

Quality Assurance / Quality Improvement
Internal Quality Review Programme
2010-2016



Quality Improvement Plan

Human Resources
10th June 2014

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1. INTRODUCTION

The HR Department would like to thank the Peer Review Group (PRG) and all the staff representatives who met with the PRG during the site visit. We very much appreciate the time and effort that people gave to make this a very worthwhile and positive process for the HR Department. We would also like to sincerely thank the staff in the Quality Promotion Office and everyone who participated in the HR staff survey and the focus groups during the development of the HR Self Assessment Report.

A copy of the PRG Report was circulated to all staff in the HR Department in November 2013 and a meeting was convened to discuss the PRG recommendations. A Quality Improvement Committee was set up to draft a Quality Improvement Plan which was circulated and discussed with all HR staff prior to it being finalised.

2. RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE PEER REVIEW GROUP REPORT

The HR Department very much welcomes the recommendations in the PRG Report particularly given that the PRG endorsed the majority, if not all of the areas and themes highlighted by the staff of HR in the Self-Assessment Report.

Overall, the quality review process has provided the HR Department with a great opportunity to collect feedback from its stakeholders which, together with the SWOC analysis and the PRG recommendations will inform the final HR Strategy and HR Action Plan over the next 3 to 5 years.

In fact, the quality review process is very timely as the University moves into the next phase of its development with the Incorporation of St Patricks College in Drumcondra, Mater Dei Institute and Church of Ireland into DCU. It will be essential that any work arising from the Incorporation Project, in particular from the *People and Organisation Workstream* is reflected in and accommodated within the HR Strategy and HR Action Plan.

Recommendations for Human Resources

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

Recommendation Number	Addressee	Priority	PRG Recommendation (Provided in PRG Report)	Area Response	University Response
Processes & Procedures					
1	U/A	P1	Provide funding for technological Information Systems and Services (ISS) and specialist support, to carry out a business process review and re-engineering exercise with external specialist support, commencing with an analysis of all aspects of the contract process including authorization, recruitment and contract production. This review should be multi-functional and carried out in conjunction with Finance & ISS, leveraging the Digital Campus initiative as appropriate. Led by external specialist support, staff members from the HR, ISS and Finance departments should be involved in this project. Following this process, invest in IT appropriately to help implement solutions.	The HR Department welcomes this recommendation as it was identified as a priority area for improvement by HR Staff in the SAR. We appreciate that the HR Information Systems and Information Technology strategies need to be embedded within the University Digital Strategy and this will be reflected in all HR IT Infrastructure initiatives. In line with this recommendation, HR will seek financial assistance from the University to engage an experienced <i>Process Engineer</i> (or an appropriate specialist) who will work with HR and relevant stakeholders to review the staff requisition and contract generation processes. This will be explored in the context of the Incorporation having regard to existing IT capabilities e.g. CORE HR.	The University is currently developing its Information Systems (IS) and Information Technology (IT) strategies, and it is also engaging with a major IT partner, as it moves towards achieving its "Digital Campus" goal. The relevant requirements of all units (including HR) will be fully addressed. The initiatives of the HR Department to undertake the recommended business process review will be supported.

Recommendation Number	Addressee	Priority	PRG Recommendation (Provided in PRG Report)	Area Response	University Response
2	A/U	P1	Develop specific proposals for IT solutions through CORE or otherwise to improve efficiency of other processes including e-recruitment, Employee Self Service functions, records management, staff requisition functionality, and HR website development. Develop individual project plans for use to enable prioritisation of the CORE functions.	HR are pleased that the PRG endorsed this recommendation of the HR SAR. A number of CORE projects are already in-train but at different stages of development. HR will develop an overall CORE Project Proposal having regard University's Digital Strategy and the Incorporation. This Strategy will include Individual project plans which have clear objectives, milestones and timelines These plans will take account of the current University Sector Project for a common CORE platform upgrade and will be reviewed on an on-going basis in the context of the HR Incorporation Project.	See response to recommendation 1.
			Strategic Development & Implementation		
3	U/A	PI	Design and implement a leadership development strategy focusing on the four key areas identified by the DCU strategy: mentoring, gender, development and succession planning; academic leadership roles (particularly for Heads of School)	The preparation of a Leadership Development Strategy is a priority for both HR and the University particularly as it moves to its next stage of development. The strategy will build on existing professional development interventions with a greater emphasis being placed on gender and on increasing the leadership and management capabilities of Heads of School and departments. Initiatives under this strategy will directly address the challenges that arise from rotating headships with succession planning being placed at the core of such initiatives.	The University supports this recommendation. Some initiatives have already been taken to address the issues mentioned: the extraordinary promotion scheme for senior academic staff (with its leadership emphasis), the recent university retention policy and the broadening of the targeted promotion policy for academic staff. All relevant schemes and policies will be

