

QUALITY MANUAL



Table of Contents

1.	INTRODUCTION.....	3
1.1	Brief Outline of the Office of the Vice President Research.....	3
1.2	Our Commitment to Quality.....	3
1.3	Quality Policy.....	4
2.	CUSTOMER FOCUS.....	4
2.1	Customer Policy and Services Provided.....	4
2.2	Customer Feedback and Complaints.....	5
3.	LEADERSHIP.....	6
3.1	Leadership.....	6
3.2	Planning.....	6
3.3	Management and Process Review.....	6
4.	Engagement of people.....	8
4.1	Engagement of People.....	8
4.2	Responsibility and Authority.....	8
4.3	Communication.....	9
4.4	Training and Continuing Development.....	10
4.5	Work Environment and Infrastructure.....	10
5.	PROCESS APPROACH.....	11
5.1	Process Approach.....	11
5.2	QMS Processes / Activities.....	11
5.3	A Systematic Approach to Management.....	12
6.	CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT.....	14
6.1	Continual Improvement.....	14
6.2	Quality Improvement Objectives.....	14
7.	EVIDENCE-BASED DECISION MAKING.....	14
7.1	Evidence-based Decision Making.....	14
7.2	Strategic Review of Data by Management.....	15
8.	RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT.....	15
8.1	Relationship Management.....	15
8.2	Suppliers.....	15
8.3	Internal Partners.....	16
8.4	External Partners.....	16
8.5	Communication with Stakeholders (Customers & Partners).....	17

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Brief Outline of the Office of the Vice President Research

The [Office of the Vice President Research](#) leads the formulation, development and delivery of the University of Limerick's (UL) research strategy, policy, and research support services. The mission is to *facilitate the growth of excellent, impactful and innovative research and knowledge transfer activities at the University of Limerick.*

The Office works with the faculties, institutes and centres, the research community and UL management to grow research capacity, quality, output, talent and funding. The Office plays an important role in building links with national and international policy makers, funding bodies, industry and other external bodies. In achieving this mission, the Office supports the values, ethics, culture and environmental policies of the University.

The Office comprises operational units: Research Support Services, Research Strategy and Policy Team, Technology Transfer Office and Doctoral College. More detail on the units can be found in Section 4. The Office has a **Customer Charter** that describes the Office customers and services.

1.2 Our Commitment to Quality

Quality is an integral part of the Office business operations, and this **Quality Manual** describes the Office Quality Management System (QMS). The Office QMS demonstrates the Office's commitment to maintaining a high level of quality and strong customer focus, while striving to continually improve the services we provide to our customers.

The Office QMS is based on the UL Quality Framework for support departments. The principles of the QMS framework are adopted from recognised best-in-class management system frameworks such as Baldrige, EFQM and ISO. The framework is built on the following set of recognised interrelated values:

- Maintaining customer focus
- Demonstrating good leadership
- Involving all staff (teamwork and inclusion)
- Emphasising continual quality improvement
- Using a defined process approach to services provided
- Using facts and analysing data in all decision-making
- Developing mutually beneficial supplier, partner and community relationships

Every support department at the University of Limerick operates a quality management system (QMS) and a review is undertaken periodically. The quality review of a support department focuses on the development and effectiveness of the department's QMS. The main components of the OVPR QMS are: customer charter, quality manual, quality processes, key business processes, institutional policy.

The Office uses a process approach to service delivery and all documented quality processes, key business processes and relevant organisational policies are referenced on the Office webpages.

The Office has a Quality Management Team (QMT) consisting of staff from the various units with a nominated chair and deputy chair. The role of the quality team is to support the continual development of the QMS. Section 3 sets out additional detail on the QMT.

1.3 Quality Policy

The Office **Quality Policy** is to continually improve the services we provide to meet the requirements of our customers. We are committed to providing high-quality support and leadership to facilitate the growth of excellent, impactful and innovative research and knowledge transfer activities and to support postgraduate researchers at University of Limerick. Our staff subscribe to the principle of quality management and customer-focused service delivery. We have implemented a quality management system to assist us to achieve our goals, maximise customer satisfaction and ensure continual improvement.

