U DE TRY QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN - 17 December 2013						
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Key	Category		Timescale			
	In Control of the Unit	1	Already Implemented	Α		
	Not in Control of the Unit	2	To be completed within one year	В		
	Requires additional funding	3	To be implemented within 5 years	С		
Rec #	Recommendation	Category	Response	Timescale		
3.11	Consideration should be given as to how effectively to prioritise the work plan with a view to eliminating or deferring low priority activities. This should empower Registry staff to consult rapidly with relevant parties and then act both to ensure effective delivery of the work plan and to support new strategic opportunities. In pursuing this course thought will also have to be given to appropriate oversight of such prioritisation via RMT and RSMT	1/2	The Registry Management Team (RMT) builds scope into its work planning programme to deal with the need to support initiatives/developments that emerge during the year, eg from the Registrar or because of national policy developments. Elements of the work programme may need to be deprioritised as a consequence although we would be careful not to eliminate low priority activities unless necessary. RMT will consider how we can better balance the known and emergent demands faced by Registry. The Registrar approves the Registry work programme.	В		
3.12	Consideration should be given to piloting a hub and spoke arrangement perhaps in student recruitment which may also help to progress delivery of the Graduate recruitment agenda	1 (+ 3)	The Student Recruitment team is small in number so already operates a type of hub and spoke arrangement for undergraduate recruitment, working closely with staff in the Programmes, Schools and Colleges through informal and formal networks. Graduate recruitment activity could also work along these lines, but clarity is required from senior management on who is responsible for leading graduate recruitment in UCD and the necessary resources then put in place accordingly. As of now, Registry has no formal responsibility for graduate recruitment.	С		
3.13	3.14 The level of consultation around new projects/developments whilst important should be appropriate and not necessarily committee based.	1	The consultative processes in place have proven to be very effective in delivering many projects, new policies, new procedures, etc. and are a good fit for the kind of culture that exists in UCD. We also use a mix of working groups and workshops to facilitate such consultation, and we intend to use the latter much more regularly from here on it. We fully agree that such consultation should "not necessarily be committee based". A more general point is that a less 'layered' approach to decision-making within the institution would allow for quicker timelines between inception to delivery of new projects/developments.	В		

3.14	Consideration should be given to a review of the number and purpose of existing committees with a view to terminating those whose remit is no longer relevant	2	The Review Reports does not make sufficient distinction between working groups that are established by Registry to help deliver upon projects and formal task groups/committees established through the formal Committee system (eg by Academic Council). Registry does not set up these committees - although it may have a view on their efficacy - but rather administers them on behalf of either Academic Council, the University Management Team or the Registrar.	В
3.15	The University should review progress of its Graduate Recruitment strategy	2/3	Registry does not have responsibility for the Graduate Recruitment strategy. The Registrar has, however, taken note of this recommendation.	С
4.4	Clarification of the reporting line of the Academic Secretariat to more clearly integrate that unit into the Registry Division should be considered. Changing the name of the unit to one that is more descriptive of its function also might be considered	1/2	This recommendation is noted; however the rationale is unclear and so it is difficult to progress. The remit of the unit has evolved over recent years with a significant increase in work that directly supports the role and functions of the Office of the Registrar and this has resulted in a split remit and focus. A possible way forward may be that in consultation with the Registrar and Director of Registry an assessment of the future remit of the unit and how it can best be resourced and its workload prioritised be undertaken. Clarification of remit and focus will inform any potential re-definition of reporting line or associated change of unit title.	В
4.5	The use of electronic voting for the Election of Graduate to Governing Authority ought to be pursued. Given statutory requirement this has to be done but a modest investment in electronic voting will deliver longer term savings	2	The use of electronic voting for the 2018 election will be actively considered, subject to approval and direction from Governing Authority, as a cross-University initiative with sponsorship from the Registrar and facilitated by Registry.	С

