



UCC

Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh
University College Cork, Ireland

Annual Report of University Quality Enhancement Outcomes and Impacts

2024-25

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Context

UCC is an autonomous degree-awarding body under the terms of the Qualifications & Quality Assurance (Education & Training) (Amendment) Act 2019¹ and is responsible for assuring and enhancing the quality of education, research and allied services offered by the University through its internal quality assurance and enhancement procedures. The Quality Enhancement Unit, working through the Quality Enhancement Committee (**Appendix I**), is responsible for developing and enabling the University's processes for external peer review of its activities in accordance with prevailing national Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines², published Codes of Practice for quality in higher education and the European Standards Guidelines (2015). The Universities Act (1997) section 35 sets out the obligations for the establishment of quality procedures and the functions of the Governing Authority in respect of the application and outcomes of quality procedures.

This report serves to:

- Provide assurance to the Governing Authority on the effectiveness of the scope and application of the University's quality procedures as required under the relevant Acts
- Demonstrate that the quality assurance and enhancement process supports and maintains the University's reputation through dissemination, exchange and adoption of good practice arising from peer review.

Recommendation

That the Governing Authority approves this report and its publication on the University website.

That the Governing Authority refers this report for discussion and consideration of any actions to be taken to the Academic Council and other University bodies.

¹ <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2019/act/32/enacted/en/html>

² Quality & Qualifications Ireland is responsible for the development of national Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines which Universities must have regard to <https://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/QA-Guidelines.aspx>

Executive Summary

This report provides a comprehensive account of the quality enhancement activities in the University for the period 2024/25, highlighting their impact and alignment with strategic goals.

Section 1 External Quality Reviews and Reports 2024/25

This section outlines the external Quality Reviews and Reports undertaken during 2024/25. UCC successfully secured authorisation to use the TrustEd Ireland International Education Mark, following a comprehensive, institution-wide self-assessment and external evaluation. The IEM Assessment Panel commended UCC's strong supports and services for international students. UCC also submitted its Annual Quality Report to QQI, outlining institutional quality assurance arrangements and key enhancement activities, including the implementation of the revised Quality Review model and a sector-recognised case study on the UCC Bystander Intervention Programme.

Section 2 Internal Quality Review Reports

This section outlines the Thematic Review of the Doctoral Learning Experience, the completion of the third cycle of Periodic Quality Review, and the re-calibration of the Quality Review methodology in advance of the fourth cycle. It also provides an updated Quality Review schedule, aligned with statutory seven-year cycle requirements, supports effective planning for the fourth review cycle from 2025/26 onwards.

Section 3 Quality Enhancement in support of UCC's Strategic Goals

This section highlights key Quality Enhancement activities that strategically support the delivery of UCC's Strategic Plan. The initiatives outlined demonstrate how quality enhancement is embedded within research and doctoral education, student success, global engagement, staff development and align with the Universities strategic goals.

Section 4 Looking forward to 2024/25

This provides a short summary of the areas of activity for the coming academic session, foremost amongst is the commencement of the fourth cycle of Periodic Quality Reviews and UCC's third Good Practice Symposium.

Section 1 External Quality Reviews and Reports 2024/25

International Education Mark

The International Education Mark (IEM) is provided for under the Qualifications and Quality Assurance Act (2012) (Revised 2019). It is a requirement for all institutions to secure authorisation to use the IEM called TrustEd Ireland Mark, as a prerequisite for the recruitment of international students or engagement in transnational education activity.

- Focus of the IEM is the protection of learners and the strategic positioning of Ireland globally as a trusted higher education provider
- Standards based evaluation against detailed operational criteria (64 in total) across 6 principal areas of activity
- Evaluation was based on self-assessment with substantial evidence of policy, process and regulatory

UCC's Approach

UCC adopted a structured, institution-wide approach to the development of UCC's International Education Mark Application Statement (IEMAS). The Vice-President for Global Engagement established the IEM Working Group, led by Ms Elizabeth Noonan, Director of Quality Enhancement and the IEM Coordinator & QQI liaison and supported by Ms Marie O Regan, Interim Quality Enhancement Advisor. The Working Group was constituted to ensure appropriate subject matter expertise across the six IEM principles and to coordinate the preparation of the institutional self-assessment. Each IEM principle was assigned a designated lead to oversee gap analysis, evidence identification and narrative development. As part of the self-assessment, the University's English Language Policy statement was developed and approved by Academic Board. A dedicated SharePoint site was established to support this work, providing access to relevant documentation, guidance and shared resources. Additionally, the IEMAS template was adapted for ease of use and to highlight published evidence.

Submission and Outcomes

UCC's IEMAS was submitted to QQI on 20th March 2025, with minor technical updates (i.e. correction of broken web links) submitted on 17th April 2025. The Assessment Panel requested additional information through its Outstanding Queries Report in June 2025 and UCC responded by submitting supplemental information on 1st July 2025. The Assessment Panel provided a draft report to UCC on 23rd October which indicated a successful outcome, confirming that the University will be authorised to use the 'TrustEd Ireland' International Education Mark, and included four commendations for UCC's strong supports and services for international students. UCC submitted its Factual Accuracy Response, along with with feedback and commentary on 12th November 2025.

UCC received a notification on 17th December 2025 that QQI's Approvals & Review Committee had granted authorisation to use the 'TrustEd Ireland' mark.

The next steps include receiving the TrustEd Ireland authorisation letter, certificate, brand guidelines and details of the compliance process including reporting and payment of fees.

Assessment Panel – University College Cork

Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) appointed an Assessment Panel to review UCC’s International Education Mark application statement (IEMAS). The names and biographies of the Panel are provided below.

Chair: Professor Emeritus Mark Rogers

Professor Emeritus Mark Rogers was Deputy President, Registrar and Vice President for Academic Affairs in University College Dublin from 2011 to 2022. He became Acting President of UCD in 2022 and retired in 2023. He holds a BA in Science from the University of Dublin (Trinity College) and a PhD in Genetics from the University of Glasgow.

Following 4 years as a Post Doctoral Fellow in the University of California, San Francisco Department of Neurology, he joined the faculty at UCD where he took on teaching, research and management duties giving him an in-depth knowledge of higher education in Ireland and abroad. He was Head of Department and Dean of Science before becoming Deputy President and Registrar. He coordinated several large EU research awards involving partners across Europe.

He is an internationally recognised researcher in prion diseases including the development and licencing of a European approved rapid diagnostic test for BSE. He was awarded the Nova UCD award for innovation in 2004 and the Knowledge Transfer Ireland Licence2Market Impact Award in 2015.

He served on the Governing Authority of UCD, and the Senate of the National University of Ireland. He has been non-executive member on a number of other Boards including the Central Applications Office (CAO), English Language Academy,

National Academy of Art and Design and the Postgraduate Applications Centre (PAC).

He is currently a board member of the Higher Education Authority.

Secretary: Professor Alastair Robertson

Professor Alastair Robertson brings over 30 years’ experience in higher education. He is currently the Interim Director of the Queen Mary Academy at Queen Mary University London and he also provides independent higher education consultancy services for the sector. Professor Robertson has previously held several senior management roles in universities, including a period as Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching) at Glasgow Caledonian University.

His areas of expertise encompass academic leadership and development, strategic change, student partnership and quality enhancement. He also has significant experience in national policy development and inter-agency work related to learning, teaching and the student experience. For example, as Chair of QAA’s Scottish Higher Education Committee (SHEEC) he was involved in the development of the Scottish Funding Council (SFC)’s new tertiary quality arrangements and he has been a member of various strategic advisory groups/ working groups over the years including Advance HE’s Professional Standards Review Group (2023)

International Expert: Yvonne Overdevest

Yvonne Overdevest is senior policy advisor at NVAO Netherlands, where she coordinates accreditation activities and manages professionalisation. Her interests include lifelong learning, teacher training, and the internationalisation of higher education. She co-chaired ENQA's working group on academic integrity and recently contributed to policy development and a framework for work-based learning.

With nearly 30 years of experience in education in Europe and the Asia-Pacific, Yvonne spent 20 years in teaching and coordination roles before transitioning to quality assurance. She has taught intercultural communication and ESP to students in diverse fields, including engineering, healthcare, political science, business, and ICT.

Although focused on QA, Yvonne continues to teach to stay informed on educational developments and delivers trainings for ESU and ECAHE. She advocates for professional and career development through her work at NVAO and a personal commitment to lifelong learning.

Yvonne holds an MA in English literature, an MA in education, and an MA in applied linguistics from Leiden University (NL) and Auckland University (NZ).

Learner: Nanshin Nansak

Nanshin Nansak is currently a student at ATU Sligo, researching mathematical modelling of biodegradable polymers for medical implants. His academic background is in Mathematics, and has over five years of experience teaching Mathematics at both Polytechnic and University levels. Between 2018 and 2022, he worked as a researcher with Nigeria's National Space Research and Development Agency (NASRDA), contributing to several government-sponsored geospatial and environmental projects.

He has experience in quality assurance and review processes, having served as a programme reviewer for the Postgraduate Diploma/MSc in Sustainability for the Hospitality Industry at Munster Technological University (MTU) and as an institutional reviewer for Southeast Technological University (SETU) Ireland.

Currently, he holds positions as the postgraduate student representative at ATU Sligo and as a Climate Ambassador for the Department of the Environment, Climate, and Communications, Ireland.

Annual Quality Report

UCC's Annual Quality Report (AQR) to Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) is the University's formal statement of its institutional level approach and policy for the quality of its education, research, training and related services as defined under the 2012 Quality Assurance & Qualifications Act. The AQRs for all higher education institutions are published by QQI and are used for sectoral analysis and benchmarking, including institutional profiling. The AQR is structured in two main parts: Part A comprises a record of each institution's current QA policies and procedures. Part B covers an extended discussion of the issues arising from quality activities, planned enhancements as well as an evaluation of the impact of previous enhancements.

Some of the highlights of Part B for 2024/25 include a comprehensive overview of the new UCC Quality Review process and a Case Study focused on the successful UCC Bystander Intervention Programme which has developed cross-sectoral collaboration and partnerships to embed and support the ongoing roll-out of UCC Bystander Intervention training across all institutions.

Section 2 Internal Quality Review Reports

Thematic Review of the Doctoral Learning Experience

UCC's Strategic Plan 2023-28 'Securing our Future' places great emphasis on the centrality of research and innovation for the Institution, as well as aiming at increasing the doctoral student enrolments and enhancing the quality of student experiences and supports by 2028.

To facilitate the fulfilment of these goals, the QEU led on the institution-wide thematic review of the doctoral learning experience, which is central to both, Goal One: Research and Innovation and Goal Two: Student Success of the University's aforementioned plan.

This initiative, the first of its kind in Ireland, resulted in the publication of a comprehensive Panel Report, driving an Quality Enhancement Plan with transformative impact on UCC's doctoral ecosystem, doctoral students' experiences and success and global research standing.

The review addressed three overarching questions:

1. In what ways and how well are doctoral learners enabled to develop the types of wider transversal skills and outcomes that meet the spirit of the IUA Doctoral Skills statement and the corresponding EUA Doctoral Skills Statement through their programmes?
2. How can the UCC culture(s) of supervision be understood in terms of their impact on the quality and equity of the students' learning experience encompassing supervision, support, doctoral community building, peer engagement and disciplinary expertise?
3. In what ways can the academic and administrative interfaces between Dean, the Graduate Studies Office, the Academic Council Graduate Studies Committee (ACGSC) and College Vice Deans most effectively support the doctoral lifecycle from the learner's perspective.

The thematic review was conducted by an International Peer Review Panel comprising senior experts in higher education, whose independent perspectives informed a robust assessment of the doctoral learning environment and practices in UCC.

Animated by a quality enhancement spirit, the 11 recommendations contained in the Panel Report, on top of 8 commendations, provided expert guidance to UCC towards implementing its ambitious goals in research and innovation excellence through the enhancement of its doctoral education ecosystem. The University's DPR, VPRI and DDS welcomed the Panel Report and committed to implementing the received recommendations, as detailed in the ensuing Quality Enhancement Plan (November 2025).

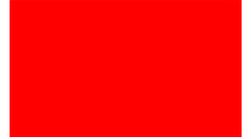
University's activities to implement the first recommendation - i.e., to establish a Doctoral College – have already commenced with a provisional launch scheduled for June 2026. This was set by the Panel as the key central initiative around which the other recommendations cohere in an integrated manner with the shared purpose to optimise the effective functioning of the doctoral education ecosystem at UCC. However, the Panel advised to first implement recommendation 7 (i.e., development of a comprehensive online portal for doctoral studies at UCC) in the very short term because of its self-contained scope and immediate benefit for the University Community and its impact in terms of global engagement and attractiveness in the doctoral education field.

With regard to the scoping questions that underpinned the review, many of the Panel’s dialogues focused on addressing the questions of supervision and governance/administrative infrastructure to support the doctoral learning experience. Nonetheless, the Panel was of the view that the question on transversal skills and the issue of doctoral pedagogy remains a central part of the doctoral learning experience at UCC and will require further attention following enhancements of the infrastructures for doctoral education.

The Panel was impressed by the enthusiasm of the staff involved in the provision of doctoral education and by doctoral students’ overall resilience, determination and passion for research. According to the Panel, UCC is well-positioned to respond to the challenges experienced, similarly to many other HEIs in Ireland and internationally, and progress with the quality enhancement of its doctoral education, strengthening doctoral education, enhancing research culture, and embedding high-quality supervision and development practices across the institution.

Thematic Review	Site Visit Dates	Link to Quality Enhancement Plan
Doctoral Learning Experience	25 th – 26 th March 2025	Doctoral Learning Experience - QEP 2025

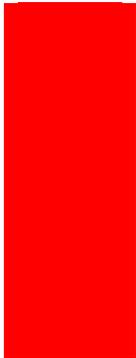
Table 1.2



Thematic Review
Doctoral Learning Experience
 Peer Review Panel Report
 April 2025



UCC
 University College Cork, Ireland
 Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh



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Peer Review Panel Report

Scope of Thematic Review

Thematic review is an enhancement-led evaluation of existing University-wide processes, practices or policies to assess their current stage of effectiveness and identify good international practices that can inform future developments.

Specific features of Thematic Review include:

- Applying an institutional lens with a holistic approach moving from policy to practice
- Applying a horizontal perspective involving multiple stakeholders
- Convening and activating an external expert panel
- Strategically aligning and sponsoring the review

This specific Thematic Review centres around the doctoral learning experience in UCC and addresses the following overarching questions:

1. In what ways and how well are doctoral learners enabled to develop the types of wider transversal skills and outcomes that meet the spirit of the IUA Doctoral Skills statement and the corresponding EUA Doctoral Skills Statement through their programmes?
2. How can the UCC culture(s) of supervision be understood in terms of their impact on the quality and equity of the students' learning experience encompassing supervision, support, doctoral community building, peer engagement and disciplinary expertise?
3. In what ways can the academic and administrative interfaces between Dean, the Graduate Studies Office, the Academic Council Graduate Studies Committee (ACGSC) and College Vice-Deans most effectively support the doctoral lifecycle from the learner's perspective?

Thematic Review of Doctoral Learning Experience

Panel Report

Review Methodology

A review team of senior international experts was appointed as detailed in Appendix 2. Following the appointment of the Review Panel, briefing meetings were organised with the Dean of Doctoral Studies, Registrar & Deputy President, Vice-President for Research & Innovation and representatives from the Quality Enhancement Unit (QEU). These meetings provided an opportunity to outline the strategic context and rationale for the Thematic Review from the perspective of the sponsors, as well as incorporating the overall approach to thematic reviews at UCC. The methodology for thematic review followed the accepted model for quality review as defined by the European Standards Guidelines (2015) as follows:

- Documentary submission;
- External review by nominated peers;
- Panel site visit to UCC;
- Report publication and action planning.

Documentary Submission

The final documentary submission to the Peer Review Panel consisted of the following items:

1. A stand-alone contribution by the Dean of Doctoral Studies, i.e., an overview of doctoral education at UCC.
2. A concise outline of the current international, national and institutional policy context.
3. An outline of the administrative structures, procedures and policies underpinning the doctoral student lifecycle at UCC with a focus on the functions operating at central institutional level and at the local academic level, through the nodal points of the four Colleges.
4. An outline of doctoral programme offerings at UCC, as well as the key findings from an alignment report between the UCC's postgraduate training modules and the IUA Doctoral Skills Statement and a high-order analysis of doctoral student population profile.
5. Insights into doctoral student feedback on their experiences in three ways: key findings against the sectoral score; specificities of international and non-traditional students; results from the 2023 Postgraduate Research Student Survey.
6. An overview of the main doctoral student learning experience themes arising from periodical internal quality review reports since 2020.

This Strategic Overview Report was equipped with appendices including submissions from relevant stakeholders (Dean of Doctoral Studies, the four College Vice-Deans, Head of the Graduate Studies Office and so on).

Panel Site Visit

- The Panel Site Visit was conducted on campus, 25th - 27th March 2025.
- The timetable of meetings for the review site visit was developed and managed by the Quality Enhancement Unit. A copy of the review timetable can be found in **Appendix 3**.
- The Panel's findings were presented online in April 2025. In the absence of the UCC President due to a family bereavement, they were shared first with the Deputy-President and Registrar and, subsequently, with the Dean of Doctoral Studies, Deputy-President and Registrar and the Vice-President for Research and Innovation.

Overall Analysis

The Panel makes eight commendations and eleven recommendations. The first recommendation (i.e., to establish a Doctoral College) should be regarded as the key central initiative around which the other recommendations will cohere in an integrated manner; their purpose is to optimise the effective functioning of the doctoral education ecosystem at UCC. However, recommendation 7 (i.e., development of a comprehensive online portal for doctoral studies at UCC) should be the first one to be implemented in the very short term because of its self-contained scope and immediate benefit. The commendations and recommendations are listed below and subsequently expanded in the following sections.

The term 'doctoral students' is used as an inclusive term to accommodate for different types of level 10 research degrees currently available, in addition to the traditional individual PhD model by research.

