



Department Application Ireland Bronze and Silver Award

(Interim Process)





Application Information

Name of institution	University College Cork
Department	School of Microbiology
Focus of department	STEMM
Date of application	December 2021 (Nov 2021 submission round)
Award Level	Bronze
Institution Athena SWAN award	Date: Nov. 2019 Level: Bronze
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Abbreviations

APCD	Academic Programmes and Curriculum Development
AS	Athena SWAN
ASSG	Athena SWAN Steering Group
BSI	Biosciences Institute
CEMC	College Executive Management Committee
(S)EMC	(School) Executive Management Committee
ERI	Environmental Research Institute
FSB	Food Science Building
GS	Graduate Studies
HOC	Head of College
HOS	Head of School
PSS	Professional & Support Staff
RC	Research Committee
SAT	Self-assessment team
SEFS	Science Engineering and Food Science
SSPC	Synthesis and Solid State Pharmaceutical Centre
SoM	School of Microbiology
TCD SGM	Trinity College Dublin School of Genetics & Microbiology
TLSE	Teaching and Learning and the Student Experience
WG	Working Group

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Department application	Recommended	Actual
Word limit	11,000	11,050
<i>Recommended word count</i>		
1. Letter of endorsement	500	578
2. Description of the department	500	871
3. Self-assessment process	1,000	1078
4. Picture of the department	2,000	1844
5. Supporting and advancing women's careers	6,500	6679
6. Case studies	n/a	n/a
7. Further information	500	0

UCC's School of Microbiology has chosen to opt in to the Professional, Managerial and Support Staff: Interim Process. The additional data, analysis and actions relation to Professional, Managerial and Support Staff should be considered as part of the award panel's assessment of whether the application meets the criteria for a Bronze award.

1 Letter of Endorsement from Head of School of Microbiology

Dr Victoria Brownlee
Head of Athena SWAN Ireland
Advance HE
First Floor, Napier House
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Dec. 22nd 2021

Dear Dr Victoria Brownlee

As School Head, I am delighted to take this opportunity to energetically endorse this School's application for the Athena Swan bronze award. I have been a member of this school since 2002, and Head since August 2019. Prior to moving to this university, I spent 14 years training and practicing as an academic scientist in Sweden, Canada, New Zealand and the USA. I have experienced living, working and co-raising a family in diverse cultures, and been the recipient of generosity, tolerance, support and prejudice. In the context of improving health in disadvantaged individuals, I have worked with ethnic minorities around the world. As a leader of a large research group since 1995, my individual actions demonstrate a commitment to gender equality, affirmative action and inclusion. I have witnessed the formalization of procedures to support equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in this university and I view this Athena SWAN application as a timely, logical and necessary milestone in that process.

We have been consciously moving in recent years to a School culture and set of values that facilitates this application. Like many academic institutions and departments, we have an historical imbalance in the proportion of senior female academic staff. To counter that, we successfully applied in 2020 for a Senior Academic Leadership Initiative (SALI) professorship under the scheme launched by the (Government of Ireland) Higher Education Authority, the appointee assuming her position in June 2021. Furthermore, in April 2021, we retained an existing female lecturer at Associate Professor level, meaning we now have two female colleagues at Professorship level, and two at Lecturer level. Two of the last three academic positions in the School were filled by female applicants.

Apart from academic hires, which are opportunities for major change but which occur infrequently, we have steadily implemented a range of policy changes, new procedures, and cultural shifts to promote EDI in the School. Examples include:

- Support for parental leave for staff members who are surrogate mothers, well before this was addressed at national level
- Support for career breaks and unpaid leave

In addition to the collation of data and proposed actions for the current application, the School began preparation for drafting a new School strategic plan to be in place by 2022, and selected actions we propose to implement include:

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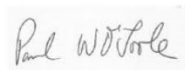
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- Creating a sense of identity and branding, including a new School mission statement reflecting our commitment to EDI
- Inclusion of research staff and postgraduate students at School assemblies
- Incorporating the discussion of this application, and promotion of EDI values, as a standing item in the agenda of our School executive management committee monthly meetings

The School has an unusually skewed aging staff profile, with retirement of 5 senior (male) professors or senior lecturers, and two male technical officers, within the next 5 years. Although the senior staff contribute proportionally to Athena SWAN preparation, there is a clear sense from our recent meetings that younger colleagues have an exciting opportunity here to have a big impact on the School culture. UCC 2022 endorses a dynamic and inclusive culture by investing in staff to help recognize and maximize their contribution to the collective success of UCC. As Head of School, I am totally committed to leading, encouraging and facilitating the implementation of the Actions identified in our Athena SWAN bronze award application. Finally, I confirm that the information presented in the application (including qualitative and quantitative data) is an honest, accurate and true representation of the School.

Sincerely,



Prof. Paul W. O'Toole

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2 Description of the School

The School of Microbiology (SoM) in UCC was conceived in 1924 through the appointment of Michael Grimes (first Chair/Professorship of Dairy Bacteriology in 1940). The department became an independent operational unit and has evolved over the years to the SoM (since 2013). The SoM is one of nine schools in the College of Science, Engineering and Food Science (SEFS) and contributes to internationally recognised teaching and research programmes at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels across two of the four Colleges in UCC namely the College of SEFS and the College of Medicine and Health (Table 2.1).

The School (Fig. 2.1) is located across the UCC campus in three buildings: The Food Science Building (FSB), the Biosciences Institute (BSI) and the Environmental Research Institute (ERI), each with dedicated offices, teaching and research laboratories. The SoM has a vibrant research programme and has extensive collaborations with research centres including primarily APC Microbiome Ireland, an SFI Research Centre (“APC”, which has staff and students in FSB, BSI and external University/research campuses), and also ERI, Tyndall Institute, Teagasc Moorepark Food Research Centre and BIOMERIT.

Ten members (approx. 50%) of the School’s academic lecturing staff are principal or funded investigators in APC. Consequently, some/all the research activities of these staff members are performed in conjunction with APC via research staff and postgraduate students that have a dual School and APC affiliation. The teaching activities are all performed as part of the School’s activities while the administration is performed by the School or the APC. The APC management are committed to the AS Charter Principles and fully support and endorse the SoM AS Action Plan, as it relates to SoM academic staff who are APC PIs, and their APC-based PGR students. APC management were consulted throughout the self-assessment process. Furthermore, eight SAT members are affiliated with the APC in the capacities of principal investigators (PI; 1F, 2M), funded investigator (FI; 1F 2M) and researchers (1F 1M). The SoM Action Plan incorporates APC good practice identified through the AS self-assessment, e.g. standardised induction for all new staff and students (**Action 5.1.3**) and researcher exit surveys to facilitate tracking of career paths of departing staff

(many APC researchers choose to pursue careers in industry as well as academia) (**Action 4.2.1**).

Table 2.1 Degree Programmes led (white) and supported (blue) by the School of Microbiology

<p>Undergraduate Programmes (with integrated Microbiology modules and lead contribution by Microbiology staff)</p>	<p>Biological and Chemical Sciences (CK 402 – a first-year general entry stream for UCC STEM UG students, providing fundamental training in chemistry, physics, mathematics and biology)</p> <p>BSc Biomedical Science (Accredited Programme, delivered by SoM in collaboration with MTU and UCC School of Biochemistry & Cell Biology)</p> <p>BSc Biotechnology (delivered by SoM in association with UCC School of Biochemistry, Departments of Process Engineering and Pharmacology)</p> <p>BSc Genetics (delivered by SoM in association with UCC Schools of Biochemistry and Biological, Earth and Environmental Science)</p> <p>BSc Microbiology (delivered by SoM)</p>
<p>Undergraduate Programmes (with integrated Microbiology modules and teaching by Microbiology staff)*</p>	<p>Agricultural Science</p> <p>Applied Plant Biology</p> <p>Biochemistry</p> <p>Food Business</p> <p>Food Science (Food Microbiology Option)</p> <p>Graduate Medicine</p> <p>Medical and Health Sciences</p> <p>Nursing</p> <p>Nutritional Sciences</p> <p>Pharmacy</p> <p>Process Engineering</p> <p>Public Health Sciences</p> <p>Science Education</p>
<p>Taught Postgraduate Programmes (with integrated Microbiology modules and lead contribution by Microbiology staff)</p>	<p>MSc Food Microbiology (coordinated by SoM)</p> <p>MSc Bioinformatics and Computational Biology (coordinated by SoM) in association with UCC School of Mathematical Science and School of Computer Science & Information Technology</p> <p>MSc Biotechnology* in association with Biochemistry, Chemistry and Process Engineering, Pharmacy and Biological, Earth & Environmental Science</p> <p>MSc Molecular Cell Biology with Bio-innovation* in association with Biochemistry, Neuroscience and Business Information Systems</p>

Taught Programmes*	Postgraduate	
		Master of Public Health
		MSc Food Science
(with integrated Microbiology modules and teaching by Microbiology staff)		PG Cert in Dairy Technology and Innovation
		PG Cert in Health Protection (Online)
		PG Cert in Infection Prevention and Control

*Student data for these programmes is not presented in this application



Fig. 2.1 The School of Microbiology in (from L to R) the FSB, BSI and ERI buildings. FSB & BSI are neighbouring buildings on main campus while ERI is located at a separate site off the main campus site.

Female representation is at least 50% at UG (63%), PGR (71%) and PDR (50%) grades (Table 2.2 & Figure 2.2). However, at all lecturing academic levels, female representation is remarkably lower (15% of lecturing staff in 2020; 3F 17M). There has been very little recruitment to academic posts in the School over the past two decades with 13 (2F 11M) of the academic staff in their posts for at least 10 years; however, since 2017, four academic staff members were recruited, three of whom were female (see Section 5.1 (i); Table 5.1.1). The School recognises the need for female representation in senior research and academic lecturing grades and is committed to addressing the historic gender imbalance in senior positions (Fig. 2.2). Female representation at undergraduate and postgraduate levels is largely consistent with national averages for the discipline. We are cognisant of the lower male representation at these levels, and will explore entry-level barriers to men (**Action 4.1.1**); however, as male representation increases across the academic career pipeline, our Action Plan prioritises the progression of females at senior researcher level and into academic positions (e.g. **Actions 5.1.3, 5.1.4, 5.3.3, 5.3.6, 5.3.10**).

Table 2.2 Staff and students in School of Microbiology (2020)

	Female	Male	%F
Academic	3	17	15
Research	27	27	50
PSS	6	4	60
Hourly Occasional Academic	12	8	60
Hourly Occasional PSS	1	0	100
Total	49	56	47
<hr/>			
UG Students	200	115	63
PGT	53	32	62
PGR	56	23	71
Total	309	170	65

Note: Staff numbers are calculated based on staff lists in December 2020 while student numbers were calculated based on a census performed in March 2020. Academic hourly and occasional staff are primarily represented by recent PGR/PGT graduates who seek part-time employment opportunities and to gain experience until they secure positions in industry/academia.

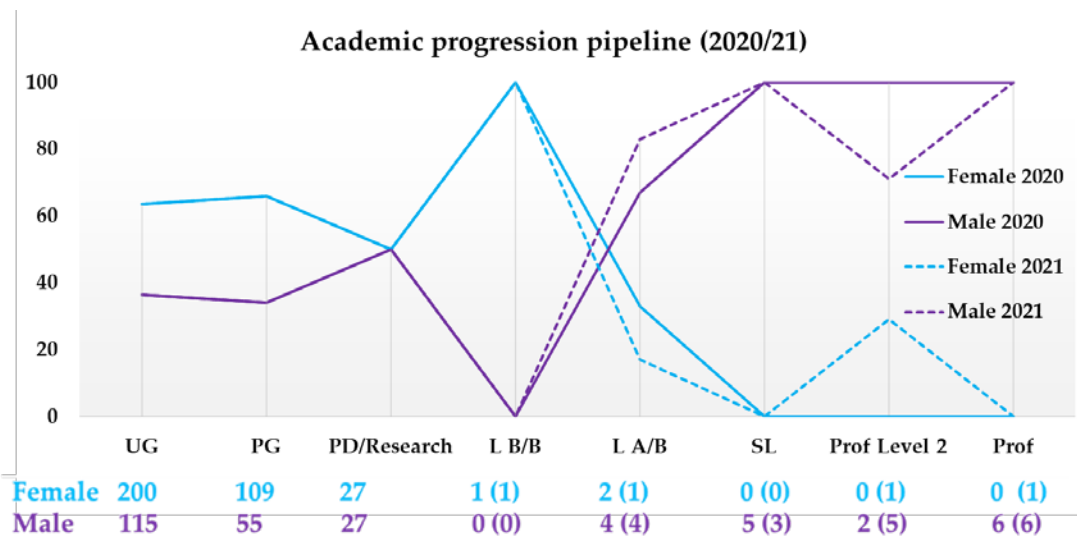


Fig. 2.2. Progression pipeline of academic staff and students. The data table indicates the changing numbers of staff in academic lecturing positions between 2020 and 2021 (in parentheses) due to recent promotions and recruitment. 2M promoted to SL; 1F 2M promoted to Prof level 2; 1F Prof level 2 appointed through SALI scheme; 1M Prof level 2 was hired in a joint appointment with APC.

The HoS reports to SEFS HoC and is a member of SEFS CEMC (Fig. 2.3). All academic staff and PSS representatives are members of SoM EMC, which meets monthly and decides academic and administrative matters. School committee chairs represent the School on the corresponding College standing committee. The School Assembly meets twice a year and consists of all members of staff in the school, in all categories of staff as well as UG and PG student representatives. The School assemblies are a forum to inform the School of recent events and to discuss suggestions for improvements to the School's operations. The Chair of the AS SAT is a member of the SEFS ASSG, which in turn reports to the University ASSG.

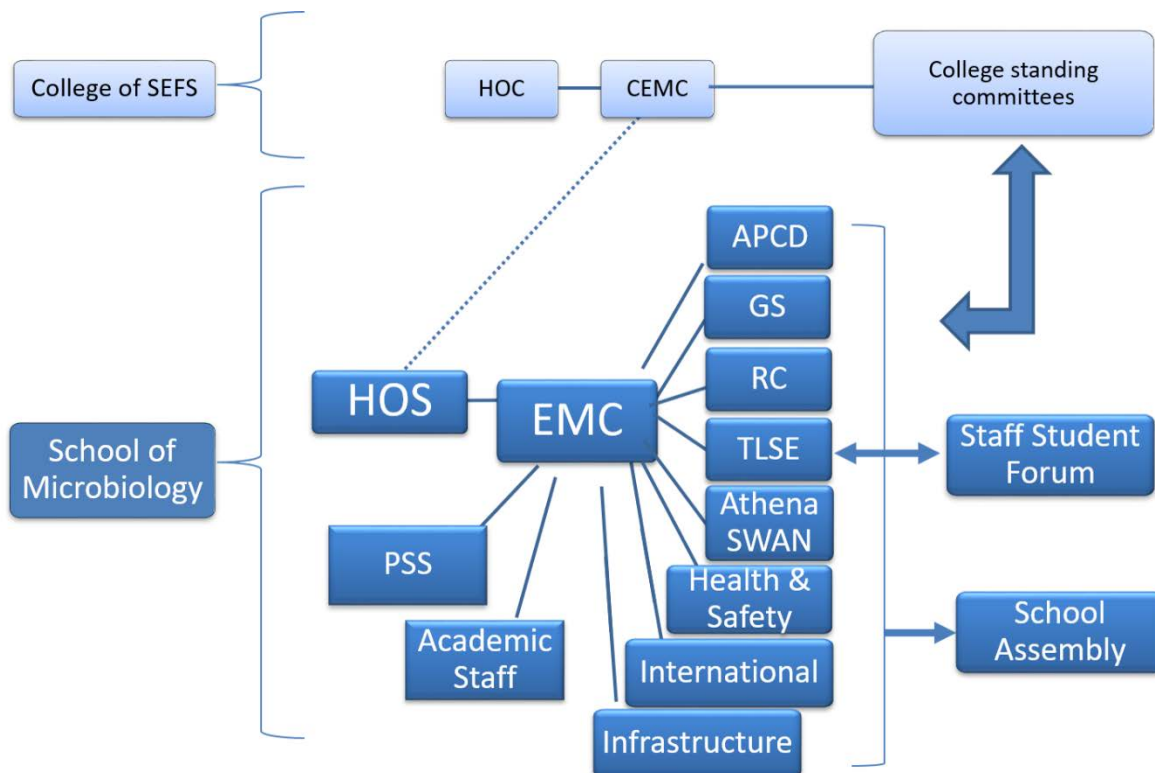


Figure 2.3 School of Microbiology organogram. Committees: Academic Programmes and Curricular Development (APCD), Graduate Studies (GS), Research Committee (RC), Teaching, Learning & Student Experience (TLSE), Athena SWAN, Health & Safety, International, Infrastructure.






3 The self-assessment process

(i) *A description of the self-assessment team*

The SAT is comprised of 17 staff (9F 8M) representing academic, technical and research staff and PGRs (Table 3.1). Members of the SAT include those that job-share and have caring responsibilities. SAT gender balance (53%F) reflects the overall gender balance among School staff (47%F). The SAT consulted closely throughout the self-assessment process with third- and fourth-year undergraduate class representatives (through focused discussions with SAT members). The HoS, Prof. Paul O'Toole, is an active SAT member and provided over-arching support to the SAT and its Chair, including ensuring a reduced teaching load for the Chair to facilitate the preparation of the application.

Four SAT members volunteered early on to join the SAT, having been aware of the School's plans to apply for an award through informal discussion with the SAT Chair. In August 2020, the SAT Chair invited Ann King (UCC's AS project officer) and Dr Therese Uniacke-Lowe (SAT Chair, School of Food and Nutritional Sciences, UCC) to present on (1) the AS Charter and the application process and (2) Dr Uniacke-Lowe's experience of AS as SAT Chair of an award-holding School. These presentations were open to all School staff and supported our early SAT recruitment initiative. Subsequently, the SAT was assembled through an open invitation by e-mail to the School community, verbal invitations at EMC meetings and through direct approaches to various staff members. In September 2020, five SAT working groups (WGs) were established to examine student (WG1) and staff (WG2) data, career progression (WG3), flexible working (WG4) and organisational culture (WG5) within SoM.

Table 3.1 Members of the School of Microbiology SAT highlighting their roles & background

	Name/Position	Relevant Experience	Role on SAT
	Prof. Jennifer Mahony Prof. (level 2)	School representative on SEFS ASSG since April 2016 Member School EMC PI APC Microbiome Ireland	SAT Chair WG 5 Lead: core writing, analysis and action plan
	Professor Paul O'Toole HoS	HoS Member of CEMC PI APC Microbiome Ireland	Strategic advice, reflective policy proposal; proof reading, editing application drafts
	School Manager	Manages School website and the administrative function of the School. Member of School EMC.	Member of SEFS AS Steering Group and WG 1
	Dr David Clarke Senior Lecturer	Member of School EMC Vice-Dean Graduate Affairs in College of SEFS Director of BSc Biotechnology FI APC Microbiome Ireland	Member of WG2
	Ms Mary Cotter	PG administrator Support academics in teaching logistics planning	Member of WG2
	Dr Sally Cudmore Manager, APC Microbiome Ireland (2005-2021)	Advocate of Athena SWAN & strong promoter of wellbeing in the workplace	Consultancy on SoM-APC action planning in 2020 Data sharing



Professor Alan Dobson
Professor

Member School EMC

Draft review & editing.



