



**University College Dublin**

**Quality Improvement Plan**

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UCD Buildings & Services

January 2010

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### ***Approach to production of the Quality Improvement Plan***

1. In order to clarify each recommendation, the relevant text was underlined in agreement with the Self Assessment Report Co-ordinating Committee.
2. The specific action for the implementation of each recommendation is set out in italics after each recommendation.

## 1. Introduction

In preparation of this Self Assessment Report (SAR) a Quality Working Group (QWG) was formed in August 2008. Initially envisaged as a support group to plan and prepare work for the review, the members of the QWG continued as a working group in preparing the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). The following are the members of the QWG:

Aidan Grannell	Director of Buildings and Estates
Cormac Reynolds	Electrical Services Manager
Cxema Pico	Systems Manager
Enda Bennett	HR Partner
Gary Smith	Facilities Manager
Michael Rafter	Operations Manager (Services)

The QWG met weekly since the publication of the Report of the Review Group.

### ***i. Self Assessment Report Coordinating Committee***

The Self Assessment Report Coordinating Committee (SARCC) was formed on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2008. This group was responsible for sign-off on the approach taken and the development of the resulting Self Assessment Report, the remit of this group was extended to include the development of the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). The members of the SARCC were selected, following an open invitation from the Director of Buildings and Estates to all members of the Unit to participate in the process. The selection of the individual members of the SARCC, was based on ensuring that as many functional areas and staff grades as possible of the Unit would be represented. The Committee members were encouraged to seek input from managers, colleagues and any reports in their area of activity through their daily interactions and on specific individual matters. The members of the SARCC are listed as follows:

Aidan Grannell (Chair)	Director of Buildings and Estates
Cormac Reynolds	Electrical Services Manager
Cxema Pico	Systems and IT Manager
Enda Bennett	HR Partner
Gary Smith	Facilities Manager
Geoff Gray	Duty Manager
John Free	Transport and Commuting Manager
Maria Kinsella	Services Supervisor
Mary Brides	Telephone Services Supervisor
Michael Rafter (Co-ordinator)	Operations Manager (Services)
Paddy McCarthy	Maintenance Plumber
PJ Barron	Project Engineer
Sean Clancy	Energy Unit / Project Engineer
Sean Leonard	Maintenance General Operative

The SARCC generally met either every 2 to 3 weeks, depending on the stage of the process.

### ***ii. Internal Communication***

Internal communication of the Quality Review Report and preparation of the QIP was addressed in the following manner:

- Town Hall meeting for all staff of Buildings and Services on 25<sup>th</sup> October (Introduction of Quality Review Report and QIP)
- Internal distribution of Quality Review Report for comment

## 2. Recommendations for Improvements – Follow-Up Action Taken and/or Planned

**CATEGORY 1:** Recommendations concerning academic, organisational and other matters which are entirely under the control of the unit

- **Category 1(a)**

### **Recommendations already implemented**

- 5.4 The following recommendations are based on the discussions with Unit staff and the reports they receive. They reflect on what the typical needs would be for a complex University with highly engineered facilities and a high volume of work tasks. Although the number of work tasks were less than 10,000 (the figure 7,240 was referred to in the Self-assessment Report), it was not clear from the figures that they included the user-operated buildings or work that was given directly to contractors or if they included the schedule of PPM works that was undertaken.

*The software system was recently upgraded and ongoing management reports will be produced and circulated to the Buildings Management Team for distribution within their respective teams as appropriate.*

- **Category 1(b)**

### **Recommendations to be implemented within one year**

- 2.8 The Review Group recommends that the roles and reporting relationships within the Unit are clarified further and that a revised organisation chart be developed to enhance clarity around roles and reporting relationships. Some of the stakeholders stated that they found the organisation structure confusing. Descriptions of roles and reporting relationships need to be transparent and clearly communicated for staff and users.

*Organisational roles and reporting relationships will be clarified as an integral part of the upcoming Buildings & Services HR Plan being developed with UCD HR.*

- 3.17 The Unit uses a mix of staff and contractor resources to deliver services. The Review Group recommends that the Unit keeps this 'mix' under review to ensure both value for money and the retention of institutional knowledge.

