Quality Assurance / Quality Improvement Programme for Academic Units

2007-2008

Peer Review Group Report for Faculty of Business

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6th to 8th March 2008

Introduction

This Quality review has been conducted in accordance with a framework model developed and agreed through the Irish Universities Association Quality Committee (formerly CHIU – IUQSC) and complies with the provisions of Section 35 of the Universities Act (1997). The model consists of a number of basic steps.

1. An internal team in the Unit being reviewed completes a detailed self-assessment report (SAR). It should be noted that this document is confidential to the Unit and to the Review Panel and to senior officers of the University.
2. This report is sent to a team of peer assessors, the Peer Review Group (PRG) – composed of members from outside DCU and from other areas of DCU – who then visit the Unit and conduct discussions with a range of staff, students and other stakeholders.
3. The PRG then writes its own report. The Unit is given the chance to correct possible factual errors before the Peer Group Report (PGR) is finalised.
4. The Unit produces a draft Quality Improvement Plan (QuIP) in response to the various issues and findings of the SAR and PGR Reports.
5. The PGR and the Unit draft QuIP are considered by the Quality Promotion Committee.
6. The draft QuIP is discussed in a meeting between the Unit, members of the Peer Group, the Director of Quality Promotion and Senior Management. The University's responses are written into the QuIP, and the result is the finalised QuIP.
7. A summary of the PRG Report, the QuIP and the Executive Response is sent to the Governing Authority of the University, who will approve publication in a manner that they see fit.

   This document is the report referred to in Step 3 above, and it is produced in accordance with the template for Peer Group Review report for faculty reviews.

1. The Unit

Location of the Unit

DCU Business School encompasses the Faculty of Business at Dublin City University and comprises five Academic Groups: Accounting; Economics, Finance & Entrepreneurship; HRM & Organisational Psychology; Management & IS; and Marketing. The terms Faculty and School tend to be used interchangeably by DCUBS. The faculty is also host to one University Designated Research Centre (UDRC) and a number of research clusters at various stages of development.

DCUBS Centre for Executive Programmes (CEP) operates as an integral part of the DCU Business School and was established by Dublin City University Business School to provide accredited programmes and short courses to business professionals at various stages of their careers. CEP provides a dedicated service to clients, both organisations and individuals, in the public and private sectors.

DCUBS is unusual within DCU in that it is both a school and a faculty. The three other faculties have both a faculty and school structure with schools having their own administration and budget holding Heads of School. DCUBS has discussed the option of this approach but to date has decided to retain the academic group structure. Figure 1 shows the overall structure.

DCUBS is located in a three-storey building with a total student seating capacity of 1,447 consisting of 11-tiered lecture theatres, and 16 flat classrooms. There are 4 computer laboratories accommodating a total of 95 students. There are 91 staff offices. The total area is approximately 3,600 sq meters.
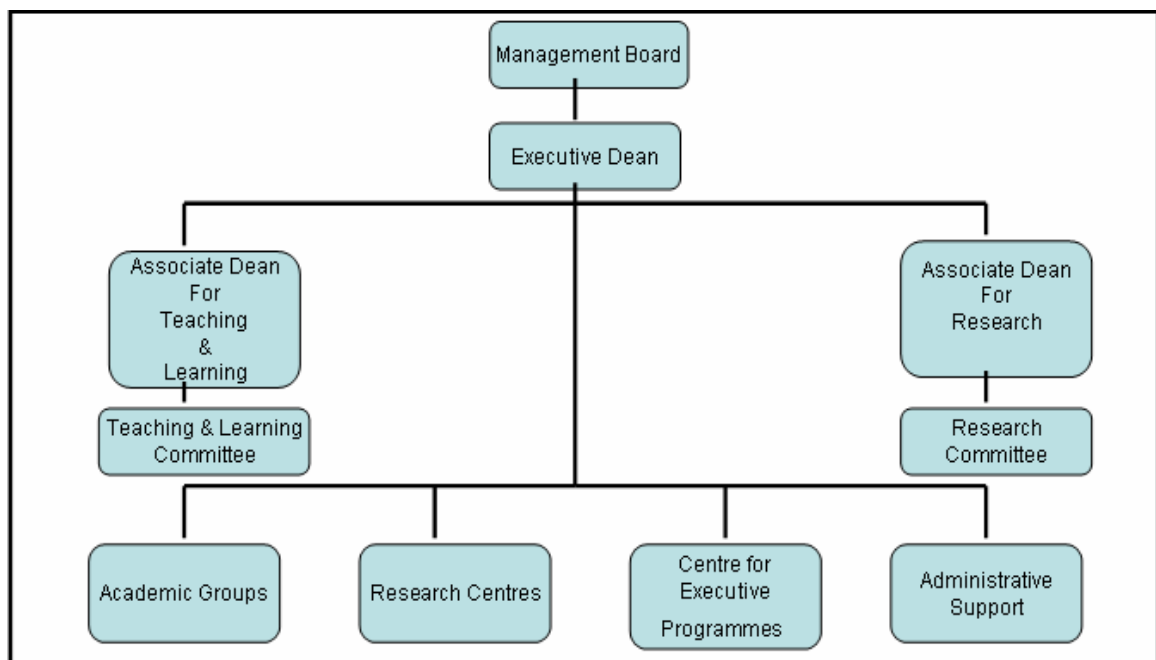

