University College Dublin

Periodic Quality Review

UCD School of Philosophy

March 2015

Accepted by the UCD Governing Authority at its meeting on 22 December 2015

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Examples of Good Practice

The Review Group identified a number of commendations, in particular:

- The broad, collaborative and highly productive **research culture of the School** is noted and commended. The researchers associated with the School have produced an impressive array of high quality research outputs (articles, monographs, chapters, journal issues, editions of historical texts, conferences and workshops), assembled a strong record in the generation of external grant income, and have forged a distinctive and inclusive research identity that is recognised both nationally and internationally.

- The **collegiality and warmth of staff** is an important asset of the School, and has created an environment in which students feel both challenged and supported, and which fosters fertile and productive exchange of ideas across some of the usual internal boundaries within the discipline.

- The **effective and collaborative management of the School,** and the inclusion of all members of staff in the decision-making and administrative process, has helped the School weather a particularly hostile financial climate during the recent economic crisis in the Republic of Ireland. It is particularly to be welcomed that, through the various restructurings of the University's governance, the School has managed to preserve its identity as a self-standing, single-discipline School of Philosophy. Particularly in the international context, this status is a mark of the School's prestige in the discipline.

- Although the Newman Building is in need of renovation and rejuvenation, the School has operated within the present limitations to make good **use of the physical space** on the 5th floor to produce a lively and inviting environment, concentrating staff in a single area, and contributing to the sense of identity for the School.

- The friendly and **collaborative relationship with the Trinity College Dublin Department of Philosophy** is welcome and productive, and has been particularly fertile for the post-graduate research community. The Review Group noted in particular the regular "work-in-progress" meetings that allow both academic staff and post-graduate researchers from the two institutions to share draft material and receive feedback.

Recommendations for Future Improvement

The full list of recommendations is set out in Chapter 10, however, the Review Group would suggest that the following be prioritised:

- The **Philosophy Seminar Room** should be given a high priority in the University's re-fenestration project and should be refurnished with flexible-use furnishings.

- A thorough review should be undertaken into the provision of **discipline-specific training and mentoring for tutors** employed in support of the provision of undergraduate teaching.

- The School should explore the possibility of expanding and formalising activities that help prepare its students (both undergraduate and postgraduate) for life after University. Two specific initiatives that should be explored are (a) the creation of an **Undergraduate Research Opportunity Programme**, to provide short-term research placements within the School; (b) the development of a scheme for **gaining work experience** beyond the University. The School should also review its provision of support for PhD students preparing for the job market.

- Consideration should be given to changing from a three-year to a **four-year** undergraduate programme in order to provide scope within the curriculum for new initiatives, such as the career-development opportunities described above.

- Although the staff cohort is currently the largest of any philosophy cohort in Ireland, **modest growth** would create capacity to undertake new initiatives and exploit opportunities. The expected slate of **senior retirements** presents both a challenge and an opportunity for the School; the aim should be to replace senior retirees with junior appointments, with the aim of achieving a modest (plus 1 FTE) growth in the overall cohort of academic staff.

- Careful consideration should be given to the **distribution of areas** in undertaking staff replacements to ensure continuation of the pluralistic character of the School.

- The very **large BA (Arts) programme** presents special challenges for the School and should be re-assessed at the University level.

1. Introduction and Overview of UCD School of Philosophy

Introduction

1.1   This report presents the findings of a quality review of the School of Philosophy, University College Dublin, which was undertaken from 23-26 March 2015. The School response to the Review Group Report is attached as Appendix 1.

The Review Process

1.2   Irish Universities have collectively agreed a framework for their quality review and quality improvement systems, which is consistent with both the legislative requirements of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012, 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 developmental process in order to effect improvement, including:

- To monitor the quality of the student experience, and of teaching and learning.

- 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 identify, encourage and disseminate good practice, and to identify challenges and how to address these.

- To provide an opportunity for units to test the effectiveness of their systems and procedures for monitoring and enhancing quality and standards.

- To encourage the development and enhancement of these systems, in the context of current and emerging provision.

- To inform the University's strategic planning process.

- The output report provides robust evidence for external accreditation bodies.

- The process provides an external benchmark on practice and curriculum.

- 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 procedures 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 and the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012.

1.4   Typically, the review model comprises 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 Review Group report's recommendations. The University will also monitor progress against the improvement plan.

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

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

- Professor Alexander Evans, UCD School of Agriculture and Food Science (Chair)

- Dr Gerardine Doyle, UCD School of Business (Deputy Chair)

- Dr Tanja Staehler, University of Sussex, UK (Extern)

- Professor Wayne Martin, University of Essex, UK (Extern)

1.6   The Review Group visited the School from 23-26 March 2015 and held meetings with School staff; undergraduate and postgraduate students; the SAR Co-ordinating Committee; other University staff, including the College Principal. The site visit schedule is included as Appendix 2.

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

Preparation of the Self-assessment Report (SAR)

1.8   Following a briefing from the UCD Quality Officer, a Self-assessment Report Coordinating Committee (SARCC) was put in place in May 2014. Committee membership and responsibility for Report chapters are set out below:

Name	Rank	Responsibility in the SAR
Christopher Cowley	College Lecturer, Chair	1, 2, 7.

Rowland Stout	Associate Professor, Head of School	5. Curriculum Development & Review
Jim O'Shea	Associate Professor, Deputy Head of School	9. External Relations
Maeve Cooke	Professor, Research and Innovation Co-ordinator	6. Scholarship & Research Activity
Tim Mooney	Senior Lecturer	4. Teaching, Learning & Assessment
Markus Schlosser	Assistant Lecturer	3. Staff & Facilities
Lisa Foran	Teaching and Research Fellow	4. Teaching, Learning & Assessment
Helen Kenny	Administrative Officer I	8. Support Systems
Maeve Kelly	Graduate student representative	4. Teaching, Learning & Assessment

1.9   A draft of the report was circulated to all members of School staff in September 2014 and all members of the School were then invited for comments at a meeting on 23 September 2014. Between that date and the end of December, the Chair was in regular contact with the Head of School and with all members of the committee about individual sections of the SAR. A full draft was submitted to the Quality Office for feedback in mid-December, and the SAR Committee met again on January 13 to discuss revisions. The final version of the SAR document was completed by 20 February 2015.

The University

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

1.11   The University Strategic Plan (to 2020) states that the University's mission is: "to contribute to the flourishing of Dublin, Ireland, Europe and the world through the excellence and impact of our research and scholarship, the quality of our graduates and our global engagement; providing a supportive community in which every member of the University is enabled to achieve their full potential".

The University is currently organised into 38 schools in seven colleges[1]:

- UCD College of Arts and Celtic Studies

- UCD College of Human Sciences

- UCD College of Science

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[1] This reflects the University structure at the time of the review, however, the University structures will be re-organised in September 2015.

- 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, Business, Engineering, Health Sciences, Agriculture, Veterinary Medicine, Arts, Law, Celtic Studies and Human Sciences. There are currently more than 26,000 students in our UCD campus (approximately 16,300 undergraduates, 7,800 postgraduates and 2,200 Occasional and Adult Education students) registered on over 70 University degree programmes, including over 6,300 international students from more than 121 countries. The University also has over 5,400 students studying UCD degree courses on campuses overseas.

