



University College Dublin

REVIEW GROUP REPORT

Periodic Quality Review

UCD Access and Lifelong Learning

June 2019

Accepted by the UCD Governing Authority at its meeting of 25 June 2020

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Key Findings of the Review Group

The Review Group has identified a number of key findings in relation to areas of good practice operating within UCD Access and Lifelong Learning (ALL) and have also highlighted areas that would benefit from improvement. The main section of this report sets out all observations, commendations and recommendations of the Review Group in more detail. A consolidated list of all commendations and recommendations is set out in Appendix 1.

Examples of Good Practice

The Review Group (RG) identified a number of commendations, in particular:

- Strong senior leadership from the UCD Registrar and the ALL senior management team, and a growing institutional commitment to ALL as evidenced through the introduction of the Widening Participation (WP) committee and the University for All campaign.
- The Review Group commends the clear alignment of the Unit's mission and goals with the University Strategy. ALL is an important hub and driver for widening access that is greatly valued by the university community.
- The Unit benefits greatly from its dedicated, committed and passionate staff who are highly regarded by colleagues and students.
- The Unit offers a comprehensive "cradle to grave" approach to access and lifelong learning. This incorporates contextual admissions, an enhanced induction and tailored support throughout the lifecycle to ensure students are fully engaged in all aspects of university life, irrespective of age, background or circumstance.
- The ALL centre is a modern and accessible space in a prime campus location that creates a welcoming and supportive environment for students, staff and visitors.
- The centre has a growing external profile – its staff contribute to national and international networks and lead on national and regional projects, e.g. Dublin as a Learning City.
- Students are involved in all aspects of the Unit's work – 'students first' is a guiding principle, students have a voice on the WP committee and access leaders are recruited and trained to help shape and facilitate delivery.
- A strong commitment to continuous improvement from senior leadership and staff is very evident in all aspects of the unit's activities and operations.

Recommendations for Future Improvement

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

- Greater clarity is needed over what the “margins to the mainstream” concept means for staff within the Unit and across the institution. It is clear that not all aspects of the work can be mainstreamed and ALL has a key role to play in continuing to drive the access and participation agenda.
- Linked to the above, members of the Review Group felt that a sharper delineation is required between responsibilities of the ALL Unit and other areas of the University.
- The Review Group recognises that further work is needed in collaboration with the institutional research team to develop a robust dataset and to use this to develop an evidence base that informs planning and prioritisation.
- While efforts to enhance communication have clearly been made, the Review Group would recommend the development of a communications’ plan (in collaboration with the UCD Communications Office) to raise internal and external visibility of the work undertaken by ALL.
- The Review Group found the matrix structure to be complex and difficult to interrogate from the outside, therefore it was a challenge to assess its suitability. The Review Group would suggest a review and assessment of this structure including perspectives from senior leaders, ALL staff and service users. Review Group members felt that currently the matrix does not allow for sufficient analysis of workload and project impact and that an underpinning timeline would help to operationalize the structure.
- The Review Group recommends that consideration is given to providing greater clarity over where responsibilities and accountabilities lie within the Unit – this would include workload allocation (i.e. the time given by staff to each project) and data on the relative effectiveness of different tasks.
- The ALL Unit should consider the feasibility of making the curriculum offer of the Open Learning programme more extensive and more flexible (e.g. increasing options by making certain courses offered to daytime students in the evening time) and in so doing create more opportunities for adult learners and others with diverse needs.
- The ALL Unit should consider undertaking a demographic analysis of lifelong learning courses and take actions to increase the diversity of the student cohorts. The Review Group also recommends that full use is made of the opportunity to showcase scholarship and research within the institution to the wider community through embedding this in the University lifelong learning offer.

1. Introduction and Overview of UCD Access and Lifelong Learning

Introduction

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of a quality review of Access and Lifelong Learning, University College Dublin, which was undertaken between 15- 18 April 2019. 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 Universities Act 1997 and 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 a review group (RG) that includes UCD staff and external experts, both national and international. The site visit normally will take 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.

The Review Group

1.5 The composition of the Review Group for UCD Access and Lifelong Learning was as follows:

- Associate Professor Rosario Hernández, UCD School of Languages, Cultures and Linguistics (Chair)
- Dr Linda Dowling-Hetherington, UCD College of Business (Deputy Chair)
- Ms Jenni Woods MBE, Head of Access, Participation and Inclusion, Kingston University
- Professor Michael Osborne, Professor of Adult and Lifelong Learning and Director of Research, School of Education, University of Glasgow

1.6 The Review Group visited the Unit between 15-18 April 2019 and held meetings with Unit staff; staff from across the University and stakeholders of UCD Access and Lifelong Learning. The site visit schedule is included as Appendix 3.

1.7 In addition to the Self-assessment Report, the Review Group considered additional documentation provided by the Unit during the site visit.

1.8 The Review Group would like to thank the staff of UCD Access and Lifelong Learning for their engagement with the process along with their welcome and positive engagement during the site visit.

Preparation of the Self-assessment Report (SAR)

1.9 Following a briefing from the UCD Quality Office, a Self-assessment Report Coordinating Committee (SARCC) was established. Regular meetings took place with updates provided as a standing item on each staff meeting agenda and other Unit meetings. The draft report was compiled by the Deputy Director and members of SARCC, in consultation with staff members, compiled sections of the Self-assessment Report. Committee membership was as follows:

- Dr Anna Kelly, Chair
- Dr Bairbre Fleming
- Ms Fiona Sweeney
- Dr Jenny Doyle
- Ms Julie Tonge
- Dr Lisa Padden
- Ms Tina Lowe
- Ms Áine Murphy
- Dr Paolo Virtuani
- Ms Leanne Joyce, student representative
- Mr Alex Carty, student representative
- Mr Aidan Byrne, student representative

1.10 The Review Group acknowledges the significant amount of work that went into preparing the self-assessment report and review materials. The report was comprehensive and reflected the pride staff have in their work, as well as the breadth of activities taking place. The Review Group also recognises that there was a great deal of narrative in the report, whereas a more critical and analytical approach would have assisted the Review Group in gaining a clearer picture of the key functions of the Unit and the impact and effectiveness of these.

The University

1.11 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.

1.12 The University Strategic Plan (to 2020) 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 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 schools¹:

- UCD College of Arts and Humanities

¹ This reflects the University structure from September 2015.

- 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

1.13 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 also has over 5,400 students studying UCD degree programmes on campuses overseas.

