
A TRADITION OF INDEPENDENT THINKING



PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2020/2021



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President's Foreword



In August 2021 I was honoured to take up the role of President of University College Cork. One year ago, in this foreword, as Interim President, I spoke of the many challenges and uncertainties faced by our university and our community during the COVID-19 pandemic. While the 2019/2020 academic year saw the necessary pausing of progress towards some of UCC's strategic objectives in favour of an immediate response to the pandemic, the 2020/2021 academic year afforded us the opportunity to look to the future and to undertake a review of our strategic priorities and direction.

Following extensive university-wide consultation, in January 2021 we adopted *UCC 2022: Delivering a Connected University* to replace the final two years of the *Strategic Plan 2017–2022 Independent Thinking – Shared Ambition*. This was an important step towards ensuring UCC's long-term sustainability and positioning to respond to emerging opportunities and challenges in the context of geopolitical challenges, the escalating climate crisis and societal and economic pressures associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. It embraces five important themes: Learning and Teaching; Research and Innovation; Student Success; People and Organisational Culture; and Infrastructure and Resources, underpinned by our commitment to sustainability, equality, diversity and inclusion and external engagement.

Although the challenges of COVID-19 remained through this academic year, we maintained business continuity and continued to safely deliver all of our programme learning and assessment and research activities. Staff worked tirelessly to provide the rich student experience for which UCC is known and for which it won Best Student Experience for

the second year running in the 2021 Education Awards. As recruitment, admissions and induction activities moved online this year, we were delighted to welcome 7,500 new students to UCC, which is testament to the efforts of our staff.

It has also been an important year for our research, with the appointment of a new Vice-President for Research and Innovation and the value of our research awards once again approaching €100m. This year UCC delivered its best performance to date in a European Research Council funding call, securing three Consolidator Awards of €6.4 million. This is a fantastic achievement as we focus on enhancing our research and fostering innovation while also responding to the immediate and pressing needs of society in the face of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Since the formation of the Green Campus Committee at UCC in 2007, students and staff across campus have worked hard together to put sustainability at the centre of university-wide research, learning and operations. We have seen many successes over the years, and this year UCC was delighted to be ranked 8th out of 1,000 universities from 98 countries across the world in the prestigious Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings, placing it as Ireland's leading university for its impact in creating a sustainable future. We also improved in the UI GreenMetric Rankings, which now ranks UCC in 9th place globally, and the only Irish university to make the top 10 of the 'greenest universities' in the world.

UCC has a proud sporting tradition, and it was a pleasure to witness eight current UCC students and seven alumni make history at the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics, representing Ireland with distinction and bringing home gold and bronze medals in rowing. The undergraduate students are all part of the Quercus Talented Students' Programme, which has been generously sponsored by Ford for the past four years. It is enormously challenging for dual-career athletes and the support from this programme, along with the help of our academic colleagues, enables them to compete at the highest international level in their sport while successfully progressing their studies.

This year UCC celebrated the 175th anniversary of its establishment. Since first opening its doors to just 100 students in 1849 UCC has continually grown and evolved, and this report provides examples of the depth and breadth of our recent accomplishments and response to pressing global challenges. I am proud of these individual and collective achievements, and I look forward to leading UCC to a bright and secure future.

Professor John O'Halloran
President
University College Cork



A Connected UNIVERSITY



A Year in UCC

Student Numbers

23,617



Registered
Students at
UCC

92%

Student
Retention
Rate



(First Year Students)

23%

Students
Via Access
Pathways



7,831

Students
Graduations



**€95
million**
Research
Income



Over
200k
Alumni
Worldwide

A Year in UCC

Rankings

	298th	Globally in QS World University Rankings
	8th	in the world for THE Impact on the UN SDG
	9th	Most Sustainable University in the World (UI Metric)
	251-300	Band in THE World University Impact Rankings



Subjects/Disciplines Making the Top 150 in Global Subject Rankings

QS World University Rankings by Subject	
Subject/Discipline	Global Rank
English Language & Literature	101-150
Nursing	49
Pharmacy & Pharmacology	101-150
Law	100
Agriculture and Forestry	57
Medicine	151-200

Shanghai Global Subject Rankings	
Subject/Discipline	Global Rank
Food Science and Engineering	49
Nursing	51-75
Dentistry and Oral Sciences	51-75
Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences	101-150
Biotechnology	101-150
Clinical Medicine	101-150
Public Health	101-150

Our Response To COVID-19



Campus Closure:
all students and staff
work and study online



Learning and Teaching:
online throughout
the academic year



**Student Recruitment,
Admissions and
Orientations:**
online



**Emergency
Management Team:**
briefed daily



**Quality
Enhancement
Process:**
online



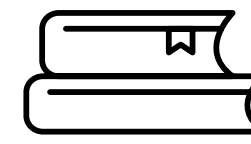
Virtual Conferings:
model retained for
Spring 2021



Research:
continued throughout
the pandemic



Assessment:
continued online



Library:
services continued
through pandemic



Staff Recruitment:
online

Our Vision

Be a leading university of independent thinkers

Our Mission

Create, understand and share knowledge and apply it for the good of all

Our Values

Our core values guide and underpin our actions and our processes:

- Creativity
- Transparency
- Freedom of Expression
- Equality
- Respect
- Responsiveness
- Scholarship
- Integrity
- Diversity
- Inclusion



UCC 2022

DELIVERING A CONNECTED
UNIVERSITY

UCC 2022 – Delivering a Connected University

UCC 2022: Delivering a Connected University replaces the final two years of the *Strategic Plan 2017–2022 Independent Thinking – Shared Ambition*. It sets out a thematic prioritisation of the university's strategy, as well as the transformative changes to its core operations in response to geopolitical challenges, the escalating climate crisis and accelerating societal and economic pressures associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

The plan was ratified by the Governing Body on 1 December 2020. Implementation began on 1 January 2021.

The strategic pivot identifies UCC's key strategic priorities for the period 2021–2022, clustered within five interconnected thematic pillars:

- ✓ Learning and Teaching
- ✓ Research and Innovation
- ✓ Student Success
- ✓ People and Organisational Culture
- ✓ Infrastructure and Resources

Deeply rooted in extensive collaboration both within and outside UCC, this two-year plan builds on the university's strengths in student focus, sustainability, and community and global engagement, to identify actions to respond to the current crisis and position UCC for long-term success.





Connected

LEARNING



Key Appointment

Professor Stephen Byrne was appointed as Interim Registrar in November 2020. Stephen joined the university in 2004 and was subsequently appointed to the Chair of Clinical Pharmacy Practice and Head of the School of Pharmacy in October 2013. Between 2018 and 2020 he also held the position of Dean of Undergraduate Studies.

Responding to Challenges

Human Capital Initiative

This academic year the university offered 254 free or heavily subsidised (90-100% of fees) postgraduate and higher diploma places to those seeking to upskill or reskill under the government's new Human Capital Initiative (HCI). The university was awarded €5.6 million for places on six new courses over the coming years, across all four colleges, under Pillar 1 of this programme which focuses on graduate conversion courses. These industry-focused courses offer opportunities for students to enhance their skills in several fields including languages, software, sustainability, and the environment, and chemical and pharmaceuticals.

The university also secured further funding of €14.4 million under HCI Pillar 3, which focuses on innovation and agility, for five new **projects** to meet priority skills needs across Ireland's economy. This funding heralds an exciting time for higher education-enterprise engagement in Ireland.

Job Stimulus Package

In October 2020, the university secured funding of €1.83 million providing the opportunity for 241 students to engage with free or highly subsidised places on postgraduate programmes under the government's jobs stimulus package. UCC is Ireland's leading university for industry and enterprise collaboration and is ready to respond to the continuous and changing needs of the economy and society.

€1.83m Job Stimulus Funding Secured

Practice-Oriented Degree Programmes

This year saw the university continue to honour its responsibility to secure students' progression towards employment through the introduction of several practice-oriented degree programmes. The **BEd Gaeilge** and the **Higher Diploma in Spanish for Teaching** are designed to respond to teaching shortages within the post-primary sector. To further address teacher supply issues, a collaboration with Munster Technological University (MTU) has seen the development of a new **BA (Hons) in Home Economics and Business** at MTU with a 'protected places' pathway to the Professional Master of Education (PME) at UCC. Students will study for three years at MTU and two years at UCC.

An exciting new employment-based **Master's Degree in Dairy Process Technology** in partnership with the Kerry Group was launched in July 2021. The support of the Kerry Group will enable graduates to upskill while contributing to the ongoing success of a very important indigenous Irish industry.



Admissions Highlights

Undergraduate Admissions

The university saw an overall increase in demand for places of 3% in 2020, as well as a 1% increase in first-preference applications. Demand for Level-8 programmes nationally increased by 1%, from 70,542 to 71,314 with UCC maintaining its 15% of the university share of first preferences.

The total intake of first-year undergraduates via the CAO in 2020 was 3,892, which represents a 4.9% increase on 2019 intake. A total of 280 international undergraduate students registered this year, which represents an 8.5% increase on 2019 registrations.

Despite the challenges presented by COVID-19 UCC maintained an exceptionally high first-year student retention rate of 92%.

Postgraduate Admissions

Due to the challenges presented by COVID-19, the postgraduate intake for both taught and research programmes for the academic year 2020/2021 are:

Postgraduate Taught	Non EU	EU
ACE and IMI	6	837
Colleges	438	2,599
Overall Total	444	3,436

Postgraduate Research	Non EU	EU
Overall Total	91	289

4.9% increase in undergraduate students via CAO from 2019 to 2020



Learning and Teaching

This academic year saw the Office for the Vice President for Learning and Teaching (OVPLT) support staff and students in the delivery of learning content, assessment and administration online. Excellence in learning and teaching continues to be promoted via the Centre for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning's (CIRTL) online postgraduate award in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, with 98 staff graduating with either a certificate or diploma this year. OVPLT continues to develop excellence in teaching as a partner or lead of several Irish Universities Association (IUA) and European University Association (EUA) groups, and Erasmus+ projects.

Centre for Digital Education

This academic year saw the Centre for Digital Education continue to enhance the digital learning experience for all staff and learners, further enable remote learning and ensure investment in future digital education infrastructure is fit for purpose. Activities included:

- ✔ Providing ongoing consultation support to UCC staff around the application of educational technology to education.
- ✔ Running weekly training sessions under the Teach Digi brand, as part of the Irish Universities Association 'Enhancing Digital Teaching and Learning' project.
- ✔ Supporting the work of the Exams Business Continuity Planning group.
- ✔ Delivering weekly Canvas training sessions on a variety of topics.

- ✔ Administering UCC digital badges, a validated micro-credential award to learners in an online format to recognise learning that supports the values and attributes the university seeks to foster.

Centre for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning (CIRTL)

CIRTL was successful in several grant awards under the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning (NFETL). One such application saw CIRTL coordinate the internal operations whereby €458,000 in funding was dispersed across UCC to support Transforming Teaching and Learning for Student Success.

A second successful application focused on extending the learning from the 2019 Teaching Enhancement grant on 'integrating the Sustainable Development Goals into the curriculum' out to other higher education institutions participating in the Green Campus network. A final application is focused on civic engagement through the curriculum and links in with UCC's Graduate Attributes Programme and the implementation of the academic strategy's *Connected Curriculum* while extending learning out to national audiences via the IUA's Campus Engage network.

The centre also continues to be an active partner with the EUA in several Learning and Teaching Thematic Peer Groups. This year UCC (via CIRTL and OVPLT) was selected as one of 29 partners in the EUA's Leadership and Organisation for Teaching and Learning at European Universities (LOTUS) programme. The LOTUS project aims to contribute to capacity building and strategic change management for learning and teaching at higher education institutions across Europe.



Skills Centre

The **Skills Centre** continued to work with partners across the university to further deliver programmes of online engagement to students. Highlights from the academic year include:

- ✔ Development of the **Success Zone**, a virtual learning 'one-stop shop' for students. This year, the Success Zone received 10,500 weekly visits from students. Demand for 'live' sessions was also high with over 5,000 virtual synchronous engagements taking place during the academic year.
- ✔ Increasing the delivery of micro-credentials allowing students to obtain digital badges for courses undertaken.
- ✔ The development of the **Assignment Calculator**, a digital tool to help students develop time management principles around their academic work while deepening their understanding of the process of academic writing.

