

TEMPLATE 3: INTERNAL REVIEW

Name Organisation under review: University College Cork, IRELAND

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Web-link to published version of organisation's HR Strategy and Action Plan:

<http://www.ucc.ie/en/hrresearch/uccresearcherstrategy/>

Web-link to organisational recruitment policy (OTM-R principles):⁴⁵

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/hr/research/uccresearcherstrategy/otmr/>

SUBMISSION DATE TO THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION: 2017

1. ORGANISATIONAL INFORMATION

Please provide an update of the key figures for your organisation. Figures marked * are compulsory.

STAFF & STUDENTS	FTE
Total researchers = staff, fellowship holders, bursary holders, PhD. students either full-time or part-time involved in research – this includes research support staff	*2033
Of whom are international (i.e. foreign nationality)	*761
Of whom are externally funded (i.e. for whom the organisation is host organisation)	*1358
Of whom are women	*1007
Of whom are stage R3 or R4 ¹ = Researchers with a large degree of autonomy, typically holding the status of Principal Investigator or Professor.	*131
Of whom are stage R2 = in most organisations corresponding with postdoctoral level	*283
Of whom are stage R1 = in most organisations corresponding with doctoral level	*1076
Total number of students (if relevant)	19,880
Total number of staff (including management, administrative, teaching and research staff- number not inclusive of PhD students)	*2800
RESEARCH FUNDING (figures for most recent fiscal year)	€
Total annual organisational budget	€286 million
Annual organisational direct government funding (block funding, used for teaching, research, infrastructure,...)	€142.1 million
Annual competitive government-sourced funding (designated for research, obtained in competition with other organisations – including EU funding)	€82.1 million
Annual funding from private, non-government sources, designated for research	€12.3 million

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/pdf/research_policies/Towards_a_European_Framework_for_Research_Careers_final.pdf

ORGANISATIONAL PROFILE (a very brief description of your organisation, max. 100 words)

University College Cork (UCC) was founded in 1845. Today there are 19,880 students 1,076 of these are doctoral students. The university offers over 120 degree and professional programmes in the humanities, business, law, science, engineering, food sciences, and medicine and health sciences. We gained the HR Excellence in Research Award in 2013. UCC employs nearly 1000 research contract staff and is the current Sunday Times University of the Year. We have a long tradition of proven research excellence. We have maintained national research leadership through recent times of austerity and gained the Athena Swan Bronze Institutional award in July 2016.

2. NARRATIVE (MAX. 2 PAGES)

1. Introduction: In 2013, University College Cork ('UCC') gained the *HR Excellence in Research Award* in recognition of the University's on-going commitment to adopting the principles of The European Charter for Researchers and a Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. In 2015 UCC retained that award. This report focusses on our progress since 2015 and outlines key future actions. A complete list of all UCC's actions and future actions can be found in the updated [2017 HRS4R Action plan](#).

2. Process of self-audit: The overall responsibility for the monitoring and implementation of the University's Evolving Action Plan lies with the HR Research Working Group (for its composition see Appendix A). The four year self-assessment has involved wider consultation with the University's research staff, the Research Staff Association, The Research Staff Association HR Working Group (See Appendix C), the HRS4R Researcher Focus Group (See appendix D) and the HR Excellence in Research committee established to lead the adoption of the HR Strategy for Research ('HRS4R') in UCC (See Appendix B). This consultation has also **involved two separate surveys** (i) The UCC Researcher Survey 2016 and (ii) The "Where are you now?" survey which was shared on social and professional networks with anyone who may have worked in research in UCC. The information and testimony gathered from these two surveys will inform our HRS4R actions going forward. See [link here](#) for results of both surveys and questions asked.

As stated in the action plan the University recognises that a two tiered system exists in the application of policies and procedures in recruitment, contract management and salary administration in the Tyndall National Institute. The University has completed a job evaluation exercise involving all research, administrative and technical support staff in Tyndall, with a view to establishing pay parity with their counterparts doing similar or equivalent work in UCC. Price Waterhouse Coopers carried out the job evaluation process and the main appeal has now been finalised. The outcome of the exercise will be implemented during 2017.

