

Quality Enhancement Plan leading to a Strategic Enhancement Project

THEMATIC REVIEW OF WORK PLACEMENT ACTIVITIES IN UNIVERSITY COLLEGE CORK

	Panel Recommendation	Response and Actions Planned ¹	Responsibility for Action ²	Resource Implications ³	Implementation Date ⁴	Progress Achieved
1	Re-organise the location and reporting lines of work placement staff to within the College Offices.	<p>Academic Leadership Forum (ALF) have deferred looking at this re-organisation.</p> <p>Response: The university faces the challenge of supporting students in all four colleges with experiential learning, work integrated learning and work placements, and we need to start reimagining our provision for a new and uncertain world. We must accept that change is now constant, agility is necessary.</p>	TBC	TBC	TBC	On Hold in 2021 by ALF
2	Create a central WIL unit to oversee institutional-wide aspects of the practice of WIL.	<p>Response: The Career Services welcome the creation of a centralised model of Work Integrated Learning (WIL). Ideally, this is best placed within Career Services as a 'Centre of Excellence for WIL' and the staff there have the best expertise to configure this. This is resource dependant and would welcome a WIL Manager/Project Lead based in CS, to manage/oversee all institutional wide aspects of WIL. Approximately 1400 work placements are currently coordinated by Work Placement Managers, based in Career Services, administering work placements within 3 out of 4 colleges. A WIL model based here would integrate work placements, internships, practica, cooperative education, fieldwork, work-related projects/competitions, service learning, entrepreneurship, student-led enterprises, applied projects, simulations (including virtual WIL) and much work that is happening ad-hoc already.</p>				
		<p>Actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. WIL terminology to be introduced and used in all CS documentation and new Employability Framework 2021-25 for work placement activity and experiential learning conducted within CS. 	Head of Careers to initiate WIL terminology. Heads of Colleges to further implement and embed terminology		Q4 2021 to Q4 2022	<p>On track.</p> <p>Framework written and developed. Communication Plan to wider university on track. Launch on track.</p>

		<p>2. Discuss ownership of institutional wide aspects of WIL:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UCC Placement policy (<i>see Recommendation 5 below</i>) • Insurance policies (especially for overseas WIL) • Adopt a clear process for non-compliance with policies (Currently ad-hoc and programme-specific) • Develop handbook with all guidelines above in one place. 	<p>Head of Careers, Director of SE, Academic Secretary, OCLA and Registrar</p>	<p>The re-instatement of the Grade 7 post in Careers would be a positive step.</p>	<p>Q1 2022 to Q4 2022</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>*Ownership of Placement Policy cannot lie solely in CS. Work Placement is university wide. A first step action could be to optimise operation of the policy (maybe re-refresh the policy) - Academic Secretariat working closely with OCLA with a "visible" re-launch through this project (2022).</p> <p>In terms of effective implementation, this could also link into Academic Secretary work on programme governance and Programme Boards. The successful operation of WIL is something that should be reviewed by Programme Board. (by end of 2022)</p> <p>*OCLA exploring the possibility of a 'ready to go' policy with a reputable insurer, discussions underway with university broker.</p>
		<p>3 Discuss approval process for Placements and Applied Research Projects and establish clear Service Level Agreements with academic partners</p>	<p>Head of Careers, Director of SE, and Heads of College</p>	<p>The re-instatement of the Grade 7 post in Careers would be a positive step.</p>	<p>Q3 2022 (Pilot project with B&L, and if successful then roll out to SEFS and CACSSS in 2023</p>	<p>TBC</p>
		<p>4 Conduct international benchmarking activity exercise to inform configuration and scope of the WIL Centre of Excellence. External resources have been provided by the International Review Panel.</p>	<p>Head of Careers, Director of SE, Work Placement Managers based in CS who work with the Colleges</p>	<p>The re-instatement of the Grade 7 post in Careers would be a positive step.</p>	<p>Q4 2022</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality benchmarking exercise can be undertaken mostly by CS and a report drafted up to inform progress.