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				<p>Identifying additional supports for academic leaders such as mentoring and executive coaching will be considered with the aim of delivering such supports in a timely and flexible manner. Progress to date for example includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 25 academic and senior support staff have completed the Online University Leadership & Management Development Programme which adopted a blended learning methodology. - The current mentoring scheme extension will take place in 2014/15. The external consultant who worked on the original project has been re-engaged and the mentoring is currently being revised website. - Under a HEA Strategic Innovation Call, DCU is participating in the design of a project which focuses on the development of academic leadership. The outcomes of this project will complement other initiatives underway in supporting and retaining Academic Leaders 	<p>reviewed and further initiatives will be taken.</p> <p>In addition, the Academic Promotions Committee (APC) has just established a working group to explore and develop ways to achieve improved gender balance in academic staff promotion. Nationally, the Irish Universities Association (IUA) is also concerned with these issues and is seeking the support of the HEA and the Government.</p>

Recommendation Number	Addressee	Priority	PRG Recommendation (Provided in PRG Report)	Area Response	University Response
4	U/A	P1	Allocate once-off resources to support HR strategy implementation, and HR's role in the DCU/SPD/MDI/CICE incorporation programme.	The department welcomes the recommendations of the PRG for additional resources to support the implementation of the HR Strategy and the incorporation programme. A HR Manager has already been designated as <i>Project Manager</i> for the <i>People & Organisation Workstream</i> of the incorporation project. The HR Manager will be backfilled in June 2014 to facilitate delivery of certain priority areas arising from the HR Strategy, HR quality review and the incorporation. In addition, HR secured approval from the University's Budget Committee to appoint a new Senior HR Manager. This new post will support the Director of HR in driving through University /HR strategic and operational initiatives and will work closely with members of the HR Management Team. The position was advertised in May 2014 and the aim is to fill it by August/September 2014.	The University has secured resources to support HR's role, and that of other units, in the incorporation programme. It is also supportive of plans to implement the HR strategy.
5	U/A	P2	Consider the development and implementation of a promotions and reward structure for technical, administrative and support staff.	Administrative, technical and support staff continue to be promoted through the normal open and competitive processes. Despite the Employment Control Framework (ECF), over 10% of staff in these categories have been promoted since 2009. Whilst government policy and guidelines do not easily facilitate the development and implementation of new structures and/or initiatives to promote and reward staff, a review to consider and further develop other options to achieve this will be undertaken.	The University will support the review being proposed by HR and will seek to find innovative ways to implement the recommendation.

Recommendation Number	Addressee	Priority	PRG Recommendation (Provided in PRG Report)	Area Response	University Response
6	U/A	P2	Consider ways of recognising and rewarding staff who undertake academic leadership roles and actively engage in administrative roles. As part of this, consider how to be more flexible re: terms & conditions and length of appointments.	<p>The University only has approval from the HEA to pay allowances for certain academic leadership roles. However, it is recognised that that there is a need to consider additional mechanisms to incentivise and reward staff for taking on these roles. HR will undertake a review in consultation with the Deans and Senior Management to look at ways to achieve this in the current climate of restrictions on pay and allowances.</p> <p>In addition, through the IUA, DCU HR is involved in a review which aims to develop an appropriate remuneration architecture for Academic Leadership and Management roles</p>	See response to recommendation 3.
7	A	P2	Continue to develop detailed implementation plans for the new HR strategy including the grounding of two areas, in particular: (1) Workforce planning – support medium term workforce planning through more comprehensive provision of workforce data to Heads of units and Executive Deans (2) Staff engagement – configure team and organisational structure to identify specific staff member to take responsibility for staff engagement.	<p>The HR Department has made significant progress in developing a HR Strategy. The new Senior HR Manager (when appointed) will work closely with the Director of HR to ensure delivery of the key areas of the HR strategy and allocate responsibility for each of the pillars including Workforce Planning and Staff Engagement.</p> <p>The aim is that each pillar will have a clear set of deliverables to support Senior Management and the wider University Strategy. These will be outlined in full in the finalised strategy document.</p>	Note: the University welcomes and supports the development of the HR strategy.

