University College Dublin

REVIEW GROUP REPORT

Periodic Quality Review

UCD School of Economics

July 2018

Accepted by the UCD Governing Authority at its meeting of 12 December 2018

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Key Findings of the Review Group

The Review Group has identified a number of key findings in relation to areas of good practice operating within the School of Economics, and areas that the Review Group would highlight as requiring improvement. The main section of this Report sets out all observations, commendations and recommendations of the Review Group in more detail. An aggregated list of all commendations and recommendations is set out in Appendix 1.

Examples of Good Practice

The Review Group identified a number of commendations, in particular:

- The level of staff engagement with the Review Group during the site visit is to be commended.

- The quality and expertise of the lecturers and the teaching, together with the excellent relationship between staff and students are clear strengths of the programme.

- The School has been very successful in implementing teaching and learning reforms. Change has happened through the vision, determination and leadership of the Head of School, combined with enthusiastic buy-in and commitment from academic staff, who are positive about recent achievements.

- The self-driven, internal review of the economics programme has been successful.

- The School is fully engaged with the new UCD fiscal arrangements and is actively involved in future planning with the College Finance Manager. The Review Group commends the School for its ongoing engagement with the College and wider University supports with regard to addressing fiscal challenges by identifying new sources of income.

Prioritised Recommendations for Improvement

The full list of recommendations is set out in Appendix 1, however, the Review Group would suggest that the following be prioritised:

- It is imperative that the College Principal and the Head of School are aligned in terms of their approaches to both the current challenges within the School as well as planning for the future of the School. There is an urgent need for greater transparency of roles and accountability for responsibilities at the various levels of School organisation. Hence, the Review Group recommends that the incoming Head of School is allocated an advisor (a senior UCD academic, external to the School and College, with institutional and Headship experience) to advise the School with regard to the development of its structures and processes.

- The Review Group recommends that the incoming Head of School delegates specific responsibilities to each member of the School Executive Committee. The Review Group also

recommends that this committee increases the frequency of meetings to, at minimum, a monthly basis to both manage the running of the School and work on the School strategic plan.

- The School, with guidance from the College Principal, should implement a mentoring system for all staff. The mentor may focus on teaching or research as is required on an individual basis. Appropriate mentors should be identified from the wider university community, as appropriate.

- The Review Group recommends that the School put in place an external advisory board. The main objective of the board would be to help formulate and support the vision and ambition of the School and its graduates for the future.

- The School should actively engage with both the College and UCD Estate Services on two projects:

  a) to ensure the coordinated modernisation of their space within the Newman Building in 2018;

  b) with additional support from UCD IT Services, to develop a dedicated data analytics suite.

- The School should engage with the Athena SWAN Award process and should plan to apply for the Bronze level Athena SWAN Award in the immediate future.

1. Introduction and Overview of UCD School of Economics

Introduction

1.1   This Report presents the findings of the quality review of the School of Economics (hereinafter referred to as SOE), University College Dublin, which was discussed between the 22nd and the 25th January 2018. The School's response to the final report, presented by the review group is attached as Appendix 2.

The Review Framework

1.2   A framework for quality review and improvement systems has been collectively agreed by the Irish Universities and is consistent with both the legislative requirements of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012, and international good practice (e.g. Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, 2015). Quality reviews are typically carried out in academic, administrative and support service units.

1.3   The purpose of periodic review is to allow the University to assess its current status with regard to the 'quality' for each constituent unit. This formative evaluation will then focus subsequent goals including:

- Monitoring the quality of the student experience in relation to teaching and learning;

- Monitoring research activity, including the management of research activity in addition to assessing the performance with regard to research productivity, research income, and recruitment and support of doctoral students;

- Identifying, promoting and disseminating guidelines in relation to good practice with regard to quality parameters;

- Providing opportunities for units to evaluate the effectiveness of their existing systems and procedures aimed at monitoring and enhancing quality and standards;

- Encourage the development and enhancement of these systems if required, in the context of current and emerging provision;

- Informing the University's strategic planning process in relation to quality;

- Developing a report which provides robust evidence to facilitate external accreditation bodies in their evaluations;

- Providing an external benchmark on practice and curriculum;

- Providing public information on the University's capacity to assure the quality and standard of its awards. The University's implementation of its quality procedure enables

it to demonstrate how it discharges its responsibilities for assuring the quality and standards of its awards, as required by the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012.

The Review Process

1.4   Typically, the review process is comprised of four major work items:

- Preparation of a self-assessment report (SAR);

- A visit by the Review Group that includes UCD staff, and national and international external experts. The site visit takes place over a three-day period;

- Preparation of a report that which will be disseminated to the public;

- Agreement of a quality improvement plan or an action plan for improvement (based on the Review Group report's recommendations). The University can use this plan as a benchmark when monitoring progress;

    Full details of the review process can be found on the UCD Quality Office website: www.ucd.ie/quality.

The Review Group

1.5   The composition of the Review Group for the UCD School of Economics is as follows:

- Professor Torres Sweeney, UCD School of Veterinary Medicine (Chair);

- Associate Professor John Crean, UCD School of Biomolecular and Biomedical Science (Deputy Chair);

- Professor Philip McCann, University of Sheffield (Extern);

- Professor Margaret Stevens, University of Oxford (Extern).

1.6   The Review Group visited the School between the 23rd-25th of January 2018 and held meetings with staff, undergraduate and postgraduate students, ex-graduates, employers, the SAR Co-ordinating Committee and staff outside of the School, including the Principal of the College of Social Sciences and Law, the student advisors, the HR Partner, HR Resourcing, UCD Finance consultant. The site visit schedule is outlined in Appendix 3. All members of the Review Group participated in all discussions and meetings.

1.7   In addition to the Self-assessment Report, the Review Group considered the documentation provided by both the School and the University during the site visit.

1.8   This Report has been read and approved by all members of the Review Group.

Preparation of the Self-assessment Report (SAR)

1.9 Following a briefing from the UCD Quality Office, a Self-assessment Report Coordinating Committee (SARCC) was established by the School.

1.10 The SAR was prepared between January and September 2017 and an update was provided in January 2018. Staff and selected students were consulted during the process and this information formed the basis of individual chapters within the SAR report. The final draft was compiled by the SAR Co-ordinating Committee chair. All School staff and the College Principal were invited to comment on the final draft.

The University

1.11 As one of the largest universities on the island of Ireland, UCD supports a broad, deep and rich academic community in Science, Business, Engineering, Health Sciences, Agriculture, Veterinary Medicine, Arts, Law, Celtic Studies and Human Sciences. There are currently more than 26,000 students in our UCD campus (approximately 16,300 undergraduates, 7,800 postgraduates and 2,200 Occasional and Adult Education students) registered on over 70 University degree programmes, including over 6,300 international students from more than 121 countries. The University also has over 5,400 students studying UCD degree programmes on campuses overseas. The University is situated on a large modern campus approximately 4 km to the south of the centre of Dublin.

1.12 The University Strategic Plan (to 2020) states that the University's mission is:

"to contribute to the flourishing of Dublin, Ireland, Europe and the world through the excellence and impact of our research and scholarship, the quality of our graduates and our global engagement; providing a supportive community in which every member of the University is enabled to achieve their full potential".

The University is currently organised into six Colleges and 37 Schools:

- UCD College of Arts and Humanities;

- UCD College of Business;

- UCD College of Engineering and Architecture;

- UCD College of Health and Agricultural Sciences;

- UCD College of Social Sciences and Law;

- UCD College of Science.

