

CCT College Dublin

ARC (Academic Research Collection)

CCT Case Studies

CCT Centre for Teaching and Learning

Winter 2-25-2022

Implementing a Research Strategy at CCT College

CCT College

Follow this and additional works at: <https://arc.cct.ie/cctcasestudies>



Part of the [Higher Education Commons](#)

**Case Study: Implementing a
Research Strategy**



'Implementing a Research Strategy at CCT College Dublin'

What was the nature of the project and when did it take place?

During the academic year, 2020-21, CCT College Dublin undertook several initiatives to advance the implementation of its five-year research strategy entitled: *Implementing a Research Strategy at CCT College Dublin, 2019-2024*. See Strategy at:

(https://arc.cct.ie/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1000&context=current_institutional_reports).

Initiatives executed in the academic year 2020/21 to support the on-going implementation of the institutional research strategy include:

- ✓ **The expansion of content on CCT's institutional repository: the *Academic Research Collection (ARC)*** with the aim of disseminating institutional research (staff and student) on an open access basis. CCT's College's institutional repository is available on the Digital Commons platform at arc.cct.ie. CCT is just the second higher education institution nationally to purchase Digital Commons software after Technological University Dublin. Cork Institute of Technology, now Munster Technological University has also purchased the platform. CCT student theses with a mark of 2.i upwards are also made available on arc.cct.ie.
- ✓ **The launch of a CCT Research Lunch and Learn Series**, (https://arc.cct.ie/lunch_learn/) in March 2021 to support staff development in relation to research activity
- ✓ Encouraging student engagement with **HECA's inaugural student Research Awards** (<https://bit.ly/3AEpiuk>) which were launched in 2021 with a closing date for submissions of June 30th.

Developing a vibrant research culture is a key priority for CCT College with the primary aim of enhancing curriculum design and the teaching and learning process. *The National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030* states that "All students must have access to teaching that has been kept up to date and relevant through scholarship, research and professional development" (2011, p.11). The publication *Core Statutory Criteria Developed by QQI for All Providers* (2016, p13) states that staff development must "Encourage scholarly activity, as appropriate, to strengthen the link between education, teaching and research."

Since its foundation in 2005, CCT College has had a central focus on research activity. CCT College's Strategic Plan 2018-2020 (2018, p.5) articulated a strategic aim of "Championing a co-operative teaching and research culture that connects with other higher education institutions, schools, industry, local communities, government and non-governmental development agencies." CCT College's new strategic plan (2021-23) published during the academic year 2021/22, reinforces an institutional commitment, "to increase investment in time and resources for the College to realise the strategic goals laid out in the first Institutional Research Strategy.... to enable teaching and learning which is research informed, research-oriented, research-based, and research-led." (2021 p.17)

CCT's Quality Assurance Manual also states that "A priority for CCT is to be a learning organisation where scholarship, professional development, innovation and research activity convert into knowledge that is used to inform curriculum delivery, curriculum content, programme design and development, enhancing the student experience, and for overall enrichment of the College and its community, critical reflection, understanding and insight" (CCT College Dublin, 2020, (p.246)

Which department(s), committee(s) or team(s) managed and implemented the project?

The Research Strategy is a college-wide initiative. Implementation is overseen by the Executive Leadership Team and Academic Council, and the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) coordinates the implementation through the CTL Forum which is a college / student partnership initiative.

Describe the aim(s) of the project?

CCT College's Research Strategy *Implementing a Research Strategy at CCT College Dublin, 2019-2024* aims to:

1. Embrace the full gamut of scholarly activity (peer-reviewed research, conference papers, publishing in professional magazines, poster presentations, the registering of patents, presenting at conferences, consulting etc.)
2. Conduct a thorough audit of existing research activity at CCT College to identify institutional research themes
3. Establish and maintain a centralised register of scholarly activity
4. Encourage research on teaching practice, industry relevant topics as well as disciplinary and cross-disciplinary research
5. Promote research pathways for faculty at all stages of their career
6. Promote the highest standards of research ethics
- 7. Encourage a vibrant culture of student research**
- 8. Provide training and educational opportunities for research**
- 9. Disseminate institutional research (staff and student) an open access institutional repository**
10. Support and encourage institutional publishing e.g. the publication of an annual institutional journal
11. Encourage intra and inter-institutional research partnerships

