

QUALITY REVIEW FOLLOW-UP MEETING

DEPARTMENT OF ZOOLOGY, ECOLOGY & PLANT SCIENCE (ZEPS)

Introduction

A meeting to discuss progress made in implementing recommendations for improvement arising from the review of the Department of Zoology, Ecology & Plant Science was held on 28 November 2007.

Present: Professor Patrick Fitzpatrick, Head, College of Science, Engineering & Food Science
Professor John Davenport Head, Department of ZEPS
Professor John O'Halloran, Department of ZEPS
Dr. Norma Ryan, Director of Quality Promotion
Ms Deirdre O'Brien, Administrator, Quality Promotion Unit

Abbreviations

PRG: Peer Review Group

VP: Vice-President

QPC: Quality Promotion Committee

QIP: Quality Improvement Plan

HR: Human Resources

SEFS: Science, Engineering & Food Science

SAR: Self-Assessment Report

DGS: Dean of Graduate Studies

QP: Quality Promotion

IUA: Irish Universities Association

This Report is divided into three sections:

Section 1: Recommendations to the Department prioritised from the extensive and detailed list drawn up by the Department and submitted to the PRG as part of the Self-Assessment Report.

Section 2: Additional recommendations made by the PRG with comments from the Department.

Section 3: the full list of all recommendations made by the Department in the SAR and the response of the PRG to each one. A commentary is opposite each one with a suggestion as to where action should be referred to.

Section 1

PRG Recommendation	QPC Recommendation	Follow-up Report Nov '07
That the management of the Department be reviewed and amended to be fully inclusive and embraced by all staff. Issues to be addressed include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- allocation of academic workloads- transparency of academic workloads- communication within the Department- departmental committee and management structures- allocation and management of space- budget management and transparency	Recommendation strongly endorsed. The QPC noted the extensive list of recommendations, generated by the Department itself and endorsed by the PRG, all relating to management of the Department. The QPC requested that these issues all be addressed in the Quality Improvement Plan ----- Recommendation strongly endorsed.	Implemented and ongoing The departmental management & committee structure has been rationalised. A space committee has been established. Communication within the department has been improved. A weekly internal newsletter is produced and there are plans to establish an intranet to support management and increase transparency. Budget information is emailed to all staff. The allocation of academic

PRG Recommendation	QPC Recommendation	Follow-up Report Nov '07
<p>- staff management, mentoring and development</p> <p>-----</p> <p>That the teaching load and teaching schedules of the Department are thoroughly examined and reviewed with the objective of reducing to a minimum double teaching</p>		<p>workloads is largely dealt with though it remains an issue for consideration with the department; however, greater transparency has been achieved.</p> <p>The issue of a model for workload allocation is one for the University as a whole.</p>
<p>That the Department should review the positioning of staff with regard to career development and promotion.</p>	<p>Recommendation strongly endorsed.</p>	<p>Implemented</p> <p>All staff, including postdoctoral researchers, have undergone a performance management & development review.</p> <p>The department has established a voluntary mentoring scheme for academic staff.</p>
<p>That the management structure of technical staff should be developed and then reviewed after a period of five years.</p>	<p>Recommendation strongly endorsed.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Roles of technical staff are being reviewed in light of the new national agreement</p>
<p>That the roles of administrative and technical staff within the Department be examined, and defined where necessary, with the objective of improving the efficient management of the work of the Department.</p>	<p>Recommendation strongly endorsed.</p>	<p>Implemented</p>
<p>That adequate security and safety measures are taken to ensure the safety and security of the staff and students of the Department.</p>	<p>QPC endorsed this recommendation and referred it to the General Services Officer for consideration</p>	<p>Implemented and ongoing</p> <p>Security has improved in general. A member of security is now on site at all times. Security key pads and swipe cards are in place.</p> <p>Cork County Council have agreed to keep the bridge and walkway open until at least 7pm throughout the year.</p> <p>The glasshouse area has been fenced off.</p>
<p>That the career structures of researchers be developed.</p>	<p>The QPC considered this issue carefully, recognising the importance of the concerns, both of the staff and of the Department. The Irish Universities Association is also considering and debating this</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Some improvements have been made, however, this is still an outstanding issue for both the department and the University as a whole. It is also a national</p>

