Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh, Éire
University College Cork, Ireland

QUALITY PROMOTION COMMITTEE

ANNUAL REPORT

2008

April 2009

QUALITY PROMOTION COMMITTEE

MEMBERSHIP

- Mr. Diarmuid Collins, Bursar
- Dr. Maeve Conrick, College of Arts, Celtic Studies & Social Sciences
- Mr. Cal Diolúin, President, Students' Union (2008/09)
- Professor Paul Giller, Registrar & Vice-President for Academic Affairs
- Mr. Martin Hayes, Director, Computer Centre
- Cllr Tom Higgins, Governor (from January 2009)
- Professor Ken Higgs, College of Science, Engineering & Food Science
- Mr Kris McElhinney, President, Student's Union (2007/08)
- Dr. Anne Mills, Admissions Officer
- Mr. Paul Moriarty, Head, Student Counselling & Development Service
- Dr. Michael B. Murphy, President (*Chair*)
- Mr. John O'Callaghan, Governor
- Dr. Seamus O'Reilly, College of Business & Law
- Dr. Norma Ryan, Director of Quality Promotion (*Secretary*)
- Professor Helen Whelton, College of Medicine & Health

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The UCC approach to quality, in common with the other universities in Ireland, is based on sound policies and principles, and on best international practice. It reflects a holistic view of quality in the university, involving all of the major stakeholders as well as external experts in the process, preserving institutional autonomy and emphasising quality improvement.

This Annual Report 2008 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 2007/08

- progress made in quality improvement of activities arising from the findings and recommendations from reviews conducted in 2003/04 and 2005/06

- plans for the future

- recommendations from the Committee to the Governing Body.

Quality Improvement – Progress on Implementation of Recommendations

Follow-up reviews have now been completed on all quality reviews conducted in the first cycle of quality reviews. Very good progress has been made in the implementation of recommendations for improvement, with, in particular over the past three years, a very serious commitment by the University as well as by departments and units to ensuring that resources are provided for the implementation of recommendations, where possible. University management is aware of these issues arising from quality reviews and, where possible, is working to bring about the necessary improvements.

Notwithstanding the real progress made there are some issues remaining to be addressed and acted upon. These are discussed in some detail in the body of the report with accompanying recommendations for action.

Plans for the Future

The second cycle of quality reviews commenced in 2007/08, and incorporated changes made to the process and the restructuring of academic and administrative systems in UCC. A key objective for the academic year 2008/09 is to complete the review of the quality of research activity across all UCC departments, centres and units. This is a major undertaking and most of the quality reviews originally planned for 2008/09 will be deferred to allow the input of the necessary resources into the research quality review.

Recommendations

1. That the University Management Team and Academic Council, together with all academic and administrative/support services units, continue to ensure that all recommendations for improvement arising from quality reviews are implemented, in so far as is possible, and that they continue to use the quality review reports to inform strategic planning and decision making.

2. That the Governing Body approves this report and its publication on the university web site.

3. That the Governing Body approves the schedule of reviews planned for 2009/10 and the draft schedule for subsequent years 2010 - 2015.

4. That the Governing Body approves the proposal for amending the procedure for appointment of external peer reviewers to quality review panels.

5. That the Governing Body supports the university management in continuing its work on enhancing the quality of all activities and on implementing recommendations in the individual reports.

Acknowledgement

SECTION A

Introduction

The focus of the quality improvement and quality assurance procedures in UCC extends well beyond maintaining the academic standard of programmes, which is recognised as a vital element in meeting the needs of its students, to include all areas of the university's operation. This includes, *inter alia,* teaching and learning, research and all administrative and support services provided. UCC recognises that all areas of the University's operation will affect (directly or indirectly) the quality of the totality of the student experience and ultimately may have an impact on student achievement. The University is conscious that students can make a valuable contribution to the assurance and assessment of quality within the University and is committed to seeking the views and contributions of students, as well as of other stakeholders, such as employers and graduates, and to using this feedback to improve the quality of the students' experience. The primary aim of UCC in conducting the quality reviews is to provide the best possible student experience and to foster an ethos of quality improvement at all levels.

Quality is the responsibility of every member of staff of UCC. Everybody has a contribution to make. In order for this approach to be successful, there must be clear lines of responsibility and accountability for each area of operation and adequate support to enable the staff to achieve their quality objectives. All staff are encouraged to participate fully in the preparation for the quality review and in the conduct of the review itself.

It is recognised that one important factor in assuring quality involves constant re-examination of one's own approach against those of one's peers. In this way the University can be assured that it is maintaining appropriate standards and also demonstrates accountability to external bodies for the use of public funds. Thus, the University is committed to the involvement of external peers in its quality improvement and quality assurance procedures. (In this context 'peer' is broadly defined to incorporate academics, practitioners and potential future employers.) The benchmarking exercise that all departments and units undertake also assists in the achievement of this aim.

This Report follows on previous Reports and will focus on reviews and outcomes of these reviews conducted in the academic year 2007/08 and, in particular, will emphasise the progress made in implementing recommendations for improvement that have arisen from quality reviews. The report also comments on the quality enhancement and improvement that was consequential on a subset of reviews conducted in 2003/04 and 2005/06, which had not previously been reported on to Governing Body. There are many findings and comments in the detailed reports of the peer reviewers that are not detailed in this report, but may be found in the full reports of the reviewers for each review, which are published on the Quality Promotion Unit web site (http://www.ucc.ie/quality). It should be noted that the overall findings in the majority of quality reviews were of satisfaction with the activities undertaken by the department or unit concerned. In most cases there were both excellent and very good features commented on by the reviewers. The complete Peer Review Group Reports are published on the Quality Promotion Unit web site following their consideration by the Quality Promotion Committee, in accordance with a previous decision of the Governing Body to delegate approval for publication of the reports to the Committee.

The Quality Promotion Committee

The Quality Promotion Committee (QPC) was considered in the re-structuring of both the Governing Body and the management structures of the University. It has been agreed that the Committee will continue, as heretofore, to present an Annual Report to the Governing Body and, in addition, to report quarterly to the University Management Team. The terms of reference remained unaltered. The appointment of members to the QPC continues to be a matter for the Governing Body.

Membership

Jan 2007- Jan 2012
- Mr. Diarmuid Collins, Bursar
- Dr. Maeve Conrick, College of Arts, Celtic Studies & Social Sciences
- Mr. Cal Diolúin, President, Students' Union (2008/09)
- Professor Paul Giller, Registrar & Vice-President for Academic Affairs
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- Dr. Norma Ryan, Director of Quality Promotion (Secretary)
- Professor Helen Whelton, College of Medicine & Health

THE QUALITY PROMOTION UNIT

The Quality Promotion Unit, headed by its Director, Dr. Norma Ryan, and assisted by an Administrator, a Senior Executive Assistant and an Executive Assistant, is responsible primarily for facilitating the implementation of quality improvement and quality assurance procedures in UCC. The Unit assists departments in preparing for reviews, including analysis of surveys and management of an electronic system for the conduct of surveys, carries out all the logistical arrangements, 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 also 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 on the Quality Promotion Unit web site (http://www.ucc.ie/en/qpu/).

QUALITY REVIEWS 2007/08

The following departments and units all completed, successfully, a quality review in 2007/08, following the guidelines approved by the university.

ACADEMIC UNITS

Department of Classics

Cork University Dental School and Hospital

Drama and Theatre Studies Programmes

Department of Economics

Department of German

CENTRES AND ADMINISTRATIVE/SUPPORT UNITS

Chaplaincy

Department of Student Health

All the units prepared a comprehensive Self-Evaluation Report, including undertaking a detailed self-critical analysis (SWOT) and a benchmarking exercise in relation to the activities of the unit. In all cases a Peer review group was appointed and visited UCC for a period of three days to meet with staff, students and other stakeholders in order to assess and evaluate the unit. Following the visit a report was submitted to the University and considered by the Quality Promotion Committee. Key extracts from the review reports[1] and all the recommendations for improvement made by the reviewers, together with the comment of the QPC on the review recommendations, are given in Section B.

Findings

The findings on this occasion mirror some of those reported on previously by the QPC to Governing Body. The majority of the units had previously undergone a quality review in the first cycle (reports published on UCC web site[2]). The reviewers included in their reports a review of the actions and developments since the first review. It was notable that the bulk of 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 resource required to implement the recommendation(s).

With respect to reviews conducted in 2007/08 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 more difficult 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, it will not always be possible to implement those recommendations requiring considerable resources. The University Management Team, in its consideration of such recommendations, will prioritise actions based on alignment with the University strategic plan.

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[1] Published in full at http://www.ucc.ie/quality
[2] http://www.ucc.ie/quality

The following sections consider key deficiencies highlighted in quality review reports on the reviews conducted in 2007/08 and the actions being taken by the University to address these. It is important to realise that the focus of the quality reviews is not merely quality assurance but also embraces quality improvement. 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. The following paragraphs briefly describe some key areas and issues which have generic application across many similar units in the University.

A. Interdisciplinary/Multidisciplinary Programmes

UCC has a number of very successful and well-delivered and supported interdisciplinary / multi-disciplinary programmes, and the number is increasing. Some of these programmes reside within a single college and others across two or more Colleges. The programmes vary widely in nature, structure and organisation. Over the past few years it has been very clear from quality reviews that there is a variety of practices operating in how such programmes are governed, managed and resourced. Recommendations for improvement have been made in a number of reviews as to the organisation and resourcing of such programmes. However in the follow-up reviews it was evident that not much change had occurred in some cases. The new University Resource Allocation Model adopted by UCC did not take into account to any significant extent the issues faced by interdisciplinary programmes. These issues are broader that simply resource allocation and include:

> i) organisation;
>
> ii) management;
>
> iii) delivery of teaching and coordination of assignments;
>
> iv) responsibility for curriculum leadership;
>
> v) allocation of resources – financial and space.

There are at present no specific guidelines/frameworks governing interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary programmes in UCC.

Action Planned: University management is aware of the need to put in place University wide appropriate governance and management structures for such programmes and the VP for Teaching & Learning has been tasked with responsibility for development and implementation of such regulations. There are a number of models of good practice in this area already working very well in UCC and these are being used as models to develop the university wide framework that is required. Flexibility in operation of the framework is deemed key to facilitating future developments of new programme that span a range of disciplines.

B. Strategic planning for research

The reviews of all the academic units emphasised the advantages for the units and individual members of units to develop research strategic plans and the need to support and mentor junior staff in the development of their research careers. Linked to this is the need for staff, especially junior staff developing their research to avail of the sabbatical leave scheme to work and research in institutions abroad.

Action Planned: in the units where this was specifically highlighted a Director for research has already been appointed. The University Management Team, in its consideration of the wider application, endorsed the sending to Academic Council and Governing Body a revised scheme for probation and establishment for academic staff incorporating, *inter alia*, recommendations for mentoring of junior staff in research development. The Sabbatical Leave Scheme is recognised to be important, especially for junior staff and its operation is presently under review to ensure that its benefits are maximised for everyone.

C. PhD qualification for academic staff

Following recommendations in previous years Governing Body has recommended that all academic staff appointed to academic positions should have a PhD, in the normal course of events. It is recognised that in some specific situations staff may be appointed without a PhD but that every effort should be made to encourage and mentor staff to study for a PhD in the first few years of appointment. While this recommendation is being implemented in general there are still some instances where this is not happening as extensively as desired.

Action Planned: the issue has recently been discussed at some length at Academic Council. The principle that all new appointees to academic positions should, normally, have a PhD (or equivalent) prior to appointment was agreed. It was also noted that in some instances this may not be appropriate/possible and that, in such instances, every effort should be made by the department concerned and also by the Probation & Establishment Board to facilitate the appointee in acquiring such a qualification.

D. Integration of student support services

As in previous years, the high quality of the student support services and the efforts of the staff to provide the best services possible, were again recognised in the reports for 2007/08. However, it is also evident that there has been a distinct lack of integration of the supports offered. In some instances improvements have been made in this regard but the dispersed nature of the services and their locations has made further improvement difficult. In a number of the support service reviews recommendations were made regarding the need to integrate the services more comprehensively, both in terms of delivery and also in terms of location.

Action Planned: The Quality Promotion Committee welcomed the appointment of a Vice-President for the Student Experience in January 2008, and noted that the remit of the VP includes, *inter alia,* responsibility for leading on the development of the integration of the student services. There has been a re-alignment of reporting relationships so that, now, all the heads of the student support services report to the VP. It is anticipated that this will facilitate development of further improvements in the services offered and their integration. The University Management team is interested in ensuring that this agenda for further integration is developed and worked on and will be seeking reports from the VP on actions taken. The VP for the Student Experience has reported that work has commenced and that this is high on the agenda for his discussions with the units concerned.

E. Academic Workload Allocation Models

One of the key issues for an academic is the balancing of workload. There are three key areas of responsibility for every academic in UCC: delivery of teaching & facilitating learning, engaging in research, and academic administrative responsibilities, including engagement with external communities, etc. In addition disciplinary norms vary with regard to the types of activities engaged in under each of those headings. Across the institution the quality reviews have highlighted the very significant contribution of hardworking academics in each of the three areas.

In addition, academic staff and, to a lesser extent, administrative staff, make very significant contributions to courses delivered outside 'normal' working hours. Such courses range from postgraduate and undergraduate degree programmes to adult continuing and professional educational courses, including outreach and e-courses. These may be delivered in the evenings, at weekends and outside the normal teaching periods. The recognition for staff of their engagement in such programmes varies considerably from department to department and from zero to a real recognition. Staff in some departments receive credit in terms of workload allocation, whereas in other departments the workload is not recognised. In some departments staff are paid an additional allowance to their salary for their work in this regard and in others there is no remuneration given. There is a need to regularise and support staff who are involved in such programmes and to ensure that recognition is made in an equitable fashion as for other elements of an academic staff members' workload.

The issue of definition and clarity around the appropriate balance of academic workloads has arisen in previous years in quality reviews. It is unclear as to precisely what should comprise an appropriate balance in the workload for academic staff in the university sector – both in UCC and generally in the university sector in Ireland. The workload of academic staff is comprised of teaching, research and administrative duties. There is no definition as to what an appropriate balance in this load should be and this has led to difficulties and discussions, both within and external to the university.

Action Planned: The QPC recognises the importance, both for staff and the university, of developing a policy in this area, especially now that there is an increased emphasis on the provision of courses and programmes in lifelong learning, in continuing professional development and in responding to the needs of the population of the region, as well as internationally. Recommendations have been made to the University Management team in this regard and the Registrar and Senior Vice-President has undertaken to lead the discussions on this and on the development of an appropriate policy in consultation with the academic community and in particular the Academic Council. A number of initiatives have commenced in 2007/08 and 2008/09. It is recognised that the issues are complex and it is not a simple matter of counting up hours.

F. Maintenance of the buildings stock in UCC

UCC has a high stock of older buildings compared to any other Irish University. The condition of a significant number of the older buildings in UCC is not at the standard the University would desire all its students to experience. There has been a number of very significant additions to the buildings and estates of UCC over the past ten – fifteen years as a

result of concentrated efforts on the part of the University to raise funds and invest in new buildings. The most recent of these is the IT building which is due to open in July 2009 on the Western Road.

42% of the buildings estate of UCC requires serious investment at this point. (This does not equate to the percentage of space available to UCC.) The legislative burden is growing and monies allocated to UCC from the exchequer are very limited and unlikely to increase. There is a need to ensure that adequate funds are found and made available for the maintenance and upkeep of the stock of old buildings still very much in use in UCC. This is particularly challenging in the current financial restrictions.

Action Planned: A rolling programme of refurbishment has been in place and of course as new buildings become available this reduces pressure on existing buildings to some extent. There has been a rolling programme of refurbishment put in place and of course as new buildings come available this reduces pressure on existing buildings to some extent. The University management is actively pursuing all avenues to increase the funding. However it must also be realised that this is an issue which will remain always and that every year some works are completed and refurbishments are being carried out on a planned and phased basis.

G. Resources for the replacement of old/out-dated equipment

As with item F above this is an ongoing matter which will always be on the agenda. There are very significant amounts of research monies being attracted into UCC, which funds new and replacement equipment every year. Laboratories continue to be refurbished and equipment replaced. Planned replacements of items such as computers for student etc are all in place and operating. and this is welcomed by all. Much of this money is devoted to capital projects and development of essential infrastructure for a university that aims to be a research-led university. However consequent on the real improvement in facilities and laboratories there is a parallel requirement to develop and replace old/outdated equipment used to support the teaching, especially that of undergraduates. In some departments there is a very heavy dependency on equipment for teaching purposes and it is becoming increasingly difficult to find the resources to replace and update this equipment, especially in the teaching laboratories. It is essential, if the university is to implement the government policies and ambitions in relation to development of the sciences and engineering disciplines, to maintain the teaching supports and infrastructure as well as the research infrastructure.

Action Planned: University management and, in particular, the Heads of the Colleges monitor the situation on an on-going basis recognising that there will never be enough money to do everything all at once.

H. Space and facilities

Allocation of space and other facilities remains a serious issue for an institution that is expanding in terms of student numbers more rapidly than plans for new facilities can be implemented. All space is at a premium in UCC and there is a real need to develop a proper space allocation policy and to implement it. Issues such as retired staff holding offices, provision of adequate facilities for the increasing number of postgraduate students in all Colleges, health and safety in laboratories, all require attention and financial resources in particular. New buildings are being resourced and planned but the need is outpacing provision all the time.

Governing Body has considered these issues as they have arisen in previous years in other quality reviews and endorsed recommendations for consideration and action by university management. In some instances substantial progress has been made, and many other issues have been resolved, as has been reported on separately and in previous reports. The issues listed here remain serious, notwithstanding the improvement in the amount of space and quality of space created by the new buildings.

All issues relating to a specific unit/department which require the attention of a member of the University Management Team have been forwarded to the member requesting action/response as appropriate. The specific issues are detailed in Section B and are not re-iterated here.

Issues also arise around the perceived inequity of space allocation, especially where provision for postgraduate students is concerned. It is difficult to cater for rapidly changing student populations in different disciplines in a constructive manner that is not overly disruptive of departmental activities.

Action Planned: the University Management Team has appointed a Space Allocation Committee which is responsible for the allocation / re-allocation of space. Every effort is made to ensure maximum use of available facilities including a regular monitoring of the usage of all teaching spaces to ensure maximum benefit.

I. The perceived inequity in funding across units in UCC and even across institutions.

An issue that arose in many of the reviews is a perception that funding is allocated randomly and that some areas 'do better' than others.

Action Planned: The University management has put in place a Resource Allocation Model which is transparent and allocates resources based on a set of criteria decided on by management. Thus funding allocation is not random. The Resource Allocation Model is kept under constant review and will be amended as necessary based on a set of principles and the strategic objectives of the university.

General Comment:

The 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 the issues remain at the forefront and that efforts, already on-going, continue to address them. Not all of the recommendations require additional resources for implementation and the expectation is that all of these will be implemented as soon as possible. The QPC notes and welcomes the fact that the university management has commenced making 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.

Quality Improvement
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 and its consideration by the Quality Promotion Committee, 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 following discussion and agreement with the relevant Head of College/Dean of Faculty/Vice-President to whom the Department/Unit reports.

Section C of this report details the follow-up reports on the remainder of the quality reviews conducted in both the Academic years 2003/04 and 2005/06, on which a report to Governing Body had not previously been made. Reports on follow-up reviews for the other reviews conducted in 2003/04, 2004/05, 2005/06 and 2006/07 have been made in previous years to Governing Body and are published on the university web site. There were no quality reviews conducted in 2006/07 in order to allow the restructuring of the academic and administrative systems in the university to be implemented and to allow time for planning the university-wide quality review of research activity.

The Quality Promotion Committee considered the reports and was satisfied that in the majority of cases the departments and units worked hard to implement the recommendations of the reviewers as endorsed by the Committee. It was also evident to the Committee that relevant budget holders had made efforts to allocate resources, in particular financial resources, to assist departments and units to implement resource-requiring recommendations arising from quality reviews. Such recommendations included the filling of academic and administrative posts, allocation of Library and other budgets, replacement/provision of equipment, etc.

Implementation of recommendations for improvement at university level

The following paragraphs discuss some of the efforts that have been made to address the recommendations and to enhance the quality of the student experience in UCC. The recommendations arose from the reviews conducted in this and in previous years and highlighted in previous reports to Governing Body. However the lack of financial support from the Higher Education Authority for the University has hindered the implementation of improvements in many areas and, while some improvements have been made, progress on some key areas has not been as rapid as had been hoped.

IT Facilities for Students

The provision of additional IT facilities for students, in particular undergraduate students, was identified as a key issue in the first few years of reviews. In more recent reviews this has not been identified as a key issue, largely because of the very significant progress made by the university in addressing the issue. This is continuing to improve very significantly every year and there has been major success in promoting the use of laptops by students complemented by the use of the wireless internet service on campus and in the student accommodation facilities.

Refurbishment of Teaching Spaces

The refurbishment programme commenced in 2002/03 and has continued for the past six years with very significant improvements in the facilities in many of the teaching rooms. However significant work remains. All newly created teaching facilities are equipped to a very high standard. There still remain a significant number of older teaching spaces, amounting to approximately 42% of all the teaching spaces in UCC, requiring upgrading and refurbishment and the money available is inadequate to maintain high quality facilities for our students. This % will decrease as new buildings are brought into operation.

Provision of Audio-Visual Facilities

A programme has been put in place for the phased refurbishment and upgrading of audio-visual facilities in all teaching spaces. In very many areas the audio-visual facilities have been significantly upgraded and plans are in place to continue this work as resources become available. All new spaces are provided with up-to-date equipment. Nonetheless it remains a key issue for some older buildings and there is an on-going programme of work to upgrade all areas as resources become available.

Teaching Spaces

The lack of adequate and appropriately sized teaching spaces continues to hinder the development of new programmes and modernisation/modifications of existing courses. This remains one of the single largest issues facing the university despite every effort being made to address the issue. There is an extensive programme of work planned and the IT Building, due to be opened in July 2009, is a very significant contributor to the success of the programme.

Number of Module Choices

Some reviews highlighted the need to prioritise the modules – both in terms of content and of number – being offered by departments. Reviewers have expressed concern at the burden on academic staff in offering excessive numbers of module choices, whilst admiring the efforts of staff to deliver as broad-ranging a programme as possible. A number of departments have considered the modules on offer within their courses and have re-organised options and prioritised their module offerings along the lines suggested by reviewers. However this still remains an issue for some other departments and programmes.

Library Resources

The situation with respect to the funding of the Library improved very significantly in the later half of 2004 and in 2005 with the advent of the funding from SFI and the HEA for electronic access to scientific journals, in particular, and the development in 2006 of enhanced electronic access to journals and publications in the humanities. The completion of the extension to the Library has significantly alleviated some of the remaining restrictions on space that the Library had suffered from. Inadequacy of Library provision is no longer a source of concern of reviewers and the University has been complimented on their success in having such an excellent provision of Library resources now.

