



University College Dublin

NovaUCD

Quality Improvement Plan

Office of the Vice-President for Innovation

October 2012

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1. Introduction

The context within which the original self-assessment report was written was quite different to the situation that now pertains. A new Vice-President for Innovation has been appointed to lead the development of innovation as the third pillar of the University, a new Office of the Vice-President has been established, a reorganisation and rebrand has been undertaken, the Director of NovaUCD has retired and a new position of Director of Enterprise and Commercialisation has been filled.

A new vision of innovation as the third pillar has been completed and is expressed in the new website www.ucd.ie/innovation.

Much has changed. Nevertheless, the specific recommendations of the Review Group remain relevant to the future operation of the commercialisation, incubation and technology transfer operations of the innovation portfolio at UCD. These recommendations and responses are detailed in this report.

The staff based at NovaUCD wish to express their gratitude to the members of the Peer Review Group (PRG) for the commendations returned in their Quality Review Report and for their constructive recommendations to enhance and improve the reputation and performance of NovaUCD

The staff appreciate that the quality review process is an opportunity to reflect on our quality standards and processes and to (1) identify shortfalls in resources and providing an externally validated case for change and/or for increased resources, (2) identify weaknesses in our procedures that can be addressed internally and (3) gain a deeper understanding of where our strengths and our weaknesses.

The staff were pleased to find that many of the recommendations made by the PRG are aligned with our primary goals. The NovaUCD Quality Improvement Plan (in conjunction with the peer review report, the self-assessment report and related appendices) will be an important reference document for assessing progress towards continuous quality improvement.

Quality Improvement Committee

Helen Mc Grath
Brendan Cremen
Peter Conlon

[Deputy Chair SAR Coordinating Committee]
[Director of Enterprise and Commercialisation]
[Project Manager, Technology Transfer]

2. Response to Recommendations in the Review Group Report

Recommendations for Improvements

Category 1: Recommendations concerning academic, organisational and other matters which are entirely under the control of the unit

Category 1(a)

Recommendations already implemented

1. Recommendation: 3.1.6

The Vice-President for Innovation should, as a matter of priority, take steps to address whatever uncertainty may remain as to the future role of NovaUCD and facilitate dialogue with the NovaUCD team in order to articulate a clearer vision of their role in driving forward innovation as the third pillar of the core mission at UCD.

Action taken:

A meeting of all staff was convened and a presentation was made by the Vice-President for Innovation outlining the vision of Innovation as the third pillar of the University and the role of NovaUCD therein. All staff participated in the discussion. Three days of strategic planning with the entire team is scheduled to take place over the summer and this is part of an on-going process. Clear reporting and communication channels have been established.

2. Recommendation: 3.2.15 and 6.1.9 and 6.2.4

Regular "all office" staff meetings should be instituted to ensure greater awareness and co-ordination of all NovaUCD activities.

Staff meetings should be the primary vehicle for keeping NovaUCD abreast of changes in policy and direction.

A staff "away-day" should take place in the near future to continue conversations instigated by the quality review process.

Action taken:

"All office" staff meetings have commenced and these have been scheduled to take place at regular intervals throughout the year. Every team member has an opportunity to contribute at these meetings.

Three days have been scheduled where all staff can share views and become directly involved in the 3-5 year strategy.

3. Recommendation: 3.2.19

The Technology Transfer team and NovaUCD should develop a professional development programme for its technology transfer professionals so as to maintain best practice; this could include attendance at professional development courses such as the Licensing Executive Society meetings and others.

Action planned:

UCD has, in the past, coordinated nationally with EI and the other Irish TT offices on a regular training schedule for TT staff (including bringing in international experts from such bodies as Praxis, etc.). This builds a local network and reduces costs. UCD plans to continue this national coordination and cooperation to drive personnel professional development. This will be supplemented with a specific programme for new staff expected to be recruited in early 2013 and attendance by selected staff at CPD seminars, international seminars and networking events.