3	Broaden the focus and messaging from work placements to work-integrated learning (WIL).	<p>Response: This is a welcome opportunity. We are now adapting our efforts to build scalable experiential learning provision and employer-led project models to deliver experiences to students en-mass that will both develop their commercial and work-based skills but also inform their career decision making, moving to a “one to many” experiential learning framework. This forms part of the new Employability Framework 2021-25. It would be welcomed to see other placement activities follow the leadership of Career Services.</p>				
		<p>Actions:</p> <p>1 Broaden the messaging of WIL in all CS literature.</p>	Head of Careers		Q4 2021	<p>On track. Framework written and developed. Communications to wider university ongoing. WIL messaging included in the new Student Success Strategy.</p>
		<p>2 Develop frameworks and toolkits that can support academic departments to efficiently embed employer engagement into the curriculum. Where possible, further prioritising careers service resources to support academic alignment activities will be crucial to scale this work-based learning provision.</p>	Head of Careers and Heads of Colleges		Q2 2022	<p>Positive progress. WIL projects already initiated in CS in 2021.</p> <p>Launch of EmployAgility Award includes 6 pathways in a new framework which include a research pathway and an enhanced student open pathway.</p> <p>Further progress to be achieved after discussions with colleges.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First meeting took place with B&L Q2 2021 • Second meeting with B&L to take place Q4 2021 <p>First meeting to take place with SEFS Q1 2022</p>
		<p>3 Facilitate UCC to align with international best practice and give the university scope to scale up/get creative if numbers increase in particular programmes or if we lose placements due to a global pandemic i.e. we are not confined to a ‘one student one opportunity’ model but can potentially develop/expand on-campus models of remote client based projects. One theme that comes through the Irish Student Survey for UCC, is that we score less well on collaborative learning, consistently over the last number of years. Moving the</p>	Head of Careers and Heads of Colleges		<p>Aligned with Section 2(4) above.</p> <p>Q4 2022.</p>	Ongoing

		model to client-based projects might create opportunities for team-based projects which would address the Student Survey findings.				
		4 Open up of our offerings to employers in terms of block placements to internship management and other initiatives - this will require less focus on traditional placement blocks and could mean a restructure in terms of existing staff roles	Head of Careers and Heads of Colleges	The re-instatement of the Grade 7 post in Careers would be a positive step.	Q4 2023	Ongoing
		5 Clear communication on this refocus to Academic Programme Directors is required to enable and bolster college strategic plans or accreditation attempts but is a more sustainable , strategic and supportive model.	Head of Careers and Heads of Colleges		Ongoing	Ongoing
4	Expand the diverse practices of WIL across the institution	Response: This is a best practice approach. This will be supported in the CS Employability Framework 2021-25. Career Services are supportive and positive to devising a module whereby Career Services teams (work placement managers, career consultants and all CS staff) support the WIL of the students of UCC through a mix of initiatives that complement the academic, but are not the academic modules, or there could be a pick and mix approach whereby students need to complete several activities to meet the requirements of the modules.				
		Actions: 1 MAPPING: There are already diverse practices of WIL across the university that need to be mapped and brought together first, so we do not overwrite, or plan to deliver something that is already in existence elsewhere and working well.	Head of Careers and Heads of College, Work Placement Managers	A Project Lead would be a positive step to start mapping the practice university wide	Q2 2022	TBC
		2 PLANNING: A University wide plan for this type of work would be essential to have buy in and to challenge the creation of the proliferation of new employability initiatives for different cohorts. Best Practice Models to be looked at.	Head of Careers and Heads of College, Work Placement Managers		Q4 2022 (to be aligned with the International Benchmarking Exercise in Section 2(4) and Section 3(3))	TBC
		3 APPROVING: A Programme Approval body like APAR could be created to make sure that no new employability initiative should be	Registrar, Director of SE, Head of Careers		Q1 2023	TBC

		created if a university wide one is already in existence.	and Heads of College			
		4 SUSTAINING: Identifying initiatives that respond to multiple institutional agendas in one hit, (Civic and Community Engagement Strategy, Graduate Attributes Programme, Connected Curriculum, UCC 2022, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy) would be a strategic and progressive way forward and can help build the profile of the university beyond our existing network.	Registrar, Director of SE (with Head of Careers and Heads of College supporting)		Ongoing	Ongoing
5	Review the Work Placement Policy to include WIL and to allow greater flexibility on how the Colleges fulfil adherence to the policy.	Response: This Work Placement Policy is a university wide policy, therefore the lead in relation to change or review needs to be driven by OCLA or Strategically at senior management level to bring all stakeholders along with it. It requires an Implementation Working Group across the university with clear ownership of 'Who' owns the policy and a clear road map of the escalation process. As the policy governs learning which is credit-based, involvement from that part of the Registrar's Office is very important. (as per R2(2) above)				
		Action: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper forms, Microsoft forms and Google Forms are not fit for purpose. Compliance needs to be first and foremost in our policy, procedures, communications with employers and students and in our daily work. To facilitate this, all university paperwork needs to move to an online 'form-gathering' platform, such as Qualtrics. Resource and implement university pre-placement student compliance IT system (like GDPR training) to automate compliance at pre-placement stage before student is approved to undertake placement. 	Registrar with the support from OCLA	A Project Lead would be a positive step to start this process	Aligned with Section 2(2) above (ownership of institutional wide aspects of WIL) Q1 2022 to Q4 2022	TBC
6	Create a WIL Working Group.	Response: The Career Services are fully supportive and energised by the creation of a Work Integrated Learning "Community of Practice". This WIL Community of Practice will also support delivery of the actions identified earlier in the QEP, particularly those related to academic programme design in the four colleges, delivery of Actions 3 and 4.. and will co-deliver on Actions 8, 9, and 10.				
		Actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication from Registrar and or President, sponsor of the Thematic Review, to support the creation of such an initiative would be most welcome. 	Registrar	Resource implications will be mainly dependent on the commitment	Q4 2021	TBC

