# **Self Assessment Report Preparation**

# **Guidelines for Academic Schools/ Units/Programmes/Units**

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# ***Note: In the following pages the word ‘unit’ is used. This refers to all types of academic unit, including academic units, schools, academic programme Boards of Studies, other academic units.***

# **1. Purpose of Reviews**

Periodic external unit and programme reviews provide a mechanism for monitoring the status, effectiveness and progress of academic programmes and developments with the overall aim of improving the quality of teaching and learning and research. The current policy adopted by UCC calls for the review of all activities related to the education of students and the quality of the student experience while at UCC at least once every five years.

These reviews provide information that can be used by the University to

* enable units to identify future directions, needs and practices;
* help units to recognise and respond to strengths and weaknesses, and to identify important directions in the discipline or profession;
* assist academic and administration/support units in assessing their relationships with, and contributions to, other academic programmes and administration/support areas within the University;
* provide a common framework for discussion with University administration;
* help inform the strategic plans of Units, Schools, Faculties, Colleges and the University.

In line with the primary objective of quality improvement, the process shall be open and supportive rather than judgmental and unduly negative.

###### **Self-Assessment Report**

###### Self-assessment is the first crucial step that a unit takes in answering the four basic questions, namely:

* What are you trying to do?
* How are you trying to do it?
* How do you know it works?
* How do you change in order to improve?

Self-assessment is a process by which a unit reflects on its objectives and critically analyses the activities it engages in order to achieve these objectives. It provides an assessment of the unit’s performance of its functions, its services and its administration. Using the published guidelines and criteria the unit records the assessment in a Self-Assessment Report. UCC, in common with the other Irish Universities, has developed detailed instruments to guide the preparation and outline the content of Self-Assessment Reports for all units (guidelines available on the Quality Promotion Unit website, www.ucc.ie/quality). At the end of this stage of the process the unit has an agreed statement of its purposes, a description and assessment of its work and a map for its future development. The report

* presents detailed information about the unit, and the collective perception of staff and students of their role not only in the university but, where appropriate, in the international community and in the social, cultural and economic development of Ireland
* presents a succinct but comprehensive statement of the unit's strategic objectives
* shows the quality systems and processes which are already in place and permits an assessment of their effectiveness
* provides a comprehensive self-critical analysis of the activities of the unit, which may include international benchmarking
* helps the unit to identify and analyse its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, and allows it to suggest appropriate remedies where necessary
* identifies those weaknesses, if any, in procedural, organisational and other matters, which are under the control of the unit and which can be remedied by action
* identifies shortfalls in resources and provides an externally validated case for increased resource allocation
* provides a framework within which the unit can continue to work in the future towards quality improvement

Self-assessment is considered to be the core component of the Irish universities’ quality framework, with emphasis placed on the value to the unit of this analytical and self-critical process. The preparation of the Self-Assessment Report acts as a stimulus and provides opportunities for reflection and consultation, enabling units to plan and manage strategically, and to align their development plans with those of the whole university. The main emphasis in all of the self-assessment processes is on qualitative analysis. Quantitative data are also provided to support the assessment, providing a statistical overview of the size and level of activities of the unit under review.

The Self-Assessment Report provides the Peer Review Group with essential information to prepare both the review visit and the final review report. The preparation of the Self-Assessment Report follows essentially the same process for all units within UCC. However, the content of reports will vary with the nature of the unit.

###### **2. Procedures**

The outcome of the self-assessment review for a unit is a Self-Assessment Report that must be drawn up by the unit. All members of staff in the unit must participate in the review process, including support staff. Students also have a role to play in the process and must be given an opportunity to have their views heard openly. The report must reflect the views obtained from all the interested sectors including those outside the university such as employers and graduates. The report should include a section on how the review process was conducted and what steps were taken to ensure the views of all staff of the unit, including all members of the academic/administrative/support staff, were considered. The Quality Promotion Committee recommends strongly that the Staff Questionnaires, Undergraduate Student Questionnaire and Postgraduate Student Questionnaire available from the Quality Promotion Unit be used to assist the unit in gathering the views of staff and students. Standard questionnaires are available on the QPU website, [www.ucc.ie/quality](http://www.ucc.ie/quality).

1. **Format of the Self-Assessment Report**

The University does not aim to establish league tables or ranking orders of units reviewed, either within or without the University, at national and/or international levels. However the Quality Promotion Committee has approved a format for the Self-Assessment Report in order to assist units in the conduct of the review and in the preparation of the final report. Use of the guidelines should result in a consistent format allowing for ease of analysis.

The Self-Assessment Report should be no longer than **thirty pages** in length, excluding appendices, and may be accompanied by additional documentation as deemed necessary to give the reviewers a complete picture of the unit and its activities. Items in the Self-Assessment Report, both in the main text of the document and in the appendices, should consist of both a brief description and an analysis and should include comments and suggestions for improvement and recommendations on how the unit hopes to remedy difficulties identified. The emphasis in both the guidelines for preparation of the Self-Assessment Report and the accompanying questionnaires is on suggestions and proposals for improvement of the existing situation in all aspects of a unit’s activities.