Ms Eithne Egan
School administrator

Manages School Twitter feed

Member of WG5

Supports School administrative functions



Dr Des Field
Post-Doctoral Researcher

School representative on SEFS ASSG since April 2019

Member of WG5

Senior PDR in SoM & APC

Ms Katherine Lavelle

Former PhD student in SoM

Member of WG3

Former PhD student (2017-2021)

PDR staff member in SoM & APC

Post-doctoral researcher



Dr John MacSharry
Lecturer

Member of School EMC

Member of WG3

Deputy Director of Graduate Entry to Medicine

School representative for MSc in Molecular Cell Biology with Bioinnovation

FI APC Microbiome Ireland



Dr John O'Callaghan
Senior Technical Officer

Provides guidance & support to UG, PG and PD researchers in laboratory activities

WG 2 Lead: core writing, data analysis, action planning



Ms Michelle O'Leary
Senior Executive Assistant

Interfacing with staff and students of the School

Member of WG4

Local induction support

		Manages School Twitter feed and linkedin pages	
	Dr Jerry Reen Lecturer	Chair of Graduate Studies Committee in SoM SEFS representative on UCC Bord na Gaeilge Member of School EMC School representative on SEFS Graduate Studies Committee	WG 3 Lead: core writing, data analysis and action plan development
	Dr Sheila Ryan Technical Officer	Provides guidance & support to UG, PG and PD researchers in laboratory activities	Member of WG4
	Dr Pauline Scanlan Research Fellow & Lecturer	Member of Graduate Studies Committee in SoM Member of HR Excellence in Research Committee Member School EMC FI APC Microbiome Ireland	WG4 Lead: core writing, data analysis and action plan development
	Ms Carmel Shortiss Teaching Assistant	Disability Support Liaison Coordinator of UG laboratory training Committed to inclusivity & positive student experience	Member of WG2
	Mr James Woods School Operative	Data handling & curation Support administrative & technical functions in SoM	WG1 Lead: discussion, writing, data analysis and action planning

(ii) *The self-assessment process*

Key pillars of SoM self-assessment process

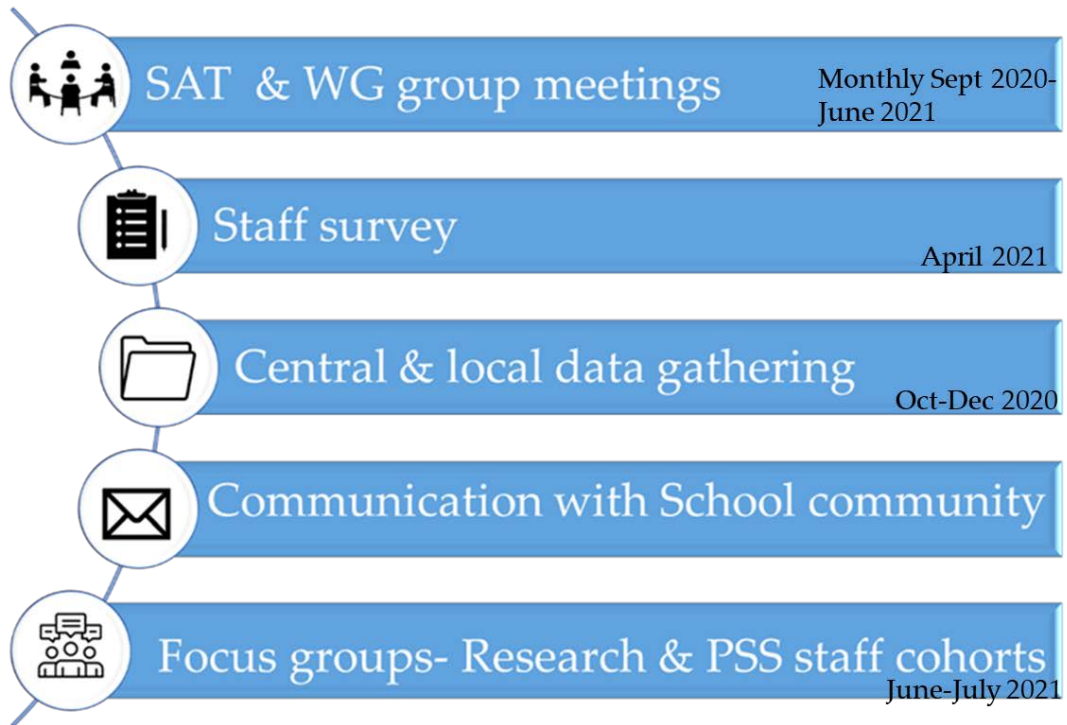


Fig. 3.2. Overview of key SAT activities

The SAT first convened in September 2020 and thereafter met monthly (virtually due to Covid restrictions). Early meetings focused on planning and discussing data gathering; and preparing/discussing the staff survey. Where appropriate, we have bench-marked our staff/student data against Trinity College Dublin SGM, which is the only comparable School nationally in terms of size and discipline. WG leaders organised monthly WG meetings and reported monthly to the SAT on progress, with all WG members contributing to the data analysis, action-planning and drafting of the above-mentioned thematic sections of the application (Fig. 3.2). We promoted the SAT's work in SoM through the use of informational banners (Fig. 3.3A) and email communications (Fig. 3.3B). AS has been a standing item on SoM EMC since January 2020 and has been promoted at our summer and winter 2020/21 School Assemblies. The School community were invited to attend EDI-related events including workshops or

seminars (Table 3.2). All SAT members (and 26 additional School members beyond the SAT) undertook Unconscious Bias awareness training through a HR workshop that was arranged specifically for the School.

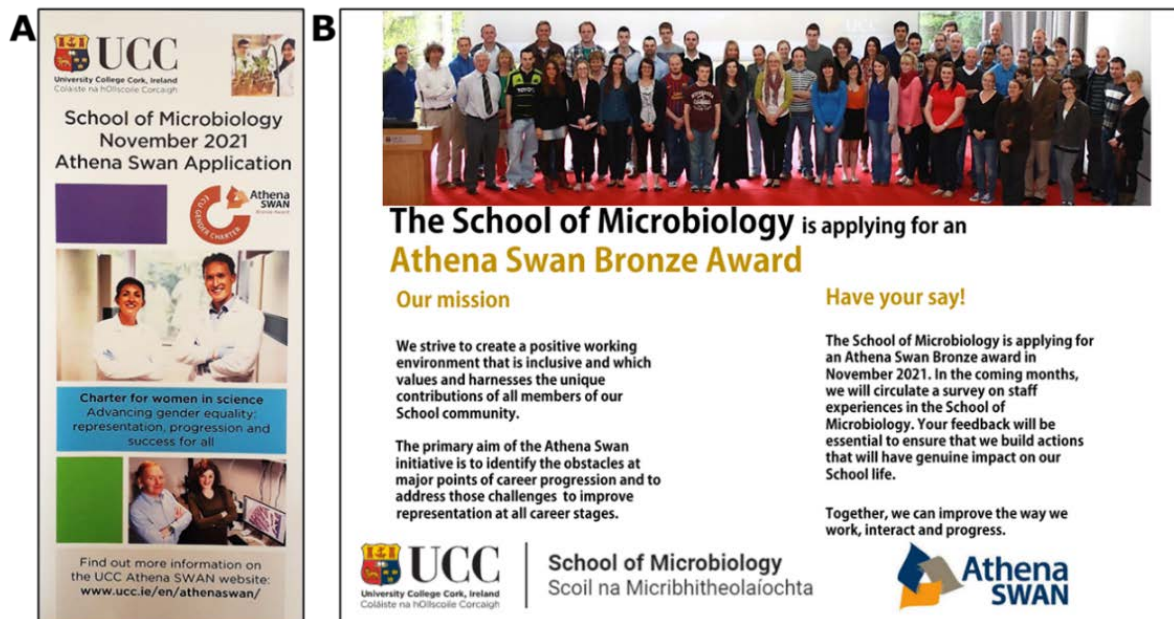


Fig. 3.3. Promotional material to raise awareness of AS in SoM and supporting SAT recruitment & feedback initiatives. **Panel A:** Image of banner located on FSB levels 3 and 4 where the majority of our staff and students are located. These images were part of our early information and SAT recruitment initiative. **Panel B:** Flier circulated to all School staff/students in February 2021 through email and noticeboards to inform them of SoM plans to submit an AS Bronze application, highlighting the benefits and encouraging participation.

A staff survey was issued in April/May 2021 to all staff and PGR students (94 staff/PGR students invited based on active contracts at the date of issuing the survey) and 76 (41F 35M) respondents (i.e. 81 % response rate) representing academic lecturing staff (27%), PSS (17%) and research staff/students (55%). UCC EDI Unit facilitated two focus groups, one for SoM researchers (focused on training, support for career progression) and one for PSS staff (focused on family-friendly policies, flexible working opportunities, career supports). Participation was limited with just four participants in both focus groups (PSS 2F 2M; Researcher 2F 1M, gender of fourth participant not reported). Special SAT

meetings in June & August 2021 considered these consultation findings and developed corresponding actions.

Table 3.2 Summary of AS and EDI events and workshops attended by SAT/ school members

Date	Event title	Number & Gender (F/M) of SoM participants
March 2019	AHE Workshop: Dr. Victoria Brownlee, AS Project Manager Ireland	2F
February 2020	AHE workshop: Applying for a Bronze departmental Athena SWAN award	3F
August 2020	Presentation to SEMC by Ann King-AS project officer & Therese Uniacke-Lowe-SAT chair SoFNS, UCC	12F/6M
January 2021	AHE workshop: Preparing for self-assessment	1F
February 2021	AHE workshop: Data analysis, Dr Victoria Brownlee	4F/1M
March 2021	Unconscious Bias training facilitated by Anne Gannon, HR, UCC	21F/22M
March 2021	AHE workshop: SMART Action Planning, Dr Victoria Brownlee	3F/1M
April 2021	AHE workshop: Making progress and delivering impact, Dr Victoria Brownlee	3F/1M

The SAT Chair and School manager were supported by UCC AS project officer and EDI Unit staff and the Chair was mentored by Dr. Therese Uniacke-Lowe, UCC SoFNS SAT Chair (Bronze award 2017). Drafts of the application were reviewed internally by SEMC, SEFS ASSG group, UCC AS project officer and externally by Prof. Ita Richardson (who led the successful AS application of the Dept of Computer Science & Information Systems, University of Limerick (Bronze award, 2021)).

(iii) Plans for the future of the self-assessment team

The AS self-assessment process has heightened the SATs awareness of the need for increased inclusivity within the School community to represent the diverse ethnicity, culture/religion, age and sexual orientations of our staff and students in addition to promoting gender equality. Therefore, members of the SAT have committed to broaden the scope of the existing AS SAT to form an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) committee to ensure that the broader equality issues of the School and its members are identified and addressed (**Action 3.1.1**). As we transition to broaden the remit of the committee, the AS agenda and Action plan implementation will remain a priority while our recruitment of new SAT members will be broadened to reflect the expanded remit and scope of the committee. This work will support the School as we prepare for a potential silver AS application in 2025 under the new AS Ireland charter framework.

We will establish a plan for the periodic rotation of SAT members and for succession arrangements for the role of SAT Chair in year one of the action plan (**Action 3.1.1**). The SAT will continue to meet every two months (WGs will meet monthly), virtually or in-person, to discuss action plan implementation progress (**Action 3.1.1**). We will update the School community at least six times a year via email, social media and on the School website regarding action plan implementation and on broader EDI issues and it is envisaged that this will support our recruitment activities (**Action 3.1.2**). AS will remain a standing item on EMC agenda, and the SAT will formally report to EMC on action plan implementation progress monthly (**Action 3.1.2**). Furthermore, our School committees are well represented on the SAT and responsibility for implementation of the action plan will be shared across the School. We will encourage and support other Schools who are in the process of applying for an Athena SWAN award, and the SAT Chair currently acts as a “buddy” to the UCC School of Mathematical Sciences AS SAT and will act as “buddy” to a first-time applicant in the College of SEFS (**Action 3.1.3**).

4 A picture of the School of Microbiology

4.1 Student data

(i) Numbers of men and women on access or foundation courses

N/A

(ii) Numbers of undergraduate students by gender

The School is entirely responsible for the honours BSc Microbiology degree (BSCMB). We share responsibility for the BSc Genetics (BSCGN), BSc Biotechnology (BSCBT) and BSc Biomedical Science (BSCBS) programme as outlined in Table 2.1.

The BSCGN and BSCBS programmes are direct-entry programmes via dedicated CAO streams. There is no direct entry to our BSc Microbiology and BSc Biotechnology programmes. First-year students enter a general Biological and Chemical Science stream (CK402) and the decision regarding choice of outlet is made on entering 3rd year.

Table 4.1.1 Number of UG students by Programme & gender (2017-20)

	2017/18			2018/19			2019/20		
	F	M	%F	F	M	%F	F	M	%F
BSCGN*	67	34	66	59	34	63	53	40	57
BSCBS*	83	30	73	81	28	74	81	29	74
BSCMB	55	31	64	55	25	69	46	26	64
BSCBT	19	21	48	22	18	55	20	20	50
Total	224	116	66	217	105	67	200	115	63

* Note: numbers in BSCGN, BSc Genetics and BSCBS, BSc Biomedical Sciences are the total across years 1-4 of these direct entry programmes, whereas the numbers in BSCMB, BSc Microbiology and BSCBT, BSc Biotechnology programmes represent total students studying these programmes in years 3 & 4.

Table 4.1.2 Number students by Programme & Year of Study (2017-20)

BSc Headcounts by Programme and Year of Study (2017-2020)										
		2017/18			2018/19			2019/20		
		F	M	%F	F	M	%F	F	M	%F
BSCGN	Yr 1	15	8	65	13	12	52	12	13	48
	Yr 2	15	7	68	14	7	67	12	12	50
	Yr 3	16	7	70	15	8	65	14	7	67
	Yr 4	21	12	64	17	7	71	15	8	65
	Total	67	34	66%	59	34	63%	53	40	57%
BSCBS	Yr 1	22	10	69	21	7	75	22	8	73
	Yr 2	20	5	80	20	10	67	19	6	76
	Yr 3	20	6	77	20	5	80	20	10	67
	Yr 4	21	9	70	20	6	77	20	5	80
	Total	83	30	73%	81	28	74%	81	29	74%
BSCMB	Yr 3	31	14	69	27	11	71	21	12	64
	Yr 4	24	17	59	28	14	67	25	14	64
	Total	55	31	64%	55	25	69%	46	26	64%
BSCBT	Yr 3	10	11	48	12	8	60	8	12	40
	Yr 4	9	10	47	10	10	50	12	8	60
	Total	19	21	48%	22	18	55%	20	20	50%
Total	Yr 1	37	18	67	34	19	64	34	21	62
	Yr 2	35	12	74	34	17	67	31	18	63
	Yr 3	77	38	67	74	32	70	63	41	61
	Yr 4	75	48	61	75	37	67	72	35	67
	Total	224	116	66%	217	105	67%	200	115	63%

Table 4.1.3 Benchmarking data for UG student numbers in UCC, TCD SGM & HEA (Biology)

	2017/18			2018/19		
	F	M	%F	F	M	%F
TCD (Years 3 & 4)	82	39	68%	89	42	68%
UCC (Years 1-4)	224	116	66%	217	105	67%
HEA (Biology)*	452	286	62%	-	-	-

*HEA Bench-marking data was only available for 2017/18

The overall UG student numbers and gender balance has been relatively stable between 2017/18 and 2019/20 (Table 4.1.1). Minor variations in gender ratios occur from year to year across the programmes (Table 4.1.2). The BSCBS degree programme is predominantly female (73-74%). There are also higher proportions of women in the BSCMB and BSCGN programmes (64-69% and 57-66%, respectively). The BSCBT programme is substantially gender balanced (48-55% female). Overall, SoM UG gender balance aligns to benchmarks (TCD SMG, HEA (biology) (Table 4.1.3). We plan to explore and address any local entry-level barriers to male undergraduates (pre-entry and among CK402 students) (**Action 4.1.1**). Overall, degree completion rates are very high across all programmes (Table 4.1.4).

Table 4.1.4 Undergraduate completion rates (2017-2020)

	2017/18			2018/19			2019/20		
	F	M	%F	F	M	%F	F	M	%F
Intake	73	52	58	78	36	68	75	32	70
Graduated on time	67	45	60	71	30	70	68	31	69
Graduated late	2	5	29	3	3	50	0	0	0
Graduated same course	69	49	58	71	33	67	68	31	69
Graduated different course	0	1	0	3	0	100	0	0	0
Did not graduate	4	2	67	4	3	57	7	1	88
Total Graduates	69	50	58	74	33	69	68	31	69
*On-Time Completion	97	90		96	91		100	100	
*Same-Course Completion	100	98		96	100		100	100	
**Overall Completion	95	96		95	92		91	97	

*% of total same-gender graduates

**Graduates as % of Same-gender intake

Non-completion may be due to failure in any year of the programme, transfer to another course, or deferral. The slightly higher non-completion rate in 2019/20 is due to an unusually high number of female non-completions (4) in the BSCBS programme. It is likely that this was pandemic-associated. We will review our student numbers and completion rates from 2020/21 and 2021/22 to evaluate if this gender disparity in completion rates represents a trend (**Action 4.1.3**). Furthermore, during the pandemic-associated restrictions in 2020, we introduced mentorship schemes for year 3 and 4

students. We perceived a positive impact from this interaction with students and consequently we will formalise these mentoring schemes, which will improve student supports and help maintain high completion rates (**Action 4.1.2**).

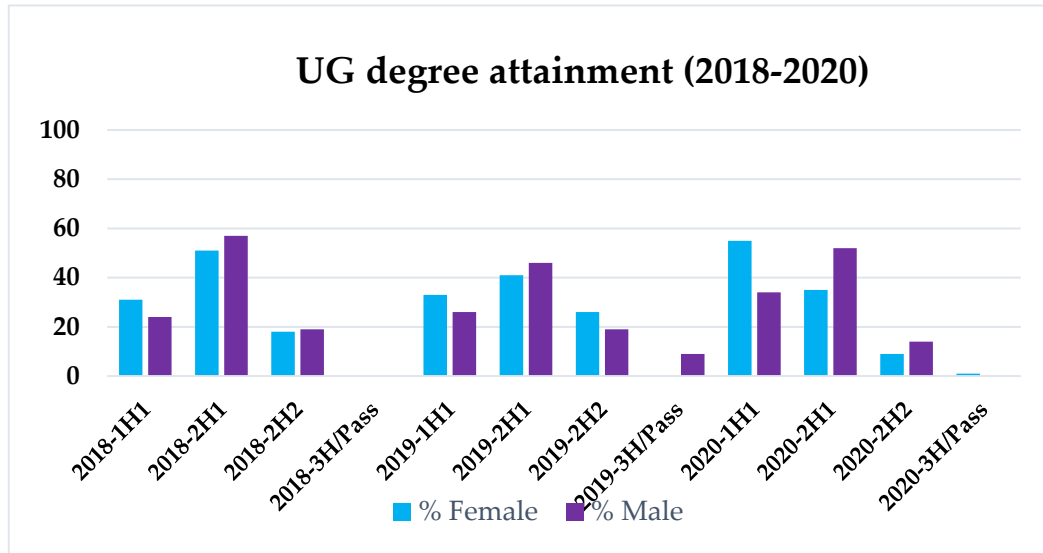


Fig. 4.1.1. Undergraduate degree attainment across the period 2018-20.

Table 4.1.5. UG Student Degree Attainment (2017/18 - 2019/20)

		Female	Male	% of F	% of M
2017/18	1H1	23	11	31%	24%
	2H1	37	26	51%	57%
	2H2	13	9	18%	19%
	3H/Pass	0	0	0%	0%
	Total*	73	46	61%	39%
2018/19	1H1	24	9	33%	26%
	2H1	30	16	41%	46%
	2H2	19	7	26%	19%
	3H/Pass	0	3	0%	9%
	Total*	73	35	68%	32%
2019/20	1H1	39	12	55%	34%
	2H1	25	18	35%	52%
	2H2	6	5	9%	14%
	3H/Pass	1	0	1%	0%
	Total*	71	35	67%	33%

% reflects grade attained as a proportion of total graduates of same gender

*Total % reflects F/M as proportion of total graduates (both genders)

Undergraduate degree achievements were evaluated over the 3-year period and the proportion of women obtaining a 1H1 grade is slightly higher than that of men. The data for 2019/20 indicates that this was a remarkable year with more students overall achieving a 2H1 or higher (Table 4.1.5 & Fig. 4.1.1). However, we did not perceive a significant gender-specific issue with the AY2019/20 data. We will monitor degree attainment to identify any ongoing impacts of the pandemic on grade attainment. The new mentoring scheme for year 3 and 4 students should help mitigate these impacts by providing individualised support to students who may experience difficulties (**Action 4.1.2**).

(iii) Numbers of men and women on postgraduate taught degrees

Our data and actions are focused on the PGT programmes that are wholly School-led (MSc programmes in Food Microbiology (MFSTMB) and in Bioinformatics and Computational Biology (MSCBCB)). The MSCBCB programme can be taken either full-time (1 year) or part-time (2 years). Student numbers are relatively low and variable (Table 4.1.6) and gender balance fluctuates year-on-year. TCD did not have PGT programmes prior to September 2020 therefore benchmarking data was not available for the review period.

