



University College Dublin
Ireland's Global University



QQI Cyclical Institutional Review 2019

UCD Case Studies





QQI Cyclical Institutional Review

Case Studies

Introduction

As reflected in our Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER), quality assurance and enhancement in UCD takes many forms. To support our analysis within the ISER, we have selected eleven case studies that demonstrate, in more detail, our quality culture and our commitment to continuous enhancement. In choosing them, we focused on institutional-level aspects that impact across the University as a whole and that:

1. demonstrate the effectiveness of our processes,
2. identify how we have responded to issues, and
3. highlight areas of innovation.

Contents

Case Study 1	Defining Educational Excellence	02
Case Study 2	Subject Extern Examiner Reports	05
Case Study 3	Researcher Career Framework	08
Case Study 4	The Library in the Life of the Student	10
Case Study 5	Student Engagement	13
Case Study 6	Proposal to Establish South China-Dublin International College	15
Case Study 7	Output-Based Research Support Scheme	17
Case Study 8	Faculty Promotions	20
Case Study 9	Culture and Engagement Survey	22
Case Study 10	InfoHub	24
Case Study 11	myUCD Portal	26

Institutional Self-Evaluation Report

- ISER 3.1 (p. 19)
- ISER 5.27 (p. 33)



Case Study 1

Defining Educational Excellence – a joined-up approach to reviewing the educational content of the University



Situation

Under Strategic Initiative 2 of the UCD Strategy 2015-2020: Defining educational excellence, UCD aims to deliver a world-class learning experience for its students. In setting out its objectives and vision for 2020, UCD recognised that excellence in teaching and curriculum design must be supported across governance and operational structures.



Task

UCD introduced a modularised curriculum in 2005. Ten years on, programmes had not been reviewed at a University-wide level and there was a concern of an over-emphasis on modules to the detriment of programme coherence and cohesion. To address the opportunities and challenges presented by the maturing modular curriculum, UCD initiated a University-wide project in 2015: the Curriculum Review and Enhancement Project (CRE process).

Recognising the CRE process as the pivotal point in this joined-up approach to reviewing the educational content of the University, this case study addresses the adaptation of Academic Regulations and systems around CMS (Curriculum Management System) in response to the project and the adaptation of University governance (delegated authority) to drive the change.

Additionally, this case study interweaves curriculum review and enhancement, underscoring UCD's commitment to QA/QE. The CRE process demonstrates a commitment to the student learning experience and to evaluating structures to determine if they are fit-for-purpose and capable of supporting the delivery of four key themes identified to enhance that learning experience. It not only promoted self-reflection and QA/QE ethos in curriculum design and delivery, the process employed by the University was externally reviewed to inform future institutional-level projects.



Action

The CRE process provided the University with the opportunity to create greater programme cohesion and coherence by identifying how individual modules fit into broader programme objectives. The process placed a strong emphasis on the articulation of outcomes, with a focus on coherently organising, delivering and assessing curricula to embed and assure these outcomes for students.¹

¹ Further information about the CRE process is available at www.ucd.ie/teaching/projects/archive/curriculumreviewandenhancement.

Conducted over a 15-month period, with a four-stage methodology, the CRE process was led locally by Project Champions. It resulted in the publication of programme vision and value statements and programme learning outcomes for 598 taught programmes, as well as a curriculum mapping exercise whereby contributing modules were mapped to the programme outcomes.

While Academic Regulations were kept under annual review, a full re-draft had last taken place to support modularisation (September 2006). Informed by the learning from the CRE process, the University decided it was timely to evaluate the regulations to determine whether they could make a more significant contribution to UCD's current strategic priorities. In 2016, Academic Council established a working group whose primary objective in reviewing the regulations was to determine how new Academic Regulations could best support students to learn and progress in their programmes. The working group was chaired by the Registrar and made up of student, faculty and staff representatives from across the University. Informal and formal consultation was undertaken with targeted individuals and groups, the Students' Union, and all faculty and staff using a variety of consultation and survey methods. Survey feedback and consequent actions were published for faculty, staff and students to view.

As an outcome of the CRE process and the review of Academic Regulations, it was recognised that the structures overseeing approval of academic programmes and their quality required review and approval at various governance boards. The principle of allowing a governance board at the appropriate level to approve changes within the broad Academic Regulations framework was agreed allowing the University Boards to focus more on strategy and broader quality issues.

Recognising that education excellence requires operational and systems support, the University's structures and processes for implementing student-related delegated authority decisions have been enhanced during this time. An Academic Regulations Implementation Group devised and delivered the technical and operational solutions required to implement the new regulations (major modifications were required to Banner, CMS, the Research Management System and SISWeb).



Results

In addition to the programme vision, value statements and learning outcomes mentioned above, recommendations from the CRE Steering Committee were incorporated into the *Education Strategy 2015–2020: Our Students' Education and Experience*. The process also provided an opportunity for module co-ordinators to reflect on how their modules fitted into programmes as well as opportunities to engage with students – further enhancements of the quality process. As highlighted by the external reviewer, the CRE process encouraged faculty to see modules as important pieces contributing to the programme, rather than as stand-alone elements. Some examples of key changes made to programme design and enhancement include the new four-year degree in Social Sciences, incorporation of more in-depth learning experiences via the introduction of 10-credit modules across a range of programmes and development of a Technology Enhanced Learning strategy. The external review indicated that the process had enabled positive change as well as identifying learning points for any future large-scale initiative of this nature.

Supporting UCD's Vision for 2020 and its strategic initiatives, as well as the implementation of recommendations from the CRE process, a new set of Academic Regulations was approved by Academic Council in 2018, to come into effect from academic year 2019/20. They establish a single set of regulations for all taught programmes in the University, and separate regulations for graduate research students. Greater emphasis is placed on ensuring programme coherence, and specific measures are introduced to ensure transparent and fair grading

processes, in addition to providing timely and effective feedback to students on all assessed work. New programme structures were introduced to promote both depth and breadth in learning outcomes, and greater efficiency is provided for by devolving decision-making. New possibilities are also provided for, such as integrated assessment across multiple modules and the assessment of learning outcomes achieved outside traditional module structures.

