



University College Dublin

Periodic Quality Review

UCD School of Veterinary Medicine

December 2014

Accepted by the UCD Governing Authority at its meeting on 19 May 2015

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Appendix One: UCD School of Veterinary Medicine Response to the Review Group Report

Appendix Two: Schedule for Review Site Visit to UCD School of Veterinary Medicine

1. Introduction and Context of UCD School of Veterinary Medicine

Introduction

- 1.1 This Report presents the findings of a quality review of UCD School of Veterinary Medicine, at University College Dublin (UCD), which was undertaken in December 2014.

The Review Process

- 1.2 Irish Universities have collectively agreed a framework for their quality review and quality improvement systems, which is consistent with both the legislative requirements of the Universities Act 1997, international good practice (e.g. Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, 2007) and informed by the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012. Quality reviews are carried out in academic, administrative and support service units.
- 1.3 The purpose of periodic review is to assist the University to assure itself of the quality of each of its constituent units, and to utilise learning from this essentially developmental process in order to effect improvement, including:
- To monitor the quality of the student experience, and of teaching and learning opportunities.
 - To monitor research activity, including: management of research activity; assessing the research performance with regard to: research productivity, research income, and recruiting and supporting doctoral students.
 - To provide an opportunity for units to test the effectiveness of their systems and procedures for monitoring and enhancing quality and standards.
 - To provide a framework within which the unit can continue to work in the future towards quality improvement.
 - To identify shortfalls in resources and provide an externally validated case for change and/or increased resources.
 - To identify, encourage and disseminate good practice.
 - To identify challenges and address these.
 - To provide public information on the University's capacity to assure the quality and standards of its awards. The University's implementation of its quality review procedures also enables it to demonstrate how it discharges its responsibilities for assuring the quality and standards of its awards, as required by the Universities Act 1997

and informed by the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012.

1.4 Typically, the review model comprises of four major elements:

- Preparation of a Self-assessment Report (SAR)
- A visit by a Review Group (RG) that includes UCD staff and external experts, both national and international. The site visit normally will take place over a two or three day period
- Preparation of a Review Group Report that is made public
- Agreement of an Action Plan for Improvement (Quality Improvement Plan) based on the RG Report's recommendations; the University will also monitor progress against the Improvement Plan

Full details of the review process can be found on the UCD Quality Office website: www.ucd.ie/quality.

1.5 The composition of the Review Group for the UCD School Veterinary Medicine was as follows:

- Professor David Croke, Director of Quality Enhancement, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (Chair)
- Professor Aisling Reynolds-Feighan, UCD School of Economics (Deputy Chair)
- Professor David Argyle, University of Edinburgh School of Veterinary Medicine
- Professor Ewan Cameron, School of Veterinary Medicine, University of Glasgow

1.6 The Review Group visited UCD from 1-4 December 2014 and held meetings with School staff on an individual or group basis, student and staff representatives from across the University, employers and external stakeholders. The Review Group also toured facilities on the Belfield campus and the farm at Lyons Estate. The site visit schedule is included as Appendix 2.

1.7 In addition to the Self-assessment Report and its appendices, the Review Group considered documentation, provided in hard copy by the School during the Site Visit.

Preparation of the Self-assessment Report

1.8 UCD School of Veterinary Medicine established a Self-assessment Co-ordinating Committee from members of the academic, technical and research staff. A PhD student and HR Partner were also members of the committee. The members of the Co-ordinating Committee were:

- Professor Torres Sweeney, Chair
- Professor Grace Mulcahy, Dean and Head of School
- Professor Pieter Brama, Head, Veterinary Clinical Sciences Section
- Ms Louise Britton, PhD student

- Mr John Buckley, School Manager
- Dr Mary Gallagher, Senior Technical Officer
- Professor Stephen Gordon, Associate Dean for Research and Innovation
- Dr Alison Hanlon, Senior Lecturer
- Ms Frances LeMatti, Senior Executive Officer
- Ms Hester McAllister, Clinical Director
- Mr Gavan Stanley, HR Partner

1.9 The Co-ordinating Committee (SARCC) oversaw the preparation of the SAR and individual members took responsibility for preparing different section of the report. Timelines were agreed with the Quality Office and regular weekly meetings of the Committee were held between July and October. Documentation from accreditation visits and consultation with staff and a wide range of stakeholders informed the self-reflection of the School. All staff had an opportunity to contribute to the report and the Review Group particularly noted and commend staff on their engagement and response to staff questionnaires.

The University

1.10 University College Dublin (UCD) is a large and diverse university whose origin dates back to 1854. The University is situated on a large, modern campus (133 hectare), about 4km to the south of the centre of Dublin.

1.11 The University Strategic Plan (to 2014) states that the University's Mission is:

“to advance knowledge, to pursue truth and to foster learning, in an atmosphere of discovery, creativity, innovation and excellence, drawing out the best in each student, and contributing to the social, cultural and economic life of Ireland in the wider world”.

The University is organised into 38 Schools in seven Colleges;

- UCD College of Arts and Celtic Studies
- UCD College of Human Sciences
- UCD College of Science
- UCD College of Engineering and Architecture
- UCD College of Health Sciences
- UCD College of Business and Law
- UCD College of Agriculture, Food Science and Veterinary Medicine

1.12 As one of the largest universities on the island of Ireland, UCD supports a broad, deep and rich academic community in Science, Business, Engineering, Health Sciences, Agriculture, Veterinary Medicine, Arts, Law, Celtic Studies and Human Sciences. There are currently more than 26,000 students in our UCD campus (approximately 16,300 undergraduates, 7,700 postgraduates (including CPD) and 2,271 Occasional and Adult Education students) registered on over 70 University degree programmes, including over 6,300 international

students from more than 121 countries. The University also has over 5,400 students studying UCD degree courses on campuses overseas.

- 1.13 The University accounts for over 30% of international students within the Irish education sector, over 25% of all graduate students and almost 28% of all doctoral enrolments across the seven Irish Universities.
- 1.14 The University is a national leader in research funding, and has established five major interdisciplinary research themes that match Ireland's needs and current global challenges. These are Agri-food; Culture Economy & Society; Health; Information, Communications and Computing; Energy and the Environment.
- 1.15 The University has just finalised in November 2014 its University Strategic Plan led by its President, Professor Andrew Deeks (appointed in January 2014). The School is active in contributing to its development.

UCD School of Veterinary Medicine

- 1.16 The UCD School of Veterinary Medicine is one of two schools within the College of Agriculture, Food Science and Veterinary Medicine.
- 1.17 The current School structure was established in 2011 as part of a number of strategic re-alignments arising from extensive management re-structuring within the University in 2005. The School has a strong tradition of providing veterinary graduates for over 100 years and is currently the sole Veterinary School on the island of Ireland.
- 1.18 The School is divided into four academic sections: Veterinary Sciences, Veterinary Pathobiology, Veterinary Clinical Sciences and Herd Health/Animal Husbandry. Committee and governance structures are in place to support the School.
- 1.19 The Veterinary Hospital acts as an important resource for clinical education and research, and the School shares teaching and research resources of Lyons Research Farm with the UCD School of Agriculture and Food Science. Significant industry-led expansion of the dairy facility at Lyons Estate is currently underway.
- 1.20 The School currently has 82 academic staff, 3 research staff, and 70.23 support staff (administrative 19.36 FTE, yard person 1 FTE, technical 49.87). 65% of staff are female, 35% male. The age demographic breakdown is predominantly in the 31-65 age groups with the largest percentage in the 31-40 age group with just under 35% of the total staff.
- 1.21 Up to 2009 the School offered undergraduate courses of the MVB degree and a part-time Diploma in Veterinary Nursing, and a graduate research programme. Since 2009 these offerings have been extended to a graduate-entry stream to the MVB programme, a 4-year BSc in Veterinary Nursing, and a professional doctorate programme to accommodate specialist clinical training. Flexible part-time graduate programmes aimed at practitioners have been extended via an online continuing education portal.