Language Centre

Recruitment to the **Language Centre's** full-time academic year courses was impacted by the public health restrictions in semester one of this year. As a result, the centre offered non-commercial services across the university this academic year with great success.

During this year, the Language Centre engaged with recruitment teams and the Admissions Office to continue to explore how its courses and services can enhance the international offer to the university, and is currently undertaking its own strategic refresh to enable it to meet the challenge of the new domestic and international landscape during and after the pandemic. The centre has taken the opportunity to align its key priorities to the university's strategic pivot.

Lunchtime Seminar Series

This year, OVPLT delivered another lunchtime seminar series on the theme of 'The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Science and the Social Sciences: Engaging with the Wider Community'. This links the university's strategic goals with UN targets for 2030. The series complemented the workshops conducted by CIRTL that supported staff to map their programmes and modules to individual SDGs.

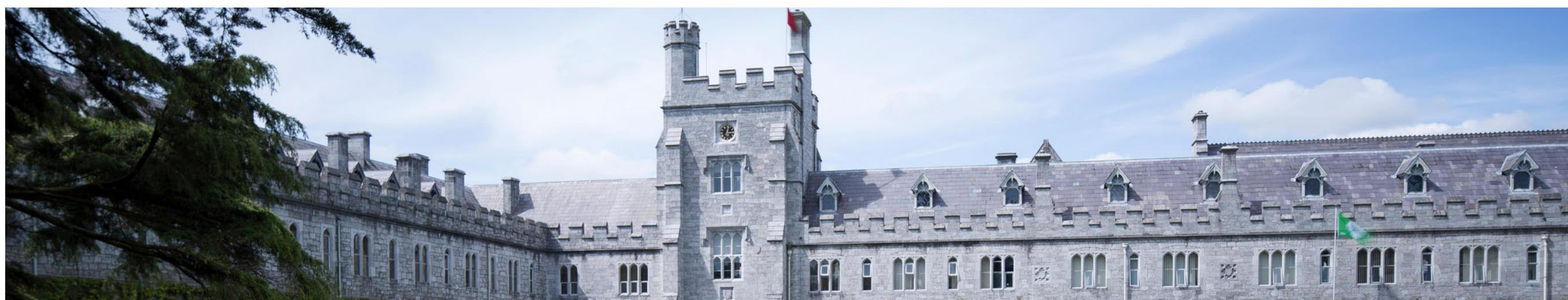
Teaching Hero Awards

Forty-eight Teaching Heroes from across UCC were celebrated at this year's Teaching Hero Awards. The Teaching Hero Awards are Ireland's only national, student-led awards for all those who teach in higher education. The awards are organised by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in collaboration with the Union of Students in Ireland and other students' unions nationwide.

The President's Awards for Excellence in Teaching

This awards scheme, the longest-running scheme of its kind in Ireland, recognises the outstanding efforts of teaching staff to ensure that UCC students receive the highest-quality learning and teaching experience. The 2020 recipients are:

Name	School/Dept.
Professor Louise Crowley	School of Law
Dr Gerard McGlacken	School of Chemistry
Dr Katharina Swirak	Dept of Sociology and Criminology
Drs Sharon Lambert and Angela Veale	School of Applied Psychology





Connected

RESEARCH &
INNOVATION



Connected Research and Innovation

Key Appointment

Professor John F. Cryan was appointed as Vice President for Research and Innovation in March 2021. A neuroscientist, Professor Cryan is recognised as a global leader in the study of gut-brain interactions. Through his research in the APC Microbiome Ireland SFI Research Centre at UCC, Professor Cryan was recently listed among the world's top one per cent of most-cited researchers, for the fifth time.

Research Income

Research income for the academic year 2020/2021 delivered €95 million. The profile trajectory over the last 10 years has been positive with a 21% increase over the period, which exceeds the Strategic Plan 2017-2022 target. Since 2005, UCC researchers have secured over €1.4 billion in research funding investment.

Following the development and implementation of a wide range of supports and supporting policies, 32% of UCC's research income is now secured from non-exchequer sources, primarily from Europe and industry. This is the highest proportion ever achieved from non-exchequer sources and demonstrates a significant uplift of more than 12% in 10 years.

€95 million
research income

Horizon 2020

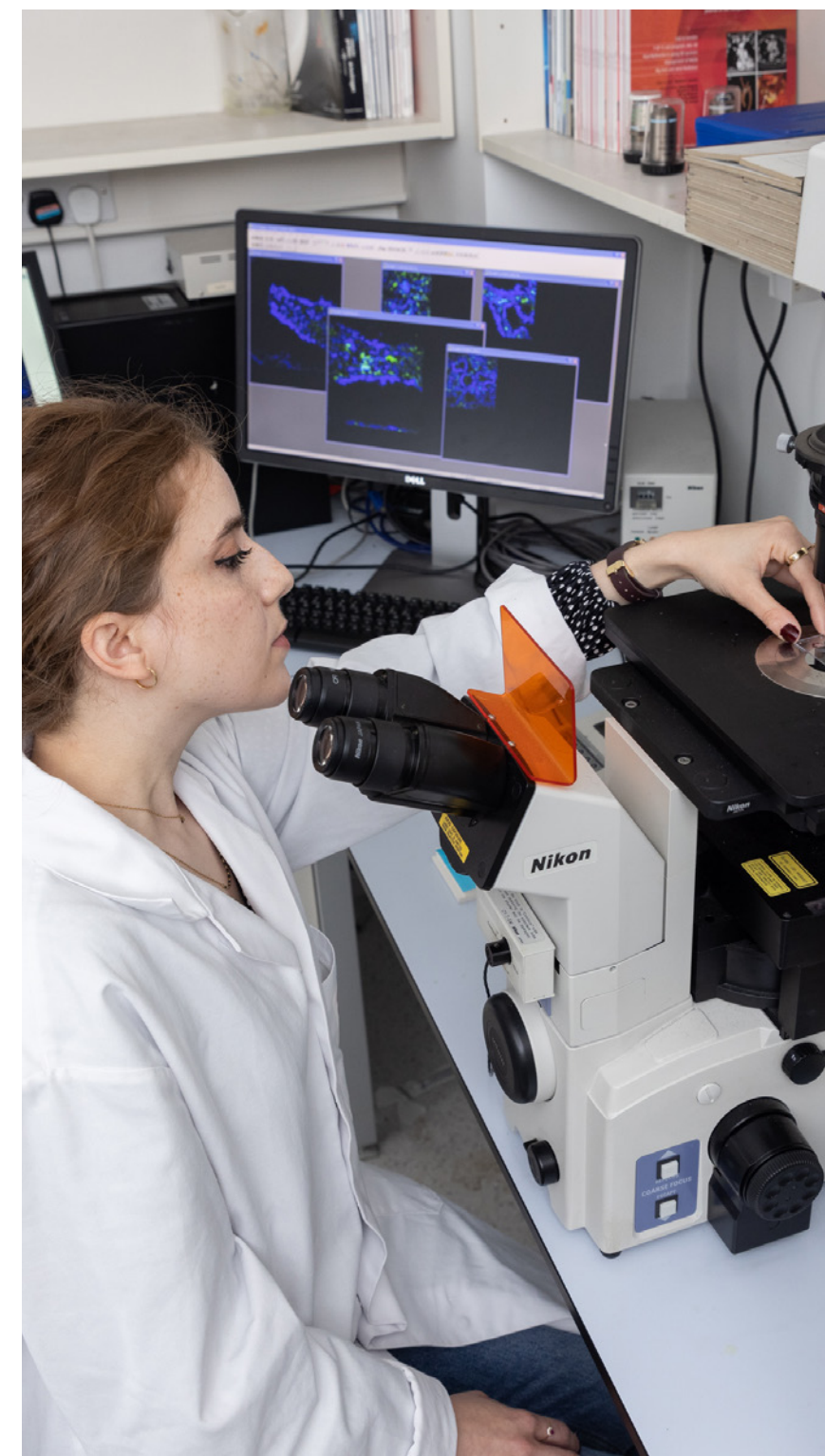
2020/2021 saw the final calls of the European funding programme Horizon 2020, a vital enabler of research activity in UCC. Over the seven years of this critical funding programme, UCC researchers secured over €118 million of investment from 237 awards. This represented an important achievement for the university's research community in that it significantly surpassed the very ambitious €110 million target set out in the university's institutional Horizon 2020 Action Plan. Success in engaging competitively with EU funding programmes was also reflected in the European Research Ranking tables – in 2020, UCC was ranked 33rd out of hundreds of institutions across Europe and is the number one ranked institution in Ireland.

European Research Council

Since its establishment in 2007, success in European Research Council (ERC) funding programmes is recognised as a global benchmark of research excellence. To help improve the university's performance in ERC funding calls, an *ERC Enhancement Strategy and Support Plan* was put into action by UCC Research in 2020 and, since its implementation, performance in ERC programmes has been encouraging.

In December 2020, the university delivered its best performance in an ERC funding call, securing three Consolidator Awards to the value of €6.4 million. The research projects were:

Professor Maria McNamara (School of Biological, Earth and Environmental Sciences, the Environmental Research Institute) – this research will focus on how key biomolecules such as melanin, keratin and collagen evolved in animals, and to understand how well these biomolecules can be preserved in fossils. This is Professor McNamara's second ERC award.



Dr Andrey Shkoporov (APC Microbiome Ireland)
 This project will help us better understand the significance of gene exchange for sustaining a healthy, diverse microbiome on the one hand and spreading antimicrobial genes on the other.

Dr Pádraig Cantillon-Murphy (School of Engineering, Tyndall National Institute)
 This research will seek to help surgeons navigate instruments beyond the camera's field of view without using harmful x-rays.

Highlighting the university's global reach and the significant interdisciplinary focus of research output, the UCC research community now collaborate with 5,026 research-performing entities across 140 countries, generating over 9,500 publications.

5,026 collaborations with research-performing entities across 140 countries

Research Publication Outputs

As highlighted in the university's *Research and Innovation Strategic Plan*, the excellence and impact of university research outputs is a key priority. This plan sets out commitments to support the university's research community in the pursuit of academic excellence, recognising high-impact publications and research excellence across all disciplines.

A key metric of university research activity used to assess excellence and impact is the citation performance of our publication outputs. The university's success in this regard was reflected in the recent announcement of the Times Higher Education (THE) World University Ranking which revealed that UCC is the leading university in Ireland for research impact as measured by citation performance.

COVID-19

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, some researchers from UCC pivoted their research expertise to focus on the many challenges associated with the pandemic.

However, despite the key role played by UCC researchers in national and international efforts to combat COVID-19, many laboratories, research facilities, archives and field sites were rendered inaccessible during lockdown, and many researchers were significantly impacted regarding the delivery of their projects and studies. To support researchers that were impacted by the pandemic, and using funding provided by the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS), UCC Research made 427 awards to the most affected UCC researchers with a combined value of almost €6.3 million.

The impact that this funding has had on researchers and early-career researchers whose work was severely compromised by the pandemic has been enormously beneficial.

UCC Research Awards 2020

Recognising the achievements of UCC's research community is a hugely important activity and is highlighted as a key action in UCC's Research and Innovation Strategic Plan.

Through an online ceremony, UCC honoured staff for their outstanding contributions to university life including advancing the research mission of the institution. The Research Awards 2020 acknowledged excellence in research activity across 10 categories.

Research Award	Awardee
Best Publication of the Year involving and Undergraduate Student as an Author	Rachel McCarthy, Digital Humanities, CACSS Patrick O'Toole, Digital Humanities, CACSS
Creating a Culture for Responsible Conduct of Research	Elizabeth Kiely, School of Applied Psychology, CACSS Liz Hales, Social Sciences & UCC Research Support Services
Early-Stage Researcher of the Year	Dr Gillian Murphy, School of Applied Psychology, CACSS Giovanni Pietro Vitali, Dept of Italian, School of Languages, Literatures and Cultures, CACSS
Open Researcher of the Year	James Louis Smith, School of English & Digital Humanities, CACSS
Research Communicator of the Year	Alan Kelly, School of Food & Nutritional Sciences, SEFS
Research Supervisor of the Year	Paul Hurley, Tyndall National Institute Silvia Ross, Dept. of Italian, School of Languages, Literatures and Cultures, CACSS
Research Support Person of the Year	Eileen Hurley, Tyndall National Institute
Research Team of the Year	Spatial and Regional Economics Research Centre, College of Business & Law
Researcher of the Year	Claire Connolly, School of English & Digital Humanities, CACSS
Career Achievement Research Award	Colin Hill - School of Microbiology, SEFS, and APC Microbiome Ireland

Strong Performance in Knowledge Transfer Survey

Knowledge Transfer Ireland published its Annual Knowledge Transfer Survey 2020 in September. This **AKTS 2020** report shows another positive year for knowledge transfer arising from UCC's research. The university's innovation metrics were in the top two in most key measures.

