



Trinity College Dublin

Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath

The University of Dublin

FACULTY OF ARTS, HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES QUALITY REPORT

2015

Submitted to Quality Committee 18 January 2016



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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Quality Report 2015 was compiled using submissions from each of the Faculty's twelve Schools, and was discussed at length at a special meeting of the Faculty Executive on Thursday 10 December 2015, with the participation of Roisín Smith, the College Quality Officer.

As a Faculty, we are generally happy with the quality assurance procedures in place. The percentage of modules being evaluated is high: 89% at UG level and 92% at PG. These figures are down from 2013/14, particularly in UG, but we have noted that procedures are in place to ensure that all modules are evaluated from 2015-16 onwards.

Data gathering methods, methods for discussing results, and for providing feedback to students on actions taken remain largely the same as in last year's report. The new College procedures for providing timely feedback on assessments to students has been embraced by the Faculty, and we hope to see this appearing less frequently in student feedback as the procedure is bedded down.

The Faculty is pleased to note that one particular area of concern highlighted in its report last year, the timely return of External Examiners' reports, has been actioned with the introduction of tighter procedures by the Quality Office.

It was suggested at the Faculty Quality Meeting that it might be more appropriate for the Faculty Quality meeting to be with Directors of Teaching and Learning UG/PG, with the final Faculty Report going to the Faculty Executive for final discussion and approval.

A number of courses in the Faculty went through a professional accreditation during this period. All were approved.

A number of Schools in AHSS were involved in School reviews during this period. The taskforce set up after the School of Languages, Literature and Cultural Studies Review has been very successful, and a document will be completed early in Hilary Term 2016. A review of the BESS course will take place in Hilary Term 2016.

The Faculty looks forward to the implementation of the Trinity Education Project and hopes that some of the recurring issues will be dealt with through that project.

Retention in UG courses in the Faculty is high, including in TSM, and well above the College's Strategic Plan target of 90%.

The University's first fully online postgraduate course commenced in the School of Social Work and Social Policy in Michaelmas Term 2015. This has proved a huge success, and initial feedback suggests that students are satisfied with the course. The Head of School was also very positive about the online experience from a teaching point of view, although there have been issues around getting the necessary funding and resources from College.



2. QUALITY REPORT

2.1 Quality of Undergraduate Programme Provision

Across the Faculty, approximately 88% of all undergraduate modules were evaluated. In half of schools, all UG modules were evaluated. All schools have undertaken to try to reach the 100% target for next year. Some of the methods proposed for ensuring this are reminders at School meetings, emailing reminders to module leaders, including guidelines in staff handbooks and mentioning the requirement for evaluations at adjunct staff induction day.

In terms of response rates, these ranged from 10% to 100%. Methods used vary between schools, with the main methods being electronic surveys, paper-based survey and meetings/focus groups. While it is generally accepted that in-class evaluations tend to produce higher response rates, this is not feasible in Schools with huge numbers of undergraduate modules. In an effort to increase response rates, one school reported that it had moved away from electronic surveys in 13/14, but had little improvement in response rates, so went back to electronic surveys in 14/15.

External Examiner Reports are received and reviewed in each School. The Faculty welcomes the new College policy, whereby Schools will receive External Examiner reports within 10 days of them arriving in Trinity. In most cases, feedback to the external examiners is verbal, during their Court of Examiners visit. However, in some cases, written feedback is provided to External Examiners on whether and how their feedback has been incorporated.

A number of courses in the Faculty went through a professional accreditation during this period. All were approved.

A number of Schools in AHSS were involved in School reviews during this period. A taskforce was set up, chaired by the Dean of the Faculty, to implement the recommendations from the reviewers in the School of Languages, Literature and Cultural Studies school review. This process was viewed extremely positively by the School, and the taskforce worked enthusiastically to implement the recommendations of the review, where possible and appropriate. Seven meetings of this taskforce have taken place, one of which was attended by one of the original reviewers and the final meeting to sign off on the final response document will take place early in Hilary Term 2016.

2.2 Quality of Postgraduate Programme Provision

Of the 62 Postgraduate courses eligible for evaluation in the Faculty, the Faculty evaluated 50%. However, Schools reported that they evaluated 55, or 89%. This indicates that many students were surveyed by both the Faculty and the School. The Faculty Office will work with Schools to streamline this process for 15/16, ensuring that each student receives only one survey. It is planned that in 2015/16, Schools will be given the option to carry out their own evaluations, and the Faculty Office will only carry out PG evaluations in Schools who are not doing their own PGT evaluations. At least one school does module-level evaluations of PGT courses.

Methods used for evaluations, feedback to students and so on, are broadly similar to those reported for UG courses.

The Faculty welcomes the fact that Postgraduate Research evaluations are being rolled out across the College in 2016/17.



2.3 Summary of best practice across the Faculty

- The Department of Economics has introduced student response clickers in some classes, which have been very successful. However, as technology moves on rapidly, it may be more appropriate to use apps on students' smart phones in the future.
- The School of Law is in its third year of using peer-observed teaching.
- The School of Histories and Humanities is using a significant amount of group work and peer assessment. It will have a better idea of the success of this next year.
- The School of Linguistics, Speech and Communication Studies has introduced standard feedback sheets on all assignments across the School, which has been very successful.
- The School of Social Work and Social Policy introduced the College's first fully online course.

2.4 Summary of issues to be escalated to College Level

By far the most common issue raised by students in a number of Schools is the appalling quality of many of the teaching and learning spaces used by Schools within this Faculty. This includes mainly the Arts building, but the facilities available for the students in the Schools of DFM and Law are also completely inadequate. Where possible Schools try to accommodate classes in appropriate spaces, but some classrooms are simply too small for increasingly large class sizes.

