

University College Cork (UCC)

Strategic Dialogue Cycle 2 Reflections on Performance

Overview

Overall the report is reflective of University College Cork's strategic aims and well aligned. UCC are progressing well on the agreed compact targets. In the areas of research and enterprise engagement significant progress is being made and current targets are being surpassed. There may be scope for UCC to extend and be more ambitious around the 2015/16 targets in these areas.

While the self-evaluation report (SER) provides significant detail of progress on what could be classed as day to day activities, perhaps more focused could be placed on strategic long-term objectives. The SER and UCC would probably benefit from a little less on process and more on outcomes and outputs. This might better reflect what it all meant to UCC and if seemed worth the effort.

For example, UCC has included targets in the compact which appear to reflect ongoing work as opposed to strategic future planning. This includes the planning permission for the ASSERT centre building (2.5) which was achieved in 2013, and maintaining Irish language courses and international teaching programme (5.5).

All this aside, it is true that UCC has made strong progress. Indeed, UCC has exceeded a number of its 2016 targets and should probably re-consider these in light of the progress to date. Without intending to be overcritical, it should be noted that where targets are being significantly exceeded there might be questions over the appropriateness of the levels of ambition displayed in setting the targets. The benchmarking data was certainly interesting, UCC might consider if this information could be leveraged to provide greater evidence of stretch targets.

It is notable that UCC has exceeded targets for 2015 and 2016 in the following areas:

- 2.3 access student intake in all three categories (mature, disability and UCC+);
- 3.2 creation of online masters programmes;
- 2.6 student satisfaction rates;
- 4.1 number of industry partner contracts;
- 4.2 number of doctoral graduates;
- 5.1 number of industry partner contracts.

It would be useful if UCC would consider the continued appropriateness of their 2015 and 2016 targets and offer an opinion as to their revision, in light of the strong 2014 progress.

Furthermore, some of the 2014, 2015 and 2016 targets have already been revised by UCC as follows:

- In section 3.3 to "*Strengthen UCC's capacity to deliver teaching qualification programmes to greater numbers of staff*", there have been some target changes. The 2015 target to have 70% of staff engaged in professional

development has been reduced to 60%. The 2016 targets to increase staff numbers participating in 'teaching and learning' qualifications and making these compulsory for all new staff have now been renamed as 'academic practice' qualifications.

- In section 3.4 "*Continue to play a leading role nationally in Teaching and Learning support and scholarship*" the target for 2015 has been changed from "securing non exchequer funding for NAIRTL to "Rebrand NAIRTL as a network".
- In section 4.1 "*Establish SFI Research Centres as a key element of the research landscape in UCC*" a new target for 2015 has been added to existing targets "APC SFI Microbiome Research Centre launched under the new Research Institutes Centres and Units policy by the University".
- In section 7.2 "*Establish UCC as one of the six centres of excellence for initial teacher education under the initial teacher education review by the HEA*" the 2015 and 2016 targets have been reduced from 50 students enrolled in the Professional Masters in Education (Art & Design) to 40.

UCC might provide some further clarification around the rationale behind these proposed amendments.

Finally, no appendices were provided to the submission however in section 1 "Clustering" there is reference to an appendix containing the MoU (Framework for Cooperation) comprising of terms of reference for the cluster. This additional information was not attached to the submission but an earlier version is on file ('draft 3' which accompanied the regional cluster submission). UCC might clarify on progress and provide additional material if they so wish.

Self-evaluation report - domain level review

1. Regional clusters:

Objective 1: 'Create a formal regional cluster between the named member institutions'. The Institute set an interim target of agreeing and implementing a framework for cluster operation and commence implementation of agreed collaborative projects over the life of the compact. The 2014 interim targets are to agree and implement: (a) a framework for cluster operation and commence implementation of agreed collaborative projects; (b) a governance framework for joint activities including; (c) establish a cluster board; (d) create an MOU for operation of the cluster; (e) Develop arbitration procedures; and (f) a coordinated work-plan for the implementation of agreed projects.

