



IRIU

REPORT

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW OF THE
**UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
DUBLIN**

~ JUNE 2011 ~



THE IRIU OF UCD

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FOREWORD BY THE IUQB

THE IRISH UNIVERSITIES QUALITY BOARD (IUQB) WAS ESTABLISHED IN 2002 TO SUPPORT AND PROMOTE A CULTURE OF QUALITY IN IRISH HIGHER EDUCATION AND INDEPENDENTLY EVALUATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF QUALITY PROCESSES IN IRISH UNIVERSITIES, AS REQUIRED BY THE UNIVERSITIES ACT, 1997.

IN 2004, THE IUQB AND THE HIGHER EDUCATION AUTHORITY (HEA) JOINTLY COMMISSIONED THE EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES ASSOCIATION (EUA) TO UNDERTAKE A CUSTOMISED VERSION OF ITS INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATION PROGRAMME (IEP) AS THE FIRST CYCLE OF INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY REVIEWS OF THE SEVEN IRISH UNIVERSITIES.

IN 2009, FOLLOWING CONSULTATION WITH A RANGE OF KEY STAKEHOLDERS, THE IUQB FINALISED THE PROCESS FOR THE SECOND CYCLE OF INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY REVIEWS. THIS PROCESS, WHICH OPERATES IN LINE WITH NATIONAL LEGISLATION AND AGREED EUROPEAN STANDARDS, IS TERMED THE INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW OF IRISH UNIVERSITIES (IRIU).

REPORTS ARISING FROM INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEWS OF AND BY IRISH UNIVERSITIES, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE UNIVERSITIES ACT, 1997, ARE PUBLISHED AT: [HTTP://REVIEWS.IUQB.NET/](http://reviews.iuqb.net/).



THE REVIEW TEAM

The UCD Review was conducted by the following team of six reviewers selected by the IUQB Board from the IRIU Register of Reviewers in March 2010. The Review Team was trained by the IUQB on the requirements of the IRIU process on Monday 7 February 2011. The Chair and Co-ordinating Reviewer undertook a Planning Visit to UCD on Tuesday 8 February 2011. The Main Review Visit was conducted by the full team between Monday 28 February and Thursday 3 March 2011. The IUQB Board approved the release of the UCD report for publication on Monday 20 June 2011.

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- » Senior Honorary Professorial Fellow of Edinburgh University
- » Member of the UK Prime Minister's Council for Science and Technology
- » Former Member of the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SFC)
- » Former Chair of the Research Committee - League of European Research Universities
- » Engaged with strategic/quality developments in Universities in Lund, Heidelberg, Geneva and Scotland

Prof Kerstin Sahlin, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Professor of Management, Uppsala University, Sweden

- » Responsible for education, internationalisation and the Library within Uppsala University
- » Professor in Business Administration, specialism – public management, transnational governance
- » Coimbra Group Executive Board member
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- » Editorial Board Member of numerous administrative/management and governance journals

Prof Iognáid G. Ó Muirheartaigh, President Emeritus, NUI Galway, Ireland

- » President, NUI Galway, 2000-2008
- » Registrar and Deputy President, NUI Galway, 1998-2000
- » Fellow of the Royal Statistical Society and Member of the International Statistical Institute
- » Board Member for Aer Arann, Connect World (Irish Government Foreign Aid Board), and Comhar (Irish language periodical)

Mr Ben Gray, Student Liaison Officer, University of Wales, UK

- » Currently responsible for the quality of the student experience at the University of Wales
- » Former President of NUS Wales (2007-2009) and ESU member
- » Former International Politics with Strategic Studies graduate, Aberystwyth University, QAA Institutional Review Student Observer (Cardiff University - 2008)
- » Extensive experience of engagement with Welsh, UK and European quality assurance processes

Ms Anne Butler, Director, Bize Consulting Ltd, Ireland

- » Former President of the Institution of Engineers of Ireland
- » Founding Director and Board Member 1993-2003 Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- » NCEA HE Committee Member on Engineering Studies 1997-2000
- » Reviewed engineering courses at 2 IoTs, Sligo IoT review, HETAC panel member (2008-2009)
- » Former IUQB Board Member 2006-2008 and DIT Governing Body member

Dr Andrée Sursock, Senior Advisor, European Universities Association (EUA), Belgium

- » Co-Author, EUA Trends Report, 2010, published April 2010
- » Manager of the EUA's Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP)
- » Led in numerous European Quality initiatives, including the European Quality Assurance framework, ESG, EQAR, and the European Quality Assurance Forum
- » Member of numerous European Quality Boards – including OAQ in Switzerland, ENQA, INQAAHE, and AEQES in Belgium
- » Review Team Secretary in approx. 60 evaluations

The logo for IRIU (International Research Institute for University Studies) is a large, light-colored watermark in the background. It features the letters 'IRIU' in a serif font, with a stylized graphic element to the right consisting of a large, thin, curved shape and four small circles arranged around it.

IRIU

REVIEW REPORT

SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

THE UNIVERSITY

University College Dublin (UCD) traces its origin to the creation of the Catholic University of Ireland by Cardinal John Henry Newman in 1854. In 1908, UCD was incorporated into the federal National University of Ireland (that included two other colleges, in Cork and Galway). UCD was established as an independent institution in 1997.

UCD is the largest university in Ireland, with 27,320 students registered in 2009/10, of whom 17,330 were enrolled at undergraduate level, 3,351 at masters' level, 1,828 at doctoral levels and 1,716 in certificate and diploma programmes. International students represent 19.2% of total enrolment.

In 2009/10, the University employed 3,218 FTE staff of whom 1,061 were academic and 1,479 support and administrative staff, with an additional 678 staff on fixed-term research contracts.

UCD's international reach includes overseas programmes in partnership with institutions in China, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, Spain and Sri Lanka. The University is a member of the international network of research-intensive universities, Universitas 21, which provides opportunities for student mobility as well as benchmarking.

UCD's annual turnover is approximately €380m including nearly €100m in research income. Its main campus is at Belfield with smaller campuses at Blackrock and Lyons Estate Farm.

MISSION AND STRATEGY

THE 2005-2008 STRATEGIC PLAN

As part of its 2005-2008 Strategic Plan, UCD reconfigured its academic structures with the creation of five colleges and 34 schools. It introduced a modular structure for undergraduate programmes, created interdisciplinary research institutes and graduate schools, and developed structured PhDs.

These changes were driven by a clear educational vision that students should be equipped with rigorous disciplinary depth, coupled with knowledge of and sympathy for broader, cross-disciplinary dimensions, and an understanding of the wider world within which Ireland exists. The overall objective was to equip students with the specialist knowledge and intellectual flexibility that would help them face an uncertain future and to play their role as Irish and global citizens. The creation of broadly defined colleges and cross-disciplinary research centres was designed to stimulate the capacity to address major contemporary problems. The re-organisation has been followed by major gains in research, substantial increases in peer-reviewed publications, an increase in competitive funding and in the University's contribution to innovation. There has

been a major growth in international student mobility, with impressive levels of outgoing student placement, giving such students invaluable experience of the wider world.

THE STRATEGIC PLAN TO 2014

In April 2010, UCD launched a new strategic plan that builds upon the previous one. The key strategic objectives of this plan – titled *Forming Global Minds* – include:

- To consolidate developments in education and maximise the benefits of the modular curriculum with the goals of stimulating creativity, innovation, entrepreneurship and active citizenship among students.
- To further develop graduate and international programmes.
- To maintain the comprehensive character of UCD, utilising that attribute to reconfigure the research effort to address major emerging disciplinary and interdisciplinary research themes, in areas such as energy and the environment, health and healthcare delivery, information, computation and communications.
- To establish innovation alongside research and teaching as a third pillar of University activity.
- To change UCD's institutional profile while maintaining the size of the undergraduate population. By 2014, UCD plans to increase the number of graduate students from 26% to 33% of the student body, widen and increase the participation of non-traditional students from 17% to 25% and increase the percentage of international students in the student body from 17% to 25%.

SCOPE AND APPROACH OF THIS REPORT

The essence of the quality assurance approach is for the institution to define as clearly as possible its first order objectives of education, research and innovation/public engagement, and for the expert review group to assess the extent to which the measures taken to achieve these objectives are appropriate and operationally efficient. The first order institutional objectives for education, research and innovation/engagement are set out in the University's strategic plan, *Forming Global Minds*. The structures and processes through which the University addresses these objectives, and its approaches to the assurance and enhancement of quality in these structures and processes, are set out in its *Institutional Self-Assessment Report*. A template used by the Review Team to identify and assess those attributes that it regards as important in assuring the quality of the processes that support the University's strategic objectives is contained in the **Appendix 1**.

The Review's principal findings in relation to quality and quality enhancement are set out formally in each section as "commendations" and "recommendations". Further, less formal, comments are made in the body of the text about issues that the University might wish to consider.

THE EXTERNAL CONTEXT

UCD is an autonomous, public university that operates within the legislative and regulatory framework established by the 1997 Universities Act. The Act outlines the functions and objectives of the University

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and its governance, and sets requirements for the following aspects: strategic planning, quality assurance, financial management (and reporting) and key aspects of human resources policy. The Act provides for academic freedom and operational autonomy subject to controls administered at national level by the Higher Education Authority and Government Departments.

Irish universities receive a high proportion of their income from Government. For UCD, this represents about 65% of its core academic income. The high dependence on public funding, combined with the constraints outlined above, limit the University's ability to manage its budget. These constraints represent a particular challenge in a time of financial crisis.

In relation to all activities other than research, the Exchequer establishes a fixed envelope (which has been declining year on year) to support such activities and that amount is then disbursed using the Recurrent Grant Allocation Model (RGAM). Research funding has supported effectively the development of research activities in Irish universities but future research funding levels are uncertain.

At the time of the review, the economic situation in Ireland was critical and is expected to continue to be challenging in the future. Employment control measures introduced by the Government included limiting promotions and recruitment. Universities had been asked not to renew staff on short-term contracts and to implement salary cuts for all remaining staff. As a result, there is a reduction of 8% in staffing at UCD while student enrolment has increased by 10%. A revised Employment Control Framework is being drafted currently and Irish universities are required to submit to the Higher Education Authority (HEA) all recruitment proposals in advance, regardless of the source of funding (core grant, research grant or non-Exchequer funding).

UCD is concerned that the fiscal crisis and increased taxation will affect its capacity to retain and recruit international academics. Several well-qualified international candidates have recently turned down offers of employment by the University.

A national higher education strategy was published in January 2011. Known as the "Hunt Report", it raises questions regarding the overall shape of the higher education system, its governance and funding, including the re-introduction of student fees (registration fees are going up, from €1500 to €2000) and makes suggestions as to how these issues might be addressed. Given the recent elections (two days before the site visit), the political fate of this plan was as uncertain as was the general political situation.

Public perception of higher education seems somewhat negative despite the good performance of the sector and the positive international reviews that have been conducted to date.

GOVERNANCE

THE GOVERNING AUTHORITY

The primary responsibilities of the Governing Authority (GA) are: to control and manage all the affairs of the University, including the determination of its strategy and policies, to oversee the implementation of such

policies, to oversee internal quality arrangements, to appoint the President and to monitor the performance of senior management. The GA meets approximately 5 or 6 times per year.

The GA is composed of external and internal members to the University. The maximum size and composition of the GA are determined by statute. In the 2005, the Institutional Evaluation Programme of the European University Association (EUA-IEP) conducted a review of UCD that recommended a reduction in size of the GA and in the number of its committees. The GA decided to reduce the number of committees from 13 to two (finance, remuneration and asset management; audit and risk management) but kept its size to 40 – the maximum allowed.

The Review Team read samples of agendas and minutes of the GA and met with a number of internal and external members. Some stressed that the large size of this body ensures balanced representation and does not affect its effectiveness. Others noted that size does matter and that the GA is a body that tends largely to endorse decisions made elsewhere.

The Review Team notes that governing authorities can be viewed in one of two ways:

- As a body that ensures collegiality and support through broad internal and external membership.
- As a body that contributes to the strategic development of the University by supporting the top management team through deep analysis of options for the University. This is particularly vital in times of crisis and requires a smaller body, with external members of high calibre with experience in leading major organisations.

The Review Team was of the view that the size and composition of the GA lent itself to the former role, in maintaining collegiality at times of change. Evidence provided from two of its academic members was that the major changes of recent years would have been much more difficult to achieve without the GA having played this role.

