



Trinity College Dublin

Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath

The University of Dublin

**Report to Board on the Review
of the College Disability Service**

24-26 November 2016

Reviewers:

Dr Ian Pickup, University College Cork

Ms Elaine Shillcock, University of Manchester

Ms Sheila Williams, University of Edinburgh

Internal Facilitator:

Mr Tony McMahon, TCD.

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Trinity College Dublin

Disability Service Quality Review

Dr Ian Pickup, University College Cork, Head of Student Experience

Ms Elaine Shillcock, The University of Manchester, Head of Disability Support

Ms Sheila Williams, The University of Edinburgh, Director of Student Disability Service

January 2015

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Introduction/Executive summary

Members of the peer review group

Dr Ian Pickup, University College Cork, Head of Student Experience

Ms Elaine Shillcock, The University of Manchester, Head of Disability Support

Ms Sheila Williams, The University of Edinburgh, Director of Student Disability Service

Timetable of visit

The timetable is attached at Appendix A. The timetable organised by the Quality Office was appropriate and allowed for consultation with all relevant parties and enabled the Peer Reviewers to have time for reflection and reporting. The reviewers met with staff of the Disability Service (DS), students with disabilities, the Student Unions, Heads of Services, Academic Staff, University Support and Professional Staff, Officers of the University, additional staff from neighbouring institutions who use Unilink and one local second level teacher. The review team, in hindsight, felt that other useful conversations could also have taken place, such as meeting with the Senior Management Team (in addition to the Chief Operating Officer (COO)). The reviewers were grateful for the arrangement of an additional meeting with the Finance Office.

Methodology

The approach followed the guidelines for Peer Review in Irish Universities with collective responsibility for the findings and the report. The views of each participant were explored with regard to their role, input, and level of contact with the Disability Service (DS). Opportunities for future developments and perceived challenges for the service were discussed. All parties were assured of the confidentiality of the process and steps have been taken to ensure that no comments can be attributed to any individual.

Site Visit

The Peer Review Group (PRG) was treated with great courtesy and kindness by all staff of the DS and they would like to thank the Director of DS, Mr. Declan Treanor and his staff for their cooperation. The Peer Reviewers would also like to express their appreciation to all those who made themselves available during the visit, including those who were not included in the original schedule. The Group also thank the members of staff in the Quality Office, particularly Ms Helen Condon, whose support and planning arrangements before, during and after the review, was outstanding. Finally, the PRG also wishes to express sincere thanks to both Ms Yselt Thornley who typed non-stop copious notes over the three days of the review and to Mr Tony McMahon, the internal facilitator, who kept us to time and provided ongoing contextual detail, as requested.

Development of the Report

An outline summary report was presented orally to senior management at an exit meeting on the third and final day of the review. The Internal Chair of the PRG, Mr Tony McMahon, and Trinity College did not contribute to the final report. This was developed by the three external peer reviewers via discussion and email exchanges.

Overall Analysis

Self-Assessment Report and Other Documentation

The reviewers found the self-assessment report (SAR) and accompanying appendices to be very comprehensive and thoroughly prepared. All areas of activity were covered in the report and this provided the peer reviewers with an excellent insight into the service as it currently operates. There is substantiating evidence to show that this is a service which is student focused and well thought of by staff and students with disabilities alike. The service has continuously sought ways to improve, develop and widen impact. Through reviewing the SAR and in discussions with staff, it is apparent that all staff were involved in preparing the SAR and that the views expressed are representative.

Since the last Peer Review in 2005, the number of students registered with the service has increased from 349 in 2004/05 to 1375 at the date of the current review. The peer reviewers felt that the present review was taking place at a critical time of development for the service with the proposed appointment of a new Director of Services (who will provide line management for the Director of the DS) and the launch of the very ambitious University Strategic Plan 2014-19. Of particular relevance are the strategic aims regarding diversification of the student population and the internationalisation agenda.

Findings of the Peer Review Group

1 General Overview

All of the clients and stakeholders interviewed praised the DS and in some cases offered direct praise for individual staff members. They are highly regarded, professional and hardworking, and this was reflected in every meeting held with the Review Group. However, in the current climate and challenging fiscal and HR context of the Irish HE sector, the Review Group has concerns about the sustainability of continuing all present activities and suggests that the team takes stock and considers a strategic, prioritised approach.

We also noted that some of the previous recommendations of the earlier Quality Review (2005) have been enacted and the Service has further developed. The challenge going forward will be to ensure that the service remains 'fit for purpose' and continues to contribute towards the success and reputation of Trinity College, Dublin.

It is acknowledged that the DS is working within the national context of reduced government funding, the employment control framework and ongoing change in the Trinity environment, including the introduction of new structures and management posts. The College Strategic Plan is a bold statement of intent for the next 5 years which includes specific targets for student demographics. The DS and other university services will be impacted directly by, and contribute to, the achievement of these goals.