The SER reports that a cluster board has been established comprising the Presidents and Registrars of the five cluster HEIs. An MoU (Framework for Cooperation) comprising of terms of reference for the cluster has been agreed and signed for the cluster (as shown in the SER appendices). The chairpersonship of the cluster rotates on a six-monthly basis between the five HEIs. In 2014, the chairpersonship was held by UCC, WIT and IT Tralee. Arbitration procedures have been agreed as part of the Framework. A work plan focusing on the areas of mapping, academic progression and research is in place. The MoU appendix referred to on page 3 of the self-evaluation report (SER) was not attached but an earlier version is on file at HEA. Beyond this, no details on the cluster work-plan were provided. It would have been useful to have a copy of the plan in support of this target having been met.

Objective 2: 'Improve student pathways' - Produce a mapping profile which outlines learner opportunities and pathways for all disciplines and levels across the cluster region which will assist in future academic planning and delivery. The initial focus of the cluster is anticipated to be on improving student pathways given priority attached to the transitions initiative. In this regard the aim is to perform baseline mapping process in terms of student pathways from secondary through to tertiary education and graduate destination (this will require engagement of secondary and FE providers as well student representative bodies). The final output is to be a full mapping profile.

The initial mappings is reported as achieved 'a baseline mapping has been completed focusing on secondary to tertiary education'. This has captured provision at Levels 6-8 of the NFQ. Beyond this individual HEIs have engaged with secondary, FE providers and the recently formed Education and Training Boards as part of continually enhancing student pathways. Formal agreements are now in place between HEIs and ETBs/FE providers. However, no detail on the baseline mapping was provided in the SER. No evidence was provided on how many or which providers were involved (FE providers / secondary schools) and there was no further details on the formal agreements in place. It would be useful to know how many students will progress through these agreement and if there are any targets set.

Objective 3: 'Shared academic planning' - The stated intention is to 'develop a cluster wide academic planning structure focused on the delivery of national priority objectives such as the Transitions Programme, Horizon 2020 and other objectives focused on improving the economic, social and cultural profile of the cluster region'. As above a completed baseline mapping of academic programme provision across the cluster was a key objective along with additional research mapping completed to identify potential research synergies.

The baseline mapping of academic programmes across NFQ Levels 6-8 was reported as completed and being continuously reviewed. The research mapping has also been completed. Again, the SER provided no details or depth of analysis on what the baseline mapping of academic programmes across levels 6-8 had shown or what the overall outcomes from this this mapping process might be. It would be useful to know what UCC thinks it might tell us about the cluster in terms of overlapping discipline provision, etc. Furthermore, it was not really clear what the research mapping had achieved. What did the process involve, what issues did it identify and what will the outcome be for UCC.

2. Participation, equal access and lifelong learning:

Objective 1: Ease student transition to, and progression through, their undergraduate programme. The focus here is on the first year retention rate and subsequent progression rates. For 2014 UCC intended to implement semesterisation and achieve a 91% 1st year student retention rate, both of which were achieved. Semesterisation was introduced on 8 September 2014 and the student records system verifies a 91% 1st year student retention rate achieved. The UCC website also gives a full overview of implementation, value and benefits of semesterisation. It also has a well-structured FAQ section. The progress on retention is notable as it is above the national university average.

Objective 2: Increase the number of pathways to level 8 programmes from Further Education programmes and evolve our policy for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). The UCC performance indicator here is the number of FETAC entry routes. For the end of 2014 UCC intended to have 48 FETAC links to 33 programmes with a total quota of 163 and have a new RPL policy implemented.

At the end of 2014, 35 UCC Programmes now have FETAC pathways and 118 FETAC courses in total are recognised by UCC. UCC have demonstrated good progress on FE pathways showing leadership in this area. Some clarity on the RPL policy is required as the SER didn't reference it and the 'current' policy on ucc.ie is dated 2010

Objective 3: Support access for socio-economic disadvantaged students, students with disabilities and mature students. The performance indicator here is numbers of access students with an interim target of 310 mature students and 175 students with a disability. Alongside this is a UCC PLUS+ student intake target of 170.

UCC have exceeded their ultimate 2016 target for mature student intake as this represents 10% of their new entrants (333). This places UCC ahead of university sector average of 8%. UCC have exceeded disability intake targets set in the compact, and the SRS return indicates a 2014/15 intake of 326. The compact targets for 2015 and 2016 have now been exceeded and may need reconsideration, in light of this excellent progress. UCC+ target has been exceeded, however two figures (189 & 182). 2015 & 2016 targets may need reconsideration, in light of this strong progress.