In the current circumstances, where difficult decisions may need to be made, both the above views are relevant. Indeed, it is the view of the Review Team that the two approaches are not mutually exclusive. However, the Team believes that the current imperative is for UCD to retain and consolidate the gains that it has made in recent years, and that a smaller body with representation of highly experienced figures from Irish society who are very familiar with difficult issues of institutional strategy, would better fit the need at the present time. However, in the interest of balance, this smaller body should also continue to have adequate internal representation, to ensure that the ethos of collegiality is preserved in these challenging times. The Team, therefore, suggests that a smaller body, with an appropriate balance of internal representatives and external leaders of Irish society, would be better placed to help the University at this time. Thus, the Team supports the broad thrust of the Hunt Report in this regard.

The Review Team was impressed with the student sabbatical officers that it met. They provided important information on the general student experience and were a crucial resource for students in crisis or at risk.

University officers charged with issues of student support confirmed that the student officers were an excellent “weather vane” for student issues and concerns. The Review Team noted, however, that sabbatical officers were constrained in shaping the GA agenda and had to rely on informal contacts with GA members in order to ensure that their concerns were discussed.

In addition, sabbatical officers underwent an hour’s training provided by the Union of Students in Ireland, which, unavoidably, could be only general and is too short. The Team advises that UCD senior managers should be meeting with new sabbatical officers as soon as they are elected, rather than wait for September, and that the University should provide sabbatical officers with an extended training, prior to their term of office, to prepare them for their duties. They are an important resource for the University.

ACADEMIC COUNCIL

Academic Council (AC) derives its authority and responsibility for academic governance under Section 27 of the Universities Act 1997. The AC is the principal policy-making and advisory body on all academic matters (research and education): it approves and reviews academic regulations and policies and monitors academic standards. AC meets twice per semester, with special meetings organised as required.

The articulation between AC and the GA is ensured in two ways: AC sends reports to the GA following each meeting and the Registrar presents an update on GA decisions and discussions at all AC meetings.

At present, the AC comprises 350 members in order to achieve broad representation: it includes members from all levels of academic staff and a number of students. The 2005 EUA-IEP review recommended a reduction in the size of AC (then 255). Given the scale of changes UCD was implementing, it decided to increase the size of AC in order to ensure an effective change process but the Review Team was told that average attendance at “routine” meetings was currently around 65.

The 2005 EUA-IEP review noted that, because of its size, AC “no longer functions as a governance body... Therefore, in order to cope with this situation, the number of committees has grown over the years, resulting in too many committees” (EUA-IEP 2005: Section 7). A 2008 internal review of governance led to the constitution of new committees. It is unclear if the number of committees was reduced, because the EUA-IEP review report does not specify the number of committees that existed in 2005. Currently, there are 11 AC committees with a governance function and two boards with a strategic focus – education and research, respectively.

Such a large body, with so many committees, cannot function effectively as a governance body. The Review Team endorses the EUA-IEP recommendation “to ensure an effective and functional Academic Council in order to provide an effective and timely governance counterbalance to the executive management team.” The size of AC should be reduced considerably and the remit of some committees could be combined to provide a more consolidated view of education and research.

THE SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

The Senior Management Team (SMT) is very large. It includes the President, seven Vice-Presidents, the five College Principals, the Director of Strategic Planning and the Heads of the three largest schools. The Vice-Presidents include the Registrar (who is also Deputy President and Vice-President for Academic Affairs), the Bursar and the Vice-Presidents for Students, University Relations, Staff, Research, and Development.

The SMT meets once every two weeks and has four sub-committees: SMT Executive, SMT Academic, SMT Finance and Operations and SMT Academic Plenary. SMT Academic Plenary gathers all academic leaders.

An internal quality review of UCD Senior Management is scheduled for autumn 2011 to assess the effectiveness of the current arrangements. It would be advisable that, as part of the SMT effectiveness review, the overall structure of governance and the efficiency of relationships between key governance bodies are considered, taking into account the recommendations in this report that relate to the GA and AC and the oversight of quality assurance and quality improvement processes (cf. Section 4).

THE ACADEMIC STRUCTURES

As noted above, UCD created five colleges and 34 schools to replace 11 faculties and 90 departments. This restructuring was designed to support the development of interdisciplinary research and education, to enhance the capacity to make strategic choices and to increase flexibility and dynamism (for example, the opportunities to make strategic choices in staff replacements are more frequent in larger units).

Each college is led by a College Principal who is responsible for the college budget, its strategy and development and its operation. The college senior management includes: the Principal, the Deputy Principal, the Director of the Graduate School, two Vice-Principals (for Teaching & Learning and for Research & Innovation), the Finance Manager and the Human Resources Partner. Each college comprises a number of schools, which are led by a Head of School. The senior college management team and the heads of schools form the College Executive – the key decision-making body within each college.

Because undergraduate programmes can draw modules from different colleges and schools, thirteen Programme Deans have been appointed for each undergraduate programme (e.g., Dean of Arts, Dean of Science, Dean of Social Science, Dean of Veterinary Medicine). In practice, some of the undergraduate programmes correspond to a specific school, so that the Head of School can also be the Programme Dean (Nursing); a programme can also be entirely contained within a college, with the College Principal also being the Programme Dean (Business).

The Programme Deans, as chairs of Programme Boards, are responsible for the design, delivery, quality assurance, assessment and academic welfare of students on the programme. The Deans are supported by a Programme Office, a resource to address students' operational problems. The Programme Deans report to the President via the Registrar.

The complexity of the system of structures, roles, responsibilities and reporting lines is in part a response to the major structural re-organisation of the University in creating a modular system of studies designed

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to offer cross-disciplinary opportunities for students. In broad terms, the pattern of Colleges and Schools reflects disciplinary focus, onto which disciplinary research maps readily (with research centres being a focus for cross-disciplinary research). The programme structure and the pattern of Deans that direct it are designed to ensure that, in general, College and School boundaries do not inhibit the trajectory of choice for undergraduates. It is not the job of the Review Team to re-design this structure, but to assess whether it operates in a way that serves the objectives set for it by the University. Major relevant issues are the extent to which potential study pathways are clear to students; the extent to which advice about study pathways is available; and indeed, the extent to which academic staff have a clear view of the structure. Much time was spent by the Review Team in understanding the structure: the information provided in advance of the main visit lacked the necessary clarity required by the Team. Some of those interviewed by the Team admitted that relationships are somewhat unclear; others were unable to answer some questions about the structures. To complicate matters, the vocabulary used to describe some posts and functions is not uniform across the Colleges. In some areas, the complex structure works well, in others not so well (cf. Section 3).

UCD has recently adopted a new plan to expand the number of colleges from five to seven and the schools from 34 to 38. The Review Team takes note of this decision and its justification: specifically, to address the misalignment of the academic structures with some of the programmes and the resulting unnecessary complexity and to ensure that all College Principals take responsibility for teaching in addition to research and innovation.

Whilst this seems a reasonable way of simplifying reporting and responsibility for parts of the undergraduate teaching programme, the reason given to the Team by several who gave evidence for this reversion to a more complex College landscape was the perceived need to re-focus on the identity of the affected schools or colleges. This is in contrast to what the Review Team understood as an important part of the rationale for the original college/school restructuring, that it created opportunity because of the enhanced flexibility and disciplinary spread of larger entities. The Team was disappointed that this latter issue was not raised by those who felt that it was necessary to realign the structures. Whilst professional accreditation bodies tend to stress the issue of historical identity, thereby tending to promote and protect traditional disciplinary boundaries, many recent advances in understanding have greatly benefited from larger, more diverse academic groupings. For example, in engineering, the manifold opportunities offered to modern engineering through association with informatics, biological materials, the environment, etc., have persuaded many universities to bring science and engineering under the same banner.

Notwithstanding these reservations, the success of UCD in creating cross-discipline collaboration is notable, and the Review Team endorses its strategic objective to continue to stress the interdisciplinary approach and recommends that specific investment and support are provided to continue to promote interdisciplinary research and education.

INTERNAL QUALITY ARRANGEMENTS

UCD has developed extensive internal quality arrangements that are geared to enhancing its operations and to respond to external requirements as set by: Article 35 of the 1997 Universities Act, Part 1 of the European

Standards and Guidelines (ESG), and various professional accreditation bodies. UCD's activities in ensuring quality include: unit, service and thematic reviews; external institutional audits (some of which are on a voluntary basis); and professional programme accreditations. External examiners validate the standards of the degrees awarded by UCD. The enhancement functions are supported by professionally-run offices such as the UCD Teaching and Learning Office, the Institutional Research Office, and the QA Office. These activities will be examined more closely in Sections 3 and 4.

On the basis of evidence collected through discussions with staff and students and reading a number of review reports and analyses, the Review Team concludes that there is a strong ethos of quality at UCD and a widely-shared commitment to ensure that activities are aligned with UCD's strategic objectives and international standards. This commitment is not only exemplified by the formal processes designed to ensure and enhance quality, but most important of all in the Team's view, it is embedded within the day-to-day working of the University.

The Review Team notes the high level of quality and commitment of administrative and academic staff and the calibre of leadership at many levels of the University, which drive and support the enhancement of quality. Although the matrix structure is complex, the "all-hands-on-deck" approach has resulted in a strong sense of shared responsibility across the institution. The dynamism of the University was evidenced by the interest of many participants in the meetings to discuss how they intend to improve future activities. In addition, led by the ISAR, the Review Team had anticipated – as a result of rapid internal changes to date, coupled with the high degree of external uncertainty – to find evidence of low staff morale. This was not found to be the case. Rather, there was significant oral evidence that staff had a great deal of pride in, and loyalty to, the institution and its future aspirations.

COMMENDATIONS

The Review Team commends the University for:

- 1.1 Its visionary approach to education that aims to prepare students to play a role as Irish and global citizens.
- 1.2 Its increased prioritisation of teaching and learning.
- 1.3 The strengthening of its research activities and the achievements made.
- 1.4 Its strong quality ethos and its embedding of quality processes across the University.
- 1.5 The leadership that has promoted and implemented visionary changes that have affected all aspects of the University, whilst succeeding in maintaining collegiality.
- 1.6 Its dynamism and forward-looking approach to education and research and its stress on the future role UCD can and should play in shaping the future of Ireland.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Review Team recommends that the University:

- 1.7 Should seek to rationalise and simplify current academic structures in order to ensure clarity, internal accountability, and students' and stakeholders' ease of access. The University is aware of these needs and is taking steps to address them.

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- 1.8 Sharpen the University's top-level governance processes: the Governing Authority should be a smaller body with an appropriate mix of internal and external members. The external members, ideally leaders in Irish society, should be in a position to give strategic advice to the University to help steer it through difficult times. This recommendation is broadly in line with the Hunt Report's recommendation on the role, size and composition of governing authorities. It is recommended that UCD works within the IUA to more expeditiously promote such changes in its governance.
- 1.9 Reduce the size of Academic Council and consolidate its committees.
- 1.10 Involve the Students' Union with policy and practice at all levels and provide training for sabbatical officers following election.

SECTION 2

INSTITUTIONAL SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT (ISAR)

The Institutional Self-Assessment Committee included 24 members to ensure broad representation, including two sabbatical students and two research students. The Committee was chaired by the Registrar. The President chaired about three meetings at key points during the process. The Review Team notes the large size of the Committee. Although this ensured broad ownership of the final document, a smaller Committee might have been able to maintain a more helpful uniformity of style and a sharper focus.

The Committee invited academic and support units in key areas to contribute initial texts and organised activities to elicit feedback (from stakeholders, student and staff). In addition, the report draws upon data and information that UCD collects routinely, e.g. some colleges organised focus groups; others developed a student questionnaire.

The draft underwent several iterations. It went to AC twice and then to the GA. It was then posted on the Intranet for consultation. The Review Team notes that the self-assessment process extended over at least nine months. Although this ensured broad consultation, a shorter process would have avoided the report becoming a moving target in a fast-changing environment.

The resulting report was informative but its length and the weight of appendices overshadowed its self-critical dimension. Interestingly, the report was much easier to understand after the visit than before. In particular, it was well into the main visit that the structure of the modular programme became clear.

Following the planning visit, the Review Team Chair requested additional documentation, which was delivered before the main visit. Supplementary information was also tabled during the visit.