The Library has extended its opening hours in 2005/06 and this has improved access for all users to the resources.

Plans for the Future

Research Quality Review

The University decided to conduct a research quality review of all research activity in UCC in the academic year 2008/09. The planning for the conduct of this review took place in 2007/08 and engaged all the academic and research units in the university. A survey was conducted by the Academic Council Research Committee, chaired by Professor Stephen Fahy, to ascertain the views of all staff on the appropriate metrics to be used in the review. There was significant agreement across all disciplines as to the key metrics to be used in the conduct of the review. These were developed by the Academic Council Research Committee, with representation from all Colleges and Faculties, and presented to the Academic Council at a meeting in March 2008. The outcome of the meeting was an agreement to proceed with the review, that the Quality Promotion Unit would take responsibility for the implementation of the review and that the process would be overseen by a Research Review Implementation Group to be chaired by the Registrar and Senior Vice-President.[3]

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[3] Full details of the process and procedures have previously been detailed in a former report to Governing Body and may be found at http://trans.ucc.ie/en/qpurr/

Academic units have been allocated to one of fifteen panels, incorporating all the research units as well as academic departments. The review visits by members of the panels will take place in 2008/09. All the reviewers will be drawn from the international community. The outcomes of the review will be reported on to Governing Body in 2009.

Because of the heavy workload for all academic staff associated with the implementation of the quality review of research it was agreed (with Governing Body approval) to defer most of the quality reviews originally scheduled for 2008/09 in order to allow the administrative tasks associated with the research review to be undertaken. The conduct of the second cycle of quality reviews will re-commence in 2009/10 (see schedule in Appendix 2 approved by the University Management Team) and approval is sought for the schedule for the completion of the second cycle of quality reviews from Governing Body.

Appointment of external reviewers to quality review panels

The QPC considered the process for appointment of reviewers to quality review panels. The present system, whereby departments/units nominate a panel from which the QPC chooses reviewers, is considered to be less than ideal and requiring amendment. The EUA, in its report[4] to the Irish universities in 2005 following the conduct of institutional reviews in all seven Irish universities, said:

> "*concern was expressed at the practice apparently accepted in all universities of the unit under review nominating a shortlist of its own candidates as peer reviewers. The EUA teams urge the Irish universities to ensure that any direct link between the unit under review and the choice of peers for that review is cut.*"

The QPC is proposing a change to the process to ensure that a greater distance is maintained between the unit under review and the choice of peers, as follows.

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[4] Published at http://www.ucc.ie/quality

Selection of Members of Peer Review Groups (PRGs)

Current approved process	Proposed process from April 2009 onwards
Chair: Appointed by the members of the PRG on convening on the first evening (prior to the commencement of the review). It is expected that the Chair will normally be appointed from among the external members of the PRG. However this is not an absolute requirement.	**Chair:** No change to process
Internal members: Nominated and appointed by the Quality Promotion Committee.	**Internal members:** No change to process
External members: Panel of at least five nominees per category is nominated by department/unit. Those nominated should not be closely associated with the unit to be reviewed (e.g. should not be a current external examiner). Panel will be submitted to external expert (e.g. previous external examiner) for selection of members of final PRG. The external expert may also suggest additional names, if s/he so deems appropriate. Additional names may also be suggested by the Quality Promotion Committee.	**External members**: Quality Promotion Committee to source potential reviewers from within Ireland and abroad. In order to ensure that reviewers have sufficient knowledge of disciplinary norms in Ireland and internationally the QPC will consult with current and/or former external examiners, and/or with other QA offices in Ireland and abroad, and/or with universities abroad that have links to UCC and/or with members/chairs of quality reviews, including the research reviews held in 2008/09. The Unit to be reviewed will not be invited to nominate reviewers. The Quality Promotion Committee will have final approval over all members of Peer Review Groups.
Consultation with Unit: Unit nominates	**Consultation with Unit:** Before finalisation of the membership of the Peer Review Group, the unit to be reviewed is asked if they have any concerns/potential conflicts with any of the members proposed. The Quality Promotion Committee will consider the response of the Unit in this regard.

SECTION B: REPORTS ON QUALITY REVIEWS 2007/08

ACADEMIC UNITS

- Department of Classics
- Department of Dental School and Hospital
- Department of Drama and Theatre Studies
- Department of Economics
- Department of German

DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICS

PEER REVIEW GROUP

- Professor Anna Chahoud, Professor of Latin, Trinity College Dublin

- Professor Kathy Hall, Department of Education, UCC

- Professor Mark Humphries, Professor of Ancient History, Swansea University *(Chair)*

- Ms. Rosalie Moloney, School Principal, Cork

- Professor Alan Titley, Department of Modern Irish, UCC

SITE VISIT

The site visit was conducted over 2.5 days from 10-12 March 2008 and included visits to departmental and library facilities including library special collections in UCC and meetings with:

- Dr David Woods (Acting Head) and staff of the department as a group and individually

- Professor Keith Sidwell, Head of Department (conference call to Canada)

- Representatives of undergraduate and postgraduate students

- Representatives of employers, past graduates and other external stakeholders

- Professor M. Peter Kennedy, Vice-President for Research Policy & Support

- Professor Grace Neville, Vice-President for Teaching and Learning

- Professor David Cox, Head, College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences

- Ms. Carmel Cotter, 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 Keith Sidwell
No. of Staff:	6 full time academic staff; 1 College Language Teacher, 1 Administrative staff
Location of Department:	O'Rahilly Building
Degrees/Diplomas offered:	BA, BEd, BMus, HDip, MA, MPhil, PhD
No. of Students:	Department has 71.73 Student FTEs: 63.79 UG and **7**.94 PG FTEs distributed as follows:

Undergraduate Student FTEs

Years 1-4	Evening Courses	Visiting	**Total U/G**
57.75	2.50	3.54	**63.79**

Postgraduate Student FTEs

H Dip	Master Taught	Master Research	PhD	**Total P/G**
2.11	4.50	.50	.83	**7.94**

MISSION STATEMENT

"The Department aims to provide a centre for the study of all aspects of the ancient Greco-Roman world and its influence on the cultures and languages of Europe. Our teaching and research reflect this broad sweep across language, literature, history, philosophy and art. Research interests range from the earliest artefacts of the Mycenaean period to Renaissance Latin texts and the influence of the classical world on 18th and 19th century Europe. The Department thus sees itself also as a focus for interdisciplinary activities (such as Medieval and Renaissance Studies)."

The Mission Statement of the department does reflect that of the University in so far as it stresses the need for teaching and research, the primary functions of a university, or of any academic unit within that university. Much more importantly, the actual practice of the departmental embodies all the aims and values of the modern university described in UCC's Mission Statement.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims and objectives of the department include, but are not necessarily limited to, the provision of a broad undergraduate education in each of the 3 subjects which it teaches, the provision of a more specialised postgraduate education in accordance with the research interests and abilities of its staff at any particular time, and the promotion of the study of Classics among both the wider university community and the general public. The department aims to support staff and students in other departments within the university, not least through the provision of high-quality language classes which will enable them to pursue their postgraduate or research work in such fields as medieval or renaissance studies, as well as supporting the research activities of its own staff in accordance with their strengths and interests. In all of these ways, it seeks to promote the reputation of UCC as a leading national university. These aims and objectives include the necessary measures to ensure the high quality, and the improvement of this quality where possible, both in existing courses and in any new courses in accordance with best practice internationally and the provision of the requisite resources and training from the university support services. The aims and objectives are in strong accord both with the Mission Statement reported above and the Mission Statement of the university. The department contributes to any mechanisms concerning the long-range planning for and development of the department, college, or university, when invited to do so, but is severely limited in its own scope for activity in this regard.

While the Peer Review Group concentrated on the review period 2002–2008 it also considered the longer-term history of the Department and the extent to which this has informed Departmental culture in terms for instance of staffing, teaching and learning, and research activity. It is clear that for much of its history the Department of Classics at UCC has experienced problems of staffing, curriculum development, and strategic planning. Since 1998, with the re-establishment of the Chair in Greek and Latin, the Department has visibly had a more coherent strategy overall. Evidence for this is provided by a number of facts: the Summer School in Greek and Latin; the Centre for Neo-Latin Studies and its associated activities including the Neo-Latin seminar, postgraduate students and a programme of research and publication that will shortly come to fruition; collaboration with other Departments; the impressive research output of some staff; the continued and sizable number of students who take Greek and Roman Civilisation particularly in First Year; the high standard of teaching and learning indicated by the exceptionally positive reports from external examiners and by the enthusiastic responses of present and past students; promotion of Departmental research through the hosting of international conferences; and a renewed general sense of purpose and direction in the Department. Largely owing to staffing uncertainties and questions of institutional support, the Department's capacity for strategic planning at present is limited; consequently, the recommendations for improvement made by the Peer Review Group address the University as well as the Department.

Self-Evaluation Report

The Self-Evaluation Report gave some causes for concern about the Department in respect of the level of staffing and of institutional support and these particular issues informed the activity of the Peer Review Group. We were pleased to note, however, that during the site visit our view of the Department's fortunes - and, indeed, the Department's own view of its situation - gave grounds for more optimism than might have been surmised from the Self-evaluation Report. In general, we noted a tendency on the part of the Department not to focus on its manifold strengths; in particular, we were able to identify, and would like to emphasise, a number of strengths which were neither mentioned in the self-evaluation SWOT analysis nor sufficiently emphasised throughout the Self-Evaluation Report.

Benchmarking Exercise

The decision by the Department to benchmark itself against Ancient Classics at NUIM was deemed to be appropriate owing to the comparability of the two departments in terms of staff complement, course offerings and institutional context (both Departments belong to NUI). The benchmarking exercise was carried out thoroughly and usefully highlighted areas where the Department of Classics at UCC might wish to develop. The exercise accurately identified the relative strengths and weaknesses of the two Departments in such a way as to give UCC Classics a useful indication of goals to which it might aspire and of the means through which these goals might be best achieved. It also highlighted problems and difficulties faced by Classics Departments elsewhere. This can be seen to have influenced the recommendations for improvements contained in the Self-Evaluation Report.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

The Peer Review Group agreed with the five following strengths identified by the Department:

1. Good relations between staff;

2. Summer School flourishing financially and academically;

3. Relatively good student numbers in First Year Greek and Roman Civilization;

4. All staff engaged in major research projects;

5. All staff highly skilled and able to teach three subjects: Greek, Latin, Greek and Roman Civilization.

In addition, the Peer Review Group drew attention to the following strengths as identified during the Peer Review Group's own information-gathering and deliberations:

1. Open and approachable character of staff members and of the Department as a whole;

2. Dynamic and inspirational quality of teaching;

3. Enthusiasm engendered in students;

4. International aspect of research;

5. Continuity of research activities and international significance of contributions made;

6. Library collection of Transmission and Transformation of Ancient World;

7. Flexibility as a measure of collective expertise;

8. Ability to organise significant international conferences;

9. Excellence of student handbooks, containing precise information on course contents and helpful methodological guidelines.

Weaknesses

The Peer Review Group agreed with the following weaknesses singled out in the self-evaluation SWOT analysis:

1. Low student numbers in language courses - although it was noted that such small figures are in line with comparable courses in most Classics departments in Ireland and the UK;

2. Poor retention rate from First into Second Year among Greek and Roman Civilization students;

3. Lack of key specialisms (Greek history, Classical art history and archaeology) among staff within the Department.

The Peer Review Group added the following:

1. Lack of an efficient system of communication and collaboration with the Library, such as may be created with the appointment of a Departmental Library Liaison other than the Head of Department.

Opportunities

In response and in addition to the Department's analysis, The Peer Review Group singled out the following:

1. 'Schoolification' as an opportunity to develop new relationships and to enhance the vitality of the Department's research culture and teaching and learning, leading to the reinvigoration of the Department's vision for the immediate and distant future;

2. Potential for cooperation and linkage with other undergraduate programmes (e.g. History of Art, Medieval History, Renaissances Studies);

3. Ability to provide fundamental training in language requirements for postgraduate programmes in cognate disciplines;

4. Potential of the Centre for Neo-Latin Studies to deliver significant benefits for the department as a whole in terms of both publications and research students;

5. Ability to provide major input in the continuation of the work of the Centre for Neo-Latin Studies and of the Neo-Latin seminar in cooperation with the SIF Chair of Renaissance Studies;

6. The strength of the Summer School raising the possibility of further development;

7. Potential for collaboration in scholarly work with academic units within and outside UCC;

8. Potential for joint appointments of academic staff with departments of cognate disciplines (e.g. History of Art);

9. Potential of the current proposed changes to the timetable for enhancing student full-time equivalents while facilitating such natural subject combinations as have been proved to be successful in other institutions;

10. Active engagement with popular culture and contemporary perceptions of the classical world.

Threats

1. Cessation of Evening Arts/Outreach programmes, which would further reduce student FTEs;

2. Failure to fill the Chair of Greek and Latin, which would diminish the standing of the discipline, lead to an impoverishment of the qualifications offered, enervate the remaining staff of the department, and lead to a lack of academic leadership within Classics both within the University and abroad;

3. Failure to appoint replacements for its two Tenure B lecturers, which would have serious consequences for the viability of undergraduate programmes;

4. Inaccurate and inappropriate measurement of the Department's research and scholarly activity by the University.

Teaching and Learning

Classics as a discipline and as academic department plays a central role in the Faculty and the University. The high quality of teaching and learning in Classics at UCC is abundantly evident from the commitment of every single member of staff to high-quality teaching, which students describe as both challenging and inspirational; from the impressive range of material covered in the course; from the successful use of Blackboard as an integrated teaching aid; from the President's Award for Excellence in Teaching awarded to a member of the department; and, last but not least, from the good relations that by all accounts characterise the exchanges between staff and students.

The development of the Greek and Roman Civilization programme is important but has to be seen in the context of timetabling issues and of staff resources. A need for modules in Classical art and architecture and material culture is particularly felt. The Department ought to take an imaginative and flexible approach to improve certain aspects of teaching and learning, and we have identified a few areas where this exercise can be carried out most effectively. These suggestions are highlighted in the Recommendations below.

Research and Scholarly Activity

Several members of staff have been very active in research and publication and in the very near future all staff will have published significant work of international importance. The Review Team was seriously concerned about the inaccurate and negative representation of the Department's scholarly output and engagement, which was given in the documents supplied by the Office of Vice-President for Research - for example, failure to mention one of the Department's major research strengths (Late Antiquity); incorrect numbers of staff factored in the calculation of research output; inadequate weight assigned to the UK RAE deadline of 2007 in the graph intended to visualize the publication pattern in the review period. We would like to rectify this picture with the findings of our Review, as follows: research awards, grants and the impressive record of international conferences hosted in the Department during the review period, not least the hosting of the major international Celtic Conference in Classics in July 2008; the importance of the Centre for Neo-Latin Studies, with its research activity at postgraduate and staff level, graduate seminars, PhDs completed and in progress, and forthcoming publications.

In terms of research strategy, the Department has succeeded in creating a unique and international resource through the acquisition of the "Transmissions and Transformation of the Ancient World" collection with the support of PRTLI funding, although the limited accessibility of this collection is highly problematic (see below). We also note that concerns about staffing raise wider concerns about future research productivity. The question of Sabbatical Leave, which is key to the full integration of research and teaching in the Humanities, still needs to be addressed at University level. The current position of UCC, with its emphasis on replacement-teaching costs, appeared to us out of line with the policy of a research-driven institution.

We also point out that while the number of PhD students is commensurate with the output of similarly sized Classics departments in Ireland and in the UK, the Department needs to look at graduate recruitment strategies and improve the visibility of research options in Classics for prospective students within the University, in the country and internationally.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

<u>Abbreviations</u>

PRG: Peer Review Group	*VP: Vice-President*
QPC: Quality Promotion Committee	*QIP: Quality Improvement Plan*
AC: Academic Council	*CACSSS: College of Arts, Celtic Studies & Social Sciences*

PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC Recommendation (following consultation with department)
Recommendations to the University	
Chair	
That the title be changed from 'Professor of Greek and Latin' to 'Professor of Classics'	Recommendation endorsed. QPC noted the view of the Department that the holder of the Chair should possess both Greek and Latin to BA degree level at least and that Classics is broadly understood to encompass both literature and history. The recommendation was referred to the Head of College of ACSSS and UMT for action.
That approval be given for the Chair be filled immediately	QPC referred this recommendation to Head of College ACSSS and UMT for consideration.
Staffing	
The University give firm commitments about staffing levels within the Department.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC referred the recommendation to the Head of College ACSSS for serious consideration
The management of the College of ACSSS should actively encourage joint-appointments between different departments or disciplines, even where these are finally located in different schools	QPC noted this recommendation and that the University supports interdisciplinary, interdepartmental and inter-institutional collaborations. QPC referred this recommendation to the Head of College ACSSS and to the College ACSSS for consideration and action, as deemed appropriate.
'Schoolification'	

PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC Recommendation (following consultation with department)
There must be a commitment to language teaching in whatever arrangement is made about the progression from Department to Discipline within a School.	QPC noted this recommendation and that this is an academic matter. QPC referred this recommendation to the College of ACSSS for consideration and appropriate action.
Management should reach a firm decision as soon as possible concerning the degree to which they will allow non-language departments within the College of ACSSS to support the activities of language departments, so that language departments are set clear and feasible financial targets	QPC strongly endorsed recommendation Recommendation was referred to the Head of College ACSSS for consideration and action.
Management should encourage the Departments of History and English to reconsider their position not to accept the Department of Classics as part of a larger school	QPC noted the recommendation and determined that this is an issue for the College of ACSSS to resolve.
Sabbatical Leave The University view sabbatical leave for research as a buttress, rather than a privilege, in the building of high-standard academic profiles.	QPC recognised the importance of sabbatical leave as a developmental tool for academic staff – especially in the development of research. The QPC recommended that the sabbatical Leave Committee of AC considers this recommendation as part of its on-going review of the sabbatical leave system. QPC noted the current requirements which insist that senior members of staff in departments not be considered for sabbatical leave in the year their department is undergoing a quality review.
Centre for Neo-Latin Studies	
Possibilities should be actively explored as to how the Department might bring this project forward in collaboration with the new Professor of Renaissance Studies.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC welcomed the willingness expressed by the department to actively pursue this matter with the new Professor of Renaissance Studies.
That the holder of the position of Professor of Renaissance Studies should have appropriate qualifications and expertise in the Classical languages and in the specialised skills that are necessary for advanced research on the original texts in this area.	QPC noted that the appointment has now been made.

PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC Recommendation (following consultation with department)
Support from the Institution The University needs to take seriously the support it offers to the Department of Classics. It is the University's academic responsibility to treasure UCC's inheritance and to guide its students towards a better understanding of the Europe of which it is a part.	QPC noted the recommendation and referred it to the Head of College ACSSS.
Flexibility in Module Offerings That departments or disciplines have the option of not running undersubscribed modules if in line with standards recommended by College policy;	QPC strongly endorsed recommendation QPC noted that AC has already approved a policy on this and related issues and the Department and College ACSSS is referred to these policies for guidance and implementation.
Timetable: The management of the College of ACSSS should consider such adjustments to the College timetable as would demonstrably increase student numbers in First Year.	QPC endorsed recommendation that the timetable for the BA programmes should continue to be reviewed. The QPC strongly supported the principle that the Colleges continue to support flexibility of student choice as a primary objective, to facilitate all students to study the subjects they wish to study.
Space: The Space Committee should allow the Department to retain the office due to be vacated by C. McCallum-Barry as a Part-Time Lecturer' Office	QPC referred recommendation to the Head of College ACSSS to decide what recommendation, if any, will be made to the Space Allocation Committee
To retain the office due to be vacated by Professor K. Sidwell for the continued use of whoever should act as Head of Department;	QPC referred recommendation to the Head of College ACSSS to decide what recommendation, if any, will be made to the Space Allocation Committee
To use the room released by the staff member acting as Head of Department as the Departmental Postgraduate Room.	QPC referred recommendation to the Head of College ACSSS to decide what recommendation, if any, will be made to the Space Allocation Committee in respect of this room.
Recommendations to the Department	
Centre for Neo-Latin Studies The Department should continue to play an active role in the cooperation between classical and historical scholarship that is necessary to advance, promote and publicize the work of the Centre.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC noted the potential of this area to grow PhD numbers.

PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC Recommendation (following consultation with department)
Curriculum Development	
A research project element, in the form of an extended essay on an assigned historical or literary topic, be offered in Third Year in place of a taught module.	QPC endorsed recommendation. Recommendation referred to Department for action.
Module descriptions in the College Calendar need not be as prescriptive as they currently are, to allow for greater flexibility; full details of course content would be provided in the Department's Student Handbooks.	QPC endorsed recommendation. Recommendation referred to Department for action.
Possibilities of **combined teaching of shared elements in literature and language modules** should be explored with a view to enabling further flexibility; cyclical teaching should be investigated.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC noted Department's willingness to explore a range of possibilities with regard to this issue.
The **offer of Greek and Roman Civilization modules (e.g. ancient history) to other departments** should be formalised; potential for reciprocal arrangements with other Departments should also be explored.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC strongly recommended that all participation of students in all modules should be formalised and exploration of these issues is fully supported.
Library That the Department entertain closer liaison with the library in order to resolve issues of accessibility and organisation of fundamental resources. The appointment of a departmental Library Liaison person other than the Head of c is desirable.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC referred recommendation to the Department for action
Recruitment Strategy The Department must develop a system of proactive recruitment of students into Second and Third Year programmes and into postgraduate programmes.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC referred recommendation to the Department for action.
Greek and Latin Summer School The Department should consider expanding the Summer School, subject to feasibility in terms of staffing, finance and space.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC referred recommendation to the Department for action, noting the Department's comments on staffing requirements and resources.

PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC Recommendation (following consultation with department)
Publicity The Department needs to be more active in promoting its own activities within and outside the University.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC referred recommendation to the Department for action. QPC noted that new activities (e.g. active participation in the Latin Academy of Cork and Kerry being planned by the local branches of the Irish Association of Latin Teachers) are already being planned by the Department and welcomed these.

