

**Trinity College Dublin  
Quality Committee**

**Minutes**

---

Minutes of the meeting of the Quality Committee held on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2014 in the Boardroom, House 1.

Present: Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer(Chair), Academic Secretary, Chief Operating Officer, Senior Lecturer, Dean of Faculty of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences, Dean of Graduate Studies, Quality Officer, Professor Simon McGinnes, Professor Sheila Ryder, Professor John Walsh, Ms. Laura Conway-McAuley, Education Officer of the Students' Union, Vice-President Graduate Students' Union.

In attendance: Ms Michelle Tanner (Head of the Department of Sport & Recreation), Professor Cyril Smith (Chairman of DUCAC), Mr Conor Traynor (Vice-Chairman of DUCAC), Professor Kevin O'Kelly (Dean of Students), Dr Liz Donnellan (Secretary to the Committee).

Apologies: Dean of Health Sciences, Dean of Faculty of Engineering, Mathematics & Science, Professor Catherine Coxon, Mrs. Jessie Kurtz.

---

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer opened the meeting by welcoming the new members of the Committee – the Senior Lecturer, Professor Gillian Martin; the Dean of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences, Professor Darryl Jones; the Education Officer of the Students' Union, Ms Katie Byrne, and the Vice-President of the Graduate Students' Union, Mr Adam Hanna.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer noted that Professor Ciaran Brady has tendered his resignation. She expressed her appreciation for Professor Brady's contribution to the work of the Quality Committee, noting in particular his ability to see beyond the local and to bring a broader perspective to the quality assurance and improvement discussions.

**QC/14-15/001            Minutes of the meeting of the 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2014**

In relation to actum QC/13-14/031 (i) Review of the Department of Sport & Recreation, the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer noted that this item was on the agenda again for discussion as the discussion at the last meeting did not have the considered views of the DUCAC Executive. The Chair of the Dublin University Central Athletic Club (DUCAC) had approached her following the last meeting to express his concerns about the recommendations as they significantly impacted on the autonomy and future of the

DUCAC. The Committee agreed to the Chair's proposal that the original minute be struck from the record and the item be considered *de novo*.

There were no other changes to the minutes.

**QC/14-15/002            Matters arising**

There were no matters arising.

**QC/14-15/003            Relationship of Quality Committee to Council**

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer spoke to a proposal to Council dated 16<sup>th</sup> September 2014 which recommended that follow-up reports to quality reviews, i.e. Implementation Plans and Progress Reports, should be considered by the Quality Committee and be appended to the minutes of the relevant Quality Committee meeting and circulated to Council, highlighting any matters that require direction or response from Council. She also drew members' attention to the Faculty Quality Reports, noting that these will be reviewed by the Quality Committee and an annual quality report, incorporating the Faculty Quality Reports, will be considered by the University Council.

**QC/14-15/004            Quality Committee Survey results 2013/14 and Programme of Work for 2014/15**

The Quality Officer reminded the Committee that in May 2014 Committee members were surveyed on the performance of the Committee in 2013/14. The results were outlined briefly at the meeting on the 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2014 and she invited members to consider the report circulated.

Speaking to the report, the Quality Officer reported that there was a 66% response rate to the survey, with six members choosing to submit additional comments. Suggestions included Quality Committee involvement in policy development, a role in supporting Schools to develop their own quality brief and greater involvement by the Committee in quality enhancement/improvement initiatives. One member requested improved feedback to the Committee on resolution of issues brought to Council while another requested a report on attendance at meetings, which should be provided at the end of the year.

A work-plan for 2014-15, attached to these minutes, was circulated for consideration by members, outlining the scope of the work that the Quality Office will be involved in during the coming year. The Quality Officer reported that in addition to the consideration of quality review and follow-up reports, some of the work-plan items respond to issues highlighted in the survey and will come before the Committee during this Academic Year.

The Quality Officer reported that significant engagement with QQI will be required in relation to a number of new initiatives including consultation on five new policy documents relating to implementation of the Quality and Qualifications (Education & Training) Act 2012, a new institutional review model, the Irish Education Mark (IEM) and a

related Code of Practice as well as changes to the way in which the universities interact with their linked providers.