Unhappiness was reported amongst students about lack of examinations after the first semester.

The requirement for more work experience elements was raised by one Extern. This will require significant changes to the structure of the curriculum and will also require resources to identify, vet and secure sufficient numbers and quality of work experience opportunities.

Full Library access for PG Cert students remains unresolved at college-level. This school was told by college that it is not possible.

Concerns were repeatedly raised over the absence of anonymous marking at PGT level. The School raised the concern with Academic Registry/Examinations Office, requesting that its masters courses be examined anonymously. The DTLPG also took part in discussions on same at GSC Meetings.

At least two PGT external examiners had concerns about the award of 'Pass' or 'Distinction' for all non-failing work. A grade somewhere between these levels was suggested, which would acknowledge that work was of a very high standard, but not at the kind of level that would merit 'Distinction'. A term such as 'Merit' to designate this was proposed. Schools do not currently have scope at this point to consider such an option.

2.5 Faculty Projects / Initiatives

External examiners commented on marking in a number of schools, such as ungenerous marking, standards not being comparable across two subjects, bunching of grades, dealing with borderline marks. The Faculty Executive has undertaken to look at this issue at FEC meetings.

The possibility of having a repository for Schools within the Faculty to share forms such as feedback sheets was discussed at the Faculty Quality meeting. The Faculty Office will look into setting this up.

2.6 College response to issues outlined in previous years Annual Faculty Quality Report

- A number of schools reported ongoing complaints from students with regards to appropriate teaching and learning spaces in the Arts Building. Complaints were received about windowless rooms and facilities being inadequate. There is also need for more small-



group teaching rooms. Also, students would prefer to have all lectures in Arts Building (this could be improved with improved timetabling system/procedures).

Update: The Dean of AHSS and the Bursar have met to discuss improvements in the Arts Building. This continues to be a significant issue for a number of buildings used by students in this Faculty.

- English skills of PG students – one Chinese student has to have another one translate to her during lectures. UCD has just introduced skype interviews in an effort to tackle this problem, however schools would need support to initiate and organise the logistics of this.

Update: GRS is working on the issue of English language competency among students for whom English is a second language.

- External examiners frequently characterise TCD's (I / II.1 / II.2 etc.) marking scheme as 'irrational' (and worse), particularly since the First bracket encompasses 31 marks where the others encompass only 10. However, the Faculty's understanding is that this is an institutional issue outside its control. A College-wide marking scale should be agreed.

Update: It is hoped that marking scales will be considered under the Trinity Education Project.

- Feedback on College-wide services to students is not currently picked up through School evaluations.

Update: This should be picked up through the ISSE survey

- It is proving difficult to schedule External Examiners visits due to i) late examination slots for some key examination papers ii) the need for the Department to run two examination systems simultaneously (SITS + Excel) in order to prepare marks for the Departmental Exam Board iii) having to comply with five different programme deadlines, none of which takes the others into account. Problems associated with SITS must be recognised and dealt with at College level. The turnaround time for exams, Court of Examiners, Court of First Appeals and Academic Appeals is reaching crisis point. The Faculty is concerned that the integrity of the Appeals process is being affected by the huge rush to get cases through.

Update: The Senior Lecturer is working to address the timings of exams, publication of results, courts of appeals, and so on.

- More help should be offered to international students (particularly from outside EU) on a college level with practical guidelines and tips on living in Ireland.

Update: GRS is continually working on improving these services. The results from the International Student Barometer are monitored closely.

- Timely receipt of feedback on assignments submitted was raised as an issue. While the Faculty welcomed the new College Policy, there may be difficulty in returning timely feedback with increasing student numbers and student-staff ratios.

Update: a new College Policy was implemented, and efforts are being made to follow the Policy.

- There is often too much of a time lag in receiving External Examiners reports. Greater streamlining of the provision of reports is necessary. Also further clarification of who External Examiners reports should be circulated to from central college – one suggestion is



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that all reports should be copied to School Administrators who are best placed to know who they should be forwarded to within their own school.

Update: Quality Office has undertaken to provide copies of UG External Examiner Reports within 10 days of receipt to Head of School, Dir T&L (UG), Schools Administrators and Faculty Office.

For Interdisciplinary Programme, Departmental Heads are also included. In the case of large Programmes where Programme Directors are appointed, they will also be sent the report. In all other cases Schools Administrators are asked to circulate the report to academics teaching on the programme/course or module.



3. APPENDICES -FACULTY AT A GLANCE

3.1 Course and Module Evaluation

Table 3.1

Number of UG Modules/Courses provided	930	100%	Number of UG Modules/Courses evaluated	832	89%
Number of PGT Modules /Courses provided	64	100%	Number of PGT Modules/courses evaluated	59+	92%+
Number of PGR students in Faculty*		100%	Number of PGR students participating in PGR Survey	n/a	n/a

❖ The absence of a PGR Survey was a key improvement identified in 2014, survey developed in 2015 and piloted in 2015/16 academic year.

3.1.1 Escalations, repeat issues, positive aspects and enhancements arising from UG course and module evaluations on quality of UG Programmes

Escalations: Issues raised by students that could not be resolved at School level and actions taken by the School:

- By far the most common issue raised by students in a number of Schools is the appalling quality of many of the teaching and learning spaces used by Schools within this Faculty. This affects the Arts Building, but the facilities available for the students in the Schools of DFM and Law are also completely inadequate. Where possible, Schools try to accommodate classes by making changes in response to requests, but some classrooms are simply too small for increasingly large class sizes. Where possible use of unpopular venues such as Goldsmith Hall have been phased out, but Schools often have no option but to use these inadequate spaces.

