

QUALITY REVIEW FOLLOW-UP MEETING

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS

A meeting to discuss progress made in implementing recommendations for improvement arising from the quality review of the Department of Economics was held on 20 January 2010.

Present: Professor Irene Lynch-Fannon, Head, College of Business & Law
 Professor Connell Fanning, Head, Department of Economics
 Dr Declan Jordan, Department of Economics
 Dr Catherine Kavanagh, Department of Economics
 Ms Mary Maguire, Manager, Department of Economics
 Dr Niall O’Sullivan, Department of Economics
 Dr Eleanor Doyle, Department of Economics
 Dr Norma Ryan, Director, Quality Promotion Unit
 Ms Deirdre O’Brien, Administrative Officer, Quality Promotion Unit

Abbreviations

PRG: Peer Review Group

QPC: Quality Promotion Committee

HR: Human Resources

BL: Business & Law

VP: Vice-President

QIP: Quality Improvement Plan

ACSSS: Arts, Celtic Studies & Social Sciences

PRG Recommendation	QPC Recommendation	Follow-up Meeting Jan 2010
Recommendations to the University		
1.	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.	Recommendation endorsed. QPC recommends that senior management continues to support attempts by department to recruit staff into senior positions in the department.
2.	That positions at senior levels, already approved by the University, be filled as a matter of urgency.	Recommendation endorsed. QPC recommended that the University continues to support strategic appointments in the Department
3.	Future academic appointments must be both marketed internationally and internationally competitive.	Recommendation strongly endorsed.

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4.	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.	Not implemented. The policy of the University is that all generated income is allocated to the Relevant University budget holder – in this case the Head of College of Business & Law. It would require a change of University policy if the generated income from activities such as education of non-EU students was to be assigned directly to departments.
5.	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.	Ongoing Discussions are underway with Buildings & Estates. The Department is concerned that the entire infrastructure (physical/computer/internet etc) be addressed in order to ensure that they are operating to their full potential. The Department and the Head of College believe that a published refurbishment cycle would benefit the university.
6.	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. The QPC recognised the challenges posed by the split location of staff of the department and in other departments/academic units of the University.	Not implemented. Due to the current financial circumstances it is difficult for the University to assign additional resources other than those already available to the Department. The Department wishes this issue be resolved as soon as possible.
7.	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.	Implemented
Recommendations to the Department			
8.	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	Ongoing There is a staff development programme in place and all members of staff are facilitated and encouraged to obtain PhDs.

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		criteria for promotion.	High teaching and administration workloads are a factor for some staff, making it difficult for them to meet all the criteria for promotion.
9.	The Department needs to develop a research culture that is consistent with its established excellence in teaching.	<p>Recommendation strongly endorsed.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>The Department is working towards developing a research culture; however, the Department believes that extra funding is required to implement this recommendation. The Department listed a number of proposals to implement this recommendation in its QIP, all of which require funding to implement. The Head of BL has also agreed to consider these proposals for funding via the Faculty of Commerce strategic development fund.</p>
10.	The Department needs to engage fully with the ongoing university debate on role, development and measurement of research in a world-class regional university.	<p>Recommendation strongly endorsed.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>There are now three staff members on the faculty research committee.</p>
11.	The policies, practices and strategies of the Department must be subject to discussion and challenge at regular fora, enabling and facilitating constructive criticism.	<p>Recommendation strongly endorsed.</p> <p>QPC welcomes the agreement of the Department to the implementation of this recommendation. QPC recommends 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.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>The department has a three year strategy which has been developed collegially.</p> <p><i>Response from Nov 08</i> - The Department does not have the facilities allowing for the whole department to meet at once, regularly and flexibly.</p> <p>The Department works well without a rigid meeting structure. Policies, practices and strategies are discussed over email on a share-point site, in small meetings with interested & relevant parties – e.g. meetings of Programme Teams, meetings of Co-Chairs on academic management committees. Fora, where all members attend, are used when they are</p>

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			relevant and are an efficient use of resources.
12.	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.	Recommendation strongly endorsed. QPC recognised that this is international best practice.	Implemented Economics regularly seek evaluation from their students. There is also a staff student liaison committee which meets regularly.