



UNIVERSITY COLLEGE DUBLIN

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

COMMERCIAL OFFICE

January 2011.

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1 Introduction

The UCD Commercial office is committed to supporting the development of the student experience by providing services to both students and staff of UCD of the highest quality.

A secondary but no least important function of the organisation is to ensure strong cash flows to facilitate the refurbishment and new build of student accommodation, to develop income generating opportunities and to ensure that all its services are operated the lowest economical cost.

Upon undertaking the Quality Review process in 2010, a committee was established to manage the required self-assessment. This committee headed by the Commercial Manager and Head of Unit comprised heads of each of the departments that fall within the review together with representative members of staff from each department.

The review was undertaken during the period 8th -11th June 2010 and the group comprised:

Commercial Manager, Manager of Residential Services, Conference and Events Manager, Manager of Catering Services, Financial administrator, a conference and events coordinator, a residences receptionist / team leader, a catering services supervisor, Head Chef and a Chef.

The committee met again on several occasions upon receipt of the Review Group Report to produce this Quality Improvement Plan.

Commercial Office

2. Recommendations for Improvements – Follow-Up Action Taken and/or Planned

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

- **Category 1(a)**

Recommendations already implemented

Recommendation:

The UCD Commercial Office needs to work much more closely with others delivering support and information to students. Examples include UCD Registry, Student Advisers, UCD International Office, Clubs and Societies and UCD Student's Union.

Action taken:

The manager of residential services attends the S.R.L.C. and to enhance the communication process the head of unit is to be invited to attend attends the student experience executive committee chaired by the VP for students.

This in addition to the normal day to day interaction and communication undertaken in the course of annual forward planning process and follow up to customer's issues as they arise.

Recommendation:

There is a need for structured regular meetings of the 'UCD Commercial Office' with the head of each of the units at which specific action points are identified and achievements assessed.

Action taken:

The frequency of the Commercial Office management team meetings has now been increased to fortnightly with specific action points identified and achievements assessed and information cascaded down to all departmental staff.

Recommendation

Information from the regular meetings above needs to be cascaded to staff in a way appropriate to their needs/location. Ways in which staff can feed information into the senior team should also be made clear.

Action taken:

Edited minutes are circulated to all staff via local management /staff meetings.

Recommendation:

Budgeting process needs to be more inclusive and driven more by stakeholders. This is important in order to establish ownership but also to realise opportunities for development rather than adopting the status quo.

Action taken:

The move to involve the key stakeholders in the process had already begun at the time of the review facilitated by the appointment of catering manager on two year contract in March 2010 which had been lacking for over 2.5 years and the restructuring of the residences management. Both of whom have the necessary skills to input more fully into the budgeting process.

The rapid growth in the number of cost centres to be managed, Time pressure to deliver at key critical times of the year for example statutory accounts and quarterly P and L's drove this previously insular approach to budgeting. We are confident that the recent approval for a part time member of the accounting team will mean that we can deliver the remaining required element of more frequent reporting and greater management input.

Outcomes by October 2011 will include:

Unit managers running expenditure reports include pop accounts and on a real time basis.

Production of a detailed analysed review of each category of income and expenditure at year end

Managers inputting into the quarterly accounts stage in estimating income and expenditure out turn for the year.

Preparation of a separate income and expenditure statement for each C&E office event to establish if the management information obtained from the exercise is of value to the organisation.

Recommendation:

Stronger emphasis needs to be given to the production of timely and more detailed finance information, to allow budget holders to monitor and allow them to assess performance against budget. Ideally these reports would be issued on a monthly basis and contain much more detail on revenue streams and the manageable costs, e.g. labour, utilities, food etc.

Action taken:

Refer above

Recommendation:

The term Commercial Office is used in multiple contexts which does not fully reflect the totality of the operations. The reality is that the core services provided by the organisation are student and staff facing and also essential in supporting the University. The current name does not therefore properly reflect the fact that most of the activities and focus are centred on these core services. The UCD Commercial Office needs to sit under a more collegiate heading and all business elements, whether student or commercial related, should operate under a more inclusive and student-focused name.

Action taken:

The name is being considered as part of an overall review of how these and other services are delivered and will be resolved during 2011.

Recommendation:

The necessity to have "summer at UCD" and Conference & Events as separate, distinct entities is not clear. They are certainly less distinct within the UCD Commercial Office than, for example, student accommodation. Events and reservations activities are strands of a central service. "Summer

at UCD” is essentially a marketing strategy and not a separate unit and should lie with the Conference and Events unit. Integrating these two areas more effectively will lead to improvements in efficiency and from that increased sales.