Overview

Commendations

Summary Commendations

The Panel is impressed by how strongly participants engaged in its Site Visit to UCC, regardless of their role: both students and staff at all levels demonstrated honesty, openness and a desire to facilitate the Panel's successful conduct of this Thematic Review. There seems to be a high degree of consensus about the need to harmonise and enhance the doctoral education ecosystem at UCC; and, especially, the need to work towards a greater equalisation of opportunities and resources for doctoral students across disciplinary divides and doctoral programme types. UCC staff's dedication to doctoral students and the enhancement of their experiences, as well as commitment to the strategic priorities of the University, is evident from feedback at the various sessions of the Panel Site Visit. Specifically, the Dean of Doctoral Studies' plan to launch the Doctoral College and Doctoral Student Lounge at UCC in October 2025 appears to have gained momentum among the University Leadership Team's stakeholders who met with the Panel; it is also endorsed by attending academic and professional services members at all levels and in all areas of the doctoral education ecosystem and doctoral student lifecycle. However, this enthusiasm is tempered by some concerns about whether adequate resourcing is available to support the implementation process.

The Panel's key commendations are listed below.

- 1- The Executive Leadership, Vice-Deans and Dean of Doctoral Studies demonstrate a very collegial working relationship and a shared vision for the future of doctoral education.**
- 2- University stakeholders express widespread support for the Doctoral College forthcoming in October 2025.**
- 3- Staff at all levels and in all areas demonstrate deep commitment to and enthusiasm for doctoral education.**
- 4- Many individual staff go above and beyond the normal call of duty to support doctoral students and the student lifecycle.**

5- The vast majority of the attending supervisors, especially those recently appointed, endorse the introduction of mandatory supervision training.

6- Overall, student attendees are extremely satisfied with the dedication and support of their doctoral supervisors.

7- All attending stakeholders are pleased with the initiatives that the Dean of Doctoral Studies has introduced to support doctoral education, students and supervisors.

8- Attendees appreciate the concept and potential of the recently implemented Graduate Education Manager system (GEM).

Commendations in detail

- 1. The Executive Leadership, Vice-Deans and Dean of Doctoral Studies demonstrate a very collegial working relationship and a shared vision for the future of doctoral education.**

The Panel is impressed with the cohesion and shared vision demonstrated by the University's senior leadership in supporting the Dean of Doctoral Studies' development plans for the future enhancement of doctoral education at UCC. Several senior leaders commended the progress and developments already accomplished by the Dean of Doctoral Studies over the last year since her appointment on a part-time basis. It was evident to the Panel that there was amongst the leadership team a confident willingness to empower the Dean to fully operate within the strategic remit of her role and streamline the governance and administrative structures of doctoral education and its support system.

- 2. University stakeholders express widespread support for the Doctoral College forthcoming in October 2025.**

It is the declared intention of UCC to introduce a Doctoral College in the autumn of 2025, so it was no surprise to find widespread support for this endeavour among staff and among senior officers. Where the Panel had perhaps anticipated resistance, none materialised — at least not among the attendees to its Site Visit to UCC. The Panel met 83 people — 51 UCC staff members and 32 students.

- 3. Staff at all levels and in all areas demonstrate deep commitment to and enthusiasm for doctoral education.**

It is evident from the many conversations held during its Site Visit at UCC that staff at all levels and in all areas are deeply committed to providing quality doctoral education at UCC and to successful experiences and outcomes for doctoral researchers. Staff maintain a high degree of motivation and resilience in the face of the many structural disconnects and difficulties concerning resources and workloads.

- 4. Many individual staff go above and beyond the normal call of duty to support doctoral students and the student lifecycle.**

From both the Strategic Overview Report and the Site Visit, it is apparent to the Panel that the doctoral education system at UCC does function currently because staff put an immense amount

of work into it. However, some of the Site Visit attendees outlined the hardship experienced in their daily roles supporting doctoral education. For instance, their work-related administrative demands were defined as “crippling” and “excruciating”. While this is a commendation of staff’s dedication and selflessness, the Panel also regards this finding as a significant vulnerability for UCC and as a threat to the fulfillment of its strategic ambitions regarding the increase and enhancement of doctoral education and student experiences. This aspect will be further addressed in the ‘Recommendations’ section of this report.

5. The vast majority of the attending supervisors, especially those recently appointed, endorse the introduction of mandatory supervision training.

In three different meetings the Panel met experienced senior supervisors, Principal Investigators (PIs) and recently appointed supervisors from UCC’s four Colleges and Tyndall National Institute. Initiatives already introduced by the Dean of Doctoral Studies were welcomed. Overall, they agreed that CPD opportunities would be beneficial, even though their high workloads make it currently very difficult for them to engage in this endeavour. Some supervisors generally expressed their need for University’s support to manage difficulties in supervisory relationships. Others would welcome CPD opportunities in research integrity and ethics, since it is an area in constant development. However, there was no full consensus among the senior academics on the introduction of mandatory training for all supervisors, and different views were sometimes presented according to experience and seniority. Staff with senior experience welcomed the introduction of CPD opportunities tailored to the supervisors’ needs in various disciplinary fields but were less enthusiastic about one-size-fits-all mandatory training. On the other hand, attendees from the recently appointed supervisor cohort unanimously opted in favour of compulsory doctoral supervisory training. Despite these differences, the Panel commends the overall endorsement of CPD/training opportunities by all academic attendees.

6. Overall, student attendees are extremely satisfied with the dedication and support of their doctoral supervisors.

The Panel met doctoral researchers from the four Colleges and Tyndall, enrolled in different years and different types of programmes. The vast majority was extremely positive about their supervisors, who were praised for their dedication, competence, mentorship and pastoral care. Supervisors appear to be fully supportive of the supervisees’ needs and appear to be their main person-to-go for any query.

7. All attending stakeholders are pleased with the initiatives that the Dean of Doctoral Studies has introduced to support doctoral education, students and supervisors.

The Panel heard praise from many University attendees – both staff and students – for the many initiatives already introduced by the Dean of Doctoral Studies. These included *inter alia* Research Integrity and Ethics, ECTS modules for doctoral students, mentoring, staff training, teaching, problem solving, a monthly PGR clinic and coffee mornings for doctoral students. The momentum built by the Dean of Doctoral Studies around the enhancement of the doctoral education ecosystem is commended by the Panel.

8. Attendees appreciate the concept and potential of the recently implemented Graduate

Education Manager system (GEM).

The new Graduate Education Manager (GEM) system was discussed by many of the staff and student stakeholders. Its introduction came as the output from the Research Student Administration Project (RAP) which is part of the university-sponsored digitalisation of the research administration systems. The Panel learnt that, despite the many difficulties experienced by both staff and students during the recent GEM implementation, there is an overall university-wide appreciation of the potential it offers, provided that resources are allocated for GEM to reach its full functionality. These include the integration of financial management, the creation of digital communities and virtual communication arenas, among others.

Recommendations

Summary Recommendations

Having learnt about the University's strong tradition of decentralisation and devolution, the Panel discovered there is also enthusiasm for greater streamlining and harmonisation of doctoral education across graduate schools and administrative functions.

The Panel's key recommendations, which are listed below, are meant to facilitate this streamlining and harmonisation process ensuring that doctoral education at UCC benefits from consistency of governance and administration; single points of failure and vulnerability should be addressed going forward.

- 1. The University should establish a Doctoral College.**
- 2. All relevant administrative and support structures around doctoral education should be re-examined to optimise efficiency and effectiveness.**
- 3. There should be a concerted university effort to foster an inclusive, supportive and reflective culture of supervision within the institution.**
- 4. The University Leadership Team (ULT) should review resources and ensure that sufficient budget is available for the successful development of the Doctoral College.**
- 5. The University Leadership Team (ULT) should continue to explore ways of increasing student funding and access to infrastructure; it should scrutinise and address inequities of resources that exist across disciplinary areas.**
- 6. The Graduate Education Manager system (GEM) requires appropriate administrative and IT support to attain full functionality. This should be provided.**
- 7. The University should establish a dedicated online portal that covers the entire doctoral lifecycle from prospective students to current students and relevant stakeholders.**
- 8. The University Leadership Team (ULT) should review the available physical space across the institution and enact plans to provide doctoral students with access to adequate working and social space. The provision of the doctoral lounge should be supported.**
- 9. Peer support networks need to be improved to enhance the doctoral community, foster research culture and nurture a sense of belonging.**
- 10. While an increase in doctoral student numbers may be desirable, the University should ensure that sufficient resources and capacity are available to support it.**
- 11. Special attention should be devoted to the specific needs of prospective and current international students, especially in light of the continuing increase in their numbers.**

Recommendations in detail

- 1- The University should establish a Doctoral College. Its successful implementation will depend on the following conditions:**
 - Appointing a Full-Time Dean of Doctoral Studies who will chair the Academic Council Graduate Studies Committee (ACGSC) and be a member of the University Leadership Team (ULT).**

- **The Graduate Studies Office (GSO) and the four College Vice-Deans should have a reporting relationship to the Dean.**
- **There should be a consistent terminology and clear consistent job descriptions for the Dean of Doctoral Studies, the Vice-Deans of Doctoral Studies and the Chairs of Graduate Studies Committees at all levels.**

The current decentralised and devolved governance structure of doctoral education at UCC was the object of discussion in many of the sessions with the UCC stakeholders at various levels -- from the central to the local. While the democratic and locally tailored arrangements appeared to be the key benefits of such system, discussions with the attendees highlighted especially its considerable drawbacks. These include prolonged and complicated decision-making processes, as well as confusion and inconsistencies of roles, job descriptions, naming conventions, plus workload and resource allocation, to the detriment of transparency, accountability and consistency of staff and student experiences across the institution.

The recent establishment of the role of Dean of Doctoral Studies and its insertion into a governance model characterised by piecemeal growth over the years shows many limitations and blockages. The Panel struggled to identify single decision-making authorities and roles within this ecosystem. While a central role is being played by the Academic Council Graduate Studies Committee (ACGSC), procedural arrangements for decision-making appear to be reactive rather than proactive and require approval by Academic Board, Academic Council and University Leadership Team (ULT). The Dean of Doctoral Studies and the four College Vice-Deans/Heads of Graduate Studies Committees/Schools seem to have great responsibilities in terms of policy interpretation and institutional alignment with national and international guidelines surrounding doctoral education. However, they lack decision-making authority. Decisions are made through complicated prolonged processes resulting in an uneven doctoral education ecosystem across the four Colleges. There are currently no financial resources being assigned centrally to the Dean of Doctoral Studies either for the development and delivery of doctoral programmes or for the provision of professional development opportunities for academic and Professional Services staff involved in doctoral education. Administrative support to the Dean corresponding to 0.5 FTE was provided only in January 2025. As a result, the introduction of new initiatives and changes is complicated and not agile enough for a constantly evolving doctoral education landscape at national and international level, with statutory guidelines requiring HEIs to align their doctoral education provision (e.g., IUA Doctoral Skill Statement and the Salzburg Principles).

The Panel believes that the consensus and momentum built by the current Dean of Doctoral Studies to streamline and harmonise the current governance structure should be harnessed, supported and pursued by the University Leadership Team so that the Doctoral College becomes established at UCC as a matter of urgency. This would send a clear message that doctoral education is a core University priority. The establishment of Doctoral Colleges has become commonplace in many universities around the world, especially those with a strong research and innovation focus, where it serves as research hub for postgraduate researchers.

The current governance structure at UCC needs to be strategically and operationally optimised and transformed into 'a one-stop-shop model': an overarching cohesive ecosystem with consistent and

comprehensive supports to doctoral students, supervisors and Professional Services staff. The Panel believes that the Dean of Doctoral Studies role needs to be consolidated to become a full-time university leadership role with recognised institution-wide authority for development of doctoral education with the support of the College Vice-Deans. The necessary strategic policy leadership and management required for this role should be reflected by the Dean of Doctoral Studies acting as Chair of the ACGSC and as an academic functional head for the Graduate Studies Office. All the corresponding Doctoral Education roles across the Colleges should have the same title for the same job description and their workload should be proportionally equivalent to ensure governance consistency, transparency, accountability and fairness across the University.

The Panel is aware of the planning necessary for, and of the difficulties that can be encountered in, establishing the Doctoral College and instances of international good practice and resources have been provided by the Panel in Appendix 1. In addition, the Panel is willing to share its experiential wisdom, since some of the Panel members' institutions of affiliation successfully underwent the same transformative process a few years ago (e.g., Southampton University). This availability extends to the implementation of the following recommendations that are also connected to the establishment of the Doctoral College.

- 2- With the introduction of the Doctoral College, all relevant administrative and support structures around doctoral education should be re-examined to optimise efficiency and effectiveness. Job descriptions should be clearly formulated at all levels; they should be consistent and integrated into a logical, common and coherent structure. Reporting lines and relationships should be made clear.**

During the Site Visit the Panel ascertained that the administrative processes around the doctoral student lifecycle from application and recruitment to graduation are not coherently structured; much variation and many disconnects and blockages occur between the central and local levels. Recruitment is distributed among various university stakeholders including the International Office (IO) and departments and individual supervisors at local level. A few dedicated Professional Services staff within the Graduate Studies Office (GSO) currently manage at central level the whole lifecycle of 1400 doctoral students from admission to graduation (except for the admissions of non-EU domiciled students, which is under the remit of the IO); at local level there are no defined consistent administrative structures or roles to support doctoral students and supervisors, with arrangements varying even among departments located within the same School. It appears that academics and academic supervisors are overburdened with administrative tasks around doctoral education (and beyond), in many cases without significant consistent workload reduction. A few GSO staff members are responsible for the doctoral student lifecycle (including the registration and examination of doctoral students and their ECTS credits); they support the resolution of emerging Quality Assurance issues and have also taken onboard the management of the recently rolled out Graduate Education Manager system (GEM), as well as servicing the rollout of GEM training across the University. While acknowledging the quality work carried out by these GSO members to support doctoral education and lifecycle, the Panel is concerned that their workload is unmanageable in the long-term and constitutes a significant risk and vulnerability for the University. There are also disconnects at the interfaces between the GSO, the Finance Office (Fees Office and Research Grant), doctoral students and 'administrators' at local academic level. Other delays and blockages affect the interfaces between UCC

and the Tyndall National Institute, with international students experiencing considerable registration delays between successful recruitment, funding allocation and registration at UCC.

In the face of this, the Panel believes that it is paramount that the establishment of the Doctoral College is accompanied by a comprehensive review of the whole administrative and support system around doctoral education so that it is streamlined, harmonised, consistently structured across the four Colleges and properly resourced to effectively function throughout.

3- There should be a concerted university effort to foster an inclusive, supportive and reflective culture of supervision within the Institution. This would include provision of professional development opportunities for staff involved in doctoral education as well as mandatory training for doctoral supervision for newly appointed supervisors.

Supervision was set at the centre of one of the three scoping questions for this Thematic Review. Quality supervision is recognised by international literature, national statutory guidelines and European principles as one of the key factors affecting doctoral researchers' successful outcomes. While most of the doctoral attendees from the four Colleges and Tyndall National Institute expressed an overall high degree of satisfaction with their supervisors' dedication and support (as was the case with similar findings from the 2023 Postgraduate Research Student Survey), it became clear to the Panel that this depends mostly on the dedication and commitment of individual supervisors rather than on the University's support structures around supervision.

Representatives of experienced supervisors, Principal Investigators and recently appointed supervisors expressed concern at their increasing workload levels and administrative responsibilities for doctoral students within a rapidly evolving doctoral education landscape (e.g., introduction of new software, implementation of Annual Progress Review for all candidates, QQI regulations and IUA guidelines on transversal skills development, funders' expectations and so on). Throughout the Site Visit, it became clear to the Panel that academics who serve as doctoral supervisors go beyond supervision and pastoral care. For doctoral students they seem to act as the main liaison person also for administrative and support issues throughout their academic journeys. As a result, they seem to struggle with increasing responsibilities, with supervision often not being accounted for within their teaching or research workload.

Supervisors attending the Site Visit overall agreed that they need greater institutional support in a range of areas. These include support to deal with difficult situations in supervisory relationships (e.g., crisis or breakdown of supervisory relationships) and opportunities for professional development, supervision training and peer support. Most of the attending supervisors were in favour of introducing mandatory training starting with newly appointed supervisors. More specifically, they discussed the potential of common cross-institutional training in leadership, management and ethics, as well as in discipline-specific areas. Among the experienced supervisors, there was also the view that the already mandatory co-supervision for newly appointed supervisors works as an effective alternative to mandatory training for all supervisors.

It became apparent to the Panel that supervision is not consistently included in workload calculations across the Institution, with variations occurring even within the same academic unit. In addition, whilst

academic staff and research staff can supervise doctoral students, differences in expectations exist regarding the involvement of research staff as supervisors. This has implications for how doctoral supervision is accounted for promotion. In the case of academic staff, it is a key criterium, whereas for research staff this is not the case. This issue is particularly relevant for researchers based at Tyndall National Institute. Another emerging issue is around the student complaint procedures, with difficulties being mostly managed at local level (according to a bottom-up escalation model) without an external independent central process, apart from the Student Ombudsman role, which is not specific to doctoral education.

In light of the above findings, the Panel believes that the already very good individual supervision standards present at UCC need to be further strengthened at institutional level to ensure that they do not depend only on the deep dedication of individual supervisors. Accordingly, a culture of quality supervision should be fostered by the University in many ways and at all levels. Enhancement of supervision requires a broader approach of institutional cultural change so that the concepts are inculcated at every stage and level: faculty hiring, onboarding, promotion, annual reviews, seminars and so on. This would help students and staff understand their responsibilities and rights, as well as addressing how to manage problems with leadership. A Doctoral College would be an essential and necessary asset for the oversight of this cultural transformation around supervision.

Doctoral pedagogy is an area of growing importance for higher education institutions worldwide, given the diversity of doctoral programmes available nowadays and the increasingly diverse pathways of doctoral graduates beyond the academy. Specifically, international literature on doctoral education (Carter et al., 2020; Huet and Casanova, 2020; Smith, 2022) identifies the institutional adoption of a signature doctoral pedagogy as a crucial asset to the success of its programmes. Doctoral supervision is a critically important, unique and rigorous form of pedagogy that is sometimes neglected. It is thus incumbent on those seeking the highest quality of doctoral education to value and shine a light on this relationship and to support the influence of evidence-based expertise on this often-overlooked role. The University needs to reflect at a deeper level about the pedagogy underpinning research education, putting a fair degree of effort into this question by, for instance, forming a graduate research community of practice that can develop a set of professional development principles.

The enhancement of institutional supervision culture also relies on the provision of adequate administrative, IT and research resources and equipment; appropriate opportunities for professional development and mandatory training; adequate recognition and weighting of supervision duties within the workload and promotion processes for all supervisors of UCC students (including those based in Tyndall National Institute); organisation of university-wide initiatives and events that celebrate and reinforce a culture of supervision and critical reflection on the pursuit of its ongoing enhancement.