UCD School of Economics

1.13   The UCD School of Economics is situated in the Newman Building on the Belfield campus. As of November 2017, the School has 24.6 academic staff, 2 postdoctoral fellows/tutors and 3 administrators, with 43.1% of staff female and 44.7% of staff of international origin.

1.14   The SOE has a student FTE of 738 and a student-staff ratio of 31.3. The School's undergraduate programmes are the BA Single Honours Economics (DN510) and the economics component of the BA Joint Majors (DN500); from September 2018 the BA Joint Majors will be superseded by the new BSc in Social Science. The School also provides considerable input into Commerce, Business, Law and Actuarial Studies degree programmes and delivers a number of modules for the BComm (Finance) at Beijing Dublin International College (BDIC).

1.15   At postgraduate level, SOE has MSc degree programmes in Quantitative Economics and in Applied Economics; these were introduced in 2016/17 to replace the old MA Economics. A third MSc, in Behavioural Economics, was introduced in 2017/18. There is also a small PhD programme, which the School has an ambition to expand.

2. Resourcing, Organisation and Management

2.1   The School of Economics is one of eleven schools within the College of Social Sciences and Law. The School has a strong reputation for the quality of both its teaching and research, both nationally and internationally.

2.2   The School operates a rotating three-year headship, with the Head of School position normally held by one of the Full Professorial team. Working with particular-key colleagues, the current Head of School has done a remarkable job over recent years in leading a transition within the School, especially on teaching related matters. The next Head of School takes up the position in September 2018.

2.3   The Head of School is advised by an Executive Committee. This Committee comprises the Head of School (Chair), Deputy Head, the School Manager and the School Directors of: 1) Teaching and Learning, 2) Graduate Studies and 3) Research, Innovation and Impact. The Executive Committee normally meets twice per semester.

2.4   The SOE has strategic staffing plans. As of November 2017, the School has 24.6 academic FTE and 2 postdoctoral fellows/tutors, but aims to increase the numbers of academics to 30 by summer 2018, at which time it plans to discontinue the appointment of postdoctoral fellows/tutors.

2.5   Public funding cuts arising from the financial crisis have had a significant impact on the School since its last review, particularly in relation to staff recruitment and student enrolment numbers. However, the School has recently improved its financial position, which has been enhanced through the University's new financing model and involvement in BDIC.

2.6 The School has increased its enrolment and will keep 40% of additional revenues that flow from this growth, under a new fiscal incentives arrangement with the University. The School is increasing its net fee income and currently has a cumulative reserve. It will use these resources to finance the hiring of new staff.

2.7 The School has an Administrative Officer and two Senior Executive Assistants and plans to hire a further administrator for the School Office. Staff commented that the School is under resourced with administrative staff. Under the current administrative structure in the School, the Head of School is responsible for addressing issues that in other Schools would fall within the remit of the School Manager. In addition, the roles and duties of School administrative staff are not clear, nor are their relationships with UCD support staff outside the School. Clarity around roles and responsibilities could support more effective functioning of the School. This is especially important in light of the requirements of the European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which came into effect in May 2018.

2.8 The School has an active teaching programme in Beijing. The Review Group met and was impressed with the enthusiasm and engagement of the associated academics. It was not particularly clear, however, how these academics integrate with the UCD academics and whether they are represented on School committees, for example, the Executive Committee.

2.9 Welfare support is provided at College level by two student advisors who have responsibility for the supporting the welfare of all of the students in the College of Social Sciences and Law.

Commendations

2.10 The level of staff engagement with the Review Group during the site visit is to be commended.

2.11 The current Head of School is dedicated and effective. His work ethic and leadership is appreciated by the other members of staff. The next Head of School, who will take up the position in September 2018, has been identified and is cognizant of the work involved with this position.

2.12 The School of Economics is fully engaged with the new UCD fiscal arrangements and is actively involved in future planning with the College Finance Manager. The Review Group commends the School for its ongoing engagement with the College and wider University supports with regard to addressing fiscal challenges by identifying new sources of income.

2.13 The School has a global profile with a number of staff teaching in Beijing and a student profile of 9:1 national to international students.

Recommendations

2.14 It is imperative that the College Principal and the Head of School are aligned in terms of their approaches to both the current challenges within the School as well as planning for the future of the School. There is an urgent need for greater transparency of roles and accountability for responsibilities at the various levels of School organisation. Hence, the Review Group

recommends that the incoming Head of School is allocated an advisor (a senior UCD academic, external to the School and College, with institutional and Headship experience) to advise the School with regard to the development of its structures and processes.

2.15   The Review Group recommends that the incoming Head of School delegates specific responsibilities to each member of the School Executive Committee. The Review Group also recommends that this committee increases the frequency of meetings to, at minimum, a monthly basis to both manage the running of the School and work on the School strategic plan.

2.16   The School should clarify how its global engagement activities are represented in School structures and the Review Group recommends that the academic staff cohort teaching in Beijing be represented on the School Executive Committee.

2.17   The School should consider extending the current 3-year headship term to five-years, which would improve continuity. All senior academic staff should be expected to take their turn in the role, as well as fully engage in the operations of the School Executive Committee or equivalent.

2.18   As the School has ambitious plans in relation to future staff planning and recruitment, the integration of the relevant activities of the Head of School, the School Manager, the College HR Partner and the UCDHR Resourcing Consultant is essential. Therefore, the Review Group recommends that this group have formal, agenda driven, monthly meetings.

2.19   The Review Group recommends that UCD Human Resources meet with School staff to clarify changes to UCDHR structures, roles, responsibilities, terminology and lines of communication.

2.20   Formal agreements on set monthly meetings with the Head of School, College Finance Manager and the School Finance SEA would ensure that the School continues to effectively maintain this financial management activity. These meetings would support the School development of a longer-term plan to prioritise the areas of the School most in need, and ensure that new revenues retained by the School are invested to greatest effect in the most transparent manner possible.

2.21   The School, with guidance from the College Principal, should implement a mentoring system for all staff. The mentor may focus on teaching or research as is required on an individual basis. Appropriate mentors should be identified from the wider University community, as appropriate.

2.22   The Review Group recommends that the School put in place an external advisory board. The main objective of the board would be to help formulate and support the vision and ambition of the School and its graduates for the future. Membership of the EAB should include a senior external academic, alumni, a range of graduate employers, Masters and PhD graduates and postdoctoral fellows etc.

2.23   The roles of the administrative staff need to be clearly defined. This should be undertaken prior to any future administrative appointments with clearly articulated reporting lines, responsibilities and job specifications. This should also include clarification of relationships with staff in UCD Support Units.

2.24   The School should ensure that it is fully compliant with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), May 2018 and additional requirements around the protection of personal data.

3. Staff and Facilities

Staff

3.1   The Review Group met with all faculty, administrative and support staff during the site visit. This included a meeting specifically with newly appointed academic staff.

3.2   As set out in section 2 above, the UCD School of Economics comprises 24.6 academic FTEs, which will increase to approximately 30 FTEs in the coming months. The size of the School is comparable to most other Economics departments across the UK but smaller than the higher-ranking US or UK economics departments. The School is aware that the age profile of staff indicates a potential retirement cliff in a number of years and is making plans to address this. The gender profile of the School may be more challenging as all full professors in the School are male with only one member of senior professoriate in the School being female.

