

University of Limerick

2023

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**Annual Quality Report University of Lir**  
**Reporting Period 2021-2022**

University of Limerick

2023

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**Annual Quality Report University of  
Limerick**

**PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM**

**Reporting Period 2021-2022**

## PREFACE

The **Annual Quality Report (AQR)**; formerly AIQR) forms part of Quality and Qualifications Ireland's (QQI) quality assurance (QA) framework of engagement with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The AQR provides documentary evidence of the development and evolution of each institution's internal quality system. It provides QQI with assurance that internal QA procedures have been established and are being implemented consistent with regulatory requirements.

The AQR, particularly part A, should assist with **document management** in the institutional review process and will facilitate institutions in providing review teams with procedural QA documentation in preparation for the external review process. It is an important part of the evidence base considered by external **review teams** as part of QQI's CINNTE cycle of institutional reviews, demonstrating that the institution's internal QA system is aligned with QQI's Core and relevant Sector- and Topic-specific Statutory QA Guidelines, and with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area 2015 (ESG). It enables the review team to satisfy itself of compliance with these requirements for the purpose of the institutional review process.

Each AQR is **published in full on QQI's website**, providing transparency on the HEIs' assurance and enhancement of quality to external stakeholders. (As such, institutions should ensure that their submissions do not contain any data that they consider to be commercially sensitive.) Collectively, the AQRs comprise a single national repository of quality assurance practice in Irish higher education institutions.

Each year, QQI produces a synthesis report of the key themes highlighted across the AQRs, primarily arising from Part B of the reports.

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## Guidelines on Completing the Report

The AQR is aligned with QQI's Core, Sector and Topic-specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines and with the ESG (2015). A mapping of the ESG to QQI Core QA Guidelines is included in Table 1 below; the structure of Part A of this report template aligns with the first column of the table. Additional guidance on completing this template and reference material is included in each section. Institutions should adhere to this guidance and have regard to QQI Core, Sector and Topic-specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines. **The guide text within each section should be deleted before submission of the report.**

### Submission Process and Timeline

The deadline for submission of the AQR each year is in February of the relevant year, with the call for submission sent to institutions in November of the preceding year. Once the call for submission has been made, QQI will provide access to QQI's provider portal, QHub, to the designated institution contact(s) to facilitate submission of the report. Through QHub, each institution will have access to an editable version of its AQR for the previous reporting period. This document can then be amended/updated to reflect any changes or developments that occurred during the current reporting period before submitting the final report to QQI.

### Completing the AQR

- When completing the AQR template, all relevant colleagues in the institution should be consulted.
- Consider whether external audiences will be able to understand the terminology used (particularly local abbreviations and acronyms); it may be helpful to include a glossary.
- Aim to avoid duplication in the report - where information is relevant to more than one section, the first mention may be referenced in subsequent sections.
- Provide reflections on what worked well, but also what may have been tried but did not work.

### Report Structure

#### Part A: Internal QA System

Part A of the AQR comprises a record of each institution's current QA policies and procedures and should provide links to those policies and procedures. Private HEIs may provide links to the policies and procedures approved by QQI during initial access to validation (IAV) or reengagement. It is the responsibility of each HEI to ensure before submission of the AQR that all links are correct and functional, and that the policies and procedures referred to are the most up-to-date versions available. Given that the AQR is submitted in respect of a discrete reporting period, it may be helpful for institutions to establish a SharePoint/OneDrive folder (or similar) for each reporting period that contains the current versions of their policies and procedures, and that hyperlinks to these versions of the documents be provided in the AQR

Part A is to be completed only if there have been **material** changes to QA policies and procedures during the reporting period. Such changes may include the approval and implementation of new policies or procedures, or significant amendments to existing ones.

#### Part B: Quality Assurance (QA) and Quality Enhancement (QE)

Part B of the AQR documents and captures QA activities, developments and enhancements undertaken by institutions **during the reporting period** and their **impact**. Insofar as is possible, institutions should demonstrate in Part B how plans set out in the previous AQR were progressed during the reporting period - these may be plans linked to strategic objectives, to reengagement advices, or to institutional review recommendations.

#### Case Studies

In each reporting period, QQI may request updates on specific thematic areas or may invite the institution to submit case studies in response to specific topics. Further, institutions may include case studies to share good practice on topics of their choosing, demonstrating QA and QE in action. In formulating case studies, institutions are encouraged to reflect on and highlight areas that may be of interest to other institutions and would benefit from wider dissemination. Further guidance is provided in Part B.

## Links to Reference Documents Cited in this Template<sup>1</sup>

### Legislation

- [Qualifications and Quality Assurance \(Education and Training\) Act 2012 \(as amended\)](#)
- [Regional Technical Colleges Act 1992 \(as amended\)](#)
- [Technological Universities Act 2018](#)
- [Universities Act 1997](#)

### QQI Documents

#### Statutory QA Guidelines (QAG)

- [Core QAG](#)
- [Sector-specific QAG for Independent/Private Providers](#)
- [Sector-specific QAG for Designated Awarding Bodies](#)
- [Sector-specific QAG for Institutes of Technology](#)
- [Topic-specific QAG for Providers of Statutory Apprenticeship Programmes](#)
- [Topic-specific QAG for Providers of Research Degree Programmes](#)
- [Topic-specific QAG for Blended Learning](#)

#### Other QQI Policy Documents

- [QQI's Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes, and Joint Awards, 2012](#)
- [QQI's Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Education and Training to International Learners, 2015](#)
- [QQI Policy Restatement on Access, Transfer and Progression, 2015](#)

### Other National/International References

- [European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area \(2015\)](#)
- [IHEQN Guidelines on Collaborative Provision](#)
- [National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland](#)
- [Ireland's Framework of Good Practice for Research Degree Programmes, 2019](#)
- [HEA National Framework for Doctoral Education](#)
- [The Salzburg Principles](#)
- [The Salzburg II Recommendations](#)
- [SOLAS Code of Practice for Employers and Apprentices](#)
- [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#)

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<sup>1</sup> These links will be updated as further guidance documents are published.

## Glossary

<b>AACSB</b>	<b>Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business</b>
AC	Academic Council
AHECS	Association of Higher Education Careers Services
AHSS	Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Science
AMBA	Association of Masters in Business Administration
APR	Academic Programme Review
APRC	Academic Programme Review Committee
AQR	Annual Quality Report
ATOTM	Any Time of the Month
AVPAA	Associate Vice President Academic Affairs
B&E	Buildings & Estates Division
BI	Business Intelligence
CAF	Contract Assessment Process
CAFM	Computer Aided Facilities Management
CAO	Central Applications Office
CECD	Cooperative Education and Careers Division
CO	Chief Officer
Co-op	Cooperative Education
CoP	Community of Practice
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CRM	Customer Relationship Manager
CS	Corporate Secretary
CTL	Centre for Transformative Learning
CWELL	Community Wellness, Empowerment, Leadership & Life Skills
DAB	Designated Awarding Body
DARE	Disability Access Route to Education
DES	Department of Education and Skills
DLSH	Digital Learning Support Hub
DPO	Data Protection Officer
ECE	Department of Electronic and Computer Engineering
EDF	Ethnic Diversity Forum

EDI	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
EFMD	European Foundation for Management Development
EHS	Faculty of Education and Health Science
ENQA	European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
EQUIS	EFMD Quality Improvement System
ESG	European Standards and Guidelines
FAQs	Frequently Asked Questions
FETAC	Further Education and Training Awards Council
FINIFOR	Forested Island North-South Research Programme
FOI	Freedom of Information
GA	Governing Authority
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
GPS	Graduate and Professional Studies
HAPPEE	The Health Alliance for Practice-Based professional Education and Engagement
HEAR	Higher Education Access Route
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HR	Human Resources
HSE	Health Services Executive
ICDF	Integrated Curriculum Development Framework
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ICTLC	Information & Communications Technology Learning Centre
IFWEA	International Federation of Workers Education Associations
INQAAHE	International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education
IPE	Inter Professional Education
IRQ	Irish Register of Qualifications
ITD	Information Technology Division
ITSIRT	IT Security Incident Response Team
IUA	Irish Universities Association
IWAMD	Irish World Academy of Music and Dance
K4C	Knowledge for Change

KBS	Kemmy Business School
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
LEDP	Limerick Enterprise Development Partnership
LevUL Up	Digital Skills Development Programme
LTAS	Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy
MA	Masters of Art
MFA	Multi-Factor Authentication
MIC	Mary Immaculate College
MLC	Maths Learning Centre
MoA	Memorandum of Agreement
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSS	Module Satisfaction Survey
NFQ	National Framework of Qualifications
NIST	National institute of Standards and Technology
OCR	Optical Character Recognition
OVRP	Office of the Vice President Research
PAF	Proposal Authorisation Form
PASS	Personal Academic Support System
PCC	Plassey Campus Centre
PCs	Personal Computers
PDP	Provost/Deputy President
PDRS	Performance and Development Review System
PESS	Department of Physical Education and Sports Science
PMSS	Professional, Managerial Support Staff
PSLC	Peer-Supported Learning Centre
QA	Quality Assurance
QE	Quality Enhancement
QIP	Quality Improvement Plan
QMS	Quality Management System
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
QRG	Quality Review Group
QSU	Quality Support Unit

QUB	Queens University Belfast
RECs	Research Ethics Committee
RPAS	Research Proposal Authorisation System
RWC	Regional Writing Centre
SDGs	UN Sustainable Development Goals
SEN	Faculty of Science & Engineering
SESU	Student Engagement and Success Unit
SET	Self-Evaluation of Teaching
SFI	Science Foundation Ireland
SI	Student Record System
SLC	Science Learning Centre
SSPR	Self-Service Password Reset
STELA	Student Evaluation and Learning Analytics
SUSI	Student Universal Support Ireland
TCD	Trinity College Dublin
TTO	Technology Transfer Office
UCD	University College Dublin
UDL	Universal Design for Learning
UL	University of Limerick
ULREG	University of Limerick Research Ethics Governance Committee
ULTAC	University Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee
VLE	Virtual Learning Environment
VP	Vice President
WG	Working Group

## PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM

Table 1

Table 1 Mapping of ESG (2015) to QQI QA Guidelines (QAG)				
AQR Part A Section	QQI QAG Core Sub-section No.	QAG Core Sub-section Title	ESG Standard No.	ESG Standard Title
1.0 - Internal QA Framework	2.1	Governance and Management of Quality	1.1	Policy for Quality Assurance
	2.2	Documented Approach to Quality Assurance		
2.0 - Programme Development and Delivery	2.3	Programmes of Education and Training	1.2	Design and Approval of Programmes
4.0 - QA of Research Activities and Programmes			1.9	On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes
8.0 - Monitoring and Periodic Review				
5.0 - Staff Recruitment, Development and Support	2.4	Staff Recruitment, Management and Development	1.5	Teaching Staff
2.3 - Teaching, Learning and Assessment	2.5	Teaching and Learning	1.3	Student-centred Teaching, Learning and Assessment
	2.6	Assessment of Learners		
3.0 - Learner Resources and Supports	2.7	Supports for learners	1.6	Learning Resources and Student Support
6.0 - Information and Data Management	2.8	Information and Data Management	1.7	Information Management
7.0 - Public Information and Communication	2.9	Public Information and Communication	1.8	Public Information
2.0 - Programme Delivery and Development	2.10	Other Parties Involved in Education and Training	1.9	On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes
8.0 - Monitoring and Periodic Review			1.2	Design and Approval of Programmes
9.0 - Details of Arrangements with Third Parties				
2.0 - Programme Development and Delivery	2.11	Self-evaluation, Monitoring and Review	1.9	On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes
8.0 - Monitoring and Periodic Review			1.10	Cyclical External Quality Assurance
4.0 - QA of Research Activities and Programmes	QAG for Providers of Research Degree Programmes			

## Introduction and Overview of Institution

This is the AQR for the University of Limerick for the reporting period **1 September 2021 - 31 August 2022**.

It is to be submitted by **Friday, 24 February 2023**.

The AQR has been approved by the UL Quality Committee, the UL Executive and is submitted by **Sinéad O’Sullivan, Director of Quality**.

### University of Limerick

The University of Limerick (UL) was founded as The National Institute for Higher Education, Limerick in 1972. In 1989, it was classified as the University of Limerick and became the first institution since the establishment of Irish independence to be newly designated a university. The University is one of Ireland’s youngest. The University profile is available [here](#).

UL has undergone relatively rapid growth. In 1989, the University had 3,490 students and currently has 18,489<sup>2</sup> students. The campus is situated on 366 hectares of land, making it geographically one of the largest universities in Ireland, and it is situated five kilometres from Limerick City. The University’s age and location have facilitated the development of a range of modern cultural and sporting facilities. The University has four faculties which have subsidiary academic units, namely (i) Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences; (ii) Business (Kemmy Business School); (iii) Education and Health Sciences; and (iv) Science and Engineering.

The University of Limerick has pioneered several initiatives that are unique in the context of Irish education, including cooperative education. Under this initiative, students undertake a six to eight-month work placement. These placements take place across 30 countries in five continents. This may contribute to a high level of employment amongst UL graduates.

The University’s current strategic plan, which is for the period 2019-2024, sets out a mission ‘to build on the expertise of our scholars in creating, harnessing and imparting knowledge for the benefit of our students and the enrichment of our community’. The strategy is broken into five goals: i) Transforming Education; ii) Research Excellence; iii) Internationalisation; iv) Engagement with the city and the region; and v) a programme of continual improvement. Central to the University’s strategic plan is its quality policy which focuses on fostering a quality culture informed by international best practice.

### Development and Approval of AQR

Operational responsibility for completion of the AQR rests with the Quality Support Unit. The Director of Quality is responsible for submission of the AQR to QQI. Upon receipt of the report template, the Director of Quality confers with the Provost and other relevant offices/officers as appropriate. The consultation and development process includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Part one is reviewed by QSU to ensure content is relevant and up-to-date and also to include any updates for the reporting period.
- A copy of the report template is circulated to the UL Quality Committee. All members are asked to contribute relevant case studies for inclusion.
- An email is sent to the University Executive and senior officers requesting case studies for inclusion in the AQR.
- Relevant data is extracted from annual support unit quality reports for inclusion in the AQR.
- Relevant data is requested from academic and professional service units for inclusion in the report.
- Weekly progress update meetings are held internally in QSU to monitor progress.

At the end of January, a draft AQR is circulated to the UL Quality Committee for review and feedback. Once final amendments are made, the AQR is circulated to Academic Council and Executive. The finalised report is circulated to Governing Authority for noting.

A documented operational procedure for completion of the AQR is available on the QSU SharePoint site.

## 1.0 Internal QA Framework

### 1.1 Governance and Management of Quality

Overall authority for the affairs of the University is vested in the [Governing Authority](#), whose functions include approving high-level strategy and policy, statutes and regulations. The Provost/Deputy President (PDP) reports directly to the Governing Authority on all quality-related issues. Matters relating to internal audit or risk management are dealt with by the [GA Audit and Risk](#) sub-committee.

[Executive Committee](#), which is accountable to the President, is the senior management committee with responsibility for developing strategic policies and procedures, monitoring corporate performance and ensuring that all aspects of the corporate function operate with optimal efficiency and effectiveness.

[Academic Council](#) controls UL's academic affairs. It oversees academic awards, standards and regulations and approves all new programmes and changes to existing programmes. Chaired by the President, Academic Council comprises senior officers, deans of faculty, heads of academic departments, Students' Union officers, assistant deans of academic affairs and elected staff representatives.

Reporting to the Chief Corporate Officer, the [Corporate Secretary](#) has responsibility for a number of areas including: Management of the University governance function including attendance at Governing Authority meetings and management of all Governing Authority Committees; Ensuring Compliance with the Universities Act 1997; Development, revision and distribution of University statutes, regulations, corporate policies and procedures; Legislative Compliance; Management of University corporate legal affairs; Management of the University's Visual Arts Collection; Management of the University's Risk Management Function; Responsibility for the University's Internal Audit Function; Management of Recruitment & Appointment Processes for the President, Academic Vice Presidents and Deans; Management of a range of internal appeals processes; Records Management; Management of the development, progression and completion of various corporate-wide projects.

As per the [academic organisational chart](#), UL comprises four faculties and 23 academic departments, together with research centres, institutes, and externally funded research centres which are aligned to host faculties. Overall responsibility for the [academic faculties](#) resides with the faculty executive deans, who report to the President. Each dean is supported in his/her role by heads of academic schools/departments, a faculty manager, an Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs, an Assistant Dean of Research and an Assistant Dean of Internationalisation. All academic members of a faculty, together with student representatives, comprise the faculty board, which meets regularly to discuss academic matters, such as proposals for new programmes.

All UL professional service (support) units report to a senior member of Executive Committee. Full details of all support units with links to individual functional areas are available [here](#).

The University of Limerick (UL) strategic plan [UL@50 Strategic Plan 2019-2024](#) articulates institutional mission, vision and strategic priorities. The overall strategic plan is supported by (a) the [UL Equality and Human Rights Strategy](#), which details objectives, actions and expected outcomes for 13 grounds of Equality and Human Rights under 10 themes: Governance; Leadership; Staff Experience; Educational Experience; Research Experience; Campus Development; Events, Clubs and Societies; Public Relations, Marketing and Communications; Technology; and Procurement and Budgeting; (b) our [teaching, learning and assessment strategy](#), which includes a specific commitment to quality in all our activities; and (c) our [Research Strategy](#) (*Wisdom for Action, 2022-2027*) These strategic documents each have associated implementation plans, which are subject to regular monitoring and review.

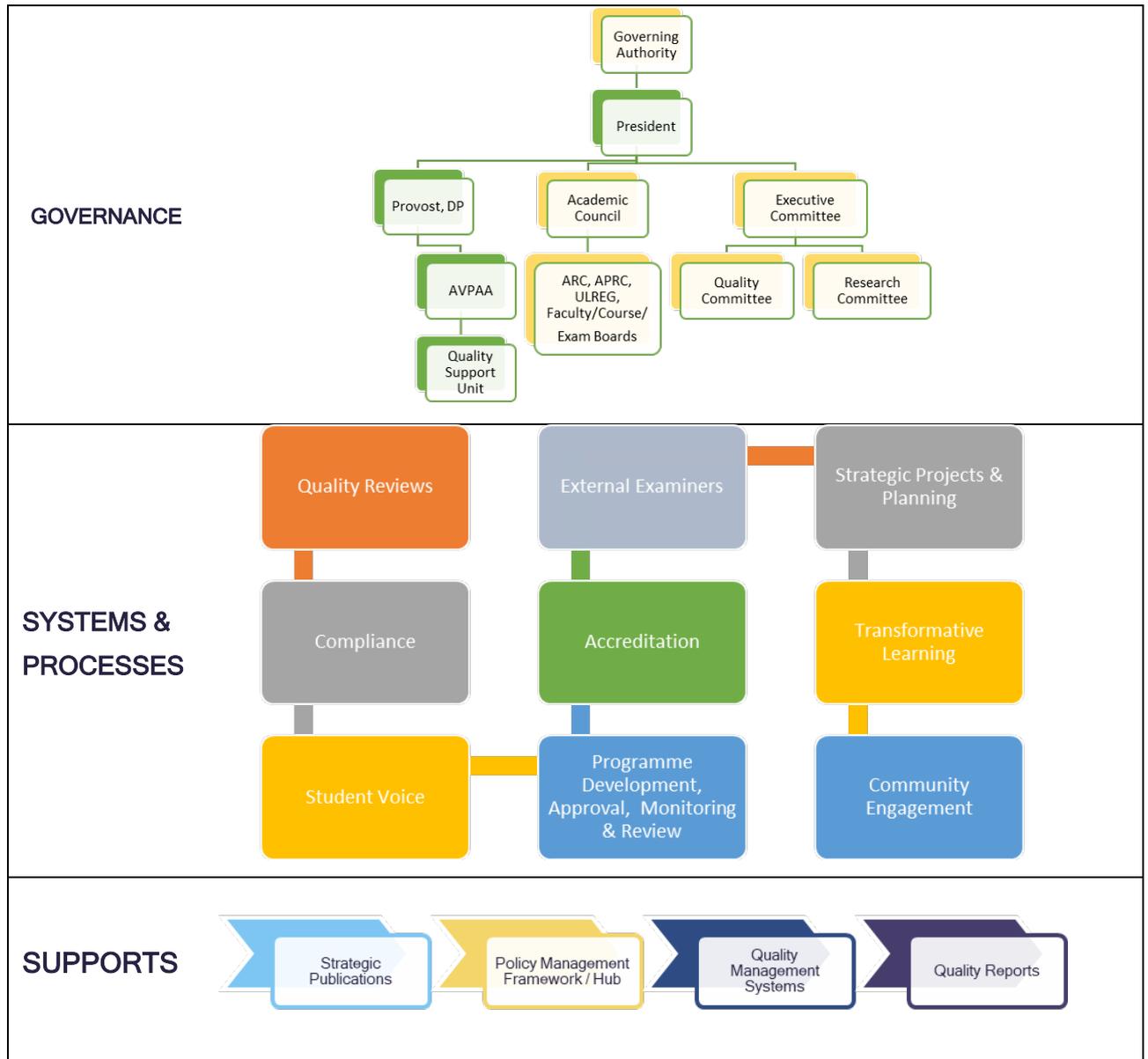
The University's decision-making processes and procedures are outlined on the Corporate Secretary's website [here](#).

