

Quality Assurance / Quality Improvement
Programme for Academic Units
2004-2005



Peer Review Group Report
for the
School of Nursing

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Introduction

This Quality review has been conducted in accordance with a framework model developed and agreed through the Irish Universities Quality Board (IUQB) and which 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 being reviewed completes a detailed self-assessment report (SAR). It should be noted that this document is confidential to the School and to the Review Panel and to 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 the School and conduct discussions with a range of staff, students and other stakeholders.
3. The PRG then writes its own report
4. The School produces a response (in consultation with the Dean of the Faculty), in response to the various issues and findings of the SAR and PRG Reports.
5. The PRG Report and the School response are then considered at a follow-up meeting, chaired by the Director of Quality Promotion and attended by an external (if possible) member of the original Peer Review Group, the Head of School (and another representative from the School), Dean of the Faculty and the Deputy President, Registrar and Vice-President for Research (on behalf of Senior Management), who address recommendations in the Peer Review Group Report, that fall outside the control of the School or that require additional resources. Arising from this meeting, School, Faculty and University-based action plans are approved. Together, these are termed the Quality Improvement Plan (QuIP)
6. A summary of the Quality Review is sent to the Governing Authority of the University, who may approve publication in a manner that they see fit. Following the approval of the summary report by the Governing Authority, it is published on the University website. The full text of the Peer Review Group Report and the Quality Improvement Plan is also published on the Quality Promotion Unit website.

1. Profile of the School

Location of the School

The School of Nursing is located in a beautiful new building designed specifically for the School. The building is located in a high profile position at the main entrance to the University.

Staff

Table 1.1: Grade Structure of the School of Nursing Staff

	Permanent	3 year Contract	2 year contract	11 month contract	Part Time	Total
Professor	1					1
Associate Professor	0					0
Visiting Professor						1
Senior Lecturer	1					1
Lecturer above bar	29	1		1	1	32
Lecturer below bar	2	4		3		9
Research Assistant				1	1	2
Research Fellow			1			1
Technical Staff		1				1
Administrative Staff				2		2
Grade 2	2			1		3

Faculty Administration to the School of Nursing

	Permanent	3 year Contract	2 year contract	11 month contract	Part Time	Total
Faculty Administrative Staff						
Grade 6	1					1
Grade 4	2					2
Grade 3	2					2

These figures were provided to the PRG by the School. They show the in post situation as at December 2004. More recent changes are not included.

Programmes / Outputs

Figures showing the current number of students in each year of all programmes were not available. (The central office were not able to provide the School with figures due to staff shortages) The BSc course student intake in 2002 and 2003 and the attrition rate is given in Table 1.2. The Central Applications Office (CAO) points requirement is shown in Table 1.3.

Table 1.2 BSc. Course – Student Intake 2002 and 2003

Course	Year 2002	Year 2003
General	87	105
Intellectual Disability	22	34
Mental Health	31	58
Total Intake	140	197
Attrition Rate	<u>-8</u>	<u>-5</u>
Total at Year End	<u>132</u>	<u>192</u>

Table 1.3 Central Applications Office (CAO) - BSc. Course – 2004

CAO Points 2004	Points
General	380
Intellectual Disability	330
Mental Health	280

Source: CAO application system

2. The Self-Assessment Process

The School Quality Committee

The School Quality Committee is made up of a mixture of staff from the academic, technical and administration sectors of the School, the members are:

Anne Walsh-Daneshmandi (Lecturer)
Dara O'Connor (Administrator)
Denise Proudfoot (Lecturer)
Evelyn McElwain (Lecturer)
Ger Cannon (Technician)
Gerard Clinton (Lecturer)
Mary Kirwan (Lecturer/Stand Alone Module Co-ordinator)
Mary McGrath (Lecturer/Skills Centre Manager)
Mel Duffy (Lecturer/Undergraduate Convenor/BNS Co-ordinator)
Michael McKeon (Lecturer/Allocations)
Nora Kilcullen (Lecturer/Library Liaison Officer)
Pam Henry (Lecturer)

