

UCC Cork University Business School

Design Team – Request for Tender Brief

New Business School Development

November 2026

1. Introduction

University College Cork (UCC) intends to develop a new purpose-built facility for Cork University Business School (CUBS) on the site of the existing Perrott's Avenue car park, adjacent to College Road and within the main university campus.

The proposed development forms a key component of the University's long-term academic infrastructure strategy and supports the continued development of CUBS as an internationally recognised, triple-accredited business school. The completed development shall comprise of approximately 7,250 sqm of accommodation and will provide a modern academic environment supporting innovative teaching, research, executive education, entrepreneurship and industry engagement. The building will act as the focal point for the School and provide accommodation that is flexible and capable of responding to future educational practices including highly collaborative, digital and AI-enabled learning. Sustainability, accessibility, operational efficiency and value for money will be embedded within all aspects of the design.

The new CUBS building will deliver an enhanced student and staff experience and ensure that the school remains positioned to thrive in a world that needs business, workers and citizens to change, be more responsible, more innovative, and do better.

The project is expected to become a landmark academic building and an important gateway destination within the UCC campus.

2. Strategic Context

2.1 University College Cork

With a student population of more than 26,000 students and a worldwide alumni network exceeding 225,000 graduates, UCC is recognised internationally for its research excellence and global impact. In the QS World University Rankings 2027, the university was ranked 220th globally. The University has been a pioneer in environmental sustainability, becoming the world's first university to receive Green Campus status.

CUBS' inclusion in a new 5-year University capital development plan, approved by Governing Authority (GA) in March 2026, reflects UCC's long-term vision to enhance teaching and learning environments, expand research capacity, and deliver modern, inclusive facilities that meet the needs of a growing and diverse university community. The development of a new home for CUBS supports these ambitions by providing accommodation capable of addressing both current and future educational requirements.

The project will help to enhance student recruitment, support postgraduate growth, increase international visibility, strengthen industry engagement and improve research competitiveness.


Cork University Business School
over the last 5 years
In 2025, the school has achieved **triple crown accreditation**
ASSOCIATION OF MBAS ACCREDITED
AACSB ACCREDITED
EQUIS
Achieved **Bronze Athena Swan accreditation** and **Amber Pieta Flag**
Athena SWAN
pieta
AMBER FLAG
2900+
Undergraduate students for 2025/26 and
700+
Postgraduate students
Since 2020, CUBS has raised over
€5m
in philanthropic funding
Appointed **17**
sustainability-focused academic positions, including an **AIB-funded Professorship & Lectureship**
114%
increase in international students between 2020-2025
Launched an **MSc** in **International Sustainable Business**
140+
Core Faculty
45+
Professional Staff
International students represent **62** countries across **6** continents
380+
corporate partners
162%
Growth in International Postgraduate Intake
32,000+
strong alumni across
42
countries
Programmes with
93+%
Graduate Employment Within 6 Months
Decarbonisation of the O'Rahilly building heating system, **reducing the heating load by by 49% & carbon emissions by 40%**
Generating over
€600,000
annually in strategic partnerships
€8M+
in Research Income
300+
Quality Journal Outputs

2.2 Cork University Business School

CUBS is amongst the global elite of less than 150 business schools that hold AACSB, AMBA and EQUIS Accreditation; a feat held by less than 1% of schools globally. CUBS is the most influential and ambitious centre of business research and education in the southwest region with increasing recognition of the school's impact and reach internationally.

As a crucial part of the Irish higher education system, CUBS produces 1,000 graduates annually, many of whom go on to reach the highest echelons of organisations across the world and create real world impact. CUBS delivers this through the provision of challenging, evolving and innovative programmes, delivering focused internationally excellent, relevant and impactful research, with established strong links with business and industry across all sectors.

The School currently occupies accommodation distributed across several university buildings. While this arrangement provides adequate teaching capacity, it does not provide the integrated environment expected of an internationally leading business school, nor does it offer the quality of facilities that enables more innovative offerings and formats.

