University College Cork, Ireland
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

QUALITY PROMOTION COMMITTEE

ANNUAL REPORT

2012

September 2013

QUALITY PROMOTION COMMITTEE

MEMBERSHIP

- Mr. Diarmuid Collins, Bursar
- Ms. Fiona Crozier, Director of Quality (*Secretary*, from April 2013)
- Cllr Jim Finucane, Governor (from July 2012)
- Professor Irene Lynch-Fannon, College of Business & Law (from May 2013)
- Mr. Gavin Lynch-Frahill, Education Officer, Students' Union (2013/14)
- Professor Paul Giller, Registrar & Vice-President for Academic Affairs
- Mr. Pádraig Haughney, President, Students' Union (2013/14)
- Mr Eoghan Healy, President, Students' Union (2012/13)
- Professor Kenneth Higgs, Acting Director of Quality (*Secretary,* to end of March 2013)
- Professor Fan Hong, College of Arts, Celtic Studies & Social Sciences (to end Aug 2013)
- Dr Deirdre Madden, College of Business & Law (to Dec 2012)
- Mr. Niall McAuliffe, Capital Projects Officer, Office of Buildings & Estates
- Ms Mary McNulty, Deputy Head, Careers Office
- Mr. Paul Moriarty, Head, Student Counselling & Development Service
- Dr. Michael B. Murphy, President (*Chair*)
- Mr P.J. O'Brien, Education Officer, Students' Union (2012/13)
- Mr. John O'Callaghan, Governor
- Professor Helen Whelton, College of Medicine & Health
- Professor Douwe Van Sinderen, College of Science, Engineering & Food Science (from April 2012)

Contents

Executive Summary

The UCC approach to quality assurance and improvement is based on sound policies, principles and on best international practice. It involves all of the major stakeholders as well as external experts in the process, preserving institutional autonomy and emphasising quality improvement.

This Annual Report 2012 of the Quality Promotion Committee to the Governing Body of UCC is primarily an account of the

- report on quality reviews conducted in the academic year 2011/12;

- progress made in quality improvement and enhancement of activities arising from the findings and recommendations from reviews conducted in 2010/11;

- plans for the future; and

- recommendations from the Committee to the Governing Body.

Irish Universities Institutional Review of UCC

The University was reviewed by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) through its Irish Universities Institutional Review (IRIU) process in December 2012 and the report was published in June 2013. The review was extremely successful and provided the University with external confirmation that its quality assurance and improvement processes are well-developed and well-understood and that it has much to celebrate. It also provided a set of, in the main, constructive recommendations that now form the basis of future development once the second cycle of reviews has ended. These developments will be discussed in the next annual report to the Governing Body.

Quality Reviews 2011/12

A full schedule of quality reviews was completed in 2011/12. Details are provided in Section B of this report and all review reports have been published on the UCC web site. Emphasis during the reviews focussed on the alignment of activities of units with the University's strategic objectives and goals as outlined in the University's Strategic Plan. Where relevant, all reviews included a follow-up review of the actions taken following the relevant first cycle quality review.

The second cycle of quality reviews commenced in 2007/08, and quality reviews continue to be conducted. Considerable emphasis is placed on the alignment of all activities of units to the Strategic and Operational Plans of the University and on implementation of recommendations for improvement. 2013-14 will be the last year of such reviews in the second cycle.

Quality Improvement – Progress on Implementation of Recommendations

Follow-up reviews are conducted on all quality reviews after a period of 12 to 18 months has elapsed following a review. Section B contains details of the quality reviews conducted in 2011/12. Section C contains details of the follow-up reviews and reports on implementation of actions arising from the quality reviews conducted in 2010/11. The QPC deemed satisfactory progress to have been made to date, with recommendations for additional actions in some instances.

Some issues remain to be addressed - these are discussed in the body of this report with accompanying recommendations for action.

Plans for the Future

Following the outcome of the IRIU report (see above) and the end of the second cycle of Quality Reviews in 2013-14, work is on-going to revise and enhance current policies and processes. In order

to give Governing body an idea of the on-going work with regard to future developments, several papers are appended to this report. They are:

- <u>A response to the IRIU report</u>. The central theme of this paper is that the recommendations made be considered holistically rather than one by one in order to give a picture of how UCC's approach to quality assurance and improvement overall might be revised.
- <u>A proposal for some pilots to the Quality Reviews taking place in 2013-14</u>. This is the last year of the second cycle of Quality Reviews at UCC and provides the University with an opportunity to test some changes to process.
- <u>An update for QPC</u>. This is the most recent paper to go to QPC (in September 2013) and details some of the work that has taken place over the summer.
- <u>Annual Monitoring</u>. One of the areas of work developed over the summer and the first part of the development of a process for programme review.

Governing Body will receive further updates on on-going work as and when it requests them and certainly in the 2013 annual report from QPC.

Recommendations

1. That the Governing Body approves this report and its publication on the University web site.

2. That the Governing Body approves the schedule of reviews planned for 2013/14 and the draft schedule for 2014/2015 (Appendix C).

3. That the Governing Body refers this report for discussion and consideration of any actions to be taken to the Academic Council and other University bodies.

Section A

Introduction

The focus of the quality improvement and quality assurance procedures in UCC extends to all activities of the University, including administrative and support services. UCC recognises that all areas of its operation will affect (directly or indirectly) the quality of the totality of the learner experience and ultimately may have an impact on student achievement. The University is committed to development of a quality culture and embedding it in all areas of its activities. Students must be at the centre of this philosophy and their contribution is core to the assurance and assessment of quality within the University. From now on, as far as possible, students will be represented on all Quality Review and Programme Review panels. UCC is fully committed to seeking the views and contributions of all learners, as well as of other stakeholders, including employers, alumni and professional bodies, and to using this feedback to guide the improvement of the quality of the learner experience. The primary aim of UCC in conducting quality reviews is to ensure that the University provides the best possible learner experience and that an ethos of quality improvement is fostered at all levels in the University.

Quality is the responsibility of every member of staff of UCC and it is recognised that everybody has a contribution to make. All staff are expected and encouraged to participate fully in the preparation for the quality review and in the conduct of the review itself.

The University is committed to the involvement of external peers in its quality improvement and quality assurance procedures. The benchmarking exercise that all departments and units undertake also assists in the achievement of this aim.

This Report focuses on quality reviews conducted in the academic year 2011/12, together with the follow-up reports on implementation of recommendations. There are many findings and comments in the detailed reports of the peer reviewers that are not included in this report. The reports are published in full on the Quality Promotion Unit web site (http://www.ucc.ie/quality), following their consideration by the Quality Promotion Committee. It should be noted that the overall findings in the majority of quality reviews were satisfactory taking into account the environment and the resources available to the unit. In all cases the review teams considered the unit's activities from the perspective of the current political, economic, social, environmental and technological circumstances pertaining both to the unit and also the University. In most cases there were both excellent and very good features commented on by the reviewers, in addition to areas which could be improved.

In addition, this report will include references to on-going quality enhancement activities in which the University is engaged.

QUALITY PROMOTION COMMITTEE (QPC)

The Quality Promotion Committee (QPC), chaired by the President, continues to present an Annual Report to the Governing Body and, in addition, reports regularly to the University Management Team of the University.

THE QUALITY PROMOTION UNIT

The Quality Promotion Unit was led by its Director, Dr. Norma Ryan, until August 2012, assisted by a support team of three administrative staff. She was succeeded in April 2013 by Ms Fiona Crozier. The QPU is primarily responsible for facilitating the implementation of quality improvement and quality assurance procedures in UCC. The Unit assists departments/units in preparing for reviews, including assistance with analysis of surveys and management of an electronic system for the conduct of surveys, carries out all the logistical arrangements associated with quality reviews, liaises with the members of the peer review groups, receives the peer review group reports and prepares reports for

the Quality Promotion Committee on each review. The Director leads the monitoring of implementation of recommendations for improvements made by Peer Review Groups and the follow-up reviews of actions arising from reviews.

All procedures, guidelines and sample questionnaires are published in paper format and are publicly available on the Quality Promotion Unit web site (http://www.ucc.ie/quality).

In addition the Unit is a partner in a number of European EC-funded Tempus and Erasmus projects focussed on developmental aspects of quality assurance and quality enhancement in European countries. Some detail of the projects is provided in Appendix B, along with a summary of other international activities that the Unit has engaged in within the past year.

QUALITY REVIEWS 2011/12

The following departments/schools and units all successfully completed a quality review in 2011/12.

Academic Units

Cork Centre for Architectural Education

School of Biological, Earth & Environmental Sciences

School of Mathematical Sciences

Centres and Administrative/Support Units

College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences

College of Science, Engineering & Food Science

Information Services

Office of the Vice President for Teaching & Learning

All units were required to prepare a Self-Assessment Report, including undertaking a SWOT analysis and a benchmarking exercise in relation to the activities of the unit. This was the second quality review for most units (excluding the Research Quality Review in 2008/09 in which all academic units were required to participate) and in these cases, the review looked at how successful the unit and the University had been in implementing recommendations for improvement made in the first quality review report. The review also considered, where appropriate, the outcomes of the Research Quality Review, the Quality Improvement Plan developed as a result and the actions taken since then. A Peer Review Group, including external reviewers, was appointed for each review and visited UCC for a period of three days to meet with staff, students and other stakeholders. Following the visit a report was submitted to the University and considered by the Quality Promotion Committee. Key extracts from the review reports for the units are given in Section B of this report. The full reports, including details of Peer Review Group membership, meetings held and all findings and conclusions are published on the University web site[1].

Findings

The findings mirror those reported on previously for other similar units. It was notable that, in the majority of cases, the recommendations made in the first review reports had been implemented in full and that the primary reasons for non-implementation of the remainder were (i) the lack of alignment with the University Strategic Plan; and/or (ii) the level of available resource required to implement the

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[1] www.ucc.ie/quality

recommendation(s). In all cases each recommendation was considered by the Quality Promotion Committee, a response made to the unit concerned and, where appropriate, were considered by one or more Senior Officer of the University.

Key issues and findings arising from Quality Reviews

As this report is a synthesis of a number of very detailed reports, this section will focus on the key findings and issues arising in a number of the quality review reports.

A number of key issues and recommendations common to many of the panels were identified, including (in no particular order of importance):

- *First cycle quality reviews*
  - o All review reports provided commentary on the progress made by the unit and by the University in implementation of recommendations for improvement made in the previous quality review report.   In general excellent progress was made. In a few instances reviewers noted a lack of progress. They understood that the current economic situation made the progress of some recommendations difficult or even impossible; nonetheless, they suggested strongly that implementation should be progressed where possible.

- *Resources*
  - o Two trends from last year continue (encouragement to academic units to seek alternative non-exchequer funding sources for all activities and clustering of research themes to maximise benefits and funding opportunities).
  - o One report (that for Information Services) stated that the level of resourcing of the unit posed a risk when benchmarked against international norms in the area.
  - o Several reports stated strongly that staffing resources were dangerously low in some units ("…heading towards a precipice" in one case.) The commitment and dedication of staff in difficult circumstances were mentioned and recommendations made around succession planning, staff development and induction and a need for more core staff rather than an over-reliance on part-time staff.

- *Strategy and mission*
  - o There were several recommendations across different kinds of units (College/School/central support units) around the theme of strategic planning and development of missions.
  - o Vision/mission statements were seen as too aspirational or as needing more objectivity. PRGs felt that reviews of strategic direction or of provision would lead to improved planning and more clarification of the roles of individual staff.

- *Communication*
  - o Recommendations for improvement were made with regard to communication between Colleges and central management, Colleges and Schools and within Schools.
  - o The perception of a lack of effective internal communication led to recommendations around improving websites and developing effective marketing and communications plans.

- *Research*
  - o Comments in PRG reports on Research present a mix of commendations (for the encouragement provided at College level) and recommendations (research strategy/planning needed, again at College level).

- o The RQR (2008-09) was referenced frequently as providing good information on which to base planning.
- o Other comments centred around the need to ensure a pattern of work that allowed staff to have time for research; the need to ensure funding for PhDs, the need to foster interdisciplinarity and a need, at University level, to strengthen the links between Research and Teaching & Learning.

UCC management and leaders of academic units are working to address these issues and in particular are focussing on those issues that action can be taken on immediately.

- *Comments on the Quality Review process*
  - o Comments on the Quality Review process cover two themes: the self-assessment report and the intensity of the process.
  - o Only one unit was praised for its self-assessment report. Comments on the others suggest that they lacked clarity, were incomplete or lacked sufficient ambition/self-criticism.
  - o The length and intensity of the process divided PGRs; some felt that the process was too intense and that they did not have sufficient time to consider the information they were receiving; others acknowledged the intensity but felt that the schedule allowed them to get a very good picture of the unit under review.
  - o In response to these points, a review of the documentation and guidelines for quality reviews is underway; it may be that further guidance might be provided to help units with the process of writing a self-assessment report. Consideration of the process as a whole, in the light of the IRIU report may also indicate a more flexible framework within which reviews sit; this would include consideration of the length and schedule of the site visit itself.
  - o In addition to the points above, PRGs expressed disappointment at the level of student engagement in the process. This too is now under review.
  - o Two PRGs recommended the implementation of a programme review process. This is now under development at University level.

Quality Improvement

With respect to all reviews conducted to date QPC noted that some of the issues can be addressed within the current resources of the university and that some will require significant funding which may be difficult or impossible to acquire in the present financial circumstances. The QPC acknowledged the very significant commitment of the University community to quality improvement, but also that, within the context of the current financial difficulties and constraints, it will not always be possible to implement those recommendations requiring considerable resources or additional staffing. The University Management Team, in its consideration of such recommendations, has prioritised actions based on alignment with the University Strategic Plan and commits to continuing to do so in the future.

It is important to realise that the focus of the quality reviews is not merely quality assurance but also embraces quality improvement and quality enhancement. Thus there will always be identification of areas for improvement, notwithstanding some excellent progress that has been made in implementing recommendations from previous reviews and similar exercises.

General Comment:

QPC recognises that the implementation of resource-requiring recommendations is not an easy task at any time and is particularly challenging in the current climate. Nonetheless the Committee considers it important that PRGs feel that they have the freedom to make recommendations that they feel are important whilst understanding the current financial situation. The QPC notes and welcomes the fact that the University management makes progress reports regularly to Governing Body on implementation of recommendations for improvement requiring decisions at management level, in

addition to the Annual Report made by the QPC.

Follow-up Reports on Implementation of Recommendations by Departments and Units

Approximately twelve to eighteen months following completion of the report of the reviewers on a department or unit, a report on the actions taken and progress on implementation of the recommendations is submitted by the Head of the Department/Unit to the Quality Promotion Committee.

Section C of this report details the follow-up report on the quality reviews of academic, administrative and support service units conducted in the academic year 2010/11. Reports on follow-up reviews for the quality reviews conducted in previous years have been made before to Governing Body and are published on the University web site.

Academic units

- School of Food & Nutritional Sciences
- Department of Food Business & Development
- Department of Physics
- Department of Music

Administrative/Support Services Units

Buildings and Estates Office

Ionad na Gaeilge Labhartha

Conclusion

The Quality Promotion Committee acknowledges the very real efforts made by staff of all departments/schools and units to engage in quality assurance and quality improvement activities. The strong commitment of units to the further development of all activities and to efforts to maintain the high quality of such activities is commendable. It is hoped that this will continue into the future years, and that the present unfavourable economic conditions will not present insurmountable obstacles to the continued development of a quality culture in UCC.

The Committee wishes to express its appreciation to all those who participated as reviewers on quality review panels. The University is very grateful to reviewers, both internal and external, for all their efforts on behalf of the units undergoing review and the University. In particular the University wishes to acknowledge the willingness of external reviewers who give their expertise and time to assist the University in this exercise

Section B: Reports on Quality Reviews 2011/12

Academic Units

- Cork Centre for Architectural Education
- School of Biological, Earth & Environmental Sciences
- School of Mathematical Sciences

Centres and Administrative Support Units

- College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences
- College of Science, Engineering & Food Science
- Information Services
- Office of Vice-President Teaching & Learning

Cork Centre For Architectural Education

Peer Review Group

- Mr. Matt Cotterell, Head of School of Mechanical, Electrical and Process Engineering, Cork Institute of Technology, Cork.
- Professor David Dernie, Dean of Architecture, University of Westminister, U.K.
- Professor Urs Hirschbert, Faculty of Architecture, Graz University, Austria.
- Professor James Horan, (*Chair*) Design Strategies, Dublin.
- Mr. Niall McAuliffe, Office of Buildings & Estates, University College Cork.
- Mr. James Murphy, School of Architecture, University College Dublin.

Site Visit

The site visit was conducted over 2.5 days from 25-27 September 2012 and included visits to core facilities in Copley Street, and meetings with:

- Professor Kevin McCartney (Director), Ms. Katherine Keane (Associate Director) and staff of the centre as a group and individually
- Representatives of undergraduate and postgraduate students
- Representatives of employers, past graduates and other external stakeholders
- Professor Paul Giller, Registrar & Senior Vice-President Academic
- Dr. Barry O'Connor, Registrar & Vice President for Academic Affairs, CIT
- Professor Anita Maguire, Vice-President for Research Policy & Support
- Dr. Bettie Higgs, for the Vice-President for Teaching and Learning, UCC
- Dr. Stephen Cassidy, Dean of Academic Quality Enhancement, CIT
- Mr. Seamus McEvoy, Interim Chair of Student Services, UCC
- Dr. Dan Collins, Head of Administration and Student Affairs Manager, CIT
- Professor Patrick Fitzpatrick, Head, College of Science, Engineering & Food Science
- Mr. Cormac McSweeney, Finance Office

An exit presentation of the principal findings of the Peer Review Group was made to staff of the department in the afternoon of the second day.

Description

Head of Centre: Professor Kevin McCartney
No. of Staff: 34 Academic Staff (of which 25 are part-time); 1 Administrator
Location of Department: 9/10 Copley Street, Cork.

Student Numbers

Architecture	2007/08	2007/08	2007/08	2007/08	2007/08	2007/08
Total UG	33.92	43.50	80.00	80.83	84.67	88.58
Total PG	0.00	0.67	2.25	3.75	36.75	17.25

Aims and Objectives

The *vision* for the CCAE: Cork School of Architecture is of a centre in which the underlying aim is to contribute to human happiness through the creation of architectural design excellence, based on a culture of debate, the promotion of rigorous exploration of ideas, and a positive attitude towards the sharing of information, knowledge and skills. The aspiration is that student work be thoughtful and

propositional, and sometimes extraordinary. The vision is for a Centre that is an outstanding resource for the profession in Ireland, a place that attracts the best international students, staff and researchers and nurtures the best of Ireland's indigenous talent.

A key to progress towards such a centre is the conscious implementation, study, testing, evaluation and development of design research procedures. This is considered to be the key to learning, professional development, and making a real contribution to adapting the profession for success in the increasingly competitive design and construction marketplace. This requires innovation and improving the quality of services offered. Students in the final stages of their study will be informed by time in architectural practice, and will carry out research focused on developing responses to the problems and opportunities facing the profession. Most importantly there will be a drive to ensure dissemination of their results in a form that can assist the profession, so that the great efforts of students in their final year will serve a greater purpose than solely their own education. Research in the design professions and the creative disciplines must become recognised as an activity aimed at not just finding knowledge, but creating knowledge.

General Comment on Quality Review

Self-Assessment Report
This report was developed for two aligned but distinct purposes: as a programmatic review of the BSc(Honours) Degree in Architecture and Masters in Architecture in support of RIAI accreditation and as the SAR for the review of the Centre's quality assurance that was jointly undertaken by CIT and UCC.

It is clear that the SAR covers the majority of the recommended headings. All staff had the opportunity to participate in the QA process and the resulting SAR is demonstrably self-reflective. The student survey results were aggregated for the report but were accompanied by the actual survey output data.

The self assessment was adequate and usefully self-critical, but not sufficiently ambitious in terms of what is required to realise an international profile.

The analysis failed to identify the lack of support from the Institutions for the development of research following the review in 2008. It also failed to recognise the lack of encouragement with the use of digital technologies, particularly in the lower years.

SWOT Analysis

In common with the overall report the SWOT conducted was comprehensive and all staff were involved. The SWOT provided the material for the development of Table 16.1 List of Actions Identified from the SWOT Analysis.

This table details the objectives of the centre and the actions proposed to achieve these objectives

An issue that did not emerge from the SWOT analysis but was raised in the student questionnaire was the limited instruction in digital media and the potential impact that this has on the employment prospects.

It is recommended that this issue be considered by Centre management and that the curriculum be developed to incorporate an appropriate level of instruction in digital media.

Benchmarking

The SAR did not contain formal benchmarking. It would be preferable for a comprehensive and formal benchmarking exercise to be carried out by the assessed unit which would provide objective comparisons of unit performance against other centres, particularly those that have characteristics or outputs that the CCAE aspires to.

Section 8 of the report catalogues the Peer Review and Quality Assurance Procedures that the Centre complies with, including Peer Review, External Examination processes etc. This section also lists comments from external examiners and the RIAI accreditation board on the curriculum, resources and facilities etc. In addition to this an article published in The Architects Journal contained a positive critique of the Centre and the work of the MArch students in particular.

Whilst the external examination process, analysis by accreditation bodies and published articles do provide a degree of external review, it does not equate to a formal benchmarking process.

As benchmarking can be a useful aid to the strategic management process at any time, it is recommended that a comprehensive benchmarking exercise is carried out by the Centre as soon as possible.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

	PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC Comment/Recommendation	Action
1	The Review Group recommends that the Centre make a concerted effort in the area of staff development in order to get research off the ground. Young staff, in particular, should be encouraged to present their work at international conferences or workshops. Research in architecture is currently a hot issue at many architecture schools across Europe. There are a number of international networks (for example the EAAE, or other, more specialised associations) that promote architectural design research by organising workshops and conferences which are particularly geared towards young staff. By attending, they can exchange notes and establish ties with other young researchers working on similar issues.	QPC endorsed this recommendation and noted the need for staff to have a declared research profile to feed into vision and policy in this area.	Staff of Centre
2	• As the teaching loads currently are not the same for CIT and UCC staff, it is easier for UCC staff to develop their own research profiles. Elsewhere in this report the Review Group strongly recommends the development of a cross-institution workload model based on principles of parity and transparency. • But while the current situation persists, the Review Group recommends that special incentives should be developed for CIT staff to also be able to engage in research activities. • Right now there are only a small number of researchers among staff that account for most of the CCAE's research publications. In the future, the Centre should strive for a more balanced picture, with greater numbers of staff actively taking part in research and publishing their results.	Recommendation and proposed action endorsed.	Centre

3	• The Review Group also recommends that the CCAE engage in interdisciplinary research with more experienced partners at CIT and UCC. • Ideally the research topics should feed into teaching and particularly design studios. The Centre is currently too small to pursue research activities that are only of peripheral interest to its overall pedagogic development. • The structure of the Master's course already seems to offer the possibility to take up design research topics and to develop them to considerable depth.	QPC noted the recommendation and ongoing action.	Centre
	Recommendations relating to Governance, Management and Staffing, Teaching and Learning		
4	The future strategic direction and positioning of the Centre needs to be reviewed at the highest levels in UCC and CIT. This is to enable the Centre to attain its full potential, building on its existing strengths and to firmly establish a sustainable future for architectural education and research in Cork. This strategy needs to consider local, national and international developments and trends. Architecture is a vital component of the cultural make-up of Cork and its environs which is a major tourism attraction for overseas visitors to Ireland and to Europe generally.	QPC endorsed the recommendation and considered it an opportune time to build on the success of the School by considering its place within Architecture in Higher Education in Ireland.	Centre, Head of College of SEFS & CIT
5	Significant progress has been made in the development of joint procedures and regulations between UCC and CIT, but this process isn't complete and the issue of joint staff appointments now needs to be considered. Ideally staff should be appointed to the Centre itself, and over time there should be a move to a clear single line management for staff within the Centre. More clear information needs to be communicated to students about the management of the Centre and opportunities available in both institutions, particularly regarding facilities. Enhanced student handbooks would be a good vehicle for this.	QPC endorsed this recommendation. It acknowledged the work that has been carried out by staff on the programme to date and would wish to see the success of the programme continuing.	Centre, UCC & CIT
6	Significant opportunities exist to strengthen links with staff and centres of expertise in both CIT and UCC and with other bodies/entities in the region.	QPC endorsed this recommendation.	Centre
7	A large proportion of the Centre's activity is delivered by part-time staff. The manner in which such staff are engaged with and appointed by the Centre needs to be explored. The processes need to be clear and unambiguous.	QPC endorsed this recommendation and acknowledged the role of part-time staff in delivering the programme.	Centre & HR.

8	All staff (full-time and part-time) would benefit from a formal staff induction process. This should embrace best practices in teaching, learning and assessment, details of administrative procedures/regulations and information relating to staff/student support services. Staff intending to engage in research will also need to engage in staff development activities specific to this activity.		Centre, HR, OVPRI & CIT
9	A two-way engagement with the Teaching and Learning Centres in both UCC and CIT would enrich the learning experience of CCAE students and students of other programmes in UCC and CIT. The studio-based component of architectural education is an exemplar of project-based learning and there is much to be learnt about its effectiveness. The engagement with the Teaching and Learning Centres could enhance both the activities of the CCAE and the Teaching and Learning Centres themselves.	QPC strongly endorsed this recommendation.	Ionad Bairre & CIT
	Recommendations relating to Facilities		
10	The Review Group recommends, subject to resource availability, that the on-site facilities be expanded in a manner that would be complementary to the existing available facilities particularly on CIT's Bishopstown campus. The specific area of development would be the provision of digital output devices.	Endorsed by QPC.	Centre
11	It is also recommended that the Centre management team engage with the Head of Crafts in CIT to discuss enhanced availability of workshop facilities and of technical support for Copley Street with a view to optimising student access and use of workshop facilities in both locations.	Noted by QPC.	Centre & CIT
12	A student Common Room is a high priority to allow students from various stages to mix socially and to share their experiences. It would also facilitate informal networking of staff and students. The Common Room should be used to communicate the availability of facilities, activities and support services in both CIT and UCC.	Recommendation endorsed by QPC to ensure continuing student identity with the programme.	Centre
	Recommendations relating to External Relations		
13	The Erasmus programme is in its infancy and needs staff resources in order to be developed and managed in a comprehensive manner. This should be priority in order to enhance the student experience and to encourage relationships with other schools of architecture in Europe. There should also be some opportunities in this area for	Endorsed.	Centre & VP External Relations

	staff visits or exchanges.		
14	The Review Group recognises the dual imperatives of internationalization and local presence. In order to forge a distinct international presence, the Group recognises the need to establish a stronger local and regional identity. This has benefitted a number of internationally significant schools, whose profile is reinforced by their relationship to and understanding of the land and culture to which they belong.	QPC strongly endorsed this recommendation and encouraged CCAE in its aspiration to contribute to the city of Cork and its environs.	Centre & VP External Relations
15	It is suggested that locating the project work of the Centre in Cork City and the local region will help to build up a body of knowledge, which will feed into research and into undergraduate teaching and learning. It will also facilitate making connections with other areas of expertise in UCC and CIT and with the wider academic community, the city and the profession.	Endorsed.	Centre, UCC & CIT
16	The city of Cork and its surrounding landscape offer a variety of relevant and very specific research opportunities. By studying and documenting the architectural tradition of the area, students and staff not only develop a stronger sense for their cultural heritage, they can also make a very valuable contribution to the city of Cork.	Endorsed.	Centre
17	It is important that the Centre develops this work in a serious and rigorous way and makes the results of the work available to interested parties and the public, in the form of exhibitions and publications as appropriate. It is suggested that this work be carried out primarily, but not exclusively, in the later years of the course when projects are of a longer duration and so can be studied in more depth.	Endorsed.	Centre
18	At the same time the Centre should allocate adequate staff resources, both academic administrative, to develop the Erasmus programmes. Bi-lateral Erasmus agreements have an important role to play in the internationalisation of any School of Architecture. A communication strategy should be developed to specifically target the international community and a website should be put in place to raise its profile and encourage international student recruitment. Allocating sufficient academic and administrative staffing and website resources is necessary to establish the identity of the Centre at this critical stage in its development.	QPC endorsed this recommendation and encourages the centre to consider ways in which it might specifically target the international community.	Centre & IEO

School of Biological, Earth & Environmental Sciences

Peer Review Group

- Professor Alistair Borthwick, Civil & Environmental Engineering, University College Cork.
- Professor Richard Cogdell, Glasgow Biomedical Research Centre, University of Glasgow, Scotland.
- Professor Kerry Gallagher, Geosciences Rennes, University of Rennes, France.
- Ms. Mary McNulty (*Rapporteur*), Careers Services, University College Cork.
- Professor Stephen Phillips (*Chair*), School of Life Sciences, University of Glasgow, Scotland.
- Professor Michael Williams, School of Natural Sciences, NUI Galway.

