Estates Office
Quality Improvement Plan

19th October 2007

Contents

The Quality Improvement Plan was finalised in a meeting on 19th October 2007. The meeting was attended by

- o Members of Senior Management
  - o President, Prof Ferdinand von Prondzinski
  - o Deputy-President, Prof Anne Scott
  - o Secretary, Mr Martin Conry
  - o VPR, Prof Eugene Kennedy
- o Members of the Peer Review Group
  - o Mr Pat Clarke (external)
  - o Dr Barry McMullin (internal)
- o Representatives of the Estates Office
  - o Director of Estates, Mr Michael Kelly
  - o Chair of Coordination Committee, Mr Richard Kelly
- o Director of Quality, Dr Heinz Lechleiter (chairing)

1.   **INTRODUCTION**

Following receipt of the Peer Review Group Report, the Estates Office discussed the findings and put together a plan for the preparation of a Quality Improvement Programme.

This plan has two aspects; the first being the identification and putting in place of the recommendations found during the process of the Quality Review, the second part being the use of these plans and improvement measures to help guide us in our Strategic Plan, "*Towards Integration and Sustainability*".

The initial report was prepared by Mike Kelly, Kathleen Whelan, Gerry O'Donnell and Richard Kelly. The final plan will be circulated to all staff for their valued input. As such, because of time constraints this Report may be revised over the coming weeks.

At this point we would like to once again thank both the Quality Promotion Unit and the Peer Review Group for their participation in this exercise. It was very much appreciated.

2.   **RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE PEER REVIEW GROUP REPORT**

The Estates Office fundamentally agrees with the recommendations of the Peer Review Group Report and they are very similar to what was mentioned in our original Self Assessment Report but overall the management team felt that some of the suggestions could have been identified in a somewhat stronger manner.

In terms of *Background and Context* we agree that a Health and Safety Officer is required immediately with the reasons outlined in the Self Assessment Report self explanatory. We would also agree that the majority of our time is spent on dealing with crises and that planning and reflection is becoming non-existent, with concerns from staff constantly revolving around funding and resourcing problems. Staff from all parts of the unit often wonder is it realised that the University building area has doubled in size in recent years without appreciable increases in resources (including staffing) and that this has had a major impact on both the quality of the services that we provide and the cost of delivering these services.

The rapid development of the University is commendable and a great testament to all concerned but it should not be understated that these large increases do necessitate an increase in the resources of the Estates Office.

In terms of *Organisation, Planning and Management* we agree that the present accommodation is not entirely satisfactory and that the Estates Office could be provided with better accommodation, especially with regard to the Workshops and associated ancillary areas.

In terms of *Functions, Activities and Processes* we also agree with the recommendations that a new helpdesk be introduced, car parking issues be looked at in more detail and that the University take responsibility for the improvement of the grounds. We completely concur with the Peer Review Group where they say that the grounds if resourced properly could be "*an effective marketing tool in attracting students to the University and also show its commitment to student life on campus*".

The comments on *Customer Perspective* were exactly as we highlighted in our initial Self Assessment Report where Staffing, Resources, Helpdesk, Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and Car Parking were the main issues. In general, staff within the office were uplifted with the general consensus of the comments from the questionnaires and the focus group meetings, where we appear to command a lot of respect and appreciation across the entire University community and they understand that we are under-resourced.

The comments on *Staff Perspective* also show how important recognition from senior management would be to staff morale. The usual issue of low resourcing is also mentioned by the Peer Review Group where they indicate that there are "*insufficient resources available to cover leave or staff absence*".

Comments on *Management of Resources* again highlight what we found from our questionnaire and focus groups, with the positive comments significantly outweighing the negative, but that CRM needs to be addressed. We agree strongly with the final comments of the Peer Review Group.

The Estates Office would once again draw attention to a summary of our Self Assessment Report highlighted in Appendix 1. It gives a concise summary of the quality issues that face us over the next three years.

Our responses to the recommendations from the Peer Review Group are outlined on the following pages.

<u>**Recommendations for Improvement for ESTATES OFFICE**</u>
The following notation is used in the recommendations for improvement.