At an operational level, the new Academic Regulations are supported by a new curriculum system. This allows the more comprehensive information required by the regulations at module, major and programme level to be captured and reported on. Examples include key information on degree aware calculation, method and timing of module remediation, feedback activity and timing, greater detail on assessment strategies, grade scales and mark-to-grade conversions. This information is reflected in the curriculum browser. It provides students with greater transparency around the University's academic offerings, allowing them to make informed choices about their majors and modules. The advanced reporting and auditing capabilities facilitate improved governance, and provide greater clarity, flexibility and coherence for faculty and staff.

With regard to governance structures, responsibility for the quality of programmes has been delegated to the most appropriate level. UMT, College Executive, UPB and Governing Boards have different responsibilities at different stages of new programme approval. Module approval lies with module co-ordinators and Schools, with exceptions brought to Governing Boards. From a teaching and learning aspect, responsibility is held by the Dean of Undergraduate Studies, VPT&Ls, University and College level committees, as well as local College meetings with School Heads of T&L (support is provided by the Teaching and Learning unit – see section 5 of the ISER).

For certain student-related matters, decision-making responsibility is delegated from UPB to Governing Boards and communicated to UCD Registry for action. This had traditionally been a paper-based system but, following consultation with the relevant Registry teams, Programme Offices, Graduate Schools and Schools, has recently migrated online. This has delivered enhancements in the quality of service provision and governance. A full suite of reports now ensures the University has oversight over such student-related decisions, facilitating improved review, audit and monitoring. It has also delivered a significant improvement in processing accuracy and turnaround time – further enhancing the student experience.

Case Study 2

Subject Extern Examiner Reports – UCD’s Review of Annual Reports

Institutional Self-evaluation Report



- ISER 5.16 (p. 31)



Situation

Subject Extern Examiners play a vital role in assisting the University in fulfilling its obligations to assure the academic standards and integrity of its awards, and form part of the University’s broader system of quality assurance and enhancement. Subject Extern Examiners can be appointed to subjects at undergraduate or graduate level, and their specific responsibilities are outlined in the University’s Policy on Subject Extern Examination¹, revised in 2017/18. A key task for the Subject Extern is to submit an Annual Report for each year of their appointment. In their report, they are asked to focus on the standard of a subject’s curriculum, assessment, and grading in comparison to international best practice, drawing particular attention to areas that highlight good practice or require attention and opportunities for the University to make enhancements. The Registrar is required to report annually to Academic Council on issues raised in Subject Extern Examiners’ reports and highlight examples of good practice from across the University. In 2017/18, the University appointed 258 Subject Extern Examiners to fulfil these responsibilities.



Task

Until 2016, all Subject Extern Examiner reports were received in hard copy. This resulted in a significantly drawn-out process, with reports being submitted over several months to various staff members across the University. Limited analysis was undertaken due to the volume and format of reports received. By the time reports were reviewed and sent to Schools and subject areas, recommendations were too late to implement as the planning cycle had been missed.



Action

In 2016, the University commenced the development of an in-house system.



Results

The first development phase of the in-house system enabled a Subject Extern to submit their annual report electronically. This enabled the University to simplify and expediate submission, keep track of reports received, and send reports on to subject areas in a timely manner for review and implementation of recommendations received. In 2017, the second development phase focused on building a workflow process. This enabled the submitted report to be passed electronically to the relevant subject areas, enabling them to provide a formal response to the Registrar addressing how any issues raised would be dealt with, or why, having reflected on the issues raised, a decision was made not to take any further action. This enabled the Registrar

¹ The full version of UCD’s Subject Extern Examiner Policy can be found at www.ucd.ie/registry/assessment/subjectextern.html.

to undertake a timely review of all responses received and report to the Academic Council on compliance figures, areas of best practice, and general themes arising from reports.

In 2018 further enhancements were made to the system, which enabled report categorisation and the ability to tag specific themes. These developments have improved the University's ability to undertake a more detailed analysis of data received and have provided an improved overview of the Subject Externs' evaluation of the standard of UCD subjects and students. Categorisations were applied to recommendations received from the Subject Extern – whether they had any or if they were major or minor recommendations; and whether Schools were or were not addressing the recommendations received. Through this report categorisation, the University was able to focus more on accountability and monitoring of quality standards and undertake a year-on-year comparison of how Schools were addressing recommendations received. Reports were also tagged with specific themes such as:

- Curriculum – content, teaching and learning approaches, programme structures
- Assessment – methods, grading, amount
- Student Feedback – how feedback is given to students on a programme, and specific student's feedback on the programme
- Quality Standards – both positive and negative
- Recurring Recommendations – recommendations previously raised but have not been addressed.

The tagging of themes enabled the University to better identify trends arising from reports and areas of best practice.

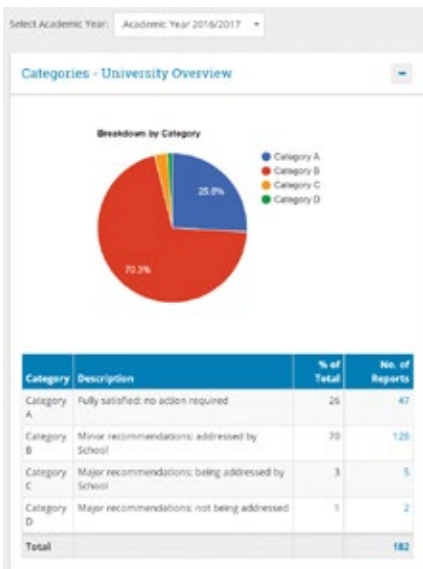
The University acknowledges that more system enhancements are required to provide greater insights into the data received, and it is anticipated that the next development phase will focus on:

- Enhancing the categorisation and themes based on operational experience from the 2018/19 academic year, to enable greater qualitative analysis of reports, in particular in relation to recurring themes and trends
- Closing the feedback loop with Subject Externs
- Making reports or summary reports available to more stakeholders such as Governing Boards and students.