Richard Jackson (Lecturer)
Rufina Morgan (Assistant Head of School/Director Undergraduate Studies)
Sheelagh Wickham (Assistant Head of School/Post Graduate Convenor)
Therese Danaher (Lecturer)

Methodology Adopted

To commence the quality review process and ensure involvement of School staff:

- Two informal lunches were held for School staff to inform them about the quality review process and answer any questions.
- The Quality Promotions Officer addressed a School staff meeting.
- Quality and the quality review process were highlighted at a School meeting by members of the School Quality Committee.
- A “quality” away day was held September 2004 where a first draft of the SAR was available to all staff for comment.
- The final draft was circulated to the staff before going to the PRG.
- At the staff meeting in February 2005, School staff were shown the provisional timetable for the visit of the PRG and again reminded of their option to meet with the PRG during the March visit.

3. The Peer Review Group Process

Overall Comments on the Visit

The review process consisted of three discrete activities: -

1. Familiarisation with the SAR in advance of the visit.
2. The comprehensive site visit by the PRG conducted over a period of two and a half days to review and validate the details of the SAR, finishing with a presentation of the preliminary findings and recommendations by the PRG.
3. The preparation and delivery of this report documenting the findings and making recommendations for future development of the School.

Site Visit Programme

Day 1 (Monday 14 March 2005)

14.00 – 15.00	Meeting of members of the PRG and briefing by Director of Quality Promotion.
15.00 – 16.00	Group agrees final work schedule and assignment of tasks for the following two days.
16.00 – 17.30	Consideration of the SAR with School Quality Committee and Head of School (included a short 20-minute presentation from School of Nursing).
19.30	Dinner for members of the PRG, Head of School and School Quality Committee.

Day 2 (Tuesday, 15 March 2005)

09.00 – 12.00

Meetings with School Staff

(All meetings below in the School of Nursing Building)

The Peer Review Group met the following groups:

09.00 – 09.15

Group from Teaching & Learning Committee

09.15 – 09.30

Group from Research Committee

09.30 – 09.45

Administration Group

09.45 – 10.00

10.00 – 11.00

Meetings with representatives from Partner Services

Marie Keane Beaumont Hospital (Dir. Of Nursing)

Susan Hawkshaw Beaumont Hospital (Nursing Dev.Coord).

Martin Farrell Mental Health Area 6 Director

Gerry Cobbe, St.Joseph's Intellectual Disability Service (Dir.of Nursing)

Eileen Kelly, St.Joseph's Intellectual Disability Service (Dev. Coord.)

Madge Conboy-Browne Mental Health Vergemont Area.

Karl Brogan James Connolly Memorial Hospital

Eithne Cusack Nursing & Midwifery Planning & Develop.

11.00 – 11.30

Meeting with School Management (Assistant Heads Group)

11.30 – 13.00

Meeting with Anne Scott (Head of School), Donal O'Mathuna (staff), Colette Lyng (staff).

13.00 – 14.15

Tour of campus and School including Nursing skills Centre

14.15 – 14.30

Meeting with group from Clinical Skills.

14.30 – 17.30

Meetings with Students and further Meeting with Staff

14.30 – 15.00

Meetings with 2nd year student representatives

15.30 – 15.40

Meeting with Mel Duffy (staff)

15.40 – 15.50

Meeting with Susan Hourican (staff)

16.00 – 16.30

Meeting with 1st and 3rd year BSc Students

16.30 – 17.00

Meeting with BNS students

17.00 – 17.30

Meeting with 3 Post Graduate Research staff/students

17.30 – 18.30

Meeting of PRG to identify remaining aspects to be clarified and to finalise tasks for the following day.

19.30

Working private dinner for members of the PRG.

Day 3 (Wednesday 16 March 2005)

09.00 – 09.45

Meeting with President, Deputy-President, Registrar, Director of Finance (Director of Quality Promotion in attendance)

10.00 – 11.15

Visit to Library

11.15 – 11.45

Meeting with Dean of Faculty

12.00 – 12.30

Meeting with Vice-President for Research

12.30 – 13.30

Meeting with Head of School to clarify any outstanding issues

13.30 – 16.00

Preparation of 1st Draft of final report

16.00 – 16.30 Exit presentation to all staff of the School made by the Chair of the PRG summarising the principal findings.