Other issues raised included:

- Unhappiness amongst students about lack of examinations after the first semester.
- Disability accommodations – the management and communication of relevant information is not reliable and is outside the control of a School to resolve. This School participated in the external review of Disability Services highlighting problems with data reliability and access.

Repeat Issues: issues raised in 2014-15 that were also raised in previous years and actions taken by the School:

- As above, the main repeat issue is the quality of departmental space, in particular in the Arts Building and the DFM spaces.



- Timetabling queries, but it is explained to students that there is limited flexibility, particularly for TSM modules.
- Issues that are personal to students often arise repeatedly, e.g. the level is too difficult, too easy; the language of the classes should be English/the target language, but it is not possible to address such contradictory responses.
- Lack of first semester examinations.

Positive aspects and enhancements:

General changes noted by a number of Schools include:

- Assignments: Changes have been made to the formats of assignments, submission dates for assignments, and Schools are also implementing the College's student feedback policy. A number of Schools have set up Assessment Forums where enhancements to and timing of assessments are discussed.
- Increased availability of lecture notes etc on Blackboard. Increased training for staff on using Blackboard. Written policy in staff handbook for using Blackboard (wording available).
- Changes to teaching methods, eg more practical classes, co-teaching.

Some more specific examples include:

- Students of one module expressed a desire for continued guest speakers and specialist masterclasses. The School actioned these requests by having such masterclasses delivered by the relevant Departments. These masterclasses have been delivered outside the timetable.
- Lab School Trinity College partnership, where students are free to experiment with novel teaching methods under the supervision of classroom teachers has been established and is working very well.
- One of the issues raised was the submission of hard copy coursework & the cost of this to students. Due to that the School has instituted a new policy for 2015-16 that it no longer requires hard copies of coursework. All coursework will be submitted by students electronically via Blackboard and academic staff will provide feedback and marks to students on blackboard. Students were very happy with this change as it results in significant printing cost savings for them. The new policy was emailed to students and staff and blackboard training was offered to all to assist them with the move from hard copies to electronic.
- The issue of support (or lack of it) for international students (setting up a bank account, finding accommodation, etc.) was raised- course documentation has been improved, highlighting the resources available in College.



- One School has addressed the delays in the process of providing feedback by putting in place for 2015-16 a centralised mechanism for the submission of work which sets in place the process for correction and feedback. This will effectively identify and address possible sites of delay through first and second marking. Administrative staffing issues have also been resolved.

3.1.2 Escalations, repeat issues, positive aspects and enhancements arising from PGT course and module evaluations on quality of PGT Programmes

Escalations: Issues raised by students that could not be resolved at School level and actions taken by the School:

- Request for additional modules to be introduced. Schools in AHSS have some of the worst student:staff ratios in the College and full-time staff members are not in the position to take up any more teaching. Due to financial constraints and funding allocation, it is difficult to employ additional adjuncts. Some rationalisation of modules etc has taken place in 2014/15.
- Library resources, opening hours, teaching spaces.

Repeat Issues: Issues raised in 2014-15 that were also raised in previous years and actions taken by the School:

Assignment Submission/Examinations and module scheduling – many of these issues, as outlined in the sections above, are raised every year.

- Scheduling of modules and examination timetabling. Actions taken to rectify this are, changing the sequence of modules, classes spaced out rather than block delivery, moving modules to a different semester and ensuring that more resources are available on Blackboard.
- In one School they try to ensure that students only take one examination per day.

Quality of Physical Learning Environment

- The condition of classrooms in the Arts building, as well as the building itself, were criticised by students repeatedly.
- The quality of the physical learning environment with particular reference to heating (this particular course is run predominately on Saturdays) - This issue was discussed at the Postgraduate Studies Committee. The Course Administrator contacted Buildings prior to each course date with a reminder and the situation improved throughout the year.

Positive aspects and enhancements:

Some positive aspects and enhancements were mentioned by a number of Schools, such as:

- Many modules were redesigned and enhanced in response to student feedback. New modules were introduced.



- Timetables were also changed where possible to in response to student feedback. Coursework feedback sheets have been designed where they didn't exist before.
- Assignment deadlines were moved around to ease workloads.
- Efforts have been made to remove delays in students receiving feedback, in line with new College policy.

More specific examples include:

- For one course, modules were delivered over a period of six weeks, instead of block delivery in a single week. Students were able to master these modules in a more effective manner and the student feedback was positive.
- Students requested more visiting guest presenters and seminars; these are taking place this year and presented by professionals from each industry.
- Use of webinar technology to support students with placement projects and assignments. Students requested support in relation to CV preparation. With the support of the Careers office, the School set up webinar, support materials and face-to-face seminar with an acting principal. Set up live webinars and made the recordings available. Regular student representative minuted meetings, plus emails to all students.
- An additional session on academic writing, referencing and course expectations was organised at the start of term.
- Additional support was provided for students using Google Drive, Turn-It-In and a Google Community platform.
- In response to some concerns over the connectedness of the various components of the core module, a meeting between the students and all lecturers concerned was held, where these concerns were addressed.
- Introduction of the Trinity Journal of Literary Translation co-founded by the director a few years ago and to which postgraduate students can contribute as editors and through publications. This improves their employability. The director is also currently working on a partnership with Google and with the Barretstown summer camp for disabled children to guarantee additional translation expertise for LT students. The students are made aware of these possibilities within the programme, and such endeavours also become a recruitment tool in the first place.
- Additional clinical tutorials outside of teaching weeks
- A peer support system between the three cohorts of students, which is valued by students.
- One of the issues raised was the submission of hard copy coursework & the cost of this to students. Due to that the School has instituted a new policy for 2015-16 that it no longer requires hard copies of coursework. All coursework will be submitted by students electronically via Blackboard and academic staff will provide feedback and marks to students on blackboard. Students were very happy with this change as it results in significant



printing cost savings for them. The new policy was emailed to students and staff and blackboard training was offered to all to assist them with the move from hard copies to electronic.