The Peer Review Group found that although the work of the DS was valued and highly regarded, this did not result in all areas of the College taking ownership and responsibility for disability matters relevant to their area. In several meetings with stakeholders, particularly where academic practice was discussed, there was mention of non-adoption of disability-led practices and policies that would in fact be of benefit to all students. Examples include the sporadic use of the Blackboard Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) in academic programmes and inconsistency of practice with relation to sharing information about students with disabilities. There were examples of excellent practice, such as the Trinity Inclusive Curriculum Project but there was also a lack of consistency in the application of disability practices and no apparent methods for ensuring an equal level of support for all students. It seemed to be left to individual choice as to whether to comply, or not, despite the presence of a number of academic officer roles in different parts of College.

2 Organisational structure and management

The DS appears to be well managed. A range of initiatives has been developed over time, along with many innovative projects, some of which are sector leading in the Irish HE context. However, as a consequence of this, staff seem to be very stretched and have perhaps been drawn away from focussing on the core functions of the service.

There appears to be a tendency for the DS to identify gaps and then to develop broader projects to support students with disabilities, and whilst these have proved beneficial, this has resulted in a dilution of the focus of resources available to the service and thus to students with disabilities (the Genio project), which was fully funded by the Genio Trust.

Many activities could be embedded more fully in the institution and delegated across to relevant areas (e.g. Human Resources (HR) for the support for disabled staff), thus freeing up time in the DS to support students with disabilities. Time freed up could be utilised to support other areas of the University to adopt responsibility for supporting students with disabilities. In some areas it seems that there is a dependency on the goodwill of individuals, and many services were built around one individual. This led the PRG to be concerned about long-term sustainability of the service and the full range of activities being undertaken.

In a climate of on-going change, the importance of the DS, amongst other student support services, must be fully acknowledged and effectively resourced and maintained as a strategic College priority. Failure to support the needs of an increasingly diverse student body is an

institutional risk. Acknowledgement of this requires the development of a strategic funding model and on-going support from senior management. The upcoming appointment of a Director of Services is potentially a positive development; in this regard, the PRG would encourage this future postholder to reinforce and build positive relationships between the DS and other key areas such as the Examinations Team, which would also appear to be transferring into the same line management structure.

In the context of on-going change, a lack of information seems to be impacting on DS staff morale which could easily be resolved with clearer communication and dialogue. Top-down communication concerning operational and strategic issues is crucial, and it would appear that the channels of communication to the DS could be improved, e.g. lack of clarity around the replacement of a key member of staff and budgetary/staffing constraints around this. The PRG recommends that there should be a greater focus on transparency and openness at all levels, thus reducing uncertainty.

The PRG recommends that the DS structure is reviewed with the aim of enabling the Director to delegate some responsibilities (e.g. consideration could be given to regarding an existing post to a Deputy Director role).

3 Resources

a. Staff composition

As mentioned above, the PRG has a sense that the service is stretched. However, we question whether it is focusing energy and resource on areas that might well be better placed in other parts of the university or delivered in collaboration with other parts of the university. Examples include the support for disabled staff, which HR could oversee, and perhaps the Counselling service working with Unilink.

The opportunity to explore options could potentially be undertaken by the new Director of Services in tandem with the Director of DS. This is not a reflection on the quality of the current provision, but should focus the DS more strategically.

In discussion with various stakeholders there was general support for this, although there was a concern that financial resource might also move from the DS. Our discussions around finance seemed to suggest that the DS is largely funded via external sources (HEA access grant, ESF funding as opposed to core funding) . Moving funds away from the DS would be neither helpful nor possible.

b. Staff training & development

It is pleasing to note that the DS staff have been able to access opportunities for their own personal development, and that this has previously been seen as a priority. However, we would encourage a sharper focus on outcomes for the service from such personal development and the development of other approaches, including conference attendance and visiting other DSs. DS staff should focus on training of other university staff in disability matters, e.g. use of Blackboard VLE and the implementation of the Trinity Inclusive Curriculum . This would help to embed good disability practice across the College and raise awareness of existing guidance and policies.

c. Physical facilities/infrastructure

The PRG were surprised to discover that the DS did not have an appropriate reception area, meaning that confidentiality is impossible to maintain; the DS is not hosted in a single location, with 3 rooms spread throughout the building with either no or unclear signage. The PRG recommends that efforts are made to ensure that there is a measure of confidentiality facilitated by the layout of the room where students come initially, e.g. by use of screens. The assistive technology lab is cramped and ideally should be extended. The PRG encourages the DS to consider ways of using existing space to better effect, for example there may be merit in converting the respite room into a working space to enable the DS to see students.

It is a positive development to hear that plans are underway to house the DS in new premises in the next few years. Our understanding is that the new space is being enabled by a large student accommodation development. Whilst we acknowledge that the provision of additional student accommodation is a strategic need, we recommend early, full consultation with the DS to ensure that their new space is 'future proof', accessible and appropriate to the needs of students with disabilities and the service. If there are any budget constraints in building, the DS should be considered as important as accommodation. .

We note the constraints of the campus buildings infrastructure and the limitations of listed buildings, but recommend that as far as possible, buildings are audited for accessibility, and actions taken to address issues such as, automating doors, reducing the height of locks on toilet doors and improving lighting levels. The Student Unions and students with disabilities themselves may be able to assist and advise by providing information to prioritise this. The PRG were concerned that HEA access grants had been diverted from use for operational support of students to capital works to improve campus environment.

d. Financial resources, budget, including self-financing activities

The PRG's understanding of the service funding is that budgets are made up of:

- 40% of the HEA Access Fund.

