



**University College Dublin**

**Periodic Quality Review**

**UCD School of Sociology**

**March 2013**

**Accepted by the UCD Governing Authority at its meeting on 25 June 2013**

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Appendix 1: UCD School of Sociology Response to the Review Group Report

Appendix 2: Schedule for Review Site Visit to UCD School of Sociology

## **1. Introduction and Overview of UCD School of Sociology**

### ***Introduction***

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of a quality review of the School of Sociology, University College Dublin, which was undertaken on 25-28 March 2013. The School response to the Review Group Report is attached as Appendix 1. (*The School may choose to respond to the Review Group Report and this is added as an appendix to the Report.*)

### ***The Review Process***

- 1.2 Irish Universities have collectively agreed a framework for their quality review and quality improvement systems, which is consistent with both the legislative requirements of the Universities Act 1997, and international good practice (e.g. Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, 2007). Quality reviews are carried out in academic, administrative and support service units.

- 1.3 The purpose of periodic review is to assist the University to assure itself of the quality of each of its constituent units, and to utilise learning from this essentially developmental process in order to effect improvement, including :

- To monitor the quality of the student experience, and of teaching and learning opportunities.
- To monitor research activity, including: management of research activity; assessing the research performance with regard to: research productivity, research income, and recruiting and supporting doctoral students.
- To provide an opportunity for units to test the effectiveness of their systems and procedures for monitoring and enhancing quality and standards.
- To provide a framework within which the unit can continue to work in the future towards quality improvement.
- To identify shortfalls in resources and provide an externally validated case for change and/or increased resources.
- To identify, encourage and disseminate good practice.
- To identify challenges and address these.
- To provide public information on the University's capacity to assure the quality and standards of its awards. The University's implementation of its quality review procedures also enables it to demonstrate how it discharges its responsibilities for

assuring the quality and standards of its awards, as required by the Universities Act 1997.

1.4 Typically, the review model comprises four major elements:

- Preparation of a self-assessment report (SAR).
- A visit by a review group (RG) that includes UCD staff and external experts, both national and international. The site visit normally will take place over a two or three day period.
- Preparation of a review group report that is made public.
- Agreement of an action plan for improvement (quality improvement plan) based on the RG report's recommendations. The University will also monitor progress against the improvement plan.

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

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

- Dr Michelle Butler, UCD School of Nursing, Midwifery and Health Systems (Chair)
- Professor Andrea Prothero, UCD School of Business (Deputy Chair)
- Professor Madeleine Leonard, Queen's University Belfast (Extern)
- Professor Christian Fleck, Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz, Austria (Extern)

Ms Sharon Benson, Queen's University Belfast participated as an observer for the preliminary meeting and day 1 of the review.

1.7 The Review Group visited the School from 25-28 March 2013 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***

1.8 The membership of the School of Sociology Self-assessment Report Coordinating Committee comprised:

- Professor Siniša Malešević, Head of School (Chair to December 2012)
- Professor Tom Inglis , Deputy Head of School (Chair from January 2013)
- Dr Sara O’Sullivan
- Dr Aogán Mulcahy
- Dr Andreas Hess
- Dr Diane Payne
- Veronica Barker
- Manolis Kalaitzake (Student Representative)

1.9 Members of the committee, in consultation with staff members and students, drafted sections of the Self-assessment Report. Chapters were distributed as follows:

(i)	Introduction and Context	Prof. Tom Inglis
(ii)	Organisation & Management	Prof. Siniša Malešević /Prof. Tom Inglis & Veronica Barker
(iii)	Staff & Facilities	Prof. Siniša Malešević /Prof. Tom Inglis & Veronica Barker
(iv)	Teaching, Learning & Assessment	Dr Aogán Mulcahy & Dr Sara O’Sullivan
(v)	Curriculum Development & Review	Dr Sara O’Sullivan
(vi)	Scholarship & Research Activity	Dr Andreas Hess
(vii)	Management Systems	Prof. Tom Inglis
(viii)	Support Systems	Veronica Barker
(ix)	External Relations	Prof. Siniša Malešević /Prof. Tom Inglis
(x)	Conclusion	Prof. Tom Inglis

1.10 The Coordinating Committee had its first meeting on 21<sup>th</sup> May 2012. It met again on two occasions in the autumn, on 15<sup>th</sup> October and 26<sup>th</sup> November 2012. During December a first draft was circulated to staff and the student representative for their views and comments. A half day meeting with the staff and the student representative was held on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2013

and following numerous suggestions and comments, detailed revisions were made and then, in early February a completed first draft was circulated to the School for its final approval at its staff meeting on 21st February 2013. Guidance from the UCD Quality Office was sought throughout the process.

### ***The University***

1.11 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.

1.12 The University Strategic Plan (to 2014) states that the University's mission is: "to advance knowledge, to pursue truth and to foster learning, in an atmosphere of discovery, creativity, innovation and excellence, drawing out the best in each student, and contributing to the social, cultural and economic life of Ireland in the wider world".

The University is organised into 38 schools in seven colleges:

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

1.13 UCD supports a broad, deep and rich academic community. There are currently more than 24,000 students (15,400 undergraduates, 6,900 postgraduates and 1,900 Occasional and Adult Education students) registered on University programmes, including over 4,600 international students from more than 120 countries.

### ***UCD School of Sociology***

1.14 The School is one of ten located within the UCD College of Human Sciences. The School Office and most academic members of staff are located in the Newman Building, with a small cohort based in the Geary Institute.

- 1.15 The permanent School staff comprises 14.5 full-time academics and three full-time administrators. In addition, the School employs four temporary part-time academics, two postdoctoral fellows and has three visiting and three Emeritus professors.
- 1.16 The School is currently involved in teaching 1,030 undergraduate and over 50 graduate students. The School is part of the Bachelor of Arts (BA) and Bachelor of Social Science (BSocSc) degree programmes, delivering an expansive range of well-subscribed modules. The School offers three degree programmes at the Masters level (with two more commencing later this year) and has a vibrant PhD programme (10 completed in 2011-12). The School also participates in various interdisciplinary thematic PhD programmes: the Simulation Science PhD, the Global Human Development PhD and the Complex Systems and Computational Social Science PhD programmes.
- 1.17 The School has an extensive record of publishing across a wide variety of areas within sociology, particularly within culture, governance, social theory, social systems and social change.
- 1.18 The School has a long tradition in sociology and has developed a national reputation as a leader in sociology education in Ireland.
- 1.19 The management structure of the School was revised in 2009 and Head of School is appointed for a period of three years. At the time of this review, the Head of School was on long-term sick leave, and the role was covered on an interim basis by the Deputy Head of School (former Head of School).
- 1.20 The School currently operates in an environment of increasing constraint and retrenchment within public service provision generally and increasing competition from long-established and new providers of sociology education and research.

