

## DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICS

### QUALITY REVIEW FOLLOW-UP REPORT

A meeting was held on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2010 to discuss progress of the Department of Classics and the College of ACSSS in implementing the recommendations for improvement arising from the quality review of the Department of Classics.

Present: Dr. David Woods, Head, Department of Classics  
Dr. Norma Ryan, Director, Quality Promotion Unit

#### General Comment

Since the quality review was held the Department has decreased in size having lost 3 academic staff due to resignations/retirements. This is placing a very significant strain on the resources and the energies of the remaining staff are focussed primarily on the teaching and research activities. The availability of some excellent part-time members of staff is facilitating the maintenance of the quality of the programmes. However the Government moratorium on employment of additional staff and the lack of financial resources due to the recession and the cutbacks is making long-term planning is very difficult. Until these issues are resolved it is impossible for the Department to implement strategies for expansion.

#### Abbreviations

*PRG: Peer Review Group*

*QPC: Quality Promotion Committee*

*HR: Human Resources*

*VP: Vice-President*

*QIP: Quality Improvement Plan*

*CACSSS: College of Arts, Celtic Studies & Social Sciences*

<b>PRG Recommendation</b>	<b>QPC Recommendation</b>	<b>Follow-up Report February 2010</b>
That the title be changed from 'Professor of Greek and Latin' to 'Professor of Classics'.	Recommendation endorsed subject to the strategic objectives of the College ACSSS and sufficient resources being made available.	Not implemented. Due to financial restrictions and the employment moratorium imposed by Government
That approval be given for the Chair be filled immediately	Recommendation referred to Head of College ACSSS for consideration.	Not implemented. Due to financial restrictions and the employment moratorium imposed by Government
The University give firm commitments about staffing levels within the Department.	Recommendation was endorsed by QPC and referred to the Head of College for serious consideration	Not implemented. The Department has lost 2 full-time academic staff since 2008. The 1 year temporary contract lectureship will not be renewed at the end of the contract. This will leave 2 permanent full-time academic staff plus 1 College Language Teacher and 1 administrative support staff. It will only be possible to deliver programmes with the use of part-time staff.

<b>PRG Recommendation</b>	<b>QPC Recommendation</b>	<b>Follow-up Report February 2010</b>
<p>The management of the College of ACSSS should actively encourage joint-appointments between different departments or disciplines, even where these are finally located in different schools</p>	<p>QPC noted this recommendation and that the University supports interdisciplinary, interdepartmental and inter-institutional collaborations.</p>	<p>Not implemented.  The Department would welcome the possibility of joint-appointments with History of Art, Religious Studies, and/or Philosophy in particular.</p>
<p>There must be a commitment to language teaching in whatever arrangement is made about the progression from Department to Discipline within a School structure.</p>	<p>QPC noted this recommendation and that this is an academic matter. QPC referred this recommendation to the College of ACSSS</p>	<p>Not implemented.  This is now agreed in principle and the Department is presently drawing up a memorandum of understanding in preparation for entering into a School structure.</p>
<p>Management should reach a firm decision as soon as possible concerning the degree to which they will allow non-language departments within the College of ACSSS to support the activities of language departments, so that language departments are set clear and feasible financial targets</p>	<p>QPC strongly endorsed recommendation and referred it to the Head of College ACSSS for consideration and action</p>	<p>On-going.  The College of ACSSS is developing a process whereby this can happen.</p>
<p>Management should encourage the Departments of History and English to reconsider their position not to accept the Department of Classics as part of a larger school</p>	<p>QPC noted the recommendation and determined that this is an issue for the College of ACSSS to resolve.</p>	<p>On-going.  This is now in the process of being implemented. It is hope that the issue will be resolved within the next 3 months.</p>
<p>The University view sabbatical leave for research as a buttress, rather than a privilege, in the building of high-standard academic profiles.</p>	<p>The QPC recognised the importance of sabbatical leave as a developmental tool for academic staff – especially in the development of research. The QPC recommended that the Sabbatical Leave Committee of AC considers this recommendation as part of its on-going review of the sabbatical leave system.  QPC noted the current requirements which insist that senior members of staff in departments not be considered for sabbatical leave in the year their department is undergoing a quality review.</p>	<p>The sabbatical leave system is presently under review. Only very limited sabbatical leave is given at the moment.</p>