Action taken:

A review of the first year of trading of this new operation which in its conceived form generated over €1.2million has been undertaken. Integration of the marketing activities into the greater organisation has been undertaken.

- **Category 1(b)**

Recommendations to be implemented within one year

Recommendation:

The various operations within UCD Residential, Catering and Events need to know and agree unit objectives and trading plans set against budget. Linked to this KPIs need to be established to reflect both the business objectives (local and linked to University strategic plan) and the customer service objectives of the units.

Action planned:

Annual Key operational performance indicators are currently being agreed with each departmental head according to the nature of the trading. Examples include but not limited to are,

Residences: occupancy targets as a percentage of the whole, satisfaction levels based upon quarterly residential surveys.

Catering: satisfaction levels based upon customer surveys.

Conference and events: customer feedback questionnaires, new business generated against budget.

Commercial office: sales performance against budgets for new income generating projects such as “summer at UCD”.

In respect to financial KPI’s admin costs for each entity will be measure over time. The objective being to drive down the non value added proportion of expenditure and will include admin cost per bed, per event day, per catering sales.

- **Category 1(c)**

Recommendations to be implemented within five years

None

Recommendations:

Opportunities for training in leadership, coaching and team building appear to be available through UCD HR and should be availed of to a greater extent.

Action planned:

PMDS provides these opportunities within UCD and the Commercial Office will avail of the opportunities as and when opportunities arise.

Recommendation:

Ensure monitoring process is in place to ensure licensees are delivering the levels of services expected of them, at the times required.

Action planned:

All new contracts will include an additional performance level requirement in addition to the existing service delivery requirement. This will be reviewed with the licensee on a periodic basis, to be agreed, during the course of the license period and will be taken into consideration as and when the contract is re let.

Recommendation:

Ensure some regard of customer need/expectation is taken into account before granting new licences.

Action planned:

In order to ensure client input into the licensee selection process a representative of the unit whether school, college or unit are currently included in the process.

Recommendation:

Good practice would suggest that, prior to awarding a new licence, a comprehensive check be undertaken to ensure the service could not be delivered as cost effectively in-house or could provide more advantageous costs for customers.

Action planned:

The department will continue to review the situation though the impediments to change remain to the in- house catering department operating the food service outlets.

The primary risks are:

The permanent employment of additional staff to a licensed foods service operation and the high cost of University labour compared with the industry norms which would be reflected in lower margins and/or higher cost to customers.

Recommendation:

Re-launch new services - brand and make better use of web internally and externally.

Action planned:

A number of staffing and operational matters will change arising out of the recommendations the Quality review report. On completion of this stage of the quality improvement plan a steering group will be established to review

the various department's web sites with a view to producing one singular Commercial Office website pulling all services together.

- **Category 1(d)**

Recommendations which will not be implemented

None

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

- **Category 2(a)**

Recommendations already implemented

Recommendation:

Integrate all the senior team and administrative support into one physical location – this should include, as a minimum, those currently referred to as the UCD Commercial Office, O'Reilly Hall (in future Conference & Events), Summer at UCD and Catering (inc. Restaurant).

Action taken:

Within the period of the review the Commercial Office moved offices to Ardmore House. The second stage of the move expected in January 2011 will see works spaces made available adjacent to the Commercial office in Ardmore House for all department heads.

Recommendation:

Best practice HR mechanisms should be introduced, i.e. management of sickness and absence, PMDS reviews and monitoring of probation periods.

Action taken:

The commercial office currently operates as directed by the SMT and human resources the above recommendations.

- **Category 2(b)**

Recommendations to be implemented within one year

Recommendation:

The title UCD Commercial Office should be discontinued. Consideration should be given to changing the title of the Commercial Manager, without any change in responsibilities or seniority, to something like 'Director of UCD Residential, Catering and Events'.

Action planned:

The support unit believes that the "Commercial" as found in the title of the Head of Unit and as part of the name of the unit should be retained to reflect a critical element of the role visa vie value for money and commercial income generating opportunities.

The need for a name change will be considered as part of organisational changes that are happening and the appropriate title will be put in place in that context.

- **Category 2(c)**

Recommendations to be implemented within five years

Recommendation:

Better liaison with HR, perhaps along the lines of the HR Partner model already in place for Colleges, would be of significant benefit to the UCD Commercial Office and its ongoing development.

Action planned:

The role out of the HR partner model stopped short of the Commercial Office activities which was we believe to the disadvantage of the department. It is proposed to resurrect the matter with the VP for Finance and Bursar.

