

## Quality Committee Meeting Minutes: 1<sup>st</sup> December, 2017

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Present: Paula Murray (Chair), Anne Ryan, Colin Graham, Siobhán Harkin (Secretary), Stephen Buckley, Jeneen Naji

Apologies: Marie Griffin, Niamh Halpenny, Killian Brennan

### 1. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 17<sup>th</sup> November 2017 were adopted.

### 2. Matters Arising

The Chair updated the Committee regarding the revised Terms of Reference for the Committee and welcomed Dr Jeneen Naji to her first meeting. Siobhán Harkin, Director of Strategic Planning and Quality was confirmed as a Member of the Committee, with the role of Secretary. A copy of the revised Terms of Reference was circulated to members.

Copies of the presentations made at the 17<sup>th</sup> November meeting of the Quality Committee were circulated to members. A copy of the Social Sciences Synthesis Report was also circulated to members and to the Dean of Social Sciences. The Director of Strategic Planning and Quality informed members that the Dean was pleased to take the report as a starting point for future initiatives and as a basis for discussions with Heads of Department at faculty.

The Chair updated the Committee that the letter from the Quality Committee expressing concerns regarding SELE and supporting the Dean of Teaching and Learning in seeking to put in place an alternative approach was being drafted.

The Director of Strategic Planning and Quality updated the Committee that a Quality Officer role was advertised and recruitment was in progress.

### 3. Maynooth University Curriculum Evaluation

Dr Emer Nestor, Maynooth University Curriculum Researcher, presented an overview of her role, the rationale for and purpose of the Evaluation Project and its framework, and provided preliminary findings from recent student surveys together with staff surveys and interviews on various aspects of the Curriculum.

The Chair thanked Dr Nestor for coming back to the Committee. The Committee commended Dr Nestor for the presentation and the research, and noted the following as particularly important and warranting further action:

Findings from the research and data analysis about **Critical Skills**, particularly in relation to exam results, progression and retention rates, results from student and staff surveys were noted. The Committee also recommended that the findings, particularly the data analysis pointing to emerging lessons, be presented at relevant University fora to facilitate in-depth discussion. Noting the low staff response rate to surveys, the Committee noted that more information about the rationale for Critical Skills along with emphasizing the independent nature of the Evaluation Research may facilitate wider staff engagement. The Committee recommended that the forthcoming year of the Institutional Review is a key time for facilitating such further University-wide discussions.

**IT Systems.** The Committee noted the complicated data systems, the considerable amount of manual patchwork, categorizing difficulties and the current absence of the evaluation perspective in ITS. The Committee agreed to write to the Registrar and the CIO, expressing its concern regarding ITS and supporting an exploration of accommodating the evaluation perspective in the University's data systems.

#### **4. Update on 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle of quality reviews**

The Director of Quality updated the Committee on the status of recent internal quality reviews undertaken in the Faculty of Social Sciences and unit-level reviews.

The Director of Strategic Planning and Quality updated the Committee on the status of preparation of Quality Improvement Plans (QIPs) for all the reviews discussed. Meetings of the relevant HoD, Dean, President and Director of Strategic Planning and Quality were held for the departments of Anthropology, Law, Sociology and Applied Social Studies. The Committee will be presented with copies of these QIPs at its next meeting. Adult Education has submitted its QIP, HR and IT Services are nearing completion of their respective QIPs while submissions from Froebel and Education departments are still in progress.

#### **5. Development of a Linked Provider and Collaborative Provision Policy**

The Director of Strategic Planning and Quality introduced the item by briefly summarizing the specific terminologies, the relevant 2012 Act, and its implications for Maynooth University. The University has a number of partnerships that resemble 'linked providers' as described in the legislation and the University requires a policy in place for any future partnerships of this type. The University's Framework for Quality Assurance and Enhancements refers to a process for review of linked providers. The Committee noted the experience of the Adult Education department with similar partnerships, and also the potential international aspects of choosing partners.

The Committee agreed to make a recommendation about the need to establish University policy around linked providers and collaborative provisions. Given the time-definite context, the Committee agreed that a sub-committee is to be established with a specific mandate. Considering the question of identifying potential membership, the Committee recommended hosting a seminar on the topic to facilitate discussion and draw on existing internal experience.

The Director of Strategic Planning and Quality undertook to draw up a draft Terms of Reference for the next meeting of the Quality Committee to start the discussion.

## **6. Development of a Framework for the programmatic review of 'omnibus' degrees**

The Director of Strategic Planning and Quality brought the item to the Committee. Extending beyond the current framework of departmental level quality reviews, a programmatic review of the 'omnibus' degrees requires a University-specific approach and a new framework. The Committee noted that to progress the proposal, a working group is to be established for the specific purpose of designing the new framework. The Committee agreed to return to the item at its next meeting.

## **7. Institutional Review 2018 Update**

The Director of Strategic Planning and Quality briefed the Committee on updates regarding the Institutional Review, 2018.

The President has been working on establishing an appropriate Committee to oversee the Institutional Review process. The terms of reference and membership for this structure are in preparation and will form an item on the Quality Committee meeting agenda as such information becomes available.

## **8. A.O.B.**

The upcoming Committee meeting in January 2018 is proposed for mid-January. The Chair thanked the Committee for their ongoing work and continuous support for the quality agenda of the University throughout the year.