



UCC
University College Cork, Ireland
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

Fheabhsú Cáilíochta
Quality Enhancement

QUALITY ENHANCEMENT UNIT



THEMATIC REVIEW
TEACHING AND ASSESSING WITH TECHNOLOGY
PEER REVIEW PANEL REPORT

APRIL 2021

"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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Thematic Review

Context and Scope

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

Specific features of Thematic Review include:

- Applying an institutional lens, holistic approach: policy to practice
- Scope is horizontal: multiple stakeholders in an activity
- External expert panel
- Strategically aligned and sponsored

Teaching and Assessing with Technology

Context

The Thematic Review of Teaching and Assessing with Technology is being commissioned by the Vice-President for Learning & Teaching and has the support of the two other senior managers with responsibility for this general area: The Director of Information Services & University Librarian and the Director of IT Services.

The overall purpose of the review is underpinned by a commitment to pedagogic excellence and development in relation to teaching and assessing with technology. The scope of the review does not include evaluation/ advice on the best-fit technological solutions for specific solutions for teaching and assessment needs. The emphasis is on the most appropriate options to maximise and coordinate strategically the existing leadership, expertise, academic governance, and overall resources for the widest possible benefit of the academic and professional community of the University.

Scope

The overall purpose of this exercise is to evaluate through international peer review, options for maximising the organisational, governance and decision-making structures required for strategic steering and overall coordination for teaching and assessing with technology.

It is expected that the Review Team will address the following questions:

1. Strategic Leadership for Teaching and Assessing with Technology.
Clarify how it might be interpreted and enacted in terms of a distributed structure of contributing units, to maximise strategic effectiveness.
2. Academic governance and decision-making.
An evaluation of the current range of sub-committees with an interest in Teaching with Technology and identification of the best mechanisms for effective governance and decision-making in alignment with strategic directions, including the possibility for differentiating between decision-making groups and general interest groups.

3. Organisational aspects.
An appraisal of current organisational and structural arrangements with recommendations on models for optimising integration and overall service alignment.
4. Expertise
Based on evolving international practices, what structures for the development of pedagogic expertise and the delivery of effective support for teaching and assessment with technology should the University consider?

Specific Outcomes

It is anticipated that the outcomes of the Review will provide peer advice with reference to international good practice on options to develop UCC's arrangements for the development and support of Teaching and Assessing with Technology. Specifically, these will include:

- Recommendations
- Commendations
- Signposts to international good practice and options for further institutional benchmarking

Outputs

The anticipated outputs from the Thematic Review of Teaching and Assessing with Technology will be as follows:

- a) Commendations on existing good practice currently in operation in UCC which merit wider dissemination
- b) Recommendations on the optimal organisational structure and configuration to provide strategic leadership and management capability/capacity for Teaching and Assessment with Technology
- c) Recommendations on strategic streamlining of governance arrangements, policy development etc.
- d) Recommendations on strategic good practice for Teaching and Assessment with Technology that can enable distinctive high-quality student learning

Panel Report

Review Methodology

A review team of senior international experts was appointed as detailed in **Appendix 1**. Following the appointment of the Review Panel, briefing meetings with the Vice President for Teaching and Learning and representatives from the Quality Enhancement Unit were organised. 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 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
- Virtual Site visit
- Report publication and action planning

Documentary Submission

The documentary submission was organised by the Quality Enhancement Unit and reflected the horizontal scope of the review from strategy to policy to practice and implementation. As the focus of the review was thematic, there was not a single self-evaluation document, rather there was a compendium of documentation which aimed to provide the Review Panel with background to UCC's strategic and operational context. A briefing document outlining the scope of the review was provided to the Review Panel, along with a synoptic document from the Office of the Vice-President for Learning & Teaching outlining the current strategic context and organisational arrangements including links to relevant institutional strategy and policy documents.

In order to provide the Review Panel with some self-evaluation material, a series of short evaluative accounts (300 words) addressing current strengths and areas for development were invited from across the University.

In addition the Review Panel were provided helpful documents from the Student Union based around their survey of students in the pandemic and the SWOT analysis undertaken as part of the self-evaluation process.

Virtual site visit

As a result of ongoing public health guidelines nationally and internationally the site visit was conducted as a virtual visit using MS Teams. The timetable of meetings for the review site visit was developed and managed by the Quality Enhancement Unit. Consequently, the Review site visit ran from 20th – 28th of April 2021 with meetings sequenced in daily short blocks to allow full engagement with a wide range of internal and external stakeholders and to manage the diminishing returns of extended video-conferencing which could compromise the integrity of the review. A copy of the review timetable can be found in **Appendix 2**.

Conduct of the Site Visit

The Review Panel was very pleased with the manner in which the review was supported and the way in which colleagues at UCC engaged with the process. The Panel had appropriate documentation before the Review started to allow for a good sense of the area being reviewed. In addition, the Panel was able to ask for more information where it was felt to be helpful, and this was provided very willingly. As such, the Panel was well prepared before the process of review and was aided throughout too.

