to these proposals. IT Services partner with key administration, academic and research units to develop agile, intuitive IT solutions. Using concepts such as DevOps, Agile Product Development, Infrastructure as a Service as key enablers to achieving this suite of IT Systems. A full list of IT policies in UCC can be found at <https://www.ucc.ie/en/it-policies/>

The IT unit has been a pivotal part of UCC throughout the COVID-19 pandemic with so many University services now running online. There has been a phenomenal transformation in the services provided to the staff and students of UCC over the period of our strategic plan and will form the backbone of our plans over the years to come. We have recognised the impact our services now have on our students, and the University Leadership Team therefore approved a new [Digital Master plan](#) to support the priorities identified in UCC 2022.

### Student Supports

The [Student Experience Office](#) co-ordinates student support services and leads the strategic development and direction of policy and practice related to the UCC Student Experience in a wide range of functions and activities.

Student policies and procedures include: Student Charter, Student Mental Health: Policy for Staff, Student Alcohol Policy, Fitness to Continue in Study Policy, Support for Pregnant Students Policy, Procedure for Responding to Reports of Missing Students, Protocol for Responding to the Death of a Student and Code of Practice for Students with Disabilities are available on: <https://www.ucc.ie/en/academicgov/policies/>

The Student Experience Office uses a thematic approach to supporting and developing the student experience. Student Supports are grouped under five headings: Student Life, Access, Career Services, Sport & Physical Activity and Student Health & Wellbeing. There is a focus on a collaborative approach to developing cross-service projects (such as improving the use of technology across all services), supporting transition into UCC, supporting students to progress and achieve their potential, facilitating high levels of engagement in student life, providing a focus on employability and transition to the world of work, and supporting student health and wellbeing.

The Student Experience Office coordinates an array of supports for students and encompasses Access UCC which includes Disability Support, Mature Student Office, PLUS Programme: Student Budgetary Advisor and SOAR Projects; Career Services which includes Careers Advisors, Employer Engagement and Work Placement; Student Health & Wellbeing which includes Student Health, Student Counselling & Development, Chaplaincy, Peer Support and Niteline; Sport & Physical Activity and Student Clubs; Student Life which includes Accommodation & Community Life (encompassing Campus Watch), Health & Safety for Student Activities, Radio & Student Media, Student Societies; Students' Union, all of which provide a range of specialised services to students.

The full range of student supports available across UCC is displayed in the [Student Support Tree](#).

## **Student Central**

The onset of COVID-19 expedited a re-design of student administration services in UCC. A successful pivot to online service delivery was made possible through the recently established *Student Central* and the development of a *Digital Student Hub*. *Student Central* provides both in-person and remote service delivery to prospective and current students. This service provides a single-entry point to an effective triage and routing function for all incoming enquiries. The *Digital Student Hub* delivered a range of new and innovative service to support students which included the following features:

- Self-Service Attendance Letters
- Web enquiry forms for current and prospective students with in-built routing to back-office subject matter experts
- The [ask.ucc.ie](https://ask.ucc.ie) knowledge bases articles
- Online Deferred Entry forms
- Online Garda Vetting Process
- Online First Year Change of Course
- Online Payment Plans
- Online Mitigation and Deferral Application forms
- Online Examination Appeals Request
- Online ID verification
- Upload of Student Photo ID for ID Cards

## **Student Health**

The Student Health Department provides a comprehensive range of student health care services to all registered students, during office hours operating a blended service of both telephone, video and onsite consultations Monday to Friday, 12 months of the year.

A combination of pre-booked appointments and emergency appointments facilitates appropriate access, according to clinical need. For those students not registered with a doctor locally, provision is made for out of hours care and home visiting for emergencies through a local general practitioner.

Student Health provide the following services:

- Primary care of acute and chronic illnesses that present in the community.
- Contraception service including insertion of Long-Acting implants and IUCDs "Coils".
- Women's Health, Cervical smear screening services.
- Screening and immunisation against infectious diseases.
- Consultant Psychiatrist Service.
- Sexual Transmitted Infection screening.
- Sexual Transmitted Infection diagnosis and treatment.
- Travel Advice and Vaccinations.
- Health Promotion Programmes.
- Hospital referral service.
- Ante Natal Care.
- Injury assessment, treatment and referral service.
- [Physiotherapy Service.](#)

There is also a dedicated comprehensive vaccination programme offering immunisation against Hepatitis B, Tuberculosis, Measles, Mumps, and Rubella to students exposed to these illnesses during their course as well as travel medicine immunisation clinics.

### **Student Counselling & Development**

Student Counselling & Development (SCD) is a free confidential service to all students. The Service provides individual counselling and support to students with emotional, psychological, academic or personal development needs. The Service also provides psycho-educational classes and workshops including *Understanding & Managing Stress*. In addition to interventions focused directly at students, SCD acts in an advisory capacity and contributes to the development of student welfare policies within the University. SCD provides training to staff for the purposes of resourcing them as mentors of students and in responding to at risk and distressed students. The service has also developed a set of Guidelines for Supporting Distressed Students in addition to providing training in this area. SCD contributes to the learning and teaching mission of the University and to student retention and performance by reducing student distress which has an adverse impact in these areas.

**Individual Counselling:** In addition to individual counselling, SCD provides online and telephone counselling to students:

1. Support for Acute Exam Stress: SCD provides on call support for students in acute distress during the exam period, to enable them to successfully complete their exams.
2. Anxiety Management Workshops: Proactive intervention to provide students with strategies for recognising and managing stress.
3. Digital Offerings: SCD provides comprehensive evidence-based online resources to students.

4. Designated Liaison Point for Transgender and Non-Binary Students: SCD has been deemed the designated liaison point for transgender and non-binary students.
5. Staff Consultations: SCD provides support for staff in managing and responding to concerns about student well-being.
6. Student Consultations: Students are also offered consultations, both individually and in groups, to explore concerns about fellow students who are experiencing difficulties and may need support.

### **Peer Support programme**

The Peer Support programme is a support service for students, by students. The programme runs on the principle of student-to-student support as we believe that many students feel more comfortable making initial contact with a fellow student for advice.

Students are welcomed into the UCC community on their first day by an experienced student volunteer from their own course. Each of these volunteers is trained thoroughly with information about the university and how to support those incoming peers who may find transitioning to their new life confusing or difficult. We are aware that shifting into a university mind-set will be one of the greatest changes the majority of our students have ever experienced and so we aim to provide the best possible support from those who have first-hand experience of what this transition is like – the students themselves.

The first representative of the university each new student meets on their orientation day is their Peer Supporter Leader. This Leader takes responsibility for ensuring these new students are given a good grasp of everything they would need to begin their journey at UCC (campus tour, IT workshop, library tour, etc.). UCC's Peer Support Programme is one of the most successful and comprehensive in the country. Each Peer Support Leader receives extensive initial training and is offered on-going continuing personal development to ensure they can provide their students with the smoothest transition possible. Peer Support Leaders are rewarded for their voluntary work representing the university with each Leader receiving a UCC Works Award and being presented a Peer Support Certificate by the Deputy President & Registrar. The Peer Support Programme ensures all of our students gain a sense of belonging to the UCC community.

### **UCC Niteline**

UCC Niteline is a listening service run by student volunteers. All student volunteers receive a UCC Works Award upon completion of their duties. They provide a non-judgmental, non-directive and confidential listening service via a free phone number and anonymous instant messaging chat. All student volunteers go through 6 training sessions with the Cork Samaritans prior to interacting with callers.

The service operates 9pm-1am, 5 nights a week during term time. The caller remains anonymous throughout their conversation and can raise any issue, concerns or worries that they have in a confidential manner.

### **Chaplaincy Services**

As one of the oldest service departments in the university, UCC chaplaincy engages with students and staff of all faiths and none. With a team of two full-time chaplains, two visiting chaplains, and an administrator, the need for outreach by our team continues to be a high priority. While the nature of chaplaincy is pastoral in nature, it also provides opportunities for developing social awareness through spirituality and liturgy.

UCC chaplaincy accompanies many students who may feel isolated in their environment – creating a safe space for them to encounter community and friendship. It is noticeable that many who use the service have confidence in chaplaincy and that their various spiritual, human and pastoral needs are met. To this end, chaplaincy engages with all other relevant services within the student experience area to create a holistic approach to the needs of

students and staff. Chaplaincy takes a lead role at times of trauma and bereavement and acts as a point of reference for follow-up support to families and students after such events.

### **Department of Sport & Physical Activity**

**UCC Sport** is run by full-time Department of Sport and Physical Activity staff with the support of students in the form of a Clubs Executive committee which represents 55 clubs within University College Cork.

The Department of Sport and Physical Activity in UCC aims “to provide high quality facilities and services to students, graduates, staff and the wider community”.

The Department enhances and supports UCC student’s development and university experience, by promoting positive health and well-being, leadership and activities from social participation to elite. The Department focuses on supporting student clubs who provide invaluable experience both on and off the “field of play”. UCC sports clubs are run by the students for the students.

Student Clubs provide a fantastic opportunity for students to develop their skills outside of the classroom. With 55 sports clubs in UCC ranging from water sports, to outdoor pursuit type activities, to martial arts, to indoor and outdoor team sports, UCC students have a great opportunity to get involved in some form of sport and recreation activity whilst at UCC. The clubs help foster lifelong friendships and provide opportunities for students to learn valuable life skills by becoming administrators within their club. Each year clubs appoint officers and administrators to run their clubs & these operations are overseen by the Clubs Executive and the Sports Department. There are many opportunities for students to represent the university in their chosen sport throughout their time in UCC either locally, provincially, nationally or even internationally (e.g., Olympics).

### **Accommodation and Community Life**

The Office of Accommodation and Community Life has responsibility for:

#### *Student Accommodation*

- Accommodation advice and advocacy service for UCC students
- Support all current and incoming students with their search for safe and affordable accommodation
- International Student Accommodation Placement Service – Full year and single semester EU and non-EU students
- First Year Student Accommodation Placement Service

#### *Campus Watch*

- First and second stages of student discipline
- Promoting respect and responsibility in the local community

#### *Community Relations*

- Engaging with the local community, relevant stakeholders and resident groups to actively and positively engage with neighbourhood issues

### **Students’ Union**

UCC Students’ Union is a democratic organization run by 6 fulltime officers elected by the student body. The principal officers are the President, the Communications and Engagement Officer, Welfare Officer, Education Officer, Commercial and Finance Officer and Entertainments Officer. There are also eleven non sabbatical officers contributing to the organisation. The SU’s main functions are to offer academic assistance to students, to provide pastoral and financial support to students in need, to lobby the University and the government on issues affecting students, and to facilitate entertainment on campus. The SU also runs a Common Room on campus and in Brookfield, and a reception desk in the Hub.

## Student Societies

Student Societies provide a fantastic environment for students to develop their skillset outside of the lecture halls. With over 100 societies in UCC ranging from academic, charitable, creative, debating, political, religious, and social student societies aim to produce a variety of interests to get involved in.

## UCC Student Media

UCC 98.3FM, UCC Express and Motley magazine aim to promote balanced student programming and writing, encouraging access to and involvement in radio and online resources for individuals and groups to present their ideas and views while being a trusted and informed voice for the student body of UCC.

## Career Services

The [UCC Career Services](#) facilitate students' professional development and successful career transition through and out of UCC by providing access to careers advice and coaching, employability skills development classes, industry-led workshops and events, work integrated learning opportunities and postgraduate opportunities, both nationally and internationally. Students are provided with access to online, digital, self-serve resources to support them in making job applications and securing their first graduate role.

The [UCC Career Services](#) helps UCC students to achieve their career objectives by:

- Working in partnership with university colleagues to deliver customised employability workshops and events to meet the bespoke needs of students.
- Offering a personal, bespoke service to create employer-student connections that form exciting futures for learning, living and working in a global society.
- Working collaboratively with students, academic departments, and industry representatives as partners.
- [Managing work placement](#) accredited modules in collaboration with almost 40 academic programmes.
- Organising Career and [Graduate Recruitment events](#) such as recruitment fairs, jobs roadshows etc. which facilitate graduate employer and student interactions.
- Providing UCC students with access to high quality employment opportunities in Ireland and internationally.
- Making UCC students aware of a wide range of postgraduate study opportunities.
- Providing one to one advice and coaching to students.

To deliver these services to students, the Service is organised around the following team structure

- Employability and Employer Engagement Team
- Work Integrated Learning Team
- Careers Consultancy Team
- Cross-Collaborative Working Groups

### *Employability and Employer Engagement Team*

The main activities of this team are to:

- Organise initiatives and events that support UCC students to develop their employability skills in preparation for entering the world of work. This is achieved through initiatives such as Graduate Recruitment activities, the [UCC EmployAgility Award](#) in which Student Volunteering and Community Engagement activities are a core part.
- Ensure that UCC students and graduates can avail of a wide range of employment opportunities both in Ireland and internationally. This is achieved by sourcing and promoting graduate employment

opportunities to UCC students and graduates using a range of communication platforms including [web based vacancy databases](#), social media and traditional on-campus events.

- Support the other Career Services teams in the day-to-day administration of their responsibilities.

#### *Work Integrated Learning Team*

This team supports the delivery of [accredited work placement](#) modules in Academic Programmes in the Colleges of Business and Law, SEFS and CACSSS. Responsibilities include:

- Support each individual student through the work placement selection process until they successfully get an offer of a role with a partner employer.
- Deliver class contact hours to prepare students for work placement, interviews, workplace skills, etc.
- Contact employers to identify and acquire suitable work placement opportunities for students.
- Work Integrated Learning officers have a joint reporting relationship to the Head of Career Services and the Head of their respective College.