The new building shall address these limitations through the provision of a coordinated academic, research and engagement environment.

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3. Project Vision

The University's vision is to create a world-class business school building that embodies academic excellence, innovation, sustainability, entrepreneurship and global engagement, while also providing value for money.

The project supports institutional objectives relating to academic excellence, internationalisation, research performance and sustainability. The building is intended to support the continued development of CUBS as one of the world's best business schools and to maintain its triple-accredited status by addressing existing accommodation deficits.

The building should become:

- A centre for business education.
- A destination for collaboration.
- A beacon of human-AI interaction.
- A catalyst for innovation.
- A hub for engagement.
- A showcase for sustainability.
- A flexible asset capable of supporting future educational transformation.

4. Project Objectives

The project objectives are:

Academic Excellence

Provide environments supporting contemporary pedagogical practices and innovative curriculum delivery.

Student Experience

Create an engaging and welcoming environment which supports learning, collaboration and social interaction.

Research Excellence

Provide accommodation supporting internationally competitive research activity and interdisciplinary collaboration.

Executive Education & Lifelong Learning

Provide specialist facilities supporting executive, professional and lifelong learning programmes.

Industry Engagement

Strengthen relationships between the University, business community and wider society.

Sustainability

Deliver a low-carbon, climate-responsive building demonstrating environmental leadership.

Future Readiness

Ensure the facility remains adaptable to future educational, technological and organisational change.

5. Site and Context

5.1 Site Location

The selected site is located at the existing Perrott's Avenue car park, adjacent to College Road and with proximity to existing CUBS facilities in the O'Rahilly Building.

The site is approximately 0.9793 acres and currently functions as a surface-level car park providing visitor and permit parking, with a capacity of approximately 117 spaces. Along Perrott Avenue, the site is flanked by a number of UCC-owned buildings, including academic, administrative, and support facilities that form part of the historic campus edge.

The site's strategic location allows strong integration with existing campus facilities, easy access for students and staff, visibility from key campus routes and improved public realm quality.



Figure 1: Site Location

5.2 Urban Design Context

The Design Team shall carefully consider existing campus character, adjacent residential properties, building scale and massing, landscape setting, public realm opportunities and biodiversity enhancement.

The design should respond appropriately to its surroundings while expressing the aspirations of a contemporary global business school.

6. Design Requirements & Principles

The CUBS Building project shall significantly enhance student experience. Particular attention should be given to the arrival experience, informal learning opportunities, social interaction, student wellbeing and visibility of services.

Digital infrastructure shall underpin all aspects of building performance. The building shall provide high-speed wireless coverage, flexible connectivity, lecture capture capability, hybrid teaching infrastructure and integrated digital collaboration capabilities.

The University recognises the transformational impact of artificial intelligence on teaching and learning. The Design Team shall demonstrate how proposals can adapt to AI-assisted learning, data-driven education, immersive technologies, future digital platforms and emerging educational models.

Universal Design principles shall be embedded throughout the project and the building should exceed minimum statutory requirements wherever feasible. Consideration shall include physical accessibility, sensory accessibility, wayfinding and inclusive learning environments.

The building interior design shall contribute positively to wellbeing, collaboration, legibility, comfort and identity and materials should be robust, sustainable and maintainable.

Architectural Quality

The building should demonstrate architectural excellence and create a memorable identity for CUBS.

Flexibility

Accommodation shall support changing educational models and organisational structures.

Inclusivity

The facility shall embody Universal Design principles throughout.

Sustainability

Environmental performance shall be considered from project inception.

Connectivity

The building shall encourage interaction between all user groups.

Innovation

The building should visibly support innovation, collaboration, entrepreneurship and experimentation.

Value for Money

The design must demonstrate value for money, adaptability, durability and operational efficiency.

7. Accommodation Requirements

The identified accommodation requirements aim to consolidate core business school activities into a single identifiable destination while retaining access to wider University infrastructure where appropriate. Accommodation will support undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, doctoral and executive education, research activity and external engagement, designed to support and enable an enhanced student and staff experience.

