



University College Dublin

Periodic Quality Review

UCD School of Archaeology

October 2010

Accepted by the UCD Governing Authority at its meeting on 29 March 2011

Table of Contents

	Executive Summary	3
1.	Introduction and Context	4
2.	Organisation and Management	8
3.	Staff and Facilities	9
4.	Teaching, Learning and Assessment	12
5.	Curriculum Development and Review	13
6.	Research Activity	15
7.	Management of Quality and Enhancement	17
8.	Support Services	18
9.	External Relations	19
10.	Summary of Commendations and Recommendations	21

Appendix 1: UCD School of Archaeology Response to the Review Group Report

Appendix 2: Schedule for Review Visit

Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of a quality review of the UCD School of Archaeology, at University College Dublin. The review was undertaken in October 2010.

The composition of the Review Group was as follows:

- Professor Ciarán Ó hÓgartaigh, UCD School of Business (Chair)
- Dr Anne Drummond, UCD School of Public Health, Physiotherapy & Population Science (Deputy Chair)
- Professor Przemyslaw Urbanczyk, Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology, Polish Academy of Sciences
- Professor Priscilla Renouf, Canada Research Chair in North Atlantic Archaeology, Memorial University of Newfoundland, Canada
- Professor Robin Coningham, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Faculty of Social Sciences and Health), Durham University

In summary, the Review Group finds that the School has a firm commitment to research and teaching. It has a manifestly strong sense of community as evidenced in the interaction between students and staff and between members of the School as colleagues. Given the current challenges facing the University and the School, this sense of community and belonging has the potential to serve as a magnet for retaining staff and attracting students both nationally and internationally. This is a strength of the School and should not be undermined.

Furthermore, the profile of the School has undertaken a step change since the previous review through the appointment of academic staff in, for example, environmental archaeology and in practical and field-based teaching. This is to be commended as it extends the scope of the School's activities in terms of its disciplinary and international focus.

However, the space constraints faced by the School in the absence of a College Strategic Space Plan significantly limits the School's ability to deliver strategic outcomes (such as growth in postgraduate and international students) consistent with University's Strategic Plan to 2014. The College should consider how best to address the School's space deficit and recognise its need for a common location and the replacement of sub-optimal laboratory, post-excavation and storage space. This will consolidate the School's identity, promote links between teaching and research as well as offering a competitive environment in attracting postgraduate student recruitment.

The Review Group also recommends, *inter alia*, that the School develop an academic workload model to maintain a workload history over time and to facilitate planning, in addition to capturing the current status of teaching and research. Evidence-based benchmarking and publicising of the School's achievements should be a strategic imperative and is particularly important evidence in the context of the School's ambitions to be among the top 30 Schools of Archaeology in Europe.

1. Introduction and Overview of UCD School of Archaeology

Introduction

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of a quality review of the UCD School of Archaeology, at University College Dublin. The review was undertaken in October 2010. The UCD School of Archaeology's response to the Review Group Report is set out in Appendix 1.

The Review Process

- 1.2 Irish Universities have collectively agreed a framework for their quality review and quality improvement systems, which is consistent with both the legislative requirements of the Universities Act 1997, and international good practice. Quality reviews are carried out in academic, administrative and support service units.

- 1.3 The purpose of periodic review is to assist the University to assure itself of the quality of each of its constituent units, and to utilise learning from this essentially developmental process in order to effect improvement, including :

- To monitor the quality of the student experience, and of teaching and learning opportunities
- To monitor research activity, including: management of research activity; assessing the research performance with regard to: research productivity, research income, and recruiting and supporting doctoral students.
- To provide an opportunity for units to test the effectiveness of their systems and procedures for monitoring and enhancing quality and standards
- To provide a framework within which the unit can continue to work in the future towards quality improvement
- To identify shortfalls in resources and provide an externally validated case for change and/or increased resources
- To identify, encourage and disseminate good practice
- To identify challenges and address these
- To provide public information on the University's capacity to assure the quality and standards of its awards. The University's implementation of its quality review procedures also enables it to demonstrate how it discharges its responsibilities for assuring the quality and standards of its awards, as required by the Universities Act 1997.

- 1.4 Typically, the review model comprises of four major elements:

- Preparation of a Self-assessment Report (SAR)
- A visit by a Review Group (RG) that includes UCD staff and external experts, both national and international. The site visit normally will take place over a two or three day period.

- Preparation of a Review Group Report that is made public
- Agreement of an Action Plan for Improvement (Quality Improvement Plan) based on the RG Report's recommendations; the University will also monitor progress against the Improvement Plan

Full details of the review process can be found on the UCD Quality Office website: www.ucd.ie/quality.

1.5 The composition of the Review Group for the UCD School of Archaeology was as follows:

- Professor Ciarán Ó hÓgartaigh, UCD School of Business (Chair)
- Dr Anne Drummond, UCD School of Public Health, Physiotherapy & Population Science (Deputy Chair)
- Professor Przemyslaw Urbanczyk, Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology, Polish Academy of Sciences
- Professor Priscilla Renouf, Canada Research Chair in North Atlantic Archaeology, Memorial University of Newfoundland, Canada
- Professor Robin Coningham, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Faculty of Social Sciences and Health), Durham University

1.6 The Review Group visited the School from 18 – 21 October 2010 and had meetings with School staff, University students and staff, including: the Head of School; College Principal; College Finance Manager; SAR Co-ordinating Committee; School academic staff; School support staff; external stakeholders (including employers of graduates and state agencies); postgraduate students, taught and research; recent graduates; undergraduate students; UCD Buildings and Services. The site visit schedule is included as Appendix 2.

1.7 In addition to the Self-assessment Report, the Review Group considered documentation provided by both the School and the University.

Preparation of the Self-assessment Report

1.8 The School set up a Self-assessment Co-ordinating Committee in accordance with the UCD Quality Review Guidelines.

The members of the Co-ordinating Committee were:

- Professor Gabriel Cooney, Professor of Celtic Archaeology and Head of School (2008–11) (Chair)
- Professor Tadhg O'Keeffe, Associate Professor
- Dr Aidan O'Sullivan, Senior Lecturer
- Dr Graeme Warren, Lecturer

- Mr Conor McDermott, Research Officer
- Dr Stephen Harrison, Post-doctoral fellow
- Ms Angela McAteer, Administrator

1.9 The UCD School of Archaeology Co-ordinating Committee met on 7 occasions between 10 November 2009 and the site visit. Staff not on the Co-ordinating Committee received regular updates at staff meetings. A day-long discussion of the first draft of the SAR was held on Friday, 9 April 2010.

The University

1.10 University College Dublin (UCD) is a large and diverse university whose origin dates back to 1854. The University is situated on a large, modern campus, about 4km to the south of the centre of Dublin city.

1.11 The University Strategic Plan (to 2014) states that the University's Mission is:

“to advance knowledge, to pursue truth and to foster learning, in an atmosphere of discovery, creativity, innovation and excellence, drawing out the best in each student, and contributing to the social, cultural and economic life of Ireland in the wider world”.

The University is currently organised into 35 Schools in five Colleges;

- UCD College of Arts and Celtic Studies
- UCD College of Human Sciences
- UCD College of Life Sciences
- UCD College of Engineering, Mathematical and Physical Sciences
- UCD College of Business and Law

The UCD School of Archaeology is a school the UCD College of Arts and Celtic Studies.¹

1.12 As one of the largest universities on the island of Ireland, UCD supports a broad, deep and rich academic community in Science, Engineering, Medicine, Veterinary, Arts, Celtic Studies and Human Sciences. There are currently more than 24,000 students (15,400 undergraduates, 6,900 postgraduates and 1,900 Occasional and Adult Education students) registered on University programmes, including over 4,600 international students from more than 120 countries.