- 1.22 There is strong demand for entry to the School's programmes and the overall student numbers have increased substantially over the past 8 years. Current undergraduate numbers are approximately 720 and research students 60. The School also provides and supports non-standard entry routes of Mature, Access and Disability.
- 1.23 The School has a high profile and reputation internationally with international accreditation on its Veterinary Medicine and Veterinary Nursing degree programmes.

Methodology

- 1.24 Prior to the site visit the Review Group considered the activities of the School as defined in the Self-assessment report and its appendices. The site visit allowed the Review Group an opportunity to evaluate and verify the data outlined in the Self-assessment Report. Key stakeholders, including staff from within the School and wider University, students, employers and external stakeholders met with the Review Group. All members of the Group participated in all discussions and meetings. This Report has been read and approved by all members of the Group.
- 1.25 At the exit presentation the Review Group provided an overview of their initial comments.
- 1.26 The Self-assessment Report provided a clear insight into the workings of the School and the extent and variety of its activities and responsibilities. A set of appendices was provided electronically as a supplement, along with additional data provided by the School in the meeting room.
- 1.27 The Review Group met highly experienced and dedicated staff from within the School and the wider University. These meetings were of tremendous value to the Review Group in validating the contents of the SAR and in exploring the concerns and aspirations for the future development of the School. In all cases, the discussions were frank, cordial and highly informative. The Review Group wishes to record its thanks to all who participated.
- 1.28 A clear overview of the methodology undertaken in writing the SAR was presented to the Review Group. The stakeholders who met with the Review Group included graduates, employers of graduates and representative practitioners who provide Extra-Mural Study opportunities to students. All stakeholders commented very positively on the School, its engagement with the profession and the quality both of its graduates in veterinary medicine and nursing and of the programmes of Continuing Professional Development which it offers.
- 1.29 The Review Group had the pleasure of meeting with a range of students (undergraduates from both streams of the veterinary medicine programme, nursing students, interns, residents, DVMS and PhD students). It was striking that all rated their educational experience highly, and had a high level of regard for School staff at all levels (academic, clinical & technical). In the context of quality review, it was significant that the students commented positively on the extent to which the School seeks their feedback on academic and other issues, and the manner in which the School 'closes the feedback loop' with them by circulating summaries of survey findings and their actions in response to the issues raised by students in their feedback. This is an example of good practice for which the Review Group commends the School.
- 1.30 Overall, the Review Group formed the view that the School of Veterinary Medicine is one of UCD's flagship Schools, enjoying a high international academic reputation, transnational professional accreditation and a key strategic position as the only School of Veterinary

Medicine & Nursing in Ireland. It was evident to the Review Group that the School strives for excellence across its domains of activity – education, training, research and clinical service – while striving also to be an excellent ‘corporate citizen’, ensuring that its efforts map onto the University’s strategic goals in a meaningful way.

- 1.31 The Review Group noted the current fiscal climate and diminishing resources (both financial and human resources) in parallel with increasing student numbers. It was noted that the core state grant fell from €126m in 2008 to €65m in 2013 while the increase in the student contribution, which is defined by the Minister for Education, is not sufficient to compensate. Clearly, this situation is of great concern to the School. The Review Group shares these concerns and notes that sustainable resources to provide a high quality educational programme are embedded in the AVMA accreditation criteria. It is clear that, if this downward trend is not reversed, the veterinary programmes may become unsustainable as constituted currently. Indeed, if allowed to continue, the decrease in HEA funding may well force the School to reduce numbers of Irish/EU students, replacing them with economic fee-paying non-EU students. Given the strategic importance of the School to the agri-food sector in Ireland, the Review Group urges the Higher Education Authority to move quickly to resolve this situation definitively.
- 1.32 The Review Group noted the importance of re-evaluating promotion criteria for clinical academic staff. The long-term position of the Hospital as the premier veterinary referral centre in Ireland could be compromised by the inability to compete with the private sector and to appropriately reward staff.

2. Organisation and Management

- 2.1 The School of Veterinary Medicine (SVM) is one of two Schools in the College of Agriculture, Food Science and Veterinary Medicine. The School was reorganised in 2011 into its present configuration. An earlier reorganization in 2005 had created a College of Life Sciences with a number of schools, one of which was the School of Agriculture, Food Science and Veterinary Medicine, formed from all of the previous Faculty of Veterinary Medicine plus part of the Faculty of Agriculture and a small part of the Faculty of Engineering & Architecture. The University is currently undertaking a new review of its school and college structures. The SVM is keen for a period of stability in its organisational structure as its new procedures, structures and integrated approaches to teaching, research and clinical services are bedded down.
- 2.2 The School negotiates its budget directly with the Bursar and President. This has given the School financial and planning autonomy. The School has increased its intake of non-EU students, and improved the commercial viability of the Veterinary Hospital. Both of these factors have improved the stability of the School’s budget despite the difficult national economic circumstances and significant reduction in the University’s exchequer funding.
- 2.3 The School is governed by a School Management Team (SMT) made up of the Dean/Head of School, Associate Deans for Teaching & Learning and for Research & Innovation, the Clinical Director of the Veterinary Hospital, Commercial Director and School Office Manager. The School has also appointed a new Associate Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs who is a member of the SMT. The Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning took up the post in September 2014. The Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning and for Research and Innovation sit on the University Committees in these areas as there are no College Vice-Principals.

- 2.4 The School Executive Committee consists of the SMT and also the Veterinary Medicine Programme Manager, three representatives of the academic, technical and administrative staff and the four section heads. Rather than having advisory roles, the College Finance Officer and HR Partner are members of the School Executive. Academic and research staff in the School are organised into four main subject sections, each with a Section Head. These Sections are (i) Veterinary Clinical Sciences (ii) Veterinary Biosciences (iii) Veterinary Pathobiology and (iv) Herd Health and Animal Husbandry. The *Section Heads* manage staff within their sections and allocate workloads in teaching and administrative duties. A workload review was undertaken in 2012 in order to identify the distribution of academic workloads among staff. A detailed workload model does not appear to be in use on an ongoing basis in the School.
- 2.5 There are numerous committees in the School with participation by faculty, staff and students. Ad hoc committees are convened for particular tasks or activities such as preparation of the Self-Assessment Report. In July 2014, a new External Advisory Board was convened to act as an advocate for and advisor to the School.
- 2.6 There is a single unified School and Programme Office as the academic content of the Veterinary Medicine and Veterinary Nursing programmes is delivered by the SVM.
- 2.7 It is clear that recent changes in HEA funding for the University in general and for the School in particular have reached a 'tipping point' where further reductions in exchequer support for the educational mission of the School would endanger its viability.

Commendations

- 2.8 The RG met with a significant number of staff across the School. Staff members are dedicated, experienced and enthusiastic about their School and the range of activities in which they are involved. New structures and line management processes have been put in place since 2011. Several new committees have been constituted to deal with various aspects of the School's management. These structures give a good framework for planning and management of the School's day-to-day business as well as enabling broad engagement in medium to longer term planning.
- 2.9 The Head of School has provided strong leadership and innovation in dealing with the worsening national economic conditions. She has developed structures and organised the School into coherent subject areas, with teaching supported by the Veterinary Hospital and clinical disciplines. The RG commends the Dean and her colleagues for their visionary and forward-looking approach to management, which has allowed the School to flourish even under the recent adverse external conditions and to retain its high standing in the international academic veterinary and professional veterinary communities.
- 2.10 The RG commends the commitment of the School to engaging openly with staff and to disseminating management information within the School in a timely fashion.

