

Quality Assurance / Quality Improvement
Programme for Support/Service Offices
2010-2016



Quality Improvement Plan
(Final Draft following Area and University Response & QulP Follow-up Meeting)
Of

Student Support & Development
6 November 2012

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Response To Recommendations in the Peer Review Group Report
3. Summary of One-Year Plan
4. Summary of Three-Year Plan
5. Appendices
 1. Office Quality Committee (for the Self-Assessment Report)
 2. Peer Review Group
 3. Office Quality Committee (for the Quality Improvement Plan)
 4. Prioritised Resource Requirements

1. INTRODUCTION

Having read and considered the Peer Review Group report, a staff member from each of the constituent units within Student Support & Development (SS&D) was nominated to be a member of the Quality Improvement Plan (QuIP) Working Group charged with developing a QuIP for SS&D. These units include: The Student Advice Centre; Counselling & Personal Development; INTRA Unit; Careers Service; Sports Development Service; Health Centre; Inter Faith Centre and the Disability & Learning Support Unit. Each individual collated feedback from their respective units and brought this back to the Working Group, which discussed and collated the responses. The final QuIP presented here represents the deliberations of the Working Group.

2. RESPONSES TO RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE PEER REVIEW GROUP REPORT

In the responses to the recommendations below, many of the issues addressed are incorporated in the recently published DCU 2012-2017 Strategic Plan: *Transforming Lives and Societies*, and are also influenced by the recently revised organisational structure. The next stage of the strategic planning process involves the development of five constituent strategies in the following areas: Research & Innovation; Teaching & Learning; International; Student Experience; Engagement. The on-going development of the *Student Experience Strategy* in particular, will provide an overarching framework for the future activities of SS&D.

Generation 21 is another, related, important strategic initiative for DCU, which was launched in September 2011. The University has identified six Graduate Attributes which every DCU student will develop during the course of their studies. These Attributes are underpinned by clusters of specific aptitudes and proficiencies which are acquired through formal and informal learning opportunities throughout the student's academic career. SS&D plays a key role in fostering the development of these Attributes and many of the activities offered via its constituent units have a significant impact on the student's portfolio upon graduation. Integral to *Generation 21* is the intention in DCU to establish a requirement for students to develop an e-portfolio. This will provide an important summary of the personal and professional development of the student over the duration of their studies at the University. By means of the E-Portfolio, students will be provided with a clear developmental framework, which will help them enhance their attainment of 'Graduate Attributes' and encourage them to actively engage in activities which will assist in building their employability skills for the future.

The University also wishes to note that in addressing the recommendations below, the constraints imposed by the current Employment Control Framework make the provision of additional staff or the provision of new temporary permanent contracts impossible.

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 Office.

Additionally, the PRG indicate the level(s) of the University where action is required:

A: Area under review U: University Senior Management (Or other areas, for example Finance, Research & Innovation Support, as applicable.)

Recommendation Number	Addressee	Priority	PRG Recommendation (Provided in PRG Report)	Student Support & Development Response	University Response
1	U	P1	Develop an integrated sports strategy for the University	SS&D fully support the development of a university-wide sports strategy, which encompasses the 'sports for all' philosophy and drives the student sport agenda.	University management recognises the desirability of having an integrated sports strategy for the university. A senior person will lead the development of this strategy, and all relevant stakeholders will be involved including: SS&D, the Office of Student Life, DCU Students' Union, the School of Health and Human Performance, The Athletics Academy, The GAA Academy and the DCU Sports Centre.
2	U	P1	Provide guidance to SS&D staff about possible liabilities associated with providing advice and intervention out of hours	SS&D will work with the University to develop Guidelines of Good Practice for all relevant staff in this regard.	The Director of SS&D has direct access to the President, Deputy President / Registrar and the Chief Operations Officer on a 24 hour / day basis for advice on all matters related to SS&D. There are a number of protocols in place which, for example, cover emergency interventions and the death of a student among others. University management will work with the Director of SS&D to review protocols currently in place in the university and to develop further protocols and / or good practice guidelines where required.

