

Mission-based Performance Compact

2018-2021

between

University College Cork

and

The Higher Education Authority

Date: 30/1/2019



Context

This Compact is an agreement between the Higher Education Authority and Higher Education Institution and is the outcome of a process of strategic and performance dialogue between the two bodies.

The purpose of strategy and performance dialogue is to align the missions, strategies and profiles of individual higher education institutions with national priorities, and to agree strategic objective indicators of success against which institutional performance will be measured and funding allocated.

This Compact demonstrates a shared sense of the balance that is required between institutional autonomy and public accountability and a recognition that a diverse range of strong, autonomous institutions is essential for the overall higher education system to respond effectively to evolving and unpredictable societal needs.

The Compact recognises that Higher Education Institution is an autonomous institution with a distinctive mission, operating within a regional, national and international higher education environment.

The Compact recognises that there is a tension between providing a transparent framework of public accountability for performance in relation to funding, and risks of unintended behaviours related to measurements. It addresses this tension by requiring higher education institutions themselves to propose the qualitative and quantitative indicators against which their performance should be assessed by the Higher Education Authority.

The purpose of this Compact is to provide a strategic framework for the relationship between the Higher Education Authority and Higher Education Institution. It sets out how Higher Education Institution's mission and goals align with national goals for higher education.

This Compact also contributes to creating a transparent and accountable system of administration of State funding. To support this purpose, the Higher Education Authority and Higher Education Institution agree that this Compact will be published.

The principles of State funding support

The principles under which State funding for higher education is provided are:

- Institutional autonomy balanced with public accountability for high quality outcomes; and
- Core funding allocations that are predictable, fair and transparent, and that provide reasonable stability from year to year and in which funding follows the student.

Contents

	Page
1. Establishment of the Compact	4
Provides for the establishment of the Compact and its term, and for the Higher Education Authority to inform Higher Education Institution of any actual or prospective changes to policy.	
2. Performance Funding Framework	5
Sets out the Performance Funding Framework within which the HEA will allocate performance funding to Higher Education Institution.	
3. Mission and Strategy Statement	6
Includes a statement of Higher Education Institution’s mission and strategy. The Higher Education Institution also agrees to inform the Higher Education Authority of changes to its mission and profile.	
4. Development Plans and Objectives	7
Sets out Higher Education Institutions strategic intentions and objectives using standardised templates aligned to the published framework. These strategic intentions / objectives <i>must</i> align with the institution’s own properly formulated strategic plan.	
5. Annual Compliance Statement	9
Where significant or urgent governance or compliance issues arise, an institution may be deemed not to have met the minimum requirements of strategy and performance dialogue.	
6. Agreement	40
Contains confirmation of the agreement between the HEA and Higher Education Institution, to be signed upon conclusion of the strategy and performance dialogue process.	
Appendices	41
Where necessary, this includes additional material supplied by Higher Education Institution, including details of how objectives might be objectively verified. This appendix will include a quantitative data sets developed by the HEA and HEIs over the coming months. Institutions will be required to validate and finalise these institutional baselines by September.	

1. Establishment of the Compact

The Higher Education Authority and Higher Education Institution agree that:

- This Compact consists of this document and the accompanying data report on the performance
- The term of this Compact is from September 2018 to September 2021 unless terminated earlier by agreement

Higher Education Institution acknowledges that policy underlying some or all of this Compact is subject to review by the Minister for Education and Skills or by the Higher Education Authority from time to time. The Higher Education Authority and Higher Education Institution agree that if changes need to be made to the Compact because of such a review, the Higher Education Authority will notify Higher Education Institution of this in writing and will consult with Higher Education Institution accordingly.

2. Performance Funding Framework

Higher education Performance Funding will provide incentives for higher education institutions to improve overall performance in accordance with their own strategies and with their place in the overall system.

Performance Funding will be allocated by the HEA based on performance by reference to high level targets set out in the Framework. Targets must be agreed in strategy and performance dialogue with the HEA. The intention is both to improve the performance of the institution in key areas and to steer the institution closer to its agreed mission and profile and to its position in the overall higher education system. The degree of challenge and of realism inherent in the targets proposed will be evaluated and discussed in strategy and performance dialogue.

The Higher Education Authority and Higher Education Institution agree to review annually the effectiveness of implementation of the strategies and goals for achieving the agreed national and institution outcomes.

3 Mission and Strategy Statement

Higher Education Institution's mission and strategy sets out its values and aspirations, what it does and how it can best serve the interests of its students, staff and key stakeholders. The Higher Education Authority and Higher Education Institution acknowledge that Higher Education Institution's mission and strategy may evolve.

Higher Education Institution and the Higher Education Authority recognise that Higher Education Institution is an autonomous institution that is responsible for determining its mission, its aspirations and its strategies for their achievement.

However, the Higher Education Authority must ensure that together the missions and profiles of the different institutions will lead to overall coherence of the higher education system as a whole and to completeness, ensuring that national needs are being met and without unnecessary duplication.

Changes to the mission and strategy statement

The Higher Education Authority acknowledges that Higher Education Institution may adjust its mission and strategy from time to time. Higher Education Institution agrees that the following will be the subject of strategy and performance dialogue with the Higher Education Authority and may result in a change to the Compact:

- Any significant change that it proposes to make to its mission during the term of the Compact
- Any significant change that it intends to make to its activities that could affect either the content or the practical application of its mission.

UCC Strategic Plan 2017-2022: Context

1. UCC is a research-intensive, student-centred, international top-tier university ranked in the top 2% of universities worldwide. Since 1849 University College Cork is the comprehensive university of the South of Ireland. Today UCC is a globally oriented research-led university providing the full range of disciplines to serve regional, national and international needs. UCC consistently attracts a disproportionately high number of top school leavers and offers a broad range of programmes across the arts, humanities, social sciences, business, law, engineering, architecture, science, food science, medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, nursing and the clinical therapies. UCC is committed to leveraging its strengths through interdisciplinary collaboration to address contemporary challenges.
 2. There are 21,000 students including 2,800 Adult Continuing Education students, 15,000 in undergraduate programmes and 4,400 engaged in postgraduate study and research. UCC's diverse student body includes 3,300 international students representing over 100 countries worldwide. UCC's educational outreach extends across over 40 locations nationwide. The university is one of the larger employers in the region with a staff of 2,800.
 3. UCC prioritises research resources in areas that are recognised as producing research at the highest international levels, with associated significant impact and uptake in the community beyond the university. In particular, UCC's research in food and health, photonics and perinatal medicine is recognised as world leading. Several of Ireland's elite research centres are embedded in UCC including the Tyndall National Research Institute (microsystems, photonics, nanotechnology), the APC Microbiome Institute
-

-
- (alimentary health, functional foods), both recognised as global leaders, and the Environmental Research Institute (climate action, sustainable society and circular economy).
4. While retaining an urban base and a global focus, UCC draws its core identity from a diverse spread of community, industry, arts and heritage relationships extending throughout its Munster hinterland, from the Irish Sea to the Atlantic Ocean. UCC is located at the second largest natural harbour in the world and in the heartland of Ireland's energy, food, pharmaceutical and ICT industries: 25% of national energy needs are produced in Cork and eight out of ten of the world's top pharmaceutical companies are located in Munster. Munster is the most productive dairy producing region in the world and Ireland's top four food companies are located in the province.
 5. UCC's regional affinity is particularly crystallised in a mutual engagement with the diverse Irish-speaking districts in the region. These Gaeltacht districts of counties Waterford, Cork and Kerry are recognised by UCC as forming an essential component of the university's heritage, and as constituting an integral part of the identity that it seeks to develop through creative partnerships. UCC is committed to its obligations under the Official Languages Act (2003), to maintaining Irish as a matriculation requirement as affirmed by the Governing Body in 2009 and to the preservation of the Irish language and the Gaeltacht as set out in the 20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010-2030.

UCC Strategic Plan 2017-22: Vision, Mission, Values and Priorities

6. UCC's Strategic Plan 2017-2022, 'Independent Thinking, Shared Ambition' is available [here](#). UCC's vision is 'To be a leading university of independent thinkers' and the university's mission is 'the creation and sharing of knowledge and its application for the good of all'. UCC's core values guide and underpin its actions and its processes:
 - creativity
 - responsiveness
 - transparency
 - strength of scholarship
 - freedom of expression
 - integrity
 - equality
 - diversity
 - respect
 7. UCC's strategic goals are to:
 1. Implement an academic strategy to deliver an outstanding, student-centred teaching and learning experience with a renewed, responsive, research-led curriculum at its core.
 2. To be a leading university for research, discovery, innovation, entrepreneurship, commercialisation and societal impact.
 3. Create value for our community through an international outlook and a capacity for informed and creative engagement on local and global issues.
 4. Attract, develop, support and retain staff of the highest quality and thereby ensure a diverse staff all of whom are enabled to reach their full potential.
 5. Strengthen our infrastructure and resource base.UCC will embrace open inquiry and exploratory risk across and between the entire breadth of disciplines of sciences, health, social sciences, law, business and the humanities; prioritise teaching and learning for students in an environment that provides space for thought for staff and students (who learn at their own pace and chart
-

their own path); strengthen the local voice on global challenges; and create an infrastructural and capital plan to deliver on the academic mission through provision of spaces and staff that facilitate interdisciplinarity.

By embedding a strong quality enhancement ethos university-wide, we will use our quality processes to ensure a culture and experience of best practice in the delivery of our academic mission, thereby demonstrating our commitment to continuous evolution and improvement.

8. The following are the priority actions of UCC's Strategic Plan 2017-22
 1. Our students and their learning experience are our highest priorities. We will deliver an innovative, differentiated academic mission committed to scholarship and education at the frontiers and margins of inquiry. It will connect with the region's industry and community; partner with leading institutions worldwide and prioritise teaching and learning for students in an environment that provides space for thought for staff and students, who learn at their own pace and chart their own path. We will increase student numbers by 2,000, from 21,000 to 23,000.
 2. The student experience will be strengthened by completing an ambitious programme to expand UCC's facilities. Space across our campuses will be increased by 20%. We will develop our Student Hub to support our innovative academic mission while adding 600 new student accommodation spaces and developing a new world-class outdoor sports facility. Our campus expansion will be designed to enhance the integration and collaboration across disciplines and these will include the completion of the new Clinical Medical School, Dental School, Cork University Business School, Life Sciences and Engineering buildings and phase one of the Space and Infrastructural Plan for the humanities and social sciences, including the Creative Hub. We will begin construction of improved facilities for the School of Law and the UCC library. We plan to upgrade and remodel existing facilities to state-of-the-art standards including the Kane Science Building. Our ambitions include the development of the Health Innovation Hub Ireland building at the Cork Science and Innovation Park.
 3. We will enable our staff to pursue excellence in research, teaching and learning. We will deliver a renewed and responsive research-led curriculum and we will strengthen UCC's research excellence and impact. We will pursue specific strategic academic appointments and the development of the next generation of research leaders. We are committed to achieving the aims of the Athena SWAN Charter and to the advancement of gender equality in academia. We will position UCC as the location of choice to attract and retain the most talented staff.
 4. Active regional and national engagement is central to our plan. We will engage with communities and we will strengthen Cork as a city of learning. We will continue to deepen our partnership with CIT and with other education providers including the further education sector. We will continue to work at a national level to increase the capacity of the Irish higher education system to operate in a competitive globalised environment.
 5. International engagement and internationalisation of the university will be reinforced by strengthening and leveraging the global UCC alumni network and by partnering with a select number of leading international universities; and by creating a culture of mobility and globalism. We will recruit an additional 700 non-EU and 400 EU students to increase the number of international students from 3,300 to 4,400.
 6. We will increase earned income from philanthropy by €100m over the period of the plan and we will generate new sources of income.
-

4. Development Plans and Key System Objectives

Section summary

Institutions are required to set out a description of their proposed approach to deliver on each of the six key system objectives, with reference to the national targets as set out in the Framework.