Since 2019, CCT has conducted a thorough audit of scholarly activity within the institution. An institutional Register of Scholarly Activity has been established that contains the details of 693 pieces of scholarly activity undertaken by CCT staff. Institutional research themes at CCT pertain to machine learning, artificial intelligence, dev ops, international business, student self-efficacy, quality assurance and the National Professional Development Framework amongst others. The College has a robust Research Ethics Committee, the operation of which is outlined in the CCT Quality Assurance Manual (2020, p.185)

Whilst all of the aims of the Research Strategy are prioritised, particular focus was given during the academic year 2021/22, to aims 7-9 inclusive, in relation to the expansion of content on CCT's institutional repository arc.cct.ie; the development of additional training opportunities for staff in relation to research activity and the dissemination and promotion of research undertaken by CCT Students.

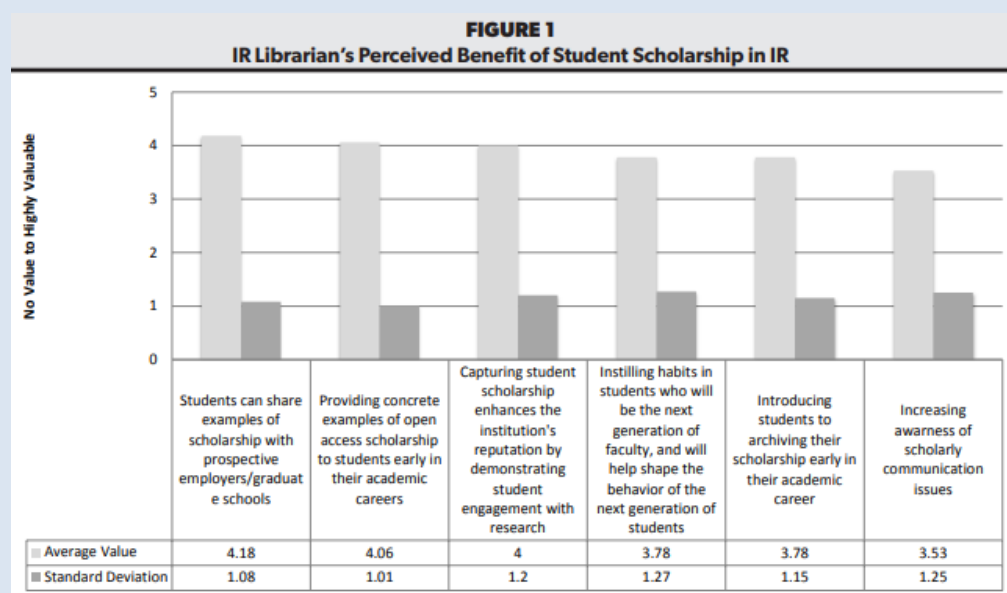
What were the intended learning outcomes or objectives of the project?

An institutional repository is an online platform for organising, preserving, and disseminating the intellectual output of an institution on an open access basis. (Crow, 2002). The development of an open access institutional repository at CCT College is in line with broader sectoral developments such as the 2019 publication by the Irish Government and the National Open Access Forum of the *National Action Plan for the Transition to an Open Research Environment*. *The National Action Plan for the Transition to an Open Research Environment* describes open research as having benefits such as supporting

- ✓ "The free flow of information across national and international research communities
- ✓ Contributing to research-enabled teaching and learning

- ✓ Citizen science
- ✓ Open innovation
- ✓ Greater transparency” (2019, p.3)

The aim of sharing CCT’s scholarly activity (staff and high-quality student work with a mark of 2.i upwards) on an open access basis shares these objectives and learning outcomes. High quality student work also provides exemplars to students. A study by the American Library Association surveyed a sample of librarians who manage open access institutional repositories about the importance of including high quality student work on these platforms. The findings of this paper are summarised in the chart below:



[Rozum, Thoms, Bates, and Barandiaran \(2015\)](#) (p.806)

The launch of a *CCT Research Lunch and Learn Series* in March 2021, provides training opportunities to staff on research activity, to expand CCT’s research output, encourage peer dialogue with sectoral experts and support the formation of research partnerships.