The initial, pre-review meeting of the Panel with the Director of Quality ensured that everyone understood the nature, purpose and scope of the review. Clearly, the inability to travel to Cork and act as a regular review panel was always going to make this a different type of review. However, the organisation of the timetable and the management of people to attend the meetings was excellent and the Panel would like to thank Siobhan Lavery in the Quality Office for her work in ensuring this happened. In addition, extra meetings were arranged to help the Panel which was very greatly appreciated. The Panel agreed areas for discussion before each meeting and then opened the dialogue with colleagues in each case. The spirit in which colleagues engaged with the panel was very positive and constructive meaning that the atmosphere was one of exploration of what “could be done” as opposed to “what isn’t right” or “can’t be done”. For this again the Panel is most grateful to colleagues at UCC.

Finally, there were no problems at all with the use of Microsoft Teams to broker the meetings over the days of the review.

Overall Analysis

It is clear that, in line with all higher education institutions, the pandemic had a significant impact on the way in which teaching and learning has taken place over the last year at UCC. The use of digital technologies to allow a continuation of activity despite the lockdowns and restrictions on access to the campus, has offered a highly timely moment at which to reflect on what worked well, what can be maintained, what needs to be discarded and how the vision for digital education will develop in the short and medium term. There is much that has been learned over the past year and from which future directions can be set. As such, the review was undertaken to provide a view on some of these aspects to help colleagues at UCC engage in addressing key questions over the coming months.

The Panel’s findings are offered in the spirit of help and guidance although based on a snapshot gained during the review. The Panel hopes that the Recommendations will help create a constructive agenda for developing digital education at UCC and build upon much of what the Panel sees as being worthy of commendation.

Overview

Commendations

1. The response to the pandemic was very impressive and reflected a collective effort of staff and students
2. There appear to be very good working relationships across UCC albeit often personal rather than designed
3. UCC 2022 provides a clear framework within which to move the digital education agenda forward

4. There is a good central University resource base to support digital education and includes amongst other aspects, a research base (CIRTL), practical and direct help (CDE, Library) and technical support (IT)
5. There are good examples of capturing staff and student experiences, as well as sharing these good ideas so as to provide support to others
6. There is a willingness to engage in innovation such as through digital badges and micro-credentialling which will be of benefit not only to UCC but also to the wider sector in Ireland and possibly beyond
7. There is good use of other agencies and frameworks beyond UCC (e.g. EUA) to help shape thinking
8. The Student Union is very engaged and there is a clear desire to help shape the future direction and engagement in digital education after the pandemic

Recommendations

1. Strategic Leadership

- Determine who is the key senior leader responsible for digital education
- Create a digital education plan to guide future activity
- Define learning in the future university
- Capitalise on opportunities for growth

2. Academic Governance and Decision Making

- Review the role of L&T Committee
- DEAG to continue but with an altered remit
- Bring in external voices
- Workload management needs exploring

3. Organisational Aspects

- Signposting: A Single Point of Help Online
- Signposting: Creation of a Physical Hub
- Focus on core technologies
- Clarity of Roles

4. Expertise

- Need to maximise expertise and spread more evenly
- Create Digital champions amongst academic staff
- Establish a flexible team approach to working with Schools
- Amplify the student voice
- Roadshow to invigorate UCC 2022 and digital education

Commendations

1. The response to the pandemic was very impressive and reflected a collective effort of staff and students

It is clear that there was a very rapid pivot to the provision of materials online when the pandemic – and then lockdown – hit the country. What was apparent was the strong

collective will to enable the pivot as best as possible to support student learning and to do so through collaboration and sharing of ideas. Academic and professional services colleagues, along with student representatives sought to enable as smooth a transition as possible which was a remarkable collective effort.

2. There appear to be very good working relationships across UCC albeit often personal rather than designed

Throughout the conversations with staff and senior leaders, a very strong sense of collegiality in endeavor came through with good and close working relationships. Often this was due to the people involved rather than because roles called for such engagement. This is a huge strength for the University but equally could be a risk if role-holders change and others need to pick up the work but without a clear framework. Nonetheless, such collegiality is one of the major reasons why the pivot was so successful.

3. UCC 2022 provides a clear framework within which to move the digital education agenda forward

The strategic direction outlined in UC 2022 is clear and offers very specific pointers for digital education under three of the five pillars. That is a very important reference point against which future planning and development needs to be benchmarked. It also helps embed digital education within the wider University strategy meaning it is not a bolt on activity. However, ensuring all colleagues are aware and understand UC 2022 is an important underpinning of progressing the digital education agenda.

4. There is a good central University resource base to support digital education and includes amongst other aspects, a research base (CIRTL), practical and direct help (CDE, Library) and technical support (IT)

The role of central teams to support academic colleagues in their teaching appears very strong. The panel heard of some excellent examples of the work being carried out in these units and they can potentially provide a very solid basis for plans for digital education particularly if they combine to share their expertise.