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	issue with the funding bodies in the State and with other higher education institutions in Ireland and is examining practice internationally. UCC is also very concerned about this issue as it also relates directly to retention of staff. It is hoped that further developments at national and local level will take place over the coming academic year.	issue.
That the availability of generic and discipline-specific training for graduate students be increased	Recommendation endorsed. The QPC noted that this recommendation is very much in line with current University policy and that it is the aim of the Dean of Graduate Studies to specifically promote the availability of training of all kinds for research graduate students.	Implemented and ongoing Significant progress has been made in this area. The department has funded certificated first aid training for all PhD students. The department has also funded statistical training and specific training such as boat-handling skills.
That the Department examine ways of optimising research opportunities, including – acquisition of external funding – attraction of new research competencies into the Department – retention of existing research competence – Mentoring of junior staff	Recommendation endorsed. The QPC did note the successes of the department in attracting research funding to date and commended the achievements of the Department in this regard. Transparency of information within the Department and opening channels of communication amongst all staff would provide help to junior staff in this regard.	Implemented and ongoing The department applies for all sources of external funding available and has received approximately €8 million in funding this year. ZEPS had the largest number of PhD students in the University in 2006/07 and has been successful in its endeavour to publish more work in high-impact journals. A scheme of voluntary mentoring for all staff is in operation.

Section 2:

Recommendations made by PRG additional to those in SAR

PRG Recommendation	QPC Recommendation	Follow-up Report Nov '07
That the Department should aim to amalgamate modules with small numbers of students into modules that more students will take and also to rationalise the assessment to reduce the load on students and staff.	Recommendation strongly endorsed. QPC noted and welcomed the positive response of the Department to the recommendation and to the plans for action.	Ongoing The department is making progress in this regard and has reduced the number of modules on offer and will continue to do so while ensuring an adequate level of choice for students.

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The development of a transparent workload model with rationalisation of academic workloads, including teaching, etc.	Recommendation strongly endorsed.	Ongoing The allocation of academic workloads is largely dealt with though it remains an issue for consideration with the department; however, greater transparency has been achieved. A first year co-ordinator has been appointed which has helped to unblock workloads and prioritise first years. The issue of workload allocation is one for the University as a whole.
That the re-alignment of technical and administrative support in line with the merging of the two original Departments be completed.	Recommendation endorsed. The QPC noted that, as the staff of the Department is now housed on a single site, it should be possible to complete the merging of the two original departments within a relatively short period of time. The QPC will welcome immediate action.	Ongoing Roles of technical staff are being reviewed in light of the new national agreement.
That the University sabbatical leave system should be availed of, particularly by junior members of staff, to encourage their research and scholarly development.	Recommendation endorsed. The QPC encouraged the Department to facilitate junior members of staff, in particular, to avail of the sabbatical leave arrangements possible in UCC.	Ongoing The department is endeavouring to create a culture in this regard and has asked staff to consider their sabbatical leave plans. An outline schedule of sabbatical leave has also been drawn up.

Section 3:

The following table details all the recommendations made by department in SAR with the comment of PRG and a priority weighting after each one. Priority 1 is the highest and Priority 5 the lowest. Indication is also given as to who should take the lead on the action required. The QPC highly commended the Department for its proactive stance in examining in such detail the issues the Department feels ought to be addressed.

