



UCC

University College Cork, Ireland
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

Fheabhsú Cáilíochta Quality Enhancement



QUALITY REVIEW

PEER REVIEW PANEL REPORT

SCHOOL OF SOCIETY, POLITICS & ETHICS

Date: October 2019

“By embedding a strong quality-enhancement ethos, we will use our quality processes to ensure a culture and experience of best practice in the delivery of our academic mission, demonstrating our commitment to continuous evolution and improvement”

(UCC’s Strategic Plan 2017 – 2022, p.23)

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Peer Review Panel Members *(for panel profiles see Appendix 2)*

Peer Review Panel		
Professor Paul McSweeney <i>(Chair)</i>	Vice-President for Learning and Teaching	University College Cork
Dr Helena Buffery	Vice-Head of CACSSS (Research)	University College Cork
Dr Stephen John	Hatton Lecturer in the Philosophy of Public Health	Cambridge University
Dr Lizzie Seal	School of Law, Politics and Sociology	University of Sussex
Mr Noel Brennan	Student (Medicine)	University College Cork
Review Coordinator		
<i>Dr Geraldine Fahy</i>	<i>Quality Enhancement Advisor</i>	<i>University College Cork</i>

**Ms Mags Walsh from Quality Enhancement Unit, University College Cork shadowed the panel as part of her induction.*

Part 1 - Overall Analysis

1.1 Timetable of the site visit

See Appendix 1.

1.2 Context

The School of Society, Politics and Ethics is a School in formation, and, under the auspices of the Individual Departments, has a long and august history. The School was initially formed as the School of Sociology and Philosophy in 2007. The most recent additions to the School have been the Department of Government and Politics in 2017, followed by the integration of the Department of Sociology and Criminology and the Department for the Study of Religions in early 2019. Following the addition of the different departments, a forum was convened in April 2019 to discuss a new name for the School. The name "School of Society, Politics and Ethics" was agreed upon. However, it was clear from both the Self-Evaluation Report (SER), and the meetings during the site visit, that departments maintain extensive autonomy - in design, administration and quality assurance of academic programmes. While this is understandable given the very recent reconfiguration of the School, the focus in the introductory part of the SER especially tended to focus more on justifying continued departmental autonomy rather than on potential shared opportunities, experiences and synergies.

1.3 Methodology and Site Visit

The Panel site visit for the School took place over three days in October 2019. The timetable was comprehensive and enabled consultation with key stakeholders, including senior management of the University, School staff, students, and external stakeholders. In the context of the site visit, there was extensive engagement with the Head of School (HoS), Heads of Department and staff of the School. The Panel brought together international, external reviewers with peer expertise in the areas of criminology, and philosophy. Internal reviewers provided knowledge of institutional and organisational structures within UCC. The student reviewer was a fourth-year medical student at UCC,

having completed an intercalated BSc Neuroscience. A Review Coordinator from the Quality Enhancement Unit (QEU) supported the Peer Review Panel throughout to facilitate the review process and the Review Panel in formulating and agreeing the final Panel Report.

An adapted Self-Evaluation Report structure was agreed between the School and the Quality Enhancement Unit at the outset of the review process to acknowledge the fact that SPE was a School 'in formation', thus observing the enhancement-led focus of the process. This was to be based on an evaluation of the quality of the student learning experience in each of the Departments and an overview section on the development and operation of the School as a whole.

1.4 Overall Analysis of Self-Evaluation Process

1.4.1 Overall analysis

This SER was presented in five parts; part one representing the School overall, followed by individual reports from each of the four distinct Departments – Government and Politics, Philosophy, Sociology and Criminology, and Study of Religions. The SER itself manifests a key issue for the School – namely a lack of integration of the different departments into a School. The SER was highly descriptive and provided limited evidence of the extent to which student/stakeholder focus groups and benchmarking data had been used to underpin the School's perspective as presented. While the approach taken was very democratic – individual chapters for each departmental report – the overall report thus lacked coherence.

The School is currently administered by Departmental Heads with a strong preference across the departments to maintain this structure. The Executive Committee of the School decided against employing a Grade 6 School Manager, instead preferring to maintain departmental autonomy. The development of a new name for the School demonstrates an initial desire to move forward with some cohesion. However, the School currently struggles with establishing its mission statement with Chapter 1 of the SER questioning whether the School should strive to be more than an administrative shell, and if so, how to establish unified structure, activity, and identity.

1.4.2 SWOT Analysis

A SWOT exercise was carried out by the School in April 2019 and identified a number of common elements across the departments. However, many of the Challenges and Threats highlighted in the Schools SWOT analysis put University-level issues at the forefront of the School's problems, e.g., decline in international rankings, dysfunctional promotions policy, lack of space, high teaching loads across the board at UCC, etc. These outcomes were confirmed during the panel site visit in the extensive evidence of low morale amongst staff.

