

Quality Enhancement Plan – UPDATE

Department of Human Resources (People & Culture)

(16th April, 2024)
 Fheabhsú Cáilíochta
 Quality Enhancement

FOR COMPLETION BY QEU	
Date of Peer Review visit: 17 th - 18 th May and 1 st & 3 rd June 2022	Head of Unit: Ms Ashley Flaherty (Chief People & Culture Officer)
Link to Panel Report published on QEU website: https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/qualityenhancementunit/reports/admin/DepartmentofHumanResources-PeerReviewPanelReport2021-22.pdf	Date QEP considered by Quality Enhancement Committee: 16th May 2024

Item No	Panel Recommendation	Actions Planned ¹	Responsibility for Action ²	Resource Implications ³	Implementation Schedule ⁴	Effectiveness/Impact ⁵ <i>To be completed as part of follow-up</i>
1	Recruitment Process: Ensuring clarity of roles and responsibilities (Central HR/HR Business Partners/hiring managers et. al.) at all stages of the process will be critical. The Panel categorises this recommendation as urgent, given the current strategy of Cluster hiring, which is a more	Substantial recommendations have been made under UCC22 Pillar 4 in addressing recruitment process redesign. These should be reviewed by the Working Group in the first instance. As part of this review, the recruitment process should be externally benchmarked and redesigned, including its	The Panel recommends that the recruitment process be reviewed by a Working Group chaired by the Deputy President, comprising HR, OCLA, EDI, the academic community		Concluded within 6 months of receipt of the Panel Report (March 2023)	Impact: a revised streamlined approach to recruitment which harnesses the benefits of IT and has related reporting metrics.

¹ May include actions planned within the unit or those that require interface with other parts of the university

² E.g. Head of School, School Manager, all staff, specific committees etc

³ Resources – the financial or human resources required to implement the recommendation

⁴ Interim milestone dates can be included here (e.g. within 6 months, within 12 months, within 3 years etc.)

⁵ **To be completed as part of follow-up 12-15 months post publication of QEP** - Recognising the need to reflect on the effectiveness of actions undertaken, and to what extent the actions have achieved their intended outcome

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	complicated and therefore riskier activity	regulatory basis, with a view to revising the process to ensure speedier recruitment while not compromising its legitimacy and integrity	and change management experts			

2024 Update: Recommendation 1: Recruitment Process:

Following the recommendation arising from the Quality Review process, the UCC President commissioned a review of UCC's Recruitment processes led by the UCC Focus Team. The discovery phase review commenced in April 2023 and a report was drafted and presented to the Chief People and Culture Officer in December 2023 detailing the key findings and recommendations.

The Discovery report proposed a redesign of UCC's recruitment operating model, encompassing cultural and structural changes, technology integration, and process enhancement. While acknowledging the unique nature and challenges of recruitment within the Higher Education Sector, the report highlights the importance of flexibility and creativity in attracting a diverse talent pool, supported by a more agile policy framework and accelerated digital transformation.

The report recommends a 24–36-month timeline for transformation, with a continuous focus on refining user experience and maximising efficiencies through technology and process redesign. This will require a financial investment in both systems and people. e.g. A Talent Team is required to support the UCC Strategic Plan and objectives.

The 70 recommendations contained within the Discovery report were accepted by the Chief People and Culture Officer and a report was presented to ULT on 23 January requesting ULT approval to commence a Recruitment Transformation Project.

The focus of the Recruitment Transformation Project will be on operational recruitment extending to create a fit-for-purpose recruitment model through process redesign, automation and enhanced focus on the user experience. This shift allows for a more strategic talent acquisition approach, aligning with key trends like AI utilisation and the University's commitment to diversity and inclusion in recruitment, structured career progression and leadership development. As such, this project will form one of the key pillars of the People and Culture Plan.

The Recruitment Transformation plan is currently being developed and a number of short-term actions are already being progressed as result of Project Alpha and incorporated into Workstream 2 actions e.g. Automation of the Post Approval Process; reduction in the selection Panel composition; and timing of reference requests.