#### *Careers Consultancy Team*

Careers advice is a key element of our service where we aim to provide accurate, impartial careers advice and coaching based on the student's needs, qualifications and circumstances. A number of options are available to students:

- Small group workshops on topics such as CVs and job applications, interview technique,
- Sector specific talks such as careers in teaching, Study in EU/US etc. as well as employability related workshops and lectures.
- [One to One Careers](#) advisory consultations by appointment with a careers consultant where students can discuss a wide variety of topics from CV's to interviews to general advice on career paths. Where a visit to the Career Service is not practicable (e.g. student is abroad) we endeavour to facilitate students by the use of phone or video calls.
- [Profiling for Success](#): administer a range of psychometric tools designed to improve self-awareness in students, thereby supporting their transition to professional life.
- [Career Set](#): Artificial Intelligence algorithms have been configured to generate personalised CV feedback and the tool has been designed using recognised best practices, applicable across industries and academic disciplines. All current students and recent graduates of UCC can access the tool to score the impact, style and brevity of their CV. The tool can also help applicants target their CV to a specific job description.
- [Big Interview](#): An AI-based Practice Interview Tool is also supporting students. Once registered on the platform, students and recent graduates can use the 'Learn' option to undertake short courses to help them understand the interview process and STAR technique. Users will also get hands-on practice with interactive mock interviews tailored to specific industries, jobs, and experience level.

#### Careers Education

Career consultants also work closely with academic departments and other UCC units to deliver bespoke employability and career related workshops and events to their students within the curriculum.

#### *Additional Policies for Career Services*

- [Student Placement Policy](#)
- [Placement Risk Assessment](#)
- [Preparation of Students Going on Placement \(Procedure\)](#)
- [Monitoring and Communication During Student Placement \(Procedure\)](#)

- [Management of Critical Incident \(Procedure\)](#)

## Access

UCC is committed to ensuring that all students entering via Access pathways (HEAR, DARE, Mature and QQI/FET admissions routes) are afforded every opportunity to succeed. A wide range of post-admission supports have been developed by a dedicated team of Access practitioners in collaboration with students and staff.

- A range of [financial supports](#) are available for students from low-income households. A dedicated student budgetary advisor is also on hand to provide support, guidance and advice to students experiencing hardship.
- Extensive reasonable accommodations and supports are available for students who are registered with a [disability](#). Students are invited to meet with a disability advisor for a needs assessment at the start of semester 1 where reasonable accommodations and any other supports required will be agreed.
- Additional academic support in the form of small group or one-to-one tutorials and academic skills sessions are delivered in collaboration with the UCC [Skills Centre](#).
- Coffee mornings, breakfast clubs and group meetings are run on a regular basis to provide social support for students.
- Access students have dedicated student advisors who are available to meet with students for a face to face or virtual consultation at any stage during the academic year to discuss any issues they may have and seek advice and assistance.
- [Laptop Loan](#) service is available to students from low-income households who do not have the resources to purchase their own device. Students are given a laptop for the duration of the academic year.
- UCC has committed to being an [Autism Friendly University](#) by making the physical, social and academic environments of the campus more 'autism-friendly' by undertaking a multi-year project to achieve these aims. There is an [Autism & Uni Student Toolkit](#) along with a new dedicate space of calm and respite for students – [the Calm Zone](#).
- An [employAbility programme](#) for students with Disabilities has been expanded. The programme aims to increase the number of students with disabilities securing post-graduation employment.

## International Students

The international Office provides both pastoral and practical support to international students through a variety of services outlined below.

### *Before Arrival*

- Nurture Emails
- Welcome Email/ Preparation Email/ Final Countdown Email
- [Dedicated web support](#)
- Visa and Immigration
- Fees and Cost of Living
- Accommodation
- Key Dates
- Getting to Cork
- Health Insurance
- In Person Advisory Sessions

### *On Arrival*

- Airport meet & greet \*for some
- Bespoke Orientation
- Bespoke Welcome Programmes
- Assistance with Registration
- How to Thrive when you Arrive – GAP Sponsored Infographic
- [Dedicated web support](#)
- Orientation and registration
- Opening a Bank Account
- Working in Ireland
- Immigration Information
- Welcome Programme
- Getting Connected
- Essential Information Sessions
- Visa and Immigration
- Snapshot of UCC Supports and Services
- Practical Tips
- Culture and Transitions
- Live sessions recorded for playback viewing on Canvas.
- Canvas Internationalisation Module

### *Ongoing Support*

- Nurture Email every 2<sup>nd</sup> week
- [Facebook Community](#)
- In Person Appointments with Staff
- Booking System for online Appointments with Staff
- Immigration & Visa Advice and Advocacy
- [Dedicated Website](#)
- Practical life
- Student Services
- Irish Culture
- [Student Support Tree](#)
- [Keep Well Website](#)
- After Hours on Call Emergency Contact Service for students
- Dedicated COVID-19 webpage
- Skills Centre for academic mentorship

### **Online/Blended Learning**

The following supports are provided in regard to online/blended delivery programmes:

- Teaching Today in UCC is an internal SharePoint Communications site for those who teach in UCC, providing advice on options to consider for engaging students in a blended context during COVID- 19
- Centre for Digital Education [website](#), where staff can access training and information and request one to one consultations with Instructional Designers to enhance the online learning experience. The vision of

the CDE is to empower staff to improve student learning through the best practice application of technology.

- The [Teaching with Technology](#) Canvas course. All staff are enrolled and this is our one-stop location for information on how to use Canvas, Panopto and Teams to teach online. This resource bank is maintained by the CDE and IT Services so it is kept current.
- The Teaching with Technology MS Team is a live forum where any staff member can ask a question about any aspect of their online teaching and receive a prompt response from a dedicated team who monitor the channel.
- Canvas's 24/7 help system ensures that any student or staff member in UCC can request assistance from a dedicated Canvas support team around the use of Canvas in teaching and learning. Where this team cannot answer a question, it is referred back to the appropriate UCC office.
- The [Teach Digi](#) project has been running since 2019. This is UCC's contribution to the HEA-funded national Enhancing Digital Teaching and Learning project. In Teach Digi, the five pillars of UCC student feedback are used to inform discussion and support for teaching staff around student engagement.
- [UCC's Lecture Recording policy](#) sets out how this approach should be used by teaching staff to ensure greater and timely access to learning by students.
- The [Success Zone](#) Canvas course is managed by the Skills Centre within the Office of Vice President for Learning and Teaching. All UCC students are enrolled in this student-facing course which provides guidance around a myriad of topics, including online learning.

## 4.0 QA of Research Activities and Programmes

### Research Activity

University College Cork (UCC) is an internationally competitive, research-led University that plays a key role in the development of Ireland's knowledge-based economy. Our institutional research strategy focuses on creating and supporting world-leading clusters of researchers, building on the research strengths of the University and is aligned with key Government strategies including the *Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 (Hunt Report)*, and *Ireland's Strategy for Research and Development, Science and Technology, Innovation 2020*.

[UCC Futures](#) is an ambitious new programme of research prioritisation coupled with an innovative academic recruitment strategy across ten indicative areas of strategic importance that will build a foundation for economic, societal and cultural resilience and prosperity. The greatest **global** challenge of our time requires us to find equitable, sustainable and just solutions to the problems of climate change, hunger, poverty and social and health disparities among the world's populations. The complexity of these global challenges requires experts from multiple disciplines and sectors to think radically and collaborate in new and re-imagined ways.

UCC Futures provides the **creative, inclusive and transformative interdisciplinary platform** that mines the frontiers of curious inquiry at the intersection of disciplines. This ambitious programme of research prioritisation coupled with an innovative academic recruitment strategy across ten thematic areas of strategic importance is building a foundation for economic, societal and cultural resilience and prosperity.

UCC Futures values excellence at every level in a truly connected knowledge ecosystem, enhancing the interdisciplinary collaborative environment to inspire, engage, and enable our research community, in partnership within the co-located clinical and enterprise ecosystem. We are creating a consciously better society through embedding the excellence of our research within our curriculum and ensuring our students are taught by world class **research leaders** within this connected knowledge ecosystem.

UCC has formally endorsed the revised version of the [National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland](#). To ensure alignment with this policy and international developments in the key area of research integrity, and informed by the [National Forum on Research Integrity](#), the UCC [Code of Research Conduct](#) provides a robust framework for the proper conduct of research and provides guidance for researchers on the standards expected at UCC. The Code details the responsibilities of the University and the research community with respect to the conduct of research including; principles of good practice, ethical approval, competence, responsibility, integrity, rights and dignity of research participants, data management and dissemination. In the light of the revised European Code and National Policy, Statement of Research Integrity, and taking on board experience in its use, the UCC Code of Research Conduct was revised in both 2019 and 2021 to ensure that the Code is up to date with the pace of national and

international developments in the field. The UCC Digital Badge in the Responsible Conduct of Research has been widely recognised as a very impactful initiative to raise awareness among the research community of current policies and approaches in ensuring the highest standards in the conduct of research.

The [UCC policy on the governance of research institutes, centres and units](#) provides clarity on how research institutes centres and units interface with academic Schools and Colleges. In 2020, a new approach to the annual reporting process was successfully piloted in the College of Business & Law and, as a reporting mechanism, has proven highly effective. The EUA Institutional Evaluation Report (IEP) highlighted the importance of ensuring effective engagement between RICUs and academic schools, as enabled by this policy, to foster research excellence and maximise synergies and impact.

The development and implementation of a comprehensive employment and career management structure for research staff, including a career development programme for the *circa*. 1,000 researchers employed in UCC, was one of the most substantial change management projects undertaken in recent years, initiated in 2011 as a partnership between HR and the OVPRI. Indeed, UCC has influenced national thinking in this area through implementation of this career structure, including a research support track to complement the traditional postdoc / senior postdoc / research fellow path.

On the basis of this and supporting initiatives, and reflecting the progress made to support researcher career development within the University, UCC received the European Commission's *HR Excellence in Research Award* on a number of occasions. UCC now proactively assists other universities throughout Europe in their efforts to attain the *HR Excellence in Research* award.

Similar to the challenges it has brought to bear at all levels of society, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a very significant impact on UCC research and our research community. The Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS), through the Higher Education Authority (HEA), provided funding to UCC to support research activities that were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. In a process managed by UCC Research, three calls to distribute this funding to postgraduate students and contract researchers impacted by the pandemic, have been completed. Following panel evaluation, 446 awards were made to the most affected UCC researchers and students with a combined value of €6.2 million.

The positive impact that this funding has had on UCC researchers and, in particular, early career researchers whose work was severely compromised by the pandemic has been enormously beneficial. A sector report on the significant benefits of these interventions, including contributions from UCC, is available here: <https://www.iaa.ie/COVID19/positive-impact-of-the-hea-COVID-19-fund-on-researchers-in-the-university-sector/>.

## **Research Quality Review**

UCC has procedures for the quality assurance and enhancement of research and a method for review via the Research Quality Review. UCC has undertaken two Research Quality Review exercises with reports published for both exercises in 2009 and 2015 ([RQR Reports](#)). In the 2015 RQR all units in UCC, including research centres, were reviewed by 15 panels comprising more than 300 international peer reviewers.

Building on the experience garnered from the first two institutional-wide initiatives, and cognisant of very significant changes as to what constitutes best practice in relation to research/researcher assessment in the open research era, planning the methodology for the next RQR is underway, while maintaining the overall objective of continued enhancement of research quality across the University.

### **Research Programmes**

The [Graduate Studies Office](#) supports our postgraduate student body throughout their time in UCC. Research students, doctoral and Masters, are a key component of the research community in UCC. As an autonomous university, UCC has developed its own [internal policies](#), having regard to the Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Research Degree Programmes (2017), the National Framework for Doctoral Education, Ireland's Framework of Good Practice for Research Programmes, and the HEA's Principles of Good Practice for Research within Irish HEIs (2020). UCC's Academic Council Graduate Studies Committee are actively reviewing and updating UCC's Graduate Studies' policies.

In UCC there is oversight from when each research student applies to the university and has a supervisory team appointed, to peer review as part of the panel for Annual Progress Reviews, to the appointment of External and Internal examiners for the examination of the research thesis. From 2020, an Independent Chair became a compulsory member of the *viva voce* for doctoral students and a *viva voce* has been introduced for MD students. The reports of the Examiners for every research student are examined by UCC's Academic Council Graduate Studies Committee and recommendations are sent to Academic Council for approval.

Research students are supported in the research journey by workshops run by the Dean of Graduate Studies, from orientation at the start of the research degree through to training for the *viva voce*. Orientation for new research postgraduates is held twice per year (April and October), highlighting policies and procedures, an overview of the Structured PhD modules, the Irish Universities [Doctoral Skills Statement](#), as well as the range of supports available in UCC. Similarly, a range of workshops and webinars are run to support supervisors. A digital badge is available to supervisors who undertake the supervisor training workshop and assessment which is run by UCC's Centre for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning (CIRTL). Responsible research conduct and integrity is an integral part of the training of research students.

## 5.0 Staff Recruitment, Development and Support

### University Recruitment and Post Approval

University recruitment is subject to a comprehensive framework of regulations, policies and guidelines underpinned by the provisions of the [University Principal Statute](#) and subject to relevant external guidelines and legislation in this regard. Detailed [appointment regulations](#) relating to individual grades and cohorts of staff and a [policy on conflict of interest in relation to recruitment and promotions](#) act as the foundation of the day-to-day management of all recruitment activity. A fundamental principle of university recruitment practice is equality of opportunity for all applicants and all recruitment regulations have a mandatory training requirement for all internal committee members with a specific focus on unconscious bias. UCC has an e-recruitment system in place for core funded positions and for research funded positions. E-recruitment has significantly improved our capacity to analyse and report on all recruitment activity including gaining a deeper understanding of patterns of application and a detailed breakdown of proportional representation at shortlisting and interview.

### Probation and Establishment Process – Academic Posts

A [probation period](#) applies to provide a reasonable period during which the new appointee can benefit from additional support and guidance in order to establish teaching and appropriate academic administrative activities and to establish research activity. The probation period also allows the University to be assured as to the quality of the appointment and that the new appointee will be able to carry out all responsibilities required and to an appropriate high standard. There is an establishment period of progress review and support by a senior academic board chaired by the President. Therefore, there is a minimum of one-year support during probation and, where the appointment is permanent there is a three-year period of support in total.