## **2 Organisation and Management**

- 2.1 The last Review Group Report for the School of Sociology (2002) recommended that the School develop a more effective organisational and management system, and in the ten years since, the School has changed its organisational structures and practices to reflect this recommendation. The most recent changes took place in 2009 and reflected changes to both procedures and practices and a restructuring of administrative structures and tasks. The new structures have been embedded into the School and appear to be working effectively on an operational level, but further work is needed in terms of the overall strategic direction the School wishes to pursue.

### ***Commendations***

- 2.2 The School responded positively to the previous QA/QI report in 2002 with regards to the changing organisational management and structure of the School.

- 2.3 All colleagues have responded positively to difficult circumstances in the School as a result of serious illness of two members of staff, including the Head of School.
- 2.4 The School benefits from having three administrative staff who have significant experience within the School, College and University; and who demonstrate excellence in all of their endeavours.
- 2.5 The development of training manuals for academic and administrative staff.
- 2.6 Graduate students are represented on School/College committees.

### ***Challenges for the School***

- 2.5 As with all schools within the University the current economic climate has proven challenging for the School of Sociology. The significant challenges the School faces will require both the School and the College to develop priorities and make strategic decisions as a result of these developed priorities. The School has lost a number of staff due to retirements in recent years, and more will take place in the short to medium term. The School currently has two staff who are on long-term sick leave. One of the main challenges within the School will be to plan for the future in terms of recruitment for new staff following staff retirements, and contingency plans if the College/University does not support new appointments.
- 2.6 There are a number of staff within the School at college lecturer and senior lecturer levels, and the absence of promotions within the past five years has had a serious impact on staff progression and staff morale. There are also only two professors within the School (one full professor and one associate professor). With the Associate Professor due to retire in the medium term, the School will have only one full professor. This has implications in terms of leadership for the School, and the challenge will be to bring in new professorial staff in order to enhance the School's vision of being Ireland's leading School of Sociology. There is also a gender imbalance within the School, with only 4 out of 14.5 staff being female, and only one of these being at the Senior Lecturer level. There are no female Associate or full Professors. Lack of progression for administrative staff who are at the top of their existing grade is also a cause for concern.
- 2.7 The Review Group noted the concerns expressed within the SAR, and in meetings during the site visit of being spread across both the Newman and James Joyce buildings, and the difficulties this has for both academic staff and students – in particular PhD students. There is also concern over the quality of some of the facilities within the Newman building. The long term project for the refurbishment of both buildings and the development of the Newman Joyce precinct has the potential to address these concerns. However, in the meantime, being spread out causes problems in the development of a School identity.

- 2.8 The School, as with all schools in the University, has faced a significant reduction in its budget since the economic downturn and cuts to University budgets over progressive years, with more cuts anticipated in the future. This poses significant problems for all schools within the University, but in particular for a small school such as this. The School itself is happy that its budget is made earlier in the academic year, as this helps with their planning for the forthcoming academic year. However, it would like to see more transparency from the College Finance manager and College Principal as to how school budgets are determined.

### ***Recommendations***

- 2.9 The School's current strategic plan was drawn up in 2007, and as the School itself recognises, was very much an aspirational plan based on the 'Celtic Tiger' years. As the economic environment has changed considerably since this time period, the Review Group recommends that the School develop a new strategic plan, which provides a realistic vision for the future. The Review Group also recommends that the School develop an Advisory Board to whom the School can then present its vision, seeking advice and recommendations etc. The Review Group advises that the School re-visit its strategic plan and establish an Advisory Board as soon as possible and that the terms of reference for the Advisory Board should focus on helping the School develop and implement its vision for the future.
- 2.10 The School should set aside time to come together to agree its future vision and direction and mechanisms to work together towards achieving its key goals. This requires strong leadership and active buy-in to this process from all staff members so that they collectively and individually take ownership of the agreed vision.
- 2.11 The School has reorganised its committee structure and currently has a School Executive, Undergraduate Studies Committee, Graduate Studies Committee, and a Research, Innovation and Scholarship Committee. The Review Group's observations, from discussions with staff, the SAR, and minutes of various committees would be that some of these committees are more effective than others. The Review Group recommends that the School completes a review of the purposes of each committee and how they can be most utilised, to not only consider the operational and day to day activities of the School, but also its future strategic directions. The development of a new agreed vision for the future will help in this regard. This review should include the agreement of terms of reference for each committee.
- 2.12 The School acknowledges that it would be faced with additional pressures if any of its administrative staff leave their current post; the Review Group recommends that the School should therefore have contingency plans in place which can be implemented quickly if this is to arise.
- 2.13 In its Self-assessment Report the School mentions its development of staff-student liaison committees. However, in the Review Group's discussions with students neither undergraduate or taught postgraduate students were aware of these committees. The Review Group recommends that the School re-evaluates these committees, and re-

introduces them if they no longer exist, and re-invigorate them so that students are more aware of them if they are indeed still currently in place.

- 2.14 The Review Group recognises the difficulties of co-location and agrees a single site location would be beneficial to the School, in particular for developing an *esprit de corps* amongst staff and students (in particular graduate students). The School should be proactive in its discussions with the College in what spaces it would like to have within the newly developed buildings. While these are obviously aspirational at this stage, the School is most likely to benefit from any new developments if it plays an active role in the planning and implementation phases of this significant project.
- 2.15 The School has a workload policy which has been in place for a number of years. It operates on a 40/40/20 principle in terms of teaching & learning, research & innovation, and administration/contribution. The workload policy developed by the School has also been adopted by other schools within the College. While the Review Group commends the School for developing a workload model, it would appear that in practice this policy is not implemented effectively. Staff submit annual workloads to the Head of School, but there appears to be no system in place to deal with staff who might be over and/or under performing in particular areas. The Review Group recommends that the policy be re-visited, in light of how it is implemented within the School.