UCD School of Philosophy

1.13   The UCD School of Philosophy is one of 10 schools in the UCD College of Human Sciences and is the largest teaching and research centre for philosophy in the country, in terms of number of full-time permanent academic staff (13), the number of graduate and undergraduate students, and research output. There are 6 full-time post-doctoral researchers currently working in the School and there is a relatively large postgraduate community, comprising approx. 25 MA students and 25 PhD students (at various stages).

1.14   The School is part of the Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree programme, and has recently joined the Bachelor of Social Sciences (BSocSci) programme, offering philosophy in numerous combinations with other subjects as well as a single subject concentration. At Masters level the School offers four different programmes (with seven streams in total) and is a major contributor to a fifth.

1.15   All 13 members of academic staff are actively publishing, with major specialisations in the philosophy of subjectivity and agency, political philosophy, and in the history of philosophy from ancient and medieval philosophy to Kant, to 19th and 20th Century Continental philosophy.

1.16   The School hosts the International Centre for Newman Studies, edits a successful international journal (*International Journal of Philosophical Studies*), and is also home to *Perspectives*, the postgraduate journal. The School hosts about two dozen visiting speakers per year.

1.17   The UCD School of Philosophy has been ranked in the top 25 in the world for its '20th Century Continental' philosophy provision by the *Philosophical Gourmet* report. In the QS rankings, it was ranked in the 51-100 bracket in 2011 and in the 101-150 bracket in both 2012 and 2013.

2. Organisation and Management

2.1   The School is led by a Head of School, and while the University statutes state that he has executive authority to make decisions, the management style is very much one of decisions being made by the consent of the members of the School. The School does not have an Executive or Management Committee (as is typical in large UCD Schools), but uses the School Committee (comprising all academic and administrative members of the School) as the forum to discuss and make decisions. The School Committee meets approximately monthly.

2.2   In recent years the School has adopted a model where the Head of School occupies the role for 2 years at a time. This is not consistent with elsewhere in the University where 3- or 5-year appointments are typical. The reasoning given is that the demands placed on a Head of School mean that her/his ability to engage in research suffers significantly. However, well established staff can tolerate this for 2 years and then resume an active research programme but it is felt that holding the position for a longer period of time would have greater long-term detrimental effects on the individuals' research performance.   A succession plan, based on 2-year appointments, is in place for Head of School until 2019.

2.3   The School recognise a position of Deputy Head of School. The Deputy is the person who is likely to become the next Head of School and shares some of the work load with the Head.

2.4   The School operates a Workload Model that was first adopted in August 2013. It is used loosely to allocate work and is to be commended. The notional work load split is 40% Teaching, 40% Research and 20% administration. The teaching load seems to relatively rigorously adhere to 3.5 modules per person with some reductions for new members of staff and the Head of School. The Workload Model is based on the notional allocation of 1,000 units of work to each full time academic staff member (where 'unit' is an undefined placeholder for the quantity of work done over the course of an academic year).

2.5   As in other Schools in UCD, the School of Philosophy operates a number of committees as outlined in the SAR. These are working well and effectively. It is worth noting that there is no School Research, Innovation and Impact Committee. It seems that the School Committee serves this function, and based on their track record is seems to be working well.

2.6   The School organises many conferences and meetings. The additional work falls on the academic staff, the administrative staff, the post docs and PhD students.

2.7   The School has two full-time administrative staff members who are invaluable members of the School. In the SAR the academic staff indicate that they need more support for inputting grades and other administrative tasks associated with students. The administrative staff in the School are effective and efficient but the current cohort of administrative staff may be too small to assist academic staff with some of their tasks while also exploiting new opportunities for the School.

2.8   With the arrival of the new UCD President the funding of Schools and the arrangements for School budgets is changing. During this transition, there is a degree of uncertainty around a number of issues related to finance.

COMMENDATIONS

2.9   The Review Group got the impression that there is a very good collegial and collaborative atmosphere in the School and that this extends to the wider Philosophy community in Ireland. There is a culture among staff that allows flexibility, workload sharing (for example, to facilitate time for research teaching is often organised into blocks) and a collaborative and supportive approach to grant writing even where there is competition for limited funds.

2.10   The effective and collaborative management of the School**,** and the inclusion of all members of staff in the decision-making and administrative process, has helped the School weather a particularly hostile financial climate during the recent economic crisis in the Republic of Ireland.

2.11   The position of Head of School is a challenging one. The current Head is doing an excellent job and he gets the necessary support from his staff in running the School.

2.12   The School operates a functional workload model.

2.13   There is a very good Philosophy Society run by the students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2.14   While the Review Group believes that the present 2-year rotation of the Headship is presently working effectively for the School, consideration should nonetheless be given as to whether a longer term may be better suited to the changing nature and role of the Head of School position at UCD. The School could also consider devolving more responsibilities to the Deputy Head of School to reduce the impact on the research activities of the Head of School.

2.15   The workload model has been in place for approximately two years now and the RG recommend that it now be reviewed and revised. Issues to consider include (i) the possibility of using defined units (ii) more accurate capture of administration and outreach activities (iii) integration of the model into the School's management practices as a tool for reflecting on the allocation of total available staff hours.

2.16   The College should have a forum for administrative staff from the different Schools to share best practice and assist each other with problem-solving.

2.17   The Head of School needs the support of the College Finance Manager to clearly understand the changing financial model underpinning the School budget and to clarify the degree of flexibility and autonomy available to the School in using the budget most effectively.

3. Staff and Facilities

Staff

3.1   The UCD School of Philosophy comprises 13 full-time permanent academic staff, 2 full-time permanent members of administrative staff and 6 full-time post-doctoral researchers (see also 1.13 above).

3.2   The staff of the School of Philosophy are certainly its greatest strength. Both individually and collectively, the academic staff are nationally and internationally recognised for their research contributions across a broad array of sub-disciplines within the field, and for their high research productivity. Moreover, the School's staff have carved out a distinctive niche in the discipline of Philosophy: they are one of only a handful of pioneering philosophy departments that have successfully managed to position themselves "beyond the analytic/continental divide."

3.3   Those from outside the discipline of philosophy may not be aware of the extent to which the academic discipline of Philosophy has been characterised in recent decades by a deep division into two broad traditions. One is variously called "Anglo-American" or "Analytic Philosophy"; the other is variously described as "Continental Philosophy" or "European Philosophy". Around the world, many departments represent either one or the other of these traditions. In those relatively rare cases where both traditions are well-represented, there is often very little interaction between representatives of the two.

3.4   UCD Philosophy is a rare example of a philosophy department that draws equally richly on both traditions, and on the history of philosophy, and where there are real and fertile interactions and collaborations across and among these research traditions. This broad, inclusive and genuinely pluralistic approach to philosophy is very much to be welcomed and celebrated; the School should be rightly proud of what it has accomplished in this regard and should work hard to preserve and extend this approach. This will be particularly important as the School approaches a period of significant generational transition, with the expected retirement of several senior and distinguished members of the staff cohort.

