Department of Government

Peer Review Group
> Professor C. Fennell, Dean of the Faculty of Law, UCC (Chair)
> Ms. M. Power, Access Officer, UCC
> Professor E. Moxon-Brown, Jean Monnet Chair of European Integration, Department of Government and Society, University of Limerick, Ireland
> Professor I. Forbes, Department of Politics, University of Nottingham, England.

Brief Description of conduct of site visit

The site visit was conducted over 2.5 days from 8th – 10th February 2004 and included meetings with

> i) Head and staff of the department as a group and individually
> ii) Representatives of undergraduate and postgraduate students
> iii) Representatives of employers, past graduates and other external stakeholders
> iv) Professor M. Aidan Moran, Registrar & Vice-President for Academic Affairs
> v) Professor J. Kevin Collins, Vice-President for Research Policy & Support
> vi) Ms. Carmel Cotter, Finance Office
> vii) Professor Denis Lucey, Dean of Faulty of Commerce
> viii) Professor David Cox, Dean of Faculty of Arts

and visits to departmental and library 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 Department of Government

Head of Department: Professor Neil Collins
No. of Staff: 8 full-time academic, 5 part-time academic, 1 administrative
Location of Department: O'Rahilly Building
Degrees/Diplomas offered: BSc in Government & Public Policy, MComm, MSc, PhD, Certificate in Political Issues in Ireland Today,
No. of Students: Department has 163 Student FTEs: 149 UG and 14 PG FTEs distributed as follows:

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Distance Learning	JYA	Socrates	**Total U/G**	Master Taught	Master Research	PhD	**Total P/G**
42	56	28	57	2	13	12	**210**	3	13	4	**20**

Mission Statement
> "to provide quality undergraduate and postgraduate programmes that enhance students' knowledge of politics, government, and public policy and to perform relevant research in the areas of government, politics, and public policy to enhance the teaching objective."

Aims & Objectives
Short - term goals:
> ➢ Achieving a steady state is the primary short-term goal of the Department as it seeks full funding for its core operations.

Additionally, the department has these additional short term goals:

- ➢ Acclimating to the new Politics degree in Arts and developing plans for optimising the department's potential in relation to it.

- ➢ Improving relationships with other University Departments and gaining recognition of the goals and objectives of the Department.

- ➢ Maintaining student base.

- ➢ Grant-writing and other forms of revenue raising.

- ➢ Facilitating internal and external dialogue through improved communications including an updated Department WEB page.

- ➢ Securing adequate space and equipment to support staff.

Longer - term goals
- ➢ To continue to build on the Department's international reputation and become recognised as a leader in providing curriculum and research that integrates a traditional politics/government curriculum with innovations suited for a new age of global, multi-level governance.

- ➢ To be on par in terms of resources and staff with other Departments of Government in Ireland.

- ➢ To contribute to the creation of a Faculty of Politics, Law, and Government.

- ➢ To increase the Department's capacity to offer consultancies and conduct groundbreaking research.

- ➢ To build a sustained record of outstanding service to the University, the discipline, and to society generally.

- ➢ To maintain high standards of quality and integrity.

General Comment on Quality Review

The reviewers found that the Department of Government provided comprehensive and clear documentation, and brought to their attention issues that proved crucial to their assessment.

The principal findings of the group underscored the wisdom of the University's decision to support the development of the Department of Government that is delivering a range of new, successful and highly popular courses. The PRG was of the opinion that the Department is to be congratulated in having within a short period of time produced a successful undergraduate programme with a high degree of self-recognition and confidence in its students. It has successful postgraduate Masters and PhD programmes of research, is a research active department with considerable success in attracting research funding, and maintains good relations with outside bodies inter alia through its successful placement programme. It was evident to the PRG that this is an extremely student friendly department with a very cohesive staff unit. As a fledgling department, however, it also faces challenges. It is inevitable that there would be some growing pains, and the PRG addressed these in a manner intended to help the Department best meet these challenges, and so foster its future development.

The issues identified related to that of the identity of the Department and location of its discipline within UCC, and the self-confidence of the Department, which to some extent had

been affected by difficulties relating to its identity. The Department has also encountered problems regarding funding, specifically 'locating and following the money'; and perhaps requires additional administrative structures and support to address these. In order to organise staff research time most effectively, the reviewers recommended that the Department might have to reassess their open door policy for students, and consider that a collegial atmosphere devoid of structured meetings might not be best, given the steady increase in staff numbers. The reviewers found that there is also a need to foster and develop necessary linkages with relevant college bodies and offices, as well as other departments, Commerce Faculty office and other Faculties.

