

Quality Enhancement Plan School of BEES

16/12/2020 – updated 08/09/2022

FOR COMPLETION BY QEU	
Date of Peer Review visit: 3 rd – 5 th December 2019	Head of Unit: Professor Andy Wheeler until 31/08/2022; Professor Astrid Wingler from 01/09/2022
Link to Panel Report published on QEU website: https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/qualityenhancementunit/reports/sefs/FINALSchoolofBEES_PanelReport-APPROVEDfollowingQEC.pdf	Date QEP considered by Quality Enhancement Committee: 26th September 2022

Item No	Panel Recommendation	Actions Planned ¹	Responsibility for Action ²	Resource Implications ³	Implementation Schedule ⁴	Effectiveness/Impact ⁵ To be completed as part of follow-up
<i>Strategy</i>						
1.	Head of School, in consultation with the SEMC, to promptly finalize their new Strategic Plan; this plan should include an action plan that will include the short-, medium-, and long-term objectives and vision of the School over the next 5 years.	New Strategic Plan to be drafted and approved by SEMC and BEES Staff following input from School Committees	HOS, Committee chairs	Staff time	Completed October 2020: Strategic Plan (SP) launched. October 2021: Key SP actions highlighted at School Council. Annually at the start of each academic year: Implementation and impact of actions will be monitored and	The Strategic Plan informs our activities and staff planning. All School committees contributed to the SP, identifying clear objectives, goals and timelines for delivery.

					reported at School Council.	
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¹ May include actions planned within the unit or those that require interface with other parts of the university

² E.g. Head of School, School Manager, all staff, specific committees etc

³ Resources – the financial or human resources required to implement the recommendation

⁴ Interim milestone dates can be included here (e.g. within 6 months, within 12 months, within 3 years etc.)

⁵ **To be completed as part of follow-up 12-15 months post publication of QEP** - Recognising the need to reflect on the effectiveness of actions undertaken, and to what extent the actions have achieved their intended outcome

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2.	Head of School should liaise with the College Alumni & Development (A&D) fundraiser as a priority to identify potential areas for philanthropic investment.	Liaise with the College Alumni & Development (A&D) fundraiser	HOS and Prof. Marcel Jansen	Staff time	<p>Completed</p> <p>Throughout 2020: Alumni newsletters published in liaison with A&D.</p> <p>June 2022: Submission (via SEFS) of proposals for UCC philanthropy campaign to A&D, including a proposal for philanthropic investment in a Natural Sciences Museum.</p>	More recently, BEES newsletters were subsumed into the SEFS newsletters for a broader audience reach.

3.	Head of School to engage with the College Financial Analyst, before the end of semester one 2020/21, to develop their business plan; this business plan should include a clear staffing plan, an evidence-based resource requirements list (including space and transport), with all plans clearly aligned with the relevant budgets	Business plan 2020 and staffing plan 2020 to be completed.	HOS		<p>Completed</p> <p>Staffing plan is submitted to SEFS at regular intervals.</p> <p>February 2022: most recent staffing plan covering the next three years submitted.</p> <p>Financial planning is discussed on a regular basis with Financial Analyst. Operational budget is issued yearly. School Manager works with HOS to allocate funds to key activities and across discipline cost centres.</p>	<p>Business and staffing planning has resulted in the ability to recruit/advertise for staff to fill gaps and to develop key strategic areas.</p> <p>Two new Lecturer posts (for dual degree with MUC) were filled in 2021 and 2022. In addition, several posts (including 3 BEES Lecturer posts and wider Senior Lecturer posts) are currently advertised as part of the Sustainability Cluster.</p> <p>More detailed financial planning now allows us to track where our funds are spent during the year and informs funding allocations for the following year.</p>
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<i>Space</i>						

