

FOOD INDUSTRY TRAINING UNIT

PEER REVIEW GROUP

- Professor J. O'Halloran, Department of Zoology, Ecology & Plant Science, UCC (Chair)
- Professor C. Murphy, Department of Accounting, Finance & Information Systems, UCC
- Mr P. Moynihan, FÁS, Dublin, Ireland
- Professor C. Shortt, Yakult Ltd, London, UK

SITE VISIT

The site visit was conducted over 2.5 days from 13-15 February 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 staff of UCC
- Representatives of employers, past graduates and other external stakeholders
- Professor Áine Hyland, Vice-President
- Professor Máirtín Ó Fathaigh, Director, Centre for Adult Continuing Education
- Professor Yrjö Roos, Dean, Faculty of Food Science & Technology
- 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 OF UNIT

Note: Data given is for the academic year 2004/05

Head of Unit: Ms. Mary McCarthy-Buckley
Staff: 1 full-time and 5 part-time staff + teaching staff of UCC
Location of Unit: Food Science & Technology Building

MISSION STATEMENT

“To be the leading provider of relevant continuing education and training for personnel in the food and drinks industry and to actively promote the dissemination of research and technology within this sector.”

OBJECTIVES OF UNIT

- To offer continuing education and training courses to the highest possible standard covering areas of food science and technology, food biotechnology and food business and management relevant to industry

- To make University College Cork the first choice University for these courses regionally and nationally
- To provide a co-operative, pleasant and productive work environment where input and discussion is welcomed from all staff and lecturers in the Food Industry Training Unit.

GENERAL COMMENT ON QUALITY REVIEW

The Self Assessment Report (SAR) was adequate basis for the PRG to undertake the review. There was evidence of full participation by staff, evidence of benchmarking undertaken and detail of SWOT analysis. The SAR included details of courses undertaken, including curriculum and sample hand-outs and course outlines. The CVs of a number of the lecturing staff were also provided. The PRG were satisfied that the report represented what existed on the ground.

The PRG were very impressed by the training provided by the Unit. The commitment and dedication of the staff in and associated with the Unit was obvious to the PRG and to the students met during the site visit. The PRG were unanimous in their praise for the Unit's staff in all aspects of the course development and delivery. The PRG also noted that the Unit provides a very valuable link between researchers in the Faculty of Food Science & Technology, in particular, and industry. The benefits to both UCC and industry of the activities of the Unit were evident in both the SAR and during the discussions held during the site visit.

The PRG noted that both a SWOT Analysis and benchmarking exercise had been undertaken.

PROGRESS MADE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PRG RECOMMENDATIONS

A meeting to discuss the progress made in implementing recommendations for improvement arising from the quality review of the Food Industry Training Unit (FITU) was held on 5 October 2006 in the Quality Promotion Unit. The FITU had submitted a Quality Improvement Plan and had been working to the Plan for the previous year. The Unit particularly wished to acknowledge the contribution of Professor John O'Halloran in his role as Chair of the newly established Business Advisory Board, which has in a relatively short time made a very significant contribution to the activities and focus of the FITU. The Unit also expressed its gratitude to Professor Pat Fitzpatrick, Head of the College of SEFS and Professor Yrjö Roos, Dean of the Food Science & Technology Faculty for their continued support and help.

Present: Ms. Mary McCarthy-Buckley, Training Manager, Food Industry Training Unit

Professor Yrjö Roos, Dean, Faculty of Food Science & Technology
 Professor Patrick Fitzpatrick, Head, College of Science, Engineering & Food Science
 Dr. Norma Ryan, Director, Quality Promotion Unit

Abbreviations

PRG: Peer Review Group

VP: Vice-President

QPC: Quality Promotion Committee

QIP: Quality Improvement Plan

UMG: University Management Group

SEFS: Science, Engineering & Food Science

FITU: Food Industry Training Unit

Recommendation of PRG	Recommendation of QPC	Follow-up Report November 06
FITU should continue to be located in the Faculty of Food Science & Technology.	Recommendation endorsed.	Implemented. All agreed that this continues to be the most effective location for the Unit.
Consideration should be given to the establishment of other Industry facing and similar training units for the wider University – all should be under an umbrella of a “Corporate College” with a mandate to establish UCC as the preferred education and training partner in Ireland.	Recommendation not endorsed. QPC recommended that a College-wide committee be established, embracing the coordinators of such similar training units in UCC, with the aim of sharing experiences, expertise and good practice.	Although the recommendation had not been endorsed, the merits of establishing closer links with similar Units and Centres in UCC are recognised. The possibilities for exploring links and sharing of expertise with the biotechnology, pharma and environmental areas of activity in the University are being considered. It was agreed that there is a need for University action and an analysis of what is going on in the area of continuing education and training specifically targeted at industry needs.
A formal Business Advisory Board should be appointed to help the long-term strategic development of the FITU	Recommendation endorsed. QPC welcomed positive action by FITU.	Implemented. A Business Advisory Board has been established with membership drawn from industry, third level institutions and relevant public bodies. The Board has agreed terms of reference, has met twice and plans to meet twice yearly. Details of membership and terms of reference are attached in Appendix A.

