



Dublin City University

Report to Governing Authority

On

Quality Assurance Matters
2004

Approved by Governing Authority, 10 February 2005

Table of Contents

Background to Quality Review Process	Page 2
Review Schedule for School and Units 2000-2005	Page 3
Publication Policy on Quality Review Reports	Page 4
Legislative Basis of Quality Assurance in Irish Universities	Page 5
Synthesis of Recommendations in DCU Quality Review Reports 2000-2004	Page 7
Report on Quality Reviews conducted in 2004	Page 9
• Student Affairs	Page 10
• Fiontar	Page 11
• Human Resources	Page 13
• School of Electronic Engineering / RINCE	Page 16
• School of Chemical Sciences	Page 18
Report on progress with one-year plans for Quality Reviews conducted in 2003	Page 20
• Office for Innovation and Business Relations	Page 21
• School of Computing	Page 23
• School of Communications	Page 26
• School of Biotechnology	Page 28
• Registry	Page 29

Background to Quality Review Process

Quality Reviews are conducted in accordance with the legislative requirements set out in Section 35 of the Universities Act (1997) and with a framework model developed and agreed by the Irish Universities Quality Board (IUQB).

The model in operation at DCU for 2004 consists of a number of basic steps:

1. An internal team in the School/Unit under review completes a detailed **Self-Assessment Report**.
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 or Unit and conduct discussions with a range of staff, students and other stakeholders.
3. The PRG then writes a report (termed the **Peer Review Group Report**).
4. The School/Unit produces a plan of action in response to the various issues and findings, in consultation with the Dean of the Faculty (for Schools) or relevant Vice-President (for Units).
5. In the case of each School/Unit that is reviewed, a follow-up meeting is convened by the Director of Quality Promotion and attended by the Head and members of the School/Unit, relevant line managers (Deans or Vice-Presidents), members of Senior Management and of the original Peer Review Group, at which the response of the School/Unit is considered along with the response of the relevant management.
6. Following these meetings, the Director of Quality Promotion finalises the **Quality Improvement Plan** (after consultation with the School/Unit under review).
7. This plan is considered by the University Executive.
8. The Director of Quality Promotion prepares a **Summary Report to Governing Authority** (*this document*) (Copies of the Peer Review Group Reports and the Quality Improvement Plans are sent to Governing Authority for approval and publication).

Review Schedule for Schools and Units 2000-2005

The following list details the quality review visits conducted or scheduled between 2000 and 2005:

October 2000:	DCUBS (Business School)
April 2002	School of Physical Sciences (published in November 2002)
November 2002 February 2004)	Office for Innovation and Business Relations (published in February 2004)
March 2003	School of Computing (published in February 2004)
March 2003	School of Communications (published in February 2004)
March 2003	School of Biotechnology (published in February 2004)
April 2003	Registry (published in February 2004)
February 2004`	Student Affairs (due for publication in February 2005)
March 2004	Fiontar (due for publication in February 2005)
March 2004	Human Resources (due for publication in February 2005)
March 2004 February 2005)	School of Electronic Engineering (due for publication in February 2005)
April 2004 2005)	School of Chemical Sciences (due for publication in February 2005)
February 2005	Student Finance Committee (including Students Union)
February 2005	Office of the Vice-President for Research
March 2005	School of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering
March 2005	School of Nursing
March 2005 (SALIS)	School of Applied Languages and Intercultural Studies
March 2005	Computer Services Department
April 2005	Finance Office

Publication Policy on Quality Review Reports

Under Section 35(2) of the Universities Act, the Governing Authority is required to provide for the publication in such form and manner as it thinks fits of findings arising out of the application of the quality assurance procedures.

In February 2005, the Governing Authority is being presented with:

- A Summary Report on Quality Assurance Activities including
 - an overview of the quality reviews conducted in 2004
 - a one-year update on progress with the implementation of the quality improvement plans for School/Units reviewed in 2003 (which Governing Authority viewed in February 2004)

- An update on progress with the jointly-commissioned (by the Irish Universities Quality Board [IUQB] and Higher Education Authority [HEA]) review conducted by the European University Agency (EUA) of:
 - the effectiveness of Quality Assurance procedures within DCU and the other Irish Universities (under Section 35(4) of the Universities Act [1997], for IUQB, under authority delegated by the governing authorities of the respective universities)
 - Quality Assurance procedures in the Irish university sector (under Section 49(b) of the Universities Act [1997], for the HEA)

Following approval by the Governing Authority, the following will be published on the university website

- Summary Report on the Quality Review to the Governing Authority (*this document*)
- Full text of the Peer Review Group Reports
- Full text of the Quality Improvement Plans

DCU has previously published the outcomes of the quality reviews conducted in 2002 (one review) on 14 November 2002 and 2003 (five reviews) on 10 February 2004.

Legislative Basis Of Quality Assurance In Irish Universities

Universities Act (1997)

Section 35. Quality Assurance

(1) A **governing authority**, in consultation with the academic council, shall, as soon as practicable after the governing authority is established under this Act and at such other times as it thinks fit, require the chief officer to establish procedures for quality assurance aimed at improving the quality of education and related services provided by the university.

(2) The procedures shall include—

(a) the evaluation, at regular intervals and in any case not less than once in every 10 years or such longer period as may be determined by the university in agreement with An tÚdarás (*the Higher Education Authority*), of each department and, where appropriate, faculty of the university and any service provided by the university, by employees of the university in the first instance and by persons, other than employees, who are competent to make national and international comparisons on the quality of teaching and research and the provision of other services at university level, and

(b) assessment by those, including students, availing of the teaching, research and other services provided by the university,

and shall provide for the publication in such form and manner as the **governing authority** thinks fit of findings arising out of the application of those procedures.

(3) A **governing authority** shall implement any findings arising out of an evaluation carried out in accordance with procedures established under this section unless, having regard to the resources available to the university or for any other reason, it would, in the opinion of the **governing authority**, be impractical or unreasonable to do so.

(4) A **governing authority** shall, from time to time, and in any case at least every 15 years, having regard to the resources available to the university and having consulted with An tÚdarás, arrange for a review of the effectiveness of the procedures provided for by this section and the implementation of the findings arising out of the application of those procedures.