Methodology

The PRG followed the timetable of meetings described above. It met initially with the Director of Quality Promotion to discuss the visit and this was followed by a discussion about the adequacy of the SAR. The PRG met with the large School Quality Committee and received a presentation about the process of drafting the SAR. Requests were made for data missing from the SAR. The PRG also requested a statement of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and concerns of the School as this was not included in the SAR. (Most of this information was made available the following day.) The meeting was followed by an evening meal with members of the PRG and the School Quality Committee. The second day started with meetings with School staff including the Assistant Heads, followed by a meeting with senior representatives of the Partner Services. The high level and comprehensive attendance at this meeting particularly impressed the PRG. In the afternoon there was a series of very informative meetings with various student year groups as well as meeting with some staff members who were also Ph.D Research Students. In the evening there was a working private dinner for the members of the PRG. The schedule for the third day was modified to allow for more time with the Head of School to discuss missing data and issues raised by staff and students.

Overview of the Site Visit

The administrative arrangements were excellent. All the staff and students were very welcoming and shared ideas and feelings with us in the limited time available to cover the activities of such a large school.

PRG's view of the Self-Assessment Report

The Self-Assessment report was mainly a description of the programmes and organisation of the School but it lacked analysis of the strengths, weaknesses opportunities and concerns. The report also lacked a lot of significant relevant data. Some of this information did however emerge during discussions with the Head and other members of staff.

Report Methodology

The group worked as a team. Specific areas of this report were first drafted by individual members and then, following discussion, the findings were incorporated into this report.

4. Findings of the Review Group

Background and Context

The School of Nursing in Dublin City University was established in 1995. The first students were admitted into the Diploma in Nursing Programme, in partnership with Beaumont Hospital and the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland. By autumn 1998 the Programme had expanded to include partnerships with 5 other health care services:

James Connolly Memorial Hospital,
St Vincent's Hospital Fairview,
Northern Area Health Board Psychiatric Nursing Services,
St Joseph's Intellectual Disability Services, Portrane
Daughters of Charity Intellectual Disability Services, Clonsilla.

This brought to six the number of Diploma Programmes (two each for General, Psychiatric and Mental Handicap Nursing). February 1997 saw the launch of a one-year part-time Bachelor of Nursing Studies programme and the Bachelor of Nursing Studies in Community Nursing in 2004 for registered nurses.

The School has a developing postgraduate portfolio of both taught and research programmes. Partnerships with external health providers and voluntary bodies contribute to this.

There are three undergraduate programmes:

- (1) B.Sc. (Hons.) in Nursing [accredited 2002] which replaced the Diploma in Nursing Programme [1995-2003];
- (2) Bachelor of Nursing (Hons.) Studies (BNS) [accredited 1997] which is a top up degree for registered nurses
- (3) Bachelor of Nursing Studies in Community Nursing (Hons.) (BNSCM) [Accredited 2004] which is a top up degree programme designed for registered nurses working in the community.

There is a developing research programme in the School. Most significantly, it is currently leading, in collaboration with the School of Nursing & Midwifery, University College Dublin, the first 5-year programme of research in nursing and midwifery funded in Ireland awarded by the Health Research Board.

The School is a young school, situated in a relatively young university. School staff are active on national fora; for example the Head of School is a member of the boards of the Health Service Executive, the Health Research Board, the European Academy of Nursing Science, and is also a member of Irish Council for Bioethics. Other staff have contributed to national developments such as Primary Healthcare and membership of An Bord Altranais. As can be seen from the research awards, the School is continuing to develop its research activity.

The School under the stewardship of Professor P. Anne Scott, has expanded to become the largest school in the Faculty of Health and Science in Dublin City University. It is housed in a purpose built facility at the entrance to DCU. The new building opened officially in June 2004 as part of the capital development of €28million, funded by the Department of Health and Children (DoHC). It marked the final phase in the transition of nurse education from the six hospitals-based schools to the university sector.

