

**University College Cork
National University of Ireland, Cork**

Quality Improvement/Quality Assurance

Peer Review Group Report

Department of Management and Marketing

Academic Year 2005/06

6th April 2006

PEER REVIEW

Members of the Peer Review Group:

Professor Max Taylor, Department of Applied Psychology, UCC (Chair)

Professor Maeve McDonagh, Department of Law, UCC

Professor Mary Lambkin, UCD School of Business, UCD

Professor David Courpasson, Associate Dean for Research, EM Lyon, France

Timetable of the site visit

The timetable is attached as Appendix A.

The timetable was suitable and adequate for the purposes of the review. The timetable included meetings with representatives of all relevant groups of stakeholders, including staff, students and external stakeholders and a tour of the departmental facilities.

Peer Review

Methodology

The following primary areas of responsibility were identified though each member of the PRG contributed to the evaluation of all aspects of the Department. Professors Lambkin and Courpasson took primary responsibility for consideration of research. Professors Taylor and McDonagh concentrated mainly on departmental structures and governance. All members took responsibility for the teaching programmes.

The site visit was brief but satisfactory given the nature of the facilities involved.

The production of the Peer Review Group report was a collaborative effort involving all members of the PRG. The report was drafted during the afternoon and evening of the second day and was finalised using email communication in the weeks immediately following the site visit.

Overall Analysis

The PRG took the view that, given the stage of restructuring of the University generally and, in particular, the changes being made to the Faculty of Commerce, this

is probably not the most appropriate time at which to undertake a review of the Department of Management and Marketing. The issue of restructuring, it is suggested, is likely to impact more on this Department than on the other Departments of the Faculty given the lack of separate identity of the Department brought about, in large part, by the fact that the Department does not have an undergraduate degree programme of its own.

Self-Assessment Report (SAR)

Overall the PRG was reasonably satisfied with the Self-Assessment Report. The PRG noted some omissions of relevant documentation in the SAR. The Department and the Quality Promotion Unit supplied some of the missing information during the site visit.

One serious omission in the SAR and appendices was that they did not include an analysis of student questionnaires or evidence that student questionnaires had been undertaken. The PRG was assured during the site visit that surveys are undertaken regularly and were shown some end-of-year results of student surveys conducted in 2004/05.

The PRG also took the view that more information could have been provided in the SAR on important issues such as the MBA Degree programme and accreditation, and broader issues relating to professional development.

SWOT Analysis

The PRG felt that the Department did a good job in terms of completing their SWOT analysis. The PRG was pleased to note the effort that had gone into the development of the SWOT analysis and recognised that this was a process that would bring benefits in the future. The PRG was satisfied that the SWOT stimulated a fundamental process of review, which it is anticipated will be the beginning of an on-going process. The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats/challenges that the PRG felt were of most importance were as follows:

Strengths:

- Conducive internal climate

- Responsiveness of department to external requests
- Access to range of disciplines within the Department
- The Department has been innovative in establishing the John C Kelleher Family Business Centre and this is commended by the PRG. The PRG noted that the Centre is unique in Ireland.
- The Department has been very successful in developing post-experience programmes and the PRG noted that the programmes attracted good students.

Weaknesses:

- Underperformance of staff in terms of volume and quality of research output
- A certain amount of inertia by staff
- Absence of focus in terms of priorities in teaching and research and in their relative importance
- Lack of control over the future of the Department due to factors external to the Department
- Poor reputation of the Department amongst key internal stakeholders.
- Weak external links with other universities and industry
- Stopping and starting programmes.

Opportunities:

- To further develop the John C Kelleher Family Business Centre to exploit its obvious potential.
- Identification and pursuit of funding opportunities, including availing of EU funding.
- To engage in research in the areas of organisational theory and critical management studies.
- To cultivate relationships with the significant local industrial and commercial organisations that offer opportunities for the development of vibrant programmes in the Department and University.
- To exploit the internationalisation of student/staff programmes as a strategic strength.
- To exercise increased control over the Department's own undergraduate programme.

- To provide leadership in the creation of a new Business School that would provide a unifying focus for all the business-related subjects in UCC.