3.3   As set out in the UCD Policy on the Appointment of Head of School, "academics promoted or appointed to the level of Professor are expected both to have the set of experience and skills required to be Head of School, and to be willing to serve the University and their School by taking on this role. In normal circumstances, the Head of School will be selected from amongst the full Professoriate." The role of Head of School at UCD includes a significant workload and level of responsibility which can have an impact on the research outputs of the academic who takes on the role. While the Irish Department of Education and Skills approved the payment of additional remuneration to non-professorial academic staff who are appointed as Heads of School in September 2016, the only compensation for full Professors who take on the role is the opportunity to have sabbatical leave at the end of their term of office. As such it may be perceived by some members of faculty that there is little incentive for people to take on such a role willingly.

3.4   In the medium- and long-term, this is not a sustainable situation and other structural options have therefore been proposed by the School including a move towards a CEO/COO type of management. In this scenario, the Head of School would be supported by two Deputy Heads, one responsible for undergraduate affairs and one for postgraduate and research-related matters. Other staff would then report directly to either of the Deputy-Heads, depending on the issues concerned. The School is planning for this transition.

3.5   Human resource (HR) issues are often the most important and time-consuming matters that a Head of Unit faces in any University. It is therefore important that a Head of School is supported at the level of the University in helping a School achieve its aims, objectives and ambitions. This could be facilitated through the introduction of a (formal or informal) mentoring and support scheme for incoming Heads.

3.6   All faculty in the School have fairly similar teaching loads in terms of the number of course taught – three per year – although the average class sizes (and the associated workloads for examining and marking etc.) differ significantly. Finding a way to introduce more flexibility into the School workload model so as to better reflect these differences would be both appropriate and just. Moreover, finding ways for the Head of School to offer and structure individual staff incentives to reward innovation and leadership in teaching, organisation or research would encourage proactive and constructive behavior on the part of all staff and foster an environment of cumulative and ongoing improvement.

3.7   The new P4G Performance for Growth scheme potentially offers opportunities for developing such an environment if the system is well designed. However, such a system will only work well if there are clear expectations as to what individual staff members would be required to achieve each year. This in turn will depend on the ambitions, vision and mission of the School, issues which are as yet rather undefined, and which will need to be developed significantly in the coming years.

Facilities

3.8   Currently the staff and students of the School are located in a number of different buildings and the physical environment in which the School operates is challenging, as there is limited space and many of the rooms are in need of refurbishment. While acknowledging the constraints imposed by the physically available space in the Newman Building, the School identified significant challenges regarding the provision of adequate office space for new staff resulting in a somewhat unsatisfactory location of staff in relatively remote locations. It would be desirable to have the majority of staff co-located close to the School Office.

3.9   In addition, there is inadequate room for communal activities and the School's research students are dispersed across other areas of the Newman Building, the Geary Institute and the Earth Institute. Ideally, the School would have a room or rooms with at least some of the PhD cohort located immediately next to the teaching faculty, in order to encourage both ongoing discussions, frequent knowledge exchanges, as well as a coherent sense of identity.

3.10   There are ongoing discussions regarding the refurbishment and possible reconfiguration of parts of the Newman Building occupied by the School of Economics. Evidence from other parts of the Building which have been refurbished is that there is indeed a very marked improvement in the day-to-day working environment of the refurbished areas. Making progress in this regard is clearly a priority agenda for the coming years.

3.11   There are ongoing discussions regarding the development of a room with dedicated computer facilities within the immediate vicinity of the rest of the School so that students can gain

ongoing experience of not only using specialist software but also of interacting with teaching faculty in understanding and interpreting the data and analyses. Employers who met with the Review Group were very clear that the main requirements for graduates of Economics was for them to have significant data handling experience with appropriate proficiency with real-life data sets. Currently the School does not have dedicated facilities to deliver these requirements.

Commendations

3.12   The School provides a very good teaching and learning environment albeit in a space and building environment that needs to be improved.

Recommendations

3.13   UCDHR should provide appropriate support, training and mentoring for all incoming Heads of School to enable an effective transition of headship and support during their tenure.

3.14   The School should consider a more flexible approach regarding the provision of individual staff rewards and incentives for innovations in teaching, organisation and research.

3.15   The School should introduce an induction programme for all new staff to enhance their understanding of School and University systems, to ensure clarity about their roles, awareness of their rights and responsibilities and opportunities for development.

3.16   The School should consider how the new P4G scheme may be better integrated with the School's ambitions, vision and mission. Staff should also be supported and encouraged by the School to participate on courses offered by the University or through their engagement in Communities of Practice as part of their personal CPD, upskilling and learning through the sharing of good practice.

3.17   The School should actively engage with both the College and UCD Estate Services on two projects:

a) to ensure the coordinated modernisation of their space within the Newman Building in 2018;
b) with additional support from UCD IT Services, to develop a dedicated data analytics suite.

3.18   Efforts must be made to secure additional and appropriate office space for new recruitment in the School of Economics.

3.19   The School should liaise with the College to investigate ways to bring more PhD students 'in house' in the immediate vicinity of the teaching staff. Co-location would enhance both the student experience and the faculty research environment.

3.20   The School should engage with the Athena SWAN Award process and should plan to apply for the Bronze level Athena SWAN Award as soon as possible.

4. Teaching, Learning and Assessment

4.1 The School teaches an exceptionally large number of undergraduate students: it has direct responsibility for students on the Single Honours Economics programme (DN510) and the BA Joint Majors, and teaches many more on other programmes. The student-staff ratio of 31.3 is high both relative to other schools in UCD (UCD average 22.1), and to comparable economics departments. In the period before 2015, when academic staff numbers had fallen, economics modules were taught almost entirely through lectures, often to very large groups. In terms of quality of learning, this didactic approach to teaching is not optimal, and it was compounded by the limited range of assessment methods employed – typically just two multiple choice tests (midterm and final exam).

4.2 A substantial curriculum review carried out in 2015-16 (see section 5) proposed the introduction of small group tutorials wherever possible, especially for modules with large group sizes, and the introduction and support of a wider range of assessment methods.

4.3 The recommended changes are being implemented, but the small group innovations will require significant resources if they are to be maintained successfully. Up until now, the School has relied on Masters' students, PhD students and temporary Teaching Fellows (TFs) to support teaching. Despite this, student-staff ratios remain high, and finding sufficient teaching staff remains demanding, however the use of TFs is coming to an end as more permanent staff are recruited.

4.4 At graduate level, differentiation of masters' programmes to suit the interests and learning needs of different types of student has successfully attracted higher numbers of students, allowing SOE to further enhance the quality and range of options.

Commendations

4.5 The SoE has been very successful in implementing teaching and learning reforms. Change has happened through the vision, determination and leadership of the Head of School, combined with enthusiastic buy-in and commitment from academic staff, who are positive about recent achievements.

4.6 Despite the significant resource requirements, and – especially over the period of their introduction – the administrative challenges both for academic and support staff, small group teaching has been established efficiently and effectively, over a short time, to the evident satisfaction of staff, undergraduates, and graduate tutors.

4.7 The Review Group met with a small number of undergraduate students who were enthusiastic and committed, appreciative of staff, and clearly satisfied with their courses.

4.8 Staff teaching loads are fairly and transparently allocated; there is general agreement from staff at all levels that they are manageable, and that staff are able to teach to their strengths.

4.9   Students at all levels find staff accessible and responsive.

4.10   New developments in teaching are occurring in the School (small group tutorials for undergrads; new structure for MSc; School funded PhD programme, etc).

