



**University College Dublin**

**Periodic Quality Review**

**UCD Career Development Centre**

**Accepted by the UCD Governing Authority at its meeting on 12 May 2009**

## **Table of Contents**

|    |  |    |
|----|--|----|
| 1. | Introduction and Overview of the UCD Career Development Centre | 3  |
| 2. | Planning, Organisation and Management                          | 8  |
| 3. | Functions, Activities and Processes                            | 10 |
| 4. | Management of Resources  | 11 |
| 5. | Quality Review/Enhancement Processes                           | 12 |
| 6. | SWOT Analysis  | 12 |

## **1. Introduction and Overview of the UCD Career Development Centre**

### **Introduction**

1. This Report presents the findings of a quality review of the UCD Career Development Centre (hereafter referred to as the Centre) at University College Dublin. The review was undertaken in December 2008.

### **The Review Process**

2. Irish Universities have collectively agreed a framework for their quality review and quality improvement systems, which is consistent with both the legislative requirements of the Universities Act 1997, and international good practice. Quality reviews are carried out in academic, administrative and support service units.
3. The purpose of periodic review is to assist the University in assuring itself of the quality of each of its constituent units, and to utilise the outcomes of this developmental process to effect improvement.

The process allows the University to:

- Monitor the quality of teaching and learning opportunities and the student experience.
  - Monitor research activity, including management of research activity and assessment of research performance with regard to research productivity and acquisition of research income, and the recruitment and support provided for doctoral students.
  - Provide an opportunity for units to test the effectiveness of their systems and procedures for monitoring and enhancing quality and standards.
  - Provide a framework within which the unit can continue to work in the future towards quality improvement.
  - Identify shortfalls in resources and provide an externally validated case for change and/or increased resources.
  - Identify, encourage and disseminate good practice – to identify challenges and address those concerns.
  - Provide public information on the University's capacity to assure the quality and standards of its awards. The University's implementation of its quality review procedures also enables it to demonstrate how it discharges its responsibilities for assuring the quality and standards of its awards, as required by the Universities Act 1997.
4. Typically, the review model comprises four major elements:
    - Preparation of a Self-assessment Report.

- A visit by a Review Group that includes UCD staff together with external experts from national and international peer institutions. The site visit normally takes place over a two or three day period.
- Preparation of a Review Group Report. These Quality Review Reports are made public.
- Agreement of an Action Plan for Improvement (Quality Improvement Plan) based on the Review Group Report recommendations. The University monitors progress against the Improvement Plan.

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

5. The composition of the Review Group for the Centre was as follows:

- Professor Gerry Doyle (UCD Dean of Academic Affairs) (Chair)
- Mr Rory Carey (Director of HR Strategy and Development, UCD Human Resources)
- Dr Judith Harford (Lecturer, UCD School of Education)
- Mr Graham Nicholson (Director, Careers Service, University of Dundee)
- Mr John Hannon (Director, Career Development Centre, NUI Galway)

6. The Review Group carried out its work on the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> of December 2008.

Meetings were conducted with:

- The Centre staff.
- A range of University staff, both academic and support staff that interact with the Centre.
- A group of student users of the Centre provision.
- A group representative of major employers of UCD students.
- The UCD Vice-President for Students.

7. The Review Group Chair and the Review Group UCD members met with the UCD Registrar and Deputy President, on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2008, as the Registrar was not available on the dates of the site visit.

### **Preparation of the Self-assessment Report**

8. All the staff of the Centre were engaged in the Co-ordinating Committee for the Self-assessment Report (SAR). Four meetings were held by the Co-ordinating Committee. During these meetings the Committee engaged in:

- A process of familiarisation and agreement of the aims and preparation of the SAR.
- The generation of a statement of services provided by the Centre.
- Strategy brainstorming, documentation and review.
- SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats).
- Preparation of staff profiles by individual staff members.
- Evidence gathering, compilation and presentation.
- Document review and verification by all staff of the Centre.
- Feedback, using quantitative and qualitative methods, gathered from students, employers, UCD administration staff and UCD academic staff.
- A questionnaire survey of the HE Careers Service Heads throughout Ireland.
- A meeting with the UCD Director of Quality to ensure that the methodology adopted by the team was appropriate.

