DCU
Ollscoil Chathair
Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City University

DÁMH NA nDAONNACHTAÍ AGUS NA nEOLAÍOCHTAÍ SÓISIALTA FACULTY
OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Faculty Quality Review
Humanities and Social Sciences

Quality Improvement Plan
June 2020

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The Faculty Management Board (FMB) has been established as the Faculty's Quality Improvement Committee. The FMB represents the Faculty's leadership and will ensure that the Quality Improvement Plan (QuIP) reflects the Faculty's strategy and the insights of the Peer Review Group Report. The FMB also has the capacity to make decisions relating to recommendations that are within our own Faculty's competence.

The FMB wishes to acknowledge the commitment of the Peer Review Group (PRG) members throughout the process and most particularly during their visit. The Quality Review process was a positive experience for the Faculty and has been a useful period of reflection on our strengths and the challenges we face.

We are particularly pleased that the commendations listed by the Peer Review Group, identified and highlighted the shared commitment to the Self Assessment Report (SAR) process and the strong academic culture of the Faculty. In terms of substance, the PRG report identified the key strengths of the Faculty – the high regard in which taught programmes are held by students and external stakeholders, the high quality of our PhD programmes, the strong employability of our graduates, our research ethos – all of which is very heartening.

Our approach to this Quality Improvement Plan (QuIP) was therefore one of seeking to reinforce and maintain the identified strengths of the Faculty, to maintain the commended use of evidence in decision-making and

with the particular challenges the Faculty faces, within the context of Irish Higher Education at present.

As this report was being developed the Covid-19 crisis struck Ireland. It was decided nonetheless to proceed with this report as the FMB believed that the discussion in relation to the QuIP could be effectively managed on-line.

On behalf of the
Faculty Management Board

Professor John Doyle
Executive Dean
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

GLOSSARY

ADEE	Associate Dean for External Engagement
ADR	Associate Dean for Research
ADTL	Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning
FEEC	Faculty External Engagement Committee
FM	Faculty Manager
FMB	Faculty Management Board
FRC	Faculty Research Committee
FTLC	Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee
HOS	Head of School

3

Responses to the Recommendations in the Peer Review Group Report
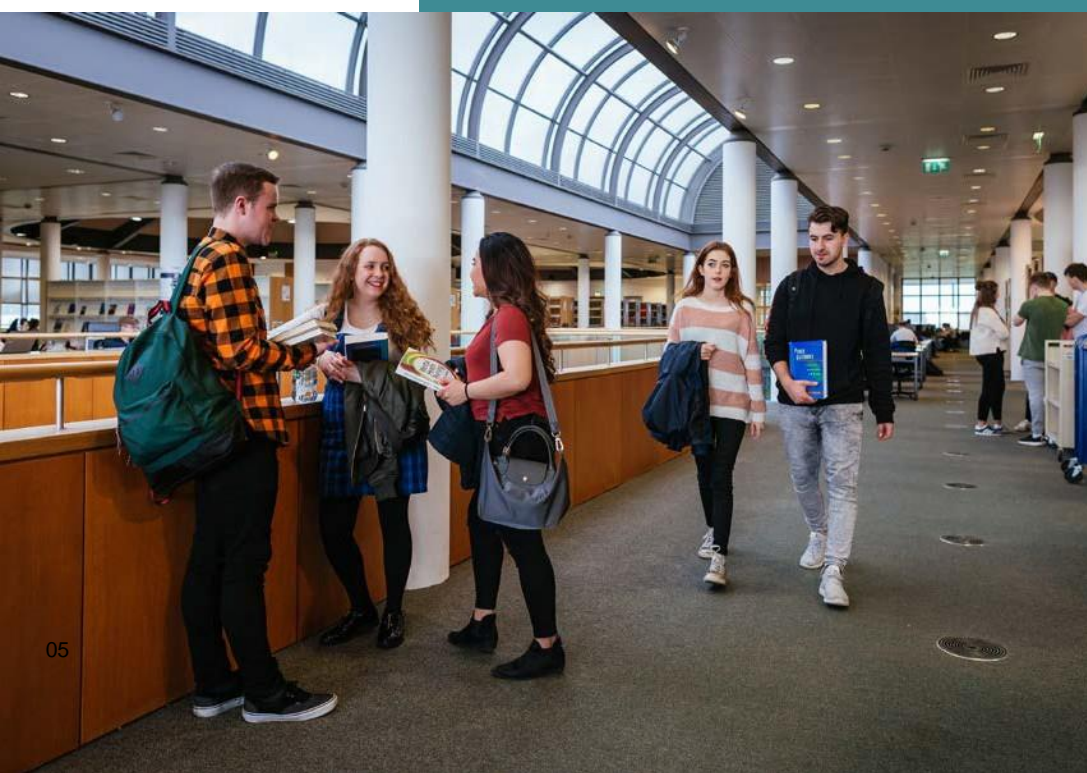
3 Responses to the Recommendations in the Peer Review Group Report

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 a rea.