CORK UNIVERSITY DENTAL SCHOOL AND HOSPITAL

PEER REVIEW GROUP

- Professor Donald Burden, Dean of Dentistry/Clinical Director, School of Dentistry, Queens University Belfast

- Dr. Michael Byrne, Department of Student Health, UCC

- Professor Jonathan Cowpe, Bristol Dental School, Bristol *(Chair)*

- Ms. Ann Kennelly, Local Health Manager, PCCC Directorate, Cork

- Dr. Seamus O'Reilly, Department of Food Business & Development, UCC

- Professor Cynthia Pine, Dean of Dentistry, Liverpool Dental School

SITE VISIT

The site visit was conducted over 2.5 days from 29 April to 1 May 2008 and included visits to departmental and library facilities in UCC and meetings with:

- 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

- Professor Grace Neville, Vice-President for Teaching & Learning

- Professor Robert McConnell, Acting Head, College of Medicine & Health

- Dr. Deniz Yilmazer-Hanke (Anatomy)

- Dr. Ruth Davis, Research Officer, Office of the Vice-President for Research Policy & Support

- 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 School: Professor Finbarr Allen
No. of Staff: 107 Full Time Employees
Location of School: Cork Dental School & Hospital, CUH, Wilton, Cork
Degrees/Diplomas offered: BDS, Dip in Dental Hygiene, Cert in Dental Nursing, Masters Dental Public Health, Doctorate in Clinical Dentistry, PhD's.
No. of Students: Department has 159 Student FTEs: 146 UG and 13 PG FTEs:

Undergraduate Student FTEs: Total U/G - 14

Postgraduate Student FTEs: Total PG - 13

MISSION STATEMENT

"Advancing oral health through excellence and innovation in education, patient care and research."

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

As part of its service remit to the community, CUDSH has had service level agreements with the former Southern Health Board to provide care for Medical Card Holders. More recently, a service level agreement has been agreed with the Health Service Executive (Southern Region) to provide orthodontic care for patients in the North Cork region.

The Oral Health Services Research Centre (OHSRC) opened in 1993, and has been at the forefront of international research on the benefits of Fluoride on oral health. It has also been commissioned by the Department of Health and Children to conduct surveys of oral health of children and adults. The Dental Hygiene teaching programme commenced around this time, and this is a two year Diploma programme.

- Pressure to improve quality in teaching and research
- Increased demand for access to places on the educational programmes at home and from abroad
- Demand for graduate entry
- Increased demand from the Health sector for specialist level dental care
- Decrease in funding from government sources for the University
- Support for lifelong learning
- Creation of flexible learning paths for Higher Education, as per the Bologna process

GENERAL COMMENT ON QUALITY REVIEW

Self-Evaluation Report (SER)

The PRG commends the depth and breadth of the SER and the detail and honest assessment reported. Ways should be explored as to how to continue the excellent work undertaken in preparing the SER which encouraged and facilitated the engagement of all staff in the process. This activity has started a process which is very healthy for the team and the panel recommends that the School continue down this road.

SWOT Analysis

The PRG were impressed by the level of participation in the SWOT analysis. This has yielded a good overview of internal and external factors that have influenced organisational change and performance. The active involvement of staff from all areas in the Cork University Dental School and Hospital (CUDSH) has raised key organisational issues and these are clearly reported and provide the basis for action. The opinions and experiences voiced in the SWOT reflect individual responses to questionnaires as reported in the Self Evaluation Report (SER). Together these have contributed to a comprehensive and honest report. CUDSH has developed a strong reputation as a high quality Dental School, attested to by quality graduates, external examiners and employers. This major strength is recognised in the ambitious strategic framework put forward that seeks to build on 25 years experience. Notwithstanding low morale, due to changing structures and associated lack of clarity of roles and responsibilities, staff display strong commitment and pride in their work and the reputation of the school and hospital. These are major strengths that the PRG applaud and should be celebrated and built upon. The PRG also recognise the weaknesses identified in the SER and associated SWOT analysis, in particular the need to address organisational and resource-related issues. There is considerable opportunity for development, including (i) a growing need for graduates, (ii) development of specialisms and (iii) research linkages within UCC and with other institutions. The SER clearly identifies challenges posed by funding mechanisms and the PRG also recognise the difficulties that this creates and point to the need for greater advocacy at a national level.

In summary, the reputation and standing of teaching programmes and clinical services are a major strength of the Cork Dental School & Hospital. Having established this reputation over the last 25 years the unit now faces the need for investment and positioning for the next 25 years. To achieve this, internal areas need to be addressed including agreement of a clear mission and associated strategy, structures, communication flows and career paths. The unit's role and function is entwined with external stakeholders and there is an opportunity to enhance interaction with these stakeholders within a strategic framework, for example (i) role and relationships within University College Cork, (ii) research linkages with other institutions and (iii) supplier level agreements with Health Service Executive.

Benchmarking

Benchmarking has been conducted against three institutions: School of Dental Sciences, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, UK; University of Nijmegen Medical Centre, The Netherlands; Dublin Dental School and Hospital. Data for a number of key areas are compared, including: teaching, funding, resources, services and research. The institutions chosen do provide for informative comparison with CUDSH, although Newcastle has twice the undergraduates of Cork, and a more relevant UK comparator may be Belfast. The review indicates a relatively poor level of funding in Cork, particularly in comparison with Dublin. The benchmarking study and report in the SER focuses on this low level of funding. While this is understandable, as it is an issue of major concern, the PRG suggest that future benchmarking could delve a little deeper into: the costs of teaching as currently delivered by many part-time staff; the potential for growth of research income; and, scrutiny of the structure and profile of clinical service provided compared to that commissioned.

Teaching & Learning

The PRG met with UG students (past and present) and employers, and also had an opportunity to review the reports from external examiners over many years. It was clear to the PRG that students in CUDSH in all the education programmes receive good educational support from hardworking and committed staff.

Concerns were raised about the negative impact of the modularisation process as this breaks teaching into small stand-alone elements in the BDS programme. Staff have endeavoured to strengthen the horizontal and vertical linkages in the programme and have made a considerable effort to increase the exposure of students to the hospital environment during both the 3rd year and in the pre-clinical years. We commend the emphasis on strong vertical programme linkages and the progress made towards a competency-based curriculum.

Research & Scholarly Activity

The PRG recognises the continued success of the Oral Health Services Research Centre and acknowledges the research activity and output in the Dental School and Hospital. The Group is impressed with the emphasis on research and the development of the 4th Level (postgraduate programmes) found in the Strategy Document. This strategy seeks to respond to key drivers in the external environment and clearly identifies research areas/themes. In particular, the Group welcomes progress made in: (i) establishing the Doctorate programme in Clinical Dentistry, (ii) clinical research fellowships and (iii) the proposed appointment of a Director of Research.

Given that many clinicians considering career progression may not wish to pursue a PhD a Doctorate programme that supports development of a specialism holds particular interest. As indicated above the doctorate programme specialising in orthodontics provides a useful general model. The Group finds the strategy to attract non-clinicians to PhD studies innovative. However, the capacity to deliver in all of these areas must be managed and while building a research culture and increasing PhD numbers are certainly objectives central to an academic unit they need to be addressed in a measured and achievable manner. The PRG welcome the proposed appointment of a Director of Research. As Chair of the Research Committee the Director can play an essential role in building an active research agenda, including links with other academic units within UCC, nationally and internationally. Attracting research funding to CUDSH will support investment in facilities and could strengthen the team of clinical research fellowships. The Group encourages inter-institutional research activity and strengthening linkages with the Dublin Dental School and Hospital.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Abbreviations

PRG: Peer Review Group	*VP: Vice-President*
QPC: Quality Promotion Committee	*QIP: Quality Improvement Plan*
HR: Human Resources	*MH: Medicine & Health*
UMT: University Management Team	*RAM: Resource Allocation Model*
HEA: Higher Education Authority	*CUH: Cork University Hospital*
CUDSH: Cork University Dental School & Hospital	

PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC Recommendations (following consultation with the School)
Recommendations to the University	
All models for future development and improvement of the funding situation to be explored	QPC strongly endorsed recommendation. QPC referred recommendation for action by the School and the Head of College MH.

PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC Recommendations (following consultation with the School)
Education funding streams need to be addressed at the national level	QPC strongly endorsed recommendation. QPC noted the urgency of the need to address this issue and referred it to the Heads of School and College MH for continuation of discussions with the HEA.
Establish a Dental School Office – to be fully staffed and operational as soon as possible	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC welcomed the actions already taken in this regard by the School and noted the ongoing discussions with staff on the necessary re-structuring.
Adoption of a partnership approach to facilitate a resource-neutral transition in the establishment of a Central School Administrative Office	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC noted that the Head of School is already engaged in discussions with administrative staff to clarify roles, with adoption of a partnership approach, and recommended that progress be made as swiftly as possible.
Department of Human Resources to take the lead in a process that addresses the outstanding issues related to part time teachers	QPC strongly endorsed recommendation. QPC referred this recommendation for action to the Head of School and the Head of College. The QPC noted that the School is already engaged in discussions with the Department of HR and the Irish Dental Association industrial relations officer. Negotiations will continue until agreements on contracts have been reached, as it is imperative to have greater clarity on the role of part-time teachers within CUDSH.
Comprehensive manpower plan to be developed	QPC strongly endorsed recommendation. QPC referred this recommendation for action to the Head of School and the Head of College MH. QPC noted that the School plans to have the 'Business Plan' for the School concluded by September 2008.

PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC Recommendations (following consultation with the School)
Specific academic appointments that merit immediate attention: • Professor of Restorative Dentistry (appointment while one of the senior clinical academics is seconded to the Head of School post.) • Senior Maxillofacial Surgery position (joint appointment with CUH) • Professor/Senior Lecturer in Oral Biosciences/ Biology	QPC referred this recommendation for consideration to the Head of College MH and UMT, noting the significant resources required to put these posts in place. QPC noted that the Head of School is exploring all avenues for funding, including the possibility of proleptic appointments.
Appointment of a Director of Research and also recommend the establishment of this director as Chair of the Research Committee	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC welcomed the action taken by the School, which has appointed Professor H. Whelton as Director of research for the School.
That investment is made in radiology, dental surgery and restorative dentistry.	QPC endorsed recommendation in principle. The QPC noted that present financial restrictions will make delivery difficult.
Strategic expansion of the facility to support increased student number in existing programmes, programme development (in particular specialist postgraduate) and research	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC noted that work is already underway to plan for expansion and acquisition of funding for the expansion. Details will be provided in the Business Plan currently under preparation.

Recommendations to the School

Cork and Dublin Dental Schools & Hospitals should take an initiative at national level to highlight dental care needs and challenges	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC welcomed the commitment by the Head of School to hold discussions with the heads of other Dental School in the country in this regard.
That current organisational/operational issues are dealt with in advance of initiating further investment in new programmes and services	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC referred recommendation for action to the Head of School and the Head of College MH.
That CUDSH review both the mix and delivery of clinical services with a view to ensuring a supply of clinical cases for teaching purposes and that this is reflected in the organisation's mission statement	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC noted actions planned by the School, including a major root and branch review of clinical service provision currently underway.

PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC Recommendations (following consultation with the School)
That all future Service Level Agreements (SLAs) with the HSE are agreed within a new strategic framework that aims to deliver the case mix required for teaching purposes and the development of specialist services that compliment strategic educational and research objectives	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC noted and welcomed actions planned by the School with the aim of moving away from a "clinical service provision" model, and rebranding itself as a regional training centre for the South of Ireland. Service commitments will be based on recruiting patients suitable for training of undergraduate and postgraduate student education and training.
Should the CUDSH develop specialist areas with the primary objective of service provision the PRG strongly advises clear Service Level Agreements based on full economic cost	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC noted and endorsed the response of the School which has planned for all services to be fully economically costed for the future. Future developments will be matched to educational requirements for clinical teaching and training.
That CUDSH explore and develop links with the adjacent Cork University Hospital (CUH) in order to review their Clinical Governance Programme and create synergies with CUH	QPC endorsed recommendations and noted the response of Dental School. QPC endorsed the efforts of Head of School to continue discussions and to attempt to progress discussions.
That the Student Liaison Committee is constituted as a Student-Staff Committee as outlined by UCC regulations and that this Committee address areas such as: regular student-staff committee meetings, academic contact person/coordinator for each year, student handbooks, coordinated timetabling, balanced student workloads and feedback procedures	QPC strongly endorsed recommendation. QPC welcomed and endorsed the School's response and commitment to implement recommendation.
That the Chair of the standing committee for teaching and curriculum be reclassified as Director of Teaching and be positioned at a more senior level within the management structure	QPC noted the recommendation and that the Dental School has a senior academic in the position of Chair of the Teaching and Curriculum committee
Explore ways in which the dental students can experience four-handed dentistry with appropriate nursing support and provide opportunities for closer interaction in the clinics between the trainee dentists and hygienists	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC noted the comments on the difficulties in implementing this recommendation and endorsed support for the Head of School in working towards implementation of this recommendation.

PRG Finding/Recommendation	QPC Recommendations (following consultation with the School)
Use of mechanisms and structures that support the full involvement of staff at all levels. These mechanisms should clarify roles, enhance participation of staff and support feedback	QPC strongly endorsed recommendation. QPC noted and welcomed actions planned by Dental School. The "Staff Liaison" committee has been reconstituted, and will meet monthly to discuss operational issues. This committee has representation from all grades of staff. The School Manager will report to the Dental School Executive on matters arising from meetings of this committee. An assembly meeting for all staff will be held twice a year to appraise staff of strategic developments in CUDSH. A staff handbook will be developed prior to the commencement of the 2008/9 academic year.
That staff are given advice as to suitable professional development programmes – particularly important for administrative and nursing staff	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC noted and welcomed actions planned by Dental School.
That various options are explored in the development of an academic career path in dentistry, and endorsing the strategy to pursue joint appointments with other academic units.	QPC endorsed recommendation. The QPC commended and endorsed the Plan of action put forward by the Head of School and referred this to the Head of College MH for discussion with the School.
That a clear strategy is used to prioritise development in establishing the Doctorate programme in Clinical Dentistry, Clinical Research Fellowships and to attract non-clinicians to PhD studies	QPC strongly endorsed recommendation. QPC noted that the School has prioritised this in the strategic plan and welcomes the commitment to develop a plan for acquisition of the necessary resources.
In seeking research funding we encourage joint submission of proposals with other academic units in UCC, inter-institutional research activity and strengthening linkages with the Dublin Dental School and Hospital	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC referred this recommendation for action to the School.

DRAMA AND THEATRE STUDIES PROGRAMMES

PEER REVIEW GROUP

- Dr. Carmel Halton, Department of Applied Social Studies, UCC

- Ms. Orlaith McBride, Director, National Association for Youth Drama, Dublin

- Mr. Cormac McSweeney, Management Accounting, UCC

- Professor David Rabey, Chair of Drama, University of Wales

- Professor Carole-Anne Upton, Professor of Drama, University of Ulster (*Chair*)

SITE VISIT

The site visit was conducted over 2.5 days from 21-23 May 2008 and included visits to departmental facilities i.e. Granary Theatre and Studio, Sheare's House, Muskerry Villas, Library, UCC and meetings with:

- 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

- Professor Peter Kennedy, Vice-President for Research, Policy & Support (conference call)

- Professor Grace Neville, Vice-President for Teaching & Learning

- Professor David Cox, Head, College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences

- Professor Colbert Kearney, Head, Department of English

- Ms. Áine Foley, 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 Programme:	Dr. Ger Fitzgibbon, Director, Board of Studies
No. of Staff:	4 Specific to DTS, 1 p/t Admin, Board of Studies and teaching staff in other associated departments
Location of Programme:	Muskerry Villas, Granary Theatre, 3rd Floor Sheare's House
Degrees/Diplomas offered:	BA, MA and PhD (Drama and Theatre Studies)
No. of Students:	Department has 31.50 Student FTEs: 10.50 UG and 21.00 PG FTEs distributed as follows:

Undergraduate Student FTEs

Years 1-4	Total U/G
10.50	**10.50**

Postgraduate Student FTEs

Master Taught	PhD	Total P/G
18.00	3.00	**21.00**

MISSION STATEMENT

The Board of Drama & Theatre Studies has a formal mission of promoting within the University academic programmes of study and research in the field of Drama & Theatre Studies. In this respect, we see ourselves as significant contributors to the University's own mission of:

> *fostering a community of scholarship that values independence of thought and critical enquiry, and enables students and staff to achieve their full potential. In an environment of excellence in teaching, learning and research, the University's central roles are to create, preserve, and communicate knowledge, and to enhance intellectual, cultural, social and economic life locally, nationally and internationally.*

> UCC Strategic Framework | 2006 – 2011, page 3

The introduction of the study of Drama & Theatre at undergraduate, Masters and Doctoral levels has clearly promoted the University's capacity to deliver on several of its stated goals: assisting staff and students to achieve their full potential; enhancing the intellectual and cultural life of the local, regional and national communities; creating, preserving and communicating knowledge; promoting excellence in teaching and research.

Within the overall institutional Mission Statement, the Board of Drama & Theatre Studies has formulated its own more discipline-specific Mission Statement. Its Mission, embodied in its programmes and the management of its affairs generally, is:

- To provide students at all levels with opportunities to develop their intellectual and creative capacities in the field of contemporary Drama & Theatre Studies;

- To promote an encouraging, supportive and friendly environment for the personal and academic development of staff and students;

- To foster through our programme design at undergraduate and postgraduate levels the creative inter-action of theory and practice in Drama & Theatre Studies;

- To develop and maintain a culture of informed enquiry and personal professional development in teaching and in research in the field of Drama & Theatre Studies;

- To maintain and develop links between the academic study of Drama & Theatre and the work of practitioners in the field.

Self-Evaluation Report

The Peer Review Group commends the staff involved in the delivery of the Drama & Theatre Studies Programmes for their constructive engagement with the review process and the preparation of the Self-Evaluation Report. The Peer Review Group notes that all efforts were made to include all staff responsible for delivery of the programmes in the Quality Review.

SWOT Analysis

The Peer Review Group notes and commends the SWOT analysis for its detailed reflection on a wide range of issues relevant to the discipline. It is considered a coherent and well structured evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the discipline and highlights the necessity to address strategic issues and move forward. The Peer Review Group notes the key factors highlighted by Drama & Theatre Studies regarding the future opportunities and threats which are summarised as follows:

- **Changes in University Structure**. *"In the next six months or so we will need to decide which School affiliation will best serve the developmental needs of Drama & Theatre Studies."*

- **The Competitive Environment**. *"Formulating imaginative, appropriate and workable responses to the changing landscape of arts training in the region, nationally and internationally will be crucial to the survival and growth of Drama & Theatre Studies."*

- **Resources.** *"Finding ways of properly resourcing the Drama & Theatre Studies Programmes in terms of staffing, spaces and equipment will be a particular challenge under the new RAM arrangements. We have already begun to find mechanisms to tackle some of this issue but need to negotiate them through the appropriate university bodies."*

The Peer Review Group also notes the conclusions of Drama & Theatre Studies with regard to its assessment of the discipline's strengths and weaknesses:

"Broadly speaking the discipline runs well in an informal and friendly way but needs to be strengthened in terms of communications and systems of management. Staff are strongly motivated and committed to the task in hand but are somewhat over-stretched in terms of teaching, leaving insufficient time for research. Over the next few months, we need to take action on the following specific issues:

- *Formulate a long-term strategy for the development of the discipline*

- *Seek improvement to staffing levels (including administrative and support staffing)*

- *Re-examine workloads to see if we can work more effectively*

- *Institute more formal delegation procedures (including appointment of year leaders, for instance)*

- *Seek formal secondments (fulltime or part-time) for staff based outside Drama & Theatre Studies*

- *Regularise Board and Management Committee meetings*

- *Actively seek improved space allocation for staff, teaching and postgraduates."*

In that regard the Peer Review Group considers the SWOT to be a useful forerunner of sustained strategic thinking. For the most part the Peer Review Group agrees with the issues raised by the SWOT analysis that are discussed in a thematic way in the sections that follow.

Benchmarking

The Peer Review Group notes and commends Drama & Theatre Studies on the number of benchmarking visits undertaken. The benchmarking exercise was considered strategically effective, given that it reflected the aspiration of Drama & Theatre Studies to be compared to the most highly regarded and well-established departments in the UK and their immediate peers in Ireland.

However the Peer Review Group did consider that Drama & Theatre Studies were overly aspirational in benchmarking itself against some of the universities given the length of establishment and resources available therein. The Peer Review Group considered that including some recently established Drama departments would have provided more appropriate comparison, in addition to those chosen by Drama & Theatre Studies.

A detailed comparative analysis by the Board between the benchmarked sites and Drama & Theatre Studies at UCC would have been helpful in terms of future strategic planning.

Teaching & Learning

The Peer Review Group notes the context of the ongoing restructuring within the University and that Drama & Theatre Studies is considering its own alignment within the School structure developing in the College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences. Drama & Theatre Studies has to consider where best to position itself in a restructured University/College and where it should align itself going forward.

The Peer Review Group noted from students the tension between the weighting applied to academic work versus the weighting applied to practical work and the Peer Review Group recommends that Drama & Theatre Studies review the existing credit weightings to address some of these concerns. The Peer Review Group notes that there was consistent need expressed by staff and students for the expansion of the practical element of the course but an injection of resources was required to facilitate it.

In general, the quality of teaching across the discipline is very good and is very well appreciated by the students. This was evident from discussions between students and the reviewers and the evaluation forms included in the Appendices to the Self-Evaluation Report. The Peer Review Group noted the comments from external stakeholders regarding the professionalism being imparted by lecturers to the students and many former students commented favourably on their continuing use of particular learning methodologies they first encountered on the Drama & Theatre Studies Programmes, e.g. use of journals.

The heavy teaching commitments of staff engaged with the Drama & Theatre Studies Programmes were noted by the Peer Review Group. Given the extensive practical component of the course, student contact hours are high on this course, thereby placing greater demands on staff in Drama & Theatre Studies than in more traditionally book-based academic programmes.

It was not clear from the Self-Evaluation Report or from meetings between staff, students and the Peer Review Group how often students are regularly reviewed for their opinion on the quality of the teaching and learning experience, though the Peer Review Group noted the largely very positive experience of most students.

Research & Scholarly Activity

There are currently many research strengths in the Departments which contribute to the Drama & Theatre Studies discipline. All of the full time staff involved in the Discipline have either a PhD or are currently pursuing a PhD and are also research active. A small number of individuals have extensive research portfolios and a national or international profile in their disciplines in the area of Drama & Theatre Studies. It is noted that there are currently four students pursuing PhD's in Drama & Theatre Studies and another currently pursuing an MPhil.

