

Quality Improvement Plan
Progress Report



DCU Business School

August 2018

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Peer Review team visit concerning the Quality Review of DCU Business School took place on 22nd and 23rd April 2015. This visit had a dual, parallel purpose, as not only was it serving the University's quality assurance process, it also constituted a mock AACSB (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business) review, in preparation for the full AACSB review visit scheduled for later that year. Following a successful full AACSB review visit in November 2015, when the quality of School's activities and quality assurance processes received considerable praise, DCU Business School achieved AACSB accreditation (officially announced in March 2016).

DCU Business School was very grateful for the contribution of the Peer Review Team to the evaluation of the effectiveness of our quality assurance processes in 2015 and we welcomed and embraced the recommendations. Indeed, following the initial draft report of the Peer Review Team, we initiated some remedies and improvements immediately and these improvements were examined as part of our AACSB review visit in November 2015. These immediate responses and actions were noted in our QuIP which was finalised in May 2016. Since then, we have continued to develop and enrich our activities and processes, as illustrated in the table provided in Section 2.

2. ACTIONS RELATING TO RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE PEER REVIEW GROUP REPORT

The response to each of the recommendations in the Peer Review Group Report is set out in the table on the following pages. Please note:

- Column 5 of the table details the School's responses and immediate actions (adopted following the Peer Review visit in April 2015) to the recommendations
- Column 6 provides and update on actions and activities between 2016 and 2018.

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 Area.

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

Recommendation Number	Priority	Addressee	PRG Recommendation	Summarised Response from Area/University (Please note that all of the information detailed in this column was included in our QuIP in May 2016. It includes immediate actions taken following initiate feedback of the Peer Review team in April 2015.)	Summarised Actions taken by Area and University and Future Plans (Please note, in this column we have detailed an update on actions and activities since 2016.)
1	P1	A	Make more explicit the thread of Assurance of Learning (AOL) throughout undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. Ensure staff clearly understand and can articulate, that governance of AOL is at programme, not module level.	<p>Recommendations Already Implemented (2015)</p> <p>A range of initiatives were implemented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An “AoL at Award Level” map was produced to illustrate governance over the system; • An AoL Process Map was designed & distributed to all staff; • AoL training seminars were delivered by the ADTL & the AAO; • An AoL Checklist was produced for use by Programme Directors & the Admin Team; • Proformas for AoL Planning and Reporting were prepared for use by each Programme Board; • AoL is integrated into the DCU quality assurance process – e.g., AoL samples are drawn for each 	DCU Business School has a very well developed culture of AOL and continuously implements our AOL processes, ensuring compliance with AACSB standards and procedures at all times. This process is overseen by the School’s ADTL with support from a Faculty Assistant and the Accreditation & Assurance Officer (AAO). The ADTL reports annually on AOL performance and process to the Teaching and Learning Committee and Management Board.

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				<p>programme when External Examiner samples are prepared.</p> <p>The quality of the AoL system in DCU Business School was examined as part of the AACSB Accreditation process in 2015. The committee highlighted AoL as one of 6 key strengths:</p> <p><i>“A very well developed culture of AOL exists at DCU Business School. Faculty and staff are clearly committed to an AOL process that has resulted in improved curricula for all programs. Multiple checks exist in the system to ensure a strong, validated system of AOL.”</i></p>	
2	P1	A	Ensure that the Academic Promotion criteria are clear to all staff	<p>A three step approach to meeting this recommendation was agreed.</p> <p>1. At a School meeting for all staff in 2015, the Executive Dean presented an overview of the Academic Promotion Criteria. (Already Implemented 2015)</p> <p>2. The Faculty Workload Model mirrors the criteria for promotion and outlines the importance of all 3 domains: teaching; research and service. (Already Implemented)</p>	<p>Every year, the Academic Promotion Criteria for promotion to Associate Professor (formerly known as Senior Lecturer) is clearly communicated to all staff in the University and full details are accessible via the main DCU website. (Please note, following discussions concerning the DCU Business School website and following good website design practice, the School website does not replicate information</p>

