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# University College Cork

## Strategic Dialogue Cycle 4 Reflections on Performance

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### Self-evaluation report – institution overview

*UCC has engaged very successfully with the dialogue process, reflecting the fact that they have used a similar process internally for purposes of strategy setting and internal executive work planning. The university has managed itself successfully through the financial crisis. However, while it has been particularly successful in attracting research funding, it has noted that the underfunding of research overhead causes financial strains within the university, and it's likely that moves such as increases in international student numbers and the acquisition of a private management training institute are attempts to create opportunities for more revenue raising to meet those financial strains.*

#### Institution overview:

Overall the compact provided by UCC was strong. The majority of 'amber' identified objectives was due to not reaching targets by small amounts or due to lack of funding.

The cluster section mainly focusses on collaborations between UCC, CIT and IT Tralee and provides minimal reference to WIT and IT Carlow. This may be due to the geographical issue raised by the university but more could be undertaken to address this issue. The UCC, CIT and IT Tralee connection seems to be strong.

It would be beneficial if the university could provide additional references to specific work plans.

#### **UCC Comment: Collaboration across the Southern Cluster**

1. The Moral Foundations of Economy & Society research centre is a long-standing collaboration between faculty at UCC and WIT to progress the development of interdisciplinary, inter-institutional and international collaborations in research-led teaching. Specific output includes an Economy and Society Summer School, research groupings, publications, external engagement with regional industry, colloquia and masterclasses. It enables on-going research and hosting of discussion groups for approximately 30 doctoral students each year, across economics, sociology, politics, anthropology and business
2. The School of Applied Social Studies UCC is working with the Institute of Technology Tralee, University College Dublin, Trinity College Dublin, Waterford Institute of Technology, Institute of Technology Carlow and Cork Institute of Technology on a National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning funded project to develop the digital capacities of social policy educators.
3. As part of the HEA PATH Strand 1 project, WIT has committed to working with UCC's School of Education to create stronger links and pathways from the IOT sector into teacher education in UCC. Access personnel within UCC, CIT and WIT will assist in the identification of current undergraduate students from the target groups who will be

invited to participate in activities with a view to giving them an opportunity to further explore the area of teaching as a profession. Information on prioritised routes of entry in addition to possible funding will also be made available to prospective students.

4. A revised framework for collaboration in education has been agreed between CIT and UCC and approved in both institutions. There are five UCC-CIT joint degree programmes: BSc Architecture, MArch Architecture, BSc Biomedical Science and BSc Industrial Physics.

## Self-evaluation report - domain level reviews

### 1. Regional clusters:

#### Initial commentary:

The self-evaluation report submitted by UCC notes considerable development from the original baseline of the regional cluster. However, the institution objective to 'Create a formal regional cluster between the named member institutions' is graded amber indicating that the objective established in the original compact has not been fully achieved.

UCC's overarching statement identifies the reasons for the status of the objective as follows:

- Full engagement by all members of the regional cluster with government led initiatives has reinforced collaboration between cluster members but the extent of engagement has also usurped the goals and priorities of the cluster;
- The geographical complexity of the regional cluster has inhibited overall cluster development;
- The makeup of the cluster is constituted by a number of moving pieces characterised by consortia moving toward mergers and TU designation;
- The appointment of a new president to each member of the cluster during the period of self-evaluation also impacted upon the work of the cluster.

#### National Policy Context:

The overarching statement provided by the university emphasises successful collaboration across activities and successfully co-ordinated responses developed by the cluster to national calls and consultations.

Issues specific to meeting 2016 targets were not identified. Rather issues mentioned in the overarching statement are referred to as inhibitors generally impeding all cluster related targets. Greater reflection on ways in which these inhibitors can be addressed in the future would be useful for both the institution and the cluster itself.

The target 'Improve Student Pathways' is identified as having an 'amber' status and, while UCC confirms that all cluster members are involved in initiatives encouraging the ongoing sharing of learning and experience, no specific new examples have been provided in the report.

The objective to 'Improve Student Pathways' has benefitted from engagement with the Regional Skills Forum. The Forum has provided a mechanism for enhancing the relationship between further education (FE) and higher education (HE) providers. The Forum has also brought coherency to the relationship between cluster members.

Notwithstanding the reasons identified in the overarching statement for an amber status, examples of how the overall objective could be achieved in the future or how the Regional Skills Forum could be leveraged further in moving closer to the full target

achievement have not been mentioned.

The role of the Regional Skills Forum and the Regional Action Plan for Jobs has also provided a structure through which shared academic planning has been honed. It may be useful for future compacts to take the extent of engagement with government led objectives and the coherency these initiatives have brought to the cluster into account when establishing targets for subsequent cycles.

