

Quality Enhancement Plan

School of Chemistry

June 2026

FOR COMPLETION BY QEU	
Date of Peer Review visit: 11-12th and 18th & 20th February 2026	Head of School: Professor Anita Maguire
Link to Panel Report published on QEU website: School of Chemistry - Peer Review Panel Report 2025-26	Date QEP considered by Quality Enhancement Committee: August 2026

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
Staff Workload						
1	The Panel recommends that the School continues to prioritise equity and transparency in workload allocation	Workload across the School will be shared with the Exec and School Board annually.	HOS School Manager	HoS time. Rollout of the AWDM at University level.	Annual	

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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	across all staff. In particular, the Panel recommends that the School:					
1a	Maintain and further refine a transparent workload model to support the fair and balanced distribution of teaching, research, supervision, administrative duties, and service roles across the School.	Maintain the practice of publishing an annual School workload summary. Where possible, redistribute workload to ensure equity across the School. Where possible, align School workload allocation with the University Academic Workload Distribution Model, covering areas such as teaching, research administration, outreach, and major leadership roles.	HoS Heads of Sections	Altered use of staff time.	December 2026	
1b	Restore the budget for demonstrators or equivalent marking support to reduce the burden of correcting laboratory reports on academic staff and to enable more timely and developmental feedback for students.	The School accepts the principle of this recommendation. However, the restoration of additional demonstrator or equivalent marking support cannot be accommodated within	Head of School; Chair of Teaching and Learning; Heads of Sections	50% of the School operating budget is currently committed to demonstrating costs. The only way this can be increased is through significantly increased income to the School		

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		the current School operating budget, particularly in light of the SEFS policy on postgraduate payment for demonstrating.		due to impact of the SEFS policy.		
1c	Support structured sabbatical planning, ensuring that staff have clear pathways to apply for and take research leave, with appropriate consideration of backfill to maintain programme delivery.	Develop a transparent sabbatical planning process, including criteria, indicative timelines, expected notice periods, teaching-cover arrangements, and annual review of potential applicants in line with University policy. The process will be discussed at School Board and incorporated into workload planning.	HoS Heads of Sections	Backfill costs	April 2027	
1d	Review and adjust the workload of Early Career Researchers, including reducing teaching loads where possible and safeguarding dedicated research time to support career development and progression.	The School already supports early-career academic staff by assigning relatively low teaching and administrative loads in the first two years of appointment, where possible, to allow	HoS Heads of Sections	Workloads carried by others in the School.	On-going	

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		them to establish their research activity. This existing practice will be maintained and monitored annually through workload planning, PDRS/mentoring discussions, and review by the Head of School and Heads of Sections.				
1e	Develop a long term approach to managing final year project supervision, ensuring that supervisory responsibilities remain sustainable and that students who do not secure placements continue to receive high quality project experiences.	The School already monitors final-year undergraduate project supervision across programmes, with supervision data shared annually. This practice will be maintained to ensure that undergraduate project supervision remains sustainable, transparent and visible in workload planning. The School will separately monitor taught MSc project	HoS Programme Directors Project coordinators	Budget for FYP costs	In advance of 2026-27 academic year.	

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		supervision and project-placement arrangements, including the availability of suitable School-based projects for students who do not secure an external or industry placement.				
Equipment and Infrastructure						
2	The Panel recommends that the School continues to focus on securing new equipment through competitive national and international funding mechanisms (e.g., INSPIRE, HERIG, Research Ireland, EU programmes) and through philanthropic avenues. The Panel recommends that funding plans should reflect both the teaching and research needs of the School. The Panel further recommends that the College/University actively prioritise and support the School's bids, given the	The School already maintains an equipment and infrastructure register covering teaching and research needs. This register will continue to be updated and prioritised annually, identifying teaching-critical, research-enabling and safety-critical requirements, estimated costs, installation needs, maintenance	EAT	Costs for installation and TO support and on-going maintenance are not included in Inspire and, therefore, will need to be covered from the School budget.	December 2026	

