

Navigate stories

Welcome to our new ITD online newsletter

Digitally Supporting and Enabling Students

Transition to Online Teaching & Learning

Enhancing Student Experiences

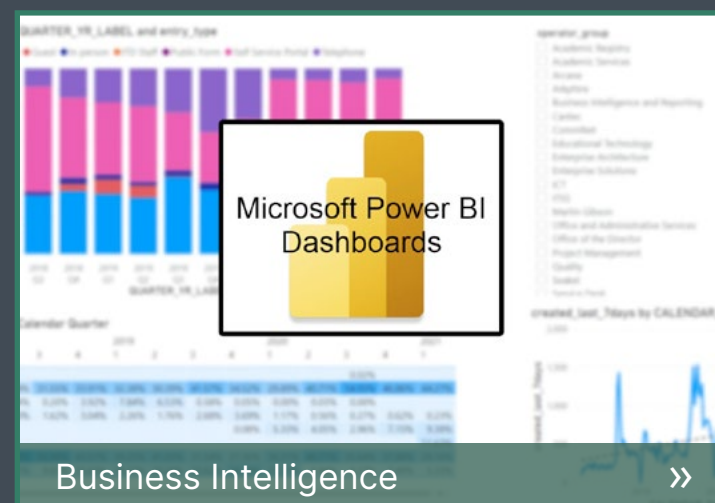
Microsoft Teams - Connecting the Campus

Business Intelligence (BI) - What are the Benefits?

Connecting with Support

Other News

ITD eNews is intended for circulation among staff and students of University of Limerick. Extracts from this edition of ITD eNews should not be published without the permission of the editor.



On behalf of the IT Division, welcome to our first newsletter of 2021



University's institutional mission, with UL's strategies for teaching and learning, research, operational excellence and an enhanced student experience.

The objectives of UL Enable Stage-1 were to modernise and stabilise UL's enabling Digital Infrastructure and to establish key new digital capabilities, resulting in the following outcomes:

- Campus engagement with stakeholders & associated solution delivery
- Project Management capability for the delivery of Digital Change projects
- IT and Digital Vendor Management capability and practices
- IT & Cyber Security capability and work programme

- Student Record Digital Transformation Capability.

I would like to thank all of our UL colleagues and students across the campus for the spirit of collegiality that has endured in working with the IT Division. I also wish to say a sincere thank you to all of the team in ITD for their professionalism and dedication to UL, particularly over the recent challenging period.

We welcome your feedback and suggestions on our newsletter. Please contact ITDOfficeServices@ul.ie

Liam O'Reilly
Director, Information Technology Division, University of Limerick.

UL Enable – Mission

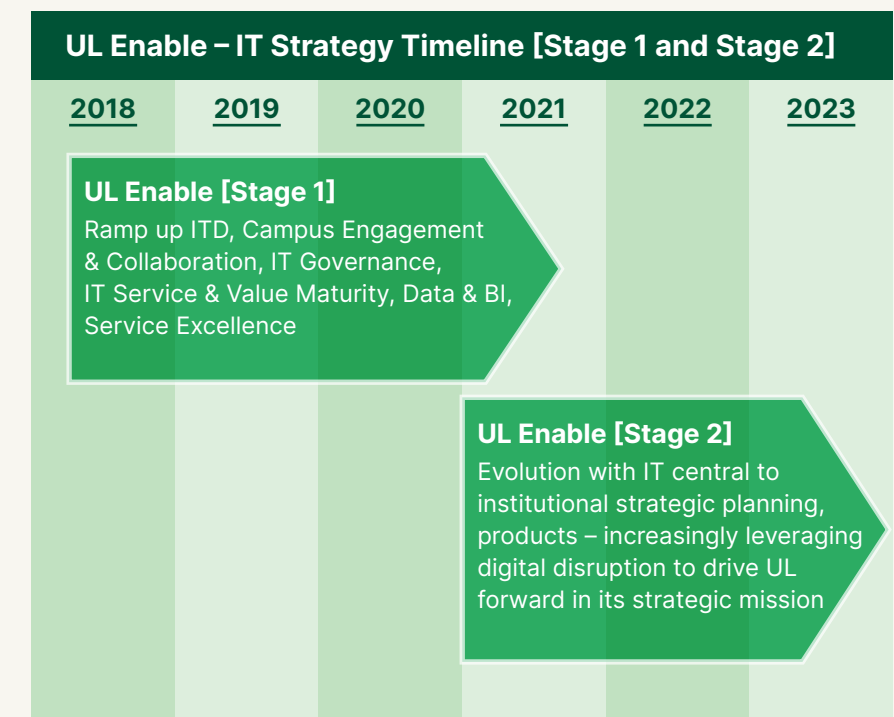


We are now 12 months from the arrival of COVID-19 and so much has changed in every facet of our lives and our work. We have spent time reflecting on the events in UL over the past year. Hindsight has the benefit of 20/20 vision. The overriding emotion from reflecting is one of relief that Stage-1 of UL's IT Strategy, UL Enable, had been approved and substantially funded 2 years prior to the arrival of COVID-19 in Ireland.

