



University College Dublin

Periodic Quality Review

UCD Access and Lifelong Learning

June 2012

Accepted by UCD Governing Authority at its meeting on 9 October 2012

Table of Contents

	Page
1. Introduction and Overview of UCD Access and Lifelong Learning	3
2. Methodology	6
3. Planning, Organisation and Management	8
4. Functions, Activities and Processes	14
5. Management of Resources	19
6. User Perspective	20
7. Summary of Commendations and Recommendations	21

Appendix One: Bibliography

Appendix Two: UCD Access and Lifelong Learning's Response to the Review Group Report

Appendix Three: Schedule for Review Site Visit to UCD Access and Lifelong Learning

1. Introduction and Overview of UCD Access and Lifelong Learning

Introduction

- 1.1 This Report presents the findings of a quality review of UCD Access and Lifelong Learning, at University College Dublin (UCD), which was undertaken in April 2012.

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 composition of the Review Group for the UCD Access and Lifelong Learning was as follows:

- Professor Alan Baird, UCD School of Veterinary Medicine (Chair)
- Ms Maura McGinn, UCD Director of Institutional Research (Deputy Chair)
- Professor Penny Jane Burke, School of Education, Roehampton University, UK
- Professor Trevor Gale, School of Education, Deakin University, Australia
- Professor Dan Goodley, Professor of Psychology and Disability Studies, Manchester Metropolitan University, UK
- Dr Veena O'Halloran, Director of Student Experience and Enhancement Services, University of Strathclyde, Scotland

1.6 The Review Group visited UCD Access and Lifelong Learning from 16-19 April 2012 and held meetings with UCD Access and Lifelong Learning staff, University students and staff, including the Registrar and Deputy President, ALL Head of Unit, Section Heads, Co-ordinating Committee, ALL staff members, University academic staff, University administrative staff, mature students, students with disabilities, HEAR students, Open Learning students, Access Programme students. The Review Group also met with a staff on an individual or small group basis. The site visit schedule is included as Appendix 3.

1.7 In addition to the Self-assessment Report, the Review Group considered documentation provided by UCD Access and Lifelong Learning, and the University during the Site Visit.

Preparation of the Self-assessment Report

1.8 UCD Access and Lifelong Learning set up a Self-assessment Co-ordinating Committee in accordance with the UCD Quality Office Guidelines. The members of the Co-ordinating Committee were representative of UCD Access and Lifelong Learning staff across the various categories. The members of the Co-ordinating Committee were:

- Ms Anna Kelly, Director of Access and Lifelong Learning (Chair)
- Dr Rhonda Wynne, Manager, Professional Development
- Ms Jenny Murphy, Student Adviser Access Centre
- Ms Tina Lowe, Disability Access Officer
- Ms Thomond Coogan, Mature Access Co-ordinator
- Dr Bairbre Fleming, Director of Adult Education
- Ms Julie Tonge, Disability Adviser
- Ms Wendy Elliott, Learning Support Tutor
- Ms Fiona Sweeney, Access Centre Manager
- Mr Gregori Meakin, Student Representative
- Mr Jason Mackin, Student Representative

1.9 The Co-ordinating Committee met every two weeks from mid-October until the completion of the SAR. To facilitate communication with members of Access and Lifelong Learning ALL staff not on the Co-ordinating Committee, a series of 5 workshops were conducted prior to the start of the SAR process and throughout the self-assessment process. In addition, staff were invited to contribute elements of their work to the report and a series of data gathering exercises were undertaken, at both a Unit and a University level. The draft SAR was circulated to all members of ALL staff and the feedback gathered was incorporated in the final draft of the SAR.

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.

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 organised into 38 Schools in seven Colleges;

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

- 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 Access and Lifelong Learning

- 1.13 In 2007/8, in order to give renewed focus and impetus to the challenge of facilitating educational access, the University undertook a review of a range of widening participation activities, and as a result and uniquely among Irish universities, UCD opted to integrate the continuum of access-related strands, resulting in the establishment of UCD Access & Lifelong Learning. In 2009, the University appointed a Director of Access & Lifelong Learning (ALL), and brought together the previously stand-alone strands of access and adult education-related activity, including disadvantaged students, those with disability, mature learners, and those studying part-time. This new unit falls within the remit of the Registrar and Vice-President for Academic Affairs.
- 1.14 The services of the ALL Unit are clustered into the Adult Education Centre, the Access Centre, the Disability Access Office, and the Unit has a staff complement of nineteen. The Unit also convenes the DRHEA Widening Participation Strand, which comprises thirteen Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the region.
- 1.15 UCD's Strategic Plan 2014 - *Forming Global Minds* – undertakes to
- “broaden the range of opportunities for students with diverse backgrounds to participate in our educational programmes, and in particular will capitalize on new, flexible modes of course delivery to enable more inclusive approaches for learners at different stages of their personal and professional lives. We will consolidate and develop existing access programmes while significantly expanding opportunities and supports for mature and lifelong learners. Specific actions include: ...”*
- 1.16 The publication of the UCD Strategy - *Mainstreaming Equality of Access and Lifelong Learning – Opening Worlds* - builds on the commitments contained in UCD's Strategic Plan to 2014 and provides the University roadmap for increasing diversity and widening participation and aspires to develop an inclusive education environment.

2. Methodology

- 2.1 This review was extensive in scale and in breadth. A series of meetings provided the Review Group with an opportunity to address issues raised from their reading of the Self-assessment Report and its supplementary volume. Key stakeholders, including staff and students met with the Review Group. The Review Group also visited areas of the University, visited support providers and consulted an extensive range of relevant written and online

materials. All members of the Group participated in all discussions and meetings. The Report has been read and approved by all members of the Group.

- 2.2 At the exit presentation the Review Group provided an overview of the initial comments. This presentation was attended by the Registrar of the University who had also met with the Review Group during its review.
- 2.3 The Self-assessment Report provided a narrative insight into the workings of the ALL unit and the extent and variety of its activities and responsibilities. A set of appendices (Volume 2; 219 pages) was provided as a supplement, along with a significant volume of additional information which was made available in the room dedicated to this review.
- 2.4 The Review Group studied the report of a previous *Thematic Review of Academic Supports for Students* in UCD (2011) and used this to provide context to this specific report. This previous document defined academic supports in the following fashion:

Academic student support refers to a range of services provided to undergraduate students, both full and part-time. Support includes advice and guidance at various points of transition and progression through UCD. It also encompasses the various skills, practical, generic and specific to the programme students are studying. Academic support also encompasses the specialist skills and services some students with particular needs require to participate and succeed in higher education.
- 2.5 The Review Group met highly experienced and dedicated staff from each of the three strands of ALL. In meetings with students and stakeholders the degree of satisfaction of user groups was generally high or very high. Specific examples of outstanding dedication and activity were evident and should be commended.
- 2.6 A clear overview of the methodology undertaken in writing the SAR was presented to the Review Group, with a clearly defined and researched SWOT analysis and an impressive set of strengths outlined with great positive feedback on ALL staff from colleagues, students and tutors.
- 2.7 There was a clear discourse of disability access throughout the document and articulated by staff and students during the time of the review.
- 2.8. The recommendations of a previous (2011) *Thematic Review of Academic Supports for Students* are noted here and, accordingly, this current review of the ALL Unit complements these and is more focussed to ALL. The expertise of the External Reviewers was particularly suited to providing evidence- and research-based recommendations.
- 2.9 The discussions of the Review Group were informed by an awareness of international good practice.