Objective 4: Develop improved opportunities for lifelong learning including continuing professional development and executive education in collaboration with the Irish Management Institute and with partners nationally and internationally to include performance indicators as follows:

- Annual number of Adult Continuing Education (ACE) lifelong learning graduates;
- Annual number of graduates from UCC/IMI programmes;
- Number of outreach centres across the South of Ireland; &
- Learning opportunities for healthcare and social professionals undergoing accreditation with CORU (CORU is Ireland's multi-profession health regulator whose role is to protect the public by promoting high standards of professional conduct, education, training and competence through statutory registration of health and social care professionals).

For 2014, UCC intended to have specific targeted initiatives created to reach specific populations such as Autism Spectrum Studies, programmes in Women's Studies (Knocknaheeny), new certificate/diploma introduced to enhance access for non-English mother tongue groups. These targets were all achieved. The Certificate and Diploma in Autism Spectrum Studies (ACE) was delivered in UCC, Bantry, Waterford, Killarney, Limerick, Letterkenny and Galway (<http://www.ucc.ie/en/ace-daus/>). The Certificate and Diploma in Women Studies was also introduced (<http://www.ucc.ie/en/ace-dws/>) and an Adult and Community Education Officer was appointed to drive community engagement agenda.

To date the UCC ACE programmes were delivered in 101 centres nationally and UCC has made commendable progress in achieving targets. More detail on the role of Adult and Community Education Officer would be useful.

Objective 5: Prioritise the provision of lifelong education and training to the healthcare professionals in the region. The key target here is the completion of the ASSERT (Application of Science to Simulation, Education and Research on Training for Health Professionals) Centre in UCC's College of Medicine & Health (see <http://www.ucc.ie/en/assert/>). This includes a 2014 target to 'secure planning permission for the ASSERT Centre building' which has been achieved. However, the SER would have benefited from some elucidation on the broader strategic relevance of this development, to UCC, would be useful.

3. Excellent teaching and learning and quality of student experience:

Objective 1: Strengthen the integration of research, teaching and learning through the greater engagement of researchers in teaching activities and by maximising opportunities for students to participate in research programmes throughout their undergraduate studies. Specific indicators include the number of undergraduate programmes with student-involved research from first year onwards and the opportunities confirmed for student participation in authentic research in each UG programme and data recorded on UCC's student record system.

Both actions are reported as achieved. Every final year student conducts independent research; the research project is assigned to the module number recorded on the ITS student record system. The SER report contains commendable efforts to strengthen integration of Research in teaching and learning. As noted at the HEA interim meeting (Jan 15) all UCC final year students are undertaking research activities. Further detail on progress towards 2016 target would be useful.

Objective 2: Develop greater opportunities for part-time and flexible learning by providing the necessary 'future-proofed' infrastructure to improve the provision of research-informed, open access Technology Enhanced Learning at UCC. Indicators include the number of e-learning students enrolled and the percentage of students studying part-time/through flexible learning.

UCC report two additional learning technologists funded and in place as well as six new online masters' programmes launched. An inter-institutional strategy has been developed for digital learning using the Strategic Innovation and Development Fund allocation in collaboration with the National Forum for Teaching and Learning. UCC's on-line brand has also been marketed and launched.

UCC has made good progress on its targets including new course creation the transition to e-assessment in mathematics education award is particularly noteworthy. Some confirmation on the 2015 target is now needed though - will this become a combined 2014/15 target of 18 courses given 2014 target exceeded.

Objective 3: Strengthen UCC's capacity to deliver teaching qualification programmes to greater numbers of staff. The indicators are the number of staff with formal qualifications in teaching and learning (aim is to have 350 staff having completed one or more accredited courses in TLHE, >50% academic staff to have participated in professional development seminars/workshops, 300 postgraduate teaching assistants to have completed an accredited course and an accredited course available for postdoc/research staff). UCC report all these as achieved. Over 449 staff (56%) have completed one or more accredited courses. 197 postgraduate teaching assistants and 64 researchers have completed an accredited course in TLHE. The cumulative total of staff completing accredited courses in TLHE to 710 (449+197+64), exceeding the planned total of 650. An accredited course is also available for postdoc/research staff.