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Number of Administrative staff too few to support Department activity.	The PRG strongly disagreed with this recommendation. The PRG considered that a change in management structure as a consequence of merging all administrative	QPC agreed with the PRG and did not endorse the departmental recommendation.	Ongoing The number of administrative staff is marginal in terms of function if a member of staff is on holiday or

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	<p>staff of the Department into a single unit and delineating all roles clearly would remove many of the difficulties and increase the effectiveness of the administration. The PRG suggested that the process should be facilitated by central administration.</p> <p>The Head of Department should consult with the Head of College of SEFS on how best to proceed.</p>		sick leave.
Academic staff: regularisation of temporary staff situation and make provision to replace retiring staff.	The PRG endorsed this recommendation and considered it should be part of the strategic plan for the Department. The PRG recommended that the Department should review the positioning of staff with regard to career development and promotion, e.g. by the use of mentoring and close involvement in the staff development plan.	<p>Noted that the Department has undertaken to sort out all staffing issues by Sept 2007 and that action is underway.</p> <p>This is a key priority for Department.</p>	<p>Implemented</p> <p>All staff contracts are now regularised.</p>
<p>Academic Staff are over-worked. Work loads need to be reviewed and managed.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Too much time spent on administration and too little on research and teaching.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Too little time for research.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Too many meetings.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Double teaching and too much distant teaching.</p>	<p>The PRG strongly endorsed the recommendation that academic workloads need to be reviewed and managed in a transparent manner.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>The PRG endorsed the recommendation for action and referred the Department to the comment on the earlier recommendation re the roles and duties of administrative staff and the need to define these clearly. If the Department has synergies in course provision there will be less assessment and more time freed for academic business.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>See comments made above.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>The PRG recommended a</p>	<p>Recommendation very strongly endorsed. This is a key priority for Department</p> <p>-----</p> <p>This is a management and allocation of academic workloads issue to be addressed by the Department. This is a key priority for Department</p> <p>The University needs to address the issue of developing an Academic Workloads Allocation Model.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>QPC noted that this recommendation is linked to other similar recommendations above. This is a key priority for</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>The departmental management & committee structure has been rationalised.</p> <p>The allocation of academic workloads is largely dealt with though it remains an issue for consideration with the department; however, greater transparency has been achieved.</p> <p>A first year co-ordinator has been appointed which has helped to unblock workloads and prioritise first years.</p> <p>The issue of workload allocation is one for the University as a whole.</p>

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	<p>serious review of the management structures and systems to ensure translation of decisions into meaningful actions. The PRG indicated a need to delegate tasks.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>The PRG were very concerned at the amount of double teaching undertaken by staff in the Department. In the current climate the Department is strongly advised to eliminate all double teaching where possible.</p>	<p>the Department.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Recommendation strongly endorsed. This is a departmental management issue. This is a key priority for the Department.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Recommendation strongly endorsed. This is a departmental management and a key priority for the Department.</p>	
<p>Technical staff replacements.</p>	<p>The PRG felt that the ratio of technical to academic staff in the Department is relatively high. Additional technical staff should be part of grant proposals and funded in that way.</p> <p>The PRG recommended that the management structure of technical staff in the Department should be developed and then reviewed after a period of five years.</p>	<p>Noted that the Department has undertaken to sort out all staffing issues by Sept 2007 and that action is underway.</p> <p>This is a key priority for Department</p>	<p>Implemented</p> <p>Replacements have been appointed.</p>
<p>Uncertainty about the roles of administrative staff, roles and specialisations of technical staff and their roles in research and teaching.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>No technical staff promotion scheme.</p>	<p>The PRG strongly recommended that the roles of administrative and technical staff are examined with urgency and decisions made within 6 months.</p> <p>The PRG suggested the increased use of administrative and technical support for the handling of grants and the ordering of consumables and equipment.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Noted. The PRG recommended that UCC acts on this issue.</p>	<p>Fundamental for effective management of Department</p> <p>This is a key priority for Department</p> <p>-----</p> <p>QPC noted that this issue has been under discussion for some time within the University.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Roles of technical staff are being reviewed in light of the new national agreement</p>
<p>Lack of specialised training for Academic,</p>	<p>The PRG agreed and noted that there are some courses offered by the Department of</p>	<p>QPC agreed and endorsed commentary of the PRG and noted that action is</p>	<p>Covered above</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