*It is felt that the current 'mix' is optimised for the existing operational requirements. This will be kept under review.*

- 3.19 The SAR document had many recommendations throughout it; however, it would have been useful had key objectives been set out for the Building and Services Unit and methods identified on how the Unit would meet these objectives - through organisational, structural, processes and systems changes, developments or improvements. The Review Group recommends that the Unit develop its vision into a clear set of objectives that all staff can buy into. Buildings and Services should produce an annual report in which these objectives could be clearly laid out - showing progress made.

*The Unit will prepare an annual report, which will highlight objectives for forthcoming year and show progress made against objectives in the preceding year.*

- 4.7 The Review Group recommends that Buildings and Services review their current approach to the implementation of minor works projects. A simple procedure for the identification, costing approval and implementation would assist in the management of minor works projects. The procedure should allow end users to clearly understand the process that applies and provide regular feedback and update of the status of individual minor works projects.

*The Unit will develop a web-based system to outline the procedures for minor works projects. An information leaflet will also be circulated with the same purpose. The current process will be upgraded to provide for a greater interaction with users and the introduction of a stage/gate approach in line with best practice in project management. The web based system will include a project tracking module.*

- 5.9 It was felt that some contractors did not see the students as customers and communication between the contractors, University staff and students was strained on occasions. The Review Group strongly recommends that robust disciplinary procedures are in place to deal with all transgressions of contractors, staff and students. Front line staff can be at risk if they are not protected by robust governance.

*The Unit is currently working on developing such procedures in conjunction with both UCD HR and the Vice-President for Students under the Dignity and Respect Procedures.*

- 6.7 There appears to be an inconsistency between the services provided by different service desks. This may partly be due to the fact that some of them are operated by Services staff, some by user-operated buildings staff and some by a combination. But this is not the only factor. While local circumstances may require variations in the level of service, the Review Group recommends that a common minimum set of services be provided at each desk and that the services available at each desk be clearly communicated at that desk.

*The Unit will take steps to ensure that the services at each desk are clearly indicated including the development of a web-based information system to outline the various services provided at each desk. An information leaflet will also be produced, (which will be location specific) to outline the extent and nature of the service available at each desk.*

- **Category 1(c)**

**Recommendations to be implemented within five years**

- 3.18 It is important for Estate Operations to reflect the needs of the strategic plans of the University and although the Master Plan was an excellent document it would have benefited from an interpretation - from an estate perspective - of the University objectives, i.e. a statement of issues that need to be addressed with options for addressing these, and a section on affordability and programming. It is possible that these were available within various documents.

*This will be addressed with the review of the Campus Development Plan.*

- 3.20 It was clear that a significant amount of work had been done to prepare for this review and that a remarkable amount of work was being undertaken by Buildings and Services. The Review Group felt that there were individual

packages of excellent material within the SAR and in all of the supporting documents. There was a common agenda on improving systems and processes. What became apparent, however, was that better coordination of these activities was necessary. The Unit would have benefited from professional administrative support in managing its documents and in coordinating its activities.

The Review Group was surprised that the Director had no dedicated PA/secretarial /administrative support to help manage, organise, and coordinate the activities to fulfil the functions of the Buildings & Services Unit and, in particular, to provide support to enable him to:

- Manage any programme changes
- Review organisation, roles and responsibilities to ensure Compliance
- Develop systems and processes that would provide evidence of performance in all areas
- Provide support and advice to other professional members
- Provide professional advice to Officers of the University
- Develop high level KPIs

The University would benefit by freeing up the Director from some administrative activities in order to provide him with time to manage the €1.3Bn estate. The Review Group recommends that the “Office of Director” be reviewed to ensure that there is an adequate level of resources available to the Director to facilitate the accomplishment of his role as efficiently as possible.

*It is intended to revisit the post of Assistant Buildings Officer together with that of the Building Planning Unit to include these issues within their remit. In addition, the formation of the Buildings Management Team and the post of Capital Buildings Senior Project Co-ordinator should provide the Director with the necessary resources and structure to accomplish his role more efficiently.*