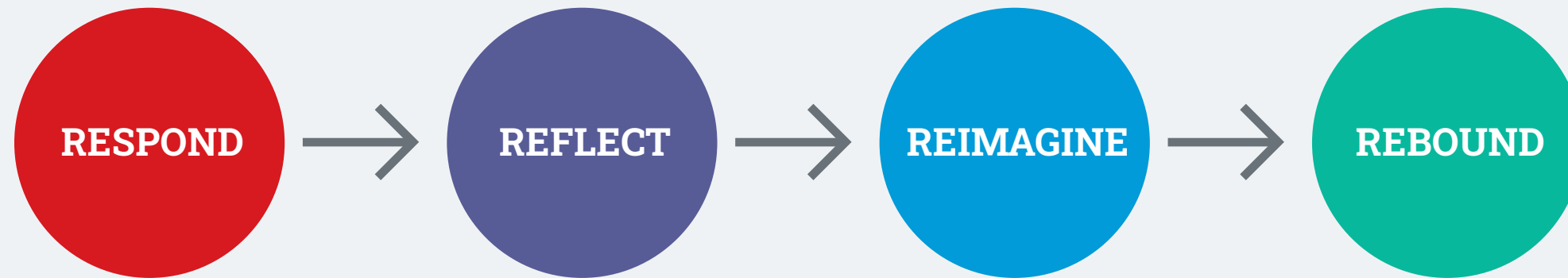
The University's approval of its first IT Strategy, UL Enable, in early 2018 laid the foundations for the transition that was achieved over the last year in accelerating UL into the Digital and online space. The strategy committed €6 million of investment in IT and Digital capabilities in UL over 3 years. These investments were aligned strategically with the

- €6m invested in new digital infrastructure and systems, comprising more than 100+ projects within the portfolio with a 100% track record of successful project delivery
- Transformation of the IT Service Model to be increasingly customer centric
- Business Intelligence and analytics platform development & capability creation
- A cloud platform governance and adoption capability
- Digital evolution of the Teaching and Learning platforms
- Establishment of Digital Professional capabilities in the areas of:
 - Enterprise Architecture Models and Governance practices

UL Enable; 2-staged approach



Digitally Supporting & Enabling Students



1

RESPOND – Immediate Must Dos
MARCH TO JUNE 2020

In the immediate aftermath of the decision taken to move teaching and learning online and for staff to work remotely in March 2020 at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in Ireland, the focus within ITD was to ensure that digital and IT services remained available and accessible to students and staff. To that end, capacity was increased in key online platforms, the ITD service desk moved fully online, contingency laptops were procured and distributed to staff, remote access capacity was increased, and new solutions implemented in areas such as document signing and workflow. The implementation of Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) for staff and the deployment of Microsoft Teams were also completed in this period to further strengthen the University’s IT security posture and to facilitate enhanced digital collaboration between staff and students.

2

REFLECT – Plan for next 3-12 months
JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2020

Throughout the summer months, ITD’s focus shifted to ensuring digital capabilities were going to be available and reliable for the start of the academic year. Some of the new digital initiatives that were completed in this period with ITD input include:

- Panopto for lecture capture
- Business Intelligence dashboards to identify potential at risk students
- Creation of additional teaching spaces
- Remote access for students to computer labs
- Implementation of Academic Registry’s Student Hub on TopDesk
- Online forms for return to work protocols
- ID card production for students
- CECD Alternative Program work on SI, and
- Increasing collaboration between staff and students by merging Microsoft platforms.

All the above was achieved by fantastic collaboration within ITD and across the campus community.



3

REIMAGINE – Plan for a New Normal

OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2020

At the end of the summer and while work was still ongoing in preparation for the start of the academic year, ITD also began planning for the new normal. The new normal is not easily defined, but it was quickly recognised that online would be pivotal in any new normal:

- Virtual open days
- Additional outdoor wifi
- Provision of almost 900 student laptops
- Automation of coop report submissions
- Online forms to facilitate student COVID-19 testing
- Telephony integration into MS Teams were all delivered as part of a “new normal”.

In addition, new Business Intelligence dashboards that helped gauge student online activity were developed, student attendance tracking in SULIS was rolled out to assist with COVID-19 contact tracing and enhanced audio solutions were procured and deployed to labs to overcome auditory issues with the use of face coverings.

