

Maynooth University Research Development Office

Quality Implementation Plan 2016

1.0 Introduction

The aim of this document is to address recommendations made by the Quality Review Panel following the 2016 review exercise and to develop a Quality Implementation Plan for the coming five years. The document gives a brief status update and addresses recommendations for improvement that are divided into three sections;

- Recommendations that the unit can implement unaided without further resources
- Recommendations that can only be implemented with assistance/input from other units input and may require further resources
- Recommendations that can only be implemented with further resources from the university

2.0 Current status

The Research Development Office underwent a Quality Review in 2010. The processes in the Office were reviewed externally by Price Waterhouse Coopers in 2013-14 and significant operations/units changes have been implemented as a result. The workflow of the unit was streamlined and a Director of RDO, a Legal and Contracts Officer and a Financial Accountant were put in place within the existing head count. The office took on further risk management and post award activities through changes in the operational management of the Research Proposal Lifecycle. Thus considerable efficiencies have been achieved by the unit in the last six years.

An enabler of a more efficient system to support our business intelligence has been the investment in a new Research Information System (RIS) which supports both the academic and administrative communities and which links to the Finance, Human Resources and Student information systems. The RIS academic profile module was rolled out early as phase 1 in 2016, the proposal tracking module was rolled out to the RDO in July-September 2016 as phase 2, with the reporting element of this to be completed in mid Sept 2016 subject to final data input of 2016 grant submissions. The third module, the ethics module will be activated in early 2017 as phase 3. The system is intuitive and robust and creates a one stop resource for the academic community for profile, proposal tracking, grant management and compliance. More significantly it will allow live reporting of nonfinancial research metrics. A full live suite of research metrics will also be available once financial metrics can be drawn from a new JDE system in finance.

3.0 Recommendations for Improvement

3.1 Recommendations that the unit can implement unaided without further resources

Number	Strategic Recommendation	Additional PRG Comments
S.1	Develop a new coherent university research strategy to reinvigorate the overall university research agenda and ensure parity of esteem with teaching and learning. This should help to: (1) enhance the visibility of research in the university; (2) explain, motivate and empower the planned structural changes; (3) address ongoing concerns; and (4) promote a cultural shift in thinking around research and its importance for the overall reputation of the university.	See Section 5.1 for further contextual commentary regarding recommendations
Unit Response	 Current Status: RDO currently has a Strategic Implementation Plan geared to the current University strategic plan; this is reviewed and updated on an annual basis to implement the research goals in the existing research strategy of the strategic plan. We will begin our planning for the next major cycle and Strategic Plan 2017-2022 in 2017. Proposal: Prepare a plan working towards a new University strategy and a more detailed subsidiary Research Strategy. This will likely include: Preparing a thorough data atlas of our research. Prepare some research foresight exercises hosted by our consolidated Institutes. Organising workshops with the Research Committee and other stakeholders to evaluate the success of the existing research strategy. Prepare a draft Research Strategy 2017-2022. 	

Number	Whole Unit Recommendation	Additional PRG Comments
U.6	Instigate periodic meetings at a strategic level between the RDO and GSO.	
Unit Response	 Current Status: Existing collaboration between RDO and GSO is largely informal: RDO and GSO developed a student agreement which will be signed by all PhD students funded from research grants. It is currently being rolled out to all existing students via RDO and to new starts by GSO. All records will be stored on RIS. As part of the Researcher Career framework, RDO and GSO have developed a joint Researcher Skills Development Programme which will provide training to postdoctorates and other researchers. Both offices have been working with HR, the Library, Commercialisation, and Centre for Teaching and Learning in the development of this programme. It is being piloted in the coming academic year. RDO 	
	 programme. It is being piloted in the coming academic year. RDO has arranged with the Director of the 3U that courses will be opened to the 3U and advertised on their website. Proposal: Instigate formal monthly meeting VPR and DGS & formal monthly meeting Director RDO and equivalent in GSO (when appointed). Formalise the co-operation between the offices by regular meetings with GSO to reduce overlap and increase efficiency in managing workload. Consider work with GSO and Communications in developing an annual research day for MU to combine with GSO colloquium and the "3 minute thesis". Ensure stronger GSO involvement in the development of the new Research Strategy (see above). GSO to assist RDO in targeting final year PhD and Master's students for disseminating research funding opportunities. 	