P1: A recommendation that is important *and* requires urgent action.
P2: A recommendation that is important, but can (or perhaps must) be addressed on a more extended time scale.
P3: A recommendation which merits serious consideration but which is not considered to be critical to the quality of the ongoing activities of the Estates Office.

Additionally, the PRG indicate the level(s) of the University where action is required:
A: Administrative Unit (The Estates Office)
G: Group Action
U: University Executive/Senior Management

	Addressee	Priority	PRG Recommendation (Draft Report)	Response
1	A	P1	➤ Expedite deployment of new web-based work request system ➤ ➤ Define triage criteria and responsibility ➤ Institute active monitoring and analysing of backlog ➤ Achieve continuous improvement in service level	New Helpdesk (Phase 1) currently in production and it is planned to have it installed by the second semester of the academic year 2007-08. It was agreed that needs of users with disabilities will be attended to. Agreed. Helpdesk will address this issue. Agreed. Helpdesk will address this issue. Agreed. Helpdesk will address this issue. A series of CRM training sessions took place over the summer 2007 with a view to enable the Estates Office to produce a customer relationship strategy over the academic year 2007-08.

	Addressee	Priority	PRG Recommendation (Draft Report)	Response
			➢ Consistent, timely, customer feedback ➢ Create accountability	Agreed. Helpdesk will address this issue. Agreed. Helpdesk will address this issue
2	A	P1	➢ Develop a Quality Handbook, including guidelines, policies and procedures. This process would benefit from involvement by an external expert, and should specifically evaluate the adequacy and effectiveness of the staff allocated for each aspect of the Unit's responsibilities.	This will be addressed over the period of our CRM Training and it is hoped to produce this guidebook in such a way that it compliments the introduction of our new Helpdesk System. Like the Helpdesk, the Quality Handbook will be web-based. Subject to funding from the Quality Improvement Fund this is expected to be completed in September 2008.
3	A U	P1	➢ Integrate Project Management Office into the Estates Office, and reporting through the Director of the Estates Office.	A & U: This recommendation will be implemented within the academic year 2007-08.
4	A	P1	➢ Review effectiveness of management structure and organisation ➢ Identify and implement required staff training ➢ Empower more distributed responsibility and decision making	Three key staff have been approved by Executive. Management structure and organisation to be adapted accordingly and to be monitored on an ongoing basis. Training needs assessed in terms of CRM. Ongoing training is discussed at Management Meetings. Empowerment is part of our Management Strategy within the Office.

	Addressee	Priority	PRG Recommendation (Draft Report)	Response
5	U	P1	➢ Clarify space management policy	The university space management policy is currently under review, with a view to taking a revised space policy document to Executive early in the academic year 2007-08.
6	U A	P1	➢ Initiate digital archival and indexing of all as-built drawings and maintenance manuals	A digital archiving plan has been costed. Implementation depends upon funding. Archiving is currently stored in a portacabin.
7	U A	P2	➢ Monitor any negative impact of commercialisation activities on core mission	A & U: Ongoing monitoring is required in order to ensure there is no negative impact on core mission.
8	U A	P1	➢ Maintain the physical assets of the University to reflect excellence and leadership through foresight	A: That is a core part of the Estates Office's Mission. U: University management is completely supportive of the Estates Office staff in this element of core mission, recognising the financial constraints within which we all work. The Kelly Review rejected DCU's proposal that a percentage of the capital value of the university's built space be made available each year for planned maintenance, in common with all Irish universities we simply do not have the funds to do sufficient work in this area. This is of great concern to university management. Additional staff and resources have been allocated in

	Addressee	Priority	PRG Recommendation (Draft Report)	Response
				relation to this recommendation.
9	U	P2	➢ Create and implement a landscape development plan	A series of plans have been prepared by the Estates Office in conjunction with its Strategic Plan 2008-2010. DCU, since its inception has engaged in an intense and ongoing building programme on campus. As this building programme begins to wind down more time and resource are becoming available for concentration on public spaces on campus, and we are working on this gradually.
10	U	P2	➢ Consider creating a representative committee to improve car park procedures, policies, sanctions	A sub-group of the Partnership Forum has met to consider some of the issues around on- campus parking raised by staff. Discussions with the Estates Office are ongoing. A proposal will be developed and put to university management and the university Executive.
11	U	P2	➢ Investigate a more flexible out-of-hours working policy, based on line management responsibility.	This issue should be brought to the Safety Steering Committee. Staff concerns should be brought to the SSC through the Deans of Faculty.