(5) A **governing authority**, in a report prepared in accordance with *section 41*, shall publish the results of a review conducted under *subsection (4)*.

[In 2002, the individual governing authorities (including DCU on 11 April 2002) of the 7 CHIU universities delegated to IUQB the power to establish the protocols for the conduct of the periodic reviews of the effectiveness of the quality assurance procedures as required under subsection (4) above, including the approval of the agencies who will conduct the reviews. The individual governing authorities have also delegated to IUQB the responsibility to publish the reports of the periodic reviews (as required under subsection (5) above) and to report on these to the HEA and, as required by the Act, to the Minister.]

Legislative Basis Of Quality Assurance In Irish Universities (Continued)

Universities Act (1997)

Section 49. Reviews

An tÚdarás (*the Higher Education Authority*), in furtherance of its general functions under section 3 of the Higher Education Authority Act, 1971, ...may review

(b) the procedures established in accordance with section 35, and may, following consultation with the universities, publish a report, in such form and manner as it thinks fit, on the outcome of any such review.

[In December 2003, The IUQB and the HEA initiated a joint review [under Sections 35(4) and Section 49(b) of the Universities Act] of the effectiveness of the quality assurance procedures in place in each of the seven universities in Ireland and of the quality assurance procedures in the university sector, as a whole.]

Synthesis Of Recommendations In DCU Quality Review Reports 2000-2004

The level of detail contained within Peer Review Group Reports and Quality Improvement Plans is very helpful, in that it provides a unique opportunity for the university to get a microscopic view of a department, with the help of external evaluators. However, this level of detail may obscure the overall picture at university-level and it may be more useful for the Governing Authority to receive a short summary of the recommendations contained within the reports, along with information on any recurring themes among the recommendations.

Recurring Recommendations in Quality Reviews

Below is a list of issues that have occurred more than once in the reviews of Schools and Units conducted since 2000. In most cases, the recurring recommendations occur in School reviews, where the 'client base and core business' is similar, in that they are all concerned with teaching, research and community service, as distinct from the more diverse missions of administrative and support units.

QUALITY REVIEW OF SCHOOLS

Organisation and Management

- **Roles of School and National Research Centres** (Physical Sciences 2002, Biotechnology 2003, Chemical Sciences 2004)
- **Completion of Faculty Restructuring** (Computing 2003, Biotechnology 2003, Electronic Engineering 2004)
- **Formal Management Structures in Schools** (DCUBS 2000, Physical Sciences 2002, Biotechnology 2003, Computing 2003, Chemical Sciences 2004)
- **School Strategic Plan and Mission** (Physical Sciences 2002, Computing 2003, Communications 2003, Chemical Sciences 2004, Fiontar 2004)
- **Marketing and Promotion of School Programmes** (Physical Sciences 2002, Biotechnology 2003, Computing 2003, Electronic Engineering 2004, Fiontar 2004)
- **Development of Workload Allocation Models** (DCUBS 2000, Biotechnology 2003, Communications 2003, Fiontar 2004)

Programmes and Instruction

- **Improving Student Feedback** (Computing 2003, Chemical Sciences 2004, Electronic Engineering 2004)
- **Enhance Postgraduate Training** (Biotechnology 2003, Communications 2003, Computing 2003, Electronic Engineering 2004)
- **New Methods of Course Delivery** (DCUBS 2000, Physical Sciences 2002, Communications 2003, Computing 2003, Chemical Sciences 2004, Electronic Engineering 2004)
- **Review or Consolidate Programme Offerings** (DCUBS 2000, Biotechnology 2003, Computing 2003, Communications 2003)
- **Monitor Staff: Student Ratio** (DCUBS 2000, Computing 2003, Communications 2003)

- **Expand Offerings at Postgraduate Level** (Physical Sciences 2002, Biotechnology 2003, Communications 2003, Computing 2003, Electronic Engineering 2004)

Research and Scholarship

- **Try to attract more SFI Funding** (Biotechnology 2003, Electronic Engineering 2004)
- **Research Publications: Strategy and Norms** (DCUBS 2000, Computing 2003, Electronic Engineering 2004, Fiontar 2004)
- **Administrative Support for Research Proposals** (Computing 2003, Electronic Engineering 2004)

Staffing

- **Technical Staff - Involvement in Research / Reward and Recognition / Career Paths** (Physical Sciences 2002, Biotechnology 2003, Electronic Engineering 2004)
- **Promotion of Academic Staff: 60:40 Junior: Senior Ratio and Benchmark/Norm/Merit-based systems** (Physical Sciences 2002, Biotechnology 2003, Electronic Engineering 2004)
- **Career Path for Postdoctoral Researchers** (Physical Sciences 2002, Biotechnology 2003)
- **Mentoring of New Staff** (Chemical Sciences 2004, Fiontar 2004)
- **Personal Development and Performance Management of Staff** (Computing 2003, Chemical Sciences 2004)

Accommodation and Resources

- **Capital Equipment: Maintenance and Replacement** (Physical Sciences 2002, Biotechnology 2003, Communications 2003, Computing 2003, Chemical Sciences 2004, Electronic Engineering 2004)
- **Refurbishment of Social Space / Common Room Facilities** (Physical Sciences 2002, Biotechnology 2003, Computing 2003, Electronic Engineering 2004)
- **Access for Research Students: Out-of-hours Policy:** (Physical Sciences 2002, Biotechnology 2003, Computing 2003)

QUALITY REVIEWS OF UNITS

Organisation and Management

- **Improve Internal Communications within Unit** (Registry 2003, Human Resources 2004, Student Affairs 2004)

Functions and Processes

- **Review of quality procedures and activities** (Human Resources 2004, Student Affairs 2004)

Staffing

- **Staff re-grading: Promotion of Non-academic Staff** (Registry 2003, Student Affairs 2004)

Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement Programme 2004

Report to Governing Authority

- **Student Affairs**
- **Fiontar**
- **Human Resources**
- **School of Electronic Engineering / RINCE**
- **School of Chemical Sciences**

STUDENT AFFAIRS

The following is a short summary of the recommendations for improvement arising from the Quality Review of the Unit. The full recommendations are contained within the **Peer Review Group Report**. The response to the recommendations by the Unit and by University management are contained within the **Quality Improvement Plan**.

