

## QUALITY ASSURANCE/QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

### 2ND QUALITY REVIEW FOLLOW-UP MEETING

#### DEPARTMENT OF GERMAN

#### Introduction

The meeting focused on progress made in implementing recommendations for improvement arising from the quality review of the Department of German in 2007/08.

The staff re-affirmed their continued commitment to the advancement of their discipline and to improving the quality of all their activities. The detailed report below highlights core developments and gives some examples demonstrating the advances made in implementing recommendations since the first Follow-up report (November 2009). The report has been agreed by the Department, the Head of College and the Head of School.

The Department confirmed that action has been and/or is currently ongoing on all the recommendations referred to the Department and within its control.

Present: Professor David Cox, Head, College of Arts, Celtic Studies & Social Sciences  
Dr Maeve Conrick, Head, School of Languages, Literatures and Cultures  
Dr Manfred Schewe, Head, Department of German  
Ms Christine Bremer, Department of German  
Dr Kerstin Fest, Department of German  
Dr Gert Hofmann, Department of German  
Dr Rachel MagShamhráin, Department of German  
Ms. Siobhan Mortell, Department of German  
Dr Claire O'Reilly, Department of German  
Ms Daniela Razocher, Department of German  
Dr Norma Ryan, Director, Quality Promotion Unit; Secretary, Quality Promotion Committee

#### Abbreviations

*PRG: Peer Review Group*

*VP: Vice-President*

*QPC: Quality Promotion Committee*

*QIP: Quality Improvement Plan*

*HR: Human Resources*

*ACSSS: Arts, Celtic Studies & Social Sciences*

*BL: Business & Law*

*UMT: University Management Group*

*T&L: Teaching & Learning*

*CLT: College Language Teacher*

| PRG Recommendation                       | QPC Recommendation  | Follow-up Report May 2010   |
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| <b>Recommendations to the University</b> |   |   |
| 1.                                       | <p>There is a need for a media room, which should have a facility for German satellite TV programmes and film screenings.</p> | <p>This is a space allocation issue for the Head of College ACSSS.</p> <p>QPC noted that any action on this recommendation should be made in the context of the comments of the Head of College of ACSSS, and recognising the agreement between the Department of German, the Head of College and UMT for the development of the Department of German over the next 10 years.</p> |
| 2.                                       | <p>The Chair of German should be replaced when resources permit</p>   | <p>The QPC recognised the agreement between the Department &amp; Head of College ACSSS with UMG for the development of German.</p> <p>The QPC also noted the importance of having a leader in the discipline at the appropriate level if the discipline is to develop and deliver on the objectives of the university.</p>  |
| 3.                                       | <p>The Language Laboratory facilities should be reviewed and upgraded</p>   | <p>Resourcing and equipping issue</p> <p>QPC recommended Head of College ACSSS seeks means, in discussion with all language departments, to determine the requirements and possibilities for funding these. This is a major quality issue for teaching and learning.</p>  |

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|    |  |   | <p>basis. Dr Ryan will write to the VP T&amp;L to request an update for the Department and for Governing Body.</p> <p>The VP T&amp;L confirmed that no progress had been made and that the issue was not being actively considered.</p>   |
| 4. | <p>That there is a review and re-evaluation of the role of the College Language Teachers in the University with particular reference to career development and retention</p>   | <p>QPC noted that a report on this has been prepared by the Head of College ACSSS and sent to the Registrar. This is an ongoing issue which is being dealt with at the appropriate level in the University.</p>   | <p>Not implemented.</p> <p>This is not within the authority of the Department or of the University to implement. UCC cannot change the terms and conditions under which people are employed in the university unless an agreement is reached nationally.</p> <p>It was noted that the terms and conditions of the CLTs remain an ongoing issue for morale.</p> <p>It was noted that there is no difficulty with retention and that the employment contracts provide full security to the CLTs, as for all permanent staff of UCC.</p> |
| 5. | <p>The University should look closely at the criteria applied to the research status of Humanities departments in general.</p>   | <p>Endorsed</p> <p>This is already underway and the Research Quality Review planned for 08/09 and for which preparations are already underway will provide significant evidence of appropriate measures of research activity.</p> <p>Academic Council has agreed metrics which will also help inform the criteria and metrics for humanities disciplines.</p> | <p>Implemented.</p> <p>The recent Research Quality Review (2008/09) provided significant evidence of appropriate measures of research activity, as proposed by the AC. See details of Research Quality Review Report plan already submitted.</p> <p>The department has compiled a list of the most prestigious journals relevant to the areas of research being conducted and will focus energies on ensuring publications in these journals as part of the strategic direction of the Department.</p>                                |
| 6. | <p>The University should consider changing the name of the degree in Language and Cultural Studies to BA International, a degree course with a built-in Third Year abroad.</p> | <p>QPC recommended that this is examined by College ACSSS</p>   | <p>Active</p> <p>This is an issue for the School of Languages, Literatures &amp; Cultures to consider when it is fully established. This point does not only concern the department and thus needs to be dealt with on school/college/university level.</p>   |