- Institutions should detail a maximum of two institutional strategic priorities under each of the six framework headings.
- Each strategic priority should be accompanied by a description of the strategic initiatives, currently being implemented, or to be implemented over the three-year timespan of the compact (academic years 2018–2021).
- These strategic initiatives should be described with reference to the high-level targets as set out in the framework.

Objective 1	Providing a strong talent pipeline combining knowledge, skills & employability which responds effectively to the needs of our enterprise, public service and community sectors, both nationally and regionally, and maintains Irish leadership in Europe for skill availability
Objective 2	Creating rich opportunities for national and international engagement which enhances the learning environment and delivers a strong bridge to enterprise and the wider community
Objective 3	Excellent research, development and innovation that has relevance, growing engagement with external partners and impact for the economy and society and strengthens our standing to become an Innovation Leader in Europe.
Objective 4	Significantly improves the equality of opportunity through Education and Training and recruits a student body that reflects the diversity and social mix of Ireland's population
Objective 5	Demonstrates consistent improvement in the quality of the learning environment with a close eye to international best practice through a strong focus on quality & academic excellence
Objective 6	Demonstrates consistent improvement in governance, leadership and operational excellence.

4.1 Key System Objective 1

Providing a strong talent pipeline combining knowledge, skills & employability which responds effectively to the needs of our enterprise, public service and community sectors, both nationally and regionally, and maintains Irish leadership in Europe for skill availability.

High Level Targets:

1. Increase to 10% the number of those aged 25-64 engaged in lifelong learning by 2020 and to 15% by 2025 National Skills Strategy Target; current base line is 6.7%;
2. Increase the numbers of HE entrants studying on a flexible basis by 25% by 2021 (baseline 2016/17 20% or 45,018 of total enrolments are flexible learners);
3. Increase tertiary attainment among 30-34 years olds to 60% by 2020 (52.9% 2016);
4. All students will have the opportunity to undertake a work placement or work-based project as part of their course by 2025 (baseline to be established and tracked);
5. Introduce Employability Statements for all disciplines in all HEIs by 2020 (baseline to be established and tracked);
6. Increase number of available Springboard places by 30% by 2021 in both universities and institutes of technology;
7. Double target to 9,000 annual new apprenticeship registrations by 2020 (over 4,500 in 2017) with 78 separate apprenticeships in place;
8. Increase the proportion of the higher education cohort studying a foreign language, in any capacity, as part of their course to 20% by 2026 (new baseline to be established and tracked);
9. Achievement of the targets in the new ICT Action Plan.

Strategy summary

Please provide details of a maximum of two institutional strategic priorities Higher Education Institution has identified under Key System Objective 1. Each strategic priority should include a description of the strategic initiatives, with reference to the above high-level targets, that Higher Education Institution is currently implementing or will implement over the three-year timespan of the compact (academic years 2018-2021).

This should reference the benchmarks by which the objectives have been set. Further supporting evidence, with regard to the means of verification, should be provided in the appendices.

Please note any external factors or assumptions that might affect institutional progress towards stated development objectives.

Strategy summary:

UCC comprehensively addresses System Objective 1 under Goal 1 of UCC's Strategic Plan 2017-2022. This goal and its associated strategies are set out as follows:

Goal 1: Implement an academic strategy to deliver an outstanding, student-centred teaching and learning experience with a renewed, responsive, research-led curriculum at its core.

Strategies

Our strategies to achieve this goal are to:

- Deliver inspired teaching, learning and assessment excellence, informed by world-class research, delivered by staff who are supported to continually develop professional practice.
- Promote and strengthen the university's research mission through the curriculum.
- Position interdisciplinarity as a core academic mission of the university.
- Create credit-bearing opportunities for all students to access a breadth of learning and develop graduate attributes, including opportunities for students to engage with the creative arts and with language learning and discovery.
- Ensure flexibility in the delivery of our programmes, strengthen the provision of online programmes and enhance access to lifelong learning and greater CPD opportunities.
- Collaborate with partner institutions in joint programmes and embed external engagement in programme development, delivery and student learning in support of the institutional engagement strategy.
- Provide ambitious programmes to support and challenge outstanding students.
- Create, extend and sustain external relationships such as with the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning and the Regional Skills Forum.
- Further develop a strong culture of student engagement to continue to embed the student in institutional decision making.
- Continue our commitment to widening participation and enhancing access for all students, fostering an inclusive environment that mainstreams diversity and equality.
- Deliver strong student-focused support services which address the wellbeing and welfare of students.
- Enhance sports and recreation facilities to give all students a greater opportunity to participate.

UCC is committed to developing new and stronger relationships with employers, professional bodies, industry and the community in framing responses to local and global issues through the academic portfolio, educational outreach and social, cultural and community projects.

UCC's future plan is informed by the university's performance during the five years of the previous strategic plan 2013-17. During this period, UCC has demonstrated an enduring and robust commitment to its core academic goals of providing excellent opportunities for students:

1. UCC enhanced its reputation as a leading Irish university for student experience. Attention to first-year students has seen our first year retention rate increase to 92%, a level well above international norms. We increased the number of students participating annually in work placement by 15% and over 4,300 students across 90% of our undergraduate programmes participated in work-based, clinical and international placements in 2017. The percentage of our graduates in employment or further study at 94.5% in 2017 is an historic high level and above average for the sector.
2. In 2014 we introduced the Quercus Talented Students' Programme aimed at supporting and promoting excellence in academia, sport, creative and performing arts, active citizenship and innovation/entrepreneurship for both prospective undergraduate students and students already registered in UCC. In 2017, the Quercus Academic Scholarships were expanded to include postgraduate students.
3. In 2015, we established the Cork University Business School (CUBS) to strengthen business education and research in UCC and in 2016 the university successfully completed its largest recruitment campaign in a single area, appointing ten new professors to CUBS. In 2016, UCC acquired the iconic Cork Savings Bank building on Lapps Quay in the heart of Cork city and its refurbishment will provide the university with a dedicated facility for the delivery of executive education. Also in 2016, UCC acquired the Irish Management Institute (IMI) following seven years of a successful strategic alliance. In 2018 IMI became the first Irish executive education provider to be simultaneously listed on both the Customised and Open global rankings, published by the Financial Times (FT). The IMI is the only Irish business institute to be ranked among international providers of

customised executive education in the 2018 Financial Times executive education rankings. IMI is ranked 61st globally for the provision of customised executive education, 29th in Europe and 10th in the UK and Ireland. IMI is ranked 78th globally, 40th in Europe and 8th in UK and Ireland for Open Enrolment programmes in 2018.

4. UCC strengthened the interface between disciplines by creating significant new interdisciplinary learning opportunities for students through the BA in Digital Humanities and Information Technology, the BA in Criminology and the BCL (Law and Business).
5. We have strengthened our collaboration with education partners in the region. In 2015, UCC partnered with CIT, IT Tralee, the Education and Training Boards and employer organisations to establish the South West Regional Skills forum to collaborate in meeting the skills needs of the region. In 2015, UCC signed a memorandum of understanding to advance the UNESCO Declaration on Building Learning Cities with Cork City Council, CIT and Cork Education and Training Board. The Learning City initiative saw Cork host the UNESCO International Conference on Learning Cities in 2017.
6. In a tripartite alliance between UCC, CIT and the Irish Naval Service, we have worked to develop the potential of Cork Harbour as a world-leading location for marine and energy research. In 2015 UCC completed the development and staffing of the Beaufort Building, part of the ERI, and home of the MaREI centre at the harbour. In 2016, the School of Law launched an LLM in Marine and Maritime Law in collaboration with the Irish Naval Service, an LLM in Environmental and Natural Resources Law and established a Centre for Law and the Environment.
7. UCC is a partner in the Campus Engage National Network to promote civic and community engagement as a core function of Irish higher education. Led by the seven Irish universities and Dublin Institute of Technology, Campus Engage enables staff and students across all disciplines to engage with the needs of the community. Based on a 2016 survey, two thirds of UCC staff are active in civic engagement working with over 200 organisations locally on community-based research, community-based learning, volunteering and knowledge exchange activities. In 2016 UCC exceeded our target of completing 50 projects under the Community-Academic Research Links (CARL) initiative to facilitate students undertaking research projects that address 'real world' issues submitted by local civil society organisations. As a unique aspect of civic engagement our junior conferring initiative has opened up the doors of UCC to over 70,000 primary school children including 50,000 in the last five years alone.
8. UCC's greatest contribution to enterprise and society lies in its significant output of graduates annually. The university has enabled national economic growth and recovery by graduating 31,000 students between 2012 and 2016, including 11,000 at postgraduate level and over 1,100 doctoral graduates. By 2014 the employment rates for UCC's graduates had fully recovered to the peak experienced in 2006. With 6,500 graduates in 2017, UCC now produces over 1,500 more graduates annually than it did in 2012 while achieving unprecedented rates of graduate employment.
9. The economic impact of the university amounts to approximately €850m annually and the presence of the UCC's 25,000 students and staff in Cork city supports over 14,700 jobs in the local economy annually. The university has attracted a third of its 2,800 staff from overseas, and these, together with UCC's international students, have contributed to the diversification of Cork's population, so that the city now has Ireland's most international population as a proportion of its total.
10. The university has aligned its programmes with the national skills agenda through the completion of 57 successful government-funded, HEA Springboard programmes that provide training and learning opportunities for jobseekers to up-skill or re-skill in areas where skill deficits exist.

Institutional Strategic Priority 1

Strengthen world-ready graduate skills by engaging collaboratively with employers through the Regional Skills Forum and other forums, creating innovative interdisciplinary programmes across the Colleges of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Science; Business and Law; Medicine and Health; Science,

Engineering and Food Science and introducing degree structures that embed greater opportunities for extended work placements (Goal 1, Action 3).

High Level Target in Framework

1. All students will have the opportunity to undertake a work placement or work-based project as part of their course by 2025 (baseline to be established and tracked);
2. Introduce Employability Statements for all disciplines in all HEIs by 2020;

Baseline

1. UCC has 62 undergraduate programmes: 39 have compulsory placement (62.9%) and 19 have optional placement (30.6%).
2. 4,300 students across 90% of our undergraduate programmes participated in work-based, clinical and international placements in 2017 (*baseline to be updated*)

Initiatives 2018 - 2021

1. Deliver deeper active learning experiences by embedding meaningful student-involved research in all undergraduate programmes and integrating practical skills development through a combination of placements, university-wide modules and an improved laboratory experience for STEM students (Goal 1, Action 2). The following undergraduate programmes with work placement will be introduced by 2021:
 - 2018/19 BSc Data Science and Analytics
 - 2018/19 BA (Hons) (Psychology and Computing)
 - 2019/20 BAgSc (Hons) – Bachelor of Agricultural Science

Work to develop 4 year concurrent education degrees BEd Gaeilge (potentially for 2020/21); and BEd Science (potentially for 2021/22)

2. Take all necessary measures to achieve and maintain high status international accreditation and international recognition including advancement of Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) accreditation for Cork University Business School. (Goal 1, Action 6)
3. Further develop Cork University Business School (CUBS) and successfully maximise the integration of the IMI within UCC to significantly enhance and broaden executive education offered to graduates and industry. Develop and implement the UCC-IMI integration plan.
4. Respond to the crisis in teacher-supply by collaborating closely with the Department of Education & Skills (DES) in setting out a plan of action that will enable UCC to increase student intake and the range of subjects offered, in line with public need.
5. Develop a UCC Student Success Strategy. The development and implementation of a University wide Student Success Strategy will enable UCC to take a whole of institution approach to student success. This strategy will provide a framework under which existing work can be document and shared in addition to setting out key priorities and actions for the university in the years ahead. Priorities and actions will be complemented by a number of on-going developments, the appointment of a Head of Access and Participation and a Head of Student Life, along with the developments under the Connected University Programme. The Connected University Programme is a five year investment programme in our student and academic services that will create a truly connected university. This programme of work is informed by the goals and actions of the university's strategic plan, 2017 – 2022, and will deliver change and improvement through a number of individual strands. There are four strategic aims to the programme:
 1. Develop an academic strategy to deliver an outstanding, student-centred education with a research-based curriculum at its core.