### Staff Training and Development

UCC is committed to the support and promotion of [staff development and training](#). There is also an [employee assistance programme](#) in place provided by Spectrum.Life. [Performance Management](#): Performance enhancement support for all staff and teams via dedicated resources and workshops complementary to the PDRS process is available. UCC has a [Performance Management Policy and Capability Policy](#) as a means of local and individual discussion on the role of [performance and staff development](#).

New staff are assigned a named mentor on appointment and there is a [mentoring programme](#) in place to support academic staff with less than five years' experience as an academic. UCC has conducted a review of academic promotion schemes and competitive calls have been processed for promotion to Senior Lecturer and Professor (Scale 2). UCC has an Academic Mentoring panel which will mentor on a diverse range of topics/ areas of need relevant to academic life.

The Office of the Vice President for Learning and Teaching supports a wide range of CPD activities for staff through the Centre for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning ([CIRTL](#)) which provides support for all staff and postgraduate students in their teaching and learning roles. Credit bearing programmes in

Teaching and Learning in Higher Education up to and including NFQ level 9 (Postgraduate Certificate/Postgraduate Diploma) are available online and free of charge to all categories of staff who support student learning, along with tailored modules for postgraduate students engaged in teaching. All newly appointed staff are required to enrol in and complete the Postgraduate Certificate programme, and participation rates in the programme are an institutional performance measure through the HEA Compact process. The Postgraduate Certificate programme is UCC's largest – as measured by enrolment numbers – postgraduate programme, and over 70% of all staff have successfully completed the certificate. The Centre staff also run regular seminar workshops on Teaching and Learning and Assessment theories and practices and these are advertised to all staff.

### **Staff Wellbeing and Development**

UCC has a strong tradition of investment in [Staff Wellbeing and Development](#) and we are proud of the work that has been achieved in supporting and enhancing staff wellbeing and development over several years. UCC strives to deliver an inclusive and respectful environment where staff and students can all progress and develop. We are committed to enhancing our policies and procedures to provide the conditions and opportunities for undertaking quality work and creating impact which connects with our strategic goals. We seek to facilitate career progression by acknowledging and rewarding staff for their endeavours and creating opportunities for colleagues to enhance their skills to achieve excellence. We are committed to equality, diversity and inclusivity at all career stages and maintain a strong focus on wellbeing. We work actively to foster a dynamic and inclusive culture by investing in staff to help recognise and maximise their contribution to the collective success of UCC.

Staff Wellbeing & Development produces a broad and extensive annual schedule of development opportunities and wellbeing initiatives, activities, workshops, talks, UCC events and programmes. We work actively to respond to development and wellbeing needs identified through the Performance and Development Review System, the University's Strategic and Annual Operational Plans, feedback from our annual survey and in response to local, institutional, national and international developments. We provide advice, guidance and support in the area of professional development planning across the university. We oversee personal development initiatives including [coaching](#) and [mentoring](#) which are available to all UCC staff members.

Staff Wellbeing supports are offered to staff through [training](#), activities, talks and events to assist them meet their personal and professional goals and to provide additional assistance during life's planned and unplanned challenges. Work in the area is ongoing, in particular to create a localised culture of employee engagement in development and wellbeing and to promote and develop further initiatives facilitated by staff members for UCC staff. UCC is proud of our achievements in being the first Irish university to attain the national IBEC Keepwell Accreditation standard and of winning the award for Physical Activity.

### **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

UCC has been a signatory to the Athena Swan Charter since its launch in Ireland in 2015. UCC has held a Bronze Athena Swan award since 2016 and will apply for Silver accreditation in November 2024. Staff across the University are contributing to an equality self-assessment exercise, underway since 2023, to assess progress under [UCC's current gender equality](#) action plan and to identify areas for improvement in the next five-year action plan.

In addition to the Athena SWAN Charter, UCC's Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Unit supports a range of equality initiatives to support both staff and students. UCC's Gender Identity and Expression Policy and Guidelines offers supports to UCC's transgender and non-binary staff and students. The EDI Unit supports the work of UCC's Equality Committee and Race Equality Forum, and also UCC's LGBT+ Staff Network, which provide an extensive range of outreach and support to UCC staff and students and help create and sustain a working environment that values equality, embraces diversity and promotes inclusion. All policies can be found [here](#).

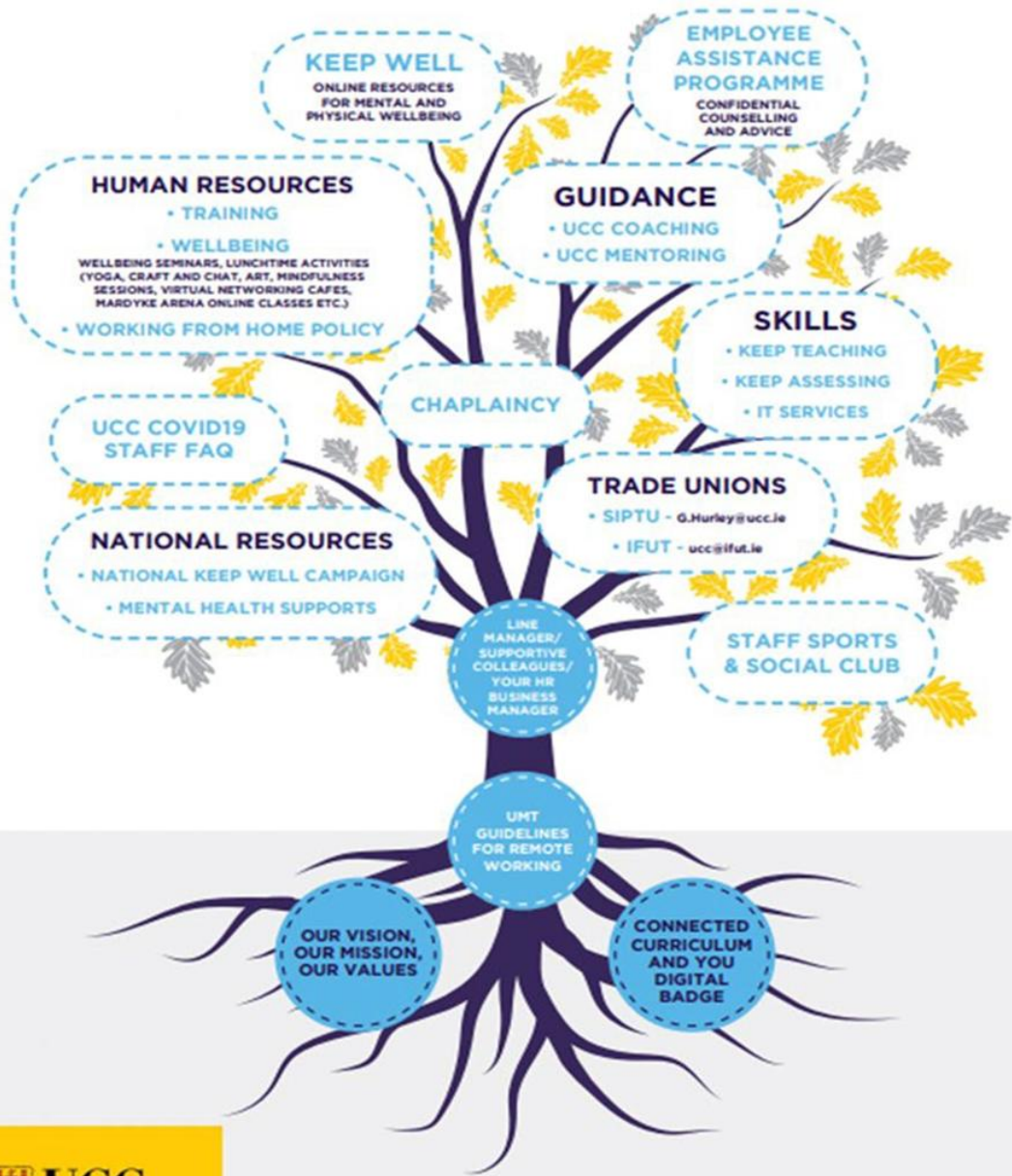
## Resource Tree Showing Staff Supports

# SUPPORTING UCC STAFF IN 2020/21

## RESOURCE TREE SHOWING STAFF RESOURCES

The "Acorn to Mighty Oak" has come to symbolise students' academic and professional development journey throughout their time at UCC. We believe this is also true for our staff. In alignment with this rich metaphor, the support services available to our staff are presented in the form of a Resource Tree.

This tree depicts the support services and resources available to staff and provide links to further information about each service.



## 6.0 Information and Data Management

### Records and Data Management

Records and Data Management policies and procedures have been updated and continue to evolve through UCC's ongoing Digital Records Management (DRM) Project. This project seeks to ensure that records and data in all formats are managed effectively through policies, procedures, and systems which

- support business processes,
- enable legal and regulatory compliance and
- preserve archives of the University's history,

while protecting the security and integrity of records and data, including personal data.

Records retention schedules, based on functional areas (academic and administrative), set out what records the University maintains in order to function and carry out its responsibilities. They detail how long those records have to be retained, and the final disposition of those records, through controlled destruction, review, or permanent retention as University archives as appropriate. The layout and structure of electronic records storage for units within the University will align to the unit's records retention schedule on completion of the DRM project.

The records management policy assigns responsibilities and sets out the structures for University staff to ensure the efficient management of records. Policy is supported by procedures providing practical instructions and by best practice guidance on related areas, e.g., version control, email management.

Schedules, policy, and guidance are accessible to staff on the [University Archives and Records Management](#) section of the Office of Corporate and Legal Affairs (OCLA) website and includes additional internal guidance and training materials on records management.

The [UCC data protection policy](#) details how the University meets its responsibilities under relevant data protection legislation such as the Data Protection Acts and EU General Data Protection Regulation ([GDPR](#)). The University also ensures researchers are supported to meet the requirements of the Health Research Regulations made under the Data Protection Acts. In 2021, the University added additional staff resources to its Information Compliance Unit including a Deputy Data Protection Officer for Research.

Like all public bodies, access to records held by the University is available under the Freedom of Information Act, 2014; the procedure for this is available at: <https://www.ucc.ie/en/ocla/comp/freedom/howfoi/>. In addition, [individuals](#) can seek access to their own personal data under data protection legislation.

Records management at UCC informs and is also informed by relevant/related policies (and procedures) throughout the University. These include:

- [Data Classification Procedure](#)
- [Research Data Management Policy](#)
- [Acceptable Usage Policy](#)
- [Externally Hosted Personal Data Policy](#)

Records and archives are maintained by the Quality Enhancement Unit (QEU) for quality review-related records inclusive of quality reports, improvement plans, operation of the Quality Enhancement Committee including agendas, papers and minutes since the inception of the quality review processes. Early records are retained in hard copy and electronically; more recently records are archived wholly electronically. Reports for all quality reviews conducted are published on the [QEU](#) website.

Records related to the quality policies and procedures for the academic affairs of the University governed by Academic Council are managed by the Office for Academic Affairs and Governance and held on the [Academic Policy Portal](#).

As part of the [Connected University](#) programme of work, UCC is in the midst of an ambitious multi-year investment in its core student and curriculum management systems. This investment will further enhance how the University manages its information and data. Highlighted below are some of the expected benefits from this investment.

- The establishment of an intuitional Data Hub will better support enrolment planning and analysis of student retention and performance data.
- A new curriculum management system will allow the capture of new curriculum meta-data and attributes and further enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the programme approval process.
- A new student placement system is being implemented across the university and will bring with it additional institutional level oversight of placement as a key form of student assessment.
- Collectively, all of the above will provide the University in a better place to explore and support the introduction of more flexible learning such as micro-credentials.

The University tracks and measures the availability and integration of its information records using agreed Key Performance Metric's. Each year, information technology KPI's are considered and discussed by the management team.

## 7.0 Public Information and Communication

### Website and Social Media Communications

UCC operates a significant digital estate for communications (the various digital platforms and channels that we use to communicate) for both internal and external communications. This includes:

- The <https://ucc.ie> domain (which at last count encompasses over 500 individual websites)
- Official University Facebook, X, Instagram and LinkedIn pages and profiles
- Social media profiles across various platforms for Individual School, department, research institutes, research centres, research units, and other UCC organisational units
- Internal SharePoint websites
- Internal Workvivo comms platform
- Digital signage
- Individual newsletters from various parts of the organisation

These channels allow us to communicate to our various audience groups that include:

- Prospective students (including undergraduate, postgraduate, adult continuing education, international, continuing education)
- Parents and Guidance Counsellors of prospective undergraduate students
- Current students
- Current Staff
- Prospective staff
- The wider academic community
- The wider community in general
- Business and Enterprise
- Our alumni
- The research community

### UCC website

The UCC website has been in existence since 1993 and was the 1<sup>st</sup> website in Ireland (and the 9<sup>th</sup> website in the world). The website is overseen by the Web Content Team in the Office of Marketing and Communications in close collaboration with the Digital Services team in IT services through a collaborative working group called the “Digital Estate for Communications Group”. Governance of the website is underpinned by the University’s Web and Social Media policy. The Office of Media and Communications provides content for the upper levels of the website while individual organisational units (Colleges, Schools, Departments, Centres, Units and Institutes) provide content for their local websites. Strategies, reports, governance, quality assurances and policies and procedures for staff, students and the wider public are all accessible from the website.

### **Education and Training Programmes**

Our prospective student portion of the website covers:

- [Courses](#)
- [Undergraduate](#)
- [Postgraduate](#)
- [International Office](#)
- [Adult Continuing Education](#)
- [UCC Online](#)
- [Continuing Professional Development](#)
- [Scholarships and Prizes](#)
- [Transition-In Programme](#)
- [Graduate Attributes](#)
- [Ask](#)
- [Incoming First Year Students](#)
- [Apply to UCC](#)

This information is collated and managed by the Recruitment and Admissions offices, who work with Schools and Colleges, to get all programme and module information up-to-date. Graduate and International students can apply through the dedicated UCC Apply website.

### **Social Media**

The university operates a number of official pages and presences on:

- [Facebook](#)
- [X](#)
- [Instagram](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- [YouTube](#)

The official channels are managed by the Marketing and Media teams from the Office of Media and Communications and provides regular news, information and updates from UCC to current students, alumni and interested parties.

