



Fheabhsú Cáilíochta Quality Enhancement

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE CORK: CINNTE INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW ACTION PLAN

The University Strategic Plan, [Securing our Future 2023-28](#), (published February, 2023) was developed concurrently with the self-evaluation process for CINNTE Institutional Review (March 2023). Both the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER) and CINNTE Report (September 2023) noted the high degree of alignment between the outcomes of both processes. The [Strategic Plan](#) is founded on 5 main GOALS of activity: Research and Innovation; Student Success; Global Engagement; Our Staff, Our Culture and Our Place, Our Footprint.

To underpin the five GOALS a suite of [Strategic Enablers](#) have been identified, these encompass institutional processes such as communication, governance, data, operational excellence.

Targets for the achievement of the planned objectives and goals are defined on an annualised basis and reported on quarterly through a University Leadership Team Strategic Plan Implementation sub-committee for monitoring and development. Institutional Review is included as an enabling activity within the strategy implementation framework thereby acknowledging the interrelationship between the CINNTE Review recommendations and implementation of the Strategic Plan. The CINNTE Action Plan detailed below, cross-references to published strategy implementation activities as appropriate as well as operational projects in response to the Review recommendations. This integration of strategy and strategic quality review illustrates the university's commitment to excellence and ongoing enhancement. This Action Plan summarises the UCC position in response to the CINNTE Report as at January 2025. Progress on the Action Plan will be reported through the University's Annual Quality Report to Quality & Qualifications Ireland in 2025.

30th January 2025

CINNTE Report Area	No.	Recommendation	UCC Strategy Implementation Plan and Process	Operational Projects (where applicable)	Responsibility	Status as at January 2025
Strategy (including global)	1	Recognising the ambition of the new UCC Strategic Plan, the review team recommends that UCC should set sufficient income growth targets which include substantial non- exchequer components. The developing financial model should prioritise ‘quick wins’ to boost university income, such as the development of high- volume economic-fee- based postgraduate taught programmes informed by market research.	University Strategic GOAL 2 Student Success Actions 2.1 & 2.2 GOAL 3 Global Engagement Action 3.5		Deputy President & Registrar Vice President Learning & Teaching Vice President Global	Enrollment planning currently underway. Development of a Recruitment Strategy in association with the VP Global, for approval by AC Recruitment of additional non exchequer income students for the 2024/25 Academic year on Master programme where capacity was available
	2	The review team recommends that the university reviews the size of the ‘President’s Strategic Fund’, benchmarks it against other research- intensive universities and adjusts it accordingly.	University Strategic Enablers	The PSF was reviewed and an annual amount allocated in line with normal University budget allocation process. The PSF will be managed by the President’s Office	President	Budget has been allocated and is allocated by the President for projects/initiatives in line with the university strategic objectives.
	3	The review team recommends that, given the weight attached to the role of the newly appointed Vice President for Global Engagement, UCC should develop an appropriately and strategically resourced Global Strategy which includes a student recruitment plan with specific College and University targets based on sound market	University Strategic Plan GOAL 3 Global Engagement actions		Vice President Global	A Global Engagement Plan has been developed committing to a more strategic approach to internationalization across a number of priority areas. A review of Marketing, Communications has been undertaken, recommending a

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		research and marketing				streamlined and consistent approach. Separately, a review of student recruitment has been completed with a detailed recruitment plan now the subject of consultation. When complete, this process will implement this recommendation in full.
	4	The review team recommends that UCC's strategic goal of increasing the number of postgraduate (particularly PhD) students should be more coherently elaborated (including clearly specified targets, timelines and implementation mechanisms) and should avoid over- reliance on exchequer funding.	University Strategic GOAL 1 Research and Innovation actions (1.3)	Thematic Review of Doctoral Student Learning Experience (scheduled for AY 23/24) along with progression of the Research Administration Project (RAP) will inform and provide the necessary infrastructure to support increases in PhD student numbers.	Deputy President & Registrar Vice President Research & Innovation Dean of Doctoral Studies Director of Quality Enhancement Head of Graduate Studies	Research Administration system launched in Semester 1 (2024/25) with full suite of reporting tools on research student progression. HEA Performance Compact updated to include targets for PhD student enrolment and progression and these will be monitored through the Strategic Plan annual implementation process. The creation of new Cohort PhD programme for the Technological University sector.