2. Upgrade, modernise and integrate student data records and management systems to provide an efficient and effective administration service to staff and students.
3. Create a central, accessible, modern space for staff and students that promotes connection and collaboration in the new Student Hub building.
4. Enhance the student experience by transforming student service delivery to optimise services to students which were previously delivered in different locations across campus.

UCC welcomes the leadership of the Teaching and Learning Forum in the development of guidelines and principles underpinning a Student Success Strategy.

Note: Dependencies and Risks

The capacity of UCC to respond to the teacher-supply crisis is heavily dependent on actions, outside of UCC's control, to be taken by the DES and HEA in relation to the academic and administrative issues related to the Professional Masters in Education (PME) and undergraduate concurrent education programmes. There are a number of resource impediments that need to be addressed as a priority in order for UCC to succeed. These are:

- a) The attractiveness of teaching as a profession due to current terms and conditions.
- b) The length of time it takes to qualify to join the profession. *Concurrent teaching degree is 4 years and consecutive pathway is 6 years.*
- c) The prohibitive fees for the postgraduate route to teaching. *Can these be supplemented by the HEA in some way?*
- d) The applied nature of the course of studies in teacher preparation, which has implications for staff-student ratio, space and overheads. *[The current Staff Student Ratio needs to be reduced from 28:1 to 15:1 as prescribed by the Teaching Council Accreditation documents]*
- e) The dependency of the university on stakeholder support for school placement

The Staff Student ratio is the most pressing issue, in terms of resources. It may make sense at this point to request that the HEA weighting of student teachers on campus might be adjusted upward to help resource the teaching of these students. It costs more to educate them due to the applied nature of the teaching degree.

4.2 Key System Objective 2

Creating rich opportunities for national and international engagement which enhances the learning environment and delivers a strong bridge to enterprise and the wider community.

High Level Targets:

1. Increase the output value of internationalisation to €1.15bn per annum by 2020 (International Education Strategy baseline €819m in 2014/15);
2. International students to represent 15% of full-time students by 2020. (In 2016/17, 11.6% of all fulltime students in HEA-funded higher education institutions were international students);
3. Progress towards Bologna target of at least 20% of those who graduate in 2020 to undertake a study or training period abroad;
4. Number of innovation vouchers project agreements with industry to increase by 12% by 2020 (487 in 2016);
5. Increase number of commercially relevant technologies (licences, options, assignments) by 20% by 2020 (163 in 2017);
6. Increase number of spin-outs established during the year by 40% by 2020 (Innovation 2020 target, 29 in 2014);
7. Improve Employer satisfaction rates with HEI collaboration with enterprise by 25% as tracked in National Employer Survey (companies < 50 employees – 55% rated collaboration as good/very good; companies with 51 – 250 employees – 60% and companies > 251+ employees – 75%);
8. Participation in Erasmus+ in Higher Education and other Study and Work Placements Abroad to reach 4,400 by 2022 (3,135 in 2016) in accordance with international strategy.

Strategy summary

Please provide details of a maximum of two institutional strategic priorities Higher Education Institution has identified under Key System Objective 2. Each strategic priority should include a description of the strategic initiatives, with reference to the above high-level targets, that Higher Education Institution is currently implementing or will implement over the three-year timespan of the compact (academic years 2018-2021).

This should reference the benchmarks by which the objectives have been set. Further supporting evidence, with regard to the means of verification, should be provided in the appendices.

Please note any external factors or assumptions that might affect institutional progress towards stated development objectives.

Strategy summary:

UCC comprehensively addresses System Objective 2 under Goals 2 and 3 of UCC's Strategic Plan 2017-2022. These goals and their associated strategies relevant to this National System Objective are set out as follows:

Goal 2: To be a leading university for research, discovery, innovation, entrepreneurship, commercialisation and societal impact

Our strategies to achieve this goal that are relevant to System Objective 2:

- Foster relationships with institutions to drive the commercialisation of research and technology transfer, through mechanisms such as licensing, patents, creating spin-out companies and supporting external start-up companies.
- Promote the engagement of all students and staff with entrepreneurial thinking.
- Work closely with the IMI to maximise the benefits of the merger for CUBS, the university and executive and business education in Ireland.
- Improve UCC's position as a provider of choice for research consultancy services in key areas.

Goal 3: Create value for our community through an international outlook and a capacity for informed and creative engagement on local and global Issues

Our strategies to achieve this goal are to:

- Support communities in their own engagement with local and global issues by making knowledge widely available, and by encouraging purposeful enquiry and debate.
- Act as an independent, articulate voice in public debate while working closely with government in playing a prominent role in setting the future agenda for higher education within Ireland and Europe.
- Elevate our civic and community engagement activity towards being more connected, visible and engaged.
- Strengthen the external recognition of UCC as a significant international base of advanced research, teaching, innovation and thought leadership which benefits society in terms of community, social and economic advancement.
- Develop new and stronger relationships with employers, professional bodies, industry and the community in framing responses to local and global issues through the academic portfolio, educational outreach, social, cultural and community projects.
- Act as a catalyst for change and creativity, sparking new connections, partnerships, practices, and exchange of ideas and expertise.
- Enhance cultural participation and interaction nationally and within the region and community to raise the profile of the visual, performing and creative arts and cultural heritage.
- Promote linguistic diversity in the university and the city.
- Promote and protect the Irish language.
- Build upon existing universities and agency links within the European Higher Education Area to develop a deeper strategic engagement with the evolving political, policy and funding landscape.
- Collaborate with other Irish universities and the regional higher education system in the context of relevant national initiatives.
- Support the continued development of learning communities and support Cork in the light of its designation as a UNESCO Learning City.
- Develop strategic alliances with other internationally-minded peer universities, with a particular focus on Asia, Europe, the Americas and the developing world.
- Enliven global alumni networks to stimulate a more active relationship and commitment to the university in volunteering, fundraising and provision of expertise to the university community.
- Take advantage of the potential of digital technologies to engage existing and new communities locally and internationally and promote the distinctive educational, social and cultural capital of the university.

UCC's future plan with regard to System Objective 2 is informed by the university's performance during the five years of the previous strategic plan 2013-17. During this period, UCC has demonstrated significant progress:

1. Since 2013, 15 high-potential start-up (HPSU) companies were established arising from UCC's investment in research bringing the total number of Gateway UCC companies created to 40 and the total number of jobs created to 240. Over 200 jobs have been created in graduate start-up

companies through UCC's IGNITE Graduate Business Innovation Programme since 2012. IGNITE's innovative approach and proven outcomes were recognised by the European Commission at the European Enterprise Promotion Awards in 2016. In 2015 we established The Entrepreneur Ship, the world's first business incubator dedicated to marine and energy companies (MaREI Centre) and in 2016 the Blackstone LaunchPad was established providing students, staff and alumni with support towards venture creation. An entrepreneurship education module, 'New Venture Creation' is now available to all students and is oversubscribed.

2. Partnership in the commercialisation of research and technology transfer is now enabled through the Bridge Network Consortium of UCC, Cork Institute of Technology (CIT), Institute of Technology Tralee and Teagasc established in 2016.
3. UCC is a partner in the Campus Engage National Network to promote civic and community engagement as a core function of Irish higher education. Based on a 2016 survey, two thirds of UCC staff are active in civic engagement working with over 200 organisations on community-based research, community-based learning, volunteering and knowledge exchange activities. In 2016 UCC exceeded its target of completing 50 projects under the Community-Academic Research Links (CARL) initiative to facilitate students undertaking research projects that address 'real world' issues submitted by local civil society organisations. As a unique aspect of civic engagement our junior conferring initiative has opened up the doors of UCC to over 80,000 primary school children including 50,000 in the last five years alone.
4. Between 2013 and 2015 UCC successfully piloted and delivered a demonstrator Health Innovation Hub to enable job creation in medical technology and healthcare small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in partnership with government agencies. The Hub leveraged industry expertise in developing products and services to improve outcomes and lower costs in national healthcare delivery. This resulted in UCC being chosen as the location for the national Health Innovation Hub Ireland in 2015.
5. Since 2013, UCC has signed 365 new industry research contracts and co-authored 364 publications with 100 corporations¹. Significant industry partnerships included research partnerships with multinational and indigenous companies in the financial services, information and communication technology (ICT), pharmaceutical, food, medical devices and healthcare sectors.
6. UCC is an active participant in Cork Innovates, a partnership with local authorities, Cork Chamber, CIT and the Local Enterprise Offices to support and enable entrepreneurship and business start-up success in the Cork region. The hosting by Cork Innovates of the Global Start-up Nations Summit in November 2016, a first for Europe, was a significant achievement for the partnership.
7. UCC has been successful in attracting greater numbers of international students and the proportion of UCC students who have travelled from outside Ireland increased from 12% to over 16% in the 2012-2017 period. We further internationalised the curriculum through the introduction of programmes including the BA World Languages and the BA International.

Institutional Strategic Priority 1

Embed internationalisation more deeply and sustainably into the university's identity by increasing the quantity, quality and diversity of international students, enabling the increased internationalisation of the curriculum and strengthening the culture of global mobility, inbound and outbound, for students and staff. Increase the number of students studying abroad in the EU Erasmus programme and with exchange partners outside the EU in UCC's wide range of partner institutions worldwide. (Goal 1 Action 5)

¹ Source: SciVal

High Level Target in Framework

1. Increase the output value of internationalisation to €1.15bn per annum by 2020 (International Education Strategy baseline €819m in 2014/15);
2. International students to represent 15% of full-time students by 2020. (In 2016/17, 11.6% of all fulltime students in HEA-funded higher education institutions were international students);
3. Progress towards Bologna target of at least 20% of those who graduate in 2020 to undertake a study or training period abroad;
8. Participation in Erasmus+ in Higher Education and other Study and Work Placements Abroad to reach 4,400 by 2022 (3,135 in 2016) in accordance with international strategy.

Baseline

1. In 2017/18 (March 1 census data) UCC had 3,410 international students representing 16.1% of the student population (source: UCC ITS Student Record System). (*Comment: UCC's data is a comprehensive metric including visiting, JYA and exchange students. Comparative data for other HEIs for this metric is not available nationally*)
2. UCC had 378 study abroad students in 2017/18
3. UCC's University Management Team has approved an internationalisation strategic review completed in December 2018, from which further baselines will be established and specific initiatives will be recommended.