Site Visit

The site visit was conducted over 2.5 days from 23-25 January 2012 and included visits to Enterprise Centre, the Cooperage, Butler Building and library facilities in UCC and meetings with:

- Professor John O'Halloran (Head) and staff of the department as a group and individually
- Representatives of undergraduate and postgraduate students
- Representatives of employers, past graduates and other external stakeholders
- Professor Paul Giller, Registrar & Senior Vice-President Academic
- Professor Anita Maguire, Vice-President for Research & Innovation
- Professor Grace Neville, Vice-President for Teaching and Learning
- Mr. Con O'Brien, Vice-President for Student Experience
- Professor Patrick Fitzpatrick, Head, College of Science, Engineering & Food Science
- Mr. Mark Poland, Director of Buildings & Estates
- Mr. Cormac McSweeney, Finance Office

An exit presentation of the principal findings of the Peer Review Group was made to staff of the department in the afternoon of the second day.

Description

Head of Department: Professor John O'Halloran
No. of Staff: 21 Academic Staff, 5 Emeritus Staff, 4 Adjunct staff, 10 Technical Officers, 5 Administrative Staff
Location of Department: Enterprise Centre, the Cooperage and the Butler Building, North Mall Campus, Distillery Fields. Including a research facility at the Lough Hyne Marine Nature Reserve near Skibbereen, West Cork.

Student Numbers

School of BEES		2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
	Fulltime UG	336.43	335.08	341.68	343.99	351.76	372.02
	Parttime UG	6.21	13.72	11.79	6.92	9.53	0.82
	Visiting UG	16.25	13.66	12.31	15.12	19.95	13.91
	Total UG excl.Visiting	342.65	348.80	353.47	350.91	361.29	372.85
	Total UG	358.89	362.46	365.78	366.03	381.23	386.75
	Fulltime PG	72.35	119.83	128.33	130.83	112.86	153.48
	Parttime PG	11.25	5.25	3.75	4.83	3.75	3.13
	Total PG excl. visiting	83.60	125.08	132.08	135.67	116.61	156.60
	Total PG	83.60	125.08	132.08	135.67	116.61	156.60

Mission Statement

To advance and apply our understanding of the natural world through excellence in research, teaching and innovation

Aims and Objectives

The School recognises the parity of esteem of research, innovation, teaching and learning that are expressed in our key values of excellence, integrity, accountability and collaboration.

Strategic Goals:

1. To be the place of first choice for staff and students to work and study
2. To conduct basic and applied research of the highest quality and publish in high-impact journals
3. To conduct pure and applied research that is relevant to society, industry and other stakeholders, by generating new knowledge that can be applied to create employment through innovation and translation of research
4. To be part of national and international networks of research and teaching excellence
5. To provide a world class education in each of the disciplines, through both general and niche graduate and postgraduate programmes, and by embedding research and innovation in all curricula
6. To train graduates and post graduates to meet the needs of society and industry both in Ireland and worldwide.

General Comment on Quality Review

Self-Assessment Report

The PRG was well aware that the School was only formed in Dec 2010, and that necessarily the School was still bedding in. The SAR was expertly compiled and generally followed the guidelines, was very well presented and gave an excellent overview of the new School in terms of its structure, functioning and aspirations. The PRG congratulated the team responsible in the School for preparation of the SAR. The history of the subject disciplines which now form the School was described and put the formation of the School into a context of the constituent parts which was very helpful to the PRG.

The SAR generally covered all the areas required for the PRG's review. Such omissions identified by the PRG were mostly rectified on request. Most notably there was insufficient information on the individual academic staff member grant income into the School (or previous departments) in the past 5 years. Individual teaching loads were also not provided but the Work Load Model (WLM - data yet to be confirmed) indicated that no academic staff member had a light load and a few had loads which were extremely high. Also, the role of technical staff was not evident in the report, but we understand this is because it is currently being revised. Explanations were sought in a small number of areas, including the basis of the draft Work Load Model.

The SAR is generally upbeat in its assessment of its current position, the quality of its teaching, the experience of the students, both undergraduate and postgraduate, under its care, the quality of its research and maintenance of its research income, and the benefits of refurbishment of the teaching and office accommodation at Distillery Fields. In spite of the effect of the Irish economic downturn

on core funding into the university the School was at least maintaining its position in all aspects of University activities.

The PRG commends BEES on its optimistic tone in the SAR in spite of the difficult economic background. A consequence of the financial position has been that promotions and rewards have been suspended for some time and this could only be very demoralising for ambitious and hard-working staff.

SWOT Analysis
The SWOT exercise had previously been carried out at an away morning at a local hotel and had been moderated by an external facilitator from Nottingham University. The detailed report suggested that most members of the School's staff felt able to unburden themselves of their frustrations and concerns but still be positive for the future of the School. There was a strong consensus on eleven areas to be addressed for improvement. None of these areas would have come as a surprise for the School's Management Team but the SWOT exercise rightly gave the School collective ownership of the strategy for improvement and moving the new School forward.

The PRG recognised the value of the SWOT exercise as a means of developing collegiality and providing an open and relaxed forum for constructive criticism and advice for all members of the School. The PRG would agree that the areas identified for improvement were correct and these will be referred to elsewhere in this report. The PRG would not recommend that the exercise is repeated in the medium term.

Benchmarking
Four benchmarking institutes had been chosen by the School to provide comparisons of the disciplines covered by the School. Senior members of the relevant disciplines (including administrative and technical staff) from the School visited these Institutes. Zoology and Ecology disciplines were benchmarked with the School of Life Sciences and the Institute of Biodiversity, Animal Health and Comparative Medicine, University of Glasgow. The Geology discipline was benchmarked with the School of Geographical and Earth Sciences, University of Glasgow. The Plant Sciences were benchmarked with Plant and Crop Sciences Division at the University of Nottingham. The discipline of Environmental Sciences (including Environmental Management) was benchmarked with the School of Environmental Sciences at the University of East Anglia.

The PRG thought that the choice of the University of Glasgow for benchmarking of Zoology and Ecology was not helpful because in the past 2 years Glasgow had undergone a major restructuring exercise whereby teaching was the responsibility of Schools and research was conducted through Institutes which made comparisons with BEES unhelpful and misleading. As BEES had sent staff to Glasgow it was surprising that this problem had not been recognised during that visit. The benchmarking of the Earth Sciences at Glasgow with BEES was better although again it was not a like with like comparison. Nottingham and East Anglia were suitable benchmarking departments.

BEES does compare well or lead in some areas with the benchmarking departments. However, differences should not necessarily be used to justify change (e.g. adding more taught MSc courses). For example research income in BEES may compare well with the valid comparators but the fact that major income earners come from only 30% of the academic staff in BEES shows that improvement is possible.

The PRG believes that the benchmarking exercise is valid and instructive but an alternative to Glasgow for Zoology and Ecology should be sought. The School is fairly unique in the Geological context of Environmental Science as most other combined disciplines tend to combine Geology with Geography rather than Biosciences. An alternative to the current approach of seeking a single benchmark partner might be to consider several possibilities and undertake the exercise remotely (via email) and then to choose an appropriate institution to visit, if required. This would make any conclusions more robust and mitigate against single mismatches as identified above.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

	PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC comment/recommendation	Action
	Research		
1.	The practice of work in BEES needs to change to allow sufficient time to be spent on research and enhance the BEES research profile. This will undoubtedly require a radical change in how teaching is delivered and how much teaching is carried out.	Recommendation endorsed.	School
2.	There needs to be a much more robust and deliberate system for mentoring, to help improve the quality of research grant proposals.	Recommendation endorsed and actions taken by School welcomed. QPC also referred this recommendation to the VPRI as the recommendation has a wider application than just to this School.	School VPRI
3.	A similar mentoring scheme to help improve the quality of papers, targeting higher impact journals would also be beneficial.	Recommendation endorsed QPC also referred this recommendation to the VPRI as the recommendation has a wider application than just to this School.	School VPRI
4.	BEES should consider setting defined research targets for every member of academic staff in their P&DR process, making sure that sufficient time is available for these to be achieved.	Recommendation endorsed. Comment from School re realistic targets endorsed	School
5.	BEES should consider enhancing its seminar programme, especially with some School-wide seminars that will help foster discipline interactions.	Recommendation endorsed	School
6.	The quality of PhD training could be improved if a defined set of generic 'skills' training modules, many of which are already available, were made a mandatory requirement.	Recommendation strongly endorsed. Comment of School noted. QPC also noted that development of generic skills in graduate students is approved policy of the University.	School
7.	Currently BEES is examining the role of its technical staff. It would be good if, as part of this review, some targeted technical support could be deployed to help underpin research.	Recommendation noted. QPC awaits the outcome of the review by the School of its technical staff and their roles within the School	School
8.	PRG endorses efforts to integrate research programmes and foster multi-disciplinary research.	Recommendation strongly endorsed	School

	PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC comment/recommendation	Action
9.	VP for Research might consult with Glasgow University or a similar institution regarding services provided to researchers to facilitate preparation of grant applications.	Recommendation endorsed. QPC referred this recommendation to the VPRI for consideration.	VP RI
10.	The PRG endorses efforts of BEES to foster research with the local research institutes, ERI and CMRC.	Recommendation endorsed. QPC welcomed the positive approach of the School to the recommendation and noted that progress has already been made in this regard	School
11.	Enhance the role of the PhD student advisor to have twice yearly meetings with the PhD student under their charge, rather than only at times of difficulty.	Recommendation endorsed.	School
	Teaching and Learning, Curriculum Delivery and Assessment		
12.	The school should explore more time-efficient approaches to teaching, such as teaching certain courses every two years (and combining classes, so that 3rd and 4th year students are in the same class), more learning based approaches in which students work at their own pace and have tutorial type interaction with a lecturer, rather than the more traditional stand up lecture.	Recommendation endorsed. QPC noted and welcomed the comment of the School that curriculum review is ongoing in the School	
13.	The use of research students for demonstrating in practical classes and field trips in BEES should be consistent with usage in other cognate Schools including payment for or otherwise for their time.	Recommendation endorsed The QPC noted that the practice in place in the School is consistent with that in other schools in SEFS. QPC noted and welcomed the success of staff of the school in attracting funds for postgraduate support.	--------
14.	The School should look to upgrading the equipment and furniture in teaching rooms.	Recommendation endorsed. QPC noted the current difficulties in funding for the University and that the School had been relocated recently to the North Mall campus with significant funding assigned for setup and refurbishment at that time.	School

	PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC comment/recommendation	Action
15.	The number of modules offered by the School should be reduced so that teaching loads can be reduced and consequently time be released for focussing on the research effort. As well as reducing the amount of teaching the School might also like to consider concentrating teaching of individual staff members into certain parts of the academic year leaving significant chunks of the calendar when the focus is predominantly research.	QPC welcomed the approach of the School and endorsed the recommendation. QPC will welcome further details to be forthcoming in the QIP	School
16.	Review the timetable regarding clashes of modules and the time needed for students to transit between Distillery Fields campus and the main campus.	Recommendation endorsed QPC noted the difficulties associated with timetabling so as to allow a range of choice available to students and welcomed the engagement of the School with the issue	School
17.	Increase the numbers of postgraduate research students. Although this might require some loss of FTEs from a reduction in undergraduate teaching, in the medium term this should be offset from increased FTEs from graduate students.	Recommendation Noted. QPC agreed that this is a matter for decision by the School and welcomed the assurance that increasing postgraduate research student numbers continues to be a priority of the School	School.
18.	Administrative staff might assist academic staff load material onto Blackboard. Backboard should be used consistently across teaching staff.	Recommendation noted. QPC welcomed the commitment of the School to facilitate and encourage academic staff to engage with the VLE and other new technologies used to assist the student learning.	School
19.	For continuous assessment exercises students must have the material returned within the agreed maximum time of 4 weeks.	Recommendation endorsed. QPC further recommended the consideration by the School of the assessment burden on students and as a consequence that on staff also.	School
20.	Consider the US as a source of additional students, in addition to India and the Far East.	Recommendation endorsed. QPC recommended that the School look to seek funding from the ERASMUS Masters programme in addition to the countries listed in the recommendation.	School
21.	Introduce work placements as regular opportunities for suitable students.	Recommendation endorsed. QPC noted that difficulties may be experienced in sourcing suitable work placements for all students, but strongly urged the School to make every effort in this regard.	School

		PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC comment/recommendation	Action
22.		Consider providing model answers, good and bad, on Blackboard and use of peer assessment as an alternative to continuous assessment and staff comment on written work.	Recommendation endorsed. QPC welcomed the commitment of the School to active consideration of the recommendation	School
23.		Make WIFI available to undergraduates at all sites and use it as a teaching tool.	Recommendation endorsed. QPC noted that this objective is already a priority of IS.	IS
	Staffing			
24.		The Committee strongly supports replacements in Geology, at least a Chair and a Lecturer. There is also a real concern about Plant Science and Zoology, where leadership positions do need to be filled.	QPC welcomed the commitment of the College of SEFS to supporting the appointment of senior staff in the disciplines as soon as possible	College SEFS
25.		It would be worth the School investigating the use of some properly qualified teaching-only staff in order to free up more time for the existing staff. This could be partly resourced from the annual surplus.	QPC noted that this is an important principle to be considered at University level. At present the policy of the University is that all academic staff should both teach and conduct research in line with the university mission of being a research-led university.	University UMT
	The Work Load Model			
26.		The School Management Team investigates the apparent work overload some members of staff are carrying, recalibrating the model if need be, and then readjust working practices to lower the workload to a reasonable threshold.	Recommendation endorsed.	School
27.		Rationalisation of the undergraduate, MSc, and diploma programmes by reducing the number of options, improving the efficiency of assessment processes.	Recommendation endorsed and actions welcomed	School
28.		Once the data in the Workload Model is confirmed, the Head of School should use the information provided to discuss the contributions of the staff to the progress of the School.	Recommendation endorsed and actions welcomed	Head of School
	Staff Development			
29.		UCC should investigate a competitive system for titular promotions for academic staff (without otherwise altering contracts).	QPC referred this recommendation to HR, noting that this has already been considered at University level and that significant difficulties are associated with implementation of such a recommendation	Corporate Secretary UMTS

	PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC comment/recommendation	Action
	Accommodation		
30.	That a large lecture theatre (capacity 250 students) be provided on the North Mall Campus.	QPC endorsed the consideration of this recommendation by the University and Buildings & Estates	UMT Buildings & Estates
31.	That a social and flexible learning space with restaurant facilities and WIFI access be made available on the North Mall Campus.	QPC noted that a small cafe and foyer area already exist on the North Mall Campus. QPC welcomed the actions being taken to extend this space and its use and endorsed the recommendation	School Buildings & Estates
32.	Research should not be impeded through problems of access to buildings out of normal working hours.	QPC noted that the issue of access on a 24 hour basis is difficult in all areas of the campus requiring consideration of issues such as safety, security, etc. QPC recommended that the School discuss the possibilities for improved access with Buildings & Estates	School Buildings & Estates
	Communications		
33.	The School builds on the work already done in this area and continue with its communication strategy, continuing to develop an inclusive and open communication process for staff and students.	Recommendation endorsed. QPC welcomed the improvements put in place by the School and the plans to prioritise this as an issue in the immediate future.	School
	Financing		
34.	The School should investigate ways of transferring its small surplus across the annual accounting boundary, in consultation with the UCC Bursar, with a view of pump-priming new research activities.	Recommendation endorsed. QPC noted that the School is planning to address this issue in discussion with the College Financial Analyst and that whatever the outcome is, it will need to be in line with University policy.	School College SEFS Bursar
	External Relations		
35.	Development of student placements programmes (even a formalised industrial degree, requiring a year of work placement as part of the curriculum).	See above	
36.	The School could have an official launch, inviting all (local, regional, national and international) stakeholders.	Recommendation endorsed.	School

		PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC comment/recommendation	Action
37.		International students (both Erasmus and beyond) could be targeted more agressively in future and could provide a good source of quality graduate students. The School should try to have representation on international affairs committees and take an active role in the marketing/recruitment processes at the UCC level and actively continue to explore setting up novel joint programs with non-Irish universities. This should be dealt with in combination with the international recruitment unit at UCC.	Recommendation endorsed QPC welcomed the active engagement of staff of the School in achieving this objective.	School
38.		The School's ambition to increase links with industry and other agencies is endorsed.	Recommendation endorsed	School
39.		Work towards formal accreditation of Environmental degree programmes is endorsed.	Recommendation endorsed. QPC considered that achieving a formal external accreditation of the BSc Environmental Studies programme would be highly likely to make the programme more attractive to students and thus enhance the quality of students and assure the sustainability of the programmes).	School
40.		The School should compile an alumni register	Recommendation endorsed and action welcomed.	School
		Students and the Student Experience		
41.		In terms of the teaching experience the School should try to convince the external departments to consider the needs of the BEES students (have a contact person in the external department to ensure the BEES students are on the appropriate mailing lists from each department …to know when lectures are cancelled, etc).	Recommendation endorsed. School should discuss with the other departments/schools concerned the areas of difficulty and seek to address these.	School
42.		The School should subsidise field courses as far as it is able and consider an installment system for payment by the student where the cost could be spread over the year.	Recommendation endorsed. QPC welcomed the commitment of the School to review all field courses and the funding of student participation in them	School
43.		The VP for the Student Experience should be replaced to continue the excellent work in this area.	QPC noted that this is a matter for the University authorities and is under active consideration by UMT	UMT

School of Mathematical Sciences

Peer Review Group

- Professor David Applebaum *(Chair),* School of Mathematics & Statistics, University of Sheffield, U.K.
- Professor Adrian Bowman, School of Mathematics & Statistics, University of Glasgow, Scotland.
- Dr Edward Cox, School of Mathematical Sciences, University College Dublin
- Professor David Elworthy, Mathematics Institute, University of Warwick, U.K.
- Dr Seamus O'Reilly*(Rapporteur)* Department of Food Business & Development, University College Cork
- Dr. Ruth Ramsay, School of Biological, Earth & Environmental Sciences, University College Cork

Site Visit

The site visit was conducted over 2.5 days from 20-22 March 2010 and included visits to school and library facilities in UCC and meetings with:

- Professor James Bowen (Head) and staff of the department as a group and individually
- Representatives of undergraduate and postgraduate students
- Representatives of employers, past graduates and other external stakeholders
- Professor Paul Giller, Registrar & Senior Vice-President Academic
- Dr. David O'Connell, Projects Officer, Office of Vice President for Research & Innovation
- Dr. Bettie Higgs representing the Vice-President for Teaching and Learning
- Dr. Michael Byrne, Deputy Vice-President for Student Experience
- Professor Patrick Fitzpatrick, Head, College of Science, Engineering & Food Science
- Ms. Carmel Cotter, Financial Analyst, College of Science, Engineering & Food Science

An exit presentation of the principal findings of the Peer Review Group was made to staff of the department in the afternoon of the second day.

Description

Head of Department: Professor James Grannell
No. of Staff: 3.5 Senior Lecturers, 14 College Lecturers, Emeritus Professors, 4 Administrative Staff, 1 Systems Administration Manager.
Location of Department: Western Gateway Building

Student Numbers

School of Mathematical		2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Sciences	Fulltime UG	507.83	513.94	537.86	561.95	549.05	543.25
	Parttime UG	0.92	3.83	4.92	3.00	1.58	1.08
	Visiting UG	5.25	12.75	8.18	9.50	8.91	8.28
	Total UG excl.Visiting	508.75	517.77	542.77	564.95	550.64	544.33
	Total UG	513.99	530.52	550.95	574.45	559.55	552.61
	Fulltime PG	29.42	37.83	91.83	62.08	44.08	56.25
	Parttime PG	1.42	2.92	2.58	2.75	1.08	0.92
	Total PG excl. visiting	30.83	40.75	94.42	64.83	45.17	57.17
	Total PG	30.83	40.75	94.42	64.83	45.17	57.17

Mission Statement & Aim and Objectives

"The primary mission of the School is to provide high quality education in Mathematics, Applied Mathematics and Statistics and to carry out research to the highest international standards in a spirit of community and professional service. Our tradition of excellence dates back to George Boole (1815-1865), the first Professor of Mathematics at UCC. "

As a language and as a body of knowledge, method and technique, Mathematics is important both in its own right and as the fundamental underpinning of science and technology. The School is involved in teaching across most of the Colleges and disciplines (Arts, Science, Engineering, Medicine, Food Science, Business and Commerce) and in its research collaborates with a wide variety of research groups inside and outside the university (as can be seen from Appendix H on External Relations). Mathematics forms an indispensable tool in the physical sciences, engineering, medicine, the life sciences, and in business and finance.

Ireland's aspiration to develop into a knowledge-based economy carries several trends with it that all point into the same direction: more numerate graduates are required, more graduates who have mathematical modelling and data-handling skills, more graduates with quantitative and mathematical research capabilities and mathematics teachers are required who are aware of the modern developments in the field.

As many modern research methodologies have originated in the mathematical disciplines, the School is well placed to play an increasingly important role in the national economy on at least four levels: (i) through teaching Mathematics to university students across a large number of programmes, (ii) through teaching Mathematics to future mathematics teachers, (iii) through the graduates of our own programmes who take on careers in industry and government, (iv) through research in Mathematics, Applied Mathematics and Statistics (including the disciplines of Financial Mathematics and Actuarial Science) which has both a direct and an indirect impact on advances in technology and science.

General Comment on Quality Review

Self-Assessment Report

The School provided a SAR which was honest in its assessment of the present position of the School. Inclusion of the School's submission to the 2009 UCC Research Quality Review (RQR) exercise and the report from the RQR Panel was of considerable assistance to the PRG in its assessment of the School's research activity. As detailed above, a number of additional documents were requested to supplement the material summarised in the SAR. The report describes a research active school with dedicated lecturers and administrative staff. However, the School also faces a number of significant challenges – these challenges revolve around staffing and organisation. The PRG recommends strongly that the School continues the discussions that led to the formation of the report and clarifies a strategy and vision for the future that can be collectively owned. Every effort to do this should be encouraged and supported. As mentioned in the SAR the recommendations from the School for the future have not yet been prioritised and this should form at least part of the discussion.

SWOT Analysis

It is clear that a full and comprehensive SWOT analysis has been carried out. This has yielded a good overview of the factors that have impacted on the operation of the School. It has also indicated the opportunities that exist for the School going forward. From review of the material available to the Group and from its meetings with members of staff, the PRG broadly concurs with the SWOT analysis.

The staff in the School face the following major challenges due to staff retirements and most recently the sad and premature death of Prof Alexei Pokrovskii (Head of Applied Mathematics): (i) a resource demanding suite of courses delivered across all of the Colleges of the University at both undergraduate and postgraduate level; (ii) organisational changes in UCC; (iii) leadership within the school – the School had significant periods without a School Head and currently has no Head of Applied Mathematics; and (iv) lack of development of roles and responsibilities within a school framework. The staff however have a strong commitment to and pride in their work and the PRG notes that the reputation of the School has been built on a long history of high calibre education and research. This is a major strength that should be built upon. The PRG also recognises the weaknesses identified in the SAR and in particular the SWOT analysis. Major weaknesses that need to be addressed revolve around the staffing shortage and consequent over reliance on part-time staff, communication/engagement/ownership/related issues within the School and the need for a planned coherent strategy that is integrated into a SEFS College plan and, more broadly, the strategic plans of UCC as a whole needs to be agreed and implemented.

The SWOT analysis identifies challenges posed by reduced funding mechanisms and the PRG also recognises the difficulties that this creates but would encourage the School to actively pursue both national and EU funding opportunities.

The listed comments in the SWOT analysis were broadly reflected in discussions with staff and the needs/recommendations section of the SWOT analysis provided a useful summary of major issues. The PRG in discussion with staff has identified the following as key comments in the SWOT analysis and endorses the following findings of the School:

Strengths
- Quality and dedication of Staff.
- Research which is of high quality with significant national and international impact, involving some collaborations with eminent researchers.
- The education programmes in the School attract high achieving students. The PRG was impressed on meeting a number of these students by their enthusiasm and interest.
- Many of the programmes have strong student uptake, for example the PRG met with students and the staff committee from the Financial Mathematics and Actuarial Science (FMAS) programme and was impressed with their enthusiasm and commitment.

Weaknesses
- Staffing issues revolving around loss of senior staff and the use of a high proportion of part-time staff makes it difficult to develop 'critical mass' in research, form a cohesive school identity, and attract PhD students. The PRG group wishes to emphasise that it met with a number of part-time staff and was impressed by the calibre of staff involved, many of whom had extensive teaching experience. The students would have been well taught by the staff the PRG met.
- There are communication 'disconnects' both vertically between the College of SEFS and the School of Mathematical Sciences and horizontally within the School. This was identified in the SWOT analysis and voiced in PRG discussions in terms of uncertainty about future directions.

Opportunities
- In identifying with a national strategy to increase international students the School sees opportunities in the roll-out of new taught postgraduate programmes (e.g. Higher Diploma in Mathematical and Statistical Risk Modelling, Financial Mathematics and Actuarial Science) The PRG in encouraging this would also suggest a module review that examines likely reconfiguration of existing module offerings with a view to developing further postgraduate programmes (possibly in collaboration with other schools). The PRG would see this as a possible mechanism for increasing international PhD student numbers. The academic argument is about building a stronger, more vibrant research community. The financial argument is the inflow of non-exchequer funds to the School.
- Building existing and developing new research linkages within UCC and also extending the collaborations both nationally and internationally.

Threats
- The major threat to the School is perceived in terms of permanent staff shortages. There is a continuing trend in decreased research funding and a moratorium on staff appointments.

Benchmarking

The School chose to benchmark against:
1. School of Mathematical and Computer Science, University of Herriot -Watt
2. School of Mathematics, Statistics and Actuarial Science, University of Kent
3. Mathematical Institut, University of Leiden
4. Mathematical Sciences, University of Missoula, Montana
5. Mathematical Sciences, University of Texas.

This is in contrast to the previous review where 5 UK universities were chosen. Benchmarking is always difficult to do. However the School has carried this out successfully and suitable institutes were chosen for comparison. The taught postgraduate programmes comparison mainly focuses around financial/actuarial discipline and a more comprehensive comparison across some of the other discipline areas would have been valuable.

Comparison with research quality is based on the RQR carried out in 2008/9. With a number of senior staff leaving after this date the conclusions reached may not continue to hold. However, the PRG wishes to emphasise that the School has a number of outstanding researchers with international impact.

There is a clear message from the benchmarking that no comparable School has the staff profile that currently is operational in UCC.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

	PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC Comment/recommendation	Action
1	The School needs to develop a strategic plan for targeted recruitment of staff over the next three years	Recommendation strongly endorsed.	School
2	the appointment of a Chair of Applied Mathematics to provide leadership to the group	QPC noted that this recommendation has already been implemented. A Chair in Applied Mathematics and two lectureships have been awarded to the School in 2011-12.	College SEFS
3	Greater delegation of responsibility from the Head of School to groups, as well as individuals, which needs to be coupled with wider communication within a culture of inclusivity.	Recommendation endorsed. QPC welcomed the commitment of the School to implementation	School
4	The School's teaching strategy committee should undertake regular programme reviews, from a strategic perspective	Recommendation endorsed. QPC noted and welcomed the commitment of the School to review programmes. QPC noted the recommendation referred to regular review of programmes and endorses this.	School
5	The School needs to develop postgraduate programmes and expand non-EU undergraduate recruitment, to reduce reliance on exchequer income. However, there needs to be greater clarity and changes to the University resource model which would incentivise the pursuit of non-exchequer income.	Recommendation endorsed. QPC noted that the University is considering ways of incentivising generation of additional income at all levels.	School UMT
6	The current academic and business principles on which the proposed delivery of UCC-accredited degrees in China is based requires further attention and the PRG urges consideration of other options and opportunities, such as Chinese and other non-EU students taking existing courses on campus.	Recommendation endorsed. QPC noted the importance of exploring all avenues for income generation	UMT VPER Registrar

	PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC Comment/recommendation	Action
7	Funding must be made available for staff to attend key conferences and to invite visiting seminar speakers to UCC.	QPC welcomed the approach of he School to this recommendation	School
8	All opportunities should be pursued to find funding for PhD students, at school, college, university, national and international levels.	Recommendation endorsed.	School College
9	Enhance the transferable skills component of undergraduate programmes and liaise more closely with the Careers Office.	Recommendation endorsed.	School
10	Foster further development of interdisciplinary research within UCC, nationally and internationally, that could benefit from various funding agencies.	Recommendation endorsed.	School
11	The role of the Senior Demonstrator should be reviewed. In doing so consideration should be given to consolidating responsibility for assigning tutors and timetabling.	Recommendation endorsed.	School

Further recommendations for improvement made by PRG

(The page number of each recommendation is given. These recommendations were not included by the PRG in the summary list but were embedded in the text of the report.)

	PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC Comment/recommendation	Action
11.	Page 16: The recommendations for improvement suggested by the Quality Review Coordinating Committee are all very valid ideas. They need to be prioritized and resourced.	Recommendation endorsed.	School
12.	Page 5: The PRG recommends strongly that the School continues the discussions that led to the formation of the report and clarifies a strategy and vision for the future that can be collectively owned. Every effort to do this should be encouraged and supported.	Recommendation endorsed.	School
13.	Page 7: The PRG in encouraging this (increasing international students through new postgraduate programmes) would also suggest a module review that examines likely reconfiguration of existing module offerings with a view to developing further postgraduate programmes (possibly in collaboration with other schools). The PRG would see this as a way of increasing international PhD numbers.	Recommendation endorsed.	School
14.	Page 11: Currently there is no representative from the department of Applied Mathematics on the School Executive Committee. This should not continue and a representative should be identified pending the appointment of a Professor of Applied Mathematics. The School executive should meet regularly and the substantive decisions and discussions communicated to the School.	Recommendation endorsed. QPC welcomed the commitment of the School to the implementation of this recommendation	School

		PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC Comment/recommendation	Action
15.		The PRG think it prudent that the new Head (of School) be appointed six months before the retirement date (of the current Head).	QPC noted that this is a very desirable approach to succession planning, which is very important. QPC recommended that that this recommendation be considered by the Head of College SEFS	Head of College SEFS
16.		Page 12: The PRG are concerned by the reported lack of engagement by HR in the issuing of contracts to 'hourly occasional' staff. ... we recommend that all such contracts should be signed-off by HR before being issued and that HR should keep records on all such staff employed.	Recommendation endorsed.	HR
17.		Page 14: In discussion with the School concerns were strongly expressed that the resource (allocation) model (RAM) in delivery was not rewarding 'efficiency, effectiveness and best practice'. The PRG believes that the strategic plan for the School should be developed in the context of significant discussion with the College of SEFS leading to an agreed way forward.	Recommendation endorsed	School College SEFS
18.		Page 15: The School website is poor and this needs to be addressed with some urgency.	Recommendation endorsed	School
19.		Page 16: The position and future of the Statistical Lab. Consultancy Unit remains unclear. The PRG is of the opinion that it should continue to be an identifiable unit within the School pending fresh developments.	QPC recommends that the School review the position of the Statistical Consultancy Unit. the Statistical Consultancy Unit has the potential to provide an income generating opportunity to the School. QPC recommended that the School clarify the role and activities of the Unit with a focus on the maximisation of service provision to the University.	School

	PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC Comment/recommendation	Action
20.	Page 8: The PRG was struck by the contribution of the School disciplines to UCC over the years and to a range of teaching programmes and activities across the university. The current environment highlights the essential role that such fundamental disciplines play in University education, research and broader economic and societal well-being. The, the PRG urges the University to recognise the contribution of these fundamental disciplines.	QPC noted the range and scale of the contribution of the School across all UCC and that the contribution of these fundamental disciplines is well recognised by the University.	
21.	Page 12: The commitment of the School to high quality 'service courses' requires active College and broader University support.	Recommendation endorsed. The contribution of the School is recognised through many means including the UCC Resource Allocation Model	School Head of College SEFS

College of Arts, Celtic Studies & Social Sciences

Peer Review Group

- Mr. Trevor Holmes, Vice-President for External Relations, University College Cork.
- Professor Anne Moran (*Chair*), Professor of Education, University of Ulster.
- Mr. Paul Moriarty, Head of Student Counselling, University College Cork.
- Ms. Lynda O'Toole, Senior Inspector, Department of Education and Skills, Dublin.

Site Visit

The site visit was conducted over 2.5 days from 10-12 October 2011 and included visits to college and library facilities in UCC and meetings with:

- Professor Caroline Fennell (Head) and staff of the college as a group and individually
- Representatives of undergraduate and postgraduate students
- Representatives of College Heads of Schools/Departments and other external stakeholders
- Dr. Michael Murphy, President
- Professor Paul Giller, Registrar & Senior Vice-President Academic
- Professor Anita Maguire, Vice-President for Research & Innovation
- Professor Grace Neville, Vice-President for Teaching and Learning
- Mr. Cormac McSweeney, Finance Office

An exit presentation of the principal findings of the Peer Review Group was made to staff of the department in the afternoon of the second day.

Description

Head of Department:	Professor Caroline Fennell
No. of Staff College:	227 Academic Staff, 94 Administrative Staff, 7 Technical Staff and 1 Security Staff member.
No. of Staff College Office:	1 Head of College, 2 Vice-Heads of College, 1 Associate Dean, 1 Financial Analyst, 1 HR Business Partner, 6 Administrative Staff.
Location of Department:	College Office, O'Rahilly Building

Mission Statement

The College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences shall have as its mission to analyse and interpret individual, cultural, social and historical issues in their personal, local, national and international contexts, and to add to the human experience by the creation of new knowledge and understanding. The College shall fulfil its mission in engaging in its core function of teaching, research and service in the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge and education.

General Comment on Quality Review

Context

This report is presented in the knowledge and understanding of a number of broader contextual factors (internal and external), including:

- The transition phase for the College both in terms of its structures and with the appointment of a new Head of College who took up post in October 2010

- The acknowledged level of personal and professional commitment of the staff of the College

- The new Rules for the operation of the College which were approved by Governing Body in September 2011

- The schoolification process for the College which is still incomplete

- The development of the University's new Strategic Plan 2012-2017, which has recently commenced, and the subsequent completion of that plan which will provide a framework for the College plan going forward

- The prevailing external context within which the review was conducted particularly the national strategy for Higher Education in Ireland (Hunt report) and the national financial constraints under which the University as a whole is working.

The PRG considers that the timing of the review provides opportunities for the College and the University, notwithstanding a number of significant challenges. The College and the University are leading in terms of widening access to higher education for groups such as the socio-economically disadvantaged and the disabled. The College has a commendable record in attracting international students. Even in these straitened financial times, the College is generating a surplus, which provides even greater opportunities for its future development. In light of this, it was the view of the PRG, that the generation of additional income does need to be incentivised by the University, if staff are to continue to engage fully with such initiatives.

The PRG unreservedly endorsed the recommendation that was made by some members of staff of the College during the site visit for the appointment of an Associate Dean for First Year Students and for the appointment of a Vice-Head of College with specific responsibility for Teaching & Learning.

Self-Assessment Report

The PRG found that the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) demonstrated a lack of clarity and understanding of the review process, including the requirements of the review, on behalf of the Head and staff of the College. Although the guidelines for the self-reflection process and the preparation of the SAR had been agreed with the College approximately twelve months prior to the review, the PRG found that they had not been followed in full. This resulted in limited ownership and engagement by staff of the College, with the full potential of the review not having been properly realised. The SAR fell short in a number of ways:

- The four main questions on page 2 of the guidelines were not addressed

   o *What are you trying to do?*

   o *How are you trying to do it?*

   o *How do you know it works?*

   o *How do you change in order to improve?*

- No executive summary and no action plan was provided

- No organogram detailing the structures of the College was provided

- Limited recommendations for improvement were included

- There was an absence of a quality focus and little evidence of an improvement approach

- The College Steering Committee was not fully representative, e.g. no students were represented on the committee

- The PRG was struck by the lack of awareness of the UCC Guidelines for preparation of the SAR by members of the Steering Committee

- The PRG noted with concern that they received four different answers as to who chaired the Steering Committee from the various members of the Committee with whom they met.

Given that invitations had been issued to external PRG members and dates set many months before the site visit, the expectation of the PRG was that the process for the preparation of the SAR would have been put in train at that point in time. The evidence before the PRG indicated that this did not happen. The PRG formed the opinion that the SAR submitted had been hastily created and the quality did not do justice to the current work nor the substantial achievements of the College.

The PRG acknowledged the work of the members of the Steering Committee and the efforts made by them to engage with internal and external stakeholders. However, outside of the circulation of questionnaires, there was limited evidence of engagement with students and either internal or external stakeholders.

The PRG would have welcomed evidence of a greater overall level of dialogue on the College and all its activities which may have yielded a detailed action plan for improvements based on the findings and reflections of the College and all its members. The report concluded with the identification of two priorities arising from the SWOT analysis and referred to numerous other areas which had been similarly identified. These were presented in Appendix 18 in the SAR but unfortunately no attempt was made to analyse or prioritise these or indeed to comment critically on them.

While extensive data was collected, very little of this was properly reflected upon nor analysed within the SAR. The evidence-base relied on low response rates from stakeholders which calls into question the true reliability and the validity of the data and therefore the resultant conclusions drawn. Furthermore, in some areas there was limited use of available College and University data which resulted in an incomplete sense of the overall student experience being conveyed to the PRG. For example, no reference was made to the outcomes of the student satisfaction survey; to external examiners' reports; to longer term employability or to the findings from previous recent quality reviews.

The College did not complete any benchmarking exercise which the PRG viewed as a crucial missed opportunity and regretted that the potential of the review process to engage with comparable internal and external data had been totally overlooked.

The PRG expressed disappointment that only ten students (one undergraduate student and nine postgraduate students) from the largest college within the University actually turned up to meet with them. Those students that did attend the meeting commented that they had been notified at very short notice. As students are core to the business of the College, the PRG regretted that its engagement with student representatives was so limited.

The imbalance in attention paid to teaching & learning versus research & innovation and external engagement /community relationships as espoused in the University Strategic Plan, as reflected in the SAR and in the PRG's discussions, was of significant concern. Neither the questionnaires nor the section entitled Teaching and Learning in the SAR provided details about the quality of the student learning experience, the use of innovative pedagogies, research and scholarship informed teaching, assessment and feedback or creativity with regard to the use of emerging technologies and the use of technology facilitate blended or e-learning. It is regrettable that sufficiently more attention had not been devoted to this core aspect of the College's mission. The questionnaires did not deal with this aspect of provision, which was most surprising, although it perhaps reflected the limited understanding of the process, evidenced in the inaccurate concept of college encountered during the review. It questions the level of scrutiny and review to which the SAR was subjected prior to its submission. Additionally, the University has a number of units dealing specifically with this area and a considerable number of staff have engaged in professional development in teaching and learning. This, however, was not outlined in any detail in the SAR.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

	PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC Comment/Recommendation	Action
1	Seize the opportunity offered by the review to take significant steps to position the College at the centre of the University and adopt a leadership position for Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences in the 21st century. It should adopt a leadership position in enhancing interdisciplinary research in the College through expanded collaboration with other colleges and disciplines across the university.	Recommendation strongly endorsed. QPC welcomed actions taken to date	College
2	Consider completing an international benchmarking exercise and use the information gained to help in the development of the College's strategic action plans.	Recommendation strongly endorsed.	College
3	Replicate the recent developments and successes achieved in research, in teaching and learning and external engagement.	Recommendation strongly endorsed.	College
4	Appoint vice-heads to lead on each of the key pillars of the University mission as expressed in the University Strategic Plan. Actively consider the appointment of an Associate Dean for 1st Year students.	Recommendation strongly endorsed. Actions welcomed.	College
5	Clarify roles, responsibilities and expectations of staff at all levels in the College against prioritised strategic objectives. Undertake a succession planning and leadership capacity audit to prioritise strategic staffing requirements. Ensure that the requisite strategic business acumen exists within the college support staff to deliver against its strategic objectives.	Recommendation strongly endorsed. Actions welcomed	College
6	Introduce a programme review for all programmes currently offered in the College. Encourage innovative, interdisciplinary programme design to include the potential of liberal arts degree(s) in conjunction with other colleges. Develop a strategic approach to future programme development (full and part-time), capitalising on links with external stakeholders.	Recommendation strongly endorsed. Actions welcomed	College

	PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC Comment/Recommendation	Action
7	Use the opportunity of the newly established Teaching and Learning Committee within the College to develop a new innovative Teaching and Learning Strategy incorporating the use of multimedia technologies and e-learning.	Recommendation strongly endorsed. Actions welcomed QPC commented that it is important to ensure that the new strategy is fully in line with the University Strategic Plan currently under preparation. The QPC also suggested that the College liaise with the relevant AC committees, especially with respect to the use of multimedia technologies and e-learning to ensure a consistent approach is developed across UCC.	College
8	Devise and implement a policy for integrating on-going student feedback into the college planning process.	Recommendation strongly endorsed. Actions welcomed	College
9	Action short-term/urgent needs and plan for long-term priorities, for example, in the short term focus on the first year student experience, the refurbishment of buildings such as those on Donovan's Rd., and the development of a detailed costed proposal with identified funding sources for a flagship building.	Recommendation strongly endorsed. Actions welcomed	College
10	Develop a plan for additional income generation including continuing professional development, international students, e-learning, lifelong learning and the expansion of interdisciplinary provision. Utilise the existing reserve to initiate such activities.	Recommendation strongly endorsed. Actions welcomed	College
11	Review the current communication policy and processes within the college and ensure they are 'fit for purpose' in engaging the whole of College in achievement of its strategic intent.	Recommendation strongly endorsed. Actions welcomed	College
12	Utilise the outcomes of this review process to inform the College's Strategic Plan.	Recommendation strongly endorsed. Actions welcomed	College

	PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC Comment/Recommendation	Action
	Recommendations to the Quality Promotion Unit *Note* *These are really recommendations to the Quality Promotion Committee*		
13	Review the appropriateness of the time allotted to a college review site visit and extend either the timeline or the number of panel reviewers to enable a more detailed assessment of college activities.	Agreed Was acted upon for the College SEFS review in 2011/12	QPU
14	Modify the guidelines for a College review to ensure adequate data, even from existing sources, is included in future SARs of College reviews.	Agreed	QPU/QPC
15	Ensure the Quality Promotion Committee undertakes a more rigorous level of oversight in the implementation of these recommendations for improvement.	Agreed . QPC will seek more regular updates from College ACSSS on the delivery of a Quality Improvement Plan and the implementation of the actions approved in the plan.	QPC

College of Science, Engineering & Food Science

Peer Review Group

- Professor David Fearn *(Chair)* Dean of Learning & Teaching, Professor of Applied Mathematics University of Glasgow, Scotland.
- Professor Fan Hong Head, School of Asian Studies, University College Cork.
- Dr. Bernard Mahon, Dean, Faculty of Science & Engineering, NUI Maynooth.
- Mr. Shane Murphy, Deputy President - Students Union, University College Cork
- Professor Emma Raven, Chair, Research Committee, Department of Chemistry, University of Leicester, U.K.

Site Visit

The site visit was conducted over 2.5 days from 28-30 November 2011 and included visits to departmental and library facilities in UCC and meetings with:

- Professor Patrick Fitzpatrick (Head) and staff of the department as a group and individually
- Representatives of undergraduate and postgraduate students
- Representatives of College Heads of Schools/Departments and other external stakeholders
- Dr. Michael Murphy, President
- Professor Paul Giller, Registrar & Senior Vice-President Academic
- Professor Anita Maguire, Vice-President for Research & Innovation
- Professor Grace Neville, Vice-President for Teaching and Learning
- Mr. Con O'Brien, Vice-President for Student Experience
- Mr. Michael Farrell, Corporate Secretary
- Mr. Cormac McSweeney, Finance Office
- Ms. Helen O'Donoghue, Human Resources, HR partner to College of SEFS

An exit presentation of the principal findings of the Peer Review Group was made to staff of the department in the afternoon of the second day.

Description

Head of Department: Professor Patrick Fitzpatrick
No. of College Staff: 339 Research Staff, 186 Academic Staff, 71 Technical Staff, 68 Administrative Staff, 4 Other.
Location of Department: Kane Building

Mission Statement

... to provide taught programmes and carry out research of the highest quality as measured by international standards, being responsive to the needs of society while at the same time being directed towards the fundamental search for knowledge and understanding in all aspects of our activities.

Aims

In all aspects of our work (academic programmes, teaching and learning, the student experience, finance, research, outreach), we will organize on two axes, with the College Office at the centre,

interacting in the vertical direction with the offices of the Registrar, Vice Presidents, and Bursar and with the schools, and in the horizontal direction with our sister Colleges. We will develop a network of individuals taking on leadership roles in these activities.

General Comment on Quality Review

Self-Assessment Report

The PRG felt that the report represented a considerable effort by the Head of College and the management team and that the College is achieving much in very difficult financial circumstances. The SAR identifies many significant issues and makes recommendations for addressing these. The majority of these are contained within those we make, below, in the Section "Findings of the Peer Review Group".   However, the PRG considered the SAR to be incomplete, failing to enumerate some very significant strengths. The report tended to focus on smaller and internal issues. Generally, it was felt that the document was unduly and unnecessarily concentrated on processes and management structures, and there was limited strategic thinking or vision.

SWOT Analysis

It was felt that the section headed "SWOT analysis" in the SAR did not adequately present the many strengths, nor did it clearly identify weaknesses. It was felt that SEFS has a number of potential opportunities on the horizon that have yet to be properly explored. More problematic is the number of potential threats, largely a consequence of the challenging climate in which SEFS finds itself. It was felt that more drastic solutions to some of these problems need to be sought, as, if not addressed, they could have a very damaging impact on research activities in the long term. A strategic and detailed/quantitative/methodical solution to these difficulties was not well articulated. There are many potential risks to be dealt with, including the economic climate and further cuts, staff morale, staff retention and decreasing research income/quality.

There appeared to be little or no student input into the SWOT, and insufficient consultation with students. The benchmarking with other similar units or institutions was not visible. It was felt that the college management team should be looking strategically at opportunities, and planning for long term decisions on a strategic basis.

A SWOT analysis, as bullet points extracted from the panel discussions, is articulated below. Some of these are specific to SEFS while others are broader, but impacting on SEFS. Many of these points are made in various places throughout the SAR. The panel was of the view that it was generally helpful to have these listed clearly, together.

<u>Strengths</u>

- A strong research profile. With some 85% of UCC's researchers, the College is an essential part of UCC's identity and strength.
- Excellent staff, strongly committed to their students, with a good level of innovation in learning and teaching.
- The quality of the accommodation, in particular the Western Gateway Building, was considered to be a great strength and the College is to be much commended on this. The co-location of different research disciplines/individuals, eg BEES, WGB, was considered to be very positive.

The panel was able to see real benefits of the synergies of placing people in a close working environment.

- The overall research record and success in competitive funding in centres of excellence.
- The quality of the associated research centres.
- UCC and SEFS have a captive market in the southwest with a strong regional identity.
- There are many well-connected local stakeholders very committed to UCC (although perhaps these are not exploited sufficiently).
- The condition of some of the laboratory areas (such as the Eureka labs for the second level teacher support) were impressive and a great asset.
- The new College structure is demonstrating benefits:
  o Programme approval processes are now done at college level (although there may be further scope for streamlining).
  o The development of new interdisciplinary programmes, eg Masters in Bioinformatics, with good support from the College in their establishment.
  o A strategic approach in making new appointments.
  o Devolution of budget, and improvement in clarity and transparency of finances. Early allocation of school budgets is seen as very helpful.
- The programme for student placements with industry was considered a great strength. This operates for some programmes within the College. The dedicated student placement officers, supporting students in placement, in CV preparation etc., was considered to be a very positive element in these programmes. Work placement was more effective, being organised at College level. The offering of a work placement is also a very positive marketing point for overseas students.

Weaknesses

- While some of the science accommodation is excellent (above), some other areas are shockingly bad, in particular some of the Chemistry and Physics teaching areas in the Kane Building. The laboratories are quite clearly not fit for purpose, especially considering the numbers of students using them. There may even be safety implications, especially in the Chemistry labs.
- The low level of overheads on research grants; failing to meet the full economic cost of undertaking research projects.
- The relationship between research institutes and SEFS are unresolved, which creates confusion in the system.
- There are differences in the treatment of postgraduates, depending where they are located, especially in institutes *vs* dept, which creates a differential learning environment.
- There is a lack of a fully resolved administrative structure in the College, with some schools and some departments, with vestiges of the old faculty system still present, despite a long and exhaustive process of restructuring. This creates a system in which the organisation looks inwards instead of outwards. It causes confusion, a lack of clarity in communication and impacts on decision making.
- The internal structures and committees are overly complex, which makes it difficult to make fast decisions and also difficult to make efficiencies by cutting out unnecessary bureaucracy. The panel did not see convincing evidence that the College Council and College Assembly were necessary or effective.
- It was felt that the external political/economic climate was sufficiently grave that the well-intentioned desire to consult everyone in every decision was no longer possible, and that decisions

should be devolved more frequently so that time could be invested in higher-level, longer-term, more strategic planning.

- There is still ambiguity over the School of Life Sciences, which needs to be immediately resolved.
- There is a lack of a strategy for internationalization, for example to:
    - develop international student numbers in a coherent way and to use this to generate income at school and college level,
    - tackle the low numbers in 2+2 programmes,
    - encourage student exchange activity.
- There is no strategic fund for the Head of College, which diminishes the visibility, authority and effectiveness of the College.
- It was felt that the web site could be improved, but it was acknowledged that this was being also addressed at university level.
- The travel time between different centres (eg between distillery fields and other locations on campus) has an impact on teaching at UG levels.
- There are timetabling issues for lectures and classroom locations. Timetable clashes appear to be a regular feature of the beginning of the session.

Opportunities

- To earn income from overseas student fees, as the current numbers of overseas students is rather small.
- To create a college investment fund to allow the CMT to invest in activities aimed at promoting college strategy. The PRG noted research grants overheads of some €2m per year and a non-pay budget of €4.5m.
- Positive actions which support the idea/visibility of the College, for example seminars, strategic investments.
- Expansion of work placement system (see above).
- To create efficiencies in administration and teaching, across the College, preserving time for research and development of new taught programmes.

Threats

- The future of research institutes in terms of contract staff and their impact on SEFS if research income falls.
- The failure to realize efficiency through a completion of the restructuring creates a real and immediate risk to the College. This inefficiency leads to increased teaching burdens, reduced research income, with early career researchers being overburdened and less able to do competitive research. This could have long-term and potentially very damaging consequences to the productivity and competitiveness of mid-level/younger scientists. The College needs to take specific actions to address this or risk degrading the research profile of key staff, as well as the student experience.
- The inability to promote staff due to financial situation and the Government Employment Control Framework If not resolved will impact on staff morale, productivity and retention. Especially if competitor institutions find imaginative ways to achieve promotion.
- The potential loss of key staff at the end of February, with the current incentivised opportunity for early retirement.

- The likely decline in research income and inability to fund research and postgraduate students was considered to be a very serious threat. There was no evidence of real consideration being given to threats and risks due to decline in research income.
- There was felt to be a lack of implementation of new structures creating a level of uncertainty and lack of clarity in reporting relationships.
- Chemistry and Physics undergraduate laboratories are in very poor condition; this could affect undergraduate numbers and the student experience.
- The Cooperage building needs a roof.
- There was no evidence of research planning / research strategy at College level.

Benchmarking

The SAR contains no element of benchmarking. An opportunity has been missed to make comparison of KPIs and survey results in the College with those of comparator units, seeking to learn from best practice elsewhere. Limited College-level organisational comparisons were tabled during the site visit.

Specific Recommendations for Improvement

	PRG Recommendation	QPC Comment/Recommendation	Action
1	Finalise the College of SEFS internal Structure.	Strongly recommend implementation as a matter of urgency	Head and staff of College
2	SEFS must focus management activity at strategic activity.	Recommendation strongly endorsed. QPC agrees with the PRG that this is essential	
3	SEFS must plan for sustainable finances.	Recommendation strongly endorsed QPC welcomed actions and response of College	College
4	SEFS must exploit opportunities for income generation.	Recommendation strongly endorsed. QPC would welcome seeing this recommendation specifically addressed wit examples and specific answers	College
5	The College of SEFS needs to be engaged with internationalisation systematically.	Recommendation strongly endorsed QPC would welcome the setting of specific targets and KPIs for measurement of success in this area.	College
6	Improve the external focus of SEFS	Recommendation strongly endorsed	College at all levels
7	Develop a SEFS Research strategy.	Recommendation strongly endorsed This was also recommended in reports on the RQR in 2009 and by the QPC following on the RQR exercise in 2010.	College
8	Develop and implement Workload Models within SEFS/UCC.	QPC noted that a university wide workload distribution model is now in place in UCC and that this model has the potential to assist in workload allocation as well as measurement.	
9	Address Infrastructure deficits in SEFS.	Recommendation strongly endorsed. QPC noted the difficult financial circumstances and that it is a critical matter for the College to address	College

Information Services

Peer Review Group

- Ms. Sheila Cannell *(Chair)* Director of Library Services University of Edinburgh, Scotland
- Mr. David Dodd Vice President & CIO, Information Resources Xavier University, U.S.A
- Dr. John B. Howard University Librarian UCD James Joyce Library, Dublin
- Ms. Caitríona O'Driscoll Education Officer, Students' Union University College Cork
- Mr. Mark Poland, Director of Buildings & Estates, University College Cork
- Ms. Maureen Sullivan, Consultant for Information Services, Maryland, U.S.A.

Site Visit

The site visit was conducted over 2.5 days from 24-26 October 2011 and included visits to
Audio Visual Media Services (AVMS), Computer Centre (CC) and Boole Library facilities in UCC
and meetings with:

- Mr. John FitzGerald (Head) and staff of IS as a group and individually
- Representatives of undergraduate and postgraduate students
- Representatives of employers, past graduates and other external stakeholders
- Professor Paul Giller, Registrar & Senior Vice-President Academic
- Professor M. Peter Kennedy, Vice-President for Research Policy & Support
- Professor Grace Neville, Vice-President for Teaching and Learning
- Mr. Con O'Brien, Vice-President for Student Experience
- Professor Patrick Fitzpatrick, Head, College of Science, Engineering & Food Science
- Mr. Cormac McSweeney, Finance Office

An exit presentation of the principal findings of the Peer Review Group was made to staff of the
department in the afternoon of the second day.

Description

Head of IS:	Mr. John FitzGerald
No. of IS Staff:	141 Permanent Staff (from Grades 10-2), 16 Temporary Staff (from Grades 6a-2).
Location of Services:	AVMS – Aras na Laoi, Computer Centre – Kane Building, Food Science Building & Boole Basement, Boole Library and Boston Scientific Health Science Library – Main Campus and Brookfield.

Aims and Objectives

IS must ensure that stakeholders have access to high quality administrative, teaching, learning, and
research resources by:

- Maintaining and developing the University's IT infrastructure
- Acquiring, preserving and providing access to relevant manuscript, printed and electronic content
- Acquiring, developing and supporting new technologies and systems
- Providing services that meet customer needs and developing new services to anticipate emerging and future needs

General Comment on Quality Review

Self-Assessment Report

The Self-Assessment Report (SAR) was comprehensive and well-thought through with good evidence provided of the analysis made. Many of the recommendations for improvement made in the SAR are incorporated into this report together with additional recommendations made by the PRG following its reflections and discussions with stakeholders.

The PRG considered that the SAR provides an excellent foundation for future developments in IS and recognised the talent of staff within IS and the potential for improvement and enhancement of the services offered. The PRG noted and welcomed the level of enthusiasm for change, for implementing the new agenda and for moving on to create the future integrated Information Services organisation. This was supported in the meetings held with the leadership of IS and the staff.

SWOT Analysis

The PRG were very grateful for the SWOT analysis, and spent much time in consideration of it. The analysis of the PRG appears in the "Findings" section below.

Benchmarking

The PRG found the benchmarking exercise which had been carried out to be very useful in providing measures of performance at peer organisations that may provide a context for understanding that of IS. An initial challenge in benchmarking is identifying peer universities, and UCC has met this challenge appropriately; the more difficult aspect of benchmarking is the nature of the IS organisation at UCC, which will evolve in coming years. The PRG encourages IS in UCC to carefully monitor key trends across the Irish HE sector, as well as further afield, and for senior management to engage actively in key professional organisations internationally as part of a strategy for maintaining currency and competitiveness.