Table 4.1.6 Number of students on all PGT programmes (2018-2020)

		2017/18			2018/19			2019/20		
		F	M	%F	F	M	%F	F	M	%F
Full Time	MSCBCB	4	7	36	5	4	56	4	12	25
	MFSTMB	5	5	50	10	5	67	14	2	88
	Sub-Total	9	12	43	15	9	63	18	14	56
Part Time	MSCBCB	2	2	50	0	1	0	1	0	100
	Sub-Total	2	2	50	0	1	0	1	0	100
Total		11	14	44	15	10	60	19	14	58

There did not appear to be any significant gender disparity in PGT course applications, offers and acceptance rates when analysing the overall trends in the School-led PGT programmes with the exception of AY2019/20 (MSCBCB 25%F

and MFSTMB 88%F) (Table 4.1.7). Though numbers are low, there has been an increase in the proportion of female applications, offers and acceptances in the MFSTMB programme across the review period (Table 4.1.7). We will continue to monitor PGT student data to identify trends and address gender underrepresentation (**Action 4.1.3**).

Table 4.1.7 MSCBCB & MFSTMB programmes. Applications, Offers, and Acceptances (2017-2020)

			PG Applicants			PG Offers			PG Acceptances		
			F	M	%F	F	M	%F	F	M	%F
2017/18	Full-Time	MSCBCB	25	26	49%	20	23	47%	4	7	36%
		MFSTMB	35	25	58%	23	18	56%	6	5	55%
	Part-Time	MSCBCB	3	6	33%	1	4	20%	0	2	0%
	Total		63	57	53%	44	45	49%	10	14	42%
2018/19	Full-Time	MSCBCB	27	31	47%	26	25	51%	6	7	46%
		MFSTMB	59	24	71%	42	14	75%	9	5	64%
	Part-Time	MSCBCB	2	6	25%	1	3	25%	0	1	0%
	Total		88	61	59%	69	42	62%	15	13	54%
2019/20	Full-Time	MSCBCB	21	31	40%	16	25	39%	5	13	28%
		MFSTMB	47	13	78%	35	11	76%	13	3	81%
	Part-Time	MSCBCB	0	1	0%	0	0	0%	0	0	0%
	Total		68	45	60%	51	36	59%	18	16	53%

MSCBCB Bioinformatics and Computational Biology; MFSTMB Food Microbiology

Across all our PGT programmes, most students graduated on time and no significant gender disparity was evident in PGT completion rates or degree attainment (Table 4.1.8 & Fig. 4.1.2).

Table 4.1.8 PGT Completion rates and timeliness (2018-2020)

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
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	F	M	%F	F	M	%F	F	M	%F
Intake	47	27	64	29	40	42	45	33	58
Graduated on time	44	21	68	27	35	44	44	31	59
Graduated late	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Did not graduate	3	4	43	0	3	0	1	2	33
Total Graduates	44	23	66	27	36	43	44	31	59
On-Time Completion rate			100			100			100
Overall Completion rate			94			93			98

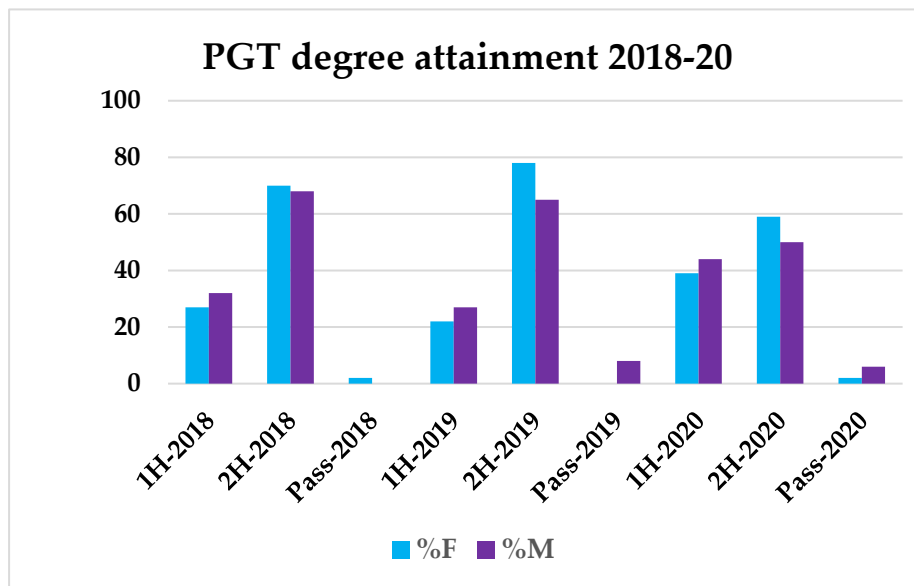


Fig. 4.1.2. Post-graduate taught degree attainment by gender from 2018-20. Outcomes are similar for students of both genders.

(iv) Numbers of men and women on postgraduate research degrees

The School has very strong PhD and MSc training programmes with approx. 80 postgraduate research (PGR) students supporting and driving research across food, medical and environmental microbiology (Table 4.1.9). Our PGR students are drawn from UCC, other Irish 3rd level institutions and includes a significant number of international students (approx. 20%). Most PGR students are full-time; however, students may opt to carry out PGR on a part-

time basis. We have proportionally higher numbers of female PGR students than bench-marking data in one year (Table 4.1.9).

Table 4.1.9 Number of PGR Students (2018-2020)

	2017/18			2018/19			2019/20		
	F	M	%F	F	M	%F	F	M	%F
MD	1	0	100	2	0	100	1	0	100
PhD	49	29	63	53	26	67	43	22	66
PhD (Structured)				4	1	80	4	1	80
MSc (Res)	8	1	89	6	0	100	8	0	100
Total	58	30	66	65	27	71	56	23	71
TCD benchmark	28	21	57	29	20	59	-	-	-

At entry, PGR students in the school are required to have a sponsor (academic supervisor) prior to application via the online CRM recruit system. In most cases students apply directly to a research lab or an academic supervisor. Students may obtain independent PGR funding with the support of an academic mentor e.g. via Irish Research Council (IRC). Alternatively, the supervisor applies to a funding body for a student fellowship e.g. Teagasc Walsh Fellowship, and then advertises the position via email to student class lists, posters on noticeboards and or via the UCC Research Vacancies website. Thus, the PGR students are recruited directly by academic staff. Completion rates of PGR programmes are typically close to 100%.

Table 4.1.10. PGR Graduations (2017/18 - 2019/20)

		F	M	%F
2017-18	PhD	5	9	36%
	MSc	1	3	25%
2018-19	PhD	4	6	40%
	MSc	2	0	100%
2019-20	PhD	15	11	58%
	MSc	1	0	100%
Total		28	29	49%

The numbers of female and male PGR students (28/29, respectively) graduating in the period 2017/18 to 2019/20 is evenly balanced at 49% F (Table

4.1.10). There are limited cases of non-completion of PGR studies in SoM. In 2017, one female part-time PhD student took a leave of absence, returning in 2019/20 to complete her studies. In 2017/18, two PhD students withdrew (1M, 1F), and one female MSc student transferred to a PhD.

(v) *Progression pipeline between undergraduate and postgraduate student levels*

Our female PGR representation (range 66 - 71%F) is slightly higher than the proportion of female students in our undergraduate cohort (ranging 63 – 67%F) in the same period (Table 4.1.2). Our female PGR representation is also slightly higher than that of TCD for the years 2017/18 and 2018/19 (average of 58%F in this period). Overall, the school is attracting both male and female students to PGT and PGR programmes in similar proportions to our undergraduate programmes.

4.2 ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH STAFF DATA

(i) *Academic staff by grade, contract function and gender: research-only, teaching and research or teaching-only*

Table 4.2.1. Academic staff in SoM based on grade and gender

		2017			2018			2019			2020		
		F	M	%F	F	M	%F	F	M	%F	F	M	%F
Academic	PROF	0	6	0	0	6	0	0	6	0	0	6	0
	PROF 2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	2	0
	SL	0	3	0	0	3	0	0	5	0	0	5	0
	L (A/B)	2	3	40	1	5	17	1	4	20	2	4	33
	L (B/B)	1	2	33	1	0	100	1	0	100	1	0	100
	Total	3	14	18	2	15	12	2	16	11	3	17	15
Research	RF	3	2	60	5	2	71	3	3	50	2	6	25
	RSO	3	4	43	4	2	67	4	4	50	7	3	70
	SPDR	1	3	25	1	5	17	2	4	33	1	3	25
	PDR	14	12	54	12	9	57	8	9	47	10	10	50
	RA	12	8	60	15	8	65	13	8	62	7	5	58
	Total	33	29	53	37	26	59	30	28	52	27	27	50
Grand Total		36	43	46	39	41	49	32	44	42	30	44	41

Note: L (B/B)= Lecturer below the bar; L (A/B)= Lecturer above the bar; SL= Senior Lecturer; RA= Research Assistant; RSO=Research Support Officer; RF= Research Fellow; (S)PDR= (Senior) Post-doctoral Researcher.

Table 4.2.2. Academic staff by grade in UCC SoM & TCD Department of Genetics & Microbiology 2019

	Professor (level 1/2)			Lecturer grades		
	F	M	%F	F	M	%F
TCD	3	10	23	4	5	44
UCC	0	7	0	2	9	18

All academic staff teach and undertake research with the exception of one female academic (L B/B) who coordinates and teaches our undergraduate laboratory sessions. Research staff do not have teaching responsibilities but can avail of teaching opportunities on agreement with the appropriate academic staff member. The SoM has had just two female lecturers until 2016 (1 L A/B & 1 L B/B). Approximately half of the academic lecturing positions were filled in the 1990s and early 2000s and since the SoM had a full complement of teaching staff, there have been limited opportunities to improve the gender balance among our lecturing staff until recently when academic vacancies arose (2017-20). We believe that this explains why female representation in lecturer and professorial roles are much lower in SoM than TCD SGM (Table 4.2.2). However, the ageing profile of the existing academic lecturing staff in combination with recent retirements in the SoM has created an opportunity for positive change. The SoM recognises the low female representation at lecturer grades and is committed to addressing the clear imbalance and some examples of this commitment follow. A part-time lecturer (B/B) was appointed in 2020 who is involved in teaching activities (no research)(see above). A female professor was appointed in 2021 (Fig. 2.2) through the SALI programme which aims to appoint high calibre female candidates to professorial posts. An existing female staff member (recruited at L A/B level in 2020) was promoted to Professor (level 2) in April 2021 through the University's retention process, an application that was fully supported and endorsed by the professorial staff of the SoM. Notwithstanding the historic gender imbalance in the School's academic staff, the number of female lecturing staff has risen to four since 2016 highlighting the positive change and commitment to improving the gender balance among our lecturing staff. A number of actions have been developed to reinforce our plan to improve the gender balance in academic positions and support their career progression (e.g. **Actions 5.1.3, 5.3.6, 5.3.10**).

Research staff in SoM are recruited on fixed-term contracts. The percentage of female researchers in the period 2017-2020 averaged 54% (Table 4.2.1). PDR female representation in SoM (52% in 2019) is similar to that in TCD SGM (47% in 2019).

The data highlights the low numbers of women in Research Fellow grade and SPDR roles (Table 4.2.1). Senior researcher positions are often linked to demonstrating a track record of securing funding. Therefore, we have devised a number of actions to support researchers in applying for funding (**Action 5.3.10**),^[66] to inform researchers of the importance of securing funding to progress to senior positions through engagement with the PDRS process (**Action 5.3.5**)^[66] and encouraging our researchers to participate in the mentorship scheme such that they recognise early in their careers the steps and supports required to enhance their career progression (**Action 5.3.6**).

Overall, our data shows a key point of attrition in the career pipeline from PDR to senior researcher grades and from researcher to lecturer grades. Given the ageing profile of the SoM, there will be opportunities for diversification of our staff profile in the next 5-7 years.

(ii) Academic and research staff by grade on fixed-term, open-ended/permanent and zero-hour contracts by gender

The majority of academic (lecturing) staff are on full-time permanent contracts (Table 4.2.3). There are currently 5 (4M 1F) academic staff on either fixed-term contracts (3M) or contracts of indefinite duration (1F 1M). Similarly, all PSS staff in the School (6F 4M) have permanent, full-time contracts. In contrast, the vast majority of research staff are on either fixed-term contracts associated with specific research grants (25F 25M) or have contracts of indefinite duration (1F 2M). One permanent member of research staff (female) holds an individual research fellowship and will become a permanent member of academic staff once the fellowship is completed (2024).

Table 4.2.3 Staff by Contract Type and Gender (2017-2020)

		2017			2018			2019			2020		
		F	M	%F	F	M	%F	F	M	%F	F	M	%F
Academic	Fixed Term	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	4	0	0	3	0
	Indefinite	1	1	50	1	1	50	1	1	50	1	1	50
	Permanent	2	11	18	1	13	7	1	11	8	2	13	13
Research	Fixed Term	32	28	53	35	25	58	29	27	52	25	25	50
	Indefinite	1	1	50	1	1	50	1	1	50	1	2	33
	Permanent	0	0	0	1	0	100	0	0	0	1	0	100
Grand Total		36	43	46%	39	41	49%	32	44	42%	30	43	41%

(iii) Academic leavers by grade and gender and full/part-time status

Mobility among lecturing academic staff is very low with no lecturing staff departures during the reporting period. Between 2018-2020, 54 contract research academic staff members left the School (48%M, 52%F; Table 4.2.4). Among these, 24 (12 M, 12 F) departed at the expiration of their contract and 30 resigned (16 F, 14 M) from their role. Many of our researchers are recruited by

	F	M	%F
Admin [Grades 5-7]	0	1	0
RF	1	1	50
SPDR	1	2	33
PDR	10	10	50
RSO	0	2	0
RA	16	10	62
Total	28	26	52

the pharmaceutical and food industries in the Cork region. To improve our understanding of the reasons for staff departures, we will encourage all departing

staff to participate in exit surveys (**Action 4.2.1**). This will give an understanding the culture and atmosphere in the school and a view of career progression opportunities/pathways for research staff in SoM.

Table 4.2.4. Break-down of staff departures from the School by role (2018-20)

5. Supporting & advancing careers

5.1 Key career transition points: academic staff

(i) Recruitment

All recruitment within the SoM follows UCC's guidelines with respect to advertising, shortlisting, interviewing and appointment (<https://www.ucc.ie/en/hr/recruitment/>). Academic positions are advertised through a centralised system. All our academic staff (and thus all panel members) have completed unconscious bias training. Avenues of recruitment include international journals, websites, scientific meetings, social media and staff networks. Selection panels for academic shortlisting are established by the HoS in conjunction with the SEFS HR manager, with a view towards thematic expertise and experience, gender balance, and external national/international perspective. We will enhance our candidate information pack to highlight the School's commitment to Athena SWAN and inclusivity (**Action 5.1.1**).

Table 5.1.1 Academic Recruitment processes for Professor and Head of School positions

Academic Recruitment (2018-2020)									
Year	Competition	Applicants		Shortlisted		Appointed		Success Rates	
		F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
2017	L B/B	10	9	3	3	1	1	50% ^a	50% ^a
2018	Prof 2 ^b	1	0	1	0	0	0	0%	0%
2018	L A/B	5	7	3	3	0	1	0%	100%
2019	HoS	0	1	0	1	0	1	0%	100%
2019	L A/B	3	11	2	0	1	0	100%	0%
Total								0%	100%

^aA female candidate was selected who deferred the position for three years and a male candidate was appointed during this period ^bProfessor (Scale 2) Microbial System Modelling: No appointment made. Appointable candidate turned down position.

We were encouraged by the high proportion of women applying for lecturing positions over the reporting period and by their success rates in these competitions (Table 5.1.1). The School actively (and successfully) pursued a SALI professorship position in collaboration with APC Microbiome Ireland and a female Professor assumed the role in 2021 (Table 5.1.1). It is essential that the

recent increase in the recruitment of female staff members is complemented with effective supports to ensure that career progression by early career female academics to higher academic grades occurs. To further this agenda, the School will establish a mentoring and support process for junior academic staff to ensure they are competitive in academic promotion competitions (**Action 5.3.6**).

In contrast to the academic recruitment process, research staff recruitment is managed by individual academic staff members (who all have completed unconscious bias training). Centralised recording of research staff recruitment at UCC began in 2020 (Table 5.1.2). Therefore, data for research staff was not available for the full period of analysis. To address this, a bespoke survey was issued to each member of academic staff to gather data into local researcher recruitment processes for 2018 and 2019 but it initially yielded limited data due local data retention policies. Therefore, in the future we will monitor and review researcher recruitment data annually and specifically shortlisting data (**Action 5.1.2**). Recruitment of research staff in 2020 (Table 5.1.2) indicated no significant gender disparity in success rates with slightly more females than males being appointed in this period (Table 5.1.2).

Table 5.1.2 Researcher recruitment based on central data in 2020

Competition	Applicants		Appointed		Success Rates (%)*	
	F	M	F	M	F	M
RA	0	1	0	1	0	100
RA	10	4	1	0	10	0
RSO-Admin (Project Manager)	1	1	0	0	0	0
PDR	6	6	1	0	17	0
PDR	6	10	1	0	17	0
SPDR	2	8	0	1	0	13
Total	25	30	3	2	12	7

*success rates are appointments as % of same gender applicants

In 2020, one SPDR position was advertised and the proportion of female applications was low. We will ensure that all advertisements for senior research positions promote the School's commitment to Athena SWAN and highlight family-friendly policies and institutional supports in order to attract more

women applicants for these positions (**Action 5.1.1**). A range of supports will also be implemented to encourage our researchers to engage in mentorship and peer-led activities in the school to ensure that they are well positioned to progress to more senior roles (**Actions 5.1.5, 5.3.1, 5.3.3 & 5.3.5**).

Per University guidelines, there is gender representation for all academic selection committees. However, data for the selection committees in the reporting period is only available for the posts indicated in Table 5.1.3.

Table 5.1.3 Academic Selection Committees (2018-20)

Post Title	Interviewer Type	Interviewer Gender	Gender of Appointed Candidate
Professor (Scale 2) Microbial System Modelling	Board Member	1F 2M	1F selected but no appointment
	Chairperson	M	
	Head of Department/Research Centre	2 M	
Head of School	Board Member	3F 2M	M
	Chairperson	M	

Researcher selection committees are PI led and with a second interviewer who typically provides gender balance. HR researcher recruitment data, which commenced in 2020, currently provides data only on selection committee Chairs (Table 5.1.4). Based on researcher recruitment data for 2020, the role of chairperson on the selection committees was held by a man in 80% of cases (reflecting the gender of the academic staff member for whom recruitment was undertaken), with appointment of candidates being balanced at 50%F (Table 5.1.4). The staff survey data also supports that the majority of interview panels are mixed gender (n=25; 80% agree or strongly agree 12F 8M).

Table 5.1.4. Research recruitment selection committees central data (2020)

Competition	Interviewer Type	Interviewer Gender	Gender of Appointed Candidate
RA	Chairperson	M	M
RSO-Administration (Project Manager)	Chairperson	M	No appointment
PDR	Chairperson	F	F
PDR	Chairperson	M	F
SPDR	Chairperson	M	M

(ii) *Induction*

Induction for new academic appointments is organised at both School, College of SEFS and at University (HR Orientation and Orientation Café) level. More recently, the Vice President for Research and Innovation at UCC has established a UCC Principal Investigator (PI) Forum which runs monthly to provide peer support for research leaders. This is a new initiative and an important support, particularly for new academic staff members. Information pertaining to uptake is not available but we will promote this locally among our academic staff (**Action 5.1.3**).

HR at UCC provide induction sessions for research staff through the Researcher Online Orientation, which outlines HR Research supports and the professional training and development opportunities available in UCC. The uptake of HR-led induction opportunities is described in Table 5.1.5. Apart from online resources, all staff are invited to attend induction sessions for new staff at local level. Local induction for researchers operates on a lab-specific basis and takes the form of (i) a guided tour of the buildings and campus, and (ii) lab safety induction.

