



University College Dublin

Periodic Quality Review

UCD School of Business

February 2012

Accepted by the UCD Governing Authority at its meeting on 19 June 2012

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Appendix One: UCD School of Business Response to the Review Group Report

Appendix Two: UCD School of Business Schedule for Quality Review

1. Introduction and Context

Introduction

- 1.1 This Report presents the findings of a quality review of the UCD School of Business, at University College Dublin, which was undertaken in February 2012. The School response to the Review Group Report is attached as 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 (e.g. Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, 2007). 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 approach used in this quality review for the UCD School of Business varied from the usual UCD model in two key ways:

- Use of an external Chair for the RG
- Use of self-assessment documentation prepared for external accreditation of the School (EQUIS accreditation, 2010), with supplementary information and self-assessment activities within the School to update and enhance material used for the accreditation.

1.6 Institutional reviews of UCD (in 2005/06 and 2010/11) had included recommendations to develop greater alignment between external accreditation processes and internal quality assurance mechanisms. It was decided, in 2011, to pilot the use of external Chairs in a small number of reviews over the coming academic years, from which to evaluate the approach and consider whether the University's quality assurance processes would benefit significantly from adopting the use of external Chairs on a wider basis.

1.7 Additionally, this was the first time that the scope of the self-assessment was explicitly modified to align the self-assessment by the School, with the external accreditation process. Although efforts have previously been made to align internal quality assurance reviews with aspects of external accreditation for Schools, the actual accreditation documentation has not previously been used directly for quality review purposes. There has also been an effort, from a reviewer guidance perspective, to enhance the accreditation process for the School's benefit, rather than duplicate it.

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

- Mr. Peter Rafferty, Director International Business Development, Vlerick Leuven Ghent Management School (Chair)

- Professor Nakiye Boyacigiller, Dean, Sabanci School of Management, Sabanci University, Istanbul
 - Professor Frank McDermott, UCD School of Geological Sciences(Deputy Chair)
- 1.6 The Review Group visited the School from 19-22 February, 2012 and held meetings with School staff, University staff and students, including: the Dean of UCD School of Business; School Management Committee; SAR Co-ordinating Committee; School academic staff; School support staff; external stakeholders who included members of the School’s Irish Advisory Board, some of the School’s corporate connections and representatives of companies participating in the Quinn School of Business Internship Programme; graduate students and undergraduate students from across a range of the School’s programmes. The site visit schedule is included as Appendix 2.

UCD School of Business External Accreditation

- 1.7 In 2010, the School was awarded a five-year extension to its EQUIS accreditation. The School undergoes an *Association of MBA’s (AMBA)* peer review visit this year (2012) and in 2013, the School will undergo *The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB)* re-accreditation. In addition to these accreditations, the School is committed to continuous improvement across all of its activities.

Preparation of the Self-assessment Report

- 1.8 In the context of UCD institutional review recommendations to enhance the University’s quality assurance procedures, the UCD Quality Office agreed to the School’s request to consider an alignment of the quality review process with the demands of external accreditation for the School. It recognised that the issues and topics covered in the EQUIS SAR bore a close alignment to the structure and content of the UCD QA Self-Assessment Report. The School agreed to provide a supplementary commentary that included information not provided for EQUIS purposes and updated statistical information (furnished as separate appendices).
- 1.9 The supplementary document was compiled by a subgroup of the School Quality Review Committee in December 2011, and submitted to the Dean for review and editorial oversight in January 2012. All members of the Quality Review Committee were invited to comment. A broad range of School staff provided comments/submissions in relation to sections of the report and their views were incorporated into the subsequent drafts.
- 1.10 In addition to the EQUIS Self-assessment Report and supplementary information, the Review Group considered documentation provided by the Unit and the University during the site visit.

The members of the Co-ordinating Committee were:

Professor Pat Gibbons (Chair)
Dr. Ann Bourke

Jefferson Smurfit Professor of Corporate Planning
Director of Teaching and Learning

Professor Anthony Brabazon	Director, Smurfit School
Ms Aoife Doherty	Associate Director, Smurfit School
Ms Tracy Donohue	Associate Director, Quinn School
Dr. Linda Dowling-Hetherington	Associate Director, Centre for Distance Learning
Dr. Suzie Geiger	Director of Research & Innovation
Ms Marie Lawlor	Director of Administration
Ms Evangeline Leonard	School HR Partner
Dr. Michael MacDonnell	Director, Quinn School
Professor Damien McLoughlin	Associate Dean-Internationalisation & Distance Learning
Professor Ciarán Ó hÓgartaigh	Dean
Professor Andrea Prothero	Associate Dean - Academic
Ms Elaine Tyrell	Senior School Administrator

The University

1.9 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.

1.10 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 38 Schools in seven Colleges;

- UCD College of Agriculture, Food Science and Veterinary Medicine
- UCD College of Arts and Celtic Studies
- UCD College of Business and Law
- UCD College of Engineering and Architecture
- UCD College of Health Sciences
- UCD College of Human Sciences
- UCD College of Science

