University College Dublin

Guidance for Review Group Members

Participating in Quality Reviews

Contents

Note: *These Guidelines were approved by UCD ACQEC (2/10/2023) will be updated as required.*

1. Introduction

The UCD approach to Quality is enhancement focused and embedded in our University activities, supported through our governance structure, policies and procedures and the responsibility of each University staff member. This approach also recognizes UCD's role as a designated awarding body with responsibility for maintaining the integrity and quality of its programme offerings and awards. Oversight of this approach is managed through a system of internal quality review that is primarily focused on the level of the unit (academic school or professional unit) and managed by the UCD Quality Office. The process reflects the University's commitment to adhering to legislative requirements, ensuring a robust quality culture, identifying good practice, and ensuring ongoing enhancement of our research, teaching and learning, and student experience. It also supports the delivery of the University's Strategic Plan reflecting our values of Collegiality, Creativity, Diversity, Engagement, Excellence, and Integrity.

This document provides an overview of the role of a review group member and the supports available to review groups throughout the process, and should be read in conjunction with the UCD Handbook for Internal Periodic Quality Review. It provides an outline of the steps within the quality process, the timelines and reporting requirements. Support and advice are available from the UCD Quality Office throughout the process.

2. The Role of the Review Group

Review Group Membership

The Review Group is typically composed of four members appointed by the University, one of whom acts as chair, the other as deputy chair, and two external experts in the discipline of the School being reviewed. (see page 6 of UCD Handbook for Internal Periodic Quality Review).

The Review Group will:
- Read the Self-assessment report, supporting documentation and other evidence submitted by the School under review
- Each member will provide their individual preliminary comments on the Self-assessment report in advance of the site visit and any additional requests for information/meetings
- Visit the School over three and half days (9am-5pm approx.) and review the activities of the School in the light of the Self-assessment report and review group meetings
- Each member will draw conclusions and note findings, make commendations and recommendations on the quality of the research, teaching and learning and the student experience
- Present the main findings in an exit presentation to the School
- Each reviewer will draft their section of the Review Group report
- Finalise, agree and submit the Review Group report within four weeks to the UCD Quality Office

The Review Group Chair/Deputy Chair will also:
- Chair the meetings (alternating with the Deputy Chair, as appropriate) and keep all meetings on schedule
- Provide institutional context where relevant

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- Co-ordinate the completion of the RGR and submit the final agreed version on behalf of the RG to the UCD Quality Office
- Represent the Review Group when the report is submitted to the University Management Team (UMT)
- Refer any matters that may arise outside the scope of the quality review to the UCD Director of Quality

Time Commitment

The following is an approximate guide to the time commitment required for participation in a quality review process:

Timeline Commitment	
Reading of the self-assessment report and appendices	1 - 2 day(s)
Preparation of preliminary comments	½ day
Site visit	3 ½ days
Post site visit – drafting of individual sections, meeting via zoom and contributing to final draft	2 days

Travel & Logistics

Travel and accommodation are organised by the UCD Quality Office. A member of the team will contact each review group member individually to coordinate arrangements, including travel, flights and accommodation, any specific dietary requirements, where relevant.

Documentation will be provided four weeks prior to the site visit. This documentation will include the School's Self-assessment report, appendices, site visit timetable, preliminary comments for the review and any other relevant information, and will be available in soft or hard copy.

Timetable

The site visit timetable is organised by the UCD Quality Office in consultation with the Chair of the Review Group and the School. Meetings will include School and University staff and student representatives, and any additional external stakeholders, such as alumni and employers. A sample timetable is available in the UCD Handbook for Internal Periodic Quality Review .

Support provided to the Review Group

The Review Group is facilitated through the process by the UCD Quality Office lead, who provides a briefing to the members in advance of the site visit. The UCD Quality Office will liaise with the School and the Review Group, forward all documentation for the review and conveys any requests for additional information or additional meetings.

Conflicts of Interest

On occasion reviewers may note a potential conflict of interest with person(s) involved in the review process. All conflicts should be declared to the UCD Quality Office.

3   Site Visit

Pre-Site Visit

In preparing for the site visit, each review group member will read the Self-assessment report and will provide feedback comments on their assigned Self-assessment report section approximately two weeks in advance of the site visit. These comments will be collated by the UCD Quality Office into one document and shared with all members in advance of the planning meeting.

Planning Meeting

The Review Group will hold a planning meeting on the evening of the first day of the site visit, normally at 5pm. The discussion will include the Self-assessment report, the structure of the site visit, review of the preliminary comments of each reviewer and to confirm the topics/questions for each of the meetings with stakeholders. The planning meeting is then followed by a welcome dinner hosted by the Registrar /Deputy President/ Vice President for Academic Affairs or their nominee.

Site Visit Meetings

Site visit meetings are used to evaluate the evidence gathered by the Review Group; to identify aspects of the School's activities that reflect good practice and to identify areas for enhancement. Each member of the Review Group is responsible for capturing their own notes on discussions and these will inform the drafting of their own section and the final Review Group report.

All discussion of the Review Group and the Self-assessment Report are confidential, and comments should not be attributed to any individual during the site visit or in the Review Group report. No member of the School should be in attendance at meetings with students or external stakeholders. The UCD Quality Office will provide/organise any timetable amendments.

Exit Presentation

One or both of the external members makes individual exit presentations (approximately 10 minutes) to the College Principal, Head of School and the entire School of their key preliminary findings of the Review Group.

4   Review Group Report

Timeline and Structure of the Review Group Report

At the end of the site visit, the Review Group Chair should ensure that the Review Group has prepared a first draft and a timeline is agreed for finalisation of the Review Group report. In writing their report the Review Group will evaluate the quality of provision of the school under review based on the Self-assessment report and their discussion, and make recommendations for enhancement. The Review Group should refer to the UCD Handbook for Internal Periodic Quality Review during the report drafting process.

The structure of the Review Group report will broadly reflect that of the School's Self-assessment report. A template for the Review Group report is provided by the UCD Quality Office.

The Report is completed by the Review Group no later than four weeks after the site visit and should be

sent to the UCD Quality Office by the Chair confirming sign off by all review group members.   The School will also have an opportunity to provide a short response which will also be included as an appendix to the final Review Group report.

Publication of Review Group Report

Following finalisation of the Review Group report, it will be considered by the Academic Council Quality Enhancement committee, University Management Team and Governing Authority, before being published on the UCD Quality Office website. Examples of UCD review group reports may be found at https://www.ucd.ie/quality/ucdqualityframework/reportspublications/.