

**Quality Enhancement Plan**  
**School of Applied Social Studies**  
**March 2024**

FOR COMPLETION BY QEU	
<b>Date of Peer Review visit:</b> 4 <sup>th</sup> - 5 <sup>th</sup> October and 10 <sup>th</sup> & 12 <sup>th</sup> October 2023	<b>Head of Unit:</b> Dr Deirdre Horgan
<b>Link to Panel Report published on QEU website:</b>  <a href="https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/qualityenhancementunit/reports/cacsss/SchoolofAppliedSocialStudies-PeerReviewGroupReport2023-24.pdf">https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/qualityenhancementunit/reports/cacsss/SchoolofAppliedSocialStudies-PeerReviewGroupReport2023-24.pdf</a>	<b>Date QEP considered by Quality Enhancement Committee:</b> 24 <sup>th</sup> September 2024

Item No	Panel Recommendation	Actions Planned <sup>1</sup>	Responsibility for Action <sup>2</sup>	Resource Implications <sup>3</sup>	Implementation Schedule <sup>4</sup>	Effectiveness/Impact <sup>5</sup> <i>To be completed as part of follow-up</i>
1	Prioritise the completion of the ongoing module portfolio review to streamline content and optimise shared delivery of various degree streams.	A full review of programmes in the School has been undertaken and completed in 2023. This indicated that the focus should be on reconfiguration of	Vice Head for Curriculum Development; HoS; and Programme Directors.	Lectureships and resources for App SW externally funded through the HEI; liaison with CIRTL re	6 months  All changes to be implemented by September 2024	

<sup>1</sup> May include actions planned within the unit or those that require interface with other parts of the university

<sup>2</sup> E.g. Head of School, School Manager, all staff, specific committees etc

<sup>3</sup> Resources – the financial or human resources required to implement the recommendation

<sup>4</sup> Interim milestone dates can be included here (e.g. within 6 months, within 12 months, within 3 years etc.)

<sup>5</sup> **To be completed as part of follow-up 12-15 months post publication of QEP** - Recognising the need to reflect on the effectiveness of actions undertaken, and to what extent the actions have achieved their intended outcome

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		<p>programmes rather than modules.</p> <p>There has been a major restructuring of programmes within the School with the changes to come into effect in September 2024.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. BSocSc - reconfiguring of core and elective modules.</li> <li>2. New Masters Social Policy &amp; Social Justice (online) which will streamline teaching delivery.</li> <li>3. Apprenticeship in Social Work</li> <li>4. New common entry point for BSW from the BSocSc</li> <li>5. The development of the FE-HE BSW</li> <li>6. New Leaving Cert pathway for the</li> </ol>		<p>development of online Masters; liaison with Cork College of FET, Morrissons Island, for development of FE-HE BSW.</p>		

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		BSoc Youth and Community Work.				
2	Concurrent with the portfolio review, complete the review of administrative responsibilities, in conjunction with the HR Business Manager, to clarify professional staff roles and responsibilities to support the delivery of the School's academic mission.	Professional services staff roles and responsibilities have been reviewed. All are aligned with programme(s) as well as specific packages of work to support key strategic aims e.g. QS rankings, CIM programme and module changes, Athena Swan, accreditation. To be reviewed in 12 months with HR Business manager.	HoS; HR Business Manager; and School Manager	NA	12 months	
3	Map all current staff research activity to identify strategic strength and areas of capacity and to leverage increased grant capture and research strengths in the context of the emerging UCC Futures landscape.	Conducted as part of School Research KPI process. All SASS academic and research staff will be embedded within a thematic research area within the School and linked with relevant Futures, ISS21 initiatives and SDGs.  Website development has prioritised the showcasing of the Schools distinctive	School KPI Champion; School Graduate Studies Committee; and School Research Committee.  School Manager (website)		12 months	

