

The Language Centre

Peer Review Group:

Professor D. Keogh, Department of History, UCC (Chair)
Professor M. MacNamara, Department of French, UCC
Ms. A. Gallagher, Director, Language Centre, NUI Maynooth
Mr. R. Satchell, Director, Language Centre, University of Bristol, UK

Brief description of conduct of site visit

The site visit was conducted over 2.5 days from 25th to 27th March 2002 and included meetings with

- i) Head and staff of the department as a group and individually
- ii) Representatives of undergraduate and postgraduate students
- iii) Chair and members of the Language Centre Board
- iv) Professor P. Woodman, Dean, Faculty of Arts
- v) Mr. N. Keeley, VP for Human Resources
- vi) Mr. M. O'Sullivan, VP for Planning, Communications & Development
- vii) Mr. M. F. Kelleher, Secretary & Bursar/VP for Finance & Administration

and visits to unit facilities in UCC. A conference call was held with Professor A. Moran, Registrar & VP for Academic Affairs, as he was unable to attend in person.

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 The Language Centre

Head of Department: Mr. S. Dodd

No. of Staff: Director (70% of time), 2 full-time administrative staff (permanent), 6 demonstrators (4

full-time, 2 part-time), 29 College Language Teachers (sharing duties in varied amounts between the Language Centre and the Language Departments.

Location of Department: O'Rahilly Building

Functions of Unit:

- The provision of a range of language courses in a standardized format, as far as possible compatible with the requirements of internationally recognised examining bodies, which may be taken either for interest or for credit within degrees that do not include specialised language study, acknowledged in their title.
- The secondment of staff to Departments of the School to aid in the teaching of specialist language degrees and other School programmes.
- The management of pooled technical and other resources used for the Centre's and the School's courses, including a materials library and facilities for open-access self-instruction in languages, open at no charge to all member of the University and to the general public for a fee.
- The provision of translating and interpreting services within UCC and for other clients.
- The offering of courses leading to professional qualifications, principally in the teaching of English as a foreign language and in translating.
- The running of examinations in a number of languages for, or in collaboration with, various external examining authorities.

Aims & Objectives

- To provide courses, as far as possible in conformity with ALTE or other recognised European or international standards, so that students in all faculties at UCC may have the opportunity to attain a certifiable competence in at least one foreign language.
- In particular, to support programmes in the business, management, engineering, and technological fields where competence in a foreign language is desirable by providing appropriate language training within the structure of courses in subjects crucial to the promotion of employment and economic growth.
- To ensure that a good range of major world and other strategic languages will be available as subjects for study at UCC.
- To provide a range of language training services at appropriate fees in response to demand from within or outside UCC, including evening and intensive courses, or in-service courses in languages for business and industry.
- To create and market Open Learning packages for languages adapted to demands from local and overseas clients, using any appropriate technologies.
- To provide specialised programmes for training of teachers of foreign languages, including English as a foreign language.
- To co-operate with appropriate external partners in the fields of educational and cultural tourism in the development and promotion of such services.
- To make available on a sound commercial basis translating, interpreting and related linguistic services for College purposes and for business, industry and other clients, whether in Ireland or elsewhere, including linguistic support for the provision of services within UCC's conference facilities.
- To aid in the delivery of courses in cultural and area studies, and offer advice on paralinguistic features of other cultures, where this is required by clients.
- To take an active part in suitable co-operative ventures between the educational sector and the various sectors of economic activity, as well as with the various promotional agencies in the Munster region, in the field of languages.
- To act as an examination centre and otherwise collaborate with other institutions of similar purpose in supporting high standards of language provision in the Munster region.

General Comment on Quality Review

The review group was impressed by the dedication of the Director and of the staff of the Language Centre. However, the group concluded that the composition of the Language Centre Board (LCB) was far too narrow to provide the best leadership to enable the rapid growth and expansion of the Centre. The reviewers concluded that the inclusion of user departments in the composition of the LCB should ensure the kind of leadership that ought to bring about the sustained growth and expansion of the Centre. The group noted the difficulties the staff of the Centre have in that their time is divided between responsibilities for the Centre and their teaching duties for the Language Departments. The Teaching English as a Foreign Language courses organised by the Centre are very successful, but carry an increasing administrative burden.