Specific Recommendations for Improvement

	PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC comment/recommendation	Action
1	UCC should adopt the full set of recommendations in the Spencer Report with immediate effect, and work to implement its full set of recommendations.	Recommendation strongly endorsed. QPC noted that action has already commenced on some of the recommendations including staff appointments for critical positions	UMTO /IS
2	There be greater linkage between the University strategy and the developing IS strategy. The mission, vision and strategic directions of Information Services must be developed to support the University's strategy.	Recommendation strongly endorsed.	IS
3	Information Services should work immediately on a short term set of IS priorities, which should then be developed into a fully integrated IS Strategic Plan.	Recommendation strongly endorsed. QPC welcomed the commitment of IS to devising and implementing strategic and operational plans	IS
4	IS should develop a new organisational structure, based on recommendations in the Spencer report and on its Strategic Plan.	Recommendation strongly endorsed. QPC welcomed the commitment to engage all staff of IS in the process.	IS
5	Staff development should be given a high priority with the development of a plan which fosters collaboration and innovation throughout IS, using a variety of techniques and approaches.	Recommendation strongly endorsed.	IS
6	IS should develop a programme to demonstrate value for money across the range of its activities.	Recommendation strongly endorsed.	IS
7	IS should undertake a study to identify financial and human resource requirements of a programme to manage network and data centre infrastructures on a lifecycle basis; a dedicated fund for lifecycle replacement of technology components should be established.	Recommendation strongly endorsed.	IS
8	A plan for implementing the recommendations in the Spencer Report be established and agreed as soon as possible.	Recommendation strongly endorsed.	IS

	PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC comment/recommendation	Action
9	Once the leadership team is in place, the PRG recommends the following steps, based on the Spencer Report. Create a new work design for IS, one in which the work that can be brought together in a single, cohesive process is aligned and integrated. The new design must be developed with careful attention to the changes occurring in higher education and to the goals and initiatives set forth by UCC. Every effort should be made to reduce redundancy, streamline workflow, leverage technology, make effective use of student employees, and outsourcing. The result should be a work design that provides meaningful assignments for staff, assures efficiencies, and leads to work satisfaction.	Recommendation strongly endorsed.	IS
10	Identify a new organisational structure, including reporting relationships, to ensure effective coordination and communication within the new IS.	Recommendation strongly endorsed.	IS
11	Consider a nomenclature for the organisational subunits that describes the work area in language easily understood by students and academic staff.	Recommendation strongly endorsed.	IS
12	Create the shared leadership model called for on page 3 of the Spencer Report (Appendix B). Clearly define the performance expectations for all managerial leaders. Prepare a "deliberate program to develop leadership skills…throughout the organisation."	Recommendation strongly endorsed.	IS
13	Conduct a training and learning needs assessment for the staff. Create a staff development plan based upon the findings of this needs assessment. Include consideration of emerging competencies and identification of those competencies everyone in IS should have, e.g., interpersonal skills, managing conflict, problem solving in groups, technical proficiency, etc.	Recommendation strongly endorsed.	IS
14	Create a new integrated Information Services Strategic Plan, one that is based upon a careful assessment and understanding of the UCC Strategic Plan, aligns with the goals and initiatives outlined in the UCC Strategic Plan and integrates the goals and initiatives of the new IS organisational units. Design a process to accomplish this that involves IS and engages them in meaningful ways.	Recommendation strongly endorsed.	IS
15	Identify two or three initiatives for which project teams could be formed to carry out the recommendation to pilot collaborative efforts in key areas. Staff these project teams with individuals from across IS. Expect these teams to work together to develop a project plan for accomplishment of an important activity.	Recommendation strongly endorsed.	IS

	PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC comment/recommendation	Action
16	The establishment of an external advisory board to the Director of Information Services.	Recommendation strongly endorse on terms proposed by IS.	IS
17	The establishment of a Service Catalogue of IS services, and the collection and publishing of metrics associated with each service.	Recommendation strongly endorsed.	IS
18	Priority is given to funding for resources, and that the proportion of funding devoted to e-resources is increased as possible.	Recommendation strongly endorsed.	IS
19	IS better coordinates services for researchers.	Recommendation strongly endorsed.	IS
20	Development of a business continuity plan for the Computer Centre.	Recommendation strongly endorsed.	IS
21	UCC should reassess the distributed model for IT administration across the institution with regard to considerations including operational efficiencies, economies of scale, the sustainability of satellite IT operations, cyber security etc.	Recommendation strongly endorsed. QPC noted the response of IS and the need to ensure engagement of staff in any actions to be taken	IS
22	A planning process is established that reviews campus middleware, identifying both current capabilities and near- and longer-term needs.	Recommendation strongly endorsed.	IS
23	Opportunities for improved efficiency and record-keeping through deployment of enterprise-scale document management systems should be explored, perhaps initially in a limited pilot programme and potentially with the assistance of an industrial consultant.	Recommendation endorsed. QPC noted the comment of IS and the need to assess priorities for resources.	IS
24	The links the Library has with the community, through its services and collections, are worked up as case studies for the next University strategy.	Recommendation endorsed.	IS
25	The Development and Alumni Office develops a fundraising strategy for UCC's heritage collections, with the aim of seeking external and philanthropic funding to open up (or reveal) any hidden collections through metadata, digitisation and physical and virtual exhibitions.	Recommendation endorsed.	IS
26	IS provide enhanced support to users through 'simple fix' training of security personnel for front line AV support and other creative collaborative solutions to meet user needs in an effective manner.	Recommendation strongly endorsed.	IS
27	A strategy is developed to address staffing issues, including imbalances in age profile, gender profile and grade profiles; and that any changes due to imminent retirements are used as an opportunity	Recommendation endorsed. QPC acknowledged the constraints of the present financial climate and the difficulties faced	IS
28	University HR should provide support to IS leadership and be prepared to adopt new practices and programs to support the creation of a culture of collaboration and innovation.	Recommendation endorsed.	HR/ IS

	PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC comment/recommendation	Action
29	The leadership positions are filled as soon as possible.	Recommendation endorsed. QPC noted that action has commenced by UCC in this regard	UCC/ IS
30	The creation of a means to identify and assess the talents of IS staff, to identify areas for talent development and prepare a comprehensive staff development plan.	Recommendation endorsed.	IS
31	Once appointed, the leadership team should undertake a leadership development programme.	Recommendation strongly endorsed.	IS
32	Implement a full roll out of wireless access to all campus buildings.	Recommendation strongly endorsed. QPC queried why it would not be desirable to achieve wi/fi rollout.	IS/UMTO
33	UCC completes the planned upgrade project for the Data Centre as a matter of priority.	Recommendation strongly endorsed.	IS/UMTO
34	A review of the infrastructure is undertaken to ensure that sufficient redundancy is provided to protect all critical services.	Recommendation strongly endorsed.	IS
35	UCC develops a strategy to optimise all its study space in libraries, computer labs and study hubs, in a coordinated fashion, ensuring that there is a variety of types of space, and that it is consistently of as high a quality as possible, with some spaces open for as long as possible.	Recommendation strongly endorsed.	IS UMTS UCC Space Committee
36	A watching brief is kept on open access labs and study space.	Recommendation endorsed.	IS
37	Consideration is given to using positive messaging to students in the Library (eg "No to noise" should be replaced by "Yes to quiet").	Recommendation endorsed.	IS
38	The allocation to IS should be benchmarked to national and international norms.	Recommendation endorsed.	IS
39	The development of Key Performance Indicators and metrics about IS services to ensure transparency of the use of the allocated resource.	Recommendation strongly endorsed.	IS
40	IS explore improvements through collaboration and funding opportunities through CONUL and IUALG.	Recommendation strongly endorsed.	IS
41	IS should develop a marketing and communications plan that reflects the identity and mission of the new, integrated IS organisation.	Recommendation strongly endorsed.	IS
42	The implementation of good internal communications system within IS.	Recommendation strongly endorsed.	IS
43	The formation of a small project team to work on communications within IS, to ensure that staff are aware of issues in IS, the University and wider HE and professional domains	Recommendation strongly endorsed.	IS

Office of Vice-President for Teaching & Learning (OVPTL) & Ionad Bairre

Peer Review Group

- Professor Alan Davidson, Dean for the Enhancement of Learning, Teaching and Assessment Robert Gordon University, Scotland
- Mr Ben Horan President, Students' Union University College Cork
- Professor Åsa Kettis, Head of Unit for Quality and Evaluation, Uppsala University, Sweden
- Professor Bairbre Redmond, Deputy Registrar, Teaching & Learning University College Dublin
- Professor Helen Whelton, Dean of Graduate School, College of Medicine and Health University College Cork
- *Professor Luan Ahma (observer) Vice-Rector University of Pristina, Kosovo*

Site Visit

The site visit was conducted over 2.5 days from 26-28 March 2012 and included visits to OVPTL and Ionad Bairre facilities in UCC and meetings with:

- Professor Grace Neville (Vice-President) and staff of OVPTL and Ionad Bairre as a group and individually
- Representatives of staff and students of Ionad Bairre
- Representatives of Head of Colleges and external stakeholders
- Dr. Michael Murphy, President
- Professor Paul Giller, Registrar & Senior Vice-President Academic
- Professor Anita Maguire, Vice-President for Research & Innovation
- Dr. Michael Byrne, Acting Vice-President for Student Experience
- Dr. Seamus O'Tuama, Director, Centre for Adult & Continuing Education
- Ms. Mary Ward, HR Business Manager, Central Administration
- Mr. Cormac McSweeney, Finance Office

An exit presentation of the principal findings of the Peer Review Group was made to staff of the department in the afternoon of the second day.

Description

Head of OVPTL:	Professor Grace Neville
No. of OVPTL Staff:	1.5 (Vice-Presidents position is half-time & 1 Administrative Staff)
No. of Ionad Bairre Staff:	3.17 FTE
Location of Services:	Office of VPTL – East Wing, Main Campus. Ionad Bairre – West Lodge, Main Campus.

Aims and Objectives

Self-Assessment Report (SAR)

The Ionad Bairre team and that of the VP for T&L are to be congratulated on the extensive descriptions, analysis, consultation, feedback and reflection undertaken and documented. The appendices to the self-assessment report were well organised and clearly presented and provide an in-depth and accurate account of Ionad Bairre which greatly facilitated our understanding of the structure and organisation of the centre, the context within which it operates, its functioning, the perceptions of

the wider university as well as its graduates and students and its accomplishments, future ambitions and challenges.

The OVPTL oversees three distinct units:

Ionad Bairre, The Teaching and Learning Centre: an Academic Centre focusing on Staff Development and scholarly approaches to Teaching and Learning.

Centre for Adult Continuing Education (CACE): An Administrative Centre providing a wide range of courses to meet the needs of Adult Education and Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

The National Academy for Integration of Research Teaching and Learning (NAIRTL): A national teaching and learning initiative led by University College Cork. The Academy is funded from national funding and includes all higher education institutions in Ireland.

This quality review included the OVPTL and Ionad Bairre only. Owing to the small number of staff involved and the closely linked functions, they were taken together for the purposes of this review. Both CACE and NAIRTL have been and will be the subject of separate reviewing processes.

The PRG felt that the OVPTL and Ionad Bairre although closely linked are two separate entities and that although the OVPTL has oversight of Ionad Bairre (and CACE and NAIRTL) the office has its own separate and distinct functions. Overall there was an imbalance in the self assessment process in the level of detail provided on Ionad Bairre and the separate functions of the OVPTL. Whilst the vision, mission, history, location, reporting relationships and structure of the OVPTL was well described, there was room for further elaboration on the distinct senior leadership role of the VP within the university apart from overseeing the three centres. The PRG considered that this lack of a critical and strategic analysis of the OVPTL as a separate entity to Ionad Bairre was a missed opportunity, particularly in regard to the positioning and future development of the OVPTL role within the University structure.

The university-level strategic plan which was included with the documentation expires this year and reference was made to consultation and involvement in the future strategy. The self assessment provided a clear description of achievements towards delivering the strategy over the last three years, there was less focus on those parts that had not been delivered.

The Self-Assessment Report sets out the vision and mission of the 2009-12 Teaching and Learning strategy. These statements are very high level and the vision is commendable. However the PRG felt that the mission was aspirational. Although the guidelines for SAR from the Quality Promotion Unit suggest analysis[2] on the achievements of the aims and objectives of the centre there is no reference to aims, objectives or specific goals in the SAR itself either for the OVPTL or for Ionad Bairre. The introduction states that the review focuses on achievement of key goals in the strategy and analyses the work done which informed their recommendations for improved structures and processes, as well as the planning of future work. However, the narrative describes the functioning of the two units against the general backdrop of the vision and mission statement but is lacking in specifics which makes it difficult to evaluate progress in delivering each goal set out in the strategy. The PRG would have welcomed an explicit analysis of the progress made in delivering the specific (tangible) objectives associated with the relevant 38 KPIs or 11 targeted actions outlined in the strategy document developed by OVPTL and Ionad Bairre in 2008. There appears to have been little monitoring of the strategy.

The PRG considered that the drafting of a new strategy would provide an opportunity to address many of the issues arising within this review. The PRG commended the Office of the VP Teaching &

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[2] How do the Mission Statement of the department and the Aims & Objectives relate to its aspirations with respect to quality? How does the department know it is meeting these Aims and Objectives?

Learning for ensuring involvement of staff and students at all levels in the development process of the last Strategic Plan. However, subsequent implementation and follow up by all relevant units could have been monitored and reported in the SAR. The PRG would have benefited from such an update. The PRG strongly recommends that the same wide involvement will characterise the development of the upcoming strategic plan since it increases joint ownership of the strategies, which facilitates subsequent implementation and follow-up. The new strategy needs to be embraced and supported by the leadership of the organisation and underpinned by a more tangible evaluative approach than the current strategy, with KPIs expressed in the form of measurable structure, process and outcome variables. These should be both qualitative and quantitative indicators, including student-centred ones. The new strategy should be the subject of ongoing monitoring and review.

SWOT Analysis

Appendix J of the Self-Assessment Report provided a detailed description of the SWOT analysis. This full report provides interesting insights into the perceived opportunities and threats in the external environment and the strengths and weaknesses in the internal context.

Although the SWOT was very well conducted the PRG felt that the group did not sufficiently consider opportunities to be significantly different or to play a higher game in terms of strategic impact. The staff's away day for carrying out the SWOT offered the chance for some blue skies thinking that the PRG believes was not fully drawn on. The staff might have acknowledged and celebrated the success of the bottom up growth of Ionad Bairre; reflected on how to prioritise their goals; focused their efforts and plan for future development of the support of teaching and learning in UCC which could be a consolidation of the current arrangements or an ambitious evolution into a dramatically bigger well-resourced centre for teaching and learning with peripheral nodes in each of the colleges and networked with all relevant staff at school level.

The PRG saw the volunteers that Ionad Bairre have nurtured as a real strength which could give even more benefits to the university if there were some way of allowing key players to empower them within their own workplace settings.

The 6 day week workload of the staff is not sustainable and should be considered a weakness to be addressed.

The lack of succession planning is a threat. The co-directors are close enough to retirement but they do not currently have space and time to mentor. There is an urgent need to define the focus and establishment of the unit for the future, and to plan for succession and knowledge transfer from the current co-directors.

Benchmarking

The centre was benchmarked against two centres in NUIG and in the University of Reading with similar remits regarding generic learning and teaching development, but wider remits in other aspects, including e-learning. This was a useful exercise as it provided details of different ways of achieving the goals of Ionad Bairre. However by merging the review of OVPTL with Ionad Bairre there was a lost opportunity to benchmark OVPTL against similar offices in these two institutions.

Specific Recommendations for Improvement

	PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC comment/Recommendation	Action
1.	The post of VP for T&L should be full time.	QPC noted that this is a decision to be made by the UMT and that the post and its support is under active consideration by UMYT currently	UMT
2.	The VP for T&L should be a member of University Management Team (Operations).	Recommendation endorsed. QPC noted that this is a decision to be made by the UMT and that the post and its support is under active consideration by UMYT currently	UMT
3.	To emphasise parity of esteem, the VP for T&L should report to the President as is the case with the VP for R&I.	Recommendation endorsed???? QPC noted the comment of the staff and will refer this issue to the UMT	UMT
4.	The university needs to capitalise on the opportunities and value of integration of teaching and research, these should not be separate.	Recommendation strongly endorsed QPC noted that this is a core principle enshrined in the UCC Strategic Plan and elsewhere.	UMT Colleges
5.	The VP for T&L should maintain effective working relationships with other key leaders, including and in particular the VP SE, VP R&I, Director of Quality Promotion Unit, Director of Planning and Institutional Research, Head of IS and Head of HR.	Recommendation strongly endorsed.	All
6.	The VP T&L should seek to work in a more formalised and transparent way with student representatives to promote student engagement in quality, as this is fundamental to student centred learning.	Recommendation endorsed.	OVPTL
7.	The challenging nature of the post requires highly developed leadership skills and the capability to deliver a clear and effective educational strategy for the university.	Recommendation strongly endorsed	UMT
8.	The post holder should have an established track record in excellence in teaching and learning as a practitioner and a leader.	Recommendation endorsed	UMT
9.	The VP T&L should emphasise the need to build and work more closely with a small team of senior academic leaders at College level across the University in order to ensure effective development and enhancement in T&L in Schools and Colleges. The VP T&L should also ensure that coherent T&L committee structures are in place both at School and College levels to ensure timely and responsive communication up and down from School to Senior Management. For a proposed structure see Appendix B.	Recommendation strongly endorsed.	VPTL

	PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC comment/Recommendation	Action
10.	The VP T&L should lead the development of the University Teaching and Learning Strategy for the next 5 year period. The strategy should contain a prioritised list of targets and outcomes.	Recommendation endorsed	VPTL
11.	The VP T&L should identify the institution wide KPIs for teaching and learning based on the strategy to ensure a university wide commitment to improvement in T&L.	Recommendation endorsed	VPTL
12.	The work of the VP in developing standards in T&L should put a premium on institutional feedback and student engagement data. Effective and visible response to student feedback will close the feedback loop and is likely to increase student participation in feedback.	Recommendation endorsed. QPC noted that this is an issue for all academic units as well as the OVPTL and the VPSE.	VPTL VPSE
13.	The VP T&L should prioritise the work with academic leaders to enhance the quality of student learning informed by appropriate evidence including student feedback.	Recommendation strongly endorsed	VPTL Academic leaders
14.	The VP T&L should direct the activities of Ionad Bairre and the Director of e-Learning team to maximise impact on the student learning experience.	Recommendation strongly endorsed	VPTL
15.	As a matter of priority, an explicit e-learning strategy should be drawn up. Such issues should be considered within the strategy.	Recommendation strongly endorsed. QPC noted that a draft e-learning strategy has been prepared by the AC Committee on e-Learning and is scheduled for consideration by AC on 29.06.2012	VPTL IS Academic Council
	Ionad Bairre		
16.	Refocusing of Ionad Bairre.	Recommendation endorsed	VPTL Staff of Ionad Bairre
17.	Expertise in Ionad Bairre needs to be re-channelled to meet the strategic needs of the university.	Recommendation strongly endorsed.	Ionad Bairre
18.	The evident expertise in the centre has built up strong academic credibility in the institution and this credibility needs to be re-channelled to become a driver of excellence in T&L at institutional as well as the individual level.	Recommendation strongly endorsed.	Ionad Bairre
19.	The centre should be re-positioned to drive wider institutional enhancement of T&L in strategic areas, rather than primarily responding to demands led by the already committed teachers.	Recommendation endorsed.	Ionad Bairre
20.	The strategic prioritisation of the teaching and learning function creates a need to embed and develop Ionad Bairre in order to best apply its proven expertise.	QPC endorsed this recommendation in principle and referred it to the appropriate authorities in UCC for consideration and decision	Bursar Finance Committee

	PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC comment/Recommendation	Action
21.	One full-time Director of Teaching and Learning post is created which will incorporate leadership of Ionad Bairre, with the brief to construct a clear plan of work for the centre's staff in line with the strategic plan of the VP T&L.	Recommendation endorsed.	UMT
22.	Rationalisation of the credited training offerings should reflect institutional priorities and resource constraints. The PRG recommends that students wishing to study at Masters and PhD level be guided by Ionad Bairre to draw on local and national opportunities.	Recommendation endorsed. QPC noted the response and commended the commitment of the staff. However the QPC also acknowledged that resources are limited and supported the recommendation that support for all teaching staff must be a key priority for the Ionad. Resources to support a Masters programme at this point in time may be limited.	Ionad Bairre
23.	Ionad Bairre staff should go out to work on focussed projects in University schools to address local enhancement needs.	Recommendation endorsed	Ionad Bairre
24.	Ionad Bairre should focus on empowering and supporting the local pedagogical leaders, i.e. graduates and volunteer staff who are an important resource for promoting and supporting T&L enhancement at school level as change agents.	Recommendation endorsed	Ionad Bairre
25.	The structure of the recently established T&L Fellowship scheme should be developed to ensure that Fellows are also change agents and that they can be further encouraged and supported to take on future academic leadership roles.	Recommendation endorsed	Ionad Bairre
26.	The Fellows should also be mobilised as a key group to focus on specific University wide policies such as assessment and e-learning etc.	Recommendation endorsed	Ionad Bairre
27.	Core staff should be identified and issued with contracts which allow them to contribute to short and medium term projects in line with the developing remit of the VP T&L.	Recommendation endorsed	Ionad Bairre
28.	The non pay budget needs to reflect the scope of activities and staffing in line with identification of core priorities arising from new strategy.	Recommendation endorsed. QPC noted the current financial difficulties facing the University and that it might not always be possible o allocate as much budget to individual units as might be necessary/desirable to enable the unit to achieve its goals	UMT Finance Committee
29.	The pursuit of external funding relevant to core priorities, in particular any national or EU development funding should be prioritised. Mentoring in the application for such funding should be obtained.	Recommendation endorsed	Ionad Bairre

	PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC comment/Recommendation	Action
30.	The Windle building space be used to provide a single site in which the activities of Ionad Bairre could be consolidated. The adjacent siting of a technology rich classroom would be of immediate value for teaching with technology.	Recommendation endorsed QPC noted that this is in line with the plans within UCC for the Windle Building and Ionad Bairre.	Ionad Bairre
31.	Caution is exercised in consideration of any other expansion of current workload, prior to identification of core priorities arising from the new strategy.	Recommendation endorsed.	Ionad Bairre
32.	Expectations of effective teaching across the institution should include, as the norm, evidence-based reflection and be part of regular enhancement of teaching and curriculum design. The unit should play a leading role in supporting such enhancement activity. Further resourcing should be considered in line with identification of core priorities arising from new strategy.	Recommendation endorsed	Ionad Bairre VPTL
33.	While stating the principle of parity of esteem should be retained, it also has to be underpinned by a clear road map as to how this will be achieved. The review considers that parity of esteem will be strengthened by the unit undertaking a higher-level role in the enhancement of overall teaching and learning standards, drawing on their existing, very positive institutional reputation.	Recommendation endorsed	Ionad Bairre
34.	The integration of research and teaching is a fundamental goal of higher education. Ionad Bairre should continue to support this goal through identification and sharing of best practice across all areas of the University.	Recommendation endorsed	Ionad Bairre
35.	The Ionad Bairre staff research focus should be to promote or carry out research that is immediately aligned to its responsibilities in providing support for T&L, and they should maintain their international outlook to the extent it contributes to the quality of their support activities. The ultimate goal should be to contribute to ensuring the excellence of the learning experience of all students at UCC.	Recommendation endorsed	Ionad Bairre
36.	The creation of adjunct professor titles for staff of Ionad Bairre could be considered as a means of fulfilling the need of research recognition.	Recommendation endorsed	Ionad Bairre
	CACE and NAIRTL		

	PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC comment/Recommendation	Action
37.	The relationship between the Office of VPT&L and both CACE and NAIRTL needs to be clearly defined.	Recommendation endorsed	VPTL UMT

Section C: Follow up Reports on Quality Reviews 2009-11

Academic units

- School of Food & Nutritional Sciences
- Department of Food Business & Development
- Department of Physics
- Department of Music

Administrative/Support Services Units

Buildings and Estates Office

Ionad na Gaeilge Labhartha

School of Food & Nutritional Sciences

Peer Review Group

- Professor Jan Delcour, Department of Microbial & Molecular Systems, Katholieke Universiteit, Leuven, Belgium
- Dr Denise Gabuzda, Department of Physics, UCC
- Mr Paul Moriarty, Student Counselling, UCC
- Ms. Catherine Murphy, Population Health - Health Promotion, Health Service Executive
- Mr. Declan Troy, Teagasc, Dublin.

Site Visit

The site visit was conducted over 2.5 days from 1-3 February 2010 and included visits to school and library facilities in UCC and meetings with:

- Professor Kevin Cashman (Acting Head of School) and staff of the School as a group and individually
- Representatives of undergraduate and postgraduate students
- Representatives of employers, past graduates and other external stakeholders
- Professor Paul Giller, Registrar & Senior Vice-President Academic
- Professor M. Peter Kennedy, Vice-President for Research Policy & Support
- Professor Grace Neville, Vice-President for Teaching and Learning
- Mr. Con O'Brien, Vice-President for Student Experience
- Professor Patrick Fitzpatrick, Head, College of Science, Engineering & Food Science
- Mr. Cormac McSweeney, Finance Office

An exit presentation of the principal findings of the Peer Review Group was made to staff of the school in the afternoon of the second day.

Description

Head of School:	Professor Kevin Cashman (Acting Head of School)
No. of Staff:	13 full time academic staff; 11 technical & support staff, 3 administrative staff; 30 contract research staff
Location of School:	Food Science & Technology Building
Degrees/Diplomas offered:	BSc, HDip, MSc
No. of Students:	School has 256.80 Student FTEs: 162.16 UG and 94.64 PG FTEs distributed as follows:

Undergraduate Student FTEs

Full- time	Part-time	Visiting	Total U/G
156.43	.08	5.64	**162.16**

Postgraduate Student FTEs

Master Taught	Master Research	Higher Diploma	PhD	Total P/G
13.83	13.50	2.81	64.50	**94.64**

Mission Statement

The educational mission of the *School of Food and Nutritional Sciences* is:

• To provide undergraduate and taught postgraduate education in Food and Nutritional Sciences to the highest standards of excellence, and to ensure that these programmes of education are relevant to regional, national and European needs.

• To perform research in its areas of expertise to the highest possible standard and of relevance to regional, national and European needs. The School is also committed to providing high quality postgraduate and postdoctoral research training; supporting innovation in the food industry and consumer health protection; engaging in the transfer of new knowledge to end-users and stake-holders, including industry, regulatory authorities and policy makers.

In filling its educational mission the School (with its Associate School, Food Industry Training Unit and the planned Food Research Institute at UCC) is intrinsically involved with the general principles of knowledge in the food and nutritional sciences and the applications of that knowledge. This approach incorporates:

- Knowledge discovery: the pursuit of new knowledge through appropriate areas of scientific research.
- Knowledge dissemination: the provision of educational programmes relevant to that pursuit, to the human resource needs of the food and related sectors and to preparing students for a lifetime of learning and change.
- Knowledge dialogue: ongoing interaction with relevant industries, the wider community and complementary institutions nationally and internationally.

Aims and Objectives

The overall aims of the School follow directly from the mission statement and may be summarised as follows:

- To provide high quality graduates for the food and healthcare industries, educational and research institutions and public service agencies.
- To carry out fundamental and applied research which combines international excellence with relevance to regional, national and European needs.
- To develop excellence and critical mass in key research areas relevant to the social and economic needs of Ireland and the EU.
- To provide high quality postgraduate and postdoctoral research training.
- To support innovation in the food industry and consumer health protection.
- To engage in the transfer of new knowledge to end-users, including industry, regulatory authorities and policy makers.

Specifically, the School has the following objectives for its staff, the University and its end-users.

The School seeks to achieve the following:

Provide its **STUDENTS** with:

- A body of scientific knowledge, together with a range of technical, human and conceptual skills.
- The ability to critically examine the scientific and technical issues and challenges facing the food and related industries and, where relevant, the wider community.
- The ability to pursue a career in the food and related industries as professionals with appropriate standards and values able to fulfill their employer's and their own expectations.
- The ability to apply a set of transferable skills including:
  - The ability to appraise theories concepts and methods.
  - Knowledge of problem-solving techniques appropriate to experimental situation.
  - Practical communication and presentation skills, both oral and written.
  - A familiarity with Information Technology.
  - Interpersonal skills relevant to group work situations.
  - The independent ability to continue learning.
- The ability to proceed to further education or research.

At a **DISCIPLINARY** level:

- On successful completion of our *BSc, HDip* and taught *MSc* programmes, students should be able to demonstrate the achievement of the respective Programme Learning Outcomes as outlined in **Annex I**:

Provide its **STAFF MEMBERS** with:

- The opportunity to pursue and advance their teaching and research interests.
- Where feasible and within tightening resource-base, the facilities to support excellence in teaching and research.
- The opportunity, as desired, to work within teaching and research teams within the Department/School or with external contacts.
- Opportunities, as desired, to liaise with leading international research organisations.
- Opportunities to interact with the community on 'food research' topics.
- Job satisfaction and prospects of career advancement.

Contribute to **THE UNIVERSITY** by:

- Enhancing UCC's reputation, nationally and internationally as a centre of excellence in Food and Nutritional Sciences.
- Attracting significant external funding for teaching and research activities.
- Developing and implementing high quality continuing education programmes.
- Enhancing the interaction between the University sector and the business community, with particular emphasis on the agri-food sector.
- Making UCC a University of choice for undergraduate and postgraduate students in Food and Nutritional Sciences.
- Enhancing contacts with past graduates.
- Encouraging staff to participate actively in College administration through service on University, College and School Committees

Contribute **TO SOCIETY** by:

- Enhancing the economic development in Ireland by provision of human capital, innovation, continuing education and public good research and consultancy.
- The dissemination of knowledge pertaining to food safety and health issues.
- Broadening the accessibility to University education in Food and Nutritional Sciences.

General Comment on Quality Review

Self-Assessment Report

Overall, the PRG was satisfied with the quality of the Self Assessment Report (SAR). However it noted that a true benchmarking exercise was not performed and that the SWOT analysis concentrated on strengths, weaknesses and trends, but unfortunately not on opportunities.

SWOT Analysis

The PRG appreciates the way the SWOT analysis has been carried out both for the teaching and learning activities as well as for the research component of the School. With regard to the teaching and learning activities, it is clear that the students are very positive about their lecturers. The low CAO points of the students entering the food science program are a problem. The PRG agrees with the statement in the Self-Assessment Report that large areas of the research infrastructure are in urgent need of extensive refurbishment. A further weakness is that the School, to date, has not adequately exploited its talent base to secure major funding opportunities (including SFI clusters). As noted in the Self Assessment Report, a significant threat is the increased national competition in the area of food science, nutrition and food and health research.

Benchmarking

The report of a complete benchmark exercise was not made available to the PRG.

