

-Quality Assurance / Quality Improvement  
Programme for Faculties  
2007-2008



Quality Improvement Plan

Faculty of Business

*October 2008*

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The Faculty very much appreciated the work of the Peer Review Group and found the experience to be a positive one. The Faculty was given an opportunity to consider the Peer Review Report before spending an afternoon reflecting on the recommendations in the report. Six groups reported back to the Faculty on how best to respond to each of the P1 (F) and P2 (F) recommendations and these are reflected in the final report. The Faculty is engaged in the process of developing a new strategic plan for the period 2009-2013. The Peer Review recommendations are an essential input to this process.

The Quality Improvement Committee developed draft responses to the Peer Review Group's recommendations. The draft Quality Improvement Plan was circulated to the Faculty for comment. The Management Board took responsibility for the final document.

The Peer Review Group made a total of 27 recommendations under the following headings.

- Organization and management (3)
- Functions, activities and processes (7)
- Customer Perspective (3)
- Staff perspective (8)
- Management of Resources (6)

Each recommendation was given a priority score between 1 and 3.

This Quality Improvement Plan was finalised in a meeting on 29 October 2008 between representatives of the

Business School (Professor Bernard Pierce, Dean and Dr Anne Sinnott, Chair of Coordination Committee)

Senior Management (Professor Anne Scott, Deputy President)

Peer Group (Dr Anne Morrissey, Rapporteur, Professor Charles McCorkell)

Director of Quality Promotion (Dr Heinz Lechleiter, chairing)

**2. RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE PEER REVIEW  
GROUP REPORT**

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## **2 Recommendations for Improvement for SCHOOL/UNIT/CENTRE**

The following notation is used in the recommendations for improvement.

**P1: A recommendation that is important *and* requires urgent action.**

**P2: A recommendation that is important, but can (or perhaps must) be addressed on a more extended time scale.**

**P3: A recommendation which merits serious consideration but which is not considered to be critical to the quality of the ongoing activities in the Unit.**

**Additionally, the PRG indicate the level(s) of the University where action is required:**

**U: University Executive/Senior Management**

**S/F: School and/or Faculty**

## 2. Specific Responses to Recommendations of the Peer Review Group Report

### 2.1 Organisation and Management of the Faculty

	<b>Addressee</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>PRG Recommendation</b>	<b>Response</b>
1	F	P1	The school should undertake an administrative review in order to realign administrative support and to free up time for academics to undertake research and programme development. In particular this review should look at the need for a higher level of administrative positions and the need to change the job description of the programme chairs.	It is intended to initiate this administrative review, to be led by external facilitators, in November 2008. The review will include: A scoping of tasks, roles, and responsibilities and the alignment of workloads and time schedules A review of administrative best practice in university environments with the aim of producing a new administrative model A set of metrics against which performance improvement can be assessed. All stages will include consultation and feedback. This recommendation is linked to recommendations 17, 19, 26.
2	F	P2	The university and school should consider strengthening senior management at Faculty level, possibly by the appointment of a deputy Dean. This would free up the Dean to develop strategic external relationships and progress the international accreditation process.	The possible role of a Deputy Dean is under active consideration by the Faculty Management Board.
3	F	P3	The school should continue to build on the good practice observed	This will form part of the terms of reference for the

	Addressee	Priority	PRG Recommendation	Response
			in the CEP	review referred to in 1 above

### 2.1.2 Functions activities and processes

	Addressee	Priority	PRG Recommendation	Response
4	F	P1	The school should develop an overarching research strategy with overall school targets and research plan. This research strategy should relate to a staff development plan and linked to the PMDS process. The research strategy should also consider the need for dedicated physical research space, the ultimate aim being a dedicated wing of the building.	An overarching research strategy is being developed as part of the current strategic planning process. A new Associate Dean for Research has been appointed, as of 1 <sup>st</sup> September 2008. The ADR (Professor David Jacobson) will meet with every member of faculty in DCUBS to discuss his/her plans for research, and in particular research output, over the next period (up to three years). These plans are being developed with two clear strategic elements in mind. Firstly, the aim is to work to our strengths and associate, where appropriate, the research of individuals with that of existing research centres. Secondly, given the inevitability of an output-