3.5   In the immediate planning horizon, the School will need to make a series of academic staff appointments, both in order to replace retiring senior staff and to undertake a modest (+1 FTE) expansion of the academic cohort. At the time of this review, this process is already underway, with new junior positions currently advertised. It is not the function of this review to prescribe the precise areas for such new appointments; this is a matter that the present members of staff are well-positioned to decide for themselves, with appropriate consultation. The Review Group would, however, propose four guiding principles to inform the School's reflections on this matter: (1) It is neither possible nor necessary for a school of this size to cover all areas of philosophy; (2) The School's genuinely pluralistic research culture is a critical asset; every effort should be made to preserve and extend it with new appointments across/beyond the "analytic/continental" divide; (3) The School should not

assume that is must replace "like with like" in replacing departing staff, but should take this opportunity to position itself strategically in three or four core areas in which its research quality and profile will attract top-flight research students both domestically and internationally; (4) consideration should be given to the School's strategy for contributing to research and public engagement activities associated with public ethics and public policy, for example (but not exclusively) in connection with the University's proposed Centre for Ethics, Government and Public Affairs.

3.6   The School benefits from an excellent, dedicated administrative team of two staff members. Both academic staff and students commended the administrative team for their support. The administrative staff of the School brings considerable experience and expertise to the administration of the School's activities (see also 2.7 above). Their effective and flexible contributions should be recognised.

3.7   The Review Group noted that there have been opportunities for academic promotions in recent years and that this has been absent for Administrative Staff. While the Review Group are familiar with the externally imposed limitations, there is a great need for the University to find a system to allow personal promotions and job re-grading for administrative staff in UCD.

Facilities

3.8   The facilities within the School are adequate but in a number of respects antiquated and in need of renovation and rejuvenation. Particularly in the wake of recent new building developments on the UCD campus (e.g., the UCD Sutherland School of Law, the new UCD O'Brien Centre for Science, the UCD Lochlann Quinn School of Business), the Newman Building is dated and unattractive, which itself projects and conveys an unfortunate message to students and visitors about the status of the Arts within the larger University community. This is greatly to be regretted, as the Arts (and Philosophy in particular) are in fact highly esteemed both domestically and internationally. In some respects the antiquated facilities present a genuine obstacle to scholarship and learning, notably in the shortcomings of facilities for seminars and reading groups. Despite all this, it is to be noted that both the School and the University have made extremely effective use of the resources that they have.

3.9   The School has made creative use of its space on the 5th floor of the Newman Building. With support from the University it has consolidated staff in a single location, and made the most of its space to create a welcoming and dynamic environment for members of and visitors to the School.

COMMENDATIONS

3.10   The broad, collaborative and highly productive research culture of the School is noted and commended. The researchers associated with the School have produced an impressive array of high quality research outputs (articles, monographs, chapters, journal issues, editions of historical texts, conferences, workshops . . .), assembled a strong record in the

generation of external grant income, and have forged a distinctive and inclusive research identity that is recognised both nationally internationally.

3.11   The collegiality and warmth of staff is an important asset of the School, and has created an environment in which students feel both challenged and supported, and which fosters fertile and productive exchange of ideas across some of the usual internal boundaries within the discipline.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff

3.12   Although the staff cohort is currently the largest of any philosophy cohort in Ireland, modest growth would create capacity to undertake new initiatives and exploit opportunities. The expected slate of senior retirements presents both a challenge and an opportunity for the School; the aim should be to replace senior retirees with junior appointments, with the aim of achieving a modest (plus 1 FTE) growth in the overall cohort of academic staff.

3.13   Careful consideration should be given to the distribution of areas in undertaking staff replacements to ensure continuation of the pluralistic character of the School.

3.14   Consideration should be given to a modest expansion of the administrative staff cohort (for example, through the addition of a 0.5 FTE administrator) to help meet the challenges of devolved administrative functions and to provide support for new initiatives.

3.15   There is a great need for the University to find a system to allow personal promotions and job re-grading for administrative staff in UCD.

Facilities

3.16   The Philosophy Seminar Room should be given a high priority in the University's re-fenestration project and should be refurnished with flexible-use furnishings.

3.17   A storage space for confidential materials (e.g., exam scripts) should be made available to the School, which should then be removed from the Seminar Room.

3.18   The School should have access to a 50-seat, shared, bookable seminar room with flexible furnishings for hosting events that are too large to be accommodated within the current seminar room.

3.19   The common space on the 5th Floor should be refurnished to make better use of this important shared space.

3.20   Options should be explored with the College for the provision of a post-graduate space that can be used for informal reading groups and other collaborative research activities.

4. Teaching, Learning and Assessment

4.1   It was evident to the Review Group from speaking to academic staff and students that all lecturers are enthusiastic teachers. Lecturers feel confident and happy about the teaching they do within their research areas as well as across the curriculum. Undergraduate and postgraduate students were equally excited about the provision they receive.

4.2   The greatest teaching challenge is the first year, especially in the context of the BA Arts programme. The BA Arts was described to the Review Group as a 'messy' degree that is very large and a real challenge to manage. The introduction of student ID cards specifying their subject areas seems a good first step towards being able to identify and 'own' students. This would also appear to facilitate the further development of the academic advising system that has been introduced by Philosophy. Overall, every step that can be taken to allow for the School to identify the students and for the students to identify the School would be helpful (e.g., sign-posting, representation of Philosophy on the ground floor by way of an exhibit or posters).

4.3   At the same time, Philosophy benefits from the vastness of the BA Arts. Some students choose UCD Arts exactly because it allows them to study a variety of subjects as in the North American system (especially Liberal Arts) which is very rare within Europe. Furthermore, students who do not yet know what Philosophy is often get to know about it by way of an elective; the first year is thus an important recruitment tool.

4.4   The students who select philosophy appear well engaged; certainly all students who met with the Review Group were excited by and fully satisfied with the programme. However, both the SAR and meetings with academic staff and students highlighted a problem with attendance in the undergraduate programme as well as a significant number of weak students. This is a situation that warrants further investigation and experimentation, as set out in recommendation 4.11 below.

4.5   Philosophy is operating a more intense tutorial system than most of UCD, with seven tutorials provided for each module. This is an important tool, given the size of lecture groups at UCD (e.g., 200-250 in first year) and the importance of debates and discussions in this subject area.

4.6   Students reported that they receive detailed and helpful feedback on essays, however, a stronger emphasis on always including some positive and some forward-looking comments would make the feedback even more helpful.

COMMENDATIONS

4.7   Excellent teaching is provided across the board.

4.8   The tutorial system is an important tool for teaching philosophy within the School and has a number of strong points. The UG students who receive it and the PhD students who deliver

most of it are very appreciative, and the Principal describes it as exemplary within the College.

4.9   The 'Philosophers Café', that is, debates around a suitable topic of general interest was mentioned repeatedly by students as a great recruitment tool for Open Days.

RECOMMENDATIONS

4.10   With respect to the tutoring system, the Review Group recommends going ahead with the proposed increase from 7 to 10 tutorials per module (starting in week 3). However, it should be accompanied by a mandatory, systematic, discipline-specific training and mentoring programme for tutors within the School. Such training should include: facilitating philosophical debate and discussion; responding flexibly to different group sizes; lesson planning; marking calibration; inclusiveness in classroom discussion. An academic staff member with overall responsibility for tutor training should be assigned. In general, tutors should normally attend the lectures to which the tutorials are linked.