Although the Review Team met a number of members of the Self-Assessment Committee, given the pressures of the timetable it did not have the opportunity to meet the Committee as a whole and to gather systematic evidence on the self-assessment process. In particular, the Review Team had no opportunity to examine the extent to which the self-assessment process led to new awareness of strengths and weaknesses. The Team is, therefore, only able to offer a limited number of commendations and recommendations.

COMMENDATIONS

The Review Team commends the University for:

- 2.1 Its efforts to engage the community in the self-assessment process.
- 2.2 Its willingness to present as much information as possible in order to ensure a useful review and to the many candid passages in the report that identify areas requiring improvement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Review Team recommends the University:

- 2.3 To limit future self-assessment committees to about ten to fifteen members and to plan a self-assessment process over a period of six months.
- 2.4 To achieve a better balance between description and analysis, and reduce the number of additional documentation to key aspects.
- 2.5 To ensure that University processes and structures are described clearly and comprehensibly for the benefit of a review body that will have international members.

SECTION 3

QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

RESPONSE TO THE 2005 INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW REPORT

As noted earlier, the University participated in EUA's Institutional Evaluation Programme (EUA-IEP) in 2005 as part of the review of all seven Irish universities. The report commended many aspects of the University and identified 31 recommendations. UCD provided a document in Appendix to its ISAR that details the University's response and describes how each recommendation was addressed.

The majority of recommendations were actioned. As an example, the EUA-IEP report recommended that: *"When formulating the new strategic plan, consider carefully how to position UCD for its specific role in Ireland, e.g. taking into consideration the disciplinary balance of the university, the type of higher education to be provided, and shifting the balance from undergraduate to postgraduate, adult and international education."* This injunction is very clearly reflected in UCD's Strategic Plan 2005-2008, which sets out clear objectives for the development of education and research capacity. The reforms introduced at the undergraduate level – modularisation and semesterisation – and at the graduate level – creation of graduate schools and development of structured PhDs – have been conducted in parallel with the creation of thematic multi-disciplinary research institutes and the reconfiguration of academic structures. The most recent strategic plan builds upon these changes and takes into account the current national crisis and the positive role that UCD can play in national development. UCD plans to progress on internationalisation and sees its role as developing Ireland's international relationships, particularly with Asia. UCD also intends to increase its enrolment at the postgraduate level as well as to broaden and increase access at the undergraduate level, while keeping the number of undergraduates constant.

Other recommendations are in the process of being addressed. The EUA-IEP report recommended *"introducing a specially adapted quality review capacity to review university-wide issues, not units"*. As examples, UCD adopted procedures for thematic reviews in 2009 and is currently exploring the possibility of adapting the unit reviews to the reconfigured academic structures. A number of university-wide studies have been conducted such as on "Student Retention in a Modular World", and a review of student support services and research on first-year students' expectations.

A minority of recommendations have been partially implemented: the recommendation to *"Ensure an effective and functional Academic Council in order to provide an effective and timely academic governance counterbalance to the executive management team"* led to the reconfiguration of the AC committees but no size reduction given the scale of change being introduced across the University.

One recommendation – addressing the size and the composition of the GA – was not implemented. In this case, it was up to the GA to agree to these changes which it feared would alter the balance between the elected and nominated members. The GA, however, reduced the number of its committees to two. The Team

understands that the freedom of the University to adjust the composition of the GA is limited by legislation such that the capacity for radical change will depend on Government action.

It is important to note that although the EUA-IEP report made a range of cogent recommendations and the University considered them seriously, the scale of changes introduced in the University since then has radically changed the environment and renders somewhat difficult a precise assessment of how some of the 2005 review recommendations were addressed. Nevertheless, the University has made good progress in relation to the first institutional review and has treated the process and its outcomes seriously.

PROCEDURES FOR ENSURING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CORE ACTIVITIES

UNIT AND SERVICE REVIEWS

UCD undertakes unit reviews on a 7-8 year cycle. The unit reviews were launched in 1995 (i.e. before the 1997 Universities Act) and focused on departments. Today, these reviews examine, holistically, various aspects of a school's operation: strategy and organisation, teaching and learning, research and resources and the relationships between these various elements.

Guidelines and a range of useful documents are available from the central Quality Office (QO), which has a co-ordinating role and supports the relevant units and Review Groups. QO staff engage in meetings organised by the Irish Universities Association and the IUQB, which represent opportunities to learn about Irish and international developments in higher education and quality assurance.

The self-assessment process is emphasised as an important phase of self-discovery and self-definition and the units are encouraged to work collegially on their self-assessment reports and to focus on key data. The Institutional Research Office provides data to the units under review and additional support as needed. The College Principals meet the review teams and engage in the report but the responsibility is lodged at school level.

The Review Groups include internal and external members. They are nominated by Heads of Schools and appointed by a sub-group of the Academic Council Committee on Quality (ACCQ) and the relevant College Principal. Guidelines have been developed to address issues related to conflicts of interest. The balance between external and internal Review Group members was recently changed to ensure that the number of internal members will not exceed that of external members.

The Review Team wishes to make several remarks in relation to this process:

- Many spontaneous comments were made during the site visit about the positive value of the mixed composition of Review Groups. Whilst there has been progress in shifting to a more balanced composition, it is the view of the Review Team that the credibility of the unit reviews would be strengthened if they relied primarily on external members; most significantly, the team chair should be external.
- The self-assessment reports available to the Review Team appeared very long in spite of the UCD guidelines that emphasise "analyses of key data and issues rather than volumes of descriptive data."

- The Team was given oral evidence that many review reports have a tendency to stress the centrality of the discipline under consideration and make recommendations that require more resources. It is important to include a senior manager on such teams, or an experienced external member from another discipline, possibly as chair, in order to give a more balanced view of the discipline and to avoid tribal advocacy, particularly in the current circumstances.
- UCD is considering piloting programme reviews to take into account academic restructuring and modularisation. The Review Team endorses such a development, which should be highly pertinent in the current environment.

The Review Panel confirms that the follow-up procedures undertaken by UCD are aligned with national and European (ESG Part 1) best practice. Thus, after a review report is completed:

- The unit prepares a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), signed off by the relevant College Principal.
- The review report and QIP are discussed in a meeting that gathers the chair of ACCQ, the chair of the Review Group, and the relevant College Principal. This group makes a recommendation to ACCQ.
- ACCQ examines both the summary review reports and the QIPs and has given a “yellow card” to two QIPs recently.
- The summary review reports (which include all commendations and recommendations) go to the GA, where they are discussed “in a robust manner”, to quote one of the GA members.
- The review reports, the summary reports and the QIPs are available on the webpage of the Quality Office.
- College Principals are asked to assess progress with the QIPs and are convened by the Registrar to discuss this in “QIP progress review meetings” the following year.

UCD has started reviewing its international provision. The Asia Pacific Management Institute Kaplan (Business Programme) in Hong Kong and Singapore was reviewed in 2007/08. UCD programmes delivered by the National Institute of Business Management, Sri Lanka, were reviewed in December 2010, while the Institute of Bankers (Ireland) (linked institution) was reviewed in February 2011.

In addition to the unit reviews, UCD conducts reviews of its services. In 2008/09, these included: buildings and services; the career development centre and the student services. The schedule of reviews to 2015 includes a review of the Senior Management Team, Human Resources, the Registrar’s Office, etc. The procedures for service/non-academic unit reviews are consistent with those of academic reviews and are made publicly available through the Quality Office webpage – as are the resulting reports and action plans.

Based on this evidence, the Review Team is confident that UCD discharges its quality assurance responsibilities fully, as required by the Universities Act and Part 1 of the European Standards and Guidelines.

ACADEMIC STRUCTURES

TEACHING

Although UCD defines itself as a research-intensive university, the Team saw no evidence that its growing research activity has decreased the emphasis on teaching. Indeed to the contrary, the Team heard much evidence that there has been increased concern and commitment in many, possibly most Schools, to improving the learning environment and teaching efforts. The UCD Horizons programme was introduced in September 2005 with the intention of offering students greater flexibility and choice as well as breadth and depth of study. UCD Horizons is a modular approach to learning and teaching that supports individual learning paths and the strategic development goals of UCD, particularly its intention to increase the diversity of its students through internationalisation and wider and increased access.

Modularisation was introduced along with semesterisation and the implementation of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). Students take 50 ECTS credits per year from within the 'home' programme and 10 credits from any subject area across the University. Students can also choose optional modules within and from outside their programme. Programme coherence is ensured by a set of core requirements. A closer examination of UCD Horizons is provided in Section 4. The following examines lines of responsibilities in teaching and assessment.

The schools are responsible for the design, delivery, assessment and quality of modules, under the oversight of the Heads of Schools, the College Vice-Principals for Teaching and Learning and the College Principals.

As was mentioned in Section 1, the reconfiguration of academic structures and the objective of developing interdisciplinary, modular education prompted the University to create 13 Programme Dean posts. In addition to their responsibilities for the daily operation of programmes and their supervision of programme offices, the Programme Deans are responsible for programme enhancement.

The Programme Deans consider programme plans before they are submitted to the programme boards, which they chair. These programme boards are composed of Heads of Schools, students, and university and staff representatives. Approved proposals are sent to the University Programme Board.

Initiatives for new programmes may come from a variety of sources: a School, a programme board, a Programme Dean, a College Vice-Principal, or external stakeholders. The Review Team was told that the evolution of the curriculum is a more hands-on and inclusive process than prior to restructuring, primarily because of the many groups that are potentially involved.

The College Vice-Principals for Teaching and Learning and the Directors of Graduate Schools meet regularly as a group with the relevant Deputy Registrars. The College Vice-Principals also meet regularly with their Heads of Schools. It was commented to the Review Team that these two sets of meetings were useful in ensuring a University-wide implementation of policies and two-way information flow between senior and middle management. Heads of Schools from across the colleges do not, however, meet frequently as a group.

The programme examination boards are a sub-set of the programme boards and include those Heads of Schools that have provided modules to the programme.

External examiners are used across the University and their roles are defined by the University's external examiner policy. The Team, however, found some examples of inconsistencies in practice. For example, in one school, they do not set the standard for the degree but approve the examination results by module and receive a sample of examination scripts to ensure coherence of marking. In effect, they audit the standard of marking of modules, whilst the school examines the spread of a student's marks to identify inconsistencies and investigate reasons. Another school make a different use of examiners. They look at assessments and how they link to learning outcomes and level descriptors as identified in the curriculum. There is a set of regulations for each programme that defines the grades.

These processes effectively exclude the traditional role of the external examiner in Ireland as a means of testing the extent to which degree standards are consistent with standards elsewhere. Further, if the module is the fundamental unit of study and the place where grade coherence is ensured, the question arises whether a classified degree rather than a transcript has meaning.

RESEARCH

Research plays a core role in UCD. As a research-intensive University, research underpins the education it offers to its students through awareness of the uncertainties, limits and possibilities of human understanding. It is crucial for its international reputation, which has a major influence on its capacity not only to attract the best from the international pool of talent as students and academics, but also as one of the key Irish attractors to knowledge-based international business. A survey of international students revealed that it is primarily this research reputation that attracts them to UCD.

The strong international and national market in research – measured through citations, success in research grant and contract awards, and in international rankings of universities, in which research plays the dominant role – ensures that the success of the University can be readily evaluated irrespective of any internal processes of assessment. The principal role of quality assurance is to determine whether internal processes are as effective as they could be in providing a sound basis for achievement. That achievement is normally maximised by appointing excellent staff and researchers and giving them strong support. UCD's ascent up the international ranking tables is to a large degree a reflection of its improved research performance.

Although there has been a remarkable mobilisation of staff effort in research over the last five years, the economic crisis has led to reductions in national research funding. At the same time, inflexible national regulations restrict promotions and there is an embargo on recruitment. Such regulations, though understandable as a first response to severe economic circumstances, take key management tools out of the University's hands that might help it weather the crisis with a less damaging impact on its research. Greater managerial flexibility that gave the University room for manoeuvre whilst keeping it within an externally auditable financial frame would be of considerable benefit. In its efforts to maintain momentum and morale, the University is looking to develop financial and non-financial awards and recognition mechanisms for high research performers.

The University strategy is to make research and innovation key concerns for all disciplines. It has invested particular efforts in research in the basic disciplines which provide the bedrock on which much directly applicable research is founded. The University does not prescribe the topics for research, but encourages academics to pursue topics that have major potential for new knowledge. It does, however, promote promising interdisciplinary research themes across four major themes - supporting infrastructure, research institutes, seed funding and orientation, and graduate student programmes.

