



University College Dublin

Quality Improvement Plan

UCD Research and Innovation

5th September 2017

1. Introduction

Give a very brief introduction to the approach taken in the development of the Quality Improvement Plan, including the dates of the original review and the names of the Quality Improvement Committee.

UCD Research and Innovation's Quality Review took place from 18th – 21st April 2016. Together with feedback received as part of the UCD staff survey of 2016, the report of the review group was reviewed internally and the following Quality Improvement Plan was drafted.

The Quality Improvement Committee consisted of:

Prof. Orla Feely, Vice-President for Research, Innovation and Impact
Triona McCormack, Director of Research
Brendan Cremen, Director of Commercialisation and Entrepreneurship
Sharon Bailey, Director of Finance and Operations
Claire Redmond, General Manager
Dipti Pandya, Senior Manager – Research Programmes
Peter Scott, Senior Manager – Research Partners

The QIP was a standing item on the management team's bi-weekly meeting agenda. Drafts were brought by the management team and senior managers to their teams for review at team meetings, with the final draft signed off by the Vice-President.

Categories

1. Recommendations concerning academic, organisational and other matters which are entirely under the control of the unit
2. Recommendations concerning shortcomings in services, procedures and facilities which are outside the control of the unit
3. Recommendations concerning inadequate staffing, and/or facilities which require recurrent or capital funding

Timescale

- A. Recommendation already implemented
- B. Recommendations to be implemented within one year
- C. Recommendations to be implemented within five years
- D. Recommendations which will not be implemented

Report	RG Recommendation	Category (see list above)	Action Taken/Action Planned/Reason for Not Implementing	Timescale (see list above)
PLANNING, ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT				
2.4	UCD R&I should continue to monitor its Work Programme and ensure its continued relevance and responsiveness to changing external factors.	1	The work programme is reviewed in full annually. We are currently undertaking an organisational and thematic review of our strategy for R&I and will be prioritising some and adding new elements to our programme arising from that. A recent example is a review of our EU work plan in the context of Brexit. We have just completed this analysis and are updating and adjusting our EU work plan.	A
2.5	The Strategy and Work Programme was well received by those in the University who knew the detail of it. However, not all were aware of the particulars of the Strategy and the work being done in UCD Research and Innovation in response to it. Thus communication of the activities of the Unit in response to the Strategy should be reviewed to help the 'buy in' to these	1	Since the review, the management team of UCD R&I have met with each Head of School, and all Colleges were visited prior to the review. It is intended that similar future meetings will be attended by the relevant Research Partner to ensure the flow of information and decisions between this dialogue and ongoing operational activity in strategy development (linking to 2.19 and 2.20). We will be communicating our work programme more formally through the VPRIs for each College, and have plans for broader communication – i.e. roadshow to all units. We will also work to create a more researcher-centric explanation of the Strategy and Work Programme.	B

	activities by Schools and Colleges.			
2.10	Whilst the pre-award support was seen as positive across the board, it was suggested that further consideration should be given to how support for Arts and Humanities subjects is delivered, as this requires a slightly different type of support than larger scale Science funding. Support in this area has improved, but it is recommended that further work would yield additional benefits.	2	Most of the resource in UCD Research supports funded research activity. The addition of a Research Partner in Culture, Economy and Society to work directly with this community and the implementation of the Decade of Centenaries seed scheme has increased the levels of engagement and support in the last year. We are currently working with the College Principals to see how they would like the research ambition for their Colleges articulated and what areas UCD Research can support.	B
2.11	Whilst support for EU funding was considered excellent, particularly in the EU People programme areas, consideration should be given to how UCD R&I can support more EU funded collaborative research projects. In particular, researchers wanted more support in building networks and collaborations in Europe. In addition, consideration should be given to how the University can influence the agenda setting in the EU for research in key areas – possibly influencing through working in partnership with other universities or research organisations such as U21.	3	We are developing a detailed EU plan that analyses current UCD performance, sets goals for future performance and identifies current barriers to performance. Each aspect of the plan is accompanied by a detailed set of actions. Some of these actions can be supported by UCD Research, others by local Schools and Colleges and some will require additional investment from the university. We successfully applied for central strategic funds to recruit a team to provide support to researchers to apply for, optimise and deliver on EU-funded programmes by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing the non-scientific aspects of proposals and uploading required documents and details to the online proposal system • Developing the detail of the budget ensuring that budget optimises opportunities for cost recovery • Project mobilisation and co-ordination if awards are successful • Providing administrative support, reporting and coordination of projects • Submitting timesheets and other documentation to reclaim costs We have prioritised EU engagement for 2017/18 and this will include strategic engagement with international partners and preparatory actions for FP9.	C
2.12	Whilst there was general satisfaction with the contracting process, it was suggested that the process could have a clearer workflow. Consideration should be given to how this process can be further clarified, stream-lined and communicated.	1	The contract review process is a project within the Grant Registration Team (GRT). There is already buy-in from the other support units, the community and the MSU to deliver on this project. The solution will result in an initial questionnaire, an online tracking, drafting and approval system. Delivery times will be measured and reported. In addition, the IP legal resource has increased from 0.5 FTE to 1 FTE which should help improve service delivery. Implementation of the solution is dependent on availability of IT	B

