

Case Study of Good Practice

Guidelines and Template

Professional Service Units



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Guidelines

Why Good Practice?

The UCC model of periodic quality review encourages self-evaluation on the quality of professional service provision, with an enhancement emphasis. All units engaging in review are required to identify and include a good practice case-study as part of the self-evaluation process. This case-study forms part of the Self-Evaluation Report and will be published as a stand-alone document on the QEU website as one of the outputs of the quality review process.

Identifying good practice is a vital facet of enhancement-focused self-evaluation, requiring active consideration of the practices which are working particularly effectively in a unit and ultimately highlighting and sharing these as part of the quality review process. Thus, the submission document needs to prioritise analytical aspects over merely descriptive ones. It is also an opportunity for professional service units to make visible the varied range of activities and initiatives taking place within UCC. This enhancement-led approach accords also with prevailing external policy expectations, which emphasise both continuous improvement and student-centredness.

Identifying a good practice case study might ideally follow from the SWOT analysis and benchmarking processes as part of the self-evaluation procedure. The conduct of a SWOT analysis would allow particular strengths to be identified and refined further through discussion leading to identification of a defining case study of good practice, which the unit would wish to include in its self-evaluation report. The key criterion for selecting a good practice case study is the unit's informed self-knowledge of its practices and a commitment to documenting and sharing the case in a peer context.

What is meant by good practice?

It is important to note that the term good practice, as opposed to best practice, is deliberately chosen. This is because good practice acknowledges:

- the variety and diversity of Professional Services within higher education institutions;
- the range of departmental/functional cultures and expectations; limitations of transferability as “what works” in one setting may not be transferable directly for another setting.

Importantly, good practice is identified by each unit according to the most relevant and meaningful measures and examples in their service area. Nevertheless, broad characteristics of good practice are likely to encompass approaches that are deliberative and sustained in their focus on enhancing the effectiveness of service delivery with an ultimate beneficial impact on the quality of student experiences. Consequently, the impact of the good practice can be identified and described.

Why does good practice matter?

Acknowledging and celebrating good practice demonstrates a mature approach to quality where the outcomes of self-evaluation balance successes alongside issues identified for further development. At unit level, it allows showcasing of activity to peers, students and colleagues across the university and externally. It also provides the opportunity for peer learning and the potential to encourage ongoing innovation and development within the university community, as a part of a wider institutional enhancement ethos.

What is the good practice case-study?

In summary the good practice case study is something that a unit is particularly proud of and considers that it does well. The case-study approach sets out to describe the good practice activity in terms of its origin, purpose, design, implementation and review. It provides information about the context, motivations and other factors which influenced its formation. It is important that the unit provides data and analytical evidence of the effectiveness of the identified good practice. The case-study may be prospective, current or retrospective recognizing that the stages of development of good practice are dynamic and part of an overall enhancement ethos. The range of good practice case studies can be inclusive of any initiative that benefits the service delivery by the unit.

Overall, the case-study is a synoptic account of the practice, 4-5 pages, or a digital or other artefact (such as video, podcast, blog), which illustrates its *scope* and *impact* in terms of enhancing the quality of service provision and/or the student experience. The description of the case study should be accessible to a range of audiences and allow the unit to illustrate and disseminate its good practice as a central part of its quality enhancement activities.

How will good practice case-studies be used?

The good practice case-study will be published along with the Peer Review Panel Report, to illustrate the University's commitment to excellence in the delivery of its functions, with direct or indirect benefits to the student experience. In the institutional context increasing the visibility of good practices can provide a knowledge bank of exemplars for wider internal exchange to inform approaches to shared issues as well as facilitating the re-purposing of good practices in different disciplinary settings.

Template

NAME OF UNIT



**Fheabhsú Cáilíochta
Quality Enhancement**



QUALITY REVIEW

DATE

GOOD PRACTICE CASE-STUDY

TITLE

AUTHORS:

(PLEASE FEEL FREE TO INSERT YOUR OWN IMAGES)



Case Study Summary on a Page

Please insert a concise and schematic overview of the chosen case study of good practice. You are welcome to include graphs/visualisations, if deemed appropriate. The summary on a page should address the following aspects:

- Title
- Subject area
- Initiative's current stage (pilot/ initial/established/developmental/mainstreaming)
- Target group/s
- Staff involved
- Summary of Case Study (e.g. year of introduction; aims & objectives; funding body if applicable; collaborators; output/s and impact)

Section One: Origins and Overview

This section should situate the chosen case-study within the Unit's functional remit and refer to its alignment with relevant international, national and University's policies (e.g., UCC Strategic Plan; Academic Strategy) and best models of practice.

The chosen initiative might be still in the **pilot phase** or an **already established approach**; both alternatives are valid; if the initiative is established, please, provide an overview of its introduction and developments to date. If the initiative is in its pilot phase, please ensure to include below an indication of future development plans.

Section Two: Purpose

This section should provide information about the context, motivations and other factors that influenced or prompted this initiative. What primary objectives and intended outcomes were anticipated?

Section Three: Design

Outline the planning phase – what factors influenced the design? Was it top-down, bottom-up, individual, collective? What were the sources of inspiration, if any? Can you specify what priorities it addresses? Can you identify the extent to which this initiative contributes to an improved delivery of the unit's functions and/or the development of Graduate Attributes and/or enhancing the student learning experience? Have students been involved in, or was their feedback functional to, the design of this initiative?

Section Four: Implementation

Describe the initiative in practice:

- How did you implement this initiative? (please, provide concrete operational details which may facilitate duplication by other units)
- What factors supported the successful implementation of this initiative?
- What challenges did you encounter in realising this initiative?
- How did you overcome them? What helped you?

Section Five: Review/Evaluate

Whether complete or on-going, comment on how this initiative impacted on your service provision and whether it may have had beneficial (direct or indirect) effects on the student experience. Provide details of staff, student and other stakeholders' feedback on this initiative (where applicable).

Questions to consider are listed below:

- How was feedback from relevant stakeholders (e.g. staff, students and other stakeholders collected and analysed?
- What are the main observations made by relevant stakeholders (staff/students/other stakeholders since this initiative has been introduced?
- In which ways has such feedback been acted upon by the responsible staff members/unit?
- In which ways do staff/students/other stakeholders think it has impacted upon the effectiveness of the service?
- What measures can be used to evaluate the outcomes and what are the implications for future practice (for your own and others' practice)?

Section 6: Conclusion

Please include any potential future developments for this initiative (where applicable):

- What aspects could be improved based on your evaluation of the initiative and the collected feedback?
- Could it be extended to involve a broader range of stakeholders without increasing energy and time demands on staff?
- If so, is there scope for preparing an actionable plan for the further development of this initiative that accounts for available resources and/or explores ways to secure additional resources?

Appendix

Please include photos /images/visualisations that you would like QEU to include in its future website publication and/or any other future dissemination activities.