

**For Circulation  
to UCD partners**



**University College Dublin  
Quality Office**

**Academic Council Committee on Quality (ACCQ)**

**Annual Report on  
UCD Taught Collaborative / Transnational Educational Provision  
2014-2015**

**Third Cycle – January 2016**

**(v5.0, 08.02.2016)**



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# 1. Introduction

The portfolio of UCD collaborative and transnational programmes has expanded considerably in recent years. In light of the increase in the number, scale, variation, complexity and the general public profile of such programmes, the University continues to develop and enhance its management, co-ordination and oversight capabilities in relation to such programmes. Processes and procedures for quality assurance and quality enhancement are a critical element of this.

The Annual Monitoring of UCD's taught collaborative programmes is an important element in the University's quality assurance and quality enhancement framework. Annual monitoring allows Programme Teams, Schools, Colleges and the University to ensure that the programmes delivered, in conjunction with collaborative partners, meet the expectations of staff and students, as well as facilitating ongoing opportunities to develop and enhance provision.

Aside from regular programme monitoring being good practice (e.g. *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*), the *Qualifications and Quality Assurance Act (2012)* also places explicit responsibility on Designated Awarding Bodies (i.e. Irish universities, RCSI and DIT) for the quality of their programmes delivered in partnership with 'linked providers'. Universities themselves are monitored annually in this regard.

Within the University's *Programme Development, Approval and Review Framework (PDARF)* there are dedicated resources focussed on provision of support for collaborative programmes, which draw on the *QQI Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes and Joint Awards (Revised 2012)* and the Irish Higher Education Quality Network (IHEQN) *Guidelines for the Approval, Monitoring and Review of Collaborative and Transnational Provision (May 2013)*.

The primary focus of this report, will be to provide a summary of the Annual Programme Reports received for 2014-2015 from the major collaborative and transnational programmes that the University is engaged with – specific details of how these programmes are identified and categorised is included in section three. This report constitutes the third cycle of annual monitoring collaborative and transnational provision and summarises the reports provided for 2014-2015.

# 2. Methodology

A short, written, retrospective report was prepared by each Programme Co-ordinator / Programme Board (or equivalent) in conjunction with all individuals or entities involved in the collaborative/transnational programme. Following local consultation and review, the report was submitted to the UCD Quality Office by the 30 October 2015 deadline (or shortly thereafter). The information and feedback received via these reports has been aggregated and analysed for this report, which will be submitted to the Academic Council Committee on Quality (ACCQ) and the UCD University Management Team (UMT).

In order to be effective, annual reports should act as a focus for reflective evaluation including, for example, consideration of the programme/partner management arrangements, the curriculum, teaching and learning, and feedback from staff and students. The Annual Programme Monitoring Report (Specimen Template) (see Appendix 1) was made available to Programme Co-ordinators / Programme Boards (with a sample exemplar).

### 3. Programmes Included in this Report

Many types of collaborative and transnational programme arrangements exist, ranging across a spectrum of activity, including: franchise, exchange, joint, dual/multiple, co-tutelle, accreditation, validation, off-campus delivery or branch campuses, joint research, access/feeder, articulation and so on. Currently, in the absence of an agreed national glossary of collaborative types, accurately classifying such arrangements can be problematic. There is work currently being undertaken within the sector generally and in UCD specifically to agree a standard glossary of terms that could be used to describe, in a more consistent way, the varying types of collaborative provision. In the interim, the University has published its own working definitions via *PDARF Information Sheet #1b – Collaborative Award Types, Taxonomies and Established Routes for Collaboration* which is among the portfolio of supports for collaborative programmes provided through the *Programme Development, Approval and Review Framework (PDARF)*. This taxonomy is used to categorise the collaborative and transnational programmes that the University is involved with, and these are captured via the *UCD Collaborative Programmes Register* which is also linked to PDARF.