4

REBOUND – Accelerate strategies now to win in the rebound

JANUARY 2021 ONWARDS

As we reflect on the past 11 months at the beginning of 2021, the Covid pivot has presented significant challenges. These include the digital capacity and digital skills challenges that have become apparent in this new radically altered environment for the University. While we hope that we may get a vaccine in 2021, this digital disruption and the experience has changed the face of UL's activities for the longer term. We now need to build on the progress made over the last 11 months and further develop what has been achieved in a sustainable and more strategic way via stage 2 of the UL Enable IT Strategy.

IT Digital Projects

19 DIGITAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEMS

- CoreHR upgrade
- Agresso upgrade to Unit4 ERP
- SI upgrade 2020
- Student Records (SITS) Programme of Work
- HR Recruitment Workflow Automation
- SI Mobilisation Data Implementation
- SI Mobilisation Online Forms

11 CLOUD AND IT MANAGEMENT

- Workflow Migrations
- Cookie Management App
- ISO 9001:2015 Recertification
- TOPDesk Student Hub Online
- CECD Replacement Systems Analysis

9 BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE (BI) & REPORTING

- BI HR Reporting
- BI SULIS Reporting
- BI UL Global Reporting
- Executive Committee Dashboard
- BI GPS Reporting

10 DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE

- Datacentre Equipment Replacement
- Commvault Backup Re-architecture
- Migration from SQL2008 to SQL2007

18 CYBER SECURITY

- MultiFactor Authentication (MFA) Rollout to Staff
- UL Laptop Encryption
- ITD Disaster Recovery
- IT Security Policies
- EA System Inventory Compilation

23 TEACHING & LEARNING

- Teaching Spaces Digital Refurbishment
- SULIS Program Site Templates
- Module Satisfaction Survey 2020
- SULIS move to AWS Ireland
- Online Portal for Student ID Cards
- SULIS upgrade 2020
- Automated Coop Report Submission

13 DIGITAL COMMUNICATING & COLLABORATION

- Staff and Student Email Migration to 365 Project
- Sharepoint Migration to Office 365
- MS Teams and Desk Phone Integration
- Campus Wide Survey Software
- Study Aboard Website Restructure

11 STUDENT EXPERIENCE

- Campus WiFi
- Lecture Capture Panopto Rollout
- Managed Print
- Student Laptop Setup
- Student COVID-19 System Request
- Digitary Core Migration
- Contact Tracing Attendance Monitoring



To read more about our projects click [HERE](#)

ITD & LTF Collaboration

ITD have been stakeholders in the Learning Technologists Forum (LTF) since it was established in 2018 by the VPAA&SE. The LTF is a community of practice and encourages collaboration between faculty and staff who support Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) in UL.

ITD have a long history of collaboration and engagement with stakeholders across the University and regularly reach out to gather requirements and assist with planning and implementation of projects. The LTF has provided many additional opportunities for collaboration since the start of the Covid 19 pandemic, where new and enhanced online learning requirements were identified and implemented. ITD have worked closely with the LTF to roll out the

Panopto Lecture Capture system and Program Site templates in SULIS during Summer 2020. Both projects were delivered in very short timeframes and benefitted from close alignment with the LTF in terms of requirements gathering, Continuous Professional Development delivery and campus wide communications.

The LTF meets regularly throughout the year and provides an opportunity for stakeholders to discuss topics of interest with their peers, to share their learnings and to consider how TEL can be used in new and innovative ways. This dialogue and feedback provides insights into how TEL is used across the faculties in UL and feeds into ITD's continuous improvement process for existing systems and services.



Semester One:

Digital Assessment

- **107,376 submissions to SULIS tests and quizzes**
- **Busiest week – Week 12**
17,961 submissions

VLE SULIS Activity

- **Average of 12,586 unique users very weekday**
- **Busiest day – Oct 2th**
13,310 unique users

Live Lectures & Live Meetings

- **>100,000 live classes and live meetings in MS Teams**
- **>35,000 live classes and live meetings in Big Blue Button**

Creating, editing and sharing video content

Panopto, the leading educational video content management system, quickly became the primary tool used by Faculty to create, edit and share video content with their students.

ITD secured a campus wide licence in August 2020 and rapidly deployed Panopto to the UL Campus.

Panopto Usage in Semester 1

- 8.7 million minutes delivered (6,093 days)
- On average 8,500 unique users of Panopto each week
- 676,741 views/downloads of videos in Panopto
- 17,658 users of which 896 are Staff
- Over 8,000 videos created

Panopto has increasingly been used to enable students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills through the medium of video, as well as providing them with the opportunity to enhance their communication & creativity skills. These attributes are vital to thrive in the modern knowledge economy.