Examples of screen shots from Subject Extern Examiner Reports dashboard

Figure 1: Year-on-year categorisation of reports

Academic Year 2016/2017 Categories
– University Overview



Academic Year 2017/2018 Categories
– University Overview

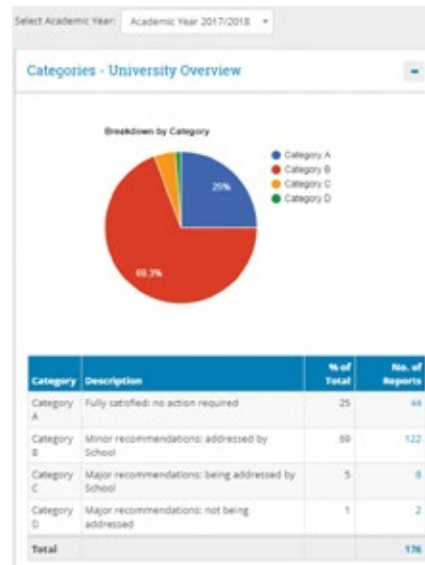


Figure 2: Category breakdown by College (each number can be drilled into and links back to original report)

Categories – College Overview

College	Categories			
	Category A	Category B	Category C	Category D
Academic Affairs		1		
College of Arts and Humanities	12	15	2	1
College of Business	4	16	2	
College of Engineering and Architecture	2	9	1	
College of Health and Agricultural Sciences	17	41	2	
College of Science	2	15	2	
College of Social Sciences and Law	7	20	1	1
Vice-President for Global Engagement		3		
Total	44	120	10	2

Institutional Self-Evaluation Report

- ISER 6.20 (p. 45)



Case Study 3

Researcher Career Framework



Situation

As a research-intensive university, UCD is committed to the development of early-career researchers. However, prior to 2010, the level of support provided was inadequate. There was also undue complexity in relation to the nature and status of employment contracts across the University.



Task

The immediate task in relation to improving support for researchers was to clarify and streamline the nature of the employment contracts for postdoctoral researchers. This complex task involved close co-ordination between UCD Research, the UCD Career Development Centre and UCD Human Resources. Once the contract situation was clarified, it was then possible to progress with development of a Career and Professional Development framework for researchers and faculty (including Principal Investigators).



Action

A key stage in the development of the Researcher Career Framework was the appointment of a dedicated 'Career Development Advisor (Postdoctoral Researchers)' in the UCD Career Development Centre. In 2014 the title for this post would be changed to 'Research Careers Manager'. From 2010 a training co-ordinator role was introduced in UCD HR and in 2014 this post was changed to a 'Researcher Development Specialist'. UCD was the first university in Ireland to introduce such dedicated roles. The Directors of UCD Learning and Development, UCD Research and UCD Career Development Centre formed part of a Standing Committee for Researcher Careers that reported into the University Management Team (UMT). Other members of staff and faculty were co-opted onto the standing committee as and when needed. Later the standing committee was re-structured, reporting into the Research, Innovation and Impact Group.

The initial task for this group was related to clarification and streamlining of the range of existing researcher contracts. These were reduced to two different types – 'PostDoc1' for researchers who would have recently completed their doctoral training; and 'PostDoc2' for researchers with a number of years of research experience already completed in addition to their doctoral training. This was a major and fundamental first step for supporting researchers, as it clarified their employment status.

From 2015 onwards, the next phase of the development of the Researcher Career Framework commenced. This involved the development of a supportive training framework that provided career and professional development opportunities for postdoctoral researchers.



Results

The outputs from the work to develop the Researcher Career Framework are principally represented through the UCD Research Skills & Career Development (www.ucd.ie/researchcareers/) framework. This provides post-doctoral researchers with access to career and professional development opportunities across four core competency areas:

- Research and Research Management
- Personal and Professional Excellence
- Teaching, Learning and Mentoring
- Innovation and Entrepreneurship.

The Researcher Career Framework is a three-way partnership between UCD Research and Innovation, the UCD Career Development Centre and UCD Human Resources. There continues to be a Researcher Development Specialist located in UCD Human Resources and a Researcher Careers Manager in the UCD Career Development Centre who support this group. A UCD Careers and Professional Development Handbook for Postdoctoral Fellows (www.ucd.ie/researchcareers/t4media/UCD%20Postdoc%20Handbook.pdf) is provided and four orientation events each academic year are also delivered to inform postdoctoral researchers about the support and resources available to them. An online portal is also provided that enables researchers (and their supervisors) to track their career development and progress, and an InfoHub report can be produced through the portal. This report provides the details of all training and development activities undertaken by the individual during their time with UCD as a postdoctoral researcher.

In 2012, UCD was awarded the “HR Excellence in Research” designation by the European Commission under the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) process. UCD was the first organisation in Ireland to receive this designation, identifying UCD as a provider of a high standard working environment for researchers. In particular, it recognises UCD’s equitable recruitment and appraisal procedures and its commitment to implement the principles of *The European Charter for Researchers* and *The Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers* (the Charter and Code). In attaining this recognition, UCD also contributes to the ability of the national research environment and the European Research Area (ERA) to attract researchers. The Charter and Code aim to provide equal rights and obligations for researchers in Europe through the implementation of principles governing recruitment, ethical and professional aspects of work, working conditions, and career development for researchers.

In 2017, UCD was awarded the Athena SWAN Bronze Institutional Award, in recognition of the work undertaken to promote the advancement of women’s careers in higher education and research. The University has also strategically involved postdoctoral researchers on School committees to ensure that the researcher environment is prioritised, and in May 2019 four individual UCD Schools were awarded the Athena SWAN Bronze Award in recognition of their commitment to achieving gender equality.

Institutional Self-Evaluation Report

- ISER 7.2 (p. 48)



Case Study 4

The Library in the Life of the Student – how UCD Library continues to improve services

Overview

UCD Library seeks student feedback in several ways – through suggestion boxes in each library site and a suggestion board, surveys and focus groups. For example, in December 2018 a Christmas Tree wish list provided a seasonal and fun way of engaging with students and their requirements. This case study demonstrates the Library's commitment to enhancement by outlining a number of initiatives launched to respond to changing student needs.

