

### **Group 3: Non-Academic Staff**

#### **Plan for Integration of GCDE into your work.**

##### **Title of your job and brief summary of your work:**

**Acting Sustainability Officer;** The Sustainability Officer coordinates the delivery of UCC's [Sustainability Strategy](#) across UCC facilities, operations, research, teaching and learning. A key part of this role is supporting and enabling sustainability and climate action amongst UCC students, staff and the wider community. The Sustainability Officer supports the university in working toward reduced environmental impact across all functions. While the position of Sustainability Officer is homed under the Office of Buildings & Estates (much of the role relates to sustainability in the built environment), the role extends beyond just the estate and takes a whole institutional approach to sustainability. A large part of the role of Sustainability Officer is the coordination of the Green Campus Programme at UCC. The Green Campus Programme is Student led, Research Informed and Practise Focussed, with the aim to build and promote a culture of sustainability and environmental responsibility throughout the university community and further afield. The Sustainability Officer thus engages extensively with the university community (staff & students) to nurture the knowledge, skills and values of sustainability that will enable both individual and institutional action and activism. This includes the integration of sustainability into, UCC core functions, student activities, research, teaching and learning. An additional element of the role is the co-coordination of a University Wide Module in Sustainability (UW0005).

##### **Name of Department, Section, Centre or School:**

Office of the Director of Buildings & Estates.

##### **Description of the work of your Department, Section, Centre or School:**

The Office of Buildings & Estates are the primary means through which the estates and built infrastructure of the University are managed. The Buildings & Estates Office includes Capital Projects, General Services, Commuter Planning, Energy & Utilities Management, Grounds Maintenance, Room Bookings, Heritage Services etc. The Buildings and Estates Office liase closely with all university stakeholders including academic departments and contracted service providers.

##### **Existing GCDE aspects of your work (e.g. policy development, projects, events, purchasing considerations, grounds work, pastoral care)**

##### **UCC Sustainability Strategy:**

The UCC Sustainability Strategy was published in 2016 in order to guide the increased pace at which action for environmental sustainability was taking place throughout UCC. Like the UCC Strategic Plan, the Sustainability Strategy centres on the values of leadership, accountability, collaboration & diversity (amongst others), but also encompasses the value of stewardship, recognising UCC's role as educators, leaders and agents of change in the journey toward sustainability. The Sustainability Strategy relies on the Brundtland et al (1987) definition of sustainability which refers to those social, environmental and economic principles which allow us to create and live in a society which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their

own needs, that lead us towards a thriving, equitable and ecologically healthy world for all. Part of the strategy's mission is to "facilitate the development and empowerment of future leaders in sustainability..." and to "engage our student body, staff and wider community in becoming active citizens for sustainability"

These objectives are addressed through nine key areas for implementation, the first of which is "Sustainability Citizenship" which aims to "engage our student body, staff and wider community in becoming active citizens for sustainability, and establish sustainability citizenship as a central component of the University ethos - with students and staff giving a commitment to learning more about sustainability and taking responsible action." The second key area for implementation is "Teaching & Learning" which aims to "foster a culture of sustainability citizenship within the University Community through both formal and informal teaching and learning opportunities and activities". These key areas are directly linked with Global Citizenship Education as they aim to empower learners, and their educators, to engage and assume active roles in addressing and resolving local and global challenges.

### **Green Campus Programme**

The Green Campus Programme is an environmental education programme and award system based on the Eco-Schools Programme coordinated in Ireland by An Taisce and internationally by The Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) (Ryan-Fogarty et al., 2016). FEE is the world's largest environmental education organisation, recognised by UNESCO and UNEP as a global leader in Education for Sustainable Development (FEE, 2019). The Green Campus Programme acknowledges long-term commitment to continual improvement from the entire organisation through the full implementation of a 7-step programme. In order to obtain and/or retain 'Green Flag' status, the programme must be completed for six different themes of environmental sustainability and more recently 'Global Citizenship'.

The theme of Global Citizenship encourages participating HEIs to consider the social, justice and human rights implications of their institution's activities, and their interlinkages with global environmental challenges. For example when considering topics such as an institutions contributions to climate change, the themes of climate justice, links between climate and gender, and the displacement of people as a result of climate change emerge. Similar themes emerge with respect to responsible consumption & production, water & sanitation, and the concept of sustainable development in general. It is important for institutions to recognise their responsibilities toward others globally, and ensure that they accept their fair share of the responsibility, and take action locally.