- 2.10 The current fiscal climate and ALL's limited resources suggest that any increase in UCD's Widening Participation (WP) effort will need to come from the University's resources as a whole, through creatively rethinking how these resources are currently used. Rather than redirect resources from Schools and Colleges into the ALL unit, the aim is to reposition widening participation and social inclusion as the work of everyone, not as additional work or as the work of some. The importance of such a strategy is emphasised in the international research literature, which argues that separate or 'bolted on' WP units are less effective in changing institutional structures, practices or cultures to address the complexities of social inclusion in higher education (Jones and Thomas, 2005; Burke, 2008; 2012, Gale, 2011). In making WP everyone's responsibility, not only are more resources enlisted to the 'cause' but the WP effort will be more effective.
- 2.11 The international research literature indicates that in more heterogeneous student populations the most benefit to academic achievement comes from serious engagement with student diversities, within academic programmes (Milem 2003). Here the emphasis is on programmes of substance, not simply those that project an image of WP.

3. Planning, Organisation and Management

Access and Lifelong Learning

Commendations

- 3.1 Engagement of ALL with outcomes of the *Thematic Review of Academic Supports for Students* (2011) was evident although understandably some of the initiatives are at a fledgling stage. The Review Group commends the work done to date.

Recommendations

- 3.2 The recommendations of *Thematic Review of Academic Supports for Students* (2011) are noted below and the Review Group recommends that the ALL unit revisit these recommendations and proceed with their implementation as appropriate. It is noted that the University has established a Working Group chaired by the Vice Registrar for Teaching and Learning to oversee their implementation.

Recommendations from the 2011 Thematic Review of Academic Supports for Students

R1: *That a senior member of staff be given overall responsibility for the development and co-ordination of Student Supports. Such responsibility should not be an "add-on" to an already overloaded portfolio, but should be a significant part of that member of staff's responsibilities so that it is given the amount of attention it deserves.*

R2: *That different terminology be adopted instead of "Student Supports"; the new terminology should be indicative of an integrated array of services accessed by all students to enable them to achieve their full potential.*

R3: *That the University develop a vision for student support underpinned by a positive philosophy and ethos enabling all students to develop the knowledge, skills and attributes required for success in learning and beyond. In addition, that the University produce a strategy to implement its vision which promotes a pedagogical model of student support and considers ways in which the outcomes of student support can be measured.*

R4: *That the student support strategy should take into consideration alternative ways of providing support for students, including aligning the nature of support with programme requirements and challenges 12*

R5: *That students be integrally involved as partners in the development of student-centred “Student Supports”, moving beyond consultation towards empowerment.*

R6: *That a review of the structure of the University to include both academic and support services, be undertaken with a view to producing simplification, and alignment of structures to activities.*

R7: *That a review of the impact of modularisation be undertaken to identify ways in which its implementation might be modified to improve the student experience. In particular, opportunities to ensure that students have a sense of identity and can make meaningful relationships with peers and staff should be built in from the very beginning of all programmes.*

R8: *That appropriate professional development opportunities are provided for staff and students involved in providing student support*

R9: *That critical academic skills (essay writing, referencing, information skills etc.) should be fully integrated into the Semester 1 curriculum, and built on through subsequent stages of each programme in a discipline appropriate way.*

R10: *That steps would be taken to improve the experience for students on the BA programme, particularly through providing structured opportunities during Orientation and throughout the first semester, for students to make relationships with their peers and with academic staff. In addition, an urgent high-level review needs to be undertaken to streamline provision and to improve the clarity of structures and pathways within the BA programme.*

Widening Participation

- 3.3 UCD’s current student population is relatively homogenous, with students from ‘under-represented’ backgrounds significantly below target in almost every disciplinary field. This has implications for the University. Apart from how it is positioned in relation to HEA policy

and in terms of its contribution to Irish society as a whole, there are also implications for the academic achievement of UCD's students.

- 3.4 Meta-analyses of the international research literature concerning both schooling and higher education indicate that as student populations become more heterogeneous, students' academic achievements also improve especially for the most advantaged students (Milem 2003; Perry et al. 2010a, 2010b). Conversely, homogeneity tends to diminish academic excellence. While UCD has achieved WP improvements in recent years, there is clear justification to shift the University's efforts into a second gear.
- 3.5 While operational level engagement in support of individual students was evident and commendable, there appeared to be little engagement between the Colleges and ALL on the achievement of strategic targets, with each stakeholder group effectively acting independently of each other. It was also clear from the Review Group's meetings with academic staff that the institutional level Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were not given equal consideration or prioritisation. In some instances, performance in some KPIs (e.g. income generating activities) was perceived as more important and compensated for poor performance in others. Specifically, it was acknowledged that this was the case for the access KPI. The absence of benchmarking performance was seen to contribute to this.
- 3.6 Generally, research literature indicates that the most effective WP strategies are those that focus on the central functions of the institution, specifically its research and teaching missions (Gale 2011).
- 3.7 The designation of priority areas within funding schemes is a proven strategy in academic contexts, to generate interest and solicit engagement in those priority areas.
- 3.8 UCD currently operates competitive grant schemes in both research and in teaching and learning. Earmarking a portion of these funds currently available for widening participation and social inclusion projects is cost neutral but has potential to be effective in legitimising, embedding and centring this agenda within high priority areas of academic work. Such prioritising would also send a clear message, both internally and externally, about the level of UCD's commitment to the WP agenda. In addition, as well as the prospect over time of establishing UCD as a leading research intensive university in this WP field and of establishing connections with cognate researchers and research centres in other institutions, there is also the real possibility and expectation that such research will contribute to addressing theoretical and empirical issues specific to UCD's circumstances. Successful grants should be required to include a research dissemination strategy commensurate with this aim.
- 3.9 Favourable consideration should also be given to quality proposals that include an ALL staff member with relevant expertise and/or experience as part of the research team.

Recommendations

- 3.10 The Widening Participation (WP) agenda should be embedded across UCD, repositioning the Access and Lifelong Learning unit (ALL) as supportive of rather than constituting the sole or main component of UCD's WP effort.
- 3.11 Establish 'widening participation' and 'social inclusion' as a priority area in UCD's internal competitive funding schemes in research and in teaching and learning, with preference given to quality proposals focused on specific areas of interest and need relative to UCD's particular circumstances.
- 3.12 UCD should identify and ring fence funding for priority projects incorporating widening participation and social within research and teaching and learning grant schemes.

