

Department of Ancient Classics

Peer Review Group:

Professor T. O'Reilly, Department of Hispanic Studies, UCC (Chair)
Dr. G. Neville, Department of French, UCC
Professor J. Dillon, School of Classics, Trinity College Dublin
Professor T. J. Cornell, Department of History, University of Manchester, UK

Brief description of conduct of site visit

The site visit was conducted over 2.5 days from 11th to 13th March 2002 and included meetings with

- i) Head and staff of the department as a group and individually
- ii) Representatives of undergraduate and postgraduate students
- iii) Professor A. Hyland, Vice-President
- iv) Professor P. Fitzpatrick, Chair, Academic Council Committee on Research
- v) Dr. R. Davies, Research Support Officer, Office of VP for Research
- vi) Professor P. Woodman, Dean, Faculty of Arts

and visits to departmental and library facilities in UCC.

An exit presentation of the principal findings of the Peer Review Group was made to staff of the department in the afternoon of the second day.

Description of Department of Ancient Classics

Head of Department: Professor K. Sidwell

No. of Staff: 7 academic staff (4 permanent full-time, 3 contract part-time) and 1 administrative staff (full-time)

Location of Department: O'Rahilly Building

Degrees/Diplomas offered: BA, MA, PhD

No. of students: In 2000/01 the Department had 61.47 U/G FTEs and 7.33 P/G FTEs, distributed

as follows:

Arts
68.8

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Evening	JYA	Socrates	Total U/G	MA Taught	MA Research	PhD	Total P/G
33.25	12.67	5.17	7.00	2.21	1.17	61.47	2.23	3.00	2.00	7.33

Mission Statement

"The Department aims to provide a centre for the study of all aspects of the ancient Greco-Roman world and its influence on the cultures and languages of Europe. Our teaching and research reflect this broad sweep across language, literature, history, philosophy and art. Research interests range from the earliest artefacts of the Mycenaean period to Renaissance Latin texts and the influence of the classical world on 18th and 19th century Europe. The Department thus sees itself also as a focus for interdisciplinary activities (such as Medieval and Renaissance Studies)."

Aims & Objectives

- To provide up-to-date courses at all levels in its areas of expertise

- To engage in research in the discipline and in its promulgation by means of conference papers and publication
- To foster the research of young scholars
- To establish and maintain an archive of Irish Neo-Latin and to make it accessible electronically
- To be an international centre for the learning of Greek and Latin for late starters
- To serve the University by making available expertise in the core discipline of European culture, by providing opportunities for staff to learn the ancient languages and by promoting the production of ancient drama in the University theatre
- To serve the community by co-operating with local societies and schools in their attempts to keep interest in the Classics alive in the region.

General Comment on Quality Review

The reviewers stressed their satisfaction that the self-assessment report was splendidly prepared in every respect by the academic and administrative staff of the Department of Ancient Classics. The overall report was honest and open, and faithfully relayed all comments made in the individual self-assessment reports. The reviewers noted that the department has been transformed in the past few years and is still in a state of transition. UCC was commended for its support of the department. The reviewers were impressed by the amount of material covered in the teaching programmes and the success of the Greek and Roman Civilisation courses. However they felt there was too much material in First Year, and that younger staff should be encouraged to avail of the support in teaching now being developed at College level.

The radical and dynamic change in the department's research culture was recognised, and the success of the department in acquiring Government of Ireland funding was evidence of the successful research strategy of the department. The Summer School in Greek and Latin is unique in Europe and is a valuable research resource for a wide range of disciplines within the humanities.

Progress on Recommendations for Improvement

Recommendation of PRG	Recommendation of QPC	Follow-Up Report – Oct. '03
Reorganise the Greek and Roman Civilisation course to include flexible options on staff research interests	Noted that the Department are planning to increase flexibility of options in Year 3 for 2003/04 and are considering the possibilities for increasing options in Year 2. The QPC welcomed and endorsed proposed action by Department.	Implemented where possible and appropriate, based on professional judgement of staff of the department. All staff have the opportunity to expose students to their particular research interests during the undergraduate programmes.
Provide an informative, student-friendly Departmental booklet	Noted that the Department plans to develop such a booklet over the summer months. The committee welcomed and endorsed the proposed action as a matter of good practice.	Implemented. A number of booklets have been developed, in particular for Greek & Roman Civilisation Year 1, and the Language Degree programmes for Years 2 and 3. A booklet for the Language Degree programmes, Year 1, will be developed during the academic year 2003/04.