Recommendation of PRG	Recommendation of QPC	Follow-up Report November 06
<p>FITU should facilitate the development of a part-time degree in 'Food Studies' in UCC. In this context UCC needs to have an active policy and culture of credit accumulation to facilitate flexible learning.</p>	<p>Recommendation endorsed.</p> <p>QPC would encourage FITU to develop such a Programme and to engage in discussions with other groups in UCC in developing credit accumulation programmes.</p>	<p>FITU had held initial discussions on the possibility of developing a part-time degree. However it was felt that to develop a degree of this nature an 'academic champion' is needed to lead the discussions. Professor Roos agreed to follow-up on this recommendation.</p>
<p>FITU should diversify sources of funding and explore new potential linkages with the School of Pharmacy, Environmental Research Institute and other relevant constituencies in UCC.</p>	<p>Recommendation endorsed.</p> <p>QPC noted proposed links between the Training Unit and other sectors related to food.</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p> <p>FITU is working on new internal and external linkages.</p>
<p>The position of Manager of the Unit should be full-time and the manager of the unit should be responsible for the delivery, accreditation and resourcing of all programmes</p>	<p>Not endorsed.</p> <p>The QPC recommended an analysis of how the FITU will develop/ought to develop in the future. If the post of a Manager can be self-financed by the activities of FITU then it will be in the control of the unit to implement. Funding the post of Manager would need to be strategically advantageous to FITU.</p>	<p>An analysis of the situation has been made and it has been agreed that the present situation is satisfactory. The establishment of the Business Advisory Board has alleviated some of the strategic decision making pressures on the position of Manager. A Strategic Plan is under development.</p>
<p>The University needs to decide whether it is serious or not about interfacing with industry and specifically in providing continuing and professional development programmes. If it is, it must put in place appropriate structures and policies to accommodate this imperative. Specifically teaching on FITU programmes should constitute part of the normal teaching allocation of staff.</p>	<p>Recommendation endorsed.</p> <p>For academic staff to be given credit for teaching on FITU and other similarly provided programmes, the courses need to be mainstreamed (see recommendation 4 above)</p>	<p>The Head of the College confirmed the commitment of the University towards interfacing with industry and the provision of continuing and professional development programmes. The UMG is presently considering the strategic direction for lifelong learning and its recognition. Recognition of staff for their input into such activities is also included in this consideration.</p>

Recommendation of PRG	Recommendation of QPC	Follow-up Report November 06
<p>The Unit should give urgent consideration to having a policy of having some of their programmes accredited at level 7 of the National Framework of Qualifications (ordinary bachelor degree)</p>	<p>Recommendation endorsed. QPC noted and welcomed action by FITU in this regard.</p>	<p>Implemented. A number of the Certificate and Diploma programmes have been positioned within the National Framework of Qualifications as appropriate. Appendix B gives details of such programmes to date.</p>
<p>A strategic review/plan should be developed for the unit as a matter of urgency using agreed terms of reference/methodology.</p>	<p>Recommendation endorsed. QPC did not agree with the unit that the appointment of a Director should precede the development of the strategic plan. The QPC recommended that FITU, in discussion with the Dean and the Faculty, and with the involvement of the Advisory Board, should develop the strategic plan. Actions appropriate to implementation of the plan should then be considered.</p>	<p>Ongoing. With the assistance of the Business Advisory Board preparation of the strategic plan is underway. It is planned to develop an operational plan following this. The establishment of the Business Advisory Board has removed the need to appoint a fulltime Director for the present. The Unit are satisfied that the existing arrangements meet the needs of the Unit at the present time.</p>
<p>Faculty should contribute proactively to the development and work of the Unit. Regular formal meetings should be set-up to discuss plans and progress.</p>	<p>Recommendation endorsed.</p>	<p>Implemented. A formal Annual Report is made each year to the Faculty and full discussion of the plans and progress of the Unit takes place. There are also frequent informal meetings occurring on a day-to-day basis.</p>
<p>In line with international practice and Government Policy, the unit should make greater use of E-learning and other methods of programme delivery.</p>	<p>Recommendation endorsed. QPC noted and welcomed action taken by unit.</p>	<p>Implemented and on-going. FITU introduced a Certificate in Meat Technology in 2005/06 which was delivered by a form of blended learning, comprising elements of both formal teaching via lecture format and e-learning. In 2006/07 a new Certificate on Food Science Technology has been successfully launched in Co. Leitrim using the same blended format for delivery.</p>