The University is committed to assuring and enhancing the quality of its activities and to fostering a quality culture throughout the institution. The University recognises the pursuit of quality, and hence excellence, as a core value. Responsibility for the quality of our activities rests at institutional, local and individual level. The University Quality Policy is available [here](#). The University's Quality Manual is available [here](#). UL's [risk management policy](#) and associated processes also represent a core university system linking risk, quality and strategy.

UL's institutional arrangements for developing, monitoring, reviewing, enhancing and managing the quality of its activities are multi-layered and multifaceted. They are informed by national acts, statutory quality guidelines and international good practice and are appropriately underpinned by [UL policies](#). The arrangements have evolved and are tailored to institutional organisational structure and mission. They are developed and overseen by relevant institutional and local unit-level governance committees and are reviewed by various means, including internal quality reviews and periodic institutional (external) reviews.

The University's [Policy Management Framework](#) sets out a standard set of principles to follow when developing, implementing and managing institutional policies with a view to promoting a consistent approach to both the development process and format of policies across the University.

## UL Internal Quality Assurance Governance, Systems and Supports



### External Quality Assurance



## **Representation of Learners and External Stakeholders**

The student voice plays a central role in UL's quality assurance framework. Students are represented on all of the key decision-making committees of the University (Governing Authority, Academic Council, Faculty Boards, Course Boards, Course Review Boards).

The Student Representative forum provides an opportunity for dialogue and discussion, addressing issues affecting students and enhances links between students and the University. Student Representatives influence change across the campus, from access, facilities, academic delivery, supports and services. They work with the University and become part of the decision-making forum. Elections are held annually for student representatives by UL Student Life, the representative body for UL's undergraduate student population.

Students also participate in the University's quality review process. All review panels comprise a student representative and external stakeholders. External stakeholders are also invited to meet with the quality review group for every site visit.

The Academic Council of the University of Limerick is charged under the University of Limerick Act with ensuring academic standards and the quality of all awards made by the University. In accordance with the University's quality assurance procedures, Academic Council appoints external examiners to all taught programmes to provide an independent view and report on student performance, programme outcomes and proposed awards. Academic Council examination boards will consider recommendations from faculty examination boards and submissions from both internal and external examiners before determining students' final awards.

## 1.2 Linked Providers, Collaborative and Transnational Provision

### Collaborative Provision & Transnational Delivery of Programmes

The University's policy on [Collaborative and Transnational Provision](#) sets out a University-wide approach to collaborative and transnational arrangements in line with the strategic plan and related faculty and divisional strategies. The policy outlines the principles that the University use to evaluate proposals for partnerships with institutions. The policy and its associated procedures provide direction to staff in evaluating complex proposals, drafting agreements and developing new and existing collaborations, thereby encouraging consistency, transparency and good practice across UL.

### Delivery to International Learners

In July 2015, QQI published a Code of Practice for the Provision of Programmes of Education and Training to International Learners. The Code of Practice (or 'the Code'), which both draws upon and informs international effective practice, can be accessed [here](#) or from the [QQI website](#). The Code represents a set of threshold requirements particular to the provision of education and training to international learners. In the introductory text, QQI indicates that compliance with the Code should be integrated into the provider's quality assurance policies and procedures.

An evidence-based overview of (a) how compliance with the Code is integrated into UL's quality assurance policies and procedures and (b) how UL complies with each of the specific criteria included in the Code is available [here](#). <https://www.ul.ie/quality/compliance>

### Linked Providers

In the context of the 2012 Education and Training Act and in its role as a designated awarding body, the University accredits a number of programmes offered by [linked providers](#). The University's linked provision arrangements are guided by its [Linked Provider Framework](#). The framework covers linked provider approval, annual monitoring and periodic review processes, which include clear governance guidelines.

As a designated awarding body, the University has established relationships with two educational linked providers: [Mary Immaculate College](#) (MIC), Limerick and the [Garda College](#), Templemore, Co. Tipperary.

QA procedures for engaging with linked providers are governed by memorandums of understanding and agreement (MoUs/MoAs) between the University and individual linked providers. The MoUs/MoAs, and hence the exact profile and scope of the resultant QA oversight, are tailored to best suit individual institutional contexts and are approved ultimately by Academic Council and Executive Committee.

## 2.0 Programme Development and Delivery

### 2.1 Programme Development and Approval

In accordance with QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guideline 3.1 (Programme development and approval) and European Standards and Guidelines ([ESG](#)) no. 2 (Design and approval of programmes), the University follows a well-established, rigorous process for developing and approving new programmes. The process and its related procedures and guidelines are documented internally on SharePoint. All new programmes must align with the institutional strategic plan, with justification included in approval documentation, and must comply with the National Framework of Qualifications ([NFQ](#)). The NFQ level, award type, learning outcomes, entry requirements, total credits, calculated credits, mode of delivery (full-time, part-time, blended, distance, evening, etc.), progression points and core pathway must all be specified on the programme submission application form for subsequent consideration by the approving groups. The University's Awards Title Framework is available [here](#).

The IRQ is a statutory return, which is currently compiled and uploaded to the QQI portal by the Quality Support Unit and approved by the Provost. It is a resource that provides public confirmation of the formal, technical relationship between a qualification and related programmes and the NFQ and is published online at [www.irq.ie](http://www.irq.ie). The IRQ is a comprehensive and authoritative list of all quality-assured education and training qualifications recognised on the Irish National Framework of Qualifications. In signing up to the [Joint-Sectoral Protocol between Designated Awarding Bodies \(DABs\) and Quality and Qualifications Ireland for the Inclusion of Qualifications within the National Framework of Qualifications](#), DABs endorse it as the basis for determining the inclusion within the NFQ of awards of designated awarding bodies, in accordance with Section 55B of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance Act (2012) as amended.

In accordance with the protocol, signatory designated awarding bodies will publish their awards included within the NFQ to the IRQ. Where QQI requires any further information on a data upload to the IRQ, it will consult with the relevant designated awarding body. The publication of an award on the IRQ confirms that a relevant designated awarding body and QQI have agreed that it is appropriate that such an award be included within the NFQ. In line with EU requirements QQI has also published the IRQ data for Higher Education programmes at European level on the Europass Qualification Dataset Register at [www.europass.ie](http://www.europass.ie) making this information visible at EU level.

New programmes are formally approved in five stages by five different groups: the host department, host faculty, Executive Committee, Academic Programme Review Committee (APRC) and Academic Council. Academic Council approves new programmes on the advice of APRC. Students and representative stakeholders of the academic units (faculty and department/school) proposing the programme are represented on Academic Council.

Procedures for institution-wide programme design, approval and modification are stored on SharePoint. The approval process procedures and guidelines, including

defined criteria, are documented in *Procedures for Processing Programme Proposals* and *Guidelines to Ensure Quality and Consistency of Submissions*, respectively. Joint or dual degrees are subject to the provisions of UL's policy on [Collaborative and Transnational Provision](#).

Following approval by Academic Council, the modification or creation of programme records is maintained by the Programme Management Office of the Academic Registry Division. Further information is available [here](#).

## Apprenticeship Programmes

The provision of statutory apprenticeship programmes is an aspect of the University's work-based learning delivery and collaborative provision. The University's [Policy and Procedures for the Provision of Apprenticeship Programmes](#) provides direction to staff and potential partners when considering the provision of statutory apprenticeships. Adherence to the policy and its related procedures assures that statutory apprenticeship programmes are developed and delivered in accordance with statutory requirements and those of the University of Limerick. The policy is guided by [QQI's Topic Specific Quality Assurance \(QA\) Guidelines for Statutory Apprenticeship Programmes](#) and [QQI's Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes and Joint Awards](#) as key external reference points but is also interdependent with other University policies and procedures relating to programme development, teaching, learning and assessment.

## 2.2 Admission, Progression, Recognition & Certification

The University's policies and procedures in relation to admission, progression and recognition of prior learning are informed by QQI's [Policy and Criteria for Access, Transfer and Progression in Relation to Learners for Providers of Further and Higher Education and Training](#).

The online prospectuses for [undergraduate](#) and [postgraduate](#) programmes and the [Graduate & Professional Studies](#) and [UL Global](#) websites specify the admission processes and entry criteria for the University's programme offerings. Programme award titles are aligned with the institution's [Award Titles Framework](#). The [Access and Widening Participation Policy](#) provides for entry mechanisms, programmes and support services that ensure equality of entry, participation and outcome for all student groups at the University. The [Recognition of Prior Learning Policy](#) complies with national and European principles on recognition and recognises all types of prior learning, including that acquired by formal, non-formal and informal routes. Appeals with regard to admissions decisions are managed under the admissions appeals process for [undergraduates](#) and [postgraduates](#).

The [Handbook of Academic Regulations and Procedures](#) specifies the regulations relating to learner admission (sections 1.2, 1.3, 5.3, 5.4), progression (4, 5.5, 5.6), recognition (1.4, 1.5, 2) and certification of awards (1.6, 5.2). The handbook is updated annually to ensure all regulations and procedures remain fit for purpose. Handbook updates are recommended by ARC and approved by Academic Council. The [Academic Programme Transfer Policy](#) specifies conditions under which students can apply to transfer between programmes internally or from a programme in another HEI.

The Institutional Research Officer and the ITD Business Intelligence & Reporting team gather statistics on student admission and progression. Reports on student progression per programme are compiled and presented to course directors, heads of department/school, faculty deans and Executive Committee.

In accordance with the Academic Programme Review Policy (which is covered in more detail in section 4.3), each programme's course review board is provided with the following sets of anonymised data, which they use in their annual and periodic programme review reports:

- Course data report, including:
  - Application data - CAO + international
  - New entrant CAO points - minimum and median
  - New entrant entry mode - DARE, FETAC, HEAR and mature
  - Student enrolment and progression data
  - First-year presence and progression after one year
  - Graduates by award level
- Course-specific results from the Student Exit Survey
- External examiner reports from the previous three academic years
- Graduate first destination reports
- All available annual programme review reports since the previous periodic review.

## 2.3 Procedures for Making Awards

The UL Academic Council approves the entry requirements, programmes of study and award titles of all degrees, diplomas and certificates that are offered by the University.

Programme learning outcomes and the curriculum designed to achieve those outcomes are articulated as part of the initial approval of a programme by Academic Council. These outcomes are mapped to the appropriate NFQ award descriptor. Learning outcomes for all modules are outlined in the University of Limerick [Book of Modules](#). Assessment of modules is based on the achievement of those learning outcomes.

Each student's performance is considered at the University Exam Board, and award recommendations are then considered at the next meeting of Academic Council.

Learners who successfully complete major, minor, supplemental or special-purpose awards receive a University of Limerick parchment fixed with the UL seal and endorsed by the UL President and Provost & Deputy President. Graduands in receipt of major, minor, supplemental or special-purpose awards are conferred at the next scheduled conferring ceremony. Unless otherwise approved by the Provost & Deputy President graduands in receipt of awards of less than 30 credits are conferred in absentia. Graduands in receipt of awards of 30 credits or greater will be invited to receive their award at the conferring ceremony.

Details of the University's procedures for certification of awards and their alignment with the National Framework of Qualifications is available on the university [website](#).

## 2.4 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

In line with **ESG 1.3 (Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment)**, active and collaborative learning forms a central element of UL's teaching, learning and assessment strategy. Given the diversity of programmes on offer at UL, programmes are delivered in many ways. In accordance with **ESG 1.3**, the mode of delivery is defined for all programme modules in the (new or revised) programme submission documentation approved by APRC/Academic Council (see last section). Academic regulation 1.4.3 (in the [Handbook of Academic Regulations and Procedures](#)) requires the academic staff member(s) to provide details to the students of the learning outcomes of the module, indicative grade descriptors corresponding to each grade, the criteria on which assessment is to be based, the minimum performance standard, the weighting allocated to each assessment instrument associated with the module and repeat assessment instrument(s) associated with the module. Programme assessment policy and procedures are clearly articulated in the Handbook of Academic Regulations and Procedures (in particular chapter 2, Marks and Standards).

The UL Academic Council is charged under the [Universities Act 1997](#) with ensuring academic standards and the quality of all awards made by the University. In accordance with the University's quality assurance procedures, Academic Council appoints external examiners to all taught programmes to provide an independent view and report on student performance, programme outcomes and proposed awards. Academic Council examination boards will consider recommendations from faculty examination boards and submissions from both internal and external examiners before determining students' final awards. The University's External Examiners Policy is available [here](#).

Under the terms of the University's [Academic Programme Review Policy](#), all taught programmes are subject to formal annual review by the relevant course review board with a commitment to periodic review (usually every five years) by a panel that includes external personnel. Master's and PhD theses by research are monitored by means of an annual progression and monitoring system involving research review panels within each academic unit. The theses are examined and reported upon by internal and external examiners.

Working with UL's four faculties, [Graduate & Professional Studies](#) (GPS) manages the development and delivery of flexible and relevant professional and personal development programmes. GPS uses a hybrid model: academic schools/departments retain ownership of courses and academic material, and GPS provides the support, procedures and processes that enable the delivery of flexible learning pathways.

Students are systematically involved in programme delivery and assessment-related activity. Programme boards include student representation (with students absenting themselves when exam results are discussed), as do associated QA oversight fora, including Faculty Board, Academic Council and Governing Authority. Institutional-level student feedback is collected systematically through the annual student [exit survey](#) and the [module satisfaction survey](#) as well as through a range of other survey activities, including, but not limited to, the [studentsurvey.ie](#), the UL postgraduate research experience survey and surveys of international students. Survey findings are

considered, as appropriate, at local level (by individual academic staff, programme boards, heads of department) and at institutional level (by deans, Executive Committee, Academic Council), and summary reports are made publicly available.

A checklist for course directors in planning for blended learning was developed during the Covid pandemic. [Programme Planning Checklist Course Director.pdf \(ul.ie\)](#). The checklist provides signposting to the key tasks involved in the planning, development and coordination of programmatic approach to blended learning during the academic year 2020/21. The intention is that these actions will provide for a more coherent and consistent student experience across the programme and is designed to complement the [Guidelines](#) for preparing teaching and learning.

### 3.0 Learner Resources and Support

The provision of module resources is the responsibility of relevant academic and support units. Relevant examples of the latter include ITD, Buildings and Estates, the Library and the Student Affairs Division. Where review processes (course review board annual programme review, external examiner reports, student surveys) point to a shortfall in a programme's learning resources and/or learner supports, the course director liaises with the head of department/school to rectify the situation.

[Academic Registry](#) is the main provider of administrative services (e.g. maintains student records, administers end-of-semester examinations, issues graduate parchments and transcripts, and develops and administers procedures for complying with the University's academic regulations and marks and standards) to units running programmes of study and their students. Academic Registry is subject to periodic quality review and, through its QMS, regular QMS auditing.

The main learner support units (Access Office, Mature Student Office, Disability Support Services, Counselling, Chaplaincy, Student Health Centre and Student Support Officers) reside in the [Student Affairs](#) umbrella division. The [Access Office](#) works to promote and support the participation of students from groups that have been under-represented in the third-level education sector. The [Mature Student Office](#) supports mature students who are registered on full-time undergraduate programmes and students who are registered on the Mature Student Access Certificate. The office helps to ease these students' transition into full-time higher education. Students with additional requirements are supported by [Disability Support Services](#), which provides a range of services to students, including [assistive technology](#). The Disability Support Services [handbook](#) provides detailed information for current and prospective students. Pastoral care is provided to students through the Personal Academic Support System ([PASS](#)), Counselling, Chaplaincy and the two students' unions ([Student Life](#) and [Postgraduate Students' Union](#)). The Student Health Centre's service is provided to registered students only.

Undergraduate programmes include either a six-to-eight-month cooperative education placement ('[Co-op](#)') or practice placement (clinical or teaching). Both types of placement are formal, compulsory and academically accredited elements of the programme. For programmes with professional placements regulated in part by an accrediting body such as the Medical Council or Teaching Council, placements are restricted to sites that are recognised by that accrediting body. In addition to Co-op, language students may undertake an Erasmus placement at a European partner institution.

The [Careers Service](#) (a section of the Cooperative Education & Careers Division) offers support to students and recent graduates in developing and implementing successful career plans and facilitates the recruitment process for students and employers.

The remit of the University's [Access, Equality and Student Affairs Committee](#) includes ensuring that "policies prepared are in accordance with good practice, student equality and diversity principles, and student, University and legislative requirements".

Led by the [UL Global](#), the University's compliance with the Code of Practice for Provision of Education and Training to International Learners is documented [here](#).

The [Centre for Transformative Learning](#) offers a number of [initiatives to students](#) to support their learning, including the [First Seven Weeks programme](#), [study skills and exam technique workshops](#), and a number of [student support centres](#) (the five learner support centres listed in section 6.2.2 and [SESU](#)).

HR's [Learning, Development and Equal Opportunities](#) section provides [training and development courses](#) to support the development of research skills for research and academic staff. Popular programmes include networking for research, grant writing, communicating research effectively, research ethics and PhD supervision. In addition, HR operates a research coaching programme, which brings together those involved in research to exchange experience and provide each other with guidance and support in achieving research outputs, including publications, books and research grants.

The [Buildings and Estates Department](#) manages and allocates space on campus in accordance with the University's [Space Management Protocol](#) (approved by Executive Committee). Buildings and Estates ensures that all aspects of the University's infrastructure are safe.

The Glucksman Library, which is managed and quality assured by the [Library and Information Services Division](#), provides information resources and facilities to students, staff and researchers.

In relation to research, laboratory space and associated equipment falls under the auspices of the individual academic unit and/or research institute in which the facilities reside.

As part of their periodic quality reviews, academic, research and support units evaluate and report upon the adequacy of their physical premises, equipment and facilities. Any recommendations put forward to a unit by the reviewers are itemised in the unit's post-review quality improvement plan.

Students are asked to give feedback on teaching and learning facilities. The Exit Survey asks students about the appropriateness of the learning environment while the MSS asks students to rate how they feel about their modules' resources, rooms and facilities.

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The institutional [Safety Statement](#) provides a framework for the organisation of safety throughout the University. The statement includes guidelines for personnel with delegated safety duties who will, by their actions and encouragement to others, ensure that the University continues to be a safe place in which to work and learn. The [Health & Safety Essentials](#) booklet, to be read in conjunction with the Safety Statement, provides guidance on the very broad scope of health & safety at work. The purpose of the booklet is to summarise the main points of the Safety Statement (Part 1) and provide information on a number of general health and safety issues relevant to the whole institution (Part 2). Further details of health and safety policies and procedures,

including Garda vetting and foreign police clearance, are available on the [Health and Safety](#) page of the HR [website](#).

### **Blended Learning**

CTL has provided supports and resources for students in order to help them to maximise their engagement and enhance their experience of teaching, learning and assessment in the online context. Students did not choose to experience their learning in the remote setting and consequently for the majority this is a new and somewhat daunting experience for them. The first resource developed was a set of guidelines on [Learning online in UL](#) which has an accompanying [short recording](#) to ease accessibility for students.

The Enhancing Digital Teaching and Learning (EDTL) three-year project is aimed at enhancing the digital attributes and educational experiences of Irish university students through mainstreaming digital in teaching and learning activities in Irish Universities, by addressing the professional development of all who teach or support teaching and learning. Supports have been developed to develop and enhance students' experience of online teaching learning and assessment. Resources developed for students by students include a video and [set of guidelines](#) on how students can best plan for effective learning during Covid-19; [online exams advice for students](#); student success for online assessment for each of the faculties [KBS](#), [SEN](#), [AHSS](#) and [EHS](#)

EDTL @ UL workshops will be available soon as part of the UL Library's Digital Skills programme for students, #Take1step. These digital skills workshops will cover a range of topics and will be available between academic week 4 and week 6.