Recommendations for Improvement: The recommendations were grouped under two headings

- **Recommendations within the remit of the Unit**
 - Better internal communications needed within Student Affairs
 - More visibility for Student Affairs within the university, by branding materials
 - A prioritisation of activities as agreed by senior management
 - Enhancement of the Heads and Officer Group
 - Ensure that all services in the unit work together
 - More use of Student Affairs expertise through the university
 - Monitor the development of management and leadership skills of key people in the unit
 - Individuals need to set boundaries on their activities and not spread them too thinly
 - Review processes need to be embedded more actively and consistently
 - Create a generic advice service for students
 - Put in place a complaints system

- **Recommendations outside the remit of the Unit**
 - Clarify the position of the Sport Complex within the Student Affairs portfolio
 - Senior management need to define and communicate the role of the unit better
 - University need to clarify the mechanisms for re-grading of staff positions
 - Appropriate quality review procedures need to be agreed and pursued
 - An urgent need for a review of the structure and function of the Health Centre
 - Need to address the use of chaplaincy space by the National Chamber Choir
 - Need to incentivise the Student Affairs team for any additional income generated

FIONTAR

The following is a short summary of the recommendations for improvement arising from the Quality Review of the School. The full recommendations are contained within the **Peer Review Group Report**. The response to the recommendations by the School, the Faculty and by University management are contained within the **Quality Improvement Plan**.

Recommendations for Improvement: The recommendations were grouped under 6 Headings

- **Background and Context**
 - Fiontar needs to improve its links with other units in the University by 'networking'
 - There appears to be a perception by Fiontar of isolation within the University
 - The University needs to increase the visibility of the Irish language
- **Organisation and Management**
 - Ensure that placing Fiontar in Humanities does not destroy relationship with Business and Computing
 - The advisory board of internal and external people to support and develop Fiontar needs to be reactivated
 - Fiontar needs to develop a mission statement recognising its direction and ethos
 - Need to develop a workload allocation tool
 - Need to establish a timetable of meetings with support services to develop collaboration
- **Programmes and Instruction**
 - Review Fiontar marketing strategy by broadening access
 - Need for marketing strategy and support from central university offices
 - Need to capitalise on developments arising from the Official Languages Act
 - Monitor the risk of dilution of the business element of the course
 - Develop an electronic portfolio
 - Continue to explore alternative delivery of programmes
- **Scholarship and Research**
 - Put in place a research strategy that leads to publication in academic journals
 - Define a small number of major projects externally funded which would lead to a policy-oriented report for the client and a stream of academic papers based on the same data
 - Continue to organise flagship initiative such as conferences
- **Staffing and Resources**
 - Urgently appoint another permanent Senior lecturer and aim to have a minimum of 50% permanent staff with the School at the end of a five-year period
 - Increase the number of staff with a PhD

- Develop 'mentoring' for staff new to teaching
- Ensure that temporary staff are not excluded from funding programmes
- Make a series of individual plans to support staff in completing PhD studies
- More support required by the university for new staff
- Recognise the unique onus that falls on Fiontar to develop instructional material for courses
- **Social and Community Services**
 - Broaden the access of Fiontar programmes
 - Continue to development of teaching materials such as the terminology dictionary

HUMAN RESOURCES

The following is a short summary of the recommendations for improvement arising from the Quality Review of the Unit. The full recommendations are contained within the **Peer Review Group Report** (PRG). The response to the recommendations by the Unit and by University management are contained within the **Quality Improvement Plan**.

Recommendations for Improvement: The recommendations were divided into 2 parts (and therein under a number of separate headings)

Recommendations identified within the HR Self Assessment Report and endorsed by the PRG

- **Communications**
 - Continue to improve communications within HR Department, exploring potential problems areas and addressing those by internal team building
- **Information Systems**
 - Develop a knowledge management system to capture knowledge throughout the organisation on HR issues
 - HR and Finance Office should move towards an integrated payroll and HR system
 - Implement the proposal to extensively use the Discover product for MIS purposes
 - Consider acquiring help desk software for the general office
 - Develop systems and processes for devolving aspects of leave, attendance to units
- **Performance Management**
 - Use the new PMDS to build the skills of Heads in managing HR issues
- **Recruitment and Selection**
 - Use the web more extensively for advertising and electronic applications
 - Implement self-identified improvements in the area of recruitment and selection
 - Direct resources to improving the skills of line managers in recruitment and selection
- **Strategic Level**
 - Ensure consistency in the application of HR policies throughout the organisation
 - Develop Standard Operating Procedures
 - Review the efficiency and effectiveness of existing policies and procedures
 - Maintain ongoing reviews through mechanisms such as staff surveys
 - Ensure that HR staff remain knowledgeable and up-to-date on HR issues
- **Training and Development**
 - Conduct a training needs analysis independent of PMDS and check against PMDS findings

Additional Recommendations identified by PRG

- **Communications**
 - Address any impression that HR is becoming less responsive to customer needs, as the university gets bigger and more proceduralised
 - Address the need to communicate more effectively with Heads
- **Information and Systems**
 - Carry out an architectural review of the C-Docs system
 - Ensure that HR data are gathered, analysed and utilized
 - Acquire a fixed-term dedicated ICT resource for a significant period of time
- **Performance Management**
 - Be wary of over relying on PMDS, which will be very resource-intensive initially
 - Encourage Heads of Schools and Units to take ownership of PMDS outcomes
 - University should drive PMDS as a mechanism to improve organisational performance
 - University should include a mechanism, within PMDS for ensuring the accountability to senior management goes beyond simply returning forms to HR
 - University must consider the implications for training/development arising from PMDS
- **Recruitment Processes**
 - Establish the role of HR in relation to manpower planning in the University
 - Develop a service for counseling for staff, particularly following promotion outcomes
 - Ensure that there is an appropriate induction programme for new staff
 - Explore more proactive mechanisms for attracting the best staff
- **Strategic Level**
 - HR should leverage a strategic role through its place on the Senior Management Team
 - HR should revisit the HR strategic plan to identify clear themes that will engage both the department and the rest of the university in a clear sense of direction for HR activity
 - With a revised HR plan, there should be a clear set of actions and performance metrics
 - HR should produce an employee version of the strategic plan
 - HR should working with senior management to map out new roles for HR in the future
 - HR should work to integrate the separate activities of the department into an effective and coherent HR system
 - Clarify the areas where HR adds real value to DCU processes
 - Develop a system, with a set of metrics for internal evaluation of HR and its processes
 - Review mechanism for service provision to campus companies
 - Consider the devolution of some recruitment and selection activities to units
 - Ensure that training and development of Heads is linked to suitable career and reward management structures for this group