UCC was Ireland's leading performer in terms of licence, option and assignment (LOA) agreements with industry, achieving 30 LOAs which transferred UCC Intellectual Property and know-how to the commercial arena. UCC has executed the highest number of LOAs of all higher education institutions in Ireland since 2017. UCC was responsible for 44% of the licence income across all Irish universities.

UCC Spin-Out Companies Launched

BioPixS, based on biophotonics research in the Tyndall National Institute, launched as a UCC spin-out company this year. BioPixS creates innovative tissue mimicking phantoms and standardisation methods for biophotonics applications to serve the pressing need of validation of clinical methodologies, algorithm development, testing, characterisation, calibration of instruments, and standardisation of the protocols and devices.

Liltoda is a new UCC spin-out that is commercialising the CogniTOT™ technology developed by UCC's INFANT research centre. CogniTOT™ is a neonatal cognitive assessment methodology that uses the output data from a child's interaction with a touchscreen software app (BabyScreen) to provide a cognitive profile of the child.

New spin-out **Stimul.ai** is tackling the issue of hospital waiting lists which continue to make headline news. Based on research from the SFI Insight Centre for

Data Analytics and the School of Computer Science and IT in UCC, Stimul.ai has developed a SaaS-based platform that enables hospitals to make better capacity planning decisions by ensuring clinics and departments are designed to maximum efficiency.

GatewayUCC Business Hub

Several clients graduated from **GatewayUCC** as they scaled and recruited new staff, despite COVID-19. **Altratech** Ltd moved to larger facilities, having grown from an initial four jobs to 25 jobs. The company is developing next-generation molecular detection for point-of-care detection of contagious diseases. **Steam Education**, which provides innovative, hands-on educational programmes in the STEAM subject areas to primary schools, also needed larger facilities as they grew their staff complement to 10 jobs. GatewayUCC attracted new client companies - **Seqbiome** Ltd and **Ribomaps** Ltd, both graduates of the SPRINT Accelerator programme, together with **UrAbility** and **Perkforce** - which between them support 20 new jobs. To date GatewayUCC has supported over 40 companies which have created 450 jobs and raised €50 million in private and public funding.



SPRINT Accelerator Programme

SPRINT, which helps researchers to create spin-out companies, continued online throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Twenty researchers from across UCC participated in the 2021 programme, from Tyndall, APC Microbiome Ireland, INFANT, INSIGHT, MaREI, ERI, IPIC and Teagasc. This brings the total to 70 researchers who have been through the programme in the five years since it was developed. Thirty-five modules on developing a spin-out company were delivered in the 2021 programme, which fosters and supports the new spin-out CEOs and leadership team members in UCC's spin-out pipeline.

IGNITE Programme

This year IGNITE supported 22 recent graduates working to commercialise 19 start-up ideas through the full-time Graduate Business Innovation Programme, and helped 39 students, staff and alumni to explore 30 start-up ideas through Start Up Lab, a seven-evening programme.

The autumn and spring IGNITE Awards and showcase events were held in October 2020 and April 2021. Mark O'Sullivan (PhD Electrical & Electronics Engineering) promoter of Neurobell, won the Bank of Ireland/IGNITE Best Business Award in autumn 2020 and Patrick O'Regan (BA English & History) of Reach the Top, won the Spring 2021 Award.

Among the IGNITE alumni highlights in 2020/2021 were:

- ✔ Dr Fiona Edwards Murphy (PhD Electrical & Electronics Engineering) founder of ApisProtect, featured in the Forbes 30 Under 30 European List.
- ✔ Marion Cantillon (BSc Food Marketing & Entrepreneurship) was a national finalist in the Enterprise Ireland Student Entrepreneur of the Year.

UCC Consulting

UCC Consulting was established in 2019 under Enterprise Ireland pilot funding to embed consultancy support services at UCC. The unit continued to deliver strong growth, almost doubling consultancy activity for the second consecutive year. In the 2020/2021 period, UCC Consulting supported 41 consultancy agreements in the period, generating estimated fees/contract revenues of €480,000.

Since its establishment UCC Consulting has generated estimated contract values of almost €800,000 for the university, providing diversified income streams to schools, departments and colleges and has supported consultancy engagements with a broad range of entities across the private, public and voluntary sectors, building relationships with major multinational companies, SMEs and government departments.

€800K estimated contract values





Connected

STUDENT
EXPERIENCE

Transition-In Programme for International Students

This year a new online **'Transition-In Programme'** for international students was created in response to COVID-19. The programme was designed to keep international students informed, engaged and connected with the university following their arrival in Cork. The programme provided students with essential material on all aspects of their transition to university life pre-departure and during the two-week period of restricted movement, including public health advice and a 14-day timetable with components covering academic and non-academic topics.

Virtual Open Days

For the first time ever UCC hosted prospective undergraduate students at a Virtual Undergraduate Open Day held over two days in December 2020. These days created a memorable virtual experience showcasing the university in the best possible digital light. The event attracted close to 5,000 registrations and 3,000 unique visitors over the course of two days.

A Virtual Postgrad Expo took place in February 2021 and attracted a significant amount of interest from potential postgraduate students.

5,000 visitors registered for UCC's Virtual Undergraduate Open Day

Graduate Attributes Programme

In November 2020, a **partnership project** was launched between Microsoft and UCC. This project is harnessing the power of Microsoft Teams and LinkedIn Learning to support final year/penultimate year students in building up work-ready skills and attributes.

In March 2021, the university launched the **Nurturing Bright Futures Programme**. Developed by Graduate Attributes Programme (GAP), this is a new, online course for senior cycle second-level students to help with the challenges of the transition to university. A self-reflection toolkit helps students to anticipate and navigate situations before entering UCC so that they are better prepared. It is designed to provide information and stimulate conversations with key people in students' lives, and to get them thinking in a structured way so that they can consult and make informed decisions about their post-secondary school options.

GAP developed a new student self-assessment tool, 'Your Graduate Attributes and Values Compass'. This custom-designed tool supports students in considering their holistic development, through the formal curriculum and through the many ways that students can grow and develop at UCC.



Quercus Talented Students' Programme

In 2020/2021 there were 15 new **Quercus Scholars**: five Academic Scholars, six Sports Scholars, one Innovation and Enterprise Scholar and three Performing Arts Scholars.

Highlights from the year include UCC students and alumni who made history at the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics and represented Ireland with distinction. These students are all in receipt of Quercus Scholarships which enable them to not only compete at the highest international level within their sport, but also to progress with their individual degree programmes. Graduate Entry Medicine student Paul O'Donovan and UCC graduate Fintan McCarthy won Ireland's first rowing gold medal in the lightweight men's double sculls. Emily Hegarty, biological and chemical sciences student, was part of the women's four who won bronze. UCC graduate Aifric Keogh was also a member of the crew who made history by winning Ireland's first women's rowing medal and Ireland's first women's team medal. Quercus scholar and occupational therapy student Mary Fitzgerald represented Ireland in the shot-put F 40 in the Paralympics, finishing sixth overall.

The Education Awards 2021

UCC won four awards at the Education Awards 2021:

- ✔ Best Green Campus
- ✔ Best Student Campus
- ✔ Best Student Experience
- ✔ Overall Excellence in Education Award.

These awards recognise, encourage and celebrate excellence in the third-level education sector on the island of Ireland from both state and privately funded institutions. The award categories highlight the key areas that impact on student performance and provide opportunities for educational institutions to have their achievements recognised across the various important facets of their operations.

Access and Participation

In 2020/2021, 23% of first-year CAO admissions were via Access Pathways:

Mature Route	234
DARE Route	246
HEAR Route	184
QQI	231
Total Access Intake	895
Total UCC EU CAO Intake	3,892
Access %	23%

Access and Participation Students feature in RTÉ Documentary

In November, two UCC students, Chrisdina O'Neill and Denise Kelleher, featured in an RTÉ documentary, charting their path to third-level education through UCC's Access and Participation programme. **My Uni Life** is a five-part series created in partnership between RTÉ and the Irish Universities Association, following the lives of seven students at various stages of their university experiences.

23% of first-year students were via access pathways



Career Services

The work of the Career Services remained largely online for this academic year. Digital practices widened the remit of services provided to the student community, including online webinars, one-to-many workshops, virtual events, employer-led workshops, and an extensive bank of recorded careers content for student convenience. Key highlights from this year are as follows:

The first Virtual Recruitment Fair took place, featuring 100 of Ireland's top graduate employers. Some 1,954 students and recent graduates registered to attend. Engagement was strong and resulted in over 6,000 one-to-one conversations between employers and attendees. Almost 200 undergraduate internships, graduate programmes and live jobs were advertised on the platform and 832 applications were made. Employer engagement events moved online, and Career Services facilitated webinars and skill sessions for 27 industry partners following the annual Recruitment Fair.

The development of 'InPlace', a central student portal for placement opportunities. The partnership between Career Services and employers in facilitating online interviews has been instrumental in securing student work placements this year.

The GoinGlobal database was made available to all students and recent graduates via the Careers Connect dashboard. GoinGlobal provides access to more than 16 million job and internship listings globally and provides career guides, advice on hiring trends and information on work permits/ visa regulations.

The UCC Works Award virtual ceremony was held in April 2021. Some 430 awards and digital badges were distributed to students participating across the four pathways. Approximately 17,040 voluntary hours were logged by participants this year.

Student Mental Health

This year, the university was allocated €270,000 to support students' mental health and wellbeing as part of a national package worth €5 million. This funding was used to support students as they returned to UCC and to recruit additional student counsellors and assistant psychologists, implement the National Student Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Framework and implement the Framework for Consent in Higher Education Institutes.

Student Counselling and Development

Student Counselling and Development adapted to ensure continued service delivery in compliance with government COVID-19 guidelines. Remote telephone and online counselling services were provided to students throughout the year. The service delivery framework has been re-designed to a stepped care approach, with offerings in direct response to identified needs. This year the university procured **SilverCloud** Health software, a trusted leader in digital mental health working with higher-education institutions to improve outcomes and reduce costs. Programmes for a wide range of mental health conditions at third level will provide digital supports to Student Counselling and Development and Student Health in both supported and unsupported modules.

€270,000 to support students' mental health



Student Societies

In response to COVID-19 over 2,000 virtual society events took place this year ensuring that UCC students remained connected whilst studying remotely. UCC Societies had another successful year at the Union of Students' in Ireland Achievement Awards, with UCC Medical Research & Technology Society winning Best Club/Society and UCC Cancer Society winning Best Charity Champion. Finally, in April this year UCC Societies Strategic Plan reached completion ahead of schedule.

Students' Union

This year the Students' Union worked extensively with the University Management Team to ensure that the student voice was represented regarding the operation of learning and teaching and the format of assessments.

The COVID Safety Support Teams (CSS) were organised by the Students' Union to supervise the library, Kampus Kitchen, and other shared public spaces on campus to ensure that all COVID-19 safety measures were followed. This initiative allowed students to continue studying and socialising safely on campus during the restrictions of the lockdown.

