

Quality Assurance / Quality Improvement Programme 2010-2016



Peer Review Group Report

Faculty of Science & Health

Peer Review Group Members

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Introduction

This Quality review has been conducted in accordance with a framework model developed and agreed through the Irish Universities Association Quality Committee and complies with the provisions of Section 35 of the Universities Act (1997). The model consists of a number of basic steps.

1. An internal team in the School/Faculty/Office/Centre being reviewed completes a detailed self-assessment report (SAR). It should be noted that this document is confidential to the School/Faculty/Office/Centre as well as the Review Group and senior officers of the University.
2. This report is sent to a team of peer assessors, the Peer Review Group (PRG) – composed of members from outside DCU and from other areas of DCU – who then visit DCU and conduct discussions with a range of relevant staff, students and other stakeholders.
3. The PRG then writes its own report. The School/Faculty/Office/Centre is given the chance to correct possible factual errors before the Peer Group Report (PGR) is finalised.
4. The School/Faculty/Office/Centre produces a draft Quality Improvement Plan (QuIP) in response to the various issues and findings of the SAR and PGR Reports.
5. The PGR and the draft QuIP are considered by the Quality Promotion Committee.
6. The draft QuIP is discussed in a meeting between the School/Faculty/Office/Centre, members of the Peer Group, the Director of Quality Promotion and members of Senior Management. The University's responses are written into the QuIP, and the result is the finalised QuIP.
7. A summary of the PRG Report, the QuIP including the University's response is sent to the Governing Authority of the University, who will approve publication in a manner that they see fit.

This document is the report referred to in Step 3 above.

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Peer Review Group Report

1. Introduction and Overview

1.1 Location

The Faculty's space envelope of approx. 19,600 m² (net) is spread over several buildings across the DCU campus, as follows:

The Science Building	School of Chemical Sciences School of Biotechnology School of Health and Human Performance School of Mathematical Sciences International Centre for Neurotherapeutics Centre for Preventive Medicine
The NICB Building	National Institute for Cellular Biotechnology
The Albert College	Biomedical Diagnostics Institute offices Health and Human Performance laboratories/offices
The Nursing and Human Sciences Building	School of Nursing and Human Sciences
The Research and Development Building <i>(DCU designated research space)</i>	Centre for Bio-Analytical Sciences Laboratory for Integrated Bio-processing (LIB)
The Research and Engineering Building and Extension	The National Centre for Sensor Research (NCSR) Biomedical Diagnostics Institute (BDI) National Bio-photonics and Imaging Platform (NBIP) Centre for Sensor Web Technology (CLARITY) Irish Separations Science Cluster (ISSC) Marine and Environmental Sensing Technology Hub (MESTECH) National Centre for Plasma Science and Technology (NCPST)
The Physical Sciences and Engineering Building	School of Physical Sciences National Centre for Plasma Science and Technology (NCPST) Centre for the Advancement of Science Teaching and Learning (CASTeL)
Campus Residences	School of Health and Human Performance Laboratory

The Faculty administration team occupies a high quality, well equipped, shared space on the ground floor of the Nursing and Human Sciences Building. The Faculty Manager, Assistant Faculty Manager and PA to the Dean are located in adjacent offices on the third floor of this building.

1.2 Staff

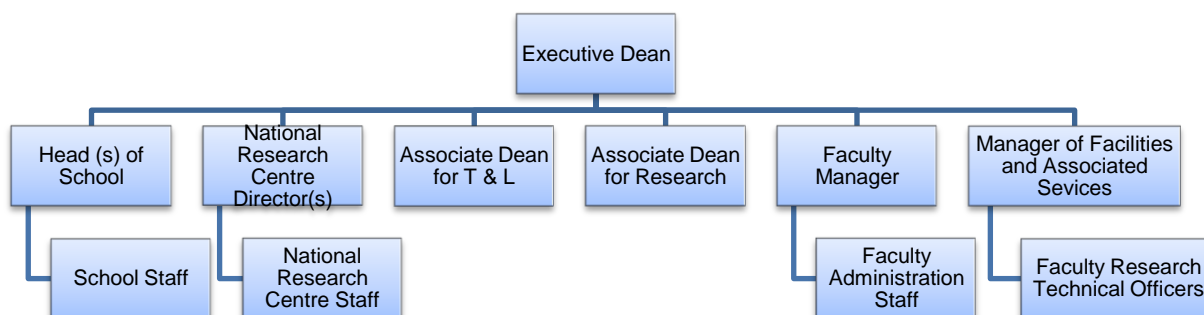
Staffing is comprised of core- and research-funded staff across the Faculty, School and Research Centres. This is broken down as follows:

FSH Staffing 2011 – Core Funded							
	Academic		Administrative		Technical and Related		
School/Centre/Unit	Perm	Temp	Perm	Temp	Perm	Temp	Totals
Executive Faculty	1		9.5	1	1		12.5
Biotechnology	19	1	0.5	1	9.3	1	31.8
Chemical Sciences	16	5	1.5		7	2	31.5
Health and Human Performance	13.5	2	1		3		19.5
Mathematical Sciences	15.5	1.5	1				18
Nursing and Human Sciences	59	5	6	1	1	1	73
Physical Sciences	13	3	1		5	1	23
Totals	137	17.5	20.5	3	26.3	5	209.3

FSH Staffing 2011 – Research Funded				
	Research	Research Support		Totals
School/Centre/Unit		Technical and Related	Admin/ Mgmt	
Executive Faculty		4		4
Biotechnology	16	1	1	18
Chemical Sciences	7			7
Health and Human Performance				
Mathematical Sciences	2			2
Nursing and Human Sciences	6.4			6.4
Physical Sciences	6	1		7
NCPST	13	1	5	19
NCSR	64.5	5	22	91.5
NICB	28.2	2	3	33.2
Totals	143.1	14	31	188.1

1.3 Product / Processes

The Faculty comprises of a central executive structure, which is the umbrella for six Schools and three National Research Centres. The reporting lines between Faculty roles are outlined below:



The Executive Dean is the Chief Executive Officer for the Faculty, appointed by the University on a five-year term. The Dean is the accounting officer for the Faculty, responsible for and reporting to the Deputy President on the management of all budgetary and resource related matters. The Dean is also the principal decision maker in the Faculty. He is supported and advised in this regard by Faculty Management Board (FMB) of which Heads of School, National Research Centre Directors, Associate Deans, and the Faculty Manager and Manager of Facilities and Associated Services are *ex officio* members. All Heads of School report to the Dean. All National Research Centre Directors report to the Dean in relation to operational matters and report to the Vice-President for Research and Innovation in respect of strategic and funding matters. Heads of School and National Research Centre Directors have overall management responsibility for their respective Schools and Centres, and act as line managers for staff within them.