5. There are good examples of capturing staff and student experiences, as well as sharing ideas, and using this to support others and include:
 - The Pandemic Pedagogy survey
 - TEACH Digi to encourage sharing of practice
 - Student chat functions and staff online community during the pandemic
 - The websites in the “Keep Teaching” family
 - Library staff involvement in digital projects
6. There is a willingness to engage in innovation such as through digital badges and micro-credentialling which will be of benefit not only to UCC but also to the wider sector in Ireland and possibly beyond

The Panel welcomed the commitment to a very proactive engagement with innovation in the digital agenda, with particular note being made of the work with micro-credentialing and digital badging. Such a commitment and the learning from the work therein, will be hugely helpful to framing discussions around the potential for extending the reach and scope of digital education within the University. Examples of such extension could include new offers in the postgraduate space alongside innovation in the creation of short-course and other CPD offers where micro-credentials could play a significant part in adding value for those who partake.

7. There is good use of other educational agencies and frameworks beyond UCC to help shape thinking and planning

External influences and voices are essential in digital issues, particularly from a pedagogic point of view. Engaging with key thinkers with good practice from the higher education sector, as the Panel heard from colleagues in CIRTl and CDE amongst others, is an important bedrock on which to build local plans and activity. The use of the European Universities Association and national networks is very good and will be instrumental in digital education planning within the context of wider pedagogic enhancement and developments.

8. The Student Union is very engaged and there is a clear desire to help shape the future direction and engagement in digital education after the pandemic

The Panel was very impressed with the positive engagement of the Student Union in dealing with the pandemic and their role in supporting students. Equally, the survey of student experience was very informative. The willingness of the Student Union to play a partnering role in the next steps for digital education was commended by the Panel as being a very positive input.

Recommendations

1. Strategic Leadership

There are a number of recommendations that fall broadly under the heading of strategic leadership that the Panel feels will not only help strengthen the foundations of the work to be undertaken under the digital education umbrella but also reduce some of the inherent risks that currently exist in this area.

- **Determine who is the key senior leader responsible for digital education**

It is clear that there is a collective willingness from senior leaders to promote and endorse the digital education agenda and that must be considered to be a major strength. However, it became apparent to the Panel from the interviews and also from the organisational structure charts, that it is not clear who takes overall responsibility and ownership of ensuring the outcomes are achieved for the University. While the very good personal working relationships are currently mitigating against this gap, the lack of a clear figure head could be problematic if personnel change or if difficult and potentially controversial decisions have to be taken. At present it is unclear where this would lie. The Panel concluded that while not wishing to undermine the good working relationships, that a single leader needs to be clearly identified. In the Panel's view, this would appear to be most appropriately

the Vice-President for Learning and Teaching as while the digital agenda broadly is certainly wider than learning and teaching, and for which the Registrar appears to be leading as shown in Pillar 1 of UCC 2022, the specifics of digital education sit squarely in the learning and teaching space and thus would most sensibly fall within the remit of the Vice-President for Learning and Teaching.

However, given the nature of the committee structures and the role of chairs (see below in Governance section) the Panel felt that the Vice-President for Learning and Teaching should be aided in the leadership task through the creation of a Digital Education Leadership Group. The group would not be a formal committee of Academic Council but would draw together the Director of Information Services, the Director of IT and the Vice-President for Learning and Teaching to discuss on a regular basis progress in line with the digital education plan (see below). Again, if personnel change then there will be a record of what decisions have been taken and an understanding of the context, which other colleagues could then pick up relatively easily.

- **Create a digital education plan to guide future activity**

A previous e-learning strategy has lapsed, and the Panel was specifically asked if a new one was needed. Given the existence of the overarching strategy as articulated through UCC 2022 and given a learning and teaching strategy within that, the Panel recommends that a new e-learning strategy is not developed. The reasoning is that a separate strategy for e-learning or digital education could be taken to imply it is an extra or bolt-on to existing core teaching and learning activity. Given the manner in which the pandemic has changed the teaching landscape, it would be unfortunate for such a perception to arise as that would undermine the potential for the successful embedding of digital education. Instead, the Panel suggests that UCC 2022 provides the guide from which a Digital Education Plan can then act as a roadmap for the coming years. The Plan can be informed by the experiences of both colleagues and students from the pandemic period in terms of pedagogy, specific teaching engagement, student support and most crucially where energy should be spent in terms of the technological support. The Digital Education Leadership group should ensure the plan is agreed, understood and enacted via the appropriate governance channels (see Governance section).