The Peer Review Group acknowledges the time restraints on staff, due to very heavy teaching commitments and the difficulties associated with balancing teaching and research commitments. However, the Peer Review Group noted that to date Drama & Theatre Studies had had little engagement with the Office of the VP for Research who had resources to facilitate and develop research amongst staff.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Abbreviations

PRG: Peer Review Group	*VP: Vice-President*
QPC: Quality Promotion Committee	*QIP: Quality Improvement Plan*
HR: Human Resources	*ACSSS: Arts, Celtic Studies & Social Sciences*
DTS: Drama & Theatre Studies	*UMT: University Management Group*

PRG Recommendations	QPC Recommendations (following consultation with the Board of Studies for DTS)
Recommendations to the University	
That the University should undertake to ensure the complete separation of financial matters (in terms of cost codes, etc.) for DTS programmes from any department.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC referred recommendation for action to the Head of College ACSSS.
That the University develop its policies and workable formulae for budgetary aspects and resource allocation for interdisciplinary degree programmes in the context of the RAM (Resource Allocation Model).	QPC strongly endorsed recommendation. QPC referred recommendation for action to the QPC referred recommendation for action to the UMT.
Governance	
That a dedicated head of unit be appointed.	QPC strongly endorsed recommendation, noting however that if additional resources are required to implement this that the Head of College ACSSS will need to allocate these and that this may not be possible immediately.

PRG Recommendations	QPC Recommendations (following consultation with the Board of Studies for DTS)
Consideration be given by the University to ways of incentivising the participation of schools and colleges in interdisciplinary degrees.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC noted that if the funding and governance issues were resolved there would be greater participation of schools and departments.
Teaching and Learning	
That access to specialist spaces is extended to facilitate teaching and learning agendas in DTS.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC recognised the difficulties in acquiring such space because of the shortage of pace generally in the university and referred the recommendation for consideration and action to the Head of College ACSSS and the Space Allocation Committee of UMT.
That a designated placement co-ordinator to prepare students and supervisors {for placement} is necessary for optimum results.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC welcomed the response of the Board of Studies noting in particular the commitment to review the operation of the internship module of the programme.
Curriculum Development	
That a single honours undergraduate programme in DTS is introduced and that the University seeks to facilitate this development through appropriate resourcing of the discipline.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC noted that this is not solely at the discretion of the Board of Studies or the Head of College and discussions need to take place within the College as to how this is implemented.
Research and Scholarly Activity	
That a research officer be appointed with a clear remit to further promote and progress the research agenda, including the 4th level agenda and to increase the number of PhD students	QPC strongly endorsed recommendation. QPC noted that a Research officer is already in place and welcomed the positive response of the Board of Studies and the actions planned
Staff Development	

PRG Recommendations	QPC Recommendations (following consultation with the Board of Studies for DTS)
That greater opportunities for sabbatical/research leave to pursue research agenda(s) are provided.	QPC endorsed recommendation in principle. QPC noted the request for additional resources necessary to implement this recommendation and recommended that the staff and Board of Studies discuss these with the Head of College ACSSS.
That each member of staff is supported in constructing a five year research plan.	QPC strongly endorsed recommendation.
That the issues around the tension that staff experience in terms of their own career advancement are addressed, specifically in terms of balancing research, teaching and professional responsibilities.	QPC strongly endorsed recommendation. QPC referred recommendation to the Board of Studies and the Head of College ACSSS for discussion and plans for addressing issues.
Staffing	
That a Chair in Drama & Theatre Studies be established.	QPC endorsed recommendation in principle. QPC noted that additional resources will be required to implement this recommendation and that the decision as to whether a Chair be appointed is for the UMT to decide.
That there is an increase in staffing and other resources for DTS, both as a precondition of single honours provision and to progress the 4th level agenda.	QPC noted the recommendation and the response of the Board of Studies QPC recommended that the Board continue to progress and develop programmes in DTS, noting the interest and increasing numbers of students registering for the existing programmes. Increases in student numbers will assist in the direction of resources towards the programme. The recommendation was referred for consideration to the Head of College ACSSS.
That the current over-reliance on part time and contract staff is redressed.	QPC noted the recommendation and the response of the Board of Studies confirming the role of contract staff in providing essential and specialised aspects of the curriculum. QPC referred the recommendation to the Board of Studies for consideration.

PRG Recommendations	QPC Recommendations (following consultation with the Board of Studies for DTS)
That a clear succession plan is needed to ensure the ongoing growth and development of DTS	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC referred the recommendation to the Head of College ACSSS.
That additional teaching and technical staff are needed to consolidate developments and to progress DTS profile both nationally and internationally.	QPC endorsed the recommendation in principle. QPC noted that in the current financial restrictions progress may be slow in this area.
That a strategy regarding staff progression and the development of promotional opportunities and career paths for staff in DTS is essential.	QPC endorsed the recommendation, noting that such a strategy is applicable to all staff in UCC.
Accommodation	
That additional appropriate teaching space is made available to allow scope for expansion.	QPC endorsed the recommendation. QPC noted the difficulties the University is experiencing with space and financial restrictions and referred the recommendation for consideration to the Head of College ACSSS and the Space Allocation Committee of UMT.
That an immediate housing of all Drama & Theatre Studies staff (including teaching and administration staff) within the one building is essential.	QPC noted this recommendation. The recommendation was referred to the Head of College ACSSS for consideration. QPC noted that this is not an easy issue to resolve.
That the tension between the demands of the timetable and the need to travel between teaching spaces should be urgently addressed.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC noted that many staff have similar difficulties in this regard and that every effort should be made to reduce the amount of time spent by individual staff in travelling to teaching venues.
That a purpose built accommodation would be desirable and important.	QPC endorsed this recommendation in principle, whilst acknowledging the difficulties in working towards its implementation in the present financial restrictions. QPC referred the recommendation to the Head of College ACSSS.
Recommendations to the Board of Studies	

PRG Recommendations	QPC Recommendations (following consultation with the Board of Studies for DTS)
That DTS develops a strategic plan by the end of 2008, led by someone with appropriate leadership skills and experience such as the current Director, working with the Management Committee	QPC strongly endorsed recommendation. QPC noted that this is essential if some of the other recommendations are to be implemented.
That the strategic plan should also include a recommendation that DTS proceed towards development of a single honours degree in DTS but with a precondition that additional resources are made available.	QPC endorsed recommendation. The QPC noted the response of Board of Studies and accepted that the Board must lead in such developments when it deems them appropriate and in accordance with the strategic plan and when resources are available for implementation.
That the interdisciplinary basis of the taught programme be reviewed and negotiated to address issues of strategic and operational management in the context of structural changes within the institution.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC welcomed response of Board of Studies and the commitment to develop DTS programmes within the new school structures in the College.
Governance	
That DTS moves to more formalised structures. The opportunity exists under restructuring to suggest new structures.	QPC strongly endorsed recommendation. QPC welcomed the positive response of the Board of Studies and actions already taken, including the establishment of a Management Committee, consisting of the Head of Discipline and all fulltime staff.
That there needs to be a suitable academic synergy between DTS and future partners.	QPC strongly endorsed recommendation.
That a five year plan needs to be constructed incorporating specific preferences regarding the alignment of DTS with other departments/disciplines.	QPC strongly endorsed recommendation. QPC welcomed the commitment of the Board to initiate the development of such a plan by the end of 2008.
That the management committee should make recommendations to the Board of Studies regarding proposals for the strategic development of DTS. Once the position of DTS within the new structures has been consolidated, the new DTS Board of Studies should begin by establishing clear terms of reference.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC referred recommendation for implementation to the Board of Studies.

PRG Recommendations	QPC Recommendations (following consultation with the Board of Studies for DTS)
That students be represented on the Board of Studies and/or a formal staff:student liaison committee be established.	QPC strongly endorsed recommendation. QPC welcomed action already undertaken in regard to implementation of this recommendation by the Board.
Teaching and Learning	
That feedback on assignments and performances is more structured. Specific protocols need to be developed and formalised.	QPC strongly endorsed recommendation. QPC welcomed action already undertaken in regard to implementation, noting that the Board has already put in place an undergraduate Student Handbook including general grade indicators to assist this process and is actively reviewing its arrangements for feedback on assignments and student progress.
That the placement is located in the Easter period.	QPC noted that the Board of Studies has agreed to review the current arrangements regarding the Internship in the light of the comments of the PRG and recommended that the Board of Studies implement the best practice possible in the light of present resources and circumstance.
That there are more formalised support structures within DTS for students including: • Placement coordination and support, including preparing the students in advance.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC welcomed the commitment of the Board to review the issue of placement coordination.
• Induction support for First Year students, particularly mature students on the BA and MA courses.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC noted and welcomed actions already underway - from 2008/09 DTS has already moved to provide First Year undergraduates with Orientation sessions, staff consultations and a detailed Student Handbook to assist induction.
• That specific roles and responsibilities of staff are established, including year co-ordinators and research officer.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC noted that the Board is in agreement with this recommendation and has begun this process of implementation..
• Clear mechanisms and protocols are required for feedback on written and practical work and for maintaining ongoing communication with students.	QPC strongly endorsed recommendation. QPC noted that the Board is reviewing its structures and protocols in this area, in the light of the PRG Report

PRG Recommendations	QPC Recommendations (following consultation with the Board of Studies for DTS)
That an exit presentation for students be considered which includes career planning, preparation for interview and construction of CVs and other issues relating to their future outside of UCC.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC noted and welcomed planned actions to review the issue of career preparation for DTS students and the Board is taking interim steps to provide more structured guidance.
Curriculum Development	
That the more technical and administrative areas of the course are further developed.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC noted comments of Board and the need for appropriate staffing for implementation.
That the issues which emerged from discussions with students around weightings are addressed.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC noted that the Board has taken steps to redistribute some workloads related in particular to Year III and will take this issue into account in reviewing the overall degree structure.
An issue arose around induction and a need was identified for designated staff contact for induction which the Peer Review Group would endorse	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC noted and welcomed planned actions: The Board plans to appoint a Year Leader to help with this issue. An appropriate handbook has already been developed as part of the induction strategy and the Board will continue to monitor this issue.
Research and Scholarly Activity	
That the connections between DTS and the VP for Research be extended.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC referred recommendation for implementation to the VP Research and the Board of Studies.
That DTS should take an active role in the development of new models of clustered research thereby, building on the existing connections.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC noted the commitment of the Board to consider this issue in the context of the 5-year strategic plan.

PRG Recommendations	QPC Recommendations (following consultation with the Board of Studies for DTS)
That an integrated research strategy be drafted in Drama & Theatre Studies and that a Research Committee attached to the discipline be established to facilitate this; to explore synergies and common themes in the research of all staff and to explore the potential for the joint submission of applications for research funding.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC referred recommendation to the Board of Studies.
That *Perforum* should be further developed. *Perforum* was identified as a unique contribution that DTS makes to the broader cultural life of Cork and anchors it within this context.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC noted comments re funding requirements for the further development of *Perforum*.
Communications	
That communicating with other key areas of the university is important and that DTS needs to represent its own interests better – optimally drawing on the wider resources of the university and becoming a more visible presence.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC noted that this is linked to the lack of university–wide management and governance structures for interdisciplinary programmes. QPC referred the recommendation to the Board of Studies for implementation.
That the website is upgraded and regularly maintained for optimum profile.	QPC strongly endorsed recommendation. QPC referred the recommendation to the Board of Studies for implementation.

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS

PEER REVIEW GROUP

- Professor Bernadette Andreosso-O'Callaghan, Senior Professor of Economics, University of Limerick

- Professor Steve Hedley, Faculty of Law, UCC

- Professor Ken Higgs, Department of Geology, UCC

- Professor Stephen Hill, Head of Staff Development & Research, University of Glamorgan (*Chair*)

- Ms. Pat Salisbury, Head of Group Human Resources, FEXCO, Ireland.

SITE VISIT

The site visit was conducted over 2.5 days from 22-24 April 2008 and included visits to departmental and library facilities in UCC and meetings with:

- 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 Grace Neville, Vice-President for Teaching and Learning

- Professor David Cox, Head of College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences

- Professor Denis Lucey, Acting Head, College of Business & Law

- Professor Neil Collins, Dean, Faculty of Commerce

- Mr. Cormac McSweeney, Finance Office

- Ms. Anne Gannon, Recruitment Manager, Human Resources

- Dr. David O'Connell, Office of the Vice-President for Research, Policy & Support *(representing the VP for Research, Policy & Support)*

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 Connell Fanning
No. of Staff: 44 Staff, 3 Adjunct Professors, 4 Visiting Professors
Location of Department: Áras na Laoi, Lancaster House, Sheraton Court
Degrees/Diplomas offered: BA, BComm, BEd, BSc, HDip, MA, MBS, MBA, MSc, PhD and Postgraduate Diplomas
No. of Students: Department has 679.70 Student FTEs: 526.45 UG and 153.25 PG FTEs distributed as follows:

Undergraduate Student FTEs

Years 1-4	Evening Courses	Visiting	**Total U/G**
499.33	3.75	23.37	**526.45**

Postgraduate Student FTEs

Diplomas	Masters	PhD	**Total P/G**
36.33	107.17	9.75	**153.25**

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Increased commitment and support at University level is required to ensure we can deliver on our goals and objectives in an increasingly competitive environment. In turn, we can continue to contribute to the current goal of UCC to "advance excellence in teaching, research and the quality of the student experience [to] make UCC a contemporary university with a global outlook" by continuing to

- innovate in teaching,

- engage in research and consultancy that have practical impact,

- develop doctorally qualified staff through the staff development programme,

- build new and develop existing links with the business community, and

- support Inter-College, Inter-Disciplinary and Multi-Disciplinary activities.

GENERAL COMMENT ON QUALITY REVIEW

The Department is highly active and effective in teaching and has clear research potential. The staff of the Department have made significant investments of time and effort over the past ten years in developing excellent quality undergraduate and postgraduate taught courses and programmes. The time is now opportune for the Department to realise its research potential alongside this teaching excellence. Most staff are enthusiastic, motivated and highly committed, and have been instrumental in developing new programmes. Staff are committed to the continued development of innovative new programmes and schemes. The Department is a major contributor to the programmes of other Departments and Colleges in UCC, with a healthy student demand for programmes over time. Consequently the Department makes a substantial contribution to the revenues of the University.

The Peer Review Group was supplemented by an extensive collection of documentation. The Self-Evaluation Report was detailed and provided a comprehensive picture of the activities of Department. Some information was absent from the submitted documentation and the Peer Review Group were subsequently provided with additional information. This included a further set of staff recommendations tabled by the Head of Department during the site visit.

While the documentation provided was reasonably comprehensive, the Peer Review Group found that the analysis of the Department's current situation was sparse, and perhaps not as helpful in identifying opportunities and potential for future development as it might have been.

SWOT Analysis

There was evidence of engagement by all staff of the Department in the SWOT exercise. The SWOT analysis conducted by the Department was helpful but was limited in scope. In particular, a careful assessment of the Department's market position would have assisted the deliberations of the Peer Review Group.

The Peer Review Group developed its own summary of key elements, provided below:

Strengths

- student focus

- excellent feedback on teaching capability

- quality of student experience

- accessibility and availability of staff to students

- large number of enthusiastic young staff, auguring well for Departmental future

- very good student full-time equivalents numbers

- a strong portfolio of teaching across undergraduate and postgraduate programmes

- the contribution made to teaching across the university, not just confined to College of Business & Law programmes

- critical mass of economics staff

- a new staff development programme, that has been very successful in achieving new PhD completions

Weaknesses

- little evidence, as yet, of a significant research culture, reflected in the relative lack of both research outputs and external research funding

- poor physical infrastructure

- multi-site location of offices and teaching facilities, reducing both operational effectiveness and departmental cohesion

- limited administrative capacity, impinging on academic time

- given the size of the Department, there is a considerable potential to both make more contribution to, and exercise greater influence on, the running of the University

- proportion of senior appointments to junior and the diversity of appointed staff

- absence of formal communications within the Department

- translation of new PhD achievement into research output is not yet fully exploited

Opportunities

- there are considerable opportunities for national and international research collaboration (not currently being realised to their full potential)

- for research collaboration within and without the university

- for influencing university opinion by giving an economic dimension to policy discussion (again, not being fully realised)

- to enhance the number of staff with research of national and international significance

- including the filling of approved senior posts

Threats

- the past appears to permeate thinking within the Department.

- there is a continuing failure to fill approved senior posts

- the continued failure to achieve promotion can have a demoralising effect across Department

- the failure to attract appropriate external candidates for approved posts

- the Department is under-resourced in financial terms and needs to retain more of its generated revenues

- the uncertainty surrounding the position of Economics in the new restructuring exercise of the university

- staff may either not have the appropriate opportunities or may not be making the most of opportunities to engage in critical debate

Benchmarking

The Peer Review Group considered the reports on the benchmarking exercise carried out by the Department in relation to the University of St Andrews in Scotland and the National University of Ireland Maynooth. The reports were highly descriptive in nature, with a lack of the comparative analysis required from such an exercise. Critical benchmarking is more than a description of cognate institutions, and effective aspirational benchmarking requires detailed comparative analysis to derive the most benefit in terms of enhancing both practice and achievement in the Department.

Teaching & Learning

The Department has been very successful in the development of a student focus. However there are legitimate concerns that future teaching and scholarly activity be appropriately research informed. More Departmental staff should be encouraged to take advantage of continuing professional education in relation to teaching and learning support. A handful of staff have benefited from excellent university support.

Some concern was expressed by students as to the effectiveness of the module evaluation process. Best practice suggests that student evaluations should be conducted independently of the relevant teaching staff and the results of this evaluation be made available to Programme Directors, as well as to individual teaching staff.

Students expressed concern that at the very time the intellectual content becomes more challenging tutorial support becomes unavailable. The Department needs to give serious consideration to the introduction of final year tutorials/small group seminars.

Students would like to have earlier career guidance and better information as to the consequences of subject choices and second year examination results.

Research & Scholarly Activity

The Peer Review Group observed some evidence of excellence in research and scholarly activity in relation to a small proportion of staff. However relatively few staff are currently achieving the research outputs and external research funding compatible with the University's aspirations to be a world-class regional university. This may reflect the need to develop an enhanced research culture to sit alongside established excellence in teaching. The Peer Review Group noted that the Department strategy had been to establish a student-focussed approach towards achieving excellence in teaching. The Peer Review Group noted that the Department recognises the need to develop and apply a comprehensive research strategy to tackle the paucity of external research funding (with one notable exception) and the delivery of research outputs in line with the University's planned introduction of key performance indicators in research, thereby developing a more focused research culture.

The current level of departmental research output is the reflection of a number of influences. In moving forward, the Department must have a clearly worked research strategy with an emphasis on increasing the quality and quantity of research out put and on attracting significant external research funding. One important element of this research strategy must be the development of further inter-Departmental, inter-university and international collaborations, encouraged and endorsed by senior Departmental staff.

The perceived lack of research time is a common obstacle to developing and improving the research culture. The staff of the Department have yet to make appropriate use of the university sabbatical leave system and should be encouraged and facilitated in doing so. The Department needs to explore ways of utilising this facility.

The importance of research-based teaching excellence is set to increase, in Ireland as elsewhere. In preparing to meet this new metrics based environment, the Department must begin to develop the research culture that will deliver research outputs and external funding commensurate with its critical mass, and without undermining its achieved teaching excellence. This is a difficult balancing act, requiring both committed leadership and the active engagement and participation of all staff.

It is academic debate and criticality that is the foundation of both research and teaching excellence. There are concerns that staff may either not have the appropriate opportunities, or may not be making the most of available opportunities, to engage in critical debate.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Abbreviations

PRG: Peer Review Group   *VP: Vice-President*

QPC: Quality Promotion Committee   *QIP: Quality Improvement Plan*

HR: Human Resources   *ACSSS: Arts, Celtic Studies & Social Sciences*

BL: Business & Law

PRG Recommendations	QPC Recommendations (following consultation with the Department)
Recommendations to the University	
The proportion of senior staff in the Department needs to increase as a matter of priority. Such a low proportion deprives the Department, its senior management and other staff and students, of experience, expertise and critical debate	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC recommended that senior management continues to support attempts by department to recruit staff into senior positions in the department. QPC referred the recommendation to the Department and Head of College BL for consideration and implementation as deemed appropriate.
That positions at senior levels, already approved by the University, be filled as a matter of urgency	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC recommended that the University continues to support strategic appointments in the department. QPC referred the recommendation to the Head of College BL.
Future academic appointments must be both marketed internationally and internationally competitive	QPC strongly endorsed recommendation. QPC referred the recommendation to the Head of College BL.
The Department needs to retain a greater proportion of its generated revenues	QPC recommended that Head of College of BL should address this recommendation in line with the University guidelines and policies and the Resource Allocation Model in place.
The physical infrastructure available to the Department needs to be improved in order to allow the Department to deliver its agenda	QPC recommended that the Head of College of BL should consider this recommendation and consult with the Director of Buildings & Estates as to how best to address matters.

PRG Recommendations	QPC Recommendations (following consultation with the Department)
The University should address the issues arising from the split site operation and its consequences for Departmental effectiveness and cohesion	QPC recommended that this issue be brought to the attention of the B&E Committee charged with oversight of the University estate plans. QPC recognised the challenges posed by the split location of staff of the department and in other departments/academic units of the University.
The University should make the appointment to the post of Head of College of Business & Law immediately	QPC endorsed the implementation of this recommendation as soon as conditions are deemed to be optimal for a successful appointment to the post.
Recommendations to the Department	
Staff need to be supported and guided in meeting the criteria for promotion in the University	QPC strongly endorsed recommendation. All staff should be facilitated and provided opportunities to allow them to meet the criteria for promotion.
The Department needs to develop a research culture that is consistent with its established excellence in teaching	QPC strongly endorsed recommendation. Implementation of this recommendation would be assisted by the appointment of staff in senior positions in the Department and would also assist in the implementation of the previous recommendation.
The Department needs to engage fully with the ongoing university debate on role, development and measurement of research in a world-class regional university	QPC strongly endorsed recommendation. QPC noted that two members of the Department are members of Academic Council. The Department is also encouraged to engage with University Officers and support offices in the manner practiced by other departments.
The policies, practices and strategies of the Department must be subject to discussion and challenge at regular fora, enabling and facilitating constructive criticism.	QPC strongly endorsed recommendation. QPC welcomed the agreement of the Department to the implementation of this recommendation. QPC recommended that the Department avail of the central room booking system to book rooms for departmental meetings should the rooms already available to the Department be unavailable at the times required.

PRG Recommendations	QPC Recommendations (following consultation with the Department)
Student evaluations should be conducted independently and regularly, and should be considered by the programme directors, with subsequent actions taken and reported back to the students.	QPC strongly endorsed recommendation. QPC recognised that this is international best practice.

