



**University College Dublin**

**REVIEW GROUP REPORT**

**Periodic Quality Review  
UCD Teaching and Learning  
March 2021**

**Accepted by the UCD Governing Authority at its meeting of 9 September 2021**

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## Key Findings of the Review Group

It is important that UCD fully appreciates the value of student numbers/ income, quality of student intake and the value of high-quality pedagogy. Visibility of Teaching and Learning (T&L) seems low compared to that of Research. The Review Group (RG) has identified a number of key findings in relation to areas of good practice operating within UCD Teaching and Learning, and areas which the RG would highlight as requiring improvement. The main section of this Report sets out all observations, commendations and recommendations of the RG in more detail. An aggregated list of all commendations and recommendations is set out in Appendix 1.

### Examples of good practice

- UCD Teaching and Learning are recognised for their expertise, based in pedagogic scholarship, and for providing high quality information, resource and support for teaching and learning.
- Importantly, rather than simply providing 'generic' information the Unit has a learned understanding of what is happening on the ground and provide extra benefit/value in their interactions and ability to successfully translate from generic to discipline specific.
- The Unit's work with Educational Technologists and the UCD Educational Technology Advisory Network (ETAN) to support Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL), particularly in the institutional response to COVID-19.
- Current practice includes expectation-based voluntary engagement which is important in building a strong community across disciplines and areas of the University.
- The Unit not only influences directly through their provision and resources, but members also have a very positive, yet less visible, influence through their advice and support on key committees and groups and through their external interactions and consultancy.
- The Unit is well positioned to address the quality of education, to change culture and to support UCD in the University's new 'Rising to the Future' (2020-2024) strategy and successfully compete in the changing international Higher Education sector.
- UCD Teaching and Learning demonstrates an excellent exemplar of building a scholarly community of practice across disciplines and areas of the University.

### Commendations

The RG identified a number of commendations, in particular:

- UCD Teaching and Learning is to be commended on their effective follow through on the previous Quality Improvement Plan (2014).
- UCD Teaching and Learning is to be commended for the strength of leadership. This provides a good basis for positioning the Unit to both inform institutional pedagogic strategy and responsively support its implementation across the institution.

- The Unit has a well-presented website with excellent signposting of quality information and resources.
- The integration with Schools has been made clearer with terms of reference for School Heads and College Vice-Principals of Teaching and Learning regarding engagement and contribution to scholarship, contributing to a frame shift across the University in educational awareness.
- Clear mission statement and objectives for the Unit have been developed within the UCD Strategic Plan. The primary strategic context for UCD Teaching and Learning activities at time of the self-assessment was the UCD Strategy (2015-2020). Six Teaching and Learning objectives are identified and addressed in the SAR.
- UCD Teaching and Learning is well regarded across the University with visibility across and beyond the Institution and clear roles within the new UCD Strategy 2020-2024.
- UCD Teaching and Learning is to be commended for its support for early career academics and those new to teaching including readiness to support and engage with staff in online delivery.
- Educational offerings, such as the professional certificate and diploma, are well regarded with good uptake, the maturity of the programme was also commended.
- The RG commends the Unit's contribution to recognition of the professionalisation of teaching.

### **Prioritised Recommendations for Improvement:**

The full list of recommendations is set out in Appendix 1; however, the RG suggest that the following be prioritised:

1. The RG recommends clarification of the role and governance structure of the Unit relative to other units within the University providing educational offerings, including but not limited to, the UCD School of Education, specialist lecturers in School/discipline-related education, the Innovation Academy, Academic Council, and its relevant committees.
2. The RG recommends consideration of how the Unit can further develop and support Vice Principals for Teaching and Learning (VPTL), School Heads of Teaching and Learning (SHTL), Ad Astra Fellows, and others who are located within disciplines but have pedagogic interest and expertise. (2.26)
3. The RG recommends that UCD Teaching and Learning continues to engage with schools through School Heads of Teaching and Learning (SHTL), a role which varies in Schools of different size, scale of offerings and discipline-specific exigencies or custom. Each School has the opportunity to reflect this in its own quality review and improvement plan process and therefore provides a tool for engagement with the Unit and for promoting ACQEC published 'Examples of Positive Practice Identified in UCD Quality Review Reports' and 'Consolidated Key Teaching and Learning Related Recommendations for Improvement'. (3.18)
4. The RG recommends that UCD Teaching and Learning review the Terms of Reference for School Heads of Teaching and Learning and for the ETAN to include responsibilities, accountabilities and reporting. The Unit could, for example, group schools, disciplines and

programmes according to specific needs. Groupings might include single subject degrees; professional degrees; laboratory-based teaching and didactic learning. Engagement with discipline leaders (UCD Register of Subjects) is essential.

5. UCD Teaching and Learning is relatively small, with dependency on key members of staff. Therefore, the RG recommends that the Unit actively considers and develops a strategy for succession planning. (2.23)

# 1. Introduction and Context

## *Introduction*

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of a quality review of UCD Teaching and Learning, University College Dublin, which was undertaken on 5 to 7 October 2020. The Unit response to the Review Group Report is attached as Appendix 2.

## *The Review Framework*

- 1.2 Irish Universities have collectively agreed a framework for their quality review and quality improvement systems, which is consistent with both the legislative requirements of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012, and international good practice (e.g. Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, 2015). Quality reviews are carried out in academic, administrative and support service Units.
- 1.3 The purpose of periodic review is to assist the University to assure itself of the quality of each of its constituent Units, and to utilise learning from this developmental process in order to effect improvement, including:
- To monitor the quality of the student experience, and of teaching and learning.
  - To monitor research activity, including management of research activity; assessing the research performance with regard to research productivity, research income, and recruiting and supporting doctoral students.
  - To identify, encourage and disseminate good practice, and to identify challenges and how to address these.
  - To provide an opportunity for Units to test the effectiveness of their systems and procedures for monitoring and enhancing quality and standards.
  - To encourage the development and enhancement of these systems, in the context of current and emerging provision.
  - To inform the University's strategic planning process.
  - The output report provides robust evidence for external accreditation bodies.
  - The process provides an external benchmark on practice and curriculum.
  - To provide public information on the University's capacity to assure the quality and standards of its awards. The University's implementation of its quality procedures enables 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 (Education and Training) Act 2012.

### ***The Review Process***

1.4 Typically, the review model comprises four major elements:

- Preparation of a self-assessment report (SAR).
- A visit by an RG that includes UCD staff and external experts, both national and international.
- The site visit normally takes place over a two- or three-day period.
- Preparation of a review group report that is made public.
- Agreement of an action plan for improvement (quality improvement plan) based on the RG report's recommendations. The University will also monitor progress against the improvement plan.

Full details of the review process can be found on the UCD Quality Office website: [www.ucd.ie/quality](http://www.ucd.ie/quality).

1.5 The original schedule for the RG site visit was 23 - 26 March 2020. A SAR was prepared for this visit which had to be postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and working remotely.