The Faculty Manager and the Manager of Facilities and Associated Services also report to the Dean and are appointed following open competition. The Faculty Manager is responsible for the management and co-ordination of all aspects of Faculty administration. The Manager of Facilities and Associated Services has responsibility for the management of those technical services across the Faculty where a common and integrated approach is appropriate.

The teaching function of the Schools is underpinned by a diversity of research at both School and Research Centre level. This is explored in more detail below.

The Faculty administration team members provide administrative support to the various constituents of the Faculty. The key duties are outlined below:

Position	Summary information
Faculty Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall Faculty Administration Management Secretariat to Faculty Management Board and Faculty Executive Group Chair of Faculty Marketing Group Overall Faculty Budget and HR Management
Assistant Faculty Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic operations management Secretariat to Faculty Teaching Committee Deputy for Faculty Manager
Senior Administration Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faculty Office Manager Secretariat to Faculty Research Committee
Administration Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timetabling (Nursing and Human Sciences, Health and Human Performance) Academic Programme Administration (Nursing

Position	Summary information
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> and Human Sciences, Health and Human Performance) • HR administration
Administration Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocations¹ administration (Psychiatric and Intellectual Disability Nursing) • Examinations administration (Chemistry, Biotechnology and Mathematical Sciences) • Actuarial exemption administration
Administration Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocations administration (General Nursing) • Examinations administration (Undergraduate Nursing and Human Sciences and Health and Human Performance)
Administration Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timetabling (Biotechnology, Physical Sciences, Chemistry and Mathematical Sciences) • Academic programme administration (Biotechnology, Physical Sciences, Chemistry and Mathematical Sciences) • Marketing support - prospectus and web updating • Postgraduate funding administration • Graduate Training Elements (GTE) administration
Administration Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocations administration (Children's and General Nursing) • Examinations administration (Postgraduate Nursing and Human Sciences and School of Physical Sciences) • Secretariat to Faculty Marketing Group • Marketing co-ordination
Senior Secretarial Assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ordination of examination papers and examinations support • Secretary to Faculty Health and Safety Committee and Biological Safety Committee • Professional Development module administration • Support to marketing events, including Science Week and DCU Open Day
Senior Secretarial Assistant (0.5 post)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PA to the Dean • Recording Secretary, FEG • Document collation and preparation for Faculty Research Awards Boards
Secretarial Assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty first point of contact, including Programme and Professional Development Modules enquiries • Support to the administration team, including purchasing • Support to Nursing allocations data entry function

¹ Allocations refer to the tracking and maintenance of clinical placements on the BSc in Nursing Programmes.

2. The Self-Assessment Process

2.1 The Co-ordinating Committee

The Faculty Quality Review Group was comprised of one representative from each of the Schools and National Research Centres, as well as the Associate Deans for Research and Teaching and Learning, the Assistant Faculty Manager, the Manager of Facilities and Associated Services, a student representative and a co-opted technical staff representative. The Committee members were:

Members of Faculty of Science & Health Quality Review Group	
Sandra O'Neill	Chair of FQRG
Bernadette Dowling	Assistant Faculty Manager
Enda McGlynn	Associate Dean for Research
Sheelagh Wickham	Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning
Conor Long	School of Chemical Sciences
Jean-Paul Mosnier	School of Physical Sciences
Bernard Keville	National Centre for Plasma Science Technology
Anne Marie Larkin	National Institute for Cellular Biotechnology
Padraig Doolan	National Institute for Cellular Biotechnology
Denise Proudfoot	School of Nursing and Human Sciences
Davide Susta	School of Health and Human Performance
Declan Moran	National Centre for Sensor Research
Deirdre Donnelly	School Secretarial Staff Representative
Ciaran McKenna	FQRG Administrative Support
Michael Burke	Facilities and Associated Services Manager
Phil Cummins	School of Biotechnology
Sarah Flanagan	Student Representative
Gary O'Donoghue	Student Representative
Turlough Downes	School of Mathematical Sciences
Veronica Dobbyn	School Technical Staff Representative

2.2 Methodology adopted during Process

The Faculty Quality Review Group met on nine occasions to coordinate input from various stakeholders across the Faculty and develop the Self Assessment Report. The Faculty also organised a Faculty Away Day, elicited input from the Faculty Research and Faculty Teaching Committees, gathered student statistics from the Institutional Research and Analysis Officer and collated research metrics from the Office for Research and Innovation Support. Draft Self-Assessment Reports were circulated to the Faculty Quality Review Group, Faculty Management Board, Faculty Research Committee and Faculty Teaching Committee twice before the final version was made available to all Faculty members and approved by Faculty Management Board.

Input was also elicited from a diverse range of groups both within the Faculty and university-wide. This included:

- Online staff / student survey and focus groups
- Focus Groups with DCU central services (externally facilitated)
- Focus Groups with FSH alumni (externally facilitated)

- Focus Groups with FSH graduate employers (externally facilitated)

The Peer Review Group (PRG) was satisfied that all stakeholders had been consulted and were in a position to provide feedback at various stages of the process. Results of the various surveys and Focus Groups were made available to the PRG, ensuring full transparency of the process and feedback.

3. The Peer Review Group Process

3.1 The Review Group

The Peer Review Group (PRG) comprised:

Prof. Kieran Hodnett	Dean, Faculty of Science & Engineering, University of Limerick
Prof. Valerie Maehle	Dean, Faculty of Health and Social Care, Robert Gordon University, Scotland
Dr. Martin Lyes	(former) Divisional Manager, Research & Innovation, Enterprise Ireland
Prof. Noel O'Connor	School of Electronic Engineering, Principal Investigator, CLARITY, Centre for Sensor Web Technologies, Dublin City University
Dr. Claire Bohan	Director, Student Support & Development, Dublin City University

3.2 Site Visit Programme

An intensive and comprehensive timetable was suggested to the PRG and this was largely adhered to. Some minor adjustments were suggested by the PRG and these were arranged by the Faculty. The adjusted timetable is presented below. Names of the individuals involved in meetings can be found in Appendix 1.