DEPARTMENT OF GERMAN

PEER REVIEW GROUP

- Professor Eoin Bourke, Professor of German (retired), NUI Galway (Chair)
- Dr. Sean Hammond, Department of Applied Psychology, UCC
- Professor Fan Hong, Department of Chinese Studies, UCC
- Ms. Maria Lorigan, Senior Inspector, Department of Education & Science, Dublin
- Professor Liliane Weissberg, Professor of German and Comparative Literature, University of Pennsylvania, USA

SITE VISIT

The site visit was conducted over 2.5 days from 13-14 March 2008 and included visits to departmental and library facilities in UCC and meetings with:

- 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
- Representatives of UCC Academic Staff
- Professor Paul Giller, Registrar & Senior Vice-President
- Professor Peter Kennedy, Vice-President for Research Policy & Support
- Professor Grace Neville, Vice-President for Teaching & Learning
- Professor David Cox, Head of College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences
- Professor Denis Lucey, Acting Head, College of Business & Law
- Ms Carmel Cotter, 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:	Dr. Manfred Schewe
No. of Staff:	16 staff
Location of Department:	Block B, East, O'Rahilly Building, First Floor
Degrees/Diplomas offered:	BA, BCL, BComm, BE, BSc, BSocSc, HDip, MA and PhD
No. of Students:	Department has 75.94 Student FTEs: 61.35 UG and 14.59 PG FTEs distributed as follows:

Undergraduate Student FTEs

Years 1-4	Visiting	Total U/G
56.49	4.86	**61.35**

Postgraduate Student FTEs

H Dip	Master Taught	PhD	Total P/G
.92	11.42	2.25	**14.59**

MISSION STATEMENT

The Department sees its educational mission as threefold:

- To train our students to become competent users of German and effective mediators between cultures.

- To promote our students' intellectual life and stimulate their curiosity; to develop and train their skills in independent analysis and critical interpretation through the study of German literary, artistic and cultural movements in the context of our common European intellectual heritage.

- To cultivate our individual and cooperative research and teaching activities in the various areas of German and comparative literature and culture, linguistics and language education to the highest international standards.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Based on our mission statement the Department's aims and objectives include:

i. The formation of students able to communicate in a competent and correct German, both oral and written.

ii. The development of students' transferable critical skills through the study of the most important and representative German literary movements and figures that have influenced European culture and civilisation from the Enlightenment to our time.

Students are also afforded the opportunity to obtain basic concepts, and, after First Year, specialised knowledge in a variety of subjects, such as German theatre, history, institutions, art, cinema and other media.

Courses in the BComm (International) German programmes have similar aims, but integrate a focus on the world of contemporary German business and commercial language. Courses in the BCL (Law & German) programme also have a special focus on legal and political culture, law and literature, and legal language.

The Department aims to make its subject expertise accessible to as many departments and units across the university as possible, for example by becoming an active player in a range of interdepartmental / interdisciplinary programmes. It also aims to cooperate with the broader community by continuing to participate in joint initiatives with regional, national and international organisations such as Cork City Library, the Irish Film Institute, the Goethe Institute and others.

For its staff, the Department provides – to the best of its ability – an equitable environment, founded on genuine mutual respect, in which staff are able to achieve their full potential in the execution of their research, teaching and administrative duties. Staff in the Department, both individually and collectively, review their activities and the circumstances in which they work as a matter of course, with the aim of maintaining highest standards in teaching, research and administration. Such reviews are conducted taking into account feedback, from current students as well as from graduates.

We aim to provide research-led teaching in the different areas of German Studies and related interdisciplinary programmes. In line with UCC's strategic priorities we regard it as our duty to guide and encourage the intellectual interests and passions of our students and to encourage our students to think and act in a creative, flexible and responsive manner. By thus producing high quality graduates in its discipline, the Department contributes to cultural, social and economic development at regional, national and international level.

Our teaching and research activities aim at helping students to build a solid educational foundation for their personal and professional futures in the knowledge that employers today are keen to attract good quality Arts students with social, communication and German language skills, analytical abilities and well-developed powers of logic, reasoning and deduction.

GENERAL COMMENT ON QUALITY REVIEW

The Peer Review Group was very impressed by the German Department. Its productivity is of a very high standard. All three members of full-time lecturing staff are to be commended for their obvious diligence and involvement in research and course development. The college language teachers clearly add to the intellectual rigour of the department and many are research active above and beyond the requirements of their contracts. Together with highly productive lektorinnen, part-funded by the German and Austrian governments, the members of the department clearly evince enthusiasm for their discipline and a high measure of collegiality, all of which adds immeasurably to the intellectual life of the University. The Head of Department in particular must be commended on his role in fostering the team spirit displayed by the Department under challenging circumstances.

SWOT Analysis

The Peer Review Group reviewed the SWOT analysis and agreed with much of what was stated in the Self-Evaluation Report.

Strengths

- The fact that a mission statement is in place

- In general work is carried out smoothly and cooperatively, in particular the coordination of the language programmes functions very well due to very efficient and productive work by the language staff. There are a variety of communication channels within the Department as well as regular staff and committee meetings. The Department is perceived by staff as a safe environment due to a generally positive attitude, and good collegiality.

- A high level of commitment and dedication among the Department's well qualified staff. A further strong point is that the Department allows staff the freedom to expand their teaching and research beyond their immediate area of expertise. However, although staff-members have a wide range of skills, there is not enough time to develop them.

- The Department's friendly, approachable, helpful and respectful staff. As students' questionnaires state, there is a very positive interaction between students and staff. A generally good, collegial atmosphere and a strong sense of identity among staff prevail within the department. Staff members are cooperative and supportive of each other, in particular of new staff. The Academic Staff questionnaire in Appendix L of the Self-Evaluation Report indicates a high rate of commitment and provides an excellent discussion document for building a vibrant future.

Weaknesses

- There is a need for the establishment of a committee to develop a strategy. Furthermore, the mission statement needs to be opened up for discussion and a written plan, incorporating common goals, should be drafted and mechanisms put in place for monitoring the success of the strategy.

- A need for a clearer definition of the different roles (e.g. coordinator) and the responsibilities allocated to those roles to avoid varying understandings of who is expected to deal with which tasks and questions.

- The non-permanent status of many members of staff was identified as a problem as it may influence commitment and morale and furthermore creates a lack of continuity. This situation creates, in many part-time staff, the sense of being exploited. There is also a shortage of permanent lecturing staff, especially in areas of specialisation such as Law and Commerce. This places heavy demands on those staff-members teaching the courses in these areas, and it is felt by staff that students should have the right to accredited experts. It is regretted that there are insufficient resources for desired staff development courses.

Opportunities

- Change of President and University structures (schoolification), role of Department within University

- EU developments: EU policy and funding (incl. Socrates and Erasmus), Bologna agreement

- Government policy on education (modern languages, Irish)

- Technological innovation – Blackboard, PowerPoint, e-mail, multi-media, 2012 digital TV and therefore more learning opportunities

Threats

- Sociocultural factors such as image / perception of foreign languages / German / Germany in Irish society, values, expectations and approach of students changing (commodification of education, "performance culture", culture of work)

- Economic factors such as languages not perceived in the current economic climate as money/income generators and uncertain job prospects for German students

- University factors such as the HR 'metastructure' (mushrooming at the expense of academic side; bureaucracy, inefficiency → consequences for local administration) and the lack of UCC support for humanities research (library) and academic travel, especially for College Language Teachers and postgraduate students

- Environmental Factors such as space and lack of it: offices (staff / postgraduate / administration); storage of books, equipment, multi-media, magazines, newspapers; room for meetings, scheduling of teaching in distant venues, parking

- Finding time / resources to up-skill, inadequate training and backup, inadequate supply for technological resources (hardware and software vital for teaching development), stress levels, workloads

The Peer Review Group endorsed the conclusions of the SWOT that the following elements should be part of future strategic thinking:

- PR/ image of German Department

- Raising the profile of the subject

- Space and resources

- Improving the departmental infrastructure

- Generating funding for staff development, postgraduates, research, materials / resources

- Student recruitment (undergraduate / postgraduate)

Benchmarking

The German Department benchmarked itself against the German Department at the University of Bristol in the UK. The decision to use Bristol was based upon comparable size in terms of student numbers and study programmes being offered as well as personal knowledge of the Department through the activities of one of the UCC staff. The UCC German Department was clearly less well resourced that its Bristol equivalent although language teaching capacity appears on a par. In terms of the programmes on offer UCC outperforms Bristol. Student numbers were lower in UCC and this is a matter of some concern that appears as a leitmotiv of the report. The Peer Review Group agreed that the choice of Bristol as a benchmark was fair and reasonable.

Teaching & Learning

The Department is to be commended for the number and range of courses on offer that include a number of interdisciplinary programmes and evening courses. The Peer Review Group was also impressed with the Department's efforts to introduce greater self-directed learning.

That said, a number of concerns were raised and the most compelling concerned the teaching of German on the BComm (International) programme. Students as well as stakeholders expressed the need for more 'business' type courses in German with an emphasis on language and commercial culture. The Peer Review Group noted that developments have been made to fill this need and that these efforts have been well received. Nevertheless, they do not appear to have gone far enough and there was a clear sense of dissatisfaction with the paucity of 'commerce relevant' material. Given the relatively high proportion of student fulltime equivalents that currently come from commerce students (estimated around 20% of undergraduate fulltime equivalents) this is an urgent challenge to the Department. It should also be noted that approximately the same number of student fulltime equivalents come from programmes in the Faculty of Law.

The Peer Review Group also noted that there did not appear to be a clear policy for teaching through the target language and a number of concerns were raised concerning language skill. It was noted that the number of language teaching hours was on the low side and it was felt that an expansion to a minimum of four hours per week (and preferably five) might be considered with added supervised language laboratory as compulsory, particularly at First Year Beginner's level. The Peer Review Group also observed that this issue had been raised fairly consistently in external examiners reports and advised the Department to take due cognisance of these comments. It may also be necessary to review credit assignments to allow for an increase in language skills especially for first year students.

The Peer Review Group was made very aware of the mixed language abilities, particularly in 1st Year and the burden this places on language teachers. Unless managed carefully, this situation can lead to attrition and loss of motivation among students at each end of the skills continuum. The Peer Review Group heard some suggestions that this may indeed be happening.

In summary, the teaching and course provision on German Studies and culture is excellent and wide ranging. However, the language teaching may need some review and a particular area of concern is around the provision of German to the students from the Faculty of Commerce.

Research & Scholarly Activity

It is clear that there exists something of a divide between what the University Research Office deems research active and what would be seen as such in most German Departments. There does not appear to have been a proper contextualisation of the nature of research in the humanities by the University. Use of a scientific standard for research is bound to result in poor benchmarking for humanities subjects such as German Studies. It is hoped that the University is able to evolve a strategy for properly evaluating the quality of their Humanities Departments' output.

In comparison with other German Departments nationally it is obvious that UCC has a vibrant research department with a large amount of scholarly output of various forms. The Peer Review Group particularly wish to commend the College Language Teachers, many of whom manage to be research active despite the fact that it is not part of their job description.

Nevertheless, despite their impressive research output there is not much evidence of success in receiving external research funding. The Peer Review Group encourages the staff to engage with external funding opportunities and to seek support of the Research Office with regard to possible IRCHSS and EU funds as well as internal College awards.

Given the substantial amount of multidisciplinary work manifest in the Self-Evaluation Report, the Peer Review Group suggest that the Department might consider a multidisciplinary centre for media studies and media research (French, Philosophy, Computer Sciences, etc.) to serve as a focus for research efforts and as a centre of gravity for potential post-graduate students and external funding.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Abbreviations

PRG: Peer Review Group	*VP: Vice-President*
QPC: Quality Promotion Committee	*QIP: Quality Improvement Plan*
HR: Human Resources	*ACSSS: Arts, Celtic Studies & Social Sciences*
BL: Business & Law	*UMT: University Management Team*

PRG Recommendations	QPC Recommendations (following consultation with the Department)
Recommendations to the University	
There is a need for a media room, which should have a facility for German satellite TV programmes and film screenings.	QPC referred this recommendation to the Head of College ACSSS as is a space allocation issue. QPC noted that any action on this recommendation should be made in the context of the comments of the Head of College of ACSSS, and recognising the agreement between the Department of German, the Head of College ACSSS and UMT for the development of the Department of German over the next 10 years.

PRG Recommendations	QPC Recommendations (following consultation with the Department)
The Chair of German should be replaced when resources permit	The QPC recognised the agreement between the Department & Head of College ACSSS with UMT for the development of German. The QPC also noted the importance of having a leader in the discipline at the appropriate level if the discipline is to develop and deliver on the objectives of the university. QPC referred this recommendation to the Head of College ACSSS.
The Language Laboratory facilities should be reviewed and upgraded	QPC noted that this is a resourcing and equipping issue. QPC recommended that the Head of College ACSSS seeks means, in discussion with all language departments, to determine the requirements and the possibilities for funding these. This is a major quality issue for teaching and learning.
That there is a review and re-evaluation of the role of the College Language Teachers in the University with particular reference to career development and retention	QPC noted that a report on this has been prepared by the Head of College ACSSS and sent to the Registrar. This is an ongoing issue which is being dealt with at the appropriate level in the University.
The University should look closely at the criteria applied to the research status of Humanities departments in general.	QPC endorsed the recommendation. QPC noted that this is already underway in UCC. The Research Quality Review, planned for 08/09 and for which preparations are already underway, will provide significant evidence of appropriate measures of research activity. Academic Council has agreed metrics which will also help inform the criteria and metrics for humanities disciplines.
Recommendations to the Department	
Strategic Plan	
The Department should develop a clear strategic plan, including reference to: - 'Schoolification' - The identity of the Department (e.g. the tension between applied (i.e. language, commerce) and academic (i.e. literature, critical analysis)).	QPC strongly endorsed the recommendation that the Department should integrate its strategic plan with that of the University taking cognisance of the development of a School of Languages and the role of German within that School. QPC welcomed the detailed and positive response of Department to engage with process of strategic planning and noted the

PRG Recommendations	QPC Recommendations (following consultation with the Department)
- Funding opportunities - Space needs and requirements - Staffing - Identification of research areas that are attractive to postgraduate students.	need to ensure that the strategic plan is in line with the University strategic plan when it is published. QPC noted the need to make the new appointments in the context of the plan, rather than making the appointments and then developing the plan.
Staffing The Department should build its team around its strategy and recruit the two new permanent staff accordingly.	QPC endorsed recommendation. The Head of College ACSSS confirmed that one of the two new lectureship posts in the process of recruitment will be in the area of Commerce and German.
Teaching Provision	
The German Department should develop modules that meet the needs of Commerce students more closely in acquiring business German and developing a knowledge of the German business environment.	QPC strongly endorsed recommendation. QPC noted and welcomed the positive response of the Department and the willingness to consider ways to achieve the aim of this recommendation. QPC recommended that the Department also engages with the College of BL in this regard.
In First Year BComm (International with German) there should be an increase in language teaching contact hours from three hours per week to five hours per week. The additional hours should be used for the development of the students' oral skills. One contact hour should be supervised in the language laboratory.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC noted the plans the Department is putting in place to implement the recommendation and recommended that the Department includes discipline-specific language in its language teaching contact hours.
The Department should develop a clear policy on teaching through the target language.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC would welcome details of the policy on teaching through the target language referred to in the departmental response and requested that it be appended to the quality improvement plan when developed.
The Department should find ways to increase student fulltime equivalents by extending the provision of popular modules to other students (e.g. Holocaust Studies).	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC referred recommendation to the Department for implementation.
The Department should consider making the newly designed MA programme in German Studies accessible to evening students.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC welcomed the commitment of the Department to implementation when students are accepted into the MA.

PRG Recommendations	QPC Recommendations (following consultation with the Department)
The University should consider changing the name of Language and Cultural Studies to BA International, a degree course with a built-in Third Year abroad.	QPC recommended that this recommendation is examined by College ACSSS
The Department should utilise the Erasmus mechanisms to ensure that all students go abroad.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC noted the departmental response that it has made the best possible use of these structures in the past. QPC recommended the department explore all means possible to facilitate the students spending some period abroad during their studies.
The Department should ensure that students are aware of library facilities and take part in library tours at the beginning of their courses.	QPC endorsed recommendation. The QPC noted the response from the Department *(the Department has a clear policy in this regard as stated under Library in Handbook pages 27–30).*
The Department should review its H Dip programme and ensure the quality of the structure and of the teaching of the programme.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC referred the recommendation to the Department and College ACSSS for consideration and appropriate action.
Collaborative Work	
That the Department, in developing its future strategy, continues to actively pursue links with larger, student full-time equivalent-rich departments/schools in UCC in order to extend their range of interdisciplinary modules and in so doing increase the student full-time equivalent allocation to the Department.	QPC endorsed recommendation in the context of the strategic needs of the university. Only viable modules should be considered.
Department should forge tighter bonds with the secondary schools in the area.	QPC endorsed recommendation.
In the context of the new appointments at Lecturer level, the Department should seriously consider including representatives on the interview panel from stakeholders with an interest in the applied side of the Department's activities such as Commerce and Law.	QPC endorsed recommendation in principle but noted that, in this case, the interview Board has already been established and approved by Academic Board.

PRG Recommendations	QPC Recommendations (following consultation with the Department)
The Department should actively consider the formation of an interdisciplinary centre for literary and media research which might attract research funding and appeal to postgraduate students.	QPC endorsed consideration of this recommendation at Department/School and College level.
That the Department consider the further expansion of their outreach activities to include other national and international institutions.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC recommended that implementation of this recommendation must not be at the expense of core departmental activities. QPC recommended that collaboration in first instance should be with other Departments of German nationally to determine what areas are lacking at a national level and to ensure coverage of the discipline to an excellent standard within the whole of Ireland.
Funding	QPC endorsed all of the following recommendations, subject to being implementation being within the context of the School and Colleges strategies.
That staff apply for external research funding and seek the support of the Research Office in doing so.	QPC endorsed recommendation
That the Department should seek research funding for library acquisition funds.	QPC endorsed recommendation.
That the Department pursue funding options for national and international students as outlined in the body of the text of this report.	QPC endorsed recommendation
That the Department should actively seek opportunities for funding via the UCC Development Office.	QPC endorsed recommendation in the context of the University strategy. Should be undertaken in collaboration with the Development Office and Departments of German nationally.
Put together list of alumni in consultation with Alumni Office for professional development.	QPC endorsed recommendation

CENTRES AND ADMINISTRATIVE/SUPPORT UNITS

- Chaplaincy
- Student Health

CHAPLAINCY

PEER REVIEW GROUP

- Fr. Michael Paul Gallagher, Dean of Theology in Gregorian University, Rome (*Chair*)

- Fr. Diarmuid Hogan, Head Chaplain, NUI Galway

- Sr. Teresa Kennedy, Coordinator for Catholic Chaplains in Higher Education, UK

- Professor Mary McCaffrey, Associate Professor of Biochemistry, Biosciences Institute, UCC

- Mr. Paul Moriarty, Head, Student Counselling & Development, UCC

SITE VISIT

The site visit was conducted over 2.5 days from 17-18 April 2008 and included visits to departmental and library facilities in UCC and meetings with:

- Head and staff of the department as a group and individually

- Representatives of undergraduate and postgraduate students and Student Union

- Representatives of employers, past graduates and other external stakeholders

- Representatives of Chaplaincy Student Team

- Representatives of Student Support Services

- Representatives of UCC Staff

- Mr. Michael Farrell, Corporate Secretary

- Professor David Cox, Head of College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences

- Professor Patrick Fitzpatrick, Head, College of Science, Engineering & Food Science

- Mr. Michael Hanna, College Manager, College of Medicine & Health (representing Professor Robert McConnell, Acting Head)

- 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: Fr. Joe Coughlan

Chaplaincy Location: Iona House, College Road, Cork & Honan Chapel

Staff: 9 Staff

MISSION STATEMENT

"The Chaplaincy team at IONA accompanies staff and students on their spiritual journey. In a welcoming and caring atmosphere we offer a listening ear. Inspired by the Scriptures we provide opportunities for a deepening of faith, for service of others and for worship. We seek in this way to be a Christian presence at UCC."

This Mission Statement has been found to be in harmony with that of the University, it has enabled the formulation of clear aims which focussed the energy and commitment of staff. Critique of functions and activities in the light of this mission has led to ongoing developments, outstanding among which has been the creation of the student team, whereby a number of students is invited each year into collaboration with the Chaplaincy bringing their own youthful energy and ideas.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- A liturgical and worship programme in the Honan Chapel

- Opportunities for staff and students to develop and express their personal prayer lives and spirituality

- Opportunities for the inculturation of faith and the evangelisation of culture

- A welcome and hospitality service

- Opportunities for community service and collective action for common good

- Support for vulnerable staff and students

- An ecumenical environment

- An interfaith environment

- Wedding services, reception tours, musical venue/cultural events

GENERAL COMMENT ON QUALITY REVIEW

At the outset the Peer Review Group wishes especially to acknowledge the professionalism and dedication of the staff of the Chaplaincy. The quality of service which such a unit is capable of delivering is ultimately dependent on the quality of the individuals available to deliver that service.

The Self-Evaluation Report was comprehensive and well presented and was carried out in accordance with the guidelines as set out by the Quality Promotion Unit. It was clear and concise, particularly in outlining the findings from the SWOT analysis. The section on analysis of stakeholders' views both internal and external was thorough and reflective and contained valuable feedback as well as a series of very useful ideas and recommendations. The Appendix section was informative, detailed and focused. The Peer Review Group would like to compliment everyone involved in producing the Self-Evaluation Report and for their efforts in gaining the views and ideas of the broad range of users of the Chaplaincy including students, staff, graduates and bishops. The Peer Review Group especially noted the surveying of the views of those attending weekday and Sunday liturgies in the Honan Chapel.

SWOT Analysis

The Chaplaincy carried out a detailed SWOT analysis as part of the preparation for the Self-Evaluation Report. The analysis was facilitated by Mr. Tony Ó Riordan, Chief Executive Officer of the Midlands Simon Community. The participants identified key themes emerging from the S.W.O.T. They grouped these themes as follows:

- Key Strengths to be built on
- Key Weaknesses to be addressed
- Key Opportunities to be grasped
- Key Threats to be managed

Key Strengths to be built on

1. The openness, hospitality and welcoming atmosphere of Iona and the Chaplaincy
2. Mission statement
3. Volunteering and Community service
4. The Honan Chapel and the quality of liturgies
5. The people (staff, student team and networks)
6. Comprehensive response to bereavement including the memorial services, the liaison with families and the Mass card service
7. Team spirit
8. Ecumenical nature of Chaplaincy
9. Retreats and pilgrimages
10. Excellent administrative support
11. Student Team

Key Weaknesses to be addressed

1. Iona: the Physical Building, its appearance and lay-out
2. Age and gender profile of Chaplains
3. Publicity: lack of awareness and even misunderstanding among many staff and students about the Chaplaincy
4. Unclear structures for linking with the four new Colleges and with other student services
5. Inadequate staffing levels
6. Insufficient budget provision
7. Informal structures for meetings
8. Lack of statistical information
9. Lack of clarity on Policies and Procedures
10. Lack of Job Description or appropriate contracts and lack of formal arrangements and relationship with Church authorities

Key Opportunities to be grasped

1. Increase in numbers of International and Post-Graduate students
2. Re-organisation of the University into four Colleges
3. Imminent new staff appointments due to retirements
4. High level of appreciation of the Chaplaincy among service users
5. Highly valued crisis and bereavement support among staff
6. Greater links with other Student Support services
7. The acquisition of "Hillside" by the Honan Trust
8. A search for meaning by students and staff.
9. The Centenary of the Honan Chapel (2016)
10. Witness to and promote lasting values in a materialistic image conscious environment

Key Threats to be managed

1. Difficulty in demonstrating the outcomes of much of this type of work
2. Secular ethos of the University and apathy in regard to faith
3. Alienation of many young people from Church
4. Students' time schedules not allowing scope for extra-curricular activities
5. Danger of being perceived as irrelevant in a more pragmatic age.