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<p>Technical, Administrative and research staff and postgraduates.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>No structured training in research tools, philosophy, IT, specialist software, etc.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Little structured training for post graduates.</p>	<p>HR. The PRG would encourage the University Health & Safety Office to put on courses to enable postgraduates to be trained in risk analysis, and laboratory and fieldwork safety training. The PRG suggested that part of the re-training of technical staff should be focussed on IT, to help provide the Department with support in this area.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>The PRG strongly endorsed the provision of structured training for postgraduates. The PRG noted that the University has commenced the provision of some generic training for postgraduates across the University in areas such as IT, statistics and communication, all to a certain level. The University should also recognise the need to provide some specialised courses tailored to meet the needs of individual Departments, including ZEPS.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>The PRG strongly endorsed this.</p>	<p>on-going on this recommendation.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Recommendation strongly endorsed.</p> <p>This is a key priority for Department and University</p> <p>-----</p> <p>As commented above, QPC noted the actions already in development by the University and acknowledged that more developments will be put in place in the immediate future.</p>	<p>This is a key priority for the department and the University.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Dean of Graduate Studies is responsible for development of generic modules</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Communication is not good.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Poor links/relations between some elements of ZEPS.</p> <p>----</p> <p>Budget communication.</p>	<p>The PRG noted the comment earlier re re-training of technical staff in IT.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>The PRG noted that there are significant opportunities arising from the relocation of the Zoology section of the Department to the same site as the Plant Science section.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>The PRG considered that with the revision and definitions of the roles and functions of the management system within</p>	<p>Recommendation strongly endorsed.</p> <p>This is a key priority for Department</p> <p>-----</p> <p>QPC noted that this is primarily a communication issue and considered that this is a key priority for Department.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Recommendation strongly endorsed.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>The department produces a weekly internal newsletter and there are plans to establish an intranet to support management and increase transparency and engagement of all staff.</p> <p>Many internal communication problems have now been solved with the new location of the department on one site.</p>

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	the Department these problems should be obviated.	This is a departmental management and communication issue and a key priority for the Department.	The Department has implemented a strategy for transparency in budget allocation and expenditure
Too much time taken to recruit staff.	The PRG agreed and recommended consideration by University.	QPC acknowledged that recruitment does take time and that the Department of HR are examining ways of reducing the time taken.	Ongoing This recommendation is for the department of Human Resources to implement.
Poor or unstructured sabbatical leave for staff.	The PRG recommended that the Department should encourage staff to take advantage of the University sabbatical leave system. This should be incorporated into the strategic plan of the Department and linked to career development and mentoring.	This issue is related to the management of Department and staff mentoring. This is a key priority for Department	Ongoing The department is endeavouring to create a culture in this regard and has asked staff to consider their sabbatical leave plans. An outline schedule of sabbatical leave has also been drawn up.
Fragmentation and mixed quality of space (i.e. old Cooperage).	The PRG noted that the recent move to new accommodation should have resolved this issue to a considerable degree. The facilities are now very good and are significantly better than many facilities for Departments of Zoology across Europe. The Cooperage has excellent volume of space, and has adequate space for postgraduates.	QPC did not consider this a major issue for the Department at the present time.	Implemented The move to a single-site location has resolved this issue.
Uncertainty regarding ZEPS long-term Buildings.	The PRG recommended that the University commit to keeping the Department in its present facilities. The PRG considered the Cooperage to be ideal for aquaculture and research laboratories.	QPC noted that there is no immediate discussion as to the possibility of ZEPS moving from its present accommodation. The QPC also noted that the PRG praised the quality of the accommodation of the Department.	Not resolved The department remains uncertain regarding its long term future in the Distillery Fields.
Distance between teaching spaces.	The PRG noted that the Department now has quality teaching space on North Mall Campus and considered that	QPC noted the comment of the PRG and commented that many other	Resolved