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						<p>Thematic Review of Doctoral Learning Experience scheduled for Semester 2</p> <p>School level PhD targets introduced across the institution</p> <p>Two new cohort PhD programmes developed to attract larger numbers of PhD students</p>
	5	<p>The review team recommends that UCC should undertake careful and robust business planning and granular monitoring guided by clearly- defined KPIs to optimise the implementation of its ambitious industrial engagement strategy.</p>	<p>University Strategic Plan GOAL 1 Research and Innovation actions (1.5)</p>		<p>Vice President Research & Innovation</p>	<p>A review to define specific resources, contact points and progression pathways that optimise industry engagement potential, relationship management and development of research collaboration activity and consultancy will take place in Q1 2025.</p> <p>Resources, KPIs and task owners will be agreed by end Q2 2025 to provide focus, capacity and direction and to monitor progression towards our ambitious industry</p>

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						engagement targets.
Governance	6	The review team recommends that, taking into account proposed changes to governance, the university should update its published governance scheme to clarify accountability and associated decision-making work- flows, and further recommends that UCC should develop a system for ongoing monitoring of the implementation of university policies and procedures across the Colleges to identify potential inconsistencies in their application and where appropriate, to remedy these.	University Strategic Plan Implementation: Strategic Enablers		Corporate Secretary Deputy President & Registrar	Legal opinion on the requirement for a Principal Statute obtained. Work has commenced to update the Principal Statute and associated Regulations and the underlying Policy Framework. The Disciplinary Section of the Principal Statute has been updated. Detailed work is underway on the Signing Authority Policy and Approvals Framework. There are a number of significant strands to this project and it will take some time to complete.
Staff	7	The review team recommends the consistent implementation of Workload Models across the university which include provision for research supervision (particularly that of PhD students).		The University has a methodology for Academic Workload Distribution (AWD) (see: https://www.ucc.ie/en/registrar/awdm/) Implementation issues will be addressed at future discussion Heads of School Consultative Forum convened by Deputy President &	Deputy President and Registrar	Work is underway to migrate the old AWD model to Qualtrics system within UCC. It is hoped to run a pilot of the new model on Qualtrics in Semester 2 of the 2024/25 Academic year.

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				Registrar		
	8	The review team recommends that UCC should address the slow delivery of a career development infrastructure for administrative and technical staff in order to provide a fit-for- purpose mechanism to ensure equitable and timely recognition and reward for staff.	University Strategic Plan GOAL 4 Our Staff, Our Culture actions 4.4 & 4.5	A Community of Practice (CoP) for School Managers, has been established, with the support of President and Quality Enhancement Committee in response to the dialogue with School Managers during the Institutional Review Site Visit (report p 27). The CoP will provide a forum for enhanced connectivity between School Managers and the exchange and fostering of good practice	Chief People and Culture Officer Convenors of School Managers (CoP)	Following the admin promotion call in 2022/23, feedback led to further review and development of the scheme in line with elements of the revised academic schemes. An ‘Interim Administrative Promotion Scheme’ is now finalised and call due in January 2025 with a streamlined process delivering an enhanced candidate experience and reduced time in administrating interview panels. • External perspective and oversight on process. • Establishment of two ‘Administrative Promotions Boards’. This approach can deliver further benefits to the university in case of the need for role/ grade review. • Connection with UCC values and

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						<p>behaviours. • Akin to academic promotional processes, the incorporation of Statutory Leave and Personal Circumstances consideration. • Enhanced feedback process.</p> <p>The CoP for School Managers commenced meeting in October 2023 and 6 number of meetings have taken place. Indicative topics addressed through the group have included financial management, staff welfare, and progressing system efficiencies.</p>
Students	9	The review team recommends that UCC should ensure, via the ongoing pilot project and related initiatives, that student satisfaction data is appropriately gathered and factored into the assessment of the quality of modules and programmes across UCC		<p>The University Student Surveys Office manages the University’s engagement with Irish Student Survey, data analysis and internal reporting via Academic Council and across Colleges. The university increased its engagement with In-Touch to facilitate programme based engagement with student data.</p>	<p>Deputy President & Registrar</p> <p>Vice President Learning & Teaching</p> <p>Student Survey Project Manager</p> <p>Director of</p>	<p>UCC has developed a “Student Voices” Survey for First and Final Year students in place of the Irish Student Survey. Survey will be run in February 2025.</p> <p>The Student Feedback pilot is being upscaled</p>

