

# Fheabhsú Cáilíochta Quality Enhancement

# QUALITY ENHANCEMENT UNIT



# QUALITY REVIEW PEER REVIEW PANEL REPORT SCHOOL OF LAW Date: 25<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> February 2020

"By embedding a strong quality-enhancement ethos, we will use our quality processes to ensure a culture and experience of best practice in the delivery of our academic mission, demonstrating our commitment to continuous evolution and improvement"

(UCC's Strategic Plan 2017 – 2022, p.23)

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### List of Panel Members

Name	Position/Discipline	Institution
Professor Liam Marnane (Chair)	Professor, School of Engineering	University College Cork
Dr Suzanne Egan	Associate Professor and Director of the UCD Centre for Human Rights	UCD Sutherland School of Law
Professor Paul Maharg	Professor of Law and Distinguished Professor of Practice	Osgoode Hall Law School, York University, Ontario
Ms Michele Power	Programme Manager, Quercus Talented Students' Programme	University College Cork
Mr Luke Watson	Student Reviewer, School of History	University College Cork
	Review Coordinator	
Dr Silvia Brandi	Quality Enhancement Unit <sup>1</sup>	University College Cork

Refer to Appendix A for detailed panel profiles.

### Part 1 - Overall Analysis

#### 1.1 Context

The School of Law (SOL) is a long-established academic unit, with a strong internationalisation focus, located within the College of Business and Law at University College Cork (UCC). Its global reach is evident from its position among the top 150 Law Schools in the QS Rankings (QS, 2019). The current School structure was adopted in 2014, with the current Head of the School (Dean of Law) being appointed in 2019.

The School offers eight Level-8 taught programmes (7 Undergraduate (UG) and 1 Postgraduate (PG) - LLB) and eight postgraduate Level-9 taught programmes (LLM), as well as the option of Masters (Level 9) and PhD (level 10) degrees by research. It also has long-standing partnerships with the legal professions as well as a number of international partner institutions.

The School has 36 full-time academic staff – ten Professors, seven Senior Lecturers, eleven Lecturers, one post-doctoral researcher and seven research assistants. Currently nine staff support the School in professional services, clinical and technical roles. There are also 27 part-time teaching staff, including some PhDs. In 2019/20 the SOL had 811 student FTEs (704 UG and 107 PG) giving a total headcount of 1245 students.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Dr Geraldine Fahy and Ms Mags Walsh from the Quality Enhancement Unit, University College Cork, shadowed the Panel as part of the Review Coordinator's induction.

The School is based in *Áras na Laoi*, on the main UCC campus. The Law School has teaching and meeting facilities, staff offices, dedicated research and social spaces for students, a kitchen and a Moot Court Room.

#### 1.2 Methodology and Site Visit

The site visit for the School of Law took place over three days in February 2020. The timetable was comprehensive and enabled consultation with key stakeholders, including the Head of College, senior management of the University and other internal stakeholders, students and local, national and international external stakeholders (via teleconference). There was engagement with the Dean of Law, the School Manager, the Vice-Dean, Programme Directors and other staff from the School. The timetable for the site visit is included in Appendix B.

The Panel brought together national and international peer reviewers. Internal reviewers provided knowledge of institutional and organisational structures within UCC, with the external Panel members contributing their peer expertise in the area of Law. All review panels at UCC also include a student representative as a full Panel member; the student representative brought valuable insights and perspectives on student issues. Review coordination was provided throughout by a Quality Enhancement Advisor from the Quality Enhancement Unit (QEU) to facilitate the review process and to support the Peer Review Panel in formulating and agreeing the final Panel Report. The Report was compiled collaboratively; the entire Panel contributed to the production of the final Report.

#### 1.3 Objectives of the 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 Law 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.

#### 1.4 Overall Analysis of Self-Evaluation Process

#### 1.4.1 Self-Evaluation Report (SER)

The appointment of a new Dean of Law coincided with the start of the self-evaluation process and created opportunity for a change momentum, which was reflected in many of the priorities identified in the School's SER. It was evident to the Panel that the School undertook a comprehensive and inclusive self-evaluation exercise. A cross-representative coordinating committee was established in the School to facilitate the self-evaluation process and to coordinate the drafting of the Self-Evaluation Report (SER). The School used the opportunity for self-evaluation to engage in a parallel strategic review of its activities through extensive consultation with staff, students and external stakeholders. The self-evaluation will also contribute where appropriate to the School's Athena SWAN application. The School evaluated its current position and identified proposed actions (priorities) under key

headings including School Governance, Teaching and Student Support, Internationalisation, External Engagement and Staffing and Facilities.

Notwithstanding the quality of the SER, the inclusion of more extensive student lifecycle data collection and analysis in the SER would have been informative, together with a broad strategic vision to provide the necessary grounding for the envisaged review of the whole suite of UG and PG programmes and the accomplishment of the priorities outlined by the School through the development of a new strategic plan. Some consideration of the implications for the School of Law of the forthcoming construction of a new Cork University Business School would have been contextually relevant.

#### 1.4.2 SWOT

The School's main strengths are its autonomy, external relations, reputation, student-focus and location in Cork. The SWOT revealed key weaknesses relating to governance and communication processes and resources. The opportunities highlighted by the SWOT largely focus on Brexit, external engagement and marketing. The School identified a number of threats, the most significant being the decreasing exchequer funding, competitions from other institutions, staff retention and workload. Overall, most of the identified weaknesses and threats, as well as opportunities, are addressed by the priorities at the end of each chapter of the SER.

#### 1.4.3 Benchmarking

The School carried out targeted, topic specific benchmarking against three UK-based institutions: Ulster University (Clinical Legal Education Approach), University of Glasgow (Internationalisation, External Engagement and Governance Structures) and Queen's University Belfast (Staffing Issues, Internationalisation, International Student Support and Governance). The School found the exercise very valuable for the planned revision of UCC School of Law's strategic planning, governance structures and processes, programmes, internationalisation and external engagement strategies. The Panel suggest that further benchmarking with other institutions specific to the area of governance would also be beneficial to the School's planned review of its governance structures and processes.