			resources. At present the projected timeframe for implementation is Sept-Dec 2017.	
2.13	Whilst there was widespread satisfaction with the content of the support provided for funding applications, one recurring theme was the concern with the scale of bids for which support is provided. There is a perception that UCD R&I only support 'large' bids and those that are already actively securing funding, which in some areas is a relatively small minority. Schools and Colleges would welcome the opportunity to work with UCD R&I to target individuals that have the potential to become (more) successful in winning research funding.	1	<p>The perception that the unit only supports 'large bids' is simply not true, for example our support for IRC programmes is discipline-wide and UCD enjoys great success in these schemes, particularly across AHSS. The majority of UCD Research's resources are applied to supporting small to medium bids, and the newly-established Research Partners team work on large-scale bids (note – our work on large-scale bids is in response to an external funding environment where focus on large-scale 'Centres'-type bids has become increasingly important). That said, during the period of the review the Research Partners team were heavily committed to securing UCD-led Centres in the open call, so this may have contributed to the perception. We secured two of four Centres awarded nationally and are now shifting the focus of the unit to growing research funding from EU sources.</p> <p>As part of our redesign of service delivery we are initiating more informal 1-2-1s/brokerage on site in the Colleges. There is a need to ensure that there is a level of interest first (i.e. work with the willing) and the Colleges and Schools can support this through strong communication around the importance of research. The roadshow of services will, we hope, also clarify the services that are available to all researchers.</p>	B
2.14	It is recommended that UCD R&I review how best to support those that are not submitting the large, strategic proposals (the "missing 80%"), with a view to working with Schools and Colleges to target a wider group of individuals who could secure significant funding at the next level down.	1	<p>Related to the above, it is recognised that there is a misconception that UCD R&I does not support small bids. This is untrue, and future communications plans will aim to address this perception. It is true that national funding sources have become more restricted in the last five years and this has constrained opportunities for funding to some disciplines.</p> <p>UCD Research's programmes team support over 1,400 applications for funding annually and 15% of these are above €1M.</p>	B
2.19	Whilst it was understood that the immediate focus of the Research Partners had been on the SFI bids, consideration should now be given to how the Partners would be able to contribute to strategy development in the thematic areas. Indeed, recognising the often competing demands of strategy and bid work, consideration	1	The Partners Team is very keen to develop and establish their role in thematic research strategy development. The most obvious success to date has been the Research Partners for Health and AgriFood working with the College of Health and Agricultural Science to develop their college research strategy. Critical success factors were sponsorship of the process by the College Principal, the inclusion of both research partners on the College Research Board – and the College Research Board being explicitly tasked with developing the research strategy as a standing item. A similar	B

