Policy for Internal Reporting on Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) Accreditation of UCD Programmes and Units
v1.9, 22 May 2018

Policy owner UCD Quality Office   **Approval date and body** ACEC (22 May 2018)

1. Purpose

The University has a number of programmes, schools and institutes which are accredited by a wide range of Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs). The purpose of this policy is to i) demonstrate the University's support for the achievement of accreditation where possible; ii) ensure that the University can provide current and prospective students with accurate information about the accreditation status of its programmes/schools/institutes; iii) ensure that the University meets its statutory obligation to have policy and associated procedure in relation to the provision of information about its arrangements with PSRBs, as the University is required to provide an annual report to Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) on a range of quality-related activity including details of its relationships with PSRBs; and iv) ensure that accreditation exercises align, where possible, with the Periodic Quality Review process which operates in the University.

2. Definitions

Professional Accreditation	A designation earned by a person, or bestowed on an academic programme or module or other activity which qualifies an individual, or individuals who have completed a professionally accredited programme/module/activity or are members of a professional organisation, to perform certain jobs, tasks or functions, and/or to enter a profession and practice professionally. Professional accreditation is normally renewable on a regular cycle (normally between 1-5 years) pursuant to a formal accreditation review exercise or other update to professional membership.
Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB)	Any domestic or international professional, statutory or regulatory body, authority, institute, association, council, commission, external faculty, register (or registry), registration board, qualifications agency, accreditation committee, society or other related organisation, which reviews and/or evaluates and/or accredits and/or endorses programmes, modules, research and/or other similar activity delivered through, at, or by staff, of the University, to ensure that the required standards are met for the relevant professions and that this standard is recognised by employers and other relevant agencies for that profession. PSRBs may have statutory authority over a profession or group of professionals, provide membership services and work to promote the interests of people working in a profession.

3. Scope

The scope of this policy relates to all programmes/schools/institutes of the University which have a formal relationship with any PSRB as defined above. This policy does not replace or otherwise impact the University's *Subscription Payments towards Membership of Professional Bodies/Academic Associations and Societies Policy*.[1] This policy will be reviewed by ACQEC (or its nominee) within one year of the implementation of the policy.

4. Policy Principles

The University recognises the many benefits associated with the professional accreditation of its programmes/schools/institutes by PSRBs, including:

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[1] This UCD Human Resources policy is available here.

- Enhancement of the student learning experience by linking theory and practice, where knowledge-generation within the University directly interacts with professional practice in the 'real world';
- Embedding of ongoing quality assurance and enhancement of activity, as evaluated by PSRBs which have extensive expertise in the relevant area, and which ensures that such activity is current and reflective of changes and innovations within a given sector and/or academic or professional area;
- Creation of pathways for graduates seeking to access the labour market for a particular profession, and promotion of professional status and/or membership to facilitate the growth and development of such graduates;
- Provision of exemptions from professional examinations required for professional licensing or practice;
- Promotion of the currency of the University's programmes and other activities in such a way as to make them easily recognised and understood by a global audience;
- Provision of external, international and peer benchmarks against which the activity within the University can be regularly compared, with a view to promoting international best practice.

In order to avail of the benefits and opportunities outlined above, this policy:

- Enables the University to publish a PSRB List which includes all PSRBs which accredit a UCD programme/school/institute;
- Creates a mechanism to enable the monitoring of the frequency of interactions between the University and any PSRB;
- Enables the integration of PSRB accreditation feedback and outcomes with other key elements of the University's statutory Periodic Quality Review process;
- Facilitates the consideration of PSRB reports, and the programme/school/institute response or action plan, by Governing Boards, the ACQEC (as defined in its Terms of Reference), and Periodic Quality Review Groups;
- Seeks to improve efficiency by identifying opportunities to streamline and align the processes for the preparation for professional accreditation exercises and Periodic Quality Review;
- Enables the University to demonstrate its compliance with the Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) *Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines* and QQI reporting requirements.

5.   Procedures

The following procedures relate to how information about relationships with PSRBs is managed by the University:

- The University will publish the PSRB List which will include all PSRBs which accredit any programme/school/institute of the University. This list will normally include the name and contact details of the PSRB, the programme/school/institute which is accredited, the date of the last accreditation and the date of the next accreditation;
- In order to ensure the accuracy of the published PSRB List, the ACQEC, via the UCD Quality Office, will periodically request updates and information regarding accreditation of any programme/school/institute from the relevant Head of School or Institute (or nominee), and/or the relevant Governing Board, including via the University Programmes Board (UPB);
- In the context of the University's Programme Development, Approval and Review Framework (PDARF), information regarding any PSRB relationship for a new programme must also be provided by the relevant programme proposer via Form PDARF3: New Programme Academic Structure Proposal;[2]
- In the context of Periodic Quality Review, information about PSRB accreditation must be provided via the Self-Assessment Report (SAR), the drafting of which is the responsibility of the relevant Head of School or Institute (or nominee). Where possible or appropriate, the timelines for Periodic Quality Review may be adjusted to align with PSRB accreditation, with a view to reducing duplication of effort. A Head of School or Institute (or nominee) may request such an adjustment to the relevant timeline through the UCD Quality Office in the context of planning for Periodic Quality Review;

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[2] http://www.ucd.ie/registry/adminservices/curriculum/documents/PDARF3.docx