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Liaise with schools – offer a course on the Leaving Certificate Latin/Classical Studies courses	Noted that the department will be considering possible options when the new appointment takes up his/her post in the autumn.	On-going. The Department is in the process of constructing a database of GRC and Latin teachers in the Cork area and will use this to launch this year the offer of school visits and support for Latin/Classical programmes in a broader way than heretofore.
Develop provision for sabbatical leave; the University should address with urgency the question of the provision of sabbatical leave in small departments	The QPC noted that the SEDC of AC and HR Committee are currently discussing conditions for leave, in particular leave of absence for academic purposes. Perhaps clarification of conditions for leave, etc. may assist staff and the department. The SEDC plans to report to AC in the autumn.	The University has improved the existing sabbatical scheme in terms of procedures, etc. However the issue of sabbatical leave in small departments remains difficult. The Department will aim to acquire fellowships with funding for replacement of the staff member while on leave.
Staffing levels must be maintained at a viable level	QPC endorsed the recommendation that staffing levels should be maintained at a level required to deliver a degree programme. A question the QPC would like the Department to consider: 'is it necessary for the department to offer 3 separate degrees?'	GRC is non-linguistic whereas Latin and Greek are language courses. Languages are central to the pursuit of research in Classics, not only in Greek and Roman culture but also in Medieval and Renaissance History, Philosophy and Literature and the History of Science. The Department has set up very flexible structures which facilitates students in GRC taking modules in Greek or Latin, thus maximising the benefits.
Open up the modular system to make it more flexible / open	The QPC noted that this recommendation is actively under consideration by the Arts Faculty. Liaison with the SNCDC of AC is recommended if major changes to the modular system are proposed. The committee would welcome any increase in flexibility and openness of the modular system.	This is under active consideration by the SNCDC of Academic Council and Faculties. The Faculty of Arts Academic Development Committee will also be asked to consider possibilities for increasing flexibility. <u>Action:</u> by SNCDC, Faculties and Academic Council
Actively pursue major research grants	The QPC endorsed the recommendation and welcomed the positive attitude of the Department.	Implemented and on-going. The Department won a major project grant in 2003 from the IRCHSS and have a Research Fellow appointed for three years. A 2-year GoI Fellowship was awarded to the Department. One member of staff won an Arts

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		Faculty Research Award.
Develop the Summer School	The QPC noted the recommendation and the fact the Department are currently working on means to allow development.	The Department has made proposals to the Dean of Arts for the development of the Summer School, which is linked to the consideration of replacement of a senior member of staff who is due to retire shortly. <u>Action:</u> Dean of Arts
In the Department's literature, stress to employers the value of a Classics education	QPC noted that this is a matter for action by Department	The target of the departmental literature are prospective students, not employers. The Department does address the question of what an education in Classics prepares a student for and what employment opportunities are available.
Get information from IBEC and similar organisations on desirable qualities required in graduates	QPC welcomed action by Department.	On-going. The Department is doing this as part of the research for the new Student Handbook and the information will be included in the next edition.
Liaise with Careers Service re graduate employment	Welcomed action by Department and noted that this is in line with actions to be taken by the Careers Service.	Implemented. The staff member developing the Student Handbook has agreed to assume the role of careers liaison officer for the Department.
Liaise more closely with the Library	Welcomed action by Department and Library	Implemented.
We were particularly impressed by the role played by the manager of Neo-Latin project and feel it would be highly desirable that the important and valuable gifts of this project manager could be supported on an imaginative inter-departmental basis – this should be considered by the Faculty and the University	For consideration and action (if deemed appropriate) by Department and Dean of Faculty of Arts	Department approached the VP for Planning, Communications & Development. Unfortunately no assistance could be provided. The Department has won a new research grant since the review and has a Research Fellow in the position now.
Change the name of the Department to 'The Department of Classics', in line with practice elsewhere	For consideration and action (if agreed) by Department.	The Department has agreed to change its name. The necessary steps will be taken in 2003/04 to implement this recommendation.

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<p>Post of CLT in Classics should be integrated into the Department</p>	<p>The QPC endorsed the recommendation, and suggested the Head of Department consult with the VP for Human Resources as to how to proceed with the implementation of the recommendation.</p>	<p>Not yet implemented.</p> <p>In practice this recommendation has been implemented. The CLT in Classics is based 100% in the Department, but officially has not yet been transferred.</p> <p><u>Action:</u> VP for Human Resources</p>