- **Category 2(d)**

Recommendations which will not be implemented

None

CATEGORY 3: Recommendations concerning inadequate staffing, and/or facilities which require recurrent or capital funding

- **Category 3(a)**

Recommendations already implemented

Recommendation:

Develop robust business plans to support opportunities for recruitment. Not doing this is currently to the detriment of some critical student-facing services.

Action planned:

At the time of the quality review robust plans were well advanced in respect to the developing new and additional business for O'Reilly Hall, the development of a retail unit, the refurbishment of the upper floor restaurant, the establishment of an exclusive soft drink supplier contract and the creation of "summer at UCD", the establishment of a residential student leisure programme, the establishment of a residential catering service for Roebuck Castle and much more.

These plans are designed to support student and staff services whilst creating an income stream rather than "supporting opportunities for recruitment".

- **Category 3(b)**

Recommendations to be implemented within one year

Recommendation:

Clarification is required on the matter of recruitment to new posts. Senior UCD management told the Review Group that approval can be gained if supported by a robust business case. New opportunities are currently not being taken forward due to belief within the UCD Commercial Office that no recruitment is possible. This is to the detriment of some critical student facing services.

Action planned:

Recruitment to new posts can be made on the basis of a business case. Restrictions on recruitment to the sector are in place which only allow for non academic recruitment where the new post delivers improved financial performance. These opportunities will be pursued.

- **Category 3(c)**

Recommendations to be implemented within five years

None

Category 3(d)

Recommendations which will not be implemented

None

Conference and Events Office (Including O'Reilly Hall Ltd.)

2. Recommendations for Improvements – Follow-Up Action Taken and/or Planned

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

- **Category 1(a)**

Recommendations already implemented

Recommendation: Work with UCD Catering Services to help them develop so that the in-house catering team could be introduced as the third panel provider for O'Reilly Hall, providing a more cost-effective option for some customers, internal and external

Action taken:

Prior to the Quality review planning was well advanced to enable UCD Catering services to become the third operator in O'Reilly Hall for the more budget conscious events. This has now happened and the UCD Catering Buffet menu pdf is now attached to all C&E Office enquiries.

Recommendation:

Ensure that UCD continues to position itself as a national venue for conferences and events.

Action taken:

Failte Ireland statistics confirm that UCD hosts 65% of all of Irelands Academic conferences.

Ongoing representation at industry events to create awareness of facilities available and includes such industry events as:

Dublin Chamber of Commerce Networking Evenings- Skillznet- Failte Ireland workshops and sessions- DCB members events.

External Advertising includes: Dublin Convention Bureau Magazine-Public Sector Times-Sunday Tribune Commercial Conferencing Feature BMI Voyager Magazine-Venues & Events Guide 2011– UK & Ireland-Sunday Business Post Conference Feature

- **Category 1(b)**

Recommendations to be implemented within one year

Recommendation:

Clarify mission statement and put in place one cost centre for O'Reilly Hall and all other event facilities (under new heading of 'Conference and Events').

Action planned:

Both O'Reilly Hall and Conference & Events staff to be collectively known as The Conference & Events Office and signature of all staff to change to C&E Office not O'Reilly Hall – as of immediate effect

A new mission statement incorporating all areas, collectively, including Commercial, Residential & Hospitality Services will be put in place by March 2011.

O'Reilly Hall Ltd is required to have its own cost centre.

Recommendation:

The centralisation of the events team will also be of major benefit. It will be the case that some time will need to be spent around conference venues when in use but that should not prevent the recommendation of co-locating units being actioned.

Action planned:

All team managers will have accommodation in the Ardmore House which will promote the centralization of information and improved communication between individual departments.

Recommendation:

The web is an important tool in opening up markets and consideration needs to be taken as to how to develop the existing site. It is essential that UCD is seen as a site for non-University visitors to Dublin.

Action planned:

The C&E office together with the new Sales & Marketing Operative will design a new interactive website for all facilities on campus available for hire.

Work on the project will commence in February 2011 with new website launch by July 2011.

Members of the focus group to be representatives from the following departments: Summer at UCD- Conference & Events Office- Catering at UCD- Residences- Retail Unit

- **Category 1(c)**

Recommendations to be implemented within five years

None

- **Category 1(d)**

Recommendations which will not be implemented

None

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

- **Category 2(a)**

Recommendations already implemented

None

- **Category 2(b)**

Recommendations to be implemented within one year

Recommendation:

Develop a joined-up UCD Conference programme alongside campus events.

Action planned:

A focus group incorporating building services, C&E Office and UCD Communications Office will be established by April 2011.

