

Quality Assurance / Quality Improvement
Programme for Faculties
2010-2016



Quality Improvement Plan [QuIP]

May 2011

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

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1. INTRODUCTION

As part of the University's Quality Review process, the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences undertook a comprehensive self-assessment over the period May to October 2010. In October 2010 the Faculty's Self-Assessment Report was completed and submitted to the Quality Promotions Director. The Quality Review of the Faculty followed when this report was presented to the appointed panel of peer assessors, the Peer Review Group (PRG), who then visited the Faculty in November 2010 to discuss the report and explore its content and the operations of the Faculty in greater detail by meeting at length with all the Faculty's stakeholders. The Peer Review Group then submitted its report to the University.

1.2 Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Quality Improvement Committee

The final PRG Report was sent to the Faculty Dean, Professor Eithne Guilfoyle, in December 2010. The report was discussed at school and faculty level and each school formulated its responses to the recommendations and its inputs to the Faculty Quality Improvement Plan (QuIP). The Dean collated all the responses and inputs and produced a draft QuIP.

1.3 Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Quality Improvement Plan

The Peer Review Group report expressed a positive view of the Faculty Self-Assessment Report and the cooperation it received during its visit:

Having considered the PRG Report and, in particular, the set of recommendations therein, the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, has produced the Quality Improvement Plan as set out below. Essentially it contains the Faculty's responses to the recommendations of PRG and the articulation of the joint short-term (1 year) and medium-term (3 year) plans.

2. RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE PEER REVIEW GROUP REPORT

Recommendations for Improvement for FACULTY

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 Faculty.

Additionally, the PRG indicate the level[s] of the University where action is required:

A: Academic Unit [Faculty]

U: University Executive/Senior Management

Or other units, for example OVPLI, OVPR as applicable.

	Addressee	Priority	PRG Recommendation [Draft Report]	Faculty & University Response
1	A	P2	<u>Overview and Strategy</u> The Faculty should critically consider how it will further advance its role, agenda and mission as an executive and academic entity.	The Faculty will critically examine its role, agenda and mission in order to integrate the development of its identity with the development of the University identity.
2	A	P1	The Faculty should explore and seek to exploit the significant practical benefit to be garnered from continuing to act in concert as well as the efficiencies of scale that should result from greater operational integration and standardisation which could prove particularly beneficial at a time when resources are increasingly constrained	The Faculty will continue to critically review its structures and processes to identify efficiencies of scale. The Faculty will identify and seek to progress solutions with the University in relation to the technical obstacles which currently hinder the joint delivery / sharing of resources.
			<u>Organisation and Management</u>	
3	A & U	P1	It is recommended that the internal reporting relationships within Faculty and between the Faculty and University are clarified and restated.	The Faculty will review its constitution to ensure that reporting lines/responsibilities are clear. The Faculty will discuss the reporting lines and responsibilities of the Research Centres. The University welcomes the action of the Faculty to optimise communications with associated Research Centres. The reporting line from the Faculty to the University central leadership and administration is through the Executive Dean. The Executive Dean reports to the Deputy President / Registrar and is a member of University Executive and the University Senior Management Group and Academic Council.
4	A & U	P1	It is recommended that communication and information flow within Faculty and between Faculty and the central units and decision making bodies with which it interacts is clarified and improved.	The Faculty will work with the University on developing a central document management system in order to facilitate information flow within Faculty and between Faculty and central units and decision making bodies.