- **Training and Development**
 - Create a training calendar for each semester and publish this one month in advance
 - Define “HR training” as a separate entity from all other training
 - Ensure HR staff receive appropriate and ongoing training for new roles
 - Undertake extensive target audience analysis before a project commences
 - Make as much use as possible of existing DCU resources (e.g. Academic departments)
 - Develop and establish a defined method of programme/course creation
 - Undertake regular monitoring and analysis of outcomes of training programmes
 - Use multiple media to communicate training schedules
 - Ensure that the Training and Development Office attends, when cross-campus or diagonal slice meeting are held in relation to the Strategic Plan
 - Develop and devote resources to a core training curriculum for staff
- **Work-Life Balance**
 - Gather appropriate data to outline the case to senior management for new initiatives
 - Work collaboratively with the Equality Office to identify top issues that cause imbalance

SCHOOL OF ELECTRONIC ENGINEERING / RINCE

The following is a short summary of the recommendations for improvement arising from the Quality Review of the School. The full recommendations are contained within the **Peer Review Group Report**. The response to the recommendations by the School, the Faculty and by University management are contained within the **Quality Improvement Plan**.

Recommendations for Improvement: The recommendations were grouped under 4 Headings

- **Organisation and Management**
 - In the face of fluctuating undergraduate demand, continue to support the School by retaining the current funding premium on postgraduate courses and research
 - Highlight the discrimination against part-time students in terms of fee remission
 - Appoint an Executive Dean to the Faculty and complete Faculty restructuring
 - Explore methods for effectively expanding the School's catchment area
 - Increase penetration of local catchment area through long-term promotion in schools
- **Programmes and Instruction**
 - Develop strategy for improving student recruitment, especially locally and nationally
 - Give feedback to student on their written work
 - Develop training in teaching methods for both new and existing staff
 - Actively solicit feedback from students on their learning experience
- **Research and Scholarship**
 - Prepare document for discussion with OVPR and Senior Management regarding the financial responsibilities of the University in relation to RINCE
 - Engage with OVPR as to what it can do to support research projects administratively
 - Establish an internal forum to discuss ways of attracting further substantial SFI funding
 - Establish procedures for training postgraduates in research skills
 - Establish clear targets regarding output of peer-reviewed materials by staff members
 - Develop a policy accounting for capital depreciation of equipment
 - Obtain agreement with university management on norms for research output expected for each grade of promotion in the Faculty
 - Improve the marketing of RINCE, perhaps by external benchmarking
- **Staffing, Accommodation and Resources**
 - Agree a transparent procedure whereby deserving junior staff can be promoted outside the 60:40 rule

- Dialogue with the Finance Office to improve the service offered to the School
- Retain the current mechanism for setting School budgets within the university
- Enhance the new Engineering Building by providing seating, refreshments and plants
- Explore the possibility of developing a career path for technical staff
- Move towards a merit-based promotion policy to replace the current 60:40 restriction
- Develop a scheme whereby excellent technical staff can be integrate into research

SCHOOL OF CHEMICAL SCIENCES

The following is a short summary of the recommendations for improvement arising from the Quality Review of the School. The full recommendations are contained within the **Peer Review Group Report**. The response to the recommendations by the School, the Faculty and by University management are contained within the **Quality Improvement Plan**.

Recommendations for Improvement: The recommendations were grouped under 5 Headings

- **Organisation and Management**
 - Clarify the role of Dean of Faculty, Head of School and Directors of National Centres
 - Clarify role of School and National Centres to ensure interaction to the benefit of both
 - Make the Headship of School a more attractive position by providing more support and appropriate training and development in necessary management skills
 - Install a practical and effective performance management system
 - Establish a robust mechanism for implementing recommendations from quality reviews
 - Formal management structure of the School needs urgent definition
 - In the context of the School's strategic plan, a more realistic mission is required
- **Programmes and Instruction**
 - Comprehensive training in teaching and learning should be provided to all staff
 - The balance between teaching and research need to be re-evaluated
 - Every member of staff should have specific teaching responsibilities
 - First year teaching should be given by senior staff and talented teachers
 - Development of teaching and learning materials should be given recognition
 - Investigate the potential of multi-media learning materials
 - Need for a greater range of learning objectives for programmes
 - Need to improve and broaden mechanisms for gathering student feedback
 - Need formal procedures for evaluating student feedback
 - Put in extra support for student without Leaving Certificate Chemistry
 - Provide training to all laboratory demonstrators
 - New staff and contract staff should be mentored by senior staff
 - Industry should be involved in the revision of syllabi
- **Social and Community Services**
 - Put formal structures in place to ensure effective ongoing liaison with industry

- New and junior staff should be mentored in their liaison with industry contacts
- The Chemistry Society needs to be resuscitated
- **Staffing, Accommodation and Resources**
 - Provision should be made for the promotion and reward of the technical staff
 - Temporary staff should be on contracts of three-year duration
 - Running and maintenance costs of major pieces of equipment needs to be resourced
 - The two vacant positions in Organic Chemistry should be filled without delay
 - A transparent system must be developed for access to School research instrumentation
- **Quality Review Process**
 - The composition of the Quality co-ordinating Committee should follow more closely the recommendation of the Quality Promotion Unit
 - The Self-assessment Report should be simplified and streamlines
 - A short presentation at the beginning of the Quality Review visit would be useful

**Report to Governing Authority
on progress¹ with the one-year plans
contained within the Quality Improvement Plans
arising from recommendations (including resource-related
recommendations²) in the Peer Review Group Reports
from Quality Reviews of Schools and Units conducted in 2003**

- **Office for Innovation and Business Relations**
- **School of Computing**
- **School of Communications**
- **School of Biotechnology**
- **Registry**

¹ In the following tables, the updates on progress with implementation were written by the Heads of the relevant Schools and Units on foot of a request from the Director of Quality Promotion in January 2005

² In some cases, resources were allocated (on foot of submissions from Schools and Units based on recommendations contained within the reports) by the Budget Committee out of a combined HEA Quality improvement fund (€80K) supplemented with some university Quality Improvement Funding (c. €45K). Such allocations are highlighted in bold in the second column in the following tables.