UCD School of Archaeology

1.13 The first Chair of Archaeology and History at the Catholic University, Dublin was appointed in 1854 and was thus one of the earliest professors of archaeology in the world. The Chair of Celtic Archaeology was a foundation chair of University College Dublin and since 1908 has been filled by a succession of leaders in the field of Irish and European archaeology. The

¹ While a reorganisation of the College structure has been agreed by the UCD Governing Authority, coming into effect from 1 October 2011, it is not currently envisaged that the School's location in the UCD College of Arts and Celtic Studies will change.

present incumbent was appointed to the Chair in 2008 and is currently Head of School (2008–11).

- 1.14 The then Department of Archaeology, University College Dublin underwent a Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement (QA/QI) review in 2001. As part of the UCD restructuring programme in 2005, the Department of Archaeology became the UCD School of Archaeology. The School is located in the Newman Building on the Belfield campus of University College Dublin and is one of the eight constituent Schools in the UCD College of Arts and Celtic Studies, one of the five Colleges of the University.
- 1.15 The composition of staff in the School reflects both the strong Irish and international profile of the School. The School has a current permanent staff of 12; 9 [one currently on 0.6 of a position] lecturers, an ICT Specialist, a Laboratory and Field Officer, an Administrator and a part-time Graphic Illustrator) and two post-doctoral fellows in 2010-11 (there were five in 2009–10). The widening agenda, changing focus and ambition of the School is highlighted by the appointment of a Laboratory and Field Officer in 2004, an Aegean Bronze Age specialist in 2005 and two Environmental Archaeologists in 2006. These step changes in the School's composition have widened the scope of the School's teaching and research and have internationalised its academic staff. The School's profile is, therefore, potentially more attractive to international students. The School has the largest cohort of archaeological postgraduate students in Ireland, with a growing number from international backgrounds. Adjunct staff, visiting fellows and staff working on School research projects add to the profile of the School.
- 1.16 The introduction of the *UCD Horizons* modular structure has led to greater flexibility in the teaching programme and a growing diversity of the student body. Archaeology is a subject taught at undergraduate level in both the BA and BSocSc programmes (which are both within the remit of the Arts, Celtic Studies and Human Sciences Programme Office). In 2006, a new BSc programme in Archaeology and Geology was launched, the first graduates of which will graduate this year (2010-11). The School continues to make a major contribution to the teaching programme of the UCD Centre for Adult and Continuing Education, offering a Certificate in Archaeology.
- 1.17 The taught MA programme has gone through a number of revisions in recent years and is currently structured as a core programme with options in specialised areas, within which students choose dissertation/research project topics. The School has introduced a Graduate Diploma in Archaeology and also offers a Higher Diploma in Archaeology as a fast track transfer degree for students with little or no archaeological experience. The School has been running a structured PhD/MLitt programme for some years and has embraced the University-wide structured graduate programme as an extension of this.
- 1.18 As a result of the periodic quality review process in 2001, the UCD School of Archaeology consciously developed a strategic approach to research. Strategic Planning processes are in place within the School and the School's approach to research is encapsulated in the School Strategic Plan for Research and Innovation 2007–2012. This strategic approach allows the School to be both coherent and adaptable in its research strategy. UCD has adopted a strategic approach to research activities, with research priorities being organised under a number of major research 'themes'. The School contributes significantly to the 'Global Ireland' major research theme and also to the 'Culture, Society and Change' theme which is a focus of the Humanities Institute of Ireland, the UCD College of Arts and Celtic Studies and the UCD College of Human Sciences.

2. Organisation and Management

- 2.1 The UCD School of Archaeology is one school of eight within the UCD College of Arts and Celtic studies. Archaeology is a research intensive School, which has a strong undergraduate teaching programme and taught and research post-graduate activity.
- 2.2 There are 9 academic staff, 3 Professors, 1.6 FTE Senior Lecturers and 4 Lecturers, in addition to an Information Technology Specialist, a Laboratory and Field Officer, an archaeology illustrator and a senior executive assistant. The Information Technology Specialist and Laboratory and Field Officer roles are graded as administrative within the HR system.
- 2.3 The Head of School serves a three-year term and the incoming Head and Deputy Head of School for May 2011 have already been identified. The School committee structure operates through an executive committee which, because of the size of the School, comprises a large proportion of the staff members. Decision-making occurs at this level and in general communication appears to be excellent.
- 2.4 There are clearly allocated key roles within the School. In addition to the roles of Head of School and Deputy Head of School, members of staff have allocated responsibilities for Teaching and Learning, Postgraduate Studies and Research. There is also a designated Health and Safety Officer and Assessment Officer within the School. The academic workload model first undertaken in 2010 reflects local characteristics and is in an early stage of development.
- 2.5 Due to the loss of a full time Executive Assistant, actual administrative support for the School Office and Head of School is under-resourced.
- 2.6 The aims and objectives of the most recent strategic plans (School Strategic Plan 2007-2008 and Research and Innovation Strategic Plan 2007-2012) are clearly articulated and appropriate. It is noted that planning is restricted by the human and space resource limitations and the uncertainty of the current national economic situation.
- 2.7 The School is a budgetary unit within the UCD College of Arts and Celtic Studies, which is the main accounting unit. The School is currently in deficit and both pay and non-pay budget have been cut within the past three years. These cuts have implications for the School's ability to deliver its teaching programmes, and the School is considering cutting any teaching areas that do not have a visible and calculable return in the short-term, which may not be a sensible long-term strategy. Within UCD, the Archaeology subject is weighted 1.3 for funding allocation purposes, despite the increasing laboratory needs associated with the recent introduction of Environmental Archaeology and the wider disciplinary trends towards Archaeological Science. Typically, subjects involving significant components of laboratory work have a higher weighting within the UCD resource allocation model.

Commendations

- 2.8 There is evidence of good communication and a strong sense of loyalty, collegiality and community among the staff in this single discipline School. This is manifest in the excellent relationships members of the School staff have with students at all levels and with external stakeholders. The UCD School of Archaeology is well respected by its stakeholders;

- 2.9 The School Executive Committee appears to work well for the School and School roles and responsibilities are clear; and
- 2.10 Early identification of the incoming Head and Deputy Head of School has allowed training and shadowing to take place, and is a good example of the proactive strategic approach that the current Head of School advocates.

Recommendations

- 2.11 Formalise a rotating term-limited programme of key role allocation (Teaching and Learning, etc.), in order to ensure a spread of systems knowledge across all staff members over time;
- 2.12 Develop an academic workload model to maintain a workload history over time and to facilitate planning. This will also allow information on the current status of the teaching, research and leadership contributions of academic staff to be captured;
- 2.13 Undertake evidence-based bench-marking against Archaeology departments in other national and international universities, as University metrics used in comparisons against other Schools in the College do not always reflect the specific needs of the discipline; and
- 2.14 Using international benchmarks, formally explore whether the subject weighting allocated to the laboratory-based modules can be reviewed to take account of the recent developments in the Archaeological science component of the School's programmes and of the Archaeological discipline internationally.