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

Recommendation No.	Priority	Addresses	PRG Recommendation	FHSS Response	University Response
1	P1	A	and develops the values and culture of the new Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences post incorporation.	The Faculty elaborated such a vision during the Incorporation process, which of necessity had an internal and Faculty building focus. This was revised and updated during the development of the Faculty Strategy in 2018. Following the Quality Review process the Faculty has now started a process of developing and communicating a vision to an external audience, with a view to completing that process by the end of 2020.	
2	P1	A	Review the current School structure and consider adapting it to optimise the expansion of the Faculty at incorporation and its current and future strategic ambitions.	The FMB has already initiated this review with a view to reporting its recommendations to the University President in late 2020.	

Recommendation No.	Priority	Addresses	PRG Recommendation	FHSS Response	University Response
3	P1	A/U	Develop and implement, with University support, a reputation plan that highlights key agendas such as employability, research and impact, and strategic marketing and communications and promote both within and outside the Faculty. This should include; (i) a coherent communications plan; and, (ii) a review of Faculty websites and other social media.	The Faculty is currently recruiting a Senior Communications and Marketing Officer. A key role for this staff member will be to advise and assist the Faculty Management Board (FMB) on a Faculty communications plan and social media / website strategy. This plan will be discussed and adopted by FMB during 2020. The Faculty has already moved the Faculty website and all School websites to the new mobile-enabled template and will transfer research institutes and centres as soon as the University is in a position to progress that. The Faculty is currently reviewing the content of all School websites and the FMB is discussing the most effective way to manage content and utilise webpages and social media to promote both taught programmes and the new citation and impact strategy.	
4	P1	A/U	Develop a clear Faculty strategy to improve virtual and physical connectivity between the three sites.	The Faculty has already put in place processes to permit staff to complete Faculty level administrative processes using online platforms. For example, staff apply for Faculty research supports using an online form. Faculty Committee meetings and Faculty staff meetings rotate across the three academic campuses. It is our view that the student and staff experience would be greatly enhanced with the introduction of an inter-campus bus – at least on a trial basis. The Faculty also believes that co-location on a single campus is the single most important need for the Faculty's future progress and we are updating a space needs analysis to facilitate University planning on this issue.	

| Recommendation No.	Priority	Addresses	PRG Recommendation	FHSS Response	University Response
5	P2	A/U	Review the high-level interaction between Faculty leadership and leaders in HR, Estates, External Affairs and the Finance Office to ensure that it is regular and more fully accountable.	The Faculty enjoys strong relations with central units. The PRG proposes some recommendations to further improve working relations: — The HR Business Partner model works well for the Faculty and HOS – as a single point of contact who then follows up if necessary with other parts of HR. It might be a useful approach in some of the other large central units. — Regular meetings between Dean and VPEA have been productive and the next useful step might be a University Committee for External Engagement (or similar title) – equivalent to Research Committee/ Education Committee (with Associate Deans or equivalent along with representatives from central units including Communications, Marketing, International Office, Student Recruitment, Alumni etc.). — Space is always a challenge given the strong growth in recent years in student numbers and research income and the Faculty's division across 3 campuses. A more strategic approach to Space Planning for the Faculty would be welcome.	
6	P2	A /U	Develop a staffing and resource investment plan within future strategy and establish a more strategic role in allocation of budget to constituent	The Faculty already has a staffing and physical resource investment plan and has also fully engaged in the Research Prioritisation Scheme. There is also a strong track record in the Faculty, in cooperation with Budget Committee, of utilising any available resources to meet the most pressing needs rather than simply rolling over resources. The greatest single investment the University could make in FHSS is a co-located Faculty and that priority is well established at University level. The Faculty has worked with colleagues in DCU Estates to progress urgent refurbishment and upgrading of teaching facilities. While the Covid-19 crisis has seen delays, the Faculty has outlined a two-year priority programme of refurbishment at Faculty level, which will be progressed as soon as DCU Estates is able to schedule and supervise the works. The FMB will further progress a priority staffing investment plan. However given the financial uncertainty caused by Covid-19, this will be postponed for 6 to 12 months.	