2. CUSTOMER FOCUS

2.1 Customer Policy and Services Provided

The Office **Customer Charter** is published on the Office [website](#). The charter lists the Office customers and services provided by the Office. It describes how the Office engages with customers and what customers can do to help the Office improve its services. Our customers are academic and research, professional staff and postgraduate researchers. Section 8 describes how we communicate with our suppliers, internal partners and external partners.

The Office services are outlined below. Services are communicated to the customer via a number of channels. Customer communication channels include the research website, research newsletter, specialised mailing lists, email, phone etc. In addition, internally organised and externally hosted events are used to communicate the Office services.

Documented key business processes, QMS policies and processes, associated forms and procedures are available on the office [SharePoint hub](#), the [research portal](#) and the [research website](#).

Overview of our services

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research leadership and governance 	Office of the Vice President Research
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research funding (pre-award and post-award) • Compliance • Reporting and rankings submission preparation • Support and oversight for research institutes and centres • Health Research reporting • Post Award Program Management • Research Contracts Management 	Research Support Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic planning and research policy development • Systems development • Research impact • Research Integrity and ethics • Research communications 	Research Strategy & Policy Team
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intellectual property management 	Technology Transfer Office

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campus company set-up • Nexus Innovation Centre Management • Enterprise Engagement 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Postgraduate Research Application and Admission • Administrative Processes to Support Postgraduate Researchers • Postgraduate Research Data • Postgraduate Research Academic Regulations and Procedures • Postgraduate Research Funding and Scholarships • Postgraduate Research Career and Professional Development • Upskilling of Research Supervisors • Recruitment of Postgraduate Researchers • Procedure on the Engagement of Postgraduate Tutor Demonstrator (PTD) 	Doctoral College

2.2 Customer Feedback and Complaints

Within the Office, customer feedback on services provided is regarded as very important. Customer feedback is used to assess current and future customer needs, determine customer satisfaction and provide information for service improvement.

Formal feedback is obtained in a number of ways, including:

- Ongoing feedback from customers via customer survey, postgraduate researcher exit survey
- An annual survey of Nexus customers
- Biennial National Student Survey of Postgraduate Research Students
- Research projects on postgraduate researcher experiences and needs
- Representation of office at institutional committee meetings.
- Training and events feedback
- The Office's website, which provides a 'comments and feedback' email address
- Formal feedback received by individual team members
- Customer enquiries and emails

Formal feedback is discussed at the management and unit meetings, and improvement plans agreed at meetings are recorded in the Quality Improvement Action Plan (QIAP). Section 3 contains more detail on the QIAP. Records of formal feedback are maintained at Office or unit level, as appropriate.

Complaints

Formal complaints including from postgraduate researchers are administered in accordance with the relevant UL Policies and Procedures.

3. LEADERSHIP

3.1 Leadership

The Vice President Research (VPR) has overall responsibility for monitoring and providing strategic direction to the University's research activities. The VPR is a member of the University Executive Team and reports directly to the President. The VPR is responsible for the development of the University research strategy in collaboration with the faculties. Institutional research performance metrics are available on the Research Performance Dashboard accessible by Senior Leadership including Heads of Department, Assistant Deans, Institute Directors.

The Office Management team comprises the Vice President Research (VPR), Director of Technology Transfer Office, Director of Research, Associate Vice President Doctoral College (AVPDC) and the Research Strategy and Policy Manager. Leadership succession strategy is facilitated by the Performance Development Review System process (see also section 4.4) wherein relevant staff have opportunities to advance their leadership skills.

The Office engages with university-wide policies and procedures in support of its remit including but not limited to UL Policy Framework, Risk Management Policy, Human Resources, Quality, Financial Management, Academic Regulations, Ethics, Procurement.

Leadership in quality is achieved via the QMT. The QMT comprises members from each of the three operational units and is led by a member of the Office management team. Current membership of the QMT is listed on the Quality section of the Office website. The Office QIAP is used by the Office and the QMT as a systematic way of recording and tracking improvement plans.

In maintaining and changing the Office Quality Management System, University-wide regulatory, statutory and policy requirements, such as [University's Act](#), [Purchasing](#), [Finance](#) and [HR](#) policies, are taken into account.

3.2 Planning

Planning within the Office is guided by the University Strategic Plan. The Office supports the delivery of the research objectives outlined in the Strategic Plan.

The University Research Committee is tasked with supporting the VPR in the development of the University's research strategy arising from the Strategic Plan and with the leadership and management of its implementation. URC's terms of reference outlines its membership and operating procedure.