1.6 The site visit was rescheduled for 5-7 October 2020, guided by ACQEC approved protocols to temporarily conduct Quality Review Site Visits remotely. Key Changes to arrangements included:

- Duration of the site visit was adjusted from three and a half days to a flexible format that still reflected the capacity of the RG and the Unit. Pre-visit planning and the site visit were undertaken virtually on a digital platform (Zoom) agreed between UCD Teaching and Learning and UCD Quality Office, as advised by IT Services.
- Pre-planning meetings were scheduled to take place earlier. Additional time was front-loaded for the RG to consider documentation and prepare for the site visit. Additional updates to the SAR were provided by the Unit including the Unit's response to COVID-19 which required additional consideration.
- At the planning stage, careful consideration was given to the spread, timings, duration, and number of participants in stakeholder meetings to maximise the value of these exchanges reflecting the need for additional considerations and limitations associated with remote engagement.
- UCD Quality Office set up, administered and facilitated effective remote collaborative working of the RG and smooth running of online meetings with key stakeholders.

- Requests for written submissions/responses from stakeholders to RG queries was provided.
- An After-Action Review was conducted by the RG Chair and UCD QO following the virtual visit which informed the operation of subsequent site visits.

### ***The Review Group***

1.7 The composition of the RG for UCD Teaching and Learning was as follows:

- Professor Alan Baird, UCD School of Veterinary Medicine, Chair
- Ms Suzanne Kealy, Director, UCD School of Nursing, Midwifery & Health Systems, Deputy Chair
- Professor Martyn Kingsbury, Imperial College London
- Professor Jo-Anne Murray, University of Glasgow

1.8 The Review Group conducted a remote site visit of the Unit from 5-7 October 2020 and held meetings with Unit staff; other University staff, including the Registrar/Deputy President, Dean of Undergraduate Studies and representatives from both faculty and professional staff. The site visit schedule is included as Appendix 3. All members of the Review Group participated in all discussions and meetings.

1.9 In addition to the Self-assessment Report, the Review Group considered documentation provided by the UCD Teaching and Learning and the University during the site visit.

1.10 This Report has been read and approved by all members of the Review Group.

### ***Preparation of the Self-assessment Report (SAR)***

1.11 Following a briefing from the UCD Quality Office, a Self-assessment Report Coordinating Committee (SARCC) was established by UCD Teaching and Learning. A clear overview of the methodology undertaken in preparing the SAR was presented to the Review Group.

1.12 The original SAR was prepared in the period February 2019 – February 2020. Staff were consulted during the process with specific aspects of the report discussed in various fora. The final draft report was developed by the SAR Co-ordinating Committee reflecting the various inputs. All Unit staff had been invited to discuss and comment on its final draft. A 230-page list of appendices accompanied the SAR and included selected metrics, methodologies of self-evaluation and supporting evidence of the value of the Unit.

1.13 The RG used both the Unit's SAR and the appendices to guide matters of its preliminary inquiry.

- 1.14 The reflective SAR provided insight into the Unit's activities along with the SWOT analysis to inform future development.
- 1.15 In March 2020, as part of the University's emergency response to the current pandemic, UCD Teaching and Learning prioritised the development of guidance and resources to support faculty to make the transition to emergency remote teaching. Additional resources included support of COVID-19 related contingency planning across the University. These were largely focussed on simple strategies, many of which were already in place, and were specifically necessary for programme delivery, revised assessment strategies, student guides and institutional FAQs on teaching, learning and assessment matters.

### ***The University***

- 1.16 University College Dublin (UCD) is a large and diverse university whose origins date back to 1854. The University is situated on a large modern campus about 4 km to the south of the centre of Dublin.
- 1.17 The University Strategic Plan (2020 to 2024) states that the University's mission is: "to contribute to the flourishing of Dublin, Ireland, Europe and the world through the excellence and impact of our research and scholarship, the quality of our graduates and our national and global engagement; providing a supportive community in which every member of the University is enabled to achieve their full potential."

The University is currently organised into six colleges and 37 schools:

- UCD College of Arts and Humanities
  - UCD College of Business
  - UCD College of Engineering and Architecture
  - UCD College of Health and Agricultural Sciences
  - UCD College of Social Sciences and Law
  - UCD College of Science
- 1.18 As one of the largest universities on the island of Ireland, UCD supports a broad, deep and rich academic community in Science, Business, Engineering, Health Sciences, Agriculture, Veterinary Medicine, Arts, Law, Celtic Studies and Human Sciences. There are currently more than 26,000 students in our UCD campus (approximately 16,300 undergraduates, 7,800 postgraduates and 2,200 Occasional and Adult Education students) registered on over 70 University degree programmes, including over 6,300 international students from more than 121 countries. The University has over 120 Subject Heads and over 5,400 students studying UCD degree programmes on campuses overseas.

## ***UCD Teaching and Learning***

- 1.19 UCD Teaching and Learning is a central support Unit, one of nine Units in Academic Affairs, which is headed by the Registrar/Deputy President.
- 1.20 The Unit, has four educational developers and an educational technology coordinator, supported by two permanent and one temporary (externally funded) project/support staff. The team is effectively led by the Director who is a member of senior administrative staff.
- 1.21 Staff members deliver on activities such as provision of professional development modules for those who teach; recognition and reward; strategic initiatives. There are four educational developers delivering modules in university teaching and learning.
- 1.22 The primary strategic context for UCD Teaching and Learning activities has been the UCD Strategy (2015-2020) which sets-out priorities to enable the achievement of “an educational experience that is holistic, one that instils in students a desire to learn and create, to question and reason, to innovate and explore, and to contribute to society at all levels”.
- 1.23 The UCD Teaching and Learning mission, within the current UCD Strategy (2020-2024) is to foster a culture of continuous enhancement of teaching and learning - supporting staff to deliver inclusive, innovative and research-informed teaching that leads to engaging and meaningful learning experiences for all UCD students. The Unit’s published values are professionalism, integrity, collaboration, inclusiveness, creativity, respect and empathy.
- 1.24 The annual budget and staff planning process is led by the Director in consultation with the Dean of Undergraduate Studies, the Finance Manager and HR Partner (Academic Affairs). The Office Administrator works closely with the Director on the day-to-day allocation and monitoring of budgets.
- 1.25 The Dean of Undergraduate Studies actively participates in the annual Work Programme planning process which ensures that the Unit’s activities are focused on strategic education priority actions. The Unit’s annual Work Programme is discussed with the University Teaching and Learning Committee (UTLC) and approved by the Registrar. Allocation of workload to individual staff flows from the annual Work Programme planning process and is then finalised by the Director with individual staff members.
- 1.26 The Unit focused on the achievement of six key strategic objectives in its self-assessment process:
1. Leading and contributing to strategic educational initiatives in response to current institutional needs and priorities.
  2. Providing a suite of professional development offerings for those who teach and/or support student learning.
  3. Recognising and rewarding those who demonstrate excellence in teaching and supporting student learning.