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	the move to the new facility should reduce or eliminate many difficulties.	disciplines/departments are in a much less favourable position. QPC did not consider this a key priority for the Department at this point in time.	
Lack of disability access to Enterprise Centre.	The PRG noted that there is a real problem in regard to access for physically disabled. The PRG also noted plans for installing a bridge across from Butler Building.	QPC noted that there is some level of access and that improvement to this has been agreed by Building & Estates and action is underway.	Resolved
Longer-term support of Lough Hyne.	The PRG strongly endorsed this recommendation and recommended negotiations be initiated with the Development Office to seek possibilities for funding. The PRG suggested that the possibility of using an alumni 'Friend of Lough Hyne' approach should be explored.	QPC endorsed recommendation and recommended that the Department consult with the Development Office	Ongoing The department has received funds of €100K to stabilise the geology and geography of Lough Hyne, however, more funding is needed to ensure a continued presence at Lough Hyne. The department will liaise with the Development Office in this regard.
Access is often difficult: a serious problem for field based subjects.	The PRG recognised the problem that research is not a 9-5 activity for staff and postgraduates. Access is thus necessary and should be especially recognised in the case that many zoological research projects need attention at unusual hours. The PRG noted that mechanisms are being put in place to alleviate this difficulty.	QPC acknowledged the importance of 7 day access, and also that access limited due to location.	Ongoing The majority of access problems have been alleviated.
No storage space for research materials.	The PRG noted access to portacabins and access to secure storage space for specimens. The PRG also noted that there are opportunities for development of storage space adjacent to the Enterprise Centre and	This is a management issue for the Department	Resolved

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	recommended that these should be investigated.		
Safety and security across entire ZEPS.	The PRG hoped that the safety and security standards that apply to the main campus will apply to this facility as well.	This is a key priority for the University. QPC noted the concerns and the need to ensure the safety of staff and students	<p>Implemented and ongoing</p> <p>Security has improved in general. There is now a member of security on site at all times. Security key pads and swipe cards are in place.</p> <p>Cork County Council have agreed to keep the bridge and walkway open until at least 7pm throughout the year.</p> <p>The glasshouse area has been fenced off.</p>
Poor AV facilities in some ZEPS teaching spaces.	The PRG noted the presence of data projectors in every room in Enterprise Centre. The PRG were impressed at the level of AV support already in place in the new facility and would hope that it would continue to be supported.	QPC noted the comments of the PRG and the relatively good AV provision for the Department.	Resolved
No integrated Departmental Strategy.	The PRG endorsed this recommendation strongly. The PRG recommended that the management structure be reviewed with a view to developing an integrated Departmental strategy for the next five years. The PRG would encourage the Department to get a departmental strategy in place as an urgent priority.	<p>QPC strongly endorsed the recommendation of the PRG and urged immediate action.</p> <p>This is a key priority for the Department.</p>	<p>Resolved</p> <p>A Strategic Plan has been developed by the department and delivered to the Science Faculty/SEFS.</p>
Uncertainty about impact of university restructuring and concerns that it will bring yet another layer of administration.	<p>The PRG noted that this is the aim of all!!</p> <p>The PRG noted the concerns of the staff – and considered that these are probably universal throughout the University.</p>	The re-structuring is an on-going activity for the University and every effort is being made to ensure it is a smooth and productive activity.	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>This is an issue for the University as a whole.</p>
Students paying for	The PRG noted that this issue	QPC endorsed the	Ongoing