Office meetings focus on strategic priorities and business objectives. They include periodic review of institutional research performance data and agreement on improvement plans. Individual meetings between the VPR and each of the unit managers are held to review business objectives within each unit. Office and unit meetings take place in accordance with the **Communications Process**.

3.3 Management and Process Review

Office objectives are aligned with institutional strategy. The [University Performance and Development Review System](#) (PDRS) is used to align staff objectives with Office objectives. Identification of staff training needs to meet these objectives forms part of the PDRS. All staff have clear roles and responsibilities set out in accordance with HR processes.

Management review of the QMS is undertaken on an annual basis to assess its suitability and effectiveness in an evolving research environment. This review includes assessing opportunities for improvement and requirement for change. To ensure the effective implementation of the Office QMS

the Office has a defined **Self-Assessment Process** that describes how periodic internal audits are undertaken.

The role of the QMT is to drive the development of the Office QMS. The QMT uses the **Self-Assessment Process** to evaluate the Office QMS. Planned improvements are recorded on the QIAP and any revisions to process documentation are undertaken in accordance with the **Document Record Control Process**. The QMT leader is a member of the management team and reports on quality related issues at Office management meetings.

4. ENGAGEMENT OF PEOPLE

4.1 Engagement of People

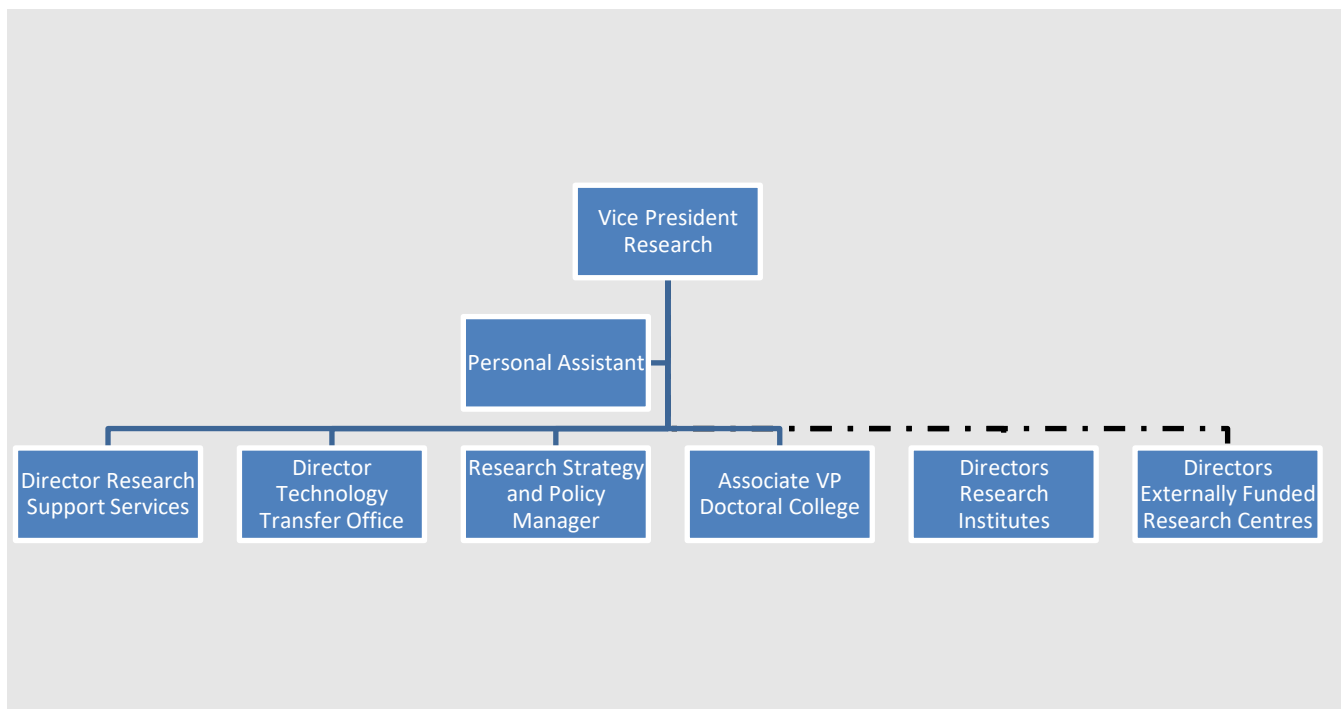
The Office is governed by the university policies and procedures for the selection, recruitment, promotion and development of staff. When taking on new staff, the Office follows HR's recruitment procedure <https://www.ul.ie/hr/current-staff/recruitments>, which are designed to ensure that successful candidates have the required experience and qualifications for the job.