Operational and Strategic Planning within the ALL Unit

- 3.13 The emphasis upon reporting and tracking was commendable; however, the Review Group noted that there was little evidence of robust operational and strategic planning within ALL. The self-assessment was undertaken in the absence of reference to the Unit's plans, leaving the Review Group with the clear impression that the strands within ALL were operating as independent silos. This made assessment difficult in terms of determining whether ALL was achieving what the University wanted it to achieve. The reported lack of funding was a concern. Nevertheless, very little financial information or analysis was provided or evidence of demonstrating value for money. The Review Group gained no understanding of how resources were targeted towards different activities and different student groups. Moreover, the desire for more staff, including executive assistants, was not supported by evidence on what additional staff might achieve.

Commendations

- 3.14 The University has undertaken to develop a more strategic approach to institutional planning and performance management. This was evident in the recognition of the importance of data collection, monitoring and analysis; the setting of institutional KPIs; the appointment of the new Director of Admissions and Enrolment with a mandate to managing enrolments in a way that ensures entry targets are met; and consideration of KPIs at executive level in the Colleges.
- 3.15 It is valuable that the Director of ALL is represented on local and national HEI and Access organisations, pushing policy and practice developments.

Recommendations

- 3.16 Connect ALL more widely with structures and community of UCD. Some staff in ALL currently experience a disconnect from wider University business and strategy. For the Unit

to address this it must develop an annual strategy in which all staff (Adult Education, Access Centre and the Disability Access Offices) are involved and included. A number of activities of this strategy could include:

- 3.16.1 Staff of the Unit should be represented on a number of cross-University committees and working groups where appropriate (e.g. those pertaining to teaching and learning; research; internationalisation; student recruitment and retention).
 - 3.16.2 Adult Education should explore directly with College Principals and Deans the possible new access routes into a host of programmes and subjects, the development of current and future part time (including evening) BA and BSc provision and the wider involvement of academic colleagues in outreach work (including summer schools).
 - 3.16.3 The Disability Access Officer should work more closely with the Centre for Disability Studies at UCD (located in the UCD School of Psychology www.ucd.ie/psychology/disabilitystudies/) to explore shared aims around policy, evaluation and research building on relationships with College champions to clearly promote the work of ALL including the WP element of course provision (Adult Education), strategies for outreach and educational support (Access Centre) and policy and awareness training (Disability Access Officer).
 - 3.16.4 Staff of the Unit should document examples of good practice – through a host of dissemination outputs including new developments to the ALL website - in relation to inclusion and widening participation across the University in order to highlight to colleagues such successes.
- 3.17 KPIs should be established for degree programmes in parallel with incentivised targets. UCD Senior Management and College Principals identify and agree stretch-targets (e.g. 10% annual increase) in relation to the participation rates of under-represented groups in their disciplinary area.
- 3.18 The Review Group noted that the University was not hitting its targets for access and there was a lack of clarity on whether the 15% target was for the University as a whole, for each College, School or for individual degree programmes (SAR page 21, figure 15). To bring clarity to UCD's WP commitment, clear and specific WP targets need to be set for Colleges and Schools, which stretch current performance. That is, future targets should be set in relation to current performance with a stretch component consistent across Colleges and Schools (e.g. 10% annual increase on current performance).
- 3.19 The Review Group felt strongly that to drive positive action and achievement of the strategic objective, a more strategic and joined-up approach was needed, with the Colleges and ALL working in partnership towards clear and agreed objectives. To ensure this achievement, the widening participation KPI (individualised for Colleges and Schools) needs to be incentivised through the resource allocation model – through either financial reward or

claw-back if the performance is not met. This would result in partnerships between Colleges, Schools, ALL and other support services, and ensure a 'joined-up' approach to achieving strategic objectives. This approach would reinforce University-wide ownership of access and lifelong learning, clarify ALL's mandate in supporting Colleges and Schools in delivering their academic priorities, and encourage a more sophisticated approach to setting WP targets with, for example, targeted action directed at specific programmes such as encouraging women into engineering.

- 3.20 One simple cost-neutral way Deans and Colleges could work towards meeting their targets is to review the appropriateness of the standard entry requirements for the target groups. Specifically, the 3 language requirement for entry into the University represents a significant barrier for students from under-represented groups. The Review Group noted that it was within the University's power to set entry standards and strongly recommended the removal of this barrier by waiving this particular requirement.
- 3.21 The cost of independent assessment by educational psychologists was identified as another barrier to entry for applicants. The University could also consider offering free assessments by the University's own educational psychologists to disadvantaged schools to increase the pool of eligible students from schools in disadvantaged areas.

Operational and Strategic Planning within Adult Education Centre (AEC) Unit

- 3.22 The University is committed to promoting learning in society more generally through the provision of adult and continuing education. At the time of the review there was uncertainty about the future of AEC and its place within the University's plan for achieving its access and lifelong learning objectives in the future. The Review Group learned that there were two clearly defined strands of activities within AEC, each of which contributed to the University's objectives – the adult education open-learning programme which supports lifelong learning and the access course which supports widening participation. AEC has a strong sense of identity and belief in its missions and historical contribution to the University, including as a source of income generation.
- 3.23 As noted above, the Review Group was impressed by the enthusiasm of the academic staff they met for welcoming students from diverse backgrounds. This was reciprocated by the participants on the programmes. It was reported that the open learning courses and access courses each provided a stepping stone to undergraduate level study at UCD, which otherwise would not have been available to those attending the courses. Moreover, the Review Group learned that UCD was one of the few high status institutions in the country that provided this route onto its degree programmes.
- 3.24 The Review Group believed that the University was also missing an opportunity to use the adult education programme as a means of financing and cross subsidising other widening participation activities. To achieve this, integration between AEC and the rest of ALL was essential.

- 3.25 The Review Group concluded that in taking forward recommendations 4.10 and 4.11, ALL needed to develop a business, strategic and operation plan for AEC including market analysis and competitive pricing, including benefit analysis and demonstration of value for money. Advice and support on developing a robust business case should be available from within the University. Furthermore, the plans need to include appropriate academic governance and quality assurance mechanisms. In summary, the plan needs to be robust, have ‘buy-in’ from stakeholders and the support of the University Management Team.

Recommendations

- 3.26 The AEC should be retained within the University and its current location within the ALL unit. The Unit should build on its current work in partnership with the wider ALL Unit, to enhance its impact on the widening participation agenda and also as a means of financing or cross subsidising other widening participation activities.
- 3.27 Develop a strategic plan for the ALL unit as a whole that gives due recognition to its component parts, and which includes a robust Business Plan for the Adult Education Centre (AEC).

