

QUALITY REVIEW FOLLOW-UP MEETING

BCOMM (INTERNATIONAL) DEGREE (formerly BComm (European) degree)

Introduction

A meeting to discuss progress made in implementing recommendations for improvement arising from the review of the BComm (International) Degree was held on 7 November 2007. The name of the degree had recently been changed from BComm (European) to BComm (International).

Present: Professor Denis Lucey, Acting Head, College of Business and Law
 Professor David Cox, Head, College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences
 Professor Neil Collins, Dean, Faculty of Commerce
 Professor Deirdre Hunt, BComm (International) Programme Director
 Dr Norma Ryan, Director, Quality Promotion Unit
 Ms Deirdre O'Brien, Administrator, Quality Promotion Unit

It was noted that the Programme continues to be successful, with good employment prospects for graduates and the emphasis on the 'international' component resonates well with government. There is a need to ensure that graduate destinations for the first five years after graduation are monitored closely and that correct data is gathered.

Abbreviations

PRG: Peer Review Group

QPC: Quality Promotion Committee

HR: Human Resources

AC: Academic Council

VP: Vice-President

QIP: Quality Improvement Plan

B&L: Business & Law

RAM: Resource Allocation Model

PRG Recommendation	QPC Recommendation	Follow-up Report Nov '07
<p>That, as a key priority, the Board of Studies defines the Degree, articulates its nature, and makes proposals to the Faculty/College/University as to how the curriculum of the Degree should be amended and improved.</p> <p><i>See detailed text of PRGR for full explanation of this recommendation</i></p>	<p>Recommendation strongly endorsed.</p> <p>QPC recommended that integration of modules be actively considered.</p>	<p>Implemented and ongoing</p> <p>A curriculum review group has been set up; the review group has prepared a curriculum review document which has been widely circulated among staff and will be sent to the Board of Studies for consideration.</p> <p>A seminar programme is to be put in place and managed by the students, incorporating all years of the programme.</p> <p>A separate budget for the funding of staff development and teaching exchange programmes has been put in place.</p> <p>The BComm (European) has changed its name to the BComm (International). The BComm in Chinese Studies has</p>

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		<p>been developed and launched.</p> <p>Integrated marketing material has been produced and circulated to career advisors and potential students.</p> <p>The potential for development of placements in additional countries is being explored.</p>
<p>That a BComm (European) Degree external examiner, with expertise in European business and management, be appointed.</p>	<p>Recommendation endorsed.</p> <p>QPC also noted the guidelines approved for the management of interdisciplinary programmes, which included the recommendation that all such programmes should have a dedicated external examiner.</p>	<p>Implemented</p> <p>An external examiner with expertise in European business and management is now in place.</p>
<p>That the post of Director for the BComm (European) Programme be established on a stronger institutional and financial basis, ideally by appointing a senior academic at professorial level with a fully funded position to act as Director, with financial subvention for the post from revenue generated by the Programme and to take responsibility for leading the drive to increase postgraduate programmes arising from the BComm (European) Degree.</p>	<p>Recommendation endorsed.</p> <p>QPC noted that the introduction of the RAM in September 2006 will make allocation of financial resources transparent and that this will aid in decisions as to allocation of funding and other resources. QPC noted that the Head of the College of B&L has the responsibility for allocating resources of the College under the RAM.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>The post of Director has been established on a part-time basis and money allocated from College of B&L.</p> <p>The College is in the process of appointing a Senior Lecturer in International Business.</p> <p>The expansion of the postgraduate programmes is linked to graduate studies development in both the College and the University. A key issue is the requirement by some disciplines that a specific number of credits be taken in the discipline prior to registering for a postgraduate programme.</p>
<p>That a student handbook for BComm (European) Degree Programme be developed, which would include all options, modules, course descriptions, reading lists, forms of assessment, etc.</p>	<p>Recommendation strongly endorsed.</p> <p>The QPC noted the comment on resourcing and referred this to the Head of the College of B&L for consideration.</p>	<p>Not implemented</p> <p>This has not been progressed as the Board of Studies is of the view that the existing material (Faculty handbook) adequately covers the need for information.</p>