In the ensuing discussion the following points were raised:

- The Faculty Quality Reports have both an oversight/reporting function and a quality improvement function. Committee members will be able to draw out common issues that may require policy amendment/development following consideration of Faculty Quality Reports by the Quality Committee. The first year of this process also provides an opportunity to review how data collected from Schools can be used to improve quality and thus build capacity at local level. The Quality Officer is available to provide guidance and support to Heads of School, and to School and Faculty Administration staff on quality assurance and improvement matters.
- Failure to address recurrent issues or to implement approved policy (e.g. returning students' work on time) should be addressed by the Head of School in the first instance. A Student Complaints procedure is currently under development by the Secretary's Office in conjunction with the Academic Services Division. This procedure advocates a tiered approach in which the Head of School is the initial respondent to any complaint. The implementation of the Student Charter also allows the SU to bring forward complaints about persistent failure to adhere to College policies –the Student Charter is currently being reviewed by the Dean of Students;
- In relation to the work being undertaken to improve the appeals process, it was agreed that the process is no longer fit for purpose. It is very resource intensive and needs to be streamlined. Additionally a cultural shift needs to take place so that the appeals process is seen as a last resort to be used in exceptional cases only.
- A new policy on plagiarism and new processes for managing external examiner reports are also being developed and these will be considered by the Quality Committee in due course.

### **QC/14-15/005            Review Report for the Department of Sports and Recreation**

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer welcomed to the meeting the Chairman of DUCAC (Professor Cyril Smith), the Vice-Chairman of DUCAC (Mr Conor Traynor), the Head of the Department of Sport & Recreation (Ms Michelle Tanner) and the Dean of Students (Professor Kevin O'Kelly).

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer began by reminding the Committee that the Reviewers' Report along with the responses from the Head of the Department of Sport & Recreation and the Chief Operating Officer (COO) had been considered at the Quality

Committee meeting on the 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2014. As this discussion did not include a response from DUCAC, she proposed that the minute of this discussion be struck out and that consideration of the Report and its recommendations, to include responses from the COO, the Head of the Department of Sport & Recreation and the DUCAC Executive take place *de novo*. This would facilitate a fully rounded discussion of the review report and its recommendations. The Committee agreed with this proposed course of action.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer thanked the Committee and then opened the discussion by reporting that concerns had been raised by the DUCAC Executive about the remit of the Quality Review and how the resulting recommendations would impact the Society. She invited the DUCAC Executive representatives to outline their concerns to the Committee.

The Chair of DUCAC reported that the DUCAC's principal concern was in relation to the scope of the Review and whether it was appropriate that it contains the activities, management and organization of DUCAC without the prior knowledge of the Society. DUCAC representatives who met with the Review Team during the site visit did so on the understanding that they were contributing to a review of the Department of Sport & Recreation. They were not aware that recommendations pertaining specifically to DUCAC and to a combining of resources with the Department of Sport & Recreation were being put forward in the Review Report. From the DUCAC's perspective the Review Team did not have the remit to do this and DUCAC was not asked by the Reviewers to comment on these recommendations.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer thanked the DUCAC Chair and reported that it is not unusual for External Reviewers to make comments/recommendations that go beyond their remit in terms of strategic development/direction.

The Dean of Students welcomed the report and the recommendation to set up a taskforce. He outlined the importance of sport in developing leadership, management and conflict resolution skills among student participants and supported the recommendation to integrate the activities of DUCAC with those of the Department of Sports & Recreation. He suggested that sports clubs are a significant vehicle for student involvement in sport and the Department of Sport & Recreation is a vehicle for training in these skills. Combining the two would be a way to integrate professionalism.

The Head of Sport & Recreation re-iterated the willingness of the Department to work with DUCAC for the betterment of Sport in TCD. She acknowledged that the Reviewers' recommendations impinge on DUCAC but suggested that it would be difficult not to do so as the two are so interrelated. She reported that the two areas already work closely to achieve outcomes, such as the recent opening of the new hockey pitch in Santry, and she suggested that implementing the review recommendations would formalize this arrangement. The Review provides an opportunity to look at how reduced resources can

be used to greater efficiency and the Head of Department offered to work with DUCAC to achieve this. She agreed that the development of a strategy for sport in TCD should be the remit of the task force and should consider staff members and others who also use the sports facilities in TCD. The COO commended the report, which she believes endorses the excellent work and professionalism of Sports and Recreation. She emphasized the importance of getting a sports strategy approved so that both the Sport and Recreation Department and the DUCAC can deliver the high quality services that students expect and deserve.

The Vice-Chairman of DUCAC was invited to comment and he emphasized the importance of student involvement in future discussions.

In the ensuing discussion the Committee raised the following points:

- It is important that the taskforce has freedom to consider different possibilities, and is not inhibited by the review report recommendations.
- If the review recommendations are implemented in totality, it would significantly impact the role of DUCAC as a capitated body. It was noted that, according to the University Calendar, DUCAC is the administrative body for sports in the College.
- It was suggested that we could consider inviting the Review Team to return to review DUCAC, but this was not considered a useful approach.
- DUCAC and the Department of Sport & Recreation must continue to work together, and it is important that these parties agree a way forward and that change is not imposed from the top.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer thanked the participants for their input to the discussion. She summarized the discussion by saying that the quality review has provided the occasion for the establishment of a taskforce to look at the development of sport in TCD. As a next step she suggested, and the Committee agreed, that the Provost nominate a Chair for the taskforce; the Terms of Reference to be agreed by Board and developed in consultation with taskforce members; and a report from the taskforce should be presented to the Board at its first meeting in Hilary term.