4.6	A review of the number of academic policies, their clarity and simplicity should be conducted. The aim should be to make all enforceable and all in the majority of cases capable of being applied without the need for reference or reassurance from Registry. This would be of benefit to both Schools and Registry	1/2	UCD Academic Council has established a formal policy development and review framework which Registry manages. Policies are not judged against a benchmark of universal enforceability but rather how they enable the effective operation of the University, delivering control and quality. The practice of not taking an absolutist approach but rather relying on 'normally' in our policies means that some local discretion may be possible. Policies are reviewed on a schedule agreed with the Registrar and on a timeline agreed with respect to available resources. To conduct a wholescale review of the policy portfolio without a defined set of overarching principles and endorsement of AC would be both unwise and unachievable. Consideration could be given to the development of worked examples/case studies as part of the guidance documentation supporting policy - see Leave of Absence as an example - with a full set of same developed according to the agreed policy review schedule. It is intended that more open training sessions will be run by Registry on policy development, interpretation and implementation.	C
4.11	There should be an urgent review of the Graduate Admissions Working Group, its eight sub groups and their ability to deliver developments and change in graduate recruitment	2	The Graduate Admissions Working Group referenced is the Graduate Recruitment Task Force, which was convened and chaired by the Registrar and not by Registry. The eight groups in question were set up by the Task Group/Registrar, with Registry participation. The Task Force is no longer in place.	A
4.12	Consideration should be given, despite the constrained financial climate, to appointing more staff to the Recruitment team to enable them to lead and coordinate graduate recruitment work throughout the Colleges and Schools, and with the International Office.	2/3	Discussions over whether Student Recruitment in UCD Registry will take on responsibility for graduate recruitment are ongoing. Such a decision will be resource dependent and with the contingent clarity provided in respect of remit and scope of responsibility.	С
4.14	Consideration at the most senior level should be given to allocating appropriate resources which would allow for further improvements to the IT System for Graduate Applications.	1	Resources are already available for developments (an annual top slice of application fee income is used for this purpose), with a new interface launched on 1 Oct 2013.	А

4.17	Consideration should be given to conducting a business process review (perhaps a LEAN model) on the assessment process relating to the relatively new modular structure, when the review of modularisation next occurs. A professional consultant should lead this process. This should yield benefits through streamlining the work, reducing the number of errors reported, and giving students more confidence in the provisional results they receive.	1	There is no planned review of modularisation or general assessment processes. There is a Grade Approvals Process (GAP) policy review planned to commence in 2013/14. It is not clear that a LEAN model review is appropriate to these supporting systems and processes, primarily involving multiple stakeholders/ customers at School and Programme level, because of the level of flexibility and local discretion that is available. However, continuing efforts will be made to streamline work and this suggested approach can be referred for consideration by the Registrar or policy review Chair/Steering Group.	В
4.18	The Review Group recommends that the processes and issues around grade changes be examined with a view to creating a more effective system for grade changes	2	This recommendation was referred for consideration by Academic Council Committee on Examinations (ACCE) at its meeting on 17 October 2013. ACCE welcomed the focus on developing a system to reduce the number of (Post Programme Examination Board) grade changes, but it is the considered view of ACCE that most grading errors arise locally in Schools and the focus of any revised process needs to be at a local level to ensure that Schools have a robust grade input checking process, which includes the necessary step of grade auditing and cross checking by School staff to reduce the number of errors at School level. This can also be referred for consideration by the GAP policy review Chair/Steering Group.	В
4.21	A review of the current programmes, majors and curricula should be undertaken, with a view to removing all that are redundant, so that the student system is simpler and clearer, and there is no longer an unseen overhead caused by maintaining all these entries.	1/2	The curriculum is under annual review. There is indeed a tendency to 'curricular bloat' which leads to the creation of additional curricular records and to the number seen as 'live' being considerably in excess of those in active use. Particular attention will be paid to working with the Schools to remove quiescent curricular elements in the coming year. The real challenge lies in reducing the overhead of maintaining our curriculum both academically and administratively and ensuring current review mechanisms are effectively used locally and supported centrally.	В

4.22	The Registry, College and School staff should review the timetable for curriculum development, with a view to aligning deadlines with the capability of all to deliver work, and to enabling the creation of new programmes far faster and at later times in the academic year	1/2	There are three interwoven processes in question: the annual preparatory cycle which includes the updating of curricular elements, the development of the University class timetable, and capacity provision; the academic review of module delivery, quality, and feedback; and the development of new offerings. Regarding the first two processes, timelines for staff have already been addressed in 2012/13 and will continue to be reviewed in 2013/13. Furthermore, Registry will work with UCD Teaching and Learning in supporting the flexibility required by the greatly varying practices across the campus regarding the annual academic and administrative review of the curriculum. There will, however, always be scope for a tension between unmovable deadlines (the start of term) and the preparatory routes which lead to them. Regarding the creation of new programmes, the Registry Work Programme includes a project for the review of PDARF, to align it with the outcomes of the recent Quality Office review with regard to annual programme reporting, periodic review; and also to revisit associated timelines. It is noted that the timelines which currently apply are significantly less onerous than peer institutions.	В
4.24	Consideration should be given to creating agile and clear fees processes to assist UCD face new recruitment and economic challenges in a responsive timeline. The system should address both standard and non-standard fee requirements, with the latter expected to grow significantly in the future, especially as competition for international, online and part-time recruitment increases.	1/2	This area has already been addressed. A new fee setting system was introduced in April 2013, allowing the fees for 2014/15 be processed by early summer and published at the end of September 2013 in support of UCD's focus on graduate student recruitment. Furthermore, the principles of fee setting are focusing on price-banded approaches which allows fees be more speedily approved. Further refinements of the process are planned for 2013/14.	A

