University College Dublin

Quality Improvement Plan

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UCD Applied Language Centre

May 2010

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Introduction

The staff of the UCD Applied Language Centre (ALC) wish to express their thanks to the Review Group (RG) members for the positive commendations and constructive recommendations in their report. Many of the recommendations outlined in the RG Report have captured the essence of the main issues within the ALC and clearly highlight areas for action in future developments at strategic, management and operational levels. It also wishes to thank the Quality Office for its support throughout this process.

The Quality Improvement Plan (in conjunction with the RG report, Self-assessment report and appendices) will act as significant reference points and benchmarks by which ALC can monitor its progress towards continuous quality improvement in the future, taking into account the current financial climate and in the context of the University's Strategic Plan.

The RG report indicated that the ALC had succeeded in achieving high quality standards despite serious under-staffing over many years. Lack of staff prevented the ALC from commencing work on the QIP last summer as it would have wished. In addition, further operational difficulties have arisen with the loss of and reallocation of key first floor space in the Daedalus Building to the International Office. This loss and that of ALC's specialist language teaching space on June 1 will have a major impact on current service provision for the coming and subsequent academic years.   Without access to essential facilities, the Centre cannot provide the current range of activities and services and will therefore require prioritization by the Management Board of ALC's strategic priorities, particularly in the light of proposed increases in international and other students.

Quality Improvement Committee

Mary Ruane	Director of the UCD Applied Language Centre
Hugo O'Donnell	Senior Administrator, ALC
Anna Nunan	Foreign Language Modules, Senior Teacher
Brian Rice	Foreign Language Modules, Administrator
Johanna Flannery	English Examinations Unit, IELTS Administrator

Over the period, from beginning of November 2009 onwards, the committee met fortnightly.

Development of the Quality Improvement Plan

21-23 Apr 2009	ALC site visit. Review Group visited the ALC.
24 Jun 2009	RG report received by ALC and circulated to staff for feedback and inspection for factual errors.
28 Aug 2009	Feedback and factual errors were reported to the UCD Quality Office. Meetings and discussions took place between the Quality Office and ALC in light of significant changes in the ALC context emerging over many weeks subsequent to the publication of the RG Report. These included key staff departures (no replacement), lack of staffing structures and the loss of an important Teaching & Learning facility within the Daedalus Building.
1 Sep 2009	Review Group finalized and circulated to ALC staff, President, Registrar, College Principal and Review Group
23 Sep 2009 to Jan 2010	Quality Office briefed Head of ALC on QIP process via meetings and phone calls. The Director indicated clearly the difficulties that she was experiencing arising from the changed circumstances. She also confirmed this to the Director of the QA Office on 25 January 2010.
19 Jan 2010	First draft of QIP was prepared by the ALC Quality Improvement Committee and submitted to the Quality Office for comment. As far as possible, changes and amendments took account of resource changes. A response was received from the Quality Office on 24 February 2010. A second draft was prepared and forwarded to the Quality Office on 9 March 2010; it too attempted to take account of resource reductions.
29 Mar 2010	On receipt of a letter from the Quality Office on 19 March the Director met with the Chairman of ACCQ, Chairman of the Review Group, the Director of Quality Assurance and the Deputy Director of Quality Assurance in order to discuss the draft QIP.
8 Apr 2010	The Director met with the Principal of the College of Arts and Celtic Studies and reviewed the content of the ALC's response to the RG recommendations. The Principal's comments together with her written amendments to the text have been incorporated into this proposal.
9 Apr 2010	The Director met with the Chairman of ACCQ, Chairman of the Review Group and the Deputy Director of Quality Assurance to discuss a further draft of the QIP.

15 Apr 2010	A final draft of the QIP was submitted and e-mail feedback was received.
16 Apr 2010	The final version was submitted to meet the deadline in 19 March letter.
28 May 2010	Revised version resubmitted to UCD Quality Office.
16 June 2010	QIP approved by Academic Council Committee on Quality (ACCQ), with one amendment.
27 Oct 2010	QIP finalised.

Response to Recommendations in the Review Group Report

1   IN THE CONTROL OF THE APPLIED LANGUAGE CENTRE

1(a)   Already implemented

1   Recommendation 5.23: The Management Board, in collaboration with the College of Arts and Celtic Studies, should ensure that all existing FL modules undergo normal academic approval processes and that this becomes a standard procedure for all future modules.

Action Taken
The Director, prepared a submission on the establishment of a Board of Studies. This was first approved by the Principal and then referred to the Board of Management for review and noting. It has now been referred for approval to the Registrar's office.

1(b)   To be implemented within one year

2   Recommendation 4.13: As part of the move to a new staffing structure, arrangements should be put in place for staff development review and opportunities for tutors to engage in pedagogical development and to enhance their scholarly profile.