New staff hiring prior to the current economic crisis permitted funded research posts to rise by 67% between 2005/09. The creation of the five colleges and several institutes and a more strategic recruitment process that considered national research priorities before determining recruitment profiles increased the capacity of UCD to take full advantage of national funding opportunities.

Much effort has been expended to structure doctoral education and ensure its quality. Five graduate schools were created, each led by a Director who reports to the College Principal and has a “dotted-line” relationship to the relevant Deputy Registrar. They meet frequently as a group. The Graduate Schools are responsible for all postgraduate provision (masters and PhDs) and examine student progression. A group was recently formed to evaluate masters’ provision on an ongoing basis.

UCD introduced structured PhD programmes five years ago, with teaching modules focused on the relevant discipline and research methodology, including transferable research skills and entrepreneurship (through the UCD-TCD Innovation Alliance). Doctoral supervision is the responsibility of a panel. The principal supervisor no longer sits in the Thesis Examination Committees.

The number of doctoral students has risen by 26% since 2005. Although most doctoral research appears to have good infrastructural support, there was some evidence that the growth of doctoral student numbers may have put pressure on the available working/desk space, something that the University will wish to examine.

UCD has improved its academic recruitment process and its retention through clear promotion criteria, with the involvement of external reviewers at every step of the ladder. A career framework for young researchers has been developed with progression mechanisms conditioned by a review process. A training programme is offered to assist post-doctoral researchers in exploring career options. The post-doctoral researchers are now considered as university staff, such that the University takes primary responsibility for them rather than Principal Investigators. Future initiatives that are being discussed include expanding a mentoring system for young researchers.

As the 2005 research strategy was developed, a central management information system was put in place. It provides the capacity to report back on progress with the strategy on an ongoing basis. The Vice-President for Research assists the Heads of Schools in the analysis of performance trends based on key performance indicators (KPIs). The identification of KPIs has created awareness and stimulated the effective responses from many researchers. The results have been aggregated at university level and analysed in order to measure progress in achieving national and institutional goals. The results and how to move forward are discussed with the schools and are passed on to national funding agencies, where appropriate.

An annual research support services survey elicits feedback from researchers (32% return rate) and an annual seminar discusses researcher needs that should be addressed. Concrete results of these activities include developing programmes and services for grant writing and organising a review process for grant proposals, etc.

A number of commendable initiatives have been taken to ensure the integrity of research:

- A code of good practice for researchers is included in the employment contract.
- As researchers submit grant proposals, they must seek prior research protocol approval through an ethics committee, chaired by a person external to UCD. The grant registration system requires a protocol approval number.
- A contract review for grant proposals prevents further problems.
- Supervisors and members of the research ethics committee receive training and a module on research protocol is included in the staff induction programme.

The University is preparing a research misconduct protocol to deal with a variety of issues that may arise, such as whistle-blowing, and wishes to collaborate with other Irish research organisations to ensure coherence of approach.

INNOVATION

The role of universities in national policies for innovation has been much debated internationally in recent years, and there are strong differences of opinion about the most effective ways in which universities can support innovation and economic growth. There are, however, a number of innovation-related processes about which there is broad consensus, and these are listed in **Appendix 1**.

The University's strategy document prioritises the following issues: creating a new breed of entrepreneurial PhD graduates through the UCD-TCD Innovation Academy; creating a new UCD-TCD enterprise venture as a one-stop-shop for commercialisation of research findings; and developing strategic partnerships with stakeholders to maximise the economic impact of the University's research.

The Innovation Academy represents a major initiative. International statistics indicate very clearly that the largest direct economic impacts of a university's own actions in the innovation domain result from the individual entrepreneurial activity of its students and staff. The Team is, therefore, impressed by the potential of UCD-TCD Innovation Academy, which if strongly supported, could create a powerful entrepreneurial hub.

The Team is also impressed by the potential of the links with industry that are focused on strategic alliances rather than just geographic considerations, by the proposals for five competence centres which would be industry-led, by efforts of the Technology Transfer Unit in UCD Nova which has links with 45 companies, including 15 campus companies, and IRCSET awards that provide for an industry-funded PhD programme. The developing regard for UCD by business is reflected in the fact that more than €200m of industry investment has been attracted into UCD.

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The University is developing a knowledge management strategy to address the needs of researchers and the wider public. It recognises its responsibility as a public institution in ensuring that data are available, verifiable and useable by researchers and the wider public. The central thrust of the plan is to develop a Knowledge Management Centre that would work with and within the Library to develop an open database system.

Many libraries world-wide are developing in quite novel ways in order to exploit electronic media and communications systems to the full. These systems permit archiving of research results and open access to it in novel ways; they permit electronically-available resources to be much more closely aligned with teaching programmes than hitherto; and they are a hub for the management and use of electronic resources for the benefit of research and teaching. It is to be hoped that the proposed Knowledge Management Centre will be well integrated with the Library provision, rather than being a separate entity.

The Library leadership is well aware of these opportunities and challenges. It also recognises that there is an untapped opportunity to develop closer relationships with academic libraries elsewhere in Ireland and has taken steps recently to that effect, a move that the Team would strongly encourage.

The Library is scheduled to be reviewed in 2014/15, at the same time as the Information Technology Services. This would provide an opportunity to consider a possible administrative realignment in order to develop a single information system that supports the library and the knowledge management functions.

PROMOTION PROCESS AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM (PMDS)

The academic promotion process was changed before the current economic crisis and the associated employment restrictions. UCD is to be commended for having introduced pathways of academic promotion that seem rigorous and based on international standards. The Review Team was told that the externals involved in the process have been very positive.

Prior to the recent embargo on promotions, the quotas limiting the number of full professors had been removed. The process became open and competitive and the criteria are based on quantified benchmarks in research, teaching and innovation. Applications for promotion are reviewed at college level and sent to a university committee chaired by the President. There is an appeals process.

It is possible to be promoted based on teaching performance although in such cases, research activity is also taken into account. Despite this, however, we were told that only two promotions have been made on the basis of teaching merit, leaving the perception that research is more to be rewarded than teaching.

The Review Team inquired about the promotion of women and was told that there is no evidence of gender discrimination in the promotion process, but that relatively few women present promotion applications. An academic mentoring programme is being piloted at the moment which might help to address this issue. Gender imbalance is an issue, both nationally and internationally, and is currently being discussed in various sectors across Ireland. The Review Team recognises that the loss of well-trained and talented women in

universities during their 30s is an international problem. Elsewhere, it represents a significant loss to national economies that has been quantified by labour economists, and there is no reason to suppose that the same is not true in Ireland. It is important that statistics are collected so that the magnitude of this process is recognised, and discussions developed about steps that could be taken to address the issue. There are no shortages of reports or examples of good practice about what such steps might be. It would be opportune for UCD to monitor this issue and work within the Irish Universities Association to discuss the position of women in Irish universities and determine what actions might be taken by the sector to improve career progress for women.

A Performance Management Development System (PMDS) was introduced and fully rolled out in UCD in accordance with national requirements. Mandatory PMDS training was delivered to all staff. The first review cycle was completed and an analysis of its effectiveness provided. The report – based on a small sample of 105 staff – notes that “78% of staff believed that they benefited from their PMDS discussion”, but that only 20% of them “believed PMDS helped them clarify their role” and only 28% reported that it provided them “with clarity on their school/unit strategy.” These data are comparable to UK data and suggest a tension between academic and managerial cultures. The internal report gives a range of recommendations to address current weaknesses.

SUPPORT SERVICES

There is a range of academic and pastoral services on offer. Programme offices deal with such issues as recruitment, retention, registration, exams, student support. These offices are, in principle, the students’ first port of call and the place where they first go for non-academic and pastoral support. Students at risk and those who need to repeat modules are contacted over the summer.

Each student is assigned an academic advisor (and a peer advisor in some colleges). UCD plans to scale up peer advising to all colleges. The Review Team met several academic advisors who were clear about their role: to prevent both academic and social problems and particularly to contribute to the integration of first-year and international students. Advisors noted, however, the following concerns: they meet only 20 to 30% of first-year students because they rely on students coming to them; the bigger the programme, the less the students are likely to come.

The recent study conducted by UCD on “Student Retention in a Modular World” (p. 87) shows some stark contrasts between the ratio of support staff to first-year students (for year 2007/08) and the average percentage of students continuing to the second year (for the period 1999/2007). In the Colleges of Arts/Human and Social Sciences, the ratio is 1:153 and retention 78.76% and 87.11%, respectively. In Business and Law, the ratio is 1:41 and the average percentage of students retained 94.2 and 95.41%, respectively.

In addition to the discrepancy in academic support, students reported that processes, procedures and regulations vary across the University even although there are University policies in place. This can be an important source of confusion in a University whose objectives and teaching programmes are designed to encourage and offer the potential for a wide cross-discipline experience. A consequence is that students may find that regulations and procedures in one part of their studies are very different from those in another part,

with the consequent potential for confusion and error. Most schools are responsive to student difficulties. We were given evidence both from student representatives and senior academics that some schools and some staff seem resistant to a more student-friendly approach. We were advised by student representatives that students are often reluctant to approach staff in such cases, and that there is currently no other route by which these problems can be resolved.

A few years ago, UCD created a Maths Centre, staffed by advanced graduate students who serve as tutors. Initial funding came from the Higher Education Authority but it is now fully funded by the University. The centre welcomed 3,500 students last year.

The counselling service works closely with the Students' Union, the residence staff, the academic advisors, the peer mentors, the coaches, etc. to make sure that students in difficulty find their way to the counselling centre. Counselling needs to increase as the academic year progresses. The average waiting period last year was two weeks. This year, however, the centre is operating with one fewer staff. It has noted a spike in the number of postgraduate students seeking support in addition to its regular caseload.

The Library participates in the internal unit reviews and meets regularly with students to understand and meet their needs. In addition, it keeps abreast of university developments by maintaining links in each school and having representatives on programme boards. Library opening hours have been extended recently to Sundays although the library has lost 14% of its staff since December 2008.

In summary, there are many excellent examples of very good student support services. The Review Team, however, notes the following:

- The significant staffing discrepancies across programme offices appear to be related to the priorities that are set by each college on how to spend the budget it receives from the University rather than analysis of varying need. In the absence of such variation in need, the Team sees no reason why a student should be offered a much lower level of support simply because of their choice of programme. The Team suggests that there should be University norms for programme support.
- The peer mentoring programme does not operate in the largest college, the College of Arts. However, the Team welcomes the intention of UCD to roll out the programme across all colleges.
- Orientation includes an introduction to the range of support services. Efforts have been made over the years to review, extend and fine-tune orientation events; they seem to attract a larger number of students than in the past. The Student Union is positive about these developments. It notes, however, that there is far too great a volume of information for the individual to retain. Thus, there seems to be a need to provide, proactively, information at crucial points during the academic year.
- UCD has reviewed its student support services. The review focuses on academic advising and specific academic skills (maths and computer skills), but does not include the international office or the counselling service. The report notes the need to strengthen the integration of support across all units and improve signposting to students. The Team understands that the University intends to address this issue.

- Students reported that not all buildings are accessible to students with impaired mobility; there is no policy in place and no training provided for academics who teach students with disabilities; the Disability Support Office is under-staffed. It would be appropriate to continue to review the effectiveness of the UCD policy on supporting students with disabilities. Students also wished to have a policy for paternity leave for student parents.
- Library cutbacks seem to have affected book acquisition; inter-library loans are now charged to graduate students (€30 per book).
- There appears to be a need to develop career support services for doctoral students that would be offered at the end of the PhD in addition to (or instead of) the current offer at the beginning of doctoral studies.