Wayfinding project (2018)

An analysis of UniShare (our customer relationship management system) data revealed that 25% of queries at library information desks related to confusion in finding required material and navigating the libraries' layout. Ongoing feedback from our users reinforced the necessity to address these difficulties, which resulted in the commencement of a Wayfinding Project. The goal of the project was to improve users' discovery experiences and enhance the interaction at our information desks.

The most common query at library information desks related to the location of a specific book and while the catalogue provides the shelfmark, students had difficulty locating the appropriate shelf. The solution to this problem came in the form of an indoor mapping web application called StackMap, supported by the assignment of numbers to the aisles and updates to all the bookends. The process around how you search for a book remains unchanged, but now when the book is available, a blue 'Map' button is visible adjacent to the shelfmark information. Clicking on the button provides the user with directions to the specific shelf where the item is located, along with a floor plan displaying a pin icon marking the relevant shelf.

The next top query was how to locate material relating to a broad subject area, such as history. The solution to this problem came in the form of EXPLORE, an interactive mapping service and the latest product from StackMap. We worked closely with the StackMap team on the development of EXPLORE to ensure it met the requirements of our users and took the opportunity to expand its functionality to map library places, such as water fountains, computers, etc. As a result of this collaboration, we are the first library in the world to launch EXPLORE.

The combination of StackMap and EXPLORE means that users can find specific material, broad subject areas and services much more easily across all library locations and all floors. Not only does this enhance the user experience, it opens the collections and services to a wider population, as not everybody considers using or searching across our five library sites. Already we have noted a marked decrease in the number of directional queries throughout Semester 1 2018/19, and testimonials also endorse the initiative.

Temporary cards (2017)

Admission to three of the five UCD Library sites is via controlled access, necessitating the use of a UCARD. In the case of forgotten cards, admission was accommodated by issuing a temporary card for that day with a charge of €1. This was available during information desk service hours only. 7,483 such cards were issued in 2016/17. The installation of a self-service temporary card kiosk in Summer 2017 has meant that students and staff who have forgotten their UCARDs can gain access throughout full opening hours even when the information desk service is closed, and at no charge. 15,942 cards were issued by the kiosk in 2017/18.

The follow up to this project, streamlining access cards for visitors to the library, is in train and will be launched in Summer 2019.

Laptop lending projects (ongoing since 2011/12)

Demand for laptop loans outstripped supply from the outset of this service in 2011. However, it was the launch of self-service laptop loans in James Joyce Library in 2014 with financial support from Students' Union, which demonstrated clearly the value of the service.

In 2011/12 the average loan for each laptop was 402 per annum (using desk service). With the introduction of self-service in 2014 this figure increased to 694, rising again in 2015/16 to 720.

A joint initiative with IT Services in 2017, funded by the Registrar, expanded the James Joyce Library Laptop Lending facility to 48 laptops (from 36), and introduced self-service laptop loans to our Health Sciences Library. The average loan per laptop is now 746 per annum – an increase of 85% since 2011/12.

Study and learning spaces (2018)

As part of our ongoing response to students' need for more flexible study spaces, the development of HUB 2 on level 1 of James Joyce Library during the summer of 2018 has resulted in a variety of different study space styles, including two new group study rooms. It is now possible for students to work and read in this area; that it also contains the reading list materials contributes to its popularity.

A new POD for group study was installed on level 2, James Joyce Library. There is also a new study/meeting/teaching/group room to accommodate 16 on level 2. A new group study room was also made available in Richview. As part of our policy to empower students and avail of services outside serviced hours, all group study rooms and Postgraduate Research Centre bookings are now online.

Library online tools (2015)

To ensure a consistent user experience while off campus we have developed an online tools page – www.ucd.ie/library/onlinetools/. From this page students can seamlessly access our full range of Library Electronic resources. Students can access their Library Account, reserve an item, book a study room or even pay a library fine from the comfort of their own couch.

Reading lists (2016)

In collaboration with UCD Agile (www.ucd.ie/agile/) and with support from UCD Registry's Curriculum Team (www.ucd.ie/registry/adminservices/curriculum/index.html), UCD Library has developed an enhanced book request process that has improved and streamlined our book ordering process for faculty in the University. This has great benefits for the students as all reading list material is ordered to support modules.

User Experience project (ongoing)

In line with international trends, Unishare data showed a reduction in the number of reference queries at information desks. To determine that student needs are met by desk services, a User Experience (UX) research project was launched. Conducted over two academic sessions, this ethnographic research is utilising a variety of methodologies – customer journey maps, faculty and student interviews and photo diaries. The results will be used to inform service developments. Initial findings show that students have difficulty referencing and citing, and currently a wider Referencing survey is in place.

Opening hours (ongoing)

All library sites' opening hours are extended in the six-week period preceding and throughout the exam period. The James Joyce Library has the longest at this point, opening from 07.00 to 00.00 Monday to Friday and 09.00 to 21.00 on Saturdays and Sundays. The library also remains open over the Easter and May bank holiday weekends. For example, in 2018/19, the May bank holiday opening hours were 08:00 to 00:00, with desk services throughout the weekend (09.00 to 17.00). To facilitate the anticipated demand, the Health Sciences Library also opened on the May bank holiday Monday for the first time in 2018/19.

Case Study 5

Student Engagement – Collaboration with the UCD Students' Union (UCDSU)

Institutional Self- evaluation Report



- ISER 7.23 (p. 53)



Situation

This case study, which was developed collaboratively between UCDSU and UCD, demonstrates the effectiveness of student representation at University level and how, through the University's governance structures, the UCDSU influences strategic and operational change.

UCDSU works effectively with UCD in three distinct ways. These are:

1. Representation on the various governance and decision-making structures in UCD, both from an academic and managerial perspective
2. Collaboration with UCD on a number of key local and national projects aimed at providing a better environment for students learning and well-being
3. Involvement in the decision-making process in certain UCD-led initiatives as they are devised, via appointment to temporary judging/evaluation/consultation panels.