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field work and lab manuals	was not raised by students. The Department Management Group should consider how the departmental funds could be used to support students on field trips.	recommendation that every effort be made to lessen the cost to students of taking part in obligatory field trips.	The department will constantly review and keep costs at a minimum.
No follow up action on issues. ----- Some groups feeling excluded from decision-making.	PRG endorsed recommendation. ----- The PRG noted postdoctoral researchers are not represented at departmental management committee and recommended that postdoctoral researchers, technical and administrative staff be represented on the management group and on departmental committees.	Recommendation strongly endorsed. This is a departmental management and communication issue and a key priority for the Department. ----- Recommendation strongly endorsed. This is a departmental management and communication issue and a key priority for the Department.	Resolved The departmental management & committee structure has been rationalised and communication within the department has been improved.
Poor representation by some at college and faculty level.	The PRG noted and hoped that the issue will be addressed by revised managerial system in the Department.	QPC welcomed indication of action by the Department, noting the importance of contributing at the level of the University	Resolved The department now has good representation on committees at all levels within the University.
Uncertainty about assets/equipment register and location.	The PRG noted this recommendation and urges dept to regularise the situation in line with University requirements.	Recommendation endorsed.	Ongoing This is in progress.
Uncertainty about Academic staff and Technical staff about prioritisation of teaching and assessment, in particular, deadlines and schedules.	The PRG agreed and recommended that the academic staff committee should look closely at ensuring that academic and technical staff define what is needed for practical, fieldwork and assessment schedules.	This is a departmental management and communication issue and a key priority for the Department.	Resolved Schedules are now posted in teaching laboratories
Difficulty with enforcing plagiarism regulations.	The PRG agreed with this recommendation.	This is a key priority for the Department and the university. Refer to Academic Council for development of appropriate University	Ongoing The department participated in the development of University plagiarism regulations and

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		guidelines and regulations	continues to enforce the regulations. The department is concerned that the plagiarism regulations are not easily accessible on the UCC web site.
Teaching equipment is old and of poor quality.	The PRG agreed and supported this recommendation.	Recommendation endorsed.	Ongoing This remains a matter of considerable concern for the department as funding for new teaching equipment is non-existent.
<p>Demonstrating falls to a small number of postgraduates.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Too little funding for postgraduates (and uncertainty about demonstrating pay).</p>	<p>The PRG were concerned that a small number of postgraduate students are carrying a high teaching load in order to fund their time as a student, and recommended that postgraduate stipends should be regularised.</p> <p>The PRG noted the benefit to 4th Year students and recommended that the Department should explore the possibility of extending the current PAL system with a view to inclusion of 4th Years in some demonstrating. PRG were concerned that some postgraduates are required to work for free.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>See comments above.</p>	<p>This is a departmental management issue and a priority for the Department.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>This is an important issue and one which the DGS has been tasked with examining.</p>	<p>Resolved</p> <p>All postgraduates now teach the same number of hours (50 hours per year).</p>
<p>Examinations: paper setting, choice, and number of questions in written and MCQ exams, double marking, moderating, etc.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Little self-directed learning by students.</p>	<p>The PRG endorsed the departmental recommendation that methodologies for assessment be reviewed.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>PRG considered that some elements of self-directed learning are essential for development of students and agreed with the Department's recommendation.</p>	<p>QPC noted the ongoing development of guidelines for writing of learning outcomes and that these will be considered by AC in the Autumn. The process of writing learning outcomes will encourage a review of examination and assessment methodologies in line with the learning outcomes defined.</p>	<p>Resolved</p> <p>Learning outcomes have been developed and all modules now confirm to Bologna expectations.</p>

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		----- Recommendation endorsed. QPC considered that this is an academic matter for the Department to resolve.	
Importance of fieldwork.	The PRG strongly endorsed this recommendation. PRG commended the Department on the fieldwork elements of their courses.	Recommendation endorsed.	Resolved The credit weighting for fieldwork has been increased to 10 credits.
Too many modules/uneven teaching.	The PRG agreed that teaching loads should be rationalised but recommended that projects be retained in Final Year. Teaching workloads should be transparent and equitable.	Recommendation very strongly endorsed. This is a key priority for the Department	Ongoing The department is making progress in this regard and has reduced the number of modules on offer and will continue to do so while ensuring an adequate level of choice for students.
Support for 4 th Year research projects and 3 rd Year literature projects may be dropping.	The PRG strongly endorsed this recommendation. PRG recommended that the Department ensure that this support does not decrease.	Endorsed PRG comment	Resolved
Knowledge of graduate destinations patchy and scant.	The PRG agreed and recommended that the Department examine the reports of the Careers Service each year to develop a systematic understanding of the destination of the graduates.	Endorsed PRG comment	Ongoing This remains an issue for the department. This is for the Careers Service to resolve.
Some uncertainty about the skills society/industry needs of our graduates.	The PRG recommended strongly that this is done because the PRG, in discussion with stakeholders, heard the view expressed about the need for IT, communication, statistical skills and knowledge of regulatory legislation as areas that need addressing.	PRG recommendation endorsed.	Resolved Prospective employers were consulted when developing the new MSc courses.
Poor understanding of student recruitment.	The PRG recommended that the Department examine the design of First and Second	PRG recommendation endorsed.	Ongoing The department is working to resolve this