3.2 Recommendations that can only be implemented with assistance/input from other units and may require further resources

Number	Strategic Recommendation	Additional PRG Comments
S.3	Introduce an Annual MU Research Day to enhance the visibility of research successes, provide an annual opportunity to engage with the wider university community and, through appropriate awards, incentivise, recognise and reward outstanding research achievements.	
Unit Response	 Current status: The Director of the RDO has been in discussion with the Director of External Affairs, GSO and the Library regarding the organisation of an MU Research Day. Proposal: RDO will work with GSO and the Library regarding an MU research day and will discuss with the Director of External Affairs on her return. Again Institutes will be a useful vehicle here. Aim is to organize the research day during the next academic year 17-18. GSO has suggested combining this day with the GSO research colloquium and the '3 minute thesis'. 	
Resource	 0.5 FTE resource required and this function may be combined with other requirements. Option A: A new RDO officer tasked in part to work with Communications Office Option B: An annual MA intern based in RDO (academically assigned to Media Studies or Business) tasked to work with Communications Office Option C: Dedicated officer tasked in Communications Office 	

Number	Strategic Recommendation	Additional PRG Comments
S.4	Examine the possibility of greater integration of the RDO and RAO, in order to develop a 'one-stop-shop' for researchers, with integrated pre- and post-award support.	
Unit Response	 HR with a view to increasing eff RAO was recommended by PWG undermined the coherence of the proposed. RDO hired a research produced at pre-award and to in offices. The feedback from a) re- finance/RAO (service partners), Piloted a summer intern project Proposal: Set up formal monthly meeting Head of RAO. Notes taken and continued progress. Arrange quarterly meetings bet E.g. EU pre-award RDO meeting specific issues and build rapport 	he finance function, an alternative was a accountant to improve the finances improve communication between the esearch staff (users) and b) is that this is working very well. completing a compliance review between pre-award accountant and shared with VPR and bursar to assure ween respective RDO/ RAO colleagues. with EU post award RAO, to solve t. d interim award meetings with PIs at iciently manage awards.
Resource		stronger post-award financial support ct with annual intern for non-financial

Number	Strategic Recommendation	Additional PRG Comments
S.5	Enhance the links between the RDO and the Communications Office with a view to improving the promotion and promulgation of research successes. Review the university website permissions to allow researchers greater freedom to develop and post individualised information.	
Unit Response	 Current Status: The communications of our research propriation optimal. RDO prepared a range of research stories solic community. The RDO and Communications set stories for Communications to access and promyear. As the above was less effective than we hoped communications event with assistance from the in 2016 to promote researcher's self-promotine media and conventional media. The Communications Office has a 'spotlight' or throughout the year. Proposal: As new Institutes are established, each directo an annual media plan (including web & social mwith Communications. RDO will integrate media training into the Rese Programme. 2 courses to run this year. Create internships between Communications/fwork directly with researchers. Communications to work with VPR, Institute d develop a strategy for media forms, outlets and Existing bank of stories provide ready starting particular starting into the stories and stories provide ready starting particular stores are provide ready starting particular stores are provide ready starting particular stores are provide ready starting particular stores particular stores provide ready starting particular stores provide ready starting particular stores particula	ited from research up a shared drive of note research over the , RDO hosted a media e Communication's Office ng their research via social n research stories r will be asked to prepare nedia) in collaboration earch Skills Development RDO for writers who can irectors and RDO to d audiences to target.
Resource	 See also S3. Option A: A new RDO officer to Communications Office Option B: An annual MA intern based in RI assigned to Media Studies or Business) tasl Communications Office Option C: Dedicated officer tasked in Comm 	DO (academically ked to work with

Number	Strategic Recommendation	Additional PRG Comments
S.6	Include the Dean of Graduate Studies as a member of the Research Committee. Consider representation of the research function (RDO legal & Contracts Officer) on the University Risk Committee and Re-evaluate the need for a university Procurement Officer.	
Unit Response	 Current Status: Graduate Studies were represented to the formation of the Graduate, Ir Committee. As the Graduate Studie Research PhD students their represe to the Research Committee. Procurement Officer has now been Proposal: The new Dean GS will be invited to 2 meetings. If this proves valuable, VI committee membership. However ir meetings (above) will suffice. VPR proposes to nominate the RDO attend the Risk Management Committee 	nternational and Education s Office currently manages entation would be a valuable asset appointed. 2016-17 Research Committee PR will recommend change to t may be that the monthly Legal and Contracts Officer, to

N	lumber	Strategic Recommendation	Additional PRG Comments
	S.7	Develop and implement a Postdoctoral Fellowship Framework aimed at enhancing training and career prospects, recognising experience, facilitating access to teaching-related activities, promoting research student supervision and supporting early career researchers to hold grants or contracts.	
	Unit	Current Status:	
R	Sesponse	to hold grants or contracts.	
		• MU does not currently have the place. The RDO will collaborate	arch Skills Development Programme. E HR Excellence in Research logo in with HR to implement the HRS4R ellence in Research award by 2018 to versities in Ireland.

