

Maynooth University Academic Department Quality Reviews:

Guidance for the Preparation of the Peer Review Group Report

The Peer Review Group (PRG) carrying out quality reviews of academic departments in Maynooth University is responsible for preparing a Peer Review Group Report, during and immediately subsequent to the PRG visit to the university. This brief document sets out details of the expected content and completion of this report.

Content of the Peer Review Group Report

The report should provide a comprehensive review of the department under review and, in summary should encompass:

- A commentary on the Self-Assessment Report (SAR),
- A concise and strategically focussed assessment of the present state of the department,
- A brief commentary on aspects of the department's activities,
- The identification of **commendations and recommendations** covering the following:
 - Commentary on recommendations for improvement that the department has identified in the SAR
 - Identification by the Peer Review Group of achievements and quality where they exist
 - Recommendations for improvement of any activity the Peer Review Group consider appropriate, covering *inter alia* management and operations, facilities, teaching and learning, research and engagement
 - Noting of any resource limitations which could impact on progress to quality enhancement/improvement vis-à-vis the recommendations made

In the report recommendations should be categorised as follows:

- **Institutional/Strategic:** involving University policies, regulations or practices; where changes may require additional resources or are dependent on activities/change in other units, where appropriate;
- **Department-Level:** Involving management, policies, or activities within the control of the department itself, and rectifiable with current resources.

Completion of the Report

- A summary first draft of the Report of the Peer Review Group should be prepared during the site visit, in a manner agreed by the members of the Peer Review Group.
- The Peer Review Chair will make an **exit presentation** to all staff of the department on the afternoon of the final day of the site visit. The exit presentation will not involve discussion with the staff of the department; the Director of Quality will introduce this session, stating that questions from staff are not permitted. The exit presentation will be a dissemination, in preliminary format, of the main findings of the Peer Review Group.
- All members of the Peer Review Group should be fully involved in and consulted on the writing and revision of the Report.
- The report should ideally be short and succinct and written as an independent document. Individuals should not be singled out by name in the report.
- Ideally, the next to final draft should be completed within 20 working days, beginning the week following the site visit.
- The next to final draft of the report should be submitted to the Director of Strategy and Quality, who will give a copy to the Head of Department in question to enable him/her to correct factual errors. A response to the Peer Review Group from the department regarding factual accuracy must be made *within 10 working days*. Only the Peer Review Group can make changes to the report. This procedure will be managed through the Quality Office.
- The final Report will then be submitted to the Director of Strategy and Quality who will forward it to the Head of Department, who in turn will make the Report accessible to all department staff. The department will be asked to respond to the findings of the reviewers and the recommendations for improvement.
- The Quality Committee will consider the report with the comments of the unit concerned.
- The department will draw up a detailed Quality Improvement Plan, based on the Report of the Peer Review Group, the comments and recommendations of the Quality Committee and the department's own recommendations for improvement.

- The Quality Improvement Plan will be formally considered at a meeting of the University President, the Head of Department, Dean of Faculty and the Director of Strategy and Quality. A summary report will be presented to the University Executive, with a particular focus on recommendations identified as requiring a response at university level.
- Following the consideration of the Peer Review Group Report by the Quality Committee and University Executive, the Peer Review Group Report and QIP will be made publicly available and will be published on the University's Quality Office web site.