

THE UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN
TRINITY COLLEGE

**REVIEW OF THE CAREERS
ADVISORY SERVICE**

May 2005

Gerry Keating Martin Thorne

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Introduction

This Review of the Careers Advisory Service was undertaken at the request of the College as part of its regular programme of Service Department Reviews, and was conducted according to the Guidelines for External Reviewers by

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The Reviewers were also accompanied throughout the site visit by Patricia Callaghan, Assistant Academic Secretary.

The Terms of Reference for the Review were to consider

- how effective the department has been in providing a service to its clients/users
- how effective the department has been in meeting its overall aims and objectives
- the effectiveness of processes designed to ensure that the department continues to meet the needs of its client groups
- the value of the service as perceived by the unit and its users in the context of the overall College activities and services provided to students
- the effectiveness of processes designed to ensure that the department makes effective use of feedback on the services it provides
- what changes in practice should be recommended to further improve the quality of the service offered
- how the department develops and maintains the competence of its staff
- the appropriateness of the objectives of the department in relation to the mission statement of the College
- the effectiveness of each department's organisational structures and procedures, eg management arrangements, resources and future plans
- how the department identifies and responds to the external and internal developments that impact on the services that it offers

In addition, and specifically in relation to the Careers Advisory Service, the Reviewers were asked to consider

- What is the value of a careers service within the context of an institution such as Trinity College Dublin (TCD)?
- Is there value in further collaboration with other local third level institutions in this field?
- Should students be charged for using the services provided by the Careers Advisory Service?
- How does the Careers Advisory Service at TCD compare with other such services in Ireland, in the UK, and internationally?
- How does the Careers Advisory Service relate to the wider provision of student services by the College?

This guidance provided a helpful framework which the Reviewers endeavoured to address but we also felt it important not to be overly constrained by it and to allow ourselves the flexibility to pursue other aspects or issues appropriate to the broad aims of the Review if they arose. We hope in so doing to have added to, rather than detracted from, the value of the Review to the College.

The Reviewers were greatly assisted by a Self Assessment Document and accompanying Appendices which provided a large body of data and evidence together with formative reflection on the Service's mission, resources, user feedback and other performance measures, approach to staff development, communication and external relationships, and perspectives on the future. This body of work formed an integral part of the Review and the opportunity it affords for self evaluation by the College and by the staff of the Service constitutes a significant part of the value of the Review.

During the course of a two-day site visit the Reviewers met a wide range of Service and College staff and users of the Service including

- The College Secretary, Academic Secretary and Dean of Students
- The Director of the Careers Advisory Service
- The Careers Advisers and Executive Officers and Project Officers of the Service
- The Senior Lecturer, Professor John Murray
- Students including several representatives of the Student Union
- The Vice-Provost, Professor Jane Grimson
- Various employers
- Various recent graduates
- Academics drawn from different subject areas
- Partners from neighbouring colleges
- Representatives of the other student services

The Reviewers would like to thank all those who gave so generously of their time to contribute to the review, including the senior managers and administrators of the College. That such senior figures were prepared to contribute so fully is a tribute to the importance which the College attaches to the work of the Careers Advisory Service and to the role it plays in the life of the College. It also did much to ensure that our task was an enjoyable one. In particular we would also like to thank the Director and staff of the Careers Advisory Service for the considerable amount of hard work they put into the exercise both in advance of, and during our visit. Their efforts, when we met them and behind the scenes, did much to make our visit go smoothly and efficiently.

Areas of Strength and Good Practice

During the course of the Review the Reviewers found much evidence of strength and good practice associated with the Careers Advisory Service currently. Overall we formed the conclusion that the College can be confident that the Service is meeting an important need through work of high quality that is recognised as such by its users. The benchmarking data obtained and presented in Appendix 32 of the Self Evaluation Document, together with the feedback available to us from users and our general experience of careers services in third level institutions in Ireland and in higher education in the UK, supports this conclusion for a service and institution of the size of TCD. (For a more detailed consideration of benchmarking and international comparisons, see below p 8.)

