

Quality Review Report

Ionad na Gaeilge Labhartha

Peer Review Group

Professor N. Ó Murchadha, Department of Physics, UCC (Chair)
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An tStiúthóir P. Mac an Iomaire, Ionad na Gaeilge Labhartha, NUI Galway
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Brief Description of conduct of site visit

The site visit was conducted over 2.5 days from 8th – 10th December 2003 and included meetings with

- i) Head and staff of the department as a group and individually
- ii) Representatives of students
- iii) Representatives of employers, past graduates and other external stakeholders
- iv) Professor Áine Hyland, Vice-President
- v) Mr. Michael Kelleher, Secretary & Bursar/Vice-President for Administration & Finance
- vi) Professor David Cox, Dean, Faculty of Arts
- vii) Mr. Paul Ryan, Department of Human Resources
- viii) Professor Seán Ó Coileáin, Dean, Faculty of Celtic Studies
- ix) Mr. Tony Perrott, Audio Visual Services Unit
- x) Mr. Seán Mac Aoire, Foras na Gaeilge
- xi) Mr. Donnchadh Ó hAodha, Chair, Bord na Gaeilge

and visits to unit facilities in UCC.

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 Ionad na Gaeilge Labhartha

Director of Unit: Pól Ruiséal

No. of Staff: 8 full-time + 2 part-time

Location of Department: O'Rahilly Building

Aims & Objectives

- To creatively promote the Irish Language in all contexts relating to subjects in UCC, in Ireland and abroad,
- To offer courses in the spoken language for all levels of fluency,
- To enable people to participate in Irish Language networks and in suitable cultural activities.

General Comment on Quality Review

The reviewers considered the Self-Assessment Report was well presented and gave a full and accurate account of the many activities of the Ionad. It highlighted difficulties that are related to understaffing and lack of special accommodation. The members of the Peer Review Group were very impressed by the Ionad and its staff. The wide-ranging activities provide the total UCC community with support to foster and develop the Irish language. Irish language courses

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<p>the traditional university type. The question of a Campus Company should be investigated.</p>	<p>of those which have some revenue potential. Increased revenue will allow the Ionad to expand its level of service provision which otherwise might be impossible in the present financial climate.</p> <p>The QPC suggested that perhaps a trial could be entered upon whereby a charging system could be put in place for some services and a review conducted after one year to analyse the success of the scheme.</p>	<p>'05.</p>
<p>That the Ionad should give urgent consideration to the matter of extending activities at Dún Cíomhain for the benefit of the local community and the Irish language community. They should engage in discussions with Comharcumman Forbartha Corca Dhuibhne as to how this can be done jointly.</p>	<p>Endorsed by QPC. The QPC would encourage discussions between the parties referred to.</p> <p>QPC noted that any such activity as employment of a teacher-administrator will only be made on a self-financing basis and proposals for same would need to be brought forward by the Ionad for consideration by the appropriate bodies within the University.</p>	<p>Implemented.</p> <p>Discussions have taken place with the various groups. A focus committee has been set up to consider all the issues and consideration of the issues has been included in the strategic plan for the Ionad. Courses (conducted in Irish) in teaching methods and computer skills have commenced.</p> <p>It has been agreed that a Teacher-Administrator will be appointed. The post proposal needs to be forwarded to the Bursar for consideration. It was noted that it needs to be self-financing.</p> <p>The Acting Head of College of ACSSS referred to the need for a policy to be developed for the funding of the activities of units such as IGL. IGL is located in the College of ACSSS and yet is an independent unit. The issue needs to be discussed in the context of the present academic re-structuring in UCC.</p>
<p>That the Ionad and Bord na Gaeilge review their relationship and clarify their mutual obligations.</p>	<p>Endorsed by QPC.</p> <p>The QPC noted and welcomed the actions planned by the Ionad. The recommendation</p>	<p>Implemented.</p> <p>The responsibilities of the Bord cover the overall bilingual issue, policy and future strategies, and is</p>

