

Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement

Finance Quality Plan

2006-2011



Review : April 2005
Report : June 2005
Plan : March 2006

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Background

A number of reviews have been carried out in finance during 2005 of which the PRG Quality review and Deloitte's Finance Function review are the 2 most important.

The PRG Quality review process involved;

- Quality Audit in March 2005,
- Quality Report issued in August 2005,
- Finance response to PRG in October 2005,
- Final Report submitted by PRG in February 2006.

A summary of the of the PRG recommendations are;

Reference	Recommendations Category	Priority 1 Recs.	Priority 2 Recs.	Priority 3 Recs.
Finance				
A.	Finance Restructure	5		
B	Staff Recruitment, Development & Retention	1	3	
C	Finance Vision and Ethos	3	2	
D	Finance Mgt. Planning & Agenda	2	2	
E	Communication Channels	3	2	
F	Customers service	2		
I	Target Setting and Measurement		2	2
J	System Development		2	1
K	Physical Location			1
I	Sub-Total	16	13	4
Finance/University				
A.	Finance Restructure	1		
B	Staff Recruitment, Development & Retention	4		
I	Sub-Total	5		
University				
D	Finance Mgt. Planning & Agenda	1		
G	Finance Positioning within Organisation	1		
H	Quality Process Review Process	1		
I	Sub-Total	3		
QPR				
H	Quality Process Review Process	1	4	1
I	Sub-Total	1	4	1
I	Total	24	17	5

Deloitte's Finance function review process involved;

- Review took place in first half of 2005,
- Preliminary report was circulated in August 2005,
- Consultative Process with senior Finance management in Final Quarter of 2005,
- Final report Sent to President in January 2006.

The key findings of Deloitte's are

- Finance has both a steward and strategy role,
- Proposed new organisation structure - (Appendix 1),
- Resource level to be set at 38 with a normalised level of 32,
- Changes to Finance process and systems.

This Quality plan is a natural progression from these 2 processes and we have incorporated aspects of both documents in our plan.

History of Achievements

The Finance Office in its own planning, recognised the benefits and necessity of introducing financial systems based on current technologies, (e.g. database, web deployment, report writers, etc.), with increased functionality, and the need to leverage technology to support university activities. The expected outcomes also included the efficient deployment of resources, and the change in the skill-set profile of some people.

The Core Payroll System was implemented in April 2001, while the Agresso Financial System went live in August 2003. Both were implemented following considerable and all-inclusive planning processes. While, the plans and aspirations for both were very ambitious, both were affected by pressure on available resources to complete and run, and maintain service levels. Both projects paused or shelved on elements of the installations to concentrate efforts on recurrent operations. However, the Agresso Project had a long-standing correction task to complete which had to be stalled while audits, year-ends and other normal activities were completed. This did have a significant impact on reporting and resources required to develop reporting.

The Agresso Project saw the deployment of distributed purchasing, web deployment of purchasing, commitment accounting, centralised invoicing, etc. most of which was not at any other Irish university. DCU has had distributed purchasing since 2000, and commitment accounting since early 1990's. DCU has had a Fixed Asset Register since the mid 1990's, this being a recent development in most other Irish universities. It also continued with on-line reporting which was one of the functions provided in "old" financials.

The Finance Office had identified and had created some initial plans, and had discussions with Faculty Administrators, about the requirement for the Finance office to partner and support the financial functions of the Executive Deans and Faculty Administrators, independently of any plans/directives of the university Executive or senior management. The office had also identified the absolute need to move from invoice creation to Accounts Receivable management. The use of technology was identified in the reduction and simplification of administration, e.g. on-line expenses, scanned documents, on-line processing, self-service reporting, self-service amendments, etc. There was also recognition to push efforts and resources away from transaction processing to greater effort on risk management and decision support.

Current Position: Finance Office

Vision: Building Excellence in service and resource management

Strategy: Deliver customer focussed financial and administrative services that meet the university's strategic program.

Customers/Clients:

President	Funding Agencies	Auditors
Audit Committee	Government Departments:	Public
Budget Committee	- Education	Suppliers
Senior Management	- Health	
Company Boards	-Finance	
Students	Funding Agencies	
Staff	Controller and Auditor General	
DCU Executive	Revenue Commissioners	
Governing Authority		
Budget Holders		

Goals and targets:

1. Meet legal, statutory and regulatory requirements so that material audit findings, fines or legal sanctions are not levied against the university,
2. Ensure compliance with international, EU and Irish law including tax legislation,
3. Ensure compliance with all university policies and procedures,
4. Develop and implement a service level plan linked to funding and available resources;
5. Regularly improve scope and level of workforce skills covering recruitment, selection, retention and training.

Responsibilities:

The Finance Office's main responsibilities are:

1. to account for the receipts and payments of the University and all its departments and subsidiaries,
2. to handle and process all payroll matters for all staff,
3. to provide a student fee processing service and related activities,
4. to co-ordinate budgets and advice on trends in University income and expenditure,
5. to manage resources, especially cash, efficiently and effectively,
6. to co-ordinate purchasing policies,
7. to insure and manage other risks,
8. to oversee financial aspects of new buildings.

The roles are split out into the following functional areas;

(A) Accounts Payable

Function

The accounts payable section provides an accounting centre for payment of all invoices and staff expense payments for the University while adhering to legislative and the university's policies and procedures associated with same.

Services

1. Processing of Invoices and Payments to Suppliers,
2. Processing of Staff Expenses & Travel Re-imbursments and Cheque Requisition Payments ,
3. Set-Up New Supplier Accounts,
4. VAT and Intrastat Returns,
5. Tax Clearance Administration,
6. Implementation of Late Payment in Commercial Transactions Regulations 2002,
7. Professional Services Withholding Taxation and Returns,
8. Subcontractors Taxation and Returns.