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				<p>Given the suspension of the Irish Student Survey for AY 23/24, the university will develop a mechanism to capture student voices until the revised survey is established.</p> <p>The University Student Feedback Project piloted module surveys in AY22/23 and a user-focused evaluation of the project (completed September 23) will inform next stages of development.</p>	<p>Quality Enhancement</p> <p>Quality Enhancement Manager</p>	<p>across two Colleges and will run in Semester 2 2025. The survey sample will capture approximately 10,000 students which represents a significant upscale. Outcomes will inform the development of a sustainable model for student feedback.</p>
	10	<p>The review team recommends that UCC should implement mechanisms to promote connection between graduate students in different Schools & Colleges as a means of promoting cross-disciplinary collaboration.</p>	<p>University Strategic Plan GOAL 1 Research and Innovation actions (1.3)</p>	<p>The post of Dean of Doctoral Studies was established May 2023 and working in conjunction with Deputy President & Registrar, Vice President Research and Innovation will take forward development initiatives and policies to support the enhancement of the graduate student experience</p>	<p>Deputy President & Registrar</p> <p>Vice President Research & Innovation</p> <p>Dean of Doctoral Studies</p>	<p>A new group consisting of the Dean and the college Vice Deans was set up in 2023 and meets every two weeks with the specific aim of addressing issues of cross college student experience.</p> <p>A monthly Dean's clinic was established for all PhD students across colleges</p> <p>There is now PGR all-college representation on the SU for the first time (Oct 2024). This involves the creation of a cross-college PGR team, who meet regularly and via the</p>

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						<p>SU Education Officer report back monthly to the Dean.</p> <p>A proposal has been submitted to Academic Council to establish a compulsory training module for all PhD students involving group and team work across colleges bringing all new start PhD students together in semester 1 of their programme.</p> <p>A University wide Three Minute Thesis competition was launched in 2023. The event brings together all PhD students from all colleges for an in-person event.</p>
Student Services	11	Given the university's strategic aim to increase postgraduate and international student numbers substantially, the review team recommends that UCC should undertake comprehensive resource planning to ensure that Student Services provision is scalable to		As part of self-evaluation process for periodic Quality Review of Deputy President & Registrar's functional area (March 2024), the process of SWOT and self- evaluation of Student Services Directorate (2023) along with the outcomes of the review will inform resource planning for 2024/5	Deputy President & Registrar Director of Student Experience	The newly appointed Digital Projects Officer for the Student Experience provides the opportunity to review service delivery, to consider greater IT integration and sustainable models to greater enhance

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		meet the increase in demand.		onwards		and digital efficiencies.
	12	The review team recognises the quality of support services provided to students at UCC but recommends, in support of that, the development of an omni-channel Communication Strategy to optimise student awareness of and engagement with the services available.	University Strategic Plan: Strategic Enablers (pp46- 47) for communication and operational excellence	This will be explored further within the scope of the periodic Quality Review (March, 2024) for the functional area of Deputy President & Registrar.	Director of Student Experience/ Director of Communications	The appointment of a new Student Experience IT Specialist will provide digital support for the ‘communication of student services’ in their brief. A digital strategy will provide an opportunity to progress our communication to students to maximise awareness and engagement.
Teaching, Learning & Assessment	13	The review team recommends that UCC should introduce formal processes for annual Module- and Programme- Monitoring enabled by the new Curriculum Management IT System.		Implementation of the re-defined Curriculum Management System will enable annualised monitoring approaches for modules and programmes, through embedded quality assurance rules for the approval of updated curricula and additional reporting capability to inform internal monitoring	Curriculum Management Project & Academic Secretary	CIM programmes and CIM modules have pre-defined values and drop-down lists to embed QA rules. The Module Policy is being updated with the experience of one year of operation by ADSC.
	14	The review team recommends that UCC should prioritize the development and implementation	University Strategic Plan GOAL 2 Student	Continued work on University Assessment Strategy, inclusive of review and rationalisation of Marks	Deputy President & Registrar	Work has commenced on the rationalization of Marks and Standards to