- Annual income derived through provision of Unilink service
- An allocation from the Global Relations Strategy (GRS) – 1% of additional funds from additional international students above the baseline goes to the COO budget – but that this funding stream has not yet commenced
- 181K from the Genio Fund (externally funded project)
- European Social Fund – reduced by 42% over the last 7 years (this funds half of the core staff in the service)

Given the lack of other income streams and increasing student numbers supported by the DS, we recommend that the method for allocating funding is reviewed, particularly regarding the proportion received from HEA access funds. This should be in cognisance of the Trinity Access Programme (TAP) being able to draw on other corporate funding from external sources, something that the DS cannot. The funding methodology needs to be closely aligned to the demographics and strategic targets annually.

The PRG recommend that Unilink HEI shared service with DCU, DIT and UCD is reviewed from a business perspective and the full economic cost of delivering this service is determined. If it is deemed to be sustainable we recommend this is established as a business unit, possibly exploring working with the Counselling Service, to remove the direct risk from the core service. If it is not financially viable then the future of Unilink should be reconsidered.

4 Systems and Processes

a. Evaluation of existing business processes, IT support and Information Systems

There appears to be some areas of inefficiency with regards data handling within the DS. The PRG recommend that the DS explores the use of process mapping, for example using LEAN approaches, particularly in tandem with adoption of the SITS (Student Information Systems) project in due course. The PRG understands that the SITS development programme is currently in a stabilization phase, but recommends that the DS is prioritized in relation to next steps as a matter of urgency.

The DS currently relies on manual input of data and there would appear to be a number of inefficient business processes. For example, Academic Liaison Officers (ALOs) distributing Learning Education Needs “Summary” (LENS) reports and some duplication of tasks. This carries a risk regarding data protection and maintenance of confidentiality, as well as being time consuming and resource intensive.

It is clear that the DS does not have access to adequate IT systems to support students with disabilities. The explanation given to the PRG is that funding was allocated for SITS module for the service, but that this has not yet been put in place due to other funding constraints in the wider University.

This is a major area of legal risk for Trinity College; examples of the manual input of data and inefficient - and ineffective – manipulation of data, for instance regarding exam support, serve to illustrate the potential for significant efficiency savings, if an initial outlay was made to enhance support mechanisms.

The lack of a supported infrastructure means that the College is at significant risk of not supporting students, poor retention and a negative student experience, with the worst case scenario of potential legal action if a disabled student does not receive the support to which they are legally entitled.

Effective IT systems are required both to speed up communications and to free up valuable staff time to provide disabled student support.

b. Procedures and Policies

There appears to be a lack of fully integrated College-wide policies and procedures, for example, there does not appear to be an effective system for distributing information and communication across the College-wide network. Although there is a College tutors pastoral support system, there is no method of distributing support information to the tutors. The DS doesn't have the name of College tutors for individual students with disabilities at the peak time of registration and needs assessment (Aug - Nov) annually.

Support of and buy-in from senior management is essential to ensure that policies are implemented and adhered to. Specifically, the promotion of an inclusive learning environment and the “mainstreaming” of disability issues (i.e. working to ensure that all areas of the University take a degree of ownership of disability/issues) should be a priority.

Although some approaches appear to be made to work through the diligence of officers (e.g. Dean of Students), the PRG recommend that specific policies, such as a Fitness to Continue in Study Policy and college-wide complaints procedure together with non-implementation of existing policies (e.g. the Trinity Inclusive Curriculum Project) are areas for development and continuous monitoring.

5 Alignment to Strategy

a. How do activities meet the mission and objectives of College

The College's new Strategic Plan makes ambitious statements of strategic intent but the PRG suggests that discussion needs to happen to determine how these could be implemented and brought to fruition.

For example, Access & Participation – increasing the percentage of under-represented groups enrolled on UG courses from 22% to 25% by 2019 will bring additional challenges for the DS. Further resources may be required to support this changing student demographic.

Further curriculum development and implementation of non-traditional mode of assessment may ease the loads on the DS and examinations office in addition to benefitting all students.

The DS already plays a significant role in the recruitment and retention of a specific cohort of students and increased targets in these areas are reflected in the strategic plan. However, sufficient resources need to be allocated to enable the DS to follow through and make these statements a reality. Appropriate infrastructures are necessary to be able to respond effectively to the needs of TCD's students with disabilities and to support them effectively in their learning.

We would like to point out that students with disabilities are students of the College and not of the service and as such the College as a whole should acknowledge its corporate responsibility.

**b. How does the area assess itself against the College's strategic plan?
(Evidence available performance indicators or key deliverables)**

Whilst the College has a set of high level key performance indicators (KPIs), some of which relate to access, The DS has its own data, which also effectively measures impact and outcome. A lot of data is available, but we recommend that this is fully aligned with the University's strategic aims. The new HEA compact agreement is a further mechanism for setting targets and monitoring progress in this regard. The PRG were told that there are lots of students with disabilities coming to Trinity but this needs to be clearly seen from the data and KPIs.

