Quality Implementation Plan for NUI Maynooth Access Office

Recommendations which the Unit could implement only with assistance from other bodies within the University and without cost implications

> (For each recommendation, list under "Response of Unit" the actions required by the Unit or other bodies to implement the recommendation, state if the recommendation has already been implemented, and if not, indicate a timeframe for the actions or the reasons for not implementing the recommendation)

There were only two recommendations in total made in the Peer Review Report.

The Peer Review Report identified specific strengths of the Access Office at point 1.

i	Student centred provision
ii	High student satisfaction
iii	Strong and effective team
iv	National leadership

There was no recommendation made.

Recommendation 2.4:

Recommendations regarding research

Response of Access Office:

> The Research issues cited in the report fall into three categories

► **Access to institutional data**

► **Access Office staff capacity**

► **Strategic institutional links**

Recommendation 2.4 - Action 1: Access to institutional data

Action 1	Specific Requirements	University Responsibility	Access Office Responsibility	Timeline
Availability of Institutional Data relating to Target Groups	The University needs a systemised structure to identify, track and monitor the identified target groups re admission, retention & progression	The University will embed data relating to the target groups in its reporting mechanisms, to include: • Aspiration Raising • Recruitment • Admission • Student Experience • Retention • Graduation • Post-Graduation	Nominated Access staff to contribute to the Information Systems/ KPI (Key Performance Indicators) Group and the Customer Relationship Management Group to secure the implementation of a data tracking system. Nominated Access staff to identify on an ongoing basis the data required by the University.	Initiated : 2012 Expected Completion: December 2012
		The role of the Institutional Researcher to include target group data collection and monitoring.	Nominated Access staff will work with the Office of the Institutional Researcher and others to identify all required routine and specific reports.	Expected Completion: Dec 2012
		Active Reporting for inclusion in university data (Departmental, President's Report, etc.)	Nominated Access staff will contribute to the University's internal and external reporting.	Expected Completion: Ongoing
		The University will finance the implementation of a project to gather and disseminate historic data on target group participation.	The Access Office will facilitate the provision of historic data to support the project.	Initiation: Jun 2012 Expected Completion: Sep 2012

The Access Office Team have discussed the issue of access to the university ITS system with the Registrar and discussions have taken place with the Records Officer, Freedom of Information Officer and the Computer Centre to provide tracking and access to ITS for the Access Office. Both the Access Office and Computer Centre personnel have visited other HEI's to look at how provision to institutional data is provided to these Access Offices. The Director of Access is now included in the Information Systems/ KPI (Key Performance Indicators) Group and CRM Group in NUI Maynooth. The identification of Access/Disability/Mature students on the ITS system from 1997 will be completed by the end of the 2012 academic year.

Recommendation 2.4 - Action 2: Access Office staff capacity

Action 2	Specific Requirements	University Responsibility	Access Office Responsibility	Timeline
Access Office Staff Capacity	To develop Access Office Staff through Professional Development, Education and Training.	The University to fund the development of specific professional development options for Access Team members. The Staff Development Office will provide Access Team members with opportunities to develop research expertise.	Access Office staff will be facilitated to participate in Professional Development Programmes with a research element. Access Office staff will undertake and disseminate research into best practice by publication in journal /book articles and attendance at conferences.	Prioritised 2011-2015 Ongoing thereafter

The Access Office is engaged in ongoing discussions with the University Staff Development Office. Professional development has been undertaken on an ongoing basis over the last 5 years and will be facilitated into the future. Within the Access Team, the focus going forward is on developing significant research expertise. A member of the Access Team is currently undertaking a research Masters in Education.

Recommendation 2.4 - Action 3: **Strategic research links with academic departments in cognate areas.**

Action 3	Specific Requirements	University Responsibility	Access Office Responsibility	Timeline
Strategic research links with academic departments	Develop and contribute to a research programme in the area of widening participation, equality and lifelong learning in collaboration with the academic community	The Office of the Vice-President for Research in the University will prioritise and facilitate research opportunities in the area of widening participation, equality and lifelong learning, in collaboration with the Access Office.	Access Office to provide time and resources to facilitate and support Access Staff to engage in research activities. Access Office will identify research topics in collaboration with the academic community, both internally and externally	Prioritised 2011-2017 Ongoing thereafter
		Academic departments and research institutes in cognate areas will engage with the NUIM Research Cluster in undertaking and disseminating research in the areas of widening participation, equality and lifelong learning. The NUIM Research Cluster will contribute to the strategic development of the HEA National Research Network.	To establish an NUIM Research Cluster to explore research possibilities on issues of widening participation, equality and lifelong learning. Access Office will stimulate and contribute to the development of the Research Programme in the area of widening participation, equality and lifelong learning. An Access Office Team Member is represented on the HEA National Research Network.	

The NUIM Research Cluster has been established since Nov 2011. An Access Office Team Member is involved on the steering committee of the HEA National Research Network. Access Office staff are currently engaged with inter-institutional collaborative research projects. The Access Team are presenting papers at national and international conferences in the areas of widening participation, equality and lifelong learning.

Recommendation 3.4:

Mainstreaming access and student success

This recommendation highlighted the following:

► Review of NUIM institutional organisation, procedures and practices to assess the extent to which the work of the Access Office is able to influence the wider work of the university.

► Assess value and practicality of extending Access Office interventions to the wider student population, supported by improved data, evaluation and research.