4. Promoting, learning from and extending the reach of exemplary and innovative teaching practices.
5. Supporting evidence-based approaches to the enhancement of teaching and learning through research and scholarship.
6. Expanding and maintaining networks of leaders and enthusiasts of teaching and learning to extend and shape practice across the University.

1.27 The Unit is commended on its Quality Improvement Plan (2014) following the previous Quality Review Report (2013). The Unit is highly self-reflective and, as part of their SAR, UCD Teaching and Learning undertook an analysis of their own strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats. This stakeholder informed exercise included opportunities for future enhancement and was therefore of value to the Review Group (Section 5).

1.28 The University is large and diverse. Unlike roles managed within a single School or programme, the Unit relies on representatives from a range of constituencies. Such diverse composition may lead to conflicting assumptions and agendas. However, the Unit is well placed to provide a common reference framework in Teaching and Learning. It is in the long-term interest of the University to lay out the inevitable disparities and speak to them as strengths.

## **Methodology**

1.29 This review provided an opportunity for the RG to consider the Unit's activities as outlined in the SAR and appendices. Pre-visit correspondence provided the RG with an opportunity to orchestrate and address issues raised from the SAR and supplementary documentation. Key stakeholders met with the RG by video conferencing. While not all, the RG met with a representative from a number of schools across the University. All members of the RG participated in all discussions and meetings.

1.30 The RG met with dedicated and experienced academics and professional staff within the Unit and more broadly across the University. Each of these engagements was enthusiastic and positive.

1.31 The RG acknowledged the additional workload challenges for the Unit caused by COVID-19 and the site visit was designed to minimise the impact on current workloads while enable a comprehensive discussion with the Unit and its stakeholders, focusing on the activities of the Unit sustained over the period since the previous review.

1.32 At the exit presentation the RG provided an overview of its initial commentary.

1.33 An overall impression shared by each member of the RG, following extensive interviews, conversations and review is that the Unit succeeds in fulfilling most of its aims. The narrative of this Report attempts to capture areas where further enhancement may be possible.

## 2. Planning, Management, Organisation and Resources

### *General Comments and Context*

- 2.1 The comments and recommendations outlined below focus on the area of planning, management, organisation, and resources. While there is much to be celebrated and commended in this area, the RG hope these recommendations will provide a basis for discussion to facilitate improvement and security of the Unit and its provision. The RG recognises that many of these recommendations are not within the power of the Unit to control and hope that raising them will empower a discussion with the University to consider how the Unit is supported and resourced in light of the new institutional strategy and competing in a different post-COVID international Higher Education landscape.
- 2.2. The UCD Teaching and Learning Self-assessment report was clear and comprehensive and gave a good account of how the group was structured, managed, and resourced. Internal communication strategies are in place. There was also a reflective and insightful consideration of planning, supplemented by additional consideration of the Unit's critical involvement with the institutional response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 2.3 The facilities could not be examined due to the pandemic-related limitations. The RG noted these have been recently upgraded as part of a major refurbishment project in the Newman Building. This is important for visibility, access, identity and as signifier of prestige and institutional support that the Unit has an appropriate and identified 'home' space.
- 2.4 The UCD Teaching and Learning team is well structured with a range of experience that is well suited to their institutional context and their responsive approach in a changing environment. The Unit members are recognised for their expertise, based in pedagogic scholarship, and for providing high quality information, resource and support for teaching and learning. Importantly, rather than simply providing 'generic' information the Unit has a deserved reputation for understanding what is happening 'on the ground' in a variety of disciplinary contexts. They are viewed by Heads of School and College Principals who met with the RG as providing extra value in their interactions with an ability to successfully translate information from generic to discipline specific context and effectively use examples from both.
- 2.5 The Unit is well positioned within UCD, with good access to senior institutional management structures including the University Management Team and Academic Council. The relationship between the Director and Dean of Undergraduate Studies works well. The relationship and well-aligned interests and expertise, particularly between the Unit Director and the Dean of Undergraduate Studies, provide a good basis for positioning the Unit to both inform institutional pedagogic strategy and responsively support its implementation across the University.
- 2.6 The Unit has good levels of autonomy yet is integrated into broader strategy, directly reporting to the Registrar. This was evident in the Unit's involvement in the institution-wide Curriculum Review and Enhancement Process (CREP). There was a considerable commitment with the review of 600+ UG and PG programmes but this helped position evidenced pedagogy

and pedagogic expertise at the heart of the change. This helps link the Unit with discipline/school practice and boosts the perceived prestige of pedagogic expertise and evidence-based pedagogic scholarship and practice.

- 2.7 The Unit's expertise is well recognised nationally and internationally, and they have had considerable success in obtaining external funding from the Higher Education Authority (HEA) and National Forum funding streams. This is a good indicator of external visibility and prestige and alignment with National strategy. The sustained success in external funding also seems to fund a range of projects that seem well placed to have positive impact and promote good pedagogy, across the University. The Unit's involvement with support of tailored individual discipline group bids for National Forum funding is a considerable workload yet is good for the Unit's 'positioning' and prestige within the University and with funders. The Unit's role in grant funding also aligns it well with the prestige associated with disciplinary grants and this is especially important in a disciplinary research-intensive context that can tend to undervalue pedagogy.
- 2.8 While UCD Teaching and Learning's success in attracting external funding from the HEA and the National Forum has many positives, such funding is not secure and hard to rely on in longer term planning. While it may be perfect for shorter-term projects subsequent loss of funding often leads to loss of associated staff and experience. Given the institutional and wider sector context this is not sustainable.
- 2.9 UCD Teaching and Learning not only influences pedagogy directly through their training provision, support, and resources, they also have a positive, but less visible, influence through their advice and support on key committees and groups and through their external interactions and consultancy.
- 2.10 The Unit was also recognised for its positive contribution to UCD policy support (for example, the UCD Academic Regulations, Teaching Development Policy for Postdoctoral Researchers, and UCD Assessment Code of Practice.).
- 2.11 The Unit also has representation on a range of university-level committees, contributing to and influencing the strategic direction of the UCD educational experience. For example, the University Management Team Education Group (UMT EG), which is tasked to provide high-level oversight and coordination of the development and implementation of the University's education strategy. Alongside UCD University Governance, these are significant developments in governance and reporting.
- 2.12 There is further opportunity for UCD's Teaching and Learning to be involved with UCD's Policy Management Framework which establishes a standard and principles for policy development, approval, implementation and review across the University.
- 2.13 One important issue is the level of resource. The annual total allocation of funds to the Unit has risen from €676K to €778K over the last five years, not considering contributions to teaching and learning development within individual School budgets (see 2.27 below).
- 2.14 The Unit is relatively under resourced and is maintaining a high quantity and quality of responsive output despite this. The comparison to benchmarking institutions (SAR, Table 2.5)

and their various activity profiles (SAR, table 2.6) provides evidence of this. The relative under-resourcing of the Unit means that the valued existing provision is not robust, it is vulnerable to the loss of key Unit staff.

