

Quality Improvement Plan
Programme for Academic Units 2007/08



Quality Improvement Plan
School of Educational Studies

16 November 2007

Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	3
1.1 General Responses.....	3
2. Specific Responses to Recommendations of the Peer Review Group Report...5	
2.1 Management & Organisation.....	5
2.1.2 Programmes and Instruction.....	7
2.1.3 Scholarship & Research.....	8
2.1.4 Social & Community Service.....	10
2.1.5 Staffing & Resources.....	11
3. Prioritised Resource Requirements.....	13
4. Summary of One Year Plan 2007-2008.....	16
5. Summary of Three Year Plan 2007-2010.....	18
Appendices.....	19

1. Introduction

The School of Education Studies is pleased to respond to the Peer Review Group's (PRG) Report, which was carried out in the context of the wider quality assurance process for Dublin City University in April 2007.

In order to draw up our draft Quality Improvement Plan all staff was given time to consider the PRG Report before spending a full day with a facilitator to reflect on the recommendations contained within the Report. This was then followed by a meeting of the Quality Improvement Committee who developed the draft, which was then circulated to all staff, the Head of School, the Dean of Faculty and an external reader for comment.

1.1 General Responses

The PRG Report has clearly highlighted the School of Education Studies as a quality provider of programmes in education and training for students who belong to groups that are often under represented in universities as well as those who are better prepared for study at third-level (p.10). To this end, the School delivers several of its programmes in part-time mode, and runs a significant proportion of the classes at evenings and weekends.

Furthermore, the Report acknowledges that the School of Education Studies values and encourages good quality research, particularly research that engages with issues of citizenship & intercultural education, equality & diversity, well-being and guidance in schools, curriculum & training, technology and science education as well as research in teaching and learning (p.13).

The Report also highlights the School's joint programmes with the School of Business and the Faculty of Health & Sciences as significant activities within the University (p.14). We also welcome the PRG's recognition of the collegiality that exists among staff within the School and the generosity of the staff in terms of commitment and time and the strong team spirit. In responding to this document we wish to stress that the maintenance of this culture is a priority for us.

Overall, we welcome this opportunity to respond to the PRG and we note that many of the recommendations if fulfilled will greatly support our teaching and research work.

The Quality Improvement Plan was finalised in a meeting on 16th November 2007.
The meeting was attended by

- Members of Senior Management
 - Deputy-President, Prof Anne Scott
 - VPR, Prof Eugene Kennedy
 - VPLI, Prof Maria Slowey
- Members of the Peer Review Group
 - Sinead Breathnach, external member
 - Prof Joe Morris, Rapporteur
- Dean of Faculty (Prof Eithne Guilfoyle)
- Representatives of the Unit
 - Head of School, Dr Carmel Mulcahy
 - Chair of Coordination Committee, Dr James O'Higgins-Norman
- Director of Quality Promotion, Dr Heinz Lechleiter (chairing)

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

2.1 Management & Organisation

	Addressee	Priority	PRG Recommendation (Draft Report)	Response	Time line
1	S	P1	5.1.1 Develop a strategic plan to ensure that growth over the next few years and beyond is properly focussed.	The Head of School has established a Strategic Plan Committee who will work with Gordon McConnell to develop a new strategic plan that will build on the previous strategic plan. All Staff to be involved.	Q1 08
2	S	P1	5.1.2 Develop a strong teaching and research committees, and possibly a management committee.	New Teaching & Learning and Research Committees have been established. Staff will explore a number of possibilities to formalise our management structures including the possibility of a management committee.	Completed Q1 08
3	S	P2	5.1.3 Purposefully adapt to and work with the structures and processes of the Faculty and University.	This process is ongoing. School and Faculty are cooperating closely and building on projects and research with members of staff from other Schools within the University	Ongoing
4	SU	P3	5.1.4 Re-examine opportunities for working	S: The T&L Committee and Research Committee will investigate	Q2 08