Staffing needs are informed by external benchmarking, assessment of needs and activity growth based on data. These needs are submitted to VPR to inform organisational workforce planning process.

The Office recognises that staff involvement is critical if business and continual improvement objectives are to be met. As such, the Office provides mechanisms to facilitate staff involvement in the review and promotion of quality.

4.2 Responsibility and Authority

The organisational chart of director reports to the Vice President Research is shown below and the full divisional organogram is held on the research portal.



Research Support Services

Research Support Services (RSS) supports the development of the University's research mission. The unit is led by the Director of Research and provides assistance and intelligence to researchers on a range of funded research programmes as well as strategic support to the university on research positioning, performance and management. The remit of the unit spans the research pre- and post-award lifecycle. In pre-award RSS supports researchers to identify funding opportunities, provides advice and support relating to funding applications, and provides institutional authorisation for the submission of funding applications. In the post-award cycle, RSS is responsible for institutional approval of research contracts and is the administrative hub for project initialisation, oversight of

award performance and compliance with grant terms and conditions, and for supporting the enhancement of UL's post-award ecosystem. Additionally, the post award function of RSS is responsible for Health Research Reporting, for providing support and oversight for UL's research institutes, and is the Researcher point of contact for export controls for research and innovation. RSS prepares research performance reports and benchmarking data to inform decision making and monitor research performance against strategic targets. RSS is also responsible for the submission of institutional data to rankings agencies.

Doctoral College

UL's Doctoral College established in 2023, is responsible for the management and development of postgraduate research across the University. The College supports the academic and professional development of Postgraduate Researchers (PGRs) across all areas of academia, industry and society. UL's Doctoral College strives to increase infrastructural efficiencies, accommodate the diversity of research and research needs, and promote networking opportunities. It will advocate for:

- The development of high-quality doctoral programmes
- The enhancement of the learning and teaching experience for PGRs and supervisors
- The development of academic regulations and guidelines to support excellence in research

Research Strategy and Policy Team

The Research Strategy and Policy Team works with senior management across the university in the areas of strategy, policy, quality and governance for research and is also responsible for the delivery of the research impact programme, research communications and supports research systems. The team plays a key role in horizon-scanning, gathering intelligence on the national and international research policy landscape and examining best practices towards achieving our strategic ambitions.

Technology Transfer Office

The Technology Transfer Office (TTO) was established in 2005 to support and develop innovation activity emanating from university research activities. The unit is led by the Director of the TTO. The TTO provides intellectual property management services, supports development of new campus companies and facilitates business engagement with industry on research and innovation. The TTO also support regional enterprise development through the Nexus Innovation Centre and through engagement with national and local development agencies.

4.3 Communication

The **Communications Process** sets out how communications are managed within the Office. All senior managers operate an open-door policy with staff members. Top-down and bottom-up communications within the Office are directed through the unit managers. Communication between units is facilitated by the Office management meetings.

Regular Office management meetings take place and are attended by the management team (i.e., the VPR, the unit managers). In addition, the VPR has one-to-one meetings with the unit managers. At these meetings unit managers are encouraged to express their views on the efficiency of processes and to suggest improvements.

Regular individual unit meetings take place between unit managers and their respective staff. At unit meetings, staff are encouraged to express their views on the efficiency of processes and to suggest improvements. The VPR attends unit meetings, as required, to ensure that clear two-way communication is maintained. Virtual platforms are widely used across the Office.

The communication structure incorporates the university's team briefing system, which ensures that all members of a division are kept up to date on developments at UL managerial level. Key information from the President and the Executive Committee is relayed through the VPR to the management team, whose members, in turn, relay information to staff in their respective units. In addition, staff across the Office are active in working collaboratively with the research and postgraduate research community through standing membership of cross-organisational committees, attendance at faculty/divisional meetings to support engagement with OVPR activities.

