Quality Assurance / Quality Enhancement
Internal Quality Review Programme 2020

Quality Enhancement Plan
Faculty of Science and Health

January 2023

Contents

This document presents the format of the Area Quality Enhancement Plan. Text in blue should be replaced by the corresponding Area response in black.

1   Introduction

The Faculty and University adopted an inclusive approach to the preparation of the self-assessment report and the conduct of this quality review and the exit presentation on 20th May 2022 was well attended by Faculty staff. The Executive Dean and Faculty Executive received the final draft report on 3rd June 2022 for factual review and this was returned to the QPO on 22nd June. The Executive Dean and Faculty Executive prepared the first draft of the QUIP and this was discussed by the Faculty Management Board at its meeting on 1st September 2022.
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2   Responses to the Recommendations in the Peer Review Group Report

The following notation is used in the recommendations for enhancement.

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 Area.

Additionally, the PRG indicate the level(s) of the University where action is required: A: Area under review U: University Senior Management

Rec	Priority	Addressee	PRG Recommendation	Area Response	SMG Response
1	P1	A	Work together more effectively as a Faculty both strategically as well as operationally, leveraging collective strengths	The PRG's observations are noted, particularly in relation to the strategic roles of faculty committees, the need for greater cohesion across schools, and the development of faculty support roles, for example, in research and marketing. By end of Year 1, a sub-group of FMB will conduct a review of strategic planning processes across the Faculty and make recommendations to FMB. Recommendations will be discussed with University Senior Management and an implementation plan agreed.	SMG notes that the Faculty is in the process of producing its strategic plan. It is expected that the issue of collective leadership will be addressed through this process and that any structural changes required will be made.
2	P1	A	Strengthen the leadership development at Faculty and School level; Strengthen and make more transparent and standardise the incentives to take on Head of School and Deputy Head of School positions. Consider making the Head of School term 5-years to realise the strategic potential of this post.	The Faculty will work with the University to review and develop a transparent Head of School model that incentivises senior leaders within schools to take on the role. The University has updated the head of school induction programme and this will be available from September 2022. This will also be complemented by a Faculty-based induction programme to cover Faculty-specific issues.	As the Head of School model is effective across the entire University any actions which may be applied will need to be agreed at Senior Management level. In addition, there are plans to further enhance the Head of School Induction programme and we will explore whether this can be further

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				The Faculty will work with schools to ensure that all schools have appropriate school management structures to support the Head of School in their role and to promote a collective leadership approach. This work will be completed within the first year. A number of new leadership development initiatives have been introduced by the University over recent years. Heads of School meet monthly with the Executive Dean, as a group. This aims to provide them with the opportunity to raise issues for discussion and to benefit from the support of peers. Within the first year, we will review the effectiveness of this approach as a means to ensure input from Schools on Faculty strategy, and as a means of disseminating key messages across Schools, and explore other communication and support needs.	complemented with the Faculty programme
3	P2	A/U	Prioritise sourcing of budget to deal with ageing equipment	The Faculty benefited from an additional €2.1m investment in teaching infrastructure in 2019/20 and support for hybrid learning infrastructure in 2020/21. Funding has also been agreed for investment in life sciences research infrastructure. However, a multi-annual budgeting process is required for equipment maintenance and replacement. The Faculty will work with the Finance Office to review the budgeting process for equipment maintenance and replacement.	SMG notes that external factors may influence the future requirement for University funding for research equipment upgrade and replacement. Currently the IUA are collating information on the need for equipment replacement in HEIs with the possibility of National investment. DCU has been fully engaged in this process.