Faculty of Science & Health, DCU - Timetable Peer Review Group visit 14th November – 16th November 2012

Day	Time	Peer Review Group (PRG) Activity/Meeting	Venue	Meeting No.
Day 1 Wed	12.30-14.00	Lunch with Director of Quality Promotion and available PRG members	1838 DCU	
	14.00-15.00	Briefing by Director of Quality Promotion	A204	
	15.00-15.45	PRG selects Chair. Discussion of main areas of interest and concern arising from the SAR; principal issues outlined to guide PRG for the visit	A204	
	15.45-16.00	Coffee/Tea	A204	
	16.00-17.15	Consideration of FS&H SAR with Dean & members of FS&H quality review committee. Short presentation by Faculty (10 min) followed by discussion of SAR.	A204	

	17:15-17.45	PRG Private meeting	A204	
	18.00-19.00	Informal Reception – PRG, Dean of Faculty, Associate Deans, Heads of Schools, Faculty Manager, Facilities Manager, Members of Quality Review Committee, Director of Quality Promotion	1838 DCU	
	19.00-20.30	PRG Private dinner	1838 DCU	

Day 2 Thurs	08.45–9.00	PRG Private meeting	H306	
	09.00-09.25	Dean of Faculty of Science & Health	H306	1
	09.30-09.45	Faculty Manager	H306	2
	09.50-10.05	Faculty Manager and other members of Faculty Administration	H306	3
	10.05-10.20	School Secretarial Staff	H306	4
	10.20-10.45	Coffee	H306	
	10.45-11.10	Associate Dean for Teaching & Learning and members of Faculty Teaching Committee	H306	5
	11.20-11.45	Associate Dean for Research & members of Faculty Research Committee	H306	6
	11.55-12.30	Heads of School in Faculty	H306	7
	12.40-13.00	Lecturers	H306	8
	13.00-14:00	Lunch	H306	
	14.00-14.50	Tour of Faculty Facilities	H306	
	15.00-15.35	Faculty Facilities & Associated Services Manager and staff in related areas	H306	9
	15:40-16:00	Coffee	H306	
	16.00-16.25	Open forum for staff of Faculty of Science & Health	HG23	10
	16.30-16.55	Directors of National Research Centres	H306	11
	17.00-17.15	Dean of Faculty of Science and Health		
	17.15-17.45	External stakeholders – Employers	H306	12
	17.50-18.20	External Stakeholders - Alumni	H306	13
	18.20-18.30	PRG private meeting time	H306	
	19.30	PRG private dinner	Crowne Plaza	

Day 3 Fri				Meeting No.
	08.45– 09.00	PRG Private meeting		
	9.00- 10.00	DCU's Senior Management Group	AG01	14
	10.00– 10.25	Reporting head for Dean of Faculty of Science & Health	AG01	15
	10.30- 11.00	Coffee		
	11.00- 11.30	Representatives from central administration – Group One: Graduate Studies Office, Invent, Research Innovation and Support, Registry/Enrolment, Registry/Awards, Registrars Office/Academic Affairs, International Office, Library, INTRA, Student Support & Dev, Counselling Service, Access, Disability Office, Careers Service	H306	16a
	11.00- 11.30	Representatives from central administration – Group Two: Sports Centre, Presidents Office, Estates Office, Health and Safety Office, ISS, Human Resources, Finance, Communications and Marketing	H206	16b
	11.30- 12.00	PRG private meeting time	H306	17
	12.00- 12.25	Undergraduate students of both genders, representative of Faculty's taught programmes	H306	18
	12.30- 12.55	Postgraduate & Research students of both genders, representative of Faculty's taught and research programmes	H306	19
	13.00- 14:00	Working Lunch Clarification of outstanding issues for PRG if required (Director of Quality Promotion, Dean, ADs, Faculty Manager available for consultation)	H306	20
	14.00- 15.40	PRG Prepare Exit Presentation	H306	
	15.45- 15.55	Dean of Faculty of Science and Health	H306	21
	16.00- 16.25	Exit Presentation – by PRG to Dean and all members of FS&H staff	HG22	22

3.3 Methodology

The PRG was extremely impressed with the professional, courteous and open manner in which the entire visit was coordinated. The timetable, while intensive, reflected the diverse nature of the Faculty and allowed the Group to meet numerous members of staff from the Faculty, Schools and Research Centres and have the opportunity to view some of the teaching and research facilities. Some minor changes to the programme were requested at the beginning of the process by the Group and these were facilitated. The Group also requested some additional information on student progression data and international benchmarks and this was also immediately forthcoming.

The Group unanimously agreed that great effort and care had gone into the writing of the Self Assessment Report, which was informative, comprehensive and factual.

3.4 Schedule of Activity

The Group was based in a suitable Boardroom and was provided with all necessary equipment to undertake the work at hand. On one occasion, the group broke up into two sub-groups to conduct two separate meetings with a grouping which were deemed too diverse to facilitate in one sitting (meeting number 16a and 16b).

Members of staff, alumni and graduate employers were open and transparent in their interactions with the Group and keen to impress upon the Group the high quality of work which is undertaken by the Faculty. This was also reflected in the survey data provided.

3.5 View of the Self-Assessment Report

The Self Assessment Report was an extensive document, which provided clear and comprehensive information about the Faculty and its constituents. Numerous appendices were provided to ensure that no detail was missing and that the Group had immediate access to detailed information about the Faculty and the wider university setting.

The Group was satisfied that all staff members and other individuals who have frequent interactions with the Faculty, were given the opportunity to voice their opinions and feed in to the final document. It was however felt that more extensive reflection and less description could have provided the Faculty an opportunity to address areas of weaknesses in more detail. Weaknesses and challenges were, however, clearly outlined in the SWOC analysis, which was presented towards the end of the document. The SWOC clearly captures the opportunities and challenges for the Faculty in the future.