The focus group is to meet on a monthly basis, as an open forum for future events and feedback from past events.

C&E Office to update the UCD Events Calendar on a weekly basis so that information of weekly events taking place is available to all staff to be implemented in March 2011.

Link to be available on new website from August 2011 to incorporate UCD and Commercial Events listings on campus.

- **Category 2(c)**

Recommendations to be implemented within five years

Recommendations:

Review the rules currently in place that restrict the team from taking commercial bookings because of the need to accommodate important internal activities. It is recognised that many of these have to take priority; however, it was felt that it should be possible to relax some restrictions. In addition, publishing the dates of key University activities, requiring the use of the O'Reilly Hall, should be completed earlier than is currently the case. Any increase in the ability of the team to accept longer lead business will be financially advantageous to the University.

Action Planned:

Although this matter is out of the direct control of the unit it remains our responsibility to at least make those holding dates aware that not releasing them in a timely fashion impedes the successful commercial operation of the hall with subsequent lost revenues to UCD.

The Conference and Events office management team will monitor the situation and report to the Bursar accordingly.

- **Category 2(d)**

Recommendation:

Reason for not implementing:

None

CATEGORY 3: Recommendations concerning inadequate staffing, and/or facilities which require recurrent or capital funding

- **Category 3(a)**

Recommendations already implemented

None

- **Category 3(b)**

Recommendations to be implemented within one year

Recommendation:

Maximise the attraction of the venue for UCD-related conferences through improved provision. An important element of such an offer would be the development of a C&E one-stop-shop service so that customers do not have to deal with multiple service providers. This applies also to external customers where almost all competitors provide such a service, indeed, it is expected by all customers.

Action planned:

The new sales strategy driven by a dedicated marketing operative will commence in March 2011, under the following guidelines:

Drive sales of UCD Conference and Events products across UCD Campus Clients and Commercial Clients.

This will involve:

Complete re-launch of the C&E Office to all staff members via Sales & Marketing plan to include:

Design of new website incorporate all services provided - Direct emailing to all in UCD database- Promote "packages" to include Room Bookings, Catering & Accommodation – 24hrs Daily Delegate Rate - Collaborate with Summer Accommodation and Catering to colleagues on a continuous basis to ensure that all internal resources are leveraged to help maximise revenues in UCD

Provision of guidance and direction to the other Conference & Events Office administrators where appropriate to ensure consistency.

Compiling and driving the marketing planning process and ensure synergies are maximised across the client portfolio.

Communicate strategies to highly professional decision makers to enhance quality service and in turn enhance guest satisfaction.

The C&E Office is to offer an extensive co-ordination service and liaison between clients and suppliers.

Initiatives currently under review for implementation in order to improve provision and attraction are:

Competitive packages- One Stop Shop for Conference & Events- Support for the UCD Community- Payment Systems Support- Include all UCD event locations such as Newman House, Belfield House and the Clinton auditorium in its event location portfolio - Introduction of UCD restaurant to O'Reilly Hall catering panel for smaller events - New Website for all CRHS services

Work on the programme has commenced and will be implemented in stages in readiness for the summer of 2011.

Recommendation:

Marketing and Sales needs should be brought together to ensure that the best use is made of limited resource across the business.

Action planned:

As above the reorganisation of the marketing role of the manager of "summer at UCD" has facilitated the commencement of a new all embracing marketing strategy encompassing Commercial, Catering, Summer at UCD and Conference & Event activities and residences. This executive will work closely with all managers to ensure that all resources are being used.

All departments will identify their requirements and prepare the necessary support materials and the C&E office will prepare a Sales & Marketing plan by the Spring of 2011 for all C&E clients to be targeted

- **Category 3(c)**

Recommendations to be implemented within five years

None

- **Category 3(d)**

Recommendations which will not be implemented

None

RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

2. Recommendations for Improvements – Follow-Up Action Taken and/or Planned

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

- **Category 1(a)**

Recommendations already implemented

Recommendation:

Review the provision of an accommodation guarantee. The Review Group strongly recommend introducing accommodation guarantees for international students. These are universal amongst most key competitors and essential for UCD to be competitive in international student recruitment. This could easily be achieved through greater flexibility in the operation of the allocation and offer systems. It will also require proactive engagement and consultation with the UCD International Office. This should be in place in time for recruitment into academic year 2011/12.

Action taken:

Prior to the review period changes to allocations and booking processes were put in place to guarantee a larger initial allocation to International students with a phased hand back of uncommitted room to Irish students. This was undertaken in consultation with the International Office to ensure that they were satisfied that the number of beds initially offered would ensure that guarantee. Throughout the booking process full flexibility was given to the International Office to reassess and change sub allocations of International beds to meet local commitments.