				of the WIL community.		
7	Continue the rollout of the InPlace system across all Colleges.	Response: The Career Services are fully supportive of the new InPlace Steering Committee. InPlace is a positive and progressive step going forward to align all work placement activity in one complete supportive over-arching university platform. The InPlace Steering Committee are best placed to provide advice and guidance on future roll-out.				
		Actions: 1. Sustainability of the InPlace Steering Committee is required throughout duration of roll-out.	Director of SE Project Team (with support from the InPlace Committee)	Steering Committee time A Supported Model is required Transition to Formal Support Arrangements - the project team, programme director and Systems Admin Team Lead -discuss formal transition of IT support for InPlace	Ongoing – the rollout will be led by the InPlace Steering Committee and revised regularly depending on growth, expansion and delivery.	30 programmes onboarded in CS in 2020-2021 2 programmes onboarded in School of Education (Q4 2021)
		2 Decisions needed on what level of support to be provided internally and externally	Project team, programme director and Systems Admin Team Lead		Ongoing	Interim arrangements in place Q4 2021. Future progress TBC
8	Adopt the use of a Customer Relations Management (CRM) system.	Response: The value of a CRM in work placement is the transparency it allows across teams, it helps avoid duplication of communication, allows us to offer a better streamlined service to employers, stimulates conversation and collaboration between colleagues.				
		Actions: 1. Career Services are in favour of further discussions around this with advice and guidance from Director of IT, UCC. Microsoft Dynamics which is already rolled out across	Head of Careers (but with support from Heads of College)	Project Lead would be positive to engage with Director of IT	Q2 2022 (initiate discussions in Q4 2021 with Director of IT, and include into the	TBC

		campus might be an option, but requires investigation, which we welcome		Services on this.	overall IT Project Plan)	
		<p>2. Future discussions with regard to the adoption of a CRM are welcomed, but we need to be mindful that Career Services already use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>InPlace</i> – tracks students’ applications • <i>Connect</i> – tracking students’ appointments and event registrations • <i>Canvas</i> – for pre-placement modules and preparation in year 2 • <i>MS teams sites</i> for placement years – <i>InPlace</i> does not have a repository information function <p>Putting another layer on top of our already multi layered systems that do not communicate with each other would be very challenging and time consuming.</p>	Head of Careers (but with support from Heads of College)		Q2 2022 (initiate discussions in Q4 2021 with Director of IT, and include into the overall IT Project Plan)	TBC
9	Expand the marketing of work placements/WIL	Response: Marketing of all Work Integrated Learning will need to be addressed in the wider university, not just Career Services.				
		<p>Actions:</p> <p>1. A consolidated approach is needed to work as a team in terms of employer engagement. Marketing of WIL will be introduced in Career Services as a pilot approach (B&L, SEFS and CACSSS), and can then be expanded out university wide.</p>	Work Placement Managers based in Career Services	Internal resources will need to be part of the marketing journey	Q2 2022	Ongoing
		<p>2. Managing academic expectations also will be key to success for all stakeholders: colleges, students, employers and WIL staff.</p>	Work Placement Managers based in Career Services and academic partners	Internal resources will need to be part of the marketing journey	Ongoing	Ongoing