Recommendation No.	Priority	Addresses	PRG Recommendation	FHSS Response	University Response
7	P2	A/U	Develop a clear and intelligence-led process through which the Faculty and the University can assess how sustainable activities and market-attuned programmes are (i) developed and enhanced, and withdrawn and closed and (ii) mobilise professional service resources in a consistent manner.	The FMB, in consultation with relevant central University committees, will seek to further develop a process through which to evaluate new programme proposals. There is a need for a more robust University-level process to inform the financial and staffing aspects of this decision-making process. The Faculty already has a process, with specific evidence-based benchmarks, through which the FMB and the relevant HOS reviews programmes and makes decisions on which programmes are discontinued. The International Office is now providing regular updates on student numbers and with the deployment of the CRM Recruit aspects of the new SIS, from September 2020, these are likely to be able to provide programme chairs with much more useful live data during the recruitment cycle. In terms of new programme development, at present University level resources on Market Research are not available at the planning phase and in the current financial climate are unlikely to be in the short-term.	

Recommendation No.	Priority	Addresses	PRG Recommendation	FHSS Response	University Response
8	P1	A	Review all undergraduate programmes with particular focus on delivering BA Joint Honours programme which more clearly links to the Faculty's identity and the values of DCU.	The Faculty is already in the middle of a full curriculum review of all programmes – but with a greater focus on UG programmes. As part of this process we have identified a series of 16 attributes and elements which we want embedded in every programme – including INTRA placements, study abroad and internationalisation, research opportunities, critical thinking, employability, etc. We are now working through an implementation process using the APR, PPR and bespoke interventions. The Covid-19 crisis has delayed this roll out, but it will continue through next year. In parallel with the curriculum developments the Faculty is revising the online prospectus and other student recruitment materials to promote the unique nature of our programme offerings.	

Recommendation No.	Priority	Addresses	PRG Recommendation	FHSS Response	University Response
9	P1	A	Develop Faculty-level guiding principles for assessment – to reflect more consistently the scale, scope and percentage of marks being allocated and to achieve more timely feedback on assignments.	This process has already begun and is being led by the ADTL, via the FTLC, and will report before end of 2020.	
10	P3	A	Develop a coordinated Faculty-wide approach to INTRA by investigating and, where appropriate, delivering opportunities for work placements across all programmes.	INTRA already exists on 6 programmes in the Faculty. The Faculty introduced INTRA on almost all other UG programmes (all except 2), with a pilot phase in operation in 2019-20 (for a one year placement in 2020-21). Full roll-out of INTRA on UG programmes will take place in 2020-21.	

Recommendation No.	Priority	Addresses	PRG Recommendation	FHSS Response	University Response
11	P1	A/U	Monitor closely the new Student Information System in terms of effectiveness and its integration with other University systems.	The Faculty welcome this recommendation. Faculty members are actively involved in the planning and are confident that this is also the approach of the Steering Committee for the SIS project.	
12	P1	A	Develop mechanisms within the Faculty to foster stronger research links across its current Schools – for example via consideration of the development and promotion of key thematic areas, that cut across several disciplines or Schools, where the Faculty is excellent and/or distinctive.	The research focus of the past few years has been strongly focused on increasing the quantity and quality of high-impact research in well-ranked journals and high impact book publishers. While this included inter-School research programmes, on balance it focused on disciplinary research. There are however a number of cross-School, interdisciplinary projects led out of the Faculty, for example, on media research, Brexit, Ethics and Online Violent Extremism. Another cross-Faculty initiative on interdisciplinary digital research methods was launched in February 2020. In response to this recommendation the Faculty is exploring a number of areas where we have the capacity to lead significant research projects or centres and which would bring colleagues from different Schools together for that purpose. The first of these initiatives will focus on: Climate Change with a focus on politics, public policy, and environmental communication, drawing on at least 3 Schools.	