A divisional SharePoint hub provides centralised access to key information for the Office as well as providing a repository for key documents. The divisional hub presents key information relating to: Quality, Research Performance Dashboard, EU R&I Programmes Dashboard, Risk Register, Calendar, Communications, Training, Policy Developments.

4.4 Training and Continuing Development

Staff training and continuing development are recognised as critical in order for teams to operate effectively, as such the research office encourages and promotes staff training outside of day-to-day work where appropriate and within available resources. Staff are encouraged to join professional associations relevant to their function as it is recognised these associations provide an ongoing method of professional development through peer interaction. Staff members are also encouraged to share their evaluation of training at unit meetings, and training files are kept as part of the University's Performance Development Review System (PDRS). PDRS covers appropriate training and conference attendance to ensure staff are aware of emerging developments in their field of specialisation. Cross-office engagement among units is identified through unit and management meetings and PDRS and realised through quality enhancement projects. Staff training and development follows the **Training and Continuing Development Process** that is available on the office website and shared server. Staff are directed to complete required training such as dignity & respect, cybersecurity and GDPR/Data Protection training.

4.5 Work Environment and Infrastructure

The Office of the Vice President Research promotes day-to-day interaction between and among units of the office which improves understanding of work practices across the office. The University's infrastructure is maintained by the Building and Estate's department. Any issues that arise in relation to the working environment can be brought to attention of the office unit managers by staff for discussion at management level. In addition, the provision of workspace for staff is bound by the Health and Safety regulations of the University.

5. PROCESS APPROACH

5.1 Process Approach

The mapping of both QMS and key business processes is an integral part of the Office's QMS and is regarded as a critical component to enable the delivery of quality services.

All controlled documents relating to the QMS are listed in the Index of Controlled Documents and managed using the **Documentation and Record Control process**. An **Index of Controlled Documents** lists the most up to date version of all controlled documents. In addition, the Index of Institutional Policies relating to Research provides an overview of the institutional level policies which are supported by the division. Both the Index of Controlled Documents and the Index of Institutional Policies relating to Research are stored on the office SharePoint hub.

When a document is removed from the QMS it is listed as strikethrough on the Index of Controlled Documents and archived. When a controlled document is replaced by a new revision the old documents is removed from the Controlled folder, placed in the records folders in the appropriate section, renamed as 'Archived' and an 'archive' watermark is put on the document.

A **Record Control Sheet** list the records and retention times for all Office records generated as a result of using QMS and business processes and is located on the Office server. These records are kept in line with the university records and retention and GDPR policies.

5.2 QMS Processes / Activities

The Office QMS processes are documented and available to staff via the SharePoint hub and other relevant UL portals. This enables an understanding of the processes employed and facilitates the review and identification of process improvements. It also ensures that relevant QMS information and support is available to deliver the business services.

The QMS processes of the office are as follows:

- Training & Continuing Development
- Documentation Record Control
- Continual Improvement
- Communications
- Self-Assessment

In addition, the Office uses processes operated by other divisions where appropriate.



5.3 A Systematic Approach to Management

Figure 3 outlines the interaction between the processes of the quality management system. The diagram outlines the main processes/activities integral to our QMS (displayed in the outer circle). These processes/activities support our key business processes (outlined in the centre).

All QMS and key business processes are continually reviewed and periodically audited in accordance with the Self-Assessment Process, the purpose of which is to evaluate the continued effectiveness of each process and identify opportunities for improvement. Opportunities for process improvement are also identified through customer feedback, staff feedback, internal audits, annual review of the QMS by Office management, inter-departmental audits, in addition to feedback from the formal Quality Review Process that all UL support departments undergo periodically.