Initiatives 2018 – 2021

1. Increase the number of students studying abroad in the EU Erasmus+ programme and with exchange partners outside the EU by 10% each year to 2021, as follows:
 - 415 in 2019
 - 456 in 2020
 - 500 in 2021
2. Take advantage of the potential of digital technologies to engage with existing and new communities locally and internationally and promote the university's educational, social and cultural capital. We will do this through:
 - the procurement of a new Virtual Learning Environment (2018)
 - the development of a Digital Hub for students (2019 and 2020).Increase the number of international students studying at UCC by 400 in the 2018-2021 period.

Note: Rationale for the increase of 400 international students as requested by the HEA:

The University Strategic Plan includes a commitment to recruitment of an additional 700 non-EU and 400 EU students to increase the number of international students from 3,300 to 4,400. This increase is linked to growth targets set out in national strategy. The Action Plan for Education sets a target of growing international student numbers by 33% by 2020. The International Education Strategy sets a further target of having international students represent 15% of total student population, in accordance with international best practice, by increasing the numbers of international students in HEIs by 33% by the end of the 2019/2020 academic year.

The growth scenario which was included in the University Strategic Plan was based on the assumption that the funding model for higher education would change over the implementation period i.e. that the recommendations of the Cassells Report would be adopted and in that context the recruitment of additional EU undergraduate students would become part of the financial strategy for the University.

As previously advised in the Strategic Dialogue Process enrolment planning has been identified as a priority action in the University Academic Strategy (launched in December 2018). Priority Five in the Academic Strategy is to “establish a student enrolment plan that aligns with student recruitment targets”.

The objective of this priority is to establish an enrolment plan that will be designed to achieve the desired size and shape of our student body through adopting a more strategic approach to recruitment. We are now working to set out clear recruitment targets to achieve the desired balances of undergraduate versus postgraduate students, of EU versus international student intake, of full-time versus part-time students, of well-represented versus underrepresented students. We acknowledge the need to align our curriculum offerings with demand and that there will be some rationalisation of modules. Therefore, enrolment planning and curriculum updating are exercises that will take place simultaneously. We are only at the very starting point of these exercises and it will be some time yet before we have more up-to-date enrolment projections and in this context the figures set out above may change.

Institutional Strategic Priority 2

Drive the commercialisation of research and technology transfer, through mechanisms such as licensing, patents, creating spin-out companies and supporting external start-up companies. Establish 12 additional investment-ready high potential spin-out companies between 2018 and 2021.

High Level Target in Framework

5. Increase number of commercially relevant technologies (licences, options, assignments) by 20% by 2020 (163 in 2017);
6. Increase number of spin-outs established during the year by 40% by 2020 (Innovation 2020 target, 29 in 2014);

Baseline

1. 26 licences, options and assignments in 2017
2. UCC established 13 Spinout companies in the 4 years up to and including 2017

The latest national benchmark data is available at

http://www.knowledgetransferireland.com/About_KTI/Reports-Publications/KTI-Review-and-Annual-Knowledge-Transfer-Survey-AKTS-2017.pdf

Initiatives 2018 – 2021

1. Develop the university’s research and knowledge-creation capital infrastructure to enable greater engagement with enterprise through the advancement of the expansion of the Tyndall National Institute (as outlined in NPF 2040) and the construction of the first building on the Cork Science and Innovation Park (CSAIP) to include a facility for Health Innovation Hub Ireland.
2. Lead a national consortium of strategic partners in the Bridge Network Consortium (together with CIT, IT Tralee and Teagasc) to deliver excellence in knowledge transfer and to create 12 additional high potential spin-out companies from UCC research (4 per year) between 2018 and 2021. Achieve the following licences, options and assignments:
 - 28 in 2019
 - 29 in 2020
 - 31 in 2021.

4.3 Key System Objective 3

Excellent research, development and innovation that has relevance, growing engagement with external partners and impact for the economy and society and strengthens our standing to become an innovation Leader in Europe.

High Level Targets:

1. Increase of 500 new postgraduate research enrolments in disciplines aligned to enterprise and other national needs by 2020. (baseline 2,235 in 2014/15);
2. Increase by 30% the number of funded postdoctoral positions in disciplines aligned to enterprise and other national needs by 2020. (Innovation 2020 target);
3. Double overall Higher Education research income derived from industry to €48m (Innovation 2020 target - €24m in 2014);
4. Increase research projects between enterprise and the public research system by 20% by 2020 (2014 Baseline is 878);
5. Secure HEI Horizon 2020 target of €550m in funding by 2020 (over €200m secured by end of 2016);
6. Increase applied research in the Institutes of technology.

Strategy summary

Please provide details of a maximum of two institutional strategic priorities Higher Education Institution has identified under Key System Objective 3. Each strategic priority should include a description of the strategic initiatives, with reference to the above high-level targets, that Higher Education Institution is currently implementing or will implement over the three-year timespan of the compact (academic years 2018-2021).

This should reference the benchmarks by which the objectives have been set. Further supporting evidence, with regard to the means of verification, should be provided in the appendices.

Please note any external factors or assumptions that might affect institutional progress towards stated development objectives.

Strategy summary

UCC comprehensively addresses System Objective 3 under Goal 2 of UCC's Strategic Plan 2017-2022 and the institution's Research & Innovation Strategic Plan for the same period. This goal and its associated strategies relevant to this National System Objective are set out as follows:

Goal 2: To be a leading university for research, discovery, innovation, entrepreneurship, commercialisation and societal impact

Our strategies to achieve this goal that are relevant to System Objective 3:

- Prioritise research resources in areas that are producing research at the highest international levels while investing in new and emerging areas where we have the potential to lead.
- Consolidate cognate research activities through clustering to establish critical mass in organised research units while enabling the individual researcher.
- Promote and support large scale interdisciplinary research projects and new emerging areas of research that are consistent with national and international priorities; support leading

researchers working in groups or individually and researchers at all scales and stages of activity.

- Develop innovative strategic and infrastructural supports for interdisciplinary research.
- Nurture an infrastructural and policy environment that maximises the research potential of all UCC researchers and ensures the highest level of compliance with research ethics.
- Consult and agree a discipline appropriate framework or set of indicators for the capture and evaluation of societal impact.
- Achieve national leadership in our key strategic research areas, as defined by measures of research impact, according to disciplinary norms and impact on policy at national and EU levels.
- Leverage national investments in research through participation in, and leadership of, large research projects at European level.
- Improve the international profile of UCC as a centre of excellence for research training and ensuring that UCC is a location of choice for internationally competitive junior and senior researchers.
- Increase the proportion of research funding from non-exchequer sources, specifically targeting prestigious funding sources, EU funding and industry sources.
- Further enhance the quality of doctoral education to ensure graduates are prepared for a wide range of successful careers.
- Partner with Irish and international institutions to deliver excellence in research.

UCC's future plan with regard to System Objective 3 is informed by the university's performance during the five years of the previous strategic plan 2013-17. During this period, UCC has demonstrated significant progress:

1. UCC competitively secured research funding of €100 million in 2017, representing a 27% increase over the last 5 years and an historic high for the institution. In the same period UCC has diversified research funding sources achieving a 36% increase in earned non-exchequer income to €30 million in 2017. UCC continues to focus its research strategy on facilitating world-class research in major Centres of Excellence. In 2013, Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) announced the SFI Research Centres Programme, the largest joint state/industry research investment in Irish history. Of the seventeen SFI-supported Centres, UCC leads four, co-leads one and is partner in eight others with a total SFI investment of over €100 million awarded to UCC. UCC also leads, or is a partner in, the six SFI Centres that were awarded Phase 2 funding in 2018.

Our success in securing European Union (EU) Horizon 2020 funding continues above the EU average. As of March 2018, UCC had secured €54 million under the Horizon 2020 programme.

According to HEA data in 2017, UCC continues to secure Ireland's highest level of research funding per academic. Indeed, over €1 billion of research funding has been secured by UCC researchers since 2005.

2. UCC completed its second university-wide research quality review in 2015 to assess the quality of its research output and performance to internationally recognised standards. This comprehensive exercise was notable in its scale, involving the recruitment of senior international peer experts: 15 Panel Chairs, 69 Disciplinary Vice Chairs and 245 remote reviewers. 97% of the reviewers were international with 49% of reviewers drawn from Russell Group universities. The research peer review evaluation scores demonstrated that the percentage of high scoring units producing research of international quality had increased by 13% between 2009 and 2015. Graduate education emerged as an area of particular strength achieving the highest unit scores showing that over two-thirds of the units reviewed are competitive globally on this parameter.
3. In 2013 UCC was conferred with the European Commission's 'HR Excellence in Research Award' accreditation reflecting the significant progress by the university in supporting researchers, including the introduction of structured PhD programmes and the implementation of the University Employment and Career Management Structure for Researchers. In 2018 UCC became the first Irish university to secure renewal of this award.

Institutional Strategic Priority 1

Position UCC as the location of choice to attract and retain the most talented researchers at all career stages, from early career PhD students to world leading Principal Investigators, and provide research and infrastructural supports that nurture the next generation of research leaders.

High Level Target in Framework

1. Increase of 500 new postgraduate research enrolments in disciplines aligned to enterprise and other national needs by 2020. (baseline 2,235 in 2014/15);
2. Increase by 30% the number of funded postdoctoral positions in disciplines aligned to enterprise and other national needs by 2020. (Innovation 2020 target);

Baseline

1. Relevant Doctorate Research Enrolments (2017/18): 667
2. Relevant Postdoctoral Positions (total as of May 2018): 222

Initiatives 2018 – 2021

1. Implement career progression structures that attract and retain high performing researchers including steps to address gender inequalities in research careers.
2. Develop and implement support initiatives that increase the excellence and impact of UCC research outputs. Introduce interventions and appropriate incentivisation (embedding research excellence and innovation impact as a core component of academic promotion and appointment criteria) to recognise high impact publication and research excellence across all disciplines.
3. Develop a series of research and infrastructural supports that empower university researchers to achieve their ambition and to nurture a new generation of Research Leaders. This will include providing 'up-and-coming' Researcher Leaders with the time and space to develop their careers including the provision of proactive support for their engagement with prestigious programmes like the European Research Council (ERC). As part of their career development, spending a period of time abroad in research centres of excellence will also be encouraged.
4. Increase the number of post-doctoral positions from 222 (May 2018) to 310 in 2021 based on research funding opportunities including SFI programmes, the IRC Postdoctoral Fellowship Scheme, and the Marie Curie IF and COFUND programmes. It should be noted that the baseline metric provided (222) includes some disciplines that are not aligned to enterprise and therefore the proposed 40% increase is significantly more ambitious than the 30% target nationally. The number of post-doctoral positions projected to increase as follows:
 - 251 in 2019
 - 280 in 2020
 - 310 in 2021

Increase total relevant doctorate enrolments from 667 to 867. The proposed increase of 200 enrolments within UCC represents 40% of the overall national target of 500. Given the national funding landscape, it is realistic to anticipate that the majority of the proposed increase will be in disciplines relevant to industry, especially in the context of UCC's track record in delivering effective engagement with the enterprise sector. The number of doctorate enrolments projected to increase as follows:

- 722 in 2019
- 787 in 2020
- 867 in 2021

The overall projected increase in postgraduate research enrolments will be cognisant of the University's Academic Strategy 2018-2022, launched in December 2018, and the priorities therein. The newly appointed Dean of Graduate Studies will work with the four Colleges to ensure that the planned increased recruitment of research (Doctoral and Masters) versus taught postgraduates, the ratio of undergraduates to postgraduates and the balance of EU and non-EU continues to be in alignment with our strategic priorities going forward.