				The newly demonstrated Business Intelligence System that is currently undergoing development should greatly assist this process. The input of the Faculty to this process is ongoing.
5	U	P2	It is recommended that a protocol for the use of email be developed.	The Faculty supports the development at University level of a protocol for the use of e-mail. The university has an established protocol for the use of email. This protocol will be reviewed to take into account the need for provision of secure attachments and central document locations for key university documents, committees and groups.
6	U	P2	It is recommended that consideration be given to the establishment of a central document management system that would act as both a repository of and a supplementary means of communicating decisions that are made at institutional level that also have a university-wide impact.	The Faculty recommends that this item is made a P1 rather than a P2 priority given that the establishment of a central document management system is critical to enabling the University and the Faculty to deliver efficiencies and support development, etc. The University has investigated this issue in depth. The Phase 1 development of the Business Intelligence System, that is part of the planned response, was scoped and is gone for tender. Phase 2 will include addressing the need for, and potential implementation of, a central document management system. The Faculty should however be aware of the current very difficult financial and staffing situation confronting the university, and P2 provides a reasonable time-line for the university to develop an appropriate action plan.
			PRG Recommendation [Draft Report]	Faculty & University Response
			<u>Staffing, accommodation and resources</u>	
7	U & A	P2	It is recommended that the University continues to work with the Faculty in prioritising the refurbishment of the Henry Grattan building and providing, over time, sufficient space to support and facilitate the Faculty's continuing growth.	The Faculty is committed to working closely with the University to ensure that progress is made in relation to the refurbishment of the Henry Grattan Building. The Henry Grattan building has undergone major renovation, and works are currently underway in relation to CG86. The provision of space is a major issue and is being reviewed, on an ongoing basis by the Space Management Committee, which deals with all requests for additional or altered space requirements.
8.1	U	P1	Specifically, the PRG recommends that the plans to install a larger lift in the Henry Grattan Building in early 2011	The Faculty supports the University's plan to install a larger lift to service the Henry Grattan Building.

			are progressed	The University is aware of, and recognises the lift access needs in the Grattan building, and has examined the total lift capacity provision in the building with a view to making improvements. This work is on-going, but current financial constraints have prevented further lift provision in the building.
8.2	U & A	P2	and that the remaining issues associated with the Henry Grattan extension [ventilation and sound proofing] are pursued as quickly as possible	<p>The Faculty is working closely with the University to assess the viability of a project to improve air and sound quality in the Henry Grattan Extension.</p> <p>The University is aware of the suggested improvements to minimise/reduce the associated noise & ventilation issues. Currently there is no funding directly available to address these problems.</p>
9	A	P3	It is recommended that enhancement of the role of the Faculty Marketing Committee be explored and that the development of a Faculty Marketing Strategy and integrated marketing plan might prove a useful first step in this regard.	The Faculty is developing an integrated Marketing Strategy, including online marketing presence and resources, in conjunction with the proposed DCU Marketing Strategy.
10	U	P2	It is recommended that the University seek to implement an integrated information management system underpinning administrative workflow across the University.	<p>The Faculty strongly recommends that Recommendation 10 should be a P1 rather than a P2 priority given that it is critical to have in place an integrated information management system in order to facilitate the improvement in administrative workflow across the University, achieve efficiencies, etc.</p> <p>The University has fully investigated this issue and a Business Intelligence System(BIS) is currently being trialled with a view to implementation in the coming months. It is expected that this will provide key information required for course management, student progression analysis and associated administration.</p> <p>The University recognises the requirement for full integration between all its IT-based information systems. Currently there are recognised limitations, which are being carefully examined with the long-term aim of greatly improved integration. The requisite access to the required information and associated ease of modification or updating of files and information will also be necessary. The overall aim is to ensure that the BIS will produce integrated outputs derived from integrated inputs which will address the recommendation.</p>