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		research profile and 'telling the story' of the School. New School website launched in February 2024.				
4	Work on a scheme with the College Finance Manager to use any additional funds coming into the School to top up PhD financial supports.	Meetings with CACSSS Financial analyst to pursue any opportunities to develop PhD financial supports.	HoS and School Manager		2 Years (Project Alpha will impact on this timeframe)	
5	Medium term recommendation - Seek opportunities and develop more formalised structures with Placement partners to secure, on an ongoing basis, the availability and allocation of placements.	<p>Ongoing CPD opportunities and civic engagement outreach with placement sites will continue to secure and retain practice placements.</p> <p>The mentorship approach to work integrated learning within the new Level-9 Apprenticeship in Social Work approach will secure a minimum of 74 placements per academic year (37 per semester) from 2024-2025 with this rising to 200 per year (100 per semester) by 2030-2031. These placements</p>	Prof SW; Directors MSW and BSW.	NA	2 years	


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		<p>will be secured by the contracted mentored apprentice places with partner employers (TUSLA, HSE, Probation services).</p> <p>In addition, the planned appointment of 2 x Practice Development Coordinators (at Grade 6A levels) over the next two years (2024-2025 and 2025-2026) will support sustained collaboration between the academic curriculum and work-integrated learning.</p> <p>Furthermore, the School's social work leadership team are active members of the All-Ireland Social Work Employers' Forum, which is actively working towards the development of an intervarsity, inter-agency national placement office to coordinate practice</p>				

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		placements for all HEIs and regions.				
6	Develop and communicate a stronger identity, both internally within the University and externally.	<p>Develop a communication plan for the School including strategic use of media and social media (Instagram, Tik Tok etc.) to communicate the School identity and mission.</p> <p>Ensure that the School website is current through regular updates on events, awards, appointments, conferences, student successes etc.</p> <p>Greater dissemination of recordings of School conferences and events through the School's social media and YouTube platforms.</p> <p>Have established research <b>impact stories</b> as a standard and regular feature of SASS externally facing activities (School</p>	HoS; Vice Head of School (Strategic Data & Communication); School Manager; CACSSS Communications Project Manager; and CACSSS Research Officer	NA	2 – 3 years	

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		<p>website and social media channels).</p> <p>Communication and marketing will be a Standing item on School Council agenda.</p>				
7	Priority recommendation - Work on a plan with the College Development Manager to identify how industry engagement and philanthropic sources can be used effectively to facilitate the School's academic activities and the overall student experience.	<p>The School will leverage its already established strong relationships with our sectoral employers including Tusla and HSE through the Social work Apprenticeship achieving our ambitions re postgraduate recruitment.</p> <p>Liaison with the College Development Manager and the Alumni Office to explore/ scope opportunities for philanthropic support.</p>	HoS; College Development Manager; Alumni Office.	NA	2 -3 years	
8	Review the process for developing undergraduate and postgraduate projects to create better alignment with ongoing research activity and enable joint student-staff publications.	<p>Review of UG final year research projects will be undertaken across all programmes.</p> <p>PG Research Committee to examine viability of the</p>	HoS; Vice Head (Curriculum Development); School Graduate Studies Committee; School PG Research		2 – 3 years	

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		current models of student research.  Enhance the research student experience and research skills by establishing the practice of co-publishing research where appropriate.	Committee; and relevant Programme Directors			
9	Develop a plan to increase grant capture to include more funded PhD opportunities.	School to undertake an initial review of School grant capture and investigate the feasibility of introducing research internships in alignment with our KPIs.  Follow-up review to be undertaken after 2 years.	HoS; School Research KPI champion; and School Research committee.		2 – 3 years	
10	Longterm recommendation - Work with the Head of College and College Manager to develop a long-term plan for the school in terms of its infrastructure	Engage with CACSSS re space and infrastructural needs for the School.	HoS; School Manager.		5 years	
11	Engage and align with the Registrar's Office, the Office of Vice President for Research and Innovation and the Dean of Doctoral Studies to support	Engage with relevant internal UCC offices and Research Ireland to identify and lobby for paid PhDs in Social Sciences	HoS; Registrar's Office, Office of Vice President for Research and Innovation; and		5 years	

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	effective and continuous lobbying of paid PhDs in the area of social sciences.		Dean of Doctoral Studies.			

For completion by Unit		
Head of Unit: Dr Deirdre Horgan	Signature: 	Date: 26/03/2024

Head of College/Functional Area:	Signature:	Date:
Interim Head of College		28 <sup>th</sup> June 2024