	Addressee	Priority	PRG Recommendation (Draft Report)	Response
12	**U**	**P3**	➢ Institute effective mechanism for University recognition of exceptional service	The Human Resources Department has put in place a university-wide reward and recognition scheme in order to ensure that there is a formal way of recognising exceptional service to the university. Details of this scheme are available on the DCU/HR website.

3.   PRIORITISED RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

This section contains a list prioritised by our Quality Co-ordination Committee, of resource requirements necessary to implement the recommendations outlined in the Self-Assessment and Peer Review Group Reports. Preliminary Estimates of the costs involved are also included.

Please note that this list only reflects issues raised by the Peer Review Group Report.

1. Resourcing and Staffing. A list of Staffing requirements has been sent to Senior Management for Review. We understand that the Budget Committee will determine the outcome of our proposals, but we note that a number of the Peer Review Group's Quality recommendations cannot be implemented without these extra resources.   We await the outcome of the Budget Committee decision.

2. Provide Funding for the New Web-Based Helpdesk (currently underway).   Overall cost for Phase 1 implementation will be approximately € 60,000. A similar annual amount will be needed for each of the next 3 years to take all Estates Office functions and introduce them onto this new facility. Training costs are included in these estimates. Total Cost will be in the region of € 240,000 by the time of complete implementation.

3. Digital Archiving of all paper based drawings and maintenance manuals. This is not a simple function to cost but preliminary estimates put it in the region of € 50,000 to € 60,000. This should be made a high priority by the University.

4. CRM (Customer Relationship Management) Training needs to be introduced over the coming months. The first phase is planned for early July. It is hoped that all staff are fully trained by this coming Autumn. Costs will be in the region of € 10,000.

5. Improved Accommodation.   This is being discussed with Senior Management at present.

6. Employ External Consultant to help with preparation of our Strategic Plan and Quality Handbook. Approx. Cost say, € 8,000.

4.   **SUMMARY OF ONE-YEAR PLAN (2007-2008)**

Quality Review:

- Completion of the initial phase of the new Web-Based Helpdesk.

- Completion of CRM training for all Estates Office Staff.

- Customer satisfaction will be monitored on an ongoing basis.

- Start and complete the process of digitally archiving our Record Drawings and Maintenance Manuals (funding permitting).

- Preparation of a Staff Quality Handbook

- Internal review of our Management and Staffing structures

- A Training Plan for all members of Staff will be identified in conjunction with HR

- Clarification of University Space Management policy with SMG

- Clarification of issues regarding Project Management of Major Capital Projects

- Discussion of Commercialisation activities with SMG

- A plan to improve the Visual Aspects of the campus will be forwarded to SMG within the academic year 2007-08.

- Resourcing issues will be determined within the year 2007-08.

Strategic Planning:

- The Estates Office's draft Strategic Plan "*Towards Integration and Sustainability*" has been used the Quality Review recommendations as part of its internal analysis on operations. Consultation with customers and stakeholders is to follow. The Strategic Plan will be in place early in 2008 and outline the goals and objectives for the years, 2008 – 2010, and put in plan a schedule to get all items actioned.

- Turn our Challenges into Opportunities.   Initial Challenges identified include:

    o   The Campus Environment and Visual Appeal
    o   Energy and Sustainability
    o   Space Management
    o   Commercialisation and Revenue Generation
    o   Helpdesk Management and Communication
    o   Customer Relationship Management
    o   Quality of Service
    o   Internal and External Communications
    o   Car Parking
    o   Backlog Maintenance and Facilities Re-Investment

    o Training
    o Staffing

5.   **SUMMARY OF THREE-YEAR PLAN (2008 – 2010)**

Quality Review:

- Ensure all Year 1 Recommendations as outlined in Section 4 are complete

- Staffing & Resourcing Issues agreed with SMG

- Completion of the second, third and fourth phases of the Web-Based Helpdesk, which includes incorporation of security, general services, cleaning, waste management and grounds maintenance