4. Findings of the Peer Review Group

4.1 Background, Overview, Strategy, Context

In conducting the assessment, the Group was very aware of the difficult external environment which is now facing the third level sector in Ireland. Budget reductions, restrictions to the recruitment of staff either as replacements or as investments in new skills, and increasing expectations of the role the sector might play in economic renewal, have all created significant pressures on the system. Despite this difficult background, the Group was struck with the energy and engagement of the staff who attended the various meetings and their clear determination to do the best job possible.

The Group also understands that the Faculty intends to continue the practice of carrying out individual School Reviews and this Review was carried out in the light of this intention.

The Group was made aware of the recent launch of the DCU Strategy “Transforming Lives and Societies” and that subsidiary university strategies were under discussion on Teaching and Learning and also Research. These discussions are intended to inform further implementation at Faculty level. The PRG recognised that the Faculty of Science and Health set itself challenging strategic objectives at its inception in 2004. These objectives remain clear and they are well reflected in the recent University strategy. They covered:

- a. Transcending traditional disciplinary boundaries in order to create inter- and multi-disciplinary teams at undergraduate, graduate and advanced research levels, enabling both staff and students to participate in developing collaborative, cross disciplinary competencies that combine cutting edge knowledge with the application of theory in order to lead practice
- b. Build on the unique interface of the life and physical sciences inherent in its composition, to create revolutionary technologies and know-how, and to identify integrated responses to problems of social and economic significance
- c. Influence and respond to an unfolding social and economic environment through collaborative engagement with internal and external stakeholders and the assimilation and dissemination of a wide range of knowledge

Addressing future challenges will require renewed energy and commitment on the part of the Faculty and its staff and the PRG hopes that its deliberations will play some positive part in assisting this process.

4.2 Organisation and Management

The Faculty structure was created in 2004 and has been developing since then. The title of Executive Dean shows the original intent that the Faculties would be central to the implementation of University policy, although the view was articulated in the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) that “the anticipated devolution of authority to executive faculties has also not yet been fully realised.”

The PRG was impressed by the openness, commitment and energy of the Faculty management and staff in working to ensure consistency in teaching and learning, research and administration across the Faculty. Their role involves the communication of information concerning relevant developments arising from such fora as the Senior Management Group, as well as the presentation of a considered and unified view on issues arising across the Faculty. In discussion with the President of the University and the Senior Management Team it became clear that the rollout of the new University Strategy in 2012 foresaw the Faculties as the main point in the University where implementation would take place.

The Faculty Office is valued by Heads of School, Research Centres and staff in helping to interface with corporate functions such as Human Resources and Finance, especially in the context of their workload. The PRG noted that three Heads of School have recently been changed and the Dean has only been in place a year. The timing of such changes and the relatively short period of tenure does little to help continuity or the attractiveness of the posts. While previous experience in positions of authority is useful in preparing someone for a higher office, there remain challenges in ensuring that operational knowledge is retained. There does not appear to be a formal process for succession when a Head of School or a Dean is changed, which creates a difficult situation for the individuals involved. The Group also felt that the position of Head of School was not one which was seen as important in terms of career progression, but rather one that brings an administrative burden, which interrupts research. As research is seen as providing career credibility, accordingly, there was a concern expressed about the willingness of individuals to take on the post of Head of School.

Two Committees exist covering Teaching and Learning and also Research. They have overall responsibility for quality in these areas and involve Convenors from each of the Schools and the Research Centres as well as student and staff representation. Their work brings a coherence and consistency to the work of the Faculty in these two important areas. The Group felt that these were good fora for driving integration in the Faculty as well as promoting innovation in both domains.

4.3 Staffing and Accommodation

Comments had been made in the SAR which suggested that some of the teaching accommodation was in a poor condition, and the Group specifically asked to be shown areas where this was the case. It was the view of the Group that this space, while it would benefit from decoration, was in no sense sub-standard. It was noted that the vast majority of university buildings have been constructed in the last fifteen years.

There were also discussions concerning the accommodation allocated to the School of Health and Human Performance, which currently covers five locations across the campus. While students interviewed were not unduly concerned at this dispersion, it was felt that physical divisions can create barriers to effective collaboration and clustering (amongst staff) and might obstruct the potential of the School as it develops further. The PRG was very sympathetic of this view.

Some further concern was raised at issues related to the School of Health and Human Performance's access to the Sports Centre, part of which is used as a teaching facility. The Centre is a limited company and seeks to balance its budget through the attraction of outside groups which are prepared to pay for usage. The process of balancing demand from external and internal users has the potential to create unnecessary tensions, although the Group felt that they were not beyond resolution. While the University has provided a large specialist teaching space, unfortunately its location in the accommodation building limits maximal usage due to the disturbance caused to other building users by the activities undertaken in the area.

The allocation of space is under regular review by the Dean to ensure that it is used to best advantage and to support strategically important areas. Reallocation of space can be difficult and can

create ill feelings if not managed sensitively. The Group concluded that it was not clear whether the optimum configuration had been achieved and that a further overview by the Dean and the Faculty Management Board might help.

The staff resource is under some pressure given the imposition of the Employment Control Framework and the likely decline in staff numbers in the next few years will impose an extra burden on those who remain, as staff leave and are not replaced. In order to address this challenge, planning will be required, with the University adopting practices which bring added value to the student experience, while increasing productivity. This situation will also be reflected in the role of administrative staff, where new and innovative approaches will be needed if the reputation of the University is to be maintained and enhanced. Part of this continuous commitment to innovation in the operation of the Faculty is the need to have career planning and development for individuals. A Performance Development Management System (PMDS) is in place in the University although it does not appear to be consistently deployed across the Faculty.

Some consideration was given to the process of allocation of work across the academic staff of the Faculty and whether it was transparent and equitable. The PRG did not pursue this issue in detail because it would have taken too much time. However, it was felt that a greater level of transparency and common principles used across the Faculty for allocating work would be helpful in allaying any concerns that there was unevenness in distribution. Driven by the Dean, it would also allow a more strategic view to be taken of the Faculty's portfolio of programmes. In most circumstances, new programmes arise from propositions from lecturing staff, reflecting their view of priorities. While there is a rigorous process in place to analyse the validity of these proposals, there remains value in taking an overview as to their relevance in the context of the new Strategy, industry demands and the move towards interdisciplinary teaching, which forms such a strong part of the Faculty Strategy.