Ways in which the economic, social and cultural profile of the region have been enhanced and consolidated have not been identified in relation to the 2016 target. It may be useful to provide evidence of success in the area at both an institutional and regional level. The provision of such evidence could assist in assessing the extent to which government led initiatives provide mechanisms that lend themselves to the broader development of the region and how shared academic planning fits with the institutional strategic plan in the long term.

**UCC Comment:**

The South-West Regional Skills Forum continues to provide a successful vehicle to nurture external engagement in programme design and delivery and enhance inter-institutional collaboration. These are core components of UCC's institutional strategy 2017-2022. Two initial industry-led sectoral groups (South-West Regional Skills Manufacturing Engineering Group and South-West Regional Skills Pharma Biopharma Group) have been established through the South-West Regional Skills Forum to collaboratively work with education/training providers in creating solutions to priority skills needs across the region with a plan to expand out to further industry sectors where demand exists in time.

The Pharma/Biopharma Group established a validation skills group with validation heads/experts from 10 companies and heads of science/engineering departments across UCC, CIT, ITT to collaboratively agree strategies addressing the validation skills gap in the sector. The group are now inputting on validation content on degree programme modules with education to ensure key components are incorporated in a consistent way across all degree programmes. They are also scoping out the design of CPD as a means of upskilling staff within companies. The Manufacturing Engineering Group held a round-table with industry and heads of school to identify key existing and projected skills needs across the sector in the region based on company technology road-maps and subsequent survey to quantify extent and expanse of needs.

The South-West Regional Skills Manufacturing Engineering Group has worked closely with UCC and regional partners in curriculum review to ensure the strongest possible alignment with key needs identified by industry through use of real-world case studies, guest lectures and increased opportunities for work placement at all stage of the degree cycle.

The South-West Regional Skills Pharma Biopharma Group, comprising 20 pharma and biopharma companies in Cork/Kerry, met on three occasions in 2017 where companies updated heads of science departments from ITT, CIT, UCC, ETBs and Skillnets of key existing and projected skills needs based on expansion plans and dominant industry trends. Plans for alignment include guest-lectures, site visit supports and real-life industry scenarios/challenges, soft skills development and best practice modules.

*Critical evaluation and feedback:*

UCC has written a comprehensive overview of their cluster progress. It should be noted that all the targets are returned 'amber' and marked for review. UCC, CIT and IT Tralee submitted identical cluster reviews showing that they are working together. WIT and ITC however are not mentioned in the report and having reviewed their cluster sections do not seem to be included in the dialogue. This may be due to the geographical issues within the clusters which all 5 institutions have commented on.

Cycle 3 feedback refers to the appointment of an independent chair of the cluster group. There is no mention of this in the Cycle 4 report. Challenges in this domain had also been previously highlighted in Cycle 2 and Cycle 3 of the process.

The geographical span and the institutional composition seem to be the main means of performance comparison between the Southern Cluster and other regional clusters in Ireland. Its composition proved challenging within the national policy environment.

IT Tralee has collaborated closely with CIT and UCC on the regional cluster domain, which is reflected with the narrative provided under this domain across the three institutions. A strong engagement with the Regional Skills Forum and the Regional Action Plan for Jobs has been reported by all the three institutions in their compact.

The self-evaluation under the regional cluster domain reflects the ongoing commitment to the cluster and the collaboration activities. However, it is important to note that the institutions would welcome the opportunity to review both configuration and goals of the cluster in the context of the new national performance framework and new institutional compacts.

## 2. Participation, equal access and lifelong learning:

### Initial commentary:

UCC's self-evaluation has assigned a green status to all the institution objectives in this domain. Evidence provided in relation to each target provides a clear trajectory of the institution's strategies in relation to participation, equal access and lifelong learning and identifies the institution's success across all of these targets.

The overarching statement confirms that over one quarter (26%) of UCC's intake in 2016 enrolled via 'access' routes. The institution exceeded targets set for part-time and flexible education with over 25% of new undergraduates enrolled on part-time courses. UCC also provides access to outreach programmes for over 3000 students across 49 locations.

The extent of evidence provided for each category reflects the level of close engagement with set targets and the level of long term planning the institution has invested into this particular domain. The first target to 'Ease student transition to and progression through their undergraduate programme' has increased from a 2010/2011 baseline of 90%, 1<sup>st</sup> year retention rate to 91% retention rate.

The target for 2016 was to maintain this 91% rate. According to UCC's ITS student record system the overall retention rate for 1<sup>st</sup> year enrolments in 2016 was 91.4%; suggesting that the university should consider increasing the target rate for retention in the next compact. A 'Uni-Ready' programme which is being delivered in 2017 should also provide the impetus for the institution to stretch the target retention level for subsequent reporting cycles.

### **UCC Comment:**

The University has set targets of 92% retention for first year and, now additionally, second year students over the course of the University Strategic Plan 2017-2022. In a report by the Irish Times in 2016, the University had the highest retention rates nationally. As the University is committing to increasing its student population by 2,000 over the lifetime of the University Strategic Plan, a 92% retention rate is an increased target.