11	U & A	P2	While the need to ensure that published information relating to the University's programmes is subject to appropriate controls is acknowledged, it is recommended that a means of enhancing approved web access to update Faculty information is identified and implemented.	<p>The Faculty recommends that Item 11 is a P1 rather than a P2 priority in order to support the development of the University / Faculty Marketing strategies.</p> <p>The University has appointed a Director of Public Affairs & Media Relations who actively liaises with all Faculties and Units and has established a committee with University-wide representation to feed in relevant information for communications and publicity. The University is very actively pursuing a concerted strategy to highlight its activities and programmes. Recently the overall website was reviewed and is currently being updated.</p> <p>A new content management system is currently in development by ISS to allow web access for updates and changes to designated staff in each Faculty and Office.</p>
12	A	P2	It is recommended that the totality of administrative resources available within the Faculty be considered in seeking to identify efficiencies and thereby address key administrative needs	The Faculty is exploring how its administrative resources could be re-configured to provide strategic support for key administrative initiatives including faculty research activities.
	Addressee	Priority	PRG Recommendation [Draft Report]	Faculty Response
			<u>External and internal relations</u>	
13	U	P2	With respect to the significant benefits that could accrue from increased collaboration between the Faculty and DCU's Linked Colleges, it is recommended that every effort be made to progress the establishment of an operational framework that will facilitate this.	<p>The Faculty would welcome the establishment of an operational framework which would facilitate and enable increased collaboration in relation to teaching and research with the Linked Colleges.</p> <p>From the perspective of the University, the MoUs with our Linked Colleges provides a governance framework for the operationalisation of any and all collaborations with our Linked Colleges. There is a joint management committee chaired by the OVPLI that meets, on a regular basis to discuss issues of mutual interest in Teaching and Learning and Research between St Patricks and DCU. This management committee has representation from the Faculty of H&SS. The University is fully supportive of this concept of collaborations with our linked colleges and members of the linked Colleges have recently been invited to join a number of committees including the QPC and the Learning in Online and Virtual Environments Group. The recent</p>

				<p>initiative in organising a Research Day focusing on Humanities research at postgraduate level is particularly noteworthy and should be strongly supported.</p> <p>The issues raised regarding the vision for medium to longer term strengthening of the level of collaboration and /or integration with our Linked Colleges, and the resourcing of this, will form an important element of the dialogue at University management level over the coming months. This will also likely be informed by external political agenda, including the detailed implementation of the Hunt Report. The resourcing issues raised by the Faculty will also form an agenda item on an upcoming meeting of University management.</p>
			Academic Programmes: Teaching and Learning	
14	A	P2	It is recommended that the Faculty progress the planned review of its portfolio of taught programmes in terms of on-going sustainability and the manner in which they are administered and managed within Faculty.	<p>In co-operation with the University, the Faculty will continue to review the role, functions and administration of Programme Boards and Progression and Award Boards.</p> <p>The Faculty will engage with a formal review of its portfolio of taught programmes.</p>
			Research, Scholarship & Training	
15	U	P2	It is recommended that the plans outlined by Senior Management regarding the provision of access to catering facilities for part-time students who attend DCU in the evenings and at weekends are progressed and, in addition, that comparable access to relevant administrative and other support services is thereafter explored and progressed.	<p>The Faculty notes the importance of the development of supports for part-time and distance learning programmes in attracting a wide range of students.</p> <p>The University is currently examining ways to improve access to facilities in the evening/weekends for all students in view of the current staffing constraints. A new Dean of Graduate Studies has now been appointed and it will be part of this person's remit to ensure that adequate facilities are available, within the current staffing and budgetary constraints.</p>
16	A	P2	It is recommended that the Faculty consider the implications of its research strategy in terms of identifying and promoting its key areas of research strength and seeking to build on achievements in these areas to date.	The Faculty will develop a robust strategy to facilitate engagement with changing circumstances and national research priorities.
17	A	P2	It is recommended that the Faculty progress a common work load model that factors in an appropriate balance between teaching and research activities to include, <i>inter alia</i> , recognition	The Faculty Board is developing a common workload model in conjunction with the University Workload Framework to ensure equity between teaching and research and suggesting measurable markers to ensure equity

			of the role of Research Centre Directors and research student supervision.	between teaching allocation and research activity and output.
18	A	P2	It is recommended that the Faculty explore ways in which the profile of Humanities and Social Science research achievements could be highlighted across the University and externally.	The Faculty will explore ways of increasing the visibility of its research endeavours in conjunction with the development of the Faculty marketing Plan.
19	A	P3	With respect to the operation of the Faculty Research Committee [FRC], it is recommended that the Faculty review the existing model for allocation of research and travel funds and consider whether there might be a greater role for the Faculty Research Committee in this regard	It is clarified that the Faculty Research Committee currently manages the process for disbursement of research travel funds and the Building Research Capacity fund through competitive processes. This 'custom & practice' process will be formalised in written guidelines.