It was apparent that this exercise was conducted in a very open, constructive and inclusive manner enabling all staff, as well as the student team, to contribute equally to evaluating the Chaplaincy's current activities and to present their ideas for future developments.

Benchmarking

The Peer Review Group noted the universities that the unit benchmarked itself against and commended the unit for its efforts to look externally to Ireland. The benchmarking exercise involved visits to De Paul University, Chicago, Loyola University, Chicago, Oxford University and University College Dublin. While the panel acknowledged the value of each visit, especially noting the Volunteering project in De Paul University, it was felt that in future benchmarking exercises the Chaplaincy might consider benchmarking itself against universities more similar to UCC. The panel commended the summary of analysis of the services and the presentation of the data but would have welcomed a conclusions section which included indicators and comparisons across the four institutions and particularly with University College Dublin.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Abbreviations

PRG: *Peer Review Group*   VP: *Vice-President*

QPC: *Quality Promotion Committee*   QIP: *Quality Improvement Plan*

HR: *Human Resources*

PRG Recommendations	QPC Recommendations (following consultation with Unit)
Recommendations to the University	
Appointment procedures for Chaplains be regularised as a matter of priority	QPC strongly endorsed recommendation. QPC referred this recommendation to the VP Student Experience for implementation.
An additional Full-time Chaplain be appointed as a matter of urgency, with	QPC referred recommendation to VP Student Experience for consideration, noting the resource implications for implementation.
a. due consideration be given to the importance of age and gender balance in a Chaplaincy setting.	QPC endorsed recommendation.
b. an increase of staff be linked to the refocusing of priorities including self-review of all activities.	QPC strongly endorsed recommendation. QPC referred recommendation to the VP Student Experience
c. job descriptions be established for all Chaplaincy personnel.	QPC strongly endorsed recommendation. QPC referred recommendation to the VP Student Experience
d. job descriptions and process for appointment of members of student team be established.	QPC strongly endorsed recommendation. QPC referred recommendation to the Head of Chaplaincy
The university authorities recognise that Chaplaincy is very different to other departments; that many of its activities are difficult to quantify and contain the elements of spirituality and confidentiality.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC referred recommendation to the VP Student Experience for implementation.
The structure of the Chaplaincy budgets be examined with a view to: a. redressing the imbalance between the Temporary staff budget and the Permanent staff budget and b. moving the Chaplain's salary from the Consumables to the Pay budget.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC referred recommendation to the VP Student Experience.

PRG Recommendations	QPC Recommendations (following consultation with Unit)
The University be much more overt in recognizing the substantial financial contribution of both the Honan Chapel and the Honan Trust to the Chaplaincy and thereby to the students and staff of the University.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC referred recommendation to the VP Student Experience and to UMT for consideration as to implementation.
Supervision for pastoral care offered by Chaplains be explored and, where possible, implemented.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC referred recommendation to the Head of Chaplaincy.
Recommendations to the Department	
The Chaplaincy review all space allocation within its control as a matter of urgency and consideration be given to the following: a. the possibility of moving major chaplaincy functions to Hillside b. the possibility of relocating the reception and administration office to the front of the building; c. the provision of office facilities for the part-time chaplains to enable them to meet students and staff in a private and dignified setting; d. specific times and space be allocated exclusively for staff; e. the possibility, as part of the University's Student Services' plans, of moving the functions of both Iona and Hillside to one larger venue; f. the allocation of an alternative, modern, student-friendly, flexible, interdenominational, multipurpose space in the planned new Student Centre.	QPC endorsed recommendation. The QPC welcomed the commitment of the Chaplaincy to making the best use of all available space resource and wished to re-iterate that the QPC will support the Chaplaincy in its decisions in this regard. QPC recognised and acknowledged the issues raised by the Head of Chaplaincy with respect to the possible use of Hillside and the other specific recommendations under this heading.
The Chaplaincy reviews and asserts its core identity and subsequently embarks on a process of re- branding	QPC strongly endorsed recommendation. QPC referred recommendation to the Head of Chaplaincy.
That immediate attention be given to how Chaplaincy publicises its presence, its message and its services. The Peer Review Group recommends greater use of information technology as well as other forms of media within UCC and the wider community to further this cause	QPC strongly endorsed recommendation. QPC referred recommendation to the Head of Chaplaincy.

PRG Recommendations	QPC Recommendations (following consultation with Unit)
More definite systems of self-review and data collection be put in place where possible which would provide valuable information about trends and effectiveness of certain activities	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC referred recommendation to the Head of Chaplaincy.
The spiritual and academic nature of university ministry be strengthened.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC referred recommendation to the Head of Chaplaincy.
The Chaplaincy should continue to build relationships with students of non-Christian denominations.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC referred recommendation to the Head of Chaplaincy.
Given the nature of the restructuring of the University, consideration be given to the importance of establishing more definite links with each of the four Colleges.	QPC strongly endorsed recommendation. QPC referred recommendation to the Head of Chaplaincy.

DEPARTMENT OF STUDENT HEALTH

PEER REVIEW GROUP

- Sr. Christine Hoy, Senior Nurse Practitioner, Edinburgh (*Chair*)

- Dr. David McGrath, Director of College Health Service, Trinity College Dublin

- Dr. Hilda O'Shea, Medical Officer, Cork Institute of Technology, Cork

- Mr. Denis Staunton, Director of Access, UCC

- Dr. Helen Whelton, Cork University Dental School & Hospital, Cork

SITE VISIT

The site visit was conducted over 2.5 days from 19-20 February 2008 and included visits to student health facility in UCC and meetings with:

- Head and staff of the department as a group and individually

- Representatives of Students

- Representatives of UCC Staff

- Professor Paul Giller, Registrar & Senior Vice-President

- Mr. Con O'Brien, Vice-President for Student Experience

- Professor David Cox, Head of College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences

- Professor Robert McConnell, Acting Head, College of Medicine & Health

- Professor Patrick Fitzpatrick, Head, College of Science, Engineering & Food Science

- Professor Denis Lucey, Acting Head, College of Business & Law (represented by Dr. Edward Shinnick)

- Ms. Carmel Cotter, 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 Student Health:	Dr. Michael Byrne
Number of staff:	3.3 FTE physicians term time; reducing to 1.0 FTE in non term time; 2.0 FTE Nurses in term time – reducing to 0.7 FTE in non term time; 0.2 Consultant Psychiatrist (2 sessions pw) term time only; 1.2 FTE Physiotherapists (term time only); 2.0 FTE Reception/admin personnel – reducing to 1.0 FTE in non-term time.
Location:	Ardpatrick House, College Road, Cork

MISSION STATEMENT

"To promote the maintenance of sound bodies and sound minds in a student population which faces increasing challenges each year"

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the Student Health Department is to maintain the health and well being of all our students, so as to ensure they achieve their own personal, social and academic potential.

This aim can be achieved by meeting the Department's objectives of providing a service that

- Is accessible, welcoming and student-friendly

- Targets problems prominent in the University setting

- Has a strong focus on preventative measures, screening, and immunising of at-risk groups

- Represents the health concerns of the student population to the University authorities

- Practices to an international best practice level

- Undertakes regular review of the quality of the care provided

- Is delivered by a team who enjoy their work and who operate in a mutually supportive team.

GENERAL COMMENT ON QUALITY REVIEW

The Self-Evaluation Report was competently done and carried out in accordance with the guidelines as set out by the Quality Promotion Unit. It was clear and concise, outlining clearly the findings from the SWOT analysis. The factual information presented was informative and up to date. The section on analysis of stakeholders views both internal and external was thoughtful and reflective and contained a series of very useful ideas and recommendations. The Appendix section was informative, detailed and focused. Finally, the panel would like to compliment everyone involved in producing the Self-Evaluation Report and for taking such an effort to gain the views and ideas of the users of the service, staff, other relevant support services and departments within the university. The Peer Review Group was particularly impressed with the Department's protocols, guidelines and standard operating procedures which were considered excellent and an example of good practice. The Peer Review Group recommend that the model presented in the Department of Student Health Report could be adopted by other similar service units across the University.

The Peer Review Group noted that all staff engaged with the process of self-evaluation and inspirational benchmarking in preparation for the writing of the self-evaluation report. The Peer Review Group commended the efforts of the Student Health Department in this regard. Evidence of this participatory approach was noted by the committee in the excellent summary of analysis and recommendations for future actions identified by all staff and included in the self-evaluation report. Extensive student and stakeholder surveys were conducted and evidence was included in the Self-Evaluation Report.

The Peer Review Group were very impressed with the commitment of the staff to the ongoing work of the Department. This is reflected in the very positive approach of the staff to working as part of a team under the excellent leadership of the current Head. It was noted that during the past year many changes in policies and procedures were introduced, but at all times these were managed in a consultative participative approach which ensured a well-planned and easy transition to the continuing development of student health service provision in UCC. The group was particularly impressed with the high level of professional expertise available within the current staff team and the ongoing commitment to provision of an efficient and effective service to UCC students.

SWOT Analysis

The Department of Student Health carried out a detailed SWOT analysis as part of the preparation for the Self-Evaluation Report. The exercise was beneficial and useful in highlighting areas within the four SWOT analysis headings, Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.

Strengths

- Good team spirit-positive attitude, team approach
- Mutual support
- no conflict in roles
- Flexibility
- Good communication pathways despite large number of part-timers
- Regular team meetings- forum for discussion
- Education
- Availability of nurse triage
- Good skill mix
- Good location

Weaknesses

- Lack of sufficient funding and time for continuing education and skill upgrade
- Inability to provide appropriate services e.g. STI clinic despite external pressure for change
- Systems inadequate, particularly in area of reception and administration support for physiotherapy
- Poor management of workload
- Infrastructural deficiencies e.g. lack of toilet facilities, no staff room, insufficient consulting rooms at times
- Low profile and visibility across campus
- Lack of clarity of job descriptions re core activities and exact service offered to students (is it a GP service for all regardless of home address, an acute service for minor ailments, or back up service to their home GP, and is policy of having a Cork-based GP followed up and encouraged?)

Opportunities

- Advances in technology

- - Telemedicine
    - Self check in
    - Video conferencing
    - Correspondence with students re appointments
  - Development of health promotion service re drugs/alcohol/obesity and possibility of appointment of health promotion officer
  - Development of sexual health service
  - Policy for staff training and development
  - Development of strategies e.g. mental health strategy
  - Collaboration with existing local primary and secondary medical services

Threats

- Changes in technology
    - Patient misinformation,
    - Risk of poor security
    - Poor standards of patient confidentiality
- Health implications with changing demographics-changing age/race/culture / disease profile and social and behaviour patterns
- Lack of funding to develop services required to respond effectively to evolving complex patient needs
- Issues surrounding implementation of HSE guidelines/ university strategies
- Inability to meet obligations set by national health agenda
- Change in political climate may threaten development
- Inability to meet expectation of students/parents/ staff of service

It was the view of the panel that this exercise was conducted in a very open, constructive and reflective manner and enabled all staff, irrespective of their status, tenure and position, to contribute equally to evaluating the current activities in the Department and to present their ideas for future developments.

Benchmarking

The benchmarking exercise involved a visit to the University of Edinburgh and Herriot Watt University in Scotland, Trinity College Dublin and Dublin Institute of Technology. The panel commented very favourably on the summary of analysis of the service and the presentation of the data, which included indicators and comparisons across the three Irish institutions. The panel would have welcomed inclusion of a reference to financial benchmarking, but recognised the different financial models in use in the NHS and the widely differing arrangements in DIT and CIT.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

PRG Recommendations	QPC Recommendations (following consultation with the Department)
Recommendations to University	
Structures	
That the existing building be reconfigured to ensure that the reception area is redesigned to enable improved patient confidentiality, office space for the office manager, self-check in service, introduction of electronic payment/fee collection system.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC noted that this issue is of particular importance in improving the quality of the student experience and recommended that this recommendation be implemented as soon as possible. QPC referred the recommendation to the Department and the VP Student Experience for implementation.
That the Physiotherapy aspect of the service be relocated to the Mardyke Arena. This recommendation would facilitate the reconfiguration of the current building.	QPC recommended that the VP Student Experience explore this recommendation with the Mardyke Arena and the Corporate Secretary.
That the room which currently houses the photocopier be re-designated as a staff toilet and shower facility. That a smaller office photocopier be purchased in keeping with modern health and safety ventilation requirements.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC noted the importance of ensuring adequate facilities for staff in such a unit. QPC referred the recommendation to the Department and the VP Student Experience for implementation.
That the two consultancy rooms with limited ventilation be provided with air conditioning, to avoid compromising confidentiality by opening windows onto external areas where students congregate.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC endorsed the need to ensure the confidentiality of the consultations and for appropriate environments. QPC referred the recommendation to the Department and the VP Student Experience for implementation.
Processes	

PRG Recommendations	QPC Recommendations (following consultation with the Department)
That the pay of medical staff be benchmarked with other Higher Education Institutions in the State.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC referred the recommendation to the Department and the VP Student Experience for action.
The University should have a single death policy.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC noted that UCC does have a death policy and that it is important that this be communicated widely to staff, in both academic and support units.
Staff: Career pathways/training	
That a Deputy Head be appointed.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC referred the recommendation to the Department and the VP Student Experience for implementation.
The identification of a budget for training and continuing medical education for all staff, with locum provision as appropriate. Staff should not self-fund continuing medical education.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC noted the importance of continuing health professional education for all professional staff. QPC referred the recommendation to the Department and the VP Student Experience for action.
That consideration be given to the amendment of contracts to include provision for study leave.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC noted the need for additional resources to fund this recommendation and referred the recommendation to the Department and the VP Student Experience for action.
That up-skilling for nursing personnel be recognised as essential and be supported.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC noted that this would be welcomed by the nursing staff and would increase the range of services offered and the efficiency of the service. QPC recommended that the Department explore the possibility of developing links with College MH for provision of courses.
Planning	
That support for re-grading when new roles and responsibilities have emerged be provided.	QPC endorsed recommendation.

PRG Recommendations	QPC Recommendations (following consultation with the Department)
That consideration be given to the Department of Student Health taking over Ardpatrick to facilitate the immediate needs of the expanding health service and the change in student demographics.	QPC noted that this recommendation is linked to the integration of student support services and the planned new Student Services Building. However, space challenges have to be addressed in the short term. QPC recommended discussion on this issue between the Head of Department, Director of Buildings & Estates and the VP Student Experience and awaits their recommendations.
That the University should expand the number of administrative staff to ensure adequate continuing support for existing service provision and the planned expansion.	QPC endorsed recommendation in principle. QPC referred this recommendation to the VP Student Experience and Department for discussion as to how to implement.
That there be formal structural relationships between the key student services - to meet regularly with respect to development of ongoing policies, procedures and practices.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC referred the recommendation to the Department and the VP Student Experience for implementation.
Health & Well-being of Students	
That a planning group be established to input into the design of the planned new Student Services Building and that the Head of the Department of Student Health be a member of that team.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC recommended that a formal planning group be established with terms of reference developed and including student input. QPC referred the recommendation to the Registrar and the VP Student Experience for action
That in addition to the existing services, a Sexual Health Clinic be established, with staff appropriately trained, and appropriate funding be provided, given the high prevalence and increasing incidence in Ireland of Sexually Transmitted Diseases.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC referred this recommendation to the VP Student Experience for consideration and for provision of funding to implement in consultation with other experts already in the Cork area.
That a full-time consultant-led psychiatric service be provided linked to the Counselling Service, Disability Support Service and possibly to other institutions (CIT).	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC referred this recommendation to VP Student Experience for consideration as to how funding might be provided for implementation. QPC recommended that consideration be given to working with the HSE and voluntary agencies exploring the possibilities of provision of outreach services in UCC. The possibility of establishing links with CIT in this regard should also be explored.

PRG Recommendations	QPC Recommendations (following consultation with the Department)
That a full-time health promotion officer be appointed, in keeping with the strategies outlined in the University Strategic Framework 2006-2011 to enhance the quality of the student experience. A Health Promotion policy will promote best practice in regard to smoking cessation, alcohol and drug awareness.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC referred this recommendation to VP Student Experience for consideration and funding to implement

Recommendations to the Department

Structures

That the client waiting room area be redesigned and redeveloped to create a more welcoming, inviting and user-friendly environment.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC referred this recommendation to Department for consideration and decisions on implementation.
That within the waiting room area there should be a clear display of the student services on offer and the charges associated with each of the services. It is recommended that this information should be displayed electronically.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC referred this recommendation to Department for consideration and decisions on implementation.
That the urine analysis equipment should be moved from the public toilet to a more suitable spot.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC requested that this be implemented by the Department as a matter of immediate importance.
That the kitchenette be reconfigured and a second fridge installed, thereby resolving the issue of having biological samples stored alongside food.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC requested that this be implemented by the Department as a matter of immediate importance.

Processes

That an effective and equitable system for fee collection, which is removed from the health professionals administering services, be developed immediately.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC welcomed the action of the Department in implementing this recommendation immediately.
That the administration of the vaccination service, including fee collection, be handled by the relevant schools and that the Department of Student Health provide the clinical service.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC stressed the importance of ensuring that the vaccination service is adequate and appropriate and recommended strongly that the relevant schools/academic departments should take full responsibility for ensuring that all students have received the appropriate vaccinations.

PRG Recommendations	QPC Recommendations (following consultation with the Department)
That the Department of Student Health assist the Schools in UCC in developing a protocol to prohibit students who have not had the prescribed vaccinations from registering for their programmes or progressing within the programmes.	QPC strongly endorsed recommendation. QPC referred this recommendation to the Heads of Colleges ACSSS and MH for immediate action, in discussion wit the Head of the Department of Student Health and the UCC Admissions Officer.
That charges for services be revised to cover costs, to ensure that service provision does not erode the budget of the Department of Student Health.	QPC strongly endorsed recommendation. QPC referred this recommendation to Department for implementation.
That a self check-in system for students with appointments be instituted.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC referred this recommendation to Department for implementation.
That a ticketing system to process students through the system (i.e. students take a ticket on arrival at the clinic and sit and wait until called) be installed.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC noted the response of the Department and requested that this be addressed, inter alia, in the QIP.
That an audit be conducted of nursing services and telephone contacts.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC referred this recommendation to Department for implementation.
That all the team should contribute to the development of in-house protocols.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC noted the action already taken by the Department in this regard and commended the Department for its rapid implementation of the recommendation.
Staff: Career pathways/training	
A training needs analysis is required for all staff, informed by workload analysis and that all staff should participate in the Staff Performance & Development Reviews.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC noted that the Department has already progressed the implementation of this recommendation.
That appropriate job descriptions be agreed with staff.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC referred this recommendation to Head of Department for implementation.
Planning	

PRG Recommendations	QPC Recommendations (following consultation with the Department)
That a survey of student health needs be conducted by the Department to inform planning and prioritisation of services and training.	QPC strongly endorsed recommendation. QPC recommended that this be implemented as a matter of immediacy and that the outcome may provide support/evidence for the additional resources required.
That the possibility of job-sharing for all staff positions be explored.	QPC recommended that the mix of staffing arrangements should be reviewed. Best practice arrangements should be considered by the Department. QPC noted that this recommendation was made in the interests of the staff. The Department is staffed primarily by part-time staff who have no access to many facilities and opportunities that would be available if job-sharing was the norm.
That the timing of transport of biological materials to laboratories be investigated with a view to ensuring same-day collection for afternoon samples.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC referred this recommendation to Department for implementation.
Revision of current courier services and delivery/collection of medical supplies.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC referred this recommendation to Department for implementation.
That the provision of a medical card for all students under 26 years of age be explored. It is recommended that this be explored in collaboration and partnership with all student health services in Higher Education Institutions in Ireland.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC referred this recommendation to Head of Department and VP Student Experience for implementation.
That the Department investigate nurse-prescribing training.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC referred this recommendation to Department for implementation.
The Department should develop a business plan, along with an annual review of medical inflation.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC referred this recommendation to Head of Department for implementation.
Communication	
That consideration be given to the establishment of a Case Forum to enable better identification of student needs. The forum would comprise of cognate professionals from Disability Support Service, Student Counselling & Development, Chaplaincy, Student Welfare Officer.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC referred this recommendation to Head of Department, together with the Heads of Disability Support Service, Student Counselling & Development, Chaplaincy and the Student Welfare Officer, for implementation.

PRG Recommendations	QPC Recommendations (following consultation with the Department)
That consideration be given to expanding the current level of cooperation with CIT Medical Services. For example the Department may consider a joint application for SIF funding, or the joint appointment of a psychiatrist, etc.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC referred this recommendation to Head of Department for consideration and exploration of the issues.
Heads of Colleges/Faculties/Schools be invited to visit the Department of Student Health to familiarise themselves with staff and the services offered.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC referred this recommendation to Head of Department for action.
The web site needs to be updated and regularly maintained.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC referred this recommendation to Head of Department for action.
Health & Well-being of Students	
A mental health policy should be developed.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC referred this recommendation to Head of Department for action.
The alcohol policy be up-dated.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC referred this recommendation to Head of Department for action.
That the service would examine the feasibility of having a female doctor available during the summer months.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC referred this recommendation to Head of Department and VP Student Experience for consideration and implementation.
That the service examine the possibility of increasing the number of staff qualified in cervical smear taking.	QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC referred this recommendation to Head of Department for consideration of the issues involved.