### **3. Staff and Facilities**

- 3.1 The number of full time staff is relatively small - 14.5 academics and three administrators. There is also a lack of senior staff with only one Professor and one Associate Professor (due to retire in 2016). Recent developments, such as the retirement of three and exit of one, highly active members of staff at Professorial level, without appropriate replacements at the equivalent level, is a on-going challenge for the School and is likely to worsen in the future with up-coming retirements.
- 3.2 The lack of promotions for academic and administrative staff has affected staff morale. While the University is engaged in a current round of promotions, these are likely to be highly competitive and are unlikely to challenge low staff morale.
- 3.3 The administrative staff are working to full capacity and workloads are likely to become more intense. This has an impact on the time available to expand and improve the website (and other initiatives). This also means that administrative staff become reactive problem solvers rather than proactive developers of administrative policies.
- 3.4 The lack of administrative support in the School also at times impacts on staff as they have to undertaken administrative work previously done by administrative staff.
- 3.5 Concern was expressed in the SAR about the location of staff across two floors in the Newman Building, the James Joyce Library Building and the Geary Institute. This makes it

difficult for the School to establish a strong School identity and sense of belonging. It also creates problems for the administration staff. It also makes it difficult for some PhD students to feel part of the School.

- 3.6 In some cases teaching rooms are unsuitable and in need of renovation and updating. Overcrowding and noise have been identified as two particular problems.

### **Commendations**

- 3.7 The Review Group commends staff generally for the excellent manner in which they continue to provide a wider range of teaching in the face of increased numbers and staff reductions given the wider recessionary financial framework in which they operate.
- 3.8 The positive experience of students on the undergraduate degree programmes was noted and is a particular strength. Students provided glowing testimonies in relation to their experience of teaching in the School and many indicated that given the right financial circumstances, they are actively considering progressing to Masters and PhD programmes.
- 3.9 The administrative staff have a strong commitment to the School and take reduced tea/coffee/lunch breaks to help manage workloads.
- 3.10 Occasional lecturers and post-doctoral students highlighted the strong support they gained from administrative staff in becoming familiar with online systems.
- 3.11 Excellent use is made of postgraduate students to support teaching.
- 3.12 While Library resources are decreasing, the School's listing of A-grade journals was protected in recent cuts and staff engage satisfactorily with the College Library Liaison contact.

### **Recommendations**

- 3.13 Locating staff within a tighter space is crucial to establishing a School brand, identity and sense of place. Priority should be given in the University's Master Plan for future allocation of space to ensuring that the current dispersal of School of Sociology staff across separate floors and buildings is remedied.
- 3.14 Academic staff should be provided with ongoing and enhanced mentoring to support development of their careers and to provide guidance about promotion.
- 3.15 Post-doctoral students and PhD students felt there could be more emphasis placed on career and publication opportunities. While support and advice is available at a University level, the School should explore how to develop this advice at a School level, including publicising more effectively what is available.

- 3.16 The Review Group recommends that the School develop a long term strategy for dealing with up-coming retirements and lack of senior academics in the School. This includes discussing and planning for who will take over when the current Head of School's term of office is completed.
- 3.17 The University should evaluate how it communicates new central initiatives to administrative staff involved in the front line implementation of changes. The Review Group also recommends that the University explore ways to enable less senior administrative staff to meet collectively with administrative staff in other Schools and Colleges to discuss and reflect on implementation of central initiatives.
- 3.18 As the University continues to explore the establishment of interdisciplinary posts, proper structures should be put in place to support this. In particular, promotion structures for someone who works across two colleges should be developed, so that they are not disadvantaged.
- 3.19 Staff raised serious concerns about the impact of the introduction of car parking fees. This will be in the region of €1,000 per annum for staff. This decreases staff morale and may have a significant impact on student numbers. The Review Group strongly recommends that the University reconsider this development.

#### **4. Teaching, Learning & Assessment and Curriculum Development**

- 4.1 UCD's School of Sociology offers a broad teaching programme, both at the undergraduate and the graduate level. 25 undergraduate modules cover a good selection from the different specialised fields of sociology. The seven pathways for studying social science at UCD at stage 2 are good clusters, with a strong representation of sociological modules.
- 4.2 The retention rate is satisfactory and the Review Group did not consider that it is of concern, given the present economic conditions. Taking into consideration the Employment Control Framework that is currently in place in Ireland, the Review Group understands that the number of teaching personnel is not likely to be increased therefore, it is the opinion of the Review Group that the resources for improvement should be allocated to other parts of the curriculum.
- 4.3 The numbers of students enrolled in the Master programmes are low. Retention rate calculations are unrealistic/problematic because graduates might return to a Master programme after a period outside the University. The data for the class of 2011 at the College of Human Sciences level indicates that about one third continues immediately with an additional study or training programme.
- 4.4 The number of FTEs in the MSocSc programme is in line with this view. So the transfer from undergraduate to graduate studies in the School of Sociology seems to be only slightly lower

than in the College of Human Sciences. The School currently offers three different MA programmes and collaborates in one joint Master programme.

- 4.5 The School outlined a plan to add two more Master programmes. In addition, staff members from the School of Sociology are engaged in two more new joint Master programmes in Irish Studies and Diaspora Studies, respectively.
- 4.6 In the Self-assessment Report, the School listed FTEs at the PhD level, along with indicating the number of students that are actually working actively on their PhD theses. The Review Group is satisfied that the number indicated is valid but suggests that in future documents reported numbers are presented more coherently.
- 4.7 The School of Sociology reported the School's student:staff ratio, which has increased over the last two decades and which the Review Group noted is markedly higher than UCD's average.

### ***Commendations***

- 4.8 The teaching performance of the School impressed the members of the Review Group. In particular, the enthusiasm expressed by the group of students who met the Review Group during the visit indicated the success of the School's dedication to excellent teaching.
- 4.9 The commendable role of the small group teaching was highlighted to the Review Group by both students and staff. It not only allows the undergraduate students to become more involved in their own learning but it is helpful for PhD students to get teaching experience and supports them economically.
- 4.10 The use of electronic devices for teaching as Blackboard, etc. has been brought to a level which is sufficient.
- 4.11 The Review Group commend the positive initiative shown by PhD students by organising a national seminar series.

### ***Recommendations***

- 4.14 The plan of the School to improve their financial situation-by enlarging the number of Master programmes has been debated thoroughly. While the Review Group is not against the policy of offering additional Master programmes, we recommend that the School consider, in the first place, counselling the best undergraduate students and encouraging them to continue studying sociology at the Masters level. The School should also seek College and University support for marketing those programmes to prospective students.
- 4.15 It is the understanding of the Review Group that the School of Sociology has proposed to the College and the University that they be given the autonomy to remodel the fee system according to particular conditions for sociology students. The Review Group recommends

that, at least on an experimental basis, the School is allowed to make use of a fee system based on accumulated credits or to lower the fee to attract more part-time students.