	Addressee	Priority	PRG Recommendation	Response
				based funding system within the University – and perhaps nationally – such elements of an output-based system as funding and publications will be emphasised. See also response to recommendation 27
5	F	P1	The school should develop a comprehensive teaching and learning assessment strategy to enhance student participation and learning.	This is to be undertaken by the Teaching & Learning committee which will report on the new strategy in December 2008
6	F	P2	A number of post Doctoral fellows should be appointed	Within LInK, two externally funded post-doctoral fellows have been appointed. Additionally, a faculty-wide post-doc scheme is being considered.
7	F	P2	The school should undertake a thorough benchmarking exercise to establish the nature of the capacity gaps between the present and the future accreditation requirements. This benchmarking exercise should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Research output,</li> <li>- Internationalisation</li> <li>- Corporate engagement</li> <li>- School autonomy</li> </ul>	The Faculty sees this as a high priority item and is committed to undertaking a benchmarking exercise as specified. This will commence in January 2009
8	F	P3	The school should consider ways of addressing issues around student representation and expectation, e.g. in relation to induction, INTRA placement, careers etc. The importance of each years results for their future careers should also be explained to	This has been achieved with a review of induction booklets, an improved BEST first year induction programme and a redesigned general induction organised by Student Affairs. A DCUBS Student Council

	Addressee	Priority	PRG Recommendation	Response
			students	has been established.
9	F	P3	The School should include an international element in its modules with a view to enhancing its international strategy.	All modules within DCU will be re-written in semester two of this academic year to reflect a learning outcomes orientation. DCUBS will take this opportunity to ensure that all module descriptors make explicit their international focus.
10	F	P3	The school should examine the practice of mixing student groups across programmes and years, as there was some evidence that this was not always successful.	We will examine this issue in the context of both AFI and resource limitations.

### 2.1.3 Customer Perspective

	Addressee	Priority	PRG Recommendation	Response
11	F	P2	The school needs to enhance its strategies relating to Employer engagement, e.g. using placement contacts / employer forums	We have begun the process of setting up Employer forums and two of these have already met.
12	F	P2	The school should appoint an advisory board, including	It is intended to implement this in the coming year.

	Addressee	Priority	PRG Recommendation	Response
			international participation.	
13	F	P2	The school should consider ways of improving its profile in the marketplace in order to achieve the recognition it deserves	A marketing working group has been established. Its remit is to complement the work of the DCUBS marketing officer. One and a half posts are now dedicated to marketing.

### 2.1.4 Staff perspective

	Addressee	Priority	PRG Recommendation	Response
14	F	P1	The PMDS process to be conducted annually, within a short designated timeframe and with 100 per cent participation	The next round of PMDS reviews will be completed by the end of December 08 and will be conducted on an annual basis thereafter.
15	U	P1	The University should consider a benchmarking approach to the promotion of academic staff	The Academic Promotions Committee (APC) has undertaken a thorough review of its promotion processes and procedures within the context of the Irish university sector, using 3UK universities, including Queen's University Belfast, as comparators. On the basis of both this analysis and the input from two senior academic external members of APC involved in our Senior Lecturer promotions competition (2007 and 2008), the DCU processes and procedures were deemed to compare very favourable to those of our peer institutions. However as we continue to review and refine our approach APC has examined criterion based promotion processes used elsewhere and has also consulted with the senior academics responsible for implementing this type of approach. The Report on Analysis of Research exercise by Dutch group xxx_is due before December may help to inform DCU in regard to appropriate benchmarks. The university will continue to

	Addressee	Priority	PRG Recommendation	Response
				build out descriptions for the areas of Teaching & Learning and community involvement. This work is ongoing but has to be seen in the context of external developments.
16	U	P1	The University should consider introducing a promotional scheme for administrative staff similar to that for academic staff.	The University does not have a 'promotional scheme' for individual administrative staff. It does however have a policy of internal promotion for certain grades within the administration groups. In general roles within DCU are driven by specific business needs of the school / unit in question. We believe that open competition is the best and fairest method of achieving promotion for all administrative staff. DCU also has a very positive track record in supporting staff in terms of further education, training and development.
17	U	P1	The School should further increase the administrative support for research within the school.	F: The Faculty has allocated an extra half post for research administrative support. The Faculty also intends to prepare a formal request to Budget Committee. U: University management would suggest that the Associate Dean of Research work closely with colleagues during the development stages of research proposals to ensure that administration support is adequately costed into any research proposal being submitted from DCUBS to external funding bodies. Full Economic Costing will