1.11 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 Business

- 1.12 The UCD School of Business is the premier business school in Ireland as evidenced by international rankings, accreditations and research achievement. It is one of the largest Schools at UCD, located within the UCD College of Business and Law.
- 1.13 The School consists of two constituent parts, situated on two sites. The undergraduate school, the Quinn School of Business is located on the main University campus at Belfield, while the graduate school, the Smurfit School of Business, is based on a dedicated campus at Blackrock, about 7km from the main campus.
- 1.14 There are almost 3,500 students registered on programmes provided through the School in the current year, of whom approximately 2,200 are undergraduates. Almost 70 research postgraduates and approximately 270 MBA students (23% of these are Executive MBAs) are currently registered. A further 2,628 students are enrolled on the School's overseas programmes.
- 1.15 The School's programme offerings comprise modules offered by its six Subject Areas: Accountancy; Banking and Finance; Human Resources and Industrial Relations; Management; Marketing; and Management Information Systems. Each subject area is responsible for the quality of programme offerings and is led by a Subject Area Head (SAH). In parallel to this academic structure is a programme structure. The major programmes are led by academics who ensure that the programmes have academic integrity and are delivered to a high standard. At a more strategic level, there is a postgraduate programme board and an undergraduate programme board, each consisting of academic, administrative and student members.
- 1.16 All programmes are subject to School and University programme planning and review mechanisms.
- 1.17 Programme reviews have been undertaken in recent years through the University Quality Review process on the Centre for Distance Learning (CDL) programme offerings in Singapore and Hong Kong (2008) and the BSc Sri Lanka Programme (December 2010).
- 1.18 A new Dean was appointed in September, 2011 and the roles and responsibilities of the School Management Team were subsequently refreshed and restructured.
- 1.19 Based on a thorough review of the School's finances throughout 2010 and 2011, the University granted the School some latitude in respect of academic recruitment. Thus, recruitment is underway for twelve academic positions at Lecturer/Senior Lecturer level. In addition, two Professorships, one in Global Leadership and the other in Quantitative Finance, have been approved and are in the process of being advertised or filled.
- 1.20 The UCD School of Business is scheduled to be the focus of a Development (fund-raising) Campaign, starting in 2012. This campaign will be designed and conducted with the assistance of the UCD Development Office. The primary emphases of this campaign are based on the

University's current Strategic Plan, Forming Global Minds. Specifically, the campaign is targeted at enhancing:

- the intellectual capacity of the School through new academic hires;
- access to the School through endowed Scholarships;
- the School's physical and learning environment.

1.21 As a backdrop to this funding campaign, the 'new' management team is embarking on a strategy development process. A feature of the new strategy will be to position the UCD School of Business as 'Ireland's Global Business School'. Underpinning that position, three major themes are under discussion which will inform research, programme development and executive development:

1. Putting us on the Right Path
2. Sustaining foreign direct investment
3. Scaling indigenous enterprises

1.22 The School has two advisory boards, the Irish Corporate Board and the North American Corporate Board. These were initiated in the early nineties, and are a well established feature of the School's governance, and provide a useful conduit to the international business community. The Boards meet twice yearly and have an integrated meeting annually. The Boards' traditional role was to advise the Business School Dean and assist in development activities.

1.23 The School has achieved a strong position in terms of international rankings, accreditations, student profile and research achievement. It leads the competition in the domestic market, however, a number of competitors offer a series of "niche" products which compete aggressively on a price basis. While the School has concentrated on enhancing its international position, it should be mindful that it does not neglect its domestic market as the majority of its students are recruited from Ireland.

1.24 The Smurfit School offers the broadest suite of postgraduate programmes in the country, exploiting the breadth of faculty resources at the School's disposal. The School and its programmes are differentiated on the basis of the quality of the curriculum, designed by research-active faculty members. The School continually refreshes its programmes and a review is currently taking place which seeks to highlight the key differentiators and refresh the designs of the programmes to ensure market relevance and student appeal.

1.25 The Quinn School is differentiated on the basis of the intensity of the learning and social experience. There has been an emphasis on small-group teaching where problems are actively discussed in class throughout the undergraduate experience. This intensive interaction is a key

differentiator at the undergraduate level. Due to the Irish university sector funding crisis this delivery model is being re-assessed.

- 1.25 The 2010 EQUIS Report found the School to have made good progress in the research domain, with research as a core component in the School strategy. A large majority of permanent academic staff have recent published output and the figure had increased 50% since previous EQUIS audit. Funded research projects and external linkages and collaborations have also been enhanced. The School is ranked 68th for research performance across the top 100 schools in the Financial Times rankings (EMBA rankings, October 2011) and this ranking equates to a ranking of 15th among the 26 European schools listed.

Process Feedback

- 1.26 Whilst it is clear that the use of documentation prepared for previous external accreditation exercises has greatly facilitated the conduct of this review, it has also identified some misalignment between the format of the Irish HE Quality Review approach and the external accreditation processes. To this extent it has not been possible to independently verify qualitative aspects of programme delivery which are assumed to have been adequately reviewed in the prior accreditation processes. In particular, the Review Group would refer to the degree programmes which are delivered overseas, wherein the existing quality reviews undertaken indicate satisfactory reviews have been carried out, it has not been possible for the Review Group to comment on in the current review.

Recommendations:

- 1.27 The School and University should consider enhancing the efficiency gains of building future Quality Reviews on the foundations of the key accreditations AACSB, AMBA and EQUIS (assuming they continue to be held by the School) through the following:
- Appointing external Review Group member(s) already versed in the accreditation processes
 - Aligning the scope of the Review Group visit and meetings to enable the Review Group to identify the areas to be reviewed in depth in advance of the visit
 - Degree programmes delivered in locations outside the main sites of the School should be represented at the Review Group meetings through the use of video technology.

2. Organisation, Management and Governance

Commendations

- 2.1 There is abundant evidence for strong and decisive leadership from the new Dean and it is clear that he has the respect and support of the School's staff and other stakeholders.