SECTION C: FOLLOW-UP REPORTS

FOLLOW-UP REPORTS ON QUALITY REVIEWS 2003/04

- Office of Registrar & Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Vice President for Research Policy and Support Office

OFFICE OF REGISTRAR & VICE-PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

PEER REVIEW GROUP

- Professor P. Barker, Professor of Finance and former Registrar, DCU
- Mr. P. Curtis, Registrar, University of Western Australia, Perth, Australia
- Dr. D. Law, Academic Registrar, University of Warwick, UK
- Professor M. Murphy, Dean of Medicine & Health, UCC
- Professor C. O'Sullivan, Department of Physics, UCC (*Chair*)

SITE VISIT

The site visit was conducted over 2.5 days from 22-24 March 2004 and included visits to facilities in UCC and meetings with:

- Head and staff of the Office as a group and individually
- Heads of offices reporting to the Registrar
- Representatives of undergraduate and postgraduate students
- Representatives of Deans and Faculties
- Representatives of employers, past graduates and other external stakeholders
- Professor Áine Hyland, Vice-President
- Mr. Michael Kelleher, Secretary & Bursar/Vice-President for Administration & Finance
- Professor Gerard T. Wrixon, President
- Mr. Michael O'Sullivan, Vice-President for Planning, Communications & Development
- Ms. Carmel Cotter & Mr. Cormac McSweeney, Finance Office
- Mr. Jerry Buckley & Mr. Peter Flynn, Computer Centre
- Mr. Mark Poland, Director, Buildings & Estates
- Mr. Noel Keeley, Vice-President for Human Resources

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 Unit: Professor M. Aidan Moran, Registrar & Vice-President for Academic Affairs
No. of Staff: 42 staff in sections included in this review
Location of Unit: West Wing, Main Quadrangle

MISSION STATEMENT

"To provide UCC with efficient and effective administration of its academic business in the interests of its students, staff and the wider community."

FUNCTIONS

- The Academic Secretariat supports Academic Council, Academic Board and related committees; general co-ordination of academic business including communication with faculties and departments; correspondence with the Higher Education Authority and other external agencies on academic matters.

- The Office for Academic Programmes and Regulations facilitates the approval and review of programme planning and is responsible for the annual publication of the University Calendars (Parts I and II), the Book of Modules and the Marks and Standards book with rules governing assessment.

- The Admissions Office manages the marketing, recruitment, admission and induction of new EU students, both undergraduate and postgraduate. The office is responsible for managing UCC's access programme directed at achieving greater diversity in student intake including mature students. The office also oversees measures needed to enhance student retention.

- The Student Records and Examinations Office is responsible for registration and student records, the management of invigilated examinations and the processing and issue of examination results, the issue of academic transcripts, student certification and administration of scholarship awards.

- The Systems Administration Office is responsible for the development and maintenance of information systems to support all processes within the Registrar's Office and in particular the ITS Student Record System. The office is also responsible for analysis and dissemination of summary data and reports relating to student data.

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

- Develop academic policies and structures at undergraduate and postgraduate levels which will facilitate and support academic development.

- Ensure implementation of the academic dimension of the University's strategic development plan as a central contribution to the overall achievement of the university's goal of excellence.

- Achieve excellence and diversity in student intake in support of university policy.

- Manage the academic administration of the university so as to optimise its service to staff and students taking full advantage of IT developments.

- Improve the services the Office offers to students, staff and the community and thereby enhance the reputation of the university.

GENERAL COMMENT ON QUALITY REVIEW

The Self-Assessment Report comprised five individual Self-Assessment Reports, one from each Section together with an overarching Self-Assessment Report covering the Registrar's Office as a whole. One Section (International Students) had been reviewed previously and was not covered in the current process nor were other Student Services reporting to the Registrar (Student Careers Service, Student Health, Student Counselling & Development and Disability Support Service).

The reviewers were particularly impressed by the thorough documentation, the comprehensive analysis, the enthusiastic engagement and participation by staff and the thoughtful and reflective self-reviews that emerged.

Each individual Section of the office carried out its own SWOT analysis (two in the case of the Admissions Office, which had engaged in such an exercise one year earlier). No overall SWOT analysis involving all Registrar's Office staff was carried out; instead, an overall analysis exercise was undertaken at Registrar's Management Group (RMG) level. The reviewers found no reason to dissent from the reported results of any of the analyses undertaken. Many of the recommendations listed in the self-assessment reports were of a very detailed, local nature and many had already been implemented by the time of the site visit of the Peer Review Group; these recommendations will not be addressed explicitly in this report, which has taken a more strategic focus, but they have all informed the thinking of the Peer Review Group.

The primary benchmarking exercise for the Registrar's Office as a whole was a site visit to the University of Leeds. This was an appropriate choice in light of similarities between the recent history of UCC and of Leeds University (provincial institutions that have experienced similar relative expansions in student numbers during the past decade). Individual Sections also undertook site visits to two university institutions within the state (UCD, DCU). The results of earlier visits to universities in Western Australia by the Head of the Admissions Office were also used for benchmarking purposes. The Peer Review Group concluded that benchmarking of good practice was a valuable part of regular planning and performance monitoring and should be incorporated as far as possible into the ongoing management of the Office.

The Peer Review Group noted that the Registrar in UCC, as in other Irish universities, has broader roles than is common internationally. The Irish model gives a distinctive role to a Registrar as the principal academic officer of the university as compared to the UK or Australian model of Registrar as principal administrative officer. This was taken as a given characteristic by the Peer Review Group and provided the functional context for the review. Thus the review focused primarily on the administrative functions of the Office, the subject of the self-assessments, rather than the academic leadership role of the Registrar.

The review was also directed to that part of the Registrar's Office comprising the core academic administration areas only. However, while the Student Services areas and the International Education Office were outside the direct scope of the review, the Peer Review Group did examine broadly the relationships between the different parts of the larger 'Registrar's Office' and has not felt inhibited in making recommendations that might extend to these areas. The Peer Review Group would recommend that any future review process should incorporate all units that report directly to the Registrar.

PROGRESS MADE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PRG RECOMMENDATIONS

A meeting to discuss progress made in implementing recommendations for improvement arising from the review of the Office of Registrar & Vice-President for Academic Affairs was held on 21 January 2008.

The Registrar wished to acknowledge the hard work of his staff considering the significant rise in student numbers, the continued complexity of programmes and the increase in student diversity over the last number of years.

Present: Dr Michael Murphy, President
Dr Norma Ryan, Director, Quality Promotion Unit
Ms Deirdre O'Brien, Administrator, Quality Promotion Unit
From the Registrar's Office
Dr Hilary Doonan, Systems Administrator
Professor Paul Giller, Registrar & Vice-President for Academic Affairs
Ms Mary McDonald, Student Records and Examinations Officer
Dr Anne Mills, Admissions Officer
Ms Michelle Nelson, Head, Graduate Studies Office
Mr Con O'Brien, Academic Secretary (Vice-President for the Student Experience from Jan 08)
Mr Denis Staunton, Director, Access Programme

Abbreviations

PRG: Peer Review Group	*VP: Vice-President*
QPC: Quality Promotion Committee	*HR: Human Resources*
VP-PCD: Vice-President for Planning, Communications & Development	*VP-RPS: Vice-President for Research Policy & Support*
UMG: University Management Group	

PRG Recommendation	QPC Recommendation	Follow-up Report Jan 08
That a wider role be developed for all parts of the Registrar's Office in support of the role of the Registrar in policy initiation. This should enable a regime in which policy informs operations and *vice versa*.	Recommendation endorsed. The QPC noted that some action has already been taken in the intervening months since the review.	This has been partially implemented with some members of staff appointed as members of some Faculty/College committees, as appropriate to their function. However this is not universal and some work remains to be done. The planned review of the modus operandi of Academic Council and restructuring is an opportunity to ensure an adequate link and to strengthen links between policy and executive implementation.

PRG Recommendation	QPC Recommendation	Follow-up Report Jan 08
That those student service units currently reporting to the Registrar be integrated more closely operationally and better integrated with the core academic administration units into the managerial structure of the Registrar's Office.	The principle of greater integration of the student services was endorsed. The QPC confirmed that integration of student services is now policy of the University. Implementation is at the discussion stage and proposals are being developed for discussion and implementation. The QPC endorsed the recommendation. A suggestion that a full-time post be considered. However the QPC acknowledged the advantages of the holder of a post being a practicing academic, seconded into this post on a part-time basis and with an academic post to return to following the period in the post.	A Vice-President for the Student Experience has been appointed and took up office on 1 January 2008 with responsibility for registry functions and some student services. This new appointment will provide leadership and strategic vision in developing and achieving greater integration of services. A Director of Access has been appointed to lead the integration and mainstreaming of access within UCC. A Graduate Studies Officer has been appointed to develop administration processes and systems in support of 4th Level Ireland. The full implementation of this recommendation will only take place following finalisation of the revision of the Senior Management Portfolios.
That the Registrar negotiate with the relevant Vice Presidents and Directors of Centres to develop frameworks to manage the interface between his office and the Computer Centre, the Finance Office, the Office of Marketing and Communications, the Department of Human Resources, etc.	Strongly endorsed. The QPC noted that some improvements have taken place since the review. The QPC welcomed the streamlining of services that is on-going. The QPC noted that there are still a number of areas where streamlining could be improved – for example admission of a postgraduate student requires completion of 5 separate forms prior to successful registration. The QPC referred this issue to all offices concerned with a recommendation that streamlining of procedures be implemented as soon as possible.	Not yet implemented. The Registrar's Office is in constant contact with other university offices. A formal framework for interfacing with other university offices has yet to be established. It is anticipated that the reorganisation of the management of the university will provide a framework for such interfaces.

PRG Recommendation	QPC Recommendation	Follow-up Report Jan 08
That the devolution of the academic structure (as defined within the ITS system, e.g. module descriptors, etc) to faculties/ departments /schools be advanced and that the appropriate resources required to implement this be ensured.	Recommendation endorsed. The QPC noted the actions taken since the review. Issues around the ownership of the data and who would have overall control of the data were briefly discussed. The QPC requested the Director of the Computer Centre to prepare a paper on data policy for the UMG.	Ongoing The DMIS system allows academic departments to submit on-line all module details (including module descriptors, learning outcomes etc) and tracks the approval process. The Book of Modules is published on-line from this system. A proposal for funding has been submitted to the Strategic Innovation Fund, Cycle 2 (SIF2) which, if successful, will result in a significant enhancement of the current ITS student data system allowing full integration of curriculum capture with the student information system in the context of a devolved academic structure. The full implementation of this recommendation awaits completion of academic restructuring.
That processes be set up within the University so that more strategic and operational planning can take place and that a structured cycle of planning, budgeting and performance monitoring and reporting be developed institution wide and within the Registrar's Office.	Recommendation endorsed. The QPC noted that actions on this recommendation are on-going.	Implemented and ongoing A Governing Body committee on planning has been established and a structured cycle of strategic planning is in place. Performance management and monitoring has been undertaken with all members of staff.

PRG Recommendation	QPC Recommendation	Follow-up Report Jan 08
That a review of the present grading system be undertaken and that a promotion system for administrative staff (to operate in parallel with the grading system) be developed.	Recommendation endorsed. The QPC referred this recommendation to the Department of HR. The QPC requested a report back by the end of January 2006.	Not implemented This issue has not been addressed. It will be referred to the Director of HR with a request to bring forward proposals in respect of the university-wide grading system for the approval of UMG and for implementation through partnership.
That specific developmental multi-tasking training be provided for staff, as appropriate, as an integral part of performance management, including annual review.	Recommendation endorsed. The QPC were of the opinion that staff should discuss their needs with the Department of Human Resources and a relevant programme should be developed to meet the needs of staff.	Ongoing This issue is under constant review within each unit. As part of management good practice various systems have been implemented to ensure that key functions are supported by more than one individual (buddy system, Standard Operational Procedures). However, wider issues such as multi-tasking, inter-office rotation and sabbaticals for administrative staff are still under discussion. It was noted that in some areas it has been difficult to ensure adequate cover in the case of an absence of a key staff member due to constraints in staff numbers.

PRG Recommendation	QPC Recommendation	Follow-up Report Jan 08
That the Registrar's Office promote greater participation by staff in appropriate university-wide staff development programmes. In particular, time should be freed up to allow staff to participate in developmental activities. Multi-tasking should be used to best effect in order to ensure that work does not accumulate to be dealt with by someone who has spent, for example, two days on a training course.	Recommendation endorsed. QPC recommended that the Registrar's Office and the Department of HR should discuss this recommendation and how best it be implemented. Proposed actions to be described in the Quality Improvement Plan.	Ongoing As above. The Registrar's Office encourages all staff to participate in training programmes and will request a list from HR of those who have availed of the opportunity to date, to ensure equal participation by all.
That internal structures of the Registrar's Office be re-configured and a supporting training programme be put in place, to enable greater integration. Consideration should be given to a structure involving a smaller number of larger Sections.	Recommendation endorsed. QPC recommended that the Registrar's Office and the Department of HR should discuss this recommendation and how best it be implemented. Proposed actions to be described in the Quality Improvement Plan.	The functions of the International Office, the Access Programme and the Graduate Studies Office have all been re-configured and a consolidation of registry functions will be considered following further review. There has been an increase in the number of Sections rather than a decrease.
That the immediate commencement of the design and development of a one-stop-shop for student services (including those falling within the responsibility of the Vice-President for Finance) so that such a resource can be put in place as soon as a suitable physical location has been identified and made available.	Recommendation endorsed. The QPC noted that the Finance Office and the Registrar's Office are in discussions on this matter. It is anticipated that there will be a central delivery point, which has not yet been identified	Not implemented. The provision of a physical one-stop-shop continues to be a priority but requires significant resources to implement. Focus has concentrated on E-business and towards an online one-stop-shop. At present, Fees and IT support are not located under the Registrar's Office remit, providing a further challenge to the delivery of a fully integrated system.

PRG Recommendation	QPC Recommendation	Follow-up Report Jan 08
That IT investment to support student administration be increased. Early introduction of a student portal will be critical.	The QPC noted and commended the fact that this recommendation has already been implemented. The QPC noted that the student portal has been established.	Partially implemented and ongoing. A student portal has been established but it requires further development in order for it to cater to individual student needs. The SIF2 bid, if successful, will allow for a more intelligent system to be implemented.
That greater use be made of 'User Groups' in planning enhanced use of IT.	Recommendation endorsed. The QPC noted that a structure is in place linking the Computer Centre and the Registrar's Office.	Not implemented. 'User groups' are used to a very limited extent at the moment; however, they will be established and further developed under the new ITS system (assuming success in the SIF2 proposal). The E-Business Steering Committee, which oversees the development of the ITS system, has representatives (academic and administrative) from academic departments/Colleges, Students Union and administration offices. Feedback from users of the DMIS system is sought at regular intervals either through focus groups or directly by email.
That there be a reduction in the reliance on and production of hardcopy versions of official documents such as Calendars.	Recommendation strongly endorsed. The QPC noted that this recommendation has already been implemented in 2005, in that the Calendar and Book of Modules are now available in electronic format only.	Implemented. Official documents such as the Calendar and book of Modules are all web-based now.

PRG Recommendation	QPC Recommendation	Follow-up Report Jan 08
That there be a more integrated approach to the University's core publications, perhaps through the creation of a single Publications Office.	Recommendation endorsed. QPC recommended that this recommendation be referred to the VP for Planning, Communications & Development	Not implemented Academic publications are located within the Registrar's Office and corporate publications within Media & Communications.
That the suitability of the ITS system should be carefully examined by a project team from the Registrar's Office, the Finance Office and the Computer Bureau.	Recommendation endorsed. The QPC noted that this action on this recommendation is already underway.	Implemented. The ITS system has been reviewed. The outcome of the review found that the present ITS system has limitations and the Office is seeking funding for an upgraded student information system.
That there be greater involvement of all Registrar's Office Sections in planning and resource allocation within the Office and a greater personal involvement of the Registrar in this process.	Recommendation endorsed.	Ongoing The Registrar meets with the Heads of individual units each year in order to discuss their budget for the coming year. Mid term reviews are planned. Away Days have been held and offered the opportunity for discussion on planning and resource allocation. Further enhancements will be discussed with Heads of Offices.
That the Registrar's Office develop a programme of regular self-evaluation including such features as benchmarking and SWOT exercises together with routine staff exchange arrangements and client satisfaction surveys.	Recommendation endorsed.	Work has been initiated on process mapping in order to map key functions and activities within the Registrar's Office. A benchmarking exercise was undertaken against the University of Southampton. Some client satisfaction surveys have been implemented (e.g. Orientation).

PRG Recommendation	QPC Recommendation	Follow-up Report Jan 08
That an annual cycle of key activities within Registrars Office be prepared together with associated deadlines. A web-delivered Calendar of Events should be derived from this critical path analysis planning and should be published for all stakeholders to access. The Registrar should seek from the appropriate university bodies a clear authority to enforce deadlines on faculties, schools and departments, including the use of appropriate sanctions.	Recommendation endorsed.	Ongoing A clear structure of processes and activities have been developed for many key activities and approved by Academic Council. However, issues remain surrounding adherence to approved timelines for proposals for new programmes and major changes.
That more systematic performance management structures within the Registrar's Office be developed.	Recommendation endorsed.	Implemented Implemented with the introduction of Performance Management reviews.
That documentation of policies and procedures including the formulation of standard operating procedures be put in place in all areas of the Registrar's Office as a matter of urgency.	Recommendation endorsed.	Implemented and ongoing The majority of offices have a Standard Operation Procedures manual and endeavour to keep it up to date at all times.

PRG Recommendation	QPC Recommendation	Follow-up Report Jan 08
That an urgent application be made to the university Safety Officer for a comprehensive Health and Safety review, including ergonomic screening, of the entire Registrar's Office area.	Recommendation endorsed.	Ongoing Many improvements have been introduced and offices have been upgraded, funded in the main by the offices themselves, including: Admissions Office, Graduate Studies Office, Quality Promotion Unit, Disability Support Services and Academic Programmes & Regulations. However, some issues remain to be resolved, including air-conditioning for every office on the top floor of the West Wing. Access for disabled students/staff to the West Wing, which is a protected building, is a major issue. The feasibility of installing a lift has been taken up with the Buildings Office.

OFFICE OF VICE PRESIDENT FOR RESEARCH POLICY AND SUPPORT

PEER REVIEW GROUP

- Professor J. Gamble, Department of Geology, UCC (Chair)
- Mr. T. Hockaday, Isis Innovation Ltd., University of Oxford, UK
- Mr. M. Kelleher, Secretary & Bursar, UCC
- Dr. C. O'Carroll, Conference of Heads of Irish Universities, Dublin
- Mr. F. Ó Móráin, Enterprise Ireland, Dublin, Ireland

SITE VISIT

The site visit was conducted over 2.5 days from 12-14 May 2004 and included visits to facilities and meetings with

- Head and staff of the Unit as a group and individually
- Representatives of internal users of the services offered by the Office
- Representatives of employers, past graduates and other external stakeholders
- Professor Gerard Wrixon, President
- Mr. Michael O'Sullivan, Vice-President for Planning, Communications & Development
- Mr. John Fitzgerald, Librarian
- Mr. Mark Poland, Director, Buildings & Estates
- Professor David Cox, Dean, Faculty of Arts
- Mr. Michael Farrell, Administrative Secretary

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

Vice-President for Research Policy & Support: Professor J. Kevin Collins
No. of Staff: 8 staff: 1 Vice-President, 2 Heads of offices, 1 Projects Officer, 2 full-time contract staff, 2 administrative support staff.
Location of Unit: North Wing, Main Quadrangle; No 5, Brighton Villas

MISSION STATEMENT

"To provide the College with research support through information, assistance, guidance and advice on all aspects of the planning, execution, sustaining and application of research."

FUNCTION

- To develop and implement research policy in UCC in line with the research strategy outlined in the Strategic Plan Agenda for Excellence.

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

- Quality improvement of its research infrastructure.

- Creation of centres of excellence which bridge traditional divisions in the Sciences, Technology and Humanities and which promote collaboration and integration.

- Increased quality of graduate output

- Strategic development of the University's capacity for innovation

- Support the commercialisation of research outputs as and where appropriate and beneficial to UCC

- Enhance UCC's competitiveness in attracting external funding

- To optimise protection and commercialisation of research for the benefit of the University, the regional and national economies

- The implementation of a research policy for the promotion of excellence across a range of prioritised subjects.

GENERAL COMMENT ON QUALITY REVIEW

The review team was impressed by the Self-Assessment Report and congratulated the Office for Research Policy & Support team for the quality, depth and frankness of the information provided.

The panel agreed that the SWOT analysis provided by Research Support Office and Industrial Liaison Office was accurate, honest, forthright and refreshingly open. A number of the issues raised in the SWOT analysis were amplified as a result of the interview sessions carried out in the interview of staff. These formed a substantive portion of the recommendations below.

The panel concluded that the choice of comparisons in the UK universities were not directly comparable with UCC. In the case of the benchmarking undertaken by the Research Policy & Support Office, the panel noted that the name of the UK comparator was not identified, but understood the need to uphold a request for confidentiality in this regard. Nevertheless, it would have been preferable if the selected institution had been available for cross-referencing by the panel. In relation to the benchmarking exercise of the Industrial Liaison Office, the UK examples quoted were not considered appropriate for reasons of scale of operations in these institutions relative to UCC. Comparison with Trinity College Dublin was considered entirely appropriate for the purposes of the assessment.

The panel commented in further detail under each of the headings in the Peer Review Group report.

PROGRESS MADE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PRG RECOMMENDATIONS

A meeting to discuss progress made in implementing recommendations for improvement arising from the review of the Office of the Vice-President for Research Policy and Support was held on 29 January 2008.

Present: Professor Peter Kennedy, Vice-President for Research Policy & Support
              Mr. Brendan Cremen, Head, Technology Transfer Office
              Dr. Ruth Davis, Research Support Officer
              Professor Paul Giller, Registrar and Vice-President for Academic Affairs
              Dr. Norma Ryan, Director, Quality Promotion

Abbreviations

PRG: Peer Review Group	VP: Vice-President
QPC: Quality Promotion Committee	HR: Human Resources
UMG: University Management Group	ILO: Industrial Liaison Office
AC: Academic Council	ORPS: Office for Research Policy & Support
GB: Governing Body	RSO: Research Support Office
VP-RPS: Vice-President for Research Policy & Support	VPO: Vice-President's Office
IP: Intellectual Property	OVPRPS: Office of the Vice-President for Research Policy & Support

Recommendation of PRG	**Recommendation of QPC**	**Follow-up Report Jan 08**
That the request for more resources needs to be accompanied by clear plans and objectives identifying what the new resources will deliver to the benefit of the University. In asking for more resources the office needs to develop a clear business plan setting out these returns which are not only financial. This requires the members of the Office to meet new challenges.	Recommendation endorsed. QPC noted that the VP is currently developing a plan to be brought to UMG.	VP is in process of developing plans in the light of the present academic and administrative restructuring process in UCC. Some changes have been made in that the Technology Transfer Office has been established and the Research Office has expanded its personnel. These changes have been funded from external sources of income.
That the future role of the VP for Research should be that of a leadership role in developing research policies and strategies for all the areas of the University. The administrative and professional roles should be delegated to appropriate senior staff reporting to the Vice-President for Research.	Recommendation endorsed. QPC noted that the next call for proposals for PRTLI-IV is imminent and that the VP-RPS will be required to take a leadership role in leading preparation of proposals.	Implemented. The success of UCC in the PRTLI-IV competition was noted.