UCD Access and Lifelong Learning

- 1.14 UCD Access and Lifelong Learning is located in the James Joyce Library Building, in a purpose-built location.
- 1.15 The Unit has a staff complement of 24 with a wide range of expertise and experiences reflecting the activity of the area.
- 1.16 Facilities include a collaborative working space, an open plan work area for eight staff, 14 individual offices and a shared staff space with catering facilities.
- 1.17 The Unit reports to the Deputy President, Vice-President for Academic Affairs and Registrar.
- 1.18 The University Widening Participation Committee oversees and monitors the progress of the University's equality and inclusion goals which is informed by National policy.
- 1.19 'University for All' reflects the University's approach to mainstreaming inclusion that is designed to recognise and value diversity as articulated in the University's current strategic plan (UCD Strategy 2015-20) and reflected in the work plan of UCD Access and Lifelong Learning.

2. Planning, Organisation and Management

General comment/context

- 2.1 The Access and Lifelong Learning Unit has undergone significant change since the last quality review in 2012. The work undertaken during this period of change has resulted in a re-alignment of the Unit's focus, a re-structuring of the Unit and the development of a governance structure.
- 2.2 Considerable efforts have also been underway to:
- enhance communications with internal and external stakeholders on the purpose, mission and strategy of the Unit;
 - enhance the visibility of ALL activities and increase awareness of the WP agenda across UCD Colleges and Schools; and
 - engage with other units across the University, including, for example, Admissions, communications, UCD Foundation, the Maths Support Centre and the UCD Academic Writing Centre.
- 2.3 The self-assessment report (SAR) details the senior management and matrix project structure. While the senior management team recognise the benefits and challenges of the matrix structure, it appears (at least to the Review Group) to be rather complex in nature. The Review Group found it difficult to understand the matrix project structure or to evaluate its appropriateness and effectiveness.
- 2.4 While acknowledging the potential value and importance of the majority of the fifteen projects included in the matrix, the Review Group questioned, for example, the focus on research and particularly the Unit's aim of increasing research activity and publishing associated outputs. The Review Group does not believe that these activities are appropriate for the Unit as they have the potential to divert attention away from its 'core business'.

Commendations

Strategic Planning:

- 2.5 Considerable progress has been made since the last quality review in implementing change across every aspect of the Unit. The Review Group acknowledges the strong engagement and important contribution that each member of the ALL team has made during this change process.
- 2.6 The Review Group acknowledges the considerable work that has been underway in the Unit with a view to aligning its mission and strategy with the University's strategic plan 2015-2020 and in identifying fifteen priority goals/projects that guide the work of the Unit. All aspects of the Unit's work strongly embody the UCD core values of collegiality, creativity, diversity, engagement and excellence and the Review Group commends the Unit in this regard.

- 2.7 The SAR report details the ALL work plan and the Review Group acknowledges the comprehensive and ambitious nature of this plan. It clearly sets out each of the fifteen goals and their related objectives.

Management and Governance Structure:

- 2.8 The Review Group commends the University senior management team, and in particular the Registrar/Deputy President, for their strong endorsement and support of the work of the ALL Unit, the WP agenda and the University for All concept.
- 2.9 The Review Group acknowledges the strong leadership within the Unit and commends their vision for the Unit and their proactive involvement in driving the WP agenda forward at national, regional and institutional levels.
- 2.10 The creation of a Widening Participation Committee, with representatives from Academic Programme Boards and Policy and Support Services and the inclusion of Student Access Leaders is a very positive development. It is clear to the Review Group that this committee has helped to initiate conversations around WP at College and School levels. The Review Group also noted the importance of having College/School WP champions sit on this committee and acknowledged the contribution of these individuals in moving the WP agenda forward.

Mainstreaming:

- 2.11 The Review Group commends all staff within the ALL Unit for the progress made to-date on embedding the principles and agenda around WP and inclusive education into the fabric of the University. The SAR notes the progress made since the last review in repositioning the ALL Unit 'as supportive of, rather than constituting the sole or main component of UCD's widening participation effort'. In the context of the 'University for All' initiative, the Unit clearly recognises that responsibility for delivering on the access and lifelong learning agenda is an institution-wide one and that Colleges and Schools play a key role in this regard.

Budgeting:

- 2.12 The efforts being made by the Unit to diversify income sources are to be commended. The Review Group noted, in particular, the work that has been underway to increase the number of scholarships available and the inclusion of these in the UCD scholarships/prize winning ceremony.

Communications:

- 2.13 Since the last quality review, the ALL Unit has invested considerable time and resources on improving its communication processes, both internally and externally. The Review Group is of the view that this investment has begun to pay dividends and has helped to raise awareness of the WP agenda among the various institutional stakeholders.

- 2.14 The Review Group commends the Unit on the launch of the ‘University for All’ week in November 2018 and acknowledges the particularly strong engagement of academic staff (almost 100) during the townhall session scheduled as part of this event.

Recommendations

Strategic Planning:

- 2.15 The Unit’s strategic planning processes, particularly around the identification of priorities and goals, could be significantly enhanced through further institutional and Unit investment in data analytics and reporting capability. Such capability will enable the Unit to more effectively evaluate the impact and outcomes of each of its activities. An evidence-based approach should be central to the Unit’s strategic planning processes. Such an approach would help inform decision-making around project priorities, the activities to be maintained, areas that would benefit from a greater focus and the identification of activities that might be discontinued.
- 2.16 Given the limited resources available to the Unit and the demanding nature of many of the projects and priorities identified in the work plan, the Review Group believes there is a need to focus efforts on the operational projects relating directly to the core mission and purpose of the Unit. ALL should continue to explore ways of showcasing and disseminating best practice in the field to colleagues in Colleges, Schools and other university units.
- 2.17 The Review Group believes that engaging in research-related activities is detracting from the ‘core business’ of the Unit. The Review Group recommends, instead, that ALL identify, and engage with, faculty around the University who share an interest in undertaking research on topics related to the work of the Unit. Engagement with the UCD Centre for Teaching and Learning, the UCD School of Education and, perhaps, the academic staff that attended the townhall meeting during the University for All week in November 2018 might be useful starting points in this regard.
- 2.18 The Review Group notes the absence of any clear benchmarking plan that would enable the ALL Unit to compare its performance, effectiveness and efficiency with comparable higher education institutions, both nationally and internationally. The Review Group recommends that the Unit identifies comparable institutions and sets out the key benchmarks that would be helpful in informing its strategic planning process.