- 2.2 The Dean is strongly commended for successfully negotiating with the University for the appointment of a large tranche of new Academic Staff. This is a notable achievement in view of the financial constraints that currently exist within the University.
- 2.3 The new delegated organisational structure involving four Associate Deans appears to be fit for purpose and working well. The role of Associate Dean for Internationalisation and Distance Learning is noted and is appropriate in view of the School's ambitions for increased Internationalisation. The model of a small School Management Team and a larger School Executive appears to be working well. There seems to be a clear delineation of roles (operational vs. strategic respectively).
- 2.4 There is clear evidence for strong collegiality and unity of purpose within the School. The School's management is commended for its role in engendering this, particularly in times of increased pressures on budgets
- 2.5 The School's budgetary control measures appear to be working well and they reflect current best practice. The School's management has achieved an excellent balance between providing transparency and the need to maintain overall collegiality and staff morale.
- 2.6 The composition of the oversight Boards (Irish and North American) is extremely impressive. This provides a high level of external oversight and governance for the School's activities and represents a considerable resource for the School. As the School continues to develop and grow, there is a need to consider how best to employ the expertise and international contacts provided by these Boards in the future.
- 2.7 Students perceive that clearly defined structures and mechanisms exist in the School to allow them to participate in its governance and to provide feedback on their courses, particularly at the level of individual modules.
- 2.8 The Staff/Student Forum meetings are an excellent means for student/staff feedback and there is evidence that feedback is swiftly acted upon by staff.
- 2.9 The School is commended on the development and operation of a comprehensive workload model. In particular, the School is highly commended on its operation of a teaching remission scheme to encourage high quality internationally competitive research. This is a good example of the School's well developed management structure.

Recommendations

- 2.10 The School's revised Strategic Plan should be finalised as a matter of urgency. The absence of an up-to-date strategic plan made it difficult for the Review Group to evaluate the extent to which the School's strategic goals and aims are currently being implemented.
- 2.11 Through no fault of the School, the University and School plans for internationalisation appear to be somewhat misaligned. The University should ensure that its internationalisation goals are

aligned with School plans and vice versa. In particular, a clear business plan, agreed by both parties, should be in place before the University launches new initiatives overseas.

- 2.12 The extent to which new academic appointments at Lecturer/Senior Lecturer/Professorial level, are aligned with the School's strategic plan, should be more clearly articulated by the School at the earliest opportunity.
- 2.13 As the School continues to grow it will be necessary to review whether the School's current organisational structure can continue to support all of its activities.
- 2.14 The University should give clearer signals to the School in relation to how the School can use its budgetary surplus to fund current and planned developments and new staff appointments on a multi-annual basis.

3. Staff and Facilities

Staff: Commendations

- 3.1 The morale and dedication of the staff seemed to be very high. Across the School, staff are highly appreciative of their colleagues: "We get to work with really good people." Staff expressed understanding of the severity of the economic situation and the justification for the cuts already imposed. However, amongst staff, in particular non-academic staff, there appeared to be a consensus that "this is as lean as we can become".
- 3.2 The increase of twelve full time staff, including two chairs, shows strong commitment to deal with the academic staff capacity problem.
- 3.3 The new Dean appears to have a strong relationship with University Management which should assist the School in tackling some of its current challenges.
- 3.4 The existence of a School level dedicated HR staff person liaising with the University on HR issues was viewed as a highly responsive resource.
- 3.5 The staff commented very favorably on the wide range of training and development opportunities they are provided with. This is potentially a very effective way to motivate staff despite the current severely restricted financial circumstances vis a vis salary increases and promotions.
- 3.6 Staff members appreciate the opportunities they receive for lateral movements within the University as a vehicle for job enrichment.
- 3.7 There was recognition that the PMDS is working on the development side, even if it is in need of further development as a performance evaluation tool.

- 3.8 That the School continues to support attendance at two international conferences a year for academic staff members despite the cutbacks shows continued commitment to research and staff development. The Review Group was particularly impressed that this opportunity is also extended to doctoral students.

Staff: Recommendations

- 3.9 The Review Group noted the impact on reduced staffing and recruitment levels as a result of the Employment Control Framework and advises the School management team to continue to closely monitor the situation.
- 3.10 There is concern that continuing to motivate individuals may become difficult especially if further cuts are imposed. This could be an impediment to new planned initiatives. The School should ensure resources and facilities are in place to deal with the expected and hoped for results of development activities. (For example, an increase in Chinese students will result in the need for appropriate Careers Office and International Office personnel to support their needs).
- 3.11 Services to students and staff have been curtailed due to staff shortages (e.g. library, registry, international office and career office). The Review Group notes the negative impact of this curtailment of services on the overall satisfaction level of the staff members.
- 3.12 There is a need for a more robust performance management system. As noted above, the PMDS is working well as a staff development tool, but not as a performance assessment tool. Most critical, the nature of the performance management system for academic staff should be different from that of the one for non academic staff.
- 3.13 The induction program for new academic staff has been a one half-day University-wide program that is comprised largely of a checklist approach to orienting new staff members to the University. This year with the large group of new appointments expected, there is recognition of the need to do a high quality Business-School-wide induction program. The Review Group supports this initiative.
- 3.14 A new enhanced induction programme for academic staff is also an opportunity to launch an upgraded mentoring programme for junior members of staff, which to date has been considered by some to have been a weakness of the School.
- 3.15 As the proportion of international students increases, it is going to become increasingly important to have additional language support for international students (e.g. helping to improve their conversational English as well as help with editing of papers etc.)

Facilities: Commendations

- 3.16 Quinn: The building's architecture is excellent for undergraduate education. The openness, the spaces for student study, social activities and that academic staff, students and staff all share

the same space, is highly commendable. Students appreciate the building, and in fact noted that they rarely want to go anywhere else. The building fosters a feeling of community, which may partially account for the positive morale amongst staff and students “we are all in this together.”

- 3.17 Smurfit: A beautiful statement building, although in places in need of repair, restoration and renewal.
- 3.18 The IT system across the facilities is good and is considered to be highly reliable, which the IT staff view as their key goal. This is especially important in Smurfit which is used 12 months a year and hence has no provision for significant renewal down-time.