Recommendation Number	Addressee	Priority	PRG Recommendation (Provided in PRG Report)	Student Support & Development Response	University Response
3	U	P1	Commission guidelines for the safe management of personal emergencies on campus and out of hours	<p>SS&D has already developed an emergency protocol to deal with student emergencies on campus. This has been made available to each member of staff in SS&D and the wider University.</p> <p>As part of Recommendation 3, we look forward to working with the University to further develop and expand this. We would welcome the establishment of a short-term cross-university working group to address this issue.</p>	<p>University response is as above in Recommendation 2.</p> <p>University management would also support the establishment of a short-term cross-university working group to address this issue as a key element of an institutional Campus Emergency Plan.</p>
4	A	P1	Immediate attention should be given to recruiting mental health mentors	We shall carry out a comprehensive review of models of mentorship in other HEIs, with the objective of piloting a peer mentorship model appropriate to DCU in the future.	
5	A	P1	Review of online registration arrangements for Counselling and Personal Development, so they are not undertaken in public areas	We welcome this recommendation and are currently putting measures in place to address the issue.	

Recommendation Number	Addressee	Priority	PRG Recommendation (Provided in PRG Report)	Student Support & Development Response	University Response
6	A	P1	Take the lead in reactivating the Student Experience Committee with a view to developing a coherent and visible pathway to the network of support arrangements for students at all stages of the student life cycle	We wholeheartedly support this recommendation. The 'student experience strand' in the forthcoming DCU Strategic Plan will provide a clear focus for this Committee. The current rebranding of the SS&D services will further support this recommendation.	
7	A	P1	Process information gathered through SS&D systems in order to develop a clear focus on student issues and effective responses	We fully agree with this recommendation and will review the data available to us, which will provide crucial information for our annual impact report. We shall also develop the reporting functionality of the CRM system, to allow us identify and react to trends in the student population promptly and effectively.	
8	A	P1	Careers Service should develop a plan for targeting the SME sector for future career opportunities	The Careers Service recognises the importance of this sector. We currently embrace this sector and are committed to strategically developing a targeted plan in the medium- to short-term.	University note: The onus to implement this recommendation is not all on SS&D. It is also important for Faculties and Schools to be proactive in this area and the Alumni Office also has an important role to play in this regard. The University will promote co-operation and collaboration between SS&D, Faculties and Alumni.

Recommendation Number	Addressee	Priority	PRG Recommendation (Provided in PRG Report)	Student Support & Development Response	University Response
9	A	P1	Undertake a review of clerical support across the department including the use of temporary contracts	We share the concerns of the Peer Review Group and would very much welcome a permanent member of staff at key reception points, especially in the Student Advice Centre, which is a central point of contact for all of our services. Given current resource restrictions, we realise that additional staffing is not possible, however. Thought will be given to the current staffing situation to evaluate if more appropriate arrangements can be introduced. We prioritise training, SOPs and supervision of all temporary staff, with a view to ensuring the maintenance of a high quality service.	University Note: University management will support the Director of SS&D in this review.
10	A	P1	Provide early alerts to Faculties when placement opportunities appear to be diminishing	INTRA currently provides INTRA Liaison Academics in each School with regular updates, via email and through access to the INTRA portal, on student placement progress for their respective degree programmes. The INTRA Unit will hold discussions with University Faculty to agree an improvement on the current update mechanism and content to meet their specific requirements in this regard. Recommendation 12 will also be discussed in this context and a more suitable mechanism agreed for early new programme alert and for taking into account advice from the INTRA unit.	University note: Academic Council has asked the INTRA unit to review a number of issues related to student placement that have emerged over the past few years, with a view to making specific recommendations to Academic Council on these matters. The Head of INTRA has been requested to set up a working group that is due to report to Academic Council in early 2013.