3. Staff and Facilities

- 3.1 The Review Group found the academic staff of the School to be a group of collegiate, accessible and highly motivated teachers and researchers, a perspective also shared by students of all levels and external stakeholders. It also noted the clear internationalisation of recent staffing appointments and successful development of research and teaching capacity in environmental archaeology within the last ten years.
- 3.2. Whilst successfully attracting larger numbers of undergraduate and postgraduate students, the freezing of the post in the Archaeology of the Late First Millennium BC / First Millennium AD (and a 0.4 of another post) has resulted in the School encountering a 73.6% rise in staff-student ratios from 1: 14.8 in 2005/06 to 1:25.3 in 2009/10. This is one of the highest staff-student ratios in the UCD College of Arts and Celtic Studies. The Review Group was informed by the College Principal that the release of the Lecturer post by September 2011 was one of the College's highest priorities for current staffing releases from the Budget Review Group.
- 3.3. Current pressure on staff is exacerbated by the non-replacement of the Student Administrator, forcing the School Administrator to divert resources away from support for the Head of School. This places considerable additional pressure both on the Head of School and on the School Administrator. A review of administrative staffing levels indicated that two individuals identified as Administrators actually perform a variety of academic-related and support activities in line with the technical and experimental staffing profiles of other Departments of Archaeology in Europe and North America. The nature and allocation of these activities is not formalised and this necessary disciplinary aspect is not recognised beyond the School.

- 3.4. Formal staff performance management and development is in place within the School in addition to more informal processes and contacts. Post-doctoral fellows found institutional-level training opportunities overly-generic and at a low level. As Principal Investigators (PIs) in their own right, they would prefer development opportunities geared to their individual needs.
- 3.5. The UCD School of Archaeology currently occupies 601.7 square metres, comprising 374.7 square metres of office and write-up space, 122.6 square metres of laboratories and 104.4 square metres of storage. Acknowledged to be in space deficit by Buildings and Services, this space is distributed between six separate localities, namely the Newman Building, Newman House, Roebuck, Crannog, James Joyce Library and The Humanities Institute of Ireland. Furthermore, not all the space allocations in the Newman Building and Roebuck are adjacent or on the same floors. The Review Group observed that the quality of accommodation is highly variable. Space in Roebuck and Crannog is notably sub-optimal although providing necessary road access for field equipment and materials for wet processing.
- 3.6. The quality, quantity and location of space allocated to the UCD School of Archaeology are notably poorer than that allocated currently to competitor departments of Archaeology across Ireland and the UK, Europe and North America. In particular, the research, postgraduate and post-doctoral laboratory and storage allocations are under-resourced and their current locations risk the divorce of research from teaching and learning activities as well as diminishing the exposure of undergraduates to the postgraduate and postdoctoral community. The composition of the School's academic staff, teaching and research place it in a good position to attract international students. This potential – of benefit to both the School and the University – is significantly constrained by the relative poverty of the space available to the School. The School's space deficit – while often part of the life cycle of the development of Schools of Archaeology – is an impediment to the School's ability to contribute to the University's strategy, outlined in its Strategic Plan to 2014, *Forming Global Minds*, particularly with respect to the increasing the number of graduate/fourth level and international students.
- 3.7. While the School is the authorised custodian of archaeological material associated with its research projects, the State is the legal owner. Therefore it is expected that these materials would be safely stored and documented in controlled facilities up to the standard of most archaeology departments elsewhere. However, this is not the case at the School. The Review Group found current arrangements temporary in nature and below acceptable collection storage standards elsewhere. There is a concern that facilities should allow the School and University fulfil obligations *vis-à-vis* the State. Additionally, current arrangements present a very complex and fragmented impression to new postgraduate students and may discourage potential students when comparing departments elsewhere. Meetings with students demonstrated that the material handling and practical opportunities offered by the School's research and contract activities played an important role in encouraging undergraduate students to register for taught postgraduate and postgraduate research within the School.
- 3.8. Whilst acknowledging that the current space arrangement has been reached through organic transformation of the School, from a cultural-historical focus to a landscape and environmental perspective over the last 10 years, the laboratory resources available to School are markedly in contrast to those recently developed in the School of Human Sciences for Geography and Psychology. The School has been proactive in managing its own

space, such as the conversion of the photographic laboratory into a small environmental laboratory (K010) but needs greater strategic assistance at a College level to counter the current inertia in resolving its space needs. The Review Group noted with concern the absence of a Strategic Space Plan for the College as a whole.

- 3.9. The growth in student numbers, in combination with cuts to library provision, has resulted in additional pressures on library resources but the Review Group noted active mitigation of this problem through the provision of reference copies, short term loans, additional photocopies and greater reference to on-line resources. The cohort of postgraduate students commented adversely on their loss of free allocations of inter-library loans.

Commendations

- 3.10. The School has successfully extended the scope of research and teaching capacity to include environmental archaeology as a key strength of the School;
- 3.11. The School has developed new specialist reference collections to support reaching and teaching capacity in environmental archaeology;
- 3.12. The Review Group commends the concept of sharing undergraduate teaching laboratories with the School of Biology; and
- 3.13. In the context of the overall space constraints of the School, the conversion of a photographic dark room (K010) into a small wet lab and the allocation of new unsecured storage area in Newman LG are welcomed by the Review Group.

Recommendations

- 3.14 The School is encouraged to clarify the current activity profiles of Administrative grades, using as comparators, the academic-related technical/experimental roles present within comparative departments of Archaeology elsewhere;
- 3.15 The School is encouraged to reconfirm its excellent reputation in the art and archaeology of Celtic and Early Christian Ireland through the reappointment to the post in Archaeology of the Late First Millennium BC / First Millennium AD in accordance with the UCD College of Arts and Celtic Studies' staffing plans as represented to the Review Group by the College Principal; and
- 3.16 The College is encouraged to endorse the approval of the 'gapped' Administrator post to support the student-facing activities of the School and re-engage support for the Head of School; and
- 3.17 Given that post-doctoral training provision at University-level appears to be highly generic (and somewhat basic), consideration should be given to mapping institutional training and development opportunities for post-doctoral fellows to their individual needs;
- 3.18 The College should address the School's space deficit and recognise its need for co-location and the replacement of sub-optimal laboratory, post-excavation and storage space. This will consolidate the School's identity, promote links between teaching and research as well as offering a competitive environment for postgraduate student recruitment; and

- 3.19 The College should finalise plans for the relocation of the School's activities from Crannog and Roebuck when that sector is redeveloped and is encouraged to develop a five year College Strategic Space Plan.

4. Teaching, Learning and Assessment

- 4.1 The School's portfolio of teaching is research-driven and is focussed on key areas of interest to academic staff. In particular, the range and diversity of courses has been extended to include areas such as environmental and social archaeology;
- 4.2 Students appear to be well-informed regarding the teaching and assessment policies of the School. However, the School has articulated a strategic structure to undergraduate teaching and module choice which was presented to the Review Group which should also be communicated to students;
- 4.3 Students at all levels appreciate the high standards of teaching and the attention of academic staff to the concerns and interests of students;
- 4.4 There is a widespread use of continuous assessment throughout the academic year. Such assessment mechanisms make students work at a regular pace and reward students for work carried out during the semester. However, there is a danger of over assessment in this context; and
- 4.5 Both students and academic staff commented that there is low attendance at lectures. However, this appears to be a more widespread institutional and cultural issue and does not appear to be a School-specific problem.