3. Key Achievements and progress against the University's original action plan 2013 and the two-year review in 2015.

A. Ethical and Professional Aspects

UCC has made significant progress in this area against the original actions of the 2013 action plan. The actions have evolved naturally in number from 2 in 2013 to 8 in 2017. These actions are mostly in the "complete and continuous phase" the most notable of these are (i) Professor Anita Maguire Vice President for Research and Innovation is the Chair of the Irish National Forum on Research Integrity realising UCC's goal to actively contribute to national protocols on research integrity and (ii) UCC was awarded the *Athena Swan Institutional Bronze Award in 2016*. To thoroughly embed the principles of Research integrity/ Responsible Conduct of Research, UCC is currently working with the University of Maryland in the United States to incorporate best practice experience from other Universities and roll out a compulsory training programme for all UCC's research staff in 2017 and 2018.

The Athena Swan award marks a significant milestone in our plans to improve gender equality in UCC. The award opens the way for Schools and Departments in the College of Science Engineering and Food Science and the College of Medicine and Health to proceed with their own applications in the Athena Swan process creating a more equal community for all our staff and students.

B. Recruitment

As part of its commitment to the HR Excellence in Research Award, UCC implemented the [University Employment and Career Management Structure for Research Staff](#) , in 2012. To add to this and in light of EC recommendations UCC has prepared an [OTM-R \(Open Transparent and Merit Based Recruitment\)](#). The OTM-R policy has encouraged UCC to review its policies on the advertising and recruitment of research posts. As a result of this review [New Appointment Procedures for Senior Research Staff](#) have been approved by Governing Body and Academic Council, with immediate effect.

Currently Higher Education Institutes in Ireland are governed by Public Sector Policies. The implementation of the Fixed Term Workers Act of 2003 combined with the Government's Research Prioritisation policy and the Employment Control Framework are now impacting UCC and other HEI's in Ireland. The University has significant long term responsibility for the provision of salaries and career management of its research staff many of whom were recruited through fixed term contracts but are now permanent employees. This presents complex work force management, career planning, and training and development issues for the University. To this end UCC Human Resources has introduced regular briefing sessions including the newly introduced [Who, What, Where, When](#) which is a nuts and bolts session for all staff on our policies, procedures, what forms to use and most importantly, how our research support offices fit together during the pre and post grant proposal and approval process. Building on this the Research Support Services and Human Resources will introduce a new programme called [Researcher Skills Training Programme in February 2017](#). This will expand and develop the training and information provided in the Who What Where When programme. Also, ***UCC is currently working to implement e-recruitment between 2018 and 2020 for all vacancies.*** In 2013 UCC had 7 actions in this section now in 2017 there are 12. This is an indication of UCC's commitment to our Research staff through HRS4R.

C. Working Conditions and Social Security

Of particular note are three new actions in this area. As part of its desire to improve the working conditions of our current research staff UCC launched three new researcher surveys in December 2016.

- a) Internal researcher staff survey.
- b) Researchers who have left UCC – and why did they leave.
- c) Internal researcher teaching survey launched by the UCC Staff Enhancement and Development Committee

These surveys form part of our continued progress in HRS4R and will inform UCC's future HRS4R action plans for 2017 to 2020.

Additionally, because of the changing career landscape for research staff, the importance of professional development plans for researchers is now high on the agenda for PI's in UCC stemming from actions in our action plan. This is also strongly emphasised at researcher and head of department/unit induction. UCC proposes to introduce an e-performance system in 2018/20 and we believe that these new processes will enable our research staff to prepare for their professional careers both within and outside of the third level sector. At the national level work has begun on the development of an Irish National Researcher Career Framework. Although this is still a few years away and dependent on government approval it will be very significant to researchers working in UCC.

In light of the recent Athena Swan Award HR has now identified actions for researchers within its Athena Swan Action Plan. These actions will complement work being done to realise actions in the HRS4R action plan.

D. Training and Career Development

One of UCC's most significant actions in this area for 2016 is the implementation of the [UCC Post Doc Development Hub](#). This is a programme of professional development training that enables the personal and professional development of our 250 Postdoctoral Researchers here, in UCC. The programme comprises a range of supports including, workshops, on-line learning, personal and professional development plans and bespoke training programmes. It brings together the training and support available for all aspects of a postdocs' career, enabling our post docs to develop transferable skills, discover new talents and expand existing ones. We have also launched a suite of [University Leadership and Management](#) development modules for Senior Research Staff in 2016. With modules on the University Context, Strategic Planning and Managing People, to name just a few, we hope that this will prove to be a valuable management tool for our busy Senior Research staff. Another area of improvement is found in our efforts to enhance the employability of UCC's researchers across different sectors. Working within the remit of Science Foundation Ireland's Industry Fellowship Programme and others like it we hope to facilitate our highly talented researchers with directional mobility from academia to industry. To this effect our [Researchers towards Industry](#) programme was launched in 2016. We also worked hard to establish synergies with external bodies to enable our researchers to avail of best practice in transferrable skills training. In this regard UCC has been asked to pilot a Wellcome Trust initiative called The International Funders Award in Management Skills for Researchers. This builds on the work done on our [Professional Skills for Research Leaders](#) ILM accredited programme of which there are now 40 graduates. Furthermore research staff in UCC are encouraged to avail of all the training and mentoring schemes available including the [Aurora Leadership Programme for Women](#). Our annual [Researcher Conference](#) is proving very popular with attendance levels of over 100 research staff. Our 2016 Conference title was *Chance Favour's the Prepared Mind* and 2017's was *Today's Researcher – Mobility is Key!*

