University College Dublin

Quality Improvement Plan

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Access & Lifelong Learning

January 2013

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1. Introduction

UCD is committed to widening participation and supporting lifelong learning. This commitment is elaborated in UCD Strategy to 2014 - Forming Global Minds, which undertakes to

> Broaden the range of opportunities for students with diverse backgrounds to participate in our educational programmes, and in particular will capitalise 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 (UCD Forming Global Minds 2010, p.17).

Access & Lifelong Learning promotes and supports the University's mission and published *Mainstreaming Equality of Access and Lifelong Learning: Opening Worlds.* Our Strategic Plan amplifies and consolidates the University's strategic commitment and offers a roadmap for increasing diversity, widening participation and developing an inclusive education environment, in which the University will become

> Ireland's leading university in the promotion of diversity, with policies, practice, systems and processes that are exemplars of best practice in extending the opportunity for under-represented students to participate in and progress at university (UCD 2011, p.18).

Fundamental to this approach to widening participation is the adoption of a holistic approach that focuses on students 'getting in, getting on and getting through'. Therefore, we place emphasis on engagement with communities, who are perceived as 'distant' from the university; the provision of admissions policies that provide equality of opportunity; the development of alternative entry pathways; inclusive programme structures and teaching and learning methodologies; as well as the provision of accessible buildings, facilities, and information and communication technology (Lee 2010).

The Access & Lifelong Learning (ALL) unit, located within the remit of the Registrar and Deputy President, Professor Mark Rogers, integrates the continuum of access-related strands. Our Unit provides specialist expertise to staff and students, to enable and support the development of an inclusive learning environment. We work closely with academic and administrative colleagues, providing advice and guidance on strategies to embed widening participation and lifelong learning across the University.

We also work closely with the University's Widening Participation (WP) Committee[1]. This Committee is chaired by Professor Brian Nolan, and reports to the University Management Team (UMT), and the Academic Council, respectively.

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[1] Professor Brian Nolan, (Chair); Dr Martin Brady, Arts& Celtic Studies; Dr Tara Magdalinski, Public Health, Physiotherapy & Population Science; Professor John Geary, Business; Dr Mark Flanagan, Engineering & Architecture; Ms Fiona Sweeney, Access & Lifelong Learning; Ms Regina Joye, Nursing, Midwifery and Health; Dr Jane Irwin, Veterinary; Dr Bairbre Fleming, Access & Lifelong Learning; Dr. Patrick Felle, Medicine; Ms Rachel Breslin, Student Union; Ms Elaine Hickey, Quality; Dr Terry Barrett, Teaching & Learning; Ms Anna Kelly, Access & Lifelong Learning (Secretary); Dr. Mary Ellen McCann, Human Sciences; Dr James McDermott, Law; Ms Eilis O' Brien, Communications; Professor Lizbeth Goodman, Research; Ms Jill O' Mahony, Registry; Dr Pádraig Wims, Agriculture & Food Science; Mr Vivian Rath, VP for Students; Dr Francesca Paradisi, Science; Ms Kathryn Smith, Library.

2.   Periodic Quality Review

Under the guidance of UCD's Quality Office, a periodic quality review of UCD Access & Lifelong Learning (ALL) was undertaken in April 2012. This process was co-ordinated by ALL Quality Steering Group[2], who oversaw the preparation of the Self-Assessment Report (SAR), which was informed by a range of data. The data included an online survey of the University staff; 'Where's ALL'? Test to locate key functions of ALL; staff reports, as well as student evaluations.

The Quality Office appointed an external Review Group to undertake the site visit:

- 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.

The Review Group visited UCD from 16-19 April 2012 and held meetings with:

- Access & Lifelong Learning staff;
- The Registrar and Deputy President;
- University academic and administration staff;
- Under-represented students, i.e. mature and lifelong learners, students with disabilities, HEAR[3] students, and part-time students.

Following this site visit the Review Group issued its report, which was considered and welcomed by the Access & Lifelong Learning staff, the University Management Team (UMT) and Governing Authority, respectively. The Periodic Quality Review Report (UCD 2012) commends the pioneering work of ALL staff, noting particularly the provision of well-regarded student support and the development of good practice

> 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 (p.17).