Commendations

- 4.6 The approach of the academic staff to teaching and learning appears to ensure a friendly and informal teaching atmosphere which is highly appreciated by students at all levels. Graduates of the School interviewed by the Review Group commented that the academic staff in the UCD School of Archaeology taught them how to think and how to effectively navigate the world of published papers and data sources, suggesting a commendable approach to learning;
- 4.7 Communication between students and staff is very good. This also includes advice regarding careers;
- 4.8 The practical aspects of teaching archaeology are acknowledged and implemented as much as the laboratory space allows. However, the incorporation of students in handling materials is problematic because of space restrictions;
- 4.9 All staff are active in research and aim to embed research in their teaching, particularly at higher levels; and
- 4.10 There is a plan to introduce innovative assessments.

Recommendations

- 4.11 Given the risk of over-assessment noted earlier, an audit of assessments should be carried out by the School with a view to standardising and streamlining the incidence and timing of assessments;
- 4.12 As part of University policy, students are requested to formally assess teaching in the School. However, they should be better motivated to participate in student evaluations of learning by, for example, more formalised communication and follow-up regarding actions taken or considered in the light of student feedback;
- 4.13 The size of Stage Two classes (which is now up to 91) should be reduced in order to allow better contact with teachers, to meet the needs of e.g. lab teaching, and to develop practical skills (such as fieldwork);
- 4.14 Wider use should be made of electronic submission tools (such as *Dropbox* in *Blackboard* or *SafeAssign*) to alleviate the burden on administrative staff;
- 4.15 More emphasis should be placed in both teaching and assessment on developing essay and report-writing abilities to match the expectations of potential employers;
- 4.16 Obligatory field trips/field work, which is crucial for teaching archaeology, should be extended beyond the current provision of 1-2 weeks;
- 4.17 To the extent practicable, an inter-School timetabling plan should be developed to allow for field trips/work to take place during the normal teaching year;
- 4.18 To discourage student absenteeism and develop student communication and associated skills, consideration should be given to the introduction of participation/attendance as part of the final grade (10-20%)
- 4.19 The School has articulated a strategic structure to undergraduate teaching and module choice which was presented to the Review Group. This should also be communicated to students;
- 4.20 To meet the expectations of students who seek a more focused education, consideration should be given to the introduction of specialised MAs and/or the clearer communication of the specialist pathways available on the current MA (which appears to be perceived as a general MA);
- 4.21 To enhance the academic development of doctoral students, their involvement in teaching should be increased in a systematic manner; and
- 4.22 To further enhance the international experience of students, teaching input by visiting/overseas-academic staff should be increased, even on a casual basis.

5. Curriculum Development and Review

- 5.1 As part of this review exercise, the School has usefully articulated clearer 'pathways' for its modules. However, this useful conceptualisation of the School's teaching portfolio has not yet been communicated to students;

- 5.2 There appears to be low interest among foreign students in coming to the UCD School of Archaeology, whose number is still dominated by Irish school-leavers. While this is partly a function of the relative space constraints of the School compared to its international peers, internationalisation appears to be a clear opportunity for the School.

Commendations

- 5.3 Students are provided with good information on module content;
- 5.4 Students at all levels appreciate the wide choice of thematic modules;
- 5.5 The scope of the curriculum developed in recent years to meet the general development of archaeology as a discipline, e.g. landscape and environmental archaeology, is welcomed by the Review Group;
- 5.6 The Review Group noted and welcomed an increased desire to focus on theory and method of archaeology; and
- 5.7 The School's engagement with Evening, Adult and Continuing Education is commended and if possible, should be maintained. This fulfils a public role for the School and has also served to attract mature students to the undergraduate and graduate programmes.

Recommendations

- 5.8 The School should undertake regular systematic evaluation of pathways and modules and modify the module portfolio based on this review. This may include the discontinuation of unpopular modules;
- 5.9 The portfolio of modules currently includes a wide range of modules. The School should consider reducing the number of modules offered while trying to balance the development of the discipline and students' interests. In particular, the School should seek to avoid rigidly following "inherited" research interests;
- 5.10 There should be a greater exploration of students' opinions regarding the curriculum in general (perhaps through formalised surveys and/or student fora);
- 5.11 Module pathways (such as articulated on p. 26 of the Self-assessment Report) should be much better communicated to students who still think in terms of free module choice. In particular, consideration should be given to improving guidance and visualisation of possible pathways;
- 5.12 The School should consider whether specialisation is available too early in the curriculum (Level 2) and the extent to which students are aware of such specialisation;
- 5.13 In that context, the School should reflect on the possible fragmentation of archaeological knowledge as a result of too many alternative pathways offered at a relatively early stage in the undergraduate programme. Further, too many modules may result in a decrease in staff awareness of the whole structure and contents of teaching;

- 5.14 Modules taught by Occasional academic staff should be avoided if possible, or where they are required, such academic staff should have formal arrangements to teach and meet students during the semester;
- 5.15 The External Examiner system should be maintained and enhanced to facilitate periodic assessment of the curriculum by international scholars;
- 5.16 In an international context, the School should continue to extend the curriculum and profile of the School beyond the traditional Celtic studies and Irish culture agenda while remembering at the same time that this attracts foreign students; and
- 5.17 In that context, the Review Group recommends changing one of the leading research and teaching themes from “Ireland and the world” to “Ireland in the world”.

6. Research Activity

- 6.1 It is very clear that the UCD School of Archaeology has a thriving research culture. The School has been very forward-looking and strategic about its research and as a result of recommendations in the School Strategic Plan for Research and Innovation 2007-2012, two new academic staff members were appointed. A key strength of the School’s research is its focus on Ireland’s recent and ancient past. The Strategic Plan for Research and Innovation 2007-2012 recognised that there also needs to be a broadening out to include more international research and a global comparative context. This process of internationalization is well on its way, with School academic staff engaged in research in Britain, continental Europe and Asia. The School is also developing active international research collaborations that include the U.K., continental Europe, North America, and potentially Asia. Notably, in 2008 it successfully hosted the large and high-profile World Archaeology Congress;
- 6.2 The Review Group recognises that the UCD School of Archaeology is the largest and most successful hub of archaeological research in Ireland. From the perspective of its research, it is one of the more successful Schools in the UCD College of Arts and Celtic Studies as measured by external funded research and very high research output, the latter including a number of books and book chapters, journal articles, including in peer-reviewed international journals; national and international conference organising; and conference presentations. With regard to the former, UCD statistics for funded research in 2008-9 and 2008-10 show that the School’s funded research is the second highest in the UCD College of Arts and Celtic Studies;
- 6.3 Complementing these collaborations, the School has recognised the next step in their research funding strategy and is focusing on larger-scale multi-year funding. They have already successfully achieved four multi-year, INSTAR projects and their medium-term plan is to target European Research Council and other larger scale funding over the next several years;
- 6.4 Importantly, the UCD School of Archaeology has a national research profile that goes beyond the academic boundaries. It communicates its research to expert and non-specialist audiences alike thereby engaging with a wide range of community sectors. The Review Group notes that this degree of engagement with the community is uncommon in academia and is to be commended.