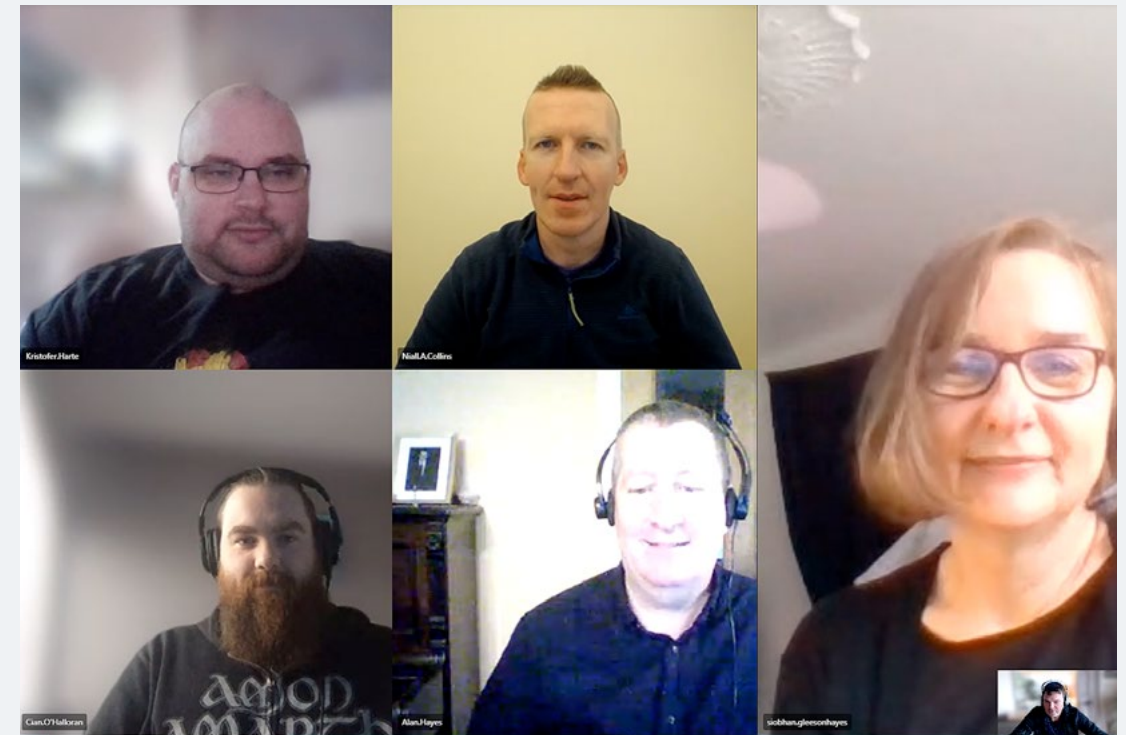
“I am very excited by the potential of Panopto. I have used it to produce pre-recorded lectures, interspersed with YouTube clips or questions for students to answer, and for students to upload assignments. I particularly like the interface that students are presented with and look forward to utilising more of its features on future modules.”

Dr Philip Kearney, PESS Department

For further information, please refer to our **TOPdesk portal** or on the **LTF Site**.



Right: UL language student illustrating the use of Panopto to create a News Report

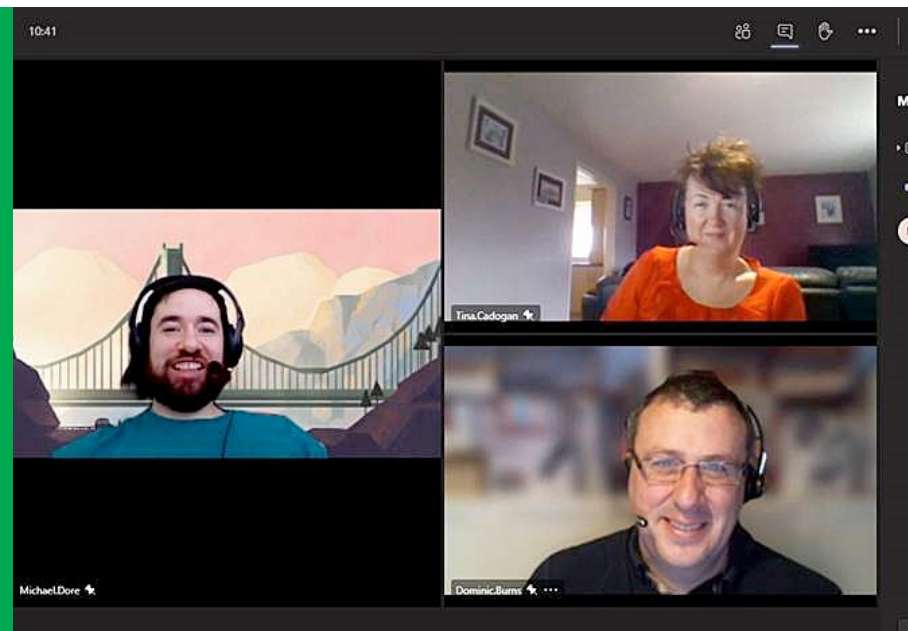


Above: Education Technology Team



Mikkel Thiele
Bayerischer Rundfunk

News from the ITD Business Intelligence Team



As the University moves forward on its digital evolution, better understanding of our students, our staff, our finances and our processes becomes increasingly critical. The ITD Business Intelligence (BI) and Reporting Systems team provides the technology, skills and advice to help transform the way in which we access, view and analyse data across the campus.