- **Define learning in the future university**

Central to the Digital Education Plan will be a clear set of statements around what the future of learning and teaching looks like in UCC. The self-evaluation document included a figure showing a spectrum of activity stretching from fully face-to-face to fully online provision. The Panel noted the very clear statements from the Vice-President for Learning and Teaching – made to the Panel and in town hall meetings with colleagues at UCC - about remaining a campus-based institution and that message has clearly resonated with colleagues as the Panel discovered in its detailed meetings. However, the benefits of augmenting the face-to-face experience with digital and using digital to open up new modes of delivery are apparent in the thinking that underpins the spectrum of options.

It is important though that there is clarity in the expectations of Schools around the mix of the different modes and the associated workload for all staff. For example, if a fully online new degree is to be made, what would be discontinued to provide the space to develop such a degree. Further, in the blended offer – where digital enhances the face-to-face experience – clarity needs to be provided as to the total amount of activity teaching staff are expected to provide. The Panel heard examples of multiple repetition of classes which appeared to suggest an increased workload for staff rather than the digital being used to alter the opportunity for engagement. The Panel recognises and supports the very clear statement from the Vice-President for Learning and Teaching that “one size does not fit all” and suggests that structured guidance could help shape the way in which Schools engage with the process of developing new models. The Centre for Digital Engagement and Centre for Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning could be encouraged to provide such guidance to

Schools, based on models of good practice in pedagogic design and digital engagement to help shape thinking.

- **Capitalise on opportunities for growth**

The pivot to online has provided an insight into the potential for digital education and the Panel heard this in many of its meetings. Building on this experience and willingness and following on from the statement of future provision (see the previous bullet point), there is clear potential now for new and exciting offers to be made that makes best use of digital technology. Specifically, there are opportunities in the postgraduate level and in the provision of CPD to create new programmes and modules that are either mostly or entirely online. There is further significant potential in building on the micro-credentialling and digital badges work that is already under way in UCC and the expert knowledge in both areas can shape how programmes and short courses can be validated in an appealing and modern way to meet the needs of a more diverse student body.

There are potentially many advantages to this approach including: attracting students to study who might not otherwise have considered UCC as they have work or other commitments preventing their physical attendance at a university; international markets can be accessed remotely which in a post-pandemic world could be very important and helps reduce the carbon footprint of travel; greater familiarity with the digital engagement can help inform the blended face-to-face activities on campus.

Ultimately, though, any proposed new programmes need to meet the established thresholds of quality and understanding of the resource implications that the University already has in place. It is recommended that any expansion of new provision is strategically determined rather than assuming all Schools have to offer something new. Again, linking to an earlier recommendation, the Panel is keen to stress that due consideration be given to the workload implications of expansion of the overall UCCC offer.

2. Academic Governance and Decision Making

It was clear to the panel, and through our discussions with a range of colleagues during the review, that strong and collegiate working relationships exist within and across the various committees and fora that have governance and/or decision-making responsibilities with respect to the digital education agenda. However, mirroring our observations and recommendations in the area of strategic leadership, the panel felt strongly that the strategic direction and the pragmatic and timely translation of vision, strategy and policy into effective practice could be further bolstered through a modest number of important changes in academic governance and decision making, as below.

- **Review the role of L&T Committee**

While it is vitally important that Academic Council maintains oversight of the digital education agenda and how this is progressed within the institution, the panel observed that there was no single fora or committee taking lead responsibility for governance and decision making. While effective and impactful progress has been made to date it was also clear that due to the above, and the distribution of operational decision making across different groups, policy formation and approval had been slower than anticipated or perhaps desirable in a number of areas (e.g. group working policy which was in development for several years without eventual approval). In some instances, different fora (including the Learning and Teaching Committee) had taken the decision to steer away from trying to develop policy and instead develop guidance and recommendations (in areas including for learning analytics) as it was felt this was a less challenging and more efficient route to establishing a grounding for the informed development of practice.

In order to address the above, and to create a clear line of reporting and responsibility with respect to governance and decision making, the panel recommends that the Learning and Teaching Committee is given ownership and responsibility for taking forward the digital education agenda, and for the formation and implementation of the policies around it. The Learning and Teaching Committee should provide regular reports to Academic Council on progress with the Digital Education Plan and policies developed to support it, as well as continuing to oversee the DEAG who it is proposed report in to Learning and Teaching Committee.

The empowerment of Learning and Teaching Committee as recommended above may necessitate a review and perhaps revision to their remit. To align Learning and Teaching Committee with overall strategic leadership and responsibility, it is recommended that the university considers carefully the chairing of a newly empowered Learning and Teaching Committee.

While the Panel was in agreement that the Vice-President for Learning and Teaching would be ideally placed (as overall strategic lead) to chair the committee it is recognised, as was discussed in the final reporting back session of the review, that while this is often the case in other institutions, this would not be the normal convention at the UCC. To which end, the other recommendations around strategic leadership and a repositioned Learning and Teaching Committee, reporting to Academic Council, should still provide a clear, direct line of reporting to the Vice-President for Learning and Teaching.