Table 5.1.5. Academic and researcher uptake of University induction & orientation (2018-2020)

Course	Grade	Female	Male	%F
Orientation for New Staff	L A/B	0	1	0
	RF	0	1	0
	SPDR	1	0	100
	PDR	3	0	100
	RA	2	0	100
Orientation Café	PDR	3	1	75
Total		9	3	75%

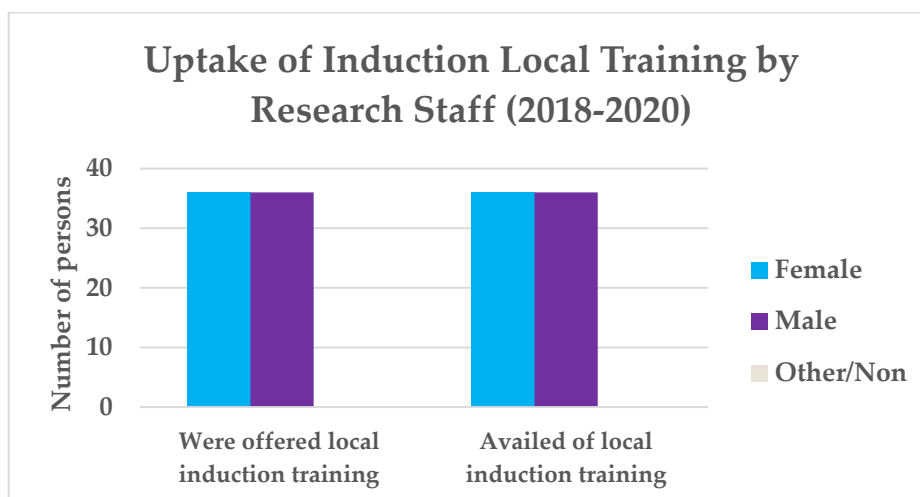


Figure 5.1.1. Uptake of local induction training for research staff in the School of Microbiology based on staff survey data (2018-2020).

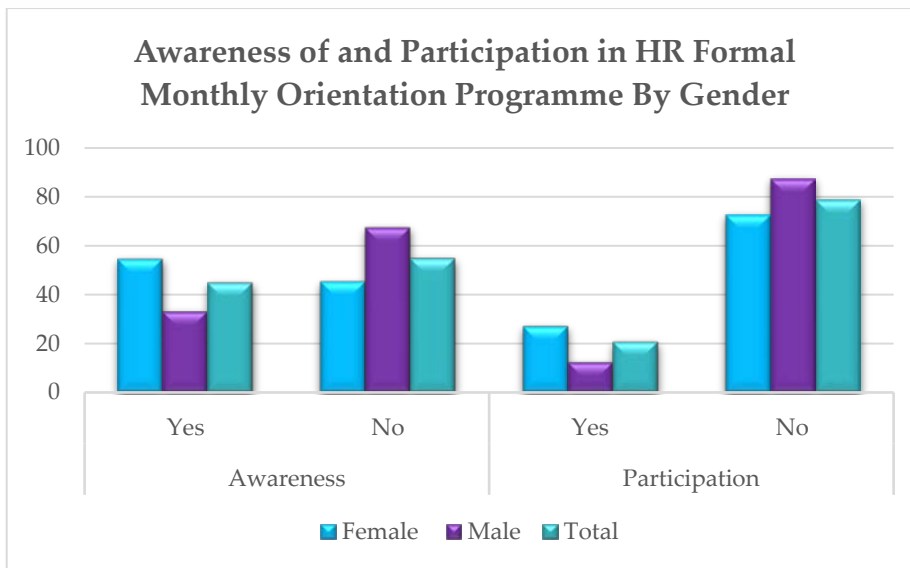


Figure 5.1.2. Awareness and uptake of HR formal orientation programme based on staff survey data.

Research staff recognise the importance of local induction with 100% availing of the opportunity (Figure 5.1.1). Awareness and uptake of HRs formal monthly orientation programme for new staff was relatively low at 45% and 21%, respectively (Fig. 5.1.2). We will increase awareness of these orientation programmes through our internal e-mail and noticeboards while line managers will also highlight such opportunities to new staff members (**Action 5.1.3**). The School survey also highlighted that 82%M and 86%F had been '*informally shown the ropes by colleagues, as needed*' (Fig. 5.1.3).

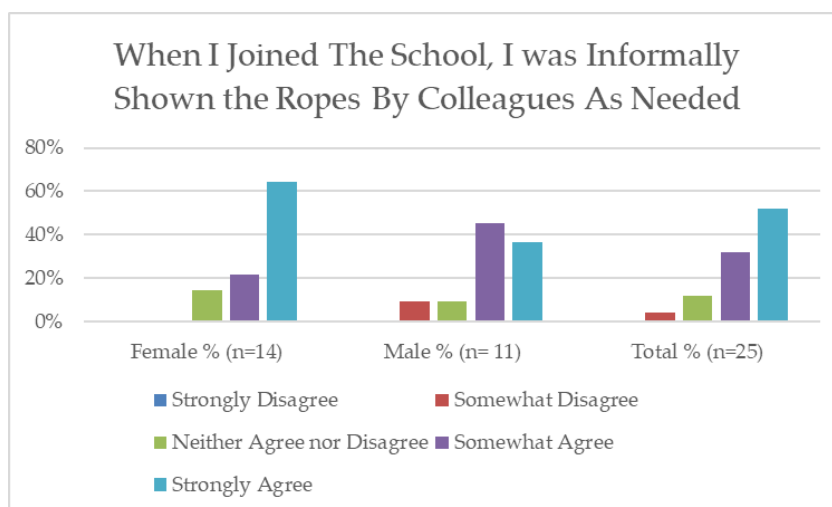


Figure 5.1.3. Survey responses regarding local induction practices

43%F and 54%M respondents expressed dissatisfaction with local induction/orientation arrangements. However, 71%F respondents felt ‘they got the supports they needed to help me settle into my new role’ compared to only 27% of male respondents (Fig. 5.1.4). We believe that this divergent feedback reflects the variability in the induction practices in different research groups. We will introduce a standardised induction process for our research staff to ensure a uniform experience for new staff in the School (**Action 5.1.3**).

The researcher focus group report highlighted different experiences/supports between APC-affiliated and non-affiliated researchers. Among the supports that were mentioned were induction, training and practical (equipment) supports. Through several action points highlighted earlier, we aim to bridge these perceived gaps by creating a greater sense of unity

“...there’s a distinction in my case between the external resources that you can access if you are not part of the APC...” and “and even to access the Wellbeing Committee, the post-doc association, the things that are run within the APC they are not available then to people that aren’t affiliated with APC, even though they could still be in the same lab group as someone that is.”

among our research community by providing two-way access to training, induction methods and peer support between the SoM and APC (**Actions 5.1.3, 5.1.5, 5.3.3, 5.3.8, 5.6.4**).

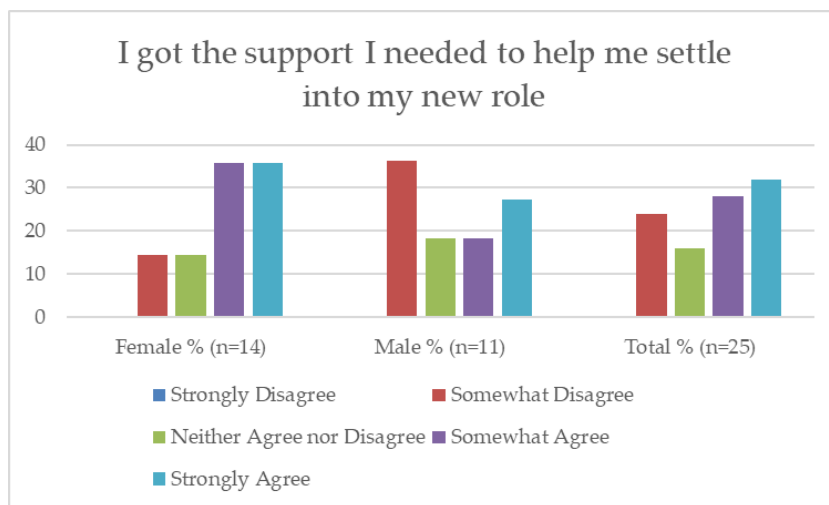


Fig. 5.1.4. Staff survey response on local support during the transition into a new role

(iii) *Promotion*

Table 5.1.6 Promotion to Senior Lecturer applications in 2018/19

	F	M	%F
Applicants	1	3	25
Shortlisted	1	3	25
Successful	0	2	0
Success Rate (% of same gender applications)	0%	67%	

Table

5.1.7 Promotion/retention applications at Prof level 2 in 2020/21

	F	M	%F
Applicants	1	3	25
Successful	1	3	25
Success Rate (% of same gender applications)	100%	100%	

Academic staff at UCC can apply for promotion through an open call or through the process of retention, and promotions are dealt with at University level (independent of the School) on a competitive basis. During the review period, only one academic promotion call was advertised. 3M and 1F applied for promotion to senior lecturer and 2M applicants were successful (Table 5.1.6). Through the professional development review scheme (PDRS), the HoS will align staff who express an interest in applying for promotion with staff members who have been successful in such applications previously (**Action 5.1.4**). Through the retention process, 3M and 1F lecturers applied and were retained at Professor (level 2) in SoM in 2020/21 (Table 5.1.7). All applicants were fully supported locally in this process (e.g. sharing of other colleagues previous applications, advice, application reviews etc.).

50% of survey respondents (n=18) did not believe that '*promotion criteria/processes in UCC are transparent and fair*' (due to the low numbers of female

academic lecturing staff, this information is not gender disaggregated). 29% (n=17) respondents agreed that they '*.. have access to the training and mentoring I need to help me meet the criteria for promotion or to improve my success at promotion*'. Furthermore, only 37 % respondents agreed that '*The full range of my work activities (including administrative, pastoral and outreach work) are taken into consideration in promotion decisions*'. 78% of respondents indicated their promotion prospects had not been affected by Covid-19. To address the apparent need for support and information regarding the promotion process, the HoS will strategically align the staff member with a colleague who has been successful in a previous application round (**Action 5.1.4**).

Regarding researchers, in addition to advice and support from line managers (which varies depending on the individual), peer level discussion and support is of significant importance. To create a support network, we will assist our PDR staff in establishing a SoM PDR association and link it with APC Microbiome Ireland's PDR association to broaden the reach of the peer support group for PDRs in SoM (**Action 5.1.5**). The APC Post-Doc association invite guest speakers and meet informally to discuss career pathways, progression and opportunities and provide peer support. We will also promote PDR participation in the University's "Post-doc Development Hub", which provides professional training and career planning support to PDRs, but also offers opportunities for broader networking among researchers across the University (**Action 5.1.5**).

5.2 Key career transition points: Professional & Support Staff (PSS)

(i) *Induction*

Formal induction arrangements for PSS are similar to that of academic and research staff as outlined in section 5.1. In the last 3 yrs, the university orientation course has been taken by one female, representing 100% of all new hires. Induction within the School is the responsibility of the chief technical officer and/or the School manager. 84% of PSS survey respondents said they were '*informally shown the ropes by colleagues*' indicating the collegial environment of the School. However, the induction experience varied

considerably with only 44% (7F 4M) of respondents indicating satisfaction with the local induction/orientation arrangements with no disadvantage apparent to new female recruits. We will develop a universal local induction process and information package for all new staff to ensure that all new staff have a similar induction experience (**Action 5.1.3**).

(ii) *Promotion*

With respect to promotion, 36% (4 of 11) of PSS survey respondents agreed that the '*promotion criteria in UCC are transparent and fair*'. Notably 67% (2 of 3) of men agreed with this statement compared to only 25% (2 of 8) of women. Similarly, only 27% (3 of 11 respondents; 2F 1M) of survey respondents agreed that '*the promotion process in UCC is transparent and fair*' and 27% of respondents felt they had '*access to the training and mentoring I need to help me meet the criteria, and that the full range of my work activities are taken into consideration in promotion*'. Only 18% of respondents agreed with the statement '*it is clear how career breaks will be considered in promotion decisions*' with 55% offering no opinion, while 45% of respondents agreed that '*PSS promotions are free of gender bias*'. In this latter case, 37% (3 of 8) of women agreed compared to 67% (2 of 3) of men. There was a more positive reflection on the supports and opportunities available at school level to staff. 63% of respondents feel they '*have the opportunities in the School to avail of the training and experience*', while 45% feel they '*have the support I need in the School to prepare and apply for promotion*'. However, 38% of women strongly disagreed with the latter statement. Most respondents (73%) felt Covid-19 had not impacted on their promotion prospects. From the PSS focus group (n=4), it was clear that opportunities for progression were a key consideration (**Action 5.1.4**).

5.3 CAREER DEVELOPMENT: ACADEMIC STAFF

(i) *Training*

Multiple training opportunities are available to those who wish to pursue them at University level. The Professional Skills for Research Leaders (PSRL) course and Post-doc development hub is run through HR and is available

to all researchers in the School. In the 2018-20 period, 82 researchers participated in the post-doc development hub (52%F).

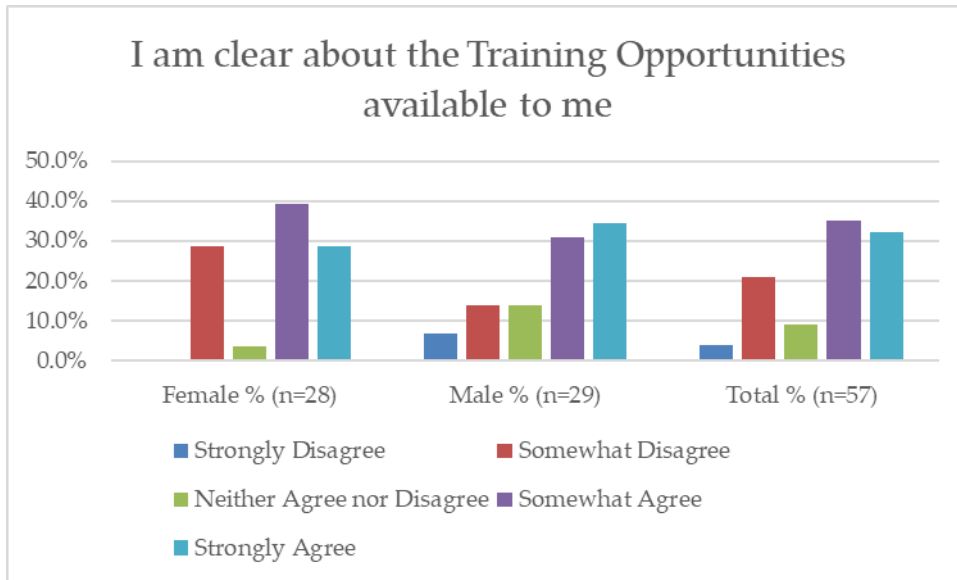


Figure 5.3.1. Staff survey responses highlighting awareness of training opportunities among research staff

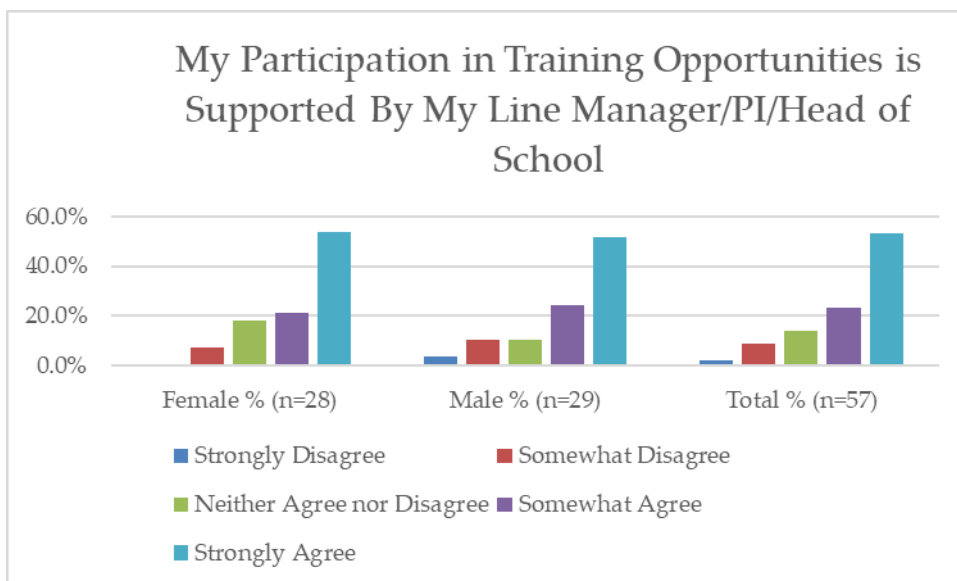


Figure 5.3.2. Staff survey responses regarding management support for training by researchers

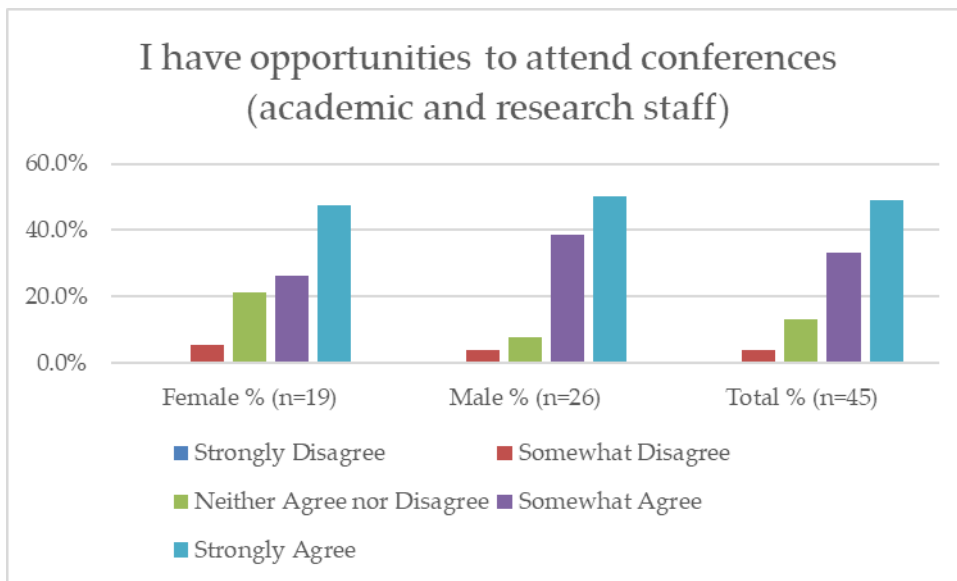


Fig. 5.3.3. Staff survey data pertaining to opportunities by academic and research staff to attend conferences

54% women and 73% men surveyed stated that they would be comfortable discussing training opportunities with their line manager. 67% of respondents were clear regarding training opportunities (Fig. 5.3.1). 65% expressed satisfaction with the available training opportunities with no significant gender differences. 76% (22F 21M) said their '*participation in training opportunities was supported by their line manager*' (Fig. 5.3.2) while 82% (37 of 57; 14F 23M) of researchers said they had opportunities to attend conferences and no significant gender disparity was observed (Fig. 5.3.3).

UCC research and teaching staff can earn a Postgraduate Certificate and Diploma in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, offered through UCC CIRTl. However, access to teaching hours through which to complete these courses can be a challenge for researchers. We will provide teaching opportunities to research staff pursuing CIRTl qualifications. Specifically, SoM allows academic lecturing staff to delegate up to 20% of a module to a relevant PDR, though many researchers are unaware of this. Through EMC, School PIs

will be asked to make all PDR staff (particularly those pursuing CIRTl qualifications) aware of this opportunity. (**Action 5.3.2**). To increase the visibility and enhance the leadership skills of our researchers, we will provide PDRs with opportunities to (co-)chair PGR seminar sessions (**Action 5.3.3**) and to contribute to SoM podcast series and/or social media campaigns (**Action 5.3.4**).

(ii) Appraisal/development review

Until recently, appraisal/development review was managed informally by the HpS. Reviews were informal and initiated by individual staff members. Prompted in part by AS discussions, over the past 18 months the current HoS has implemented the University’s PDRS process in the School, and the inaugural formal PDRS review for SoM academic staff is now complete. A priority for our action plan will be including SoM researchers in the next phase of the PDRS process (**Action 5.3.5**).