Target 2 under this domain was to 'increase the number of pathways to level 8 programmes from Further Education Programmes and evolve our policy for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)' has increased from a baseline of '30 FETAC programme linkages with a total quota of 59' to the 2016 target of 'Increase the number of Further Education Colleges to which we are linked.' While the 2016 target is not quantifiable, the institution has increased the entry links to 38 UCC programmes via 82 FETAC linked awards. The intake for 2016/2017 was 180.

The progress specifics made in line with RPL targets are not provided. Provision of evidence as to how RPL has contributed to the increased intake via FETAC linked awards would indicate the extent to which target 2 should be reviewed and possibly increased for subsequent reporting cycles/compacts.

### **UCC Comment:**

One of the outputs of the School of Education 'New Avenues to Teaching (NAT) Project' is to establish targeted supports which will enable UCC to change the student mix and profile in initial teacher education programmes, e.g. development of stronger links with

the IOT sector and other feeder institutions into teacher education in UCC.

UCC continues to evolve its policy for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). In addition, RPL entry exists on several postgraduate programmes including MA in Women's Studies, MA in Local History, MSocSc in Voluntary and Community Sector Management, Higher Diploma in Applied Computing Technology, MA in Creative Writing, MBA, MSc Healthcare Leadership, PG Diploma in Supply Chain Management, MSc Electronic Business and MSc Business Information and Analytic Systems.

Adult and Continuing Education are currently engaged in a pilot project with the Carbery Group in relation to a group of 18 farmers in West Cork who have been taking part in a sustainability project for the past four years entitled the "Carbery Greener Dairy Farm Programme". ACE are working on creating an RPL pathway for these farmers into the Diploma in Environmental Science and Social Policy.

Similar to other targets under this domain, target 3 – *'Support access for socio-economic disadvantaged students, students with disabilities and mature students'*, is returned as achieved. The 2010 /2011 base line shows a mature student intake of 403. The intake target for 2016 was 320. The actual number achieved was 373.

Taking into consideration the impact of the recession, UCC has managed to maintain a high mature student intake. However, the fact that the institution target has been easily exceeded for 2016 suggests that future compacts should consider stretching this target further.

**UCC Comment:**

UCC Access services are committed to maintaining and consolidating this strong performance. The focus in the coming years is ensuring a high-quality student experience for the growing number of Access students and maintaining favourable retention and graduate outcomes. As the University has committed to an increase of 2,000 in total student numbers -- from 21,000 to 23,000 - over the lifetime of University Strategic Plan 2017-2022, the Access services will see the proportionate increase in Access students. The target of 26% in the University Strategic Plan 2017-2022 reflects planned growth.

In terms of overlap in students from FET and Access, as would be expected a proportion of the FET entrants are being supported by the Access Services. In 2016, 26% of FET students were supported by the Access Services.

Targets for the intake of students with a disability (190 in 2016) and UCC PLUS+ students (195 in 2016) were also exceeded by 91 students and 63 students respectively indicating that the institution's targets could be developed further in this area. It would also be useful to view the overlap of data between target 2 and target 3. This overlap could help determine future projections and possibly the extent to which targets can be realistically developed.

Target 4, 'Develop improved opportunities for lifelong learning including continued professional development and executive education in collaboration with the Irish Management Institution and with partners nationally and internationally', is comprised of 4 specific performance indicators, all of which have been achieved.

The 2010/11 baseline included 10 outreach centres and with 453 'ACE' students graduating with a certificate, diploma or masters. The number of outreach centres has

increased to 49 and there are now 3,000 students in the community with 70% of these students accredited to the Irish National Framework of Qualifications. The report also remarks that a large amount of the 70% are in receipt of ECTS with professional accreditation. Further information on the breakdown and how it feeds into targets relating to cluster development and the Regional Skills Fora would be interesting here.

**UCC Comment:**

Adult and Continuing Education's (ACE) suite of continuing education and enterprise engagement programmes is largely driven by demand from industries or sectors. ACE has an established link with the South-West Regional Skills Forum Manager. ACE's link with the Regional Skills Forum was instrumental this year (2017) in designing programmes to meet the needs of regional industry for the Springboard+ funding call. ACE subsequently secured HEA funding for seven UCC programmes and has since filled all available places. The programmes are Certificate in Operator Development, Certificate in Process and Chemical Engineering, Certificate in Procurement Management, Higher Diploma in Advanced Languages and Communication, MA in Digital Arts, Postgraduate Certificate in Bio (Pharma) Processing and Postgraduate Certificate in Project Management.

The institution has developed partnerships with organisations ranging from Cork Prison to UNESCO. The diversity of partnerships provides UCC with the opportunity to work with communities across 190 distinct programmes ranging from Autism Studies to Enterprise Engagement programmes. A new centre for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and CDP Directorate was also established in 2016 to increase, promote and govern CPD across the university showing a clear commitment to continued development and a long-term vision for this particular domain.