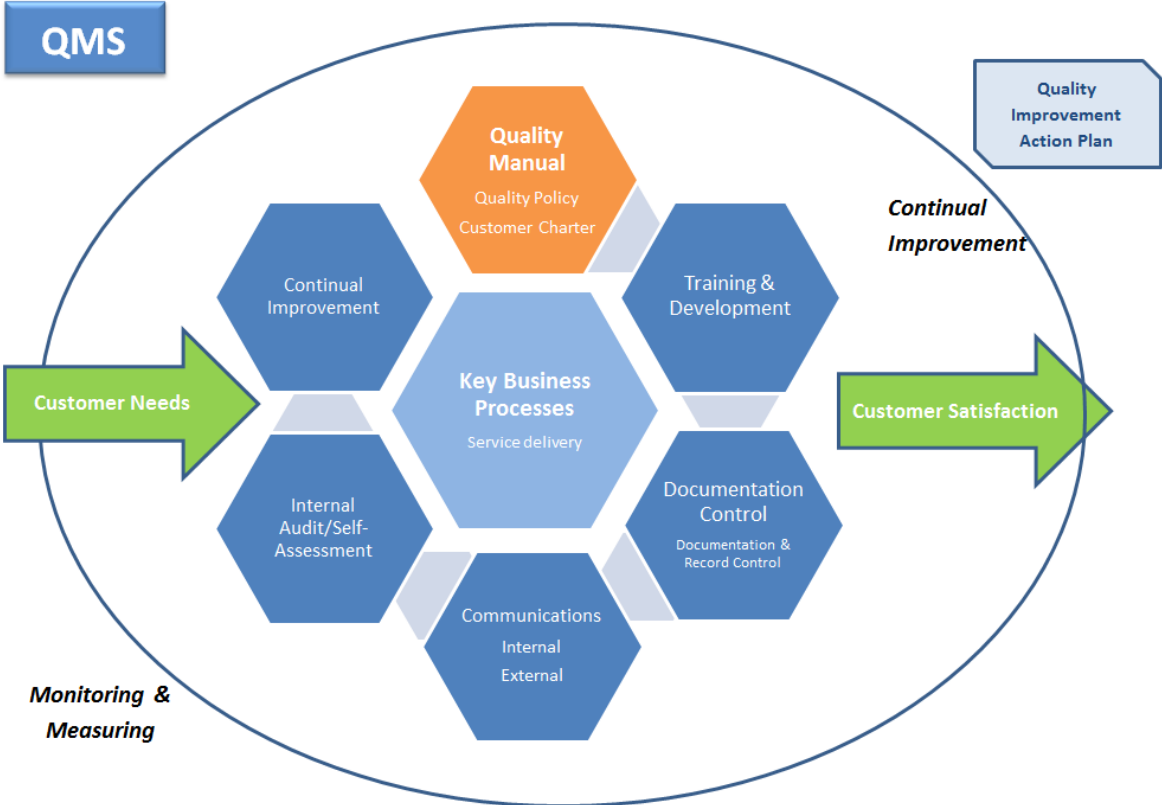


Figure 3 Interaction of processes

6. CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT

6.1 Continual Improvement

The Office recognises that continual improvement is at the core of its QMS and is essential for the provision of high-quality services to its customers. The Office understands the importance of learning from past experiences and revising processes and plans accordingly. To ensure this happens systematically, the Office has implemented a 'Plan, Do, Check, Act' (PDCA) approach in the Office Continual Improvement Process. PDCA is an iterative four-step problem-solving process.

Plan: Establish improvement actions necessary to deliver results in accordance with business objectives. Utilise feedback from staff and customers. Capture planned improvement on QIAP.

Do: Implement improvement plans. Encourage staff to drive improvements in the processes for service delivery.

Check: Monitor the processes and results against objectives and specifications. Use customer feedback and self-assessment. Evaluate all feedback and results. Report the outcome.

Act: Apply actions to the outcome for further improvement actions. This means reviewing all steps (Plan, Do, Check, Act) and modifying the process to improve it before its next implementation. Review all management and service processes for improvement. Use QIAP to ensure that actions taken are effective and inform future planning.

6.2 Quality Improvement Objectives

Opportunities for improvement of the Office QMS are identified via self-audits, annual management review of the QMS, feedback from staff and customers and regular customer surveys. Planned improvements are added to the Office QIAP.

A number of members of the QMT have undertaken auditor training and are available to conduct process audits. Office auditors are available to participate in audits and quality reviews of other departments and support divisions. A schedule of audits is updated to the shared server annually along with details of the trained QMS auditors within the office.

For their individual meetings with the VPR, the unit managers prepare reports that include both performance data and proposed improvement action items pertaining to their area of work.

7. EVIDENCE-BASED DECISION MAKING

7.1 Evidence-based Decision Making

The Office of the Vice President Research places great emphasis on data-driven decision making, as such it monitors and reports research performance against the targets set in both the strategic plan and the related metrics agreed with the Higher Education Authority (HEA). The Office carries out *ad hoc* and scenario-based analysis to aid decision making. The data is discussed at management meetings to aid strategic decision.