Digitisation of Staff Request Form (PF3) and clarification of roles and responsibilities of the relevant recruiting Heads is underway via the revised post approval process from a technical perspective. Clearer process flow and policy underpinned by review of existing Appointment Regulations is the next stage of this part of the project.

<p>2</p>	<p>The Panel recommends that a “People Strategy” be developed and owned by ULT, identifying and agreeing core values and related behaviours, clarifying the purpose of HR and the expectations of the University around people management. This purpose should clearly identify the balance between the compliance vs developmental roles that HR functions are expected to play. This should be completed concurrently with the new UCC Strategic Plan.</p>	<p>develop a HR Vision and Strategy based on broad consultation with key stakeholders. The HR Vision and Strategy should include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Key performance indicators agreed with UMT; b. Initiatives to support any proposed cultural transformation, to embed the values and behaviours of the institution; c. Service level agreements (SLAs) with key stakeholders, particularly the four colleges, the main research institutes and professional services; d. The acknowledgement that workforce planning should be enhanced throughout UCC and while supported by HR, is a critical line managerial function; e. The enhanced use of technology to improve processes, enhance security, improve management information and track SLAs. f. An implementation plan for managerial training (see recommendation 4 below). 	<p>HR under the leadership of the HR Director develop a HR Vision and Strategy</p>		<p>within 6 months of the adoption of UCC’s Strategic Plan, develop a HR Vision and Strategy based on broad consultation with key stakeholders. (August 2023)</p>	<p>This recommendation is in active progress to implementation stage.</p>
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		g. Clear and consistent polices for those UCC staff on CID, part-time and hourly contracts (see recommendation 6 below).				
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2024 Update: Recommendation 2: People Strategy

The University’s strategic Plan ‘Securing Our Future 2023-2028’, clearly outlines the strategic people priorities in goal 4.

The Chief People and Culture Officer took up their appointment on 1 November 2023 and has been completing a series of organisational development diagnostics.

Work has commenced on developing a Culture Evolution approach and plan which will inform the People and Culture Plan activities. The plans will shortly be formalised and communicated. , In addition plans are in place to agree, communicating and embedding UCC values and behaviours. eg working with a number of functional areas on a local basis.

Similarly, work has commenced on developing the UCC Operational and Strategic Workforce Planning approach. Project Alpha has identified the need for UCC to understand the workforce required for the future and delivery of the Strategic Plan.

Both elements will come together to shape the People and Culture Plan. This will be socialised with the various UCC stakeholders before publishing in Quarter 4. SLAs are being explored as part of the implementation plan.

The People and Culture Department will develop a People and Culture Department Workplan, which in addition to wider people and culture activities, will include a People and Culture transformation programme, building the People and Culture team capability, professional standards, and harness IT platforms to provide more robust access to HR and OD information and data. The People and Culture Department Workplan will support the UCC People and Culture Plan. Our future focus will be on making UCC values and behaviours meaningful across the employee lifecycle, through our existing functional structures.

In relation to Manager training, an approach will be developed and implemented but will require investment to roll out, particularly if this is identified as a mandatory training need.

<p>3</p>	<p>The Panel recommends that the HR Operating Model/Organisation Design be reviewed. The combination of centralised HR services and Business partners is designed to ensure consistency in delivering HR service centrally and tailored advice locally.</p>	<p>The Panel recommends that the role of the HRBPs and their relationship with HR be reviewed to ensure client service and the deployment of HR policies and initiatives are both delivered in the optimal manner.</p>	<p>This review should be led by HR in consultation with client Units and would form part of the implementation plan for the HR Vision and Strategy and therefore be addressed in the HR Vision and Strategy.</p>			<p>2024 - This recommendation is in active progress to implementation stage.</p>
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2024 Update: Recommendation 3: HR Operating Model/Organisation Design

Under new leadership the HR function’s focus, resource and organisation design has been reviewed.