	Addressee	Priority	PRG Recommendation (Draft Report)	Response	Time line
			with the linked colleges in teaching and research programmes.	further possibilities in 2007-08. U: Recently signed linkage agreements with all of our linked Colleges should help facilitate this endeavour.	
5	S	P2	5.1.5 Develop a more systematic approach to data collection.	Sept-Dec 2007 Head of School will Explore type of data required and access to data with Faculty/University Internal Research and Analysis Office.	Q4 07
6	S	P2	5.1.6 Cost the delivery of programmes and component activities of programmes, with a view to deploying resources more effectively.	Head of School and Chairs of Programmes have costed some programmes with a view to more cost effective use of resources.	Completed
7	S	P1	5.1.7 Develop a plan for workload allocation that is agreed to by staff, and which is applied openly and transparently each year.	All staff will be involved in process to decide on workload with Head of School ; This process is ongoing	Ongoing
8	SF	P3	5.1.8 Work with the Faculty to develop administrative and support structures for research at the Faculty level.	October 2007 Meeting with Senior Faculty Staff to explore possible support. F- Work with Associate Dean of Research, and Faculty Research Committee to ensure that appropriate supports for research are in place.	Completed Ongoing

2.1.2 Programmes and Instruction

	Addressee	Priority	PRG Recommendation (Draft Report)	Response	Time Line
1	S	P1	5.2.1 Review the number of contact hours devoted to teaching and student support, and consider what alternative more cost-effective approaches are possible, and how a more independent approach to learning may be inculcated in students.	The School has returned to 2 hour lectures on all programmes. An investigation paired with research is under way within the School looking for ways to provide academic tutorial support and re-evaluate time given to and manner of student support without undermining our ethos.	Q3 08
2	S	P1	5.2.2 Review the content of programmes to ensure that there is an overall sense of coherence within modules and between modules.	Chairs of Programmes have scheduled more regular meetings for programme teams to plan and develop programmes i.e. share twelve week plans. Provisions have been made to include part-time staff in these meetings. School will provide an opportunity in early 2008 for Programme Boards to meet on this issue.	early 2008
3	S	P1	5.2.3 Continue to pursue vigorously national accreditation for the subjects SPHE and CSPE from the Teaching Council.	Already in place, supervisory visit from Teaching Council CSPE panel took place in September 2007; preliminary feedback	Final decision in February 2008

	Addressee	Priority	PRG Recommendation (Draft Report)	Response	Time Line
				was very positive. Final decision in February 2008. SPHE was never considered for national accreditation.	
4	S	P2	5.2.4 Review the range of programmes being offered and their frequency of delivery, with the aim of developing a more sustainable long-term strategy for on-going development of teaching.	This issue will be considered in the formation of our new strategic plan which will be developed in 2007/08. U comment: University management is entirely supportive of this recommendation and suggest that particular attention be paid to developing appropriate links and collaboration with faculties / schools where elements of similar provision is likely. For example it is likely to be within the interest of staff in the School of Educational Studies to collaborate with colleagues in the school of Nursing in the delivery of research modules – at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels; and in the provision of foundation and skills development modules in counselling at post-graduate level.	Q3 08
5	S	P2	5.2.5 Review the policy for placement in schools, developing a more	Experience on this has shown that this	Q4 08

	Addressee	Priority	PRG Recommendation (Draft Report)	Response	Time Line
			structured arrangement that facilitates a fuller involvement of schools in supervision and mentoring.	type of development will require a considerable amount of support to the schools from the teacher training department. However, we will seek funding from an external source to pilot mentoring for students on the GDEd programme in their placement schools. A new mode of supervision including contracted staff has been put in place. Administrative support is now available for conducting this task.	Completed

