



University College Dublin



University College Dublin

# Human Resources Strategy 2022-2024

*The Revolution of Work*





University College Dublin is Ireland's global university. Through our research, our education and the many ways in which we engage with global society, we have the opportunity and the obligation to ensure that we contribute to the flourishing of Ireland and the world. The international standing of UCD has grown in recent years and is currently ranked within the top 1% of higher education institutions world-wide. Our community has also grown, with 33,000 students (4,000 studying at locations outside of Ireland), 4,250 core employees and some 300,000 alumni worldwide.

The previous UCD Human Resources Strategy - *Growing through people* was developed and launched in late 2016 and designed to support the prevailing organisational strategy at the time. It was centered around the theme of growth and to be in tune with and supportive of the University's goals. In the 5 years that it has been operational the strategy has delivered well against a diverse span of services and projects reflective of the breadth and depth of talent within the function and the growing needs of an ambitious and successful institution. It has also received national recognition on three separate occasions for delivery and impact. However, HR like any other part of the University, cannot remain unchanged and there was a need to undertake a more comprehensive review of the strategy to assess that it was still fit for purpose in such a rapidly changing environment and to ensure it was still in tune and complementary with UCD's new strategy - *Rising to the Future: 2020 - 2024*.

Through a consultative process, it was established that the four strategic pillars underpinning the previous strategy remain valid and provide a comprehensive framework within which we can aggregate our strategic priorities. Therefore, the broad architecture of the strategy remains fit for purpose, however our strategic

priorities have evolved. Some fundamental activities and services remain and in other cases we have entirely new activities and projects that better align with UCD's new and ambitious strategy, within the context of a rapidly evolving workplace.

Under each strategic pillar, the revised HR strategy clearly sets out both our key priorities and desired outcomes. Through these outcomes we will be held accountable so that we continue to strive to achieve a greater contribution to UCD's overall strategy, continue to seek opportunities for improvement in both service and support, and continue to champion the growth and development of the individual, the team and the institution, so that UCD can best rise to the future.

Our strategy - *The Revolution of Work* builds on successes and progression already achieved and envisages a supportive, developmental environment and culture based on four established strategic pillars:

1. Transforming Service Partnership;
2. Building Organisational Capability;
3. Enhancing our Performance Culture;
4. Becoming an Employer and University of Choice.

As I stated in our previous strategy, it is our people that set us apart from other universities and the revision of our strategy continues to put people at the centre through investment, support and development to nurture their talents and make UCD an even better place to work and grow. The next few years will see a rapidly changing work environment, *The Revolution of Work*, for which UCD, through this strategy, will be able to leverage the best for our people and the University.



Tristan Aitken,  
Chief People Officer, Director of SIRC and Legal  
Services





# Our People Vision

*The Revolution of Work* - a supportive, developmental environment and culture

- In support of the UCD Strategy - *Rising to the Future*
- Leveraging collective experience and contribution
- Aligned with best practice
- Focus on all employees: leaders, people managers and individual colleagues