Quality Review 2003: Office for Innovation and Business Relations: Follow-up of Implementation of Recommendations

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY MANAGEMENT / TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER / COMMERCIALISATION

Recommendation in Peer Review Group Report (February 2003)	Progress in the implementation of Recommendations (January 2005)
Recruit an experienced technology transfer professional.	Agreement has been reached with Enterprise Ireland (EI) to support a Technology Transfer professional with immediate effect [interviews held in January 2004]. The University will now have 2 full-time Commercial Technology Transfer professionals supported by EI – one in the Biotechnology and associated areas, one in the IT and associated area
Produce a written policy clarifying responsibilities and jurisdictions associated with the various constituents in the Research and Technology Management functions	Invent now has the responsibility for the IP management and commercialisation of university research.
Technology Transfer Officer to be responsible for technology implementation plans, follow-up auditing and appraisal of results and recommending those to be actively pursued to commercialisation.	<p>A Technology Transfer budget which is funded by research overhead contributions and funding from the President is now operational</p> <p>The Inteum C/S – complete Intellectual Property Management System has been purchased with effect from September 2004. This database is a proven relational information management system currently by 280 institutions worldwide. It is an easy-to-use interactive system for entering and tracking information regarding all facets of technology portfolio management, contracts, companies, technologies, patent prosecution, docketing, agreements, expenses, revenue, to-do activities etc. The system was evaluated in conjunction with the Computer Services Department.</p>
Drafting of IP guidelines for postgraduates, conflict of interest policy, procedures for dispute resolution and monitoring and ensuring compliance with these.	<p>The University Conflict of Interest policy has been formulated and circulated to Deans/Heads Group and has been approved by the Research Committee and University Executive.</p> <p>The Invention Disclosure form was introduced with effect from April 2004. It was devised based on disclosure forms currently in use in US universities.</p> <p>The IP assignment forms have been designed by the University's legal advisors. The assignment form is completed at the time when the decision has been made to file for patenting.</p> <p>A full audit and analysis of the 'DCU IP portfolio' has been carried out.</p> <p>Guidelines for Investing in DCU Technologies were approved by the Invent Board in July 2004.</p>
Significantly capitalise on DCU's operations, to boost performance, to motivate and stimulate staff and to generate much-needed revenue to fund its continued development as it sees fit	<p>A series of seminars entitled "Research to Commercialisation" have been underway since October 2004.</p> <p>IP clinics are held monthly in Invent sponsored by Tompkins Patent Attorneys.</p>

INTRA PROGRAMME

Recommendation in Peer Review Group Report (February 2003)	Progress in the implementation of Recommendations (January 2005)
Create policy document on health and safety issues for students on employment.	Meetings have taken place between the INTRA staff and the Health and Safety officer in order to produce a policy for students on employment. The Health and Safety Officer is currently drawing up a draft document for consideration.
Create more opportunities for international work placement experiences.	A pilot project was tested for engineering students in France in the 2004 INTRA programme. This person contracted a person based in France to find suitable placements for students in France. It was not considered to be successful.
Computer system improvements are needed to make the program's management more effective. Become more web-based in student selection process	<p>The development of a new fully-integrated system for the INTRA on line programme (ITOL) is currently being tested prior to full implementation for the 2005 programme.</p> <p>This system has many features including a web course with information on how best to prepare for a work placement and web assessment forms.</p> <p>Funding from the joint HEA/DCU Quality Improvement Fund of €41,390 was received in June 2004 for the development of a web-based INTRA management system.</p>
Obtain the agreement for an executive-on-loan from a corporation to assist with job development.	A former IDA executive was considered for finding positions in the United States, but the position did not come to fruition.

Quality Review 2003: School of Computing: Follow-up of Implementation of Recommendations

Recommendation in Peer Review Group Report (May 2003)	Progress in the implementation of Recommendations (January 2005)
Expedite/complete the Faculty re-structuring.	This is taking place, since the appointment of an Executive Dean in July 2004
Prepare written strategic plans at both School and Faculty levels.	The School Executive is currently developing a draft strategic plan for the School. This will feed into the strategy plan for the Faculty and the University
Complete re-organisation of structures within School. Schedule regular School meetings. Clarify research support and development roles.	New structures have been implemented, including weekly School Executive meeting, monthly School meetings and meeting of research and teaching committees and programmes boards. These will continue to be modified in the light of experience.
Critically review programme board system.	Programme Boards continue to play an important role- this is being reviewed both in the context of the School and DCU generally.
Review the operation of the GD/IT Programme	This has been reviewed already and alterations made
Clearly "brand" the two BSc in CA streams for the benefit of students and employers, paying special attention to the need to avoid any perception of disparity in academic quality.	The structures of the Software Engineering and Information Systems streams have been comprehensively reviewed, and they have been redefined to make them more distinct from each other and more comprehensible to the students. The Computer Science stream has been discontinued as it was found to be indistinguishable from the Software Engineering stream. Additional resources (including additional optional modules) have been allocated to the Information Systems stream to make it more distinct and improve the content for the students. The School has employed a marketing executive on a temporary campaign to promote the degree in schools. While the marketing person is in place, there is, as yet, no funding for advertising and printed material costs.
Investigate opportunities for flexible, online, distance based provision; explore possible synergies with Oscail.	This is in hand. Flexible access to course material is particularly important for the part-time BSc in Computer Applications, which is the subject of a re-development exercise at the moment.
Enhance systems for gaining regular feedback on the student experience in all programmes.	A number of mechanisms are in place to allow students to make their views and concerns known. These include student participation in the Programme Boards, the surveys of student opinion undertaken by the Registry and the personal tutor system. At the level of individual modules, academic staff are at present responsible for getting their own feedback from students in a suitable form and acting on it as they see fit. They are required to report that they have carried this out. The School intends to review these arrangements so that the system is more transparent, and it is easier to ensure that action is taken when feedback identifies a weakness.
Develop an integrated, strategic, approach to the overall module and programme portfolio, both undergraduate and postgraduate.	The School continually reviews its portfolio of courses and modules, and expects to propose some further developments in the coming year.
Focus research publication on peer-reviewed journals and high quality peer-reviewed conferences. Promote early parallel dissemination through open e-print archives.	The School continues to enhance its research profile, which is to the forefront of computing departments nationally. It is seeking further space to accommodate its research students, and is encouraging and increasing involvement in cross-disciplinary research. The School will collect links to online copies of our publications, subject to copyright restrictions, to make them accessible on the web.