The five learning centres are all providing support to students within the remote context with a high level of engagement in the services and supports available. Further details available from CTL Annual Reports.

## 4.0 QA of Research Activities and Programmes

Overall research strategy and policy is articulated by the University's: (a) [strategic plan](#); (b) [research strategy](#), which is informed by the overall strategic plan; and (c) [quality policy](#). The management of [institutional-level research](#) is largely the responsibility of the Vice President Research, who is supported by the Office of the Vice President Research. Research-related policies and procedures are available [here](#). The University Research Committee, which reports to Executive Committee, advises and reports on research priorities for the University.

At an institutional level, the management of master's and PhDs by research falls under the auspices of [Graduate & Professional Studies](#) (GPS). Information on postgraduate research is given on the [Postgraduate Research](#) page of the GPS website. Academic regulations affecting postgraduate research students are included in the [Handbook of Academic Regulations and Procedures](#) (in particular in chapters 2 and 5). In addition to providing access to that handbook, the [Codes of Practice and Regulations](#) page of the GPS website provides access to the policies, procedures, forms and guidelines that underpin the research postgraduate processes. GPS reviews and, where necessary, updates on an ongoing basis these forms, documents and relevant academic regulations.

QA measures are in place to collectively ensure the effective oversight of the quality of institutional research throughout the full lifecycle of research projects. The [Research Portal](#) provides information and relevant forms relating to research projects, including procedures relating to research proposal development, authorisation, submission and management. The [Research Projects](#) section of the [Finance Department](#) oversees and reports on financial aspects of research activity. The [Human Resources Division](#) publishes HR policies and procedures relating to research staff on its [Research Staff](#) web page.

UL is committed to ensuring that all research carried out under its auspices meets the highest standards of [integrity](#), and that an environment of research integrity prevails through the promotion of good research practices, together with the use of fair, effective, and transparent procedures to address research misconduct. In support of the Research Integrity Policy, UL has appointed a Research Integrity Officer from among its senior faculty and research integrity champions are in place within each faculty.

UL's [Research Integrity Policy](#) applies to all employees of the University, as well as all Adjunct, Emeritus, and visiting personnel officially engaged in research work at the University and/or undertaking any research activity in the University's name. This policy is aligned with the [National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity In Ireland \(2014\)](#)

- [IUA national policy statement on ensuring research integrity in Ireland](#)
- [Procedure for Managing Allegations of Misconduct in Research](#)
- [Conflicts of Interest -Protocol and Procedures relating to Research Activities](#)

The Office of the Vice President of Research maintains overall responsibility for research ethics and governance structures at the University. This is facilitated by the [Operating Guidelines for the Governance and Oversight of Research Ethics](#) and the

[ULREG Terms of Reference](#). ULREG (University of Limerick Research Ethics Governance committee) is primarily concerned with research related policies, procedures and governance, whilst all research ethics applications are considered at Faculty level by Research Ethics Committees (RECs). All appeals of Faculty REC decisions are referred to ULREG.

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All members of the University staff and students are required to plan and conduct their investigations in accordance with appropriate ethical standards. Staff should ensure that they have knowledge of any relevant disciplinary guidelines on research ethics and that any empirical research has the required approval by the Faculty's Research Ethics Committee and/or other bodies as required. Research on patients (i.e. people who are receiving treatment as a result of an illness) falls within the remit of the Committee but requires ethical clearance from the relevant hospital Research Ethics Committee prior to the research commencing.

Faculty Research Ethics Committees are charged by the University to consider the ethics of proposed research projects which will involve human subjects and to agree or not as to whether the projected research is ethical.

Faculty Research Ethics Committees must be consulted about any research proposals which involve:

- Direct experimentation on individuals;
- Surveys or questionnaires administered to individuals;
- Use of data derived from individual records where individuals might be identified.
- Experimentation which involves animals
- Animal Science REC

Faculty Committee Information can be found at:

- [Kemmy Business School Ethics](#)
- [Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences Ethics](#)
- [Education & Health Sciences Ethics](#)
- [Science & Engineering Ethics](#)

The quality of research is reviewed through the quality reviews of [academic units](#), [research institutes](#) and [support units](#). The latter include the Office of the Vice President Research, Graduate & Professional Studies, Finance, HR, Library and Information Services Division, ITD and Buildings and Estates, all of which contribute to a greater or lesser extent to achieving the University's research goals. Several of the above support units regularly develop, deliver or coordinate various research-related professional development courses, which are widely advertised throughout the institution by email. The University of Limerick tracks and reports on research performance via a number of mechanisms including research performance dashboard

available to management, Annual Research Performance report published each year and returns to the Higher Education Authority.

The University of Limerick measures its research performance under four broad categories including publications, funding, research postgraduates, and impact. These are reported annually. In addition, the data is captured quarterly in order to meet ongoing requests for research performance metrics from Research Institutes, Departments/Schools, Executive Committee, etc. A Research Performance Dashboard is in place and available for heads of department, Executive Committee and Directors of Research Institutes/Centres.

The activity under each of the categories is collated from various data sources both internal and external to UL. The internal data sources include but are not limited to the UL Research information system (ULRIS), Student Record System, Agresso financial system, and MyIP (research contracts and commercialisation activity). External data sources include bibliometric databases from Web of Science, Scopus, InCites, and Scival. Examples of key measures captured under the four categories include:

- Top 10% publications
- Book and book chapter publications by high impact publishers
- Research postgraduate graduations
- Funding awards
- Impact case studies
- Spin-outs
- Licences

## 5.0 Staff Recruitment, Development and Support

### Staff Recruitment

The University's HR policies and procedures for the recruitment of [academic](#), [support](#) and [research](#) staff comply with Irish public sector recruitment and appointment procedures. Recruitment policies, procedures and practices comply with the [Universities Act 1997](#), the [Employment Equality Acts 1998/2004](#), the [Equal Status Acts 2000/2004](#), [Qualifications and Quality Assurance \(Education and Training\) Act 2012](#), [Athena Swan](#) and the [HR Strategy for Researchers \(HRS4R\) | UL - University of Limerick](#). The University's [Equality and Diversity Policy](#) is designed to ensure that the University's procedures and practices operate in a manner that is consistent with the institution's commitment to equality of opportunity and do not discriminate against individuals on grounds of gender, gender identity, gender expression, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, race or membership of the Traveller community, socio-economic status, ethnicity, national identity or neurodiversity.

The University's recruitment and staff development procedures for academic staff are designed to ensure that teaching staff are suitably qualified and experienced for their teaching and research roles. Applicants called to interview are required to submit references prior to interview, and subsequent offers of employment are subject to receipt of satisfactory references. Prior to taking up an offered position, the successful candidate must submit evidence (original copies) of academic, professional or technical qualifications. PhD qualifications are the norm for academic staff.

The recruitment policies are reviewed regularly, updated as required, approved by Governing Authority and [published](#) on the HR website.

### Staff Management

Terms of probation and tenure are addressed in each new hire's contract and job specification. Members of staff report to and are managed by their line manager. Established members of staff (i.e. those with a contract of at least 10 months) participate in the University's formal, mandatory Performance and Development Review System ([PDRS](#)). The PDRS is designed to identify the CPD needs of staff and to ensure those needs are met. Section 5.3.2 provides more details on the PDRS.

### Staff Development

The [Talent Development](#) Section is an integral part of the University's Human Resources Division. Their aim is to support the University's strategic plan by delivering focused training and talent development solutions to all employees that will enable a high performing organisation. A further aim is to ensure the most effective use of the talents, skills and abilities of employees by supporting employees to maximise the contribution they can make. The Talent Development Section aims to foster close relationships with academic and administrative departments to support them in achieving their objectives.

Newly recruited members of staff participate in an intensive, one-day general induction programme delivered by HR. General induction includes reference to web-accessible

HR employee [policies and procedures](#), including the [Code of Conduct for Employees](#) and the [Acceptable Behaviour in the Workplace Policy](#). In addition, new staff are provided with [local induction](#) to familiarise them with their designated roles and responsibilities and their place within the unit.

Ongoing CPD is a central feature of the University's professional development environment. Through the [PDRS](#), the head of department/school meets with each member of staff to agree on specific CPD requirements for that staff member. The [Centre for Transformative Learning](#) (CTL) operates a [peer observation of teaching](#) process whereby an academic member of staff observes a colleague's teaching and gives them feedback on how their teaching could be improved. The CTL offers the [Student Evaluation of Teaching](#) (SET) process, which is designed to provide useful information to individual lectures on their students' experiences of the modules they teach. The CTL promotes graduate diploma and master's [courses in teaching, learning and scholarship](#). In conjunction with the [National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education and the Midwest Regional Cluster](#), the CTL offers teaching staff regular workshops on various aspects of pedagogy and a wide variety of resources and supports for improving their teaching. The University's [Learning Technology Forum](#) provides a coordinated approach to the use of technology-enhanced and blended learning. CTL have a dedicated website offering specific supports for staff with the move to online learning. The [site](#) covers continuity of assessment, alternative to end of semester exams, guidance on assessment choices and tools and guidelines for online teaching.

## 6.0 Information and Data Management

### Information Technology and Systems

In addition to maintaining and developing the University's network and communications infrastructure, including the campus data centre facilities, the [Information Technology Division](#) (ITD) maintains a suite of enterprise applications and software systems that are critical to the teaching, learning, research and administrative goals of the institution. The IT strategy, [UL Enable 2018-2022](#), is about positioning IT in the institution as an enabling and leading capability for the University in realising its mission and strategic objectives. A list of IT-related policies and regulations is available on the ITD [website](#).

The University operates the following information management systems:

- SI (Student Record System)
- Agresso (Finance Management System)
- Core (HR Information Management System)
- ULRIS (Research Information System)

Profiles of the student population as well as student progression, success and drop-out rates are gathered, reported and analysed in a number of ways. The Institutional Research Officer gathers statistics on student admission and progression. Reports on student progression per programme are compiled and presented to course directors, heads of department/school, faculty deans and Executive Committee.

The Office of the President compiles student profile data for inclusion in the University's annual Strategic Dialogue self-assessment report to the Higher Education Authority (HEA) - see the published HEA's [Higher Education System Performance Institutional and Sectoral Profiles](#) for details.

The annual institutional-level [Student Exit Survey](#) process includes internal longitudinal benchmarking and benchmarking against our linked providers.

The University's Student Engagement & Success Unit ([SESU](#)) undertakes research and analyses data relating to student engagement. The source of the data is the [Studentsurvey.ie](#).

The [Academic Registry Division](#) maintains and controls the University's student records through its student records system (SI), from which various officers and offices can extract and tailor data to generate reports. Reports are generated from SI for relevant internal stakeholders at institutional level (e.g. Academic Council and Executive Committee) and local level (e.g. course review boards). Reports are generated from SI as required for external stakeholders, such as the HEA and the Department of Education and Skills.

A list of University programmes is generated annually from SI for submitting to the HEA. Twice a year (mid-semester), a 'not-registered' report is generated from SI and sent to the HEA and grant-funding bodies (e.g. [SUSI](#)). The security of SI is maintained

through access levels, which are controlled by ITD and the system administrator in the units that use SI. Academics input their students' assessment results into the system, and data integrity scripts are run (Oracle Discoverer) to check the accuracy and completeness of the data.

## Records Management and Retention

The University operates an institutional [records management and retention policy](#). Policies and procedures on the maintenance and retention of quality-related documentation at unit level form part of each support unit's QMS. One of the quality management processes of the QMS is documentation control. All QMS processes are published on the Quality section of each unit's website.

## Data Protection and Freedom of Information

[Data protection](#) forms part of the remit of the [Corporate Secretary's Office](#). The University operates a [data protection policy](#), which was revised in 2018 to reflect changes under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), a European Union (EU) regulation introduced in May 2018 to strengthen and unify data protection within the EU. GDPR replaces the Irish Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003.

The Corporate Secretary's Office website has a dedicated [web page](#) that outlines how and why the University shares personal data with third parties and lists all relevant parties. The Corporate Secretary's Office also manages the University's [freedom of information](#) function. The University complies with the [Freedom of Information Act 2014](#) and has an FOI unit and FOI officer.

The Corporate Secretary's Office website includes an [Information and Compliance](#) page. In addition to the aforementioned records management, FOI and data protection, this page provides information on the Disability Act, the Official Languages Act, copyright and environmental regulations.

## Key Performance Indicators

The university has agreed a suite of KPIs with the HEA as part of its mission-based performance compact. These KPIs are reported annually to the HEA in our self-evaluation report, as part of the strategic dialogue process.

A suite of KPIs were developed to monitor the UL@50 Strategic Plan - these were agreed with EC and GA. This listing was prepared through extensive consultation with senior management, reviewing the new strategy, consideration of the KPIs used in previous strategies, data requested and reported on by the HEA, and discussions with GA. As the strategy is now being recalibrated in response to institutional review recommendations, further work on KPIs has been put on hold, pending the outcome of the strategic plan review.



## 7.0 Public Information and Communication

### Public Information

The University regularly updates its [website](#) so that its wide range of stakeholders can easily source information relevant to them. The Office of the President is responsible for maintaining the high-level pages, such as those providing information on [institutional leadership](#), [Governing Authority](#), [Academic Council](#) and [strategic publications](#). Individual units are responsible for maintaining their own websites, all of which are accessible from the University [homepage](#).

The University adheres to the Freedom of Information Act 2014, which informs institutional practice in this area. Section 8 of the Act requires FOI bodies to prepare and publish as much information as possible in an open and accessible manner on a routine basis, having regard to the principles of openness, transparency and accountability as set out in sections 8(5) and 11(3) of the Act. Links to each section of the University's FOI Publication Scheme are maintained by the [FOI section](#) of the Corporate Secretary's Office. Links include:

- [General Information about the University of Limerick](#)
- [Information on Functions & Services Provided](#)
- [Information on Decision-Making Procedures](#)
- [Financial Information](#)
- [Procurement Information](#)
- [Other Routinely Published Information / FOI Disclosure Log](#)

The Corporate Secretary's Office [website](#) also includes sections on [data protection](#), [records management](#) and [environmental information](#).

The University's [Student and Staff Gateway](#) provides information on calendars and timetables; policies, procedures and handbooks; learning resources; support and administration; further study; and details on upcoming events.

The [Marketing and Communications Division](#) is responsible for gathering and disseminating a wide range of information to audiences both internal and external to the University. The Division also manages the University's institutional social media accounts. The University's Social Media Strategy and Social Media Policy are available [here](#). The focus of the strategy is to develop a core tier of social media channels and adopt a proactive social media publishing process that integrates the four faculties and key business units. The Division supports the campus-wide University Social Media Community Group and offers training, strategic advice and policy guidelines. Information regarding UL Open Days is published annually on the University website.

UL Connect is University of Limerick's internal communications and information sharing platform. Linked to users' single sign-on, it comes up as one of three default home pages on all UL laptops and desk top PCs. The platform allows for easy sharing of text, video, images and podcast on a one-to-many basis and enables users to send communications to all users or specific audiences according to location (faculty),

department, area (research / academic / PMSS (professional, managerial, support staff, or communities of interest. In addition to allowing for the horizontal sharing of information and events between staff, and the cascade of information from the University, UL Connect acts as a single location for other University information streams and third-party apps: @UL Twitter account, News Centre, UL Podcasts, LinkedIn Learning, Core HR, Agresso, SilverCloud, TopDesk, Speak Out tool and more.

## Learner Information

The online prospectuses for [undergraduate](#) and [postgraduate](#) programmes and the [Graduate & Professional Studies](#) (GPS) and [UL Global](#) websites specify details of (or provide links to) the University's programme offerings. The published information for each programme specifies the programme's title; NFQ level; entry requirements; duration; structure; list of modules; career prospects; student profiles; video clips from students, graduates and staff; and a contact name and email address for requesting more information. Hard copies of the prospectuses and supplementary programme descriptor documents are made available to the public during open days, career fairs and information evenings. Current and prospective research students can access information on the University's research activities and offerings on the [Research](#) and [GPS](#) websites.

All programmes published on the online prospectuses lead to an award. Once a programme has been selected on the GPS website, the page specifies whether the programme leads to an award and, if so, what the award is. UL Global's [International Foundation Programme](#) web page makes it clear that the programme does not lead to an award itself but provides international students with an alternative application route to undergraduate study.

Information on internal transfer and progression is available in the [Student Handbook](#), which all new students receive during enrolment.

## Publication of QA Reports

QA evaluation reports are published at unit level in the context of the periodic [quality review process](#) for academic, research and support units. The outputs of the process for each unit include (i) a reviewers' report, which is [published](#) on the QSU website; and (ii) a quality improvement plan (QIP) for the unit, which is based on the recommendations from the reviewers' report. The final QIP implementation summary report is published on the websites of the QSU and the relevant unit, and the QSU informs the campus community (by email) about the publications.

The University publishes the reports from its institutional reviews ([2012](#) and [2020](#) to date) on the Office of the President and QSU websites. Quality assurance policies are available on the University policy [hub](#). Quality assurance procedures are available on the QSU [website](#) and are also published on individual unit websites.

## 8.0 Monitoring and Periodic Review

### Self-Evaluation

A diverse range of procedures are enacted at institutional, local and, indeed, personal level with a view to monitoring, self-evaluating and enhancing the quality of our activities. Institutional-level self-evaluation activities incorporate, but are not limited to, the following:

- The University collects, analyses and reports upon a whole range of datasets and other information to external stakeholders (e.g. the HEA, QQI and Department of Education and Skills). These activities are undertaken by a wide range of (largely) support units and offices/officers, as relevant to functional area.
- At an institutional level, the strategic plan sets priorities, objectives and measures of success. Progress on the achievement of the plan's aims and objectives, as defined in terms of indicators of success and outcomes, is monitored on an ongoing basis by Executive Committee and Governing Authority.
- The University's research strategy specifies action items and targets for each strategic objective. The Vice President Research oversees regular reviews of the strategy and reports on performance against targets to Executive Committee and Governing Authority. These KPI's are embedded into HEA compact and Knowledge Transfer Ireland reports which take place on a regular basis.
- Self-evaluation activities (and associated authorship of a self-evaluation report) are carried out as part of academic, research and support unit quality reviews. Review reports are made [publicly available](#), and the review recommendations form the basis of a subsequent quality improvement plan (QIP). The implementation of the QIP is monitored by the QSU, the PDP/CO, the relevant dean and the university Quality Committee.
- UL implements an [external examination process](#) for both taught and research programmes, and external examiner reports are considered at local unit and individual level. External examiners are requested to contact the Office of the Provost/Deputy President directly if they have particular concerns.
- Under the terms of UL's [Annual Programme Monitoring and Periodic Review](#) policy, all taught programmes are subject to formal annual monitoring by the relevant course review board with a commitment to periodic review (usually every five years) by an external panel. The review outcomes are considered at departmental and faculty level and by Academic Council's APRC.
- Student feedback is gathered by means of the [module satisfaction survey](#) and [student exit survey](#), and detailed and/or aggregate reports are considered by individual academics, heads of department, course boards, deans, Executive Committee and Academic Council.
- All UL support units are required to implement a QMS. A requirement of the QMS is the inclusion of a 'QMS Audit' process, whereby all processes are audited by trained QMS auditors on an annual basis. An [Inter-Department Audit Process](#) is in place to help units prepare for quality reviews. The audits are referred to as 'inter-department' because they are conducted by trained

auditors both from within the unit under review and from other UL support units. The purpose of the audit process is to ensure that all components of the unit's QMS are audited for compliance with UL's quality framework. The process allows for a sharing of best practice and a focus on inter-department collaboration. Support units are also required to complete an annual quality report, which provides valuable input for the annual institutional quality report (AIQR).

- Faculties provide an annual quality report, which is linked to the annual programme monitoring process and resulting faculty action plan.
- Systematic and ongoing risk assessment exercises (feeding into risk registers) are undertaken by academic and support units in line with UL's [risk management policy](#), the implementation and monitoring of which is undertaken by Executive Committee and Governing Authority's [Audit and Risk Committee](#).
- Led by the QSU, the University conducts compliance exercises to document the extent to which the institution meets its external QA obligations. This work is guided by the *Process for Assessing Compliance with Statutory and Related Quality Requirements* (an internal document stored on SharePoint). Once the University receives notice of a new or revised quality requirement, the QSU coordinates an exercise that assesses the extent to which the University complies with that requirement. Examples include the 2015 ESG and QQI guidelines and codes of practice. Responsibility for assessing how the University complies with the requirement lies with the unit(s) or officers that have functional responsibility in the area concerned. Refer to the [Compliance](#) page of the QSU for more details. Identified enhancement opportunities lead to the development of a QIP, which is implemented by relevant units.