4. Recommendation: 4.23

A Licence Transfer Sheet containing all pertinent information (invoice timings, inventor shares, School shares, NovaUCD share etc.) should be provided to the Operations team for all licence deals to enable efficient subsequent invoicing. NovaUCD should consider procurement of an appropriate Customer Relations Management System.

Action taken:

The licence summary sheet is available and being completed by the Technology Transfer Project Managers for the Operations team.

A CRM tool is regarded as critical by The Office of the Vice President for Innovation and NovaUCD for the future development of networks, on-going communication, co-ordination of events and contact management for past clients. The Office of the Vice President for Innovation has initiated a coordinated review of this important requirement within the University. Criteria for a system will be developed and coherent solutions implemented in 2013.

5. Recommendation: 4.24

NovaUCD needs approved access to the University's financial systems for disbursement of royalty payments in a more efficient way, or someone should be assigned from the Finance team to undertake these tasks.

Action taken:

Additional financial expertise has been assigned to the Operations Team and this has resulted in the disbursement of royalties being managed in a more efficient and timely manner.

6. Recommendation: 4.26

Reserved parking for incubatee companies and some visitor parking spaces should be provided using models developed elsewhere in the University.

Action taken:

Parking is provided consistent with UCD policy. NovaUCD in conjunction with the Buildings Office has provided 5 premium rate pay and display visitor car parking spaces to help alleviate parking problems in the area. This ensures spaces are always available albeit at a high cost.

7. Recommendation: 5.1.5

Information such as number of license and option agreements, number of royalty bearing licenses, number of confidentiality agreements, IP management agreements, patent expenses (both reimbursed and unreimbursed) and license revenue should be routinely tracked.

Action taken:

The revenue from licence agreements is tracked by the Operations team and reported to the UCD FRAMC routinely and all technology transfer metrics as outlined above are tracked by the Technology Transfer team on a database (MYIP) designed specifically for such activities.

8. Recommendation: 6.3.6

There should be more proactive marketing of the range of NovaUCD services within UCD.

Action taken:

A major investment has been made in communications. A new Innovation website was launched in June 2012 alongside a Facebook page, YouTube channel and Twitter feed. These highlight the role of NovaUCD through text, photographs and video to internal and external stakeholders. The website will be reviewed and updated continuously

to update the stakeholders and there is also a plan in place to introduce effective marketing material to promote innovation at UCD.

10.Recommendation: 6.3.8

NovaUCD needs a presence/link on the University main web page and its own website should be revamped to make it more user-friendly.

Action taken:

As above NovaUCD has invested heavily in a new website and there is a direct link to it on the main UCD webpage. The website has received great praise for its highlighting of all the innovative activities across the university and access to forms and advice is user friendly.

Category 1(b)

Recommendations to be implemented within one year

1. Recommendation: 3.1.7 and 6.1.7

3.1.7 Establishment of appropriate governance and advisory structures at University level, and re-establishment of local management meetings are key to supporting the activities of NovaUCD, and in this regard the Review Group recommends a range of actions:

- Advisory Board – An Innovation Advisory Board with a range of specialist sub committees should be constituted as a matter of priority with an independent chair (who could be a senior member of University staff) and with both internal and external representation. The sub-committees would report on NovaUCD activities and seek input from the board.
- IP Advisory committee – While NovaUCD should have confidence in its own decision-making, particularly where this is backed up by clear IP policies, transparent decision-making and consistent involvement of the inventor(s) in the decision-making process, the Review Group agrees that a panel of IP experts would be useful for referral of difficult IP issues.
- UCD-TCD Alliance – The Vice-President for Innovation should take a lead role in informing the NovaUCD staff of progress with the Alliance to date and plans for the future. Progress updates should be provided at regular staff meetings.
- KT Policy Development – NovaUCD should review, update and further develop all policies affecting NovaUCD operations. There

is an existing UCD process/template for review of policies which should facilitate this process.

6.1.7 NovaUCD should make time for reflection as a group on all of its policies, activities and any data outcomes.

Action taken and planned:

The Office of the Vice-President for Innovation, which includes all staff based in NovaUCD, completed a strategic review in Oct 2012. This is being used to inform and direct plans and goals. The strategy takes into account all activities for the group and a specific focus is being developed on impacts and outcomes. This strategy will be updated annually to incorporate any new/appropriate inputs.

