



Quality Enhancement Plan

May 2024



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1 Introduction

DCU Business School thanks DCU's Quality Promotion Committee for overseeing the School's quality review process and for allowing the process adopt the EQUIS accreditation assessment criteria, thereby greatly enhancing the School's preparation for its EQUIS peer review visit (February 2024).

The School greatly appreciated the work of the Peer Review Group in preparing for the review meetings, the robust engagement in meetings, and the constructive and helpful feedback provided, both in the report and directly with the team leading the quality review and EQUIS processes in the School.

The School adopted the following phased approach to responding to the feedback provided in Peer Review Group report:

Phase 1, Sept 2023 – Feb 2024

This was a period of intense strategic evaluation, decision-making and action concerning items raised in the Quality Review (QR) report that needed immediate attention to enhance the School's preparation for the EQUIS visit in February. While led by the EQUIS project team and Management Board, the work effort required a whole-School approach.

The key output of this collective work was a clearer understanding of the School's strategic positioning (nationally and internationally) and our strengths and weaknesses, resulting in the refinement of the School's Strategy (2023-2028) and core sub-strategies - Teaching and Learning, Research, Internationalisation, Industry Engagement and Executive Education. Additionally, responding to feedback in the QR report, the EQUIS project team focused on improving the clarity and consistency of the key strategic narrative and supporting evidence for presentation to the EQUIS peer review team. The output of this work effort was evident in the quality of the School's EQUIS SAR, the positive response of the EQUIS peer-review team during the visit and, ultimately, in the achievement of EQUIS accreditation by the School .

As a result of the work completed in this period, several of the recommendations in the QR report have been addressed already, as noted in the Responses Table that follows.

Phase 2, Apr 2024 – May 2024

During this time, we clarified the make-up of the QuEP working group, which is a sub-set of our Accreditation Committee, and re-visited the Quality Review Report to plan the response to the outstanding recommendations. This work has resulted in the Responses Table that follows and the one-year and three-year quality improvement plans.



2 Responses to the Recommendations in the Peer Review Group Report

DCU Business School is grateful for the many commendations in the Peer Review Group Report. We found the quality review process to be constructive in nature and very helpful to the School both in terms of ongoing quality improvement planning and in preparation for our EQUIS submission and visit. We find the recommendations in the Peer Review Group Report to be targeted and highly relevant and, again we express our thanks to the peer review team.

The School's responses to the Peer Review Group recommendations are set out below together with the one-year and three-year plans.

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.

R e c	P r i o r i t y	A d d r e s s e	PRG Recommendation	Area Response	DCU Senior Management Response
Context, Governance and Strategy					
1	P1	A	Provide a systematic strategic analysis of your national and international environment as well as your own strengths and weaknesses. Identify relevant KPIs to track strategy implementation	Immediately addressed. Following the Quality Review (QR) process, the School's Management Board: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> completed a thorough review of the School's strategic competitive positioning (national and international) re-examined the School's understanding of its strengths and weaknesses, and completed a full SWOT. Refined the School Strategy (2023-2028), clarifying strategic goals and prioritised objectives, and developing and communicating KPIs as the basis for strategic performance management. One-year plan: In autumn 2024, the School's Management Board will complete an annual progress report on strategy implementation (Year 1) [i.e. compare performance in 2023/24 to baseline year of 2022/23].	DCU Senior Management welcomes this timely recommendation and the response by DCU Business School. The proposed one-year plan aligns closely with the University's approach to implementing the DCU Strategic Plan.
2	P2	A	The SAR should be more explicit as it relates to mutual benefit between the school and university	Immediately addressed. In our EQUIS SAR we more clearly described the mutual benefits and interconnections between the School and University.	DCU Senior Management notes that, while this recommendation pertains specifically to the EQUIS accreditation documentation, we welcome the focus and subsequent documentation of the many mutually beneficial relationships and engagements between DCUBS and the wider University.
3	P2	A	Align more strongly with the University in order to leverage major strategic initiatives and opportunities	Immediately addressed. The School's strategy and operations are strongly aligned with those of the University, though we appreciate that we did not provide sufficient clarity in our QR SAR. We conveyed this alignment more clearly in our EQUIS SAR.	DCU Senior Management acknowledges the strong alignment between the Faculty strategy and the University Strategic Plan.

