



University College Dublin

EUA QUALITY REVIEW OF IRISH UNIVERSITIES

University College Dublin

UCD is delighted to receive the report of the EUA/HEA/IUQB Quality Review of University College Dublin.

The University found the review process very useful and highly stimulating, and would like to formally thank the review team for their commitment, professionalism and insight.

The review came at a critical time in the University's development, as a new management team prepared the University Strategic Plan 2005-2008. The review formed an important part of the reflective process, and the comments of the reviewers during their carefully constructed oral report formed an important input to that Strategic Plan.

UCD welcomes the specific recommendations of the review group. The report makes recommendations in the area of mission, teaching and learning, research, governance, and quality assurance/quality improvement.

The University critically evaluated its mission during the strategic planning process and, as suggested by the review group, fundamentally revised the University mission statement. The emphasis is now clearly on establishing UCD as a leading international research-intensive university which is internationally competitive yet distinctive and distinctively Irish. The challenge remains at an institutional and sectoral level to define areas of strength, specialisation and distinctiveness.

The priority strategic initiative in teaching and learning in the UCD Strategic Plan 2005-2008 is the move to a fully modular credit accumulation structure for all programmes, commencing September 2005 and complete by September 2006. The introduction of modularisation has been used as a vehicle to move to a learning outcomes approach at module and programme level as well as other important educational innovations in aligned assessment and grading practice. The project includes the full implementation of ECTS and Bologna process requirements. While this project will facilitate international mobility of students, the University recognises that this needs to be stimulated and supported, and will remain mindful of the review group's observation that both outward and inward mobility need to be encouraged and monitored.

The second strategic initiative is the development and implementation of coherent teaching evaluation across all courses, based on student evaluation and peer review, and the incorporation of feedback from such evaluations in staff induction, training, development and promotion procedures. UCD welcomes and will implement the review group's recommendations on the role of the Centre for Teaching and Learning and the dissemination of good practice in this area.

The recommendations of the review group in the area of research and research management were presented in their oral report and the major recommendations also incorporated into the University Strategic Plan 2005-2008. The University fully recognises the challenges involved in being genuinely research-intensive, and that this requires coherent policy, professional management and specific interventions to support graduate students and post-doctoral researchers.



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The University welcomes the endorsement of its approach in the development of research institutes as major drivers of research activity. The University recognises the importance of evaluating the quality and impact of research activity and is encouraged by the review group's recommendation that this be a mainstream element of the QA/QI process for all units of review.

The University will bring to the attention of its Academic Council the review group's comments on the effectiveness of that body, and request that Council establishes a formal review of its composition, remit and procedures.

The University has embarked upon a major restructuring process, moving from an overly complex organisational structure including 11 Faculties, and over 100 Departments and Centres to a structure where 36 Schools are the core academic units organised into 5 Colleges. This is an essential organisational step in implementing a number of the review groups recommendations including:

- greater delegation of functions, including QA/QI, to Deans and Heads of School
- revision of the resource allocation model
- shortening the quality review cycle by reducing the number of units of review

The University welcomes the review groups recognition that UCD was an early adopter of formal QA/QI processes, and agrees that the University should build on this track record to create a quality culture that infuses all activities. The University finds the recommendations of the review group in this area appealing and insightful.

We see a future for quality at UCD which

- emphasises quality enhancement
- links institutional research to quality review which in turn feeds into strategic planning
- identifies and disseminates good practice and innovation
- is characterised by shorter review cycles, alignment and consolidation of different quality activities and administratively lighter enhancement-led reviews
- synchronised quality and planning processes at the level of the Schools, feeding into quality and planning processes at College and University level

UCD would like to reiterate its appreciation of this most valuable review, and its thanks to all those concerned with the delivery of an important, clear, concise, and stimulating report.