Overall Targets have been exceeded for 2014, however PG assistants target has not been achieved as the demand was lower than anticipated. 2015 and 2016 targets have been reduced by 10% from agreed compact. UCC might outline their reasoning and rationale for the proposed changes at the HEA meeting.

Objective 4: Continue to play a leading role nationally in Teaching and Learning support and scholarship. Indicators include active participation in National fora, proposals developed on the theme of Teaching for Transitions.

These objectives have been achieved, proposals have been developed and submitted to the National Forum on the theme of Teaching for Transitions. The 2015 target to achieve non-exchequer funding has been removed though and the target is now rebrand NAIRTL. UCC might outline the reason for the proposed funding target change at the HEA meeting.

Objective 5: Continue to act on recommendations with respect to excellence in teaching & learning in the Bologna Process, in the Quality Review reports for academic units and from student feedback surveys. The interim target, end 2014, is the number of quality review and student feedback recommendations addressed. UCC report a protocol formulated to address Quality Review recommendations with respect to excellence in teaching and learning; a formal process in place to respond to student survey feedback relating to the quality of teaching and learning; formal engagement with the Teaching & Learning centre for all units preparing for a Quality Review; analysis completed of the extent to which learning outcomes are written for each programme and module to international best practice standards; analysis completed of the extent to which the programme learning outcomes constructively align with module learning outcomes; and, analysis completed of the extent to which module learning outcomes constructively align with assessment as achieved.

The new process of periodic review for academic units addresses the first four interim targets. Revised guidelines respond to a recommendation in the UCC's Institutional Review report about greater focus and clarity about the purpose of reviews. The first step was to separate out the processes for reviewing academic units from other types of support or management units. UCC now has a threefold focus for academic units undergoing review: 1. An opportunity, after a period of time during which modules will have been revised, removed, added, to reflect on whether provision within the unit is still located correctly on the national qualifications framework; 2. A review of the student experience that enables them to achieve the standards required (i.e. teaching, learning, assessment (including learning outcomes), welfare, resources, student feedback etc.); 3. An opportunity for the unit under review to put forward any matter on which they would welcome discussion with external peers. UCC reports that the clearer focus for reviews of academic units allows for a clearer process for consideration of recommendations on excellence in teaching and learning. However, the reporting on these targets was somewhat unclear, while it looks like the targets here have been achieved, further clarity on implementation and how this relates to the interim targets would be useful.

Objective 6: Improve student satisfaction, engagement and employability. Indicators include measures of student placement opportunities within programmes provided either through volunteering activities, international placement or work placement; the percentage of graduates in employment or further study; the first year retention rate; National and University student survey scores; and, the completion of planned actions.

Interim targets are to maintain an 86% student satisfaction score in the UCC student survey, having students participating on all Quality Review panels and the maintenance of 300 student peer-support volunteers.

UCC has achieved an 89% student satisfaction score in the student survey, a Students' Union officer now participates on all quality review panels and UCC had 300 student peer-support volunteers in 2014. UCC note that UCD and TCD run their programmes differently to UCC and it is therefore not possible to compare like with like. TCD's model, which is probably closest to that of UCC, splits the peer support programme into peer support mentors and peer supporters, who have different duties.

These targets have been met and indeed surpassed in respect of the student satisfaction survey outcomes. Further detail on survey participation rates would be useful and targets for 2015 and 2016 may need some reconsideration, in light of the strong progress.

4. High quality, internationally competitive research and innovation:

Objective 1: Establish SFI Research Centres as a key element of the research landscape in UCC. Indicators include the number and scale of research centres and institutes of Industry partners; the scale of leveraged non-Exchequer income; and, the number of researchers employed in each centre.

