

## QUALITY REVIEW FOLLOW-UP REPORT

### STUDENT COUNSELLING & DEVELOPMENT

#### Introduction

A meeting to discuss progress made in implementing recommendations for improvement arising from the review of Student Counselling & Development (SCD) was held on 24 October 2007.

The Head of SCD wished to emphasise that the Quality Review process was a very successful one for SCD with many positive changes implemented as a result. The issue of space is still outstanding, however, and remains an urgent issue for the service. Challenges for the future centre around the increase in student numbers and the diversification of the student population which will inevitably result in an increased pressure on the service. Data is being continuously collected on the usage of the service and analysed so as to assist in the decision-making process for the future development of the services.

Present: Professor Paul Giller, Registrar & Vice President for Academic Affairs  
Mr Paul Moriarty, Head, Student Counselling and Development Centre  
Dr Norma Ryan, Director, Quality Promotion Unit  
Ms Deirdre O'Brien, Administrator, Quality Promotion Unit

#### Abbreviations

*PRG: Peer Review Group*

*QPC: Quality Promotion Committee*

*HR: Human Resources*

*VP: Vice-President*

*QIP: Quality Improvement Plan*

*SCD: Student Counselling & Development*

<b>Recommendation of PRG</b>	<b>Recommendation of QPC</b>	<b>Follow-up Report Oct 07</b>
A review be undertaken of the staffing arrangements and salary structures required to meet current and future needs of the service.	Recommendation endorsed. The QPC noted in particular that the staffing issues need to be addressed and the comments in relation to the comparability of salary scales for counsellors.	Implemented and ongoing An additional counsellor has been appointed. The issue of salaries is dealt with in the recommendation below.
The University examine the possibility of basing salaries on equivalent professional posts (e.g. psychologists) within the Health Service Executive, comparable national education institutions and the wider public sector.	Recommendation endorsed.	Implemented and ongoing Salary scales for counselling staff are now aligned to professional HSE grades and those applicable in the other Irish universities. This has created an imbalance, however, as the salary scale of the Head does not now reflect the extra responsibilities required to carry out the duties of the post.
Consideration be given to putting in place clear formal arrangements for deputising for the Head of SCD in his/her absence.	Recommendation endorsed. QPC noted that action has already been taken to implement this recommendation.	Implemented A member of staff has been nominated to deputise in the absence of the Head of SCD.

<b>Recommendation of PRG</b>	<b>Recommendation of QPC</b>	<b>Follow-up Report Oct 07</b>
A review be undertaken of the role and responsibilities of the Executive Assistants, with a view to realistically assessing the needs of the service and putting in place the necessary resources.	Recommendation endorsed.	Implemented The Executive Assistant has been upgraded to Senior Executive Assistant. Resources were provided by the Registrar's Office to facilitate this upgrade.
The remuneration of administrative staff should be in line with the particular responsibilities of the post.	Recommendation endorsed. The QPC recommended that the matter be put to the Grading Committee as the appropriate body to assess the level of responsibility and appropriate remuneration.	As above.
Urgent consideration be given to finding suitable alternative accommodation for the SCD	The QPC acknowledged the needs of the SCD. The QPC recommended that the Head of SCD develop some proposals and liaise with the Registrar, President of Students Union and the Space Subcommittee.	Ongoing A long-term solution is still urgently required for the service. However, a satisfactory medium term solution (conversion of the existing garage) has been enacted with funding provided by the Heads of the four Colleges. Provision of an adequate reception space and waiting room remains an issue.
The provision of adequate and appropriate toilet facilities is reviewed urgently and with a view to health and safety of both staff and students.	Recommendation endorsed. The QPC commented that any plans for development of accommodation suitable for the SCD must take into account all factors, including accessibility, health and safety requirements, etc. The QPC recommended that the Head of SCD liaise with the Registrar and the Office of Buildings & Estates.	Implemented Adequate toilet facilities will be provided in the new garage conversion.
A security protocol be implemented as a matter of urgency in the immediate future.	Recommendation strongly endorsed.	Implemented Counsellors are never alone in the building with a student and panic buttons have been installed in every room. These panic buttons are linked to an external agency and are continuously monitored.
Appropriate reception and waiting areas be provided as a matter of urgency	Comment as for recommendations above on space and accommodation	Not implemented Reception and waiting areas will not be provided in the new garage conversion. This remains an issue to be resolved.