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|  |  |  | (Just to note: The original suggestion made in the Quality Review may have been based on a misunderstanding of UCC structures concerning the BA / LCS degree)   |
| <b>Recommendations to the Department</b> |  |  |   |
| 7.                                       | <b>Strategic Plan</b>  |  |   |
|  | <p>The Department should develop a clear strategic plan, including reference to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ‘Schoolification’</li> <li>- The identity of the Department (e.g. the tension between applied (i.e. language, commerce) and academic (i.e. literature, critical analysis).</li> <li>- Funding opportunities</li> <li>- Space needs and requirements</li> <li>- Staffing</li> <li>- Identification of research areas that are attractive to postgraduate students.</li> </ul> | <p>Strongly endorsed the recommendation that the Department should integrate its strategic plan with that of the University taking cognisance of the development of a School of Languages and the role of German within that School.</p> <p>QPC welcomed the detailed and positive response of Department to engage with process of strategic planning and noted the need to ensure that the strategic plan is in line with the University strategic plan when it is published.</p> <p>QPC noted the need to make the new appointments in the context of the plan, rather than making the appointments and then developing the plan.</p> | <p>Implemented</p> <p>The Department have completed their Strategic Plan and are actively working on implementation of the objectives contained in the plan.</p> <p>For example, the Department are currently in negotiations with Professor Dermot Keogh to develop European Jewish culture and history studies within the department. It is envisaged that a conference on European Jewish culture and history will take place in 2010 followed by a lecture series. The next step will be to develop a centre and an MA programme.</p> <p>Funding remains an issue but the Department is focused on future plans and confident in their ability to attract funding.</p> <p>Further details available on request.</p> |
| 6.                                       | <b>Staffing</b>  |  |   |
|  | <p>The Department should build its team around its strategy and recruit the two new permanent staff accordingly.</p>   | <p>Endorsed.</p> <p>The Head of College ACSSS confirmed that one of the posts will be in the area of Commerce and German.</p>  | <p>Implemented.</p> <p>Two additional lecturers have been appointed since the review.</p>   |
| 7.                                       | <b>Teaching Provision</b>  |  |   |
|  | <p>The German Department should develop modules that meet the needs of Commerce students more closely in acquiring business German and developing a knowledge of the German business environment.</p>  | <p>Strongly endorsed.</p> <p>QPC noted and welcomed the positive response of the Department and the willingness to consider ways to achieve the aim of this</p>  | <p>Implemented [and ongoing].</p> <p>New modules have been introduced which are of immediate relevance to Commerce students.</p>  |