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					The University has made an investment of over €3m from its own resources to upgrade equipment as part of the strategic development in life sciences.
4	P2	U	Review promotion and staff development opportunities and practices for academic and professional support staff; make the 'targeted promotion' process and criteria transparent to all staff		The University constantly reviews promotion opportunities for both academic and professional staff. At a Faculty level the Human Capital planning exercise will be further enhanced to identify development opportunities. It should also be noted that the recently launched PRD scheme will enable development discussions for staff to be better prepared for promotion opportunities when they arise. The targeted promotion policy and selection criteria is available as a published policy and the outcome of the process is not secret. We will engage with the Executive Dean of the Faculty to explore how future outcomes may be disseminated within the Faculty
5	P2	A	Create a Faculty committee to bring the CTOs skills and experience into the	The PRG's observation is welcome in relation to bringing the CTOs into Faculty planning. We will establish a CTO	SMG welcomes the establishment of a CTO committee and its representation

Rec	Priority	Addressee	PRG Recommendation	Area Response	SMG Response
			operational and strategic planning of the Faculty; Consider whether one representative of UDRC Directors might suffice on the Faculty Management Board	committee, to be chaired by and represented on the FMB by the Facilities and Technical Services Manager. This will be implemented within the first year. All UDRC Directors are members of FRC, which is chaired by the ADR, who is a member of FMB. In addition, two additional researchers are elected to FMB, one of whom is a UDRC Director. The PRG's recommendation to increase UDRC representation will be considered by FMB.	on the FMB by the Facilities and Technical Services Manager.
6	P1	A	Redefine the resource allocation model and practices to support the strategic priorities	The Faculty will work with the Director of Finance to review the resource allocation model within the Faculty with a view to better aligning resources with strategic priorities.	SMG notes this recommendation and welcomes the response of the Faculty. The Finance Office look forward to proactively engaging to support the Faculty in considering how best to support the strategic ambitions of the faculty.
7	1	A	Review and redefine the support for EDI across the Faculty and Schools, including, eg, support for maternity backfill. Most importantly, undertake an extensive communications programme to ensure that the practices are widely known and understood.	The Deputy Dean role was extended in May 2022 to include responsibility to support EDI. They will work with colleagues across faculties and with the University's EDI unit. We will work with colleagues in HR and the Finance Office to review policies relating to maternity leave and support for maternity leave backfill. This will be followed with a Faculty open-house and communications with heads of schools and units, hiring managers and staff to ensure practices are widely known and understood. This will be completed within the first year.	SMG welcomes both the specific EDI remit now held by the DEputy Dean and the commitment to communicate DCU policies to colleagues. Extra clarity will be provided to ensure that colleagues are aware that full backfill is available for maternity cover.

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8	1	A/U	Prioritise external research benchmarking to inform and steer strategic initiatives	Work has already commenced to identify aspirational peers for each school, research area (subject) and research centre, for an initial benchmarking exercise. The ADR will continue to work with the Research Office on this through the Citations Action Plan. An initial benchmarking exercise will be completed within the first year. This will be followed with an implementation plan to address opportunities for comparative improvements, to be reviewed annually.	SMG notes that the faculty are actively engaged with the VP Research in analysis of research output benchmarking. A benchmarking exercise with all other Irish Universities has now been completed for each discipline in the Faculty, with a focus on publication outputs, % of articles which are top Quartile, % of articles which are open access and Field Weighted Citation Index. This analysis will form the basis of strategic planning and also wider international comparisons.
9	2	A/U	Re-examine the SSOT process for effectiveness, e.g., the process for selecting modules is reviewed to ensure all modules in a programme are reviewed over a period of two to three years and results are communicated to module coordinators. Ensure that all staff and students are informed of how this process works.	We will work with the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) to review the SSOT process. We (ADTL through the FTC) will review the process at school-level. This is subject to review across the university (OVPAA)	SMG note that the university is planning to introduce a revised approach to assessing the effectiveness of teaching, with enhanced feedback mechanisms to students. These revised mechanisms will be developed with flexibility to meet faculty-level requirements.
10	1	A/U	Assess reasons why communication of policy and practice is sometimes perceived as lacking transparency and create mechanisms to ensure that staff	The first staff Away Day highlighted a number of issues under the communications heading. These included intra-faculty communications and external marketing. FEG will undertake a more detailed analysis of the feedback at FEG and prepare a plan to explore further and address issues raised.	SMG will ensure that awareness of policies and access to them is widely communicated.