4.	Head of School and School Manager should engage with administrative staff about optimization of their working space before the end of semester one 2020/21.	Plan School office optimisation	HOS & Admin	Building costs	Completed Admin office was reconfigured in 2021 to allow for an increase in the admin team.	
5.	Space Working Group should immediately review the quality of the environment in the Bottling Storage space with a view to it being managed in a similar manner to the individual lab spaces, e.g., person in charge, user list, etc.	Review Bottling Storage Space	Space Working Group	Staff time, building/facilities costs	This action has been overtaken by the plans for a new Tyndall National Institute (TNI) expansion which includes dismantling of the Bottling Plant. Meetings with HOC and TNI/B&E project team to discuss alternative space provision requested for September 2022.	

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6.	Space Working Group to develop a more formal process for moving equipment between sites, e.g., between BEES and the research institutes and <i>vice versa</i> .	Ensure that equipment is moved safely and that location of equipment is known	Chief Technical Officer	Staff time	Ongoing The process is managed by the Chief Technical Officer and is needs-driven. All technical staff are required to have	

					full, clean driving licences. The School van for transporting large items of equipment is used.	
7.	Teaching & Learning, Student Experience & Curriculum Development Committee should review the current laboratory teaching spaces, particularly from the perspective of audio-visual, for example the School should look at placement of IT screens in labs and teaching spaces to maximise student experience.	Review of audio-visual equipment and equipment upgrades	TLSE Committee	Cost of IT visual aids	<p>Completed</p> <p>2020: Panopto was installed in all teaching rooms. Additional screens were installed in larger teaching labs in Cooperage and Butler Building.</p> <p>2020/21 academic year: Lectures live-streamed/ recorded from teaching rooms or lecturers' homes (due to Covid restrictions).</p> <p>2021/22 academic year: Lectures live-streamed/ recorded in addition to in-person delivery.</p> <p>Semester 1 2022/23: Review of release of lecture recordings</p>	Student in-person attendance declined during the 2021/22 academic year across the university with reduced student engagement and increased failure rates. Live-streaming will therefore not continue in 2022/23. However, lecture recording is still recommended in the School, with the impact of releasing recordings being reviewed in S1.

					dependent on student engagement.	
8.	Before the end of semester one 2020/21, the Head of School, in conjunction with the Space Working Group, should discuss with staff and students' issues regarding access to space currently available for students, and to further optimize usage of any available space.	Review staff and students space needs and communicate availabilities of existing dedicated space	HOS & Space Working Group	Building costs of required upgrades	Ongoing Every 6 months: Assess PG student and staff space requirements.	Access to PG and research staff office space was limited while room capacities were reduced due to Covid. PG office space is now sufficient for our needs. However, building access is subject to restricted UCC building opening hours and not 24/7.

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9.	SEMC, in consultation with the Space Working Group, should immediately deal with low-cost improvements in relation to space including putting a bench in the molecular biology and plant sciences laboratory, and fixing the carpet tiles in the technician's office.	Deal with low-cost improvements	SEMC & Space Working Group	Building costs of required upgrades	Ongoing Every 6 months: HOS implements a periodic review of low-cost repair requirements, but these are subject to availability of funds.	Owing to financial limitations, not all minor improvements could be completed.