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<p>That the introduction of a combination of a university placement and a work placement be considered for all students within the Programme during Third Year.</p>	<p>Recommendation strongly endorsed.</p> <p>QPC noted the variety of types and quality of experience offered to students. QPC stressed the need to ensure all students, in so far as is possible, are offered experiences of equivalent quality.</p>	<p>Implemented and ongoing</p> <p>All BComm (International) students have the opportunity to avail of a work placement. Discussions to establish work placements in the new BComm (International - Chinese Studies) are ongoing.</p>
<p>That UCC academic staff should make more frequent, ideally annual, visits to the partner universities; staff from partner universities should be encouraged to make reciprocal visits. The PRG recommended that a minimum of one visit per year by the Placement Officer should be made to each partner institution and that adequate resources be provided to enable this to happen.</p>	<p>Recommendation strongly endorsed.</p> <p>Action on the recommendation should be planned in the context of the overall reform of the programme</p>	<p>Implemented</p> <p>The Board of Studies and the College of B&L are committed to ensuring that all partner Universities are visited annually.</p>
<p>That a 'buddy' system be developed to help prepare students before they go abroad and to support visiting students at UCC.</p>	<p>Recommendation endorsed.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>A pilot 'buddy' system is in the process of being rolled out by the International Education Office.</p>
<p>That a BComm (European) Business Advisory Board be established to provide a forum for promoting the BComm (European) Degree, allowing business and other external stakeholder input into the Programme's development.</p>	<p>Recommendation noted.</p> <p>The QPC recommended that a College of Business Advisory Board be established which would be have a broader remit than just the BComm (European) Degree, and would cover all the 'business' degrees offered in the College of B&L and would help inform the development of the existing degrees and new degrees.</p> <p>Such action may also depend on the integration of the BComm and BComm (European) Degrees into a single entity with options, rather than continuing to develop new 'BComm' Degrees</p>	<p>Not implemented</p> <p>The establishment of Advisory Boards within the College of B&L is a strategic issue for the College and is currently under discussion.</p>

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That a much wider use of visiting/adjunct lecturers from the partner universities and the business community as lecturers on the Programme be made, once the revised Programme is established.	Recommendation strongly endorsed.	Ongoing Visiting lecturers are being integrated into the programme on an ongoing basis.
That the Faculty of Commerce agrees terms of reference for the Board of Studies which would include issues such as length of service on such Boards, in order to ensure both continuity and turnover in terms of Board membership.	Recommendation endorsed. QPC referred this and subsequent recommendations to the College of B&L, with a recommendation that the College of B&L examines these recommendations in the light of the overall restructuring and management of the academic business of the College.	Not implemented
That the Board of Studies establish a Management Group, which would meet on a weekly basis during teaching periods and would take responsibility for the management and coordination of the Programme and of curriculum review.	Recommendation endorsed. <i>Comment as for recommendation above</i>	Ongoing A Management Group has not been established. The work of the Management Group, as described by the PRG, is currently being undertaken by the Director. The Board of Studies now meet on a monthly basis.
That a dedicated administrative post be put in place to support the BComm (European) Degree Programme, funded from the income generated by the Programme; dedicated office space should be provided for the Programme Director and proposed Programme Administrator to act as a focal point for the Programme for staff and students.	Recommendation endorsed. <i>Comment as for recommendation above</i>	Not implemented The Board of Studies does have access to administrative support in the College. The issue is around interdisciplinary degrees and the funding mechanisms for these, which have not been agreed in UCC.
That the Board of Studies should take responsibility for staff development in relationship to the needs of the BComm (European) Degree.	Recommendation endorsed. <i>Comment as for recommendation above</i>	Ongoing A staff development fund has been created for the BComm (International) in Chinese Studies for those wishing to take research courses relevant to Chinese studies. The Board of Studies is encouraging research activities in this area.