**UCC Comment:**

UCC's centre for Adult Continuing Education (ACE) works in close collaboration with Cork Institute of Technology, Cork ETB and Cork City Council as one of the four leaders of the UNESCO learning city project, in Learning Neighbourhoods, in the Cork Lifelong Learning Festival (internationally biggest event of its type) and in the hosting of UNESCO'S 3rd International Learning City conference. It collaborates closely with Institute of Technology Tralee on the Skellig Centre for Research and Innovation (CRI) rural regeneration, which aims to develop an outreach university campus for higher education, research and entrepreneurship based in Cahersiveen, County Kerry. It is led by Kerry County Council, UCC and South Kerry Development Company.

**UCC/IMI**

There were 32 cohorts of participants in IMI/UCC programmes in 2016, an increase of two cohorts over 2015. There are currently 20 UCC/IMI programmes. In 2016, the number of participants registering for UCC validated IMI programmes was 577 (Postgraduate Certificates and Diploma), 26 (Masters) and 101 (MSc in Business Practice).

**National Policy Context:**

UCC note that they 'continue to exceed national targets for the provision of part-time and flexible education' but don't contextualise this any further with reference to the *National*



*Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education, 2015-2019.*

**UCC Comment:**

In its Strategic Plan, 2017-2022, the University has committed to prioritising 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. This is fully informed by goals in National Skills Strategy 2025, the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030, the Action Plan for Education 2016-2019 and the National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2015-2019. There is a progressive shift to technology-facilitated distance and time-flexible learning and learner-centered approaches and UCC seeks to ensure flexibility in the delivery of programmes, strengthen the provision of online programmes and enhance access to lifelong learning and greater CPD opportunities. Regardless of their circumstances, student should be enabled to study in a manner compatible with other needs in their lives. In addition, lifelong and lifewide learning and continuing professional development are demanded by employers and employees to support flexible career paths.

UCC has approved the establishment of an Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Unit reporting to the Senior Vice President Academic 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.

UCC's PATH-funded project 'New Avenues to Teaching' in the School of Education will be one of a number of projects that UCC is managing in the area of equality and diversity including the pilot initiative on Public Sector Duty with the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission. Admissions policy in UCC ensures that all undergraduate programmes have a quota of places reserved for students admitted through the HEAR and DARE routes. For the 2017/2018 academic year, UCC's New Avenues to Teaching (NAT) Project supports will be targeted at these students. At postgraduate level, supports will focus on students progressing from these undergraduate pathways to the Professional Master of Education (PME) programme. In addition, eligible students on the joint UCC/CIT PME Art and Design, entering from non-UCC undergraduate degrees, will be supported.

*Critical evaluation and feedback:*

The reports states that 70% of outreach centre students are accredited to Irish NFQ and with ECTS credits. Further information on the breakdown and how it feeds into targets relating to cluster development and the Regional Skills Fora would be welcomed here.

All other aims are marked as achieved.

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

Initial commentary:

UCC has both maintained and made considerable progress on the targets under this domain. Student retention, which was at a commendable percentage, has increased to 92%, albeit, this is reported at 91.4% elsewhere in the self-evaluation report.

**UCC Comment:**

91.4% is the correct number.

The number of students engaging in annual work placements has increased by 15%. If overlap exists, it would be interesting to see the overlap between the number of students in outreach centres and this figure. The number of graduates in employment or further study was 94.5% in 2017.

**UCC Comment:**

There is no overlap between the target set for the number of student engaged in placements (relating to mainstream undergraduate programmes) and the number of students in outreach centres. However, for the five academic years commencing 2013/14 and ending 2017/18, UCC delivered 36 programmes under Springboard. 75% of those courses included a work placement element.

UCC has also introduced the 'Quercus Talented Students' Programme which should further enhance retention and employment prospects for graduates. The programme has been extended to postgraduate students and reporting on the impact and development of this programme would be useful in subsequent compacts.

UCC is continuing to address the demand for students exposed to an interdisciplinary education and has introduced two new courses, a BA in Digital Humanities and Information Technology and a BA in Criminology and BCL, in this area.

Recruitment has also been expanded with 10 new professors recruited to Cork University Business School in 2015 and the acquiring of the Irish Management Institute (IMI) in 2016. The recruitment of professors occurred under the preceding reporting period. In light of future compacts, the impact of acquiring IMI on outreach activities should be assessed.

Target 1 under this domain, 'Strengthen the interaction of research, teaching and learning through the greater engagement of researchers in teaching activities and by maximising opportunities for students to participate in research programmes throughout their undergraduate studies', has been returned as 'amber'. While 50% of undergraduate programmes engage students in research, there has been some issues designing a methodology for assessing the diversity of pathways through undergraduate programmes. A 'robust' system has now been put in place so that an annual baseline may be determined.