Recommendation:

Widen the rent ladder. An option might be to better reflect difference between refurbished and new (emphasis value and annual rents). Consider some limited development of twin accommodation to provide lower entry price point, and other ways of providing some more affordable accommodation.

Action taken:

Additional off campus accommodation has been leased by UCD to provide more UCD managed accommodation at the lower rate though it is not planned to widen the rent ladder as suggested at present following a number of discussions with the students union.

Recommendation:

It was suggested by some students that the payment of rent in just two instalments was too onerous. Availability of more staged payments should be considered, and this work should include consultation and research with students.

Action Taken:

License Fees are currently paid in two instalments. In order to reduce the burden of payment schedules a third instalment is proposed for 2010 / 2011. The cost of utilities will also be spread across the three instalments.

Recommendation:

More consultation with students on developments and refurbishments is recommended. An apparent lack of consultation appears in part to have led to problems in recent builds/refurbishments, for example, the lack of an oven, insufficient fridge and freezer capacity and lack of common room space even in Roebuck 2. Some institutions actually build model apartments which can be visited and commented on by stakeholders before plans are signed off.

Actions Taken:

A new consultative policy was introduced as part of the residential services own quality review. This now forms the basis for ensuring student and stakeholder consultation and feedback on all Residences operations. These stakeholders have already been engaged in consultation on new build facilities which will be an ongoing process.

An example raised was the new dormitory style catered accommodation, was decided upon based on consultation with students. However by the time the build had been approved some students expressed views against this style of build. It should be noted that occupancy levels are 100% and much positive feedback has been received. It is inevitable that views will change and that there won't be a consensus amongst customers. However, more customer choice is surely a good thing as evidenced by the popularity of this formula.

Recommendation

There is a concern about the target of increasing bed spaces irrespective of student demand or student experience. Robust research, consultation and a business plan is an essential precursor and it would be important to continually review and test the validity of the strategic plan objective in this respect.

Actions Taken:

Student demand is known though UCD will continue to monitor and researched demand and competing markets when making strategic decisions on the construction of new bed spaces. Demand greatly exceeds capacity with occupancy year on year at a rate of 99.41%

Recommendation:

Concerns were raised about the lack of student advocacy in discipline situations. There was also a concern that students were not being informed of their right to appeal a discipline decision. Student rights in these situations should be agreed and clearly communicated, based on best practice and in consultation with residents, UCDSU and UCD Student Advisers. Accommodation web pages need to be developed to ensure such information is available.

Actions Taken:

These recommendations were completed prior to the Quality Review where the whole area of discipline was reviewed, documented, and communicated in a thoroughly transparent manner including the posting of all documentation on our web site. Support material in respect to these matters was available at the time of the review. A loss in continuity through SU administration changes is prevalent and therefore Residential Services will endeavour to ensure that all stakeholders are included in the communication process to residents at the beginning of each year.

Recommendation:

Also refer category two

Maintenance is a major area of concern, with no obvious plan to address it. This may link in to the past failure to appoint a Maintenance Manager. Alternative methods of delivering maintenance services should be explored. One possible option might be to provide some funds to UCD Buildings who would provide maintenance service directly or provide access to their sub-contractors. Residence management may well be duplicating processes/activities already happening as a matter of course within UCD Buildings. This option may still require some dedicated Residence maintenance resource to coordinate activities locally. The Review Group supports the view that a better service may be provided by having maintenance assistance within Residence but liaising closely with Buildings. The current Manager of Residential Services happens to have a maintenance background and this is currently of great benefit. However, such reliance is unlikely to be sustainable in the long term.

This current approach can only lead to inefficiencies and importantly distract Residence management from other important activities. It is believed unreasonable for Residence management to be expected to continue with the current arrangement. Critically, despite best efforts, the feedback results clearly show that measures in place are not working as well as they need to.

Actions Taken:

Prior to the review and in the light of current employment restrictions mid-term arrangements were put in place to contract the function and management of maintenance as part of the maintenance contract which has greatly enhanced the service.

An element of the contract provides for staff to manage the process.

Much of the maintenance requirement is reactive and is not that complex so as not to be able to fall within the remit of the residential services department.

The department is currently well supported by Buildings and Services when more complex issues arise and the relationship is being deepened as we become part of the Universities key tendering processes for lift maintenance etc.

The Manager of the Commercial office has formed a working group which has already met, with the Director and Buildings and Estates and their Technical Services Team to improve communications.