The specification for the building was drafted in terms of the activity for which it was being built, namely nurse education. However the need to acknowledge nursing research and practice as essential components of the building and its activity was highlighted in the design. The modern facility provides a diverse range of learning, teaching and research environments. Innovative ideas in curriculum design, teaching and learning strategies have been articulated in the design of the audio-visual network, the computer laboratory and in the layout and functioning of the nursing skills centre. Staff accommodation ensures optimum working conditions for staff and easy access for students. The social space in the building – the exhibition area and catering facilities – ensures that other members of DCU staff are welcome and prevents insularism which may prevail in a predominantly ‘single use’ building. The School comprises academic, research, technical and administrative staff with a student compliment of over one thousand.

In the Strategy document, - *Leading Practice: Education, Research and Innovation* the School has developed an ambitious vision and the working principles are generally commendable. There are, however, few measurable goals and definitions of the ways to achieve them. Staff in the School are currently working on the details of an implementation plan.

Organisation and Management of the School

The School of Nursing is the largest of six schools in the Faculty of Science and Health in DCU. Faculty management is under the leadership of the Executive Dean, supported by the Faculty Executive and Faculty Management Board. There is a representative of the School of Nursing on the Faculty Executive. The School is represented on the Faculty Management Board by the Head of School, an Assistant Head and a member of staff.

Professor Ann Scott is Professor of Nursing and Head of the School. The School has an academic staff of 44, with a new Professor of Mental Health Nursing, a senior lecturer and two lecturers about to take up appointments. The number of administrative and technical staff assigned to the School is six. Five other administrative staff are shared with the Faculty. They apparently work mainly for the School but their line management accountability is to the Faculty and not to the School. This is not compatible with good staff management as the staff should be directly responsible to the manager who delegates most work to them. This anomaly needs to be addressed by the University. There are two Assistant Heads of School, one responsible for undergraduate studies and the other for postgraduate work. Other staff members have been assigned responsibility for module co-ordination, the skills centre, undergraduate convenor/BNS co-ordinator, allocations, library liaison, research director, in addition to their teaching and research activities.

PRG considers that the School is seriously understaffed at senior and administrative level for the size of the student population, complexity of the undergraduate programmes and the need to develop nursing as an academic discipline.

The School has a unique funding arrangement in DCU. It is funded through the University and Faculty from dedicated funding from the Department of Health and Children (DOHC) according to a nationally negotiated formula. For the BSc programme an annual fee of around €10,000 is paid by the DOHC per student. When this fee was negotiated nationally there was an assumption in the calculation of costs that direct costs would account for 60% of the fee, and indirect costs 40%. It appeared from discussions that indirect costs in DCU were significantly more than 40% but the reason for this is not clear.

At present the School is within the Faculty of Health and Science. While there is some collaboration in terms of teaching within the Faculty, potential collaborations across a range of other activities were not fully evident. The school loses a significant share of the administrative resources it brings in to the Faculty, to a degree that administrative support in the school is inadequate. It may be that the potential of the School may be better realised within a different Faculty configuration or as a stand-alone Faculty given its size and complexity. In the meantime, consideration should be given to granting the School a more independent status within the Faculty.

The organisation of the School reflects the recent history of nurse education in Ireland, principally the move from a hospital- to a university- based system of education, the reliance of the School on health service partners for clinical teaching and the recent emergence in this country of an academic discipline of nursing. The relationship of the School with its seven health service partners is vital to its success because of its dependence on the partners for clinical teaching and because the service partners will be employers of the nurses on graduation. This relationship is defined in memorandums of understanding which were agreed in December 2002 after much discussion and negotiation. The PRG was most impressed by the positive endorsement of the quality of the relationships developed by the School with its service partners, as expressed to the PRG by leaders of these services.

The School developed a complicated committee system (outlined in the appendix to the SAR) to manage its business, reflecting the complexity and scale of the transition of the undergraduate programme to the university, the need to manage the relationship with the service partners, and the need to develop the teaching and research profile of the School. Following discussion with staff, the key committees appear to the PRG to be the

- Assistant Head of School Committee which functions as a management team for the School.
- Professional Advisory Committee which manages the interface between the School and the service partners.
- BSc Course Team Committee.
- BNS Course Team Committee.
- Clinical Skills Development Committee.
- Research Committee.