► Devise mainstreaming strategy and identify partners, responsibilities and barriers.

Response of Access Office:

Mainstreaming access and student success

► The Access Office with the Centre for Teaching and Learning are developing a proposal for a dedicated Centre for Educational Excellence in NUI Maynooth which will provide a hub for collaboration and the development of innovative and creative initiatives within the University.

► The Access Office contributes significantly to a number of committees and sub-groups throughout the University. However, it is acknowledged that the work of the Access Office needs to be embedded at all committee levels in order to influence the wider work of the University.

Recommendation 3.4 - Action 1: Review of University infrastructure.

Action 1	Specific Requirements	University Responsibility	Access Office Responsibility	Timeline
University review of the institutional infrastructure.	The University needs to review its policies, procedures, committees and other institutional structures to embed the role and influence of the Access Office within the University.	As part of the development of the new NUIM Strategic Plan, the University will undertake a review of the present institutional organisation, procedures and practices to assess the extent to which the work of the Access Office is enabled to influence the wider work of the University.	Access Office staff to engage with the infrastructural review to embed the Access Office into the committee structure of the University.	Jan-Jun 2012
		Ensure that the Access Office is represented on senior and influential decision-making committees such as Academic Council, the Teaching & Learning Committee and other relevant university committees to best influence practice.	Access Office staff to contribute specific expertise and knowledge as committee members.	Expected Completion with the delivery of the new Strategic Plan.
		Goal 5 and Goal 9 of the NUI Maynooth Strategic Plan Addendum 2009-2014 reflect the University commitments to inclusion and diversity and to the reform of its governance, management and organisational structures. The University to review all University policies to ensure that they reflect these commitments and legislative obligations.	Access staff will contribute to the University review of the institutional infrastructure and the development and review of policies.	Expected Completion with the delivery of the new Strategic Plan.

Recommendation 3.4 - Action 2: Extend Access Office initiatives to wider student population

Action 2	Specific Requirements	University Responsibility	Access Office Responsibility	Timeline
Extend selected Access Office initiatives, programmes, projects and activities to the University community.	Assess the effectiveness, suitability and potential for Access Office initiatives to be extended to the wider student population, with the aim of contributing to the retention and success of all students.	The University will develop a system of independent measures to evaluate the success and mainstream applicability of Access Office programmes.	Access Office will review and prioritise its policies and programmes to optimise the mainstream opportunities for the University.	Expected Completion: Annually in May
		The University will apply these independent measures to validate the mainstream applicability of identified Access Office initiatives.	Access Office will track, monitor and evaluate its initiatives, programmes, projects and activities.	Following the development of independent measures, annually in May
		The University will formulate a strategy for the phased rollout of appropriate Access Office initiatives to the broader University community.	Access Office will recommend the rollout of selected initiatives and work with the University in their implementation.	Expected Completion: Ongoing

Recommendation 3.4 - Action 3: Identify partners, responsibilities and barriers

Action 3	Specific Requirements	University Responsibility	Access Office Responsibility	Timeline
Development of partnerships and a collaborative approach to optimise outcomes for the wider student body and the University community.	Models of collaboration and partnership around the development of an inclusive campus to be identified. Barriers to inclusive practice to be identified and addressed.	All departments and offices to embed equity, widening participation and inclusion into their documented strategic objectives as part of the new University Strategic Plan.	Access Office to work with University partners in the development of strategic objectives.	Expected with the delivery of the new Strategic Plan.
		The University, departments and offices to identify potential models of collaboration and partnership that will contribute to the development of an inclusive campus, to include (but not limited to) an inclusive curriculum, the development of a learning campus, physical accessibility and the employment of staff with disabilities.	Access Office to contribute to the development of models of collaboration to support the development of an inclusive campus.	Ongoing
		The University will investigate opportunities to recognise, facilitate and support collaborative engagements.	Access Office will actively seek out collaborative opportunities.	Ongoing

A number of mainstream activities have already been rolled out to the wider university community to support the development of an inclusive campus; these include the MAP Academic Advisors, LIST (Library Information Skills Tutorials), MSC (Maths Support Centre) and Educational Technology software on all Public Access Computers across the university.

The mainstreaming strategy will have a longer term duration as new projects are developed they will become possibilities for mainstreaming following evaluation, positive outcomes and mainstreaming capacity.

Appendix: General response to the Peer Review Report

The Access Team were heartened by the positive feedback from the Peer Review visit and appreciative of the high praise for the team.

The team are excited about the two key recommendations and feel that they have been very effective in bringing targeted students into the university and supporting them to achieve a successful outcome and the recommendations bring new challenges. These challenges require more engagement internally with the university and challenge the university and the office to embed diversity strategies into the heart of the university. They also require the Access Team to expand their skills base and to challenge the effectiveness of activities and projects in the context of underlying principles and long term effectiveness.

The issue of mainstreaming is timely and while the team are convinced of its merits they are also cognisant of the possibility of widening participation issues being lost in the greater issues of the university.

The team found the preparation of the Peer Report demanding and difficult as everyday commitments had to continue to be met. Nonetheless it was agreed that the end result and the Peer Reviewers site visit were extremely beneficial for the team and their long-term role in the university.

Signed;

Professor Philip Nolan, President

Dr David Redmond, Registrar

Ann O'Brien, Director of Access