5. Improve the international profile of UCC as a centre of excellence for researcher training via further enhancement of the quality of doctoral education by providing tailored structured training, support and environment to students including national and international linkages where appropriate, and by ensuring that the University provides the best practices and quality of supervision possible.
6. Renew UCC's Human Resources Excellence in Research Award from the European Commission in 2021 (subject to European Commission assessor availability).

Note: Dependencies and Risks

- Uncertainties due to Brexit.

Institutional Strategic Priority 2

Increase UCC's capacity to deliver impact in society, the economy and the community, and meet national economic, societal and cultural development needs through the coherent delivery of innovation and co-creation initiatives.

High Level Target in Framework

3. Double overall Higher Education research income derived from industry to €48m (Innovation 2020 target - €24m in 2014);
4. Increase research projects between enterprise and the public research system by 20% by 2020 (2014 Baseline is 878);
5. Secure HEI Horizon 2020 target of €550m in funding by 2020 (over €200m secured by end of 2016);

Baseline

1. In 2016/17, UCC secured €10.6 million from industry sources, a 123% increase over 5 years
2. In 2016/17, UCC initiated 106 research projects with the enterprise sector
3. As of March 2018, UCC researchers have secured 107 Horizon 2020 awards (38 as coordinator and 69 as partner). The total financial drawdown amounts to €54 million.

The latest national benchmark data for 1 and 2 above is available at

http://www.knowledgetransferireland.com/About_KTI/Reports-Publications/KTI-Review-and-Annual-Knowledge-Transfer-Survey-AKTS-2017.pdf

Initiatives 2018 – 2021

1. Progress UCC-led SFI Research Centres to Phase 2 funding to maximise the opportunity for enhancing industry engagement with the university. Increase annual research funding from industry sources to €12m by 2021 and the number of research projects with the enterprise

sector to 110. Research funding from industry sources and research projects with the enterprise sector to increase as follows:

- €11.3m and 107 research projects in 2019
 - €11.6m and 108 research projects in 2020
 - €12m and 110 research projects in 2021
2. Implement measures to ensure that the University's Horizon 2020 funding success rate continues to perform above the EU average. Increase the total funding secured under H2020 to €100m.
 3. Implement incentives and support initiatives that enable the UCC research community to proactively engage with government, professional organisations and community engagement initiatives, including CARL (Community-Academic Research Links) and Campus Engage, to deliver social, cultural and policy-relevant impact.
 4. Undertake a qualitative and quantitative evaluation of the impact of collaborative projects with industry and their conversion to licensing outcomes.

4.4 Key System Objective 4

Significantly improve the equality of opportunity through education and training and recruits a student body that reflects the diversity and social mix of Ireland's population.

High Level Targets:

1. All HEIs will have a Student Success Strategy in place by 2020 which will embed whole-of-HEI approaches to institutional access strategies;
2. Implement new data initiatives and indicators to support the development and implementation of evidenced based National Plans for Equity of Access by 2019;
3. Implement the strands of the Programme for Access to Third Level (PATH) Fund to support the implementation of the National Plan for Equity of Access 2015-2019;
4. Sustain the expansion from underrepresented groups with 2,000 additional enrolments from socioeconomically disadvantaged groups and 1,000 from Further education access programmes;
5. Increase in enrolments from DEIS schools by ensuring that every such school will be participating in a HEI led access programme;
6. Completion rates for students from disadvantaged cohorts will be specifically targeted for improvement.

Strategy summary

Please provide details of a maximum of two institutional strategic priorities Higher Education Institution has identified under Key System Objective 4. Each strategic priority should include a description of the strategic initiatives, with reference to the above high-level targets, that Higher Education Institution is currently implementing or will implement over the three-year timespan of the compact (academic years 2018-2021).

This should reference the benchmarks by which the objectives have been set. Further supporting evidence, with regard to the means of verification, should be provided in the appendices.

Please note any external factors or assumptions that might affect institutional progress towards stated development objectives.

Strategy summary:

UCC addresses System Objective 4 under Goal 1 of UCC's Strategic Plan 2017-2022. This goal and its associated strategies relevant to this National System Objective are set out as follows:

Goal 1: Implement an academic strategy to deliver an outstanding, student-centred teaching and learning experience with a renewed, responsive, research-led curriculum at its core.

Under this goal, the UCC strategy that is relevant to System Objective 3 is to:

- Continue our commitment to widening participation and enhancing access for all students, fostering an inclusive environment that mainstreams diversity and equality.
1. UCC's commitment to Access and Widening Participation has been a central feature of UCC's Strategic Plans to date.

UCC's Disability Support Service (DSS) provides support to over 1300 students with disabilities and is a core element of the Access Programme in UCC. The Service works to increase access and participation of students with disabilities and specific learning difficulties by delivering a very proactive and innovative pre entry programme. There are three strands to the Pre Entry Outreach Programme:

- **Disability Access Route to Education (DARE)**
UCC is part of the national DARE third level admissions scheme for school leavers with disabilities and specific learning difficulties. A special quota of places is reserved in all undergraduate degree programmes in UCC for students deemed eligible under the DARE scheme. In 2017/18, UCC admitted 255 students eligible under the DARE scheme up from 190 on entry in 2013/14. The total number of students registering with the DSS in 2017/18 was 404 - an increase from 2015/2016 of 74%.
- **Assistive Technology (AT) Outreach Programme**
This enhances access and transition to UCC for students with disabilities/learning difficulties by increasing awareness of the role of AT in enabling students to maximise their potential. It provides hands-on training and support to students, parents, teachers and special needs assistants (SNAs) to support and encourage students to use AT in school, when completing homework and for exams. School based training is also provided to try to encourage a whole school approach to assistive technology in secondary schools. The programme has developed a partnership with the Cork Education Support Centre to deliver a range of evening training sessions to meet the needs of SNAs and teachers.
- **Summer and Easter Schools for students with Sensory and Physical Disabilities, Asperger's syndrome and those with a Specific Learning Difficulties**
UCC's DSS links with the Visiting Teacher Service and Special Educational Needs Organisers to identify students with disabilities in both primary and second level who would benefit by participating in DSS summer, mid-term and Easter workshops. The events are aimed at creating a culture of ambition amongst young students with disabilities.

UCC's Mature Student Office (MSO) works with full-time undergraduate students who are over the age of 23 on 1 January on the year of entry to third level. In 2016/17 there were 1,016 mature students registered in UCC. UCC sets aside a quota for the mature student entry route on all undergraduate degree programmes. There is a separate quota for QQI FET links and students who undertake the particular UCC Adult Education programmes are exempt from the Mature Student Admissions Pathway entrance assessment when applying for progression to the Bachelor of Social Science in Youth and Community Work. Mature Student can enter UCC through four distinct pathways:

1. Mature Student Entry Route
2. QQI Links (Further Education route)
3. Leaving Certificate Points
4. UCC Adult Education Progression

The UCC PLUS+ Programme is a core element of the Access Programme in UCC. It aims to increase the number of young people from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds accessing and succeeding in University. There are three central strands to the work of the UCC PLUS + Programme:

- an outreach programme
- a special admissions route, HEAR, and
- a post entry support programme in UCC.

UCC PLUS+ has an extensive outreach programme linked to primary schools in Cork City, and 32 second level schools in Cork, Kerry and Waterford. The programme works with DEIS schools, identified as having low progression rates to third level. UCC PLUS+ endeavours to increase the number of students from non-traditional backgrounds progressing to third level by offering a wide range of targeted attainment and aspiration raising activities. These activities are designed in

consultation with schools and take place on the University campus and in schools. In 2016/17, two new outreach initiatives were developed in conjunction with UCC's linked schools:

- **LearnSmart** – Learning Skills workshop. This is an independent learning skills workshop to teach First Year students how to begin to become independent learners. This workshop includes thinking skills, organisational skills, discovering learning styles, using technology to aid study, self-management skills and overcoming obstacles. The workshop is fun and engaging using active and collaborative teaching methodologies. The workshop is delivered by UCC staff and Student Ambassadors.
- **Primary School – Design a Book Mark Competition.** In an effort to create a college going culture in DEIS primary schools, 5th class students (10, 11 year olds) are encouraged to get creative and design a bookmark on the theme of going to College. Students from 16 DEIS schools participated in the initiative, with five finalists having their efforts recognised with prizes and a reception in UCC on World Book Day.

In 2017/18, UCC admitted 255 students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds eligible under the HEAR scheme.

The University recognises that students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds need targeted support while undertaking their studies. Accordingly, it has designed a comprehensive package of support services including financial, academic, personal and social supports. UCC has found that retaining UCC PLUS+ Programme students in University is significantly enhanced by providing them not only with continuous guidance and mentoring but also with a financial bursary each year; these bursaries are financed considerably by private donations to the University. The retention and success rate of UCC PLUS+ students remains on par with the general student population.

Over 1,100 students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds supported by the UCC PLUS+ Programme have graduated from UCC since the programme commenced in 1996. 96% of these students have graduated with honours.

2. The evolution of the Qualifications and Quality Authority of Ireland Further Education and Training (QQI FET) entry route has been an important feature in UCC's widening participation agenda in recent years as set out in the previous Performance Compact. In the 10 years to 2017, the intake of students to UCC via the QQI Further Education and training (FET) entry route increased from 35 to 242, now representing almost 7% of all new entrants. The number of degree programmes at UCC that can now be accessed on the basis of holding a recognised FET qualification has grown from 2 in 2002 to 41 in 2018. The students admitted through this entry route in 2017 come from almost 50 Further Education Colleges and UCC is now the leading university nationally for intake of students through this route.
3. In 2018, 23% of UCC's student intake was through access routes. We continue to exceed national targets for part-time and flexible education primarily through our Centre for Adult and Continuing Education (ACE) and in 2017/18 25% of new undergraduate entrants were enrolled on part-time courses.

Institutional Strategic Priority 1

Build on UCC's Access strengths to date by further widening participation and enhancing access for all students, fostering an inclusive environment that mainstreams diversity and equality.

High Level Target in Framework

2. Implement new data initiatives and indicators to support the development and implementation of evidenced based National Plans for Equity of Access by 2019;
3. Implement the strands of the Programme for Access to Third Level (PATH) Fund to support the implementation of the National Plan for Equity of Access 2015-2019;
4. Sustain the expansion from underrepresented groups with 2,000 additional enrolments from socioeconomically disadvantaged groups and 1,000 from Further education access programmes;
5. Increase in enrolments from DEIS schools by ensuring that every such school will be participating in a HEI led access programme;

Baseline

2017/18 Access Intake through Access admissions routes: 23%

UCC has a demonstrable record of accomplishment and substantial professional expertise in promoting equity of access and the provision of services which address the needs of non-traditional learners through outreach, post entry support initiatives, scaffolding of transitions between second and third level and further education and third level and development of flexible learning pathways that suit part-time and mature students. Limitations in information technology infrastructure have restricted the capacity to utilise all available data sets rigorously to thoroughly analyse performance in the above areas.

