

Quality Assurance / Quality Improvement
Programme for Administrative Units
2002-2003



Peer Review Group Report
for
The Registry

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Introduction

This Quality review has been conducted in accordance with a framework model developed and agreed through the Irish Universities Quality Board (IUQB) and which complies with the provisions of Section 35 of the Universities Act (1997). The model consists of a number of basic steps.

1. An internal team in the School/Unit being reviewed completes a detailed self-assessment report (SAR). It should be noted that this document is confidential to the School and to the Review Panel and to senior officers of the University
2. This report is sent to a team of peer assessors, the Peer Review Group (PRG) – composed of members from outside DCU and from other areas of DCU – who then visit the School/Unit and conduct discussions with a range of staff, students and other stakeholders.
3. The PRG then writes its own report
4. The School/Unit produces a School/Unit Quality Plan in response to the various issues and findings of the SAR and PRG Reports.
5. The PRG Report and the School/Unit Quality Plan are considered by the University Executive, which makes a formal response to both, after consultation with the School/Unit and the Director of Quality Promotion. The School/Unit Quality Plan and the Executive Response become incorporated into what is termed the Quality Improvement Plan (QuIP)
6. A summary of the PRG Report and the QuIP is sent to the Governing Authority of the University, who may approve publication in a manner that they see fit. The summary report will then be published on the Quality Promotion Unit website.
7. Following the approval of the summary report by the Governing Authority, the full text of both the Peer Review Group Report and the Quality Improvement Plan are published on the Quality Promotion Unit website.

This document is the report referred to in Step 3 above.

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1. Profile of the Registry

1.1 Location

The Registry is located on the ground floor of the Henry Grattan Building extension. This location is fairly central within the University campus and has been occupied by the Registry and a number of other administrative and academic units since July 2001.

1.2 Staff

- The statutory position of Registrar is currently held on an interim basis by the Deputy President of the University. The post of Registrar in combination with the new position of Vice President of Learning Innovation, has just been advertised in the national press.
- A new post of Director of Registry is currently held on an interim basis by the Assistant Registrar (Academic Management), and has also just been advertised.
- There are currently thirty two fulltime personnel in the Registry and four vacant positions.

1.3 Overview of Processes and Services

The Registry is a central administrative unit, which is responsible for Dublin City University's academic management and academic quality. There are three distinct aspects to this:

- The unit manages and maintains on record the academic life cycle of students, whether undergraduate, postgraduate, Irish or international, from the moment when prospective students or their advisors first seek information about DCU, through the offer/admission process, registration, examinations and the dissemination of results, appeal of those results and other decisions, to the Graduation day.
- The unit oversees the management of Academic Council and Academic Council Standing Committee, which are responsible for all academic decision-making. All new programmes are processed by the Registry through the various stages of Validation and Accreditation. Queries relating to proposed new programmes and amendments to existing programmes are discussed with the Registry, which is responsible for maintaining the records of programme structures and assessment of students.
- The Registry represents the University at national and international fora, such as the Conference of Heads of Irish Universities, the Higher Education Authority and the Socrates Educational Group in Brussels.

To discharge these diverse responsibilities, the Registry is organised around seven functional sub-units or 'teams' each with a Team Leader. Operational decision making is normally the preserve of each Team Leader. A Management Committee consisting of Team Leaders and the Registrar's Office staff (11 people in total) meets on a fortnightly basis. It has proven to be a useful forum for the formation of internal Registry policy. The current teams are:

- Admissions and Information Office:** Admissions and Information is responsible for providing the most up-to-date information on DCU programmes of study to the general public; and for the administration of all stages of the entry process to these programmes.
- Education and Management Analysis Office:** EMAO provides centralised analytical support for information relating to students' academic lives at DCU and develops policy for handling and promulgation of related data. Its work comprises the design and collection of new data using surveys (quantitative and qualitative), and the analysis of existing data, including the construction of new databases, relating to the student population and the development of new methodologies for monitoring and benchmarking.

