



# UCD Digital Application Governance Policy

**Policy Owner:** IT Services

**Approval Body & Date:** UMT 16th Dec 2025

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## 1. Purpose

Good governance of UCD's digital applications is essential to ensure that digital investments, resources and transformation efforts are aligned with the University's priorities - supporting UCD's strategic initiatives, operational efficiency and enhanced user experience; safeguarding UCD against risks and cyberthreats; and enabling UCD to meet regulatory and legislative obligations.

The purpose of the Digital Governance Policy is to provide clear governance structures that guide the delivery and deployment of digital applications in UCD's environment as well as providing guardrails for their ongoing management and support, in line with the University's strategic goals and compliance obligations.

A key objective is to ensure that all proposed digital applications are assessed for alignment with UCD's Enterprise Architecture Principles before acquisition and are registered in the University's central applications register. Only applications registered with IT Services should be deployed for use in UCD.

This policy should be read in conjunction with UCD's IT Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) which covers the use of IT resources, including but not limited to applications and technologies, by all staff, students, or other users, including third party users, whether they are physically located on campus or accessing IT resources remotely regardless of geographic location.

## 2. Terms and Definitions

**Digital Application** - subsequently referred to as "**Application**" in the context of this document - is a digital solution that provides functionality to UCD's community, typically accessed through a web browser, mobile device, or desktop, or that provides functionality or capabilities to other applications.

Applications include on-premises hosted and cloud services; bespoke and package solutions; internally managed and externally managed by a third party; subscription and perpetual paid licences as well as free or open-source solutions.

Each application is categorised according to its scale:

- **University wide** - a solution that is implemented for use across multiple units or schools.
- **Local** - a solution that is implemented for use in one school or unit.

Additionally, applications fall into one of three classes based on their purpose.

- **Enabling Applications** - Solutions supporting specific functions and activities enabling UCD's business capabilities and processes.

- **Infrastructure Applications** - Solutions that support technical operations and processes within UCD.
- **Learning/Teaching Applications** - Course/discipline-specific software packages, supporting teaching and learning, or taught research in particular academic domains or modules.

**Business Capabilities** represents what UCD does to achieve a specific business purpose or outcome. Capabilities support the realisation of the organisation's strategies. UCD has aligned to the [Higher Education Reference Model \(HERM\) Business Capability Model](#)<sup>1</sup>, as its reference model for describing Business Capabilities.

### 3. Scope

#### In Scope

- Any Enabling Application, Infrastructure Application or Learning/Teaching application irrespective of scale or class, deployed by a UCD College, School, Institute/Centres, Unit, Wholly Owned Subsidiary Company, or other organisational entities as designated by the UMT Digital Campus Group, that;
  - enables or supports university business capabilities and processes.
  - where UCD is the data controller or processor.

#### Out of scope

- Research Solution - software used by a researcher (or research team), for the delivery of a research project  
*Note: the exclusion of research solutions will be reviewed a year after the policy is approved.*
- Personal Use Tools/Apps that individuals have personally enabled and use for their own activities, and do not contribute to the UCD's business capabilities or processes.
- Applications deployed within UCD licensee, separate legal entities to UCD, and incubator companies, for their own use.

Note 1: while the applications used by licensee or incubator companies fall out of scope of this policy, all users of UCD's IT resources, which could include the staff of licensees and incubator companies, must comply with [UCD Information Technology Services Acceptable Use Policy](#),

Note 2: The management of research data must additionally adhere to [UCD's Research Data Management Policy](#)

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<sup>1</sup>The Higher Education Reference Model (HERM) is a joint collaboration by EUNIS, UCISA, EDUCAUSE, and CAUDIT, and is the globally recognised Business Capability Model within Higher Education Institutions.

## 4. Principles

- 1) [UCD Enterprise Architecture Principles](#) should be adhered to when acquiring, developing or deploying applications. Any exception must be justified with the relevant Head of School/Unit and recorded on the school/unit risk register in accordance with UCD's Risk Management Framework.
- 2) All applications must have Application Owners and Contacts. See the [Application Ownership Roles and Responsibilities](#) document for details. This applies to new and existing applications.
- 3) UCD IT Services will operate a technical assessment procedure to help those acquiring, developing or deploying applications to determine if they are compliant with the Enterprise Architecture principles, with recommendations on how to comply, where feasible.
- 4) All applications must be registered with UCD IT Services for inclusion in the university's Applications Portfolio. This applies to new and existing applications.
- 5) This policy will support UCD's procurement and data protection obligations.

## 5. Roles and Responsibilities

**All Faculty, Researchers (including Student Researchers such as PHD students), and Staff Members (including staff of UCD Wholly Owned Subsidiaries):** There is an obligation for all those who plan to acquire, develop or deploy applications to;

- Comply with this policy
- Report known breaches of this policy to the IT Helpdesk at [www.ucd.ie/ithelp](http://www.ucd.ie/ithelp)

**Head of School / Unit / Wholly Owned Subsidiary:** is responsible for ensuring that all applications that are locally deployed and managed by their school/unit/wholly owned subsidiary, comply with this policy.

**Technical Assessment Group:** is responsible for the technical assessment of proposed applications. The Technical Assessment Group will be overseen by the UMT Digital Campus Group.

Reports on the assessments and outcomes will be maintained by the Technical Assessment Group and made available to the UMT Digital Campus Group.

## 6. Technical Assessment

The technical assessment will adopt a tiered classification approach based on risk and impact, with particular focus on architectural and cyber security aspects, along with proposed recommendations. The purpose of the technical assessment is to support compliance with the policy.

The details of the Technical Assessment Procedure will be documented separately (link will be included when available, *procedure to be established in 2025/26*).

All policies, policy related documents and forms are subject to amendment. Please refer to the UCD Governance Document Library website for the official, most recent version.

## 7. Compliance with the Policy

All risks identified, including deviation from policy, should be recorded appropriately within the relevant School/Unit's Risk Register.

Known breaches of policy that present a risk to the University will be reported to members of the UMT Digital Campus Group.

Compliance metrics agreed and captured as part of the Technical Assessment Procedure will be made available to the UMT Digital Campus Group (UMT DCG).

## 8. Related documents

- [UCD Enterprise Architecture Principles](#)
- [UCD Application Ownership Roles and Responsibilities](#)
- [IT Acceptable Use Policy](#)
- [UCD Data Protection Policy](#)

## 9. Version History

Version	Date	Responsible	Comment
1.00	05/01/2026	Tom Cannon	Version approved by the UMT on 16 <sup>th</sup> December 2025

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