Management and Governance Structure:

- 2.19 The governance relationships between various groups and committees relating to the work of the ALL Unit appear to be complex. For the purposes of enhancing clarity, the Review Group recommends a review of the reporting and governance relationship between the ALL Unit, the Widening Participation Committee, the University Management Team (UMT) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion group and the College Programme Boards.

- 2.20 In attempting to understand the matrix project structure, it was not entirely clear to the Review Group as to where staff accountabilities and responsibilities rest. The Review Group recommends that the matrix project structure more clearly articulates this information.
- 2.21 The extent to which the matrix project structure is effective from both a staff and a user perspective was not clear to the Review Group. The matrix project structure has been in place since 2015 and it would appear timely that an internal review be conducted to ascertain the views of both staff and students on whether it is 'fit for purpose' going forward. This review, might include, for example, an examination of staff workload levels, the sustainability of these workloads and the demands on staff time, particularly in the context of the meetings structure currently in place.
- 2.22 Staff involvement in multiple projects and the need to attend multiple meetings each week related to these projects has significant implications for the workload of, and demands on, each member of staff. Staff sometimes find themselves in a "fire-fighting or reactive" mode, particularly when they also find themselves having to respond to students who present themselves at the Unit reception. The Review Group believes there is an urgent need to consider how all staff might be given the opportunity to regularly set aside dedicated time and space to enable them to reflect, and make progress, on work projects and to be able to participate in relevant staff development activities.

Mainstreaming:

- 2.23 Progress has been made on moving the work of the Unit from the "margins to the mainstream" of the University. However, the Review Group believes that greater clarity is needed within ALL itself and within Colleges/Schools in terms of what is meant by "mainstreaming".
- 2.24 While acknowledging the value for the Unit of maintaining the many individual relationships it has formed with colleagues from certain Colleges/Schools, the Review Group recommends that ALL rely less on the 'goodwill' from these relationships. Instead, the Review Group recommends that the Unit increase its investment of time and energy on relationship building with Colleges/Schools. The Unit might consider the appropriateness of introducing a College partnering model (similar to the HR Business Partner model).

Budgeting:

- 2.25 The Review Group recommends that UCD Foundation work more closely with the ALL Unit and assist them in developing and implementing a plan for the future in terms of philanthropy from both private and corporate sources.

Communications:

- 2.26 Based on discussions with staff from around the University, the Review Group believes that work remains to be done on building awareness among staff in terms of the work of the Unit. The Review Group recommends, for example, that information sessions be held with all

College/School staff who are directly involved in student recruitment. Teaching and learning symposiums and new faculty orientations held at College/School level might also be useful fora for the Unit to raise awareness of its activities. The Review Group recommends that ALL link in with each College Vice Principal for Teaching and Learning to identify suitable events that it might contribute to.

- 2.27 A stronger internal and external communications plan might help ALL to increase awareness and visibility of its activities, both internally and externally. The Review Group recommends that UCD Communications work with the Unit and assist them in developing such a plan.
- 2.28 The ability of the Unit to raise its profile and increase awareness around its activities, both internally and externally, appears to be somewhat hampered by its current positioning on the main UCD website. The Review Group recommends that ALL work with the UCD Communications unit to address this.
- 2.29 During meetings with staff from across the University, there appeared to be rather limited understanding of what it means to be an “age friendly university”. The Review Group recommends that appropriate steps be taken to raise awareness among the university community of the principles for an age friendly university.
- 2.30 The development of more media content (e.g. videos, testimonials) that captures the ‘stories’ of students participating on the various programmes and the impact this participation has had on themselves, their families and their wider communities could be helpful in raising the profile of the Unit externally.

3. Functions, Activities and Processes

General comment/context

- 3.1 The ALL Unit through its various functions and activities is a key driver for UCD’s University for All imperative, which links the four components of work (Curriculum/T&L, Student Support, Physical Infrastructure and IT). It does this through a range of activities in the spirit of “cradle to grave”.
- 3.2 Overall mainstreaming of issues pertaining to inclusion is manifested in the ALL range of functions and activities, and is embedded within a context of strong commitment and steering from the management of the University.
- 3.3 The range of activity is extensive. Some is a legacy of previous functions of earlier structures, principally the Lifelong Learning programme. Other activity is a response to national government initiatives, notably the PATH programme. Many elements of the activity bring to the attention of all staff the characteristics that an inclusive university might have. This is illustrated in the *Toolkit for Inclusion* that the Unit has developed, which is likely to inform developments in all parts of the university in both academic and support areas.

- 3.4 The outreach activity, through working with community partners, involves offering visits (some residential) to the University, mentoring (utilising current students from disadvantaged communities) and developing relationships with “hard to reach” communities through links with partners. Associated with these activities, the unit trains mentors and liaises with the University WP committee. This set of functions and activities is extensive, and appears logical. However, a question to be asked is around the relative effectiveness of each of these activities, particularly given that some are time-consuming. There is a demand for an increased presence of core UCD academic staff out in the community and there is an opportunity to make greater use of university facilities for outreach activities.
- 3.5 WP groups are subsequently supported through a customised orientation programme and targeted learning support, and access to support services throughout their learning journey.
- 3.6 Progression rates for the Access programme seem comparable to other equivalent universities, though the scale of the activity in terms of enrolment numbers is low by comparison with, for example, some equivalent universities in the UK. For the Open Learning programme there has been commendable growth, and there is much potential for development, through consideration of structural flexibility (more courses, evening mode delivery) and consideration of costing models.
- 3.7 The Lifelong Learning programme is a potential showcase for some of the most interesting research and scholarship in the University, though currently it seems to be a rather more traditional offer using part-time tutors. The contribution that these highly experienced programme participants might offer to the University does not seem to have been considered and hence not capitalised upon. There are many potential involvements that they might have in the University (e.g. as mentors to younger students and in a range of voluntary roles) in the spirit of the Age Friendly University to which UCD subscribes.

Commendations

- 3.8 The ALL unit clearly functions as a one-stop shop for its key stakeholders: potential and registered students who are in one of the WP target groups; external partners; and internal academic and service units of the University. It is demonstrable from the comments of each of these groups that the activities of the Unit are universally well regarded.
- 3.9 The provision offered at the point of transition is particularly strong. This involves targeted orientation activity, up-front learning skills provision, and continuing personal advice on all matters that pertain to student life. It is clear that this work is valued by students, academic staff and support staff, and does not represent a duplication of the activities of other services such as the Writing and Maths Support Centres, advising and counselling.
- 3.10 The Unit has taken a lead in facilitating access through its own provision (p/t Access) in collaboration with willing Schools of whom there are many, and through Open Learning provision.