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[2] Ms Thomond Coogan, Ms Wendy Elliot, Dr Bairbre Fleming, Ms Tina Lowe, Mr Jason Mackin (Student Representative), Mr Gregori Meakin (Student Representative), Ms Jenny Murphy, Ms Fiona Sweeney, Ms Julie Tonge, Dr Rhonda Wynne, Ms Anna M. Kelly (Chair).
[3] Higher Education Access Route available to students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds.

It also acknowledges that the University has made improvements in respect of access and widening participation, but notes that there is "clear justification to shift the University's efforts in to second gear" (p.10), noting that the

> "...Widening Participation (WP) agenda should be embedded across UCD, repositioning the Access & Lifelong Learning unit (ALL) as supportive of rather than constituting the sole or main component of UCD's WP effort" (p.11).

Considerable emphasis is also given to the issue of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and access targets

> 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 (3.5,p.10).

The final phase of the University's periodic review process is the preparation of this Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), which presents an action plan for improvement, based on the recommendations of the Review Group.

The development of the QIP has been overseen by the ALL Quality Steering Group[4], which met fortnightly to undertake this task. Monthly staff meetings were also held to facilitate the participation of the wider staff group. The generation of the proposed actions was facilitated through the use of Google Docs, and all staff members were invited as individuals and as teams, to contribute content, opinions or observations.

The recommendations of the Review Group were identified as falling into two broad groups, i.e. those that refer to the University and thus are not within the direct control of the ALL Unit; and those that are focussed on the ALL Unit and therefore within its direct control. Those recommendations that fall outside the direct control of the ALL unit related to

- Targets and Key Performance Indicators;
- Competitive Funding;
- Teaching and Pedagogy.

The Registrar and Deputy President sought advice on the optimum approach to progress the implementation of these recommendations at a meeting of the UMT on the 13th November 2012. The actions proposed are elaborated in Section 3 of this document.

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[4] Ms Thomond Coogan, Dr Bairbre Fleming, Ms Anne Lavelle, Ms Tina Lowe, Ms Jenny Murphy, Mr Tom O' Brien, Ms Fiona Sweeney, Ms Julie Tonge, Dr Rhonda Wynne, Ms Anna M. Kelly (Chair)

At a meeting held on 10th December 2012, the ALL staff agreed that the rich content generated through the Google Docs, as well as the actions proposed by the UMT, merited an alternative approach from the typical QIP template. At this meeting, the Unit Director presented a selection of Review Group recommendations, which were grouped into these two broad categories. The ALL staff agreed that this categorisation represented the optimum approach and that all recommendations and their associated actions would be grouped thus.

A discussion also took place regarding the appropriate categorisation of particular recommendations. Informed by the discussion, using the content generated through Google Docs and the UMT, the Unit Director undertook to draft the QIP and circulate to the staff team for comment and observations.

The draft QIP was sent to staff on the 16th January 2013 for review. At the staff meeting on the 24th January 2013, a Staff Consultation exercise[5] was undertaken. Each recommendation and its associated actions were considered for a) agreement; b) amendment; c) omission (Appendix 7.2). The meeting agreed most of the content. Some amendments were also suggested and omissions were identified. The QIP was then revised and re-circulated to staff for final sign-off.

The resulting Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) will guide the Access & Lifelong Learning unit, and the wider University community, as the full implementation of UCD's strategic commitments are realised.

2.1. Review of Quality Implementation Plan

In the context of the University nearing the end of our current planning cycle, the ALL team has decided to implement a formal rolling review process, which should provide us with opportunity to reflect on the implementation actions of the Quality Implementation Plan, and adjust or modify in the context of the development of the University's next strategic plan.

The ALL Quality Steering Group will guide the QIP implementation process, the output of which will be used to inform the Unit's work programme, and also to advise and assist the Registrar in prioritising future widening participation developments.

2.2. Quality Implementation Plan Format

The twenty nine recommendations of the Expert Panel are grouped, classified and the actions planned are set out in this QIP.

Specifically, Section 3 addresses the University-focussed recommendations; in other words those recommendations that fall outside the direct control of the Access & Lifelong Learning (ALL) unit.