Recommendation Number	Addressee	Priority	PRG Recommendation (Provided in PRG Report)	Area Response	University Response
8	A	P2	Integrate the Equality Agenda with HR through an updated Equality Action plan with a particular focus on gender. Clarify the priority actions required to promote equality actions for staff and students. Ensure gender awareness is appropriately reflected in all HR policies and processes.	<p>The Director of Equality will undertake to update the Equality Action Plan for staff and students with a focus on gender.</p> <p>In addition, the Director of Equality will work more closely with HR to (a) ensure there is a fuller integration and understanding of the Equality agenda and (b) develop policies and procedures with an emphasis and focus on gender.</p> <p>Following the receipt of funding from the HEA, DCU is now participating in a sectoral project aimed at targeting the gender imbalance that exists in the STEMM area. The project will use the Athena Swan Award established by the Equality Challenge Unit in the UK.</p>	Note: the University welcomes and supports the HR responses.
9	A	P2	Establish, with input from HR Director and Equality Director, an effective Diversity Forum that reports directly to the Senior Management Group.	As outlined in the Self Assessment Report, the development of a Diversity Forum is timely. The Director of HR has already met with the Director of Equality regarding the terms of reference, principles and guidelines in regard to the establishment of such a forum with appropriate representation.	Note: the University has noted and welcomes the establishment of the Diversity Forum.

Recommendation Number	Addressee	Priority	PRG Recommendation (Provided in PRG Report)	Area Response	University Response
			Communications		
10	A	P1	Set up an email for DCU staff to communicate with HR on routine queries e.g. ASKHR@dcu.ie	<p>This email account has been set up. Currently, the account is referenced in the <i>allstaff</i> emails issued from HR. Queries arising from these allstaff communications are acknowledged (and answered) within 48 hours or escalated as appropriate.</p> <p>The aim is to promote awareness and use of the ASKHR email account by placing it on the HR Website frontpage and at relevant points of enquiry.</p>	
11	A	P1	Focus on the use of empathetic language and the provision of contextual material when communicating difficult messages with staff and clarify HR's role in relation to such messages.	<p>As outlined in the SAR, HR is aware of the sensitivities relating to information that it is required to disseminate to staff regarding new government legislation affecting the terms and conditions of staff, national agreements such as Haddington Road, the ECF etc.</p> <p>We will review these communications on an on-going basis having regard to the audience, language, content and context.</p>	Note: the University welcomes and supports the HR responses.

Recommendation Number	Addressee	Priority	PRG Recommendation (Provided in PRG Report)	Area Response	University Response
12	A/U	P2	Develop up-to-date documentation on HR policies and procedures in accordance with the University's revised policy template, involving Heads of School and senior management as appropriate to undertake this. These should be made available online.	<p>The University has a comprehensive set of policies and procedures for which HR are the guardians. These policies are available on the HR website, however, a full review of all policies and information on the HR website will be undertaken with input from relevant stakeholders.</p> <p>The review will also have regard to work that will be ongoing in this area for the incorporation project. As part of the review the HR website will be updated and web linkages provided where appropriate.</p>	The University welcomes and supports this recommendation. The APC will continue to contribute to the improvement of the HR set of policies and procedures.
13	A	P2	Review the wording and structure of public-facing documentation to ensure highly professional documents reflective of DCU ethos.	This recommendation will be addressed in conjunction with the actions arising from recommendations 11 and 12 above. Advice and expertise from DCU's Communications and Marketing office will be sought.	Note: the University welcomes and supports the HR responses.

Recommendation Number	Addressee	Priority	PRG Recommendation (Provided in PRG Report)	Area Response	University Response
14	A	P2	Develop a system to provide succinct and timely information to DCU Heads and Managers concerning all changes and developments in regard to relevant policies / procedures / legislation / senior management decisions, to enable them to best carry out their management duties e.g. email, newsletter, attendance at meetings and other means. Leverage the improved website for this purpose.	<p>The HR OBIEE project to provide Dashboards of information to Heads of Schools and Managers has commenced and the first roll-out of available information is due to commence in September 2014. This will provide information from the CoreHR database and ITS systems which will better equip Heads and Deans in many aspects of their management role including manpower planning and strategic recruitment. A further review of the provision of timely and up-to-date information (e.g. new legislation, policies & procedures etc) to support Managers in carrying out their management duties will be undertaken.</p> <p>The aim is to leverage the improved website to enhance the provision of information and data to DCU Management and appropriate training and support will be provided in this regard.</p>	Note: the University welcomes and supports the HR responses.