COMMENDATIONS

The Review Team commends the University for:

- 3.1 Its initiatives taken to ensure both the development and the integrity of research.
- 3.2 The introduction of an open, rigorous and competitive promotion process, the moves to reward teaching through professorial promotion and the attention being paid to young researchers' careers.
- 3.3 The decision to shift the focus of unit reviews to the programmes.
- 3.4 The decision to develop a knowledge management strategy.
- 3.5 The decision to extend the peer mentoring system across the University.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Review Panel recommends that the University:

- 3.6 Addresses the discrepancies in student support across the colleges and the study cycles. Norms for student support must be set by the University rather than left to the discretion of the colleges.
- 3.7 Addresses the different applications of rules and regulations across the schools.
- 3.8 Reviews the volume and timing of information to students to ensure that they fully exploit the services available.
- 3.9 Ensures the integration of the various student services.
- 3.10 Reviews the effectiveness of the UCD policy on supporting students with disabilities, particularly the physically-impaired students.
- 3.11 Considers the composition of Review Groups and increases further the number of external members in relation to the internal ones. Ensures that the Chair is external to the University.
- 3.12 Develops the impressive potential of the UCD-TCD Innovation Alliance with urgency and energy.

SECTION 4

QUALITY ENHANCEMENT

UCD HORIZONS

As mentioned earlier, UCD Horizons, or the modularisation of the curriculum, was introduced in September 2005 and had a major impact on teaching and pathways of student choice.

IMPACT ON TEACHING

The impact of this initiative was significant on academic staff, particularly because of the speed with which it was introduced and its timing (at the same time as UCD reconfigured its academic structures and expanded its research activities). Five years on, academic staff report that UCD Horizons triggered a process of self- and collective reflection about teaching practices and on the quality of teaching and learning. The Review Team was told that discussions about teaching now not only take place in formal fora but are also common topics of debate in informal settings.

Comments made at the various meetings held by the Team show great enthusiasm for the new learning environment: “modularisation has been hugely positive;” it has “helped strengthen programmes and broaden students’ horizons;” it has “increased the potential for curricular change because modules can be changed one at a time.” Modularisation has also been an opportunity to embed quality assurance: “QA is not bolted on; it is built in to modularisation”; it “encourages academic staff to think about how to make their courses attractive to students.”

The renewed importance of teaching and learning is evident in the following developments:

- UCD Teaching and Learning (a centre that develops teaching and learning resources and supports academic development) was placed under the responsibility of the Deputy Registrar for Teaching and Learning in 2008. The scope and capacity of the centre have been expanded, as well as the resources posted on its webpage. The centre seems to be widely recognised for its competence and ability to support teachers. It offers a number of accredited modules and workshops, day-long events and seminars to support academic development.
- Fellowships in Teaching and Academic Development were established in 2007 (with HEA funding) and have served to raise the profile of teaching. Fellows are selected on the basis of their teaching skills and funded to conduct research on the scholarship of teaching and learning on a biennial basis. The Fellows retain a close connection with UCD Teaching and Learning, thus supporting the strategic goal of the centre: to enhance teaching and learning based on scholarship. Fellows produced two excellent studies: on first-year students’ expectations at UCD and on enhancing teaching and learning in a modularised curriculum (writing skills, improving assessment practices, problem-based learning, etc.). These are based

on international literature reviews and on solid research conducted within UCD.

They resulted in excellent sets of recommendations to UCD.

- Some schools have an annual in-service day to discuss teaching and learning, student engagement or active learning pedagogies.
- UCD grants are available to support module innovation. Recently, emphasis has been placed on developing links between teaching and research at the undergraduate level.
- Awards recognise good teaching.

Thus, a great deal of work, effort and energy has gone into the enhancement of student learning and engagement. Some of these initiatives were developed with external funding and concerns were expressed about the future of such funding and whether limits on funding might curtail UCD's ability to continue to improve. The Team hopes, notwithstanding budgetary pressures, that the momentum of development can be maintained in what is the historic core of a university's mission.

IMPACT ON STUDENTS

UCD Horizons is meant to provide students with depth and breadth through modularisation and electives. The Review Team was told that students' ability to use Horizons immediately was limited because they have no prior experience of electives. To reduce the level of confusion, some programmes have reduced the number of electives. The intention is to provide a defined, coherent core, with limited choice, in order to avoid a cafeteria-style education. Patterns of electives seem to vary, depending on the students or their concentrations. In Arts, students have adapted to taking electives, which represent about one-sixth of their credits. The progressive adaptation to modular structures by successive cohorts of students sets helpful examples for their successors, although it is important that such patterns of choice do not become prescriptive.

Modularisation and continuous assessment have increased the number of examinations and are placing greater demands on students and their capacity to manage their time. It is an issue acknowledged by the University. Students who fail and fall outside the mainstream are posed difficult challenges within a modularised and matrix structure. UCD recognises some of these problems and is in the process of addressing them. This includes consideration of the transition to university and the differences in academic background; strengthening academic advising (including peer mentoring) across the institution; developing mandatory study-skills modules; promoting small classes and active learning.

UCD Students' Union Sabbatical officers commented on the insistent and often complex demands made by continuous assessment in a system of complex modular study pathways but where no University-wide timetable or general regulations covering the tempo for submission of continuously assessed work are available. It is unfortunate if the rich tapestry of extra-curricular activities offered by the University, which is an important part of the potential learning experience, is less exploited than it should be. The Team suggests that the University should explore the possibility of creating a timetable that would allow greater predictable space for extra-curricular activities.

QUALITY ENHANCEMENT

These issues were mirrored in discussion with both academic staff and students, and raise several key questions on which the University should reflect. Do the students have the required information to navigate through a complex organisation? Who owns the programmes? Where is the student home? As a generalisation, these do not appear to be such significant problems in the professional or the smaller schools, but do appear to be so in the larger schools. It was suggested by student representatives that in some larger schools, students have responded by recreating, de facto, the departments in their own sector of the school. It is important that UCD ensures the appropriateness of information and support it provides for students, particularly in larger schools and colleges.

FINE TUNING UCD HORIZONS

Two years ago, UCD reviewed all 900 Arts modules in terms of enrolment and grade patterns, drop-out and failures rates, etc. Areas of concern were highlighted and the pertinent actors involved were the Heads of relevant Schools, UCD Teaching and Learning, the Vice-Principals for Teaching and Learning and the College Principals. All modules in Law and Business were reviewed last year. The Law Programme Dean identified learning outcomes. These two strands are now under study to ensure alignment of modules with learning outcomes.

UCD is aware that the decision to implement modularisation as a “big bang” had some disadvantages. In response to recognised disadvantages, the University is in the process of reviewing and fine tuning the Horizons Programme. The Institutional Self-Assessment Report identifies the following issues (p. 15):

- The overall structure of the curriculum is complex, in particular the rules regarding programme structures and student progression.
- The need to review the balance between flexibility and curricular cohesion.
- Assessment strategies within the modular structure need further consideration, as there are concerns about over-assessment.
- Maintaining efforts to provide a wider range of general electives to address the vision set out in the UCD Strategic Plan: ‘Forming Global Minds’, within available resources.

INTERNATIONALISATION

Currently, UCD enrolls nearly 4,500 international students (representing 19% of total enrolment), split equally between EU and non-EU students. The largest non-EU contingents come from China, India, Malaysia and the USA.

The number of outgoing exchange students has reached 500 per year and is on the increase. It is an impressive number by any criterion. UCD has the largest number of Erasmus students in Ireland. Its membership in Universitas 21, a network of research-intensive universities, contributes to other types of staff and student mobility.

There is a range of supports for incoming and outgoing students:

- Incoming students: The International Office maintains regular contacts with students before they arrive; local agents in key regions help with entry visas. The

Office, in co-operation with the Schools, provides support with immigration issues. This year, the Office secured a specific schedule with the Garda (Police) National Immigration Bureau and brought students as a group to process their papers. UCD guarantees a residence for those international students who want it. Once students arrive, the focus moves to orientation, prevention of problems and social and academic integration. In response to a survey that showed integration difficulties with a specific group, the International Office responded by organising a support group for them. International students are supported by their advisors in their programme. UCD is now part of the International Barometer, which shows that the international benchmark for academic advising is 1 advisor to 1000 students; at UCD, it is currently 1:4,500.

- Outgoing students: With a couple of exceptions, each school has at least one Exchanges Co-ordinator to support outgoing mobility. The International Office's web page provides useful information and UCD works with the host university to further support the students.

Additional elements of internationalisation are:

- Approximately 30% of academic staff are non-Irish.
- UCD offers a number of degree programmes overseas: in Hong Kong and Singapore through the Asia Pacific Management Institute Kaplan; the National Institute of Business Management, Sri Lanka; Penang Medical College, Malaysia; CESUGA in La Coruna, Spain; and a collaboration in computer science with Fudan University, Shanghai, China. The overseas provisions are managed by the relevant schools.

By 2014, UCD plans to increase its international enrolment to 25% (or about 6,000 students) with a stress on non-EU students, for specific target regions and with a focus on liberal-arts undergraduates. The planned increase will be done while being mindful of quality. It is intended that there should be no downward pressure on entry requirements, with awareness that recruiting without reference to quality of both student and provision is a short-term gain.

UCD also plans to double the number of students participating in outgoing mobility programmes to 1,000, including short stays abroad, and encourages returning students to recruit other students and serve as peer advisors.

The International Office is a unit within the Office of the Registrar and reports to the Registrar but – conceptually – it likes to think that “it is located everywhere” because of the number of students involved and the links that are maintained across the University. Several staff members in the Office are dedicated to specific regions. The regional management structure contributes to develop expert regional knowledge and local links. The Director sits on a SMT committee and reports regularly to the SMT Executive and SMT Academic. The SMT is reported to be supporting actively the internationalisation goals of UCD. Academics are invited to travel to target regions to support international recruitment efforts.

As was mentioned in Section 3, international activities are reviewed as part of the formal internal review cycle. In addition, the International Office runs surveys by groups of students, e.g., ERASMUS, India, USA, etc. Recent issues that were identified included the student residence (recommendations were sent to the Accommodation Office), and the scale of orientation activities, which is not penetrating to all student groups. The Office is currently surveying its peer mentoring in order to assess the level of integration and support received by international students. Involvement in Universitas 21 and the International Student Barometer provides opportunities for international benchmarking and the International Office emphasised that it is attentive to students' feedback.

The Review Team was impressed by the level of professionalism of the International Office and its expertise, its student-friendly orientation and understanding of its potential contribution to UCD's strategic development. In this favourable context, it would be important that UCD's international strategy enlarges the notion of "internationalisation at home" beyond that of increasing the numbers of international students or staff. This would require integrating an international perspective in study programmes, embracing different teaching cultures in the classrooms to adapt to different learners' needs and developing students' inter-cultural understanding. In addition, the drive to internationalise should not be about income generation: offshore branches are costly adventures (both in their set-up and operational phase) and increasing international student numbers require an extension of services in respect of language training, accommodation, information and administrative support, counselling, advising, etc.

INTERNAL REVIEWS

As mentioned earlier, UCD established departmental reviews in 1995, prior to the 1997 Universities Act. These were based on an enhancement model. This development seems to have been overshadowed by the introduction of the Act. Thus, the Review Team was told that "QA came in response to the Universities Act and the periodic unit reviews and that, for a number of staff, it was a lighthouse that shone every few years."

The question then is whether internal review mechanisms are driven by a culture of compliance or if they are embedded and have promoted a quality ethos across the University. Based on the meetings and written evidence, it is clear that the frequency of internal scrutiny far exceeds the requirements set out by the Act. Some examples are: the Career Development Centre' alumni surveys, which provide relevant data to each school and feed into programme renewal; the library conducts three surveys a year; surveys are conducted by the Registrar's Office, the International Office, the IT Office, etc; the research conducted by the Teaching Fellows and the various thematic studies that have been mentioned.

STUDENT FEEDBACK

The mechanisms that permit students to contribute to the improvement of university processes include the participation of students in programme boards and the organisation of all-day student fora. The rolling out of an online student questionnaire across the University this year should increase the scope of student feedback. The questionnaire is standardised but with the capacity for teachers to add a few questions. It was piloted last year in ten schools and changes were introduced based on student and staff feedback. The results will be aggregated automatically and sent to the Heads of Schools in order to promote responsibility

for the quality of modules. The module co-ordinator will receive the relevant quantitative and qualitative data. UCD Teaching and Learning and the Institutional Research Office will look at emerging themes.

A QUALITY ETHOS

Based on this evidence, it is clear that there is an ethos of quality that is embedded within UCD and that arrangements have mainstreamed quality and improved data management. The University is now faced with several challenges:

- Co-ordinating and framing the survey process: with the availability of online questionnaire tools, it is easy for any unit or service to come up with a survey. In view of the proliferation of surveys from all parts of the University, an oversight body was created to streamline surveys and look at the validity of the questions.
- Ensuring that students and staff are informed about how these data are used for enhancement in order to communicate actions taken in response to feedback and motivate students to continue to provide meaningful feedback.
- Ensuring a link between QA/QI and the strategic process, possibly through a formal review of quality arrangements: a structural one related to the governance responsibility and link with strategy; and bringing together the results of QA/QI whilst maintaining the current level of vitality and distributed ownership.