- Roll out the agreed Training Plans for all Estates Staff

- Roll out the agreed Plans to improve the Visual Aspects of the Campus

Strategic Planning:

- Use the Estate as a Strategic Asset that can aid Faculty and Corporate Strategies

- Get commitment from the University for a long-term integrated and strategic perspective on The Estates Office Strategic Plan, *Towards Integration and Sustainability*

- Recognise the importance of image, visual impact and aesthetic value to DCU and discuss at executive level how a first-class and sustainable campus environment can be created by 2010

- Formulate a long term plan for DCU which will integrate the Estate and Facilities with Faculty and Corporate Strategic Plans; a 2020 vision for DCU. Let's plan the future now!

- Become a driver of Renewable Energy and Sustainability

- Look at the Challenges we face in a detailed way and strategically turn them into opportunities

Management:

- Endeavour to find resources to improve Estates Office ability to improve output

- Use technology and planning to get maximum use out of existing resources

- Address issue of perception through improved communication and transparency aided by workflow systems open to web

- Endeavour to develop external consultancy links with a view to using profits to fund objectives

Maintenance, Projects, Energy:

- Improve Communications with University Community

- Put a plan together for Backlog Maintenance and Facilities Re-Investment

- Continue to use and develop Energy Management strategies to maximise comfort and minimise cost

- Develop Alternative Energy Resources

- Continue to drive CO_2 emissions down below allowable thresholds and benefit from Emissions Trading

- Address Challenges as outlined in Year 1 Recommendations List

Safety:

- Employment of Safety Specialist

- Employment of Fire Safety Officer

Grounds and Waste Management:

- Develop leading Waste Management Systems to improve efficiency and drive down costs

- Address Resourcing. Investigate leveraging of existing resources to attain objectives

- Implement Cross Training to minimise threat to operations through loss of staff

- Develop Facilities such as Horticultural Nursery on site

- Find ways to fund completion and *greening* of the Campus

- Endeavour to avail of any opportunities for outside consultancy that arise as a means of funding objectives.

Security and General Services:

- Continue commercialisation of CCTV Technology

- Attain leadership in Security Sector

- Continue relationship building with the University Community

APPENDIX 1   Executive Summary from February 2007 Self-Assessment Report

In accordance with DCU's Quality Assurance Programme for 2006/2007, the following Self-Assessment Report has been produced with the fullest possible participation of all staff members within The Estates Office. It outlines both the current activities within the unit and our plans for the next two to three years. The report outlines the details of our unit, our planning & management procedures, our functions, our activities and our processes. It also gives both internal staff views and external customer perspectives on our operations and how we serve and interact with the university community as a whole.

To facilitate the process we conducted two surveys; an internal staff survey questionnaire, and a series of campus wide focus group meetings with an external facilitator. We also had a number of internal staff meetings over the review period, a Management Away Day and an All-Staff Review Session specifically for discussion of the Quality Review Process.

In reading the report it is important to remember that the University has developed at a very fast pace over the past seven or eight years and the square meterage of the buildings has practically doubled without an appreciable increase in staffing. Buildings that have come on stream in recent years include: The Helix, Science Building, Hub, LIRC, Post Grad Residences, St Clare's, Engineering and Research Building, College Park Apartments, Computer Applications Extension, Swimming Pool & Sports Club, School of Nursing, Ryan Academy, Multi Storey Car Park and the NICB. These have all had a major impact on both the quality of the services that we provide and the cost of delivering these services. The rapid developments of the University are commendable and a great testament to all concerned in the design and build process but it should not be understated that these large increases do have an effect on the resources needed by the Estates Office.

The main functions and activity areas are detailed out to show what services we offer to the University. Added to these we have included some information on our achievements both individually and collectively as a unit. We also include projects that could have a significant impact on the campus and how these may help in the marketing of the University to future generations of students, examples being the installation of a wind turbine, a combined heat and power plant and a biomass woodchip fuelled central boilerhouse. This together with our landscaping plans will, we hope, produce a real *green* campus.

