

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT / QUALITY ASSURANCE

FOLLOW-UP REPORT SCHOOL OF HISTORY

- History
- History of Art

NOTE: Although the School of History has been established and History of Art has always been located within the Department of History, as it was previously, the two disciplines History and History of Art are in effect operating as separate entities and there is not yet a shared governance/management structure/system in place. Thus each discipline prepared a separate SAR and prepared separate responses to the relevant recommendations/sections of the PRG Report. The reviewers did comment on the School but made detailed comments specific to each discipline.

The School is actively implementing the recommendations within its available resources and intends to continue to do so. The School is committed to the quality agenda and to embedding a quality culture in all its activities.

The Follow-up meeting was held in the School of History on 6th January 2012.

Present

Professor Geoff Roberts, Head of School
Professor David Ryan,
Dr. Flavio Boggi,
Dr. Simon Knowles
Dr Sabine Kreibel
Ms. Maeve Barry

Dr. Norma Ryan, Director, Quality Promotion Unit

6th January 2012

Abbreviations

PRG: Peer Review Group

QPC: Quality Promotion Committee

HR: Human Resources

RQR: Research Quality Review

CEMC: College Executive Management Committee

VP: Vice-President

QIP: Quality Improvement Plan

CACSSS: College of Arts, Celtic Studies & Social Sciences

AC: Academic Council

ECF: Employment Control Framework.

| PRG Finding/Recommendation | | QPC Comment/Recommendation | Follow-up Report January 2012 |
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| | History | | |
| 1. | To implement the proposals of the School Research Committee to re-focus History's research profile and performance, in the light of the findings of the RQR report. | Recommendation strongly endorsed. | The School is working on preparation of its research strategy, which is presently in draft format. The strategy will cover the next 5 years. However before finalisation the School is awaiting the proposals of the AC Research Committee for the next RQR to ensure that the strategy is aligned with the requirements for the RQR. It is hoped that the strategy will be finalised by the end of 2011/12. |
| 2. | To implement the structured PhD process initiated and overseen by the School Graduate Studies Committee, and to monitor its impact, particularly with regard to the generic skills element. | Recommendation strongly endorsed. QPC also recommended that the School should ensure that the process is in line with University guidelines and regulations | Implemented. Implementation includes the conduct of annual reviews for all PhD students. All University policies have been implemented with respect to PhD students. A very active postgraduate Historical Society has been established, and an annual conference now takes place. |

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| 3. | To consider the introduction a distance-learning MA programme in History with a view to curriculum innovation and the generation of significant fee income. | Recommendation endorsed | Implemented. MA in War Studies has been developed and will be offered on-line in September 2012. |
| 4. | To proceed with the appointment of a Chair in Irish History to replace Professor Keogh. | QPC noted that implementation is a matter for the Head of College ACSSS. | A Chair in History has been appointed. A second chair has been approved in principle but the process for filling the chair has not yet commenced. |
| 5. | To assist staff to achieve promotion to Professor and Senior Lecturer and to consider <i>inter alia</i> academic workloads and other factors that might affect this. | Recommendation strongly endorsed. QPC noted the University policy on mentoring of early career academic staff and recommended such a system be considered within the QIP to be developed by the School. | The School is supporting career development for academic staff and particularly focus on early career staff. |
| 6. | To establish a Working Group on equal opportunities practice and to feed outputs into the University Equality Committee. | Recommendation endorsed. QPC welcomed the increased commitment to equal opportunities within the School | The committee was established but has not met to consider the issues. The committee is awaiting a briefing from the University Equality Committee on the issues to be considered. |

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| 7. | To establish a Working Group on Workloads, chaired by the Head of School, to devise a suitable model, taking into account the research, teaching and supervision priorities of the School and developments at College and University levels. | QPC noted that there is a University working group addressing the development of academic workload allocation model(s) and that this committee is due to report to Academic Council in late 2010/2011. QPC advised that the School await the developments from this committee before expending a lot of effort in duplicating the University committee's work. | The School of History participated in the pilot programme for the University Academic Workload Distribution Model and plans to implement this in full in Spring 2012. |
| 8. | To rotate officers and membership of committees in 2010-2011. | Recommendation strongly endorsed. In particular QPC noted the desirability of ensuring equitable workload distribution among all staff. | Implemented. |
| 9. | To continue the work of the Learning and Teaching Committee in developing quality research-led undergraduate teaching. | Recommendation strongly endorsed. | On-going. The School Learning and Teaching Committee is very active and continues its work on these topics. |
| 10. | To plan, prepare and deliver tutor training programme for 2010/2011. | Recommendation strongly endorsed. | Implemented. The tutor training programme is in place and is extensive. |