4.11   The Review Group recommends that the School take a more systematic approach in confronting the issue of low attendance at lectures and tutorials. PG tutors have mentioned that the 10% contribution to the mark based on Attendance and Participation works better than leaving attendance vague. Other options may include weekly assignments (to be agreed with the relevant lecturer) to actively engage students (e.g., reflections on the reading, weekly questions, online quizzes, . . .) as well as sharing good practice among colleagues. The Review Group also recommends initial data-collection to understand the situation better.

4.12   The Review Group recommends increasing awareness of the discipline of Philosophy to Stage 1 students and the more general arts student population. At suitable moments in the year (e.g., orientation week, week 1 or week 6), something like the 'Philosophers Café' could be a very useful tool.

4.13   The School should consider appointing an academic adviser contact for each year group.

4.14   The School should engage with the College, the BA Programme Office and UCD University Relations to identify ways to allow students to identify with the School (see examples in 4.2).

4.15   The School Teaching & Learning Committee could engage with UCD Teaching and Learning to explore ways to increase the inclusion of positive and forward-looking comments in the detailed formative feedback provided to students (see also 4.6).

5. Curriculum Development and Review

5.1   As set out in 1.14, the School is part of the Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree programme, and has recently joined the Bachelor of Social Sciences (BSocSci) programme, offering Philosophy in numerous combinations with other subjects as well as a single subject concentration. The

duration of each of these courses is 3 years. The possibility of changing to a 4-year programme for the BA Arts as a whole was discussed during the site-visit and everybody that the Review Group spoke to considered this a helpful move, (and it has worked well for a number of other Programmes). Initially, the intake would need to be a bit smaller to be able to resource it. In the longer run, this would improve the quality of students; it would allow working with them for three years after the introductory first year; and it would create an opportunity for external and internal internships as well as semesters and year abroad.

5.2   Curriculum Review is undertaken in a transparent and commendable fashion, completely every 2-3 years (and with respect to smaller improvements, every year). The curriculum as taught by the School is broad, diverse, and covers all main areas very well.

5.3   The Review Group agrees with the School's decision that no major changes to the curriculum are needed at this point. However, the Review Group notes that in the School's longer-term planning the introduction of a module in 'Aesthetics' and/or Feminist Philosophy would have clear advantages, and more interdisciplinary modules (e.g., Philosophy of Psychology, Philosophy of Education) would also be useful. What precise modules would be introduced over the next few years can be made dependent on what new academic staff will be appointed.

5.4   Some students mentioned disappointment that they could not take more philosophy modules in their first year. The School's decision to introduce an additional, seventh module in 'Critical Thinking' (precise title tbc) is a good step. It might seem worth considering whether it is possible to add one more module for the first year, provided this can be resourced. In general, the curriculum should also be revisited regularly with respect to titles and their comprehensibility to non-philosophers.

5.5   There are some who see students with an undergraduate Philosophy degree as being "not particularly employable". This needs to be changed and there are actions that the School can consider to address this misperception. It is worth noting that postgraduate students and employers (see also section 9) were more positive.

COMMENDATIONS

5.6   The School teaches a broad and exciting curriculum that attracts good student numbers and is generating very positive student satisfaction.

5.7   There is a reflective, innovative and collaborative approach to curriculum design and review has ensured that the curriculum remains lively and fresh and responsive to student needs and academic staff research interests.

5.8   The introduction of a first year module in 'Critical Thinking' (precise title tbc) ticks several boxes. It emphasises transferable skills as conveyed by philosophy; it introduces an additional module into the first year; along with the success of 'Logic', this could be a very popular elective that would help with recruitment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

5.9   The Review Group strongly recommends the introduction of a four-year-degree programme for the BA Arts as a whole.

5.10   In addition to its regular review of the curriculum content, the School should also review the titles of its modules, in particular to ensure that they are clear and attractive for non-philosophers.

5.11   While the Review Group supports the School's plan to introduce a new pathway to the BSocSci, the Review Group recommends that the School engage in an exercise (for example, a facilitated SWOT analysis) to assess the advantages and disadvantages of introducing other new degree programmes.

5.12   The Review Group agrees with the proposal to introduce a new pathway within the BSocSci under the title 'Philosophy and Society'. However, the introduction of the proposed new degree programmes in 'Philosophy, Politics and Economics' (PPE) and 'Philosophy, Politics, Law' (PPL) need to be carefully considered with respect to the advantages <u>and</u> disadvantages (e.g., hidden extra work generated).

5.13   The School should explore the possibility of expanding and formalising activities that help prepare its students (both undergraduate and postgraduate) for life after University. Two specific initiatives that should be explored are (a) the creation of an Undergraduate Research Opportunity Programme, to provide short-term research placements within the School; (b) the development of a scheme for gaining work experience beyond the University. The School should also review its provision of support for PhD students preparing for the job market.

6. Research Activity

6.1   The Research environment of the School is excellent and remarkably productive. The School's track record in recent years in the production of research outputs is impressive, and the success in external research grants in support of the School's activities is excellent. The School sponsors a rich array of research events (conferences, workshops, seminars, etc.) that contributes to a sense of research vibrancy within the School and promotes its reputation within the discipline both nationally and internationally.

Sabbatical Arrangements, Definition of "Research-Active", Workload Model

6.2   The Review Group recognises that a review of the definition of "Research Active" and of the sabbatical arrangements may need to be undertaken at University level. Sabbatical arrangements should be fit-for-purpose and not unfairly disadvantage any member of staff (e.g. early career members of staff, members of staff with parental responsibilities, or members of staff who are expected to shoulder a disproportionately large burden of administrative and/or committee work within the School or University). The Group were

also concerned that there might be a danger that the present UCD sabbatical policy may disadvantage individuals who are unable to undertake their sabbatical time outside the Republic of Ireland.

6.3   The Review Group suggests that the School's workload model, which has now been in effect for nearly two years, should be reviewed and updated. The Review Group also recommends that consideration be given to the use of hours rather than "undefined units" as the basic currency within the model, and that the model be used as a tool not only for balancing workloads across the School, but for reflection on the ways in which staff time is being used. The Review Group is sceptical of the allocation of specific numbers of hours for specific research outputs, and recommends that consideration be given to the use of a standard 40% top-slice of staff time to be designated for research activities.

PG Stipends

6.4   The School presently offers a limited number of stipends for research students. These stipends are a critical element in the School's ability to compete both nationally and (especially) internationally for the best PhD students. The PhD students attracted by such stipends themselves form an integral element in the School's overall research environment. They also serve a "pump-priming" function, as stronger PhD students perform better on the academic job market, enhancing the School's reputation and desirability as a destination for applicants for such programmes.

Centre for Ethics, Government and Public Affairs

6.5   The University is in the process of establishing an interdisciplinary Centre for Ethics, Government and Public Affairs, which provides an opportunity for the School to expand its activities in this area, both academically, and in forms of engagement beyond the academy, e.g., in public policy arenas.

COMMENDATIONS

6.6   The School has been extraordinarily productive in the publication of research outputs of an impressive variety and in respected venues.