Recent customer surveys do not indicate that the standard of maintenance is a problem.

Category 1(b)

Recommendations to be implemented within one year

Recommendation:

Lack of common rooms/spaces in the residences is a problem – consideration should be given to providing some such spaces even if this involves sacrificing an apartment in each complex until, through future developments, other solutions can be found. This will benefit the student experience and create more ‘value’ within the cost of the accommodation.

Action planned:

Prior to the most recent build it was UCD policy to minimise congregation spaces within residences a policy that has created difficulties when attempting to develop a more collegiate feel to the accommodation service.

Retro introduction of break out spaces is planned for the next academic year to compliment this year’s enhancements which includes improvements to laundries and vending facilities etc.

New builds will include the necessary student support areas

Recommendation:

Customer feedback from students is quite extensive but no obvious conclusions arising from the feedback are presented, and no agreed action plan to take forward areas where improvement may be needed. These need to be established with timescales for review within an agreed time following publication of any survey.

Action planned:

Conclusions and action plans from student feedback are available for inspection. A secondary survey has since been completed and it is intended to update any outstanding conclusions and recommendations and to put a structure in place to ensure these are communicated back to residents.

Recommendation:

At a time when University rents are perceived to be higher than the private sector it is important that the benefits derived from the ‘full package’ are made much clearer, so that more appropriate like-for-like comparisons can be made on cost. Additionally, there are many other benefits of living on campus that could be better highlighted – annual rental comparisons with the private sector are helpful in such comparisons.

Action planned:

Enhancements and updates will be made to literature and the website to fully explain the complete residence package and marketing tools will be

explored to inform both incoming and current students of the benefits and also the major improvements completed and additions to facilities over the past two years.

Recommendation:

Widen the rent ladder. An option might be to better reflect difference between refurbished and new (emphasis value and annual rents). Consider some limited development of twin accommodation to provide lower entry price point, and other ways of providing some more affordable accommodation.

Action taken:

Limited widening of the rent ladder has been undertaken through the provision of low cost units available through Muckross and Blackrock. Recently this option was explored with the students union but an acceptable solution has not yet emerged.

- **Category 1(c)**

Recommendations to be implemented within five years

None

- **Category 1(d)**

Recommendations which will not be implemented

None

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

- **Category 2(a)**

Recommendations already implemented

None

- **Category 2(b)**

Recommendations to be implemented within one year

Recommendation:

A much more thorough inspection of new builds following handover is required in order to identify problems that may lead, in a relatively short time, to major remedial expenditure, for example, the ventilation issue in the Glenomena complex. This latter issue appears to have major financial implications and far greater visibility needs to be given to such areas of risk to the business.

Action planned:

Buildings and Estates manage the procurement and construction of new residences on behalf of Residential Services (Commercial, Residential,

and Hospitality Services) and they are responsible for ensuring the quality of the construction and refurbishment work carried out. It is proposed that a review of the post build handover be undertaken with Buildings and Estates to identify how the University can ensure that issues like the Glenomena Ventilation are identified and rectified at build stage, and also the management of Residential Services are afforded a more direct role and greater input in the construction projects as they have valuable knowledge in how construction issues can impact on operating the buildings.

- **Category 2(c)**

Recommendations to be implemented within five years

None

- **Category 2(d)**

Recommendations which will not be implemented

None

CATEGORY 3: Recommendations concerning inadequate staffing, and/or facilities which require recurrent or capital funding

- **Category 3(a)**

Recommendations already implemented

Recommendation: A review of Management and Support is required to manage more effectively the development of the residential estate and the student experience.

Action planned:

The provision of maintenance staff support has been undertaken through the maintenance contract.

- **Category 3(b)**

Recommendations to be implemented within one year

None

- **Category 3(c)**

Recommendations to be implemented within five years

Recommendation:

It was recognised that there is a need to strengthen the management team of the UCD Residences to address retirement and contract completions, and also to ensure effective growth over the immediate and coming years. A business model which proposes a new structure that not only provides for growth and efficiencies, but reduces the overall staffing costs per bed as the residences grow, associated with a staffing plan, should be developed and submitted for review by the UCD Bursar's Office.

Action planned:

A review has commenced that will form the basis of a new business model that will address the changing dynamics of the service we provide and it's delivery, the expansion of Residential Services, and the resources (both tangible and intangible) required to implement it effectively. Due to the restrictions on recruitment interim measures have been put in place to support the management team.

These current midterm plans involving the use of contractors to both undertake and manage the maintenance process is providing UCD with valuable experience in respect to the benefits or other wise of contractors v in house management.