- 3.11 The Unit takes a leading role in the Dublin Learning City initiative and this provides the potential for substantial international profile.
- 3.12 The Review Group acknowledges the extensive and ongoing work of the Unit in establishing and building relationships with its external partners and in continually seeking to enhance its outreach activities. Given the size of the Unit, its efforts in this regard are to be commended.

Recommendations

- 3.13 The ALL Unit should further commit itself to putting into place systematic processes to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the pre-entry programmes that it directly manages (the Access programme).
- 3.14 The Review Group recommends the gathering of data from the much larger activity that pertains to awareness-raising that is facilitated with community partners, Schools and Colleges. Nuanced data is needed, captured longitudinally, to assess change in terms of application, admission and retention trends from targeted organisations. This might be assessed alongside a range of other factors that might affect access, including that of transport infrastructure.
- 3.15 Consideration might be given to offering higher profile events in communities with no tradition of large numbers of students progressing to university. This might, for example, involve creating a strong community engagement role for academics to work with communities in addressing key community-driven concerns, and profiling the University as a driver for Dublin as learning city.
- 3.16 The issue of suitable transport links to UCD from some target communities might be considered, through, for example, discussions with the city's transport authorities or the offer of the University's own shuttle bus.
- 3.17 The Unit should be supported in the efforts it makes in mediating on behalf of students in cases of intransigence relating to 'reasonable accommodations' where this is a legal requirement. Its staff should not have to expend valuable time in such negotiation. Clear escalation procedures should be in place to help resolve these matters and the appropriate HR processes should be invoked at an early stage.
- 3.18 Although potential students make visits to the university, largely in the spirit of improving awareness, an opportunity is being missed in not creating mechanisms whereby facilities of the university (such as laboratories) could be used more extensively, especially when not used by existing students of the university.
- 3.19 The Access programme could be expanded considerably. It is customised provision that matches well with the undergraduate curriculum, and enjoys considerable support in Schools of the University.

- 3.20 Similarly, there is opportunity to expand the Open Programme, and the aspiration to eventually allow whole degrees to be taken in this mode could be achievable more readily without extra cost by offering certain modules only in twilight or evening mode for all students of the University. Discussion with Schools already involved show that some already do so, and do not see impediments. Others expressed concern about the potential loss of full-time students in electives should this approach be taken. So, care has to be taken, but there could be benefits for all students, including those in full-time study by freeing up time in the day for part-time work or other activities.
- 3.21 There is an opportunity to expand the Lifelong Learning programme to showcase the research and scholarship of the University. The extent of the current provision is relatively modest. The participation might be diversified, and this may require review of its relatively high cost. Consideration should be given to situating this work within the framework of the Dublin Learning City initiative.

4. Management of Resources

General comment/context

- 4.1 Following the previous review, the impact of the national financial crisis led to a reduction in staffing and other resources within the ALL Unit. There has been some recovery in the past two years and the Unit currently consists of 24 members of staff. UCD's unique configuration of the ALL function means that a direct comparison with staffing levels at other institutions is not possible. However, a desktop benchmarking exercise indicated that the size of team is more or less in line with other widening access units (albeit with a slightly smaller headcount than some key competitors).
- 4.2 The Unit has a fixed operational budget that has not been increased for a number of years. A range of scholarship schemes are funded through philanthropic donations and the Unit has successfully bid for government funding to lead three PATH projects.
- 4.3 The University has made a significant capital investment in the ALL workspace, which is situated in a prime location and has been designed to a high specification.
- 4.4 The Unit produces a number of high quality printed reports, brochures and other materials to showcase its work.
- 4.5 Staff workloads are allocated through a matrix structure and individual staff have a wide range of roles and responsibilities in relation to multiple projects and activities which are described by the leadership team as interdependent.
- 4.6 UCD has a KPI of 33% for WP in undergraduate programmes by 2020. The ALL Unit has worked closely with the institutional research team to produce data on WP target groups at institutional and programme level in order to track progress against the institutional KPI.

- 4.7 The 2017/18 proportion of students from WP backgrounds at UCD stands at 29%. This figure includes students from several target groups including lower socio economic groups, disability, mature, part-time, QQI-FET and students with refugee/asylum status.
- 4.8 From the discussion with the Head of Institutional Research it was clarified that not all students counted within the 29% have entered UCD through designated entry routes, for example, HEAR, Mature Entry, and DARE schemes. Other sources of data included in this figure comprise students who qualify for the specified entry routes but who enter UCD on the basis of their CAO points, students with a disability who register with the ALL services, students who declare their disability and socio-economic group through the Equal Access Survey (administered by the University on behalf of the Higher Education Authority (HEA)), students taking open-learning courses, part-time students and those entering on the basis of their QQI-FET qualification.
- 4.9 Some initial data has been produced at an institutional level on the retention, progression and completion of students entering UCD through the HEAR and DARE schemes, compared with the wider UCD population. A report has also been compiled on students joining through alternative admissions pathways, including programme level data in relation to quotas, acceptances, shortfalls and waitlists.

Commendations

- 4.10 The institution's capital investment in the ALL centre signals an institutional commitment to widening access and has facilitated improved collaboration between staff.
- 4.11 A high quality service has been maintained by the Unit through a period of austerity where there has been a zero-budget increase.
- 4.12 Data produced on WP groups at institutional and programme level has been powerful in allowing academic colleagues to see how their School is performing in relation to access and enabling champions to initiate challenging discussions at Programme Boards about potential strategies to better support access and participation.
- 4.13 Students and alumni are engaged as mentors, co-creators and facilitators. They are viewed as an extension of the substantive team and recognised as an important resource in delivering the work of the Unit.
- 4.14 The procurement process for the institutional virtual learning environment (VLE) included criteria in relation to accessibility, demonstrating that this was a key consideration. There has been some use of the VLE to complement and enhance projects and activities delivered by the Unit.
- 4.15 There have been clear efforts made by the Unit to ensure that its activities complement rather than duplicate those delivered elsewhere (e.g. student recruitment, writing and maths support).

- 4.16 There has been some diversification of funding, including philanthropic donations, to support student scholarship schemes and successful bids for PATH projects.