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		of comprehensive assessment rubrics (including marking schemes) to ensure equivalence of grading – especially at exit degree award level – between disciplines, Schools and Colleges.	Success (Action 2.1)	and Standards. Consultation with the Centre for the Integration of Research, Teaching & Learning (CIRTL) to support the development of assessment rubrics through training and resources.	Vice President Learning & Teaching Chair of Academic Development and Standards Committee Director of CIRTL	provide an integrated regulatory framework for pass, progression and award. This work will be sequential commencing with rationalisation and approval of the marks and standards for First Year programmes for implementation in 2025/26. CIRTL has rolled out a new micro-credential on inclusive assessment that includes a section on rubric design. CIRTL is linking with the four Inclusive Assessment Fellows who will lead out on a 1 year institutional initiative to explore assessment in the four colleges. Rubric development is also part of the digital badge on fostering academic integrity which was developed in partnership with the Skills Centre. Rubrics are shared as a model approach in the PG

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						<p>Cert and PG Dip in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education and this aspect will be development further in support of the CINNTE guidelines.</p> <p>The NUI Grade Descriptors have been used across the constituent universities for over two decades. They are a harmonised way of describing achievement in examinations and assessments from <35% to 90-100%. The Grade Descriptors are currently under review across the NUI universities with the intention of revalidating the bands and, where necessary, modernising the descriptor language.</p>
	15	The review team recommends that examination papers submitted to External Examiners for review should be accompanied by the cognate sample answers where		Review and revision as appropriate of current policy and procedures for External Examiners, including guidance to Schools. This will be informed by the outcomes of the	Academic Board (External Examiners Sub-Committee) Academic	The ExPERA report published October 2024 will be considered by External Examiner Sub-Committee and Academic

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		feasible / appropriate, which is standard practice across the third level sector in Ireland.		national policy research project on External Examining (ExPERA) being led by the IUA Quality Directors during 2023/24	Secretary	Board to agree aspects of the institution's practices for external examining to be enhanced.
Library & Information Technology Services	16	The review team recommends that, given the crucial importance of Library & IT services to the quality of the student experience, UCC should strive to protect existing budgetary allocations for these services against competing internal demands, and to continue to lobby for greater exchequer funding support to permit their adequate resourcing.	University Strategic Plan GOAL 2 Student Success (Action 2.3)	Library Vision and Plan for the future developed and presented to Academic Council (January 2024) by the University Librarian. The Universities Digital masterplan was presented and approved by University Leadership Team (ULT) in June 2023 and Finance Committee in July. The Director of IT will work with the Finance Office to source the funding and implement the Digital Masterplan.	University Librarian & Vice-President for Learning & Teaching IT Services	This has been a challenge with the financial situation. The information resources budget has been retained but staffing in operations budgets reduced.
	17	The review team recommends that UCC should seek to maximise the value of its significant investment in IT systems and data- capture through the appointment of a Chief Information Officer charged with the development of a Data Strategy for the university to support data-driven decision making and quality enhancement at all levels within the university.	Strategic Plan Strategic Enablers: Digital Capabilities and Data Quality	The development of integrated high quality data resources is underway as an enabler of strategic plan implementation. This will allow the development of real-time data, that is configured to be easily visualised and interrogated at various levels of activity. The capability to support this development is incorporated through the functions of the Chief Financial and Operations Officer role.	CFOO	<i>This recommendation is addressed in the Strategic Plan Strategic Enablers: Digital Capabilities and Data Quality.</i> <i>The development of integrated high quality data resources is underway as an enabler of strategic plan implementation. This will allow the development of real-time data, that is</i>

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						<p><i>configured to be easily visualised and interrogated at various levels of activity. The capability to support this development is incorporated through the functions of the Chief Financial and Operations Officer (CFOO) role.</i></p> <p><i>This recommendation will be addressed by the CFOO.</i></p>

Internal Consultation and Approval

Institutional Review Group, 8th November, 2023

Academic Council, 10th November, 2023

Quality Enhancement Committee, 23rd November 2023

University Leadership Team, 21st November and 6th February 2023

Governing Body, 5th December 2023