Recommendation Number	Addressee	Priority	PRG Recommendation (Provided in PRG Report)	Student Support & Development Response	University Response
11	A	P1	Improve and increase the use of signage to signal the commonality among the various SS&D units distributed around campus	Discussions are currently underway with DCU Communications and Marketing Office to develop a comprehensive signage system for the University. SS&D will be included in this initiative. SS&D has also rebranded and now has a comprehensive 'colour coded' system to assist students in identifying the diverse units belonging to SS&D.	
12	A	P1	The INTRA unit should be made aware of upcoming new programmes, with an INTRA content, to allow unit to advise on work placement implications	See Response to Recommendation 10. The Careers Service would also welcome the opportunity to be kept informed on new programmes.	University Note: The university also has a responsibility in this area, and once a new programme has been accredited and launched will ensure that the INTRA Unit and the Careers Service will be advised when work placements will be required and the student numbers involved.
13	U&A	P2	Commission a detailed review of the sustainability of the current Health Centre service arrangement in consultation with the Director of SS&D	We agree with this Recommendation and will work with the University to review the situation.	University management are aware of the significant increase in demand on the current health service, particularly, though not exclusively, in the area of mental health. University management will work with the Director of SS&D to review the current health service arrangements in terms of sustainability.

Recommendation Number	Addressee	Priority	PRG Recommendation (Provided in PRG Report)	Student Support & Development Response	University Response
14	U&A	P2	Further develop the role between employers and the academics in relation to issues such as curriculum development and academic/business linkages	SS&D supports this recommendation and, through the INTRA and Careers Service, will follow the guidance of the University to continue strengthening these linkages.	<p>Although this University role is carried out by a number of units across the University, the INTRA Unit and the Careers Service can both contribute their particular expertise in this area. DCU has a long history of significant interaction and engagement with employers in the development of new programmes and the monitoring and review of current programmes. There are also very important and well established industry engagements with our research programmes especially our large C-SETS. The President further strengthened these linkages by establishing the DCU Enterprise Advisory Board which met for the first time in May 2011.</p> <p>Many Schools /Faculties have either ad hoc or standing committees which foster business / service / industry engagement, for example the three Schools within the Faculty of Engineering and Computing have recently revived their own enterprise advisory boards with annual meetings now in place. DCU Business School has appointed Programme level advisory boards and will bring a preliminary list for a faculty level Advisory Board for approval to its October Management Board. The Employers' Databases, which are maintained by the INTRA Unit and the Careers Service are additional important sources of valuable information and contact for potential members of curriculum development committees, accreditation boards and so on. University management will continue to work with SS&D to ensure we make good use of the valuable relations that have been fostered and continue to be fostered with employers.</p>

Recommendation Number	Addressee	Priority	PRG Recommendation (Provided in PRG Report)	Student Support & Development Response	University Response
15	U	P2	Consider moving the Disability and Learning Support Service to a location which assures safe and ethical practice	SS&D wholeheartedly welcomes this recommendation. A proposal to the Space Planning and Management (SPM) Committee suggesting changes to the current accommodation of the Disability & Learning Support Service has recently been approved. Plans are currently underway to renovate a suitable space very close to current SS&D offices.	University Management is glad to support this recommendation and resulting proposal that allows for the relocation of the Disability and Learning Support Service near SS&D offices. The new organisational structure has also been revised to reflect the associated line management changes.
16	A	P2	Careers Service should consider the split of activity between careers support for individual students and development of employability skills among the student body	The Careers Service is constantly monitoring the split and is cognisant of the increasing demands on the service. Since the review visit, the development of a student life-skills centre has been under discussion. This will utilise the skills and expertise of Careers Service staff, DCU staff and external experts, and will significantly address this recommendation.	University note: The University will promote co-operation and collaboration between SS&D, Faculties and Alumni to address this recommendation.