Recommendation:

Review the current method of providing student residence support (RAs) and put forward a business case that will provide a full-time professional (live-in) member of staff to manage the RAs and develop a more efficient, effective and inclusive programme of service delivery to students. This will allow a critical enhancement of the Residence Life support provided and so enhance the student residential experience. It is probable that this could be achieved at no increase in cost, when the considerable value of free accommodation provided to RAs is taken into account (advice is offered from UK models and in particular that operated by the University of Edinburgh). This will in turn provide more justification for the perceived higher rents.

Action Planned:

A review of models used for managing out of hours support will be carried out which will include both National and International Universities of equivalent scale. Within this review the advantages of reducing the number of RA's to facilitate live in management will be fully assessed.

- **Category 3(d)**

Recommendations which will not be implemented

None

CATERING SERVICES

2. Recommendations for Improvements – Follow-Up Action Taken and/or Planned

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

- **Category 1(a)**

Recommendations already implemented

Recommendation:

Re-launch the *Campus Fresh Ideas* and use local leaflets/UCD intranet as well as interactive marketing of product – take around product, invite users to sample product, etc.

Action taken:

The re-launch of Campus Fresh Ideas commenced with the appointment of a new manager of a catering services. In this regard, based on feedback as received from users of the Fresh Ideas Brochure during the first six months of 2010, and in keeping with changing requirements of on-campus catering needs, it was decided to simplify this version of the Campus Fresh Ideas Brochure (herein after referred to as Edition 1) with the publication of an updated version of the Fresh Ideas Brochure in October 2010, titled Edition 2.

The second Edition of the Fresh Ideas Brochure featured the most popular items as indicated from Sales Patterns during the previous 12-month period, and was prepared during September 2010 and printed in October 2010, and circulated campus-wide, initially to known existing and previous users of the Catering Services, and thereafter to a wider on-campus population. In addition, an electronic version of the Fresh Ideas Brochure Edition 2 was also prepared, in full colour, and emailed out to a newly-devised list of historic customers, and potentially new customers identified from telephone booking enquiries.

Recommendation:

Utilise the capability of the existing catering team in O'Reilly Hall and other venues, where appropriate i.e. UCD Restaurant should become the third catering provider for O'Reilly Hall.

Action taken:

It has always been understood as a given fact between UCD Catering Services Department and O'Reilly Hall Conference and Events Office, that UCD Catering Services are an essential component of the Panel of Caterers that exists in O'Reilly Hall, for consideration for events staged at the Venue.

UCD Catering Services also regularly provides Catering Service to O'Reilly Hall for a host of smaller events, ranging from Tea/Coffee/Biscuit & Refreshment Services, through to Wine & Canape Receptions.

Whilst it is not always possible to cater for all events in O'Reilly Hall, due to limitations in terms of available staffing numbers during Term Times, and also during Summer Language School Programmes, UCD Catering Services endeavours to cater for as many events in O'Reilly Hall as is practically possible, and throughout 2011 will continue in this vein as part of its strategy to keep as much business "in-house" as is possible, feasible and realistic.

Recommendation:

Continued improvement in communication within the unit. For example, the Review Group were surprised that Catering Services were not involved in discussions about whether they could deliver the catering in Roebuck 2. It is understood that this has been contracted out but the responsibility for the risk on ensuring adequate business levels lies with the University.

With Roebuck 2 there is concern that an apparent reliance within the model upon lunchtime trade is overly optimistic given the remote location of the facility from the rest of the main campus buildings. Given that the resource appears to be currently available in-house to provide the core service, a review of the plans for this building, even at this late stage, would be advised.

Action taken:

As stated previously the Commercial office will continue to improve communication across all departments and the appointment of a catering manager has opened up new opportunities for communications.

On the specific point of the use of an in house contractor to deliver the Catering Service in Roebuck 2, the timing of the project (conceptualised in 2009) was such that the business plan indicated major operational difficulties associated with the in house service being in a position to operate the catering services, not least (a) the Industrial relations issues that exists in this Department; (b) the absence of a catering manager to drive the project forward; and (c) the high cost of labour compared with contractor's costs, at that time.

The catered accommodation model works well and at this stage it is not felt necessary to revise the model.

Recommendation:

Better liaison with academic units would serve to highlight how student timetabling changes might affect the delivery of catering services and also generate other catering opportunities, e.g. retirement parties, local gatherings, lunch-time seminars/meetings.