Resource	 Requires commitment from HR to lead and manage HR4SR Resource (1 FTE) is required in HR to carry out the self-assessment, draft and implement the development plan.
	• Budget required for 3-4 of the Research Skills Development Programmes courses proposed where in-house expertise is not available.

3.3 Recommendations that can only be implemented with further resources from the university

Number	Strategic Recommendation	Additional PRG Comments	
S.2	Consider the appointment of a Special Projects Officer as support for the VPR in developing, communicating and implementing the new Research Strategy. This support could also facilitate the development and submission of strategic large scale grant applications.		
Unit Response	 preference would be to: Create a senior post within the support to the VPR and Directo and implementation of the new metrics. Our experience with the recent would also be pivotal in suppor bids for research funding. Manage the implementation of 	 plications. new role for a senior administrator to support strategy is needed. The efference would be to: Create a senior post within the RDO to facilitate high level strategic support to the VPR and Director of RDO regarding the formulation and implementation of the new research strategy and reporting on metrics. Our experience with the recent SFI centre bids suggests that this post would also be pivotal in supporting strategic large-scale institutional 	
Resource	 Create an SAO IV post in RDO to business information and large 	o support strategy development, institutional projects.	

Number	Whole Unit Recommendation	Additional PRG Comments
U.1	Urgently review the staffing levels and contract conditions for the RDO staff with the aim of creating greater capacity for developmental activities and enhanced stability and sustainability. For example, additional legal support is essential to avoid contract-related bottle necks within the RDO and the Commercialisation Office.	See Section 5.1 for further contextual commentary regarding recommendations
Unit Response	 2. Managing Legal & Contracts; I risk and legal for the Universiti (0.6FTE Legal & Contracts Office Proposal: Create a University legal departs Secretary who would support additional support for Legal ar supplement 0.4FTE or Review Appendix II which indicates the which posts have been advertion 	rtment under the University the existing 0.6 FTE or Create an ad Contracts Office in RDO by either RDO staffing level (see attached e staff numbers in RDO and levels at ised in Ireland in the past year). cracts (as opposed to 1 or 3) in order ed RDO candidates.

 Resource Create additions support for Legal & Contracts Option A. Create a new legal office under bursar/secretal with capacity to assist with research contracts. Option B. Create an additional support for Legal and Contracts Officer in RDO. Convert the Pre-Award Accountant role to a permanent post Review & regrade existing staff, via the Admin review due in 201 Budget allocation of €30K for RIS Legal Module

Number	Whole Unit Recommendation	Additional PRG Comments
U.2	Ensure adequate resources are in place to maintain and support RIS in order to continue to reap future benefits from new and enhanced features.	
Unit Response	 in from the academic commun Implement additional Offer continuous train Rollout the Proposal T community in 2017 Offer training for the e Operate the reports fu Act as first point of co Via ITMSC. Purchase the 'Leg reduces reliance on individual, 	upgrades to RIS ing for Profiles racking module to the academic ethic module
Resource	* €30k approx. purchase RIS legal mod	lule

Number	Whole Unit Recommendation	Additional PRG Comments
U.3	With respect to the Ethics Committee, plan for future capacity requirements and adequately recognise the workloads involved.	
Unit Response	 enhancement or a two module Research Ethics Subcommittee committee. RDO are currently recruiting et Proposal: RDO and the Chair of the Social examine the current criteria for number of proposals currently without affecting the integrity of The Secretariat is currently revi a view to ensuring a more comp The Director of the RDO will ho the coming academic year as pa Development Pilot Programmed improve the ethics protocols pri reduce the workload on the corrigion and improve efficiency in the prior 	of the MU process. ewing the ethics protocol form with plete submission for approval. st ethics writing clinics and training in art of the Research Skills . The aim of this proposal is to rior to submission which should mmittees. odule for ethics in 2017 to streamline rocess.
Resource	 Increase the numbers of staff of Subcommittee. Resources required for Two-mo Research Ethics Subcommittee 	odule buy for the Chair of the Social