A Teaching and Learning Committee has been formed recently but its role was not clear to the PRG. A staff meeting takes place once a semester. The number of committees appeared excessive and the lines of communication were not clear to the PRG in all cases. The number of committees may be adding unnecessarily to the administrative load on staff. While this kind of complex structure may have been necessary in the early years of the transition and development of the programme, a structure more suited to an academic environment is required as the School matures and as staff adjust to new roles.

The Head of School initiated annual career development reviews with staff of the School. As the number of staff has grown, these reviews, while extremely valuable, are consuming an increasing amount of her time. The PRG learned of University proposals to introduce a system of performance management and development reviews and was made aware of the concerns of staff about the relationship of reviewing and reviewed staff. Because of the distinctive history, organisation and expertise of the School, the introduction of a performance and development system needs to be handled with particular sensitivity.

Findings

- The PRG was impressed by the Scale of the organisational and managerial challenge represented by the transition from hospital-based teaching to a university campus, the newness of the teaching programmes and of nursing as an academic discipline and the size of the student body. The achievements of the School, especially the teaching programmes, in such a short space of time are considerable.
- The School's committee structure is too complex and there is a lack of clarity of roles and lines of communication.
- The success of the relationship with service providers and the Professional Advisory Group (PAG).
- The under-staffing of the School at senior academic and dedicated administrative levels.
- More administrative support should be transferred from the Faculty to the School and the staff should report directly to the Head of School.
- The benefit to the School of its current location within the Faculty of Health and Science was not clear to the PRG
- A lack of transparency in the manner in which the School is funded by the University and by the Faculty.
- The need to take account of the distinctive history, organisation and expertise of the school in designing a system of performance management and development.

Programmes and Instruction

The School offers a range of programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate level. At undergraduate level two programmes were on offer, a BSc with registration as a nurse and a degree for nurses who already had a registration. Postgraduate programmes included a number of postgraduate diplomas, a taught master's programme and a masters or doctorate by research. Across all programmes students highlighted staff

support, approachability and encouragement of students as particular strengths of the School. The staff had prepared an impressive range of documentary information for students and their concern for students was evident. Staff have developed innovative approaches to teaching and learning, and a comprehensive postgraduate framework. The skills laboratory developments were particularly interesting and impressive. The development of a Teaching and Learning committee within the School is to be commended.

Students undertaking the BSc programme highlighted a number of issues which impacted significantly on their learning particularly within the clinical setting. Preparation for placement and the support within placement were highlighted particularly.

The PRG were aware that there was a national agreement which shaped the training and role of preceptors and that preceptors were responsible for assessing student competency. Some students however had found that their preceptor was not fully prepared for the role. In addition the documentary evidence required for competency assessment was time-consuming and difficult for students and preceptors to complete and was at times overshadowing actual learning. While the assessment of competence is an essential requirement of nurse registration programmes, the evidence requirements within the current scheme were a problem.

Communication between staff and students in relation to course requirements was an issue when students were undertaking clinical work. Students suggested that they were not always clear in relation to requirements and at times, particularly in year three, felt that there was a real need for an increased level of support. While a system of link lecturers had been put in place and the School staff are to be commended for their excellent work which had been undertaken in defining and clarifying this role, it was of concern that many students had not met a link lecturer during their time in clinical practice. The PRG were adamant that support for students while in clinical practice was critical to student learning.

Many students expressed a concern about the timing and the volume of assessments. This was particularly a concern when students were in clinical practice and found themselves facing a number of assignments at times when they perceived that they needed to focus more directly on clinical experience.

The PRG were aware that systems were in place for students to raise issues of concern about their programmes and that changes had been made in relation to some of the issues raised. However systematic and timely systems of response to programme issues were not fully evident. Many important issues which had been raised had resulted in changes while others appeared unresolved. While students were represented at programme board this system did not appear to be able to respond in a timely way.