The office recognises that some decisions are more important than others, whether in their immediate impact or long-term significance. As a means of understanding the significance of a decision, the Office has identified two levels of decision making:

- Strategic, which is at a university-wide level
- Tactical and operational

Metrics are in place for measuring institutional research and innovation performance and these are measured and recorded by each of the operational units within the Office.

7.2 Strategic Review of Data by Management

Where feasible, the Office uses electronic systems for both storing and retrieving data. An electronic database to track proposals is used in RSS. SharePoint 365 is used for workflow management, file storage and sharing and support of committees and working groups. Software databases are used for managing UL intellectual property, research agreements and commercialisation activity.

Other information management systems used include Research Proposal Authorisation System (RPAS), UL Research Information System (ULRIS), Web of Science, InCites and Scopus, which capture faculty publication outputs. To ensure that the reporting of research metrics across support departments is consistent, data is shared via Microsoft Power BI Research Performance Dashboard, accessible by University Research Committee, Institute/Centre Directors, Assistant Deans Research and Heads of Department/School.

All processes have associated records and information, which are stored on the shared server. Unit managers monitor and review performance relating to their own areas and report on it at management meetings. In addition, research performance data from units is fed into the quarterly and annual research performance reports.

Trend data are analysed at unit and managerial level with respect to business performance and services provided. The data collected are used to inform both operational and strategic planning and to make informed decisions at management and unit meetings.

8. RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

8.1 Relationship Management

Due to the nature of the services and supports it provides, the Office has a strong working relationship with its suppliers, internal partners and external partners.

8.2 Suppliers

Our engagement with suppliers is bound by the [Guidelines](#), [Policies](#) and [Procedures](#) of the University Procurement Office that are available on the [Procurement website](#). Also available on the Procurement Office website is a list of contracted and approved suppliers. The Procurement Office ensures that the University adheres to national guidelines and European regulations and aims to ensure that funds used to purchase goods and services obtain optimum quality, service and value for money. For goods or services for which there is no specific contracted or approved supplier, a supplier for that good or service may be listed on the University's supplier list (i.e. may already have a supplier ID) for account payment purposes. If not, the requestor may organise for the supplier to be added by the Procurement Office by following the university's supplier set-up procedure guidelines.

If an issue arises with a supplier the procurement office is notified and another supplier may be identified. Suppliers approved under tenders may be contracted by service level agreements.

8.3 Internal Partners

The Office engages closely with other academic and support departments in achieving both strategic and operational objectives. Office staff are engaged across the organisation as members of standing committee (such as EC Quality Committee, Space Committee, IT Governance Forum) and working groups or strategic projects (Web Development).

Faculties and Academic departments: The Office interacts with academic and research centres/institutes on all of the services outlined in Table 1. University Research Committee together with its sub-committees and working groups, is used as a forum for two-way communication between the Office and faculty representatives/institutes & centre directors and for sharing research best practice across the university. It also considers the strategic direction of research for the University and its implementation and performance. Office staff engage with faculties and departments through their unit meetings across a range of topics including research funding, research integrity and ethics, research policy development, rankings, research strategy development.

Research Institutes: The Office works closely with the Research Institutes and engages with their leadership across the range of our services.

Finance Office: OVPR works closely with the Chief Finance and Performance Officer in the funding of the research strategy (capex and opex). In particular the research finance office team on financial aspects of grant applications and awards. Approval from the Finance Office is required on any funding proposals where the budget exceeds set limits. The research section of the finance office reports key data and metrics to the Office of the Vice President Research.

Human Resources (HR): Each unit of the Office engages with HR in relation to staff recruitment, contract renewals/changes, data sourcing, training. HR processes relating to staff are available on the HR website and may be accessed by any member of staff. The Office also collaborates with HR on training delivery for customers and Office staff as well as providing data to inform UL research information system, rankings and performance data returns.

Office of the Corporate Secretary (OCS): Each unit engages with the Corporate Secretary office for advice in the areas of legal/research contracts, policy development, data protection, freedom of information, governance.

Library and Information Services: The Office works closely with the library in the establishment of research services, awareness raising of supports available and engagement across topics such as Open Science and Open Access.