UCC's interim 2014 target is to have centres operating as efficient research units with 25 established industry contracts in place. As of December 2015, each UCC-(co)led SFI Research Centres has completed their establishment phase and has made significant progress in the consolidation and development of their research programme and industrial engagement. Centres have been established to operate as efficient research units. UCC leads four, co-leads one SFI Research Centre and is a partner in six of the other seven SFI Research Centres. The UCC-led centres are APC (food and health); INFANT (perinatal); MAREI (marine renewable energy); IPIC @TNI (photonics); and, INSIGHT (big data and data analytics). A sub-objective, to have 89 industry contracts in place by December 2014 between the UCC-(co)led SFI Research Centres and a wide range of national and international SME and MNC industry partners, is significantly ahead of the interim target set as 50 established industry contracts in place by end 2015. These are all commendable achievements and 2015/16 targets may need reconsideration in light of such excellent progress.

Objective 2: Ensure the sustainability, competitiveness and strategic coherence of research in UCC by diversifying funding sources. Metrics here include levels of research income; non-Exchequer research income; and, the number of new funding sources. Interim targets are to establish a European Project Support Office to support PIs in seeking funding from Horizon 2020; measures implemented to nurture trans-disciplinary research especially linking STEM and humanities research teams (including the launch of the Irish Humanities Alliance); and, all new PhD students enrolled in UCC to be on a structured PhD programme.

As of 15th January 2015, UCC's European Project Support Office, the Prime UCC Project Office, was engaged by 16 clients and 9 applications were submitted to EU

and related funding programmes with 7 proposals in preparation. UCC's current Horizon 2020 success rate is 50%.

Specific measures were also implemented to nurture trans-disciplinary research including the establishment of the UCC Horizon 2020 Support Task Force; delivery of the 'Tackling Societal Challenges' Seminar Series, jointly hosted by the College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences (CACSSS) and UCC Research Support Services (RSS); delivery by UCC RSS of (i) funding Information Workshops and (ii) Mentorship Programmes, focussed on building partnerships and exploiting trans-disciplinary opportunities for STEM, humanities and social sciences researchers; comprehensive UCC engagement, through the Irish Humanities Alliance (IHA), the Irish Social Sciences Platform (ISSP) and the Irish Research Council (IRC), in supporting the National Experts and the National Delegate in proposing trans-disciplinary elements for the 2016 and 2017 H2020 Work programmes. Finally, UCC had its first intake of BA in Digital Humanities & Information Technology (CK118) in September 2014, joint programme across the College of Arts, Celtic Studies & Social Sciences and the College of Science, Engineering & Food Science and all new PhD students enrolled in UCC are now on a structured PhD programme.

Again UCC has made excellent progress here. Indeed the 2016 target (230) for doctoral graduates was been achieved by 2014 (258). The 2016 target should be consequently be reconsidered. Overall, this is commendable work, including the creation of an interdisciplinary course in digital humanities at undergraduate level, UCC seem to be ahead of curve in providing innovative new courses at this level. It is also a welcome development that all new PhD entrants are enrolled in structured programme. Now that the National Framework of Doctoral Education has been launched UCC should reference this in postgraduate studies handbook.

Objective 3: Undertake a comprehensive university wide review of research. Specific measures here include: the output of the review and performance relative to the 2009 output. Indicators for 2014 include review panels in place and schools and research centre submissions received based on research to end of 2014. Both of these aims have been achieved and it is again commendable that UCC are leading in this area nationally. The final outcomes of the review and its implications for and use in university planning and prioritisation will be important.

5. Enhanced engagement with enterprise and the community and embedded knowledge exchange:

Objective 1: Further develop innovation and entrepreneurship under UCC's 'Innovation Platform' to meet national economic development and job creation needs through the coherent delivery of innovation and entrepreneurship initiatives. Compact targets include new start-up businesses created including high potential start-ups (HPSUs) and graduate enterprises and new jobs created. The specific indicators are the establishment and operation of a UCC-led Technology Transfer consortium together with CIT and Teagasc to enhance economic development in the region; delivery of the National Demonstrator Health Innovation Hub initiative; an increase in the participation of graduate companies in the Ignite Graduate Business Innovation Centre

to 37 companies; establishment 6 new start-up companies; Completion of 35 licences, options or other technology transfer agreements with industry; and, the conclusion of at least 60 significant industry research agreements.