- **DEAG to continue but with an altered remit**

DEAG is clearly important to the advancement of the digital education agenda and supporting the development of effective practice, and is an important forum for discussion, horizon scanning and the academic voice. It is recommended that DEAG is given a clear and distinct remit for this responsibility, and that membership of DEAG is reconstituted to bring together key professional services staff and a representative group of academic champions to report into and inform the work of Learning and Teaching Committee, and act as a direct channel into the colleges.

- **Bring in external voices**

To support the development of strategy, policy and practice, it is recommended that the university seeks to bring in external voices and expertise in advisory, non-executive roles, who can contribute to ensuring the relevance and future proofing of the digital education agenda with respect to current and emerging developments in the sector, employer and industry needs and expectations, and harnessing digital technologies and practices in meeting the university's wider agendas with respect research, knowledge exchange, public engagement and social good.

The means and mechanisms by which this may best be implemented should be explored, but it is recommended that the external voices and expertise to be harnessed be drawn from employers, digital specialists, and perhaps also from other Higher Education Institutions who are innovating in both similar and in different ways to UCC.

- **Workload management needs exploring**

With the development and implementation of strategy and policy for digital education, there is a need to look closely and critically at the issue of staff and also student workload in relation to different models and modes of delivery. It will be important to establish a shared understanding that "going online" does not equate to the needs or demands of designing for effective online learning and teaching, and that there may be challenges for students in the nature of the blended or hybrid

modes of learning that are to be engaged in, and corresponding challenges for staff who will teach and support students through these modes. In particular, there is a concern and a need to address the potential challenges for staff in teaching the same modules and programmes in dual or multiple modes for different cohorts or means of delivery. Sustainability of approaches across modes of delivery, and avoiding duplication of effort for staff, will be critically important.

3. Organisational Aspects

It was very clear to the Panel that the University has made a monumental collective effort to move to an online provision of teaching in early 2020 and it was clear it produced a very successful outcome in meeting the majority of student needs in the short term. Again, this reflected the good working relationships between colleagues. However, in having more time to reflect and plan future developments in digital education, there are aspects of the way in which a number of features are organized that are perhaps less than ideal for a more sustainable approach to supporting and developing digital education. The Panel felt a number of aspects could be addressed to help strengthen and build on existing activity and willingness to collaborate. In particular these are:

- **Signposting: A Single Point of Help Online**

From the Panel interviews, it became apparent that there was some uncertainty about to where staff should direct their questions or requests for help. Those that sought “central” University support – and not all did apparently – were not always sure as to where they should begin. The range of starting points was felt to be confusing by some: IT help pages, CDE, Library, College pages were just some of the options mentioned. The Panel felt this confusion was unfortunate given the quality of the potential support available.

The Panel recommends that a small team is convened, perhaps drawn from DEAG, that is tasked with designing and creating a single point of online help and support for digital education for staff across the University. It can draw together all the elements that currently exist which do appear to be very useful but at present do not connect and in some cases replicate advice but in a different form. The Panel also suggests that in thinking about what this site contains, attention is given to the range of support colleagues often require – from the basic operation of key software through to enhancement of their teaching with innovative uses of software. This will help with the difficulty that was raised with the Panel in its interviews where there was a blurring between technicians and instructional designer roles and some uncertainty over who was best placed to help (see the last bullet point in this section).

- **Signposting: Creation of a Physical Hub**

The Panel noted a comment relating to a physical hub for digital education. Whilst this might seem counter-intuitive there is merit in taking this idea forward. A clear signal of the interaction between the physical and digital environments will reinforce the vision for future education being campus-based but with the enhancement that digital engagement can bring to that face-to-face experience. The model of the Skills Centre in the Library offers a possible template and can act as a venue for DEAG type activities such as Digital Commons, retreats and seminars.

- **Focus on core technologies**

The Panel recognises the tension between offering enterprise-wide, reliable and secure technologies with innovation in the use of digital at the local level. However, regulatory and security requirements are such that there needs to be tight oversight of software being used to avoid the significant risks of hacking and GDPR breaches. The case of Canvas provides a very good example of what can be

achieved with a very well-conceived project and roll out of an enterprise system and the Panel recommends that a similar approach is taken to simplifying the software range available across the University. This work can be sponsored by the Digital Leadership Group (see above).

- **Clarity of Roles**

In discussions with colleagues in the professional services, it was apparent that there was some uncertainty over roles and the relationship between responsibilities in different areas. Two specific examples struck the Panel and that was LTU and AVMS and relates to the earlier observation around technical support and instructional design/teaching enhancement. It appeared to the Panel that some elements of the work of both units could easily fit with the work of the CDE but not all of it. The Panel recommends that the remit and roles of the two groups are reviewed alongside that of the CDE to ensure clarity in service offer is maintained.

4. Expertise

The Panel recognises that capacity to engage with and develop digital education is vitally important to success in achieving the goals of a digital engagement plan. There has been a great deal of knowledge and skill built up during the pandemic, often at a speed much greater than in more normal times. However, this could mask unevenness across the institution and skill sets might start to diminish rapidly if the momentum around digital education is not maintained through a more strategic evaluation of current and future needs.