- The UCD Quality Office will provide, on the request of a Head of School or Institute (or nominee), information regarding the statutory Periodic Quality Review process which operates within the University, where a professional accreditation exercise or PSRB may require this information;
- Final versions of PSRB reports, and the programme/school/institute response or action plan, must be provided by the relevant Head of School or Institute (or nominee) to the relevant Governing Board, and also as supporting documentation to the Periodic Quality Review Process Self-Assessment Report (SAR) for the relevant programme/school/institute. This will enable the relevant Governing Board, or the Periodic Quality Review Group, to identify any issues in relation to professional accreditation;
- The ACQEC will periodically consider reports on PSRB activity throughout the University. This may include, but is not limited to, a final summary of the outputs of any professional accreditation exercise, and a final summary of commendations and recommendations made by any PSRB. The ACQEC may, via the UCD Quality Office, request copies of the final versions of relevant PSRB report(s), and the programme/school/institute response or action plan, from the Head of School or Institute (or nominee), who are obliged to supply the report(s) and response or action plan upon such a request.

6. Roles and responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of all relevant parties are outlined as follows:

- **Head of School or Institute (or nominee)**
  These individuals are normally responsible for liaising with the relevant PSRB(s), to ensure that a positive and constructive relationship is maintained. The Head of School or Institute (or nominee) must, on request, provide information about PSRB accreditation within their domain, as well as the final versions of all PSRB reports, including the unit response to the report or action plan, to the relevant Governing Board, and to the ACQEC (via the UCD Quality Office). This must also be provided as supporting documentation to the relevant Periodic Quality Review Self-Assessment Report (SAR). The Head of School or Institute (or nominee) may request information from the UCD Quality Office regarding the University's statutory Periodic Quality Review process for inclusion in the relevant documentation. The Head of School or Institute (or nominee) may also request, from the UCD Quality Office, an adjustment to the Periodic Quality Review timeline to align with PSRB accreditation, with a view to reducing duplication of effort.

- **Head of Governing Board (or nominee)**
  The relevant Governing Board is responsible for the quality of the programmes within its remit, and, therefore, the Head of Governing Board (or nominee) may request information about PSRB accreditation from a School , as well as the final versions of PSRB reports, all final commendations and recommendations, and the programme or school response or action plan. The Head of Governing Board (or nominee) will also liaise with the ACQEC (via the UCD Quality Office) to ensure the accuracy of the University's published PSRB List.

- **UCD Quality Office**
  Acting on behalf of ACQEC, the UCD Quality Office will liaise with the relevant Schools, Institutes and Governing Boards to ensure that the University's published PSRB List is correct and up-to-date. Upon request by a Head of School or Institute (or nominee), the UCD Quality Office will, where possible (and if desired), harmonise the University's Periodic Quality Review schedule to support the programme/school/institute in its preparations for a PSRB accreditation exercise, for example, by using the some of the same documentation (if appropriate) and scheduling a Periodic Quality Review either before a PSRB visit or as soon as possible after a visit. The UCD Quality Office will also, on request, provide a Head of School or Institute (or nominee) with information about the University's statutory Periodic Quality Review process, to assist with the drafting of the relevant documentation for a professional accreditation exercise. Acting on behalf of ACQEC, the UCD Quality Office may also request a copy of the final version of any professional accreditation report, and a final summary of the relevant commendations and recommendations, as well as the programme/school/institute response or action plan, which will be made available to ACQEC.

- **Academic Council Quality Enhancement Committee (ACQEC)**
  As detailed in its terms of reference, the ACQEC will receive and consider relevant reports, identifying trends/issues and good practice and recommending appropriate action, as required,

including in relation to reports such as external reports on academic provision and professional services, such as PSRB reports. The ACQEC, via the UCD Quality Office, may therefore request a copy of the final version of any PSRB report, and a final summary of the relevant commendations and recommendations, as well as the relevant programme/school/institute response or action plan. The ACQEC also exercises authority over the PSRB List published on the UCD Quality Office website.

7.   Related documents

This policy ensures that the University is compliant with its obligations under the following instruments:

- *Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012* (sections 13 and 14 of Part 2); and
- Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) *Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines* (section 9.1),

and is aligned with the:

- *UCD Academic Regulations*;
- *UCD Policy on Subscription Payments towards Membership of Professional Bodies/Academic Associations and Societies*;
- *UCD Subject Extern Examination Policy*;
- *Academic Council Quality Enhancement Committee (ACQEC) – Terms of Reference.*

8.   Version history

Version and Date	Status/Committee
v1.0, 25 August 2017	First Draft (Policy Developer)
v1.1, 29 August 2017	Draft Update (Policy Developer)
v1.2, 4 September 2017	Draft Update (Policy Developer, with input from University Governance)
v1.3, 14 November 2017	Draft Update (Policy Developer)
v1.4, 4 December 2017	Draft Update following Policy Working Group meeting #1 (Policy Developer)
v1.5, 14 December 2017	Draft Update following Policy Working Group meeting #2 (Policy Developer)
v1.6, 23 January 2018	Draft Update following review by UCD Director of Quality (Policy Developer)
v1.7, 30 January 2018	Draft Update following Policy Working Group meeting #3 (Policy Developer)
v1.7, 14 February 2018	Academic Council Quality Enhancement Committee (ACQEC)
v1.8, 15 February 2018	Draft Update following ACQEC meeting of 14 February 2018
19 February - 30 March 2018	Stakeholder Consultation
v1.9, 31 March 2018	Draft Update following Stakeholder Consultation
v1.9, 17 May 2018	Academic Council Quality Enhancement Committee (ACQEC)
v1.9, 22 May 2018	Academic Council Executive Committee (ACEC) (**approved**)