



## University College Dublin

### UCD Quality Assurance and Quality Enhancement Policy

#### 1. Introduction

University College Dublin is a dynamic community of students, scholars and staff committed to performing at the highest standards. The University's aim is to provide a stimulating and innovative environment for teaching, learning and research. The University wishes to assure quality teaching, learning, research and service delivery through a regular review and improvement process. Its approach to quality assurance and quality enhancement, as set out in this policy, is to learn from best practice, locally and internationally, and benchmark against leading research universities. Quality enhancement is the process of continuous improvement.

The University is responsible for the academic standards of awards made in its name, and for ensuring that the quality of learning experiences is adequate and appropriate, to enable students to achieve these standards. In order to discharge those responsibilities, the University has a range of systems and procedures for assuring and enhancing the academic standards of awards and the quality of its educational provision. These mechanisms include:

1. Regular Peer Review of Academic and Support Units
2. Robust programme approval, monitoring and review processes
3. Module evaluation
4. External Examiner Reports
5. Established procedures for the appointment of staff and a comprehensive range of programmes for their ongoing professional development
6. Student: Staff Consultative Committees or equivalent
7. Systematic student participation and feedback in QA/QE processes
8. Regular review of QA/QE processes

The University's implementation of its quality assurance and quality enhancement procedures, also enable it to demonstrate how it discharges its responsibilities for assuring the quality and standards of its awards, as required by the Qualifications and Quality Assurance Act 2012.

## **2. Purpose**

The aim of the University's quality assurance and quality enhancement policy is to enhance the effectiveness of its core activities of learning, teaching, research and their effective management. The policy addresses all areas of University activity taking cognisance of their contribution to, and alignment with, the University's Strategic Goals.

## **3. Principles**

1. Quality teaching, learning, research and support services, and continuous improvement are core values. Quality assurance and continuous improvement are understood to be the joint responsibility of staff, management, and the collegial and governance bodies of the University.
2. Benchmarking and evidence based approach. The University evaluates its achievements against appropriate national and international benchmarks. Its quality assurance processes are evidence-based, where outcomes and feedback from stakeholders (including students, staff, employers and the community, as appropriate) will provide the basis for analyses and conclusions on which improvements are planned.
3. Collegiality. The University's processes reflect the principles of rigorous peer review, as we aim to identify areas for improvement, to foster collaboration and exchanges of best practice and to encourage an ethos of critical self-evaluation.

## **4. Features**

1. A commitment to widespread involvement of staff, students and stakeholders in the quality assurance process;
  - critical self-evaluation and rigorous peer review of academic and service areas by Review Groups whose membership will include both internal University staff and external members, all of whom will be independent of the unit under review. In the case of a review of the effectiveness of the institution's quality assurance/quality enhancement processes, all peer Review Group members will be external experts;
  - methodical collection of evidence relating to quality assurance activities, including, as appropriate: service satisfaction and student experience, benchmarking against external reference points;
  - external assessment of professional programmes as appropriate, through accreditation and international review;

- multiple avenues for student and staff input to quality assurance and quality enhancement such as: College, School, Services, committees, Students' Union. Students are expected to share responsibility for the effectiveness of their own learning through partnership in and engagement with, for example, module, programme and other learning experiences provided;
  - publish impartial and objective reports of quality reviews of academic and service units;
  - provision of opportunities and support for the continuing professional development of staff.
2. Robust and accountable University governance, management and decision-making relating to the quality assurance and quality enhancement policy framework.
- effective organisational structures to oversee quality assurance processes and the development and implementation of quality improvement plans;
  - a regular cycle of reviews of academic and service providers;
  - a process for monitoring the progress of implementing recommendations arising from Quality Review Reports;
  - a commitment to identify, share and implement examples of good practice, across the University;
  - the University will periodically monitor the effectiveness of its quality assurance and enhancement mechanisms to ensure that they are operating in accordance with best practice.
3. A commitment to assessing outcomes and processes against the highest external standards
- formal links with a number of the world's leading universities; national and international benchmarking of academic standards and service provision;
  - national and international benchmarking of quality assurance processes with comparable research-led universities;
  - the University will work constructively with external agencies, in particular Quality and Qualifications Ireland and Professional Bodies.