Recommendations

4.11   The School should introduce a mentoring system for new and early-career faculty to include support for their development as a University teacher. This should include increasing awareness of opportunities to obtain a University Qualification in Teaching and Learning.

4.12   The School, with guidance from UCD Teaching & Learning (UCD T&L), should develop a programme for new recruits covering aspects of Teaching and Learning including, for example, the use of the Virtual Learning Environment, grading and standards, examination procedures, and student support services.

4.13   The School should consider, with guidance from UCD T&L, introducing peer review of teaching for all faculty.

4.14   The School should, with advice from UCD T&L, provide consistent training and support for tutors (most of whom will have no teaching experience), and establish the role of module coordinators in this. This will be increasingly important when the small group teaching system is no longer new.

4.15   The School should ensure that small group teaching is firmly embedded and sustainable for the future, focusing on a secure supply of graduate students and post-docs, and effective administration.

4.16   The School should, in discussion with student representatives, identify and address student non-attendance at tutorials.

4.17   The School should explore possibilities for the use of innovative teaching methods, especially those that increase interactivity and student engagement during teaching sessions; increase awareness amongst staff of innovations being introduced elsewhere in the University, and in other economics departments worldwide, that take advantage of virtual learning environments and online learning resources. The Economics Network and the Biennial Developments in Economics Education Conference are both excellent sources of ideas.

4.18   The School should facilitate staff discussion on the development of effective assessment methods, so that they can learn from each other's experience.

4.19   The School should review assessment methods for Masters' courses, and consider the potential for more continuous assessment, which would test a wider range of skills.

4.20   The School should consider how to facilitate social interaction and cohort-building amongst Masters students and extend these interactions to PhD students.

5. Curriculum Development and Review

5.1   In 2015-16, the School carried out a substantial review of its graduate and undergraduate programmes, which went significantly further than the concurrent University process, motivated by concerns and awareness of weaknesses within the School itself. Every module offered by the School was reviewed. In addition to changes in teaching and assessment (section 4) the review led to the restructuring of undergraduate programmes, in particular to increasing the number of stage 1 modules, from 2 to 4 for Joint Honours students, and 4 to 8 for Single Honours, and to higher Level maths becoming a minimum pre-requisite for both Single and Joint Honours.

Commendations

5.2   The 2015-16 curriculum review established quality objectives and reforms which aim to allow students to build strong foundations at earlier stages.

5.3   Effective restructuring has revitalised and expanded the Single Honours programme. Current students have responded very well to, and appreciate the value of, a cohort identity.

5.4   A coherent suite of Masters' programmes has been established; students are highly satisfied with the course structure, and the teaching and support they receive.

Recommendations

5.5   The School should consider how undergraduates can develop their quantitative data handing skills, with an emphasis on direct experience of data handling. Employers of this cohort, during the site visit, emphasised the importance of data handling and were generally pleased with this at the graduate level.

5.6   The School should harness the enthusiasm of the current undergraduates to market the Single Honours programme to prospective students, with the objective of attracting high quality students for whom Economics is the first preference.

5.7   The School should undertake further work on setting appropriate Math requirements to ensure there is an aptitude for higher level courses in addition to providing options for students with an aptitude/interest in more mathematical/technical work. This should be kept under review during the forthcoming programme changes in the BSc in Social Sciences.

5.8   The School should consider the range of options available to Single Honours students, whose choices currently become more limited as they progress, because they have taken more modules at earlier stages.

5.9   The School should clarify its strategy for the PhD programmes for staff, covering areas such as: attracting students to the programme, funding, what is expected of supervisors, teaching loads and training for PhD students, and how the School will help students towards successful placement. The School should also explore potential for further cooperation with the TCD Department of Economics.

6. Research

6.1   The quality of much of the research being undertaken at the UCD School of Economics is very high. Many of the School's publications appear in highly ranked and very highly ranked journals. The Review Group had no concerns regarding the quality of the research being produced by the School.

6.2   That said, in the coming years the UCD School of Economics will increasingly have to adapt to the fundamentally changing external environment in which economics departments and schools nowadays operate. While much economics research can be undertaken without significant funding – especially where theoretical research is being undertaken or empirical research is using secondary data is being conducted – across the world there is an increasing shift towards research which relies on research funding. Here there are two main types of research. On the one hand there is applied research addressing grand societal challenges which tends to be increasingly multi-disciplinary and multi-method in nature. However, the skills-sets of economists often means that economics schools and departments are uniquely placed to play a central role in many of these research agendas. On the other hand, fundamental 'blue-skies' research often requires long periods of reflection and research grants can provide the time and space to undertake such research. Top economics departments and schools across the world typically display high levels of research grant capture in order to undertake both applied and fundamental research.

6.3   The current level of research grant funding in the UCD School of Economics is very low by international standards, by the standards of UCD, and even by the standards of the UCD College of Social Sciences and Law. On the other hand, the quality and talents of the School of Economics faculty provides a real potential for significant grant capture in many major thematic research areas. There are numerous new research funding opportunities emerging at the national and international levels which the School of Economics can exploit.

6.4   Science Foundation Ireland provides opportunities for economists. Even though research funding tends to be geared more towards STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) subjects, as with research grant funding in the UK and many other European countries, there are still opportunities to be explored by economists, including working with colleagues in other fields. Similarly, the Irish Research Council (IRC) offers opportunities related to postgraduate activities, especially involving cross pollination.

6.5   European research funding programmes offer a range of possibilities, and especially with Brexit, the timing is potentially beneficial for Irish universities. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the primacy of UK universities in EU research funding bids is being reduced.

6.6   The European Research Council (ERC) Major Grants programme typically provides funding of €2-3 million for an individual researcher to undertaken a significant line of research over a 3-5 year period, and includes allowances for doctoral and/or post-doctoral research support as required. The quality of the scholarship at the UCD School of Economics means that various UCD faculty members would be realistic candidates for such a funding scheme. There are also schemes for emerging and established scholars – the ERC Starting and Consolidator Grants schemes - where funding levels are typically up to €1.5 and €2 million, respectively, for 5-years. Starting Grants are for promising early-career researchers with 2-7 years' experience after PhD and Consolidator Grants are for excellent researchers with 7-12 years' experience after PhD and again, some UCD School of Economics faculty would be realistic candidates for such funding programmes.

6.7   The Horizon 2020 programme, and whatever also emerges as its eventual successor, is also an obvious funding arena where the UCD School of Economics can potentially make significant inroads. Such programmes involve research bids based on networks of institutions - individual schools or departments in different universities in different countries. The increasingly international profile of the UCD School of Economics – especially amongst the early-career staff – ought to naturally lend itself to pursuing such programmes, by teaming up with other institutions to submit research bids. Other opportunities are also associated with schemes such as the Marie-Curie Fellowships programme aimed at post-doctoral candidates.

6.8   Winning research grant funding is a matter of experience, of learning by doing, of trial and error, of experiencing many prior repeated failures and rejections. Early-career staff in particular need to learn how to construct research grant bids and in order to do this the standard mode in most research organisations is that more experienced staff – with a well-established track record of applying for and winning research grant funding - will provide key leadership roles by acting as mentors and co-applicants to early-career colleagues. A particular challenge for the UCD School of Economics is that many of the more senior staff have limited experience in this regard and therefore are not in a position to undertake such a leadership role. Whatever the reason, history, School culture or other factors, this is situation which needs to fundamentally change in the coming years in order to enhance the viability and attractiveness of the UCD School of Economics as a place to build an academic career. A strong track record of grant capture means that a school or department is well regarded by university hierarchies and this also means that a school or department is better placed to propose new ideas or initiatives which will positively viewed at higher levels.

