Policy on Academic Centres

Approved by Academic Council on 10 October 2008

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1. Introduction & Context

This document establishes UCD policy on the definition, and approval process for the establishment and continuation, of Academic Centres. This policy governs the application process for the establishment of all Academic Centres and the operation of Centres.

The Governing Authority, on recommendation of the President, has the the authority to establish Academic Centres, appoint Academic Centre Directors, retitle or abolish an Academic Centre, or merge two or more existing Centres. Responsibility for the oversight of operational matters relating to all Academic Centres is delegated by Academic Council to the Academic Council Committee on Academic Centres (ACCAC). The purpose of the ACCAC is:

a) To review proposals to establish, develop or re-configure Academic Centres;
b) To carry out periodic reviews of Centres to ensure that (i) advancement is being made in relation to the Centre meeting its objectives as outlined in its Business Case, and (ii) the Centre is sustainable;
c) To evaluate applications for the naming or re-naming of Centres against the criteria included in this policy;
d) To evaluate applications for appointment of Directors of Centres.

2. Definition of Academic Centres

Academic Centres at UCD are governed by statute (Chapter 18, Statute 6). In February 2008, the University defined the purpose, and a number of organisational and management features, of Academic Centres. Academic Centres are defined as:

- A simple organising structure to support research and activities related to research. An Academic Centre should be a means by which a collective of academic staff with a common research expertise, programme or activity identify themselves inside and outside UCD; or
- An identity and external point of contact to support a suite of Continuing Professional Development or executive education activities and/or programmes.

Academic Centres are not management units, and should not employ or manage staff, or deliver programmes independently of Schools.

There is a clear distinction between Academic Centres at UCD and competitively-won national multi-institutional centres such as the SFI Research Centres or EI/IDA Technology Centres. These latter centres often involve significant UCD participation, and have a substantial presence in the University. Their establishment, continuation and governance are based on success in competitive processes and agreements between partners and funders, and do not fall under this policy. Only in exceptional circumstances will the ACCAC recommend that Centres that do not meet all the criteria are given a derogation. This will only be in the case that the Centre is of high strategic value to UCD and that there are reasonable and logical grounds for a derogation from the normal criteria.

2.1 Types of Academic Centre

Chapter 18 of Statute 6 makes a clear distinction between Research Institutes and Academic Centres; while Research Institutes constitute a separate management unit within the University; this is not the case with a Centre as is clear from both the Statute and the recommendations of the Working Group on Academic Governance (February 2008). Applications from existing Centres carrying the title "Institute" must provide a rationale for the continued use of Institute as opposed to Centre.

There are two types of Academic Centre at UCD: Research Centres and Centres established to promote Continuing Professional Development. Applications to establish Academic Centres that combine both activities will also be considered. All Centres will be required to make a clear case on both research and financial sustainability criteria and will be reviewed in both areas at the appropriate review point (see section 4).

2.2 Governance of Academic Centres

All Academic Centres must be associated with a School and governance structures must reflect this. The primary reporting line from Centre Director is normally to the Head of School and to a College Principal (or, where relevant, to a University Vice-President) to whom an annual report must be submitted by the Centre Director.

A Centre may establish an Advisory Board to advance its objectives and, where relevant, to satisfy external funding requirements. A Research Centre Advisory Board shall be chaired by the Centre Director and have representatives from all affiliated Schools, the College Vice-Principal(s) for Research and Innovation (or nominee), the University Vice-President for Research (or nominee), as required to satisfy external funding requirements, and may have relevant stakeholders outside UCD. A CPD Centre Advisory Board shall have School(s) representatives and relevant stakeholders outside UCD.

In the case of a Research Centre, the School with which it is to be associated is the School in which the majority of the researchers affiliated to the Centre are located. Should the home School of the majority of researchers change during the approved term of the Centre, a recommendation will be made by the Centre's Advisory Board to the relevant School (and, as appropriate, College) governance structure(s) to consider which School the Centre should be located in. In the case of a Centre established to promote Continuing Professional Development, this will be associated with the School responsible for delivering the majority of the relevant modules (or other educational provision) associated with the CPD activity.