R e c	P r i o r i t y	A d d r e s s e e	PRG Recommendation	Area Response	DCU Senior Management Response
4	P2	A	Analyse not only the Irish environment, but also the international one	<p>Immediately addressed. The international environment, and the School's international positioning and strategy, were at the heart of the strategic analysis and strategy refinement outlined in response to Recommendation 1 above.</p> <p>One-year and three-year plans: We recognise that our international reputation and positioning are likely to strengthen as a result of EQUIS accreditation, thereby creating new opportunities. Thus, we plan to specifically review and refine the School's Internationalisation Strategy on an annual basis.</p>	<p>DCU Senior Management welcomes this focus on the international environment and recognises the potential impact of the recently achieved EQUIS accreditation by DCUBS.</p> <p>The University has developed a University-wide Internationalisation Plan and established a cross-faculty International Engagement Committee, which includes representation from the DCUBS Associate Dean for Internationalisation (ADI). This Strategy will be reviewed and enhanced pending further implementation of the ongoing organisational review. The ADI has participated fully at the institutional level and is part of the continuing implementation and review of core elements of the strategy - such as the review of MoUs, development of Non-EU PGT and UG Recruitment, and enhancement of International Partnerships. The DCUBS Internationalisation Strategy is central to the delivery of the holistic strategy for internationalisation at DCU.</p>
Programmes					

R e c	P r i o r i t y	A d d r e s s e e	PRG Recommendation	Area Response	DCU Senior Management Response
5	P1	A	Align the suite of programmes with the expertise of the School	Immediately addressed. Our suite of programmes is fully aligned to expertise in the School. We better communicated this alignment in our EQUIS SAR.	DCU Senior Management notes this recommendation relates specifically to the EQUIS documentation and has since been fully addressed.
6	P2	A	To have a more streamlined approach for the timetabling of assessments	This recommendation emerged from the PRT's meeting with students. The School makes every effort to provide clear guidance to students on the timing of assessment submissions. The common request from students that multiple submission dates at the end of the semester be avoided, is not possible or appropriate, given the dominance of CA in the assessment strategy and the need for summative assessment in modules. However, the School will seek to ensure that details of submission requirements are communicated early to students so that they can adequately plan their work effort. One-year plan. The School's Teaching and Learning Committee will review current assessment scheduling processes at the programme level (release of assessment details, submission dates, etc.) to ensure that students have early sight of assessment submission dates and can plan their work accordingly.	From 24/25, the University has adopted 'minimum threshold expectation' statements which indicate that draft assessment schedules should be collated by each Programme Chair, reviewed and adjusted to ensure a manageable level of assessment workload for students throughout the semester and alignment with ECTS weighting.
Students					
7	P1	A	Grow student numbers in programmes that are critically small in size	There is strong demand for the School's programmes. For most applicants to Business School programmes, demand exceeds available places. On some programmes, reflecting market conditions, competition, etc., there is, in some years low demand for some programmes, most typically post experience programmes. The School manages this annually through the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The School has a marketing plan which includes a focus on the promotion of programmes with small numbers. Additionally, the School works with central university units to	DCU Senior Management strongly endorses this recommendation by the PRG. The University actively engages with Faculties annually to establish and review student numbers in light of our student growth model and financial sustainability requirements. In addition, a new central curriculum service, integral to an approved