Task

As noted at section 7.25 of the ISER, at University level UCDSU currently has representatives on four of UCD's eight University Management Team (UMT) subgroups, holds 23 seats on Academic Council, with elected sabbatical officers also holding seats on seven of the nine AC subgroups. This case study focuses on UCD-UCDSU collaboration vis-à-vis the UMT Student Experience Group and Academic Council regarding the University's approach to remediation at two levels: 1/ Academic Regulations and 2/ fees.



Action

Regarding UCD's Academic Regulations, the Academic Council Executive Committee (ACEC) Regulations Review Working Group was established in 2017 and included UCDSU representation. Following two consultation phases, a revised set of Academic Regulations was submitted to Academic Council (AC) in April 2018. This included a proposal to cap substitution as a remediation option – while grades achieved through resit and repeat attempts were capped, those achieved through substitution had not been. Concern at this proposal was raised at AC, particularly by the UCDSU representatives, and the proposed remediation section of the regulations was not approved. Following the April 2018 AC meeting, the Registrar met with UCDSU representatives to discuss alternative remediation proposals and their possible implications, before bringing options back to the ACEC Regulations Review Working Group for discussion and recommendation to AC.

In relation to remediation fees, UCDSU presented a paper to the meeting of the UMT Student Experience Group (SEG) requesting that the impact of resit and repeat fees be discussed. On foot of this, the group agreed that a review group be established to carry out an analysis

of resit and repeat fees. The UMT SEG Resit and Repeat Fees Review Group was formed, consisting of representatives from the Registrar's Office, academic community, UCDSU, Student Advisers, UCD Assessment, and UCD Finance. A report containing an analysis of current practice and recommended principles underpinning resit and repeat fee charges was brought to the UMT SEG, which endorsed many aspects of the report and agreed to bring a summary of the observations and recommendations for change to UMT for consideration.



Results

As highlighted by this focus on remediation, student representation and participation in University-level committees in UCD is effective in contributing to the enhancement of the student experience. In relation to Academic Regulations, the final proposal, as recommended by the UCDSU representatives and ACEC Regulations Review Working Group and approved by AC in November 2018, resulted in a number of revisions to the remediation regulations originally proposed. Specifically, resit attempts will be grade capped, repeat attempts will be grade penalised, and substitution will not be regarded as a form of remediation – therefore, no penalty or capping will be applied. At an operational level, based on the report and recommendations from UMT SEG regarding resit fees, UMT agreed to reduce the fees as proposed. The result: fees for students who have to undertake resit assessments as a method of remediation was reduced from €230 to €180.

Case Study 6

Proposal to Establish South China-Dublin International College (SDIC)

Institutional Self-evaluation Report



- ISER 7.26 (p. 54)



Situation

This case study outlines the quality improvements which UCD has sought to implement in its consideration of the establishment of a second joint international college in China, as well as future quality enhancements which have been identified as part of this process.

As background, UCD established its first joint international college in China in September 2011, following approval from the Chinese Ministry of Education for UCD and Beijing University of Technology to create the Beijing-Dublin International College (BDIC).

In relation to the second joint international college proposal, the UCD School of Agriculture and Food Science began a collaboration with South China Agricultural University (SCAU) in 2012 to offer a range of collaborative taught programmes, initially in a joint 2+2 degree format¹ and then a joint 3+1 format². Each of these individual collaborative programmes received academic and strategic approval at the time in line with UCD's programme development and approval framework.



Task

In June 2017, the presidents of the two universities agreed that they would explore the establishment of a joint international college modelled on BDIC in Beijing and to be named the South China-Dublin International College (SDIC).



Action

Detailed work then began between the UCD School of Agriculture and Food Science, the UCD School of Biology and Environmental Science and their counterpart schools at SCAU to develop a formal proposal to give this effect. In February 2018, the UMT Global Engagement Group endorsed the strategic merit of UCD progressing its discussions to establish a joint college with SCAU, and UMT approved that decision. At that point, guidance was sought from the Registrar (who had been closely involved with the establishment of BDIC, UCD's first joint international college in China) on the composition of a formal Due Diligence Working Group to review the proposal, and who might best chair that Working Group.

A Due Diligence Working Group was formed, comprising representatives of the relevant Schools, the Provost of BDIC, the Dean of Students and representatives from the International Office, Finance Office, Legal Office, Human Resources (HR), and the Safety, Insurance,

¹ Stages 1 and 2 at SCAU and Stages 3 and 4 at UCD.

² Stages 1 to 3 at SCAU and Stage 4 at UCD.

Operational Risk and Compliance Office. Chaired by UCD's Director of Strategic Planning, the Working Group met four times between September and November 2018 and undertook a site visit to SCAU in Guangzhou in December 2018. In its due diligence, the Working Group considered the overall proposal, the proposed legal agreement for the establishment of SDIC, the tax implications of UCD's involvement in SDIC, the HR implications of recruiting staff to work in SDIC, the cost recovery model for reimbursing UCD for its teaching in SDIC, the overall fit with UCD's strategy in China, and the student support facilities available in SCAU. It also developed a register of the potential risks associated with the project, and their associated mitigation strategies.

The Working Group concluded that, given overall similarities between the proposed SDIC and BDIC, UCD's experience in establishing BDIC and the lack of impediment in any of the areas examined that there was no reason for the project not to proceed.



Results

Accordingly, the recommendations of the Working Group were considered by the UMT Global Engagement Group in February 2019, together with an advanced draft of the proposed contractual agreement between UCD and SCAU to establish the joint international college (subject to Chinese Ministry of Education approval). The UMT Global Engagement Group endorsed the strategic merit of the final proposal, and recommended that it be presented to UMT and the Academic Council to endorse the establishment of the joint college, following which the Governing Authority would receive the final recommendations of those two bodies for its ultimate approval.

From a quality enhancement perspective, UCD has sought to learn from its experience of establishing a first joint international college in China to ensure a smoother due diligence and approval pathway for the establishment of SDIC. Identified future improvements are included as potential future enhancements under section 10.13 of the ISER.