Recommendation Number	Addressee	Priority	PRG Recommendation (Provided in PRG Report)	Area Response	University Response
			Staffing and Accommodation		
15	A/U	P1	<p>Implement structural and other changes to enhance space usage, including a review of space and reception services, to enable the public office to deal with staff queries and members of the public in a more private and confidential setting and also to improve the service for the collection of contracts.</p>	<p>As identified in the SAR, the current layout and setup of the HR Department, in particular the HR general office is not conducive to a positive or confidential interface with staff and other visitors. As a matter of urgent discussions have already taken place with the Estates Office to secure office space for two additional HR staff (including for the new Senior HR Manager).</p> <p>A fuller review, in consultation with HR stakeholders and the Estates Office will be undertaken to maximise space with a view to improving the overall service. This review will have regard to the resources that will need to be accommodated as a result of the Incorporation Project.</p> <p>The issue of contract collection and drop-off has been explored and a new approach in the provision of this service has been developed and will be implemented shortly.</p>	<p>The University is fully cognisant of the space constraints on HR in its current location. However, currently there are very few options to provide additional and/or reconfigured space. The new University campus development programme will help to address the problem, most likely by relocating HR to newly refurbished space in the Albert College.</p>

Recommendation Number	Addressee	Priority	PRG Recommendation (Provided in PRG Report)	Area Response	University Response
16	A	P2	Ensure that each pillar of the HR strategic plan has a clearly identifiable manager within the HR structure with responsibility for same.	As outlined in the responses to recommendations 4 and 7, the development and implementation of the HR Strategy will be undertaken by a newly appointed Senior HR Manager who will work closely with the Director of HR to finalise the Strategy and ensure there is dedicated HR Manager with responsibility for the delivery of each of the main pillars of the HR strategy. This will be key to the successful implementation and delivery of the different strands.	Note: the University welcomes and supports the HR responses.

3. SUMMARY OF THE ONE-YEAR PLAN

No.	Recommendation / Action Item	Timeline	Lead
	Processes and Procedures		
1. P1 U/A	HR will seek University funding for specialist support to carry out a business process review and re-engineering exercise, commencing with an analysis of all aspects of the contract process including recruitment and contract production. This process will include all relevant stakeholders, but critically the DCU Finance Office. Engage Process Engineer to undertake Review (See 3 year plan for further information)	Q3, 2014 Q3/Q4, 2014	Norma Wilkinson / Joe Maxwell
2 P1 A/U	HR will develop an overall CORE Project Proposal with individual project plans which have clear objectives, milestones and timelines. These plans will take account of the current University Sector Project for a common CORE platform upgrade and will be reviewed on an on-going basis in the context of the HR Incorporation Project.	Q3. 2014	Joe Maxwell / Norma Wilkinson
	Strategic Development and Implementation		
3a P1 U/A	Design and develop a Leadership Development Strategy focusing on the four key areas identified by the DCU strategy: mentoring, gender, development and succession planning; academic leadership roles (particularly for Heads of School (See 3 year plan for further information)	Q4 2014	Marian Burns Martin Leavy
4 P1 U/A	Allocate once-off resources to support HR strategy implementation, and HR's role in the DCU/SPD/MDI/CICE incorporation programme.	Q2 2014	Marian Burns Emer McMahon

7 P2 A	Finalise the HR Strategy with more detailed implementation plans for key areas identified in the strategy including those highlighted by the PRG (1) Workforce planning and (2) Staff engagement.	Q4 2014	Marian Burns (New Senior HR Manager)
9 P2 A	Establish, with input from HR Director and Equality Director, an effective Diversity Forum that reports directly to the Senior Management Group.	Q3 2014	Paul Smith Marian Burns
10 11 13 14 P1 P1 P2 P2	<p>Communications</p> <p>HR will be developing a full communications strategy. The following recommendations by the PRG will form part of the deliverables within the wider strategy. More specifically it will include recommendations, 10, 11, 13 and 14</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Set up ASKHR@dcu.ie email - Use empathetic language and contextual materials - Review and reworking of public facing documentation - Provision of timely and succinct information regarding changes and developments in legislation, policies and procedures to senior management to support them in their roles (including the “Dashboard”) 	Q3 2014	Marian Burns (New Senior HR Manager)
15 P1 A/U	<p>Implement structural and other changes to enhance space usage, including a review of space and reception services, to enable the public office to deal with staff queries and members of the public in a more private and confidential setting and also to improve the service for the collection of contracts. (See 3 Year Plan for further information)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement new process to improve the service for collection and return of contracts. 	Q3 2014	Norma Wilkinson Tina Patton
16 P2 A	Ensure that each pillar of the HR strategic plan has a clearly identifiable manager within the HR structure with responsibility for same.	Q4 2014	Marian Burns (New Senior HR Manager)