Please ensure that **one copy for each reviewer plus two additional copies** of the Self-Assessment Report are delivered to the QPU six weeks before the review commences. These copies should all be **bound** and **paginated**.

Electronic copy: Please also email all documentation (SAR plus all appendices) to the QPU ([deirdre.obrien@ucc.ie](mailto:deirdre.obrien@ucc.ie)) in word format.

# **Template for the Self-Assessment Report**

The following are guidelines for the preparation of the Self-Assessment Report, including a template for the Self-Assessment Report. Units are recommended to use this template but can add any additional information/material deemed relevant and appropriate to ensure the reviewers have a good understanding of all the activities of the unit.

# **Unit Co-ordinating Committee**

In preparing for a Quality Review most units will feel it necessary and of assistance to appoint a co-ordinating committee responsible for preparing the Self-Assessment Report. The committee is representative of all staff in the unit and may also include a user representative. Normally the membership of the committee should not exceed a total of 6, although in some cases it may be necessary to have a larger number.

The committee is an operational one and meets frequently, usually every month at the start of the process, but often on a weekly basis when the report is being finalised. All staff members should be kept fully informed about the self-assessment process and encouraged to contribute their views.

The Chair of the committee is appointed by the Head of the unit.

Example of membership of an academic unit co-ordinating committee:

* Chair – normally a senior member of academic staff
* Head of unit
* Junior member of academic staff
* Representative of research staff
* Representative of administrative staff
* Representative of technical staff
* Representative of users - optional

The above is offered as a guideline only and should be adapted to suit a particular unit’s needs.

**Quality Promotion Unit**

The Quality Promotion Unit’s role is to assist the units preparing for quality review. Advice and guidance may be sought from the staff of the QPU at any time on any aspect of the preparation.

# **University College Cork**

**National University of Ireland, Cork**

**Quality Improvement/Quality Assurance**

**Academic Year XXXX**

**Self-Assessment Report**

## Title of Unit/Programme

**College of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Date:**

# **Confidential**

#### Self-Assessment Report - Format

**1. Contents**

2. Overall Analysis and Recommendations

3. Appendices

1. **Contents**

An index table should be inserted at the start of the Self-Assessment Report and the pages numbered.

1. Overall Analysis and Recommendations

Since the primary goal of the Quality Improvement/Quality Assurance process is quality improvement, the formulation of strategies and the recommendations for improving the work of the unit should be highlighted in the document.

The text of the document should contain a general brief introduction to the unit including:

* a brief description of the unit,
* a summary of the teaching, research and scholarly programmes,
* a brief history of the unit, and
* an overall analysis of the unit’s activities.

Much of the factual detail should be supplied as appendices to the document. If appropriate, describe how the unit has grown and developed in recent years (the description should set the scene for the Peer Review Group). Strengths should be emphasised, effective unit responses to concerns and opportunities considered, and weaknesses discussed.

Information on the conduct of a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) Analysis is available on the Quality Promotion Unit web site, www.ucc.ie/quality. Practical assistance in carrying out a SWOT analysis may also be obtained by contacting the Quality Promotion Unit.

*(Note: The questions outlined throughout the rest of the document are designed to help in the completion of these sections. They are intended as a guide only and there may well be additional comments the unit may wish to make)*

**Mission Statement**

State the Mission Statement of the unit.

* Is the approach of the unit to quality reflected in the Mission Statement?
* Does the Mission Statement of the unit reflect that of the University?

**Aims & Objectives**

**Description**

Describe the unit’s aims and objectives using the following questions as prompts/aides.

* What are the unit’s aims and objectives?
* What does the unit seek to achieve for its students?
* What does the unit seek to achieve for its staff?
* What does the unit seek to achieve for the discipline?
* What does the unit seek to achieve for the University?
* What does the unit seek to achieve for society generally?
* How are the aims and objectives determined?
* Are the aims and objectives geared towards improving the quality of all activities of the unit?
* Are there specific aims and objectives geared towards quality assurance and quality improvement? If so, what are they?
* Do the aims and objectives of the unit relate to the Mission Statement of the unit?
* Do the aims and objectives of the unit relate to the Mission Statement of the University?
* What provisions exist for the long-range planning and development of the unit?

Analysis and Benchmarking

Provide an analysis of the unit’s aims, including references to the SWOT and benchmarking exercises carried out by the unit. The Quality Promotion Committee requires every unit undergoing review to carry out an analysis of their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. All members of the unit should engage in the preparation of this analysis. The Quality Promotion Unit provides guidelines and assistance in carrying out this analysis.

* How frequently has the unit benchmarked or evaluated itself against a comparable or similar unit in another institution in Ireland? Abroad?
* Is there a unit in another university that you would consider as a suitable role model?
* Is there a unit in another institution, at national/international level, that you aspire to emulate? Be specific about the reasons for choosing the particular unit/institution and what is particularly admired about the unit(s).
* How would the unit consider it could achieve a similar level of quality performance?
* How do the Mission Statement of the unit and the Aims & Objectives relate to its aspirations with respect to quality?
* How does the unit know it is meeting these Aims and Objectives?
* How does the unit assess the quality of its Teaching?
* How does the unit assess the quality of its Learning?
* How does the unit assess the quality of its Research?
* How is the discussion of quality and quality enhancement promoted within the unit?