## Periodic Review

In line with international good practice and national statutory requirements, the University of Limerick undertakes periodic quality reviews of its educational, research and related services every seven years. Coordinated by the Quality Support Unit, the review process represents one cornerstone institutional quality assurance and enhancement mechanism. Information relating to both the current and previous cycle of quality review activity is available on the QSU [website](#). Prior to each cycle of reviews, the QSU engage in a campus-wide consultation process. Timelines are agreed for the review cycle which are approved by the Executive and published on the QSU website.

Quality review guidelines for the various streams of reviews are prepared in consultation with relevant stakeholders. Quality review guidelines are approved by the relevant VP/CO. The QSU co-ordinates the quality review process, offering support and guidelines to all units. There are three key stages to the process:

- a. The unit/Faculty/institute under review initially undertakes a self-analysis exercise, identifying its strengths and weaknesses, as well as opportunities for improvement. The unit/Faculty/institute documents these findings in a self-

- assessment report (SAR), which is circulated to the review team prior to the site visit.
- b. A quality review group (QRG), comprising internationally recognised experts, is appointed to review the unit. The QRG members study the SAR prior to the site visit and provide preliminary comments to the QSU for circulation to the review team. The site visit is a three-day event on campus at which the review team (QRG) meet with faculty and staff of the unit. They also meet with students and a range of internal and external stakeholders. This leads to the production of a concise report by the QRG (commendation and recommendations), which is read back to the unit at the conclusion of the site visit.
  - c. Follow-on activities which include discussion of the report by the UL Quality Committee, publication of the report on the QSU website, the creation of a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) by the unit/Faculty, and presentation of the report and QIP to Quality Committee. The final stage of this process is a progress update meeting with the relevant VP/CO 12-18 months after the review, where the Director of the Unit reports on all the actions taken by the Unit/Faculty relating to the report recommendations.

## External Panelists

In compliance with the [guidelines](#) for the periodic quality reviews of academic, research and support units, the review groups include senior academics (academic units), peers (research units) and cognates (support units), who come from outside the Republic of Ireland and work in disciplines that provide them with a strong degree of familiarity with the core activities of the unit under review. The expert panelists on academic and research unit reviews typically have a significant international reputation in their field of expertise and come from a prestigious international university or other appropriate institutional setting. The expert panelists on support unit reviews are typically directors or senior members of a similar unit in a leading international university or comparable educational institution outside Ireland. The QSU maintains a record of all quality review group members.

In compliance with the University's [procedures for the recruitment of academic staff](#), selection panels include one or two (depending on the level of appointment) external and one internal subject specialist. In compliance with [procedures for the recruitment of research scholars](#), selection panels include at least one external and at least one internal subject specialist. In compliance [with procedures for the recruitment of support staff](#), selection panels include a person external to the unit who has expertise in the unit's business. In compliance with the [procedures for the promotion of academic staff](#), promotion panels include two external academics.

In compliance with the [Academic Programme Review Policy](#), (i) expert personnel may be invited onto the course review board (for annual programme review) at the discretion of the chairperson, and (ii) the period programme review panel will include two external academic subject experts and at least one employer representative.

In accordance with the University's QA procedures, Academic Council appoints [external examiners](#) to all taught programmes to provide an independent report on

student performance, programme outcomes and proposed awards. The [External Examiner Policy](#) specifies the examiners' roles and function, how they are appointed (including reference to conflict of interest) and how the system is administered.

External examiners of research programmes are approved by the relevant head of department/school and the Assistant Dean Research and appointed by Academic Council. Two-thirds of external examiners of taught programmes and PhD theses are international.

### **How the Internal QA System engages with External Quality Assurance?**

Led by the QSU, the University conducts compliance exercises to document the extent to which the institution meets its external QA obligations. This work is guided by the Process for Assessing Compliance with Statutory and Related Quality Requirements (an internal document stored on SharePoint). Once the University receives notice of a new or revised quality requirement, the QSU coordinates an exercise that assesses the extent to which the University complies with that requirement. Examples include the 2015 ESG and QQI guidelines and codes of practice. Responsibility for assessing how the University complies with the requirement lies with the unit(s) or officers that have functional responsibility in the area concerned. Refer to the [Compliance](#) page of the QSU website for more details.

Identified enhancement opportunities arising from these activities lead to the development of a QIP, which is implemented by relevant units.

The University submits an annual quality assurance report ([AQR](#)) to QQI. Following submission of the report to QQI, the University publishes the report on its website. Publication of the AIQR by the University is interpreted by QQI as publication of the University's QA procedures.

The University is required to undergo statutory external review through a process of self-evaluation and site visit from an external panel of peer experts. Recommendations arising from self-evaluation and those recommended by the panel are incorporated into an institutional quality improvement plan. The Quality Committee has oversight of the implementation of that plan.

Nationally, the University contributes to inter-institutional dialogue on quality-related issues through its participation on the Irish Universities Association Quality Committee. Internationally, the University engages with quality trends in higher education by participating in relevant international conferences, such as those organised by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA).

**Annual Quality Report (University of Limerick)**  
**PART B: INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE**  
**ENHANCEMENT & IMPACT**  
**Reporting Period 2021-2022**

## **PART B: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM**

## 1.0 Quality Implementation and Developments

### 1.1 Strategic QA Updates

#### Quality Enhancement from Internal Monitoring and Review

The University is committed to assuring and enhancing the quality of its activities and to fostering a quality culture throughout the institution. The University recognises the pursuit of quality, and hence excellence, as a core value. Responsibility for the quality of our activities rests at institutional, local and individual level.

All professional service units within UL implement a bespoke Quality Management System (QMS), based upon the seven quality management principles specified in the [ISO9001:2015](#) quality management standard. Continual improvement (Principle 5) is the ethos underpinning quality management systems. Improvement is essential for a unit to maintain current levels of performance, to react to changes in its internal and external conditions and to create new opportunities for quality enhancement.

All academic and professional service units proactively engage with periodic quality reviews and use the review findings to drive both unit-level and institutional-level quality enhancements.

Examples of quality enhancement at both unit and institutional levels are outlined below:

- The Academy for Children, established by **UL's Access Office** in 2020, has been awarded the European Language Label for 2021 for its French programme delivered in Our Lady Queen of Peace National School, and which was developed by staff in the School of Modern Languages and Applied Linguistics at UL. The Academy seeks to enhance the University's commitment to community engagement and widening the participation of underrepresented groups at third level. The ethos of the Academy is based on a firm belief in partnership, in community and in keeping children at the heart of the decision-making process.
- The Athena SWAN process in UL is managed through the Office of the Director HR-EDI. On 8 September, the **Department of Physics** in UL was congratulated by Simon Harris TD, Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, on achieving the first Silver Athena SWAN Department award in Ireland.
- **Community Engagement:** UL's flagship community engagement project has been chosen by the National Forum for Teaching and Learning as the national exemplar for best practice in community engaged learning. A further 13 students have begun studying on the CWELL diploma which continues to be delivered in the city centre.
- Resulting from the **STudent Evaluation and Learning Analytics (STELA)** project (which evaluated why we ask students for feedback, the most effective methods to use and how we can best use the feedback provided by students. a new **Student Survey & Feedback Mechanisms Policy** and **Policy on the Use of Data**

to Enhance Teaching, Learning and Assessment (Learning Analytics) have been approved. The STELA project is being led by the Quality Office in collaboration with CTL, DPO and ITD..

- The establishment of the dedicated **Erasmus+ Projects Office**. UL is a national exemplar in Erasmus+ and in establishing the projects office we will further enhance our ability to draw down significant income to deliver strategic partnerships and capacity building projects. Erasmus+ ICM at UL was nominated as an example of best practice in Europe along with the University of Valladolid, Spain to represent European Universities at the European Commission -Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture Worldwide Seminar on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2021.
- On 1<sup>st</sup> December, the President formerly launched the **Ethnic Diversity Forum**. The forum sees the coming together of staff and students from various ethnic backgrounds who share racial, national, tribal, religious, linguistic and/or cultural characteristics. The Ethnic Diversity Forum (EDF) will be a sub-group of the Human Rights -EDI Steering Committee and will lead on our ongoing efforts to advance inclusion and embrace diversity on campus. The purpose of the EDF is to understand and advocate for a positive campus climate in relation to ethnicity, equality, diversity, and inclusion and to make recommendations and progress actions that aim to make UL an equitable, safe and respectful work and study environment for all.
- On 3<sup>rd</sup> December, the **Any Time of the Month (ATOTM) Project** was launched by the President. The ATOTM project is a collaborative initiative between the office of the Director HR-EDI, Student Life and the ATOTM project leaders, a group of young women hoping to change people's perceptions and normalise periods and combat period poverty. Period products are now available free of charge in every building on campus. Staff and students have engaged in the initiative by becoming 'friendly strangers' and wearing ATOTM badges or stickers to show anyone in need of a period product that they can be approached and will offer help. See separate case study.
- UL was ranked the 21<sup>st</sup> most sustainable university in the UI **GreenMetric World University Rankings 2021**. The rankings were based on aspects such as setting and infrastructure, energy and climate change, waste, water, transportation, and education and research. In the 2021 rankings, UL was ranked 21<sup>st</sup> out of 956 universities worldwide compared to 17<sup>th</sup> out of 912 universities last year. UL's overall score increased by 225 points compared to last year and our score in all categories improved except for Energy and Climate Change. The Energy and Climate Change score dropped because of the higher energy usage per person this year due to the reduced number of people on campus.
- **New Research Portal**: Office of the Vice President Research (OVPR) has launched a new Research Portal, providing guidance and information to staff and students engaging in research at UL. Building on expertise from across the organisation, the portal provides a central location to share and signpost to information which will guide on the research journey. OVPR modernised the site to make it more secure and user-friendly and in the spirit of continuous improvement, we will be periodically reviewing and updating the site.

- **Research Performance Dashboard:** The Research Performance Dashboard provides an overview of research activity for publications and research awards. Developed in-house by Research Support Services using Microsoft Power BI, the dashboard provides data on research funding awards, publications, international publication collaborations by faculty, institute, department. The dashboard is easy to navigate and updated quarterly with the latest research data. Access to the dashboard is available to UL senior management or their nominees. The dashboard is a valuable tool for management to assess research performance and facilitate decision making and planning within the university. In the reporting period the dashboard was updated to capture Scopus data.
- **Customer Relationship Management System:** The implementation of the Radius CRM across GPS and ULG to enhance communications to offer holders on taught postgraduate and undergraduate programmes. The use of the CRM will provide an enhanced customer experience and a more streamlined approach to communications post offer. Ultimately this will lead to an increased conversion rate for applicants on these programmes.
- **Triple Accreditation:** The Kemmy Business School (KBS) has been recognised as one of the world's top business schools with the announcement that it has achieved "triple-accreditation". The KBS has been accredited by the prestigious EFMD Global quality system (EQUIS) adding to its existing international accreditations the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) and the Association of MBAs (AMBA). The triple accreditation from the three centres of business and academic excellence now place the KBS within the top 1% of business schools in the world and the third Irish business school to achieve the accolade alongside the Smurfit Business School in UCD and the Trinity Business School in TCD.
- **UL -DIKTI Bridging Programme:** GPS, in conjunction with UL Global and AHSS, participated in the running of the Pre-doctoral Research Bridging Programme in UL for 19 fully funded Indonesian academics from November 2021 to January 2022. The Bridging Programme can be seen as a very effective model for attracting international talent onto the PhD register at UL by providing pre-registration guidance on developing a research proposal, working with a supervisor, and integrating into the research culture of the university.
- The **Quality Support Unit (QSU)** continues to work with colleagues across the University to enhance and streamline the quality assurance and enhancement framework. Specifically, they have developed a data portal to support the 27annual programme review process with colleagues in ITD and CECD. This portal gives course directors and academic managers access to key data which will allow them make data informed decisions on programme enhancement.
- **Academic Registry** has won (for the second year in a row) the Education Award for Excellence in the Provision of Professional Services, in addition to also being a finalist in two further categories: Best Use of Educational Technology/ICT Initiative of the Year and Student Engagement & Communications Award. Winning the Professional Services award emphasises the quality service offering envisaged by Academic Registry's vision, mission and values.

- The **Cooperative Education & Careers Division (CECD)** has won the Best University Partnership Award at the recent 2022 Global Careers Summit. The international award acknowledged CECD's innovation across its Diversity and Inclusion Employability Programme, with the judging panel highlighting the scale and success of the programme, its multi-partnership model, and its deep engagement with industry partners in driving the EDI employability agenda for students and early-career graduates.
- The **Cooperative Education & Careers Division** has won the 2022 AHECS Strategic Innovation Award. It was awarded on the basis of a submission entitled "The UL Pivot", which highlighted the success of the Global Coop programme, during and after the challenges of Covid.
- **Entrepreneurship Programme:** KBS, in collaboration with the Technology Transfer Office and Nexus Innovation Centre, have launched an entrepreneurship programme aimed at researchers across UL. 'From Research to Spin Out -the Role of Entrepreneurial and Innovative Thinking' will provide an overview of the research commercialisation process of transforming research into marketable products, services processes and spin out companies, and will explore the role and benefits of applying entrepreneurial and innovative thinking to research as a means of determining its financial, social and environmental impacts. By combining the insights of academics, experienced spin out entrepreneurs, government support agencies and funders, the programme will generate an important network of supports for researchers and serve to nurture an enhanced innovative research culture across the UL campus.
- UL is committed to access in its broadest sense. In April, we submitted our application for reaccreditation as a **University of Sanctuary**. The new application sets out UL's ambition to mainstream support for Sanctuary students within Student Affairs and ensure that, in addition to the tuition fee waivers, asylum seekers in Direct Provision also received a stipend of €100/week to cover travel to/from campus, meals on campuses and data and photocopying.
- UL's successful involvement in a number of the over 60 awards in total as part of the **North-South Research programme** was announced. The North-South scheme is a key enabler of collaborative research between individuals, teams and institutions on the island of Ireland to realise significant economic and social benefit. FINIFOR: A Forested Island, KBS in partnership with QUB, looks at large scale native broadleaf tree planting on the island of Ireland, that provides us with the best near-term action that can reduce our carbon emissions and restore a more natural wildlife friendly countryside.
- At the recent **2022 Education Awards**, the collaboration between UL and HSE Procurement was formally recognised as the Certificate and Diploma in Public Procurement and Supply Chain Excellence Programme were one of the finalists shortlisted. Both programmes were nominated in the category titled 'Best Business and Third Level Institution Collaboration'. The Education Awards recognise, encourage and celebrate excellence in the third level education sector on the island of Ireland.

- **UL joins Global IP Marketing Platform:** The Technology Transfer Office (TTO) creates impact from UL's excellent research through the management and commercialisation of UL's intellectual property. Successful commercialisation of our research involves marketing to companies and investors national and internationally. As part of the TTO strategy to improve our service delivery and expand our marketing reach the TTO recently joined the IN-PART global IP marketing platform. IN-PART offers UL access to a network of more than 6000 companies in the Lifesciences, Engineering and IT sectors. UL is currently marketing 13 technologies on the platform which has resulted in a number of new connections with companies and investors. The platform also offers opportunities to UL researchers to submit proposals to company specific challenges promoted on the platform. The IN-PART platform is a new tool used by UL TTO to facilitate impact from UL's excellent research. In Part gives a window to showcase UL research and innovation activities. It also supports TTO decision making in optimising knowledge transfer impact for a better society.
- **Sustainability:** UL has begun crafting a collective vision and action plan for a more sustainable University. The [UL Sustainability Report](#), published in November 2021, showcases the many stories of how our campus community are looking to contribute to a better future. Full details of the UL sustainability initiative are available on the [Sustainable University](#) website.
- **UL Connect:** In Autumn 2021, the Executive Committee approved the development and roll-out of a secure internal communications platform. UL Connect is now UL's internal communications and information sharing platform. Linked to users' single sign-on, it comes up as one of three default home pages on all UL lap tops and desk top PCs. The platform allows for easy sharing of text, video, images and podcast on a one-to-many basis and enables users to send communications to all users or specific audiences according to location (faculty), department, area (research / academic / PMSS (professional, managerial, support staff, or communities of interest. In addition to allowing for the horizontal sharing of information and events between staff, and the cascade of information from the University, UL Connect acts as a single location for other University information streams and third-party apps: @UL Twitter account, News Centre, UL Podcasts, LinkedIn Learning, Core HR, Agresso, SilverCloud. TopDesk, Speak Out tool and more.
- **Universal Design for Learning Community of Practice:** Staff from the Student Affairs Division have played a pivotal role in introducing and integrating Universal Design for Learning (UDL) practices across campus. This effort has culminated in UL being shortlisted for the John Kelly Awards for Universal Design. After a review by an international panel of experts, UL's application for UDL in Collaboration was judged worthy of shortlisting, showcasing a range of cross-institutional and innovative approaches to implementing UDL based practices. The application was submitted to showcase work undertaken as part of the 'UDL at UL' project, which aims to promote and establish curriculum-based practices based on equity and social justice underpinned by the Universal Design for Learning framework. This project work included developing an Inclusive Practice module and resources built on UDL principles

and practices, delivering UDL specific events and creating a UDL specific community of practice. This project will also establish a UDL special interest group which will influence policy changes to promote inclusion and reduce educational barriers. Further information on the UDL CoP is available on the UDL [homepage](#).

- A Streamlined student orientation programme and aligned First 7 Weeks (F7W) programme were launched, which included a new interactive handbook <https://www.ul.ie/sites/default/files/ctl/Interactive%20Handbook%202021.pdf>.

During the reporting period, the following departments achieved Athena Swan awards.

Unit	Level	Awarded	Renewal
Department of Physics	Silver	Sept -21	Apr-25
Department of Physical Education and Sports Science (PESS)	Bronze	Sept -21	Apr-25
Department of Biological Sciences	Bronze	Sept -21	Apr -25
Department of Nursing & Midwifery	Bronze	Sept-21	Apr -25
School of Engineering	Bronze	April -22	Nov-25
Department of ECE/Confirm	Bronze	June -22	Apr -26

During the reporting period, the following policies were approved.