### **Outreach and General Public**

The [Revisit UCC Podcasts](#) are a series of podcasts produced by the [Visitors' Centre](#) which looks at different aspects of life, research and history at UCC. The podcasts are available on all podcasting platforms and are advertised regularly on social media. The Visitors' Centre also run public, private and school tours which communicate the university, story, messaging and gives a top line view of the Universities research priorities.

Other channels for public dissemination activities include:

- regular news and press releases on research stories, student success, rankings, partnerships and key announcements from UCC which are published on the UCC website, through social media channels and media outreach.
- [Independent Thinking](#) digital magazine which contains a round-up of high impact stories from across teaching and learning, student experience, research and alumni.

### **Quality Processes**

Quality assurance policies and procedures and the evaluation and findings from quality reviews are published in full on the [Quality Enhancement Unit](#) website.

## 8.0 Monitoring and Periodic Review

### Periodic Review

Quality assurance and enhancement policy at UCC is informed by international best practice and has regard to the requirements of the *Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act, 2012* and with the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (2015)*. Our [guidelines](#) are comprehensive and include our objectives, principles and process.

UCC's approach to peer review is informed by the [Quality Enhancement Policy](#); the University is committed to institutional reflection on the outcomes of quality review processes to contribute to on-going institutional planning and development. In light of this, the University has taken the enhancement decision to have senior university officers as Chairs of Panels to further augment their connection into the quality review process. Chairs are, for the most part, members of ULT (University Leadership Team). ULT is the senior executive management committee whose membership includes senior university officers, Vice-Presidents and Heads of College and its purpose is to assist and support the President in leading the development of the University and the delivery of University Core functions in accordance with the strategic plan and the Universities Act. This is part of the Quality Enhancement strategy for shared engagement and shared responsibility for quality across the University.

The key components of the periodic quality processes include review methodologies for: academic quality, research quality, support quality, thematic and topic specific issues. Review methodologies are based on self-assessment and an expert assessment model involving external peer review, national and international benchmarking and analysis of good practice. They are underpinned by key data and indicators emerging from internal approval, review and monitoring mechanisms. Periodic review takes account of national and European guidelines as well as good practice in higher education quality. The methodology for the periodic review process follows the 4-stage process of:

- Self-evaluation
- Appointment of a peer review panel and site visit
- Publication of a peer review report
- Follow-up and quality enhancement

All review reports and recommendations arising from periodic review are considered by the Quality Enhancement Committee and senior management. Recommendations arising from review are responded to by the area under review and are subject to a follow-up process. Key issues arising from review are analysed and reported to the Quality Enhancement Committee and the University Leadership Team as part of the integration between quality and strategic planning actions and processes. Annually, the QEC reports on the key issues, improvements and themes from University-wide periodic review to Governing Authority, which then refers the report to Academic Council for consideration and action.

### **Thematic Review**

In addition to periodic quality reviews of education, research and services, Thematic Reviews are also undertaken. The function of Thematic Review is to support the development of priority strategic actions through peer review and benchmarking. These reviews take an enhancement-led strategic evaluation of a topic encompassing University-wide processes, practices or policies to assess their current stage of effectiveness and identify international good practices that can inform future developments. Each review has a customised scope which is developed by the Quality Enhancement Unit in consultation with the senior sponsor and the Quality Enhancement Committee.

Specific features of Thematic Review include:

- A holistic policy to practice approach to a strategic theme
- A horizontal scope which transcends units and includes multiple stakeholders across an activity
- External expert panel
- Strategically aligned and sponsored

The conduct of Thematic Reviews follows broadly the same methodological steps as periodic review, with some adaptation to the self-evaluation report to reflect the strategic and University-wide scope of the review process.

### **External Peer Review**

External peer review is a central part of the University's overall approach to quality and in this regard the University engages extensively with other higher education institutions, nationally and internationally. Objectivity of external peer review for periodic quality review, external examining and new programme approval is preserved through the rigorous application of criteria to ensure that peer reviewers have appropriate expertise and experience to fulfil their roles.

All peer reviewers must be free of any conflicts of interest including current or recent prior close association with the University including as a student, staff member, or peer. Role of the External Assessor in new programme approval: <https://www.ucc.ie/en/apar/curriculumapproval/handbook/>

Extern Examination procedures for taught programmes: <https://www.ucc.ie/en/academicgov/externs/>

Extern Examiner policy: <https://www.ucc.ie/en/academicgov/policies/standards/#external-examiners>

### **Supporting Self-Evaluation**

The University's Quality Enhancement Unit provides advice and guidance to units engaged in self-evaluation as part of the periodic quality review processes and [guidelines](#) are accessible and available through the University website: As part of the self-evaluation process, all academic units prepare a [Case Study of Good Practice](#) to highlight existing practices which are effective in supporting and enhancing student learning.

Through partnership with Staff Development & Well Being support is provided for SWOT Workshops for all units at the outset of the self-evaluation process. Ongoing work with the Centre for Integration of

Research, Teaching & Learning (CIRTL) and Research Support Services provides ongoing support and connection to self-evaluation and review methodologies for education and research.

Each unit undergoing review is assigned a Review Coordinator from the QEU. The Review Coordinator works with the unit from the outset to the conclusion of the process; this role provides dedicated support, advice and guidance on all aspects of the periodic review process. The Review Coordinator also works with the Panel for each review, acting as a key point of liaison between the Peer Review Panel and the University, supporting the Panel throughout the site visit, facilitating the development of the Peer Review Report and coordinating follow-up.

## 9.0 Details of Arrangements with Third Parties

### 9.1 Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies

Type of arrangement	Total Number
PRSBs	52
Awarding bodies	1
QA bodies	0

1. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	BPharm/MPharm (CK703)
Date of accreditation or last review	01/05/2025
Date of next review	02/05/2030

2. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Irish Medical Council
Programme titles and links to publications	Direct Entry Medicine (CK701)
Date of accreditation or last review	01/12/2024
Date of next review	01/12/2029

3. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Irish Medical Council
Programme titles and links to publications	Graduate Entry Medicine (CK791)
Date of accreditation or last review	01/12/2024
Date of next review	01/12/2029

4. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists (ISCP)
Programme titles and links to publications	MSc Physiotherapy (CKX23)
Date of accreditation or last review	23/01/2025
Date of next review	26/09/2030

<b>5. Type of arrangement</b>	<b>PRSB</b>
Name of body:	CORU, Irish Association of Speech & Language Therapists (IASLT)
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc Speech and Language Therapy (CK705)
Date of accreditation or last review	30/01/2025
Date of next review	30/01/2030

<b>6. Type of arrangement</b>	<b>PRSB</b>
Name of body:	Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	Postgraduate Diploma in Public Health Nursing (CKW01)
Date of accreditation or last review	23/07/2025
Date of next review	23/07/2030

<b>7. Type of arrangement</b>	<b>PRSB</b>
Name of body:	Academy of Clinical Science and Laboratory Medicine
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc (Hons) Biomedical Science (joint with MTU) MT871
Date of accreditation or last review	01/04/2025
Date of next review	01/04/2030

## 9.2 Collaborative Provision

### Definitions:

QQI's Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes, and Joint Awards, 2012 defines collaborative provision as a process that occurs where two or more providers are involved by formal agreement in the provision of a programme of higher education and training.

The Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 (as amended) defines 'joint award' as a single award made jointly by two or more awarding bodies

The Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 (as amended) defines 'linked provider' as a provider that is not a designated awarding body but enters into an arrangement with a designated awarding body under which arrangement the provider provides a programme of education and training that satisfies all or part of the prerequisites for an award of the designated awarding body.

Type of arrangement	Total Number
Joint research degrees	3
Joint/double/multiple awards	17
Collaborative programmes	6
Franchise programmes	0
Linked providers (DABs only)	0

1. Collaborative provision	Joint research degree
Name of body (/bodies):	Universite de Lille
Programme titles and links to publications	MA Global Cultures and Migrations (MAGCM)
Date of last review	10/02/2025
Date of next review	

2. Collaborative provision	Joint research degree
Name of body (/bodies):	Munster Technological University
Programme titles and links to publications	Genomics of the human gut microbiome in early life
Date of last review	07/04/2025
Date of next review	

3. Collaborative provision	Joint/double/multiple award
Name of body (/bodies):	Beijing Foreign Studies Universit

Programme titles and links to publications	BSc, MSc, MA, BA
Date of last review	13/06/2025
Date of next review	13/06/2030

<b>4. Collaborative provision</b>	<b>Joint/double/multiple award</b>
Name of body (/bodies):	Beijing Technology and Business University
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc Risk & Actuarial Studies
Date of last review	09/07/2025
Date of next review	09/07/2035

<b>5. Collaborative provision</b>	<b>Joint/double/multiple award</b>
Name of body (/bodies):	Shanghai University
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc, BA, MSc, MA (depending on pathways)
Date of last review	28/08/2025
Date of next review	28/08/2030

## 9.3 Articulation Agreements

### Definition:

Per the IHEQN Guidelines for the Approval, Monitoring and Review of Collaborative and Transnational Provision, an articulation agreement may be defined as a process whereby all students who satisfy academic criteria on one programme are automatically entitled (on academic grounds) to be admitted with advance standing to a subsequent stage of a programme of a degree awarding body. These arrangements are subject to a formal agreement between the parties.

<b>Articulation agreements - Total number</b>	<b>15</b>
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<b>1. Articulation agreement</b>	<b>Articulation agreement</b>
Name of body (/bodies):	Yangzhou University
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc/BA/MSc depending on pathway student enters
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	10/10/2024
Date of next review	10/10/2032
Detail of the agreement	Allow YZU students transfer to existing UCC programmes

<b>2. Articulation agreement</b>	<b>Articulation agreement</b>
Name of body (/bodies):	Cork Education and Training Board
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc in Occupational Therapy
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	25/06/2025
Date of next review	25/06/2030
Detail of the agreement	Creation of a 1+4 tertiary degree with Cork and Kerry ETB. Students will complete Year 1 in either Cork or Kerry, ETB and proceed into Year 1 of the BSc in Occupational Therapy in UCC in the second year of their study. Progression to Year 2 is in accordance with strict criteria. Students not deemed eligible to progress may exit with QQI Level 5 award. Current degree structure for BSc in Occupational Therapy is unchanged.



**Annual Quality Report (UCC)**  
**PART B: INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE**  
**ENHANCEMENT & IMPACT**  
**Reporting Period 2024-2025**

## **PART B: INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE ENHANCEMENT & IMPACT**

# 1.0 Quality Implementation and Developments

## 1.1 Strategic QA Updates

### Recalibration of Periodic Quality Review

UCC recalibrated its periodic Quality Review process during 2024/25 in advance of its Fourth Cycle, following a period of review, stakeholder engagement and benchmarking.

#### *Context*

Since 2000/01, University College Cork has undertaken three cycles of Periodic Quality Review as required under the provisions of the Universities Act (1997) and the Qualifications & Quality Assurance (Education & Training) (Amendment 2019) Act with the third cycle of review completed in October 2024.

The overall approach to Periodic Quality Review is a shared one across the previously established Universities having been developed through the work of the Irish Universities Association and the Irish Universities Quality Board in the form of the Framework for Quality in Irish Universities (2003 & 2007). Compliance of the Framework with requirements for quality in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) was confirmed by the EUA Review of Quality in Irish Universities (2005). Following the establishment of Quality & Qualifications Ireland, in 2012, the procedures for Periodic Quality Review in operation were confirmed to meet national policy requirements.

#### *Development of Quality Review in Third Cycle at UCC*

Features of Quality Review developed during the Third Cycle, have included:

- Enhancement focus
- Full engagement of student as reviewers
- Introduction of good practice case studies
- Development of Thematic Review approach
- Units of Review: Schools and Functional Areas
- Enabling support and advisory through QEU & HR staff for units under review
- Stakeholder data gathering and processing
- Pilot of programme review as part of self-evaluation
- Increased engagement of ULT members in the review process

The self-evaluation process for UCC's Institutional Review, identified two areas for further enhancement which were included in the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report:

- Strengthening of quality culture through engagement of staff in a wider range of quality activities, indicatively thematic quality groups; enhanced benchmarking; Thematic Review; the dissemination and exchange of Good Practice and the biennial Good Practice Symposium;

- Enhancement of periodic review by strengthening programmatic review, student-centred aspects and the integration of indicators of quality for self-evaluation, enhancement planning and implementation. Increasing alignment of review outcomes with developments in strategy, planning and policy as well as external alignment with professional and statutory body review mechanisms.

#### *Preparing for Fourth Cycle of Review*

In advance of commencing a Fourth Cycle of Periodic Quality Review, the model of periodic review was examined holistically taking account of incremental changes to date as well as current external and internal issues to identify points of re-calibration required to meet institutional, national and European requirements and ensure overall fitness of purpose of UCC's Quality Review process into the future.

The overall objectives of re-calibration are to:

- maximise strategic alignment with UCC structures, processes and decision-making activities;
- ensure that the next iteration of quality review is referenced with current/emerging national and international good practice;
- consolidate incremental and current ongoing enhancements to current model and operating procedures.

Towards this end, the commencement of the Fourth Cycle of Periodic Quality Review was deferred to 2025/26, to allow completion of the final reviews of Third Cycle in 23/24 and the first phase of units under review in the 4th cycle to have the required 12 month preparatory period during academic year 2024/25.

#### *Approach*

##### Stage 1

- Analysis of internal requirements through stakeholder engagement (staff, students and current reviewers) and documentary review.
- National and international benchmarking on quality review approaches and objectives relevant sectoral and institutional reports.
- Assessment of current UCC model based on 1 & 2.
- Outline revised model for quality review methodology.
- Peer review of proposal for revised quality review methodology.

##### Stage 2

- Refinement and/or development of required operational changes for updated model, inclusive of:
  - a. Review methodology full lifecycle
  - b. Self-evaluation process: approach, support structures and resource documentation
  - c. Qualitative and quantitative data for review

The Quality Enhancement Committee reviewed and approved the above approach.

### **Outcomes of Recalibration – revised Quality Review approach**

The outcomes of the work undertaken on the recalibration of the Quality Review Process include a revision of the Quality Enhancement Policy along with a revised Quality Review Process aligned with the University strategy and national and international good practice.