During the academic year 2020/21, HECA launched the inaugural *HECA Student Research Awards*. CCT prioritised engagement with the awards by its student body as part of institutional student success initiatives. The *National Understanding of Student Success* published by the National Forum in 2019 references the work of Kuh (p.11) who outlines ten high impact educational experiences that foster student success. He includes student research as one of these high impact educational experiences. CCT supports a vibrant student research culture as part of institutional student success initiatives.

Describe the project / initiative

CCT’s institutional repository is available at arc.cct.ie on Digital Commons software which is a Bepress product. Further information on Digital Commons software is available at: (<https://bepress.com/products/digital-commons/>). [Arc.cct.ie](http://arc.cct.ie) showcases on a fully open access basis the full spectrum of scholarly activity at CCT College including academic papers, books, presentations and student theses (with a mark of 2.i upwards).

[Arc.cct.ie](https://arc.cct.ie) showcases the output of the CCT Centre for Teaching and Learning such as the slides and recordings of the CCT Excellence in Teaching Series (https://arc.cct.ie/guest_lecture/) and CCT's Research Lunch and Learn Series (https://arc.cct.ie/lunch_learn/). [Arc.cct.ie](https://arc.cct.ie) also publishes on an open access basis CCT's publishable quality assurance documentation (https://arc.cct.ie/quality_assurance_manual/) and institutional strategies (https://arc.cct.ie/strategy_documents/). In November 2020, CCT College was invited by Digital Commons to deliver a presentation at an international event on the development of an institutional repository at CCT College Dublin. See slides at: https://arc.cct.ie/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1005&context=fac_presentations.

The CCT Research Lunch and Learn Series was launched in March 2021 with a talk by Ruth Ní Bheoláin, Quality Assurance Manager at Hibernia College and Chair of HECA's HAQEF Committee. Ruth described her experience as an early researcher of publishing a scoping literature review entitled: *Student Partners in Assessment* (<https://doras.dcu.ie/25254/>) with co-authors Rob Lowney and Fiona O' Riordan of Dublin City University. The recording of the webinar is available on arc.cct.ie at: https://arc.cct.ie/lunch_learn/1/

A second Research Lunch and Learn talk was delivered in 2021 with a talk by Dr James Brunton of DCU, which was entitled *Creating and Sustaining a High-Quality Research Output as a Busy Lecturer*. This talk was also extended to the wider sector. James is Programme Chair of the BA in Humanities in the Department of Open Education at DCU. He has extensive research output (see his staff profile at: https://www.dcu.ie/researchsupport/research-profile?person_id=14334#tab-research). James' talk as part of the Research Lunch and Learn Series focused predominately on research pertaining to teaching and learning activities. The recording of this webinar is available at: https://arc.cct.ie/lunch_learn/2/.

In 2021, HECA launched the HECA Research Awards with a closing date of 30th June. The accompanying website (<https://bit.ly/3AvZ25s>) describes the awards as having the following aims:

"The HECA Student Research Awards (HSRA) is an opportunity for students to showcase their research to a wider academic community. The aim is to promote the research studies that are currently being undertaken in our colleges, and to support and encourage further study in these areas. A Panel of research experts from a number of academic institutions will assess the posters and decide on a winner." ([HECA, 2021](#)).

What data was collected during this project / initiative

Feedback forms are distributed to attendees of the CCT Research Lunch and Learn Series in which they describe the Research Lunch and Learn events as effective in stimulating and encouraging research activity. Survey results for Ruth's talk as an example can be viewed at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-8VV256DJ9/>. The talk received a 4.7 star rating out of 5 with Ruth's delivery being described as "excellent." Comments to the following questions included:

What was your key takeaway from the event?

- "Take it one step at a time with regards to Research - set yourself up at the start with the right tools and plan accordingly! Look at a scoping review"
- "To publish isn't such a big leap once one has something written"
- "That starting out as a researcher doesn't have to be complex or as daunting as it may appear."

How will this event change your practice on the ground?

- "Pick a research topic and engage!"
- "Yes hope to look at something next semester"

- “It encouraged me to get involved in researching. Something that I always wanted, but I had never known how to start”

What further classes would you like?