<b>PRG Recommendation</b>	<b>QPC Recommendation</b>	<b>Follow-up Report February 2010</b>
Possibilities should be actively explored as to how the Department might bring this project forward in collaboration with the new Professor of Renaissance Studies.	QPC endorsed recommendation, and noted that the Head of Department and relevant members of staff will actively pursue this matter with the new Professor of Renaissance Studies as soon as s/he takes up his/her post.	Because of the retirement and non-replacement of key staff there is no longer any staff with an interest in Neo-Latin studies.
That the holder of the position of Professor of Renaissance Studies should have appropriate qualifications and expertise in the Classical languages and in the specialised skills that are necessary for advanced research on the original texts in this area.	QPC noted that the appointment has now been made.	-----
The University needs to take seriously the support it offers to the Department of Classics.	QPC noted the recommendation and referred it to the Head of College ACSSS.	Not implemented.
That departments or disciplines have the option of not running undersubscribed modules if in line with standards recommended by College policy;	QPC strongly endorsed recommendation.  QPC noted that Academic Council has already approved a policy on this and related issues and the Department and College is referred to these policies for guidance and implementation.	Implemented in principle.  There is now a regulation that 8 students must be registered to allow a module to run. However flexibility is being operated for some modules, where deemed essential.
The management of the College of ACSSS should consider such adjustments to the College timetable as would demonstrably increase student numbers in First Year.	QPC endorsed recommendation that the timetable for the BA programmes should continue to be reviewed. The QPC strongly supported the principle that the Colleges continue to support flexibility of student choice as a primary objective, to facilitate all students to study the subjects they wish to study.	There has been no change to the College 1 <sup>st</sup> Year timetable. There are unfortunate clashes remaining, e.g. Classics and History of Art. However flexibility is being implemented where possible to allow maximum student choice possible.
The Space Committee should allow the Department to retain the office due to be vacated by C. McCallum-Barry as a Part-Time Lecturer' Office	QPC referred recommendation to the Head of College ACSSS to decide what recommendation, if any, will be made to the Space Allocation Committee	Implemented.

<b>PRG Recommendation</b>	<b>QPC Recommendation</b>	<b>Follow-up Report February 2010</b>
To retain the office due to be vacated by Professor K. Sidwell for the continued use of whoever should act as Head of Department;	QPC referred recommendation to the Head of College ACSSS to decide what recommendation, if any, will be made to the Space Allocation Committee	Implemented.
To use the room released by the staff member acting as Head of Department as the Departmental Postgraduate Room.	QPC referred recommendation to the Head of College ACSSS to decide what recommendation, if any, will be made to the Space Allocation Committee	There has been a re-organisation of the space available to the Department. Overall the department has lost the use of one room since the review.
The Department should continue to play an active role in the cooperation between classical and historical scholarship that is necessary to advance, promote and publicize the work of the Centre for Neo-Latin studies.	QPC endorsed recommendation. Department strongly agrees, not least because of the potential of this area to grow PhD numbers if properly resourced and managed.	This has been discussed above.
A research project element, in the form of an extended essay on an assigned historical or literary topic, be offered in Third Year in place of a taught module.	QPC endorsed recommendation.	Implemented for the academic year 2010/11.  A new module GR3026 has been approved consisting of a minor dissertation.
Module descriptions in the College Calendar need not be as prescriptive as they currently are, to allow for greater flexibility; full details of course content would be provided in the Department's Student Handbooks;	QPC endorsed recommendation.	Implemented.  Modules have been reviewed and revised. Descriptions have been amended, including adoption of a learning outcomes based approach in line with University policy.