#### *Revised Quality Enhancement Policy*

University College Cork is committed to excellence in serving learners, stakeholders and its wider community through education, research and contribution to society nationally and globally.

Enhancement is a cornerstone of UCC's quality culture promoting the success and reputation of the university through an active commitment to critically assessing and refining institutional activities to better meet the diverse needs of learners, stakeholders and wider society. Strategically aligned with UCC's vision, mission, values and institutional goals, the university's quality enhancement processes form an ongoing cycle of systematic self-evaluation, and engagement with peer review to derive outcomes that help augment and develop the quality of the University's academic and service activities through effective implementation pathways and the sharing of good practice.

The University's quality enhancement approach is committed to:

- Building and embedding a culture of quality which is engaged, reflective and connected
- Working collaboratively to develop effective evaluation approaches that allow critical reflection on achievement of strategic goals and objectives and an appraisal of the known and anticipated needs of stakeholders
- Engaging students as active partners in the quality enhancement process to embed a student-centred approach
- Developing quality processes that promote creativity, excellence and innovation
- Using peer review as an important reference point for confirming and developing the quality of the University's activities
- Undertaking institutional reflection on the outcomes of quality review processes to contribute to on-going institutional planning, resource allocation and institutional development
- Ensuring that quality processes facilitate the sharing of good practice internally and externally
- Developing our evidenced-based approach to quality enhancement informed by relevant research and good practice nationally and internationally.

Quality assurance and enhancement policy at UCC is informed by international best practice and has regard to the requirements of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training)

(Amendment) Act 2019 and with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (2015) as well as the Higher Education Authority Act (2022, Section 76).

### *Revised Quality Review Process*

The Quality Review process, for both academic and professional services units, has been revised to cover 6 main domains which reflect the requirements of existing national (QQI) and quality guidelines for the European Higher Education Area, current Strategic Plan goals and wider higher education performance requirements. The scope of each of the domains and the associated criteria for both academic and professional services reviews are outlined below. These will provide the basis for self-evaluation, the ensuing Self-Evaluation Report and engagement with the Peer Review Panel.

### *Revised Academic Approach*

The revised Quality Review (Academic) approach is based on the following 6 domains which are underpinned by two transversal themes: Academic/Research Integrity and Equality, Diversity & Inclusion.

#### **1. School Context and Overall Profile**

The mission and objectives of the School and the effectiveness of its contribution to achievement of the overall University strategy.

#### **2. Academic Standards and Programme Quality**

The effectiveness of processes for the quality assurance and enhancement of programmes offered by the School.

#### **3. Student Learning Experience**

The effectiveness of academic approaches, learning resources and support to enable a high-quality student learning experience.

#### **4. International Student Experience**

The effectiveness of School-based supports and services available for international students enrolled on programmes inside or outside Ireland. This section focuses on the criteria to meet the IEM.

#### **5. Research activities**

The effectiveness of the School's management, planning and outcomes of research activities.

#### **6. Staffing**

The effectiveness of the School's activities for supporting and enabling staff development and performance in a progressive and inclusive way.



### *Revised Professional Services Approach*

The revised Quality Review (Professional Services) approach is based on the following 6 domains which are underpinned by the transversal theme of Academic/Research Integrity and Equality, Diversity & Inclusion.

#### **1. Unit Context and Overall Profile**

The mission and objectives of the unit and the unit's contribution to the achievement of the overall University strategy.

#### **2. Service Provision**

The effectiveness of processes for the quality assurance and enhancement of services provided by the unit.

#### **3. Service Design**

The effectiveness of service design, examining evolution over time, current configuration and responsiveness to emerging challenges.

**4. Specialist**

This section focuses on core activities which may not be substantially covered in other sections and may not be applicable to all units.

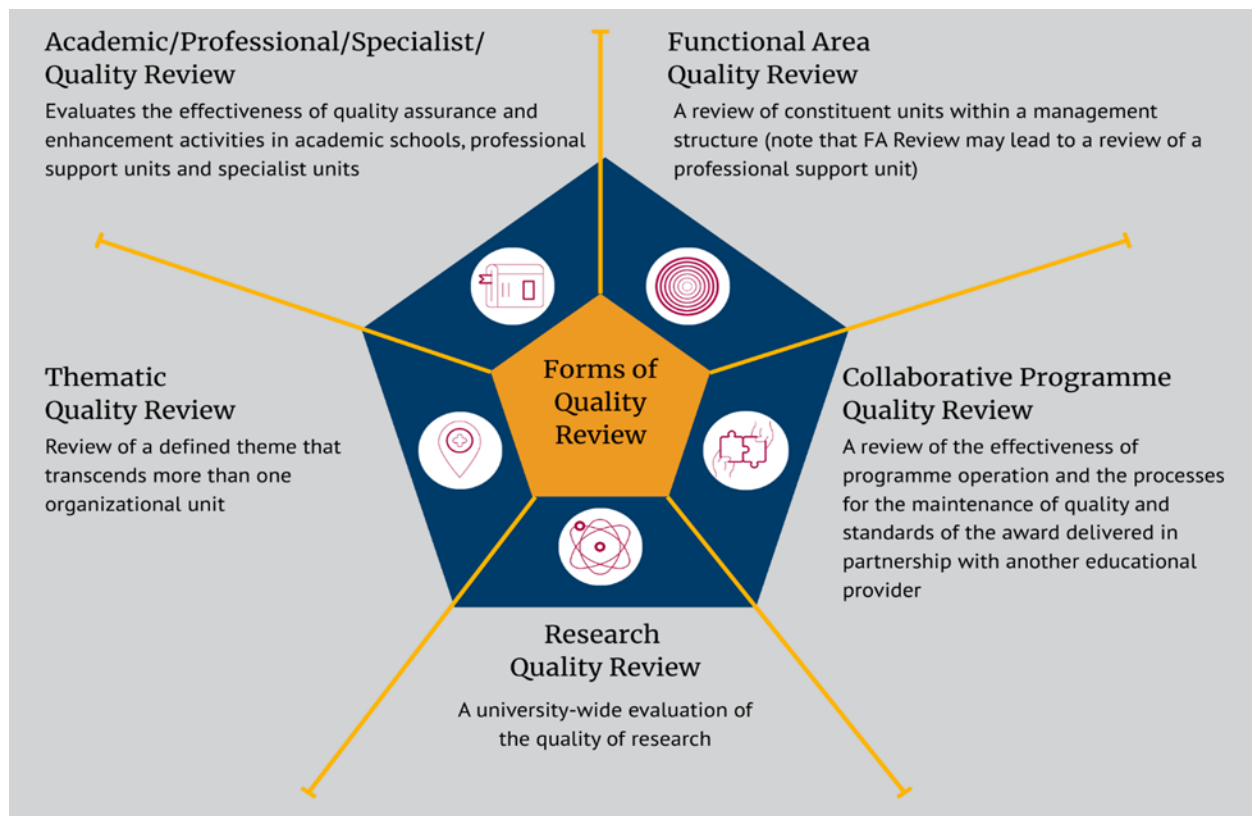
**5. Staffing**

This section considers the effectiveness of the unit's activities for supporting and enabling staff development and performance in a progressive and inclusive way.

**6. Communication & Engagement**

The effectiveness of the unit's communication strategies and external engagement with the wider community.



*Forms of Quality Review in UCC*

## 1.2 Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR

No.	Planned objectives (Previous AQR)	Update on Status
1	Institutional Review	UCC's Institutional Review recommendations are being addressed on an ongoing basis with reference to UCC's Strategic Plan <a href="#">Strategy 2023-28 Securing our Future</a>
2	Programme Review	A pilot programme review was undertaken, the outcomes of which will be considered and form the basis for systematic programme review in the fourth cycle of quality reviews. A Senior Academic Advisor for Programme Review was appointed in 2024/25.
3	Recalibration of the Quality Review process	UCC has recalibrated its methodology for Quality Review ensuring that it is strategically aligned, referenced to current/emergent good practice internationally and nationally and consolidates incremental and current ongoing enhancements.

## 1.3 Governance and Management

### 1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule

Body	Meeting dates
Governing Authority	10/09/24, 22/10/24, 10/12/24, 11/02/25, 11/03/25, 15/04/25, 10/06/25
Academic Council	11/10/2024, 15/11/2024, 17/01/2025, 28/02/2025, 16/05/2025, 06/06/2025
Quality Enhancement Committee	29/09/24, 23/01/25, 15/05/25

### 1.3.2 QA Leadership and Management Structural Developments

There were no structural changes during the time period.

## 1.4 Internal Monitoring and Review

### 1.4.1 Overview of Periodic Reviews

Unit of review for which report has been published during reporting period	Date of completion/reason for conducting review (if not planned) or non-completion (if planned but not conducted)	Links to relevant publications
School of Applied Psychology	October 2024	<a href="#">SchoolofAppliedPsychology-PeerReviewPanelReport2023-24.pdf</a>
Thematic Review of Doctoral Learning Experience	March 2025	<a href="https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/qualityenhancementunit/reports/thematicreports/DoctoralLearningExperience-PeerReviewPanelReport2024-25.pdf">https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/qualityenhancementunit/reports/thematicreports/DoctoralLearningExperience-PeerReviewPanelReport2024-25.pdf</a>

## 1.4.2 Expert Review Teams/Panels<sup>1</sup> involved in IQA

### (i) Expert Review Team/Panel Size and Related Processes

#### Guide

Details in respect of review/evaluation processes that concluded during the reporting period should be set out below.

Please use whole numbers rather than percentages.

	Total	Academic Schools/ Department	Professional Services/Support Unit	Approval/Review of Linked Provider	Programme Approval	Programme Review	Other
<b>Number of review/ evaluation processes</b>	2	1					1
<i>of those:</i>							
<b>On-site processes**</b>	2						
<b>Desk reviews</b>							
<b>Virtual processes**</b>	2						
<b>Average panel size for each process type*</b>	4.5						

\* excluding secretary if not a full panel member

\*\*The standard UCC Quality Review is hybrid - both onsite and virtual

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<sup>1</sup> QQI acknowledges that the terminology used to describe the groups of individuals that conduct peer review/evaluation varies from institution to institution.



## 2.0 IQA System – Enhancement and Impacts

### Internationalisation

#### ***UNIC - the European University of Cities in Post-Industrial Transition***

University College Cork is one of the founding partners of [UNIC, the European University of Cities in Post-Industrial Transition](#). UNIC is an alliance of ten universities across Europe who are working with their cities and with one another to tackle urban challenges and develop shared, sustainable futures.

The UNIC university partners are University College Cork, Erasmus University Rotterdam, Koç University Istanbul, University of Deusto in Bilbao, University of Liège, Ruhr University Bochum, University of Oulu, University of Zagreb, University of Lodz, Malmö University.

UNIC unlocks new international opportunities by connecting students, staff and city stakeholders with our partners for transformative learning, research, innovation and societal impact.

UNIC's flagship 'CityLabs' for co-creation were developed in the first phase, and has proven transformative. CityLabs are opportunities for collaboration between universities and the cities they're embedded in, working together on societal challenges

UNIC Centre for City Futures (CCF) is the next phase for UNIC CityLabs; a 'one-stop-shop' broker between UNIC Cities and UNIC universities.

The mission of the UNIC Centre for City Futures is to understand complex societal phenomena in the ten UNIC cities and to envision attractive futures that overcome urban challenges.

It is powered by 10 interconnected living laboratories with local transformation-making focuses. By linking ten university-city contexts, the Centre forms a large-scale transnational living laboratory, where UNIC CityLabs provide access to innovative data sources and opportunities for City-Engaged Research and City-challenge-based learning.

In Cork, UNIC Centre for City Futures has facilitated University College Cork participation in the Cork Futures Initiative, focusing on revitalising and renewing Cork city centre.

***Redesigning the Post-Industrial City MSc (RePIC)*** is a joint master's programme, established by the UNIC alliance in 2023 and delivered by eight UNIC university partners, including University College Cork (UCC). Architecture (Cork Centre for Architectural Education) and Geography lead the master's programme in UCC.

- RePIC's vision is to develop a dynamic network of urban thinkers with the capacity to contribute to future-oriented, avant-garde thinking on the revitalisation of the post-industrial city.
- 'RePIC was accredited in 2023 by AQAS (DE): the first Irish degree fully accredited via the European Approach for the Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes.
- Awarded prestigious Erasmus Mundus Design Measures and Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters awards in 2022 and 2023 respectively, enabling Erasmus Mundus scholarships to be awarded to top student applicants.
- Awarded Best Master's Programme: Science, Technology and Built Environment at the Education Awards 2025.
- A popular and competitive course, with 1,389 applications for 2024 entry and 1,333 applications for 2025 entry

- The programme curriculum stands out by: using challenge-based learning methodologies and engaged research approaches; crossing a range of disciplines; bringing in insights from city and industry partners; including student placements at relevant organisations. The UCC academic track concentrates on the theme of 'Urban Transformation and Resilience'. Through a CityLab experience, an open Research Design Studio, learning on contemporary urban thinking and utilising digital storytelling techniques students can formulate critical narratives for the built environment of Cork City and its hinterlands.
- RePIC is an accelerator for academic engagement, research and other collaborations across UNIC.

## **Staff Recruitment, Management & Development**

### ***UCC and AI***

#### **Elements of AI**

The University of Helsinki and UCC have teamed up to bring AI 'into the sitting rooms and kitchens of Irish homes'.

The [Elements of AI](#) is a free massive open online course (MOOC) developed by the University of Helsinki and the technology company Reaktor. The free Elements of AI online course will be hosted in Ireland by University College Cork. An Irish language version of the course will also be released in the new year.

Since its establishment, more than 545,000 people from over 170 countries have taken the Elements of AI. Approximately 40% of those have been women, which is more than double the average for computer science courses in general. The objective of Elements of AI was to teach 1% of the population of Finland the basics of artificial intelligence. As part of the recent Finnish Presidency of the Council of the EU, Finland committed to making the course available across the EU to educate at least 1% of the EU population in AI.