# Our Values

- Collegiality
- Creativity
- Diversity
- Engagement
- Excellence
- Integrity



# HR Strategy



1. Transforming Service Partnership



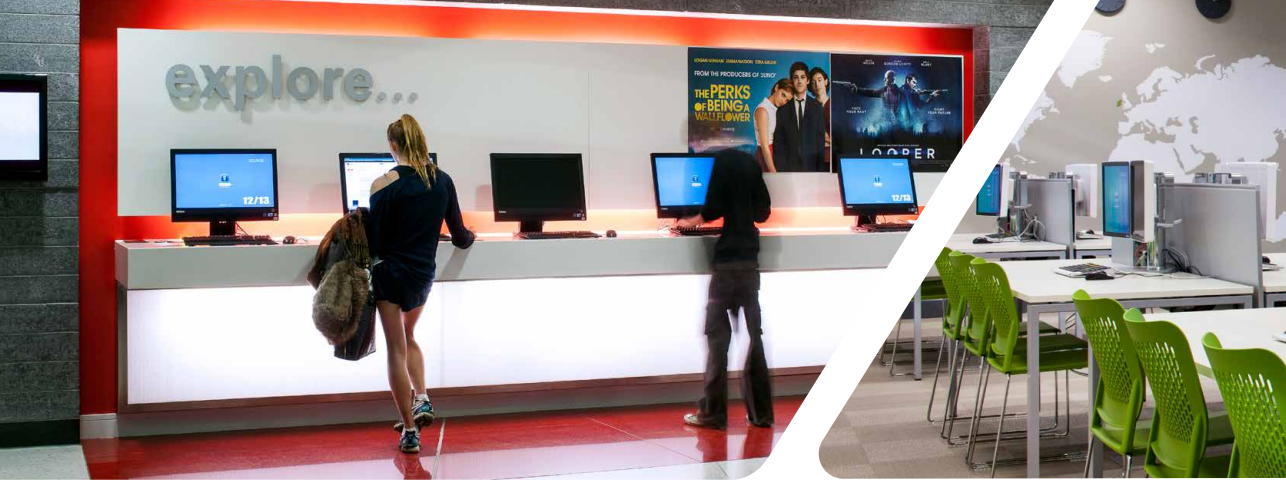
2. Building Organisational Capability



3. Enhancing our Performance Culture



4. Becoming an Employer and University of Choice



# 1. Transforming Service Partnership



This pillar of the HR Strategy supports the University's objective to attract, retain and develop an excellent cohort of faculty and staff as set out in *Rising to the Future 2020-2024*.

The University has identified 6 key enablers which will facilitate the achievement of the University's objectives. Our activities will be focused on supporting these enablers, particularly Enabler 1 - to recruit additional excellent faculty members and Enabler 4 - to implement advanced systems and services.

The competition for talent is significant and increasingly challenging. It is critical that a variety of approaches are utilised to attract the best talent available across the world.





It is essential that the potential candidate has an excellent experience at all stages of their interaction with UCD from interested observer to potential candidate to new employee. Those that join UCD will have multiple interactions with all areas of HR Services during their career including Resourcing, Operations and Pensions. Our objective is to deliver a first-class service that reflects excellence in everything we do. To achieve this objective, we will partner with our colleagues across the University to identify opportunities to transform how we deliver our services in support of the needs of the user, to reduce the associated administrative burden and make it easier to interact with HR.

## Key Initiatives

- ④ Support UCD's ambition to attract excellent talent through key projects such as the Ad Astra and Senior Academic Leadership Initiative (SALI) programmes by designing creative and effective recruitment campaigns which will attract a diverse pool of qualified candidates
- ④ Embed the use of search champions and diverse recruitment practices to meet Athena Swan targets as set out in the UCD Gender Equality Action Plan
- ④ Review and update the Work at UCD website to enhance the information available to prospective candidates and highlight key benefits which will encourage them to join UCD
- ④ Include other national programmes such as SFI Professorships on our website to ensure we are actively supporting the ambition of the University in growing research capability
- ④ Establish robust policies and procedures which will enable UCD to continue virtual hiring activity where appropriate and enhance the current supports



## Key Initiatives *Cont'd*

- ④ Continue looking for opportunities to automate resourcing activities and to increase the use of technology to provide an improved service to our users and key stakeholders. Allied to this we will continue the roll out of automated interview scheduling for all groups and expand the use of automated communications to different cohorts of employees
- ④ Introduce digital tools such as Nitro Sign to streamline the transfer of documents that can utilise digital signatures such as employment contracts and pension forms
- ④ Maximise the use of employee and manager self-service in our HR system to extend the functionality available to employees and managers via dashboards and other interfaces
- ④ Use the workflow functionality in our HR system to transition all forms online so that employees can initiate requests and their manager can approve online
- ④ Improve reporting capability and provide enhanced management information via dashboard views by implementing a new reporting tool called Tableau
- ④ Carry out regular reviews and analysis of UCD Helpdesk tickets to enable the HR team to update FAQs and the HR website based on customer feedback and queries and to support service improvements
- ④ Continue looking for opportunities to automate pension activities, establish robust procedures and increase the use of technology to administer pension benefits virtually, providing an improved service to pension scheme members