- 2.15 The RG are of the opinion that the size, position, and recognition of the Unit by the University reflects both internally and externally how UCD values pedagogy. An under-resourced Unit will struggle to maintain provision and find it difficult to support the implementation of the new strategy.
- 2.16 Given the COVID-19 pandemic, while funding across the sector is limited, there is likely to be a demand for staff skilled in educational development and experience of Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL). The National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning is likely to be pivotal in strategic management of this.

### **Commendations**

- 2.17 UCD Teaching and Learning is well structured with a range of experience that is well suited to their institutional context. The team is effectively led by the Director who has a good relationship with the Dean of Undergraduate Studies, and this provides a good basis for positioning the Unit to both inform institutional pedagogic strategy and responsively support its implementation across the institution.
- 2.18 UCD Teaching and Learning is recognised for their expertise, based in pedagogic scholarship, and for providing high quality information, resource and support for teaching and learning. Importantly, they are viewed widely as providing extra value with an ability to successfully translate information from generic to discipline specific context and effectively use examples from both.
- 2.19 UCD Teaching and Learning's effective involvement in the UCD curriculum review and enhancement process (CREP) helped position evidenced pedagogy and pedagogic expertise at the heart of the change and boosts the perceived prestige of pedagogic expertise and evidence-based pedagogic scholarship and practice.
- 2.20 The Unit's pivotal role in boosting the perceived prestige of pedagogic expertise and evidence-based pedagogic scholarship and practice, vital for culture change aligned with UCD's 'Rising to the Future' strategy (2020-2024) and acute and ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 2.21 The Unit's valuable contribution to pedagogy-related policy development and implementation, not only directly through their training provision, support, and resources, but also through their advice and support on key committees and governance structures including The University Programmes Board (UPB), and Academic Council and its relevant Committees.
- 2.22 The Unit has a very well organised website with excellent signposting of quality information and resources. This proved especially valuable in supporting the institutional response to COVID-19.

## Recommendations

- 2.23 Although UCD Teaching and Learning is well structured and recognised for their expertise it is a relatively small team, partly supported by external temporary funding. Given that many of the commendations above depend on the Unit having an appropriate range of expertise with people who can apply their expertise and translate it into a varied and challenging context the staff in the Unit are very important. The RG recommends that the Unit actively considers strategies to address the following:
- (a) the reward, recognition, and retention of Unit staff,
  - (b) succession planning for the Unit and contributors within Schools and Colleges (see also 5.10)
  - (c) recruitment for the Unit to meet likely increased demand.
- 2.24 The relationship between the Director and Dean of Undergraduate Studies and their well-aligned interests and expertise is the basis for informing institutional pedagogic strategy and supporting institutional implementation. The RG recommend considering how to maintain this effective relationship with future Deans of Undergraduate Studies whose disciplinary background may be less well aligned with institutional pedagogic strategy.
- 2.25 The Unit was well regarded and praised across our review however it was not always clear how the Unit interacted with other Units. The RG recommend clarification of the broad education framework within the University and the expected interactions and relationships between the Unit and others such as the UCD School of Education, Innovation Academy, and the Professional Academy.
- 2.26 A distributed community of pedagogic interest and expertise is important in the operationalisation of institutional pedagogic strategy and culture change. The RG recommends consideration of how the Unit can further develop and support VPTL, SHTL and Ad Astra Fellows, and others who are located within disciplines. They are crucial in supporting evidenced, responsive institutional culture change. They may have heterogenous backgrounds and experience and may require support to be effective in their roles. Additionally, some may have greater pedagogic aspirations and might benefit from support and development at 'higher' levels and support with discipline located pedagogic scholarship. Developing these populations may foster future institutional educational leaders.
- 2.27 The Unit has a strong, effective involvement with early career academics with voluntary engagement levels of around 10-15%. The RG invites the Unit to explore opportunities for increasing this reach, particularly identifying ways to engage with academics further along in their careers, perhaps utilising alumni of the Unit to contribute to the development of their more junior colleagues. Coordinating the Teaching and Learning aspects of individual School Quality Improvement Plans is an opportunity to identify specific needs.
- 2.28 The RG advise the University and the Unit to seek more secure and appropriate levels of funding and support. A business plan designed with the assistance of the Bursar offers an opportunity for holistic review of resource allocation.

- 2.29 The Unit should be part of the post-COVID-19 university review with a focus on experiences of teaching and learning online in different programmes and settings.
- 2.30 Clarify the dualistic nature of Unit (supportive versus strategic functions relating to initiatives and policies including international engagement).
- 2.31 The RG recommends that the University continue to support the Unit to further develop communities of practice to promote evidence-based innovative pedagogic practice within and across disciplines, change institutional culture to exploit the opportunities in UCD's 'Rising to the Future' strategy and wider sector opportunities in a post-COVID-19 sector that will inevitably be more pedagogy aware.

### **3. Core Activities of the Unit**

#### ***General Comments and Context***

- 3.1 For the purpose of this report 'Core Activities' are defined as an integrated set of initiatives and actions intentionally designed to have a systemic impact on enhancement of Teaching and Learning across UCD. These include supporting strategy and impact, reward and recognition, innovation, national impact on policy initiatives, specific projects and programmes, accreditation, collaboration with the Educational Technology community through ETAN and scholarship.
- 3.2 The COVID-19 pandemic has had, and continues to have, a severe impact across the entire university sector and has certainly accelerated a University-wide adoption of technology enhanced learning with timely opportunities to capitalise on necessity-driven changes. However, a full review of the impact of the pandemic on the Unit's activities will be a matter for future review.
- 3.3 There is evidence of variable engagement with the Unit across the University and it may be helpful to consider ways in which the Unit's profile could be further raised through the growing network of Fellows.
- 3.4 The RG noted the considerable contributions of UCD Teaching and Learning to the area of academic personal development, through recognition of the professionalisation of teaching through the Teaching Awards and the Teaching and Learning Symposium.
- 3.5 The Unit's work with Educational Technologists and the ETAN network to support technology enhanced learning (TEL) act in parallel with this and is equally important. Given the likely international Higher Education sector-wide changes that are likely to result from the COVID-19 pandemic successful integration between pedagogy and technology is likely to be increasingly important, not just for educational innovation and distance learning but more generally across educational practice and strategic planning.

- 3.6 UCD Teaching and Learning ran a successful Student Digital Ambassador initiative and as noted above, engages with the National Forum. The Unit also maintains regular engagement with the Irish Universities Association (IUA) and Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) on a topic/project-specific basis.
- 3.7 The RG noted in those who met with the panel, an increase in the interest in discipline related pedagogic research. The RG recommend the Unit further encourage this engagement through, for example, identifying opportunities for interdisciplinary/cross university collaboration in order to further support and develop the growing community of discipline-located pedagogic experts and help recognise and further establish institutional culture change with regard to disciplinary pedagogy.
- 3.8 UCD has excellent reporting systems which could be used further to provide metrics for evidence-based educational research.