Action planned
Ongoing staff development is essential for teaching and examining staff, and for administrative personnel. The following measures will be taken:
- A subcommittee has been formed to produce a report on the current development priorities for language teaching staff. The subcommittee report is due on 30 April. Information received so far indicates that demands are in the area of language proficiency testing, application of CEFR policy to syllabi and classroom practice, and materials development. This report will be used as one of the elements to draw up a staff development policy for teachers and testers especially in the context of a new resource environment.
- As part of its plan for collaboration with the SLL, it is proposed to establish joint programmes for language teacher development.
- The ALC will work with the UCD Centre for Teaching and Learning to ensure that modules are devised to meet needs identified by the sub-committee.
- A programme of staff development for administrative personnel has been implemented for full-time staff under PMDS and this will be extended under the second phase of this programme.

3   Recommendation 5.26: The ALC and SLL should establish a forum to clarify respective areas of activity and to explore potential future collaboration. This should be an incremental process and in the short-term should focus on avoiding overlap in the provision of language elective modules and improving the advertising of all UCD language electives.

Action planned
The ALC Director sought a meeting with the Head of SLL in late December to present its proposals for areas of cooperation. It was agreed that the matter of overlap of SLL and ALC modules is no longer an issue. The de facto situation is that, with some

monitored exceptions, the specialist students are taught by SLL, and the Centre is seen as the natural choice for non-specialist linguists.

New opportunities for collaboration exist in the following areas:
a) Sharing of language teaching resources in the Daedalus building. There have been requests for use of the open language learning resource area from the School (mainly French, German and Spanish). A pilot project has got underway with French. The closure of language teaching resources in Daedalus means that these collaborative initiatives with the School will come to an end.
b) Sharing of approaches to language teacher recruitment, induction and evaluation in line with recommendations to establish a staffing structure for language coordination and teaching in ALC. This would have implications for similar language teaching appointments in SLL.
c) Joint pedagogical research projects. It is expected that this will enable the ALC approach to language teaching based on CEFR norms and pedagogies to be taken into account.

A programme of collaborative activities will be put in place for 2010/11 to include the preparation of a policy document on teacher development and evaluation in semester 2 next year; and joint small-scale pedagogical research projects including the organisation of conferences and perhaps a lecture or seminar series.

4   Recommendation 7.9: The ALC's research intentions would be well served by identifying and collaborating with partners both internal and external to UCD as appropriate, who may have the capacity to enhance the ALC's research potential.

Action planned
The ALC has identified a number of research partners with a view to extending its small but innovative research programme. Following discussion with the Principal and the V-P for Research in the College, it will seek to develop bi- and multi-lateral research projects in areas of key pedagogical importance for the Centre.

Its main partner at the present time will be its counterpart centre in Trinity College, the Centre for Language and Communication Studies (CLCS) based in the School of Linguistic Speech and Communication Sciences. It has long-standing collaborative links with CLCS and a very similar approach to language teaching and language teaching research. It has identified a number of research themes. It will now seek opportunities for collaboration under the UCD/TCD Innovation Alliance. Through the link with CLCS, it will also extend its research collaboration with a number of international partners.

Following discussions with CLCS, it has identified the following priority topics: CEFR applications in the context of institution-wide language learning policy, European Language Portfolio evaluation, ICT and language learning, and language education policy and planning.

The CLCS and the ALC have also commenced discussions on possible collaboration on the development, enhancement and delivery of specialist English language modules and courses for international students who have already registered in each university. In line with policy in the CLCS, such pedagogical activity would be progressed within a research and development framework and lead to a range of outputs including dissemination and publication.

The Centre currently has a strong partnership with the Irish Institute for Chinese Studies (IICS)/Confucius Institute in UCC. This collaboration focuses on areas relating to the teaching of Chinese and other Asian languages. It has recently received funding for a book project on the teaching of Chinese in Ireland and it is engaged in a programme of pedagogical innovation in language teacher education with the Institute/Centre. It is also working on a proposal for the teaching of Japanese with the Centre for Asian Studies in UCC which is linked to the IICS at UCC. The ALC has close working links with the NUI Maynooth and the University of Limerick in the field of second and foreign language education and pedagogy and is exploring the possibility of developing formal research and innovation partnerships.

Internally in UCD, the ALC has strong links with the School of Education and is examining the possibility of joint research proposals in the field of second/foreign education. It is also working on a joint programme of research and innovation with SLL (see Recommendation 5.26/No. 3). The aim is to develop outline collaborative research programmes and apply for UCD seed funding.

5   Recommendation 8.13: A system needs to be put in place to ensure external validation of the quality of the modules and their assessment processes. This may include an overview of newly developed modules at the level of the UUPB and of existing modules through the module enhancement process. The quality of all modules needs to be monitored through the appointment of external examiners.

Action planned
- The Director, working to the Principal, prepared a submission on the establishment of a Board of Studies to oversee academic standards in the ALC. This was reviewed by the Board of Management and sent to the Registrar who will take it to the relevant bodies for approval.
- In line with guidelines, the ALC has commenced the process of appointing external examiners (see Recommendation 5.25/No. 9).

6   Recommendation 8.16: The ALC should develop a system for ensuring that the information that is collected from students in the form of end of semester questionnaires/focus groups on teaching quality is fed back into the enhancement process. Information on this system should be made available to staff and students of the ALC.