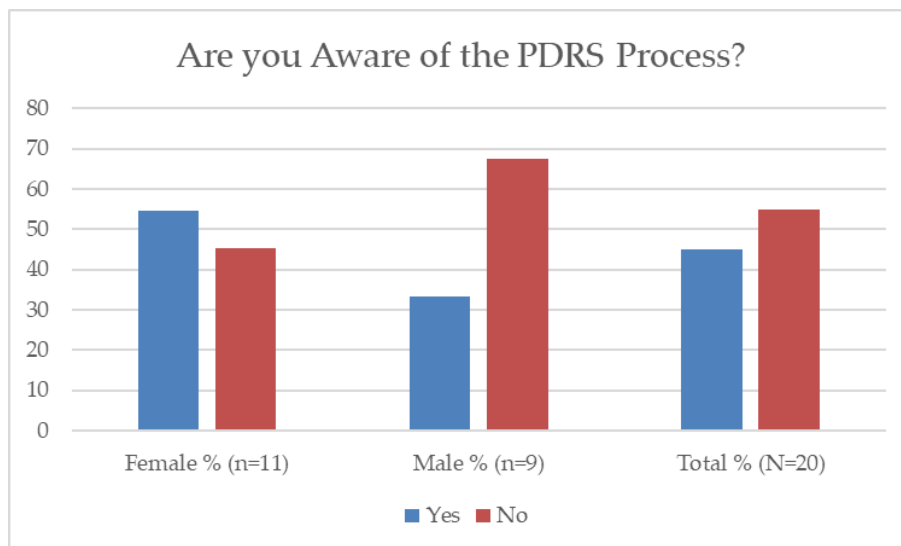


Figure 5.3.4. Survey data indicating awareness levels of the PDRS process

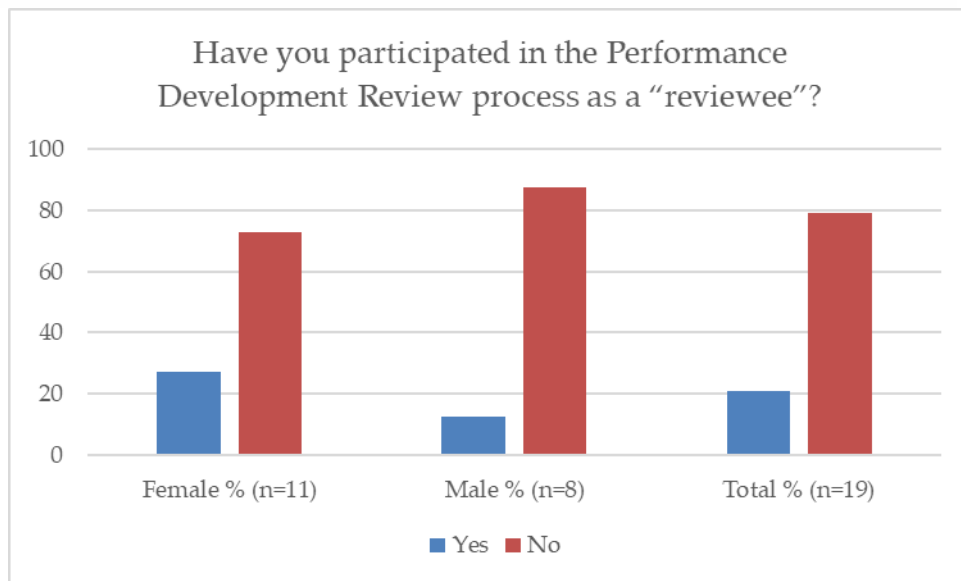


Figure 5.3.5. Survey data indicating participation levels in the PDRS process

The staff survey data revealed that awareness (Fig. 5.3.4) and uptake of the PDRS process (Fig. 5.3.5) was quite low, which may reflect the timing of the survey which preceded the inaugural formal SoM PDRS review. Furthermore, our research staff are not embedded in this PDRS as yet (**Action 5.3.5**).

UCC encourages researchers to prepare a Professional Development Plan (PDP) as part of the Researcher Career Framework (currently under review nationally). However, 63% of researcher survey respondents (n=8) said they had not met with their line manager to discuss a Professional Development Plan.

Significant gender differences were observed in response to queries relating to researchers' comfort discussing training, mentorship and career progression issues with their line manager (Figure 5.3.6).

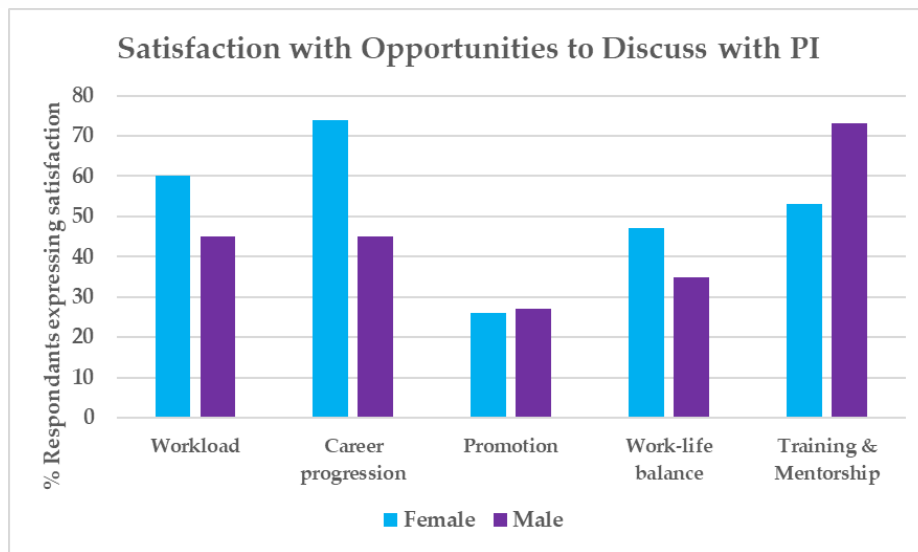


Figure 5.3.6. Gender categorised responses outlining the number of researcher respondents expressing satisfaction with their opportunities to discuss aspects of career with their PI (line manager).

We will reinvigorate the Professional Development Plan process (**Action 5.3.1**) and use the researchers' personalised plans to integrate our research staff into the PDRS process (**Action 5.3.5**). This will improve opportunities for research staff to discuss career progression and a range of other role-specific issues with their PIs. We will incorporate guidance on the PDP process into our new PDR handbook, which we will develop based on the successful model of the SoM PGR student handbook, which provides key guidance and information relevant to the PGR students (**Action 5.3.1**).

(iii) *Support given to academic staff for career progression*

UCC operates a Probation and Establishment Scheme to enable the new appointee to benefit from additional support and guidance to establish teaching and appropriate academic administrative and research activity. Within this time, new staff engage in a process of performance management whereby goals and objectives are set in consultation with the HoS. Based on University guidelines, a senior academic from within the School is appointed as a mentor with which the new appointee can engage over the 3 yr establishment period. This process

also ensures that new staff are provided with specific guidance and appropriate training. Although this is a relatively new initiative, uptake of the scheme in the School appears inconsistent (**Action 5.3.6**).

Table 5.3.1 Mentorship training uptake among academic staff at lecturer and professor level

Year	Course	Grade	Female	Male	%F
2018	Career Development Mentoring	Prof	0	1	0
2019	Career Development Mentoring	PDR	1	0	100
2020	Mentoring (Newly Appointed Staff & Their Mentors)	L A/B	1	0	100
		Prof	0	1	0
Total			2	2	50

Newly appointed staff have engaged with the mentorship training scheme (Table 5.3.1) within the review period and we will continue to encourage our early career academic staff to engage with the mentorship scheme & to schedule regular meetings with their mentor (**Action 5.3.6**).

For PDR staff, support is provided through the appointment of a mentor for all research staff located in the same research laboratory to promote growth and confidence in the role over the first 12 months. This is consistently implemented for all School researchers. Further professional development supports are available via the Post Doc Development Hub, the HR Odyssey programme, and the Careers Office, all delivered at University level. Limitations on progression in research was raised in the researcher focus group as a consideration in career planning.

The participants in the researcher focus group suggested that the SoM organise presentations to help research staff and students understand the role of the post-doctorate and identify pathways to an academic career (Action 5.3.7, 5.3.8).

“It’s difficult to stay at it because within UCC there are stipulations that you can only work as a post-doc for so many years. And after that you have to bring in your own funding which is very competitive. So, like it can be difficult, but it can be very rewarding too for some people. I’ve seen both cases.” Female RSO. Researcher Focus group.

(iv) Support given to students (at any level) for academic career progression

To ensure that a supportive and inclusive environment is provided to undergraduate students, an academic Mentor is assigned to incoming first year students. The mentor serves as a point of contact for students and both individual and small group meetings provide an opportunity for students to share and discuss any academic concerns. Students may also avail of alumni mentorship through UCC Career Services. At University level, Peer Support Leaders are assigned to all incoming undergraduate and international students for the duration of academic year and a dedicated First Year Experience Co-ordinator is available to all students who have queries with regards to their academic progression. The UCC Skills centre provides regular training sessions which helps students (at all levels) to develop their academic writing, presentation and critical thinking skills whilst the Careers Service provides additional supports for career planning, CV development and interview skills.

A weekly Seminar Series is organised by the School and all students are encouraged to attend. External speakers and guest lecturers from industry or academic institutes, in addition to final year PhD students, provide the undergraduate cohort insights into future career pathways and current research trends. This seminar series was discontinued during the Covid-19 pandemic due to waning attendance levels and to reduce the burden on the academic staff. However, it will be revived in 2022 with an opportunity for PDRs to co-chair sessions increasing their visibility, participation and training experience (Action

5.3.3). We will also establish a “Microbiology Day” showcasing our researchers (**Action 5.3.7**).

The SoM GS Committee has issued a Handbook which contains all necessary information relating to policies, operations and responsibilities of both postgraduate students and supervisors. A formalised learning plan is established and agreed by both student and supervisor within the first three months to ensure a sense of understanding and direction is in place. Formal annual reviews ensure that the learning plans are regularly evaluated and edited as appropriate, and an end of year Poster Showcase ensures that students are afforded the opportunity to share their work and academic progress. In addition, students meet with their supervisors and the chair of the GS Committee at the 18-month stage of their PhD for a formal progress review. Further to this, PG students within the SoM may present their work at national/international conferences. All PG students within the school are required to undertake PG6026, Teaching and Demonstrating Skills for SEFS PG Students, to develop their supervisory and teaching skills and immerse themselves within the School. PG students may also access up to three coaching sessions through the College of SEFS to overcome motivational hurdles encountered during their academic journey, particularly in the later stages. PGT students in the School’s MSCBCB and MFSTMB programmes perform research projects led by an academic staff member to provide practical training and skills.

The researcher focus group (which included three PhD students) highlighted the need for clarity on the PhD process, career pathways and the supports that are available to them. The PhD Roadmap Workshop, designed by PhD students in partnership with the School GS Committee, was implemented in the School (November 2021) with full PhD student attendance and will become an annual event. Through this workshop, we will highlight training resources and wellbeing supports via internal and external speakers (**Action 5.3.8**).

(v) *Support offered to those applying for research grant applications*

The importance of funding was recognised by most survey respondents (84%, n=44). 66% (17F 12M) expressed satisfaction with opportunities to apply for funding. 59% (11F 15M) expressed satisfaction with supports available within the School for applicants. In contrast, 47% (10F 11M) expressed satisfaction with supports available from OVPRI while 33% of respondents disagreed that *'Support is available in my School for applicants whose funding applications are unsuccessful'*, indicating a need to enhance the support structure within the School (**Action 5.3.10**). Further support is available at University level through the various research centres associated with the SoM e.g. APC, SSPC and the ERI. Significant gender-based disparities in the responses were not observed. 83% of females and 73% of males said they perceived no change in opportunities to apply for funding to the Covid-19 pandemic. We will monitor application and success rates pertaining to funding applications by SoM research staff (**Action 5.3.9**). We will also establish a peer-led grant support mechanism within the SoM for early career researchers (**Action 5.3.10**).

5.4 CAREER DEVELOPMENT: PROFESSIONAL AND SUPPORT STAFF

(i) Training

A comprehensive programme of training opportunities is available to PSS within the University, with examples of those completed outlined in Table 5.4.1. Training is monitored at local level and staff take responsibility for accessing the opportunities available to them. 13% of female PSS respondents to the staff survey (1 of 8) and 67% of males (2 of 3)

indicated their satisfaction with 'access to the training and mentoring I need to help me meet the criteria for promotion or to improve my success at promotion'. The PSS focus group indicated that the scheduling of training opportunities during busy term-times often reduced their ability to attend while part-time PSS staff indicated a lack of training availability. We will use PSS PDRS reviews to assess and support PSS staff training needs, and advocate with HR to increase access to training outside of term-time and via recording of training sessions (**Action 5.4.1**).

"Offering opportunities for personal development and for people to be trained in new areas/tasks that they wish to and that are connected to their roles..." TO, PSS focus group

"Allowing people on short term contracts to access the same types of trainings, opportunities and facilities that permanent staff are entitled to' PSS focus group suggestion

Table 5.4.1. PSS training opportunities & uptake 2019 & 2020 (all uptake was by female staff members)

	2019	2020
	F	F
Adkar In Action	0	1
Customer Service Skills For Front Line Delivery	1	1
Developing & Enabling A Customer Service Ethos	1	0
Editing & Proofreading For Academic Purposes	1	0
Engaging People Who Are Anxious, Distressed, Angry	0	1
Engaging With People Who Are Angry, Anxious Or Panicked	0	1
Identifying & Responding To Students In Distress	1	1
Inside Out Mindfulness: Working Mindfully	1	0
Integrating Coaching Skills Into Management	0	1
Money Skills For Life	0	1
Remote Working Workshop - Employee	0	2
Remote Working Workshop - Manager	0	1
Safetalk	1	0
Senior Leadership Development: Aspiring Leaders	0	4
Working Effectively Across Cultures	1	0
Total	7	14

(ii) Appraisal/development review

Until recently, PDRS reviews were available to PSS staff only on request. Going forward, all PSS staff will be invited by the CTO, SM or HoS to participate in PDRS reviews as part of the formal implementation of UCC PDRS in the School. PSS staff focus group feedback affirmed that, in participants' experience, issues relating to accessibility and work-life balance could be raised and discussed as part of the PDRS process. Participants acknowledged that PDRS reviews are now being implemented systematically, creating an opportunity for PSS staff to discuss with their line managers supports for their career planning in a more formal, systematic way (**Action 5.4.1**).

(iii) Support given to professional and support staff for career progression

Support for PSS in preparing for the career progression process with a view to promotion is applied in a similar way to that outlined for the academic staff in Section 5.3. Further details of the staff response regarding appraisal/development review are also outlined in Section 5.3. We will strategically align staff who are planning to apply for promotion with previously successful applicants to increase success rates (**Action 5.1.4**). It is noteworthy that our technical staff cohort is gender balanced due to recent appointments following the retirement of long-serving technical staff members. Additional technical staff changes are expected due to the impending retirement (in the coming 3-5 years) of senior technical staff. This will create promotional opportunities for members of the technical staff.

5.5 Flexible working and managing career breaks

(i) Cover and support for maternity and adoption leave: before leave

During the reporting period, 8 women availed of maternity leave. Among research staff, 1 took maternity leave in 2017, 5 in 2018, 1 in 2020 while 1 TO is on extended leave following her maternity leave and her position is being back-filled during this period. No academic staff availed of maternity leave during the review period. No individuals availed of adoption leave during the period of analysis.

Staff arrange a meeting with their line manager when they are ready to disclose their pregnancy and/or their intention to take leave. This meeting is key to decision-making on the workload and timing of delivery, level of contact to be maintained during the period of leave, cover for teaching or administrative responsibilities, and, for academic staff, any arrangements for PGR and PDR supervision in their absence. All pregnant employees, irrespective of length of service are entitled to paid leave to keep appointments for antenatal care prescribed by a doctor, midwife or health visitor. Partners are also entitled to paid leave to attend two antenatal classes.

Of those that availed of family leave, including maternity leave, 41% (n=7) agreed and 29% (n=5) strongly agreed that they felt supported by the SoM before family leave endorsing the School's family-friendly ethos.

(ii) Cover and support for maternity and adoption leave: during leave

The University's maternity leave scheme is open to all staff categories who have completed 26-weeks continuous employment, irrespective of contract type, topped up (from the minimal state entitlement) so that mothers receive their full pay for the duration of maternity leave. Central University funding allows academic and PSS staff to be replaced (100% back-fill) while on maternity leave. National scientific funding bodies provide funding to cover maternity leave for PDR and PGR staff & students.

For ongoing communication during the leave period, staff members discuss the level of interaction they would like to have during the leave period with their line manager and a plan is developed based on the discussion. While on leave, individuals are maintained on general School level emails (while there is no expectation for staff/students on leave to reply). While on Maternity Leave individuals are entitled, at their initiative and by agreement with the HoS, to work for a maximum of 3 Keep in Touch Days (KIT), which are paid. The nature of the type of work is a decided upon between both parties.

Of the surveyed participants individuals that reported availing of family leave, 41% agreed and 29% strongly agreed that arrangements were available to keep in touch during family leave. To increase awareness of staff entitlements relating to maternity, adoption, paternity leave and flexible working, we will update our website and induction booklet to include a section dedicated to leave and provide links to the HR website relating to leave and relevant policy documents (**Action 5.5.1**).

(iii) *Cover and support for maternity and adoption leave: returning to work*

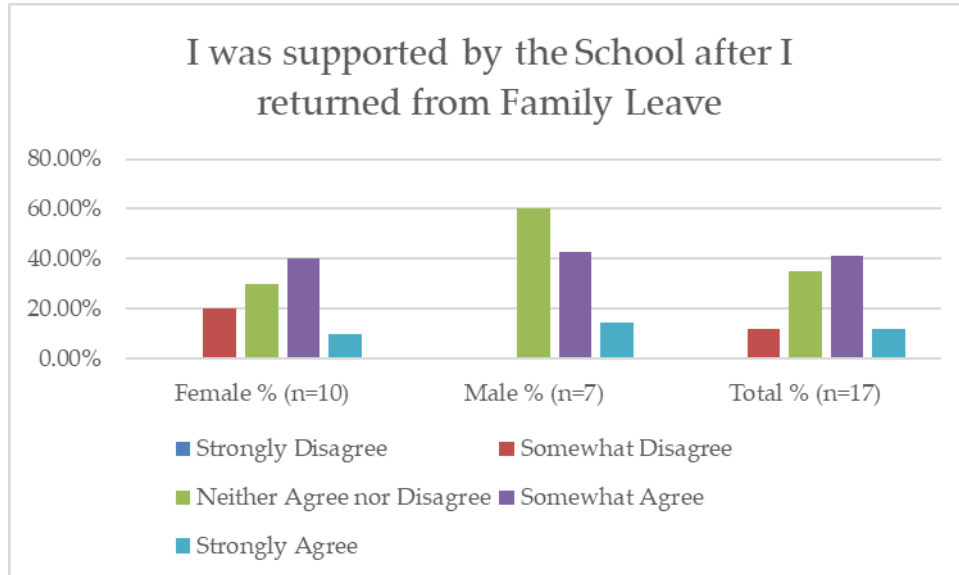


Figure 5.5.1. Staff survey data relating to support received by staff on returning to work after family leave

UCC offers a €5,000 grant to academic staff returning from maternity leave. In our staff survey, over 50% (5F 4M, n=17) somewhat/strongly agree that they were supported by the School after returning from family leave (Fig. 5.5.1). Examples of individual experiences reported in the staff survey are highlighted in the text box.

“Support and encouragement from colleagues. Help from colleagues with catching up on work. No urgent demands from PI/Line Manager to allow time to adjust to return-to-work”,

“Helpful planning discussions on return. Some duties were still maintained by colleagues to reduce my workload on return for a number of months”

Examples of helpful supports mentioned in staff survey

Notably, 31% (4F) reported experiencing difficulties upon return to work, all of whom were female. Specific difficulties cited included “no adjustment of working hours, no transition period” and “feeling of starting over”. These statements indicate that

some line managers are not fully aware of the supports that should be provided to staff transitioning back to the workplace after a period of leave. Therefore, we will increase awareness amongst line-managers and supervisors of potential difficulties that arise upon return to work and ensure that they speak with staff about expectations, workload, working hours and transition back to work well in advance of return (**Action 5.5.2**). Moreover, a female member of staff who participated in the PSS focus group suggested that the University evaluate the possibility of allowing more KIT days, for those who wish. This will allow PSS to maintain links with the School and provide opportunities for training to support the return to work (**Action 5.5.3**).

(iv) Maternity return rate

All listed maternity leave takers in 2017/18 returned to work (Table 5.5.1) after their period of leave.

Table 5.5.1 Maternity leave uptake (2018-2020)

Year	Grade	Took Unpaid	Returned
2017	RF	No	Yes
2018	RF	No	Yes
2018	RF	No	Yes
2018	PDR	No	Yes
2018	PDR	Yes	Yes
2018	RSO	Yes	Yes
2020	RSO	No	Yes
2020	TO*	Yes	N/A

*TO currently on maternity leave

(v) Paternity, adoption, and parental leave uptake

2F PSS staff availed of parental leave in the reporting period and one male researcher availed of paternity leave in 2020. There has been no uptake of adoptive leave during the reporting period. The SoM has no specific policy to promote paternity leave but strongly supports eligible staff to take it. We will

improve awareness of eligibility and local support for uptake of paternity, parental and adoptive leave as part of **Action 5.5.1**.