3.2 External Examiner Reports

Table 3.2

Number of UG Programmes externally examined	66	Number of UG External Examiner Reports returned	45	68%
Number of PG Programmes externally examined	67	Number of PG External Examiner Reports returned	56	84%

❖ External Examiner process was a key area for improvement identified in 2014. New arrangements introduced for payment of external examiner in May 2015, new External Examiner Policy, Process and Report Template introduced in 2015/16.

3.2.1 Escalations, repeat issues, positive aspects and enhancements arising from External Examiner Reports or Courts of Examiner meetings on the quality of UG Programme Provision

Escalations: Issues raised by students that could not be resolved at School level and actions taken by the School:

- One of the Externs mentioned that the programme needed to incorporate more work experience elements. This will require significant changes to the structure of the curriculum and will also require resources to identify, vet and secure sufficient numbers and quality of work experience opportunities.
- Staff teaching too many modules.
- Some external examiners expressed concern that it was not in the remit of TCD Court of Examiners to consider ad mis cases/special circumstances of candidate.
- One report mentions the “unusually difficult organisational challenges” both created by the new systems and their break-down. This is exacerbated by the very short time period between the end of exams and the deadlines for TSM marks, and the ongoing problems with getting marks from one department in time for the Courts of Examiners meetings.

Repeat Issues: Issues raised in 2014-15 that were also raised in previous years and actions taken by the School:

- External examiners often comment on marking, for example what they perceive to be ungenerous marking, standards not being comparable across two subjects, bunching of grades.



Positive aspects and enhancements:

- Diversity of coursework and methods of assessment. This enabled examiners to better differentiate candidates at different levels and to allow students to demonstrate a wider range of competencies.
- Advised to augment the number of incoming Erasmus students - the School increased Erasmus intake to 4, instead of 1.
- External examiner for one programme commented that by the end of his third year he had gained greater confidence in the quality management procedures of that programme.
- External examiners have said it is not preferable to use excessive choice on examination papers as this can lead to question spotting. Narrower range of questions whilst still preserving a fair level of choice was introduced.
- Undergraduate guidelines for staff were prepared for all teaching staff to improve awareness of standards, practices for teaching and assessment.
- A point was raised by an external examiner in relation to staff confidence in supervising both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. An additional staff member with research methodology background provided added support to both students and staff in this regard.
- One change is that UG essays which received a fail mark will be double-marked, as well as high Firsts. Exam marks should be moderated in the Department, not by the externals, but the very short turn-around period will make it difficult to find a time to meet. "Feed-forward" as a method of giving feedback on essays was recommended, to improve the approach and analytical skills for the next assignment.
- One external examiner recommended providing new externals with a briefing pack giving an easily accessible overview of things like the structure of the different programmes offered and the way different components contribute to the evaluation of modules. This information has always been provided, but perhaps not in a way that is easy to understand. The School will produce a summary document for new externals in future.
- A complaint was made by the one External Examiner about one department's examination procedures. The DUTL met the SL to discuss this as part of the new Quality procedures. A formal policy requiring all exam scripts to contain justification for the allocation of particular marks was proposed by the DUTL and agreed by the School Executive on 14 September. This new policy has now been incorporated into the School's Staff Handbook.
- How a department deals with borderline cases – department has agreed a new procedure for this.
- Recording of oral exams – they will be recorded in 15/16.
- Anonymity of reporting: previous Courts included names of candidates, upon recommendation of External Examiners all Courts were carried out with reporting by exam number only.
- There were concerns about the exercise of discretionary rules - Structured discretion principles were devised and implemented at subsequent Courts of Examiners. This was specifically commented by this year's External Examiners as being a welcome enhancement.
- Research Project: Lack of transparency for granting extensions to word limits on projects - discussed at meeting with module personnel and



External Examiner. Also discussed and noted at Curriculum Review Meeting in Summer - : Plan this year (2015-16) to have extension to word limit permission considered by 2 other staff members other than project supervisor. Also, form developed and to be completed and signed to have paper trail of decision-making in this context.

3.2.2 Escalations, repeat issues, positive aspects and enhancements arising from External Examiner Reports or Courts of Examiner meetings on the quality of PG Programme provision

Escalations: Issues raised by students that could not be resolved at School level and actions taken by the School:

- Full Library access for PG Cert students remains unresolved at college-level. School was told by college that it is not possible.
- At the Exam Board, the question was raised of what could be done to improve the results of the dissertation element. It was felt that students have enough time for the dissertation but that many perhaps lose touch with their supervisors because the writing process falls during the summer vacation. One might wish to think about how to make sure that students' dissertation plans are approved by their supervisors before the summer break, while still encouraging students to stay in touch and send their drafts to their supervisors during the summer. This is something the School may not be able to change a 100 percent as staff members typically do not supervise in the month of August, for example. Supervision of dissertations is limited to 10 hours per student and will most likely remain at that level due to the wide range of responsibilities staff members have. The external examiner was made aware of that.
- Concerns were repeatedly raised over the absence of anonymous marking at postgraduate taught level. The School raised the concern with Academic Registry/Examinations Office, requesting that our masters courses be examined anonymously. The DTLPG also took part in discussions on same at GSC Meetings.
- Two schools reported that their external examiners had a concern about the award of 'Pass' or 'Distinction' for all non-failing work. They felt that it would be best to have a grade somewhere between these levels, which would acknowledge that work was of a very high standard, but not at the kind of level that would merit 'Distinction'. He suggested something like 'Merit' to designate this. One School has undertaken to raise this feedback and concern. No action was taken by the other School as it does not wish to introduce this model.
- One outgoing external examiner raised a concern about the overall award of distinction and how this is calculated. If a student has performed at distinction level in all of their non-dissertation work but has failed to achieve a distinction in their dissertation, they cannot currently receive a distinction overall. He has suggested that there should be lee-way in relation to this.
- Revisit current arrangements for Internships: this recommendation is under review.