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				3. A section of the new DCU Business School website will provide extensive guidance for all staff. (Planned for delivery in 2016/17)	already appropriately provided on the University website).
3	P1	U/A	Continue to monitor the financial model for externally generated revenue to ensure equity and sustainability.	To ensure that DCU Business School has the capacity to achieve its mission, the Dean oversees a robust system of financial management, which involves planning and managing the financial infrastructure, the allocation of resources to both strategic initiatives and operational delivery, and evaluation of actual expenditure. The Dean consults with Management Board regarding key financial strategies and works closely with the Manager of Faculty Administration to ensure that there is appropriate oversight of day-to-day financial management. The funding streams, which are the bedrock of the financial infrastructure and provide DCU Business School with the necessary resources to deliver its mission, include: Government grant Undergraduate tuition fees Postgraduate tuition fees	DCU Business School continuously seeks opportunities to expand its financial infrastructure, concentrating not only on securing necessary resources from the main funding streams but investing in future stream development (e.g. Mr Eoghan Stack joined the Business School as Director of Commercial Business Development in January 2018). In the last couple of years the Business School has expanded its international delivery as part of the DCU@PNU initiative (our staff now deliver two of our undergraduate programmes and one postgraduate programme in PNU in Saudi Arabia). We have also delivered one of our postgraduate programmes in Malta and is in discussions for the provision of one of our programmes in Abu Dhabi. In terms of bespoke

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				<p>Revenue from DCU Business School’s Centre for Executive and International Education External research grants and DCU research grants Other external funding to support specific initiatives.</p> <p>In light of the reduced funding provided by the state for higher education, in 2011 DCU Business School set a strategic priority to increase the revenue earned from non-exchequer sources. The strategic decision was made to target new revenue streams in the international market. Strategic actions have resulted in the acquisition of contracts to deliver two of our undergraduate and one of our postgraduate awards at PNU in Riyadh and also the delivery in Dublin of bespoke education training programmes for the Malaysian Ministry for Higher Education. These strategic initiatives have generated a strong revenue stream for the School in recent years. Furthermore, we anticipate that as the economy recovers we will have the opportunity to reignite our engagement with organisations for the development and delivery of bespoke executive programmes. Furthermore, as the</p>	<p>Executive Education courses offered, DCU Business School successfully delivered a course for Invest Northern Ireland, won a very competitive development programme for Enterprise Ireland, has delivered a management development programme for a professional services firm and has been involved with a number of other smaller scale projects. Together, our enhanced activity in this space has ensured (and we hope it will continue to do so) that the School has continued to accumulate financial resources that can be used effectively to achieve our mission and strategic goals. This activity also makes a contribution to the financial well-being of the University.</p>

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				University refines its international strategy, we expect to attract increasing numbers of international students to both our undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. (Ongoing)	
4	P1	A	Improve the promotion of engagement with industry. This is hugely impressive for DCU Business School but is not evident in the SAR.	<p>This recommendation resulted in a complete review of how we present our engagement with industry and how we monitor and demonstrate achievement of one of our four strategic intents: “Industry engagement will be a hallmark of our activities”. We have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointed an Associate Dean for Industry Engagement & Innovation; (2015) • Undertook a complete rewrite of our “AACSB Self Evaluation Report” so that our Industry Engagement was evident through programme design; teaching and learning; research; and the wide range of service undertaken by faculty across the Business School. (Successfully achieved) <p>The rewritten SAR and the panel visit during the AACSB accreditation process allowed DCU Business School to demonstrate achievements in this area and it was</p>	<p>Industry engagement is extremely important to DCU Business School and is embedded across the various domains of our activity (teaching, research, executive education etc). In 2017, DCU Business School was awarded the Small Business Charter accreditation from the Chartered Association of Business Schools which recognises the quality of our engagement with SMEs. We are the first Business School in Ireland to achieve this accreditation.</p> <p>Engagement with industry permeates our teaching activities (INTRA, business practicums, guest speakers, applied case studies etc) and many of our innovative industry engaged modules are award-winning (DICE, NGM, NED etc).</p>