The PRG recommend that the DS further develops, with key stakeholders, KPIs at a service level – both quantitative and qualitative - to further demonstrate impact and effectiveness. The DS KPIs (listed below) should connect with the higher level College level KPIs and possibly even with wider student service KPIs.

The following areas may be appropriate KPIs for consideration:

- number of students with disabilities
- students with disabilities' retention rates,
- employability of students with disabilities
- number of students seen (eg appointments) by the DS
- number of LENS reports produced annually etc.
- New entrants – required or DARE
- Total number of students with disabilities in college
- Service delivery detailing types and volumes

6 Performance

a. Performance against industry quality standards and benchmarks

As far as we can tell, the service meets the relevant quality standards.

The team should be commended on the contribution that is being made to national developments around access and post entry provision for students with disabilities. Staff have taken on leadership roles in a number of relevant organisations (e.g. DAWN) and are contributing to on-going debate and national initiatives. It is clear that the service is regarded very well by other universities and by professionals in second level schools.

b. Has the area met stakeholder expectations (as evidenced through user/client survey results, or service indicators)?

Expectations are not explicit so this is a difficult question to answer “scientifically”. However, everyone the PRG met has been positive and very complimentary about the service. Survey results provided were also very positive. There was mention of support for PG students, where there is an assumption that PG students are more independent.

c. Evaluation of service level agreements

The DS has Service Level Agreements (SLAs) in place with partners within the Unilink project, and for provision of services for Marino College and these appear to be appropriate. The DS is encouraged to build on this approach to develop similar agreements with internal stakeholders as an effective tool for engagement and the encouragement of mainstreaming of provision. All SLAs should be subject to regular review to assess impact and sustainability.

d. Relationships with other college areas, academic and administrative

The PRG notes the complexity in existing and emerging College structures and the importance of connections with a wide range of services and divisions. There are generally very positive comments from all areas but the PRG suggest that disability is a corporate responsibility and key areas might be shifted elsewhere. The DS has been very proactive and developed areas of partnership working e.g. Unilink, but it is felt that these arrangements and SLAs were not always supported at a senior level as effectively as might be the case. There was concern around these links being dependent on individual staff relationships. If staff leave or are sick, then we question the sustainability of these arrangements.

The PRG note that anything relating to disability was seen as the responsibility of the DS and again suggests that disability has to be seen and dealt with as a key corporate responsibility. Development of standard operating procedures would be a positive step to counter this risk.

The DS is very highly thought of by other units and departments. The efforts made on behalf of students with disabilities is self-evident, but may lead to an over dependence on the DS by other departments. This should be considered in relation to core activities, and the development of SLAs and KPIs.

The planned appointment of a Director of Services is crucial to aid the development and cross College integration of the DS and all student services. The PRG welcomes this approach, and encourages the College to place the student experience at the centre of the appointment process.

The DS currently plans and delivers its work in relation to phases of the student journey. This is to be applauded and provides scope for adoption across other services. This could create new synergies between teams and services working within the new Director's portfolio. For example, each service need not spend time working on pre admissions/outreach activity. There may be an opportunity for DS, TAP and the admissions office to work together more on this particular strand of work.

e. Value for money and efficient use of resources

The PRG Acknowledge that given current financial climate and employment context, the DS has managed to maintain a good level of service delivery. The team is working very hard within this context, but a sharper focus on core service delivery and alignment of resources to achieve specific KPIs would be advantageous.

7 Communication

a. Communication with users/clients, and other stakeholders

The PRG has already highlighted the difficulties being encountered in sharing confidential information between university units. The development of the SITs, together with a consistent application of policies, will greatly enhance the DS's ability to communicate quickly and efficiently across College and ensure that legal obligations within the Disability Act (2005) are met.

b. Publications

The PRG noted a number of high quality, potentially helpful publications. It was suggested that it might be helpful for the service to have a clearly recognisable "brand" as the leaflets and publications were not immediately recognisable as being from the same source.

It wasn't clear whether the publications were intended to raise awareness of the service and its provisions, provide information – or all of these areas. We had questions about how the publications reached their target audiences eg there was mention of a service "newsletter" but that it wasn't read.

The PRG noted the range of DS literature available. The PRG recommends a review of student and staff needs in relation to DS communication and publications. This review, to include how information is usefully targeted, branded and publicized would be pertinent.

8 Governance compliance

The DS and TCD have developed a number of important policies. There is a serious reputational and legislative risk to College in the lack of consistency of application of such policies.

Reviewers' recommendations

The PRG makes the following recommendations:

1. The purchase and implementation of a disability module for SITS should be prioritised as a matter of extreme urgency. If this is not possible, then consideration should be given to the purchase of a bespoke "off-the-shelf" disability CRM,, for example, Maximiser Student Relate, as an interim or permanent measure as quickly as possible.
2. Senior managers should support the DS by championing relevant disability related policies, including the use of Blackboard VLE in advance of lectures, and where possible to provide notes or video capture of the lectures. The College should ensure that all academic staff follow and abide by the Trinity Inclusive Curriculum . We note that the college has procedures in place that appear similar to Fitness to Study Policies in other HEIs, but the recommendation is that this is formalised and made more transparent in a supportive academic framework.
3. The current funding arrangements for DS are heavily reliant on HEA and ESF allocations, both of which are decreasing. College should consider providing core funding for the DS, thus removing the requirement for additional income generation.