4. Functions, Activities and Processes

- 4.1 The current Access to Higher Education courses provided through the Adult Education Centre in ALL has clearly made a valuable contribution to providing an alternative and ‘second chance’ route into UCD for those who do not have the standard entry points. ALL is currently faced with the dilemma of a strong vision to widen participation but in a context of decreasing resources. This has impacted on the ability of ALL to address the different groups who might be under-represented at UCD, including those from lower socio-economic and minority ethnic backgrounds aged 18-22. The Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) programme has clearly made an outstanding contribution to reaching students from lower socio-economic backgrounds aged 18 and under, and the work of the Access Centre has been central to the success of the HEAR scheme at UCD. However, the ALL strategy as it currently stands leaves a gap in provision for those students from under-represented backgrounds and minority ethnic groups aged 18-22, who are not being addressed through HEAR or through the current Access to Higher Education courses.

Commendations

- 4.2 The commitment of the University to Widening Participation, including the strong sense of deep commitment of ALL unit staff to widening participation, access and lifelong learning and their dedication to developing strong links with selected schools to widen participation is commended by the Review Group.
- 4.3 The Review Group commends the work of the ALL unit in supporting colleagues to plan and facilitate the inclusion of under-represented students in all programmes.

- 4.4 The Review Group commends the work of the Adult Education Centre at a time of perceived uncertainty about its future. The open learning programme in particular was highly prized by the University staff involved in its delivery.
- 4.5 The Review Group would like to commend the pioneering work of the ALL unit in the access to education programmes, and the progression of students to degree programmes and the explicit attention given to issues of language and of widening participation (i.e. the implications of particular discourses and language).
- 4.6 There is a great range of useful and well-used support services offered through the ALL unit ranging from orientation to exam assistance.
- 4.7 ALL staff are passionate and dedicated to their work and to developing and sustaining good relations with some very highly committed staff throughout the University.
- 4.8 The use of peers in orientation, outreach, and Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) programme is at the forefront of good practice and well regarded by students.
- 4.9 ALL actively promotes of equity through its activities, including an acute awareness of disability and equality issues, legislation and practice including anticipatory duties.

Recommendations

- 4.10 Connect ALL more widely with structures and community of UCD by:
 - 4.10.1 working with HR to ensure that awareness of widening participation and the work of ALL becomes part of the induction process for new staff (with specific guidance being offered by the Disability Access Officer especially in relation to legislative requirements around disability and widening participation)
 - 4.10.2 continue opening up access to the Critical Writing Academy to other existing and incoming UCD students
 - 4.10.3 continue rolling out peer mentoring and assisted learning (Access Centre) and study skills (Adult Education) across UCD programmes
 - 4.10.4 auditing widening participation and inclusive education related research of UCD academic colleagues and producing a working document on 'UCD research informed widening participation practices'.
- 4.11 Strengthen and continue to build ALL as a collegial community of practice.
- 4.12 During the visit the Review Group became aware that the process in developing the SAR had been valuable in working collaboratively across the three sections to develop a shared

purpose. It will be important to ensure that collaborative ways of working across all units are sustained.

- 4.13 The ALL Unit would benefit from intervention by an external organisation to facilitate discussions amongst management and staff to raise staff morale and attempt to resolve a number of outstanding issues. These indications emerged in the SAR and were also raised in discussions with the Review group. A number of suggestions were gathered during the review which might further build upon energy, including:
- 4.13.1 an external facilitator should be engaged to organise and support a staff away day in which opinions and views are shared and future strategies are identified and agreed.
 - 4.13.2 professional development reviews should be utilised to recognise achievements and agree future aims.
 - 4.13.3 colleagues in the Unit should identify good practices currently enacted with (potential) students and explore how such practices can be extended.
 - 4.13.4 The Director of Adult Education should meet with HR and the Director of ALL to clarify job specifications and managerial responsibilities for each staff member. This should also encompass liaison with course providers and proposers particularly in relation to developing a business case; market research and course development.

Outreach

- 4.14 ALL unit staff are already well versed in building relations, including the recruiting and training of UCD students and academics for participation in outreach programmes. The work undertaken with student ambassadors might also provide some input for consideration. These are proven strategies that can be employed to 'scale up' ALL's WP effort in a context of limited resources.
- 4.15 Opportunities to expand this strategy in the pursuit of outreach should be explored, as well as opportunities to partner in the provision of outreach programmes with other universities (e.g. through DRHEA), schools and community groups. Primary schools in disadvantaged areas are particularly important sites to include in UCD's outreach activities, given the importance that the research literature places on early interventions (Gale et al. 2010).
- 4.16 Community groups in disadvantaged areas should also be engaged, particularly those groups that involve the 18 to 22 year old age cohort, which is neglected by UCD's current access strategies. Good examples of partnering with community groups already exist within the University (e.g. Certificate Women's Studies outreach and the Certificate in Drugs Counselling Theory & Intervention Skills). The Review Group also acknowledges the goal of ALL's Director to increase outreach activity, particularly among students with sensory or physical disability.

- 4.17 The Review Group strongly recommend that any such expansion in activity is informed by the research literature on good programme design and evaluation and that it is informed by a robust strategic plan. However, this and other suggested expansion to outreach programmes need to be pursued without increasing already high workloads of ALL outreach staff. That is, the scaling-up of current outreach activity is contingent on increasing ALL's funding to run these programmes, including funding to employ additional staff to run them. In the pursuit of Recommendation 4.10 some Schools and Colleges may decide to contribute funding for such purposes, particularly programmes geared towards raising the proportion of under-represented groups in their particular academic areas.
- 4.18 Given UCD's reducing core government grant, these additional funds might more realistically be sourced from philanthropic organisations, groups and individuals. UCD's extensive connections with wealthy alumni could be explored as such a source. So could businesses such as Citigroup, which currently funds scholarships and a new outreach programme in schools (Citigroup FutureU Mentoring Project). The ALL unit is currently not well placed (in terms of time and expertise) to source possible outlets and develop proposals. It will require the commitment of an expert grant application writer, with direct funding or in-kind support provided by the University and the possibility of the grant covering the labour involved in writing the application.

Recommendations

- 4.19 Expand outreach programmes proven to be effective in encouraging and enabling under-represented groups to access UCD, increasing the absolute number of students involved and including programmes aimed at primary schools and community groups located in disadvantaged areas.
- 4.20 Alternate or additional strategies should be identified by ALL in increasing its widening participation activities within the current challenging and limited financial environment.
- 4.21 ALL should liaise with the University's corporate and alumni fund-raising activities to identify additional resource or grant opportunities. This should include support or advice around grant applications from the relevant University office(s).

Access to Education

- 4.22 Lowering the age of entry of Access to Education programmes has proven a highly effective strategy for meeting the needs of students from under-represented backgrounds aged 18 and over. To do this would make UCD a leader in this field, with responsibility to pursue this given to Adult Education.
- 4.23 Access to Higher Education courses, established in the late 1970's in the UK, have a long history of providing entry routes for mature students (aged 21 and over) and supporting the national agenda to widen participation in higher education for students from under-represented backgrounds. Such courses were initially designed to provide access for mature

students aged 21 and over, offering them a 'second chance'. However, in the UK, after considerable consultation and concern about those students under the age of 21 and under-represented in higher education, the entry age was lowered to 18 years old.