Number	Whole Unit Recommendation	Additional PRG Comments				
U.4	Continue and enhance the RDO pro- active development activity in terms of meeting with researchers and identifying future opportunities, for both interdisciplinary team and individual based research. Faculty targeted expertise within the RDO may help in this regard.					
Unit Response	 Current status: RDO have developed the REACH programme which is 'An enhanced Research development programme which aims to Expand, Activate, & Connect researchers beyond their existing Horizons'. The programme aims to offer an integrated set of initiatives across RDO, Commercialisation, Graduate Studies, Human Resources, Finance, Communications and the library. The Research Skills Development Pilot Programme is one of the REACH initiatives. As part of the initial implementation of the programme the RDO hosted a pilot 'Open door drop in' session within a set of departments in early 2016 where an RDO staff member sat in a Department for a half day and researchers could 'drop in' to meet with the RDO rep. 					
	 coming academic year. Roll out the full 'Open door dro academic year. A calendar of 'C implemented which will offer the allows directly feedback on the 	ppen door drop in' sessions are being nemed advice general advice. This needs of researchers. vithin the institutes RDO are in the				
Resource	• 4 AOI Admin support roles are are discipline specific.	proposed within the institutes which				

Number	Whole Unit Recommendation	Additional PRG Comments
U.5	Shift the responsibility for and management of IRC postdocs from the GSO to the RDO, resources and expertise permitting.	
Unit Response	the IRC post doctorate and po	to create an RDO post to transfer stgraduate programme from GSO to ne post was approved for 3 years with ack to GSO.
Resource	•	nanage all of the pre-award IRC octoral and postgraduate fellowships.

Number	Whole Unit Recommendation	Additional PRG Comments				
U.7	Investigate possible ways of working around the identified issues with InterReg, ESPON or similar awards. Produce clear explanatory guidelines in respect of acceptance/non- acceptance and associated risks.					
Unit Response	 community. These programme conditions that are onerous for risk for the institution, particip dependent on the completion taken on a case by case basis r The VPR presented a paper to issues with these programmes could partake in them. ESPON: The MU Legal and Com- negotiations on behalf of Irish a specially convened meeting and ESPON Managing Authorit contract terms and conditions Universities participation in fur 	of a risk assessment and a decision is not popular with the staff involved all faculties last year outlining the and under what circumstances we tracts Officer led face -to - Universities during Summer 2016 with with the Director of the ESPON ETGC cy in Dublin. As a result, pertinent have been changed to facilitate Irish ture calls.				
	 A "Risk Framework for Contract negotiation" is required to outline the University's approach to risk in contract negotiation; to include liability caps; indemnities and warranties as well as dispute resolution etc. This Framework would both give direction and clarity as to the level of risk the University is prepared to accept in contract negotiation, be available to the MU Research Community to explain the University position. Development of the Framework would identify when Risk assessment would be required and the resultant management processes. Risk Management Training for Legal Contracts Officer – Research and contracts with industry. 					
Resource	Create an additional University	Legal Officer (See also U2.)				