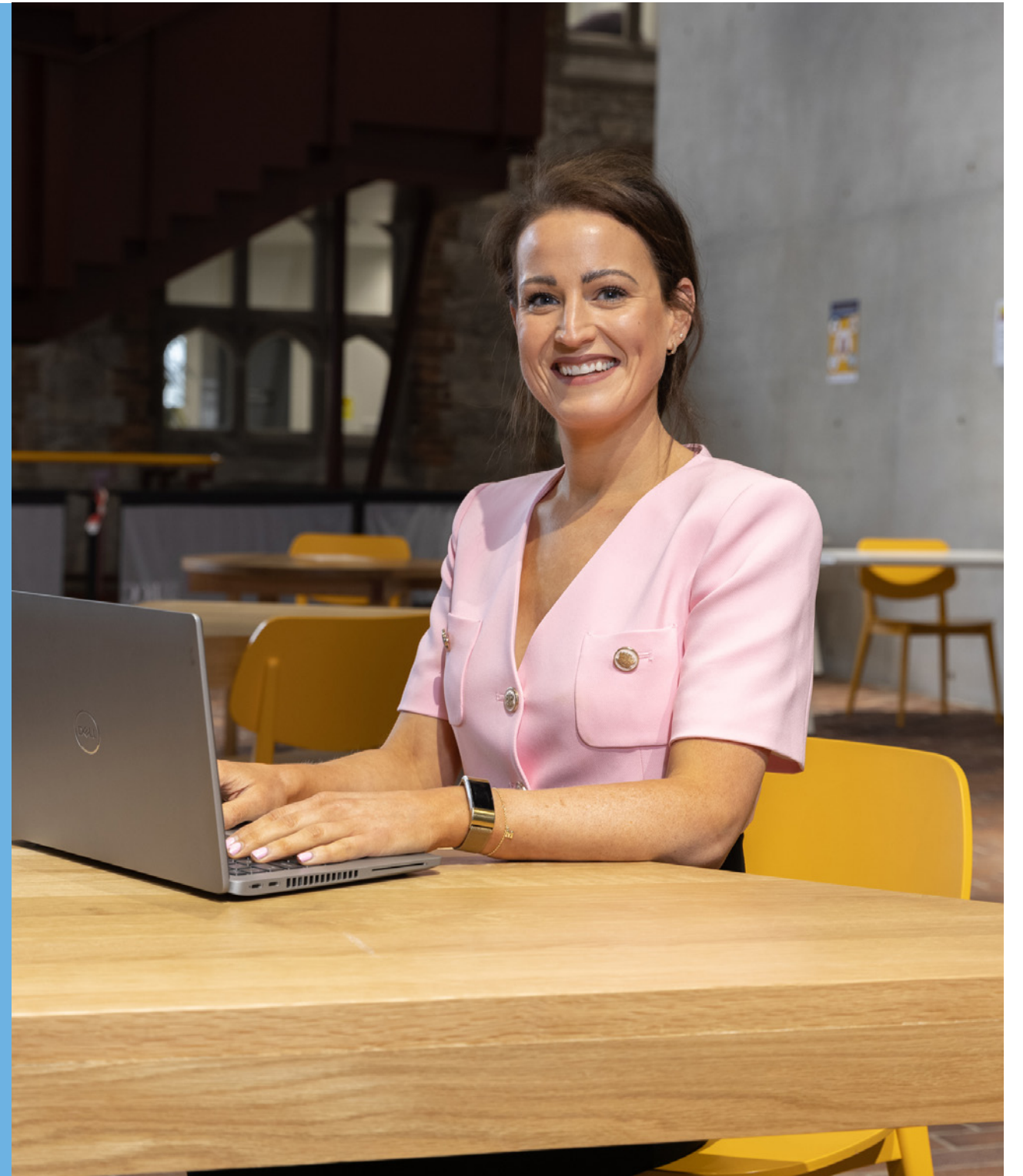
2,000 virtual society events in response to COVID-19





Connected

PEOPLE



The university continued to provide support and leadership to staff during the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic. Enhancing employee wellbeing initiatives has become a vital part of how UCC navigates through this most difficult period.

Staff Wellbeing and Development

Responding to requests for skills and knowledge development, a 'Virtual Café' network was established this year, which also helped reduce the sense of isolation experienced by some colleagues working during the pandemic by forging links between peers. Over 117 staff have participated in the network to date.

Supports for New Staff

Initiatives to support new staff included:



HR orientation sessions which took place regularly online throughout lockdown.



Peer Support Networks for staff. These are small groups of approximately five new staff who meet regularly to foster learning in the workplace.



In conjunction with UCC Visitors' Centre, dedicated campus tours for new staff members.

HR Excellence in Research Award

UCC successfully renewed the HR Excellence in Research Award for the second time in January 2021 and is now the leading university on the island of Ireland in this process.

The Odyssey Programme UCC

The Odyssey Programme UCC was referenced this year in the Chronicle of Higher Education by Professor Leonard Cassuto as a model of best practice worth replicating in American universities. This programme enables researchers and final year PhD students in UCC to adapt, integrate and expand on their existing expertise to prepare for possible diverse career choices.

Awarded the HR Excellence in Research Award in **2021**



University Staff Recognition Awards

The 2020/2021 Awards demonstrate the exceptionally high calibre of staff across UCC and the high regard in which nominees are held by the colleagues who nominated.

Name	School/Department/Unit/Research Centre	Award
Dr Angela Flynn	School of Nursing and Midwifery	The Frank McGrath Perpetual Award for Equality & Welfare
Ms Colette Cunningham	School of Public Health	Impact Award
Dr Claire Edwards	School of Applied Social Studies	Leadership Award
Mr Eoin Hahessy	Office of Marketing and Communications	Leadership Award
Dr Amanullah De Sondy	Study of Religions Department	Exceptional Citizen Award
General Services Operations Team	Buildings and Estates	Exceptional Citizen Award
Irish Legal Information Initiative	School of Law	Enhancing the Student Experience Award
The UCC Indian Alumni Community	Alumni and Development	Enhancing the Student Experience Award
Dr Michael Byrne	Student Health	Outstanding Colleague Award
Ms Margaret Coakley	Graduate Studies	Outstanding Colleague Award
Dr Eithne Hunt	Department of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy	Outstanding Colleague Award
Mr Allen Whitaker	School of Biological, Earth and Environmental Sciences	Outstanding Colleague Award





Connected

CAMPUS

Information Technology Services

The priority task of IT Services this academic year was to ensure that the university continued to operate successfully online during COVID-19 restrictions. The ability to support academic services and activities online were key areas of focus.

Canvas, the university's virtual learning platform, averaged 1.4 million page views per day during this period. Work also focused on building a digital workplace for remote working, with projects undertaken with colleagues across the university. All of this was enabled through the outstanding work of IT Services staff.

Finally, a new *University Digital Masterplan*, with the strategic pivot as its focus, was prepared for launch in 2021/2022.

1.4 million
Canvas page views per day
during COVID-19 restrictions



Boole Library

The library continued to prioritise making services, both physical and digital, available to students and staff to enable their learning, teaching and research. Despite the reintroduction of public health restrictions in October 2020, the library remained open at limited occupancy subject to appropriate protective measures including pre-booking, physical distancing, and mandatory face coverings. The significant enhancement of the online service offering ensured an equitable student experience through the implementation of innovative solutions to maintain service levels this year.

Extended Opening Hours

Following implementation of a new staffing model, the library now offers extended hours of service to benefit the university community.

The Book of Lismore

This academic year saw an internationally significant achievement for the university with the acquisition of *The Book of Lismore*, which will be housed in the Treasure Gallery currently being developed in the Boole Library. *The Book of Lismore*, rightly considered one of the great books of Ireland, was gifted to UCC thanks to the generosity of the Duke of Devonshire, his family, and the Trustees of the Chatsworth Settlement. It is now one of the most distinguished treasures of the UCC library collection. The *Book of Lismore* was welcomed to UCC during an online event in late October.

The Coastal Atlas of Ireland wins Best Irish Published Non-Fiction Book of the Year 2020

Cork University Press

Sixteen books were published by Cork University Press this year. The top three publications for 2020/2021 were:

1. *The Coastal Atlas of Ireland* (edited by Robert Devoy, Val Cummins, Barry Brunt, Darius Bartlett and Sarah Kandrot)

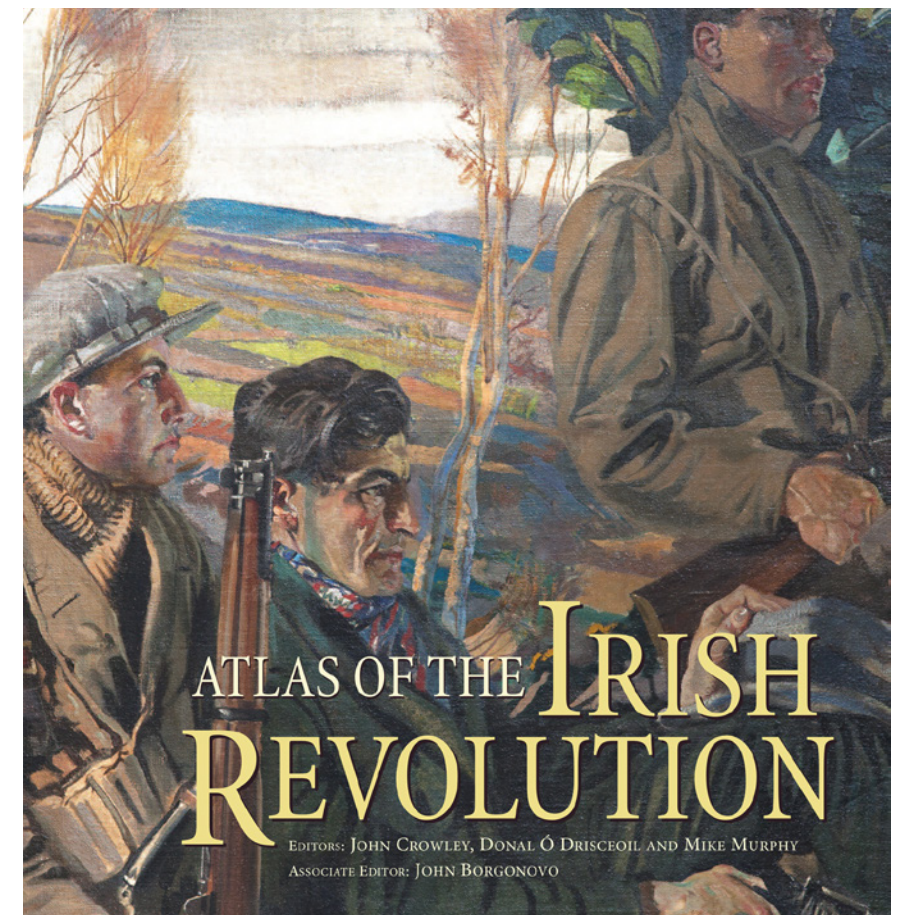
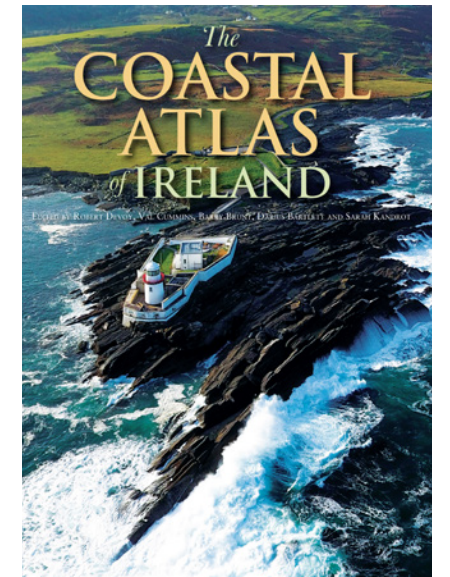
Winner of Best Irish Published Non-Fiction Book of the Year 2020, *The Coastal Atlas of Ireland* is a celebration of Ireland's coastal and marine spaces. When read in its entirety the *Atlas* will provide readers with a fascinating and comprehensive excursion through time and space along Ireland's coastline.

2. *Irish Country Furniture and Furnishings 1700-2000* (Claudia Kinmonth)

This major illustrated study investigates farmhouse and cabin furniture from all over the island of Ireland. It contributes as much to our knowledge of Ireland's cultural history as to its history of furniture.

3. *Atlas of the Irish Revolution* (edited by John Crowley, Donal Ó Drisceoil, Mike Murphy and John Borgonovo)

Winner of Irish Book of the Year 2017, *The Atlas of the Irish Revolution* is a landmark publication that presents scholarship on the revolutionary period in a uniquely accessible manner. It brings history to life for general readers and students, as well as academics, and represents a ground breaking contribution to the historical geography of these compelling years of conflict, continuity and change.