At UCC the Green Campus Programme takes a whole institution approach to sustainability. It is "student led, research informed and practise focussed". The intent is that by following the seven step process our staff, students and indeed our graduates will become equipped with the attitudes, values and skills required

to advocate for and take action for sustainability locally and globally (i.e. placing students (and staff) at the centre of the decision making process, allowing them contribute to the review of university activities, empowering them to take action, valuing their evaluations and critique, embedding sustainability in the curriculum, encouraging them to inform and involve others, and holding the institution to account).

**The Green Campus Committee** is primary means by which students are represented in the decision making process for matters relating to sustainability at UCC. The committee is Co-Chaired by a member of UCC EnviroSoc & by the Deputy President of the UCC Students Union. Both the society and the students union have written this into their constitutions in order to ensure continuity of student representation from year to year. The committee is composed of students from across UCC that have been elected to their roles in an AGM, however committee meetings are open for all students and staff to attend. Engagement with the Green Campus Committee primarily comes from students that are interested in environmental, sustainability, social justice issues, with strong representation by members of the Environmental Society and International Development Society.

The activities of the Sustainability Officer and Green Campus Committee align strongly with the values of GCDE such as developing empathy and solidarity, respect for self and others, and instilling a sense of social responsibility and belonging. This includes capacity to critically examine power and privilege, and a commitment to social justice and sustainable use of the environment. Finally, the belief that you can make a difference is a central value of the Green Campus Programme. The Sustainability Officer works to engage the wider campus community with these values through awareness and engagement campaigns, while also providing avenues for students and staff to enact these values through local action & activism. This supports the development of GDCE skills such as 'direct action', advocacy, requesting accountability, influencing policy, etc.

The Sustainability Officer (SO) is the primary staff liaison and mentor to the students of the Green Campus Committee (GCC). The SO must ensure that students are kept up to date and adequately informed and equipped to undertake their duties. This involves acting as the primary liaison between students and the various agents of the university, and helping the students build confidence in their abilities through direct support, and advice, ensuring that the student voice is strong, articulate and well represented. Acting as an advocate, the SO must also ensure that the student voice is recognised and valued by colleagues and management. The SO also continuously seeks opportunity for the GCC to collaborate with colleagues, placing the student perspective as a central component of local institutional action for sustainability. The most important element of this role is encouraging student activism, ensuring that students are confident that they can speak freely without fear of repercussion or failure.

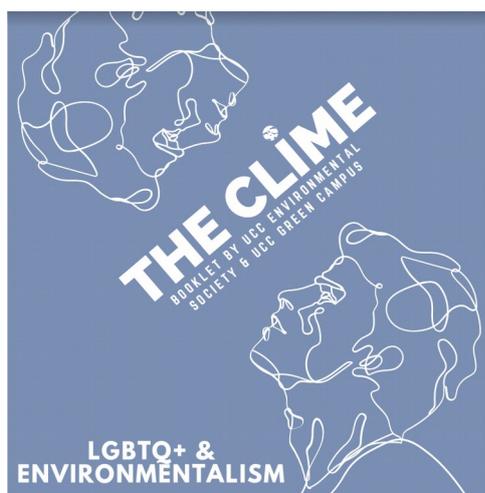
A recent example of the collaborative work of the GCC and SO was a campaign called "Build Back better - A UCC Climate Assembly" which ran in March 2021. This two week long event was a public participation campaign modelled broadly on the concept of the 'Citizen's Assembly'. Organised by the GCC, Student's Union and UCC Societies, with extensive support from the SO, the event invited

the citizens of UCC to review the progress of UCC Sustainability Strategy and make recommendations to senior management as citizens of the university community. The SO supported the student body in organising this campaign, liaising with colleagues and students to create 9 workshops over two weeks. The student body have recently published their final report with ambitious recommendations for UCC to take action, including a commitment to action for climate justice. The GCC also directly addressed the Interim President of UCC with their findings, concerns and recommendations, and sought commitment to take more immediate Climate Action, embedding a Climate Justice and Just Transition approach.

