



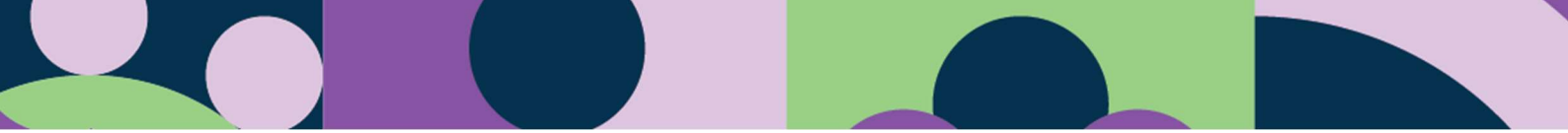
Ollscoil Chathair
Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City University

Faculty Quality Review

DCU Institute of Education

Quality Improvement Plan

September 2023



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Introduction

The IoE Faculty Board established a Steering Group and a number of sub-groups to manage the self-assessment process. The Steering Group was responsible for overall self-assessment report (SAR) delivery and for ensuring that the process focused on mission-critical and strategic areas, engaged meaningfully with staff and students, was comprehensive and that the SAR identified specific and targeted recommendations.

Sub-groups in External Engagements, Research and Scholarships, and Teaching and Learning were responsible for ensuring that relevant staff, student and external stakeholders had opportunities to input and shape the process as appropriate. I would particularly like to thank staff across the faculty who gave time and energy to the production of the SAR.

The engagement of the Peer Review Group was thorough and considered and I want to express my thanks for their work with us. It was heartening for the faculty that so many of our own considerations were validated by the PRG. We were encouraged by their recognition of what had been achieved since incorporation and their challenge to move from reactive to proactive work was welcomed. They offered some particularly insightful observations on our challenges around teaching, placement and workload.

We have reflected this impetus in our Quality Improvement Plan (QuIP). The Faculty will maintain the same approach to delivering the Quality Improvement Plan as was used for the development of the SAR; the Faculty Board will act as the Steering Group with members of the Board and others as needed taking the lead on particular strands of activity. We intend to build strong links between our new strategy and the commitments in our QuIP to ensure alignment and manageability.

We will need some specialist support in moving things forward - in facilitating some working groups, or in specialist support for workload modelling to give two examples. The PRG in the final feedback session reminded us that our capacity for additional developmental work is limited by too many 'blue light' moments, which require us to respond immediately to issues as they arise. They called out the area of professional placement for particular commentary. We had done likewise in the SAR. Progress on the specific recommendation to move to a more coherent approach to professional placement will require a new resource, at the appropriate level, to drive and oversee that convergence which should, ultimately, reduce the risks around placement, support smoother operations, stronger partnerships with placement settings, and an improved staff and student experience.

This QuIP is being completed as our new students begin their studies with the Institute of Education. Their excitement at joining us is palpable and their expectations and aspirations are high.

The PRG set a clear direction of travel for the Institute - towards its next phase of development, and the emergence of IoE 2.0, building on the successes of our first six years.

Our QuIP is about getting to IoE 2.0, delivering on student expectations, supporting staff capacity and building room for development and innovation.



Professor Anne Looney, Executive Dean
DCU Institute of Education



Responses to the Recommendations in the Peer Review Group Report

The Peer Review Group (PRG) assigned a priority to each recommendation using the following notation:

P1: a recommendation that is important and requires urgent action.

P2: a recommendation that is important but can (or 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 in the area.

The PRG also indicate where action is required:

A: Area under review

U: University Senior Management



Recommendation	Priority	Addressee	PGR Recommendation	Area Response	SMG Response
Planning and Effective Management of Resources					