Threats

- Restructuring of the University. Staff pointed to the lack of control over the destiny and the position of the Department in the context of these changes.
- Competition from other universities for postgraduate and undergraduate students and from other forms of learning such as distance learning. The PRG agreed that there is a decline in the market for business courses at present and noted that this is not just confined to Ireland.
- Measuring of research output and linking of resources to the measurement of research output.
- Lack of ability to attract postgraduate research students.
- Poverty of vision for the role of a university in the current restructuring programme.

Benchmarking Exercise

Benchmarking was carried out with four Irish business schools and with the following overseas institutions: Esade and IESE Business Schools, Barcelona and the University of Exeter. Site visits were undertaken by teams of Departmental staff to each of the overseas institutions. Each team addressed a different area of concern: namely, school organisation and administration, teaching, research and customer services.

The benchmarking of Irish Universities was detailed and included comparisons of programmes offered at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, research/business links and research output. Given that, unlike UCC, some of the Irish institutions surveyed operate with separate departments for the disciplines of Management and Marketing, the report aggregated data from both disciplines in order to facilitate comparison with the Department of Management and Marketing at UCC.

In the case of the overseas institutions surveyed, the report identified difficulties in undertaking the benchmarking process arising out of the differences between the model of business schools operated in many overseas universities and the Irish model,

in particular, the fact that the appropriate unit of analysis in many such institutions are programmes or, in some cases, research centres rather than departments.

Overall, and bearing in mind the difficulties of engaging in direct comparisons identified above, the benchmarking exercise produced useful comparative information. However the PRG would have wished to see more qualitative conclusions and inferences drawn from the exercise. The PRG also noted that the stretch targets identified were very different from the reality of the Department of Management & Marketing at UCC.

FINDINGS OF THE PEER REVIEW GROUP

Department Details

The PRG felt it would have been useful to have had detailed information on the teaching responsibilities and workloads of individual staff members included in the submission documents. The PRG noted that a listing of administrative responsibilities was included in the appendices attached to the SAR. The PRG noted that a full list of the programmes offered by the Department was included in the documentation and that the individual staff members with responsibility for each of these programmes were identified. Additional information was provided during the site visit. Some diagrams and tables in the documentation provided were difficult to follow. The PRG spent a lot of time seeking to elicit information from various interviewees and this could have been short-circuited. The PRG felt that greater transparency was required in respect of teaching workload allocations and financial resources.

Department Organisation & Planning

The committee structures in the Department were not clearly expressed in the SAR but what was apparent seemed limited to the PRG. The PRG got no sense of how the committees that were referred to were run. During the course of the visit following a request from the PRG, details were supplied on the frequency of departmental meetings, staff:student committee and other committee meetings.

Teaching & Learning

The PRG noted that there are many courses offered by the Department, including a number not registered on the Student database system (ITS). The number of programmes in which the Department is involved clearly generates a significant amount of administration. There was a lack of clarity in the documentation about the nature and scope of all programmes. The PRG also noted a lack of clear articulation about the policy relating to the commencement of new programmes. A number of courses appear to be the result of external requests rather than developed because of a rationale/strategic decision taken within the Department.

There appears to be a considerable involvement of staff of the Department in teaching of external courses outside UCC but the PRG found a lack of clarity as to precisely what the Department is teaching.

The PRG were informed that a specific member of staff acted as the co-ordinator on behalf of the Department for the B.Comm Degree. However it was unclear as to what extent this person took overall responsibility for the input of the Department into the programme. This was also true for other programmes that the Department is involved in. The PRG recommended that for substantive programmes in which the Department is involved there should be a nominated staff member responsible for management of the Department's contribution and input, e.g. a coordinator for input into the B.Comm Degree.

The input of the Department into the MBA programme is very significant. The PRG was of the opinion that the Department should adopt a more proactive role in the management and development of the MBA programme, given the course content and normal national and international practice.

The PRG noted with approval the fact that three staff of the Department were awarded the Postgraduate Certificate for Teaching & Learning in Higher Education organised in UCC in 2004/05 and that some staff members are actively engaged in debates in improving the quality of Teaching & Learning. The investment of staff in enhancing the quality of their teaching was commended as very good practice by the PRG.