1.4.3 Benchmarking

There was no evidence that benchmarking took place during preparation of the SER, resulting in a missed opportunity for the School to formally assess their current practice. It was mentioned during the site visit that the Department for the Study of Religions undertook a benchmarking exercise with the School of Divinity at the University of Edinburgh, but no additional details were provided to the panel. Likewise, whilst reference was made in the Department of Sociology and Criminology SER to European Universities that they are benchmarked against, and to 'subject benchmarks', it was not clear how these were developed or utilised.

1.4.4 Developments since last review

Although all Departments which comprise the School had engaged in the Quality Review process previously, in the formulation of the SER it is difficult to see how outcomes from previous reviews have been actioned. As a new entity, Criminology (which emerged as a discipline in 2016) has no

previous reviews available for comparison. The Study of Religions was included in the QR 2013 of the School of Asian Studies, but no mention is made of this in the current SER. Other than some minor programme changes, and acknowledgment of staffing issue difficulties, the discipline of Sociology, and the Department of Philosophy do not mention specific developments since the last review cycle (2010/11). The Department of Government and Politics draw attention to continuous reference in previous reviews (QR 2008 and 2017, and the RQR 2015) to restrictions placed on the Department by the shortage of physical space, and the urgent appointment of a Professor of Government.

1.5 Good Practice Case Study

The 'Case Study of Good Practice' is an important element of the self-evaluation process, allowing the School to identify good practice and provide an opportunity for knowledge sharing and peer learning. The absence of such a study was a missed opportunity for the School, or even its individual departments, to highlight a positive aspect of their work.

Part 2 – Findings of the Panel

2.1 School Overview

2.1.1 Narrative and Rules

It became clear from the SER and site visit that School members struggle with understanding the “top-down” rationale behind grouping the different departments together as a School unit, leading to the lack of a clearly articulated vision or unifying narrative for the School. While the Panel clearly acknowledge that this is a School in formation, largely operating as four autonomous units, there is an opportunity being missed to leverage the School’s distinctive offerings and disciplinary diversity, whilst also presenting themselves as others now see them – as a School. The Panel also noted that that practices and approval processes vary within the different departments and concluded that the School would benefit from the establishment of School Rules to define and enable the fulfilment of School functions. The Panel acknowledges that School rule development needs to be a “bottom-up” process and should build upon existing collaborations. At the same time, it was obvious to the Panel that there are many points of cohesion amongst the different departments (e.g., strong theoretical foundations, methods and methodologies, approach to student experience), and that these points also coalesce with many areas of strategic importance for UCC (e.g., Graduate Attributes, Connected Curriculum), which should be capitalised on by the School. A significant piece of work for the School will be establishing and consolidating its identity in an increasingly resource and recruitment-competitive national and international context. There is a need for operational and governance structures that enable the retention of disciplinary identity but also facilitate cohesive decision-making processes to avail of School-level initiatives. The theme of “Unity in Diversity” is a suggested potential starting point for characterising the identity of the School moving forward.

2.1.2 Unit details including staff and student profile

The School has 39 full-time academic staff and 7.5 full-time administrative staff spread across the four departments. The School currently has a combined total of 1,075 undergraduate (UG) students (FTE’s: Sociology & Criminology = 552; Philosophy = 100; Government & Politics = 258; Study of Religions = 66). The School had an intake of 81 for its combined postgraduate taught (PGT) programmes in 2019/20. At the time of the site visit, nine of the PGT programmes offered achieved enrolments of 5 or fewer students for 2019 (see table below). It would be useful if the School could consider consolidation of their portfolio of programmes with a view to eliminating the programme offerings that are not attracting demand, in line with [Priority 2 of the Academic Strategy](#). The Panel was of the

view that this could allow the School to prioritise resources, including staff time, to focus on enhancing the programmes with high potential. Increasing the number of postgraduate research (PGR) students and the volume of international students, which are currently very low, would also be extremely beneficial to the School.

Programme	2019 Intake
CKD56 MSc (International Public Policy and Diplomacy)	19
CKE32 MA (Criminology)	17
CKE70 MSc (Government and Politics)	16
CKD10 MA Health and Society	9
CKE55 MA (Sociology)	5
CKE20 MA (Anthropology)	4
CKE53 MA (Philosophy)	4
CKE56 MA (Sociology of Development and Globalisation)	3
CKA21 Higher Diploma in Arts - Philosophy	2
CKA27 Higher Diploma in Arts - Study of Religions	1
CKA44 Higher Diploma in Arts - Politics	1
CKA22 Higher Diploma in Arts - Sociology	0
CKC14 Postgraduate Diploma in Philosophy	0
Total	81

Source Recruitment and Admissions Office - 23 October 2019

High Staff: Student ratios are evident across all departments, with the exception of the Department for the Study of Religions but are especially high in Sociology with a SSR of 1:47.69 which includes a new appointment starting in January 2020. (**Source:** CACSSS HR Business Partner) It will be important that any new appointees contribute to enhancing the profile of the School.