- Peer review publication process
- Collaborative publication with students

In relation to arc.cct.ie there are now 204 pieces of scholarly activity on the platform which have been downloaded 16,896 times (15, 541 downloads in the last year) which is a testament to the efforts made to expand content on the platform during the academic year 2020/21. It must be noted that CCT is a small college relative to other institutions. Current practice that all student research projects with a mark of 2.i upwards will be automatically displayed on arc.cct.ie, with an opt out policy for students who do not want their work shared on the platform, will increase the content on arc.cct.ie notably. Staff content is displayed on arc.cct.ie, subject to staff consent and in line with the copyright conditions of academic publications.

CCT College students won first prize and third prize in the inaugural HECA Research Awards. See announcement at: <https://heca.ie/announcing-the-winners/>. This is a testament to the efforts made by the College to promote the Awards, (the closing date for submissions was 30th June).

What insights were gleaned from the project data?

Project data reveals that in the academic year 2020-21, CCT College Dublin further advanced the implementation of its Research Strategy. In line with sectoral developments, CCT now prioritises open research practices such as the sharing and dissemination of its intellectual output on an open access basis via its institutional repository arc.cct.ie. Feedback to the College’s inaugural *Research Lunch and Learn Series* demonstrated the impact that talks by peers from the sector can have in relation to stimulating research output. Sharing high quality student research on arc.cct.ie and encouraging engagement with student research awards are also effective mechanisms for supporting a vibrant student research culture.

How has practice changed on the ground at CCT as a result of the project?

CCT College Dublin has had a strong commitment to fostering research activity since its foundation in 2005. Changes to practice on the ground relate to the publication of the College’s first formal research strategy in 2019 and the launch of a staff development initiative specifically in the context of research: The *CCT Research Lunch and Learn Series*. Additionally, CCT staff and student research is conducted on the ground in the context of open research, transparency, parity of standing between teaching related and disciplinary related research, student success and student partnership.

CCT College Dublin is now a member of the Library Association of Ireland’s Open Scholarship Group (<https://www.libraryassociation.ie/open-scholarship-group/>) and in 2021 compered a national event held by the group entitled: *Open Scholarship 101* (<https://youtu.be/tXkNK9YVxY0>). Screen shots in the appendix demonstrate that as result of the aforementioned approaches, CCT’s scholarly output is now read all over the world. This transparency is important for all stakeholders: students, faculty, employers, the public and accreditation agencies.

Plans for an annual institutional, open access academic journal are currently being submitted through internal governance structures. The establishment of an open access institutional journal at CCT College which accepts submission from CCT students and staff will build further on the culture of transparency, openness and inclusion that informs the research culture at CCT College Dublin.

Reference List

Rozum, B. et al. (2015) '*We Have Only Scratched the Surface: The Role of Student Research in Institutional Repositories*', American Library Association. [Online]. Available at:

[file:///C:/Users/Sarah/Downloads/Rozum Thoms Bates Barandiaran.pdf](file:///C:/Users/Sarah/Downloads/Rozum%20Thoms%20Bates%20Barandiaran.pdf). [Accessed 21 January 2021]

Crow, R. (2002) The Case for Institutional Repositories: A SPARC Position Paper. Scholarly Publishing & Academic Resources Coalition, Washington. [Online]. http://www.arl.org/sparc/bm~doc/ir_final_release_102.pdf

CCT College Dublin (2019), *Implementing a Research Strategy at CCT College Dublin 2019 - 2024*. [online] ARC (Academic Research Collection). Available at: https://arc.cct.ie/strategy_documents/2/ [Accessed 22 January 2022].

CCT College Dublin (2018), *Strategic Plan 2018-2020*. [online] Available at: https://arc.cct.ie/strategy_documents/1/ [Accessed 24 January 2022].

CCT College Dublin (2020), Quality Assurance Manual. [Online] Available at: https://arc.cct.ie/quality_assurance_manual/1/

CCT College Dublin (2021), *Strategic Plan 2021-2023*. [online] ARC (Academic Research Collection). Available at: https://arc.cct.ie/strategy_documents/6/ [Accessed 24 January 2022].