The PRG were aware of the preparation required prior to enabling students to engage in direct practice. Students across all years emphasised the importance of clinical

practice within their programmes and were keen to participate in care areas and to be involved as a team member. The PRG would question however the purpose of a two week observational experience within semester one year one. Students wanted to participate in direct care and found their inability to do so stressful and undermining.

Scholarship and Research

The School is at an early stage of development, and nursing as an academic discipline is young. In addition, most of the academic staff have arrived by way of transfer from teaching hospitals where research has not been part of their mission. Taking all this into account, the PRG is impressed by the progress made at establishing a research culture in the School, and by the short- to medium-range plans to give the School a research profile in line with established academic disciplines.

It is a significant achievement to have won 6 externally funded research awards in 2004 to the value of €230,783, this coming on top of an earlier award of €1M from the Health Research Board with the School as lead partner. It is also noteworthy that many academic staff are engaged in research leading to a Ph.D, with a stated target of 50% of academic staff with Ph.D.s by 2010. The target is at the upper edge of what is possible but we believe the School is serious about trying to achieve it. If achieved, it will place the School at the forefront of nursing research in Ireland.

A comprehensive list of publications in journals and conference proceedings was not made available. From what the PRG saw, it would appear that publications are as yet low in volume and more local than international. The School should encourage staff to present their work in international fora and journals. We applaud the School for putting in place a mechanism to support staff in writing scientific articles and grant proposals. There is some support for attendance at international conferences and summer schools, and this should be pursued to the maximum extent possible. There is currently support for up to two staff to be on sabbatical leave.

Research is presently carried out at the individual level primarily, and this is not unreasonable given the current stage of development of the School. However, identifying and developing a number of focused research groupings must be a longer-term strategy. The School indicated that it is already conscious of this. It should continue to seek out opportunities to engage in joint research with outside bodies, in particular with its partner services in the first instance.

Overall the PRG noted that supervisors provide good support for Ph.D. students. There is some scope to provide more structured tutoring to new students in the skills of conducting and presenting research. This has not been a serious matter to date as Ph.D. students are almost wholly drawn from School staff. The School should look towards developing a policy in this regard in line with the recently published *Good Practice in the Organisation of Ph.D Programmes in Irish Universities* from the Irish Universities Quality Board.

Success in building a strong research base will depend on the active and willing participation of staff. This in turn depends on operating a coherent package of policies that encourage and support staff who engage in research. The package should include policies on work allocation, short-term relief from administrative or teaching duties,

attendance at conferences and summer schools, research training including grant writing, School seminars, and research mentoring. The School is well advanced in developing policies along these lines, but the PRG urges that staff be involved in framing them to the greatest extent possible, and that the policies be given wider dissemination.

Social and Community Services

The PRG commend School staff for the positive and collaborative partnerships which they have developed with senior staff in regions of the Health Service Executive. The PRG is aware that developing partnerships is key to successful engagement with the health services and requires significant time and energy of senior staff. Without these partnerships it would not be possible to offer a number of programmes within the School of Nursing. It is important therefore that due recognition is given to senior staff engaged in this complex work and it is an acknowledged and credited part of their role.

The School has developed a Healthy Living Centre which has academic practice and research potential. This initiative has also the capacity to further develop the School's contribution to the community. The PRG are aware that a plan is being developed for the Centre and commend this as the Centre will require careful planning if it's potential is to be fully realised. The Centre could also play a role in supporting nursing students in developing and maintaining their health in a manner that compliments their responsibilities as health professionals.

The need for nursing staff to maintain a link to practice was highlighted by School staff. This was identified as crucial to effective teaching. There is also potential in these links for research collaboration. However there is a need to recognise clinical practice as an integral part of lecturers in nursing work.

The PRG, cognisant of the developments in primary care and its importance in the continuity of patient care, suggest that the School should consider placements in General Practice.

Staffing, Accommodation and Resources

Staffing

The School has 55 academic and administrative staff. Four new academic staff will join the School later in 2005. One appointment is for a Chair in Mental Health Nursing – the first in Ireland. Forty-four of the current staff are academic staff responsible for teaching, practice, research and administration. Five are administrative staff who are shared with the Faculty of Science and Health (FSH). All academic staff are members of the FSH. In addition, there are two nurses and one AV technician.