Facilities: Recommendations

- 3.19 Smurfit: While a beautiful statement building, it is in need of some retrofitting and redesign.
- 3.20 In both Quinn and Smurfit there is a need for more flexible seating in rooms. For example, it may be more appropriate if flat, rather than tiered seating is used. Should Executive Education move to a new locale (as suggested as a possibility – see below) their facility could perhaps be used by the graduate programmes.
- 3.21 Quinn: The Review Group was informed that in the new large classroom in Quinn (built by combining two smaller classrooms) students who sit on the two ends of the class are unable to see the whiteboard. If this is the case, it needs to be remedied.
- 3.22 The Executive Education Space: The room and quality of the executive education space in Smurfit is inadequate given the growth and strategic redirection planned here by the Dean (see also paragraph 9.11). The impending capital campaign may be an opportunity to move the Executive Education unit to new dedicated facilities which could be devoted to Executive Education or enhanced as education/motivation centres e.g.
- A new building at Blackrock.
 - A prestige property, perhaps adjacent to golf or other outdoor pursuits centres that could be a destination for upscale, executive education programs for senior executives. Such facilities and combined experiences are increasingly part of the competitive offering in this sector.
- 3.23 Library: Many individuals noted concerns with the limited Library opening hours. In addition, budget cuts have meant that virtually no new books have been added to the collection and there are worries about journal subscriptions, though the Review Group was unable to obtain specific details of service reductions. The Review Group recognises that the Library leadership is constantly reviewing their operations to optimise service levels. The Review Group urges them to ensure this is a transparent process which invites input from staff.

- 3.24 Smurfit library hours are inadequate, especially for a School with so many part time students. However, it appears that the main concern here is a need for a quiet, warm place to study afterhours rather than a library per se. The question of whether Library hours could be shifted was raised, where the Library could be opened and closed later in the day. This should be discussed with a group of representatives from the student body.
- 3.25 While the IT system was viewed overall, as quite good, students noted that care must be given, so that UCD IT systems do not to fall behind the competition. Ten years ago the School was viewed as a leader in what it provided its students by way of IT facilities. Competitors are now catching up. The Review Group noted that wireless access was somewhat patchy in areas of the Quinn building. For example, technological innovations may require the School to build a media lab facility in the not too distant future, in order to stay current with the latest teaching pedagogies in business.

4. Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Commendations:

- 4.1 There are opportunities for students to take courses in other colleges (schools) within the University. This provides a wide range interesting options for pursuit of studies for students and demonstrates an understanding and acceptance of the desirability of enabling students to design educational experiences in line with their aspirations and interests.
- 4.2 The School continues to attract a credible level of international students to the fulltime MBA programme and has appropriate plans to improve the level of international participation in other postgraduate programmes.
- 4.3 The development of international student recruitment partnerships (including shared study arrangements which are by their structure considered strategic) in key target markets is to be commended.
- 4.4 UCD School of Business has indicated its intention of re-entering the executive education market through the appointment of a Dean of Executive Education and the initial recruitment of appropriately qualified personnel.
- 4.5 The School has adopted the use of current technology in some aspects of programme design and delivery (e.g. all students are expected to be equipped with a laptop computer). A technology and learning resource (Business ELearning Team) is available for the development of learning materials using these technologies. It is understood that this is being rolled out across the School.
- 4.6 Programmes at both UG and PG levels have developed a process of orientation for incoming students. Student who attended the orientation were unanimous in their praise of the process and the resulting integration into the life and community of the School.

Recommendations:

- 4.7 The current mechanism for compensating the School of Business for offering business modules in other UCD Schools is dissuasive. UCD should examine how funding systems can be modified to encourage such cross-teaching.
- 4.8 UCD should ensure that sufficient funding continues to be available to maintain international recruitment activities that can be delivered in the current intensely competitive environment. Failure to do so may result in an unhealthy “clustering” of non-Irish nationalities in the classroom and amongst the Schools’ talent pool presented to employers.
- 4.9 Whilst UCD has been supportive of the School of Business in maintaining staff/student ratios the international development plans indicate that recruitment activities must be regularly reviewed to ensure sufficient academic staff are recruited.
- 4.10 The School should ensure that physical facilities, teaching and administrative personnel and supporting materials are appropriate for Executive Education clients and participants. This will be particularly demanding as the reputation of UCD in Executive Education increases, as competitor analysis will compare UCD with the level of provision available in other international business schools, aiming at a similar target market.
- 4.11 UCD School of Business has developed significant opportunities for students in undergraduate programmes to avail of international study experiences. As this is greatly appreciated by those who have taken these opportunities and by the employer representatives that the Review Group met, it is suggested that the School consider extending further this opportunity for students, where possible. Appropriate resources will need to be in place to achieve this.
- 4.12 Whilst the School staff has demonstrated an understanding of the importance of the advance identification of, and subsequent confirmation of relevant learning in students, it is not clear that the procedures have been developed fully in practice with the student body. It is advised that the University processes are further examined in advance of the 2012 accreditation exercise.
- 4.13 The undergraduate School has migrated from a concept of “small group teaching” (group size circa 50) to “large group teaching.” A classroom has been modified to enable larger groups to be accommodated. The current academic year is the first since the change was made and it is advised that a comparison be made at year end on student grades profiles to ascertain if differences (attributable to this change) are identifiable.
- 4.14 The very tight schedule for delivery of exam grades at the end of the first semester, has the potential to leave the process exposed to errors. The potential lack of sufficient time for this process may also reduce the effectiveness of the use of external examiners. It is suggested that:

- The schedule of programme start, exams and grade delivery dates be re-examined with UCD Registry, in order to relieve some of the time pressure on post-semester 1 examination grading
 - The sequence of exams be examined to ensure those with large numbers of students taking subjects are completed at the start of the exam cycle, to allow the maximum time for grading
- 4.15 Attendance at the orientation programmes for the School of Business is not currently considered obligatory. It is suggested that the School should make attendance mandatory.

5. Curriculum Development and Review

Commendations:

- 5.1 The Business School is (with the support of the University) recruiting additional academic staff to facilitate the development and delivery of new degree programmes to meet market needs (e.g. MSc in Digital Marketing).
- 5.2 There is evidence that programmes which have repeatedly failed to attract a sufficient number of students have been curtailed (e.g. MSc. Innovation and Technology Management and part-time MSc Project Management Practice).
- 5.3 With the support of the institute of Bankers, UCD offers a part-time MBA programme in facilities in Dublin city centre, indicating its willingness to respond to market locational needs.