- **Need to develop expertise and spread it more evenly**

The Panel heard how some Colleges were better placed to support their staff than others. While it was hard to quantify this effect, it appeared that this arose from an uneven spread of instructional designers across the Colleges. In the staff interviews, a preference for learning from those at the elbow and nearby was expressed and while that can't always be provided for reasons of resource constraints, the Panel felt there was merit in, and thus recommends, reviewing the current deployment of instructional designers across the University. In particular, the relationships between the CDE and local deployment of instructional designers should be reviewed to ensure that maximum value is being gained in terms of total support offered and how effectively it is joined up.

The Panel also heard of some very impressive project work supported by and sometimes led by staff from the Library. It is apparent from interviews that the value that Library staff can bring in the space of digital skills development is perhaps not fully appreciated and that there is capacity amongst that group – and indeed willingness – to be more involved in the digital education agenda. The Panel supports this notion and recommends that Library staff are considered more prominently as part of the totality of support for digital education in the future.

A suggestion the Panel has is that further capacity could be generated in this space through judicious use of postgraduate students providing they have effective training and support. It is not that they would become instructional designers per se, but they could be active supporters of local activity around the digital education agenda and in so doing reduce some of the barriers that are significant in some Colleges. These training roles could be formally part of the staff development offer and have microcredentials or badges associated with the training.

- **Create Digital champions amongst academic staff**

The Panel recommend that a leadership role of Digital Champion should be created for each School. The reasoning behind this is twofold. First, key members of staff have developed their skills and

expertise over the last two years, and this is a means of capturing that skill and valuing it directly. Second, the Champions can act as high-profile advocates for the University wide agenda for digital education. The role would need to be a relatively senior one and contribute towards a career pathway for whoever took it on. In addition, training for CPD purposes should be provided that sits within the suite of CIRTl programmes and is credited and perhaps badged too. This will ensure the role is not perceived as a simply another administrative burden but is one that has real value to the School, the University and most importantly to the individual.

- **Establish a flexible team approach to working with Schools**

The requirements at the local, School level are often quite varied and depend on where a School is towards achieving its own digital education goals. As such, and mindful of the overarching view from the PVC L&T that “one size does not fit all”, the Panel recommends a more agile and responsive mode towards helping Schools that builds on the points raised above. The creation of agile teams that move from School to School when the need arises but which are centred on the Digital Champion in a particular School. These teams could be flexible but draw on Instructional Designers, Library colleagues and postgraduates as mentioned above, with further input from CDE and CIRTl to help inform and shape the practical and pedagogic thinking underpinning any developments. The Panel recommends that the Digital Education Leadership group should sponsor this work as part of embedding the Digital Education Plan.

- **Amplify the student voice**

Much of what has been recommended so far has focused, naturally, on the staff components and was derived from meetings with staff and the documentation provided. The Panel also met with two members of the Student Union and were very impressed with the views expressed and the insight they showed. In addition, the Panel was given sight of the survey undertaken by the Student Union of student experience during the pandemic and it was good to hear that this has been shared with colleagues as there was much that could be helpful in developing the Digital Education Plan. It is clear that the student body is represented across many of the groups and committees around learning and teaching. The Panel believes that the student voice could be very important in helping to shape the Digital Education Plan particularly in relation to student expectations of the use of technology to support their learning but also in helping deepen the impact of the digital skills framework. While not wishing to determine how this is done, the Panel does recommend that full consideration is given to how the student voice can be a major element within the planning for the future of digital education and its impact.

- **Roadshow to invigorate UCC 2022 and digital education**

As stated earlier, the Panel believes that UCC 2022 has provided a significant signpost for the digital education agenda. However, from interviews with representatives from the staff body, the understanding of what UCC 2022 is and the content therein was surprisingly patchy and this suggests that it has not yet become embedded. While this statement has to come with a caveat that the Panel only met a small sample of staff across academic units and professional services, nevertheless it was felt that would be great merit in a roadshow that takes the messages of UCC 2022 and the digital education agenda back out to Schools to explain what is planned and also listen to any concerns. It will not only help with the profile of both activities, but it will also allow for a wider degree of consultation which can be important in making moves forward. The roadshow should be led by the Vice-President for Learning and Teaching although the Panel is mindful of the time commitment this entails.

Conclusions

The purpose of the Review was to maximise the organisational, governance and decision-making structures required for strategic steering and overall coordination for teaching and assessing with technology. The Panel felt that through the interviews it conducted, and the documents provided, that it is able to provide a snapshot of how UCC is engaging with this agenda within the context of the global Covid pandemic.

The Commendations are clear, and the Panel was impressed by the collective efforts and achievements across the University in meeting the challenge of the pandemic.