### **Outreach, Engagement & Awareness Raising**

The SO and GCC run a number of awareness raising and educational campaigns each year. These are aimed at educating staff and students about various global environmental challenges, the need for local action, and the belief that everybody can make a difference. These campaigns are intended to be informative and encourage collective action, recognising the role played by wider systems without placing blame on the individual. During the pandemic these awareness campaigns were forced to move online, taking the form of social media campaigns and webinars. The pandemic has highlighted some of the deep inequalities in society and made people reevaluate their connections with the planet and global communities. In that context the students of the GCC developed a number of campaigns centring on social inequalities, climate justice, eco-feminism and intersectionality in environmentalism.

*'The Clime'* is an booklet series published online by UCC Green campus & UCC Environmental Society. The booklet is created to provide the reader with a condensed resource pack relating to specific environmental and social topics. Each issue is curated by the students and delve into social themes linked to environmentalism and sustainability. The series highlights social justice and intersectionality in environmentalism and equips the reader with resources to educate themselves and take action.



In March 2021, the GCC and EnviroSoc celebrated International Women's Day with a series of comic strips and infographics produced by students. These infographics illustrated how gender and climate change are related, highlighting

how women are more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, and callin for gender equality in UCC, and diversity in the decision making processes.



## UW0005 - University Wide Module in Sustainability.

The inclusive, university wide approach taken in Green Campus has been adopted to develop a university wide module on sustainability, through partnership and collaboration across all sectors of campus and beyond. The module is co-coordinated by Dr Ger Mullaly, Dept. of Sociology & Crimnology, the Sustainability Officer, and Sandra Barry, Buildings & Estates. The module features over 20 different contributors, representing all schools of UCC, encompassing about 15 different disciplines, as well as numerous members of the Green Forum and the Green Campus committee, and key operations staff from Buildings and Estates. It has been developed freely by all participants involved in course and content development. The module is open to students and staff of the university as well as the general public, and is free of charge to complete. The module is available for additional academic credit, Continuing Professional Development, or a UCC Green Campus Digital Badge. In 2021 the module was also offered as a core module on the HDip Sustainability in Enterprise. In 2021 the module moved online to great success, with a total of 141 staff, students and external participants attending the module.

The fundamental focus of the module is around sustainability citizenship, with the overarching theme of 'Putting sustainability in its place: Putting yourself in the picture'. The module places a strong emphasis on transdisciplinarity, illustrating how the many societal and environmental challenges and solutions are indivisible and interlinked. The module asks participants to think critically about global challenges and reflect on them through a personal perspective and local lens. The localisation of the SDGs thus emerges as a strong theme, as does partnership, community and collective action. This module places a large emphasis on the values of empathy, solidarity, respect and social responsibility, asking participants to critically examine power structures and the systems that contribute to global challenges. Importantly the module aims to instil the belief participants can contribute positively and make a difference, no matter their discipline or area of expertise. The module highlights many avenues for direct action including personal reflection, advocacy, informing policy and requesting accountability of those in positions of power.

Discussion and debate are encouraged throughout each class, and the chat function for online classes is used to great effect! Infographics of the chat function are created following each session. The module is assessed via a weekly learning diary, a self-reflective report, and participation in a group project. For the group projects groups are assigned in a way that ensures that staff and students of a variety of disciplines work together, each bringing their unique perspective and discipline. Groups are assigned an SDG and tasked with identifying a local challenge, and by putting themselves in the picture, discuss potential solutions to that challenge. Each participant is encouraged to bring their unique perspective, skills and attributes to the group.

### **Which aspects of your work do you plan to work on from a Global Citizenship and Development Education Perspective?**

Sustainability Strategy Revision

Climate Action Planning: Climate Justice & Just Transition

Model COP26

Workshop on how to make effective submissions to public consultations.

#### **Plan for integration of GCDE into your work:**

1. Global Citizenship and Development Education Objectives (e.g. effecting change in policy, developing projects, organising events, purchasing considerations, grounds work, pastoral care, etc.).
2. Values / Ethics: What GCDE values or ethical approaches underpin these plans?
3. Local/Global: how can you make local and global connections, from a global justice perspective, within this work plan?
4. Content: what GCDE themes or knowledge will you address in your work?
5. Methodologies: What GCDE methodologies will you use to implement your plan?
6. Framing/Positioning: what GCDE theories, philosophical underpinning or framing will influence this work?
7. Action: thinking of the change you wish to make, what action/s will you or others engage with as part of or as a result of this work?
8. Skills: What skills do you or your participants need to achieve your GCDE work objectives? How will you develop these skills?
9. Practical considerations: e.g. what resources do you need? How much time do you have for this work? What is realistic in this timeframe?