- 3.23 Processes and systems are an essential part of any organisation where performance needs to be measured and action taken. This is more important where there are many thousands of jobs per year and where the record keeping is part of legal compliance. This is both a management and operational issue. The systems are there to help manage the complex activities being undertaken, provide feedback to the users of Buildings and to the Unit's own staff and to enable the coordination of activities. If there is a drive to meet KPIs and deliver against Service Level Agreements (SLAs) then collection of information and reporting must be efficient and cost effective. In relation to systems development, it is noted that progress has been made (e.g. web portal, shared folders etc.) but that much work remains to be executed. The Review Group recommends a review of the Unit's computing and information systems to provide a framework for the suite of processes being delivered. A coordinated approach to systems development is essential to manage this complex and diverse group of activities and the Review Group recommends that appropriate resources are provided to develop this University activity. A high level group should be established, drawn from various areas of the Unit and led by the Director. This group should consider the appropriateness of the existing systems and put in place a plan to develop a full suite of systems covering planned preventative

maintenance, asset management, helpdesks, document management etc. to be rolled out in the medium term.

*A group will be set up within a year to further develop an evolving range of KPIs, which will include a review of the Unit's computing and information systems.*

- 5.3 The recommendations focus on the operation of the Unit and overall management of the University resources. It is difficult to disassociate the management of resources from discussion about value for money (VFM) and performance. The Review Group cannot make a judgment on VFM issues and performance – rather, the Review Group will identify process and system improvements that could help in the overall management of the estate. These in turn will support VFM initiatives. In order to demonstrate VFM and overall performance there is a need to record and analyse activities. Because the Unit appears to be under-supported by administrative and systems specialities it has not progressed sufficiently to provide information on KPIs and SLAs, both of which it is planning to develop and introduce. The introduction of new computing programmes and information systems will not necessarily increase VFM or performance. If the Unit wishes to introduce systems to deliver the changes recommended it is essential that value judgments reflecting on suitability and VFM are undertaken.

*The Unit has reported on 5 KPIs annually to the SMT for the last two years. Further KPIs will be developed, to include benchmarking of performance with the UK third level sector. The full range of KPIs will be included in the Annual Report.*

- 5.5 The Unit should develop more management reports on performance and provide feedback to the managers, operators and stakeholders from the systems they currently operate, for example, to provide timely management data on outstanding works/tasks, repeat failures and record of actions taken, by whom and when.

*There are systems in place for reporting in a number of areas, e.g., voice services, these systems will be reviewed with a view to extending them into other areas of operation of the Unit.*

- 5.6 The Review Group recommends that the Unit should develop meaningful KPIs for each section of the Unit based on what would help them to identify how well they are doing and provide appropriate management reports. Some areas may not warrant any appropriate KPIs and unless useful they should not be developed.

*The Unit has reported annually on 5 KPIs to the SMT over the last two years. Further KPIs will be developed, to include benchmarking of performance with the UK third level sector. The full range of KPIs will be included in the Annual Report.*

- 5.7 Task management should be linked with risk assessments and provide alerts to relevant staff or contractors on health & safety issues by room and location. This would ensure that there is a robust system that minimises risk and health & safety issues.

*The Health and Safety record of the Unit indicates that current management arrangements have been effective to date. It is intended to continue working with the Health and Safety Office and local managers to maintain and improve on performance.*

- 5.8 It was evident that a significant amount of tasks were outsourced and a number of similar contractors were on site at any one time. Some work had been undertaken to rationalise the lifts contract which has been successful (however not fully inclusive as the Students Centre had a different lift contractor). It is felt that a review of the procurement process to rationalise the number of contracts could be beneficial, in particular on tendering maintenance contracts, small new works and minor works. The review should consider the advantages and disadvantages of facilitating opt-outs by units such as the Student Centre. The Review Group recommends that the Unit develop a procurement plan to ensure best value for money from all contracted services. KPIs relating to the management of contractors and value for money would help demonstrate performance. If the volume of new works and minor repairs was high then the introduction of Frameworks may help to improve delivery.

*A Procurement Planning Group is in the process of being established, its remit will include this recommendation.*

- 5.10 The Review Group recommends that it would be beneficial to introduce post occupancy evaluations of contracts to identify successful, good and bad elements in the delivery of major capital projects and be part of the continuous, improvement, commissioning and learning initiative.

*This will be carried out for upcoming Capital Projects.*

- 5.11 The different styles of project management need to be replaced with one common method of delivery. A simple process and project management guide for all those involved with a capital project which clearly sets out roles and expectations would be beneficial, for example for the role of the Energy Manager, Health & Safety Officer, operations and maintenance personnel etc. This would help manage the internal resources of both the Buildings and Services Unit and its client departments.