The PRG was not provided with any results of student satisfaction surveys in the documentation provided in advance. The PRG noted that the documentation supplied indicated that regular student evaluations of modules are carried out but there was no detailed account of the results and analysis of such student evaluations in the SAR. The PRG were provided with some more detailed information during the visit but in an indigestible form – in that it constituted raw data and the material lacked summary and analysis. The PRG noted that in the material provided the response rate tended to be very low and that there was a wide range of opinions expressed by the students.

The PRG also noted a high proportion of modules appear to be assessed entirely through continuous assessment, in particular group projects. This gave the PRG cause for anxiety because of risks of plagiarism and inability to measure individual input of students, especially in First Year but also in subsequent years. The PRG would have welcomed some discussion in the documentation of the logic lying behind the focus and reliance on this form of assessment.

The PRG noted that, despite discrepancies in figures, the Department has a relatively high student/staff ratio. The PRG noted an imbalance in the ratio between senior and junior staff, particularly in the area of marketing. There is also a notable lack of prioritisation of the human resources subject area. This area would usually be a key focus for such a Department both nationally and internationally.

The PRG observed that the ratio of administrative to academic staff appears if anything to be higher than the University norms.

Pending the formal establishment of a Business School at UCC the PRG considered that the current facilities and accommodation available to the Department are adequate. The deficiencies in computer provision can readily be met out of existing departmental resources.

The PRG noted that the Department has had a series of one-off programme developments that have not been continued or sustained. The PRG recommended that the Department consider engaging in more long-term planning of courses and areas to be developed.

The PRG noted that the Department has introduced a tutorial system.

Research & Scholarly Activity

The PRG noted that the Department's benchmarking exercises had drawn attention to the positive performance of staff in the area of research. In examining the research output of staff, however, the PRG found cause for concern. Research output seems to be concentrated on a small number of people and it is not clear from the documentation whether a framework exists within the Department to assist the research efforts of all staff and to aid staff development in this area. The PRG would encourage staff to seek publication in international key peer-reviewed journals more extensively, and in particular, to consider the higher ranked journals in the Social Sciences Citation Index.

The PRG would also encourage staff to consider expanding their collaborations with international researchers in their fields and to participate as much as possible in international research networks and conferences. This would assist staff in increasing success in publications.

The PRG noted a fragmentation in research topics among staff and suggests that the Department should prioritise specific areas in order to optimise the chances of attracting external funding and of successful publication.

Postgraduate Research

Whilst the PRG recognised the difficulties in attracting postgraduate students in the areas of management and marketing, they were concerned at the very low level of graduate research activity. The PRG noted with concern the decrease described in the SAR from fifteen research graduates in 1999 to two in 2005. The PRG was of the opinion that, whilst the provision of funding would help in some respect, the availability of research active senior staff would be of greater importance in increasing the level of graduate research activity in the Department.

The PRG welcomed the development of the John C Kelleher Family Business Centre and noted the opportunities for research that this would present. It is important that

the staff build an intellectual base to sustain the development of the Centre and its associated activities and to become a centre of expertise.

The PRG welcomed with interest the introduction of generic postgraduate training modules at the level of the University and recommended that the Department avail of some of these.

Overall the PRG found the facilities for postgraduates to be reasonably good.

Staff Development

The PRG was impressed at the levels of support for staff that are in place, including the support and encouragement of junior staff in undertaking PhD studies; and the provision of funding to attend international conferences and to take sabbaticals. The PRG noted that three individual staff undertook studies for the Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching & Learning in Higher Education and commended them for this.

External Relations

The PRG was gratified by the very positive attitude to the Department that pertained among a variety of external stakeholders. There was clearly an openness on the part of stakeholders towards further developing and extending opportunities for collaboration and development of new activities in teaching, course development and research. The stakeholders were also keen to encourage closer contact on the part of the Department with alumni and possibilities for contribution to course development and research.

The PRG noted with approval that the Department already has relationships with local organisations and business groups and considered this to be an excellent way of developing courses in a viable and sustainable way.

Support Services

The PRG was very impressed at the support offered by the UCC Library. However, the PRG noted there is no dedicated Subject Librarian for Business. The PRG was disappointed to note that the Department had spent only one-quarter of their book allocation and that there is a significant surplus in the account in the Library for the

Department. The PRG commended the Library on the development of the Library-led *Information Literacy Programme at UCC* course and suggested that the Department of Management & Marketing avail of it at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

The PRG noted that IT support for the Department appears to be weak. In particular the PRG noted the lack of support from the Computer Centre for Apple computers.

