

Quality Assurance / Quality Improvement
Internal Quality Review Programme
2018-2019



Quality Improvement Plan

Student Support & Development

November, 2019

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1. INTRODUCTION

Following the receipt of the final report from the Peer Review Group, it was circulated to the entire SS&D staff for their attention. This was then discussed at the Heads Meeting and a date set for the SS&D Quality Review Committee to convene and address the Quality Improvement Plan.

It was agreed that the items recommended by the panel would be integrated into the SS&D strategic planning days on June 6th and 7th. This worked extremely effectively as we were able to incorporate the recommendations into our planning for the coming year.

The SS&D Quality Review Committee then met to finalise the responses through discussion initially and the final document was circulated to the group electronically and agreed. The entire QuIP was then circulated to all SS&D staff.

2. RESPONSES TO 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 Area.

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

No.	Priority	Area	PRG Recommendation	SS&D Response	University Response
<i>Planning and Effective Management of Resources</i>					
1	P1	A/ U	<i>Review structures to ensure they are fit for purpose / fit for the future and consider consolidation of functions in order to deliver a seamless experience for stakeholders</i>	<p>We will review structures to ensure they are fit for purpose in line with university / unit projects and plans for the coming 3 to 5 years. This review will also include a skills gap analysis. The approach to this will include identifying (existing or potential) 'frameworks' under which discrete units of SS&D can work closely together. This work has already commenced in the area of Widening Participation and Careers/INTRA.</p> <p>Further information relating to the implementation of this review are included in the One-Year (P.9) and Three-Year (P/ 15) Implementation Plan for this recommendation</p>	<p>The University welcomes Student Support and Development's proposed approach to implementation of this recommendation, and note the Area's intention to align this review to future University level plans and student needs within its scope.</p> <p>The HR department welcome an opportunity to contribute and support the work of SS&D in the implementation of this review of structures.</p>
2	P2	A/ U	<i>Ensure clear succession planning across SS&D to maintain quality and ensure resilience of services in as far as possible</i>	<p>The Director of SS&D has progressed this recommendation and met with a member of HR staff to discuss an approach. The Director will be working with HR and relevant members of staff in SS&D to develop a succession plan and career progression framework for the Unit. SS&D has put itself forward to be a pilot in any</p>	<p>The University welcome the Area's approach to address this recommendation, and will support the Area in implementation through our HR function.</p>

No.	Priority	Area	PRG Recommendation	SS&D Response	University Response
				succession planning exercise which the University may wish to develop.	
3	P1	A/ U	<i>Ensure the provision and immediate availability of funding to support international students with a disability</i>	SS&D will undertake a review of the current situation and potential challenges in the future, with the growth of international student numbers. This will be presented to Senior Management for consideration. The DLSS will develop a policy on supporting international students with disabilities.	The University will work closely with SS&D and the International Office to plan for appropriate supports required for international students. The University note an international contingency fund, which has a finite fund available for emergency supports where appropriate. Expenditure on this fund is managed by the DCU International Office.
4	P2	U/ A	<i>Ensure there is adequate impact assessment of senior management decisions on the capacity of SS&D to deliver and to mitigate risk</i>	This was also identified as a weakness in our SAR. SS&D will continue to contribute to / participate in discussions and be pro-active in identifying the impact of senior management decisions, as soon as these come to our attention.	University structures ensure that internal stakeholders are consulted and engaged on strategic projects that with impact operational delivery within their Area. SS&D sits within a broader structure in the University and is represented at SMG by the VPAA. The University's strategic annual review and renew process provides an opportunity for feedback on strategy implementation, and a review of future milestones. This process, alongside strong ongoing communication channels and SS&D representation at University Executive provide an opportunity to mitigate risk where new projects are being scoped and implemented.