Potential short-term “low-hanging fruits” for UCC might include the following activities:

- Review and improve the current [UCC list of responsibilities](#) for graduate supervision. It would be highly beneficial if these supervision resources were to be created through a participative

process with a broad doctoral community involvement – in the realm of culture this is as important as the outcomes.

- Once finalised, these resources could be launched and celebrated by the University to raise awareness and further promote the desired cultural transformation around doctoral education and supervision.
- Produce a contract-type document outlining expectations to be co-signed by doctoral student and supervisor at the outset of the relationship and periodically revised, as needed (focus is different from the already implemented research learning agreement).
- Institute a graduate mentorship award and publicise it widely.
- Include doctoral education as a stand-alone item within the periodical quality review processes of the University, especially for academic units.

4- The University Leadership Team (ULT) should review resources and ensure that sufficient budget is available for the successful development of the Doctoral College.

Together with the strong enthusiasm for the establishment of a Doctoral College, some University attendees expressed their concerns that there may be a mismatch between the University's strategic ambition for the enhancement of doctoral education and the establishment of the Doctoral College with its actual implementation outcomes. There is some concern that, if the Doctoral College turns out to be only partially implemented, though it is used as a marketing strategy, there is a lost opportunity for achieving a collective institutional transformative quality enhancement initiative in doctoral provision.

The Panel is of the view that a comprehensive and thorough examination of all the required financial and human resources of the Doctoral College needs to be conducted as a preliminary step to its establishment. If new funding sources cannot be generated and/or identified, the University may need to redirect resources from other portfolios to ensure the Doctoral College's optimal functioning at all levels.

5- The University Leadership Team should continue to explore ways of increasing student funding and access to infrastructure; it should scrutinise and address inequities of resources that exist across disciplinary areas.

The Panel is concerned with the limited funding currently available at UCC for level 10 researchers. This was highlighted in the Strategic Overview Report on Doctoral Education and during the Site Visit to the Institution. Only about 65% of doctoral candidates are funded (fees and stipend) and these are unevenly spread across the disciplines (e.g., 83% of CSEFS students in receipt of a stipend in 2023 against only 18% in CACSSS). These facts are quite concerning for the Panel, even though this is an issue shared with many other Irish higher education institutions. Together with that, the Panel notes that, even with the recent increase in stipends for state-funded doctoral students in Ireland, the recently set minimum yearly stipend tends to be lower than in international European HEI counterparts and lower than market salaries paid to professionals in industry. Furthermore, stipends for researchers in the Colleges of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences (CACSSS) and Business and Law (CBL) tend to be systematically lower than in STEM and Medicine and Health.

Funding difficulties have been furtherly exacerbated by UCC's high dependency on exchequer funding for research, combined with the current uncertainty and delays brought about by the still ongoing merger of Irish Research Council (IRC) and Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) into Research Ireland commenced two years ago. Financial hardship is also regarded as one of the main factors impacting upon doctoral students' negative outcomes (e.g., ill-health, withdrawal and delayed completion times).

Additional widespread issues concerning UCC doctoral students relate to travel and equipment funding. Inconsistency of access to research resources and infrastructures, equipment, other resources and supports also emerged as a significant issue at UCC. Doctoral students during the Site Visit claimed that such inconsistency also constitutes a potentially divisive source of inequities among peers, not only across disciplinary areas but often also within the same academic unit (School and/or department), depending on the funding sources and arrangements for individual doctoral students.

While the Panel is aware that it is impossible to fully equalise financial distribution, access to infrastructures, equipment and resources for all the doctoral candidates, it believes that there is scope for finding creative and innovative approaches to new funding streams. Overall, the Panel supports the Dean in pursuing the outlined plans to secure stabilisation and increases in external funding streams while also reducing the Institution's over-reliance on exchequer funding (e.g., philanthropy, industry, Irish Research Council, European Research Council and Horizon Europe research grants, UCC Futures-related research grants with scope for doctoral researchers' engagement and so on).

6- The Graduate Education Manager system (GEM) requires appropriate administrative and IT support to attain full functionality. This should be provided.

The Panel recognises that the digitalisation of the research student administration processes at UCC is an important step towards the optimisation of the administrative management of the doctoral lifecycle. This digital transformation of doctoral student administration was recently implemented through the adoption of the Graduate Education Manager system (GEM), which was widely discussed during the Panel Site Visit to UCC by a variety of attending stakeholders – students, supervisors, ULT members, academics and administrators at all levels and in all areas. The Panel found that the overall feedback on its introduction was mixed, with an appreciation of both its positive transformative potential and its current shortcomings.

Among the positives, GEM is appreciated as a source of administrative transparency and accountability; as a recording tool for capturing key doctoral education statistics (e.g., Supervisor/supervisee ratios, Progress and Development Reviews; ECTS credits and so on), as well as identifying risks/vulnerabilities and doctoral journey gaps for individual researchers. It also functions as a depository of doctoral students' research work and as a reminder of deadlines and supervision frequency and so on.

Despite current benefits and future potential, the Panel is concerned with the apparent underperforming of the GEM system and its over-reliance on manual inputs coupled with a scarcity of human, financial and IT resources to achieve its full functionality.

The Panel recognises that some of the issues experienced by doctoral students, academic supervisors and administrators at all levels with the GEM rollout are due to its recent introduction and the deep learning curve associated with that. However, it has gained awareness that substantial difficulties arise from a combination of IT systems' incompatibilities, financial restrictions and the need for the integration of GEM with pre-existing University regulations and functionalities.

The necessity to harmonise GEM with the student recording system in use at UCC (Integrated Tertiary Software - ITS) has emerged as a big obstacle. Currently this integration is carried out manually and requires constant manipulation of the system. No additional human resources have been provided to support this activity.

Furthermore, because of the lack of GEM training-dedicated personnel, the few GSO staff members responsible for the administration of the whole doctoral student lifecycle have been also entrusted with this university-wide task. In some cases, local administrators or academics chairing the School Graduate Studies Committees have also assumed the burden of training their fellow colleagues and research students.

First year doctoral students have encountered difficulties in completing their research learning agreement through GEM because they are required to complete a Data Management Plan, which presupposes the prior knowledge of research ethics (yet this is learnt through a PGR module upon which they can register after becoming doctoral students). Finally, it appears to the Panel that GEM has not been exploited to its full extent yet (e.g., for its skills/trainings function and for fees/grant management; as a digital communication site with potential for creating peer communities).

In light of all of the above, the Panel strongly recommends that the ULT prioritises investment in the provision of the necessary administrative, IT and financial supports for GEM to attain its full functionality and achieve its transformative potential for all the stakeholders within the University's doctoral education community.

7- The University should establish a dedicated online portal that covers the entire doctoral lifecycle from prospective students to current students and relevant stakeholders.

During its review the Panel found out that postgraduate research student recruitment does not happen at central level, unlike the recruitment for taught programmes. Similarly, there is not a professional centralised Postgraduate Research Prospectus for the University nor a centralised up-to-date active supervisor list that prospective postgraduate researchers can search. While there are some discipline- or college-based resources and websites providing some doctoral programme information, they are not cohesive, up-to-date and fully functional in serving the needs of doctoral education stakeholders. Doctoral researchers' recruitment is largely carried out at local academic level, especially by individual supervisors. The Panel has noted the ongoing transition from the IRIS researcher

management system to the new PURE system, which will enable a search by keyword for potential supervisors.

Apart from this welcome development, UCC does not seem to have a professionally developed online portal covering the entire doctoral lifecycle. The only currently existing centralised website on [research education and programmes at UCC](#) for prospective students was developed by the Graduate Studies Office to provide general basic information on pursuing postgraduate research at UCC (Master's by research and doctoral programmes), without availing of any dedicated IT professional resources.

The Panel is of the view that this gap in centralised postgraduate research-related information needs to be addressed as a priority, even before the establishment of the Doctoral College. The University needs to immediately invest in the development of a professional centralised portal dealing with all aspects of doctoral education. This needs to look very attractive, be easy to navigate, and function as a one-stop-shop for a range of key stakeholders in doctoral education: actual/prospective supervisors, actual/prospective students, actual/prospective funders, actual/prospective industry and other partners and so on. This portal should cover all the aspects of the doctoral lifecycle and should be professionally managed, regularly serviced and updated and appropriately resourced. It should cover not only information about doctoral education programmes, supervisors and policies at UCC, but also key related aspects such as accommodation, general and specific support services, useful practical advice, events, awards, conferences and so on.

8- The University Leadership Team should review the available physical space across the institution and enact plans to provide doctoral students with access to adequate working and social space. The provision of the doctoral lounge should be supported.

During its Site Visit the Panel became aware of the space issues experienced by doctoral students at UCC, who expressed the feeling of having “nowhere to be”. Many doctoral candidates (especially within CACSSS) do not have an assigned desk at UCC and can avail of hot-desk facilities some of which are located in basements without windows. Alternatively, they have access to other larger spaces which are very noisy and available on a first-come-first-served basis.

Hence, space emerged as a vexed and contentious issue and as a key resource to be provided in a variety of forms according to its purposes: lab-based research practice spaces; non-traditional performance-based and art-based studios and pods; individual study and social spaces for peer networking. Student feedback pertained also to the quality of the available space and its alignment with EDI principles and UCC's strategic sustainability goals.

Accordingly, for the Panel study/research spaces should include: standard quality study areas with desks and natural sunlight; artistic studio pods for art-based installations and participatory performance-based research projects; scientific lab spaces with up-to-date equipment and longer opening hours to suit conduct of experiments; inclusive spaces, equipped to cater for researchers with special needs and learning difficulties; quality spaces with access to daylight (not located in basements without windows).

As for the need of social spaces, the Dean's proposal to develop a doctoral lounge received strong support from the doctoral researcher attendees and staff members involved in doctoral education. They all agreed that such a lounge would serve the vital purpose of facilitating inter-disciplinary peer networking and would facilitate the emergence of a cohesive doctoral community at UCC. A postgraduate lounge would help to promote feelings of peer solidarity — which is so conspicuously evident among Tyndall respondents with their cohesive environment. A satisfying peer network is important for retention of students and for their mental health.

The Panel believes that space for the doctoral students need not necessarily involve new buildings, but it will involve re-purposing and developing under-used space. Hence, the Panel strongly recommend the University to address spatial issues for doctoral researchers by carrying out a review of existing spaces to make the best use of them.

9- Peer support networks need to be improved to enhance the doctoral community, foster research culture and nurture a sense of belonging.

It appears to the Panel that there is not a strong sense of doctoral community across all doctoral stakeholders groups at UCC, whereas this is the case among doctoral students at Tyndall National Institute. This issue seems to affect not only doctoral researchers, but also academic and professional services staff involved in doctoral education and lifecycle. Indeed, many of the University stakeholders attending the Site Visit had not met before on campus, despite their common roles and experiences. A strong sense of isolation and exclusion was perceivable among researchers themselves and within academic environments (at Departments and Schools). Staff and students at each College seem to face many similar problems and deal with them locally and individually without any collective endeavour and permanent peer support systems in place.

The Panel learnt that the Dean of Doctoral Studies has begun some collective support initiatives such as University-wide orientation events for the October doctoral intake session, monthly coffee morning events with students, as well as clinics with doctoral supervisors. However, doctoral researchers' attendance was reported as being quite low. This is probably due to a combination of factors, including the fact that there are no social or research spaces for most doctoral students on campus, so many researchers do not routinely participate in campus life and events.

For the Panel, the introduction of a buddy system among doctoral researchers is an effective initiative that could be implemented to counter the sense of isolation and exclusion felt by many doctoral researchers. However, the Panel believes that this disconnect needs to be addressed at a broader strategic, cultural and practical level through a range of initiatives aimed at building communities of practice among Professional Services staff, academics and doctoral researchers across the disciplines and Institution. Establishing the Doctoral College; streamlining and harmonising the administrative structures and interfaces around the doctoral lifecycle; launching a doctoral lounge for doctoral students; elaborating a signature pedagogy for doctoral education at UCC with a comprehensive range of valorising initiatives; these developments will certainly make a positive impact in terms of fostering

collaboration, a sense of belonging and an increased sense of interdisciplinary solidarity among doctoral supervisors, researchers and Professional Services staff members.

10- While an increase in doctoral student numbers may be desirable, the University should ensure that sufficient resources and capacity are available to support it.

Previous evaluations of the University had made recommendations about doctoral studies: the EUA Institutional Evaluation Programme [UCC Report \(2020\)](#) recommended that the University benchmark its arrangements for doctoral studies; the [CINNTE Review \(2023\)](#) recommended to a detailed plan to underpin the planned increase of doctoral student numbers. During the Site Visit, some reservations were expressed to the Panel about the mechanisms and resources for achieving ambitious doctoral student intake targets. While some participants argued that there is a misalignment between ambitions and resource investments at UCC, the Panel believes that increased targets are achievable, if implemented in phases of twenty extra admissions per year, and by exploiting existing niche professional doctorate needs in the region. For instance, there is an important role for UCC to play in enabling staff in Technological Universities to attain their doctorates. However, the Panel recommends the University to adequately resource this increase in enrolment for a successful outcome. Otherwise, there is a risk of increased frustration among staff and student cohorts, creating additional stress and inefficiency.

11- Special attention should be devoted to the specific needs of prospective and current international students, especially considering the continuing increase in their numbers. The University should review and address any deficiencies in the support provided to them. This includes timeliness in processing their applications.

International students, approaching 44% of UCC respondents to the 2023 PGR Student Survey, provided feedback on specific difficulties that impact negatively on their student experiences. One issue that came up repeatedly across the four Colleges and Tyndall international cohorts is the complaint about short-term visas in the Schengen area, which require annual renewal despite students' four-year research programme award. Longer-term visas are needed to study with stability, enjoy peace of mind, and be enabled to attend international conferences and research events.

More broadly, another frequently reported common issue for international non-EU researchers (especially those based in Tyndall National Institute) is the disconnect and delay between the successful recruitment processes, funding award and actual UCC registration. Some students stated that they had to wait between 6 to 12 months before registration to start their research project, whereas others even failed to register. Recruitment and advertising were also highlighted as areas that require further improvement. Many international students seemingly heard about the UCC and Tyndall research vacancy opportunities through individual academics at their home institutions. However, they believe that the vacancies should be broadly and officially advertised and visible on websites. Funding issues also tend to affect international students more harshly than Irish and EU students, since the latter can at least apply for the SUSI fee-waiver grant. Other key areas of need include accommodation support and socialization opportunities. Given that there is a generalised housing crisis in Ireland, it is even more demanding for international students to find quality affordable

lodgments in Cork. Feedback from international Site Visit attendees is that they tend to arrive at UCC during the summer break when a good proportion of staff is on annual leave. Students may need help with managing bureaucratic matters, finding their way on the campus and its many Professional Services offices and, more simply, settling in Cork and establishing supportive social ties. The establishment of a 'Peer Buddy' System may be of practical and emotional support to international students upon their arrival in Cork.

On the plus side, international students' satisfaction with their supervisors reached almost 78% in the latest national survey - about 10 percentage points higher than that of Irish-domiciled doctoral researchers.

Conclusions

The Panel would like to thank UCC for the opportunity to undertake this review. The Panel is greatly encouraged by the enthusiasm of the staff involved in the provision of doctoral education and by doctoral students' overall resilience, determination and passion for research. This is admirable considering that the doctoral education system currently functions because staff compensate for the institutional doctoral systemic shortfalls with an immense amount of work.

It seems to the Panel that the practice of devolution that has served well in the past may be less serviceable in the future. To streamline and harmonise the UCC's doctoral education ecosystem, resources of money and space will need to be redeployed, and priorities may need to be re-ordered, to promote high achievement at doctoral level for UCC.

UCC, similarly to many other HEIs, is currently experiencing many internal and external challenges that also impact on doctoral education: financial restrictions, recent digitalisation of the research student recording system and adoption of the Graduate Education Manager system, changing doctoral student profiles and needs, increasing internationalisation of higher education, a highly competitive national and international funding landscape, increasing external statutory regulations and industry-funding requirements, plus a deep housing crisis, locally and nationally. Yet, it is the Panel's belief that UCC is well-positioned to respond to the challenges ahead and progress with the quality enhancement of its doctoral education.

The Panel's view is that recommendation 7 (development of an online portal for the whole doctoral studies lifecycle) should be first addressed in the short-term because it can be implemented relatively smoothly and it will bear immediate benefits for doctoral education, the doctoral community at UCC and its external stakeholders. The implementation of a comprehensive online portal for doctoral education should be accompanied by an evaluation of its resource implications, to ensure its appropriate resourcing (in human, financial and IT terms). After recommendation 7, recommendation 1 should be prioritised so that the newly established Doctoral College's governance functions would take primary responsibility for rolling out and implementing the remaining recommendations.

With regard to the scoping questions that underpinned the review, many of the Panel's dialogues focused on addressing the questions of supervision and governance/administrative infrastructure to support the doctoral learning experience. The Panel is of the view that the question on transversal skills and the issue of doctoral pedagogy remains a central part of the doctoral learning experience at UCC and will require further attention following enhancements of the infrastructures for doctoral education.

The UCC Strategic Plan 2023-28 'Securing our Future' places great emphasis on the centrality of research and innovation for the Institution, as well as aiming at increasing the doctoral student enrolments and enhancing the quality of student experiences and supports by 2028. The achievement of a doctorate is the highest qualification in Irish/British academia. It sits at the apex of the system, particularly in an institution like UCC which is constantly aspiring to improve its research. Currently it is the top Irish university for highly cited researchers in the Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU, the Shanghai ranking). With a quality enhancement spirit, the recommendations made by the Panel are intended to help UCC implement its ambitious goals in research and innovation excellence through the enhancement of its doctoral education ecosystem.

The Panel looks forward to hearing of UCC's future developments pertaining to its Doctoral Education ecosystem and welcomes the UCC leadership to remain in contact.