- (iii) **Examinations and Academic Awards:** The section is responsible for scheduling all University examinations and co-ordinating all related activities. The team is also responsible for managing activities for the University's conferring ceremonies.
- (iv) **International Office:** The section is responsible for the internationalisation of the University and raising the international student body at DCU from 10% of the current cohort to 30% in the coming years. This section is currently actively developing and promoting international activities at DCU and is the central point of contact for information on international education -for staff and students of DCU. The Office also oversees the administration of the University's exchange agreements with overseas universities, currently numbering about 120.
- (v) **Postgraduate Research/External Examiners Desk:** This section oversees the administration of the postgraduate research function within the Registry, and also handles the appointment of and payments to external examiners for taught undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes.
- (vi) **Student Records and Information Systems Office:** This team is responsible for a range of functions involving the integrity of DCU programmes and student data. It develops policy and procedure relating to all aspects of student academic record management and is involved in the planning and development of new systems relating to same. The team manages the registration process, is responsible for the promulgation of University examination results and maintains the modular level data of the academic structure for the University's student database (ITS).
- (vii) **Registrar's Office and Executive Education Function:** The Registrar's Office – which currently includes the Registrar, the unit's head and a member of the senior management of the University, is responsible for managing key academic decision making bodies such as Academic Council, Standing Committee of Academic Council, the Validation Committee, and the Accreditation and the Appeals Boards. Management of the University's modular system, the HR function within the Registry, and academic and other projects also reside there, as does the management of relations with significant external clients, such as the Conference of Heads of Irish Universities, the Inter University Quality Steering Committee, the Higher Education Authority and DCU's linked colleges. Dublin City University Executive Education Centre is a campus company which is commissioned by individual companies and sectors to design and deliver academic programmes and short courses that are tailored to meet the specific needs of the commissioning organisation.

It is important to acknowledge here, that as part of the Registry's ongoing strategic planning exercise, a broad consensus has developed among the staff that a significant re-engineering of this team structure will be necessary in order to further improve the quality of the services provided to both DCU and the external community. This will require the Registry to be in a position to deploy its staff in a flexible, cross-Registry manner based on three identified 'meta-processes' namely:

- The Student Life Cycle
- Service Provision
- Academic Management and Participation

To this end, an Operational Planning Team has recently been formed, consisting of the Admissions & Information, Exams and Student Records Officers with the brief to develop an operational plan for the change from the functional team structure to a meta-process focus. A programme of training for all staff will be required as part of the changeover, which will provide access to a comprehensive set of skills related to the Registry's "core" business, i.e. Academic Structure, Rules, Regulations and Procedures. It has also been generally acknowledged that the Unit will require a change in the current Management Committee structure and that a smaller committee with a more executive management function will be necessary in future.

2. The Self Assessment Process

2.1 The Co-ordinating Committee

Name/Function

Position within Registry

*Jim Murray, Chairperson	Assistant Registrar (Academic Policy & Planning)
#Margaret O’Flanagan, Deputy Chair.	Education & Management Analysis Officer
Bernadette Dowling, Secretary	Information Officer
\$Joachim Barnett	Admissions & Information Officer
Carmel Lawlor	Examinations Co-ordinator
+Phylomena McMorrow	Examinations Officer (on leave at time of review)
Angela Mitchell	Acting International Officer
+Emily Phipps	Records Co-ordinator
Noeleen Smullen	Acting Examinations Officer

The committee was formed with a view to securing representation from all Grades of staff in the Registry, rather than to ensure that all current functional areas were represented. This would appear to make sense, given that staff were both informed and consulted at all stages during the compilation of the report.

*Jim Murray and Bernadette Dowling both left the Registry before the PRG visit
 #Margaret O’Flanagan took over as Chairperson from Jim Murray before the PRG visit
 \$Joachim Barnett replaced Phylomena McMorrow on the committee for the period of her leave
 +Phylomena McMorrow and Emily Phipps were both on maternity leave just before and during the PRG visit

2.2 Methodology Adopted

The following methods were used by the Co-ordinating committee to complete the self assessment exercise:-

- 11 Committee Meetings
- 6 internal focus groups
- 3 external focus groups
- Internal staff survey
- DCU staff survey
- Student experience survey
- 2 internal briefing sessions for all staff

The programme of activities for the self assessment was agreed at the first committee meeting. All notes of meetings, and documentation produced, were posted on a shared intranet drive, which is available to all Registry staff. Briefings and updates on the progress of the review were given to the Management Team in their fortnightly meetings, the minutes of which are also posted on the intranet. The final report was written by the Chairman of Co-ordinating committee.