No.	Priority	Area	PRG Recommendation	SS&D Response	University Response
Effectiveness of Activities and Processes					
5	P2	A/ U	<i>Think online first in the provision and communication of resources and services and layer on top of this</i>	<p>In recent years, we have built our on-line resources considerably and will continue to do so. Since the Review, we have identified areas of improvement and future development.</p> <p>While staff have good knowledge in IT, we lack expert knowledge in digital technologies and complex online resources, which can be challenging. This is a 'skills gap' which we would like to address in the future to ensure online resources are effective and professional.</p> <p>Social Media Ambassadors will be employed to target students and alert them to online resources and initiatives to optimise engagement.</p> <p>Further information on implementation plans are included in P. 10 of the QuIP</p>	<p>The University welcome progress made to date on this recommendation, and the leadership shown by SS&D and other colleagues in the development of the online Discover DCU, launched in 2018.</p> <p>The University recommends the application of a range of existing technology resources available within the University, and for SS&D to work closely with ISS and other relevant Units to deliver online resources and supports to students.</p>
6	P1	A	<i>Reintroduce multidisciplinary case conference meetings for high risk students</i>	<p>This was identified as a weakness in our SAR. Following discussions, a protocol is currently being developed for case conferences across the Units, which will be reinstated in this academic year.</p>	<p>The University welcomes the progress made by SS&D in relation to this recommendation, and their plans for revised protocols to be implementation for the 2019/20 academic year</p>
Communication and Provision of Information					
7	P2	A	<i>Review information sharing within and outside SS&D and use of data to inform service planning and delivery</i>	<p>This was discussed in great detail and protocols are currently being created. The data that we gathered from CRM over the last year has played a key role in informing our service offering for the coming year. The potential of CRM is yet to be exploited and we will continue to work with the University on optimising this tool for the benefit of the student.</p>	<p>The University welcome the progress made to date by the Area in relation to this recommendation. The University notes the Area's intention to further leverage the capabilities of CRM in relation to managing information relating to student engagement with SS&D</p>

No.	Priority	Area	PRG Recommendation	SS&D Response	University Response
				Further information on SS&D's approach to the implementation of our approach to quality improvement is provided on p.11 of this report.	services, and looks forward to working closely with the Unit in the context of further student experience enhancements that can be delivered as a result of the implementation of a new Student Information System
8	P2	A/ U	<p><i>Update SS&D website to ensure information on services offered by all units is mobile enabled and to include easy access to information, including on Crisis management, out of hours in particular</i></p> <p>Note: A number of SS&D Units' content are already migrated to mobile enabled format but not Chaplaincy or Counselling & Personal Development Service</p>	<p>Changes to the website to including mobile-enabled information on the-out of-hours service have been completed during summer 2019.</p> <p>Out-of-hour Emergency Contact Details for students will be displayed in a prominent position on the SS&D webpages.</p>	The University notes progress made to date in relation to this initiative, and encourages the Area to seek support from Information Systems and Services (ISS) to complete implementation of this plan.
9	P1	A/ U	<p><i>Upgrade the outward facing interfaces e.g. INTRA portal, mentoring portal, 2nd level student achievement awards, to make them fit for purpose.</i></p>	<p>SS&D is very concerned about the student-facing portals and identified this as a weakness in the SAR. Portals can have a significant impact on the student experience and the efficiency of the Service, when functioning correctly.</p> <p>The University is developing a placement system that will alleviate the major risk we currently have with the INTRA portal, but there is an interim period of risk that we are currently discussing with ISS and Academic Affairs. Other 'portals' within SS&D are relying on the CRM system or Google Sheets. The CRM portal is a priority for the coming year, as it will significantly streamline our work. Initial work has commenced but</p>	<p>The University recognises the identified risks associated with a number of outward facing portals, and operational management systems within SS&D. The University welcomes the work conducted by SS&D and ISS since the review to mitigate immediate systems risks, and looks forward to working closely with the Area on delivering long-term systems enhancements in the future.</p> <p>The University note application made for funding of this portal through the QulP</p>