Section 4 deals with Unit-focussed recommendations, which fall within the ALL unit's direct responsibility, while Section 5 summarises the implementation timeframe.

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[5] Designed by Dr Bairbre Fleming, Director Adult Education

3. University-Focussed Recommendations

The following are considered university or institution-focussed recommendations, in that they fall outside the direct control of the Access & Lifelong Learning unit.

These recommendations are grouped and presented as follows:

- Embedding Widening Participation;
- Targets and Key Performance Indicators;
- Competitive Funding of Research and Teaching & Learning;
- Teaching and Pedagogy;
- Adult Education.

The University Management Team (UMT) considered these recommendations and advised on the optimum approach to progress their implementation. The following five sections detail the specific recommendations in each group, and set out related actions and timelines proposed.

3.1. Embedding Widening Participation

The Periodic Quality Report made a series of recommendations concerning embedding widening participation throughout the University, as follows:

- The Widening Participation (WP) agenda should be embedded across UCD, repositioning the Access & Lifelong Learning unit (ALL) as supportive of rather than constituting the sole or main component of UCD's WP effort (Recommendation 3.10).

- 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 (Recommendation 4.26.3).

- 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 (Recommendation 4.26.2).

- 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. (Recommendation 4.28).

- 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 (Recommendation 5.4).

3.1.1. Actions Planned

The following actions are planned in response to the recommendations that concern embedding widening participation:

a) *The University's Widening Participation Committee, working with the advice and guidance of the ALL Unit, is currently engaged in an exercise to identify institutional barriers and propose solutions to embed widening participation across the University. The Committee's first report on Institutional Barriers is scheduled to be finalised in May 2013.*

b) *The ALL unit is seeking representation for staff on key university committees during 2013.*

c) *The ALL unit will provide the Registrar with regular progress reports, and these will be tabled at the University Management Team meeting, (UMT) which will provide active oversight on the implementation of Strategic Objectives and Quality Implementation Plan (QIP).*

d) *The ALL unit, with the advice of the Disability Access Oversight Group, will finalise the Disability Access Audit, including the identification of building renovation priorities and indicative costs; the report of which will be submitted to the University Management Team in 2013.*

e) *The ALL unit, in collaboration with IT Services, and with the advice of the Disability Access Oversight Group, will develop a process to carry out a disability audit of the University's ICT infrastructure.*

f) *The ALL Director, in collaboration with the Registrar and Buildings & Facilities and in consultation with the Unit staff, will develop a plan, for consolidation of the current various ALL locations. A centralised location, which will facilitate enhanced opportunities for staff collaboration and also increased visibility of the work of Access & Lifelong Learning across the University, will be sought.*

3.2. Target and Key Performance Indicators

The Periodic Quality Report made a series of recommendation concerning targets and key performance indicators, as follows:

- 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 (Recommendation 3.17).

- 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) (Recommendation 3.18).

- 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 sophistic approach to setting WP targets with, for example, targeted action directed at specific programmes such as encouraging women into engineering (Recommendation 3.19).

- 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 (Recommendation 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 (3.21).

3.2.1. Actions Planned

The following actions are planned in response to the recommendations that concern targets and KPIs:

a) *The UCD Widening Participation Committee, working with the advice and guidance of the ALL Unit, will consider the above recommendations and formulate a report for the UMT, outlining the options to progress the targets and key performance indicators recommendations.*

b) *Recommendation 3.21 will not be implemented, as there is an admission process available to students from disadvantaged backgrounds, which does require a psychological assessment.*

3.3. Competitive Funding of Research and Teaching & Learning

The Periodic Quality Report made a series of recommendations concerning competitive funding of research and teaching and learning, as follows:

- 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 (Recommendation 3.11)

- UCD should identify and ring fence funding for priority projects incorporating widening participation and social [sic] within research and teaching and learning grant schemes (Recommendation 3.12)

- 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 (Recommendation 3.9).