(B) AR Debtors

Function

The AR Debtors section is responsible for issuing of all invoices for services and other income, allocation and posting of all receipts while adhering to taxation regulations and the university's procedures associated with same.

Services

1. To ensure all sundry receipts are captured and accounted for properly.
2. Receipts can be processed in several ways with reference to the type of payment.
3. To invoice customers and receive payment for services
4. To pay and account for Post Graduate Studentship.

(C) Fees Office

Function

The fees office are responsible for the setting of fees for courses and course modules, the collection of these fees from students, issuing of Invoices and receipt of grants/payments for fees to Public bodies and Companies and Fees payments from the HEA and Dept. of Health .

Services

1. To set fees and publish on website and booklet,
2. To ensure fees are generated correctly on ITS,
3. To account for fees income on a correct basis and process to Agresso,
4. To allocate bank giro, cheques, cash and credit card payments correctly,
5. To follow up payment of outstanding fees,
6. To complete statutory and regulatory returns in relation to fee income,
7. To reconcile control accounts.

(D) Fixed Assets**Function**

The Fixed Asset section is responsible for ensuring that Capital expenditure is accounted for correctly.

Services

1. To ensure Capital Projects, Research Grants and Recurrent Budget and Capital Equipment Grants Are accounted correctly,
2. To ensure Fixed Asset Register is kept up to date,
3. To ensure that reconciliation and reporting is correct in relation to Capital expenditure,
4. To account for leased assets.
5. To manage Capital receipts and Grants.

(E) Insurance Risk Management**Function**

Risk management strives to ensure all Insurance risk is covered for the University and the Campus Companies. Insurance Cover includes Public Liability Insurance, Employer's Liability, Vehicle Insurance, Professional Indemnity, Travel, Property Insurance with all risks covered including contents, and Student Personal Accident cover.

Services

1. To ensure Insurance policies are put in place and all known risk is covered,
2. To administer insurance claims,
3. To approve insurance premiums,
4. To complete relevant information forms.

(F) Payroll**Function**

The Payroll section is responsible for ensuring that all staff are paid correctly and in a timely fashion including employees of DCU, Research and Companies.

Services

1. To pay all staff and studentships correctly on a weekly and monthly basis,
2. To deduct and account for both statutory and non-statutory deductions,
3. To post all payroll transaction to Agresso,
4. To deal with Queries in relation to Nominal Ledger postings on Payroll from the Schools, Campus Companies and the Research areas,
5. To deal with Queries from the Social Welfare Department as well as queries from individuals in relation to Social Welfare issues,
6. To deal with queries in relation to Salary on an adhoc basis,
7. To prepare monthly reconciliations on payroll controls and bank accounts.

(G) System Support and Development**Function**

The System Support and Development section is responsible for supporting users of the Agresso Financial System and the development of the systems for its user base.

Services

1. To pay provide helpdesk support for users,
2. To design and carry out training programmes,
3. To develop reporting in Agresso,
4. To integrate feeder systems to improve transaction processing,
5. To facilitate workflow and automation of processing transactions.

(H) Research**Function**

The Research Section is responsible for accounting for Research Projects carried out in the University, which are funded in the main by grants and sponsorship from outside bodies. Projects may be funded by the European Union, the National Plan for Research or by such bodies as Enterprise Ireland, Science Foundation Ireland, HRB, The Wellcome Trust, and Fas or by an industry partners. Funding is also provided directly by the University.

Services

1. To ensure grants are applied for and received,
2. To ensure compliance with funding agency's terms and conditions,
3. To submit financial returns to relevant bodies and provide documentation for audit,
4. To administer Donations received from benefactors,
5. Postgraduate and Undergraduate Access Funding.

(I) Reporting**Function**

The Finance Office provides financial/accounting services for each Company and University using the shared Agresso System.

Services

1. To complete annual financial and statutory accounts for DCU and its group of companies,
2. To complete and submit regulatory and non statutory returns,
3. To ensure that the financial transactions are processed correctly,
4. To provide relevant and timely information for budgetary control and decision making,
5. To assist the auditors in the audit of the financial statements,
6. To manage and report on Cash flows within the group.

Initiatives completed

A number of projects have been kicked off since the PRG carried out its quality audit and are complete or at an advanced stage. The below list is not comprehensive but does identify important milestones that have been achieved in the period from 01st January 2005 to 31st March 2006.

A) Finance Restructure

1. Actively engaged with Deloitte's review,
2. Consultative process in relation to preliminary report,
3. Raised strategy issues with President and Deloitte's,
4. Evaluating different models in relation to restructuring finance,
5. Presented findings to President on resources and new proposed structure,
6. Roll out of Accounts payable shared services.

B) Staff Recruitment, Development and Retention

1. Appointed Financial Accountant to assist in Companies,
2. Put Grade 2 and Grade 3 panels in place,
3. Outsourced Helix Accounting to clear back log,
4. Recruited additional accountant for Research,
5. Appointed 3 permanent positions within Accounts Payable,
6. Appointed 2 permanent staff within Fees,
7. Provided training in PC applications to finance staff,
8. Sent staff on customer awareness workshop.

C) Finance Vision and Ethos

1. Customer awareness workshop with all staff,
2. Identify improved service levels with changes to systems and procedures,
3. Process of identifying service levels gaps,

D) Communication channels

1. Review of website in a number of sections,
2. Improved Email/Protocol put in place,
3. Raised individual finance profiles,
4. Communicated Quality review and Deloitte's position to staff,
5. Regular Senior finance managers meeting,
6. Monthly departmental staff meetings within each section,

Initiatives Completed by Functional units

To demonstrate that FO is committed to continually improving service levels and improve on existing procedures and systems the following changes have been implemented in the following Sections in the period from 1st January 2005 to 31st March 2006.