#### 1.4.4 Developments since last review

The last periodic quality review took place in the academic year 2012/13 and the Panel noted that the School has addressed many of the key recommendations (e.g. lowering the SSR, teaching loads for early career academics, enhancing student representation on committees). Some recommendations from the previous review have not been implemented, as the School determined that recommendations relating to organisation, planning, governance and financing now have limited relevance due to the recent restructuring of the University.

#### 1.5 Good Practice Case Study

The case study of good practice presented by the School, 'The Child Law Clinic' and its contribution to securing redress for survivors of sexual abuse in national schools within the Republic of Ireland, was commended by the Panel as a successful example of research-led and practice-based experiential learning for a cohort of PG students (LLM) with an important social justice outcome for Irish society.

Other examples of enhancing the student learning experience were presented to the Panel during the site visit:

- The clinical module 'Law of the Sea' (LW6625), run in collaboration with the Irish Naval Service, with the purpose of introducing a strong experiential learning dimension to the study of environmental law for policy innovation and impact;
- The 'Experiential Learning in Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)' project, characterised by a skills-based curricular approach to the teaching and learning of ADR (LW6619);

• The Advanced Legal Reasoning module (LW3366) for undergraduate students taught through the flipped classroom method, aimed at fostering students' ability to think critically and confidently through collaborative processes of argumentation.

The Panel was impressed by these initiatives and commended the School on supporting their development. QEU will work with the School of Law to publish the Child Law Clinic Case Study of Good Practice.

#### 1.6 Tour of the Facilities

The Panel was taken on a tour of the School's facilities throughout *Aras Na Laoi*. The tour commenced with the Student Common Room (shared with Economics), a small flexible teaching room (AL.G. 33), and a tiered lecture theatre (AL.G. 30). The Panel also viewed two meeting rooms (one equipped with videoconferencing facilities), the kitchen (for staff and postgraduate students), office space for research assistants, and the Part-time Staff shared office and the PhD Room.

### Part 2 – Findings of the Panel

#### 2.1 School Overview

The Panel was impressed by the engagement with the quality review process demonstrated by the School's staff and by the quality enhancement approach it embraced. There seem to be high levels of collegiality and synergy between the academic and professional services staff of the School. The School enjoys a positive reputation across the University (and beyond) for its involvement in University-level academic and governance structures and considerable, genuine collegial contributions to the University community. Law staff are also very active in a number of research centres (e.g. the Children's and Family Law Research Centre, the Centre for Criminal Justice and Human Rights, the Centre for Law and the Environment and the Centre for Research in Sport Economics and Law) and six clinics. The involvement of the School in public policy-making, social justice issues, civic and community engagement is particularly timely, in relation to the Connected Curriculum framework outlined in the <u>UCC Academic Strategy 2018-22</u> and to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (especially Goals 10 and 16). However, the Panel feels that the unit has much untapped potential to become a more modern, forward-looking and dynamic post-Brexit School.

#### 2.1.1 Mission, vision, aims and objectives

The School of Law's Mission Statement is to be 'a modern Law School where students benefit from education that is relevant, challenging and skills-based, with committed staff who conduct research that is innovative and has impact and are engaged with law and society, nationally and internationally'. The School's most recent Strategic Plan expired in 2018. A new plan is currently being drafted, which will be informed by the key priorities identified through the Self-Evaluation process and this report.

While acknowledging the progress made since the previous strategic plan 2016-18, the Panel also notes that the newly identified priorities around governance, teaching and learning, internationalisation, external engagement and staffing partly overlap with the previous ones. The Panel recommends the inclusion of a detailed operational plan with clear timelines and Key Performance Indicators, backed up by a strong business plan to deliver the priorities of the new strategic plan. The Panel also urges the School to consider the opportunities available to Ireland as the main common law country remaining in the European Union post-Brexit, as well as establishing the UCC Law School as the first Irish provider of innovative practice-based approaches to legal education. In doing so, it could consider drawing from initiatives pioneered in North America such as Law Without Walls (<u>http://lawwithoutwalls.org</u>) or the Institute for the Future of Law Practice (<u>https://www.futurelawpractice.org</u>), both of which expand and improve the quality and accessibility of legal training solutions for students.

#### 2.1.2 School organisation, planning and communication

The Panel acknowledges the student-centred focus of the School and the progress made as a result of the restructuring and expansion of the professional services team. However, the Panel agrees with the SER analysis that there appear to be an ongoing lack of clarity with regard to the decision-making structures, roles and processes across the School. The Panel welcomes the School's expressed intention of simplifying its structures and processes of governance; as part of this, the Panel recommends that the School sets up a data collection and analysis project for its activities so that they are consistently driven by evidence-based approaches. The Panel expresses concern that the restructuring of the governance structures is progressing simultaneously with the drafting of the new strategic plan. It recommends instead, that the School should firstly finalise its new Strategic Plan and subsequently proceed with clarifying its governance structures. In this regard, the Panel believes that

further benchmarking may be beneficial to gain insights into leaner and more effective governance structures and processes for the School.

#### **2.2** Evaluation of Academic Standards

#### 2.2.1 Student "life-cycle"

The School attracts a diverse population of students with enrolment coming primarily through the conventional routes: Central Application Office (CAO) for undergraduates and Postgraduate Application Centre (PAC) for postgraduates. The Panel expresses concern about the disproportionately high ratio of undergraduate to postgraduate students in the School. Student intake across the main UG programmes has grown considerably (+ 28%) since the introduction in 2016/17 of the BCL Law and Business and BCL (Pathways) first-year common entry option, which offers alternative study streams from second year onwards (BCL International, BCL Clinical and BCL). Postgraduate intake, however, has remained consistently low. Three of the Masters programmes count as little as four enrolled students (each) for the academic year 2019/20. The Panel supports the Dean's intention to immediately tackle this issue by reviewing the PG programme offerings to attract more national and international applicants. The forthcoming appointment of a Chair in EU Law is acknowledged by the Panel as a step forward in this direction.