Recommendations

- 4.17 The Review Group recommends that further work is undertaken with the institutional research team to develop a robust dataset of clearly defined WP cohorts that can be used to inform practice and assist with impact monitoring of transitional and post-entry support. This would include, for example, exploring whether there is an association with improved rates of retention and progression for WP students who engage with ALL activities, compared with those who do not participate in order to help the team identify those activities that have the greatest impact.
- 4.18 The Review Group recommends that the Unit undertake a cost and impact analysis for each project using an initiation template to clearly identify aims and objectives, resource requirements, targets and outcomes.
- 4.19 The management team should have a clear understanding of the opportunities for growth and efficiency savings that could be achieved for each activity, as well as the associated impact (e.g. increasing/reducing the reach of an activity and by how much).
- 4.20 The Unit should take a transparent and systematic approach to staff workload planning so that appropriate time is allocated to all activities and staff have a clear understanding of individual aims, objectives and priorities.
- 4.21 Consideration should be given to building capacity to support increasing numbers of access students through sharing expertise and enabling staff elsewhere to support students with more complex needs (e.g. Student Advisers and staff at the Student Desk).
- 4.22 The Review Group recommends that a core programme of training be developed and implemented for all staff within the Unit and that sufficient time be allocated to this within staff workload allocations. This training should include, for example, GDPR, EDI, unconscious bias, mental health awareness and dealing with distressed students.
- 4.23 A dedicated resource within the Unit should be allocated to fundraising, either through working directly with UCD Foundation, or identifying opportunities to make discrete bids for project funding through relevant foundations and charities to support the maintenance and on-going development of ALL work.
- 4.24 The Review Group recommends that greater use be made of alumni and students as a resource to support the work of the team, e.g. through a structured and targeted alumni mentoring programme.

- 4.25 The Review Group recommends that greater use be made of the institutional VLE, particularly in relation to creating a Unit repository of academic and support resources available to students of the Unit. The Unit should work with the VLE implementation team to explore how this might best be implemented.

5. User Perspective

General comment/context

- 5.1 The ALL Unit has gathered feedback from service users to ensure that their views informed the SAR.
- 5.2 The Review Group met with a wide range of stakeholders during the site visit.

Commendations

- 5.3 All stakeholders met by the Review Group, including students, access leaders, FutureYou mentors, community partners, UCD support services, faculty and staff, highly praised the work of the Unit and the commitment of its staff.
- 5.4 The Review Group were highly impressed by the significant number of internal and external stakeholders met in the course of the visit and their genuine desire to share their feedback with the group, in particular the student users.

Recommendations

- 5.5 The Review Group recommends the development of efficient and appropriate mechanisms to collect feedback from stakeholders that could be used to better inform the work of the Unit.
- 5.6 The Review Group recommends that the Unit work to achieve greater integration with external stakeholders with a view to further enhancing collaboration and exploring new opportunities.

6. SWOT Analysis

General comment/context

- 6.1 The ALL Unit considered the SWOT analysis as a central and reflective process that was carried out over a series of stages. The process began with a staff meeting and was followed by a group exercise.

- 6.2 After the group exercise, staff were encouraged to reflect on the different sections and to make individual contributions.
- 6.3 The SWOT was available on a white board and in an electronic folder.

Commendations

- 6.4 The SWOT analysis appears to have identified the key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing the ALL Unit.

Recommendations

- 6.5 The Review Group recommends that the ALL Unit use the SWOT exercise to link it more clearly to address the issues identified in the SAR.
- 6.6 In order to address the weaknesses and potential internal and external threats to the Unit, the Review Group recommends that an evidence-based approach to all its activities should be adopted.

UCD Access and Lifelong Learning – Full List of Commendations and Recommendations

This Appendix contains a full list of all commendations and recommendations made by the Review Group for UCD Access and Lifelong 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, Organisation and Management

Commendations

Strategic Planning:

- 2.5 Considerable progress has been made since the last quality review in implementing change across every aspect of the Unit. The Review Group acknowledges the strong engagement and important contribution that each member of the ALL team has made during this change process.
- 2.6 The Review Group acknowledges the considerable work that has been underway in the Unit with a view to aligning its mission and strategy with the University's strategic plan 2015-2020 and in identifying fifteen priority goals/projects that guide the work of the Unit. All aspects of the Unit's work strongly embody the UCD core values of collegiality, creativity, diversity, engagement and excellence and the Review Group commends the Unit in this regard.
- 2.7 The SAR report details the ALL work plan and the Review Group acknowledges the comprehensive and ambitious nature of this plan. It clearly sets out each of the fifteen goals and their related objectives.

Management and Governance Structure:

- 2.8 The Review Group commends the University senior management team, and in particular the Registrar/Deputy President, for their strong endorsement and support of the work of the ALL Unit, the WP agenda and the University for All concept.
- 2.9 The Review Group acknowledges the strong leadership within the Unit and commends their vision for the Unit and their proactive involvement in driving the WP agenda forward at national, regional and institutional levels.

- 2.10 The creation of a Widening Participation Committee, with representatives from Academic Programme Boards and Policy and Support Services and the inclusion of Student Access Leaders is a very positive development. It is clear to the Review Group that this committee has helped to initiate conversations around WP at College and School levels. The Review Group also noted the importance of having College/School WP champions sit on this committee and acknowledged the contribution of these individuals in moving the WP agenda forward.

Mainstreaming:

- 2.11 The Review Group commends all staff within the ALL Unit for the progress made to-date on embedding the principles and agenda around WP and inclusive education into the fabric of the University. The SAR notes the progress made since the last review in repositioning the ALL Unit 'as supportive of, rather than constituting the sole or main component of UCD's widening participation effort'. In the context of the 'University for All' initiative, the Unit clearly recognises that responsibility for delivering on the access and lifelong learning agenda is an institution-wide one and that Colleges and Schools play a key role in this regard.

Budgeting:

- 2.12 The efforts being made by the Unit to diversify income sources are to be commended. The Review Group noted, in particular, the work that has been underway to increase the number of scholarships available and the inclusion of these in the UCD scholarships/prize winning ceremony.

Communications:

- 2.13 Since the last quality review, the ALL Unit has invested considerable time and resources on improving its communication processes, both internally and externally. The Review Group is of the view that this investment has begun to pay dividends and has helped to raise awareness of the WP agenda among the various institutional stakeholders.
- 2.14 The Review Group commends the Unit on the launch of the 'University for All' week in November 2018 and acknowledges the particularly strong engagement of academic staff (almost 100) during the townhall session scheduled as part of this event.

Recommendations

Strategic Planning:

- 2.15 The Unit's strategic planning processes, particularly around the identification of priorities and goals, could be significantly enhanced through further institutional and Unit investment in data analytics and reporting capability. Such capability will enable the Unit to more effectively evaluate the impact and outcomes of each of its activities. An evidence-based approach should be central to the Unit's strategic planning processes. Such an approach would help inform decision-making around project priorities, the activities to be maintained, areas that

would benefit from a greater focus and the identification of activities that might be discontinued.

