

Quality Enhancement Plan

ASSERT Centre

2025

FOR COMPLETION BY QEU	
Date of Peer Review visit: 19 th – 21 st January 2021	Head of Unit: Professor Leonie Heskin
Link to Panel Report published on QEU website: https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/qualityenhancementunit/reports/comh/ASSERTCentre-PeerReviewGroupReport2020-21.pdf	Date QEP considered by Quality Enhancement Committee: 23 rd January 2025

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1	Identification, in conjunction with the College of Medicine and Health, of a clear developmental trajectory	Since the Quality review was conducted in 2021, there have been a number of developments in ASSERT which help connect the centre to its communities in both	Director of ASSERT	Funding secured	Ongoing	A new director ASSERT and professor (Scale 2) of Simulation based education was appointed in January 2024. The Director has been in the post for 12 months now and here are the

¹ May include actions planned within the unit or those that require interface with other parts of the university

² E.g. Head of School, School Manager, all staff, specific committees etc

³ Resources – the financial or human resources required to implement the recommendation

⁴ Interim milestone dates can be included here (e.g. within 6 months, within 12 months, within 3 years etc.)

⁵ To be completed as part of follow-up 12-15 months post publication of QEP - Recognising the need to reflect on the effectiveness of actions undertaken, and to what extent the actions have achieved their intended outcome

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	for the Centre, which addresses questions of an appropriate reconfiguration, a route to competitive distinction and future sustainability, based on its potential in its two closely interconnected operational domains - education and training and research and innovation, and aligned with recent innovation developments within the region.	<p>education & training and research & innovation. These developments are driving activity within the Centre and have occurred in healthcare with the HSE and in industry.</p> <p>Training and education:</p> <p>1. grow PG simulation training in collaboration with SSWHG. (SSWHG Lead appointed in collaboration with CoMH, national simulation strategy launched, staff in region undergoing certificate in simulation in NUIG). Simulation coordinator (f/t) appointed to implement new training initiatives across SSWHG. 2. develop new and innovative approaches to skills development for Life Sciences industry. Funded through HCI, iEd Hub, activities</p>				<p>observations of effectiveness/impact over the course of the year.</p> <p>Over the last year there has been an emphasis on the education and training development in ASSERT. The centre director engaged directly with all heads of school to assess up-to-date needs. In addition, a lunch time event was arranged in ASSERT for the faculty of the schools of all 6 undergraduate schools in the college of Medicine and Health. As a result of assessing school needs, costings were reduced in ASSERT and more simulation input offered. The medical school extended their simulation offering to the 4th and 3rd years in addition to the established 5th year engagement.</p> <p>SSWHG Lead appointed in collaboration with CoMH, and the simulation coordinator worked extensively with all hospitals in the region and concentrated on in-hospital in-situ simulation initiatives, with the co-ordinator enabling delivery of multiple interprofessional simulation sessions. Both posts are finished now while we wait for restructuring of HSE posts in the Simulation field, in conjunction with the National simulation office.</p>

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		<p>embedded in ASSERT, iEd team accommodated in ASSERT</p> <p>3. Continue UG contribution</p> <p>4. Continue courses with industry and strengthen links</p> <p>These actions are described below, the research focus will be sustained and grown once the extended teaching and training activity is embedded and inclusion of academics in the center broadened.</p> <p><i>Healthcare developments with HSE</i> Funding of €410,000 has been secured by the Head of College to support the development of Simulation Based Training across the College and in the South/South West Hospital Group (SSWHG).</p> <p>This includes recruitment of a Clinical Lead, for Simulation Based Training for the SSWHG (0.2 FTE) and one Simulation Co-ordinator (1 FTE) post, in the ASSERT Centre, College of Medicine and Health to</p>				<p>The majority of industry lead courses occurred in conjunction with Stryker research and development (average 5 courses per year) and also Smith and Nephew (0.5 courses per year).</p> <p>Both fellowships of two-year duration, focused on innovative technology in neurosurgery and obstetrics. These projects were successful and are now complete.</p> <p>ASSERT and iEd hub lead the Digital Academy which is instrumental in developing the VR and immersive simulation suite. The VR suite now serves 20 students with individual head sets and 5 faculty viewing big screens. The immersive suit is now complete and a</p>