Appendix 1 – Good Practice Samples from Panel Members’ Institutions & References

Below are included some indicative resources which were generously provided by Panel Members. They are not intended as an exhaustive list of existing international good practices on doctoral education. The University is thankful to the Panel for highlighting good practices implemented in their institutions that may serve as useful reference points for UCC while engaging in strategic enhancement to its doctoral education ecosystem. The peer reviewer from University of Southampton indicated a willingness to share further relevant resources and expertise post-review with UCC colleagues. At the Panel’s closing presentation, the Deputy President & Registrar accepted this generous offer which will be followed up as part of the post-review activities.

a. Doctoral College Online Portal Examples

Ulster University

- [Find a PhD](#)
- [Doctoral College](#)
- [Handbook](#)

Erasmus University Rotterdam

[PhD Vacancies](#)

Ghent University

- [Doctoral Research Resources for Candidates](#)
- [Doctoral Research](#)

University of British Columbia

- [UBC Graduate School](#)

b. Doctoral College Governance and Administration

University of British Columbia Graduate School

- [Forces and Forms of Doctoral Education \(2019\)](#)
- [Central Graduate Schools](#)

c. Doctoral Pedagogy

University of British Columbia Graduate School

- [Postformal Learning for Postnormal Times](#) (Journal Article)

d. Doctoral Supervision

University of British Columbia Graduate School

- [Supervision](#)
- [Principles of Graduate Supervision](#)
- [Enhancing Graduate Supervision](#)
- [Awards for Excellence in Mentoring](#)
- [Supervision Expectations Contract Template](#)
- [Proposal for Supervision Evaluation](#)
- [Fostering Excellence in Graduate Supervision at UBC](#) (Journal Article)
- [Doctoral Supervision in Canada](#) (Journal Article)

Ulster University

- [PhD Supervisor Development Programme](#)

Utrecht University Netherlands

[Good supervision - Graduate School of Life Sciences - Utrecht University](#)

Leiden University

- [Golden rules for PhD Supervision](#)
- [Roadmap for Transparency \(V2\)](#)
- [Roadmap for Transparency \(empty\)](#)

e. Peer Supports and Networks

- [The Netherlands PhD Association Website](#)
- [PhD Supervisor Conflict Roadmap](#)
- [Promovendi Netwerk Nederland](#) (The National Interest Group for and by Doctoral Candidates)
- [PhD Policy: Recommendations and Best Practices](#) (Promovendi Netwerk Nederland)

f. International Article Resources

Agné, H & Mörkenstam, U. (2018) 'Should first-year doctoral students be supervised collectively or individually? Effects on thesis completion and time to completion', *Higher Education Research and Development*, 37:4, pp. 669-682. DOI: 10.1080/07294360.2018.1453785

Albertyn Ruth M. (2024) Doctoral intelligence: a framework for developing mindsets for doctorateness in changing doctoral contexts, *Higher Education Research & Development*, 43:5, 1011-1025, DOI: 10.1080/07294360.2024.2315032/

Alkathiri, M. S., & Olson, M. R. (2019) 'Preparing doctoral students for the professoriate through a formal preparatory course' *International Journal of Doctoral Studies*, 14, 33-67. <https://doi.org/10.28945/4174>

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Appendix 2 - Members of Review Panel

Doctoral Learning Experience

Panel Members

The external reviewers bring a depth and breadth of experience and expertise in the area of doctoral education.

Emeritus Professor Rosalind Pritchard (Chair)	<p>Emeritus Professor of Education at Ulster University where she was Head of the School of Education and Co-ordinator of Research. She holds an Honours degree in Modern Languages and Literature (German and French from TCD) together with two Master's degrees, one in Education and one in General and Applied Linguistics.</p> <p>She is a Senior Distinguished Research Fellow of her University, a member of Royal Irish Academy and of the British Academy of Social Sciences, an Honorary Member of the British Association for International and Comparative Education, and a Distinguished Member of the European Association for Institutional Research. She has held grants from the Leverhulme Trust, the Economic and Social Research Council, the UK Council for International Education, the German Academic Exchange Service and the Higher Education Innovation Fund. Her research interests are in higher education, especially institutional mergers and linkages; gender issues; German education; language teaching. She has extensive experience of editorial work, and recently (09/2023) published a co-edited book (with A. Sahlane) entitled English as an International Language Education: Critical Intercultural Literacy Perspectives. She founded a book series with Brill on Higher Education and contributes to it as an author.</p>
Professor Christopher Howls	<p>Professor Chris Howls is Professor of Mathematics within Mathematical Sciences and Director of the University Doctoral College at the University of Southampton. He gained a First in Joint Honours Mathematics and Physics at Bristol, before going on to obtain PhD in Mathematical Physics under Professor Sir Michael Berry FRS. Following on from winning one of only 6 SERC (the then EPSRC) postdoctoral fellowship in the UK, he has held permanent lectureships at the University of Manchester and at Brunel before coming to Southampton where he is now Professor of Mathematics. He has served as head of the ~50 strong Applied mathematics group, curating RAE and REF submissions. He set up and ran the Faculty Graduate School in the former Faculty of Social Human and Mathematical Sciences, during which time he also took over and steered an E(no P)SRC DTP through its mid-term review. He is currently Director of the University Doctoral College, responsible for policy, training and</p>

	<p>development of ~3,000 PGRs across all 5 Faculties, ex-officio chairing the Doctoral College Board and sitting on most University-level research and education committees. The main area of Chris’s research works is in asymptotic analysis, including pioneering the development of exponentially accurate techniques. In over 70 published works he has also applied these techniques to identify and/or explain novel physical features in areas as broad as quantum mechanics, general relativity, nonlinear wave formation and (most recently) upstream beaming of aeroacoustic engine noise in work co-sponsored by Rolls Royce. He has supervised PhDs and postdocs across Maths, Physics and Engineering. He is PI on around £35m grants/budgets. He is chair of the Standing Committee of the British Applied Mathematics Colloquium (the largest annual mathematics meeting in the UK). Among his editorial board appointments includes serving the maximum two full terms on the editorial board of Proceedings of the Royal Society of London A. He has given over 70 invited talks and has held several visiting chairs in the US, Europe, Japan and Australia. He is an associate Editor of the US Government Digital Library of Mathematical Functions. He co-founded the EPSRC Meet the Mathematicians outreach events and the EPSRC MathsTaught Course centres. He has served as UG/Masters external examiner and Tripos reviewer at Cambridge, Oxford, Imperial, Bristol and as external REF assessor for Russell Group Maths departments. He is a member of the London Mathematical Society, Institute of Physics, Fellow of the Institute of Mathematics and Fellow of the Higher Education Academy.</p>
<p>Dr Susan Porter</p>	<p>Dr Susan Porter is Dean Emeritus and Vice-Provost of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies at the University of British Columbia (UBC), the Past President of the Canadian Association for Graduate Studies (CAGS), and a Clinical Professor in Pathology and Laboratory Medicine at UBC. A strong focus throughout her administrative career has been the preparation of graduate students and postdoctoral fellows to thrive and to contribute meaningfully through their work after graduation or fellowship completion. She has led a concerted effort over the past eight years towards a rethinking of the core of doctoral education — students’ research, their dissertation, and the ways in which they learn and are mentored. At UBC, she has been leading a “Reimagining the PhD” conversation and series of initiatives, most notably a multiple award-winning “experiment” (the Public Scholars Initiative) that is demonstrating the immense value and legitimacy of broadening doctoral research that fosters students’ holistic development to better address today’s urgent needs. She has also co-led a national CAGS task force on the subject, and is working to further the conversation and to provide support and resources for the graduate community across Canada and beyond.</p>

Professor Karin van Wingerde

Karin van Wingerde holds a chair in Corporate Crime and Governance at Erasmus School of Law, Erasmus University Rotterdam, the Netherlands. She earned her doctorate in Criminology in 2012 at Erasmus School of Law. Her research is situated at the intersection of regulation, governance, and compliance and addresses the interplay between various public, private, and hybrid modes of governance and corporate, white-collar, and organised crime and harm. Between 2014 and 2019 she was Dean of Education of the doctoral programme at Erasmus School of Law. Since 2021 she is Director of Erasmus Graduate School of Law.

Appendix 3 – Virtual Review Site Visit Timetable



Fheabhsú Cáilíochta
Quality Enhancement

Thematic Review of Doctoral Learning Experience

Peer Review Panel Site Visit

25TH March - 9TH April 2025

In Summary

04/03/2025 – Panel Briefing:	There is a preliminary (online) Panel Briefing from the Director of Quality Enhancement for the Panel to outline the review scope and modalities. This also constitutes an opportunity for the Panel to discuss its first impressions on the University’s strategic overview report on its doctoral education.
25/03/2025 - Site Visit Day 1:	Panel meets Dean of Doctoral Studies, a sample of doctoral students and supervisors from across the four Colleges and Tyndall National Institute.
26/03/2025 - Site Visit Day 2:	The Panel meets with a range of senior staff responsible for the strategic planning, governance and management of doctoral education and research at UCC. This includes operational administration of the doctoral student lifecycle, learning resources and service provision for a diverse range of programmes, including relevant members of the University Leadership Team (ULT), Academic Council Graduate Studies Committee (ACGSC), Academic Council Research and Innovation Committee (ACRIC) and key internal and external stakeholders for doctoral education programmes offered across the University. There is also a conclusive meeting with the Dean of Doctoral Studies, the Deputy-President and Registrar and the Vice-President for Research and Innovation.
27/03/2025 - Site Visit Day 3:	The Panel prepares their key commendations and recommendations. Panel members depart.
09/04/2025 (09.30 - 10.00) Via Ms Teams	The Panel Chair delivers the Closing Presentation (online) to the Deputy-President and Registrar (Acting President).
09/04/2025 (14.30 – 15.00)	The Panel Chair delivers the Closing Presentation (online) to the Dean of Doctoral Studies and the Vice-President for Research and Innovation.

Panel Briefing

Tuesday 4th March 2025 (via Ms Teams)	
10.00 – 11.30	Briefing of the Panel by the Director of Quality Enhancement and the Review Co-ordinator <i>Panel to discuss Strategic Overview of Institutional Doctoral Education Report</i>

Site Visit to UCC – first week

Monday 24th March 2025	
During the day	Panel members arrive in Cork
19.00	Dinner for Panel members hosted by the Director of Quality Enhancement and the Dean of Doctoral Studies Venue: Perrott's Garden Bistro Restaurant, Hayfield Manor Hotel

Day 1: Tuesday 25th March 2025	
Venue: Seminar Room, Boole Library	
09.00 – 09.30	Convening of Panel – private meeting <i>Objective: Panel agree issues to be explored in forthcoming meetings.</i>
09.30 – 10.30	Meeting with the Dean of Doctoral Studies Dr Lynch to give 5-minute introduction detailing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UCC's doctoral education overview - Vision for doctoral education at UCC going forward <i>Objective: Discussion regarding UCC's doctoral education developments to date and strategic priorities going forward</i>
10.30 – 10.55	Coffee Break
10.55 – 11.00	Walk to the Student Hub for next meeting
11.00 – 11.55	Meetings with Doctoral Students (two simultaneous sessions for College of Science, Engineering & Food Science 'SEFS' & College of Arts, Celtic Studies & Social Sciences 'CACSSS') <i>Objective: Discussion with doctoral students on the quality of their overall</i>

Day 1: Tuesday 25th March 2025			
(two simultaneous sessions)	<p><i>experiences and of support services and resources available to them at school, college and university-level.</i></p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>Meeting with Doctoral Students (SEFS) Venue: Student Life Meeting Room, Hub</p> </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>Meeting with Doctoral Students (CACSSS) Venue: Áine Hyland Room, Hub</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p>Meeting with Doctoral Students (SEFS) Venue: Student Life Meeting Room, Hub</p>	<p>Meeting with Doctoral Students (CACSSS) Venue: Áine Hyland Room, Hub</p>
<p>Meeting with Doctoral Students (SEFS) Venue: Student Life Meeting Room, Hub</p>	<p>Meeting with Doctoral Students (CACSSS) Venue: Áine Hyland Room, Hub</p>		
11.55 – 12.00	Panel members walk to respective venue for second parallel meeting with doctoral students		
12.00 – 13.00	<p>Meetings with Doctoral Students (two simultaneous sessions for College of Business and Law ‘CBL’ and College of Medicine and Health ‘CMH’)</p> <p><i>Objective: Discussion with doctoral students on the quality of their overall experiences and of support services and resources available to them at school, college and university-level.</i></p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>Meeting with Doctoral Students (CBL) Venue: Student Life Meeting Room, Hub</p> </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>Meeting with Doctoral Students (CMH) Venue: Áine Hyland Room, Hub</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p>Meeting with Doctoral Students (CBL) Venue: Student Life Meeting Room, Hub</p>	<p>Meeting with Doctoral Students (CMH) Venue: Áine Hyland Room, Hub</p>
<p>Meeting with Doctoral Students (CBL) Venue: Student Life Meeting Room, Hub</p>	<p>Meeting with Doctoral Students (CMH) Venue: Áine Hyland Room, Hub</p>		
13.00 – 14.00	<p>Lunch for the Panel</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Venue: Seminar Room, Boole Library</p>		
14.00 – 15.00	<p>Meeting with Doctoral Students (Tyndall National Institute)</p> <p><i>Objective: Discussion with doctoral students on the quality of their overall experiences and of support services and resources available to them at school, college and university-level.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Venue: Seminar Room, Boole Library</p>		
15.00 – 15.45	<p>Meeting with Doctoral Student Supervisors and Principal Investigators (PIs) of Science, Engineering and Food Science</p> <p><u>Tyndall National Institute</u></p> <p><i>Objective: Discussion with supervisors on the quality of their overall experiences, resources and professional development opportunities made available to them as supervisors, as well as key supervision trends and patterns – positive aspects and common issues encountered by supervisors and doctoral students</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Venue: Seminar Room, Boole Library</p>		
15.45 – 16.30	<p>Meeting with recently appointed Doctoral Student Supervisors of Science, Engineering and Food Science</p> <p><u>College of Medicine and Health</u></p>		

Day 1: Tuesday 25th March 2025

	<p><u>of Business and Law</u></p> <p><u>of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences</u></p> <p><u>National Institute</u></p> <p><i>Objective: Discussion with supervisors on the quality of their overall experiences, resources and professional development opportunities made available to them as supervisors, as well as key supervision trends and patterns – positive aspects and common issues encountered by supervisors and doctoral students</i></p> <p align="right">Venue: Seminar Room, Boole Library</p>
16.30 – 17.00	<p>Meeting of Panel</p> <p>Seminar Room, Boole Library</p>
18.30	<p>Informal dinner for members of the Panel</p> <p align="right">Venue: Perrott’s Garden Bistro Restaurant, Hayfield Manor Hotel</p>

Day 2: Wednesday 26th March 2025 Venue: Conference Room, Boole Library	
09.00 – 09.30	Convening of the Panel – preparation for the day ahead
09.30 – 10.15	<p>Meeting with University Leadership Team Members of Strategic and Operational Pertinence</p> <p><i>Objective: Discussion regarding the University’s strategy and priorities especially concerning the potentiation of doctoral education, the planned increase of doctoral student enrolments, the enhancement of doctoral learning experience and outcomes through digital innovation, transversal skill development and provision of comprehensive support services</i></p>
10.15 – 10.45	<p>Meeting with the Graduate Studies Office Stakeholders</p> <p><i>Objective: Discussion on the effectiveness of administrative processes supporting the doctoral student lifecycle with a specific focus on the interfaces between Dean, the Graduate Studies Office, ACGSC, College Vice-Deans and on the prospected benefits arising from the recent implementation of GEM – how can they most effectively support the doctoral lifecycle from a learner-centred approach?</i></p>
10.45 – 11.10	Coffee Break
11.10 – 11.40	<p>Meeting with Representatives from Finance Office / Fees Office</p> <p><i>Objective: Discussion of the interfaces between the Graduate Studies Office, the Finance Office and Fees Office in relation to the processes of registration and funding of doctoral students.</i></p>
11.40 – 12.10	<p>Meeting with Academic Council Graduate Studies Committee (ACGSC) and Academic Council Research and Innovation Committee (ACRIC)</p> <p><i>Objective: Discussion on institutional governance and communication structures and processes involved in doctoral education provision with a particular focus on the interfaces and synergies between ACGSC and ACRIC with regards to the mechanisms for ensuring effectiveness and identifying and addressing issues concerning doctoral student lifecycle statistical trends (e.g., enrolment numbers, progression and completion rates and timelines), experiences and needs.</i></p>
12.10 – 13.00	<p>Meeting with Heads/Vice-Deans of College Graduate Studies</p> <p><i>Objective: Discussion on governance, operational and communication structures and processes involved in doctoral education provision, with a specific focus on the role played by the college graduate schools as nodal points in supporting the potentiation of doctoral education, the planned increase of doctoral student enrolments and the enhancement of doctoral learning experience.</i></p>
13.00 – 14.00	Lunch

Day 2: Wednesday 26th March 2025	
Venue: Conference Room, Boole Library	
14.00 – 14.45	<p>Meeting with a Sample of School Graduate Studies Committee Chairs</p> <p><i>Objective: Discussion on governance, operational and communication structures and processes involved in doctoral education provision, with a specific focus on the role played locally by School Graduate Studies Committees in supporting doctoral students academically and administratively and ensuring the enhancement of their experiences throughout the student lifecycle.</i></p>
14.45 – 15.15	<p>Meeting with the HR Business Manager for Research</p> <p><i>Objective: Discussion around synergies between HR Research, Dean of Doctoral Studies and OVPRI in the provision of support services and professional development opportunities to doctoral students across the University</i></p>
15.15 – 15.30	Coffee Break
15.30 – 16.00	<p>Final meeting with the Dean of Doctoral Studies, the Deputy-President and Registrar and the Vice-President for Research and Innovation</p> <p><i>Objective: Opportunity for the Panel to seek clarifications, if required.</i></p>
16.00 – 17.00	Private Meeting of Panel - Summative meeting to discuss key emerging themes and topics of importance for Panel Report
18.30	<p>Informal Dinner for the Panel</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Venue: Perrott's Garden Bistro Restaurant, Hayfield Manor Hotel</p>

Day 3: Thursday 27th March 2025	
Venue: QEU Office, 6 Carrigside, College Road	
09.00 – 11.30	Convening of the Panel - Meeting to draft recommendations and commendations
11.30 – 11.45	Coffee Break
11.45 – 12.45	Panel finalises recommendations and commendations

Wednesday 9th April 2025 (via Ms Teams)	
09.30 – 10.00	<p>Closing Presentation to Deputy-President and Registrar (Acting President) by Panel Chair and a Panel Member</p> <p><i>Closing presentation to be made by the Chair or other member(s) of Panel as agreed, summarising their principal findings</i></p>

14.30 – 15.00	<p>Closing Presentation to Dean of Doctoral Studies and Vice-President for Research and Innovation by Panel Chair and a Panel Member</p> <p><i>Closing presentation to be made by the Chair or other member(s) of Panel as agreed, summarising their principal findings</i></p>
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Appendix 4 – Index of documentation made available to the Review Panel