- 2.16 Given the limited resources available to the Unit and the demanding nature of many of the projects and priorities identified in the work plan, the Review Group believes there is a need to focus efforts on the operational projects relating directly to the core mission and purpose of the Unit. ALL should continue to explore ways of showcasing and disseminating best practice in the field to colleagues in Colleges, Schools and other university units.
- 2.17 The Review Group believes that engaging in research-related activities is detracting from the 'core business' of the Unit. The Review Group recommends, instead, that ALL identify, and engage with, faculty around the University who share an interest in undertaking research on topics related to the work of the Unit. Engagement with the UCD Centre for Teaching and Learning, the UCD School of Education and, perhaps, the academic staff that attended the townhall meeting during the University for All week in November 2018 might be useful starting points in this regard.
- 2.18 The Review Group notes the absence of any clear benchmarking plan that would enable the ALL Unit to compare its performance, effectiveness and efficiency with comparable higher education institutions, both nationally and internationally. The Review Group recommends that the Unit identifies comparable institutions and sets out the key benchmarks that would be helpful in informing its strategic planning process.

Management and Governance Structure:

- 2.19 The governance relationships between various groups and committees relating to the work of the ALL Unit appear to be complex. For the purposes of enhancing clarity, the Review Group recommends a review of the reporting and governance relationship between the ALL Unit, the Widening Participation Committee, the University Management Team (UMT) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion group and the College Programme Boards.
- 2.20 In attempting to understand the matrix project structure, it was not entirely clear to the Review Group as to where staff accountabilities and responsibilities rest. The Review Group recommends that the matrix project structure more clearly articulates this information.
- 2.21 The extent to which the matrix project structure is effective from both a staff and a user perspective was not clear to the Review Group. The matrix project structure has been in place since 2015 and it would appear timely that an internal review be conducted to ascertain the views of both staff and students on whether it is 'fit for purpose' going forward. This review, might include, for example, an examination of staff workload levels, the sustainability of these workloads and the demands on staff time, particularly in the context of the meetings structure currently in place.
- 2.22 Staff involvement in multiple projects and the need to attend multiple meetings each week related to these projects has significant implications for the workload of, and demands on, each member of staff. Staff sometimes find themselves in a "fire-fighting or reactive" mode,

particularly when they also find themselves having to respond to students who present themselves at the Unit reception. The Review Group believes there is an urgent need to consider how all staff might be given the opportunity to regularly set aside dedicated time and space to enable them to reflect, and make progress, on work projects and to be able to participate in relevant staff development activities.

Mainstreaming:

- 2.23 Progress has been made on moving the work of the Unit from the “margins to the mainstream” of the University. However, the Review Group believes that greater clarity is needed within ALL itself and within Colleges/Schools in terms of what is meant by “mainstreaming”.
- 2.24 While acknowledging the value for the Unit of maintaining the many individual relationships it has formed with colleagues from certain Colleges/Schools, the Review Group recommends that ALL rely less on the ‘goodwill’ from these relationships. Instead, the Review Group recommends that the Unit increase its investment of time and energy on relationship building with Colleges/Schools. The Unit might consider the appropriateness of introducing a College partnering model (similar to the HR Business Partner model).

Budgeting:

- 2.25 The Review Group recommends that UCD Foundation work more closely with the ALL Unit and assist them in developing and implementing a plan for the future in terms of philanthropy from both private and corporate sources.

Communications:

- 2.26 Based on discussions with staff from around the University, the Review Group believes that work remains to be done on building awareness among staff in terms of the work of the Unit. The Review Group recommends, for example, that information sessions be held with all College/School staff who are directly involved in student recruitment. Teaching and learning symposiums and new faculty orientations held at College/School level might also be useful fora for the Unit to raise awareness of its activities. The Review Group recommends that ALL link in with each College Vice Principal for Teaching and Learning to identify suitable events that it might contribute to.
- 2.27 A stronger internal and external communications plan might help ALL to increase awareness and visibility of its activities, both internally and externally. The Review Group recommends that UCD Communications work with the Unit and assist them in developing such a plan.
- 2.28 The ability of the Unit to raise its profile and increase awareness around its activities, both internally and externally, appears to be somewhat hampered by its current positioning on the main UCD website. The Review Group recommends that ALL work with the UCD Communications unit to address this.

- 2.29 During meetings with staff from across the University, there appeared to be rather limited understanding of what it means to be an “age friendly university”. The Review Group recommends that appropriate steps be taken to raise awareness among the university community of the principles for an age friendly university.
- 2.30 The development of more media content (e.g. videos, testimonials) that captures the ‘stories’ of students participating on the various programmes and the impact this participation has had on themselves, their families and their wider communities could be helpful in raising the profile of the Unit externally.

3. Functions, Activities and Processes

Commendations

- 3.8 The ALL unit clearly functions as a one-stop shop for its key stakeholders: potential and registered students who are in one of the WP target groups; external partners; and internal academic and service units of the University. It is demonstrable from the comments of each of these groups that the activities of the Unit are universally well regarded.
- 3.9 The provision offered at the point of transition is particularly strong. This involves targeted orientation activity, up-front learning skills provision, and continuing personal advice on all matters that pertain to student life. It is clear that this work is valued by students, academic staff and support staff, and does not represent a duplication of the activities of other services such as the Writing and Maths Support Centres, advising and counselling.
- 3.10 The Unit has taken a lead in facilitating access through its own provision (p/t Access) in collaboration with willing Schools of whom there are many, and through Open Learning provision.
- 3.11 The Unit takes a leading role in the Dublin Learning City initiative and this provides the potential for substantial international profile.
- 3.12 The Review Group acknowledges the extensive and ongoing work of the Unit in establishing and building relationships with its external partners and in continually seeking to enhance its outreach activities. Given the size of the Unit, its efforts in this regard are to be commended.

Recommendations

- 3.13 The ALL Unit should further commit itself to putting into place systematic processes to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the pre-entry programmes that it directly manages (the Access programme).