2	P1	A	<p>Review and refine the current matrix structure - the four operational areas – in order to ensure that resource management pathways and decision-making processes function efficiently and transparently for all staff and students...</p> <p>This review requires immediate action in order to facilitate the enactment of the next strategic plan.</p>	<p>The Faculty agrees with the Panel’s assessment that the structures and systems put in place during the IoE’s formative stage have played a significant role in drawing together and consolidating the different parts of the Institute, but that these now need to be refined.</p> <p>The Faculty will undertake an organisational design project to review and refine the matrix structure during the next year.</p> <p>This will need some external facilitation and consultancy support.</p>	<p>Senior Management welcomes this recommendation and the response from the Faculty.</p> <p>The University is committed to ensuring that organisational structures and capabilities align for strategic delivery. It is timely, therefore, that initially established structures, systems, processes and communication channels within the IoE be reviewed to ensure the Faculty can continue to achieve its strategic priorities.</p>
3	P1	A	<p>Review the balance and emphasis of the current work focus in order to facilitate the enactment of the next strategic plan and most if not all of the recommendations in this PRG report. This may be achieved by (1) reducing the amount of some activity (particularly placement, teaching and assessment); (2) moving away from an expectation that all staff should be contributing across all areas in a broadly similar way; (3) exploring the potential of more innovative approaches to each of the areas of: placement, teaching and assessment.</p>	<p>The current model has worked well in building a shared understanding of how work is assigned and has ensured a consistency in approaches across schools. The Faculty agrees that a review is now timely to ensure fitness for purpose.</p> <p>We will review current workload allocation and the workload model to ensure alignment with strategic focus.</p> <p>This will be undertaken over a three year period to give sufficient time for negotiation and to assess how actioning the recommendations under Teaching and Learning impact on our resourcing needs.</p>	<p>Senior Management welcomes this recommendation from the Peer Review Group. It aligns closely with the guiding philosophies of the University’s new Strategic Plan, which acknowledges the need to prioritise activities and focus resources for maximum impact.</p>



Recommendation	Area Response	SMG Response
Priority	Teaching and Learning	
Addressee	PGR Recommendation	

6	P1	A	<p>Review and redevelop the full suite of programmes across IoE to identify module synergies, opportunities to reduce both the number of modules and multiple (parallel/duplicate) presentation of modules or module content. The IoE needs to innovate teaching delivery formats away from an ‘encyclopaedic’ model and towards the provision of a sustainable teacher education experience that develops teacher meta-competencies for self-directed and life-long learning.</p>	<p>The Faculty will review our suite of programmes to identify opportunities for synergies and staff and student workload reduction. This review will be conducted during the next year and will have a particular focus on our programmes at Level 9.</p> <p>The Faculty will also examine accredited teacher education programmes in the context of the need for a sustainable experience that develops teacher meta-competencies for self-directed and life-long learning. This work will be scheduled over a three year period and where possible will happen in the context of developments/innovations in programmes required as a response to curriculum and assessment changes across the education sector in that period.</p>	<p>This recommendation and planned action are fully aligned with the University's strategic focus on curriculum design and teaching: adopting a range of approaches that emphasise mastery of knowledge frameworks and building learning capabilities rather than covering specific content.</p>
7	P1	A	<p>Complete a thorough programmatic review of assessments. This should include reviewing which and what kind of assessments are necessary, how to reduce the number of assessments and how to increase the extent of programmatic assessment. This will facilitate faculty in having more time to give effective and constructive feedback on fewer assessments and allow students to engage in deeper and more self-directed learning.</p>	<p>The Faculty will conduct a review of assessments across programmes with a view to reducing the volume of summative assessments by identifying opportunities for joint/integrated assessments and synoptic assessments across modules.</p> <p>The Faculty will initiate this review in 23/24 (subject to resourcing).</p>	<p>A programmatic approach to assessment design is a key emphasis in the University Teaching and Learning Strategy, and support in responding to this recommendation will be available from the Teaching Enhancement Unit which has built up considerable expertise in this regard, including via its work with DCU Futures programmes.</p>

Recommendation	Priority	Addressee	PGR Recommendation	Area Response	SMG Response
8	P1	A	Recruit a Director of Placement with responsibility for a complete and systematic reform of Placement across the IoE.	<p>The Faculty is engaging with the Directors of HR and Finance to progress resourcing a role with a remit to review and reform professional placement, to engage with external stakeholders, to align practice across programmes and to reduce operational workload with a view to improving the staff and student experience.</p> <p>The Faculty notes the University has already sanctioned two additional posts focused on primary placement (at P5 and AP) to address the high risk of operational failure identified in the Self-Assessment Report.</p>	<p>The university has committed to developing a broad quality assurance framework for Placement across all the contexts it is undertaken by DCU students (professional, enterprise and international academic mobilities). Active involvement by the Faculty in its development will complement parallel work within the Faculty and ensure close alignment.</p> <p>The University is supportive of the proposal for a dedicated post, on the basis that the postholder would undertake a review of placements to reform and enhance the entire process. This would be undertaken on the basis of a fixed-term project.</p>