Higher Education Strategy Group (2011), *National strategy for higher education to 2030: report of the Strategy Group*. [Online] Dublin: Dept. of Education and Skills: Distributed by the Government Publications Sales Office. Available at: <https://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2017/06/National-Strategy-for-Higher-Education-2030.pdf>. [Accessed 23 January 2022].

National Open Research Forum. (2020) *National Framework on the Transition to an Open Research Environment, Digital Repository of Ireland* [Online], Digital Repository of Ireland [Depositing Institution]. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.7486/DRI.0287dj04d>. [Accessed 23rd January, 2022].

Quality and Qualifications Ireland, [online] Core Statutory Guidelines Developed by Quality and Qualifications Ireland. Available at: <https://qaguidelines.qqi.ie/core.html#core-issuu> [Accessed 27 January 2022].

Images

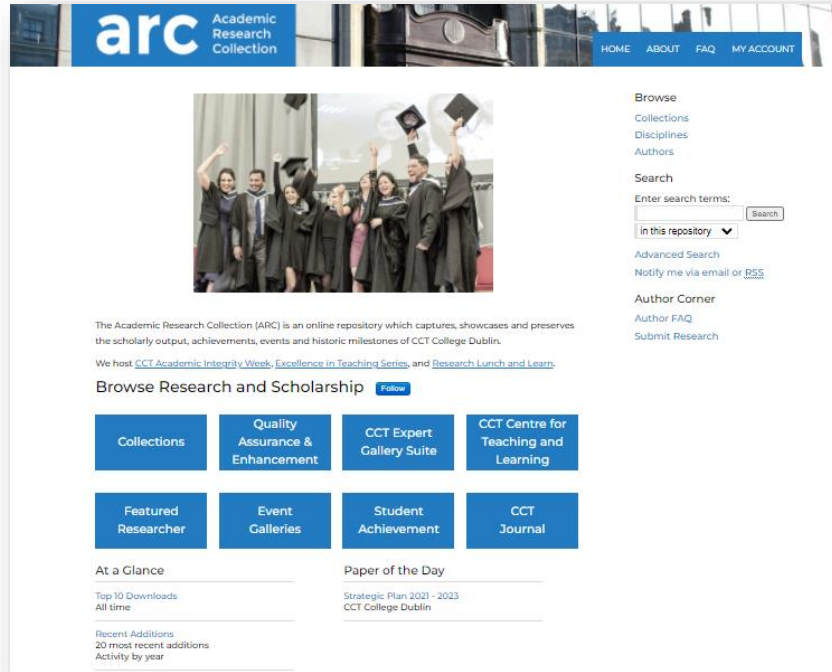
Linking research and teaching graphic from the *National Strategy for Higher Education (2030)* included in the *Implementing a Research Strategy at CCT College, 2019-24*

Fig 4 Approaches to Linking Research and Teaching

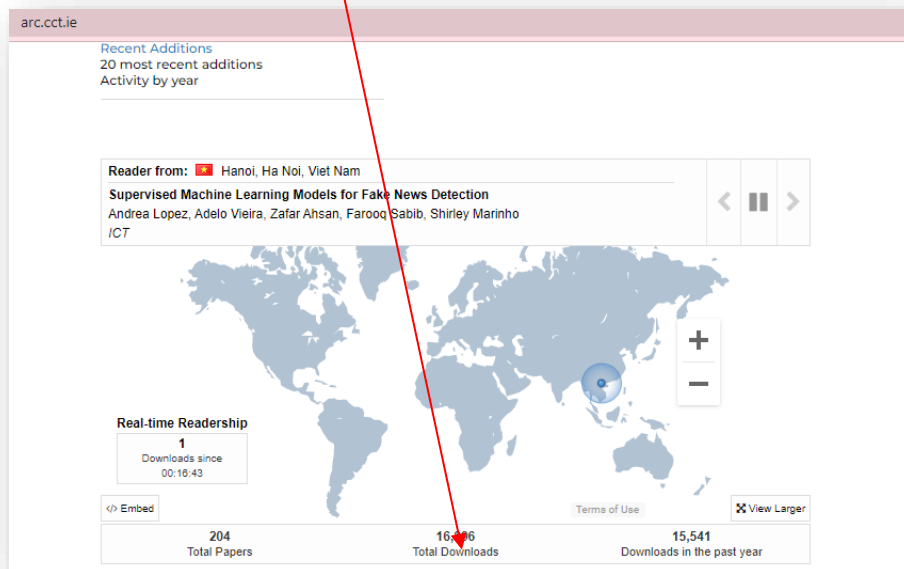
Approach	Description
Research-Led	The curriculum is led by the research interests of the teachers
Research-orientated	The curriculum emphasises the processes by which knowledge is produced
Research-based	The curriculum includes activities in which students actually conduct research through projects and other course works
Research informed	The curriculum is informed by systematic enquiry into the teaching and learning process itself