In the view of the Peer Review Group (PRG), the methodology adopted by the co-ordinating committee was appropriate, comprehensive and provided a sound basis for achieving an objective result.

3. The Peer Review Group Process

3.1 Site Visit by Peer Review Group – Timetable

Day 0 (Wednesday 9 April 2003)

18.00 – 19.30	PRG briefing by Director of Quality Promotion. PRG agrees final work schedule and assignment of tasks for the following two days
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20.00 Dinner for members of the PRG, the outgoing Registrar (Registrar for the period covered by the Review) and the Unit Quality Co-ordinating Committee.

Day 1 (Thursday 10 April 2003)

09.00 - 09.30 Director of Quality Promotion and Interim Director of Registry meet PRG at main DCU Reception and proceed to base room in Registry.

09.30 - 13.00 Consideration of Self-Assessment Report. Meetings with the following groups:

- Registry Quality Committee
- Former Registrar
- Admission/Information Team
- Examinations Office
- Education & Management Analysis
- Postgraduate Research Desk
- Student Records and Information Systems

13.00 - 14.00 Lunch & University walkabout.

14.00 – 16.00 Meetings with representative selections of:

- Students
- Faculty Administrators
- Academic Staff
- Other Staff

16.00 - 17.00 Visit to core facilities of Unit.

17.30 – 18.30 Meeting of PRG to identify remaining aspects to be clarified and to finalise tasks for the following day.

Day 2 (Friday 11 April 2003)

09.00 – 09.45 Meeting with President, Deputy President, Secretary, Director of Finance and Director of Human Resources.

10.00 – 11.30 Meetings with the following groups:-

- International Office
- Registrar's Office & Executive Education
- Private meetings with individual staff (by request)

11.30 – 12.30 Meeting with other staff of Service /Support Units:

- Director of Student Services
- Director of Education Services
- Business Systems Manager, Computer Services Department
- Training & Development Officer, Human Resources Office

12.30 – 13.00 Meeting with the Acting Registrar and Interim Director of Registry to clarify outstanding issues.

13.00 – 14.00 Brief Discussion with the Director of Quality Promotion followed by Working Lunch for members of the PRG.

14.00 – 16.00 Preparation of Exit Report.

16.00 – 16.30

Exit Report presentation to all staff of the Unit by the Chair of the PRG, summarising the principal findings of the PRG.

3.2 Methodology

The PRG was given ample time to read and assess the Registry Self Assessment Report (SAR), which was received three weeks before the date of the Review. The visit was organised by the Quality Promotion Unit and involved a preliminary meeting on day one, at which the Director of Quality Promotion briefed the members of the PRG on their duties and the proposed format of the review. Days two and three were spent in meetings with:

- all members of the Registry functional teams (apart from those individuals on leave);
- members of the Management Committee;
- the outgoing Registrar;
- the interim Registrar and Director of Registry;
- other Registry staff who requested individual or group meetings.

Meetings were also held with Registry stakeholders comprising: DCU staff outside the Registry who were in a position to comment on either services received from and/or provided to the Registry; two students in a formal meeting and an impromptu “vox pop” by the PRG with 15 others; the President, Secretary, Directors of Finance and HR of the University. A total of 40 individuals excluding the Registry staff were met during this process.

3.3 Overview of Site Visit

The visit of the PRG broadly followed the timetable which had been developed by the Quality Promotion Unit in association with the Registry. Some changes in the running order were found to be necessary due to the fact that some meetings ran over time. Time was set aside for the reviewers to “go walkabout” in the Registry, which proved useful in assessing work conditions and in seeing the Registry in action. A brief tour of the University facilities was also scheduled and proved useful and interesting for the external members of the PRG.