Recommendation of PRG	Recommendation of QPC	Follow-up Report Jan 08
That there is a need to restructure and consolidate the commercialisation aspect of research activities in the University.	Recommendation endorsed. The QPC noted the comments made with respect to the need for structuring of the technology transfer function of the Office and for expertise in the specific aspects of commercialisation, e.g. Biotransfer, ICT. At the same time the need for communication and coordination between those responsible for such activities in different centres was acknowledged. The Office of the VP-RPS has a role to play in coordinating these activities.	The Technology Transfer Office has been established and staff recruited. Processes need to be developed and the management of incubation space remains to be determined.
To avoid issues of the appearance of conflict of interest there is a need for transparency and formality in University wide decision-making.	Recommendation strongly endorsed. QPC welcomed actions by Office: Issues identified by the VPRPS that require attention by UMG are being brought to UMG. Within OVPRPS, processes that require formalisation are being identified and formalised.	All key decisions are brought to UMG for decision. Processes have been identified and formalised. The on-going process to write standard operating procedures is up-to-date.
The panel recommends better communication to ensure that the processes by which University-wide decisions related to research policy are made are more open and accountable. This will require the ORPS to seek advice, possibly from HR, and to activate processes in which lead to change in this area	Recommendation endorsed. QPC acknowledged the need for better communications within the University, particularly in relation to communication of decisions made by UMG to the wider University community.	VPRPS is reporting monthly to UMG. Deans/Heads of Colleges are being increasingly involved in the development and implementation of research policy. Communications concerning decisions remain to be improved.

Recommendation of PRG	Recommendation of QPC	Follow-up Report Jan 08
In relation to the structure of the ILO and RSO the panel sees a need for closer liaison between the two - the panel recognises the parallelism of the RSO and ILO – there needs to be more and more effective inter-communication.	Recommendation endorsed.	Implemented. All OVPRPS staff meet together biweekly to discuss current issues and progress. A central computer server has been bought for sharing information and to ensure compatibility. The web site of the office is being rewritten. A project has been initiated to produce material to advertise research in UCC.
Through the proceedings the panel became aware of the need to address issues of management in the entire ORPS – this involves communication, planning and prioritisation of activities.	Recommendation endorsed. The QPC noted and welcomed the commitment for the time to be spent on VP duties by the post-holder	The VP-RPS is spending 80% of his time in the office. Internal office communications, planning, and prioritisation are being addressed through biweekly staff meetings, and the VP-RPS taking a proactive role in task assignment.
That the location of office space should be reviewed.	QPC endorsed the on-going discussions leading to a review of locations and possibilities.	Location of office space remains an unresolved issue. Overall staff are located in three separate locations. It is planned that the Technology Transfer Office will move into the new IT Building on its completion.
That senior managers should review the roles and interactions between various academic committees, particularly those associated with the wider research activities of the University. It is vital that an open and effective conduit of communication be maintained between ORPS, Research Committees and Senior Management at UCC.	QPC noted and endorsed that this recommendation will be considered as part of the discussions on re-structuring. This is a standing item on the UMG agenda. The VP-RPS is preparing a report for UMG.	Not implemented.

FOLLOW-UP REPORTS ON QUALITY REVIEWS 2005/06

- Department of Physiology

DEPARTMENT OF PHYSIOLOGY

PEER REVIEW GROUP

- Professor John Coote, Department of Physiology, University of Birmingham, UK
- Professor Gerald Fitzgerald, Department of Microbiology, UCC
- Professor Peter Jones, Department of Zoology, Ecology & Plant Science, UCC (Chair)
- Professor Alan Keenan, School of Biomolecular & Biomedical Science, UCD

SITE VISIT

The site visit was conducted over 2.5 days from 17-19 October 2005 and included visits to departmental and library facilities and meetings with

- 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 & Vice-President for Academic Affairs
- Professor Michael Murphy, Acting Head, College of Medicine & Health/ Dean of Faculty of Medicine & Health
- Ms Margot Conrick, Head of Information Services, UCC Library
- Mr Cathal Kerrigan, Therapies and Basic Sciences for Medicine Librarian
- Professor Eamonn Quigley, Head, Medical School
- Ms Carmel Cotter, Finance Office
- Professor Peter Kennedy, Vice-President for Research Policy and Support
- Heads or nominees of Heads of Schools of Professional Programmes
- Professor Patrick Fitzpatrick, Acting Head, College of Science, Engineering & Food Science/Acting Dean of Faculty of 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

Note: data given is for the academic year 2005/06

Head of Department:	Professor Edward Johns
Staff:	*11 academic staff (1 Professor, 1 Adjunct Professor, 1 Statutory Lecturer, 1 Senior Lecturer, 7 Lecturers), 2 Executive Assistants.*
Staff Academic FTE:	11.54
Student/Staff FTE Ratio:	20.40
Location of Department:	Windle Building and Biosciences Institute
Degrees/Diplomas offered:	Dentistry, BSc, Medicine, Pharmacy, MSc, PhD

Number of Students

The Department has 235.43 Student FTEs distributed as follows:

Undergraduate Student FTEs

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	**Total U/G**	Economic	Visiting American	Visiting European
84.18	102.67	22.50	17.08	**226.43**	48.78	0.17	0.58

Postgraduate Student FTEs

HDip	Master Taught	Master Research	PhD	**Total P/G**
0	3	0	6	**9**

MISSION STATEMENT

To create and communicate knowledge in the area of Physiology from a molecular to integrative level, through the scholarship of teaching and research.

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

- Provide outstanding education in physiology and its applicability to health sciences, in undergraduate, graduate and professional areas.

- Produce research, scholarship and creative work in the field of Physiology, from a molecular to integrative level, of an excellence that is recognized internationally, nationally, and locally.

- Provide an equitable and fair environment, focused on learning, for both students and staff.

- Provide a high quality of undergraduate student experience.

- Build on and enhance a strong tradition of community and professional service in the Department of Physiology.

GENERAL COMMENT ON QUALITY REVIEW

Self-Assessment Report
The PRG was impressed by the Self-Assessment Report (SAR). It was comprehensive, with evidence of real intradepartmental collaboration. The PRG were happy that the report reflected clearly and accurately the activities of the department.

SWOT Analysis
The department provided a detailed SWOT Analysis in the SAR. The reviewers commended the Department for their thorough and inclusive preparation of the SWOT analysis.
Strengths: The PRG agreed with the SAR that the strengths of the department include the staff, the broad range of skills and knowledge in the Department and the teaching by the staff of the Department. Research skills are also broad-ranging and the Department has the potential to

develop a broad-based research profile. A strong sense of loyalty to the Department and to 'Physiology' in general was evident.

Weaknesses: The PRG agreed that there is a lack of strategy, and a lack of structure and systems. There is the perception that workloads of the staff of the department are excessive and that there is a very heavy teaching workload in particular, which makes it more difficult to increase the research output of the Department.

Opportunities and Challenges: The PRG felt that the possibilities for new funding avenues at national and EU levels will be an opportunity for the Department to exploit. The PRG recognised that the physical environment of the Windle Building is grossly inadequate in both quality and quantity of space provided to the Department. The PRG agreed with the assessment made by the Department in relation to student funding and expectations and considered that there are and will be opportunities to promote the discipline of Physiology as a valuable degree option to undergraduates. The PRG agreed with the assessment made by the Department in that technology is seen as an opportunity to improve the quality of teaching and reduce teaching workloads. Other challenges that the Department is facing are the lack of any representation on the College of Medicine & Health Board and the likelihood of increased and more diverse entry into medical programmes.

Benchmarking

The PRG considered that the benchmarking exercise was carried out thoroughly by the Department.

Teaching & Learning

The PRG felt that it was very clear, based on discussions with students, graduates and other stakeholders, that the quality of teaching by all staff in the Department is of the highest standard

Research & Scholarly Activity

The appointment of the new Head of Department and recent new academic appointments of lecturers have led to the establishment of several energetic research programmes.

PROGRESS MADE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PRG RECOMMENDATIONS

A meeting to discuss progress made in implementing recommendations for improvement arising from the review of the Department of Physiology was held on 30 January 2008.

Present: Professor Patrick Fitzpatrick, Head, College of Science, Engineering and Food Science
Professor Robbie McConnell, Acting Head, College of Medicine and Health
Professor David Kerins, Head, School of Medicine
Professor Edward Johns, Head, Department of Physiology
Dr Norma Ryan, Director, Quality Promotion Unit
Ms Deirdre O'Brien, Administrator, Quality Promotion Unit

Abbreviations
 PRG: Peer Review Group   *VP: Vice-President*
 QPC: Quality Promotion Committee   *QIP: Quality Improvement Plan*
 SEFS: Science, Engineering & Food Science   *HR: Human Resources*
 M&H: Medicine & Health   *B&E: Buildings & Estates*

PRG Recommendation	QPC Recommendation	Follow-up Report Jan 08
That the possibility of combining students from different streams into common modules be examined.	Recommendation endorsed. The QPC recommended that the Department should keep this issue under continuous review, with an examination of all possibilities, on an on-going basis.	Ongoing This recommendation is under active debate within the Department and changes are introduced every year in an effort to implement this recommendation. It should be noted that Physiology, to a large degree, is subject to the decisions made in other departments regarding their course delivery and timetable and the Department cannot always dictate the curriculum and how it is delivered.
That the Department give consideration to the potential advantages that would accrue from the clustering of cognate disciplines such as Physiology, Pharmacology and Anatomy.	Recommendation endorsed. The QPC noted the positive response of the Department to this recommendation. The QPC recommended strongly that discussions around this issue and possibilities arising from this should proceed.	Ongoing Discussions are ongoing, in the light of academic restructuring, regarding a potential new working relationship between Physiology, Anatomy and Pharmacology. it is hoped these discussions will be finalised in the current academic year.
That the Department/discipline of Physiology be represented at Faculty Board or equivalent decision-making body in the new College of Medicine and Health. Effective communication channels need to be established in order that all relevant decisions be communicated to the Department in sufficient time for the Department to respond.	The QPC noted the positive response of the Department to this recommendation and the reasons for it. the QPC endorsed the recommendation that effective channels of communication be established. The QPC was of the opinion that all the pre-clinical sciences (and clinical disciplines) should be represented at College of M&H Board and that mechanisms should be put in place to effect this	Not implemented This recommendation has not been implemented to date; however, it will be addressed and explored during the on-going restructuring process.

PRG Recommendation	QPC Recommendation	Follow-up Report Jan 08
That, in view of the unacceptable quality of the present building, the University takes measures to rectify this as a matter of urgency.	The QPC noted that within the new 4th level initiative there will be money set aside for refurbishment of 'older' buildings the Universities. The University is aware of the difficulties experienced in the Windle Building and is hopeful that money will be released by the Government in 2006 for such purposes. The QPC recommended to Buildings & Estates that the refurbishment of the Windle Building be listed as a priority as soon as funds become available. The QPC also noted that there if the Universities are part of the NPD 2006 – 20011 then this might provide another source of funds	Implemented This recommendation has been implemented. Physiology will be housed in the new IT Building which is due for completion in December 2008. However, there remains some concern that the Department may be divided physically between two locations. Presently there is no accommodation for staff in the new IT Building and assurances are being sought that all departmental offices and laboratories will be located in the IT Building
That teaching at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels be supported by a senior administrator, to be appointed in addition to the existing Senior Executive Assistant. Such a resource could more likely be provided by an amalgamated structure. The appointment of a senior administrator would free up technical support time	The QPC referred this recommendation to the Acting Head of the College of M&H for consideration. The QPC also noted that such appointments are more likely in an amalgamated structure and recommended that this possibility be very actively explored.	Not implemented. The implementation of this recommendation is dependent on the outcome of restructuring and the proposed new working relationship between Anatomy, Physiology and Pharmacology.
That all course and year co-ordinators be clearly identifiable to the student body.	Recommendation endorsed. The QPC noted the departmental response re the identification of coordinators in the Book of Modules but is concerned that such information is also made available in student handbooks and on Notice-Boards in the Department. The appointment of year co-ordinators was deemed very important.	All co-ordinators are identified in the Book of Modules and on Blackboard. All year coordinators have been identified, noting that slightly different arrangements pertain in the School of Medicine.

PRG Recommendation	QPC Recommendation	Follow-up Report Jan 08
That, in light of current significant teaching commitments of the staff, the Department may wish to consider further exploiting IT resources for delivery of course material	Recommendation endorsed. The QPC noted that the Computer Centre has taken over the management of the computers in the Department and that the Department should liaise with the Computer Centre on the support to be provided. The QPC also suggested that the Department should liaise with the Schools in the Brookfield Campus concerning the possibility of sharing some of the excellent facilities provided there.	Ongoing There is an increased use of IT, where possible. A large number of new laboratory sessions have been developed and additional IT support will now be provided to all departments by the School of Medicine. However, the IT facilities cannot be used to their full potential because of constraints in the Windle Building. It is anticipated that the facilities in the new IT building will allow for the full implementation of this recommendation.
That teaching delivery, currently on a course-wide basis, be replaced with one more focused on a systems-based model. This would facilitate teaching across programmes and reduce duplication of effort.	Recommendation endorsed. The QPC welcomed the response of the Department that the recommendation will be considered very carefully.	Ongoing This recommendation has been implemented in part with the BSc programme and is under active development, with regular and ongoing discussions at departmental level.
That any further expansion of teaching commitments be matched by resource allocation to recruit appropriate lecturing staff	Recommendation endorsed.	Implemented Three new staff have been employed and will commence work over the next three months. The Head of Department is anxious to ensure adequate office space for them and has undertaken to write to the UMG Space Sub-Committee in this respect.

PRG Recommendation	QPC Recommendation	Follow-up Report Jan 08
That a mechanism be developed to provide feedback to students following examination and other methods of assessment.	Recommendation endorsed. QPC welcomed actions taken by Department *(… informal feedback is given to students who fail their examination and support is given. In terms of MCQ tests, the Department is currently developing software whereby MCQ tests can be provided, marked and a degree of feedback given almost instantaneously. This will initially be tried and tested by having lab tests at the end of each practical using the computer systems. In this way, the student should have informative feedback on their learning objectives almost immediately).*and noted that a grant to assist in this project has been provided from the Quality Improvement Fund 2005	Ongoing This is being actively considered and developed within the Department. The MCQ developments (software providing instant feedback) introduced to date are working well.
That the Department continues to develop its BSc Physiology Degree, into a truly flagship programme that will provide a platform for the expansion of postgraduate driven-research.	Recommendation strongly endorsed. Response of Department welcomed *(Response: this recommendation is one that is already being actively considered by the Department and in fact the process was begun in 2002. The appointment of two new academic staff, the disruption of teaching synergies for Medical, Dental and Science students has meant that the Science course had to be taught entirely separately. Thus, the Department has seized this opportunity and meetings are being held to develop a flagship programme for the BSc Physiology Degree).*	Ongoing The Department continues to develop and implement strategies to ensure that the BSc Physiology Degree is the flagship programme of the Department.

PRG Recommendation	QPC Recommendation	Follow-up Report Jan 08
That the Departmental Strategic Plan should take particular cognisance of research opportunities to develop translational research programmes from molecules to man.	Recommendation endorsed.	Implemented The Department has begun to develop a Research Plan. All research active staff have contributed to a potential research strategy.
That further encouragement be given to the development of collaborative research, by members of staff, with others in cognate research areas in other departments	Recommendation endorsed.	Ongoing The Department is actively pursuing research collaborations.
That a formal appropriate representative Departmental Committee be established, which should meet at least once a term	Recommendation endorsed. QPC noted and welcomed action by Department (*Response: a Departmental Committee has already been established and has met twice. Its composition and remit are still under consideration and development. Several sub-groups have been established to monitor and report on progress of teaching in each of the major programmes. The plan is that the full committee will meet at least twice per term*).	Not implemented Due to administrative shortages all departmental committees meet on an *ad hoc* basis. The Head of Department has undertaken to write to the Head of College to pursue the additional administrative support required.
That a staff /student liaison committee be established	Recommendation endorsed.	Not implemented As above - due to administrative shortages all departmental committees meet on an *ad hoc* basis. The Head of Department has undertaken to write to the Head of College to pursue the extra administrative support required.

PRG Recommendation	QPC Recommendation	Follow-up Report Jan 08
That the allocation of teaching and other duties be done in a fully transparent manner.	Recommendation endorsed.	Ongoing. The Department has developed a workload plan which will be considered further at the next departmental Away Day.
That the Department develop a Strategic Plan, covering teaching, research, administration and other aspects such as staff and curriculum development	Recommendation strongly endorsed.	Ongoing The Departmental Strategic Plan is still under development.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: QUALITY PROMOTION COMMITTEE

Reports to: Governing Body

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.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

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 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 fulfil these responsibilities the Committee will:

- 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.

- Approve the schedule for departmental/unit QI/QA reviews.

- Approve the composition of the Peer Review Group.

- Receive and consider reports and minutes from Faculty management committees (or equivalent) regarding work in relation to: academic standards; quality assurance; quality improvement.

- 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.

- 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.

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

- 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 reports.

- 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.

- Keep under review quality standards for central services.

- Liaise with other bodies in the University as appropriate.

- Report annually to the Governing Body.

CONSTITUTION

Ex Officio:

- President (Chair)

- Registrar & Vice-President for Academic Affairs

- Vice-President for Support Operations

- Bursar

- Director of Quality Promotion (Secretary)

- President of Students' Union

Nominated Members:

4 Academics – 1 from each College

3 representatives from administration and services

2 external members of 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 2: QUALITY REVIEW SCHEDULE 2007-2014

All Degrees and Diplomas and Certificates offered by a Department/School are included in the review of an academic department

1. **Finalised Schedule: Quality Reviews 2007/08 – 2009/10**
2. **Draft Schedule: Quality Reviews 2010/11 – 2013/14**

1. FINALISED SCHEDULE: QUALITY REVIEWS 2007/08 – 2009/10

QUALITY REVIEWS 2007/08

Chaplaincy

Department of Classics

Department of Economics

Department of German

Drama & Theatre Studies Programmes

Student Health Department

University Dental School & Hospital

QUALITY REVIEWS 2008/09

Biological Services Unit

Department of Government

Research Quality Review – 15 Panels covering all academic departments and research institutes in UCC

QUALITY REVIEWS 2009/10

College of Medicine & Health

Department of Chemistry

Department of Computer Science

Department of Food & Nutritional Sciences

Office of Buildings & Estates

Office of Corporate and Legal Affairs

School of Clinical Therapies
- Occupational Therapy
- Speech & Hearing Sciences

School of English

School of History
- History
- History of Art

School of Pharmacy

2. DRAFT SCHEDULE 2010/11 – 2013/14 *Approved by QPC on 20 April 2009*

Note: the QPC approved the extension of the second review cycle from that originally approved to allow for the research quality review to be conducted in 2008/09

QUALITY REVIEWS 2010/11

Centre for Policy Studies

College of Arts, Celtic Studies & Social Sciences

Department of Food Business & Development

Department of Physics

Food Industry Training Unit

Ionad na Gaeilge Labhartha

School of Mathematical Sciences
- Applied Mathematics
- Mathematics
- Statistics
- Statistical Consultancy Unit

School of Music

School of Sociology & Philosophy
- Philosophy
- Sociology

Scoil Léann na Gaeilge: Gaeilge, Béaloideas, Léann Ceilteach
- Early & Medieval Irish
- Folklore & Ethnology
- Modern Irish

QUALITY REVIEWS 2011/12

Centre for Architectural Education

College of Science, Food Science & Engineering

Department of Accounting, Finance & Information Systems

Department of Human Resources

Department of Law

Department of Management & Marketing

Information Services
- Library

- Computer Centre
- Audio Visual Services
- Support for e-learning

Office of VP Research Policy & Support
- Research Office
- Technology Transfer Office

Office of VP Teaching & Learning
- Centre for Adult Continuing Education
- Ionad Bairre
- Including a Thematic Review of the quality of teaching & learning strategies, policies and delivery

School of ZEPS and Geology
- Geology
- Zoology, Ecology & Plant Science

QUALITY REVIEWS 2012/13

College of Business & Law
- Faculty of Commerce
- Faculty of Law

Finance Office

Registrar's Office
- Academic Programmes & Regulations
- Academic Secretariat
- Admissions
- Graduate Studies
- International Education
- Student Records & Examinations
- Systems Administration
- Language Centre

School of Applied Psychology

School of Applied Social Studies

School of Education
- Education
- Sports Studies

School of Engineering
- Civil & Environmental Engineering
- Electrical & Electronic Engineering
- Microelectronic Engineering
- Process & Chemical Engineering

School of Languages, Literatures & Cultures
- French
- German
- Hispanic Studies
- Italian

School of Nursing & Midwifery

Student Support Services
- Access
  - Disability Support
  - Mature Students
  - UCC Plus
- Accommodation & Student Activities
- Careers
- Counselling & Development
- Student Health Department
- Physical Education & Sport
- Student Centre
- Student Union
- Student Clubs and Societies

QUALITY REVIEWS 2013/14

Department of Religious Studies

School of Asian Studies
- Chinese
- Korean

School of Human Environment
- Archaeology
- Geography

School of Life Sciences
- Anatomy
- Biochemistry
- Microbiology
- Pharmacology
- Physiology

School of Medicine
- All clinical disciplines

Institutional Review - timing uncertain

To be determined by IUQB, and will be of the QA procedures of the University and the effectiveness of the quality assurance measures, along with a consideration of compliance with the ESG (European Standards and guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education). Incorporates a review of the Quality Promotion Unit. Detailed guidelines to be determined by IUQB.

Interdisciplinary Programmes in Arts to be assigned to a review year

Programme	Participating Disciplines
Applied Linguistics	English, French, German, Modern Irish
BComm Degrees	
BSc Degree (Environmental Sciences & Environmental Studies)	
Contemporary Chinese Culture & Business	Chinese, Economics, Food Business & Development, Government, Law, Management & Marketing
Drama & Theatre Studies *(completed 07/08)*	Education, English, French, German Italian, Music, Hispanic Studies
Early Childhood Studies	Applied Psychology, Applied Social Studies, Education, Paediatrics
Film Studies	Computer Science, English, French, German, Hispanic Studies, Italian, Music, Philosophy, Sociology
Language & Cultural Studies	All Disciplines in the College
MA Contemporary Migration & Diaspora Studies	Applied Psychology, Applied Social Studies, Geography, Law, Sociology
MPlan and Sustainable Development	Applied Social Studies, Geography, Sociology
Politics	Government, History, Philosophy
Women's Studies	Applied Social Studies, Folklore & Ethnology, French, Hispanic Studies, History, Irish/Gaeilge, Italian, Law, Philosophy, Sociology