Action planned
All end-of-semester student questionnaire data (approx. 2500 student module places) is analysed using SPSS at the end of each semester. The results are conveyed to all teaching and administrative staff and feed back into the enhancement process.   By the end of semester 1 in the 2010/11 period, the findings will be made available to students of the Centre in the form of written reports to individual students which will be also posted on Moodle, and through oral presentations to the focus groups.

7   Recommendation 8.17: The ALC should consider establishing a student forum that would allow students to raise issues of concern.

Action planned
The ALC has initiated a review to establish which forms of student fora would best suit the different type of programmes which are offered by the ALC.

In the case of the Horizons modules, where there are very high numbers, student fora will be organised according to proficiency level (CEFR A1/A2/B1 and CEFR B2/C1) rather than by language. This would strengthen the plurilingual dimension in the programme and afford effective and time-efficient ways of organising student feedback. As the role of English language teaching in the Centre is currently under review, a decision on the type of forum suited to this category of learner will be made before 1 July. It is intended that the new external examiners will also feed into this evaluation process and into the proposals made in Recommendation 8.16/No.16 above.

Plans will be put in place to ensure that student fora systems will be fully implemented for the following programmes in 2010/11:

- Each Graduate TESOL programme (Grad Cert/Grad Dip/MA)
- Students taking Horizons modules (FLM & English)
- A representative selection of English teaching programmes

8   Recommendation 5.24: Until a more satisfactory staffing structure and more transparent quality assurance procedures are in place, the ALC should be cautious about further expanding the FL Horizons programme but should focus on supporting students to make informed module choices about progressing to higher levels of FL achievement and on recruiting students from across all schools.

Action planned
The ALC Board of Studies, reporting to the University Undergraduate Programme Board (UUPB), will provide academic oversight of the foreign language modules. The ALC will liaise with schools and programme boards through these structures with a view to developing policy in regard to the linguistic needs of the non-specialist language students (engineers, scientists etc.) for employment and study purposes. In line with RG recommendations, the ALC will modify and consolidate its syllabus development and assessment structures to ensure that students can reach proficiency standards in line with relevant European norms, and can acquire a range of autonomous language learning strategies which will support their future language learning across a range of languages for different purposes.

9   Recommendation 5.25: The Centre should introduce an appropriate number of external examiners for FL modules.

Action planned
- The ALC will appoint two external examiners for the foreign language modules operating under Horizons. One would be responsible for the institution-wide language programme as a whole with particular reference to west and central European languages, and one would be responsible for Asian, Middle Eastern and African languages.
- It will seek to appoint one external examiner for English, who can cover both the graduate TESOL (Grad Cert/Grad Dip/MA in TESOL) programme and all Horizons/non-Horizons English teaching and testing programmes.

2 NOT IN THE CONTROL OF THE APPLIED LANGUAGE CENTRE

2(a) Already implemented

10 Recommendation 3.17: The strategic goals of the ALC need to be clearly articulated. ALC goals should support University goals and in turn the ALC should be supported by the University in achieving its goals – the commercial activity of the Centre should be complementary to its strategic focus.

Action taken
ALC Strategic Objectives have been drawn up in the first instance by the Registrar drawing on the Centre's SAR and the RG report. These have received final approval by the Board of Management. The commercial activity of the Centre now occupies a much-reduced role.

Strategic Objectives:
a. to build strong relationships between ALC and other relevant academic and support units in UCD;
b. to work with the International Office to provide English for Academic Purposes and other English language supports for international students attending or preparing to attend UCD programmes;
c. to work in collaboration with the UCD School of Languages and Literatures, and where relevant other UCD Schools, to provide students, particularly students not specialising in languages, with a range of language options suited to their needs, benchmarked to European standards, and organised and delivered to the highest standards;
d. to further develop commercial language teaching programmes as an activity ancillary to and supportive of core academic activities;
e. to achieve accreditation for its English teaching in line with counterparts elsewhere;
f. to establish the 'TESOL Pathway' as the leading graduate programme in this area in Ireland;
g. to develop, as staffing allows and in collaboration with other relevant academic units, a research programme in second/foreign language pedagogy

The grid below shows which actions which have been and will be undertaken to support these objectives. Each letter corresponds to a Strategic Objective (see above) and each number to the Items in this QIP.

a.	1, 3, 4, 5, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16
b.	19, 21, 22, 23
c.	3, 4, 5, 25, 26
d.	21
e.	23
f.	28
g.	4, 24, 25

11 Recommendation 3.18: The ALC and other parties need to resolve difficulties that have over-shadowed some of the ALC's activities in the past as collegially as possible and to move ahead in a spirit of co-operation that will allow both the ALC and University goals to be successfully achieved.

Action planned

The ALC welcomes the recognition given in the report to this matter by the RG and their understanding of the impact of the difficulties on the Centre's effectiveness and morale. The RG has provided an external perspective on the issue which has been very helpful and has provided support for the ALC towards the achievement of its own goals and those of the University.

The establishment of new structures has brought about improvement in the Centre's governance and operations. These include the establishment of the Board of Management and the proposed creation of the Board of Studies; in addition it has been agreed that the ALC will have representation on key University committees which will enable it consolidate its role and participate more fully in the internationalisation process. The strengthening of the status of the Centre and its staff, in these and other ways, will enable the Centre to act and be treated as a fully integrated entity in the University.