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	central role of Chemistry in the College and University. In addition, the Panel recommends that the School:	implications and potential funding routes. The register will be used to support INSPIRE, HEREG, Research Ireland, EU, philanthropic and University funding bids.				
2a	Establish a dedicated budget for equipment maintenance , ensuring that essential teaching and research infrastructure is maintained proactively and sustainably.	The School agrees this is a priority. However, this is not feasible within the current budget.	HoS School Manager	The only way to achieve this is to redirect overhead income to the School, to create this budget line, which has implications for current commitments.	June 2027	
2b	Establish a workshop capability , potentially in collaboration with other Schools, to provide support for small scale fabrication, repairs, and maintenance.	This is under consideration in partnership with Physics in the context of the Kane renovation.	Kane renovation steering group, HoS Chemistry, HoS Physics.	Cost in setting up the workshop and ongoing TO support.	In line with Kane renovation.	
2c	Explore the potential of the Virtual Lab as a tool for knowledge capture , particularly to record and preserve the expertise of technicians approaching retirement, thereby supporting continuity	Review present practice and how to capture present knowledge	Heads of Sections, in collaboration with Prof Eric Moore.	Staff time (any other costs?)	August 2028	

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	of technical knowledge in cases where roles cannot be replaced immediately.					
School Structure						
3	The Panel recommends that the School reflect on whether the existing ‘sections’ continue to serve its needs. The Panel recommends reflecting on whether the current section arrangements continue to add value, or whether a more integrated structure might better support the School’s ambitions.	Structure of the School to be reviewed	HoS Heads of Section EAT	Staff time	June 2027	
4	The Panel recommends that the School undertake a review of its governance structures to support effective decision making. In particular, the Panel recommends:	Structure of the School to be reviewed	HoS Heads of Sections EAT	Staff time	June 2027	
4a	Reviewing the structure and size of the School Executive Advisory Team , as its current scale may limit efficiency and inadvertently contribute to perceptions of division within the School. A more streamlined structure could enhance effectiveness, communication pathways and working relationships.	Structure of the School to be reviewed	HoS Heads of Sections EAT	Staff time	June 2027	
4b	Strengthening communication flows within the School , ensuring that decisions	Existing communication	HoS Heads of Section	Staff time	August 2027	

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	taken at leadership level are communicated consistently, promptly, and through clearly defined channels to the entire staff body.	mechanisms, including School Board, committee reporting, section meetings, circulated agendas and minutes, email, and Teams/SharePoint spaces, will continue to be used. These mechanisms will be reviewed in the context of the revised governance structures to ensure that key decisions and actions are communicated clearly and consistently across the School.	EAT School Manager			
Students						
5	Improve the quality and timeliness of feedback on laboratory reports , ensuring that students receive clear, developmental guidance that helps them understand their strengths and areas for improvement.	Existing laboratory assessment and feedback practices, including templates, rubrics and Canvas-based feedback mechanisms, will continue to be used. The School will review the consistency of implementation	Heads of Sections Chair T&L	Staff time	In advance of 2026-27 academic year	

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		across modules and remind staff of agreed expectations regarding marking criteria, feedback quality, and the timely return of feedback.				
6	Review the volume and frequency of laboratory reports to achieve an appropriate balance between assessment workload and the capacity to provide high quality, constructive feedback.	Review present practice and implement necessary changes	Heads of Sections Chair T&L	Staff time	In advance of 2026-27 academic year	
7	Explore opportunities to use VR simulation for assessment and/or pre-laboratory training, supporting student preparedness, safety, and confidence before engaging in practical work.	Identify priority laboratory classes in which VR or simulation can improve pre-lab preparation and safety (timetable issues also need be considered)	Heads of Sections, in collaboration with Prof Eric Moore.	Staff time (any other costs?)	August 2027	
8	Improve signposting of learning resources , ensuring students have clear, timely access to the learning materials they need to prepare for lab work, particularly in cases where the timetable requirements mean that labs are taking place before the supporting theory classes.	Develop minimum Canvas standards for laboratory modules, including clear location of pre-lab materials, theory links, assessment briefs, marking criteria, submission dates,	Heads of Sections	Staff time	In advance of 2026-27 academic year	

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		safety requirements, absence procedures and contact points.				
9	Clarify within programme documentation which degree programmes offer guaranteed placements and which offer optional placements and publish transparent academic alternatives for students who do not secure a placement.	Clarify the placement arrangements in the programme documentation, specifying if placements are guaranteed or dependent on competitive selection and external availability.	Programme Directors Dr Stig Hellebust (Module coordinator for the optional 3 rd year placements)	Staff time	In advance of 2026-27 academic year	

For completion by School

Head of School: Prof. Anita Maguire	Signature: 	Date: 09/06/2026
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Head of College: Prof Sarah Culloty	Signature: 	Date: 10.06.2026
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