2.3 Academic Centre Staff Affiliation

A minimum number of staff is necessary to create a Centre. In the case of a Research Centre or combined Research and CPD Centre, there must be a critical mass of at least five full-time, permanent academic staff (conducting research) proposed at the application stage. In the case of a CPD Centre only there must be more than one full-time, permanent member of academic staff involved.

Research across disciplines will be promoted as a feature of UCD Academic Centres. The critical mass of researchers may all come from one subject area or School, however applications should reflect plans for inter-disciplinary research and research linkages. Research Centres approved on the basis of plans for inter- disciplinary research will be given a maximum period of three years in which to achieve planned inter- disciplinary goals, with reference to staff affiliation and research outputs.

School administrative staff may be assigned to the Centre by the relevant Head of School. The application must indicate what proportion of the administrator's time will be needed to ensure that the Centre runs effectively and efficiently and this will be reviewed and agreed by the Head of School as appropriate. The Head of School has the authority to withdraw the administrative support if this is required by the School.

3. Academic Centre Sustainability

All Academic Centres must be sustainable. For a CPD Centre, financial sustainability requires that the Centre generates sufficient income to meet the costs of the academic and administrative staff primarily affiliated to its operation and that it meets the income targets agreed in the original application.

For a Research Centre, academic sustainability must be demonstrated at School level, and requires that the Centre generates the agreed number of research students and proposed research income outlined in the original application, and is making the agreed contribution to the realisation of the School's publication profile. Research expenditure arising from the Centre's activities must be met from income generated by the Centre.

4. Academic Centre Review

The ACCAC shall determine the nature and timing of any reviews for all Academic Centres. In the first instance, all Academic Centres shall be subject to review during their third year of operation. Subsequent to this, and pending the recommendations arising from any such review, additional periodic reviews of each Academic Centre shall be undertaken, according to a schedule determined by the ACCAC, where the period of time between reviews for any Academic Centre shall not exceed five years. To ensure that the Centre is meeting the objectives established during the application process, such review(s) will be

conducted on the basis of a report submitted by the Centre Director (and approved by the Head of School and the College Principal. The report should provide information on how the Centre has met its targets and the degree to which it is academically and/or financially sustainable. In the case of Centres that combine both activities, the report should provide information on both aspects of sustainability.

In relation to the output of any review, the ACCAC may recommend that:

- Where the Centre is not realising the objectives articulated in the original application, the Centre should re-submit a revised application for approval. The re-submitted application must be approved by the Head of School and the College Principal (as appropriate) before it is sent to the ACCAC. Following review of the revised application, the ACCAC will make a recommendation to Academic Council that either the Centre will continue to operate or it will be discontinued with immediate effect.

- Where the review highlights issues to be addressed, the ACCAC shall define the timeframe (normally within two years) within which a subsequent review shall be undertaken to consider whether those issues have been satisfactorily addressed.

- Where exceptional performance is demonstrated, the Centre may continue to operate until the date of its next review (no later than five years from its last review).

- The submission of review reports is mandatory if a Centre wishes to operate beyond the next review date. Where the Centre does not comply with the requirements of the review process, the ACCAC will make a recommendation to Academic Council that the Centre be abolished with immediate effect.

The ACCAC may need to co-opt other members to ensure that appropriate expertise is available to conduct any review effectively.

5. Application and Approval Processes

5.1 Establishment of an Academic Centre
The Governing Authority, upon recommendation from the Academic Council, will approve the establishment of Academic Centres, in accordance with Chapter 18 of Statute 6. Applications for approval as an Academic Centre will be made using the application form that accompanies this policy document[1]. An application requires the support of the Head of School and the College Principal (as appropriate) and includes an opportunity for commentary from the University Vice-President for Research.

5.2 Appointment of an Academic Centre Director
The nomination of the Academic Centre Director must be included as part of the application for the establishment of an Academic Centre. Consideration of the appointment of the Academic Centre Director shall be made at each review point, so that the duration of the appointment in all instances is for the period between the last review of the Centre and the next review of the Centre. In instances where there may arise the need to appoint an Academic Centre Director outside of the normal review process, an application shall be made in writing to the ACCAC, submitted jointly by the existing Academic Centre Director (if possible), the Head of School with which the Centre is associated and the relevant College Principal . The application must be accompanied by a statement from the relevant Head of School and the College Principal supporting the nomination, with a statement about the rationale for the appointment of the nominated individual, as well as a short curriculum vitae of the proposed new Academic Centre Director. The term of appointment for the Academic Centre Director is effective from the date of Academic Council approval of the nomination.

