

**SCHOOL OF CLINICAL THERAPIES**  
**QUALITY REVIEW FOLLOW-UP REPORT**

A meeting was held on the 12<sup>th</sup> of December 2011 to discuss progress of the School of Clinical Therapies and the College of Medicine & Health in implementing the recommendations for improvement arising from the quality review of the School of Clinical Therapies.

Present: Professor Fiona Gibbon, Head, School of Clinical Therapies  
Dr. Helen Kelly, Department of Speech & Hearing Sciences, School of Clinical Therapies  
Ms. Helen Lynch, Department of Occupational Science & Occupational Therapy, School of Clinical Therapies  
Ms Kathryn Neville, College Manager, College of Medicine & Health  
Ms. Deirdre O'Brien, Administrative Officer, Quality Promotion Unit  
Dr. Norma Ryan, Director, Quality Promotion Unit

Comment: Following the quality review and consideration of the recommendations of the PRG, the School developed a quality improvement plan. The plan was discussed and approved at the School Board, and the School Executive utilised the QIP when allocating resources received from the College.

**Abbreviations**

*PRG: Peer Review Group*

*QPC: Quality Promotion Committee*

*PBL: Problem-Based Learning*

*TBL: Task- Based Learning*

*HRB: Health Research Board*

*HSE: Health Services Executive*

*CMH: College of Medicine & Health*

*VP: Vice-President*

*QIP: Quality Improvement Plan*

*SLT: Speech & Language Therapy*

*OT: Occupational Therapy*

*IASLT: Irish Association for Speech and  
Language Therapy*

*GS: Graduate Studies*

<b>PRG Recommendation</b>		<b>QPC Comment/Recommendation</b>	<b>Follow-up Report December 2011</b>
1.	The workloads of all staff within the school should be reviewed taking account of teaching, research, clinical and administrative commitments, in a transparent way.	<p>Recommendation strongly endorsed.</p> <p>QPC noted that performance reviews are part of UCC policy as is transparent and equitable allocation of academic workloads.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Some adjustments have been made but further work on this issue will await the arrival of the new Professor of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy. The School noted that there have been significant difficulties experienced during the past year, including staffing shortages. It is hoped that these will be resolved shortly.</p>
2.	Student contact hours and the volume of assessment of students should be reduced, particularly in relation to fostering independent student learning in a manner that is consistent with the PBL/TBL approach adopted.	<p>Recommendation endorsed.</p> <p>QPC noted the obligation to adhere to guidelines and requirements of the relevant professional bodies and recommended that the School liaise, as appropriate, with the relevant professional bodies in implementation of curricular reform.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Some adjustments have been made but further work on this issue will await the arrival of the new Head of OSOT.</p>
3.	The School ensures that the psychology requirements of the IASLT accreditation guidelines are fully met.	<p>Recommendation endorsed.</p> <p>QPC noted the obligation to adhere to guidelines and requirements of the relevant professional bodies and recommended that the School liaise, as appropriate, with the relevant professional bodies in implementation of curricular reform.</p>	<p>Implemented</p> <p>Changes have been made to the 2012 BSc Speech and Language Therapy modules in order to align with the requirements of the IASLT accreditation guidelines.</p>

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<p>4. The concerns about clinical practice placement facilitation for Occupational Therapy students be addressed at College of Medicine &amp; Health and University levels by way of negotiation with the Health Services Executive.</p>	<p>Recommendation endorsed. QPC welcomed action already taken and encouraged continuation of efforts to ensure concerns are addressed</p>	<p>On-going. Progress has already been made here, with an initial meeting taking place in 2010 between senior staff at UCC and the HSE to agree a solution to this long standing problem. The outcome of these discussions was an agreement to fund 1.0wte Practice Tutor position from HSE funds to be based in UCC.  The College of MH is also making progress with reinstating a College level HSE liaison committee which would also provide a forum to address such issues.</p>
<p>5. The School continues to provide PBL/TBL tutor training to ensure consistent delivery of the curriculum and support for students.</p>	<p>Recommendation endorsed.</p>	<p>Implemented</p>
<p>6. The School continues to monitor and benchmark the degree awards in relation to the proportion of students achieving first class honours.</p>	<p>Recommendation endorsed. Comment of School welcomed.</p>	<p>Implemented</p>
<p>7. The School should consider whether grading of clinical placements by clinicians should be on a pass/fail basis only.</p>	<p>Recommendation endorsed. Comment of School welcomed.</p>	<p>Implemented A pass/fail system was put in place for 2<sup>nd</sup> year speech and language therapy students. Dept of OSOT to continue discussions on this matter.</p>