- Auditing widening participation and inclusive education related research of UCD academic colleagues and producing a working document on 'UCD research informed widening participation practices' (Recommendation 4.10.4)

3.3.1. Actions Planned

The following actions are planned in response to the recommendations that relate to competitive funding of research and teaching and learning:

a) *The Vice-President for Research will consider mechanisms to prioritise and fund widening participation as a research priority in 2013.*

b) *The ALL unit will audit widening participation and inclusive education-related research of UCD academic colleagues and produce a compendium of 'UCD research-informed widening participation practices' (Recommendation 4.10.4).*

3.4. Teaching and Pedagogy

The Periodic Quality Report made a series of recommendations that relate to teaching and learning, as follows:

- 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;

- 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) (Recommendation 6.4).

- 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 (Recommendation 4.26.9).

3.4.1. Actions Planned

The following actions are planned in response to the recommendations that relate to teaching and learning:

a) *The Deputy Registrar, Teaching and Learning (T&L), working with the Vice Principals for T&L Group (VPTL/ADTL), will consider these recommendations. Through this group, an event for academic staff will be run in 2013, presented by the Access & Lifelong Learning unit, working in collaboration with UCD T&L.*

b) *The Access & Lifelong Learning unit will advocate for the adoption of the principle of universal design in the University's programme design processes.*

c) *The Access & Lifelong Learning unit will advocate for the incorporation of access and inclusive learning-related questions on Module Review Surveys, which are co-ordinated by UCD Teaching and Learning.*

3.5. Adult Education

The Periodic Quality Report made a series of recommendations concerning Adult Education, as follows:

- 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 (Recommendation 3.26).

- 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) (Recommendation 3.27).

- 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 (Recommendation 4.13.4).

- 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 (Recommendation 5.6).

3.5.1. Actions Planned

The following actions are planned in response to the recommendations that concern Adult Education:

a) *Professor Mark Rogers, Registrar is considering the future role and remit of the Adult Education Centre in the context of the University's strategic goals, and the Adult Education Position Paper (2012) and a decision on its future direction and contribution/role will be reached in 2013.*

b) *The Registrar, with the support of the ALL unit, will prioritise the development of an institution-wide strategy for flexible, part-time and lifelong learning.*

c) *Job specifications and professional development options for staff in Adult Education will be examined to identify the nature of individuals' work and potential future direction.*

d) *Adult Education is collaborating with MIS regarding a centralised record system. Significant progress has been made on the development of an online registration system and it is planned to conduct a pilot test in 2013.*

4. Unit-Focussed Recommendations

The following are considered unit-focussed recommendations, as they fall within the direct control of the Access & Lifelong Learning unit.

These recommendations are grouped and presented as follows:

- Staff Guidance and Support for the University Community;
- Student Support;
- Unit Management and Communications;
- Community Engagement and Outreach;
- Educational Access.

The Access and Lifelong Learning staff team considered the recommendations made and advised on the optimum approach to progress their implementation. The following five sections detail the specific recommendations in each group, and set out related actions and timelines proposed.

4.1. Staff Guidance, Information and Support for the University Community

The Periodic Quality Report made a series of recommendations concerning the need to provide information, guidance, and also to raise awareness among the university's academic and support staff, as follows:

- 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) (Recommendation 4.10.1)

- 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 (Recommendation 4.26). These aims could be addressed through specific activities including but not limited to:

  – 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) (Recommendation 4.26.1)

  – the Disability Access Officer arranging with heads of school to provide disability equality training, perhaps delivered by disabled people's organisation (Recommendation 4.26.4)

- 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 (Recommendation 4.26.6)

- Schools and Faculties being encouraged to use KPI data to identify how ALL can help and intervene (Recommendation 4.26.7)

- 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' (Recommendation 4.27)

- Extend disability equality throughout UCD and support the educational experiences of disabled students (Recommendation 4.29)

- 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 (Recommendation 5.5).

4.1.1. Actions Planned

The following actions are planned in response to the recommendations concerning the need to provide information and guidance, and to raise awareness among the university's academic and support staff:

a) *The ALL unit will establish a working group comprising, T&L, HR Equality & Diversity, Centre for Disability Studies, School of Social Justice and the Student Union, whose remit will be to consider the optimum approaches to address both disability and equality awareness for staff and students.*

b) *The ALL unit will develop a compendium of existing resources on socially inclusive pedagogy/andragogy.*

c) *The ALL unit is working with UCD Teaching and Learning, and it is planned that ALL staff will deliver input in T&L module 'Becoming a Better University Teacher' during 2013.*

d) *The ALL unit will assign staff to act as the formal links with HR Equality & Diversity and T&L respectively.*

e) *The ALL unit has convened one focus group for staff with disability, and it is intended to hold another such meeting in 2013.*

f) *The ALL unit is further developing the Access Reporting Tool to enhance widening participation data, and is continuing to work with Academic Schools/Programmes to ensure that the necessary participation data is made available to relevant University staff.*

g) The ALL unit, in collaboration with HR, is engaged in discussions to resolve the confusion between the role/titles of the Disability Access Officer and the Disability Adviser respectively.