**UCC Comment:** Issues relating to the methodology have been resolved. Clarification: 55% of undergraduate programmes engage students in research as identified through learning outcomes. There is also strong evidence of research across each year of a student study with 28 (of 62 ) or 45% of the reviewed programmes providing opportunities for research based or research orientated study across the duration of the programme.

Target 2 was to 'Develop greater opportunities for part-time and flexible learning by

providing the necessary 'future-proofed' infrastructure to improve the provision of research-informed, open access Technology Enhanced Learning at UCC'. The university has returned this target as green or achieved. An e-Learning infrastructure with a distinct e-learning market presence has been established and 9% of students are now studying part-time/through flexible learning.

Target 3 was to 'Strengthen UCC's capacity to deliver teaching qualification programmes to greater numbers of staff'. This target is coded green. UCC reports an increase from the 2010/11 baseline of 240 staff completing one or more accredited courses in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education to 407 staff having completed a NU-Postgraduate Cert/ Postgraduate Diploma/ MA in Teaching and Learning at Higher Level over the course of all 4 reporting periods. Modules in Teaching and Learning have also been extended to postgraduate students since 2011 with 267 having completed a module over the course of all 4 reporting periods. Newly appointed staff also engage with Teaching & Learning development programmes.

Target 4, to 'Continue to play a leading role nationally in teaching and learning support and scholarship', is also coded green. The university has worked with the IUA on this front and international collaborations have been established for the Centre for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning. Target 4 shows clear engagement with national target and fora.

Target 5 was to 'Continue to act on recommendations with respect to excellence in teaching and learning in the Bologna Process, in the Quality Review reports for academic units and from student feedback surveys'. UCC has introduced a new curriculum management system enabling semesterisation. Despite delays caused by budgetary reasons, the system is now in place showing a commitment to recommendations made by international processes and agreements.

**UCC Comment and Clarification:**

As part of EIB funded Student Hub and Services Programme, the University is making a significant investment in a new student administration system which will enable credit accumulation thereby releasing the potential to create more flexible modes of study for all cohorts.

Target 6, to 'Improve student satisfaction, engagement and employability', is also coded green. UCC has far exceeded its target suggesting that targets could be stretched further. Data on the impact of semesterisation on student satisfaction and employability would be useful in future compacts.

Data provided on benchmarked performance (Teaching and Learning) sourced from U-Multirank 2017 places UCC's Bachelor graduation rate above that of Queens University Belfast, the University of Southampton, the University of Edinburgh and the University of Aarhus.

**National Policy Context:**

The self-evaluation would have benefitted from reference to the wider national policy context, in particular how the institute is engaging with The Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) results from 2016 and ongoing work on the Transitions agenda.

**UCC Comment:**

The University completed a review of student surveying activity in 2016/2017 and in response to staff and student feedback and with concern for 'closing the loop', the University has devolved module feedback to a local level within Schools and Department thus enabling targeted and responsive immediate feedback to student concerns. In addition, based on the survey, the University is developing an implementation plan for student assessment, feedback and survey processes.

UCC has agreed a set of principles guiding academic planning at the University and through the formation of an Academic Strategy Implementation Working Group at the beginning of the academic year 2017/18 will draft an operational plan in full consultation with Colleges. The Irish Survey of Student Engagement, the Transitions Agenda, the National Skills Strategy 2025, the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030, the Action Plan for Education 2016-2019 and the National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2015-2019 have guided this process and prioritised actions. Over the past three years, the University has broadened entry routes into three disciplines: Music, Engineering and Law.

UCC is fully engaged with ISSE and this year we have seen a significant improvement in student responses rates. The response rate for this period for ISSE was– 19.5% with 13% reaching the final question. Noted improvement 2015 8.9%, 2016 11.7% (modified survey), 2017 19.5%. There may be missing data in ISSE because of randomisation of blocks of data but this will not be known until analysis and therefore this may be more difficult to compare the ISSE to the UCC Student Experience Survey (SES), which has had a percentage response rate of mid to high 20s over the last decade.

*Critical evaluation and feedback:*

All targets are marked as achieved and from the breath of reporting provided, the university is performing strongly particularly with the establishment of the Centre for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning, the development of the e-learning infrastructure and the introduction of a new curriculum management system.

## 4. High quality, internationally competitive research and innovation:

### Initial commentary:

UCC secured research funding of €96.4million, including EU Horizon 2020 funding, in 2016. This represented a 21% increase over the previous five years. UCC leads 4 SFI research centres and co-leads 1 other with NUIG, UCD and DCU.

Based on a Research Quality Review to assess research output and performance in 2015, the percentage of high scoring units increased from 43% in 2009 to 57% in 2015.

11 high-potential start-up companies have been established since 2013 bringing the total to 40 and the number of jobs created to 240.

In 2013, UCC was conferred with the European Commissions 'HR Excellence in Research Award'.