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		<p>support the strategic development of Simulation Based Training.</p> <p>ASSERT is a member of the HSE digital health living labs network. Members of this network function act as testbeds for new digital health technologies. The core objective of this network is to look to accelerate the co-creation and adoption of digital health solutions in Ireland in collaboration with healthcare providers and digital health technology industries. The first such project with ASSERT is up and running in Remote Patient Monitoring Projects with the HSE and Med Tech Industry. Other projects are in the pipeline.</p> <p><i>Industry</i></p> <p>Stryker has funded 2 ASSERT research fellowships at €100,000 each. Each fellowship is of two-year duration. The research focus is on innovative technology in neurosurgery and obstetrics.</p> <p>Both fellows have been appointed</p> <p>The iED Hub project (€8.7m) provides innovative teaching to the pharmaceutical and MedTech</p>				<p>recent update in its software and a pilot trial test day for running a scenario with a digital manikin was successful and the suite is ready for use.</p> <p>The two micro credential lead by ASSERT's clinical liaison officer "Fundamentals of Human Structure and Fundamentals of Neuroanatomy" are ongoing.</p>

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	As part of this, due consideration should be given to establishing what is the 'added value' that the ASSERT Centre wishes to attach to its unique approach to any activity and/or collaboration it pursues	<p>industry and is now located in ASSERT. ASSERT will lead the Digital Academy which is a key part of the iED HUB project. The project will use the advanced facilities in ASSERT to develop innovative learning. The project will develop micro credentials in line with iED HUB academic activity.</p> <p>In terms of education and training ASSERT provides a leading edge facility with a concentration of high fidelity simulation equipment and capacity for advanced simulation. In a region with a high density of life sciences companies, the advantage of having such a well-equipped facility for SBT is evident, no one stakeholder on its own could justify the resource. The potential for research is clear and will grow once the education and training aspects of ASSERT are consolidated.</p> <p>ASSERT has developed research in the past and there is an excellent opportunity to grow research activity in the future. Through its</p>				<p>The ASSERT centre has concentrated on training and education over the last 12 months to enable increased effective medical simulation-based training and increasing patient safety. There has been a 75% increase in external courses in the period 1/10/2023 to 30/9/2024 as compared with the period 1/10 2022 to 30/9/2023.</p> <p>Assert has secured two National Simulation grants (one in collaboration with the school of nursing).</p> <p>ASSERT has also secured an NDTP development funding for five "train the trainer courses" in developing skills to develop and debrief both procedural and non-technical skills courses. This will</p>

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		close links with academic, health and industry partners nationally and internationally. ASSERT has the capacity to enable clinicians, industry, and academics across a broad spectrum of healthcare research, to design, develop, deploy and trial innovative and disruptive healthcare solutions, in a simulated healthcare environment that deliver real world solutions for healthcare problems in the developed and developing world.				<p>enable a bigger pool of faculty to facilitate ASSERT and in-hospital courses.</p> <p>After careful observation of team dynamics, undergraduate, postgraduate and industry requirement, there will be a reconvening of the Strategic Advisory Review Group (SARG) in 2025.</p> <p>After scoping the activities and the potential of the centre over the last 12 months, the plan will be to road test a new 3-year plan with the group. This plan will align with UCC 2023-2028 Strategic Plan and will be accompanied by a SMART business plan with agreed deliverables.</p>
2	Establishment, in conjunction with the College of Medicine and Health, of a Strategic Advisory Review Group to report indicatively within three months and composed of national and international experts in the field (including Tyndall counterparts) along with	The College has established a Strategic Advisory Review Group (SARG). The members are as follows: Prof Helen Whelton (Chair, Head of College of Medicine and Health, Interim Director of ASSERT, Chair of College Executive, Member of University Leadership Team)	Director of ASSERT	Under review	By end Q2 2022	