In particular we would cite the following examples of particular strength and good practice:

- The commitment of CAS staff – we found consistent evidence of a high degree of commitment by the staff of the Service to helping students effectively and to delivering products and services of high quality. This was evidenced by user feedback, by our own observations from meetings with CAS staff, and by examples of staff willingness to work considerable extra hours to complete important tasks such as the collection of survey data on graduate destinations.
- The Service ethos with regard to students – despite College expansion and increases in student numbers the Service retains a strongly caring ethos and a focus on treating students as individuals. This came across in our discussions with CAS staff and was also borne out, unprompted, by comments from students and academic representatives. The Service clearly remains committed to the provision of one-to-one advice. In common with similar services elsewhere, the CAS has had to adapt to increasing student numbers by making greater use of group methods and self-help materials but its professional values remain wedded to providing personalised support to students as individual, autonomous learners and decision-makers. This concern for the individual characterised interactions by reception and “front line” staff as well as in-depth career guidance interviews and was clearly valued by users. (The challenge for all such services is to ensure, in the face of continuing rises in student numbers and pressures on resources, that this care and concern is directed towards those students for whom it makes most difference – see below p 7).
- Vision and forward-thinking – the Service is indeed “modern”, in our view, in the sense that it is not solely concerned with the delivery of traditional careers service activities such as the provision of careers information, advice and guidance, but is also pro-actively engaging with the strategic issues around employability and the role of third level education in relation to skills. This was evidenced by the HEA projects (in which we suspect that TCD would not have had such a leading role were it not for the initiative of the Careers Advisory Service) and the Service’s own initiatives with IT developments (eg web site, employer/vacancies database, and the delivery of advice and guidance by email). In these areas we were especially impressed by
 - the evident leadership and vision of the CAS Director (acknowledged both by CAS staff involved and by external partners involved in the HEA projects)

- the flexibility and responsiveness of CAS staff and their willingness to try new ways of working (eg advice and guidance by email)
- the general appetite of CAS staff for innovation
- The strongly positive feedback from all users of the Service – the Self Evaluation Document included appendices containing detailed feedback on a wide range of CAS products and services including student satisfaction with the Service as a whole, the CAS web site, the Personal Development Programme, career publications stocked in the careers library, CAS training seminars, the VACWORK programme, the Employer Fair, and comments from graduates replying to the First Destinations Survey. Of these, only the Personal Development Programme – especially its on-line elements – attracted more equivocal feedback (see below p 7-8). The feedback evidence generally was also borne out by comments made to the reviewers from all the stakeholders encountered in the course of the Review.

Issues for Consideration

From our reading of the evidence and documentation presented to us, and our discussions with the various stakeholder representatives, we identified 5 areas for consideration as the Service and the College go forward to face the challenges of the next five years:

i. User Feedback

The Service displays a healthy commitment to monitoring and evaluation of what it does through user feedback and as already noted above (p 6), feedback from users is strongly positive on nearly all areas of provision. Currently the Service mostly concentrates on summative feedback with an emphasis on satisfaction rates as a measure of performance or quality control. This is clearly important, especially in preparing for a service review, but its usefulness may be subject to diminishing returns if repeated year on year. The Service already operates a "suggestion box" but may wish to consider supplementing this with further elements of formative feedback designed to elicit ideas about possible new developments or to market test or evaluate new developments. Greater use of focus groups, "suggestions" mechanisms (combined with responses to suggestions), consultative user groups, etc might be especially helpful in times of change and challenge, and might also have a marketing and promotional value. They might also help the Service to "carry its users with it" when faced with difficult choices over resources, etc.