Document Title	Approval Body	Approval Date/s
Student Charter	GA	24/09/2021
Student Survey & Feedback Mechanisms Policy	AC	06/10/2021
External Examiner Policy (Taught Programmes)	AC	08/12/2021
Policy for the Recruitment of Staff	GA	10/12/2021
Code of Conduct for Employees	GA	24/02/2022
Probation Policy	GA	24/02/2022
Records Management and Retention Policy	GA	24/02/2022
Student Death Policy	GA	24/02/2022
Data Protection Policy	GA	05/05/2022
Awards Titles Framework	AC	15/06/2022

Handbook of Academic Regulations and Procedures	AC	15/06/2022
Contract Signing Policy	GA	30/06/2022
Gender Identity and Gender Expression Policy	GA	30/06/2022
Policy for the Acquisition of New Property, Buildings, Land or Infrastructure	GA	30/06/2022
Policy for UL Research Institutes and Centres: Establishment, Governance and Management Arrangements	GA	30/06/2022
Reassignment Policy & Procedures	GA	30/06/2022
Statute No. 6: Regulations Governing Composition of Academic Council	GA	30/06/2022
Policy on Provision of Non-Audit Services by the External Auditor	GA	30/06/2022
IT Security Policy	GA	30/06/2022
Acceptable Usage Policy	GA	30/06/2022
Official Entertainment Policy	GA	Noted at GA 24/02/2022
Travel & Subsistence Policy	GA	Noted at GA 24/02/2022
Health Research Policy	AC	noted at GA 30/06/2022

## 1.2 Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR

No.	Planned objectives (Previous AQR) Note: Include reference to the relevant section of the preceding AQR, where applicable	Update on Status Provide brief update on status, whether completed or in progress. If an action was planned in the previous AQR, but not completed, provide reasons/short reflections for the delay/non-completion.
1	Development of the Curriculum Development Framework	The Integrated Curriculum Development Framework (ICDF), approved by Academic Council, has been updated to incorporate the revised Graduate Attributes following campus-wide consultation. Development of the ICDF Resource Hub in progress. Curriculum development consultations with programme teams is ongoing. Piloting of resources and workshops to support the integration of the ICDF is in progress.
2	Development of the Academic Model	An Academic Model has been developed and approved. Implementation is delayed to allow end to end testing of the model within with the Student Information System (SI).
3	Development of Model for Periodic Programme Review	A model for periodic programme review is in place. Implementation will commence in the academic year 2023-24 An additional post has been approved to support implementation.
4	Working group on student feedback mechanisms	The WG commenced meeting in May 2022. It expects to report to the Quality Committee in Q4, 2022.
5	StELA Live	Much progress was made on the project during the reporting period. See Section 2.1 above (Collaborative Activities) for full details as well as the website below: <a href="https://www.ul.ie/ctl/current-projects/stela-live-implementing-learning-analytics-student-success">https://www.ul.ie/ctl/current-projects/stela-live-implementing-learning-analytics-student-success</a>
6	Sustainability Initiative	Early in March 2022 the ambitious UL Sustainability Framework 2030 was delivered and signed off by the Executive Committee and Governing Authority in May of 2022. The sustainability framework was officially launched in October 2022. Now complete, the framework communicates our collective vision and an agile action-oriented plan which will guide UL over the next 10 years to become a sustainable university. The result of this process is 21 UL Missions which are action oriented and measurable.
7	Further digitisation of key processes	HR: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roll out of online recruitment pack and online workflows</li> <li>• New business intelligence reports created to assist with annual leave tracking, recruitment scheduling, KPIs, quarterly HEA returns, managing hourly staff and monitoring payroll approval process.</li> </ul> QSU <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Digitisation of quality review management database</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing enhancements to External Examiner process.</li> </ul> <p>LISD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduced a Research Data Management Libguide</li> <li>Launched new Special Collections &amp; Archives online research guides</li> </ul> <p>ITD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Roll out of the Research Proposal Authorisation System (RPAS)</li> <li>Introduction of Multi-Factor Authentication</li> </ul>
8	Development and publication of Student Charter in line with Code of Governance for Irish Universities	UL <a href="#">Student Charter</a> was approved by Academic Council in June '21 and by Governing Authority in Sept '21. The Charter is guided by the principles of quality service as set out in the Code of Governance for Irish Universities and is published on the University policy hub.
9	Virtual Learning Environment project	<p>Brightspace has been selected as UL's new VLE. The new VLE will dramatically enhance our capability to deliver new and innovative programmes and enable us to build upon the enormous advances that have been made in learning and teaching over the last two years during the pandemic. The new VLE will be at the heart of our Transforming Education agenda in the recalibrated UL@50.</p> <p>A small number of pilot programmes and modules (approx. 20 modules) will start using Brightspace in September 2022, with an additional phase running in January 2023 (185 modules). Our goal is to complete the migration of all modules to the Brightspace VLE during the academic year 2023/24.</p> <p>The VLE Project Team is actively working on procuring other integrations (add-ons and plug-ins) that will enhance the Brightspace experience even further. The VLE Project Team is also working on options for transitioning modules from Sulis and Moodle and how staff will be supported via the training plan.</p>
10	Revision of Academic Integrity policy and procedures to align with national guidelines published by the National Academic Integrity Network	Academic Integrity team being appointed to progress this objective. See Section 2.1
11	Continued enhancement of Student Information System	The Tactical Stabilisation Programme is currently in Phase III: Foundations for Digital Transformation. There are multiple foundational projects in flight as part of Phase III Foundations for Digital Transformation where the ITD Academic Services Team play a key technical lead in delivering namely the Academic Model and Grading, Progression & Awards. Other Phase III in-flight projects are Self Service Letters, CAO Data Purge and

		Data Quality Improvements for HEA SRS Statutory Returns which form part of the Service and Data workstreams.
12	Further enhancement of Admissions Systems	<p>ITD, working in partnership with Graduate Professional Studies (GPS) and UL Global (ULG) have deployed a CRM system (Radius) for select groups of applicants in the student admissions lifecycle. UL's cloud-based Radius platform now manages campaigns for a subset of programmes.</p> <p>The account creation process for new students was also streamlined using new technology (SSPR) and enhanced communications sent to students. These changes have made significant improvements to the onboarding process for new students and the latest CAO onboarding process was very efficient &amp; user friendly.</p>
13	Web Development (Redesign) Project	A new single Drupal platform has been created and over 50 sites on old Drupal system have been migrated into this new system. More sites are in the pipeline of migration. See Case Study in Section 4.
14	Participation in the National Forum Discipline and Network Funded Project - Exploring Student and Staff Learning Experiences of Problem Based Learning	This collaborative project across the Irish HE sector was completed in Summer 2022. Recommendations highlight the need for digital and technological training to enhance facilitators' competence, to build rapport and promote social cohesion amongst learners. See case study in Section 4.

## 1.3 Governance and Management

### 1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule

Body	Meeting dates
Governing Authority (GA)	8 September 2021, 8 October 2021, 5 November 2021, 11 November 2021 (Special Meeting), 10 December 2021, 27 January 2022, 24 February 2022, 28 March 2022, 5 May 2022, 30 June 2022, 3 August 2022 (Special Meeting)
GA Access, Equality and Student Affairs	14 September 2021, 19 October 2021, 1 December 2021, 10 February 2022, 6 April 2022, 19 May 2022
GA Audit and Risk Committee	2 September 2021, 13 September 2021, 8 December 2021, 8 February 2022, 15 March 2022, 25 March 2022, 4 April 2022, 14 June 2022
GA Finance, HR and Asset Management Committee	8 September 2021, 17 November 2021, 9 December 2021, 16 February 2022, 21 March 2022, 17 June 2022
GA Governance Committee	18 October 2021, 29 November 2021, 14 February 2022
Executive Committee (EC)	15 September 2021, 29 September 2021, 13 October 2021, 15 October 2021, 27 October 2021, 10 November 2021, 22 November 2021, 8 December 2021, 12 January 2022, 26 January 2022, 9 February 2022, 23 February 2022, 9 March 2022, 23 March 2022 6 April 2022, 20 April 2022, 11 May 2022, 18 May 2022, 1 June 2022, 16 June 2022, 29 June 2022, 13 July 2022, 27 July 2022, 29 July 2022
Campus and Infrastructure Sub Committee	19 October 2021
Human Rights - Equality Diversity and Inclusion Sub Committee	1 December 2021, 19 April 2022
Global Engagement and Strategy Sub Committee	7 October 2021, 2 February 2022, 1 June 2022
Operations Sub Committee	30 September 2021, 28 October 2021, 25 November 2021, 28 January 2022, 23 February 2022, 24 March 2022, 28 April 2022, 26 May 2022, 28 July 2022
Quality Sub Committee	3 November 2021, 12 January 2022, 9 March 2022, 4 May 2022, 1 June 2022
University Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee	26 October 2021, 6 April 2022, 1 June 2022
University Research Committee	15 September 2021, 23 November 2021, 7 February 2022, 16 May 2022, 27 June 2022

Academic Council	24 September 2021, 6 October 2021, 24 November 2021, 8 December 2021, 2 February 2022, 2 March 2022, 26 April 2022, 18 May 2022, 15 June 2022
Academic Council Grading Committee	1 September 2021, 23 September 2021, 2 December 2021, 20 January 2022, 16 May 2022, 3 June 2022, 24 June 2022
Academic Programme Review Committee (APRC)	15 September 2021, 14 October 2021, 18 November 2021, 16 December 2021, 13 January 2022, 10 February 2022, 10 March 2022, 7 April 2022, 5 May 2022, 16 June 2022
Academic Regulations Committee	07 September 2021, 19 October 2021, 16 November 2021, 11 January 2022, 15 February 2022, 22 March 2022, 19 April 2022, 24 May 2022
AHSS Faculty Board Meetings	13 October 2021, 24 November 2021, 9 February 2022, 16 March 2022
KBS Faculty Board Meetings	20 October 2021, 24 November 2021, 9 February 2022, 16 March 2022
EHS Faculty Board Meetings	29 Sept 2021, 17 Nov 2021, 9 February 2022, 16 March 2022
S&E Faculty Board Meetings	13 October 2021, 24 November 2021, 26 January 2022, 16 March 2022
Research Ethics and Governance Committee	15 November 2021, 31 January 2022, 9 May 2022, 22 June 2022
University Teacher Education Board	5 October 2021, 2 November 2021, 30 November 2021, 25 January 2022, 15 March 2022, 10 May 2022
University Management Council Group	16 September 2021, 14 October 2021, 18 November 2021, 9 December 2021, 22 February 2022, 29 March 2022, 26 April 2022, 26 May 2022, 28 June 2022
Library Information Resources Development Committee	20 October 2021

### 1.3.2 QA Leadership and Management Structural Developments

The following strategic appointments were made during the reporting period:

- An Executive Dean of Kemmy Business School was appointed for a five-year period.
- A Chief Financial Performance Officer was appointed in September 2021.
- A new Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) Director was appointed.
- A Director of Marketing and Communications was appointed in November 2021.
- Jan 2022: University of Limerick has appointed an Adjunct Professor of Smart Energy Systems in the [Department of Electronic and Computer Engineering](#).

- A new Corporate Secretary was appointed in May 2022.
- The Provost and Deputy President was appointed for a five-year period in July 2022.
- An Interim Executive Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences was appointed in July 2022.
- The Interim Provost and Deputy President returned to his post of Vice President Global and Community Engagement in July 2022.
- The Interim Vice President Global and Community Engagement returned to the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences.

The proposal for the Doctoral College at UL was approved by Executive on May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022. The proposal highlights the anticipated organisational structure that would support the Doctoral College. This includes a new Associate Vice President of the Doctoral College and a Doctoral College Board to provide oversight, strategic and financial planning, as well as governance and decision making to doctoral education. The proposal also summaries the expected deliverables that the Doctoral College can offer to its stakeholders. The deliverables have been aligned with the strategic goals and priority areas identified within the recalibrated UL@50 Strategic Plan. It is expected that the UL Doctoral College will be established at the beginning of the 2023-24 academic year.

The University Research Committee (URC) approved 3 new centres this academic year.

- [Sports & Human Performance Research Centre](#)
- [Centre for the Study of Popular Music and Popular Culture](#)
- [Limerick Digital Cancer Research Centre](#)

## 1.4 Internal Monitoring and Review

### 1.4.1 Overview of Periodic Reviews

Unit of review for which report has been published during reporting period	Date of completion/reason for conducting review (if not planned) or non-completion (if planned but not conducted)	Links to relevant publications
Bernal Research Institute	22-25 November 2021	Report available <a href="#">here</a>
Human Resources Division	6-9 December 2021	Report available <a href="#">here</a>
Health Research Institute	14-18 February 2022	Report available <a href="#">here</a>
Faculty of Education and Health Sciences	7-10 March 2022	Report available <a href="#">here</a>
UL Global	23-26 May 2022	Report available <a href="#">here</a>

## 1.4.2 Expert Review Teams/Panels<sup>2</sup> involved in IQA

### (i) Expert Review Team/Panel Size and Related Processes

	Total	Academic Schools/ Department	Professional Services/Support Unit	Approval/Review of Linked Provider	Programme Approval	Programme Review	Other
Number of review/ evaluation processes	5	3	2				
<i>of those:</i>							
On-site processes							
Desk reviews							
Virtual processes	5						
Average panel size for each process type*		6	5				

\* excluding secretary if not a full panel member

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<sup>2</sup> QQI acknowledges that the terminology used to describe the groups of individuals that conduct peer review/evaluation varies from institution to institution.

**(ii) Composition of Expert Review Teams/Panels involved in IQA**

Type of Expert/ Role on Panel	Total	Gender			Internal	National	International			Institution Type	
		Male	Female	Other, or unspecified			UK, incl. NI	Other European	Outside of Europe	Similar	Different
Chair	5	3	2		2	1	1	1	3	2	
Secretary	5		5		5					5	
Academic/Discipline Specific	13	7	6			8	5		11	2	
Student Representative	5	2	3		1	3	1		3	2	
QA	2		2		2				2		
Teaching & Learning											
External Industry /Third Mission	3	1	2			3			1	2	

## 2.0 IQA System – Enhancement and Impacts

### Quality Enhancements to Corporate Governance

Several quality enhancement initiatives were implemented by the Corporate Secretary's Office to further strengthen corporate governance.

1. The Legal Services and Internal Audit units implemented the following:
  - a. A 'Contract Assessment Process' (CAF) and Research Contracts Questionnaire to ensure all contracts have been subject to adequate due diligence and review before signature;
  - b. Delivered 3 'Conflict of Interest Policy sessions to ensure awareness of export controls requirements and 8 'Export Control' sessions to ensure awareness of export control requirements;
  - c. Established a central database of all Research Contracts on SharePoint with restricted access.
2. The Data Protection Unit developed and launched a new online data protection training course. The course replaces the previous 'off-the-shelf' course and specifically addresses the situations and circumstances in which a University is processing personal data. This training is mandatory for all staff.
3. The Information & Compliance unit developed supporting material to enable compliance with revised UL Records Management Policy; expanded the Records Classification and Retention Schedule, developed a Records Management guidance and FAQs, and checklist and developed a revised awareness training programme for rollout to the campus community.
4. The CS Office also developed a hybrid awareness programme targeted at researchers which covers an introduction to Data Protection, Records Management and Research Data Management at UL. This was a collaborative initiative between staff in the Corporate Secretary's Office and the Glucksman Library.

### Collaborative Activities

**1. Student Success Dashboard:** As the university moves forward on its digital journey, better understanding of our students, our staff, our finances and our processes becomes increasingly critical. The ITD BI and Reporting Systems team provides the technology, skills and advice to help transform the way in which we access, view and analyse data across the campus. Among other projects, the ITD BI team has recently worked with QSU to progress a new Student Success dashboard that provides data about applications, registrations, enrolments, and graduations at a faculty and department level. This dashboard, which is currently in beta, makes key statistics available to assist the annual programme monitoring process in a form that was not previously available. Some highlights of the dashboard are:

- Statistics for each faculty detailing how many applications, offers, and registrations occur per academic year for the past 5 years, including the year-on-year change rate and 5-year change rate in registrations.
- Drill-down to show same per department.
- Registrations per gender per faculty/department
- Applications by geography
- Active Students per course year
- Graduates by award per faculty/department

The dashboard presents data retrieved from the BI Data Warehouse. The BI ITD team is working to improve data quality and increase available metrics in the warehouse in order to enhance data-driven decision making across the campus.

**2. Research Proposal Authorisation System (RPAS):** As a part of the University's digital transformation, colleagues in OVPR, ITD and Finance worked on the development of the Research Proposal Authorisation System (RPAS), which provides a digital solution to support the research pre-award funding process at UL. RPAS allows submission, collaboration, progress tracking, review, management and approval of the pre-award research funding applications. With the introduction of RPAS, this new workflow replaces the paper process - Proposal Authorisation Form (PAF).

This project has enabled users to trace the application at any stage and will allow tailored research support through early engagement and communications around the development of research funding proposals. Research Support Services can manage and report on the applications throughout the process from development to award status.

The platform will also offer a Collaboration Workspace for users to enable more efficient communication across the UL parties involved in developing, supporting, and approving research proposals. The new solution will decrease the volume of emails and will introduce a more transparent information flow and record management system.

**3. STELA Live:** The Student Evaluation and Learning Analytics (StELA) project will look at why we ask students for feedback, the most effective methods to use and how we can best use the feedback provided by students. As students interact with the virtual learning environments and other university systems, what insights can we draw from this existing data? Can the insights from multiple feedback mechanisms be triangulated to provide reliable information that can be acted upon? In the period from Sept 2021 to August 2022, the STELA Live project has achieved the following outcomes:

- Collaborative drafting of the Data Management Plan with ITD Business Intelligence and SITS Data Governance
- Compilation of SITS Data Sharing Templates, following approval from SITS Data Governance for the data to be harvested for this project (approved by Associate Vice President Academic Services & Deputy Registrar, September 2021), followed by posterior approval for data access from Office of the Provost
- Agreement with ITD Business Intelligence to harvest SI Data defined in the Data Management Plan, and learning analytics from Sulis (in collaboration with module leaders as data owners)
- Selection of four voluntary large first year undergraduate modules, in collaboration with module leaders as data owners:
- Recruitment of a dedicated position for the project to work in collaboration with the BI unit in ITD as a researcher to extract, combine, anonymize, and analyse data.
- Production and approval of a Data Protection Impact Assessment in collaboration with the Data Protection Officer
- Ethics research approval from AHSS Ethics Research Committee for baseline analysis
- Creation of a dataset with common data definitions to facilitate appropriate access by staff to support student success in collaboration with the Power Intelligence Unit in ITD.
- Design of a protocol for intervention to improve the academic experience of students through the delivery of timely, personalised, and actionable feedback under the umbrella of the Policy on the Use of Data to Enhance Teaching, Learning and Assessment

(Learning Analytics). This intervention has been based on the insights from the preceding baseline analysis and current data of engagement and informed from the perspective of teachers, students, and relevant support services at UL.

A workshop on using student feedback and learning analytics in professional development, was held in December 2021. This workshop, funded through the National Seminar Series call, was an opportunity for participants to experience and work with a suite of online structured resources which seek to support teaching staff in attending to feedback from student evaluations of teaching and the prospects learning analytics afford. The workshop showcased the guidance documents and scenario-based resources that have been created as part of the STELA (STudent Evaluation and Learning Analytics) project. There was a strong emphasis placed upon reflection and active approaches from participants throughout the workshop.

**4. LevUL up Digital Skills Development Programme:** LevUL Up is a digital skills development programme for UL students coordinated by CTL in collaboration with the Glucksman Library and the Information Technology Division (ITD). This Autumn semester, LevUL Up comprised two parts, a Digital Skills Awareness Course, hosted on Sulis, plus a calendar of 21 live online workshops focusing on a range of digital skills and literacies. Workshops were offered during a 6-week timeframe and repeated on a few occasions amounting to 74 workshop instances in total. The workshops were delivered by both staff and students at UL, recorded, and subsequently made available for all UL staff and students to watch back on a single channel. At the end of this semester, almost 600 people are enrolled in the student role on the Digital Skills Awareness Course, and almost 1,700 people registered for live online workshops.

## Programmes of Education and Training

**CWELL - a level 7 diploma designed by communities for communities:** The Community Wellness, Empowerment, Leadership and Life skills (CWELL) diploma is a unique academic programme that has been co-designed with local Limerick communities to address their community-identified needs. The CWELL diploma programme represents a long-term university commitment to supporting both individuals and communities in under-represented parts of Limerick. The course acronym reflects the curriculum content, which is designed to apply to both individual and community needs in terms of: managing physical and mental well-being; empowering individuals and groups to identify and advocate for their needs; and developing the necessary leadership and life skills to address personal and community development objectives in a proactive and strategic manner. In 2021, CWELL community partners joined together to create a community-based website, supporting the programme: [www.CWELL.ie](http://www.CWELL.ie) The website contains testimonials from CWELL students and community partners, as well as copies of the CWELL magazine, which is produced 5 times a year.

Details on the academic structure and content of the programme can be found here:

<https://www.ul.ie/gps/community-wellness-empowerment-leadership-and-life-skills-cwell-diploma>

**MA Community Research+ A level 9 taught Masters programme:** Combining inputs from UL Engage with graduate offerings in the Departments of Politics and Public Administration, Sociology and the School of English, Irish and Communication. This innovative cross-disciplinary and practice based graduate programme comprises a common 'engaged research and practice' core augmented by disciplinary specific academic training and research. To achieve this the MA Community Research Plus+ programme combines traditional lecture-

based graduate studies with real time, real-life, on-the-job research training in UL Engage-supported community/university collaborative projects (locally and internationally).

Students combine community engaged learning in engaged research design; engaged research delivery; and project evaluation with graduate modules in their chosen field.

- Community Research + Development, offered by the Department of Politics and Public Administration (course video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PishZdMI8IY> )
- Community Research + Journalism, offered by the Journalism Unit in the School of Language and Communication (course video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vzV5zsKIFcl&feature=youtu.be> )
- In 2020 a new stream was offered by the Department of Sociology in Community Research + Sociology

**Professional Diploma in Community Engagement - a graduate Diploma, level 9:** The Professional Diploma in Community Engagement is designed to meet the needs of professionals and practitioners in community based settings in the public, semi-state and not-for-profit sector. The curriculum has been co-designed with Tusla Education Support Service to assist Home School Liaison workers (teachers seconded to a role mediating between family and school ) from our national Child and Family Support Agency, to gain practical experience working with people from communities of socio-economic deprivation.