- 4.16 The Review Group recommends that the productive collaboration between the School of Sociology and the School of Mathematics to provide statistical literacy to Sociology majors and Sociology Master programmes should be continued and, if possible, to be expanded. Given the present composition of the staff it does not seem possible to go further and develop a Master programme in Social Science Methods but the Review Group would like to encourage the School to start considering this development in the not too distant future.
- 4.17 The Review Group recommends that the School start developing ideas for joint Master programmes, both within UCD but also beyond, nationally and internationally. It is the understanding of the Review Group that all staff members are encouraged to participate in international “invisible colleges” and the School should develop at least one UCD and one international joint study programme, in consultation with the relevant UCD support units, for example, UCD Academic Secretariat, UCD Bursar’s Office, UCD Corporate and Legal Affairs Office and the UCD Quality Office. The international programme could approach European funds for financial resources.
- 4.18 There is scope, on several levels, to improve the experience of PhD students in the School. The PhD Committee should review current practices and procedures, paying particular attention to the following:
- 4.19.1 The Review Group recommends that the allocation of supervisors be made more transparent. Under the current system, some students are concerned that they have not been assigned to the most appropriate supervisors.
- 4.19.2 The involvement of School staff in collective work with the PhD students should be increased effectively and sustainably. The School organises Roundtable seminars for the PhD students and, last year, the PHD students organised a series of seminars on the theme Critical Issues in Irish Society Network (CIISN). The Review Group recommends that the School organise regular research seminars, where the PhD students can present their on-going work and get feedback from as many staff members as possible. The participation of, on average, at least half of the staff should become the norm. Given the highly esteemed plurality of the School’s staff, such a seminar will become, within a very short period of time, a unique selling point of the School’s PhD programme.
- 4.19.3 PhD students should be encouraged to produce articles for journals while working on their PhD and staff members should be encouraged to publish together with their PhD students. Aligned to this, the Review Group recommends that the format of the PhD theses should be reconsidered, moving, where possible, from a monograph format to a more open format, probably stopping short of a cumulative model.

4.19.4 Concern was expressed by students about some supervisors not being as available or approachable as others and, on some occasions, feedback from supervisors was not constructive, which has a negative impact on student morale. It would appear also that some Doctoral Studies Panels (DSPs) are more effective than others; again it is recommended that the role and implementation of DSPs within the School is re-visited.

## **5. Research Activity**

- 5.1 A wide range of staff research interests is evident in the School. Pluralism is identified as a core strength in the Self-assessment Report. Staff consistently publish books, edited books, book chapters, journal articles in national and international journals and the increasing focus on moving from publishing book chapters to publishing journal articles is positively noted. Staff have also attracted research grants although it is noted that at present no staff member is involved in internationally funded research.
- 5.2 However, judging by the evidence made available, it is clear that research output is uneven and patchy across the School. Some members of staff appear to be research active while others are less so. The recent and upcoming retirements are likely to make this situation worse and the School needs to give careful consideration to how it deals with this unevenness over the next five years. Staff members in early/mid stages of their academic careers need to be particularly supported to develop their publication profiles.
- 5.3 While the Review Group acknowledges the time and resource difficulties in applying for grants and writing up research findings in books, journal articles etc, nonetheless, the Review Group noted the lack of emphasis among staff on developing a strong internal School-based collaborative research culture that could help staff promote their individual and collective research interests.
- 5.4 While funding is becoming increasingly competitive and the Review Group recognise the time difficulties in managing grants and note that at times School and College support may not be as effective as it could be, nonetheless, the Review Group feel that staff could be much more proactive in applying for international funding and European funding in particular.
- 5.5 The Review Group feels that developing a strong inter-School collaborative, research culture should be a top priority for the School. It was unclear to the Review Group if an effective research strategy was in place. While the Review Group recognise the strength in pluralism, they also note the School's resistance to the concept of 'clusters'. However, more ownership could be taken in relation to identifying broad research themes that would simultaneously protect staff individual research interests, autonomy to work independently but also nurture collaborative frameworks which is necessary for the current research environment.

### ***Commendations***

- 5.6 The RG recognises the strength and depth of scholarship and unfunded research at the School and the contribution that they make to academia and the wider community.
- 5.7 The research seminar series is to be commended. Most of the talks are publically available on YouTube and a range of excellent world-class speakers have delivered presentations. It is good to see the Schools engagement with other schools and institutes within the University and with Trinity College Dublin in organising and delivering these seminars.
- 5.8 There is evidence that teaching programmes are influenced by research and there is good synergy between staff research interests and teaching. This was highlighted as a strength by undergraduate students.
- 5.9 Staff have applied for and been successful in obtaining funding for post-doc studentships.
- 5.10 Some staff have strong media profiles and this ensures that their research has local and national impact.
- 5.11 The School has an Annual Research Day, which enables staff to briefly discuss their research plans and strategies along with attending a public lecture given by a prominent sociologist.
- 5.12 The School hosts bi-weekly roundtable discussions, which enable PhD students to discuss their research with their peers.
- 5.13 The Review Group note the success of the Dynamics Lab research group which brings together academic staff, post-doctoral researchers and PhD students within an inter-disciplinary framework.

### ***Recommendations***

- 5.14 While recognising the strengths of pluralism in the School and the need to protect the right of staff to pursue individual research topics and objectives, the School could be more proactive in exploiting opportunities for synergies between staff research interests within the School and with those in other cognate schools and the wider University.
- 5.15 For example, the School is well placed to make a strong contribution to at least one of the major themes identified by the University in relation to Culture, Economy and Society.
- 5.16 The School already has broad themes including Health, Well-Being and Society and War and Conflict Resolution. These and other themes could be more proactively identified along with ways in which these 'individual' themes could be incorporated within broader thematic approaches to developing a School wide approach to research. These and other themes could be set widely enough to incorporate individual and collective research interests.

- 5.17 The School could develop a more strategic vision and policy around broadening research collaboration, strengthening internal and external networks and ensuring that these are consistent with the strategic research vision of the wider University.
- 5.18 The Research Committee should take the lead in developing a long-term strategic research plan, supporting the development of research themes, identifying collaborative research opportunities, ensuring support for early/mid-career researchers and providing advice and support on research grant opportunities and management.
- 5.19 The School should prepare a five-year plan for research output in relation to grants and publications including providing formal supportive mechanisms to enable staff to meet these aims.
- 5.20 The School should review the School's research web page to ensure that it highlights the breadth and depth of the School's research endeavours, along with its links with other schools and colleges.
- 5.21 The School should continue to promote its high-profile seminar series bringing in local, national and international scholars but also develop a School based seminar series where staff and postgraduates present their research.
- 5.22 The School should explore models to free up staff for research activity. This could include the School's sabbatical system and condensing teaching into one semester. This should be considered in line with the School's workload policy.
- 5.23 Conference funding is essential to building up research networks and should be protected for academic staff and postgraduate students.
- 5.24 Staff should continue to pursue their strategies for publishing with PhD students.
- 5.25 The Dynamics Lab inter-disciplinary research group provides evidence of success in developing links between researchers and academics at different points in their careers and the model could be developed along other research themes.