Repeat Issues: Issues raised in 2014-15 that were also raised in previous years and actions taken by the School:

- Marking:
 - Dissertation marking: the External Examiner suggested that the supervisor not be the primary dissertation marker and proposed double marking - The dissertation is now marked blind by an independent academic and the supervisor proposes a second indicative mark.
 - Where double marking was not taking place within one programme this was highlighted by the external examiner. The School has completely harmonised the regulations relating to MPhil programmes across the School, meaning that all programmes double mark submitted work. This is now fully in place for 2015-16.
 - External examiner suggested that all advanced level modules should contribute to final award. Also that the Final Year Project was weighted too heavily and was contributing too much to the final award - The contribution of individual components of the course to the final award was changed in accordance with suggestions.
- Assessment Standards
 - Issues of presentation in the final dissertation in terms of footnoting and conventions were raised - Issues of presentation have been stressed to students from the beginning of each programme. Conventions are made available to all students through the programme handbook and now also on each module page on Blackboard.
 - The external examiner in the MPhil in one year commented on how under-researched some essays were, and how little use was made of journals; in her second year she reported that this problem was not applicable; in her third year she again noted how little secondary material some of the students (with one notable exception) use, especially how few scholarly essays. Obviously the small cohorts mean that it is impossible to generalize about this, but colleagues that teach on this programme might want to discuss how to encourage more consistent use by the students of the scholarly facilities that are available to them (e.g., access to journals through repositories such *JSTOR*). This has been addressed over the years and improved upon. Students are regularly made aware of this in the research seminar and other modules.
- Feedback to students
 - The Examiners raised the need for greater formative feedback to students to indicate areas for improvement. Examiners also raised concerns about differing levels of feedback across modules and strands. This was addressed by the course co-ordinator with strand leaders at the meetings of the Course Board.
 - In 2013-14, external examiners suggested use of a more standardised and transparent format for returning grades for taught modules and dissertations. The Course Director and administrator created a results submission form for taught modules and continuously liaise with



- internal examiners to ensure commentary was returned on individual questions. Internal examiners were requested to submit a detailed report on all dissertations under their review. Dissertation reports were provided to all external examiners.
- Increasing amount of feedback to individual students - This was addressed by providing individual feedback sheets for each exam question and providing 1:1 meetings to review student marks.
 - Overlap in the content of some modules - Overlap in subject areas has been deleted.
 - External examiners have repeatedly criticised the linguistic skills of non-native speaker students. As a result of such criticisms, non-native speaker applicants are now required to submit writing samples.

Positive aspects and enhancements:

- Marking
 - The marks of repeat examination are now capped at 50%. Previously the average of all passed modules was used as the cap.
 - The introduction of double marking across the entire School has further underlined the robust quality of the marking process. Colleagues continue to learn from each other as a result and the double marking process increases the discussion of the modules considerably, leading to a consistent peer evaluation of teaching.
 - In previous years, External examiners recommended the use of the full marking system spectrum and suggested internal examiners avoid “bunching” of grades around the II.1 band and reward excellent work with high I grades where appropriate. The Course Director strongly encourages internal examiners to follow this guidance at each exam period. External examiners noted the adoption of this practice across the majority of taught modules and the research dissertation
 - Percentage divisions across assignments and exams within modules were rounded to make interpretation of marks easier for students.
 - Dissertation marking: the External Examiner suggested that the supervisor not be the primary dissertation marker and proposed double marking - The dissertation is now marked blind by an independent academic and the supervisor proposes a second indicative mark.
 - Where double marking was not taking place within one programme this was highlighted by the external examiner. The School has completely harmonised the regulations relating to MPhil programmes across the School, meaning that all programmes double mark submitted work. This is now fully in place for 2015-16.
 - The External Examiner had previously recommended that all grading of dissertations take place on a single coherent numerical scale. This was then adopted for the 2014/15 dissertation process.
- Exam papers



- An examination paper template has been introduced so that there is a common and consistent format for all exam papers
- External Examiners provide lengthy review comments on provisional examination papers which has improved the rigor of examination setting style.
- The Director of the MSc submitted a detailed spreadsheet to the External Examiner regarding the pass rates per module and per cohort (part-time or full-time), which created a basis for a more detailed approach to modules that have stronger divergences in results at any point in time.
- The School acted to share good practice identified by the EE in a number of strands with staff across the programme through the supervisors workshop and meetings with strand leaders.
- The greater stress on presentation and footnoting conventions suggested by some of the examiners has led to a broadening of approach to the teaching of these issues, and to a significant improvement of students' skills in these areas from a much earlier point in the academic year. . Conventions are made available to all students through the programme handbook and now also on each module page on Blackboard.
- The use of video recordings for grading class presentations that would permit EEs to view the oral presentations delivered by students. This will be implemented in this academic year.
- The format of the meetings between EEs and students were changed so that there are now separate meetings for each of the four MPhil courses.
- The contribution of individual components of the course has been changed. This now means that some of the final award derives from teaching/learning & assessment in Year 1 which is an enhancement from the student experience perspective as well as being more pedagogically appropriate.
- Have introduced a weekly tutorial slot for students across the course to pick up to and respond to any difficulties or queries that are arising. Perhaps due to this in part, all of our students in the 2014-2015 cohort completed successfully (and without need for extensions to the time frames, Dean's grace, etc.).
- In the 2013–14 external examiner's report it was stated that the course might change its name to make its content more clear. In response to this, the course director will chair a discussion following the 2015 examiners' meeting to examine these and other issues regarding the future not just of the course name, but its overall content.
- At the Court of Examiners, the externs all agreed that the required word count for the dissertation should be shortened.