Capital Developments

The university's capital programme continued during 2020/2021 with significant progress on several active projects despite the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and increased construction inflation in 2021. The capital programme is financed primarily through the European Investment Bank (EIB) loan facility which supports a €250 million programme. Support for the Cork University Business School project was secured via the Higher Education Strategic Infrastructure Fund in late 2019.

Cork University Business School (CUBS)

Following on from the successful acquisition and redevelopment of the former Cork Savings Bank, plans are progressing for a new CUBS building in the centre of Cork City. The development will incorporate the existing academic departments in business and will deliver an integrated facility for undergraduate, postgraduate, research and innovation activities. A cost/benefit analysis has been completed for the project and a 1.46-acre site acquired at Union Quay. The university was successful in 2019 in achieving support towards the overall cost of the project under the Higher Education Authority's Strategic Infrastructure Fund (HESIF) competition. Potential design teams have been shortlisted following a prequalification process and requests for tenders were issued in early 2021. The successful design team will be appointed in late 2021.

1.46-acre site acquired for CUBS

Cork University Dental School and Hospital

The existing Dental School is based on the Cork University Hospital (CUH) campus. The new proposed Dental School and Hospital on the site of the Cork Science and Innovation Park at Curraheen will allow for more efficient teaching of a higher number of undergraduate and postgraduate students. The project is a key component of the EIB-financed projects.

The Reddy Architecture and Urbanism led design team was appointed in July 2018. Planning permission for the five-storey, 8,710m² facility was granted in August 2019. While the detailed design stage of the development was impacted by the pandemic and by draft changes to ventilation standards, tenders for the construction of the facility were sought in March 2021. Construction inflation has impacted on the overall cost and options to address the shortfall are under consideration.

Cork University Clinical Medical School

A new Clinical Medical School facility is planned for the CUH campus in collaboration with the HSE. A design team led by Avanti Architects was appointed by HSE/UCC to progress the design of this facility which is planned to be located adjacent to the main entrance of the hospital. It will provide critical support and teaching facilities for the medical students based in the hospital. The building will also include a HSE facility targeting the other allied health professionals. A feasibility study was completed in February 2020 and the planning application was lodged in October 2020 and granted in March 2021. Detailed design is progressing, and it is planned to issue the request for tenders in early 2022.

Discussions are ongoing with various stakeholders regarding similar medical school educational facilities in both South Tipperary General Hospital and University Hospital Waterford, which are part of the South/Southwest Hospital Group.



Kane Building

A major refurbishment of the 1970 Kane building is a priority project for the university. A design team has been appointed and has developed an overall masterplan and phasing strategy for the refurbishment project. It is hoped to finance this project through a combination of state support/philanthropy. Preliminary works were undertaken during the summer of 2019. Works were also completed on a new high-tech ultra-low-vibration laboratory in the basement of the northern end of the building in early 2021.

Student Accommodation

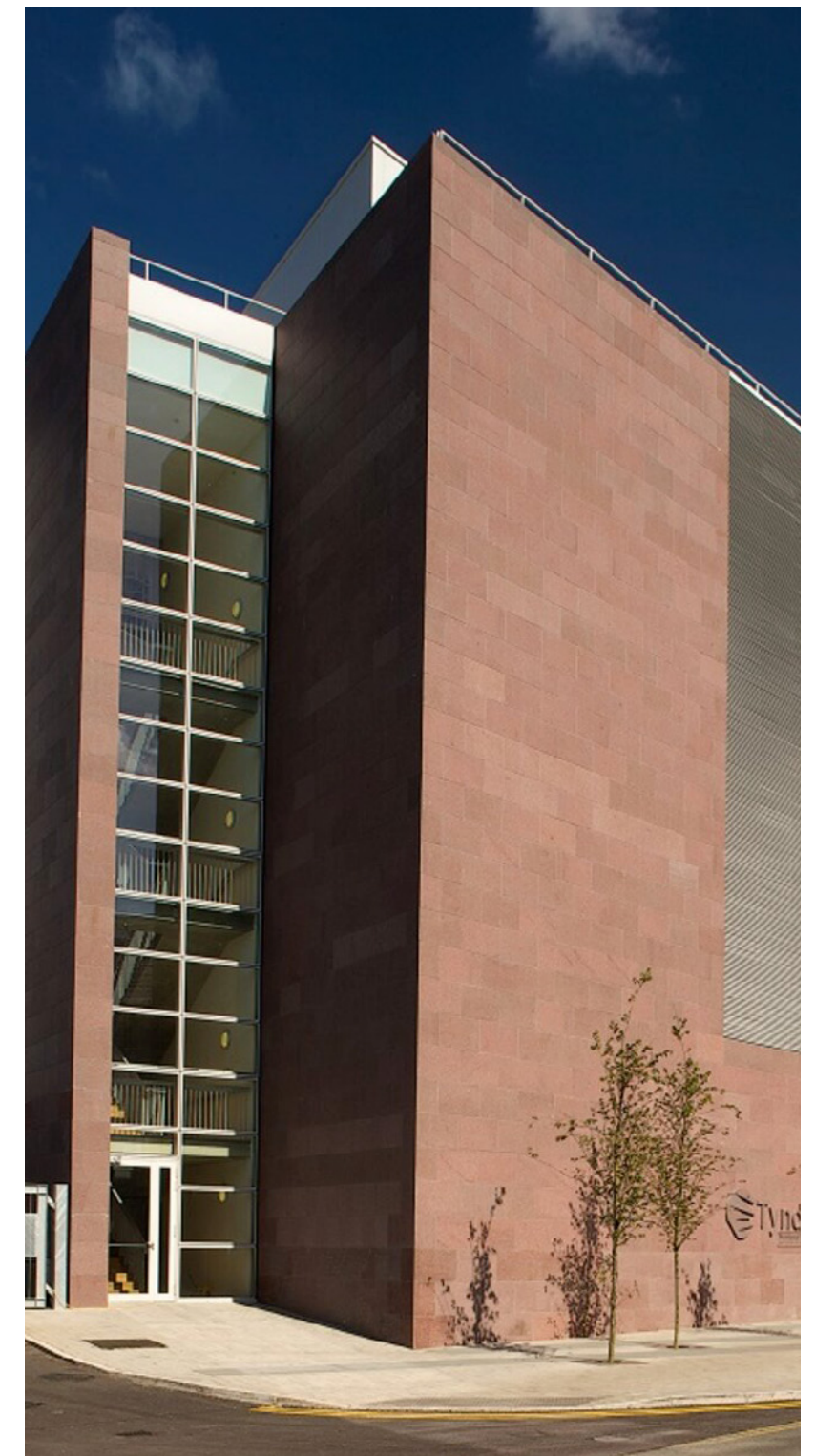
The Crow's Nest site was acquired in 2016 and a design team was appointed in August 2016. Planning permission for the four-tower, 255-bed student accommodation development plus a student medical facility was granted in March 2018. Construction commenced in November 2019. The pandemic has impacted on site progress, with site shutdowns in 2020 and 2021 and subsequent delays associated with implementing safety protocol measures. It is planned to complete in time for the 2022/2023 academic year.

Tyndall National Institute

Plans are progressing for a major new development on the North Mall site directly across the north channel of the River Lee from the existing Maltings site. A design team led by Scott Tallon Walker has been appointed to develop a major landmark building in line with the masterplan for the site developed with co-owners of the site, Mercy University Hospital. The project is a key component of Project Ireland 2040 (National Planning Framework) and the National Development Plan (2018-2027). Planning permission for the facility (including a detailed environmental impact assessment report) was lodged in March 2021. As expected, Cork City Council issued a request for further information in June 2021. A response to this request will be submitted in December 2021 and it is hoped to progress with detailed design and construction once planning approval is granted.

Two other projects were completed at Tyndall in 2020/2021:

- ✔ The Phase 3 building refurbishment, while impacted by the pandemic, was completed in late 2020. The project subsequently won the SEAI award under the 'Energy in Buildings' category in 2021.
- ✔ The relocation of two labs from Block C to Block A was completed in Q3 2021.



Other Projects

UCC Development Masterplan Review

A review of the **UCC Development Masterplan** was completed in early 2021 and was approved by the Governing Body in June 2021. The masterplan will be submitted to Cork City Council in late 2021 as part of their new City Development Plan 2022–2028.

The support of Cork University Foundation for the university's physical development plan is crucial to our capital programme. The university has a relatively small land bank compared with other Irish universities. This creates significant pressure in accommodating the future development needs of the university. UCC is looking forward to a major injection of state funding to support the university's infrastructure through Project Ireland 2040 and the National Development Plan (2021–2030). UCC continues to work with both the HEA and the local authorities to ensure the university is well positioned to meet its future development needs in a sustainable way.

Backlog Maintenance

A long-term annual programme to address the issue of backlog maintenance of the older buildings in the university estate was included in the EIB programme and was completed in 2021. Several refurbishment/infrastructure projects were progressed in the final year of the programme. UCC was also successful in achieving support for several energy improvement projects through the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland's Better Energy Workplaces scheme. The university met its Public Sector 2020 Energy Reduction target of 33% four years ahead of schedule. Achieving the government target of 51% reduction in carbon by 2030 will require significant investment in retrofits, heat pump technology, etc.

The HEA provided a devolved grant for 2020/2021 which will allow the university to continue addressing building maintenance across health and safety, end-of-life replacement, energy, access, etc.

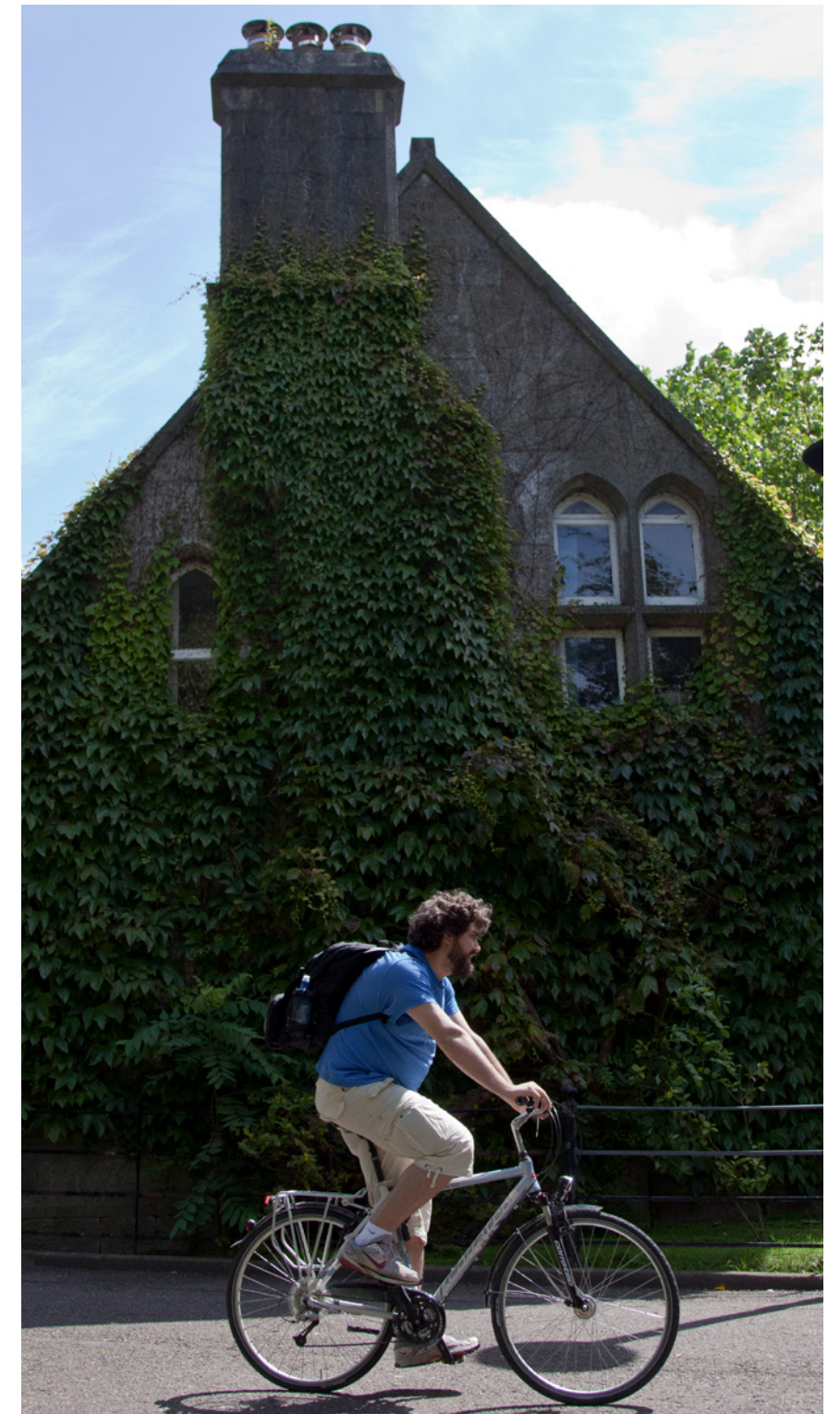
Commuter Planning

The reduced traffic and parking demand during the pandemic allowed for a review of bicycle-parking facilities on campus. Some areas for additional facilities were identified and new racks (covered and uncovered) are planned to be installed shortly.