In Ireland the course will be supported by the School of Computer Science & Information Technology at UCC under the leadership of Professor Barry O'Sullivan and Dr. Derek Bridge. The objective is, again, to deliver free AI education to at least 1% of the Irish population. In completing the course students will become familiar with many key concepts from the field of artificial intelligence. The course is open to everyone, regardless of background. All that is necessary is a way of accessing the internet. While the course itself is online, there will also be a team, including PhD and post-doctorate students, who will be supporting learners on the course. Additionally, UCC will offer two formal ECTS university credits to those who complete the course.

In announcing the launch of Elements of AI in Ireland, the lead tutor and founder of the course, Professor Teemu Roos said: "We are delighted about being able to join forces with an institution such as UCC. They are in a great position to reach Irish audiences and boost AI-awareness in Ireland. We also hope that through this initiative, we can strengthen ties between Finland and Ireland in terms of both academic as well as business collaboration."

#### **AI Literacy Courses**

Through the School of Computer Science & IT, the ENTIRE Digital Innovation Hub, and the UCC Futures on AI and Data Analytics, three one-day AI Literacy courses suitable for a general audience were delivered during 2024/25. These were full day courses and attendance was either in-person at UCC or online through MS Teams.

These sessions had external participation from SMEs and various public-sector organisations, including universities and TUs. This skills development workshop provided a grounding in artificial intelligence, the most common AI technologies, how they work and are evaluated, how AI systems can be assessed, how ethical

principles have been developed and applied to AI systems, and how these have informed the development of the AI Act.

#### University-wide module: The Essentials of Artificial Intelligence

UCC ran a new University-wide module during 2024/25 which will be repeated during 2025/26; UW0013: The Essentials of Artificial Intelligence, delivered by Professor Barry O'Sullivan, School of Computer Science & IT. The module is open to all full-time registered students and all staff in the university.

This module was delivered in hybrid format and recordings of sessions were made available through Canvas. The goal of the module is to provide all learners with a grounding in the foundations and application of artificial intelligence, how ethical principles have been developed and applied to AI systems, and how these have informed the development of assurance, governance, and regulatory frameworks for AI.

The module covered topics including, but not limited to: the history of artificial intelligence; An overview of AI; Common AI technologies; The principles of Generative AI; Evaluation of AI systems: robustness, performance, fairness, bias, etc.; Applications of AI in fields such as engineering, science, medicine and health, business, education, law, the humanities, etc.; The role of AI in Sustainability; The sustainability of AI, green AI, frugal learning, etc.; The impact of AI on skills and the Future of Work; The impact of AI on education and academic assessment; The ethics of AI; AI policy-making; and regulatory approaches such as the European Union's AI Act.

#### ***School Managers' Community of Practice***

In the report of the 2023 Institutional Review of UCC, the Review Panel identified School Managers as a staff group that could benefit from enhanced opportunities to connect and engage in peer learning for their career development. Following consultation, it was felt that a 'Community of Practice' model would enable the sharing of best practice among colleagues with similar functional expertise who work in different units, as is the case with School Managers in UCC.

The Community of Practice was proposed to and endorsed by the University's Quality Enhancement Committee. In 2024/25 meetings were held in hybrid or online formats. Hybrid meetings have enabled colleagues involved in blended work to participate.

The Community of Practice has continued to explore many pressing matters for School Managers. It has proven to be a nimble and responsive group. Guest speakers are frequently invited and so create synergies for cross-university improvement initiatives, for example, discussing continuous improvement and digitisation common themes and challenges for managers with guests from the UCC Continuous improvement network, and the CIM curriculum software group.

As a forum for sharing common problems, the Community of Practice is actively contributing to the development of common solutions: for example, a representative of the UCC IT Steering Group, joined one meeting for discussion about potential digitisation projects, which led to a survey of School Managers regarding potential digital efficiency projects and a shortlist of projects to be developed.

As was envisaged in the original proposal, themes for discussion have emerged from the group itself, in response to new initiatives and technological developments. Meetings will continue to run in hybrid or online formats at 4-6 weekly intervals throughout the 2025-26 academic year.

#### **Supports and Resources for Learners**

### ***International Education Mark/English Language Policy***

UCC is in the process of applying for the International Education Mark (IEM), a new statutory quality mark, part of a suite of wider legislative measures designed to protect and support international learners. The IEM is a requirement under the provisions of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education & Training) Act 2012 (amended 2019) and is a strategic priority for the University, set out in the Global Engagement Plan.

As part of the preparations for the IEM the University Academic Board approved a new English Language Policy statement in January 2025. This policy outlines UCC's approach to supporting its international students' English language needs. UCC is committed to supporting international students to achieve academic success and to fostering inclusivity throughout its staff and student body. By providing English language support, UCC assists international students to meet the academic requirements of their chosen course of study and to engage in university life. UCC recognises that the measures listed in the policy are crucial for the university to maintain its academic standards, to attract and retain talented students, maintain its global reputation, and to ensure inclusivity. This policy will be subject to regular monitoring by the Language Centre, under the auspices of the Vice President Global Engagement, and periodic review by Academic Council taking account of feedback from students, and internal and external stakeholders. By doing so, UCC will ensure that the policy is fit for purpose and that English language supports offered align with student and institutional needs and meet current and future, internal and external quality assurance standards. This policy is underpinned by existing English Language Requirements and Admissions policies and the current robust practices and procedures of the UCC Language Centre.

### ***UCC Employability Framework 2025–2028***

The UCC Employability Framework is a significant milestone that will serve as UCC's beacon for the next three years, guiding how we embed employability, skills development and meaningful student success across UCC programmes. This framework comprises of 5 pillars with 15 actions.

#### **Pillar 1: Embedding Employability in the Curriculum**

Incorporate Career Development and Employability related activities and Work Integrated Learning in disciplinary appropriate ways within all programmes at UCC.

#### **Actions**

- Co-develop career-focused initiatives: Work closely with academic schools to ensure career development is integrated into the curriculum. This includes offering group career coaching, workshops, and guest speaker sessions that align with academic learning.
- Collaborate with Programme Directors to strategically provide support for students at key stages before and throughout each cycle of Work-Integrated Learning activities including work placement, internships and apprenticeships within UCC programmes. This approach ensures that support is seamlessly integrated and aligned with the academic structure and objectives of the programmes.
- Strengthen and support comprehensive "PhD Career Transition Programmes" tailored to equip PhD students with the knowledge and skills needed for non-academic career pathways and will enhance transferable skills that align with industry requirements.

#### **Pillar 2: Fulfilling Successful Student Transitions**

To provide a student-centered holistic approach to empower students to develop and articulate the skills and attributes needed to make a successful transition from university to the next stage of their career.

#### Actions

- Provide students with numerous opportunities to engage with all aspects of Career Services and the Graduate Attributes Programme for both personal and professional growth. This should be accomplished through a variety of interventions that enhance their skills, self-efficacy, and self-confidence, ultimately supporting effective career development planning.
- Empower students to take ownership of their skills development by providing a broad range of opportunities, including extracurricular options such as short internships, entrepreneurial activities, and volunteering through participation in the skills awards programme, “The UCC EmployAgility Award”.
- Ensure considered and strategic use of advanced digital tools, and AI-powered technology where useful, to support the teaching and learning of employability-related skills and attributes, enhancing skills development while aligning with the objectives of the Graduate Attributes Programme.

#### Pillar 3: Building Meaningful Relationships and Networks

Establish, maintain, and expand an eco-system of inter-connected working relationships with our key stakeholders, including employers and alumni, to support student career development.

#### Actions

- Establish strong communication channels: Career Services will continue proactively reach out to employers, industry leaders, and recruiters to understand their needs and expectations for graduates. Regular communication through emails, phone calls, and in-person meetings helps build trust and demonstrate commitment to the partnership.
- Industry advisory boards: Strengthen and partner in advisory boards made up of employers, alumni, and industry professionals who can provide insights into industry trends and offer guidance on curriculum development, ensuring that students are equipped with the skills employers are seeking in early careers talent.
- Strengthen the partnership with UCC Advancement, by expanding and co-developing the current Career Services/Alumni Mentorship Programme. This will ensure students have enhanced access to mentors in their relevant fields, fostering meaningful connections and support for their career growth.

#### Pillar 4: Increasing Employment Opportunities

To expand meaningful job opportunities for all students to gain local, national, and global employment opportunities, through placements, internships, work-integrated learning, and work-based projects.

#### Actions

- Building employer partnerships: Establish and maintain relationships with a wide range of employers, including SMEs, multinational companies, non-profit organizations, and public service bodies. These partnerships provide a pipeline of job opportunities for students through placements, internships, apprenticeships and work-based projects.

- **Work-Integrated Learning (WIL):** Develop and promote work-integrated learning opportunities that align with students' academic studies and career aspirations. These programmes might include placements, industry collaborations, apprenticeships and projects that allow students to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world settings.
- **Career Fairs, Networking Events, and Employer Engagement:** Organise career fairs, networking events, and employer engagement activities where students can interact directly with recruiters, hiring managers, and alumni. These events allow students to explore potential job opportunities, gain industry insights, and connect with prospective employers.

#### Pillar 5: Communicating and Enhancing the Role of University College Cork as a Leader of Graduate Employability

To actively communicate, promote and enhance student employability as delivered through strategic initiatives.

##### Actions

- **Develop a comprehensive Career Communication Strategy:** Establish a strong re-brand identity for the Career Services that communicates its role in student success. This involves clearly articulating the value proposition of career services and the impact it has on employability, particularly through events, social media, and other promotional activities.
- **Feedback loops:** After each engagement (workshop, placement, event), career services will collect feedback from both students and employers. This feedback can help strengthen the relationship, improve services, and ensure that the university meets the evolving needs of the labour-market.
- **Data-driven career support:** Use data analytics to track student progress, employment trends, and the success of career programmes. Analysing this data and Graduate Outcomes Survey data can help tailor support and services to the needs of students and employers, ensuring the employability initiatives remain relevant and effective.

#### ***Continuous Improvement Action Network***

Continuous Improvement (CI) is a fundamental concept aimed at enhancing processes, services and products incrementally over time. Understanding and implementing CI can lead to significant benefits, such as increased efficiency, better service quality, increased staff morale and higher stakeholder satisfaction.

At its core, CI is about consistently seeking ways to improve. This involves regularly reviewing current practices, identifying areas for enhancement, and making small, manageable changes. The goal is not to overhaul systems overnight but to foster a culture where gradual improvements are the norm, part of our every-day behaviours, and how we can expect to work.

One of the most critical aspects of CI is mindset. CI is not just about using specific tools and techniques; it's about adopting a proactive approach to problem-solving and a commitment to ongoing development. This mindset emphasises curiosity, a willingness to challenge the status quo, and a dedication to making things better, no matter how small the improvement.

UCC's Continuous Improvement Action Networks was set up to create space (physically and virtually) to:

- Generate ideas for innovative and scalable improvements

- To help people come together in different ways to complete work on initiatives in a supported environment.
- Learn from colleagues - we'll continue to grow and expand how we create a “learn and apply” environment for you to succeed
- Share continuous improvement initiatives, successes and learnings with your network peers.
- Take an opportunity to see if there are potential efficiencies for cross-functional initiatives.
- Create visibility and reporting on change initiatives - we want to highlight all the amazing work that the network does together and individually

UCC's Continuous Improvement Action Network also links in with colleagues in other HE's through the re-established Irish branch of [Lean HE Europe](#): CI HE Ireland. The UCC network currently has over 300 members, with vastly different roles and responsibilities.

*Event: Understanding Design Thinking for Organisational Innovation*

The Continuous Improvement Action Network kicked off their in-person events for 2025 on 5<sup>th</sup> March, bringing colleagues together for an engaging and insightful workshop.

In collaboration with Lynne Whelan, Senior Change Management Professional at South East Technological University, the event, titled "Understanding Design Thinking for Organisational Innovation – A Practical Workshop," provided attendees with hands-on experience in applying design thinking to an organisational challenge.

Lynne shared her expertise in organisational transformation and strategic design, showcasing frameworks and tools that have helped teams across industries become more agile and innovative. Participants explored how design thinking fosters human-centred problem-solving, and the workshop showcased practical strategies to evaluate ideas.

During the session, participants had the chance to experience SETU's Design Thinking framework. The SETU framework condenses the 5 Stage Design Thinking framework (Empathy, Define, Ideate, Prototype and Test) into 4 - Mapping, Framing, Idea/Evaluation and Action.

Using A0 posters and plenty of post-it notes, participants worked in groups with a prompt to consider the upcoming Digital Cleanup Day on campus, and how teams and units could be encouraged to engage and participate in the day.

Key takeaways from the event:

“The four stages and how useful it is to follow these stages to get a comprehensive analysis of a situation and how useful it is to go large before tightening on potential areas. Useability, feasibility and viability provided a helpful way of testing.”

“It was a great way to engage people in a topic. It was very useful to put all ideas on the table, and then assess them under feasibility, usability and viability. It gave everyone a chance to contribute. I can see that would be helpful in planning service changes.”

“The Diverge and Converge theory, the need to be able to have a big picture and small picture approach at the right time in the design process.”

*Event: UCC Digital Clean Up Day*

As part of UCC's Green Week, the Continuous Improvement Action Network introduced UCC's first Digital Clean Up Day, a simple yet impactful initiative to declutter our digital lives. Digital Clean Up Day has two main goals: raising awareness about the digital footprint of our staff members and promoting personal digital wellbeing.

UCC Digital Clean-Up Day is part of a [global movement](#). This initiative was run through the Continuous Improvement Action Network in collaboration with The Students' Union, Sustainability and Climate Action, IT Services, Centre for Digital Education, Marketing and Brand Impact and Staff Development and Wellbeing.

The first goal of the Digital Clean Up Day is to help individuals recognise their own digital clutter and take steps to minimise it—such as cleaning out email inboxes and organising files in a more efficient way.

The second goal is to focus on the wellbeing and productivity benefits of a digital spring clean and understanding the University's policy on the right to disconnect.