Recommendations

- 4.24 Address the access gap of 18-22 year olds in current strategy by lowering the age entry to Access to HE courses to 18 years of age.

Disability Equality

- 4.25 Disability is often the last minority group to be represented in Widening Participation and Equality discourses. This is particularly frustrating when one considers that disabled people constitute one of the biggest minority groupings (Goodley, 2011). It is evident from research that disabled students and their allies continue to be excluded from every day and ordinary practices of educational life (Madriaga and Goodley, 2011). Community participation includes not only physical access but also community belonging. Indeed, in light of the exclusion that many disabled children experience in mainstream schools, it is extraordinary that many enter universities in the first place. Their presence should be valued and celebrated. There are numerous examples of proactive activities by the Unit across UCD that promote an anticipatory duty to disabled students.

Recommendations

- 4.26 The Unit should continue to promote disability equality across the University – amongst staff and students – which presents disability access as not simply focused on the built environment but values diverse learners and includes considerations of inclusive teaching, learning and assessment. These aims could be addressed through specific activities including but not limited to:
- 4.26.1 the Disability Access Officer continuing to make links with internal groups (e.g. UCD Centre for Disability Studies, School of Psychology) and external organisations of disabled people (e.g. newly convened Irish Disability Studies Association – which includes members of the UCD Centre for Disability Studies)
 - 4.26.2 the Disability Access Oversight Group devising a clear strategy for identifying reasonable adjustments and access issues for students that is streamlined with clear staff responsibilities identified
 - 4.26.3 the ALL Unit working collaboratively as part of the Widening Participation Forum and with the Disability Access Oversight Group (which includes senior management) to fully embed widening participation in all areas of UCD
 - 4.26.4 the Disability Access Officer arranging with heads of school to provide disability equality training, perhaps delivered by disabled people's organisation

- 4.26.5 the Access Centre continuing with positive developments around tackling disability access and fitness to practice requirements building on the innovative work of UCD's School of Nursing
- 4.26.6 the Disability Access Officer and Access Centre working together to make staff aware of the 2005 Disability Legislation through a host of dissemination and staff workshops
- 4.26.7 Schools and Faculties being encouraged to use KPI data to identify how ALL can help and intervene
- 4.26.8 the Access Centre promoting support to dyslexic students across the University (as requested by some colleagues)
- 4.26.9 the Access Centre working closely with teaching and learning colleagues in relation to supporting the preparation of materials for teaching and the development of inclusive assessment methods.
- 4.27 Confusion between the role of the Disability Access Officer and the Disability Adviser needs to be clarified. One simple solution would be to change the name of the role of the Disability Access Officer to 'University Accessibility Officer'.
- 4.28 The Review Group is aware of the urgency required in the delivery of the Access Audit on buildings. It is recommended that the audit is delivered as a matter of urgency if work is to commence in the next planning cycle due to begin in September 2012.
- 4.29 Extend disability equality throughout UCD and support the educational experiences of disabled students

5. Management of Resources

Commendations

- 5.1 The Review Group commends ALL for their participation in this process and the work done to create a centralised reporting and tracking system within the ALL unit.
- 5.2 Work of the Outreach programmes has been particularly valuable in creating a positive relationship between schools in disadvantaged areas. It is a shame it is curtailed due to funding, which has led to the discontinuation of outreach in primary schools.
- 5.3 The AEC programme showcased UCD to the wider community and contributes to wider civic engagement and reputation enhancement. On a pragmatic level the adult education evening classes represented use of the estate and University resources

Recommendations

- 5.4 The Access Unit occupy one location on campus which will help provide continuity of provision and increase visibility of the work across the University. The staff from the unit should liaise with Buildings and Services to find a suitable location which can accommodate all the Access Unit staff and accommodate space where staff can meet students in a private setting. It is important that all staff from the Access Centre are involved in the decision about any new location of the unit.
- 5.5 With WP embedded across the University, the ALL unit is well placed with expertise and experience to inform, advise and support academic and administrative staff on how best to achieve UCD's WP aims.
- 5.6 Adult Education students should be enrolled on the Universities central student records system. There is precedence for doing this in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programmes.

6. User Perspective

- 6.1 The user perspective was collated comprehensively in the SAR through a number of surveys and other feedback mechanisms. A series of meetings provided the Review Group with an opportunity to meet with key user groups, including staff, students and graduates.

Commendations

- 6.2 The Review Group commends the open learning programme which was highly prized by the participants, who were fulsome in their praise of the programme and the opportunities it provided.
- 6.3 Feedback from students in the main has been very positive. Some issues related to accommodation of ALL students have been highlighted but it is the view of the Review Group that these are isolated incidents which require a UCD-wide coordinated response including Buildings and Services

Recommendations

- 6.4 Principles of socially inclusive pedagogy need to be promoted to UCD teaching staff by UCD Teaching and Learning and supported by the expertise of ALL staff. Well-informed research is now available on what such teaching practices in higher education involve. These can be characterised as:
- creating collaborative and inclusive spaces, in which students are encouraged to share their beliefs, knowledge and experiences;

- developing student-centered strategies, which entail flexible and tailored activities that enable students to ground their learning in something relevant to them as individuals;
- connecting with students' lives, through subject matter that is relevant to students' immediate lives and/or their imagined roles and identities as professionals; and
- being culturally aware, which includes using culturally relevant examples, anecdotes and stories to aid learning, as well as a non-academic frame of reference for teaching (i.e. teaching beyond the academic culture) (Hockings, Cooke & Bowl 2010).

6.5 The ALL Unit should collect stories of the achievements of diverse learners across UCD and celebrate these via the website and other forms of internal and external dissemination.

7. Summary of Commendations and Recommendations

(Please note that the paragraph references below refer to the relevant paragraphs in the Report text)

A. Planning and Organisation

Commendations

Access and Lifelong Learning

Commendations

3.1 Engagement of ALL with outcomes of the *Thematic Review of Academic Supports for Students* (2011) was evident although understandably some of the initiatives are at a fledgling stage. The Review Group commends the work done to date.

Recommendations

3.2 The recommendations of *Thematic Review of Academic Supports for Students* (2011) are noted below and the Review Group recommends that the ALL unit revisit these recommendations and proceed with their implementation as appropriate. It is noted that the University has established a Working Group chaired by the Vice Registrar for Teaching and Learning to oversee their implementation.

Recommendations from the 2011 Thematic Review of Academic Supports for Students

R1: That a senior member of staff be given overall responsibility for the development and co-ordination of Student Supports. Such responsibility should not be an "add-on" to an

already overloaded portfolio, but should be a significant part of that member of staff's responsibilities so that it is given the amount of attention it deserves.

R2: That different terminology be adopted instead of "Student Supports"; the new terminology should be indicative of an integrated array of services accessed by all students to enable them to achieve their full potential.