A recent example saw the release of the new Post Graduate(PG) Course Applications Dashboard in our PowerBI platform. This dashboard provides a view of the number of applicants for the many PG courses and updates each week with the latest statistics. It replaces a manually populated spreadsheet that was very labour intensive to produce with a hands-free solution that is now fully automated using data directly fed from Student Information System(SI).

FIGURE 1: PG COURSE APPLICATIONS - SUMMARY

This dashboard also provides access to historical applicant statistics per week, going back over several years. This historical data allows us to see the progression of demand for these courses over time and enables much more complex analysis of data than has previously been possible.

FIGURE 2: PG COURSE APPLICATIONS - HISTORICAL APPLICATIONS

The PG Course Applications dashboard is available to all Deans, Heads of Department (as previously) and all course directors of relevant Level 9 courses.

“Graduate & Professional Studies would like to thank the ITD BI Systems team for working with us to develop this transformative new dashboard. This allows us to view, analyze and share post graduate applications data in new and exciting ways.”

Professor Ann Ledwith, Dean of Graduate & Professional Studies

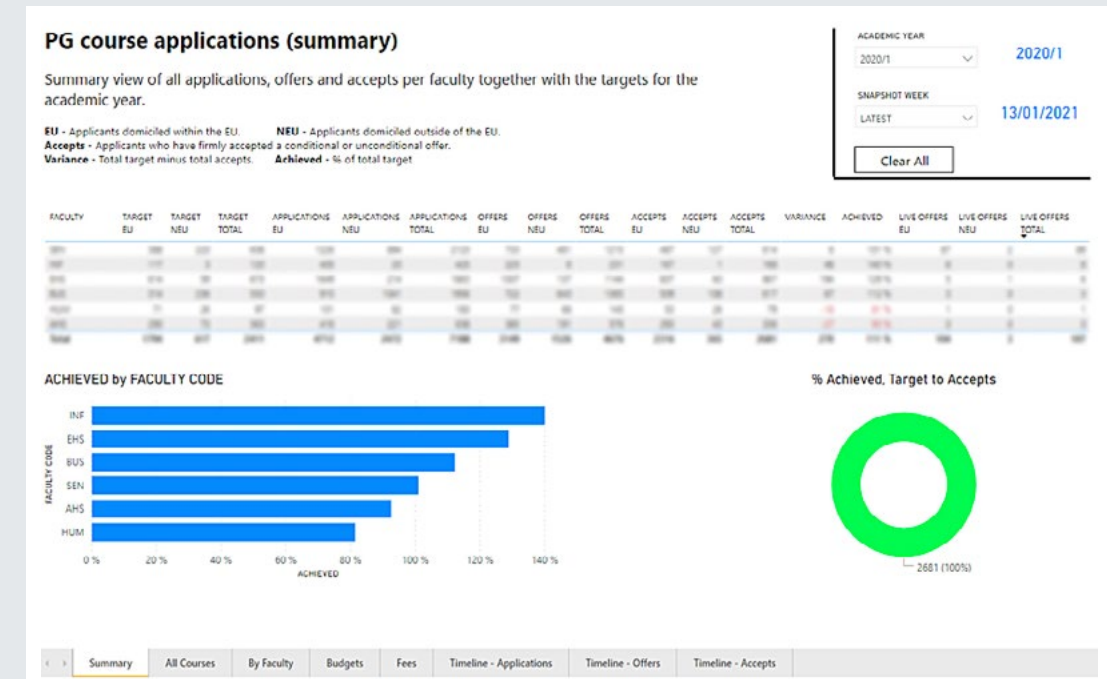


Figure 1: PG Course Applications - Summary



Figure 2: PG Course Applications - Historical Applications



BRINGING THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY TOGETHER DIGITALLY



In March 2020, ITD rapidly deployed Microsoft Teams suite of collaborative tools to the campus, which quickly became the digital platform that has enabled the UL community to remain connected, whilst physically apart.

With the accelerated roll out of MS Teams, ITD has provided a space for Staff and Students to remain productive and collaborate on information easily and securely.

The platform has enabled Staff & Students to collaborate and communicate with each other, through using Online Meetings, Breakout Rooms, Live Events, in addition to Call and Chat functionality.

The widespread adoption of Teams is a key part of the transformation of the University of Limerick's digitally enabled workforce. Teams will be a key enabler for The Future of Work as the collaboration platform for the reimagined Digital University, and a key enabler for our continued digital evolution.