Recommendation of PRG	Recommendation of QPC	Follow-up Report November 06
The Unit should adopt an explicit customer charter.	Recommendation endorsed.	Implemented. See Appendix C for details.
The Unit should implement summary improvements from the Self-Assessment analysis. Many of these represent improvements than can be implemented quickly and would enhance student satisfaction.	Recommendation endorsed.	Implemented. FITU reviewed its own recommendations for improvement in its operations and confirmed these have all been addressed at the level of Programme Manager.
The Unit should carry out business intelligence analysis on competitors' student retention rates and reputation.	Recommendation endorsed.	Action on this recommendation will be included as part of the scoping for preparation of the strategic plan.
The Unit should implement greater financial controls and accountability.	The QPC acknowledged that the financial accounts of FITU are strictly controlled and in accordance with university policy and legal requirements. However the QPC recommended that there should be greater transparency in the accounts and in particular, in the costings of each module/course offered. The QPC welcomed the response of FITU.	Implemented. A system has been put in place to produce up-to-date balance sheets for each Programme, thus facilitating transparency of the costings of each module/course offered.
That FITU would consider the possibilities and advantages of making a formal report to faculty each year and of publishing a FITU newsletter.	Recommendation endorsed. QPC noted and welcomed actions already underway.	Implemented. The first Report to Faculty was made in 2005 and the second in 2006. A newsletter for the Unit is currently being developed.

APPENDIX A

Board Membership

- Ms Maura Conway, Food Industry Training Unit, UCC
- Mr Sean Faulkner, Enterprise Ireland, Dublin
- Dr Alan Kelly, Department. of Food and Nutritional Sciences and Dean of Graduate Studies, UCC
- Professor Ray Kinsella, UCD Michael Smurfit School of Business
- Ms Breda Maher, Cooleeney Farmhouse Cheese, Tipperary
- Ms Mary McCarthy-Buckley, Food Industry Training Unit, UCC
- Mr Pat Moynihan, Retired from FAS HQ, Dublin

- Professor John O'Halloran (Chairperson), Department of Zoology, Ecology and Plant Science, UCC
- Mr Gerry Raftery, Dawn Fresh Foods, Tipperary
- Ms Ruth Rice, PepsiCo International, Cork
- Professor Yrjö Roos, Faculty of Food Science & Technology, UCC
- Mr David Twomey, Food Industry Training Unit, UCC

Terms of Reference for the Business Advisory Board

The Business Advisory Board will have a key role in steering the strategic development of the Food Industry Training Unit. It will contribute by:

- Reviewing current policy and procedures relating to the Food Industry Training Unit.
- Highlighting challenges and opportunities presented by developments in the Irish and international food and related industries.
- Identifying areas of co-operation with other organisations, internally in UCC and externally.
- Evaluating the Food Industry Training Unit's performance in its evolution as a provider of continuing education and training services.
- Providing a base of expertise to identify and assess emerging priorities in continuing education and training anticipated to be strategically important to the development of the Food Industry Training Unit.
- Identifying training needs in the marketplace.
- Proposing policy and procedures where relevant.
- Meeting as a group twice a year.

Membership: The Board will have twelve members, drawn from industry, state agency and education representatives and will be appointed for a two year term.

Duration: The Business Advisory Board will review these Terms of Reference every two years.

Procedures: The above Terms of Reference were adopted by the Board at the meeting on 9 February 2006.

APPENDIX B

National Framework of Qualifications

Positioning of Certificates and Diplomas

Diploma in Management Practice (Consumer Foods)	Level Minor 7
Diploma in Business Management	Level Minor 7
Diploma in Corporate Direction (Food)	Level Minor 7
Diploma in Food Science and Technology	Level Minor 7
Diploma in Meat Technology	Level Minor 7
Diploma in Speciality Food Production	Level Minor 7
Certificate in Food Science and Technology	Level Minor 6
Certificate in Meat Technology	Level Minor 6
Certificate in Seafood Technology	Level Minor 6

APPENDIX C

Customer Charter

Mission Statement of the Food Industry Training Unit: 'To be the leading provider of relevant continuing education, training, professional development and lifelong learning for personnel

in the food and drinks industry. To develop and deliver high quality courses, thus strengthening internal capability in companies’.

Purpose of the Customer Charter: This Charter sets out the manner in which customers will be assisted in their dealings with the Food Industry Training Unit. It also sets out the standards and quality of service provided by the Food Industry Training Unit.

Commitment to Customers

The Food Industry Training Unit is committed to:

- Delivering the best possible service with efficiency and with a minimum of delay
- Aiming, where possible, to meet our customers’ needs

Service Standards

- Customers will be treated with respect and courtesy
- Telephone, e-mail and fax messages will be responded to, where possible, within 24 hours
- When a member of staff is out of the office, a message to that effect will be left on his/her telephone together with an ‘out of office’ response to incoming e-mails.
- When a new project has commenced, a master file will be opened.
- All correspondence coming from the Food Industry Training Unit will contain the name of the person dealing with the matter and his/her telephone number and e-mail address.
- Documentation produced by the Unit will be technically correct, reflect customer instructions, use accurate but plain language and be professional in layout and appearance.

Service Evaluation: The Food Industry Training Unit is committed to consulting customers for feedback on courses and programmes and it is an essential element in understanding the requirements of our customers. In order to evaluate performance we welcome feedback or suggestions so that we can continue to provide a high quality service.

Customer Complaints: In the event of a customer having a complaint he/she should contact the Training Manager, Food Industry Training Unit, Faculty of Food Science and Technology, University College Cork.

Contact Point: Mary McCarthy-Buckley, Training Manager, Food Industry Training Unit