Recommendations

- 2.11 The RG urges University Management, in conjunction with the School, to use every effort to secure from the HEA an increase in exchequer funding for veterinary education and training to sustainable levels. Commitment from the HEA for a sustainable funding stream will be vital for the School in retaining its transnational professional accreditation.

- 2.12 Following recent re-organisations of the College and of UCD more broadly, it is clear that the School is thriving under the current governance provision and has regained the ground that was lost during the economic down-turn. Accordingly, the RG recommends that the current stability should be allowed to continue for at least five years before any further re-structuring is considered by University Management.
- 2.13 The RG recommends that the School should formalise remits and convene regular and minuted meetings of committees in key areas such as Teaching and Learning, and Research and Innovation. Through these committee structures, School strategies should be developed and communicated within the School and College. The School strategy will contribute to the University achievement of its 2015-2020 strategy. More formalised committee structures will enable improved communication among School members and facilitate succession planning in key areas. Strategies for widespread diffusion of innovations in Teaching and Learning within the School should be developed by the Teaching and Learning committee.
- 2.14 Greater transparency in workloads and in the allocation of teaching and administrative duties is necessary to enable all staff members to balance their time in key performance areas. To this end, the SMT should develop more detailed workload frameworks by identifying the range of tasks undertaken, and regularly gather information on how School members are spending their time.
- 2.15 The RG recommends that the School move to a system of multi-annual financial planning and budgeting in conjunction with the Bursar's Office.

3. Staff and Facilities

- 3.1 It is clear that the current promotions system operated by UCD, while well structured, disfavours clinicians in the School. Their career track from primary qualification and their significant time-commitment to clinical service provision effectively preclude them from attaining 'excellence' against the research and teaching benchmarks set out in the promotions documentation which are appropriate for non-clinical colleagues (e.g. biomedical scientists). The RG noted that the AVMA accreditation team expressed concern regarding this issue in their exit presentation. The absence of such a 'clinical academic career track' disadvantages the School in a number of ways:
- It affects the recruitment and retention of clinical staff adversely
 - It renders the School / Hospital vulnerable to competition from the private sector
 - It affects the education & training programmes of the School adversely
 - It threatens the retention of AVMA accreditation long-term
 - It threatens the School's high international reputation
 - It raises a serious issue of inequality in the treatment of clinical versus other academic staff in the School / University
- 3.2 The RG was concerned to learn that the career pathways and promotional opportunities open formerly to administrative and technical staff within the School and the University appear to be unavailable currently – this is contributing to an evident demoralisation of staff within the School.

- 3.3 The RG noted the comments in the SAR and directly from staff that systems for appropriate induction and mentoring of new staff were unfit for purpose. The RG was disappointed to learn that the former staff performance management development system (PMDS) for staff had been discontinued across the University, and takes the view that a system of this kind is essential to assist staff in their career development and to ensure that staff activity is aligned to the School's priorities.
- 3.4 The RG noted the use by the School of a basic workload model to achieve an equitable distribution of academic administrative duties, but takes the view that further implementation of this model would, in the short- to medium-term, provide the School with data which would facilitate the equitable distribution of staff time across all of the relevant domains of activity.
- 3.5 The RG noted that the School has received financial provision in the order of €400,000 per annum from the University in the last year for capital investment.

Commendations

- 3.6 The RG was impressed by the evident collegiality and good working relationships that exist among the staff of the School and Hospital across disciplines and staff categories.
- 3.7 The RG commends the high quality of the facilities for education, training, research and clinical service in the Veterinary School / Hospital complex at UCD; these are comparable in standard to those in peer Schools worldwide. The clinical facilities are of high quality and sufficient for the student numbers. The teaching space is of high quality and is maintained in an excellent condition. There is good quality space supporting the teaching and learning environment. The laboratory space is of high quality and supports the School's research portfolio. The farm is an excellent resource and the building of the new dairy facility will further support student teaching and the student experience.
- 3.8 The RG commends the school on its clinical skills laboratory and the range of material supporting student teaching within the unit.

Recommendations

- 3.9 The RG recommends that the School examine clinical academic career track models implemented by peer Veterinary Schools in Europe and the US to identify appropriate benchmarks for promotion within a 'Clinical Academic Career Track' and to develop fresh proposals to be brought to University Senior Management as a matter of urgency. The RG recommends that the University consider flexibility in its promotional process to allow veterinary clinical academics to be considered for promotion based upon alternative criteria, appropriate to their discipline, developed by the School following this benchmarking exercise.
- 3.10 The RG urges the University to respond positively and creatively to the School's proposals for the development of a 'Clinical Academic Career Track' within Veterinary Medicine to facilitate the promotion of staff whose time commitment includes significant clinical service provision.
- 3.11 Similarly, the RG urges the University to develop new career pathways and promotional mechanisms for staff in the administrative and technical categories.
- 3.12 Given the extent to which members of technical staff contribute to teaching (practical, small-group & PBL) within the School, the PRG recommends that appropriate opportunities

to up-skill in teaching modalities be made available to them through UCD Teaching & Learning.

- 3.13 The RG recommends that the University ensure that the current systems for induction and mentoring of new staff are redeveloped and enhanced to ensure that they meet the needs of the School and other Schools / Units across the University.
- 3.14 The RG recommends that the University introduces a system of staff performance and development as a priority action.
- 3.15 The RG recommends that the School widen the implementation of its current workload model to capture data on the time commitments of staff to their various domains of activity (teaching, administration, research, clinical service, external professional involvement) and to use these data to establish data-driven global workload distributions for School staff.
- 3.16 The RG recommends that the School consider a mentoring programme for new members of academic staff.
- 3.17 The RG recommends that the School and University work together to ensure that the Campus Development Plan addresses the needs of the School for remediation of the existing facilities and provides for their expansion, in particular through the development of larger clinical and teaching facilities, clinical skills facilities, computer-based assessment resources and enhanced facilities for Imaging and Hydrotherapy.
- 3.18 The RG recommends that UCD continue to support capital investment by the School on an annual basis.

4. Teaching, Learning and Assessment

- 4.1 The RG was impressed by the positive comments of employer representatives regarding the high standard of training received by UCD Veterinary students and the balanced nature of the undergraduate curricula, and by their interest in working with the School to develop a broader range of Taught Postgraduate and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) courses.
- 4.2 The RG noted the involvement of staff across the Academic Sections in the management, delivery and review of the undergraduate curricula, but were concerned that the structures underpinning these activities may not be sufficiently coherent, robust or responsive to the needs of the School and University.
- 4.3 The RG noted the positive comments from both the veterinary medicine and nursing students on their courses and quality of teaching. Nursing students did raise concern over the lack of practical “hands on” experience during their course. Regarding Extra-Mural Study (EMS) provision for veterinary medical and nursing students, the PRG noted the comments of representatives of participating practices that they would like to have:
 - greater dialogue with the School on an ongoing basis regarding curriculum content
 - greater awareness of the intended learning outcomes for EMS attachments undertaken by students throughout the curriculum
 - greater awareness of the skills level and background knowledge of the students whom they receive on EMS attachments
 - greater coordination with the School to ensure that students receive balanced exposure across the range of routine procedures carried out in large- and small-animal practices in Ireland

- 4.4 In particular, the RG noted a lack of functional committee structures for the governance of Teaching and Learning, a lack of an Assessment Executive and no mechanism in place for curriculum mapping.
- 4.5 The RG noted the absence of mechanisms for assessing the teaching performance of School staff, other than through the routine module surveys, and took the view that such assessment would provide good opportunities for professional development.

Commendations

- 4.6 The RG commends the School on the extent to which the knowledge, skills and attitudes exhibited by their graduates are valued and appreciated by the Veterinary profession.
- 4.7 The RG commends the school on the investment in new initiatives in e-learning technologies and support of a learning technologist, and also the excellent clinical skills laboratory with a good range of material for student learning.