		3. A clear and consistent marketing campaign - Testimonials, student success stories, with academic support will be key to success.	Work Placement Managers based in Career Services and academic partners	Internal resources will need to be part of the marketing journey	Ongoing	Ongoing
10	Separate curricular and co-curricular work placements from extra-curricular work placements	Response: Academic departments need to be part of that conversation. For actions 10 & 11 it would be worth developing formal nomenclature for the different types of experience, some broad expectations about credit levels for learning and assessment requirements. The goal should be to have a framework which puts "order" on current practice and distinguishes them relative to one another. At present, the University would not be able to explain coherently why the variety of credit and forms of assessment is arrived at. We would welcome something the Registrar could promote possibly using the Deans of Undergraduate and Graduate Studies to lead internal discussion and development of a proposal working closely in tandem with Head of Careers, APAR and Programme Directors. In a way it should/could be analogous to the framework used to express blended and online learning.				
		Action: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some definitions and clarity around what these are is essential. A meeting with College Managers and Academic Programme Directors is required. 	Work Placement Managers based in Career Services, Head of Careers and Director of SE	Project Lead post in Careers would be a positive step	TBC	TBC
11	Review and create consistency of student workload when engaging with work placement/WIL offerings.	Response: In terms of process, there is a standard process, but credits, approval, relevance of work is approved and dictated by the specific degree content and therefore would require strong negotiation with academic colleagues in terms of that consistency piece.				
		Actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This needs wider discussion in the context of WIL 	Work Placement Managers based in Career Services, Head of Careers and Director of SE	The WIL Community of Practice should be part of the resourcing	TBC	TBC
12	Consider more shorter work placement options (3 months) as an alternative to longer work placements (6-12 months)	Response: Some academics have not considered introducing shorter placements or more interesting employability content to their research projects despite one of the most serious crises that has impacted work placement. Unless the WIL unit can 'own' that piece, the accredited placement offerings will always be approved by academic programme directors acting in a programme silo.				
		Actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This needs wider discussion in the context of WIL 	Work Placement Managers based in Career	The WIL Community of Practice should be part	TBC	TBC

			Services, Head of Careers and Director of SE	of the resourcing		
13	Review and begin shifting away from unpaid work placements	<p>Response: Some Academic Programme Directors are happy to accept unpaid placements to get the student some relevant work experience and others are not allowing this.</p> <p>While it is essential that no student is taken advantage of, we are now in a position that students are losing out on valuable experience by having a requirement in some programmes that placement be paid. In a proportion of cases when students source their own placement, they opt to take an unpaid placement to support or engage in experiential work-based learning or work integrated learning. Possibly R11, R12 and R13 could be substantively addressed through the suggestion above in R10 to develop nomenclature and academic framework. This would be very welcome.</p>				
		<p>Actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consideration be given to the introduction of a university wide policy on unpaid work placements. This would be most helpful and would need to be communicated directly to Programme Directors as a university policy, to remove ad-hoc inconsistent approaches to paid versus unpaid placements. 	Registrar, Director of SE and OCLA		TBC	TBC
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Articulate clear guidelines on “Unpaid Placements” Vs “Experiential Learning or WIL” is required. This will enable shorter projects within the social sciences, government etc., as well as research placements to be realised. These employer/host organisations are important experiential learning opportunities and employers are offering expertise, training, time and resources into supporting and mentoring students in experiential learning opportunities. 	Registrar, Director of SE and OCLA		TBC	TBC
14	Encourage UCC WIL staff to engage with WIL professional associations (e.g., ASET, WACE, Global WIL), WIL literature, and conduct WIL research	<p>Response: This has been supported and will continue to be supported. Professional staff development is very important and will always be considered. These associations offer Best Practice Guidelines on many forms of WIL and can support staff to integrate these.</p>				
		<p>Actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Professional association membership is important and is a priority to the Career 	Registrar, Director of SE, and Head of Careers	Resource implications are primarily financial.	Q4 2021 – ASET membership is complete.	Ongoing – data insights will provide evidence to inform further expansion of WACE membership institution wide.

		Services staff. WIL research and writing is also being supported.		Professional associations are expensive.	WACE membership will be implemented for 2 staff on a pilot basis Q4 2021 as a pilot. Data insights will provide the university feedback on the quality and benefit of WACE membership.	
		2. ASET membership has already been implemented in 2021, with WACE being investigated – budget is an issue.	Registrar, Director of SE, and Head of Careers	WACE has an institutional membership fee at 4000 Canadian Dollars.	Q4 2021	Head of Careers is offering a work around solution on a pilot basis for 2021-22, at 1000 Canadian Dollars for 2x staff members of CS.

¹ This column includes the response received to the recommendations. Please feel free to update or add to this section if required.