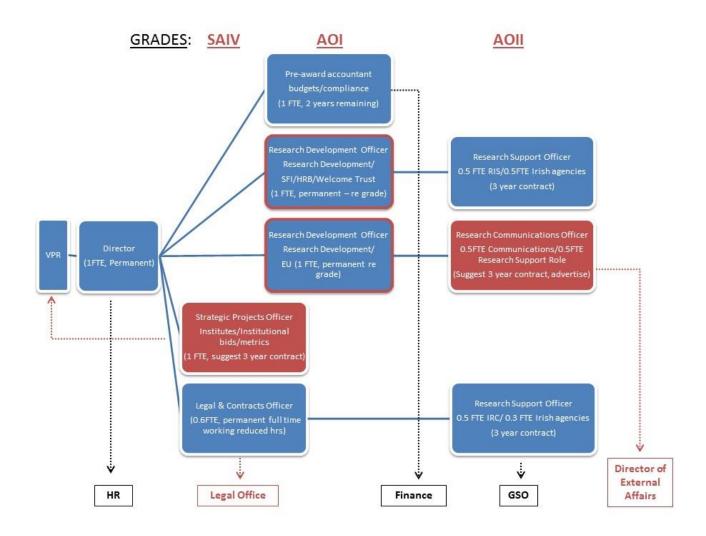
4.0 Summary of resource requests

See Appendix I for organogram of proposed changes

Resource	 Research Development Officer – strategy development Create an SAO IV post in RDO to support strategy development and large institutional projects. 					
	Legal & Contracts Officer					
	• Option A. Create a new legal office under bursar with capacity to					
	assist with research contracts.					
	• Option B. Create an additional support for Legal and Contracts					
	Officer in RDO.					
	Review and Re grade RSO support staff					
	• <i>Review & regrade existing staff, via the Admin review due in 2017</i>					
	• Budget allocation of €30K for RIS Legal Module Convert the Pre-					
	award Accountant role to a permanent post.					
	• Maintain the post to manage all of the pre-award IRC programmes, including postdoctoral and postgraduate fellowships, in RDO.					
	Communications/RDO Officer					
	• This post could either be a Communications post with RDO facilitation					
	or vice versa.					
	\circ Option A: A new RDO officer (AO) tasked to work with					
	Communications Office					
	 Option B: An annual MA intern based in RDO 					
	(academically assigned to Media Studies or Business)					
	tasked to work with Communications Office					
	• Option C: Dedicated officer (AO) tasked in Communications					
	Office (not preference.					
	HR/RDO Officer to implement HRS4R					
	• Requires commitment from HR to lead and manage HR4SR					
	• Resource is required to carry out the self-assessment, draft and					
	implement the development plan.					
	• Budget required for 3-4 of the Research Skills Development					
	Programmes courses proposed where in-house expertise is not					
	available.					
	Contracts Module for RIS					
	• €30kapprox purchase RIS legal module.					
	Institute Admin Support					
	• Create 4 AOI support roles within the institutes which are discipline					
	specific. As part Institute plan.					
	Research Ethics Committee					
	• Resources required for Two-module buy for the Chair of the Social					
	Research Ethics Subcommittee for subsequent years.					

Appendix I Organogram of Proposed Changes

- •Create a SAOIV role for large scale project/institutional bids reporting to the Director of RDO
- •Re- align the Research Development Officers grades to AOI (outlined in red)
- •Create a University Legal Office with a collaborative link to Legal &Contracts Officer
- •Create a Communications Officer post with a collaborative link into the Director of External Affairs



Appendix II Research Development Office Staff Indicative Numbers (excluding Finance and Commercialisation)

Research Development Office Staff Indicative Numbers (not including Finance or Technology Transfer teams)

	Maynooth University	University of Bangor	Aberystwyth University	Brunel University London	Keele University	DCU	UL	NUIG	UCC	UCD	TCD
Students	10500	10645	10000	14000	9900	11800	13100	17200	19200	25700	16000
Research income **	€19M	€23M	€25-30M	€25M	€29m	€35M	?	?	?	?	?
RDO -pre award only (non-finance)***	5	12	18	11	14	17	10	11	10	36	24
Legal & Contracts	0.6	2	2	4	3	1	1	1	3	?	11
Total	5.6*	14	20	15	17	18	11	12	13	36	35

* Not included 1 additional temporary post for SFI (to Jan 17)

** Research Income - approximates based on information available on the institutions' websites

*** Numbers exclude SFI centres support staff

<u>Summary of posts offered in Irish Institutions in the past year</u> (excluding MU)

MU equivalent Grade	Number of posts
SAOIV	5
AOI	15
AOII	2*
SEA	None

*UL post has not been filled and the DCU post was filled but

the candidate departed after 3 months to take up a SAOIV post in UCD

Current/ Past Job Vacancies 2016					
Job Vacancies	Post	Salary (000)	Status	MU equivalent	
TCD	2 posts	€52-€79	5 year and 3 year contract	SAO IV	
UL	1 post	€54К-€83	Contract (duration not specified)	SAO IV	
UCD	2 posts	€56-€65	4 year contract	SAO IV	
TCD	3 posts	€46-€54	3 year contract	AOI	
UCC	3 posts	€47-€56	Permanent/5 year/3 year	AOI	
UCC	1 post	€48	4 year contract	AOI	
NUIG	1 post	€48-€65	Permanent	AOI	
NUIG	1 post	€48-€65	1 year contract	AOI	
NUIG	1 post	€42-€54	1 year contract	AOI	
Dundalk IT	1 post	€51-€56	2 year contract	AOI	
DCU	3 posts	€45-€54	1-2 year contracts	AOI	
DCU	1 post	€45-€54	2 year contract	AOI	
UL	1 post	€31-45	multiannual	AO II*	
DCU	1 post	€33-€50	1 year contract	AO II*	

*UL post hasn't been filled and the DCU post was filled but

the candidate departed after 3 months to take up a SAOIV post in

UCD