In response to a query on the status of the review report, the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer suggested that this would be considered following the taskforce recommendations. It was agreed that the taskforce would use not only the report from the quality review to inform its work but also the draft strategy for Sport which has already been developed, along with other inputs as necessary, which could include, if deemed necessary, a smaller scale assessment of some elements of DUCAC.

The DUCAC representatives, the COO, the Head of Sport & Recreation and the Dean of Students agreed to the proposal that a taskforce be established, with a Chair appointed by the Provost, to recommend a strategy for sport and recreation, taking into account the quality review report, the draft sport and recreation strategy, and DUCAC plans.

**QC/14-15/005**

**QQI: International Education Mark (IEM)**

The Academic Secretary reported that the introduction of the International Education Mark (IEM) is an important issue on the horizon for universities and would be a positive development for the sector if it succeeded in regulating the English Language provision sector. She reported that a White Paper on the IEM was circulated for consultation by the Quality Qualifications Ireland (QQI) in July 2014 and that TCD as Chair of the IUA had coordinated the drafting of a university sector response. A draft Code of Practice (COP) for Providers of Education and Training to International Students had been released and was open for public consultation until the 14<sup>th</sup> November 2014.

A joint policy statement from the Department of Education and Training and the Department of Justice and Equality on “Regulatory Reform of the International Education Sector and the Student Immigration Regime” was released in September 2014 in response to the recent closure of English Language Teaching Colleges. It is unclear if the document was intended to include the University sector and the IUA are in discussions with the two Government Departments concerned to ensure that the University sector is exempt from the conditions of this Statement.

Internationalisation is a key strategy of the College’s Strategic Plan 2014-2019 and these policy developments are likely to pose additional regulatory and quality assurance burdens on the implementation of our strategic objectives.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer reported that a small working party of IUA Registrars/Chief Academic Officers will meet with QQI to outline the universities’ concerns and request a clear differentiation between the university sector and the English language teaching Colleges. Irish Universities are degree awarding bodies and are already quality assured through the Institutional review programme. There is further concern regarding the proposed IEM fee and how the universities will benefit above what we already receive through the annual subscription to QQI.

The Committee strongly supported the concerns raised and the need to clearly distinguish the university sector in relation to this issue. It was noted that we must avoid the adoption of a system similar to the UK Border Agency, which poses considerable strain on university academic administration and teaching.

**QC/14-15/006**

**Any other business**

The Quality Officer reported that a workshop would take place on the 15<sup>th</sup> October in DCU to look at the results of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) and how the resulting data can be used: lessons learnt from year 2 will be discussed. The National report will be published in November and a report will be brought to the next Quality Committee with regard to the TCD findings.

**Section B:**

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer drew the Committee's attention to four documents which had been circulated for information:

- a. TCD response to QQI Review of Reviews;
- b. Summary note from Annual Dialogue meeting with QQI;
- c. Consultation Draft Code of Practice for the provision of Educational and Training Programmes to International Learners;
- d. Regulatory Reform of the International Education Sector and the Student Immigration Regime.

There was no other business and the meeting closed. The next meeting will take place on the 30<sup>th</sup> October 2014.