The School is very young in development and academic and administrative staff have been in respective positions for only a few years. Only two staff are at the senior level. Financial approval supports a staffing structure of 3 professors, 4 associate

professors, 10 senior lecturers and 27 lecturers. The School has had dramatic growth over a decade with a huge staff increase in the past few years. The academic staff includes a group who transferred from several hospital-based schools of nursing. Given the rapid growth and the limited amount of university experience, the staff have coalesced into a well-functioning team. The Head is a well-prepared, and experienced and dynamic leader. The academic and administrative staffs are exceptionally enthusiastic and dedicated to the success of the School. They are a highly engaged group.

The School has made very good progress as staff work to develop several working structures including governance, review and policy determination. Upon reflection, both academic and administrative staff are seeking more clarity regarding how the vision of the School affects plans for current and future staff composition and requirements and how these plans affect individual positions. The School has a goal to increase the number of Ph.D. qualified staff to 50%. Fourteen academic staff members have active plans for the doctoral degree with school support in terms of fees and one day per week study support. Several others are contemplating doctoral education. In addition, the School intends to increase the proportion of senior staff.

There is a huge challenge within the School to secure academic depth in education, research and practice. Continuing staff development is kept high on the agenda with visiting scholars providing both teaching and research development support. A future initiative includes developing a live health facility and direct community interface with the community in North Dublin. This Healthy Living Centre will provide opportunities for education, research and practice and the linkage of all three. The School was the first in the country to develop a formal joint appointment of a lecturer-practitioner role with one of its hospital partners.

The School has a challenge to recognise the importance of those staff with heavy teaching and administration responsibilities while moving the very important research and practice programmes. This recognition needs to include both rank and salary.

The SAR reveals that the majority of staff time is spent in teaching and administration. For example, 64.7% spend less than 10% time in research and very little time in practice. The School has ambitious plans to increase research and practice activities while maintaining its large undergraduate enrolment and increasing the postgraduate student enrolment. A top management priority is ensuring a balanced workload for academic staff at the same time as the majority of staff will be enrolled in doctoral education.

Accommodation and Resources:

The School is perceived by many in the University to have considerable financial resources. In reality, the complexity of the School has demonstrated need for these financial resources. There is a lack of clarity as to how the School accesses a fair share of resources, especially related to administrative and research support. There should be a transparent process of allocation of funds received by DCU to address the perceived shortage of funds allocated to the School of Nursing.

The School has a beautiful new building that is designed for education, research, administration and practice. The learning laboratory is state-of-the-art including health care technology and communication suites. Computing facilities are also current. Resources will be needed to maintain the building, including adequate heating and cooling. The building space, in terms of classrooms and offices, is shared with personnel and students from other parts of the university.

5. Recommendations for Improvement

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 timescale.
- P3: A recommendation which merits serious consideration but which is not considered to be critical to the quality of the ongoing activities in the School.

Additionally, the Review Group indicate the level(s) of the University where action is required by using the following:

- S: School
- F: Faculty
- U: University Executive/Senior Management

Background and Context

- 1 P1-U The University Executive / Senior Management should give serious consideration to migrating this large and ambitious school to independent status as a separate faculty or place it in a special relationship within a suitable faculty.

Organisation and Management of the School

- 2 P1-U The University Executive / Senior Management should appoint additional senior academic and administrative staff to the School as a matter of urgency.
- 3 P1-FU Senior administrative support should be transferred from Faculty level, reporting to the Head of School.
- 4 P2-U The University Executive / Senior Management should consider whether the strategic aims of the School might be better met by the establishment of the School as a separate faculty.
- 5 P2-U The University Executive / Senior Management and the Faculty should develop a more transparent method of funding the School.