4.28	Cross training teams with complementary work-load peaks and troughs would reduce the impact of peaks experienced by certain units	1	This is an important recommendation, not only given the current and continuing resource constraints but in the interests of effectiveness and staff morale. Greater clarity will be required in respect of the peaks and troughs that individuals face, then building up to teams/units, and upwards to the level of Registry. An analysis will then be necessary with regards to what tasks are amenable to this kind of cross team/unit support. Taken all together, decisions can be taken on what type of cross-training is necessary and who should undertake it. Where members of a team/unit help another team during a peak for the latter, this has to incorporate a developmental aspect, not just a case of easing pressure on the team. This will be a significant project but will be aided by the many informal arrangements already in place and will also provide the opportunity to test out a move to a competence- based training and development framework.	B/C
4.29	Staff on the Student Desk should receive ongoing training on the functions - fees and grants, for example - that would allow them to provide a greater level of assistance to students without having to contact experts from the other units	1	The Student Desk is committed to supporting and extending the professionalism and deep competence of its staff, aiming to ensure they are at near-expert level in the businesses they support. This will reinforce the capacity of the Desk to deliver the supports and services our students need. In order to achieve this the training framework for the Desk will be reviewed as will the interface structure between the Desk and the areas whose customer facing business it delivers.	В
4.37	Consideration should be given to how to address the need to upgrade the space available for the five Registry units to work together in a suitable environment. This should include suitable meeting rooms, private areas and rest areas. Co-location of units including Student Recruitment should be considered.	1-3	A new meeting room has recently being created, which can be divided into two smaller meeting spaces. A staff room has also recently been provided. A review will be undertaken on the space occupied by the staff more generally, and in that context the recommendation re co- location of Student Recruitment can be considered, although the unit's present location does not cause any disadvantage to how it works or interacts with the rest of Registry or the rest of the University more generally.	A-C

4.38	Consideration should be given, urgently, to upgrading the Student Desk to create something of which all can be proud.	1+3	Ideas already exist in respect of a more optimum configuration of the student space in the Tierney building i. e. layout, counter area, furniture, private meeting space. We will look to draw from best practice in sister institutions (e.g. some of our best of breed Universitas 21 colleagues). Taking this forward is of course resource dependent but also dependant on the kind of mandate and emphasis which may emerge under the new President. It should be noted that the Student Desk paradigm has significantly shifted from its original focus on counter services to the integrated delivery of services across various media and channels, only one of which is the counter services in the Tierney building. It is seen as a significant point of success that the need for students to attend in person in Tierney has been greatly reduced over the last number of years: the development of the Student Desk should be comprehensive and integrated rather than simply focusing on the physical environment in Tierney. That being said, the Desk has received an incremental refurbishment in 2013; more significant developments, and the justification of associated costs, await a potential mandate under the new President.	В
5.6	UCD Registry should review print publications to determine if they are all needed in their present format	1	The SARCC provided printed versions of a number of electronic publications for the convenience of the Review Group during the site visit. This may have led to the misconception on the part of the Review Group that Registry produces a large amount of printed publications. In total Registry only publishes three publications annually: 1) the UCD Prospectus produced by Student Recruitment. 2) the Welcome to UCD first year pack produced by Admissions and 3) the Mature Students booklet (also Admissions). Postage, print, design and packing costs associated with the first year pack has seen a significant reduction in the past five years. In 2013, a digital edition of the booklet was produced which contained interactive features such as videos and photo galleries and live links to social media. The decision was made in Autumn 2013 to discontinue the publication of the Mature Students booklet, and to assimilate the necessary information into a combination of the UCD Prospectus and the Admissions pages on the myUCD Prospective Students' website.	A

5.13	Consideration should be given at the Unit level to the development of cross-training plans to allow staff to assist other teams at peak times and to assist the Student Desk	1	This is dealt with under 4.28	B/C
5.14	Management should explore promotional opportunities and other innovative ways to recognise outstanding administrative staff	1/2	Personal promotions-in-post are no longer an option. Promotions are now achieved by applying for a vacant post and being successful. Other innovative ways to recognise outstanding staff could be managed by RMT with the assistance of HR. The Staff Recognition project being led by HR will be referenced in this regard. At a more local level, the profiling of innovations by staff in Registry, for instance at regular Registry staff meetings, and other forms of recognition, will be continued.	A/B
5.15	Consideration should be made to moving beyond a generic job title based on UCD grading to titles appropriate to roles	1/2	Could be a positive move in giving identity and ownership of individual roles. This is already the case in some areas of Registry. On the other hand, anything too specific would potentially reduce flexibility. There is an argument for taking the opposite approach to this recommendation: make posts generic to the maximum extent, with competencies defined for certain grades, being standard for the grade, and with recruiting on that basis to the extent possible and appropriate. What tasks staff carry out in their day to day role should have some fluidity and in line with their competency. This approach would also help with 'promotion', widening skills bases and also help in respect of 4.28 above. This recommendation will be explored with all Registry staff in early 2014 in a workshop format.	В
5.16	Consideration should be given to the nomenclature around generic description of Registry roles, eg Administration or Support. The use of the term "professional services" is used in some institutions and the Review Group suggested this as an option.	1/2	The existing nomenclature will be reviewed, with all Registry staff consulted for views. The use of 'professional' rather than 'non-academic' should find strong support. As with 5.15, this recommendation will be explored with all Registry staff.	В