SWOT: The PRG felt the analysis prepared by the Department to be an accurate assessment.

Benchmarking: The PRG felt that the department rather missed the opportunity here to locate themselves in terms of their own identity within the discipline i.e. how they would characterise their particular research direction and identity in relation to departments in Ireland and further afield. However, the Head of Department did have a clear and strategic sense of the position of Cork's Department of Government in relation to equivalent departments at UCD and TCD.

The PRG felt that the final projection for the Department lacked in terms of direction, and other than looking for adequate resources and core funding, was too minimal and lacked either appropriate direction or specificity in terms of the future.

Progress on Implementation of Recommendations for Improvement

A meeting to discuss progress made in implementing recommendations for improvement arising from the review of the Department of Government was held on 11th January 2006.

Present: Professor N. Collins, Head, Department of Government
                  Professor C. Fennell, Acting Head, College of Business & Law
                  Dr. N. Ryan, Director of Quality Promotion

Abbreviations
 PRG: Peer Review Group   *VP: Vice-President*
 QPC: Quality Promotion Committee   *HR: Human Resources*
 QP: Quality Promotion   *B&L: Business & Law*

Recommendation of PRG	Recommendation of QPC	Follow-up Report January '06
Investment in training with regard to financial management of the department and effective liaison with College offices. Attention to process.	The QPC recommended that the Head of Department meet with the Dean of Commerce and a nominee of the Finance Office to resolve this.	Implemented. This issue is now resolved. There is now a full allocation to the Department of all monies due from income generating activities such as fees from Visiting students, academic programmes, etc.
Expansion of highly regarded consultancy work with central and local government.	Endorsed.	Activity in this area is continuously on-going and staff of the Department are continuing to pay particular attention to this.

Recommendation of PRG	Recommendation of QPC	Follow-up Report January '06
Formalise the administrative mechanisms of the Department, to include:		
(a) Appoint a Departmental Manager / clerical assistance with placements	The issue of under what conditions and how departmental managers should be appointed has been referred to the Department of HR and Deans-EMG for consideration. The QPC noted that in the past a departmental manager may be appointed when there are a number of administrative staff in the department and within existing resources.	The University has conducted an analysis of administrative support available to the four Colleges and the seven Faculties. The analysis confirmed that there is very adequate administrative support overall in the Faculty of Commerce. Thus the issue for the Department of Government is to seek a re-allocation of administrative support within the Faculty/College. This requires action by the Acting Head of College and the Head of Department. The proposal is that the departmental manager, if appointed, would take over the role of work placement officer and based on existing models, this would account for 50% of the workload. The remaining workload would include the following: - Management of research accounts - Co-ordination of the departmental finances - Organisation of the annual fieldtrips to Dublin (*3), Belfast and Brussels - Health and safety - Co-ordinating all academic exchange programmes - Exams officer - Running the Department's tutorial programme - Co-ordinating the day to day running of all of the Department's academic programmes and contributions. The Head of College confirmed that there is support for work placement administration within the Faculty of Commerce and recommended that the Department seek the assistance of these staff.

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(b) Structure Departmental Meetings	Strongly endorsed. Action by Department welcomed.	Implemented. Meetings now take place monthly with all relevant issues on agenda.
(c) Student-Staff Consultative Committee	Strongly endorsed.	Implemented. Minutes are circulated to all via an email list.
(d) Office hours	Endorsed.	Placement officer has office hours posted. Other staff continue to operate an open-door policy. Department has considered the recommendation and decided not to implement and office hours policy. Students participating in the First Year mentoring scheme do make appointments.
(e) Research Committee	Endorsed.	Implemented. Has been established and meets regularly.
(f) External Committee	Endorsed.	Implemented. This issue is a standing item on all departmental committee meetings. The Department decided not to set up an additional committee.
Appoint a member of staff to liaise with the Faculty of Arts.	QPC noted there is already a staff member who is a member of the Faculty of Arts. This member is the liaison person, pending agreement on which faculty(s) the Department should be primary members of.	Implemented. The Head of Department is a member of the Faculty of Arts.
Provide adequate space and facilities for academic staff and postgraduate researchers.	The Buildings Committee and the Space subcommittee of the BC are presently reviewing and recommending policies and norms for postgraduate students and the facilities that should be available to them. However notwithstanding any outcome from these deliberations the Deans of Commerce and Arts will be requested to review the	This issue has not yet been resolved. The Space Subcommittee of the Buildings Committee has conducted a space audit of the O'Rahilly Building and has not yet reported back to the Buildings Committee with recommendations. An outcome and decisions are awaited.