4.4 Management of Financial and other Resources

The University distributes funding to the Faculties after taking a "top slice" to cover the costs associated with central functions. Both this allocation and the subsequent onward distribution to Schools are governed by a formula which is essentially based on student numbers. This is a well established process and is accepted as being fair and reasonably transparent and is approved by the Faculty Management Board. National Research Centres also receive a portion of funding from the University, although the bulk of their funding comes from external competitive sources. The PRG welcomed further transparency as a general management rule. While there had been some extra budget available for the Dean to disburse at his discretion in previous years, this now appears to have been lost due to the decline in the budget. This discretionary funding had been used for initiatives to support Teaching and Learning and Research facilities, and the Maths Learning Centre which is a University wide facility.

The issue of the adequacy of IT systems in supporting the Faculty, particularly around the examination processes, arose on a number of occasions during discussions. The Group was concerned that while significant ground work has already been undertaken in specifying a suitable IT system, the current resource is not yet providing the quality of service required. The PRG concluded that there remains a significant risk to the University's reputation in situations where results might be incorrect. The necessity for some manual manipulation and re-entry of results and the difficulty of accommodating non-standard courses were cited as particular problems to be addressed.

The Dean and the Faculty Office staff provide efficient, wide-ranging services and good leadership to support the operation of the Schools and Research Centres, and these are respected by staff generally.

The PRG was particularly impressed with the committed and enthusiastic technical support staff who brought great energy and professionalism to their primary responsibility of ensuring that research and teaching equipment is maintained and available for use.

4.5 External/Internal Relations including Community Engagement

The Self Assessment Report outlined a wide variety of initiatives which are being employed to engage the interest of second level students as part of the process of ensuring the University has a continuing stream of students into its undergraduate courses. The recent shift of interest by this cohort into Science and Engineering should work to DCU's advantage, given its strength and reputation in the area. During the visit, the PRG was pleased to witness one of the Open Days held for second level students.

The issue of internal communication arose on a number of occasions during the assessment, engendered in part by the self assessment process itself. Staff and students spoke of the Away Day as an opportunity to meet colleagues and work together on issues of common interest. The PRG felt that, as the Faculty is large, with a distinction between the Schools and the Research Centres, the natural inclination would be for the evolution of silos which would militate against collaboration across and outside the Faculty. While good efforts had been made to recognise this as an issue, the evidence presented at meetings showed that for many undergraduates and postgraduates, their perspective remained quite local, limiting their experience of the University. Staff affiliations were aligned more closely with the School than with the Faculty. With limited resources being an on-going challenge for the Faculty, the strengthening of cross-Faculty links will be crucial for continued success and sustainability. However, the PRG did get a distinctive sense of oneness and belonging within the FSH.

By its nature, the Faculty has a significant investment in laboratory space and the PRG felt that this represented a potential risk in terms of Health and Safety. While the PRG was assured that procedures are in place, it wished to reiterate the need to be pro-active in ensuring that all Faculty staff are aware of H&S issues and procedures and that practices are respected. Health & Safety procedures may not be uniform across the Faculty or, indeed, across the University, and this needs to be examined.

4.6 Academic Programmes, Teaching & Learning

In its deliberations, the PRG started from the view that the student is at the heart of the University and it welcomed the development of a new Strategy in this area which is due for completion in 2013. The Group heard how proposals for new programmes are brought forward and rigorously examined in terms of cost effectiveness and, in particular, the market research conducted to ensure that any new programme would attract sufficient student numbers.

The Faculty Teaching Committee (FTC) has responsibility for the overall management of the Faculty's under- and postgraduate taught programmes, related issues of quality, and for overseeing Teaching and Learning policy developments in the Faculty. The Committee consists of Convenors from the Schools, and representatives for the Research Centres, staff and students. The PRG was impressed by the workmanlike approach of the Committee and its commitment to its responsibilities. The involvement of staff from Research Centres in teaching was seen as an important connection across the Faculty, which could be enhanced. The Group felt that the FTC was an important forum which could be developed further to drive quality and innovation in teaching as well as maintaining a good level of collaboration on coursework across the Faculty.

The Group was concerned with the teaching evaluation processes which had been developed on an effective but ad hoc basis across Schools. It is understood that a university-wide system of teaching evaluation has been introduced since and this needs to be embedded in the Schools. Monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning is critical to the enhancement of quality and without a robust and universally applied approach it will be hard for the University to achieve the challenging goals which it sets itself under the new Strategy.

The PRG met a number of employers who were involved in INTRA placements. There was positive feedback on the quality of student produced by the Faculty and their adaptability to business / industrial conditions. All of the employers felt that they would be willing to continue their involvement in the programme although there was less certainty as to whether they would employ the student after graduation. This was due more to the uncertain economic conditions than a reflection on the quality of the graduate. In these cases there was a discussion on whether the university had sufficient insight

into the environment facing companies and the consequent reflection of this in the programmes. While INTRA appeared to be well respected, there was a sense that the University could enhance the level and form of contact with employers which would provide a two-way dialogue of value to both parties. In regard to clinical placements there was satisfaction with the quality of the undergraduate nurses and a feeling that the relationship between the School of Nursing and Human Sciences and the hospital was well founded and well managed. It was, however, noted that the re-sit regulations in the University can sometimes mean repeated placements for weaker students. Although this only happens for a very small number of students, it was a cause of concern with regard to fitness for practice.

4.7 Research, Scholarship & Training

The Faculty Strategy on Research was developed in 2006 and remains in place until 2013 when a new Strategy, which is currently being devised, will be launched. The Faculty has a strong ethos of research and has been successful in attracting funding from external competitive sources, both national and international. The new University Strategy points to a greater emphasis on the role of DCU in building knowledge-intensive collaborations and there is evidence that the University has already a track record in this regard.

The Faculty Research Committee (FRC) has oversight of research issues, quality, policy and strategy. The Committee also disburses a series of small grants including travel funds, small research projects and some postgraduate scholarships. The PRG felt that it was important that such discretionary money be available to encourage such initiatives and that it gave the Committee an important role with visibility in the Faculty. It was not clear to the Group what activities the FRC pursued to ensure that the quality of research was maintained at a high level but the figures presented in the SAR suggest an active and successful community of researchers with a good record of achievement in peer reviewed journals.