(vi) Flexible working

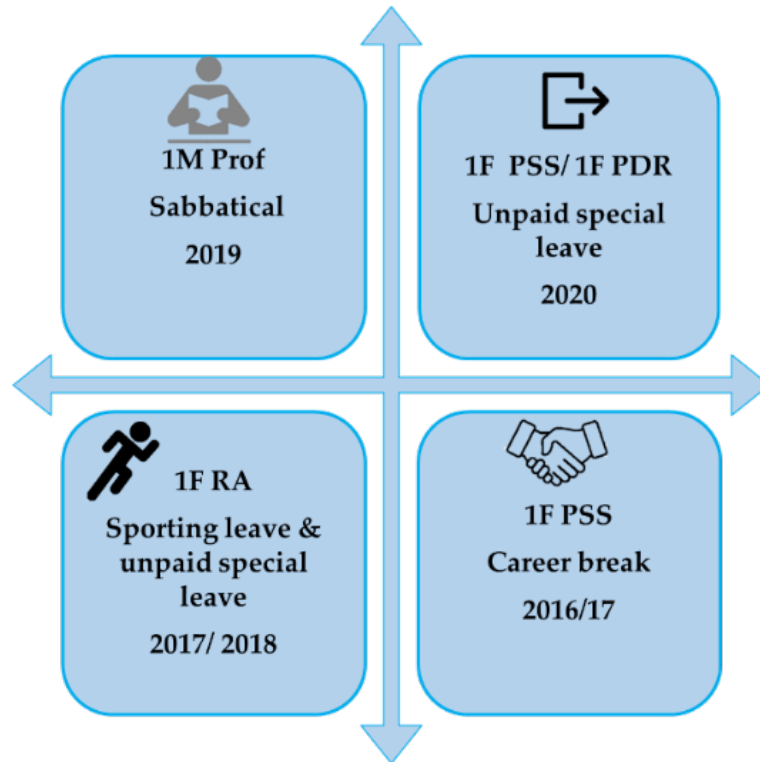


Fig. 5.5.2. Examples of flexible working arrangements and leave supported by the SoM in recent years.

UCC offers a number of formal flexible working policies, some of which are applicable to all staff and some which are limited to certain cohorts. The School is fully supportive of flexible working and arrangements can be (in)formally negotiated with line managers. In addition to supporting staff availing of formal leave and flexible working arrangements, we try to facilitate requirements on a case-by-case basis to accommodate individuals' personal circumstances. Recent examples of local support for both flexible working and leave are highlighted in Fig. 5.5.2. 48% of surveyed staff (n=60) feel that flexible working is supported within the school (Fig. 5.5.3), with 70% comfortable discussing flexible working with their line manager (78% F, 63% M) (Fig. 5.5.4).

Overall, 77% of surveyed staff reported that they were able to work flexibly, with 49% reporting that flexible working is currently available to them and 28% reporting that they could negotiate flexible working hours if needed with their line manager (Fig. 5.5.5). The apparent conflict in survey data relating to flexible working arrangements and policies is likely underpinned by our researcher staff who are less likely to be aware of these policies and supports. Therefore, we will highlight that the School is fully supportive of flexible working arrangements in future job advertisements (**Action 5.1.1**) and in the induction handbook and School website (**Action 5.5.1**).

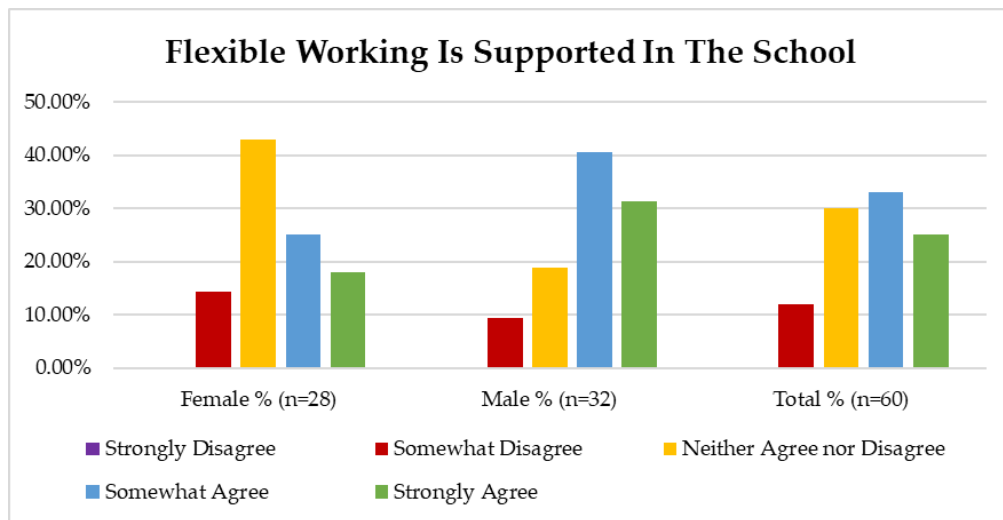


Fig. 5.5.3. Survey responses indicating perception of support for flexible working in SoM

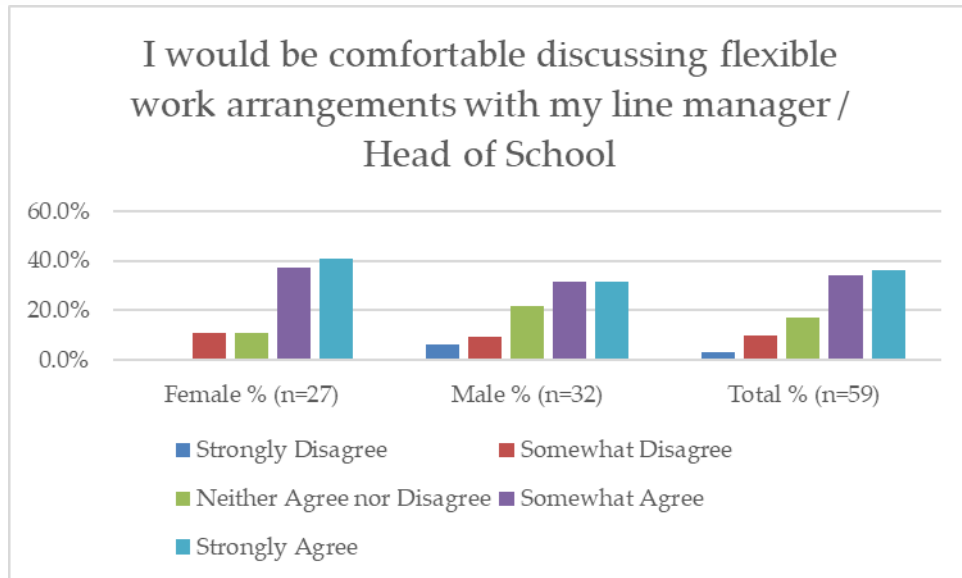


Figure 5.5.4. Survey data indicating staff comfort in discussing flexible working arrangements with line managers

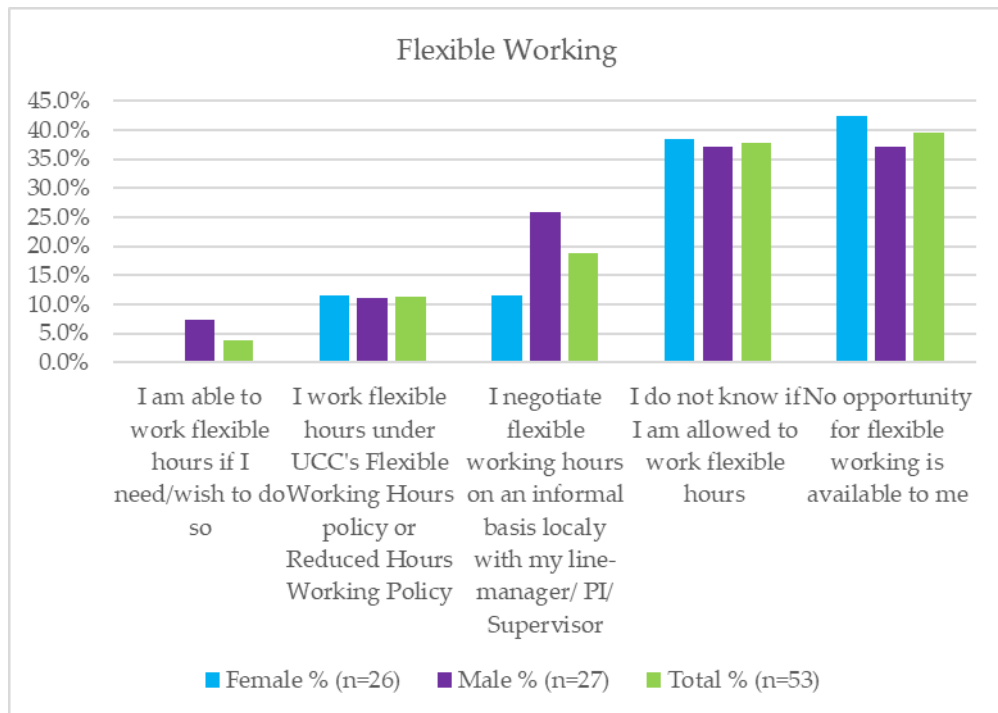


Figure 5.5.5. Survey responses on issues surrounding opportunities for flexible working in SoM

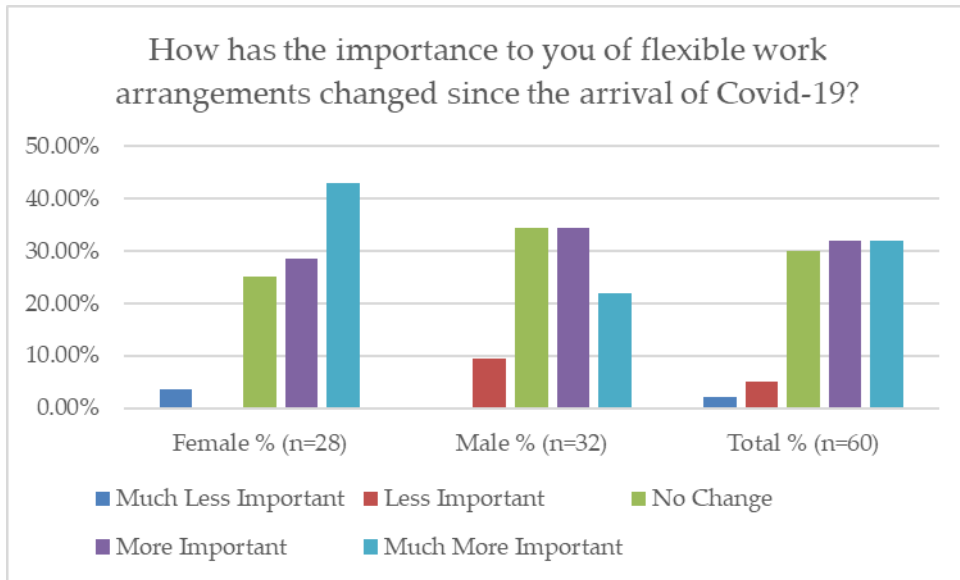


Figure 5.5.6. Impact of Covid-19 on perceived importance of flexible working

64% of staff (n=60) reported that flexible working was more important to them as a consequence of the pandemic (20F 18M) (Fig. 5.5.6). UCC is currently in the process of drafting a formal Work from Home policy and this will be implemented at School level.

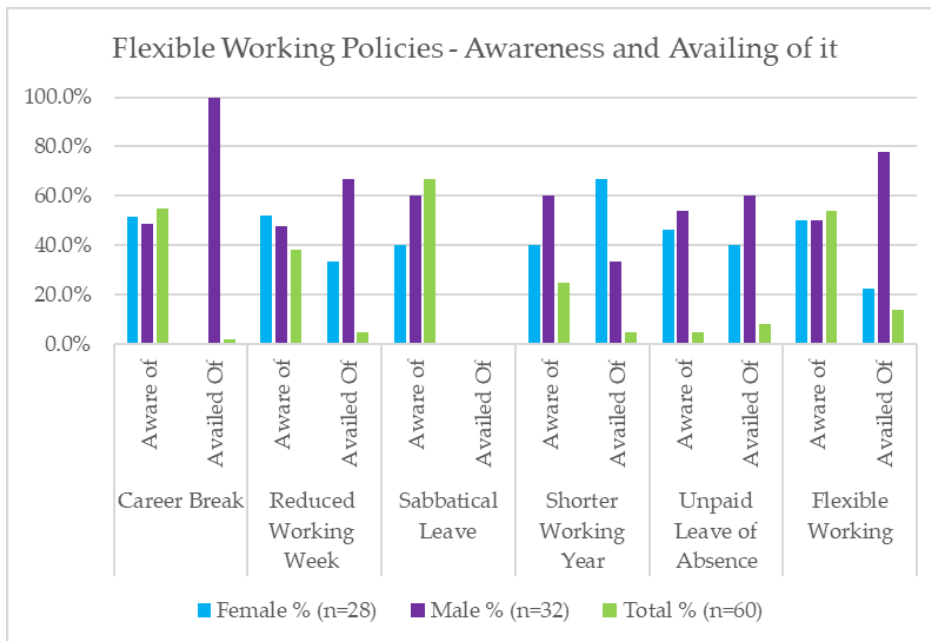


Figure 5.5.7. Awareness and uptake of flexible working options in SoM

However, there was limited awareness of the various formal flexible working options on offer (Fig. 5.5.7). In some cases (e.g. UCC policy for flexible working where 55% of staff reported awareness of the policy), this may reflect the fact that the policy is only applicable to certain cohorts of staff. The SoM will confirm that it is supportive of family-friendly and flexible working practice in future advertisements (**Action 5.1.1**) and increase awareness of flexible working policies through improvement of our induction information pack (**Action 5.5.1**).

(vii) Transition from part-time back to full-time work after career breaks

An employee who has been granted a reduced working week or period of unpaid leave may at any time apply to return to his/her contracted working week. In the reporting period, 1F 2M members of staff availed of the reduced working week, 2F 1M staff availed of shorter working year, 2F 7M members of staff availed of flexible working hours. Although there is no specific policy to support staff in their transition back to work/full time hours following a period of leave within the SoM, the SoM is supportive in such situations while UCC has an extensive range of staff well-being supports including coaching and mentoring which all staff can access.

5.6 Organisation and culture

(i) Culture

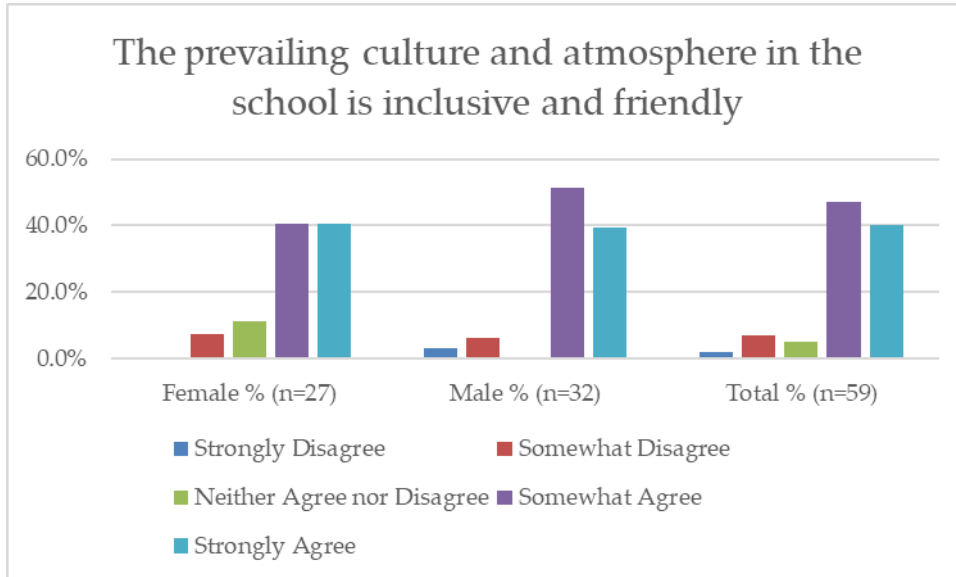


Figure 5.6.1. Perception of culture and atmosphere in SoM (survey data)

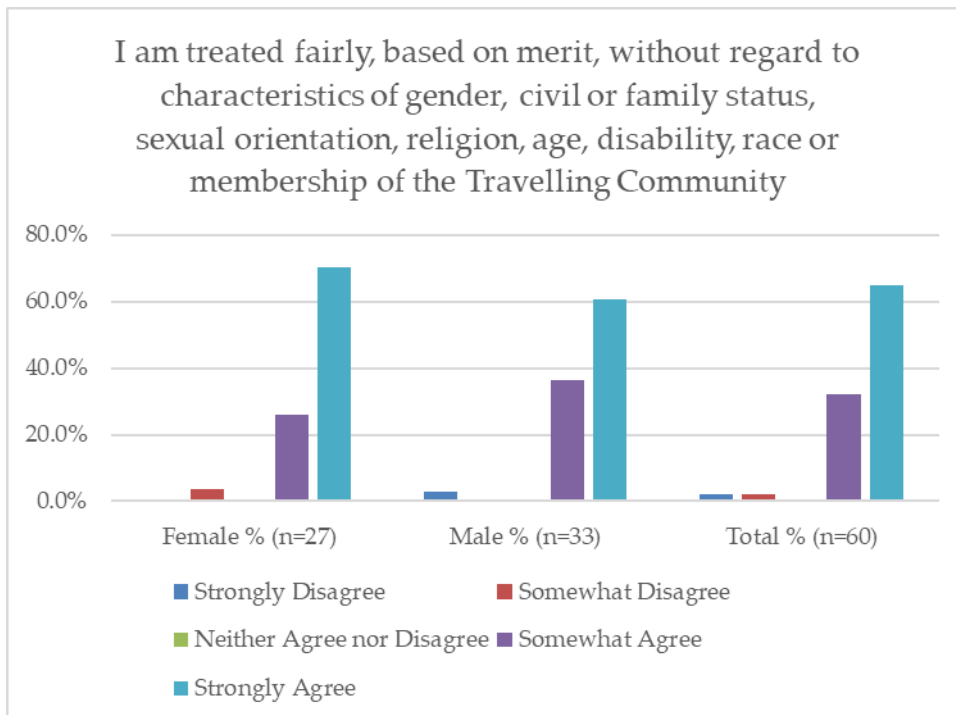


Figure 5.6.2. Perception of treatment within SoM (survey data)

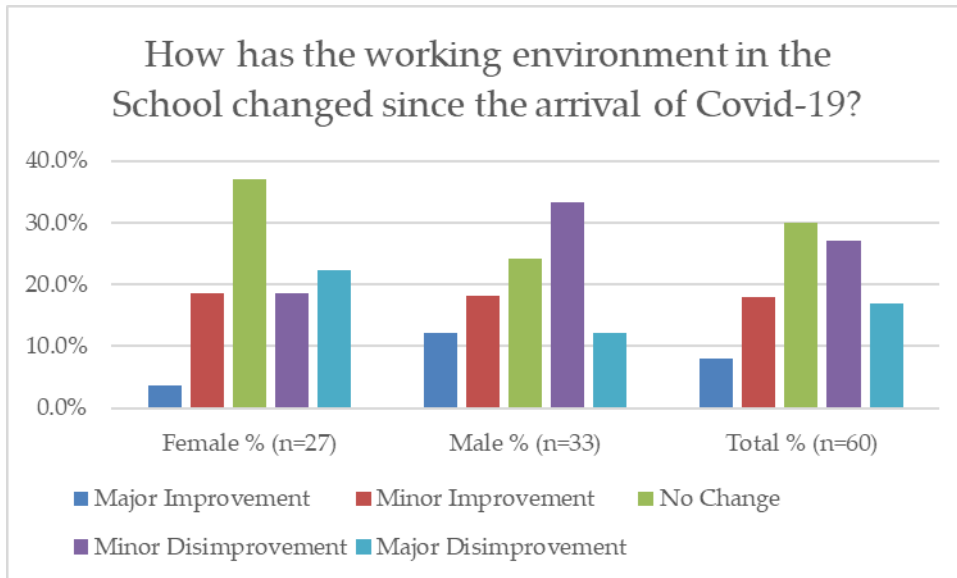


Figure 5.6.3. Impact of Covid-19 pandemic on the working environment in SoM (survey data)

The SoM is committed to excellence in research and teaching irrespective of gender, ethnicity, age or beliefs. As the HoS highlighted in his support letter, we have several examples of individual women being supported in maternity, adoption and compassionate leave over the past decades, often before formal policies and supports surrounding these issues were in place in the University. The staff survey largely affirms this ethos and 87% of survey respondents (n=59) agree that the prevailing culture is inclusive and friendly (Fig. 5.6.1) while 70% agree that the SoM promotes a clear expectation of behaviour in the workplace. Furthermore, 97% of respondents stated that they are treated fairly and based on merit (Fig. 5.6.2). However, 36 % of staff reported a minor or major dis-improvement in the working environment due to Covid-19 restrictions (Fig. 5.6.3). This response was notably higher among male respondents than female respondents.