Case Study 7

Output-Based Research Support Scheme (OBRSS)

Institutional Self-evaluation Report



- ISER 9.11 (p. 61)



Situation

Research activity is critical to UCD's reputation as a leading international university. The University recognises that commitment to excellent research builds UCD's reputation. UCD also recognises that many of the day-to-day costs of research activity are not covered by research grants. In recognition of this, UCD Research & Innovation developed the Output-Based Research Support Scheme (OBRSS) to disburse research support funds to faculty based on their research outputs, as captured through publications and PhD supervision.



Task

The overarching objectives of the OBRSS are to incentivise faculty to publish research output in higher quality titles and to increase the numbers of faculty that are research active.



Action

The design involved the construction of a ranked publication list and a points system. The ranked publication list includes journals, conferences, and monographs; and the ranking is based on a basket of indicators including Norwegian Register for Scientific Journals, Series and Publishers Danish BFI, Finnish Publication Forum, SNIP (Source Normalised Impact Factor per Paper), and CiteScore. Faculty from across the University are consulted in finalising the ranked publication list each year; they are also requested to update their publication records on the Current Research Information System (CRIS) for points to be calculated. Only publications with a status of 'Published' in the CRIS are included in the OBRSS. PhD supervision records are maintained in the institutional Student Information System (SIS).

The OBRSS uses the ranked publication list – one section for Publishers and another for Series (Journals, Book Series, and Conference Series) – as a reference for the calculation of points. Each publication is assigned one of two levels: level 1 – Normal – or level 2 – Prestigious. Weighted scores are then applied to each publication. Points are allocated for different types of publication.

There is a consultation process to ensure that inputs from the faculty are considered in finalising the ranked publication list. During the consultation period, they can make recommendations to add/remove publications to/from the ranked publication list at the two levels. The suggestions and recommendations are reviewed by UCD Research & Innovation.

Publication points are calculated for each publication in the CRIS over a three-year period (for example 2015–2017) using the following formula:

Publication output-points = B x C x F x N, where

B = points (allocated based on the type of publications and whether it is in a 'normal' or 'prestigious' channel)

C = collaboration factor (multiply by 1.25 if there are any international authors on the paper)

F = UCD author factor (multiply by 0.7 if there are two UCD faculty on the paper; multiply by 0.6 if there are three UCD faculty on the paper; multiply by 0.5 if there are four or more UCD faculty on the paper)

N = if the total number of authors on a paper exceeds 100, multiply the result by 0.1

The total publication points for an individual are equal to the sum of all the points for each of their publications in the three-year period. PhD supervision points are calculated by counting the number of PhD students supervised in the current academic year. Two points are awarded for being a primary or a secondary supervisor. The maximum points for PhD supervision have been capped at 20. Publication and PhD supervision points are both worth €35.

All faculty are automatically entered into the OBRSS each year. The total points accumulated is communicated using a personalised points statement. Final points statements are issued in October each year. The minimum value threshold for a research award is €200. There is no maximum research award, but in the first three years of operation, the maximum award based on the maximum points for an individual author were between €10,000 and €15,000.

Awards may be used for research support, such as to cover travel expenses, office supplies, equipment, and laboratory supplies. Overall, approximately 1% of the total annual research budget for the university is allocated to the OBRSS.



Results

In the first three years of operation the percentage of faculty that are research active has increased from 82% to 89%. The creation of the ranked publication list in OBRSS provides guidance to researchers for quality publication outlets. The initial results from the first three years of the OBRSS show evidence that faculty are selecting to publish in higher quality publication outlets as can be seen in the table below.

OBRSS categories	2016 Scheme (Publications from 2013 to 2015)	2017 Scheme (Publications from 2014 to 2016)	2018 Scheme (Publications from 2015 to 2017)	Difference between 2016 & 2018	% Difference
Prestigious Channel – Level 2	4,230	4,444	5,183	953	22.5%
Normal Channel – Level 1	4,267	6,323	7,446	3,179	74.5%
Not recognised in OBRSS publication list	4,515	3,202	3,421	-1,094	-24.2%
UCD Total	13,012	13,969	16,050	3,038	23.3%

There was a 23% increase in the reported number of publications in Prestigious Level 2 publication channels, and a large increase (75%) was noted in the Normal Level 1 publication channels. At the same time, there appeared to be less publishing activity (-24%) in channels that are not recognised by the OBRSS. While these figures are indicative, a trend cannot be established given the OBRSS has only been in operation for three years. Nevertheless, the OBRSS has set an example of output-based support scheme in Ireland. Three other Irish universities are currently considering implementing similar schemes.

In November 2017, the OBRSS points system was adopted by the UCD University Management Team to measure research activity – i.e. greater than zero OBRSS points infers research active and the more points the more research active a person, School or College is. The % research active is the number of research active FTEs divided by the total FTEs in the School, College or the University.

Institutional Self-Evaluation Report

- ISER 11.2 (p. 72)



Case Study 8

Faculty Promotions



Situation

Prior to 2015 UCD managed academic promotions through a promotion round process. This took place approximately every two years, with a gap between 2008 and 2012 due to the Employment Control Framework that prohibited promotions.

As set out in the UCD strategy, UCD values excellence and understands that excellent performance requires excellent people working in a supportive environment. The strategy states that: *"UCD will continue to attract excellent and diverse students, faculty and staff from around Ireland and around the world, and will put in place appropriate support measures to develop and retain the members of our community"*.

The strategy commits to working to ensure that the University's faculty and staff are enabled to achieve their full potential and are appropriately rewarded for their contribution.



Task

In line with this strategic objective, UMT approved the establishment of the Faculty Development, Reward and Recognition (FDRR) Working Group, in mid-2015. The purpose of the Working Group was to review and benchmark UCD's current practices, standards and criteria for faculty promotions against equivalent universities and formulate the change to the faculty promotions process at UCD.

Under the old promotion round system, applications for promotion to Senior Lecturer (retitled Associate Professor in 2016) were assessed against benchmarks and, where quotas applied, against each other. As part of the review the FDRR Working Group reviewed UCD's promotion round system against leading global universities, in terms of the following:

- The type of Promotion System
- The number of committees involved in the Promotions Process
- The role of External Assessors
- Whether benchmarks or criteria were used.