Research and Scholarship

10	P1	A	Adopt a more expansive definition of research to include applied research, such as that focused on classroom practice or policy. This would also require a wider set of criteria for measuring research quality and include measures of impact beyond purely academic impact.	The Faculty works within the university definition of what constitutes research and research activity but recognises that the communication of the impact of educational research requires specific intentional activity.	<p>The University is supportive of a wide definition of research outputs to include a core focus on publication in high-quality peer-reviewed academic journals, to provide a base for other outputs, including policy work, application in the classroom, etc. Our definitions of research quality, for example in promotion applications explicitly reflect these wider criteria. We will ensure this is effectively communicated to staff.</p> <p>Our definition of research impact in the University Strategy explicitly defines impact as including both impact in international research debates and also directly in wider society, the economy, policy, etc.</p>
11	P1	A/U	Link the University recognised Research Centres more formally into the key decision-making processes of the IoE.	University-recognised Research Centres are formally linked into faculty decision-making processes through the Director's	See the response under recommendation 2.



Recommendation Priority Addressee PGR Recommendation	Area Response	SMG Response
	reporting line to the Dean. The Faculty will review this link and that of Research Centres, Groups and Clusters through the organisational design project under Recommendation 2.	
12 P2 A/U Provide more enhanced support for high-impact research staff to allow them more time to focus on research activity, including establishing and developing national and international networks and partnerships, and strategic management of greater variance in the balance of contribution by staff across the range of activities.	The Faculty will engage with high-impact staff to determine what kinds of additional supports will enhance attainment of outcomes related to achievement of faculty strategic goals and the University Research Strategy.	Senior Management welcomes this recommendation and the response from the Faculty. We are committed to a review of workload models, which is a key part of achieving this balance. The Vice President for Research is also currently leading a review of central university supports for research, intended to enhance support for research active staff.
13 P2 A Explicitly recognise postgraduate research students as a part of the research orbit of the IoE so that they have a clear role and expectation to contribute to the research culture of the IoE. In pursuit of this outcome it would be important to explicitly address the provision of activities and supports specific to the part-time doctoral cohort of researchers.	The Faculty currently provides extensive support for part-time postgraduate research students beyond 5 pm, including training, research-in-progress dissemination events, and social events. This recommendation appears to be related to the lack of provision beyond 5 pm at the University level.	Relevant central units will explore with the Faculty how it can be better supported to recognise part-time doctoral researchers as part of the research orbit of IoE.
14 P2 U Review the existing policy on 'PhD by publication' at University level in light of international best practice to allow greater flexibility for full-time faculty to work towards obtaining a Level 10 qualification.	This recommendation, and details of the arrangements in place in another HEI, have been sent to the GSO for consideration.	The Dean of Graduate Studies and colleagues in the Graduate Studies Office will further explore this recommendation. If appropriate, a proposal will be prepared for the relevant university committees.

University Service and Engagement

Recommendation	Priority	Addressee	PGR Recommendation	Area Response	SMG Response
16	P2	A/U	<p>Improve and enhance initiatives that will support communication and collaboration across the four campuses. These could include an enhancement of current ‘hot desk’ arrangements on both campuses, the inclusion during new staff induction of processes that would enable all new staff to easily ‘navigate’ all three academic campuses, and the encouragement of informal cross-faculty and cross-campus pairings of mentors/buddies in similar (targeted) roles to reduce to the greatest extent possible inefficiencies in the system. Examples would be at Head of School level or Research Centre Director level.</p>	<p>The Faculty welcomes the recent HR initiative to maintain an office on St Patrick’s campus and is supportive of university initiatives which would lead to greater cross-campus integration.</p> <p>The Faculty would also welcome tailoring/extending the existing mentoring scheme to meet this specific need.</p>	<p>A pilot hot desking initiative for research students commenced in Semester I 2023/24. It is envisaged with existing space constraints that this pilot will be expanded to encompass some staff areas across all academic campuses.</p>