- [Securing our Future - UCC Strategic Plan 2023-2028](#)
- [UCC's Sustainability and Climate Action Plan 2023 – 2028](#)
- [UCC Futures - Securing our future through Research Brochure](#)
- Strategic Overview of Doctoral Education at UCC (Report)
 - Appendices
- Useful Resources (Additional Information)
 - UCC Key Functions Table (including Function name, acronyms, Title & Hyperlink to relevant UCC website)
 - Literature Review Doctoral Learning Experience
 - Thematic Review of Doctoral Learning at UCC (Scoping document)
 - Links to relevant Policy Resources including:
 - [QQI Ireland's Framework of Good Practice Research Degree Programmes \(2019\)](#)
 - [IUA Doctoral Skills Statement \(2021\); QQI National Framework for Doctoral Education \(2023\)](#)
 - [QQI National Framework for Doctoral Education \(2023\)](#)
 - [HEA National Framework for Doctoral Education](#)
 - [EUA Building the Foundations of Research: A Vision for the future of Doctoral Education in Europe \(2022\)](#)
 - [The National Framework for Doctoral in Ireland: Report on its Implementation by Irish Higher Educational Institutions, EUA Solutions \(2021\)](#)
 - Presentation from the Dean of Doctoral Studies (*for meeting on 25/03/2025*)
 - Presentation from representatives of the UCC Boole Library (*for meeting on 26/03/2025*)
 - [Academic Council Graduate Studies Committee \(ACGSC\) Terms of Reference](#)
 - [The Odyssey Report 2022](#)
 - [Visa & Immigration Information](#) via the International Office, UCC Website
 - [Disability Support](#) via the International Office, UCC Website
 - UCC Campus Map
- Panel Briefing & Preparation
 - Panel Briefing Slides
 - Panel Aide Memoir
 - Panel Member Questions
- Panel Membership
 - Panel Profiles
- Draft Timetable of meetings for Site Visit

Appendix 5 - Acronyms and Abbreviations

Acronym / Abbreviation	Full Name
ACGSC	Academic Council Graduate Studies Committee
ACRIC	Academic Council Research and Innovation Committee
ARWU	Academic Ranking of World Universities
CACSSS	College Arts Celtic Studies & Social Sciences
CBL	College of Business and Law
CMH	College of Medicine and Health
CSEFS	College of Science, Environmental and Food Science
EDI	Equality Diversity and Inclusion
ERC	Educational Research Centre
EU	European Union
GEM	Graduate Education Manager
GSO	Graduate Studies Office
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
HR	Human Resources
IO	International Office
IRC	Irish Research Council
IUA	Irish Universities Association
OVPRI	Office of Vice-President for Research and Innovation
PGR	Postgraduate Research
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
QEU	Quality Enhancement Unit
RAP	Research Student Administration Project
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
SUSI	Student Universal Support Ireland
Tyndall	Tyndall National Institute
UCC	University College Cork
ULT	University Leadership Team

Periodic Quality Review

In accordance with the requirements of the Universities Act (1997), the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education & Training) Act 2012 (revised 2019) and the Higher Education Authority Act (2022), the Governing Authority is required to provide for and maintain a system of quality assurance (HEA Act, section 76) achieved through the conduct of quality reviews of its research, education and training on a cyclical basis of at least once every 7 years. The process of quality review involves: self-assessment, appointment of a peer panel; site visit and a Quality Review Report which is published on the university's website as part of the public information about the quality of higher education. Following publication of the Quality Review Report, a Quality Enhancement Plan is developed and once approved by the Quality Enhancement Committee is published on the university website.

School of Applied Psychology

The quality review of the School of Applied Psychology, whose Panel Site Visit took place in October 2024, marked the closure of the third cycle of internal periodic quality reviews at UCC. The School of Applied Psychology was established in 1964 and is one of the ten academic units located within the College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences (CACSSS). It has been the first School in CACSSS to have obtained the Athena Swan Bronze Award (2022), which confirms its current engagement in EDI-informed approaches and initiatives.

The Panel brought together internal and international peer reviewers. While the former provided knowledge of institutional and organisational structures, the external Panel members contributed their peer expertise. The student Panel member brought valuable insights and perspectives on student issues. At the end of the site visit, the Panel presented its initial findings - commendations, recommendations and observations- to the staff of the School.

The Panel Report, containing more commendations than recommendations, confirmed the School as a very strong unit with a strategic and relevant programme portfolio, with most programmes being accredited by the Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI), an extensive placement capability for postgraduates and an ambitious plan to further embed WIL into the entire curriculum for undergraduate and postgraduate students. The Panel also engaged with the challenges being faced by the School in the national context, such as CORU's new professional registration requirements. Overall, the Panel found the review process to be thorough, insightful and grounded on an honest self-reflection and meaningful and enthusiastic engagement with quality enhancement principles and processes. Indeed, it acknowledged most of the Self-Evaluation Report's findings and endorsed the recommendations identified by the School in its Self-Evaluation Report.

Periodic Quality Review	Site Visit Dates:	Link to QEP
School of Applied Psychology	2 nd - 3 rd and 7 th & 10 th October 2024	School of Applied Psychology - QEP 2025



UCC

University College Cork, Ireland
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

Fheabhsú Cáilíochta Quality Enhancement



QUALITY REVIEW

Peer Review Panel Report

SCHOOL OF APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY

“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.”

(UCC Quality Enhancement Committee)

October 2024

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Context

The School of Applied Psychology was established in 1964 and is one of the ten academic units located within the College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences (CACSSS). It has been the first School in CACSSS to have obtained the Athena Swan Bronze Award (2022), which confirms its current engagement in EDI-informed approaches and initiatives.

Its undergraduate and postgraduate programme portfolio has considerably grown in the last sixty years and many of its programmes are accredited with the Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI). It currently offers two undergraduate programmes (both PSI-accredited) – the BA in Applied Psychology (AP) and BA in AP and Computing (the latter is jointly offered with the School of Computer Sciences & IT). It is one of the three schools contributing to the BA Early Years and Childhood Studies, which is anchored in the School of Education and approved by the Qualifications Advisory Board. It also provides a two-year postgraduate conversion course for graduates in other disciplines who intend to pursue further studies in AP – the Higher Diploma in AP (level 8). Of the six postgraduate programmes, four are also accredited by the PSI – the MA in AP, the Higher Diploma in AP, the MA in AP Work and Organisational Psychology and the Doctorate in Clinical Psychology (level 10) that is co-designed and co-delivered with the Health Service Executive (HSE). In addition, it offers a MA in AP Mental Health, a MA in AP Work and Organisational Behaviour, a MA AP Positive and Coaching Psychology and a structured PhD programme pathway. Its programme portfolio includes the Master's in Integrative Psychology and Psychotherapy, a Dublin-based collaborative programme designed and delivered by Turning Point Institute. The latter was subjected to a quality review in 2021/22 and has had its [Quality Enhancement Plan](#) approved by the UCC's Quality Enhancement Committee in September 2024. Finally, the School of Applied Psychology provides service teaching across the four colleges and partners with Adult Continuing Education (ACE) in offering a range of lifelong learning courses.

Student numbers have been comfortably above 500 FTEs over the last five years, with 525.5 registered students in 2023/24 (respectively divided into 338 UGs and 187.5 PGs).

The total staff headcount of the School is 42 of which slightly above 2/3 are female. These are divided as follows: 29 academics, 6 professional services, 2 technical officers and, finally, 5 researchers (project-specific on fixed-term contracts). The current staff profile indicates a considerable increase in the number of senior roles within the Unit since the publication of the last Panel Report (2014). Indeed, it currently includes three professors and thirteen senior lecturers. Finally, also thanks to the outcomes of the last quality review and the ensuing staff hiring campaign, the Staff Student Ratio (SSR) has dramatically dropped from 31.7 to 18.8 in 2023/24.

Methodology and Site Visit

A model for conducting site visits virtually was developed in 2020 to enable completion of Quality Reviews under the prevailing public health restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This model ensured continuity in the operation and delivery of quality review and enhancement activities. In 2022 the model moved to a hybrid review comprising of a 2 day on-campus site visit and 2 half-day virtual meetings.

This review took place under the hybrid review process over 2 weeks from the 2 to the 10 October 2024. During the site visit the Panel met with staff, students, senior officers and relevant stakeholders. During the virtual meetings the Panel focused on writing the Report with a particular emphasis on the commendations, recommendations and observations. The sequencing of meetings was organised to ensure coherence and progression in the conduct of the review. The platform used for the virtual meetings was MS Teams. The timetable for the site visit afforded appropriate time to engage with a broad variety of stakeholders. The timetable is included as Appendix B.

The Panel brought together internal and international peer reviewers (Panel profiles can be found in Appendix A). The internal reviewers provided knowledge of institutional and organisational structures with the external Panel members contributing their peer expertise. The student Panel member brought valuable insights and perspectives on student issues. At the end of the site visit, the Panel presented its initial findings - commendations, recommendations and observations- to the staff of the School.

To support the Peer Review Panel and facilitate effective engagement throughout the site visit, additional guidance and support was provided by staff of the Quality Enhancement Unit (QEU) in UCC. This included technical support, as well as briefing and advisory support prior to and throughout the review. Review coordination was provided throughout by a Review Coordinator to facilitate the review process and to support the Peer Review Panel in formulating and agreeing the final Panel Report. The Panel agreed on the outcomes of the Report. The Report was compiled collaboratively and the entire Panel contributed to the production of the final Report.

Panel Members

Refer to Appendix A for detailed Panel profiles.

Name	Position/Discipline	Institution
Professor Mark F. McEntee	Vice Head Learning and Teaching, College of Medicine and Health	University College Cork
Professor Ruth Ramsay (Chair)	Zoologist (and former Dean of Graduate Studies), School of Biological Earth and Environmental Sciences	University College Cork
Professor Richard Roche	Former Deputy Head, Department of Psychology	Maynooth University
Ms Isobel Sheahan (Student Reviewer)	UG Student, College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences	University College Cork
Professor Danaë Stanton Fraser	Professor in Human Computer Interaction, Department of Psychology	University of Bath

Review Coordinator		
<i>Dr Silvia Brandi</i>	<i>Quality Enhancement Unit</i>	<i>University College Cork</i>
IT and Logistics Coordinator		
<i>Ms Sheila Ronan</i>	<i>Quality Enhancement Unit</i>	<i>University College Cork</i>

Objectives of Quality Review

The overarching objectives of academic quality review at UCC are to enable Schools, through evidence-based self-evaluation, to:

1. Reflect on and promote the strategic enhancement of their academic activities to ensure an outstanding learning experience for all students (enhancement dimension);
2. Evaluate the effectiveness of their processes for assuring academic standards and provision, in line with the University's academic mission and strategy (assurance dimension).

Thus, peer review goes beyond quality assurance to also embrace continuous quality enhancement. The Peer Review Panel Report reflects these objectives in the recommendations and commendations outlined to support the School of Applied Psychology in further refining its priorities and optimising its activities in the pursuit of its ambitious drive for excellence within the international and national arena of higher education.

Commendations and Recommendations

Commendations

Based on the information obtained from the Self-Evaluation Report and meetings with multiple internal, as well as external stakeholders to the School of Applied Psychology, the Panel commends the School for the following:

1. Clear, accessible and thorough SER, reflective of an enthusiastic, inclusive and participatory approach of staff and students to the self-evaluation process and positive engagement with the Panel during its site visit to UCC;
2. The School is extremely valued as one of the high performing Schools within the College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences and for its contributions to the University and its wider stakeholder groups;
3. Academic, technical and professional services staff integration and collegiality;
4. School's leadership for the well-developed workload model, which is inclusive of the full range of academic staff activities and commitments;
5. Extensive and diversified community engagement by School's staff and students in a range of activities and participatory endeavours for the psychological wellbeing of society, community groups and services;
6. External stakeholders' unanimous praise of the value of the collaboration between School and themselves in research, teaching and service development, which included a strong reciprocity, communication and value for all parties; this encompasses partnerships with industry, community and clinical practices;
7. Plans to deepen student involvement in the School (including the establishment of a Student Council);
8. Placements are an important part of research training in some of the School's programmes and this is a clear strength;
9. Strong commitment to EDI, reflected by the School's Athena Swan Bronze award (the first in CACSSS) and by the establishment of a School's EDI Committee to embed EDI principles into all of the School's provision and practices;
10. Excellent case study of good practice exemplifying the School's pioneering integration of Work-Integrated-Learning (WIL) approaches into its curriculum, with plans to further embed this innovative framework into all module offerings;
11. Long-term partnership with Adult Continuing Education in a comprehensive range of course offerings that support lifelong learning, industry-focused options for upskilling, neurodiversity- and mental health focus and with potential for access to higher education for under-represented groups in society;
12. Efforts to strategically channel School's research activities into three main thematic areas, while also engaging with the UCC Futures Framework and fostering research culture and capability within the School;
13. Excellent student supervision and inspiring examples of innovative approaches to curriculum development, Teaching, Learning and Assessment to enhance student learning experiences (including teaching by experts with lived experience and assignments with a strong applied-focus and community engagement and impact approach).

Summary Recommendations

1. The Panel recommends that the infrastructural challenges faced by the School be addressed as a priority in the short to medium and long-term, having regard for both strategic and operational priorities identified in the SER.
2. The Panel recommends that a range of learning supports and student facilities be provided for students based in the satellite North Mall Campus so that they are not disadvantaged vis-à-vis their colleagues on the UCC main campus.
3. The Panel recommends that student involvement in the School's activities be deepened, a Student Council be established and decision-making and communication structures and processes be reviewed, in consultation with student representatives, to ensure that the student voice is heard in its diversity.
4. The Panel recommends the development of a range of staff support measures to enable academic, clinical and PMSS staff to identify and pursue suitable Personal & Professional Development pathways and promotion opportunities.
5. The Panel recommends that the School leadership continue its workload management initiative to address increasing staff workload and morale implications.
6. The Panel recommends that inclusivity and accessibility tools be progressively incorporated and utilised in Learning, Teaching and Assessment within the School.
7. The Panel recommends that the School continue reviewing its programme and module portfolio offerings to maintain their continuing relevance.
8. The Panel recommends that the School pursue its SER recommendation and progress its strategic efforts to enhance and embed research activities into all its domains.

Recommendations – Further Detail

The Panel considers all its recommendations as equally important, although the timeframes for implementation and action owner/s may differ depending on specific bullet points. Thus, it has opted for the indication of timeframes³ and action owners against each bullet point when these differ from the general formulation.

- 1. The Panel recommends that the infrastructural challenges faced by the School be addressed as a priority in the short to medium and long-term, having regard for both strategic and operational priorities identified in the SER.**

The Panel supports the School of Applied Psychology (SoAP) in their efforts to ensure that their physical infrastructures at UCC's North Campus (Cork Enterprise Centre and Distillery House) are not only adequate to the learning, teaching, research and wellbeing needs of a growing staff and student population in a high performing academic unit, but also EDI-proof and fully compliant with the UCC's health and safety guidelines (including the connecting routes between UCC's main and satellite campuses). In the medium to longer term, the Panel is also of the view that the School would benefit from a strategic co-location either at the Cork Enterprise Centre or in a purposely built new campus.

Specifically, the Panel encourages the Head of School and School Manager, with the support of the Senior Executive Management Committee (SEMC) and the Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee, to implement this recommendation through the following actions:

- Develop a plan for the School in terms of its infrastructure, cognisant of both operational and strategic considerations, with short, medium and long-term implementation details (short-term);
- Carry out the planned EDI audit of its physical infrastructures to ensure that buildings are fully accessible for students and staff with disabilities (short-term);
- To enhance student experiences, identify suitable space/s within the Cork Enterprise Centre (CEC) and engage with the DPR Office to repurpose those to provide multipurpose study/social areas with food preparation facilities at the North Mall Campus for undergraduate students, considering the satellite campus' distance from the Boole Library and Hub; this needs to be equipped with kettle and microwave equipment, lockers, as well as with study facilities (e.g. desks and chairs), as deemed appropriate (short-term);
- Engage with the Director of IT Services, Buildings and Estates and the Head Librarian to discuss either the refurbishing or the decommissioning and repurposing of the UCC Open Access Computer Lab located on the first floor of the Cork Enterprise Centre, whose computers, desks and chairs not only are obsolete but also constitute a health and safety hazard (short-term);
- Engage with the Head Librarian and the VP for Learning and Teaching to establish basic library facilities at the Cork Enterprise Centre with study spaces and pertinent library services - e.g. book drop-off facilities (short-term);

³For the purpose of clarity, timeframes commence at the moment of publication and official circulation of the Panel Report; short-term implementation end within 12 months; medium-term lasts until two years after and, finally, long-term is any time longer than that.

- Engage with the Director of IT Services to establish a laptop loan scheme for students based at the UCC North Mall Campus (CEC), similar to the one in place at the Boole Library (short-term);
- In light of the concern expressed by students during the site visit about the security of the walkway between the North Mall campus and the main UCC campus, the Head of School, in collaboration with other users of the North Mall Campus, needs to liaise with the Director of Buildings and Estates and the Director of Enterprise Risk Management (OCLA) to pursue the establishment of a 'Risk Management Group', as already discussed in the past. This group would be entrusted with pursuing a multi-agency approach to this long-lasting issue and implement a range of measures to enhance the security of the walkway, in order to protect the health, safety and well-being of all the UCC students and staff while commuting between UCC campuses (short-term);
- Engage with the CACSSS's Head of College and the College Financial Analyst to identify financial solutions to allow the School to carry over funds from one year to the next to upgrade or extend its physical infrastructures and facilities (short-term);
- Engage with UCC Buildings and Estates to pursue existing plans for continuing the upgrade of the School's physical infrastructures at the Cork Enterprise Centre (medium-term);
- As a matter of priority, engage with the ULT and Buildings and Estates to develop a master plan for repurposing Distillery House, whose current sub-standard conditions represent a health and safety hazard, and rehouse the School's staff and students in an alternative suitable building (medium-term).

This recommendation should be initiated within 6 months of receipt of the Panel report and completed within 12 months following receipt of the Panel report; instead, the actions whose bullet points indicate a medium-term timeframe should be completed within two years of receipt of this report.

2. The Panel recommends that a range of learning supports and student facilities be provided for the students based in the satellite North Mall Campus so that they are not disadvantaged vis-à-vis their colleagues on the UCC main campus.