Commendations

- 6.5 The Review Group noted the very strong research culture in the UCD School of Archaeology and was impressed with the total amount of annual research funding received by the School;
- 6.6 The level of research productivity was considered to be very high, notably the large number of books and book chapters, journal articles, including in peer-reviewed international journals; national and international conference organising; and national and international conference presentations;
- 6.7 The hosting of 2008 World Archaeological Conference, held in Dublin, was a huge achievement, bringing the world to Ireland and Ireland to the world;
- 6.8 The dynamic and positive research environment, which includes a collegial atmosphere, attracts students at all levels, but in particular PhD students and Post-Doctoral fellows;
- 6.9 The School's degree of strategic research planning shows vision, leadership and foresight; and
- 6.10 The high priority that the School gives to increase the internationalism of its collaborations and the global perspective of its results is commendable.

Recommendations (for the School)

- 6.11 The Review Group strongly concludes that the single greatest obstacle to further building on the School's research strength is the sub-optimality and insufficiency of the research facilities, in particular but not limited to wet and dry research labs; collections management; archives and equipment storage and management;
- 6.12 The Review Group recognises that a lesser but still significant obstacle is ensuring sufficient protected research time and it agreed that rationalisation of the School teaching programme be undertaken with a view to freeing up time through streamlining module offerings;
- 6.13 The Review Group agrees that a high priority is to fill the current gap in the research complement of the School is Celtic Archaeology (specifically Archaeology of the late first millennium BC/first millennium AD) and this gap should be filled;
- 6.14 The Review Group recommends that the School continues a more focussed targeting of large-scale multi-year research funding; and
- 6.15 The Review Group recommends that the School further internationalises its research by continuing to target peer-reviewed international journals and international conferences as a means of making their research results globally relevant.

Recommendations (for the College and University)

- 6.16 The financial and human resources administration of School research grants at the College and University levels should be streamlined to facilitate academic administration; and
- 6.17 The space needs of the UCD School of Archaeology, which arise out of the scientific methodology of the discipline, should be given a high priority within a strategic space plan at the College level.

7. Management of Quality and Enhancement

- 7.1 Issues relating to the management and enhancement of the quality of research and teaching are addressed in the sections relating to these areas. This section focuses more specifically on the recommendations in the Review Group report emanating from the QA/QI review completed in 2001.
- 7.2 In that context, the 2001 Review Group made five main recommendations. These are outlined in the following discussion along with the 2001 response to those recommendations and the current Review Group's comments in that regard.

Commendations and recommendations

- 7.3 The 2001 Review Group recommended that the position of the Senior Technician should be upgraded;

The School responded that, 'the position of the senior technician was strategically developed and re-aligned to the critical need for co-ordination and leadership in the IT area. This is now led by our IT Specialist;

The 2010 Review Group recommends that consideration be given to clarifying the role and career pathways of the senior technician consistent with the research and teaching needs of the School.

- 7.4 The 2001 Review Group recommended that an additional academic post was required to facilitate practical and environmental work;

The School responded that an additional academic was appointed in 2002, with the specific remit of improving and leading practical and field-based teaching;

The 2010 Review Group welcomes this appointment as an articulation of the School's strategy in improving and leading its practical and field-based teaching.

- 7.9 The 2001 Review Group recommended that the MA course be restructured.

The School responded that 'this has been done on a couple of occasions over the last decade. With the dramatic changes in the Irish and international economy and the consequences that this has had for the archaeological profession the focus of the taught graduate programme needs to be reviewed again.'

The 2010 Review Group recommends a review and clarification of the positioning of the MA, particularly in the light of the current employment climate and wider opportunities in internationalising the student body.

- 7.12 The 2001 Review Group recommended that the department (as it then was) should develop a strategic plan.

The School responded that 'the department adopted a strategic planning process which was recognised as a very positive step by the University, to the extent that the Department was one of the academic units chosen by UCD to meet the OECD team on its site visit when

preparing its report on the higher education sector in Ireland in 2004. The strategic planning approach also led to the appointment of two environmental archaeologists in 2006. Since 2008 the focus on strategic planning at School level has decreased as immediate budgetary and operational issues have been the key management concern.'

The 2010 Review Group welcomes the strategic developments reflected in the appointments outlined. In the Roles & Responsibilities of School, College and Programme Board (pp. 11-12), strategic planning takes places at both College and School levels. We recommend that, in the light of the UCD Strategic Plan to 2014, the College and School should develop and implement a research strategy that is congruent with the University research strategy, national policy and emerging trends globally. In particular, we recommend that such a strategic plan should serve to focus the School's research and teaching activities.

- 7.15 The 2001 Review Group recommended that the achievements of the department should be more actively publicised to promote the corporate image of the department and of University College Dublin.

The School responded that 'this continues to be a focus of all the activities of the School. A School Development Board was established in 2006 but this has been inactive over the last three years in the context of the University's development and fund-raising priorities and strategies'.

The 2010 Review Group recommends that the evidence-based benchmarking and publicising of the School's achievements remains a strategic imperative. This is particularly important evidence in the context of the School's ambitions to be among the top 30 Schools of Archaeology in Europe.

The 2010 Review Group welcomes and encourages the establishment of a forward planning group with a remit to consider and develop the strategic direction and focus of the School.

8. Support Services

- 8.1 The UCD School of Archaeology, like other Schools, relies on many support services provided at the College and University levels, including library resources, computing (IT) services, financial management, human resources (HR) and academic programme management and delivery.
- 8.2 One of the main issues noted in discussions with many of the groups interviewed is that there appears to be a degree of inefficiency in the financial and HR services. To take one example, there are inefficiencies in timely administrative processing of contracts which have down-the-line impacts on human resources, procurement procedures, and timely spending and reporting.
- 8.3 It was observed across interviews that there are inefficiencies relating to academic timetabling. To take one example, there are clashes in module scheduling in the Archaeology and Geology option, including lectures, exams and field trips.

Commendations

- 8.4 The School has excellent computing facilities; and
- 8.5 In the context of budgetary constraints, the relevant archaeology book holdings of the main library are improving.

Recommendations (for the School)

- 8.6 The Review Group recommends that the School continues to update its computing and hardware.

Recommendations (for the College and University)

- 8.7 The Review Group recommends that the administrative post of Student Officer, currently vacant, be filled as a priority;
- 8.8 The Review Group recommends that access to the relevant electronic journals should be maintained as a matter of priority;
- 8.9 The Review Group recommends that administration of grants and associated human resources be streamlined;
- 8.10 The Review Group understands that timetabling is undertaken at College level (in the context of a wide range of disciplines) and recommends that specific recognition be given to Archaeology in this regard and that the timetabling and scheduling of courses and course-related activities (e.g. field trips) be rationalised; and
- 8.11 The Review Group recommends that the School continue in its efforts to meet its obligations regarding fieldwork safety regulations established through the UCD Safety Office.

9. External Relations

- 9.1 The Review Group saw detailed evidence of the UCD School of Archaeology's cross-disciplinary connections within the University and with the broader community of Irish archaeological practitioners, academics and policy makers.
- 9.2 A meeting with a group of the latter in an external 'stakeholder' meeting demonstrated the value of the commitment made by members of the School and highlighted their leadership contribution. Indeed, they also indicated that they expected the School to continue to play a major role in commercial archaeology in Ireland. In the context of the economic downturn and consequent decreases in funding, the commercial sector in Ireland has lost critical mass and capacity. It was noted that, even in that context, there are opportunities for the School to pioneer the provision of CPD and the licensing of archaeologists in Ireland. The external stakeholders were also keen to identify the need to prioritise the study of the material results of the last two decades of commercial excavations through undergraduate, graduate and research activities. Three members of this broader community have been formally co-opted on to the academic staff of the School through the use of Adjunct posts.
- 9.3 The UCD School of Archaeology also maintains a series of funded and unfunded research networks across Europe and beyond with projects and networks stretching from North

America to the Philippines. These three tiers of external relations underpin the currency, impact and dissemination of the School's activities.