### **Commendations**

- 3.9 The RG commends the Unit for its clear mission statement and alignment of activities with objectives for the within the UCD Strategy (2015-2020).
- 3.10 UCD Teaching and Learning is doing tremendous work for a team of its size and the level of funding. It is particularly evident that considerable effort is made to share good practice and support scholarly communities around Teaching and Learning.
- 3.11 The Teaching Awards has been a successful initiative which, along with student nominations for Teaching & Learning awards has positively raised the profile and importance of Teaching and Learning across the institution.
- 3.12 The programmes and training that the Unit delivers have been well received and staff expressed having benefited greatly from undertaking these. The UCD Teaching and Learning Symposium has also been successful with high levels of staff engagement.
- 3.13 The Unit provides a forum for SHTL to interact, share practice and act as a community of scholars. The development of a role descriptor for the SHTL role is to be commended. This role also supports the development of a pipeline of successors for the College level VPTL roles.
- 3.14 The Unit's response to COVID-19 has been exemplary, mention was made of signposting to resources (including FAQs). The feedback from all groups involved in the review was that the Unit responds in a timely, helpful, and positive manner to any request for help/support in digital scholarship.

## Recommendations

- 3.15 From a core activity perspective, the relationship between the Unit and other UCD entities in terms of responsibilities is sometimes unclear. Therefore, it is important to clarify the Unit's roles and responsibilities in this context. (see also 2.25).
- 3.16 The RG noted inconsistencies in roles at the level of School Head of Teaching and Learning which in some areas become heavily involved in administration and/or assessment. The role descriptors refer specifically to the strategic nature of the role and this should be prioritised if the University is to realise the potential of its 2020-24 strategy 'Rising to the Future' and successfully compete in a post-COVID-19 international HE sector.
- 3.17 The Unit was praised for its recognition of the professionalisation of teaching through the Teaching Awards and the UCD Teaching and Learning Symposium. We recommend the Unit and the University explore opportunities for extending this and building pedagogic recognition more explicitly and constructively in Performance for Growth. The desirability of key roles such as VPTL and SHTL should be enhanced by addressing issues of status, recognition, responsibility, influence and support. Identifying academics on-track for Teaching and Learning and other leadership roles within Schools or Colleges which will improve succession management and opportunities in relation to faculty promotions.
- 3.18 The RG recommends that the Unit be more proactive in reaching out to each of the Schools and that one way to do this is to start by reflecting on initiatives such as UCD's Consolidated Recommendations for Teaching and Learning as well as published Examples of Positive Practice identified in UCD Quality Review Reports.
- 3.19 There is sometimes a disconnect in the cascade of information between the Colleges and Schools and it should not be assumed that all information reaches those that need it. Tracking activity with, for example, the Teaching Toolkit would reflect how it is being used and by whom. (<https://www.ucd.ie/teaching/resources/teachingtoolkit/>)
- 3.20 The RG recommend a review of how the Unit and team (including School Heads of Teaching & Learning) can sustain the level of work and outputs going forward as they do appear to be spread rather thin.
- 3.21 Whilst the "hub and spoke" model of educational technology support appears to be working well, there are some areas of the University that do not have such support or others which enjoy local (School appointed) lectureships in Education or Educational Technologists. Consequently, a review of engagement and provision commensurate with local need would be beneficial.
- 3.22 UCD Teaching and Learning should continue to work with UCD Research and Office of Institutional Research to further develop a range of quantitative and qualitative indicators of quality to further assess and prioritise quality enhancement.
- 3.23 The RG recommends encouragement and enhancement of collaborative research in pedagogy, matching experts in education with disciplinary experts to generate high impact and meaningful research outputs.

- 3.24 The Unit was widely praised for its Professional Certificate and Diploma. Given the increased numbers of 'Ad Astra Fellows' and others interested in the pedagogic scholarship of their disciplines, and with institutional and HE sector-wide professionalisation of pedagogy. These initiatives could be extended with a programme of continuing professional development.

## **4. Ongoing Quality Review and Stakeholder Feedback**

### ***General Comments and Context***

- 4.1 UCD Teaching and Learning utilises a variety of approaches to seeking feedback on their activities including surveys, modules and programme evaluations, interviews, focus groups, and benchmarking exercises. The findings of the feedback cited in the SAR largely echo with the observations of the RG during the site visit. The Unit proactively engages with the local teaching and learning infrastructure at school and college levels.
- 4.2 The Unit is well regarded by their colleagues in the University, and some individuals were singled out for their contribution.
- 4.3 The Unit has led several Strategic Projects and Activities. These contribute to the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) including supporting incorporation of blended learning into programmes.
- 4.4 The RG noted that Teaching-Research Linkages are in place and being further developed.
- 4.5 It was noted by the RG that there are inconsistencies in how the SHTL role is operationalised in each of the schools.
- 4.6 At international level, the Unit works with the Universitas 21 Educational Innovation Cluster on initiatives such as the U21 Teaching Indicators Framework.

### **Commendations**

- 4.7 The RG highly commends the Unit on the breadth and depth of the Quality Review stakeholder feedback. The approach of 'evidencing the value' and the mapping exercise that was conducted demonstrates the depth of ongoing engagement with stakeholders in a variety of formats.
- 4.8 The Unit's support for the VLE Oversight Committee during transition from use of Blackboard to Brightspace.
- 4.9 Members of the Unit are contributors to the UCD Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) Strategy which placed UCD well in its institutional response to the pandemic-related lockdown.

- 4.10 The RG commend the Unit's contribution to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) through Internationalisation and Teaching across Culture using a new module (for faculty), entitled 'Teaching Across Culture'.
- 4.11 The key findings of the Self-Assessment stakeholder feedback process were strongly echoed by each of the representative groups that engaged with the RG during the virtual site visit. The RG noted that this particularly refers to the expertise of the staff in the Unit.
- 4.12 UCD Teaching and Learning delivers several professional development courses for faculty with several distinct credit bearing modules in a variety of formats leading to awards such as Certificate, Professional Certificate and Professional Diplomas. These modules are very positively evaluated in the module feedback and were also strongly endorsed by the representative groups that met with the RG. The maturity of programming was positively reported on during the site visit, additionally, staff who had undertaken the courses described the personal impact as 'incredibly enriching'.
- 4.13 In addition to the above, the responsiveness of the Unit is to be commended, as demonstrated in the COVID-19 context and how the Unit rapidly pivoted to provide off-campus Teaching & Learning support to faculty and staff who provide education remotely.

### **Recommendations**

- 4.14 The Unit has high visibility and engagement with staff and academics in some schools. The RG recommends that the Unit identifies models of engaging with more schools and staff to broaden their reach in the University.
- 4.15 The Unit has developed induction resources for newly appointed faculty; however, these resources do not appear to be linked to the HR induction resources and the RG recommends that Teaching and Learning engage with UCD Human Resources to align all induction resources for newly appointed faculty in one central place such as the Assistant Professor Development Programme which has been created specifically for newly appointed members of faculty.
- 4.16 The RG recommend that UCD reviews the governance, organisational structure, and resourcing of technology enhanced learning to fully embed such approaches and support future strategic developments in this area.
- 4.17 Time spent by faculty on Teaching and Learning development and teaching enhancement should be recognised at School level through the Faculty Workload Model.
- 4.18 The RG recommends sharing of UCD good practice within and across disciplines internationally by supporting pedagogical research and continue to develop its international profile through organisations such as Universitas 21.