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	Year programmes with a view to attracting good quality students into the departmental programmes.		issue. Participation in recruitment drives can be difficult due to time constraints.
High student/staff ratio.	The PRG reviewed the similar data for other departments in the Faculty of Science and found the student/staff ratio to be relatively low compared with cognate departments.	QPC noted the comment of the PRG and endorsed it. The QPC would encourage the Department to seek to increase the number of students studying in the Department.	Resolved The number of undergraduate and postgraduate students has increased.
Low level of commercialisation and entrepreneurial skills in ZEPS.	The PRG noted the recommendation and considered that this might be an option for some individual postgraduates and staff.	This recommendation is linked to provision of structured training for graduate students which is already underway in University	Ongoing
Support for fieldwork poor, in particular vans and some consumables.	The PRG recommended that this is for departmental action	QPC considered this to be a departmental operational matter	Ongoing
Uncertainty about insurance for fieldwork, particularly when by oneself.	The PRG strongly endorsed this recommendation for immediate action by Department	This is a departmental management issue and a key priority for the Department to ensure all appropriate insurance etc is in place.	Resolved The department now communicate the insurance documentation annually to the ZEPS community.
Research participation by technicians low.	The PRG referred to recommendations above re the redefinition of roles and responsibilities of all administrative and technical staff.	This is a departmental management issue and a priority for the Department.	Ongoing More technicians are now participating in research.
Computer and other support from within grants.	The PRG endorsed this as an operational issue for Department to implement.	Recommendation of PRG endorsed.	Resolved
Uncertain links with Institutes.	The PRG recommended that the Department/University explore these issues.	This is a University issue to be explored	Ongoing Clarity is required regarding the relationship between ZEPS and the research institutes.
Barriers to	The PRG endorsed this	QPC noted that expertise	Ongoing

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optimising research opportunities.	recommendation and recommended that links be established with the administrative support. The PRG noted the facilities and support offered by VP for Research.	is already available in the University in the Office of the VP Research and recommended that the Department liaise closely with the VP Research.	For the VP Research Also need to put in place simplified customer led research grant serving system
Retention of research competencies in ZEPS is a problem as it often departs with graduates and postdoctoral researchers.	The PRG endorsed this recommendation.	Recommendation endorsed.	Ongoing Technicians are now more involved in research.
Poor/uncertain funding opportunities.	The PRG noted the success of the staff of the Department in attracting funds from a range of grant awarding bodies. Mentoring of junior staff in this area was recommended.	QPC noted that, in relative terms, ZEPS performs well in this area and noted the comments of the PRG. QPC endorsed the recommendation on the mentoring of junior staff.	Ongoing The department applies for all sources of external funding available and has received approximately 8 million in funding this year.
Lack of career structure for Post Docs and Research Scientists.	The PRG endorsed this recommendation.	UCC matter	Ongoing The situation has improved somewhat with more tenure B type posts for research staff.
No enabling support for inter-institutional collaboration.	The PRG endorsed this recommendation.	Noted recommendation and commented on the importance of facilitating and enabling collaboration with cognate disciplines in other institutions, the need to develop joint degrees, etc. The QPC also noted the importance placed on this type of activity by the HEA and Government and the need for the Universities to be proactive in this regard.	Not resolved There is no structure in place to support this at the present time.