All of these 2014 aims have been achieved. A UCC-led Technology Transfer consortium was established with CIT and Teagasc, a National Demonstrator Health Innovation Hub successfully delivered. In 2014 participation of graduate companies in the Ignite Graduate Business Innovation Centre was increased to 37 companies. As of July 2014 62 jobs had been created since 2011 and 22 new start-up companies were established in 2013-14; 4 of which were established through research commercialisation. 35 licences, options or other technology transfer agreements were completed with industry in 2013-14 (13 licences and options in 2013, 22 licences and options in 2014) and 89 industry contracts were in place by December 2014. UCC continues to meet and exceed all targets here. The HEA notes and welcomes the inclusion of new targets for 2015.

Objective 2: Develop the Irish Maritime and Energy Resource Cluster (IMERC) as a research and commercial cluster of world standing in collaboration with CIT and the Irish Naval Service. Specifics for 2014 include: new start-up businesses created; new research jobs created; and, 70 new research jobs delivered. UCC report 70 research jobs created by iMERC through MAREI, the Beaufort Laboratory and the Halpin Centre for Research and Innovation (a further 130 jobs were created in the construction of the Beaufort Laboratory). Again commendable progress, but perhaps 2016 targets could be more specific, e.g. how many industry suites are proposed what types of industry are targeted?

Objective 3: Combine the regions hospitals and UCC's College of Medicine & Health into a single integrated Academic Healthcare Centre (AHC) to improve the provision of clinical care, health education, training, research and innovation and to achieve an increase in the quality of service to the region.

The following actions were planned for 2014: a Governance model agreed for engagement with hospital partners; and, the Clinical Research Facility fully embedded in UCC's College of Medicine & Health as an enabler of patient focussed research. Both goals have been achieved. The Governance model has been agreed for engagement with hospital partners with a UCC Professor appointed Chief Academic Officer on the Executive Leadership of the Hospital Group. The Clinical Research Facility is now also fully embedded in UCC's College of Medicine & Health. The governance of the quality assurance and risk mitigation aspects of the work of the Clinical Research Facility (CRF) have been agreed and implemented. Staff in the CRF-C are providing a quality assurance/risk mitigation function to the research in the College. The teaching function of the CRF-C is fully embedded in the UCC's College of Medicine & Health through the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health. The Director of the CRF-C has a joint appointment with this department with responsibility for patient-focused research. This is commendable progress, demonstrating a commitment to the intersection of health and education academic provision and research. Again, in light of excellent progress 2015 and 16 targets could be more specific. A further concern might be the extent of contingency planning should require legislative change be delayed.

Objective 4: Achieve an international leadership position as an 'engaged university' through engagement with employers and enterprise, community engagement and corporate social responsibility. Alongside the achievement of these planned actions measures include the number of primary and second level students participating in the Eureka Centre for the promotion of STEM subjects; a coherent plan for improved engagement with enterprise and employers developed; a Centre for Global Development expanded to include engagement with UCC's student body and alumni; and, mapping exercise completed of external engagement activities in Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences.

All the objectives have been achieved. A 2014 plan for improved engagement with enterprise and employers has been delivered; the UCC Business School is established; an External Advisory Board is established to advise on CPD provision (membership entirely external, includes industry professional bodies and Chamber of Commerce); UCC has become a member of the IBEC Regional Group; UCC Business School governance structures have been agreed and a Head of School appointed. The Centre for Global Engagement expanded to include student membership with 3 positions held by members of the Students' Union. An extensive mapping exercise which identified, recorded and analysed the external engagement activities carried out by the Schools and Departments within the College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences was completed 2014. This mapping exercise identified key trends which demonstrate the impact of the University community in civil and public society. In particular the exercise demonstrated that deep connections between the University and public, private and civil agencies which serve to enrich both the University and the wider community. Findings of the mapping exercise are recorded in detail in the External Engagement Working Party Final Report approved by the College in October 2014. The SFI Spokes Programme has facilitated major industry collaborations with national and international companies e.g. the collaboration between APC and Janssen.

The objectives are therefore being achieved and UCC are taking an active role in engaging with employers, enterprise and the community. It would be useful to know how these objectives are being aligned regionally, particularly in a regional cluster context. For example, the key trends from the mapping exercise could have been included or contextualised here. Finally, the relationship between the reporting on the development of the business school (while welcome) and the targets as set out in the compact is unclear.