R e c	P r i o r i t y	A d d r e s s e e	PRG Recommendation	Area Response	DCU Senior Management Response
				<p>enhance the promotion of programmes internationally and nationally.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The School reviews postgraduate programme registrations annually and has a track record of closing or pausing programmes, or moving to entry every second year, if the attractiveness of a particular programme has a pattern of declining numbers. - Furthermore, if a programme has relatively low registrations, the School seeks to introduce operational efficiency measures, such as co-delivery of modules with other programmes etc. <p>As such, we consider existing processes deal with this issue, and thus, we do not consider any new action is needed.</p>	operating model for curriculum management, will be put in place. This new unit will develop a quality assurance framework that will include strategic alignment, financial viability and market demand considerations, and perform periodic audits.
8	P2	A / U	Increase student internationalisation across programmes	<p>One-year and three-year plans. Increasing the internationalisation of the student cohort is a key priority in the School's Internationalisation Strategy (as it is in the University's strategy) and so we will review performance in this regard, along with planned actions, on an annual basis.</p>	<p>See the response to Recommendation 4 above.</p> <p>In addition, the University welcomes the innovative actions already underway, such as Semester 2 entry, to increase internationalisation across programmes.</p>
Faculty					
9	P1	A	Define or clarify distinct areas of expertise	<p>Immediately addressed. As part of the strategy refinement process outlined in response to Recommendation 1, we clarified three distinct areas of expertise: 1. Digitalisation of Business and Society; 2. People, Relationships and Trust; 3. SME Scaling and Succession.</p> <p>Additionally, reflecting the university's new approach to the management of research centres, the School began a review and</p>	DCU Senior Management Group welcomes the refinement of the distinct areas of expertise of DCU Business School. The University recognises the need to prioritise those areas which will yield maximum benefit for our stakeholders and communities.

R e c	P r i o r i t y	A d d r e s s e e	PRG Recommendation	Area Response	DCU Senior Management Response
				implementation of the organisation of research in the School (including a process for faculty to create high performance research clusters).	
10	P2	A	Clearly defined mentoring system for junior staff members	<p>Immediately addressed. The School has a clear mentoring system, and Management Board is committed to its effective implementation. We have refreshed our established mentoring process for new staff/early career researchers. This is actioned via the Group Heads.</p> <p>Alongside this, we have another mentoring scheme for colleagues who may benefit from a mentor, irrespective of their grade or role, and to support colleagues returning to work.</p>	<p>The development of our staff has always been a key priority for DCU, and DCU's Strategic Plan includes a commitment to ensure all staff have the opportunities to develop their skills and talents and advance with DCU structures.</p> <p>Staff mentoring is a valuable and rewarding process for all parties and DCU Senior Managements welcomes the Faculty's commitment to ensuring the effective implementation of the faculty-based mentoring system.</p> <p>The DCU Learning and Development Unit offers a range of mentoring programmes and supports and would welcome the opportunity to work with DCUBS on additional supports as required.</p>
Research and Development					
11	P1	A	Define a strategy towards research impact in addition to research outputs	Immediately addressed. The ADR and Management Board reviewed and refined the School's Research Strategy to ensure an appropriate focus on research impact. This is included in the School's current Research Strategy.	DCU Senior Management strongly supports this recommendation. Increasing the impact of our research, in both international research debates,

R e c	P r i o r i t y	A d d r e s s e	PRG Recommendation	Area Response	DCU Senior Management Response
					and directly in social and economic impacts are core components of the DCU Strategic Plan and associated KPIs. The achievement of University targets will be driven by the Faculty-level research plans.
12	P2	A / U	Grow number of full-time doctoral students	One-year plan. The growth in postgraduate research students is an objective in the School's Research Strategy. The progress in achieving targets will be reviewed annually.	A key strategic focus of the University is to significantly grow our doctoral community over the next five years. DCU Senior Management welcomes the inclusion of this objective in the DCU Business School strategic plan.
Executive Education					
13	P1	A	To have a process for providing opportunities for faculty that have an interest in Executive Education	Immediately addressed. The School's Commercial Director had an open call to faculty for increased engagement with Executive Education activities. One-year plan. The School's Commercial Director will work with the Academic Group Heads to increase the number of faculty who have the opportunity to participate in the design and delivery of executive education programmes.	DCU Senior Management Group supports this recommendation, which will create further developmental opportunities for faculty colleagues.
Resources and Administration					
14	P1	A	To increase the degree of freedom through the development of additional resources (through internationalisation, Executive education, and/or other means)	Three-year plan. Increasing resources via increasing international student recruitment and the expansion of executive education (and PNU delivery if possible) is part of the School's Strategy. Additionally, it is essential that the School works with DCU Executive (and particularly the Director of Finance) to secure via the budget a greater share of the resources it generates from ongoing core	DCU Senior Management notes this recommendation. The Director of Finance, along with other departments within the University (including the Student Recruitment Office) are working closely with DCU Business