Progress on Recommendations for Improvement

Since the Quality Review took place the Director of the Language Centre has resigned. Concerns have been raised by the Finance Committee with respect to the overall costs associated with the four modern Language Departments in UCC (French, German, Hispanic Studies and Italian) and the Language Centre.

The national funding situation regarding the Irish Universities has also deteriorated.

The recommendations made by the reviewers following the Quality Review were predicated on implementation by the Director. Given the costs involved a new Director is unlikely to be appointed at this time.

Arising from the above a subgroup of the EMG, consisting of the Registrar and Vice-President for Academic Affairs, the Vice-President and the Vice-President for Human Resources, and the Dean of Arts have had to re-consider the situation and have formulated an alternative strategy for development of the four Language Departments referred to above and the Language Centre. This strategy is currently being discussed between the Registrar and the staff of the four departments concerned and the Language Centre.

1 M. Moran

Registrar & Vice-President for Academic Affairs

31st October 2003

Recommendations of PRG	Recommendations of QPC
Director should report to the Dean of Arts and to the Registrar & VP for Academic Affairs	Endorsed the recommendation that the Director of the LC should report to the Dean of Arts. The Dean of Arts is the budget holder for the LC and the committee that this is an appropriate reporting structure and will be the most efficient mechanism. The QPC did not agree that the reporting line should be to the Registrar or to the LCB. The committee agreed that reporting to a committee rather than to an individual is not the most appropriate mechanism.
LCB should be structured as a users group with a representative from each Faculty under the Registrar & VP for Academic Affairs as Chair	Endorsed the recommendation of the PRG and recommended immediate action on the setting-up of the users group.
The assignment of all LC teachers to Language Departments must be on the basis of demonstrated need.	Endorsed the recommendation of the PRG. A suggestion as to how 'need' could be demonstrated would be for every department to provide the Director with a copy of the timetable for the CLTs. This would clearly indicate the workload and contact hours of the CLTs.
A new Organisation Chart with clear reporting structures is drawn up based on Appendix K of PRG Report	Endorsed the recommendation that an organisational chart be drawn up and the reporting lines implemented, with the exception that the Director should report to the Dean of Arts and not to the LCB.
The position of Director, given the size and complexity of the LC, should be one of full-time management. Where time permits, allowance may be made for no more than two hours teaching in any one week outside the LC	QPC agreed with the view of the PRG that the position of the Director should be one of full-time management. The committee strongly endorsed the recommendation, with the proviso that the maximum number of teaching hours of the Director should be one hour per week and not two (or equivalent as deemed most appropriate).
The appointment of a Co-ordinator of External Services for Publicity and Promotion, External Recruiting, national and international, and working closely with international networks of language teachers and other centres. A second language teacher should be seconded to help with	QPC accepted the recommendation. The QPC would like to see a marketing drive organised from within the LC. The QPC did not recommend that additional staff be appointed to the LC at this time.

Recommendations of PRG	Recommendations of QPC
this work for a specific period	
The creation of an additional post at Executive Assistant level	This recommendation was not endorsed. It was recommended that the duties of the staff of the LC should be re-organised to maximise efficiency and to focus on the need to increase the marketing of services offered by the LC and to increase funding from outside sources.
The appointment of co-ordinators for each of the following areas: French, German, Italian, Spanish and EFL (x2).	QPC accepted this recommendation with the proviso that the co-ordinators be appointed from among the existing CLT staff.
The permanent transfer to the Departments of Ancient Classics and Irish respectively of the College Language Teacher of Ancient Classics and of the College Language Teacher of Irish.	Endorsed recommendation. The Heads of the Departments of Ancient Classics and Irish and the VP for Human Resources will be informed of the recommendation and its endorsement. It was noted that the contractual teaching load should be made explicit to the CLTs and emphasis placed on the requirement to deliver the teaching load as in the contract.
That College Language Teachers seconded to a language department should be treated as members of the staff of that department.	Endorsed recommendation.
Heads of the Language Departments should take responsibility for all decisions in relation to the College Language Teachers in their department	As the LC is now funded from within the Faculty of Arts budget the QPC agreed that the most appropriate action is for both the Heads of the relevant Departments and the Director of the LC to liaise with the Dean of Arts in relation to the CLTs and any decisions taken.
The Language Centre must use to the optimum the contracted time of all College Language Teachers.	Strongly endorsed recommendation. Action on this recommendation is required by the Director of the LC and the Heads of the relevant Departments to ensure that this happens.
Early consideration should be given to the creation of a category of academically related staff as in other EU countries	Endorsed this recommendation and referred it to the Department of HR for comment.
Teaching loads of CLTs ought to be closely monitored for reasons of fairness and to ensure effective use of resources	QPC strongly endorsed this recommendation. There are a number of ways this monitoring could be achieved, for example, scrutiny of the timetables for individual staff, monitoring of the rooms booked for the teaching, statements from Heads of the relevant Departments as to the precise teaching contact load of each CLT in their department.