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<p>That the Resource Allocation Model planned for introduction in UCC in October 2006 should include a significant programme basis, in order to ensure that all interdisciplinary programmes, as well as departments, are properly resourced.</p>	<p>Recommendation endorsed. <i>Comment as for recommendation above</i></p>	<p>Ongoing Student fees have been ring-fenced. This has had a positive effect on the programme allowing, for example, for the development of marketing materials.</p>
<p>That the Professor/Director should have direct access to and responsibility for dedicated resources, subject to policies determined by the Board of Studies.</p>	<p>Recommendation endorsed. <i>Comment as for recommendation above</i></p>	<p>Ongoing The Board of Studies will revisit this recommendation. Discussions are ongoing with the Library in this regard. Inadequate language laboratories are a matter of urgent concern for the programme.</p>
<p>That active consideration be given to the creation of lectureship post(s) in appropriate interdisciplinary areas (e.g. business culture) so as to integrate the different areas of study in the Programme more effectively and to provide it with a distinctive focus.</p>	<p>Recommendation endorsed. <i>Comment as for recommendation above</i></p>	<p>Ongoing This is an area of vital concern for the programme and requires urgent consideration. Some improvements have been made; a new Senior Lecturer in International Business will have some input into the programme and the Department of Government have appointed a Chinese speaking lecturer.</p>
<p>That a part-time teaching allocation should be established for the BComm (European) Degree so as to encourage and support initiatives to strengthen the comparative European dimension in teaching and learning in this Degree.</p>	<p>Recommendation endorsed. <i>Comment as for recommendation above</i></p>	<p>Not implemented Part-time teaching funding is provided to individual departments on the basis of student FTEs. The engagement of the departments with the Board of Studies is under active consideration by the Board of Studies.</p>
<p>That the relationship between the Board of Studies and the relevant Subject Librarian(s) should be formalised in order to enhance awareness of the needs of the students in the Programme and to consider options for improving the current situation.</p>	<p>Recommendation endorsed.</p>	<p>Implemented The subject librarian is now a member of the Board of Studies.</p>

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<p>That the options of offering (i) diplomas from the partner university in recognition of the year students spend abroad and (ii) double degrees with partner universities be explored.</p>	<p>Recommendation endorsed.</p> <p>The QPC noted that this is an issue under discussion at the national and sectoral levels and recommended awaiting the outcome of these discussions before taking any specific actions. The issue is also closely linked to the Bologna Process and is under active consideration at the European level.</p>	<p>Not implemented</p> <p>This recommendation is being actively explored. The Board of Studies will be advised by their partner Universities on this matter.</p>
<p>That the Board of Studies explore the possibility of establishing a European/International Masters Programme, perhaps building on academic expertise from the Programme's partner universities where such programmes are developing strongly.</p>	<p>Recommendation endorsed.</p>	<p>Not implemented</p> <p>The programme curriculum has been developed and approved. However staff are required to implement it.</p>
<p>That the possibility of creating a BComm (European) Centre should be explored.</p>	<p>Recommendation noted.</p> <p>QPC referred this recommendation for consideration to the Head of the College of BL.</p>	<p>Not implemented</p> <p>This recommendation is one which the Board of Studies welcomes; however, consideration of it will have to be postponed at present as it links into university restructuring.</p>
<p>That the Board of Studies together with the language departments explore the possibilities for obtaining support from the relevant embassies/foreign ministries for the appointment of teaching assistants with business expertise.</p>	<p>Recommendation endorsed.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>The Board of Studies have maintained and fostered links with relevant Embassies. The Swiss and Italian Embassies are very involved and the Chinese Ambassador recently launched the BComm (International) in Chinese Studies.</p> <p>An application has been made to the German authorities for a teaching assistant in the area of German business.</p>

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<p>That consideration be given to creating a senior position, at an appropriately senior level, aimed at ensuring the promotion and coordination of interdisciplinary studies across the University.</p>	<p>Recommendation noted. The QPC noted that the Committee established by Academic Council to consider interdisciplinary degrees and their academic management has reported to AC and the recommendations are being looked at and will be discussed further in the Autumn.</p>	<p>Not implemented This recommendation is for the University to implement.</p>