Objective 1 – Establishing SFI research centres has been met as has Objective 3 – University wide review of research.

Objective 2 was returned as 'amber' as it is an ongoing area in ensuring sustainability, competitiveness and strategic coherence in UCC.

Data provided on benchmarked research performance, sourced from U-Multirank 2017, places UCC lower than the other universities it selected to compare itself with, in areas of research publications and citation rate but higher in areas of external research income, postdoc positions, art related input, top cited publications and highest in interdisciplinary publications (% of total publications).

In the CWTS Leiden Ranking, UCC's 2016 rank is second only to NUIG in the number and proportion of the publications of a university that, compared with other publications in the same field and in the same year belong to the top **10%** most frequently cited.

### National Policy Context:

Of the 12 SFI Research Centres established nationally, UCC leads 4, co-leads 1, and is a partner in 6. Each SFI Research Centre established in UCC is a thriving interdisciplinary research entity supported by research income derived from exchequer sources and leveraged non-exchequer income (SFI investment of €94 million investment with co-funding)

UCC has 300 active researchers employed across their SFI centres.

Professor Barry O'Sullivan, Director of INSIGHT-UCC, was named as SFI's Researcher of the Year for 2016 and is UCC's fourth recipient of SFI's premier annual accolade. Previous recipients include UCC-led SFI Centre Directors, Professors Fergus Shanahan (2013), Louise Kenny and Geraldine Boylan (2015).

*Critical evaluation and feedback:*

The section relating to sustainability and competitiveness is still as 'amber' with significant progress achieved. The lower levels of funding available across the disciplinary competitive schemes has resulted in lower intakes of students in the past four-five years and hence lower graduations.

Feedback last year referenced a UCC-centric focus with no references to collaborations with the cluster. This is not referenced in this year's report.

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

### Initial commentary:

The initial emphasis on engagement with enterprise focusses on the output of graduates with a total of 31,000 students graduating between 2012 and 2016.

The report further references that it has funded 32 Springboard courses since its introduction in 2011.

Between 2013 and 2015, the Health Innovation Hub successfully enable job creation in the medical technology and healthcare fields in partnership with government agencies and small-medium enterprises. As a result of this success UCC was chosen as the location for the new National Health Hub Ireland in 2015.

In addition to these developments, UCC also participates in 'Cork Innovates' and has exceeded its target of 50 projects under the Community-Academic Research Links (CARL) initiative.

The compact states that industry suites, incubation units and enterprise centres have been developed. A single Academic Healthcare Centre has been developed between the regions hospitals. Through its collaborations with employers, UCC is now recognised internationally as an 'engaged university'.

The university annually experiences over 4,000 students engaging its Eureka Centre. They have also have strengthened and promoted the Irish language, heritage and culture through collaborations with different Gaeltacht communities. 1,238 of a proposed 1,600 students attend part-time Irish courses and there are 2,345 of a proposed 2,500 participants in their Irish Network and Sceimeanna Gaeilge.

### **UCC Comment:**

New areas are currently being developed to address the slight shortfall in targets. In accordance with its new Strategic Plan, UCC is renewing its focus on its Irish-speaking hinterlands, particularly with a view to achieving greater integration of their unique resources within the Irish-language community agenda of the University to the benefit of both communities. The immediate focus is on the Gaeltachtaí of An Rinn (Co. Waterford) and Baile an Fheirtéaraigh (Co. Kerry).

In An Rinn, UCC in collaboration with Coláiste na Rinne have developed a package whereby the students and staff of the University may participate in Irish-language activities thereby developing a 'Gaeltacht campus'. A new residential module (GA2033) for visiting students piloted in 2017 had 25 participants. In the Gaeltacht of Baile an Fheirtéaraigh, UCC is currently developing a high-tech learning space to enable online learning and communication for staff, students and the local community at its hostel (Dún Chíomháin). In addition, there has been enhanced availability of Dún Chíomháin to students and staff during the academic year 2016/17: 250 students travelled to Dún Chíomháin for weekend courses, and the Dún booked out throughout the summer for Scéim na dTeaghlach. Likewise, in the same academic year, 100 students travelled to An Rinn for two days as part of the second-year curriculum.

Under their 'Innovation Platform', the university has made great progress. Namely, they have established 11 out of the 12 High Potential Start-Ups (HPSU) and have reached their target of 340 additional jobs created.

The university has built on its existing contributions to cultural and artistic life but the development of a cultural hub has been delayed due to lack of funding.

**UCC Comment:**

UCC is now entering into an eight-year strategic partnership with the Cork Opera House. This will provide a significant opportunity for the University to develop a city-centre presence for collaborative academic and cultural purposes; providing opportunities for the development of interdisciplinary programmes and modules; providing student work placements and the use of Opera House facilities as alternative learning spaces for transversal skills development and key programmes in performance and the development of co-created works and performances.