2.1.3 Scholarship & Research

	Addressee	Priority	PRG Recommendation (Draft Report)	Response	Time Line
1	SF	P1	5.3.1 Recruit a Senior Academic with significant experience of initiating, directing, and coordinating collaborative research projects.	<p>We welcome the idea of having a member of staff who will prioritise research . This, and other ways of promoting the research agenda will be explored in cooperation with the OVPR and OVPLI and using external expertise.</p> <p>Colleagues from academic departments in peer institutions abroad have been invited to spend time at DCU in order to contribute to our research activities. This is an ongoing process.</p> <p>F: The Faculty supports the School in its efforts to address the this issue and the wider issue of balance between junior and senior positions.</p>	Q1 08
2	S	P1	5.3.2 Develop the role and operational model for the recently convened Research Committee and its convenor.	A Research Committee has been elected. It will develop a brief that will be considered by all staff .	Q1 08

	Addressee	Priority	PRG Recommendation (Draft Report)	Response	Time Line
3	S	P1	5.3.3 Develop an initial research strategy immediately through the Research Committee with the support of an external facilitator.	November 2007 Research Committee to arrange this after their brief is agreed by all staff .	Q2 08
4	S	P1	5.3.4 Promote a culture of excellence through the publication of research findings in leading peer-reviewed international journals and presentations at formative conferences, and develop other DCU Executive approved Key Performance Indicators.	Key target areas have been identified. The T&L and Research Committees will investigate ways of further promoting this on an ongoing basis.	Completed Ongoing
5	S	P2	5.3.5 Develop a critical mass of expertise in a small number of nationally or internationally prioritised areas with a long term view to seeking University Designated Research Centre status.	Research Committee will consult all academic staff to identify prioritised areas and to begin planning for new research centre.	Q4 07
6	S	P2	5.3.6 Drive closer linkages between the education and research missions.	Teaching & Learning Committee and Research Committee will explore possibilities. Chairs of programmes need also to be consulted regarding involvement of students in research projects and commitment required.	Q1 08
7	S	P2	5.3.7 Create novel, distinctive research programmes by building research links with schools inside and outside the Faculty.	Significant work has already begun in this area with the School of Communications and other possibilities will be explored by the Research Committee.	Ongoing.

2.1.4 Social & Community Service

	Addressee	Priority	PRG Recommendation (Draft Report)	Response	Time Line
1	S	P3	5.4.1 The School should seek to better represent itself within the University, and to generate more publicity for its strong engagement with the community.	An interim PR Committee was established in Dec 2006 and this will need to develop a brief and formalise its membership in 2007/08.	

2.1.5 Staffing & Resources

	Addressee	Priority	PRG Recommendation (Draft Report)	Response	Time Line
1	S	P1	5.5.1 Prepare for the supervision demands of the Ed.D. Degree, possibly with support from other schools.	Internal and External staff already in place for 2007. Cooperation with other Schools will be initiated, and intake of new students will be planned carefully.	Ongoing

	Addressee	Priority	PRG Recommendation (Draft Report)	Response	Time Line
2	S	P1	5.5.2 Identify aspirational peer institutions to help in the development of benchmarks for resourcing.	Already Peer Institutions within University and investigations to be made with the Mater Dei Institute of Education.	
3	S U	P2	5.5.3 Plan for increasing the proportion of senior personnel to a level closer to University norms, and additionally increase the number of full-time permanent staff at the expense of part-time and contract staff.	<p>S: Head of School to pursue this goal as a matter of urgency.</p> <p>U: Staffing issues should be addressed initially though consultation between the Head of School and the Dean of Faculty.</p> <p>F- Faculty recognises the need for the increased levels of permanent staff and increase proportion of Senior Personnel. Note that within the last year two staff members have been promoted (one to SL and one to Assoc Prof.). Subject to discussions with the HoS, the faculty will support the addition of another SL post through promotion or recruitment within the next year.</p>	ongoing
4	S	P2	5.5.4 Develop short and long-term funding proposals to purchase	Head of School to consult with staff on	