Separately, but related, the OVPI is currently reviewing, in cooperation with UCD Research, the overall university approach to industry interaction structures and mechanisms and expects to make recommendations around this area within 12 months.

Updates and progress on the UCD-TCD Alliance are reported by the Vice-President for Innovation to the team at regular meetings.

2. Recommendation: 3.2.16

NovaUCD should replace the legal counsel or to have on-going legal services provided by UCD Office of the Corporate and Legal Affairs Secretary. This should be resolved as part of the wider negotiations between the Vice-President for Innovation and the University.

Action taken:

NovaUCD has filled the vacant legal counsel position on a temporary basis until the end of 2012. This has allowed time for further analysis and discussion regarding a longer term solution to legal support for The Office of the Vice President for Innovation and particularly the TT function. It is expected that a balance between the appropriate level of legal support locally in NovaUCD and back up by the Office of Corporate and Legal will be reached by the end of 2012.

3. Recommendation: 3.2.21 & 3.2.22

The respective roles of Business Development Managers (BDMs) and NovaUCD should be reconsidered when the guidelines for the TTSI (2) funding are released.

Guidelines for engagement with School-based BDMs should be established to manage expectations and to ensure that opportunities for exchange of information and cross-selling of opportunities (including services) are not lost.

Action planned:

The office of VP for Innovation is developing, in cooperation with the Office of VP Research, an enhanced business partnership model that better coordinates the activities of all parties involved in industry engagement, including BDMs, across the University. This model has multiple projects associated with it and these are being executed on an ongoing basis. This effort is overseen by senior VPs in the University.

At a more local level, regular coordination meetings with TT Case Managers and BDMs are being set up to ensure on the ground communication is developed.

4. Recommendation: 3.2.23

A clarifying document or policy should be developed to clarify who has signature authority responsibility for all documents that affect NovaUCD's operations.

Action planned:

An internal document has been put in place outlining where the internal responsibility lies for certain documents that affect NovaUCD operations however a document will be drafted outlining a proposal for signatures required external to NovaUCD.

5. Recommendation: 4.21

Some benchmarking should take place with other Universities on licence deal structure types to ensure that appropriate terms are being negotiated.

Action planned:

The IP protocol, a national policy document around IP management and commercialisation, was adopted by the Government in May 2012. As part of this, A Central Technology Transfer Office is to be put in place by the end of the year with a view to developing and propagating best practice in this area. This will include benchmarking of terms and conditions on licensing and start-up deals. The Office of the Vice President for Innovation, and the Technology Transfer Team will cooperate fully with it's effort and looks forward to this development.

6. Recommendation: 4.22

NovaUCD should receive a share of equity sales for reinvestment in its programmes to stimulate enterprise, including a seed fund and this dialogue should commence with the University as part of the SLA

discussions. The agreement reached with the University in 2000 regarding equity distribution should be revisited as part of these discussions.

Action planned:

The decisions around use of funds from equity sales resides with the appropriate senior management and boards of the University. The Office of the Vice President for Innovation, as part of its recently generated strategy, is formulating a proposal for the use of these funds that relate directly to the enhancement of the commercialisation agenda. It is expected that a resolution on this item will be achieved in early 2013.

Recommendation: 4.25

NovaUCD is encouraged to review its patent portfolio, which contained a high percentage of national-phase patents, and associated patent expenditure.

Action taken:

The review of NovaUCD's patent portfolio is currently underway as is the associated expenditure. Patents that will no longer be supported have been identified and others are in analysis. This will be an ongoing effort and a detailed review/update of the patent support process will be undertaken in 2013 to further optimise use of funds in this space.

7. Recommendation: 5.1.6

UCD and NovaUCD explore ways to better manage the transfer of finances between accounts.

Action taken:

A meeting took place between the Bursar, the Vice-President for Innovation and the Director of Enterprise and Commercialisation where NovaUCD's challenges were raised. Matters surrounding authorisation and responsibility are currently being resolved.