5.3 Naming or Re-naming of an Academic Centre

The name of the Academic Centre must be included as part of the application for its establishment. The name shall normally reflect the academic, research and/or CPD orientation of its activities, with due regard also for the inter-disciplinary nature of any of its activities, and shall normally refer to 'UCD' in the title in

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[1] Available at http://www.ucd.ie/registry/academicsecretariat/docs/centres_f.doc

accordance with the University's *Brand Identity Guidelines*, which stipulate that "each unit name must be prefixed with UCD."[2] Academic Centres may be exempted from the requirement for the centre name to be prefixed with 'UCD' with the permission of the ACCAC, and only where they meet the following criteria:

- The centre is a national, international or global entity, recognised as such by the relevant bodies, and that status is to be reflected in the centre title; and
- The centre was established via a competitive process or by direct mandate (e.g. legislative provision) or through collaboration among a number of partners, and/or there is or has been external funding and/or peer review which has given rise to the establishment of the centre; and
- The centre is subject to external oversight, in addition to the normal internal UCD oversight of the centre.
- In such instances, 'UCD' must still appear in the title of the centre, with "[centre title]…at UCD" being the recommended configuration.

Consideration of the name of the Academic Centre shall be made at each review point, at which time any proposals for re-naming of the Academic Centre may be made. In instances where there may arise the need to re-name the Academic Centre outside of the normal review process, an application shall be made in writing to the ACCAC, submitted jointly by the existing Academic Centre Director (if possible), the Head of School with which the Centre is associated and the relevant College Principal.

An Academic Centre may be named or re-named in order to honour an individual who has made a substantial contribution to the activity of the Centre, to the University more generally, or to the field in which the activity of the Centre is principally focused. In such instances, the following criteria shall apply:

- An Academic Centre may be named after a former member of the professorial staff of the University, including those holding the position of Emeritus Professor, who has demonstrated a commitment, or in any way has made a substantial contribution, to the activities of the Centre;

- An Academic Centre may be named after an individual who is an eminent leader in their field and distinguished by high achievement in the world of industry, business, science, the professions, the arts or public service and who has been recognised by peers as outstanding in the field in which the Centre is principally active. They should have displayed the type of leadership and innovation in their particular professional field comparable to the standards of scholarship and leadership normally expected of a professor;

The application must be accompanied by a statement from the Academic Centre Director which explicitly addresses the above criteria.

Any application to name or re-name an Academic Centre in honour of an individual must also be accompanied by a letter of support from that individual or that individual's estate, confirming their willingness to agree to the naming of an Academic Centre in honour of that individual.

Use of the term 'Centre' by any entity associated with the University requires prior consultation with, and approval by, the ACCAC.

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[2] *UCD Brand Identity Guidelines* (page 13)
http://www.ucd.ie/styleguide/brandidentity/UCD_Brand_Guidelines_2014.pdf

Version History

Version	Date	Summary of Changes	Changed by
1.0		Working Group	Patricia Maguire
1.0	10 Oct 08	Approved at Academic Council	AC
1.1	21 Mar 11	Changes made following the ACCAC meeting. Inclusion of section 8 'Five year review and Academic Centre continuance'.	ACCAC
1.1.	24 April 11	Academic Council approval of the above change.	AC
1.2	21 Nov 11	Updating of policy, including reference to ACCAC and amendments to review section.	ACCAC
1.3	21 Nov 11	Updating of policy following feedback from the Registrar and meeting of ACCAC.	ACCAC
1.3	8 Dec 11	Academic Council approval of the above changes.	AC
1.4	17 Sept 12	Changes made following ACCAC meeting	ACCAC
1.5	5 Nov 12	Changes made following ACCAC meeting	ACCAC
1.6	26 Nov 12	Changes made to section 2.2 following input from ACCAC members	ACCAC
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1.12	19 Jan 15	Changes made following ACCAC meeting of 3 Nov 2014	ACCAC
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