Communications and Provision of Information

19	P1	A/U	<p>Improve communications and the provision of information in the IoE. This should focus on (i) achieving cohesion and organisational clarity among the various groups comprising the IoE matrix structure and, subsequently (ii) formalising and making explicit all communication channels including decision-making and feedback processes, as well as communication channels to central units and functions within the University.</p>	<p>The role of faculty structures in facilitating communications, issue-resolution and transparent decision-making will be considered under the organisational design project (recommendation 2).</p> <p>The Faculty will embed student voice when addressing Teaching and Learning recommendations.</p> <p>The Faculty would welcome engagement with central units to develop strategies which build stronger connections between central support services and faculty staff at all levels.</p>	<p>See response under recommendation 2.</p>
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Stakeholder Relationships

20	P1	A	<p>Complete the development of the IoE Internationalisation and External Engagement Strategy. This should align with the University’s Strategy but also recognise the uniqueness of</p>	<p>The Faculty will develop an IoE External Engagement and Internationalisation strategy.</p>	<p>The IoE is represented on the new University-wide ‘Internationalisation Committee’ that will oversee and support the delivery of DCU’s key internationalisation targets and</p>
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Recommendation				Area Response	SMG Response
Priority	Addressee	PGR Recommendation			
		IoE and its ambition to be a global leader in teacher education.			metrics. These will guide the development of individual faculty plans.
21	P1	A	Develop a system for tracking, mapping, monitoring and evaluating IoE external engagement activity.	The Faculty will design and implement a system for tracking, mapping, monitoring and evaluating External Engagement and Internationalisation activities.	The Faculty is represented on the Associate Deans for Engagement Committee, which will review a revised International Partnership Approval Process focussed on DCU's work with foreign higher education institutions, and an 'External Partnerships Approval Process' that will cover other third-party relationships such as those with enterprise and state agencies. This guidance will assist the Faculty in monitoring and maintaining level 1-2 relationships at the Faculty level and level 3-4 at the University level.
22	P2	A/U	Develop a more strategically aligned, systematic and criteria-guided process for determining which external activity opportunities to pursue, which to decline and what value can be derived. The IoE needs to be clearer internally and externally as to where to invest its time and resources.	The Faculty will articulate the criteria-guided process for determining which external activity opportunities to pursue, which to decline and what value can be derived.	The Internationalisation Committee will agree on a Partner Matrix to assist in due diligence and guiding priority country engagement. More nuanced criteria will need to be determined at the Faculty level based on their own strategic priorities within; T&L, research or policy engagements.

Summary of One-Year Plan

No.	Recommendation	Responsible	Due
2	Review and refine the current matrix structure in order to ensure that resource management pathways and decision-making processes function efficiently and transparently for all staff and students.	Executive Dean	June 24
6	Review and redevelop the suite of programmes at Level 9 across IoE to identify module synergies, opportunities to reduce both the number of modules and multiple (parallel/duplicate) presentation of modules or module content.	Faculty Board	June 24
10	Adopt a more expansive definition of research to include applied research, such as that focused on classroom practice or policy.	University	
11	Link the University recognised Research Centres more formally into the key decision-making processes of the IoE.	Executive Dean	June 24
12	Provide more enhanced support for high-impact research staff.	ADR	June 24
13	Explicitly recognise postgraduate research students as a part of the research orbit of the IoE. Explicitly address the provision of activities and supports specific to the part-time doctoral cohort of researchers.	University	
14	Review the existing policy on 'PhD by publication' at University level in light of international best practice to allow greater flexibility for full-time faculty to work towards obtaining a Level 10 qualification.	University	
16	Improve and enhance initiatives that will support communication and collaboration across the four campuses.	University	
19	Improve communications and the provision of information in the IoE as well as communication channels to central units and functions within the University.	Executive Dean/University	June 24
20	Complete the development of the IoE Internationalisation and External Engagement Strategy	Deputy Dean	June 24
21	Develop a system for tracking, mapping, monitoring and evaluating IoE external engagement activity.	Deputy Dean	June 24
22	Develop a more strategically aligned, systematic and criteria-guided process for determining which external activity opportunities to pursue.	Deputy Dean	June 24