In implementing this recommendation, the Head of School and the School Manager, with the support of the Teaching and Learning and EDI Committees, need to:

- Ensure that all of the relevant School staff is up-to-date with current policies and procedures to implement locally special accommodation measures (e.g. extensions; examination accommodations; Panopto lecture-recordings and so on) granted to students registered with the DSS and beyond (short-term);
- Ensure that forms of support are established at School level to meet the specific needs of an increasing international student population. These may include the designation of specific staff member/s as first point of contact for international students in the School and as interfaces with the relevant services provided by the University at central level and by the International Office (short-term);
- Monitor that the quality enhancement actions arising from the TPI quality review (2022) concerning student experiences are implemented to ensure that students can benefit from comparable learning support and facilities available for UCC students enrolled in the other programmes offered by the School. Specifically, access to Student Health assistance, DSS

support, library, sport facilities, clubs/societies and others, as provided by UCC, should be offered also to TPI students (medium term);

- Engage with Cork City Council for the location of a TFI self-service bike rental station in proximity of the North Mall Campus to facilitate sustainable commuting between the North Mall campus and UCC's main campus (short-term).

This recommendation should be initiated within 6 months of receipt of the Panel report and completed within 12 months following receipt of the Panel report. The actions whose bullet points indicate a medium-term timeframe should be completed within two years of receipt of this report.

3. The Panel recommends that student involvement in the School's activities be deepened, a Student Council be established and decision-making and communication structures and processes be reviewed, in consultation with student representatives, to ensure that the student voice is heard in its diversity.

The Panel supports the SER recommendation to deepen and extend student involvement in the School's activities (including the planned establishment of a Student Council) and recommends implementing this recommendation through the following actions:

- The Head of School, with the support of the SEMC, to set up student partnership structures and processes to enable undergraduate and postgraduate students' proactive engagement in decision-making processes concerning the areas identified for staff-student partnership - e.g. curriculum review and design, Learning Teaching and Assessment approaches, student supports and facilities provision, infrastructural plans, EDI-informed initiatives, WIL opportunities (medium-term);
- The School Manager and Teaching and Learning Committee to clearly disseminate among staff and students, a school-wide handbook that points at university and local procedures to deal with all student matters including complaints, appeals, mitigation, extensions, support and DSS matters;
- Head of School and School Manager, with support from Teaching and Learning Committee, to implement training and formal guidelines for staff in terms of responding to student issues so that they are effectively integrated into School practices. All communications should be recorded and processed in accordance with these guidelines;
- Head of School and School Manager to ensure that student reps taking part in the School Assembly and all other committees with student representation receive adequate instruction on their roles and are provided with the appropriate level of information and understanding to effectively take part in discussions;
- Head of School and Chair of the Graduate Studies Committee to establish a Postgraduate Student Committee (including representation from MA Research, MA Taught, Doctoral students and HDip Students);
- Head of School and Chair of the Graduate Studies Committee to ensure that the School's structures and processes for doctoral student representation and communication include, for example, local induction, regular meetings, communication about changes in University-level processes and opportunities for training;
- Head of School and Chair of the Graduate Studies Committee to establish a joint PhD-D Clin Psych Student Forum as a consultative and practice-exchange structure;

- Head of School and School Manager to ensure the School website clearly indicates that the Doctorate in Clinical Psychology is structured as an HSE/Cork Prison Service staff programme and, as such, requires a work-visa for international non-EU applicants. It should be made very clear that student enrolment into the School's undergraduate and master's programmes does not offer international non-EU students an automatic career pathway into the D Clin Psych.

Having reviewed the School's SER and engaged with staff and students during the site visit, the Panel is of the view that staff-student communication and student representation structures and processes work more effectively for undergraduate students, whereas there appear to be some disconnects between staff and student perceptions at postgraduate level, especially with regards to research students. In addition, in its view, it would be beneficial to offer regular opportunities for communication and collaboration between PhD by research and Doctorate in Clinical Psychology students, to overcome their current isolation from each other, ensuing from their programmes' different emphasis (academic vs clinical), separate infrastructural location and lack of a common postgraduate student representative body. Finally, it became evident to the Panel that international non-EU undergraduate and postgraduate students may need specific communication efforts and supports.

This recommendation should be initiated within 6 months of receipt of the Panel report and completed within 12 months following receipt of the Panel report (apart from the action whose bullet point indicates a different timeframe).

4. The Panel recommends the development of a range of staff support measures to enable academic, clinical and Professional Management & Support Services (PMSS) staff to identify and pursue suitable Personal & Professional Development (PPD) pathways and promotion opportunities.

Having engaged in extensive discussions with staff members during the site visit, the Panel acknowledges the efforts made by the Head of School to mentor and support staff in their personal and professional development. Despite this, staff mentoring emerged as an area of ongoing relevance for School staff, despite the existing practices of early career mentoring and informal peer mentoring through thematic research clusters co-membership. More specifically, an area largely discussed during the site visit concerns staff promotion rates within the School, together with the polarised outcomes between academic (100% success rates) and PMSS staff (0% success rate), coupled with the lack of the reiteration of a promotion round for the latter since 2022.

Hence, it recommends the Head of School, with the support of the SEMC, to engage with the College Business Manager and, more generally, the UCC HR department, and implement the following actions:

- Establish a structured long-term individual mentoring support system for all staff in addition to existing early career and informal collective mentoring practices (short-term);
- Seek support from the CACSSS HR Business Manager to make a business case assessment with the College and ULT for the recruitment of strategic posts, including:

- a Chief Technical Officer - a role which would fit within the quota allowance for the School (medium-term);
- a Placement Officer for the embedding of UG and PGT work placements and WIL opportunities within the School enabling them to grow their placement provision (medium-term);
- PGR Placement Officer/s to carry out the administrative duties connected with the planned growth in Doctorate of Clinical Psychology intake (medium-term).

This recommendation should be initiated within 6 months of receipt of the Panel report and completed within 12 months following receipt of the Panel report (apart from the actions whose bullet points indicate a different timeframe).

5. The Panel recommends that the School's leadership continue its workload management initiative to address increasing staff workload and morale implications.

During the site visit the Panel heard about the recent advancement in workload management led by the current Head of School with the introduction of a new well-developed workload model, which is transparent and inclusive of the full range of academic staff activities and commitments. Yet, workload was discussed in the SER and at the site visit as an ongoing concern for all staff for its impact on their morale, despite the incredible collegiality level in the School. The Panel tried to unpack the many factors concurring to increasing workload, including the growth in clinical/work placement/WIL offerings, growth in PhD/Doctoral student numbers, professional accreditation requirements, student supervision, teaching and assessment duties, an expansion in community engagement, research activities and others. Specifically, the projected growth of the Doctorate in Clinical Psychology requires adequate staffing to support the administration of clinical placements, which constitute a core component of the programme (in this regard see Recommendation 4 above).

In light of this, the Panel supports the SER recommendation to address workload. More specifically, the Panel advises the Head of School with the support of the SEMC to lead on the following actions:

- The Head of School and T&L Committee to ensure consistency in marking practices across the School so that there are no instances of double or triple marking on CA submissions apart from the agreed percentage of cross-marking (short-term);
- Verify whether the School's workload model for academics aligns with the current criteria for promotion - 50% Research: 30% Teaching: 20% Leadership (medium-term);
- Provide guidance on the research component of the workload (medium-term);
- Provide guidance on the leadership component of the workload (medium-term);
- Develop rules regarding buying out of teaching (medium-term);
- Make a business case for the recruitment of additional staff members to support the placement and WIL components of School programmes, which are currently carried out by academic staff (medium-term).

This recommendation should be completed within 2 years following receipt of the Panel report (apart from the actions whose bullet points indicate a different timeframe).

6. The Panel recommends that available inclusivity and accessibility tools be progressively incorporated and utilised in Learning, Teaching and Assessment within the School.

In consideration of the expanding range of Inclusivity and Accessibility tools being currently developed by the University (e.g. Inclusive UCC and CIRTL), the Panel recommends that the School Teaching and Learning Committee, in conjunction with the EDI Committee, leads on a school-wide initiative to implement a range of actions that benefit student learning experiences. These include the following:

- For new modules, ensuring the use of the UCC Inclusive Design templates (short-term and ongoing) while engaging the Centre for Digital Education (CDE) and Inclusive UCC to implement the transition into these templates for existing modules, as they are updated (medium-term);
- Considering duplicating multi-staff module delivery methods at undergraduate level, to expose students to a variety of teaching styles and approaches, as well as to allow for staff flexibility for sabbatical leave or engagement in other professional activities (medium-term);
- For multi/dual lecturer (aka "split") modules, considering structuring them in blocks of teaching for each lecturer, rather than alternating lecturing staff within the same week; this will provide a more consistent experience for students and a contingency in case of staff illness/unavailability (short-term);
- Promoting expansion of lecture-recording availability across modules for all students (short term);
- Ensuring that all staff know where they should direct students to obtain the up-to-date implementation procedures in place for DSS-related processes of accommodation, appeal and mitigation (short-term);
- Leading on a school-wide review of assessment practices – their quantity, type and clustering of assignments within busy semester periods (short-term);
- Considering alternative assessment modalities to a three-hour formal written exam, especially in consideration of DSS-registered students who are allocated additional 30 minutes (medium-term);
- The Head of School and their nominee in the TPI Joint Board of Studies ensure that TPI staff involved in the programme anchored in the School are granted UCC credentials to access the library, utilise the University's Virtual Learning Environment (Canvas) for Teaching, Learning and Assessment purposes and any other practices to monitor and assure the quality of academic standards and provision within the programme (short-term);
- The School Manager to lead on a review of timetabled teaching and tutorial hours to ensure that there are no clashes or overlaps and that commuting distances between the main and North Mall campuses are taken into account (medium-term);
- Ensuring that all postgraduate students engaging in part-time teaching have the required skills for the material that they are teaching (short-term);
- Advising lecturers to further integrate their own/UCC-based research into modules and teaching to provide further opportunities for students to learn about and participate in School research, as well as fostering a sense of School pride, identity and awareness of research as a major facet of School's activities (medium-term).

This recommendation should be completed within 2 years following receipt of the Panel report (apart from the actions whose bullet points indicate a different timeframe).

7. The Panel recommends that the School continue reviewing its programme and module portfolio offerings to maintain their continuing relevance.

The Panel acknowledges the substantial strategic restructuring of the undergraduate and postgraduate programme portfolio that was completed after the last quality review. It is also supportive of its continuing engagement with current developments at local, national and international level. Locally, these include the recent adoption of the WIL framework at institutional level; the UCC-led pioneering establishment of the apprenticeship degree programme model; the School's withdrawal from its substantial contribution to the BA programme, due to its impact on SSR and workload. Nationally, the imminent introduction of a regulation process for the psychology profession by CORU, bears significant implications for the accreditation status of the School's programmes. CORU regulation will most directly impact upon the accreditation and regulation of the D. Clin. Psych. programme. This may result in a separate process to existing PSI accreditation (with clear workload implications for staff). The remit of CORU regulation may extend further to accreditation of the undergraduate and masters-level programmes, and, potentially, a necessity of academic staff to be registered with CORU in order to lecture on psychology modules⁴.

In light of these developments, the Panel encourages the Head of School and the SEMC to implement the following actions:

- Establish a School Curriculum Review Working Group to address the CORU developments and liaise with the Deputy-President & Registrar to ensure that University leadership provides support to find sustainable solutions to this issue that may have serious repercussions on the School's programmes' external accreditation status and currency (short, medium and long-term);
- Considering the disciplinary relevance of Applied Psychology and students' interest in this discipline, engage with the Head of College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences to identify creative and sustainable solutions for the School to resume its contribution to the BA programme, without detrimental impact upon staff workload or SSR (medium-term);
- Continue the engagement with relevant stakeholders to establish the innovative apprenticeship master's degree programme in Clinical Associate in Psychology (medium to long term);
- The Head of School, in conjunction with the SEMC and the Teaching and Learning Committee, to develop a phased plan to pursue the embedding of WIL approaches in all the curriculum offerings, following one of the core recommendations in the SER. Particular attention should be paid to undergraduate options, since there are currently only a few placement/research/internship opportunities for a large cohort of students (medium to long term). In doing so, special attention should be paid to the FTE staffing needed to implement the plan (see recommendations 4.2 and 5.6 on staffing above);

⁴While this may be possible under a grandparenting mechanism for Strand 4 ("Practitioner Psychologist"), the Panel feels that a pre-emptive discussion of these issues for all programmes will put the School in a stronger position when these changes come into being in the near future.

- Assess the possibility of introducing postgraduate programme offerings in AP and Computing, as a follow-up from the BA AP and Computing which was successfully established in recent years (medium to long term);
- Pursue its planned review of all module offerings with a view of discontinuing no longer viable, relevant or under-subscribed modules, reducing duplication and freeing time and resources for new module offerings or other core activities such as research (medium to long term);
- Ensure that student feedback on modules is systematically considered and that support systems are put in place for modules that are perceived as particularly challenging, especially for PG students with no prior or recent research experience (e.g. AP6061 'Qualitative Research Methods and Data Analysis' (medium to long term);
- Ensure that the module review is carried out in partnership with the student body and with due consideration for EDI-principles, as indicated in the SER (medium to long term).

This recommendation involves actions to be pursued within different timeframes (as indicated) ranging from short to long-term. More generally, it is ongoing and, as such, should be a recurring item for consideration on the agenda of the Senior Executive Management Committee.

8. The Panel recommends that the School pursue its SER recommendation and progress its strategic efforts to enhance and embed research activities into all its domains.

The Panel acknowledges the intensification of the School's research activities in recent times. It also supports the SER recommendation to focus on strategic alignments with the UCC Futures framework and other competitive national and international calls, embedding research in all aspects of the School and at all levels, deepening the involvement of UG and PG students, as appropriate.

As part of this, it recommends the Head of School with the support of the SEMC to lead on the implementing the following actions:

- The Research Committee to map all current staff research activities to identify strategic strengths and areas of capacity to leverage increased grant capture and research strengths in the context of the UCC Futures landscape and other relevant national and international opportunities (medium-term);
- Engage with the University to source financial support for funding small research/internship schemes to subsidise undergraduate and postgraduate students' temporary involvement in research projects conducted by the School (medium-term).

This recommendation should be completed within 2 years following receipt of the Panel Report.

Observations

Additional to the recommendations, the Panel identified certain observations for consideration, which the Panel believes fall outside of the School's remit. The Panel suggests that these observations be

shared with the appropriate functions to agree on a plan for addressing these observations accordingly.

Observations to the University Leadership Team (ULT)

During its site visit to UCC, the Panel became aware of a range of issues whose resolution relies on the effective engagement and support of the ULT. These include financial and budgeting policies and procedures that affect units' strategic planning and investment of their funding in infrastructural projects; implementation of national legislation on remuneration for PhD students' contribution to Teaching and Assessment, among others. Specifically, the Panel advises the ULT to:

- Consider addressing the absence of a long-term budgetary strategy and how it presents challenges for supporting longer-term resource investment in the discipline, as well as limiting the potential for incentivising income-generation locally;
- Consider that there are some aspects of communication with the postgraduate research community regarding contracts that could be enhanced. This includes, for example, how changes to Postgraduate Student Stipends/Teaching contracts are communicated to the postgraduate community to avoid confusion, hearsay and ill-feeling (for example, the differing accounts received regarding the timing of the withdrawal of funding from PhD students following the decoupling of teaching commitments linked to stipends/scholarships).
- Address as a matter of priority, the infrastructural decline of Distillery House, where part of the School staff and students are housed. Specifically, it suggests liaising with the Head of Buildings and Estates and the School of Applied Psychology's Head to develop a master plan for repurposing Distillery House, whose current sub-standard conditions represent a health and safety hazard, and to rehouse School's staff and students in an alternative suitable building.

Observation to Chief People and Culture Officer

- The Panel exhorts the Chief People and Culture Officer to consider the possibility of establishing consultation mechanisms that include College HR Business Managers to feed into the new promotion schemes.

During the site visit the Panel heard on various occasions about the high rate of unsuccessful applications at the last promotion round for PMSS staff within the School and about its dampening effect on the morale of this very dedicated staff group. They also became aware that a new PMSS promotion scheme is currently being elaborated, without consultation with College HR Business Managers. The Panel believes that it would be beneficial to include inputs also from these professionals who are very familiar with the sector.

Observation to Academic Council (Teaching and Learning Committee)

- The Panel encourages AC Teaching and Learning Committee to ensure that, while reviewing the University's Assessment Policy, the introduction of anonymous marking of CA assignments is considered.

During the Site Visit to the School of Applied Psychology and UCC the Panel discussed with various stakeholders, Learning Teaching and Assessment practices. As part of this, it became aware that anonymous marking currently is not covered under the University's assessment policy, although it is occasionally applied in a discretionary manner at local level. In light of this, the Panel would like to draw the AC's attention to the advantages of this marking approach. In particular, it can be used as a way of ensuring that the grounds for any perception of marking bias are removed for students. This consideration is particularly relevant when the latter are parts of small, easily identifiable cohorts and happen to express criticism on existing arrangements variously impacting upon their student experiences.

Observation to the Director of IT Services and the Director of Buildings and Estates

- The Panel advises the above stakeholders to support the Head of School with either the refurbishment or the repurposing of the UCC Open Access Computer Lab located on the first floor of the Cork Enterprise Centre, whose computers, desks and chairs not only are obsolete but also constitute a health and safety hazard (short-term). Respectively, the Director of IT Services could support the decommissioning of the lab, while the Director of Building and Estates could contribute towards completing the necessary building upgrade.

During the Site Visit to UCC, the Panel was accompanied on a tour of the current infrastructures and facilities at the School of Applied Psychology on the UCC North Mall Campus. The Panel was startled by the poor conditions of some of the facilities, such as the UCC Open Access Computer Lab.

Observation to the Director of Buildings and Estates and the Director of Enterprise Risk Management (OCLA)

- The Panel advises the Director of Buildings and Estates and the Director of Enterprise Risk Management (OCLA) to pursue the establishment of a 'Risk Management Group' including the designated stakeholders in the SOAP and School of BEES. This group would be entrusted with pursuing a multi-agency approach to ensure the security of the Leaside walkway for staff and students by implementing a range of measures to protect the health, safety and well-being of all the UCC students and staff while commuting between UCC campuses (short-term).

During the Panel Site Visit at UCC the Panel heard about students and staff's concerns about the security of the Leaside walkway which connects the North Mall Campus (where the School is based) with the main UCC campus. The Panel believes that the University has legal obligations towards its staff and students in terms of protecting their health and safety while at UCC. This includes their commuting between the main campus and satellite campuses.