Users tend to constitute the main target for careers services when seeking feedback and this is clearly important when evaluating existing provision. Career guidance providers are familiar with the phenomenon that those who avail themselves the most eagerly of such services, and who respond the most enthusiastically to feedback requests, are often those who are the most assertive and self-confident, - and may not be the most in need of such support. Many careers services are now also beginning to think about non-users when seeking feedback designed to inform policy making and planning for the optimum use of resources. This becomes more important when resources are under increasing pressure because of rising student numbers or through diversification in the role and mission of the Service (see above p 5). In the face of such changes, a purely demand-led model of delivery may not represent the most effective use of limited resources and may ultimately be difficult or impossible to sustain. Better understanding of the needs of non-users, and the reasons for non-usage, combined with the further development a more formalised diagnostic assessment of need (or *triage* process) at the initial point of contact with the Service, may help to ensure that the valuable but finite resource of personalised, in-depth, one-to-one guidance is targeted where it can be most effective. Some careers services are working on the most efficient and effective ways of doing this and there may be models of good practice emerging elsewhere that TCD could usefully adopt or adapt, and to which it could contribute.

As observed already above (p 6), the one area of provision which attracted rather more equivocal feedback was the Personal Development Programme, especially its on-line elements. The evaluation was conducted in the departments of Physiology and Psychology (the latter representing an above averagely sophisticated and critical audience in this context). For the Programme as a whole, one-third of the respondents apparently did not feel it had increased their awareness of possible career paths, and one-third of the graduates who responded did not find the interview skills session helpful and did not consider the reflective journal to be at an appropriate level.

Assessments of the perceived usefulness of the on-line elements ranged from an average score of 1.5 to 2.65 on a scale of 1 (min) to 4 (max). This experience is not unique to TCD and reactions to personal development planning tools and programmes elsewhere are generally rather mixed. The effectiveness of self-reflection is often heavily influenced by individual learning styles and its value is often recognised later in retrospect, or by older, more experienced students. The Careers Advisory Service has done much to champion the cause of PDP and should be encouraged to pursue this area of development. In so doing, it might usefully consider whether a greater degree of customisation to match students' degree disciplines, backgrounds, experience and interests, as well as greater variety and flexibility in the modes of delivery, might increase the apparent value to participants. The Service and the College might also consider the pros and cons of compulsion *versus* election, and incentivisation through credits, certificates or other awards to enhance recognition by students and by employers. There could be much merit also in considering the potential for input by employers especially in certain degree subject areas which could further add to the perception of relevance by students. The development and delivery of bespoke programmes for different Schools could also be developed as an example of non-core value-added services offered to academic Schools by the Careers Advisory Service on a separately chargeable basis under the new resource allocation model (see Appendix pp 17-18).

ii. Staffing and Staff Development

Questions of comparability between institutions in terms of staff and financial resources devoted to the provision of career guidance support are extremely complex and difficult and the Reviewers were not able, within the scope of this Review, to form a clear view about how well the Service at TCD was resourced in relation to the demands placed upon it. There appeared to be some evidence to suggest that the Service may be relatively well resourced compared with other Irish institutions but less well resourced than some other institutions elsewhere including those UK institutions selected for benchmarking for the purposes of this Review. The range across UK institutions is very wide, however, and other international comparisons are even more difficult to establish on a like-for-like basis. There could be some marketing advantage to the College in benchmarking its resource allocation in this area, but on what basis and with which comparator institutions would need to be the subject of a strategic decision by the College. The work involved in compiling the necessary data and analysis to do so, and in maintaining its currency, should not be underestimated.

Whatever the level of staff resource available, it is clear that the staff of a careers service represent its most valuable asset and the extent to which they are supported and developed is a critical factor for success. There are two aspects of staff development which the Reviewers feel merit consideration:

- Staff of the Careers Advisory Service displayed a high level of commitment to their own professional development and an appetite for training. There was some lack of clarity, however, about the availability of appropriate training and the extent of their access to it. Some staff seemed aware of the College staff development fund but others clearly were not and support staff in particular felt the fund was not well known. In other cases staff were keen to access external training provision but were uncertain about College policy and the degree of support to which they would be entitled. This raises potential issues both of policy and communication.