# Key Outcomes

- ① The quality and accessibility of information about working in UCD and living in Ireland will attract potential candidates
- ① The pool of quality applicants for roles in UCD will grow through the effective marketing of various initiatives and expanded candidate search approaches
- ① Candidates will be attracted by the excellent opportunities and supports in place to enable them to develop their careers in UCD
- ① University employees, whether individual contributors or those in management roles will have the tools and technology to enable them to efficiently complete administrative tasks so most of their time can be focused on their primary responsibilities
- ① Managers will have key employee information available in dashboard layout to facilitate prioritisation and decision making
- ① There will be a culture of continuous improvement for all our service users





## 2. Building Organisation Capability



This pillar is focused on initiatives and outcomes that are designed to enable our community to identify, build and develop capabilities that will have the strongest and most direct impact on the execution of UCD's strategy, while maximising opportunities for individual growth and advancement.



## Key Initiatives

- ④ Develop a new approach to working that will take the key learnings from the Covid-19 pandemic and build a flexible and dynamic work framework for the University in alignment with the strategic themes of health, sustainability, digital transformation and humanity. By prioritising a versatile hybrid way of working, in collaboration, we will optimise the benefits for work-life balance, health, sustainability and leveraging digital enablers to support the successful growth of UCD and the wellbeing of our University community
- ④ Create a workplace culture that empowers employees to work flexibly predicated on the nature of the work they need to do, their individual circumstances and the delivery of the University's ambitions
- ④ Optimise digital technology, a key enabler to support our employees in the delivery of their objectives, allied with a primary focus on intra and interpersonal competency development, to create a nurturing environment where each employee can flourish and achieve their potential
- ④ Continue to deepen and strengthen the annual integrated planning process with a key focus on succession planning, developing potential, strengthening capabilities and attracting and sourcing global talent. This will be achieved through enhanced data analytics, market assessment, trend analysis, targeted development initiatives and maximising our impact on social media platforms
- ④ Build on the success of UCD's inaugural Ad Astra global recruitment campaign, to attract, retain and develop and an excellent cohort of new faculty and to ensure our Ad Astras continue to be supported and developed through proactive leadership, mentorship and development. By doing so they will becoming ambassadors for UCD in our strategic efforts for continued attraction and retention of the best and brightest talent globally



## Key Initiatives *Cont'd*

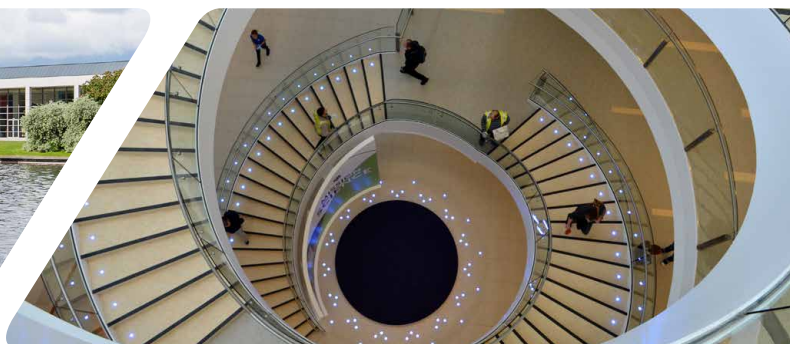
- ④ Design and develop the next iteration of UCD's leadership programmes for senior leaders, research leaders and people managers, in the context of best practice global research and in collaboration with the University community. Focus on leadership in context, enhancing the development of a dynamic leadership culture in UCD, attuned to the constantly evolving global higher education and research environment. Develop the behavioural, psychological, emotional and technical dimensions of transformational leadership capability to support the flourishing of UCD's talent
- ④ Review the Head of School role, as per the recommendations from UCD's Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER), in conjunction with the Registrar and Deputy President and others, to recognise their critical leadership responsibilities and enhance job satisfaction, career and leadership development and overall efficacy of the role
- ④ Underpin all major initiatives with our Organisation Design Framework and best practice change management principles, and in alignment with UCD's values, to develop and enhance professional relationships across the University in a transparent, collegiate, and supportive manner. Further, develop a capability programme to support the development of skills associated with achieving successful outcomes through effective change management