Specific Recommendations for Improvement

	PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC Comment/ Recommendation	Follow up Report June 2013
1	The deficit in funding for library resources be addressed in light of the importance of access to the highest quality resources.	Recommendation endorsed.	Ongoing. The deficit has been managed so as to optimise the School of FNS's library resources but there has been cuts in the School's subscriptions. There is potentially the need for a further €12,500 cut in existing subscriptions. There is a need for the School and SEFS to work closely with the library staff.
2	The School should consider whether it would be more efficient and less disruptive to adjust structures in the School to match the College structures at a somewhat slower pace, to allow the School to focus on its core teaching and research activities.	Recommendation endorsed	Completed. Over the last two to three years, the School of FNS has systematically adjusted its committee structures and operational modes to mirror and accommodate changes made at an operational/committee level within the College of SEFS. This has not distracted from the core academic and research missions of the School. As both SEFS and School are now beyond initial genesis stages, this recommendation is now largely defunct.
3	Academic workload models should be discussed within the School and workloads made transparent.	Recommendation strongly endorsed. QPC noted that a University-level Working group is currently undertaking to develop an academic workload allocation model with a view to adoption across all academic units in UCC. The School might wish to be cognisant of this and await the outcomes of the discussion which are due in the autumn 2010.	Ongoing. Academic staff in the School undertook the University-wide Workload model exercise, and also a workload exercise linked to the implementation of full economic cost (FEC) model [FEC to be instigated in UCC within the next 2 years]. A new cycle of the University-wide Workload exercise, following refinement from the 1st iteration, will be conducted over the next 12 months. However, there is still a need for a derivizatived model within the School to inform teaching workload assignment in context of admin and research activities.
4	Various options for raising the bar for entry into the Food Science degree programme should be considered	Recommendation strongly endorsed.	Ongoing The School following a review process, has highlighted curriculum changes which it will introduce to the programme in a staged manner and cognizant of semesterisation implications.

	PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC Comment/ Recommendation	Follow up Report June 2013
5	The School should have as a goal to make Food Science the first choice for the majority of entrants into that programme from the CAO.	Recommendation strongly endorsed. QPC noted that a number of possibilities exist to address the issue of student numbers, including reversing the policy of the 'direct entry' route; the potential for expansion of the further education programmes, and the graduate programmes should be actively explored.	Achieved The School has worked hard in relation to CAO first preferences both its BSc programmes and seen 1st preferences for the BSc Food Science rise in recent years and 1st preferences for BSc Nutritional Sciences remain very strong. The School actively engages with career guidance teachers and created a new website.
6	The School should develop a strategic research agenda for the School with a shared vision aimed at world-leading research.	Recommendation strongly endorsed.	Ongoing. The School has continued to be proactive and lobby for a UCC-led Institute of Food Research. To underscore its desire (which has been mandated twice, in Research Quality Review [2009] and Dept Quality Review in 2010], the School included a key strategic research action in its School Strategic Plan (Dec 2012): that the three core areas within the Institute be expanded to four, two of which were Food Science and Technology, and Food Nutrition and Human Health – to reflect the two core research areas of the School. This was adopted. The formal proposal for an Institute at UCC is likely to be submitted within the next 6 months.
7	A PMDS should be developed and more visibly linked to the goals and objectives of the strategic plan of the School.	Recommendation endorsed. QPC noted that it is University policy that a PMDS is in place and operating in all areas of UCC.	Ongoing A cycle of Performance and Development Reviews were undertaken in the School and finalised on time in 2011. The forecasted plans and actions of School staff aligned very closely to the teaching and research goals of the School. A new cycle of reviews will begin again in Autumn 2013 and these can be framed in the context of our recent School Strategic Plan.

	PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC Comment/ Recommendation	Follow up Report June 2013
8	The wealth of knowledge within the School of FNS should be disseminated widely to key stakeholders.	Recommendation endorsed.	Ongoing The activities of the School in terms of education, outreach and research have been disseminated by a number of means, including our dedicated, and self-funded, new website and, a Food@UCC newsletter. There has been major engagement by School staff in relation to funding agencies The School (through A. Kelly as programme coordinator) runs the Agri-Food Graduate Development Programme which also plays a role in dissemination of its knowledge to young Irish food-related postgraduates.
9	Partnerships with external agencies should be fostered in a variety of ways.	Recommendation endorsed.	Ongoing The School has liaised closely with and supported the actions of FITU. The School has been proactive in terms of engagement with funding agencies.
10	Consideration should be given to the establishment of a resource hub/centre on Diet and Health.	Recommendation endorsed.	Ongoing The School has been proactive in terms of disseminating information on education, outreach and research (see point 8 above).
11	Consideration should be given to the development of modules/courses on specialist nutrition topics, which could include a Public Health Nutrition course.	Recommendation endorsed. QPC recommended that the School bring forward proposals to the College SEFS where all implications could be considered.	Ongoing Since proposing this recommendation the financial environment within the 3rd level sector has changed considerably making decisions about the priority taught MSc versus specialist MSc (such as a Public Health Nutrition MSc) of critical importance in terms of operating within existing resource allocation and yet playing a role in income generation through postgraduate numbers (taught MSc as well as research). Thus, the School is carefully monitoring the potential opportunities while balancing against resource. Specialist MSc (such as Clinical Nutrition) remain an academic priority and will be looked at again from a resource perspective.

	PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC Comment/ Recommendation	Follow up Report June 2013
12	Possibilities for integrating food microbiology staff more closely with the activities of the School should be explored.	Recommendation endorsed.	Completed The Department of Microbiology have had discussions with the School of FNS in relation to the *BSc Food Science* programme and its streams and also in relation to Research in the context of the Institute. The Department of Microbiology (currently in transition to a School within College of SEFS) was in discussions about a 'Life Science School' but integration with FNS was not a realistic option.
13	The School needs to formulate a strategic plan for the School and to formulate concrete, practical, implementation plans for the realisation of its strategic objectives.	Recommendation strongly endorsed. QPC noted that it is essential that this is completed as a matter of priority.	Completed The School developed and submitted its Strategic Plan to the College of SEFS in Dec 2012.
14	An effective "management team" should be established in the School.	Recommendation strongly endorsed. QPC noted that it is essential that this is completed as a matter of priority.	Ongoing In terms of 'management team', the School has a Head and also Vice-Head of School as well as key committees (each with a Chair) mandated in the core areas of teaching and learning, research, health and safety etc.
15	The University should develop a committee designed to deal with external relationships, which is comprehensive in scope and has relevance for both Colleges and Schools.	Recommendation endorsed. The QPC noted that there are College and School advisory Boards in existence and that it is part of the policy of the University that this be normal practice. The Committee referred this recommendation to the VP External Affairs for further consideration as to possible action.	Ongoing External relationships have continued to be fostered by School staff in various constructs (as referred to in the above points).
16	A Head of School is appointed without unnecessary delay.	Recommendation strongly endorsed.	Completed This recommendation was achieved on time, and now the Head re-appointment process is pending again. (postscript note: New Head appointed 1st Sept 2013).

	PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC Comment/ Recommendation	Follow up Report June 2013
17	The School should carefully consider its options for how to make use of the two new lecturer appointments, such as the research areas in which it would be most desirable to hire. The School should further strive to integrate the new lecturers into the School in a collegial and supportive atmosphere. The School should evaluate the effect the new appointments have on workloads etc. before considering the possible need for further additional staff.	Recommendation strongly endorsed. QPC noted that it is very important the new appointments are made so as to support the overall strategic objectives of the School, College and University	Completed The two new lecturers in the School have proven themselves to be in extremely strategic research areas in terms of the School research plan and external research funding environment. Both have integrated well with the School, and have been afforded a supportive environment in which to begin their UCC academic careers. Both have academic mentors and both received seed funding from the UCC-Food Industry Partnership Board to allow them establish research links and networks. The newest submission in terms of academic staffing was in the area of Sensory Science, and while supported and prioritized on academic and strategic grounds, the financial support for this was placed back on the School (as opposed to core funding) and thus is still under consideration.
18	The undergraduate teaching laboratories should be refurbished to a higher and more uniform standard, as a matter of urgency.	Recommendation strongly endorsed. QPC noted that this is a question of resources and that the School needs to discuss this need with the Head of College SEFS.	Completed The School was successful in securing competitive internal strategic funding within the College of SEFS for refurbishment of its undergraduate labs in Food Science and Nutrition. There has been a huge improvement in both undergraduate laboratories.
19	The School should provide clear and complete information to potential entrants to the Food Science and Nutrition undergraduate programmes about the academic programmes.	Recommendation strongly endorsed.	Completed The School has been extremely proactive in providing potential entrants to its Food Science and Nutrition undergraduate programmes information that is accurate and complete. It has used our new website (http://foodatucc.ie/) and also supplied this information via Open days and various meetings with career guidance teachers as well as School visits.
20	The School should consider ways in which 3rd year students could provide information and support to 1st and 2nd years about the need to take Physics, Chemistry and Maths in these first two years.	Recommendation strongly endorsed.	Ongoing The School has brought students from more advanced stages of its BScs back to speak to the younger students on the need and importance of core science subjects such as Physics, Chemistry and Maths. The Programme coordinators have also highlighted this to the 1st year cohorts. Work with the three Departments/School (Physics, Chemistry and Maths) has ensured a careful monitoring of the performance of our 1st years in relation to these subjects.

Department of Food Business & Development

Peer Review Group

- Professor Chris Curtin *(Chair)*, School of Political Science & Sociology, NUI Galway
- Dr. Janet Haddock-Fraser, Kent Business School, University of Kent, U.K.
- Mr. Conor Healy, Cork Chamber of Commerce, Cork
- Professor Ken Higgs, Department of Geology, University College Cork
- Dr. Deirdre Madden, Department of Law, University College Cork

Site Visit

The site visit was conducted over 2.5 days from 8-10 November 2010 and included visits to departmental and library facilities in UCC and meetings with:

- Professor Michael Ward (Head) and staff of the department as a group and individually
- Representatives of undergraduate and postgraduate students
- Representatives of employers, past graduates and other external stakeholders
- Professor Paul Giller, Registrar & Senior Vice-President Academic
- Professor M. Peter Kennedy, Vice-President for Research Policy & Support
- Professor Grace Neville, Vice-President for Teaching and Learning
- Professor Irene Lynch-Fannon, Head, College of Business & Law
- Mr. Cormac McSweeney, Finance Office

An exit presentation of the principal findings of the Peer Review Group was made to staff of the department in the afternoon of the second day.

Description

Head of Department: Professor Michael Ward

No. of Staff: 15.5 Academic Staff; 3.5 Admin Staff; 7 Contract Research Staff/PhD Fellows

Location of Department: O'Rahilly Building, UCC

Student Numbers

Food Business & Development	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Total UG	227.83	260.83	246.88	234.62	235.03	242.75
Total PG	91.20	98.87	86.92	172.13	150.56	122.75
Total	124.62	103.87	116.25	178.13	184.31	137.08

Mission Statment

The overall mission of the Department of Food Business and Development is *to promote, through its educational, research and outreach activities, the development and continuing effectiveness of Ireland's food businesses, the sustainability of rural and local development, the role of co-operatives and the sustainability of livelihoods in the developing world.*

Our mission is expressed in such a way as to emphasise the effective performance of complex tasks relating to the performance and sustainable development of the food industry, rural-based businesses, rural communities and an effective co-operative movement.

Aims and Objectives

The overall goal as set out in the Department's strategic plan is to build on the growth and development within the Department over the last three decades and develop best in class teaching and research with the capacity to make significant contributions to enterprise and policy nationally and internationally.

The Department's objectives are outlined in our Strategy (presented in *appendix I*) and align with those in the University's development plan. Our overarching objectives are as follows:

1. To further develop our interdisciplinary linkages (in teaching and research) in the College of Business & Law and between the business and science disciplines through our linkages within SEFS.
2. To continue to develop a research-active academic community through support for thematic clusters, research grant applications, and continued investment in human capital through sabbatical leave and the development of courses in research methodologies for both staff and doctoral students.
3. To enhance the student experience by encouraging innovation in teaching, the expansion of flexible learning, the integration of practitioners into programmes and programme development, and the establishment of tutoring and mentoring support for all students.
4. To review, improve and develop existing and new communication channels for our research projects, publications and programme initiatives with key stakeholders including prospective undergraduate, postgraduate, and doctoral students, businesses, public and industry bodies and agencies, and the media.

General Comment on Quality Review

Self-Assessment Report (SAR)

The Peer Review Group would like to compliment the Department on the comprehensive data provided in the SAR and in the supplementary appendices. Additional information, when requested, was readily available and provided in a timely fashion. The Peer Review Group commends the Department on their energy, enthusiasm, engagement and commitment to the self-assessment process. The Peer Review Group was impressed by the willingness of the staff to engage in open, frank and constructive discussion.

The Department was favourably commented on by its students, in particular in relation to the approachability of the staff and their interest in the welfare of the students across all programmes offered. Senior management in the University recognised and acknowledged the innovative and enterprising approaches to teaching and to all academic activity by the department. The external stakeholders valued the contribution of the multidisciplinary activities to the wider society. This is clearly a department with a good track record, an excellent work ethic and with significant potential opportunities for greater impact and development nationally and internationally. These opportunities could potentially place the department in a more favourable position in an uncertain exchequer funding environment in the future.

At this point in time the Department faces challenges which are recognised and identified in the SAR and in the SWOT analysis.

Challenges

The PRG formed the opinion that in order to develop and move forward strategically, the Department must recognise that their current situation, with regard to teaching commitments in particular, is unsustainable and that there is an urgent need to prioritise activities, in particular in regard to the teaching workloads being carried by the majority of academic staff. It is important to note that this was the first recommendation of the 2001-2 Peer Review Group Report. Some of the implications that follow from this excessive teaching workload include the inability to provide a high quality service to students in tandem to delivering a high quality research output.

The PRG noted that some of the challenges identified in this Report have already been clearly recognised in the Department's own SAR. The PRG commented on the need for a strategic approach to these challenges and to identify immediately the key projects to deliver on the strategic imperatives. A plan of action is required with specific objectives and this should be implemented as a matter of urgency. Success in meeting these objectives will require strong and decisive leadership supported by full engagement and cooperation of all staff of the department.

In particular, the Department needs to put in place a more streamlined management structure, a more focused teaching programme, more clearly defined research programmes/clusters and to develop improved relationships with external stakeholders. These recommendations are discussed further below.

Specific Recommendations for Improvement

	PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC recommendations/comment	Follow up August 2013
1	That there should be a streamlining of management structures, with a reduction of number of committees.	Endorsed	Completed. Management structure was reviewed and clusters established and operational; number of Department committees reduced by 6.
2	A departmental management team should be established with a small number of academics and a representative of administrative support.	Strongly Endorsed	Completed. A management team has been established; it includes Head of Dept, Deputy Head, Head of Clusters and a representative of administrative support.
3	That the Head of Department and senior staff should avail of all opportunities for in-house leadership/ management training and staff development offered by UCC.	Strongly endorsed	Ongoing. Staff endeavour to take the opportunity for training when it is available.
4	That the Performance Management Review System in place in UCC be implemented within the Department.	Endorsed	Implemented.
5	The Senior Lectureship post recently filled following interview should be released and the appointment completed as a matter of urgency.	Noted	Ongoing. The Senior Lectureship position was approved and filled. However, the appointee has since left the job due to a promotion elsewhere. The Dept is working hard to get this post filled again.
6	A review of administrative arrangements within the Department should be undertaken with a view to enabling a more flexible assignment of tasks.	Strongly endorsed	Ongoing. Departmental Manager retired shortly after QR took place. There is a staff member on a half-time basis providing support but it is not sufficient for the Depts needs.

	PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC recommendations/comment	Follow up August 2013
7	The budget allocated by the College of Business and Law for administrative support backfill arrangements should be availed of for special projects.	Referred for consideration to Head of College BL	Acting Head of College of Business & Law operating under severe financial constraints.
8	A complete review of all teaching programmes (UG and PG) across the entire department is required as a matter of extreme urgency with a view to exploring synergies/consolidating offerings to become more efficient and reduce teaching loads.	Strongly endorsed	Completed

Reviews of UG and PG programmes were completed with a view to bringing individual teaching loads in line with University norms. Included review of service modules and combining groups where appropriate. |
| 9 | A Director of learning should be appointed within the Department to ensure the implementation of these recommendations. | Endorsed | Completed

The Deputy Head of Dept is currently filling this post (until Dec. 2013). |
| 10 | Opportunities for more student centred learning should be explored. | Strongly endorsed | Completed

(As part of review of programmes, see recommendation 8 above). |
| 11 | The amount of contact and supervision at module level needs to be reviewed. | Endorsed. | Completed.

Review undertaken. |
| 12 | Postgraduate students should be employed for seminar and tutorial work to assist in alleviating teaching workloads and provide additional transferable skills to students. | Endorsed.

QPC welcomed response of Department | Completed.

The Dept introduced a tutorial system using postgraduate students. |
| 13 | Ensure that students have appropriate prerequisites for modules undertaken in the programmes. | Endorsed | Ongoing.

Review of programmes (recommendation 8) will ensure that this continues to be the case. |

	PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC recommendations/comment	Follow up August 2013
14	Provide feedback on assessments in a timely and appropriate fashion	Strongly endorsed	The Department has an agreed policy - the review and future coordination of all programmes (recommendations 8 & 9) will ensure full implementation of this policy. Dept conducted an in-house seminar regarding feedback and problems associated with group work and individual marking.
15	Institute a system of regular feedback and module assessment from students.	Strongly endorsed This refers to feedback from students on the quality of the T&L experience not to assessments submitted by students	Ongoing. The Department is committed to the University policy regarding module assessment by students.
16	Focus on the skills set being acquired by students and the extent to which this fits the needs of future employers	Endorsed	Ongoing. The Department used the opportunity of the review of programmes (see recommendation 8) as an opportunity to review how programme learning outcomes address the following: level of knowledge and understanding, subject-specific skills, key skills, professional skills, progression to employment/further study, and personal development. Where appropriate they will engage at College and University level regarding student skill-sets, in particular writing, numeracy and IT skills.
17	Provide training to students on writing skills, particularly in relation to reports.	Endorsed	Ongoing (see recommendation above)
18	Provide a module on communication and problem solving.	Endorsed Response noted	Ongoing (see recommendation 16 above)
19	Provide appropriate career and postgraduate advice	Endorsed Response noted and endorsed	Ongoing The Department engage with the Graduate office and encourage students to avail of Careers Services.

	PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC recommendations/comment	Follow up August 2013
20	Placement procedures should be reviewed, in particular in relation to timetabling, guidelines for students and employers.	Endorsed	Ongoing. Some of the timetabling challenges have been addressed in terms of return to 4th Year studies. There will be continuing engagement with the Careers Service with regard to placement policies and procedures.
21	A regular staff - postgraduate student seminar series should be established which would facilitate the development of a research culture and sharing of experiences amongst all staff and postgraduate students, especially research students.	Endorsed	The Department is committed to putting more focus on the seminar series.
22	A system of research mentoring for early career staff should be put in place immediately. Time and thought needs to be given to how all staff can be supported to develop and enhance research capability and priority should be given to staff completing their doctorates.	Strongly endorsed Add comment	Ongoing Partly addressed in the context of recommendation 4 (Performance Management Review System) and recommendation 23 below. Full implementation of the new University workload model will also be helpful.
23	The department should improve its research profile by increasing its research output in peer reviewed journals by approving the division of staff into clusters with a leader to assist and support development of research excellence in these clusters.	Endorsed Response and action welcomed	Completed. Research clusters were established with designated leaders (rotating on a biennial basis) will be established to support research endeavour, including early career researchers. The aim is to focus research activity on thematic clusters and hence build on intradepartmental collaboration, deepen expertise and increase research funding.
24	The external marketing of programmes offered by the Department needs to be improved.	Endorsed	Ongoing. Continued engagement with Admissions and Graduate Studies office. Improved and updated information on web-site.

	PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC recommendations/comment	Follow up August 2013
25	The Department should review the range of its programmes in line with external requirements and in response to market opportunities and to staff workload.	Strongly endorsed	Completed. See recommendations above.
26	Both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes should be promoted in the context of demand for food graduates nationally & internationally.	Endorsed	Ongoing.
27	There is a need to leverage opportunities across the three areas covered by the department currently, especially in food sector with a particular focus on food business areas.	Strongly endorsed	Ongoing. The Department has deliberately nurtured a three-way synergy among Food Business & the Consumer, Co-operative Organisation and Sustainable Rural Development. The overriding purpose is to contribute to the development of a sustainable food system, which integrates the rights of the consumer to quality food and the rights of the producer to make a living through effective food supply chain operation.
28	There is a need to engage with other leading universities around the world (in food and food development).	Strongly endorsed	Ongoing. The Department is continually aiming to strengthen links with other Universities through existing programmes (e.g. Agri Mundus) and sister Universities involved in joint delivery of rural development programmes.

	PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC recommendations/comment	Follow up August 2013
29	The Department is advised to renew and strengthen links with the College of SEFS, especially the food-related disciplines. The Group suggested regular meetings/away days with staff in food science as one means of achieving this objective. Further engagement with Teagasc should also be considered a priority.	Strongly endorsed	Ongoing. The Department aims to strengthen research links with food scientists in SEFS and health professionals in the College of Medicine and Heath, and external institutions, in particular joint research projects in the UCC-Teagasc Strategic Alliance, Centre for International Development and the proposed Food Institute. In addition, they aim to build on current participation in the Institute for Social Sciences in the 21st Century (ISS21)[3] based in the College of Arts, Celtic Studies & Social Sciences in terms of joint research projects.
30	An advisory board with external input should be established to assist in the development of strategy and curriculum, facilitating links with external agencies, employers and other stakeholders.	Endorsed	Implemented Advisory boards were set up at cluster levels.
31	External stakeholders should be invited to provide guest lectures, workshops etc.	Endorsed	The Department endeavours to provide these, however current financial constraints are limiting resources.

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[3] Participating in two clusters: (i) Civil Society and (ii) Health, Food and Wellbeing.

Department of Physics

Peer Review Group

- Professor Nora O'Brien, School of Food & Nutritional Sciences, University College Cork
- Professor John Morrison *(Rapporteur)*, Department of Computer Science, University College Cork
- Professor Gerard O'Sullivan *(Chair)*, School of Physics, University College Dublin
- Dr. Graham Smith, School of Physics & Astronomy, University of St. Andrews, Scotland
- *Professor Luan Ahma (Observer), Vice-Rector, University of Pristina, Kosovo*

Site Visit

The site visit was conducted over 2.5 days from 21-23 February 2011 and included visits to departmental and library facilities in UCC and meetings with:

- Professor John McInerney (Head) and staff of the department as a group and individually
- Representatives of undergraduate and postgraduate students
- Representatives of employers, past graduates and other external stakeholders
- Professor Paul Giller, Registrar & Senior Vice-President Academic
- Professor Anita Maguire, Vice-President for Research & Innovation
- Professor Grace Neville, Vice-President for Teaching and Learning
- Mr. Con O'Brien, Vice-President for Student Experience
- Professor Patrick Fitzpatrick, Head, College of Science, Engineering & Food Science
- Mr. Cormac McSweeney, Finance Office

An exit presentation of the principal findings of the Peer Review Group was made to staff of the department in the afternoon of the second day.

Description

Head of Department: Professor John McInerney

No. of Staff: 7 FT, 2 PT and 1 Temp Academics;

Location of Department: Kane Building

Student Numbers

Physics	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Total UG	180.29	181.46	176.58	196.66	194.88	194.46
Total PG	56.17	86.42	90.83	106.50	104.33	102.17
Total	56.17	86.42	90.83	106.50	104.33	102.17

Mission Statement

To generate, propagate and apply knowledge in Physics and in closely related areas of which Physics is a key component. This includes world class research, teaching, innovation, exploitation and public service.

Aims and Objectives

Support excellent degree programmes in Physics and Astrophysics and joint degrees with Mathematics, Applied Mathematics, Statistics, Chemistry and other cognate disciplines.

Educate and train postgraduate students, especially doctoral students, to the highest standards in research, research management, teaching, communication and general professional competence.

Conduct research in astrophysics and cosmology, chemical and environmental physics, electronic structure and condensed matter theory, photonics and nonlinear optics, quantum optics, laser spectroscopy, plasma diagnostics, physics of biology and medicine. Communicate this research in peer-reviewed journals and conferences. Exploit this research where appropriate, including supporting industry and government in understanding and applying its results and outcomes.

General Comment on Quality review

Self-Assessment Report

The Self-Assessment Report (SAR) covered all required assessment areas, and provided the PRG with a good overview and sense of a Department with a clear commitment to excellence in both teaching and research. It affirms the quality of the programmes and research within the Department. However, despite a major increase in research performance and an explosion in PhD numbers during the past decade, there was a widespread belief that the visibility and appreciation of the Department within UCC was significantly lower than it deserved. A number of recently retired staff had not been replaced and teaching and research supervision loads had reached saturation. The Department also felt that it had been unfairly judged in a recent university wide Research Quality Review exercise. Moreover it was apparent that the more progress was needed on implementation of the recommendations of the 2000/2001 quality review panel. In particular those recommendations, with regard to internal communications, establishment of a number of committees and a rotating headship have not been addressed in a meaningful way. The SAR concluded by identifying a number of items that needed to be addressed: resolution of the Departmental structure within the new College Structure, clarification of the Physics-Tyndall relationship, the urgent need for new staff

appointments, provision of additional space and upgrading of existing teaching laboratories, introduction of annual reviews of postgraduate student performance and the need to ensure continuity and coherence in undergraduate programmes following from recent course reorganization.

In summary, the PRG affirms the quality of the programmes and the excellence of research within the Department. It is clear that the student experience is a positive one and that external stakeholders have a good relationship with the Department. However, the PRG is of the opinion that the visibility of the Department could be considerably strengthened by a clearer, more transparent management structure. Moreover, because of the pivotal role played by UCC Physics as a core discipline underpinning teaching across a range of degree programmes and research within Tyndall, the PRG is strongly of the view that the issues raised in the SAR need to be addressed urgently.

SWOT Analysis

The PRG reviewed the SWOT analysis and accepts it as a fair and honest reflection of the Department during the period under review.

Strengths

The PRG agrees that a major strength of the Department is the quality of its undergraduate and postgraduate students, the strong growth in postgraduate student numbers and its access to the world leading research facilities available at Tyndall. All staff are research active and have excellent publication and citation records as well as strong international links. The Department has traditionally benefited from good internal connection to the School of Mathematics which has resulted in their producing outstanding graduates over many years.

Weaknesses

The weaknesses identified stem largely from the unresolved management issues, high workloads, lack of visibility within UCC, loss of skills through retirements, lack of funding for teaching laboratories and upgrading of laboratory space within the Kane building.

Opportunities

The opportunities identified included further leveraging the connection to Tyndall, introduction of new undergraduate courses to increase undergraduate FTEs and the possibility of amalgamation into a larger structure provided by the reorganization of UCC Departments into a College Structure. The PRG were not convinced that the latter might be an optimum configuration for a core discipline such as Physics.

Threats

Threats included loss of staff through retirement, an excessive bias towards Tyndall related activity, declining numbers of students with the requisite background in physics and mathematics and competition for postgraduate students posed by the Dublin Physics Graduate School.

Benchmarking

The PRG considers that the benchmarking exercise was performed appropriately and fairly. The Departments selected, UCC Biochemistry, TCD Physics, University of St. Andrews and University of

Surrey, were well chosen and appropriate. The PRG accepts the conclusions of the Department in relation to each topic considered.

Specific Recommendations for Improvement

	PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC Comment/Recommendations	Follow up June 2013
1	That resources for at least two lectureships should be made available as a matter of urgency.	QPC noted the response of the Department and that posts have been allocated to the Department and are in the process of being filled. The recommendations of the PRG did not make the point that the posts should be additional to the core complement but rather replacement posts for recent retirements	Completed Replacements for retired staff were made after the Quality Review, however additional posts are required.
2	That a long term recruitment and training strategy for technical support should be developed within a two year time frame.	Recommendation endorsed	One Technical Officer post was filled. The Dept is facing two further retirements in 2015 and would ideally like to appoint a technical support staff member to ensure essential experience and knowledge is not lost.
3	That an extra 500sqm is required for research laboratory space, offices for new staff and to house PhD students.	Recommendation Noted	Ongoing. The Dept is unable to provide 500sqm required but research support and office space has been made available.
4	That a programme of gradual refurbishment of the Kane Building should be instituted as funding allows.	QPC noted that some refurbishment is underway and will continue to be supported as resources allow.	Ongoing. Refurbishment of the Kane Building has been in progress for some years now.
5	That there should be a move to a Rotating Head of the Department in Physics, supported by a strong executive group. The PRG strongly recommends that this issue should be explored with the existing Head and senior officers of the University.	Recommendation endorsed. The QPC noted that this recommendation was also made in the report of the reviewers who undertook the quality review of Physics in 2001. QPC welcomed the willingness expressed by the current incumbent to enter into discussions with university administration on how this might be proceeded with.	Ongoing. This issue has been discussed at length with the Head of College and by the Departmental Committee. The Dept does not foresee a change of Head for the coming years.

	PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC Comment/Recommendations	Follow up June 2013
6	That the empowerment and proper functioning of a number of key, active committees is essential for the effective planning, organisation, management and oversight of core departmental activities, including, but not necessarily be limited to, Departmental Executive, Graduate Studies, Teaching and Learning, Research, Staff-Student Liaison.	Recommendation strongly endorsed. The QPC noted that there is a certain conflict of evidence here and requested that the Head of Department provide evidence, eg. Minutes of meetings to show that the committees do exist, meet and conduct business as indicated in the response.	Ongoing The Departmental Committee was restructured to include subcommittees such as; Teaching & Learning, Staff-Student, Graduate studies and Research along with the existing Academic Committee.
7	That the overall benefits of the proposed linkage with Mathematics to create a new Department be further examined by the Departmental executive.	Recommendation strongly endorsed.	The proposed merging with the School of Mathematical Sciences was deemed unviable.
8	The establishment of both a staff-student liaison committee to offer an official forum to both hear and clearly respond to UG and PG student concerns, and a teaching and learning committee to organise all aspects of teaching. The PRG endorses the following suggestions made by students: Lecturers should have greater oversight over laboratory report marking to ensure consistency. The possibility of increased weighting for continuous assessment for non Physics degree students should be considered. The provision of fora for postgraduate interactions to strengthen awareness of research activities and provide a sense of community.	Recommendation strongly endorsed. QPC welcomed the commitment of the Department to implement the recommendations in 2011/12.	Postgraduate fora are already in place. Under consideration by the Graduate Studies Committee.
9	That there should be formal tutor training for postgraduate students, stronger recognition of their effort, and more care should be taken that individual postgraduate students are not overloaded.	Recommendation strongly endorsed. QPC noted and welcomed commitment of Department to implementation of this recommendation. QPC also noted that Ionad Bairre (UCC's Teaching & Learning Centre) also provides accredited courses in teaching for postgraduate students.	The Dept strives to provide this resource for postgraduates but is currently constrained by lack of staff and funding.

	PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC Comment/Recommendations	Follow up June 2013
10	That the University regulations on PhD interim review procedures for all PhDs should be consistently implemented for students based both in Physics and at the Tyndall Institute.	Recommendation strongly endorsed. The QPC suggested that perhaps Tyndall might become more closely involved in the procedures for all PhD students who are based in either the department of Physics or in Tyndall.	Implemented. Postgraduate performance reviews were reviewed and now occur more frequently.
11	That a research committee be established	Recommendation strongly endorsed.	Implemented (See recommendation 6 above).
12	That a Performance Management Development System should be implemented in accordance with University policy.	Recommendation strongly endorsed.	Ongoing. The University Performance and Development Review System (PDRS) is currently in operation in the Dept.
13	That the workloads of all staff in the Department should be reviewed immediately to take account of teaching, research and administration duties. Workloads should be monitored on an annual basis to facilitate equitable distribution.	Recommendation strongly endorsed. QPC noted that the University Academic Workload Model is being rolled out in the autumn term. Whilst it is not a workload allocation model it will facilitate allocation of workload with a shared understanding of criteria.	Management of workload and work assignment among staff is being done in accordance with University processes.
14	That initiatives are developed to improve the external visibility of the Department of Physics, primarily though the roles of the Executive Group and the Research committee.	Recommendation endorsed.	Ongoing.
15	The PRG recommends that Recommendations 1-6 and 8 of the previous Quality Review are further progressed and strengthened	See below following each recommendation	Issues involving; Communications, Graduate Studies Committee, representative Departmental Committee, rotation of Headship, annual staff reviews, improved laboratory space, designated lectureship for Astrophysics have been almost all been implemented by the Dept.
16.	That communications within the Department should be improved.	Recommendation strongly endorsed.	Implemented The Dept has made efforts to improve its communication by establishing an intranet for the purposes of sharing meeting documentation. A Facebook page was set up and the Dept web-site will be redone.

	PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC Comment/Recommendations	Follow up June 2013
17	That truly functioning Graduate Studies and Staff-Student Committees be established.	Recommendation strongly endorsed.	Implemented. The staff-student liaison committee consists of co-ordinators and students.
18	That a representative departmental committee be established.	Recommendation strongly endorsed. QPC noted that there seems to be some confusion as to whether such a committee is in place and fully functioning or not. QPC advocated clarity and transparency with regard to all departmental committees and their remits.	The Departmental Committee has representatives of all categories of staff on it.
19	That a system for rotation of the Headship of the Department of Physics be put in place.	See response to recommendation 5 above.	(See recommendation 5 above).
20	That annual staff reviews be carried out.	See response to recommendation 12 above.	The Dept endeavours to review staff annually.
21	That there should be improvement in laboratory and building infrastructure.	See response to recommendation 5 above.	Ongoing. (See recommendation 4 above)
22	That one of the vacant lectureships in the Department should be designated specifically for Astrophysics.	QPC noted that this recommendation has been implemented.	Completed.
23	Following from the recommendations of the previous quality review, address the evolution of the department structure and leadership in the context of the new schools structures within the College of SEFS. In particular, resolve the appropriate school structure in which the discipline of physics is best served within the College.	Recommendation endorsed. QPC noted the departmental response and the fact that this is a complex issue that requires careful consideration before resolution.	Ongoing. These issues are discussed in recommendations 5, 6 and 7 above.
24	Clarify the relationship between the Physics Department and the Tyndall National Institute, especially in relation to staff appointments and the roles of department and institute in regard to postgraduate student supervision	QPC noted the recommendation and endorsed it while also noting the response of the Department.	Ongoing. Efforts have been made to clarify the academic status and duties of jointly paid and affiliated staff.
25	Develop the engagement of Physics in other major research institutes within UCC.	Recommendation strongly endorsed.	A new research strategy is being drafted to enable greater engagement with other research institutes.

	PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC Comment/Recommendations	Follow up June 2013
26	Replace recent retirements of staff to maintain strength in key physics research areas and support skills.	Recommendation noted. QPC noted that the Department has already been allocated 2 lectureships to be appointed in 2011/12.	Implemented. (See recommendation 1).
27	Make additional academic appointments to support the large growth of postgraduate physics student numbers seen over the past decade.	Recommendation noted.	Ongoing. The Dept would welcome the approval of new posts.
28	Allocate additional laboratory space to the department in support the appointment of new experimental physics academic staff.	Recommendation noted.	(See recommendation 6 above).
29	Invest substantially in modernizing the equipment for the undergraduate laboratory programme.	Recommendation noted.	Financial support was received from the College.
30	Address the research overhead contribution to the Department from research grants based in the Tyndall Institute, for which the principal investigators are staff of Physics.	Recommendation referred to VP Research & Innovation The QPC noted that the UMTO is considering a draft document on allocation and distribution of research overhead	The Dept is negotiating a financial contribution from Tyndall towards overheads generated by staff whose salaries are paid by the Dept.
31	Establish a uniform policy of annual review for all Physics PhD students.	Recommendation strongly endorsed.	Implemented.
32	Coordinate the delivery of topics in the various modules for undergraduate Physics majors, to ensure better continuity and coverage in the overall programme.	Recommendation strongly endorsed.	Implemented

Department of Music

Peer Review Group

- Ms. Mary McCarthy, National Sculpture Factory, Cork
- Mr. Brendan O'Sullivan, Director, Programme in Planning and Sustainable Development, University College Cork
- Dr. David Ryan, School of History, University College Cork
- Dr. Scott Wilson, Music Department, University of Birmingham, U.K.
- Dr. Helen Phelan, Irish World Academy of Music & Dance, University of Limerick

Site Visit

The site visit was conducted over 2.5 days from 17-19 January 2011 and included visits to departmental and library facilities in UCC and meetings with:

- Mr. Mel Mercier (Head) and staff of the department as a group and individually
- Representatives of undergraduate and postgraduate students
- Representatives of employers, past graduates and other external stakeholders
- Professor Paul Giller, Registrar & Senior Vice-President Academic
- Professor Anita Maguire, Vice-President for Research & Innovation
- Professor Grace Neville, Vice-President for Teaching and Learning
- Mr. Con O'Brien, Vice-President for Student Experience
- Professor Caroline Fennell, Head, College of Arts, Celtic Studies & Social Sciences
- Mr. Cormac McSweeney, Finance Office

An exit presentation of the principal findings of the Peer Review Group was made to staff of the department in the afternoon of the second day.

Description

Head of Department: Mr. Mel Mercier

No. of Staff: 13 Academic Staff; 1 Admin Staff; 1 Technical; 25 Hourly Paid Staff

Location of Department: Music Building, Sunday's Well Road, Cork

Student Numbers

Music	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Total UG	181.58	166.38	167.50	178.50	187.13	174.67
Total PG	26.67	27.33	41.92	48.00	37.33	42.50
Total	26.67	27.33	41.92	48.00	37.33	42.50

Mission Statement

'the cultivation ─ through creativity in teaching, research, composition and performance ─ of a dynamic learning community dedicated to an interdisciplinary and cross-cultural understanding of music'

Aims and Objectives

The Department of Music at UCC has two primary, overarching aims: to be a model of excellence in teaching/learning, scholarship, performance and composition;

to live up to the commitment in our Mission Statement '*to the cultivation ─ through creativity in teaching, research, composition and performance ─ of a dynamic learning community dedicated to an interdisciplinary and cross-cultural understanding of music*'..

These primary aims are consonant. Both uphold the four principal dimensions of our engagement with music (teaching/learning, performance, composition and scholarship) in parity of esteem. And within both will be detected the hallmark of the Department: a view of music that embraces the subject in the widest possible sense, respecting all its manifestations.

To those primary aims may be added aims that are particular to the Department's students and staff and the other constituencies it serves:

- *For its students:* to provide a sound and stimulating learning environment that encourages exploration.
- *For its staff:* to provide a working environment that is professional and friendly, and a research environment that is vibrant and supportive.
- *For the university:* to provide an educational model of curricular diversity and innovation, contributing to intellectual leadership in the arts and humanities.
- *For the discipline of music:* to develop and disseminate new ideas and practices in the study and realization of music.
- *For society locally and at large:* to be a flagship for the understanding of music, culture and human creativity, and for positive integration at this time of changing demographics.

General Comment on Quality Review

Self-Assessment Report (SAR)

It is felt that, broadly speaking, the SAR was concise and clear; that its aims and objectives were articulated well; and that there was a thorough engagement with the spirit of the evaluation process. The key concerns in the SAR are seen as being generally resonant with those areas of concern identified by the Peer Review Group in its own findings.

The SAR brings forward the rich diversity of offerings and achievements of the Department with a rare integrity and intensity of purpose. It is felt that the report articulates a generosity of spirit, and a broad and inclusive approach to how a cutting-edge 21st century music school might be formulated.

However, the Peer Review Group is of the opinion that the report could have been much more strategic in its focus and that the overall mission and aims of the Department could have been articulated in such a way that they tie in more closely with those of the UCC Strategic Plan, the Strategic Plan of the College of Arts Celtic Studies and Social Sciences and, more crucially perhaps, with key aspects of National Strategic Cultural policy. This point is of particular significance for this Department because - in the opinion of the Peer Review Group – the performance and reputation of the Music Department are in unusually strong alignment with the core elements of these high-level decision-making instruments at University and National Level.

SWOT Analysis

It is considered that the SWOT analysis also engaged positively with the spirit of the review process and that its findings are consistent with the observed issues and priorities of the stakeholders. In some respects, it is considered that the analysis does not play up some of strengths that the Department obviously possesses (for example, the vibrancy and strength of the student body as well as the cultural profile of staff and researchers). Also, one of the terms that seemed to come up regularly in the visit – both from external stakeholders and senior University management - is that the Department is somewhat of a 'hidden gem' within UCC. Hence the need, perhaps, to include a more strategic dimension to the SWOT analysis. A more focused and extensive development of the issues raised and substantive issues in the analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats is also warranted. It would also benefit from a clearer and more analytical presentation of the links between these four aspects of the SWOT.

Benchmarking

In general terms it is considered that the reason for selecting the institutions chosen for comparison is not clear. On some levels indeed, they appear to be inappropriate comparators and it is noteworthy that none of them are institutions from the Republic of Ireland. The benchmarking element of the report also – as in the previous review process - limits itself to questions of resources. Whist this may be understandable (and even helpful) in terms of pointing out deficiencies, the Peer Review Group considers this focus to be unfortunate because it does not draw out those relative successes that would show the UCC Music Department in a stronger light. Additionally, in presentation terms, if the three chosen institutions were compared directly under consistent and similar headings a much more incisive analysis would have been achieved. On the whole whilst there was a good comparison of

resources, this was a missed opportunity to analyse, reflect on and draw out the differences between the Department and appropriate peer institutions.

Specific Recommendations for Improvement

	PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC Comment/recommendation	Follow up July 2013
1	That those outstanding matters recommended in the previous quality review be addressed and brought to finality	Recommendation of PRG strongly endorsed.	1a. Staffing. A new Chair has been confirmed for the Department. However, as a member of staff has recently left Music, they will endeavour to attract more full-time staff. 1b. Committee structures. Improved committee structures have been put in place, ie committees for teaching & learning, research and graduate studies. 1c. Workload allocation. The University has since implemented a workload allocation model. The Dept piloted it last year and it has been operational a few months now.
2	That the appointment of the Chair of Music be expedited.	Recommendation of PRG implemented. QPC noted that the University has approved the filling of the professorship in Music and that the recruitment process is underway.	Completed (see recommendation 1a above)
3	That the Head of Discipline issue be resolved as a matter of urgency.		Completed.
4	That an appropriate structure of senior staff be established within the Department of Music to support the Chair, Head of Discipline and other staff.	QPC referred recommendation of PRG to Head of College ACSSS for consideration and comment	The embedding of the schoolification process has meant a senior member of staff from the Dept is now full-time Head of School. While the Dept appreciates the support from the School, as such, there are less senior staff to support the Dept.
5	That any vacancies at Senior Lecturer level at that might result from the appointment of the Chair and Head of Discipline ought to be filled at that level.	QPC referred recommendation of PRG to Head of College ACSSS for consideration and comment, noting the restrictions of the Employment control Framework operating in the public sector presently.	Ongoing. The Dept strongly endeavours to fill its current vacancies.

	PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC Comment/recommendation	Follow up July 2013
6	That the Department adopt a strategic approach to its engagement with the College and University at various levels.	Recommendation of PRG strongly endorsed. Response of Department and the evidence of active engagement welcomed by QPC	Ongoing The Department of Music recognises the importance of adopting a strategic approach to its engagement with the College and University. The Department is currently taking such an approach.
7	That the Department re-draft its mission statement and set of operating objectives so that that they are more closely aligned with the strategic plan of the College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences, the Strategic Plan of the University and national cultural and arts policies	Recommendation of PRG strongly endorsed. The QPC noted the regional context in which the Department is sited and commented on the need to recognise that there is another School of Music in Cork and that it is important to distinguish the two Schools in terms of mission and goals.	Completed.
8	That, in re-drafting its mission statement and objectives, the Department focus on its 'Unique Selling Points', its brand values and a clear set of strategic priorities that have a regional, national and international horizon.	Recommendation of PRG strongly endorsed.	Completed
9	That all academic staff in the department individually and collectively take responsibility– at the highest level – for advocating for and articulating the abilities, capacity and potential of the Music Department among other departments, disciplines, schools colleges and other University entities	Recommendation of PRG strongly endorsed.	Completed
10	That the Vice Presidential Offices of Research and Innovation, of Teaching and Learning, and of the Student Experience, together with the Head of College, make a joint response to the recommendations set out in this review and bring forward proposals for addressing those issues that within their remit with a particular emphasis on recognising and enhancing the role of the Music Department in promoting the University both regionally and worldwide.	The QPC endorsed this recommendation and referred it to the Head of College ACSSS, noting that the role of the activities of the staff and students of the Department of Music is important in the defining of the brand that is UCC. Music is central to the vision of the 'Irish Identities' project.	Completed.

	PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC Comment/recommendation	Follow up July 2013
11	That a full-time Events Organizer / Communications officer be appointed to help plan, organise and facilitate the schools ambitious programme of events. Consideration could be given to making this appointment at a strategic level within the School of Music & Theatre, or at College level, in conjunction with the priorities of the Head of College.	Referred to Head CACSSS QPC noted the financial restrictions and employment restrictions imposed on the University currently by government. QPC queried could this post be self-funding?	Due to financial restrictions, an Events Officer has not been appointed.
12	That the revised mission statement and objectives (see recommendation 8 above) be communicated at all appropriate levels including promotional material, the departmental website, College website and UCC International Students Office.	Recommendation of PRG endorsed.	Completed. The mission statement is displayed prominently on the Dept. web-site.
13	That, in accordance with the governance issues mentioned above, the Department develops a more focused and strategic approach to advocacy within the University community and to influencing other schools, decision makers, disciplines and units both in terms of enhancing the departmental profile at the highest levels and in terms of a broad outreach for joint or interdisciplinary research, teaching and practice with peer units and individuals within UCC.	Recommendation of PRG endorsed. QPC welcomed the positive response of Department	Ongoing.
14	That the Head of School and key senior staff communicate more strategically and more regularly with decision makers at all levels of University structures and that staff participate where possible on all key working groups and assembly meetings at School, College and University level.	Recommendation of PRG endorsed. QPC welcomed the positive response and engagement of Department	Ongoing. The Dept supports this recommendation and has made significant progress in this regard
15	That consideration be given to making staff meetings more efficient and businesslike, i.e. as a decision making forum rather than a debating / discussion forum and that substantive and detailed matters be dealt with at committee level.	Recommendation of PRG endorsed.	Ongoing. Substantive and detailed matters are dealt with at staff meetings and at committee level.

	PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC Comment/recommendation	Follow up July 2013
16	That a Department wide system/process be established to analyse student feedback/reviews.	Recommendation of PRG endorsed. QPC noted that the University is about to pilot a new student module evaluation system and this should help the Department in its analysis.	Ongoing. The Department already has a system of student feedback. Currently that feedback is analysed by individual members of staff, as is appropriate. The Department also has a staff-student committee that considers student views on a regular basis.
17	That the Department enhance its positive relationships with its alumni and other student and graduate networks.	Recommendation of PRG endorsed.	Ongoing.
18	That the Department adopts a Workload Allocation Model as soon as possible, as this would provide clarity in terms of workloads, enable reconsiderations of the balance and nature of staff activity, and help facilitate discussions and negotiations with the University and College. This model should include research and should precisely account for administration.	Recommendation of PRG endorsed. UCC has developed an Academic Workload Allocation Model for implementation in the academic year 2011/12.	Ongoing The University has since implemented a workload allocation model. The Dept piloted it last year and it has been operational with a few months now.
19	That the College and University prioritise additional senior appointments within Music, beyond the Chair of Music and Head of Discipline. It is the understanding of the Peer Review Group that strategic appointments can be made even within the current restrictions imposed by Government, and it is recommended that this be considered as an urgency requirement in order to secure the longer term viability of the Department of Music	QPC noted that a Professorship in Music has been advertised and is in the process of recruitment. Other matters relating to appointments have been referred for the attention of the Head of College ACSSS in the first instance. The Department is encouraged to engage proactively with the Head of College ACSSS on these matters.	Ongoing. The Dept continues to engage with the Head of College ACSSS on this matter.
20	That the Department reconsiders the number of joint honours combinations being offered at undergraduate level with a mind to solving the issues of timetabling and transit between the building and the main campus.	Recommendation of PRG endorsed. The QPC noted that a 2 years notice period of significant changes to the programme offerings is required to be given to potential students.	The Dept will continue to review this issue. The Department has taken steps to improve student progression at the early stage of BMus to avoid difficulties later in the programme.
21	That the Department reconsiders its mission in terms of research strengths and develops programme-wide learning outcomes, with a mind to student exit trajectories and employability.	Recommendation of PRG strongly endorsed.	Ongoing.

	PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC Comment/recommendation	Follow up July 2013
22	That a rebalancing of student numbers in favour of postgraduates is achieved.	Recommendation of PRG endorsed. QPC noted that this action is very much in line with the University's strategic goals.	The Department is actively recruiting postgraduate students into its various programmes: three taught MAs, HDip, MPhil, PhD (including the PhD Digital Arts) and the new MRes. The Department is supporting the introduction of the MA in Irish Studies is considering the development of joint postgraduate programmes with Drama and Theatre Studies.
23	That the Department continue its process of recasting the curriculum and give strong consideration to reducing the number of programmes and modules with the following points in mind: Making gains in workloads, efficiencies, and maximising departmental FTE income; Improving the consistency of quality for graduates and improving their employability; Creating greater depth through the creation of a stronger core curriculum. This might take the form of multiple cores perhaps centred around research strengths / clusters in the areas of Media Theory, Ethnography, Cultural Theory, Performance and Composition.	Recommendation of PRG endorsed.	The Department considers its curriculum and range of programmes on an ongoing basis and seeks at all times to balance the need to make gains in workload, efficiencies and FTE income with the need to respond to University policy and maintain core Department values.
24	That the Department establishes clear, prioritised research clusters - such as those noted in the SAR (media theory, ethnography, cultural theory, performance and composition) – and that these be articulated in the reconfigured mission statement and teaching and learning objectives recommended above.	Recommendation of PRG endorsed.	Ongoing.
25	That the Department continues its engagement with the University in what has been a positive initial discussion about how its research activities, and specifically practice-based research activities, should be evaluated for purposes of research assessment and promotion.	Recommendation of PRG endorsed. QPC noted that the metrics used by UCC for evaluation of research in UCC do recognise practice-based activities and scholarly activities	Ongoing
26	That the Department continues to support faculty in reaching their full research potential through the inclusion of research in a transparent and equitable workload allocation model and the development of support mechanisms for faculty interested in exploring practice-based research as a medium of publication.	Recommendation of PRG endorsed.	Ongoing (See recommendation 18 above)

	PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC Comment/recommendation	Follow up July 2013
27	That the Head of College and VP for Research & Innovation initiate a dialogue with the Discipline towards the establishment of clearer principles for assessing the entire spectrum of research in music	Recommendation of PRG endorsed. QPC noted that the metrics used by UCC for evaluation of research in UCC do recognise practice-based activities and scholarly activities	Ongoing.
28	That the Department explore the potential for increased numbers of postgraduate students	Recommendation of PRG endorsed.	The Dept acknowledges the difficulty in attracting postgraduate students and it is currently trying to establish a PhD in Performance (Music) in 2015-16. The Zhejiang collaboration did not prove viable but a new MA proposal is currently being developed within the Department. The Dept wishes to promote the strategy of the College's Internationalisation agenda and the Head of College made recommendations with regards efforts to continue progress with the MA proposal.
29	That the College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences re-establishes its fund for postgraduate scholarships (as discussed with the Head of College) as a matter of urgency and explores means of supporting academic staff in attending research conferences and related events.	Recommendation referred to CACSSS	Completed. PhD Scholarships have been provided by the College to the School to support events.
30	That the Department initiates discussion with the Head of College and the Vice President for Research & Innovation towards the articulation of a research initiative exploring the cultural and economic impact of the arts in Ireland. This should be explored with reference to the cultural events coordinated by the Department for the public at the university, city, national and international level.	Recommendation of PRG endorsed.	The Dept runs the hugely success Fuaim free music concert series during the academic year. The Dept is also involved in: The Cork International Choral Festival The Sean O Riada Composition Competition The Cork Music Education Partnership
31	That the Department prioritises objectives in line with its budgetary capacity.	Recommendation of PRG strongly endorsed.	Ongoing.
32	That the discipline-specific requirements be embedded in budget lines (including special building requirements, equipment, facilities etc.).	Recommendation referred to Head CACSSS	Ongoing.

	PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC Comment/recommendation	Follow up July 2013
33	That the Department explores options to accrue the full benefits of the FTE weighting for the purpose of income generation.	Recommendation of PRG endorsed.	Ongoing.
34	That the Department identifies and examines priorities for the development of initiatives to raise non-exchequer funding streams for the ongoing development of the Department.	Recommendation of PRG endorsed.	Ongoing, primarily at School level.
35	That the Audits of Health and Safety, Disability/Access and Security be carried out and that the Head of School, Head of College and Head of Buildings and Estates agree a costed and phased implementation of the remedial works required.	Recommendation of PRG endorsed. QPC noted that the department of Music has submitted its H&S report and included a plan to address issues	Health & Safety and Disability/Access audits were carried out. The Dept continues to work with the Office of Buildings & Estates with regard phased repair and improvement of facilities. The Dept remains only partially accessible to students, staff and visitors who are mobility impaired.
36	That a budget line be established by the College to meet the discipline-specific building requirements in the Music Building (including sound-proofing, temperature and humidity control in specified rooms etc).	Recommendation referred to Head CACSSS as decisions on budgets in schools/departments are devolved to the relevant Head of College	The Head of College has raised the needs of the Dept with the Office of Buildings & Estates.
37	That a schedule of general repairs and maintenance to be prioritised, agreed, budgeted for and carried out.	Recommendation of PRG endorsed.	Ongoing. (See recommendation 35 above)
38	That issues to do with access to and from the Music building (including links to the main University campus) be resolved and prioritised within the University's strategic plan.	Recommendation referred to Head of CACSSS to address	Ongoing (See recommendation 35 & 36 above).
39	That full Wireless internet access be made available throughout the entire building as an immediate priority.	Recommendation implemented QPC commended the prompt action on this recommendation.	Completed. This issue has been addressed and full Wireless internet access is now available throughout the building.
40	That the deficiencies in computer laboratories need to be addressed.	Recommendation of PRG endorsed.	This issue has been addressed in part: the undergraduate computer laboratory has been refurbished and converted into an open-access laboratory. Further investment is needed to address the deficiencies in the postgraduate computer laboratory and the studio. The Department is limited financially regarding the necessary upgrading of these facilities.

	PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC Comment/recommendation	Follow up July 2013
41	That Discipline-specific equipment needs be assessed and prioritised (e.g. Music Technology software / hardware, Instrument acquisition / maintenance / tuning, PA systems etc.).	This recommendation was referred to the Head of CACSSS to be included in considerations of budget allocations. The QPC also recommended that the Department and College should have due regard to the opportunities available to the discipline for attracting external funds which could be used for this purpose.	Ongoing. The Dept is challenged financially regarding the maintenance of pianos and other departmental instruments.
42	That the café / social area be improved, given the remote location and the lack of local facilities.	Recommendation of PRG endorsed. QPC noted that additional funds will be required to improve the facilities	Some improvements have been made to the student canteen: new furniture, kitchenware and vending machines have been installed. The Department is limited financially regarding further upgrading of these facilities
43	That a more coherent and consistent approach to issuing front-loaded course outlines, early feedback, availability of materials, and evaluation needs to be implemented.	Recommendation of PRG strongly endorsed.	Ongoing The Department supports this recommendation and has made significant improvements in the delivery of feedback/evaluation, course outlines and materials.

Ionad Na Gaeilge Labhartha

Peer Review Group

- Dr. Diarmait Mac Giolla Chríost, School of Welsh, Cardiff University, Wales
- Professor Des MacHale, School of Mathematical Sciences, University College Cork
- Professor Liam MacMathúna *(Chair)*, School of Irish, Celtic Studies, Irish Folklore & Linguistics, University College Dublin
- Dr. Rónán Ó Dubhghaill *(Rapporteur)*, Director of Planning & Institutional Research, University College Cork
- Mr Padraig Ó hAoláin, Údaras na Gaeilge (retired), Galway

Site Visit

The site visit was conducted over 2.5 days from 21-23 March 2011 and included visits to facilities in UCC and meetings with:

- Mr. Pól Ruiséal (Head) and staff of the unit as a group and individually
- Representatives of UCC staff and students
- Representatives of employers, past graduates and other external stakeholders
- Professor Paul Giller, Registrar & Senior Vice-President Academic
- Mr. Donnchadh Ó hAodha, Cathaoirleach, Bord na Gaeilge
- Professor Grace Neville, Vice-President for Teaching and Learning
- Mr. Con O'Brien, Vice-President for the Student Experience
- Mr. Cormac McSweeney, Finance Office

An exit presentation of the principal findings of the Peer Review Group was made to staff of the unit in the afternoon of the second day.

Description

Head of Unit: Mr. Pól Ruiséal

No. of Staff: 11 staff members

Location of Unit: O'Rahilly Building

Cuspóirí

- *an Ghaeilge a chur chun cinn go cruthaitheach in COC agus in Éirinn faoi réir ag airteagal 8 de Bhunreacht na hÉireann (1937), ag Acht na nOllscol (1997), ag Acht na dTeangacha (2003) agus ag Comhaontú Bhéal Feirste (1998)*
- *cláir teanga sa Ghaeilge labhartha agus fheidhmeach a thairiscint ag an uile leibhéal líofachta san ollscoil agus ag na leibhéil chuí sa Ghaeltacht i gcomhthéacs institiúid na hollscolaíochta Gaeilge*

- *cur ar chumas daoine bheith páirteach i dtimpeallacht thacúil, dhátheangach a bhfuil scéimeanna agus gréasáin Ghaeilge agus gníomhaíochtaí cultúrtha mar chuid lárnach di*
- *a chinntiú go dtagann na seirbhísí teanga uile faoi anáil taighde agus na gcleachtas is fearr i réimse leathan an tsealbhaithe teanga.*

Aims and Objectives

- To promote Irish creatively in UCC and in Ireland in accordance with article 8, The Irish Constitution (1937), provisions of the Universities Act (1997), the Official Languages Act (2003), The Belfast Agreement (1998).
- To offer spoken and applied Irish language programmes to learners at all fluency levels in UCC and at appropriate levels in An Ghaeltacht in the context of the 'institiúid na hollscolaíochta' project.
- To enable active participation in a supportive bilingual environment which includes; Irish language networks, schemes and cultural activities as key components.
- To ensure that all services be informed by authoritative research and guided by good practice in the broad process of language acquisition and learning.

