

# UNIVERSITY CENTRE COLCHESTER

Strategic Plan 2017-2020

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## Strategic Plan 2017-2020

The University Centre Colchester (UCC) Strategic Plan 2017-2020, builds on the Colchester Institute Strategic Plan 2017-2020, “Better careers begin here”, and the Higher Education Strategic Plan 2014-2017.

Colchester Institute’s successful proposal to rebrand its Higher Education provision as University Centre Colchester, received the support of HEFCE and BIS in 2015. The UCC commenced its activities formally in September 2016.

The present document takes account of recent strategic developments at the University of Essex and demonstrates a recognition of the strengths of the College’s Higher Education provision as indicated by the commendation for the quality of student learning opportunities issued by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) in 2013 and, more recently, by the commendations made in the University of Essex’s Institutional Review (2017).

The Strategic Plan also recognises the developmental importance of new partnership agreements with other Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The University Centre regards the expansion of collaborative working relationships with a number of HEIs as demonstrable evidence of its growing reputation for providing a high quality learning environment for its students.

# UNIVERSITY CENTRE COLCHESTER

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## **Colchester Institute Mission**

To deliver first class education, professional development and technical skills training, to develop careers and strengthen the local economy.

## **UCC Mission**

University Centre Colchester (UCC) aims to provide a high quality learning environment in which students are fully engaged and are enabled to achieve their personal best. UCC courses have an up-to-date, flexible and responsive curriculum that is research informed and shaped by a combination of employability criteria and academic credibility.

## **UCC Vision**

To be an outstanding Centre, highly acclaimed by students as central to their future success.

### Aims

1. To further enhance, promote and develop excellence in teaching, learning and assessment in all areas of HE provision
2. To encourage, develop and celebrate a research informed curriculum in which research connected learning and are at the heart of the provision
3. To refine institutional processes to ensure that the enhancement of learning opportunities continues to exceed the expectations of the QAA Quality Code
4. To provide appropriate, high quality support (including study skills, learning support and pastoral support) to all students
5. To provide an innovative, responsive and sustainable curriculum offer, that takes account of the changing needs of learners, employers and the market place
6. To acknowledge governmental initiatives which link education and training with skills, employability and societal agendas
7. To establish an institutional reputation for M-level provision that connects market-driven demand for qualifications with the UCC's academic expertise
8. To develop a thorough understanding of the student life cycle to enhance all aspects of the University Centre's provision.

### 1. To further enhance, promote and develop excellence in teaching, learning and assessment in all areas of HE provision

This will be achieved by:

- 1a Enhancing teaching with subject-specific scholarly activities, research and industry connectivity, as well as staff training in pedagogical practice
- 1a >> **SUCCESS INDICATOR**  
Student feedback & engagement and staff output & attainment
- 1b Promoting enrichment of the learning experience through the employment of tutor/practitioners within programme teams, and the facilitating of subject-specific events with industry practitioners and organisations
- 1b >> **SUCCESS INDICATOR**  
Student participation and feedback
- 1c Developing and promoting a comprehensive approach to the different forms of assessment available
- 1c >> **SUCCESS INDICATOR**  
Student feedback, staff feedback

### 2. To encourage, develop and celebrate a research informed curriculum in which research connected learning and the valuing of staff are at the heart of the provision

This will be achieved by:

2a Encouraging and supporting staff in identifying the connection between their professional experience, academic practice, and the value of both in the context of research activities

2a >> **SUCCESS INDICATOR**

Quantifiable staff research activities that are linked to staff teaching

2b Supporting teaching staff in gaining teaching qualifications or teaching recognitions

2b >> **SUCCESS INDICATOR**

Staff participation and attainment across all Schools

2c Conducting a thorough curriculum review in accordance with the University of Essex Education Strategy to ensure the inclusion of a *capstone* (a significant student conducted research element) within all honours awards

2c >> **SUCCESS INDICATOR**

To complete the review by December 2017 and submit to UoE proposed programme specification and module description amendments by April 2018; promoting of staff and student research activities

2d Recognising staff expertise and professional standing

### 2d >> **SUCCESS INDICATOR**

Supporting staff in the application of their expertise, both with the UCC and beyond

### 3. To refine institutional processes to ensure that the enhancement of learning opportunities continues to exceed the expectations of the QAA Quality Code

This will be achieved by:

3a Continuing to monitor and update IT systems that underpin quality assurance and quality enhancement to support effective setting and tracking in year of targets for recruitment, progression, retention and success rates

3a >> **SUCCESS INDICATOR**

Documentation produced is appropriate to sector expectations

3b Encouraging academic and administrative staff to contribute to the improving of systems and approaches used

3b >> **SUCCESS INDICATOR**

Staff satisfaction with a shared sense of ownership and outcome

3c Expanding the involvement of student reps in HE quality processes and procedures at all levels of academic oversight, from annual or periodic review to programme development, delivery and evaluation

3c >> **SUCCESS INDICATOR**

Tangible student contribution to HE quality processes through documented evidence of the 'student voice', informing decision-making, where applicable



### **4. To provide appropriate, high quality support (including study skills, learning support and pastoral support) to all students**

This will be achieved by:

4a Developing systems to assess and meet the learning support needs of Higher Education students, working in conjunction with cross College services/departments

4a >> **SUCCESS INDICATOR**

Provision of learning support that meets the needs of students

4b Creating mechanisms to provide effective and appropriate support to students from disparate social and economic backgrounds

4b >> **SUCCESS INDICATOR**

Effective delivery of support that meets the expectations of the Office for Fair Access (OFFA)

4c Maximising funding opportunities to enable the provision of learning support for students in Higher Education

4c >> **SUCCESS INDICATOR**

Receipt of appropriate funding streams

### 5. To provide an innovative, responsive and sustainable curriculum offer that takes account of the changing needs of learners, employers and the market place.

This will be achieved by:

5a Working with other providers and employers, through advisory boards, to identify market demands, training needs and industry trends to develop a distinctive curriculum portfolio

5a >> **SUCCESS INDICATOR**

Ongoing, circular, exchange of information between members of the advisory boards and UCC staff

5b Identifying and developing a number of highly specialised vocational higher education programmes, (including degree apprenticeships) whilst reviewing the course content of those that are offered by a number of other providers.

5b >> **SUCCESS INDICATOR**

Course development and innovation at UCC that is informed, organic and sustainable

5c Building on the UCC's ethos and unique selling points, to promote an institutional identity through strategically focused marketing to facilitate staff, student recruitment and retention

5c >> **SUCCESS INDICATOR**

Staff and student feedback; statistical evidence of recruitment and retention

### **6. To acknowledge governmental initiatives which link education and training with skills, employability and societal agendas**

This will be achieved by:

6a Establishing lines of communication with the relevant organisations to contribute to, and benefit from, policies that impact positively on programme development and innovation

6a >> **SUCCESS INDICATOR**

Increased institutional presence in policy-shaping studies and reports

6b Monitoring UCC's programmes and all other provision of training in view of current developments in education and commerce

6b >> **SUCCESS INDICATOR**

Ability to map the UCC's portfolio of programmes against UK-wide developments in education and training

6c Offering practical support to staff wishing to involve themselves in this area as part of their own professional development

6c >> **SUCCESS INDICATOR**

Increased staff awareness and expertise in relation to national agendas in education

### **7. To establish an institutional reputation for M-level provision that connects market-driven demand for qualifications with the UCC's academic expertise.**

This will be achieved by:

7a Building on employer and industry feedback in the design of L7 modules and exit awards

7a >> SUCCESS INDICATOR

Validation of qualifications pertinent to industry

7b Involving staff in identifying opportunities for follow-on and top-up qualifications

7b >> SUCCESS INDICATOR

Course design, validation and student recruitment

7c Linking UCC Higher Education Strategic Plan 2017-2020, items 1, 5 and 6, in order to increase student recruitment

7c >> SUCCESS INDICATOR

Student recruitment pattern that goes beyond the UCC's current data sets for recruitment

### **8. To develop a thorough understanding of the student life cycle to enhance all aspects of the University Centre's provision.**

This will be achieved by:

8a Designing, implementing and updating a targeted marketing strategy that draws on quantitative and qualitative recruitment data of the last three years

8a >> SUCCESS INDICATOR

Evaluation of student recruitment on the basis of institutional achievements and national sector trends

8b Working with current students to promote the UCC

8b >> SUCCESS INDICATOR

Institutional social media presence; data derived from Open and Interview days.

8c Drawing on CI alumni to document and celebrate past student successes

8c >> SUCCESS INDICATOR

Development of alumni network through collaborative actions by academic and administrative staff