The Panel notes an over-reliance on anecdotal evidence of student progression, retention, completion and career pathways, which staff also pointed out during the site visit. Therefore, it encourages the School to address this by promptly establishing procedures to systematically collect and analyse data on all aspects of the student lifecycle (e.g. admissions, progression, module/programme feedback, graduates' destinations). This information will provide a solid evidence-based foundation for decision making for curriculum review and future developments, as well as contributing to enhancing the student experience.

#### 2.2.2 Programme delivery and curriculum planning

The School currently has 17 distinct taught programme offerings from Level 8 to Level 9 on the National Framework of Qualifications (Appendix C), as well as Research Master's (LLM) and PhDs. During the site visit, it became apparent that UG programmes have not evolved in line with developments in the law profession over the last decade, for example, the new professional competencies recently established by the Law Society. Given the high overall number of programmes and related modules (over 150) and the perhaps inevitable degree of duplication among them, as recognised by staff, the Panel welcomes the School's plan to systematically review, streamline and rationalise all its curriculum offerings. The Panel recommends that this review is done as a matter of urgency and within a purposely developed evidence-based framework. As part of this, the School should ensure that professional and soft, as well as academic skills are embedded in learning and assessment for all modules within the UG and PG curriculum. The UG curriculum review should be carried out with a view to broadening placement and other-practice-based learning opportunities for all students, taking into account the range of skills, values and attitudes that are desired traits in a UCC law graduate.

#### 2.2.3 School communication structures

The Panel acknowledges recent efforts made by the School towards more effective internal and external communication through the appointment of a dedicated Marketing and Communications Officer, the redevelopment of the School's website and daily presence in social media channels (Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn). However, consultation with staff during the site visit revealed that intra-School communication is still perceived as an issue, especially the over-reliance on email communication. Furthermore, it is evident that programme directors would benefit from a common

platform for communication and dialogue; therefore, the Panel recommends that the School take steps to ensure that an effective internal communications system is prioritised as part of the planned overhaul of its governance and communication structures and processes.

#### 2.2.4 Communication with students

The School communicates with students through a variety of electronic channels including Canvas, emails, social media, Law student intranet and the School website. The Dean convenes monthly (during term times) Student Council meetings with class representatives to deal with students' requests, queries and to facilitate communication to students from the School. The Panel acknowledges the efforts recently made by the School to increase communication and engagement with its students through student representation in the self-evaluation process and other activities. It also welcomes the School's plan, as outlined in the SER, that the revision of the School governance and communication structures is underpinned by a student-inclusive approach.

Student feedback was highlighted as an issue for students during the site visit, especially at UG level; this concerns both feedback collected from students on modules and feedback to students on their examination and assignment performance (for the latter, see section 2.3.2 below). It became apparent to the Panel that, while the majority of students have the opportunity to submit a module evaluation, there is no requirement for staff to systematically review or implement this feedback. The Panel recommends that the School implements a consistent School-wide policy to enable the systematic collection of student feedback along with feedback loops on actions taken. Relevant information arising from student feedback should also link back into the broader School-level data collection and analysis project. The potential offered by Canvas to standardise UG student communication, assessment feedback mechanisms and students' feedback on modules should be explored to enable a consistent school-wide approach to important aspects of the student learning experience interface.

#### 2.3 Evaluation of Student Learning Experience

#### 2.3.1 Teaching and learning, including the impact of research on teaching

The Panel was impressed by the innovative teaching approaches presented by staff at the Enhancing the Student Learning Experience session of the site visit, which provided excellent examples of experiential learning, professional skills, critical thinking and impactful team-research at their core. However, the Panel is concerned that the clinics and the outlined modules – LW6625, LW6619 and LW3366 - are accessible only to a relatively small number of students. This is a problem faced by many law schools and is seldom addressed. The Panel would suggest the following general solutions:

- 1. There are opportunities to develop research-led and practice-led teaching to encompass not only intellectual aims but also the social needs of specific groups of stakeholders (e.g. other professions such as healthcare, social work, journalism, accountancy, business). As an inspiring example of this, the Panel suggests that the School considers the work pioneered by the Institute for the Future of Law Practice (<u>https://www.futurelawpractice.org/</u>). This form of hybrid curriculum would fit well with the curricular aims of the School of Law.
- 2. It is evident to the Panel that clinical legal education is a strength of the School of Law at both UG and PG level. In particular, the clinics, in which PG students from a range of LLM programmes participate, are commended for bridging the gap between research and professional practice and for their outstanding contribution to society and specifically, social justice. However, the Panel believes that UG students should also have access to this opportunity and that the clinics would benefit from greater promotion nationally, to raise their profile. Furthermore, the Panel recommends that the number of places on the BCL (Pathways) be increased to respond to evident student demand, and that issues raised by

students regarding the varying experiences on placement in terms of tasks, supervision and assessment be addressed within the broader review of the UG and PG curricula with a view to arriving at a standardised approach for placements across programmes.

3. Finally, in light of the above, the Panel suggests the School should develop and implement an ambitious teaching and learning strategy, to embrace fully approaches to the use of digital and technological resources, as a means to increase the effectiveness of student engagement.

In relation to the BCL (International) and BCL (Law and French) programmes, the psychological, academic and practical preparation of students for the year/semester abroad emerged in the course of the site visit. The Panel advises the School to promptly review these programmes with a view to optimising the student experience abroad in third year and ensuring effective alignment between the curricular choices while studying abroad and the students' final year.

#### 2.3.2 Assessment

A critical issue highlighted by UG students is inconsistency in relation to both continuous assessment and formal examinations, as well as examination/assignment guidance provided by lecturers. Students' concerns with feedback relate to both the type (often a grade without personalised constructive commentary) and the timing of it. Students reported that, because of delays in receiving feedback, they miss the opportunity for learning through formative feedback. In particular, mature students tended to find the transition to higher education particularly difficult and found assignment feedback initially unclear and their marks below their expectations, leading to increased risk of dropping out in first year. School staff also recognised that assessment approaches across programmes need to be harmonised. In light of this, the Panel recommends the School streamline and standardise assessment feedback mechanisms, including the possibility of availing of the opportunities offered by the new Virtual Learning Environment, Canvas.