## Supports for Learners

**1. Exploring Student and Staff Learning Experiences of Problem Based Learning:** This collaborative project across the Irish HE sector was completed in Summer 2022. It investigated learner and facilitator experiences of transition to online enquiry/problem-based learning (E/PBL) during the COVID-19 pandemic. Engaging in online E/PBL presented diverse views on how best to support transition to student-centred learning and teaching methodologies online. Recommendations highlight the need for digital and technological training to enhance facilitators' competence, to build rapport and promote social cohesion amongst learners.

Outputs from this project included:

- A poster presented at VITL week <https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/wp-content/uploads/26-VITALSC01UL07-PBL-1.jpg> (Nov 2021)
- An oral presentation at the EdTech conference <https://ilta.ie/> (April 2022)
- A webinar series: Student and Staff Learning experiences of Problem Based Learning in Digital Spaces (May 2022) <https://pblfacilitate.wordpress.com/events/>
- Resources for the Community including for E/PBL students and tutors <https://pblfacilitate.wordpress.com/resources/> .
- Poster presentation at the QQI 10th Anniversary Conference, Croke Park (October 2022) <https://www.qqi.ie/events/qqi-10th-anniversary-conference>
- A research paper (currently in process) to be submitted to AISHE-J in Spring 2023.

**2. UL Learning Centres:** Student support services play a crucial role in the success of students in higher education. All of our Learner Centres provide space where students feel comfortable about raising issues that may help them to study or learn more effectively and build their confidence and self-esteem. Our range of helpful learning centres are part of the UL campus

and help students to tackle challenges in maths, science, IT, writing and through peer supported learning. Uptake of student support services during the reporting period include:

- A total of 30,336 visits were made to the Mathematics Learning Centre's (MLC) drop-in centre Sulis site in the period between summer repeats 2021 and the middle of week 15 Semester 2 2022. 3,092 hours of the MLC's 24/7 support material was viewed throughout the year. In addition to the engagement with the MLC's 24/7 material, a total of 2,868 attendances at MLC classes were recorded throughout the year. This is a combination of attendances at MLC online group support classes, MLC appointments, MLC revision programmes and MLC in-person drop-in support. Furthermore, voluntary anonymous student surveys submitted this year indicate that almost half of the students who completed the surveys feared that they would fail their mathematics module(s), with almost all students stating that the MLC would contribute to them passing their module or getting a better grade.
- Science Learning Centre (SLC) is providing support (through the Drop-in Centre (face to face), online appointment-based sessions and support tutorials) to undergraduates whose degree includes a science or engineering component. A total of 14,244 visits were made to the Science Learning Centre (SLC) SULIS site by 3,742 unique visitors enrolled as 'participants' on the course between May 2021 and May 2022. The SLC Sulis site also contains 50 videos created by tutors in various subject areas and 2,756 hours of video content was viewed throughout the year. We provided support tutorials for 8 modules this year (5 Chemistry modules, 3 Mechanical Engineering modules; 6 modules at the request of student reps, 2 'Prepare and Repeat' modules). 183 online 1-1 appointments were made over the academic year. SLC is also continuing to cater to some of the specific requests made by students with special needs and is working in collaboration with disability services to provide the best facility to these students.
- ICT Learning Centre (ICTLC): During AY 2021/22, the ICTLC operated a hybrid model of support, with students being able to avail of both online synchronous support and face-to-face support in our centre. These supports include drop-in sessions, one-to-one appointments, group sessions, and our Prepare and Repeat (PAR) sessions. In total, 550 students, primarily from the core ICT courses, availed of the supports with a total of 2038 visits recorded. A series of targeted support classes for 3 first-year and 6 second-year ICT modules were delivered face-to-face in both semesters. During the past academic year, 5 core programming modules were supported using the Digital Learning Support Hub (DLSH).
- The Peer-Supported Learning Centre (PSLC) offered Peer-Supported Learning Group (PSLG) support to 10 modules this year from the Faculty of Science & Engineering, School of Allied Health, and the Kemmy Business School. A total of 1008 individual students were targeted with 239 (23.71%) attending the support. While the attendance rate was lower than last year, the usual trends were seen with students attending the at least 50% of the support sessions (8 weekly sessions per semester) showing an average QPV 30.70% higher than the class average, compared to those who attended no sessions showing an average QPV 3.24% below the class average. Similar findings for pass rates are seen with those attending 50% or more of the support sessions passing (achieving a grade of C3 or higher) on average 17.29% above the class average whilst those who didn't attend passing at a rate 2.21% below the class average.
- The Regional Writing Centre delivered 28 workshops on various aspects of writing for academic assessment during this period, over two-hundred and fifty students attending.
- Two PhD Writers' Weeks were facilitated for 18 PhD candidates, most in their final year.
- Volunteers from StudentVolunteers.ie judged the Regional Writing Centre's 11th annual National Secondary School Essay-writing Competition.

- Seven international scholars visiting through the Erasmus Mobility + from Bosnia and Ghana were hosted by the RWC.
- Digital Learning Support Hub (DLSH). For DLSH supported modules, each week during the semester, appropriate online content is deployed. This content is supported with scheduled weekly face-to-face ICTLC sessions or online using the Peer Supported Learning Group (PSLG) model. An additional core ECE first-year programming module was supported with PAR during the spring semester. A total of 40 students targeted based on their grades in prior assessments with relevant online content made available to the students each week. A flipped classroom model was used with the focus of these classes on lab work and solving typical assessment questions. With the managed return to campus this year, the ICTLC implemented Pair-Programming support in labs for the core first-year ECE programming modules in both semesters. The centre organised and mentored 3-person teams for the Robocode (first-year national programming competition) during February with the winners of our in-house competition representing UL during the event held in early March. DLSH offered continued avenues for the PSLC to make its support more accessible and flexible. Of the 10 PSLG programmes deployed, 5 were run online through DLSH. The online platform allowed us to reach out to more students and the freedom to deploy supports 'after-hours'. Unfortunately, a certain level of 'online fatigue' has hampered attendance rates but the positive reception of the online nature by those who attended encourages us to continue to examine, adapt, and develop online and hybrid deployments of our supports going forward.

## 2.1 Initiatives within the Institution related to Academic Integrity

UL has committed to establishing an *Academic Integrity Team* which will progress the key strategic goal of *upholding, cultivating, and embedding a culture of academic integrity*. This team will scope best practice in creating a culture of academic integrity across the Irish higher education sector through engagement with QQI National Academic Integrity Network activities. This team will be comprised of the following posts - Academic Integrity Lead (Senior Lecturer - 3-year post), *Academic Integrity Educational Developer (3 year post)\* 2* and a *student Intern (1 year post)*. Initial work will be on the development of a policy and procedure in terms of embedding AI in curricula with the team adopting a two-pronged approach to the achievement of this aim:

- Education of the students on the principles of academic integrity (Evidence of students not aware that what they are engaging in is, in fact, misconduct)
- Investigation of cases.

In so doing, the team will engage and collaborate with each faculty Student Support Officers, the Student Engagement and Success Team (Library, Centre for Transformative Learning, Student Affairs), Course Directors, University Advocates and others.

By establishing an academic integrity team, there is clear alignment to embedding a best practice approach to upholding and cultivating academic integrity.

### 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period

#### 3.1 QA and QE supporting the Achievement of Strategic Objectives

No.	<b>Relevant objectives</b> Note: Include reference to the relevant section of the preceding AQR, where applicable	<b>Planned actions and indicators</b> <i>Note: Include details of unit responsible, and how planned action will address the relevant strategic priority and/or reengagement advice/CINNTE recommendation. If the institution is preparing for cyclical review, include how the planned actions will address the relevant review objective(s).</i>
1	Development of a University Research Strategy	Develop a research strategy for the University of Limerick in association with the recalibrated UL Strategic Plan.
2	Development of a University Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy aligned to the UL strategy UL@50.	With the approval of the recalibrated UL@50 strategic plan in principle by the Governing Authority on 24 February, which has Transforming Education at its heart, the University Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee (ULTAC) will begin the process of developing a new Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy (LTAS) to deliver this objective.
3	Conduct a university-wide cultural audit	A UL Culture Audit was initiated on request by the Governing Authority to gather sufficient data from all staff to give senior management the information that they need to direct a transformational process for the University's organisational culture.
4	Establishment of UL Global Lounge	UL Global Lounge will be a space on campus dedicated to promoting and celebrating internationalism and helping with the integration of students from all over the world into the wider university community. In HEIs where they have already been established, such spaces are used by students and staff to socialise and learn, to host multicultural and educational events, and to provide an international learning experience to all students on campus.
5	Implementation of MoveOn for UL Global	Implementation of this system will significantly improve the administration of Mobility in Erasmus and Study Abroad. The potential of this software to enhance the quality assurance of partnership arrangements and agreements is also being explored.
6	Introduction and implementation of a new Information Management System for the University Governing Authority	To improve governance and documentation security, the Corporate Secretary's Office plan to introduce a new Information Management System for Governing Authority.

7	Conduct a thematic review of professional supports for Research	As part of the current cycle of quality reviews, conduct a thematic review of professional supports for research across several university departments.
8	Conduct a review of approval pathways and supporting policies for collaborative agreements	The definition and approval pathways for collaborative provision are being revised due to organisational restructuring and a post implementation review of the existing policy.
9	Develop a Healthy Campus Charter	Develop a 'Healthy Campus Charter' to consolidate and collectively enhance action, while simultaneously ensuring that UL has a comprehensive response to the HEA's Healthy Campus Charter.

## 3.2 Reviews planned for Upcoming Reporting Periods

### 3.2.1 Reviews planned for Next Reporting Period

Unit to be reviewed	Date of planned review	Date of last review
Finance	12-15 Sept '22	June 2015
Academic Registry	21-24 Nov '22	n/a
Faculty of Science & Engineering	23-26 Jan '23	n/a
Professional Support for Research	6-9 Mar '23	n/a
UL Engage	20-23 Mar '23	n/a
PCC Group	24-28 Apr '23	June 2016

### 3.2.2 Reviews planned beyond Next Reporting Period

Reviews scheduled beyond the reporting period are available [here](#)

## 4.0 Additional Themes and Case Studies

### Theme 1: Ensuring the Quality Assurance and Enhancement of Work Placements

#### CASE STUDY 1

**Title:** Library Work Placement 2021

**Theme:** Ensuring the quality assurance and enhancement of work placements

**Keywords** (2-3 words): Work Placement, Library, Poster

#### Short Abstract:

A student completed a work placement in the Glucksman Library from September to Christmas 2021. It was 8 hours a week and was a requirement of her programme of study at Ulster University, where she was doing a postgraduate course in Library & Information Management.

#### Case Study

Her work placement was conducted virtually for the most part, as the prevailing public health advice at the time was that ONLY UL students and employees were allowed to be on campus. The library provided Sinéad with work which she completed online, from her own home at a time that suited her. It was largely desk-based research that helped the library out and provided valuable learning experiences for the student who wants to become a professional librarian. When public health restrictions eased Sinéad was allowed to come into the library and she rotated through several work areas in the library and even did some front of house work at the library's Information Desk. The library learned from Sinéad too, she made recommendations for the library's popular reading collection using BookTok which, for us, was a new way of identifying popular titles. Sinéad attended a library conference and presented a poster about her virtual work placement and wrote an accompanying blog post that describes her experience

<https://www.libfocus.com/2022/05/making-it-work-doing-virtual-work.html>

#### CASE STUDY 2

**Title:** Professional Work Experience for UL Students

**Theme:** Ensuring the Quality Assurance and Enhancement of Work Placements

**Keywords** (2-3 words): Service Delivery, Student Input,

#### Short Abstract:

The ITD Service Desk is the main point of contact for all staff & student queries. As part of the UL Enable Strategy, ITD transformed their Service Delivery model & implemented new systems including TopDesk to help streamline how queries are managed from end users.

#### Case Study

Staff & students are the primary users of IT systems in UL. Student input is vital as it enables us to identify how students interact & use IT systems while also highlighting service gaps & areas for improvement. Over the past four years, we changed our

recruitment strategy & we now hire UL students on fixed term contracts (via the Coop Office / Recruitment of PG students) to deliver IT support to staff & students.

What are the benefits for students?

1. Gain invaluable professional experience working in a large & complex IT environment.
2. Further develop & improve their IT skills.
3. Develop customer service skills & gain teamwork experience.
4. Fully paid positions.

What are the benefits to ITD?

1. Be the voice of students & help ITD deliver services that best cater for our students' needs.
2. Help us to develop training material & online content.
3. Answer queries from staff & students.

Key Stats

1. Over the last 4 years, ITD have hired 51 students - 25 postgrads & 26 Coop students. The Coop placements have spanned across 7 academic disciplines

Feedback from the Cooperative Education & Careers - Placement Officer

*"We greatly value this successful collaboration with our colleagues in ITD. It gives our Coop students a fantastic opportunity to enhance their graduate capital, through the experience gained in a busy and professional workplace setting with ITD."*

Coop Student, Computer Games Development

*"Since starting on the service desk back in January as a student, I have thoroughly enjoyed the experience. No two days have been the same on the desk. The team in ITD has been extremely helpful in allowing me to settle in so quick and being able to support both staff and students daily with any IT problems they might have or services they require is something I am proud to do. I would highly recommend the Service desk in UL to any student looking for cooperative education."*

When do we recruit?

- Coop students are recruited in collaboration with the Coop Office.
- Postgraduate students are recruited over the summer months & we publish these vacancies on our social media platforms & the ITD website.

### CASE STUDY 3

**Title:** Build Your Future Global Capital - A pathway for UL students

**Theme:** Ensuring the Quality Assurance and Enhancement of Work Placements

**Keywords** (2-3 words): Global Mindsets, Talent Acquisition

#### Short Abstract:

In an increasingly globalised world, employers are seeking to recruit globally 'ready' graduates - graduates who can demonstrate global knowledge, perspectives, insights and sensitivities as well as cultural agility. The ability to work in multi-disciplinary, multi-cultural and multi-locational teams is key to many organisations' talent acquisition strategies. In a "shrinking world", employers are seeking graduates who engage easily with customers, suppliers and intermediaries across cultural and geographical divides. In this context, job

seeking graduates with global mind-sets and experience can enjoy significant added value in the graduate recruitment arena.

### Case Study

How can our graduates become “globally competent”? Certainly, evidence points to immersive global work placements - where students live and work in another country - as being an optimal conduit for developing an ability to see the world through a wider lens. UL’s global Cooperative Education programme, for example, offers 300+ undergraduates the opportunity to undertake a 6-8 months’ placement within a network of 25+ countries across all five continents. However, for a diversity of reasons, not every student is in a position to undertake a long, immersive, international work placement. To meet the needs of this student cohort, we investigated other shorter work- integrated-learning models that would offer students the opportunity to build their global capital in a different way. Having reviewed the possibilities of such a provision, UL’s strategy was to partner with an initial group of nine universities from eight countries (including Canada, Australia, Namibia, the US, Kyrgyzstan, and Thailand) in piloting an innovative and ambitious global student-industry programme, viz., The Global Challenge.

The Global Challenge is a four-week virtual work integrated learning programme where students work in culturally - and disciplinarily - diverse global teams to produce a business strategy that aims to solve social issues profitably through creating sustainable impact. Client organisations are identified across business, government and community/not-for-profit sectors. And, critically, every project must be aligned to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), allowing students to contribute to prosperity and dignity for people and our planet now and into the future. The sectoral and geographical reaches of the programme are impressive as seen in the table below.

#### Examples of Client Companies

- DeWarmte BV (Belgium) - sustainable, circular heat technology manufacturing
- Sharkbite (Germany) - Innovation GmbH sustainable transformation consultancy
- Music Relief Foundation (UK) - Using music to address youth issues and engaging with communities
  - AustCham (China) - Australian-Chinese engagement
- Western Digital (Global) - one of the world’s largest hard drive and memory device manufacturers.
  - Hatch Quarter (Australia) - Public administration and safety consultancy
  - It’s Our Planet Too (UK) - Producer of eco-box toolkit for children
  - Nityo Infotech (Indonesia) - Information Media and Telecoms

In terms of its structure, the Global Challenge programme runs for four weeks. At the beginning of the programme, students attend the programme orientation and induction. They also participate in a very practical cultural intelligence workshop. This is followed by a 3-week virtual project where the multidisciplinary and multicultural teams collaborate to solve a problem for their assigned client organisation. Following this, our students complete a reflection and presentation component.



Screen Grab of Zoom Meeting of a Global Challenge Student Meeting

There was a rich diversity in terms of the profile of participating students - undergraduate and postgraduate students across science, engineering, arts, humanities, social science and business have taken the opportunity to develop their future global capital. As a lead university in the programme, CECD staff are part of the multi-cultural facilitation team overseeing the Global Challenge student presentations. These presentations are a valuable opportunity to gather informal feedback from students around the challenges of working in a multi-cultural team, collaborating across different time-zones, using diverse ways of communicating, and channelling a range working styles, as well as partnering with students from different disciplinary backgrounds. In the most recent end-of-programme survey, 83% of students reported that they had increased their global competencies, with 100% of students reporting that they had increased their social and professional networks. In the same survey, 93% of students reported that they would reference this experience for future career opportunities, and 80% of students said that the experience had increased their business decision making skills. When asked to identify the main global competencies that they developed/improved upon as a result of this experience, the top six cited competencies were: problem solving, collaboration, service orientation, cultural consciousness, innovation and leadership. Interestingly, this aligns with the key competencies sought by graduate employers.

The voice of the student is important and a UL student captures the experience well in her testimonial:

*“Although at times the industry project was challenging and difficult to balance alongside other commitments, the experience I gained from the project was invaluable. Leading a team of four other individuals from different countries and time zones has helped me to develop my skills in project management communication, collaboration and problem-solving. It also allowed me to gain experience in this area of work and provided food for thought on whether it is something I’d like to pursue in the future. Overall, it was a very worthwhile experience”.*

Since the pilot, the Global Challenge has gone from strength to strength, with more than 500 students from 30+ countries engaging with this tough but valuable global pathway and using it as a springboard to showcase their global competence. A challenge. A global challenge. A very successful challenge.

## Theme 2: Sustainability

### CASE STUDY 4

**Title:** A UL Mission-based Sustainability Framework 2030

**Theme:** Sustainability

**Keywords (2-3 words):** Sustainability, UN SDGs, systems-wide approach, participation, mission-oriented, transparent, measurable

#### Short Abstract:

In 2021 UL President tasked members of the UL community to come together and develop a holistic systems-wide approach to support its transition to becoming a sustainable university. Central to this transition, was the need for fundamental organisational change at every level, cultural, governance, business model, behavioural and through its core missions of research, teaching and engagement with the wider community. UL has committed to working toward becoming a sustainable university while working towards tackling national and global challenges and supporting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's).

#### Case Study

##### *Process*

##### Systems-wide Perspective

This strategic framework was co-designed and co-developed by 70+ members of our community, including faculty, staff, students and external stakeholders who have actively participated in developing this systems-wide approach. As a first step to work on a university-wide approach, colleagues took the SDG's and reframed them as Higher Education Grand Challenges. This collaborative process was led by Andrea Deverell, Centre for Sustainable Futures and Innovation, and Chaired by Prof Ann McPhail which included engaging, facilitating and synthesising complex input from across our organisation through a series of intensive workathon sessions followed by monthly check-in meetings.

The groups were split into four working groups to ensure a systems-wide approach. One staff member coordinated the efforts of the Partnership, Society and Engagement group, Another coordinated the efforts of the Leadership, Staff and Governance group, and a third coordinated the efforts of the Learning, Research and Students group and a member from Buildings & Estates coordinated the efforts of the Campus community and Operations Group. Each group played a fundamental role in unearthing the challenges, starting points and work already on the go in UL.

##### 'Workathons'

The group coined the term 'workathon' which came to mean four-hour working sessions. These 'workathons' took place online, where a large digital board was created to enable the group to see their work unfold over time and everyone had an opportunity to comment, critique and share insights by leveraging tools like Miro and Teams. The first workathon focused on attempting to unpack and imagine what a sustainable university was or could be. The group arrived at several core insights: a sustainable university is a university that walks the talk - a role model for society. To be sustainable meant putting sustainability at the centre of every decision and action at every level and across every function of a university.

Underpinning the framework is a mission-based approach (Mariana Mazzucato <https://marianamazzucato.com/>). This approach allowed the group to translate the UNSGs to the higher education context and to make them actionable and measurable over time.