For the bullet points given below be specific in detailing the means of measuring of entities such as achievements and assurance of quality, etc.

* How well have the unit’s Aims and Objectives been implemented within the past five years?
* How has the success of the unit in the implementation of the Aims and Objectives been measured?
* How does the unit ensure it is delivering quality programmes in teaching and research?
* What means is the unit using to measure the quality of its programmes?
* How does the unit ensure enhancement of quality?
* How does the unit ensure the continuing enhancement of the student learning experience?

Projection and Recommendations for Improvement

* What recommendations for improvement is the unit proposing for the future? In particular what are the aims of the unit with respect to improvement of the quality of research and teaching? Refer to the benchmarking of the unit in addressing this question.
* What are the plans for improving the quality of the learning experience for students?
* What are the plans for the enhancement of the quality of learning of the staff of the unit and their commitment to the goals of the unit and of the University?
* What changes in Aims and Objectives are now called for as a consequence of this review?
* What strategies can be identified to achieve these changes?
* How does the unit propose to measure its success in achieving its aims?

##### 3. Appendices

##### Appendix A Unit Details

### Appendix B Individual Staff Profiles of all staff: academic, administrative and support (from IRIS)

##### Appendix C Unit Organisation and Planning

##### Appendix D Data and Statistics on Students (*from Data Warehouse)*

##### Appendix E Teaching and Learning

##### Appendix F Research & Scholarly Activity

##### Appendix G Staff Development

##### Appendix H External Relations

##### Appendix I Support Services

Appendix J SWOT Analysis

Appendix K Benchmarking Exercise

Appendix L Strategic Plan

Appendix M Peer Review Group Report (*from previous Quality Review*)

Appendix N QIP *(from previous Quality Review)* and Follow-Up Report (*from time of last review to present)*

Appendix O Research Quality Review (RQR) Report *(from previous Research Quality Review)*

Appendix P RQR Quality Improvement Plan plus comment on implementation to date

Appendix Q Unit Co-ordinating Committee

##### Appendix R Completed Staff Questionnaires

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##### Appendix A

**Unit Details**

This appendix should provide details of location of facilities of the Unit, a list of all staff and status, which have been summarised in the Self-Assessment Report. Brief Individual profiles of all staff (academic, research, administrative and support staff), should be appended as Appendix B. The following information is a guide to the information that should be included.

**1. Physical Facilities**

Include all facilities ‘owned’ by unit and those used by unit, such as teaching facilities.

* office accommodation
* classrooms
* laboratories
* seminar rooms
* teaching facilities
* research facilities
* other

**2. Staff Profile**

List all staff in each grade, indicating

* whether the staff member is permanent or temporary
* whether the staff member is full-time or part-time
* the number of years the staff member has been a member of the unit and/or of UCC
* contract length (for staff members with temporary contracts)

**3. Succession Planning**

Consider the implications, if any, of the age profile of staff for the future sustainability of activities of the unit.

**Appendix B**

**Individual Academic and Research Staff Profiles**

***NB:*** *the information required below is now available from IRIS. Please contact Ms. Deirdre Kearney, IRIS co-ordinator, Office of the VP for Research and Innovation. Please provide her with the names of the academic staff and researchers in your unit and a report will be generated containing all of the details for each staff member. Staff are strongly advised to ensure that the information in IRIS is current and up-to-date.*

This form should be filled out by all academic and research staff (including all full-time, part-time and contract staff). The information provided should include all scholarly activity. Please feel free to include any form of scholarly activity that is considered a valid activity under this heading.

1. **Surname**
2. **Forenames**
3. **Title**
4. **Nationality**
5. **Third Level Education**

University attended (dates), degrees, diplomas obtained, etc.

1. **Current Post**

* Title
* Unit/Research Centre
* Date of appointment

1. **Last three posts held with dates**
2. **Academic honours/achievements e.g. awarding institution, award and date of award**
3. **Formal publications for 5 year period preceding review**

The following types of formal publications may be included:

* Article in a book
* Article in a journal
* Book (whole)
* Book review published as an article in a journal
* Chapter in a book
* Conference Proceedings (editorship)
* Conference paper published in a *Proceedings*
* Graphical or notational compositions (maps, music, dance, *etc*)
* Journal (editorship)
* Patent granted
* Play
* Poem
* Report

**Important:** ‘Formal publication’ in this context means ‘peer-reviewed publication on paper by a recognised publisher’. It excludes publication by the author(s) alone; publication on the internet unless subject to peer review of accepted standards in print form; and presentation at a conference if there were no formal Proceedings published.

1. **Research grants awarded for 5 year period preceding review.**

Give name of awarding body, title of project and amount awarded with dates of beginning and termination of grant.