6.7   The School has an unusually rich and vibrant programme of research events (conferences, workshops, seminars).

6.8   The weekly Work-in-Progress research groups provide many opportunities for both staff and students to try out new ideas and get feedback from colleagues on their work in progress.

6.9   The School's track record on grant-income is impressive relative to its size and to norms within the discipline, and the School has adopted a commendable strategy for ensuring broad participation in the grant-writing and grant-review process, and to ensure transfer of expertise from senior to junior members of staff.

6.10   The presence within the School of the editorial operation for *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* (IJPS), together with the high reputation of IJPS and the general identification of IJPS as "the Dublin journal," are an asset to School.

6.11   The editing and publication of *Perspectives: International Postgraduate Journal of Philosophy* provides opportunities for post-graduate students to participate in the editing process, gaining both valuable transferable skills and insight into the academic publication process.

6.12   Even during the recent period of economic challenge, post-graduate students have been supported both through GRIF (*Graduate Research Innovation Fund*) and through School funding for participation in academic conferences.

RECOMMENDATIONS

6.13   The Review Group recommends that sabbatical arrangements and the definition of "Research-Active" be reviewed both at School and University-level, to ensure that they are fit-for-purpose and do not unfairly disadvantage some members of staff.

6.14   The Review Group recommends that the School's workload model be reviewed and updated.

6.15   The School should engage with the College to explore options for an increase in the number of stipends and/or tuition waivers for postgraduate students, with the primary aim of enabling the School to compete effectively in recruiting top applicants to the PhD programme. The School should be supported in exploring budgetary options for realising this goal.

6.16   The proposed founding of a new Centre for Ethics, Government and Public Affairs presents important opportunities for expanding its engagement with public life in the Republic of Ireland and beyond. The School should develop a strategy for engaging with the new Centre and exploiting these opportunities.

7. Management of Quality and Enhancement

7.1   The School of Philosophy use a variety of approaches to evaluate the quality of the outputs of the School. This system of management and quality enhancement appears to be effective and includes, *inter alia*, student feedback, closing the feedback loop, External Examiner reports and data on student progression, in addition to a Staff-Student Liaison Committee. Some excellent examples of responding to student feedback have been observed by the Review Group. The existing pool of expertise within the School from the variety of philosophical schools of thought is very valuable to the School and its reputation, enabling it to attract postgraduate students both nationally and internationally. While the School of Philosophy do not have a Research and Innovation Committee, this has not impeded the School regarding successful grant applications and publications. Staff members are justifiably proud of the quality of their teaching and research activities.

COMMENDATIONS

7.2   The School enjoys an excellent reputation and rapport with existing students.

7.3   Student feedback on lectures is excellent when benchmarked within the College and across the University.

7.4   Feedback from External Examiners is considered and appropriate actions are taken by the School in addressing any issues therefrom. Indeed the Self-assessment Report of the School is an excellent document and mirrors the self-reflection that pervades within the School.

7.5   The Review Group commends the School regarding its research success and productivity.

7.6   The School is to be commended for its process of sharing grant writing expertise with early career academic staff with a vibrant and inclusive partnership between junior and senior staff.

7.8   Following the previous Quality Review Process, recommendations were considered and the School responded to all issues in the previous Quality Review report.

7.9   During the site visit School staff welcomed ideas for improvement, for example, with regard to enhancing its teaching and learning within tutorial classes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

7.10   The Review Group recommends that the School give considerable thought to introducing discipline specific training for its tutors to ensure consistency of teaching standards in tutorial sessions (see also 4.10 above).

7.11   Given the nature of the discipline of Philosophy the Review Group consider it important for tutors to be required to attend the lectures for which they will be teaching the relevant tutorials.

7.12   It is recommended that there be regular meetings between the lecturer and the tutor to ensure that the design and delivery of the tutorials is at the highest standard possible. It was suggested by current students that questions be designed for each tutorial which would direct student reading and preparation for tutorials and would also guide the tutorial sessions.

7.13   While modules are evaluated using UCD's on-line module enhancement process, it is not evident whether formal student feedback is obtained regarding the quality and value of tutorials. Given the range of student experience in tutorials the Review Group recommends that the School implement a formal process to collecting student feedback in tutorial sessions so that any problems identified can be addressed in a prompt and timely manner.

7.14   All staff in the School (and graduate students) should get together to brainstorm ideas to promote the School and the discipline of Philosophy both inside and outside of UCD. For example, the "Philosophers Café" could be further adopted as a recruitment tool on a continuous process rather than a once-a-year event as it appears to have been a great success and should be repeated with numerous groups of students.

7.15   It is recommended that the School consider hosting more frequent Staff-Student Liaison meetings, preferably twice each semester so that teaching and learning issues can be identified and acted upon on a timely basis. The current practice of once or twice a year could be improved upon.

8. Support Services

8.1   The School has experienced a broad spectrum of quality of support services across the University. In discussions with the Review Group number of processes that impinge on the School's work, as well as some positive developments, were identified.

8.2   While the Library suffered greatly due to recent financial cutbacks impacting its ability to purchase new materials, this situation has improved considerably with all books requested being purchased. If new journal titles are proposed they are generally only acquired if another title is dropped. The main difficulty is one of balancing the static or reducing budget in an environment where purchase prices are inflating and exchange rates are against the Euro.

8.3   The introduction of HR Partners at College-level has been very successful and the School's relationship with its HR Partner is extremely positive. However, the provision of one HR Partner for the University's two largest colleges perhaps under-resources such an important role. In addition, while UCD Human Resources has greatly improved the provision of documentation, it can be difficult for Schools to navigate the amount of information available.

8.4   The School appears to engage well with the College and some College initiatives, for example, the Engagement Committee appear to be beneficial. However, greater support from the College Finance function should be garnered by the School in order to gain a greater understanding of the changing budgetary environment and any opportunities this might offer to support the School's teaching & learning, research and external activities.

8.5   As outlined in 1.14 and 4.2, the School is part of the BA which is an extremely large and complex programme. Recruitment of students to the single major could be improved by reviewing the marketing materials used by the School, College and Programme, placing an emphasis on the use of Plain English. Seeking advice from University Relations could be of benefit to this review. Increasing the engagement with the International Office could also provide opportunities for increased recruitment of overseas students.

8.6   To continue to encourage student retention and engagement it would be helpful for the School to be able to more clearly identify its students. It would also be beneficial if the position of Engagement Officer in the College is filled.

8.7   The School could benefit from strengthening its link with the UCD Career Development Centre and University Relations to identify employment opportunities for Philosophy graduates and to help build the School's profile, including delivering the message to the wider public of the skill set of graduates of Philosophy as critical thinkers, being relevant to all employment opportunities.

COMMENDATIONS

8.8   The existence of an Engagement Committee within the College whereby 2nd and 3rd year students engage in peer mentoring is to be commended.

8.9   The UCD Library has managed to sustain its collection through an extremely challenging period of drastically limited budgets and is making innovative use of its facilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

8.10   During the site visit concerns were expressed surrounding promotion for administrative staff within the School and within the University. This needs to be addressed at the University level (as in 3.15 above).

8.11   Improved and sufficient HR support is needed to provide guidance through the very extensive HR documentation and to assist in managing personnel challenges as they may arise.

8.12   The School should engage more with the College Finance function to gain a greater understanding of the changing budgetary environment (as in 2.17 above).

