

Quality Assurance / Quality Improvement  
Programme for Administrative Units  
2005-2006



**Unit Quality Improvement Plan**

***The Library***

***14 December 2006***

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The development of the Library Quality Improvement Plan was integrated into the formulation of the new Library strategic Plan. It was thought that the specific recommendations in the QuIP would benefit from the strategic context of the library, and by extension the university, three-year plans.

The Quality Improvement Committee (QIC) noted that the Peer Review Group (PRG) was very positive about the Library's self assessment report, which found confirmation in its own assessment of the library's client-oriented services, its initiatives, for example in the areas of information skills training and institutional repository development, its management of a limited budget, and in the user community's high estimate of library service quality. The QIC noted the over-riding recommendation (13) that there should be linkage between university and library plans and operations, so that for example university requirements of the library service would be based on available resources and related supports.

The QIC agreed with the PRG report recommendations, although some have required clarification.

Where recommendations required library action, they were integrated into the Strategic Plan as specific objectives, the timing depending on the priority level of each recommendation, and the stage of strategic plan development. Some urgent recommendations, for example the replacement of the library swipe card system, were acted upon immediately, and such cases will be indicated in the QuIP. Recommendations which have budgetary implications will be subject to available resources.

Recommendations which were addressed to the university were highlighted in the QuIP for the university's attention. Where appropriate the Library noted suggestions or perspectives to assist the University in its deliberations on such recommendations.

The summaries of the library one and three year plans reflect the outline development of the library strategic plan, which is being formulated at present.

The Quality Improvement Plan was discussed and approved in discussion between representatives of Senior Management and the Library in the presence of representatives of the Peer Group and the Director of Quality Promotion on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2006.



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## 2. LIBRARY RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE PEER REVIEW GROUP REPORT

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 Unit.

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

**A:** Administrative Unit

**U:** University Executive/Senior Management

### Overview

	Addressee	Priority	PRG Recommendation	Response
1			A huge effort was made to carry out a thorough and honest self-appraisal in preparation for Quality Review	
2			Staff were clearly committed and involved in the process and very open in their interactions/discussions with the review group	
3			The Library is very client-orientated and provides excellent overall service	
4			The facilities are generally very good and replacement of some defective computers was a major advance	

5		Improved access to on-line journals was a major boost to all sectors, especially to researchers	
6		Staff provide a user-focused service and are friendly and flexible in their approach	
7		Discussions with focus groups confirmed findings of user satisfaction survey	
8		The embedding of Information Literacy training into course modules is appreciated and is of strategic importance	
9		The establishment of an Institutional Repository and the provision of a Research Librarian with support from Research overhead and from OVPR are excellent developments	
10		The Library is seen as very important in fostering interaction and cooperation in a positive and supportive manner with sister Institutions e.g. St Patricks, Mater Dei	
11		Members of the academic/research community noted that library services have dramatically improved in the last few years and this level of service must be maintained and improved for the future	
12		The spending policy must be strategic in terms of collections and staffing levels in view of the limited budget available	

Items 1-13 are represent findings of the PRG and are fully endorsed by the Library.

**Major issue**

	<b>Addressee</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>PRG Recommendation</b>	<b>Response</b>
13	U	P1	University must put in place a basic quality system at senior management level into which the Library's quality system can feed. This is crucial; particularly to address major unresolved issues. Most of the outstanding issues arise from the lack of this linking of the University's quality systems at the higher level.	<p>A: The Director of Library Services perceives that there is a lack of fit between university planning and operations and library planning and operations, which needs to be rectified.</p> <p>U: This will be reviewed during the coming year by the Senior Management Team, in consultation with the Director of Library Services. The Deputy President has initiated semester meetings with the Director of Library Services which will feed into discussions at Senior Management Group.</p>

**General**

	<b>Addressee</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>PRG Recommendation</b>	<b>Response</b>
14	U	P1	Strategies need to be put in place to address problems relating to the book collection including overall shortage of books; shortage in specific areas in the Humanities; insufficient numbers for large class sizes and the provision of adequate funds to support new courses. Extra	A: (i) The library notes the shortage of books for undergraduate students. The Library has seen a decrease in the non pay budget in actual terms over the last five years and this has impacted severely on the book budget. Clarity