3.2.3 Feedback provided to External Examiners, and the method of feedback used.

Court of Examiners Meeting



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- In many cases, External Examiners are informed of enhancements made on foot of EE comments at the next Court of Examiners meeting. In some cases, these comments would have been made by the EE's predecessor. They were also provided with feedback on specific issues through the discussion at the court of examiners, and discussed experience of the methods employed to address previous issues raised. Discussion also involved how repeat issues could be further improved or if alternative approaches could be employed where they persist.

Other Meetings

- In some cases, the external examiners also meet with the course staff and have a more informal, but detailed discussion about their observations.

Written Feedback

- In a number of cases, feedback is provided to the External Examiners via email.

Provision of course material and Previous External Examiner Reports

- External examiners were provided with feedback initially through the provision of all course handbooks and module outlines, which in many cases addressed the issues raised in previous years. Where such issues were addressed in the course materials this was often highlighted for the external examiner.
- In some instances, External Examiner reports are made available to incoming External Examiners.



3.3 Accreditation Cycle

Table 3.3

Accreditation body	Name of Programme accredited	UG/PG	Last Accreditation Visit	Outcome achieved*	Next Visit Due
AMBA	MBA	PG	Sept 2015	Accredited	2020
Teaching Council of Ireland	Professional Master of Education	PG	Nov 13	Accredited	Approx. 2020
Teaching Council of Ireland	Bachelor of Music Education	UG	Sept 12	Accredited	Approx. 2020
Mediator's Institute of Ireland	Evening Diploma in Conflict and Dispute Resolution Studies		N/A	N/A	N/A
CORU	BSc Clinical Speech and Language Studies	UG	Sept 15	Approved	2019
IASLT	BSc Clinical Speech and Language Studies	UG	2009	Accredited	Jan 2016
PSI	D Clin Psych	PG	Jan 2012	Accreditation	2017
PSI	D Couns Psych	PG	June 2014	Full accreditation	2018
PSI	PCC/Higher Diploma	PG	May 2011	Full Accreditation	Spring 2016
Behaviour Analyst Certification Board	Postgraduate Diploma ABA	PG	2014	Accredited	Unknown
CORU	Bachelor in Social Studies	UG	March 2012	Review Successful	2017
CORU	Masters in Social Work	PG	April 2014	Review Successful	2019

**Outcomes include Accredited, Accredited with Conditions, Not Accredited*



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3.3.1 Escalations, repeat issues, positive aspects and enhancements relating to Programme and School Accreditation Reviews

MBA: action will be taken on receipt of the final report from the Peer Review Panel

PME and B.Bus.Ed: These courses were part of a complete, and national, reconceptualization in 14/15 of initial teacher education in Ireland and as such it has many positive aspects – including a systematic approach to key areas in initial teacher education (ITE) consistency across all ITE programmes nationwide; focus on inclusive education as a core component of all ITE courses.

Diploma in CDRS: We renew our accreditation annually by providing, the course materials and hours of skills based practice to the MII. The course co-ordinator attended an MII workshop on quality assurance in Summer 2015.

BSc Clinical Speech and Language Studies: Issues from 2009 review were mostly resolved with move to new premises. The vacant Chair position has also been retained as part of the School Strategic Plan

D Clin Psych: Clinical work of course staff was adjusted, Supervisor training has been enhanced.

D Couns Psych: College/Faculty could perhaps help with access to a dedicated common room for postgraduate students. Accreditation panel also commented that more help should be offered to international students on a college level, with practical guidelines and tips on living in Ireland. Positive aspects highlighted were the high level of commitment of core staff, the excellent support provided by EO, and the high levels of satisfaction among and calibre of current and former trainees.

MSW: The CORU accreditation team for our most recent review on the Masters in Social Work were unhappy with the levels of staffing on the programme. They sought a letter from the Dean confirming the Faculty is committed to the programme and will continue to resource it sufficiently. This letter was provided in May 2014 by Dean Wickham and following that the programme was approved for a 5 year period.



3.4 Quality Review Cycle

Table 3.4

School or Programme	Date of Quality Reviews	Type of Quality Review (S, P, R)*	Current Status (RR, IP, PR)**	Next due
School of Languages, Literatures & Cultural Studies	12 – 14 November 2014	S	IP	TBC
School of Education	9 th – 11 th February 2015	S	IP	TBC

Refer Schedule of Reviews on Quality Office Website *School (S); Programme (P); Research (R). ** Review Report (RR); Implementation Plan (IP); Progress Report (PR)

3.4.1 College level issues/recommendations raised in Quality Review Reports for escalation to Quality Committee and Council

School of Languages, Literatures & Cultural Studies:

College-level issues/recommendations:

1. **SITS.** The Student Information System too often fails to deliver the kind of information that is required to progress students efficiently and effectively through their degrees and thus adds considerably to the burden on staff.
2. **Fixed timetable.** The lack of a fixed timetable across the College greatly adds to the administrative burden placed on administrative staff. This situation also has severe impact on staff research, specifically the difficulty of maintaining a research day.
3. **Degree programmes.** The complexity of degree programmes in the College makes it difficult for SLLCS to administer these programmes effectively without a huge investment of staff time and effort. SLLCS also adds to this complexity due to the persistence of different practices across its constituent departments.
4. **Committee and reporting structures.** There do not seem to be clear committee and reporting structures from College to Faculty to SLLCS, meaning that there is often confusion about where authority lies. This also raises quality assurance issues, to the extent that different parts of the College, different Schools, and – in this case – departments within a School are inconsistent in their application of procedures and rules.
5. **Financial model.** There appears to be a great deal of confusion about how the College’s financial model operates, and indeed there are perverse incentives, for example that income generated by successful MPhils does not always flow back to Schools. There is also an issue of management information (see below).