1. **Research awards granted in 5 year period preceding review, e.g. medals, bursaries, prizes**
2. **Prestigious recognition of national/international academic standing**
3. E.g. membership of international committees, membership of evaluation panels, invited keynote lecturers, membership of editorial boards, etc.
4. **Supervision of postgraduates**

* Number of graduate students supervised in 5 year period preceding review, indicating the degree the student is/was registered for.
* Number of graduates conferred with Masters Degrees in 5 year period preceding review (give names of students, their start and completion dates and funding sources)
* Number of graduates conferred with Doctoral Degrees in 5 year period preceding review (give names of students, their start and completion dates and funding sources)

1. **Patents filed – give details**
2. **List any campus companies you are involved in with a brief statement of your level of involvement and the approximate percentage of your time devoted to the campus company(ies) per week.**
3. **List any consultancies you are involved in and the percentage of your time devoted to these consultancies. Include here any involvement you might have in the provision of training courses to industry and/or public bodies.**

Consultancy is defined as the provision of professional advice for a fee and should only be conducted within the guidelines laid down by UCC for the performing of consultancy.

1. **Scholarly Activity not included above:**

Any other research related activity which you consider impacts on your research endeavour e.g., journal referee, activities relating to the public understanding of your area of research; dissemination of research results – unpublished conferences or invited lectures; media exposure; conference organisation, etc.

**Individual Administrative/Support Staff Profiles**

This form should be filled out by all full-time, part-time and contract members of the administration and support staff of the unit.

1. **Surname**
2. **Forenames**
3. **Title**
4. **Nationality**
5. **Third Level Education**

University/Third Level College attended, degrees, diplomas obtained, etc.

1. **Current Post**
   * Title
   * Date of appointment
2. **Last three posts held with dates**
3. **Honours/achievements**
4. **Any other information relevant to the post held**

**Appendix C**

**Unit Organisation and Planning**

This appendix should provide all details about the organisation of the unit including

* Management and committee structures. This should include
  + a list of all committees of the unit
  + the structure of the committees
  + details of how staff are appointed/elected to these committees
  + what level of authority the committees have.
* How the unit conducts its planning processes.
* Workloads - a table of the full workload of all academic staff members.

Information is requested under the following headings:

1. Management structures/committee structures
2. Budgeting
3. Unit communication with College(s)
4. Staff communication within the unit
5. Student communication within the unit
6. Communication with support services
7. Academic staff workloads in the unit
8. Procedures used in making recent appointments
9. Administration / office staff

**1. Management Structures/Committee Structures**

Describe the management structure within the unit, including consideration of the following questions:

* What is the management structure in the unit?
* What is the committee structure in the unit?
* Include in the description of any committees, the responsibilities of the committees, their composition, frequency of meetings and reporting structures
* Include references to issues such as the management of safety in the unit*.*

Consider the implications of the management structure of the unit and include consideration of any changes for improvement that might be made.

**2. Budgeting**

Describe the budgetary situation for the unit, providing details as appropriate.

* What are the budgeting arrangements in the unit?
  + from UCC Core budget
  + from other sources, e.g. research, consultancy, international students, etc.
* Are staff consulted on budgetary issues?
* Is information from administration timely and accurate?

**3. Academic Staff Workloads in the Unit**

Provide a table indicating the annual workload of each member of academic staff.

Describe how workloads are allocated within the unit, including consideration of the following questions:

* Give a brief description of the workload distribution among individual members of the academic staff. Include teaching, research and administrative duties.
* How are decisions concerning workload allocation made in the unit?
* Who allocates the workloads?
* Are all staff aware of the workloads of all other staff members in the unit?
* How do the workloads in the unit compare with those in similar units in UCC? In Ireland and other countries, e.g. UK, USA?
* Are the workloads evenly spread among staff?
* Do teaching, student advising and administrative duties leave adequate time for research and for supervision of research postgraduate students?
* Are the number of tutors and demonstrators sufficient to ensure adequate instruction and safety in practicals?

Provide an analysis of the workloads of staff in the unit, including an analysis of the academic workload allocation mechanisms within the unit.

**4. Unit Communication with College(s)**

Describe the mechanisms, if any, that are in place for communication with the relevant College(s), including Head(s) of Colleges and College Office(s).

Comment on the effectiveness of communications between the unit and the College(s).

**5. Staff Communication within the Unit**

Describe the mechanisms by which staff are informed of changes in academic and other procedures and developments in the Faculty, College and University, including consideration of the following questions:

* How are staff kept informed of changes in academic and other procedures?
* How are staff kept informed of decisions in the College? Academic Council? Governing Body?
* Who prepares and sets the agenda for the staff committee meetings?
* Are decisions reached by vote/consensus in the unit, by committee or by the Head of unit?
* Are formal minutes taken of staff meetings and of committee meetings? If so, by whom? Are the minutes circulated/made available to all staff?
* Are staff consulted on upcoming appointments? If so, which staff are consulted?

**6. Student Communication within the Unit**

Describe the mechanisms for communication with students within the unit, including consideration of the following questions:

* Is there a unit staff/student committee? If so, how often does it meet?
* Are there other arrangements for consultation with students e.g. a mentor system, an advisory system?
* How are students kept informed of relevant decisions in the unit?
* Are staff available for consultation with students on a regular basis, especially before and after examinations?
* Do staff have posted office hours?

**7. Communication with Support Services**

Describe the mechanisms for communication by the unit with the support services in UCC.