Recommendations of PRG	Recommendations of QPC
<p>The Language Centre should concentrate on core activities of:</p> <p>Teaching English as a Foreign Language, English for Academic Purposes, English for Specific Purposes, English language testing and assessment, Languages for All, Accredited foreign language modules in degree programmes in all faculties, A range of language services to companies and institutions in the private and public sectors.</p>	<p>The QPC agreed that the LC needs a business plan which will include elements such as budget, plans for marketing, plans for increasing funding from sources other than the UCC core budget.</p> <p>The QPC requested that the LC submit a business plan to the committee by the <u>end of October</u> next. This business plan should incorporate the recommendations of the PRG, and in particular take account of recommendations 15 and 16. The QPC recommended that, as part of the business plan, the Director of the LC bring forward suggestions for a mechanism to allow the LC to retain a proportion of funding acquired from different sources, following discussions with the Dean of Arts and the Secretary & Bursar. Such a mechanism would need to take into account the existing financial support provided by UCC, in particular the salaries and provision of space. If the LC were to increase the amount of non-pay monies available to it then replacement of equipment, etc. would become more possible. The Director of the LC should consult with the Dean of Arts and the Registrar in drawing up the business plan.</p>
<p>The Language Centre should focus in particular on the Objectives 2, 3, 4, 6, 8 and 11 as detailed in the objectives for the Language Centre approved by the Language Centre Board.</p>	
<p>Liaison with the Access Officer should be initiated in order to make available appropriate language teaching in this area</p>	<p>Endorsed recommendation. Suggested that the Director contact Michelle Power, the Access Officer.</p>
<p>Substantial expansion of multimedia facilities for autonomous learning should be undertaken.</p>	<p>QPC agreed with the recommendation and that the monies for the expansion should come from earned income.</p> <p>Plans for how this may be achieved should be built into the business plan to be prepared for October.</p>
<p>Specialised and intensive and/or tailor made language courses for staff at the appropriate levels</p>	<p>QPC accepted and strongly endorsed this recommendation. The LC should work towards developing a customer focus and should identify and encourage staff of the LC who would be interested in achieving this focus. This also relates to the issue of appropriate marketing of the LC services.</p>
<p>A three-year development plan should be prepared before October 2002 by a committee chaired by the Registrar & Vice President for Academic Affairs</p>	<p>Strongly endorsed the recommendation as a matter of priority – with the proviso that it is a business plan and includes all elements of a business plan. The Director of the LC, not a committee, should prepare the plan and submit it to the QPC by the end of October.</p>
<p>The Registrar and Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Dean of Arts should monitor the implementation of this 3-year development plan, carrying out detailed six-monthly reviews.</p>	<p>The monitoring of the implementation of the business plan should be by the Dean of Arts, as the Director will be reporting to the Dean and the Dean will be responsible for the budget of the LC.</p>
<p>The Language Centre should apply in good time to the centralised booking system for adequate space</p>	<p>Endorsed recommendation</p>
<p>Deployment of all College Language Teachers for</p>	<p>Strongly endorsed recommendation</p>

Recommendations of PRG	Recommendations of QPC
the full complement of their contractual hours in revenue generating activities.	
A more transparent resource allocation mechanism from the Finance Office	The Director should discuss the issue of resource allocation from UCC's core budget with the Secretary & Bursar and the Dean of Arts. The QPC suggested that an alternative mechanism for the budget allocation may be developed which would allow the LC to retain more of the externally earned income, but would also give some responsibilities to the LC for earning some portion of the salaries of the staff of the LC.
The submission of an annual financial report to Dean of Arts and to the Registrar & VP for Academic Affairs.	Acknowledged that the LC does submit an annual report. The QPC agreed that, in future, this report should be sent to AC and the Governing Body and must include all activities of the LC and a budget statement.