

Background to the IRIU Process

Irish universities are required under Section 35 of the Universities Act, 1997 to establish and implement procedures for quality assurance and arrange for a review of the effectiveness of these procedures “from time to time and in any case at least every 15 years.” In 2002, the governing authorities of all seven universities authorised the establishment of the Irish Universities Quality Board (IUQB) and delegated to IUQB the function of arranging regular reviews of the effectiveness of quality assurance procedures, which are institutional in their scope. The IUQB operates an institutional review process every five-six years. The IUQB’s Institutional Review of Irish Universities (IRIU) process is designed to confirm whether Irish universities are (i) compliant with the requirements of Section 35 of The Universities Act, and are (ii) consistent with the Part One requirements of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area 2005 (ESG). The IRIU process is undertaken by a team of six independent national and international reviewers selected by the IUQB Board.

Background to the University

Dublin City University (DCU) was first established as the National Institute for Higher Education, Dublin at the beginning of the 1980s. Through the Dublin City University Act of 1989, it became the seventh and most recently founded of Ireland’s Universities. Since then, DCU has continued its predecessor’s emphasis on working closely with industry and business. This is to be seen in its continuing promotion of work-based learning and training in its taught programmes, its emphasis on applied and fundamental research in partnership with industry and business and the commercialisation of the work of its researchers. DCU’s population of researchers and postgraduate research students has grown markedly in recent years.

In 2009-10, more than 10,700 students were registered to study at DCU, of whom more than 7,300 were studying at undergraduate level, more than 2,400 were studying for taught postgraduate awards and more than 650 were researching for PhD awards. In December 2009, the University employed more than 430 academic staff and more than 420 support and administrative staff. DCU has three Linked Colleges: St Patrick’s College, Drumcondra, where more than 1,800 undergraduates and more than 660 postgraduates are studying for DCU awards; Mater Dei Institute, where more than 730 undergraduate and postgraduate students are studying for DCU awards; and All Hallows College, where 330 students are studying for DCU awards.

The Review Team

The review was conducted by the following team of six reviewers, trained by the IUQB on 16 February 2010. The Chair and Co-ordinating Reviewer undertook a Planning Visit to DCU on 17 February 2010. The Main Review Visit was conducted by the full Team between 1- 4 March 2010.

Professor Robert Glidden,
President Emeritus, Ohio University, US (*Chair*)

Mr Thierry Malan,
recently retired General Inspector for Administration of the National Education and Research (IGAENR), Ministry of Education and Research, France

Professor Gerard Wrixon,
President Emeritus, University College Cork (UCC), Ireland

Ms Anita Līce,
Former Vice-Chairperson, European Students’ Union (ESU), Latvia

Dr Barbara Haering,
Director, econcept Inc, Switzerland

Dr David Cairns,
Former QAA Assistant Director and independent higher education consultant, UK

Review Team Conclusions

Based on the Review Team’s evaluation of the Institutional Self-Assessment Report, supporting documentation and meetings conducted during the Main Review Visit, the Team found sufficient evidence to confirm:

CATEGORY	KEY REVIEWER FINDINGS
Statutory Requirements	The Review Team concluded that the University’s activities are compliant with statutory requirements.
European Standards	The Review Team concluded that the University’s activities are broadly consistent with European Standards.
National, European and International best practice	The University is taking account of national, European and international best practice.

Review Team Commendations*

The Review Team found sufficient evidence to commend the following examples of good practice for further promotion internally, nationally and internationally:

1	Dublin City University has effectively embedded a quality culture that permeates the institution and its work.
2	The preparation of the Institutional Self-Assessment Report, which was done conscientiously and with clarity and candour, constitutes a quality enhancement measure in itself that has made a significant contribution to the University's quality culture.
3	The University has exhibited wisdom and foresight in conceiving the Academic Framework for Innovation project, it has managed the project's implementation in exemplary fashion, and it has plans for further work with staff and students to deepen understanding of the concepts underlying the AFL.
4	The University has developed common themes among the outcomes of its internal reviews that have helped it to focus on areas that need attention or improvement across the institution.
5	The University has developed and applied Topic Reviews as a cross-institutional quality assurance and quality enhancement process that has potential for wider application in other higher education institutions in Ireland and beyond.

Review Team Recommendations*

The Team found sufficient evidence to recommend the following activities to the University for attention and development:

1	Continue efforts to synchronise internal review and strategic planning cycles, and analyse and coordinate the many internal quality review procedures in order to achieve a better linkage with externally-driven reviews.
2	Establish a "standing committee" of the Governing Authority, drawn from its external members, to be convened between meetings of the full Governing Authority, and seek opportunities for external members of the Governing Authority to become more closely acquainted with the University's work.
3	Develop an institution-wide management information system to support the work of academic managers and committees across the University.
4	Develop and adopt both a more consistent approach to providing feedback to students on their work and ways for students to provide feedback on their experience with tutors, supervisors and other teaching staff.
5	Develop and implement a robust performance appraisal system for staff.

**The five key commendations and recommendations of the DCU Review Team are presented in the Summary Report. A comprehensive list of all the commendations and recommendations made by the Review Team are presented in the Conclusions section of the full Review Report.*

IUQB Board Ratification

The IUQB Board received and considered the Review Team's report on the review of Dublin City University at its meeting on 14 June 2010. The Board formally signed off the report for publication, having satisfied itself that the review process was completed in accordance with published criteria.

Further Information

The full Dublin City University review report alongside the institutional response to the IRIU is published in the Quality Reviews Catalogue on the IUQB Website at: <http://reviews.iuqb.net/>.

Further information on the IRIU review process, the IUQB Board, the outcomes of all internal and external reviews of Irish universities, and the range of quality assurance and enhancement activities undertaken by the IUQB can be found on the IUQB Website www.iuqb.ie



IUQB 10 Lower Mount St. Dublin 2.

TEL 353-1-644 9774

EMAIL info@iuqb.ie

FAX 353-1-661 2449

WEBSITE www.iuqb.ie