Commendations

- 9.4 The Review Group commends the School for hosting major international archaeological events, such as WAC-6 and The Theoretical Archaeology Group (TAG), to showcase the School's activities to academics and potential graduate students;
- 9.5 The Review Group welcomes the diversification of the academic staff which has accelerated the internationalisation of the School's research and teaching;
- 9.6 The Review Group notes that student placements are viewed as being mutually beneficial to practitioners, academics, policy makers and the students themselves;
- 9.7 Graduates of the School are highly valued by employers for their professional and transferable skills;
- 9.8 Adjunct positions enhance the capacity of the School and provide valuable contributions to research, teaching as well as additional external stakeholder engagement; and
- 9.9 Statutory bodies recognise the key research leadership contributions of members of the School to the development of priorities and strategy, with specific reference to the development of Archaeology 2020 (Repositioning Irish Archaeology in the Knowledge Society) and Research Framework for the Brú na Bóinne UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Recommendations

- 9.10 The School is encouraged to continue to develop its International strategy to consolidate undergraduate, postgraduate and academic staff links in North America in consultation with the UCD International Office;
- 9.11 The College may wish to develop and disseminate a coherent international strategy supporting individual Schools;
- 9.12 The School may wish to review its broad portfolio of national networks and commitments in order to focus on a set of core national priorities;
- 9.13 The School may wish to review its broad portfolio of international networks and commitments in order to focus on a set of core international priorities;
- 9.14 The School may wish to review its network of relationships with archaeological practitioners, academics and policy makers in order to formalise their input into research and teaching and learning opportunities;
- 9.15 The School should further develop a workload models to balance and incentivise the range of activities undertaken by academic staff in the School; and
- 9.16 In that context, the School should consider offering research leave and/or arranging workload allocation to maximise research outputs and the development of larger grant bids.

10. Summary of Commendations and Recommendations

Paragraph references below refer to the relevant paragraphs in the Report text.

A. Organisation and Management

Commendations

- 2.8 There is evidence of good communication and a strong sense of loyalty, collegiality and community among the staff in this single discipline School. This is manifest in the excellent relationships members of the School staff have with students at all levels and with external stakeholders. The UCD School of Archaeology is well respected by its stakeholders;
- 2.9 The School Executive Committee appears to work well for the School and School roles and responsibilities are clear; and
- 2.10 Early identification of the incoming Head and Deputy Head of School has allowed training and shadowing to take place, and is a good example of the proactive strategic approach that the current Head of School advocates.

Recommendations

- 2.11 Formalise a rotating term-limited programme of key role allocation (Teaching and Learning, etc.), in order to ensure a spread of systems knowledge across all staff members over time;
- 2.12 Develop an academic workload model to maintain a workload history over time and to facilitate planning. This will also allow information on the current status of academic staff teaching, research and leadership contributions to be captured;
- 2.13 Undertake evidence-based bench-marking against Archaeology departments in other national and international universities, as University metrics used in comparisons against other Schools in the College do not always reflect the specific needs of the discipline; and
- 2.14 Using international benchmarks, formally explore whether the subject weighting allocated to the laboratory-based modules can be reviewed to take account of the recent developments in the Archaeological science component of the School's programmes and of the Archaeological discipline internationally.

B. Staff and Facilities

Commendations

- 3.10. The School has successfully extended the scope of research and teaching capacity to include environmental archaeology as a key strength of the School;
- 3.11. The School has developed new specialist reference collections to support reaching and teaching capacity in environmental archaeology;
- 3.12. The Review Group commends the concept of sharing undergraduate teaching laboratories with the School of Biology; and

- 3.14. In the context of the overall space constraints of the School, the conversion of a photographic dark room (K010) into a small wet lab and the allocation of new unsecured storage area in Newman LG are welcomed by the Review Group.

Recommendations

- 3.14 The School is encouraged to clarify the current activity profiles of Administrative grades, using as comparators, the academic-related technical/experimental roles present within comparative departments of Archaeology elsewhere;
- 3.15 The School is encouraged to reconfirm its excellent reputation in the art and archaeology of Celtic and Early Christian Ireland through the reappointment to the post in Archaeology of the Late First Millennium BC / First Millennium AD in accordance with the UCD College of Arts and Celtic Studies' staffing plans as represented to the Review Group by the College Principal; and
- 3.16 The College is encouraged to endorse the approval of the 'gapped' Administrator post to support the student-facing activities of the School and re-engage support for the Head of School; and
- 3.17 Given that post-doctoral training provision at University-level appears to be highly generic (and somewhat basic), consideration should be given to mapping institutional training and development opportunities for post-doctoral fellows to their individual needs;
- 3.18 The College should address the School's space deficit and recognise its need for co-location and the replacement of sub-optimal laboratory, post-excavation and storage space. This will consolidate the School's identity, promote links between teaching and research as well as offering a competitive environment for postgraduate student recruitment; and
- 3.19 The College should finalise plans for the relocation of the School's activities from Crannog and Roebuck when that sector is redeveloped and is encouraged to develop a five year College Strategic Space Plan.

C. Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Commendations

- 4.6 The academic staff approach to teaching and learning appears to ensure a friendly and informal teaching atmosphere which is highly appreciated by students at all levels. Graduates of the School interviewed by the Review Group commented that the academic staff in the UCD School of Archaeology taught them how to think and how to effectively navigate the world of published papers and data sources, suggesting a commendable approach to learning;
- 4.7 Communication between students and staff is very good. This also includes advice regarding careers;
- 4.8 The practical aspects of teaching archaeology are acknowledged and implemented as much as the laboratory space allows. However, the incorporation of students in handling materials is problematic because of space restrictions;

- 4.9 All staff are active in research and aim to embed research in their teaching, particularly at higher levels; and
- 4.10 There is a plan to introduce innovative assessments.

Recommendations

- 4.11 Given the risk of over-assessment noted earlier, an audit of assessments should be carried out by the School with a view to standardising and streamlining the incidence and timing of assessments;
- 4.12 As part of University policy, students are requested to formally assess teaching in the School. However, they should be better motivated to participate in student evaluations of learning by, for example, more formalised communication and follow-up regarding actions taken or considered in the light of student feedback;
- 4.13 The size of Stage Two classes (which is now up to 91) should be reduced in order to allow better contact with teachers, to meet the needs of e.g. lab teaching, and to develop practical skills (such as fieldwork);
- 4.14 Wider use should be made of electronic submission tools (such as Dropbox in Blackboard or SafeAssign) to alleviate the burden on administrative staff;
- 4.15 More emphasis should be placed in both teaching and assessment on developing essay and report-writing abilities to match the expectations of potential employers;
- 4.16 Obligatory field trips/field work, which is crucial for teaching archaeology, should be extended beyond the current provision of 1-2 weeks;
- 4.17 To the extent practicable, an inter-School timetabling plan should be developed to allow for field trips/work to take place during the normal teaching year;
- 4.18 To discourage student absenteeism and develop student communication and associated skills, consideration should be given to the introduction of participation/attendance as part of the final grade (10-20%)
- 4.19 The School has articulated a strategic structure to undergraduate teaching and module choice which was presented to the Review Group. This should also be communicated to students;
- 4.20 To meet the expectations of students who seek a more focused education, consideration should be given to the introduction of specialised MAs and/or the clearer communication of the specialist pathways available on the current MA (which appears to be perceived as a general MA);
- 4.21 To enhance the academic development of doctoral students, their involvement in teaching should be increased in a systematic manner; and
- 4.22 To further enhance the international experience of students, teaching input by visiting/overseas-academic staff should be increased, even on a casual basis.