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	representatives from the College Executive and University's UMT to identify and clearly define a framework for:	<p>Prof Dara Byrne (Professor of Simulation Education , University of Galway)</p> <p>Dr Paul Galvin (Head of ICT for Health Strategic Programmes, Tyndall National Institute, UCC)</p> <p>Prof Paul Ross (Director APC Microbiome Ireland, UCC)</p> <p>Dr Pat Henn (Director of Research and Education, ASSERT Centre UCC)</p> <p>Mr Declan Fox (Entrepreneur)</p> <p>Dr Simon Edgar (Director of Medical Education/Anaesthetist, NHS Lothian , Scotland)</p> <p>Advisors to the Board:</p> <p>Aine Foley (Head of Finance, College of Medicine and Health, Member of College Executive)</p>				

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	<p>The ASSERT Centre's raison d'être, correlated with a clear formulation of its core aims, objectives, remit and scope (deciding the balance</p> <p>between its two foci – education & training and research & innovation);</p> <p>Clear and focused values, mission and vision, anchored on a clearly defined identity</p> <p>Appropriate structures and processes of governance, with clearly defined roles,</p>	<p>Susan Rafferty-McArdle (College Manager and Member of College executive)</p> <p>Anna Toner (College Administrative Team, Member of College Executive)</p> <p>The Advisory Board's purpose is to review and advise on the strategic direction and performance of ASSERT and to support ASSERT to achieve its purpose.</p> <p>The board is a non-statutory skills based board that provides advice to the Head of College. It is not a decision making body and has no governing legislation. The advisory board will meet three times in its first year and twice per year thereafter with adhoc communication in the intervening periods. The period of initial appointment shall be for 3 years. The first 2 meetings have taken</p>				

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	responsibilities a and reporting lines.	<p>place on 04/07/2022 and 16/02/2023.</p> <p>The terms of reference and undertakings of the SARG are as follows:</p> <p>To advise the Head of College regarding the strategic direction of the ASSERT Centre</p> <p>To advise on the best use of the allocated budget and resources of the ASSERT Centre</p> <p>To provide an overview of trends and opportunities in the wider environment</p> <p>To identify any growth initiatives which would benefit ASSERT</p> <p>To review the activities of the Centre as reported to ensure they are</p>				

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	A sustainable three-year plan, aligned with the University's Strategic Pivot UCC 2022 and accompanied by a S.M.A.R.T.	<p>aligned with the agreed strategic direction</p> <p>To receive and react to reports from the Director of ASSERT and to assess the progress of ASSERT towards its viability and sustainability goals</p> <p>To disclose and manage any conflicts of interest</p> <p>To adhere to confidentiality and non-disclosure of any commercially sensitive information which may arise within the Advisory Board papers or meetings</p> <p>Building on the first 2 meetings, the third meeting will focus on the drafting of the mission and vision for ASSERT along with a sustainable 3 year plan, aligned with UCC 2023-2028 Strategic Plan and</p>				

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	<p>(Specific, Measurable Achievable Realistic Timely) business plan with agreed deliverables</p> <p>The Strategic Advisory Review Group should give consideration to leadership requirements to drive the ASSERT Centre forward in the effective formulation and implementation of the deliverables included in the Centre's Business Plan. In particular, it is likely that this will require the identification and appointment of a full-time focused Executive to complement the existing team, proactively leading the outreach along both axes of a revitalised plan. This person is seen by the Panel as business oriented, proactive, with credible gravitas and</p>	<p>accompanied by a SMART business plan with agreed deliverables</p> <p>The National Simulation Strategy will help inform the advisory group.</p> <p>The College proposes to recruit a full time Professor of Simulation Based Training/Director of ASSERT. The configuration of this post has been discussed with the advisory group and in greater detail with Prof Dara Byrne NUIG.</p> <p>This post is currently due for submission to the University Leadership Team for approval and augments the role previously held by the Director of Research and Education , Dr Pat Henn, who is due to retire in the Summer of 2023. While the director will not of necessity be a clinician, it is proposed that the clinical leadership needs will be discipline specific and that at least three clinical leads will be affiliated to the ASSERT centre.</p>				

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	<p>filling the role of Director of Strategic Development, as part of the triumvirate with the two existing directors.</p> <p>Ultimately, if successful, such a person, given her/his full-time focus, would subsume responsibility for the Centre's continuing operations, as they evolve and morph in line with the future strategy for the ASSERT Centre.</p>	The first of these is Prof Marietta Inaucci who is leading on Endoscopy training to meet local, national and international demand for advanced endoscopy training.				
3	Should the decision be to embrace a strong research and innovation focus, then the Strategic Advisory Review Group should consider identifying and attracting a leading PI or world-class clinician, to be associated with ASSERT, with a	The recommendation to appoint strong clinical leadership for ASSERT is accepted. In the interim, the Head of College has taken over as the Interim Director of Assert in order to provide continuity leadership to ensure good governance, to have direct engagement with the work of ASSERT and to contribute directly to	Director of ASSERT	Under review	By end Q2, 2023	The Head of College had taken over as the Interim Director of Assert up to December 2023. The new director commenced their appointment on January of 2024.