Recommendations:

- 5.4 UCD School of Business has a broad range of undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes available. It was not evident that a regular review process is in place to ensure that the range of programmes continues to be relevant to the needs of students and employers. Neither is it clear that opportunities for sharing facilities and modules across degrees are optimised. It is suggested that UCD (programme coordinators) collectively consider a regular review of programme offerings (e.g. annually/5-yearly including: content; student feedback; target markets; employer needs and delivery structure and methods).
- 5.5 The School of Business may consider which other programmes could be offered in Dublin city centre locations to attract a greater share of the part-time degree programme market in Ireland.
- 5.6 The Review Group noted that the School of Business incorporates ethical and social dimensions into its modules. In some institutions, as in UCD, this education has been effectively integrated in subject modules instead of delivered as a separate subject. Some schools prefer a two-pronged approach continuing to offer stand alone 'Business and Society' modules, while

ensuring that ethics is integrated throughout the curricula. The School of Business should keep its approach under review.

- 5.7 It was not clear that programme level feedback from students (on both academic and support services elements) is canvassed on a systematic basis. If this is the case it could be considered as part of the input to the regular programme review process mentioned above.
- 5.8 The schedule for changes to module descriptors may inadvertently result in descriptions being unnecessarily less detailed than they could otherwise be. It is suggested that the School with the Registrar, examine if the schedule can be adjusted and/or the cyclical nature of the activity (and the issues that make it difficult to change) be clearly explained to academic staff.

6. Research and Innovation

Commendations

- 6.1 Despite severe economic circumstances UCD has, within the Employment Control Framework, facilitated a continuation of academic recruitment. This is to be highly commended.
- 6.2 The increase of the academic staff members holding doctorates from 65% in 2000 to 94% today is to be highly commended and bodes well for research productivity.
- 6.3 Research productivity among academic staff is strong with 1.6 and 2.4 international refereed journal articles per year in 09/10 and 10/11 respectively reflects appropriate research output from a research oriented school.
- 6.4 Recent recruits from strong PhD programmes and with initial publications in quality journals, also bodes well for the future of the School.
- 6.5 The system of teaching remission for research productivity and achievement is standard practice at first class research oriented schools and is the case at the School.
- 6.6 The Review Group commends the School for the existence of a formal sabbatical system and research leave.
- 6.7 Support for attendance at two international conferences a year, despite the economic challenges, shows continued commitment to staff development. The Review Group is particularly impressed that this is extended to doctoral students.
- 6.8 The funding of new chairs in the business bio-technology and cultural entrepreneurship is to be commended.

6.9 PhD Programme: The Review Group commends the many ways the PhD programme has been revamped to improve its quality and rigour. Several of the positive changes-noted include the following:

- Revamping the PhD programme to require 30 credits of coursework.
- Instigating a scholarship programme for Chinese PhD students. Important both so School academic staff can extend their own research to China, understand China better and to train a group of scholars from China with ties to Ireland and UCD.
- Despite funding issues and many part-timers, the students in the doctoral programme have excellent completion rates (modal completion is five years).
- Provision for PhD students to attend international conferences.

Recommendations

6.10 Research Funding has been very sporadic. School research funding has decreased significantly in the last number of years (though understandable given the economic circumstances but of concern nevertheless). Staff need to be encouraged to apply for EU Research grants. The perception exists amongst some academic staff that support is there for the grant application process but not the post-grant administration process. The Review Group urges that efforts be made to improve ties between the UCD Research Office and the Business School.

6.11 The new appointments to be made, if coming from outside of Europe, should be asked to apply (if eligible) for the Marie Curie career integration grants, as soon as possible.

6.12 Should the School define a thematic focus for its research? On the one hand the School's goal to be Ireland's global business school means more internationally focused research needs to be done. On the other hand, the School is also charged with improving Ireland's competitiveness. The balancing of these two foci will not be easy, but will yield benefits to the School, and will optimise research focus and help develop the School's brand.

6.13 Finding more funding for PhD students is critical and should be considered as a priority. The assertion that only 40% are fully funded would be considered low by the Review Group, for an institution that considers itself to be a premier research university. Options to consider would include requiring PhD students to work as research assistants.

6.14 The School should address the apparent weakness around academic mentoring especially considering the influx of new appointments.

6.15 As Dublin is an attractive destination, a larger visiting staff programme would have been expected for the School. This may help increase research output and mentoring of junior academic staff.

7. Management of Quality and Enhancement

Commendations

- 7.1 The School is highly commended on achieving triple accreditation status (AACSB, EQUIS and AMBA). Its programmes are therefore subject to regular external reviews by the accrediting bodies, ensuring a degree of oversight of the content, quality and delivery of its programmes. It is important that the School's triple accreditation status is maintained.
- 7.2 There is abundant evidence that the School is acutely aware of the changing external environment in which it operates, and is conscious of the need to maintain and enhance quality in view of increased competition, both nationally and internationally.
- 7.3 Several examples of programme updating and revision were provided. Examples include the revision of the Master in Management (MiM) programme in 2010 and the introduction of a new curriculum for the BComm Programme commenced in September 2011. The MBA and the Master in Accounting programmes have also been revised substantially within the past two years.
- 7.4 The School utilises a wide variety of student feedback mechanisms and does not rely solely on the standard online student feedback system that typically attracts low response rates from students. The School is commended for using staff/student forums at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Crucially, students also reported that their feedback and suggestions offered in these meetings are normally acted upon in a timely fashion by the School.
- 7.5 Overall, there is a very high level of satisfaction among both the undergraduate and postgraduate students. In general their UCD experience appears to be very positive.
- 7.6 Student feedback on the Centre for Distance Learning and the Careers Office in the Smurfit School in particular was very positive.