PRG Recommendation	QPC Recommendation	Follow-up Report February 2010
<p>Possibilities of combined teaching of shared elements in literature and language modules should be explored with a view to enabling further flexibility; cyclical teaching should be investigated;</p>	<p>QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC noted that the Department will explore all these possibilities when it seeks to revise its modules at the next occasion in January 2009. At first glance, however, this recommendation seems to be predicated on the belief that there is a significant overlap between certain literature and language modules. This is not the case. Furthermore, the language content of the language modules cannot be diminished without seriously undermining their whole character and purpose. The Department wishes to pursue more cyclical teaching, but the current timetabling system does not facilitate this.</p>	<p>Implemented and on-going. The department has conducted a review of all modules, including a consultation with students as ascertaining student preferences. Some cyclical teaching has been implemented and the possibility of more is being investigated.</p>
<p>The offer of Greek and Roman Civilization modules (e.g. ancient history) to other departments should be formalised; potential for reciprocal arrangements with other Departments should also be explored.</p>	<p>QPC endorsed recommendation. QPC strongly recommended that all participation of students in all modules should be formalised and exploration of these issues is fully supported.</p>	<p>Implemented and on-going. The participation of all students in modules has been formalised. The Department, together with some cognate departments, is continuing to explore options and increased flexibility in module choices.</p>
<p>That the Department entertain closer liaison with the library in order to resolve issues of accessibility and organisation of fundamental resources. The appointment of a departmental Library Liaison person other than the Head of Classics is desirable.</p>	<p>QPC endorsed recommendation. The Department accepts the desirability of appointing a Library Liaison person other than the Head of Department, as had always been the case until the strained circumstances of the current year (when ongoing negotiations concerning accessibility to the T&amp;T collection required that the acting HoD continue to serve as Library Liaison also).</p>	<p>Implemented and on-going. Full liaison is taking place. However the key issue is access to the resource of <i>Transmission of the Ancient World</i>, which is locked away in the basement. Both the PRG and the Department feel very strongly that this resource should be available on open shelves and thus available to staff and especially students.  With only 2 permanent members of academic staff there is no option but that the Head of Department is also the Library liaison.</p>

<b>PRG Recommendation</b>	<b>QPC Recommendation</b>	<b>Follow-up Report February 2010</b>
<p>The Department must develop a system of proactive recruitment of students into Second and Third Year programmes and into postgraduate programmes.</p>	<p>QPC endorsed recommendation.</p>	<p>Implemented and on-going.</p> <p>The Department has revised its range of modules offerings to provide clear and attractive 'pathways' for students (of History, English, and Religious Studies in particular) who wish to take it as a Minor Subject, and is advertising this fact more heavily to the First Year Students (e.g. by distributing information sheets). It will continue to explore ways to develop its recruitment strategy. The current shortage of staff is making it difficult to implement all the strategies the department would like to put in place.</p>
<p>The Department should consider expanding the Greek and Latin Summer School, subject to feasibility in terms of staffing, finance and space.</p>	<p>QPC endorsed recommendation.</p> <p>The Department is willing to consider expanding the Summer School subject to assurances concerning staffing levels and the retention of an equitable portion of the proceeds.</p>	<p>The Summer School is as big as it can be. It is noted that other international Schools are in the process of development elsewhere and that the current recession is affecting the number of applications for places.</p>
<p>The Department needs to be more active in promoting its own activities within and outside the University.</p>	<p>QPC endorsed recommendation.</p> <p>The Department is willing to entertain any concrete proposals in this area. New activities already planned for next year include active participation in the Latin Academy of Cork and Kerry being planned by the local branches of the Irish Association of Latin Teachers. The Department may also try to arrange some 'revision' lectures for Leaving Cert students of Classical Studies or Latin, suitably advertised in the relevant schools</p>	<p>On-going.</p> <p>With only 2 permanent academic staff the Department is now very limited in what it can achieve.</p>