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			understand all policies and how they are implemented		
11	2	A	Develop a policy for staff-to-student communication that focuses on assignment feedback, channels for communication to students, number of emails sent to students, development of programme assessment maps at the start of each semester	This issue was already highlighted for review and discussion at FTC this semester and will be completed within the first year. We will discuss recommendations with the VPAA.	SMG welcomes this recommendation and notes that the provision of feedback and programme assessment maps are in line with established university expectations.
12	2	A	Strengthen the two-way communication and collaboration strategy with external stakeholders, especially alumni, to ensure a higher level of collaboration both in T&L and in research.	We will work with the Director of External Engagement to prepare a strategy for external engagement to include all external stakeholders. Within the first year, we will prepare the strategy and appoint a business development manager to lead out on the implementation of this plan.	SMG and the Executive Director of Engagement (EDE) welcomes FSH working closely with Alumni office to enhance the centrally held data and ways Alumni can support FSH. EDE would also request to work with FSH in developing a BDO role in external engagement to ensure strategic alignment with University and faculty
13	1	A	Introduce students more to regulatory aspects (very strict in some specific areas) and ethics before they go in their INTRA programme	This issue was identified also in our student survey. The FTC will conduct a more detailed review of the feedback provided on this issue. We will work with heads of school, programme chairs and student representatives to identify particular deficits to be addressed. This work will be completed within the first year.	The university acknowledges and welcomes the Faculty intention to address this.

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14	2	A	Introduce a PhD induction programme across the Faculty for all incoming PhD students in addition to the GSO general induction programme to build a sense of community among this group e.g. coffee mornings, research conversations for PhD students, faculty research days	The FRC will collate all existing elements of orientation/induction currently being delivered by the different schools across the Faculty and work together with PGR students to design a tailored Faculty PhD induction programme to build a better sense of community amongst PGR students.	SMG acknowledges these plans to enhance a sense of community among Faculty PGR students.
15	1	A	Investigate ways of systematising external stakeholder engagement in the Faculty using alumni and other stakeholders, to support and inform students at all levels and to enhance research collaborations.	This work will be completed in line with Recommendation 3c.	SMG notes that there will be a more structured series of meetings of all Faculty ADEs in 2023, and the common issue of access to useful data managed within INTRA, Careers office, Alumni, EdTrust, Research Engine etc is being actively addressed by the relevant data managers. Look forward to working with FSH ADE on their KPIs

3   Summary of the One Year Plan

Rec No.	Action	Responsibility	Timeline
1	Review of Faculty strategic planning processes	Deputy Dean	Dec 31st 2022
2	Review of school structures to support collective leadership and head of school	Executive Dean	March 31st 2023
3	Work with Finance Office, VPR and COO to review budgets for teaching and research equipment	Executive Dean/Finance Office/RIS/COO	December 31st 2022
4	2-3 open houses to promote University policies, including maternity leave policies	Faculty Manager/HR Business Partner	June 2023
5	Establish Faculty Chief Technical Officers' Committee FMB review UDRC representation	Facilities and Technical Services Manager FMB/Executive Dean	December 31st 2022
6	Review Faculty Resource Allocation Model	Executive Dean/ Director of Finance	March 31st 2023
7	Continue to establish EDI structures Review policies related to maternity leave and backfill	Deputy Dean/EDI unit Deputy Dean/HR/Finance Office	June 2023 March 2023
8	Continue work to identify aspirational peers for schools and research centres Agree KPIs Complete initial benchmarking exercise	ADR/Heads of School/ Directors of UDRCs/RIS	December 31st 2022 December 31st 2022 December 31st 2022
9	Re-examine the SSOT process	OVPAA/ADTL/Heads of School	March 31st 2023
10	Examine away day feedback from staff on perceptions of communication within the Faculty	Deputy Dean	December 31st 2022
11	Staff-student communication plan	ADTL/FTC/OVPAA	December 31st 2022

12	Prepare strategy for external engagement, including 2-3 KPIs Appoint Business Development Manager	ADEI/Deputy Dean/Director of External Engagement	31st December 2022 31st March 2023
13	Review INTRA preparation	ADTL/FTC /Heads of School/Programme Chairs	31st December 2022
14	Develop Faculty PhD programme to build sense of community	ADR/FRC	31st December 2022