The accommodation schedule shall remain sufficiently flexible to allow refinement throughout design development.

The new CUBS building is envisaged as a transformative, future-focused business school that balances functional excellence with a strong sense of place. Practical requirements such as room configurations, technology infrastructure, power, data connectivity, and operational functionality must be given equal importance to the building's atmosphere, identity, and overall user experience.

A central objective of the project is to provide a singular integrated facility that will enhance collaboration, interdisciplinary engagement, student progression, employability, and innovation. The building will also strengthen relationships with local, national, and international business partners by providing a welcoming hub for engagement and knowledge exchange.

The building is expected to be a highly connected digital environment where access to power, data, and network connectivity is ubiquitous. All learning, social, and collaborative spaces should support intensive technology use, reflecting the reality of modern education and business practice.

Flexibility is a critical design requirement, and spaces should be easily adaptable for different teaching, learning, working, and social activities, with minimal reliance on fixed layouts. The building should promote formal and informal learning through a mix of group-based (6 persons) teaching rooms, breakout areas, collaborative workspaces, silent study areas, and social learning environments. The design should facilitate both spontaneous interaction and structured collaboration, supporting creativity, discussion, reflection, and knowledge exchange.

The physical environment should mirror the professional business world while maintaining the openness and creativity of an educational setting. The transition between university and workplace should feel seamless, preparing students for future careers and providing executive learners with a contemporary, industry-relevant environment.

7.1 Digital Infrastructure Requirements

The new CUBS building will be designed as a fully digital, technology-enabled learning environment, with comprehensive access to power, high-capacity data, and network connectivity throughout all teaching, learning, social, and collaborative spaces. Given the widespread use of multiple devices by students, staff, and visitors, this infrastructure is fundamental to the building's success.

CUBS will move away from traditional fixed PC laboratories toward a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) approach. This shift will reduce the need for dedicated computer labs while increasing the flexibility of teaching spaces. Classrooms must therefore be capable of functioning both as conventional

teaching rooms and as technology-enabled laboratory environments, supported by extensive power and data provision.

7.2 Learning & Teaching Spaces

CUBS teaching strategy prioritises flexibility, adaptability, digital connectivity, and future-focused learning environments, ensuring spaces can support a wide range of teaching methodologies, technologies, and student needs while maximising utilisation across the building. As such, spaces should incorporate leading educational technology and support interactive learning.

All teaching rooms will be designed as collaborative learning environments to support group based (6 per group) working. Collaborative Teaching Rooms are flexible, technology-enabled learning environments designed to support active learning, group work, problem-solving, case-based teaching, workshops, simulations, and team-based learning. These spaces move beyond traditional lecture-based delivery by encouraging interaction, discussion, creativity, and engagement among students and educators.

Collaborative teaching facilities will include multiple screens including group-based access to individual screens, clear lines of site to lecterns, capacity for inter group communications and ease of movement throughout the room to facilitate interactive learning and teaching.

An Executive Education Room is included in the teaching space provision, and this will be a premium learning and engagement space designed to support executive education, professional development programmes, corporate training, leadership development, industry workshops, board-level discussions, and strategic events. The space should reflect the standards and environment of a modern executive education centre, providing a professional setting that bridges academia and industry.

The Design Team will be required to demonstrate how accommodation supports contemporary educational practice. Learning environments should facilitate active learning, case-based teaching, team-based learning, collaborative learning, experiential learning and hybrid learning. Furniture and technology should facilitate rapid reconfiguration.

Full details of the required number and size of learning and teaching spaces is outlined in the Schedule of Accommodation.

7.3 Specialist Teaching & Research Spaces

Additional specialist facilities will include:

- 30-seat **Quantitative Investment Laboratory** (Trading Room, 2 persons per terminal), a specialist teaching, research, and industry-engagement facility designed to support education and applied research in quantitative finance, investment analysis, portfolio management, financial data analytics, algorithmic trading, machine learning, and FinTech. This space students with access to professional financial datasets, trading platforms, analytical tools, and simulation environments that replicate contemporary investment and financial markets.
- 70-seat **Advanced Software Laboratory**, a technology-enabled facility that supports teaching, research, innovation, and industry collaboration in areas such as software development, data

analytics, artificial intelligence, machine learning, FinTech, cybersecurity, business intelligence, and digital transformation.