- The staffing establishment of the Service currently comprises a Director, a team of Careers Advisers, 3 project officers each dedicated to specific and externally funded projects, and a “support” team of 3.0 x FTE Executive Officers. The latter cover a wide range of responsibilities including reception and information provision, web site development, employer liaison, VACWORK, alumni data, and office administration. Each EO has a particular focus but there is also some cross-over between team members. The team is led by a part-time Office Supervisor who also carries the principal responsibility for employer liaison. Whilst this arrangement provides a certain degree of flexibility which may be helpful in a small team when covering for staff absences, etc, we question whether it is sufficient to enable the development of the specialist expertise and professionalism in certain key activities that is becoming increasingly common in careers services elsewhere - even of a similar size - including those chosen for benchmarking in this Review. In particular, consideration should be given to the further development of specialist roles in the areas of
 - *Information and IT provision* - The provision of careers information, and its accessibility by students and graduates is undergoing rapid change driven by technological innovation. If the College is to continue to provide the standard of support for its students, and to match the good practice that is increasingly available to students elsewhere then consideration should be given to the further development of specialist roles in Information Management and IT Development dedicated to supporting careers information and guidance. This calls for clearly designated leadership and professional training and expertise. Possible means of achieving this might include an appropriate plan for further training and professional development for existing staff, review of current job and recruitment specifications, review of current job gradings, possible collaboration and development of joint resources with College library and information services, etc.
 - *Relationships with employers* - The College has a strong reputation with many employers but faces certain challenges in the increasingly competitive environment of third level education and graduate recruitment (see below pp 11-12). Trends in the employment market for graduates suggest that the traditional graduate careers will absorb a shrinking proportion of the growing output of graduates and that a more proactive approach to SMEs and to new avenues for graduate employment may be necessary. Consideration should be given to the development of a more proactive, specialist leadership role - probably full-time - to enhance the development of employer relations and develop and manage the delivery of services for recruiters. Best practice elsewhere suggests that such roles benefit from professional training and experience in marketing or customer relations which may again have implications for recruitment and job specifications, and for job gradings.
 - *Graduate destinations and LMI data* - The collection, analysis and presentation of graduate destination and labour market information is becoming both increasingly complex technically and increasingly important politically and strategically not only to careers services in supporting careers advice and guidance, but also to institutions and to academics in supporting marketing and student recruitment, performance indicators, and success in attracting funding. The

increasing importance of published league tables has also encouraged some careers services elsewhere to develop more specialist expertise in this area. This could be viewed as a particular aspect of the need for a stronger Information Management and IT Development function referred to above but we also found the links between the Careers Advisory Service and the College alumni office to be relatively undeveloped in this context. Such links could present potential opportunities for collaboration and the pooling of resources.

iii. Location and Premises

Whilst the premises currently occupied by the Service are located at the traditional heart of the campus and subject to severe planning and building constraints, they are not fit for purpose by the standards of many comparator institutions. In particular they are fragmented and therefore not conducive to integrated service delivery and effective teamworking. They are also not accessible to students with mobility impairment (of whom we were informed there were currently some 100 at the College). In this regard the College is at risk of potential litigation on grounds of equal opportunities which could be costly both financially and in terms of reputation. We found much support, especially amongst students and from providers of other student services, for the physical co-location of the various student service activities provided by the College, especially if this enabled a solution to the problem of access by those with impaired mobility. We encountered very strong resistance on the part of students, however, to the possibility that this might entail premises - albeit superior - off campus. The Reviewers did not necessarily share these objections but in the marketing of non-compulsory services, perception is all.

iv. Organisational Alignment and Relationship with the Schools

There are many schools of thought about the optimum organisational positioning for careers services. Their role crosses many boundaries: pre-/post-graduation, curricular/extra-curricular, education/employment, Schools/central services, internal/external, etc and much of their work is about helping clients to effect successful transitions. Questions about the optimum organisational alignment for the provision of careers education, information and guidance are also likely to be prompted by any physical co-location with other student support services, and as a consequence of the new resource allocation model (ARAM). In the view of the Reviewers, any move towards co-location of the various student services should not be allowed to weaken relationships between the Careers Advisory Service and the Schools, or to undermine either the important linkage between career development/employability and learning/teaching for *all* students (not just those "in difficulty") or the particular contribution the Service can make in collaboration with academic staff to curriculum development and delivery.