Although the PRG found the visit to be intensive due to the number of meetings timetabled, we agreed with the Director of Quality Promotion that the period was probably the maximum that could be expected of Peer Reviewers. The three weeks granted for the compilation of the PRG Report was viewed as an adequate period of time for reflection on the SAR and submissions during the site visit.

The PRG found the facilities made available to us to be more than adequate during the site visit. Support from both the staff of the Registry and the Quality Promotion Unit was superb and requests for extra documentation and changes in the running order of meetings were met immediately.

The members of the PRG were struck by the very high levels of enthusiasm and depth of knowledge on issues under review from all staff in the Registry. They had obviously embraced the concept of the Quality Review and welcomed it as an opportunity both to convey how much they enjoy working in the Registry and the extent to which they feel their input has been valued over the last three years by the outgoing Registrar. It was also an opportunity to air some grievances, most of which, it appeared to the Group, were related to issues outside the direct control of the Registry.

Inputs from DCU staff outside the Registry and students were also forthright and comprehensive. There was a broad consensus from DCU staff that the Registry’s service to the University was of a

high standard and that it had seen significant improvement during the period under review. There was also consensus that the morale and degree of pride in the work of the Registry teams was exemplary.

3.4 Peer Review Group Report Methodology

A Chairman and a rapporteur were appointed. A first iteration Peer Review Report was composed by the rapporteur and forwarded to the other members of the PRG for their input. Amendments and inputs were collated and a final draft report was compiled. Following final approval from the PRG, the draft report was forwarded to the Director of Quality Promotion.

Sources of information used in compiling the PRG Report included: the Registry Self Assessment Report and appendices; the University Strategic Plan, "Leading Change"; a typical student portal page; the International Office Business Plan; samples of briefing documents on the Registry review to the staff by the Review committee; email feedback to DCU staff on Registry Quality questionnaire; email from DCU President on the new Management structure for the Registry.

3.5 View of Self Assessment Report

The Registry Self Assessment Report was found to be clear, comprehensive and objective. During the course of the two days of meetings, it was notable that no significant areas of criticism were identified which had not already been noted in the report. The quality of the methodology used, coupled with what transpired to be a fair and impartial analysis of results and inputs, resulted in a self assessment exercise and document that is to be highly commended.

There would, however, appear to have been a lack of emphasis and analysis on the academic management and academic quality function of the Registry in the Self Assessment Report. The report listed the outputs with regard to academic policy and a list of the Registrar's participation in internal and external groups and committees, but failed to provide an in-depth analysis of these outputs. It was not ultimately clear to the PRG whether this was due to a lack of functionality or ability to influence the Academic policy and direction of the University, perhaps resulting from an over concentration on the administrative aspects of the function, or whether it was just that the report was deficient in this regard.

The Executive Education function was not well represented in the Self Assessment report. This may be due to there being a lack of integration of the Executive Education function within the Registry, which may be addressed with the advent of the proposed "meta-process" structure. There was also a lack of emphasis on the functions of the International Office, beyond a description of its current services.

The PRG was broadly in agreement with the SWOC analysis carried out as part of the exercise. We have included, in a later section of this report, the elements of the SWOC that the PRG felt could be validated during the course of the visit.

4. Findings of the Review Group

The findings of the review group are divided into several sections, covering background and context, frequent issues arising, observations and recommendations and, finally, a summary of our recommendations.

4.1 Background and Context:

It is necessary to distinguish between two periods with regard to the background of the Registry Self Assessment exercise. The first period relates to the last three years as a whole, which is the term covered by the present review, and the second is the more recent background encompassing

an announcement in March of 2003 by the DCU President, regarding a new senior management structure for the Registry:

Period of 2000 – 2003

- The most recent 3 years have seen much improvement in the external perception and internal organization of the Registry.
- The morale of staff has improved.
- The working conditions of staff have improved.
- The staff turnover, which had led to a loss of expertise and knowledge of how Registry systems operate, has largely been reduced.
- There has been a significant investment in the documentation of processes in the form of Standard Operating Procedures.