Departmental Co-ordinating Committee & Methodology employed in the preparation of the Self-Assessment Report

The PRG noted that the Department set up a co-ordinating committee representative of all staff to prepare for the quality review. The PRG commended the Department for engaging in the SWOT and benchmarking exercises.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVMENT

The PRG was concerned at conducting this review in the context of structural uncertainty in the University, which it felt weakened its capacity to make meaningful recommendations. The PRG was very concerned at the highly stressful Faculty context in which the staff of the Department of Management & Marketing have to work and how this impinges on the work and welfare of the staff. The PRG is concerned at leadership issues in the Faculty of Commerce and the lack of strategic direction. The PRG was not re-assured in interviews with Senior College Officers that there is a clear strategic direction or will to address the issues in the future.

Recommendations for improvement made by the Department in the SAR

The PRG considered very carefully the recommendations for improvement put forward by the Department and, where they have deemed appropriate, have incorporated these into their recommendations below.

Recommendations for improvement made by the PRG

The PRG grouped its recommendations under a number of key headings as follows.

The PRG recommends that:

1. Planning and Organisational Issues

- (a) the Department give further consideration to the setting of strategic objectives and develop a five-year plan for their implementation.
- (b) the Department should develop a clearer organisational structure.
- (c) the Department engages in more active and transparent workload planning to facilitate development of research programmes by all staff.
- (d) the Department should put in place a reporting system so that staff be regularly informed of the budgetary position.

2. Staffing

- (a) the Chair in Marketing should be filled as a first priority to lead the existing staff in the Department
- (b) additional senior staff in the specific areas of management, organisational behaviour and human resources should be appointed.

3. Teaching & Learning

- (a) in order to address their adverse student/staff ratio, the Department should rationalise their portfolio of teaching commitments.
- (b) the Department should review their assessment procedures for all undergraduate courses and modules with a view to reducing the over-reliance on continuous assessment; an objective of 50% continuous assessment and 50% end-of-year examination might be a target to be realised.
- (c) the Department review the involvement of tutors in assessment.
- (d) specific coordinators should be appointed with responsibility for coordination for each undergraduate programme.
- (e) Diploma in Management & Marketing should have modules in Accounting and Finance incorporated.
- (f) in the context of recruitment of additional staff, the Department should seek to prioritise the introduction of new taught Masters programmes in Human Resources and Organisational Behaviour.
- (g) the Department take a more explicit leadership role in development of the MBA programme.

(h) a structured programme of research training for postgraduates should be put in place.

4. Research & Scholarly Activity

the Department seek to explore, develop and implement a formal plan to increase the research output of all staff. The plan should ensure that

- i. the Department prioritises specific research areas in which it has the highest probability of improving its publication output;
- ii. prioritisation is given to increasing the number of research postgraduates in the Department;
- iii. the Department actively pursues research funding from all possible sources and engages with the Office of the VP Research in doing so;
- iv. the Department explores possibilities for the funding of research support staff and for research staff, including from within existing departmental resources;
- v. the staff of the Department should seek to form networks with international researchers, participating in networks etc.;
- vi. the Department should invest in its postgraduate room, including upgrading and rationalising its IT provision, optimising use of wireless technology, etc.

5. Support Services

Appointment of a Subject Librarian in the Business disciplines should be a key priority for the University.

6. External Relations

The Department develop more comprehensive links with industry, business organisations and alumni.

Timetable for conduct of Peer Review Visit

Department of Management & Marketing

Tuesday 14th February 2006

- 17.30 Meeting of members of the Peer Review Group
Briefing by Director of Quality Promotion Unit, Dr. N. Ryan.
Group agrees final work schedule and assignment of tasks for the following 2 days.
Views are exchanged and areas to be clarified or explored are identified.
- 19.30 Dinner for members of the Peer Review Group and Head of Department and Departmental Co-ordinating Committee.