R3: That the University develop a vision for student support underpinned by a positive philosophy and ethos enabling all students to develop the knowledge, skills and attributes required for success in learning and beyond. In addition, that the University produce a strategy to implement its vision which promotes a pedagogical model of student support and considers ways in which the outcomes of student support can be measured.

R4: That the student support strategy should take into consideration alternative ways of providing support for students, including aligning the nature of support with programme requirements and challenges 12

R5: That students be integrally involved as partners in the development of student-centred "Student Supports", moving beyond consultation towards empowerment.

R6: That a review of the structure of the University to include both academic and support services, be undertaken with a view to producing simplification, and alignment of structures to activities.

R7: That a review of the impact of modularisation be undertaken to identify ways in which its implementation might be modified to improve the student experience. In particular, opportunities to ensure that students have a sense of identity and can make meaningful relationships with peers and staff should be built in from the very beginning of all programmes.

R8: That appropriate professional development opportunities are provided for staff and students involved in providing student support

R9: That critical academic skills (essay writing, referencing, information skills etc.) should be fully integrated into the Semester 1 curriculum, and built on through subsequent stages of each programme in a discipline appropriate way.

R10: That steps would be taken to improve the experience for students on the BA programme, particularly through providing structured opportunities during Orientation and throughout the first semester, for students to make relationships with their peers and with academic staff. In addition, an urgent high-level review needs to be undertaken to streamline provision and to improve the clarity of structures and pathways within the BA programme.

Widening Participation

Recommendations

- 3.10 The Widening Participation (WP) agenda should be embedded across UCD, repositioning the Access and Lifelong Learning unit (ALL) as supportive of rather than constituting the sole or main component of UCD's WP effort.
- 3.11 Establish 'widening participation' and 'social inclusion' as a priority area in UCD's internal competitive funding schemes in research and in teaching and learning, with preference given to quality proposals focused on specific areas of interest and need relative to UCD's particular circumstances.
- 3.12 UCD should identify and ring fence funding for priority projects incorporating widening participation and social within research and teaching and learning grant schemes.

Operational and Strategic Planning within the ALL Unit

Commendations

- 3.14 The University has undertaken to develop a more strategic approach to institutional planning and performance management. This was evident in the recognition of the importance of data collection, monitoring and analysis; the setting of institutional KPIs; the appointment of the new Director of Admissions and Enrolment with a mandate to managing enrolments in a way that ensures entry targets are met; and consideration of KPIs at executive level in the Colleges.
- 3.15 It is valuable that the Director of ALL is represented on local and national HEI and Access organisations, pushing policy and practice developments.

Recommendations

- 3.16 Connect ALL more widely with structures and community of UCD. Some staff in ALL currently experience a disconnect from wider University business and strategy. For the Unit to address this it must develop an annual strategy in which all staff (Adult Education, Access Centre and the Disability Access Officers) are involved and included. A number of activities of this strategy could include:
 - 3.16.1 Staff of the Unit should be represented on a number of cross-University committees and working groups where appropriate (e.g. those pertaining to teaching and learning; research; internationalisation; student recruitment and retention).
 - 3.16.2 Adult Education should explore directly with College Principals and Deans the possible new access routes into a host of programmes and subjects, the

development of current and future part time (including evening) BA and BSc provision and the wider involvement of academic colleagues in outreach work (including summer schools).

- 3.16.3 The Disability Access Officer should work more closely with the Centre for Disability Studies at UCD (located in the UCD School of Psychology www.ucd.ie/psychology/disabilitystudies/) to explore shared aims around policy, evaluation and research building on relationships with College champions to clearly promote the work of ALL including the WP element of course provision (Adult Education), strategies for outreach and educational support (Access Centre) and policy and awareness training (Disability Access Officer).
- 3.16.4 Staff of the Unit should document examples of good practice – through a host of dissemination outputs including new developments to the ALL website - in relation to inclusion and widening participation across the University in order to highlight to colleagues such successes.
- 3.17 KPIs should be established for degree programmes in parallel with incentivised targets. UCD Senior Management and College Principals identify and agree stretch-targets (e.g. 10% annual increase) in relation to the participation rates of under-represented groups in their disciplinary area.
- 3.18 The Review Group noted that the University was not hitting its targets for access and there was a lack of clarity on whether the 15% target was for the University as a whole, for each College, School or for individual degree programmes (SAR page 21, figure 15). To bring clarity to UCD's WP commitment, clear and specific WP targets need to be set for Colleges and Schools, which stretch current performance. That is, future targets should be set in relation to current performance with a stretch component consistent across Colleges and Schools (e.g. 10% annual increase on current performance).
- 3.19 The Review Group felt strongly that to drive positive action and achievement of the strategic objective, a more strategic and joined-up approach was needed, with the Colleges and ALL working in partnership towards clear and agreed objectives. To ensure this achievement, the widening participation KPI (individualised for Colleges and Schools) needs to be incentivised through the resource allocation model – through either financial reward or claw-back if the performance is not met. This would result in partnerships between Colleges, Schools, ALL and other support services, and ensure a 'joined-up' approach to achieving strategic objectives. This approach would reinforce University-wide ownership of access and lifelong learning, clarify ALL's mandate in supporting Colleges and Schools in delivering their academic priorities, and encourage a more sophisticated approach to setting WP targets with, for example, targeted action directed at specific programmes such as encouraging women into engineering.
- 3.20 One simple cost-neutral way Deans and Colleges could work towards meeting their targets is to review the appropriateness of the standard entry requirements for the target groups.

Specifically, the 3 language requirement for entry into the University represents a significant barrier for students from under-represented groups. The Review Group noted that it was within the University's power to set entry standards and strongly recommended the removal of this barrier by waiving this particular requirement.

- 3.20 The cost of independent assessment by educational psychologists was identified as another barrier to entry for applicants. The University could also consider offering free assessments by the University's own educational psychologists to disadvantaged schools to increase the pool of eligible students from schools in disadvantaged areas.

Operational and Strategic Planning within Adult Education Centre (AEC) Unit

Recommendations

- 3.26 The AEC should be retained within the University and its current location within the ALL unit. The Unit should build on its current work in partnership with the wider ALL Unit, to enhance its impact on the widening participation agenda and also as a means of financing or cross subsidising other widening participation activities.
- 3.27 Develop a strategic plan for the ALL unit as a whole that gives due recognition to its component parts, and which includes a robust Business Plan for the Adult Education Centre (AEC).

B. Functions, Activities and Processes

Commendations

- 4.2 The commitment of the University to Widening Participation, including the strong sense of deep commitment of ALL unit staff to widening participation, access and lifelong learning and their dedication to developing strong links with selected schools to widen participation is commended by the Review Group.
- 4.3 The Review Group commends the work of the ALL unit in supporting colleagues to plan and facilitate the inclusion of under-represented students in all programmes.
- 4.4 The Review Group commends the work of the Adult Education Centre at a time of perceived uncertainty about its future. The open learning programme in particular was highly prized by the University staff involved in its delivery.
- 4.5 The Review Group would like to commend the pioneering work of the ALL unit in the access to education programmes, and the progression of students to degree programmes and the explicit attention to given issues of language of widening participation (i.e. the implications of particular discourses and language).