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				<p>considered one of our key strengths: <i>“The teaching at DCU Business School is innovative and distinctive. It has excellent engagement with industry as evidenced in research projects, industry-led or co-developed business internships and consulting projects for Irish and international companies. Internally, the DICE, INTRA and Next Generation Management (NGM) modules offer strong support for student learning. For example, NGM students have excellent engagement with industry during the module and excellent employment statistics after graduation”.</i></p> <p>To ensure an ongoing focus on industry engagement, a section of our new DCU Business School website will focus on industry engagement and Management Board wish to promote further the industry links within the Business School by setting up an “Industry Engagement” space on the ground floor. (Planned for delivery in 2016/17 – subject to funding)</p>	<p>Engagements with industry are also core to the activities of our three Research Centres, the DCU Centre for Family Business, IC4 (Irish Centre for Cloud Computing & Commerce), and the DCU Leadership & Talent Institute. Each centre has an active annual programme of activities targeted at businesses.</p> <p>Our non-accredited executive education offering is directed towards business development. We continue to offer a suite of highly successful management development programmes for business in Ireland. These include, for example, the Go Global 4 Growth programme for small and medium sized businesses with growth ambitions, delivered in partnership with Enterprise Ireland.</p>
5	P1	A	Continue to reach out across the University to engage in relevant	DCU Business School enjoys a positive relationship with central services. Demonstrating the level and quality of this	DCU Business School continues to enjoy a positive relationship with central services which

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			activities and share good practice e.g. Alumni Office.	internal engagement can be challenging. In order to capture the excellent work undertaken with the Alumni Office; the INTRA Office; the International Office etc. DCU Business School wish to use the new website and dedicated space in the Business School to highlight these activities. (Planned for delivery in 2016/17 – subject to funding)	is now strengthened by Ms Caroline Enright joining DCU Business School as a Senior Communications and Alumni Officer. There is also a dedicated Alumni space on the new Business School website.
6	P1	A	Develop criteria for measuring the impact of teaching and learning on students, especially ‘global awareness’ and ‘transformation’.	DCU Business School has used AoL to track the impact of teaching and learning on all the graduate attributes. The data is collected at Programme Board level; Collated by the Faculty Teaching & Learning Committee; and reported to Management Board annually. (Already Implemented)	DCU Business School continuously tracks the impact of teaching and learning on students via the AoL process.
7	P1	A	Develop a narrative around <i>Learning Analytics</i> , which should include the use of <i>Guru</i> and personal tutor interventions.	Since the PRG visit, DCU Business School has prepared a narrative for inclusion in the updated SER. This focused, most especially, on “at risk” students – “Processes and Criteria for Evaluation, Identification and Intervention” with particular emphasis on how we make use of university generated data; GURU analytics; and the personal tutor system to ensure we deliver a student-centred, supportive, high quality learning experience for our students. (Already Implemented)	The School continues to use Guru to support our engagement and support for our students.

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8	P1	A	Clarify for staff the benefits of taking part in 'revenue-generating' activities to ensure continuous support for same.	The impact of revenue generating activities in the Business School has served to underline for all staff the importance of providing support for such projects. School meetings are used as a vehicle to provide regular updates on the impact which key projects such as PNU Programmes; the Enterprise Ireland- Management for Growth Programme; Invest NI- Leadership Team Programme are having on the delivery of our vision for DCU Business School. Approximately 50% of faculty have contributed to revenue generating activities in 2015/16. (Already Implemented)	Staff are fully aware of the benefit the School's non-exchequer revenue generating activities and are willing to be involved where this is possible/permitted. Due to the limitations imposed by the HEA, staff can only be paid for extra work if that work is in connection with international activities. Due to this restriction concerning paying staff overload, and the fact that the School is working at full capacity, it is now increasingly difficult to include current staff in extra, non-exchequer revenue generating activities delivered in Ireland.
9	P2	A	Explore the opportunities of the DCU Incorporation Programme for DCU Business School and examine the impact of this major university development on the School.	Incorporation of new colleagues in the area of education and the formation of the new Institute has allowed us to explore a deeper engagement with PNU in Saudi Arabia. We are in early stage negotiations regarding the delivery of a Masters in Early Education in Riyadh. (3 year time frame for delivery)	Since 2016, other faculties in DCU (Science and Health and Engineering and Computing) have developed and delivered programmes in PNU. DCU Business School has been happy to share our experiences and expertise in delivering such projects and we have provided vital guidance and support over the past two years.