2.1.3 School organisation, planning and communication

This is a School in formation and currently largely operates as a School in “name only”. The individual Departments that make up the School of Sociology, Philosophy, Criminology, Government, and Politics are not housed in the same building but instead staff members occupy different physical space across the UCC campus. Whilst there appears to be considerable goodwill amongst the staff towards colleagues in other departments, there is little evidence of sharing of information across departments, and limited, to no, knowledge sharing opportunities. There are many examples of best practice in individual Departments that could be shared and disseminated throughout the School, as became evident in almost every meeting during the Review process. Given that the School is the unit of resource allocation within the College, there is considerable potential for the School to leverage and maximise its synergies, resources and creativity through integrated School structures, in accordance with the vision of the University’s Strategic Plan and Academic Strategy.

There is much to be gained from developing more cohesive School structures, with opportunities for further collaboration, interdisciplinarity, knowledge sharing, and dissemination of current good practice, through the development of appropriate School committees as well as efficiencies in administration workloads. The School Executive Committee appears to be the only formal School-level committee. At present, while members are regularly in touch via email, it meets just 3-4 times per year. The School does not appear to regularly, or indeed ever, meet as a group. When asked what

would enable them to feel like a School, staff members responded that support for School-wide initiatives would assist in the first instance, along with a dedicated space to meet at a group. The Panel suggests that the School facilitate a series of fora, each meeting at least once per year, to share good practice on teaching, research and community engagement, and identify cross-cutting themes and research projects. The appointment of a School Manager would be a key catalyst in enabling and embedding more cohesive School structures and communication. In developing these structures, the School should look to other examples of best practice across the University to inform the development of their own processes and rules.

Because of inherited departmental structures within the School, there appears to be a lack of cohesion of administrative systems and processes employed across the departmental offices. The Panel strongly agree that having separate administrative staff in each department essentially doing the same job and separately liaising with the College Office is inefficient (e.g., processing of curriculum changes). Coordinating the workloads of the administrative staff at School-level – while having them remain within their individual departments – would be a culture change, but the Panel believes it would ultimately be a positive one. This more integrated School administrative structure would involve some centralisation and streamlining of processes, and avoidance of replication of workloads; for example, allowing administrative staff members to specialise in a particular area (e.g., curriculum management, health and safety reports, risk register). The Panel also advises that this specialisation could greatly benefit administrative staff in terms of career development. The appointment of a Grade 6 School Manager to lead and facilitate this coordination would be optimal. Additionally, an identifiable physical space which would co-locate all four Departments would harness the School's collective potential to maximise their research and community impact.

2.2 Evaluation of Academic Standards

2.2.1 Student "life-cycle"

Undergraduate students are the mainstay of every department in the School. The School attracts a diverse population of students across the four departments with the enrolment primarily coming through the conventional CAO route. Students spoke highly of their experience in the School and it is evident that there is a highly affirmative support and pastoral care culture for students. The Panel, in turn, were impressed by the (albeit small number of) students that they met. However, it was clear that the UG students identify more with their individual Departments than the School itself; most were unaware of the proposed new School name and had little idea of what a School structure could provide them. In line with the new Academic Strategy, the Panel would encourage the School to ensure that all students develop a clear understanding of the graduate attributes and transferable skills inherent in an Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences education. This could be achieved, for example, by employing presentations or group work as part of the assessment strategy.

Work Placements are vitally important in the Department of Government and Politics; they provide the opportunity for students to get real-life, practical experience. Placements are very student-centred in UCC and the Department of Government and Politics appear no different. The Work Placement system is one of mentoring and regular contact. Occasionally, students source their own placement opportunities with the support of the Work Placement Officer, but the vast majority are arranged by the Work Placement Officer. The Department of Government and Politics was the first political science department in Ireland to introduce placement as an embedded module in an undergraduate programme in 2002. The Panel acknowledged that the Work Placements process meets all the priorities of UCC's Graduate Attribute programme. Students in the other departments would greatly benefit from having this process more widespread across the School.

The Panel noted the disparity in the ratio of undergraduate (UG) students to postgraduate (PG) students in the School, with UGs far outnumbering PGs, both taught and research. Whilst recognising

the need to maintain undergraduate student numbers, the Panel identified the potential of the School to nurture its interdepartmental (or interdisciplinary) identity and profile to attract EU and non-EU PG students, in an effort to rebalance the undergraduate to postgraduate student ratio.