#### 2.3.3 Learning resources (staffing, physical, technical, other)

Despite its refurbishment ten years ago, the School space and facilities in Aras Na Laoi appeared inadequate to the Panel in matching the international ambition of the School and the mainstreaming of blended teaching approaches. The building's spatial configuration and technological equipment is outdated for a 21<sup>st</sup> century, globally highly ranked Law School. The Panel proposes that the School immediately start planning to address the current inadequacy and deficit of space. Opportunities presented by the planned building of the new Cork University Business School, the University's commitment to provide the School of Law with new facilities (Strategic Plan 2017-22), as well as the potential support from Alumni and Development, should be explored by the School. However, the Panel is of the view that the issue of space cannot be addressed in isolation, because spatial issues are inextricably linked to pedagogical and technological aspects informing teaching and learning practices. In addition, the recent global challenge being wrought by the Covid19 pandemic demonstrates the necessity for a modern Law School to develop flexible online approaches to teaching, learning and assessment. These can obviate the enforced closure of physical spaces, as well as limiting the financial loss for the institution. Thus, the Panel urges the School to promptly develop a meta-strategy that addresses the pedagogy, technology and space nexus, in order to effectively inform the School's decisions about spatial expansion and planning. Such meta-strategy should underpin the Law School's planning choices, regardless of whether it opts for a completely new build or for a significant refurbishment of existing premises (Aras Na Laoi<sup>2</sup>).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> The UCC (Acting) Buildings Officer confirms that *Aras Na Laoi* it is not a protected structure but only an old building of architectural interest. This means that, although the external character of the building cannot be significantly altered (any external alteration would be subject to planning permission), significant internal structural alterations are possible, provided that they comply with current building regulations (to obtain the Fire Safety Certificate and a Disability Access Certificate).

In terms of technological resources, the Panel acknowledges the engagement of Law staff with Canvas, the newly introduced VLE, as well as widespread use of Panopto for lecture-recordings, which was clearly appreciated by students consulted during the site visit. Many flagged the learning benefits deriving from it, as well as personal difficulties some students experience in physically attending lectures. Thus, the Panel recommends the School to make a further step and develop a policy to record all lectures via Panopto. The recording of live lectures is only one step, of course: the recordings are useful digital assets, which, in the meta-strategy outlined above, could be further developed as learning resources across the school's curricula. This could be part of a comprehensive digital plan encompassing all School's activities, including not only teaching, learning and assessment but also administration, research, outreach, external engagement and internationalisation.

#### 2.3.4 Student support

Several students, especially PGs, spoke favourably of their experience of affirmative support and pastoral care culture at the School. Students may contact their lecturers for appointments outside of the designated office hours, which are published and communicated to students. The School operates a personal tutor scheme for all UGs and has a dedicated Disability Support Officer within the School as a key point of contact for students registered with the University Disability Support Service and/or struggling with a variety of health, learning and other difficulties.

Staff support is also evident from their regular contribution to student initiatives such as those organised by the UCC Student Law Society, UCC Green Campus, EnviroSoc and UCC Free Legal Advice Centre.

However, both UG and PG students would like to receive increased School support in digital and technological literacy (e.g. advice and training on academic referencing or bibliographic applications such as *Zotero*), coursework and novel types of assignments (blogs, creation of video resources, online chatrooms and so on). The Panel recommends that this is addressed by the School as part of its digital plan development.

#### 2.3.5 External links/community engagement/employability

During the site visit, it became evident to the Panel that the School enjoys considerable goodwill from legal professions, NGOs, alumni and international partner universities, because of its valuable service in terms of civic engagement, policy-contributions and the quality of the student education. During the site visit the Panel met with a representative group of external stakeholders, including employers, work placement hosts, alumni, representatives of national NGOs and academics from international higher-level institutions. It was evident that the School has significant impact locally, nationally and internationally, despite its modest size and resources. This is due to the exceptional efforts of its academic staff with policy contributions, pro-bono research and the provision of quality students and graduates for key legal professional services.

From an enhancement perspective, external stakeholders pointed to the need for the School to develop and integrate personal communications, soft and technical skills education within the curriculum (e.g. interview and CV-writing skills and commercial skills). They also agreed that the School needs to increase its visibility and advertise its LLM programmes to a wider international target market, to generate increased non-exchequer income. The Panel believes that the School's ongoing partnership with UCC Alumni & Development is vital to reach these goals. Hence, it urges the School to consolidate this collaboration by finalising and implementing its Alumni & Development Strategy.

#### 2.4 Staff

#### 2.4.1 Staff Profile

As mentioned in section 2.1.2, the School has 27 FTE academic staff, with 8.9 FTE professional services staff. Many of the academic faculty are involved in academic administration roles as Programme Directors or Co-Directors, Committee Chairs, Clinic Directors, as well as pursuing other activities and areas of responsibility (e.g. research, teaching and Learning, internationalisation, external and community engagement and so on). The Panel welcomes the School's plan to review its Workload Allocation Model to ensure fair, efficient and transparent workload distribution for all staff. This model should take account of the administrative responsibilities of academic staff, to ensure that they have sufficient time to engage in research, learning, and teaching activities to advance their own career objectives as well as delivering on the strategic priorities of the School.

The Panel welcomes the School's proposal to make a detailed case for securing additional academic staff for the School of Law. In order to achieve this, it urges the School to develop an evidence-based staffing plan that is closely connected with the overarching Strategic Plan and its outlined long-term developmental needs of the School.

Finally, the Panel also acknowledges the School's concerns regarding the reliance on and degree of integration of part-time staff. The School already recognises the need to provide more comprehensive guidance to part-time staff around teaching and learning within the School of Law to ensure the quality of the teaching carried out by hourly occasional and part-time lecturers and tutors. The Panel suggests that all lecturers and tutors (including PhD students) be encouraged to engage with training and mentoring opportunities provided within the School and the University on matters relating to Teaching and Learning and are advised of opportunities for professional development, as offered by CIRTL and beyond.