## **6. Management of Quality and Enhancement**

- 6.1 The School uses a mix of approaches to evaluate the quality of modules provided by the School and to seek student feedback.
- 6.2 Modules provided by the School are evaluated using UCD's on-line module enhancement process and feedback is used by module coordinators to address issues identified. However, students are not provided with feedback on these enhancements. Members of staff also seek feedback from students on individual modules on an informal basis.

- 6.3 Students are represented by student members of School graduate and undergraduate committees and student representatives are appointed through the Students' Union. However, concerns were identified amongst students in relation to how their views are represented through this system. Masters students identified that they had no formal representation. A staff-student liaison forum is in place but this forum has not met for some time and only meets when an issue has been raised by a student representative.
- 6.4 Undergraduate modules provided by the School contribute to two programmes (Social Science and BA programmes) and these programmes sit outside of the School structure. Learning outcomes have been established for the two programmes which guide the content and assessment of individual modules. However, there is no clear system in place for the evaluation of undergraduate or graduate programmes as a whole.
- 6.5 Feedback from Extern Examiners is positive and confirms the implementation of recommendations made previously.

### ***Commendations***

- 6.6 The School has adopted effective mechanisms for the review of modules and has used the information obtained to enhance the quality of its teaching.
- 6.7 Student feedback on undergraduate and taught graduate programmes is very good and pass rates are good across modules.

### ***Recommendations***

- 6.8 Working with the Deans of Social Science and Arts, the School should agree mechanisms to evaluate undergraduate and graduate programmes. This should include a regular review of learning outcomes (for programmes and modules), programme fitness for purpose, and programme viability and include feedback and feedforward opportunities for staff and students.
- 6.9 Review the role of the staff-student liaison forum and mechanisms established for the representation of student views and the prompt identification of student concerns across all programmes.
- 6.10 Ensure effective mechanisms are in place for School staff to review module outcomes, through the grade approval process.

## **7. Support Services**

- 7.1 As discussed in Section 2 above, the School reorganised itself in 2009, and new administrative structures were put in place to support the School's activities. These new

structures appear to be working well, and the School's administrative staff demonstrated considerable knowledge of School/College/University systems and procedures. The structures support both the School's core activities and necessary support to students. The School is also for the most part happy with the support it receives from various central administrative units within the University.

### ***Commendations***

- 7.2 The School benefits from an excellent, dedicated administrative team. During the site visit administrative staff were praised by both academic colleagues and students at both undergraduate and graduate levels. Indeed administrative staff show an incredible level of dedication to the School. They frequently work beyond the normal working hours and show enormous goodwill to the University. This is to be commended particularly in the current circumstances where pay cuts have been introduced at a national level for public sector employees.
- 7.3 Development of training manuals for academic and administrative staff.

### ***Challenges***

- 7.4 The administrative and academic staff within the School are currently stretched to full capacity, and thus, as they themselves stated, they could contribute more to the School, but are not able to do so because they do not have sufficient time to sit and reflect. A number of useful ideas were proposed in the SAR and during the site visit in relation to developing new communications links with various stakeholders, but there are no resources to allow this. One possible avenue is to consider College-wide resources which may help in this regard (for example, in terms of alumni relations, research support, and marketing).

### ***Recommendations***

- 7.5 The School operates well within the wider College and University structures. However, there are a number of areas where the School feels it would be better able to perform its duties if there were changes to particular University procedures. These recommendations are therefore for the University to consider:
- 7.5.1 The timing of communications from central University administrative units often comes at very busy times for School administrators (e.g. start of semester, exam period etc.). It would be beneficial to the School if the University considers the timing of such communications.
- 7.5.2 Similarly, different units within the University ask for information back from schools at the same time; and with deadlines from different units set at similar times, this makes it difficult for staff to meet these. The establishment of a centralised calendar of deadlines for various tasks would help identify bottlenecks, address these if possible, and if, not the early communication of these to schools would help in staff

planning. Examples of deadlines raised by administrative staff include – undergraduate prospectus, module enhancement information, module descriptor forms, structure updates, timetabling, transfer of CA grades from Blackboard to Gradebook, Gradebook grade entry and closure etc.

7.5.3 Sometimes administrative staff are sent information on new strategies, policies, procedures etc. for which they have had no active input. More collaboration and input with administrative staff in schools would benefit both the University and the School.

7.5.4 It would be useful if both formal and informal communication channels were developed for graduate administrative staff across schools and colleges within the University.

## **8. External Relations**

8.1 The School has strong relationships with media and internal and external research institutes. The relationship with employers is less clear and the involvement in international research networks needs to be strengthened.

### ***Commendations***

8.2 Members of staff serve on a number of College Committees.

8.3 Member of academic staff have good record of serving as external examiners, referees, assessors, editors of journals across wide range of universities.

8.4 Some members of staff have high media profiles.

8.5 School has good links with research institutes within College, Ireland and internationally.

8.6 School held 2012 interim meeting of ISA Research Cluster on History of Sociology.

### ***Recommendations***

8.7 The RG recommends the establishment of an Advisory Board (see Recommendation 2.9).

8.8 The School should develop a strategy with regard to getting access to EU funds by following closely the emerging new EU scheme Horizon 2020.

8.9 There are two levels of funding available for sociology: the bottom up basic research oriented European Research Council (ERC) and the wide spectrum of “calls” published by the European Commission. With regard to the ERC the School does not need to get additional counselling - detailed information is available at <http://erc.europa.eu/>. Whether staff

members of the School think of them as candidates for Advanced Grants depends on their own self-evaluation. On the level of Starting Grants (for researchers of any nationality with 2-7 years of experience since completion of PhD) the School should develop a strategy to select potential candidates to apply for such a grant within the next five years. The College and/or UCD should offer incentives for potential applicants.