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	general issue of space and facilities in the O'Rahilly Building for the departments of the Faculty of Commerce.	
Provision of photocopying cards and Inter library loan vouchers to postgraduates.	Endorsed. To be implemented as resources allow. The QPC suggested that monies from JYA student fees and other external funding opportunities should be used to assist postgraduates in this way.	Implemented.
Equity of treatment of postgraduates with regard to facilities.	The QPC endorsed the recommendation that all postgraduates should be treated with equity within a department and also, if possible, across departments. See response to recommendation 4 above.	The Department has implemented this recommendation as far as possible. However the space deficit remains an issue, particularly with regard to accommodation for a growing postgraduate population. The Acting Head of the College of B&L confirmed that this issue is being actively considered at the level of the Space Subcommittee of the Buildings Committee.
Re-introduction of tutorials and utilisation as source of funding for postgraduates as well as integrating postgraduates into work of Department.	The QPC recommended that the Head of Department meet with the Dean of Commerce and a nominee of the Finance Office to resolve the issue of appropriate funding and to ensure that the Department receives its fair share of the allocation to the Faculty.	Implemented.
Establish postgraduate/research committee to develop postgraduate identity within department and to avoid isolation.	Endorsed.	Implemented. Teaching of postgraduate in relation to development of generic skills has been formalised. There are now joint methodology classes and organisation of social events. There is ongoing development of support for postgraduate students.
Model for allocation of administrative tasks to staff; more responsibility taken across the university by	QPC endorsed the recommendation on implementing a model for allocation of workloads	Implemented. The Department has adopted the model of workload allocation

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senior staff.	including administrative tasks for work within the Department. QPC noted the comment of the Department on contribution of staff to College.	used by the School of Nursing. It is difficult with a small staff cohort to allocate all tasks evenly but every effort is being made. The Department now has two Senior Lecturers appointed and they are taking their share of responsibilities.
The status of Government/Political Science research and teaching in UCC needs to be accepted and affirmed.	See comment for recommendation below.	The Department confirmed that there is no real change in approaches as yet. It is hoped that the development of the new academic structures may take this agenda forward. The discipline is recognised by the international communities. The Department re-iterated that the relevant Deans should consider the issue of primary membership of both the Faculties of Arts and Commerce again.
Consider the proper location of the Department of Government. The options are: 1. Move Government into the Faculty of Arts 2. Give Government Primary Member status in the Faculty of Arts while retaining its status in the Faculty of Commerce. 3. Move Government to a newly created Faculty of Social Sciences 4. Support the position of Government in the Faculty of Commerce Decisions about, and the implementation of, any of the first three options will need to be taken at a senior University level.	The QPC noted with strong interest the comments of the reviewers in the report of the PRG concerning the position of the Department of Government. The QPC recommended that the Deans of the Faculties of Arts and Commerce be asked for their views on which, if any, of the recommendations 1. to 3. should be implemented or whether the status quo should continue (i.e. option 4.). The QPC was of the opinion that the Department should not be a primary member of both faculties.	No change has occurred. The issue was considered and it was decided not to change the current situation. See comment to recommendation above.
Establish a sound and transparent financial basis for the Department, to facilitate	QPC noted this recommendation and that it is linked to the position of the	Implemented.

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planning, entrepreneurial developments and support research activities.	Department in the University. The financial allocation to the Department is a matter for the relevant Dean who has budgetary responsibility for the Department. QPC recommended that the Department discuss the financing of the Department with the Dean of the Faculty of Commerce.	
Fund a Professorial Research Fellowship or senior post to provide a better balance between senior and junior staff.	Endorsed. QPC recommended that the Department explore possibilities of using external funding to fund such a post. The current financial situation of the University means it is unlikely that funds can be made available from the core University budget for this purpose in the immediate to medium term future.	Since the review took place the University has appointed two Senior Lecturers to the Department. Money has also been received from Enterprise Ireland and from the HEA Targeted Initiatives Programme to fund this Fellowship.
More permanent instead of temporary posts for Academic staff.	The QPC requested that the Deans of the Faculties of Commerce and Arts comment on the strategic development of the Department of Government. This is linked to development of degrees in politics.	Implemented. The Department did note that two staff are now appointed on indefinite contracts.
Sabbatical leave policy support.	Endorsed in the context of the University policy on sabbatical leave.	Not implemented. The Department confirmed that, because of the small number of academic staff and the high teaching loads, it is difficult to make arrangements for staff to take sabbatical leave.