2.3 Evaluation of Student Learning Experience

2.3.1 Teaching and learning

The evident commitment to reflective education and innovative teaching was impressive. There were some excellent examples of novel pedagogies which could be held as exemplars; it was clear from the SER however that this is not universal across the School. The Panel suggest that the School implements consistent School-wide policies around the quality, timing and delivery of student feedback, and that this information is shared with students. In addition, the School should ensure mechanisms for disseminating feedback from external examiners, both to identify areas of good practice as well as areas for action and development.

2.3.2 Assessment

Undergraduate students raised their assessment burden as an issue during the Site Visit, particularly, the sheer number of assessments and their often-grouped scheduling at specific points in the academic calendar. While it was evident to the Panel that the academic staff in each department are aware of this clustering and attempt to avoid it where possible, it is clear that a coordinated approach is needed between departments in the School and with other Departments and Schools (e.g. Economics, Psychology) as a lack of communication between departments on the number of assessments, and assessment deadlines, could prove damaging to students' learning experience.

2.3.3 Learning resources (staffing, physical, technical, other)

While space is evidently at a premium within the University, this is a particularly problematic issue in a school with such large student numbers, above all in the small "villa" buildings housing several of the departments. In the course of the site visit, staff members drew the Panel's attention to the dangerous overcrowding of students, particularly in inclement weather, in the hallways of these buildings before and after lectures. The Panel also noted staff concerns regarding the suitability of Safari G02 as a teaching room given its small size.

2.3.4 Student support

The highly affirmative support and pastoral care of students has already been highlighted. This occurs at departmental and individual level between students and lecturers. The Panel also noted the level of support provided to students by administrative staff and advise that this be kept under review from a workload perspective.

The issue of support for PGR students also came up during the site visit, largely from the Panel's direct conversations with PGR students; the Panel recommends that the School convenes and supports regular School-level graduate seminars to further enhance the sense of community among PGRs, and further encourages and supports PGRs to attend conferences and submit their work for publication in academic journals. This is particularly important as the only dedicated space for PhD students is located in the dedicated CACSSS PhD space in Wandesford Quay, which is far away from the main departments.

Additionally, the Panel was concerned about some of the issues raised by staff with regards to the lack of residential accommodation for PG, particularly international PGT, students. While this is not an issue the School can solve alone, the Panel encourages the School to continue to support prospective students in sourcing accommodation prior to their arrival in Cork.

2.3.5 External links/community engagement/employability

External stakeholders were very positive and enthusiastic about the new name of the School but were unsure, apart from this name, what the School was about, and what benefits the new School could have for them. There was some exemplary evidence of community engagement and the work of certain individuals was highly commended by external stakeholders. However, while staff in each department engage widely, the Panel feels that there is potential for greater interface with the community at School-level, building on the critical mass of School wide activities. External stakeholders suggested that a potential School-wide initiative would be to make more of the many departmental links between public advocacy and environmental issues.

2.4 Staff

2.4.1 Staff Profile

Because of the different sizes of the departments, there is an imbalance in the FTEs across the School (exacerbated by the large UG student numbers in Sociology), which has clearly led to frustration amongst some staff members in relation to perceived imbalance in workload distribution. The School needs to develop structures to ensure transparency and parity in terms of resource and workload allocations. The School should explore potentials for efficiencies across the departments in terms of sharing workload (for both administration and academic purposes). The School Executive Committee should develop a Staffing Plan to prioritise staffing needs to the Head of College in an environment of limited resources. The Staffing Plan could also outline staff development needs, a regular and equitable sabbatical plan, prioritise the filling of posts, and take account of staff turnover. Having a School Manager in place, who could also support and advise the Head of School and the embedding of School structures, would also be a critical aspect in realising a cohesive School.

2.4.2 Staff Development Objectives

An ongoing issue for the School will be staff development; this is critically important for academic succession and leadership. Staff should be supported to develop their career pathways and the workload model and staffing plan should ensure sufficient time for all staff to undertake research, and to enable their own career progression. While the staff profile of the School as a whole demonstrates a reasonable gender balance, both male and female colleagues should be encouraged to undertake leadership training, and achieve, or enhance, teaching and learning qualifications. Additionally, more female colleagues should be encouraged to participate in initiatives such as Aurora.