4.2. **Student Support**

The Periodic Quality Report made a series of recommendations concerning student support, as follows:

- 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 (Recommendation 3.10).

- 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 (Recommendation 3.21).

- Continue opening up access to the Critical Writing Academy to other existing and incoming UCD students (Recommendation 4.10.2)

- Continue rolling out peer mentoring and assisted learning (Access Centre) and study skills (Adult Education) across UCD programmes (Recommendation 4.10.3)

- Colleagues in the Unit should identify good practices currently enacted with (potential) students and explore how such practices can extended (Recommendation 4.13.3)

- 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 (Recommendation 4.26.5)

- The Access Centre promoting support to dyslexic students across the University (as requested by some colleagues) (Recommendation 4.26.8)

- 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 (Recommendation 6.5)

4.2.1. Actions Planned

The following actions are planned in response to the recommendations that concern student support:

a) *The ALL Unit will implement the recommendations of the Thematic Review of Academic Supports for Students (2011) within the context of the Thematic Review Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), and in keeping with the remit of the ALL Unit.*

b) *At a Unit level, the ALL Student Support Group will be reactivated in 2013 to delineate the supplementary supports required to enable under-represented students to integrate and participate, and to ensure that these are aligned with generic student supports, and communicated widely throughout the University.*

c) *The ALL unit will establish a 'Student Forum', with a view to facilitating input and formal feedback to be communicated regularly.*

d) *The ALL unit will consider the changes needed (if any) in the arrangements for educational assessments for prospective students with disabilities, following the outcome of the review of the HEAR and DARE alternative entry routes.*

e) *The ALL unit will optimise and promote the provision of supports for students with dyslexia*

f) *The ALL unit will identify and provide funding as appropriate to the dissemination of good practice currently enacted with (potential) students and stories of student achievement.*

g) *The ALL unit will collate and publish an annual report of the participation rates for under-represented students.*

h) *The ALL unit will establish a university-wide working group to explore approaches to tackling disability access and fitness to practice in clinical disciplines, informed by the School of Nursing model.*

i) *The ALL unit will continue to rollout the critical writing skills, assisted learning and study skills.[6]*

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[6] Peer mentoring has been rolled out by the University

4.3. **Unit Management and Communications**

The Periodic Quality Report made a series of recommendations concerning Unit management and communications, as follows:

- Connect ALL more widely with structures and community of UCD by (Recommendation 4.10)

- Strengthen and continue to build ALL as a collegial community of practice (Recommendation 4.11)

- 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 (Recommendation 4.12).

- 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 (Recommendation 4.13). A number of suggestions were gathered during the review which might further build upon energy, including:

  – 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 (Recommendation 4.13.1)

  – professional development reviews should be utilised to recognise achievements and agree future aims (Recommendation 4.13.2).

4.3.1. Actions Planned

The following actions are planned in response to the recommendations concerning Unit management and communications:

a) *The ALL unit, in collaboration with HR, and an external Facilitator, will design a development programme in 2013, which inter alia addresses working relationships, legacy 'silo' structure, communications, morale, collaborative working, project planning, and maximising staff expertise and interests.*

b) *The ALL unit will continue to strengthen and use a collegial approach to developing, managing and communicating its activities, actions and initiatives.*

c) *The ALL unit will encourage and recognise professional development and role change, within the context of the changing nature of the work, (both for individuals and the ALL team), as the Unit shapes its work plan and focus.*

d) The ALL unit will develop a platform for staff to share ideas, research and practice, which facilitates dissemination and affords opportunities for mentoring. Where gaps in knowledge are identified, external experts will also be invited.

e) The ALL unit has identified and is seeking representation for staff on key university committees during 2013.

f) The ALL unit is establishing a project team to redevelop the ALL website in 2013, in collaboration with IT Services and UCD Communications.

g) The ALL unit will develop a communications strategy in 2013, in consultation with UCD Communications, which will include an Annual Report, Event Calendar, etc.