SUMMARY OF THE THREE-YEAR PLAN

No	Recommendation / Action Item	Timeline	Lead
	Strategic Development and Implementation		
1. P1 U/A	HR will seek University funding for specialist support to carry out a business process review and re-engineering exercise, commencing with an analysis of all aspects of the contract process including recruitment and contract production. This process will include all relevant stakeholders, but critically the DCU Finance Office. (See One Year Plan) Implementation of Process Review recommendations outcomes	Q2 2015	Norma Wilkinson Joe Maxwell
3B P1 U/A	Implementing leadership development strategy focusing on the four key areas identified by the DCU strategy: mentoring, gender, development and succession planning; academic leadership roles (particularly for Heads of School)	Q3 2016	Marian Burns Martin Leavy
5 P2 U/A	Consider the development and implementation of a promotions and reward structure for technical, administrative and support staff.	Q4 2016	Gareth Yore
6 P2 U/A	Consider ways of recognising and rewarding staff who undertake academic leadership roles and actively engage in administrative roles. As part of this, consider how to be more flexible re: terms & conditions and length of appointments.	Q3 2015	Marian Burns
8 P2 A	Updating Equality Action Plan. Integrate the Equality Agenda with HR through an updated Equality Action plan with a particular focus on gender.	On-going over 3 years	Paul Smith

12 P2 A/U	Develop up-to-date documentation on HR policies and procedures in accordance with the University's revised policy template, involving Heads of School and senior management as appropriate to undertake this. These should be made available online. <i>(Note: This will be undertaken having regard to the Incorporation Project)</i>	Q4 2015	Emer McMahon Norma Wilkinson
15 P1 AU	Implement structural and other changes to enhance space usage, including a review of space and reception services, to enable the public office to deal with staff queries and members of the public in a more private and confidential setting and also to improve the service for the collection of contracts.	Q3 2016	Norma Wilkinson Tina Patonn

APPENDIX 1 – Area Quality Committee (for Self-Assessment Report)

Ms Emer McMahon	HR Manager (Chair)
Ms Karen Brady	HR Assistant
Ms Jennifer Butler	HR Officer
Mr Martin Leavy	Training & Development Manager
Mr Joe Maxwell	HR Officer / FOI Officer
Ms Amanda Jordan	HR Assistant
Mr Gareth Yore	Employee Relations Manager

APPENDIX 2 – Peer Review Group Members

Mr Matthew Knight, Director of Human Resources, University of Leeds (Chair)
Ms Rosaleen McCarthy, Director of Human Resources, National University of Ireland, Maynooth
Ms Brigid McManus, Former Secretary General at Department of Education & Skills
Dr Brenda Daly, School of Law & Government, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, DCU (Rapporteur)
Dr Brien Nolan, School of Mathematical Sciences, Faculty of Science & Health, DCU

APPENDIX 3 – Area Quality Committee (for Quality Improvement Plan)

Ms Marian Burns	Director of Human Resources
Ms Emer McMahon	Strategic HR Projects Manager (Chairperson)
Mr Martin Leavy	Training & Development Manager
Ms Norma Wilkinson	HR Manager
Mr Joe Maxwell	Senior HR Officer / FOI Officer
Ms Tina Patton	HR Supervisor
Ms Amanda Jordan	HR Assistant

APPENDIX 4 – Prioritised Resource Requirements

Project Title	Cost Estimate
Business Process review of Staff Request - appointment of a Process Engineering Consultant to undertake Process Re-engineering Project <i>(Recommendation 1)</i>	€45,000 (Priority 1)
Purchase and Implementation of E-recruitment module on Core HR <i>(Recommendation 2)</i>	€47,700 (Priority 2)
HR Management Information Dashboard (OBIEE)	€12,000 (Priority 3)
Data Cleansing Exercise to Enable ESS functionality including pensions and support Records Management <i>(Recommendation 2)</i>	€54,780 (Priority 4)