6.9   In order to develop an environment where every member of faculty is involved in at least one external research grant project proposal per year there needs to be significant change in culture (and potentially also systems) within the UCD School of Economics. There needs to be a clearer articulation of the research ambition, vision and mission at the level of the School, along with the introduction of a research mentoring system for all faculty, in particular early-career academics. Such research mentoring and support could be achieved by, for example, a College-wide research mentoring system or the development of research support networks and reciprocal arrangements outside the School. .

6.10 The impact of research - both at the level of the School and the individual - also needs to be considered carefully. Sources of evidence regarding impact need to be identified, quantitative measures or indices of engagement need to be considered, along with qualitative evidence of engagement and impact. A mixed quantitative and qualitative approach would be most suitable.

Commendations

6.11 Some very good quality research is being undertaken in a number of distinct fields, including those that lend themselves to major grant funding possibilities and high levels of impact.

Recommendations

6.12 The School needs to develop and clearly articulate its research ambitions, vision and mission.

6.13 The School should introduce a research mentoring scheme for faculty, in particular early-career scholars paying specific attention to the construction of research grant applications.

6.14 The School should consider how more senior colleagues with little experience of research grant capture can also be helped to develop major grant proposals – especially targeted at the ERC Major Grants programme.

6.15 The School should promote frequent engagement between faculty and UCD Research for advice and support on different types of research calls and applications processes.

6.16 It would benefit the School to investigate possibilities for participation in H2020 bids – linking with researchers in other EU countries.

6.17 The School needs to explore ways to identify and measure the societal engagement and impacts of the School's research activities.

7. Management of Quality and Enhancement

7.1 The School has a broad range of world-class faculty and staff who are clearly committed to delivering excellent programmes in Economics. The School has undergone an exhaustive Curriculum Review, at their own instigation, and the Review Group would like to commend them on the nature of this introspective, reflective process and on their responses and subsequent actions.

7.2 The School has a long-standing history of engaging with students and stakeholders for the purposes of curriculum enhancement, utilising a variety of approaches to evaluate the quality of their outputs. These include use of both the University-wide system of monitoring student feedback and additional methodologies developed in-house that have enabled the School to form a more complete picture of the quality and standing of their programmes. The

continuation and moderate expansion of these procedures will continue to benefit the programmes in the medium and long term.

7.3   Current quality processes include a somewhat *ad hoc* engagement with external stakeholders (primarily employers), student feedback, external examiner reports, informal mentoring of faculty and staff, in addition to Staff-Student Liaison Committees. There is scope to formalise stakeholder input and increase the interaction between the Programme External Examiner and the students. This could also include, for example, a moderated Q+A session with cohorts of each stage in which academic staff were not present, which might prove particularly useful at the end of Stages 3/4.

Commendations

7.4   The School utilises University quality mechanisms, both internal quality enhancement processes and the external examiner system, to assure the academic standards of its modules and awards.

7.5   The self-driven, internal review of the economics programme has been successful.

7.6   The level of staff engagement with the Review Group during the site visit is to be commended.

7.7   The Review Group were impressed by the responsiveness to feedback shown by the School, as evidenced by the clear successes of the programme changes that have been implemented, in particularly the provision of tutorials and the drop-in clinic.

7.8   Student feedback on modules shows that student satisfaction with the programme is high.

7.9   The quality and expertise of the lecturers and the teaching, together with the excellent relationship between staff and students are clear strengths of the programme.

Recommendations

Taking into consideration the expanded School activities in teaching and the recruitment of significant numbers of new staff, the Review Group makes the following recommendations:

7.10   The School should continue to roll out small group teaching across all stages of the programme.

7.11   The School should conduct a periodic review of assessment strategies reflecting student feedback and current practices in peer institutions.

7.12   The School should introduce a wider forum for student programme feedback at the end of Stages 3 and/or 4, moderated by a member of University staff from outside the School.

7.13   The School should increase efforts to facilitate meetings between the Programme External Examiner and students.

7.14   The School should develop a closer, formalised involvement with external stakeholders that will inform future curriculum developments.

8. Support Services

8.1   The School engages with a wide variety of supports and services provided by other UCD units, including IT Services, Human Resources, Library, Teaching and Learning, UCD Research, Estates Services, Finance, and International. The School recognised the hard work of individuals within these units and while, for the most part, the School has a positive relationship with these University support units, some issues were identified.

8.2   The School identified a number of issues with the physical facilities in the Newman Building and the Review Group noted that engagement with UCD Estates has been generally positive, and refurbishment of School offices and environs are imminent and should be in place for the start of the 2018-19 academic year. Notwithstanding these positive developments, there are concerns surrounding the adequacy of space provided for the effective and efficient delivery of the Economics programme, most notably the provision of space for computer facilities.

8.3   The School has identified some small problems with UCD IT Services provision. The School should work with UCD IT Services during the roll out of the new Virtual Learning Environment to identify whether any additional utility is required, for example with regard to targeted communication requirements and increasing availability of relevant software licenses. Similarly, the School should liaise with IT Services to identify items for the School's budget planning over the coming years, including the provision of facilities for data handling for undergraduate students in consultation with UCD Estates Services.

8.4   The University strategy to increase its non-EU student numbers has broad support from within the School. The School should be proactive in its engagement with UCD International to drive

targeted overseas student recruitment and to ensure effective supports are in place for international students on arrival. Planning issues can obviously arise when there is a large drop off between the number of places offered and the number of students that ultimately register for a programme.

8.5   The Review Group noted the success of the Beijing-Dublin International College programme and the opportunities that exist to increase the recruitment to the MSc and PhD programmes in the School.

8.6   The School identified a number of frustrations in their dealings with UCD HR, UCD Registry and UCD Research. This included a perception of high turnover of staff within these units, leading to delays in processing. It seems that some of these problems could be alleviated by a more informed interaction between the units and the School, for example a visit and presentation from staff within these units outlining their roles and responsibilities and importantly, how to best manage blockages in the system.

Commendations

8.7   The School is to be commended for establishing and maintaining good relationships with most University-wide service providers.

8.8   The School recognises the hard work of individuals within UCD support units, sometimes in demanding circumstances.

Recommendations

8.9   The School should liaise with IT Services during the roll out of the new Virtual Learning Environment to ensure that targeted communications utilities that allow staff to communicate with specific class groupings/subsections are appropriate for their needs.

8.10   The School should meet with IT Services to ensure effective financial planning by the School for software license requirements moving into the future.

8.11   In conjunction with UCD International and Student Recruitment, the School should establish sustainable targets for growth in non-EU students, particularly at postgraduate level.

8.12   The School and UCD International should work together to facilitate recruitment of postgraduate students from BDIC.

8.13   The School should host information briefings from all relevant Support Services for all staff, specifically with relation to recruitment procedures (UCD HR) and the role and supports offered by UCD Research and UCD Teaching and Learning.

9. External Relations

9.1 There is extensive public engagement, both nationally and internationally, by faculty and staff from across the School. School faculty are in prominent leadership positions in academic societies, industry and government councils.

9.2 The Review Group met with Alumni and external stakeholders who were very supportive of the endeavours of the SOE. They clearly articulated their views on their future needs of the graduates of the School.

9.3 The School's external communications can be inconsistent and there is scope for the School to develop a communications plan to manage its engagement with stakeholders, including, current students, alumni, industry, government and research partners.