UCC also offers [postgraduate training modules](#) which have been identified as generic and transferable skills relevant to PhD student education at University College Cork. Their relevance may vary upon experiential learning, disciplinary and professional development needs. PhD students may take a selection of these modules as part of their Structured PhD or as stand alone modules where the credits would appear on the academic transcript of results (but not on the final degree parchment). For a 3 year PhD, the maximum number of credits that can be undertaken is 30 credits. For a 4 year PhD, the maximum number of credits that can be undertaken is 90 credits.

3. ACTIONS

UCC's 2017 – 2020 action plan [is available here](#).

Comment on the implementation of Open, Transparent, Merit-Based Recruitment principles:

UCC's OTM-R policy is available and [published here](#).

This policy sets out, in chronological order, the various steps of the UCC Researcher recruitment process, from the job advertising/application phase through to the appointment phase. In line with the HR Excellence in Research Award our OTM-R policy aims to build on the principles of the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, providing more detailed information on the recruitment process for researchers here in UCC.

4. IMPLEMENTATION (MAX. 1 PAGE)

The goal of the Internal Review process is to assess UCC's HRS4R actions and provide key information on the status of these actions and their progress, noting any changes or opportunities for growth and new initiatives that may have evolved from previous initiatives and actions. This information is vital to anticipating and meeting the needs of our current research staff. To prepare for this review and implement our revised action plan many stakeholders were consulted particularly members of our research community here in UCC. The four year self-assessment has involved consultation with the University's research staff, the Research Staff Association, The Research Staff Association HR Working Group, the HR Research Working Group and the HRS4R Researcher Focus Group (see appendix for members of these groups). The consultation process has also involved three separate surveys (i) The UCC Researcher Survey 2016 and (ii) The "Where are you now?" survey which was shared on social and professional networks and (iii) The UCC Researcher Teaching Survey. The overall responsibility for the monitoring and implementation of the University's Evolving Action Plan lies with the HR Excellence in Research Committee, Chaired by Mr Barry O'Brien Director of Human Resources, the HR Research Advisor and, the HR Research Working Group (for its composition see Appendix).

Research staff representatives meet with members of the university's senior management team including the VP Research and Innovation and the Director of HR three times per year. This affords an additional opportunity for researchers to articulate concerns directly to UCC's senior management. The agenda is set by the researchers and often helps amongst other things to highlight HRS4R goals and review progress made on previously established goals.

Currently UCC is has transitioned to new leadership. Our New President Professor Patrick O'Shea is working with university senior management on UCC's new strategic plan. He said "Our goal is to be a great modern metropolitan model of a research university" and this provides UCC with an excellent opportunity to embed more securely and further align our organisational policies within the HR Excellence in Research initiative.

The HR Research Manager reports to the HR Research group and other stakeholders on a regular basis on any developments or issues regarding the implementation of the HRS4R action plan. This involves identifying trends/issues across all actions as well as opportunities to assist the owners of these actions in achieving the stated goals. Sometimes this may mean making adaptations where necessary within the bounds of the action plan or negotiating with action owners to find successful solutions. The commitment to continuous improvement that the HRS4R requires is a collaborative effort, consistently requiring attention and revision of the planned actions.

Inclusive of completing the internal review as per the requirements and placing all documentation on the UCC website, UCC will provide an agenda that includes times, meeting locations and the names of people (including senior management, research staff, the UCC Research Staff Association and PhD students) the reviewers will be meeting. There will be a campus tour during the visit to showcase our research centres and facilities. And if possible, UCC will provide an office or workspace for the reviewers to use and have copies available of any documents or resource materials that have been requested. We will arrange for staff and PhD students to have lunch and/or dinner with the reviewers as required.

Please note that the revised HR strategy and Action Plan must also be published upon completion of the internal assessment.