A digital clean-up has been proven to have many benefits:

**Digital Sustainability:** At UCC, sustainability is a core value. By reducing digital clutter, we help lower our collective carbon footprint.

**Wellbeing:** A cluttered digital space can cause unnecessary stress. Organising and decluttering our digital life and learning about our right to disconnect is an important aspect of our digital wellbeing. promotes focus, calm, and mental clarity.

**Financial Sustainability:** By cleaning up our emails and files, we reduce unnecessary use of cloud storage and can help cut down on costs associated with platforms like Microsoft 365.

On April 9<sup>th</sup> the Network held multiple information sessions and practical workshops throughout the day, enabling individuals to learn about how to reach "Inbox Zero" and a guide to undertaking a Digital Declutter.

This initiative has been very successful. Schools and functions were asked to pledge a day to dedicate to their collective digital decluttering effort. 728 people pledged their time (1,200 hours) to Digital Cleanup activities between April-June 2025. The Network has also created a starter pack for other institutions with details on the full initiative and lessons learned and has shared it with 6 other institutions to date.

## **Integration of UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)**

### *UCC leadership in offshore wind energy*

UCC continued to strengthen its position regarding emerging offshore wind energy opportunities, including

- MaREI at UCC signed an MoU with EirGrid in September 2024 to deepen UCC's collaboration on ensuring Ireland's smooth, secure and rapid transition to a zero emissions electricity system powered by wind energy;
- Budget 2025 allocated €99 million to Port of Cork for upgrades to accommodate offshore wind development following MaREI convening Public Bodies Offshore Wind Forum for Port of Cork.

### *Advancing UCC Leadership in Sustainability*

UCC was ranked in fourth place globally in the UI GreenMetric World University Rankings in December 2024. UCC's fourth place makes it the eighth consecutive year in which the university has finished in the top 10 of the rankings, and the first time UCC has secured 4<sup>th</sup> place. One reason for such a high ranking in sustainability leadership relates to UCC's success in reducing waste on campus. In this regard, January 2025 marks the second anniversary of UCC's banning of the sale of all disposable cups and plastic bottles on campus. Over those two years, the University has saved over 2 million disposable cups as well as hundreds of thousands of plastic bottles. The University was an early adopter of the Deposit return Scheme with two DRS machines on campus, both of which are linked to charitable donations.

#### *Providing sustainability thought leadership nationally*

UCC sustainability researchers organised a showcase event at Engineers Ireland in Dublin in December 2024. The purpose was to share and discuss some recent energy modelling research and policy insights and to seek feedback from the nearly 100 stakeholders and friends from the policy, industry, and NGO communities who attended. The specific focus was on carbon budgets, policy pathways, emissions, energy security, and engagement on infrastructure. The feedback was hugely positive both from attendees present and from key partners who chaired sessions and opened and closed the event, including Fionnuala Callanan from the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications, Jeanne Moore from the National Economic and Social Council, Oisín Coghlan from Friends of the Earth, and Prof. John Fitzgerald one of Ireland's leading economists.

#### *UCC supporting Cork City's Climate Neutral Mission*

On May 6<sup>th</sup>, Cork City was one of 39 cities across the EU to be awarded an EU Mission City Label at a ceremony in Vilnius, marking the successful finalisation of Cork City's climate change contract with the European Union to achieve climate neutrality by 2030. UCC actively supports Cork's Mission City journey in three ways, i) through our collaborative research on climate action and climate justice with Cork City Council; ii) through our own emissions reduction contributions in UCC as a key institution within the city and iii) through our participation in the Climate Neutral Cork Leadership Group.



*Brian Ó Gallachóir, UCC, David Joyce, Cork City Council, Deputy Lord Mayor Cllr. Honore Kamegni, Paul McGuirk, Cork City Council, Adam Farenden, Arup, at the awarding of the Mission Label to Cork City.*

### *UCC Supporting All-Island Climate Action and Sustainability*

UCC co-organised and participated in the Higher Education Institutions and Local Government: Partnering for Planetary Solutions conference in Kilkenny Castle in May 2025. This event, hosted by the All-Island Local Authority Forum, brought together local authority Chief Executives, central government, relevant agencies, and senior academics from across Ireland and Northern Ireland. The conference showcased international and local best practices in collaborative climate action, highlighted actionable paths for future collaboration, fostered partnerships between HEIs and local government, and laid the foundation for long-term cross-sectoral cooperation. UCC showcased our collaborative research with local authorities in Ireland on climate action and the support we provide through the SDSN Ireland network that we co-host with Queen's University Belfast.



*UCC's John Barimo and Alexandra Revez at the Higher Education Institutions and Local Government: Partnering for Planetary Solutions conference*

### *Sustainability Laboratory Certification for UCC Research Labs*

Two of our UCC Sustainability Institute research laboratories have been awarded Sustainable Laboratory Certifications by Research Ireland, in collaboration with My Green Lab and Impact Laboratories. This recognition highlights the significant strides we are making to embed sustainability into our research infrastructure -reducing energy use, minimising waste, and supporting a culture of environmental responsibility. These labs are home to the FreeHydroCells team, led by Prof. Justin Holmes who are at the forefront of developing clean hydrogen technologies with the potential to power a low-carbon future. This certification not only affirms our commitment to sustainability but also reflects the calibre of infrastructure available at the Institute.

### *Successful Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN Ireland) Meeting*

UCC organised a successful SDSN Ireland meeting in the Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment in Beggars Bush, Dublin in July 2025. Representatives from the 16 third level and other knowledge generation institutes on the island of Ireland gathered and focussed their discussions on strengthening university-government partnerships in research and policy, leveraging research outputs for practical policymaking,

exploring cross-border SDG synergies, expanding arts-based public engagement in the climate and sustainability agenda and preparing for Ireland's EU Presidency and the post-2030 sustainable development agenda.



*Johnathan Dalzell (NI DAERA), Rob Deegan (DCEE), Prof John O'Halloran (UCC), Prof. Michael Alcorn (QUB), Prof. Brian Ó Gallachóir (UCC)*

## 2.1 Initiatives within the Institution related to Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity is at the heart of all academic endeavour and is critical to the reputation of the University; the integrity of awards and qualifications; the assurance of quality and standards; good research quality; ethics, and institutional academic leadership. The University has a clear Academic Integrity for Examinations and Assessments Policy and provides support and advice to students on academic integrity across all aspects of their academic work. The Students' Union also provide advice and updates to their members. Guidance and resources on academic integrity are available from several units across the University: [Policy](#); [Skills Centre](#); [Library](#); [Students' Union](#); [Research Integrity](#)

UCC is an active member of the National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN), established by QQI in November 2019. During Academic Year 24/25 UCC's Academic Integrity Education Officer, Dr Loretta Goff, represented UCC in the NAIN along with Dr Olive McCarthy (Senior Lecturer/Academic Council Learning & Teaching Committee), Eleanor Fitzgerald (Head of Student Records & Exams) and the Students' Union Education Officer. Notes from NAIN masterclasses and NAIN academic integrity updates are regularly shared with the Registrar, Vice President of Learning and Teaching, and relevant committees (Teaching & Learning) as well as integrated into resources for both staff and students. Quarterly Academic Integrity Updates from QQI are also shared with all staff via email. Dr. Goff reports contract cheating providers and their targeting of UCC students and staff to QQI and was an active member of the NAIN Working Group 5: Capacity Building & Professional Development and NAIN Working Group 6: NAIN Strategy (2025-2028) Development during AY 24/25. In June 2025, Dr Goff joined the NAIN Steering Committee. Dr Goff is also a member of the European Network of Academic Integrity (ENAI) and participates in several working groups in this network, sharing initiatives from UCC internationally, and bringing learnings from this network to UCC. These working groups focus on inclusion, gamification of academic integrity, educational materials, and unauthorised content generation.

During AY 24/25 several initiatives, resources, and trainings aimed at fostering academic integrity, providing educational opportunities, and support took place at UCC. A primary goal of these continues to be developing a shared understanding of academic integrity across the University and establishing a learning and teaching environment that supports it, clearly delineating academic integrity from academic misconduct and taking positive, preventative approach that focuses on good pedagogy, learning, and development. These initiatives and related resources offer advice and support for both students and staff that is responsive to ongoing and developing risks (i.e., contract cheating and generative AI), and that reflects and incorporates NAIN guidance, including the Academic Integrity Guidelines, National Principles and Lexicon and the GenAI Guidelines. These initiatives include:

### Student engagement

UCC's Academic Integrity Education Officer role is based in the Skills Centre, UCC's student-facing academic support centre. Through the Skills Centre, students are provided with resources and training on academic integrity and related topics. The Skills Centre employs postgraduate students as peer tutors who offer group workshops on academic skills as well as one-to-one appointments. All of these tutors have a dual role as student Academic Integrity Champions and receive academic integrity training each year (35 in AY 24/25). This enables the tutors to highlight academic integrity across all engagements with their peers at the Skills Centre. Further opportunities for all students to engage with academic integrity are provided by the Skills Centre, including:

- The "Academic Integrity Fundamentals" Short Course remains available to all students in the Canvas Success Zone with content updated as needed to align with policy or technological updates. It is strongly recommended that all students complete this and it has been made a requirement by lecturers in several

programmes. The course covers academic integrity, academic skills that support it, responsible use of GenAI, academic misconduct, risks of contract cheating and file-sharing, understanding text-matching software (Turnitin) and academic integrity supports in UCC. Students receive a certificate upon completion of the course that can be used to fulfil requirements in their programmes. In AY 24/25, 682 students completed the course, with many more engaging with some of the content.

- “Academic Integrity”, “Responsible Use of Generative AI”, and “Sourcing and Cite-seeing” (with newly added academic integrity content) sessions were delivered by the Skills Centre: 1,164 students participated.
- Academic Integrity training for Class Reps in partnership with the Students’ Union, enabling them to advise peers: approximately 250 participated.
- Integration of Academic Integrity sessions as part of modules/programmes, embedding it in curriculum. This includes BU1001: International Business with Languages: 130 students, PG6009: Graduate Information Literacy: 83 students, and the Pharmacy Learning to Learn Programme: 45 students.
- National Academic Integrity Week: Student champions engaged with 399 students on promo stands, encouraging them to spin the academic integrity wheel to prompt conversations. Students also engaged in several workshops and Academic Integrity Bingo in the Skills Centre across the week. A digital signage campaign ran on screens across campus with key messages on academic integrity, directing towards further resources and sessions on that week. A social media campaign also ran throughout the week (38 posts, 7,335 impressions, 268 engagements).
- 1,000 students responded to a survey on their use and perspective of GenAI in Higher Education (including a focus on academic integrity), informing the development of a training resource as part of the GenAI LEARN project (described in “Generative AI resources” section).
- Collaboration with the Library Learning & Teaching Team for referencing support (resources and workshops) to support academic integrity.
- Communication of academic integrity topics to students via email, social media and campus digital signage at key points across semesters to raise awareness and engagement with sessions and resources.

As a result of these initiatives, academic integrity has become an increasingly discussed and visible topic for students across campus and they are provided with a variety of opportunities to engage with it.

### **Staff engagement**

Supports available to staff regarding academic integrity provide them with proactive approaches for fostering a culture of the same in the University, both in their research and in teaching that supports students’ academic integrity. Moving the focus from simply detecting “cheating” to evaluating learning brings renewed attention to the process of learning and alignment between learning outcomes, pedagogical approaches, feedback, assessment and rubrics. This also encourages partnership between staff and students and supports UCC’s strategic goals, specifically 1.4, which calls for research to be “underpinned by academic integrity, and ethical and responsible practice” and 2.1, wherein students are empowered to be “active participants in co-creating education pathways, further enabling education success, underpinned by academic integrity”. The Academic Integrity Education Officer provides staff with this support, often in collaboration with the Centre for the

Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning (CIRTL). Resources and trainings related to academic integrity include:

- The [Fostering Academic Integrity in Learning and Teaching Digital Badge](#). This short course, with approx. 25 hours of learning content supports staff to: identify the core principles of academic integrity; describe key points of engagement or intervention across the student journey in relation to academic integrity; analyse reports from plagiarism detection software from different disciplinary perspectives; evaluate responses to potential academic misconduct examples based on their understanding of relevant policies and procedures; reflect on their role in fostering a culture of academic integrity in the university.

This Digital Badge was updated in AY 24/25 to reflect developments in generative AI and updates to UCC policy. All staff completing the course are required to identify an intervention in their practice that will foster academic integrity, widening the impact of this course in practice. 239 Staff have engaged with this course since it launched in October 2022 and 37 staff earned a Digital Badge in AY 24/25.

- 156 staff responded to survey on their use and perspective of GenAI in Higher Education (including a focus on academic integrity), as part of the AI-ntegrity project.
- Weekly 2-hour drop-in office hours on GenAI and Academic Integrity were offered to all staff to avail of if they had any queries or wanted feedback or advice.
- A new workshop, and accompanying online resource, on [Writing a GenAI Statement](#) was provided, supporting staff to provide transparency and clarity to students about their expectations regarding GenAI use in their module/assessment.
- Customised sessions on GenAI in the context of learning and teaching, with a focus on academic integrity and assessment were offered for delivery to Departments/Units/Programmes on request.
- A monthly GenAI Journal Club was established where a recent article was presented to staff followed by discussion, relating it to the UCC context and experiences. The aim of this was to establish a community of practice in this area, connecting colleagues across the University.
- 2 UCC-hosted webinars for staff during Academic Integrity Week, one with guest speaker Dr Lorna Waddington, Academic Integrity Lead at Leeds University.
- In total, 198 staff engaged in workshops and events.
- Regular communications to staff with information on resources and sessions, and academic integrity updates, are issued through email (using the 'all staff' list and targeted distribution via the Vice Heads Learning and Teaching), Workvivo updates, and the weekly Office of the Vice President of Learning and Teaching Bulletin.

### Generative AI resources

- The [Toolkit for the Ethical Use of GenAI in Learning and Teaching](#), which includes information on how GenAI works, a lexicon of common terms, ethical concerns/critical AI literacy, academic integrity guidance, and case studies of changes to assessment and learning activities across the four UCC Colleges, continues to be updated. Content from this Toolkit has informed student and staff training regarding

responsible use and assessment redesign and has been shared nationally and internationally as an open resource, with over 3K site visits in AY24/25.