6. **Strategic Vision.** The Reviewers did not get the impression of a coherent and dynamic strategy for the role of SLLCS within the College's vision, for example, in relation to its internationalisation aspiration, or indeed more generally. This was also the case at Faculty level, where they did not see a forward-looking strategy beyond the replacement of imminent retirements. While they understand the extreme difficulty of strategic thinking when in crisis-management mode, they nevertheless sensed a lack of vision in relation to SLLCS's role in the Faculty and a reluctance to exercise leadership. They understand the College's tradition of consensual decision-making, but feel that it is also vital that decisions, once arrived at, are implemented consistently.
7. **Staffing.** Hourly-paid staff deliver a significant proportion (50%) of teaching in the School, and they have little or no security of tenure and few prospects for career progression. Dissatisfaction about the same issues was expressed by a number of academic staff on short-term (1-3 year) contracts on whom SLLCS strikes the reviewers as being disproportionately dependent. Furthermore, many staff on permanent contracts who might have expected to be promoted but who remain 'stuck' at the top of their pay scale. These categories of staff are most negatively impacted by the additional burdens generated by the poor functioning of College systems and by the particular structures that operate within the School, as detailed below. As a matter of principle and to ensure the fair treatment of talented, dedicated and hardworking colleagues, we would urge the College, Faculty and School to develop as a matter of urgency a coordinated approach to addressing the precarious position of these categories of staff.
8. **Management Information:** The reviewers felt it was important to address the issue of management information, since this issue cuts across College, Faculty and SLLCS, and given how important it is in developing strategy and driving change. The reviewers were surprised that key management information was not readily available in advance of our visit, including (crucially) information on SLLCS's finances, but also data on research grant income, proportion of research-active staff, sabbatical policy at College, Faculty and School levels, committee structures, role descriptions and remits for committees, etc.
9. **TSM:** The TSM programme be revised with the view of introducing a model which allows students to spend a Year Abroad, similarly to European Studies students (and to the vast majority of Modern Languages joint-honours students in Irish and UK institutions).

School of Education

College-level issues/recommendations:

1. The College should prioritise the appointment of a Chair in higher education policy and/or practice;
2. The Faculty should consider how best to support the School's research administration centrally, through the provision of a part-time research officer or through some combination of the two.
3. More consideration needs to be given to the Strategic Direction of the School, in particular:
 - a. The relationship between the School and the planned new 'Institute for Teacher Education';
 - b. The impact of the PME on the School's Master's level provision;



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- c. The need to reduce the numbers of casual staff;
- d. The long-term ambition for the School in terms of its national and international identity;
- e. The role that the school will have in the planned College-wide Academy for Teaching and Learning.
- f. The need to strengthen its research centres and groups so that they are less dependent on a very small number of key academic staff;
- g. The workloads of the academic staff which will increase in the future;
- h. The relationship between the research undertaken by the School and the taught courses that it offers
- i. The impact of an increased degree of internationalisation on the School in particular where is the balance between being reactive and proactive;
- j. The need to build a clear School of Education identity which makes the most of the TCD brand.



3.5 Progression, Retention and Completion Statistics

Table 3.5.1: UG New Entrants Retention – 1314 JF students (available from Senior Lecturers Annual Report)

Faculty achievement 1314 JF students	96.5%
TSM achievement 1314 JF students	96.7%
Faculty achievement 1213 JF students	96.5%
TSM achievement 1213 JF students	92.2%

Strategic Plan target of 90% retention (A1.1) for transition from first year to second year.



Table 3.5.2: UG New Entrants Retention of 1314 JF students into 1415 by course in FAHSS

Course Title	Total on Course	Outcome	No.	%
Acting	16	RETAINED	16	100%
		NOT RETAINED		
Ancient and Medieval History and Culture	13	RETAINED	12	92%
		NOT RETAINED	1	8%
Business Studies and French	13	RETAINED	13	85%
		NOT RETAINED		
Business Studies and German	15	RETAINED	14	93%
		NOT RETAINED	1	7%
Business Studies and Polish	2	RETAINED	1	50%
		NOT RETAINED	1	50%
Business Studies and Russian	6	RETAINED	6	100%
		NOT RETAINED		
Business Studies and Spanish	11	RETAINED	11	100%
		NOT RETAINED		
Catholic Theological Studies	5	RETAINED	5	100%
		NOT RETAINED		
Classics	3	RETAINED	3	100%
		NOT RETAINED		
Clinical Speech and Language Studies	27	RETAINED	27	100%
		NOT RETAINED		
Deaf Studies	18	RETAINED	17	94%
		NOT RETAINED	1	6%
Drama and Theatre Studies	18	RETAINED	18	100%
		NOT RETAINED		
Early and Modern Irish	1	RETAINED	1	100%
		NOT RETAINED		
Economic and Social Studies	239	RETAINED	231	97%
		NOT RETAINED	8	3%
English Studies	41	RETAINED	40	98%
		NOT RETAINED	1	2%
European Studies	46	RETAINED	44	96%
		NOT RETAINED	2	4%
History	40	RETAINED	37	93%
		NOT RETAINED	3	7%
History and Political Science	25	RETAINED	24	96%
		NOT RETAINED	1	4%
Irish Studies	9	RETAINED	9	100%
		NOT RETAINED		
Law	97	RETAINED	96	99%
		NOT RETAINED	1	1%



