



Fheabhsú Cáilíochta
Quality Enhancement

Quality Enhancement Plan

School of Physics

January 2024

FOR COMPLETION BY QEU	
Date of Peer Review visit: 18 th -19 th November & 24 th – 26 th November 2021	Head of Unit: Professor Paul Callanan
Link to Panel Report published on QEU website: https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/qualityenhancementunit/reports/sefs/DepartmentofPhysics-PeerReviewGroupReport2020-21.pdf	Date QEP considered by Quality Enhancement Committee: 23 rd November 2023

Item No	Panel Recommendation	Actions Planned ¹	Responsibility for Action ²	Resource Implications ³	Implementation Schedule ⁴	Effectiveness/Impact ⁵ <i>To be completed as part of follow-up</i>
1	Increasing income through the recruitment of International Students.	The School has begun to liaise with the UCC US agent to improve student recruitment from that	School Teaching and Learning Committee, HoS	Expanded and refurbished teaching space, as per Physics	Over next two years	Highest

¹ May include actions planned within the unit or those that require interface with other parts of the university

² E.g. Head of School, School Manager, all staff, specific committees etc

³ Resources – the financial or human resources required to implement the recommendation

⁴ Interim milestone dates can be included here (e.g. within 6 months, within 12 months, within 3 years etc.)

⁵ **To be completed as part of follow-up 12-15 months post publication of QEP** - Recognising the need to reflect on the effectiveness of actions undertaken, and to what extent the actions have achieved their intended outcome

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		source, and has in the past been in detailed contact with Minzu University in China. The School very much hopes that the latter can be re-started, especially after the recent visit of UCC VP Global and her team to China.		plans for Kane Refurbishment. Travel costs for funding for academic visits to recruitment fairs and collaborating universities.		
2	Work with and through the College of SEFS to approach SFI for funding for two further lectureships/professorships in the area of Quantum Physics.	The School is a key element of UCC Futures/Quantum and Photonics. As such, a detailed business plan has been developed justifying the appointment of 5.5 new academic FTEs in the areas of Quantum and Photonics (followed by at least one other in Astrophysics).	Director of UCC Futures Quantum and Photonics, HoS	Additional staff office and research space, as per Physics plan for the Kane Refurbishment, also essential.	2024/2025 for hires, 2026+ for Kane Refurbishment	Highest
3	Increase EU undergraduate student numbers by creating a business plan for the suggested new programmes (and current programmes).	As part of UCC Futures, we have included a business plan for increasing CK408 intake and a new degree in Theoretical Physics. In addition, there will also be a new MSc programme in	Business plan already created, action now with HoS and the School's Outreach, Public Relations and Admissions Committee.	Expanded and refurbished teaching space, as per Physics plan for the	2024/2025	High

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		Quantum/Photonics/Environment. The School will now work to promote these programmes to EU undergraduates.		Kane Refurbishment.		
4	The School's relationship with Tyndall	There continues to be strong lines of communication between the School and Tyndall – in the context of UG teaching (module delivery, Final Year Projects), UCC Futures (where the School shares a senior appointment with Tyndall) and SFI Research Centres. SEFS has recently initiated a series of ~biannual meetings between cognate Schools and Tyndall, which will be the ideal platform to enhance the School's relationship with Tyndall going forward. The School will continue to use its close relationship to Tyndall in marketing its programmes.	HoS	none	ongoing	Highest
5	School plans to improve gender balance within the staffing body.	Despite our recent SALI appointee, the School remains acutely aware of the gender imbalance that still	HoS, the School's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee	None currently.	ongoing	High


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		remains within its staffing complement (and to a lesser extent in its student cohort). It is progressing its plans to apply for an Institute of Physics new “Inclusion” programme, a successor to its “Juno” Award, as a stepping stone to an Athena Swan award. In addition, the School will continue to support the student EPONA initiative.				
6	That the School explores future synergies with cognate areas/disciplines:	This is expected to occur organically within UCC Futures/Quantum and Photonics.	HoS, Director of UCC Futures Quantum and Photonics.	None currently	ongoing	high
7	That the School engages with its alumni: -	The School has significantly increased its efforts to maintain communication with its graduates. The HoS has met with the HoC and SEFS Head of Development, concerning Physics philanthropic possibilities.	HoS	None currently	ongoing	moderate