Leadership and Management

10.	SEMC should develop an immediate plan for effective implementation of existing UCC policies (e.g., PhD progress reviews), rationalization of programme offerings, executing small-scale refurbishments together with clarification and rationalization of administrative workloads of academic staff.	Develop plans for PhD progress reviews, CK404 curriculum review with a common 2 nd biological year and the replacement of 3 degree programmes by 1 BSc Geosciences degree. Committee and workload model to be reviewed.	HOS, SEMC, TLSE, PG Studies Committee	Staff time and cost of refurbishments	<p>Completed/ongoing</p> <p>Summer 2020: PhD progress reviews reinstated following Covid shutdown.</p> <p>2020/21: CK404 curriculum revised. Geosciences degree option will be available to 2nd-year students from 2023/24.</p> <p>2020/21: Common 2nd year for biological degrees discussed in detail but declined.</p> <p>2021/22 and annually: Academic workload model reviewed and workloads assessed.</p> <p>April 2022: Academic workload workshop held.</p> <p>By end of 2022: TLSE to provide plan for module rationalisation.</p>	Introduction of a common biological 2 nd -year was discussed but declined by one of the disciplines in 2020/21. Decisions to rationalise programme and module offerings will have to be made in 2022/23 as workloads remain high.
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					September 2021 and annually: Committee structure and membership reviewed.	
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11.	School Committees should have agenda-based rather than calendar-led meetings with adequate, and meaningful, student representation.	Review operations of School Committees	HOS and Committee chairs	Staff time	Completed as part of the Strategic Plan which outlines a 5-year action plan for each committee enabling task-based meetings. 2022/23: Review of student representation on committees.	PG students are represented on all committees. UG students are represented on the Athena SWAN Working Group.
12.	School should reinstate the Staff – Student Committee with immediate effect.	Reinstate the Staff – Student Committee	HOS and TLSE	Staff time	Originally planned to be implemented in S2 2021 – not followed through due to Covid pressures with TLSE heavily engaged in pivoting teaching and curriculum development. October 2022: First	During the Covid restrictions (2020/21 and 2021/22 academic years) the School ran informal online lunchtime meetings for students where they could meet classmates postgrads and staff and discuss various issues. Feedback on this initiative was very positive. Third- and fourth-year

					Staff-Student Committee meetings to be held. Every semester: Further meetings, with separate S1 meetings for first-year and higher-year students and combined meetings in S2.	students were also consulted as part of 10:20 meetings.
13.	Teaching & Learning, Student Experience & Curriculum Development Committee should develop a policy surrounding student feedback (including student module evaluation data) in terms of how best to provide consistent, optimized timely feedback before the end of semester one 2020/21.	Policy development around modules evaluation and feedback to students	TLSE	Staff time	Completed Semester 1 2021: TLSE developed a Canvas-based quiz for module evaluation. June 2022: Feedback to students addressed in the context of external examiner comments at exams review meeting.	

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14.	Annual review of the remit, operations and progress of all committees should be carried out by the SEMC.	Annual review	HOS, SEMC	Staff time	Ongoing Start of each academic year: HOS and SEMC to review	

					remit, operations and progress of all committees.	
<i>Communication</i>						
15.	SEMC should immediately review its communication mechanisms, specifically communication with students; this should include timing and mechanism of communication including timetable changes, circulation of postgraduate booklet. This should be done using a variety of resources, e.g., email, Canvas and BEES social media.	Review communication mechanisms in the School	SEMC and School manager	Staff time	Completed/ongoing 2020/21 and 2021/22 academic years: A Canvas module was set up to communicate with students and regular updates were sent to students. Also see item 12 (Staff-Student Committee).	

Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Student Experience

16.	Teaching and Learning, Student Experience and Curriculum Development Committee should develop a School policy surrounding assignment submission, and give serious consideration to adopting online submissions for all assignments.	Develop School assignment policy	TLSE Committee	Staff time	<p>Completed All assignments submitted online during Covid restrictions.</p> <p>June 2022: Post-Covid policy decided in exam review meeting.</p>	All staff now routinely use Canvas for CA submissions and marking, but some forms of CA (field and lab notebooks) are not suitable for electronic submission and hard copy submissions for those will continue.
17.	Teaching and Learning, Student Experience and Curriculum Development Committee, should give consideration to the development of a School-wide policy on the implementation of Panopto.	Develop School-wide policy on the implementation of Panopto	TLSE Committee	Staff time, camera upgrades in teaching rooms	<p>Completed (also see item 7) 2020: Panopto installed in all teaching rooms, camera systems upgraded, academic staff trained in use of Panopto and other virtual/online teaching options.</p>	