3. SUMMARY ACTIONS RELATED TO ONE-YEAR PLAN

In order to deliver on the recommendations made by the Peer Review Team, DCU Business School has prioritised and implemented the following:

1. The development of a new DCU Business School website, together with enhancements of information on the DCU main website, allows us *inter alia* to:

- Communicate with DCU Business School staff regarding career development; promotion criteria; training opportunities etc. (Recommendations 2, 8).
- Continue to attract high quality students and to ensure financial viability by promoting our taught programmes to potential students in the national and international marketplace (Recommendations 3, 4).
- Communicate with DCU staff across all campuses in order to: share good practice in teaching, research and service; The Business School blog is an example of one of our communication channels.
- Highlight to key stakeholders, such as industry and professional bodies, the level and type of activities currently undertaken in DCU Business School and to secure additional and/or enhanced activity in this vital area of our work (Recommendations 4, 6).

DCU Business School, working with the DCU Communications and Marketing Office and following the required tender process, committed to spending €24,673 plus VAT 6,668.25 (total €31,341) with “Webfactory” to design and launch the new DCU Business School website. However, that budget did not allow for generating content tailored for various stakeholders. QUID funding enabled enhancements and developments. The process of developing our website has been somewhat challenging and, in particular, we have struggled at times to have the web-developers meet deadlines so progress has taken longer than expected. However, we feel that we are now seeing the benefit of that expenditure and effort, as the look and content of our website is much improved compared to 2015/16.

2. In terms of the intention of developing an “Industry Engagement” area on the ground floor of the Business School, the development of the new Student Hub with its enterprise spaces etc. changed our thinking somewhat. Rather than replicating ideas which will be present in the Hub, we decided to look at another initiative for the ground floor space in the Business School building. In 2016/17, it was decided to re-orientate some of the ground floor space to create a social zone for students to meet and engage. In collaboration with EY, one of our industry partners, a modern social zone was designed and delivered. The zone features screens that convey information to students about programmes, activities and events in the School and University. The response to the re-configured space has been very positive. Plans to display the names of major industry partners are at an advanced stage. This project has taken longer than expected due to the difficulty of finding an appropriate display space coupled with a display design sufficient to capture the large number of partners.

4. SUMMARY ACTIONS RELATED TO THREE-YEAR PLAN

Our specific commitments to meet the review recommendations in our three-year plan have been delivered:

- i. To engage with other faculties to create and enhance revenue generating activities in the Gulf States. As outlined in table 2, DCU Business School aided both the Faculty of Science and Health and the Faculty of Engineering and Computing to engage with PNU, such that both faculties are currently delivering postgraduate programmes there in 17/18. Additionally our own ongoing relationship with PNU has resulted in the continued offering of two of our Business undergraduate programmes and one postgraduate programme. We are also actively engaging with a couple of other potential partners in the regions.
- ii. We have achieved the goal of continued measurement and evidencing of AOL on all our programmes on an annual basis.

DCU Business School has not only implemented the recommendations of the Quality Review Report, we are also firmly committed to ongoing strategic and operational development and to evidencing the quality of all of our activities. For our next AACSB review (likely to take place in late 2020), we will be required to demonstrate continuous improvement and quality assurance across all areas of activity. The themes of 'Engagement, Innovation and Impact' are central to our next AACSB review and the School is actively tracking and documenting recent examples of these themes across our Teaching, Research and Engagement activities. We provide below an extract of our recent submission to AACSB which provides a brief summary of recent activities which enable us demonstrate 'Engagement, Innovation and Impact'

5. CONCLUSIONS

The Quality Review conducted in 2015 was an extremely valuable process for our School, which generated considerable learning and has led to enhancements and developments in various aspects of our activities.

We have outlined in this report how we have responded to, and acted on, the recommendations included in the Peer Review Report and we will be happy to provide further information at any stage to the QPO.