Figure 1: Overall faculty structure

Staff

	Permanent			Temporary/Adjunct		
	F/T	P/T (FTEs)	Total	F/T	P/T (people)	Total
Academic:						
Professor	8		8			
Assoc. professor	1		1			
Senior lecturer	8		8			
Lecturer above bar	27		27	3		3
Lecturer below bar	4	2	6	10	64	74
	48	**2**	**50**	**13**	**64**	**77**
Administrative:						
Administrator II	2		2			
Senior Admin Ass.	1		1			
Admin Ass.	3		3	1		1
Sec. III	3	1.5	4.5	1		1
Sec. II	2		2	1		1
	11	**1.5**	**12.5**	**3**		**3**

Table 1: Staff at 30 September 2007

	2000	2005	2006	2007
Academic:				
Professor	5	3	3	8
Associate Professor	0	3	3	1
Senior Lecturer	8	9	10	8
Lecturer	20	25	26	33
Totals	**33**	40	42	50
Administrative:	5	8.5	8.5	12.5
Total permanent staff	**38**	**48.5**	**50.5**	**62.5**

Table 2: Change in permanent staff numbers

Product / Processes

DCUBS, (which includes CEP), is responsible for design, delivery and management of undergraduate and postgraduate business education and training and the promotion and management of research in the School. On the **teaching** side, there are 15 programmes at undergraduate level, catering for 1663 students. There are 8 full time postgraduate taught masters programmes and 15 post experience taught masters programmes, with 320 students and 467 students enrolled respectively. In addition, 845 students are enrolled on non-accredited programmes on post experience programmes. On the **research** front, there are currently 29 students enrolled on full time PhD programmes, including

15 students on faculty-funded scholarships. There are a further 18 students enrolled on the PhD programme part time and 24 students on the new DBA programme. In addition, there are 5 students enrolled on a part time research Masters programme. There are a number of research clusters, including one university designated research centres, LInK as well as four emerging clusters: Cluster for Research on Student Learning & Teaching, the Edgeworth Centre for Financial Mathematics, the Enterprise Process Research Centre and the Centre for Consumption Studies. Research is facilitated through: mentoring by senior staff of junior researchers including joint publication; the provision of research funding for travel to conferences; payment of PhD fees for academic staff; involvement in research centre activity. A research committee, headed by the Associate Dean and including representatives of each academic group, develops and monitors research strategy and policy within the faculty.

2.   The Self-Assessment Process

The Co-ordinating Committee

Dr. Anne Sinnott, Chair
Mr. Jonathan Begg, Administration
Mr. Paul Davis, Management & Information Systems Group
Ms Claire Kearney, Economics, Finance & Entrepreneurship Group
Ms Joanne Lynch, Marketing Group
Dr. Ruth Mattimoe, Accounting Group
Ms. Bernadette McCulloch, Centre for Executive Programmes
Professor Kathy Monks, HRM & Organisational Behaviour Group / LInK

Methodology Adopted

DCUBS, LInK and CEP were each due for separate quality reviews in 2008. Since DCUBS is both interdisciplinary and integrated, the school felt that a single review would provide a better and more comprehensive overview of the Faculty. A quality Steering Committee was formed in October 2007 with membership from each academic group, the administration team, LInK and CEP, with the membership shown above. The committee met on a weekly basis. Information on all aspects of the assessment was gathered and located centrally on Moodle, the DCU Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). The committee developed a staff questionnaire and arranged focus groups during December 2007 for each of the following units identified in Table 3.

Administration Team	CEP
MIS Group	LInK
Marketing Group	Wider University Stakeholders
Economics, Finance & Entrepreneurship Group	Alumni
	Undergraduate Students
Accounting Group	Postgraduate Students
HRM Group	Research Students

Table 3: Focus Groups

The self-assessment report did not contain any detail on the assignment of tasks to group members. However, this information was contained in separate folders, available to the PGR group during our visit.