8. Recommendation: 5.1.7 & 6.1.11

Additional routine reporting of all NovaUCD activities to University senior management, College Principals and Heads of Schools should be undertaken. This report should include inventions disclosed, commercial agreements executed and other key performance indicators in order to raise awareness and recognition of NovaUCD activities on campus.

Consideration should be given to the production of a regular newsletter containing information on KPIs for NovaUCD for circulation to stakeholders.

Action planned:

Currently many reports are produced and it is NovaUCD's intention to review these and streamline them, identify stakeholders and ensure that the relevant information is being disseminated to the correct groups and individuals. A regular newsletter will be published with progress reports for stakeholders.

10.Recommendation: 6.2.5

The knowledge and experience of existing NovaUCD staff should be availed of in the development of new policies.

Action planned:

It is the intention of NovaUCD to develop new policies in consultation with NovaUCD staff and the wider community to garner the experience gained by staff over the years both in the public sector and while in industry.

11.Recommendation: 6.3.5. & 6.1.10

A survey of UCD School's opinion, involving a range of engagement methodologies of NovaUCD services (including focus groups) would be useful.

Generation of data on user views of services offered by NovaUCD should move beyond the use of questionnaires and include use of tools like focus groups, structured interviews with key personnel, and structured follow-up on anecdotal information to generate harder data for decision-making.

Action planned:

The Office of the Vice President for Innovation will include these recommendations into its plans for feedback and enhancement of the IT function in 2013.

Category 1(c)

Recommendations to be implemented within five years

1. Recommendation: 4.19

NovaUCD should commence the process of negotiating a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the University so that there is agreement on tasks to be done and the appropriate level of re-imburement for these services.

Action planned: This issue is currently being reviewed by NovaUCD and as a first stage of the process talks have taken place with UCD Office of the Corporate and Legal Affairs Secretary and the Bursar's Office around the provision of services. Over the next 12 months the Office of the Vice-President for Innovation intends to work with the administrative side of the university and utilise those templates to work with the academic side of the University in relation to SLAs.

Recommendation 4.20

NovaUCD should negotiate a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with UCD Nova to agree on tasks to be carried out and the charges to be levied for the existing facility and also for any new incubation facility.

Action planned:

UCD Nova Limited was established to manage the capital fund around the purchase of the NovaUCD building and now incorporates charges related to the NexusUCD building. As part of the board level management of this entity, which includes personnel from the OVPI and UCD Finance, annual plans and budgets are established that take into account all charges.

2. Recommendation: 5.2.8

NovaUCD should engage in succession planning with respect to key positions within the unit and this should be led by the new Director of Enterprise and Commercialisation.

Action planned:

This has been agreed and is the responsibility of the new Director of Enterprise and Commercialisation.

3. Recommendation: 6.3.7

NovaUCD are strongly encouraged to hold most of their events within School/College facilities and to use their relationships with Business Development Managers to ensure this happens.

Action planned:

NovaUCD is currently working with UCD Research and looking at the possibility of working in the new science building and defining the use of the knowledge centre as a space for research and innovation. NovaUCD has run / has scheduled a number of events in the last few months in Newman House, the new Sports Centre Red Room, William Jefferson Clinton Auditorium and the Quinn School. This strategy will continue.

Category 1(d)

Recommendations which will not be implemented

1. Recommendation: 4.18

Consideration should be given to charging for additional services to spin-in companies who only pay the space charge. There should be some clear differentiation between the services provided to spin-out companies where 15% equity is taken, and spin-in companies where there may be no equity held.

Reason for not implementing: NovaUCD needs to conduct research into this issue. NovaUCD will benchmark itself against other incubation centres and determine if they discriminate between spin-ins and spin-out companies in relation to licence fee and services provided. This issue is extremely market driven and NovaUCD needs to be comparable with other universities. NovaUCD will then decide if this recommendation should be implemented.