The income derived from the UniLink HEI shared service with DCU, DIT and UCD is important in this regard, but activity within this project must be fully costed from a business perspective to determine next steps. The PRG recommend that Unilink is reviewed from a business perspective and the full economic cost of delivering this service is determined. If it is deemed to be sustainable we recommend this is established as a business unit, possibly exploring working with the Counselling Service, to remove the direct risk from the core service. If it is not financially viable then the future of Unilink should be reconsidered.

The budget for capital works to improve access should be held by Estates and Facilities and utilised in full consultation with DS.

4. The PRG recommend that the DS further develops, with key stakeholders, key performance indicators (KPIs) at a service level – both quantitative and qualitative - to further demonstrate impact and effectiveness. These should connect with the higher level College

level KPIs and possibly even with wider student service KPIs

5. Consideration should be given to reallocating some activities from the DS to other areas of the university, e.g. the support for disabled staff. This would free up resource in the DS to enable a focus on student related core activity.
6. The PRG strongly recommends that the University does NOT introduce charges for services to students. We firmly believe that this is a core responsibility and duty of the College and an appropriate resource allocation model needs to be developed.
7. The upcoming appointment of a Director of Services (DoS) is a crucial development and will be critical in championing and promoting the DS and other student services across College. It is important that the DoS has direct experience of provision of student support services. The structure of the DS should also be reviewed to create a mechanism for the Director of the Disability Service to delegate some responsibilities. This should be a priority for consideration once the DoS is appointed.
8. The DS should place a strategic focus on further developing links with other College areas to support mainstreaming of practice. This should include provision of staff training, and sharpening methods of communication.

Appendix A – Timetable for visit

Final Schedule for Disability Service Review, TCD 24th – 26th November 2014

Reviewers:

Dr. Ian Pickup, University College Cork
Ms. Sheila Williams, University of Edinburgh
Ms. Elaine Shillcock, University of Manchester

Internal Facilitator: Mr. Tony McMahon

Day 1: Monday 24th November 2014

Time	Meeting	Venue	Attendees
08.15	Meet Reviewers and escort to Trinity College for first meeting	Lobby of the Davenport Hotel	Helen Condon, Quality Office, TCD
08.45 – 09.45	Introductory Meeting with College Officers	Boardroom House 1	Pro Vice-Provost (Prof. Marina Lynch), Dean of Students (Prof. Kevin O’Kelly), Quality Officer (Ms Roisin Smith), External Reviewers, Internal Facilitator
10.00 – 11.00	Meeting with Head of Disability Service	4017 Base room Arts Building	Mr. Declan Treanor (Head of Disability Service), External Reviewers, Internal Facilitator
11.00 – 11.30	Meeting & coffee with Interim Chief Operating Officer (COO)	4017 Base room Arts Building	Interim Chief Operating Officer (Ms. Geraldine Ruane), External Reviewers, Internal Facilitator
11.30 – 12.15	Meeting with Area Staff	4017 Base room Arts Building	Mr. Andrew Costello (Assistive Technology Officer), Ms. Alison Doyle (Disability Officer), Mr. Declan Reilly (Disability Officer), Ms. Jennifer Maxwell (ESW Administrator), Ms. Eileen Daly (Careers Officer for students with disabilities), Ms. Carol Barry (Executive Officer), External Reviewers, Internal Facilitator
12.15 – 12.45	Tour of Facilities	4017 Base room Arts Building	Declan Treanor (Head of Disability Service), External Reviewers, Internal Facilitator
12.45 – 13.30	Reviewers’ private time & lunch	4017 Base room	External Reviewers, Internal Facilitator
13.30 – 14.00	Disability Service Finances	4017 Base room Arts Building	Ms. Connie Abbott, Finance Partner, Office of the COO, External Reviewers, Internal Facilitator

Day 1: Monday 24th November 2014 *continued*

Time	Meeting	Venue	Attendees
14.00 – 15.00	Meeting with Academic Staff and School Administrators	4017 Base room Arts Building	Faculty of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences: Dr. Elaine Moriarty (Assistant Professor) & Ms. Olive Donnelly (School Administrator) – School of Social Science & Philosophy Faculty of Engineering, Mathematics & Science: Prof. Brian Foley (Head of School of Engineering) Faculty of Health Sciences: Dr. Sharon O'Donnell (Director of Teaching & Learning UG) & Mr. Frank O'Rourke (School Administrator) – School of Nursing & Midwifery
15.00 – 15.45	Meeting with Student User/Stakeholder group	4017 Base room Arts Building	Student Users, External Reviewers, Internal Facilitator <u>Attendees:</u> Sinead Burke (PhD Education), Anthony Curran (UG PESS), Elliot Ward (UG Law), Jack Kavanagh (PhD History), Michelle Beirne (UG Occupational Therapy), Sinead Impey (Masters in Medical Informatics), Matthew Corbally (Masters in English), Marian Mangaoang (UG Nursing), Emily Collins (UG Drama Studies and Film Studies), Bernard Healy (UG Irish Studies).
15.45 – 16.15	Meeting with Unilink Service	4017 Base room Arts Building	Ms. Claire Gleeson (Occupational Therapist), Mr. Kieran Lewis (Occupational Therapist), Dr. Clodagh Nolan (Unilink founder, Discipline of Occupational Therapy), Mr. Declan Treanor (Head of Disability Service), External Reviewers, Internal Facilitator
16.15 – 17.30	Reviewers' private time & coffee	4017 Base room Arts Building	External Reviewers, Internal Facilitator
18.15	Meet Reviewers at Davenport Hotel & escort to restaurant	Lobby of the Davenport Hotel	Quality Officer (Ms. Roisin Smith)
18.30	Dinner with College Officers	La Mère Zou 22 St. Stephen's Green Dublin 2	Pro Vice-Provost (Prof. Marina Lynch), Interim Chief Operating Officer (Ms. Geraldine Ruane), Dean of Students (Prof. Kevin O'Kelly), Quality Officer (Ms Roisin Smith), External Reviewers