No.	Priority	Area	PRG Recommendation	SS&D Response	University Response
				we will require university support for this crucial, student-facing tool.	prioritised funding process. In light of future investment in a range of new student information systems, the University suggests that any investment should align with developments in student systems in DCU to ensure value for money for any investment.
Ongoing Quality Enhancement					
10	P2	A	<i>Benchmark SS&D activity v. peers nationally / internationally (Association of Managers of Student Services in Higher Education [AMOSSHE])</i>	<p>SS&D management will explore suitable benchmarks nationally and internationally.</p> <p>This will include an examination of service offering, staffing levels, expertise offered and impact. Relevant staff are existing members of national and international organisations (e.g. AMOSSHE, AGCAS, PCHEI), and have good networks through which this activity can be pursued.</p>	<p>The University welcomes opportunities for benchmarking of our service provision to ensure optimal delivery of student services. The University commends SS&D for its continued active involvement in national and international networks and events through which best practice can be shared.</p> <p>The University notes the completion of an independently led review of Widening Participation in DCU, completed by the Bridge Group in September 2019. This review included a benchmark assessment of DCU's delivery on our widening participation agenda, based on national, and where appropriate, international comparators.</p>

No.	Priority	Area	PRG Recommendation	SS&D Response	University Response
11	P2	A	<i>Enhance delivery of training and resources for academic and support staff across the university community to develop their capability and confidence in dealing with presenting student issues within appropriate professional boundaries</i>	A full suite of workshops and training is currently being finalised by SS&D and will be rolled out in the coming year. We are currently updating our 'staff resources' to help staff support students independent of our services. This will be completed for the new academic year.	The University commend SS&D in progress in relation to implementation of an enhancement plan in response to this recommendation to date. It is hoped that enhanced training and resources can build on an already deep commitment to supporting students by both academic and support staff throughout the University.
12	P1	A	<i>Provide appropriate supports for SS&D front line staff to support staff wellbeing and effectiveness</i>	Two levels of support have been identified – one for frontline staff, dealing with students in the first instance; debriefing for Student Advisors / Life Coaches to ensure transference does not occur. Suitable support interventions are being discussed.	The University welcomes an opportunity to support in the development and delivery of a framework that supports staff involved in front-line delivery of student support services.
Stakeholder Relationships					
13	P1	A	<i>Systematise and formalise meetings and engagements with internal and external stakeholders, e.g. SU, Office of Student Life and employers</i>	SS&D welcomes this recommendation and will identify areas of engagement that will be formalised. In recent months, SS&D and the OSL has consciously increased collaboration (e.g. Consent / Mental Health Support). The location of the Leadership & Life Skills Centre in the U has also helped to develop stronger relationships between the two units.	The University offers its support to SS&D in relation to the implementation of this recommendation, and welcomes an opportunity to contribute to the successful facilitation of stakeholder engagement activities, where appropriate.

3. SUMMARY OF THE ONE-YEAR PLAN

The one-year plan should contain actions and timelines in response to PRG findings and recommendations. It should also assign responsibility for the actions to named persons, or roles, or parts of the organisation.