The PRG was presented with a very impressive set of metrics relating to research output from the FSH. Impressive and all as they appeared to be, the PRG feels that the FRC should play a role in identifying a set of external, preferably external to Ireland, institutions/centres/schools against which the individual parts of the FSH research community might be benchmarked. Increasingly, this is a requirement from funding bodies and would help to put the value of the research outputs into a context related to peer groups elsewhere in the world.

The translation of these research results into technology, which may be transferred to industry, has been successfully organised by the University through the Technology Transfer Office in the INVENT Centre. Results show good progress in regard to licences, options and assignments in the last five years. The involvement of a wide variety of companies in research groups across the Faculty also points to the relevance of the work undertaken and the willingness of the co-operating companies to be involved in collaborative research projects.

The PRG noted that a report has been commissioned on the University's National Research Centres and it is hoped that this will provide insight into the next phase of their development.

The Group felt that a challenge existed in the University making best use of the expertise which has been developed within the Research Centres and being able to exploit that expertise in its Teaching and Learning activities. Communication will undoubtedly play a part in this area, although there is a strong role to be played at Faculty level in ensuring that there is strong collaboration across the Schools and the Centres and effective communication channels to the postgraduate and postdoctoral researchers within the Faculty.

The question of knowledge retention came up on a number of occasions related to the tendency for postdoctoral and other researchers on short term research contracts to develop a deep understanding and expertise related to techniques involving highly specialised pieces of equipment, without arrangements being put in place to retain this knowledge within the institution when they leave. The FSH and the University might review contracts of employment to insure that knowledge by training of other researchers, postgraduate students and technical staff might form a part of the normal duties of research staff.

4.8 Student/Staff Perspective

The Group had the opportunity to meet staff and students in an open session to get direct feedback on their views and experiences. The undergraduate views were very positive, seeing the University as providing a challenging and supportive environment for their personal and educational development. One aspect which arose during the discussions was the lack of discipline-specific Societies, e.g. Physics Society, in some disciplines. It was pointed out that while such Societies were started with some enthusiasm, they tended to decline as individuals moved on with their studies or left the University. It was felt that these Societies provided an opportunity for undergraduates to meet speakers from outside the University and to network among themselves.

The PRG was very impressed with the views of postgraduate students on the support they received from their supervisors, particularly in relation to finding time to check progress. The evident commitment that Faculty members showed in ensuring that students had the chance to develop high quality research skills, was also commendable. A number of students pointed to the difficulty of accessing equipment which was in the University and could play a useful part in their research. The PRG was not clear as to the scale of the issue or other factors which might explain if a reticence to share equipment was significant.

4.9 Overall Analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Concerns

<p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated and enthusiastic members of staff who are committed to quality • Range of disciplinary expertise within the Faculty which facilitates multidisciplinary collaboration across research and teaching • Strongly established research reputation both nationally and internationally, evidenced by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - three National Research Centres - sustained success in securing research funding - consistent, high quality research output and impact from same both collectively (evidenced by citation analyses in key subject areas) and individually (evidenced by H indices of, and awards and recognition to individuals) - consistent evidence of translation of research outputs (invention disclosures, licenses, patents and spin outs) • Relevance and quality of Faculty degree programmes, which are delivered using a variety of pedagogy • Significant contribution to STEM education and research, exemplified by CASTeL and Maths Learning Centre • Accessible and integrated Faculty administrative structures • Strong links with other universities and educational institutions, industry, community, services and sporting bodies • Strong reputation for sport and related academic disciplines. 	<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ineffective internal communication, including communication in relation to university policy and decision-making • Deficiencies within and between core IT systems resulting in a continued dependence on paper-based processes, frequent need for manual intervention to discharge critical processes and, in some cases, duplication of effort • Impact of the Employment Control Framework and current budgetary constraints which include loss of experienced, senior staff, growing dependency on part-time and temporary staff, absence of career opportunities for temporary staff and reduced promotional prospects for staff • Space restrictions and dispersion of Faculty facilities across campus • Ageing teaching equipment and infrastructure and the absence of funding sources to support maintenance and/or renewal • Lack of support in developing e-learning materials • Inability to harness the full potential that could be garnered from interaction between Schools and research centres • Lack of career planning mechanism for staff • Lack of succession planning for key posts in the School, i.e. Heads of School/Dean
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To increase and strengthen collaborations within DCU strategic partnerships such as 3U and the Joint Institute for Education, and with other institutions, nationally and internationally • To further enhance cross Faculty collaborations • To work with University HR and RIS Offices to further develop the research career framework • To manage research equipment in a more cost effective and efficient manner to the benefit of all Faculty staff • Exploit potential opportunities for enhanced postgraduate training provision • Maximise the benefit to be derived by students within the Faculty from strategic University initiatives such as Generation 21 Graduate Attributes, Student Enterprise Hub, etc, • Engage with, influence and manage the impact within Faculty of on-going changes to DCU's management structure and organisation. 	<p>CHALLENGES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued annual decline in recurrent core funding • Changes in government research funding prioritisation • Reduced national research funding opportunities • Succession planning and the maintenance of critical mass in key areas of activity in the context of the Employment Control Framework, • Sustaining critical infrastructure and teaching equipment in the absence of adequate funding to support its maintenance and/or renewal • Capacity to respond positively to the reconfiguration of education provision in the areas of Nursing and Initial Teacher Education.

5. Recommendations for Improvement

Indication of Priority:

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.

P 3: A recommendation which merits serious consideration but which is not considered to be critical to the quality of the ongoing activities.

