



Fheabhsú Cáilíochta
Quality Enhancement

Quality Enhancement Plan
School of the Human Environment
20th March 2024

FOR COMPLETION BY QEU	
Date of Peer Review visit: 25 th & 26 th October and 1 st & 2 nd November 2023	Head of Unit: Dr Fiona Cawkwell
Link to Panel Report published on QEU website: https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/qualityenhancementunit/reports/cacsss/SchooloftheHumanEnvironment-PeerReviewGroupReport2023-24.pdf	Date QEP considered by Quality Enhancement Committee: 16th May 2024

Item No	Panel Recommendation	Actions Planned ¹	Responsibility for Action ²	Resource Implications ³	Implementation Schedule ⁴	Effectiveness/Impact ⁵ <i>To be completed as part of follow-up</i>
1	The Panel recommends that a School administrative structure be introduced to	a) A School Executive Management Committee (SEMC) already exists but will be enlarged and meet on a more regular basis, with minutes taken; School Rules will be developed from principles	a) Head of School, plus SEMC b) Head of School, plus Chairs of Departmental	Time for review and discussion; plus the appointment of a School Manager to assist with core	Assuming the appointment of a School Manager during Q2 of 2024, the administrative	

¹ May include actions planned within the unit or those that require interface with other parts of the university

² E.g. Head of School, School Manager, all staff, specific committees etc

³ Resources – the financial or human resources required to implement the recommendation

⁴ Interim milestone dates can be included here (e.g. within 6 months, within 12 months, within 3 years etc.)

⁵ **To be completed as part of follow-up 12-15 months post publication of QEP** - Recognising the need to reflect on the effectiveness of actions undertaken, and to what extent the actions have achieved their intended outcome


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	capitalise on the benefits of Schoolification.	<p>contained within the MoUs written when the School was formed (2007) and when Classics joined the School (2013)</p> <p>b) School level committees will be maintained/formed for some areas (e.g. Health & Safety, EDI, Athena Swan and others as agreed to be relevant by all staff), however it is felt that the disciplines are sufficiently unique that they are best served by departmental committees for teaching and learning, research, and postgraduate studies – routes for better information flow between College and Departmental committees will be implemented</p> <p>c) School reports are currently managed at a Departmental level largely due to the lack of a School Manager, once this person has been appointed the administrative load on departments will be reduced</p>	<p>Committees and representatives from CACSSS committees</p> <p>c) Head of School, Head of CACSSS</p> <p>d) Head of School, Head of CACSSS</p>	administration tasks, some adjustment to workload balance for individuals may be needed	structure will be in place by Q3 2024	


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		d) The staff of the School agree that there should be a separation of the Head of School and Head of Department roles insofar as is possible				
2	The Panel recommends that the School develops a School Plan.	The Panel recommendations will be a core part of this School Plan and it is intended to align the School Plan with the University strategic initiative timelines (2023-2028), and cover the core enterprises of the School in teaching and learning; research; postgraduate programmes and students; EDI; staff and student wellbeing; School community building; external engagement including website; staff promotion	Head of School, plus SEMC, with input from all staff	Time for review and discussion; plus the appointment of a School Manager to assist with core administration tasks, some adjustment to workload balance for individuals may be needed	Assuming the appointment of a School Manager during Q2 of 2024, this will be complete by early 2025 – the first step however will be a School statement, available for the 2024-25 academic year outlining who the people of the School are, and the goals and objectives of the School, the plan will then be reviewed at every School Meeting (6 monthly intervals) to allow all staff to comment	
3	The Panel recommends that the School pursues an	The staff in the School are very supportive of this recommendation, and a working group of staff from across all sectors and disciplines within the School will be established	Head of School, plus Athena Swan working group, EDI School Committee which	Time for review and discussion; some financial support to assist with data	While the Review Panel suggest a timeline of 18 months for submission it must be noted that the	

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	Athena Swan Bronze Award.	to undertake the work necessary to submit the application; prior to this however it is planned that a School EDI Committee will be formed with a view to exploring EDI related issues beyond Athena Swan	will include a Chair who sits on the SEMC, with input from all staff	processing tasks and the appointment of a School Manager, plus support from the UCC EDI unit, some adjustment to workload balance for individuals may be needed	School will be constrained by external limits on the number of AS submissions from UCC as a whole in any one period, therefore it may not be possible to submit before 2027 – nevertheless the School can identify issues and implement change via the EDI Committee	
4	The Panel recommends that the School ensures that students can articulate the transversal skills developed during their study.	The staff in the School support this recommendation, and links with the Graduate Attributes Programme and employment opportunities can be more clearly articulated for each of the disciplines as an immediate action; subsequently the teaching and learning committees for each department can identify the key transversal skills that will be developed each year and students given a self-assessment checklist at the start and end of each academic year so that they can measure their own individual progress	Head of School, Heads of Departments, Chairs of Teaching and Learning Committees	Time for review and discussion including with student representatives; plus the appointment of a School Manager to assist with core administration tasks, some adjustment to workload balance for individuals may be needed	Identification of links to the Graduate Attributes Programme can be added to the BA handbooks for 2024-5, teaching and learning committees can address identification of the skills during the 2024-25 academic year for rollout in September 2025	

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5	The Panel recommends that the School develops a policy on feedback and marking criteria for students.	The staff in the School support development of a policy on feedback at a generic level, but further discussion is needed as to whether School-wide marking criteria can be implemented or whether the skills being tested are significantly different and therefore demand departmental-level marking criteria in order to be meaningful	Head of School, Heads of Departments, Chairs of Teaching and Learning Committees	Time for review and discussion including with student representatives; plus the appointment of a School Manager, some adjustment to workload balance for individuals may be needed	Teaching and learning committees within the Departments can review the feedback and marking criteria during 2024-25 across the School with a view to identifying commonalities prior to the start of the 2025-2026 academic year	
6	The Panel recommends that the School continues to encourage interdisciplinary connections.	The staff in the School agree and through initiatives including an annual School lecture, a School research review event, a School programme review event, occasional workshops e.g. on digital technologies, and informal activities to enable sustained conversations throughout the year, opportunities for closer collaboration will be explored, particularly in light of discussions around an interdisciplinary MA, for example in Environmental Humanities	Head of School, Heads of Departments, Chairs of Teaching and Learning Committees, Chairs of Research Committees	Time for review and discussion; plus the appointment of a School Manager to assist with core administration tasks, some adjustment to workload balance for individuals may be needed and a new hire for the MA in Environmental	A research review event will be held in the summer of 2024 and thereafter annually, the School lecture will be held towards the end of 2024 and thereafter annually, discussions around teaching collaborations will begin in summer 2024 and continue through 2025, informal opportunities to meet	

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				Humanities will be sought	(perhaps monthly) will be explored	
7	The Panel recommends that the School reconsiders its name.	There are wide ranging views on this amongst the School staff and considerable discussions would be needed to ensure that if a change takes place, it incorporates input from all members of the School including the student body, and meets with approval from the wider UCC community	Head of School, plus input from all constituents and stakeholders	Time for review and discussion; plus the appointment of a School Manager to assist with core administration tasks	This is a lower priority recommendation than the others in the view of many School staff, and will therefore be considered once work on implementing the other recommendations has commenced and/or concluded	

For completion by Unit		
Head of Unit: FIONA CAWKWELL	Signature: 	Date: 21/03/2024

Head of College/Functional Area: CHRIS WILLIAMS	Signature: 	Date: 20/3/24
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