GET THE MOST OUT OF MS TEAMS

Please refer to our [TOPdesk portal](#) for information and tips on features available to you, and for downloadable interactive user guides:

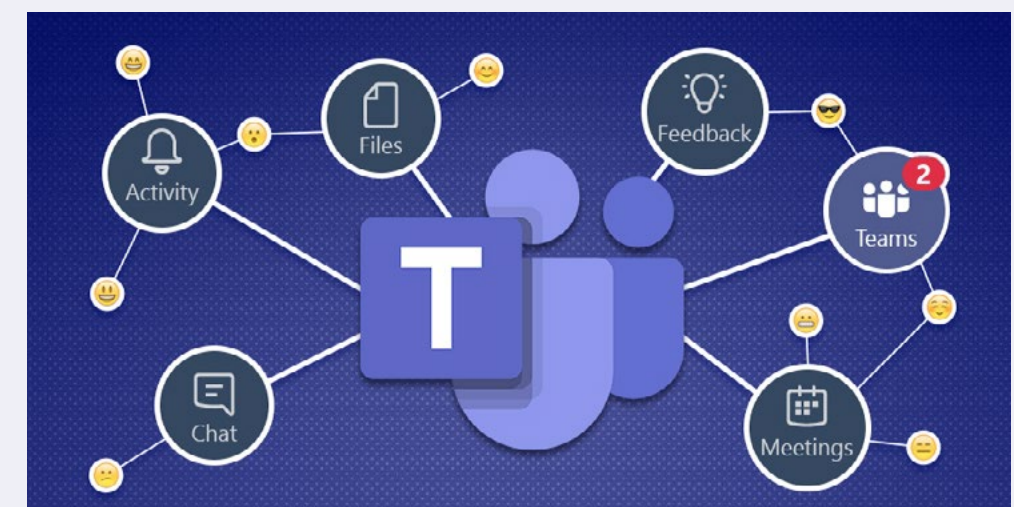
- **MS Teams Basic Functionality**
- **MS Teams Owners 'How To' Guide**

TIPS ON SAFE MEETING OPTIONS

Did you know you can make changes to your meeting options to control your attendee permissions, for example:

- make attendees enter a call lobby
- prevent attendees recording
- prevent attendees muting others
- prevent an attendee from unmuting themselves.

Find out more with the: **MS Teams Safe Meeting Guidelines**



UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK
OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

ID Card Photo Upload

Click Photo Box To Add or Change

To complete photo upload click the icon on your photo below

NAME SVEN MOLLOY
AINM

UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK
OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

STUDENT
MAC LEINN

ID NO. LUIMH AITH. 12267221

WebCenter Online Portal for Student ID Cards

September Orientation is always a bustling time for incoming students and support staff. The epicentre being UL's enrolment centre, EG0-10, where over the course of a week, thousands of students pass through completing enrolment and receiving their student card.

With the onset of the 2020 pandemic, a huge effort was undertaken to move orientation week online. One major aspect being the production of student ID cards. To overcome this challenge ITD introduced WebCentre, an online portal for collecting student photographs. WebCenter enabled the creation of a streamlined process where students could enroll online and receive their student card by post, within 7 days. WebCentre was an outstanding success, with over 4,500 students receiving their student card by the end of Week 1.

Automated Coop Report Submission

Prior to September 2020, the process of report submissions and the dissemination to the relevant academic visitors was primarily manual, which took approximately 5 weeks to turn around.

Cooperative Education in partnership with IT's Academic Services Team, have automated this process, which has enabled Students to upload their coop report via the Student Administration Portal. The report can now be revealed to the relevant assigned faculty member through the same portal for evaluation.

This process improvement has brought a number of benefits including:

- ease of submission for students
- immediate distribution to faculty
- ease of access to the reports by faculty
- streamlining the evaluation process
- reduction in need for office storage and offsite storage
- reduction in summer tasks in managing physical reports.



Above: Academic Services Team



STUDENT COVID-19 REQUEST

In early December, the HSE contacted UL with a requirement to setup a COVID Test Centre on Campus, for Students to be tested prior to returning home for the Christmas holidays. This required a secure digital platform for Students to book a COVID test and for the platform to integrate with the HSE's COVID booking system.

In an ambitious lead-time of 5 days, ITD implemented a digital system, which enabled our colleagues in the HSE to input the uptake of students into their HSE systems, in an efficient, secure and GDPR compliant manner.

The initiative proved such a success, that the process was repeated once again in February. The uptake was impressive, with a total of 1,956 Students requesting a COVID-19 Test pre & post-Christmas.

A further testament, which highlights the success of this project, is that there are indications that the initiative and solution could potentially be implemented in neighbouring High-Level Institutions, if the need ever presents itself.

Further insights behind the initiative from Dr Marie Casey, Department of Public Health - HSE, can be found in the following article from [The Examiner](#). Every little bit helps in the continued battle against COVID-19.