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| 11. | To increase opportunities for postgraduates to publish and to give due consideration to how this objective might best be achieved. | Recommendation endorsed. QPC noted the need for the School to focus on publication in appropriate national and international journals of high quality and other appropriate publication media. | On-going. Postgraduates are encouraged to publish, irrespective of the programme of study they are pursuing. They are given advice on publishing and also contribute to on-line journals. |
| 12. | To establish a working group to review the future of the Irish National Institute for Historical Research, in the context of a wider strategic review of the Discipline's configuration of research projects and priorities and of the resource issues relating thereto. | Recommendation endorsed. QPC recommended that the School take account of University help available. | INIHR is not in place. A Working Group has been established to consider both College and University strategies with respect to the possibility of the INIHR being established. The School is continuing to actively plan for all anniversaries in Ireland in the next 10 years. |
| 13. | To ensure refurbishment of staff offices. | Recommendation endorsed | Implemented. |
| 14. | To build capacity for strategic awareness and strategic action. | Recommendation strongly endorsed. | On-going. Away days have been held and a committee established with a strategic remit. |
| 15. | To continue building interdisciplinary links within UCC and intra-institutional links nationally and internationally. | Recommendation endorsed | On-going. All School staff are encouraged to be involved in such activities, e.g. MA in Irish Studies, and will continue to be so. |
| 16. | Greater clarity and direction with respect to the availability of the tutorial system and its consistency throughout all years of the programmes be put in place for students. | Recommendation endorsed. | Implemented. |

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| 17. | The Discipline clarifies the system for allocation of places on quota bound modules in 2 nd and 3 rd year and that this system be communicated in a timely and transparent fashion to students. | Recommendation strongly endorsed. QPC recommends immediate action on this recommendation. | Implemented. |
| 18. | Further consideration is given to the inclusion in the senior year of the undergraduate programme of a formal introduction to information literacy specifically related to archival systems. | Recommendation endorsed. | Implemented. There is a specific module delivered in Year 2 of the programme. |
| 19. | The Discipline actively engages with the careers service to provide subject-specific advice to students on careers and postgraduate opportunities. | Recommendation endorsed. | Under consideration. Not yet implemented. |
| 20. | Greater clarity and information flow on the postgraduate and research seminars be made available, to ensure that appropriate audiences are fully informed and that the full value of these seminars is widely shared. | Recommendation strongly endorsed. | Implemented. A full programme is in place and is advertised widely to staff and students. |
| 21. | The Discipline introduces a dedicated discipline-specific induction day to research postgraduates, to complement the University induction programme. | Recommendation strongly endorsed. QPC also recommends that the School ensures that all research postgraduates participate in the University-organised induction programmes for research postgraduates. | Implemented. The Historical Postgraduate Society is very involved in this exercise and organised the formal induction in October 2011. |

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| 22. | The adoption of an annual report from each academic staff member on research progress as an appropriate measure for staff development. | Recommendation endorsed. | Implemented. |
| 23. | The Discipline formulates in strategic terms its outreach activities so as to optimise the public profile of the Discipline locally, nationally and internationally for the benefit of the Discipline and for UCC | Recommendation endorsed | On-going. Needs further development and the Research Committee of the School is working on this. |
| 24. | In the context of the review of the INIHS that the Discipline reviews the viability of the full suite of research projects currently sustained by external funding. | Recommendation endorsed QPC also suggested that the School engages in an analysis of the long term viability and sustainability of all research projects | Implemented |
| 25. | The University gives urgent consideration to easing the restrictive terms under which sabbatical leave is currently being supported, and to restoring a sabbatical research leave scheme that takes account the full range of research-directed objectives of staff. | QPC noted that this consideration has taken place and that AC has approved a revision to the scheme. The revised scheme does take account of the research objectives of academic staff. | The School is actively engaging in the revised Sabbatical Leave Scheme introduced by the University and is encouraging all staff to avail of the scheme in an organised manner. |
| 26. | The adoption of the recommendation in the SAR <i>re</i> the appointment of a chair in Irish History will still leave the professorial level in History in UCC substantially below the level merited by the Discipline's academic standing and scale. The University should address this anomalous situation as a matter of urgency. | Recommendation noted. QPC noted that this recommendation is for consideration by the Head of College ACSST under the devolved management system | Agreement in principle has been reached for the appointment of a second chair in History. |

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| 27. | In the context of overall support for research initiatives and developments in the School of History, and in the Humanities in general at UCC, further consideration needs to be given to the role of the Office for the VP for Research in assisting such initiatives and developments. | QPC noted that the Office of the VP Research does provide support to the humanities disciplines and that a dedicated Research Support Officer has been appointed to the College ACSSS | The School makes every effort to liaise with the College and the Office of the VP Research and Innovation. The appointment of a research officer in the CACSSS with effect from 23 January 2012 should assist in this regard. |
| | History of Art | | |
| 28. | That the space committee should consider re-housing the staff member providing administrative support to History of Art within the unit's designated building. The PRG noted that the present administrative support is not a full-time activity for the post holder who also provides support for History and who reports to the Head of School. | Recommendation noted. School response also noted. The QPC noted that the implementation of this recommendation is a matter for the Head of School of History | Not implemented. This recommendation is still under review by the School. |
| 29. | In any new structure that may emerge the Discipline of History of Art must be accorded parity of esteem and be acknowledged as an autonomous disciplinary entity. | The QC noted this recommendation and will request the incoming Head of College ACSSS to consider plans to address the structures in the College. | The School supports parity of esteem between both disciplines within the School. |