2(b)   To be implemented within one year

12   Recommendation 3.11: The ALC should continue to function as a separate unit within the College.

Action planned

The Centre welcomes the recommendation that the ALC should remain in the College of Arts and Celtic Studies (ACS) and should continue to be a separate unit. This arrangement, which is in line with international patterns in the field, will provide the most natural and supportive academic underpinning for the work of the Centre.

Following meetings with the Principal, it has been agreed that the ALC will be a separate entity within ACS and will have school status. It is now proposed to agree a timeline with the Principal on the achievement of the following:
- Actively ensure that the ALC is represented as a Centre within ACS with research, teaching and resource functions.
- Actively ensure that the Centre would receive the full support of ACS to discharge its responsibilities to students in the wider University particularly in the field of internationalisation, also in the provision of specialist language programmes for students of other disciplines studying languages, and in the provision of languages to emerging non-traditional categories of learners.
- Ensure representation on appropriate University and College bodies, such as the SMT Plenary and others so that the ALC has access to necessary information.
- Affirm the ALC's separate status through a re-branding exercise. This would include altering the website and developing new informational literature about the Centre.

13   Recommendation 3.12: The ALC should be managed in such a way as to clearly function in an equivalent manner to the other constituent units of the College.

Action planned

The ALC welcomes this recommendation which will enable the Centre consolidate its school status within the College. At the meeting with the Principal, the Director agreed a number of ways this recommendation might be advanced and it will now seek a timeline to ensure the implementation of these. They include:
- Implement operational structures whereby the College will support and defend the

research, scholarly and teaching interests of the ALC, its staff, and its resources, and at the same time ensure that these structures will underpin the wide range of language supports required to support different forms of language provision for schools and students across the University.

- Initiate a series of regular meetings between the Director and the College Principal, between the Director and the Vice-Principals and other officers to ensure progress under each of the ALC's Strategic Objectives.
- Revise the existing five-year plan to reflect the recommendations of the RG report.

14 Recommendation 3.13: The Review Group recommends that, in the short term, the ALC should be guided by the Board of Management. The composition of the Board should be enriched by senior users of the Centre's services, and the inclusion of an additional senior academic from a relevant area (e.g. the Professor of Linguistics). The RG perceives the role of the Board of Management as being to bring to a resolution the current difficulties and uncertainties and manage the transition towards adaptive structures and governance that will enable the ALC to develop its primary relationship with the College.

Action planned
The RG report has stressed the central role of the ACS in the ALC's future; one of the roles of the Board of Management would be to facilitate the consolidation of this aim. The ALC will bring this recommendation to the attention of the Board of Management, and following a discussion by the Board, identify one or more additional members who would work with the Board towards the resolution of the current difficulties, enable the Centre develop its primary relationship with the College, and prepare the ground for the move to the next development phase under the new Steering Committe which will be established.

15 Recommendation 3.14: The Review Group strongly recommends that, in the medium term, the Board of Management should be replaced by a Steering Committee. This Steering Committee should continue to give strategic oversight and ensure that the views of key stakeholder groups (e.g. Registrar; schools who are key service-users; International Office, etc.) are represented in decisions about developments within the ALC. However, the RG's view is that the ALC's primary management relationship should be with the College of Arts and Celtic Studies, as is the case with the other constituent units of the College.

Action planned
The ALC supports the proposal for a Steering Committee which would be strategic and action-oriented and would enable the primary management relationship with the College to be consolidated. The Board of Management was designed as an interim arrangement to oversee the implementation of a strategic plan for the ALC and robust financial, academic and governance structures. The ALC and the Board should agree a time-line for this process which would be followed by the appointment of a Steering Committee.

The Steering Committee's terms of reference should be aligned with the recently-approved Strategic Objectives which have been recently approved for the Centre. The Director will seek guidance on how to progress the drafting of the terms of reference, the composition and the approval process. ALC staff wish to see the specialist needs of language learning and teaching strongly reflected in the Steering Committee's terms of reference.

16 Recommendation 3.15: The composition of the future Steering Committee should, in the unanimous opinion of the Review Group, include the ALC Director; a representative of the International Office; a representative of the School of Business; a representative of the School of Languages and Literatures, and a representative of each College representing in each case the profile of a key user of ALC.

Action planned
- The ALC will seek guidance from the Board of Management and the Principal on how to progress the drafting of the terms of reference, the composition and the approval process for the Steering Committee.
- Using this advice and drawing on examples of terms of reference for entities similar to the ALC elsewhere in the University, the Director will then prepare draft terms of reference for the ALC for consideration and approval by the Board.
- The ALC will seek a timeframe for the implementation of this proposal.
- In addition to the members mentioned in this Recommendation, the ALC proposes that members of ALC staff would have representation on the Steering Committee.

17 Recommendation 3.16A: A more adaptive financial model for the ALC is required - options on alternative approaches to funding should be explored, particularly in the context of the emphasis on the ALC as a service-provider for the UCD community into the future.