Overall Analysis of Self-Evaluation Process

Self-Evaluation Report (SER)

The Peer Review Panel perceived the Self-Evaluation Report as a clear, accessible, well-structured and thorough document, which demonstrated the collegial, participatory and inclusive approach to self-evaluation adopted by the School.

Despite this, the Panel is of the view that the SER would have benefited from greater detail on the structures and processes in place to enable students to collectively engage with staff in two-way communication. This applies especially to postgraduate research students and D Clin Psych students who spend a significant amount of their time on placement (as HSE employees). Furthermore, the section on student feedback could have more closely captured differences in perspectives from the various student cohorts, especially with respect to the undergraduate/postgraduate taught/research programme divides. These emerged more clearly during the Panel Site Visit to UCC and are addressed in the Panel Report.

This notwithstanding, the SER's reflective and honest approach led to the identification of a range of commendations, as well as key recommendations for the quality enhancement of the School's strategic objectives and operations that are endorsed by the Panel in this Quality Enhancement Report.

SWOT

The SWOT session and analysis was conducted in-person by a facilitator within UCC QEU, external to the School of Applied Psychology, as appropriate, and all categories of staff in the School (academic, research professional services and technical) were invited to, first, contribute to an online feedback exercise on Padlet - a collaborative web platform - and, subsequently, attend the in-person workshop held in October 2023. The session had a good attendance rate (roughly half of the invited staff). This was further enhanced with systematic data collection from internal and external stakeholder groups, including students and occasional hourly staff and contract researchers.

The Panel considered that the SWOT exercise provided a foundational point to develop the SER and identify some of the existing critical areas for the School such as staff's workload and morale, coupled with scarcity of time for research and mentorship opportunities, AI-impact upon assessment and academic integrity and the drawbacks from the decoupling of PhD stipends from teaching, poor quality and limited space capacity, just to name some.

Benchmarking

The School of Applied Psychology focused its benchmarking on the specific aspect of supporting a sustainable growth of doctoral programmes, one of the areas identified for enhancement as part of the self-evaluation process. In doing so, it engaged with two comparable institutions, one national – the University of Galway's School of Psychology – and the other international – Northumbria University's Department of Psychology (UK). The three criteria considered as part of this process were the mechanisms adopted for structuring, managing and supporting doctoral programmes; the integration of doctoral programmes and students in the School; and, finally, the approaches, aspirations and challenges to their growth.

The Panel acknowledged the high degree of engagement with benchmarking and supports the School in its pursuit of the enhancements ensuing from this exercise.

Developments since previous Quality Review

The previous internal periodic quality review of the School of Applied Psychology was held during the academic year 2013/14. At that time the Unit received a total of thirteen recommendations from the Peer Review Panel, which could be grouped in the following areas: School's organisational structures consolidation; staffing issues and high Staff Student Ratio (SSR); programme portfolio development and greater connection between Learning and Teaching and Research; student experience-related improvements; research specialisation clustering support and strategic funding; enhancement of School's infrastructures and facilities; greater support and opportunities for staff development. The School's SEC revisited the recommendations as part of the self-evaluation process and commented on them all having been addressed. Particularly significant are the ensuing increase in the staff's seniority levels – currently 13 senior lecturers and three professors, a dramatic reduction of the SSR (from 31.7 to 18.8), research specialisation into three research areas, partial refurbishment of some physical spaces and other improvements which are accounted for in the table included in the SER.

Good Practice Case Study

The School's case study of good practice focuses on Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) practices across a range of programmes offered by the School. It was chosen in recognition of the pioneering engagement by the School's staff in what has recently become prominent at University level as an innovative framework for development and integration of theory and practice within all modular offerings institution-wide. The School of Applied Psychology engages in approximately 46 placement provision partnerships with an increasing number of organisations that collaborate at the confluence of teaching and learning. With a growing number of degree pathways and student intake, the School is committed to the integration of WIL as intentional and requisite aspects of the curriculum across undergraduate (BA AP), taught postgraduate (MA AP), and doctoral postgraduate (Doctorate of Clinical Psychology) programmes. As exemplars of WIL design and implementation across each level, the Good Practice Case Study highlights three educational units of learning: 'Psychology of Childhood & Adolescence' (AP2045), 'Service Design & Evaluation' (AP6173), and 'Placements' in the Doctorate of Clinical Psychology.

- AP2045 is a community engaged learning (CEL) module, co-produced with a student partner (2nd year BA Applied Psychology), the module coordinator Dr Sharon Lambert, Dr Ruth Hally from CIRTIL, and with community partners Let's Grow Together (LGT), an infant and child partnership in Knocknaheeny, Cork. An area categorised by Pobal Deprivation Index as 'Extremely Disadvantaged', LGT's aim is to 'work in partnership with everyone important in children's lives, sharing knowledge, skills and resources, empowering families and enabling children through their relationships and in their communities to be nurtured, fulfilled, achieving and learning'.
- AP6173 aims to enable students to experience and develop a critical understanding of the roles that applied psychologists can play in the design and evaluation of services. External partners contribute by (1) scoping and facilitating the project work that individual students carry out and (2) by sharing their expertise and insight through guest lectures, workshops, and seminars. External partner feedback has been positive, with partners who have sought to

maintain the connection to the module over the years and to provide ideas and input on projects for each annual cohort.

- Placements are a core component of the D Clin Psychology programme. The external partners are clinical, educational and counselling psychologists. They mentor, teach and supervise the trainee clinical psychologists whilst on placement. They also assess performance and give the course team feedback on the competence development of each trainee. Core training in clinical psychology enables trainees to translate and generalise psychological knowledge and skills with clinical populations across the life span, with a range of cognitive abilities (e.g. intellectual disability and autism) with problems that range from acute to severe and enduring, and across a range of service settings (e.g. community, in-patient and residential).

The Panel was impressed with the presented case study of good practice and is very supportive of the planned phased incorporation of WIL approaches into all the programmes offered by the School in the medium to long-term.

Overall Appraisal

The Peer Review Panel for the quality review of the School of Applied Psychology found the review process to be thorough, insightful and grounded on an honest self-reflection and meaningful and enthusiastic engagement with quality enhancement principles and processes. Indeed, the Panel acknowledged most of the Self-Evaluation Report's findings and endorsed the recommendations identified by the School in its Self-Evaluation Report.

The Peer Review Panel was pleased to discover, during the sessions with internal and external stakeholders, that the School's staff, students and graduates are held in great esteem within the University and among the greater stakeholder groups. In light of this extremely positive appraisal, the Panel also believes that there is scope for further strategic and operational growth of the School and of its reputation locally, nationally and internationally going forward.

The Panel concluded that the staff across all categories are a great asset for this Unit and acknowledged the professional commitment, integration, collegiality, commitment to EDI-informed initiatives and their dedication to 'giving psychology away' to benefit the psychological wellbeing of communities, professional development of professionals within the industry, healthcare, education and community sectors, lifelong learning and wider society.

The Panel has made constructive recommendations based on their findings from the School's SER, combined with evidence from discussions with stakeholders throughout the Site Visit, as well as existing good practices at their institutions and elsewhere. The recommendations made by the Panel in this report are meant to enable the School's fulfilment of its aspiration to continually enhance its educational, clinical, research and community engagement provision and pursuit of strategic goals.

Facilities

The Panel undertook a guided tour of the North Mall Campus - the Cork Enterprise Centre (CEC) and Distillery House - where the School is located. The Panel was pleased to learn about the recently

concluded retrofitting of the CEC. However, it expressed its concern at the security risks posed by the Leaside walkway connecting the two UCC campuses, the very poor state of some of the spaces used by the School staff and students in both buildings and at the lack of student facilities and learning supports in this satellite campus vis-à-vis those offered in the UCC main campus. Some of the recommendations address in great details the enhancement interventions that the Panel recommends in terms of both physical infrastructures and student facilities, considering their distance from the Boole library, Hub and Student Union headquarters.

Conclusion

The enthusiasm and collaborative engagement of the School with the quality review process was greatly appreciated by the Panel. The Panel wishes to thank the School's Self-Evaluation Committee for their enthusiastic, democratic and thorough work on the self-evaluation process and all staff and students for their welcoming and responsive attitudes to the Panel during its site visit to UCC.

The Panel also gained a greater understanding of a previous Head's crucial contribution to the strategic refocusing of the School's programme portfolio, as well as the current Head's innovative and transparent approach to workload management to account for staff's multiple activities and support greater uptake of research opportunities. The Panel found the School to be a very strong unit with a strategic and relevant programme portfolio, with most programmes being accredited by the Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI), an extensive placement capability for postgraduates and an ambitious plan to further embed WIL into the entire curriculum for undergraduate and postgraduate students. The Panel also engaged with the challenges being faced by the School in the national context such as CORU's new professional registration requirements.

Finally, the Panel members were grateful for the excellent support provided by staff of the Quality Enhancement Unit in the planning of the review, the practical supports during the site visit and in writing this report.

Next Steps

The Panel Report will next be presented to the Quality Enhancement Committee (QEC), chaired by the President, and subject to QEC approval, will be subsequently published on the Quality Enhancement Unit (QEU) website.

The School will implement the recommendations within the timeframes outlined and provide a detailed report on their progress via a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). The QEP will be considered and approved by the QEC and published on the QEU website.

Appendix A – School of Applied Psychology, Panel Profiles

<p>Professor Mark F. McEntee</p>	<p>Professor McEntee is one of the world’s top medical radiation scientists; his publications involve exploring novel technologies and techniques that enhance the detection of clinical indicators of disease whilst minimising risk to the patient. He is recognised as a leader in the clinical translation of medical imaging optimisation and radiological perception. His research has been disseminated through major international imaging meetings, including the annual meetings of the Radiological Society of North America, the European Congress, the UK Radiological Congress, the International Society of Optical Engineering and the Medical Imaging Perception Society.</p>
<p>Professor Ruth Ramsay (Chair)</p>	<p>Professor Ruth Ramsay is a zoologist, whose research focuses on the behaviour of vertebrate animals in the wild and captivity (and environmental enrichment), intertidal marine ecology and the impact of climate change, as well as the biology and ecology of exotic aquatic species and their potential impact on native fauna. Her animal behaviour research is strongly linked with Fota Wildlife Park, Cork where she is a member of their Research Ethics Board. She carries out research also on the scholarship of teaching and learning. Her research has resulted in >125 publications (as RM O’Riordan) in internationally peer-reviewed journals and books, as well as the supervision to completion of 23 PhD and five Research Masters students, with another ten currently. Her previous leadership roles in UCC included being Dean of Graduate Studies, Chair of UCC’s Student Discipline Committee, Vice-Chair of UCC’s Athena SWAN Steering Group, Vice-Head of the College of Science, Engineering and Food Science (SEFS), Head of the Graduate School of SEFS and Vice-Head of the School of Biological, Earth and Environmental Sciences (BEES). She has previously been involved in three Quality Reviews in UCC, as well as leading the Reference Group and then co-authoring the chapter on the Quality of Postgraduate Research Programmes in UCC’s Institutional Self-Evaluation Report for CINNTE’s Institutional Review in 2023. She has a BA Mod. (Zoology) (TCD), PhD (Zoology) (UCC) as well as a BA (French & Italian) (UCC) and is an <i>Aurora</i> alumna.</p>
<p>Professor Richard Roche</p>	<p>Professor Richard Roche is Professor and former Deputy Head of the Department of Psychology, Maynooth University, where he has been employed since 2005. His areas of interest are cognitive neuroscience/neuropsychology, particularly memory, ageing, dementia and neuroaesthetics, with recent research focus especially on lifestyle-based interventions for cognitive decline in ageing and dementia and on reminiscence-based approaches. Professor Roche has published thirty-nine research articles, over a hundred conference posters, several book chapters and three academic books. He has to date accrued over €1.4 million in research funding and has graduated nine PhD students and three MSc students. He has served as President of Neuroscience Ireland and was Founding President of the Irish Brain Council. He is also strongly committed to both Patient Public Involvement (PPI) and science outreach and public engagement approaches. He has been Chair of the FENS Communications Committee since 2022, having joined the Committee in 2020. He recently acted as Principal Investigator on three projects with a</p>

	<p>strong PPI component, which were funded by the Irish Research Council (New Foundations and COALESCE) and in partnerships with the Alzheimer Society of Ireland (ASI).</p>
<p>Ms Isobel Sheahan (Student Reviewer)</p>	<p>Ms Isobel Sheahan is a second-year BA student at the College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences at University College Cork. She is currently studying for a Bachelor of Arts Degree. In her first year at UCC, she was an active member of the Students Union as an academic representative of Arts English. In this role, she liaised with her peers and the staff of the University to ensure the resolution of issues that arose throughout the academic year. She communicated proactively with the student body via social media and created polls to collect student feedback and assess their engagement. She was awarded a 'UCC EmployAgility Award' for her contributions. Ms Sheahan also works part-time in a pharmacy, adhering strictly to safety procedures and regulations. Thanks to this and her experience as an academic representative, she has garnered invaluable insights into both effective organisational approaches and the diversity of student needs and experiences.</p>
<p>Professor Danaë Stanton Fraser</p>	<p>Professor Danaë Stanton Fraser is a cognitive psychologist who directs the CREATE Lab in Psychology at the University of Bath. Her area of expertise is human-computer interaction with a focus on the design and evaluation of immersive technologies. Professor Stanton Fraser's work is underpinned by a process of co-design with end users and industrial partners. Professor Stanton Fraser publishes in high-impact international journals and conferences including ACM CHI, DIS, CSCW and Ubicomp as well as in JEP Applied, Behavioural Brain Research, Ergonomics, Computers in Human Behaviour, Memory and Cognition and Nature Scientific Reports. She has obtained research grants from InnovateUK, UK research councils (EPSRC, ESRC, AHRC), charities and industry. She is currently an investigator on UKRI REPHRAIN and InnovateUK/UKRI MyWorld. Internally at Bath Danaë has sat on a large number of committees including Senate, Council and Academic Staff Committee, she was also Associate Dean Research for 4 years. She has held a number of external advisory roles including for the UK research councils on the EPSRC Strategic Advisory Network and the EPSRC ICT Strategic Advisory Team.</p>

Appendix B – School of Applied Psychology Site Visit Timetable

In Summary

Tue 24 September 2024 – (Online) Panel Briefing:	Panel briefing from the Director of Quality Enhancement (online).
Wed 2 October 2024 - Site Visit Day 1:	The Panel meets with the Head of School and School Management Team. This is followed by a meeting with School staff, students and visit to the School’s facilities.
Thu 3 October 2024 - Site Visit Day 2:	The Panel meets with the Head of College, Senior Management, Programme Directors and key internal stakeholders of the School
Mon 7 th October 2024 - Online Day 3:	The Panel meets with external stakeholders and prepare their key commendations and recommendations
Thu 10 October 2024 - Online Day 4:	The Panel meets with the Head of School. A closing presentation is given by the Panel to all members of the School. Panel members depart.

Tuesday 24 September 2024	
11.30 - 13.00	Briefing of the Panel by the Director of Quality Enhancement and the Review Co-ordinator. <i>Objective: Presentation on self-evaluation context, methodology and process at UCC, panel roles and panel to discuss aspects of site visit and Self-Evaluation Report (SER).</i>

Tuesday Visit to UCC – first week

Tuesday 1 October 2024	
During the day	Panel members arrive in Cork
19.00	Dinner for Panel members hosted by the Quality Enhancement Manager

Wednesday 2 October 2024

09.00 – 09.30	<p>Convening of Panel members – private meeting</p> <p><i>Panel agree issues to be explored in forthcoming meetings.</i></p>
09.30 – 10.30	<p>Meeting with the Head of School</p> <p>(School Manager to join at 10.15)</p> <p><i>Discussion on the SER; how the School undertook its SER; what it learned from the process; what it hopes to gain from the review.</i></p> <p><i>Discussion regarding School’s developments to date, strategic priorities, overview of educational provision.</i></p>
10.30 – 11.15	<p>Meeting with School Management Team/Senior Administrators</p> <p><i>Discussion of management, operational priorities and practices.</i></p>
11.15 – 11.45	Coffee break
11.45 – 12.30	<p>Meeting with UG students</p> <p><i>Discussion of UG student issues, feedback and interaction with the School</i></p>
12.30 – 13.15	<p>Meeting with PG students</p> <p><i>Discussion of PG student issues, feedback and interaction with the School</i></p>
13.15 – 13.55	Lunch
13.55 – 14.00	Panel to be collected by School’s staff to conduct the tour of facilities
14.00 – 15.00	<p>Tour of School’s facilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distillery House tour • Cork Enterprise Centre (CEC) tour (ground floor including research spaces, cafeteria, EEG lab and teaching space) • CEC’s first floor tour (including admin office, computer centre, kitchen and, if required, staff offices) • Return to venue before 15.00
15.00 – 16.30	<p>Meeting with all staff</p> <p><i>Discuss issues such as communications, staffing, structures and staff development</i></p>
16.30 – 17.00	Private meeting of Panel
18.00	Informal dinner for members of the Panel

Thursday 3 October	
09.00 – 09.30	Convening of the Panel – preparation for the day ahead
09.30 – 10.15	Meeting with the Interim Head, College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences (CACSSS) (Finance Business Manager, CACSSS to join at 10.00) <i>Discussion regarding College strategy and priorities, the links between College/School financial resource allocations process, staffing resources and infrastructure</i>
10.15 – 11.00	Meeting with the Deputy President & Registrar <i>Discussion of UCC’s Strategic Plan and Academic Strategy</i>
11.00 – 11.20	Coffee break
11.20 – 11.45	Meeting with the Co-chairs of the School’s Self-Evaluation Committee <i>Objective: Discussion on the SER – insights from the Co-Chairs on the self-evaluation process and workings of the SEC</i>
11.45 – 12.15	Meeting with University’s Senior Leadership Team members <i>Objective: Discussion on strategy and priorities</i>
12.15 – 12.45	Meeting with the HR Business Manager, CACSSS <i>Discussion on staffing and recruitment contracts and structure</i>
12.45 – 13.15	Meeting with the Dean of Undergraduate and Postgraduate Studies <i>Objective: Discussion on strategy with regards to student recruitment, retention and student experiences</i>
13.15 – 14.00	Lunch
14.00 – 14.45	Case Study of Good Practice <i>“Work-Integrated Learning in the School of Applied Psychology”</i> <i>Opportunity for the School to showcase good practice and enhancements to the student learning experience with a focus on the Case Study of Good Practice</i>
14.45 – 15.30	Meeting with Programme Directors/Chairs of Boards of Study <i>Discussion on programme quality assurance, governance, delivery and assessment</i>
15.30 – 16.15	Enhancing the Student Learning Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Pedagogy to enhance teaching and learning for diverse student cohorts · Enhancements in assessment · Support processes <i>Objective: Discussion on programme enhancements to student learning experience</i>
16.15 – 17.00	Private meeting of Panel

	<i>Summative meeting to discuss key emerging themes and topics of importance for report</i>
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Online meetings – second week

Monday 7 October 2024	
09.30 – 09.45	Convening of the Panel – preparation for the day ahead
09.45 – 10.30	Meeting with External Stakeholders <i>Objective: discussion of external stakeholders' views and experience of the School</i>
10.30 – 10.45	Meeting with the Dean of Doctoral Studies <i>Objective: Discussion on strategy with regards to student recruitment, retention and student experiences</i>
10.45 – 11.30	Panel meeting to draft the recommendations and commendations
11.30 – 12.00	Break for Panel
12.00 – 13.30	Panel meeting to draft the recommendations and commendations

Thursday 10 October 2024	
09.00 – 10.15	Meeting of Panel to finalise recommendations and commendations
10.15 – 10.45	Head of School and Head of College meeting <i>Clarification and discussions of main findings by Panel</i>
10.45 – 11.15	Break for Panel
11.15 – 12.30	Panel meeting to discuss feedback from Head of School; consider and finalise the closing presentation
12.30 – 13.00	Closing presentation <i>Closing presentation to all staff, to be made by the Chair or other member(s) of Panel as agreed, summarising the principal findings of the Panel.</i>
13.00 – 13.30	Panel – wrap up meeting

Re-Calibration of Periodic Quality Review

Prior to commencing the 4th cycle of Periodic Quality Review, the Quality Enhancement Unit (QEU) undertook a re-calibration process to review existing processes and ensure that the Quality Review methodology is strategically aligned, informed by current and emergent good practice at national, international and institutional levels and consolidates incremental and ongoing enhancements to the model. In particular, in alignment with the recently launched UCC EDI Framework and Action Plan 2025-2028, it ensured that an explicit Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) lens is embedded across all stages of the revised Quality Review model. Specifically, quality enhancement activities pursued by the QEU align most closely with two EDI strategic Objectives of the University: 'Foundation -Building EDI leadership and organisational commitment' and 'Culture - Ensuring an Inclusive, respectful and safe environment'.