Recommendation No.	Priority	Addresses	PRG Recommendation	FHSS Response	University Response
13	P2	A/U	Consider the viability of creating a Humanities and Social Sciences Graduate School to assist in attracting high calibre PhD students and to increase visibility of doctoral provision nationally and internationally.	The Faculty welcomes this recommendation and the FMB has established a working group to explore it, to report back to FMB in October 2020.	
14	P2	A	Develop clearer policies and procedures in learning and teaching, research and impact, and recruitment, retention and career development to deal with issues which require increasing attention, including Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, and Sustainability.	The Faculty Management Board will both consolidate existing policies in these areas and also review and develop new policies. The Faculty will submit its first School level application to Athena Swan in Spring 2020 (Communications) and will then prepare a Faculty wide application. Sustainability and diversity are two of the key principles in the curriculum review at present underway in the Faculty.	
15	P2	A/U	Provide appropriate resourcing of training at a Faculty cohort level – with a particular focus on building a sense of community amongst personnel in the Faculty.	At present staff engage with Learning and Development centrally and there are advantages to sharing courses with colleagues in other parts of DCU. However the FMB will explore whether some staff development could take place at Faculty level as part of an effort to strengthen the building of the staff community.	

Summary of the
One-Year Plan

4
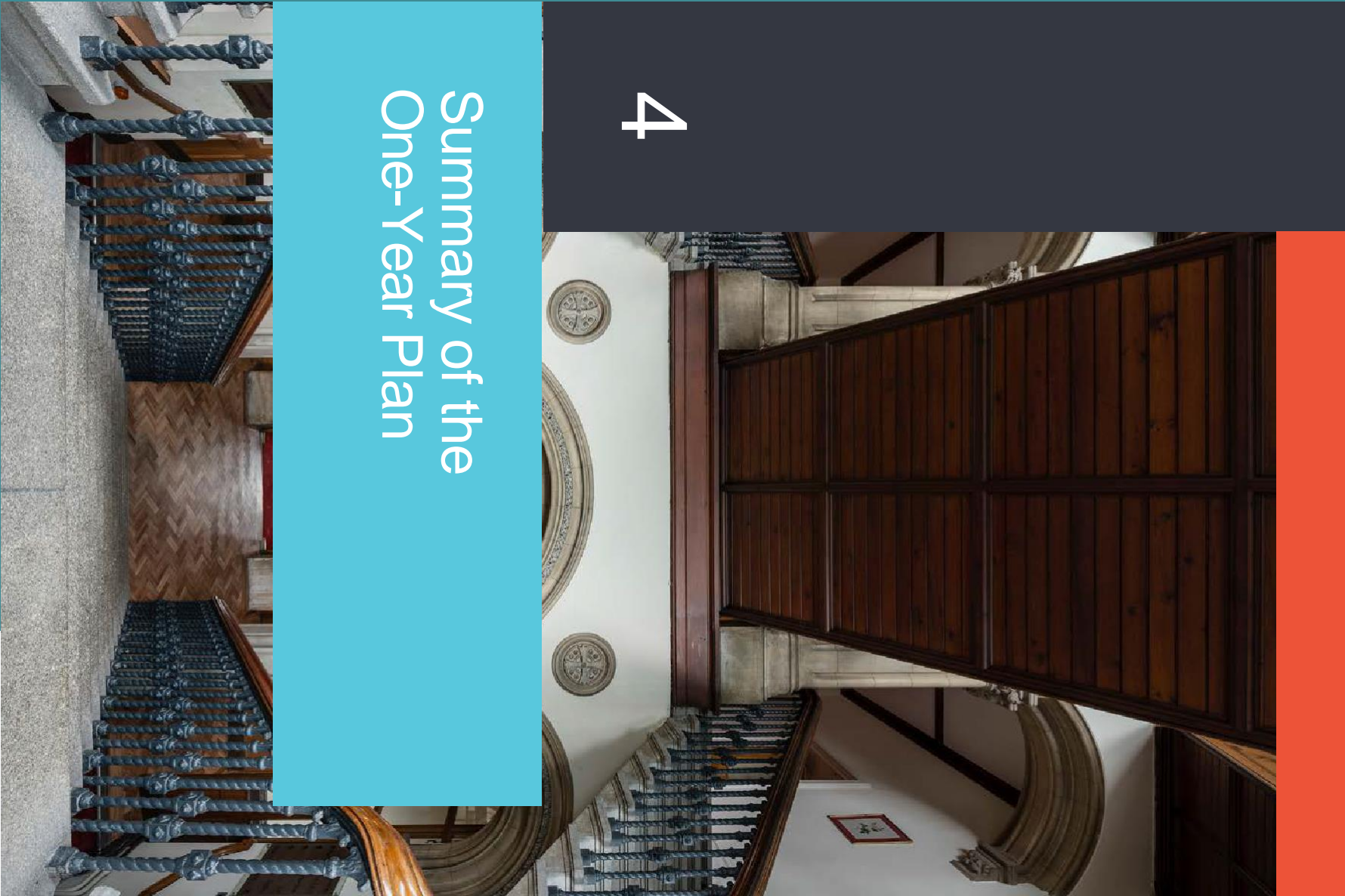
4   Summary of the One-Year Plan

Recommendation		Responsible	Progress
1.	Develop a clear Faculty vision that articulates and develops the values and culture of the new Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences post incorporation.	FMB	Complete by End 2020
2.	Review the current School structure in the Faculty – report to President.	FMB	End 2020
3.	Branding Plan:		
	Agreeing communications plan;	FMB	Q2/3 2020
	Appointment of Senior Communications and Marketing Officer.	Dean/FM	Q2 2020
	Reviewing all recruitment materials.	New Communications Officer/HOS/ Programme Chairs under direction of ADEE	Q3 2020 to Q1 2021
	Moving research centres to new template – as soon as can be resourced.	FM/central University Communications	TBC