#### 'Check-ins'

'Check-ins' were designed to enable the entire group to come together for a short stand-up meeting once a month. This enabled us to make sure that we could see the connections across our four working groups.

#### Open Door Policy

From the onset, the Sustainable University Working Group decided it would have an open-door policy, it was not to be an exclusive group of individuals. Starting out with 12 individuals it has continued to grow with people reaching out to join continuously. The group is currently well over 70+ individuals strong.

#### Result

Early in March 2022 the ambitious UL Sustainability Framework 2030 was delivered and signed off by the Executive Committee and Governing Authority in May of 2022. The sustainability framework was officially launched in October 2022. Now complete, the framework communicates our collective vision and an agile action-oriented plan which will guide our organisation over the next 10 years to become a sustainable university. The result of this process is 21 UL Missions which are action oriented and measurable.

To access the framework to find out more. Website: [Sustainability | University of Limerick \(ul.ie\)](https://sustainability.ul.ie)

[To learn more about the process visit UL Links | University of Limerick](https://ul.ie)

## Theme 3: Digitisation

### CASE STUDY 5

**Title:** Development of Online Recruitment Packs

**Theme:** Digitisation

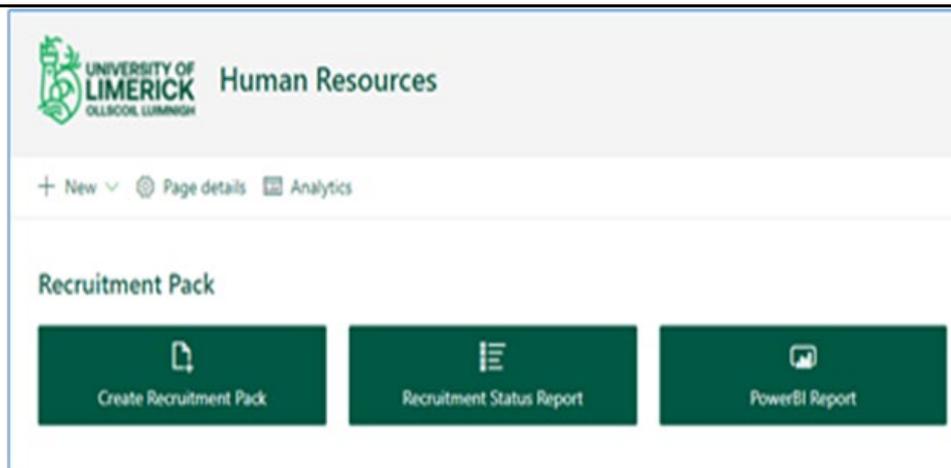
**Keywords** (2-3 words): Recruitment, Workflow, Service Improvement

#### Case Study

*Development of Online Recruitment Packs*

*Summary of Impact.*

To achieve its strategic goals, UL must hire top-quality staff in a timely manner. Recruitment packs help to expedite the hiring process so that new staff can commence as soon as possible. This is a test base for UL's workflow system and will be applied across campus.



#### *The Need*

The HR Division had received complaints about delays in the recruitment process. The use of a manual approval process meant that it was difficult to trace where approval lay at a particular point in time. Incomplete packs were also being received. This led to issues with turnaround times and meant that the process was not measurable. There was also the risk of a confidentiality breach due to forms containing sensitive information being misplaced.

#### *Approval*

The HR Director agreed to pilot an online workflow process; this was ITD's first test of its new workflow solution.

#### *Aim of the Project*

The aim of Phase 1 of the project was to provide a pilot that would act as proof of concept for a subset of recruitment packs and a subset of teams. The recruitment pack was updated to a pre-formatted template that would make completing the pack easier and would help to avoid data being lost. The system would then forward the pack along a pre-determined approval route, communicating with those who needed to approve the pack and providing details of the status of the pack for tracking and reporting. The solution will be fully rolled out in Phase 2. The pilot has now been completed and is in use in certain areas. Phase 2 will incorporate the feedback from the pilot group and enable the online recruitment tool to support all teams and all types of recruitment competition.

#### *Benefits*

The online system will mean that recruitment packs are turned around faster, which will shorten the recruitment process. It will also be easier to identify the status of each pack and ensure accountability for this, reduce the risk of data being lost, provide better macro reporting and clarify communication between stakeholders. The successful completion of the project will enable the functionality for future online forms and workflow solutions within HR to be adapted as standard.

#### *Evaluation*

The project pilot has proved that this is a workable solution and meets the expectations of the original business case. There are some challenges, including users' reluctance to move to a new system and the fact that the pilot was not built to cater for all recruitment packs. These will be dealt with as part of the second phase of the project. Once fully established, the process will continue to be evaluated by reviewing turnaround times and feedback from hiring managers and the recruitment team.

### **CASE STUDY 6**

**Title:** Introduction of the Online B&E Helpdesk

**Theme:** Digitisation

**Keywords (2-3 words):****Short Abstract:**

UL's riverside campus extends to 367 acres and contains almost 258,000m<sup>2</sup> of built space spread across circa fifty buildings. Whilst maintaining UL's outstanding physical facilities in support of teaching, research and the pursuit of cultural and recreational activities is a core function of the Buildings and Estates (B&E) department, it is also charged with, inter alia, providing security, cleaning, landscaping, and porter services. As a measure of activity within the department, B&E received over 20,000 customer-generated requests for their services in 2020, of which nearly half were maintenance requests spread across the electrical, mechanical, and building/carpentry disciplines.

**Case Study**

Welcome to the Buildings and Estates Help Desk

Log a call below by selecting the relevant category

<b>MAINTENANCE</b> Maintenance Request	 Portering Request	 Cleaning Request	 Campus Security
 Landscaping Services	 Covid-19 PPE Request	 Other B&E Forms	 Waste Management - Information
<b>MINOR WORKS</b> Minor Works - Information	 Outdoor Event Support Request Form	 Parking - Information	 Any Other Queries - Contact Us

Prior to the introduction of the online B&E Helpdesk, all customer-generated requests including maintenance requests were made either via telephone or by emailing a dedicated email address. Upon receipt of a request a member of B&E's administrative staff would transcribe the contents of the email/telephone call into the relevant log for the appropriate team to action. B&E first introduced computerised maintenance logs in 2006. Developed using Microsoft Excel, the maintenance logs especially were refined over time to reflect the continual improvement in customer service and any adjustments to the service level agreement with the University.

At B&E's External Quality Review in 2020, it was recommended that B&E install an online Help Desk either as stand-alone system or ideally as part of computer aided facilities management system (CAFM). In actioning this B&E set up a CAFM Implementation Team with the remit of researching and implementing a CAFM for the department. Initial research, which included demonstrations from multiple vendors, concluded that installing a proprietary CAFM necessitates significant upfront and recurring investment, requires considerable groundwork to ensure it will deliver the required functionality, needs to be properly resourced, and should not be rushed. Therefore, to accelerate the introduction of an online Help Desk, B&E reviewed existing enterprise solutions already in use at use in UL with a view to adopting if feasible. Having decided the functionality did

not meet its requirements, B&E opted to develop its own CAFM-ready online Help Desk using its own in-house resources and the Microsoft suite of software already supported by the University. Following a pilot phase of testing with a subset of the heaviest users of B&E services, B&E's online Help Desk was officially launched in March 2022. Multiple communications channels were used to ensure maximum uptake of the service thus minimising the number of service requests made by email and telephone. In the six months since its roll-out, 95% of the c. 5,000 service requests that could have been logged using B&E's online Help Desk were. Since introducing the online Help Desk all customers receive a tracking reference number unique to their request and written confirmation that their job is complete - in the past this level of service was reserved for customers making maintenance requests only. Whilst the introduction of the online Help Desk has not eliminated the workload of the admin team it has helped alleviate it. In the future additional B&E service offerings will be migrated to its online Help Desk thus further improving the quality of services B&E provides.

### **CASE STUDY 7**

**Title:** IT Security Focus

**Theme:** Digitisation

**Keywords (2-3 words):** Cybersecurity, Multi-Factor Authentication

#### **Short Abstract:**

Over the last 12 months, cybersecurity has become an area of increasing focus with several high-profile ransomware incidents in Ireland and internationally. In the Higher Education sector alone, recent cybersecurity incidents affecting universities across Europe have led to the suspension of classes & assessments, leaking of sensitive data to the Dark Web and the complete shutdown of campus services for some universities.

#### **Case Study**

As part of the University's Digital Evolution, ITD aligns to international frameworks such as NIST (National Institute of Standards and Technology) to improve our cybersecurity posture. In practical terms, this means that we focus on improvements in five key areas as outlined in this picture.



ITD's key focus is to ensure university critical assets are resilient to cybersecurity events. We continuously assess the threats and vulnerabilities that might impact the delivery of these services. We have developed processes to quickly detect potential cybersecurity issues and improved our abilities to contain and respond to a detected cybersecurity event.

As part of our ongoing efforts to protect UL digital resources from the evolving threat landscape, a sample of some of the key improvements delivered by ITD to improve our security posture over the last 12 months include:

- Roll out of Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) across the campus community, significantly reducing the potential for staff & student accounts to be compromised.
- Deployment of InTune, a modern workplace management solution to secure UL devices in use outside of the University's network.
  - Development of additional IT Security Awareness Training material.
- Regular reviews of our Incident Response procedures by our internal ITSIRT (IT Security Incident Response Team).

Engaging with partners to actively test our cybersecurity defences with scenario-based penetration tests and deep network vulnerability scanning.

### CASE STUDY 8

**Title:** QRG Online Nomination Process Digitisation

**Theme:** Digitisation

**Keywords:** Quality Enhancement, Automation, Approvals

#### Short Abstract

The QSU are responsible for managing quality reviews at UL. The nomination and approval of reviewers for each review is a key element of this process. This project

streamlined and digitised the QRG lifecycle from nomination to approval, with transparent monitoring and audit trail at each stage in the process.

### Case Study

As part of the QSU's digitisation plan, the QRG nomination and approval process, and associated due diligence exercise was reviewed and digitised. The original time-consuming and resource intensive process was reviewed and replaced with an automated workflow with single point data entry by the proposer.

The original process consisted of a multi-step heavily manual process, involving multiple touch points and different software packages. The transformed process:

- User-friendly, intuitive solution based on familiar Microsoft 365 environment
  - Accessible Nomination form with immersive reader. Microsoft 365 accessibility features
- Dynamic and sustainable approach - incorporating an Approvals Matrix to assign approvers to each unit and review stream
- Automated workflows, dynamic multistage approvals, progress monitoring and team level access on SharePoint
- Faster time from nomination to approval (from days/weeks to minutes/same day)
  - Reduced burden on approvers due to use of specifically directed and actionable approvals requests using standard templates (both MS Teams dynamic cards and MS Outlook).
- Enhanced QSU-level visibility on progress through process with the use of traffic-light colour convention progress indicators.
- “*Write data once*” approach - automated workflow pipes data directly from SharePoint database to communications templates.
- Designed with security in mind - MFA and separation of approvals from QSU database - approvers receive all information required to make decision via approvals process and do not require or have access to the underlying data
  - Process initiated by completion of online nomination form by unit under review:
    - online form submission triggers automated workflow transferring data to SharePoint database
    - automated notification triggered to review coordinator to begin due diligence exercise
    - completion of due diligence exercise triggers the start of multistage approval process based on Approvals Matrix
      - audit trail automatically captured for all stages in process
    - workflow transfers approved QRG members to the QRG Manager App

The risks identified in the process mapping phase included:

Risks	Mitigations and Enhancements
Time-consuming, repetitive and manual tasks	Fast, dynamic and automated process

Manual copying and pasting of QRG information from Nomination Forms and emails to excel workbook	Single point of data entry by proposer using online form. Online workflow to trigger (a) data transfer to SharePoint and (b) multistage Approvals process.
Repeated copying and pasting of the same information from various sources for different communications and parts of the process	Data automatically piped from SharePoint database to populate email communications and 365 Approvals app workflows
Copy and paste errors transcribing data from multiple sources	Single datasource with automated data transfer and data piping
Manually editing Nomination Form Document for each quality review & emailing same to Quality Team	Standardised, accessible online form for all reviews - accessed via weblink
Manual creation of bespoke emails for approvers, copying and pasting from various data sources	Workflow triggers standardised communications that are pre-populated with data from SharePoint database
Resource intensive for senior managers with approval requests competing with multiple emails in inbox. The use of non-standard email wording for each review, approvers required to dedicate more time to read emails to identify key requirements and what was being asked of them	Standardised clear communications reduces time requirement on approvers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specifically-directed</li> <li>• Actionable</li> <li>• Standard template</li> <li>• Intuitive voting buttons</li> </ul>
The absence of formalised Director of Quality approval step	Formalised as approval stage in automated workflow
Time delay from nomination to approval	Reduced from a number of days/weeks to a number of minutes to hours
No visibility on progress at any given time, as communications only in individual email boxes	QSU-level visibility on progress throughout process for each QRG member and review. Information dynamically updates using traffic-light colour convention for each stage in process.
No centrally accessible audit trail	Comprehensive audit trail of approvers including timestamps, datestamps and approval comments recorded on SharePoint database.
Increased risk due to unavailability of key staff	Automated workflows, progress monitoring and team level access on SharePoint ensures that all QSU members can check the status of each nomination and approval.
Heavily reliant on individuals	Automated workflow
Maintenance of non-user-friendly Excel-based file on SharePoint. No data validation.	Standardisation of data types and values. Migration to SharePoint list with data validation. Intuitive data entry form with drop-down lists to ensure data integrity and adherence to business rules. Integration with PowerApps using the QRG Manager App

Varied user-journeys depending on different staff preferences and communication styles	Improved and predictable user journeys
Security challenges associated with email-driven procedures	MFA and SSO with individual users and security groups. Separation of approvals from QSU SharePoint lists - approvers receive all information required to make decision via approvals process and do not require or have access to the underlying data
Document version control challenges associated with email-driven procedures	SharePoint inbuilt version control.
Data retention challenges with multiple documents retained on multiple systems	Single datasource on SharePoint
Not designed with accessibility in mind	Accessible MS Form with immersive reader. Inbuilt accessibility features with SharePoint online, Outlook and MS Teams.

## Theme 4: Transforming Education

### CASE STUDY 9

**Title:** Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) Implementation & Campus Rollout

**Theme:** Transforming Education

**Keywords** (2-3 words): UL@Work, Pedagogical Innovation

*Implementation of the Brightspace Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)*

#### Summary of Impact:

As part of the HCI funded UL@Work project, WP2 will deliver the implementation and rollout of the Brightspace VLE across the entire campus to enhance the delivery of both online and face-to-face learning of UL's programmes. The review and implementation of the new Virtual Learning Environment is reflected in the UL@50 - University of Limerick Strategic Plan 2019 - 2024, Strategic Goal 1: Transforming Education under the enterprise priority.

#### The Need

The project, subsidised by the UL@Work initiative, aims to build a flexible, technology-enhanced learning platform that responds to digitisation and the future world of work. It also presents an opportunity to improve the student and staff experience through a consistent and modern interface, provide centralised support and to create an agile infrastructure that can adapt to user requirements.

Brightspace will replace the two VLE platforms (Moodle and Sulis) currently used at the UL, implementing an enterprise-wide solution that aligns with the UL's ambitions to grow and improve UL's national and international educational offerings.

*Performance and Achievement*

A Four Stage Approach is being taken to implement the Brightspace VLE across campus:

1. Stage 1 - September 2022 (22 academic modules launched in Brightspace)
2. Stage 2 - January 2023 (185 academic modules launched in Brightspace)
3. Stage 3 - September 2023 (all remaining Autumn semester modules)
4. Stage 4 - January 2024 (all remaining Spring semester modules)

#### Evaluation and Future Stages

As a part of Stage 1 in September 2022, 22 modules were successfully delivered across the academic community. In October 2022, a review of Stage 1 stakeholders took place. Feedback from this review indicates that academics found the new Brightspace VLE intuitive and user-friendly, acknowledging its potential in enhancing teaching provision. Additionally, students enjoyed a clean and simplified interface, and the review noted an overall positive student experience.

Currently, the project is launching 185 modules representing all faculties for the Spring 2023 semester and during February a review of Stage 2 stakeholders will take place. The VLE project team is preparing for a planned migration of modules for September 2023 which includes training, migration, and user support.

## Theme 5: Research Excellence

### CASE STUDY 10

**Title:** UL joins Global IP Marketing Platform

**Theme:** Research Excellence

**Keywords** (2-3 words): Research Impact, Network, Knowledge Transfer

#### Short Abstract:

The Technology Transfer Office (TTO) creates impact from UL's excellent research through the management and commercialisation of UL's intellectual property. Successful commercialisation of our research involves marketing to companies and investors national and internationally.

#### Case Study

As part of the TTO strategy to improve our service delivery and expand our marketing reach the TTO recently joined the IN-PART global IP marketing platform. IN-PART offers UL access to a network of more than 6000 companies in the Lifesciences, Engineering and IT sectors.

UL is currently marketing 13 technologies on the platform which has resulted in a number of new connections with companies and investors. The platform also offers opportunities to UL researchers to submit proposals to company specific challenges promoted on the platform. The IN-PART platform is a new tool used by UL TTO to facilitate impact from UL's excellent research. In Part gives a window to showcase UL research and innovation activities. It also supports TTO decision making in optimising knowledge transfer impact for a better society.

## Theme 6: Third-Mission Activities, Societal and Community Engagement

### CASE STUDY 11

**Title:** UL Engage Projects

**Theme:** Third-Mission Activities, Societal and Community Engagement

**Keywords:** Community Engagement, collaboration

#### Short Abstract:

The UL Engage website gives details of UL Engaged projects with communities, as well as accredited engaged learning and engaged research. All UL Engage listed projects must comply with UL Engage guidelines for submission. These are:

- projects must include details of collaborating partners and/or their organisational logos for project verification. This ensures that the projects listed are real and authenticated by our collaborating partners.
- projects must also include details of how the project is evaluated - because our engagement is not reflexive and responsible if we do not ask 'how well are we doing?'

The project listings all conform to the same style, to provide consistent information. The green tab outlines the project in user friendly language for a non-specialist audience. It explains, what we're doing; why we are doing it; who we are working with; and how we evaluate the project.

The orange tab provides details, where relevant, of any curriculum based learning that the project supports. It explains to would-be students, what the project module involves; the rationale for the module and project; who students can expect to work with; and how their work will be evaluated.

The red tab provides details, where relevant, of any research associated with the project. The information follows the same format: what is the research; why is it necessary; who is collaborating; how is it evaluated.

Details on project partners and contact information for project partners are given for all projects under the black tab. Any resources - like photos, articles, reports, podcasts etc, are available under the grey 'Resources' tab.

#### Case Study

Projects in 2021/2 include:

- [Access Campus](#) - partnering with Limerick Enterprise Development Partnership (LEDP) to offer a mini-campus in the South side of the city catering for learners from primary school, after schools, secondary supports and mature access.
- [Cherish the Children? \(2021-current\)](#) This project examines the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on children and adolescents. It looks at the economic, psychological, and social conditions their engagement with school during the pandemic and focuses on finding out which children were most vulnerable to the impacts of the pandemic. By examining the social and economic context of the children who missed school before, during and after the pandemic, this study aims to understand the pattern of disengagement from school. By analyzing data from a range of sources, we will be able to predict the patterning of school disengagement, so that educational policy makers, government officials, schools can understand the signs and conditions that are likely to lead to school disengagement. We hope that by knowing what to look for, educational policymakers,

government officials, schools will be better able to support children at risk of missing school.