### **The University**

9. University College Dublin is a large and diverse institution, whose origin dates back to 1854. The University is situated on a large, modern campus, about 4km to the south of the Centre of Dublin.
10. According to the current University College Dublin Strategic Plan (2005-2008) the University's Mission is:
 

"To advance knowledge, pursue truth and foster learning, in an atmosphere of discovery, creativity, innovation and excellence, drawing out the best in each individual, and contributing to the social, cultural and economic life of Ireland in the wider world".
11. The University is organised into in five Colleges with 35 Schools:
  - i. UCD College of Arts and Celtic Studies.
  - ii. UCD College of Business and Law.
  - iii. UCD College of Engineering, Mathematical and Physical Sciences.
  - iv. UCD College of Human Sciences.
  - v. UCD College of Life Sciences.

There are currently over 22,000 students registered on University programmes, including some 3,000 international students from some 110 countries.

### **The UCD Career Development Centre**

12. The Centre reports to the UCD Registrar and Deputy President.

13. The Centre's mission is to facilitate and empower UCD students in developing career management and employability skills. The Centre is responsible for the management and development of careers programmes.
14. The Centre has a central campus location, situated in a prominent corner position at ground level of the UCD Library Building, with open aspect on two sides. The Centre has gone through major refurbishment over the summer months in 2008. This involved restructuring of the operational and physical environment, providing an enhanced careers library and information service for students conducting careers research.
15. The Centre serves four client groups:
  - i. Students
  - ii. Employers
  - iii. UCD academic and administration staff
  - iv. Alumni

The services provided by the Centre currently include:

#### **Client Group One: Students**

The Centre assists students in developing their careers and in finding jobs as follows:

#### **Career Development**

- Advising on careers and graduate study, through face-to-face interactions, by telephone and online.
- Actively marketing and promoting the careers services on offer. This involves contacting and eliciting help from student societies and the student communication team in this regard.
- Providing access to online careers resources, including advising on specialist sites relevant to students needs.
- Maintaining, updating and developing the careers information library.
- Researching, compiling and disseminating first destination graduate data.
- Writing, publishing and distributing careers publications, articles and information leaflets, some in association with professional and commercial partners including GCI and GTI.
- Organising careers events and talks on and off the UCD campus. The list below catalogues the Autumn 2008 schedule:

|         |                         |
|---------|-------------------------|
| 30 Sept | UCD Careers Week talks. |
| 1 Oct   | UCD Careers Week talks. |

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| 2 Oct      | UCD Careers Week talks.  |
| 7 Oct      | Pricewaterhouse Coopers - UCD Student Centre – CV and interview skills.  |
| 8 Oct      | Arthur Cox - Stillorgan Park Hotel - trainee solicitors.   |
| 9 Oct      | UCD Careers Fair - UCD O'Reilly Hall – major careers event - 60 employers and training bodies - all disciplines.   |
| 13 Oct     | Bain & Co - UCD Student Centre - strategy consulting - London.   |
| 14 Oct     | JP Morgan – Radisson Hotel - investment banking – pre final year event.  |
| 14 Oct     | Gradireland Careers Fair - RDS – all disciplines – major careers event - 200 employers.  |
| 14 Oct     | Maples and Calder - Westbury Hotel - trainee solicitors, London and Dublin.  |
| 14 Oct     | ICAP - Ron Blacks, Dawson St - interdealer broking, London; graduate jobs and internships.   |
| 15 Oct     | SJ Berwin - UCD School of Law - trainee solicitors, London.  |
| 16 Oct     | Linklaters - UCD Student Centre - trainee solicitors, London.  |
| 16 Oct     | CV/Cover Letter and Application Workshop   |
| 16 Oct     | Interview Workshop   |
| 21 Oct     | Deloitte Consulting UK - Fitzwilliam Hotel - consulting experience event.  |
| 22 Oct     | Accenture Target Chances Event - Accenture Offices - consultancy case study and networking.  |
| 22 Oct     | Herbert Smith - UCD Student Centre - trainee solicitors, London.   |
| 22 Oct     | Matheson Ormsby Prentice - firm's offices - trainee solicitors.  |
| 23 Oct     | McKinsey & Co - UCD Student Centre - strategy consulting, presentation, case study.  |
| 23 Oct     | BCM Hanby Wallace - firm's offices - trainee solicitors.   |
| 23 Oct     | CV/Cover Letter and Application Workshop   |
| 23 Oct     | Interview Workshop   |
| 28 Oct     | Google – UCD Student Centre - business roles, all disciplines - Dublin and elsewhere in Europe.  |
| 28 Oct     | JP Morgan – Shelbourne Hotel - investment banking.   |
| 30 Oct     | Boston Consulting Group - Westin Hotel - strategy consulting - London and international.   |
| 30 Oct     | Accenture Events at UCD Student Centre - CV and interview workshop; one-to-one meetings; presentation and reception - business consulting, technology consulting, business and systems integration consulting. Dublin based. |
| 30 Oct     | Morgan Stanley – UCD Quinn School - careers/recruiting - Investment Banking Division.  |
| 3 Nov      | Deloitte evening - accountancy - by invitation.  |
| 3 Nov etc. | Pricewaterhouse Coopers - accountancy - by invitation.   |
| 4 & 6 Nov  | Ernst & Young - accountancy - by invitation.   |
| 4 & 6 Nov  | KPMG - accountancy - by invitation.  |
| 4 Nov      | HSBC - Shelbourne Hotel - International Management - careers in banking for globally mobile graduates.   |