#### 2.4.2 Staff Development Objectives

The Panel became aware that the Academic Staff Mentoring Scheme has not operated systematically across the School over the last few years. Nonetheless, over 60% of the School's academic staff has gained a Learning and Teaching qualification offered by the University (e.g. CIRTL postgraduate certificate, diploma and/or Masters). The Panel believes that, with increasingly dynamic learning environments, staff need to remain current in the areas of Teaching & Learning & Assessment and Research; in this sense, the recommended development and implementation of a broad pedagogical strategy and correlated digital plan would be beneficial to the achievement of this goal. The Panel urges a swift review of the Academic Staff Mentoring Scheme to ensure that it returns to operate systematically across the School.

#### 2.5 Collaborative partnerships (e.g. joint programmes)

The Panel welcomes the existing close interdisciplinary collaborations of the School of Law with various other schools across the University, such as joint programmes and individual research specialisms; the School has a particularly important collaboration with colleagues in the College of Business and Law (e.g. Bachelor of Commerce and Executive BMA with CUBS), the College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences and the College of Medicine and Health, teaching modules in Social Work (BSW and MSW), Criminology (BA and MA), Planning and the Environment (MPlan), international development and Government (e.g. Constitution project) and in the areas of health law, ethics and technology.

The Panel urges the College of Business and Law to develop a comprehensive plan to ensure the smooth continuation and enhancement of collaboration between the two schools in the college on

joint programmes, research and other relevant matters, in light of the Cork University Business School (CUBS)'s planned move to a new, purpose built facility, and the emerging opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration, such as Fintech and Law, for example.

### Part 3: Commendations and Recommendations

#### 3.1 Commendations

In an ethos of quality enhancement, whereby good practice is acknowledged and disseminated, the Panel notes the following areas for commendation:

- Evidence of extensive external engagement at local, national and international level with significant contributions to policy and society and strong commitment to social justice;
- Impressive levels of external stakeholder satisfaction with the quality
  of the School of Law's staff, students and graduates' engagement and contributions;
- High levels of collegiality evident in the School, as well as synergy between the academic and professional services team;
- Excellent work ethic and collegial contributions to the University;
- Excellent engagement with Alumni & Development and established connection with alumni;
- Excellent examples of good Learning & Teaching practice presented at the 'Enhancing the Student Learning Experience' session;
- Excellent examples of pastoral care demonstrated by individual staff members;
- High reputation for excellent research in specific areas of Law.

#### 3.2 Recommendations to the School

#### 3.2.1 Strategy and Governance

- The Dean, in consultation with the Law Executive/School Management Team, to promptly finalize the School's new Strategic Plan; this plan should include an action plan with clear timelines and Key Performance Indicators to achieve its strategic goals that will cover the short-, medium-, and long-term vision and objectives of a modern, forward-looking and dynamic post-Brexit School that exploits the School's potential and aligns with the University Strategic Plan and Academic Strategy;
- The Dean, in consultation with the College Financial Analyst, should finalise the School's Business Plan to support the realisation of its Strategic Plan before the end of Semester One 2020/21; this business plan should include a clear staffing plan, an evidencebased resource requirements list (including space), with all plans clearly aligned with the relevant budgets / income projections;
- The School Manager to coordinate the setting up of a data collection and analysis project to support the running of the School's activities and evidence-based decision-making;
- The Dean, in conjunction with the School Curriculum Committee and the Director of Teaching and Learning, should review its programme offerings to align with the School's vision, aims and objectives, as well as the University Strategy, Academic Strategy and Strategy Plan;
- As planned, the Dean and the Governance Working Group should overhaul the School's governance structures before the beginning of the 2020/21 academic year, in line with its strategic vision including the appointment of clearly defined appropriate leadership roles;
- The Dean, in consultation with the Law Executive/School Management Team and the School's Marketing and Communications Officer, should take steps to ensure that an effective internal communications system is prioritised as part of the planned overhaul of its governance and communication structures and processes;
- The Dean and the School's Director of External Engagement and Alumni Relations should work with colleagues in Alumni & Development to promptly finalise the School's Alumni and Development Strategy, which is vital to achieving its strategic goals;

- The Dean and the School Management Team/Law Executive should move forward with developing a meta-strategy (and related plan) to provide the School of Law with new, innovative and more suitable facilities that address the pedagogy, space and technology nexus, in light of commitments made in the University's Strategic Plan 2017 – 2022;
- The Dean and Law Executive/School Management Team, in consultation with the School's IT Officer, should develop a comprehensive digital plan encompassing all the School's activities including research, administration, outreach and internationalisation, regulation, learning, teaching and assessment.

#### 3.2.2 Staffing

The Dean and the School Management Team/Law Executive should revisit the academic staff mentoring scheme to ensure it operates more systematically.

#### 3.2.3 Finance and sustainability

The Dean and the School Management Team needs to continue to develop its plans for income-generation through internationalisation and philanthropy, to ensure the long-term financial sustainability of the School.

#### 3.2.4 Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Student Experience

- The School's overall approach to teaching, learning and assessment should be reviewed in light of advancing digital learning initiatives.
- The School Curriculum Committee should ensure that professional skills are embedded in learning and assessment in all Law modules within the UG and PG curriculum.
- The Director of Teaching and Learning should encourage all academic staff and tutors (including PhD students) to engage with training and mentoring opportunities provided within the School and the University on matters relating to Teaching and Learning and with opportunities for professional development as offered by CIRTL.
- The Director of Teaching and Learning and the Clinical Education Coordinator should develop and implement a placement policy to broaden placement and other practice-based learning opportunities for students, taking into account the range of legal skills that are currently necessary in a variety of professional settings.
- The Vice-Dean for Student Affairs/Director of Learning and Teaching should ensure that there is a standardised best practice approach to obtaining, and responding to, student feedback and communicating this to students and ensure that any developments are fed back into the data collection and analysis project.
- BCL (International) and BCL (Law and French) Programme Directors should review the programmes, in conjunction with students, to ensure they are adequately prepared for and supported during their year abroad.
- School should re-establish a Teaching and Learning Committee for the start of the academic year 2020/21 to ensure that its ambition in teaching and learning is steered and implemented through its governance structures.