In *PDARF Information Sheet #1c – Due Diligence and Risk Management*, these collaborative award types are then mapped onto a risk and due diligence matrix which differentiates between different types of collaborative arrangements and sets standards for due diligence associated with each. In this context, not all ‘collaborative’ programme arrangements are required to be formally monitored on an annual basis at institutional level. For example, student exchange arrangements, or access/feeder/articulation arrangements that effectively operate as targeted student recruitment pathways, would not normally be subject to formal annual monitoring at institutional level. Rather, it is more appropriate that some form of regular oversight of these types of arrangement should take place at ‘local’ level, such as through regular School or Programme Board monitoring of student experience.

The focus of this report is, therefore, on the core taught collaborative/transnational programmes that the University (through the *UCD Collaborative Programmes Register*) categorises as ‘franchise’, ‘dual/multiple’ or ‘validation’. These programmes are prioritised on the basis of preliminary feedback from Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), which indicates that these are the types of programmes that should be formally monitored on an annual basis, and as per the provisions of *PDARF Information Sheet #1c*.

Programmes included in this report are as follows:

Partner/Campus	UCD School	Programme	Type
Teagasc (Moorepark and Kildalton, Ireland)	School of Agriculture & Food Science	Professional Diploma (L7) in Dairy Farm Management  BAgrSc Dairy Business (report pending)	Validation  TBC
Université Panthéon-Assas (Paris II) & Université Toulouse Capitole 1 (France)	School of Law	BCL/Master 1 – M1	Dual
Kaplan (Hong Kong)	School of Business	Bachelor in Business Studies (BBS)  MSc (Logistics & Supply Chain Mgmt; HRM; Management; Marketing; IT, Project Mgmt)	Franchise  Franchise
Kaplan (Singapore)	School of Business	BSc (Finance; IT; HRM; Management; Marketing; Logistics; Banking & Wealth Mgmt)  MSc (Logistics & Supply Chain Mgmt; HRM; Management; Marketing; IT, Project Mgmt)	Franchise  Franchise
National School of Business Management (NSBM) (Sri Lanka)	School of Business	BSc (Finance; IT; HRM; Management; Marketing; Logistics; Banking & Wealth Mgmt)	Franchise
Beijing Dublin	School of Electrical &	BE Internet of Things Engineering	Dual

International College (BDIC), Beijing University of Technology	Electronic Engineering		
	School of Computer Science	BSc Software Engineering	Dual
	School of Business	BComm Finance	Dual

## 4. Summary Findings from Annual Reports 2014-2015

### 4.1 General Findings/Good Practice

- Establishment of a Programme Management Team (PMT) and definition and codification of the protocol for communication among the members of the team – and between the team, the partner institutions and the students – has helped to embed the key channels through which quality assurance and enhancement can be pursued. This includes, in some instances, an annual meeting devoted solely to quality assurance.
- There is evidence of Schools and Colleges undertaking not only annual quality review of the administration and academic content of collaborative programmes, such as that exercised through the production of the annual programme report, but also annual review of the financial viability of such programmes.
- There are examples where improved and enhanced contact with the cohort of *potential* students as part of a programme recruitment strategy has helped to increase student numbers in excess of the projected targets and has also improved student retention. Additional supports for students once accepted and registered to the programme, such as a ‘Survival Guide’ supplied by each host institution for all visiting students of that institution, a dedicated new student orientation programme and assisted student registration sessions, likewise promote retention and help to enhance the student experience. A further example of this is the provision of a short, optional, summer school session (or other similar session available during the academic year), on-campus at UCD in Dublin, which helps students on overseas programmes to better connect with UCD. Frequent visits by UCD staff to overseas locations are also useful.
- In the majority of the reports, feedback received from students on individual modules is outlined in detail, with concomitant plans for amending the curriculum to address the concerns which have been raised.
- Lists of meeting dates for the programme teams are provided as appendices to the reports, including, in some instances, detailed agendas and descriptions of aims and objectives.
- The relevant outputs of School/Unit Periodic Review, where applicable, are reflected in the Annual Programme Monitoring Report for collaborative/transnational programmes managed by the School.