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8.	Staff pursuing PhD programmes of study should be offered protected time and in addition, that particular support should be offered to staff who have recently completed their PhD Degree in order to facilitate publication from their research and further their research career development.	Recommendation endorsed.  QPC welcomed the response of the School. QPC noted that the University strongly supports the implementation of peer mentoring systems for staff and supports all actions of the School in this regard.	Ongoing  The School is in complete agreement with this recommendation; however, the full implementation of this recommendation has been impeded during 2011 due to the current staffing shortages in Dept OSOT.
9.	The School should consider the viability of the entire suite of postgraduate taught programmes currently on offer and should consider restructuring by availing of generic postgraduate modules offered within UCC and also collaboration with other Universities.	Recommendation endorsed.  QPC noted the action already commenced by the School. QPC welcomed the intention to explore possibilities of collaborations with other Universities with respect to delivery of appropriate postgraduate programmes in the disciplines in an efficient and high quality manner, availing of expertise from outside as well as within UCC.	Implemented  The new MSc in Audiology started in 2011 has proved very popular and the only course of its kind in Ireland.  The School will review its MSc programmes in 2012.
10.	The School should explore the business case for short continuing professional development courses, including advanced clinical skills.	Recommendation endorsed.	Implemented  The School has put in place national Audiology workshops, workshops with Fulbright scholar and practice education skills workshops. They are also delivering Practice-Based Research CPD workshops nationally , funded by the Irish OT Association CPD programme

<b>PRG Recommendation</b>	<b>QPC Comment/Recommendation</b>	<b>Follow-up Report December 2011</b>
11. That the School reduce the number of research strands and develop a more thematic approach to research, focused on a small number of well defined topics.	<p>Recommendation endorsed.</p> <p>The QPC, noting the comment of the School, endorsed the recommendation as a strategy in continuing to develop the research agenda of the School.</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p> <p>As the School is small with a diverse range of research interests it has proved difficult to find common themes but the issue is under active consideration within the School. The School is in the process of developing research seminars and the output of research publications has increased.</p> <p>In addition, the College of MH has provided financial support to assist the School in developing its research work. Also, the possibility of hosting a research workshop off site and with external input is available to the School and is funded by the College.</p>
12. The School should take active steps to exploit the diversity and range of funding opportunities available for research support.	<p>Recommendation strongly endorsed.</p> <p>QPC noted the need for all units to actively explore ways to increase funding available. QPC welcomed the activity of the members of the School in this regard.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>The School has encouraged the implementation of this recommendation and external grant applications have been submitted.</p>
13. There should be deeper engagement by researchers in the School with the Office of the Vice-President for Research Policy and Support.	<p>Recommendation endorsed.</p> <p>QPC welcomed the School response and commitment to doing all possible in this regard.</p>	<p>Implemented.</p> <p>The School engages regularly with the Office of the VP for Research and finds the office helpful in this regard.</p>

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14.	The College of Medicine & Health should provide additional targeted support for early career researchers in the skill of grant application writing and in research grant management.	Recommendation endorsed.	Ongoing. Some work on this recommendation has been completed at local level.
15.	Staff should be encouraged to participate in scientific writing workshops such as those organised annually by the HRB.	Recommendation endorsed.	Ongoing Staff are supported and encouraged to attend workshops as appropriate.
16.	The departments should focus on student services and the School should deal with programme planning and administration, and thereby reduce duplication of effort.	Recommendation endorsed. QPC welcomed the comment of the School in relation to reduction of duplication of effort and the aim of increasing efficiencies without loss of quality.	Implemented
17.	Workload and grading for the administrative staff should be looked at in the context of functioning of both Departments and School offices.	Recommendation endorsed. QPC welcomed proposed action.	Ongoing All administrative staff complete regular performance reviews.

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18.	The concerns of the course team about audio-visual, IT and speech technology laboratory support should be resolved.	Recommendation endorsed. QPC welcomed proposed action.	Ongoing  The College of MH expects an amelioration of this situation once a number of Schools within the College move into the Western Gateway Building. The physical size of the College will be such that a solution to the computing needs of the entire College will be urgently required.  The College is committed to resolving this issue for the School of Clinical Therapies.
19.	The PRG recommend that the staff of the School undergo a performance review.	Recommendation endorsed. QPC welcomed proposed action.	Implemented  All staff undergo performance reviews.