	Addressee	Priority	PRG Recommendation	Response
				partially address this issue if it is applied. The growth of critical mass through coordinated research centres also facilitates a more targeted administrative support structure. Advice should also be sought from OVPR in relation to capacity building.
18	F	P2	A tighter control must be maintained in relation to the numbers and quality of adjunct faculty with the goal being to recruit more full time academic staff.	We will develop an academic staff recruitment plan in order to address the high student to full-time staff ratio
19	F	P2	The School should conduct a review of the job description of academic staff particularly in relation to the division between academic and administrative work.	To the extent that the Faculty has control over this it will be addressed as part of the response to recommendation 1.
20	F	P2	The School should implement more timely recruitment of staff in line with its approved strategic plan.	This has been achieved in the case of all new permanent and contract staff.
21	F	P2	The school should consider ways of enhancing the clearly and successful open and collegiate atmosphere by developing a strengthened shared understanding of school priorities.	Particular emphasis will be given to clarifying these issues during the series of school meetings and workshops which will take place as part of the process of finalising our new strategic plan

2.1.5 Management of resources

	Addressee	Priority	PRG Recommendation	Response
22	U	P1	The university management should consider amending the Resource allocation model to support the school's ambitious plans. In particular the next Strategic Plan for the School will need to be supported by at least an indicative budget for 3 years so that the School can plan with some certainty.	<p>It is unclear from the PGR Recommendation as to how the internal resource allocation model fails to support the ambitious plans of the School e.g. the approaches and support from the University to build the original Business School building and the subsequent extension in 2007. Also the support the University has given to the Executive Education concept both as a limited company and a unit within the School has been very flexible. The University is funded on an annual basis by the HEA both for undergraduate fees and for a grant per student. There is no certainty from year to year as to what the amounts for each will be, consequently it is virtually impossible for the University to plan financially for the medium to long term. The funding of Irish Universities is a closed system; each university is affected by expansion/contraction in other universities. This is also the case within DCU, expansion/contraction in one Faculty will affect all Faculties. The only certainty, to date, is that a Faculty's funding will not decrease in the short term.</p> <p>The issue will be kept under continuing review.</p>

	Addressee	Priority	PRG Recommendation	Response
23	U	P1	The university needs to address the staff:student ratio, which currently inhibits successful accreditation	<p>F: The Faculty intends to prepare a formal proposal on academic staff recruitment.</p> <p>U: Under the current system of funding and within the current and foreseeable economic climate it is unlikely that this will be possible in terms of additional permanent posts. However the faculty in consultation with the University may be able clarify and benchmark staff – student ratios, and to identify possible models for progressing this matter, and will receive all possible support from university management in this regard.</p>
24	U	P1	The University should continue to invest in the development of research at the school level	<p>The university supports the development of research within the Business School in various ways. Each year an allocation of funding specifically for research is made to the School, based on research activity measures. Other schemes are open on a competitive basis such as Conference Support: Visiting Fellowships: DCU Research Fellowship: Equipment maintenance: Facilities enhancement etc</p> <p>The university will continue to support initiatives which enhance coordination of research within the school and which further build critical mass. Furthermore, building</p>

	Addressee	Priority	PRG Recommendation	Response
				<p>synergistic relationships between business school researchers and others in DCU's science and technology sectors will be supported.</p> <p>During 2007 the university supported the strategic link of the LInK research centre with other institutions across the country, in its successful submission to Cycle 4 of the Programme for Research in Third Level Institutions (PRTL I) run by the HEA. In its recent 2009 submission to PRTL I Cycle 5, the university has again included LInK in terms of further building strategic collaborations nationally.</p>
25	F	P1	The School should be more proactive in applying for internal and external research funding	This will be emphasised in our next strategic plan which will also include relevant metrics
26	F	P1	The school should review its programme management and seek to combine Programme Boards in a way which reduces the admin burden on such a large number of staff. This would free up some staff resource to focus on research, which many had expressed a desire for.	This will be dealt with as part of the implementation of recommendation 1
27	F	P2	Dedicated space for LInK	This is accepted as a priority but can not be fully solved due to space constraints. The re-configuration of

	Addressee	Priority	PRG Recommendation	Response
				existing space will address this as for as possible by March 2009.