			resources may be required.	<p>in relation to the overall library budget is necessary to ensure adequate forward planning.</p> <p>(ii) The issue of book shortages in the Humanities collection can only be resolved when item (i) above is addressed.</p> <p>(iii) However, it is imperative that the library is included in the planning &amp; consultative phases of new courses, as only then can it support such courses with the appropriate resources.</p> <p>U: A recognition/ projection of library costs is now included as part of the validation process for new courses. The Director of Library Services has also been invited to make a presentation and lead a discussion at the university Heads meeting in order to try to negotiate an increase in School / Faculty library budget contributions.</p>
15	A	P1	The availability through IReL of full-text Humanities journals from 2006 will be of major benefit in addressing the above.	The IReL initiative relates to electronic journals and does not address shortages in the book collection.
16	A	P1	The recurrent budget is limited and is unlikely to improve in the immediate future therefore, it is essential to prioritise how it is distributed between materials, staff and operations so as to continue to give excellent service	Prioritising will take place as part of the library's Strategic Plan and services will be provided according to the resources made available.
17	U	P1	Oscail students are making considerable demands on the library and budgetary aspects relating to their support need clarification	<p>A: The Library agrees with this recommendation and will review its relationship with Oscail.</p> <p>U: Such a review has the support of senior management.</p>
18	A	P1	Several areas in technical services (CMS) e.g. donations, new book/journal processing appear to be suffering from time delays due to staff shortages and need to be addressed.	Functions of CMS were seriously impacted during 2005 by staff shortages particular in the Acquisitions area. This issue has now been partially resolved with the appointment of staff to outstanding vacancies. However, there is an ongoing need to ensure appropriate staffing levels in this

				department.
19	U	P1	There is an urgent need to enhance University Communication Structures and Processes to better respond to Library issues and give timely information especially in relation to budgetary matters and staffing. This is essential in order for library management to plan properly.	<p>A: The Library strongly agrees with this recommendation.</p> <p>U: Budget planning across the university is framed within the HEA calendar. A meeting has been set up between the Director of Library Services and members of the Senior Management Group regarding these matters. Senior management also welcomes suggestions from the Director of Library Services regarding how communication structures and processes might be improved.</p>

**Building and Environment**

	<b>Addressee</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>PRG Recommendation</b>	<b>Response</b>
20	U	P1	The Building Management System has failed continuously creating temperature/air circulation and associated problems and results in poor student/staff working conditions. This needs to be remedied as a priority	A meeting with Estates has been held to discuss the BMS issues: Actions planned include the urgent replacement of all faulty window motors and the subsequent review of the BMS. A number of solutions to the particular problems in the SE sector have been proposed by Estates and are under review.
21	U A	P1 P2	The access system within the building has failed and is greatly hindering staff and students particularly those with disabilities. This needs immediate attention The building could be further enhanced by improving the layout to include more quiet areas with computer access; sound proofing the study rooms; more points for laptops or wireless access and some general maintenance such as painting	Work to replace and upgrade the entire access system was completed in September 2006. It is anticipated that this will resolve access issues.  Library is currently preparing its new Strategic Plan and it will consider the reconfiguration of library space to reflect changing user need.
22	A	P1	The opening hours should be reviewed to ascertain the need for better access at weekends and evenings during the summer vacation	Opening hours will be reviewed in the context of the new Strategic Plan.
23	A	P2	The Assistive Technology area needs some modification to cater for students in wheelchairs	The Library will assess necessary alterations in the AT room in consultation with the Disability Office and the Estates Office.

24	A	P3	Car parking adjacent to library should be examined for library staff working late shifts	This issue is has been addressed and is completed.
25	U/ A	P1	Provision of even limited catering facilities for those working late or at week ends would be very beneficial and would greatly boost staff morale	Outline approval for a mains water supply to the staff area in the library has been given.

### Strategic approach for Library

	Addressee	Priority	PRG Recommendation	Response
26	A	P2	Staff will need to continually adopt new and imaginative approaches and demonstrate even greater flexibility as the nature and demand for library services changes and to allow for the implementation of new strategic initiatives.	The Library and staff have discussed, in the context of the Strategic Plan, variation of existing services and new services to meet changing user need.
27	A	P2	Staff resources in this new environment will need to be re-assigned to prioritise strategic areas.	The Library will be assessing its services and appropriate staff resources in the context of the Strategic Plan.
28	A	P2	There is a need to address issues in relation to flexitime and other working practices in a flexible, constructive and visionary manner to allow best use of staff resources.	The Library has introduced flexitime on a pilot basis commencing Autumn 2006 and will be discussing other staff/service relationships in the context of the strategic plan.
29	A/ U	P1	Communication processes need to be re-examined to ensure all staff in the Library are fully informed on key issues related to budgeting and resources and their implications	A: (i) The Library endorses the recommendation that communication from the university regarding budgetary and resourcing issues needs to be improved.

				<p>U: Please see senior management response under recommendation 19 above.</p> <p>(ii) In its new Strategic Plan the library will specifically address its internal and external communication mechanisms.</p>
30	A	P1	There is a need to further enhance the interaction between the Library and new Research Centres and to emphasise and publicise the role of the Library as a central service and key part of the University	<p>The library endorses this recommendation and will continue to seek new ways of enhancing relationships with Research Centres through formal liaison and the identification and resourcing of needs.</p> <p>Marketing and promotion will be specifically addressed in the new Strategic Plan and an external marketing advisor will assist the Library in publicising its role as a central service and key part of the University.</p>
31	U	P1	A strategy for both the provision and upgrading of IT needs to be introduced in co-operation with the rest of the University	A centralised procedure and fund for the purchase and replacement of all IT in public areas has now been agreed at Executive level.