To prevent this, and to maximise the impact and reach of career education, information and guidance, will require an effective compact between the Careers Advisory Service and the new academic Schools and this could usefully be rooted in a formal linkage between the Service and the new group of Directors of Teaching and Learning. Such a compact will require greater transparency about what the Service commits to deliver to its principal user groups (students, Schools, employers), about who is paying for what, about the standards to which the main areas of activities and services will be delivered, and about the expectations and entitlements of users. As the user

groups come to see their relationship with the Service as increasingly one of purchaser-provider, the Service will need to embark on a communications exercise aimed both at students and at Schools to promote wider understanding of this compact. The Reviewers remain doubtful, however, of the wisdom of highly detailed, over-specified service level agreements that involve time consuming processes to negotiate and police, require a large body of data and metrics in order to monitor, and are inherently inimical to innovation, experimentation and risk-taking. There is also a danger that a too detailed disaggregation of costs could translate into cost disincentives to provide for the special needs of groups such as mature students, international students, the disabled, etc and into cost penalties to Schools with above average distributions of such students. An outline example of the kind of approach to service standards advocated by the Reviewers is offered as an appendix (pp 17-18).

In a devolved budgetary environment there is a risk that financial pressures in Schools may militate against any provision that is not directly linked to specific academic or research outcomes, and make it more difficult to achieve the embedding of employability-related skills in the curriculum. The College will need to demonstrate commitment and leadership if progress is to be maintained in the new, more challenging circumstances. Effective service delivery also requires clarity on the part of users about expectations and entitlements, and on the part of providers about roles and responsibilities. Some staff of the Careers Advisory Service felt strongly that there was a need for a clearer articulation of College policy and student entitlement in respect of support services generally and careers advisory services in particular.

v. *"The TCD Experience"*

TCD has an internationally recognised reputation for academic and research excellence. It is currently ranked 87 in the THES ranking of the world's top 200 universities and the latest ISI bibliometric data ranks the College in the top 1% worldwide in 9 subject areas (science and social science citations). Recent expansion into vocational subject areas such as Nursing has not diluted the strong culture of liberal education enhanced by a rich variety of extra-curricular, voluntary and sporting opportunities which make up "the TCD experience" - if anything this has been further enhanced by the broad curriculum initiative. Entry standards are amongst the highest in the Irish third level education system and an EUA review in November 2004 found that TCD students were "proud of being students at Trinity College" and "well aware of the added value of having a certificate, diploma or degree (undergraduate or graduate) from the College". TCD graduates are perceived as academically highly qualified and gifted, self-confident, assertive and articulate. This was confirmed by the alumni and by the employers who contributed to this Review.

The College recognizes, however, that perceptions about job prospects for graduates are becoming increasingly important in student recruitment. We were therefore somewhat surprised by the extent of concern expressed to us by some employers, and especially by the particular recent graduates to whom we spoke, about the apparent lack of "job readiness" and of competitiveness in the contemporary employment market of TCD graduates compared with those from other institutions albeit less prestigious academically, especially those whose degree programmes include formal work experience placements. They pointed to a potential imbalance in the TCD

experience with personal, academic and intellectual development emphasized at the expense of, and perhaps even to the neglect of, employability.

Examples of comments made to us by recent graduates:

TCD concentrates on imparting knowledge but the knowledge loses its context

Science teaching [at TCD] is in an ivory tower

A degree is not worth what it was 20 years ago

A degree from TCD has an elitist kudos but the Institutes of Technology are becoming more competitive

Is TCD doing enough to sell its vision to its students and graduates?