Objective 5: Strengthen and promote the Irish language, heritage and culture in the University and in its Munster hinterland. Objectives include the number of enrolled students and participation on Scéimeanna na Gaeilge. Specific measures include to maintain 1,600 students attending part-time Irish courses, 2,500 participants in UCC's Irish network and Scéimeanna Gaeilge and continuation of UCC's Irish language teaching abroad. All of this aims have been achieved. 1,741 students attended part-time Irish courses, 2,503 students participated in UCC's Irish network and Scéimeanna Gaeilge and UCC's Irish language teaching abroad programmes were delivered to 85 students in the University of Bochum, Germany.

This again demonstrates commendable progress and targets surpassed. Would have been helpful to see evidence of UCCs consideration as to whether this target/achievement balance could or should be stretched further, or if not, why not. For example, what might the future plans for developing and providing more innovative delivery of cultural heritage preservation be?

Objective 6: Build on the University's existing contributions to the cultural and artistic life in Ireland by strengthening research, practice and learning in the creative arts. The main target here is the completion of the planned actions and measures such as the Number of Artist in Residence schemes.

In 2014 the proposal to develop the Creative Hub was partially finalised, in consultation with local and internationally based stakeholders, to develop the Creative Hub at UCC (a dedicated space designed to support arts practice, research and learning and facilitate the integration of this work with the Irish creative arts, technologies, digital humanities and civil society networks) in collaboration with local authorities and locally and nationally based arts and cultural organisations. The consultation process took longer than expected delaying the programme slightly. The Artist in Residence scheme consolidated and expanded in collaboration with the Arts Council to include Writer in Residence and Traditional Artist in Residence. A further objective, to Consolidate collaboration with Dingle / Corca Dhuibhne History Interactive Timeline (a community project to put in place an easily accessible online tool on the history and heritage of the region) was achieved. Funding was received and the project completed.

The partial achievement of a target was noted, the analysis of the cause and effect was welcomed. More detail on three initiatives, such as aims, objectives and outputs would be welcome. For example, what was the source of the funding received in support of the Dingle / Corca Dhuibhne project.

6. Enhanced internationalisation:

Objective 1: Strengthen partnerships with universities of similar vision so as to grow (i) the number of overseas students; and, (ii) the number of joint programmes. Specific targets include internationalisation risk analysis completed, approval for at least one '4+0' programme secured with a partner university in China.

These goals were reported as partially achieved as the internationalisation risk analysis was not completed in 2014. However, approval was granted for the Food Science '4+0' programme secured with Beijing Technology and Business University (BTBU) in China. The partial achievement of the target and related analysis was noted. More detail on Food Science '4+0' programme, would be welcome such as the expected start date and the student numbers expected to participate.

Objective 2: Increase the international student cohort to 16% in support of Ireland's international education strategy. The key performance indicator is the percentage of overseas students at UCC. Initial indicators for 2014 include, an International steering group established to oversee the delivery of the internationalisation policy; seven regional working groups (Africa, ASEAN, China, EU, India, Latin America, US)

implemented; regional implementation plans reflecting the four pillars of UCC's Internationalisation Strategy; and, additional foundation pathways developed into UCC.

All these aims were achieved. The international steering group was established, chaired by the President, with terms of reference approved on 3 September 2014. Seven regional working groups (Africa, ASEAN, China, EU, India, Latin America, US) implemented with chairs appointed. Regional implementation plans for the regional working groups are in place as is an additional foundation pathway, Masters Qualifying Examination (Business).

Good progress is reported here, it would also be good to know if targets have been set for working group objectives and if there are priority target countries. The HEA notes that 13% of 2014/15 enrolments are international in line with sectoral averages. However, to achieve the 2016 profile international enrolments will need to increase by 30% based on 2014/15 enrolments. UCC might need to consider is this is this possible given competitive nature of the market? The large intake through science without borders is also impressive, it would be useful to know if UCC has considered risks around these numbers. Finally it would be good to know who the target audience for the additional foundation pathway are and what the student numbers to date are.

Objective 3: Further internationalise the curriculum. The key indicator is the number of international placement opportunities for UCC students. Measures include the percentage of UG programmes with year abroad; the number of exchange students; and, an extended range of programmes offering international study.