(A) Accounts Payable;

1. Cheque Requisition Expenditure Forms reviewed and redrafted,
2. Staff Travel & Expenses Forms reviewed and redrafted,
3. Manual cheque book review in order to replace with system based facility,
4. New cancelled cheques procedure,
5. Petty Cash Pilot introduced to see if rollout is appropriate,
6. Supplier Authorisation procedure put in place to manage supplier database,
7. Upload of sundry cheques requisitions to speed up processing,
8. Emailing faculty administrators in advance of monthly payment run dates.

(B) AR Debtors;

1. On Line payment for Conferences,
2. Monthly reconciliations of bank accounts.

(C) Fees

1. EU Status Tool available on line,
2. On Line Payment facility made available,
3. New credit control policy prepared and awaiting approval,
4. New Deferment policy submitted for approval,
5. Automation of Tax Receipts printing,
6. Account balance tidy up functionality developed and implemented,
7. Oracle Discoverer reporting tool introduced,
8. Integration of ITS to Agresso.

(D) Fixed Assets

1. New policy in relation to treatment of Capital Expenditure,
2. Sale and Leaseback of Assets,

(E) Insurance Risk Management

1. Review of Group Insurance cover,

(F) Payroll

1. Development of shared folders with other departments for standard queries,
2. Presentation of information requirements to other departments,
3. Logging of all staff requests for staff cost projections,
4. Review of Company Tax Group situation,
5. Incorporation of 3 new campus companies within payroll,
6. Review of forms and implement New HR change request form,
7. Implementation of more detailed reporting on staff costs for budgets,
8. New format of monthly controls and reconciliations implemented,
9. Implementation of ROS system for making returns.

(G) Systems Support and Development

1. Review and sign off of data migration,
2. Upgrade of Agresso Completed,
3. Agresso online manuals reviewed and changed,
4. Agresso Training Course developed,
5. On-Line Staff Re-imburement Module RFP,
6. Finance report development.

(H) Research

1. Research Activity Metrics workshop,
2. Improved accounting services internally and for SFI,
3. New system initiatives to identify incorrect postings,
4. Development of accelerator report writing.

(I) Reporting Development

1. Development of Agresso Report Writer-Accelerator,
2. New Planning/Reporting Tool (Corporate Planner) workshop was held,
3. Consultation with Deloitte in relation to the finance function,
4. Agresso 2003 & 2004 Rollup Completed,
5. Audit lead time significantly reduced.

Methodology;

In drafting our Quality plan we took the following into account;

1. PRG Quality review report,
2. Finance Response to that report,
3. Finance staff workshop,
4. Deloitte's Finance Function review,
5. Finance's continued drive to improve procedures and processes.

Critical factor (Resources);

It has to be highlighted at this stage that the success or failure of implementing this Quality plan will depend on the level of resources that are made available to the Finance Function.

Service levels within finance are dictated by the number and quality of staff available because of;

- **Diversity and variety of the nature of work within the finance function,**
- **Constant state of change within the finance environment,**
- **Factors outside finance which can have a significant impact on our work load,**
- **Implementation of system developments is resource intensive,**
- **Greater demand from Funding Agencies,**
- **Increase in Governance demands,**
- **Growth in subsidiary holdings.**

Staff	Total	Permanent	Temporary
Existing Complement	26		
Deloitte's Level of Staff	38	32	6
Finance current view	41	34	7

Our functional quality plan shows where additional resources are required over the next 2-3 years to implement systems developments and changes in procedures to improve our level of service.

Quality Improvement Plan: Year 1

Introduction

We have set out our Year 1 Quality improvement plan into 3 sections

- 1. Finance management pre-requisites,**
- 2. Finance units Common initiatives,**
- 3. Individual Functional unit's initiatives.**

Finance management pre-requisites,

This section is very important as it will have a knock on affect on the ability of individual finance units to achieve their individual plans

Finance Restructure

1. Agree high level design of Finance Organisation with Executive,
2. Discuss and agree with Key Finance personnel,
3. Identify key gaps where recruitment is required,
4. Communicate and role out new finance organisation,
5. Fulfil new taxation self compliance requirements.

Staff Recruitment, Development & Retention

1. Ensure appropriate resource levels are in place in each unit,
2. Introduce relevant professional development schemes,
3. Investigate skills/competency gap and develop training programmes,
4. Introduce job shadowing and train staff,
5. Monitor work load and work practices.

Finance Vision and Ethos

1. Make a vision statement setting out objectives and targets,
2. Set out Systems plan and expectations,
3. Set key targets and ensure measurement of these metrics,
4. Develop change management plan,
5. Build up a service quality ethos within Finance,
6. Process of identifying service levels gaps and perceptions.

Communication channels

1. Identify all communication channels with stakeholders,
2. Ensure a consistent, accurate and timely experience is given,
3. Investigate new channels to interact with stakeholders,
4. Introduce staff communication policy.

Functional Unit Common Initiatives

The following initiatives will be carried out by each functional unit as part of the quality plan.

1. Identify all customers and stakeholders,
2. Document all services provided,
3. Set out levels of service to be provided,
4. Develop a stakeholder requirements and Gap analysis,
5. Set key Target levels and report on these,
6. Communicate these target levels with customers and stakeholders,
7. Monitor and escalate non-performance and risks.

Functional Unit Unique Initiatives

Each functional unit will then look at its own unique services and implement the following to improve the level of service within 1 year. Additional resources are required in the next 2 – 3 years to implement these.