- 3.14 The Review Group recommends the gathering of data from the much larger activity that pertains to awareness-raising that is facilitated with community partners, Schools and Colleges. Nuanced data is needed, captured longitudinally, to assess change in terms of application, admission and retention trends from targeted organisations. This might be assessed alongside a range of other factors that might affect access, including that of transport infrastructure.
- 3.15 Consideration might be given to offering higher profile events in communities with no tradition of large numbers of students progressing to university. This might, for example, involve creating a strong community engagement role for academics to work with communities in addressing key community-driven concerns, and profiling the University as a driver for Dublin as learning city.
- 3.16 The issue of suitable transport links to UCD from some target communities might be considered, through, for example, discussions with the city's transport authorities or the offer of the University's own shuttle bus.
- 3.17 The Unit should be supported in the efforts it makes in mediating on behalf of students in cases of intransigence relating to 'reasonable accommodations' where this is a legal requirement. Its staff should not have to expend valuable time in such negotiation. Clear escalation procedures should be in place to help resolve these matters and the appropriate HR processes should be invoked at an early stage.
- 3.18 Although potential students make visits to the university, largely in the spirit of improving awareness, an opportunity is being missed in not creating mechanisms whereby facilities of the university (such as laboratories) could be used more extensively, especially when not used by existing students of the university.
- 3.19 The Access programme could be expanded considerably. It is customised provision that matches well with the undergraduate curriculum, and enjoys considerable support in Schools of the University.
- 3.20 Similarly, there is opportunity to expand the Open Programme, and the aspiration to eventually allow whole degrees to be taken in this mode could be achievable more readily without extra cost by offering certain modules only in twilight or evening mode for all students of the University. Discussion with Schools already involved show that some already do so, and do not see impediments. Others expressed concern about the potential loss of full-time students in electives should this approach be taken. So, care has to be taken, but there could be benefits for all students, including those in full-time study by freeing up time in the day for part-time work or other activities.
- 3.21 There is an opportunity to expand the Lifelong Learning programme to showcase the research and scholarship of the University. The extent of the current provision is relatively modest. The participation might be diversified, and this may require review of its relatively high cost. Consideration should be given to situating this work within the framework of the Dublin Learning City initiative.

4. Management of Resources

Commendations

- 4.10 The institution's capital investment in the ALL centre signals an institutional commitment to widening access and has facilitated improved collaboration between staff.
- 4.11 A high quality service has been maintained by the Unit through a period of austerity where there has been a zero-budget increase.
- 4.12 Data produced on WP groups at institutional and programme level has been powerful in allowing academic colleagues to see how their School is performing in relation to access and enabling champions to initiate challenging discussions at Programme Boards about potential strategies to better support access and participation.
- 4.13 Students and alumni are engaged as mentors, co-creators and facilitators. They are viewed as an extension of the substantive team and recognised as an important resource in delivering the work of the Unit.
- 4.14 The procurement process for the institutional virtual learning environment (VLE) included criteria in relation to accessibility, demonstrating that this was a key consideration. There has been some use of the VLE to complement and enhance projects and activities delivered by the Unit.
- 4.15 There have been clear efforts made by the Unit to ensure that its activities complement rather than duplicate those delivered elsewhere (e.g. student recruitment, writing and maths support).
- 4.16 There has been some diversification of funding, including philanthropic donations, to support student scholarship schemes and successful bids for PATH projects.

Recommendations

- 4.17 The Review Group recommends that further work is undertaken with the institutional research team to develop a robust dataset of clearly defined WP cohorts that can be used to inform practice and assist with impact monitoring of transitional and post-entry support. This would include, for example, exploring whether there is an association with improved rates of retention and progression for WP students who engage with ALL activities, compared with those who do not participate in order to help the team identify those activities that have the greatest impact.
- 4.18 The Review Group recommends that the Unit undertake a cost and impact analysis for each project using an initiation template to clearly identify aims and objectives, resource requirements, targets and outcomes.

- 4.19 The management team should have a clear understanding of the opportunities for growth and efficiency savings that could be achieved for each activity, as well as the associated impact (e.g. increasing/reducing the reach of an activity and by how much).
- 4.20 The Unit should take a transparent and systematic approach to staff workload planning so that appropriate time is allocated to all activities and staff have a clear understanding of individual aims, objectives and priorities.
- 4.21 Consideration should be given to building capacity to support increasing numbers of access students through sharing expertise and enabling staff elsewhere to support students with more complex needs (e.g. Student Advisers and staff at the Student Desk).
- 4.22 The Review Group recommends that a core programme of training be developed and implemented for all staff within the Unit and that sufficient time be allocated to this within staff workload allocations. This training should include, for example, GDPR, EDI, unconscious bias, mental health awareness and dealing with distressed students.
- 4.23 A dedicated resource within the Unit should be allocated to fundraising, either through working directly with UCD Foundation, or identifying opportunities to make discrete bids for project funding through relevant foundations and charities to support the maintenance and on-going development of ALL work.
- 4.24 The Review Group recommends that greater use be made of alumni and students as a resource to support the work of the team, e.g. through a structured and targeted alumni mentoring programme.
- 4.25 The Review Group recommends that greater use be made of the institutional VLE, particularly in relation to creating a Unit repository of academic and support resources available to students of the Unit. The Unit should work with the VLE implementation team to explore how this might best be implemented.

5. User Perspective

Commendations

- 5.3 All stakeholders met by the Review Group, including students, access leaders, FutureYou mentors, community partners, UCD support services, faculty and staff, highly praised the work of the Unit and the commitment of its staff.

- 5.4 The Review Group were highly impressed by the significant number of internal and external stakeholders met in the course of the visit and their genuine desire to share their feedback with the group, in particular the student users.

Recommendations

- 5.5 The Review Group recommends the development of efficient and appropriate mechanisms to collect feedback from stakeholders that could be used to better inform the work of the Unit.
- 5.6 The Review Group recommends that the Unit work to achieve greater integration with external stakeholders with a view to further enhancing collaboration and exploring new opportunities.

6. SWOT Analysis

Commendations

- 6.4 The SWOT analysis appears to have identified the key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing the ALL Unit.

Recommendations

- 6.5 The Review Group recommends that the ALL Unit use the SWOT exercise to link it more clearly to address the issues identified in the SAR.
- 6.6 In order to address the weaknesses and potential internal and external threats to the Unit, the Review Group recommends that an evidence-based approach to all its activities should be adopted.

UCD Access and Lifelong Learning – Response to the Review Group Report

The range and breadth of work undertaken by the Access & Lifelong Learning (ALL) team is extensive, complex and institution wide. The ALL team found the Quality Assurance (QA) process helpful, timely and provided a focused opportunity to reflect, critique, and consider the actions needed to further progress and support the University in its ambition to become a diverse and inclusion institution. We are grateful to the Reviewers for their expertise and attention, welcome their commendations and appreciate their supportive comments.