18.	Teaching and Learning, Student Experience and Curriculum Development Committee should review their existing research skills modules (BL2002, BL3004) in third year to ensure students further their technical writing skills.	Review of skills training in the School	HODs & TLSE Committee	Staff time	Completed April 2022: Skills training within our undergraduate degrees reviewed at an academic workload and curriculum workshop.	
19.	HoS should ensure that students and staff, who are learning and teaching in locations remote to UCC, can avail of supports around learning and teaching, including the opportunities to provide feedback on learning experiences and opportunities to avail of the teaching and learning supports offered by CIRTL	Inform remote students and staff of learning resources	HOS	Staff time	Completed 2020/2021 academic year: In response to Covid lockdowns online supports were increased and strengthened.	

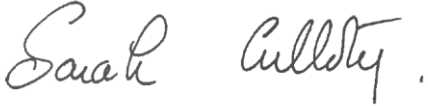
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<i>Postgraduate Students</i>						
20.	Graduate Studies Committee should facilitate the development of a forum for postgraduate students, including those based off-campus, to enable them to interact and network with each other both professionally and socially.	Develop a forum for postgraduate students	Graduate Studies Committee	Staff time	December 2021 and July 2022: BEES Research Day was held with presentations by postgraduates. 2021-22: Informal meetings of PG	

					students and staff (“Postgraduate Informal Tea & Snacks”) organised by PG reps. 2022/23 academic year: Research Club (or similar) to be reinstated.	
21.	Graduate Studies Committee should ensure that all postgraduates are invited to a timely, school-specific, orientation session and receive the postgraduate handbook. This orientation session should be in place by the start of the next academic year (2020/21).	Development of a postgraduate orientation session and delivery of the postgraduate handbook	Graduate Studies Committee	Staff time	Postgrad handbook is available online. October 2022: Orientation event for new students to be held.	
22.	Graduate Studies Committee, in consultation with Research Supervisors, should organise and facilitate annual postgraduate research student progress reviews in line with UCC policy.	Re-start annual postgraduate student progress reviews	Graduate Studies Committee	Staff time	Completed (also see item 10) Annual progress reviews for PhD students now take place.	
23.	Graduate Studies Committee and research supervisors should engage with students to conduct a training needs analysis and familiarize students with postgraduate module options available, for example PG7026, PG7048 and PG7039.	Conduct a training needs analysis and familiarise students with postgraduate module options	Graduate Studies Committee	Staff time	Completed/ongoing Summer 2020: Module review incorporated into the Postgraduate Student review.	

<i>External Engagement</i>						
24.	School Manager, in conjunction A&D and the SEMC, should initiate the development of a graduate database.	Develop an alumni graduate database	School Manager & Prof. Marcel Jansen	Staff time	Completed (also see item 2) Graduate database built.	SEFS has a much larger alumni database that is now used for communications via SEFS.
25.	School should apply to the President's Strategic Fund, and the Cork University Foundation, to ensure that BEES museum specimens are correctly curated, managed and displayed to enable their use for outreach events and recruitment activities and to be part of a wider university cultural project to raise public awareness about the scientific heritage of UCC.	Apply to the President's Strategic Fund, and the Cork University Foundation, to develop BEES museum	HOS and Dr Fidelma Butler	Staff time	Completed/ongoing (also see item 2) Project initiated through the UCC T&L Enhancement Fund. January 2022: UCC Natural Collections Museum website launched.	Key challenge will be to find suitable venue/storage facilities for our museum collection, not all of which can be displayed in the current museum setting. This situation is exacerbated by the TNI expansion plan, which will remove our current storage facility. A proposal for philanthropic fundraising for a UCC Natural Sciences Museum was submitted.

For completion by School of BEES

Head of Unit: Professor Astrid Wingler	Signature: 	Date: 08 September 2022
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Head of College: Professor Sarah Culloty	Signature: 	Date: 19 th September 2022
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