2.5 Collaborative partnerships

The Panel was of the view that each department is too modest about its achievements, and that the School as a whole could leverage the strength and reputation of individual departments to explore further opportunities for potential research partnerships and increase their visibility in support of strategic funding within the University, nationally and internationally. As evidenced in the SER, the School is currently pursuing two School-wide strategic projects, The Collaborative Ireland, and “Doing Business in China” Executive Blended course. The Panel sees the potential of the “Doing Business in

China” strategic project as a great initiative to generate revenue and urges the School to urgently find a solution to the administration issues surrounding this project in order to move forward.

Part 3: Commendations and Recommendations

3.1 Commendations

In an ethos of quality enhancement, whereby good practice is acknowledged and disseminated, the Panel notes the following areas for commendation:

- Obvious commitment of staff to both student welfare and the student experience;
- Highly affirmative learner support (e.g., pastoral care for students);
- Maintaining research profiles and high levels of PhD students despite heavy workloads;
- Proactive and ambitious research activities;
- Commendable commitment to disciplinary excellence;
- Programme “health check” initiative in Sociology and Criminology, particularly the mapping of this onto UCC’s Academic Strategy;
- Loyalty, commitment and work ethic of the administration staff;
- Willingness of staff to be creative when developing new programmes and assessment methods;
- Apparent variety of opportunities for students to interact and identify areas for input into potential future programme;
- Apparent good student awareness of developing transversal skills indicates good level of academic support.

3.2 Opportunities

The Panel is of the opinion that, by unleashing the benefits of the School as a collective, there would be many opportunities for the School as follows:

- There is potential for the School to leverage its synergies, resources and creativity through integrated School structures, in accordance with the vision of the University’s Strategic Plan and Academic Strategy.
- The School should harness its collective potential to maximise its research and community impact, central to this could be the proposed plan to pool resources to attract and support new PhD students.

3.3 Peer Review Panel Recommendations

3.3.1 Recommendations to the School

3.3.1.1 Facilitating School cohesion

- Head of School should facilitate an all staff away day, with the assistance of HR, by the end of the current academic year (2019/20), to enable the articulation of a unifying narrative to

incorporate already existing shared values, whilst continuing to respect and protect disciplinary diversity.

- Build upon the positive energy from the development of the new School name by collaborating to consolidate existing excellence in the areas of public advocacy and community engagement which remain grounded in the highest quality theoretical research. Potential projects may include Graduate Attributes, shared School MA (such as the proposed MA Public Advocacy), PhD scholarships, applications to Marie Curie and Human Capital Initiative.

3.3.1.2 School organizational structures

- The School Executive Committee should draft detailed School rules for approval by the School Assembly and College of CACSSS that can be updated as necessary. These rules should include membership of the School Executive Committee and how often it should meet; we recommend that it meets at least twice each semester. The School rules should be agreed upon and be implemented by the start of the next academic year (2020/21).
- The School Executive Committee should have defined terms of reference, continue to be minuted and shared with the staff of the School. This School Executive should be considered as advisory to the Head of School. The terms of reference should be developed by the end of the current academic year (2019/20).
- A School Assembly should be held at least twice per year to facilitate cross-departmental interaction on the operation of School and strategic initiatives. This should include all categories of staff and student representation.
- Head of School should facilitate a series of fora, each meeting at least once per year, to share good practice on teaching, research and community engagement, and identify cross-cutting themes and research projects.

3.3.1.3 Teaching and Learning

- School-level critical assessment of 5-credit modules, and identification of opportunities for amalgamation of modules, should be undertaken in order to reduce assessment load on students.
- School Executive Committee should consider consolidation of the School's portfolio of programmes with a view to eliminating programme offerings that are clearly not attracting demand. This would allow the School to prioritise resources, including staff time, to focus on enhancing programmes with high potential. This should be done in collaboration with the Director of Recruitment and Admissions.
- Programme directors should clearly articulate Graduate Attributes, and other aspects of the Connected Curriculum, in programme learning outcomes, and modules descriptions.
- Develop a standardized School-level approach to online student feedback.
- Ensure as good practice that lecture materials be made available on Canvas as soon as possible following each lecture.
- Implement School-level induction for PhD students, and follow on training and development opportunities, and social activities, to be developed in consultation with existing students.

- Reconsider that any studentships being developed be for the entire duration of the PhD, including the condition that students apply for IRC funding in all cases.

3.3.1.4 Space

- Head of School, in consultation with the College Manager, should identify a suitable common space for executive meetings and committees. This may involve repurposing existing space or negotiating the return of a centrally booked tutorial room which has been identified by staff in the course of the quality review as potentially being highly unsuitable for teaching.

3.3.1.5 Staffing

- In consultation with the Careers Services and the College, consolidate the current Work Placement supports within the School; ideally to extend the opportunity for work placement across the School, particularly to support new initiatives such as the MA Public Advocacy.
- School Executive Committee should articulate a School staffing plan within six months, particularly addressing the urgent staffing needs in Sociology. This should cover prioritization of filling posts, staff turnover, development, and an equitable sabbatical plan.