	should be given to how to balance these activities with the role portfolio.		<p>approach at other Colleges would be recommended, with some finessing to recognise that not all Colleges align neatly with research themes. Such an approach would need 'buy-in' of the Colleges at all levels.</p> <p>The team's Senior Manager has met with the Director of Strategic Planning to see how the partners could play an active role in supporting integrated School and College planning.</p>	
2.20	The Colleges felt that, even though the Research Partner roles were co-funded by them, they had had little opportunity to input on the strategic priorities for the roles. Therefore, consultation should be undertaken with the Colleges to understand their priorities for the roles, and how these priorities would be balanced by the bid work needed by UCD R&I.	1	<p>See 2.19 above, the best form of consultation is to include the Research Partners in the CRIB/College RIIG and task the CRIB/RIIG with having research strategy as a standing item that they are responsible for as supported by the Research Partner.</p> <p>In addition, research partners will meet regularly with Heads of School and VPRIs to ensure they are supporting the Colleges to deliver on research objectives outlined in College plans.</p>	A
2.21	In addition, whilst recognising that it was early days, the Colleges would welcome a more visible presence by the Research Partners. Therefore, consideration should be given to how the Research Partners can be more present in the Colleges whilst often needing to work across multiple Colleges in some themes. The Human Resources Partners model currently in operation across Colleges is an effective working example.	2	<p>Whilst the introduction of the Research Partners is a major step in the provision of additional support to the researcher community, this team is not the only support available. Proposal Support also provide an extensive service to researchers, and as previously mentioned there is an opportunity for this team to engage with researchers on the ground in clinics and 1-1 support meetings.</p> <p>As the Research Partners team develops we would look to have them more visibly located in the Colleges. This is also dependent on space availability at these sites.</p>	B
2.22	It should be noted that, whilst the Research Partner roles were developed to work on strategic priorities, it was felt that UCD R&I often equated strategic with 'large'. Whilst this connection was often the case, for some areas it was felt that support for smaller funding bids or other groups of researchers (such as early stage researchers) could also be strategic, and the	1	<p>Research Partners are already providing support to some smaller bids that have been identified as of future strategic importance. For example, the Wellcome Trust ISSF, HRB Ignite both in Health, and the Bioeconomy Model Demonstrator Region in Science. The Culture, Economy & Society portfolio has a particular focus on smaller funding mechanisms. The profile of this work is presumably less obvious as it is smaller scale, but it does take place. That said, the process of identifying which small bids are genuinely strategic for UCD is not yet well established, and could benefit from formalisation, particularly linked to the comments in 2.19 and 2.20</p>	C

	Research partners should consider how to incorporate these areas into their portfolio, when appropriate.			
2.28	The multiple roles in UCD R&I, and the structure of the new Unit, were not fully understood neither by staff within the Unit nor by academic colleagues. Whilst acknowledging that the restructure is very recent, work should be undertaken to ensure that the whole Unit understands the roles and responsibilities across all areas, and how this information is communicated across the University.	1	This is good feedback and we held a number of workshops during April – July aimed at developing shared objectives and ways of working across the unit, understanding what each team is responsible for and identifying areas of shared responsibility across teams and individuals.	A
2.29	Whilst there were obviously a suite of team meetings in place in all areas of the Unit, it was clear that not all messages are cascading throughout the Unit. Consideration should be given to the format and content of team meetings to ensure they are not just about downward communication, how input can be encouraged from the bottom up, and to consider how these meetings can be used to facilitate teams to actually work together in practice.	1	See 2.28 above. These were unit-wide workshops. At the annual unit planning meeting in July each team presented its successes for the year, the main activities it is responsible for and why these are valued by the researchers and the university. Staff members have also scheduled and delivered knowledge sharing meetings with the unit. In addition, a new monthly communication to staff from the VP started in April. Other documentation will be made available to staff by way of shared folders, e.g. Director’s reports to the RIIG, RIIG minutes, report on research finances. The teams are working together more effectively and each team is defining, in a bottom up way, how it contributes to shared unit objectives.	A
2.30	Consideration should be given to further integration of teams from Research and Innovation, particularly with respect to the communications functions of the two sides of the Unit.	1	A Communications and Branding Group has recently been put in place, and the two Directors are prioritising tasks and allocating appropriately. A new Director of Enterprise and Commercialisation has been appointed and we will discuss the integration of the communications functions.	B
2.33	It is recommended that UCD R&I review all its communications with Schools, Colleges and individual researchers (including the website, email communications and face-to-face contact) to clarify both the communications channels	1	The Communications Manager is currently conducting a review with the ambition of consolidating our channels and working with the internal communications team in the University. During 2017/18 we will develop an induction booklet and guide to services for incoming (and existing) researchers. Delivering a more integrated service to researchers is a priority project for the coming years and how the services are	B