COMMENDATIONS

The Review Team commends the University for:

- 4.1 The emphasis placed on teaching by developing, encouraging and rewarding staff that support the student learning experience.
- 4.2 The initiative to establish the Fellowship Programme in Teaching and Academic Development, the quality of research conducted by the Fellows and the recommendations arising from their studies.
- 4.3 The quality of resources developed by the Centre for Teaching and Learning.
- 4.4 Its successful internationalisation strategy and the good levels of student mobility that have been achieved and the support provided by UCD International Office to progress further internationalisation.
- 4.5 The variety of good initiatives to review all activities, in a searching and an ongoing manner and the decision to ensure the co-ordination of surveys.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Review Team recommends that the University:

- 4.6 Implements rigorously the cross-University student module feedback system and ensures that students and staff are informed about how these data are used, which suggestions have been adopted and which have not and, crucially, why.
- 4.7 Ensures a link between QA/QI and the strategic process by improving the quality governance structure whilst maintaining the current level of vitality and distributed ownership

SECTION 5

COMPLIANCE WITH SECTION 35 OF THE UNIVERSITIES ACT, 1997 AND CONSISTENCY WITH THE PART 1 ESG

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

From the written evidence presented within the ISAR, the additional documents considered in advance of and during the Main Site Visit, and the oral evidence collected during discussions with staff and students, the Team is sufficiently confident to confirm that UCD is compliant with the statutory requirements of The Universities Act 1997. Specifically, UCD:

- Conducts cyclical reviews of its academic units and non-academic units and services
- Includes external peers in the review processes
- Emphasises self-reflection in the review process
- Publishes the outcomes of internal reviews
- Takes account of the outcomes in a systematic manner
- Ensures that the Governing Authority fulfils its role in relation to these processes

Consistency with Part 1 of the European Standards and Guidelines

The internal review process described above is aligned with Part 1 of the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG). Evidence of consistency and engagement with the ESG includes:

- A policy and procedures for quality assurance, which are well documented and publicly available and demonstrate a widely-shared commitment to continuous improvement
- The approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes and awards
- The use of external examiners which ensures consistency in student assessment
- The promotion process, PMDS and mentoring schemes ensure the quality of teaching staff
- The review of learning resources and student support ensures the quality of the learning environment
- The Institutional Research Office collects and analyses information related to the management of study programmes and other activities. The data are used in the internal reviews and institutional decision making
- The results of internal reviews are available on the UCD website

ENGAGEMENT WITH NATIONAL, EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL GOOD PRACTICE

UCD takes into account national good practice through its involvement in IUQB and IUA. Its programme review and monitoring are in line with the national initiative led by IUQB in 2010/2011. The advancements made in post-graduate student experience are ongoing and reflect national developments in this area led by the *Best Practice Guideline on the Organisation of PhD Programmes in Irish Higher Education*, published by IUQB in 2009. Its PMDS is a nationally-led initiative.

UCD takes into account European good practice through its active involvement in the European University Association (EUA). It has requested, on a voluntary basis, several EUA-IEP reviews over the years and has engaged in several EUA projects related to the development of internal quality processes. Its membership in EUA's Council for Doctoral Education allows UCD to keep abreast of European best practice in this area. UCD engages actively in international benchmarking through its membership in Universitas 21 and the International Barometer.

SECTION 6

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the Review Team's evaluation of the Institutional Self-Assessment Report, supporting documentation and meetings conducted during the Main Review Visit, the Team found sufficient evidence to confirm:

CATEGORY:	KEY REVIEWER FINDINGS
Statutory Requirements	The Review Team found that the University's activities fully comply with statutory requirements.
European Standards	The Review Team found the University's quality assurance arrangements to be fully consistent with Part 1 of the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ESG).
National, European and International best practice	The University actively takes account of national, European and international best practice.

The Team found sufficient evidence to commend the following examples of good practice for further promotion internally, nationally and internationally:

6.1	The dynamism of UCD, its forward-looking approach to education and research and its stress on the future role that the University can and should play in shaping the future of Ireland.
6.2	The initiatives taken to ensure both the development and the integrity of research.
6.3	The introduction of an open, rigorous and competitive promotion process, the moves to reward teaching through professorial promotion and the attention being paid to young researchers' careers.
6.4	The decision to develop a knowledge management strategy.
6.5	The emphasis placed on teaching by developing, encouraging and rewarding staff that support the student learning experience.
6.6	The initiative to establish the Fellowship Programme in Teaching and Academic Development, the quality of research conducted by the Fellows and the recommendations arising from their studies.
6.7	The quality of resources developed by the Centre for Teaching and Learning.
6.8	The successful internationalisation strategy and the good levels of student mobility that have been achieved and the support provided by UCD International Office to progress further internationalisation.
6.9	The variety of good initiatives to review all activities, in a searching and an ongoing manner and the decision to ensure the co-ordination of surveys.

The Team found sufficient evidence to recommend the following activities to the University for attention and development:

6.10	Sharpen the University's top-level governance processes. The Governing Authority should be a smaller body with an appropriate mix of internal and external members. The external members, ideally experienced leaders in Irish society, should be in a position to give strategic advice to the University to help steer it through difficult times. This recommendation is broadly in line with the Hunt Report's recommendation on the role, size and composition of governing authorities. It is recommended that UCD work within the IUA to more expeditiously promote such changes.
6.11	Reduce the size of Academic Council and consolidate its committees.
6.12	Involve the Students' Union with policy and practice at all levels and provide training for sabbatical officers following their election.
6.13	Address the discrepancies in student support across the colleges and the study cycles. Norms for student support should be set by the University rather than left to the discretion of the colleges.
6.14	Minimise the diversity of rules and regulations across the schools, and place all academic and administrative regulations on the web.
6.15	Ensure the integration of the various student services.
6.16	Review the effectiveness of the UCD policy for supporting students with disabilities, particularly physically-impaired students.
6.17	In relation to the internal review process, consider the composition of Review Groups and increase further the number of external members in relation to the internal ones. Ensure that the Chair is external to the University.
6.18	Ensure a link between QA/QI and the strategic process by improving the quality governance structure whilst maintaining the current level of vitality and distributed ownership.



IRIU

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

UCD IRIU TEAM: ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE FOR KEY PROCESSES

The essentials for high quality operation of a university comprise a clear definition of purpose, processes that are well tuned to deliver that purpose, appropriate governance and management structures and appropriate infrastructural provision. The following is a template of delivery processes that guided the Review Team's analysis of quality and enhancement in relation to the University's objectives in education, research and innovation/engagement.

EDUCATION	RESEARCH	INNOVATION & ENGAGEMENT
Clear objectives; in the case of UCD, these are depth, breadth and global awareness	For a comprehensive university such as UCD: exploiting the capacity to reconfigure efforts to respond to current research challenges	Clear definition of the university's innovation and engagement role
Ethos and practice: embedding quality enhancement	Structures that facilitate research focus	Awareness and interaction with local, national, international stakeholders
Evolving programmes as knowledge and demand evolve	Structures that facilitate cross-disciplinary research	Clear pathways for external inquiries into the complexities of the university
Accessible and supportive infrastructure	Awareness of and response to: the international research agenda and national and local needs	Optimal use of the university's intellectual resources to the benefit of the economy and society
Effective and perennially available advice to students	Using research strengths to inform and inspire teaching	Stimulation of engagement with the local and national community
Well-signposted pathways of study to facilitate intelligent student choice	Clear concept and management of doctoral programmes	Use of academic freedom to contribute to public debate and activism
Readily available advice and support to students at times of individual crisis	Effective graduate schools	Stimulating awareness and facilitating engagement by students
Well-informed and accessible careers advice	Supporting the careers of young researchers	
	Help and support in preparing grant proposals	
	Volume of good published research	

APPENDIX 2

MAIN REVIEW VISIT - TIMETABLE

SUNDAY 27 FEBRUARY 2011

TIME	ATTENDEES	PURPOSE
16:00 – 18:30	<i>Review Team</i>	<i>Private meeting</i>
19:00 – 21:00	Review Team & UCD SMT representatives: Dr Hugh Brady , UCD President Dr Philip Nolan , UCD Registrar & Vice-President for Academic Affairs Prof. Des Fitzgerald , UCD Vice-President for Research Prof. Maurice Boland , Principal, UCD College of Life Sciences Prof. Mary E Daly , Principal, UCD College of Arts & Celtic Studies Dr Roy Ferguson , Director of Quality/IC	Discussion of the key issues to be explored during the visit over dinner with representatives of the University Senior Management Team and UCD Director of Quality/Institutional Co-ordinator Dinner

DAY 1: MONDAY 28 FEBRUARY 2011

TIME	ATTENDEES	PURPOSE
09:00 – 09:30	Review Team & IC Dr Roy Ferguson , Director of Quality/IC	Private time to enable the team to set up and discuss issues for the day & prepare for the first meeting with the President
09:30 – 10:10	Dr Hugh Brady , UCD President	Private discussion with the President
10:10 – 10:20	<i>Break</i>	
10:20 – 11:20	Registrar Dr Philip Nolan , Registrar & Deputy President	Strategic management and quality assurance issues in time of budgetary stringency; structures and functions, particularly in relation to teaching; governance issues: role and responsibilities of GA and AC and; top-down/bottom-up relationship between central management/colleges/ schools; supervision of linked institution; definition of purpose for teaching, learning and innovation; research-based teaching
11:20 – 11:45	<i>Review Team</i>	<i>Private time to reflect on meetings undertaken and prepare for meetings ahead</i>

APPENDIX 2

MAIN REVIEW VISIT - TIMETABLE

11:45 - 12:45	<p>College Principals:</p> <p>Prof. Maurice Boland, Principal, UCD College of Life Sciences</p> <p>Prof. Mary E Daly, Principal, UCD College of Arts & Celtic Studies</p>	Strategic management and quality assurance issues in time of budgetary stringency; structures and functions, particularly in relation to teaching; top-down/bottom-up relationship between central management/colleges/schools; what have been the main benefits of the restructuring; the integration of student support services in the college structure; views on staff morale
12:45 – 13:45	<i>Review Team (LUNCH)</i>	<i>Private time to reflect on meetings undertaken, prepare for meetings ahead and consider institutional documentation</i>
13:45 – 14:30	<p>UCD Governing Authority representatives:</p> <p><u>Internal GA Members</u></p> <p>Prof. Patrick Shannon, UCD School of Geological Sciences</p> <p>Dr Joe Brady, UCD School of Geography, Planning and Environmental Policy</p> <p><u>External GA Members</u></p> <p>Mr Tom Harrington, Elected by the Association of County and City Councils</p> <p>Mr Colm Wiley, Elected by the Association of County and City Councils</p>	Discussion of the mechanisms employed by the Governing Authority for quality assurance and enhancement within the University in line with the Universities Act requirements. Role and effectiveness in strategic planning.
14:30 – 14:45	<i>Review Team</i>	<i>Private time to reflect on meetings undertaken and prepare for meetings ahead</i>
14:45 – 15:45	<p>College Vice-Principals Teaching & Learning and Deputy Registrars:</p> <p>Mr Feargal Murphy, Vice-Principal for T&L, UCD College of Arts & Celtic Studies</p> <p>Dr Barbara Dooley, Vice-Principal for T&L, UCD College of Human Sciences</p> <p>Dr Declan Patton, Vice-Principal for T&L, UCD College of Life Sciences</p> <p>Dr Amanda Gibney, Vice-Principal for T&L, UCD College of EMPS</p> <p>Dr Ann Bourke, Vice-Principal for T&L, UCD College of Business & Law</p> <p>Prof. Bairbre Redmond, Deputy Registrar, Teaching & Learning</p> <p>Prof. Julie Berndsen, Deputy Registrar, Graduate Studies</p>	Definition of purpose for teaching, learning and innovation; research-based teaching; top-down/bottom-up relationship between central management/colleges/schools in relation to teaching; student support services and the college structure; role and effectiveness of external examiners; how embedded and integrated are quality processes? Involvement of students in continuous improvement of learning; view on staff morale
15:45 – 16:00	<i>Review Team</i>	<i>Private time to reflect on meetings undertaken and prepare for meetings ahead</i>