8.13   The School website and pamphlets need to be Plain English tested so that the discipline of Philosophy may be understood by the ordinary person.

8.14   A link between the UCD International website and the School of Philosophy website in attracting international students is important.

8.15   For the purposes of identification of Philosophy students, greater support for staff members in using the existing University IT services and data within Registry could be highly effective.

8.16   Continue to develop the supports for student retention and engagement. In this respect it would be important to ensure that the vacant position of Engagement Officer in the College is filled.

8.17   The School should strengthen its link with the UCD Career Development Centre to identify employment opportunities for Philosophy graduates.

8.18   The Review Group recommends that the School work with University Relations in order to build the School's profile.

9. External Relations

9.1   The select group of external stakeholders who the Review Group met were overwhelmingly positive about the value of education in Philosophy for society and employment. (See also section 5).

9.2   Staff in the School carry out a range of activities that promote UCD and the School externally. These include reviewing international publications, serving on boards of societies and journals, and being external examiner.

9.3   The Review Group had a very interesting meeting with an external stakeholder group. They suggested that the School could better engage with the public by, for example:

- hosting and presenting public debates and lectures

- engaging with policy makers in the area of secondary school education (the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment)

- offering "taste of Philosophy courses" (e.g. to secondary school students – possibly in Transition year)

- making parties outside the University (e.g. commercial companies and NGOs) aware of their academic and research interests

- increased media presence – increase their contributing to the media (print radio TV, on line) using language that is accessible to the public

- contribution to the Ethics debate

9.4   There may be resource implications and increased workload associated with the development of additional external activities. Reviewing the current activities and developing a reasonable strategy that would include developments over time (e.g. 1-year, 3-years and 5-years) would be worthwhile.

COMMENDATIONS

9.5   The School organise many seminars workshops and conferences. Also, members of the School are commended for undertaking *The Conscience Project* as part of the President of Ireland's initiative on *Ethics*.

9.6   The reputation of Staff in the academic world is high.

RECOMMENDATIONS

9.7   While the School currently engages in an impressive range of external activities, the Review Group recommends that they review and further develop these activities. It would be beneficial, as part of the review, to gather input from external stakeholders.

9.8   The School should develop a School profile (see also 8.18) and a communications plan, with advice from University Relations. This could feed into future development of the School's website, marketing material and other external activities.

10. Summary of Commendations and Recommendations

A. Organisation and Management

<u>Commendations</u>

A.1   The Review Group got the impression that there is a very good collegial and collaborative atmosphere in the School and that this extends to the wider Philosophy community in Ireland. There is a culture among staff that allows flexibility, workload sharing (for example, to facilitate time for research teaching is often organised into blocks) and a collaborative and supportive approach to grant writing even where there is competition for limited funds.

A.2   The effective and collaborative management of the School, and the inclusion of all members of staff in the decision-making and administrative process, has helped the School weather a particularly hostile financial climate during the recent economic crisis in the Republic of Ireland.

A.3   The position of Head of School is a challenging one. The current Head is doing an excellent job and he gets the necessary support from his staff in running the School.

A.4   The School operates a functional workload model.

A.5   There is a very good Philosophy Society run by the students.

<u>Recommendations</u>

A.6   While the Review Group believes that the present 2-year rotation of the Headship is presently working effectively for the School, consideration should nonetheless be given as to whether a longer term may be better suited to the changing nature and role of the Head of School position at UCD. The School could also consider devolving more responsibilities to the Deputy Head of School to reduce the impact on the research activities of the Head of School.

A.7   The workload model has been in place for approximately two years now and the RG recommend that it now be reviewed and revised. Issues to consider include (i) the possibility of using defined units (ii) more accurate capture of administration and outreach activities (iii) integration of the model into the School's management practices as a tool for reflecting on the allocation of total available staff hours.

A.8   The College should have a forum for administrative staff from the different Schools to share best practice and assist each other with problem-solving.

A.9   The Head of School needs the support of the College Finance Manager to clearly understand the changing financial model underpinning the School budget and to clarify the degree of flexibility and autonomy available to the School in using the budget most effectively.

B. Staff and Facilities

Commendations

B.1   The broad, collaborative and highly productive research culture of the School is noted and commended. The researchers associated with the School have produced an impressive array of high quality research outputs (articles, monographs, chapters, journal issues, editions of historical texts, conferences, workshops . . .), assembled a strong record in the generation of external grant income, and have forged a distinctive and inclusive research identity that is recognised both nationally internationally.

B.2   The collegiality and warmth of staff is an important asset of the School, and has created an environment in which students feel both challenged and supported, and which fosters fertile and productive exchange of ideas across some of the usual internal boundaries within the discipline.

Recommendations

Staff

B.3   Although the staff cohort is currently the largest of any philosophy cohort in Ireland, modest growth would create capacity to undertake new initiatives and exploit opportunities. The expected slate of senior retirements presents both a challenge and an opportunity for the School; the aim should be to replace senior retirees with junior appointments, with the aim of achieving a modest (plus 1 FTE) growth in the overall cohort of academic staff.

B.4   Careful consideration should be given to the distribution of areas in undertaking staff replacements to ensure continuation of the pluralistic character of the School.

B.5   Consideration should be given to a modest expansion of the administrative staff cohort (for example, through the addition of a 0.5 FTE administrator) to help meet the challenges of devolved administrative functions and to provide support for new initiatives.

B.6   There is a great need for the University to find a system to allow personal promotions and job re-grading for administrative staff in UCD.

Facilities

B.7   The Philosophy Seminar Room should be given a high priority in the University's re-fenestration project and should be refurnished with flexible-use furnishings.

B.8   A storage space for confidential materials (e.g., exam scripts) should be made available to the School, which should then be removed from the Seminar Room.

B.9   The School should have access to a 50-seat, shared, bookable seminar room with flexible furnishings for hosting events that are too large to be accommodated within the current seminar room.

B.10   The common space on the 5th Floor should be refurnished to make better use of this important shared space.

B.11   Options should be explored with the College for the provision of a post-graduate space that can be used for informal reading groups and other collaborative research activities.

C. Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Commendations

C.1   Excellent teaching is provided across the board.

C.2   The tutorial system is an important tool for teaching philosophy within the School and has a number of strong points. The UG students who receive it and the PhD students who deliver most of it are very appreciative, and the Principal describes it as exemplary within the College.

C.3   The 'Philosophers Café', that is, debates around a suitable topic of general interest was mentioned repeatedly by students as a great recruitment tool for Open Days.

Recommendations

C.4   With respect to the tutoring system, the Review Group recommends going ahead with the proposed increase from 7 to 10 tutorials per module (starting in week 3). However, it should be accompanied by a mandatory, systematic, discipline-specific training and mentoring programme for tutors within the School.   Such training should include: facilitating philosophical debate and discussion; responding flexibly to different group sizes; lesson planning; marking calibration; inclusiveness in classroom discussion. An academic staff member with overall responsibility for tutor training should be assigned. In general, tutors should normally attend the lectures to which the tutorials are linked.