These objectives have been achieved, a new programme CK110 World Languages was introduced, as was a B.Sc. in Risk and Actuarial Science '2+2' programme in partnership with Beijing Technological and Business University.

7. Institutional consolidation:

Objective 1: Establish a shared services model across regional HEI partners

The key objective is the achievement of the above planned action. The indicator is to have proposals discussed and implementation model agreed with regional partners regarding shared HR and student services.

This has been achieved, in that UCC and partners have developed a shared recruitment portal universityvacancies.com. An office of Government Procurement has also been established and extended across the procurement activities of HEIs.

The HEA notes procurement and jobs advertising initiatives as progress towards HR and student shared services. While these are steps in the right direction, more detail is required on overall progress towards a holistic system implementation model of regional shared services in these and other areas would be useful.

Objective 2: Establish UCC as one of the six centres of excellence for initial teacher education under the initial teacher education review by the HEA.

The key objective is the achievement of the above planned action. The indicator is the number of students registered for the Professional Masters in Education and to work with CIT to have the programme for Art and Design integrated into a joint professional masters of education (art and design).

This goal has been partially achieved. The target was to have 25 students enrolled in the Professional Masters in Education (Art & Design). The first intake of students on the Professional Masters was in 2014 with 20 students. UCC report that this intake is lower than projected because of difficulties in securing placements in what is a minority optional school subject in the secondary system and because of capacity limits in the general PME course to accommodate higher numbers of students in the suite of common modules.

The HEA noted the goal partially achieved and the difficulties which arose. It would be useful to know how these are being addressed and if UCC feel these can be rectified also noting a reduction in 2015 and 2016 targets.

8. Additional Notes:

UCC has revised targets for 2015 and 2016 as follows:

- In section 3.3 to "*Strengthen UCC's capacity to deliver teaching qualification programmes to greater numbers of staff*", there have been some target changes. The 2015 target to have 70% of staff engaged in professional development has been reduced to 60%. The 2016 targets to increase staff numbers participating in 'teaching and learning' qualifications and making these compulsory for all new staff have now been renamed as 'academic practice' qualifications.
- In section 3.4 "*Continue to play a leading role nationally in Teaching and Learning support and scholarship*" the target for 2015 has been changed from "securing non exchequer funding for NAIRTL to "Rebrand NAIRTL as a network".
- In section 4.1 "*Establish SFI Research Centres as a key element of the research landscape in UCC*" a new target for 2015 has been added to existing targets " APC SFI Microbiome Research Centre launched under the new Research Institutes Centres and Units policy by the University"
- In section 7.2 "*Establish UCC as one of the six centres of excellence for initial teacher education under the initial teacher education review by the HEA*" the 2015 and 2016 targets have been reduced from 50 students enrolled in the Professional Masters in Education (Art & Design) to 40.

Targets met/exceeded

Specifically UCC has exceeded targets for 2015 and 2016 in the following areas and the institute should consider revising these targets, where appropriate, in light of the progress made.

Participation, equal access and lifelong learning:

Its 2014 interim target was 310 and they have exceeded the 2016 target of 320 for access student intake in all three categories (mature, disability and UCC+). The intake was 330.

Excellent teaching and learning and quality of student experience:

UCC had a 2014 target of creating six online master's programmes; in 2014 they created 12 programmes. They have met their 2015 target. Rather than revising this targets upwards, UCC might have a target of sustaining these programmes.

Under the objective *Improve student satisfaction, engagement and employability*, UCC's 2014 interim target was to maintain an 86% student satisfaction score in the UCC student survey. UCC have exceeded this with an 89% student satisfaction score.

High quality, internationally competitive research and innovation:

Under the objective *Establish SFI Research Centres as a key element of the research landscape in UCC*, UCC's had an interim target of 25 industry contracts. UCC has met and exceeded the targets for 2014 and 2015 (target 50). In 2014 89 industry contracts were in place.

Under the same objective, UCC have a target of 230 doctoral graduates by 2016. Although not a target for 2014, analysis of HEA SRS data for 2014 suggests that UCC have exceeded this target in 2014 – there were 258 graduates.