	Addressee	Priority	PRG Recommendation (Draft Report)	Response	Time Line
			needed equipment which supports instruction.	needs assessment and to make representation for additional funding at start of new academic year. This task was completed by the School and submitted with the draft response to QRC. Awaiting a response to urgent need for microteaching labs. (See attached)	
5	U	P1	5.5.5 Aggressively seek support for the development of research space including the DCU Trust, laboratory sponsors, etc.	It is important that the Head of School also work with and through the Dean of Faculty on this issue. Shortage of space is a university wide issue and is currently reviewed by Senior Management. S comment; Head of School to begin talks with University immediately on the development of an appropriate space for research and teaching activities i.e. new building. In the short term the School requires an additional 2 office spaces. (Most obvious being those vacated by CTYI.) If the School is to maintain an identity it needs to keep	

	Addressee	Priority	PRG Recommendation (Draft Report)	Response	Time Line
				staff close together in the one building. Much of the School is already fragmented as lectures take place throughout the University.)	
6	U	P1	5.5.6 Investigate opportunities under institutional grant schemes, e.g., the Strategic Innovation Fund, to provide infrastructural supports for research in the prioritised areas.	Consultation with the VPLI and VPR is required to move this recommendation forward. S comment: Head of School to liaise with Faculty and University on this.	Ongoing
7	FS	P2	5.5.7 Investigate the provision of technical support at Faculty level.	October 2007 Consult with staff in school and Head of School to liaise with Faculty. . F – Recruitment of technician to meet technical needs of School has just taken place. Faculty purchased 30 laptops to meet needs of School of Education in September 07. School has the opportunity to communicate additional resource needs as part of its budgeting process in early May.	

3. Summary of One Year Plan 2007-2008

Staffing	
The Head of School in consultation with the Chairs of Programmes will immediately seek to cost all programmes and arrange for the appointment of full-time staff to support the work of the School on the BSc in Education & Training, the Graduate Diploma in Education and the MSc in Guidance & Counselling programmes.	Q2 08
Senior Staff Appointments	
The number of Senior Lecturers/Professors within the School will be in line with the normal ration across the University. In line with our strategic plan some of these appointments may be tied to specific responsibilities such as Teaching & Learning, Research, Undergraduate and Post-graduate Studies. We will work with the Dean of Faculty to fill these posts as quickly as possible.	Ongoing
Staff Workload	
Before the start of the new academic year the Head of School will consult with staff to develop an interim policy on work load that is open and transparent. This policy will have to consider the amount and type of teaching that each member of staff engages in, the seniority of the staff member and associated responsibilities i.e. Chair of Programme, the amount of tutorial support, teaching practice supervision, responsibilities associated with research i.e. principle investigator, research assistant etc.	Q2 08
Strategic Plan	
In September 2007 the Head of School will establish a Strategic Plan Committee who will work with Gordon McConnell to be established a new strategic plan that will build on the previous strategic plan. All Staff to be involved.	Q2 08
Space, Equipment and Resources	
It is our intention to work with the University to develop a more appropriate space for the delivery of our programmes in education and training and in which to engage in substantial research. This may link with plans for the refurbishment of the Henry Grattan Building.	ongoing
As a matter of urgency the School of Education Studies will seek the provision of 3 microteaching laboratories to facilitate the delivery of microteaching modules across all Teaching programmes and also Counselling Skills on the Graduate Diploma in Guidance and Counselling.	Q2 08
Data Collection	
The Head of School will immediately put in place procedures for the collection of data in relation to student progression, grades, and access and progression routes. We will also develop a more precise student/lecturer ratio based on our FTE/SCR.	Q3 08
Establishment of New Committees	
In September 2007 the Head of School will arrange for a new Teaching & Learning Committee to be established and efforts will be made to develop the Interim Research Committee. Concurrent with this staff will explore a number of possibilities to formalise	Completed