Law and Business	24	RETAINED	23	96%
		NOT RETAINED	1	4%
Law and French	17	RETAINED	16	94%
		NOT RETAINED	1	6%
Law and German	14	RETAINED	14	100%
		NOT RETAINED		
Law and Political Science	21	RETAINED	21	100%
		NOT RETAINED		
Music	15	RETAINED	13	87%
		NOT RETAINED	2	13%
Music Education	11	RETAINED	11	100%
		NOT RETAINED		
Philosophy	18	RETAINED	16	89%
		NOT RETAINED	2	11%
Philosophy, Political Science, Economics and Sociology	32	RETAINED	32	100%
		NOT RETAINED		
Prof Dip in Stage Management and Technical Theatre	13	RETAINED	13	100%
		NOT RETAINED		
Psychology	33	RETAINED	32	97%
		NOT RETAINED	1	3%
Social Studies	44	RETAINED	44	100%
		NOT RETAINED		
Sociology and Social Policy	26	RETAINED	25	96%
		NOT RETAINED	1	4%
World Religions and Theology	8	RETAINED	7	88%
		NOT RETAINED	1	12%

Course Title	Total on Course	Outcome	No.	%
TSM Ancient History and Archaeology	19	RETAINED	19	100%
		NOT RETAINED		0%
TSM Classic Civilisation	23	RETAINED	23	100%
		NOT RETAINED		0%
TSM Drama	18	RETAINED	18	100%
		NOT RETAINED		0%
TSM Economics	46	RETAINED	45	98%
		NOT RETAINED	1	2%
TSM English Literature	76	RETAINED	76	100%
		NOT RETAINED		0%
TSM Film Studies	20	RETAINED	20	100%
		NOT RETAINED		0%
TSM French	70	RETAINED	68	97%
		NOT RETAINED	2	3%



TSM Geography	30	RETAINED	29	97%
		NOT RETAINED	1	3%
TSM German	28	RETAINED	26	93%
		NOT RETAINED	2	7%
TSM Greek	3	RETAINED	3	100%
		NOT RETAINED		0%
TSM History	42	RETAINED	41	98%
		NOT RETAINED	1	2%
TSM History of Art and Architecture	35	RETAINED	31	89%
		NOT RETAINED	4	11%
TSM Italian	20	RETAINED	18	90%
		NOT RETAINED	2	10%
TSM Jewish and Islamic Civilisations	11	RETAINED	9	82%
		NOT RETAINED	2	18%
TSM Latin	4	RETAINED	4	100%
		NOT RETAINED		0%
TSM Mathematics	23	RETAINED	23	100%
		NOT RETAINED		0%
TSM Modern Irish	27	RETAINED	27	100%
		NOT RETAINED		0%
TSM Music	14	RETAINED	14	100%
		NOT RETAINED		0%
TSM Philosophy	48	RETAINED	47	98%
		NOT RETAINED	1	2%
TSM Psychology	14	RETAINED	14	100%
		NOT RETAINED		0%
TSM Russian	9	RETAINED	6	67%
		NOT RETAINED	3	33%
TSM Sociology	50	RETAINED	47	94%
		NOT RETAINED	3	6%
TSM Spanish	31	RETAINED	31	100%
		NOT RETAINED		0%
TSM World Religions and Theology	9	RETAINED	9	100%
		NOT RETAINED		0%



Table 3.5.3: PG Confirmation Statistics

Students eligible for confirmation process in 2015	Number.	Students confirmed in 2015	No.	%
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This information is not available from Central College.

Table 3.5.4: PG Completion Statistics

Students eligible to complete (Yr 4 or above) in 2015	Number	Students completing (Yr 4 or above) in 2015	Number	Number and % of students at Yr 5; Yr 6; Yr 7	Number	Comment
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This information is not available from Central College.

3.6 Irish Survey of Student Engagement (Refer Faculty ISSE Report for data and tables. Contact Quality Office for Word version of ISSE Report)

Table 3.6.1: Key stats from Faculty ISSE Report

Faculty Response	Total	Percentage	Male	Female	Irish Domicile	Non-Irish Domicile
First Year	277					
Final Year	212					
PGT	317					

*Faculty Office does not have access to the breakdown by year into Male, Female and so on.

3.6.1 Faculty Performance on ISSE indices

AHSS scored higher across eight indices when compared to the overall TCD scores and increased its scores in three indices in 2014/15. AHSS strength was in the *Academic Challenge* index was when compared to overall TCD score in 2014/15 (AHSS 53.1; FEMS 47.3, HS 51.6, TCD 51.1) and when compared with other faculties in the *Higher Order Thinking* index (AHSS 68.0; FEMS 62.0, HS 68.2). There was general consistency of scores across AHSS



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when compared with last year scores. *Work Integrated Learning* increased this year to 40.7 from 38.3 in 2013/14. *Overall Satisfaction* score decreased this year to 68.2 from 70.1 in 2013/14.

3.6.2 Action on issues arising from ISSE Report

The Faculty is pleased to note that it scores higher than the Trinity average on *Student and Staff Interaction* for first year students, and the highest in the College for final year students, which is a significant achievement given the extremely low staff:student ratio in the Faculty. It will be difficult to improve significantly on this with current staffing levels.

It is hoped that continuing initiatives within the Schools, Faculty and University will improve the Faculty's scores in other areas.

3.7 Internationals Student Barometer

3.7.1 Key issues arising from ISB Report

The Faculty received an overall satisfaction rate of 88%.

3.7.2 Action to respond to issues arising from ISB Report

No particular action has been identified.