- 8.11 With regard to the call system of European funds the School needs counselling and the College and/or UCD are encouraged to offer the School this support.
- 8.12 Since EU funds are highly competitive School's staff should be credited even if not finally successful in getting funded and a scheme should be developed for continued application afterwards.
- 8.13 The School should explore the potential to introduce work-based placements in various fields and internships for its students.
- 8.14 The School should explore how it can make better linkages with its alumni. The College should explore the potential establishment of College-wide alumni relationships, with a role in tracking graduates.

## **9. Summary of Commendations and Recommendations**

### **A. Organisation and Management**

#### Commendations

- A.1 The School responded positively to the previous QA/QI report in 2002 with regards to the changing organisational management and structure of the School.
- A.2 All colleagues have responded positively to difficult circumstances in the School as a result of serious illness of two members of staff, including the Head of School.
- A.3 The School benefits from having three administrative staff who have significant experience within the School, College and University; and who demonstrate excellence in all of their endeavours.
- A.4 The development of training manuals for academic and administrative staff.
- A.5 Graduate students are represented on School/College committees.

#### Recommendations

- A.6 The School's current strategic plan was drawn up in 2007, and as the School itself recognises, was very much an aspirational plan based on the 'Celtic Tiger' years. As the economic

environment has changed considerably since this time period, the Review Group recommends that the School develop a new strategic plan, which provides a realistic vision for the future. The Review Group also recommends that the School develop an Advisory Board to whom the School can then present its vision, seeking advice and recommendations etc. The Review Group advises that the School re-visit its strategic plan and establish an Advisory Board as soon as possible and that the terms of reference for the Advisory Board should focus on helping the School develop and implement its vision for the future.

- A.7 The School should set aside time to come together to agree its future vision and direction and mechanisms to work together towards achieving its key goals. This requires strong leadership and active buy-in to this process from all staff members so that they collectively and individually take ownership of the agreed vision.
- A.8 The School has reorganised its committee structure and currently has a School Executive, Undergraduate Studies Committee, Graduate Studies Committee, and a Research, Innovation and Scholarship Committee. The Review Group's observations, from discussions with staff, the SAR, and minutes of various committees would be that some of these committees are more effective than others. The Review Group recommends that the School completes a review of the purposes of each committee and how they can be most utilised, to not only consider the operational and day to day activities of the School, but also its future strategic directions. The development of a new agreed vision for the future will help in this regard. This review should include the agreement of terms of reference for each committee.
- A.9 The School acknowledges that it would be faced with additional pressures if any of its administrative staff leave their current post; the Review Group recommends that the School should therefore have contingency plans in place which can be implemented quickly if this is to arise.
- A.10 In its Self-assessment Report the School mentions its development of staff-student liaison committees. However, in the Review Group's discussions with students neither undergraduate or taught postgraduate students were aware of these committees. The Review Group recommends that the School re-evaluates these committees, and re-introduces them if they no longer exist, and re-invigorates them so that students are more aware of them if they are indeed still currently in place.
- A.11 The Review Group recognises the difficulties of co-location and agrees a single site location would be beneficial to the School, in particular for developing an *esprit de corps* amongst staff and students (in particular graduate students). The School should be proactive in its discussions with the College in what spaces it would like to have within the newly developed buildings. While these are obviously aspirational at this stage, the School is most likely to benefit from any new developments if it plays an active role in the planning and implementation phases of this significant project.
- A.12 The School has a workload policy which has been in place for a number of years. It operates on a 40/40/20 principle in terms of teaching & learning, research & innovation, and

administration/contribution. The workload policy developed by the School has also been adopted by other schools within the College. While the Review Group commends the School for developing a workload model, it would appear that in practice this policy is not implemented effectively. Staff submit annual workloads to the Head of School, but there appears to be no system in place to deal with staff who might be over and/or under performing in particular areas. The Review Group recommends that the policy be re-visited, in light of how it is implemented within the School.

## **B. Staff and Facilities**

### Commendations

- B.1 The Review Group commends staff generally for the excellent manner in which they continue to provide a wider range of teaching in the face of increased numbers and staff reductions given the wider recessionary financial framework in which they operate.
- B.2 The positive experience of students on the undergraduate degree programmes was noted and is a particular strength. Students provided glowing testimonies in relation to their experience of teaching in the School and many indicated that given the right financial circumstances, they are actively considering progressing to Masters and PhD programmes.
- B.3 The administrative staff have a strong commitment to the School and take reduced tea/coffee/lunch breaks to help manage workloads.
- B.4 Occasional lecturers and post-doctoral students highlighted the strong support they gained from administrative staff in becoming familiar with online systems.
- B.5 Excellent use is made of postgraduate students to support teaching.
- B.6 While Library resources are decreasing, the School's listing of A-grade journals was protected in recent cuts and staff engage satisfactorily with the College Library Liaison contact.

### Recommendations

- B.7 Locating staff within a tighter space is crucial to establishing a School brand, identity and sense of place. Priority should be given in the University's Master Plan for future allocation of space to ensuring that the current dispersal of School of Sociology staff across separate floors and buildings is remedied.
- B.8 Academic staff should be provided with ongoing and enhanced mentoring to support development of their careers and to provide guidance about promotion.
- B.9 Post-doctoral students and PhD students felt there could be more emphasis placed on career and publication opportunities. While support and advice is available at a University

level, the School should explore how to develop this advice at a School level, including publicising more effectively what is available.

- B.10 The Review Group recommends that the School develop a long term strategy for dealing with up-coming retirements and lack of senior academics in the School. This includes discussing and planning for who will take over when the current Head of School's term of office is completed.
- B.11 The University should evaluate how it communicates new central initiatives to administrative staff involved in the front line implementation of changes. The Review Group also recommends that the University explore ways to enable less senior administrative staff to meet collectively with administrative staff in other Schools and Colleges to discuss and reflect on implementation of central initiatives.
- B.12 As the University continues to explore the establishment of interdisciplinary posts, proper structures should be put in place to support this. In particular, promotion structures for someone who works across two colleges should be developed, so that they are not disadvantaged.
- B.13 Staff raised serious concerns about the impact of the introduction of car parking fees. This will be in the region of €1,000 per annum for staff. This decreases staff morale and may have a significant impact on student numbers. The Review Group strongly recommends that the University reconsider this development.

### **C. Teaching, Learning & Assessment and Curriculum Development**

#### Commendations

- C.1 The teaching performance of the School impressed the members of the Review Group. In particular, the enthusiasm expressed by the group of students who met the Review Group during the visit indicated the success of the School's dedication to excellent teaching.
- C.2 The commendable role of the small group teaching was highlighted to the Review Group by both students and staff. It not only allows the undergraduate students to become more involved in their own learning but it is helpful for PhD students to get teaching experience and supports them economically.
- C.3 The use of electronic devices for teaching as Blackboard, etc. has been brought to a level which is sufficient.
- C.4 The Review Group commend the positive initiative shown by PhD students by organising a national seminar series.