### 4.2 Recommendations for Enhancement

- There is scope for further development of supporting documentation for students on collaborative/transnational programmes and this should be explored further. This includes, but is not limited to, student diaries, a course prospectus that would provide a single source of information for students from all partners, including information on grading scales and criteria at all partner institutions, and a student ‘survival guide’ provided by each institution that hosts students.
- In relation to programmes that offer a Work Placement component, there is a need to enhance training for the placement host and better matching of students to hosts.
- There appears to be potential to utilise online resources further for students on programmes that are delivered across multiple locations. This may also include online provision of orientation information as well as programme and module information.
- Literacy as a general issue should be considered further – this includes academic literacy, foreign language literacy and maths literacy. The successful delivery of any academic programme depends on a sound

understanding of the literacy levels of both students and staff (e.g. non-native English speaking students and staff). Where the literacy levels are found to be below acceptable requirements, immediate action should be taken to address this (there is evidence of this happening in some instances). One example of good practice which directly addresses the issue of academic literacy, was the offering of a workshop on 'Critical Thinking' and this type of support could be replicated across other collaborative arrangements where appropriate. Related to this, is a need to address and clarify issues around plagiarism and academic integrity. In one example, resources and expertise were drawn from the UCD Applied Language Centre to good effect. This resource could be of benefit to other collaborative programme teams.

- There appears to be a need for more systematic and formal consideration of the human, financial and infrastructure resource requirements underpinning collaborative arrangements.
- It was not always clear that feedback from extern examiners (and planned actions in response) had been integrated into the Annual Programme Monitoring Report. Furthermore, while attention has been paid to the revision of individual modules based on student feedback, there appears to be minimal focus on actions for the enhancement of programmes as a whole.

### **4.3 Actions Planned for 2015-16**

Evidence has been provided that indicates that ongoing programme and module monitoring and enhancement is routinely taking place. Further evidence is provided which demonstrates how student feedback is being responded to. Examples of planned developments include the following:

- Input from industry experts to be introduced to modules and programmes to support the academic curriculum with 'real world' practice and examples.
- Additional material will be made available online, including grading scales and descriptors, orientation information and module and programme information.
- Enhanced literacy and foreign language training to be delivered utilising a variety of mechanisms available in UCD (including the UCD Applied Language Centre) and in partner institutions.
- Further development of modules in direct response to student feedback.
- Re-scheduling of Programme Examination Board meetings to align with the UCD Grade Approvals Process (GAP).
- Development of a new field in SISWeb, where students can view their name as it will appear on their parchment, with the availability of an option to update this to ensure that parchments accurately reflect student names, recognising diverse cultural practices in this respect.
- Updated annual monitoring guidance to further emphasise the need/benefit of reflective, rather than vague, analysis in annual reports. In future, the programme management team should demonstrate explicitly how they have engaged with the recommendations from the previous year's reports.
- While proposals for future action planned for 2015-2016 are clearly defined in most instances, some plans do not always reflect the feedback received from the extern examiner(s) eg key comments have not been included and/or referred to in some instances. There should be greater integration of the feedback from the extern examiner, and more explicit reference to it, in future reporting.
- Future reports should engage with financial resource evaluation, with consideration of the future viability of a collaborative or transnational programme, with reference also to the relevant School and College budgeting framework and strategic plans, as appropriate.
- Consideration should be given to extending annual reporting to UCD's Recognised Colleges.

## 5. Conclusion and Next Steps

This report relates to the annual monitoring of UCD's Taught Collaborative/Transnational Educational Provision. As stated in the introduction, regular programme monitoring is considered good practice and is aligned with sectoral, national and international guidelines as they relate to quality assurance and enhancement of academic programmes.