Action

Faculty promotions rolling process

Following a comprehensive review of best practice internationally, the FDRR Working Group recommended the introduction of a rolling promotions process to UCD and this was launched on 18 May 2016. This rolling process is built on a principle of self-reflection and encourages candidates to have a developmental conversation with their Head of School and/or other senior faculty to proactively consider their readiness for promotion prior to submitting an application. The advantage of the rolling process is that it enables faculty to apply for promotion at a point in time when they believe they are in a position to be awarded promotion and replaces the old deadline driven promotion rounds system.

In addition to the new Faculty Promotions Policy a purpose-built online application system was created to support the process. The FDRR Working Group also developed a 'Development Framework for Faculty' that sets out a range of dimensions within each of the three criteria upon which applications are assessed: Research, Scholarship and Innovation; Teaching and Learning; and Leadership and Contribution. The Development Framework provides indicators for the types of activities associated within each dimension at each level from Lecturer/Assistant Professor up to Full Professor. Candidates for promotion are assessed against the Development Framework for Faculty and are encouraged to reflect on this prior to applying for promotion.

Feedback

Each candidate receives written feedback irrespective of the outcome of their application and unsuccessful candidates have the opportunity to receive oral feedback from members of the Faculty Promotions Committee. Candidates are encouraged to reflect on their feedback with their Head of School/College Principal and consider the University's academic and strategic agendas in order to consider what further contributions they might choose to make. The feedback provided by the Faculty Promotions Committee is intended to be constructive, actionable and to inform in relation to future applications.

Workshops

Workshops are held throughout the year for candidates preparing to apply for promotion and have been introduced for Heads of School as part of the Head of School Induction and at other points in the year. The aim of these workshops is to deliver a consistent message to candidates preparing to apply for promotion and to support Heads of School in their role in the process.

Appeals process

The recently launched Appeals process, managed by the Faculty Promotions Appeals Committee, was developed through constructive engagement with Unions. It is an example of clear communication between both parties being essential to lead to the right outcome for an individual, and to ensure appropriate learning in relation to the future application of the policy.



Results

Faculty promotions review

The new rolling Faculty Promotions process was reviewed approximately 18 months after its introduction. A Review Group of senior faculty consulted widely with candidates who had applied for promotion, Heads of School, College Principals and External Assessors and made a series of recommendations to improve the process. As a result, a subsequent review, chaired by the President, of the Faculty Promotions Policy and Procedures, Development Framework for Faculty and Conflict of Interest Guidelines was carried out in late 2018. The outcome of the review was approved by the Governing Authority in December 2018.

Application summary

Between May 2016 and August 2018, 151 applications for promotion were fully processed by the Faculty Promotions Committee with an average success rate at each level as follows:

Lecturer/Assistant Professor to Associate Professor	68% (57/84)
Associate Professor to Professor	77% (43/56)
Professor to Full Professor	91% (10/11)

Institutional Self-Evaluation Report

- ISER 11.13 (p. 74)
- ISER 11.15 (p. 74)

Case Study 9

Culture and Engagement Survey (incl. Leadership Programme)



Situation

To highlight the effectiveness of one communication initiative, an output from UCD HR's strategic planning consultation process indicated that the University did not actively seek formal culture and engagement feedback from the University community. This would be considered good practice and a means to periodically evaluate employee views concerning their workplace experience.

Becoming recognised as a great place to work based on the strength of our people and an environment that enables them to succeed, is central to the University's HR strategy. Being an employer of choice means that we need to ask challenging questions and push the boundaries of what we do. We need to understand our culture and really explore what it means to be part of the University community. By looking at this, we are better able to understand where our strengths and developmental opportunities are as a university and as a community.

To this end, the University commissioned Willis Towers Watson to build a culture and engagement survey using global higher education benchmarks to generate robust management information to support action against the culture and engagement initiative.



Task

The first culture and engagement survey extended to circa 3,500 faculty and staff and elicited employee feedback in order to identify potential areas for enhancement across several domains including leadership, communication, organisational culture, working conditions, and career progression. The survey was launched in 2016, achieving a 51% response rate. The second survey was repeated in September 2018, also achieving a 51% response rate. Of the 3,839 employees surveyed, 54% of the academic population responded, 64% of the support staff and 23% of the research funded population. The lower response rate for the research funded population is not surprising given the transient nature of this population.



Action

Following the close of the survey there was a period of reflection during which time reports were prepared for senior management, Heads of School and line managers across the University. This included an analysis of the data gathered, communication of results to the University community and a devolved action-planning process, supporting local leaders and managers in implementing response plans that address themes identified through the active engagement of employees.

Key themes emerging at a macro level included Development and Recognition, Leadership and Management Development, People-focused policies and Community Building. Owing to the level of work involved in design, rollout, reporting, planning and implementation phases, it was decided to run the survey on a two-year basis.



Results

A series of proactive initiatives were targeted for implementation including Performance for Growth, Job Families Framework, Career Planning Tool, Employee Recognition Awards and a new Leadership and People Manager Programme (LDMP). Taking the LDMP as a specific example, in 2017, after a lengthy period without any formal leadership development strategy, UCD launched a new Leadership and People Manager Programme for UMT members and the Extended Leadership Group (ELG).

Since then approximately 90 individuals, including the UMT, have engaged in a 360-feedback process and attended the two core modules. Thirty-five Coaching Set sessions have been held to date facilitated internally by HR Partners and People and Organisational Development Specialists. An elective programme was subsequently designed based on topics that were identified as the top areas of interest and impact by participants exiting the core modules.

To ensure ongoing quality assurance and efficacy all modules are subject to participant feedback at the end of the module and thematic observations are used as a matter of course to inform refinement and adjustments. In addition, a new People Manager Development Programme has been designed and implemented for UCD's people managers (300+ participants, 100+ took electives).

The UMT has decided that the second cycle of survey analysis and action planning to support the findings of the 2018 survey will be incorporated in the University's integrated planning process for 2019/20, which further demonstrates the commitment to act on feedback and align with the University's strategic mandate. We will be benchmarking against our 2016 results and will identify improvement and enhancements this cycle to support local leadership and managers to address key themes that arise.