Level(s) of the University where action is required:

A: Area under review (Faculty of Science & Health)

U: University Senior Management

No	P1, P2, P3	U, A	Recommendation
1	P1	A	Develop and establish a Faculty wide strategy and process for the succession for the Head of School role including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the process by which a successor is selected clarity on the expectations of an individual in the role the way in which the successor can be kept abreast of current and ongoing issues the provision of adequate time and mentoring support prior to taking up appointment, to allow the new Head to start work in the role quickly and with no loss of impetus, when the previous incumbent steps down
2	P1	U	Prioritize the establishment of a fit-for-purpose facility for the School of Health and Human Performance, which will allow the School to operate on as few sites as possible. Given the timescale involved in securing capital investment, it is also recommended that an interim contingency plan be drawn up that will improve the situation as much as possible in the short term.
3	P1	A	Establish a time limited working group involving the Sports Centre Management, the School of Health and Human performance and other relevant functions. Include in the aims of the group the development of an agreed approach on the use of the sports facilities, which both balances the Sports Centre's need for financial support from external users, as well as the needs of the School of Health and Human Performance with respect to teaching and learning. It is also recommended that facility usage is agreed at the beginning of the academic year with those involved.
4	P1	A/U	Develop and implement a space reallocation strategy to allow the Faculty to prioritise the needs of strategic growth areas in its teaching portfolio and to ensure parity in the quality of the learning experience. It is also recommended that the strategy is periodically reviewed as part of the annual planning process.
5	P1	U	Address the shortcomings of the current ITS system as a matter of urgency in the short term and as a priority within the longer-term digital campus / flexible learning strategy for the University. The quality of the ITS System represents a significant risk to the reputation of the University particularly in the context of the management of examination results.
6	P1	A	Develop and establish more effective communication processes to ensure the smooth flow of information between: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All administrative functions (internal and external to the Faculty) The full gamut of postgraduate / postdoctoral communities across Schools Senior management and Faculty staff regarding university policy
7	P1	A	Faculty Teaching Committee: Co-ordinate the development of innovation in teaching and learning within the Faculty, and engage and communicate with relevant staff.

8	P1	A	Embed an effective teaching evaluation mechanism, critical for quality improvement, into the operation and culture of the Faculty. It is further recommended that teaching evaluation within the Faculty be established in the context of University wide activity in this area, and that the Faculty Management Board, along with the Faculty Committee for Teaching and Learning, take an active role in developing and monitoring the effectiveness of this mechanism.
9	P1	A	Establish Enterprise advisory boards (or equivalent) to elicit input into programme development as well as refresh and strengthen the Faculty's engagement with industry. DCU has the track record and the potential to develop best practice in industry interaction across a wide range of areas including research, programme design, skills requirements and INTRA.
10	P1	A	Establish a knowledge retention strategy to ensure that highly specialised knowledge developed by researchers is retained within the Faculty and more generally within DCU when they leave.
11	P2	A	Develop a plan to ensure the embedding of career planning and development mechanisms, including PMDS, at all levels. It is further recommended that the Faculty Management Board monitors participation of activity in this area across the Faculty on an annual basis.
12	P2	A	Undertake a review of the current workload allocation processes across the Faculty and follow this by a proposal from the Faculty Management Board on common workload principles to be implemented by the Schools. This recommendation is being made as it is important that the Dean has oversight of clear and transparent workload allocation strategies within and across Schools.
13	P2	A	Routinely review Faculty-level administrative processes, including those that involve interfacing externally, to ensure they continue to be fit for purpose. Also develop and establish a regular review process involving relevant staff, with a focus on bringing forward innovative approaches to administrative tasks with the intention of saving time and resources.
14	P2	A	Arrange for a small budget to be annually retained by the Dean during the process of allocating resources across the Faculty, to fund initiatives in support of the implementation of the University's Strategic Plan, particularly those which focus on improving the quality of the student experience.
15	P2	A	Encourage the development of, and strengthen where possible, active discipline relevant societies to facilitate and support the interaction of undergraduates, postgraduates and staff in an informal learning environment.
16	P2	A	Faculty Research Committee: Co-ordinate the identification of a set of external, preferably external to Ireland, institutions/centres/schools against which the individual parts of the Faculty research community might be benchmarked.
17	P2	A	Conduct an audit of Health & Safety standards across all Schools and Research Centres, and develop and implement common policies and procedures.

APPENDIX 1

Confirmed Attendees Faculty of Science and Health PRG Site Visit November 14th - 16th 2012

Wednesday 14th November 2012

Dean, Director of Quality Promotion & Members of FSH Quality Review Group @ 16:00

Costello	John	Dean
Mooney	Pauline	Faculty Manager
O'Neill	Sandra	Chair of FQRG
Dowling	Bernadette	Assistant
McGlynn	Enda	Associate Dean for Research
Wickham	Sheelagh	Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning
Long	Conor	Member of FQRG
Mosnier	Jean Paul	Member of FQRG
Keville	Bernard	Member of FQRG
Larkin	Anne Marie	Member of FQRG
Proudfoot	Denise	Member of FQRG
Downes	Turlough	Member of FQRG
Cummins	Phil	Member of FQRG
Burke	Michael	Member of FQRG
Ingle	Sarah	Director of Quality Promotion

Wednesday 14th November 2012

Informal Reception @ 18:00

Fagan	Ciaran	Head of School, Biotechnology
McGlynn	Enda	Associate Dean for Research
Mooney	Pauline	Faculty Manager
Costello	John	Dean
O'Neill	Sandra	Chair of FQRG
Dowling	Bernadette	Member of FQRG
Moran	Kieran	Head of School, Health and Human Performance
O'Riordain	Eugene	Head of School, Mathematical Sciences
Moore	Gerry	Head of School, Nursing and Human Sciences
Woods	Catherine	Head of School, Health and Human Performance
Flanagan	Sarah	Student Representative on FQRC
Wickham	Sheelagh	Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning
Keville	Bernard	Member of FQRG
Hughes	Greg	Former Head of School, Physical Sciences
Larkin	Anne Marie	Member of FQRG
Proudfoot	Denise	Member of FQRG
Theron	Emma	Member of FQRG

Thursday 15th November**Faculty Manager @ 9:30**

Mooney	Pauline	Faculty Manager
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Thursday 15th November**Faculty Manager and other members of Faculty Administration @ 9:50**

Dowling	Bernadette	Assistant Faculty Manager
McKenna	Ciaran	Administrative Officer
Moore	Deirdre	Administrative Officer
O'Hara	Emer	Faculty Secretary
Theron	Emma	Administrative Officer
Hickey	Grace	Senior Secretarial Assistant
Irwin-Bannon	Margaret	Senior Administrative Officer
Mooney	Pauline	Faculty Manager
Sheehy	Sharon	Senior Secretarial Assistant
Sereti	Tanya	Administrative Officer
Mooney	Pauline	Faculty Manager

Thursday 15th November**School Secretarial Staff @ 10:05**

Clark	Dawn	School of Nursing & Human Sciences
McArthur	Julie	School of Chemical Sciences
Donnelly	Deirdre	School of Biotechnology