Recommendations

- 7.7 The School should consider whether the very wide range of programme offerings comprising 12 undergraduate and 27 graduate taught programmes is the best marketing strategy for student recruitment and continued growth.
- 7.8 The programme portfolio is already extremely broad, yet new intra-university opportunities remain to be exploited at the intersection between business and other disciplines. The School needs to consider carefully whether it can capitalise on these opportunities whilst maintaining its already long list of programme offerings.

- 7.9 While there is evidence that the School has a culture of proactively reviewing its activities on a regular basis (e.g. Bain Review), the School should introduce a more formalised and regular process of periodic re-evaluation and renewal at programme level.
- 7.10 Better feedback mechanisms need to be put in place so that students can give more formal feedback at the programme level, perhaps via the staff/student forum meetings. Students felt that they have adequate opportunities to provide feedback at the level of individual modules, but not at the overall programme level.
- 7.11 Undergraduate (Commerce) students have indicated that they need to receive more help and better guidance from academic staff to help them to make their final year subject choices.
- 7.12 Consideration should be given to providing more detailed feedback to (Quinn) students on their exam results.
- 7.13 Smurfit School (graduate) students felt that there were few opportunities for them to provide feedback about programmes or to interact with the School's management at a high level (e.g. with the Dean).
- 7.14 Smurfit School (graduate) students indicated that student selection, particularly in terms of English language fluency for some programmes, such as the MiM, should be more stringent.
- 7.15 The EQUIS 2010 Review Report recommended that the School "Reviews the performance management systems to better align them with international standards." This Review Group endorses the recommendation, however, it is noted that the School has been constrained from taking meaningful action in this area in the past, due to government regulations. The environment related to productivity increases in the public sector is changing and the Review Group would encourage the School to avail of this change, to implement, in consultation with staff, a performance management system.
- 7.16 While it was noted that the School of Business and the School of Languages & Literatures operate separate Student Forums resulting in BComm International students being able to discuss only Business modules in the Business School Forums, the EQUIS 2010 Review Report commended the programme as an exemplar of cross disciplinary integration. The Review Group recommends that a mechanism is set up to facilitate student feedback at the programme level.
- 7.17 As stated in paragraph 1.27, the Review Group were not able to directly assess how the quality of programmes overseas compare with those offered in Dublin. A recommendation to facilitate this in future is set out in 1.27 above.

8. Interaction with Support Services

Commendations

- 8.1 The School is commended on its provision of a series of parallel support services for its students in the Smurfit School. Examples include admissions, programme and careers offices, all of which appear to do an excellent job in supporting the students based in both buildings.
- 8.2 The School is commended for its proactive engagement with UCD central support services such as the International Office and the Careers Office.
- 8.3 The Review Group was highly impressed by the calibre of the School's support staff representatives that it met. There is abundant evidence that the School's support staff work well together as a team to provide the best possible support for the School's staff and students. Morale appears to be high despite the ongoing financial constraints on the University.
- 8.4 The School's support staff appear to have coped remarkably well with the additional work pressures that have resulted from the need to expand student numbers at a time of reduced funding to support the University's administrative and support functions. However, the University must recognise that there are practical limits to the requirement to 'do more with less'.
- 8.5 In general, despite the cutbacks and challenging financial climate, staff of the Business School recognise that most support service staff across the University endeavour to provide the best possible level of service in difficult circumstances.
- 8.6 IT Services are commended for proactively engaging with academic and support staff to improve the quality and user experience of online service applications (e.g. module descriptor software, gradebook, class list reports etc.). Overall students receive a high level of IT technical support and have access to a wide range of centrally provided software applications.

Recommendations

- 8.7 The School should address the issue of building and Library opening hours in the Smurfit School as a matter of urgency. It is recommended that the School should consult with the student cohort to establish how opening hours could be best adjusted to take account of the students' work patterns, availability etc.
- 8.8 The Review Group noted that some students simply require a comfortable, heated after-hours location in which to sit and do their group work, projects and personal study. For some students, provision of such after-hours facilities on the Blackrock campus appears to be more important than necessarily having access to a full on-site out-of-hours library service. Nonetheless, the early closing times of the Library on the Blackrock campus causes particular difficulties for part-time students who work during the day and this should be addressed in a cost-effective way, having consulted with the part-time student cohort.

- 8.9 Restrictions on University funding to support the purchase of new text books, subscriptions to electronic databases and journals present severe problems for all Schools across the University, including the School of Business. The School should engage more proactively with the Library and, perhaps, should explore ways to part-fund some of these purchases and subscriptions, even if on a temporary basis, or via sponsorship from business. Imaginative funding models may be required to ensure that subscriptions to electronic data bases and key journals continue uninterrupted. Should the School be able to contribute to the cost of such action, these arrangements should be seen as a short-term measure and should be reviewed as soon as the funding situation in UCD and the Library improves.
- 8.10 UCD Registry should more clearly recognise that the needs of graduate students are different from those of undergraduates. There is a clear case for the introduction of a differentiated or segmented service for undergraduate and postgraduate student cohorts. Postgraduate students, particularly some of those in the Business School pay very high fees compared with the 'fees' paid by undergraduates. It is therefore, not unreasonable that postgraduate students should expect to receive a better level of service from Registry. As an example, the provision of a separate Graduate Student Desk telephone helpline should be a priority for UCD Registry. While it is recognised that this may result in a small decrease in the level of service to undergraduates, a poor student experience at the postgraduate level could be even more damaging, because 'word of mouth' marketing is particularly important for this student cohort.
- 8.11 The Review Group recommends the establishment of a UCD Assessment Users Committee similar to that employed by IT Services. This would improve communication and allow meaningful feedback by academics to UCD Assessment. Given the crucial importance of UCD Assessment's role in maintaining the academic integrity of the assessment process, this is a key recommendation of the Review Group.
- 8.12 The School welcomes the introduction of a system that allows graduate students to pay fees in three instalments each year. However, the UCD Fees & Grants Office should consider introducing a system of monthly (e.g. direct debit) payments, to facilitate graduate students in particular who pay relatively high fees.
- 8.13 Issues have been identified in relation to the management of UCD Residences. In particular there is a need for better communication, consultation and flexibility on the part of UCD Residences. There is also a clear case for the separation of undergraduates and postgraduates in residences. These issues could be resolved with minimal additional cost but would have a strong positive effect on the student experience.
- 8.14 The University and UCD Registry should take steps to alleviate the pressure on academic staff surrounding exam marking and grading, especially at the end of the first semester. Starting the academic year one week earlier in September, for example, could significantly alleviate this pressure. While the loss of one week of research time at the end of the summer would not be popular, it does seem to be a relatively small price to pay in order to alleviate time pressures on