Day 2: Tuesday 25th November 2014

Time	Meeting	Venue	Attendees
09.00 – 10.00	Meeting with College Tutors and other academics	4017 Base room Arts Building	Dr. Claire Laudet (Senior Tutor), Dr. Michael Shevlin (School of Education), Dr. Amanda Piesse (School of English), Dr. Siobhan Mc Cobb (School of Medicine), Prof Gerry Whyte (School of Law), Dr. Patricia McCarthy, (School of Education), Dr Jonathan Dukes (School of Computer Science & Statistics), External Reviewers, Internal Facilitator
10.00 – 11.00	Meeting with College Officers	4017 Base room Arts Building	Dr. Aideen Long (Dean of Graduate Studies), Dr. Gillian Martin (Dean of Undergraduate Studies), External Reviewers, Internal Facilitator
11.00 – 11.30	Reviewers' private time & coffee	4017 Base room Arts Building	External Reviewers, Internal Facilitator
11.30 – 12.15	Meeting with rep from Academic Registry	4017 Base room Arts Building	Ms. Leona Coady (Director of the Academic Registry), Ms. Sue Power, (Admissions Officer), Ms. Mary Mc Mahon (Examinations Officer), External Reviewers, Internal Facilitator
12.15 – 13.00	Meeting with Student Services Group	4017 Base room Arts Building	Ms. Helen Shelton (Librarian & Chief Archivist), Ms. Jessie Kurtz (Deputy Librarian), Mr. Anthony Dempsey (Accommodation Officer), Mr. Sean Gannon (Director of Careers Advisory Service), Dr. Deirdre Flynn (Director of Student Counselling Service), Dr. David McGrath (Director of College Health), Ms. Michelle Tanner (Head of Sport & Recreation), External Reviewers, Internal Facilitator
13.00 – 14.00	Reviewers' private time & lunch	4017 Base room Arts Building	External Reviewers, Internal Facilitator
14.00 – 15.00	Meeting with Student Union, Graduate Student Union	4017 Base room Arts Building	President of TCD SU - Mr. Domhnall McGlacken-Byrne; Education Officer – Ms. Katie Byrne; Welfare Officer - Mr. Ian Mooney; Disability Officer SU - Mr. Conor McMeel; Graduate SU President - Ms. Megan Lee; External Reviewers, Internal Facilitator

Day 2: Tuesday 25th November 2014 *continued*

Time	Meeting	Venue	Attendees
15.00 – 15.30	Meeting – 2 nd level outreach initiatives	4017 Base room Arts Building	Catherine Stocker (Trinity Access Programme), Ms. Orlaith O’Brien (Teacher, Ballinteer Community School, Dublin), Alison Doyle, Disability Service; External Reviewers, Internal Facilitator
15.30 – 16.00	Meeting re Estates & Universal Access	4017 Base room Arts Building	Mr. Paul Mangan (Director of Estates & Facilities), Mr. Pat Mc Donnell (Deputy Director of Buildings, Estates & Facilities), External Reviewers, Internal Facilitator
16.00 – 18.00	Reviewers’ private time & coffee	4017 Base room	External Reviewers, Internal Facilitator
19.15	Dinner with Head of Area	Pigs Ear, Nassau St.	Head of Area, External Reviewers, Internal Facilitator

Day 3: Wednesday 26th November 2014

Time	Meeting	Venue	Attendees
09.00 – 09.45	Meeting with College Compliance representatives	4017 Base room Arts Building	Mr. John Coman - College Secretary; Ms. Sinead Mc Bride - College Solicitor; Mr. Sean O'Driscoll, HR rep; Mr. Luke Field - Equality Officer; External Reviewers, Internal Facilitator
09.45 – 10.30	Meeting with Disability and Unilink Shared Service HEI	4017 Base room Arts Building	Dr Sean Delaney, Registrar Marino Institute of Education; Ms Anne O'Connor, Head of Disability Service Dublin City University (DCU); Sylvia Mooney – Acting Head of Disability Service, Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT); Ms Julie Tonge, Disability Student Adviser, University College Dublin (UCD); External Reviewers, Internal Facilitator
10.30 – 13.00	Reviewers private time & coffee – preparation of draft report	4017 Base room Arts Building	External Reviewers, Internal Facilitator
13.00 – 14.00	Lunch	4017 Base room Arts Building	External Reviewers, Internal Facilitator
14.00 – 15.00	Wrap-up meeting with the Head of Area	4017 Base room Arts Building	Mr. Declan Treanor, External Reviewers, Internal Facilitator
15.00 – 16.00	Wrap-up meeting with College Officers	Boardroom House 1	Pro Vice-Provost (Prof. Marina Lynch), Interim Chief Operating Officer (Ms. Geraldine Ruane), Dean of Students (Prof. Kevin O'Kelly), Quality Officer (Ms Roisin Smith), External Reviewers, Internal Facilitator