Planning and procurement for the upgrading of the car-parking infrastructure progressed, with completion expected in mid-2022.

Discussions are ongoing with Cork City Council representatives regarding additional public bike stations on College Road (extension of the Coke Bike Scheme). Works have begun on installing a station on College View.

Energy Reduction target of 33%
four years ahead of schedule





Connected TO OUR COMMUNITY



UCC is part of a global movement of civically engaged and socially responsible higher education institutions whose aim is to promote universities' 'Third Mission' – societal engagement and impact.

UCC is a leading member of the **UNIC European University**, an alliance of eight universities that are educating through teaching, research and community engagement, in partnership with city and regional stakeholders.

Community Enhanced Learning

- ✔ UCC received €440,000 in EU Erasmus+ funding in a consortium bid to develop undergraduate community-based learning modules (UNICORN).
- ✔ The Community-Academic Research Links (CARL) programme reached a milestone of over 115 community-based research projects.
- ✔ UCC, in partnership with other Irish universities, launched a Community Engaged Learning online course for staff: *'Your Students Addressing Real World Problems through the Curriculum'*.
- ✔ UCC was successfully funded by the NFETL to lead the national *'Student and Community Partnerships: Impact in Action'* initiative – a series of video and written case studies showcasing student community engaged learning in action.

Capacity Building

In 2020, UCC along with other Irish universities received Health Research Board funding of €3.3 million over five years to establish a National Public Patient Involvement Network, to promote engaged

health research in Ireland. UCC led the successful €2 million Horizon 2020 Science with and for Society bid to develop engaged research across the UNIC European University Alliance partners. UCC led the €1.5m Horizon 2020 GRIPP project which is embedding Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) to engage societal actors throughout the research process. UCC/Tyndall are partners in the Horizon 2020 €1.4 million Time4CS initiative which is promoting 'citizen science' in communities.

National to Global Impact

In June 2021 the University, in partnership with the Royal Irish Academy and Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland, led the development of a position paper, and a national symposium on engaged research: Better Together: Knowledge Co-production for a Sustainable Society. In addition, the SFI APC Microbiome Research Centre has established engaged research as part of its strategic vision. Finally, the Environmental Research Institute, SFI MaREI Research Centre, INFANT Centre and ISS21 are leaders in co-creating knowledge *with* society.

Cork City-Lab

UCC established a City-Lab in Cork, to identify and address societal challenges faced by post-industrial cities and their regions. This was funded by EU Erasmus+ as part of the €4.2 million UNIC European University initiative.

Civic Partnerships

The university is a key contributor to multi-organisational partnerships in the region, which improve social inclusion, health, environmental and learning outcomes. These include: Cork Healthy Cities; Cork Food Policy Council; Cork Environmental Forum; Cork City of Sanctuary; Cork Age Friendly City and County; and the UNESCO City of Learning. The university is building community capacity through establishing six Learning Neighbourhoods



in Cork, through supporting local communities in Gaeltacht regions, the West Cork Islands and Cahersiveen (Skellig CRI) in Kerry.

UCC's ground-breaking Dingle 2030 partnership with ESB Networks, led by the MaREI Centre, is developing new ways to build capacity and empower communities around climate action. The Centre for Cooperative Studies actively supports a wide range of national organisations and communities, particularly building capacity within the micro-finance sector nationally.

Student Volunteering

46% of UCC students volunteer with local community organisations, clubs and campus groups on an ongoing basis. The university is embedding student volunteering through its [studentvolunteer.ie](https://www.ucc.ie/en/studentvolunteer) system, with 1,940 UCC students registering 10,528 volunteer hours.

10,528 student volunteer hours registered

Adult Continuing Education

Adult Continuing Education's (ACE) short course programme for spring 2021 saw almost 700 students registered. This represents a 50% increase on the standard spring programme intake rate. A total of 30 courses, across disciplines, ran from January to April 2021.

In March 2021, ACE delivered a fully online six-week course digital badge in Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in partnership with the National Forum. This badge will enable academic staff to gain an understanding of what RPL means within their own area.

ACE led the university's response to the HEA's Springboard+ 2021 call. Eighteen programme proposals were submitted for consideration including proposals from all four colleges at Levels 7, 8 and 9 of the National Framework of Qualifications. ACE secured more than €1 million in the Springboard+ call funding to provide 12 part-time courses in autumn 2021 with 326 places on offer.

Alumni and Development

Key Appointment

Kerry Bryson joined the Alumni and Development Office in August 2021 as Director of Business Development and Advancement. In this new role, Kerry is responsible for all advancement activities: alumni engagement, development and philanthropy, and strategic communications to support the enhancement of the university's global reputation, influence and impact. She will work with colleagues across the university to develop stakeholder networks worldwide and to support key income-generating and commercial activities, drive new initiatives and maximise revenue. Kerry joins UCC from the University of Stirling, where she was Director for Global Advancement.



Development

In 2020/2021 the institutional philanthropic KPIs were exceeded with €6.25 million in new gifts and pledges against a target of €4 million, with a further €2 million received from bequests. Furthermore, three individuals notified the university of their intention to leave UCC a legacy in their wills at a combined value of €2.25 million.

Alumni Events

The alumni events programme pivoted online in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The **Global Speaker Series** was launched and each month an expert from the global alumni community spoke to an expert from the university about a question of international importance. Speakers shared fascinating perspectives, speaking about the unique challenges and opportunities in their sectors. The series generated 7,500 views from 51 countries. There was also a very successful online Christmas Homecoming event.

Volunteering Opportunities

The new **UCC Alumni Online** platform, which recruited 4,100 members, will enable several new opportunities to volunteer. The platform will enable the launch of UCC's first Alumni to Student Mentoring Scheme. The pilot programme, developed by Alumni and Development and the Career Service, sees distinguished alumni mentors offer their guidance while simultaneously offering student mentees the opportunity to form meaningful professional networks with a wide range of impressive alumni. The programme will be launched early in the academic year 2021/2022.

UCC Dublin Chapter Launched

In March 2021, a new alumni chapter was launched in Dublin by a committee of fourteen Dublin-based alumni in collaboration with Alumni and Development. The establishment of the chapter was warmly welcomed by the Dublin alumni community.





Connected

FOR
SUSTAINABILITY

Rankings and Awards

2020/2021 saw UCC continue to build its reputation as Ireland's Green University. UCC ranked 9th globally in the UI GreenMetric Ranking. It ranked 8th in the Times Higher Education Impact Ranking, an improvement from 32nd the previous year, even though the number of participating universities increased to over 1,000. The university continued to be internationally recognised for its sustainability achievements and, in 2020, signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the University of Bologna specifically focused on 'green campus and sustainability.' In 2021, UCC was named the Best Green Campus at the Irish Education Awards.

Operations: Reducing our Carbon Footprint

In 2021, the Irish government released **Ireland's Climate Action Plan** which sets out national and sectoral targets for carbon emissions reductions. UCC's 2030 interim target is a 61% absolute reduction in Scope 1 and 2 emissions. The planned pathway to achieving this will see the installation of renewable energy and transition of fossil fuel heating systems to heat pump technologies as well as ongoing energy conservation campaigns. With the support of the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI), UCC has mapped a full pathway to achieve these targets with a pipeline of retrofitting and renewable energy projects.

UCC's Saver Saves scheme, which was launched in 2016, continues to drive significant energy savings across campus. There are currently six active Saver Saves teams across the university. Together they have delivered over 3,000,000 kWh in energy

savings, avoiding 1,100 tCO₂, and significantly reducing the amount of waste generated in each building while improving the recycling rates of waste streams. This combined with the university's ISO 50001 energy management systems has resulted in UCC achieving a 51.5% energy efficiency improvement against a 2020 target of 33%. Despite increasing the size of the estate by 41% since 2006 the university achieved a 21% reduction in absolute energy consumption by 2020. Thanks to continued investment in our retrofitting programme, UCC is well on its way to achieving its 2030 carbon reduction targets.

In 2020/2021 the Cleaner Production Promotion Unit delivered UCC's most detailed carbon emissions inventory to date. This revealed that 55% of the university's carbon footprint is attributable to our Scope 3 emissions, i.e. those that arise from our transport and procurement activities. It is imperative therefore that our sustainability and climate action plans incorporate all sources of university emissions and not only those related to heating and electricity. The following projects were implemented:

- ✔ **Staff E-bike Trial:** staff commuting to work accounts for 5% of UCC's carbon footprint. A large portion of these commutes are in the range of five to 20km distances. Recognising that E-bikes could play an important part in reducing staff commuting emissions, UCC provided a fleet of E-bikes for staff to trial with the goal of encouraging a modal shift amongst those that typically drove short to medium distance. More than 150 staff members have participated in the trials to date, with six staff transitioning to E-bikes as the main mode of transport.



- ✓ **EV Charging:** UCC has expanded its all-electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure for staff and has 14 charging stations across its estate for staff to use. Seventy-five staff members have registered to use the charging stations which provide over 5,000 charging sessions per year.
- ✓ **Procurement Strategy:** recognising the impact of procurement on UCC's Scope 3 emissions, the Procurement Office now includes sustainability in all tendering specifications and criteria. Recent successful green procurement projects included: the university's cleaning services; graphic design services; security services; car park management service; and sustainable printing service.

Learning and Teaching

UCC's Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Toolkit
UCC'S SDG **Toolkit** was developed as a resource for academic staff to better integrate the UN SDGs within their teaching practice. The project was funded through Ireland's National Forum for Teaching and Learning and was developed to deliver on the inclusion of sustainability within UCC's Connected Curriculum. The development of the toolkit was a cross-university collaborative process. It took a 'students as partners' approach, with two members of the student body sitting on the advisory group. The toolkit was developed by one-to-one and small group focus sessions, with the participation of over 40 staff and 25 students. Techniques and resources were piloted in 20 lectures across several disciplines at UCC. Six professional development workshops and one intensive professional development design sprint event were also conducted. The toolkit is an open-source web-based resource available to all HEIs and is easily adaptable.