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| 30. | Mentoring and other appropriate support is provided to the Head of Discipline in his/her role as a leader of an autonomous discipline. | Recommendation endorsed. QPC noted that the University Management Team has approved the extension of the Leadership Development Programme to heads of Schools for 2010/11 and with the possibility of a wider extension as soon as resources allow. | Implemented. The Head of Discipline is participating in the Leadership Development programme in UCC and in the mentoring system in place in the School in which all staff of the School participate. |
| 31. | The University give urgent consideration to easing the restrictive terms under which sabbatical leave is currently being supported, and to restoring a sabbatical research leave scheme which takes account of the full range of research-directed objectives of academic staff. | QPC noted that this recommendation has already been implemented by the University with a revised sabbatical leave scheme approved by the Academic Council in 2009/10 and operational for 2010/11 onwards. | Implemented. See comment above under Sabbatical Leave Scheme |
| 32. | The members of History of Art are supported in the development of a strategic plan which should include specific targets for research outputs, which resonate with the School, College and University strategic plans. | QPC endorsed the development of a strategic plan by the School which incorporates specific targets for research for all academic staff. | Under active discussion. Finalisation is awaiting the publication of the UCC Strategic Plan 2012-2017 |
| 33. | The Library or University, as appropriate, pursues the possibility of sections of books being provided as PDFs, online, under appropriate licensing arrangements (to meet the deficits in History of Art). | QPC noted that the matter was resolved. | Implemented. The University ensured that funds allocated to History of Art were made available for purchase of materials. |

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| 34. | <p>Provided that growth and further recommended development of History of Art takes place the PRG envisages that the restoration of a professorial appointment in History of Art will become at once logical and appropriate to its further development and distinction.</p> | <p>Recommendation noted. QPC commented that this is the responsibility of the Head of College ACSSS and referred the recommendation to the Head of College for consideration</p> | <p>Staffing discussions are held with each budget holder in CACSSS in the first instance by the College HR Manager and College Finance Analyst to identify staffing needs. Schools and Departments are encouraged to think strategically in terms of retirement planning, programme development and discipline leadership which should inform the plans they put forward at those meetings. (The current staffing cycle of meetings is due to finish this month, Jan 2012). Staffing proposals overall will then be considered by the Head of College, having discussed strategy with CEMC, and in light of budget considerations, ECF and headcount. A final staffing proposal from the College will go to UMTO on request in February.</p> |
| 35. | <p>The School addresses the disparity between the Discipline's current and anticipated future image provision requirements and the technical support presently provided.</p> | <p>Recommendation endorsed. This is a matter for the School. The QPC recommends that staff of HA work within the School structures and with the Head of School to seek ways to resolve this.</p> | <p>Implemented.</p> |

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| 36. | History of Art capitalises upon the opportunities potentially available for quality enhancement, staff development and increased efficiency available through participation in School committee structures. | Recommendation endorsed. QPC noted the necessity for the School to develop, as a matter of immediacy, School governance and management structures. QPC recommends that all disciplinary areas within the School are represented and involved in such structures. | Not implemented yet. Working relationship is in place. This will be reviewed in the light of the new Rules for the College ACSSS approved in October 2011 by the Governing Body. |
| 37. | History of Art explores the opportunities for masters as well as doctoral research-based qualifications so as to increase the throughput of and reduce completion times of postgraduate studies. | Recommendation endorsed. QPC noted and welcomed the response of the School | Actions are on-going. A new marketing programme is in place. New brochures have been developed. The School is monitoring success both nationally and internationally of actions taken. All opportunities are being exploited. |
| 38. | The use of the UCC-CIT Memorandum of Understanding is explored as a means for the History of Art to pursue the opportunities in the domains of reciprocal library arrangements, teaching and research collaborations, afforded by links with Crawford and other local institutions. | Recommendation endorsed. | On-going. An agreement exists between Crawford and UCC. Discussions have taken place on the possibilities of shared teaching and options are being explored. |
| 39. | That provision of access by History of Art to ARTstor is maintained. | Recommendation endorsed. QPC recommended that the relevant staff in the School liaise with the relevant library staff to ensure this happens | Implemented. |

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| 40. | Provision of field trips are maintained at reasonable cost, and organised so that they do not exclude those students with other teaching-term study commitments | Recommendation endorsed. | Implemented. Field trips are organised to take place at weekends so as not to disrupt other studies. |
| 41. | The Discipline actively engage with the careers service to provide subject specific advice to students on careers and postgraduate opportunities. | Recommendation endorsed | Implemented. Links are provided to relevant documentation in Ireland and abroad. |
| 42. | That before the discipline engages in any initiative aimed at offering a summer school, which would further reduce the already restricted time available for research to academic members of staff and may not prove financially beneficial, that a detailed cost-benefit analysis should be undertaken. | Recommendation strongly endorsed. QPC welcomed the commitment to undertake such an analysis | The School is investigating various options, including participation in early start semester programme offerings. |