MAIN REVIEW VISIT - TIMETABLE

16:00 – 17:00	<p>Heads of Teaching & Learning (School) and representatives from UCD Teaching & Learning:</p> <p>Dr James Sullivan, UCD School of Chemistry & Chemical Biology</p> <p>Dr William Magette, UCD School of Architecture, Landscape and Civil Engineering</p> <p>Ms Eimhear Bríd Ní Dhuinn, UCD School of Irish, Celtic Studies, Irish Folklore & Linguistics</p> <p>Dr Oonagh Breen, UCD School of Law</p> <p>Ms Áine Galvin, Director, UCD Centre for Teaching & Learning</p> <p>Ms Elizabeth Noonan, UCD Director of Academic Development</p>	<p>Definition of purpose for teaching, learning and innovation; research-based teaching; top-down/bottom-up relationship between central management/colleges/schools in relation to teaching; student support services and the college structure; role and effectiveness of external examiners; how embedded and integrated are quality processes? Involvement of students in continuous improvement of learning</p>
17:00 – 17:30	<p>Academic Staff selected from across the Colleges:</p> <p>Dr Lorraine McGinty, UCD School of Computer Science & Informatics</p> <p>Prof. Muiris O’Sullivan, UCD School of Archaeology</p> <p>Prof. Andrea Prothero, UCD School of Business</p> <p>Dr Michelle Butler, UCD School of Nursing, Midwifery & Health Systems</p> <p>Dr Niamh Moore Cherry, UCD School of Geography, Planning & Environmental Policy</p> <p>Dr Patricia Kieran, UCD School of Chemical & Bioprocess Engineering</p> <p>Dr Judith Harford, UCD School of Education & Lifelong Learning</p>	<p>Embedding and utility of QA and enhancement processes. Effectiveness of teaching structures</p>
17:30 – 18:00	<p><i>Review Team</i></p>	<p><i>Private discussion to exchange first impressions and identify key findings, commendations and recommendations from Day 1. Also to assist in preparations for the meetings to be undertaken on Day 2</i></p>
19:30 – 21:30	<p><i>Review Team</i></p>	<p><i>Private Dinner</i></p>

APPENDIX 2

MAIN REVIEW VISIT - TIMETABLE

DAY 2: TUESDAY, 1 MARCH 2011

TIME	ATTENDEES	PURPOSE
08:45 - 09:15	Review Team & IC Dr Roy Ferguson , Director of Quality/IC	Meeting between the IC, C & CR to clarify issues from Day 1 that might impact on Day 2
09:15 - 10:15	Programme Deans & Programme Office Directors & Graduate School Directors: Dr Joe Brady , Dean of Arts Prof. Mark Rogers , Dean of Science Prof. Jim Phelan , Dean of Agriculture Prof. Grace Mulcahy , Dean of Veterinary Medicine Ms Iris Burke , Director of Programme Office, Agriculture & Veterinary Medicine Ms Sue Philpott , Director of Programme Office, Engineering & Architecture Prof. Pdraig Dunne , Director of Graduate School, UCD College of EMPS Prof. Julie Bermdsen , Deputy Registrar, Graduate Studies	Definition of purpose for teaching, learning and innovation; research-based teaching; top-down/bottom-up relationship between central management/colleges/schools in relation to teaching; student support services and the college structure; role and effectiveness of external examiners; how embedded and integrated are quality processes? Involvement of students in continuous improvement of learning
10:15 - 10:45	<i>Review Team</i>	<i>Private time to reflect on meetings undertaken and prepare for meetings ahead</i>
10:45 - 11:30	UCD Research Office Representatives: Prof Des Fitzgerald , UCD Vice-President for Research Dr Aoibheann Gibbons , UCD Director of Research Development Mr John Coman , UCD Corporate & Legal Affairs Secretary Dr Karina Daly , Research Services Manager	Session on processes to ensure integrity and quality of research with a focus on non-metric elements
11:30 - 12:00	<i>Review Team</i>	<i>Private time to reflect on the meetings undertaken and prepare for the meetings ahead</i>
12:00 - 12:45	Representatives of senior Library staff: Dr John Howard , Librarian Ms Carmel O'Sullivan , Associate Librarian Peter Hickey , Head, Library Academic Services STM Ursula Byrne , Head, Library Academic Services HSS Lorna Dodd , Liaison Librarian and Leader of the Library Welcome Group	Session focused on student engagement issues and quality assurance; support for student learning
12:45 - 13:45	<i>Review Team (LUNCH)</i>	<i>Private time to reflect on meetings undertaken, prepare for the meetings ahead and consider institutional documentation</i>

MAIN REVIEW VISIT - TIMETABLE

13:45 – 14:30	<p>Representatives of UCD Human Resources:</p> <p>Mr Eamon Drea, UCD Vice-President for Staff</p> <p>Mr Michael Flanagan, Director of Employee Relations</p> <p>Mr Michael McGinley, Director, HR Services</p> <p>Ms Claire O'Malley, HR Relationship Director</p> <p>Mr Rory Carey, Director, HR Strategy & Development</p>	Session on staffing issues – promotions process for academic and non-academic staff and a discussion around staff numbers – diversity and flexibility in staffing and recruitment, including gender issues, etc.
14:30 – 15:00	<i>Review Team</i>	<i>Private time to reflect on meetings undertaken, prepare for meetings ahead and consider institutional documentation</i>
15:00 – 16:00	<p>UCD Students' Union Sabbatical Officers:</p> <p>Mr James Williamson, UCDSU Education Officer</p> <p>Mr Scott Ahern, UCDSU Welfare Officer</p> <p>Mr Ger Gallagher, UCDSU Disability Officer</p> <p>Ms Regina Brady – UCDSU Women's Officer</p>	Session on student engagement in the University (curricular and extra-curricular; formal and informal); student services, teaching and student involvement in quality processes
16:00 – 16:15	<i>Break</i>	
16:15 – 17:30	<p>Undergraduate/graduate Students - including those that engaged with recent reviews and student feedback processes:</p> <p><u>College Forum Reps:</u></p> <p>Christine Bazigou, BA (Linguistics & Sociology) - 3rd Year</p> <p>Ciara Sweeney – 2nd Year Agricultural Science</p> <p>Orna Mulhem, BA</p> <p><u>Orientation Feedback Group:</u></p> <p>Darragh O'Loughlin, Engineering</p> <p>Janie Rath, Physiotherapy – 1st year</p> <p>Colin O'Shaughnessy, Maw – 1st year</p> <p><u>IR Steering Group Member:</u></p> <p>Niamh Ni Shiadhail, PhD Irish & Celtic Studies</p>	Session on student engagement in the University (curricular and extra-curricular; formal and informal); student services, teaching and student involvement in quality processes
17:30 – 18:00	<i>Review Team</i>	<i>Private discussion to exchange first impressions and identify key findings, commendations and recommendations from Day 2. Also to assist in preparations for the meetings to be undertaken on Day 3 – allocating questions per meeting, agreeing an order of questioning and outlining the key requirements of each session etc.</i>
19:30 – 21:30	<i>Review Team</i>	<i>Private Dinner</i>

MAIN REVIEW VISIT - TIMETABLE

DAY 3: WEDNESDAY, 2 MARCH 2011

TIME	ATTENDEES	PURPOSE
09:00 – 09:30	<i>Review Team & IC</i> Dr Roy Ferguson , Director of Quality/IC	<i>Private meeting between the IC, C & CR to clarify issues from Day 2 that might impact on Day 3</i>
09:30 – 10:15	UCD staff to discuss Enhancement Theme (Student Feedback Mechanisms) Prof. Bairbre Redmond , Deputy Registrar Teaching & Learning Ms Maura McGinn , Director of Institutional Research Ms Joan Mullan , Deputy Director of Quality Dr Amanda Gibney , Vice-Principal for Teaching & Learning, UCD College of EMPS Mr Feargal Murphy , Vice-Principal for Teaching & Learning, UCD College of Arts & Celtic Studies Ms Áine Galvin , Director, UCD Centre for Teaching & Learning	Session on student engagement in the University (curricular and extra-curricular; formal and informal); student services, and student involvement in quality processes
10:15 – 10:45	<i>Review Team</i>	<i>Private time to reflect on meetings undertaken and prepare for meetings ahead</i>
10:45 – 11:30	Representatives from UCD International Office: Dr Erik Lithander , Director of International Affairs Mr Alex Metcalfe , International Office Manager Ms Enda Carroll , Manager, Centre for Study Abroad Ms Una Condron , Senior Administrator Mrs Carl Lusby , Student Adviser Ms Catherine Conway , European Programme Officer Mr Gary Osborne , International Marketing Manager	Session on internationalisation at home/abroad; integration and support of international students; support to outgoing students; role of the office and the University strategy
11:30 – 12:00	<i>Review Team</i>	<i>Private time to reflect on the meetings undertaken and prepare for the meetings ahead</i>

MAIN REVIEW VISIT - TIMETABLE

12:00 – 12:45	<p>Representative group of staff providing academic advice and general support to students:</p> <p>Ms Fiona Sweeney, Access Centre Manager</p> <p>Dr Maria Meehan, Director of Maths Support Centre (and former Programme Director)</p> <p>Mr Kieran Moloney, Student Adviser, Human Sciences</p> <p>Ms Colleen Blaney Doyle, Student Adviser, EMPS</p> <p>Miss Annette Forde, Director of Programme Office, Science</p> <p>Mrs Nadia D’Alton, Director of Programme Office, Health Sciences</p> <p>Prof. Joe Carthy, Stage 1 Science Omnibus Co-ordinator</p> <p>Ms Marie Murray, Director of Student Counselling</p> <p>Dr Jason Last, Director of Pre-Clinical Studies, UCD School of Medicine & Medical Science (Academic Adviser)</p>	Session on student engagement in the University (curricular and extra-curricular; formal and informal); student services, and student involvement in quality processes; the role and effectiveness of UCD advising systems
12:45 – 13:30	<i>Review Team (LUNCH)</i>	<i>Private time to reflect on meetings undertaken, prepare for the meetings ahead and consider institutional documentation</i>
13:30 – 14:15	<p>Academic Council Committee on Quality: Chair and a few members:</p> <p>Dr Mark Richardson, Head, UCD School of Architecture, Landscape & Civil Engineering (Chair ACCQ)</p> <p>Ms Bronwyn Moloney, Deputy Director of Quality</p> <p>Mr Robert French, Chief Technical Officer, UCD School of Biology & Environmental Science</p> <p>Prof. Mary Daly, Principal, UCD College of Arts and Celtic Studies</p> <p>Prof. Michael Gilchrist, UCD School of Electrical, Electronic and Mechanical Engineering</p>	Role and view of the Committee in relation to internal quality and its oversight of academic affairs
14:15 – 15:00	<i>Review Team</i>	<i>Private time to reflect on meetings undertaken, prepare for meetings ahead and consider institutional documentation</i>
15:00 – 15:30	<p>UCD Quality Office:</p> <p>Dr Roy Ferguson, UCD Director of Quality</p> <p>Ms Bronwyn Moloney, UCD Deputy Director of Quality</p> <p>Ms Joan Mullan, UCD Deputy Director of Quality</p>	Description and analysis of the activities of the office and how it engages the University community

APPENDIX 2

MAIN REVIEW VISIT - TIMETABLE

15:30 - 16:15	Academic and other staff unions: Mr John Dunnion (IFUT) Mr Tommy Murtagh (SIPTU) Ms Yvonne Abbott (UNITE)	Meeting with members of the academic and other staff unions
16:15 - 17:30	<i>Review Team</i>	<i>Private discussion to exchange first impressions and identify key findings, commendations and recommendations from Day 3. Also to agree amongst the team that all aspects of the report have been fully covered in advance of preparations for the oral report to be given on day 4.</i>
19:30 - 21:30	<i>Review Team</i>	<i>Private Dinner</i>