Recommendation in Peer Review Group Report (May 2003)	Progress in the implementation of Recommendations (January 2005)
Introduce dedicated administrative support for preparation of external research proposals.	The School has established a support system for academics writing research proposals through talks on "grantmanship", tips from previously successful grant winners, and a buddy system for critically reviewing each proposal. This is proving successful. The continued absence of a school manager leaves a shortfall in administrative support that should be addressed. The School is aware of the additional services provided by the Office of the Vice-President for Research, and will make use of these.
Provide formal research skills training for new postgraduate research students.	Responsibility for providing a supportive framework and a helpful environment for research students and managing their progress within the School is now a dedicated administrative task for a member of academic staff. The duties of this member of staff include training students in research skills. The School is aware of the existence of the University working group, which is examining the inclusion of taught modules and research skills modules as part of PhD programmes throughout the University.
Develop more flexible access provision to better facilitate and support students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Explore possible collaboration on this issue with Oscail.	The School has long participated in the North Dublin Access programme, and will continue to do so. It has in addition developed an access programme with Colaiste Ide, which is just now coming on stream. Arrangements will be made, possibly through the personal tutor system, for more active support of students entering the School through the Access programme. The CA Evening degree caters for students who come mainly from non-traditional sources and who are unable to take up full-time study. This programme is being re-designed at present and in its new version it will seek to increase flexible access.
Make a co-ordinated effort to develop and recognise social and community service. Reflect this in strategic plan(s).	The School will make provision in its strategic plan to recognise contributions by staff to social and community service.
Address the serious shortfall in administrative staffing as a matter of urgency. This minimally requires the appointment of a senior administrator plus a second full time secretary. This is imperative to avoid dissipating the energies of the Head of School in administrative tasks to the detriment of the strategic drive that is essential to the development of the School.	Despite representations previously made, no effective provision has been made and it continues to be a major requirement for the School that this issue be addressed by the University.
Explore all feasible means, institutionally and nationally, of improving the student-staff ratio to reflect relevant international norms.	As previously reported, the staff/student ratio is grossly out of line with international norms and results in high marking & tutoring loads on staff. We believe strongly that we are unreasonably disadvantaged within the faculty by having a low SCR multiplier in comparison with our fellow schools (0.65 for Computing in comparison with 0.8 for both Electronic & Mechanical Engineering). It is anomalous that the School gets fewer resources when in many cases it offers courses entirely comparable to those in our fellow schools. We ask that this anomaly be addressed urgently.
Review the adequacy of the complement of the technical support team to ensure that it is not over-extended	The Head of School and the technical support team have formulated a plan to ensure adequate technical support at a level of staffing that is commensurate with the resources brought in by the School. The plan has been submitted to the HR (July 1st 2003) and a response is still awaited.

Recommendation in Peer Review Group Report (May 2003)	Progress in the implementation of Recommendations (January 2005)
In the context of strategic planning, develop concrete initiatives and measurable goals to address gender imbalance.	Male academic staff in the School greatly outnumber females, but it is not easy to remedy this to any great extent in the short-term. This is partly because academic posts in the School are currently frozen, and partly because we attract much greater numbers of male applicants when lectureships are advertised. At 15% female academics, the School is not out of line with other computing schools and with the proportions of females graduating with research degrees in computing. The School is performing better with respect to attracting female research students: currently about 20 of our 70 research students are female. Of the six female staff, one is an Associate Professor and another is a Senior lecturer, but of the four most junior academics three are female. The School will follow a policy of encouraging and supporting female staff who apply for promotion within the procedures laid down by the University and will work with the University's Equality Office towards this goal.
Adhere to hardware and software refresh schedules.	Hardware and software renewal is a major problem Most of the School's computing equipment is over four years old. An appropriate renewal policy and funding are needed as a matter of urgency.
Support all staff in planning personal development. Articulate explicit career pathways for academic staff specialising in teaching.	Staff are supported on a personal basis by the Head of School in planning and managing their careers. Action on this recommendation requires a University policy on staff appraisal. The rollout of the PMDS system in 2005 will be of assistance in this regard.
Review current out-of-hours policy with a view to making it more researcher and student friendly.	The School supports 24/7 access but recognises that provision of this is constrained by availability of security and maintenance staff in the University. However, a minimum of 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. is desirable for students, while 24/7 should be available for staff and postgraduate researchers.
Provide enhanced facilities for informal networking among staff and postgraduate research students.	The School considers this to be an important issue for staff and research student development, primarily to encourage the exchange of ideas and collaborative working. It is discussing a change in use of some existing space with the Executive Dean and expects rapid progress in this area.