- 4.6 There is a great range of useful and well-used support services offered through the ALL unit ranging from orientation to exam assistance.
- 4.7 ALL staff are passionate and dedicated to their work and to developing and sustaining good relations with some very highly committed staff throughout the University.
- 4.8 The use of peers in orientation, outreach, and Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) programme is at the forefront of good practice and well regarded by students.
- 4.9 ALL actively promotes of equity through its activities, including an acute awareness of disability and equality issues, legislation and practice including anticipatory duties.

Recommendations

- 4.10 Connect ALL more widely with structures and community of UCD by:
 - 4.10.1 working with HR to ensure that awareness of widening participation and the work of ALL becomes part of the induction process for new staff (with specific guidance being offered by the Disability Access Officer especially in relation to legislative requirements around disability and widening participation)
 - 4.10.2 opening up access to the Critical Writing Academy to other existing and incoming UCD students
 - 4.10.3 rolling out peer mentoring and assisted learning (Access Centre) and study skills (Adult Education) across UCD programmes
 - 4.10.4 auditing widening participation and inclusive education related research of UCD academic colleagues and producing a working document on 'UCD research informed widening participation practices'.
- 4.11 Strengthen and continue to build ALL as a collegial community of practice.
- 4.12 During the visit the Review Group became aware that the process in developing the SAR had been valuable in working collaboratively across the three sections to develop a shared purpose. It will be important to ensure that collaborative ways of working across all units are sustained.
- 4.13 The ALL Unit would benefit from intervention by an external organisation to facilitate discussions amongst management and staff to raise staff morale and attempt to resolve a number of outstanding issues. These indications emerged in the SAR and were also raised in discussions with the Review group. A number of suggestions were gathered during the review which might further build upon energy, including:

- 4.13.1 an external facilitator should be engaged to organise and support a staff away day in which opinions and views are shared and future strategies are identified and agreed.
- 4.13.2 professional development reviews should be utilised to recognise achievements and agree future aims.
- 4.13.3 colleagues in the Unit should identify good practices currently enacted with (potential) students and explore how such practices can be extended.
- 4.13.4 The Director of Adult Education should meet with HR and the Director of ALL to clarify job specification and managerial responsibilities particularly in relation to developing a business case; market research and course development.

Outreach

Recommendations

- 4.19 Expand outreach programmes proven to be effective in encouraging and enabling under-represented groups to access UCD, increasing the absolute number of students involved and including programmes aimed at primary schools and community groups located in disadvantaged areas.
- 4.20 Alternate or additional strategies should be identified by ALL in increasing its widening participation activities within the current challenging and limited financial environment.
- 4.21 ALL should liaise with the University's corporate and alumni fund-raising activities to identify additional resource or grant opportunities. This should include support or advice around grant applications from the relevant University office(s).

Access to Education

Recommendations

- 4.24 Address the access gap of 18-22 year olds in current strategy by lowering the age entry to Access to HE courses to 18 years of age.

Disability Equality

Recommendations

- 4.26 The Unit should continue to promote disability equality across the University – amongst staff and students – which presents disability access as not simply focused on the built environment but values diverse learners and includes considerations of inclusive teaching, learning and assessment. These aims could be addressed through specific activities including but not limited to:

- 4.26.1 the Disability Access Officer continuing to make links with internal groups (e.g. UCD Centre for Disability Studies, School of Psychology) and external organisations of disabled people (e.g. newly convened Irish Disability Studies Association – which includes members of the UCD Centre for Disability Studies)
 - 4.26.2 the Disability Access Oversight Group devising a clear strategy for identifying reasonable adjustments and access issues for students that is streamlined with clear staff responsibilities identified
 - 4.26.3 the ALL Unit working collaboratively as part of the Widening Participation Forum and with the Disability Access Oversight Group (which includes senior management) to fully embed widening participation in all areas of UCD
 - 4.26.4 the Disability Access Officer arranging with heads of school to provide disability equality training, perhaps delivered by disabled people’s organisation
 - 4.26.5 the Access Centre continuing with positive developments around tackling disability access and fitness to practice requirements building on the innovative work of UCD’s School of Nursing
 - 4.26.6 the Disability Access Officer and Access Centre working together to make staff aware of the 2005 Disability Legislation through a host of dissemination and staff workshops
 - 4.26.7 Schools and Faculties being encouraged to use KPI data to identify how ALL can help and intervene
 - 4.26.8 the Access Centre promoting support to dyslexic students across the University (as requested by some colleagues)
 - 4.26.9 the Access Centre working closely with teaching and learning colleagues in relation to supporting the preparation of materials for teaching and the development of inclusive assessment methods.
- 4.27 Confusion between the role of the Disability Access Officer and the Disability Officer needs to be clarified. One simple solution would be to change the name of the role of the Disability Access Officer to ‘University Accessibility Officer’.
- 4.28 The Review Group is aware of the urgency required in the delivery of the Access Audit on buildings. It is recommended that the audit is delivered as a matter of urgency if work is to commence in the next planning cycle due to begin in September 2012.
- 4.29 Extend disability equality throughout UCD and support the educational experiences of disabled students

c. Management of Resources

Commendations

- 5.1 The Review Group commends ALL for their participation in this process and the work done to create a centralised reporting and tracking system within the ALL unit.
- 5.2 Work of the Outreach programmes has been particularly valuable in creating a positive relationship between schools in disadvantaged areas. It is a shame it is curtailed due to funding, which has led to the discontinuation of outreach in primary schools.
- 5.3 The AEC programme showcased UCD to the wider community and contributes to wider civic engagement and reputation enhancement. On a pragmatic level the adult education evening classes represented effective use of the estate and University resources

Recommendations

- 5.4 The Access Unit occupy one location on campus which will help provide continuity of provision and increase visibility of the work across the University. The staff from the unit should liaise with Buildings and Services to find a suitable location which can accommodate all the Access Unit staff and accommodate space where staff can meet students in a private setting. It is important that all staff from the Access Centre are involved in the decision about any new location of the unit.
- 5.5 With WP embedded across the University, the ALL unit is well placed with expertise and experience to inform, advise and support academic and administrative staff on how best to achieve UCD's WP aims.
- 5.6 Adult Education students should be enrolled on the Universities central student records system. There is precedence for doing this in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programmes.