Recent Background

- Registry is entering two fresh periods of change:
 - Firstly, a transition from the top level Registry management structure comprising the Registrar and two Assistant Registrars (working with Team Leaders) to the an interim arrangement whereby the role of Registrar is being split and the two key areas of responsibility assumed separately by the Deputy President of DCU and an acting Director of Registry by the Assistant Registrar (Academic Management).
 - Secondly, following the completion of recruitment competitions, the appointment of a Vice President for Learning Innovation (Registrar) and a Director of Registry.

These two periods of transition will each generate uncertainty and unease among the Registry staff. These feelings were evident in meetings with Registry staff and other staff within DCU. It would appear that this new structural arrangement for the Registry has only recently been finalized. The PRG thinks that, in order to avoid uncertainty and confusion among Registry staff and the University community as a whole, it would have been desirable if this new structure had been finalized and the competition to seek replacements had begun sometime last year. Given the strides that have been made to improve structures, procedures and services from within the Registry over the last three years, it is regrettable that the same care was not taken by the University management when planning the future organization and management of the Registry.

While acknowledging that the University as a whole is undergoing a period of structural change in its management, the PRG was surprised that such a major change in the Management of the Registry would appear not to have been discussed with key people in the Registry. The decision, when taken, was presented to the Registry's management staff, with no opportunity for practical input. This is regrettable and does not support the University's distinctive values of collaboration & networking; accessibility & openness; development & supportiveness (Strategic Plan 2001-2005).

The question as to how the two existing Assistant Registrar posts will fit into the new Management structure remains unresolved at this point.

The PRG was mindful that the recent announcement of Management changes would be to the forefront of Registry staff's concerns, but every effort was made by the PRG to avoid these concerns dominating deliberations and discussions, given that the Review spans the last three years.

4.2 Frequent Issues Arising:

Several issues recurred during PRG deliberations and discussions with Registry and other staff. In no particular order, these are:

- Career progression is obviously a big issue in DCU and this includes both unfilled and open positions within the Registry, the current “pause” in filling such vacancies, as well as the situation whereby in order to achieve a promotion, it is often necessary to move to another unit in the University. This situation of moving people to achieve promotion has the advantage of spreading expertise around the University but also has the disadvantage of presenting staff with large learning curves as they move from post to post and results in the loss of valuable corporate knowledge to the Registry.
- There is unease throughout the Registry that there has to be an interim management arrangement. There is a desire for strong and secure leadership and management as quickly as possible.
- Expressions of regret that Prof. Barker is leaving the Registry were voiced by many individuals, both within and from outside the Registry.
- There is a need for more web-based and online services offered by Registry to students and staff in many of the services that Registry provides. This is clearly recognized by the Registry and was acknowledged by the Registry in their Self Assessment Report (SAR)
- Communication is a crucial aspect of every organization and issues related to communications in the Registry were discussed frequently during the course of the PRG Review. Both internal and external communications would appear to require improvement and in some cases formalization. A particular area of concern would be communication with Faculty Offices.
- The creation and documenting of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) is a very positive development by the Registry and the teams should be commended and thanked for the effort put into their development and maintenance.
- Event management by the Registry, notably the graduation ceremonies and the registration process, is seen to be efficient and professional.
- Stability within the Registry has been achieved with the formation of functional teams which operate efficiently. This stability has been a notable achievement of the last 3 years. The Registry is now seeking to improve the overall structure, where possible, and the obvious support from Registry staff for the “meta-process” concept is a really strong indication of their team spirit and commitment.
- This staff goodwill and enthusiasm should not be lost through any gap in the drive to move to a “cross-Registry” mode of operation resulting from the current interim management arrangement, or the eventual new management structure.
- As a result of its inward focus over the last few years in consolidating and developing secure structures, the Registry is sometimes perceived as inward-looking, blinkered and insular. This point was identified in the Registry SAR.
- The ITS system is regarded as an invaluable resource and a powerful tool in the management and administration of the Registry.
- The ITS system has suffered from some bad publicity throughout the University which would appear to be related to the lack of training available to staff when it was first installed and the non user-friendly interface. Although strides have been made in improving the interface with initiatives such as the student portal pages, a considerable amount of further development must take place.
- The Registry does very good work in supporting students with special needs and students with disabilities. This was not highlighted in the SAR, but is to be highly commended.