2. Response from the Director of the College Disability Service

Introduction/overview:

The Quality Review of the Disability Service (DS) was undertaken on the 24th – 26th November 2014 by an external review panel comprising the following members: Dr Ian Pickup, University College Cork, Head of Student Experience, Ms Elaine Shillcock, The University of Manchester, Head of Disability Support and Ms Sheila Williams, The University of Edinburgh, Director of Student Disability Service.

We welcome the Reviewers' Report, dated January 2015, and wish to thank the Reviewers and the Internal Facilitator, Mr. Tony Mc Mahon for their time, expertise and commitment to the process. From the outset of the process, we considered the Quality Review as valuable in terms of objectively reviewing the Disability Service and its broad range of functions. This is particularly relevant in a period of significant change within College (with the implementation of recommendations arising from the START Programme). The report arising from the review is very positive; the recommendations provide strategic direction for the Disability Service, and we very much welcome the Reviewers' observations that:

- There is substantiating evidence to show that this is a DS which is student focused and well thought of by staff and students with disabilities alike. The DS has continuously sought ways to improve, develop and widen impact.
- The staff of the DS are highly regarded, professional and hardworking and there were examples of excellent practice, such as the Trinity Inclusive Curriculum Project.
- The DS is well managed. A range of initiatives has been developed over time, along with many innovative projects, some of which are sector leading in the Irish HE context.
- The team should be commended on the contribution that is being made to national developments around access and post entry provision for students with disabilities. Staff have taken on leadership roles in a number of relevant organisations (e.g. DAWN) and are contributing to ongoing debate and national initiatives. It is clear that the service is regarded very well by other universities and by professionals in second level schools.
- The DS currently plans and delivers its work in relation to phases of the student journey (DS Strategic Plan). This is to be applauded and provides scope for adoption across other services.

- The reviewers acknowledge that given the current challenging fiscal climate and the HR context of the Irish HE sector employment, the DS has managed to maintain a good level of service delivery.
- The reviewers noted a number of high quality, potentially helpful publications.

The majority and most important recommendations set out in the report are made at a College level and they will be reviewed in more detail as the Implementation Phase of the review process is completed.

Risks

The Reviewers identified the lack of an effective IT system as a major area of legal risk for College leading to a significant risk of not supporting students. Effective IT systems via a disability module in SITS are required to both speed up communications and to free up valuable staff time to provide disabled student support.

The challenge going forward for College is for consistent College wide compliance with Disability policies and practices. The Review Group is of the view that students with disabilities are students of the College and not of the Disability Service and as such the College as a whole should acknowledge its corporate responsibility. As the reviewers commented that:

‘It seemed to be left to individual choice as to whether to comply, or not, despite the presence of a number of academic officer roles in different parts of College’. There is a serious reputational and legislative risk to College in the lack of consistency of application of such policies.

Staffing for the service is identified as stretched with funding identified as primarily being from external sources. The physical facilities were also deemed not fit for purpose and an immediate review of the use of space in advance of a move to the Oisín House development is required.

Review Report Findings and Recommendations:

The following is a review of the top level recommendations outlined by the Reviewers in the Report. The full range of recommendations, including those identified in the body of the Report, will be addressed individually in the Implementation Plan which is in preparation.

Recommendation 1: We support the Reviewers’ recommendation for the purchase and implementation of the disability module in SITS to mitigate the significant legal risk to the College. The present reporting functionality, and dissemination and flow of information are

inefficient. The SITS enhancement programme should prioritise the disability module immediately. A DS 'stand-alone' bespoke database is not recommended.

Recommendation 2: We support the Reviewers' recommendation that the Trinity Inclusive Curriculum and the College Accessible Information Policy be integrated and formalised into the proposed Trinity Teaching & Learning Strategy. This will require a robust review of all policies across College and ensuring their proper implementation and continuous monitoring. We also support the formalised development of a Fitness to Study Policy.

Recommendation 3: We support the Reviewers' recommendation that the College should provide core funding for the Disability Service.

We support a review of the method for allocating funding to DS, particularly regarding the proportion received from HEA access funds.

We support the Reviewers' recommendation that a full cost benefit analysis of the Unilink shared services should be undertaken.

We support the Reviewers' recommendation that a budget for universal access capital works should be part of the Estates and Facilities overall budget and the DS Director should be the sponsor of this element of their work.

Recommendation 4: We support the Reviewers' recommendation that key performance indicators at a DS and Directorate of Service level be further developed and connected to the College Strategic Plan objectives and KPIs'

Recommendation 5: We support the Reviewers' recommendation that some DS functions such as support of disabled staff should be integrated into the Human Resource function.