## 5. Overall Observations and Recommendations

### *General Comments and Context*

- 5.1 As part of the Unit's preparation for quality review, a SWOT workshop was undertaken to which all staff were invited to attend. It was clear to the RG that there was a high level of engagement by Unit staff and other stakeholders, identifying the current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges for the Unit. This was also evident to the RG during their virtual site visit discussions.
- 5.2 The SWOT analysis appears to have identified key high-level strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing UCD's Teaching and Learning Unit.
- 5.3 The RG concurs with the assessment of the SWOT findings with regards to the differing levels of engagement across the University. This was also evident from the number of schools that the site visit participants represented. This gap in engagement levels presents an opportunity for the Unit to address and improve the visibility of their work and expand their reach.
- 5.4 Weaknesses identified in the self-analysis and highlighted in other areas of the SAR have risen due to the COVID-19, internal and external communications challenges. The Unit needs to ensure that risks identified as weaknesses and threats are monitored and addressed.
- 5.5 It is the view of the RG that the SWOT, while not overly self-critical, was useful and largely agreed with it, and will benefit from further reflection, perhaps at individual School or College level.

### **Commendations**

- 5.6 The RG highly commends the inclusive self-reflection process within the Unit as shown by the breadth and depth of the SWOT analysis and the subsequent reflection in the SAR.
- 5.7 The RG commends the SWOT report as a largely accurate representation of where the Unit currently stands in terms of its Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. The commendations and recommendations that the RG have collated are directly related to the SWOT.

### **Recommendations**

- 5.8 The RG acknowledges that there are different levels of engagement between other Units and UCD Teaching and Learning. This was evident from both the summary of the SWOT findings and the feedback from stakeholders and the compositions of groups that were part of the review visit. The RG recommends that the SWOT analysis is used in guiding the Unit's Quality Improvement Plan.

- 5.9 The RG strongly recommends that the Unit develops a strategic plan specifically to address the varying levels of engagement with individual Schools (but do not advocate compulsion for this).
- 5.10 The RG also recommends that the Unit considers how they may influence succession planning for roles that are not within the control of the Unit. These include, for example, the School Heads of Teaching and Learning, College VPTLs.
- 5.11 The RG recommends that the Unit explores the possibility of developing further qualifications in Teaching & Learning, particularly in circumstances where external availability is limited.
- 5.12 The RG recommends that the Unit considers an alliance with the UCD School of Education to develop qualifications in teaching and learning.
- 5.13 Given the Unit is ultimately dependent on working relationships with multiple academic communities and other professional Units, benefit is likely to accrue with development of clearer structured co-ordination of service delivery and target setting with academic units and other support Units of the University.
- 5.14 In order to identify and address the impact of potential internal and external threats to the Unit, UCD Teaching and Learning should establish a risk register.

### UCD Teaching and Learning – Full List of Commendations and Recommendations

This Appendix contains a full list of commendations and recommendations made by the RG for the UCD Teaching and Learning and should be read in conjunction with the specific chapter above. (Please note that the paragraph references below refer to the relevant paragraphs in the report text)

## 2. Planning, Management, Organisation and Resources

### Commendations

- 2.17 UCD Teaching and Learning is well structured with a range of experience that is well suited to their institutional context. The team is effectively led by the Director who has a good relationship with the Dean of Undergraduate Studies, and this provides a good basis for positioning the Unit to both inform institutional pedagogic strategy and responsively support its implementation across the institution.
- 2.18 UCD Teaching and Learning is recognised for their expertise, based in pedagogic scholarship, and for providing high quality information, resource and support for teaching and learning. Importantly, they are viewed widely as providing extra value with an ability to successfully translate information from generic to discipline specific context and effectively use examples from both.
- 2.19 UCD Teaching and Learning's effective involvement in the UCD curriculum review and enhancement process (CREP) helped position evidenced pedagogy and pedagogic expertise at the heart of the change and boosts the perceived prestige of pedagogic expertise and evidence-based pedagogic scholarship and practice.
- 2.20 The Unit's pivotal role in boosting the perceived prestige of pedagogic expertise and evidence-based pedagogic scholarship and practice, vital for culture change aligned with UCD's 'Rising to the Future' strategy (2020-2024) and acute and ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 2.21 The Unit's valuable contribution to pedagogy-related policy development and implementation, not only directly through their training provision, support, and resources, but also through their advice and support on key committees and governance structures including The University Programmes Board (UPB), and Academic Council and its relevant Committees.
- 2.22 The Unit has a very well organised website with excellent signposting of quality information and resources. This proved especially valuable in supporting the institutional response to COVID-19.

## Recommendations

- 2.23 Although UCD Teaching and Learning is well structured and recognised for their expertise it is a relatively small team, partly supported by external temporary funding. Given that many of the commendations above depend on the Unit having an appropriate range of expertise with people who can apply their expertise and translate it into a varied and challenging context the staff in the Unit are very important. The RG recommends that the Unit actively considers strategies to address the following:
- (a) the reward, recognition, and retention of Unit staff,
  - (b) succession planning for the Unit and contributors within Schools and Colleges (see also 5.10)
  - (c) recruitment for the Unit to meet likely increased demand.
- 2.24 The relationship between the Director and Dean of Undergraduate Studies and their well-aligned interests and expertise is the basis for informing institutional pedagogic strategy and supporting institutional implementation. The RG recommend considering how to maintain this effective relationship with future Deans of Undergraduate Studies whose disciplinary background may be less well aligned with institutional pedagogic strategy.
- 2.25 The Unit was well regarded and praised across our review however it was not always clear how the Unit interacted with other Units. The RG recommend clarification of the broad education framework within the University and the expected interactions and relationships between the Unit and others such as the UCD School of Education, Innovation Academy, and the Professional Academy.
- 2.26 A distributed community of pedagogic interest and expertise is important in the operationalisation of institutional pedagogic strategy and culture change. The RG recommends consideration of how the Unit can further develop and support VPTL, SHTL and Ad Astra Fellows, and others who are located within disciplines. They are crucial in supporting evidenced, responsive institutional culture change. They may have heterogenous backgrounds and experience and may require support to be effective in their roles. Additionally, some may have greater pedagogic aspirations and might benefit from support and development at 'higher' levels and support with discipline located pedagogic scholarship. Developing these populations may foster future institutional educational leaders.
- 2.27 The Unit has a strong, effective involvement with early career academics with voluntary engagement levels of around 10-15%. The RG invites the Unit to explore opportunities for increasing this reach, particularly identifying ways to engage with academics further along in their careers, perhaps utilising alumni of the Unit to contribute to the development of their more junior colleagues. Coordinating the Teaching and Learning aspects of individual School Quality Improvement Plans is an opportunity to identify specific needs.
- 2.28 The RG advise the University and the Unit to seek more secure and appropriate levels of funding and support. A business plan designed with the assistance of the Bursar offers an opportunity for holistic review of resource allocation.