Recommendations

- 4.8 The RG recommends that the School would engage more fully with EMS practices to ensure greater clarity in terms of the School's expectations of the receiving practice, and of the students' level of skills and knowledge when attending the practice.
- 4.9 The RG recommends that the School prioritise the documentation and mapping of the undergraduate curricula (Veterinary Medicine & Nursing), preferably through the use of a relational database system (custom or proprietary), which will facilitate the validation of effective curriculum delivery, the blueprinting of assessments and the tracking of curriculum revision.
- 4.10 The RG recommends that the School create new administrative structures to firmly 'anchor' ownership of the curricula, to facilitate curriculum review and to drive the development and rationalisation of assessment methods within the School; specifically a 'Teaching & Learning Committee' and an 'Assessment Executive', both of which report to the Associate Dean for Teaching & Learning. Additionally, the RG recommends that these groups develop a strategic plan for curriculum mapping and assessment development over the next five years.
- 4.11 The RG recommend that the School adopt mechanisms to facilitate and review programme-wide compliance with University requirements in relation to assessment methods, design, QA and standards. Procedures should be in place to maximize the fairness, validity and reliability of assessment outcomes, including but not limited to academic peer review of assessment content, proofing of scripts, supervision and invigilation, maintenance of records and moderation processes. The School should adopt appropriate moderation processes to ensure parity within and between individual units of study, across the programme, with other institutions; and to ensure that each student is fairly treated.
- 4.12 The RG recommend that the School should adopt a process to review assessment outcomes and to change assessment strategies when required.
- 4.13 The RG recommend that the School should optimize resources to ensure optimum assessment reliability and validity across the curriculum, e.g. greater use of MCQs as part of overall assessment strategy (not to the exclusion of other methods) and less reliance on essay type formats.
- 4.14 The associate membership of the UK Veterinary School's Council (VSC) offers a great opportunity for the School to access a validated question bank for veterinary students. The

PRG recommend that the Head of Teaching and Learning engage with the appropriate sub-committee of VSC.

- 4.15 The RG recommends the introduction of standard setting for examinations.
- 4.16 The RG recommend that the School enhance support of e-learning technologies and the development of a broader range of blended learning approaches.
- 4.17 The RG recommends that the School explore methods for the assessment and support of the teaching performance of staff, for example by implementing 'peer evaluation of teaching' as a confidential, enhancement-focused approach to the development of teaching skills.
- 4.18 The RG recommends that the School ensure that all staff have access to training opportunities in teaching, learning and assessment.
- 4.19 The RG recommends developing methods for rewarding excellent and innovative teaching perhaps through the use of a "school award system".
- 4.20 The RG recommend that some effort be made to ensure appropriate procedures for postgraduate students including:
- Induction of postgraduate students
 - Appropriate handbook for postgraduate students
 - Mechanisms for dealing with student-supervisor conflict
 - Supervisor training
 - Developing a strong postgraduate community

5. Curriculum Development and Review

- 5.1 The RG noted the modular organisation of the undergraduate veterinary course. However, a mechanism for curriculum mapping is lacking and this raises a concern that 'silos' of teaching may be created within modules.
- 5.2 The RG noted that the School had adopted a "curriculum creep" project but it is difficult to see how this could be effectively managed without appropriate curriculum mapping.

Commendations

- 5.3 RG commends the School on its quality of teaching in undergraduate veterinary medicine and veterinary nursing.

Recommendations

- 5.4 In line with recommendations outlined above, a mechanism for curriculum mapping should be considered a high priority.
- 5.5 A curriculum review should include analysis of redundant material and ensuring strong vertical and horizontal integration.

6. Research and Scholarship

- 6.1 The RG noted that the School had benchmarked its research performance over a ten year period and could demonstrate a strong and internationally competitive performance for the

subject area. The research portfolio is broad covering translational, basic and clinical areas, across the different target species. Overall the research is well-focused on areas of direct relevance to veterinary medicine with a high proportion of outputs aligning to veterinary research.

- 6.2 The School is currently in receipt of grants totalling around €30m; the RG considers this is a very healthy level of funding based on the number of research active staff, especially considering the funding constraints in some areas of veterinary medicine (e.g. the companion animal sector).
- 6.3 The RG regards the volume of peer reviewed research outputs (approx. 200/year for 2010-12) as a strength of the School, taking into account the high proportion of academic staff heavily engaged in clinical activity with reduced research time. However, over the last two years the number of peer reviewed publications has dropped, and whether this reflects a natural cycle of activity, or signals a more sustained reduction in output volume is unclear.
- 6.4 The SAR provided information on annual outputs and grant funding but a more in-depth analysis might have assisted in understanding underlying trends. How grant income and quality outputs were distributed across the School was described at Section level but a finer grained analysis and articulating areas of real strength may help to inform future strategy and investment decisions. Assessment and expectations of research performance for different individuals within different roles were not defined; although to some extent this relates to overall University policy on staff review and development.
- 6.5 The SAR reflected the main research themes of the School, which are well aligned to UCD strategy and national priorities, including sustainable food production and disease reduction/control. However a detailed and coordinated strategy for driving forward the research performance of the School was less clearly described in the SAR, although the School does identify the need to support the interface between clinical and basic areas of strength. During review meetings scientific areas of unmet need were identified and their potential for investment well argued. The broad research remit of veterinary schools, working across a wide range of interests, does act to restrain over-concentration of resources in specific areas and the ability to build critical mass, nevertheless priorities could be developed over time.
- 6.6 Discussions within the Review Group suggested that the research environment for postgraduate students was a variable experience depending on group size and specific area of activity.

Commendations

- 6.7 A strong and broad portfolio of research with areas of international excellence.
- 6.8 It was clear to the RG that the School is imbued with a strong research culture.
- 6.9 The School's objective to build on translational research opportunities afforded by potential synergies between the clinical and basic areas, thus ensuring its research outcomes have direct impact on the animal health area.
- 6.10 Highly successful research staff are fully engaged with education at both a postgraduate and undergraduate level helping to ensure teaching is research-led and informed.
- 6.11 The establishment of the DVMS with opportunities for increased training in research methodologies in clinical disciplines.
- 6.12 The presence of strong research role models within the School.

Recommendations

- 6.13 The School is encouraged to consider how future staffing plans align to the research aspirations of the School and identify priority areas for future investment. The Research Innovation & Impact Committee should consider how best to engage with the School and partner units to best inform discussions on future direction.
- 6.14 The School should give consideration to how it monitors and benchmarks research performance of the School/Sections/groupings/individuals on an ongoing basis to monitor trends and inform future strategy.
- 6.15 The School should consider the benefits of dual-supervision for all postgraduate research students and how best to ensure that all students feel the benefit of a vibrant research community, regardless of project area.
- 6.16 Following wide consultation and inclusive discussion, the School should consider the benefits and risks of seeking an HPRRA (research) license to cover clinical (companion animal) research within the Hospital.
- 6.17 The introduction of a clinical academic career track will help to clarify staff resourcing available for research and more accurately define the research performance of the School.