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	strong research background and perhaps formally situated within the College of Medicine and Health.	<p>the assessment of ASSERT's future potential.</p> <p>The work of the ASSERT Centre has evolved since the Quality Review under the direction of the HoC. The three distinct teaching and training strands of the work: UG training, PG training and Industry have crystallized with engagement of the iEd Hub, Industry partners and the HSE in addition to accommodation of UG teaching. The appointment of the new director and clinical leads will allow ASSERT to build on this solid foundation and increase its R&I output and impact.</p> <p>The Centre is looking to strengthen its link with the Office of VP for Research and Innovation to progress its R&I activities. Both the Director of iEd Hub and the SSWHG simulation lead have been included as part of the fortnightly planning and progress meetings for ASSERT.</p>				
4	Key objectives for the ASSERT Centre in the next	The HoC and Interim Director of ASSERT is also the Chief Academic Officer for the SSWHG. the CAO	Director of ASSERT & Dr Pat Henn	Funding Secured	Ongoing	The Head of College had taken over as the Interim Director of Assert up to December 2023. The new director commenced their appointment on January of 2024.

			(Who retired in April 2023)			NDTP selected SSWHG to pilot a region wide Education and Training initiative and are funding a
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	<p>three years should include:</p> <p>Working towards establishing strong and durable links with the HSE and the SSWHG</p> <p>Enhancing the Centre's attraction of and collaboration with research-active professionals, including those based in Tyndall Institute, proactively outreaching to existing and future collaborators and clients.</p>	<p>group commissioned a national strategic plan and implementation framework for SBT. The NDTP have given funding for SBT which has been matched by SSWHG. As a consequence Dr Rory O'Brien (paediatric emergency consultant CUH) has begun his work (20% buy out) as the Clinical Lead for Simulation based training in SSWHG, reporting to the CAO/HoC/Assert interim director and is actively engaged with ASSERT personnel to plan and formulate Post Graduate training for the South/South West Hospital Group. A simulation co-ordinator Ms Stephanie Ryng has been appointed to support the implementation and delivery of this plan.</p> <p>In addition, the NDTP has selected SSWHG to pilot a region wide Education and Training initiative and are funding a (50% buy out) consultant Prof John Cooke as Director of Education and Training.</p>	Director of ASSERT and Dr Pat Henn	Core Budget	ongoing	<p>(50% buy out) consultant Prof John Cooke as</p> <p>Director of Education and Training. Prof Cooke has been instrumental in enabling simulation initiatives in all hospitals in the form of equipment and room refurbishment through various funds for example. After submitting an application by ASSERT in 2024 this enabled the "train the trainer courses" in ASSERT.</p> <p>There are fresh new exploratory talks with Tyndall in 2024, assessing future collaboration projects with them and the College of Science, Engineering & Food Science UCC. Other relevant entities, such as the Cork University Dental School and Hospital and the Department of Digital Humanities will be explored in the future for collaborative opportunities.</p> <p>ASSERT continues to benefit from the investment in iED as its activities feed into the iEd response to industry education needs. ASSERT are leading the Digital Academy with iED HUB. And are developing micro credentials in line with iED HUB academic activity.</p> <p>ASSERT director continues to work closely with the National Simulation office and is engaging with a number of national</p>

						meeting for the office in the last 12 months.
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		<p>Prof Cooke reports to Prof Whelton in her CAO role Prof Cooke has now established an E&T faculty with representation from each of the 10 hospitals in the group and with admin support. The SBT activity led by Dr O'Brien feeds into this Pilot.</p> <p>ASSERT is now a HSE affiliated Digital Laboratory and has engaged in Remote Patient Monitoring Projects with the HSE and Med Tech Industry.</p> <p>Stryker fellowships are now in place and it is anticipated that further projects around innovative instruments and technology are expected to emerge over the coming 12 months.</p> <p>ASSERT is liaising with Tyndall National Institute via the Senior Technology Manager re potential collaborative projects in the healthcare domain, including application of innovative technology. The first planned</p>				5 HSE clinical staff have completed the post graduate diploma in Healthcare Simulation and Patient Safety at NUIG.

