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[Insert Admin Unit name] Strategy Planning

Annual Plan - 2025

# Introduction

This document sets out a template to assist each area in setting how they will contribute to the delivery of the strategy, as well as highlighting key operational goals.

It should be clearly noted that plans should be kept as brief as possible. There’s no need to go into great detail, clear summaries of objectives and initiatives should be set out and bullet points used where possible.

Plans should be articulated around the university’s 6 Strategic Initiatives, and our 3 behaviours and actions.

**Our 6 Strategic Initiatives**

* Learning for life
* UCD student experience
* Research with ambition
* Irish roots, global reach
* OneUCD
* Physical and digital campuses

**UCD’s behaviours and actions**:

* Globally engaged
* Fostering inclusion
* Driving sustainability

# Strategic Initiatives

To drive change in our three pillars, we will invest in and focus activity through six Strategic Initiatives:

* Learning for Life
* UCD Student Experience
* Research with Ambition
* Irish Roots, Global Reach
* OneUCD
* Physical and Digital Campuses

Throughout the strategy development process, we gathered ideas from the community and combined this with our assessment of the external environment in which UCD operates, to develop the commitments under each of these initiatives and the key actions we will take to deliver them. We have iterated and integrated these into projects across the organisation, so that in implementing our strategy we are operating as OneUCD.

These Strategic Initiatives are rolled up at a summary, programme level and outlined in the tables below with reference to programmes that a priority for year one.

**We invite each admin unit to consider where you will lead a programme or contribute to it, indicating in each instance what this contribution might be. Where you will lead a programme, you should also complete a Project Initiation Request.**

***Please note it is not expected that an area will contribute to all initiatives. We have blocked out programmes that are not commencing in 2025/26. Please feel free to leave individual project areas blank if that is appropriate.***

**Strategic Initiative: Learning for Life**

| **Programme** | **Description** | **UCD Year One Priority** | **Consideration for Admin Unit Plans 2025/26 and Subsequent Years** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| General Education | Provide opportunities for all students to develop knowledge and skills such as AI & Digital Skills, Sustainability, Leadership and Languages, either in programme or other learning modes by initially reviewing programme content to identify gaps in general education provision. These activities will support the development of frameworks to support programme and modules mapping and integration to curriculum of sustainability (and other skills where appropriate). | **✓** |  |
| Students as Reflective Practitioners | Students will build strong transversal skills through enhanced opportunities for experiential learning, work integrated learning and global engagement. We will focus on a pilot feasibility to improve integration of Work Integrated Learning with Industry and other partners. Academic Advising is a key activity and part of the educational experience, where students are supported by faculty in making appropriate choices from a wide range of opportunities towards achieving realistic academic and professional goals. Our activities will also enhance support for under-represented students participating in mobility options. | **✓** |  |
| Learning across the Life Course | Grow the diversity and flexibility of our portfolio of learning options, supporting our ambition to bring the excellence and opportunity of the UCD learning experience to learners across their life stages. | **X** |  |
| Support for Graduate Research and Post Doctoral Scholars | Professional and developmental support including enhancing the sense of belonging and community for these cohorts and create opportunities for knowledge-sharing and interdisciplinary engagement. We will identify dedicated space for graduate students to foster interdisciplinary working and collaborative workshops. There is a recognition of different approaches/policies for graduate researchers and post-doctoral scholars. | **✓** |  |
| Curriculum Review | Reform our curriculum, timetabling, assessment modes and credit weightings to optimise learning within programmes in all modes at all levels. | **X** |  |
| Employee Learning | Development support for faculty and staff will be established as we grow our capacity as an organisation that reflects and learns. We will enhance coordination of all learning opportunities for employees with a common platform for accessing these. This will form part of the Discovery phase of a HCM system in the Enhance Support across the Life Cycle Workstream. | **✓** |  |
| **Admin Unit specific projects in this area** | | **Outline of planned project (with a focus on 2025/26)** | | |
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**Strategic Initiative: Student Experience**