	PRG Recommendation	Action	Timeline	Responsibility
<i>Planning and Effective Management of Resources</i>				
P1	<i>Review structures to ensure they are fit for purpose / fit for the future and consider consolidation of functions in order to deliver a seamless experience for stakeholders</i>	<p>The review will take place in 2 stages:</p> <p>Stage 1: Identify (existing and potential) conceptual frameworks that can provide an overarching structure for relevant units to consolidate their work. Discussions have already commenced in the area of Careers / INTRA (in the context of the 'employability' framework) and WP/Autism/Access (in the context of a Widening Participation Strategy).</p> <p>Stage 2: will take place in line with succession planning, whereby an in-depth review will be carried out of the needs of the University (and hence, the Unit) in the next 3-5 years. During this process, potential structural changes may be identified.</p>	Stage 1 will be completed by July 2020	Director of SS&D
P1	<i>Ensure the provision and immediate availability of funding to support international students with a disability</i>	<p>The DLSS, in consultation with the Director, will undertake a full review of recent trends in international student needs, and examine plans for the increase in international student numbers in DCU. The DLSS will develop a model to predict funding requirements for international students for the following academic year and present this to Senior Management in the June prior to commencement each year. The DLSS will also develop a policy for supporting international students and submit this to Executive for consideration.</p> <p>The Director will liaise with the VP for External Affairs to discuss the provision of a contingency fund should an unforeseen expense arise (in the case that a student has not disclosed prior to arrival or additional support is required).</p>	June 2020	Head of DLSS / Director of SS&D

	PRG Recommendation	Action	Timeline	Responsibility
P2	<i>Ensure there is adequate impact assessment of senior management decisions on the capacity of SS&D to deliver and to mitigate risk</i>	The Director will continue to monitor developments which she is involved in or becomes aware of and will discuss capacity issues with the Heads of Unit. Where challenges arise, this will be fed back to Senior Management. A framework for such an impact assessment will be created by the SS&D management team. SS&D will formally request of Senior Management that 'impact' is discussed with SS&D as university-wide initiatives develop. The 'formalisation' of such an impact assessment at Senior Management level would be welcomed by SS&D as it would systemise the process. This will be discussed with Senior Management.	June 2020	Director
Effectiveness of Activities and Processes				
P2	<i>Think online first in the provision and communication of resources and services and layer on top of this</i>	<p>As part of the end-of-year review, each Unit is re-examining the provision of online resources in their respective areas within the 'triangular' framework of student support & developmental opportunities which encourages a) large group b) small group c) one-to-one interventions.</p> <p>Examples of progress to date: The First Year Landing Page is being developed for the 2019/20 student cohort, with a view to simplifying the transition for new undergraduate students.</p> <p>Additional Podcasts are being developed for various areas including the DCU Engagement Award, Discover DCU and Careers.</p>	September 2019 and on-going	Deputy Director of SS&D / Heads of Units
P1	<i>Reintroduce multidisciplinary case conference meetings for high risk students</i>	The relevant services have convened and are re-visiting their protocol for case conferences, with a view to ensuring a systemic approach to the support of the student. Case conferences will be rolled out for the new academic year.	December 2019 and on-going	Head of Counselling, Disability & Learning Support, Health Service, Student Learning (and

	PRG Recommendation	Action	Timeline	Responsibility
				others, where relevant)
Communication and Provision of Information				
P2	<i>Review information sharing within and outside SS&D and use of data to inform service planning and delivery</i>	<p>Information Sharing: Protocols are currently being drafted to examine the sharing of information within SS&D and with staff in the University outside of the Unit. We are also updating our 'staff pages' and Staff Handbook, to ensure that all DCU staff have immediate access to accurate, up-to-date information.</p> <p>Use of Data: Over the past year, we have collected and analysed a significant amount of data from CRM to provide insight into student engagement with SS&D activities / opportunities. The data has helped inform our service offering for the coming academic year and was included in our strategic planning days. We are now finalising 'report templates' across SS&D so that the data can be analysed more frequently during the Semester. This will allow us to be agile and respond to demand, where appropriate.</p>	December 2019 and on-going	Director / Deputy Director / Heads of Units
P2	<i>Update SS&D website to ensure information on services offered by all units is mobile enabled and to include easy access to information, including on Crisis management, out of hours in particular</i> Note: A number of SS&D Units' content are already migrated to mobile enabled format but not Chaplaincy or Counselling & Personal Development Service	<p>All webpages have been updated and are mobile enabled.</p> <p>Contact details for emergencies will be created and placed in a prominent position on the SS&D pages</p>	<p>September 2019</p> <p>December 2019</p>	<p>Heads of Units</p> <p>Director</p>
P1	<i>Upgrade the outward facing interfaces e.g. INTRA portal, mentoring portal, 2nd</i>	The current CRM system will need to be audited and assessed for a new Microsoft platform, as the former ADX portal is no longer supported. Work will need to be carried out in the coming months to assess the functionality of the	June 2020	Deputy Director / Head of Access / Head