## Quality Assurance and Enhancement Work Programme 2014-2015

Area	What	Committee
<b>Quality Reviews 2014/15</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. College Day Nursery - October 6 -7<sup>th</sup></li> <li>2. College Health Centre - October 30-31<sup>st</sup></li> <li>3. School of Languages, Literature and Cultural Studies (LLCS) - November 12-14<sup>th</sup></li> <li>4.</li> <li>5. Disability Service – November 24-26<sup>th</sup></li> <li>6. TR071 Science Programme - December 2-4<sup>th</sup></li> <li>7. Student Counselling Services - January 26-28<sup>th</sup></li> <li>8. School of Education - February 9-11<sup>th</sup></li> <li>9. Review of Research Themes - November 2014 – May 2015</li> </ol>	<p>Quality Committee Reviews 1-4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Reports 5 Mar 2015</li> <li>• Implementation Plans -7 May 2015</li> </ul> <p>Reviews 5-6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Reports 7 May 2015</li> <li>• Implementation Plans 4 June 2015</li> </ul> <p>Reviews 7-8</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2015/16</li> </ul>
<b>Follow-up on Quality Reviews of previous years</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Department of Sport and Recreation - Review Report</li> <li>2. Trinity Research and Innovation - Review Report</li> <li>3. School of Mathematics - Review Report</li> <li>4. Accommodation &amp; Catering - Implementation Plan</li> <li>5. Trinity Research and Innovation - Implementation Plan</li> <li>6. School of Mathematics - Implementation Plan</li> <li>7. Department of Sport and Recreation – Implementation Plan</li> <li>8. Human Resources - Progress Report</li> <li>9. School of Medicine - Progress Report</li> <li>10. Library - Progress Report</li> <li>11. School of Engineering - Progress Report</li> <li>12. Comparative Medicine (BRU) - Progress Report</li> <li>13. School of Social Work &amp; Social Policy - Progress Report</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Quality – 9<sup>th</sup> Oct 2014</li> <li>2. Quality - 30<sup>th</sup> Oct 2014</li> <li>3. Quality - 30<sup>th</sup> Oct 2014</li> <li>4. Quality - 30<sup>th</sup> Oct 2014</li> <li>5. Quality - 10<sup>th</sup> Dec 2014</li> <li>6. Quality - 10<sup>th</sup> Dec 2014</li> <li>7. Quality - 10<sup>th</sup> Dec 2014</li> <li>8. Quality - 30<sup>th</sup> Oct 2014</li> <li>9. Quality - 30<sup>th</sup> Oct 2014</li> <li>10. Quality - 10<sup>th</sup> Dec 2014</li> <li>11. Quality - 5<sup>th</sup> Mar 2015</li> <li>12. Quality - 5<sup>th</sup> Mar 2015</li> <li>13. Quality - 7<sup>th</sup> May 2015</li> </ol>
<b>Annual Faculty Quality Reports</b>	<p>Report of Faculty Quality Outcomes in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Module Evaluations</li> <li>• PG Surveys</li> <li>• External Examiners</li> <li>• System level recommendations arising from Quality Reviews and implementation issues</li> <li>• Professional Accreditation Reviews</li> <li>• Faculty Quality initiatives.</li> </ul>	<p>Quality - 10<sup>th</sup> Dec 2014 Council - 11 Feb 2015</p>



<b>QQI Program of Work</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Response to Consultation documents due 14 Nov 2014 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft Code of Practice for Provision of Education and Training Programmes to International Learners</li> <li>• Policy on Quality Assurance Guidelines</li> <li>• Policy on Monitoring</li> <li>• Policy and Criteria for Awarding</li> <li>• Policy for Determining Award Standards</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. QQI Consultation Seminars due in Nov 2014 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Linked Providers and Designated Awarding Bodies</li> <li>• Review of Reviews, International Education Mark (IEM and COP), Quality Assurance Guidelines</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Annual Institutional Quality Report to QQI - TBC</li> <li>4. January 2015 – QQI open applications for the IEM to Accreditation and Coordination of English Language Services (ACELS)</li> <li>5. Early 2015 – QQI Release Quality Assurance Guidelines for Irish Universities</li> <li>6. Mid 2015 – College Draft Quality Policy and Procedures to respond to QQI Quality Assurance Guideline and QQI Act 2012</li> <li>7. Mid 2015 – QQI open applications for the IEM to all Higher Education Institutions</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Quality - 10<sup>th</sup> Dec 2014</li> <li>2. Quality - 10<sup>th</sup> Dec 2014</li> <li>3. Quality – TBC</li> <li>4. N/A</li> <li>5. Quality – TBC</li> <li>6. Quality, Council and Board – TBC</li> <li>7. Quality, Council and Board – TBC</li> </ol>
<b>Quality Enhancement Projects</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. College level recommendations from Quality Reviews 2013/14</li> <li>2. External Examiners Process – Report and Recommendations</li> <li>3. TR071 Programme evaluation Working Group</li> <li>4. Appeals Process – Report and Recommendations</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Quality - 30<sup>th</sup> Oct 2014</li> <li>2. Quality - 10<sup>th</sup> Dec 2014</li> <li>3. Quality - 10<sup>th</sup> Dec 2014</li> <li>4. Quality - 5<sup>th</sup> Mar 2015</li> </ol>
<b>Policy Development</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Recognition of Prior Learning</li> <li>2. Plagiarism</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Council - 11<sup>th</sup> Feb 2015</li> <li>2. Council - 15<sup>th</sup> Apr 2015</li> </ol>
<b>Guideline Development</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Research Institutes</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Research – 24<sup>th</sup> Feb 2015</li> </ol>
<b>Irish Survey of Student Engagement</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Outcomes from 2013/14 ISSE Survey</li> <li>2. 2014/15 ISSE Survey Administration – March 2015</li> <li>3. Analysis of ISSE 2014/15 Data – June 2015</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Quality - 30<sup>th</sup> Oct 2014</li> <li>2. Quality – 2015/16</li> </ol>