- **Virtual Learning Room**, incorporating a high-definition video wall, advanced audio systems, lecture capture, live streaming, and digital collaboration technologies to support interaction with remote participants, international partners, and industry stakeholders. The room should facilitate simulations, virtual case studies, digital business exercises, and immersive learning experiences aligned with future business education practices.

- **Behavioural Laboratory and adjacent Observation Room** a specialist research environment to support behavioural, consumer, organisational, decision-making, entrepreneurship, and management research activities. The facility should enable controlled experiments, focus groups, simulations, user-testing, and observational studies involving students, staff, industry partners, and external research participants.

- **Podcast Room** will provide a dedicated, acoustically treated space for the creation of podcasts, interviews, digital learning content, research dissemination, and industry engagement activities. The facility should support students, academic staff, researchers, executive education participants, and external partners in producing professional-quality audio and video content.

These specialist spaces should be designed as highly flexible, visible, and prominent elements of the building, with potential to attract industry partnerships and philanthropic support.

7.4 Adaptive Learning Space

The (multifunctional) Adaptive Learning Space is a highly flexible, technology-rich environment designed to support a wide range of academic, professional, social, and innovation-focused activities. It is intended that the space will evolve throughout the day, enabling teaching, collaborative learning, project work, workshops, events, industry engagement, informal study, and community interaction within the same environment.

As a space that will support teaching, exhibitions, networking, innovation activities, workshops, and social learning, key functional requirements will include integrated storage for furniture and equipment, flexible lighting and acoustic controls, direct connection to circulation, collaboration, and social spaces with accessibility and inclusivity embedded throughout the design.

The technological infrastructure in the Advanced Learning Space should include extensive power and data provision throughout with high-density wireless connectivity, large-format digital displays and presentation screens, interactive collaboration technologies, advanced audiovisual systems and event broadcasting capability.

7.5 Collaboration, Study & Breakout Spaces

The CUBS Building should be designed as a learning environment that extends well beyond formal teaching rooms. A significant proportion of the building should be dedicated to flexible breakout, collaboration, networking, and self-directed study spaces that support both individual and group learning.

The success of the building will depend on providing sufficient informal learning accommodation, with capacity for 15 bookable study rooms (6-person capacity) and 400 breakout seats distributed throughout the building outside of teaching rooms and restaurant area. These spaces should support a range of activities, including independent study, group and individual project work, peer learning, networking, and informal engagement.

Having regard to the shift to a BYOD model in this building breakout space should also include provision for lockers to support a student laptop loan scheme.

A variety of breakout space types should be provided, ranging from quiet individual study areas to larger collaborative workspaces. The layout should incorporate clear acoustic and functional zoning, with designated silent study areas alongside locations intended for discussion, teamwork, and social learning.

Bookable Study Rooms should provide students with dedicated spaces for collaborative project work, group study, online meetings, presentations, and focused academic activity. These rooms should complement the wider informal learning environment by offering enclosed, technology-enabled spaces that can be reserved in advance.

To maximise accessibility and utilisation, collaboration and study spaces should be dispersed throughout the building and supported by comprehensive access to power, data, and network connectivity, ensuring users can work effectively wherever they choose within the building.

7.6 School Executive Offices

The CUBS Building should include office accommodation and support space that supports the executive leadership and serves as the administrative hub of the Business School. The suite should provide individual offices for the Dean, Vice Deans, and School Manager, supported by a professional reception and waiting area.

The suite should be designed to facilitate leadership, governance, stakeholder engagement, and executive decision-making, and should include 10 individual executive offices sized to accommodate small meetings with multiple attendees. Additional space will include a formal boardroom for governance meetings, senior leadership discussions, and engagement with external stakeholders and a micro kitchen to support meetings and visitors. Reception and waiting facilities will provide a professional point of arrival for guests and stakeholders.