4.4. **Community Engagement and Outreach**

The Periodic Quality Report made a series of recommendations concerning community engagement and outreach, as follows:

- 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 (Recommendation 4.19).

- Alternate or additional strategies should be identified by ALL in increasing its widening participation activities within the current challenging and limited financial environment (Recommendation 4.20).

- 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) (Recommendation 4.21).

4.4.1. Actions Planned

It is widely recognised that the source of educational disadvantage is rooted in differential economic, social and cultural circumstances (Bourdieu & Passeron 1990; Clancy & Wall 2000; Baker et al. 2004; O'Connell et al. 2006). The National Strategy for Higher Education (2011) too stresses the need for engagement with the wider community, argues for a co-ordinated approach and recommends that "higher education institutions need to become more firmly embedded in the social and economic contexts of the communities they live in and serve" (p.79). The following actions are planned against this backdrop:

a) The ALL unit will establish a working group in 2013, whose role will be to develop a community engagement and outreach strategy that builds on good practice currently taking place in the Access Centre and Adult Education. This strategy will inter alia, audit current activities, collect evidence from

current initiatives, identify key target communities, and will also be informed by the research literature. It will also take cognisance of the University's approach to engagement, the limited resources available and explore the potential for further collaboration and partnership development.

b) *The ALL unit will work with the University's corporate and alumni fund-raising activities to identify additional private funding sources.*

4.5. **Educational Access**

The Periodic Quality Report made a series of recommendations concerning educational access, as follows:

- 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) (Recommendation 3.16.2).

- 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 (Recommendation 4.24).

4.5.1. Actions Planned

The following action is planned in response to the recommendations that concern educational access.

a) *The ALL unit will undertake a project to identify geographical areas of low participation for mature and post-secondary students and explore the collaboration potential among key groups. A plan to expand the delivery of mature years' foundation access programmes will be developed, in the light of the findings.*

b) *The ALL unit will continue to work with the DRHEA Widening Participation Strand to develop and drive strategies that provide increased opportunities for participation of under-represented groups in higher education.*

5.   Implementation

The ALL Quality Steering Group[7] will oversee the implementation of this Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). Regular meetings of this Group are scheduled, which will consider, shape and co-ordinate the actions needed. Together with the wider ALL staff team, the projects and initiatives identified will be progressed.

The Tables below summarise the University and Unit-focussed actions detailed in this QIP, and also shows the indicative timeframe for implementation.

University Actions (n=15)		1 year	5 year
3.1 Embedding Widening Participation			
a)	Widening Participation Committee: first report on institutional barriers	x	
b)	The ALL unit is seeking representation for staff on key university committees	x	
c)	Provide Registrar/UMT with regular progress reports	x	
d)	Disability Access Oversight Group: finalise the Disability Access Audit	x	
e)	Disability Access Oversight Group - disability audit of the University's ICT infrastructure	x	
f)	Develop a plan for consolidation of the ALL locations		x
3.2 Targets and Key Performance Indicators			
a)	UCD WP Committee to formulate a report for UMT, outlining options to progress recommendations re the targets and key performance indicators	x	
3.3 Competitive Funding of Research and Teaching & Learning (T&L)			
a)	VP for Research to consider options		x
b)	ALL to audit WP research and produce compendium		x
3.4 Teaching and Pedagogy			
a)	Deputy Registrar T&L, working with VPTL/ADTL Group and in collaboration with ALL to consider recommendations and plan event for academic staff		x
b)	ALL to advocate for adoption of universal design principles		x
c)	ALL to advocate for incorporation of access and inclusive learning-related questions on Module Review Surveys		x
3.5 Adult Education			
a)	Registrar is considering the future role and remit of the Adult Education Centre in the context of the University's strategic goals	x	
b)	Registrar, with the support of the ALL unit, will prioritise the development of an institution-wide strategy for flexible, part-time and lifelong learning	x	
c)	Job specifications and professional development options for staff in Adult Education will be examined to identify the nature of individuals' work and potential future direction	x	
d)	Adult Education is collaborating with MIS regarding a centralised record system	x	