The Recommendations point to a number of areas for consideration. Some are directive while many will require discussion and wider consultation. They are all offered in the spirit of support to help the University take forward the learning from the pandemic and the best practice that was clearly developing before that. Good foundations exist but it is apparent that with clearer leadership, better governance, improved organisation and a focus on building expertise across all areas, the University will be able to ensure its plans for digital education are robust, sustainable and build on the positive engagement over the last two years.

Appendix 1 - Members of Review Panel

Panel Profiles – Thematic Review of Teaching and Assessing with Technology

<p>Professor Gráinne Conole e4 Innovation</p>	<p>Gráinne Conole is an independent consultant and was a professor and Head of the Open Education Unit within the National Institute for Digital Learning at Dublin City University. Before this she was a consultant and visiting professor at Dublin City University. She has worked at the Universities of Bath Spa, Bristol, Leicester, the Open University UK and Southampton. Her research interests are on the use of technologies for learning, including Open Educational Resources (OER) and Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), new approaches to designing for learning, e-pedagogies, and social media. She has an HEA National Teaching Fellowship and fellow of EDEN and ASCILITE. She has published and presented over 1000 talks, workshops and articles. In terms of Masters and PhD supervision and external examinations (both national and international): (14 as internal examiner, 56 as external examiner, 16 as supervisor). This year alone she has examined 8 PhD vivas. She has been external examiner for the Technology and Learning Masters course at Trinity College Dublin (2013 -2017), PGCE course at the University of Southampton (Current), a Masters course in Educational Technology in Ulster (now complete), the Networked Learning masters at Lancaster University (now complete), the masters in e-learning at Plymouth University (now complete), an e-learning Masters at Dublin City University (now complete) and the masters in e-learning at the Dublin Institute of Technology (now complete). See http://e4innovation.com for more details.</p>
<p>Professor Wyn Morgan (Chair) University of Sheffield</p>	<p>Wyn is currently Professor of Economics at the University of Sheffield in the UK and from 2015-2020 was Vice-President for Education. In that latter role he was tasked with leading all matters relating to teaching, learning and the wider student experience, including setting the strategic direction for education and leading on student recruitment, progression, attainment and outcomes. Two major themes of his work have been taking an holistic view of programme enhancement and the role of digital in teaching and learning. Previously he was Assistant Pro Vice-Chancellor for Teaching and Learning and Professor in Economics at the University of Nottingham. Throughout his time in leadership roles, he has continued to teach and research in economics. His research focuses on food economics with particular reference to food prices and inflation and he has undertaken work for Defra, the Commonwealth Secretariat and the House of Lords.</p>

<p>Mr Justin Ralph (Critical Peer Professional)</p> <p>Chief Technology Officer Royal College of Surgeons</p>	<p>Justin Ralph joined RCSI as Chief Technology Officer in 2017. Justin is responsible for the IT Department and the implementation of the Digital Transformation Strategy cross RCSI. Justin sits on the Senior Management Team of RCSI.</p> <p>Prior to joining the College, Justin served as Business Transformation Lead at BearingPoint for over a decade, where he led a number of large transformational programmes. He has also worked with KPMG in the US, UK, and Ireland. Justin graduated from TCD with a Bachelor of Accounting and Strategic Management in 1992. He also holds a Postgraduate Diploma in Information Technology from the NUI, Maynooth (1993), completed an MBA in Finance at Boston College in 1996 and passed the CPA (Certified Public Accountant) exams in Massachusetts in 1998. He has also studied in both Babson College and Yale.</p>
<p>Professor Keith Smyth</p> <p>University of the Highlands and Islands</p>	<p>Keith Smyth is the Chair of Education (Professor of Pedagogy) and Head of the Learning and Teaching Academy at the University of the Highlands and Islands, where he works with colleagues on strategic learning and teaching developments, funded projects, and supporting staff to engage in educational scholarship and research. Keith has particular interests in digital education practice, co-creative pedagogies and curriculum models, open education and scholarship, and educational strategy and policy. Keith developed the openly licensed 3E Framework for designing technology-enhanced learning which has been used extensively across HE and FE, and is currently Vice-Chair of the Association for Learning Technology. Recent publications include the co-authored books 'Conceptualising the Digital University: The Intersection of Policy, Pedagogy and Practice' (Palgrave MacMillan) and 'Digital Learning: The Key Concepts' (Routledge). Keith blogs at www.3eeducation.org.</p>

Appendix 2 – Virtual Review Site Visit Timetable

THEMATIC REVIEW OF TEACHING AND ASSESSING WITH TECHNOLOGY

PEER REVIEW PANEL VIRTUAL SITE VISIT

20TH - 28TH APRIL, 2021

ALL MEETINGS WILL TAKE PLACE ON MS TEAMS

In Advance

Tuesday 13th April	
14:00 -15:00	Chair and Panel Briefing with Director of Quality