### **3. SUMMARY OF THE ONE-YEAR PLAN**

#### **Organisation and Management of the Faculty**

The Faculty will initiate an administrative review with a particular emphasis on programme management. The review will be overseen by the Faculty Management Board and will commence in October 2008. In consultation with the DCUBS Management Board and informed by the recommended benchmarking exercise, the Dean will prepare academic and administrative staff projections for the next three years.

The DCUBS Management Board will actively seek ways to better utilise existing space and attain additional space in order to provide the recommended facilities for LInK and also address the growing needs of its other research centres and clusters.

#### **Functions activities and processes**

An overarching research strategy with associated metrics is being developed as part of the current strategic planning process. This will be led by the Associate Dean for Research in consultation with the DCUBS Research Committee and will be completed by March 2009. The Associate Dean for Teaching & Learning will lead the development of a comprehensive teaching and learning assessment strategy in consultation with the DCUBS Teaching & Learning Committee. This will be completed in January 2009

#### **Customer Perspective**

The Faculty is actively engaging with all of its stakeholders. Programme Directors have begun the process of forming employer forums and this will be rolled out to other programmes during the current academic year. An extra half post has already been allocated to strengthen the marketing function of the Faculty.

#### **Staff perspective**

The next round of PMDS reviews will be completed in the coming months. An academic staff recruitment plan focused on addressing the high student staff ratio will be developed in the current academic year.

#### **Management of resources**

The Faculty will be proactive in seeking both internal and external funding. The Faculty Research Committee will employ the expertise of successful candidates to coach others. This will commence in September 2008.

**4. SUMMARY OF THE THREE-YEAR PLAN**

**Organisation and Management of the Faculty**

The recommendations of the administrative review will be implemented for the academic year 2009/2010. overseen by the Management Board.

The outcome of the benchmarking exercise will be used as the basis for proceeding with an international accreditation plan.

**Functions, activities and processes**

The DCUBS Strategic Plan 2009-2013 will be implemented based on relevant metrics for all functions, activities and processes within the Faculty. Within the three year period we will be undertaking our mid plan review and update. This will be overseen by the DCUBS Management Board.

**Customer Perspective**

We will have a stakeholder management strategy with assigned responsibilities within the three year period.

**Staff perspective**

A reorganisation of administrative functions and of programme management will have relieved academic staff of some of the administrative tasks which currently take up so much time. The extra time will be invested in improving research output and in enhancing student learning.

**Management of resources**

The Faculty will continue to grow its non-public sources of revenue, in line with specific targets set out in its strategic plan.

A proposal for extension of the Faculty's physical facilities will be formulated.

## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX 1**

#### **1. Unit Quality Committee (for the Self-Assessment Report)**

##### **DCUBS Quality Steering Committee**

Jonathan Begg (Administration Team)  
Paul Davis (MIS Group)  
Joanne Lynch (Marketing Group)  
Claire Kearney (Economics, Finance & Entrepreneurship Group)  
Ruth Mattimoe (Accounting Group)  
Kathy Monks HRM Group and LInK)  
Bernadette McCulloch (Centre for Executive Programmes)  
Anne Sinnott (Chair)

#### **2. Peer Review Group**

Professor James J. Ward, NUI Galway (Chair)  
Mr. John Weldon, Middlesex University Business School, London  
Ms. Louise Desmond, Financial Regulator  
Professor Charles McCorkell, Dublin City University  
Dr. Anne Morrissey, Dublin City University (Internal Rapporteur)

#### **3. Unit Quality Committee (for the Quality Improvement Plan)**

Jonathan Begg (Administration Team)  
Paul Davis (MIS Group)  
Joanne Lynch (Marketing Group)  
Claire Kearney (Economics, Finance & Entrepreneurship Group)  
Ruth Mattimoe (Accounting Group)  
Kathy Monks HRM Group and LInK)  
Bernadette McCulloch (Centre for Executive Programmes)  
Anne Sinnott (Chair)

##### **And**

##### **Management Board**

Prof. Bernard Pierce (Dean)  
Prof David Jacobson (Associate Dean, Research)  
Dr Anne Sinnott (Associate Dean, Teaching & Learning)  
Prof. Brian Leavy (Director, CEP and Group Head, MIS)  
Ms Ursula Baxter (School Manager)  
Prof Patrick Flood (Group Head, HRM)  
Mr Tony Foley (Group Head, Economics, Finance & Entrepreneurship)  
Dr Michael Gannon (Group Head, Marketing)  
Dr Barbara Flood (Group Head, Accounting)