| **Programme** | **Description** | **UCD Year One Priority** | **Consideration for Admin Unit Plans 2025/26 and Subsequent Years** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Office of Student Experience and Wellbeing | Establish Office that; consults on student and campus experience, establishes the Director of Student Experience and enhances support for physical and mental wellbeing. Phase 1 priorities will include implementation of recommendations around support for physical and mental health and wellbeing. | **✓** |  |
| Third Space Requirements and Delivery | Prioritise delivery of high-quality accessible space for learning, social and recreation space by Identifying student requirements from third spaces (non-teaching, non-research space). | **✓** |  |
| Student Belonging | Support an increasingly diverse community of students to feel a sense of belonging at UCD; enabling every student to flourish and thrive, participating in volunteering, activism, student societies, clubs and representation. We will increase response rates to the student survey as a precursor to develop a comprehensive action plan for student belonging. | **✓** |  |
| Ad-Astra (Faculty Student Ratio) | Launch Cycle 5 of the Ad Astra scheme in areas of strategic priority and maximise the opportunity for the University and fellows from these recruitments, helping to support a reduction in Faculty Student Ratio & improve rankings. | **✓** |  |
| Intercultural competencies | Deepen global collaborations to advance intercultural experiences and competences of UCD students by developing key partnerships, promote intercultural learning, mobility and virtual mobility and showcase attainment of these competencies. | **X** |  |
| Universal Design for Inclusive Learning and Campus Development | Advance universal design as a core principle in our learning design and our physical and digital campuses. | **X** |  |
| Student Partnership for Innovation and Change | Partner actively with our students to further understand their needs and priorities, building a shared responsibility towards positive change for UCD and wider society. Enhance internal communications approach to our student community and review governance structures to include student reps where relevant. | **✓** |  |
| Student Growth | Deliver a growth strategy (Non-EU Students) for student expansion to support reduction of FSR, enhance academic performance and secure funding for strategic investment to support Colleges and Schools through the Student Enrolment Planning Group. | **✓** |  | |
| **Admin Unit specific projects in this area** | **Outline of planned project (with a focus on 2025/26)** | | | |
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## Strategic Initiative: Research with Ambition

| **Programme** | **Description** | **UCD Year One Priority** | **Consideration for Admin Unit Plans 2025/26 and Subsequent Years** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| AI Institute | AI Institute to deliver significant impact, based on: a landscape review (informing UCD’s position in AI across learning, research and innovation including assessment of international strengths, future capability in AI and resources required) with the future design of the AI Institute with an implementation plan. | **✓** |  |
| Policy Hub | Grow our capacity to inform public policy through our research that will; establish a policy hub that provides a framework enabling integrated policy briefs, engagement with policy makers and builds UCD’s capacity and capability in this area. | . **✓** |  |
| Cross –Cutting Areas of Impact | Supporting large scale cross-cutting areas of research; by reviewing and revising how our large collaborative platforms operate, develop criteria for large scale cutting areas & implement new approaches for research and learning. We will initially develop criteria for cross-cutting areas in UCD (integrating our activities in research, learning and engagement). | . **✓** |  |
| Innovation Masterplan | Develop and embed innovation across our campus by; reviewing and revising local support, develop new support with a wider range innovation and impact pathways and establish Campus Masterplan. | **X** |  |
| Research Integrated Service | Improve the researcher experience through an integrated service by; developing full supports across the UCD researcher Journey, formalise a joined-up approach across UCD functions/services and developing communities of practice and knowledge. The Researcher Experience Programme will implement recommendations of the Quality Improvement Plan to ensure effective support for researchers and will formalise a joined-up approach of research specific support from central units. | **✓** |  |
| Infrastructure & Equipment | Critical infrastructure supporting research by; integrating research planning formally into formation of UCD capital plans, effective allocation and management of space and pilot schemes that implement UCD wide systems with digital support. | **✓** |  |
| Attract Outstanding Researchers | Attract outstanding researchers by renewing Ad-Astra (Cycle 5), review strategic recruitment and explore a professors of practice programme. | **✓** |  |
| Research Culture Programme | Advance best practice in research culture, underpinned by academic freedom by; revising research metrics to reflect our strategic priorities, redesigning drivers of recognition & reward and investing in research culture and integrity. | **✓** |  |
| **Admin Unit specific projects in this area** | **Outline of planned project (with a focus on 2025/26)** | | |
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**Strategic Initiative: Irish Roots, Global Reach**

| **Programme** | **Description** | **UCD Year One Priority** | **Consideration for Admin Unit Plans 2025/26 and Subsequent Years** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Partnership Framework & Infrastructure | Develop the partnership framework and a support infrastructure including development of CRM. Leverage regional strategies (Africa, North America, South Asia, and East Asia) and other networks to develop UCD’s reputation and identify a small number of strategic partners to collaborate with. | **✓** |  |
| Brand and Reach | Re-invigorate the UCD brand through a new suite of brand assets and consistent approach to application across UCD and our international activities. Amplify and disseminate our stories for growing our reputation and project a cohesive authentic message. Develop a communications campaign approach, implement a multi-annual rankings improvement programme and develop public affairs to support government engagement. | **✓** |  |
| National & Global Reputation | Implement our regional strategies particularly focusing on areas of priority and develop a comprehensive plan. Increase all-island engagement. | **✓** |  |
| Cultural and Heritage Collections | Establish UCD's reputation and impact as a state-of-the-art Cultural Heritage Centre, co-locating, operational development and enhanced dissemination of collections and providing a digital platform to support access, communication and amplification of collections. | **X** |  |
| Irish Language Plan | Establish a foundational resource plan to embed the Irish language in the activities of Units, Colleges and Schools in compliance and in the spirit of Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla (Leasú) 2021. Communicate UCD’s contribution to Irish culture and provide opportunities to experience the richness of Ireland's music, literature, language and dance. | **✓** |  |
| Alumni Development & Network | Develop an integrated plan for alumni engagement aligned with UCD’s 2030 goals focusing on US and UK initially and extending to other key regions, supported by the CRM. | . **✓** |  |
| **Admin Unit specific projects in this area** | **Outline of planned project (with a focus on 2025/26)** | | |
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## Strategic Initiative: One UCD