This case study demonstrates that UCD systematically engages with and listens to faculty and staff feedback; most importantly, that it responds to that feedback through action-planning and implementation, which provides evidence as to the effectiveness of this communication mechanism. Metrics emerging from the second survey indicate that eight of the fifteen categories have shown an upward positive trend with four categories considered statistically significant, specifically communications, recognition and reward, professional and personal development and reputation. Only one category of statistical significance has trended downward i.e. leadership. It is recognised that specific investment in leadership capability was not provided for over the ten years prior to the survey, ergo this area will need continuous investment over the coming years.

Institutional Self-Evaluation Report

- ISER 12.16 (p. 79)



Case Study 10

InfoHub: an internally developed services and information portal

Introduction

InfoHub is an integrated portal that provides access to services and information for faculty and staff in the University, covering teaching and learning, research management, financial management and HR management. InfoHub is available to all UCD staff and affiliates with access to specific information or services driven by the individual's role within the university. InfoHub is typically used by 1,500 staff members each day.

Each employee can use InfoHub to view information about themselves and to request access to services. This includes:

- View and amend information on their staff profile
- View their Development Profile, apply for a promotion and access the University's Performance for Growth process
- Apply for or book a range of services including a UCD parking permit or a teaching space
- View information relevant to their teaching or research responsibilities (e.g. information on the classes they teach).

InfoHub is the University's platform for cross-university management information. There are a large number of reports covering all domains. Key reports include Staff Management, Cost Centre Reporting, Student FTEs, Research Activity Dashboard.

InfoHub includes a workflow engine that has been used to automate a large number of processes. Examples include Post Authorisation Form (PAF) process for hiring new staff and Delegated Authority Processes (for requesting key changes to student records).

There are a number of other important modules contained within InfoHub that are widely used. These include:

- Targeted Communications – provides the ability to email defined groups of staff or students
- UniShare – a suite of customer relationship management (CRM) tools that record contact with existing students and prospective applicants
- Electronic Payments – a system that provides a mechanism to pay money to students, either for scholarship/grant purposes or as a result of refunds due on accommodation or tuition
- Booking Centre – provides a generic capability to book and/or pay for miscellaneous courses, events etc.
- Online Applications – manages the process by which prospective students apply directly for admission to UCD.

Supporting InfoHub

The Enterprise Applications Group in UCD IT Services provides support to management, at University, College and School levels through the provision of integrated systems, processes and information. Their services include the analysis, design, implementation and support of business systems and the development of management information.

Ongoing enhancement

Ongoing investment is made each year to add additional capabilities to the InfoHub platform, where those capabilities are not provided more easily by standard package applications.

During 2018/19, new capabilities were added including:

- Curriculum Management – an enhanced system that allows each module co-ordinator to maintain the key academic and logistical attributes of each module along with a similar facility at major and programme levels
- Performance for Growth (P4G) – supports the P4G process by automating the recording of achievements, challenges, objectives and development plans for each employee.

During 2019/20, further investment will be made in a number of areas including enhancements to the Online Applications and Accommodation systems.

Activities are underway to enhance the data privacy and information security controls built into the system. In particular, work is underway on a data retention tool to control the deletion of data that has exceeded the relevant data retention policy.

Conclusion

The InfoHub platform is critical to the day-to-day functioning of a large number of units and processes across the University. It integrates different data sources and databases with a common portal and dashboard and is provided on a platform that is built to be robust and up-to-date from a technology perspective. It simplifies access to services and communications and allows for responsive iterative refinement through use of analytics. There is a comprehensive support model in place to ensure that it is operational 24/7 and it continues to be enhanced and developed to support new and changing requirements of the University.

Institutional Self-Evaluation Report

- ISER 13.11 (p. 82)



Case Study 11

myUCD Portal



Situation

Following a review of UCD's online presence for prospective students in 2006, a centralised prospective student website underpinned by a portal and customer relationship management system was developed.



Task

Key objectives include: (1) increasing prospective student engagement; (2) providing cross-University recruitment activity coherence and managing contact relationships; (3) integrating with current University business systems.



Action

The actions undertaken to address each of the key objectives of this task are outlined as follows:

(1) Increasing prospective student engagement

As a result of consolidating and streamlining to a centralised prospective undergraduate website, it is now possible to develop a clear picture of what UCD offers. The website branding has a consistent style and navigation template. In addition, with the deployment of Google analytics across myUCD it is possible to make informed content, design and navigation decisions.

UCD interacts online by giving prospective students the option of creating their own unique myUCD Account. With a myUCD Account, prospective students can, for example, automatically book UCD campus tours, request further information by post and receive open day/evenings email notifications 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

(2) Cross-University recruitment activity coherence and contact relationship management

myUCD's powerful back-end tools automatically target and track all interactions with prospective students. Dynamic reporting of school visits and event management allow faculty from across the University to plan their recruitment activities in a co-operative and cohesive manner.

(3) Integration with current University business systems

myUCD is powered by the ezRecruit Business System (ezRecruit was selected as it is possible to integrate it with the SIS/Banner Business System). In addition, the vendor operates a flexible approach to the development of the system which allows UCD to carry out tailored annual upgrades to enhance both the prospective student and recruiters' experience.



Results

For prospective students, there is now a wide variety of relevant, targeted information relating to the student lifecycle included on the Study At UCD website (www.ucd.ie/studyatucd).

For undergraduate admissions, the 'myUCD' portal provides extensive information on the following topics:

- Courses
- Applying to UCD (includes admissions criteria, policies and procedures)
- Visiting UCD
- UCD Prospectus
- Open Evenings & Career Fairs
- My UCD on Facebook
- Scholarships
- UCD Horizons (the modular and credit-based structure for taught degrees at UCD)
- CAO
- Campus Life
- Summer School
- UCD Open Day.

Under the "Applying to UCD" section of the 'myUCD' portal, there is also a set of dedicated resources and support for a wide variety of types of applicant, including Irish Leaving Certificate Applicants, Mature Applicants, EU Applicants, Non-EU Applicants, Transfer Applicants, A-Level/GCSE Applicants, and Graduate Entry applicants.



University College Dublin
Belfield, Dublin 4, Ireland.

 www.ucd.ie