Does the unit have satisfactory mechanisms in place for communicating with Support Services, Library, Audio Visual Services, Human Resources, Registrar’s Office, Examinations & Records Office, Careers Service, Computer Centre, Research Office, etc.?

**8. Procedures used in making Recent Appointments**

Describe the process by which recent appointments were made in the unit and how staff of the unit are engaged in procedures for making appointments in the unit, including consideration of the following questions:

* Has the unit had any recent appointments (academic, administration, support staff) in the last three years?
* Who was involved in short-listing candidates?
* Were the advertising and other recruitment procedures suitable for attracting the best candidates*?*
* If not, was any consideration given to why this was the case?

**9. Administration / Office Staff**

Provide a description of the facilities availability for the administrative staff of the unit, of the training for improvement in specialist skills and of the availability of standard operating procedures in the unit, including consideration of the following questions:

* Are there training opportunities for administration/office staff?
* If so, has any member of the administration/office staff availed of these opportunities?
* Is the equipment in the office adequate?
* What arrangements exist for the review of office procedures?

##### Appendix D

##### Data and Statistics on Students *(from Data Warehouse)*

Relevant data on students, including relevant statistics may be obtained from the Data Warehouse.

**Appendix E**

**Teaching & Learning**

Degree Program Curriculum/Curricula

List the taught undergraduate and postgraduate degree and diploma programmes to which the unit contributes.

For each programme offered at undergraduate and postgraduate append the following information:

* A brief explanation of the structure of the programme and the unit contribution to the programme. If appropriate, describe or append the professional accreditation requirements.
* A copy of the relevant module descriptions as in the UCC *Book of Modules* using extracts from the UCC *College Calendar*, as appropriate.
* Indicate the positioning of the programmes on the National Framework of Qualifications
* A description of the method of admission or selection of students (if other than CAO).
* The minimum points at entry.
* A comment on the teaching methods used by the unit in the programme (expressed as % of total contact hours)
* In the case of teaching of courses that the unit offers as a service to other programmes in UCC, explain the mechanisms for assuring contact and discussion between the relevant Units and comment on the involvement of the unit in programme Boards of Studies.
* Details of mechanisms used to explain time-tabling, programme requirements, reading lists, methods of assessment, marks and standards, and any other administrative and examining details to students.
* Details of mechanisms to evaluate the effectiveness of the programme by students past and present, and by employers and professional bodies.
* A description of the level of involvement of the external examiner(s) in the programme.
* Copies of the extern examiners reports for the past three years.
* Refer to the appropriate information booklet(s). These should be available in the unit for consultation by the Peer Review Group during the site visit.

**Student Statistics**

See Appendix D.

Include a brief critical analysis of the programme, which will take into account the above information and the feedback that the unit received from student questionnaires, both past and present, and employers/professional bodies.

In the analysis consider the following questions

* What is the general “state of health” of each course/programme and the overall course/programme mix?
* What are the programme’s overall strengths and weaknesses?
* How does the curriculum compare with those at other similar institutions? How does the unit evaluate the similarities and dissimilarities?
* What opportunities exist to create interdisciplinary courses within the curriculum?
* Should any courses be discontinued or altered? If so, why?
* Should any courses be added? If so, why?
* What outcomes are expected for students? How does the unit measure if these are being achieved?

# **Unit** **Curriculum and Scheduling**

Describe the unit’s procedures for the development of curricula, regular consideration of curricula and the delivery schedule for curricula components.

# Consider the following questions:

* What students does the unit seek to serve?
* Are the needs of these students being adequately served?
* How does the unit measure to what extent their courses assist students in meeting general education requirements? Is this satisfactory?
* Does the unit schedule courses in a manner that allows students to plan their academic program with some degree of certainty? How successfully is this scheduling being communicated to the students?
* Are sufficient “service” or ‘introductory-level” courses offered regularly?
* Are course offerings balanced between day and evening time slots? Why or why not?
* Are there any plans to offer courses by non-traditional instructional modes? Why or why not?

Include reference to methodologies used to gather the views of students’ and other stakeholders.

# **Teaching**

In the analysis of the teaching activities of the unit consider the following questions:

* What provisions exist for the regular evaluation of the quality of instruction? Are these satisfactory?
* How are students involved in the evaluation of instruction? Is this satisfactory?
* What results has the evaluation of instruction yielded over the past five years? How have these results been acted upon? Is this satisfactory?
* What resources and strategies currently exist to improve the quality of instruction in the unit? How have these been used?
* What new strategies might be developed?
* Is sufficient attention paid to responding to the particular needs of gifted, remedial, minority, part-time, off-campus students?
* Have any innovations in teaching been introduced recently?
* Are staff encouraged to develop teaching skills and teaching methods?
* Are staff encouraged to attend courses on development of teaching skills organised by UCC or other agencies?
* Do staff attend such courses?
* Are there any arrangements for the induction of new staff?
* Are there any arrangements for the training of tutors and demonstrators?
* What is the level of attendance of students?
* Are the students enthusiastic towards learning?
* Is consideration given to development of interdisciplinary programmes? To inter-faculty programmes? To institutional programmes?
* Has the unit found specific difficulties associated with the development of interdisciplinary programmes? Of inter-faculty programmes? Of institutional programmes?