3.3.1.6 Leadership

- In recognition of the need for better coordinated activities at School-level, in response to institutional developments, we recommend that the School moves, by agreement, towards a more integrated School administrative structure. This should involve some centralization and streamlining of processes and would optimally result in the appointment of a Grade 6 School Manager. Opportunities for reducing replication of workloads should be explored (including curriculum management, health and safety reports, risk register).
- Ensure senior academic leadership at the level of Professor/Professor (scale 2), in each discipline remains a priority for the School in terms of staff planning.

Arising from the site visit, the Panel identified a number of important issues which are detailed below in the form of observations. It draws these to the attention of the College and University Management Teams.

3.3.2 Peer Review Panel Observations to the College

3.3.2.1 Space

- When space becomes available in the O'Rahilly Building, consideration should be made to relocate the School of Society, Politics and Ethics here.

3.3.2.2 Senior leadership

- Ensure the strategic appointment to Professor of Government remains a College priority.
- For future appointments, ensure that the appointments of the Head of School and Heads of Department complies with current College and University policies, rather than a rotating Headship as proposed in the Self-Evaluation Report.

3.3.3 Peer Review Panel Observations to the University

3.3.3.1 Staff-student ratios

- Staff student ratios in Sociology (1:47.69) represent a major risk for the University as a whole. This issue needs to be addressed urgently.
- The University should address the high workloads, high staff-student ratios, and lack of promotion and recognition in this School that are resulting in a loss of high quality staff which runs contrary to Goal 3 of the University's Strategic Plan of "Attract, develop, support and retain". The values, attitudes and expertise of staff within this School speaks directly to key priorities in the Academic Strategy, the Connected Curriculum.

Appendix 1 – Peer Review Panel Site Visit Timetable

In Summary

- Tuesday 22 October: The Panel arrives for a briefing from the Director of Quality Enhancement, followed by a meeting with the Head of School and School staff. This is followed by a meeting with Stakeholders.
- Wednesday 23 October: The Panel meets with the Head of College, students and relevant senior officers. A working private dinner is held that evening for the Panel in order to draft the report.
- Thursday 24 October: The Panel meets with the Head of School. A closing presentation is given by the Panel to all members of the School. Panel members depart.

Tuesday 22 October 2019	
Venue: Tower Room 2 (unless otherwise specified)	
12.00 – 13.00	Convening of Panel members. Briefing by Ms Elizabeth Noonan, Director of Quality Enhancement, Ms Mags Walsh, Quality Enhancement Developer and Dr Geraldine Fahy, Quality Enhancement Advisor, followed by lunch.
13.00 – 14.00	Private meeting of Panel <i>Panel agree issues to be explored in meetings with Head of School, staff and Stakeholders.</i>
14.00 – 15.30	Meeting with Head of School, Professor Don Ross - to be joined by Heads of Discipline at 14.45 Dr Lidia Guzy, Head, Study of Religions Dr Clodagh Harris, Head, Government and Politics Professor Maggie O’Neill, Head, Sociology and Criminology <i>Discussion regarding developments to date, strategic priorities of the School and overview of educational provision.</i>
15.30 – 15:50	Tea/coffee <i>Panel discussion.</i>
15:50 – 16:00	Move to CACSSS Seminar Room (G.27) for Meeting with School staff
16.00 – 16.50	Meeting with School staff <i>Discuss issues such as strategy, communications, research & education, staffing, teaching & learning, curriculum & assessment.</i> Venue: CACSSS Seminar Room (G.27)
16.50 – 17.00	Move to Staff Common Room for Stakeholder meeting
17.00 – 18.00	Meeting with External Stakeholders Mr Denis Barrett, Cork Learning Cities Coordinator

	<p>Senator Colm Burke, Cork North Central Constituency Ms Julie Connolly, Cork Volunteer Centre Ms Sheila Connolly, Manager, Cork Alliance Centre Mr Mark Leyden, Cork County Council Mr Thomas McHugh, Cork Chamber of Commerce Mr James O'Donovan, Cork Environmental Forum Ms Niamh O'Reilly, Schuman Traineeship (Equality and Diversity Unit) Mr Brendan Touhy, Dingle Innovation Creativity Hub Mr Pádraic Vallely, Social Innovation Fund Ireland</p> <p><i>The Panel meets with past graduates, employers of graduates and other stakeholders as appropriate to discuss views on the quality of education received and the quality of the graduates.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Venue: Staff Common Room</p>
19.00	<p>Informal dinner for members of the Panel & staff members of the School</p> <p>Dr Aman De Sondy Dr Kieran Keohane Professor Don Ross Professor Arpad Szakolczai</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Venue: Jacob's on the Mall</p>