(A) Accounts Payable	Existing Resources	Additional Resources
1. Launch of new website to include new forms, procedures And information,	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
2. Replace Manual cheque book with Agresso automated cheques,	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
3. Roll-out of upload of similar transactions to reduce input time,	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
4. Implement on Line Staff Expense re-imburement module,		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5. Clean up invoice outstanding for more than 3 months,		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6. Review of all PO's for obsolete items,		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
7. Clean up invoice to be GRN's,		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
8. Develop pro-active clearance and chasing procedures.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(B) AR Debtors		
1. Extension of on line payment facility	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
2. Monthly Review of total outstanding Debtors,	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
3. Implementation of standard credit control processes,	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
4. Development of notebook facility within Agresso,		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5. Clean up outstanding inter-co debtors.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

(C) Fees	Existing Resources	Additional Resources
1. Review position of fees within DCU website and Launch of new website,	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
2. Introduce monthly cycle and reconciliation of control accounts,	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
3. Input to On line Registration Programme,	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
4. Input to PAC integration,	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
5. Integration of ITS to Agresso.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
6. Clean up current year suspense account postings,	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
7. Reconcile receipts made by Internal transfers,	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
8. Clean up accounts with small balances,	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
9. New automated voice mail answering service,	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
10. On line student balance information to be introduced,	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
11. On line bank giro request to be introduced,	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
12. Old debt review and clean up exercise,		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
13. Identify bad debts and write off,		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
14. Development of reporting of fee income and balances,		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
15. Investigate upload of transactions to ITS,		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
16. Development of integration of PG student records and studentships.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(D) Fixed Assets		
1. Audit of Fixed Assets on Agresso	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
2. Review of Functionality on FAR in Agresso	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
3. Introduce monthly cycle and reconciliation of control accounts,	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
4. Input to Fixed Asset Policy,	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
5. Project reporting,	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
6. Capital Grants and Returns.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
(E) Insurance Risk Management		
1. Complete Risk Analysis surveys of DCU Group,	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
2. Compile statistical returns that impact on premiums.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(F) Payroll		
1. Review website and Launch of new website,	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
2. Development of HR template,	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
3. Integration of Payroll to Agresso with new coding,	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
4. Upgrade of Core Payroll,	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
5. Development of reporting on companies payroll.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

(G) Systems Development**Existing
Resources****Additional
Resources**

- | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Carry out Post Agresso Implementation review, | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| 2. Develop Agresso training programme on the feedback from Pilot | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| 3. Integration of ITS (Fees to Agresso, | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| 4. Implementation of EFT for Suppliers, | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| 5. Develop automated cheque reconciliations On Agresso, | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| 6. Implement On-Line Staff Re-imburement Module RFP, | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Development of reporting from Agresso, | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Integration of Payroll to Agresso, | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. Implement feeds to reporting and planning tools from Agresso. | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

(H) Research

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Development of management review of deficits, | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| 2. Implement budget checking on Agresso, | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| 3. Regularise reporting structure to Audit bodies, | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| 4. Schedule of Research Accounting information workshops, | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| 5. Implement RSS for electronic contracts, | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Roll out project tracking systems for budget approval, | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Survey and workshops to identify PI's needs. | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

(I) Reporting Development

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Development of Agresso Report Writer-Accelerator, | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| 2. Roll out of new Reporting Tool (Corporate Planner), | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| 3. Reduction of Audit lead time, | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Implement monthly reporting discipline and reconciliation, | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Review of timescale for Regulatory returns, | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Build on faculty partnering for finance resources, | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Extension of GAAP reporting. | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

Quality Improvement Plan 2-5 Years

The Finance Office will continue to improve services and processes, which have the following outcomes;

Finance management pre-requisites,

Finance Restructure

1. Development of shared services functions,
2. Introduction of credit control,
3. Build up in house tax knowledge,
4. Extend Treasury and Funding Models.

**Existing
Resources**

**Additional
Resources**

-
-
-
-

Staff Recruitment, Development & Retention

1. Empower staff to ensure that they can deliver Improved service,
2. Raise profile of individuals within finance for Specialised queries,
3. Review physical environment that staff works in,
4. Develop partnering model for finance staff.

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-

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-

Finance Vision and Ethos/Culture

1. Put in place a mechanism to gather customer Feedback and assimilate,
2. Tackle confusion in relation to budgeting within The university,
3. Review Implementation of the Quality Plan.

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-
-

Communication channels

1. Develop forum for feedback into finance,
2. Constantly Review communication channels.

-
-

Functional Unit 2-5 Year Plan**(A) Accounts Payable**

	Existing Resources	Additional Resources
--	-------------------------------	---------------------------------

- | | | |
|--|--|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Central management of tax clearance for DCU Group, | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Grouping of invoice from large suppliers, | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Eliminate incorrect debit balances with Creditors, | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Monthly cycle for reconciliations of all suppliers, | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Investigation of procurement card. | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

(B) AR Debtors

- | | | |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Old debt review and clean up exercise, | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Identify bad debts and write off, | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Development of reporting of Debtors. | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

(C) Fees

- | | | |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Old debt review and clean up exercise, | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Identify bad debts and write off, | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Development of reporting of fee income and balances, | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Investigate upload of transactions to ITS, | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Automation of allocation of receipts, | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Upgrade of Its Systems. | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

(D) Fixed Assets

- | | | |
|--|--|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Development of reporting from Fixed Asset Register, | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Investigate bar coding and tracking system, | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Introduce on line Fixed asset ID generation. | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

(E) Insurance Risk Analysis

- | | | |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Carry out risk analysis and continuity planning for finance, | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Introduce reporting mechanism on risk. | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

(F) Payroll

- | | | |
|--|--|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Integration with New HR System, | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Roll out of on line staff requests authorisation, | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Development of Oracle Discoverer Reporting, | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Implement part time module on Core Pay, | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Investigate use of On Line Pay Slips, | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Carry out a review of Take on Time Sheets. | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

(G) System Support and Development**Existing
Resources****Additional
Resources**

- | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Upgrade of Agresso | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| 2. Output of Financial information into Financial planning Tools | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| 3. Pilot use of scanners to reduce level of paperwork. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |

(H) Research

- | | | |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|
| 1. On line approval for staff researchers, | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Renewal of significant proportion of funding grants, | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Development of 7 framework proposals, | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Document retrieval system for Audit claims, | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Stratification of funding proposals , | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

(I) Reporting Development

- | | | |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Implement monthly reporting discipline and reconciliation, | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Reduction of Audit lead time, | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Review of timescale for Regulatory returns, | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Build on faculty partnering for finance resources. | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

Items not covered by Quality Improvement

The following items fall outside the remit of the Finance department and are not covered by the Quality plan

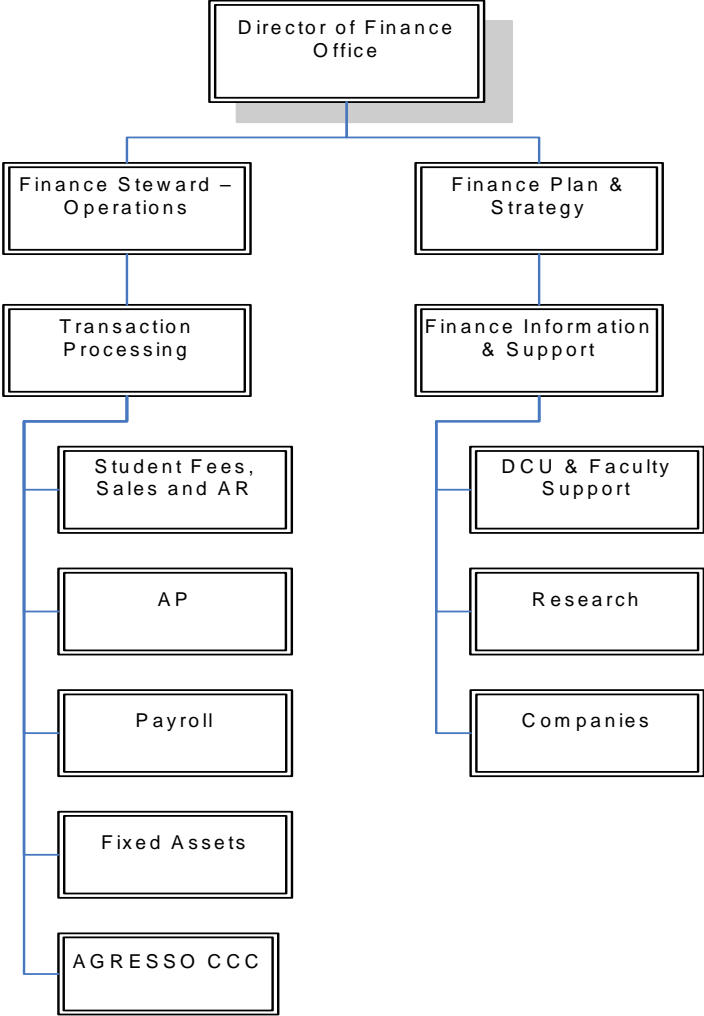
1. Objectives and expectations of senior management for the unit under review should be forwarded to PRG members well in advance of the peer review commencement.
2. PRG recommend that the relationship between the Director of Finance and the President should be unambiguously expressed in a re-arrangement of the reporting structure as outlined in the DCU Self-Evaluation Report for the EUA [Graph D7] to formalise the direct reporting line between the Director of Finance and the President adequately and acknowledge the responsibilities of the Director of Finance
3. Senior Management should provide a timetable for publication of their response to the additional staffing plan proposals from Finance.

Implementation

We propose to keep the quality committee working group to rollout a customer ethos within finance and to monitor feedback in relation to service quality levels.

1. identify all stakeholders and customers of finance and their needs and requirements,
2. Define, clarify and document stakeholders and clients needs, expectations and services,
3. Set target levels of service, communicate (Service level Agreements) and measure,
4. Deliver on agreed service mix and levels with annual review of changing requirements,
5. Build on existing relationships with customers groups and method of communication,
6. Establish focus Groups, forum surveys and questionnaires for feedback and benchmark against the best practice,
7. Implement Quality plan.

APPENDIX 1: Proposed Finance Structure



APPENDIX 2: Responses to Peer Group Recommendations

<u>Ref.</u>	<u>P1 Ref.</u>	<u>Main Category</u>	<u>Sub-Category</u>	<u>PRG</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Priorty</u>	<u>Finance Office Commentary</u>
A(i)		Self-Assessment Process	Quality Process Review	The PRG recommend the introduction of a checking process along key milestones during the quality review process to ensure that the quality review process itself could not be undermined by the low or absence of commitment and engagement of units under review.	QPU	2	Milestone e-mails have been built into the review process following the recommendation.
A(ii)		Self-Assessment Process	Quality Process Review	The PRG recommend that systems be put in place to ensure that a comprehensive Self Assessment Report is completed in a timely manner.	QPU	2	Systems are in place to ensure that a comprehensive Self Assessment Report is completed in a timely manner.
B(i)	(i)	Peer Review Process	Quality Process Review	Objectives and expectations of senior management for the unit under review should be forwarded to PRG members well in advance of the peer review commencement.	University	1	Mission statements will be developed by all units and agreed with the university to reflect objectives.
B(ii)		Peer Review Process	Quality Process Review	In reviewing aspects of the timetable the PRG recommend that the merit of a working dinner for the PRG on the second evening of the review be reviewed.	QPU	3	It will be emphasised for future reviews that this time-table element is flexible.
B(iii)		Peer Review Process	Quality Process Review	The readiness of units should be assessed by the QPU prior to the commencement of the Peer Review. This assessment should be communicated to the PRG.	QPU	2	Meetings have been arranged between the QPU, the Deputy-President and Heads of Units to be reviewed to assess the readiness of Units.
B(iv)		Peer Review Process	Quality Process Review	Critical information such as the availability of the Head of Unit under review should be given to PRG as soon as this information is available.	QPU	2	Information flow to PRG will be improved in this and other respects.