4.	Faculty strategy to improve virtual and physical connectivity between the three sites.		
	Online forms where possible for internal processes and rotation of meetings/virtual meetings.	FM	Complete
	Inter-campus Bus.	University	University level decision
	Faculty presentation of precise space requirements for co-location.	FMB	July 2020
5.	Review the high-level interaction between Faculty leadership and leaders in HR, Estates, External Affairs and the Finance Office to ensure that it is regular and more fully accountable.		
	Begin discussion with senior staff in relevant units.	Dean/FM	Q3 2020
6.	Develop a staffing and resource investment plan within future strategy and establish a more strategic role in allocation of budget to constituent units.		
	Research Prioritisation Proposal.	FMB	Complete
	Refurbishment Plan: Faculty proposals to DCU Estates /SPAMG.	Dean /FM	Complete
	Long-term colocation investment need (see 4. above).		
	Staffing Investment Plan.	Dean /HOS/FM	Q2 2021

Recommendation		Responsible	Progress
7.	Review all undergraduate programmes.		
	Curriculum review under way.	FMB/ FTLC/ HOS/ Programme Chairs	On-going over next 24 months
	Branding/marketing of programmes – outlined in 3. opposite.		
8.	Faculty-level guiding principles for assessment.		
	Already underway under leadership of ADTL, will be approved by FTLC and FMB end 2020.	ADTL/FTLC/ FMB	End 2020
9.	INTRA: Pilot scheme to UG programmes up and running since Jan 2020 – potential Covid-19 impacts.	ADEE	Complete
	Roll out to almost all UG programmes in train, with students applying in Spring 2021 to go on 10 month INTRA from Sept 2021 -potential Covid-19 impacts.	ADEE	Complete by Spring 2021
10.	New SIS – Faculty is actively involved in the SIS implementation.	Dean /FM	On-going
11.	Stronger research links across its current Schools.		
	FMB is addressing this in its research strategy.	FMB/ADR	Done/On-going
	First step in this is a new proposed "Research Centre for Climate and Society" [provisional title].		
12.	Consider the viability of creating a Humanities and Social Sciences Graduate School.	FMB	Autumn 2020
	This recommendation is being actively discussed by FMB with a view to making a decision in Autumn 2020.		
13.	Develop clearer policies and procedures – on equality, diversity, sustainability.	FMB	Spring 2021
	Athena Swan application – School of Communications May 2020.	HOS – Communications	May 2020
	Athena Swan entire Faculty – timeline to be determined by central University.	FMB – working group	TBC