7. Management of Quality and Enhancement

- 7.1 The School is subject not only to internal quality review within UCD but also to accreditation by Irish, European and US statutory and professional bodies. The successful management of these processes attests to the maturity of the culture of quality within the School, which appreciates the distinct imperatives and requirements of audit-based accreditation and of enhancement-focused quality review.
- 7.2 The quality of the SAR and supporting documents attests to the degree to which School staff members can reflect effectively and in a balanced manner on their activities. However, outside of periodic review and accreditation processes, the Review Group concluded that a key element of continuous evaluation and development is absent, namely a system for annual performance management and development of staff. The RG noted that this is due to the cessation of the University-wide PMDS system several years ago. It is clear that the effective management of staff is hampered severely by a lack of accurate information on their activity and time-commitments. Indeed, this impacts negatively also on the deployment of staff in teaching roles and the effective strategic management of research in the School. The Review Group recommends that the University should introduce a manageable system of performance management and development. In parallel, the School should extend its current work-load model to provide a comprehensive overview of staff commitments.
- 7.3 The Review Group found evidence, both in the SAR and in discussions during the site-visit, that the School expends significant effort annually in gathering feedback on its activities and services from students, clients of the veterinary hospital and other stakeholders. A variety of methods is used including on-line surveys, questionnaires and focus groups. Additionally, it is clear that School staff are receptive to this feedback and act quickly to decide on actions to be taken in response, and to disseminate survey results and actions to students. 'Closing the feedback loop' in this manner is the key to maintaining constructive engagement and dialogue with stakeholders.

- 7.4 The School derives additional useful feedback from student participation in Committees. The students praised the role played by the Staff – Student Liaison Committee in particular as an effective way of communicating issues and concerns to School Management. In working to optimise the functioning of committees supporting / driving curriculum and assessment development in the School, the Review Group felt that student representatives should be included in the membership of the Teaching & Learning Committee.
- 7.5 The establishment of the new External Advisory Board is a laudable initiative on the part of the School which will provide new perspectives and inputs to the development of School Strategy. The Review Group commends this and encourages the School to develop comprehensive terms of reference for the Board.

Commendations

- 7.6 The RG commends the culture of quality and quality enhancement which is well established within the School and a key aspect of its ethos.
- 7.7 The RG commends the School’s awareness and use of feedback from a wide variety of sources.
- 7.8 The RG commends the extent to which the School takes measures to inform students and other stakeholders of its responses to issues emerging from their feedback, and thus to ‘close the feedback loop’ effectively.
- 7.9 The RG commends the establishment of the External Advisory Board.

Recommendations

- 7.10 The Review Group recommends that the University should introduce a manageable system of performance management and development and that, in parallel, the School should extend its current workload model to provide a comprehensive overview of staff commitments.
- 7.11 The RG recommends that student representatives should be included in the membership of the Teaching & Learning Committee.
- 7.12 The RG recommends that the School work with the members of the External Advisory Board to clarify the role and remit of the Board, and to ensure its involvement in planning for future development of the School’s facilities and services to the University and to the broader community.

8. Support Services

- 8.1 The School activities are supported by a wide range of support services within the School as well as from College and University units. The School has excellent administrative and technical staff working in the subject sections to support teaching and research activities. The School Office Manager line-manages the section administrative staff and supports the Head of School and the SMT.
- 8.2 The School has recently hired an Educational Technologist, a Commercial Manager, an Operations Manager and a Student Advisor. The College Finance Officer and College Accountant provide support in financial planning. A Veterinary Library is located within the

main School building and library services are facilitated by a Veterinary Medicine Liaison Librarian located in the University's main James Joyce Library.

- 8.3 Staff in the University's Building and Services Department, Registry, IT Department, HR Department, UCD Teaching and Learning, Safety Office and International Office provide support as needed to all academic and non-academic staff of the School.
- 8.4 The School provides a bespoke induction programme for new members of staff. The University induction courses are offered infrequently and tend to be general in scope. The University HR Department offers a wide range of training courses and is responsive to requests to provide either bespoke courses or new courses suggested by staff or Schools.

Commendations

- 8.5 The RG commends the excellent quality, experience and commitment of support staff within the School. Support staff members undertake a variety of roles in their posts and reported high levels of satisfaction with the University's support services. The University has moved to provide information online in many areas and this has enabled School administrative staff to effectively provide support to their sections and School. The commitment and engagement of the administrative staff was impressive particularly in light of the limited incentives from the University in rewarding excellence in non-academic grades.
- 8.6 The RG commends the School on the commitment to student welfare and wellbeing. The School has recently hired a Student Advisor who articulated a very strong commitment to supporting students, providing pastoral care, engaging closely with School members where issues of student welfare are concerned and liaising with University support units dealing with all aspects of student health and wellbeing. Feedback from the undergraduate students relating to communications with staff in the School and student supports was very favourable.
- 8.7 The RG commends the University on the range of staff development opportunities available to all staff through the HR Department, as well as the flexibility and responsiveness of HR to requests for new training options.

Recommendations

- 8.8 The RG recommends that the University re-establish a promotion track for administrative staff as a matter of urgency. The retention and continued commitment of high quality support staff is vital if the School is to continue providing excellence in its teaching and research missions. The promotions pathways for non-academic staff have not been available since 2008. This is having a demoralising effect on staff. Staff can seek to apply for promotions through redeployment elsewhere in the University, but incur reduced holidays and increased working hours for relatively small pay increases.

9. Veterinary Hospital

- 9.1 The RG considered that a) the absence of a clearly defined clinical academic career track with job-specific objectives, performance and advancement criteria and, b) the inability to compete with the private sector, places the School at a distinct competitive disadvantage compared with other leading schools. It was suggested at meetings that, as evidenced by recent promotion successes, the University is sympathetic to the inequality of opportunity for clinical staff heavily engaged in clinical teaching and income generation. Nevertheless the

absence of objective performance criteria aligned to the role will exacerbate the recruitment and retention problems common to many veterinary schools, especially in key disciplines. In the longer term the potential of the hospital to remain the leading referral centre and continue to grow non-exchequer income (particularly in the small animal area) will be seriously jeopardised by inflexible promotion and remuneration policies.

- 9.2 A current and serious constraint to expansion of clinical activity and income relates to affordability of nursing provision. Veterinary nursing has matured as a profession in its own right and employment terms and conditions, pay scales, career pathway and gradation of seniority should be benchmarked with the profession as a whole. Resolving this impasse is essential for the continued development of the Hospital and the School.
- 9.3 Ambitious and sustained expansion of clinical services is dependent on the ability of the School to develop carefully costed and robust business plans that manage risk effectively.

Commendations

- 9.4 Highly qualified and motivated staff ambitious for the Hospital and the School.
- 9.5 Modern purpose-built hospital facilities and clinical staff operating at the leading edge of the profession ensure an excellent environment for teaching a range of clinical and professional skills to undergraduates, interns and DVMS students.
- 9.6 Significant potential for future growth bolstered by recent improvements in cost control, efficient business management practices and profitability.
- 9.7 Connectivity to the Veterinary Sciences building and multispecies areas helps to ensure cohesion and interaction of veterinary school staff and students throughout the programme.

Recommendations

- 9.8 The establishment of a clinical academic career track that acknowledges and rewards clinical contribution by using relevant objective criteria for appointment and promotion.
- 9.9 The School acknowledges that future expansion of clinical activity needs to be carefully managed to ensure teaching, scholarship and staff morale is not compromised.
- 9.10 In the future the School and University need to consider equitable and transparent employment practices that allow for retention and recruitment of staff highly sought after in the private sector.
- 9.11 Development of appropriate pay scales and career pathway for veterinary nurses.

10. External Relations

- 10.1 The Review Group was impressed by the high level of engagement of the School in veterinary education, professional training and standards, clinical service provision and the agri-food business sector. Within UCD, the School is a key contributor to university governance, teaching, research and public engagement. Within Ireland, as the sole provider of education and specialist training in veterinary medicine and nursing, the School is the main tertiary referral centre for the veterinary profession and a major source of advice to all sectors of the agri-food business sector.