D. Curriculum Development and Review

Commendations

- 5.3 Students are provided with good information on module content;
- 5.4 Students at all levels appreciate the wide choice of thematic modules;
- 5.5 The scope of the curriculum developed in recent years to meet the general development of archaeology as a discipline, e.g. landscape and environmental archaeology, is welcomed by the Review Group;
- 5.6 The Review Group noted and welcomed an increased desire to focus on theory and method of archaeology; and
- 5.7 The School's engagement with Evening, Adult and Continuing Education is commended and if possible, should be maintained. This fulfils a public role for the School and has also served to attract mature students to the undergraduate and graduate programmes.

Recommendations

- 5.8 The School should undertake regular systematic evaluation of pathways and modules and modify the module portfolio based on this review. This may include the discontinuation of unpopular modules;
- 5.9 The portfolio of modules currently includes a wide range of modules. The School should consider reducing the number of modules offered while trying to balance the development of the discipline and students' interests. In particular, the School should seek to avoid rigidly following "inherited" research interests;
- 5.10 There should be a greater exploration of students' opinions regarding the curriculum in general (perhaps through formalised surveys and/or student fora);
- 5.11 Module pathways should be much better communicated to students who still think in terms of free module choice. In particular, consideration should be given to improving guidance and visualisation of possible pathways;
- 5.12 The School should consider whether specialisation is available too early in the curriculum (Level 2) and the extent to which students are aware of such specialisation;
- 5.13 In that context, the School should reflect on the possible fragmentation of archaeological knowledge as a result of too many alternative pathways offered at a relatively early stage in the undergraduate programme. Further, too many modules may result in a decrease in staff awareness of the whole structure and contents of teaching;
- 5.14 Modules taught by Occasional academic staff should be avoided if possible, or where they are required, such academic staff should have formal arrangements to teach and meet students during the semester;
- 5.15 The External Examiner system should be maintained and enhanced to facilitate periodic assessment of the curriculum by international scholars;

- 5.16 In an international context, the School should continue to extend the curriculum and profile of the School beyond the traditional Celtic studies and Irish culture agenda while remembering at the same time that this attracts foreign students; and
- 5.17 In that context, the Review Group recommends changing one of the leading research and teaching themes from “Ireland and the world” to “Ireland in the world”.

E. Research Activity

Commendations

- 6.11 The Review Group noted the very strong research culture in the UCD School of Archaeology and was impressed with the total amount of annual research funding received by the School;
- 6.12 The level of research productivity was considered to be very high, notably the large number of books and book chapters, journal articles, including in peer-reviewed international journals; national and international conference organising; and national and international conference presentations;
- 6.13 The hosting of 2008 World Archaeological Conference, held in Dublin, was a huge achievement, bringing the world to Ireland and Ireland to the world;
- 6.14 The dynamic and positive research environment, which includes a collegial atmosphere, attracts students at all levels, but in particular PhD students and Post-Doctoral fellows;
- 6.15 The School’s degree of strategic research planning shows vision, leadership and foresight; and
- 6.16 The high priority that the School gives to increase the internationalism of its collaborations and the global perspective of its results is commendable.

Recommendations (for the School)

- 6.11 The Review Group strongly concludes that the single greatest obstacle to further building on the School’s research strength is the sub-optimality and insufficiency of the research facilities, in particular but not limited to wet and dry research labs; collections management; archives and equipment storage and management;
- 6.12 The Review Group recognises that a lesser but still significant obstacle is ensuring sufficient protected research time and it agreed that rationalisation of the School teaching programme be undertaken with a view to freeing up time through streamlining module offerings;
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- 6.17 The space needs of the UCD School of Archaeology, which arise out of the scientific methodology of the discipline, should be given a high priority within a strategic space plan at the College level.

F. Management of Quality and Enhancement

Commendations and recommendations

- 7.5 The 2001 Review Group recommended that the position of the Senior Technician should be upgraded;

The School responded that, 'the position of the senior technician was strategically developed and re-aligned to the critical need for co-ordination and leadership in the IT area. This is now led by our IT Specialist;

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The School responded that 'this has been done on a couple of occasions over the last decade. With the dramatic changes in the Irish and international economy and the consequences that this has had for the archaeological profession the focus of the taught graduate programme needs to be reviewed again.'

The 2010 Review Group recommends a review and clarification of the positioning of the MA, particularly in the light of the current employment climate and wider opportunities in internationalising the student body.

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The School responded that 'the department adopted a strategic planning process which was recognised as a very positive step by the University, to the extent that the Department was one of the academic units chosen by UCD to meet the OECD team on its site visit when preparing its report on the higher education sector in Ireland in 2004. The strategic planning

approach also led to the appointment of two environmental archaeologists in 2006. Since 2008 the focus on strategic planning at School level has decreased as immediate budgetary and operational issues have been the key management concern.'

The 2010 Review Group welcomes the strategic developments reflected in the appointments outlined. In the Roles & Responsibilities of School, College and Programme Board (pp. 11-12), strategic planning takes places at both College and School levels. We recommend that, in the light of the UCD Strategic Plan to 2014, the College and School should develop and implement a research strategy that is congruent with the University research strategy, national policy and emerging trends globally. In particular, we recommend that such a strategic plan should serve to focus the School's research and teaching activities.

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The School responded that 'this continues to be a focus of all the activities of the School. A School Development Board was established in 2006 but this has been inactive over the last three years in the context of the University's development and fund-raising priorities and strategies'.

The 2010 Review Group recommends that the evidence-based benchmarking and publicising of the School's achievements remains a strategic imperative. This is particularly important evidence in the context of the School's ambitions to be among the top 30 Schools of Archaeology in Europe.

The 2010 Review Group welcomes and encourages the establishment of a forward planning group with a remit to consider and develop the strategic direction and focus of the School.

G. Support Services

Commendations

- 8.4 The School has excellent computing facilities; and
- 8.5 In the context of budgetary constraints, the relevant archaeology book holdings of the main library are improving.

Recommendations (for the School)

- 8.6 The Review Group recommends that the School continues to update its computing and hardware.