Wednesday 15th February 2006

- 08.30 Convening of Peer Review Group in Department Board Room, Room 263 O'Rahilly Building

Consideration of Self-Assessment Report

- 09.00 Professor Sebastian Green, Head of Department
- 09.30 Meeting with all members of the department
- 10.45 Meetings with members of staff.
- 10.45 Dr Carol Linehan, *Lecturer in Management*
- 11.00 Dr Jim Walsh, *Lecturer in Management*
- 11.15 Dr Joan Buckley, *Senior Lecturer in Marketing*
- 11.30 Brendan Richardson, *Lecturer in Marketing*
- 11.45 Angela Desmond, *Department Manager*
- 12.00 Michael Murphy, *Lecturer in Marketing*
- 12.15 Professor Deirdre Hunt, *Associate Professor of Management*
- 12.30 Dr. Donncha Kavanagh, *Senior Lecturer in Management*
- 12.45 Ms. Joanne Murphy, *Teaching Assistant*
- 13.00 Working private lunch for members of Peer Review Group
- 14.00 Visit to core facilities of Department. PRG escorted by Professor Sebastian Green
- 14.30 Representatives of Research Postgraduates
- Alan Gallagher, MSc 1
Deirdre Harrington, MSc 1
Helen Leonard, MSc 1
Brian O Cuinneagain, MSc 1
Kevin Philpott, MSc 1
Zheng Cui, PhD 2
Irene McGoey, PhD 3, *Heinz Fellow in International Business*

- 15.00 Representatives of 1st, 2nd and 3rd Year Undergraduate Students
- Mark Murphy, BComm 1
 Mary Claire Murphy, BComm 2
 Lorraine Walsh, BComm 3
 Robert Lynch, BSc Comp Sc 4
- 15.25 Representatives of 4th Year Undergraduate Students and full-time HDip Students
- Brian Power, Class Rep HDip 1
 Keith Hallinan, HDip 1
 Simona Esposito, HDip 1
 Christina Faley, HDip 1
 Valerie Shanahan, BComm 4
- 16.05 Representatives of Taught Executive Education Programme Students
- Eileen Williamson, MBS Health Services Mgt 2
 Keith O'Callaghan, Dip in Family Business 2
 Karen Collins, Dip in Project Management
 Michelle Nelson, Part-Time HDip in Management and Marketing 2
- 16.35 Representatives of Researchers
- Linda Murphy, researcher with the JC Kelleher Family Business Centre
- 17.00 Representatives of recent graduates, employers and other stakeholders
- Mr. Robbie Foley, *MSc 2003 now runs Marketing Consultancy business*
 Ms. Freda Hayes, *Family Business Partnership Board & Blarney Woollen Mills*
 Mr. Michael Hanley, *Involvement in setting up HDip in Clonakilty & West Cork Enterprise Board*
 Ms. Mary Manning, *FÁS*
 Ms. Evelyn Moynihan, *HDip 2000 & Musgraves*
 Ms. Caroline O'Reilly, *BComm, MSc 1995, now lecturing in CIT*
 Mr. Ger Goold, *KPMG*
- 19.00 Meeting of Peer Review Group to identify remaining aspects to be clarified and to finalise tasks for the following day followed by a working private dinner for members for the Peer Review Group.

Thursday 16th February 2006

- 08.30 Convening of Peer Review Group in Department Board Room, Room 263 O'Rahilly Building
- 08.35 Professor Caroline Fennell, Acting Head, College of Business & Law
- 09.00 Professor Paul Giller, Registrar & Vice-President for Academic Affairs
- 09.30 Visit to Boole Library, meeting with Ms. Margot Conrick, Head of Information Services, Ms. Rosarii Buttimer, Social Sciences Librarian
- 10.45 Ms. Carmel Cotter, Finance Office

- 11.00 Professor Neil Collins, Dean, Faculty of Commerce
- 11.30 Professor Peter Kennedy, Vice-President for Research Policy & Support
- 12.00 Consideration of Issues by PRG
- 12.30 Professor Sebastian Green, Head of Department
- 13.00 Working private lunch for members of the Peer Review Group
- 14.00 Preparation of first draft of final report
- 17.00 Exit presentation made to all staff of the Unit by the Chair of the Peer Review Group, summarising the principal findings of the Peer Review Group.
- The presentation is not for discussion at this time.
- 19.00 Working private dinner for members of the Peer Review Group to complete drafting of report and finalisation of arrangements for speedy completion and submission of final report.

Friday 17th February 2006

Externs departed