The School Executive Offices will also contain/ have adjacent to the reception area, with accessibility from the reception area, an 8-person shared office space for the CUBS office membership of the CUBS professional services function.

The overall design should reflect the status of an internationally accredited business school, providing a professional, welcoming, and executive-quality environment for leadership, governance, and external engagement activities.

7.7 Office & Shared Working Spaces

The CUBS Building should be designed to foster a strong sense of community, openness, and collaboration among staff and students while maintaining appropriate levels of security and privacy.

The working environment should be welcoming, transparent, and attractive, encouraging interaction, engagement, and a shared sense of belonging.

The Student Services Office should serve as a prominent, easily accessible student support hub positioned on the ground floor to maximise visibility, accessibility, and engagement. The space should provide a welcoming, student-focused environment that integrates administrative services, student support functions, informal meeting facilities, and staff collaboration areas.

The Student Services Office will accommodate up to 25 members of the CUBS professional services team in a shared working environment. Within the space there will a number of smaller workspaces and meeting rooms to include a shared 2-person office for team managers, two small meeting rooms of 4/5 person capacity and one larger 8-person capacity meeting room. The Student Service Office will have a designated reception area at the main entrance and will also contain a staff micro kitchen as well as significant storage and a space to support printing facilities.

Additional workspace on remaining floors should be designed around a combination of shared workspaces, meeting facilities, and support amenities, promoting efficient service delivery and facilitating collaboration. A mixture of open-plan and shared-office accommodation is required to support varying team structures and working styles. In larger open plan spaces provision should be made for smaller meeting pods within the space. Adjacency to allow for growth in certain function areas is important so one 5-person shared person office should be adjacent to a 3-person shared office.

Full detail of office space requirements is outlined in the Schedule of Accommodation.

7.8 Reception

The building should feature a prominent and easily accessible main entrance with a dedicated reception area that serves as a welcoming gateway for students, staff, visitors, and industry partners. The entrance experience should clearly communicate the identity of the building as the business school, reinforcing the University brand, values, and sense of place from the moment of arrival. The reception and arrival space should create a strong first impression, combining accessibility, visibility, and a professional business-school character.

7.9 Restaurant, Staff & Student Micro Kitchens

The CUBS Building will provide a 60-seat restaurant (located on the ground floor) and social facilities that support community building, wellbeing, and informal interaction among students, staff, and visitors.

Staff micro-kitchens will be located adjacent to staff work areas and the building will also include a dedicated student micro-kitchen to support student needs and encourage interaction outside formal learning settings. Easily accessible water fountains and refill stations should be located throughout the building for both staff and students.

Together, these facilities should create a welcoming and sociable environment that supports collaboration, wellbeing, and everyday campus life while complementing the building's broader learning and community objectives.

8. Stakeholder Engagement

The Design Team should develop and implement a comprehensive stakeholder engagement strategy to ensure the building design reflects the needs, aspirations, and expectations of all key stakeholders. Engagement should include consultation with University Leadership, staff, students, alumni, industry partners, neighbours, and potential donors, ensuring their perspectives inform the design process, strengthen stakeholder buy-in, and support the successful delivery of a building that meets academic, community, and strategic objectives.

9. Philanthropic Opportunities

The Design Team should identify and incorporate opportunities for building and facility naming, donor recognition, and corporate partnership visibility throughout the development. The design should provide flexible and high-quality solutions for acknowledging philanthropic contributions, corporate sponsorship, and strategic partnerships in a manner that enhances the identity of the Business School while maintaining an appropriate and professional architectural aesthetic.

Recognition opportunities may include naming rights for the building, key facilities and spaces, donor walls, digital recognition displays, and integrated branding elements that support fundraising, stakeholder engagement, and long-term partnership development.

10. Summary

The completed development should establish a lasting physical expression of the ambitions of Cork University Business School and support the University's academic mission for decades to come.

