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Authors	Harrington, Elaine
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UCC
University College Cork, Ireland
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

‘You can do anything, but not everything’:
Using UCC’s Service Principles to optimise services in UCC Library’s Client Services

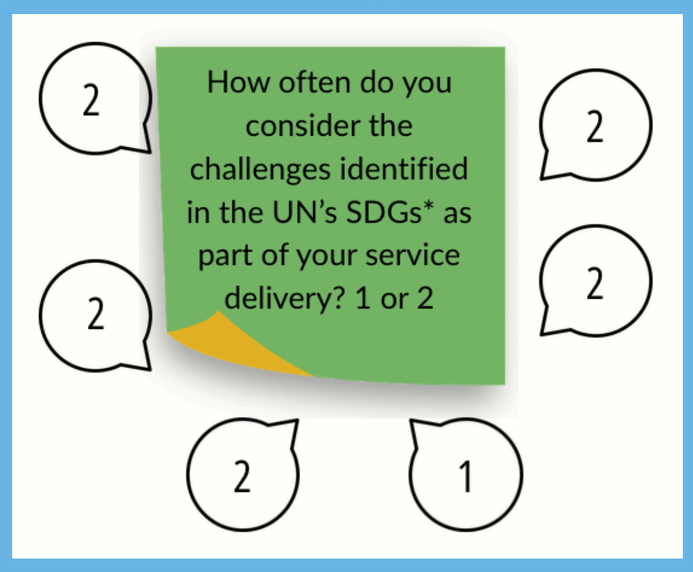
UCC’s Service Principles

UCC’s Service Principles were developed to ensure high-quality service delivery to students, providing staff with tools to evaluate and enhance their procedures. Within UCC Library’s Client Services, these principles helped the team define their roles and fostered a unified identity and shared goals. This initiative also supported the integration of improvement areas into individual development plans as part of a Performance Development Review cycle.

Evaluating Client Services through a Service Principles Lens

The Library’s Vision & Plan Service Excellence principle anchored the project. In Summer 2025, the team assessed the five principles — Trust, Connected & Responsive, Universally Designed, Sustainable & Innovative, and Continuously Improving — individually, in groups and at team level. 55 service principle questions were each scored out of 5 and the team scored 19 of these with a 1 or 2. From these the team identified three key areas and focused on critical questions to enhance service quality. Quarterly check-ins were established to maintain commitment and an annual reassessment is forthcoming.

The team had already adopted the phrase “you can do anything, but not everything” which they used to prioritise core practices. Using this approach with the GROW (Goal, Reality, Obstacles/Options and Way Forward) coaching model, the team further clarified goals, increased accountability, enhanced problem-solving, and improved communication, ultimately boosting service quality. This in turn fostered stronger team relationships and drove performance.



The team used whiteboard post-its to reconcile different group scores and facilitate reflection.

Enhancing Services That Are...

Continuously Improving

Learning from external stakeholders to enhance service quality and impact

Sustainable & Innovative

Using user feedback to enhance how service operates to the principles of sustainability and innovation delivery

Consider challenges identified in the UN’s SDGs.

Universally Designed

Consistently prioritising universal design and accessibility in the service.





Outcomes

Transition Year Programme Feedback

- Recommended reshaping first-year orientation workshops: length, platform and focusing on types of spaces.
- Revamped workshops had greater success rate in February 2025.
- Delivered a reverse tour identifying areas to improve: 2nd floor, red zones.
- Service as a Space: completed chair and desk audits enhancing service quality.
- Identified suggestions for an audit for the next cohort to enhance service quality.

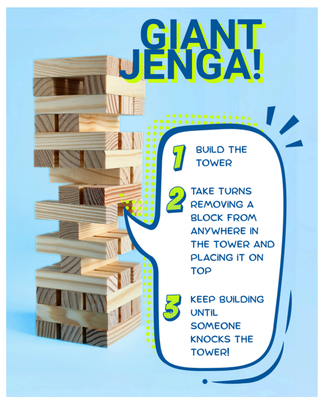
Website & Signage

- Collaborated with Library’s EDI group standardising signage templates using accessible fonts and colours.
- Added alt-text to FAQs with images.

Staff Resources & Development

- Created a new digital booklet for staff introducing library services. Developed using feedback from staff new to UCC in 2024/2025.
- Student Intern gave recommendations to Client Services team for data analysis upskilling.





Engagement

- Student Intern analysed library data identifying trends for spaces, services and collections.
- Relocated feedback/contact information to inside group study rooms.
- Used Instagram polls for students to select which vegetables to grow in Green Towers aeroponics.
- Implemented new online form for recording incidental feedback - added coat hooks to single-person study pods.
- Regular collaboration with Student Engagement & Employment Co-ordinator. Providing new games to encourage breaks.

Future Initiatives & Conclusion

The 2025 Leaving Cert access programme will include a feedback form for service enhancement. The Client Services team are developing a website space filter tool.

The team appreciated the service principles activity facilitating diverse opinions and perspectives, and how their input influenced and shaped future developments. The activity encouraged critical thinking and highlighted the interplay between Client Services and student needs. This process sparked innovation and generated new ideas, and built on the six thinking hats method the team used for problem-solving.

Elaine Harrington
Client Services Team Lead
e.harrington@ucc.ie

Acknowledgements

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