D. User Perspective

Commendations

- 6.2 The Review Group commends the open learning programme which was highly prized by the participants, who were fulsome in their praise of the programme and the opportunities it provided.
- 6.3 Feedback from students in the main has been very positive. Some issues related to accommodation of ALL students have been highlighted but it is the view of the Review

Group that these are isolated incidents which require a UCD-wide coordinated response including Buildings and Services

Recommendations

- 6.4 Principles of socially inclusive pedagogy need to be promoted to UCD teaching staff by UCD Teaching and Learning and supported by the expertise of ALL staff. Well-informed research is now available on what such teaching practices in higher education involve. These can be characterised as:
- creating collaborative and inclusive spaces, in which students are encouraged to share their beliefs, knowledge and experiences;
 - developing student-centered strategies, which entail flexible and tailored activities that enable students to ground their learning in something relevant to them as individuals;
 - connecting with students' lives, through subject matter that is relevant to students' immediate lives and/or their imagined roles and identities as professionals; and
 - being culturally aware, which includes using culturally relevant examples, anecdotes and stories to aid learning, as well as a non-academic frame of reference for teaching (i.e. teaching beyond the academic culture) (Hockings, Cooke & Bowl 2010).
- 6.5 The ALL Unit should collect stories of the achievements of diverse learners across UCD and celebrate these via the website and other forms of internal and external dissemination.

APPENDIX 1

Bibliography

- Burke, PJ (2012) *The Right to Higher Education: Beyond widening participation*. London: Routledge.
- Burke, PJ (2008) 'The Implications of Widening Participation for Professionalism' in Cunningham, B (ed) *Foundations of Professionalism*. London: Institute of Education, University of London.
- Gale, T. (2011) Student equity's starring role in Australian higher education: Not yet centre field. Special Issue: "Confronting perceptions of student equity in higher education". *Australian Educational Researcher*, 38(1), 5-23.
- Gale, T., Hattam, R., Comber, B., Tranter, D., Bills, D., Sellar, S. & Parker, S. (2010) *Interventions early in school as a means to improve higher education outcomes for disadvantaged (particularly low SES) students*. Adelaide: National Centre Student Equity in Higher Education. 208 pp. (paperback), ISBN: 978-0-980798-30-2. <http://www.equity101.info/content/Interventions-early-school-means-improve-higher-education-outcomes-disadvantaged-students>
- Goodley, D. (2011). *Disability studies: An inter-disciplinary introduction*. London: Sage.
- Goodley, D. and Runswick-Cole, K. (2011). The violence of disablism, *Sociology of Health and Illness*, 33 (4), 602–617
- Hockings, C., Cooke, S. & Bowl, M. (2010). Learning and teaching in two universities within the context of increasing student diversity: complexity, contradictions and challenges, in David, M. (ed.) *Improving Learning Widening Participation in Higher Education*. London and New York: Routledge, pp. 95-108.
- Jones, R. & Thomas, L. (2005) 'The 2003 UK Government Higher Education White Paper: a critical assessment of its implications for the access and widening participation agenda' in *Journal of Education Policy*, 20 (5): 615-630
- Madriaga, M. and Goodley, D. (2011). 'Moving beyond the minimum: socially just pedagogies and Asperger's syndrome in UK higher education', *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 15 (1) 71–8
- Milem, J. F. (2003). The Educational Benefits of Diversity: Evidence from Multiple Sectors. In Chang, M. J., Witt, D., Jones, J. & Hakuta, K. (eds.) *Compelling Interest: Examining the Evidence on Racial Dynamics in Colleges and Universities*. Stanford: Stanford University Press: 126-169.
- Perry, L. et al. (2010a) Does the SES of the school matter? *Teachers College Record*, 112, 1137-1162.
- Perry, L. et al. (2010b) School socio-economic composition and student outcomes in Australia. *Australian Journal of Education*, 54, 72-85

APPENDIX 2

UCD Access and Lifelong Learning Response to the Review Group Report

The quality review process has been both helpful and constructive to UCD Access and Lifelong Learning and has afforded us a very timely opportunity to formally 'take stock' and reflect critically on our strengths and challenges.

We welcome the report of the Review Group and in particular, would like to endorse the commendation of the dedication, commitment and hard work of the staff of the Access & Lifelong Learning unit.

We have established a process to develop a quality improvement plan and the Quality Review Report will provide the basis for this work.

APPENDIX 3



Schedule for Quality Review Site Visit to UCD Access and Lifelong Learning

16-19 April 2012

Preliminary Meeting: Monday, 16 April 2012	
17.15-18.45	RG meet at hotel to review preliminary issues and to confirm work schedule and assignment of tasks for the following two days (RG and UCD Quality Office only)
19.30	Dinner for the RG hosted by UCD Registrar and Deputy President

Day 1: Tue 17th April	
Venue: Room 130, UCD James Joyce Library (Waiting Room: Room 134, UCD Library)	
08.45-09.00	Private Review Group (RG) meeting
09.00-09.30	RG meet with Director, Access & Lifelong Learning (ALL)
09.30-09.40	Break
09.40-10.10	RG meet with Director Adult Education Centre (AEC)
10.10-10.20	Break
10.20-10.50	RG meet with Manager, Access Centre
10.50-11.30	Coffee Break RG
11.30-12.00	RG meet with Registrar and Deputy President
12.00-12.15	Break
12.15-12.45	RG meet with QA Co-ordinating Committee

12.45-2.00	RG lunch with external stakeholders
2.00-2.30	RG meet with Mature Students
2.30-3.00	RG meet with Students with disabilities
3.00-3.15	Coffee Break
3.15-3.45	RG meet with HEAR students
3.45-4.15	RG meet with Open Learning students
4.15-4.45	RG meet with Access Programme students
4.45-5.00	Break
5.00-6.00	RG private individual meetings with ALL staff members

Day 2: Wed 18th April

Venue: Room 130, UCD James Joyce Library (Waiting Room: Room 134, UCD Library)

9.00-9.30	Private Review Group (RG) meeting
9.30-10.10	RG meet with Adult Education Centre staff
10.10-10.20	Break
10.20-11.00	RG meet with Access Centre staff
11.00-11.15	Coffee Break
11.15-11.50	RG meet with Disability Access Officer and the Disability Access Oversight Group members
11.50-12.00	Break
12.00-12.30	RG meet with part-time Tutors working with the Adult Education Centre
12.30-2.00	Lunch
2.00-2.50	RG meet with Academic Staff
2.50-3.00	Coffee Break

3.00-3.50	Tour of Facilities
3.50-4.00	Break
4.00-4.50	RG meet with Administrative Staff, e.g. Library, HR, Registry, Recruitment, Admissions, IT, Programme Office
4.50-5.00	Break
5.00-7.00	RG private individual meetings with ALL staff members

Day 3: Thurs 19th April	
Venue: Room 130, UCD James Joyce Library (Waiting Room: Room 134, UCD Library)	
08.30-09.00	RG meet with UCD Registrar
9.00-9.30	Private Review Group (RG) meeting
9.30-10.30	Further meetings as required by RG
10.30-1.00	Preparation of draft Report by RG
1.00-2.00	RG lunch
2.00-4.00	Preparation of draft Report by RG
4.00-4.30	Briefing meeting with Registrar and Director, Access & Lifelong Learning (ALL)
4.30-5.00	Exit presentation to UCD Registrar and ALL unit staff