UCC Creative is a new initiative at UCC launched in June 2017 by the new Professor of Creative Practice (Jools Gilson), which is focussed on developing creative practice at UCC, and in collaboration with local, national and international contexts, including communities, festivals and other centres of excellence.

Data provided on benchmarked performance (Knowledge transfer and regional engagement) sourced from U-Multirank 2017 places UCC high in publications cited in patents, bachelor graduates working in the region and master graduates working in the region but low in industry co-patents and regional joint publications.

**National Policy Context:**

UCC has aligned its programmes with the national skills agenda through the completion of 32 successful HEA Springboard programmes. These programmes provide training and learning opportunities for jobseekers to up-skill or re-skill in areas where skill deficits exist.

**Critical evaluation and feedback:**

UCC have passed their target for students engaged through the Eureka centre but have minimally missed the targets set for students attending Irish courses and participating on Irish Network and Sceimeanna Gaeilge.

The lack of funding has delayed the development of the cultural hub.



## 6. Enhanced internationalisation:

### Initial commentary:

The introduction of an internationalised curriculum has increased the university's international student enrolment numbers and has resulted in a cohort of 3,300 international students from over 100 countries. Equally, almost one third of the university's staff were recruited internationally.

In 2017 UCC renewed its commitment to its Centre for Global Development.

Based on the compact provided, UCC has achieved their target of strengthening partnerships with universities of a similar vision. A development and business plan has been agreed with partner institutions for 1 transnational (TNE) programme.

16.3% as against a proposed target of 15% of total student enrolments are international students (note that HEA 2016/17 statistics indicate that 14% or 2,346 are international).

### **UCC Comment:**

UCC includes Erasmus students in calculating the number of international students for the purposes of setting KPIs and has communicated this data difference to the HEA on prior occasions. Erasmus students are an important indicator of international student numbers for university targets. The 16.3% cited was calculated using a count of internationally domiciled students including Erasmus figures but as a percentage of the student population excluding Adult Continuing Education. The figure is 3,179.

30% of undergraduate programmes now provide a year abroad and the number of ERASMUS students has increased by 30% from the initial baseline.

Data provided on benchmarked performance (International Orientation) sourced from U-Multirank 2017 places UCC high in student mobility and international academic staff. Foreign language bachelor and master programs received lower rankings.

### National Policy Context:

The UCC self-evaluation didn't seek to contextualise its internationalisation performance or challenges in the context of the International Education Strategy for Ireland. The proportion of UCC international students has increased from 12% to 17% between 2013 and 2017 and makes a significant contribution to national targets.

### **UCC Comment:**

While UCC continues to contribute to national strategy by its consistent growth in international student intake, and by the success of its graduates across the globe, it has also strategically prioritised the internationalisation of education as described in *Irish Educated, Globally Connected: An International Education Strategy for Ireland, 2016-2020* as "a comprehensive approach to education that prepares students, academics and staff to be active and engaged participants in an interconnected global world". Enhanced internationalisation of the curriculum is currently evidenced in all four colleges of UCC through specific programmes, for example the BA World Languages, BA International and BSc (Hons) Biological, Earth and Environmental Sciences - International Field Geosciences

(exit route); opportunities for electives; opportunities for co-curricular languages study and numbers of international students present in programme cohorts. Just over 50% of UCC's 62 undergraduate programmes, or 32, now offer students the opportunity to study/work abroad.

Eleven of University College Cork's 62 programmes at an undergraduate level have an explicit international orientation (18%). Over the course of the strategic plan, three undergraduate programmes with an explicit international focus (see preceding paragraph) were introduced in addition to approximately eight postgraduate programmes. The College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences introduced the Diploma in Arts and Social Sciences (2+1). Five joint degrees with Chinese partners were also introduced to facilitate overseas students completing a portion of their degree studying at University College Cork: BA (Hons) Economics Dual degree Award designed with Chinese partner specifically for Chinese market (1+2); BSc (Ord) Food Science & Technology (level 7) (1+2) 1 China, 2 Ireland; BSc (Hons/NFQ Level 8) Food Dual Award with Chinese Partner 2+2; BSc (Ord) Computer Science (level 7) Dual Award with Chinese Partner 1+2; BSc Risk & Actuarial Studies Dual Award with Chinese Partner (2+2)

In addition, a pre-masters/preparatory pathway for international students was introduced. Eight certificates with a global focus were introduced through ACE, Springboard, CACSSS and CBL. UCC launched its first Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) Loop: Repetition and Variation in Music (kadenze) in 2016.

Over the 2017-2022 period, UCC seeks to increase the number of international students by 33% from 3,300 to 4,400.