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|   | <p>recommendation.</p> <p>QPC recommended that the Department also engages with the College of BL in this regard</p>   |  |
| <p>In First Year BComm (International with German) there should be an increase in language teaching contact hours from three hours per week to five hours per week. The additional hours should be used for the development of the students' oral skills. One contact hour should be supervised in the language laboratory.</p> | <p>Endorsed.</p> <p>QPC noted the plans the Department is putting in place to implement the recommendation and recommended that the Department includes discipline-specific language in its language teaching contact hours.</p> | <p>Ongoing.</p> <p>The Department is in negotiations with the College of Business and Law to discuss the requested additional 2 hours for language teaching.</p> <p>(Dr Claire O'Reilly and Ms Siobhan Mortell, BComm International Coordinators).</p>                   |
| <p>The Department should develop a clear policy on teaching through the target language.</p>  | <p>Endorsed.</p> <p>The QPC would welcome details of the policy referred to in the departmental response and requested that it be appended to the quality improvement plan when developed.</p>                                   | <p>Implemented.</p>  |
| <p>The Department should find ways to increase student fulltime equivalents by extending the provision of popular modules to other students (e.g. Holocaust Studies).</p>   | <p>Endorsed.</p>   | <p>Implemented.</p> <p>The Department has initiated a number of new modules this current year and has opened Holocaust modules to all German students. Curriculum innovation is also a focus of the Department with modules in Berlin studies implemented this year.</p> |
| <p>The Department should consider making the newly designed MA programme in German Studies accessible to evening students.</p>  | <p>Endorsed.</p> <p>QPC welcomed the commitment of the Department to implementation when students are accepted into the MA.</p>  | <p>Implemented.</p> <p>Staff in the Department of German now teach at weekends and evenings to accommodate MA students' needs. Staff have shown immense flexibility to implement this recommendation.</p>  |
| <p>The Department should utilise the Erasmus mechanisms to ensure that all students go abroad.</p>  | <p>Endorsed</p>  | <p>Implemented</p> <p>Apart from a small handful of students, almost all students spend one year abroad and receive funding from various sources including DAAD funding and Erasmus and Comenius funds. The</p>  |

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|    |   |  | <p>Department has a good network of partner universities and a further cooperation, with the Herder-Institute Leipzig, has been initiated recently.</p> <p>The Department aims to continue this strategy of affording all students, where possible, the opportunity for a year abroad in Germany as part of their studies.</p>  |
|    | <p>The Department should ensure that students are aware of library facilities and take part in library tours at the beginning of their courses.</p>   | <p>Endorsed</p> <p>The QPC noted the response from the Department (<i>the Department has a clear policy in this regard as stated under Library in Handbook pages 27–30</i>).</p> | <p>Implemented</p> <p>The Department has a clear policy in this regard as stated under <u>Library</u> in the departmental Handbook. This has been re-emphasised again to students.</p>  |
|    | <p>The Department should review its H Dip programme and ensure the quality of the structure and of the teaching of the programme.</p>   | <p>Endorsed</p>  | <p>Under active consideration</p> <p>The H Dip in Arts is a school issue and the Department looks forward to discussing this at School Council. Discussions have been initiated by Dr Claire O'Reilly as Chair of the School Teaching and Learning Committee.</p>   |
| 8. | <b><i>Collaborative Work</i></b>  |  |   |
|    | <p>That the Department, in developing its future strategy, continues to actively pursue links with larger, student full-time equivalent-rich departments/schools in UCC in order to extend their range of interdisciplinary modules and in so doing increase the student full-time equivalent allocation to the Department.</p> | <p>Endorsed in the context of the strategic needs of the university. Only viable modules should be considered.</p>   | <p>Implemented [and ongoing]</p> <p>Several new and existing postgraduate modules have been opened to Film Studies, Philosophy, Comparative Literature and Translation. The School Teaching and Learning Committee, chaired by Dr. Claire O'Reilly, will be examining areas for further collaboration across disciplines.</p> <p>A new interdisciplinary MA programme for Comparative Literature has been developed by Dr. Fiona Cox, Department of French and Dr Gert Hofmann, Department of German ('on the books'), due to commence in October 2010.</p> |
|    | <p>Department should forge tighter bonds with the secondary schools in the area.</p>  | <p>Endorsed</p>  | <p>Implemented [and ongoing]</p> <p>The Department has developed a multifaceted, pro-active policy</p>  |

