
Quality Promotion Sub-Committee Meeting

Date: 8th December 2014

Attendees: Jim Walsh (Chair), Cathal McCauley, Ben Finnegan, Fiona Lyddy, Rowena Pecchenino, Bernard McMahon, Ronan Reilly, Siobhán Harkin (Secretary)

Apologies: Victor Lazzarini, Aidan Mulkeen

Minutes

1. **Minutes:** Minutes of the Quality Committee Meeting of 23rd May 2014 were adopted.
2. **Matters Arising:** There were no matters arising which did not otherwise appear on the agenda.
3. **Correspondence:** No correspondence.
4. **University Quality Review Schedule.** The Committee was updated on Quality Reviews scheduled for the academic year 2014/2015. Two reviews are underway; the Registry and associated units and the Library. Non-academic student services are scheduled to carry out its review by the end of the calendar year. In addition, as part of departmental planning, progress reports on recommendations arising out of the previous cycle of quality reviews are being sought from departments. The Committee noted the review schedule for the year.
5. **Draft guidance for review of administrative and support units of the university.** S. Harkin presented a draft guidance document for units undergoing quality review. The purpose of the document is to provide a practical guide to units on the objective of the process, carrying out the self-assessment, the process for the selection of reviewers, arrangements for the peer review group visit and the post-review follow-up.

The Committee discussed the proposed enhanced role of the internal reviewers, specifically in relation to workload and “moral hazard”. The Quality Office informed the Committee that equality of roles for internal and external reviewers in the peer review group was standard practice in other universities and could contribute to a culture of enhancement led quality approaches at unit level. It is envisaged that a panel of experienced staff would be

established for the internal reviewers and that training and advice would be provided to this panel. It was proposed that the document be discussed at University Executive before being presented at Academic Council.

- 6. Towards a framework for policy development in Maynooth University.** The development of a framework to guide policy development in the university was discussed. Such a framework would set out principles for the governance, approval, style, dissemination and review of policies.

The Committee welcomed the proposal and the Quality Office undertook to scope the work involved in developing such a framework, including benchmarking this aspect in other universities

- 7. National developments in quality assurance: QQI update** The Committee was updated on developments at national level through QQI, particularly (i) the process of “re-engagement” with QQI as the legislation is enacted at institutional level, (ii) the process for achieving the International Education Mark and (iii) the new procedures in place for domestic linked providers.

The Committee noted the significant increase in quality-related work that the university will be undertaking in line with the QQI developments.

The Committee recommended establishing whether the 3U Pathways Programme could be considered a linked provision under the QQI definition. The Quality Office will follow up with the 3U Director and QQI in this regard.

- 8. EU developments in quality assurance: New European Standards and Guidelines** The new Standard and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area were presented to the Committee.

The increased focus on student-centred learning was discussed as well as the guideline on the assurance of the competence of teaching staff. The undesirability of a credential-based approach to the latter was noted.

The Committee recommended that Heads of Departments be provided with an update and training with respect to the ESG. The Quality Office will arrange for a workshop in the next academic year in this regard.

- 9. Student Surveys: National and Institutional.** A summary of the results from the Irish Survey of Student Engagement for the university was presented. The Committee noted that areas of perceived weakness correlated to work already underway in the Curriculum Initiative, particularly around experiential learning. The Committee also noted the concern of the Student Union around low levels of volunteering and engagement in clubs and societies by students, recognising that the student mix and commuting issues were contributing factors. Work underway on the co-curriculum seeks to address this aspect.

The Committee was presented with and discussed the University Survey of Incoming Students.

The key points of the survey are:

- (a) Maynooth University attracts a very high proportion of first generation students
- (b) The Academic reputation of the University is the most important influence on students decision to come to Maynooth
- (c) Finance is the greatest concern for incoming students, with a very high proportion relying on part-time work to fund their studies.

10. Developments in International rankings A briefing paper setting out the university's position in the THE ranking and the methodology used to determine such ranking was discussed and noted by the committee.

11. Terms of Reference – new Quality Committee Terms of Reference for a reformed Quality Committee were presented for noting. The new committee will be established in line with the new Academic Council in 2015.

Siobhan Harkin (Secretary)
13th February 2015