- 10.2 It was abundantly clear, from the SAR and discussions with external stakeholders, that the external engagements of the School are not nominal in nature. Rather, they are deep and sustained relationships which place the School at the centre of a web of knowledge contributing to the development of the veterinary professions and underpinning cutting-edge agri-business development in Ireland. For example, the relationship with the Department of Agriculture has led to the establishment of a significant programme of research in veterinary epidemiology and disease surveillance.
- 10.3 However, while recognising the value of this high level of engagement, the Review Group was concerned that the School cannot continue to support such a wide range of activities without additional support from the University in areas such as blended / on-line learning, digital marketing, use of social media and fund-raising. In addition, the School may benefit from the advice of the External Advisory Board in terms of priority 'high-yield' areas for future involvement.
- 10.4 The School contributes significantly to the UCD internationalisation strategy through the innovative graduate entry programme in veterinary medicine, which has led to a significant increase in non-EU student numbers, with obvious benefits to the local economy.

Commendations

- 10.5 The RG commends the School's evident commitment to and success in developing sustained and meaningful engagement with the University community and with national / international partners in a diverse range of activities.
- 10.6 The RG commends the School's contribution to the UCD internationalisation agenda through the creation of the graduate entry route into veterinary medicine and the increase in non-EU student intake associated with this programme.

Recommendations

- 10.7 The RG recommends that the assistance of the External Advisory Board is sought in identifying priority 'high-yield' areas for future involvement, especially to facilitate fundraising.
- 10.8 The RG recommends that the University provide additional support and training as required in areas relevant to School 'outreach' such as blended / on-line learning, digital marketing and fund-raising.

11. Review Group Commentary on the School's Overall Analysis and Recommendations for Improvement (Strategic Objectives)

- 11.1 The Review Group (as noted previously) was impressed by the depth of the self-reflection process undertaken by the School in preparation for this review and concurs with the School's analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Strengths as presented in the SAR.
- 11.2 Regarding the School's strategic objectives, the Review Group noted that [a] the School needs to develop a new Strategic Plan to follow the current plan which ends in mid-2015, and [b] the University has just finalised a new Strategic Plan 2015-2020. Therefore, the

Review Group felt that it was premature to comment on strategic objectives in this document.

11.3 Rather than commenting on existing objectives, the Review Group offers the following points for consideration by the School as it develops its new Strategic Plan from 2015 onwards:

- Maintaining financial stability through working closely with the University and HEA
- Staff and career development through appraisal systems and establishment of appropriate promotion criteria
- Appropriate structure for teaching and learning with curriculum review and mapping
- A review of assessment methods and the introduction of an Assessment Executive
- Development of a research strategy sympathetic to the career aspirations of the staff, to the school strategy and to the funding opportunities
- To engage with appropriate Campus planning exercises in order to ensure the implementation of physical developments for the School and/or University such as imaging, hydrotherapy and expansion of the clinical skills laboratory

12. Summary Commendations and Recommendations

This chapter contains a summary of all commendations and recommendations made by the Review Group for the School of Veterinary Medicine and should be read in conjunction with the specific section. *(Please note that the paragraph references below refer to the relevant paragraphs in the report text above)*

Organisation and Management

Commendations

- 2.8 The RG met with a significant number of staff across the School. Staff members are dedicated, experienced and enthusiastic about their School and the range of activities in which they are involved. New structures and line management processes have been put in place since 2009. Several new committees have been constituted to deal with various aspects of the School's management. These structures give a good framework for planning and management of the School's day-to-day business as well as enabling broad engagement in medium to longer term planning.
- 2.9 The Head of School has provided strong leadership and innovation in dealing with the worsening national economic conditions. She has developed structures and organised the School into coherent subject areas, with teaching supported by the Veterinary Hospital and clinical disciplines. The RG commends the Dean and her colleagues for their visionary and forward-looking approach to management, which has allowed the School to flourish even under the recent adverse external conditions and to retain its high standing in the international academic veterinary and professional veterinary communities.
- 2.10 The RG commends the commitment of the School to engaging openly with staff and to disseminating management information within the School in a timely fashion.

Recommendations

- 2.11 The RG urges University Management, in conjunction with the School, to use every effort to secure from the HEA an increase in exchequer funding for veterinary education and training

to sustainable levels. Commitment from the HEA for a sustainable funding stream will be vital for the School in retaining its transnational professional accreditation.

- 2.12 Following recent re-organisations of the College and of UCD more broadly, it is clear that the School is thriving under the current governance provision and has regained the ground that was lost during the economic down-turn. Accordingly, the RG recommends that the current stability should be allowed to continue for at least five years before any further re-structuring is considered by University Management.
- 2.13 The RG recommends that the School should formalise remits and convene regular and minuted meetings of committees in key areas such as Teaching and Learning, and Research and Innovation. Through these committee structures, School strategies should be developed and communicated within the School and College. The School strategy will contribute to the University achievement of its 2015-2020 strategy. More formalised committee structures will enable improved communication among School members and facilitate succession planning in key areas. Strategies for widespread diffusion of innovations in Teaching and Learning within the School should be developed by the Teaching and Learning committee.
- 2.14 Greater transparency in workloads and in the allocation of teaching and administrative duties is necessary to enable all staff members to balance their time in key performance areas. To this end, the SMT should develop more detailed workload frameworks by identifying the range of tasks undertaken, and regularly gather information on how School members are spending their time.
- 2.15 The RG recommends that the School move to a system of multi-annual financial planning and budgeting in conjunction with the Bursar's Office.

Staff and Facilities

Commendations

- 3.6 The RG was impressed by the evident collegiality and good working relationships that exist among the staff of the School and Hospital across disciplines and staff categories.
- 3.7 The RG commends the high quality of the facilities for education, training, research and clinical service in the Veterinary School / Hospital complex at UCD; these are comparable in standard to those in peer Schools worldwide. The clinical facilities are of high quality and sufficient for the student numbers. The teaching space is of high quality and is maintained in an excellent condition. There is good quality space supporting the teaching and learning environment. The laboratory space is of high quality and supports the School's research portfolio. The farm is an excellent resource and the building of the new dairy facility will further support student teaching and the student experience.
- 3.8 The RG commends the school on its clinical skills laboratory and the range of material supporting student teaching within the unit.

Recommendations

- 3.9 The RG recommends that the School examine clinical academic career track models implemented by peer Veterinary Schools in Europe and the US to identify appropriate benchmarks for promotion within a 'Clinical Academic Career Track' and to develop fresh proposals to be brought to University Senior Management as a matter of urgency. The RG

recommends that the University consider flexibility in its promotional process to allow veterinary clinical academics to be considered for promotion based upon alternative criteria, appropriate to their discipline, developed by the School following this benchmarking exercise.

- 3.10 The RG urges the University to respond positively and creatively to the School's proposals for the development of a 'Clinical Academic Career Track' within Veterinary Medicine to facilitate the promotion of staff whose time commitment includes significant clinical service provision.
- 3.11 Similarly, the RG urges the University to develop new career pathways and promotional mechanisms for staff in the administrative and technical categories.
- 3.12 Given the extent to which members of technical staff contribute to teaching (practical, small-group & PBL) within the School, the PRG recommends that appropriate opportunities to up-skill in teaching modalities be made available to them through UCD Teaching & Learning.
- 3.13 The RG recommends that the University ensure that the current systems for induction and mentoring of new staff are redeveloped and enhanced to ensure that they meet the needs of the School and other Schools / Units across the University.
- 3.14 The RG recommends that the University introduces a system of staff performance and development as a priority action.
- 3.15 The RG recommends that the School widen the implementation of its current workload model to capture data on the time commitments of staff to their various domains of activity (teaching, administration, research, clinical service, external professional involvement) and to use these data to establish data-driven global workload distributions for School staff.
- 3.16 The RG recommends that the School consider a mentoring programme for new members of academic staff.
- 3.17 The RG recommends that the School and University work together to ensure that the Campus Development Plan addresses the needs of the School for remediation of the existing facilities and provides for their expansion, in particular through the development of larger clinical and teaching facilities, clinical skills facilities, computer-based assessment resources and enhanced facilities for Imaging and Hydrotherapy.
- 3.18 The RG recommends that UCD continue to support capital investment by the School on an annual basis.

Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Commendations

- 4.6 The RG commends the School on the extent to which the knowledge, skills and attitudes exhibited by their graduates are valued and appreciated by the Veterinary profession.
- 4.7 The RG commends the school on the investment in new initiatives in e-learning technologies and support of a learning technologist, and also the excellent clinical skills laboratory with a good range of material for student learning.

Recommendations

- 4.8 The RG recommends that the School would engage more fully with EMS practices to ensure greater clarity in terms of the School's expectations of the receiving practice, and of the students' level of skills and knowledge when attending the practice.
- 4.9 The RG recommends that the School prioritise the documentation and mapping of the undergraduate curricula (Veterinary Medicine & Nursing), preferably through the use of a relational database system (custom or proprietary), which will facilitate the validation of effective curriculum delivery, the blueprinting of assessments and the tracking of curriculum revision.
- 4.10 The RG recommends that the School create new administrative structures to firmly 'anchor' ownership of the curricula, to facilitate curriculum review and to drive the development and rationalisation of assessment methods within the School; specifically a 'Teaching & Learning Committee' and an 'Assessment Executive', both of which report to the Associate Dean for Teaching & Learning. Additionally, the RG recommends that these groups develop a strategic plan for curriculum mapping and assessment development over the next five years.
- 4.11 The RG recommend that the School adopt mechanisms to facilitate and review programme-wide compliance with University requirements in relation to assessment methods, design, QA and standards. Procedures should be in place to maximize the fairness, validity and reliability of assessment outcomes, including but not limited to academic peer review of assessment content, proofing of scripts, supervision and invigilation, maintenance of records and moderation processes. The School should adopt appropriate moderation processes to ensure parity within and between individual units of study, across the programme, with other institutions; and to ensure that each student is fairly treated.
- 4.12 The RG recommend that the School should adopt a process to review assessment outcomes and to change assessment strategies when required.
- 4.13 The RG recommend that the School should optimize resources to ensure optimum assessment reliability and validity across the curriculum, e.g. greater use of MCQs as part of overall assessment strategy (not to the exclusion of other methods) and less reliance on essay type formats.
- 4.14 The associate membership of the UK Veterinary School's Council (VSC) offers a great opportunity for the School to access a validated question bank for veterinary students. The PRG recommend that the Head of Teaching and Learning engage with the appropriate sub-committee of VSC.
- 4.15 The RG recommends the introduction of standard setting for examinations.
- 4.16 The RG recommend that the School enhance support of e-learning technologies and the development of a broader range of blended learning approaches.
- 4.17 The RG recommends that the School explore methods for the assessment and support of the teaching performance of staff, for example by implementing 'peer evaluation of teaching' as a confidential, enhancement-focused approach to the development of teaching skills.
- 4.18 The RG recommends that the School ensure that all staff have access to training opportunities in teaching, learning and assessment.
- 4.19 The RG recommends developing methods for rewarding excellent and innovative teaching perhaps through the use of a "school award system".
- 4.20 The RG recommend that some effort be made to ensure appropriate procedures for postgraduate students including:

- Induction of postgraduate students
- Appropriate handbook for postgraduate students
- Mechanisms for dealing with student-supervisor conflict
- Supervisor training
- Developing a strong postgraduate community

Curriculum Development and Review

Commendations

- 5.3 RG commends the School on its quality of teaching in undergraduate veterinary medicine and veterinary nursing.

Recommendations

- 5.4 In line with recommendations outlined above, a mechanism for curriculum mapping should be considered a high priority.
- 5.5 A curriculum review should include analysis of redundant material and ensuring strong vertical and horizontal integration.

Research and Scholarship

Commendations

- 6.7 A strong and broad portfolio of research with areas of international excellence.
- 6.8 It was clear to the RG that the School is imbued with a strong research culture.
- 6.9 The School's objective to build on translational research opportunities afforded by potential synergies between the clinical and basic areas, thus ensuring its research outcomes have direct impact on the animal health area.
- 6.10 Highly successful research staff are fully engaged with education at both a postgraduate and undergraduate level helping to ensure teaching is research-led and informed.
- 6.11 The establishment of the DVMS with opportunities for increased training in research methodologies in clinical disciplines.
- 6.12 The presence of strong research role models within the School.

Recommendations

- 6.13 The School is encouraged to consider how future staffing plans align to the research aspirations of the School and identify priority areas for future investment. The Research Innovation & Impact Committee should consider how best to engage with the School and partner units to best inform discussions on future direction.
- 6.14 The School should give consideration to how it monitors and benchmarks research performance of the School/Sections/groupings/individuals on an ongoing basis to monitor trends and inform future strategy.
- 6.15 The School should consider the benefits of dual-supervision for all postgraduate research students and how best to ensure that all students feel the benefit of a vibrant research community, regardless of project area.

- 6.16 Following wide consultation and inclusive discussion, the School should consider the benefits and risks of seeking an HPRA (research) license to cover clinical (companion animal) research within the Hospital.
- 6.17 The introduction of a clinical academic career track will help to clarify staff resourcing available for research and more accurately define the research performance of the School.

Management of Quality and Enhancement

Commendations

- 7.6 The RG commends the culture of quality and quality enhancement which is well established within the School and a key aspect of its ethos.
- 7.7 The RG commends the School's awareness and use of feedback from a wide variety of sources.
- 7.8 The RG commends the extent to which the School takes measures to inform students and other stakeholders of its responses to issues emerging from their feedback, and thus to 'close the feedback loop' effectively.
- 7.9 The RG commends the establishment of the External Advisory Board.

Recommendations

- 7.10 The Review Group recommends that the University should introduce a manageable system of performance management and development and that, in parallel, the School should extend its current workload model to provide a comprehensive overview of staff commitments.
- 7.11 The RG recommends that student representatives should be included in the membership of the Teaching & Learning Committee.
- 7.12 The RG recommends that the School work with the members of the External Advisory Board to clarify the role and remit of the Board, and to ensure its involvement in planning for future development of the School's facilities and services to the University and to the broader community.

Support Services

Commendations

- 8.5 The RG commends the excellent quality, experience and commitment of support staff within the School. Support staff members undertake a variety of roles in their posts and reported high levels of satisfaction with the University's support services. The University has moved to provide information online in many areas and this has enabled School administrative staff to effectively provide support to their sections and School. The commitment and engagement of the administrative staff was impressive particularly in light of the limited incentives from the University in rewarding excellence in non-academic grades.
- 8.6 The RG commends the School on the commitment to student welfare and wellbeing. The School has recently hired a Student Advisor who articulated a very strong commitment to supporting students, providing pastoral care, engaging closely with School members where issues of student welfare are concerned and liaising with University support units dealing

with all aspects of student health and wellbeing. Feedback from the undergraduate students relating to communications with staff in the School and student supports was very favourable.

- 8.7 The RG commends the University on the range of staff development opportunities available to all staff through the HR Department, as well as the flexibility and responsiveness of HR to requests for new training options.

Recommendations

- 8.8 The RG recommends that the University re-establish a promotion track for administrative staff as a matter of urgency. The retention and continued commitment of high quality support staff is vital if the School is to continue providing excellence in its teaching and research missions. The promotions pathways for non-academic staff have not been available since 2008. This is having a demoralising effect on staff. Staff can seek to apply for promotions through redeployment elsewhere in the University, but incur reduced holidays and increased working hours for relatively small pay increases.