Summary of Three-Year Plan

No.	Recommendation	Responsible	Due
3	Review the balance and emphasis of the current work focus in order to facilitate the enactment of the next strategic plan and most if not all of the recommendations in this PRG report.	Executive Dean/HR	June 26
6	Innovate teaching delivery formats away from an 'encyclopaedic' model and towards the provision of a sustainable teacher education experience that develops teacher meta-competencies for self-directed and life-long learning.	Executive Dean or nominee	June 26
7	Complete a thorough programmatic review of assessments.	ADTL	June 26
8	Deliver a complete and systematic reform of Placement across the IoE. This is dependent on resourcing a new leadership position.	Executive Dean	June 26

Appendices

1. Quality Promotion Steering Group for the Self-Assessment Report

Prof. Anne Looney, Chair and lead on Strategy

Prof. Charlotte Holland, Deputy Dean and lead on Engagements/Internationalisation

Maeve Fitzpatrick, Faculty Manager and lead on Structures/Management and Resourcing

Dr Anna Logan, Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning and TL lead

Dr Maura Coulter, Associate Dean for Research and lead on Research

Dr Shivaun O'Brien, Associate Dean for Professional Development and Partnerships and lead on Engagements/Partnerships

Dr Eleanor Healion, Assistant Faculty Manager, Academic Affairs, and project manager to the Teaching and Learning and Research sub-groups

Caitríona Ní Mhurchú, Assistant Faculty Manager, Placements and Engagements, and project manager to that sub-group

Colum Cronin, Development Officer and Project Support

Rev Professor Anne Lodge, Director of the Church of Ireland Centre

Dr Cora O'Farrell, Director of the Mater Dei Centre for Catholic Education

Dr Sandra Cullen, Head of the School of Human Development

Dr Geraldine French, Head of the School of Language, Literacy and Early Childhood Education

Dr Una McCabe, Head of the School of Arts Education and Movement

Dr Margaret Leahy, Head of the School of STEM Education, Innovation and Global Studies

Dr Aoife Brennan, Head of the School of Inclusive and Special Education

Dr Martin Brown Head of the School of Policy and Practice

2. Peer Review Group members

Prof. Gerry MacRuairc (Chair)

Director of Western Institute for Education Studies, School of Education, University of Galway,

Prof. Tony Gallagher

School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work, Queens University Belfast

Prof. Elaine Munthe

Director of Knowledge Exchange for Education, University of Stavanger, Norway

Mr. Paddy Lavelle

General Secretary, ETB Ireland

Mr Matt Riemland

PhD Candidate, School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies, DCU

Prof. Claire Gubbins

Professor of Organisational Behaviour & HRM, DCU Business School

Dr Noel Murphy

Head of the School of Electronic Engineering, DCU

3. Quality Committee (for the Quality Improvement Plan)

Prof. Anne Looney, Executive Dean and Chair

Patrícia Cálão, Project Support

Prof. Charlotte Holland, Deputy Dean

Maeve Fitzpatrick, Faculty Manager

Dr Anna Logan, Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning

Dr Maura Coulter, Associate Dean for Research

Dr Shivaun O'Brien, Associate Dean for Professional Development and Partnerships

Dr Eleanor Healion, Assistant Faculty Manager, Academic Affairs

Caitríona Ní Mhurchú, Assistant Faculty Manager, Placements and Engagements

Rev Professor Anne Lodge, Director of the Church of Ireland Centre

Dr Cora O'Farrell, Director of the Mater Dei Centre for Catholic Education

Dr Sandra Cullen, Head of the School of Human Development

Dr Geraldine French, Head of the School of Language, Literacy and Early Childhood Education

Dr Una McCabe, Head of the School of Arts Education and Movement

Dr Margaret Leahy, Head of the School of STEM Education, Innovation and Global Studies

Dr Aoife Brennan, Head of the School of Inclusive and Special Education

Dr Martin Brown Head of the School of Policy and Practice