## Recommendations

- C.5 The plan of the School to improve their financial situation—by enlarging the number of Master programmes has been debated thoroughly. While the Review Group is not against the policy of offering additional Master programmes, we recommend that the School consider, in the first place, counselling the best undergraduate students and encouraging them to continue studying sociology at the Masters level. The School should also seek College and University support for marketing those programmes to prospective students.
- C.6 It is the understanding of the Review Group that the School of Sociology has proposed to the College and the University that they be given the autonomy to remodel the fee system according to particular conditions for sociology students. The Review Group recommends that, at least on an experimental basis, the School is allowed to make use of a fee system based on accumulated credits or to lower the fee to attract more part-time students.
- C.7 The Review Group recommends that the productive collaboration between the School of Sociology and the School of Mathematics to provide statistical literacy to Sociology majors and Sociology Master programmes should be continued and, if possible, to be expanded. Given the present composition of the staff it does not seem possible to go further and develop a Master programme in Social Science Methods but the Review Group would like to encourage the School to start considering this development in the not too distant future.
- C.8 The Review Group recommends that the School start developing ideas for joint Master programmes, both within UCD but also beyond, nationally and internationally. It is the understanding of the Review Group that all staff members are encouraged to participate in international “invisible colleges” and the School should develop at least one UCD and one international joint study programme, in consultation with the relevant UCD support units, for example, UCD Academic Secretariat, UCD Bursar’s Office, UCD Corporate and Legal Affairs Office and the UCD Quality Office. The international programme could approach European funds for financial resources.
- C.9 There is scope, on several levels, to improve the experience of PhD students in the School. The PhD Committee should review current practices and procedures, paying particular attention to the following:
- C.9.1 The Review Group recommends that the allocation of supervisors be made more transparent. Under the current system, some students are concerned that they have not been assigned to the most appropriate supervisors.
- C.9.2 The involvement of School staff in collective work with the PhD students should be increased effectively and sustainably. The School organises Roundtable seminars for the PhD students and, last year, the PHD students organised a series of seminars on the theme Critical Issues in Irish Society Network (CIISN). The Review Group recommends that the School organise regular research seminars, where the PhD students can present their on-going work and get feedback from as many staff

members as possible. The participation of, on average, at least half of the staff should become the norm. Given the highly esteemed plurality of the School's staff, such a seminar will become, within a very short period of time, a unique selling point of the School's PhD programme.

- C.9.3 PhD students should be encouraged to produce articles for journals while working on their PhD and staff members should be encouraged to publish together with their PhD students. Aligned to this, the Review Group recommends that the format of the PhD theses should be reconsidered, moving, where possible, from a monograph format to a more open format, probably stopping short of a cumulative model.
- C.9.4 Concern was expressed by students about some supervisors not being as available or approachable as others and, on some occasions, feedback from supervisors was not constructive, which has a negative impact on student morale. It would appear also that some Doctoral Studies Panels (DSPs) are more effective than others; again it is recommended that the role and implementation of DSPs within the School is re-visited.

## **D. Research Activity**

### Commendations

- D.1 The RG recognises the strength and depth of scholarship and unfunded research at the School and the contribution that they make to academia and the wider community.
- D.2 The research seminar series is to be commended. Most of the talks are publically available on YouTube and a range of excellent world-class speakers have delivered presentations. It is good to see the Schools engagement with other schools and institutes within the University and with Trinity College Dublin in organising and delivering these seminars.
- D.3 There is evidence that teaching programmes are influenced by research and there is good synergy between staff research interests and teaching. This was highlighted as a strength by undergraduate students.
- D.4 Staff have applied for and been successful in obtaining funding for post-doc studentships.
- D.5 Some staff have strong media profiles and this ensures that their research has local and national impact.
- D.6 The School has an Annual Research Day, which enables staff to briefly discuss their research plans and strategies along with attending a public lecture given by a prominent sociologist.
- D.7 The School hosts bi-weekly roundtable discussions, which enable PhD students to discuss their research with their peers.

- D.8 The Review Group note the success of the Dynamics Lab research group which brings together academic staff, post-doctoral researchers and PhD students within an interdisciplinary framework.

### Recommendations

- D.9 While recognising the strengths of pluralism in the School and the need to protect the right of staff to pursue individual research topics and objectives, the School could be more proactive in exploiting opportunities for synergies between staff research interests within the School and with those in other cognate schools and the wider University.
- D.10 For example, the School is well placed to make a strong contribution to at least one of the major themes identified by the University in relation to Culture, Economy and Society.
- D.11 The School already has broad themes including Health, Well-Being and Society and War and Conflict Resolution. These and other themes could be more proactively identified along with ways in which these 'individual' themes could be incorporated within broader thematic approaches to developing a School wide approach to research. These and other themes could be set widely enough to incorporate individual and collective research interests.
- D.12 The School could develop a more strategic vision and policy around broadening research collaboration, strengthening internal and external networks and ensuring that these are consistent with the strategic research vision of the wider University.
- D.13 The Research Committee should take the lead in developing a long-term strategic research plan, supporting the development of research themes, identifying collaborative research opportunities, ensuring support for early/mid-career researchers and providing advice and support on research grant opportunities and management.
- D.14 The School should prepare a five-year plan for research output in relation to grants and publications including providing formal supportive mechanisms to enable staff to meet these aims.
- D.15 The School should review the School's research web page to ensure that it highlights the breadth and depth of the School's research endeavours, along with its links with other schools and colleges.
- D.16 The School should continue to promote its high-profile seminar series bringing in local, national and international scholars but also develop a School based seminar series where staff and postgraduates present their research.
- D.17 The School should explore models to free up staff for research activity. This could include the School's sabbatical system and condensing teaching into one semester. This should be considered in line with the School's workload policy.

- D.18 Conference funding is essential to building up research networks and should be protected for academic staff and postgraduate students.
- D.19 Staff should continue to pursue their strategies for publishing with PhD students.
- D.20 The Dynamics Lab inter-disciplinary research group provides evidence of success in developing links between researchers and academics at different points in their careers and the model could be developed along other research themes.

## **E. Management of Quality and Enhancement**

### Commendations

- E.1 The School has adopted effective mechanisms for the review of modules and has used the information obtained to enhance the quality of its teaching.
- E.2 Student feedback on undergraduate and taught graduate programmes is very good and pass rates are good across modules.