4 Summary of the Three Year Plan

Rec No.	Action	Responsibility	Timeline
1	Broader review of leadership development at Faculty and School level, to include the uptake of opportunities across schools, staff grades, gender and incentives, impediments and rewards for taking up leadership roles and responsibilities.	Executive Dean	December 2023
2	Review of EDI processes and policies - ? annual staff survey	Deputy Dean/EDI unit	December 2023
3	Extend to identify aspirational peers for subject areas Complete initial benchmarking exercise Annual review of KPIs	ADR/Heads of School/ Directors of UDRCs/RIS	December 31st 2023
9	Re-examine the SSOT process	OVPAA/ADTL/Heads of School	March 31st 2024
11	Examine Faculty results from University staff survey on the effectiveness of communication with staff	Deputy Dean	December 31st 2024
11	Review of staff-student communication plan	ADTL/FTC/OVPAA	December 31st 2023
12	Annual review of progress against KPIs	ADEI/Director of External Engagement	31st December 2023/4/5

13	Follow-up on INTRA preparation	ADTL/FTC /Heads of School/Programme Chairs	31st December 2024
14	PGR student survey to review Faculty PhD programme	ADR/FRC	31st December 2023

5 Appendices

5.1 Quality Committee (for the Self-Assessment Report)

School / Unit	Representative
Executive Dean (Chair)	Prof Michelle Butler
Deputy Dean	Prof Brien Nolan
School of Biotechnology	Prof Anne Parle-McDermott
School of Chemical Sciences	Dr John Gallagher
School of Mathematical Sciences	Dr Eabhnat Ní Fhloinn
School of Nursing, Psychotherapy and Community Health	Dr Denise Proudfoot
School of Physical Sciences	Dr Jean Paul Mosnier
School of Health and Human Performance	Dr Brendan Egan
School of Psychology	Dr Sinéad Smyth
Research Centres, nominated by FRC	Dr Mary Pryce
Associate Dean for Research	Prof Christine Loscher
Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning	Dr Niamh O'Sullivan
Associate Dean for External and International	Dr Stella Vlachou
Postdoctoral Researcher	Dr Esen Efeoglu
Student Representative, nominated by Faculty undergraduate representative on the Students' Union	Emma Duffy
Taught Postgraduate Student Representative	Eoghan Rutherford
Postgraduate Research Student, nominated by FRC	Dearbhla Finnegan
Faculty Manager	Caitriona Brennan
Manager of Facilities and Associated Services	Michael Burke
Assistant Faculty Manager (Secretary)	Emma Theron
Faculty Administrative Officer	Siuin McManus

5.2 Peer Review Group members

- Prof. Rachel Msetfi - Executive Dean of the Faculty of Education and Health Sciences, University of Limerick (Chair)
- Prof. John Derrick - Vice-President and Head of Faculty of Science, The University of Sheffield, UK
- Prof. Brian Fulton - Professor of Physics and Dean of Faculty of Sciences, Department of Physics, University of York

- Prof Sharon O'Brien - DCU, Associate Dean for Research, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
- Prof. Gabriel-Miro Muntean - Professor at the School of Electronic Engineering, Co-Director DCU Performance Engineering Laboratory and Quality Promotion Committee member. (Coordinating Reviewer)
- Ms. Hazel Byrne - Student Representative, DCU Business School

5.3 Quality Committee (for the Quality Enhancement Plan)

School / Unit	Representative
Deputy Dean	Prof Brien Nolan
School of Biotechnology	Prof Paul Cahill
School of Chemical Sciences	Prof Silvia Giordani
School of Mathematical Sciences	Prof Paolo Guasoni
School of Nursing, Psychotherapy and Community Health	Prof Veronica Lambert
School of Physical Sciences/Research Centre Representative	Dr Eilis McLoughlin
School of Health and Human Performance	Dr Brendan Egan
School of Psychology	Prof Pamela Gallagher
Associate Dean for Research	Prof Christine Loscher
Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning	Dr Niamh O'Sullivan
Associate Dean for External and International	Dr Stella Vlachou
Research Representative nominated by FRC	Prof Kieran Moran
Chair of Faculty Health and Safety Committee	Dr. Aoife Morrin
Faculty Manager	Caitriona Brennan
Assistant Faculty Manager (Secretary)	Emma Theron