*The system of project management needs to be updated to reflect the new Government / Department of Finance forms of contract and embedded in the day-to-day implementation of capital projects.*

- 5.12 From discussions with clients and staff, the Review Group were under the impression that there was no common format to the record management of projects. If this is correct, it would be beneficial to introduce a common process and a structured organised record management system for all capital works and minor projects.

*The system of project management needs to be updated to reflect the new Government / Department of Finance forms of contract and embedded in the day-to-day implementation of capital projects.*

- 6.8 A variety of service 'brands' are used by the Buildings and Services Unit (Buildings and Services, Buildings Office, Services, First Response, Unicare, E3, The Energy Bureau). The Review Group recommends that the number and purpose of brands be reviewed and consolidated. Efforts should then be undertaken to clearly communicate to users what services are provided.

*The existing headings that are used are long established and are well recognised throughout the University. The Unit will produce an information leaflet, supported by a user survey, which will be part of an overall web-based system, to outline particular services.*



- **Category 1(d)**

**Recommendations which will not be implemented**

*It is considered that all recommendations are addressed under other categories.*

**CATEGORY 2:** Recommendations concerning shortcomings in services, procedures and facilities which are outside the control of the unit

- **Category 2(a)**

**Recommendations already implemented**

- 5.14 The Review Group recommends that space utilisation and auditing policies need to be put in place across all colleges and units (including support units) and simple KPIs produced to demonstrate performance. Although there were initiatives underway to develop and implement space management processes within the colleges, it is important that the University has a coordinated approach and each unit is treated appropriately. Failure to have a University approach may have a divisive impact. The Unit should continue to identify international best practice in asset management and to communicate clear policies to users.

*A Technical Space Committee has been established by the SMT Capital Projects Group, which has set out norms for space management purposes. There are three Space Committees, formed by the Colleges, which manage the use of space within their remit. Audits have been carried out at the request of the SMT for Colleges, Schools, Research Institutes, Units, etc.*

- **Category 2(b)**

**Recommendations to be implemented within one year**

- 3.22 The Review Group feels there is a need to review or test the organisational responsibility for high risk Project Portfolio Management (PPM) and/or failures where they occur within the user-operated buildings. The Facilities Managers within these buildings have significant responsibilities yet there appeared to be no direct line management to the Building and Services Unit. Unfortunately these organisational issues are often only tested after major incidents have taken place or key plant has failed.

*A meeting process with the managers of the user-operated buildings will be set up, which will be reviewed on an ongoing basis.*

- 6.11 In discussions with representatives from user-operated buildings and students, it emerged that there appears to be a need for a more coordinated and interactive approach to event management. The Review Group recommends that the Unit set up an event co-ordination system to oversee annual planning of events and to ensure that event organisers have access to this information on a regular basis (not just an event listing).

*The Unit has re-established an event planning process under the Room Allocations Team. The Unit will produce a booklet in conjunction with the various booking agents, which will be part of an overall web-based system, to detail the service provided.*

- **Category 2(c)**

### **Recommendations to be implemented within five years**

- 3.24 The Building and Services Unit has a key role in incident management and has procedures to deal with incidents. It is important that these are dovetailed with the University's Business Continuity Planning. It was not clear where this activity sits in the organisation and who was responsible for developing business impact assessments and individual unit plans in this regard – the University needs to review this. Responsibility for Health & Safety was also unclear in some areas where non Buildings and Services staff had control of maintenance and repairs and where the work was done by contractors (i.e. in user-controlled buildings). The Review Group recommends that an analysis be carried out to ensure that there is clarity and ownership of activities undertaken. This should include technical responsibility and quality control on high risk areas, plant or machinery - including the management of contractors and their compliance with regulations.

*This will be addressed as part of the meeting process with user-operated buildings.*

- 3.25 The Unit has the single highest level of influence on environmental and sustainable activities within the University. A coordinated approach to energy management and sustainability would help the University to improve its overall awareness of the sustainability agenda. A network of champions across the University would assist the Unit to drive through new measures of improved performance in these areas.