###### **Student Learning**

In the analysis and consideration of student learning include consideration of the following:

* What means are employed to ensure the maximum participation of students in the learning process?
* Do students participate in lectures and other teaching activities?
* Are you aware of the reasons for non-completion by some of your students?

# **Student Recruitment**

In consideration and analysis of student recruitment include consideration of the following questions:

* Have course enrolments been adequate over the past five years?
* Are there variations in demand among various elements of the curriculum? How do you evaluate your enrolments?
* What and who are your major markets and “publics?”
* Do you recruit your majors from within the University (e.g. by declaration of major, by change of major) or from outside the institution? Who are your non-major students?
* What strategies have been developed to assist in recruitment of students (for degree programmes and individual courses)? Are they adequate? Appropriate?
* Are the students currently recruited appropriately?
* Would the recruitment of other types of students enhance the program and/or its service?
* Are you affected in any way by the backgrounds of the students you serve? Is this beneficial?
* What is the present and anticipated future size of your market? What factors are likely to influence this projection? What are the implications of this projection?

**Appendix F**

**Research & Scholarly Activity**

**Research Activity**

Please append your **Research Strategic Plan** to this document.

Research and scholarship are an integral part of the work of any university. The Self-Assessment Report should provide evidence of research activity undertaken in the past five – six years, and should incorporate a brief outline of the research interests of each staff member together with recent activity in this field. It may be helpful to categorise research in terms that are meaningful for a particular discipline, e.g. scholarship, basic, strategic, applied and contract research.

The submission on research should address the following points, it being understood that not all staff members will be engaged in each activity:

* The extent to which research activity informs teaching at undergraduate and postgraduates level
* The extent to which research activity plays a part in postgraduate training links with other academics in Ireland and abroad
* Participation in collaborative projects both nationally and internationally
* Links with industry and effectiveness in the promotion of research and research funding (where relevant)
* Applicability of research to national policies (where relevant)
* Research results published in a timely fashion and in appropriate journals
* Involvement of staff in consultancies and training courses offered outside UCC.

The following is a list of data that may be consulted by the Peer Review Group:

* List of publications in the form of books, articles in appropriate scholarly journals – both peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed - papers presented at conferences, etc.
* List of contributions to significant national and international conferences
* List of editorial and academic refereeing work of staff
* Record of research grants awarded to staff members
* Record of research visits by academic staff to academic libraries, repositories and other institutes
* Record of researchers visiting the unit.

*Note: The reviewers will focus in particular on the level and success of activity over the past five years.*

**Research Funding**

Describe the situation with respect to funding received by the staff of the unit for research. Outline the unit policy in this area.Describe where research funds have been obtained in the past five years.

Include an analysis of the adequacy of internal funding for the following: library funding; travel funding; research equipment; postgraduate fellowships; post-doctoral research funding; funding for technical and other research support.

**Research Supervision**

Describe the unit policy on research supervision. Include a description of the procedures followed to quality assure the supervision of research graduates and a comment on how the unit is implementing the university’s policies on research supervision.

Much of the following data is available from the Data Warehouse:

* List the number of research students in the unit by category of type of postgraduate degree, whether they are full-time or part-time and if the degree is by research only or is by a combination of taught courses and minor dissertation.
* Give the number of PhD students registered in the unit in each of the last five years
* Give the number of PhD Degrees completed (i.e. actually conferred) in each of the last five years
* What was the average completion time for PhD Degrees in the last five years?
* Give the number of Master Degrees registered in the unit in each of the last five years
* Give the number of Master Degrees completed (i.e. actually conferred) in the last five years
* What was the average completion time for Master Degrees in the last five years?

Comment on the effectiveness of research supervision in the unit.

**Appendix G**

**Staff Development**

Summarise the staff development activities that staff have participated in over the past three years.

Include consideration of the following questions:

* Do academic staff participate in the teaching support programmes offered by the Staff Enhancement & Professional Development Programme? By Ionad Bairre, the UCC Teaching & Learning Support Centre?
* Do staff avail of the Training & Development programmes provided by Human Resources?
* Are there any suggestions the Unit would like to make about staff development activities in UCC?
* Have all staff participated in the Performance Management Development System?

Include consideration of the following questions in your analysis of staff development activities:

* Are staff development needs systematically identified and supported, in relation to individual aspirations, to the curriculum and institutional requirements?
* Do all staff, academic, administrative and support, regularly undertake appropriate staff development related to identified needs: induction, in-service training, secondments, sabbatical leave, etc.?
* Given the present UCC Calendar and the examination system, is there sufficient time for refreshment and/or research in the summer?
* Does the unit have a policy, which supports and encourages sabbatical leave?
* Are UCC’s arrangements for sabbatical leave conducive to staff availing of them?
* What changes, if any, would the unit like to recommend?
* If so, has any member of staff availed of these opportunities?
* Does the unit have a policy, which encourages staff to gain higher degrees or other further qualifications?
* Do academic and research staff participate in the teaching support programme offered by the Staff Enhancement & Professional Development Committee? By Ionad Bairre?
* Are there specific staff development policies for postdoctoral research staff? For junior research staff? For academic staff?
* Are there specific training opportunities for academic and research staff?
* Are there specific training opportunities for administrative staff?
* If so, has any member of the administrative staff availed of these opportunities?
* Is the equipment in the administrative office adequate?
* What arrangements exist for the review of office procedures in the unit?
* Are there training opportunities for technical and other support staff? If so, has any member of the staff availed of these opportunities?
* Are the equipment and facilities provided adequate?