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	<p>will be discussed in detail with An tIonad and with Bord na Gaeilge. UCC bilingual policy and An Bord's terms of reference will be examined. This will be carried out in the context of the overall review, which will take place as part of the preparation for the 2006 - 2011 UCC strategic plan. The QPC noted that An Bord is an advisory and policy Board and not a Board of Management. An tIonad functions under the aegis of An Bord. Bord na Gaeilge is a statutory committee of Governing Body.</p>	<p>an advisory board. IGL implements the policies of the Bord, manages day-to day activities and has some independence from the Bord at certain levels.</p>
<p>That the two full-time temporary positions (Senior I.T. Assistant and Director of Applied Irish Courses) be immediately established as permanent positions. Furthermore, as a result of the extra demands which will be made on the Ionad to service UCC and External Bodies in meeting their obligations resulting from the <i>Official Languages Act (2003)</i>, the Ionad will need extra staff in the short term.</p>	<p>The QPC noted this recommendation and re-affirmed the situation that any new appointments will be made only on a self-financing basis. The QPC was of the opinion that there are significant business opportunities available to the Ionad, particularly with the enactment of the <i>Official Languages Act 2003</i>. The role and purpose of an additional IT Assistant would need to be clarified in the Strategic Plan of the Ionad. Approval for additional staff by the University would be most likely contingent on additional fee income.</p> <p>The QPC suggested that the question of a business plan, developed on the basis of the strategic plan for the Ionad should be discussed with the Director of the Ionad by the Director, Quality Promotion.</p>	<p>The two posts are presently funded by the HEA Strategic initiative Funds. The role and purpose of additional staff is clearly set out in the Ionad strategic plan.</p> <p>The reporting structure for units such as IGL needs to be decided at University level. The critical decision to be made is whether units such as IGL should be associated with one of the Colleges or part of the University central administration. In the case of IGL the responsibilities of the Head of the College of ACSSS are not clearly defined, and this makes it difficult to make decisions on key issues such as staffing, etc. It should be noted that originally the Head of the Ionad reported to the President. In the new academic structures the position of units such as IGL in relation to the new funding mechanism is not defined.</p>
<p>The spatial requirements of the Ionad need to be properly met as a matter of urgency so that it can carry out its many teaching and training activities without constraints and so facilitate the</p>	<p>The QPC noted this recommendation and suggested that this be addressed in the business plan to be brought forward by the Ionad.</p>	<p>The Space Subcommittee of the Buildings Committee has not yet reported on the space audits conducted in the past year. The Subcommittee is due to make recommendations to the Buildings Committee. IGL</p>

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<p>development of these and new activities it will shortly be required to undertake. In particular, there is need for a second instruction room, a computer laboratory and extra office and storage space. In addition there is need for a student common room.</p>		<p>recognises the UCC has serious space difficulties. Nonetheless IGL is adamant that it will be difficult to make further progress without additional space.</p> <p>Space requirements are clearly set out in the Ionad Strategic Plan 2005 – 2010.</p>
<p>A sabbatical / study leave scheme, similar to that available to Academic Staff, should be made available to the Ionad staff to enable them to develop and engage in research related to the language and IT instructional activities. UCC must recognise that this will place extra burdens on the Ionad. It is also necessary for the Ionad to continue its work in the development of courses and teaching materials. It is important to collaborate with other institutions (especially their sister Ionaid in the other universities) in this work.</p> <p>The Ionad staff should be encouraged and facilitated in the development of a professional society which would promote contact and collaboration with other Institutions.</p>	<p>Noted by the QPC.</p> <p>The QPC also noted the response of the Ionad.</p> <p>An Ionad staff agree with the need for the development of teaching materials and courses and the establishment of a professional society. It is envisaged that staff members from centres for spoken Irish in both NUIG and UCC will meet for a daylong seminar in autumn '04 to discuss these and other professional issues of mutual concern. Some staff members felt that the system already employed was sufficiently flexible to meet the research requirements of staff members. Work contracts of Ionad staff fall under the administrative rubric and do not provide for sabbatical periods nor specify research conditions. The issue will be explored with the Head of Human Resources, Dean of Arts and relevant parties.</p>	<p>The Head of IGL confirmed that teachers in IGL do not seek a change in contract conditions. But it is recognised that some engagement in research, particularly research into teaching and other scholarly activities is required. The staff will continue to undertake relevant professional courses especially in the area of development of courses and teaching methodologies and materials. The staffs have expressed satisfaction at the measure of flexibility that is currently employed in this domain.</p>
<p>We recommend that UCC pays the fees for the Diploma in Applied Irish for UCC staff.</p> <p>We recommend that fees be waived for full-time registered students and that they be allowed study for the Diploma in Applied Irish concurrently with a regular degree programme.</p>	<p>Not endorsed by the QPC. The present financial climate would make it impossible for the University to pay the fees on behalf of staff.</p> <p>The QPC recommended that all students, including UCC staff, should pay full fees.</p>	<p>Fees are being charged for courses for the public. Reduced fees are being charged for staff and spouses of staff.</p> <p>The issue of comparison with generic courses was raised, as well as the issue of fees paid by overseas students, who do not pay an additional fee at the moment. The University policy on charging of fees for such courses</p>

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		is very unclear and needs to be agreed. The fees charged are in line with those charged in other Irish Universities.
<p>We recommend that UCC authorities consult with the Ionad on developing a strategy to meet the evolving duties resulting from the enactment of the <i>Official Languages Act</i> (2003).</p>	<p>The QPC noted that this recommendation is a matter for Bord na Gaeilge to advise the University on.</p> <p>The QPC noted the action of the Ionad in informing Bord na Gaeilge of this recommendation.</p>	<p>Implemented.</p> <p>An Implementation Group for the <i>Official Languages Act 2003</i> has been established, chaired by Mr. Michael Farrell. A scheme has been developed for actions for '06-'09 in accordance with the terms of the Act and is in the process of being agreed with the Minister for the Gaeltacht.</p>