C.5   The Review Group recommends that the School take a more systematic approach in confronting the issue of low attendance at lectures and tutorials. PG tutors have mentioned that the 10% contribution to the mark based on Attendance and Participation works better than leaving attendance vague.   Other options may include weekly assignments (to be agreed with the relevant lecturer) to actively engage students (e.g., reflections on the reading, weekly questions, online quizzes, . . .) as well as sharing good practice among colleagues. The Review Group also recommends initial data-collection to understand the situation better.

C.6   The Review Group recommends increasing awareness of the discipline of Philosophy to Stage 1 students and the more general arts student population. At suitable moments in the year (e.g., orientation week, week 1 or week 6), something like the 'Philosophers Café' could be a very useful tool.

C.7   The School should consider appointing an academic adviser contact for each year group.

C.8   The School should engage with the College, the BA Programme Office and UCD University Relations to identify ways to allow students to identify with the School (see examples in 4.2).

C.9   The School Teaching & Learning Committee could engage with UCD Teaching and Learning to explore ways to increase the inclusion of positive and forward-looking comments in the detailed formative feedback provided to students (see also 4.6).

D. Curriculum Development and Review

Commendations

D.1   The School teaches a broad and exciting curriculum that attracts good student numbers and is generating very positive student satisfaction.

D.2   There is a reflective, innovative and collaborative approach to curriculum design and review has ensured that the curriculum remains lively and fresh and responsive to student needs and academic staff research interests.

D.3   The introduction of a first year module in 'Critical Thinking' (precise title tbc) ticks several boxes.   It emphasises transferable skills as conveyed by philosophy; it introduces an additional module into the first year; along with the success of 'Logic', this could be a very popular elective that would help with recruitment.

Recommendations

D.4   The Review Group strongly recommends the introduction of a four-year-degree programme for the BA Arts as a whole.

D.5   In addition to its regular review of the curriculum content, the School should also review the titles of its modules, in particular to ensure that they are clear and attractive for non-philosophers.

D.6   While the Review Group supports the School's plan to introduce a new pathway to the BSocSci, the Review Group recommends that the School engage in an exercise (for example, a facilitated SWOT analysis) to assess the advantages and disadvantages of introducing other new degree programmes.

D.7   The Review Group agrees with the proposal to introduce a new pathway within the BSocSci under the title 'Philosophy and Society'. However, the introduction of the proposed new degree programmes in 'Philosophy, Politics and Economics' (PPE) and 'Philosophy, Politics, Law' (PPL) need to be carefully considered with respect to the advantages and disadvantages (e.g., hidden extra work generated).

D.8   The School should explore the possibility of expanding and formalising activities that help prepare its students (both undergraduate and postgraduate) for life after University. Two specific initiatives that should be explored are (a) the creation of an Undergraduate Research Opportunity Programme, to provide short-term research placements within the School; (b) the development of a scheme for gaining work experience beyond the University. The School should also review its provision of support for PhD students preparing for the job market.

E. Research Activity

Commendations

E.1   The School has been extraordinarily productive in the publication of research outputs of an impressive variety and in respected venues.

E.2   The School has an unusually rich and vibrant programme of research events (conferences, workshops, seminars).

E.3   The weekly Work-in-Progress research groups provide many opportunities for both staff and students to try out new ideas and get feedback from colleagues on their work in progress.

E.4   The School's track record on grant-income is impressive relative to its size and to norms within the discipline, and the School has adopted a commendable strategy for ensuring broad participation in the grant-writing and grant-review process, and to ensure transfer of expertise from senior to junior members of staff.

E.5   The presence within the School of the editorial operation for *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* (IJPS), together with the high reputation of IJPS and the general identification of IJPS as "the Dublin journal," are an asset to School.

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E.11   The proposed founding of a new Centre for Ethics, Government and Public Affairs presents important opportunities for expanding its engagement with public life in the Republic of Ireland and beyond. The School should develop a strategy for engaging with the new Centre and exploiting these opportunities.

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F.2   Student feedback on lectures is excellent when benchmarked within the College and across the University.

F.3   Feedback from External Examiners is considered and appropriate actions are taken by the School in addressing any issues therefrom. Indeed the Self-assessment Report of the School is an excellent document and mirrors the self-reflection that pervades within the School.

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F.5   The School is to be commended for its process of sharing grant writing expertise with early career academic staff with a vibrant and inclusive partnership between junior and senior staff.

F.6   Following the previous Quality Review Process, recommendations were considered and the School responded to all issues in the previous Quality Review report.

F.7   During the site visit School staff welcomed ideas for improvement, for example, with regard to enhancing its teaching and learning within tutorial classes.

Recommendations

F.8   The Review Group recommends that the School give considerable thought to introducing discipline specific training for its tutors to ensure consistency of teaching standards in tutorial sessions (see also 4.10 above).

F.9   Given the nature of the discipline of Philosophy the Review Group consider it important for tutors to be required to attend the lectures for which they will be teaching the relevant tutorials.

F.10   It is recommended that there be regular meetings between the lecturer and the tutor to ensure that the design and delivery of the tutorials is at the highest standard possible. It was suggested by current students that questions be designed for each tutorial which would direct student reading and preparation for tutorials and would also guide the tutorial sessions.

F.11   While modules are evaluated using UCD's on-line module enhancement process, it is not evident whether formal student feedback is obtained regarding the quality and value of tutorials. Given the range of student experience in tutorials the Review Group recommends that the School implement a formal process to collecting student feedback in tutorial sessions so that any problems identified can be addressed in a prompt and timely manner.

F.12   All staff in the School (and graduate students) should get together to brainstorm ideas to promote the School and the discipline of Philosophy both inside and outside of UCD. For example, the "Philosophers Café" could be further adopted as a recruitment tool on a continuous process rather than a once-a-year event as it appears to have been a great success and should be repeated with numerous groups of students.

F.13   It is recommended that the School consider hosting more frequent Staff-Student Liaison meetings, preferably twice each semester so that teaching and learning issues can be identified and acted upon on a timely basis. The current practice of once or twice a year could be improved upon.

G. Support Services

Commendations

G.1   The existence of an Engagement Committee within the College whereby 2nd and 3rd year students engage in peer mentoring is to be commended.

G.2 The UCD Library has managed to sustain its collection through an extremely challenging period of drastically limited budgets and is making innovative use of its facilities.

<u>Recommendations</u>

G.3 During the site visit concerns were expressed surrounding promotion for administrative staff within the School and within the University. This needs to be addressed at the University level (as in 3.15 above).

G.4 Improved and sufficient HR support is needed to provide guidance through the very extensive HR documentation and to assist in managing personnel challenges as they may arise.

G.5 The School should engage more with the College Finance function to gain a greater understanding of the changing budgetary environment (as in 2.17 above).

G.6 The School website and pamphlets need to be Plain English tested so that the discipline of Philosophy may be understood by the ordinary person.

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G.8 For the purposes of identification of Philosophy students, greater support for staff members in using the existing University IT services and data within Registry could be highly effective.

G.9 Continue to develop the supports for student retention and engagement. In this respect it would be important to ensure that the vacant position of Engagement Officer in the College is filled.

G.10 The School should strengthen its link with the UCD Career Development Centre to identify employment opportunities for Philosophy graduates.

G.11 The Review Group recommends that the School work with University Relations in order to build the School's profile.