The ALL Self-Assessment Committee (SAR) oversaw the QA process, ensuring that the final report represented the span of work, quantified the outputs, offered critical analysis and focused on enhancements and solutions to further streamline this work. Both staff and student representatives were fully engaged with the QA process, and both access students and the extensive range of stakeholders were generous with their time and contributions.

The ALL team is also grateful to the Reviewers for their recommendations, which will translate into the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). The execution of the QIP coincides with development of the new University Strategy, and the associated ALL Workplan. The latter will be informed by this Strategy and will take account of the Quality Report recommendations.

The 8 key recommendations made by the reviewers have been carefully considered and this initial analysis is collated as follows:

Recommendations 1, 2 and 3, refer to the work underway in articulating and actioning mainstreaming across the University. This work, as captured in the University for All Toolkit (Kelly & Padden, 2018), is already underway and will continue to form a key element of activity. The merit and process of generating university-wide data and impact measurements is integral to this work.

Recommendation 4 - refers to the development of a communications plan. The emphasis placed on generating a Communications Plan is welcome and progress in this regard will continue. Communications has been a standing item on the University Widening Participation Committee for over a year and will continue to be a focus.

Recommendations 5 and 6 refer to the matrix structure and workload. The Unit's organisational structure, together with the Workplan, have generated an integral diagram to assist in developing understanding of the various roles and project responsibilities. Each project has an assigned lead, outcomes and accountabilities. Matrix management brings its own challenges and critique, as illustrated in the SAR in 1.4 and requires further enhancement, as well as consideration of a workload allocation model, so that staff time, data collection and effectiveness measures can be identified.

Recommendation 7 refers to flexibility and extension of Open Learning. The premise behind Open Learning is to maximise existing course teaching, remove duplication of effort, and offer mainstream part-time study options to facilitate the diverse needs of students. The University is pioneering this development and is committed to widening participation and enhancing flexibility wherever possible; however, this is not without its policy and operational challenges.

Recommendation 8 refers Lifelong Learning and the diversification of this student population. Lifelong Learning students are typically those who are already graduates, and our analysis confirms the correlation between resources, prior learning and participation. Work has begun to widen participation and the introduction of measures such as, Free Taster Lectures three times a year, and the introduction of Scholarships are some of the initial attempts to target a diverse student cohort.

Finally, we would like to respond to two additional areas noted in the Quality Report. The first is the Outreach Programme - we thank the Reviewers for their observations in this regard, although we were surprised at the relative absence of comment or recommendations on this important area.

The second relates to the Reviewers' observation about our research activity and the potential to divert attention from 'core business'. While we understand the sentiment, our core business is to progress and support the University's goal to become a diverse and inclusive institution and we are confident that our research activity is integral to this and to ensuring that practice is evidence-based, subject to regular review, with impact being measured objectively.



UCD Access and Lifelong Learning

Quality Review Site Visit

15-18 April 2019

TIMETABLE

Pre-Visit Briefing Prior to Site Visit : Monday, 15 April 2019

- 17.00-19.00 RG meet at hotel to review preliminary issues and to confirm work schedule and assignment of tasks for the site visit – **RG and UCD Quality Office only**
- 19.30 Dinner hosted for the RG by the Registrar and Deputy President– **RG, UCD Deputy President and UCD Quality Office only**

Day 1: Date: Tuesday, 16 April 2019

Venue: ALL Learning Space, Access & Lifelong Learning, Level 1, James Joyce Library Building

- 8.10 Review Group arrive on campus
- 8.30 -9.15 Meeting with Registrar, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Deputy President
- 09.30-10.00 RG meet with Head of Unit:
- 10.00-10.30 RG meeting with Head of Unit and Deputy Director:
- 10.30-10.40 Break - include tea/coffee break
- 10.40-11.40 Group 1: ALL Management Team
- 11.40-11.50 Break
- 11.50-12.50 Group 2: Campus Accessibility, Pre-Entry, Scholarship, Alternative Admissions Team:
- 13.00-14.00 Review Group only – sandwich lunch

14.00-14.30	RG Break
14.30-15.30	Group 3: Post Entry & Access Supports Team
16.30-17.30	Visit to core facilities of the Access & Lifelong Learning
17.30-18.00	Meeting of Review Group to identify any remaining aspects to be clarified and to finalise tasks for the following day
18.00	RG depart

Day 2: Date: Wednesday, 17 April 2019

Venue: ALL Learning Space, Access & Lifelong Learning, Level 1, James Joyce Library Building , UCD Belfield

09.00-09.30	Review Group Meet
9.30- 10.30	Group 1: Mainstreaming and Campus Accessibility Stakeholders: WP Committee, Dean of Undergraduate Students; Library, Teaching & Learning, Careers; Estates; EDI Chairs & reps & Staff disability Network
10.30-10.40	Break
10.40- 11.40	Group 2: Pre-Entry and Scholarships Stakeholders: Community Partners; School Representatives; UCD Foundation; FE; Student Recruitment; Admissions
11.40-11.50	Break
11.50- 12.50	Group 3: Post Entry Stakeholders: Dean of Students; Student Advisers; Maths Centre / Writing Centre; Residences; Students Union; Student Desk; International; Careers Development Centre
12.50- 13.50	Lunch
14.00-15.00	Group 4: Part-time Provision Stakeholders: Uni Access Governance Reps; Cultural Partners; Hourly Paid Tutors; School involved in Lifelong Learning
15.00-15.10	
15.10-16.00	Break
	Group 5: Students Stakeholders: Access Leaders, Access Students, Alumni
16.00-17.30	Private meeting with individual staff of the Unit by request

17.30-18.00 RG private meeting to review meetings

18.00 RG depart

Day 3: Date: Thursday, 18 April 2019

Venue: ALL Learning Space, Access & Lifelong Learning, Level 1, James Joyce Library Building, UCD Belfield

09.00-10.00 Review Group Meet

10.00-11.00 (Optional) Further meetings with University and/or Unit staff as required and/or RG begin work on first draft of Review Group Report

11.00-11.15 Break - coffee/tea

11.15-12.45 Preparation of draft Report and exit presentation continues

12.45-13.30 Working lunch for Review Group

13.30-15.00 Preparation of first draft of Review Group Report

15.00-15.30 RG meet with Registrar, Deputy President and Vice-President for Academic Affairs to feedback initial outline commendations and recommendations

15.30-15.45 Break

15.45-16.00 RG meet with Head of Unit to feedback initial outline commendations and recommendations

16.00-16.30 Exit presentation to all available staff of the Unit: Access & Lifelong Learning Team summarising the principal commendations/recommendations of the Review Group

17.00 RG depart