

Quality Implementation Plan for the Department of French

1. Recommendations which the Department could implement unaided

Recommendation 7.1: *that the department work towards providing for clearer enunciation of learning skills, learning inputs, learning outcomes.*

Response of Department: The Department of French welcomes this recommendation. The Department is providing a clearer enunciation of what the learning of a language entails in terms of attendance and participation at language classes. Learning outcomes are being included in module descriptors and handbooks as of 2011-2012.

Recommendation 7.3.1: *that the modular portfolio of Years 2 and 3 should be reviewed and redesigned to achieve the continuing provision of real choice by moving from 2.5- to 5-credit modules*

Response of Department: In the aftermath of the site visit first steps towards implementing this recommendation have already been undertaken. Working within the context of reduced staff numbers (from five to four over two years) and in the context of prevailing commitments (such as to European Studies), the Department intends to reform its second and final year content module structures in a way that will facilitate the introduction of 5 ECTS credit modules and still offer as much choice as possible to students.

The Department of French affirms its commitment to the principle of 5 ECTS credit modules. The retention of a limited amount of 2.5 ECTS credit modules may be necessary to facilitate the compatibility with structures on the European Studies programme and interdisciplinary modules such as ID 229 (European Cinema). The new structures will be implemented in 2012-2013.

Recommendation 7.3.2.: *that modes of delivery be reviewed with a view to introducing some seminars to accompany and complement lectures*

Response of Department: Seminar-style teaching is already the practice in certain modules and tutorials. However, in the context of reforms envisaged under 7.3.1., modes of delivery are being reviewed, in particular the current balance between small group teaching and large group teaching.

Existing initiatives include complementing First Year literature lectures with online discussion groups. The introduction of 5 ECTS content modules in 2012-2013 will make a delivery of one lecture hour plus one seminar hour per week feasible.

Recommendation 7.3.3.: *that consideration be given to the place and arrangements of the dissertation*

Response of Department: The Department agrees that the place and arrangements for the undergraduate dissertation requires serious attention. The review of this course element is taking place in 2011-2012; implementation of any new format is envisaged in 2012-2013 in the context of the overall reform of the modular structure in French.

Recommendation 7.3.4.: *that consideration be given to possible streamlining of some current assessment procedures.*

Response of Department: The Department agrees that there is scope to streamline assessment procedures, for example by introducing a system of sampling as suggested in 3.2.4. A review takes place in 2011-2012; implementation is planned for 2012-2013.

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

Recommendation 7.2.: *that the default position regarding residence abroad be reviewed.*

Response of Department: This recommendation has been discussed at the level of the SMLLC Committee and concrete plans are underway to introduce a policy by which the year abroad will become the "default position" for NUIM students of foreign languages. This will involve liaison with the Registrar's Office, the International Office and other relevant units in the University such as the Mature Students Office and the Access Office.

Implementation of the arrangements is envisaged for 2012-2013.

Recommendation 7.4: *that consideration be given as to how best the French Department can participate in and profit from the new structures provided by SMLLC and by the Graduate School, not only to offer an optimal research experience for students, but also to make the most stimulating and effective use of staff expertise.*

Response of Department: The Department of French is participating in a SMLLC-wide process of creating compatible MA structures with a view to more integrated collaboration between the units in the School. Since 2010, all new PhD and MLitt students fall under the regulations of the Structured PhD programme which all subjects within SMLLC have implemented in a way that facilitates collaboration and sharing of resources and expertise.

Recommendation 7.5: *that consideration be given as to how best to maximize the distinctiveness of French as a research discipline in NUIM, especially perhaps in relation to the various aspects of the Irish-French heritage through An Foras Feasa, and also through shared interests in the SMLLC, such as translation studies and women's writing.*

Response of Department: The Department of French will continue to aim at producing research of the highest quality by pursuing the links mentioned in 7.5 in addition to the existing networks in France in which staff members are already active. Outputs are being delivered on an ongoing basis both in terms of graduate teaching and supervision, and in terms of research and publications at postgraduate and staff levels.

Recommendation 7.6: *that consideration be given as to how French can best contribute to, and gain from, the inception of the School and the role French staff can play in the effective development of school-wide managerial and administrative structures and in the formulation and execution of the School's strategic objectives.*

Response of Department: The Department of French will continue to participate fully and proactively in the activities and initiatives of the School at all levels.

Examples are the organisation of the SMLLC Research seminar series and the utilization of this as an element of the provisions for the Structured PhD. French will also strive to make its MA structures compatible with the MA structures of the other subjects in SMLLC (concurrently to a similar process in Spanish and German) with a view to facilitating closer collaboration including the sharing of modules and the introduction of school-wide themed MA programmes.

3. Recommendations which the Department could implement only if additional resources are provided by the University

None

Appendix: General departmental response to the Peer Review Report (optional)

The Department of French welcomes the Peer Review's acknowledgement of its significant strengths and achievements, in particular its research strength and its success in creating a friendly and supportive learning environment for its students.

The Department of French acknowledges the necessity of reform to enhance the student experience and adapt to the pressures of reduced academic staff numbers.

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