## Key Outcomes

- ④ UCD's new Flexible Working Framework will demonstrate the principles of sustainability across policy and operation, showcasing UCD's ambition to become a 'living lab' for a sustainable community
- ④ Harnessed the transformations made possible by digital technology in our own employee community - in our research, teaching and learning and in our operations and decision making. The UCD hybrid work environment will be fully integrated with physical campus life, providing a thriving, welcome, modern and intellectually stimulating environment for our community to flourish within
- ④ Excellent employee engagement levels across all change initiatives with high levels of trust, collaboration, creativity and job satisfaction
- ④ A dynamic, supportive and motivational leadership culture realised through a distributed leadership model of purpose, autonomy and trust. Leaders in UCD act as role models, providing support and encouragement to colleagues to embrace our shared leadership philosophy, behaviours, and values in all their endeavours
- ④ Attraction and retention of an excellent and loyal workforce committed to continuous personal and professional development, supporting UCD to achieve its strategic ambitions





### 3. Enhancing our Performance Culture



This pillar of UCD's HR Strategy directly supports the University's mission and vision to build a thriving, supportive and inclusive community of students, faculty and staff, alumni and diaspora.

We will work together to make UCD an attractive, friendly, accessible and high performing environment, ensuring that both the physical and digital campus is welcoming, state of the art, and safe, and that our services are responsive to the needs of those who use them.

We are committed to developing empathetic and ambitious leaders who will inspire creativity and energy, serving as a catalyst for high performing individuals and teams. Through their behaviours and actions, leaders and people managers will cultivate an environment where colleagues can be





courageous, feel empowered to try new things and give their best, by communicating with empathy and providing regular feedback that builds trust and encourages employees to realise their potential.

Ensuring our people experience a supportive culture in which to grow and achieve their full potential is central to what UCD is about; we will further enhance our development supports for colleagues at all stages of their career and encourage our colleagues to embrace the vibrancy of university life and all it has to offer.

## Key Initiatives

- ④ Ensure that every member of our community is enabled to achieve their full potential, as set out in UCD's strategy by embracing the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion so that no one is excluded
- ④ Continue to embed and champion engagement with UCD's Performance for Growth Framework (P4G), as part of our performance culture enhancement strategy to support all aspects of development for colleagues. This will be realised through regular and ongoing feedback and development conversations, connected to the goals and objectives of individual schools / units. A full review of the implementation of P4G was completed in 2021 and the associated action plan has been approved by the University Management Team. Progress on activities within that plan to enhance the P4G experience for our employees will deepen P4G's integration with all aspects of career development and support optimising individual contribution
- ④ Curate and design, in partnership with local leadership and people managers, through the People Development and Organisation Capability team, both bespoke and competency related development programmes



## Key Initiatives *Cont'd*

- ④ Leverage UCD's LinkedIn Learning membership to support the development of our employees and to build organisation capability, particularly in areas of strategic importance
- ④ Cultivate pan University collaborative relationships through the HR Partner team, providing coaching and guidance across the spectrum of HR related activity, being both an advocate of HR best practice and in conjunction with UCD's People Development and Organisation Capability team, a provider of organisational and people development consultancy services. The HR Partner and People Development and Organisation Capability teams will utilise a range of organisational development tools, such as DiSC, MBTI and High Performing Team to support both the development of individuals and larger team initiatives
- ④ Assess the Newly Appointed Assistant Professor (NAAP) Orientation and Development Programme for its efficacy in supporting new faculty and their understanding of the career development supports available to them, including the Faculty Development Framework and P4G. Continue to review and enhance new faculty induction which form part of the overall UCD Orientation suite
- ④ Align and deepen the HR Partner service offering in the University community, in collaboration with local leadership, ensuring that UCD's HR Strategy is implemented consistently across the University community and in harmony with school and unit strategic objectives