- [Short Guide: Assessment in the Age of AI](#) - CIRTL maintains this resource to support academic staff to consider the impact of GenAI and to offer examples of assessment redesign.
- The “AI-ntegrity” project ran in AY 24/25, surveying staff on GenAI and academic integrity. Results from this informed updates to resources and workshops, and planning for a tiered offering of training supports for those ranging from beginner to intermediate levels of GenAI understanding.
- The “GenAI LEARN” project ran throughout AY 24/25. This project brought together student and staff partners with the objective of co-creating *with* students resources *for* students to support their responsible and effective use of GenAI. The [GenAI Learning Hub](#) is the result of this project, made available in June 2025. This open resource is informed by scoping and benchmarking exercises of existing national and international guidance/resources and the results of a university-wide survey on students' perceptions of and experience with GenAI, as well as input from project partners. This project effectively made students partners in the larger process of determining the place and role of these new tools in Teaching and Learning.

## Policy

An Academic Integrity Working Group was established in 2024/25 to discuss ongoing policy updates, including the updated version of the [Academic Integrity for Examinations and Assessments Policy](#) (implemented from June 2025, for the start of AY 25/26). These further updates to the policy (more extensive than those of the previous academic year), led by the Academic Assessment Integrity Officer, reflect updates to terminology and structure to align more closely to the NAIN Framework for Academic Misconduct Investigation and Case Management.

The updated policy puts into place processes for investigating, sanctioning, and reporting academic misconduct, as well as the Academic Misconduct Register, which is a centralised record of all levels of academic misconduct in UCC. The Academic Misconduct Register enables staff to determine whether students have previously engaged in academic misconduct for the purposes of cumulation. All students who engage in academic misconduct are also now required to complete academic integrity training, an educational intervention which aims to mitigate future misconduct and support students in their studies.

The updated policy also defines and formalises the role of the Academic Integrity Representative. Academic Integrity Representatives are academic staff members, who are nominated by their Head of School. These individuals serve as a single point of contact for academic integrity matters, lead investigations into suspected academic misconduct on a local level, report academic misconduct to the Student Records and Examinations Office, and check the Academic Misconduct Register. These individuals will ensure the consistent application of the policy and its associated processes across the University.

## Publications, collaborations, and outreach

UCC's growing expertise in the area of academic integrity (and GenAI) is evident through increased engagement in national and international collaborations and research projects, the provision of training externally, and sharing research and resources nationally and internationally through publications, conference presentations and invited talks. These include:

- Partner in [Fostering Learners' AI Readiness \(FLAIR\)](#) Erasmus+ project with 5 additional partner countries (Austria, Estonia, Netherlands, Spain, Türkiye). In AY 24/25 national reports on GenAI were produced as part of this project and work continues to develop teaching materials to populate a framework, of which academic integrity is a key component.
- Academic publication: [Everyone has a role to play: academic integrity, professional development and third space](#) uses the development of the “Fostering Academic Integrity in Learning and Teaching” Digital Badge as an example of the importance of third space collaboration for academic integrity.
- National case study collections: [Teaching Humanities and Social Sciences in the Era of Generative AI: Case Studies from around Ireland](#) (case study contribution focusing on academic integrity, GenAI, and student partnership) and [Using GenAI in Teaching, Learning and Assessment in Irish Universities: Examples from the Disciplines](#) (co-editor).
- Academic Integrity training sessions provided for Cork College of FET, Tramore Rd., Cork ETB Morrison's Island, and Oxford Business College by request.
- 6 invited talks (University of Galway (Psychology), HEA Learning & Teaching conference (poster), European Network for Academic Integrity (Integrity for All working group), Mary Immaculate College AI in Education Talk Series, University College Dublin (College of Business Faculty Insights Series, National Academic Integrity Network).
- 8 conference presentations from Academic Integrity Education Officer sharing research and resources related to academic integrity.

## 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period

### 3.1 QA and QE supporting the Achievement of Strategic Objectives

Update on CINNTE Recommendations	Planned actions and indicators
<p>The CINNTE review team recommended that UCC should ensure, via the ongoing pilot project and related initiatives, that student satisfaction data is appropriately gathered and factored into the assessment of the quality of modules and programmes across UCC</p>	<p>UCC initiated a Pilot to develop a systematic approach to capturing student feedback at module level on their learning experience. This was carried out in the Colleges of Business &amp; Law and Medicine &amp; Health and included over 11,000 undergraduate and postgraduate taught students during academic session 2024/25. The surveying period was followed by an extensive evaluation of the user experience from both a staff and student perspective. The evaluation highlighted a number of challenges, including the amount of manual work involved, limited automation, restricted flexibility in survey design and a less-than-ideal user experience.</p> <p>Based on these findings, a more fit-for-purpose and scalable approach to student feedback is being identified. In the meantime, an interim solution is in place that allows feedback activity to continue using the materials and lessons learned from the Pilot.</p>
<p>The CINNTE review team recommended that UCC should introduce formal processes for annual module and programme monitoring enabled by the new Curriculum Management IT System.</p>	<p>A Senior Academic Advisor for Programme Review was appointed in 2024/25. An initial review of processes in UCC and peer universities has been undertaken and work is underway to formalise programme review enabled by a review document pre-populated with CIM data.</p>
<p>The CINNTE review team identified School Managers as a staff group that could benefit from enhanced opportunities to connect and engage in peer learning for their career development.</p>	<p>Following consultation, it was felt that a 'Community of Practice' model would enable the sharing of best practice among colleagues with similar functional expertise who work in different units, as is the case with School Managers in UCC.</p> <p>The Community of Practice was proposed to and endorsed by the University's Quality Enhancement Committee.</p>

## 3.2 Reviews planned for Upcoming Reporting Periods

### 3.2.1 Reviews planned for Next Reporting Period

Unit to be reviewed	Date of planned review	Date of last review
School of Chemistry	2025/26	2016/17
School of History	2025/26	2016/17

### 3.2.2 Reviews planned beyond Next Reporting Period

[Quality Review Schedule 2024-2032](#)

## 4.0 Additional Themes and Case Studies

### **Bystander Intervention Programme**

The National Framework *“Safe, Respectful, Supportive and Positive: Ending Sexual Violence and Harassment in Higher Educational Institutions”* (2019) requires HEIs to develop and deliver *‘Direct student-facing activities including workshops/classes that promote an understanding of consent and calling out unacceptable behaviour.’* The UCC Bystander Intervention programme for staff and students, first delivered by Professor Louise Crowley in 2016, is expressly identified in the Framework as a critical, targeted initiative, necessary to successfully effect cultural change across the Irish HEIs. The associated Action 16 of the ESVH Implementation Plan 2022-2024 mandates that each institution create an education plan that ensures *‘ongoing messaging to disseminate information consistent with the Framework aims for cultural change and awareness raising.’* The UCC Bystander Intervention programme team has developed cross-sectoral collaboration and partnerships to share, embed and support the ongoing roll-out of UCC Bystander Intervention training across all institutions. Additionally, the training is in highly sought after in private industry to enhance and promote positive workplace culture among national and global organisations.

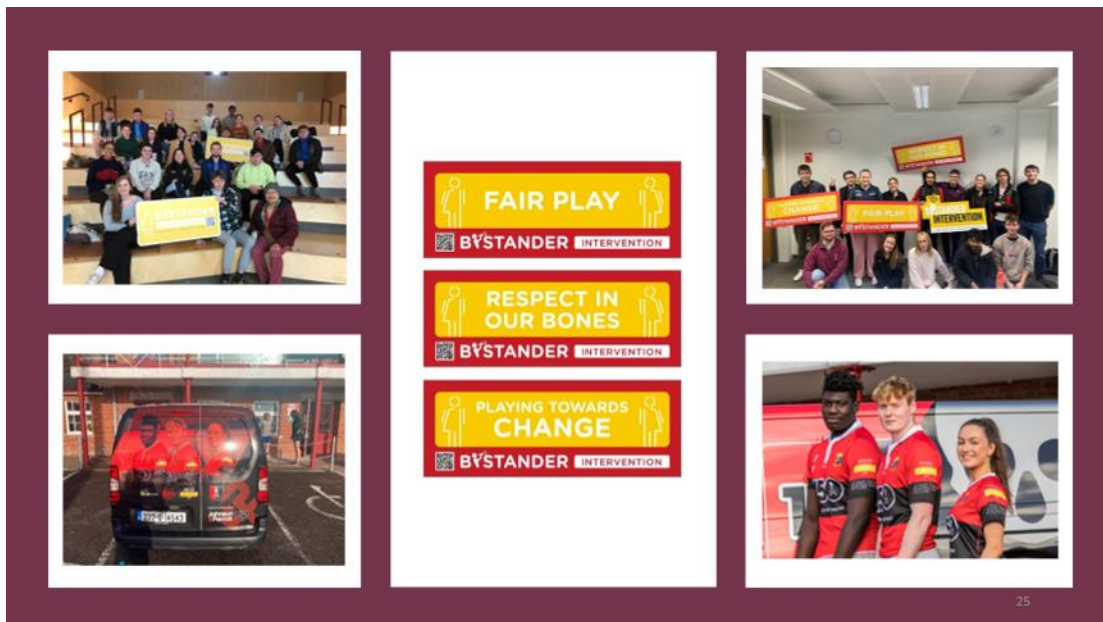
### **Bystander Intervention at UCC**

The UCC Bystander Intervention Programme Director Professor Louise Crowley, and Programme Manager Céline Griffin have vast experience and an award winning reputation for the creation and delivery of the UCC Bystander Intervention student and staff training programmes that serve to educate participants to better understand and identify acts of sexual harassment and violence, to develop respectful interactions and relationships and to support the development of the necessary skills to empower them to both cultivate and activate their capacity as bystanders to demand a safe and respectful environment through safe and effective interventions. As an institution UCC has embraced its role as educators in this sphere, recognising the capacity for evidence-based training to effect meaningful cultural change across campus and in turn across broader society.

The components of the Bystander Intervention workshops, provide participants with the essential knowledge required, in order to identify the range of harmful behaviours experienced in person, verbally and through digital means. By addressing existing information vacuums and misinformation, this programme will shatter ignorance or misconceptions surrounding any perceived acceptability of the identified acts and behaviour. Ultimately collective engagement with this programme will cultivate a sense of responsibility, engage the participants with an understanding and empathy for victims of harassment and abuse, whilst promoting an individual and collective desire to be a part of a safe and positive study or workplace environment. This layered learning approach, involving both knowledge and skills development represents an appropriately dual-faceted response to the complexity of the issues and the need for participants to be able to both recognise and reject unacceptable behaviour by triggering their instinct to intervene as well as ensuring that they have the capacity to do so safely and effectively in

the circumstances. Ultimately as a sector, all staff and students must recognise their capacity as a pro-social bystander to contribute to the development of a new normal and cultivate a shared sense of responsibility for cultural change.

### Student engagement at UCC 2024/25



- 26 Student workshops
- 437 students in attendance
- Student Groups: UCC Rugby, UCC Soccer, UCC Rowing, UCC Respect Officers, Peer Support Leaders and Le Cheile Students.

- 316 students enrolled
- 122 digital badges awarded.
- Academic Modules: International Development, BA International, Applied Psychology, Law, Engineering, Mental Health Nursing, Pharmacy, MA Women’s Studies, MA Analytical Chemistry, MSc. Nursing (Non-EU), ID+ programme.

### Bystander Intervention week February 2025

Our annual promotion and celebration of the power of the Bystander Intervention training to effect cultural change across campus.



First Year Orientations



- 20 minute presentation to 4393 first years
- 10 minutes presentation to 488 international students.
- 314 first year students enrolled and completed the RSVP (Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Programme), created specifically for UCC first years and the next step in their learning pathway towards the Bystander Intervention Digital Badge micro credential.

### **First year student feedback**

Students provided extensive feedback on Orientation and the RSVP module, indicating the prevalence of sexual violence, safe bystander intervention, consent, support services and laws on these issues were their most impactful learnings.

- It has given me a lot of new perspective on issues in our society and helped educate me on how I can be a part of helping to tackle these social issues
- The sheer amount of support available in regard to this topic and the fact that you're never alone in such a situation. There is always someone to help and someway to help.
- What impacted me most was the emphasis on subtle forms of bystander intervention and how effective they can be in preventing harm. It challenged the assumption that stepping in always requires confrontation and instead highlighted practical ways to support others in difficult situations. It made the concept of intervention feel more accessible to everyday life on campus.
- What impacted me most was that this information was made readily available at orientation. In my previous degree studies elsewhere, there was nowhere near the same focus or availability of this information or resources.
- I like that the effort is being made to prevent sexual violence and such here at UCC.

As an effective and a necessary investment in addressing SVH, the impact of the UCC Bystander Intervention programme cannot be disputed. It is consistent year on year in its evidence that this training empowers all participants to make safe, effective interventions.

### **Staff Engagement and Promotion 24/25**

Bystander Intervention week (Staff Insight Session), EDI soapbox event, Teaching and learning showcase, President's café, Annual newsletter, Reporting at management level, EDI: Belonging at UCC 2025-2028 Framework, Education Awards submissions.

- Individual UCC units undertaking training: Ionad Na Gaeilge, Library Staff, Buildings & Estates, Cork University Business school and the Tyndall Research Institute.
- 89 staff participants were enrolled
- 14 staff digital badges awarded

Bystander Intervention training is valued to contribute to a positive workplace culture and recognised as this in EDI Athena Swan applications.

### **What we did in 2024/25 across the sector**

Action 16 of the Framework Implementation plan requires each institution to develop and deliver “Direct student-facing activities including workshops/classes that promote an understanding of consent and calling out unacceptable behaviour.” To empower institutions across the sector to meet this requirement, the UCC Bystander Intervention team has made the hybrid Bystander Intervention programme available to all institutions

The learning from embedding Bystander within UCC over the last ten years, addressing challenges and providing examples of best practice from UCC is informing the ongoing rollout of Bystander Intervention training across the HE sector.