Action planned
To date, ALC budgetary systems have been based on grant-funded internal projects and external commercial activites. With the refocus of the ALC on specific functions needed by the wider University, and away from commercial programmes, funding mechanisms for the different activities will be reviewed and an approach agreed in each case. An adaptive financial model would give a budgetary structure in line with those available to schools and service units and would provide for the variety of activities which take place in the ALC. The following points should also be noted:
- Current and proposed activities must be linked to funding sources either directly to RAM or to other agreed funding mechanisms.
- It is essential to develop an enhanced system to track income (including sources) and expenditure against activity.
- The ALC has requested the International Office to provide relevant information in order to estimate the costs of providing English for UCD international students.
- The ALC welcomes the decision by the Board of Management to establish a working party to examine possible financial models for the programmes provided to support UCD's internationalisation strategy. The Registrar has proposed the composition of a financial planning group (Registrar, Principal, ALC Director, ALC Senior Administrator and the College Finance Officer) to advance this proposal.

18 Recommendation 3.16B: There needs to be greater transparency about the financial situation of the ALC so that all parties share a common understanding of key financial data.

Action planned
The ALC financial reporting should replicate, as far as possible, that of UCD Schools. This will include fully integrating the ALC with the University resource allocation model. The newly-established financial planning group should be tasked with achieving this. (See also Recommendation 3.16A/No. 17)

19 Recommendation 6.17: The RG recommends that the University recognises the ALC as the sole provider of English language courses and is of the view that other University units who provide similar courses (e.g. the Irish Institute for Chinese Studies) should end provision.

Action planned

The ALC strongly welcomes the RG's recommendation that the ALC should be the sole provider of English language courses in the University. This recommendation arises from the decision by the University to place the teaching of English to Chinese students in the Irish Institute for Chinese Studies(IICS) and the Confucius Institute(CI). Naturally this has had an impact on the Centre, its staff and its operations. Following the Director's presentation of its case to the Management Review Committee of the IICS/CI in January and a discussion with the Principal, it is now proposed to:

- Ask the Board of Management to endorse this decision and refer it to the Academic Council for approval.
- Progress establishment of the Board of Studies and ensure that the terms of reference cover delivery of all English language and English language-related elements.
- Ensure representation of the ALC on the key UCD academic governance bodies, i.e. Academic Council and related committees.

3   REQUIRES ADDITIONAL FUNDING / RESOURCES

3(b)   To be implemented within one year

20   Recommendation 4.11: The ALC needs to devise a realistic staffing plan for both its English Language and its Foreign Language modules, including, as a priority, a Senior Language Co-ordinator post with responsibility for all quality assurance matters across Horizons languages and stages. In due course, this post should be supported by Language Co-ordinators, initially in French and Spanish, who might typically take responsibility for co-ordinating their own and for overseeing and providing support for tutors of one or two of the less commonly taught languages in the Centre. As languages such as Chinese and Japanese grow, they will also require co-ordination by a full-time member of staff.

Action taken
The ALC welcomes the recognition by the RG of the long-standing staff shortages in the Centre. The RG's recommendations have endorsed the ALC's strategy on staffing as outlined in the SAR (see relevant SAR extract on staffing in the Appendix). This strategy is based on the ALC's investigation of international practice in the field and has been costed.

To achieve the ALC Strategic Objectives initially outlined in the SAR and then modified and amended by the Board of Management (see Item 10, Recommendation 3.17), the ALC needs to appoint a small core team of academic staff (in the fields of second language pedagogy and applied linguistics), language coordinators and teachers (west and central European languages, East Asian languages, English etc.), and administrative as well as technical personnel. This small central team would be supplemented by a large number of freelance hourly-paid language teachers and testers (approx. 100).

The proposed staffing structure for the Centre is set out in *Table 12: Proposed ALC staff plan 2008/9 to 2011/12* page in the SAR. A revised version for 2009/2010 to 2012/13, taking account of new information, is also included in the Appendix. Further modifications are likely in light of the Board of Management's recent decision to establish a new ALC academic and business planning process for the Centre.

As a result of severe staff shortages, the ALC requested that, as a matter of urgency, the recruitment of core administrative staff at appropriate levels be prioritised to address long-standing staff shortages in the Centre. This was agreed. A full administrative staffing plan was developed and the BRC approved the appointment of five key staff to fill posts. These staff will provide administrative support in the following areas: teaching of foreign language modules, teaching of English to UCD's international students, graduate TESOL programme, internal and external language testing, and commercial programmes.

Action planned
In parallel with progress on the appointment of administrative staff, ALC is working to progress a plan to establish a personnel structure for academic, language coordinator and teaching staff across a range of languages. The proposal would include job descriptions and recommendations for appropriate salary scales for the new grades and will require consultation and discussion with Human Resources.

21 Recommendation 6.14: The RG recommends that the ALC should restructure its commercial activities so that they become ancillary to its core role of supporting UCD students. Self-funding should continue to play a role in the provision of pre-sessional support, EFL programmes, English language testing, and postgraduate TESOL programmes while surpluses from this commercial income stream will enable the Centre to develop its infrastructure and technological needs.