DocuSign

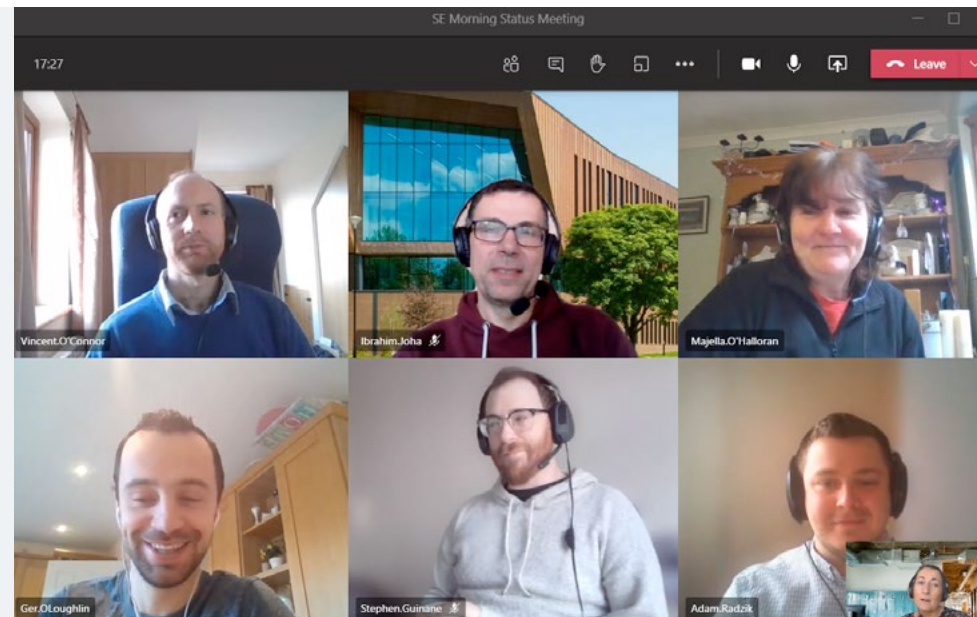
The sudden shift to remote working in late March 2020 presented many challenges for existing university processes. One such challenge, "How can legally binding agreements be signed remotely?" DocuSign was identified as the solution, a web-based eSignature platform, which was rapidly rolled out by ITD in April.

DocuSign not only allows documents to be remotely signed with any device, it also encapsulates documents with a tamper proof certificate, ensuring signed documents remain legally binding.

"With DocuSign nearly 80% of agreements are now signed within 24 hours, irrespective of the signatory's location. Agreements can even be signed using a mobile phone, so the convenience level is extremely high. Other benefits include the reduction of paper use and reduced storage requirements, thereby reducing ULs carbon footprint."

Paul Dillon (Director, Technology Transfer Office)

Connecting with Support



Above: IT Services Team



Above: Service Desk Team

Over the last few years, the implementation of the UL Enable Strategy centred on the delivery of key digital systems to support teaching and learning. In parallel the service delivery model was overhauled and transformed. A culture of customer focus, and continuous improvement was established and embedded within the department. The combination of tools development and transformation of the service delivery model enabled ITD to successfully support the transition to online teaching and learning in response to the COVID-19 crisis.

Here are some key actions delivered by ITD in 2020:

- Implemented an onsite rota to support and deliver critical IT services
- Delivered an emergency consignment of 175 contingency laptops to enable critical staff without devices to work remotely, this work continued with ITD configuring additional 1,056 devices
- Published 134 remote work/study guidelines on TOPdesk with the Forticlient knowledge item been viewed over 4,237 times

- Developed and tested the IT Services Continuity Plan
- Worked closely with Faculty Technicians with regards to supporting tools and technology
- Enabled remote access to student labs
- Worked with HEAnet to agree standard laptop offerings for student
- Supported the distribution of over 800 government funded laptops for students.

Where to get information?

A great place to start is our **Quick Start Guide to IT Services for Staff** or our **Quick Start Guide to IT Services for Students**.

Click **HERE** to view a video how to use and navigate the TopDesk Self Portal.

How to log a call?

Staff can log a call using the ITD Call Management System **TOPDesk**, or by sending an email to **Service.Desk@ul.ie**. Students can log call online at **www.ul.ie/itss**.

SUMMARY OF CALL ACTIVITY

Description	Number of Calls in 2020
Total Number of Calls Completed	35,315
Total Number of Student Calls Completed	10,902
Total Number of Staff Calls Completed	24,413
Average feedback rating	4.88 out of 5
Percentage of call completed within SLA	96%
Number of calls completed by the Service Desk (L1)	18,569 or 53%
Password Reset Requests Completed	6,246
Total Number of Staff Accounts Created	778
Microsoft Services including Teams, OneNote and OneDrive, Email for Business queries	4,590
Number of SULIS calls completed	1,984
Number of Laptops encrypted	918
Number of Security calls completed (staff only)	682
Remote Access queries resolved	1,742

Meet Brian Walsh



- **How long have you worked in UL?**

2.5yrs

- **What does your job entail?**

IT Vendor Management. My role is primary to manage IT external vendor activities and maintain new and existing vendor relationships. The above in more detail incorporates the establishments of standards and mechanisms by which to assess and track vendor performance on an annual basis.