- 2.29 The Unit should be part of the post-COVID-19 university review with a focus on experiences of teaching and learning online in different programmes and settings.
- 2.30 Clarify the dualistic nature of Unit (supportive versus strategic functions relating to initiatives and policies including international engagement).
- 2.31 The RG recommends that the University continue to support the Unit to further develop communities of practice to promote evidence-based innovative pedagogic practice within and across disciplines, change institutional culture to exploit the opportunities in UCD's 'Rising to the Future' strategy and wider sector opportunities in a post-COVID-19 sector that will inevitably be more pedagogy aware.

### **3. Core Activities of the Unit**

#### **Commendations**

- 3.9 The RG commends the Unit for its clear mission statement and alignment of activities with objectives for the within the UCD Strategy (2015-2020).
- 3.10 UCD Teaching and Learning is doing tremendous work for a team of its size and the level of funding. It is particularly evident that considerable effort is made to share good practice and support scholarly communities around Teaching and Learning.
- 3.11 The Teaching Awards has been a successful initiative which, along with student nominations for Teaching & Learning awards has positively raised the profile and importance of Teaching and Learning across the institution.
- 3.12 The programmes and training that the Unit delivers have been well received and staff expressed having benefited greatly from undertaking these. The UCD Teaching and Learning Symposium has also been successful with high levels of staff engagement.
- 3.13 The Unit provides a forum for SHTL to interact, share practice and act as a community of scholars. The development of a role descriptor for the SHTL role is to be commended. This role also supports the development of a pipeline of successors for the College level VPTL roles.
- 3.14 The Unit's response to COVID-19 has been exemplary, mention was made of signposting to resources (including FAQs). The feedback from all groups involved in the review was that the Unit responds in a timely, helpful, and positive manner to any request for help/support in digital scholarship.

## Recommendations

- 3.15 From a core activity perspective, the relationship between the Unit and other UCD entities in terms of responsibilities is sometimes unclear. Therefore, it is important to clarify the Unit's roles and responsibilities in this context. (see also 2.25).
- 3.16 The RG noted inconsistencies in roles at the level of School Head of Teaching and Learning which in some areas become heavily involved in administration and/or assessment. The role descriptors refer specifically to the strategic nature of the role and this should be prioritised if the University is to realise the potential of its 2020-24 strategy 'Rising to the Future' and successfully compete in a post-COVID-19 international HE sector.
- 3.17 The Unit was praised for its recognition of the professionalisation of teaching through the Teaching Awards and the UCD Teaching and Learning Symposium. We recommend the Unit and the University explore opportunities for extending this and building pedagogic recognition more explicitly and constructively in Performance for Growth. The desirability of key roles such as VPTL and SHTL should be enhanced by addressing issues of status, recognition, responsibility, influence and support. Identifying academics on-track for Teaching and Learning and other leadership roles within Schools or Colleges which will improve succession management and opportunities in relation to faculty promotions.
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## **4. Ongoing Quality Review and Stakeholder Feedback**

### **Commendations**

- 4.7 The RG highly commends the Unit on the breadth and depth of the Quality Review stakeholder feedback. The approach of 'evidencing the value' and the mapping exercise that was conducted demonstrates the depth of ongoing engagement with stakeholders in a variety of formats.
- 4.8 The Unit's support for the VLE Oversight Committee during transition from use of Blackboard to Brightspace.
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### **Recommendations**

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- 4.18 The RG recommends sharing of UCD good practice within and across disciplines internationally by supporting pedagogical research and continue to develop its international profile through organisations such as Universitas 21.

## **5. Overall Observations and Recommendations**

### **Commendations**

- 5.6 The RG highly commends the inclusive self-reflection process within the Unit as shown by the breadth and depth of the SWOT analysis and the subsequent reflection in the SAR.
- 5.7 The RG commends the SWOT report as a largely accurate representation of where the Unit currently stands in terms of its Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. The commendations and recommendations that the RG have collated are directly related to the SWOT.

### **Recommendations**

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- 5.9 The RG strongly recommends that the Unit develops a strategic plan specifically to address the varying levels of engagement with individual Schools (but do not advocate compulsion for this).
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- 5.12 The RG recommends that the Unit considers an alliance with the UCD School of Education to develop qualifications in teaching and learning.
- 5.13 Given the Unit is ultimately dependent on working relationships with multiple academic communities and other professional Units, benefit is likely to accrue with development of clearer structured co-ordination of service delivery and target setting with academic units and other support Units of the University.
- 5.14 In order to identify and address the impact of potential internal and external threats to the Unit, UCD Teaching and Learning should establish a risk register.

### Response from UCD Teaching and Learning to RG Report

We welcomed the opportunity to engage with the Review Group during their virtual site visit in October 2020 and are appreciative of the Review Group's diligence in all aspects of the process and follow-up. The original RG site visit, scheduled for March 2020, had to be postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and we are grateful to the Review Group for their unflagging energy and openness during the significant demands of the online review process. We would also like to acknowledge the valuable support provided by the UCD Quality Office throughout.

As a team we are committed to continuous critical reflection and improvement; this is confirmed in the RG report which commends the inclusive self-reflection process within the unit, the breadth and depth of the Quality Review stakeholder feedback, the accuracy of our SWOT analysis and our effective follow through on the previous Quality Improvement Plan (2014).

We are delighted to see affirmation for the unit's positive ethos and many achievements. The Review Group confirms that the unit is recognised for its expertise, based on pedagogic scholarship, and for providing high quality information, resources and support for teaching and learning. The RG report also highlights strengths in relation to: the unit's clarity of mission and objectives, aligned to UCD Strategy; leadership of the unit; the unit's work to support technology enhanced learning particularly in response to COVID-19; the quality and maturity of its educational offerings; its excellence website signposting high quality scholarly resources; its integration with Schools and focus on building a community of practice across disciplines; and its contribution to recognition of the professionalism of teaching.

With specific reference to the prioritised recommendations identified by the Review Group, the Unit's initial comments and proposals are outlined below:

- 1. The RG recommends clarification of the role and governance structure of the Unit relative to other units within the University providing educational offerings, including but not limited to, the UCD School of Education, specialist lecturers in School/discipline-related education, the Innovation Academy, Academic Council, and its relevant committees.**

Like many teaching and learning units internationally, UCD Teaching and Learning's role and organisational positioning has evolved and has been re-formed over the past 20 years in response to both institutional and external change factors. Decisions around the governance structure and role of the unit are primarily a matter for UMT and therefore the Director of the Unit will engage with the UCD Registrar and Deputy President in relation to this recommendation in the first instance.