<u>Ref.</u>	<u>P1 Ref.</u>	<u>Main Category</u>	<u>Sub-Category</u>	<u>PRG</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Priorty</u>	<u>Finance Office Commentary</u>
C(i)	(ii)	Change Management	Finance Vision and Ethos	Going forward management within Finance Office should sustain and develop a culture that seeks to influence and shape its environment.	Finance Office	1	Staff workshop initiated to define stakeholders and services. A Change Implementation committee has been established which will facilitate contact with the University community.
C(ii)	(iii)	Change Management	Finance Vision and Ethos	The Finance Office should express its own vision of how financial services will be delivered in a formal statement, following on from a consultation process with all stakeholders. This vision should support and be strongly aligned to the University statement of strategy. This statement by the Finance Office should include a high-level mission statement and objectives and targets as found in a business plan format.	Finance Office	1	This will be agreed and communicated, and FO will endeavour to have the vision formally endorsed by the Senior Management. However This is resource dependent.
C(iii)	(iv)	Change Management	Finance Restructure	The creation of the maximum integration of this Report with the Deloitte and Touche consultancy.	Finance Office	1	Finance has integrated Deloitte findings into the Quality Improvement Plan.
C(iv)	(v)	Change Management	Customers service	The widening of the customer base survey envisaged as part of the Deloitte and Touche consultancy.	Finance Office	1	All stakeholders identified in workshop will be included. FO intends to conduct a survey of customers and stakeholders.

<u>Ref.</u>	<u>P1 Ref.</u>	<u>Main Category</u>	<u>Sub-Category</u>	<u>PRG</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Priorty</u>	<u>Finance Office Commentary</u>
M(i)	(vi)	Change Management - Communication	Communication Channels	The Finance Office must critically review as a matter of urgency the communication channel between itself and stakeholder groups. The review should focus on responsiveness to client need, communication / information channel, telephone, formal reporting, web site.	Finance Office	1	FO websites have been reviewed in a number of finance departments and phone and email protocols were introduced. Other communication channels will be explored and delivered.
M(ii)	(vii)	Change Management - Communication	Communication Channels	The Finance Unit requires as a matter of priority to engage in a communication exercise with its stakeholders to establish business and service needs, gaps in current service provision and the impact of these services demands on resources and skills mix available in the Finance Office.	Finance Office	1	Finance will follow the partnership model as a central element in a communication process with stakeholders.
M(iii)		Change Management - Communication	Communication Channels	The Finance Office should establish a Finance Forum, comprised of users from stakeholder groups which would review quarterly the quality of financial services received and collectively assess how service improvements might be made.	Finance Office	2	The Finance Office will establish a Finance Forum, comprised of users from stakeholder groups which will bi-annually communicate FO initiatives to stakeholders, and review the quality of financial services received and collectively assess how service improvements might be made.
M(iv)		Change Management - Communication	Communication Channels	The assessment and, where appropriate, improvement of channels of communication between the Unit and budget holders, in particular faculties and research centres, in structured consultation with the Units involved.	Finance Office	2	Agresso and Financial Management training in consultation with units is under way. Partnering has commenced.

<u>Ref.</u>	<u>P1 Ref.</u>	<u>Main Category</u>	<u>Sub-Category</u>	<u>PRG</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Priorty</u>	<u>Finane Office Commentary</u>
P(i)	(viii)	Change Management – Planning & management	Finance Mgt. Planning & Agenda	The prioritisation, in conjunction with the Senior Management group, of a resolution of potential policy issues relating to the tension between accountability requirements and decentralisation objectives, as a fundamental aspect of the planning process for the development of the Unit, its staffing levels, and the definition of its responsibilities.	Finance Office	1	Statutory reporting and tax compliance will always takes precedence The Deputy President will revisit communication between Executive, Budget Committee, Faculties/Units.
P(ii)	(ix)	Change Management – Planning & management	Finance Restructure	The development of a planned and phased programme for implementation of the desired increased resources for the Unit.	Finance Office	1	Finance have recruited a number of qualified staff and outsourced the backlog of accounting within a subsidiary following from the Deloitte report. A planned and phased resourcing programme will be agreed with Senior Mgt. after completion of the Quality Improvement Plan.
P(iii)		Change Management – Planning & management	Finance Mgt. Planning & Agenda	A management development programme should be initiated for Finance management to develop new and alternative management styles which will be more appropriate in a change environment.	Finance Office	2	Outside support will be used to manage and implement change.
P(iv)		Change Management – Planning & management	Target Setting and Measurement	The Finance Office should monitor workload and performance through the development of performance metrics.	Finance Office	2	Metrics for some departments have been compiled and we will continue to implement and monitor targets for some sections.
P(v)		Change Management – Planning & management	Communication Channels	The re-institution of staff planning meetings (a) at senior management and (b) at sub-unit level on a regular basis.	Finance Office	2	Monthly meetings with staff are in place and a staff communication policy is been reviewed.