	used and how researchers find the correct support for their need. In particular, Schools and Colleges were keen for Research and Innovation staff to be much more visible out in the Schools and Colleges, and UCD R&I should work with Research Directors to consider how best to achieve this.		communicated to researchers will be a key strand of the project. In the meantime, workshops and clinics in the Schools will increase the visibility at local sites and the “meet the VP” breakfasts and lunches for new employees give them a chance to meet the team in UCD R&I in a single session.	
2.34	There is sometimes a disconnect in the cascade of information between the Colleges and Schools and it should not be assumed that all information reaches those that need it. Much more use could be made of the communications functions in the Schools themselves to cascade information, and this should be investigated.	2	This recommendation will be communicated to the VPRs at the next RIIG meeting as it a common issue within local units.	B
2.35	UCD Research is in a prime location on campus, and has open space that lends itself well to being a hub for information on research funding and opportunities. However, this space is not well utilised at present. It is recommended that the possible uses for the ground floor space should be reviewed to better facilitate communications with research staff from across the University.	1	The UCD Research space is very well utilised by the UCD community. Our large Boardroom, smaller adjacent meeting room and reception area open out into an event space which has been used recently for celebrations such as a World Book Day Celebration for UCD’s authors, a celebratory lunch for Ken Wolfe and a LEGO interactive learning zone as part of the UCD Festival. Recently, new directional signage was put up to aid people coming into the building for the first time, and all staff contact details are available on an interactive unit just inside the door. UCD Research is a staff building, and significant changes would impact operations. It is also used by the University more generally for hosting high level meetings with industry, government and international partners. As such it must be flexible to fulfil all of its functions. The reconfiguration of our upstairs mezzanine space in 2015 has given staff an area for collaboration (which is utilised regularly), a meeting pod and additional hot desk and lunch space. This space is often used for 1-1 meetings with researchers and informal group meetings.	D
2.38	Whilst being strong, there is scope for better coordination of the communications’ operations of the two areas of the Unit, and these should be reviewed to bring them together as one team,	1	See 2.30.	B

	where their work can better complement each other.			
FUNCTIONS, ACTIVITIES AND PROCESSES				
3.15	Post-award Support was identified by the Review Group as the single biggest area of confusion and dissatisfaction across UCD R&I, UCD HR, UCD Finance and UCD Legal functions, together with operational aspects of grant tracking and overall administration. It appears to the RG that the problem is primarily one of lack of ownership of this aspect of research administration.	3	<p>This is consistent with feedback from surveys and with ongoing comments from the academic community. Post award finance are currently conducting an analysis of the underspend in research income, to be complete by end of April. We envisage that this will highlight areas of post award support for immediate improvement. In addition, work has commenced on the Service Delivery Programme which aims to create a more integrated, researcher-centric service across the University. This is a two-year change programme that will have impact centrally and locally and will need the full engagement and buy-in of the support units and Colleges. Improved staff satisfaction with service will be one of the measures of success of this initiative.</p> <p>Organisation wide change and investment is required if improvements are to be made. We recently successfully submitted a business case to the strategic fund for two additional resources in the Grant Registration Team. This expands the remit of the team to support PIs through grant negotiation and initial mobilisation – e.g., RAFs, procurement, participants portal, meet and greet, face-to-face kick off meetings.</p>	C
3.16	The RG received both internal and external commentary regarding this topic. The RG recommend the prioritisation of the review of requirements in this space and implement relevant structural and process changes to support Finance, HR, grant tracking and administrative requirements, together with commercialization, as appropriate. Implementation may require pan-institutional collaboration and commitment across Schools, Colleges and Administration.	3	See 3.15	C
3.17	During the site visit the RG heard that the review	1	This is not true for all contracts and depends on the value of the award received. When	A