Quality Review 2003: School of Communications: Follow-up of Implementation of Recommendations

Recommendation in Peer Review Group Report (May 2003)	Progress in the implementation of Recommendations (January 2005)
Preparation of a strategic plan	Completed September 2004; a request for financial support to allow visits to and from the School in connection with this strategic planning exercise was not met.
Support for development of a new cross-faculty BA programme	The Executive Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, appointed in January 2004, has taken this programme proposal in hand and a School representative is actively engaged in the process.
Retention of small-class teaching structure	The balance attained in recent years of larger (years 1 and 2) and smaller (years 3, 4 and postgraduate) class sizes has been maintained.
Development of new teaching and learning methods	The School's Teaching and Learning Committee has a much more prominent role in the School, providing advice and support to staff and a forum for discussion of teaching methods.
Library staff involvement in teaching and learning	The contribution of the Library to modules in information skills, and related topics, has increased.
Monitoring of staff-student ratios	The School has not undertaken the planned broader comparisons of its own position with cognate departments elsewhere. The university management referred, in relation to this recommendation, to the application of the Incentives Model, but the Incentives Model was never available to be applied.
Matching expertise and programmes	The School continues to have "significant staffing needs in areas of specialism that are under-resourced"; these are the subject of a staffing proposal to the Executive Dean. Here, too, the university management's reference to the application of the Incentives Model is redundant.
Audit of technical facilities in order to prioritise the upgrading of facilities	This was interrupted by the departure of one member of technical staff and the sick leave of another. Shorter-term needs in technical resources have been the subject of funding proposals to the Budget Committee, DCU Educational Trust and Executive Dean. Funding from the joint HEA/DCU Quality Improvement Fund of €65,780 was received in June 2004 for the upgrading of the School's television studio. The work undertaken on foot of this grant is close to completion.
Appointment of additional technician	This was the subject of a proposal to the Budget Committee, which referred, in its response, to a continuing study of technician positions in Irish universities. No support was given.
Addressing deficiencies in the technical department's loans service	Repeated requests for approval of an additional staff member were unsuccessful. The School has achieved a marked, though non-permanent, improvement in the service through the employment of student assistants.
University commitment to refurbish or replace the Henry Grattan Building	The university management has declared the refurbishment or replacement of the Henry Grattan Building to be "one of its major priorities". DCU received no major recommendation for capital building refurbishment in the recent Kelly report to the HEA.
University validation of broader range of intellectual and expressive work	This is partially formalised, but needs continuing attention.
More focused selection of PhD students	The procedures have been significantly improved, with collegial involvement in the selection.
Strengthening the position of research students	The integration of research students into the life of the School, through teaching assistance and research seminars has continued to improve. Funding research students has become more difficult: no grant requests to external funding agencies were successful in the past year, and the university's research allocation to the School represents half of the financial commitment to present students.
Provision of research skills training	The School has continued and enhanced its workshops for research students. The newly appointed Associate Dean for Research in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences has made it a priority to put in place faculty-wide research skills training.

Recommendation in Peer Review Group Report (May 2003)	Progress in the implementation of Recommendations (January 2005)
Support for development of a new research centre	The School is close to completion of a revised, broader programme for its existing research centre, having decided against establishing an additional centre. Funding sought to help with the development of the research centre programme was not granted.
Promoting the School's research strengths	A higher profile within and beyond the university for the School's research achievements has been achieved, inter alia, by the publication in 2004 of four books on broadcasting and film by School staff members, the publication by the School of an outstanding piece of research by a postgraduate student, the award to a School staff member of a President's Research Award, the award to another of an Albert College Fellowship, and the publication of three reports commissioned from the School by state agencies.
Strengthening links with related departments.	Progress has been made in this regard through new structures in the Faculty, through an innovative teaching project involving the DCU linked colleges, and through continuing involvement in collaborative research.

Quality Review 2003: School of Biotechnology: Follow-up of Implementation of Recommendations

Recommendation in Peer Review Group Report (May 2003)	Progress in the implementation of Recommendations (January 2005)
A coherent overall management structure for the school.	A School Management structure, to encourage real involvement from all members of the school – academic staff, technicians, post-docs and post-grads, was proposed in the School Strategic Plan of April 2004. This will be further discussed, in light of the new Faculty Management structure, when the School becomes involved in the IQUB Sectoral Project on Strategic Planning.
An uncomplicated and transparent 'system' for calculating and assigning staff workloads.	A preliminary workload distribution formula was presented in the School's Strategic Plan, April 2004. The formula will be adjusted on an on-going basis and will have to be implemented with some flexibility to take account of illness, sabbaticals, parental leave, etc.
Provision of administrative support for externally funded research projects.	There is a proposal to put a structure in place at University level to provide support for research projects.
Clarity and fairness in the allocation of practical demonstration duties of and an equitable and transparent remuneration system for postgraduate students.	An Academic Co-ordinator for Postgraduate Students has been appointed to oversee the allocation of demonstrating duties. The level of remuneration from the School for demonstrating duties has been doubled.
A postgraduate induction programme and postgraduate handbook.	An Administrative Flowchart for Postgraduate Students and Supervisors was produced in the School. In-house programmes are organised for Safety and Out-of-Hours training. A Pilot Programme on Graduate Coursework has been organised within the Faculty.
More accurate portrayal of course content and objectives in promoting and marketing programmes	New marketing literature, with input from members of the School, has been generated by the Faculty. Members of the School continue to be actively involved with marketing, including Open Days, presence at Young Scientist's Exhibition, running of Leaving Certificate Biology Experiments, CTYI and Biology Olympiad. Staff continue to develop new programmes, including the Degree in Environmental Science & Health, Genetics & Cell Biology and MSc. in Bioinformatics. The School has been actively involved in promoting degree programmes overseas.
Out-of-hours policy	Researchers continue to have issues with the Out-of-Hours policy. It should be possible to remedy the situation and the issue is currently being dealt with at Faculty level.
Provision of a designated common room area where all groups within the School can interact socially.	While there are restaurants in the proximity of the Science Building, there continues to be a need for a common area where members of the various constituencies within the School can meet. A room is currently used for this purpose, but mainly by the Postgraduate students. It would be desirable to develop this room to encourage greater interaction amongst staff at all levels.
Replacement of the aging computers in the School	Funding from the joint HEA/DCU Quality Improvement Fund of €25,000 was received in June 2004 for the replacement of computers in the School.