<u>Ref.</u>	<u>P1 Ref.</u>	<u>Main Category</u>	<u>Sub-Category</u>	<u>PRG</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Priorty</u>	<u>Finance Office Commentary</u>
P(vi)	(x)	Change Management – Planning & management	Finance Vision and Ethos	The foregrounding of issues of culture and ethos – definition, elaboration and implementation – as an integral element in all the Unit’s planning and management functions.	Finance Office	1	Issues of culture and ethos will be clarified in the FO mission statement.
P(vii)		Change Management	Finance Mgt. Planning & Agenda	The definition, on a sub-unit by sub-unit basis, of unambiguous and – however initially modest – progressive and measurable targets for the improvement both of internal procedures and of the delivery of services to the customer base.	Finance Office	2	Target metrics are being established and will be monitored by the Change Implementation Committee.
P(viii)		Change Management	Finance Mgt. Planning & Agenda	The regular measurement of progress towards these targets and, where appropriate, the amendment or enhancement of these targets in the light of experience.	Finance Office	2	Target metrics are being established and will be monitored by by the Change Implementation Committee
I(i)	(xi)	Institutional Expectations	Staff Recruitment, Development & retention	Restructure the Finance Office to focus on major business needs.	Finance Office	1	New restructure model has been prepared and will be forwarded to Senior Management as part of the resource package (see P(ii) above)
I(ii)	(xii)	Institutional Expectations	Staff Recruitment, Development & retention	Recruit additional professionally qualified staff to improve the focus and delivery of professional aspects of the service.	Finance Office	1	Grade 2 and 3 panels have been put in place with additional staff been recruited for Research and Companies. A trainee accountant programme will be developed
I(iii)	(xiii)	Institutional Expectations	Staff Recruitment, Development & retention	Recruit additional accounting staff to ensure general service quality.	Finance Office	1	Deloitte’s review is complete and Grade 2 and 3 panels put in place with additional staff been recruited for Research and Companies. A trainee accountant programme will be developed.

<u>Ref.</u>	<u>P1 Ref.</u>	<u>Main Category</u>	<u>Sub-Category</u>	<u>PRG</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Priority</u>	<u>Finance Office Commentary</u>
L(i)	(xiv)	Positioning of Finance Office within the University	Finance Positioning within Organisation	PRG recommend that the relationship between the Director of Finance and the President should be unambiguously expressed in a re-arrangement of the reporting structure as outlined in the DCU Self-Evaluation Report for the EUA [Graph D7] to formalise the direct reporting line between the Director of Finance and the President adequately and acknowledge the responsibilities of the Director of Finance.	University	1	The Director of Finance also reports to the President (dual reporting relationship). Senior Management will review the reporting structures and adjust the graphical representation accordingly.
S(i)	(xv)	Service Ethos	Customers service	Ensure that the future plan for the Finance Office adequately reflects a customer service ethos as a core objective of the service.	Finance Office	1	This is covered in P(vi) above
S(ii)		Service Ethos	Staff Recruitment, Development & retention	Payroll should be positively reviewed to gain insight from its experiences within the Finance Office. It is evident that the solution is not simply more resources but encompasses other aspects of the work environment.	Finance Office	2	FO supported payroll to ensure the core task of paying employees on time is achieved.; service ethos does exist in other sub-units but was curtailed by resourcing and other factors. This will be addressed after completion of the Quality improvement Plan and the process of continued improvement
S(iii)		Service Ethos	Finance Vision and Ethos	Finance should publish the ethos required in Finance, train staff, agree service levels with customers, and monitor customer feedback.	Finance Office	2	This process has already started as outlined.
S(iv)		Service Ethos	Staff Recruitment, Development & retention	Finance should identify service champions and not rely exclusively on senior staff.	Finance Office	2	FO will communicate new structure and roles.
S(v)		Service Ethos	Target Setting and Measurement	Set regular reviews at Senior Management level of the reporting lines for the top two levels of Finance staffing.	Finance Office	2	Regular review meetings have been put in place.