- [Comhrá video vignettes](#) provide resources for UL staff wishing to integrate civic engagement into their curriculum. The Comhrá Collection features contributions from all K4C mentors and their community partners and is available on the UL Engage resources site. Thematic Comhrá topics include transformative learning; digital engagement; values mapping; unconscious bias; conflict management; research reciprocity; use of language; use of informal spaces; interculturalism and reflective practice. Our global partners in IFWEA are currently working with K4C mentors, Languages and Culture, to provide 10 digital workbooks, to accompany the video resources. The first of these can be viewed here: [Interculturalism - digital workbook.pdf](#).
- [CWELL diploma programme](#) - a level 7 diploma programme directed at adult learners from socio-economic disadvantaged communities across Limerick city. The curriculum is co-designed with community partners to address community identified needs in Community Wellness, Empowerment, Leadership and Lifeskills (CWELL). CWELL is an inter-disciplinary programme delivered by staff from 3 UL faculties: Education and Health Sciences (EHS); Arts Humanities and Social Sciences (AHSS); and Irish World Academy of Music and Dance (IWAMD). CWELL continues to recruit and is now fully embedded in local communities. 20 students are enrolled for the A/Y 2022/23
- [HAPPEE - the Health Alliance for Practice-based Professional Education and Engagement](#) partners staff from the School of Allied Health, with CWELL consortium stakeholders to deliver Community-University partnership projects to leverage expertise for positive socio-economic impact. Having completed the pilot programme with Corpus Christi Primary School in 2021, this programme will be extended to four national schools in the southside of the city: Our Lady Queen of Peace; Le Cheile; Gaelscoil Sheoirse Clancy, Our Lady of Lourdes. HAPPEE Southside is a collaboration between the participating schools, St Gabriel's Disability Services Team and the University, designed to create sustainable practice-based Inter Professional Education (IPE) placements (in speech and language, occupational, physio and music therapies) in local schools.
- [Irish Traveller Access to Justice Report](#)
- Together we have co-authored an authoritative analysis of Travellers' experiences with and in the criminal justice system, making evidence-based recommendations about the tools available within the criminal justice system to protect Traveller rights. Among the key barriers to accessing justice is institutional racism towards Travellers found to be prevalent in the criminal justice system. Funded by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission and the Irish Research Council under the prestigious COALESCE programme, this project documents and explains the relationship between Travellers in Ireland and the Irish criminal justice institutions.
- [JAI Volunteer staff programme](#) - partnering UL Engage and Junior Achievement Ireland, 14 UL staff volunteers from across the university were trained to offer schools programmes. In Spring 2022, 30 UL staff volunteers delivered online programmes to 20+ local and regional schools, reaching 500+ students. This programme is significant in terms of it enabling *all UL staff* from any division or unit to participate.
- [K4C for Kidz](#) - introducing primary school children to community-based research with UL staff, to drive curiosity and make the university a more familiar place, and to foster community connections and capacity building in areas of socio-economic disadvantage. The project is a collaboration between UL Engage, SSPC and Gaelscoil Sheoirse Clancy Primary School. The school is a DEIS band school located in an area of socio-economic disadvantage in the south side of Limerick

city. The K4C-4-Kids programme is aimed at 11-13 year olds and was co-designed with the 5th and 6th class teacher in the school. The ten week programme, delivered in spring 2022, was primarily delivered in the school but also included an on-campus lab based workshop to aid the pupils in defining their research question and planning their methods. The pupils worked in small groups, supported by the team, to conduct a piece of research that could be accommodated within the school day and with the school community. The programme culminated in a poster presentation day during which the pupils confidently explained their processes and findings.

- [One Million Stars \(2021\)](#)
- The One Million Stars to End Violence project brings communities together to engage in a creative project that demonstrates our support and solidarity with those who experience violence, particularly domestic violence. The star is a symbol of light, hope, and solidarity and together, through star weaving, we can collectively take a stand toward ending violence in Ireland.
- Communities & Outreach Coordinator and Project Lead says weaving stars is about bringing people together, "in weaving stars, we are weaving communities; we are weaving people".
- [Supporting people with Dementia and their family carers through music \(2020 - current\)](#)
- A team of researchers, clinicians and people living with dementia are developing telehealth (online) music therapy services for people living with dementia and their family caregivers.
- Through collaboration and engagement with members of The Dementia Research Advisory Team at The Alzheimer Society of Ireland, this project will develop accessible online music therapy programmes for those who are at risk of isolation, living in isolated rural areas, have limited mobility or increased cognitive decline.
- [UL2030 Graduate Bursaries](#) combines expertise in engaged research for societal impact from all four UL faculties and to offer transdisciplinary Engaged Research training programme for researchers carrying out SDG focused collaborative and applied research.
- [Community Spirit CWELL project](#) - a project to enhance community spirit in the Kileely and Ballynanty through the refurbishment of locally significant community spaces, including: the historic graveyard in Kileely, the Marian Shrine in Ballynanty, and the playground in Ballynanty. The project also held interviews with older members of the community in order to capture their memories of the area and worked in collaboration with the Ballynanty Residents Association to create a newsletter template that can be used to communicate across the area. Project Partners: St Munchin's Community Centre, Ballynanty Residents Association.
- [Shine a Light CWELL project](#) - a project to bring attention to the work undertaken by volunteers involved in homeless outreach services. The intention is also to broaden our understanding of what homelessness is, how it is manifested and how it is experienced. The main output from the project is the creation of a video, comprised of interviews with both individuals volunteering in the area. Project Partners: Help the Homeless Limerick, Novas.
- [Moyross Made Me CWELL project](#) - Working with local consultations and community partners, this project sought to explore young people and children's aspirations - the barriers and enablers to young people identifying and pursuing their ambition. The findings of the research were presented back to all who took part in the research in a celebratory event. Project Partners: Moyross Youth Academy.
- [Wall of Hope CWELL project](#) - a project is to promote positive mental health in the Garryowen area and beyond, with a particular focus on youth mental health. The

project aims to achieve this through the creation of a mural which will contain positive affirmations as well as information on local help lines. Project Partners: Garryowen Residents Association, Limerick Enterprise Development Park.

### CASE STUDY 12

**Title:** Anytime of the Month a student led social enterprise working to achieve period justice in Ireland

**Theme:** Third-Mission Activities, Societal and Community Engagement

**Keywords (2-3 words):** Student Social Entrepreneurship

#### Short Abstract:

Engaging in social entrepreneurship is a mechanism for students to proactively address societal problems and the challenges of the SDG goals at local, national and international levels and thus UL places a focus on enabling and empowering students to become agents of change and deliver social economic and environmental impacts through immersive real life learning experiences. *Anytime of the Month*, a student led social enterprise working to achieve period justice in Ireland is a good practise case study of how students impactfully engage in social entrepreneurship and have generated societal impact.

#### Case Study

Anytime of the Month vision and market need: This enterprise was initiated in 2021 and has continued to grow substantially in 2022 demonstrating the ongoing need for the services provided by Anytime of the Month. <https://anytimeofthemonth.com>

Anytime of the Month's vision is to alleviate the effects of period poverty in Ireland and tackle the stigma and lack of education around periods through awareness campaigns, secondary school education workshops, creating a network of friendly strangers, providing workplace ambassador programmes and the provision of period products to those most in need. Underpinning Anytime of the Month are the principles of inclusivity, accessibility and dignity by addressing the problem and barriers (personal, social, educational and professional) caused by period poverty.

The need for this social initiative resulted from personal student experiences of period poverty and the results of a primary research needs assessment revealing that 1 in 3 third level students experience period poverty and that increases to 1 in 2 among secondary school students. One in 10 of those surveyed said they were forced to use a "less suitable sanitary product" because of the high monthly cost involved. Moreover, the results revealed that the problem was more pronounced with homeless people and those asylum-seekers living in direct provision.

#### Product and service offerings

Based on the needs analysis a range of revenue generating products and services were developed as follows;

- **Network of Friendly Strangers:** A friendly stranger wears an Anytime of the Month badge or sticker, which means individuals can approach them if in need of a period product and provide a visible symbol tackling the silent stigma surrounding periods. These badges and stickers are sold on their ecommerce website and are made from recycled materials to ensure environmental sustainability. A pack of two badges generates €5.29 in profit while a pack of three stickers generates €3.71 in

profit. Profits from just one sale provides enough to donate a pack of period products to those most experiencing period poverty.

Training and education: The students have designed and continue to deliver a range of 'period positive workshops' for second and third level students to educate students about period poverty and the language around periods. At third level these workshops were the first in the area of period poverty and these innovative workshops have been completed with approx. 13 third level Student Unions reaching a broad cohort of students. For the secondary school market, a collaboration with health professionals resulted in the creation of a 6-module workshop that provides comprehensive education on menstrual health, once again the first of its kind in Ireland. This model trains teachers to deliver our workshops to students, to remove the stigma surrounding periods within the school environment.

The students also collaborate with sporting organisations recognising that period poverty and stigma were issues impacting upon young girls participating in sport. Anytime of the Month partner with the Camogie Association of Ireland and delivered webinars and workshops with 32 coaches and expanded to deliver workshops and webinars to young girls and parents.

The international need for this type of enterprise was demonstrated when the students partnered with Free Period Angus in Scotland to teach their local communities about periods and period poverty. This collaboration has continued to develop with the addition of other workshops and joint promotional activities about period poverty and reducing the stigma of periods.

Furthermore, on December the 3rd 2021 the President at the University of Limerick Professor Kerstin Mey launched the Anytime of the Month Initiative on campus where the University will provide free period products on campus and UL were the first third level educational institution in Ireland to do so. Anytime of the month worked with UL Student Life to assist distribute the period products and since then 21 colleges in Ireland and UK have come on board to provide period products. [Anytime of the Month Promo V3 \(1\).mp4](#)

Workplace ambassador programmes

Anytime of the Month provides two corporate packages as follows;

Silver €700	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1-hour ATOTM Period Positive Workshop covering: -- The Menstrual cycle - Period poverty</li> <li>- Language inclusivity - Period stigma - Eco-friendly periods               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selection of ATOTM badges and stickers</li> <li>• E-Certificates</li> <li>• Max 30 employees</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Gold €1,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1-hour ATOTM Period Positive Workshop covering: -</li> <li>-- The Menstrual cycle- Period poverty</li> <li>- Language inclusivity - Period stigma</li> <li>- Eco-friendly periods</li> <li>- The impact of periods on employee productivity               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selection of ATOTM badges and stickers</li> <li>• E-Certificates</li> <li>• ATOTM period product display box</li> <li>• Progress report within the ATOTM network</li> <li>• Max 80 employees</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

As with the Network of Friendly Strangers and the educational workshops all revenues from the corporate workshops are reinvested back into the enterprise and used to purchase period products for those most in need. Over the last year there has been a strong focus on refugees and those living in direct provision for example 459 boxes of organic and plastic free period products were donated to Thomond House, Novas and Doras.

#### *Summary*

Ultimately, we expose our students to the ideology of social entrepreneurs, and we empower our students to explore new opportunities, take risks, commit to work, gain confidence, apply intelligence and determination in uncertain environments - and change the world for the better. This type of initiative serves to create greater inclusivity making social entrepreneurial ambition more accessible and realisable across all age cohorts and disciplines, and externally to benefit regional communities.

By challenging stereotypes and encouraging independent thinking, students critically explore the root causes of SDG issues and how they interlink and provide sustainable solutions that enhance the economic, physical and mental wellbeing of individuals and communities and demonstrates in a very practical manner how future business leaders can extend beyond a purely financial bottom line to a triple bottom line to measure impact in terms of financial, social, and environmental benefits to the community.

## **Theme 7: Supports and Resources for Learners**

### **CASE STUDY 13**

**Title:** Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Project - UDL@UL

**Theme:** Supports and Resources for Learners

**Keywords** (2-3 words):

#### **Case Study**

The UDL@UL, a HEA funded 1-year project began in November 2021. The project had two key objectives. One objective centred on the development of an inclusive practice module that could be potentially used across a range of relevant postgraduate programmes (e.g., Teaching, Learning & Scholarship, Graduate Diploma, The MA in Technical Communication and E-Learning). The second objective was focused on creating a culture of inclusivity underpinned by UDL Practices.

The module was designed and was to be put through APRC with the intention of rolling the module out in the Spring 2024 Semester. The content of this module entitled Inclusive Praxis and UDL was designed to transcend UDL and draw on different areas of inclusivity including anti-racist pedagogy, anti-ablism, decolonising the curriculum, trauma-informed pedagogy, inclusive language and other related topics. The module proposed to draw on expertise internally within UL and from further afield where necessary. UL already has academics researching in some of these key areas. The module was quite broad and complex and requires further work in 2023 to have it ready for Spring 2024. It was also envisaged that this would lead to a micro-credential UDL-based module under the UL@Work programme.

The second objective centred on creating a more inclusive culture across all facets of UL. This inclusivity was to draw on the principles of UDL and interconnected practices in inclusive practice and accessibility.

The second objective included:

- Creating Cross-Campus awareness of UDL - 3 UL specific webinars from an international expert
- Development of a UDL Community of Practice (CoP) to encourage peer sharing on UDL and inclusive teaching strategies
  - Facilitate the rollout of the UDL Badge
- Mainstreaming Assistive Technologies to support UDL practices through the Library Digital Edge set up
  - Research UDL-based practice (ongoing)
  - Deliver CPD related to UDL and Accessibility
- Promoted UDL and Accessibility within the university's new Virtual Learning Environment
  - Create reusable digital resources around UDL and Accessibility
    - Establish national links with other HEIs in UDL

Below are examples of some of the work undertaken in the project.

#### 1. *Creating Cross-Campus awareness of UDL*

This project facilitated 3 webinars to promote UDL across all facets of the university with international UDL expert Dr Thomas Tobin, a founding member of the University of Wisconsin-Madison Centre for Teaching. These webinars targeted UDL awareness in Academia, UDL and Support Staff and UDL for Senior Management. These webinars were well attended and received positive feedback from participants. The webinars were designed to promote awareness of UDL among academic and support staff. It was also used as an opportunity to engage with Senior Management, and both UL's President and Provost were in attendance for the third session which focused on the role of senior management in driving the process. Please find links to the webinars below.

5. [Webinar 1 with Dr Thomas J. Tobin on embedding Universal Design for Learning \(UDL\) at UL](#)
6. [Webinar 2 with Dr Thomas J. Tobin on embedding Universal Design for Learning \(UDL\) at UL](#)
7. [Webinar 3 with Dr Thomas J. Tobin on embedding Universal Design for Learning \(UDL\) at UL](#)

#### 2. *Mainstreaming Assistive Technologies to support UDL*

This part of the project looked at mainstreaming assistive technologies. Mainstreaming assistive technologies is an aim of the HEA's National Access Plan for Higher Education and supports a more UDL-based inclusive approach to education - offering supports and technologies to all students who may benefit from them, rather than just particular cohorts.

A collaboration with Library staff and supported by ITD, this project forms part of the offering available through the Library Digital Edge. This collaboration will see a range of assistive technologies available to all students. Examples of items that can be loaned from the Library Digital Edge through this collaboration include:

- Reading Pens including new user booklet
  - Digital Recorders
- iPads with Assistive Technology Apps



This project will also see the library receive a high-quality CZur scanner (see below) which will allow students to scan and OCR books and documents so they can be read by assistive technologies. OCR (Optical Character Recognition) allows a device to access each character and word within a digital scan so it can be identified so it can be made accessible to all students. In particular, students utilising text to speech software may benefit significantly from this type of resource.

### 3. Development of Reusable UDL Digital Resources

The project also developed digital resources and images related to UDL and accessibility. These include UDL and accessible images with UL branding which can be shared both internally and externally.

- [UDL and Accessibility Resources](#)

Example Resources include a guide for creating accessible digital content and another for crating accessible social media (see below).



## Creating Accessible Digital Content

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**H2 H3 H3 H4 H4 H4**

**Apply Headings**  
Use heading styles to organise page structure and hierarchies.



**Provide Alternative Text for non text elements**  
A short concise and contextual description of the non text elements.

- **Incorrect:** "Picture of flowers"
- **Correct:** "yellow, pink and purple flowers"



**Use Descriptive Links**  
Meaningful hyperlink text.

- **Incorrect:** "Click here" or "Here is the link"
- **Correct:** "Accessibility is crucial to inclusive education at the University of Limerick"



**Consider Colour**  
When applying meaning, emphasis and contrast.

- **Incorrect:** use colour only to convey meaning
- **Correct:** use text and symbols to convey meaning, with colour as decoration



**Creating Lists**  
Format data into proper lists.

- **Incorrect:** listing items without order
- **Correct:** use ordered or unordered list tool



**Creating Tables**  
Keep your tables simple in structure.

- **Incorrect:** no header row, merged fields
- **Correct:** caption, heading row and/or column



**Including Audio/Video**  
Accompanied with complete and accurate transcripts and closed captioning.

- **Incorrect:** no CC or auto-generated CC
- **Correct:** CC edited for grammar and punctuation



**Use Plain Language**



**Use Camel Case Hashtags**



**Consider Hashtag Placement**



**Use Alt Text**



**Social Media Accessibility**



**Add Captions**



**Use Link Shorteners**



**Reduce Emoji Usage**



**Keep default Twitter handle font**

The project also created a collection [UDL at UL - Student & Staff Knowledge](#) videos designed to highlight examples of UDL practices on campus including staff and student perspectives on the importance of UDL in Higher Education.

## Theme 8: Public Information and Communication

### CASE STUDY 14

**Title:** Web Development Project

**Theme:** Public Information and Communication

**Keywords** (2-3 words): Website redesign,

#### Short Abstract:

UL undertook a Website Redesign Project which consisted of 11 documented aims. The project itself is split into two phases, The UX Research phase and the Web Design Implementation Phase.

#### Case Study

**UX Research Phase:** This phase encapsulated the first 7 aims and has been completed. It involved extensive user research to identify key user audiences, user goals and user journeys. This research ranged from Discovery through Foundational Research, Primary Research, Analysis and Synthesis and culminating in Iterative Prototyping and testing. Key internal and external stakeholder groups were involved and the outputs from the process have been distilled into a series of low-fidelity wire-frames which encapsulate key user journeys and sections of the site. These wire-frames will form major inputs into Web Design Implementation Phase.

**Web Design Implementation Phase:** This phase covers items 8-11 of the stated aims. The main aim is item 8 which involves creating a completely newly designed website for the university.

It was intended that this would all be part of one tender, but in the interim some components of it have already been completed. A new single Drupal platform has been created and over 50 sites on old Drupal system have been migrated into this new system. More sites are in the pipeline of migration. This new system will form the basis for the subsequent redesign work. Tender documents are now being prepared to procure services to complete the visual redesign (which will have outputs fulfilling aim 9) and redevelopment based on the UX Phase outputs. A website request process and new Web Governance structure is in place to fulfil aims 9 and 10.

The aims of the Website Redesign Project are to:

1. Identify and procure external expertise in User experience, Web Design and Web Development
2. Identify and prioritise the main external user groups and their needs and requirements
3. Identify and prioritise the main internal stakeholders and their needs and requirements
4. Audit the content of the current websites and establish a content strategy around future content creation and provision that aligns with the university's core strategy
5. Identify and consolidate prioritised content and sections that should be included in the scope of the redesigned external-facing website
6. Identify and consolidate prioritised content and sections that should be considered internal and therefor better aligned to a private intranet solution (which would be governed by a separate project)
7. Carry out extensive user, competitor and domain research to inform the design process

8. Design and develop a modern mobile-responsive website that satisfies the identified goals
9. Establish clear guidelines and standards around development and presentation of web content
10. Establish clear processes for website requests, creation and maintenance within the university
11. Identify a hosting solution that can facilitate the delivery of the platform in a performative and secure manner

The project itself is split into two phases, The UX Research phase and the Web Design Implementation Phase.

#### UX Research Phase

This phase encapsulated items 1-7 of the aims and has been completed.

It involved extensive user research to identify key user audiences, user goals and user journeys. This research ranged from Discovery through Foundational Research, Primary Research, Analysis and Synthesis and culminating in Iterative Prototyping and testing. Key internal and external stakeholder groups were involved and the outputs from the process have been distilled into a series of low-fidelity wire-frames which encapsulate key user journeys and sections of the site. These wire-frames will form major inputs into Web Design Implementation Phase.

#### Web Design Implementation Phase

This phase covers items 8-11 of the stated aims.

The main aim is item 8 which involves creating a completely newly designed website for the university.

The original goals of this item were -

- Creating a new web platform based on the most up to date version of Drupal, a single site to host all subsequent content and developments
- A complete visual redesign, re-imagining the look and feel of the website in line with brand guidelines.
- A reconfiguration and redevelopment of the existing site to match the outputs of the UX research project in terms of customer journeys, information architecture and new functionality.
- Migrating and amalgamating existing websites into the new single website as required

A new single Drupal platform has been created and over 50 sites on old Drupal system have been migrated into this new system. More sites are in the pipeline of migration. This new system will form the basis for the subsequent redesign work. Tender documents are now being prepared to procure services to complete the visual redesign (which will have outputs fulfilling aim 9) and redevelopment based on the UX Phase outputs.

A website request process and new Web Governance structure is in place to fulfil aims 9 and 10. As part of the new Drupal site build and migration previously mentioned, a more modern and secure hosting system was put in place (item 11) but securing this service for a longer term is part of a procurement currently being run by ITD.