	PRG Recommendation	Action	Timeline	Responsibility
	<i>level student achievement awards, to make them fit for purpose.</i>	new portal, in order to ensure that the needs of the Unit/students are met. This is urgent but requires funding. The University is developing a placement system which will alleviate the major risk we currently have with the INTRA portal. This will inevitably take time and the existing risk of 'complete portal failure' is a major concern. Discussions have commenced with ISS and Academic Affairs regarding an interim solution.		of Careers / Financial Assistance Officer
Ongoing Quality Enhancement				
P2	<i>Benchmark SS&D activity v. peers nationally / internationally (Association of Managers of Student Services in Higher Education [AMOSSHE])</i>	Colleagues will continue to attend national and international conferences / maintain membership of national and internal professional organisations in order to keep apprised of developments and trends across the sector. We will undertake a benchmarking exercise of activity, staffing levels, impact of activities in line with our succession planning and career development work. Access has just completed a benchmarking exercise through an international company.	June 2019 and ongoing Completed	Director of SS&D / Heads of Unit
P2	<i>Enhance delivery of training and resources for academic and support staff across the university community to develop their capability and confidence in dealing with presenting student issues within appropriate professional boundaries</i>	A Working Group has been convened to develop a full overview of workshops and trainings which will be available for DCU Staff from September 2019, these will include items such as working with students in distress, understanding Autism, Disability Awareness. We will develop these in line with the needs of the University and trends in the student body. The Staff Handbook has been up-dated to reflect the Services we offer and clarify referral mechanisms. 'Staff pages' have been updated to ensure that all DCU staff have (confidential) access to relevant information.	September 2019 – June 2020	Director of SS&D / Heads of Units

	PRG Recommendation	Action	Timeline	Responsibility
		SS&D will work with Marketing and HR to ensure that DCU Staff are made aware of the resources and training on offer.		
P1	<i>Provide appropriate supports for SS&D front line staff to support staff wellbeing and effectiveness</i>	Two levels of support have been identified – one for frontline staff, dealing with students in the first instance; debriefing for Student Advisors / Life Coaches to ensure transference does not occur. Suitable support interventions are being discussed. This item will be integrated into the annual PMDS Review to ensure that staff are satisfied with the level of support.	July 2019 and ongoing	Director of SS&D / Heads of Unit
Stakeholder Relationships				
P1	<i>Systematise and formalise meetings and engagements with internal and external stakeholders, e.g. SU, Office of Student Life and employers</i>	The SS&D Management Team will identify relevant stakeholders where formal arrangements are not in place. Formal meetings currently take place with many external stakeholders and the format and frequency of these will be examined.	July 2019 and on-going	Director of SS&D / Heads of Units

4. SUMMARY OF THE THREE-YEAR PLAN

	Recommendation	Actions	Timeline	Responsible
P2	<i>Ensure clear succession planning across SS&D to maintain quality and ensure resilience of services in as far as possible</i>	The Director of SS&D will work with HR on the DCU Human Capital Plan and collaborate with Heads of Unit to ensure the cascading of this work through all levels of the Unit. Initial thinking has commenced but this is a medium-term project which involves a number of elements, including the use of PMDS as a developmental tool, examination of roles and responsibilities, career progression and university developments.	June 2021	Director / Heads of Units