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		<p>project is in development with a Senior Scientist at Tyndall.</p> <p>The iEd Hub and the secondment of an Clinical Industrial Liaison Officer to ASSERT funded by course income is having a strong impact of the building of positive relations with industry.</p>				

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	Establishing a new configuration to enable implementation of the agreed objectives, direction and business priorities of the Centre, such as an effective communication, marketing and PR Strategy to ensure it projects a coherent identity, with a clearly recognisable brand, and communicates a consistent message on its added value, reaching out to the various, actual or potential, internal and external stakeholders, locally, nationally and internationally and raising awareness of the Centre's activities, achievements, projects, collaborative	<p>ASSERT benefits from the investment in iED as its activities feed into the iEd response to industry education needs. The partnership benefits from the marketing and communication activities of iEd.</p> <p>The appointment of a new f/t director will support the development of marketing and communications as the offerings of ASSERT become more distilled and resourced</p> <p>The new configuration will be informed by SARG and with the Office of VP for Research and Innovation.</p>	<p>Director of ASSERT</p> <p>Director of Research and Education – ASSERT</p> <p>Manager CoMH</p> <p>Financial Officer CoMH</p>	Core Budget	Ongoing	

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⁶ E.g. Head of School, School Manager, all staff, specific committees etc



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	opportunities, while ensuring its profile and reputation are raised.					
	<p>Fully exploring the idea of establishing a National Simulation Centre of Ireland, as outlined in the SER, similar in concept to the Health Innovation Hub Ireland, in collaboration with the other relevant academic centres. This exploration should also detail the strategic opportunities, benefits and challenges that such development could present.</p> <p>Fully exploring the idea of establishing a National</p>	<p>While awaiting the implementation of the HSE's National Simulation Training Plan for healthcare staff, ASSERT will recruit a director of SBT, support the newly appointed SSWHG Clinical Lead for Simulation Based Training and the Simulation Coordinator, to support the strategic development of Simulation Based Training across the College of Medicine and Health, and the SSWHG. The interim director of ASSERT is actively engaged with SSWHG to ensure alignment of SSWHG and ASSERT activity on SBT</p> <p>Funding has also been provided for 5 HSE clinical staff to undertake the post graduate diploma in Healthcare Simulation and Patient Safety at</p>	<p>Director of ASSERT/CAO SSWHG/ Dr Pat Henn</p> <p>Dr Pat Henn</p>	<p>Funding secured from SSWHG for local implementation</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>2 years</p>	

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	Simulation Centre of Ireland, as outlined in the SER, similar in concept to the Health Innovation Hub Ireland, in collaboration with the other relevant academic centres. This exploration should also detail the strategic opportunities, benefits and challenges that such development could present.	<p>NUIG. Two further staff will be supported in the next year.</p> <p>ASSERT are leading the Digital Academy of iED HUB. This will develop micro credentials in line with iED HUB academic activity</p>		Equipment funding and staffing from iED HUB		
5	The Centre should prioritise professional career development of its staff and, in this context, the Director should ensure that the periodic Staff Performance Management and Development review is utilized effectively to ensure that staff are aware of the criteria and avail of guidance in developing their professional development and career.	Ongoing individual meetings with ASSERT staff re Staff Performance Management and Development. Ongoing on an annual basis or at the request of a member of staff.	Dr Pat Henn	Nil	Ongoing on annual basis or at request of a staff member	Staff Performance Management engagements with all full time and part time ASSERT staff have been launched in December of 2024 and have started this January 2025.

For completion by Unit		
Head of Unit: Professor Leonie Heskin	Signature: 	Date: 21.1.2025
Head of College/Functional Area: Professor Helen Whelton	Signature: 	Date: 21.1.2025