Initiatives 2018 - 2021

1. Strengthen UCC's evidence base for widening participation through the development of a data strategy for Access. Utilise data available from the Pobal HP Deprivation Index to better understand the socio-economic profile of students, and to enhance targeting of outreach and engagement activities.
2. Develop a new UCC Student Records System that facilitates opportunities for improved data connectivity, assessment of performance and analytical capabilities across the entirety of the student life cycle.
3. Recruit a Director of Access in 2018/19.
4. Deliver PATH Strand 1 (Initial Teacher Education New Avenues to Teaching (NAT) Project) to linked DEIS schools and to students from non-DEIS schools who fit the designated target groups, to encourage secondary school students from these groups to consider teaching as a viable and real career option. Establish targeted supports to enable UCC to change the student mix and profile in initial teacher education programmes including the provision of financial support scheme for students using a responsive personalised process.
5. Deliver PATH Strand 2 – 1916 Bursary Fund: The Regional Partnership comprising UCC, CIT IT Tralee, WIT and IT Carlow was awarded 35 bursaries each for 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20. Deliver on the seven bursaries awarded to UCC annually.
6. Deliver PATH Strand 3 – Higher Education Access Fund: The Regional Partnership comprising UCC, CIT IT Tralee, WIT and IT Carlow was awarded funding of €1.6million over 3 years for the SOAR project (Scaffolding Aspirations, Achievement and Access through Evidence-Based, Peer-to-Peer, Community-Embedded Mentoring). One of the key outcomes of the SOAR project is the development of structures that will enable the sharing of best practice across the partner institutions resulting in synergies in the development of new initiatives. The SOAR project

includes three initiatives identified to operationalise the southern HEI partnership-based approach.

The new PATH 3 initiatives are focused on increasing access for the most marginalised of students. The PATH funding will augment the focus on Travellers, students with physical and sensory disabilities, lone parents and communities experiencing marginalisation. A target of 80 additional students over the 3 years has been set. Given the challenges faced by these cohorts, it will be a significant achievement to reach this target.

7. Increase the number of students progressing from DEIS Schools into Further Education and on to Higher Education through implementation of a new innovative support programme for students from DEIS Schools attending post leaving certificate colleges in Cork City in collaboration with Cork ETB.
8. Achieve 25% student intake through Access Admission routes of UCC's total increased student intake (UCC's total student population is planned to increase from 21,000 in 2018 to 23,000 in 2022) as follows
 - 23.5% intake in 2019
 - 24% intake in 2020
 - 25% intake in 2021

4.5 Key System Objective 5

Demonstrate consistent improvement in the quality of the learning environment with a close eye to international best practice through a strong focus on quality & academic excellence.

High Level Targets:

1. Implement from 2018 Continuous Professional Development Framework for all academic staff in all HEIs;
2. All HEIs to engage in International benchmarking by 2020;
3. Improve problematic non-progression rates by 10% (overall baseline of 15% for 2014/15);
4. Improve non-progression rates in STEM disciplines by 10% (differing discipline baselines);
5. All HEIs to have in place policies for digital teaching and learning by 2019;
6. The HEA will develop guidelines to steer the process of total quality management, in line with best international practice.

Strategy summary

Please provide details of a maximum of two institutional strategic priorities Higher Education Institution has identified under Key System Objective 5. Each strategic priority should include a description of the strategic initiatives, with reference to the above high-level targets, that Higher Education Institution is currently implementing or will implement over the three-year timespan of the compact (academic years 2018-2021).

This should reference the benchmarks by which the objectives have been set. Further supporting evidence, with regard to the means of verification, should be provided in the appendices.

Please note any external factors or assumptions that might affect institutional progress towards stated development objectives.

Strategy summary

In UCC's Strategic Plan 2017-2022, the university has declared its commitment to a comprehensive quality enhancement approach, inclusive of all aspects of its activities, by embedding a strong quality enhancement ethos and using "our quality processes to ensure a culture and experience of best practice in the delivery of our academic mission, demonstrating our commitment to continuous evolution and improvement".

UCC addresses System Objective 5 primarily under Goals 1 and 4 of UCC's Strategic Plan 2017-2022. These goals and their associated strategies relevant to this National System Objective are set out as follows:

Goal 1: Implement an academic strategy to deliver an outstanding, student-centred teaching and learning experience with a renewed, responsive, research-led curriculum at its core.

Our strategies to achieve this goal are to:

- Deliver inspired teaching, learning and assessment excellence, informed by world-class research, delivered by staff who are supported to continually develop professional practice.
- Promote and strengthen the university's research mission through the curriculum.
- Position interdisciplinarity as a core academic mission of the university.
- Create credit-bearing opportunities for all students to access a breadth of learning and develop graduate attributes, including opportunities for students to engage with the creative arts and with language learning and discovery.
- Ensure flexibility in the delivery of our programmes, strengthen the provision of online programmes and enhance access to lifelong learning and greater CPD opportunities.
- Collaborate with partner institutions in joint programmes and embed external engagement in programme development, delivery and student learning in support of the institutional engagement strategy.
- Provide ambitious programmes to support and challenge outstanding students.
- Create, extend and sustain external relationships such as with the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning and the Regional Skills Forum.
- Further develop a strong culture of student engagement to continue to embed the student in institutional decision making.
- Continue our commitment to widening participation and enhancing access for all students, fostering an inclusive environment that mainstreams diversity and equality.
- Deliver strong student-focused support services which address the wellbeing and welfare of students.
- Enhance sports and recreation facilities to give all students a greater opportunity to participate.

Goal 4: Attract, develop, support and retain staff of the highest quality and thereby ensure a diverse staff all of whom are enabled to reach their full potential

Our strategies to achieve this goal are:

- Develop the organisation to ensure that the university is governed with the highest possible levels of responsiveness, efficiency and flexibility.
- Value and include all categories of staff as one collegial community working towards the best interests of the university.
- Strengthen leadership and management capacity throughout the organisation.

- Further improve consultation and engagement with staff through effective transparent communications.
- Improve service delivery and support to academic staff by re-organising administrative and support functions and by creating more efficient and effective administrative processes.
- Continue to develop and retain the best staff by providing them with a positive and safe working environment.
- Strengthen the recruitment process, supported by the latest technology, to identify and appoint the best staff available on the global market prioritising staff with significant international experience.
- Provide a dynamic and supportive research environment which will enhance our position as a leading research university.
- Engage with Government to deliver a human resource toolkit that is fit for purpose to attract, develop and retain excellent staff.
- Enhance support to all staff through improved induction, employee wellbeing programmes and by professional development.
- Maximise the potential for a stable working contract across all of our staff.
- Develop improved career structures, including research career paths, in line with national policy.
- Continue commitment to facilitating positive engagement with staff and staff representative organisations thus contributing to a continuing positive climate of employment.
- Renew commitment to principles of fairness, equality of opportunity and respect for all and implement the Athena SWAN Charter Principles in our policies, practices, planning and culture.

UCC's future plan with regard to System Objective 5 is informed by the university's performance during the five years of the previous strategic plan 2013-17. During this period, UCC has demonstrated significant progress:

1. In 2015 UCC established the Centre for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning to consolidate its initiatives to enhance the quality of teaching at UCC. UCC is now a leader in this field with over 70% of academic staff at UCC holding an accredited National University of Ireland (NUI) qualification in Teaching and Learning. Building on UCC's strong eLearning capacity, UCC is the first and only institution in Ireland to offer online and flexible study options for continuing professional development (CPD) for higher education teaching staff. In 2017 UCC became a member of the first European Learning and Teaching Forum which aims to lead policy development on changing learning landscapes.
2. Significant progress has been made towards effecting change for gender equality. In 2016 UCC became the third Irish university to attain an Athena SWAN award and work is now underway to implement UCC's three-year Athena SWAN action plan. This builds on other equality initiatives at UCC, including the Aurora Leadership Development Programme and the GENOVATE EUFP7 Project, and particularly GENOVATE's Gender Equality Action Plan for UCC.
3. UCC is breaking new ground in developing a model approach for universities to implement the new public sector duty. This is a new statutory duty, created under the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014, that requires public bodies – including universities – to include equality and human rights considerations in carrying out their functions.
4. UCC established an Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Unit reporting to the Deputy President and Registrar to lead on policy development and implementation, coordinate the provision of equality related services, and to promote equality diversity and inclusion across all of the university functions. The EDI Unit provides a robust infrastructure and leadership for planning, coordinating and delivering UCC's equality initiatives.

Institutional Strategic Priority 1

Strengthen the Continuous Professional Development Framework for all academic staff at UCC

High Level Target in Framework

1. Implement from 2018 Continuous Professional Development Framework for all academic staff in all HEIs

Baseline

1. An integrated and online professional development programme is available for all staff who teach [Postgraduate Certificate (30 credits), Diploma (30 credits) with access to a face-to-face Masters in Teaching & Learning in Higher Education (60 credits)].
2. 70% of staff who teach have achieved the Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education.
3. Supplementary development opportunities are available to all staff, including post-doctoral students, through an extensive programme of teaching and learning seminars, digital byte-sized session on digital pedagogy, as well as two modules for doctoral students on structured PhD, with access for Masters students on request.
4. Based on March 2018 benchmark data (research by UCC staff in the Centre for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning) UCC is the only higher education institution in the country with a fully integrated, online postgraduate certificate and diploma in Teaching & Learning in Higher Education.
5. A Learning Taxonomy has been developed to maximise the full development of a spectrum of learning opportunities from face to face to online.

Initiatives 2018 - 2021

1. Building on the University's introduction of a digital badging framework in 2017/18, enhance staff development by extending digital badging to include a badge in Universal Design for Learning.
2. Strengthen the alignment of CPD for staff with quality enhancement and quality culture, through the Office of the Vice President for Learning and Teaching engaging in a pilot of the new method of quality review in 2018/19.
3. Continue to strengthen the integration of research, teaching and learning through supporting staff research and scholarly output in relevant disciplinary journals and other international fora on the basis of 6 publishable papers per year.
4. Evaluate the alignment of existing programmes and module offerings in line with the Learning Taxonomy and ensure that new programme development is informed by the Taxonomy.

Institutional Strategic Priority 2

Implement an improved and comprehensive quality enhancement approach at UCC

High Level Target in Framework

2. All HEIs to engage in International benchmarking by 2020;
6. The HEA will develop guidelines to steer the process of total quality management, in line with best international practice.

Baseline

1. At an institutional level, UCC has identified its benchmark and comparator universities as follows: University of Southampton, University of Edinburgh, Leiden University, Aarhus University, University of Otago, Queen's University Belfast, NUIG, UCD, and TCD. See Appendix.
2. The institutional quality review framework in place for education, research and allied services, is based on international expert peer review and benchmarking model and complies with the QQI national quality assurance guidelines. The University has already committed to developing further its quality culture and processes through a focus on enhancement. In 2017/18 it piloted the identification and external peer validation of Case Studies of Good Practice for Enhancing Student Learning as part of the academic quality review method. It also set out a Quality Enhancement Policy (2018) as a reference point in furthering its enhancement focused activities. Arising from this policy, a 360 review of the current academic quality review method is underway.