R e c	P r i o r i t y	A d d r e s s e e	PRG Recommendation	Area Response	DCU Senior Management Response
				activities (e.g. UG and PG programmes), as the School has a strategic target to reduce its Student Staff Ratio (SSR) from 34.8 in 22/23 to 30.5 by the end of 25/26. We have a 2030 target SSR of 25:1.	School to support increased international enrolments and an improved staff-student ratio for the School.
15	P2	A/ U	Increase awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of central services, for example, brand management, IT	Immediately addressed. We described more clearly the strengths and weaknesses of the central services in our EQUIS SAR.	DCU Senior Management notes this recommendation relates specifically to the EQUIS documentation and has since been fully addressed. We strongly encourage DCU Business School to continue to engage with relevant central support areas, where challenges have been identified in the documentation.
Internationalisation					
16	P1	A	Articulate the internationalisation strategy, in alignment with DCU	Immediately addressed. As outlined above, the School's Internationalisation Strategy was refined as part of the review of the School Strategy following the QR process. The School's strategy is aligned to that of the University.	See the response to Recommendation 4 above.
17	P2	A/ U	To develop a holistic strategy for internationalisation which includes, undergraduate, postgraduate, industry elements of internationalisation. There is a need to enhance the strategy for internationalisation such as partnership alliances	Immediately addressed. The Internationalisation Strategy was reviewed and refined following the QR process and the interaction with other sub-strategies (T&L, Research, Executive Education) was considered. Thus, the strategy is more comprehensive and it embeds internationalisation across a wide range of activities in the School. One-year plan. As outlined in responding to Recommendation 4, we plan to specifically review and refine the School's Internationalisation Strategy on an annual basis. Three-year plan. Expanding and deepening international partnerships is a core part of our Internationalisation Strategy. We	See the response to Recommendation 4 above.

R e c	P r i o r i t y	A d d r e s s e e	PRG Recommendation	Area Response	DCU Senior Management Response
				will establish a new model of developing and managing strategic partnerships with international universities in our three-year plan.	
Ethics, Responsibility and Sustainability					
18	P1	A	Include sustainability more strongly into research and programme redesign	One-year plan. The ADTL/T&L Committee and ADR/Research Committee will monitor the inclusion of sustainability in programmes and research activity, respectively.	Sustainable development is a key driver in our Strategy and DCU Senior Management strongly supports this recommendation. DCU has recently appointed an Education for Sustainable Development Officer, who will actively work with academic colleagues to embed ESD content, approaches and competencies into our curriculum. Sustainability is also a key focus of a number of cross-Faculty university research centres, which provide an opportunity to develop multi-disciplinary research programmes including colleagues from business disciplines.
Connections with Practice					
19	P1	A	Build stronger international corporate relationships	One-year plan. The School will review the structures and processes for leading and managing Connections with Practice/Industry Engagement. Three-year plan. The School will develop a plan to build stronger relationships with international corporations.	DCU Senior Management welcomes this recommendation. This aligns closely with the DCU Strategic Plan, which commits to increasing the impact of our domestic and international enterprise partnerships.

R e c	P r i o r i t y	A d d r e s s e	PRG Recommendation	Area Response	DCU Senior Management Response
					DCUBS has membership on the University Engagement Committee and DCU Senior Management welcomes the commitment to ensuring structures and processes to manage connections with industry are optimal.