our management structures including the possibility of a management committee.	
Teaching Load	
September 2007 – Return to 2 hour lectures on all programmes and investigate ways to provide academic tutorial support. Re-evaluate time given to and manner of student support i.e. specific times for lecturers' availability. Inform students of other support services without undermining our ethos.	Partly completed Ongoing
Co-ordination of Programmes	
2007/08 Chairs of Programmes to begin to schedule more regular meetings for programme teams to plan and develop programmes i.e. share twelve week plans. Part-time staff will be included in these meetings.	Completed
BSc in Education & Training	
September 2007 new Chair to be appointed after competition among internal staff. Accreditation of degree by the Teaching Council to be pursued.	Completed
Research Strategy	
In December 2007 the newly constituted Research Committee will consult all academic staff to identify prioritised areas and to begin planning for new research centre. October 2007 in consultation with all staff the Research Committee will develop a research strategy. Head of School to liaise with Faculty to develop appropriate space and resources for research activities.	Completed Ongoing
Culture of Excellence in Research	
Building on our already existing culture of excellence staff are to be facilitated in finding time for research, publishing and presenting at high level conferences.	Ongoing
Identification of Peer Institutions	
Formal Contact to be made with the Mater Dei Institute of Education to obtain data that will allow us to seek funding and resources on the same basis as other education departments within the University and elsewhere.	Q2 08
Library	
In consultation with lecturers All Programme Chair will ensure that the library is well stocked in relation to the requirements of their programme.	Ongoing

5. Summary of Three Year Plan 2007-2010

Faculty Integration

This process has already begun and it is our aim that by the end of 2010 the School of Education Studies will be fully integrated within the Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences. This will be achieved in a number of ways most particularly by maintaining a strong presence on the Faculty Board, the Faculty Teaching & Learning Committee and the Faculty Research Committee as well as pursuing cross faculty opportunities in teaching and learning and research. We will also continue to develop closer links with the administration support that is available to us from the Faculty Office.

Budgeting

As was pointed out in the School's Self Assessment Report (p.6, p. 34) despite the increase in our student numbers our non-pay budget has decreased each year. This reflects a lack of appreciation on the part of the University for the costs involved in the delivery of education and training programmes particularly in the area of teaching practice supervision. If we are to continue to maintain the standards required by the Teaching Council in relation to the training of teachers the University will need to ring fence funds to support our teacher training programmes.

Linked Colleges

The admission of the linked colleges of St. Patrick's Drumcondra, Mater Dei Institute of Education and All Hallows College provides for a number of opportunities including the possibility of developing a critical mass for educational research. It is our intention to aggressively pursue all opportunities to develop closer links with these colleges.

Range of Programmes

By 2010 we will have developed our strategic plan and settled on the range and frequency of programmes to be delivered within the resources available to us in the School. This is not to say that new programmes will not be developed but that any future developments will be considered within a process of consolidation of existing programmes.

Teaching Practice

By 2010 the Office of the Director of Teaching Practice will be well established and as such leadership be provided in this area in the context of an overall vision for teaching practice on all programmes within the School and in line with the requirements of the Teaching Council.

Public Relations

A PR Committee will be put in place to generate publicity and to promote awareness of the work of the School within the University and elsewhere. This process has already begun with the establishment of the annual formal ceremony to mark the opening of the School's academic year and which will take place in early October of each year. In 2006 the address was given by Dr. Diarmuid Martin, Archbishop of Dublin and in 2007 the address will be given by Ms. Cairíona Ruane, Northern Ireland Minister for Education. We look forward to developing other similar events as well as working closely with the media to highlight our research achievements.

Appendix One

School's Quality Committee for Self Assessment Report

Dr. James O'Higgins-Norman (Chair)
Dr. Charlotte Holland
Dr. Majella McSharry
Mr. Conor Sullivan
Mr. John Lalor
Dr. Brendan Walsh

Peer Review Group

Dr Tom Mullins
Dr Sinéad Breathnach
Prof. Arnold Danzig
Prof. Robert Forster
Prof. Joe Morris

School Quality Committee for Draft Quality Improvement Plan

Dr. Carmel Mulcahy (Head of School)
Dr. James O'Higgins-Norman (Chair)
Dr. Charlotte Holland
Dr. Majella McSharry
Mr. Conor Sullivan
Mr. John Lalor

Appendix 2

Prioritised Resource Requirements

Name of the Unit proposing the project:

Education Studies

Title of the project:

Creation of Microteaching laboratories

Aim of the project:

Develop three microteaching laboratories, a simplified version of the School of Nursing model.