Wednesday 23 October 2019		Venue: Tower Room 2
08.45 – 09.00	Convening of the Panel	
09.00 – 10:00	<p>Professor Chris Williams, Head of College to be joined by Ms Maeve Doyle, HR Business Advisor, at 09:40am</p> <p><i>Panel discuss College strategy and priorities. The links between College/School financial resource allocations process, staffing resources and infrastructure.</i></p>	
10:00 – 10.45	<p>Enhancing Student Learning Experience</p> <p>Dr Kieran Keohane, Dept. of Sociology and Criminology Ms Paula Meaney, Dept. of Sociology and Criminology Ms Dearbhail O'Callaghan, Work Placements Manager Dr Tatsuma Padoan, Dept. of Study of Religions Dr Joel Walmsley, Dept. of Philosophy</p> <p><i>Opportunity for the School to showcase good practice and enhancements to the student learning experience (e.g. student feedback, staff development, graduate outcomes).</i></p>	
10.45 – 11.15	Tea/coffee	
11.15 – 12.00	<p>Academic Strategy Implementation: Assessment & Innovation</p> <p>Dr Vittorio Bufacchi, Dept. of Philosophy</p>	

	<p>Dr Jenny Butler, Dept. of Study of Religions Dr Andrew Cottey, Dept. of Government and Politics Dr Ger Mullally, Dept. of Sociology and Criminology Dr Theresa O’Keefe, Dept. of Sociology and Criminology</p> <p><i>Discussion regarding teaching and learning assessment practices and innovative assessment strategies</i></p>
12.00 – 12.45	<p>Representatives of undergraduate students</p> <p>Conach Mairead Gibson, 3rd Yr, Sociology and Criminology Jeremiah Daniel Healy, 2nd Yr, Sociology and Criminology Tadhg MacCionnaith, Government and Politics (attended) Finch McKee, 2nd Yr, Philosophy and Sociology (attended) Matthew Moynihan, Government and Politics Anne Marie O’Hara, 1st Yr, Sociology and Criminology Devon O’Mahony, Philosophy Grace Charlotte O’Shea, Study of Religions Kerri O’Sullivan, 3rd Yr Sociology (attended) Mistura Bukky Oyebanji, Study of Religions</p>
12.45 – 13.30	<p>Representatives of Postgraduate students</p> <p>Evan Boyle, Sociology and Criminology Conor Cashman, Sociology and Criminology Michael Mary Crowley, Study of Religions Andrea Di Carlo, Philosophy Kevin Hosford, Sociology Maxwell Osonokwu, Government and Politics Brenda Mondragon Toledo, Sociology and Criminology Dawn Wang, Philosophy Marnina Elizabeth Winkler, Study of Religions Meilan Zhang, Sociology and Criminology</p>
13.30 – 14.30	Lunch and private meeting of the Panel
14.30 – 15.00	<p>Dr Jennifer Murphy, Director of Recruitment & Admissions Mr Paul O’Donovan, Academic Secretary (Deputy for Professor John O’Halloran, Deputy President & Registrar)</p> <p><i>Discussion of University academic and development strategy</i></p>
15.00 – 15.30	Tea/coffee
15.30 – 16.15	<p>Meeting with Senior Officers of the University:</p> <p>Professor Paul McSweeney, (Panel Chair), Vice President for Learning and Teaching Dr David O’Connell, Director of Research Support Services</p>
16.15 – 17.15	<p>Meeting with Programme Directors</p> <p>Study of Religions: Dr Amanullah De Sondy, Programme Director</p>

	<p>Sociology/Criminology: Dr James Windle, PD for BA Criminology Dr Tracey Skillington, PD BA Sociology (major, joint and minor) Dr Ger Mullally PD MA Sociology, Globalisation and Development plus MA Sociology Dr. Katharina Swirak, PD for MA Criminology</p> <p>Philosophy Dept.: Dr Katherine Furman, Programme Director Dr Cara Nine, Programme Director</p> <p>Government / Politics: Dr Niall Duggan, PD for MSc International Public Policy and Diplomacy Dr Mary Murphy, PD for BA Politics</p> <p><i>Discussion on monitoring and review of programmes to include indicatively, student progression, assessment, External Examiner reports, external accreditation /recognition (where appropriate), supports for learners, placement (where appropriate).</i></p>
18.00 – 21.00	<p>Working private dinner for members of the Panel to commence drafting the report.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Venue: Meeting Room 2, River Lee Hotel</p>