Source: National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 (2011, p.54)

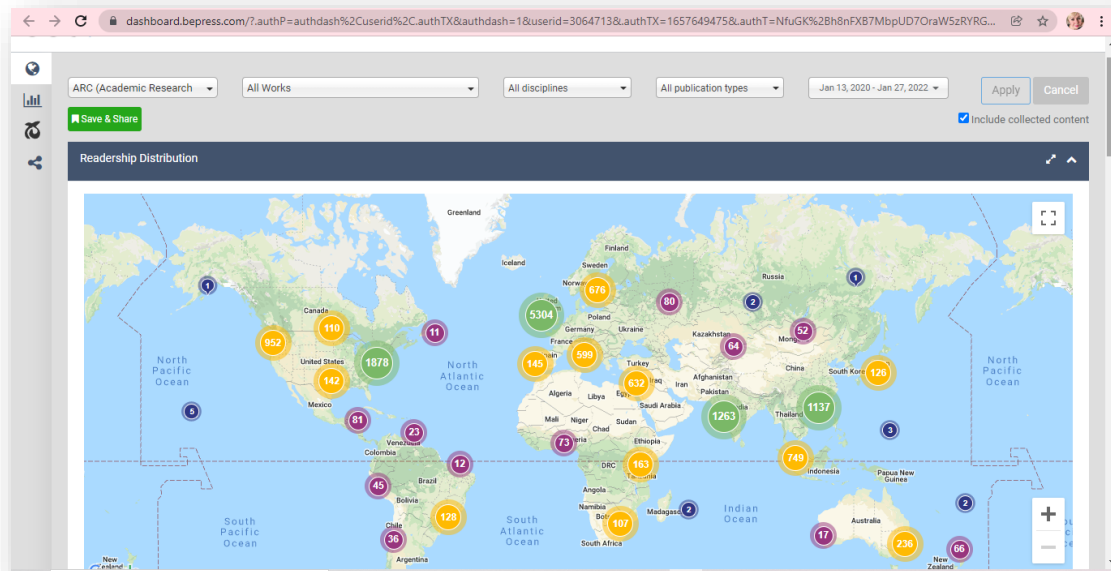
Home page of CCT College's Institutional Repository Arc.cct.ie



Screenshot of arc.cct.ie with the number of global downloads since January 2020, (15,541 downloads have been made in the past year).



Downloads of Content on arc.cct.ie around the world. See screenshot below and visual at:
<https://bit.ly/3u54UBw>



CCT Research Lunch and Learn Series (https://arc.cct.ie/lunch_learn/)

**CCT College Dublin
Research Lunch and Learn**



"Writing a Scoping Literature Review"
A Guest Lecture by *Ruth Ni Bheoldain*

Ruth Ni Bheoldain is the Quality Improvement Officer at Ireland's College Dublin, Chair of Health Sciences Quality Improvement Program in International Public Health in Health Sciences and Director of Health Improvement Research Unit in International Health.

Friday, 26th March 2021, 1:00pm
<https://room.us379585023663>
To book a place, please contact moreill@cct.ie

cct | College Dublin
Computing + IT + Business



HECA Research Awards Full details about winners at: <https://bit.ly/3IFqZur>

A CCT College student secured 1st prize. See winning submission at: <https://heca.ie/wp-content/uploads/Academic-Poster-Mobile-Application-to-travel-the-world-using-Virtual-Reality-and-Machine-Learning.pdf>. CCT also secured 3rd prize.