*The Energy Unit is developing a network of energy champions across the University.*

- 4.8 The process by which newer buildings are managed is commendable for user-operated buildings. The operation of these buildings is mostly controlled and funded by the local college or institute. This provides local service and cost transparency. The Facilities Managers do not report to the Director of Buildings and Services but to the local head of college/institute. The Review Group believes it is extremely important that the staff of Buildings and Services have full knowledge of the operation of the user-operated buildings and that, as a minimum, a formal communication network is established between the Buildings and Services management and staff and the Facilities Managers to ensure full compliance with all statutory obligations (health & safety, procurement etc.) and that a consistent and professional approach to the management of the overall University estate is guaranteed. The communication network should help ensure that 'best practice' is shared by all building professionals, that lessons are learned, and that best value for money is achieved in procuring services.

*A Procurement Planning Group is in the process of being established, its remit will include this recommendation.*

- 5.13 (Part A)\* The Review Group recommends that UCD should coordinate its room booking and space utilisation policies. The system should be user friendly (student interface) and, if possible, all rooms should be in a central

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\* Recommendation 5.13 is addressed in two parts in two different sections as some elements are categorised differently. Only the underlined parts are addressed under this category.

booking system. Poor management of space leads to inefficient developments and severe negative opportunity costs.

It was not clear to the Review Group and to staff and students who was responsible for room bookings. Students felt that advance block booking prevented them using space which was, in fact, free. Room utilisation figures should be reviewed to ensure maximum usage. The Review Group recommends that a standard policy should be implemented regarding booking of rooms by students/student clubs. This should aim to enable bookings to be confirmed at the time they are made. If this is not possible, then Services should provide subsequent confirmation rather than requesting the student to return at a later date to verify whether the booking has been made. If possible, the policy should allow bookings to be made by phone, email or web rather than requiring the student to attend the desk in person.

*It is agreed that in order to maximise the utilisation of space, all rooms should be managed through the central booking system by the Room Allocations Team. This will be co-ordinated with the Registrar's Office.*

- 6.9 There is an 'untapped market' for energy saving initiatives. The awareness of the existing energy saving initiatives is lower than would be expected and can be improved with clear, focussed communication. The student body could be very active energy saving champions and would benefit from deeper and broader engagement.

*The Energy Unit is developing a network of energy champions across the University; its remit will include this recommendation.*

- 6.10 Designated liaison staff ('go to' people) within the user community in each building would help communication and provide improvements both for the user community and for Buildings and Services. Such staff would deal with operational affairs rather than (or in addition to) policy issues or more strategic issues.

*This will be pursued with Colleges, Schools and Units, etc, as appropriate.*

- **Category 2(d)**

### **Recommendations which will not be implemented**

- 5.13 (Part B)\*\* The Review Group recommends that UCD should coordinate its room booking and space utilisation policies. The system should be user friendly (student interface) and, if possible, all rooms should be in a central booking system. Poor management of space leads to inefficient developments and severe negative opportunity costs.

It was not clear to the Review Group and to staff and students who was responsible for room bookings. Students felt that advance block booking prevented them using space which was, in fact, free. Room utilisation figures should be reviewed to ensure maximum usage. The Review Group recommends that a standard policy should be implemented regarding booking of rooms by students/student clubs. This should aim to enable bookings to be confirmed at the time they are made. If this is not possible, then Services should provide subsequent confirmation rather than requesting the student to

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return at a later date to verify whether the booking has been made. If possible, the policy should allow bookings to be made by phone, email or web rather than requiring the student to attend the desk in person.

*It has been proven to be necessary for Clubs and Societies to make a booking in person, as part of the risk management of such bookings. Such bookings typically involve receptions, (regularly involving the consumption of alcohol), debates, etc, with associated issues such as VIPs, stewarding, cleaning, etc. This process enables timely planning and appropriate event management. The procedures are also designed to ensure that the rooms are ready for teaching purposes on the next day. It is noted there is a shortage of rooms for student use at present, which exacerbates the situation. However, there should be an improvement in space available for student use when the SLLS Project has been completed and becomes operational.*

- 6.12 Energy charging via the RAM has helped to incentivise energy saving and has also provided more transparent information to users. Closer integration of IT Services information and Buildings and Services information could facilitate accurate charging for IT infrastructure in a building by charging those occupying the space and, thereby, providing similar benefits for IT Charging via the University Resource Allocation Model.