the assessment process at the end of the first semester. The Review Group takes the view that this is becoming a serious issue and is threatening the academic integrity of the grading process.

- 8.15 There is a view among academic staff that some of the UCD Registry deadlines in relation to the module descriptor content management system are too early in the academic year and are somewhat arbitrary. Academic staff must update module descriptors mid-way through the second semester, for modules that they are still delivering, possibly for the first time. This allows little time for reflection on how to improve the content and delivery of a module. Registry needs to better communicate to academic staff the rationale for such early deadlines (e.g. timetabling and other constraints).
- 8.16 The University and the School need to cooperate in order to put in place better pastoral and practical supports for international students arriving for the first time in Ireland and UCD. This problem is likely to become more acute and diverse as new markets with different expectations are targeted (e.g. India).
- 8.17 Issues with the level of service offered by the UCD Research Office, particularly at the post-award level were noted by the Review Group. Some of these problems could be solved or alleviated by putting in place a system in which specific personnel in the post-awards have responsibility for particular groups of Schools. Academics should be provided with more than a generic e-mail address or webpage; they need the opportunity to establish a good working relationship and rapport with the post-awards research staff.
- 8.18 Stage One students should routinely receive careers advice and support to help them plan their subject choice and career options. The School should provide the subject-specific advice to these students.
- 8.19 The University and HR should aim to avoid undue and apparently unnecessary delays in routine short-term replacement of staff, e.g. to cover maternity leave.
- 8.20 Parking is a particular concern for staff of the Business School because of the need for some staff to travel between campuses during the working day. The University should address this problem to facilitate the movement of staff as required.
- 8.21 Concerns were expressed about the quality of the internal postal service and it is noted that this problem is particularly acute for this School because it operates on two separate campuses. The University should ensure that service level agreements are put in place to improve and to foster better confidence in the service.
- 8.22 Overall, IT support and network access appears to be very good in the School. However, the Review Group found that the provision of wireless access was poor on the upper floor of the Quinn Building. While it is recognised that this is not the primary means for network provision at this level in the building, it should nonetheless be improved by IT Services, at least in the meeting rooms and in other communal areas.

9. External Relations (Contribution to the Community and Corporate Connections)

Commendations

- 9.1 The School is one of only circa 57 schools worldwide to have triple accreditation, this is an impressive achievement.
- 9.2 The School has an excellent reputation in the community as “Ireland’s premier business school.”
- 9.3 The School has two strong and highly committed advisory boards. The composition of the oversight Boards (Irish and North American) is extremely impressive. These provide a high level of external oversight and governance for the School’s activities and represent a considerable resource for the School. As the School continues to develop and grow, there is a need to consider how best to employ the expertise and international contacts provided by these Boards in the future. In particular, members of these Boards could be important contacts for the School’s development (fundraising efforts) in the coming years.
- 9.4 The links that academic staff members have with the Irish business community are of great importance and a strategic strength. Furthermore, the consulting contracts and board directorships held by academic staff members with prestigious organisations is a key resource for the School.
- 9.5 The new Director of Executive Education is a key appointment.
- 9.6 The internationalisation strategy of the School and the recognition that this should span regions is a critical asset. There is a clear vision of what the School needs to be doing in this most critical area.
- 9.7 The appreciation that you can’t just internationalise programmes, students and academic staff, that you also need to internationalise your research is laudable.
- 9.8 Reputation of executive education is high, both due to the excellent reputation of the School and the quality of the education programmes offered (earning evaluation ratings of 4.5/5.00 and above).
- 9.9 Engagement of students on non-profit and/or humanitarian activities is considered an impressive strength.

Recommendations

- 9.10 Solving the cap on remuneration levels should be a priority, in order to facilitate academic staff who are considered to be “star executive education teachers”, to be enabled to teach more on programmes, thus gaining more resources for the School.

- 9.11 There is an urgent need to internationalise Executive Education in order to make it more attractive, not only for international executives, but top Irish executives as well. This may be the only way to compete with the executive programmes at leading international business schools. A premier quality facility (see facilities section) will be crucial to achieving this.
- 9.12 The advisory board members that the Review Group met with commented that the School did not take sufficient advantage of their vast number of high quality UCD alumni. It was felt that many of these individuals are ready for continuing education programmes and are a largely untapped student pool.
- 9.13 Related to 9.12 above, there is a need to increase offerings from outside of the Business School but within the University. It is important to increase joint offerings perhaps with the Schools of Medicine and Medical Science, Economics, and Mathematical Sciences. This would not only lead to a potential increase in funding but also help to foster more interdisciplinary ties between the schools, that could then perhaps lead to other projects (offerings to undergraduates, joint research).
- 9.14 Staff commitment to and participation in, executive development, seems low at 12.5% (EQUIS SAR) and even at the current figure of 15-20%. How to increase this without reducing high quality research and teaching in degree programmes is a challenge of the first order. This could be done, perhaps, by increasing the overlap and hopefully synergy between the areas academic staff are doing research in and the foci for executive education.
- 9.15 The School is encouraged to take further advantage of the CEMS alliance which is now not only in Europe but also has top schools in China, Latin America and India. While retaining a separate Masters of International Management programme, UCD could consider building on its CEM relationship with these schools in other areas as well, further enhancing its international offerings.
- 9.16 Given the prominent role played by Smurfit and Quinn within the Dublin, and the wider Irish, business community, more cases¹ could be written by the School's academic staff. This would help attract more Executive Education clients and enhance the overall reputation of the School. A risk here is finely balancing the demand for more top tier research with the need to be responsive to the business community's needs.
- 9.17 The School should consider establishing how much research is being conducted in the area of ICT. How much of this research is being conducted with colleagues across the University, particularly with those in the UCD School for Computer Science and Informatics was not clear.