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

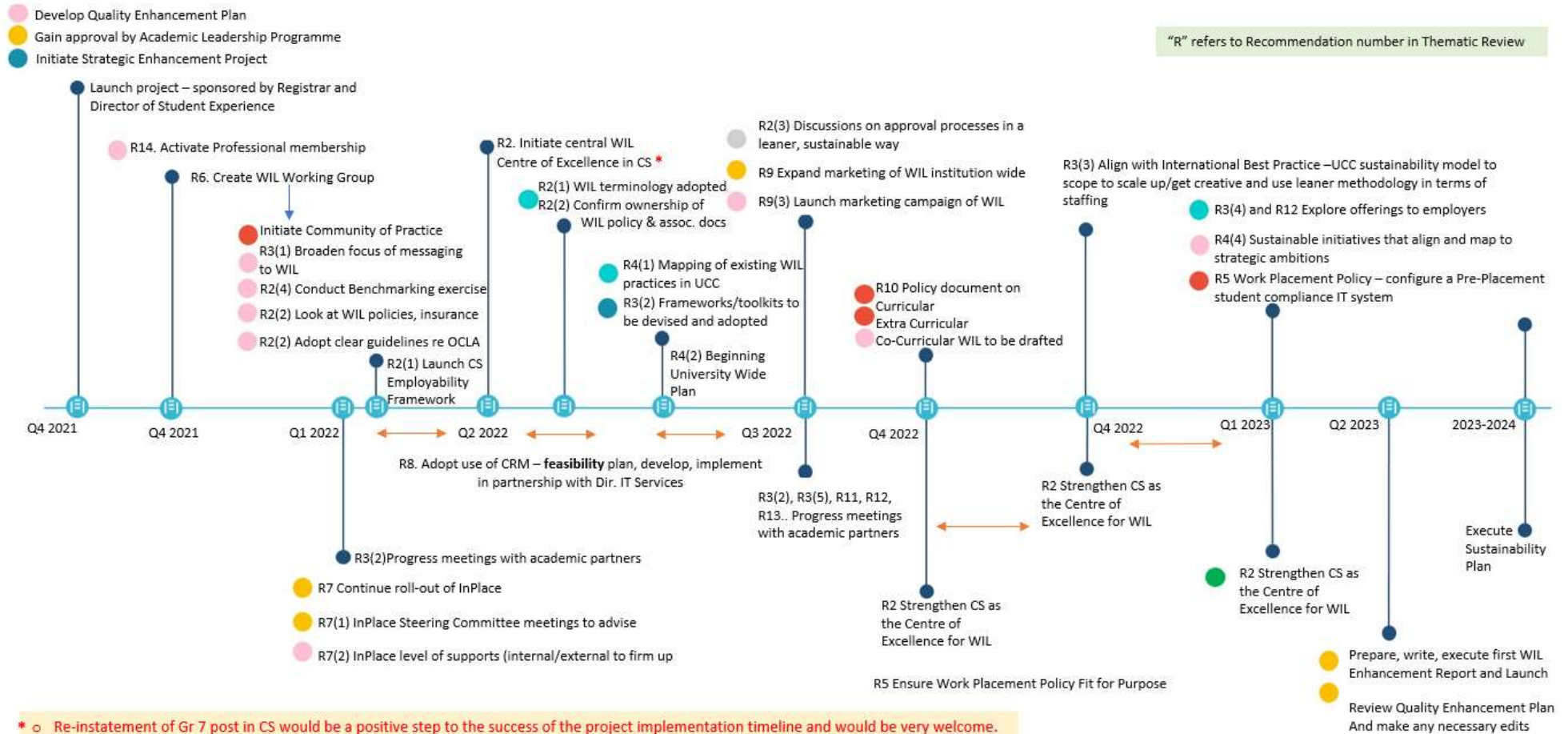
³ Resources – the financial or human resources required to implement the recommendation

⁴ Interim milestone dates can be included here

SUMMARY NOTES:

- The work associated with this QEP, which is highly contingent on collaboration with Heads of Colleges, and others, will be best adopted as a **Strategic Enhancement Project** under the sponsorship of Registrar and Head of Student Experience with a view to using such titling as a way to give institutional visibility, call to action and commitment to support efforts to advance the recommendations.
- The Director of Quality Enhancement Unit has inputted greatly into this Roadmap.
- There is a strategic link between this work and the **University Rankings** work.
- Each of the recommendations above are organised by the recommendations of the Thematic Review of Work Placement, however a more streamlined approach to the advancement of the recommendations is outlined below, in the **Roadmap to Success – Timeline view**.
- Would be grateful for ALF to review this QEP before sending to Quality Enhancement Committee for approval.

Strategic Enhancement Project – Draft Timeline



Signed:

Mr. Paul Moriarty, Director of Student Experience

Prof. Stephen Byrne, Interim Registrar, and Sponsor of Strategic Enhancement Project