3.   The Peer Review Group Process

The Review Group

Professor James J. Ward, Department of Marketing, NUI Galway (Chair)
Mr. John Weldon, Associate Dean, Learning and Quality Enhancement, Middlesex
    University Business School, London
Ms. Louise Desmond, Bank Examiner, Financial Regulator
Professor Charles McCorkell, Senior Academic, Engineering and Computing,
    Dublin City University
Dr. Anne Morrissey, Oscail, Dublin City University (Internal Rapporteur)

Site Visit Programme

Day 1 (Wednesday) 5th March 2008)
14.00 – 15.30 Meeting of members of the Peer Review Group, Briefing by Acting
                       Director of Quality Promotion
15.30 – 17.45 Meeting with Dean and Quality Steering Committee
20.00   Dinner for PRG, members of the Quality Co-ordinating committee,
                       Dean of Faculty and acting Director of Quality Promotion

Day 2 (Thursday, 6th March 2008)
09.00 – 09.45 Meeting with DCUBS Management Board
09.45 – 10.30 Teaching & Learning Committee.
10.30 – 11.00 Research Committee.
11.00 – 11.15 Coffee Break
11.15 – 12.30 Administration Team **(parallel session)**
11.15 – 12.30 CEP **(parallel session)**
12.30 – 13.15 Working Lunch
The afternoon consisted of meetings with various stakeholders:
13.30 – 14.30 Staff Representatives.
14.30 – 15.00 Tour of Campus and coffee break
15.00 – 16.00 Undergraduate Students
16.00 – 16.30 Alumni & Recent Graduates
16.30 – 17.00 Postgraduate Students
17.00 – 17.30 Employers

19.30 Working private dinner for members of the Peer Review Group

Day 3 (Friday, 7th March 2008)
09.00 – 10.00 Discussion of previous work, preparation of PGR report
10.00 – 11.00 Meeting with University Senior Management Group
11.00 – 12.00 Meeting with LInK representatives
12.00 – 12.30 Meeting with University Stakeholders
12.30 – 13.30 Meeting Dean of Faculty.
13.30 – 14.00 Lunch
14.00 – 16.00 Preparation of 1st draft of final report and Exit Presentation
16.30 – 17.15 Exit Presentation to all staff of the faculty

Methodology
The self-assessment report was received a month in advance of the visit by all
members of the PRG. The acting director of Quality Promotion gave the group an
initial briefing on the peer review process, with timelines, and an indication of the
roles and responsibilities of the group, which was very useful. She was also
available for advice during the visit. Professor James Ward agreed to assume the

role of Chair of the PRG at our initial meeting. In the preparation of the final report, it was decided to allocate responsibility for the various sections of the report as follows:

Background and context	All
Organisation and Management	Dr. Anne Morrissey
Functions, Activities and Processes	Mr. John Weldon
Customer Perspective	Professor Charles McCorkell
Staff Perspective	Ms. Louise Desmond
Management of Resources	Professor Jim Ward

Schedule of Activity

With the exception of two parallel meetings, as indicated above, the PRG attended all of the meetings together. The timetable was very full, but did allow sufficient time for the review. The PRG was very impressed with the enthusiasm of the student and staff groups, who answered all questions fully and completely. Additional information that had not been included in the SAR or in the ancillary folders was immediately forthcoming on request. The meetings with the university stakeholders was held late on Day 3, but some interesting issues were raised and the PRG were of the view that it would have been more useful if this meeting had been scheduled for Day 1, With the exception of the meeting with the faculty research committee, all meetings were very well attended with large representation of the stakeholder group. The PRG noted the absence of the Associate Dean for Research.

View of the Self-Assessment Report

In general, the PRG group was satisfied with the content of the report, which was well presented. The group appreciated the amount of time and effort put in by the staff involved in the preparation of the report. However, there were a number of omissions we would have expected to have been included. For example:

- The report was more descriptive and less analytical than we would have expected. In section 4, for example, we would have liked more analysis on the quality of the student entering the school (e.g. the CAO points and trends, progression and achievement rates), retention rates, and the quality of the graduates leaving the school.
- The inclusion of some anecdotal evidence from student feedback would have helped confirm more effectively successful teaching methods and a positive student experience.
- The presentation of research lacked detail and because of the significant role of LInK in the document, did not give due credit to the diversity of research that is being undertaken in the school. The lack of detail is exemplified by the content of section 4.2, where it would have been informative if a matrix of the performance of the research clusters (number of staff, number and quality of publications etc), with more analysis on research outputs had been included.
- The inclusion of some financial information would have helped the review group to better understand the context in which the school was operating. We would suggest that the Quality Office should make this a formal requirement for future SARs.

4. Findings of the Review Group

Background and Context

It is 8 years since the last review, which is perhaps too long for us to provide a detailed comment on the developments over the entire period. In the first half of the period, there were considerable organisational and staffing changes, with three changes of deanship in just 4 years. While significant developments

continued to take place in the school's teaching, research and quality assurance activities over the 2002-2004 period, including the restructuring of the MBA and its accreditation by AMBA, in the light of the discontinuities in strategy and structure, the focus of the self-assessment was on the period 2004-2008. The PRG agreed that it was legitimate to concentrate on the period 2004 to 2008. Since 2004, there has been a significant increase in the number of programmes, which has placed considerable pressure on staff, but which the school has handled adequately.