Thursday 24 October 2019		Venue: Tower Room 2
08.45 – 09.00	Convening of the Panel	
09.00 – 09.30	Private meeting of Panel (tea/coffee)	
09.30 – 10.15	<p>Professor Don Ross, Head of School</p> <p><i>Clarification and discussions of main findings by Panel.</i></p>	
10.15 – 12:15	<p>Private meeting of Panel</p> <p><i>Drafting the panel report</i></p>	
12:15 – 13:00	Formulating the closing presentation and lunch	
13:00 – 13:10	Move to Council Room	
13:10 – 14:00	<p>Closing presentation</p> <p><i>Closing presentation to all staff, to be made by the Chair or other member(s) of Panel as agreed, summarising the principal findings of the Panel. This presentation is <u>not</u> for discussion at this time.</i></p>	Venue: Council Room

Appendix 2 - Peer Review Panel Profiles

Quality Review of the School of Society, Politics and Ethics, UCC

<p>Mr Noel Brennan</p>	<p>Noel Brennan is fourth year medical student and has previously completed an intercalate BSc in neuroscience.</p> <p>Over the last five years at UCC he has been actively involved in unions, societies and clubs. He has been involved in local and national campaigns on issues like housing, mental health and the environment. He has coordinated community outreach programmed and organised a variety of creative, academic and entertainment events with St. Vincent De Paul, MSF and the Medical society.</p> <p>He was the Students Union representative for the College of Medicine and Health and was nominated for national rep of the year and has previously won Fresher of the year and a STAR award.</p> <p>He previously reviewed the Cork University Business School.</p>
<p>Dr Helena Buffery</p>	<p>Helena Buffery teaches and researches in the School of Languages, Literatures and Cultures and is currently Vice-Head of CACSSS (Research). She has served on the Quality Enhancement Committee for the past 2-3 years and will be representing the QEC on the Review Panel.</p>
<p>Dr Stephen John</p>	<p>Stephen John is Hatton Trust Senior Lecturer in the Philosophy of Public Health, at the Department of History and Philosophy of Science, University of Cambridge. He also studied for his PhD at Cambridge. His research and teaching centres around issues at the intersection of political philosophy, philosophy of science and public health policy. He is currently pursuing two projects: one on the ethics of science communication, and a second on the ethics and epistemology of chance and categorisation. He has a particular interest in recent UK cancer detection and prevention policy. He has published papers in both philosophy and public health journals.</p>
<p>Professor Paul McSweeney</p>	<p>Professor Paul McSweeney is Vice-President for Learning and Teaching in University College Cork. His office coordinates the activities of the University's Centre for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning (CIRTL), Adult Continuing Education (ACE), Centre for Digital Education, CPD Directorate, Examinations Appeals and the Language Centre, together with responsibility for delivering aspects of the University's Academic Strategy.</p> <p>As Professor of Food Chemistry and former Head of the School of Food and Nutritional Sciences, he has an active research profile in dairy chemistry and cheese science. He is the co-author or co-editor of 15 books and about 275 research papers and reviews with a h-index of 62 with over 18,000 citations (Google Scholar; May 2019). He was awarded the Marschall Danisco International Dairy Science Award of the American Dairy Science Association in 2004 and in 2009 a higher doctorate (DSc) on published work by the National University of Ireland.</p>

	<p>Since 2009 he has been a member of Academic Board, the senior university standing committee of Academic Council responsible for the formulation of strategy and policy to meet the university's education and research objectives. He has chaired the university's Examinations Appeals Committee and for over five years ADSC, the university's main academic policy committee. He is also a member of the board of the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education.</p> <p>Prof McSweeney has considerable leadership and management experience in higher education. He was vice-head of school, vice-head of the College of Science, Engineering and Food Science, interim Head of College, a governor of the university (2015-2018) and member of its Finance Committee and head of the School of Food and Nutritional Sciences before being appointed Vice-President for Learning and Teaching in December 2018.</p>
<p>Dr Lizzie Seal</p>	<p>Dr Lizzie Seal is Reader in Criminology in the School of Law, Politics and Sociology at the University of Sussex, where she convenes the MA Criminology and Criminal Justice. Her research is in the areas of historical and cultural criminology. She was Principal Investigator on 'Race, Racialisation and the Death Penalty in England and Wales, 1900-65' [Leverhulme RPG-2016-352], 2016-2018 and is currently PI on 'Reforming British Law and Policy on the Global Death Penalty' [British Academy IC3\100170]. Lizzie is the author of four monographs (two co-authored, two single authored) as well as numerous journal articles and book chapters. She is Publications Chair for the British Society of Criminology and Secretary of the Society's Historical Criminology Network. She is also a member of the Howard League for Penal Reform's research advisory group. Lizzie is external examiner for the BA Criminology programme at University of Birmingham.</p>