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| 6 Nov  | IAESTE – UCD Engineering - engineering and science summer internships abroad.                              |
| 6 Nov  | Interview Workshop   |
| 6 Nov  | Assessment Centres Workshop  |
| 13 Nov | Goldman Sachs – UCD Student Centre - investment banking summer internships.                                |
| 13 Nov | White & Case - Clarence Hotel - trainee solicitors, London.  |
| 13 Nov | Interview Workshop   |
| 13 Nov | Assessment Centres Workshop  |
| 17 Nov | Kerry Group – UCD Career Development Centre - accounting and finance interviews.                           |
| 17 Nov | Procter & Gamble – problem solving tests for candidates applying for the P & G ‘Irish Challenge’.          |
| 18 Nov | Merrill Lynch Ireland – firm’s offices - open evening for students, esp. business, finance and technology. |
| 20 Nov | Lidl - UCD Student Centre - retail management.   |
| 20 Nov | A & L Goodbody - firm’s offices - presentation for applicants by invitation.                               |
| 4 Dec  | McCann Fitzgerald - firm’s offices - presentation for interview candidates by invitation.                  |

## **Finding Jobs**

- Posting job vacancies and internships both off-line in paper form and online, e.g. through the Common Vacancy System and the Centre website.
- Alerting students to external job-seeking-assistance, including speculative applications and networking.
- Assisting with CV preparation, job application and interview preparation.
- Providing access to online psychometric testing websites.
- Holding employer presentations on campus, and preparing and disseminating related publicity.
- Organising and publicising careers fairs that are both general and specialised, e.g. science and IT fairs.

## **Client Group Two: Employers**

The Centre assists employers in raising their profile and in recruiting UCD students.

### **Profile**

- Linking employers with academics, e.g. alerting academics to employers’ campus presentations.



- Contributing to content writing of *gradireland*, *Hobson's Employer Directories*, and other promotional publications.
- Disseminating employer publications to students.

### **Recruitment**

- Advertising vacancies to students through relevant media sources – online through Blackboard, for example; through internal communication media and in paper format.
- Liaising with employers, publicising and arranging employer presentations to students (on campus and off campus).
- Organising and running careers fairs, the UCD careers week, and contributing to UCD Open Days.
- Providing employers with on-campus interview facilities.
- Publicising employer internships, vacation work opportunities, and placement opportunities to students.
- Attending employer 'Open Days' for careers advisers (nationally and internationally).
- Writing-up organisation profiles, and job selection methods for student access.
- Researching, compiling and disseminating first destination graduate data.

### **Group Three: UCD academic and administration staff**

The Centre assists UCD academic and administration staff with services and linkages:

#### **Services**

- Providing bespoke careers talks for students in particular disciplines.
- Promoting new graduate study courses, e.g. in relevant publications and websites.
- Researching, compiling and disseminating first destination graduate data.
- Assisting with pre-placement support, including delivering presentations to students and providing job application and interview advice.

#### **Linkages for UCD staff**

- Alerting UCD staff to visits by employers presenting on campus, particularly those with job vacancies relevant for students on their programmes.
- Linkages with professional bodies, e.g. ACCA.
- Linkages with secondary school guidance counsellors.

- Linkages with “New Era” applicants.

#### **Client Group Four: Alumni**

The Centre invites and organises facilities for members of UCD Alumni to deliver career presentations.

## **2. Planning, Organisation and Management**

### **Commendations**

- The SAR presented by the staff of the Centre was comprehensive and was the result of an all-staff collaborative effort.
- The SAR and the interactions with the staff demonstrated an enthusiastic and energised team approach.
- The Centre is managed with a dynamic and collaborative leadership style.
- The Centre maintains a strong reputation with regard to careers event management.
- UCD students are generally highly regarded by top Irish graduate recruiters, a reputation that is effectively harnessed by the Centre in the organisation of a number of employer events.
- The strategic plan developed by the Centre team is a strong basis for future development, managed by careful prioritisation on a phased basis.
- The triage model (initial assessment of needs at first point of call and subsequent referral to professional advisers on a priority basis) of career management is an effective model to manage and prioritise resources effectively.
- The Centre staff should continue to work effectively in partnership with professional networks including Graduate Careers Ireland and the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS).
- The location of the Centre, in its central position on the main University campus and the open aspect provided through the recent refurbishment, is in line with best practice.
- Obvious strides have been made within the past twelve months with:
  - Successful and imaginative refurbishment of the Centre office and public space.
  - Concentration on the development of the Centre website.
  - Re-branding of the service provided under the Career Development title.
  - Engagement with core academic units.