The customer perspective exercises were very interesting but a lot of the comments were as we predicted:

Staffing and Resources
Helpdesk
Customer Relationship Management and
Car Parking

The general feeling seems to be that the Estates Office is operating in difficult circumstances and with insufficient resources, and that we are broadly perceived to be courteous, diligent and practical.

Although there are differences in accent between the respective Customer Groupings, certain points and themes recur throughout the customer views and comments. Aside from operational perennials such as the state of the toilets and locked rooms, the main focus appears to be on the interface between the Estates Office and its customers. Clearly customers want to see an Estates Office that is less remote and more proactive in engaging with customers.

This interface is seen to be open to improvement at the operational level by introducing a more customer focused Helpdesk system that can be accessed by telephone and through the web, and that logs, tracks and signs-off works for customers. All Customer Groupings expressed the need for a more structured periodic dialogue with the Estates Office, in the form of a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. The rationale that was given is that long-term, both the Customer and the Estates Office would be actually saving time by spending time on this dialogue.

Many customers also clearly feel that the Estates Office is difficult to access. At the more strategic level, there is concern about the way the Estates Office and Projects co-operate and the effect this has on the acceptance of new buildings and completed works. This is a major concern for the Estates Office staff also.

It is also conspicuous that all Customer Groupings who participated in the Quality Review have identified a lack of resources (including staff) in the Estates Office as a problem both for the Estates Office itself and for the wider DCU community. Where customers do not appear to view this as an excuse for poor performance, they regard it as one of the factors that contributes to perceived shortfalls in certain areas.

Assuming the customers who participated in the Focus Group Meetings are representative of the broader DCU community, there is reason for the Estates Office to be greatly encouraged by this exercise. Not only has a significant number of senior customers shown the willingness to invest in and contribute to the success of the Estates Office by participating in this exercise; they have also unequivocally shown the readiness and the will to engage in a stronger dialogue with the Estates Office in the future.

Our internal perspective showed us our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and possible threats to us. This identified issues such as staffing, resources, lack of redundancy in our systems, the need for extra maintenance, grounds, health & safety and helpdesk personnel, training requirements, the need for Facilities Managers in each Faculty and improved communications both internal and external.

We have already begun investigating a new Helpdesk system and it is hoped that a web based solution will be an invaluable addition to the efficient running of the Estates Office in its role as a support service to the University. At present the system is at the initial phase of its development. It is important that this new system be managed properly as it will now encompass all of the areas under the Estates Office remit including Maintenance, Security Services, Grounds, Cleaning and Waste Management. The day to day operation of the Helpdesk will involve managing requests, scheduling work, providing resources, updating records and recharging costs to name but a few and it is proposed that customers will make their request using a new graphical user interface for ease of access to locate their building and room. To this end it will be important to appoint a Systems Manager, as the successful development of the system will only be possible through the co-ordination of key stakeholders including the Computer Services Department, the

various   Managers within the Estates Office, the newly appointed Helpdesk Development company, and most importantly, interacting with the University Customers in general.

It should also be noted that the Estates Office is involved in a programme to commercialise some of our activities in accordance with the University Strategic Plan. This is being done within the DCU campus company structure. The first area to be launched was technical security, under Dublin Software Park Ltd which has met with some commercial success with the involvement of two key personnel in the office.

This process has been very worthwhile and we hope that it will help play a big part in the Estates Office Strategic Plan when it is introduced this year.

APPENDIX 2   Group and Committee Members

- **Estates Office Quality Committee**
  - **Kathleen Whelan**
  - **Gerry O'Donnell**
  - **Michael Woods**
  - **Richard Kelly (Chair)**
  - **Mike Kelly**

- **Peer Review Group**
  - **Ms Jeannie Rice, Vanderbilt University (Chair)**
  - **Mr Brian Hand, University of Limerick**
  - **Mr Pat Clarke, Enterprise Ireland**
  - **Prof. Barry McMullin, DCU**
  - **Rev. John Gilligan, DCU**

- **Estates Office Quality Improvement Plan Committee**
  - **Kathleen Whelan**
  - **Gerry O'Donnell**
  - **Michael Woods**
  - **Richard Kelly**
  - **Mike Kelly**