	and negotiation of contracts can be a slow and protracted process, and this is sometimes a source of complaint from researchers. In some cases delays are due to processes within external partners; however, it is also true that internal processes could also be improved. Legal support within the Innovation team is currently just 0.5 of an FTE. Increased support is needed here, though not necessarily within UCD R&I.		complexity and level allows, contracts are reviewed by UCD Research only, with expertise sought only as required on a case by case basis and in line with risk management procedures. For more complex contracts we have recently made changes to the process and resourcing. There is now one full-time resource in legal (up from 0.5 FTE), and the contract review process is underway – see 2.12. This project was cross unit, was led by UCD Research and used yellow-belt training and an agile methodology to design the improved process. Once implemented the online system will enable tracking of a contract by the PI remotely.	
3.18	The initial reorganization of UCD R&I has been a success. Therefore, the Unit should seek to build on this to improve internal UCD R&I integration and communication. As discussed in an earlier section, communication across and within teams in UCD R&I is needed, to improve the flow of information, so that there can be a better understanding of what each team is doing. There also needs to be more bottom-up rather than top-down input to agenda setting. In addition, there is a need for better integration within and between teams – e.g. Communications, Research Partners and Technology Transfer Team.	1	The first stage of the work planning process last summer allowed the team to work with a ‘blank sheet’ to identify suggested areas to work on. The staff meeting in September focused on each project within the work plan with the lead presenting on what the project would deliver. Feedback from this session was very positive and suggested that the team had a clearer view of the work programme. Since then, we have held 4 staff workshops, the last in early July (see 2.28 and 2.29). Tech Transfer Officers in Nova were an important support during the last Centres bid process and we will continue to build on this. Engagement of the TT team earlier in initial stages of contracting with industry will be important to manage industry expectations. The Director of Enterprise and Commercialisation will also initiate a programme of work around TT operations, but as they are just in post these can’t be detailed further at this stage.	B
3.19	Build on positive intent expressed by Schools and Colleges in engaging with UCD R&I. UCD R&I should be pro-active in developing and establishing closer links, as well as assessing how best to include them into the core UCD R&I mission.	1	RIIG members represent their Colleges at that forum and each meeting provides a briefing on priority projects and operational performance as well as policy changes and a review of the external environment impacting research and innovation. The meeting’s content can act as a two-way conduit from UCD R&I to the community. Similarly, the formal inclusion of the Research Partners in CRIBs/College RIIGs will enhance communication flow with School Research Directors.	A
3.20	The role of the College VPRIIs needs to be clarified so that they can have an increased role	2	We are currently working with the VPRII team to develop suggested role profiles for VPRIIs and Directors of Research. In addition, we are seeking to identify what supports	B

	and engagement in the promotion and delivery of the UCD R&I mission. There should also be a reward structure that acknowledges the contributions of the College VPRiIs.		are available to these roles and how they can fulfil their function. While we are supportive of a reward structure and more formalised recognition for these roles in the university, this is not in our control.	
3.21	The support for active researchers in major STEM units is strong. This is less so for the non-research intensive non-STEM units. Working with Colleges, UCD R&I should develop programmes to assist the less active researchers and units and provide support for non-major grant funding research and scholarship. Examples could include shared proposal preparation services, and training programmes geared to non-STEM units, recognising that one-size doesn't fit all.	1	See 2.13 and 2.14	A
3.22	The RG heard that new or emerging researchers often found it difficult to navigate UCD R&I. Therefore, signposting of 'who to contact' needs to be improved. The roles of the newly formed Research Partners were unclear to many stakeholders. The focus and mode of engagement of the Research Partners needs to be understood by and agreed with the stakeholders.	1	<p>Recently, it's been noted that the 'Impact' pages on the UCD R&I intranet contain more hits than other pages, presumably because this information channel being actively pushed through our current series of impact workshops. For other supports, people are inclined to pick up the phone to someone that they know instead of looking at online supports. The planned roadshow of services, clinics in the local units (Colleges and Schools) and the planned communications strand of the Service Delivery Programmes will all aim at closing this communication gap. As part of the development of our service delivery programme, we are mapping all of our services with a view to providing clarity around the researcher journey.</p> <p>We also host bi-annual 'Meet the VP' breakfasts for new academics and are part of the overall HR induction programme. These sessions include an overview of our services and are attended by most of the team to facilitate casual get-to-know you opportunities for new staff.</p> <p>The role of Research Partners is evolving as a balance between the job as initially designed, versus the immediate demands of the community. This creates a communication challenge as the remit is in motion, however it may be beneficial to proactively communicate the job as intended which may start to inform the nature of the community demands and bring better alignment. The tension between having them</p>	C

