

# QUALITY REVIEW FOLLOW-UP REPORT

## DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED SOCIAL STUDIES

### Introduction

A meeting to discuss progress made in implementing recommendations for improvement arising from the review of the Department of Applied Social Studies was held on 11 October 2007.

Present: Professor David Cox, Head, College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences  
Dr Norma Ryan, Director, Quality Promotion Unit  
Ms Deirdre O'Brien, Administrator, Quality Promotion Unit

*Department of Applied Social Studies:*

- Professor Fred Powell, Head of Department
- Dr Catherine Forde, Lecturer, Deputy Course Director BYCW
- Ms Carmel Halton, Lecturer, Director of Practice and Chair of Departmental QA/QI committee
- Ms Orla McDonald, Administrator
- Dr Feilim O'hAdhmaill, Lecturer, MSoc 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector Management Coordinator and Acting Student Support Officer
- Ms Fionnuala O'Connor, Department Manager

### Abbreviations

PRG: Peer Review Group

VP: Vice-President

QPC: Quality Promotion Committee

QIP: Quality Improvement Plan

HR: Human Resources

Recommendation of PRG	Recommendation of QPC	Follow-up Report Oct 07
An elected Department Management Committee be established, representative of all categories of staff, which reports to the Head of Department and the Departmental Committee.	Endorsed. The QPC recommended that the terms of reference be clarified. The QPC welcomed the action taken by the Department so far ( <i>an interim committee has been set up</i> ) and the planned implementation of the recommendation. The QPC noted that other similarly sized departments in UCC have set up Departmental Management Committees and that the system works very well.	Implemented A fully representative Departmental Management Committee has been established which meets at least once a month during the teaching periods.
The policy whereby programme activity of staff represents a source of primary identification within the Department be reviewed.	Strongly endorsed. QPC recommended that this recommendation be implemented immediately and as a matter of urgency.	Implemented The Departmental Management Committee has reviewed this recommendation and explored the alternatives. It is their view that the current structure of the department should remain as it currently stands.

<b>Recommendation of PRG</b>	<b>Recommendation of QPC</b>	<b>Follow-up Report Oct 07</b>
<p>There be established a programme of continuing professional development for all staff which would include support systems for personal research activity, personal and departmental priority development areas, career progression, etc.</p>	<p>Endorsed.</p> <p>QPC suggested that the Department should seek examples of best practice elsewhere in UCC and externally. The QPC also recommended that the department examine the practise of supporting research activity as evidenced in the School of Nursing &amp; Midwifery and consider putting in place a similar system for mentoring of staff.</p>	<p>Implemented and Ongoing</p> <p>The Department has developed a handbook and induction programme for new academic staff. The Department will continue to mentor staff on an informal basis.</p> <p>The Department is endeavouring to develop its research culture, recognising its importance in a department which includes many junior staff. A submission re recognition of non-traditional forms of research promotion has been made to the Promotion &amp; Establishment Board. Teaching portfolio development has been promoted. Regular research seminars involving leading academics have taken place.</p>
<p>The Department be housed in appropriate space as soon as possible.</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>The QPC agreed that the current housing of the Department is inappropriate and that UCC is actively pursuing options for improvement of the situation.</p>	<p>Not implemented</p> <p>The Head of College is actively pursuing the issue of space for the Department at UMG but the department's space crisis continues unaddressed to date.</p>
<p>Appointments, where possible, should be advertised and filled in a permanent capacity.</p>	<p>Endorsed.</p> <p>The QPC noted that all posts, temporary and permanent, should be advertised and filled according to the approved University procedures. The QPC were strongly of the opinion that all appointments where possible should be made on a permanent basis.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>This recommendation is being implemented where possible, as has always been departmental policy.</p>
<p>The University should recognise the special needs of the non-traditional students by making available adequate support services.</p>	<p>Endorsed.</p> <p>The QPC noted that UCC is actively working at developing very strong and well-managed support services, improving on the existing services available.</p>	<p>Ongoing implementation by the University.</p> <p>The Department has appointed a Student Support Officer to further the implementation of this recommendation and is seeking additional resourcing through all possible avenues.</p>

<b>Recommendation of PRG</b>	<b>Recommendation of QPC</b>	<b>Follow-up Report Oct 07</b>
<p>The Department reflect on the teaching culture within the Department with a view to enabling the growth of research activities. This reflection should include a review of programmes with small numbers of students with a view to consideration of more shared teaching and maximising the efficiencies and avoidance of duplication of teaching.</p>	<p>Endorsed.</p> <p>The QPC strongly recommended that the Department review the existing situation and address this issue prior to the commencement of the next academic year.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>The Department has reflected on this issue and all staff have been supported in striving to become more research active. A number of smaller programmes have been withdrawn or paused in accordance with the department's strategic priorities. Staff are being encouraged to organise their schedules to create space for research and publications.</p>
<p>The language elements and emphasis on the European dimension of the B. Social Work European Pathways Programme be reconsidered.</p>	<p>Endorsed.</p> <p>The QPC recommended that action on this recommendation be considered by the Department as a whole and not just by a subset of the Department.</p>	<p>This recommendation has been considered by the Department. Language classes were offered to BSW students on an extra-curricular basis. The Department has decided to drop this provision. However it is felt that the students greatly benefit from study visits to Europe, which have been retained.</p>
<p>The Department revisit the core principles as defined in the SAR with a view to identifying where fourth level education applies and orient the Department's energies and activities on that basis.</p>	<p>Strongly endorsed.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>The Department has developed a Practitioner Doctorate in Social Science which is proving very successful, with a new intake of 12 students in 2007/2008. It also has been central to the development of a National GREP programme in the Social Sciences.</p>
<p>The staff of the Department increase contributions to peer-reviewed journals and publications.</p>	<p>Strongly endorsed.</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p> <p>DASS has an international research base but it needs broadening amongst the staff group.</p> <p>The Department will endeavour to increase the number of contributions to publications, including peer-reviewed journals, books, book chapters, and research reports, in line with its mission objectives and those of UCC as a whole.</p> <p>The Department believes that its non-traditional forms of research also require recognition in terms of promotion and resources.</p>

<b>Recommendation of PRG</b>	<b>Recommendation of QPC</b>	<b>Follow-up Report Oct 07</b>
<p>A clear formula for the measurement and allocation of academic workloads be developed and implemented in a transparent fashion.</p>	<p>Strongly endorsed.</p> <p>The Department is also referred to the need to examine good practice in UCC and elsewhere in this regard. The QPC endorsed the immediate dissemination of the data on academic workloads within the Department. The QPC recommended that a transparent workload allocation system should be in place within the Department prior to the next academic year and that staff are informed of the workloads allocated to all staff. Furthermore the QPC recommended that consideration of other issues raised in this review report, should be taken into account in the workload allocations for 2006/07.</p>	<p>Not implemented in full, but significant progress has been made.</p> <p>This recommendation has been discussed by the Department. The Department has reviewed its allocation of workloads and has allowed for greater transparency. It was pointed out that a workloads document has been tabled and discussed every year since the department's inception at a day meeting in May/June. This has now become much more inclusive in form and content including in addition to lecturing duties: tutoring on professional courses, project supervision, research supervision and administrative workloads.</p>