The School has prioritised supporting its staff in adjusting to the new working conditions imposed on many staff during the pandemic. Since the arrival of Covid-19, our administrative staff work remotely while our research/academic staff and most of our technical staff returned to work on campus in June 2020. The School has made significant efforts to maintain strong

contact with all staff members and cohorts of staff whether they are working on campus or remotely. All meetings are currently held online such that all staff enjoy the same accessibility. For staff working remotely, we now have regular weekly meetings in place with their line managers. We plan to maintain the flexibility of these new working arrangements and to continue to support all our staff during and beyond the pandemic (**Action 5.6.1**).

(ii) HR policies

The SoM operates in accordance with University policies regarding equality, dignity at work, bullying and disciplinary processes. The HoS and EMC is advised of updated University policies (1) through representatives of the School who contribute to University and College level committees and (2) through HoS attendance at College EMC meetings, where HR representatives provide pertinent updates. While the staff survey largely endorses the positive and inclusive ethos of the School (87% of respondents somewhat or strongly agree), perhaps, what is less clear (based on the researcher focus group report) is the reporting mechanisms and supports should unfair treatment be experienced or observed and what impact this may have on the individual's career. Furthermore, the focus group reports highlighted the desire for an champion/committee to represent the wellbeing and inclusivity needs of the SoM community. Consequently, the HoS has established that the current SAT would form the basis of a broader equality and inclusivity committee with the purpose of identifying equality/inclusivity issues that may arise. Within the EDI committee, we will identify EDI champions as ambassadors for the committee within the School. The EDI champions will help signpost colleagues to the formal reporting structure (**Action 3.1.1**). To increase the SoM community's awareness of the EDI committee and EDI champions, we will highlight our presence, composition, mission and ethos in upcoming School assemblies (**Action 3.1.1**).

(iii) Representation of men and women on committees

Since there are low numbers of female academic lecturing staff, it is perhaps unsurprising that SoM women are statistically underrepresented on various committees. The academic members of staff are equally encouraged to participate in School, College and University level committees. Requests for

participation in University and College level committees is mostly by open invitation and in some cases, the HoC may target women to ensure gender representation. At School level, the HoS may invite all School members to participate in a committee or if there is a specific working group, targeted invitations may also be issued, in which case gender representation is considered. To prevent overloading of female academic staff members, it is encouraged that committee participation is rotated where possible such that the workload is equally distributed while diverse representation on various committees is maintained. An overview of representation on various committees at School & College are indicated in Table 5.6.1.

Table 5.6.1. Overview of committee representation by School staff members

Committee	2017-2018			2018-2019			2019-2020		
	F	M	%F	F	M	%F	F	M	%F
SoM Executive Management Committee (SEMC)*	3	19	14	4	20	17	6	18	25
SoM Water quality monitoring committee	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
SoM Athena SWAN Self-Assessment Team (SAT)		-	-	-	-	-	9	8	53
SoM Graduate Studies Committee	1	1	50	1	1	50	1	2	33
SoM Safety Committee	0	2	0		2	0	0	3	0
HR Excellence in Research committee - SoM representation	0	0	0	1	0	100	1	0	100
SEFS Athena SWAN Steering Group - SoM representation	1	0	100	1	0	100	1	1	50
SEFS Teaching Learning and the Student Experience Committee (TLSEC) - SoM representation	1	0	100	1	0	100	1	0	100
SEFS Research & Graduate Studies Committee (RGSC) - SoM representation	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	2	0

(iv) Participation on influential external committees

Opportunities to participate on external committees are open to all staff members. When opportunities arise, information is shared and discussed within the School and staff are encouraged to put themselves forward. Some of the School's academic staff represent the SoM in different committees of the U.K. Microbiology Society (2M 1F currently). Similarly, our School has presence at national and international levels through participation on committees that influence decision-making in the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (1M) and the International Scientific Association for Probiotics and Prebiotics (2M). The SoM is very mindful of gender balance and the encouragement of female colleagues to participate in such committees. Furthermore, many of the academic staff participate in EU projects and have proactively promoted female colleagues to participate in these projects. Several academic staff members (both male and female) contribute to editorial and reviewing activities on international scientific journals and funding bodies. To showcase the School staff representation on external committees, we will use our School's website to inform our staff and students of our committee activities and the personnel involved (**Action 5.6.2**).

(v) Workload model

The UCC Academic Workload Distribution Model (AWDM) was established in 2010 to ensure transparency and fairness in academic workload distributions. AWDM is currently under review. Workload allocation models are not currently in place for research or PSS staff but are project or role-specific. Equitable distribution of teaching workload among academic staff is the responsibility of the HoS, operating under the guiding principles of transparency, fairness, equity and dynamic adjustment where support is necessary. The HoS ensures transparency by presenting the teaching workload (number of modules, number of hours, number of final year student projects, MSc research projects) for the coming academic year at the School EMC and published on MS Teams. There is opportunity to discuss the presented workload with the HoS subsequently. The final distribution is based on consultation with staff members. Fairness is achieved by balancing teaching workload with due

regard to career stage, research workload, administrative, committee and community duty. Equity is achieved by striving to accomplish an overall distribution of teaching workload that shares the total School activity burden equally across all academic staff, starting from the same teaching load and adjusting as required. Dynamic adjustment involves consideration of career stage, probation/establishment phase, sabbatical leave, fellowship leave, maternity leave as appropriate.

(vi) *Timing of departmental meetings and social gatherings*

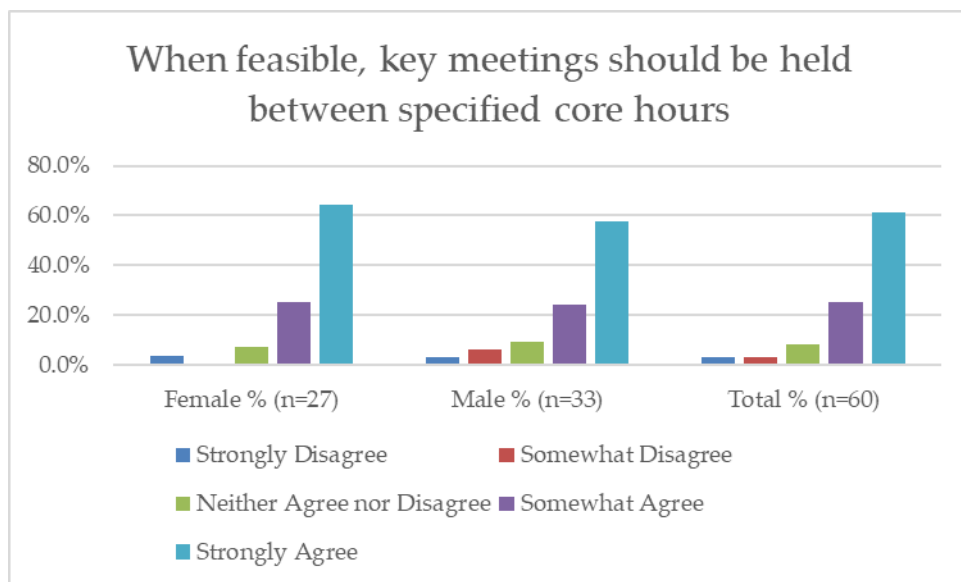


Figure 5.6.4. Survey responses indicating desire for meetings to be conducted during core working hours

Historically, School EMC meetings were arranged primarily to prepare for examination boards and on an *ad hoc* basis as required at other times of the year. Due to the arrival of Covid and the associated reduced opportunity to meet staff informally or formally in person, executive management meetings have been formalised (2020-21) and have been held monthly across term. These meetings typically commence at 9.15 am to allow staff members with young children to attend the meetings. The survey highlighted a strong preference for key meetings to be held between specified core hours (86%) (Fig. 5.6.4). In recognition of this, we have changed the day and time of these meetings so that

they now commence at the later time of 10.00 am since August 2021 (**Action 5.6.3**).

(vii) Visibility of role models

Table 5.6.2. Representation of women as speakers and seminar chairs

	2018			2019			2020		
	F	M	%F	F	M	%F	F	M	%F
Visiting external speakers	2	4	33	2	9	18	1	1	50
Chairpersons in seminars	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0

Visiting researchers and/or external examiners on PhD viva voce committees were invited to give presentations at the School's seminar series as opportunities arose (Table 5.6.2). Therefore, the gender representation was not consciously considered in the arrangements for these meetings. The chairs of the seminar series were both male (Table 5.6.2). While the seminar series lapsed during the pandemic, we will reinvigorate this process. To improve the gender balance in our seminar series, we will generate a gender-balanced long-list of speakers in advance of the next series and monitor for gender balance (Action 5.3.3) We will also coordinate with APC to provide our researchers with multiple opportunities to network (**Action 5.6.4**). Furthermore, the "Microbiology Day" will be planned with a focus on gender balance (**Action 5.3.7**). The School's promotional material and website is typically gender-balanced (Fig. 5.6.5); however, we will conduct a review of all our promotional material to ensure that it is gender balanced and amend as necessary.



Fig. 5.6.5. Home page of SoM presenting primarily gender-balanced imagery

(viii) Outreach activities

The SoM is active in several forms of outreach including primary and secondary level school visits; social media updates on publications and research; lab tours to visiting students and researchers; contributions/exhibitions at local and national events such as the National Ploughing championships, Science Week and Cork Discovers. Several of the academic lecturing staff have contributed to radio and television interviews. PGR and PDR as well as academic lecturing staff are equally represented in these activities. Across 2019 and 2020, 39 outreach activities were recorded in the SoM with 13 (33%) of these activities undertaken by female members of SoM staff/student body. However, the SoM did not have a formal documentation system for logging outreach activities and through local discussion, it is believed that female representation in outreach activities pertaining to SoM is much higher. Therefore, we will implement a formal data gathering system for outreach activity to ensure gender-balanced representation (**Action 5.6.5**).

6. FURTHER INFORMATION

N/A

7. ACTION PLAN

Priority actions are highlighted in teal

Action No.	Description of action	Rationale	Key outputs and milestones	Timeframe (start/end date)		Person responsible	Success criteria and outcome
Self –Assessment Process – Application Section 3							
3.1.1	Broaden the remit of the current SAT to incorporate additional EDI considerations and facilitate a structured rotation of the existing SAT	<p>To maintain gender balance in the SAT composition and to facilitate rotation of the SAT and its Chair, a structured plan for recruitment and rotation will be developed. The composition of the SAT will also need to meet the needs of the expanded remit (EDI).</p> <p>A suggestion emanating from the focus group report was that the School should have an inclusivity ambassador and/or clearly defined local EDI supports</p>	<p>Revised terms of reference to be presented to SAT</p> <p>Terms of reference to address (a) varying terms for student, researcher representatives (b) periodic rotation of a proportion of SAT members annually/biannually (c) appointment of a deputy chair (d) identifying broader EDI priorities (e) appointment of EDI Champions</p> <p>Following consultation, terms of reference to be adopted, deputy chair appointed and membership revised/updated.</p> <p>SAT to meet bimonthly, focusing on Action Plan implementation.</p>	March 2021	Ongoing	HoS & AS SAT	<p>New terms of reference adopted</p> <p>Annual rotation of membership</p> <p>Maintain high attendance at SAT meetings at existing levels of >80%</p> <p>Gender & EDI issues to be discussed at all School EMC meetings as a standing item on the agenda.</p> <p>Future staff consultation (including focus groups) will monitor awareness & understanding of the remit and work of the EDI committee/EDI ambassadors, and specifically awareness of relevant equality policies (including</p>
				June 2022	October 2022	HoS & WG3	
				January 2023	June 2023		

Action No.	Description of action	Rationale	Key outputs and milestones	Timeframe (start/end date)		Person responsible	Success criteria and outcome
			<p>(a) EDI champions visible in School. Champions to serve as contact points for disseminating information on accessing relevant equality policies and supports (including reporting mechanisms).</p> <p>(b) Gender & EDI issues standing item on EMC meeting agenda</p> <p>(c) Annual update of key progress of EDI committee work (including Action Plan implementation) at School assemblies</p>	<p>October 2022</p> <p>June 2022</p>	<p>Monthly</p> <p>Annually</p>		reporting mechanisms).
3.1.2	Provide regular e-mail/website EDI updates to the School community, to include progress on action plan implementation, information on gender-based and EDI initiatives	The wider School community would only become aware of action plan implementation through School-wide meetings which are held twice a year. To increase awareness of the initiatives being implemented, it will be necessary to update staff more regularly. This will highlight the local ethos of	<p>School EMC to be updated monthly on action plan implementation</p> <p>E-mail updates every 2 months to inform the School community of EDI/gender-based actions and initiatives.</p>	<p>January 2022</p> <p>June 2022</p>	<p>Monthly</p> <p>Bi-monthly</p>	<p>AS SAT Chair</p> <p>AS SAT chair & SM</p>	<p>Maintain high level of awareness of AS (91% in most recent staff survey).</p> <p>Future staff survey to indicate high level of awareness of progress with action plan implementation (>70%) - to be included as an</p>

Action No.	Description of action	Rationale	Key outputs and milestones	Timeframe (start/end date)		Person responsible	Success criteria and outcome
		inclusivity and support our SAT recruitment activities.	School webpage and social media updates to provide a resource for School staff and students to view gender and EDI-related activities and developments.	July 2022	Sept 2022 & twice yearly	SM	additional question in the next staff survey
3.1.3	Support other Schools in submitting applications, including through SEFS ASSG, and by SAT Chair acting as “buddy” to new applicants	In preparation of this application, the SoM benefitted from the experience of an AS “buddy” - Dr Therese Uniacke-Lowe- the AS SAT Chair in SFNS, UCC. We are committed to providing similar support to colleagues in other Schools’ SATs.	The current AS SAT chair will act as a “buddy” to future first time applicants within the College of SEFS in UCC (“buddies” are allocated informally, facilitated by UCC EDI Unit)	January 2022	December 2024	AS SAT chair	SAT chair to formally align with (“buddy”) a first-time applicant School/department within the next 4 years
Student Data – Application Section 4.1							
4.1.1	Consult with students to understand motivations for programme choice	BSc in Biomedical Science has a low male representation (~26%M) while the Computational Biology PGT programme has a low female representation (25%F). Student motivation in choosing these programmes is unclear. Therefore, we will survey students to understand	UG and PG student consultation completed and analysed (year 1 and 2).	March 2022 and 2023	June 2022 and 2023	Programme Directors with SAT and SM support	At least 50% of the relevant cohort of students participate in the first planned survey exploring motivation for student programme choice. Summary survey report to be presented by SAT to School

Action No.	Description of action	Rationale	Key outputs and milestones	Timeframe (start/end date)		Person responsible	Success criteria and outcome
		their motivation and whether perceived gender-based barriers impact their choices					EMC and School Assembly, with recommendations for actions proposed and adopted for implementation in [years 3, 4]
4.1.2	Formalise mentoring schemes for 3 rd and 4 th year students to ensure high UG completion rate & to increase awareness of student supports within the School	The HoS implemented a 3 rd and 4 th yr mentoring system pairing students with academic members of staff in AY20/21 as a short-term response to the exceptional circumstances. Informal feedback suggests that students benefitted from this support and we will embed it as part of our ongoing activities. This will help us to maintain our overall high UG completion rates.	Formalise the mentorship scheme for 3 rd and 4 th year UG students linking to assigned academic supervisors as part of 3 rd yr literature review projects and 4 th yr research projects.	Sept 2022	annually	HOS and Academic Staff	All 3 rd and 4 th year UG students formally assigned and engaging with mentors from AY 2021/22, with participation rates monitored and participant experience evaluated annually Maintain high UG completion rates of >90% observed in AY 2022/23
4.1.3	Monitor student completion rates, particularly for 2020/21 and 2021/22, BSCBS programme, and	Though numbers are small, our data showed slightly higher female non-completion rates in 2019/20 (Table 4.1.3) particularly for BSCBS programme, which	Data will be analysed after student registrations are complete and after exam boards.	October 2022	Annually	SM and EDI, TLSE Chairs	2020/21 data analysed by SAT [and TLSE] and reported to SEMC with recommendations for action to address any

Action No.	Description of action	Rationale	Key outputs and milestones	Timeframe (start/end date)		Person responsible	Success criteria and outcome
	monitor application rates, completion rates and grade attainment data annually, for all programmes (UG, PGT, PGR).	<p>we suspect is pandemic-associated. This cohort switched abruptly to exclusively online learning in March 2020. Issues with IT and internet connections, as well as the challenges of adapting and coping during the early phase of the pandemic, placed exception stresses on this cohort.</p> <p>Though numbers are low, there was an increase in the proportion of F applicants/offers/acceptances in the MFSTMB programme in the reporting period.</p>	<p>The SAT and TLSE Committee will review the data to assess whether high pre-pandemic completion rates are restored or if pandemic impacts continue to be felt.</p> <p>SAT/TLSE will report to CEMC, including providing an analysis of the data and proposing recommendations to address gender-based disparities.</p> <p>Monitor student application and completion rates and grade attainment at UG, PGT and PGR level annually in future and action any issues arising.</p>	October 2023	annually	SM, AS SAT	negative fluctuations in completion rates and any gender-based disparities in application/completion or grade attainment rates
Academic & Research Staff Data – Application Section 4.2							
4.2.1	Track career paths of our departing research staff and create an alumni network.	The career paths of our researchers beyond their time in SoM is currently unclear. We have established that the APC requests staff to participate in an exit questionnaire to	Drawing on APC model and experience an exit questionnaire will be developed to identify reasons for staff departure, the career plans/new positions	April 2022	July 2022	SM with the support of the administrative team	Target 50% participation rate in exit survey among departing researchers in Year 1.