Quality Review 2003: Registry: Follow-up of Implementation of Recommendations

Recommendation in Peer Review Group Report (May 2003)	Progress in the implementation of Recommendations (January 2005)
Continue internal structural review and the re-engineering of the functional teams to a more “meta-process”-based structure.	The Registry has now been restructured, with a reduction from seven to three teams. Students Enrolment; Student Awards; and the International Office. A more “meta-process”-based structure is now in place. Some further minor changes are being made at present to clarify the responsibilities of particular posts, as a result of feedback from staff outside Registry and discussions amongst Registry staff. It should be noted that support for Academic Council and its associated committees, as well as support for validation and accreditation, is now located within the Office of the Vice-President for Learning Innovation / Registrar. Two staff were transferred from Registry to the OVPLI/Registrar in line with this change.
Change from current Management Tea to a smaller operations-focussed Executive management Team	In line with the team re-structuring, the Management Team now comprises the Director, the Student Awards Manager, the Student Enrolment Manager and the Dean of the International Office. A Registry Advisory Group, comprising members representative of the different grades and not including Management Team members, is also in place and liaises with the Management Team.
Appoint an “IT Champion” from within the existing staff to drive the development of web-based services	A member of staff with a specific IT brief (including a brief for the Student Records System (ITS) has been identified, but because of other pressures, the IT aspect of this person’s overall role is not as significant as it ideally ought to be. Web-based initiatives continue to be driven within the teams (see 19 below)
Fill current vacant posts on a temporary/contract basis with a formal staffing needs analysis to be conducted in six months time.	After careful analysis, and in tandem with team re-structuring, the complement of permanent staff required in Registry was decided upon. Registry is now moving to a position where nearly all posts are held by permanent postholders.
The commitment to a cross-Registry structure needs to be formalised and it needs to be developed in consultation and with the support of Registry	The cross-Registry structure has been achieved. The team re-structuring was the result of extensive consultations, including on a one-to-one basis, and numerous meetings. As noted above, further minor adjustments are being made, which will be accompanied by a training schedule
Establish a self-contained International Student Centre	Agreement has been reached in principle that the International Office will become a stand –alone Unit within the Registry from the Start of the 2005/06 academic year.
The interim period of management of the Registry should be as short as possible	A Director of Registry took up office on 1 September 2003
Career progression for non-academic staff, to be implemented, following audit by external consultants	This recommendation relates to the general issues of career progression for non-academic staff in the University and is being dealt with under the remit of the University Partnership Forum
A sustainable training programme to be implemented to support the acquisition of cross-Registry skills and to including training of trainers	Formal training to date has included Supervisory Training for staff at Grade 3 and above, and Customer Service training for all members of Registry staff. Funding from the Training or Trainers programme was sought for these courses, by way of formal bid by the Director of Registry, and the submission for funds was successful. More localized training, whether formally scheduled away from Registry or on-the-job, continues. The University’s Training and development unit has provided an excellent level of support in the formal training area.
A move to more suitable accommodation with adequate space provision for all necessary functions, including meeting rooms and a reception area, to include maximum natural light and fresh air.	The implementation of much of this recommendation is beyond the scope of Registry. However, a number of improvement have been made: a new Student Information Area (reception for students, who no longer have to queue in the main Henry Grattan ‘street’ area; the demolition of some internal walls to allow more natural light into the open plan area; plus some other internal improvement in respect of filing and storage areas (Funding from the joint HEA/DCU Quality Improvement Fund of €15,600 was received from the refurbishment of the Student Information Area)
Registry staff morale to continue to be a priority for new management	This is an area that received constant attention and one-to-one meetings often take place to gauge staff morale, as well as the use of other more informal methods. Full team meetings also take place where there is an opportunity for staff to ‘have their say’ and to offer alternative ways of doing things

Recommendation in Peer Review Group Report (May 2003)	Progress in the implementation of Recommendations (January 2005)
Improvement required to internal and external communications and a less insular approach to functions is required and a more inclusive attitude to other services	Formal and informal networks have been established between Registry and other areas of DCU, e.g. a regular meeting between Registry's Management Team and Senior Faculty Administrators; task-focussed Working Groups set up to review admissions procedures at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, and to review deferrals and other examination-related issues. Any review of Registry's operational procedures that impact on other areas of the University will always be subject to discussion with all parties concerned.
Tighter monitoring of response times to queries. A reappraisal of the benefits of the Symposium telephone management system	Response times are regularly monitored, within the context of the main tasks that are within the remit of Registry. A Customer Service Charter is almost at the final stage of development, which will deal with how Registry interacts with 'customers' at the Student Information Area, by telephone and by email – the Charter will deal explicitly with response time. A review of the Symposium telephone system has resulted in a move to a dedicated two-person roster during office hours, with additional back-up from other staff as required.
Duplication of work with Faculty Offices to come to an end	Progress continues to be made in this area, for example, in the area of academic structures. In general, the principle now in operation is to provide access to areas of the Student Record system to Faculty Office staff that was hitherto restricted. Quality control mechanisms are in place.
A project to implement an 'electronic-purse' function	Students no longer need to visit the Finance Office to pay for transactions conducted at the Student Information Point, as Registry now has the facility to take payments by cash, cheque, credit card etc. This is a very significant advance, as the previous system was heavily criticized over a number of years.
Physical access improvement to be carried out	This recommendation concerns the refurbishment of the Student Information Area, which has been achieved (see 10 above). Access for University staff to Registry offices is now easier, via an entrance door in the Student Information Area.
Continue to develop web initiatives and improved interfaces with, and access to, the ITS system for internal and external stakeholders	The development of an online application system for postgraduate programmes was a major advance and is now in operation. Online registration is at the development stage, with serious progress planned over the next few months. Other Registry processes are also being overhauled to make more use of the web, e.g. in the general enquiries area. Access to IT has been greatly facilitated by the use of the Discover tool, and, as noted above, access to the ITS for Faculty Offices has been extended.
Registry to inform other areas of the University of the strengths of their team practices and SOPs which may be of wider benefit	This recommendation is being addressed in a number of ways: by regular liaison with Faculty Office staff and other constituencies external to the Registry; by ensuring our SOPs are kept up to date and discussed with relevant stakeholders; and by the intention to hold 'information session' for interested staff and students in February/March 2005 (to cover how Registry is structured, who to contact in respect of particular tasks and so on)
Future reviews of the Registry to include meetings with representatives of Academic Council, Governing Authority, Executive and relevant University Committees	This is agreed, but the remit of the OVPLI/Registrar is noted in respect of Academic Council (see 1 above).