Recommendation 6: Legally the cost of reasonable accommodations for disabled students cannot be passed on to the end user. Any additional charges to the student population will be clarified in the Service Level Agreements to the students where a minimum level of service has to be outlined.

Recommendation 7: We support the Reviewers' recommendation that the appointment of a Director of Services is a crucial development to ensure the disability agenda across College is championed. This ensures that disability is recognised as a key corporate responsibility of College. We support the Reviewers' recommendation that the structure and resources of the DS be reviewed to ensure sustainability and scalability in line with College Strategic Plan.

Recommendation 8: We support the Reviewers' recommendation for the DS to develop a strategic focus and links with other College areas to which they are strongly connected to further mainstream disability into core functions and activities. An identification of staff

training and communication needs will lead to a more targeted strategy. Delivery of the disability module in SITS will improve communications significantly.

There are other recommendations within the report and these will be dealt with as part of the more detailed and all-encompassing Implementation Plan, including:

Physical infrastructure of DS: A review of current space usage is required. The DS should consider ways of using existing space to better effect. The proposed move to the new premises, the Oisín House development is also supported. The review of the current usage of the DS physical space will take place in order to maximise efficiency and effectiveness of the current location while maintaining client confidentiality.

College Universal Access: We support the Reviewers' recommendation that accessibility audits of College buildings takes place. See recommendation 5 which recommends reallocating some activities from the DS such as universal access responsibilities to the Estates and Facilities which has responsibility for the built environment. This will be addressed in the Implementation Plan.

Service Level Agreements – the DS welcome the development of SLAs in College and the need to specify the minimum service level they can offer with the resources they have in place. These will be subject to regular review to assess impact and sustainability.

Conclusions

The Disability Service intends to work with the Chief Operating Officer and other appropriate College Officers and relevant stakeholders to address the recommendations arising from the report. The DS will prepare a detailed Implementation Plan outlining the timeframe for implementation. We wish to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to all those involved in the review process and, in particular, to all the internal and external stakeholders who gave generously of their time to engage with the Reviewers themselves.

3. Response from the Chief Operating Officer

Introduction/overview:

As Chief Operating Officer I wish to sincerely thank the review group for their excellent work in carrying out the review and also for their engagement with the students and staff of the College. I am very grateful to the PRG for the professional and objective manner in which they reviewed the College Disability Service (DS). I recognise the time and effort taken to understand our DS, its challenges and opportunities, and for reflecting the many differing opinions expressed. I am very appreciative of the recommendations of the PRG and look forward to working with the Director and his staff in developing an implementation plan.

Main body of the response:

The PRG have listed eight high level recommendations for implementation. It is notable that six of these eight recommendations relate to College level responsibility and other service areas. I will ensure that these six recommendations are discussed with the appropriate College areas with a view to identifying the appropriate owners to ensure they take responsibility for delivery of the recommendations. Overall the recommendations can be categorised into three main areas: Systems and Processes, College responsibility towards those with Disabilities, and Funding.

The Reviewers noted many strengths of the current service provided by the DS, noting the clear evidence that the service is customer focused and well thought of by staff and students with disabilities alike. They commented positively that the staff are highly regarded, professional and hardworking.

DS Systems and Processes:

Whilst I fully support the development of a Disability Module in SITS, this is not included as a priority in the current phase of the enhancement programme to SITS. I would propose that the disability module be dealt with as a priority in the next phase (G2) of the SITS enhancement programme given the possible regulatory and reputational risk. This will require agreement and funding by the Executive Officers. In the interim we will research the CRM option proposed by the Reviewers.

I will support the DS in undertaking a review of their structure and current processes. I will drive this with the new Director of Services. This will assist in the further development of service efficiencies and KPIs. It will also identify those services presently offered and/or championed by the Disability Service that will need to be reallocated to a more appropriate College area. I will engage with these areas to drive this recommendation.

College responsibility towards students, staff and customers with disabilities:

While the PRG noted there were examples of excellent practice such as the Trinity Inclusive Curriculum Programme, there was a lack of consistency in the application of disability practices. The PRG were of the view that students with disabilities are students of the College and not of the DS and as such the College as a whole should acknowledge its corporate responsibility. Policies, procedures and services, academic and administrative require review and audit to identify where noncompliance exists and an appropriate action plan will be developed.

Disability Service funding:

I support the recommendation regarding the provision of core funding for the DS. I recognise that the complex funding arrangements for the DS, both core and external, is reducing year on year and agree that the provision of a base line service has an associated cost. The new Director of Services together with the Director of DS will be tasked to identify appropriate levels of service and funding, and the costs associated with the provision of same.

Conclusions:

I am pleased to confirm my commitment as Chief Operating Officer to work with the Director of DS and with other appropriate College Officers to address the recommendations arising from the Quality Review and prepare a detailed implementation plan. I am very appreciative of the work of the staff of DS and the work carried out by the review group. I believe the implementation of the recommendations will enable the DS and College to meet and exceed the needs of those with Disabilities and the objectives as stated in the Strategic Plan 2014-2019.

Geraldine Ruane

Chief Operating Office