### Recommendations

- E.3 Working with the Deans of Social Science and Arts, the School should agree mechanisms to evaluate undergraduate and graduate programmes. This should include a regular review of learning outcomes (for programmes and modules), programme fitness for purpose, and programme viability and include feedback and feedforward opportunities for staff and students.
- E.4 Review the role of the staff-student liaison forum and mechanisms established for the representation of student views and the prompt identification of student concerns across all programmes.
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## **F. Support Services**

### Commendations

- F.1 The School benefits from an excellent, dedicated administrative team. During the site visit administrative staff were praised by both academic colleagues and students at both undergraduate and graduate levels. Indeed administrative staff show an incredible level of dedication to the School. They frequently work beyond the normal working hours and show enormous goodwill to the University. This is to be commended particularly in the current circumstances where pay cuts have been introduced at a national level for public sector employees.

F.2 Development of training manuals for academic and administrative staff.

### Recommendations

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F.3.2 Similarly, different units within the University ask for information back from schools at the same time; and with deadlines from different units set at similar times, this makes it difficult for staff to meet these. The establishment of a centralised calendar of deadlines for various tasks would help identify bottlenecks, address these if possible, and if, not the early communication of these to schools would help in staff planning. Examples of deadlines raised by administrative staff include – undergraduate prospectus, module enhancement information, module descriptor forms, structure updates, timetabling, transfer of CA grades from Blackboard to Gradebook, Gradebook grade entry and closure etc.

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F.3.4 It would be useful if both formal and informal communication channels were developed for graduate administrative staff across schools and colleges within the University.

## **G. External Relations**

### Commendations

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G.3 Some members of staff have high media profiles.

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### Recommendations

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- G.10 With regard to the call system of European funds the School needs counselling and the College and/or UCD are encouraged to offer the School this support.
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## **APPENDIX 1**

### **UCD School of Sociology Response to the Review Group Report**

The UCD School of Sociology welcomes the Quality Review report as the culmination of a very useful and constructive process. We welcome in particular the endorsement given by the Review Group to many aspects of our activities and the significant commendations contained in the Report. We also welcome the recommendations that the Group makes in the Report regarding the improvement of policies, management structure, teaching provision and research activities. The School of Sociology will be considering how to address each of the recommendations over the next few months, with the aim of preparing a Quality Improvement Plan. The School's Self-assessment Report, the Review Group Report and the Quality Improvement Plan will all be used to inform the School's academic and resource planning activities for the next strategic period.

## APPENDIX 2



### Quality Review Site Visit Timetable

#### UCD SCHOOL OF SOCIOLOGY – 26-28 MARCH 2013

##### Pre-Visit Briefing Prior to Site Visit (Monday, 25<sup>th</sup> March 2013)

- 17.15-18.45 RG met in the Hotel to review preliminary issues and to confirm work schedule and assignment of tasks for the following two days (RG and UCD Quality Office only)
- 19.30 Dinner hosted for the RG by the, UCD Registrar and Deputy President (RG, UCD Deputy President and UCD Quality Office only)

##### Day 1: TUESDAY 26th MARCH, 2013

Venue: School of Sociology Seminar Room, F308, Newman Building

- 09.00-09.30 Private meeting of Review Group (RG)
- 09.30– 10.15 RG meet with **Acting Head of School**
- 10.15-10.30 Break
- 10.30 –11.15 RG meet with **Principal, UCD College of Human Sciences**
- 11.15 – 11.30 Tea/coffee break
- 11.30 – 12.15 RG meet with **SAR Coordinating Committee**
- 12.15-12.45 Break – RG review key observations and prepare for lunch time meeting
- 12.45-13.45 **Working lunch (buffet)** – meeting with external stakeholders

13.45-14.15	RG review key observations
14.15-15.30	RG meet with <b>representative group of academic staff</b> – primary focus on Teaching and Learning, and Curriculum issues
15.30-15.45	RG tea/coffee break
15.45-16.25	RG meet with <b>College Finance Manager</b> and <b>Head of School</b> to outline School's financial situation
16.25-16.30	Break
16.30-17.10	RG meet <b>UCD Programme Deans</b>
17.10-17.15	Break
17.15-18.15	<b>Tour of facilities</b>
18.15	RG depart

**Day 2: WEDNESDAY 27<sup>th</sup> MARCH, 2013**  
**Venue: UCD School of Sociology Seminar Room, F308, Newman Building**

08.45-09.15	Private meeting of the RG
09.15-09.55	RG meet with <b>representative from UCD Library</b>
09.55-10.10	Break
10.10-10.35	RG meet with a representative group of <b>postgraduate students</b> (taught and research)
10.35-11.00	RG meet with a representative group of <b>recent graduates</b> (PG and UG)
11.00-11.15	RG tea/coffee break
11.15-12.15	RG meet with the <b>School Research Committee</b> (& other relevant staff members)
12.15-12.30	Break - RG review key observations
12.30-13.15	Lunch – Review Group only
13.15-14.00	RG meet with <b>representative group of undergraduate students</b>

14.00-14.15	RG private meeting - review key observations
14.15-15.00	RG meet with <b>support staff representatives</b> (e.g. administrative / technical etc)
15.00-15.15	Break
15.15-16.00	RG meet with <b>occasional lecturers and postdocs</b>
16.00-16.15	RG available for private individual meetings with staff
16.15-17.45	RG private meeting – review key observations/findings and begin preparing draft RG Report
17.45	RG depart

**Day 3: THURSDAY 28<sup>th</sup> MARCH, 2013**  
**Venue: School of Sociology Seminar Room, F308, Newman Building**

09.00-09.30	Private meeting of RG
09.30-09.50	RG meeting with <b>representative from Building Planning Manager, UCD Buildings &amp; Services</b> for overview of the proposed Newman Joyce Precinct Project (proposed new building for Human Sciences and the Library)
09.50-10.30	(Optional) RG meet with Head of School and/or specified University staff to clarify any outstanding issues <u>or</u> begin preparing draft RG Report
10.30-10.45	Break
10.45-12.30	RG continue preparing draft RG Report
12.30-13.15	Lunch
13.15-15.30	RG finalise first draft of RG Report and feedback commendations/recommendations
15.30-15.45	Break
15.45-16.00	RG meet with <b>Head of School</b> to feedback initial outline commendations and recommendations
16.15	<b>Exit presentation</b> to <u>all available staff of the unit</u> – made by an extern member of the Review Group summarising the principal commendations/recommendations of the Review Group
16.45	Review Group depart