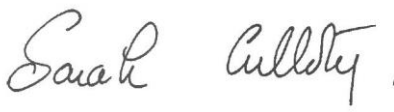
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8	That the School leverages its strong social media presence to capture individual social media posts into an annual bulletin/newsletter;	A bi-annual newsletter has been instigated.	Physics EA with Comms responsibility	None currently	ongoing	moderate
9	That the School nurtures its links with teachers :	The School is delighted to see the interest in the Physics and Maths stream in the new CK413 Science Education programme, and plans to use this new teaching cohort to raise its profile at post-primary level.	School's Teaching and Learning Committee	None currently	Next 1-2 years	high
10	That the School increases their links with CIRTL and encourages staff to do the PG Certificate in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education..	Noted and staff will be informed.	HoS	none	imminent	
11	Recommendations re Collaborative Provision	It is an unfortunate recent development that the Industrial Physics programme has been terminated. However, the School wishes for this to be revisited, in the context of ways in which the intake could be improved, and the	HoS	none	Currently N/A	moderate

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		programme accommodated more directly into the CK408 stream.				
12	That the School ensures that students are aware of employment opportunities in industry and in careers outside academia:	The School arranges for at least one industrial representative to give an annual seminar, and has greatly improved the degree to which it tracks the employment success of its graduates.	School's Seminar Committee, Director of 4 th Year Studies	none	ongoing	moderate
13	That the School broadens the students' transferrable skills ... and ensures that students can articulate these skills to potential employers;	Physics students have a particularly broad range of transferrable skills, as is clear from the diversity of job destinations of our graduates. The School will look at additional ways to further develop these. Note too that all Physics are students strongly encouraged to obtain python programming experience.	The School's Teaching Committee and Learning Committee, Director of 4 th year Studies	None currently	ongoing	moderate
14	The School should have regular student surveys with a particular focus on workload	The School continues to carry out its staff-student meetings: the systematic use of surveys by all lecturers will be considered at the	School's Teaching and Learning Committee	moderate	ongoing	moderate

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		future School Teaching Committee meeting.				
15	The School should consider offering work placement in all Physics degree programmes	Work placement is an integral part of the Industrial Physics programme, but otherwise remains extremely challenging within with CK408 programme due to the significant organisational effort involved. This will be revisited once all the UCC Future hires are in situ.	HoS	New staff hires	TBD with staff	moderate
16	The School should re-evaluate the rationalisation of modules to reduce staff workload	Some modules have already been removed from the curriculum (for example PY4101 and PY4126): these may be re-introduced when staffing levels allow.	School Teaching and Learning Committee	New staff hires, ongoing	2-3 years	moderate
17	The School should consider the learning and adaptations used during Covid-19 to	Generally, blended learning did not work well for our students, with the exception of the “take home labs” which we are continuing to	The School’s Teaching and Learning Committee, HoS	none	N/A currently, 3 years in context of Kane Refurbishment	moderate

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	maximise blended learning and lighten workload;	use in our first year. It is possible that the use of blended learning may be revisited once the full impact of the Kane Refurbishment programmes is known (and the effect this will have on access to teaching space)				
18	The School to consider increasing the project weighting to more than 10 credits;	The School has not discussed this option yet, but will do so.	The Schools Teaching and Learning Committee	unclear	TBD	moderate
19	The School should assess the amount of continuous assessment required per module	The School has already discussed this, and made efforts to both reduce the amount and coordinate the scheduling of the assessments between lecturers.	The School's Teaching and Learning Committee	none	annually	moderate
20	That the School constitutes an External Advisory Board	Not yet implemented, to be discussed within the School.	HoS	None	TBD	moderate

For completion by Unit		
Head of Unit: Professor Paul Callanan	Signature: 	Date: 10.1.24

Head of College/Functional Area: Professor Sarah Culloty	Signature: 	Date: 11.1.24
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