**Appendix H**

**External Relations**

Please describe the involvement of staff of the unit in external relations, ensuring in particular that the following are addressed. In the comments on each please consider how improvements may be made.

Describe the unit’s external relations under the following headings:

* Other units in UCC
* Participation in the development of the University by serving on University Committees and Boards
* Industry, public agencies, potential graduate employers
* Membership of scholarly societies, professional and other bodies
* Units in other universities in Ireland and abroad
* The Institutes of Technology in Ireland
* Socrates and other student/staff exchange programmes
* Other international links
* Community
* Other – *please specify*

**Appendix I**

**Support Services**

This section relates to the views of staff of the unit on the administrative and support services offered by UCC. Support services play an important part in ensuring and enhancing the quality of the activities of the unit and are not always under the control of the unit itself. Thus it is important that the views of the unit are ascertained. All such views will be relayed to the individual support services in such a way as not to identify the unit that has expressed the views. In the table below please indicate the percentage of the staff who rated the following support services in UCC in each category.

This is not an exhaustive listing. If there is any **service omitted please** include it. If **an area’s title has changed** or no longer exists, we would appreciate it if you would draw our attention to this. Thank you.

| **Facility** | **Not Applicable** | **Poor** | **Fair** | **Good** | **Very Good** | **Excellent** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Office of Head of College of Arts, Celtic Studies & Social Sciences |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Office of Head of College of Business & Law |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Office of Head of College of Medicine & Health |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Office of Head of College of Science, Engineering & Food Science |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Office of the Registrar and Senior Vice-President (Academic) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Academic Secretariat |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Admissions Office |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Academic Programmes & Regulations |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Academic Systems Administration |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Disability Support Service |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Examinations & Records Office |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| International Education Office (Operations) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Audio Visual Services |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Audio Visual Equipment |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Student Careers Service |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Office of Vice-President for Research & Innovation |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Technology Transfer Office |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Computer Centre – General |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Computer Centre – Research |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Computer Centre – Teaching |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Library – Physical Environment |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Library – Resources (print, electronic, etc) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Library – Physical Environment |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Library Services – Resources (print, electronic, etc) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Ionad Bairre (The Teaching & Learning Centre) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Mature Student Office |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Quality Promotion Unit |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Office of the President |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Office of VP for External Relations |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Development & Alumni Office |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Office of Buildings & Estates |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Office of Media & Communications |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Finance Office – Accounts Section |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Finance Office – Fees Section |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Finance Office – Finance Section |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Finance Office – Payroll Section |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Procurement Office |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Department of Human Resources |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Catering |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Chaplaincy |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Cleaning |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Maintenance |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Parking Arrangements |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Sports Centre/Mardyke Arena |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Student Accommodation Office |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Student Health Centre |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Student Counselling & Development |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Students Union |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| UCC+ |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Library Services**

# **Introduction**

An assessment of the Library's contribution to the undergraduate and postgraduate student learning experience is a necessary part of the QI/QA assessment in an academic unit. The library and the unit should both be involved in this assessment and the following questions, prepared by the Librarian, Mr. John Fitzgerald, provides a checklist of library-related issues to be considered during the course of the review process.

Since Library services and facilities constitute a substantial element of a student’s learning experience in UCC, it is appropriate that the Library's contribution should be evaluated as part of a unit QI/QA review. The following questions deal with the elements of the services provided by the Library and on how the staff of the unit and library staff interact.

Library/Unit Liaison

* Have arrangements been made to ensure that the library is aware of the requirements of the unit?

For example:

* Has the unit nominated a member of staff to liaise with the relevant member of library staff?
* Are library staff invited to participate in course planning and research project development to identify resource implications?
* Do these arrangements work well, so that the requirements of the unit are met in good time?

For example:

* Is there advance notification by the unit, or by individual teaching staff, of recommended reading materials and other information requirements to ensure timely provision?
* What arrangements exist to facilitate communication between the Library and students, and how well do these arrangements work?

For example:

* Are there opportunities to discuss library matters at staff/student committee meetings?
* Are there opportunities for commenting on library services in student surveys or questionnaires?
* What arrangements have been made to encourage and enable students and teaching staff to make effective use of the full range of library services?

For example:

* + Does the Library provide a sufficient range of promotional and information leaflets and notices?
  + Is such information adequately available on the campus computer network?
  + Is library signposting and guiding adequate?
  + Do teaching staff promote and encourage the use of library services in lectures and seminars?

**Relevance of library provision**

* Is the provision of library and information resources (i.e. books, periodicals, CD-ROMs, networked electronic services, etc.) *appropriate* and *sufficient* for unit needs

An assessment of *appropriateness* should take account of, for example, the relevance of resources in relation to curricular changes, course developments, and the unit’s research profile; and also of the currency of resources.