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[7] Ms Thomond Coogan, Dr Bairbre Fleming, Ms Anne Lavelle, Ms Tina Lowe, Ms Jenny Murphy, Mr Tom O' Brien, Ms Fiona Sweeney, Ms Julie Tonge, Dr Rhonda Wynne, Ms Anna M. Kelly (Chair)

Unit-Focussed Actions (n=26)	1 year	5 year
4.1 Staff Guidance and Support		
a) ALL unit will establish a working group to consider the optimum approaches to address both disability and equality awareness for staff and students	x	
b) ALL unit will develop a compendium of existing resources on socially inclusive pedagogy/andragogy		x
c) ALL unit is working with UCD T&L, and is planning to deliver input in T&L module 'Becoming a Better University Teacher' during 2013	x	
d) ALL unit will assign staff to act as the formal links with HR Equality & Diversity and T&L respectively	x	
e) ALL unit has convened one focus group for staff with disability, and it is intended to hold another such meeting in 2013	x	
f) ALL unit is further developing the Access Reporting Tool to enhance widening participation data		x
g) ALL unit, in collaboration with HR, engaged in discussions to resolve the confusion between the role/titles of the Disability Access Officer and the Disability Adviser	x	
4.2 Student Support		
a) Unit Director is a member of the Student Support Working Group, chaired by Deputy Registrar, which is working to implement the recommendations of the Thematic Review of Academic Support for Students		x
b) ALL Student Support Group will be reactivated in 2013 to delineate the supplementary supports	x	
c) ALL unit will establish a 'Student Forum'	x	
d) ALL unit will consider the changes needed (if any) in arrangements for educational assessments for prospective students with disabilities, following the review of HEAR and DARE		x
e) ALL unit will optimise and promote the provision of supports for students with dyslexia		x
f) ALL unit will disseminate good practice currently enacted with (potential) students and stories of student achievement.		x
g) ALL unit will collate and publish an annual report of the participation rates	x	
h) ALL unit will establish working group to explore approaches to tackling disability access and fitness to practice in clinical disciplines		x
i) ALL unit will continue to rollout the critical writing skills, assisted learning and study skills support		x
4.3 Unit Management and Communications		
a) ALL unit, in collaboration with HR, and an external Facilitator, will design a development programme to addresses working relationships, legacy 'silo' structure, communications, morale, collaborative working, project planning, and maximising staff expertise and interests	x	
b) ALL unit will continue to use a collegial approach to developing, managing and communicating its activities, actions and initiatives	x	
c) ALL unit will encourage and recognise professional development and role change, within the context of the changing nature of ALL's work		x
d) ALL unit will develop a platform for staff to share ideas, research and practice,		x
e) ALL unit has identified and is seeking representation for staff on key university committees		x
f) ALL unit is establishing a project team to redevelop the ALL website in 2013, in collaboration with IT Services and UCD Communications	x	
4.4 Community Engagement and Outreach		
a) ALL unit will establish a working group to develop a community engagement and outreach strategy that builds on current practice		x
b) ALL unit will work with the University's corporate and alumni fund-raising activities to identify additional private funding sources		x
4.5 Educational Access		
a) ALL unit will identify geographical areas of low participation for mature and post-secondary students and explore the collaboration potential among key groups and expand the delivery of mature years' foundation access programmes		x
b) ALL unit will continue to work with the DRHEA Widening Participation Strand to develop and drive strategies that provide increased opportunities for participation	x	

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7. Appendix

7.1. Access & Lifelong Learning Staff (2013)

1. Ms Therese Brosnan
2. Ms Thomond Coogan
3. Ms Constance Dandine
4. Ms Wendy Elliot
5. Mr Anthony Kinane
6. Dr Bairbre Fleming
7. Mr Pauric Holleran
8. Ms Anne Lavelle
9. Ms Tina Lowe
10. Ms Margaret MacDonagh
11. Ms Jenny Murphy
12. Mr Ronan Murphy
13. Mr Tom O' Brien
14. Dr Lisa Padden
15. Ms Roisin Ryan
16. Ms Fiona Sweeney
17. Ms Julie Tonge
18. Dr Rhonda Wynne
19. Ms Sinead Hyland (DRHEA)
20. Ms Anna M. Kelly.