¹ Cases are detailed accounts of real life business situations, where an executive is confronted with an important and complex decision to make. Cases are a favored pedagogical tool in management education; in some institutions the majority of the curriculum is taught using cases. There has been a movement for more diversity in cases in terms of the nationality of the home country of the company under analysis. Thus it would be natural for Irish executives to want to see at least a portion of their curriculum focus on some challenging situations faced by Irish companies.

Appendix One

The UCD School of Business Response to the Review Group Report

The UCD School of Business welcomes the Quality Review Report as the culmination of a very useful and constructive process. We welcome in particular the support given by the Review Group to many aspects of our activities and the significant commendations in the Report.

The recommendations made in the report are helpful and constructive and will help the School to further enhance the quality of our research and teaching. The School will consider each of the recommendations carefully over the coming months as we prepare our Quality Improvement Plan. As a result the process and its documentary outcomes will be used to inform the School's academic and resource planning activities.

We thank the members of the Review Group for their constructive comments in this regard and also thank the UCD Quality Office for their support throughout the process.

Appendix Two



Schedule for Quality Review Visit

UCD School of Business

19-22 February 2012

<u>SUNDAY, 19 FEBRUARY 2012</u>	Radisson blu St Helen's Hotel, Stillorgan Road, Dublin 4
16.30	Briefing for the Review Group Chair
17.15 – 19.00	Preliminary Meeting of the Review Group
19.30	Dinner to launch the review, hosted by the UCD Registrar & Deputy President
<u>MONDAY, 20 FEBRUARY 2012</u>	Review Group based in the UCD Quinn School of Business on the main UCD campus at Belfield, Dublin 4 Rooms Q272 & Q233 available to act as meeting/interview rooms Room Q201 will act as Resource Room with supporting documentation
08.30-09.30	Private meeting of Review Group (RG)
09.30-10.15	RG meet with Principal of the UCD College of Business & Law and Dean of the UCD School of Business
10.15-10.30	Break – Private time for RG
10.30-11.15	RG meet with Dean and some members of the School Management Team

11.15-11.30	Tea/coffee break
11.30-12.15	RG meet with members of the School Quality Review Coordinating Committee, with the exception of those already met with as part of School Management Team
12.15-12.30	Break – Private time for RG
12.30-13.30	RG Working Lunch
13.30-13.45	Private Time for RG
13.45-14.45	RG meet with academic staff with primary focus on Teaching & Learning and Curriculum issues
14.45-15.00	Break – Private time for RG
15.00-15.25	Meeting 1 with support staff representatives
15.25-15.45	Meeting 2 with support staff representatives
15.45-16.00	Tea/coffee break
16.00-16.50	RG meet with School Academic Programme Coordinators
16.50-17.00	Break – Private time for RG
17.00-17.45	RG available for private individual meetings with staff
17.45-18.15	Tour of Quinn School facilities
18.15	RG depart from Quinn School

<u>TUESDAY, 21 FEBRUARY 2012</u>	RG based in the Quinn School Building, Belfield Campus until noon and thereafter in the Smurfit School, UCD Blackrock Campus
08.45-09.15	Private meeting of RG
09.15-09.55	RG to meet with: Director of Registry; Head of Library Academic Services (Humanities & Social Sciences); Associate Librarian; School HR Partner
09.55-10.00	Break – Private time for RG
10.00-11.00	RG to meet with group of undergraduate students
11.00-11.15	Tea/coffee break
11.15-12.00	RG to meet with members of School Research Committee
12.00	RG transported to the UCD Michael Smurfit Graduate Business School, Blackrock, Co. Dublin
12.30-13.15	Lunch
13.15-14.00	RG to meet with group of graduate students
14.00-14.15	Break – Private time for RG
14.15-15.00	RG to meet with Head of School, School Director of Finance & Senior School Administrator responsible for HR matters
15.00-15.15	Tea/coffee break
15.15-16.00	RG to meet with members of staff appointed in last 2/3 years
16.00-16.30	RG to meet with MBA Careers Manager and graduate Business Career/Placement Manager

16.30-16.45	Break – Private time for RG
16.45-17.15	RG available for private individual meetings with staff
17.15-17.45	Tour of Smurfit facilities with School Director of Development
17.45-18.00	Break – Private time for RG
18.00-19.00	Meeting with corporate and employer representatives
19.00	RG depart from Smurfit School
<u>WEDNESDAY, 22 FEBRUARY 2012</u>	Review Group based in the UCD Quinn School of Business on the main UCD campus at Belfield, Dublin 4
09.00-09.30	Private meeting of RG
09.30-10.00	RG meet with Jefferson Smurfit Professor of Corporate Planning
10.00-10.30	Optional meetings with particular staff members at request of RG
10.30-11.00	RG telephone conference call with Professor of Marketing/Director of Centre for Marketing Studies
11.00-11.15	Tea/coffee break
11.15-12.30	RG prepare draft RG Report
12.30-13.30	Working Lunch
13.30-15.30	RG prepare draft RG Report
15.30-15.45	Tea/coffee break

15.45-16.00	RG meet with Dean of the UCD Business School
16.15	Exit presentation by RG to all available School staff
16.45	RG depart from Quinn School.