- 6 P1-S The School should implement a new committee structure for the organisation, management and development of the School as soon as possible. Staff should be involved in the design of the new structure and the structures developed should maximise the involvement of staff in making and developing policy.
- 7 P1-S The School should review the assignment of the administrative responsibilities of existing staff in the light of the imminent academic appointments and the recommendation that senior administrative staff be assigned to the School.
- 8 P2-S The School should continue to prioritise its relationships with the service partners and the good working relationship be deepened at all levels between the School and the partners.
- 9 P2-U The University Executive / Senior Management and Faculty should recognise the distinctive history, expertise and organisation of the School in the introduction of a University-wide system of performance management and development.

Programmes and Instruction

- 10 P1-S The School should simplify the system of documenting student competence.
- 11 P1-S The School needs to operationalise the link lecturer role urgently.
- 12 P2-S The School should review the timing and volume of student assessments with the aim that assessments are phased and equitable throughout the programme.
- 13 P2-SF The School/Faculty should develop a mechanism for dealing with students issues in a timely way.
- 14 P2-S The School should ensure that students receive appropriate preparation prior to the first clinical placement to enable them to participate in direct care during that placement.
- 15 P2-U The University Executive / Senior Management should consider how the University promotion system can recognise and credit those involved in partnership development.

Scholarship and Research

- 16 P2-S The School should encourage staff to present research work in international fora and journals.

- 17 P2-S The School should further encourage attendance at international conferences and summer schools for staff who are developing their research.
- 18 P3-S The School should identify and develop a number of focussed research groupings.
- 19 P2-S The School should seek out opportunities to engage in joint research with outside bodies, in particular with its partner services.
- 20 P2-S The School should develop a policy for structured tutoring of new Ph.D. students in the skills of conducting and presenting research, in line with recommendations from the Irish Universities Quality Board.
- 21 P1-S The School should develop policies on work allocation that encourages and supports research.
- 22 P2-S The School should continue to develop policy initiatives that support staff who engage in research, such as short-term relief from admin or teaching duties, research seminars, and research mentoring.
- 23 P2-S The School should engage staff in developing research policies, and ensure policies are widely disseminated.

Social and Community Services

The issues raised by the review team in the Social and Community Services section of this report are matters for consideration. There are no specific recommendations.

Staffing, Accommodation and Resources

Staffing Recommendations:

- 24 P1-S The School should develop a proposal for staff development that takes into account the need for research, teaching, practice and administration including a timetable for individuals and groups of academic staff to complete doctoral and postdoctoral research.
- 25 P1-S To meet the established, ambitious and multiple goals, the School, Faculty and University / Senior Management should determine a plan to completely resource the staff development. This will require that recurring financial resources be made available over the next 5 to 10 years.
- 26 P2-S The School should work towards a system of metrics for staff achievements that include innovation in teaching, innovations in practice, innovation in administration as well as research.

- 27 P1-S. The School should establish workload allocation that includes a balance of teaching, research, practice and administration.
- 28 P1-S The School should have a clear plan as to the number and expertise of staff required to meet the nursing and other disciplinary needs of the School, i.e. nursing speciality, psychology, sociology.

Accommodation and Resource Recommendations:

- 29 P2-SU The School should consider a number of specific requests by students, such as that canteen or vending services offering coffee and healthy food be available after 4 pm for the evening students at reasonable cost. Staff should work with students to minimise out-of-pocket costs such as parking in some clinical sites, access to on-line resources, and extra copies of required readings.
- 30 P3-U The University Executive / Senior Management should include specific building maintenance, heating and cooling in future budgets.
- 31 P1-U The University should investigate further the heating requirement for the building.
- 32 P1-SU The School / University should train staff in how to adjust individual rooms air conditioning controls to avoid cool drafts etc.
- 33 P2-U The University should erect more prominent external professional signs showing that the building is the “School of Nursing / Scoil Altranais”.
- 34 P1-U The University should examine ways to reduce the problem of a low ceiling in part of the building near the entrance by perhaps roping off the area to prevent accidents.
- 35 P1-SU The School / University should investigate the widely reported problems with computers and printers not working in the DCU Library, and printer problems in the School.
- 36 P1- SU The School / University should test evacuation procedures in the School computer room as students perceive a potential problem with desks being too close.
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