Action planned
The restructuring of the 'commercial' programme has commenced and occupies a much-reduced role in the Centre. The emphasis in this field now is to respond to expanded University demands for English as a result of internationalisation.

There are some areas where these revenue-generating activities can provide key academic (and financial) synergies in the future. IELTS testing is one and a small summer English language teaching might also be offered. The ALC will prepare a business plan for both these areas to be completed by 1 July 2010. It will seek to ensure that the plan for summer teaching will help underpin the pre-sessional programme both financial and operational.

22 Recommendation 6.15: The ALC needs to work with key stakeholders to support internationalisation through provision of pre-sessional and in-sessional English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses. It should be recognised that in-sessional programmes may not be self-financing and must be supported.

Action planned
Internationalisation is a key priority for the University and the ALC welcomes the opportunity to support this important strategy. It already has a track record of success in providing programmes (pre-sessional and in-sessional) to meet the English needs of current and prospective students across different disciplines. The following measures are proposed:

- The pre-sessional programme devised by the ALC for the University some years ago has been updated again to reflect new circumstances. The ALC will prepare a draft costing for the pre-sessional based on anticipated numbers and relevant information.
- As shown in the SAR, the Centre has also devised different forms of in-sessional to meet student demands. These too are reconfigured each year in response to changing study patterns.
- In order to configure more customised structures for the pre- and in-sessional programmes in UCD, the ALC has sought access to information as well as contextual and enabling structures from the International Office to enable it devise a planned and cost-effective programme of English support for international students. It outlined many of the elements that it believes the University might include in such a structure in its SAR. Once it gets the relevant information from the International Office, it will produce an academic and business plan for a longer period of 3+ years. This will be done in conjunction with the broader financial planning exercise which is outlined in Recommendation 3.16A /No. 17 and 3.16B /No. 18.

23 Recommendation 6.16: The ALC should progress its objective of becoming professionally accredited by the British Association of Lecturers in English for Academic (BALEAP).

Action planned
The ALC welcomes the RG's endorsement of the proposal contained in its SAR that the ALC would seek accreditation from BALEAP, one of the leading accreditation bodies in this field.

By being the first Irish HE institution to seek and hopefully achieve accreditation by a highly regarded academic body such as BALEAP, UCD would send a clear signal that it views the quality of English language teaching for international students as central to the success of internationalisation.

- The ALC has long-standing links with BALEAP and many of its members. It has now applied for BALEAP institutional membership, the first step in seeking accreditation.
- An action plan to achieve accreditation will be developed. The action plan will identify those criteria which will present the most significant challenges to the goal of achieving accreditation. It will take account of the impact of loss of space on the quality of the infrastructure as the nature and quality of resource facilities is one of the key criteria for success in achieving accreditation.

24 Recommendation 7.8: The immediate priority for the ALC should be to strengthen its organisational capacity and academic credibility by getting appropriate structures and staffing in place.

Action planned
The RG report indicated that the ALC's research activites and aspirations were well-conceived, appropriate for investigation and present clear opportunities for the Centre. The relevant Strategic Objective states that the research programme should only take place as staffing allows and in collaboration with other parties. With the approval to appoint a number of administrative posts in the Centre, there have been important steps taken towards strengthening organisational capacity which will make it possible to move to the next phase.

ALC research actvities and aspirations are mainly in the field of pedagogical research and innovation. They are selected because they underpin the current language teaching and learning activities of the Centre, they support the graduate TESOL programme and they make it possible to recruit specialist language teachers. The Centre needs to appoint appropriately qualified staff who can conduct research in areas such as: language proficiency testing, CEFR applications, use of ICT, English for academic purposes & related areas, language pedagogies, plurilingualism, language teacher development, and autonomous learning.

The Director has met and had constructive discussions with the Principal and the Vice-Principal for Research in the College on developing a research strategy for the Centre and ensuring its realisation. The timeline for the production of a draft proposal is 1 September.

25 Recommendation 7.10: The ALC should be encouraged and supported in developing its research capability over time as structures and staffing allow.

Action planned
The ALC has received support from the Principal and the Vice-Principal for Research to progress its research strategy. It intends now to progress this matter under the following main headings: (a) seek approval for the ALC research strategy incorporating strategic links externally and internally; (b) seek advice on how to submit for funding under the TCD/UCD Innovation Alliance, and (c) progress the appointment of three full-time academic staff. It is confident that this will receive support.

26 Recommendation 8.14: The appointment of Language Coordinators to give oversight to language teaching is critical - the lack of such oversight in the current situation, where large numbers of hourly paid staff are involved in the delivery of modules, presents a threat to quality.

Action taken
The ALC fully supports the RG's proposal to move towards the creation of a tiered structure of language coordinators (from assistant to senior coordinator) based on systems operating in universities internationally. The coordinator role, as understood by the RG body and as operated in international universities, is not implemented in the Irish higher education system. The ALC will seek an agreement from the University that it will support a proposal to establish a new language coordinator career grade and seek clarification on the implications of such a step.

Action planned
Discussions will take place with SLL on the ALC proposals to establish a cadre of language coordinators. The development of a joint approach to language teacher recruitment and induction structures is listed as an area of cooperation between the SLL and the Centre and will enable a constructive dialogue on this issue to emerge.