3. SUMMARY OF THE ONE-YEAR PLAN

Overview and Strategy

The Faculty Board will initiate a series of meetings in the Faculty to review the Faculty's identity and mission, and discuss the compatibility of the Faculty's identity and mission with that of the University.

Organisation and Management

The Faculty Board will:

- Critically review the Faculty Constitution both to clarify internal lines of communication and responsibility and also to progress communication with the Linked Colleges.
- Complete the process of developing the Faculty Workload Framework in line with the University Framework.
- In conjunction with the University management, review the flow of communication between Faculty and University.

The Dean, Faculty Manager will:

- Work with Information Systems and Services to assess the possibility of using new platforms to disseminate information, share documents and enhance communication flow within the faculty and between the Faculty, the University and the Linked Colleges.
- Liaise with Information Systems and Services in relation to the implementation of approved web access to facilitate updating of faculty information in a user-friendly and timely fashion.

The Faculty Board, Schools will:

- Review and where necessary revise the flow of communication between Schools and Faculty.
- Facilitate the review and reorganisation of the Schools' committee structures and communications processes to improve efficiency, quality and the participation in and dissemination of decision-making.

The Dean, Faculty Manager, Faculty Board will:

- Develop a protocol for circulation of papers and other documents, e.g. link to archived documents rather than attachments.

Staffing, accommodation and resources

The Dean, Faculty Board will:

- Explore possibilities for joint / cross school appointments where the skill sets clearly address those of one or more schools within the Faculty.

The Dean, Faculty Manager will:

- Explore how existing administrative resources could be re-configured to provide strategic support for key administrative initiatives including faculty research activities.
- Continue to have regular meetings with Estates to raise current and new issues and to secure sufficient and fit-for-purpose space, based on requirements plans submitted by Heads in the annual submissions, to the University's Space Planning and Management Group.
- Work in conjunction with Estates to explore the viability of upgrading the ventilation / air quality systems taking into consideration costs, etc. and to obtain surveyor's recommendations and costs related to the improvement of soundproofing.

The Faculty Board will:

- Continue to critically review Faculty structures and processes to identify efficiencies of scale.

The Faculty Marketing Committee will:

- Initiate the development of an integrated Faculty Marketing Strategy in conjunction with the proposed DCU Marketing Strategy developed by Public Affairs Office.
- Explore the possibility of developing a faculty 'look/brand' in conjunction with the University's current review of DCU's branding.
- Explore ways to improve efficiencies and effectiveness in marketing activities

- Explore ways to develop an online marketing presence.
- Liaise with Public Affairs alongside the Office of the Vice President for Research to ensure that good examples of HSS research output receive extensive publicity and support.

External and internal relations

The Faculty Board will:

- Critically review the Faculty Constitution to enhance co-operation with the Linked Colleges.
- Facilitate the review and reorganisation of the Schools' committee structures and communications processes to improve efficiency, quality and the participation in and dissemination of decision-making.

Academic Programmes: Teaching and Learning

The Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee will:

- Initiate the review of academic structures and programme managements.

Research, Scholarship and Training

The Dean and Associate Dean for Research will:

- Seek to secure additional research administrative resource support in the Office of the Vice President for Research and in Faculty to effectively improve the quality of information we have and help grow and brand our Faculty research output.

The Faculty Board in conjunction with the Faculty Research Committee will:

- Facilitate collaboration with the Linked Colleges in undertaking coordinated research by continuing to support the formation of partnerships, joint projects and inter faculty research projects;
- Liaise with the Institute of Ethics/ DCU Research Ethics Committee and the Linked Colleges Research Ethics Committees regarding the provision of research ethics training and support for researchers;
- Explore the viability of models of research metric analysis suitable for the Humanities and Social Sciences;
- Identify opportunities to promote more effective and externally recognised research outputs which builds on current strengths within the Faculty;
- Continue to support competitive bidding for scarce research resources to ensure that priorities are met;
- Liaise with Information Systems and Services to provide access for Faculty staff to post on-line [without University acting as gate keeper] resources [podcasts, etc] highlighting / showcasing and promoting research;
- Encourage and promote participation in and hosting of conferences which are high profile and international by the Faculty's staff in academic conferences.