# Key Outcomes

- ① People managers feel appropriately skilled, and colleagues are prepared and confident to engage in regular quality, performance conversations which outline expected performance within roles and demonstrate benefit to both the individual and the University
- ① Regularly refreshed individual development plans which support the delivery of agreed objectives through personal development and career growth, raising job satisfaction and engagement levels
- ① Leaders and people managers who are equipped to inspire and motivate teams to succeed with enhanced skills, aligned with a performance and development culture and associated practices
- ① An environment which strongly supports personal and professional development and is recognised as such in the global market
- ① Colleagues who are equipped and motivated to identify and prepare for career opportunities which interest and stretch them and are aligned and contribute to UCD's ambitions





# 4. Becoming an Employer and University of Choice



This pillar of the HR Strategy directly supports the University's objective to attract, retain and develop an excellent cohort of faculty and staff; provide an inclusive educational experience; and build engagement as set out in *Rising to the Future 2020-2024*.



The initiatives and outcomes are designed to push the boundaries and help us develop a diverse community of connected and motivated colleagues, empowered to succeed, making UCD an employer of choice.

## Key Initiatives

- 📌 Develop a holistic and supportive mental health and wellbeing framework that recognises the evolving work / life pressures faced by colleagues and supports peers and managers to offer informed help. We will also seek external accreditation for the outcomes of the initiative
- 📌 Support the digital workforce and the University's desire to become a model for digital transformation in a higher education environment, through the implementation of leading-edge engagement and accessible communication platforms and systems that inform employees, build communities and enhance services such as key Promotions and Grading functions
- 📌 Enhance data collection mechanisms using dynamic systems that enable us to understand the diversity make-up of our employee population and facilitate colleagues to share their views and feedback, which will inform policy development, identify priorities and measure impact of initiatives
- 📌 Support the creation of an environment of dignity and respect where incidents of bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct are not tolerated through the development of new policies, a transparent process and the implementation of a comprehensive framework
- 📌 Continue to enhance an inclusive culture through the implementation of the EDI Strategy 2018 - 2020 - 2025 including implementation of the Gender Equality Action Plan 2020 - 2024



## Key Initiatives *Cont'd*

- 📌 Develop enhanced supports at both a University and school level, through collaboration and in partnership with faculty across the University, for faculty at all career stages preparing to apply for promotion
- 📌 Enhance and simplify the current Job Families Framework, to make it more accessible to professional and administrative staff and achieve greater integration with other key HR processes so that the framework underpins the entire lifecycle of professional and administrative staff
- 📌 Develop progressive employment policies to support and enhance the employment experience within the University
- 📌 Maintain a collegiate and solution focused employee relations environment, through partnering with Trade Union and other colleagues





## Key Outcomes

- 🏠 Reduced stigma around mental health issues within the UCD community. People managers and colleagues who are aware of the supports and policies around mental health and are confident to offer help to their reports or peers
- 🏠 A connected community of employees who feel engaged and united with UCD and believe that their input is important. A community with high levels of engagement driving increased productivity, improved retention and reduced absenteeism, while encouraging high levels of discretionary effort
- 🏠 An inclusive environment where people feel that they belong and are respected regardless of their backgrounds and where diversity is both valued and nurtured
- 🏠 Colleagues who feel their views have been regularly heard in shaping initiatives and policies are fully engaged in their roll out and operation. Development of an environment of mutual trust and respect
- 🏠 A greater understanding and support of the promotions process culminating in improved success rates of promotion at every level
- 🏠 Professional and administrative staff can recognise the Job Families Framework across different processes that they engage with from joining the University, through P4G conversations and as they develop in their roles and careers
- 🏠 A progressive working environment underpinned by developed employee policies that promote a stable and cooperative employee relations environment



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