#### 3.3 Observations to the College

#### 3.3.1 Strategic

• The Head of College should work closely with the Dean and the School Management Team to achieve the School's strategic goals and help the School deliver on its vision (including securing extra-space for its expansion).

#### 3.3.2 Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Student Experience

• College Executive Management Committee should develop a comprehensive plan to ensure the smooth continuation and enhancement of collaboration on joint programmes, research and other relevant matters, following the planned move of Cork University Business School to its new building.

#### 3.4 Observations to the University

#### 3.4.1 Strategic

• University should follow through on the commitment for construction of improved facilities for the School of Law as laid out in the University Strategic Plan 2017-2022.

#### 3.4.2 Staffing

• University Senior Management Team should continue to maximise the opportunities, and streamline the process for, promotion.

# **Appendix A – Panel Profiles**

# Panel Profiles – Quality Review of the School of Law, UCC

Dr Suzanna Fran	Dr Suzanne Egan is Associate Professor in the Sutherland School of
Dr Suzanne Egan	Law at University College Dublin where she has just completed a four-
	year term as the first Director of the UCD Centre for Human Rights
	(2015 - 2019). She has published widely in the field of international
	human rights law, policy and education and was awarded a Higher
	Doctorate of Laws (LLD) by the National University of Ireland for her
	published work in the field. She teaches courses on International and
	European Human Rights Law and Human Rights Education at the Law
	School and was the recipient of a Teaching Excellence Award from
	UCD in 2017 for her sustained commitment to teaching excellence
	and student learning. Dr Egan was appointed by government to serve
	for two terms as a Member of the Irish Human Rights Commission and
	was also a member of the Joint Committee of the Irish Human Rights
	Commission and the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission
	(2001-2012). She has been invited on several occasions to brief
	members of the Irish Parliament on key issues of international human
	rights law and has provided advice to the Irish Constitutional
	Convention. She has been a Visiting Professor at De Paul Law School,
	Chicago, the University of Connecticut and a Visiting Fellow at
	Harvard Law School's Human Rights Program (2011-2012). She is
	currently an honorary Visiting Research Fellow at the University of
	Bristol's Human Rights Implementation Centre.
	Professor Paul Maharg is Distinguished Professor of Practice – Legal
Professor Paul Maharg	Education at Osgoode Hall Law School, Yorke University, Ontario,
	Canada; and part-time Professor of Practice, Newcastle University
	Law School, England. He is Honorary Professor of Law in the The
	Australian National University College of Law, Canberra, where he
	was Director of the PEARL (Profession, Education and Regulation in
	Law) centre. Earlier, at <u>Strathclyde Law School</u> , he was Director of the
	innovative Learning Technologies Development Unit, as well as
	Director of the JISC/UKCLE-funded project, SIMPLE (SIMulated
	Professional Learning Environment).
	He has published widely in the field of legal education, particularly in
	international and interdisciplinary educational design, and in the use
	of technology-enhanced learning. He is a Principal Fellow of the
	Higher Education Academy (2015), a National Teaching Fellow (2011),
	and a Fellow of the RSA (2009). He holds Visiting Professorships in
	Hong Kong University Faculty of Law, the Chinese University of Hong
	Kong Faculty of Law, and was 2014 Distinguished Professor of
	Teaching and Learning at Denver University Sturm College of Law. He
	is Consultant Editor of the European Journal of Law and Technology,
	and an Executive member of the British and Irish Law Education
	Technology Association ( <u>BILETA</u> ). He blogs at
	http://paulmaharg.com. Full CV at http://paulmaharg.com/bio/.
Professor Liam Marnane	Professor Liam Marnane received the B.E. Degree in Electrical
(Chair)	Engineering from University College Cork in 1984 and the D. Phil
	Degree from University of Oxford in 1989 studying test vector

	generation and design for test of VLSI designs. He was a lecturer in VLSI design at the School of Electronic Engineering Science, University of Wales, Bangor from 1989 to 1993. In 1992 he was a Visiting Researcher and Marie Cure Fellow at the <i>Institute de Recherche en Informatique et Systemes Aleatoires</i> , at the University of Rennes, France. In 1993 he was appointed as lecturer in Digital Signal Processing in the Department of Electrical & Electronic Engineering at University College Cork, as senior lecturer in 1999 and as Professor in 2014. In 1999 he was a visiting researcher to the Electronic Devices Research Group, Department of Physics, University of Linköping. He has been awarded the " <i>Giner de Los Ríos</i> " Visiting Research Fellowship of the University of Alcalá, Madrid, Spain, for 2007 and 2020. His research interests include <u>Biomedical Signal Processing</u> and digital design for <u>DSP</u> , coding and cryptography. He is PI in the SFI funded research (INFANT). He was Dean of Graduate Studies for UCC from 2013-2016 and Head of School of Engineering from
	2016-2019. He is a member of the IEEE and Engineers Ireland.
Ms Michele Power	Ms Michele Power is the Programme Manager for University College Cork's Quercus Talented Student Programme and a member of the University's Quality Enhancement Committee. She graduated with a BA in European Studies from UL in 1990 and then completed an MA by research in Modern History in UCC.
Mr Luke Watson	Mr Luke Watson is an MA-Student in the School of History at University College Cork. His research interests include Franco-Irish history and Irish political history. Through both his undergraduate and master's degrees, he has gained relevant critical thinking skills, which can be applied to the Peer Review process. Mr Watson is also an editor and proof-reader for a Wuhan-based Chinese philosopher and lecturer and works as a tutor with UCC's Skills Centre. He has also contributed to the latter's internal review process in the past. Both of these roles have provided Mr Watson with valuable experiences in inter-academic and interdisciplinary work. Finally, he is the sitting President of a local Cork hobby society and works in tandem with its Committee to review the society and deliver on the needs of its member base.
Dr Silvia Brandi	Dr Silvia Brandi joined UCC's Quality Enhancement Unit in February
(Review Coordinator)	<ul> <li>2019. Prior to this, in January 2018, she became a team member of the Student Records and Examinations Office, one of the University's core Professional Services, progressing from her previous post at the Boole Library (since December 2016).</li> <li>Having gained her Masters' Degree in Youth and Community Work (2006) and PhD Degree (2013) in Social Policy with UCC's School of Applied Social Studies, Dr Brandi worked as UCC university lecturer within the Higher Diploma in Social Policy programme for nearly four years.</li> <li>While pursuing her postgraduate studies at the UCC School of Applied Social Studies, she acquired other relevant public service experience by working for Cork's social services (HSE South/Tusla) for ten years, where she supported young people out of home and, later, assisted</li> </ul>