Commendations

9.4 The School contributes to national debates on economic and policy issues.

Recommendations

9.5 As discussed in section 2, the SOE should consider setting up an external advisory board to help the School make informed strategic decisions in terms of curriculum development, research activities and additional revenue opportunities.

9.6 With a view to facilitating staff and PhD level exchanges and collaboration, the Review Group encourages the School to consolidate existing relationships and to explore the creation of new relationships with universities across and outside Europe.

9.7 To improve visibility, the School's should liaise with the College marketing supports to develop a communications plan to more effectively highlight its activities and its national and international standing.

UCD School of Economics – Full List of Commendations and Recommendations

This Appendix contains a full list of commendations and recommendations made by the Review Group for the UCD School of Economics and should be read in conjunction with the specific chapter above. *(Please note that the paragraph references below refer to the relevant paragraphs in the report text)*

A. Resourcing, Organisation and Management

Commendations

2.10   The level of staff engagement with the Review Group during the site visit is to be commended.

2.11   The current Head of School is dedicated and effective. His work ethic and leadership is appreciated by the other members of staff. The next Head of School, who will take up the position in September 2018, has been identified and is cognizant of the work involved with this position.

2.12   The School of Economics is fully engaged with the new UCD fiscal arrangements and is actively involved in future planning with the College Finance Manager. The Review Group commends the School for its ongoing engagement with the College and wider University supports with regard to addressing fiscal challenges by identifying new sources of income.

2.13   The School has a global profile with a number of staff teaching in Beijing and a student profile of 9:1 national to international students.

Recommendations

2.14   It is imperative that the College Principal and the Head of School are aligned in terms of their approaches to both the current challenges within the School as well as planning for the future of the School. There is an urgent need for greater transparency of roles and accountability for responsibilities at the various levels of School organisation. Hence, the Review Group recommends that the incoming Head of School is allocated an advisor (a senior UCD academic, external to the School and College, with institutional and Headship experience) to advise the School with regard to the development of its structures and processes.

2.15   The Review Group recommends that the incoming Head of School delegates specific responsibilities to each member of the School Executive Committee. The Review Group also recommends that this committee increases the frequency of meetings to, at minimum, a monthly basis to both manage the running of the School and work on the School strategic plan.

2.16   The School should clarify how its global engagement activities are represented in School structures and the Review Group recommends that the academic staff cohort teaching in Beijing be represented on the School Executive Committee.

2.17   The School should consider extending the current 3-year headship term to five-years, which would improve continuity. All senior academic staff should be expected to take their turn in the role, as well as fully engage in the operations of the School Executive Committee or equivalent.

2.18   As the School has ambitious plans in relation to future staff planning and recruitment, the integration of the relevant activities of the Head of School, the School Manager, the College HR Partner and the UCDHR Resourcing Consultant is essential. Therefore, the Review Group recommends that this group have formal, agenda driven, monthly meetings.

2.19   The Review Group recommends that UCD Human Resources meet with School staff to clarify changes to UCDHR structures, roles, responsibilities, terminology and lines of communication.

2.20   Formal agreements on set monthly meetings with the Head of School, College Finance Manager and the School Finance SEA would ensure that the School continues to effectively maintain this financial management activity. These meetings would support the School development of a longer-term plan to prioritise the areas of the School most in need, and ensure that new revenues retained by the School are invested to greatest effect in the most transparent manner possible.

2.21   The School, with guidance from the College Principal, should implement a mentoring system for all staff. The mentor may focus on teaching or research as is required on an individual basis. Appropriate mentors should be identified from the wider University community, as appropriate.

2.22   The Review Group recommends that the School put in place an external advisory board. The main objective of the board would be to help formulate and support the vision and ambition of the School and its graduates for the future. Membership of the EAB should include a senior external academic, alumni, a range of graduate employers, Masters and PhD graduates and postdoctoral fellows etc.

2.23   The roles of the administrative staff need to be clearly defined. This should be undertaken prior to any future administrative appointments with clearly articulated reporting lines, responsibilities and job specifications. This should also include clarification of relationships with staff in UCD Support Units.

2.24   The School should ensure that it is fully compliant with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), May 2018 and additional requirements around the protection of personal data.

B. Staff and Facilities

3.12   The School provides a very good teaching and learning environment albeit in a space and building environment that needs to be improved.

Recommendations

3.13   UCDHR should provide appropriate support, training and mentoring for all incoming Heads of School to enable an effective transition of headship and support during their tenure.

3.14   The School should consider a more flexible approach regarding the provision of individual staff rewards and incentives for innovations in teaching, organisation and research.

3.15   The School should introduce an induction programme for all new staff to enhance their understanding of School and University systems, to ensure clarity about their roles, awareness of their rights and responsibilities and opportunities for development.

3.16   The School should consider how the new P4G scheme may be better integrated with the School's ambitions, vision and mission. Staff should also be supported and encouraged by the School to participate on courses offered by the University or through their engagement in Communities of Practice as part of their personal CPD, upskilling and learning through the sharing of good practice.

3.17   The School should actively engage with both the College and UCD Estate Services on two projects:

    a) to ensure the coordinated modernisation of their space within the Newman Building in 2018;

    b) with additional support from UCD IT Services, to develop a dedicated data analytics suite.

3.18   Efforts must be made to secure additional and appropriate office space for new recruitment in the School of Economics.

3.19   The School should liaise with the College to investigate ways to bring more PhD students 'in house' in the immediate vicinity of the teaching staff. Co-location would enhance both the student experience and the faculty research environment.

3.20   The School should engage with the Athena SWAN Award process and should plan to apply for the Bronze level Athena SWAN Award as soon as possible.

C. Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Commendations

4.5   The SoE has been very successful in implementing teaching and learning reforms. Change has happened through the vision, determination and leadership of the Head of School, combined with enthusiastic buy-in and commitment from academic staff, who are positive about recent achievements.

4.6   Despite the significant resource requirements, and – especially over the period of their introduction – the administrative challenges both for academic and support staff, small group teaching has been established efficiently and effectively, over a short time, to the evident satisfaction of staff, undergraduates, and graduate tutors.

4.7   The Review Group met with a small number of undergraduate students who were enthusiastic and committed, appreciative of staff, and clearly satisfied with their courses.

4.8   Staff teaching loads are fairly and transparently allocated; there is general agreement from staff at all levels that they are manageable, and that staff are able to teach to their strengths.

4.9   Students at all levels find staff accessible and responsive.

4.10   New developments in teaching are occurring in the School (small group tutorials for undergrads; new structure for MSc; School funded PhD programme, etc).

Recommendations

4.11   The School should introduce a mentoring system for new and early-career faculty to include support for their development as a University teacher. This should include increasing awareness of opportunities to obtain a University Qualification in Teaching and Learning.

4.12   The School, with guidance from UCD Teaching & Learning (UCD T&L), should develop a programme for new recruits covering aspects of Teaching and Learning including, for example, the use of the Virtual Learning Environment, grading and standards, examination procedures, and student support services.

4.13   The School should consider, with guidance from UCD T&L, introducing peer review of teaching for all faculty.

4.14   The School should, with advice from UCD T&L, provide consistent training and support for tutors (most of whom will have no teaching experience), and establish the role of module coordinators in this. This will be increasingly important when the small group teaching system is no longer new.

4.15   The School should ensure that small group teaching is firmly embedded and sustainable for the future, focusing on a secure supply of graduate students and post-docs, and effective administration.

4.16   The School should, in discussion with student representatives, identify and address student non-attendance at tutorials.