- Establishment of a number of positive working relationships that have the potential for the development of careers education initiatives.
- Interaction with students and student societies.

### **Recommendations**

- The management of the Centre should continue to be the responsibility of the UCD Registrar and Deputy President.
- The Centre should be placed on a stable footing through the appointment of key permanent staff, with a minimum of a Director of Service, a Deputy Director, a Careers Adviser and administrative staff. This will represent an initial investment that should be reviewed by the Registrar by summer 2010 with a view to further meeting the needs of a university of UCD's standing.
- These appointments should be carefully scheduled: the appointment of the Centre Director should be completed first, and subsequent appointments scheduled so that the Director has a direct input into the selection of the remaining staff.
- The Centre is effectively located in its current position in the ground floor of the UCD Library Building, and should remain in this location.
- Additional external signage, an alternative front-facing and attractive entrance and full utilisation of available space should be achieved with nominal additional spend.
- The Review Group recognises an immediate and urgent need for investment in resources for the Centre.
- The Centre should distinguish and prioritise their core expertise in career management and empower all staff to have an appropriate input into achieving the service's overall mission.
- The Career Development Advisers' caseloads should be linked to College and/or Programme specialisms and to employer liaison within those sectors.
- A review of all administrative tasks and functions needs to be undertaken. Skills need to be matched to appropriate professional standards (e.g. Employer Liaison Role).
- The Centre needs to focus on and clarify its core activities.
- The Centre needs to identify and clearly set out its service provision and to communicate that provision effectively with each of the key stakeholder groups.
- The Centre should change its management model to a more de-centralised one with enhanced collaboration with academic staff in the various programmes.
- The Centre should investigate the procurement of an online careers Customer Relations Management (CRM) system e.g. Casigma.
- The Centre should explore the possibilities for introducing career education into academic programmes, initially through particular pilot schemes and subsequently on a phased basis. Potentially, such courses would be credit bearing.

- The Centre should work in close consultation with academic colleagues and with programmes in developing career oriented courses. This will require an overarching structure supported at university level through the Education Strategy.
- The Centre should establish a network of academic champions for careers in the various programme areas through the development of academic liaison roles.
- The Centre should endeavour to ensure that duplication of careers effort should be avoided within the University. For example, the bespoke careers operation targeting postgraduate business students at the Blackrock Campus should be clearly and firmly linked into the Centre - closer co-operation between these careers efforts should be reviewed as a priority.

### **3. Functions, Activities, Processes**

#### **Commendations**

- The Review Group was impressed with the positive reports on the organisation, size, impact and overall excellence of the careers fair organised by the Centre.
- Great strides have been made in the current premises, in line with best practice.
- The Review Group was very impressed by the demonstrations and plans for the Centre website.
- The establishment of the student communication teams was perceived as a positive initiative and should be supplemented by the use of student and academic subject representatives.

#### **Recommendations**

- The Centre should actively further explore the concept of developing a number of appropriate fund raising activities, including a series of specialist careers fairs, e.g. an internship /student placement fair. Such development should be advanced and co-ordinated within the parameters of existing University structures and in a collaborative manner with, for example, the University Vice-President for Development.
- As sufficient professional resources become available, the Centre should prioritise the delivery of professional one-on-one careers guidance interviews.
- The staffing resource envelope should be managed to facilitate lunch time openings of the Centre, a critical time from the students' perspective.
- There should be an effective one-stop point of contact for employers who wish to advertise job vacancies, arrange for career presentations on behalf of their organisations, etc.
- There should be an established network of student career liaison representatives for each subject/discipline area. These liaison students should meet with Centre staff annually or on a semester basis and should be emailed regularly with information on job vacancies, internship opportunities, seminars, etc. These students should link into the various student societies where appropriate.