Tusla's Implementation Officer (Cork) with relevant research on
contemporary issues in Irish social work.
Her undergraduate (Honours) degree in Ancient Classics was awarded
by Padua University (Italy) in 2000. During her undergraduate studies
she also worked as a free-lance journalist.

# Appendix B – Peer Review Panel Site Visit Timetable

Tuesday 25 February:	The Panel arrives for a briefing from the Director of Quality Enhancement, followed by a meeting with the Head of School, School staff and a tour of the School facilities, as well as meeting undergraduate students. This is followed by a meeting via teleconference with international, national and local external stakeholders.
Wednesday 26 February:	The Panel meets with the Head of College, Programme Directors/ academic staff, relevant senior officers, internal stakeholders and postgraduate students. Panel commences drafting of report recommendations.
Thursday 27 February:	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 25 Febr	uary 2020
	Venue: Tower Room 2
10.00 - 10.45	Convening of Panel members (with tea/coffee).
	Briefing by Director of Quality Enhancement
10.45 – 11.30	Private Meeting of Panel
	To agree issues from the SER for further exploration, based on review feedback summaries from each reviewer and to set agenda topics for the individual site visit meetings.
11.30 - 12.30	Meeting with Dean, School of Law
	(to be joined by the School Manager at 12.10)
	5-minute introduction detailing:
	- how the School undertook its SER
	<ul><li>what it learned from the process</li><li>what it hopes to gain from the review</li></ul>
	Discussion regarding developments to date, strategic priorities of the School and overview of educational provision
12.30 - 13.15	Private Meeting of Panel & Lunch
	Panel agree issues to be discussed with School staff and undergraduate and postgraduate students.
13.15 – 13.30	Panel move to Seminar Room G27, O'Rahilly Building
13.30 - 14.30	Meeting with School Staff
	Small group discussion:
	What is working well in the School?

	What has potential? What should be improving?
	What is the one thing that needs to change?
	Feedback to entire group in final 20 minutes
	Venue: Seminar Room G27, O'Rahilly Building
14.30 - 14.45	Transition to Áras na Laoi, escorted by Vice-Dean (Student Affairs)
14.45 - 15.15	Tour of School Facilities
	Guided by Head of School
	Venue: Áras na Laoi
15.15 – 16.00	Meeting with Undergraduate Students, with representatives from:
	BCLB3 (Law & Business) BCLB4, (Law & Business) BCLF4 (Law & French) BCL (Evening Programme) BCL1 BCL 3 BCLB1 (Law & Business) BCLC4 (Clinical) BCLI4 (International) BCLI6A4
	Venue: Moot Court Room, Áras na Laoi
16.00 - 16.15	Transition to Tower Room 2
16.15 – 17.00	Private Meeting of the Panel (with tea/coffee)
17.00 - 18.00	Meeting with External Stakeholders
	Partner at Ronan Daly Jermyn, Cork CEO of EuroComply Data Protection Consultants, Dublin Professor of Law, Temple University, Beasley School of Law, USA Professor of Law and Government and a Senior Advisor to the Dean at Temple Law, Temple University, Beasley School of Law, USA Partner at Comyn Kelleher Tobin Solicitors, Cork Professor of Law and Senior Counsel in the Environmental and Natural Resources Law Clinic, Vermont Law School, USA Legal and Policy Officer, National Women's Council, Dublin The Panel meets via tele-conferencing call with key international, national and local external stakeholders, including members of the School's External Advisory Board and School Liaison Committee, professional firms, partnered foreign universities' representatives and other stakeholders as appropriate to discuss views on the
	quality of the Unit's collaboration, as well as its graduates and the education received

Wednesday 26	February 2020
	Venue: Tower Room 2
08.45 – 09.30	Convening of the Panel Panel agree issues to be discussed with Head of College and College Financial Analyst
09.30 – 10.30	Meeting with Head of College (to be joined by the College Financial Analyst at 10.10) Panel discuss College strategy and priorities. The links between College/School financial resource allocations process, staffing resources and infrastructure.
10.30 - 11.00	Tea/Coffee
11.00 – 12.15	<ul> <li>Meeting with Programme Directors/Chairs of Boards of Studies</li> <li>Chair of Curriculum Committee, Programme Director of EBCL (Evening Programme)</li> <li>Clinical Legal Education Coordinator (acting)</li> <li>Director of Graduate Studies</li> <li>Director of Taught LLMs</li> <li>Director of Undergraduate Programmes</li> <li>Programme Director BCL (International)</li> <li>Programme Director BCL (Law &amp; French)</li> <li>Programme Director for LLM (Environmental &amp; Natural Resources Law)</li> <li>Vice-Dean for Student Affairs</li> <li>Discussion on monitoring and review of programmes to include indicatively, programme &amp; module approval processes, student progression, External Examiner reports, external accreditation/recognition (where appropriate), supports for learners, placement (where appropriate) and, from 11.45, implementation of the Academic Strategy (2018-22)</li> </ul>
12.15 – 13.00	Enhancing Student Learning Experience Director of Research – 'Teaching Reasoning using principles from the Flipped Classroom method.' Director of the Child Law Clinic Co-Director Centre for Law and the Environment; Chair, School of Law Liaison Committee Lecturer - 'Experiential Learning in Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR): Developing a Curriculum for ADR Skills, Theory, and Practice.' Director of Teaching & Learning Opportunity for the School to showcase good practice and enhancements to the student learning experience