There would be much to be gained for the College and for its graduates if this imbalance could be addressed and more emphasis placed on explicit preparation for a career without undermining the distinctive features of the TCD experience. In particular, whilst the current VACWORK programme clearly does stimulate summer work experience opportunities for TCD students, more needs to be done to respond to employers' clear preference to start the employment relationship earlier in students' time at university through the growing practice of internships. This would require that a higher priority be given to employability in terms of learning and teaching strategy, curriculum development and personal tutorial support by the new academic Schools and we believe that the Careers Advisory Service has demonstrated the potential to make a significant contribution both in a consultancy role to the Schools and as a direct provider of employability enhancing activities to students. This again points to the importance of a strong and effective relationship between the Service and the Schools, as discussed on p 10-11 above, if this potential is to be realised.

Most of the employers who met the Reviewers were heavily involved in the recruitment of recent graduates, and all the alumni who met with us had graduated only recently. It may be that the TCD experience confers a career advantage in terms of latent potential which does not become apparent, and does not "pay off", until graduates become more experienced in their careers and seek to advance to more senior levels in their chosen professions or in management. If so, it is greatly to the College's advantage to be able to demonstrate this long-term added value through objectively researched and statistically valid data. The traditional First Destination Survey provides a wealth of detail about the short-term experience of graduates in the first 6 months after graduation but there is a dearth of data generally - in the UK as well as in Ireland - covering the first 5-10 years of graduates' career progression and development. Additional longitudinal surveys have been conducted in a small number of degree disciplines as part of the Personal Development Programme and the Transferable Skills project and some modest investment in evaluating the wider significance of these findings for the College as a whole, and in developing a regular longitudinal survey on a larger scale conducted by the Careers Advisory Service, with its long experience of the First Destination Survey, in collaboration with Schools could be well worthwhile.

Conclusions

In summary, our conclusions were:

- The College can be confident that the Careers Advisory Service is meeting an important need through work of high quality delivered by committed staff within a strongly caring ethos focused on treating students as individual, autonomous learners and decision-makers. This is evidenced by strongly positive feedback from its users.
- The Service is modern and forward-looking in its engagement with the strategic issues around employability and the role of third level education in relation to skills.
- The Service is strongly committed to the importance of feedback from users and now has an opportunity to develop a more formative approach that will help it to generate and evaluate ideas for possible new developments and to direct the use of finite resources for maximum impact, as well as to provide evidence of quality assurance for existing provision.
- Within the scope of this review, and in the absence of detailed and standardised comparative data beyond the benchmarking work undertaken specifically for the Review, it was only possible for the Reviewers to form some tentative views about the adequacy of the overall level of resourcing available to the Service compared with other such services in Ireland, in the UK, and internationally. The benchmarking data assembled for the Self Assessment Document speaks for itself but is expensive in staff time and effort to maintain or to replicate for all but a small number of institutions. Further benchmarking on specific aspects of resourcing or service provision could be helpful in informing future developments. A possible approach to international comparability could be to extend such benchmarking to include institutions overseas, particularly in N America.
- More could be done to meet the aspirations of Careers Advisory Service staff with regard to training and professional development by clarifying and promoting the availability of appropriate training and its accessibility by staff.
- The main weakness in the staffing resources of the Service currently, compared with similar services elsewhere, is the relatively undeveloped specialist expertise, leadership and professionalism in certain key functions such as information management and IT development, the management of relations with employers, and the provision of longitudinal data on graduate career progression and labour market information.
- The current accommodation of the Service is not fit for purpose and there is much support for the physical co-location of student service activities, although an off-campus location would be strongly opposed by students.
- Career development and employability for all students, and its inter-relationship with learning and teaching, is becoming increasingly critical strategically for the College and relations between the Careers Advisory Service and the new Schools need to be strengthened. Greater transparency about the basis for these relationships and about their importance will be needed but excessively detailed, over specified service level agreements are likely to be counter-productive. Care should also be taken that arguments in favour of the co-location of student services, and the operation of the new resource allocation model, do not undermine such relationships.
- TCD has an internationally recognized reputation for academic and research excellence, and offers a distinctive student experience that produces graduates who are perceived as highly qualified and gifted academically, self-confident, assertive and articulate. To capitalise on the potential career advantages of this distinctiveness requires careers education, information and guidance that is customised, contextualised and responsive to need. The criticality of employability and of career success to the College's market