Initiatives 2018 – 2021

1. Refine and pilot a revised academic quality review method in 2018/19 with increased emphasis on enhancement of student learning as set out in the 2015 European Standards Guidelines and 2018 update (ESG: 1.3). Pilot a revised model for professional/support services review in 2019/20, to be followed by the development of a revised research quality model arising from the outcomes of previous whole institution Research Quality Reviews (2009 & 2015). Develop and implementation evaluation framework for effectiveness of all reviews 2020/2021.
2. Enhance external benchmarking approaches to improve self-evaluation activities, implementation and monitoring of quality review outcomes from 2018/19 by providing contemporary benchmarking resources for academic and professional units. From 2019/20 extend methodology to broaden benchmarking reference points, including relevant external disciplinary and service benchmarks such as programmed/ institutional accreditation (e.g. AACSB accreditation/ Athena Swan). Internal benchmarking and peer validation of 6-8 published Case Studies of Good Practice for enhancing students' learning per year. By 2020/21, a repository of 25 Case Studies accessible internally and disseminated externally to support excellence in the student learning environment.
3. Develop UCC's unique commitment to the active participation of students across the University's quality processes. In 2018/19 roll out Digital Badges for Quality Peer Reviewers to recognise students' engagement as Reviewers based on successful assessment of the expertise, transversal skills and advocacy outcomes demonstrated by students, awarding 8-10 badges per year. By 2019/20 implement a Student Quality portal to support enhanced student engagement in quality processes and to provide opportunities for co-creation in quality policies and processes. In 2020/21 evaluate student participation in quality, and update in light of international practices and outcomes achieved at UCC.

4.6 Key System Objective 6

Demonstrate consistent improvement in governance, leadership and operational excellence.

High Level Targets:

1. Implementation of the 2018 Higher Education Gender Equality Task Force Action Plan and the 2016 Expert Group recommendations;
2. HEIs to have attained an Athena SWAN bronze institutional award by 2019 (TUs within 3 years of establishment);
3. All HEIs to submit their annual Governance Statements to HEA on time;
4. 100% compliance by HEIs with public procurement rules;
5. Draft annual financial statements to be submitted by HEIs to C&AG within stipulated C&AG guidelines;
6. Full transparency in HEI financial statements about accounting for Trusts and Foundations;
7. 100% compliance by HEIs with public pay policy;
8. 100% compliance by HEIs with public sector numbers controls;
9. Implementation of recommendations from rolling governance reviews;
10. HEA will develop individual compacts with the HEIs which reflect the overall ambitions of the System Performance Framework and local/regional opportunities;
11. Institutional strategic compacts will be assessed by a panel of experts, including international participants, to assess their coherence and capacity for delivery.

Strategy summary

Please provide details of a maximum of two institutional strategic priorities Higher Education Institution has identified under Key System Objective 6. Each strategic priority should include a description of the strategic initiatives, with reference to the above high-level targets, that Higher Education Institution is currently implementing or will implement over the three-year timespan of the compact (academic years 2018-2021).

This should reference the benchmarks by which the objectives have been set. Further supporting evidence, with regard to the means of verification, should be provided in the appendices.

Please note any external factors or assumptions that might affect institutional progress towards stated development objectives.

Strategy summary:

In UCC's Strategic Plan 2017-2022, the university sets out its commitment to good governance, leadership and operational excellence with the statements that: "University College Cork acknowledges the fundamental importance of good governance across the Institution, to the proper delivery of its services to students, its role in society and its delivery on this strategic plan.

The highest standards of governance are expected of the university community in all its endeavours. The university will constantly strive over the course of this plan to ensure increasing levels of responsibility, accountability and transparency.”

As set out under Key System Objective 5 above, in UCC’s Strategic Plan 2017-2022, the university has declared its commitment to a comprehensive quality enhancement approach, inclusive of all aspects of its activities, by embedding a strong quality enhancement ethos and using “our quality processes to ensure a culture and experience of best practice in the delivery of our academic mission, demonstrating our commitment to continuous evolution and improvement”.

UCC addresses System Objective 6 primarily under Goals 1, 4 and 5 of UCC’s Strategic Plan 2017-2022. These goals and their associated strategies relevant to this National System Objective are set out as follows:

Goal 1: Implement an academic strategy to deliver an outstanding, student-centred teaching and learning experience with a renewed, responsive, research-led curriculum at its core.

Our strategies to achieve this goal are to:

- Deliver inspired teaching, learning and assessment excellence, informed by world-class research, delivered by staff who are supported to continually develop professional practice.
- Promote and strengthen the university’s research mission through the curriculum.
- Position interdisciplinarity as a core academic mission of the university.
- Create credit-bearing opportunities for all students to access a breadth of learning and develop graduate attributes, including opportunities for students to engage with the creative arts and with language learning and discovery.
- Ensure flexibility in the delivery of our programmes, strengthen the provision of online programmes and enhance access to lifelong learning and greater CPD opportunities.
- Collaborate with partner institutions in joint programmes and embed external engagement in programme development, delivery and student learning in support of the institutional engagement strategy.
- Provide ambitious programmes to support and challenge outstanding students.
- Create, extend and sustain external relationships such as with the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning and the Regional Skills Forum.
- Further develop a strong culture of student engagement to continue to embed the student in institutional decision making.
- Continue our commitment to widening participation and enhancing access for all students, fostering an inclusive environment that mainstreams diversity and equality.
- Deliver strong student-focused support services which address the wellbeing and welfare of students.
- Enhance sports and recreation facilities to give all students a greater opportunity to participate.

Goal 4: Attract, develop, support and retain staff of the highest quality and thereby ensure a diverse staff all of whom are enabled to reach their full potential

Our strategies to achieve this goal are:

- Develop the organisation to ensure that the university is governed with the highest possible levels of responsiveness, efficiency and flexibility.
- Value and include all categories of staff as one collegial community working towards the best interests of the university.
- Strengthen leadership and management capacity throughout the organisation.
- Further improve consultation and engagement with staff through effective transparent communications.
- Improve service delivery and support to academic staff by re-organising administrative and support functions and by creating more efficient and effective administrative processes.

- Continue to develop and retain the best staff by providing them with a positive and safe working environment.
- Strengthen the recruitment process, supported by the latest technology, to identify and appoint the best staff available on the global market prioritising staff with significant international experience.
- Provide a dynamic and supportive research environment which will enhance our position as a leading research university.
- Engage with Government to deliver a human resource toolkit that is fit for purpose to attract, develop and retain excellent staff.
- Enhance support to all staff through improved induction, employee wellbeing programmes and by professional development.
- Maximise the potential for a stable working contract across all of our staff.
- Develop improved career structures, including research career paths, in line with national policy.
- Continue commitment to facilitating positive engagement with staff and staff representative organisations thus contributing to a continuing positive climate of employment.
- Renew commitment to principles of fairness, equality of opportunity and respect for all and implement the Athena SWAN Charter Principles in our policies, practices, planning and culture.

Goal 5: Strengthen Our Infrastructure and Resource Base

Our strategies to achieve this goal are to:

- Maximise efficiency and value for money by all initiatives possible.
- Diversify and grow existing non-exchequer funding and identify new innovative funding streams.
- Pursue and connect with donors and alumni to increase philanthropic funding.
- Engage with the government and other stakeholders to create a sustainable funding model for higher education.
- Enhance UCC's sustainability reputation as Ireland's first 'Green University'.
- Integrate ICT systems and develop improved information services across the university.
- Provide effective, transparent and accountable governance.
- Pursue campus development to the highest standards to enhance the UCC experience and to contribute to the cultural attractiveness of Cork.

UCC's future plan with regard to System Objective 6 is informed by the university's performance during the five years of the previous strategic plan 2013-17. During this period, UCC has demonstrated significant progress in improving governance, leadership and operational excellence:

1. In 2015 UCC established the Centre for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning to consolidate its initiatives to enhance the quality of teaching at UCC. UCC is now a leader in this field with over 70% of academic staff at UCC holding an accredited National University of Ireland (NUI) qualification in Teaching and Learning. Building on its strong eLearning capacity, UCC is the first and only institution in Ireland to offer online and flexible study options for continuing professional development (CPD) for higher education teaching staff. In 2017 UCC became a member of the first European Learning and Teaching Forum which aims to lead policy development on changing learning landscapes.
2. In 2014 UCC formally introduced Lean Continuous Improvement methodologies to its process improvement initiatives to deliver on Action 31 of the UCC Strategic Plan 2017-22 to 'Simplify the university's processes by deepening and expanding the active engagement with continuous improvement/lean process improvement methodologies'. Since 2014 240 staff members have been trained (39 staff members received 'Green Belt' training, 86 received 'Yellow Belt' training and 112 received 'White Belt' training). Lean provides staff with a significant opportunity for professional

development and the learning of transferable skills. The initial projects completed by 'Green Belt' staff members result in the following benefits:

- Annual savings of €222,000
 - cycle time reductions of 94%,
 - process defect rates reduced by 67%,
 - process steps reduced by 60%,
 - elimination of paper and significant energy consumption reductions.
2. UCC's commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) is evidenced by the work of its Equality Committee and LGBT Staff Network over the past number of years. The mainstreaming of EDI is now the responsibility of a dedicated EDI Unit with responsibility for Athena SWAN amongst a range of other commitments.
 3. Significant progress has been made towards effecting change for gender equality. In 2016 UCC became the third Irish university to attain an Athena SWAN award and work is now underway to implement UCC's three-year Athena SWAN action plan. This builds on other equality initiatives at UCC, including the Aurora Leadership Development Programme and the GENOVATE EUFP7 Project, and particularly GENOVATE's Gender Equality Action Plan for UCC.
 4. UCC is breaking new ground in developing a model approach for universities to implement the new public sector duty. This is a new statutory duty, created under the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014, that requires public bodies – including universities – to include equality and human rights considerations in carrying out their functions.
 5. UCC established the EDI Unit reporting to the Deputy President and Registrar to lead on policy development and implementation, coordinate the provision of equality related services, and to promote equality diversity and inclusion across all of the university functions. The EDI Unit provides a robust infrastructure and leadership for planning, coordinating and delivering UCC's equality initiatives.

Institutional Strategic Priority 1

Implement the recommendations of the HEA Gender Equality Review.

High Level Target in Framework

1. Implementation of the 2018 Higher Education Gender Equality Task Force Action Plan and the 2016 Expert Group recommendations;
2. HEIs to have attained an Athena SWAN Bronze institutional award by 2019

Baseline

1. Athena SWAN Bronze institutional award achieved (November 2016) and action plan underway.
2. Three Schools applied for Departmental Bronze awards (November 2017).
3. HEA recommendations on gender in key decision-making bodies (1.6), disaggregation of staff data by gender (1.15), and in recruitment, selection and promotion procedures (1.16) are all under development.

Initiatives 2018 - 2021

1. Apply to renew the institutional Athena SWAN award in 2019 and submit three departmental applications for Athena SWAN annually. Submissions from the Schools of Food & Nutritional Science and of Public Health are planned for 2018 and Business Information Systems for April 2019.

2. Complete the pilot Public Sector Duty Assessment on behalf of HEIs for the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission in 2018.
3. Implement a comprehensive equality data collection system for staff and students using voluntary identity data disclosure.

Note: Dependencies and Risks

- There are significant challenges to gaining Athena SWAN accreditation and implementing gender and other equality actions given constraints on University resources and the challenge of ensuring institutional policies and practices are proactive around EDI issues. The resource issue is particularly acute in the area of equality data collection and analysis. UCC needs support to fund a full-time Equality Data Analyst. The appointment of an Equality Data Analyst will ensure UCC successfully renews its Athena SWAN Bronze award in 2019, achieves its annual targets of three Departmental Bronze awards, and creates a comprehensive data infrastructure and evidence base for the University's first ever comprehensive EDI Action Plan.
- The availability of the Department of Education and Skills Gender Equality Task Force Action Plan.