13.00 - 13.45	Lunch
13.45 - 14.30	Meeting with Postgraduate Students, with representatives from:
	LLB – 3 x student representatives LLM
	LLIVI LLMCRF (Children's Rights & Family Law) – 2 x student representatives
	LLMIHR (International Human Rights & Public Policy)
	LLMIPE (Intellectual Property and E-Law) PhD – 4 x student representatives
44.22 45.22	
14.30 – 15.00	Meeting with Deputy President & Registrar
	Discussion of UCC's Strategic Plan (2017-2022) and Academic Strategy (2018-2022)
15.00 - 15.30	Private Meeting of Panel
15.30 - 16.15	Meeting with Senior Officers and Key Internal Stakeholders of the University
	Vice President for Research and Innovation
	Vice President for Learning & Teaching
	Head of Development, Legacy & Major Gifts, College of Business & Law, Alumni & Development
	Head of Development, College of Business and Law, Alumni & Development
16.15 – 18.15	Private meeting of the Panel to commence drafting the report recommendations and commendations (with tea/coffee)
19.30	Review Panel Dinner
	Venue: Grill Room Restaurant, River Lee Hotel

Thursday 27 Feb	ruary
	Venue: Tower Room 2
08.45 - 09.15	Convening and Private Meeting of the Panel
09.15 - 10.00	Meeting with Head of School
	Clarification and discussions of main findings by Panel
10.00 - 11:30	Private Meeting of Panel to finalise drafting the report recommendations and commendations (with tea/coffee)
11.30 - 12:00	Panel formulate the closing presentation

Closing presentation to all staff, to be made by the Chair or other member(s) of Panel
Closing Presentation
Move to Áras na Laoi for Closing Presentation
Clo

## **Appendix C – Taught Programmes in the School of Law**

#### Level 8 Programmes

Bachelor of Civil Law (BCL) & Law Pathways BCL (Clinical) BCL (Law and French) BCL (Law and Irish) BCL (Law & Business) BCL (International) Evening BCL (EBCL) LLB Diploma in Common Law (European)

#### Level 9 Programmes

LLM LLM (Children's Rights and Family Law) LLM (Intellectual Property and E-Law) LLM (International Human Rights Law and Public Policy) LLM (Business Law) LLM (Business Law) LLM (Marine and Maritime Law) LLM (Environmental and Natural Resources Law) LLM (Practitioner) LLM (Criminal Justice) (not on offer in 2019/20)

# **Appendix D – Current Taught Programme Headcount Data**

Qualification		EU/International	2019/20				
	UG/PG		Current Headcount Year Year Year Year				
			1	2	3	4	Total
CK301 BCL (Hons)	UG	EU		43	58		101
CK301 BCL (Hons)	UG	International			1		1
CK307 BCL (Hons) Law and Business	UG	EU	39	23	26	27	115
CK307 BCL (Hons) Law and Business	UG	International	1		1		2
CK301 BCL (Hons) Clinical	UG	EU		18	14	21	53
CK301 BCL (Hons) Clinical	UG	BCLF	25	22	18	18	83
CK302 BCL (Hons) Law and French	UG	EU	24	22	18	18	82
CK302 BCL (Hons) Law and French	UG	International	1				1
CK304 BCL (Hons) Law and Irish	UG	EU	15	11	6	9	41
CK301 BCL (Hons) International	UG	EU		38	30	29	97
CK301 BCL (Hons) International	UG	International					
CK301 Law Pathways	UG	EU	108				108
CK301 Law Pathways	UG	International	4				4
CK301 BCL (Hons) Evening	UG	EU	41		26	3	70
CK301 BCL (Hons) Evening	UG	International				-	
CKL13 LLB	PG	EU	15	14			29
CKL13 LLB	PG	International		1			1
CKL32 LLB	PG	EU		3	1	1	5
CKL14 LLM	PG	EU	2	5	-	-	2
CKL14 LLM	PG	International					
CKL33 LLM	PG	EU	1				1
LLM (Business Law)	PG	EU	2				2
LLM (Business Law)	PG	International	3				3
LLM (Child and Family Law)	PG	EU	5	1			1
	PG	EU	6	L			6
CKL29 LLM (Children's Rights and Family Law) CKL29 LLM (Children's Rights and Family Law)	PG	International	1				1
	PG			4			
CKL30 LLM (Children's Rights and Family Law)	-	EU	2	4			6
CKL48 LLM (Environmental and Natural Resource Law)	PG	EU	2				2
CKL48 LLM (Environmental and Natural Resource Law)	PG	International	-	2	2		10
CKL49 LLM (Environmental and Natural Resource Law)	PG	EU	5	3	2		10
CKL27 LLM International Human Rights Law and Public Policy	PG	EU	8				8
CKL27 LLM International Human Rights Law and Public							0
Policy	PG	International	4				4
CKL28 LLM International Human Rights Law and Public							
Policy	PG	EU	1	1			2
CKL16 LLM (Intellectual Property and e-Law)	PG	EU	2				2
CKL16 LLM (Intellectual Property and e-Law)	PG	International	1				1
CKL35 LLM (Intellectual Property and e-Law)	PG	EU	1	2			3
CKL46 LLM (Marine and Maritime Law)	PG	EU	2				2
CKL46 LLM (Marine and Maritime Law)	PG	International	1				1
CKL47 LLM (Marine and Maritime Law)	PG	EU	1	2			3
CKL23 LLM (Practitioner) (Part time)	PG	EU	1	1			2

2019/20 School of Law Current Programme Headcount Data (source: Admissions Office, December 2019