			focus on a small number of initiatives through to successful conclusion vs spreading themselves widely across initiatives will always be a challenge, and communication alone won't resolve this.	
MANAGEMENT OF RESOURCES				
4.7	The physical environment in the UCD Research building should be reviewed with respect to facilitating engagement and communication.	1	See 2.35.	D
4.8	Prioritisation and redevelopment of the East Wing of NovaUCD would allow for growth in incubation space.	1	This is now an approved project within UCD and has progressed to formal planning stage with the local council. It is expected to come on line in mid-2019.	C
4.9	UCD R&I needs to match the current level of provision with existing resources. This includes the management of stakeholders' expectations. Potential risks such as cuts in budgets and TTSI funding need to be managed.	3	<p>We have successfully headed off risk to TTSI funding recently. We agree that stakeholder expectations need to be managed in context of UCD Research. However, this recommendation conflicts with other recommendations that UCD Research provide more support on the ground, to AHSS researchers and in post award. We will assess support needs across the university as part of the Service Delivery Programme and have successfully taken a business case for investment to UMT that outlined where resources are required to provide different levels of support and how these can be secured.</p> <p>Perhaps a 'virtual budget' given at both school and college levels would allow the various parts of UCD to (conceptually) buy service for specific things and therefore either explicitly or implicitly set priorities. Similar to a S&MI award request for cash, we could extend this to requests for support e.g. 10k cash plus 5 days of a partner plus 2 hours of a Director etc. This would ensure that limited resources are applied to meet the Colleges priorities.</p>	C
USER PERSPECTIVE				
5.9	There exists an urgent need to review the entirety of the Post-Award support function and implement structural and process changes to the	3	Our Org Design and Service Delivery work will hopefully create a valuable plan and roadmap for this, but it will require new investment or the substantial reallocation of existing administrative resources (see 4.9)	C

	<p>current system, processes and procedures. Implementation of any effective solution may require pan-institutional collaboration and commitment across UCD Colleges, Schools and Administration, with due attention to providing a first-class customer service. There is significant confusion and high levels of dissatisfaction across customer groups about this function. The interrelationship between UCD R&I, UCD Legal, UCD HR and UCD Finance, appears opaque and difficult for clients to understand and engage with. Significantly, there was external commentary to the Review Group during the site visit on what is an internal UCD process, leading to the potential for reputational damage.</p>			
5.10	<p>Build upon positive feedback from Schools and Colleges and establish closer relationships in supporting/developing research agendas, in line with the needs of disciplines and the broader UCD research agenda.</p>	1	See 3.19	A
5.11	<p>Further develop supports and services to Schools and Colleges that ensure UCD R&I is recognised as relevant to areas such as Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. While this is addressed in the SAR, there is significant on-the-ground concern around the relevance and support of UCD R&I in these areas.</p>	1	See 3.19. We suggest that resolving 5.9 above would provide a better solution and would be more aligned with our principle of providing service as close to the researcher as possible, rather than trying to change a pre award support unit into a centralised, general research support unit.	B/C
5.12	<p>Attention should be given to enabling UCD/external clients access the most appropriate member(s) of staff at UCD R&I, to ensure good levels of customer care and experience. While members of staff at UCD R&I were viewed as professional and helpful, many customers were unaware of whom to contact in</p>	1	There are many facets to engaging and supporting external clients of UCD. The main route for this is through our researcher/PI community supported by R&I. In this context R&I drive initiatives that facilitate ease of engagement. A recent example of this is the setting up of a Managed Consulting group, 'ConsultUCD', within NovaUCD, the first of its kind in Ireland. Facilitated access to UCD experts as consultants not only supports engagement at this level but is also expected to lead to deeper engagement into research and education.	A

	the first instance.			
5.13	As the recent re-structuring at UCD R&I beds-down, attention should be given to further integration of what still feels to users, like two separate entities (UCD Research and NovaUCD). The integration of separate functions in areas such as communications may benefit from further integration, to present UCD R&I as a single entity.	1	See 2.30 and 3.18.	A
ANALYSIS OF STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES – OVERALL ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT				
6.5	The analysis does not include a plan of action for each item identified. The SWOT analysis should be extended to include this.	1	This will be captured in the current review process, and in the implementation of recommendations from the staff survey.	B
6.6	UCD R&I have identified the strategic role that it plays in furthering research and innovation activity across the University. It is, however, dependant on having working relationships with the academic communities and other professional units. UCD R&I would benefit is working with these areas to build and implement a more structured and co-ordinated service delivery as well as agreeing targets with academic units.	1	We are working with the Director of Strategic Planning to build research planning support for the Schools into the School planning process. The most recent School planning process did not detail the targets for each School. This information would greatly enhance the support units' ability to plan and align support to School and College priorities.	B
6.7	In order to address the impact of potential internal and external threats to the Unit, UCD R&I should put in place a risk register.	1	UCD R&I has a risk register in place which is reviewed bi-annually.	A

3. 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. The planned action to address each recommendation with an estimate of the cost involved should also be included:

Since the review process in April 2016 and the final report in April 2017, we have already implemented changes and secured additional resources to enhance the support to the research community.