Thursday 15th November**Faculty Teaching Committee @ 10:45**

Clynes	Mary	UG Convenor School of Nursing and Human Sciences
Wickham	Sheelagh	Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning
Dobbyn	Veronica	Technical Staff Representative
James	Paraic	Chemical Sciences Convenor
Belton	Sarahjane	Health and Human Performance Convenor
Cunningham	Eamonn	Physical Sciences Convenor
Dowling	Bernadette	Assistant Faculty Manger / FTC Secretary
Reynolds	David	Mathematical Sciences Convenor
Devery	Rosaleen	Biotechnology Convenor
Flanagan	Sarah	Faculty Student Convenor
Kirwan	Mary	Postgraduate Convenor, Representing the Director of Teaching & Postgraduate Convenor
O'Sullivan	Finbar	National Research Centre Representative

Thursday 15th November**Faculty Research Committee @ 11:20**

McGlynn	Enda	Associate Dean of Research
Irwin-Bannon	Margaret	Secretary to FRC
O'Connell	Barry	Technical Staff Representative
Murphy	Ronan	School of Health and Human Performance, Research Convenor
Barron	Niall	Postdoctoral Staff Representative
Kirby	Daniel	Postgraduate Student Representative
Nikolopoulos	Lampros	School of Physical Sciences, Research Convenor
O'Connor	Robert	NICB Research Convenor

Thursday 15th November**Heads of School & Former Heads @ 11:55**

Carroll	John	Mathematical Sciences
Fagan	Ciaran	Biotechnology
Long	Conor	Chemical Sciences
Moore	Gerry	Nursing and Human Sciences
Hughes	Greg	Physical Sciences (Former)
Moran	Kieran	Health and Human Performance
Woods	Catherine	Health and Human Performance

Thursday 15th November**Lecturers @ 12:40**

Courtney	Eileen	Nursing and Human Science
Menkens	Olaf	Mathematics
Lehwaldt	Danielle	Nursing and Human Science
Cummins	Phil	Biotechnology
Warrington	Giles	Health and Human Performance

Thursday 15th November**Faculty Facilities and Associated Services Manager @ 15:00**

Burke	Michael	Manager, Facilities and Associated Services
Burke	Maurice	Senior Technical Staff
O'Meara	Gillian	BRU
O'Connell	Barry	Senior Technical Staff

Thursday 15th November**National Centre Directors @ 16:30**

Clynes	Martin	NICB
Turner	Miles	NCPST

Thursday 15th November**External Stakeholders – Employers @ 17:15**

Murphy	Simon	Employer – Henkel
Lyons	Breid	Employer – Beaumont Hospital
O'Sullivan	Carina	Employer – Daughters of Charity Service
Atkinson	Larissa	Employer – Fitwell Ireland
Kelly	Marie	Employer – Ipsen
O'Shea	Donal	Employer – Slidepath
O'Brien	Damien	Employer – SME Matters

Thursday 15th November**External Stakeholders – Alumni @ 17.50**

Bird	Aoibheann	Alumni
Cadogan	Yvonne	Alumni
Daniels	Brendan	Alumni
Hughes	Lynda	Alumni
Jordan	Shane	Alumni
King	Sinead	Alumni
Lynch	Gillian	Alumni
Marshall	Brendan	Alumni
Murphy	Edwina	Alumni
Stapleton	Mark	Alumni
Townsend	Sue	Alumni
Vaas	Roman	Alumni
McMahon	Gillian	Alumni

Friday 16th November**DCU's Senior Management Group & Director of Quality Promotion @ 09:00**

MacCraith	Brian	President
Dowling	Jim	Deputy President
Rafoery	Declan	Chief Operations Officer
O'Cuinn	Ciaran	Executive Director for External and Strategic Affairs
Sinnott	Anne	Executive Dean DCU Business School
Doyle	John	Executive Dean, Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences
McMullin	Barry	Interim Dean, Faculty of Engineering and Computing
Burns	Marian	Director of Human Resources
Ingle	Sarah	Director of Quality Promotion

Friday 16th November**Central Administration Group One @ 11:00**

Looney	Lisa	Graduate Studies Office
Stokes	Richard	INVENT
Terres	Ana	Research and Innovation Support
Jameson	Celine	Registry/Enrolment
Barry	Gillian	Registry/Awards
McDermott	Louise	Registrar's Office / Academic Affairs
Bryne	Audrey	International Office
Breen	Ellen	Library
Halpin	Amanda	Library
Sommerfield	Anne	INTRA
Moloney	Deirdre	Student Support & Development
Kennedy	Ruan	Counselling Service
Harvey	Ted	Disability Office
McLoughlin	Yvonne	Careers Service

Group Two @ 11:30

Robinson	Ken	Sports Centre
Neville	Jane	President's Office
Kelly	Richard	Estates Office
Tully	Eileen	Health and Safety Office
Healy	James	ISS
Yore	Gareth	Human Resources
Gillen	Brendan	Finance
McCabe	Louise	Human Resources
Floyd	Alan	Finance
Wynter	Deirdre	Communications and Marketing

Undergraduate Students @ 12:00

Reville	Sophie Lee	BNID – Nursing and Human Sciences UG
Korpos	Christian	BPY – Nursing and Human Sciences UG
Gunnoo	Melissa	PBM – Physical Sciences
Downes	Vincent	AP – Physical Sciences
Hanks	William	PHA – Physical Sciences
Goel	Aastha	BT – Biotechnology
Byrne	Vanessa	HOR – Biotechnology
Palmer	David	GCB – Biotechnology
Irwin	Richard	ACM – Mathematical Sciences
Fagan	Georgina	PEB – Health and Human Performance
Duigenan	Cliona	SSH – Health and Human Performance
Reilly	Ann	BHS – Nursing and Human Sciences

Postgraduate and Research Students @ 12:25

Tolland	Karinda	Nursing and Human Sciences PhD
Keating	David	Nursing and Human Sciences PhD
Doughty	Leanne	Physical Sciences PhD
Doyle	Catherine	Physical Sciences PhD
Connolly	James	Physical Sciences PhD
Fenech	Cecilia	Biotechnology PhD
Quigley	Ben	Mathematical Sciences PhD
Doonan	Bryan	Chemical Sciences PhD
Kelly	Sean	NCPST
Hanzlikova	Nina	NCPST