One of the distinctive features of the enhanced quality review methodology at UCC is a revised model of academic quality review based on six domains; School Context, Academic Standards, Student Learning Experience; International Student Experience; Research Activities and Staffing with the inclusion of EDI and Academic Integrity as transversal themes. This signals a commitment to EDI principles as a lens embedded in all the quality review activities from unit's self-evaluation onwards, with particular resonance for unit planning and performance, student learning and access and staffing and research.



As part of its implementation of an EDI-informed approach, the QEU has committed to having a QEU staff member responsible for EDI in the team; carrying out continuing monitoring of the composition of Peer Review Panels in terms of equality, diversity and inclusion; including enhanced opportunities for a wider range of staff to become involved in the quality review process, particularly in supporting self-evaluation activities, as well as facilitation roles for issues such as programme review and quality.

This re-calibration process was completed during 2023/24 and has enabled an adequate preparation period for units engaging in review from 2025/26.

Quality Review Schedule

The Quality Review schedule aligns to a 7-year cycle as per national statutory requirements. Extended self-evaluation periods may be applied to accommodate professional body accreditation, where appropriate.

Quality Review Schedule for 2025/26 and 2026/27

Academic Year of Site Visit	Unit Name	Review Type
2025/26	School of Chemistry	School
	School of History	School
	<i>Office of Corporate and Legal Affairs (OCLA)</i>	<i>Functional Area</i>
2026/27	Cork University Dental School and Hospital	School
	School of Clinical Therapies	School
	School of Food and Nutritional Sciences	School
	School of English and Digital Humanities	School
	School of Biochemistry and Cell Biology	School
	School of Microbiology	School
	Office of the Vice-President for Learning and Teaching: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adult Continuing Education (ACE) - Boole Library - Careers Services - Centre for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning (CIRTL) - Centre for Digital Education (CDE) - Examination Appeals - Skills Centre 	Functional Area

Academic Year of Site Visit	Unit Name	Review Type
	Office of the Vice-President for Global Engagement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alumni and Development - Language Centre - Office of Marketing and Brand Impact - Office of Media and Communications 	Functional Area

The full [Schedule for Quality Review 2024-25 to 2031-32](#) is published on our webpage. The schedule may be subject to revision, as required.

Section 3 Quality Enhancement in support of UCC's Strategic Goals

This section summarises and relates quality enhancement activities to the university's Strategic Plan.

Goal One: Research and Innovation

Thematic Review of the Doctoral Learning Experience

UCC's Strategic Plan 2023–28, Securing our Future, places research and innovation at the core of the University's mission, with a specific focus on strengthening doctoral education, increasing enrolments and enhancing the quality of the doctoral experience. In support of these priorities, the Quality Enhancement Unit led a Thematic Review of the Doctoral Learning Experience. The review supports Goal 1: Research and Innovation by enhancing the quality and consistency of doctoral education, thereby strengthening UCC's research capacity and international standing.

Revision of Quality Review Methodology

In advance of the 4th cycle of Periodic Quality Review, the Quality Enhancement Unit undertook a re-calibration of the Quality Review methodology to ensure alignment with current national, international and institutional good practice. The revised model strengthens institutional oversight of research activities and the doctoral learning experience, embedding these within a six-domain framework supported by transversal themes of EDI and Academic Integrity. This approach directly supports Goal 1: Research and Innovation by enhancing the quality and governance of research and doctoral education in the University. Whilst overall the revised methodology creates clear alignment with the Strategic Plan goals.

Goal Two: Student Success

Student Reviewer Engagement Project: Application Process and Training Enhancement

As part of the Quality Enhancement Unit's (QEU) commitment to student engagement and continuous enhancement, a Student Reviewer Engagement Enhancement Project was undertaken in 2023–24. It was led by Dr Silvia Brandi and Ms Seugnet Kritzinger, resulting in more inclusive and agile processes with a focus on widening the application base (UCC's Leave No One Behind) and enhancing the effectiveness and accessibility of the provided student reviewer training. As a result of these developments, in 2025/26 QEU implemented a streamlined and more inclusive application processes reaching out to all Schools across the University and relevant student support functions and a two-stage training with dedicated SharePoint site and multi-modal learning tools, inspired by EDI and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) approaches. The This training site contains a suite of accessible resources, including a series of short captioned informational videos, designed to support Student Reviewers in their preparation and participation on the Peer Review Panel.

Furthermore, this digital project obtained support from the University's Centre for Digital Education during the summer 2025, through the engagement by Student Interns, entrusted with the task of reviewing the QEU student training site against UDL principles and practices. These initiatives complement the ongoing QEU efforts to implement student success-oriented approaches, such as

the development of a Student Digital Space on the QEU website in 2022. This aligns with 'Goal two: Student Success' by strengthening meaningful, accessible and inclusive, EDI-informed student engagement in quality review processes.

Collaboration with Student Union

Dr Stephen Hammel collaborated with the Student Union on re-imagining the class representative election process, with a focus on improving student engagement, efficiency and transparency. The redesigned system automated the once manual data collection process using Canvas and Qualtrics. It incorporated a survey that pre-selects course, year and college and uses branching to direct nominations appropriately. The development of a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) further supported this work by reducing the risk of manual error and strengthening both the accuracy and confidentiality of the process. This project aligns with Goal 2: Student Success, by enhancing the student experience, reducing administrative barriers, and ensuring that key democratic processes within the University are more efficient and student-centred.

Student Feedback Project

Dr Stephen Hammel led a second Pilot Student Feedback Project which integrated an amended module-level survey approach, informed by an independent evaluation of the user experience and overall effectiveness in meeting the initial pilot's objectives. It focused on a significantly larger student population (ca. 11,000 students), undergoing undergraduate and postgraduate taught provision. The survey was administered via Canvas using Qualtrics, following consultation with Heads of College (Business and Law and Medicine and Health), relevant Learning & Teaching Committees, Academic Council, and the Students' Union. An online town hall for module coordinators was held in advance of the survey launch on February 2025.

A subsequent review of the Pilot will inform UCC's approach to a campus-wide student feedback system that meets user requirements and institutional needs.

This project aligns with Goal 2: Student Success and Goal Four: Our Staff, Our Culture by supporting the systematic collection of feedback to enable data informed decision-making to enhance the student experience.

Goal Three: Global Engagement

Engagement in Erasmus + Study Visits

The QEU's Engagement in Erasmus+ staff mobility visits aligns strongly with UCC's Strategic Goal Three: Global Engagement by strengthening international partnerships, enabling peer learning, and embedding global perspectives into quality enhancement.

University of Malmö, Erasmus Visit

Dr Silvia Brandi, Quality Enhancement Advisor, participated in the Erasmus+ staff mobility programme at the University of Malmö, Sweden, including a one-day engagement at Lund University in March 2025. This supports UCC's Strategic Goal Three: Global Engagement by strengthening international collaboration within (and beyond) the UNIC European University Alliance and, specifically, peer learning in quality assurance and enhancement.

The programme focused on peer practice exchange with colleagues involved in Quality Assurance (QA) and Quality Enhancement (QE) across both institutions. Key areas of engagement included, Informal benchmarking and knowledge exchange on frameworks, operational processes, and best practices in QA and QE, comparative discussions on doctoral programme structures and oversight and exploration of how institutional human rights principles are integrated into university governance and quality systems. These engagements enhance UCC's international network, support the exchange of expertise, and contribute to the continuous enhancement of institutional practices through global perspectives, while also supporting UCC's reputation as an engaged university.

More specifically, thanks to the newly established networks with Lund University, Dr Brandi, in liaison with the UCC Vice-President for Global Engagement and under the oversight of the UCC's Director of Quality Enhancement, successfully organised an inter-institutional management meeting with Lund's Global Engagement Lead. The outcomes were provided to the Vice President Global Engagement to inform UCC's Ethical and International Human Rights Framework.

Middle East Technical University (METU)

As part of the Erasmus+ Staff Mobility Programme, QEU hosted Dr Hakkı Polat from the Middle East Technical University (METU) 12th – 16th May 2025. The visit included productive discussions on quality operations and institutional projects, a tour of UCC, and a presentation of QEU's current activities. Dr Polat also engaged with various stakeholders across the university, strengthening international collaboration and peer exchange including on specialist research areas. The subsequent interest expressed by additional METU colleagues in visiting UCC is a positive indicator of strengthening UCC's global networks and commitment to shared learning.

Goal Four: Our Staff, Our Culture

Development of Digital Badge

UCC staff frequently serve as representatives on committees, panels and working groups at institutional, national, and international levels. Their contributions influence strategic decision-making, shaping the university's direction and impact. However, facilitating discussions, aligning diverse perspectives, and ensuring meaningful contributions require specialised skills.

In response to this, Dr Anne Gannon (People and Culture) and Dr Stephen Hammel, have designed a Digital Badge entitled "Effective Facilitation for Strategic Success", to equip staff with essential skills to lead productive group meetings for strategic and project-based initiatives.

The Digital Badge will be submitted for approval in January 2026, supporting Goal 4: Our Staff, Our Culture offering new staff CPD opportunities and the embedding of core strategic skills in UCC.

President's Awards for Excellence in Teaching

Ms Elizabeth Noonan served as a member of the selection panel for the President's Awards for Excellence in Teaching 2023/24 in November 2024. Participation in this process supports UCC's

Strategic Goal Four: Our Staff, Our Culture by recognising excellence in teaching and celebrating staff professional achievements.

Ethical and Human Rights Framework Working Group

The Ethical and Human Rights Framework Working Group, chaired by the Vice President for Global Engagement, was established in December 2024. Ms Elizabeth Noonan was invited to participate as a member of the Working Group which supports UCC's Strategic Goal Four: Our Staff, Our Culture. The Working Group is tasked with developing a Human Rights Framework to inform University partnerships and to support ethical, responsible, and sustainable global engagement.

Postgraduate Certificate in Professional Practice and Leadership in Higher Education

Ms Elizabeth Noonan acts as Module Leader for the Tertiary Education module as part of the Postgraduate Certificate which has been developed for professional staff. Together with Dr Anne Gannon, they provide programme participants with an in depth treatment of the global and systems level changes in higher education and enable participants to relate these change dynamics to the conduct of their roles.

Goal Five: Our Place, Our Footprint

External Engagement with the Irish Student Survey

In 2022, the Irish Student Survey underwent a strategic reflection and review. This resulted in the commissioning of two reports to seek ways to enhance the national survey. Informed by these reports, HEIs were requested to nominate staff to form a national Review Working Group tasked with the redesign of a more effective survey instrument. Dr Stephen Hammel was nominated as UCC's representative. Over the course of the 18-month process, drafts of the survey were presented at relevant Academic committees and brought to the Review Working Group.

A revised survey, with a focus on the student experience was approved by the National Steering Group and is scheduled to run in 2026.

Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland and International Education Mark Assessor

Ms Elizabeth Noonan was appointed for a period of 5 years to the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland accreditation panel from February 2024. She was appointed by Quality & Qualifications Ireland as an external assessor for the International Education Mark.

Peer Exchange with RCSI Colleagues

The Quality Enhancement Unit hosted colleagues from the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI) for a peer exchange focused on quality review processes and the sharing of good practice. This engagement facilitated open discussion on shared challenges and opportunities in quality management, student feedback processes, effectiveness of quality initiatives and benchmarking. These sessions offered the opportunity for the identification of process enhancements and the

sharing of practical solutions to common challenges. The visit concluded with presentations highlighting examples of good practice and a reflective discussion on key learnings and next steps for continued engagement. This activity aligns with Goal 4: Our Staff, Our Culture through professional learning and meaningful peer engagement.

Section 4 Looking forward to 2025/26

Fourth Cycle of Periodic Quality Review

The commencement of the fourth cycle of Periodic Quality Review (2025/26 to 2031/32). The full schedule has been published on QEU webpage with the following Schools scheduled for review in this academic year:

- School of Chemistry
- School of History

Good Practice Symposium 2026

The Symposium will adopt a thematic focus, with the proposed theme of "Belonging", aligning with the University's Mission as set out in the current Strategic Plan. The theme will be inclusive of good practice across education, research, professional services, student activity, and global engagement.

Appendix I: Quality Enhancement Committee

QEC Membership

QEC Membership 2024/25

Ex Officio:

- Professor John O'Halloran, President (Chair)
- Professor Stephen Byrne, Deputy President & Registrar
- Chief Financial and Operating Officer
- Ms Elizabeth Noonan, Director of Quality Enhancement (Secretary)
- Ms Katie Halpin-Hill, President, Students' Union (2024/25)
- Ms Alison Ní Threasaigh, Education Officer, Students' Union (2024/25)

Nominated Members:

4 academic staff members – 1 representative from each College

- Professor Maggie O'Neill, College of Arts, Celtic Studies & Social Sciences
- Professor Pádraig Cantillon-Murphy, College of Science, Engineering & Food Science
- Professor Maria Cahill, College of Business and Law
- Professor Yvonne Nolan, College of Medicine & Health

3 staff members – representatives of administrative and support services

- Mr David Hogan, Institutional Research Officer, Office of the Vice President for External Relations
- Ms Nóirín Deady, First Year Experience Coordinator, Admissions Office
- Ms Alison O'Connell, College Manager, College of Arts, Celtic Studies & Social Sciences

2 members of Academic Council

- Dr Rachel MagShamráin, Head, Department of German
- Dr Mohamad Saab, Lecturer, School of Nursing and Midwifery

Coopted members

- Dr Christopher Brown, International Office (*Co-opted member for IEM process*)

1 Doctoral Student representative

Tbc in consultation with Dean of Doctoral Studies

QEC Terms of Reference

Aim: 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 Terms of Reference of the Committee are to:

- foster a quality culture throughout the University, that is supportive of innovation, the sharing of good practice and development of excellence in teaching, learning, research and related services;
- oversee the development of University quality assurance and enhancement policies and procedures, informed by national and international policy developments, that support strategic goals for excellence and the identification of good practice;
- facilitate student engagement in quality assurance and enhancement activities;
- ensure that University quality review policies and procedures have regard to prevailing national and European requirements: the Qualifications and Quality Assurance Act 2012, published national quality assurance guidelines and European Standards and Guidelines (ESG);
- recommend policy and procedures for ensuring the integrity of various forms of academic association with external organisations including collaborative provision and linked providers;
- review and analyse systematically the outcomes of quality processes and relevant quality indicators to confirm the on-going maintenance of quality and identify any required strategic enhancement activities;
- ensure the methodologies for expert peer review are evaluated as required in order to maintain a focus on both fitness for purpose and fitness of purpose;
- review and propose revision to the terms of reference, where appropriate and necessary.

In fulfilling its remit, the Quality Enhancement Committee will advise the University Leadership team and Academic Council on key quality issues arising with implications for strategy or policy development. It will also provide an Annual Report to Governing Authority to meet the requirements of the Universities Act 1997 and the Qualifications and Quality Assurance Act 2012 (amended 2019).

Constitution

Ex Officio Members

- President (Chair)
- Senior Vice-President Academic & Registrar
- Chief Financial and Operating Officer
- Director of Quality Enhancement (Secretary)
- President, Students Union
- Education Officer, Students Union

Nominated Members

- 4 academic staff with experience of participation in quality review and/or knowledge of quality systems - one from each College, nominated by the President.
- 3 administrative & support services staff with experience of participation in quality review and/or knowledge of quality systems from administration and services, nominated by the President.
- 2 members of Academic Council
- 1 Doctoral Student representative

Quorum

The quorum necessary for the transaction of business shall be 6 at least one of whom shall be the President or the Senior Vice-President Academic. A duly convened meeting of the Committee at which a quorum is present shall be competent to exercise all or any of the authorities, powers and discretions vested in or exercisable by the Committee.

Sub-Committees

The Committee shall establish such sub-committees and working groups, with specific briefs, as are deemed necessary for the efficient operation of the Committee.

Term of Office

The term of office for the Committee is four years, with the current Committee's period of office ending June 2029.

Casual Vacancies and Co-opted Members

The Committee has the authority to fill any casual vacancies that arise during the lifetime of the Committee. The Committee may as required co-opt members with specialist expertise to ensure that its work is appropriately informed.

Appendix II: Annual Quality Report 2024/25