*Space data is being provided to IT Services upon request. Space data is updated regularly from minor project changes or user reports.*

**CATEGORY 3:** Recommendations concerning inadequate staffing, and/or facilities which require recurrent or capital funding

- **Category 3(a)**

**Recommendations already implemented**

*It is considered that all recommendations are addressed under other categories.*

- **Category 3(b)**

**Recommendations to be implemented within one year**

- 3.21 Some managers are responsible for both capital projects and day-to-day operations. This is common in small management teams and is a high risk scenario where both capital and operational duties could fail due to shifting priorities. The value of capital, minor works and operational activity should warrant organisational structure changes to avoid this (this does not mean the excellent support provided across the disciplines should be lost).

*The post of Capital Buildings Senior Project Co-ordinator has been approved to manage the implementation of the Capital Programme and will provide a dedicated senior resource to oversee the implementation of the current capital programme.*

- 4.6 The two distinct areas of responsibility within the Unit are capital and operations; capital works (which may or may not include minor work); and an operational section with responsibility for staff performance, maintenance contractor performance, PPM, breakdown, coordination of energy reduction and systems efficiencies with the energy team. The procedures governing the management of capital projects are outlined in the Capital Works Management Framework. This covers the appointment of consultants, contractors etc. Significant capital programmes present significant risk to the University. Large sums are involved and in addition to the financial risk, it is imperative that projects are meticulously planned and implemented. The Review Group also recommends strengthening the management of capital projects – from initiation to completion. It is suggested that a single unit within Buildings and Services takes responsibility for the capital programme as it is extremely difficult for managers with significant day-to-day operational responsibilities to focus on the significant challenges of managing capital projects. This unit would develop a consistent process for the delivery of projects ensuring the project briefs are well developed, all procedures are applied to achieve compliance with government procedures and that the necessary consultation process with end users, building operations, health & safety are completed.

*The post of Capital Buildings Senior Project Co-ordinator will provide the necessary focus on the above issues, which have been correctly identified as being of primary importance to the Unit.*

- **Category 3(c)**

**Recommendations to be implemented within five years**

- 4.5 The Review Group recommends that Buildings and Services develop a robust set of procedures to help ensure consistency of approach in the delivery of services. There appears to be an over-reliance on personal relationships and methods of working. Standard operating procedures and systems need to be introduced for key activities where they are spread across different people and or locations.

*The Unit will develop a web-based information system to outline the various services that are provided by the Unit. An information leaflet will also be produced to facilitate access to these services.*

- 4.9 There was some criticism of the absence of an automated feedback loop from the helpdesk. The Review Group recommends that the feedback loop to end users for maintenance issues should be improved so that the person originating a maintenance issue is always apprised of its resolution. It is also recommended that an updated computerised helpdesk system is established to allow all requests to be logged, automatic emails generated, work requests generated, feedback provided on completion of tasks etc. A new system should allow trends to be analysed, KPIs established and to provide key management information to inform resource allocation etc.

*The operation of the maintenance helpdesk is being reviewed with a view to upgrading its operation.*

- 4.10 The Review Group encourages Buildings and Services to continue its Building Care Programme and to develop a prioritised list of backlog maintenance, health & safety requirements, access improvements needed etc and to put in place, where possible, a multi-annual programme to improve the conditions of the estate in the short to medium term. The programme should prioritise relevant statutory requirements (e.g. Disability Act, Health & Safety Act etc).

*The Building Care Programme is in its initial stages and has an emphasis on façade, appearance and weathering.*

- **Category 3(d)**

**Recommendations which will not be implemented**

*It is considered that all recommendations are addressed under other categories.*

### **3. Prioritised Resource Requirements**

This section should only contain a list, prioritised by the Quality Improvement Committee, of recommendations outlined in the Review Group Report, which require additional resources. The planned action to address each recommendation with an estimate of the cost involved should also be included:

*It is considered that it is too early in the process of the preparation of the Quality Improvement Plan to identify precise needs or indeed to prioritise resource requirements. However, it is projected that in the current economic situation, it is highly unlikely that staff will be engaged. It is expected that this situation will last for the foreseeable future. The overall implementation programme for the Quality Improvement Plan will be determined by this constraint.*

Note: The Quality Improvement Plan should be used to inform School/Support Unit and College level academic, support service and resource planning activities.