UCC has developed a number of Transnational Education (TNE) programmes. TNE is educational provision delivered abroad under licensure; joint-programmes; delivery by one institution's staff on the ground to students of another institution or similar international teaching off site. UCC has joint programmes with ten Chinese partner institutions including Beijing Technological and Business University Beijing Information Science & Technology University, Guilin University Of Electronic Technology, Henan University Of Economics And Law and Anhui University Of Finance & Economics In addition, UCC and Future University in Egypt (FUE) signed a Cooperation Agreement in September 2014 to develop a collaborative relationship between the institutions for enhancing the teaching and learning of students graduating with the FUE B.Sc. Pharmacy degree. UCC support FUE in the delivery of an enhanced Pharmacy curriculum with appropriate mentoring and guidance from UCC staff. Each student receives a separate certificate from UCC, confirming that the student has completed the revised pharmacy degree (delivered by FUE in Egypt) that conforms to a set of learning outcomes and curricular standards approved by the School of Pharmacy, UCC and committed to by FUE through a Co-operation Agreement between UCC and FUE. UCC is also delivering an undergraduate Biology module to students from UC Davis. The module is taught by UCC faculty with oversight by UC Davis faculty.

#### BTBU

UCC has been collaborating with Beijing Technological and Business University for over a decade, since 2006. There are two joint programmes in place, the Joint Bachelor Degree Programmes in Applied Statistics (Risk and Actuarial Studies) and BSc Food Science &

Technology (International) Food Science, which were approved by the Chinese Ministry of Education in 2013 and 2014 respectively. Since 2006, the number of students has grown from 5 to 56 (2016/17). In 2016/17, BTBU students participated in the following programmes: Degree programmes in Economics, Electrical Engineering, Accounting Studies, Food Science, Food Science and Technology, Financial Economics, Risk and Actuarial Studies; Diploma programmes in Food Studies, Accounting Studies, Business and Financial Economics, Business Economics and Financial Economics.

*Critical evaluation and feedback:*

HEA feedback on UCC's Cycle 3 performance requested more detail on the programmes and initiatives used to attract international students. A dual degree with Beijing Technological and Business University is mentioned in this report but no substantial details are provided.

## 7. Institutional consolidation:

### Initial commentary:

Collaboration has been strengthened in the region, with CIT and IT Tralee. A shared services model has been established with CIT, IT Tralee and Teagasc.

In 2015, UCC signed a memorandum of understanding to advance the UNESCO Declaration on Building Learning Cities with Cork City Council, Cork Institute of Technology and Cork Education and Training Board. Under the Learning City initiative, Cork will host the UNESCO International Conference on Learning Cities in 2017.

In a tripartite alliance (IMERC) between UCC, Cork Institute of Technology (CIT) and the Irish Naval Service, UCC has worked to develop the potential of Cork Harbour as a world-leading location for marine and energy research. Furthermore, in 2015 UCC completed the development and staffing of the Beaufort Laboratory in the Marine and Renewable Energy Research, Development and Innovation Centre (MaREI) at the harbour.

37 of 40 proposed students have enrolled in the Professional Masters in Education (Art & Design). This target has yet to be completed.

Under Participation, equal access and lifelong learning, UCC set targets to develop improved opportunities for lifelong learning students including continuing professional development and executive education in collaboration with the Irish Management Institute and with its partners nationally and internationally.

Under excellent teaching and learning and quality of the student experience, UCC note that in 2016 it acquired the Irish Management Institute (IMI) following seven years of a successful strategic alliance. They note that the IMI is the only Irish business institute to be ranked among international providers of customised executive education in the 2016 Financial Times executive education rankings.

### Critical evaluation and feedback:

As per last year UCC still has returned one green and one amber for its proposed targets. More work needs to be done in relation to the establishment of UCC as one of the six centres of excellence for initial teacher education. Their target of 40 students has almost been met with 37 students now enrolled.

#### **UCC Comment:**

UCC's Centre of Excellence for Initial Teacher Education comprises four programmes:

Professional Master of Education (PME) (MEDPF on ITS)

Professional Master of Education Art and Design (PME A&D) (MEDPAD on ITS)

BEd Sports Studies and Physical Education (SSPE) (BEDSS on ITS)

BSc Science Education (BSCSED and BSCSDD on ITS)

The numbers on these programmes have been strong and the School of Education has provided a new pathway into its BSc Science Education (38 students in 2016/17) for those who don't achieve a place for Science on its PME. In relation to the specific shortfall of three students for its PME A&D, in conducting research for the HEA PATH Strand A

submission to the HEA, UCC's School of Education examined the number of PME and PME A&D students receiving SUSI funding. The percentage of A&D students receiving funding was much higher than the PME. For example in 2016/17, the number of students in receipt of SUSI funding was:

Year 1 students:

PME 20/120 (19.6%)

PME A&D 8/17 (47%)

Year 2 students:

PME 19/114 (18%)

PME A&D 11/20 (51%)

The percentage difference would suggest that PATH funding could potentially effect increased demand for this programme.

## **8. Additional Notes:**

None.