Since its early development, the SAR indicates that the Guiding Principles of the School are to be:

- Student-focused in its orientation
- Professional, collegial and interdisciplinary in its operation
- Open, innovative and international in its outlook
- Research-oriented and supportive of a strong PhD research community
- Dedicated to the pursuit of excellence and innovation in its teaching.
- Industry-focused

However, from discussions with staff, there appears to be some confusion over the priority of the above guiding principles, particularly when members of academic staff wish to apply for promotion. This finding will be described in more detail later.

Leading up to this review, the school is updating its 2006–2008 Strategic Plan, which will be finalised following this Peer Review. The DCUBS current strategy 2006–2008 Building International Reputation was developed during 2005 to dovetail the DCU strategic Plan 2006-2008 *Leadership through Foresight* that explains the short time span of the DCUBS strategic plan. The key elements of the DCUBS strategic plan include strategies on Programmes, Learning and Innovation, Research and External stakeholders. These areas were explored in detail in the SAR.

Nationally, DCUBS is well established as a business school of premier quality. The School's strategic intent is to progress beyond this to become a widely recognised, premier quality business school within Europe. By building on its reputation, the school intends to make innovation its signature theme – both as an innovative business school, in its approach to the core mission of teaching and research, and as a school with recognized expertise in the management of innovation at organizational, sectoral, national and international levels.

The five sections that follow are structured in the same way, with an outline of the findings in the first section, followed by separate sections on the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges of each area. A set of recommendations is contained in Section Five of this report.

Organisation and Management

Overview

The organisation of the Faculty is shown in Figure 1 above. The **Executive Dean** is the Chief Executive Officer of DCUBS and is appointed for a 5-year term. The current Dean, Prof. Bernard Pierce, was appointed in 2004 and is the principal decision maker in the School, with support from and in consultation with the School's Management Board. The Dean is also responsible for the management and expenditure of all budgets and resources within the School.

Following wide consultation, the academic staff of DCUBS have agreed to maintain the group structure rather than adopt a school structure as would be the norm elsewhere. Each **Academic Group** is led by a Head of Group who provides leadership and coordination for academic activities within the Group, including staff mentoring and planning and workload allocation. The Head of Group is an ex officio member of the DCUBS Management Board and is normally at the level of Senior Lecturer or Professor and is appointed for 3 years following an election.

Two **Associate Deans** are appointed within DCUBS, an Associate Dean for Research, and an Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning. There is also an Academic Director of the Centre for Executive Programmes. Reporting to the Dean, the Associate Deans support the Dean in a range of areas and represent the Dean and/or DCUBS when necessary. Associate Deans are appointed for a 3-year term, renewable for a further 3 years. The PGR group was disappointed not to have met the Associate Dean for Research, who was unavailable.

The DCUBS Management Board supports the Executive Dean in the management of the School. Membership of this Board consists of the Executive Dean (Chair), Heads of Groups, the two Associate Deans, the Academic Director of the Centre for Executive Programmes (CEP) and the Administration Manager. The Management Board is responsible for developing and overseeing DCUBS policy, strategy and resourcing. The Management Board normally meets eleven times per year. The DCUBS Management Board is assisted in the management of teaching and learning activities and developments in the School by the **DCUBS Teaching and Learning Committee** and in the management of research activities and developments in the School by the **DCUBS Research Committee**. Both committees meet at least five times per year.

Every programme in DCUBS is managed by a **Programme Board,** chaired by the Programme Chair/Director. While the function of the board is to deal with all academic issues relating to the programme, the job description of the Programme Chair contains a large element of administrative duties and they can spend a lot of time sorting out routine time matters, such as time tabling problems. Tasks such as these should be carried out centrally by the administrative support.

The DCUBS **Administration team** functions as an integrated group under the management of the Administration Manager. Administrative staff are allocated to four different offices. The School Office provides support for all undergraduate and full time postgraduate programmes. The CEP operates under the management of CEP Head of Operations and the Academic Head of CEP. CEP manages executive programmes and provides support for all part-time, post experience programmes. The Programme Office has responsibility for the academic processes relating to all DCUBS/CEP programmes. The Management Office is responsible for finance, catering, marketing, research administration, and facilities management for the Faculty. The CEP also has one full-time staff member based in DCU Registry.

