

**Self-Assessment Report for Professional Support Areas**

Of

(Insert Name of Area here)

Date:

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# 1 Executive Summary

Guidance Note:

The guidance note shall be **around one page in length** and include the following:

* A summary of approach taken to Self-assessment in the Area
* A summary of the key issues arising from self-assessment
* A summary of the key issues arising from the SWOT analysis
* A summary of the key areas for improvement identified as a result of the process.

# 2 Introduction and Context

Guidance Note:

This section should be used to provide contextual information to assist the Peer Review Group in understanding both the structure and core activities of the Area. It is suggested that it is **around 2-3 pages in length**.

## 2.1 Area Function and Key Areas of Responsibility

Guidance note:

This section should set the scene for the Peer Review Group (PRG)

Provide a brief description of the main functions of the area and how this relates to the overall university. This should include the management areas which the area reports into and any relevant university committees under its remit.

## 2.2. Structure of the Area under Review

Guidance Note:

Key information includes,

* Include the overall function of the office and how it relates to the broader university
* Include information on the area under review in the context of the overall university structure (please provide an organisational chart of the area, and how it relates to the overall structure of the university). Include information on the key areas of responsibility of each ‘team’ within the area, if relevant.
* Where is the area physically located in the university, and what space facilities does it currently use? Are all staff situated in the same location?
* Describe how the area may have grown, developed, or changed since the last review, in particular where recent structural or organisational changes have occurred
* Information on the number of staff within the area, including a summary table with details of the staff in that area.

Sample staff information table:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Job Title** | **Years in current role** | **Years at DCU** | **Outline Responsibilities** |
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# 3 Area Approach to Self-Assessment

Guidance Note:

Summary explanation of how the Self-Assessment Report was developed and an overview of what was included. This section should aim to be **no longer than 1-2 pages in length**

Should include,

* Information on the Quality Review Committee, including the name role of each member of the committee, and identifying the Chair of the group.
* A Brief overview of the Methodology of Quality Review Committee Process, including,
* Number of meetings held by the committee
* Allocation of tasks and areas of responsibility during self-assessment
* How was the process communication to other staff in the area, or how were other staff involved in the review.

# 4 Progress Made Since the Last Review

Guidance Note:

Include here an outline of the progress and/or the developments / enhancements made in the area, and areas reporting in, where relevant. This section should aim to be **no longer than 2 pages in length**.

This section should include an indication of how the area addressed the recommendations made by the Peer Review Group Report and Quality Improvement Plan in the last quality review, and reflect on how well the recommendations were able to be addressed.

Where an area is reviewed by another process, including those relating to risk management, internal audit, and external review of operations etc. an update on progress made outlining any subsequent relevant recommendations should be included here.

# 5 Self-Reflective Analysis

*Guidance Note: This is the main body of the Self-Assessment Report. In all sections, please keep in mind that the focus should be on an assessment of the* ***efficiency and effectiveness*** *of activities, rather than a description of the activities and processes themselves.* The entirety of Section 5 should be **around 16-18 pages in length.**

## 5.1 Strategy and Planning

Guidance note:

This section should include a reflection on the ways in which the area plans and sets goals for itself, and the extent to which these goals and plans align with those of the institution, or other relevant strategic plans.

Areas for Consideration/ Questions to Address include:

* To what extent is strategic planning undertaken with the area?
* Is the current strategy or strategic statement a living document within the area? To what extent does it drive activity within the area?
* Is the current strategic plan / strategy statement sufficiently aligned with other plans in the university, and in particular the university’s strategic plan?
* Is the area sufficiently or correctly structured to deliver on its strategy, or to respond to the strategic priorities of the university?
* Is there a balance between short-term execution of planned activity and creating a longer term vision and priority plan for the area?
* How does the area plan for the development of new services / supports / processes? Is this effective?

## 5.2 Management of Resources

Guidance Note:

This section should review the effectiveness of the management of resources within the area i.e. Financial, Space, Human, Capital etc. An analysis of how the area utilises and develops its resources in order to adequately meet the challenges of delivering on its organisational responsibilities should be carried out.

Areas for Consideration / Questions to Address include:

* To what extent is the current organisational structure of the area effective in delivering its key responsibilities?
* Can you comment on the appropriateness of current available work spaces to assist in achieving the key responsibilities of the area?
* How are priorities with respect to financial budgets established? What approaches have been implemented in recent years (if any) to manage changes in allocated budget?
* How effective are the processes for planning around staff resources, including the filling of vacant posts?
* Are the processes for the allocation of tasks to teams and individuals appropriate and effective?
* To what extent are staff aware of, and avail of relevant professional development opportunities within the area?
* What factors are considered in relation to environmental and broader operational sustainability, including reducing waste (financial, environmental, energy etc.), and encouraging sustainability broadly within its activities and processes?

## 5.3 Effectiveness of Activities and Processes

Guidance Note:

This section should reflect on how the area manages the delivery of the activities and processes for which it has responsibility. The area is encouraged to provide sub-headings for various activities where appropriate.

Areas for Consideration / Questions to Address include:

* What overall assessment / reflection can be made in regard to Functions / Activities / Processes within the area?
* What systems are in place to gauge and review the quality of the processes and activities within the areas? How does the unit assure itself of meeting professional standards or quality requirements?
* What processes are in place to review and consider options for ongoing quality improvement within the area?
* How does the area measure the effectiveness of their operations based on national or international best practice? Does the area engage in benchmarking activities? If so, which institutions or metrics does it use to carry out this exercise?
* To what extent does the unit manage area or institutional risk?
* In what ways does the unit make effective use of technology or information systems to fulfil activities or processes within the area, or its interactions with other areas of the university?
* Provide a commentary on the supports provided by other areas of the university which contribute to the achievement of goals and tasks with the area under review.