A new operating model is currently in design. The Operating model is underpinned by design principles aligned to the UCC Strategic Plan and Goal 4 delivery. Consideration was also given to the various reviews and recommendations regarding the functions impact and effectiveness. This includes the Panel’s recommendation regarding the HR Business Partner role.

The proposed operating model will be socialised and appropriate consultation will take place before implementation.

The operating model will include data analytics to ensure that the function is both user and data driven, linking any solutions with behaviours and values and alignment with the UCC strategy. A main design of the new operating model is that the function will be agile/proactive/solution focussed to institutional needs. Simplicity will also underpin any design solutions.

Initial diagnostics have identified capability and capacity gaps which will require financial investment e.g. Talent, Organisational Design and Development, Strategic Workforce Planning, Organisational Change, Data Analytics, Policy development, Pensions and ER Case Support and Management.

4	Given the fact that “people” management is a managerial responsibility as opposed to a HR responsibility, the Panel recommends that all people managers receive regular formal managerial training	in areas such as goal setting, feedback, performance management/development, EDI, critical conversations and compliance with HR standards, etc.	This recommendation should be endorsed by ULT and incrementally developed and delivered by HR. In advance of delivery, HR should develop an implementation plan as part of the HR Vision and Strategy.			2024 - This recommendation is in active progress to implementation stage.
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2024 Update: Recommendation 4: People Management Development

The understanding of HR and the responsibility for leading and managing the University’s human resource is vital to the success of our People Strategy, as it brings it to life in the everyday. As mentioned above, the development and roll out of a dedicated leaders and managers development programmes related to the People Strategy has been earmarked to meet this need. The People Strategy itself will set out a vision and clarity of purpose for leaders and managers in this regard.

A translation of the leadership competencies emerging from the University’s Strategic Plan has been mapped and has been reviewed against current learning and development provision across all development provided units across the University (including within HR). A gap analysis has been performed with the identification of a future programme of knowledge and skills related to the competencies required. This has been delivered as part of a broader look at CPD as it relates to the University Strategy. The necessary required leadership, mentoring, coaching. (Heads of Schools- criteria) Modularised/continuous focus on leadership competencies. Link into expectations of role, application and execution of leadership skills. Definition of UCC leadership – philosophy of leadership. Reflective practice of leadership and enable leaders to instil a more global/environmental perspective within HEI. Broader appreciation of university outcomes required.

A further gap that has been identified is in basic people management skills. A modular programme will be developed and rolled out as part of the People and Culture Plan programme of work.

5	Feedback from stakeholders was that the system of promotions for administrative staff is not fit for purpose since it ignores the leadership role of line managers in the development as well as the appraisal of staff.	If relevant Government Departmental approval is required for this review it should be sought. This review should consider how a personal development conversation with line managers, feedback from line managers and candidate prior achievement, among other things, could inform the process and provide appropriate recognition and reward.	The Panel recommends that the assessment process and criteria should be reviewed by HR in consultation with senior management, staff and unions within a year of receipt of the Panel Report to ensure fitness for purpose.		within a year of receipt of the Panel Report to ensure fitness for purpose. (Sept 2023)	2024 - This recommendation is in active progress to implementation stage with the review being finalised and recommendation being put forward for consideration.
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2024 Update: Recommendation 5: Promotions for Administrative Staff

A review has commenced on the Administrative Promotion Scheme, with reflection of lessons learnt from the last two cycles. There has also been on-going consultation with union representatives (SIPTU). Best practices from academic promotion approaches and methodologies in use at UCC, has been considered in the review of the administrative promotion scheme. Arising from the review, a proposal is at the point of being brought forward for consideration by stakeholders. In the interests of moving with pace on this review, the proposal allows for some immediate changes to the current process with a defined future state to which it is proposed the scheme would move to.