Each of the rooms will be equipped with a fixed video camera and audio recording device. Students will be responsible for recording their own sessions via a touch screen computer located within the room. Each of the rooms can be monitored from a technician station.

Tutors and students can view these sessions locally and remotely for playback sessions.

References to Peer Review Group Report:

Page 11:

It recognises that the School has achieved a national and international profile and reputation for its unique portfolio of programmes, but also that its innovative and radical approach makes non-stop and significant demands on the staff of the School in terms of time and personal space.

Page 12:

In the view of the Review Group it is not advisable for the School to develop any more new programmes, at least not until it has developed a strategy for deploying its resources more cost-effectively. In the immediate future the School should review its present portfolio of programmes with a view to rationalising student intake, reducing staff contact time, rationalising where possible the programmes' modular content, and reappraising the frequency at which some programmes are offered.

Every aspect of teaching should be assessed as to its cost, as to whether it can be done more cost effectively in some other way, and even as to whether it needs to be done at all.

It may well be the case that a less intensely hands-on approach to interacting with students might help the students to cultivate a more independent approach to learning.

Page 17:

There is a significant practical element in teacher training, arguably justifying the provision of dedicated and fully equipped microteaching laboratories. We sense that a good case might be made for these, but the School did not provide us with sufficient details of taught programmes, supporting documentation, and quantitative data to make a judgement. The School should proceed to build a reasoned argument in favour of improved teaching facilities and teaching equipment (such as video, audio, micro-teaching cameras, video editing facilities, etc.), and then take their case to the Faculty.

The School might support its case by identifying aspirational peer schools and providing comparative benchmarks.

5.1.6 P2-S Cost the delivery of programmes and component activities of programmes, with a view to deploying resources more effectively.

5.2.1 P1-S Review the number of contact hours devoted to teaching and student support, and consider what alternative more cost-effective approaches are possible, and how a more independent approach to learning may be inculcated in students.

5.5.4 P2-S. Develop short and long-term funding proposals to purchase needed equipment which supports instruction.

Expected impact on quality (of Unit and University):

Reduce contact time of staff involved with microteaching which will result in a more student centred and cost effective process.

Automatically create a resource bank of good examples of microteaching for best practice tuition.

Save approximately 112 hours converting analogue sessions to digital, compression for the web and uploading time. (SE1 and PEB1)

Students can edit their clips easily to illustrate what they think is positive use of the current teaching skill. This will form part of their assignment, along with an essay justifying their selection.

Save approximately 40 hours set up and collection of portable video cameras. (SE1, SE2, PEB1, PEB2, ET1 and DET)

These rooms will also be to record practice career guidance interviews on the Graduate Diploma in Guidance Counselling programme.

The rooms could also be used in the advanced teaching practice modules on various courses to record demonstrations

Use recording facilities on each of our programmes to allow lecturers and leading parishioners in specific subject fields to demonstrate best practice in the design, delivery and evaluation of teaching/training episodes.

This development will be in keeping with DCU being at the forefront of technology and innovation.

Breakdown of modules and programmes who will depend on the creation of rooms with recording facilities:

ES114 Microteaching and Teaching Preparation

SE1: 30 students

PEB1: 40 students

ET1: 70 students

ES216 Microteaching and Teaching Practice

SE2: 30 students

PEB2: 40 students

ES208 Advanced Teaching Strategies

DET: 30 students

ES527 Psychometrics - Theory and Practice
GDGC: 20 students

ES520 Foundational Skills in Guidance and Counselling
GDGC: 20 students

Financial summary:

Estimate €20,000.