5

Summary of the
Three-Year Plan

5 Summary of the Three-Year Plan

Recommendation	Responsible	Progress
1. Develop a clear Faculty vision that articulates and develops the values and culture of the new Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences post incorporation.	FMB	Complete by End 2020
2. Review the current School structure in the Faculty. Implementation of any changes recommended by FMB and supported by President.	FMB	August 2021
3. Branding Plan including (i) a coherent communications plan; and, (ii) a review of Faculty websites and other social media.	FMB	Q2/3 2020
Full roll -out of communications plan on all Faculty controlled websites and social media.	Dean/FM/HOS/ Programme Chairs under direction of FMB	Q2 2020
4. Faculty strategy to improve virtual and physical connectivity between the three sites.		
Inter-campus Bus.	University	University level decision
University decision on future co-location of the Faculty.	FMB FMB	July 2020
Planning for Faculty co-location.		University level decision
5. Review the high-level interaction between Faculty leadership and leaders in HR, Estates, External Affairs and the Finance Office to ensure that it is regular and more fully accountable.		
Following agreement with other units – roll out of any identified changes in process and methods of working.	Dean/FM	2021/22
6. Develop a staffing and resource investment plan within future strategy and establish a more strategic role in allocation of budget to constituent units.		
Co-location plan progressing (see 4. above).	University/ Dean/HOS/FM	
Staffing Investment Plan – kept under annual review.	Dean	Annually every September/ October
7. Clear and intelligence-led process through which the Faculty and the University can assess sustainability of programmes.		
Seek with relevant University committees to agree new process for new programme evaluation.	University / FMB	2021
Roll out new SIS.	University / FMB	2021-24

Recommendation	Responsible	Progress
8. Review all undergraduate programmes.		
Curriculum review being completed.	FMB/ FTLC/ HOS/ Programme Chairs	Complete by 2022
Branding/marketing of programmes – outlined in 3. opposite.		
9. Faculty-level guiding principles for assessment.	ADTL/FTLC/ FMB	Annually in Spring
Adopted in 2020 but kept under annual review.		
10. INTRA: Pilot scheme to UG programmes up and running since Jan 2020 – potential Covid-19 impacts.	ADEE	Complete
Roll out to a most all UG programmes in train, with students applying in Spring 2021 to go on 10 month INTRA from Sept 2021 - potential Covid-19 impacts.	ADEE	Complete
11. New SIS – Faculty is actively involved in the SIS implementation.	Dean /FM	On-going
12. Stronger research links across its current Schools.		
The Faculty Research Strategy remains focused on promoting high quality publications, especially well-ranked Scopus articles and books with well-regarded book publishers. As part of this the Faculty will develop new schemes to support and promote inter-School research. This will include both structured research centres and support for individual projects.	FMB/ADR	Complete/ On-going
13. Consider the viability of creating a Humanities and Social Sciences Graduate School.	FMB	Spring 2021
Depending on the recommendation made by FMB in Autumn 2020, this will be implemented in Spring 2021.		
14. Develop clearer policies and procedures – on equality, diversity, sustainability – adopted.	FMB	Spring 2021
Faculty level Athena Swan application – submitted.	FMB – working group	TBC
15. A number of short training events at a Faculty cohort level have been developed and implemented in cooperation with DCU Learning and Development.	University/ FMB	By Autumn 2021 and on-going thereafter

6

Appendices

6.1 Quality Committee (for the Self-Assessment Report)

Faculty Management Board Membership 2019-2020

Professor John Doyle (Executive Dean, Chairperson)
Dr Brad Anderson (School of Theology, Philosophy, and Music)
Professor Françoise Blin (SALIS)
Dr Jennifer Bruen (Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning) Ms
Goretti Daughton (Faculty Manager)
Professor Derek Hand (School of English)
Professor James Kelly (School of History and Geography)
Dr Tanya Lokot (Associate Dean for External Engagement) – from November 2019 Dr Ken
McDonagh (Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning)
Professor Iain McMenamin (School of Law and Government)
Professor Ciarán Mac Murchaidh (Fiontar & Scoil na Gaeilge)
Professor Eugene McNulty (Associate Dean for Research)
Professor Kevin Rafter (School of Communications)
Dr Ethna Regan (School of Theology, Philosophy, and Music) – until September 2019 Ms
Kirsty Rickard (Recording Secretary)

Peer Review Group members

Noel Dorr (Former Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs, former Ambassador to the UK
and to the United Nations)
David Galbreath (Dean, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Bath) Margaret
Heffernan (appointed Rapporteur for the review group) (Assistant Professor, DCU Business
School, Dublin City University)
Jim Livesey (Dean, School of Humanities, University of Dundee)
Brien Nolan (Associate Professor, School of Mathematical Sciences, Dublin City University) Adrienne
Scullion (nominated Chair of the review group) (Pro Vice Chancellor,
Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, Queen's University Belfast)