4.17   The School should explore possibilities for the use of innovative teaching methods, especially those that increase interactivity and student engagement during teaching sessions; increase awareness amongst staff of innovations being introduced elsewhere in the University, and in other economics departments worldwide, that take advantage of virtual learning environments and online learning resources. The Economics Network and the Biennial Developments in Economics Education Conference are both excellent sources of ideas.

4.18   The School should facilitate staff discussion on the development of effective assessment methods, so that they can learn from each other's experience.

4.19   The School should review assessment methods for Masters' courses, and consider the potential for more continuous assessment, which would test a wider range of skills.

4.20   The School should consider how to facilitate social interaction and cohort-building amongst Masters students and extend these interactions to PhD students.

D. Curriculum Development and Review

Commendations

5.2   The 2015-16 curriculum review established quality objectives and reforms which aim to allow students to build strong foundations at earlier stages.

5.3   Effective restructuring has revitalised and expanded the Single Honours programme. Current students have responded very well to, and appreciate the value of, a cohort identity.

5.4   A coherent suite of Masters' programmes has been established; students are highly satisfied with the course structure, and the teaching and support they receive.

Recommendations

5.5   The School should consider how undergraduates can develop their quantitative data handing skills, with an emphasis on direct experience of data handling. Employers of this cohort, during the site visit, emphasised the importance of data handling and were generally pleased with this at the graduate level.

5.6   The School should harness the enthusiasm of the current undergraduates to market the Single Honours programme to prospective students, with the objective of attracting high quality students for whom Economics is the first preference.

5.7   The School should undertake further work on setting appropriate Math requirements to ensure there is an aptitude for higher level courses in addition to providing options for students with an aptitude/interest in more mathematical/technical work. This should be kept under review during the forthcoming programme changes in the BSc in Social Sciences.

5.8 The School should consider the range of options available to Single Honours students, whose choices currently become more limited as they progress, because they have taken more modules at earlier stages.

5.9 The School should clarify its strategy for the PhD programmes for staff, covering areas such as: attracting students to the programme, funding, what is expected of supervisors, teaching loads and training for PhD students, and how the School will help students towards successful placement. The School should also explore potential for further cooperation with the TCD Department of Economics.

E. Research

Commendations

6.11 Some very good quality research is being undertaken in a number of distinct fields, including those that lend themselves to major grant funding possibilities and high levels of impact.

Recommendations

6.12 The School needs to develop and clearly articulate its research ambitions, vision and mission.

6.13 The School should introduce a research mentoring scheme for faculty, in particular early-career scholars paying specific attention to the construction of research grant applications.

6.14 The School should consider how more senior colleagues with little experience of research grant capture can also be helped to develop major grant proposals – especially targeted at the ERC Major Grants programme.

6.15 The School should promote frequent engagement between faculty and UCD Research for advice and support on different types of research calls and applications processes.

6.16 It would benefit the School to investigate possibilities for participation in H2020 bids – linking with researchers in other EU countries.

6.17 The School needs to explore ways to identify and measure the societal engagement and impacts of the School's research activities.

F. Management of Quality and Enhancement

Commendations

7.4 The School utilises University quality mechanisms, both internal quality enhancement processes and the external examiner system, to assure the academic standards of its modules and awards.

7.5 The self-driven, internal review of the economics programme has been successful.

7.6   The level of staff engagement with the Review Group during the site visit is to be commended.

7.7   The Review Group were impressed by the responsiveness to feedback shown by the School, as evidenced by the clear successes of the programme changes that have been implemented, in particularly the provision of tutorials and the drop-in clinic.

7.8   Student feedback on modules shows that student satisfaction with the programme is high.

7.9   The quality and expertise of the lecturers and the teaching, together with the excellent relationship between staff and students are clear strengths of the programme.

Recommendations

7.10   The School should continue to roll out small group teaching across all stages of the programme.

7.11   The School should conduct a periodic review of assessment strategies reflecting student feedback and current practices in peer institutions.

7.12   The School should introduce a wider forum for student programme feedback at the end of Stages 3 and/or 4, moderated by a member of University staff from outside the School.

7.13   The School should increase efforts to facilitate meetings between the Programme External Examiner and students.

7.14   The School should develop a closer, formalised involvement with external stakeholders that will inform future curriculum developments.

G. Support Services

Commendations

8.7   The School is to be commended for establishing and maintaining good relationships with most University-wide service providers.

8.8   The School recognises the hard work of individuals within UCD support units, sometimes in demanding circumstances.

Recommendations

8.9   The School should liaise with IT Services during the roll out of the new Virtual Learning Environment to ensure that targeted communications utilities that allow staff to communicate with specific class groupings/subsections are appropriate for their needs.

8.10   The School should meet with IT Services to ensure effective financial planning by the School for software license requirements moving into the future.

8.11   In conjunction with UCD International and Student Recruitment, the School should establish sustainable targets for growth in non-EU students, particularly at postgraduate level.

8.12   The School and UCD International should work together to facilitate recruitment of postgraduate students from BDIC.

8.13   The School should host information briefings from all relevant Support Services for all staff, specifically with relation to recruitment procedures (UCD HR) and the role and supports offered by UCD Research and UCD Teaching and Learning.

H. External Relations

<u>Commendations</u>

9.4   The School contributes to national debates on economic and policy issues.

<u>Recommendations</u>

9.5   As discussed in section 2, the SOE should consider setting up an external advisory board to help the School make informed strategic decisions in terms of curriculum development, research activities and additional revenue opportunities.

9.6   With a view to facilitating staff and PhD level exchanges and collaboration, the Review Group encourages the School to consolidate existing relationships and to explore the creation of new relationships with universities across and outside Europe.

9.7   To improve visibility, the School's should liaise with the College marketing supports to develop a communications plan to more effectively highlight its activities and its national and international standing.

UCD School of Economics – Response to the Review Group Report

We are grateful to the members of the Review Group for all the time and effort that they have put into this process and we welcome this Report. In particular, we appreciate the Report's approval for the work the School has put into reforming its graduate and undergraduate programmes and its recognition of the excellent research being done by our faculty. The Report provides many recommendations and we are considering all of them. That said, in order to maximise impact, we will likely focus on a smaller set of the recommendations that relate to our key strategic areas.

Here, we restrict our comments to the "Prioritised Recommendations" and a small number of specific points.

Recommendations: *It is imperative that the College Principal and the Head of School are aligned in terms of their approaches to both the current challenges within the School as well as planning for the future of the School. There is an urgent need for greater transparency of roles and accountability for responsibilities at the various levels of School organisation. Hence, the Review Group recommends that the incoming Head of School is allocated an advisor (a senior UCD academic, external to the School and College, with institutional and Headship experience) to advise the School with regard to the development of its structures and processes.*

The Review Group recommends that the incoming Head of School delegates specific responsibilities to each member of the School Executive Committee. The Review Group also recommends that this committee increases the frequency of meetings to, at minimum, a monthly basis to both manage the running of the School and work on the School strategic plan.

Response: We agree with the Review Group's assessment of the School's structure as of the time of their visit in February 2018. However, since then we have carried out a substantial restructuring of the School's administration and management structure. Steps already taken include:

- A new management structure with two Deputy Heads, one for undergraduate programmes and one for graduate programmes and research, assisting the Head in running the School.

- The appointment of as a new senior administrator on a higher grade than our existing staff to manage our administration team and work with the Head in running the School.

- Agreement on a clear set of job descriptions for each of our administrators and also for the leadership and administrative roles being taken on by academics.