An assessment of *sufficiency* should take account of provision in relation to student numbers.

Availability and accessibility of library services and facilities

* How well do the availability and location of library services correspond to the needs of students and teaching staff?
* Are they available where and when required?
* Are library facilities accessible for all categories of student?

For example: Do the hours of opening and of service meet the needs of part-time, modular degree and distance learning students?

* Is provision for reading and study activities adequate and suitable?

For example:

* Are there enough study places in relation to student numbers?
* Is there sufficient provision of computer applications?
* Is there adequate provision of specialised facilities for students with special needs?

User Support

* Is library orientation and training in library and information skills offered to, and taken up by, students and teaching staff?
* Are these facilities encouraged and promoted by the unit?
* Are reference and information services satisfactory?

For example:

* Are the opening hours of enquiry or information desks satisfactory?
* Are telephone and written enquiries responded to satisfactorily?

**Overall Comment**

Comment on the results of the questionnaires on support services from a unit perspective and from a student perspective.

Detail any suggestions for improvement of the relationship of the unit with these services, especially if the majority of staff felt the service was in the category ‘poor or fair’.

**Outcome**: The results of the Quality Reviews, insofar as they relate to library facilities and services, will be made available to the Library so that deficiencies in provision can be remedied, services improved and where necessary, the budgetary implications of such improvements identified

**Appendix J**

**SWOT Analysis**

Every unit preparing for quality review is required to prepare a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) Analysis on all of the activities of the unit. This includes an examination of the challenges facing the unit and consideration of ways to address these.

The Quality Promotion Unit has published detailed guidelines to assist units in this exercise on the QPU web site, [www.ucc.ie/quality](http://www.ucc.ie/quality). The SWOT analysis is used to inform the Self-Assessment Report and one very significant outcome is the drawing up of detailed and specific recommendations for improvement. These should be achievable and realistic and must be included in the Self-Assessment Report.

The full details of the SWOT Analysis should be included in this appendix for the information of the reviewers.

**Appendix K**

**Benchmarking Exercise**

Every unit preparing for a quality review is required to undertake a benchmarking exercise. The Quality Promotion Unit offers assistance and guidance in this process, if requested.

The purpose of this exercise is to assist the unit in looking forward and planning where improvements should be focused. It is about having realistic aspirations and expectations, drawing comparisons with national and international institutions/units with practices and examples that the unit could reasonably aspire to following in UCC.

The unit should detail the activities undertaken to conduct the benchmarking exercise, the institutions benchmarked, and the indicators that were examined in detail.

**Appendix L**

**Unit** **Strategic Plan**

Please append the Strategic Plan for the unit.

The reviewers will be sent the Strategic Plan for UCC and any information available on the operational plans for the Colleges. The unit plan should be developed in line with the University and College Strategic Plans and should seek to fulfil the ambitions of the University’s plan and mission.

If the strategic plan for the unit does not include a research plan, please include the research plan (see Appendix E).

Include any operational plans as available.

**Appendix M**

**Quality Review Peer Review Group Report**

Include a copy of the Peer Review Group Report for the previous quality review of the unit (or nearest equivalent). This will enable reviewers to assess the developments and improvements made since the review.

**Appendix N**

**QIP and Follow-up Report on previous Quality Review**

Include a copy of the QIP (Quality Improvement Plan) and the report on implementation of actions arising from the recommendations made following the previous quality review (Follow-up Report).

Indications of difficulties encountered in implementation should also be made in addition to a comment as to the reason for lack of implementation.

**Appendix O**

**Research Quality Review Report**

Please attach your complete Research Quality Review Report, including scores.

Electronic copy is available on request from QPU, if required.

**Appendix P**

**RQR Quality Improvement Plan**

Please attach your Quality Improvement Plan arising from the RQR Report.

Comment on any actions taken since the review to implement improvements.

**Appendix Q**

**Unit Co-ordinating Committee**

**Membership**

List the names of each member of the unit co-ordinating committee, starting with the chair.

# **Methodology**

Briefly describe the process followed by the unit in implementing the review process.

This should include:

* Number of meetings held by committee
* Number of meetings with other parties (e.g. Dean(s), student groups, etc.)
* Allocation of tasks to members of the committee
* How the SWOT Analysis was conducted.
* How the benchmarking exercise was completed.
* Degree of communication with staff not on the co-ordinating committee
* Sample copies of all questionnaires used to gather information

###### **Comments on Methodology & Suggestions for Improvement**

If the unit has any comments to make on the methodology for the Quality Review and/or suggestions for improvement on this guide to completion of a Self-Assessment Report please include them here for the benefit of the Quality Promotion Committee.

**Appendix R**

**Completed Staff Questionnaires**

Attach copies of all completed academic, administration and support staff questionnaires.

There is no need to append any of the student or other questionnaires completed. Please include samples of the questionnaires used to gain information from students and others from outside the unit as a guide to the Peer Review Group. The completed questionnaires should be available in the unit for the reviewers to consult during the site visit, if required.