position also requires direct ownership of the means to deliver careers education, information and guidance. We would therefore caution against any further movement in the direction of outsourcing beyond the Service's current approach to collaboration with other local third level institutions through specific partnerships for specific projects. There are concerns, however, that TCD graduates are insufficiently prepared – at least in the short term – to meet the needs of employers and to compete in the contemporary employment market.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Feedback, monitoring & evaluation	The Service should review its plans for feedback, monitoring and evaluation for the coming 5 years to include less detailed summative satisfaction rates and more formative feedback, through such mechanisms as focus groups, further “suggestions” mechanisms and consultative user groups designed to generate, evaluate and market test ideas for possible new developments and to inform the targeting of resources for maximum impact.
Recommendation 2: Survey of non-users	The Service should undertake a survey of non-users designed to increase understanding of the needs of non-users and the reasons for non-usage.
Recommendation 3: Diagnosis & assessment of needs	The Service should further develop a more formalised process for diagnosis and assessment of the needs of individual users, or triage, designed to ensure that resources – especially of individual, in-depth one-to-one guidance – are targeted where they can have maximum impact.
Recommendation 4: Personal Development Programmes	The Service should review its current model for the delivery of Personal Development Programmes and assess the feasibility of greater customisation and flexibility in the modes of delivery in order to match students’ degree disciplines, background experience and interests, and individual learning styles. This should include assessing the feasibility of offering bespoke programmes for different Schools, paid for by Schools as a separate, value-added enhancement including full administrative support and training elements delivered by employers (see Appendix).
Recommendation 5: Recognition of Personal Development Programmes	The College should assess the relative merits of compulsion <i>versus</i> election, and the potential of incentivisation through credits, certificates or other awards to increase the recognition of the value of PDP programmes both by students and by employers.
Recommendation 6: Staff training & professional development	The College should consider whether more can be done to increase awareness by staff of the availability of appropriate training and professional development, and of the extent of the support they can expect to enable them to access it and benefit from it.
Recommendation 7: Development of key roles	Steps should be taken to develop further the specialist expertise, leadership and professionalism of staff in key roles within the Service in relation (a) to information management and IT development, (b) to the management of relations with employers and the delivery of services to recruiters, and (c) to the provision of labour market information including data on career destinations and progression.
Recommendation 8: Data on the medium and long term career progression of graduates	The College should address the shortage of data about the medium and long term career progression of its graduates, and the potential for closer collaboration between the Career Advisory Service, the College alumni office and the Schools in this area. This could include the development by the Service in conjunction with the College alumni office of a regular, large scale longitudinal survey, 3-5 years after graduation. Initially this should be funded centrally on a pump-priming basis but the pilot should include an assessment of the feasibility of offering such surveys to individual Schools on a rolling basis as a separately chargeable, value added enhancement to the core Service provision to Schools (see Appendix).
Recommendation 9: Premises	The College should address the inadequacies of the current premises provided for the Service.
Recommendation 10: Relationships with Schools	The College and the Service should develop an effective, transparent – but not overly specified – compact between the Service and the new academic Schools within the context of the new resource allocation model (see Appendix) and promoted through a communications exercise aimed at students and at

	Schools. This compact should include a formal linkage between the Service and the new group of Directors of Teaching and Learning.
Recommendation 11: Institutional commitment	The College should demonstrate its commitment to the strategic importance of employability and career development through a clearer articulation of College policy and student entitlement in respect of support services generally and the Careers Advisory Service in particular.
Recommendation 12: The place of employability in learning & teaching	The College should give a higher priority to employability in terms of learning and teaching strategy, curriculum development and personal tutorial support as well as through the continued provision of specialist, dedicated central services. This should include a commitment to finding ways of increasing the immediate "job readiness" of graduates and their ability to compete in the employment market, and of responding to employers' preference to start the employment relationship at an earlier stage in students' lives at university.