UL Global: A service-level agreement between UL Global and the Doctoral College ensures a high level of service is delivered consistently to international postgraduate researchers and provides a list of tasks and owners of those tasks to preserve clarity.

Postgraduate Student Union (PSU): Doctoral College liaise frequently with the PSU who have formal membership of the Doctoral College Working Group as well as a standing monthly meeting with the AVPDC.

Graduate and Professional Studies (GPS): Doctoral College works with GPS with respect to marketing and recruitment of postgraduate researchers.

Other internal partners include Information Technology Division, Buildings & Estates, Cooperative Education and Careers Division, Legal Services Unit, Marketing, Communications and Public Affairs.

8.4 External Partners

Higher Education Sector

Links with other higher education institutions (HEIs) are undertaken through membership of the Irish Universities Association ([IUA](#)). The IUA's Vice Presidents and Deans of Research group includes representatives from all seven Irish universities meet regularly. Likewise, research support officers meet at the IUA Research Officers group, research governance officer meets via the National Research Integrity Forum and research impact by a newly established national working group.

UL engages in research collaborations with other HEIs at home and abroad. Several national research centres have been established in Ireland, each involving multiple HEIs. Other research collaborations are led by principal investigators (PIs) and are facilitated and supported by RSS and the TTO. Support tends to be in the form of facilitating appropriate grant preparation, consortium agreements and other help with requirements mandated by the funding organisations.

Research Funding Bodies

The Office engages closely with research funding bodies in relation to national and European funding sources. There is regular communication between the Office and funding body staff, and the Office has deliberately established personal contacts with funding body staff through networking at events and one-to-one interactions. Office staff attend national workshops and information sessions organised by funding bodies. Funding bodies are invited to UL to showcase UL research strengths, disseminate funding information and engage in detailed discussions. For all funding agencies, engagement relating to agreements or contracts, this process is managed by RSS- Research post award and compliance unit (newly established), which manages the process to ensure all research agreements are signed in line with the University Contract Signing Policy.

Industry and the Wider Community

UL is very active in undertaking research projects with industry. Interactions range from conducting research in areas that are relevant to an individual company to multi-partner research centres that manage multiple projects with a sector-wide impact. These projects are typically led by the relevant UL researcher with the process managed by RSS. Support for the formal contractual relationship negotiations are managed by the UL Legal Services Unit (LSU), with the Technology Transfer Office providing support on intellectual property related matters.

National Government

On behalf of UL, the Office provides government department and agencies with submissions on the development of national research policy and represents the university at various fora to discuss national research strategies and advocate for quality doctoral education. The Office's involvement in these submissions ensures we have insight into the development of national research policy and builds positive relationships with government agencies. Input to submissions is sought from University Research Committee and, where relevant, from academic staff across the university. This work also supports the dissemination of research outcomes while raising UL's profile with government partners.

Regional and Local Government

The Office maintains relationships within the region through its interactions with relevant regional bodies and actively participates in regional development initiatives, plans and strategies.

International Partners

The Office facilitates broad engagement with international universities and companies. This happens through various for a, such as EU research programmes, SFI Research Centres programme, Enterprise Ireland Centres Programme and its membership of international bodies such as YERUN: Young European Research University Network. The Office participates in international meetings, conferences and brokerage events.

8.5 Communication with Stakeholders (Customers & Partners)

The Office communicates with the campus community and the community external to the university through direct formal and informal mechanisms. The Office website is used to communicate the research office policies and procedures. The website includes a research process guide which profiles support Services to Researchers. This guide provides information on the services provided by university support departments including Accounts, Procurement, Research Support Services including post award, the Technology Transfer Office, Corporate Secretaries office and Human Resources.

Other formal and informal mechanisms of external communication include:

- Discussions at national committee meetings
- Events organisation - including briefings, seminars and workshops, conferences
- UI Connect, Website, social media and public relations
- Direct contact with external stakeholders, e.g. funding agencies, industry
- Contacts with other research offices
- Attendance of office staff at national and international forums, conferences and training events

Revision No.	Date	Approved by:	Details of Change
4	19/04/2021	VPR	Reflect restructure change with TTO reporting to COO and inclusion of correct name for University Research Committee.
5	13/12/2022	VPR	Reincorporate restructure change and additional services.
6	13/05/2024	OVPR MM	Incorporate Doctoral College function and the additional expansion of services.