5.17	Consideration should be given to increasing the staff complement in the Student Recruitment team.	2/3	A proposal on the staff complement in Student Recruitment has been sent to the Registrar and a decision is awaited.	В
6.7	Development of a 'Who Does What in Registry' listing with contact information should be considered.	1	A new Staff Directory is live on the Registry website. Staff users of our website can search for staff by role or keyword. This will be communicated to the wider university in December 2013 with further communications planned during 2014.	В
6.8	Consideration should be given to providing an integrated central university calendar of key dates on the Registry website	1/2	A Registry key dates section is now live on the Registry website and a new searchable key dates section has been added to the Current students website. The facility allows users to filter search by keyword, date, etc. A communication will be sent to staff in December 2013 to advise them of the new development. (A central UCD calendar already exists and is managed by the University Relations Office - it is seen, however as more of an events calendar rather than key dates for operational purposes).	В
6.9	The creation of additional staff training across schools/programme/Student Desk would alleviate confusion experienced by students in seeking assistance	1/2	There are three elements to further developing student supports - training itself in the various services students use and staff need, clarity on what services are delivered where, including overlaps, and an effective mechanism for providing integrated supports between the various 'landing points' for the student. Registry will work closely with Schools and Programmes in articulating the services being provided, in ensuring the necessary training is available and can be provided, and in extending the UniShare CRM system already in use in some areas. This integrated provision of services to students is a key component of ensuring both effective services and the efficient use of staff resources. This integration also includes 'finger tip' access (mobile or online) to information and targeted guidance for students as well as other online information and the use of social media.	В

6.13	UCD should review its policies around deadlines for Schools, as well as reviewing the complexity around its processes and their communication for its stakeholders	1	Perhaps an integrated set of deadlines for Schools and Programme Offices, building on the Key dates section of the Registry website, with a brief explanation of why the action is required at that time e.g. to support registration. This is probably linked to 6.8 and 4.22 somewhat. All Registry deadlines and annual processes will be mapped out to see there is overlap, redundancy, conflicts with an objective of streamlining where possible and benefiting schools Registry is committed to working with its colleagues in Schools in effectively delivering the mutual businesses we support. A key element of this effective collaboration is the setting of practical timelines and the articulation of necessary dependencies and sequencing. Another key element is the continuous review of processes and communications so as to both reduce the workload required and enhance the effectiveness of the businesses in question. Registry will place particular emphasis on these two elements in the development of its key businesses. The liaison staff in the Curriculum team have a particularly key role here.	В
6.21	Registry continues to monitor the user experience of the website	1	Focus groups and user testing took place in March and April 2013. The Registry website has been updated to reflect feedback from these sessions and further updates are in progress. More focus groups are planned for Semester 2 2014.	B/C
6.22	Registry staff continue to work on streamlining and targeting their communications	1	The Registry Communications Officer will work more closely with each unit on this aspect. Initial plans include workshops with each unit, presentations at Registry coffee mornings, brainstorm sessions and templates and resources for staff. Some work has already been done on providing a resource area for staff with Registry templates, brand guidelines, guidelines for sending communications, etc. Consideration should be given to methods of communication other than electronic communication. More 'traditional' methods ie mail, posters, text may make certain important messages more visible at times or may simply need to be in addition to e-comms to ensure a maximal communication. There is also an e-comms piece around push alerts that should be looked at.	B/C

6.23	Consideration to be given to more use of FAQs on the website for both Staff and students	1	This will be looked at as part of a larger project to update and review the Registry website.	В
6.24	Consideration to be given to an "away day" for Registry staff providing an opportunity for it to plan for more cross unit working and more coordinated communication and contact with Schools	1	This is accepted as a good suggestion, although clearly a good deal of preparation and prior thinking would first be required to achieve maximum return. The first step is the series of workshops for Registry staff in the early part of 2014, followed by an away day of some kind subject to agreement.	В