| **Programme** | **Description** | **UCD Year One Priority** | **Consideration for Admin Unit Plans 2025/26 and Subsequent Years** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Enhanced Support Across the Lifecycle. | Enhance support across the employee lifecycle with a particular focus on; resourcing, training, promotion and recognition, employee training and wellbeing . Assess benefits of an integrated Human Capital Management System to support the employee journey through a Discovery phase project: Chart the lifecycles for different types of employees and align support to these in the form of Technology & People. Roll out revised employee Culture and Engagement Survey. | **✓** |  |
| EDI Anti-Racism and Athena Swan | Development and delivery an anti-racism plan. Roll-out EDI action plan in key areas of focus, in line with Athena Swan commitments. | **✓** |  |
| Organisational Design for One UCD | Bring together a strong coherent approach for the organisational design of UCD that enhances delivery of activities and services through a more integrated approach, supported by workload and hybrid working model. Implement changes to Head of School role and develop supported by an agreed workload and hybrid working model.. | **✓** |  |
| Strategic & Integrated Planning | Strengthen the Integrated Planning process with supportive infrastructure. | **✓** |  |
| Fundraising Campaign | Work with UCD Foundation to significantly increase philanthropic giving to our university through development of a multi-annual ambitious campaign supported by a portfolio of investment opportunities and structured lead and pipeline planning. Investigate development of a University endowment. Develop campaign with fundraising targets across the duration of the strategy. | **✓** |  |
| Strategic Investment Plan | Develop Investment Plan and develop strategic investment fund to deliver the strategy. Review the budget model to ensure it supports delivery of the strategy and UCD’s Cross -Cutting Initiatives. | **✓** |  |
| Transformational Change | Develop capability for transformational change at an institutional, team and individual level, developing change capacity for large scale programmes. Develop a programme for capacity building in support of service transformation and organisational change. | **✓** |  |
| Strategy 2030 Communications | Establish a Communications Strategy highlighting the value of 2030 and demonstrate progress to the UCD Community. | **✓** |  |

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| **Admin Unit Specific Projects in this area** | **Outline of planned project (with a focus on 2025/26)** |
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## Strategic Initiative: Physical and Digital Campuses

| **Programme** | **Description** | **UCD Year One Priority** | **Consideration for Admin Unit Plans 2025/26 and Subsequent Years** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Capital Programme | Successfully complete major capital developments in the Centre for Future Learning, Science Phase 3, Sports and Amenities, Lyons Farm, together delivering state-of-the-art space for learning, research and the student experience. Progress student residences proposal. Assess landscape for future projects linked to 2040 plan. | **✓** |  |
| 2040 Campus Masterplan | Develop an integrated campus plan to 2040 that meets future needs and covers all aspects of campus life and future University requirements by establishing the principles for campus design. | **✓** |  |
| Capital Refurbishment | Development and delivery of a capital refurbishment programme that includes James Joyce Library, residences, the Newman building, the Agriculture building and older residences. The plan will incorporate climate mitigation approaches. | **✓** |  |
| Campus Utilisation Review | Undertake a root and branch review of campus utilisation and occupancy against available benchmarks and informed by the conditional survey and strategic priorities, including sustainability. Develop updated principles and approach for cross-campus space utilisation. Review conditional survey, utilisation and priorities including sustainability. Implement wayfinding and signage project. | **✓** |  |
| Enterprise Roadmap | Develop 10 year enterprise architecture roadmap to ensure digital technologies support our ambitions, underpinned by EA and organisational design principles to provide staff and students with digital-enabled solutions around the service user. Advance implementation of AI-enabled tools, along with FinPOST, CRM. Advance development and implementation of data governance and utilisation. Initial work on timetabling which will inform the wider curriculum review. | **✓** |  |
| Net Zero Plan by 2040 | Develop and begin to implement an action plan to reduce our carbon emissions by 51% and improve energy efficiency by 50% from baseline by 2030 and place us on the path to net zero carbon by 2040. Create structure for innovative pilot projects that draw on learning and research for sustainability. Implement recommendations around sustainable procurement and other operational processes. | **✓** |  |
| **Admin Unit specific projects in this area** | **Outline of planned project (with a focus on 2025/26)** | | |
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# Behaviours and Actions

The UCD Strategy to 2030 sets out three behaviour and action areas which underpin all of UCD’s activities. These are:

* Globally engaged
* Fostering inclusion
* Driving sustainability

Please set out below how your area will embody these principles over the lifetime of the UCD strategy if these are not already included in the sections above.

# Space and Infrastructure

Please summarise, at a high level, infrastructure requirements for your area to fulfil its plans.

# Appendix – Financial Summary

A summary of your financial plan is to be included here. Your Finance Manager will assist you in the preparation of this document.



University College Dublin

For support in developing annual plans please access   
the University planning website where contact details, templates and planning timelines are available: [www.ucd.ie/uplan](http://www.ucd.ie/uplan)