UW Module

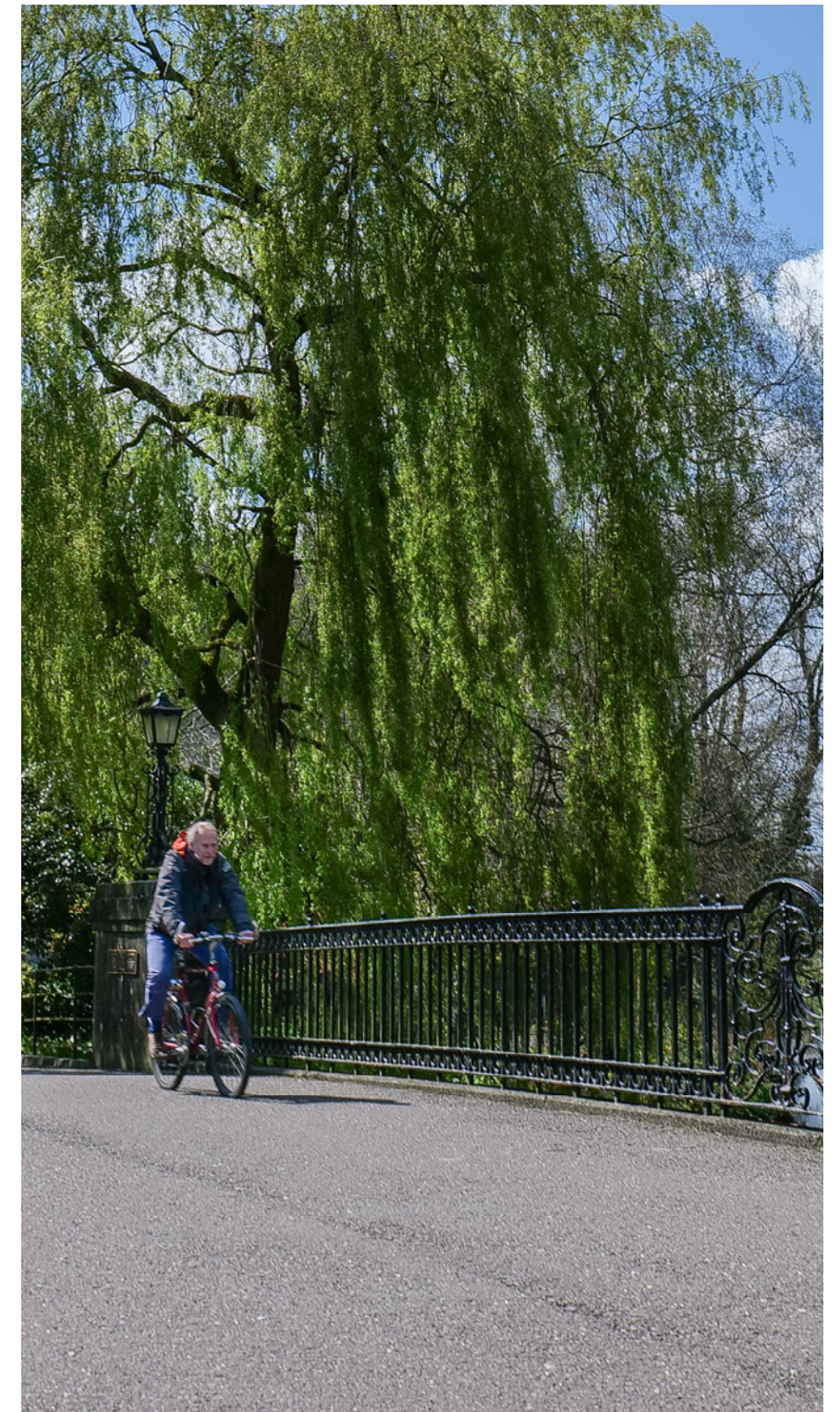
The university-wide module in sustainability moved online for 2020/2021; 165 participants registered for the module.

165 participants registered for the module

Sustainable Futures

The Sustainable Futures project aims to empower businesses to meet their legal requirements in transitioning to a low-carbon future, and to seek opportunities while meeting Ireland's climate challenges.

A growing number of businesses require a skilled workforce who are knowledgeable in sustainability and decarbonisation, and who can place climate concerns at the heart of strategy, operations, and decision-making, while at the same time maximising employment provision and profitability. Sustainable Futures is a cross-university initiative that will bring together science and enterprise, academia and industry, to drive sustainability and decarbonisation by developing new qualifications and continuing professional development (CPD) courses that will draw upon UCC's renowned expertise in the environmental field. The project will engage with industry and business



to pursue an enterprise-informed curriculum development, mapping the skills required for the transition to sustainable enterprise practices through decarbonisation.

It will further develop the new Higher Diploma (Level 8), Postgraduate Certificate (Level 9), Postgraduate Diploma (Level 9) and Master's (Level 9). These qualifications are aimed at several demographics: graduates from all disciplines; operational staff within industry partners; and early to mid-career, current and aspiring leaders who want to develop their capacity to drive the business response to sustainability challenges. Further CPD courses will be developed, aimed at professionals across all sectors wishing to enhance their skills in various fields to deliver on all aspects of environmental sustainability within enterprise.

Led by UCC, in collaboration with Maynooth University and Sligo Institute of Technology, the Sustainable Futures project has been awarded €3,913,440 under the Department of Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science's Human Capital Initiative.

Engaging the UCC Community

UCC Climate Assembly

In February 2021, UCC students and staff came together to run a climate assembly in UCC. This was the first assembly of its kind to take place in an Irish university. The assembly was inspired by the Citizens' Assembly and was based around the need to 'Build Back Better'.

UCC students felt that the pandemic had exposed some of the deep inequalities in our society and has made people re-evaluate their connection to the planet. The assembly consisted of eight themed workshops, which were co-facilitated by a student and a staff member. The workshops ran over two weeks and were open to anyone in the UCC community. The assembly was a collaboration between the Green Campus Committee, the Students' Union, and UCC Societies. Buildings & Estates staff also helped in the organisation of the workshops. The **Build Back Better Climate Assembly Report** includes a series of ambitious recommendations

including: improvement to cycling infrastructure; reduction in private car usage; reduction in academic business travel; and a target for net zero emission by 2030.

A guide, **UCC Green Campus Climate Assembly Guide**, was also produced to assist others in running similar events. It's hoped that this encourages other HEIs to increase the participation of their campus communities in shaping their climate action policy.

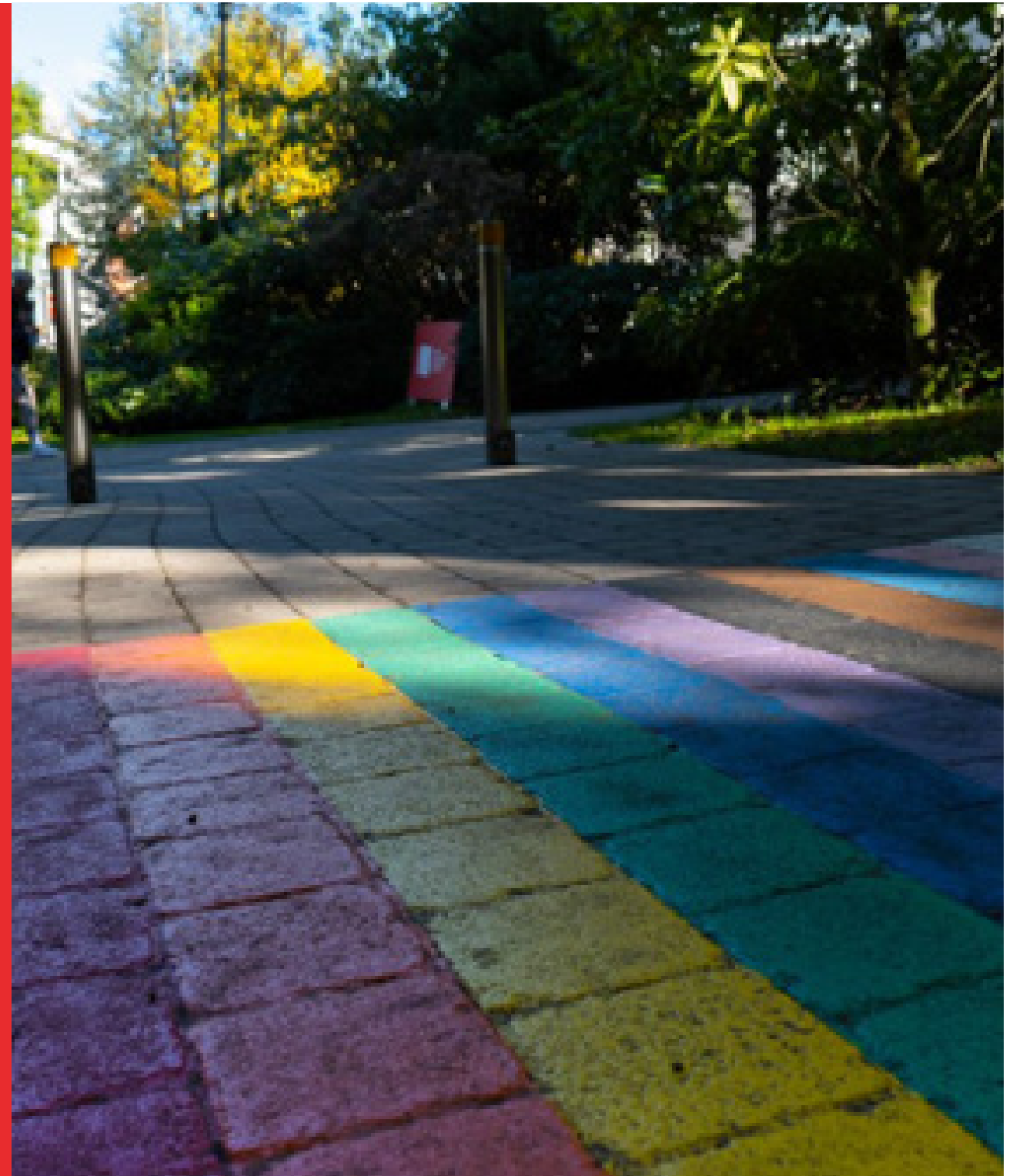
€3,913,440
awarded to the Sustainable Futures project





Connected

FOR EQUALITY,
DIVERSITY AND
INCLUSION



Key Appointment

Dr Avril Hutch joined the university in June 2021 as Director of **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**. Avril joins UCC from the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland and will focus on delivering a holistic university approach to equality, diversity and inclusion for both students and staff.

Autism-Friendly University Initiative

The much-loved Old College Bar was transformed into a dedicated space of respite and calm for students, and in particular students on the autism spectrum.

The Calm Zone/An Ceantar Ciúin is laid out across two levels, and every facet of the space – including acoustics and accessibility – has been considered to maximise autism-friendliness and designed to global design guidelines for built environments to be used by individuals with autism. Two **outdoor sensory spaces**, the Boole Courtyard and the Hawthorn Garden, were developed as calm places of respite for students on campus this year.

These initiatives are part of the university's commitment to transforming its campus to meet the diverse needs of students.

Leaders in Inclusive Education

In September 2021, the university was awarded €1 million in performance funding from the Higher Education Authority in recognition of UCC's commitment to the promotion in the field of **inclusive education**, and its efforts to open higher education to students with intellectual disabilities via the **Certificate in Contemporary Living** programme.

Athena SWAN Award

The School of Biochemistry and the School of Law earned departmental-level **Athena SWAN** Bronze Awards. Athena SWAN is a critical part of the university's strategic vision. Creating inclusive work

and learning environments is key to cultivating the talent and potential of staff and students.

UCC Race Equality Forum

In November 2020, Dr Amanullah De Sony assumed the role of co-chair of the UCC Race Equality Forum and has initiated a monthly discussion series called *'Conversations on Racism in Ireland'*, held online. The series facilitates constructive conversations about race and racism in Ireland in general and universities in particular. It aims to begin a constructive discussion around the lived experiences of minorities in the academy, and to build towards a race equality action plan for UCC.

Sanctuary Scholarship Scheme

Five Sanctuary Scholarships were awarded to students in 2020/2021 who will undertake undergraduate degree programmes in the College of Science, Engineering and Food Science, the College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences, and the College of Business and Law, including, for the first time, a law entrant. This year's scholars include three Leaving Certificate students, two QQI entrants and two mature students. Twenty-one UCC students have now accessed university education through this scheme. The Sanctuary Scholarship Scheme is a key part of fostering a sustainable culture of welcome within the university as a recognised **University of Sanctuary**.

Senior Academic Leadership Initiative

The appointment of Professor Lindsey Earner-Byrne as Professor of Irish Gender History and Professor Ruth Massey as Professor of Microbiome and Health Science took place under the Senior Academic Leadership Initiative (SALI). The SALI initiative aims to support higher education institutions to take positive action to accelerate and achieve their gender equality and diversity goals and objectives. UCC is committed to the promotion of equality and diversity as an institution.





Finance

Finance

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on all areas of university activity continues to pose financial challenges. Despite this, an overall group surplus of €8.2 million was recorded for 2020/2021 compared to a deficit of €2.26 million in 2019/2020 and a deficit of €5.64 million in 2018/2019. This surplus was achieved through robust budget management and the continued improvement of certain exchequer and non-exchequer income. Furthermore, the university achieved a positive investment return of €3.4 million on its investments. Earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation (EBITDA) amounted to €23 million in 2020/2021, which represents a 44% increase on prior year EBITDA of €16 million.