P1	<i>Upgrade the outward facing interfaces e.g. INTRA portal, mentoring portal, 2nd level student achievement awards, to make them fit for purpose.</i>	<p>The University is developing a placement system which will alleviate the major risk we currently have with the INTRA portal. This, we understand, is being done as part of the work on the new SIS project. The Head of INTRA will make herself available for expert input as and when required. We are in contact with the SIS Project Manager to ensure we are kept up to date with developments.</p> <p>There is a requirement for a Mentoring Platform if the current mentoring programme is to be sustained and grow. The Head of Careers will examine possible solutions but funding is currently not available through the SS&D budget.</p> <p>The Graduate Outcome Survey is using a commercial survey tool, outside of the university-supported environment for the collection of this data and to fulfil our statutory requirements (this is also the case for the ESF fund). We will examine the possibility of a <i>University</i> Survey Tool with Senior Management in order to simplify the process and cut costs.</p>	<p>June 2021</p> <p>June 2021</p> <p>June 2021</p>	Director / Head of Access / Head of Careers /
P2	<i>Benchmark SS&D activity v. peers nationally / internationally (Association of Managers of Student Services in Higher Education [AMOSSHE])</i>	We will proactively seek opportunities to benchmark ourselves internationally and normalise this activity as an integral part of what we do.	June 2021	Director of SS&D / Heads of Units
P1	<i>Review structures to ensure they are fit for purpose / fit for the future and consider consolidation of functions in order to deliver a seamless experience for stakeholders</i>	<p>Stage 1 was described in the 1-year plan.</p> <p>Stage 2: will take place in line with succession planning, whereby an in-depth review will be carried out of the needs of the University in the next 3-5 years. During this process, potential structural changes may be identified.</p>	July 2021	Director of SS&D

5 APPENDICES

5.1 SS&D Quality Committee (for the Self-Assessment Report)

Claire Bohan (Chair)
Annabella Stover
Deirdre Moloney
Cathy McLoughlin
Maeve Long
Karina Curley
Helena Ahern
Jessie Byrne
Carol Ellis
Yvonne McLoughlin
Paul Hampson / Seamus McEntee

5.2 Peer Review Group members

Dr Manuel Alonso, Associate Chief Operating Officer (Director of Student Services) Loughborough University, Loughborough (Chair)
Dr Pat Morgan, VP for Student Experience, National University of Ireland, Galway
Ms Fíona Ní Chinnéide, Executive Director, Irish Penal Reform Trust
Ms Goretti Daughton, Faculty Manager, Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences, DCU (Rapporteur)
Professor Pádraig Ó Duibhir, Deputy Dean, Institute of Education, DCU

5.3 SS&D Quality Committee (for the Quality Improvement Plan)

Claire Bohan (Chair)
Annabella Stover
Deirdre Moloney
Cathy McLoughlin
Maeve Long
Karina Curley
Helena Ahern
Jessie Byrne
Carol Ellis
Yvonne McLoughlin
Paul Hampson

All members of SS&D staff fed into the Quality Improvement Plan through the SS&D planning days in June.

5.4 Prioritised Resource Requirements

Project 1: Title:

Cost Estimate:

Project	Title	Cost Estimate
1	Scoping & development of a student-facing portal, linked into CRM Microsoft Dynamics to unify the student experience within all units.	5 x €980 scoping 20 x €980 development 2 x €980 training Total: €26,460
2	Online first: Migrating physical student resources to podcasts/screencasts/Youtube Videos (1year project (2 students, hourly contract) to build expertise and establish a solid foundation).	€5,000
3	Working together: Facilitators for Careers/Intra inter-Unit dialogues.	€2,500 for Careers & INTRA Facilitator / Away Day
4.	Facilitators to work on re-structuring / re-imagining of SS&D service offering to ensure a more seamless experience for the student.	€5,000 over 2 years for Facilitator
5.	Social Media Ambassadors – to advertise Discover, DCU Engagement Award, SS&D events (to increase engagement). Yearlong pilot, one Ambassador per Faculty.	120hrs x 5 Ambassadors @ €9.80 per hour €6,750