## 5.4 Communication and Provision of Information

Guidance Note:

This section should include a critical analysis of the structures and processes for communication, both internally within the area under review, with the wider university community, and where appropriate, externally. It should also include an assessment of how information is generated, stored and used for the purpose of self-monitoring, planning or as a tool for enhanced processes.

Areas for Consideration / Questions to Address include:

* A review of communication structures within the area, the university and (where relevant) externally
* A reflection on how the views of staff and other stakeholders are included in the planning and decision-making process
* A review of how the current communication structures and methods keep staff informed on information within the area, and other relevant information from the university
* A reflection of the provision of information to key internal and external stakeholders
* A review of the extent to which area staff participates in university fora and decision-making committees
* In what ways does the area keep abreast of national or international best practice in their professional area?

## 5.5 Ongoing Quality Enhancement

Guidance Note:

This section should include an analysis of the ways in which a culture of quality improvement and enhancement is embedded within the area. It should include a discussion on ways in which quality is recognised and acknowledged within the area as well as the ways in which quality enhancement is supported within the unit.

Areas for Consideration / Questions to Address include:

* Information on recognition for excellence in quality within the area, including internal or external awards (e.g. President’s Award nominations and award winners, Industry Awards etc.)
* Applications and Awards to Quality Improvement Funding calls
* Methods used to identify areas or aspects of the work within an area which should be prioritised for improvement
* Does the area have a method of routinely setting targets / goals for improvement in the performance of its predictors and perception measures of user satisfaction, and has it established the relevance of its measures and targets?

## 5.6 External Perspectives

Guidance Note:

This area of the report should focus on self-reflection based on feedback received during the SAR from areas external to the area under review. In particular, this should include a reflection on feedback received from students and other internal stakeholders on the effectiveness of how the unit completes its organisational remit. Where possible, it should also include a reflection on the views and feedback from key external stakeholders- suppliers, collaborators, external clients, and other key external relationships. Areas are encouraged to use research and information gathered as part of self-assessment to inform this section of the report.

# 6 SWOT Analysis

Guidance Note:

This section should outline an area level SWOT analysis. Guidance on conducting a SWOT analysis is available from the Quality Promotion Office. It is recommended that the SWOT be **no longer than one page in length**

Sample Table below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Strengths | Weaknesses |
| * Add content here
* Add content here
* Add content here
 | * Add content here
* Add content here
* Add content here
 |
| Opportunities | Threats |
| * Add content here
* Add content here
* Add content here
 | * Add content here
* Add content here
* Add content here
 |

7 Summary of Identified Areas for Improvement

Guidance Note:

This section should build on the SWOT table, and also include an overall analysis of the area’s activities. Strengths should be emphasised, responses to weaknesses and opportunities considered and challenges discussed.

Information from previous Audit reports or Risk registers should be utilised to inform this section as well as providing material for self-reflection.

Since the goal of this overall process is quality improvement and enhancement, it is very important that the formulation of strategies / recommendations for improving the work of the area in the future should also be highlighted in this section. In this section you may consider using a set of bullet points to suggest, in light of self-assessment, some key areas where you believe the Peer Review Group could provide the area with advice and possible recommendations for future improvement.

This may include:

* Questions which the area would like the PRG to consider during their review of Self-Assessment materials and during the PRG visit
* Requests for input and advice from the PRG in relation to specific identified issues
* Proposals for improvement within the area as a result of self-assessment, which may be ratified by the PRG.

It is recommended that this section be **no longer than 2-3 pages in length**

Appendices

*Guidance Note: If large (more than 30 pages) the appendices should be submitted as a separate document, or submitted digitally to the Peer Review Group on a USB drive, as appropriate.*

*Material for Appendices may include:*

|  |
| --- |
| Professional Support Area- Data for Inclusion in Appendices |
| Staff Information | Information on Staff* Staff Number Profile- Trend information- 5 years if available (including anonymised summary data on grades/ seniority, gender, age profile)
* Information on accolades received by Area staff in the last 5 years, including external awards, President’s Awards
* Area organisational structure chart and DCU organisational structure chart
 |
| Policies | Copies of relevant policies and strategies including,* Current area strategy statement, or strategic plan
* Benchmarking information, or other performance indicator information
* Relevant operational policies for the area, which may have been referenced in the SAR
* Information on current schedule of area team meetings/ committee structures
 |
| Facilities/ Resources | * Budgetary information for last 5 years, including pay and non-pay costs
* Information on teaching, lab, office space allocated to area under review
* List of equipment (if relevant) and lifecycle/ date of purchase
 |
| Self-Assessment Research | Survey and other SAR research methodology* Questionnaires
* Statistics
* Focus-Group protocols
* Full results of Surveys, Focus groups, interviews, Away Days
 |
| Information on Other Assurance Activities | * Internal Audit reports of the Area
* Risk Register reports for the area
* Other reports or reviews undertaken by the Area or a third party
* Summary findings / recommendations from previous quality reviews
* Information on relevant procedural manuals or key standard operating procedures
* Information relating to the structure and size of similar Areas/ Units in other benchmark universities.
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