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|  |   | <p>involving a number of staff. The Funding from Ionad Bairre has contributed significantly to developing the Berlin project and involves school visits by our students to local secondary schools (built in as an element in the module). In relation to its strategic Berlin-Focus the Department has also successfully run a series of short courses on Berlin City as part of UCCs Adult Education Programme.</p> <p>We, as a discipline within the school, are spearheading the contact with local schools both at primary and at secondary levels. Two staff members are active within the state funded- Modern Language Primary Schools Initiative (MLPSI, Dr C.O'Reilly is Department of German liaison). We have hosted visits from schools in connection with Christmas and Easter events. Recent visits to schools include schools in Midleton, Youghal, Crosshaven, Ballincollig and Cobh.</p> <p>Further, it is departmental policy to follow up with students who attended the Open Day. E.g. Siobhan Mortell went to Youghal to talk to students who came to the Spring Open Day and expressed an interest in German.</p> <p>In addition to the above, further plans are underway to increase the contact with feeder schools in the form of competitions, Open Days etc.</p> |
| <p>In the context of the new appointments at Lecturer level, the Department should seriously consider including representatives on the interview panel from stakeholders with an interest in the applied side of the Department's activities such as Commerce and Law.</p> | <p>Endorsed in principle but noted that, in this case, the interview Board has already been established and approved by Academic Board.</p> | <p>Not Applicable. Posts are now filled</p>  |

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|    | The Department should actively consider the formation of an interdisciplinary centre for literary and media research which might attract research funding and appeal to postgraduate students. | Endorsed consideration of this at a School and College level.  | Implemented and ongoing<br>Dr. Fiona Cox is chairing the School's Research Committee and will bundle ideas for future bids. The Departmental Research Officer, Dr. Gert Hofmann, has liaised with her already.  |
|    | That the Department consider the further expansion of their outreach activities to include other national and international institutions.  | Endorsed.<br>Recommended that implementation of this recommendation must not be at the expense of core departmental activities.<br>Recommended that collaboration in first instance should be with other Departments of German nationally to determine what areas are lacking at a national level and to ensure coverage of the discipline to an excellent standard within the whole of Ireland. | Implemented and ongoing<br>The Department is very active in this field. The Department organised a nationwide conference (Oct. 2009) for third level teachers of German. The Department has a member of the Department on the board of ATLTGI and two very active members on the board of <i>Business German in Ireland</i> .<br>There are numerous further examples here [a full list of all our national and international activities can be obtained from the Department of German's <i>Sekretariat</i> ]. |
| 9. | <b>Funding</b>   | All of the following recommendations were endorsed subject to being within the context of the School and College's strategies.   |   |
|    | That staff apply for external research funding and seek the support of the Research Office in doing so.  | Endorsed   | Implemented and ongoing<br>The College of ACSSS has established its own research office and is in process of staffing it. The VP for Research Office has also designated someone with responsibility for Arts and Humanities. The Head of Department has met with the research representative in the CACSSS to discuss the next round of PRTLTI.  |
|    | That the Department should seek research funding for library acquisition funds.  | Endorsed.  | Implemented and ongoing<br>The Department intends to contact 'Pro Helvetia' – the Swiss academic/cultural exchange service – in order to seek funding for library acquisition funds.  |
|    | That the Department pursue funding options for national and international students as outlined in the body of the text   | Endorsed   | Implemented and ongoing<br>The Department currently has an intern from the Herder Institute   |

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| of this report.  |   | <p>Leipzig.</p> <p>The Department has recently established links with the University of Konstanz to make Erasmus funding available for postgraduate students who want to pursue their projects at Masters level here. For the new “Berlin” module, the Department will try to negotiate with Aer Lingus in order to get funding as a trip to Berlin trip might become an integral compulsory element of the module.</p>  |
| That the Department should actively seek opportunities for funding via the UCC Development Office. | Endorsed in the context of the University strategy. Should be undertaken in collaboration with the Development Office and Departments of German nationally. | <p>Ongoing.</p> <p>The Department will contact the Development Office and discuss further steps.</p> <p>Staff will continue to actively pursue external research funding and research grants. The creation of an interdisciplinary centre would help to secure more research funding. The HoD has visited Dr. Jean Van Sinderen-Law, Director of Development, in this regard.</p>  |
| Put together list of alumni in consultation with Alumni Office for professional development.       | Endorsed  | <p>Partially implemented and ongoing.</p> <p>The Department is in the process of devising (with the Computer Centre) a data collection system for their website. The students will input their contact details which the Department can then use as a database. The students will be able to keep in touch with the Department and will have access to testimonials and information on the career paths of former students. The Department has a section on the website for alumni.</p> <p>Ms Siobhan Mortell has inquired about a tool so we can generate alumni details directly from our website. The Department is closely cooperating with the Department of Computer Science and has agreed to host an intern who will assist in the further development of the Department’s IT needs.</p> |