Strengths	Weaknesses
• The group structure allows collegiality • New senior posts • Understanding of benefits of international accreditation • Good corporate relationships • Loyalty of staff	• Other units of similar size in other universities would have two or more schools and therefore greater representation at university level and a sharing of the management workload. • The faculty administration is under resourced, particularly at the more senior level. • Lack of clarity among staff around future priorities
Opportunities	**Threats**
• Reorganisation of the administration function and administration duties of academic staff • Appointment of Deputy Dean • Increased representation on university committees • Expanded recruitment	• The unbalanced workload of academic staff could lead to lack of opportunity for research

Functions, Activities and Processes

Overview

DCUBS currently offers 15 programmes at undergraduate level with 1663 registered students in 2007/08 and 8 full time taught masters programmes with 320 students enrolled. In addition, there are 15 part time postgraduate programmes administered by the Centre for Executive Programmes, including the new Doctor of Business Administration, which commenced in 2006, with 467 students registered currently. There are 29 full time and 18 part time PhD students registered with the School. Finally, the DCUBS contributes to teaching on 21 other programmes throughout the university. The Bachelor of Business Studies and its international equivalent are the most popular courses in the school with a combined student enrolment of 678 students.

In line with the Faculty Strategic Plan, the focus over the term of the plan is on further growth in student numbers primarily but not exclusively in the area of postgraduate programmes and executive education activity. In the last three years alone, 9 new programmes have been introduced, some with very small enrolment numbers. Some programmes such as the MSc in Operations and Technology Management, were designed for one specific organisation and such programmes are likely to have a short life span, unless further corporate sponsors arise.

The Self Assessment provides that the hallmark of the **Teaching and Learning** Strategy is innovation. Whilst it was possible to recognise elements of innovation there is not a strong documented evidence base to support the stated aim. The process of realigning the educational philosophy around problem-based learning does not yet seem to have been conceptually or practically firmed up. There is a lack of evidence as to an analysis of the resource cost relative to the added value for students. Whilst clearly there is evidence of good practice at all levels of programme delivery and learning, there does not appear to be in place an overarching comprehensive strategy aimed at addressing issues of student engagement and enhancement of learning. Such a strategy might cover the following matters amongst others:

- Programme structures appear to be traditional with limited opportunities for flexible, part-time or blended learning.
- Content delivery and assessment design are sound though further consideration in how to engage and motivate student learning could be given.
- The management of learning processes is effective though issues around timetable management, availability of options, management of group work, mixed cohorts, achievement expectations across disciplines, graduate skills development, student progression, employer engagement in learning are all ones which affect student involvement and could benefit from ongoing enhancement.
- Excellent placement opportunities exist and there appear to be good support mechanisms in place. However, there is evidence that student expectations could be managed more effectively.
- Use of educational technologies is in place but a broader strategy for embedding such technologies is not evident. In a Business School of this size it might be expected that there would be a dedicated educational technology support unit.

The School sets out a coherent **research** strategy supporting the University's Academic Themes. The strategy builds upon growth in research output and a development of a broader research climate. LInK the University Designated Research Centre in the School, provides an important focus for research activity. This along with recent appointments of senior staff has strengthened the support for research in the School. Out of LInK and the Schools research centres there is

evidence of growing sub areas of research, which can support the School strategy. Individual research students appear to be well supported.

The School's Self Assessment identifies broad and ambitious research targets of 50% increases in student numbers, income and publications. Whilst research activity has increased in recent years the evidence suggests that it has not increased so rapidly as to justify such high headline targets. For a School of this size research funding is low. Also for its size research output is low. This suggests paradoxically that the targets are not sufficiently ambitious. The School identifies three main elements: expanded PhD scholarship scheme, Research Fellow scheme and development of the professional Doctorate programme. These are appropriate and are read in the context of strategic plans at staffing and administration levels. It does not appear in the evidence that headline targets are related to lower level targets and identification of specific support for the achievement of sub targets, which will contribute to the whole. There does not appear to be evidence that all staff have individual research plans with supported targets. It is not evident that faculty have research plans which relate broader personal staff development plans. The School recognises the need to appoint further research active staff at senior level, postdoctoral level and studentship level. Whilst these are appropriate they are not a substitute for developing a pervasive research culture encompassing and supporting all faculty. Similarly whilst there could be developments in dedicated administrative support and dedicated research space these will not of themselves generate income or output.

There is strong evidence that support structures such as careers and student support such as induction are professionally and enthusiastically operated. There is less evidence that they are fully integrated into the Teaching and Learning Strategy and the programme delivery. There is clear evidence of strong commitment amongst faculty to their students, however the effectiveness of personal tutoring is not consistently substantiated. Similarly mechanisms for student feedback exist but it is not clear that their effectiveness or responsiveness is evident to students. Programme Boards appear to be cumbersome and inconsistently effective.

