

Quality Committee Meeting Minutes: 30th November, 2016

Present: Paula Murray (Chair), Michael Dunne, Stephen Buckley, Siobhán Harkin (Secretary)

Apologies: Anne Ryan, Marie Griffin, Niamh Halpenny, Robyn Duke

1. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting of the 20th September 2016 were adopted.

2. Matters Arising

No matters arising, which do not appear under subsequent agenda items.

3. Update on completed internal quality reviews

The Director of Quality updated the Committee on recent internal quality reviews undertaken and their progress.

- The Peer Review of the Human Resources Department took place on 15 and 16 September 2016 and a draft peer review group report is undergoing fact-check.
- The Research Office is preparing its Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), following receipt of its peer review group report.
- The Quality Office is awaiting the QIP from Registry and Associated Units.

4. Schedule of internal quality reviews and activities: 2017

The draft schedule of internal quality reviews for the period January to June 2017 was discussed. It is proposed that seven academic departments in the Faculty of Social Sciences and three administrative units undergo review. The Committee noted the significant number of reviews being undertaken, recognising the need for most reviews to be carried out whilst students were available to meet Peer Review Groups. This necessarily puts an outer limit on the time available to carry out reviews.

5. Selection of internal reviewers for quality reviews

The Director of Quality presented a discussion paper on the process for selection of internal reviewers for quality reviews. The central proposal is that all academics at senior lecturer or above could be asked to act as a member of a peer review group. The Committee welcomed the proposal and the following points were made:

- The central proposal that staff at senior lecturer and above could be asked to act as peer reviewers was welcomed. This is in line with the approach taken for internal members of PhD committees. The Committee viewed this approach as being aligned to the concept of service to the university.
- Consideration should be given to the workload – particularly of Heads of Department – in this regard; the Committee, however, did not want to preclude them from the proposal.
- Consideration should also be given to a similar framework for non-academic staff, given the significant levels of experience amongst administrative and technical grades.
- For the upcoming set of reviews, given the short lead-in time, the existing approach to selection of internal members of peer review groups should remain the same, until the new approach is endorsed.

ACTION: The Director of Quality will update the document, taking the comments of the Committee into consideration.

ACTION: The Chair undertook to ascertain whether the revised document needs to be passed or noted by Academic Council.

6. Annual Dialogue Meeting with the QQI: summary and outcomes

The Director of Quality presented a summary of the Annual Dialogue Meeting between the University & QQI, which took place on 11 November 2016. The key points of discussion and engagement related to the annual institutional quality report (AIQR), consultation on the QA procedures of the Institution, in-line with Section 29 of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 and the upcoming Institutional Review (see 7 below).

7. Institutional Review: guidelines and timeline

The Director of Quality briefed the Committee on the upcoming Institutional Review. At the Annual Dialogue Meeting between the University & QQI, it was agreed that the Institutional Review would take place in 2018, with the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report due at the end of Q2 and the review visit to occur in Q4 2018. A handbook on institutional reviews is being prepared by the QQI.

The Committee noted the primacy of the Institutional Review in terms of their work in the coming period.

ACTION: The Committee undertook to dedicate a meeting in Q2 2017 to kick-off the process of institutional review, in terms of their role.

8. AOB

The Committee thanked the Quality Office for undertaking a significant workload now and over the coming period.