<b>Recommendation of PRG</b>	<b>Recommendation of QPC</b>	<b>Follow-up Report Oct 07</b>
<p>The Head of SCD approves the appointment of the external supervisors, that formal contracts are established with the external supervisors and that twice-yearly meetings are held between the external supervisors and the Head of SCD.</p>	<p>Recommendation endorsed. The QPC noted the duty of care on the SCD Unit and the University for counsellors.</p>	<p>Implemented and ongoing External supervisors are now in place and staff have agreed to the process and are implementing it.</p>
<p>Resources be allocated to enable the development of team consultation, decision-making, sharing of skills, experience and knowledge among the team members and regular meetings of the Head of SCD with individual members of staff (full-time and part-time) to review and monitor work in progress.</p>	<p>Recommendation strongly endorsed.</p>	<p>Implemented The entire SCD team now meet twice a term. This team meeting includes a business and training aspect along with a reflective practice element. SCD have used these meetings to create links with other support services both internal and external to UCC.</p>
<p>Payment of sessional counsellors for clinical administration and other activities be taken into consideration in the context of the review of the staffing structure.</p>	<p>This is linked to earlier recommendations.</p>	<p>Implemented Resources have been received from the Registrar's Office to implement this recommendation. Sessional Counsellors are being paid the full-time counsellors rate pro-rata.</p>
<p>The holder of the proposed office with responsibility for student affairs and student services be a member of the University Management Group.</p>	<p>QPC noted proposed action concerning the appointment of a Dean of Student Affairs reporting to the Registrar.</p>	<p>Ongoing This recommendation awaits the appointment of the new Vice-President for Student Experience in January 2008.</p>
<p>The expertise on mental health issues developed by the counsellors and psychiatrist be made available in an appropriate way to academic staff with a view to enhancing the understanding of mental health issues and to assist students to maximise the benefits of their education at university level and to achieve their academic goals.</p>	<p>Recommendation endorsed.</p>	<p>Ongoing The Head of SCD will discuss this recommendation with the Head of Student Health Service with a view to finding a mutually compatible solution.</p>
<p>The numbers of students being treated be monitored with a view to the long-term impact on resources.</p>	<p>Recommendation endorsed</p>	<p>Ongoing Data is being collected on an ongoing basis.</p>

<b>Recommendation of PRG</b>	<b>Recommendation of QPC</b>	<b>Follow-up Report Oct 07</b>
Data analysis be completed on a regular basis and that specific results be communicated to various University bodies, as appropriate and relevant.	Recommendation endorsed.	Ongoing Data analysis as well as data collection is ongoing. SCD has opened a dialogue with the four College Heads which has facilitated the sharing of relevant College statistical information.
Colleges/Faculties provide opportunities for the SCD staff to make presentations to academic and administrative staff. Such discussions could enable SCD staff to be informed of relevant changes and developments across the University.	Recommendation endorsed	Implemented SCD has created a wallet-sized card with contact details and information on the services available which has been sent to all administrative and academic staff members. SCD also hold regular workshops focussing on identifying and responding to students in distress.
That some strategic thinking be carried out around development issues and on how this type of developmental work is delivered in the future	Recommendation endorsed	Implemented SCD have just undergone a Clinical Review funded through the Access programme. This extensive review focussed on policies, procedures and developmental issues. Twenty recommendations were produced. These will be implemented by the SCD where possible.  One clear recommendation was the need for access to a clinical psychologist. The Head of SCD is pursuing discussions on this with the VP for Academic Affairs.
The service be viewed as one for all students and should be more closely integrated with other student services and the academic sector.	Recommendation endorsed	Ongoing This recommendation awaits the appointment of the new Vice-President for Student Experience.
SCD carry out detailed analysis of the impact of the strategic plan in relation to the future need for counselling and development services.	Recommendation endorsed	Implemented Regular reviews of the situation will be undertaken by SCD.
The University's strategic planning process takes note of the impact of its specific plans on student services and on the counselling and development service in particular.	Recommendation endorsed	Ongoing This recommendation is for the University to implement. The establishment of the Institutional Research Unit will help in the monitoring of impact and planning.

<b>Recommendation of PRG</b>	<b>Recommendation of QPC</b>	<b>Follow-up Report Oct 07</b>
<p>The University recognise the role played by SCD in assisting the University to fulfil its obligations and provide adequate resources accordingly.</p>	<p>Recommendation endorsed</p>	<p>Ongoing  This has been implemented to some extent as resources have been received from the Registrar. However, the issue of space remains of paramount concern for SCD.</p>