DAY 4: THURSDAY 3 MARCH 2011

TIME	ATTENDEES	PURPOSE
09:00 - 09:30	<i>Review Team</i>	<i>Private meeting between the IC, Chair & CR to clarify issues that need to be taken into account</i>
09:30 - 10:15	UCD President & Deputy President Dr Hugh Brady Dr Philip Nolan	Informal feedback of key findings/clarify issues
10:15 - 11:30	<i>Review Team</i>	<i>Preparation for Exit Presentation</i>
10:15 - 11:30 (Parallel)	IC & IUQB Reviews Manager (meet in IC's office) Karen Jones, IUQB Dr Roy Ferguson	Parallel meeting to enable the institution to give feedback to the IUQB on the conduct of the Review Team and feedback on their experience of the process. Clarification on the post-visit process will be provided
11:30 - 11:45	<i>Break</i>	
11:45 - 12:30	Review Team & IUQB Quality Reviews Manager	Meeting to enable the Chair and the team to rehearse the PowerPoint presentation and confirm the key findings and the experiences of the Team with the IUQB Reviews Manager
12:30 - 12:45	<i>Break</i>	

MAIN REVIEW VISIT - TIMETABLE

12:45 – 13:30	<p>Review Team, IUQB Reviews Manager</p> <p>Representatives from the UCD Senior Management Team, IC:</p> <p>Dr Hugh Brady</p> <p>Dr Philip Nolan</p> <p>Dr Roy Ferguson</p> <p>Prof. Maurice Boland</p> <p>Prof. Tom Begley</p> <p>Prof. Julie Berndsen</p> <p>Prof. Bairbre Redmond</p> <p>Prof. Nick Quirke</p> <p>Mr Gerry O'Brien</p> <p>Mr Eamon Drea</p>	<p>Oral Report - Chair gives an oral presentation of the key findings and recommendations of the Review Team and confirms actions and timescales associated with the finalising and publication of the reports and any follow-up actions – CONFIDENTIAL</p>
13:30 – 14:30	<p>Lunch</p> <p>Review Team, IUQB Quality Reviews Manager</p> <p>Representatives from the UCD Senior Management Team, IC</p> <p>Dr Hugh Brady</p> <p>Dr Philip Nolan</p> <p>Dr Roy Ferguson</p> <p>Prof. Maurice Boland</p> <p>Prof. Tom Begley</p> <p>Prof. Julie Berndsen</p> <p>Prof. Bairbre Redmond</p> <p>Prof. Nick Quirke</p> <p>Mr Gerry O'Brien</p> <p>Mr Eamon Drea</p>	<p>Informal lunch with the University before departure</p>
14:30	<p>Depart</p>	

APPENDIX 3

OVERVIEW OF THE IRIU PROCESS

INTRODUCTION

Universities have requirements under Section 35 of The Universities Act 1997 to establish and implement procedures for quality assurance and, more relevantly to the IRIU, to arrange for a review of the effectiveness of internal procedures “from time to time and in any case at least every 15 years”. These reviews of effectiveness are designated in The Act as the responsibility of the individual governing authorities. In this way, the autonomy permitted in the organisation of internal reviews is complemented by accountability. In 2002, the governing authorities of all seven universities authorised the establishment of the Irish Universities Quality Board (IUQB) and delegated to the IUQB the function of arranging regular reviews of the effectiveness of quality assurance procedures, which are institutional in their scope.

In 2004-05, the Irish Universities Quality Board (IUQB) and the Higher Education Authority (HEA) jointly commissioned the European University Association (EUA) through its Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP) to undertake the first cycle of external reviews of the seven Irish universities. The resulting sectoral report, published in April 2005, found *“the systematic organisation and promotion of quality assurance at the initiative of the universities themselves”* as being *“unparalleled in any other country in Europe, or indeed in the United States or Canada”*. The reviewers deemed the system *“to strike the right tone and combination of public interest, accountability, and university autonomy. It encourages a greater focus on quality and improvement than some systems worldwide, while at the same time being less intrusive than some other systems in Europe”*. The report concluded that it was, however: *“time to move to a new phase”* that *“should build on the existing system, linking it more closely to strategic management and feeding its outputs into the ongoing development of the universities, individually and collectively”*.

In October 2006, after consultation with the universities, it was agreed that a second cycle of institutional reviews would be initiated in 2009/10. The Institutional Review of Irish Universities (IRIU) process was approved for publication by the IUQB Board in March 2009. By the end of this rolling cycle of reviews, independent reviewers will have confirmed whether Irish universities are operating in line with the requirements of (i) Section 35 of the Universities Act, 1997, and are (ii) consistent with the Part 1 requirements of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area 2005 (the ESG).

IRIU METHOD

The aims and objectives of the IRIU method are:

- to operate an external review process consistent with The Act, and the Part 2 Standards outlined in the ESG
- to support each university in meeting its responsibility for the operation of internal quality assurance procedures and reviews that are clear and transparent to all their stakeholders, and which provide for the continuing evaluation of all academic,

research and service departments and their activities, as outlined in The Act, incorporating the Part 1 ESG Standards

- to provide evidence that each university continues to engage with national, European and international guidelines and standards, particularly in accordance with the Bologna process
- to support institutional strategic planning and ownership of quality assurance and enhancement to operate as part of the Framework for Quality in Irish Universities
- to support the availability of consistent, robust, and timely information on the effectiveness of quality assurance and enhancement processes operating within Irish universities
- to provide accountability to external stakeholders in relation to the overall quality of the system and thereby instil confidence in the robustness of the IRIU process

There are four elements to the IRIU method:

- Element 1: Institutional Self-Assessment Report (ISAR)
- Element 2: The Review Visit(s) – Planning Visit and Main Review Visit
- Element 3: Review Report
- Element 4: Institutional and Sector Level Follow-up

Institutions can expect to undergo IRIU normally every six years. The schedule for the second cycle of institutional reviews (2009/10 – 12/13) is published on the IUQB web site and was developed in consultation with each Irish university and approved by the IUQB Board in June 2009.

THE REVIEW TEAM

The recruitment of national and international experts to the IRIU Register of Reviewers is conducted bi-annually. Each Team of reviewers is selected by the IUQB Board from the Register of Reviewers based on the reviewer's ability to demonstrate current or recent experience in at least three of the seven criteria categories published in the IRIU Handbook. Reviewers are trained, deployed and paid on a per review basis. IRIU Reviewers are not IUQB employees. As part of the nomination and selection process, reviewers sign to confirm any conflicts of interest. Additionally, universities have an opportunity to comment on the proposed composition of their Review Team in advance of deployment, to ensure there are no conflicts of interest in the proposed Review Team, and thus the IUQB Board will ensure that an appropriate and entirely independent Team of reviewers is selected for the institution being reviewed. The IUQB Board has final approval over the composition of each IRIU Review Team.

The IRIU Review Teams will normally consist of:

- two international reviewers (one of which will also act as Review Chair)
- an Irish reviewer
- a student representative
- a representative of external stakeholders
- a co-ordinating reviewer

OVERVIEW OF THE IRIU PROCESS

REVIEWER TRAINING AND DEPLOYMENT

Each Review Team will receive institutionally-specific training in advance of deployment. The purpose of reviewer training/briefing is to ensure that all reviewers:

- understand the social, cultural, economic and legal environment within which Irish universities are operating
- become familiar with the Framework for Quality in Irish Universities
- understand the aims and objectives of the IRIU process as well as the key elements of the method
- understand the statutory requirements placed on Irish universities in relation to quality, as outlined in The Act and the ESG
- understand their own roles and tasks and the importance of Team coherence and delivering a robust, evidence-based report in a timely manner

REPORTING

In the interests of equity and reliability, the Review Team's findings and recommendations presented in the review reports will be based on recorded evidence. In line with ESG guidelines, the Team will be asked by the IUQB Reviews Manager on the final day of the Main Review Visit to confirm that the review procedures used have provided adequate evidence to support the Team's findings and recommendations on the University's procedures and practices in relation to:

- its fulfilment of its statutory requirements, which includes the:
 - regular evaluation of each department, and, where appropriate, faculty and any service provided by the University by persons competent to make national and international comparisons on the quality of teaching and research and the provision of other services at university level
 - assessment by those, including students, availing of the teaching, research and other services provided by the University
 - publication of findings arising out of the application of those procedures
 - implementation of any findings arising out of the evaluation, having regard to the resources available to the university
- its consistency with the Part 1 Standards of the ESG
- operating in line with national, European and international best practice
- identifying and enhancing good practice in the management of quality assurance and enhancement
- identifying issues for further development in relation to the management of quality assurance and enhancement

Two review reports arise from the IRIU - a brief non-technical summary report and a full review report for specialist audiences. Both reports are prepared by the Co-ordinating Reviewer and are signed off by the Chair following consultation with all Review Team members. The University will be given an opportunity to comment on factual accuracy and if they so wish, to provide a 1-2 page institutional response to the report that will be published as an appendix to the review report. Each IRIU report will be formally signed off and

approved by the IUQB Board once satisfied that the review process was completed in accordance with published criteria. Reports will be published by the IUQB thereafter. In accordance with Section 41 of the Universities Act, 1997, the IUQB will submit review reports to the Minister.

FOLLOW-UP

One year after the Main Review Visit, the University will be asked to produce a follow-up report (incorporating the institutional action plan), normally submitted alongside the Annual Institutional Report (AIR) and discussed as part of the Annual Dialogue (AD) meeting with the IUQB. Within the report, the University should provide a commentary on how the review findings and recommendations have been discussed and disseminated throughout the University's committee structure and academic units, and comment on how effectively the University is addressing the review outcomes. The report should identify the range of strategic and logistical developments and decisions that have occurred within the institution since the review reports' publication. Institutions will continue to have flexibility in the length and style of the follow-up report but should address each of the key findings and recommendations that the reviewers presented. The follow-up report will be published by the IUQB.

If an IRIU Review Team identifies in its review report what it considers to be significant causes of concern, particularly in relation to the institution's fulfilment of its statutory requirements, (in accordance with the IUQB's Memorandum of Association, 2006), the IUQB will consult with the University in question to agree an immediate action plan to address the issue(s) of Review Team concern, including the time-frame in which the issue(s) will be addressed. The University will report to the IUQB every six months on progress against the action plan for the duration of the plan. Where the IUQB considers that progress in implementing the action plan is inadequate, the IUQB may, in consultation with the University and the HEA, intervene to secure a revision or acceleration of the plan, or to arrange a further review visit, ideally involving most or all of the original Review Team.

The IUQB will regularly monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the IRIU process, as part of an organisational commitment to actively contribute to the broader enhancement of a culture of quality across the Irish higher education sector and as required by Part 3 of the ESG.



UNIVERSITY RESPONSE TO THE IRIU

In accordance with the spirit of the Universities' Act (1997), the focus of University College Dublin's Quality Assurance activities is on continuous internal reflection and improvement, while adhering to externally generated regulation and accreditation requirements across all aspects of provision. University College Dublin therefore, welcomes the report of the independent external Review Team.

The Review Report affirms that UCD has in place a range of embedded quality assurance processes at institutional level and within the core University activities of teaching and research. Quality assurance processes are also established within student support services and central University support services. These quality assurance mechanisms are designed to assure the quality of provision and ensure that developments are aligned within the strategic priorities of UCD.

UCD has used the institutional review process as a further opportunity for critical self-reflection. The University has made substantial efforts, both to consider internally and present a range of evidence throughout the Quality Review process, about the effectiveness of its quality assurance mechanisms and efforts to enhance the quality of provision.

The Review Team confirms that UCD is fully compliant with the statutory requirements of the Universities Act 1997. The Review Team also verifies that the UCD internal quality review processes are aligned with Part 1 of the European Standards and Guidelines, and that UCD actively engages with national, European and international good practice.

UCD welcomes the Review Team's conclusion that there is a strong ethos of quality at UCD and a widely-shared commitment to ensure that activities are aligned with UCD's strategic objectives and international standards. This commitment, it is acknowledged by the Review Team, is not only exemplified by the formal process designed to ensure and enhance quality, but "most important of all in our view, it is embedded within the day-to-day working of the University" (Review Team Report: 11).

The University recognises that there are a number of issues to be addressed to further enhance provision and that there is no room for complacency. However, it is gratifying that many of the external Review Team Report recommendations reaffirmed the work already in progress by the University to enhance provision, such as:

- the need to simplify and rationalise academic structures;
- ensuring the integration of various student services;
- reviewing the external composition of Review Groups;
- implementing the cross-University student feedback system
- ensuring greater links between QA/QI and the strategic planning process

The University will develop an action plan to address each of the Report's recommendations for further improvement across its activities. The University is therefore, appreciative of the Review Team's suggestions for improvement which will help us to further focus our efforts.



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