APPENDIX – A POSSIBLE APPROACH TO A MODEL FOR SERVICE SPECIFICATION & FUNDING

At the invitation of the College Secretary the Reviewers offer the following as an illustration of a possible approach to a more rigorous specification for service delivery and funding of the Careers Advisory Service. These ideas represent an evolution of the current situation rather than a departure from it, and would need further refinement and discussion by those more closely involved. They are based on a number of key principles:

- greater transparency about funding and accountability, and about expectations and entitlements as required by the new resource allocation model (ARAM)
- a distinction between core activities (non-optional, funded generically on the basis of entitlement rather than take-up) and non-core activities shown in italics (optional, value added enhancements funded through cost+ charges based on detailed costings and the delivery of specific, measurable outputs)
- proactive marketing and promotion based on selling the benefits rather than the product
- better management of expectations
- the importance of quality assurance and continuous quality improvement

Under How Paid For? we have not made any attempt to quantify the different elements of funding. Any surpluses from cost+ charges could be added to CAS planned reserves to help fund capital expenditure and pump priming for new developments.

BENEFICIARIES	SERVICES PROVIDED	BENEFITS/VALUE ADDED	SERVICE SPECIFICATION	HOW PAID FOR?
Students	Careers educational activities Information, advice & guidance Skills development Work experience	Self awareness raising Opportunity awareness Employment marketability Employability	Service level statement covering – entitlement & eligibility	– Employability investment by all Schools – Employability fund element of student non-tuition fee
Alumni	Information, advice & guidance <i>Peer-to-peer mentoring</i> <i>Psychometric assessment</i>	Transitional support into world of work Career orientation after time out to travel, etc Career development support Support for career change Promotion & development of College-alumni relationships	– expectations & outcomes – professional values, techniques, processes	– Employability investment by all Schools – Alumni relations investment by College & Schools – <i>Cost+ charges to individual alumni</i>
Schools	Core provision of careers educational activities Feedback of subject level First Destination data <i>Customised PDP programmes incl full admin support package + employer input</i> <i>Longitudinal destination/progression surveys</i> <i>Employability input to training/CPD for academic staff & personal tutors</i> <i>Input to curriculum development & course design</i>	Shared responsibility for employability agenda Reduced admin burden for academics Enhanced marketability & competitiveness of Schools Enhanced relevance & marketability of degree programmes Brokerage to increase School contacts with employers	Standard template for subject level First Destination data Prospectus for core educational activities offered to Schools incl quantified entitlement to CAS staff time input <i>Marketing campaign for non-core services</i>	– Employability investment by all Schools – <i>Cost+ charges to individual Schools</i>

College	Contribution to understanding of demand for graduates Contribution to College marketing & promotion Contribution to promotion & development of College-alumni relations	Better informed strategic direction/leadership Maintenance & strengthening of College reputation and competitive position Enhanced relations with alumni and employers	Review of College needs leading to identification of most effective contributions & processes	College investment in strategic development, marketing, alumni relations
Employers	General employer liaison & relationship building Non-targeted publicity for vacancies & other opportunities Standard level of information provision to students <i>Targeted publicity/promotion for vacancies & other opportunities</i> <i>On campus events</i> <i>Fairs</i> <i>Advertising to students</i>	Profile raising Contact with students earlier in their courses Meeting short-term and long-term manpower requirements Assisting building of strategic relationships between employers & universities De-mystifying third level education for SMEs Support for employer objectives re <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - diversity & equal opportunities - raising workforce skill levels - business development 	Marketing & promotion campaign by CAS covering <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - expectations & outcomes - processes & procedures - professional values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employability investment by College & Schools - <i>Cost+ charges to individual employers</i>