Recommendation Number	Addressee	Priority	PRG Recommendation (Provided in PRG Report)	Student Support & Development Response	University Response
17	A	P2	Careers Service and INTRA programme should consider ways to further use INTRA connections as entry routes for students into industry	INTRA and Careers currently work closely on relevant opportunities and are committed to increasing collaboration and efficiencies, where appropriate.	University note: The university agrees that it is very important that the Careers Service and the INTRA Unit have a collaborative approach in regard to engagement with industry, and will support SS&D in this initiative. See also note under 16 above.
18	A	P2	Consider ways to further collaborate with Faculties to include career development/employability skills in the curriculum	<p>With the Head of Careers position temporarily vacant, we are not in a position to move on this recommendation at the moment. We will continue to collaborate with faculties with the current practices of integrated careers delivery and welcome their feedback. The situation will be revisited at an appropriate time in the future.</p> <p>Due to staffing restrictions in the Careers Service, direct input from the Careers Advisers into every programme at DCU is not a realistic goal. The development of a life-skills centre will, however, provide a sustainable platform for the delivery of professional development to larger numbers of students. (See also the response to Recommendation 16).</p>	

Recommendation Number	Addressee	Priority	PRG Recommendation (Provided in PRG Report)	Student Support & Development Response	University Response
19	A	P2	Introduce a cafeteria usage management system in the Inter Faith Centre	We will further examine the situation regarding <i>space</i> management in the Inter Faith Centre. The kitchen facility is not, in itself, an issue.	
20	A	P2	Develop clearer relationships with Faculties for the referral of academic and exam related matters	See Responses to Recommendations 6, 16 and 24.	
21	A	P2	Produce an annual impact report of the work of SS&D	We support this recommendation and will look to implement as soon as possible. An annual activity report will also be developed alongside the impact report.	
22	A	P2	Develop a distinctive communication and branding strategy	We have recently completed a rebranding strategy, with guidance from the DCU Communications and Marketing Office. (See also response to Recommendation 11.)	
23	A	P2	Development of KPIs for SS&D should be deferred until they can be fully aligned with the forthcoming DCU strategy	We agree with this recommendation. SS&D acknowledges that, due to the nature of the services we offer, some of our KPIs will inevitably be qualitative in nature. We will seek to balance the KPIs in terms of qualitative and quantitative data.	

Recommendation Number	Addressee	Priority	PRG Recommendation (Provided in PRG Report)	Student Support & Development Response	University Response
24	A	P2	Consider offering training on student problems and referral methods to programme directors and personal tutors	We strongly support this recommendation and will work with the University to develop a university-wide student support network, which includes the Personal Tutor /Year Head and Programme Chairperson system and other front-line staff. This shall be clearly linked to the response in Recommendation 6.	

3. SUMMARY OF THE ONE-YEAR PLAN

#	Action	Timeline	Lead
A-I	Create a clear overview of all student support elements in the University and develop a clear referral system, offer training and strengthen the network of student support across the University.	July 2013	Claire Bohan / Deirdre Moloney
A-II	Review models of mental health mentors across the HEI system, with a view to potential implementation at DCU.	July 2013	Anne O'Connor / Helena Ahern
A-III	Reactivate and re-examine the Terms of Reference of the Student Experience Committee.	December 2012	Claire Bohan
A-IV	Develop the CRM system to ensure the easy accessibility of relevant and up-to-date reports. Incorporate other relevant systems in SS&D into CRM. Update to CRM 2011.	July 2013	Claire Bohan
A-V	Discussions will take place between the INTRA Unit, the Careers Service and University Faculties to address the issues raised in the PRG relating to the INTRA Process, Faculty involvement in INTRA and collaboration with the Careers Service (recommendations no: 10, 12, 14, 17).	March 2013	Maeve Long & Head of Careers Service
A-VI	Review the current staff arrangements in front-line positions	January 2013	Claire Bohan
A-VII	Review the online registration arrangements for Counselling & Personal Development to ensure privacy	December 2012	Helena Ahern
A-VIII	Develop a clear and distinctive communication and branding strategy, which targets both staff and students	December 2012	Deirdre Moloney
A-IX	Propose a more suitable location for the Disability & Learning Support Service, which promotes further collaboration and enhances privacy for students	February 2013	Anne O'Connor
A-X	Consider ways of ensuring that the Inter Faith Space is used efficiently by students.	October 2012	Joe Jones