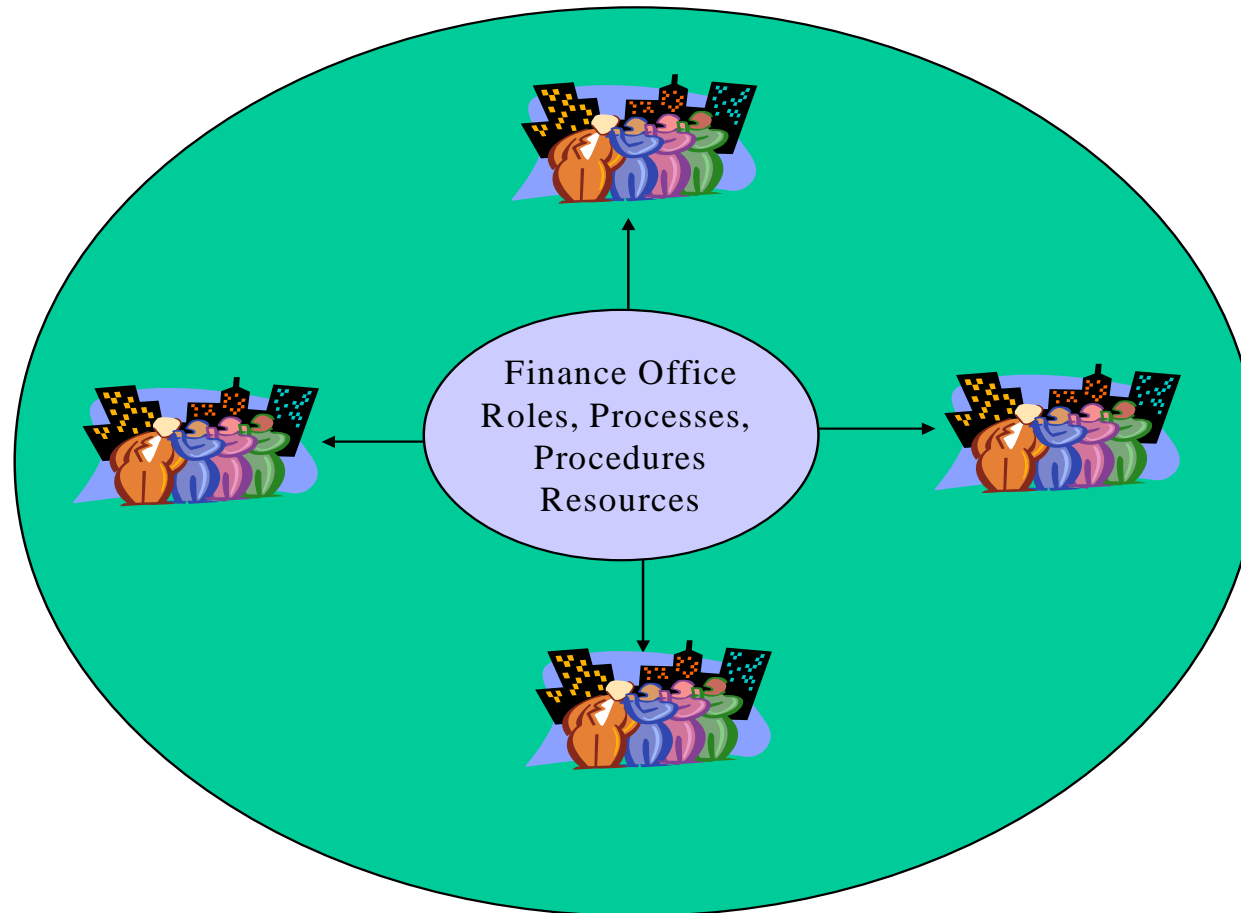
<u>Ref.</u>	<u>P1 Ref.</u>	<u>Main Category</u>	<u>Sub-Category</u>	<u>PRG</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Priorty</u>	<u>Finance Office Commentary</u>
S(vi)		Service Ethos	Physical Location	Keep student needs under consideration in future location of Finance staff servicing students.	Finance Office	3	Location of office is not decided by Finance. It was proposed by finance to locate Cash office in Registry to facilitate a one stop shop for students.
S(vii)		Service Ethos	Physical Location	Keep Faculty needs under consideration in future location of Finance staff service units.	Finance Office	3	Location of office is not decided by Finance. faculty needs would be taken into consideration.
R(i)	(xvi)	Staffing & Resources	Finance Mgt. Planning & Agenda Timetable	Senior Management should provide a timetable for publication of their response to the additional staffing plan proposals from Finance.	University	1	The benchmarking exercise is now completed. Resourcing issues will be addressed after completion of the Quality Improvement Plan. (see I (i) and P (ii) above)
R(ii)	(xvii)	Staffing & Resources	Staff Recruitment, Development & retention	Recruit additional accounting staff to ensure improved quality of the general service	Finance Office/ University	1	Qualified staff recruited in Research and Companies. Grade 2 and 3 panels put in place.
R(iii)	(xviii)	Staffing & Resources	Staff Recruitment, Development & retention	Closely monitor levels of overtime and stress experienced by staff during the transition period.	Finance Office/ University	1	We have benchmarked levels of overtime and feel this will fall as HR systems are integrated with payroll. Additional temporary appointment has been made.
R(iv)	(xix)	Staffing & Resources	Staff Recruitment, Development & retention	Increase the ratio of permanent to temporary staff to avoid wasteful use of resources	Finance Office/ University	1	This is ongoing with a target ratio of 80:20.
R(v)	(xx)	Staffing & Resources	Staff Recruitment, Development & retention	Recruit additional professionally qualified staff to improve the focus and delivery of the professional aspects of the service.	Finance Office/ University	1	Qualified staff have been appointed in Research and Companies. Grade 2 and 3 panels are still open.

<u>Ref.</u>	<u>P1 Ref.</u>	<u>Main Category</u>	<u>Sub-Category</u>	<u>PRG</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Priorty</u>	<u>Finance Office Commentary</u>
R(vi)	(xxi)	Staffing & Resources	Finance Restructure	Director of Finance should validate further his plan proposals with key influencers, perhaps through widening the Deloitte & Touche discussions with stakeholders. In particular: enhanced staffing of research accounting a central budget management function The needs of companies including more devolution of high volume low value transactions.	Finance Office	1	The plan has been validated through discussion with Deloitte's and is ready for presentation to Senior Management by end of June 2006.
R(vii)	(xxii)	Staffing & Resources	Finance Restructure	The reporting arrangements within the Finance Office should be revised to reflect a pyramidal structure which would assist in providing a more effective service and remove the existing risk of a 'single point logjam'.	Finance Office	1	See Appendix 1 and revised Appendix 3. The Change Implementation Committee will be integrated into the structure and graphic representation.
T(i)		Systems & Technology	System Development	Improve business systems generally including planning, budgeting, reporting and transaction processing to improve the quality of the service and to avail of potential productivity gains.	Finance Office	2	Systems integration and development plans are in place and will be part of the continuing improvement process..
T(ii)		Systems & Technology	System Development	Make time, as soon as possible, to identify champions for integrating high volume feeder systems and discuss with Computer Services the availability of systems staff to produce them.	Finance Office	2	Fees and payroll are being integrated into Agresso an other systems are under review.
T(iii)	(xxiii)	Systems & Technology	Communication Channels	Publish user guide to budgets and reporting and keep it up to date on the Web.	Finance Office	1	New Agresso manuals have been put on the website and discussions with Faculty Administrators are taking place.
T(iv)	(xxiv)	Systems & Technology	Finance Mgt. Planning & Agenda	Identify and publish timetable for all key budget and reporting outputs.	Finance Office	1	Month end cycle is been developed and will be rolled out Budget timetables are set outside the finance department
T(v)		Systems & Technology	Target Setting and Measurement	Monitor and report compliance with key dates for finance outputs.	Finance Office	3	Month end cycle is been developed and will be rolled out

<u>Ref.</u>	<u>P1 Ref.</u>	<u>Main Category</u>	<u>Sub-Category</u>	<u>PRG</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Priorty</u>	<u>Finance Office Commentary</u>
T(vi)		Systems & Technology	Target Setting and Measurement	Set high-level financial performance targets at Senior Management level.	Finance Office	3	This will form part of our metrics after completion of the Quality Improvement Plan.

Appendix 2

Finance Function Traditional Thinking



Appendix 3

Finance - New Perspective/Thinking