- The Centre website should be further developed to be of at least a web 2.0 standard. It would be essential that at least one member of the Centre staff has appropriate ICT expertise to ensure the delivery and upkeep of an effective online tool. The University ICT service should be encouraged to assist in this development.
- The Centre should develop a range of careers education initiatives, on a pilot basis initially, to embed careers in the curriculum at UCD. These would include stand-alone modules for non-vocational programmes as well as integrated career development learning for vocational programmes. These initiatives should maximise the use of all available resources, including employer and academic partnerships. These initiatives could be seen as a proactive approach by UCD to the national current economic crisis and should be reviewed by Senior Management prior to further implementation.
- The careers information resource should be further developed to provide a comprehensive facility so all students can access careers information, including postgraduate study opportunities worldwide. The Centre should aspire to have 75% of these resources online within a three year period.
- The Centre should explore the possible piloting and implementation of a Personal Development Planning system for all students at UCD.
- The Centre should prioritise the implementation of an online client relationship management system to effectively publicise careers events, manage stakeholder relationships, etc.
- The Centre should continue to develop robust marketing strategies and practices to effectively disseminate their message to all stakeholders, students, staff, employers and alumni.
- The Centre should be integral to the development of a service for early stage researchers (postdoctoral fellows, etc.). Expansion into this area would require additional staff resources.

#### **4. Management of Resources**

##### **Commendations**

- The Centre has been effective in managing on a tight budget.
- Staff are aware of the importance of budget management.
- Since there is significant potential for extension of the core services via technology, staff in the Centre have been proactive in their efforts in this area.

##### **Recommendations**

- The non-staff budget should be reviewed and should meet the needs of a leading university careers service.
- The Centre should examine protocols and procedures in relation to its ability to attract additional funding.

- The Centre should seek additional resources to develop a service for early stage researchers.

## **5. Quality Review/Enhancement Processes**

### **Commendations**

- The SAR has created an awareness of the importance of quality review and some initiatives have recently been introduced.
- There is evidence of a willingness to engage with students, employers, academic and other colleagues around quality assurance.

### **Recommendations**

- There is an immediate need for the establishment of clearer feedback systems that connect with the strategy of the Centre and the University.
- There should be a continuous improvement model of quality.
- The Centre might wish to take cognisance of the UK MATRIX quality standards for HE Careers Services.

## **6. SWOT Analysis**

### **Strengths**

- Excellent, resilient, well-informed staff.
- Strong new leadership.
- Client-centred, committed, empathetic culture.
- Organised and service orientated; information service is good.
- Responsive, flexible and professional.
- Careers Fairs/Careers Talks/Careers Week all well run.
- Application Supports – talks and publications are good.
- Careers Library facility.
- Strong co-operation with professional bodies and other external partners.

### **Weaknesses**

- Very under resourced with regard to staff.
- No capacity for staff development due to under-resourcing.

- Definition and communication of policy needs more work.
- Temporary positions are vulnerable.
- Feedback from each of the stakeholder groups should be sought on an ongoing basis.
- Data on usage of the service and footfall in the Careers Office and Library are limited.
- Collaboration with academics is not what it might be.
- Timely one-to-one careers advice is insufficient to meet student needs.
- All day opening of the Centre should be instituted.
- Restricted resources result in a less than ideal service to students.
- Employers prefer an initial, single and central point of contact with careers in UCD and not multiple, disjointed ones.
- Succession/continuity – expertise may be lost if temporary staff leave for permanent jobs elsewhere.

### **Opportunities**

- Seek increased permanent resources for the Centre.
- Change the model for the Centre into a more de-centralised one with enhanced collaboration with academic staff in the various programmes.
- Technology advances should provide enhanced communication with students and university staff.
- Employers' breakfasts with lectures on graduate destinations could be usefully introduced.
- Investigate the Casigma system (on-line Careers Service Management).
- The Centre should work in partnership with the Alumni Office, College Principals and Heads of Schools to promote the careers agenda on a University-wide basis.
- Disseminate First Destinations reports and analyses widely.
- Ensure that careers courses are embedded in degree programmes and are relevant to the developing needs in the current economic environment.
- Delivery of accredited careers modules within Horizons (curriculum embedded in collaboration with academic staff).
- Graduate studies services can be developed if staff resources become available.
- Commercial sponsorship could be obtained for careers events from employers.

## **Threats**

- Without a fully staffed and functional Careers Centre the employers' view of UCD will suffer and they may, as a result, bypass UCD in their recruitment efforts.
- There might be a universal cut in budget in an external economic environment where the Careers Service will be in greater demand.
- Academic staff will begin to offer un-co-ordinated careers advice.
- There might be a reduction in the Centre's educational role and services, leading to a reduction in direct contacts with students.
- Loss of expertise and experience, especially if staff leave and few written processes and procedures exist.