27 Recommendation 8.15: The current practice of administrative staff taking on roles that would normally fall to academics should be regularised appropriately as soon as is practicable when staffing issues are addressed.

Owing to staff shortages, it has been necessary for administrative staff to take on duties which would normally fall to full-time language coordinators and teachers. Administrative staff have never carried out work associated directly with teaching functions. In the absence of full-time staff, this work has been undertaken by hourly paid teaching staff who are paid a non-teaching rate for this work (these rates are approved annually by the University). The practice alluded to in this Recommendation is being phased out and will end as soon as the ALC has appropriately trained full-time teaching staff, hopefully by the end of the 2010-2011.

28 Recommendation 4.12: There is an urgent need for the appointment of a core of full-time academic staff to coordinate existing programme offerings and to develop the EAP support programmes. The Centre has done an excellent job with current patterns of staffing, but this is not sustainable in the longer term.

Action planned
The ALC has at present just one academic staff member. The ALC identified in its SAR the areas in which new academic appointments would contribute to the development of the Centre's objectives in the field of pedagogy and second language acquisition.

The role of academic staff in the ALC would be as follows: to provide academic leadership and oversight for the Centre's language teaching programmes, to direct the work of the language coordinators who are in charge of implementing language programmes for thousands of students and examination candidates, to teach and supervise graduate students in English language teacher education, and to develop research and innovation projects in key language teaching fields. The main areas in which appointments are immediately required are:

- Language testing (primarily in English for international students, and also for other languages)
- English for General and Academic Purposes
- ICT and e-language learning
- Multi/plurilingualism and CEFR applications

The ALC's recommendation is that there should be two immediate appointments in TESOL (ELT and testing and English for Academic Purposes) and one in Foreign Languages (Multi/plurilingualism and CEFR applications).

4.   PRIORITISED RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

This section should only contain a list, prioritised by the Quality Improvement Committee, of recommendations outlined in the Review Group Report, which require additional resources.

Required Resources Summary & Estimated Costs

No.	Related Recs[1]	Planned Action	€ Cost (Approx.)
1	Cat 3(b): 24	Immediate priority to strengthen its capacity and academic credibility by getting appropriate structures and staffing in place.	Conservatively €400k to €750k annually
2	Cat 3(b): 20	Staffing plan for English Language and Foreign Language modules.	
3	Cat 3(b): 28	Urgent need for appointment of a core of full-time academic staff.	
4	Cat 3(b): 26	Appointment of Language Coordinators.	
5	Cat 3(b): 27	Current practice of administrative staff taking on roles that would normally fall to academics should be regularised when staffing issues are addressed.	
6	Cat 1(b): 2	System of staff development reviews and opportunities for pedagogical development.	
7	Cat 1(b): 5	Validation of quality of modules monitored by external examiners.	€8k annually
8	Cat 1(b): 9	Introduce an appropriate number of external examiners.	
9	Cat 3(b): 22	Work with key stakeholders to support internationalisation.	Cost TBC
10	Cat 3(b): 21	Restructure commercial activities so that they become ancillary the core.	Cost TBC
11	Cat 3(b): 25	The ALC should be supported in developing its research capability over time.	€50k seed fund
12	Cat 3(b): 23	Get accredited by the British Association of Lecturers in English for Academic (BALEAP).	€2k annually

[1] Category of recommendation followed by the related recommendation number reference.

Appendix

ALC staffing (from the SAR)

Staffing needs
Following on a decision by the Board of Management, the UCD HR Organisation Development Manager, along with the College of Arts & Celtic Studies HR Partner, have been assigned to work with ALC senior staff to propose a draft staffing plan for the Centre. This would begin to address some of the staffing issues. As part of this process, work has begun on producing a strategy for the Centre for a 3-5 year period. A number of meetings have taken place between the relevant parties. The process of working on the strategic and staffing plan is running parallel to the Quality Review.

The current staffing structure consists of a director, a core permanent administration staff (four members), temporary contract administration staff (four members) and a large number of hourly paid employees. The Centre has only one academic member, and all other teaching staff are hourly paid. For a full list of ALC staff see Appendix S. This provides information about staff employed for the year 2008/9 (up to March 2009), under the headings of teaching, examining and administration. The staffing levels are inadequate for the size, diversity and complexity of a body such as the ALC. There is concern amongst colleagues about aspects of the staffing structure, particularly the over-reliance on hourly paid and temporary staff and the need for contractual clarity. These aspects have been referenced in the report. They have also been raised at the UCD HR/ALC meetings.

A typical university language centre will have a wide variety of staff members as part of its core team. A great weakness of the ALC has been the absence of a structured career path for its teaching staff and particularly the lack of senior positions in language learning and teaching.

The creation of a new type of post - language and senior language coordinator - is a *sine qua non* for any future expansion in the ALC. Such posts exist widely in university language teaching units in other countries. They are part of a tiered structure of language teaching staff with high qualifications and expertise, who lead and manage teaching and learning teams. They work in areas such as curriculum design, learning technologies, language testing, and many others. The Centre needs a number of such full and part time posts to manage key areas of its operations. Appendix T shows a blueprint developed by the ALC for a tiered language teacher/coordinator structure under headings such as grade level, mandatory skill requirements and job duties. It was written some years ago and it has stood the test of time.