<p>6</p>	<p>The Panel recommends that UMT, as part of its People Strategy, develops a clearer vision for those UCC staff on CID, part-time and hourly contracts. Their contribution to the mission of the University requires recognition, they deserve clarity about role and contractual obligations and their ongoing contribution should be enhanced with opportunities for growth and development. This vision should then be operationalised in the HR Vision and Strategy, in conjunction with OCLA and EDI, with a suite of clear and consistent policies. If such policies exist, they should be communicated more extensively. The Panel also recommends that the HRIS records for all part-time and occasional staff of UCC should be managed by HR in the same proper and comprehensive manner as all other cohorts of staff.</p>		<p>ULT</p> <p>This vision should then be operationalised in the HR Vision and Strategy, in conjunction with OCLA and EDI, with a suite of clear and consistent policies.</p>			<p>2024 - This recommendation is in active progress to implementation stage.</p>
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2024 Update: Recommendation 6: Strategic Vision for UCC staff on CID, Part-Time contracts:

Planning for the ‘People Strategy’ incorporates consideration of the University’s full human resource, inclusive of those on part-time hourly occasional and CID contracts. In addition to the Quality Review raising recommendations relating to colleagues on such contracts, other recent reviews have also highlighted the need to provide connection to our HR vision for these colleagues. A review of Specific Purpose contracts relating to academic staff has been concluded, which highlighted a need to manage the overall career trajectory of this cohort, providing practical recommendations which were incorporated into the delivery of Pillar 4, UCC 2022.

A Project Alpha WS2 Hourly Paid Project Group established to review the current hourly paid approach and design the solutions to improve the approach and management controls. Engagement has also commenced with IFUT to focus on data regarding Academic Hourly Paid staff.

Inclusivity of HOPS, long-term career trajectory and employee experience on par with other UCC staff. (Link to SWFP – career pathways) Structured approach required for recruitment of HOPS.

Developing the policy and procedural approach for the ongoing management of hourly paid staff will require a financial investment in both systems and resource.

7	Review the communications within the HR Department	Communication needs to be enhanced within HR to further: a. Enable exchange of knowledge, expertise and insights; b. Ensure the entire HR function is kept up to date	HR Director, in consultation with HR team			2024 - This recommendation is in active progress to implementation stage.
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		<p>with HR developments and direction; c. Reduce the potential for siloed thinking; d. Enhance the sense of community and teamwork; e. Improve the capacity of HR to be agile in response to urgent priorities affecting distinct teams and services within HR.</p>				
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2024 Update: Recommendation 7: Communication within HR Department

Under the leadership of our new Chief People and Culture Officer, the HR Department is working towards a reimagining of its service, inclusive of how it communicates internally and externally. The ‘People and Culture Department Transformation Plan’ once finalised, will influence the final approach taken to managing HR communications. In the meantime, HR is looking to review the capabilities of its IT platforms to support departmental communications.


Initial activities identified are Whole team, structured updates, to provide consistency in messaging, two-way communication channels, and a wider look at ways of working and communicating with impact.

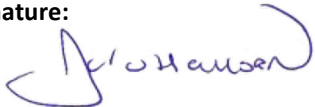
8	The Panel recommends that an internal HR Working Group is established, tasked with ensuring that HR's initiatives are more consistently communicated across UCC, and that HR's achievements are acknowledged and recognised.		HR Working Group		within a year of receipt of the Panel Report	
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2024 Update: Recommendation 8: Establishment of internal HR Working Group.

As part of planning of our 'People and Culture Department Transformation', an implementation plan (inclusive of the aforementioned dedicated leaders and managers programme), communication strategy and related set of actions are being tied down. The engagement of internal to UCC expertise, in communication and marketing as well as IT channels for communication impact are being set out. The finalisation of the 'People and Culture Transformation Plan' will inform the communication plan directly at which time an internal HR Working Group can be established. A dedicated resource rather than panel to enable consistency in comms and policy development. Following an extensive review of P&C and part of future plan of service, we are reimagining roles and resources required.

For completion by Unit

Head of Unit: ASHLEY FLAHERTY	Signature: 	Date: 16.04.24
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Head of College/Functional Area: Professor John O'Halloran, President	Signature: 	Date: 22.04.2024
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