6.3 Quality Committee (for the Quality Improvement Plan)

Professor John Doyle (Executive Dean, Chairperson)
Dr Brad Anderson (School of Theology, Philosophy, and Music)
Professor Françoise Blin (SALIS)
Ms Goretti Daughton (Faculty Manager) Professor
Derek Hand (School of English)
Professor James Kelly (School of History and Geography) Dr
Tanya Lokot (Associate Dean for External Engagement)
Dr Ken McDonagh (Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning)
Professor Iain McMenamin (School of Law and Government) Professor
Ciarán Mac Murchaidh (Fiontar & Scoil na Gaeilge) Professor Eugene
McNulty (Associate Dean for Research) Professor Kevin Rafter (School
of Communications)
Ms Kirsty Rickard (Recording Secretary)

6.2

Title of project	Developing a Reputation Plan and Communications Strategy
Reference to Peer Review Group Report	No. 3 Develop and implement, with University support, a reputation plan that highlights key agendas such as employability, research and impact, and strategic marketing and communications and promote both within and outside the Faculty. This should include; (i) a coherent communications plan; and, (ii) a review of Faculty websites and other social media.
Aim of project	To allow us to complete a response to Recommendation 3 in one year.
High Level Summary of Activities/ Milestones	— With external professional support analyse the key elements of the current reputation of the Faculty among key external (and internal) stakeholders. — Analyse the gap between that existing reputation and the Faculty's own assessment of its strengths and weaknesses. — Develop with external and internal support a high-level strategic communications plan, designed to positively project key strategic objectives and strengths, in line with the Faculty Strategic Plan and the QA process outcomes. — Set out an operational plan to implement a strategy through the Faculty's own web-presence, social media platforms and other communications activity.
Expected impact on quality improvement in Area and University	— Create and communicate a coherent and distinctive Faculty brand and vision. — Deal with any negative reputation issues and project positive reputation issues more effectively. — Improve Student Recruitment (domestic and international) through a more effective communications and marketing strategy and activity. — Increase Research Impact through more effective citation impact strategy and dissemination of scholarly expertise and research outcomes.
Amount requested and financial summary	€25,000 — Cost of external communications advice, facilitation of stakeholder interviews/focus groups and preparation of report/ strategy. — Support for development of website content and social media activity so it can be effectively mainstreamed and sustained at the end of this short-life project.

Title of project	Creating a Humanities and Social Sciences Graduate School/ enhancing cross-School research links
Reference to Peer Review Group Report	No. 12 Develop mechanisms within the Faculty to foster stronger research links across its current Schools – for example via consideration of the development and promotion of key thematic areas, that cut across several disciplines or Schools, where the Faculty is excellent and/or distinctive. and No. 13 Consider the viability of creating a Humanities and Social Sciences Graduate School to assist in attracting high calibre PhD students and to increase visibility of doctoral provision nationally and internationally.
Aim of project	To launch a Humanities and Social Sciences Graduate School as a key mechanism to further develop cross-School research links and to increase visibility of our quality postgraduate research offerings nationally and internationally.

High Level Summary of Activities/ Milestones	— Explore some best practice models internationally, of such Faculty level cross-disciplinary Graduate Schools.
	— Discuss with internal stakeholders to avoid duplication or role confusion.
	— Design a model which would focus on:
	  — brand projection,
	  — efficiencies in Graduate Training,
	  — institutionalisation of cross-disciplinary approaches to complement existing disciplinary strengths,
	  — maintaining School registrations and strengths of the existing models.

Expected impact on quality improvement in Area and University	— Stronger national and international awareness of the scale, diversity and quality of our PhD programmes and scholarships – almost 200 students in 2019-20. — Maximising the opportunities for securing external funding for PhDs. — Maximising the quality of PhD applicants. — Improving quality of PhD level training and professional development structures: e.g. GTE pathways, funding seminars, publication workshops. — Improving the management of PhD student contributions to UG teaching by sharing and institutionalising best practice more effectively. — Improve the overall PhD experience and foster cross-Faculty research networks and collaboration, as well as collegiality.
Amount requested and financial summary	€20,000 — Short-term back-fill to allow an experienced academic lead this initiative, through to mainstreaming at the end of one year. — Travel (when feasible) to explore some best practice models in more detail. — Marketing/PR costs to project the launch of the Graduate School, after which all costs are mainstreamed.

Notes

Purposefully different, consistently excellent