In addition to language coordinators, the Centre needs appropriately qualified academic staff in key strategic areas for the future of the Centre such as English for Academic Purposes, language testing and many others. As well as engaging in graduate teaching and research, they would devote a portion of their time to innovation and quality management for the Centre's language teaching programmes. These academic staff will prepare the graduates to take up teaching and testing positions in our Centre and others.

Finally, the ALC also needs highly skilled and varied categories of administrators to match the complexity and diversity of the system. Administrator categories would include staff with experience of conducting international language tests, management of learning technologies, dealing with international students, marketing and finance. Some of these administrative positions would be located in teaching & learning, some of them in graduate education and research and some of them in Central Services.

The following table illustrates a proposed planned phasing-in of a staffing structure, which includes posts in the main categories above. It shows positions already in place, positions that

require upgrades, and new posts as language coordinators, academics and administrators. Outline job descriptions for a number of these posts are being prepared at the present time. Securing such positions would be a key step forward in stabilising the Centre's personnel structures and in building for the future. This proposal will be shown to the HR/ALC meeting for further discussion.

Table 12: Proposed ALC staff plan 2008/9 to 2011/12

Existing posts Temporary & Permanent		Additional posts			Total no. of posts after 3 years
		2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	
Foreign Languages					
2 Administrators (both for upgrading)	New posts	1 Coordinator[1] 1 Teacher[1]	1 Coordinator[1] 2 Teachers[1] 1 Administrator[1]	1 Teachers[1]	**2 Coordinators 4 Teachers 3 Administrators**
	Upgrade	2 Administrators[1]			
English for wider community & external examinations					
4 Administrators (3 for upgrading)	New posts	1 Coordinator[2] 3 Teachers[2] 1 Administrator[2]	1 Teacher[2]	1 Teacher[2]	**1 Coordinator 5 Teachers 5 Administrators**
	Upgrade	3 Administrators[2]			
ALC Central Services					
2 Administrators	New posts	1 Administrator[3] (Accounts)			**3 Administrators**
English for Academic Purposes					
No contract posts	New posts	2 Lecturers (25%)[4] 1 Coordinator[4] 1 Teacher[4]	1 Lecturer (25%)[4] 2 Coordinators[4] 1 Teacher[4]	1 Teacher[4]	**3 Lecturers (25%)[5] 3 Coordinators 3 Teachers**
Graduate TESOL & Research					
No contract posts	New posts	2 Lecturers (75%)[4] 1 Administrator[4]	1 Lecturer (75%)[4]		**3 Lecturers (75%)[5] 1 Administrator**
Total of 8 posts					**Total of 33 posts**

Proposed ALC staff plan 2009/10 to 2012/13 (Revised May 2010)

Existing posts Temporary & Permanent		Additional posts			Total no. of posts after 3 years
		2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	
Foreign Languages					
3 Administrators (3 for upgrading)	New posts	1 Coordinator[1] 1 Teacher[1] 1 Administrator[1]	1 Coordinator[1] 2 Teachers[1]	1 Teachers[1]	**2 Coordinators 4 Teachers 4 Administrators**
	Upgrade	3 Administrators[1]			
English for wider community					
2 Administrators (1 for upgrading)	New posts	1 Coordinator[2] 3 Teachers[2] 1 Administrator[2]	1 Teacher[2] 1 Administrator[2]	1 Teacher[2]	**1 Coordinator 5 Teachers 4 Administrators**
	Upgrade	1 Administrator[2]			
External examinations					
1 Administrator (1 for upgrading)	New posts	1 Administrator[2]	1 Administrator[2]		**3 Administrators**
	Upgrade	1 Administrator[2]			
ALC Central Services					
2 Administrators	New posts	1 Administrator[3] (Accounts)	1 Administrator[3] (Reception)		**4 Administrators**
English for Academic Purposes					
No contract posts	New posts	2 Lecturers (25%)[4] 1 Coordinator[4] 1 Teacher[4]	1 Lecturer (25%)[4] 2 Coordinators[4] 1 Teacher[4]	1 Teacher[4]	**3 Lecturers (25%)[5] 3 Coordinators 3 Teachers**
Graduate TESOL & Research					
No contract posts	New posts	2 Lecturers (75%)[4]	1 Lecturer (75%)[4]		**3 Lecturers (75%)[5]**
Total of 8 posts					**Total of 33 posts**

NB: The table includes figures for 25% & 75% of a staff member. Accordingly the totals in some columns differ from what might be expected at first glance.

Currently junior administration posts are omitted from this proposal. Some will be required but it has to be considered further.

[1] Funded by the RAM surplus on Horizons courses

[2] Funded by additional surplus generated from external activity

[3] Funded by the RAM surplus on Horizons courses and additional surplus generated from external activity

[4] Funding mechanism to be agreed

[5] The three lecturing positions would be split between Graduate TESOL & Research (75%) and English for Academic Purposes (25%).