



# Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

between



University College Dublin, National University of  
Ireland, Dublin  
and

Mbarara University of Science and Technology, Uganda

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## 1. Purpose

This non-binding Memorandum of Understanding describes the general terms of collaboration between University College Dublin, National University of Ireland, Dublin ('UCD') acting through its School of Public Health, Physiotherapy and Sports Science, and the Department of Physiotherapy of Mbarara University of Science and Technology (MUST).

## 2. Background

University College Dublin is Ireland's largest university and is ranked in the world's top 100 university in clinical, preclinical, and health sciences. It was founded in 1854 and has made a unique and substantial contribution to the creation of modern Ireland, based on successful engagement with Irish society on every level and across every sphere of activity. UCD is one of Europe's leading research-intensive universities; an environment where undergraduate education, masters and PhD training, research, innovation and community engagement form a dynamic spectrum of activity. The international standing of UCD has grown in recent years; it is currently ranked within the top 1% of institutions world-wide. UCD is also Ireland's most globally engaged university with over 30,000 students drawn from over 120 countries, and includes 5,500 students based at locations outside of Ireland.

Physiotherapy at UCD is based in the multidisciplinary School of Public Health, Physiotherapy, and Sports Science. The physiotherapy programme at UCD is more than 60 years old and it is the largest provider of undergraduate and graduate physiotherapy education in Ireland. There are two entry-to-practice level programs in physiotherapy: a 4-year BSc physiotherapy program and a 2-year professional master of physiotherapy programme. It also offers a range of post-graduate programmes for physiotherapists.

Mbarara University of Science and Technology (MUST) was established as the second public university in Uganda. It was founded in 1989 and is located in the south-western region of the country. MUST's mission is to provide quality and relevant education at national and international

level with particular emphasis on Science and Technology and its application to community development. The university has an enrollment of over 3,000 students in 6 faculties and 2 institutes (Faculty of Medicine, Faculty of Science, Faculty of Business & Management Sciences, Faculty of Interdisciplinary Studies, Faculty of Computing and Informatics, Faculty of Applied Sciences and Technology, Institute of Tropical Forest Conservation and Institute of Maternal, Newborn and Child Health). The Faculty of Medicine trains students in medicine, nursing, medical laboratory science, pharmacy, pharmaceutical science, physiotherapy and counseling at a variety of diploma, degree, and postgraduate levels. The vision of the Faculty is "to be recognized as a centre of excellence in health sciences education, research, and community service."

The Physiotherapy Programme was envisioned by staff in the neighbouring government hospital in 2007 and started in 2012. It is a 4 year degree programme. The mission of the Department of Physiotherapy is "To provide high quality evidence based education in Physiotherapy with emphasis on producing innovative, research orientated students who will translate the knowledge and skills into practices that will improve the health and well-being of nation and beyond. "

The relationship between UCD and MUST began in 2015 when Dr O'Sullivan visited the Department of Physiotherapy at MUST for a meeting to explore the possibility of developing a partnership between the two institutions. During the summer of 2015, physiotherapy students from MUST voluntarily joined students from UCD who were on a clinical placement in Church of Uganda Kisiizi Hospital. This was regarded by the students as a very valuable learning experience for all involved. In 2016 there were bilateral visits to both institutions by two members of staff of each of the respective physiotherapy programmes. These visits entailed general discussion with a variety of stakeholders including students, academic and clinical staff, and clinical site visits. At the end of both visits, a structured workshop using an appreciative inquiry methodology was undertaken. The purpose of the structured workshops was to harness the knowledge and experience of academic and clinical colleagues to best identify the priorities for the partnership and shape the collaboration going forward. A further meeting was held at the World Confederation of Physical Therapy congress in Cape Town, South Africa in 2017 and regular Skype meetings are held.

The collaboration outlined in this Memorandum of Understanding will strengthen the relationship between UCD and MUST staff and students, by promoting intellectual exchange, joint learning and research initiatives, and joint clinical experiences for students, with the intention of strengthening rehabilitation in global health. The partnership will be reviewed within five years of this MOU's signing, to assess outcomes and determine the potential for ongoing cooperation.

### **3. Objectives**

The objectives of the collaboration are to:

1. To develop joint online learning activities in the area of international health for students affiliated with both institutions.
2. To expand postgraduate training and collaborative research opportunities.
3. To provide joint clinical learning opportunities for students affiliated with both institutions.