2. **The RG recommends consideration of how the Unit can further develop and support Vice Principals for Teaching and Learning (VPTL), School Heads of Teaching and Learning (SHTL), Ad Astra Fellows, and others who are located within disciplines but have pedagogic interest and expertise.**

We recognise this need and have already initiated a needs analysis to better understand the support and development needs of those already engaged in or aspiring to teaching and learning leadership roles. Early indications would suggest that there is good interest among the target audience in a proposed 'course' in educational leadership and the respondents have provided useful feedback and suggestions on the content and focus of such an offering. The unit is actively considering potential collaborators (within UCD) for the co-development and delivery of a suitable development offering.

3. **The RG recommends that UCD Teaching and Learning continues to engage with schools through School Heads of Teaching and Learning (SHTL), a role which varies in Schools of different size, scale of offerings and discipline-specific exigencies or custom. Each School has the opportunity to reflect this in its own quality review and improvement plan process and therefore provides a tool for engagement with the Unit and for promoting ACQEC published 'Examples of Positive Practice Identified in UCD Quality Review Reports' and 'Consolidated Key Teaching and Learning Related Recommendations for Improvement'.**

In preparing for the SAR, the unit identified uneven engagement across schools as an area for improvement. Work is already underway to strengthen engagement with and between SHTL through regular meetings focused on areas of particular concern identified by the SHTL. Attendance at these meetings has been consistently high over the past 12 months.

For some time now the unit has offered customised workshops to individual Schools to support them in their self-assessment of teaching and learning for periodic quality review. The take-up of these workshops has been low. This recommendation offers an alternative approach to engaging with individual Schools and the SHTL as part of the quality improvement process. The Director of UCD T&L will engage the Dean of Undergraduate Studies and the Director of Quality Assurance to discuss how best to progress.

4. **The RG recommends that UCD Teaching and Learning review the Terms of Reference for School Heads of Teaching and Learning and for the ETAN to include responsibilities, accountabilities and reporting. The Unit could, for example, group schools, disciplines and programmes according to specific needs. Groupings might include single subject degrees; professional degrees; laboratory-based teaching and didactic learning. Engagement with discipline leaders (UCD Register of Subjects) is essential.**

In their report the Review Group commends the development of a role descriptor for School Heads of Teaching and Learning which has been helpful in clarifying key areas of responsibility for SHTL. A similar exercise was undertaken with ETAN and revised terms of reference for this network were implemented in 2019-20. Both the SHTL and Educational Technologist roles report into the Head of School (or nominee); neither role is accountable to UCD Teaching and Learning. The Director of UCD T&L will consult with the Dean of Undergraduate Studies to determine what action if any could be taken by the unit.

The RG report acknowledges that the unit is relatively under resourced and is maintaining a high quantity and quality of response output despite this (point 2.14). Without additional staff resources it is difficult to see how the unit could stretch to developing specific provision for different groupings as proposed in this recommendation.

- 5. UCD Teaching and Learning is relatively small, with dependency on key members of staff. Therefore, the RG recommends that the Unit actively considers and develops a strategy for succession planning.**

The unit recognises this 'threat' and the Director will engage with the HR Partner to develop a strategy for succession planning. It is also important to recognise that the current small size of the unit, where staff are thinly spread across a span of activities, presents an ongoing challenge in terms of ensuring continuity of services in situations where unplanned absences or resignations arise.



## UCD Teaching and Learning

### Quality Review Remote Site Visit: 5-7 October 2020

Pre- Visit

#### SESSION 1

<b>Tuesday 18 August 2020 - Review Group Briefing Meeting</b>	
10.00-11.00	Review Group & Quality Office Briefing session
10.15-10.30	Virtual Room opened - UCD Quality Office Lead

#### SESSION 2

<b>Tuesday 29 September 2020 - Planning Meeting &amp; Welcome Session</b>	
10.00-10.45	Preliminary Comments and areas for discussion Part 1 Review Group & UCD Quality Office Lead
10.45-11.00	Break
11.00-11.45	Preliminary Comments and areas for discussion Part 2 Review Group & UCD Quality Office Lead
11.45-12.00	Break
12.00-12.30	Registrar / Deputy President Welcome & University Perspective
12.30-12.40	Chair Wrap Up

### SESSION 3

Wednesday 30 September 2020 - <b>Organisation/Management of Resources/Strategy</b>	
10.15-10.30	Virtual Room opened - UCD Quality Office Lead
10.30-11.00	Private meeting of Review Group
11.00-11.45	Dean of Undergraduate Studies
11.45-12.15	Key observations 15 /break 15 mins
12.15-13.00	Director of UCD Teaching & Learning
13.00-13.30	Key observations
13.30	Wrap up

### Main Remote Site Visit

### SESSION 4

Monday 5 October 2020 --- <b>Core Activities &amp; Stakeholder Feedback</b>	
11.45-12.00	Virtual Room opened - UCD Quality Office Lead
12.00-12.30	Private meeting of Review Group (RG)
12.30-13.15	Teaching and Learning Team
13.15-13.45	Key observations 15mins/ break 15mins
13.45-14.30	Vice-Principals for Teaching and Learning
14.30-15.00	Key observations 15mins/break 15mins
15.00-15.45	School Heads of Teaching and Learning
15.45-16.15	Key observations 15mins/break 15 mins
16.15-17.00	Representative Group of Heads of School
17.00-17.30	Key observations 15mins/break 15mins
17.30-18.00	Report Drafting
18.00	Wrap up

## SESSION 5

Tuesday 6 October 2020 - <b>Technology &amp; Strategic Projects</b>	
09.15-09.30	Virtual Room opened - UCD Quality Office Lead
09.30-10.00	Private meeting of Review Group (RG)
10.00-10.45	Graduates & Current Students of Professional Programmes in University Teaching & Learning
10.45-11.15	Key observations 10mins /break 5mins
11.15-12.00	Reward and recognition of teaching excellence
11.00-12.15	Key observations 10mins /break 5 mins
12.15-13.00	Technology Enhanced Learning - (EdTech's, IT Services, Estates)
13.00-13.15	Key observations
13.15-14.00	Break for lunch
14.00-14.15	Prep for afternoon sessions
14.15-14.45	Curriculum Review & Enhancement project
14.45-15.15	Key observations 15mins /break 15mins
15.15-15.45	Assessment and Feedback activities
15.45-16.15	Key observations 15mins /break 15mins
16.15-17.00	Report Drafting Session  Review Group (option for group to work offline)
17.00	Wrap up

## SESSION 6

Wednesday 7 October 2020 - <b>Review Key Findings</b>	
08.45-09.00	Virtual Room opened - UCD Quality Office Lead
09.00-10.30	Review Group continue to prepare key points of commendation and recommendations for improvement for exit presentation
10.30-10.40	Break
10.40-11.00	Dean of Undergraduate Studies  Review Group feedback initial outline commendations and findings
11.00-11.10	Break
11.10-11.30	Director of UCD Teaching & Learning  Review Group feedback initial outline commendations and findings
11.30-14.00	Final Prep before presentation
14.00-14.30	Dean, HOU & all T&L staff, UCQO  Exit Presentation to UCD Teaching and Learning
14.30-15.00	Wrap up - site visit close out