Contract Negotiation and Support for Project Mobilisation

Project mobilisation is often a period of intense activity for a new PI, or an experienced PI with a particularly large award. The scale of activities, coupled with lack of experience, or knowledge of processes to be followed, can lead to a slow and frustrating service experience. Two new resources have been allocated to the Grant Registration Team that will extend the services offered by this team to include:

- Individual face to face (F-2-F) meeting with awardees as soon as success has been announced for large and strategic awards e.g. Centres, Strategic Partnership, Lead H2020, ERC, awards greater than €1M etc.
- Regular F-2-F information sessions for all other awardees with support clinics held immediately thereafter.
- Review of funded resources (may be in conjunction with RFO) and highlight specific project requirements e.g. timesheets, operation of depreciation, eligible / ineligible expenditure.
- Assistance with completion and approval of forms required to recruit staff (e.g. RAF) and the recruitment process.
- Set up of student stipends and fees.
- On-boarding of new research funded staff (e.g. requesting email address, systems access, ordering PC etc.)
- Assist with initialising procurement of large items of equipment.
- Assist with negotiation of consortium and other partner contracts.
- Assist partners with funder requirements e.g. set up on participant's portal.

This service will result in improved administrative support to the research community. The removal of administrative burdens will enable the Researchers to achieve the ambitious research targets. We expect the quicker ramp up of projects to lead to increased research expenditure and research overheads earned as well as improved research outcomes.

Support Team to enhance UCD researchers' engagement in H2020 programmes

We need to close the gap between UCD's current performance in delivering its original Horizon 2020 target, create the capacity to secure additional new funds from EU to deliver the increase institutional funding target and to capitalise on the opportunity presented by Brexit.

To do this we requested seed funding from the strategic fund to put in place an EU team in the research community that will:

- Incentivise greater participation in EU funding instruments by academic staff
- Optimise funding requested in proposals for support resources and provide a means of delivering these if the proposal is successful
- Improve research expenditure on H2020 grants

The team will support the researchers through:

- Writing the non-scientific aspects of proposals and uploading required documents, details to the online proposal system
- Developing the detail of the budget ensuring that budget optimises opportunities for cost recovery
- Project mobilisation and co-ordination if awards are successful
- Providing administrative support, reporting and coordination of projects
- Submitting timesheets and other documentation to reclaim costs

The ambition is that this team closes the gap between centrally provided supports and the needs of a research community with significant other demands on their time. The funding has been secured for a period of 3 years. If successful, we envisage that most of the ongoing costs will be recovered from awards in the future.

Priority 1:

The feedback from the Quality Review Group, our own surveys and ongoing engagement with the community through RIIG, monthly meetings with VPRs, workshops and one-to-one interactions all highlight the same issue. Our academic community don't feel that there is adequate support for research and Schools don't feel equipped or incentivised to manage their research activities.

Creating a more integrated, research-centric set of services within the central units will optimise the service delivered by existing central resources and create more value and an enhanced experience for the researcher. However, a fully integrated service model requires a layer of locally available support resources for day-to-day services. Outside of the central units, there is little available resource for on the ground support. Recent analysis concludes that there are 13.5 FTE core funded research support roles in the Colleges and Schools and a further 9.5 FTE in the Institutes. The Service Delivery Programme, including the Research Organisation project strand will seek to develop this cross-campus support model for research. The programme will run for the next two years, but we expect to be in a position to bring a business case to UMT by Summer of 2018.

Priority 2:

Work has already been completed on optimising the workflow around contract management. This needs to be supported through the implementation of an online system. IT Services will need to prioritise resources to develop and implement this solution. The system will be developed in-house and the resource required has already been agreed with IT Services.

Priority 3:

The refurbishment and extension to our incubation facilities at the East Courtyard in NovaUCD will enhance our capacity to accommodate additional start-up companies collaborating with UCD researchers. This is an important initiative for UCD to take full advantage of the recent University Bridge Fund to invest in early stage start-ups. The total capital cost is approx €5.7m and this has been approved in principle by the FRAMC.

Note: The Quality Improvement Plan should be used to inform School/Support Unit and College level academic, support service and resource planning activities.