3 Summary of the One-Year Plan

Rec.no.	Action	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Strategy – performance management			
1	<p>Develop and implement a systematic process for an annual strategic performance review of the School:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and agree process for annual review of strategic performance, setting timelines and responsibilities. Review and document changes in the national and international competitive environments. Review and document performance during the year against prioritised objectives set out in the School Strategy (2023-2028) – compare KPIs in 2023/24 to both targets and performance in the prior year (2022/23) Report to the School on strategic performance and involve School in discussions on refinement to Strategy 	<p>Q3, 2023</p> <p>Q4, 2024</p> <p>Q4, 2024</p> <p>Q4, 2024/Q1, 2025</p>	<p>Executive Dean and Management Board</p> <p>Executive Dean and Management Board</p> <p>Executive Dean and Management Board</p> <p>Executive Dean</p>
2. Internationalisation			
8, 16, 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Craft an action plan in response to the internationalisation issues raised in our EQUIS report (includes consideration of the identification of, and engagement with, international peer schools). Review and refine internationalisation strategy in light of action plan above. As part of annual strategic performance review outlined at 1 above, review performance against prioritised international objectives, in particular, the objective concerning internationalisation of student body. In light of EQUIS accreditation, review the School's brand management and communications plan, particularly in terms of international positioning. 	<p>Q3/4, 2024</p> <p>Q4, 2024</p> <p>Q4, 2024</p> <p>Q4, 2024/Q1, 2025</p>	<p>Associate Dean for Internationalisation (ADI), Executive Dean and Management Board</p> <p>ADI, Executive Dean and Management Board</p> <p>ADI</p> <p>Marketing and Comms (School and University)</p>
3. Teaching and Learning			

6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review process for assessment scheduling at a programme level, with a particular emphasis on release of assignment information, submission deadlines, and enhancing communication to students. 	Q3/4, 2024	Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning (ADTL) and Teaching and Learning Committee (TLC).
18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor the inclusion of sustainability in programmes. 	Q4, 2024	Responsible Business Committee, in conjunction with ADTL and TLC.
4. Research			
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As part of annual strategic performance review outlined at 1 above, review performance against strategic objectives concerning postgraduate research. 	Q4, 2024	Associate Dean for Research (ADR)
18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor the inclusion of sustainability in research activity. 	Q4, 2024	Responsible Business Committee, in conjunction with ADR and Research Committee.
5. Executive Education			
13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a process which enables more faculty to be involved in the design and delivery of executive education. 	Q3, 2024	Commercial Director and Academic Group Heads.
6. Connections with Practice			
19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the structures and processes within the School for leading and managing Connections with Practice/Industry Engagement 	Q1/2 2025	Executive Dean and Management Board.

4 Summary of the Three-Year Plan

Rec.no.	Action	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Strategy – performance management			
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a full, holistic mid-point review of the performance of the School against the School Strategy (2023-2028). 	Q2, 2026	Executive Dean and Management Board
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete a review of the competitive national and international environment and the School's strategic positioning and performance. 	Q2, 2026	Executive Dean and Management Board
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise the School Strategy in light of the above reviews, re-calibrating KPIs, as appropriate. 	Q2, 2026	Executive Dean and Management Board
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Craft the School's strategic narrative in preparation for the School's AACSB re-accreditation process in Q3/4, 2026. 	Q2, 2026	AACSB Project Leader, Executive Dean and Management Board
2. Internationalisation			
17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement a new model (and processes) for initiation and management on the School's partnerships/engagements with international universities. This action will encompass the evaluation and management of engagement with EQUIS and AACSB peer schools. 	Q2/Q3, 2025	ADI
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As part of mid-point review of performance against strategy outlined at 1 above, review performance against prioritised international objectives, in particular, the objective concerning internationalisation of student body. Revise the Internationalisation Strategy as appropriate. 	Q2, 2026	ADI, Executive Dean and Management Board
3. Resources and Administration			