This year, the university completed a review of the Expected Economic Useful Life (EUL) of certain fixed assets. This review increased the EUL of certain assets from 50 to 80 years. This led to a reduction, on an annualised basis, of the depreciation charge of approximately €6 million; this reduction was offset by a reduction in the amortisation of deferred capital grants of approximately €2 million.

Statement of Comprehensive Income

Table 1 Summary Results	30/09/2021	30/09/2020	30/09/2019
	€'000	€'000	€'000
State grant	67,954	61,331	57,482
Academic fees	152,924	151,242	142,279
Research grants and contracts	95,043	94,414	99,032
Amortisation of state capital grants	9,044	11,326	9,923
Other operating income	43,920	41,184	60,742
Interest income	5	20	50
Investment income	124	355	552
Deferred funding for pensions	59,653	57,660	54,054
Donations and endowments	3,346	3,573	3,724
Total income	432,013	421,105	432,838
Staff & pension service cost	298,563	295,677	279,233
Other operating expenses	82,060	81,663	99,352
Pension interest expense	26,053	22,748	36,859
Depreciation	20,475	26,300	23,622
Total expenditure	427,151	426,388	439,066

Total Consolidated Income for the year grew by c. €10.9 million to €432 million.

Income

Exchequer revenue streams improved as a proportion of overall income, with state grants showing an increase of 10.8% of total income; this increase reflects additional once-off COVID-19 funding received from the state to offset costs arising from the transition to remote learning and the requirements of infection control/prevention measures on the campus.

Academic fee income of €152.9 million in 2020/2021 represented an increase of €1.68 million, reflecting a 1% growth in student numbers from 22,650 in 19/20 to 22,934, with non-EU students comprising 10.74% of total student base. Revenue from international students at €32.4 million represents a decrease of €4.5 million year on year arising from the full-year impact of COVID-19 international travel restrictions. The university expects the international student income stream to recover as COVID-19 international travel restrictions are eased. The university continues to focus on improving international student income to ensure it generates sufficient resources for long-term sustainability.

Student fees increased in 2020/2021 due to the continued growth in student numbers attending the university and the consequent increase in the amount of fees received.

Of the €152.9 million of academic fee income received, a total of €47.8 million was paid by the Higher Education Authority (HEA) on behalf of EU undergraduate students, an increase of 3.2% on the previous year. The remaining €105.1 million was generated by the university to generate its own resources to secure financial sustainability. Other operating income stands at €43.9 million,

an increase of €2.7 million/6.6% on the previous year, reflecting the early-stage recovery in general economic activity as COVID-19 restrictions eased in 2021.

Research activity delivered €95 million of income this year. This reflects the increase in research activity, recovering from a decline in 2020.

Expenditure

Consolidated expenditure for the year amounted to €427.2 million, an increase of €0.9 million in the year. Overall staff costs across the UCC group of companies grew by €2.89 million/1% due to pay restoration arising from the Public Service Agreement 2021-2022 Building Momentum and annual staff increments. Other operating expenses at €82.1 million are €0.49 million higher than the previous year. This reflects the recovery of activity on campus after an easing of the COVID-19 public health restrictions.

Fixed Assets

The increase in land and buildings costs during 2020/2021 reflects the ongoing expenditure on the Crow's Nest student accommodation project, €4.0 million. The cost of equipment, primarily research related, capitalised during 2020/2021 was €24.0 million. The depreciation charge for the year was €20.5 million.

Investments

The investments relate to the investments held by the University College Cork Trust Fund as at 30 September 2021. The fund generates income to fund prizes and scholarships across a wide range of programmes. The increase in investments of €3.4 million reflects the recovery in equity markets in 2021. The fund has increased in value over the past five years by €8.3 million, representing an annualised growth of 11.3%.



Debtors

Year-on-year debtors has increased by €11 million (25%) higher than previous year. This increase is due to the variation, year on year, in the timing of the receipt of certain monies.

Current Asset Investments and Cash at Bank

The university continues to maintain strong liquidity; cash balances and short-term investments are at €109.6 million at 30 September 2021, an increase of €25 million from 2020. The university has a comprehensive Treasury Policy in place to ensure Treasury risks are minimised.

Creditors Amounts Falling Due Within One Year

Creditors falling due within one year have increased from €29.5 million to €253.2 million, an increase of 13.2%. The main reason for the increase is the timing of payments arising from certain research activities.

Trade creditors have reduced to €6.96 million, a reduction of €2.04 million/22% from 2020. This reduction is due to the timing of trade creditor payments near year-end and operational efficiencies in group payment processing procedures. Short-term bank borrowings have increased to

€8.4 million, an increase of €2.4 million/41%; this arises from the repayment profile of the group loan portfolio.

Creditors Amounts Falling Due After More Than One Year

This balance has increased by €8.7 million/2%. This is mainly due to a new loan sourced from the Housing Finance Agency for the Crow's Nest accommodation development.

Restricted and Unrestricted Reserves

The restricted and unrestricted reserves at 30 September 2021 of €242.9 million are €8.2 million higher than 2020.

Summary and Outlook

In the financial year 2020/2021, the university continued to see extensive challenges posed by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the operating environment. UCC successfully delivered an agile business model, providing a hybrid academic experience of higher and professional education enabling a high-quality education offering, supported by digital online technologies.

In response to the challenges and uncertainties due to COVID-19 in 2021, and to date, research activities saw a strong research output and benefits in external funding during the reporting period. The successful implementation of remote working arrangements for other university staff continued, and tremendous credit must be given to our outstanding staff, who continue to deliver great results for our students in these unpredictable times.

Student numbers at undergraduate and postgraduate levels continued their growth path throughout 2020/2021; commercial revenues from ancillary operations recovered in 2021, though some components of ancillary activities still experienced a challenging operating environment.

The university's exchequer and non-exchequer revenue increased during the year due to state grants and the impressive delivery of academic courses by UCC and the IMI Institute.

While government support for the COVID-19 impact was needed and the investment in higher education and research announced in Budget 2022 is welcome, it is not sufficient to address the core-funding deficit in the sector.

The funding issues facing the Irish third-level sector were identified in the Cassells report in 2016 and the university looks forward to being given an opportunity to engage with the department through the Irish Universities Association (IUA) to ensure that a sufficient funding model is put in place for third-level education, thereby ensuring UCC continues to play a pivotal role in Ireland's future recovery.

The university expects that COVID-19 will continue to impact its finances in 2022, and UCC is fully confident that we will emerge positively to meet our strategic goals, strengthening our infrastructure and resource base, and driving future growth and success.





Enabling CONNECTIONS



Enabling Connections

Corporate and Legal Affairs

The Office of Corporate and Legal Affairs (OCLA) plays a central role in the university, delivering on its strategic agenda through providing a reliable and facilitative governance framework which meets evolving statutory requirements and stakeholder expectations. It does this through supporting the Governing Body and Governing Body Committees. OCLA provides the following professional services to the university community:

- ✓ legal
- ✓ information compliance
- ✓ records management
- ✓ archives
- ✓ health and safety
- ✓ risk management

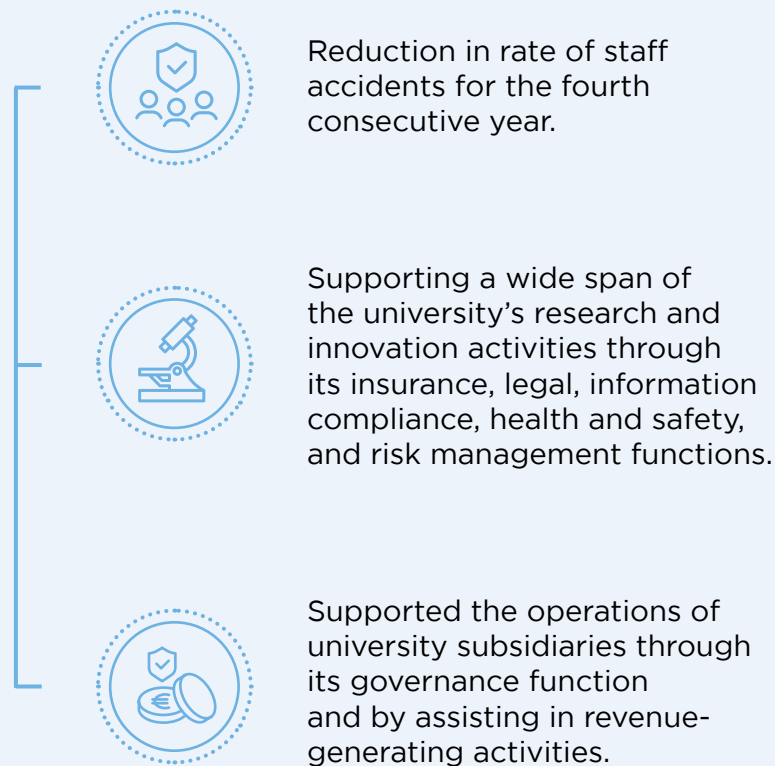


During 2020/2021, a period marked by the COVID-19 pandemic, some of the highlights achieved by OCLA included:

- ✔ Co-ordinated, in collaboration with Human Resources, the recruitment of the sixteenth university president.
- ✔ Led the Campus Business Continuity Team in the implementation of infection control measures in line with COVID-19-related public health advice to enable a safe return to on campus activities, including delivering training for over 200 lead worker representatives across the university.
- ✔ Managed the university's business interruption insurance claim as a result of the pandemic.
- ✔ Reviewed the student governance structures and comprehensively updated the Student Rules.
- ✔ Provided legal and data protection advice on the implementation of the Framework for Promoting Consent and Preventing Sexual Violence in Higher Education Institutions.
- ✔ Provided legal advice and data protection advice to the Irish leg of the World Health Organisation Solidarity Trial, a global trial sponsored in Ireland by the Department of Health. The trial sought to identify effective treatments for Covid-19. OCLA's legal and information compliance teams developed the legal framework and data protection advice for this study which involved completing over 30 contracts with six universities, nine hospital sites, the Department of Health, the State Claims Agency, and the Health Research Board.

- ✔ Rewrote the Disclosures Policy to align with new legislation.
- ✔ Played an important role in drafting, with the IUA, the Code of Governance for Subsidiary Companies of Irish Universities.

OCLA added value to UCC through:



Membership of Governing Body 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021

Chief Officer:

Professor John O'Halloran,
President

Chairperson:

Dr Catherine Day

Senior Officers:

Professor Stephen Byrne,
Interim Registrar

Professors/Associate Professors:

Professor Frédéric Adam
Professor John Cryan
Vacant
Professor David Kerins
Vacant

Academic Staff :

(other than Professors/Associate Professors):
Dr Louise Crowley
Michael Delargey
Dr Angela Flynn
Dr Heather Laird
Dr Brian O'Flaherty

Staff (other than academic staff):

Sinead Hackett
Gary Hurley
J.P. Quinn

Students:

Naoise Crowley, President, Students' Union
Eimear Curtin, Deputy President, Students' Union

Postgraduate Student:

Vacant, Postgraduate Officer, Students' Union

Nominees of External Organisations:

Dermot Breen (IBEC)
Colm Leen (Cork Chamber of Commerce)
John Fitzgibbons (Cork Education and Training Board)
Margaret Lane (Cork Opera House)

Nominees of the Minister for Education and Science Professor:

Maeve Conrick
Fionuala McGeever
Rose McHugh
Bride Rosney

Graduates:

Owen Dinneen
Michelle Healy
Jennifer O'Sullivan

Lord Mayor of Cork:

Cllr Joe Kavanagh

Mayor of the City & County of Waterford:

Cllr Damien Geoghegan

Nominees of the National University of Ireland:

Dr Valerie Mannix Boyle
Dr Dermot O'Mahoney



Nominees of the Councils of the Administrative Counties of:

Cork	Cllr Bernard Moynihan
Waterford City and County	Cllr Davy Daniels (Mayor of the Metropolitan District of Waterford)
Kerry	Cllr John Francis Flynn
Limerick	Cllr Jerry O'Dea
Tipperary	Cllr Michael Fitzgerald



UCC At A Glance