Veterinary Hospital

Commendations

- 9.4 Highly qualified and motivated staff ambitious for the Hospital and the School.
- 9.5 Modern purpose-built hospital facilities and clinical staff operating at the leading edge of the profession ensure an excellent environment for teaching a range of clinical and professional skills to undergraduates, interns and DVMS students.
- 9.6 Significant potential for future growth bolstered by recent improvements in cost control, efficient business management practices and profitability.
- 9.7 Connectivity to the Veterinary Sciences building and multispecies areas helps to ensure cohesion and interaction of veterinary school staff and students throughout the programme.

Recommendations

- 9.8 The establishment of a clinical academic career track that acknowledges and rewards clinical contribution by using relevant objective criteria for appointment and promotion.
- 9.9 The School acknowledges that future expansion of clinical activity needs to be carefully managed to ensure teaching, scholarship and staff morale is not compromised.
- 9.10 In the future the School and University need to consider equitable and transparent employment practices that allow for retention and recruitment of staff highly sought after in the private sector.
- 9.11 Development of appropriate pay scales and career pathway for veterinary nurses.

External Relations

Commendations

- 10.5 The RG commends the School's evident commitment to and success in developing sustained and meaningful engagement with the University community and with national / international partners in a diverse range of activities.

- 10.6 The RG commends the School's contribution to the UCD internationalisation agenda through the creation of the graduate entry route into veterinary medicine and the increase in non-EU student intake associated with this programme.

Recommendations

- 10.7 The RG recommends that the assistance of the External Advisory Board is sought in identifying priority 'high-yield' areas for future involvement, especially to facilitate fundraising.
- 10.8 The RG recommends that the University provide additional support and training as required in areas relevant to School 'outreach' such as blended / on-line learning, digital marketing and fund-raising.

Appendix One: UCD School of Veterinary Medicine Response to the Review Group Report

The School expresses its warm appreciation for the thorough and incisive report prepared by the Review Group, ably guided and assisted by the staff of the UCD Quality Office.

The preparation of the SAR provided a valuable opportunity for self-reflection, which complemented that provided in preparation for external accreditation visits. The discussions with the RG over the course of the visit were cordial, constructive and useful in terms of reinforcing and clarifying our thinking on strategic development.

It is gratifying to see the hard work and dedication of the staff of the School reflected in the commendations. We particularly look forward to addressing the Recommendations, which by and large are reflective of our own SWOT analysis, in the Quality Improvement Plan, and to working with the University Management Team in seizing the opportunities that are so clearly articulated in the report.

Appendix Two: Schedule for Review Site Visit to UCD School of Veterinary Medicine



University College Dublin
National University of Ireland

UCD Quality Review
SITE VISIT SCHEDULE
to UCD School of Veterinary Medicine
1st – 4th December 2014

DAY ONE

Monday 1 st December		
17.00-19.15	RG meeting at hotel to review preliminary issues and confirm work schedule and assignment of tasks.	
19.30	Dinner for RG hosted by Registrar and Deputy President	

DAY TWO

Tuesday, 2 nd December		
08:30–09.00	Private meeting of RG	<i>Boardroom, Veterinary Sciences Centre</i>
09:00-09.15	Meeting with Head of School	<i>Boardroom, Veterinary Sciences Centre</i>
09.15-10.00	RG meet with Head of School, Management Committee and Chair, SAR Co-Ordinating Committee	<i>Boardroom, Veterinary Sciences Centre</i>
10.00-10.15	Tea/coffee – Meet with College Principal	<i>Boardroom, Veterinary Sciences Centre</i>
10.15-11.00	RG Meet with SAR Co-ordinating Committee:	<i>Boardroom, Veterinary Sciences Centre</i>
11.00-13.00	Tour of Facilities including Tour school/college facilities including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Companion animal hospital - Large animal hospital, including ambulatory - Hospital support areas (pharmacy, clinical pathology, medical records, imaging) - Areas where teaching animals are housed - Necropsy section 	
13.00-14.00	Buffet Lunch meeting with employers and other external stakeholders	<i>Common Room, Veterinary Sciences Centre</i>
14.00-14.30	RG private meeting to Review Key observations	<i>Boardroom, Veterinary Sciences Centre</i>
14.30-15.45	RG meet with representative group of academic staff – focus on Teaching, Learning and Curriculum.	<i>Boardroom, Veterinary Sciences Centre</i>

15.45-16.00	Tea/Coffee BREAK	<i>Boardroom, Veterinary Sciences Centre</i>
16.00-16.45	RG meet with support staff representatives (administrative, technical)	<i>Boardroom, Veterinary Sciences Centre</i>
16.45-17.30	RG members meet with Heads of Academic Sections <i>Veterinary Clinical Sciences</i> <i>Veterinary Biosciences</i> <i>Veterinary Pathobiology</i> <i>Herd Health and Animal Husbandry</i>	<i>Boardroom, Veterinary Sciences Centre</i>
17.30	RG Depart	<i>Boardroom, Veterinary Sciences Centre</i>

DAY THREE

Wednesday, 3rd December		
08.00-10.00	RG Travel to UCD Lyons Research Farm	
10.00-10.30	Private meeting of RG over Tea/Coffee	<i>Boardroom, Veterinary Sciences Centre</i>
10.30-10.45 10.45-11.00	RG meet Veterinary Medicine Liaison Librarian and Head of Academic Services, UCD Library, representatives from UCD Buildings and Services, IT Services	<i>Boardroom, UCD Veterinary Sciences Centre</i>
11.00-12.00	RG meet with a representative group of graduate students (PhD and DVMS) and recent graduates (parallel meetings)	<i>Boardroom, Veterinary Sciences Centre</i>
12.00-13.00	RG meet with the School Research, Innovation and Impact Committee	<i>Boardroom, Veterinary Sciences Centre</i>
13.00-14.00	RG meet with a representative group of undergraduate students over buffet lunch	<i>Staff Common Room – Veterinary Sciences Centre</i>
14.00-14.45	Meeting with College Finance Manager and Head of School outlining School's financial situation	<i>Boardroom, Veterinary Sciences Centre</i>
14.45-15.30	RG meet with recently appointed members of Staff	<i>Boardroom, UCD Veterinary Sciences Centre</i>
15.45-16.30	RG members meet with Heads of Clinical Disciplines (Tea Coffee at this meeting)	<i>Boardroom, UCD Veterinary Sciences Centre</i>
16.30-17.30	RG available for private individual meetings with staff.	<i>Health Sciences Centre</i>
17.30-18.00	RG private meeting to review key observations	<i>Boardroom, Veterinary Sciences Centre</i>
18.00	RG depart	

DAY FOUR

Thursday, 4th December		
08.30-09.30	Private Meeting of RG	<i>Boardroom, UCD Veterinary Sciences Centre.</i>
09.30-	Optional meetings of RG with Head of School and/or other staff to	<i>Boardroom, UCD Veterinary Sciences</i>

10.30	clarify any outstanding issues, <u>or</u> revisit to any of the school facilities, <u>or</u> begin preparing draft report.	<i>Centre.</i>
10.30-10.45	Tea/Coffee BREAK	<i>Boardroom, UCD Veterinary Sciences Centre</i>
10.45-12.30	RG Group work on Draft Report	<i>Boardroom, Veterinary Sciences Centre</i>
12.30-13.15	LUNCH	<i>Boardroom, Veterinary Sciences Centre</i>
13.15-15.30	RG Group finalise first draft of report/feedback/commendations/recommendations	<i>Room 101A/B, UCD Veterinary Sciences Centre</i>
15.30-15.45	BREAK	<i>Boardroom, UCD Vet Sciences Centre</i>
14.45-	RG group meet with Head of School and Principal, College of Agriculture, Food Science and Veterinary Medicine to feedback initial outline commendations and recommendations	<i>UCD Health Sciences Centre</i>
15.30	Exit Presentation to All Staff	<i>Lecture Theatre 114, Veterinary Sciences Centre</i>
15 .45	RG Depart	<i>UCD Health Sciences Centre</i>