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Large intake of high calibre students on undergraduate programmes • High calibre of graduates • INTRA programme for 3rd year undergraduate students • Commitment and enthusiasm of academic and administrative staff • Employer Recognition of the quality of the School, its students and programmes	• A higher proportion of staff need to be engaged in research • Relatively low number of full time research students for a school of its size • Poor student engagement • Lack of a teaching and learning assessment strategy • Standard of catering for CEP students
Opportunities	**Threats**
• To increase the level of external research funding • To appoint a number of Post Doctoral researchers • Set targets for research output • Problem based learning • Streamlining of modules and programmes in line with the Academic Framework for Innovation • Provide more flexible learning opportunities, eg blended learning, part time undergrad programmes	• Not enhancing Teaching and Learning Strategies to support student engagement and learning • Not engaging and supporting all faculty in research • Not developing research income and outputs comparable to institutions with which the School wishes to compare itself

Customer Perspective

Overview

DCUBS has strong relationships with key stakeholders, including industry, alumni, professional bodies, schools and guidance counsellors, other University faculties and units, partner institutions, and the wider community. DCUBS has also developed its education links with industry through its Centre for Executive Programs (CEP). This has involved the building of partnerships with a number of client organisations, both in the public and private sectors, and with a number of professional bodies, designing and delivering programmes to suit their organisations and their members. A comprehensive review of employer's attitudes and experiences with DCUBS undergraduate students was undertaken in 2007 indicating that DCUBS is held in very high regard by potential employers.

DCUBS sees its relationships with professional bodies as a key element in the ongoing strength of its reputation (e.g. the relationships with the accounting bodies across the full suite of accounting programmes). The PRG found this to be true, with one employer stating that he now has to employ graduates from other colleges, as DCUBS graduates tend to be snapped up by the "Big 4".

Relationships with second level students, teachers and guidance counsellors are well developed with DCUBS staff participating in the School Liaison programme. DCUBS staff have been actively engaged with a number of local initiatives including PLATO, NORDUBCO, BITCI, Colaiste Dhulaigh, in developing the links between education and the wider community.

Where possible the centrally administered Student Survey of Teaching (SSOT) is used in DCUBS. However, evaluation of modules tends to be an individual decision with some academic staff electing to survey every module each semester and some surveying only infrequently and some not at all. In parallel with the proposed introduction of Problem Based Learning, the Integrated Training (INTRA) element of undergraduate programmes is being redesigned.

According to the SAR, the personal tutor system is the cornerstone of tutoring in DCUBS. However, comments from students indicated that while there was a defined personal tutoring system, it lacked comprehensiveness. While all students are appointed a tutor in first year, they rarely contact their tutors and tend to approach other members of staff, such as a project supervisor, with problems. However, the DCUBS induction programme, BEST, introduced in 2006, has been very successful, with a similar model being considered for roll out in the rest of the university.

Strengths	Weaknesses
• High calibre graduates • Very high retention rates • Employers continued demand for DCUBS graduates. • Year 1 induction programme, BEST • Excellent extra curricular opportunities	• Personal tutor system not seen as useful by students • Poor student engagement • Not all student representatives were aware of Programme Boards • Student restaurant very expensive • Access to PT lecturers is difficult
Opportunities	**Threats**
• Re-establish Advisory Board to include international representation • More scope for enhancing relationships with employers, eg employer forums • Improve effectiveness of marketing • Use stakeholders – alumni, employers to tell DCUBS story	• Higher profile of post graduate business courses elsewhere

Staff Perspective

Overview

The PRG were very impressed with the collegiality, enthusiasm, commitment and loyalty of the staff of DCUBS. The School has a proactive and collaborative academic staff supported by excellent secretarial and administrative offices. All of the feedback received in relation to the willingness, helpfulness and availability of the academic and administrative staff was very positive.   The Panel were also very impressed with the openness and responsiveness of the staff to the Self Assessment process. Table 1 provides details of the academic and administrative staff in the DCUBS. Out of the total staff complement illustrated in Table 1, 13 per cent of the School's staff complement is international, including members from the UK, China, France, India, Italy, Japan, South Africa and Germany. The school also hosts a visiting professor for at least one semester each year. Over one third of the staff have worked internationally and staff are encouraged to avail of the University's sabbatical policy, which allows sabbatical leave applications, on average, every seven years. The School recognises the necessity to continue to internationalise its faculty in order to improve its competitive position and the International Activities Working Group was established in October 2007 to explore opportunities.

The School has seen significant growth in the number of postgraduate students, leading to the third floor extension and the recent growth in staff numbers, including the allocation of four new professorial posts in 2007. There are currently six academic vacancies, comprising four vacancies in accounting, one in finance and one in strategy. Furthermore, although the School has been fortunate in its ability to attract highly qualified and experienced adjunct faculty, part-time faculty members cannot serve the School to the same extent as full-time faculty members.