### **3. SUMMARY OF THE ONE-YEAR PLAN**

(at Unit level)

#### **General**

- The Library will seek once-off funding to redress cumulative shortages in the book collection. [Rec. 14 P1]
- The Library will seek to ensure that all proposals for new courses will expressly specify and cost resource requirements and will further seek to ensure that appropriate funding is secured. [Rec. 14 P1]
- The Library's relationship with Oscail will be reviewed and resource requirements and funding provision will be clarified. [Rec. 17 P1]
- In order to clear backlogs caused by staff shortages a six month cataloguing contract will be requested. [Rec. 18 P1]

#### **Building and Environment**

- An action plan has been agreed with Estates regarding the replacement and maintenance of window motors. This will improve the environment for both staff and students. To address the specific intractable problems in the staff areas on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floors a cooling solution will be secured. [Rec. 20 P1]
- An action plan has been agreed for the replacement of the swipe access system as a matter of urgency. [Rec. 21 P1]. The work has been completed.
- The PRG made a number of recommendations about the configuration and utilisation of library space. The Library will review its use of space to ensure it best reflects and accommodates changing user needs. [Rec. 21 P2]
- A review of Library opening hours will be conducted during the next year to ensure best fit with user need. The resource requirements for this will also be clarified. [Rec. 22 P1]
- Car parking at the rear of the Library will be secured for those working late nights. [Rec. 24 P3]
- Limited catering facilities will be provided through the introduction of mains water facilities to the staff area. [Rec. 25 P1]

#### **Strategic Approach for Library**

- Within the context of its new Strategic Plan the Library will examine its service patterns to ensure coherence with user need. [Rec. 26 P2]
- Commencing Autumn 2006 the Library was to pilot flexitime. Other staff/service relationships will be discussed in the context of the Strategic Plan. [Rec. 28 P2] Flexitime has been introduced since.

- The Library will conduct a review of both its internal and external communication processes and mechanisms. This issue will be specifically addressed in the new Strategic Plan. [Rec. 29 P1]
- The Library will seek opportunities to enhance the interaction with existing and new Research Centres through formal liaison and communication. [Rec. 30 P1]
- The Library will specifically address marketing and promotion in its new Strategic Plan and will secure the assistance of an external marketing advisor in publicising its role as a central service in the University. [Rec. 30 P1]

#### 4. **SUMMARY OF THE THREE-YEAR PLAN**

(at Unit level)

- Enrich User Experience
  - Co-ordinate library access times with user needs
  - Provide more on-line assistance
  - Adjust physical environment to user needs
  - Improve physical environment
- Improve Search and navigation
  - Develop federated search capacity
  - Enhance TALIS Prism
- Develop Physical Collections
  - Increase humanities research collection
  - Increase stock of information in physical formats
- Enhance Digital Information Environment
  - Analyse usage and increase access to electronic information
  - Improve online supports for information
  - Enhance functionality of Institutional repository
- Improve library organisation
  - Vary staff/service relationships
  - Provide a more flexible working environment
  - Improve library communication internally and externally
  - Provide a planned context for staff training and development

## APPENDIX I

### **Library Quality Co-ordinating Committee (for the Self-Assessment Report)**

Carmel Harnett, Assistant Librarian IA, Information & Public Services  
(Chairperson)  
Frances Burke, Library Attendant, Information & Public Services  
Christina Byrne, Senior Library Assistant, Collection Management Services  
Miriam Corcoran, Sub-Librarian, Planning & Administration Services  
Daphne Duncan, Assistant Librarian IA, Collection Management Services  
David Meehan, Assistant Librarian IA, Information & Public Services  
Mairead Murphy, Library Assistant, Information & Public Services  
Daniel Seery, Library Assistant, Planning & Administration  
Services/Collection Management Services  
Paul Sheehan, Director  
Margaret Wilson, Senior Library Assistant, Planning & Administration  
Services

### **Peer Review Group**

#### ***External***

Agnes Neligan, Librarian, National University of Ireland, Maynooth  
Helen Workman, Director of Learning Resources & University Librarian  
Deirdre Ellis-King, Dublin City Librarian, Dublin City Public Libraries

#### ***Internal***

Prof. Richard O'Kennedy, School of Biotechnology, DCU (Rapporteur)  
Dr. Mike Hopkins, Academic Theme Leaders Office, DCU

### **Library Quality Committee (for the Quality Improvement Plan)**

Paul Sheehan, Director (Chairperson)  
Miriam Corcoran, Sub-Librarian, Planning & Administration Services  
Daphne Duncan, Assistant Librarian IA, Collection Management Services  
Siobhan Dunne, Assistant Librarian I, Collection Management Services  
Amanda Halpin, Assistant Librarian IA, Information & Public Services  
Carmel Harnett, Assistant Librarian IA, Information & Public Services  
Garret McMahon, Assistant Librarian I, Planning & Administration Services  
David Meehan, Assistant Librarian IA, Information & Public Services