WEEK 1

Tuesday 20th April	
9:30 – 10:15	Convening of Review Panel <i>Review panel convenes to identify the issues to be explored</i> <i>Director of Quality Enhancement and QEU staff member to meet for a quick introduction.</i>
10:15 – 11:00	Meeting with the Vice President for Learning and Teaching <i>- to explore responsibilities and perspectives</i>
11:00 – 11:15	Break for Panel Members
11:15 – 12:00	Meeting with Senior Manager of the University Director of IT Services <i>- to explore responsibilities and perspectives</i>
12.00 - 12.45	Meeting with Head of Digital Education at UCC <i>- to explore responsibilities and perspectives</i>
12:45 – 13:30	Meeting with Interim Registrar <i>- Perspectives from UCC Academic Strategy & UCC 2022 relevant to the scope of the review</i>
13:30 – 14:30	Break for Panel Members
14:30 – 15:15	Meeting with Senior Manager of the University Director of IT and Library Services <i>- to explore responsibilities and perspectives</i>

Wednesday 21st April	
9:30 – 10:30	Convening of Review Panel <i>Review previous meetings and agree matters to be explored in today's meetings</i>
10:30–11:15	Meeting with Chairs and Vice Chairs of University Committees Academic Council Learning & Teaching Committee (AC-LTC) Chair Deputy Chair Digital Education Advisory Group (DEAG) Co-Chair Co-Chair Academic Council Information Systems and Educational Resources (AC-ISER) Chair Academic Council Academic Standards and Development Committee (AC-ADSC) Chair Academic Council Academic Staff Development Committee (AC-ASDC) Acting Chair
11:15 – 11:45	Break for Panel Members
11:45 – 12:30	Meeting with UCC Library Staff Academic Technology & Communications Head of Academic Technologies & Communications (<i>Unable to attend due to prior commitment</i>) Engagement Liaison Librarian Library Leadership Director of Library Services Research Collections Special Collections Librarian Research and Digital Services Research Data Coordinator

12:30 – 13:00	Meeting with IT Services Staff Digital Services Head of Digital Services Audio Visual Media Services AVMS Manager
13:00 – 14:00	Break for Panel Members
14:00 – 14:30	Meeting with Support Services Staff Disability Support Service Disability Advisor and Manager of the Disability Support Service Digital Education Digital Education Officer
14:30 – 15:00	Meeting with OVPLT Staff Centre for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning (CIRTL) Director of CIRTL
15:15 – 16:00	Review Panel Meeting with Chief Technical Officer, Royal College of Surgeons

Thursday 22nd April	
9:30 – 10:00	Convening of Review Panel <i>Review previous meetings and agree matters to be explored in today's meetings</i>
10:00 – 10:30	Meeting with Student's Union Representatives President Education Officer
10:30–11:15	Meeting with Representatives from College of Arts, Celtic Studies & Social Sciences Teaching & Learning Committee Member of DEAG and of Student Experience sub-committee of CACSSS Teaching and Learning Committee Chair, Student Experience sub-committee of CACSSS Teaching and Learning Committee Chair, College Academic Development sub-committee of CACSSS Teaching and Learning Committee Vice-head, (T&L) CACSSS and chair of CACSSSS Teaching and Learning Committee
11:15 - 11:45	Break for Panel Members

11:45 -12:30	Meeting with Representatives from College of Business and Law Learning and Teaching Committee Lecturer, Acting Chair of CoBL Learning and Teaching Committee for 2020 CUBS Tech Ops Team Chair of CoBL Learning and Teaching Committee Vice Dean for Learning and Teaching, School of Law School of Law, IT/Multimedia Officer Lecturer, CUBS Online Learning Group School of Law, School Manager
12:30 – 13:15	Meeting with Representatives from College of Medicine and Health Teaching & Curriculum Committee Deputy Head Academic Affairs, College of Medicine and Health Instructional Designer School of Nursing & Midwifery Vice Dean of School of Public Health & Programme Director – MSc Occupational Health School of Microbiology, Deputy director of Graduate Entry Medicine Meeting with Representatives from College of Science, Engineering and Food Science Teaching, Learning & Student Experience Committee Chair, Teaching, Learning & Student Experience Committee Chair of the School of Microbiology TLSE and the School of Microbiology representative on SEFS TLSE.
13:15 – 14:15	Break for Panel Members
14:15 – 14:45	Meeting with Academic Secretary, Academic Affairs & Governance <i>– to explore responsibilities and perspectives</i>
14:45 – 15:00	Break for Panel Members
15:15 – 15:45	Review Panel Meeting with Chief Technical Officer, Royal College of Surgeons

Tuesday 27th April (Panel self-organised meeting to formulate recommendations)	
10:00 – 12:30	Convening of Review Panel <i>Panel to meet to discuss and agree review findings.</i>
12:30 – 13:00	Meeting with Panel and Director of Quality Enhancement Initial review findings
16.00 – 17.00	Initial Findings Presentation on Thematic Review of Teaching and Assessing with Technology