Anailís ina Iomláine

An Féin-Mheasúnú agus an Anailís SWOT

Bhí an Tuairisc Fhéinmheasúnaithe agus an Anailís SWOT mion agus cuimsitheach den chuid is mó. Chomhlánaigh an Plean Straitéiseach a cuireadh ar fáil le linn na cuairte iad. Bhraith an PGA go raibh an Anailís SWOT an-úsáideach. Dheimhnigh an PGA a chuid torthaí le linn an Athbhreithnithe Cáilíochta agus d'aontaigh an PGA leis na láidreachtaí, laigí, deiseanna agus dúshláin lárnacha a d'aithin an IGL.

Tagairmharcáil

Aithnímid ó na céimeanna tosaigh tagairmharcála go mbeadh sé tairbheach don Ionad teagmháil a dhéanamh le haonad idirnáisiúnta inchomparáide.

The Self-Assessment Report and SWOT Analysis

The Self Assessment Report and SWOT Analysis were detailed and quite comprehensive. The Strategic Plan provided during the visit complemented them. The PRG felt that the SWOT analysis was very useful. The PRG confirmed its findings during the Quality Review and the PRG agreed with the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and key challenges identified by IGL.

Benchmarking

The PRG recognises from the initial stages of benchmarking that it would be beneficial for the Ionad to contact comparable international centres.

Specific Recommendations for Improvement

	PRG Finding / Recommendation	QPC Comment/recommendation	Follow Up Report May 2013
1	The need for an Advisory/Strategic Group of 6/7 members is recognised. This group would be responsible for the strategic development of the Ionad. A senior officer of the University should chair this Advisory Group and its members should include people from inside and outside the University. The Advisory Group would operate on a pilot basis until the next review. The first task is to renew the strategic plan.	Recommendation of PRG endorsed. QPC noted the IGL recommendation that this recommendation be discussed by Bord na Gaeilge but recognised it is an issue for the Ionad	Implemented. IGL agreed with Bord na Gaeilge there will be two strategic groups, one local, with the power to co-opt which has been operational since Autumn 2012. The other group (Advisory) will include national members.
2	That the Director is a member of Bord na Gaeilge and that another member of IGL acts as secretary of Bord na Gaeilge. It is recommended that the Senior Officer of the Office of Corporate and Legal Affairs or his/her representative, have membership on Bord na Gaeilge because of the duties of that office arising from the Official Languages Act.	Recommendation of PRG endorsed. The QPC endorsed this recommendation subject to its implementation being within the legal framework under which the Bord and University operates.	It had been discussed with Bord na Gaeilge at length and agreed it wasn't within the legal framework. As the Unit reports through Bord na Gaeilge, it was decided not to alter.
3	Staff recognise the need to implement the Official Languages Act and that the scheme is being operated in UCC. It is also recognised that it is a sensitive issue as far as some positions are concerned and that discretion is required in the manner in which people are advised to comply with it. It is preferable that this direction comes from UCC's Office of Corporate and Legal Affairs.	QPC noted that is the current situation and that direction does come from the OCLA.	A Language Scheme Committee was established and a draft document is in place but has not been implemented yet. IGL will continue to take direction from OCLA.
4	The PRG recognises the current importance of Dún Chíomháin. It is recommended that the discussion between NUIG and UCC is reinforced to promote partnership with regard to advancing Irish university education in the Dingle area.	Recommendation of PRG endorsed.	NUI Galway do not have the resources to build a facility in the area at present.

	PRG Finding / Recommendation	QPC Comment/recommendation	Follow Up Report May 2013
5	There is a growing need for translation and there is a need to keep it under review as it grows. The importance of translation is increasing in the context of the language scheme and management should ensure that appropriate resources are available.	Recommendation of PRG endorsed. QPC noted that support is currently given by the University for the translation services and that due cognisance should be given for this in the fees charged.	Implemented. A significant amount of income is generated through the service. The majority of which is returned to core funding and 20% is retained by IGL for resources.
6	The importance of teaching courses was recognised. They should be developed, progressing from basic courses to applied courses and should be tailored to the needs of staff *e.g.* library staff, reception staff.	Recommendation of PRG endorsed. QPC recognised the excellence of the tailoring of courses provided by IGL.	Implemented. IGL will consider the value of offering Irish courses to outside bodies for an appropriate fee.
7	That the team would agree to allocate more formal responsibilities and take responsibility for overseeing specific areas daily to ensure effective continuity of service.	Recommendation of PRG endorsed. The response of IGL welcomed	Ongoing. IGL has agreed to continue the formal allocation of duties among staff.
8	That the scholarship scheme is developed as an added incentive for the promotion of Irish. Currently there is a fee of €5,500 and the granting of a €500 scholarship at year end. It is recommended that the scholarships are raised to €1,000, with the fee reduced by €500 at the beginning that the scholarship be paid in two instalments, and that all students are required to organise events to earn credits. The PRG proposes that the number of scholarships is increased to enable 40 students to be accommodated in a house.	Recommendation of PRG endorsed. The QPC noted that implementation of this recommendation is within the existing resources of IGL and would not require additional resources to be provided from the University	Ongoing. The Director of IGL discussed the recommendation with the Head of Student Accommodation and was advised it would not be commercially viable to reduce the fee by e500. It was also agreed that it would not be financially prudent in a period of severe economic stringency to increase the scholarships to €1,000. The University recently launched a scheme to give students valuable work experience and receive formal recognition for same.
9	That some assistance is provided to An Chuallacht to support grammatical accuracy in their publications; to nominate a member of IGL staff annually as a general point contact person to provide assistance to students.	Recommendation of PRG was noted.	Implemented.
10 h	That the opening hours for an Seomra Caidrimh are extended and that another Seomra Caidrimh is made available for students.	Recommendation of PRG endorsed. QPC noted that this recommendation should be implemented from within the existing resources of IGL.	Ongoing. An Seomra Caidrimh hours were extended and organised, discussion circles are held three times a week during term-time and other various events, to accommodate students.

	PRG Finding / Recommendation	QPC Comment/recommendation	Follow Up Report May 2013
11	That any new space being made available is located near the Ionad to maintain the physical presence of the unit.	Recommendation of PRG endorsed. QPC noted that additional space has been made available to IGL	Implemented. Further space has been allocated.
12	That IGL put together a 5 year strategic financial plan.	Recommendation of PRG strongly endorsed.	Currently in draft format. IGL ensuring strategic plan is linked to that of the University.
13	That there is a need for a more formal communications system. It is recommended that regular meetings, are held for all staff (including Dún Chíomháin), at least four times per year.	Recommendation of PRG endorsed.	Ongoing. Due to the size of the Unit, several formal and informal meetings are held on a regular basis. At least eight meetings a year are held in Kerry to include Dún Chíomháin.
14	Every opportunity for publicity should be used *e.g.* UCC News.	Recommendation of PRG endorsed.	Implemented. IGL uses a variety of social media in addition to publicise the Unit.
15	That benchmarking includes comparison with an appropriate international group *e.g.* in Wales.	Recommendation of PRG endorsed.	IGL communicates regularly with the University of Aberystwyth and Annual Reports and other Reports are exchanged and discussed in detail.
16	In preparation for this process, IGL should engage with their counterparts throughout the island of Ireland.	Recommendation of PRG endorsed.	IGL is actively in touch with its' counterparts in Ireland. The Public Lecture Series run by IGL invites senior figures from third level institutions and public bodies to speak at UCC during the academic year. Regular meetings are held at conferences, seminars, events as organised nationally by IGL peer centres.

Office of Buildings & Estates

Peer Review Group

- Mr. Angus Currie *(Chair)*, Director, Buildings & Estates, University of Edinburgh
- Mr. Paul Mangan, Director of Buildings Office, Trinity College Dublin
- Mr. John O'Callaghan, Member of Governing Body, University College Cork
- Mr. Éamonn Sweeney *(Rapporteur)*, Advisor to the President, University College Cork

Site Visit

The site visit was conducted over 2.5 days from 4-6 April 2011 and included visits to facilities in UCC and meetings with:

- Mr. Mark Poland (Head) and staff of the unit as a group and individually
- Representatives of UCC students & staff
- Representatives of external stakeholders
- Mr. Michael Farrell, Corporate Secretary
- Professor Anita Maguire, Vice-President for Research & Innovation
- Professor Grace Neville, Vice-President for Teaching and Learning
- Mr. Con O'Brien, Vice-President for Student Experience
- Heads of Colleges
- Mr. Cormac McSweeney, Finance Office

An exit presentation of the principal findings of the Peer Review Group was made to staff of the unit in the afternoon of the second day.

Mission Statement

"To provide an integrated and efficient range of facilities services* which enhance the estate and support the University's objectives"

*services include security services, cleaning, postal services, room bookings, building and landscape maintenance, environmental management (commuter planning, energy, waste management etc) capital development, property/space management & heritage services

Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of the Office are:

- Security & Services: Provide a safe secure environment to students and staff and the wider public and to ensure the smooth operation of all university events and activities
- Cleaning: To provide an efficient and effective cleaning service in line with best practice.
- Postal Services: To ensure all internal and external post is handled and delivered in a safe, confidential and timely manner.
- Room Bookings: To work with academic units to establish an efficient timetable that utilizes our facilities in a sustainable way. Once the internal needs are satisfied to maximize the use of our space from external bookings where possible.

- Building & Landscape Management: To proactively manage and maintain our portfolio of buildings, infrastructure and grounds in a safe and fit for purpose basis. To take particular care of our protected structures and to seek funding to address our backlog maintenance deficit.
- Environmental Management: To operate our services in a sustainable basis and to promote energy efficiency, waste reduction etc. To achieve independent certification (eg Campus Green Flag) of our sustainable practices. To establish and develop our commuter plan which promotes, sustainable travel while improving access to the campus. To minimise our use of utilities (gas, electricity, heat, water) and to promote sustainable practices throughout the University.
- Capital Development: To meet the University's space needs in a creative and innovative way through our ongoing capital development programme.
- Property/Space Management: To ensure that our property portfolio meets the University's need in a cost effective manner. To manage our overall space to ensure space is well utilized and fit for purpose.
- Heritage Services: To care for, exhibit and promote UCC's collections, thus contributing to the University's ability to educate, innovate and communicate.
- Minor Works: To manage a cost effective and efficient minor works programme in line with University needs and funding availability.

General Comment on Quality Review

Self-Assessment Report

The PRG considered the SAR to be a comprehensive, well prepared, well-structured and objective document. The appropriate supporting appendices gave a comprehensive overview of the Office. The PRG generally agreed with and accepted that the analysis and the majority of recommendations contained in the report were appropriate and timely.

Without exception, all of the representatives from the wider University community that the PRG met acknowledged the commitment and contribution of the Buildings and Estates Office staff to the work of the University, frequently working under considerable pressure and resource constraint to deliver essential services and quality developments.

SWOT Analysis

It was the view of the PRG that the SWOT analysis was balanced, realistic and candid. The tiered approach to the development of the SWOT analysis by each of the units within the Office of Buildings and Estates was commended as was the high level of engagement of all staff in the preparation for the review and the actual review process.

The SWOT analysis involved all staff of Office of Buildings and Estates and each unit within Office of Buildings and Estates were very serious in their approach to the process of undertaking the analysis. The culmination of this was in the combined analysis carried out by the senior managers from the Office of Buildings and Estates. The PRG was pleased that all sections of the Office of Buildings and Estates contributed in a very meaningful manner to the preparation of the SWOT.

The PRG was cognisant of the issues identified in the SWOT analysis and noted that these are reflected in the recommendations proposed in the SAR.

Benchmarking

The PRG was of the view that the work on benchmarking and analysis was comprehensive, succinct, professionally presented and gave a good overview of the estate, finance and resources. The PRG noted the engagement with Estate Management Statistics service and the work carried out by the independent advisor. The PRG noted that the benchmarking exercise related to the period 2007/2008 and was of the view that given the dramatic change to the financial environment in the intervening period that it would have been beneficial to update elements of the benchmarking exercise. In addition, the PRG recommended that the benchmarking exercise could have benefited from benchmarking against peer review amongst Irish institutions, especially between comparable buildings types given the extensive building programme in recent years, although it noted that such data is not readily available.

Specific Recommendations for Improvement

	PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC Comment/Recommendations	Follow up May 2013
1	That the Office of Buildings and Estates prioritise all recommendations and convert into a three year Quality Improvement plan	Recommendation endorsed.	Completed.
2	That a review of the IP telephony infrastructure be carried out with a view to identifying a potential cost-saving replacement to the existing telephony infrastructure at UCC.	Recommendation endorsed. Details of timeline for review to be included in QIP	Ongoing. B&E is liaising with the Computer Centre on a joint project to move the existing infrastructure to IP. A plan has been put in place to ensure long term service provision.
3	That the Estate, Environment and Heritage Advisory Committee consider the IT support required to enhance heritage activities at UCC.	Recommendation endorsed.	Implemented. A section was created off the main UCC website to highlight heritage activities. The University Curator is currently compiling a database of all the University's collections.
4	That room rates and the policy regarding charges, particularly with regards to alumni events, be reviewed to ensure maximum utilisation of the resource.	Recommendation endorsed.	Ongoing. B&E reviews room charges annually. The Office raised €140,000 from external room bookings last year. However, UCC competes with local hotels for external bookings. This issue is reviewed annually with the University's Secretary.
5	That a project to review off-site storage facilities and opportunities for cooperation and development of shared services storage facilities be undertaken incorporating estates, IT, Library, individual academic depts. and possible external partners.	Recommendation endorsed. QPC recommended that B&E lead on the discussions and convene the relevant group.	Ongoing. B&E has held discussions with the landlord regarding the Pouladuff site. The Director of B&E has also spoken with the Librarian and the Director of Library Services regarding alternative means for off-site storage.
6	That, in the event of change to the situation pertaining to the storage facilities at Pouladuff, the need to make provision for long-term storage of archival materials is actively considered.	Recommendation endorsed.	Same as above.

	PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC Comment/Recommendations	Follow up May 2013
7	That the long term viability of open access PC labs be reviewed with a view to the potential development of increased and more flexible spaces for postgraduates.	Recommendation endorsed.	Ongoing. The Director of B&E reported open access labs are still required as the need for students to utilise computers/their own personal machines still exists. However, he envisages this will change with time and the space could be utilised in other ways.
8	That the Office of Buildings and Estates management team explore the potential for greater alignment of small works and capital development works teams as the balance of the development programme changes in coming years	Recommendation endorsed.	Ongoing. The Buildings Officer explained the small works and capital development teams have been converging in recent times due to lack of capital resourcing.
9	That the Office of Buildings and Estates implement a policy for charging and full cost recovery from UCC wholly owned companies for project development and management.	Recommendation endorsed.	B&E carry out capital development work in UCC subsidiaries. Contract staff members are charged to the subsidiary in question which helps off-set costs.
10	That income generating activities be formally identified across the range of services provided by the Office of Buildings and Estates and a corporate policy is agreed on recovering costs from academic and service units where enhanced service levels are agreed.	Recommendation endorsed.	Implemented. B&E has indentified income generating opportunities. The Director of B&E has drafted Service Level Agreements and intends to bring them to UMTO for approval shortly.
11	That the Office of Buildings and Estates initiate a formal mechanism through which UMTO/S be informed reliably of plans in relation to estate planning and staffing issues within the Office of Buildings and Estates	Recommendation endorsed.	Ongoing. The Director of B&E is a member of UMTS. As part of the University budgetary process, he brings these plans to the Bursar and UMTS.
12	That closer formal links be developed with the Procurement Office across the full range of B&E purchasing, including Green procurement and liaison with the NPS (national procurement service).	Recommendation endorsed.	B&E has established links with Procurement Office. It is intended a post will be created in Procurement Office to deal specifically with B&E procurement.
13	That the Office of Buildings and Estates should consider options for increasing opening hours based on identifying a suitable funding model supported by corporate policy.	Recommendation endorsed.	This option is not viable as buildings are not heated overnight in an effort to reduce costs.

	PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC Comment/Recommendations	Follow up May 2013
14	That the Space Subcommittee should be encouraged to identify additional accommodation for graduate students at UCC.	Recommendation endorsed.	Completed. The Post-graduates have a dedicated Common Room now.
15	That the Office of Buildings and Estates in conjunction with the Computer Centre review the IT infrastructure requirements into the future.	Recommendation endorsed.	Ongoing. The Director of the Computer Centre is looking at possible solutions.
16	Recommend putting in place a forum for overview of an integrated IT and physical estate infrastructure strategy.	Recommendation endorsed.	Completed. A group was established and an overall review of IT infrastructure conducted.
17	That the Office of Buildings and Estates establish formal mechanisms for project prioritisation and integration and transparency of decision making.	Recommendation endorsed.	Completed as part of Strategic Planning process.
18	Having regard to the current economic conditions affecting the financial viability of contractors, that the Office of Buildings and Estates address carefully financial criteria and costing prior to shortlisting and appointment of contractors	Recommendation endorsed.	Completed. B&E has a financial process in place that determines pre-qualification of contractors. The Bursar is also involved to ensure contractors are financially viable.
19	That the Office of Buildings and Estates conclude work with Cork City Council on the updated development plan and thereafter establish a forum with CCC and other external stakeholders on impact of works on local and regional areas.	Recommendation endorsed.	Completed. Mechanisms are in place regarding interaction with CCC. B&E staff members sit on various forums within the city and region. A strong network now exists.
20	That the Office of Buildings and Estates work with internal and external stakeholders to maximise the potential tourism opportunities offered by the university campus.	Recommendation endorsed.	B&E understands there are other areas within the University liaising with Bord Fáilte and they are happy to support the work in any way they can.

Appendix A: Quality Promotion Committee Terms of Reference

Reports to: Governing Body and University Management Team

Aim: To assist in the provision of outstanding education in undergraduate and professional and graduate areas by fostering the improvement of quality in education and all related services provided by the University.

Responsibilities

The Quality Promotion Committee is responsible to the Governing Body for the overseeing of all matters, which have an impact on maintaining, and where possible, improving and enhancing the quality of the student experience in UCC. It aims to ensure that there are appropriate procedures in place for the assurance of quality within the University and for the promotion of quality improvement in both teaching and non-teaching areas.

- Promote collective responsibility for quality improvement and assurance throughout the University.
- Recommend to Governing Body/Academic Council policy in relation to
    - Quality assurance
    - Educational development in relation to teaching, learning and assessment
    - The quality of the students' learning experience
- Promote innovation and development, which will enhance the quality of the student experience, in both teaching and non-teaching areas.
- Oversee University procedures for the identification and dissemination of good practice.
- Keep under review policy and procedures for ensuring the integrity of various forms of academic association with external organisations including the franchise of University programmes and the recognition, accreditation or validation of programmes offered by other organisations.
- Promote and encourage equal opportunities practice to enhance the quality of the student experience.
- Keep under review the requirements of national agencies, which have a remit for quality in education such as the HEA and ensure that University policy and procedures are consistent with national guidelines where appropriate.

Operational Procedures

In order to fulfill these responsibilities the Committee will:

1. Approve all significant developments in policies and practices relevant to quality improvement in all aspects of the University, including the design, development and review of guidelines and procedures for QI/QA.
2. Approve the schedule for departmental/unit QI/QA reviews.
3. Approval of the composition of the Peer Review Group.
4. Receive and consider reports and minutes from Faculty management committees (or equivalent) regarding work in relation to:

- academic standards
- quality assurance
- quality improvement

5. Receive and consider reports of review panels concerning academic programmes, departments, administration units and central services, and, as appropriate, make recommendations to the Governing Body and the President for future action.

6. Ensure that there are effective procedures in place for involving students, staff, employers and representatives of the local community in quality assurance and improvement processes.

7. Provide appropriate guidance on matters concerning the maintenance and enhancement of quality for programme teams and central services.

8. Keep under review and recommend to Governing Body the information which should be maintained on taught programmes including: the content of definitive programme documents; documentation requirements for programme approval and review; and the issues which should be addressed in external examiners report.

9. Keep under review and recommend to Governing Body the range of statistical information and indicators, which should inform the quality assurance processes for academic programmes and central services.

10. Keep under review quality standards for central services.

11. Liaise with other bodies in the University as appropriate.

12. Reports to University Management Team

13. Report annually to the Governing Body.

Constitution

Ex Officio:

- President (Chair)
- Registrar & Senior Vice-President Academic
- Bursar
- Director of Quality Promotion (Secretary)
- President, Students Union
- Education Officer, Students Union

Nominated Members:

- 4 Academics, with experience of participation in quality review and knowledge of quality systems – one from each College
- 3 Administrative & Support Services representatives with experience of participation in quality review and knowledge of quality systems from administration and services
- 2 external members of Governing Body

Term of Office

The term of office for the current committee is five years and mirrors the lifetime of the Governing Body

Casual Vacancies

The Governing Body has delegated authority to the Committee to fill any casual vacancies that arise during the lifetime of the Committee.

Appendix B: Report on Activities of Quality Promotion Unit

1. TEMPUS IV Programme

Title of Project: CUBRIK - Strengthening Quality Assurance System within Western Balkans HEIs in Support of National and Regional Planning

Funding Body: European Commission

List of Partners:
- University of Alicante, Spain
- University College Cork, Ireland;
- Erashushogeschool, Brussels, Belgium;
- University of Banja Luka, Bosnia & Herzogovina;
- University of Mostar, Bosnia & Herzogovina;
- University of Tuzla, Bosnia & Herzogovina;
- University of Zenica, Bosnia & Herzogovina;
- University of Kliment Ohridski, Macedonia;
- State University of Tetova, Macedonia;
- University of Kragujevac, Serbia;
- University of Novi Sad, Serbia;
- University of Niš, Serbia.

2. TEMPUS IV Programme

Title of Project: SHEQA: Strategic Management of Higher Education Institutions Based on Integrated Quality Assurance System

Funding Body: European Commission

List of Partners:
- Katholieke Hogeschool Sint-Leuven, Belgium;
- Ministry of Education and Science, Republic of Serbia;
- Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of ZEDO Canton;
- Ministry of Education and Science of Canton Sarajevo, Bosnia & Herzogovina;
- University of Zenica, Bosnia & Herzogovina;
- University of Mostar, Bosnia & Herzogovina;
- University of Sarajevo, Bosnia & Herzogovina;
- University of Bihać, Bosnia & Herzogovina;
- Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of WH Canton, Bosnia & Herzogovina;
- University of Tuzla, Bosnia & Herzogovina;
- Agency for Development of Higher Education and QA;
- University Džemal Bijedić, Bosnia & Herzogovina;
- University of East Sarajevo, Bosnia & Herzogovina;
- University of Girona, Spain;
- University College Cork, Ireland;
- WUS-Austria, Austria.

- University of Maribor, Slovenia.

3. TEMPUS IV Programme

Title of Project: FOCUS: Fostering Quality Assurance Culture at Libyan Universities

Funding Body: European Commission

List of Partners:
- Garyounis University, Benghazi, Libya;
- Omar Al-Mokhtar University, El Beida, Libya;
- Högskoleverket, Stockholm, Sweden;
- Libyan International Medical University, Benghazi, Libya;
- University College Cork, Ireland;
- University of Alicante, Spain;
- Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm, Sweden.

4. TEMPUS IV Programme

Title of Project: EDUCA: Modernization and Development of Curricula on Pedagogy and Educational Management in the Central Asian Countires.

Funding Body: European Commission

List of Partners:
- Semey State Pedagogical Institute;
- Kazakh National Pedagogical University named after Abai;
- Center for Progressive Education Technologies;
- Kulob State University by name Abuabdulloh Rudaki;
- Compostela Group of Universities;
- Osh State University;
- Issykkul State University named after Kasym Tynystanov;
- Naryn State University named after S. Saamatov;
- Otto-von-Guericke University Magdeburg;
- Ministry of Education and Science of Kyrgyz Republic;
- University College Cork;
- Tajik State Pedagogical University named after Sadriddin Aini;
- Education Network Association;
- University of Alicante;
- Vilnius Pedagogical University;
- Ministry of Education and Science of Republic of Kazakhstan;
- Ministry of Education of the Republic of Tajikistan;
- Arabaev Kyrgyz State University;
- Korkyt Ata Kyzylorda State University;
- Khujand State University named after B.Gafurov;
- E.A. Buketov Karaganda State University;
- University of Cumbria.

5. TEMPUS IV Programme

Title of Project: MEDAWEL: Integrating a Holistic Approach to Student Services for Increased Student Wellbeing

Funding Body: European Commission

List of Partners:
- Princess Sumaya University for Technology, Jordan;
- Al Hussein Bin Tala University, Jordan;
- University of Kafrelsheikh, Egypt;
- Modern University for Business and Science, Lebanon;
- Lebanese University (LU), Lebanon;
- An-Najah National University, Palestine;
- Universidad Alicante, Spain;
- University College Cork – National University of Ireland, Ireland;
- Glasgow Caledonian University, UK.

6. TEMPUS IV Programme

Title of Project: LO@HEI: Encouraging the process of curriculum development based on learning outcomes and research guided teaching in the private higher education institutions of Kosova.

Funding Body: European Commission

List of Partners:
- University of Salzburg, Austria (project grant-holder);
- University College Cork, Ireland;
- University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom;
- University Politehnica of Bucharest, Romania;
- Arena e Arsimit Bashkëkohorë (AAB) College, Kosovo;
- Fama College, Kosovo;
- Iliria College, Kosovo;
- UBT College, Kosovo;
- Dardania College, Kosovo;
- Victory College, Kosovo;
- Universum College, Kosovo;
- College Biznesi, Kosovo;
- Pjeter Budi College, Kosovo;
- Dukagjini College, Kosovo;
- Evolucion, Higher Vocational School of Arts, Kosovo;
- Tempulli, Higher Education Professional School, Kosovo;
- Institute, European School of Law and Governance, Kosovo;
- Kosovo Accreditation Agency, Kosovo;
- National Qualification Authority, Kosovo;
- WUS Kosova, Kosovo.

Appendix C: Future Development of Quality Promotion Unit

1. <u>A response to the IRIU report</u>.
The central theme of this paper is that the recommendations made be considered holistically rather than one by one in order to give a picture of how UCC's approach to quality assurance and improvement overall might be revised.

2. <u>A proposal for some pilots to the Quality Reviews taking place in 2013-14</u>. This is the last year of the second cycle of Quality Reviews at UCC and provides the University with an opportunity to test some changes to process.

3. <u>An update for QPC</u>. This is the most recent paper to go to QPC (in September 2013) and details some of the work that has taken place over the summer.

4. <u>Annual Monitoring</u>. One of the areas of work developed over the summer and the first part of the development of a process for programme review.