- **What do you like most about your job?**

Negotiating with Suppliers ensuring the University is getting value and service enhancements where possible.

- **What's your most used productivity hack?**

Vendor Trackers and Scorecards which have proven most beneficial managing external suppliers, where we have experienced supply/performance issues with.

- **What is one fun fact about yourself?**

I'm really only 33.

- **What is something people don't know about you?**

I am a secret lumberjack by trade.

The Show must go on!

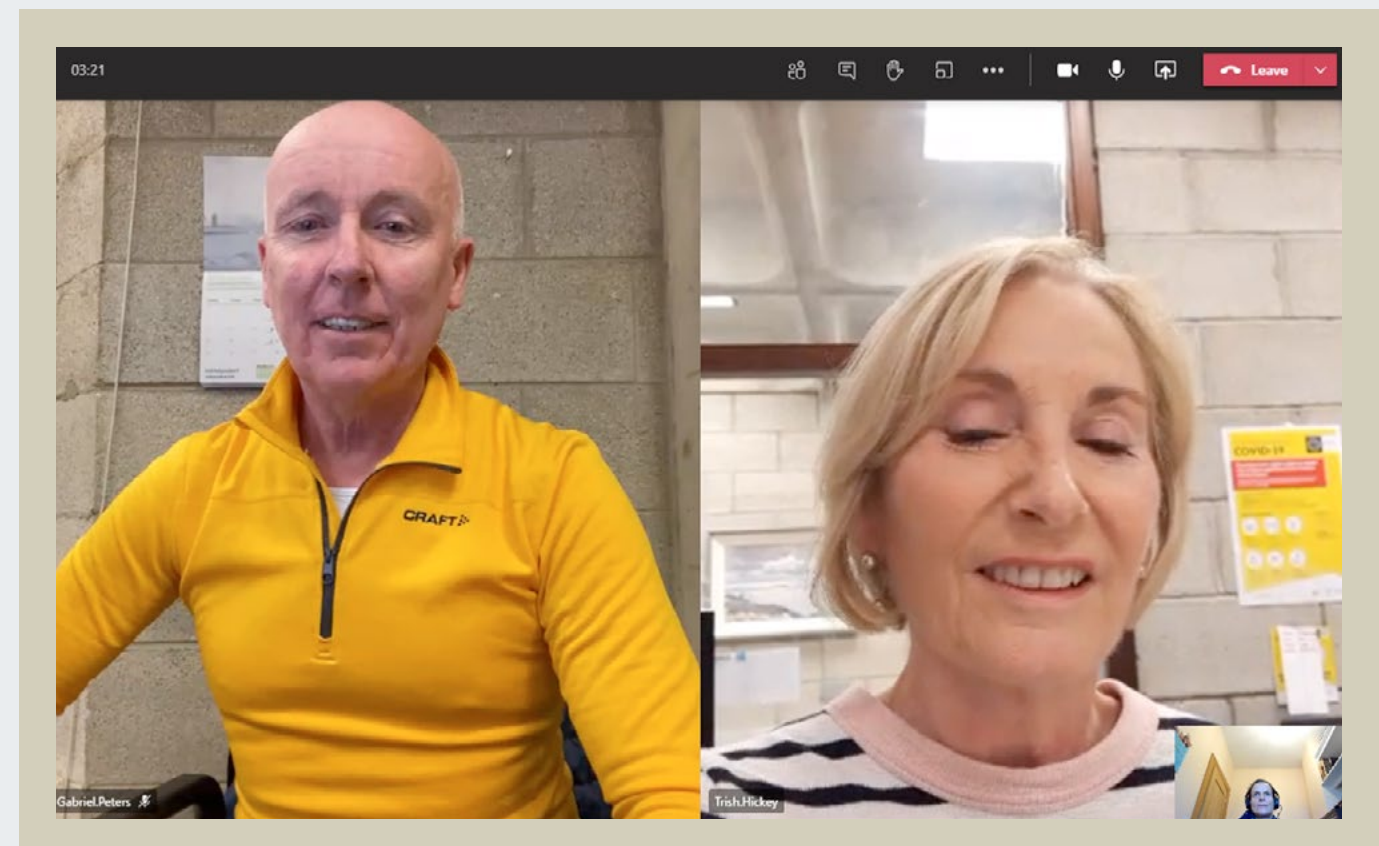
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Queries? Contact us on printit@ul.ie



Gabriel Peters

Trish Hickey



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