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H.2 The reputation of Staff in the academic world is high.

H.3   While the School currently engages in an impressive range of external activities, the Review Group recommends that they review and further develop these activities. It would be beneficial, as part of the review, to gather input from external stakeholders.

H.4   The School should develop a School profile (see also 8.18) and a communications plan, with advice from University Relations. This could feed into future development of the School's website, marketing material and other external activities.

UCD School of Philosophy Response to Review Group Report

The School of Philosophy found the preparation for the March 2015 Quality Review very useful, and we are grateful for the Review Group's time and effort for coming and examining our School, and for compiling such a positive Report. We will certainly take all of it on board during our Quality Improvement Planning process. For the meantime, in this response we would like to address some of the prioritised recommendations, at least those that fall within the control of the School.

- 3.16 The Philosophy Seminar Room should be given a high priority in the University's re-fenestration project and should be refurnished with flexible-use furnishings.

    3.17 A storage space for confidential materials (e.g., exam scripts) should be made available to the School, which should then be removed from the Seminar Room.

    3.19 The common space on the 5th Floor should be refurnished to make better use of this important shared space.

    We strongly welcome these recommendations. Since the Site Visit, we have met with UCD Building Services, and we await their detailed suggestions about minor improvements to the seminar room, and more significant improvements that we can make to the common space.

- 4.10 With respect to the tutoring system, the Review Group recommends going ahead with the proposed increase from 7 to 10 tutorials per module (starting in week 3). However, it should be accompanied by a mandatory, systematic, discipline-specific training and mentoring programme for tutors within the School. [...] An academic staff member with overall responsibility for tutor training should be assigned. In general, tutors should normally attend the lectures to which the tutorials are linked. [see also 7.10]

    The incoming Head of Teaching & Learning will take overall responsibility for tutor training and monitoring, and has already made plans to roll out the following in September 2015: (i) a special session to train new tutors, (ii) procedures to ensure that module co-ordinators sit in on new tutors' tutorials, and (iii) a rule for tutors to attend the lectures of a module they are teaching for the first time [see 7.11].

- 5.13 The School should explore the possibility of expanding and formalising activities that help prepare its students (both undergraduate and postgraduate) for life after University. Two specific initiatives that should be explored are (a) the creation of an Undergraduate Research Opportunity Programme, to provide short-term research placements within the School; (b) the development of a scheme for gaining work experience beyond the University. The School should also review its provision of support for PhD students preparing for the job market.

The School welcomes these suggestions, and the Head of School is consulting colleagues on some possible ways of implementing these. Already we have decided to hire ten students to assist at the Philosophy Summer School this summer, something which they can put on their CV. Our Postgraduate Research Student Committee will discuss the assistance we can provide our PhD students.

- 3.13   Careful consideration should be given to the distribution of areas in undertaking staff replacements to ensure continuation of the pluralistic character of the School. (p. 13)

Careful consideration will be given to the distribution of areas. We note: (1) It is neither possible nor necessary to cover all areas of philosophy; (2) The School's pluralistic research culture is a critical asset; (3) We do not assume that we must replace "like with like", but will consider to strengthen strategically three or four core areas to attract research students both domestically and internationally; (4) Consideration will be given to the School's strategy for contributing to research and public engagement activities associated with public ethics and public policy.

- 6.15   The School should engage with the College to explore options for an increase in the number of stipends and/or tuition waivers for postgraduate students. [...]

This is one of our key priorities for the coming 5-year period.

- 7.15   [...] the School [should] consider hosting more frequent Staff-Student Liaison meetings, preferably twice each semester.

We will institute this in the coming academic year.

- 8.13   The School website and pamphlets need to be Plain English tested so that the discipline of Philosophy may be understood by the ordinary person

  9.8   The School should develop a School profile (see also 8.18) and a communications plan, with advice from University Relations. This could feed into future development of the School's website, marketing material and other external activities.

The School will ask its Communications Officer to assemble a committee which, in consultation with University Relations, will revamp the website and pamphlets over the summer of 2015.

UCD School of Philosophy

Quality Review Site Visit - 23-26 March 2015

TIMETABLE

Monday, 23 March 2015

17.00-19.00	RG met in the hotel to review preliminary issues and to confirm work schedule and assignment of tasks for the site visit
19.30	RG Dinner hosted for the UCDQO

Day 1: Tuesday, 24 March 2015 Venue: Room D5.22, Newman Building

08.45-09.00	Private meeting of Review Group (RG)
09.00-10.00	RG met with **Head of School and other senior staff**
10.00-10.15	Break
10.15-11.15	RG met with the **representative group of academic staff** – primary focus on Research Activities
11.15 – 11.30	Tea/coffee break
11.30 – 12.15	RG met with **SAR Coordinating Committee**
12.15-12.45	Break – RG reviewed key observations and prepared for lunch time meeting
12.45-13.45	**Working lunch (buffet)** – meeting with **external stakeholders**
13.45-14.15	RG reviewed key observations
14.15-14.45	RG met **UCD Programme Deans and representative from Arts Programme Office**
14.45-15.00	Break

15.00-15.45	RG met with **College Finance Manager** and **Head of School** to outline School's financial situation
15.45-16.00	RG tea/coffee break
16.00-17.15	RG met with **representative group of academic staff** – primary focus on Teaching and Learning, and Curriculum issues.
17.15-18.15	**Tour of facilities**
18.15	RG depart

Day 2: Wednesday, 25 March 2015
Venue: Room D5.22, Newman Building

08.45-09.15	Private meeting of the RG
09.15-10.00	RG met with **Principal, UCD College of Human Sciences**
10.00-10.30	Break
10.30-11.20	RG met with a representative group of **postgraduate students** (taught and research) **and recent graduates (UG and PG)**
11.20-11.35	RG tea/coffee break
11.35-12.20	RG met with **support staff representatives**
12.20-12.35	Break - RG reviewed key observations
12.35-13.15	Lunch – Review Group only
13.15-14.00	RG met with **representative group of undergraduate students**
14.00-14.15	RG private meeting - reviewed key observations
14.15-14.45	RG met with **recently appointed members of staff**
14.45-15.00	Break
15.00-15.30	RG met with members of **Postgraduate tutors**
15.30-15-45	Break
15.45-16.30	RG met with representatives from UCD support services: **UCD Library (College Liaison Library), UCD Registry (International Admissions) and Student Adviser**

16.30-16.40	Break
16.40-17.50	Private individual meetings with staff
17.50-18.20	RG met with **Head of School**
18.20-18.30	RG private meeting – reviewed key observations/findings
18.35	RG departed

Day 3: Thursday, 26 March 2015
Venue: Room D5.22, Newman Building

09.00-09.30	Private meeting of RG
09.30-10.30	RG began preparing draft RG Report
10.30-10.45	Break
10.45-12.30	RG continued preparing draft RG Report
12.30-13.15	Lunch
13.15-15.15	RG finalised first draft of RG Report and feedback commendations/recommendations
15.15-15.30	RG met with **College Principal** to feedback initial outline commendations and recommendations
15.30-15.45	Break
15.45-16.00	RG met with **Head of School** to feedback initial outline commendations and recommendations
16.15	**Exit presentation** to all available staff of the unit
16.45	Review Group departed