The Associate Dean for Research will:

- Initiate a schedule of meetings with Research Centre Directors to help prioritise areas of research strength for future funding proposals.

The Faculty Research Committee will:

- Provide on-going support for research funding initiatives including the O'Hare Scholarship, Research Capacity Building [RCB] and other Faculty/University/ research projects;
- Continue to host and develop the Faculty Research Day.

4. SUMMARY OF THE THREE-YEAR PLAN

Overview and Strategy

The Faculty Board will ensure that:

- The Three-Year Element of the Quality Improvement Plan is embedded in the Faculty Strategic Plan;
- During the life of the Three-Year Plan elements achieved in the One Year Plan will be monitored and if necessary reprioritised for implementation in the three year plan
- The Faculty's Strategic Plan continues to evolve in line with the development of the University Plan;
- External circumstances are monitored so that the Faculty's strategies continue to be viable and appropriate or adjust accordingly.

Organisation and Management

The Faculty Board will ensure that:

- The Faculty monitors and reviews structures which have been introduced under the One Year Plan.

Staffing, accommodation and resources

The Dean, Faculty Manager will continue to:

- Progress the implementation of major infrastructure projects including air quality and soundproofing in the Henry Grattan Extension, if deemed viable;
- Review and seek to expand its space allocation to accommodate staff, visitors, emeritus staff and postgraduate research students.

External and internal relations

The Faculty Board will seek:

- To increase and enhance co-operation and collaboration with the Linked Colleges under the auspices of the established University framework.

Academic Programmes: Teaching and Learning

The Dean, Associate Dean for Learning Innovation, Faculty Board will:

- Review the Faculty portfolio of programmes and awards with a view to rationalising the number of programmes of studies on offer while allowing for different pathways and awards.

The Associate Dean for Learning Innovation, Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee will:

- Continue to engage in the ongoing revision and streamlining of Programme Management and Administration;
- Review the roles and responsibilities in relation to programme management in conjunction with University developments in this regard.

Research, Scholarship and Training

The Faculty, with the Faculty's research centres, groups and individuals will:

- Agree and develop policies, strategies and processes for the maintenance and development of research activity infrastructure;
- Seek to define an Institutional research strategy that would co-ordinate and prioritise research activities in the University and the Linked Colleges.

The Faculty will:

- Implement appropriate research metrics;
- Evaluate its research strategy and revise formulation as necessary;
- Implement and assess on an ongoing basis the effectiveness of initiatives as set out in the one year plan.

APPENDICES

1. Faculty Quality Committee [for the Self-Assessment Report]

Prof. Eithne Guilfoyle, Executive Dean / Chair
Dr. Françoise Blin, Associate Dean for Learning Innovation
Dr. Pat Brereton, Associate Dean for Research
Ms. Hannah Dyas, Faculty Manager
Ms. Goretti Daughton, Senior Administrative Officer

2. Peer Review Group

Prof. Pól Ó Dochartaigh, Chair / Dean, Faculty of Arts, University of Ulster
Prof. Nicholas Rees, Dean of Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Liverpool Hope University
Ms. Teresa Casserly, Senior Consultant and Manager, Institute of Public Administration
Ms. Pauline Mooney, Rapporteur / Faculty Manager, Faculty of Science and Health, DCU /
Member of DCU Quality Promotion Committee
Dr. Noel Murphy, Head of School, School of Electronic Engineering, DCU

3. Faculty Quality Committee [for the Quality Improvement Plan]

Prof. Eithne Guilfoyle, Executive Dean / Chair
Dr. Françoise Blin, Associate Dean for Learning Innovation
Dr. Pat Brereton, Associate Dean for Research
Ms. Hannah Dyas, Faculty Manager
Ms. Goretti Daughton, Senior Administrative Officer

4. Prioritised Resource Requirements

Project 1:	Content Management System	Cost Estimate:	€30,000
Project 2:	Video / Podcast Showcase	Cost Estimate:	€20,000