Action taken:

At the end of Summer 2010, a data base of email addresses was collated by the Catering Services Department, the objective of which was to ensure more effective Target Marketing of the range of products and services available via the UCD Catering Services Portfolio, This data base covered (a) existing customers of the catering department; (b) potentially new customers; and (c) more specific details in relation to communication with individual schools for the purpose of seeking to cater for "Conference and Workshop" Catering Requirements.

A direct measure of success of this initiative was the communication of the Autumn Brochure for Catered Delivery Services Campus-Wide; the Thanksgiving Day Brochure; and Christmas 2010 Festive Catering Brochure;

all of which has a significant impact on (a) the exposure of the Department; and (b) was instrumental in increasing Sales overall during this two-to-three month period, in comparison with previous year's performance.

In addition, due to liaison with other Academic Units, UCD Catering Services inaugurated a new Breakfast Service in the Carvery Room in September 2010, in response to demand for early morning meetings, and the closure of the Norah Greene Conference Room Facility.

Plans are afoot for 2011 to continue with these types of Marketing Initiatives, with the development of a wider student-based email data base for communication of student-specific offers throughout this coming year.

Category 1(b)

Recommendations to be implemented within one year

Recommendation:

Market research should be introduced to consider what weekend services are required now and into the future with the expansion of on campus accommodation.

Action:

During the next year the matter of weekend catering services will be reviewed.

As with all such initiatives, awareness of the need to operate such weekend services in a cost-effective manner is foremost on the minds of the Catering Management Team, and initiatives such as "Weekend Supplement" Charges are being considered as part of the review process.

- **Category 1(c)**

Recommendations to be implemented within five years

None

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

- **Category 2(a)**

Recommendations already implemented

None

- **Category 2(b)**

Recommendations to be implemented within one year

Recommendation:

The University is introducing chip-enabled university card. It is understood that a number of uses of such a card have been identified but, as yet, no unit has been identified to lead such a project. The possibility of using the card for cashless catering provides a real opportunity for Catering and should be explored urgently with a view to establishing a project to take forward in the short term.

Action:

Driven by MSU, it is envisaged that the Catering Services Department will be a trial location for the implementation of such a scheme, with a proposed implementation date of May 2011. Work-in-progress on development of such a system has been in place since November 2010.

- **Category 2(c)**

Recommendations to be implemented within five years

Recommendation:

Labour costs are high in relation to sales. These need to be brought into line with industry norms and there is an opportunity to reduce casual staff costs through carefully monitoring.

Action:

The core problem is not over manning but high unit labour cost due to long standing employment contractual arrangements and a lack of flexibility. The reviewers should be aware that in a university environment the matter is complex and influenced by local and National policy.

Nevertheless, the department will undertake what limited measures it can to control and reduce labour costs.

Due to the expansion of Catering Services by the opening up on a new service facility in the Rendezvous Room (lower ground floor area), it is hoped that the expected increase in throughput through the Restaurant Building will serve to increase sales and allow better utilisation of the "permanent" workforce, which is the area where the least amount of flexibility is, thereby creating a situation where the ratio of labour cost to sales will reduce over the coming year, with gradual reductions on a year-by-year basis thereafter.

- **Category 2(d)**

Recommendations which will not be implemented

None

CATEGORY 3: Recommendations concerning inadequate staffing, and/or facilities which require recurrent or capital funding

- **Category 3(a)**

Recommendations already implemented

Recommendation:

The view of the Review Group is that the planned new food court is in principle a good idea. However, a great deal of work and attention to the layout is critical as well as validation of expected benefit from the investment. There should be independent oversight of the final plans and critically the evidence that supports the expected growth before final approval given. It is vital that the development of the food court goes together with the upgrading of the seating area to provide a more modern arrangement. Extensive staff and student customer surveys and focus groups will be important to validate Management plans.

Continued: "However, in comparison with current trends elsewhere, it now offers a style of catering that is less flexible than required and lacking in appeal to many existing and potential customers"

Action:

Work has been undertaken in respect to identifying the market and ensuring that the offer matches demand and this customer feedback will continue.

Category 3(b)

Recommendations to be implemented within one year

- **Category 3(c)**

Recommendations to be implemented within five years

None

- **Category 3(d)**

Recommendations which will not be implemented

None

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:

Action:

All projects as set out in the QIP are resourced and ready to roll out without the need to seek additional staffing. As stated previously the Commercial Office will monitor any temporary arrangements put in place as a result of the recruitment restrictions to ensure that these arrangements do not affect the service delivery.

The Commercial Office is aware of new opportunities and of those areas that with additional permanent management could better serve its customers though it is projected that in the current economic climate, it is highly unlikely that staff will be engaged a situation that is expected will last for the foreseeable future.