7.2. **ALL Staff Meeting: Response to QIP 24th January 2013**

In your group can you indicate which of these you are:

Agreement	*In agreement with (no further amendment/edit required)*
	Warrants amendment or further discussion
Amendment	*Recommendations from the Review Group which were overlooked/omitted*
Omissions	

University-focussed Actions (n=14)	*Your response*
3.1 Embedding Widening Participation g) *Widening Participation Committee: first report on Institutional Barriers* h) *Provide the Registrar and UMT with regular progress reports,* i) *Disability Access Oversight Group: finalise the Disability Access Audit,* j) *Disability Access Oversight Group - disability audit of the University's ICT infrastructure.* k) *Develop a plan for consolidation of the ALL locations.*	
3.2 Target and Key Performance Indicators c) *The UCD Widening Participation Committee to formulate a report for the UMT, outlining the options to progress the targets and key performance indicators recommendations.*	
3.3. Competitive Funding of Research and Teaching & Learning a) *Vice-President for Research to consider mechanisms* b) *Audit and compile list of UCD WP and inclusive education-related research*	
3.4. Teaching and Pedagogy a) *Collaborate with Deputy Registrar, Teaching and Learning, to develop a plan to promote inclusive pedagogy* b) *Deputy Registrar, Teaching and Learning to consider how to incorporate access -related questions on Module Review Survey*	
3.5. Adult Education a) *Registrar considering the future role and remit of the Adult Education Centre in the context of the University's strategic goals* b) *The Registrar will prioritise the development of a strategy for flexible, part-time and lifelong learning* c) *Job specifications and professional development options for staff in Adult Education will be examined to identify the nature of individuals' work and potential future direction.* d) *Adult Education is collaborating with MIS regarding a centralised record system*	

Unit-focussed Actions (n=23)	*Your response*
4.1. Staff Support a) *Establish a Working to consider approaches to address disability and equality awareness for staff and students.* b) *Develop a compendium of existing resources on socially inclusive pedagogy/ andragogy.* c) *Deliver input in T&L module 'Becoming a Better University Teacher'* d) *Assign ALL staff to act as link with HR Equality & Diversity and T&L* e) *Convene Additional focus group for staff with disability in 2013* f) *Further develop the Access Reporting Tool to enhance WP data, and continue to disseminate participation data to UCD schools.* g) *Clarify title confusion re Disability Access Officer & Disability Adviser.*	
4.2. Student Support a) *Student Support Working Group to implement the recommendations of the Thematic Review of Academic Support for Students* b) *At a Unit level, the Student Support Working Group will be reactivated* c) *The ALL unit will establish a 'Student Forum', with a view to facilitating input and formal feedback to be communicated regularly.* d) *Consider the changes needed (if any) in the arrangements for educational assessments for students with disabilities,* e) *The ALL unit will identify and disseminate good practice* f) *Present annual report of the participation rates for equity groups.* g) *Establish a university-wide working group to explore approaches to tackling disability access and fitness to practice in clinical disciplines*	
4.3. Community of Practice a) *Contract an external Facilitator to provide a development programme to address working relationships, legacy 'silo' structure, collaborative working, project planning, and maximising staff expertise and interests.* b) *Examine professional development opportunities for Unit staff.* c) *Develop a platform for staff to share ideas, research and practice* d) *Identify and seek representation for staff on key university committees* e) *Redevelop the ALL website* f) *Develop a communications strategy in 2013, in consultation with UCD Communications, which will include an Annual Report, Event Calendar,*	
4.4. Community Engagement a) *Establish a working group to develop a community engagement and outreach strategy*	
4.5. Educational Access a) *Identify geographical areas of low participation for mature and post-secondary students and explore collaboration opportunities A plan to expand the delivery of mature years' foundation access programmes will be developed, in the light of the findings.* b) *Continue to work with the DRHEA Widening Participation Strand to develop and drive strategies that provide increased opportunities for participation of under-represented groups in higher education.*	