Category 2: Recommendations concerning shortcomings in services, procedures and facilities which are outside the control of the unit

Category 2(a)

Recommendations already implemented

1. Recommendation: None

Action taken:

Category 2(b)

Recommendations to be implemented within one year

1. Recommendation: 4.17

Since the equity for help model may limit NovaUCD's ability to secure a greater equity stake in companies where there is valuable IP licensed and where a larger equity stake may be more beneficial to UCD, alternative ways of presenting the deal should be considered which would give NovaUCD more flexibility.

Action planned:

NovaUCD is integrating this into its launch model and looking at the necessity to adjust it and the UCD policy.

2. Recommendation 5.2.10

NovaUCD should be provided with the services of a HR partner

Action planned:

Contact has been made with the HR Services Director and a meeting has been arranged with the HR Relationship Director to progress the matter further.

Category 2(c)

Recommendations to be implemented within five years

Recommendation: None

Action planned:

Category 2(d)

Recommendations which will not be implemented:

Recommendation: None

Reason for not implementing:

Category 3:

Recommendations concerning inadequate staffing, and/or facilities which require recurrent or capital funding

Category 3(a)

Recommendations already implemented

Recommendation: None

Action taken

Category 3(b)

Recommendations to be implemented within one year

1. Recommendation: 3.2.18

The Technology Transfer Manager should consider developing an internship programme within NovaUCD that would employ students and postgraduates to work on a variety of defined projects.

Action planned:

Due to restructuring and re-focus as part of the new funding cycle (TTSI 2), this is not part of the short term plans for TT. However, it will be considered as part of plans for the 2013/2014 academic year.

It should be noted that MBA students are engaged at present on a project basis in certain areas within the office.

2. Recommendation: 3.2. 20

Enterprise Development services should be supported financially at an appropriate level when the present incumbent takes up a new post.

Action planned

An application was made to the BRC for the backfilling of the Enterprise Development post and reporting lines will be determined by senior

management. Funding has been made available to fill this vacancy. This matter is currently being addressed as a matter of priority.

3. Recommendation: 5.2.9

The Operations team require some additional resources especially with the prospect of the new incubation facility which it was assumed UCD Nova Ltd. will be asked to manage. The cost of an additional position should be included in the management charge to be agreed for the new facility.

Action planned:

Provision has been made in the 2012/2013 budget for facilities support for the new building and that service will be engaged shortly. It is proposed that the service will be able to support both NovaUCD and the new facility. The updated Mazars financial plan for the new facility was presented to the Bursar and an additional UCD contribution was granted for the 2012/2013 financial year in order to facilitate the operation of the new facility and the servicing of the loan taken out by UCD to purchase the building.

4. Recommendation: 5.2.11

Enterprise Development services should be an additional charge and revenue source to UCD Nova for both existing and future incubation facilities. This could be achieved by either an increase in the management fee and or and increased rental charge to client companies

Action Taken:

The fee charged by NovaUCD is not just a fee for space but is inclusive of all the services provided both to the clients of NovaUCD. This fee is not for space alone and takes into account the local competitive environment. This fee is constantly monitored and will continue to be monitored on an on-going basis.

5. Recommendation: 5.2.12

With the current Enterprise Development Manager assuming a new role, the Review Group recommends that the post is replaced with a full-time executive who should be line-managed so as to minimise disruption and ensure continuity of service delivery.

Action Taken:

An application was made to the BRC for the backfilling of the Enterprise Development post and reporting lines will be determined by senior management. Funding has been made available to fill this vacancy. This matter is currently being addressed as a matter of priority.

Category 3(c)

Recommendations to be implemented within five years

1. Recommendation: 3.2.17

Fixed term contracts for the technology transfer staff should be formalised as permanent contracts by the University.

Action planned:

This will be implemented with appropriate staff in compliance with University HR direction and policy.

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.

Required Resources Summary & Estimated Costs			
No.	Rel. Recs¹	Planned Action	€ Cost (est.)
1	5.2.9	1 x FTE for new facility – NexusUCD – Belfield Office Park Blocks 9 & 10	€80k
2	3.2.20	Backfilling of Enterprise Development post	€80k

Note: The Quality Improvement Plan should be used at School and College level academic and resource planning activities, to inform funding allocation decisions.

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