Academic staff are expected to contribute to the School through teaching, research and administration. However, there is no comprehensive listing of non-teaching and non-research activities or of individual workload allocations. Since the last review, teaching modules were reduced from 8 to 6, while administrative workloads have increased, with no blocked time for research. Most academic staff are frustrated with the lack of time available for research, the perception being that 50-70 per cent of the workload of academics is being spent on administration. During the various discussions with academic staff, concern was expressed regarding the administrative workloads undertaken by them and that administrative support is inadequate in some areas. The School continues to have difficulty finding a satisfactory solution to the research versus other workloads issue.

While the current **administrative staff** complement is thought to be satisfactory, the School is administratively under-resourced in a number of ways and in a number of key support areas. The administrative staff expressed the view that, within the current structure, there needs to be greater clarity in relation to the roles and positions within the administrative offices and that there is an immediate need for administrative staff at more senior levels.   It was also felt that the workload of the Senior Administrator is currently overstretched. Senior administrative staff cannot currently delegate and for example, the ongoing recruitment and management of adjunct faculty by the Senior Administrator continues to create significant additional administrative workload.

The turnover of experienced administrative staff, coupled with the dependence on temporary staff, is putting a strain on resources.   It was noted that where an administrative staff member is seconded to other offices or

faculties within the University, their permanent position in the original post is held open indefinitely and that the staff member is replaced by the recruitment of temporary staff. This hampers the ability of the administrative offices to train and retain experienced administrative staff. Furthermore, should the review of the division between academic and administrative staff duties, as recommended above, culminate in the future transfer of some administrative work from academic to administrative staff, the administrative offices will need to be strengthened with the recruitment of permanent administrative staff at more senior levels, possibly around grades 5 or 6.

While the revenues generated by the Centre for Executive Programmes is impressive, it was noted that most staff did not fully appreciate the strategic and longer term value of the executive education programmes, and that the administrative work of the other offices was perceived by some staff as being less prestigious. Academic staff expressed the view that the level of support for non-CEP programmes should be reviewed with consideration being given to the provision of similar support to other programmes.

In recognising the importance of individual staff career development, it was noted that the requirements for **promotion** of academic staff are not transparent. It is widely recognised by academic staff that research output has an important impact on promotion opportunities and that administrative work is not valued in terms of career advancement. It was also recognised that there is no clear outlet for promotion for the administrative staff and that a full review of administrative staff career development should be undertaken by the University. This review should provide for a process for recognising and rewarding excellence and experience through the upgrading of administrative staff in situ and/or providing administrative staff with a clear path for promotional opportunities.

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Very loyal and motivated staff • High collegiality among staff • Appointment of new Professorial staff	• High administration workloads • Perceived imbalance between administration support for CEP programmes and non-CEP programmes • No clear internal outlet for promotion of administrative staff • University's competitive approach to promotion from lecturer to senior lecturer • Requirements for academic promotion are not transparent • Large number of adjunct faculty • No transparent method for calculating academic work loads
Opportunities	Threats
• The PMDS scheme should be carried out on an annual basis • Recruit internationally recognised faculty • Engage Academic staff in globally competitive research • Support Academic staff's motivation to increase research activity • Increase and strengthen internal and external collaborations	• Staff could become demotivated if concerns are not addressed • Decreasing ability to compete for and retain top faculty

Management of Resources

Overview

The QRP report of 2000 referred to resourcing as a "source of significant dissatisfaction within the School". The 2008 SAR refers again to "serious outstanding issues of staffing and resourcing". Of all the issues discussed during the visit of the PRG to the campus, the matter of resources, in one manifestation or another, dominated. The SAR, in the section dealing with <u>Weaknesses determined by deficient resources</u> lists the following:

1. Staff student ratio.
2. Lack of staff time due to academic administrative loads.
3. Administration team is very stretched.
4. Central services, especially catering, for part-time students.

In meetings with staff the PRG probed these issues in detail. Overall, the PRG's assessment on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges, generally concurs with the SAR.

The SAR gives a **staff student ratio** figure of 40:1 for the student-staff ratio. However, this was not accepted by the University Management, whose figure was 30:1. It should be possible to arrive at an agreed figure on this, but even at 30:1 the figure is very high, and has obvious implications for the next two issues in the above list.

High student-staff ratios lead to **heavy academic workloads** automatically. However, they also have knock-on effects on the administration side as there are fewer staff to share the admin burden. DCUBS appears to be further impacted by the fact that there are so many Programme Boards, resulting from the large number of programmes, all of which require a Chair. This is an internal School matter which can to some extent, but not entirely, be addressed by reviewing how programmes are managed, and specifically whether there is a need for so many Boards.