Note: Response to Clarification Sought by the HEA

Constraints on resources, in particular in relation to the lack of a staffed, fit for purpose equality data infrastructure, has historically meant that delivery of Athena SWAN applications is significantly slowed. In terms of infrastructure, it is a challenge to report data in an efficient way for Athena SWAN application working groups, in particular departmental working groups, because the university data capture and information reporting requirements are based on legacy information systems, which were configured in a way as to not ordinarily capture gender specific data. The data required for EDI and specific Athena SWAN requires these core data files to be further interrogated and analysed outside the normal available analysis and report writing tools. In addition, EDI needs include data not routinely captured by existing systems and therefore require investment in manual interventions.

For staff and student gender data, we have been reliant to date on existing data analysts, who do not have sufficient capacity to deliver data in a timely way for Athena SWAN applications, or to support ongoing data queries from those working on applications. Funding has been identified for a full-time Equality Data Analyst for 5 months (Jan-May 2019), based in the EDI Unit to support our institutional Bronze renewal application and to work on building our equality data infrastructure. However, this position requires a more permanent footing. This is a sector wide issue - we propose working closely with the HEA to support sector-wide, comprehensive collection of voluntarily disclosed staff and student equality data across a range of categories, including race/ethnicity.

Ensuring that policies and procedures around EDI are proactive involves a number of different approaches.

- UCC has led a pilot of the Public Sector Duty to promote equality in higher education. We have taken a number of actions as part of this pilot, including the development of a UCC Diversity Calendar which raises awareness of the need for flexibility for staff and students observing particular religious events.
- Data Collection and Action Plan: Comprehensive UCC Staff and Student Equality Surveys were conducted in September-October 2018. This incorporates data collection on staff perception and awareness of policies, and identifies the need for training in particular areas. This data will be used to draw recommendations for our UCC EDI Action Plan regarding supporting the implementation and awareness of existing EDI-focused policies and procedures.
- Policy Review: UCC is currently reviewing the text, implementation and accessibility of Duty of Respect and Right to Dignity Policy and awaits the recommendations of the Minister for Higher Education's Task Force on Sexual Violence in 3rd level in this regard.

- Policy Formulation: UCC recognises the changing societal landscape requires responsive EDI policy action. As one example, the EDI Unit was established in January 2018 and, through a significant process of consultation with staff and students, gained approval for its first Gender Identity and Expression Policy and Guidelines in October 2018.
- Further priorities for policy formulation and review will be identified as part of the UCC Staff and Student Survey analysis process and the development of UCC's EDI Action Plan.

Institutional Strategic Priority 2

Implement an improved effective, transparent and accountable governance model and culture within the University.

High Level Target in Framework

9. Implementation of recommendations from the rolling governance reviews

Baseline

Base position is set out in latest Annual Statement of Governance and Internal Control aligned to the existing code for the University sector.

Initiatives 2018 - 2021

1. Work with the sector and the HEA to implement the recommendations as set out in the Public Accounts Committee Report on the Examination of the Financial Statements for the Third Level Sector.
2. Establish an action plan with allocation of responsibilities and timelines to deliver on all the recommendations by 2021. Specific actions to be delivered in 2018 include:
 - Ensuring all staff are fully aware of their obligations under Standards in Public Office and Ethics in Public Office legislation, and the requirement to declare any real or perceived conflict of interest as set out in recommendation no. R.28 of the above examination. A revised Conflict of Interest Framework will be developed.
 - Provide Full disclosure of Foundations, Trusts transactions and balances in the disclosure notes or as an appendix to the financial statements in line with recommendation R.53.
 - Ensure that all significant advance payments are approved up front by the Head of Finance as per Recommendation R.113.

6. Annual Compliance Statement

The HEA will take into account ongoing compliance with important foundational requirements such as:

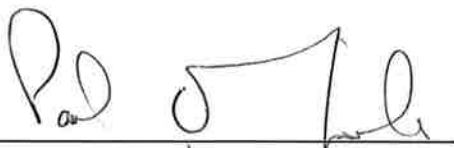
- Statutory quality assurance processes
- Providing an annual statement required under their Code of Governance and with all other requirements of that Code
- Providing details of satisfactory financial outturn, budget and financial plan
- Employment control framework
- Data returns to the HEA.

Where significant or urgent governance or compliance issues arise, such as unacceptable financial deficit, weakness in financial plans or major omissions or delays in returns, an institution may be deemed not to have met the minimum requirements of strategy and performance dialogue.

7. Agreement

To be completed following the conclusion of the strategy and performance dialogue process.

The HEA and Higher Education Institution agree that the mission, planned profile and targets, as set out in the foregoing sections of this Compact, are consistent with the objectives set for the higher education system and are appropriate to the place of Higher Education Institution within the system.

Signed: 

Date: 6/2/2019

Chief Executive, Higher Education Authority

Signed: 

Date: 31.01.19

President, Higher Education Institution

Signed: 

Date: 31.01.19

Chair, Governing Body, Higher Education Institution

Appendices

We (Higher Education Institution) include the following appendices with our performance compact.

List the appendices here:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Appendix 1: Providing a strong talent pipeline combining knowledge, skills & employability which responds effectively to the needs of our enterprise, public service and community sectors, both nationally and regionally, and maintains Irish leadership in Europe for skill availability
<input type="checkbox"/>	Appendix 2: Creating rich opportunities for national and international engagement which enhances the learning environment and delivers a strong bridge to enterprise and the wider community
<input type="checkbox"/>	Appendix 3: Excellent research, development and innovation that has relevance, growing engagement with external partners and impact for the economy and society and strengthens our standing to become an Innovation Leader in Europe
<input type="checkbox"/>	Appendix 4: Significantly improves the equality of opportunity through Education and Training and recruits a student body that reflects the diversity and social mix of Ireland's population
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Appendix 5: Demonstrates consistent improvement in the quality of the learning environment with a close eye to international best practice through a strong focus on quality & academic excellence
<input type="checkbox"/>	Appendix 6: Demonstrates consistent improvement in governance, leadership and operational excellence
<input type="checkbox"/>	Appendix 7: Institutional quantitative data return (September 2018)

Appendix:

1. Monitoring and Reviewing Performance and Progress

UCC monitors and reviews the performance in delivering its strategic plan as follows:

1. An Annual Plan is developed detailing the priority actions for the year. Specific outcomes for each action are detailed and owners for each outcome are identified. Each expected outcome has an owner who is a member of the University Management Team (UMT).
2. Once the Annual Plan is developed and approved each September, the agenda for every UMT Strategy (UMTS) meeting for the year is agreed and set out in advance.
3. UMTS meets every six weeks. In addition to reviewing the progress of the implementation of the Annual Plan, a UMTS meeting is dedicated annually to reviewing progress to the annual targets of UCC's key metrics (key performance indicators).
4. The KPI data is summarised in a 'dashboard' format which includes:
 - the five year trend with the five-year high highlighted in green and the five-year low highlighted in red
 - the trend versus the previous year
 - the performance against the target for the year (green means achieving target)
 - the variance to the target

Detail of the 5-year trend on KPIs is provided in addition to benchmark university data where it is available.

5. The KPIs include performance of the main University outputs:
 - student satisfaction
 - number of graduates
 - graduate degree results
 - graduate employment
 - research outputs
 - spin-out companies

The KPIs also include outputs from other key processes of the University (such as student recruitment, income generation etc.) and performance against the targets set out in the Strategic Plan 2017-2022.

6. An annual report of performance is approved by UMTS and is presented to Governing Body and to the Governing Body Committee on Strategy and Innovation.

2. UCC's Benchmark Universities

Background:

UCC appointed a Director of Strategic Planning & Institutional Research in December 2006. One of the key initial tasks for the appointee was to identify and agree an appropriate set of benchmark universities. This task was initiated on 27 February 2007 with the stated objectives of:

- identifying comparator institutions for UCC
- agreeing on 9 institutions for UCC to use for future benchmarking and comparison of performance

The following needs were to be met:

- To enable benchmarking of performance to be undertaken by providing external comparators to UCC
- To provide a mechanism for monitoring trends to ensure planning in UCC is consistent with best international practice
- To facilitate UCC in leveraging international best practice to improve its KPIs
- To provide UCC with a 'target' group of institutions with which it can further strengthen and develop relationships for mutual benefit

Selection Criteria:

At that time, the criteria for selecting the benchmark universities was agreed in consultation with the President, Heads of College, Deans and Vice Presidents of the University. It was agreed that the selected benchmark universities should:

- Have a similar disciplinary profile to UCC
- Have broadly comparative student numbers, staff numbers and income level
- Be research driven
- Include universities in a regional and second city locations
- Include universities that would 'stretch' UCC to improve its performance
- Have good availability of data
- Be ranked by THES and Shanghai Jiao Tong
- Represent a spread of geographies globally

Process:

The selection process included the following steps:

- Referrals of comparator institutions were sought from staff with experience of international higher education and from the President, Heads of College, Deans and Vice Presidents
- An initial list of 53 referred institutions was identified and these were further discussed through a consultation process with UCC staff with international university experience
- Data was gathered on the 53 institutions
- The selection criteria was applied to identify 9 recommended benchmark universities
- The recommended universities were proposed to the University Management Group for approval

Outcome:

UCC's benchmark universities were agreed on 27 April 2007. The benchmark universities are as follows:

- NUIG
- UCD
- TCD
- QUB
- University of Southampton
- University of Edinburgh
- Aarhus University
- Leiden University
- Otago University

UCC has continued to use its benchmark universities for the purposes stated above. Engagement with the universities has included site visits, tele-conferences, data sharing and frequent discussion. Engagement with the universities has occurred at an institutional level but also frequently at other levels (e.g. a detailed benchmarking of Community Engagement activities is currently underway across the universities listed above).

Benchmarking Performance:

UCC uses the EU funded U-Multirank to assess its performance against its benchmark universities. U-Multirank has the advantage of being non-commercial and includes a more holistic assessment of the performance of universities than found in commercial world-ranking exercises. UCC has provided this comparator data annually in the self-assessment of performance during the previous Performance Compact period.

3. Risk Management

UCC adopts a single risk management approach to managing risks and opportunities for all levels throughout the University as documented in its Risk Management Policy.

This approach informs the University's business processes and facilitates delivery of:

- Strategic & Operational objectives and planning
- Financial planning
- Service planning and provision to students and other stakeholders
- Policy making and review
- Performance management
- Project management
- Partnership working
- Value for money

The University has a Risk Management Committee comprised of senior officers of the University, Academic Council nominees and nominated College/School Managers. The purpose of the University's Risk Management Committee is to:

- ensure the development and implementation of the University's Risk Management Policy
- ensure that appropriate procedures are in place to identify, assess and manage risk from a strategic and operational perspective
- monitor implementation of Risk Management procedures and
- report to relevant stakeholder/oversight bodies within the University including the University Management Team and the Audit Committee of Governing Body.

Approach to monitoring of risks:

- Risk Management Committee
Meets 8 times per year to consider University Risk Register, Functional Area Risk Registers and certain other risk registers of particular importance to the University such as Science Foundation Ireland Centres risk registers and European Investment Bank projects risk registers
- University Management Team (Strategy)
Reviews minutes of every Risk Management Committee meeting and attends periodic Risk Management Workshops
- University Management Team (Operations)
Reviews Red-Extreme risks at every fortnightly meeting
- Governing Body
Reviews Red-Extreme risks (2 per bi-monthly meeting)
Receive an Annual Report via the Audit Committee of Governing Body
- Audit Committee
Receives minutes of every Risk Management Committee meeting
Receives Annual Report of the Risk Management Committee, comments on the Annual Report to Governing Body and makes recommendations for future work of Risk Management Committee