4. SUMMARY OF THE THREE-YEAR PLAN

#	Action	Timeline (completion)	Lead
B-i	Carry out a root-and-branch review of the Health Service and explore alternative ways of funding the service / providing the service through other channels.	July 2014	Claire Bohan / Caroline Temple
B-ii	Develop a comprehensive strategy to develop the SME sector for future employment for DCU graduates	July 2014	Head of Careers
B-iii	Develop clear KPIs in line with the DCU Strategic Plan	September 2013	Claire Bohan
B-iv	Introduce an annual impact report for SS&D and publish main activities	September 2013	Claire Bohan
B-v	Aim to develop an integrated sports strategy, in collaboration with the University, which incorporates elite sports and the "sports for all" philosophy.	September 2015	Yvonne McGowan & University appointee (ref response to Recommendation 1)
B-vi	In consultation with the University, play a relevant role in strengthening the relationship between employers and DCU staff	September 2014	Head of Careers
B-vii	Further develop the opportunities for students to enhance their employability skills	September 2014	Head of Careers / Maeve Long and engage with / Schools/Faculties/Alumni
B-viii	Develop an Academic Skills / Life Skills / Professional Development Centre to improve reach of services; address increased volume of students requiring access to knowledge and/or support; support Graduate Attribute development	January 2014	Claire Bohan

5. APPENDICES

- 1. Office Quality Committee (for the Self-Assessment Report)**
- 2. Peer Review Group members**
- 3. Office Quality Committee (for the Quality Improvement Plan)**
- 4. Prioritised Resource Requirements**

Appendix 1 – Quality Review Committee in SS&D

Name	Unit in SS&D
Dr. Claire Bohan (Chair)	Director of SS&D
Ms. Yvonne McGowan (Co-Chair)	Sports Development
Ms. Marie McNamara	Sports Development / Counselling & Personal Development Service
Mr. Ruan Kennedy	Counselling & Personal Development
Ms. Helena Ahern	Counselling & Personal Development
Ms. Maeve Long	INTRA
Ms. Geraldine Farrell	INTRA
Ms. Deirdre Moloney	Student Advice Centre
Ms. Celine Geraghty	Student Advice Centre / Central Administration
Ms. Paula Harrison	Health Centre
Fr Joe Jones	Inter Faith Centre
Sr. Susan Jones	Inter Faith Centre
Ms. Catherine Timmins	Careers Service
Ms. Denise McMorrow	Careers Service
Ms. Anne O'Connor	Disability & Learning Support
Ms. Marian Scullion	Disability & Learning Support

Appendix 2 – Peer Review Group Members

Mr Tony Donohoe	Head of Education, Social and Innovation Policy	Irish Business & Employers Confederation (Chair)
Ms. Sue Steging	Head of Student Support	University of Ulster
Mr Daniel Persaud	Director of Student Support	University of Warwick
Dr Malcolm Brady	Head of Management Group	DCU Business School
Ms. Phylomena McMorow	Director of Registry	Dublin City University (Rapporteur)

Appendix 3 – SS&D Quality Improvement Plan Committee

Name	Unit
Dr. Claire Bohan	Director
Ms. Yvonne McGowan	Sports Development
Ms. Deirdre Moloney	Student Advice Centre
Ms. Anne O'Connor	Disability & Learning Support
Ms. Carol Power	INTRA
Ms. Helena Ahern	Counselling & Personal Development
Fr. Joe Jones	Inter Faith Centre
Ms. Yvonne McLoughlin	Careers Service

Appendix 4 – Prioritised Resource Requirements

Project	Title	Cost Estimate
1	Relocation of Disability & Learning Support Unit to the Henry Grattan Building	€40,000
2	Update current CRM system to CRM2011	€10,000
3	Updating of SS&D materials to reflect the new logo	€5,000
4	Wall Montage of the 'Student Journey'	€5,000
5	Target SME sector for employment for graduates	€4,000