The Annual Programme Reporting process for UCD's collaborative programmes has a strong enhancement focus, with an emphasis on collegial discussion and reflection at programme and module level, a focus on the student experience, careful consideration of the management and delivery of provision, and recognition of the unique and complex array of inter-institutional issues. This is an evolving process and the framework through which collaborative and transnational programmes are managed by the University will be subject to an over-arching review in advance of the fourth reporting cycle (December 2016), overseen by Academic Council Committee on Quality. The key issues to be addressed by this over-arching review may include the following:

- The current framework which is used to support collaborative and transnational programmes will be reviewed to ensure that it can support and enable the University's pursuit of its strategic partnership and internationalisation agenda. The objective is to ensure coherent, comprehensive and co-ordinated support for all staff engaged in developing and managing collaborative programmes. It will establish the mechanisms necessary to ensure that appropriate and proportionate due diligence is undertaken for each new collaborative proposal. The approval process in particular, will be revised and refreshed so that it can be more agile and can better respond to emerging strategic initiatives. The annual programme monitoring process will be evaluated further, with a view to enhancing the process and the report template itself (e.g. to include, for example, additional emphasis on financial viability and explicit reference to the School/College/University strategic plans).
- There will be further development of a glossary of terms and taxonomy of types of collaboration. This categorisation of collaborative arrangements will also be aligned with any national glossary of collaborative types that may emerge. In conjunction with this, a more holistic view of collaborative programmes will be taken, so that the entire portfolio can be considered with a view to establishing a set of policies, guidelines and procedures that relate to the different types and different categories of collaboration, with the approval and monitoring processes being appropriate and proportional to the scale and level of risk associated with the proposal.
- The involvement of various administrative support units – including in particular the UCD Quality Office, UCD Registry, UCD International and UCD Corporate and Legal, working in conjunction with School, College and Programme Offices – requires enhanced co-ordination in a way that ensures that the most appropriate unit and/or staff members are involved and engaged with the relevant step in the development, approval, implementation and/or review of collaborative programmes. The aim will be to simplify the process and make it more 'user-oriented'. A central repository for information relating to each collaboration will also be further enhanced.
- This over-arching review will also include an assessment of the impact of the development of the new national QQI Framework for Quality Review in Irish Higher Education which is part of the ongoing implementation of the *Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012*.

This report will be circulated to UCD Programme Co-ordinators for taught collaborative/transnational programmes, Heads of School, Vice-Principals for Teaching and Learning, directors of relevant support units, the Academic Council Committee on Quality (ACCQ) and the University Management Team (UMT). A revised version of this report (e.g. details of the UCD partnership network and student numbers will be redacted) will also be circulated to the collaborative partners named in the report, via the relevant UCD Programme Co-ordinator.

# Appendix 1 – Annual Programme Monitoring Report (Specimen Template)



University College Dublin

## Collaborative and Transnational Taught Programmes

Annual Programme Monitoring Report

Reporting Period: 2014-15

Partner Institution/Transnational Campus: \_\_\_\_\_

Programme Title(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Please describe the nature of the collaboration

*(e.g. franchise, 2 year taught at X: 2 years taught at UCD – UCD Award)*

\_\_\_\_\_

UCD Programme Board: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Programme Board  
Chair/Coordinator/  
Academic Committee Chair (or equivalent):

\_\_\_\_\_

Date of Last Report (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

### Student Enrolments:

Programme Title/Stage	Student Enrolments 2014-15		Total Students on Programme
	Male	Female	

1. Summary of Student Feedback (formal and informal)

*Summarise student feedback from e.g. modules, staff-student meetings, etc.*

2. Summary of Feedback/Issues raised by Module Coordinators/teaching staff and in particular, External Examiners, on module and/or programme delivery

3. Please comment on the overall operation of the programme(s) during the previous year

*e.g.*

- *Programme Delivery / Structure*
- *Programme Management / Administration*
- *Student Support / Guidance*
- *Student Recruitment / Progression/ Withdrawals*
- *Resources / Programme Viability*
- *etc*

4. Please provide summary details of programme management meetings/contact between the partners

*e.g. date, purpose of meeting, key issues arising etc*

5. Examples of Good Practice

6. Action Points progressed from 2013-14

*Outline progress with previous year's action points*

7. Action Points planned for 2015-16

*Identify any developments planned*

8. Any other comments?

Signed

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Programme Coordinator or equivalent)

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_

Signed  
(if appropriate)

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Provost / Head of UCD School*

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

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***Please return the completed form to the UCD Quality Office, Room 118B, Tierney Building by 30 October 2015***

[Date of next Annual Report – October 2016]