4.3 Peer Review Group Observations & Recommendations

The observations of the peer review group are grouped under several headings:

4.3.1 Staffing, Accommodation and Resources

- Current unfilled vacancies puts pressure on existing teams. However the opportunities for efficiencies identified may allow for changes to the staffing structure. It is recommended that a comprehensive staffing needs analysis be conducted following the completion of the re-engineering process and the improvement of linkages with faculty offices.

- The terms of employment of the outgoing Registrar, in particular the duration of the appointment, seem to have been the subject of some confusion. The appointment of a permanent management team is to be welcomed.
- The progression of staff is an issue of concern to many within the Registry.
- Although the staff's current accommodation is perceived to be better than in their previous location, it is certainly not ideal because of issues such as lack of privacy, high noise levels, poor light in the general office and poor air quality.
- Information point is not ideal as the queuing area is located in a public thoroughfare and there is no private area for students to discuss personal issues.
- The information point is being used for unnecessary contacts because of the relative lack of development of the web interface with students and the unavailability of forms and leaflets on a "self-service" basis, whether on the web or from a publicly accessible rack.
- The fact that only Registry and Computer Services staff have ease of access to the Registry offices and that most other University staff are required to request access by phone has the undesired effect of increasing the perception of Registry insularity. It is acknowledged, however, that the security of staff and materials (such as examination papers) needs to be considered.
- There is a requirement for the original plan for the Registry accommodation to be completed, i.e., for a proper queuing and waiting area, a Registry Reception desk and private meeting rooms.

4.3.2 Planning and Resource Management

- The development of a Cross-Registry approach to business planning has been delayed as a result of functional consolidation in the team structure. The PRG endorses the recommendation in the SAR that a cross registry approach, based around the identified meta- processes, will characterize the next phase of development.
- An aspiration to establish clear lines of communication both internally and with other functions in the University was articulated, but requires careful planning.
- Continued self-development and career advancement in an atmosphere of support and mutual respect is important to maintain and develop the Registry's human resources.
- Important also is the continued planning for improvements and documentation of procedures with SOPs.
- Urgent attention is required for the implementation of web-based services, including registration.
- In order to drive this project, it will be necessary to appoint an 'IT champion' within the Registry, perhaps supported by a small committee to analyse current IT functions and to formulate a series of proposals in conjunction with the Computer Services Department.
- Duplication of activities with Faculty Offices should end. Full and formal process integration with Faculty Offices and the Finance Office to include necessary IT supports should be implemented.
- The Registry staff have benefited from a close collaboration with the Training & Development team in the HR Department to date.
- A further training plan is required in order to realize the ambition for cross-Registry team focus and to provide the necessary upgrading in IT skills to support new initiatives.
- The commitment to the cross-Registry use of resources needs to be formalized.
- The new Executive Management team as proposed in the SAR will improve overall operations management.
- Up to this point, the quality of the financial management information provided by the Finance Office does not allow for proper budgetary control to be maintained locally. It is hoped that the new finance system being installed by the Finance Office will ameliorate this situation.
- Planning for financial expenditure relating to strategic developments is also difficult due to the timing of the HEA funding to the University. The Registry has an aspiration to, in future, identify sources of funding for such developments, that are both novel and independent of the central University budget.

4.3.3 Functions Activities & Processes

- It is acknowledged by the PRG, that the current functional teams have been excellent in delivering the basic functions and processes of the Registry over the last three years.
- The provision of an even more coherent and efficient service to the University community will best be served by the change from isolated teams with discrete functions to a meta-process approach based on the three headings.
- Outputs relating to academic management and participation were not analysed in the SAR and therefore a judgement as to the Registry's effectiveness in this area is difficult.
- It would have been useful for the PRG to meet with members of Academic Council, the Executive Committee, Governing Authority and other key University committees in order to be in a position to form an opinion on this aspect of the work of the Registry.
- The students interviewed by the Peer Review Group expressed a relatively high level of satisfaction with the service being provided by the Registry.
- Despite the Registry's desire to move to web-based Registration, the students interviewed by the Peer Review Group viewed Registration as a quick and efficient procedure.
- Following the Registry's own survey and focus groups, it would appear that some areas of concern to students are:
 - The operating hours are thought to be too short.
 - There is a need for a private area for personal consultations.
 - Charges for services are perceived to be too high.
 - There is a requirement for information and forms to be made available, without queuing.
- The Registry has undertaken to establish workshops with students each year with a view to delivering improvements in all areas of the service.