Again it is clear that there is a relatively small administration team handling a large administration load leading to a **stretched administration team**. The PGR noted a distinct difference between the apparent work load and efficiency of the five staff in the CEP administration office and the administration staff in the other areas. This view was also supported in the SAR, where 72% responded with a positive view of the CEP administration support compared to 35% for non CEP programmes. The PRG felt that the burden falls particularly on the senior administration staff, who take responsibility for a huge breadth of programmes.

Overall, the view of the PRG was that there is a case to look at resource allocation to the School from the University. It is clear that there is a very dedicated and highly motivated staff, with excellent leadership from the Dean, but that they view the resourcing of the School as less than supportive of their efforts. References by staff to the Resourcing Allocation Model of the University as "wicked", "unfair" and "not transparent", give a sense of their feelings.

The PRG identified other areas where resources are posing a problem. These included **(1) Research Administration (2) Space.** With regard to research administration, LInK has no administration support currently and this puts a very heavy burden on the UDRC management. This is being rectified to some extent with the appointment of an additional half-time administration support person.

The perennial problem of space has recently been addressed by the addition of the 3rd floor, which is a fine facility. However, provision needs to be made for a dedicated research space, particularly for LInK. This does not have to be a large space and could perhaps be found by re-configuring some existing space. In the

longer term, growth of the School will require an extension to the present building.

DCUBS has an excellent reputation, particularly with employers, but also among students, as evidenced by the quality of applicants. The School also has ambitions that are very important to the University, and vital for its competitiveness in the domestic market and for future international standing. International accreditation of the School by EQUIS and/or AACSB are major issues on the agenda, which will need a period of investment to address the resource issues raised above.

There is a danger that if the University continues to regard the School as a "cash cow" to the current extent, it will kill off the obvious ambition that is there at present. This is a matter for internal discussion, recognizing that the School is likely to continue to be a net contributor to the University, but ensuring that a period of investment is necessary to assist the School achieves its ambitions. The President confirmed that accreditation was very important, having come from a school where he had previous experience of this. The PRG regarded his support as significant for its attainment.

Strengths	Weaknesses
Very dedicated and motivated staff Excellent leadership from the Dean The recent addition of the third floor space	Student staff ratio is too high Academic staff overburdened with administration Too many programme boards Some administration staff over burdened Lack of administration support for research centres
Opportunities	**Threats**
International accreditation by EQUIS and/or AACSB Potential to streamline the administration function Potential to reduce administration load for academic staff and thereby increase opportunities for research University to consider increasing research resource allocation	The possibility that the University will not recognize the need to invest in the School, by allocation of a greater share of University budget, to ensure its continued development and in particular the achievement of accreditation. The university continuing to regard DCUBS as a "cash cow"

5.   Recommendations for Improvement

The following notation is used in the recommendations for improvement

- o P1: A recommendation that is important *and* requires urgent action.
- o P2: A recommendation that is important, but can (or perhaps must) be addressed on a more extended time scale.
- o P 3: 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 should attempt to indicate the level(s) of the University where action is required:
- o A: Administrative Unit
- o U: University Executive/Senior Management

Organisation and Management of the Faculty

P1A   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.

P2A   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.

P3A   The school should continue to build on the good practice observed in the CEP

Functions activities and processes

P1A   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.

P1A   The school should develop a comprehensive teaching and learning assessment strategy to enhance student participation and learning.

P2A   A number of post Doctoral fellows should be appointed

P2A   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:
- Research output,
- Internationalisation
- Corporate engagement
- School autonomy

P3A   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 students

P3A   The School should include an international element in its modules with a view to enhancing its international strategy.

P3A   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.

Customer Perspective

P2A The school needs to enhance its strategies relating to Employer engagement, e.g. using placement contacts / employer forums

P2A The school should appoint an advisory board, including international participation.

P2A The school should consider ways of improving its profile in the marketplace in order to achieve the recognition it deserves

Staff perspective

P1A The PMDS process be conducted annually, within a short designated timeframe and with 100 per cent participation

P1U The University should consider a benchmarking approach to the promotion of academic staff

P1U The University should consider introducing a promotional scheme for administrative staff similar to that for academic staff.

P1U The School should further increase the administrative support for research within the school.

P2A 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.

P2A The School should conduct a review of the job description of academic staff particularly in relation to the division between academic and administrative work.

P2A The School should implement more timely recruitment of staff in line with its approved strategic plan.

P3A The school should consider ways of enhancing the clearly and successful open and collegiate atmosphere by developing a strengthened shared understanding of school priorities.

Management of resources

P1U 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.

P1U The university needs to address the staff:student ratio, which currently inhibits successful accreditation.

P1U The University should continue to invest in the development of research at the school level

P1A The School should be more proactive in applying for internal and external research funding

P1A 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.

P2A Dedicated space for LInK