We are certainly open to the Head being allocated an advisor on the development of School structure but, for now, we think it is best that any advice relate to improving the current system after it has been in operation long enough to evaluate.

Recommendations: *The School, with guidance from the College Principal, should implement a mentoring system for all staff. The mentor may focus on teaching or research as is required on an individual basis. Appropriate mentors should be identified from the wider University community, as appropriate.*

Response: The College of Social Sciences and Law has put in place a new mentoring system for junior academics and the School is participating in this process. The new University Performance for Growth (P4G) framework will also provide space for all academics in the School to receive guidance on their professional development. For now, we think it is best to let these two schemes run and assess their impact rather than introduce another mentoring scheme for senior staff.

Recommendations: *The Review Group recommends that the School put in place an external advisory board. The main objective of the board would be to help formulate and support the vision and ambition of the School and its graduates for the future.*

Response: The School's executive committee will explore setting up an external advisory board. It may be useful for us to discuss this issue with other School that have already set up boards of this type.

Recommendations: *The School should actively engage with both the College and UCD Estate Services on two projects:*

i. to ensure the coordinated modernisation of their space within the Newman Building in 2018;

ii. with additional support from UCD IT Services, to develop a dedicated data analytics suite.

Response: The School's offices in D corridor have been renovated over the summer and this process will also give us a new, higher quality room for our School meetings and smaller masters and PhD modules. We would love to have a computer or data analytics room but given the paucity of space in the Newman building, this does not seem realistic in the short term. We are aware that UCD is planning to put in a new "teaching building" where the old student bar used to be. We are hoping to engage with the College and Estate Services about the idea of a specialised space in this building for computers and database access for Economics students and are examining options for external funding for the computers if we are allocated such a space.

Recommendations: *The School should engage with the Athena SWAN Award process and should plan to apply for the Bronze level Athena SWAN Award in the immediate future.*

Response: Our newly appointed School Manager will chair a committee to work on this application.

There are two other small items that we would like to respond to.

2.8 The School has an active teaching programme in Beijing. The Review Group met and was impressed with the enthusiasm and engagement of the associated academics. It was not particularly clear,

however, how these academics integrate with the UCD academics and whether they are represented on School committees, for example, the Executive Committee.

Response: Our BDIC academics have permanent offices at UCD and spend two-thirds of their year here. They are fully integrated into our School. We deliberately do not ask them to sit on committees because they are junior academics who need to focus on developing their research. This is especially imperative as they are not on permanent contracts as our regular staff. They are also not available for committee meetings while they work in Beijing. We are looking into establishing a BDIC representative from the permanent staff who could forward proposals or concerns of BDIC staff to the School's executive committee.

3.6. All faculty in the School have fairly similar teaching loads in terms of the number of course taught – three per year – although the average class sizes (and the associated workloads for examining and marking etc.) differ significantly. Finding a way to introduce more flexibility into the School workload model so as to better reflect these differences would be both appropriate and just. Moreover, finding ways for the Head of School to offer and structure individual staff incentives to reward innovation and leadership in teaching, organisation or research would encourage proactive and constructive behaviour on the part of all staff and foster an environment of cumulative and ongoing improvement.

Response: We concede that the School's workload model is inadequate and that we need to think more about how work is allocated across the School. We have made one major step in this direction. We have moved from a norm in which all faculty, other than the Head of School, teach three modules to one where the default is that academics teach four modules with deductions for junior faculty and for those faculty that are undertaking major leadership or administrative roles. We believe this provides better incentives for staff to undertake these roles and also gives an explicit recognition to their impact on workloads. The School has been in discussion with the College Principal about developing a new workload model and this is likely to be implemented in Spring 2019. Eventually, our desire would be to provide reductions in teaching for research as well as administration. This, however, may prove impossible given the large number of students we serve relative to our staff numbers.

Quality Review Site Visit Timetable

UCD School of Economics: 22-25 January 2018

| Pre-Visit Briefing Prior to Site Visit, Monday, 22 January 2018 – DOES NOT INVOLVE THE SCHOOL |

17.00-19.00   RG meet in hotel to review preliminary issues and to confirm work schedule and assignment of tasks for the site visit – **RG and UCD Quality Office only**

19.30   Dinner for the RG **Principal, UCD College of Business** – **RG, College Principal and UCD Quality Office only**

| Day 1: Tuesday, 23 January 2018 |
| Venue: Room G214, Newman Building |

08.30-09.00   RG meet with **Principal, UCD College of Social Sciences & Law**

09.00-10.00   RG meet with **Head of School**

10.00-10.15   RG private meeting - RG review key observations

10.15-11.30   RG meet with **representative group of academic staff** – primary focus on **Teaching and Learning, and Curriculum** issues.

11.30-11.45   Tea/coffee break - RG review key observations

11.45-12.15   RG meet **UCD Programme Dean and Associate Dean**

12.15-12.45   RG private meeting – RG review key observations and prepare for lunch time meeting

12.45-13.45   **Working lunch (buffet)** – meeting with **employers and other external stakeholders**

13.45-14.15   RG private meeting - RG review key observations

| 14.15-15.15 | RG meet with **College HR Partner and College Finance Manager** (from 14.45) |

14.15-15.15   RG meet with **College HR Partner and College Finance Manager** (from 14.45)

15.15-15.30   RG tea/coffee break and review key observations

15.30-16.00   Meeting regarding the School of Economics **Masters programmes**

16.00-16.45   **Tour of facilities**

18.00   RG depart

Day 2: Wednesday, 24 January 2018
Venue: Room G214, Newman Building

08.30-08.45   Private meeting of the RG

08.45-09.55   RG meet relevant **UCD support service representatives**

09.55-10.10   RG meeting with **Student Advisors**

10.10-11.10   RG meet with a representative group of **postgraduate students** (taught and research) **and recent graduates** (PG and UG)

11.00-11.15   RG tea/coffee break - RG review key observations

11.15-12.15   RG meet with the **School Research Committee** (and other staff members nominated by the HoS)

12.15-12.30   RG private meeting - RG review key observations

12.30-13.15   Lunch – Review Group only

13.15-14.00   RG meet with **representative group of undergraduate students**

14.00-14.15   RG private meeting - review key observations

14.15-15.00   RG meet with **support staff representatives**

15.00-15.15   RG meet **UCD Research**

15.15-15.45   RG meet with RG meet with **representative group of staff –** primary focus on **Beijing-Dublin International College (**BDIC**)**

15.45-16.00   RG private meeting - RG review key observations

16.00-16.45   RG meet with **recently appointed members of staff, including postdocs**

16.50-18.00	RG available for **private individual meetings** with staff
17.15-17.45	RG meet with **College Vice Principal for Research**
18.00-18.30	RG private meeting – review key observations/findings
18.45	RG depart

Day 3: Thursday, 25 January 2018
Venue: Room G214, Newman Building

09.00-09.30	Private meeting of RG
10.00-10.30	RG meet with **UCD IT Services**
10.30-10.45	RG meet **incoming Head of School**
10.45-12.30	RG continue preparing draft RG Report
12.30-13.15	Lunch
13.15-15.30	RG finalise first draft of RG Report and feedback commendations/recommendations
15.30-15.45	RG meet with **College Principal** to feedback initial outline commendations and recommendations
15.45-16.00	RG meet with **Head of School and College Principal** to feedback initial outline commendations and recommendations
16.00	**Exit presentation** to all available staff of the unit
16.20	Review Group depart