14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a full review of the resource base of the School and evaluate performance against the School Strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> review revenue generated across all areas of activities – students/programmes (including international student revenues), executive education, research, PNU, corporate donations/philanthropy. review expenditure of the School and review percentage contribution to the university. 	Q1/Q2, 2026	Faculty Manager, Executive Dean and Management Board.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate the progress of the School in reducing its Student Staff ratio (SSR), in light of the targets set in the strategy from 34.8 in 22/23 to 30.5 by the end of 25/26. 	Q1/Q2, 2026	Executive Dean and Management Board.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adjust plans and take corrective action as needed, in light of above reviews. 	Q1/Q2, 2026	Executive Dean and Management Board.
4. Connections with Practice			
19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate the effectiveness of new structures and processes introduced as a result of the review concerning leading and managing Connections with Practice/Industry Engagement (action in one-year plan). 	Q1/2 2026	Executive Dean and Management Board.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an action plan to increase engagement with international companies. 	Q4, 2025	TBC (will depend on review of structures and processes).



5 Appendices

5.1 Quality Committee (for the Self-Assessment Report)

The self-assessment phase of the Quality Review was conducted by an internal quality review steering group that was led by Prof. Barbara Flood and Prof. Colm O’Gorman. This steering group was also responsible for leading the School’s EQUIS accreditation process. Project management for both the Quality Review and EQUIS accreditation processes was led by Victor Lima, the School’s Accreditation and Assurance Coordinator. The School’s Management Board, led by the Executive Dean, placed the preparation for the Quality Review and EQUIS accreditation processes at the heart of the School’s activities for 2024.

5.2 Peer Review Group members

Membership of the Peer Review Group (PRG) for the Quality Review was (note: roles are those held at the time of the meetings):

- Prof. Vincent Mangematin, Dean & Chief Academic Officer, Kedge Business School, France (Chair)
- Prof. Metka Tekavčič, Dean of the Faculty of Economics, University of Ljubljana
- Prof. Ansgar Richter, Dean of Rotterdam School of Management
- Ms Orlaith Onoh, Dublin City University (BA in Economics, Politics and Law)”, Student Representative
- Prof. Blanaid White, Dean of Strategic Learning Innovation, Dublin City University
- Dr Martin Brown, Head of School of Policy and Practice, DCU Institute of Education, Dublin City University

5.3 Quality Committee (for the Quality Enhancement Plan)

- Professor Dominic Elliott – Executive Dean
- Professor Barbara Flood – Management Board Member
- Professor Colm O’Gorman – Management Board Member
- Mr Victor Lima – Accreditation and Assurance Coordinator

5.4 Prioritised Resource Requirements

See document- “DCU- Quality Enhancement Planning Prioritised Resource Proposals” to complete this section

Guidelines for Prioritised Resource Requirements: *Prioritised resource requirements are funded through the University’s Quality Enhancement Fund which is administered by the Quality Promotion Committee (QPC). The Quality Enhancement Fund is limited, therefore funding proposals should be confined to once-off, short term projects. Proposals that contain large capital expenditure (e.g. new buildings) or long term commitments (e.g. staffing) go through the University’s Budget Committee.*

Areas can propose more than one project as long as the above criteria are fulfilled for

Title of project	New accreditation data management system
Reference to Peer Review Group Report	This project will support a number of actions set out in the one-year and three-year plans to monitor performance against KPIs.
Aim of project	The School currently utilises the Sedona system to gather faculty data across a wide range of activities and to produce metrics and tables that are required by accreditation bodies. This system is out of data and does not adequately meet the School’s needs. Thus, the aim of this project is to purchase and implement a new accreditation software system.
High Level Summary of Activities/ Milestones	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Consideration of needs and evaluation of a number of software systems, leading to a choice of preferred system (Q3 2024).- Acquisition of system and training of accreditation staff (Q4, 2024).- Migration of data from Sedona and other sources (Q4, 2024, Q1 2025).- Train faculty to input data into the system and test the generation of accreditation tables (Q2, 2025).
Expected impact on quality enhancement in Area and University	A new system is essential to enable the School manage data effectively, in light of its multiple accreditations.
Amount requested and financial summary	Total request - €50,000 This is based on an estimate of purchase cost and some consultancy service cost to support implementation.