1. A response to the IRIU report

	Recommendations	Action	Delivery Date	Person Responsible	Resources
1	Continue to work towards the more robust management of the schedule of approved projects that form its operational plans and towards more robust and more accountable management of individual projects within its operational plans.	Contacted Ronán O'Dubhgaill 20/8/13			
2	Consider how projects in its Operational Plans that are linked to the findings and recommendations of Quality Review reports that have University-wide relevance can be more clearly identified, so that the Quality review process can more clearly demonstrate its contributions to University-wide change and improvement.	Contacted Ronán O'Dubhgaill 20/8/13			
3	Make clear the source of the Quality Promotion Committee's authority so that its status and authority are clear to staff, students and stakeholders, and to avoid confusion between governance and management structures.	I WOULD APPRECIATE CLARITY ON THIS – IN OUR SELF-ASSESSMENT FOR THE IRIU WE SAY THAT THE QPU REPORTS TO BOTH GB AND UMTS BUT IS RESPONSIBLE TO GB. (VOLUME 2, Pg 5, 1a)			
4	Ensure that all development and operational aspects of its collaborations outside Cork, including those overseas, are subject to formal quality assurance procedures and governance that are at least as secure as those for its collaboration with Cork Institute of Technology, and that regular reports on current and planned collaborations are made to the Governing Body, Academic Council and senior managers.			Registrar and Senior VP/Director QPU?	
5	Give close attention to securing greater consistency in the way its regulations are observed across the Colleges.				
6	Continue to work to simplify its committee structures at the centre and in the Colleges to ensure greater efficiency and transparency and take further steps to enable the Academic Council to give more focused attention to priority areas such as quality assurance (including the quality assurance of international collaborations) and risk management			UMT?	
7	Continue with the introduction of a programme of leadership management and governance training for academic leaders and managers in the	Project management training programme on-going		HR	

	Colleges.	Heads and Managers Forum on-going			
8	Defer devolving responsibilities for quality control, quality assurance and the maintenance of academic standards to the Colleges until they can demonstrate that their governance and management arrangements, including for the oversight of the Schools, are being satisfactorily and robustly discharged, and that any devolution of responsibility can be subject to robust oversight and review by the University Management Team (Operations)	No plans to devolve responsibilities for quality control, quality assurance and the maintenance of academic standards to the Colleges. The matter will be kept under consideration.		UMT?	
9	Make full use of the complete range of reports of its Quality Reviews in future critical self-evaluations and consider how it might develop its institutional capacity to undertake self-critical evaluations of its work.	Development of process for Thematic Review	2016-17	Director, QPU	
10	Publish the criteria for identifying a programme as 'high risk' to Colleges, Schools and Departments in a standard format that enables them to assess whether the programme they Are proposing is likely to be judged 'high risk', with the Academic Board retaining responsibility for monitoring how the criteria are implemented.			Academic Secretary/Academic Programmes and Regulations Office	
11	Undertake a Quality Review of its new programme approval arrangements and their operation by the Colleges after their first year in operation that examines a sample of programme approvals under the new arrangements across the Colleges and that the terms of reference for this Quality Review should also include an examination of the effectiveness of the linked processes for approving major and minor modifications, responsibility for which has also been delegated to Colleges, and examination of the success of otherwise of the new programmes approved by the Colleges.			Director, QPU/Academic Secretary	
12	Clarify the nature and purpose of the Quality Review process as it applies to Academic Departments, Schools, College, services and administrative and management offices, respectively.	This will be an on-going process as we revise existing QR processes and introduce programme review with annual monitoring. Example: Director of QPU meeting with College managers in autumn 2013 to discuss the	By end 2013-14	Director, QPU	

		development and focus of revised QR process for review of Colleges.			
13	Ensure that student membership of all Quality Review, programme approval, and programme review panels is a feature of the next iteration of its quality arrangements.	Students now have a standing item on the QPC agendas The President of the SU and Director of QPU have already met to ensure students are available for the QRs taking place in 2013-14 The Director of QPU will attend the class rep training in Killarney in October 2013 and will arrange subsequent briefing/training for student members of review panels.	Done August 2013 October 2013 By Christmas 2013	Director of QPU and President of SU	
14	Make greater use of the data from its developing management information systems to support internal reviews.	Management information data will form part of the new annual monitoring process and will feed into programme review on a periodic basis.	From 2014-15	Director, QPU/Academic Secretary/Heads of College/Heads of School/Department.	
15	Conduct an initial pilot of its new programme review process with a sample of programmes of varying characteristics across the University.	Programme review process under development. To be ready by end 2013-14	First programme reviews in 2015-16.	Director, QPU	
16	Consider how it might undertake a whole-institution review of its portfolio of taught programmes to identify programmes in need of development and support and those that might better be offered by other institutions elsewhere or closed.				
17	Draw on the experiences of other higher education institutions in Ireland, and further afield in Australia and the UK, to improve response rates to its own institution-wide student survey and, until the planned Irish National				

	Student Survey comes into full operation, conduct its own Student Satisfaction Survey annually and rationalise and co-ordinate the student surveys that are conducted by Departments and Schools to reduce 'survey fatigue' among students.				
18	Encourage and support the Students' Union to work towards representation arrangements that correspond to the gender balance across the University and are more inclusive of other nationalities in UCC's student body.			Head of Student Experience/President of SU?	
19	Review the extent to which its quality assurance arrangements depend on the contributions of external examiners and external peers and whether it needs to rebalance its internal quality assurance arrangements to make more prominent reference to and use of external reference points such as the National Framework of Qualifications, the advice and guidance formerly provided by IUQB and now by QQI, the notes of guidance and consultations provided by the Irish Higher education Quality network (IHEQN), and Part 1 of the standards and Guidelines for Quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (3rd edition, Helsinki 2009)	All new processes and those under development will make reference to external reference points, including the NQF, more explicit. We will consider the new version of the ESG once it is published (due Spring 2014).	By end 2013-14	Director, QPU	
20	Ensure that the quality assurance arrangements for programmes delivered with transnational partners are at least as secure as those UCC has developed for its work with CIT; ensure that the Quality Promotion Unit is kept informed of new collaborations and especially new overseas collaborations and consulted on their academic and quality aspects; develop a comprehensive Quality Guide for Overseas Collaborations as soon as possible that draws on international good practice and requires all members of the University and those working for it as agents to follow the terms of the Quality Guide when it is completed.	Our response to this will overlap with that for recommendation 4. We will need to use documents such as the IHEQN's *Guidelines for the Approval, Monitoring & Review of Collaborative and Transnational Provision* to develop our own internal policy and process. I would suggest that we also take into account documents such as the UK QAA Quality Code, section B10: *Managing higher education provision with others* and the OECD's *Guidelines for quality provision in cross-border higher education.*			

		First action will be to ensure that QPU has an up to date register of all collaborative provision at UCC.	By end 2013	Director, QPU	
21	Take all necessary steps to ensure the accuracy of the information that it publishes about its programmes and modules including in its on-line Module Catalogue				
22	Include questions in its next Student Satisfaction Survey that will enable it to establish the extent and location of research-led teaching in the Departments and Schools.				
23	Redouble its efforts through teaching awards, travel and study grants, and sabbatical leave to persuade staff that it is intent on embedding research-led teaching and other changes in pedagogy and the curriculum for the benefit of all its students.			VP Teaching & Learning?	
24	Gather together evidence for its external stakeholders of the consequences of being unable to provide more support staff for areas that it needs to expand, so that UCC can meet Government aspirations, and show how current resource constraints and, particularly, rigidities in the funding framework, jeopardise the University's present successes in supporting its students.			UMT?	
25	Take all necessary steps to secure the funds to construct its student hub and, where possible, continue to adapt its learning facilities to be more accessible.	Continuing to appraise funding opportunities and models to ensure progress can be made as swiftly as possible. The concept of 'what and how' is taking shape through steering groups.		Head of Student Experience	
26	Work with the students' Union to designate an additional sabbatical post to enable the perspectives and needs of international students to be made more prominent in University discussions.			Head of Student Experience/President of SU/Vice President External Relations?	

27	Consider how it might deal with perceptions of unease on the part of students walking to and from its satellite campuses in Cork in the evening.	I think we can use part of the statement in our response to the review report that refutes this recommendation and say that, as always, this is something that we will keep under close consideration.			
28	Confer with the Students' Union and representatives of its postgraduate research students on how best to establish formal representation for the interests of research postgraduate students in the University's deliberative and management arrangements.			Dean of Graduate Studies/President of SU?	

2. Proposal for some pilots to the Quality Reviews taking place in 2013-14

Title:

Modifications to the operation of Quality Reviews: proposal for pilots 2013-14

From:

Fiona Crozier, Director of the Quality Promotion Unit (QPU)

Action required:

QPC is requested to consider and endorse proposals to operate pilot modifications to the Quality Review process in some of the units to be reviewed in 2013-14

Background:

QPC endorsed a paper at its meeting of 25th May 2013 (entitled 'Cover note to the Irish Universities Institutional Review (IRIU) Report') in which it was proposed that UCC's response to the recommendations set out in the IRIU report, particularly around the operation and impact of Quality Reviews, would be considered in a holistic manner. This linked with the on-going development and intended introduction of a process of Programme Review and Annual Monitoring.

2013-14 is the final year of the current cycle of Quality Reviews. As such, it offers an opportunity for the University to pilot some changes to the current operation of the QR process. The results of the pilots would then feed into the development of any revised policies and processes for quality assurance and improvement.

A further benefit of the pilots will be a sense of areas of process where cost can be reasonably reduced without adverse impact on the process or its outcomes.

Summary (key points)

- The paper builds on the previous paper to QPC which that committee endorsed with regard to taking a holistic approach to responding to the recommendations in the IRIU report;
- The paper should be considered in the light of other agenda items such as introducing a standing item for students to report on their involvement in QA and QI and on other matters, and on an idea to bring the scheduling of the review of similar units (such as Colleges) in line in order to maximise information that may be of use to the University in its strategic planning process;

- All pilots would operate within a framework of consistently applied principles;

- Pilots are suggested for some but not all of the Quality Reviews to be carried out in 2013-14. It is suggested that no unit is requested to pilot more than one change except in cases where the unit itself has suggested a change (see *Student Experience*).

Introduction

The timing of the receipt of the IRIU report in early 2013 and the scheduling of the second Research Quality Review Evaluation Exercise in 2014-15 give rise to an excellent opportunity for considering some development of the current Quality Review process and to test some initial responses to the recommendations made in the IRIU report. QPC has already approved a holistic approach to responding to the recommendations in that report; such an approach involves a significant amount of thought, development and implementation. The proposed pilots in this paper would be one stage of that approach. Note should also be taken of other QPC agenda items which discuss matters such as introducing a standing item for students to report on their involvement in QA and QI and on other matters, and on an idea to bring the scheduling of the review similar units (such as Colleges) in line in order to maximise information that may be of use to the University in its strategic planning process. All of these matters relate to a holistic approach to QA and QI – this paper seeks only to address one aspect of such development.

Regardless of the desire to pilot changes to any process, in order to ensure consistency of process and of outcome, all reviews should operate within a framework of consistently applied principles. These are set out below.

Principles

- The process adheres to the four-stage model for review set out in the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA* (i.e. self-assessment, peer review, site visit, published report) thus ensuring consistency of operation;
- The review is carried out through a process that is independent in its operation and allows the panel to come to its conclusions independently and without interference;
- All reviews are intended to provide both assurance of quality and a means by which the unit under review can consider improvements;
- There is student member on all review panels who is regarded as a full member of the panel;
- All review panels meet students.

Units for review and proposals for pilots

The following units will be reviewed in 2013-14:

Academic Affairs
Applied Psychology
Asian Studies (School of)
Geography and Archaeology

Medicine (School of)
Medicine and Health (College of) (See specific agenda item on this matter)
Student Experience

The range of type, function and size of units lends itself well to the piloting of some alternative approaches to the process. The following suggestions are made:

Academic Affairs

This is a large and complex office. It is proposed that the process for this review remains unchanged.

Applied Psychology

It is proposed that the process for this review remains unchanged.

School of Asian Studies

This is a very small academic unit. It is currently in the process of looking at the structure of the School and the review will provide a good opportunity to get an external peer view on such matters. However, the size of the unit suggests that a process on the same scale as that in place for, for example, Academic Affairs is unnecessary.

Proposal:
A self-assessment report would be produced. There could be discussion with the School about the value of a SWOT analysis and the benchmarking exercise. Neither would be excluded but would need to be appropriate in terms of size and cost.

Review team: 2 x externals (1 x national, 1 x international) (Question: could this be reduced to one international external? We risk the team being bigger than the unit under review), 1 x internal member of staff, 1 x student, 1 x rapporteur from QPU.

(NB: rationale for having a rapporteur from QPU: it is often the practice in UK institutions for a member of the quality unit to be attached to an internal review as rapporteur and as someone who can provide information and advice about the process of the review. This is usually coupled with the event being chaired by an internal, senior member of staff (see Student Experience below). In the case of UCC, the QPU is too small to be able to offer this service for every review but it is nevertheless a model that is worth trialling. It is also often viewed as staff development.)

A site visit as follows:

Day 1 15.30   PRG convenes with QPU for briefing and initial discussion/agenda-setting
       17.00   PRG is joined by Professor Fan and Professor Bocking in order to clarify any initial thoughts/questions and provide clarity on matters arising from their initial discussions.
       19.00   Dinner. PRG, QPU x 1, School of Asian Studies x 2

Day 2   Schedule of meetings with staff and students. Exit presentation.
               Evening dinner and work on report. (Externals depart on day 3).

Geography and Archaeology

It is proposed that the process for this review remains unchanged.

School of Medicine

It is proposed that the process for this review remains unchanged. (Preparation already well underway).

Student Experience

This is another large and complex area. It is proposed that the PRG is chaired by a senior member of UCC staff. The reason for this is two-fold: the Chair will be able to provide background information and advice on the operation of this particular area; it will allow the external members of the PRG to focus their expertise on the unit under review rather than on the operation of the process and matters such as time-keeping in meetings. (If this pilot is successful, I would suggest that QPC considers this as a future model for all reviews. Externals are employed for the specific expertise. It will be easier for them to focus on the content of what is being reviewed if they are not also burdened with the management of process and meetings. Their specific brief would be to focus on content whilst that of the (internal) chair would be to 'manage' the site visit. However, one of the externals should continue to give the exit presentation.)

The Head of Student Experience has indicated a preference for student focus groups instead of questionnaires as a means of getting information from that body. It is proposed that focus groups replace the student questionnaire in this review.

Note:

Following a discussion with Des Lee, Managing Director of FuturScope, the company used to facilitate SWOT analyses, two points became clear: Mr Lee assumes that if he has facilitated a SWOT analysis once with a unit under review, he does not expect that the same unit would need external facilitation during its next review. He is also strongly of the view that the SWOT analysis comes at the wrong point in the process. He suggests that a SWOT analysis should form part of a strategic planning process rather than a self-evaluation process and that, therefore, it might be a more useful exercise if it were to be carried out after receipt of the report so that the unit under review can look at where it is currently and the position it might move to after consideration and implementation of the recommendations.

It would be very useful if one or two of the units under review would be prepared to pilot this approach. For example, if Academic Affairs and Applied Psychology were prepared to work on their SWOT analysis after receipt of their reports, it would provide QPC with information on how that change to process worked for two quite different units. It would also allow for consideration of a fresh approach to the development of Quality Improvement Plans.

Pros and cons

There are pros and cons to operating pilots in this way:

Pros

- Allows the University to explore new ways of operating the Quality Review process whilst staying within international best practice and not disrupting the established review schedule;
- Provides an opportunity to consider the outcomes of the pilots in the light of the recommendations in the IRIU report and the decision to consider those recommendations holistically;
- May lead on to pilots in later aspects of the process such as production of QIP and follow up;
- Begins to develop a culture of change;
- If some models are successful, they could lead to financial savings, both in the pilots and in the operation of future review processes.

Cons

- Operational inconsistency across reviews (Response: all to be operated within a framework of consistently applied principles – see page 3);
- The pilots distract the unit under review from the primary objective of the review (Response: the pilots proposed are not so significant as to present a serious risk).

Action requested of QPC

QPC is asked to approve the proposals to pilot some changes to the operation of Quality Reviews in 2013-14 as set out in this paper.

Fiona Crozier
17th June 2013

3.   An Update for QPC

Title: Update for QPC

From: Fiona Crozier, Director of the Quality Promotion Unit (QPU)

Action required: QPC is requested to consider and comment on the update

Background:

At its last meetings in May and June 2013, QPC approved an approach to considering the recommendations contained in the Irish Universities Institutional Review report and also some pilot modifications to the Quality Review process for the reviews that will take place in 2013-14.

This paper brings QPC up to date with on-going work over the summer and invites comments (and, in some cases, approval) of the work and suggestions set out.

Summary (key points)

The paper sets out some information under the following headings:

- Cultural change (comment/discussion/endorsement)
- A framework for quality assurance and review processes (comment/discussion/endorsement)
- Programme review and annual monitoring (comment/discussion/endorsement)
- Quality review (comment)
- Thematic reviews (comment)
- Timeframe for developments (comment/endorsement)
- Response to IRIU recommendations (comment/discussion/endorsement of approach)
- QPU website and documentation (comment)
- Reviewers' fees (comment/approval).

Update for QPC, 2nd September 2013

Introduction

Over the summer, QPU has been working on further proposed changes to the processes for quality assurance and improvement at UCC. Some of the work is in response to recommendations in the IRIU report; some has been carried out in partnership with the Office for Academic Affairs, in particular with the Academic Secretary, the Administrative Officer for Academic Programmes and Regulations and the Chair of the Academic Development and Standards Committee.

This paper is intended to update QPC to ensure that it has an opportunity to comment on and shape developments as they happen and to approve the direction of those developments. Some of the items listed below are in the very early stages of thought and, therefore, contain no detail. The intention is to provide QPC with a broad, overarching picture. Detail will follow in subsequent meetings.

Cultural change

Some of the proposals set out below will require some cultural readjustment or change. This need may be stronger for some proposals than for others and may be more difficult for some parts of the University than for others.

There are three key reasons for suggesting a change of culture:

i)   By the end of 2013/14, Quality Review will have been through two cycles at UCC. This, coupled with the recommendations contained in the IRIU report suggest that it is time to look at what we should be keeping from the present system and how we should be developing and changing in order to continue to maximise the impact of our processes and to recognise the maturity of our systems.

ii)   Part of that assessment of "where we're at" includes a need to consider how far quality, quality assurance and quality improvement are part of an embedded culture at UCC, as opposed to something that happens every five years. Often this necessitates more ownership of the process by those under review and more trust by those managing the process.

iii)   The current climate means that processes must operate more efficiently. The dual need to streamline and save money and yet to incentivise staff to participate fully in QA and I necessitates some level of change. It will become increasingly difficult to persuade staff to act as internal reviewers on peer review groups given their increased workloads and this must be taken into account in the development of any new systems. However, there is still a need to ensure that processes operate within a robust framework that will stand up to external and internal scrutiny.

A framework for quality assurance and review processes

QPC has already seen the proposed framework of principles for reviews in the paper that proposed some pilot modifications to the reviews to take place in 2013/14. The principles below remain the same apart from the addition of the word 'standards' in the third bullet. This will be added to the reviews of academic units (see below under Programme Review and Annual Monitoring) and is in line with the Guidelines and Good Practice for the Approval, Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes and Awards in Irish Universities, published by the Irish Universities Quality Board. That document suggests that more explicit reference to the location of the programme or award on the National Qualifications Framework would be desirable. This is picked up in one of the recommendations contained in the IRIU report.

Framework of principles

- The process adheres to the four-stage model for review set out in the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA* (i.e. self-assessment, peer review, site visit, published report) thus ensuring consistency of operation;
- The review is carried out through a process that is independent in its operation and allows the panel to come to its conclusions independently and without interference;
- All reviews are intended to provide both assurance of quality and standards and a means by which the unit under review can consider improvements;
- There is student member on all review panels who is regarded as a full member of the panel;
- All review panels meet students.

In future, as programme review comes into existence for academic units (alongside Quality Review of support units), it is suggested that ALL reviews must sit within the framework provided by the principles above (the third principle will need to be reworded slightly for Quality Reviews of support units in order to remove the reference to academic standards where necessary). However, within that framework, and in keeping with the desire to incentivise staff and to place ownership of the review in the unit under review, it may be that more flexibility is permissible in terms of the focus and logistics of the review.

In terms of logistics, this might mean that the review of two Schools (for example, Medicine and Asian Studies) are different in length/in size of review panel/in the schedule for the review, for example. There is also no reason to suggest that the review of a College should look exactly the same as the review of, for example, Buildings and Estates. The focus of such reviews might be slightly different and should take on board where the unit under review is in its strategic planning cycle and what it would like to achieve from the review. This will provide focus for the self-assessment report and should provide some incentive for staff to participate fully in the review. Whilst the review will still need to fulfil the objectives set out in the third bullet point above, allowing the unit under review to have some say in the focus means that the University gains maximum benefit from its review panels, especially the externals.

One example of focus and process development has followed QPC's agreement that all Colleges should be reviewed in the same year (2015-16). A meeting with the four College

managers will be held in the autumn of 2013 to seek their views on the development of a model of Quality Review for Colleges. Within the framework set out above, we will discuss how best to streamline and focus reviews of those units. Similar consultation might take place with other groups of cognate units.

Programme review and annual monitoring (see paper on Annual Monitoring)

So far only the annual monitoring aspect of a process for Programme review has been developed (draft paper is included on the agenda). One matter for consideration is how we manage units for review – do we want it to be programme review or academic review (i.e. a review process for academic units that can focus more specifically on academic matters). The IUQB guidelines say that, "…any overall system must take…scale and complexity into account in order to be both practical and effective." It is important that all coherent academic units are still reviewed – in the case of named awards this is relatively simple. However, the scale of reviewing the BA might prove more difficult. There are various ways of thinking about this – for example, should the large awards like the BA or the BComm form part of the review of a College with a view to ensuring that the College is managing the standards and quality of those programmes? This will need to be teased out.

Annual monitoring – see separate papers. Note the inclusion of external examiners' reports. Also the intention that, if we introduce annual monitoring, we remove the current follow-up process.

Quality review

Still to be considered in detail: the quality review process for all support units.

Thematic reviews

On the radar but still to be considered in detail.

Timeframe for developments

2013-14   Final year of second cycle of reviews. Outcomes of pilot modifications to reviews analysed.
Programme review and annual monitoring processes finalised and published.
Revised Quality Review process finalised and published.

2014-15   Research Quality Review
Two deferred reviews (Management & Marketing and AFIS)
First round of annual monitoring introduced.

2015-16   Introduction of revised processes, including review of four Colleges and first programme reviews (schedule to be finalised).

Response to IRIU recommendations

See attached table. [Appendix C, Item 1 of this report]

Other matters

QPU website and documentation
QPU has begun to look at the content of its website and accompanying documentation and guidance. Both will be updated as revisions to processes are approved and actioned.

Reviewers' fees

It is proposed that external PRG members' fees are revised as follows:

Chairs of RQR panels: previously 1,500 euros. Proposed 1,400 euros (In the last RQR a contingency fund was budgeted for – there is no such fund in the budget for 2014-15. This reduction in fees would save 7,500 euros which would provide some contingency funds if needed).

External members of peer review groups: Previously 1,500 euros. Proposed from 2014-15, 1,200 euros. Rationale: a streamlining of process should necessitate less work/time. The fees paid are (in UK terms) very generous (often more than twice what a reviewer would be paid for a two-day periodic review). QPU does not currently have a budget and needs to ensure that the surplus on which it is surviving is used as efficiently as possible. It is important that the QPU allows for the professional development of its staff to ensure that the unit is in line with regional, national and international developments in quality assurance and improvement. QPU's budget/surplus needs to be managed in a way that allows for the continuing success of QA and QI processes as well as for the continuing development of its staff.

FRC
16th August 2013

4.   Annual Monitoring

Draft Specification for an Annual Monitoring Process

Introduction

Policies and processes for quality assurance and improvement generally lie within a Quality Promotion Unit (QPU) which interfaces with external national agency responsible for such matters. However, quality itself lies at the interface between the teacher and the student. In other words, QPU does not produce quality; it lies in the exchange of knowledge and the research and teaching that takes place in, for example, the lecture theatre or the laboratory. In recognition of this and of the maturity of the current processes for quality assurance and improvement some changes to process are proposed. The aim of the changes is to build on the solid foundation that already exists in this area, to streamline and focus the processes for review and to hand some of the responsibility for quality and its assurance back to the level of delivery.

This might be seen as a change of culture; in fact, it merely highlights those aspects of any policy for QA and QI that sometimes get hidden behind process, namely, that such processes should be useful to the unit under review; they should provide the University with the information that it needs to manage quality effectively and to report to external bodies such as Quality and Qualifications Ireland; that quality and its assurance and improvement should be seen as a holistic part of everyday life rather than something that happens periodically and that the development of a 'quality culture' relies on useful processes and information that are managed at the point of delivery, i.e. within the unit itself with support from central services such as the QPU or Academic Affairs office.

The following extract is taken from the Irish Universities Quality Board Good Practice Guidelines for the Approval, Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes and Awards in Irish Universities:

"Effective monitoring includes many aspects, informal and formal, numeric and descriptive, direct and by survey, module/teacher- or programme-focused, and related to student and graduate experience. However, there can be no definitive list of essential methods and channels, and overly onerous or intrusive monitoring may be as bad as, or worse than, doing nothing. In any case, monitoring is simply a very important support to good programme management. Nevertheless, collecting, assessing, and always acting on students' feedback, when appropriate, and always reporting back (even to following cohorts of students), form the core of effective programme monitoring".

A selection of the guidelines included in the document are set out below, along with the relevant European standard:

- All study programmes are monitored routinely to a sufficient degree, and in just sufficient detail, to assure the quality of their management, teaching, learning assessments and the student experience.
- Programme boards and programme co-ordinators are the primary agents responsible for monitoring and enhancement.

- A variety of monitoring procedures and channels are used that, in combination, are sufficient to provide assurance of quality and identify where changes to programmes (and how they are delivered) may be needed or desirable.
- Focused monitoring activities are undertaken for all substantial collaborative provisions nationally or internationally, with reporting to both the host institution and the associated institutions.
- University and college/faculty systems minimise the workloads associated with monitoring and reporting; for example, data and information are collected and processed just once and are readily available in suitable formats.
- Training, guidance, templates, support and back-up to facilitate feedback from students and other monitoring methods are provided centrally.
- Students are assured of the preservation of their anonymity when contributing to surveys, regardless of the format used (paper or on-line) to elicit feedback.
- The university has regulations, guidelines and supporting documentation (including templates for reports etc.) that define generically the roles and responsibilities of external examiners, and minimum standards for their appointment and their reports. These allow for flexibility, and differences between disciplines
- There are regulations and procedures governing improvements and changes to study programmes that facilitate enhancements while preserving academic integrity and protecting students' interests (see Appendix 1.13 for one approach to how this might be done).
- Programme co-ordinators and boards monitor closely the impact of implemented changes on student workloads, timelines and general experience, particularly with respect to changes to modules that are shared between programmes.
- Annual reports by programme boards include sufficient information to allow higher management levels to identify recurring issues as well as important isolated issues (including examples of exemplary practice).

Extract from the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area:*

Standard 1.2 Approval, Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programme and Awards

Institutions should have formal mechanisms for the approval, periodic review and monitoring of their programmes and awards.

Guidelines

The confidence of students and other stakeholders in higher education is more likely to be established and maintained through effective quality assurance activities which ensure that programmes are well-designed, regularly monitored and periodically reviewed, thereby securing their continuing relevance and currency.

The link between programme review and annual monitoring

This paper proposes the introduction of an annual monitoring process for all taught programmes leading to a UCC award, including those programmes offered jointly or in collaboration with external partners. There is an intention on the part of the University to introduce periodic programme review. This intention received favourable comment in the recent IRIU report and was linked to a

recommendation that the University could make better use of internal management information. (NB: There is no intention that any unit should be reviewed under two processes. Academic units will be reviewed under the new programme review process. They will not then be part of the Quality Review of any other unit, nor will they be reviewed under that process as well.)

Annual monitoring

Periodic programme review is backed up (and made less onerous) by annual monitoring processes which allow programmes/Departments/Schools/Colleges to monitor, for example, trends in quantitative and qualitative information, to keep an overview on any small or significant modifications made to programmes over the course of a year and to comment on the information. This internal process builds a portfolio of evidence which provides the evidence base and framework for the process of periodic programme review, which would seek external input. It will also provide Heads of College and College management with regular management information data.

Both processes (annual monitoring and programme review) provide information that assures the University, its stakeholders and the wider public of the standards and quality of its academic provision and of the value of its degrees and diplomas.

Process

A template with six broad headings will be provided. Some of the template will be pre-populated with information on which comment is sought. The broad headings are as follows:

- Management information data (pre-populated): to cover entry/progression/exit/first destination returns. The programme will be invited to comment on the data and on any trends that are positive or on those that highlight areas that need to be addressed.
- Comments from external examiners' reports. Trends or themes emerging consistently?
- Outcomes of student surveys (either those carried out internally by the programme or the University module survey). Again, the programme will be invited to comment on positive trends or those that highlight areas that need to be addressed.
- Overview and comment on major and/or minor changes to the programme/modules over the year
- In the case of a new programme approved via the Programme Approval Process, comment will be sought on whether or not all recommendations and suggestions by the panel were implemented. A commentary will be invited.
- Any other comments that the programme wishes to make.

The annual monitoring process would eventually replace the current process for follow-up review. The same commentary on periodic programme review recommendations could be sought on an annual basis thus removing the need for a formal follow-up meeting.

In line with the IUQB *Guidelines*, students should be involved in discussions about annual monitoring (through their representation on the relevant committee?) and should receive feedback on the outcomes.

Timelines

The process would begin in autumn 2014 and look back at the year 2013-14. The reporting structure should follow the College's committee structure in terms of reporting up from programme level to the relevant Learning and Teaching/Student Experience Committee. Students should be able to comment via representation on committees or on staff/student liaison committees.

An annual meeting of the College level Teaching and Learning Committee or equivalent (December or January?) would sign off the reports. A representative from both QPU and APAR would attend that meeting. This allows for information flow to the central University units and also provides support from those areas to the College as it signs off the monitoring forms. It is important that such units are visible more regularly and not just when a particular unit is going through a PAP or review of some kind.

Reporting at Institutional Level

The QPU/APAR representatives will draw up a list of common themes and report these annually to the Quality Promotion Committee and ?? Academic Board? There is no intention that the annual monitoring templates would be reported individually at University level. They are intended to be useful to Colleges, Schools, Departments and other academic units in providing the basis for feedback to students, for preparation for periodic review and for management information purposes.

Pros and Cons:

Pros

- More holistic approach to QA and QI by linking aspects of the work of QPU, the Academic Development and Standards Committee and the Office of Academic Affairs
- Puts responsibility for internal QA and QI back to the point of delivery
- Involves students and helps to link quality assurance to the student experience
- Develops a quality culture (i.e. happens more than once every five years and becomes a regular part of academic monitoring)
- Provides departments/Schools/Colleges and the University with regular commentary on management information
- Staff from central units involved are more visible more regularly and may be used as a resource
- Responds to the IRIU report

Cons

- Another layer of bureaucracy? (But this should be outweighed by the advantage of building towards a periodic review rather than it being a 'big bang' once every five years. Also by the benefit to the departments of using management information data and the commentary that this provides to the University).
- It may be difficult to keep the process 'on-time'; i.e. reporting when it should.

Further questions/thoughts at this stage

Process for programme review to be developed.

What should be the units for review? Need to tie up with monitoring.