Recommendations (for the College and University)

- 8.7 The Review Group recommends that the administrative post of Student Officer, currently vacant, be filled as a priority;
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- 8.10 The Review Group understands that timetabling is undertaken at College level (in the context of a wide range of disciplines) and recommends that specific recognition be given to Archaeology in this regard and that the timetabling and scheduling of courses and course-related activities (e.g. field trips) be rationalised; and
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Commendations

- 9.4 The Review Group commends the School for hosting major international archaeological events, such as WAC-6 and The Theoretical Archaeology Group (TAG), to showcase the School's activities to academics and potential graduate students;
- 9.5 The Review Group welcomes the diversification of the academic staff which has accelerated the internationalisation of the School's research and teaching;
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- 9.7 Graduates of the School are highly valued by employers for their professional and transferable skills;
- 9.8 Adjunct positions enhance the capacity of the School and provide valuable contributions to research, teaching as well as additional external stakeholder engagement; and
- 9.9 Statutory bodies recognise the key research leadership contributions of members of the School to the development of priorities and strategy, with specific reference to the development of Archaeology 2020 (Repositioning Irish Archaeology in the Knowledge Society) and Research Framework for the Brú na Bóinne UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Recommendations

- 9.10 The School is encouraged to continue to develop its International strategy to consolidate undergraduate, postgraduate and academic staff links in North America in consultation with the UCD International Office;
- 9.11 The College may wish to develop and disseminate a coherent international strategy supporting individual Schools;
- 9.12 The School may wish to review its broad portfolio of national networks and commitments in order to focus on a set of core national priorities;
- 9.13 The School may wish to review its broad portfolio of international networks and commitments in order to focus on a set of core international priorities;

- 9.14 The School may wish to review its network of relationships with archaeological practitioners, academics and policy makers in order to formalise their input into research and teaching and learning opportunities;
- 9.15 The School should further develop a workload models to balance and incentivise the range of activities undertaken by academic staff in the School; and
- 9.16 In that context, the School should consider offering research leave and/or arranging workload allocation to maximise research outputs and the development of larger grant bids.

I. Summary of Commendations and Recommendations

- 10.1 In summary, the School has a strong commitment to research and teaching. It has a manifestly strong sense of community as evidenced in the interaction between students and staff and between members of the School as colleagues. Given the current challenges facing the University and the School, this sense of community and belonging has the potential to serve as a magnet for retaining staff and attracting students both nationally and internationally. This feature is a strength of the School and should not be undermined.
- 10.2 Furthermore, the profile of the School has undertaken a step change since the previous review through the appointment of academic staff in, for example, environmental archaeology and in practical and field-based teaching. This is to be commended as it extends the scope of the School's activities in terms of its disciplinary and international focus.
- 10.3 However, the space constraints faced by the School in the absence of a College Strategic Space Plan significantly limits the School's ability to deliver strategic outcomes (such as growth in postgraduate and international students) consistent with University's Strategy Plan. The College is urged to address the School's space deficit and recognise its need for co-location and the replacement of sub-optimal laboratory, post-excavation and storage space. This will consolidate the School's identity, promote links between teaching and research as well as offering a competitive environment in attracting postgraduate student recruitment.
- 10.4 The Review Group also recommends, *inter alia*, that the School develop an academic workload model to maintain a workload history over time and to facilitate planning, in addition to capturing the current status of teaching and research. Evidence-based benchmarking and publicising of the School's achievements should be a strategic imperative and is particularly important evidence in the context of the School's ambitions to be among the top 30 Schools of Archaeology in Europe.

Appendix 1

UCD School of Archaeology Response to the Review Group Report

We warmly welcome the Quality Review Report, and wish to record our gratitude to the members of the Review Group for their time, energy, commitment and courtesy. As a School, we found great value in the twinned processes of self-assessment and external review, and we look forward now to working with the UCD Quality Office to develop a Quality Improvement Plan based on this very measured and comprehensive report.

We feel that the report captures the essence of our School. It identifies our strengths and achievements, but also recommends pathways towards improvement. Since November 2010 we have been working as a team to address specifically those issues raised by the Review Group at the end of its site-visit, and we have already made progress with respect to individual workloads and the undergraduate module portfolio. The delivery of the report now allows us to continue the process of improvement more assiduously.

The Quality Review Report also identifies and articulates very clearly the wider challenges that we face, but it also highlights, very valuably, the ways in which our School can, with support from the College and the University, realise its potential as one of the top centres for teaching and research in European Archaeology. We especially welcome these recommendations and we look forward to working with the College and University towards meeting our goals.

Finally, we wish to thank the UCD Quality Office for its guidance and encouragement throughout this process, especially in the preparation of the Self-assessment Report.

Appendix 2



Schedule for Review Visit

UCD School of Archaeology
Date 18-21 October 2010

Pre-Visit Briefing Prior to Site Visit: Monday 18th October 2010

- 17.30-19.00 Review Group meets in the hotel to review preliminary issues and to confirm work schedule and assignment of tasks for the following three days - **RG and UCD Quality Office only**
- 19.30 Dinner for the Review Group - **RG and UCD Quality Office only**

Day 1: Tuesday, 19th October

Venue: K012, UCD School of Archaeology

- 09.00-09.30 Private meeting of Review Group
- 09.30-09.40 Review Group introduction to the School staff
- 09.40-10.15 Review Group meets Head of School
- 10.15-10.30 Break
- 10.30-11.30 RG meet with SAR Co-ordinating Committee:
- 11.30-11.50 Tea/Coffee break – Review Group only
- 11.50-12.35 Review Group meets with Principal of UCD College of Arts and Celtic Studies
- 12.35-12.45 Break
- 12.45-13.30 Review Group meets with technical/administrative/other School support staff
- 13.30-14.15 Lunch – Review Group only
- 14.15-15.00 Review Group meets with representative group of staff to discuss research issues
- 15.05-15.25 Review Group meets with Finance Manager, UCD College of Arts and Celtic Studies
- 15.30-15.45 Tea/Coffee break – Review Group only

- 15-45-16.45 Tour of outlying School research facilities:
 • Crannog/Roebuck via Humanities Institute of Ireland (time permitting)
- 16.45-17.45 Tour of facilities in Newman Building
 • Archaeology Corridor including K014
 • Lower Ground floor storage area
 • A104
- 17.45-18.15 Review Group meets to review key observations
- 18.15 Review Group Departs*

Day 2: Wednesday, 20th October
Venue: K012

- 08.45-09.15 Private meeting of Review Group
- 09.15-10.00 Review Group meets with a representative group of Postgraduate/PhD students
- 10.00-10.10 Break
- 10.10-11.10 Review Group meets with representative group of academic staff to discuss teaching & learning issues; curriculum development; assessment etc.
- 11.10-11.30 Tea/Coffee break
- 11.30-12.30 Review Group meets with representative group of undergraduate students
- 12.30-12.45 Private meeting of Review Group to review findings
- 12.45-13.30 Lunch – lunch with staff
- 13.30-14.15 Review Group meets with Head of School (2004-08) and staff appointed since 2001
- 14.15-14.30 Review Group meets with School post-doctoral fellows
- 14.30-14.40 Break
- 14.40-15.30 Review Group meets with group of external stakeholders
- 15.30-15.45 Break
- 15.45-16.45 Review Group private meeting with School staff (by request – 10 minute intervals)
- 16.45-17.10 Review Group meets Senior Project Co-ordinator, UCD Buildings and Services
- 17.10-17.45 Review Group Private meeting and Depart

Day 3: Thursday, 21 October

Venue: K012

09.00-09.30	Review Group private meeting
09.30-10.15	RG meets with recent BA and MA graduates
10.15-10.45	Review Group meets with Head of School, to sweep-up/clarify any outstanding issues
10.45-12.30	(Optional) Review Group meets with unit or University staff to clarify outstanding issues or start preparing draft Review Group Report
12.30-13.15	Lunch – Review Group only
13.15-15.00	Review Group finalises first draft of Review Group Report and prepare exit presentation – and confirm arrangements/deadline for Review Group completion
15.00-15.15	Review Group meets with Head of School, to feedback outline strengths and recommendations on areas for further development
15.15-15.30	Break – reconfigure K012 for exit presentation
15.30-16.00	Exit presentation to all available staff of the School – to be made by an external member of the Review Group (or other member of the Review Group, as agreed) summarising the key findings of the Review Group
16.00	Review Site Visit ends – Review Group depart