4.3.4 SWOC – Elements Identified by Registry and endorsed by Peer Review Group

Strengths

Event Management
Energetic and committed staff
Willingness of staff to change practices and develop new procedures
Strong stable foundation for further development
Ongoing strategic planning
Involvement of all staff in operational plans
Inclusive nature of management
Flexible working arrangements

Opportunities

More engagement with formation of National and International policy on Higher Education
Advances in technology to be capitalized on for the benefit of the service
New Faculty structure within the University involving Faculty Deans will provide an opportunity for enhanced collaboration
The proposed cross-Registry, 'meta-process' focus will provide a basis for effective planning and resource management
Potential efficiency gains from the integration functions with the faculty offices.

Weaknesses

One-way communication with other University Departments – need more explanation of changes to services
Two way communication – need for formal exchanges with Faculty offices and other relevant units to address duplication of work
A more complete engagement with clients including in particular, prospective students
Lack of IT Officer and committee to drive necessary IT developments
Response times to queries

Concerns

Lack of involvement in major changes involving Registry Management
Deconstruction of current teams will cause some disruption in the medium term
Too heavy a reliance on goodwill from staff to achieve developments and changes due to lack of progression opportunities
Poor work conditions for some staff with respect to air and light quality, space provision and privacy

5.1 Recommendations Identified by Registry and endorsed by PRG

- Continue internal structural review and the re-engineering of the functional teams to a more “meta-process” based structure.
- Change from current Management Team to a smaller operations focussed Executive Management Team.
- Improvements required to internal and external communications.
- A less insular approach to functions is required and a more inclusive attitude to other services and departments.
- A project to implement an ‘electronic purse’ function to be fast-tracked and the necessary IT links with the Finance Office to be implemented.
- Changes in the current University career structure, with particular reference to career progression for non-academic staff, to be implemented following audit by external consultants
- Continue to develop web initiatives and improved interfaces with, and access to, the ITS system, for internal and external stakeholders.
- Appoint an ‘IT champion’ from within the existing staff to drive the development of web-based services.
- Physical access improvements to be carried out according to the original accommodation plan, subject to necessary security considerations.
- A sustainable training programme to be implemented to support the acquisition of cross-Registry skills and to include training of trainers.

5.2 Additional Recommendations from PRG

- The interim period of Management of the Registry should be as short as possible (while acknowledging the need for a careful selection process), in order to avoid the stalling of current development initiatives.
- While recognizing that the current vacancies put pressure on staff in the existing structure the PRG note that there are significant number of potential efficiency gains identified which may impact on staffing. We recommend the filling of these vacant posts on a temporary/contract basis with a formal staffing needs analysis to be conducted in six months time.
- The development of more formal and frequent communications channels with Faculty Offices.
- Duplication of work with Faculty Offices to come to an end.
- Tighter monitoring and management of response times to queries. A re-appraisal of the benefits of the Symposium telephone management system to be carried out, following mixed reviews.
- The International Office business plan to be re-examined and strides taken towards a self contained International Student Centre.
- Registry staff morale to continue to be a priority to new management.
- The commitment to cross-registry structure needs to be formalized and the model for achieving it to be developed in consultation and with the support of, Registry staff.
- A move, when the University budget allows, to more suitable accommodation with adequate space provision for all necessary functions, including meeting rooms and a reception area, to include maximum natural light and fresh air.
- When time allows – the Registry to inform other areas in the University of the strengths of their team practices and SOPs etc which may be of wider benefit.
- Future reviews of the Registry to include meetings with representatives of Academic Council, Governing Authority, Executive and other relevant University committees.