The success of the project will be evaluated against a range of strategic, operational, and long-term outcomes, including the achievement of core project objectives, high levels of student satisfaction, positive accreditation results, enhanced research performance, stronger industry engagement, strong sustainability performance, demonstrable value for money, and the building's ability to adapt to future educational, technological, and organisational needs.

Overall, the building should deliver lasting benefits to students, staff, industry partners, and the wider University community while remaining flexible and relevant over time.

CUBS Building: Schedule of Accommodation								
Category	**Item #**	**Description**	**Location/ Adjacency**	**Maximum Capacity**	**Number Required**	**Total Capacity**	**m^2 Per Person**	**Total Area / m^2**
Learning & Teaching	1	84 Person Collaborative Teaching (6 person groups)		84	1	80	2.6	218.4
	2	60 Person Collaborative Teaching (6 person groups)		60	4	240	2.6	624
	3	54 Person Collaborative Teaching (6 person groups)		54	3	162	2.7	437.4
	4	Executive Education Teaching (6 person groups)		54	1	54	3.1	167.4
	5	42 Person Collaborative Teaching (6 person groups)	Adjacent	42	1	42	2.6	109.2
	6	30 Person Collaborative Teaching (6 person groups)		30	1	30	2.6	78
Specialist Teaching & Research	8	Quantitative Investment Laboratory	Externally visible	30	1	30	3.2	96
	9	Advanced Software Laboratory		70	1	70	3	210
	10	Podcast Room		4	1	4	4	16
	11	Virtual Learning Room		4	1	4	10	40
	12	Behavioural Laboratory	Adjacent	30	1	30	3.4	102
	13	Observation Room		4	1	4	4	16
Adaptive Learning Space	14	Multifunctional, highly flexible, technology rich environment	Ground floor and very accessible	100	1	100	3.1	310
Collaboration, Breakout & Study Spaces	15	Collaboration, breakout & study spaces to facilitate group work and individual study. Multiple pods & spaces for individual & groups spread throughout the building			400	400	1.5	600
	16	Bookable Study Room		6	15	90	2.5	225

Category	Item #	Description	Location/ Adjacency	Maximum Capacity	Number Required	Total Capacity	m^2 Per Person	Total Area / m^2
School Executive Offices	17	Individual Offices		1	10	10	12	120
	18	Meeting Room		20	1	20	2.5	50
	19	CUBS Office: 8-person shared office space (entrance off reception area)		8	1	8	5.7	45.6
	20	Reception & Waiting Area		2	1	2	15	30
	21	Micro Kitchen		1	1	1	16	16
Office & Shared Working Spaces	22	Student Services Office (to include micro kitchen, 1x 2-person shared office, 2 x small meeting rooms (c. 4/5 person) and one large meeting room (c.8 person) and a reception area near the entrance	Ground Floor and visible	25	1	25	9.5	237.5
	23	3 Person Shared Office		3	16	48	5.7	273.6
	24	4 Person Shared Office		4	3	12	5.7	68.4
	25	5 Person Shared Office	one 5 person adjacent to one 3 person	5	3	15	5.7	85.5
	26	25 Person Open Plan		25	1	25	5.7	142.5
	27	Micro Kitchen		2	2	4	16	64
	28	10 Person Meeting Room		10	1	10	2.5	25
	29	12 Person Meeting Room		12	1	12	2.5	30
Reception	30	Reception Desk	Ground floor near entrance	2	1	2	15	30

Category	Item #	Description	Location/ Adjacency	Maximum Capacity	Number Required	Total Capacity	m^2 Per Person	Total Area / m^2
Restaurant & Student Micro Kitchen	31	Restaurant	Ground floor	60	1	60	2.5	150
	32	Student Micro Kitchen Area	Lower Floor	2	1	2	16	32
Ancillary Spaces	33	Toilet & Comms						240
	34	Risers						140
	35	Stairs & Lifts						490
	36	Circulation						1,150
Total Space Requirement								**6,670**

Enclosed Plant Room & Plant	
Stairs	150
Internal Walls & Columns	430
Total	**7,250**