Action No.	Description of action	Rationale	Key outputs and milestones	Timeframe (start/end date)		Person responsible	Success criteria and outcome
		<p>establish their career plans and how the APC could better support their researchers in the future. This is a practice that help to improve local supports for our researchers while simultaneously facilitating the development of an alumni network that could support our existing research staff cohort.</p>	<p>secured to identify career paths and to gain feedback from staff regarding their experience SoM.</p> <p>The new questionnaire will be rolled out from September 2022</p> <p>Database of contact information created.</p> <p>Summary report of data to be delivered annually to SAT, including recommendations for action.</p>	<p>Sept 2022</p> <p>Sept 2022</p> <p>December 2022</p>	<p>As needed</p> <p>Updated ongoing</p> <p>Dec annually</p>	<p>SM, AS SAT chair</p>	<p>A summary report of data to be compiled annually and reported to SAT, including recommendations for action</p> <p>Database of contact information established</p>
Supporting and Advancing Careers: Key Career Transition Points: Academic Staff – Application Section 5.1							
5.1.1	Update advertisements and candidate information pack to reflect the School's commitment to Athena SWAN and to highlight family friendly and flexible work policies	<p>Promote the School's commitment to Athena SWAN to prospective recruitment applicants.</p> <p>The School has few women in academic and senior research positions and aims to attract more women applicants in future competitions.</p>	<p>Add Athena SWAN Charter logo to advertisements and candidate information packs for all School positions.</p> <p>Ensure language is included in all recruitment advertisements promoting family-friendly and flexible</p>	January 2022	May 2023	Administrative staff with guidance from SM, WG3	<p>Athena SWAN logo visible on all recruitment advertisements from July 2022</p> <p>10% increase in female applications to senior PDR positions advertised in the next three years</p>

Action No.	Description of action	Rationale	Key outputs and milestones	Timeframe (start/end date)		Person responsible	Success criteria and outcome
			working policies and supports. Audit job description language for bias using appropriate software and ensure inclusive terminology to remove barriers at application stage.				
5.1.2	Monitor and review researcher recruitment annually, particularly short-listing data	Central data regarding PDR staff recruitment only became available from 2020. Therefore, we did not have a complete dataset for this assessment. Short-listing data is not currently available centrally for researchers.	Annual review of researcher recruitment applications/appointments from central database. Annual survey of line managers to access short-listing information.	June 2022 First survey complete Sept 2020	June annually Sept annually	SM, WG3	Annual monitoring of researcher recruitment data in place with actions responding to trends and issues identified
5.1.3	Establish a formal shared and standardised process for induction of Academic/Research staff with information packs and details of academic units and supports within	Only 44% of new staff expressed strong satisfaction with local induction practices. We plan to make the induction process universal to all new staff members. 55% of staff hired in the past 3 years were not aware	Develop a draft Induction Pack for newly recruited staff. Incorporate feedback from SAT and selected recent recruits to finalise Induction Pack Promote central HR induction and new PI	Jan 2022 September 2022	Aug 2022 December 2022	WG3 and School Manager	A published draft of the SoM 'Induction Pack' for 'new hires' online on the SoM website. Links to induction information readily accessible on SoM website and

Action No.	Description of action	Rationale	Key outputs and milestones	Timeframe (start/end date)		Person responsible	Success criteria and outcome
	the SoM and across the University.	of the formal HR orientation programme.	Forum and share list of supports in the SoM newsletter and website.				<p>promoted in the newsletter.</p> <p>>60% new staff express strong satisfaction with local induction in next survey</p> <p>>15% increase in awareness of induction and orientation opportunities</p>
5.1.4	HoS to strategically align staff who wish to apply for promotion with previously successful applicants and to provide opportunities to discuss/provide feedback on unsuccessful applications	<p>Promotion at UCC is achieved on a competitive basis and a wealth of information on the process rests with those who have completed it. We, therefore, plan to create a culture of support for School members who plan to pursue promotion opportunities through partnership with an experienced member of staff and with HoS endorsement.</p> <p>Only 25% PSS staff and 50% of academic survey respondents agreed that the</p>	<p>Development of a School/discipline-specific guidance document for line managers to use in PDRS discussions to ensure that promotion criteria are clearly outlined and understood. This will facilitate discussion surrounding career progression opportunities and plans.</p> <p>Announcement of promotion preparation and feedback supports at EMC and/or School assemblies to ensure that staff are aware of the</p>	Jan 2022	July 2022	WG3	Improved perception that the promotion criteria and processes in UCC are fair and transparent, in the next staff survey (at least 60%).
				Twice yearly at School assemblies (starting June 2022)		HoS with input from SM, CTO	

Action No.	Description of action	Rationale	Key outputs and milestones	Timeframe (start/end date)		Person responsible	Success criteria and outcome
		promotion criteria are transparent and fair and 27% of PSS staff and 50% of academic staff agreed that the process of promotion is transparent.	<p>available supports within the SoM.</p> <p>Strategic pairing of staff members to provide experiential advice on the promotion process.</p> <p>The HoS, CTO and SM will explore the possibility of pairing SoM PSS staff with colleagues in other Schools or central university functions, should a colleague with relevant experience of promotion not be available within the School</p>	On announcement of promotion calls (no calls currently scheduled) when they arise & in future PDRS rounds		HoS, SM, CTO	
5.1.5	Establish a PDR association in SoM. Link SoM PDR association with APC Post-doc association to create a community of researchers.	<p>Researcher focus group report indicated an appetite for peer support systems relating to career progression and planning. We will create a researcher peer network where PDRs can explore career progression issues, pathways and experiences.</p> <p>The APC has a well established and effective</p>	<p>Create a PDR association in collaboration with APC Post-doc association.</p> <p>Promote opportunities for peer networking among a broader community of researchers through participation in the "post-doc hub" programme</p>	September 2022	March 2023	WG3 in liaison with SAT chair & APC management	Establishment of an integrated PDR association and network between APC/SoM.

Action No.	Description of action	Rationale	Key outputs and milestones	Timeframe (start/end date)		Person responsible	Success criteria and outcome
		PDR association with a strong programme of career themed events. We will model our new network on the APC association. By linking the two, we will create new opportunities for our research staff to network and discuss career planning and pathways.					
Supporting and Advancing Careers: Career Development: Academic Staff – Application Section 5.3							
5.3.1	Create PDR handbook with guidance on preparing a Professional Development Plan.	<p>Only 63% of researcher survey respondents had met with their line manager to discuss a Professional Development Plan.</p> <p>Survey feedback indicated inconsistency in researchers' satisfaction with opportunities to discuss workload, career progression, training and mentorship.</p>	<p>Draft PDR handbook</p> <p>Include guidance on PDP preparation in new PDR handbook</p> <p>Roll out pilot of PDP in one research group</p> <p>Roll out School-wide PDP following pilot</p>	<p>April 2022</p> <p>May 2023</p> <p>Sept 2023</p>	<p>April 2023</p> <p>Sept 2023</p> <p>June 2024</p>	<p>WG3, HoS, Chair of SoM Research Committee</p> <p>WG3, EMC</p>	<p>PDR handbook published online on SoM website.</p> <p>At least 70% of PDR staff complete PDPs with their PIs by 2024</p> <p>At least 70% of PDR staff to have completed a PDRS review by 2024</p> <p>Increased satisfaction (at least 60%) reported by PDR staff in future SoM Survey with opportunities to discuss workload, career progression,</p>

Action No.	Description of action	Rationale	Key outputs and milestones	Timeframe (start/end date)		Person responsible	Success criteria and outcome
							training and mentorship.
5.3.2	Offer teaching opportunities to PDR staff pursuing Teaching & Learning qualifications	<p>The SoM has a local policy that up to 20% of a module may be delivered by relevant PDR staff.</p> <p>It is therefore proposed that the SoM should endorse this opportunity for PDR staff who are committed to pursuing a career in academia and who are undertaking a PG cert/diploma in Teaching and Learning at UCC.</p>	<p>Encourage PIs at EMC to make PDR staff aware of teaching opportunities</p> <p>Promote discussion of teaching opportunities in future PDP meetings</p> <p>Provision of teaching opportunities for PDRs who participate in the CIRTL course</p>	<p>April 2022</p> <p>2023</p> <p>Commencing AY22/23</p>	<p>May 2022</p> <p>2024</p> <p>Ongoing on a case-by-case basis</p>	<p>HoS, School Manager, Chair of SoM TLSE Committee</p>	<p>Awareness relating to teaching and learning training opportunities among PDRs (>60%).</p> <p>Participation in the CIRTL programme among PDR and/or lecturing staff.</p>
5.3.3	Provide opportunities for PDR staff to (co-)chair PGR seminar sessions	<p>Researcher focus group feedback highlighted that researchers would like more information on what is involved/required to be an academic. Opportunities to co-chair sessions with academic staff members will provide access to additional training, mentorship and leadership skills while simultaneously supporting our PGR students by providing visible role models and</p>	<p>Introduce PDR-led PGR seminar series with the support of academic lecturing staff.</p> <p>Provide (co-)chair opportunities for PDR staff incorporating inclusive representation of session chairs</p> <p>Generate a long-list of gender-balanced speakers for the</p>	<p>Mar-June each year</p> <p>Jan-Feb each year</p>	<p>Mar-June each year</p> <p>Jan-Feb each year</p>	<p>PD committee, EMC</p>	<p>PDR staff to (co-) chair at least 40% of seminar sessions with 50% gender representation among the PDR co-chairs</p> <p>Future researcher consultation to indicate increased awareness of academic career pathways</p>

Action No.	Description of action	Rationale	Key outputs and milestones	Timeframe (start/end date)		Person responsible	Success criteria and outcome
		increasing interactions and connectivity among the School community. Analysis of the speaker list across 2017-19 identified that female representation of internal and external speakers is low thus reducing the presence of visible female role models in the academic sphere.	upcoming PG seminar series. Virtual options or alternative dates will be offered to accommodate speakers with caring responsibilities.				Target 50% gender representation of visiting speakers by 2024
5.3.4	Establish PDR team to lead and manage social media campaign	PDR staff are a major cohort within SoM. To enhance the visibility of our PDR staff, it is intended to establish a PDR team who will lead and manage a social media campaign for the SoM and improve the visibility of our female PDR staff in particular as role models for PGR and UG students.	Establish a social media PDR team with responsibility for providing regular updates on our research and EDI-related activities and to establish a SoM podcast series.	August 2022	December 2025	Administrative team, SM, PDR representatives	Establishment of a gender-balanced PDR communications team Increased visibility of PDR staff within the SoM and externally through social media campaigns and podcasts.
5.3.5	Integrate researcher staff as part of next PDRS process	Based on staff survey data, awareness of (57%) and uptake of the PDRS system among research staff is low (<20%). Women are underrepresented at senior	Circulate updated researcher handbook (Action 5.3.1) Draft PDP generated by researchers within 6 months of commencing contract	Sept 2023 Sept 2023	Annual review/update Within 6 months of	HoS, line managers and School Manager	Increased awareness (>70%) and uptake of PDRS opportunities by early career research staff (>50%).

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		research grades, which require a track record of securing funding. We will use researcher PDRS reviews to support women researchers to prepare for senior researcher roles.	Researcher PDRS meetings scheduled Review of PDRS process	Dec 2023 July 2024	new recruits start date June 2024 Dec 2024		
5.3.6	Encourage early career academics to engage with the University's mentorship programme and to schedule meetings on a regular basis.	In the past three years, three new academic members of staff have been hired. To ensure that these staff members are supported in acquiring the appropriate experience in all aspects required for promotion, mentorship by an experienced staff member is essential. We will strongly encourage early career academics to engage with their assigned mentors.	Develop protocols and discussion checklists to guide academics on effective mentorship. Promote completion of digital badges at UCC related to mentorship and team leadership. Regular meetings between mentors and mentees.	Oct 2022 April 2023	March 2023 Annual reminders	HoS and SM	Formalised protocols and discussion checklists for effective mentorship. Increased uptake of mentorship opportunities by early career lecturing academic staff.
5.3.7	Create a Microbiology Day to showcase researchers at all levels- One day annual event.	The researcher focus group report indicated that PGRs and PDRs would benefit from local information regarding the skills required/activities in the academic career track to assist in career decisions.	A gender balanced schedule of speakers taking part in the Microbiology day. Industry and Academia represented in the series annually, guided by	December 2023	Annually	HoS, School Manager, SoM EMC, WG2 & 3	High attendance from PGR and UG students (>60% invitees) with a gender balanced composition of speakers.

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		Limited opportunities for women to act as visible role models in the SoM.	inputs from staff and from the SoM PGR/PDR committee (See action 5.3.3). Opportunities for PGRs and PDRs to meet with speakers pre- or post- the presentation.				Increased satisfaction reported by PDR staff in future staff consultation with access to local information and support with career planning, including planning an academic career.
5.3.8	Use PhD Roadmap Workshop to promote training resources, mentorship and wellbeing supports for PGR students	Researchers focus group (inc. PhD students) indicated a need for greater clarity on PhD process, supports and career pathways.	PhD Roadmap Workshop to be supported fully by SoM and to include speakers from academia, industry and APC wellbeing committee, SoM EDI committee and new SoM PDR association (Action 5.1.5). Promote PGR committee and invite new members at School Assemblies	First PhD Roadmap Workshop Nov 2021 June/Dec 2022	Annual event Twice yearly	HoS, WG3, Graduate Studies committee	SoM PGR committee established and active PhD Roadmap Workshops held annually with high (>90%) PhD attendance Future PhD student consultation indicates improved satisfaction with guidance and information on navigating the PhD, career planning.
5.3.9	Collect grant application data and success rates by gender.	Access to better quality data on researchers applications for national/international	Develop draft annual survey of research staff relating to successful and	September 2022	January 2023	WG3 in consultation with RC chair	Annual report of research grant application activity shared with AS SAT

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		funding will allow us to identify and remove barriers to all researchers for applying for funding. The data will allow the creation of strategic partnerships of staff who are interested in applying for funding.	<p>unsuccessful grant applications annually.</p> <p>Pilot survey within one large research group</p> <p>Review and analyse the data</p> <p>Roll out the survey across all School research staff</p>	<p>Feb 2023</p> <p>April 2023</p> <p>Sept 2023</p>	<p>March 2023</p> <p>April 2023</p> <p>October 2023</p>		& EMC. Report to include recommendations to remove identified barriers.
5.3.10	Establish peer-led grant application support network for early career researchers.	<p>Increasing the research capacity of early career researchers and academics is a key platform for future success.</p> <p>33% of survey respondents disagreed that 'Support is available in my School for applicants whose funding applications are unsuccessful'.</p>	<p>Establish a list of successful grant applicants who are willing to assist colleagues who wish to apply to similar funding schemes including offering critical feedback on application drafts</p> <p>Promoting research funding application success at School Assemblies and newsletter/website</p> <p>Profile successful ERC/prestigious grant applicant experience of</p>	<p>April 2022</p> <p>Starting June 2022</p> <p>Annually at Microbiology Day</p>	<p>Update annually</p> <p>June/Dec each year</p>	<p>WG3 & 4, Chair of SoM Research Committee in liaison with research theme representatives from EMC</p>	<p>List of at least 5 PIs who are willing to provide assistance and feedback to future applicants established</p> <p>At least 50% of survey respondents agreeing that support is available in the School for grant applicants in the next staff survey</p> <p>Research funding successes being promoted at all School assemblies and on the School newsletter/website</p>

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			the application process at the Microbiology Day				
Supporting and Advancing Careers: Career Development: Professional Support Staff – Application Section 5.4							
5.4.1	<p>Use PDRS process to support PSS staff training needs in a systematic way</p> <p>Advocate to HR for flexibility in scheduling training programmes</p> <p>Promote Staff Connect to SoM PSS staff, when launched.</p>	<p>13% of female PSS survey respondents (1 of 8) and 67% of males (2 of 3) indicated their satisfaction with <i>'access to the training and mentoring I need to help me meet the criteria for promotion or to improve my success at promotion'</i></p> <p>The PSS focus group indicated that the scheduling of training opportunities during busy term-times, and the lack of availability of recorded training sessions, often reduced their ability to participate in training while part time staff indicated a lack of training availability.</p> <p>Focus group feedback indicated some PSS staff were unclear whether some programmes (e.g. leadership-themed</p>	<p>Advocate with HR for the recording of HR training programmes, and for the scheduling of more training programmes outside of term-time, to facilitate more PSS staff to avail of training.</p> <p>Use PSS PDRS reviews to assess individual training needs, and identify specific supports (e.g. protected time to avail of training; clarification of full range of training opportunities available) to ensure PSS staff can avail of training aligned with their professional development goals.</p> <p>Promote UCC Staff Connect initiative to SoM PSS staff when it launches in SEFS. Staff Connect is a UCC</p>	<p>June 2022</p> <p>July 2023</p> <p>June 2023</p>	<p>Sept 2022</p> <p>Oct 2023</p> <p>Annual reminder</p>	<p>HoS, School Manager, WG4</p>	<p>At least 60% of both male and female PSS staff reporting satisfaction with access to training opportunities to prepare for promotion in next staff survey</p>

Action No.	Description of action	Rationale	Key outputs and milestones	Timeframe (start/end date)		Person responsible	Success criteria and outcome
		programmes) were available to them.	<p>initiative currently being piloted in College of Business & Law, creating a network of staff with diverse skills sets/expertise across different functional areas for networking/learning, creating new opportunities for peer-learning across functional areas.</p> <p>Investigate limits on part-time staff access to training via University ESS. Identify and address local barriers, or advocate with HR to remove institutional barriers.</p>	March 2022	August 2022		
Supporting and Advancing Careers: Flexible Working and Managing Career Breaks – Application Section 5.5							
5.5.1	Update SoM website and induction booklet to include links to/information regarding flexible working, leave entitlements, family-friendly policies etc.	Staff awareness of the University's policies relating to flexible working and leave ranged from 25-67% (depending on the specific policy). Therefore, we plan to provide direct and easy access to information and supports to staff.	Update SoM website and induction booklet with relevant links and information	May 2022	December 2022	SM, admin team in collaboration with SAT WG4	Future staff survey or focus group to indicate an increased awareness of the flexible working options available (>70%)

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5.5.2	Promote supports required for staff returning from family leave at EMC to ensure best practice across the School	31% of staff (all female) returning to work after a period of leave reported experiencing difficulty in the transition back to work. We consider that this is likely due to a lack of understanding by some line managers of the supports that are available and required by staff on return to work during the transition period.	<p>EDI will be a standing item on the EMC agenda.</p> <p>EMC-level discussion of the difficulties and supports will ensure that all line managers are informed and will help establish consistent standards across the School for best practice for staff returning from leave.</p> <p>This will include recommendations on scaled reintroduction of activities on return to work and/or “catch-up” briefings prior to their return.</p>	Sept 2022	3-4 updates annually at EMC meetings	HoS, SM, WG4	<p>At least 50% of staff returning from family leave report satisfaction with their experience transitioning back to the workplace in the next staff survey</p> <p>Supports for staff returning from leave discussed and recorded in the minutes of at least 2 EMC meetings annually</p>
5.5.3	Lobby HR to allow increased KIT days, especially for PSS staff	A suggestion from the PSS focus group suggested that PSS staff may wish to avail of additional KIT days while on leave to ensure that they can participate in training and key local discussions that will	Discuss with SEFS HR business manager regarding the possibility of providing additional KIT days for PSS staff	June 2022	September 2022	HoS, WG4	College or University level commitment to additional KIT day(s)

Action No.	Description of action	Rationale	Key outputs and milestones	Timeframe (start/end date)		Person responsible	Success criteria and outcome
		support the transition back to work.					
Supporting and Advancing Careers: Organisation and Culture – Application Section 5.6							
5.6.1	Ensure connectivity with staff who are working remotely. Line managers to establish programmed communications via online/phone meetings, email updates so that remotely based staff maintain integration within their teams.	36% of surveyed staff reported a minor or major dis-improvement in the working environment due to Covid-19 restrictions. As we adjust to more flexible working norms, it is essential that all staff maintain regular contact with their peers and line managers for inclusivity.	Structured meetings established to ensure support of remote working staff and ongoing support of line managers requirements. Next staff survey to include questions for staff who work remotely and their line managers to identify if remote-working staff are adequately connected and that their line managers report satisfaction with efficiency, output and connectivity.	August 2020	Annual review	All remote-working staff and line managers, WG5	Staff survey to indicate that remote working staff feel sufficiently connected and informed (>80%) and line managers to report satisfaction with operating conditions, output levels and connectivity of their staff members (>80%).
5.6.2	Update website to showcase staff representation on national/international committees.	Many of the School community are not aware of the range of activities and committees that our academic and research staff are involved in. The School does not promote public	Update SoM website to showcase the School colleagues participation on influential committees	Jan 2023	Annual updates	SM in liaison with EMC	All external committee work is highlighted on the School website

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		engagement and stakeholder engagement within the School. Raising awareness of these activities may help raise the visibility/profile of the School's (female) academic staff.					
5.6.3	Plan core meetings between 10 am and 4 pm, where possible and well planned in advance where this is not possible to allow those with caring responsibilities to plan ahead.	To support staff with caring responsibilities, core meetings should be held between 10am and 4pm or planned sufficiently to allow for maximal attendance. 89% of surveyed staff expressed a preference for key meetings to be held within these hours.	Since August 2021, core SoM meetings are held between 10 am and 4pm and planned to occur at set times to allow planning for those with caring responsibilities. Recording of meetings will be encouraged where staff members express regular difficulty in attending meetings held outside these times.	August 2021	Annual review	HoS, SM, line managers	Maintain or improve satisfaction levels (75%) with timing of meetings for those with caring responsibilities in the next staff survey
5.6.4	Open access for SoM and APC researchers to eachothers' seminar series	The researcher focus group report highlighted that some researchers would benefit from access to APC networking opportunities and a sense of community within the School. As outlined in action 5.3.3, the School seminar series	Mutual access to APC and SoM seminar series to members of both communities irrespective of affiliation	March 2023	As per seminar series schedules	HoS, APC management, SM, PDR committee	Next researcher focus group to indicate greater satisfaction with equity of experience irrespective of affiliation or physical location

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		will be co-chaired by PDR staff thereby creating significant opportunities for greater visible female role models within the School.					
5.6.5	Formalise data gathering process pertaining to outreach activities (inc. gender-based information)	Currently, there is no formal data collection system for outreach activities. Therefore, it is difficult to ascertain the gender representation of those who participate in these activities. Only, 47% of surveyed staff (n=53) agree/strongly agree that the School considers the gender profile of presenters in planning outreach activities.	The School community will be informed by email and public notices of formal data collection systems that will be implemented. The SoM outreach officer will handle and store the data and facilitate an annual review of gender representation in outreach activities.	Jan 2022	annual	SoM outreach manager & WG5 with input from School staff and students.	Formal database established with annual report of gender-based information regarding representation in outreach activities in advance of next AS application. Improved perception among staff survey participants of gender consideration (>60%) in planning outreach activities in next staff survey