Quality Review
of the
Department of
Manufacturing and Operations Engineering

The University of Limerick (UL), through its membership of the Irish Universities Quality Board (IUQB), follows an established process for Quality Assurance (QA) and Quality Improvement (QI). This involves a seven-year cycle during which all Departments work to improve the quality of their programmes and services and undergo a rigorous self evaluation prior to a quality review by internationally recognised experts in the field.

The process itself has evolved as a result of the Universities Act, 1997 in which the responsibility for QA/QI was placed directly with the individual universities. The UL Quality Support Unit (QSU) web site provides an elaboration of this process and the state of progress.

The broader picture is described in the publication *A Framework for Quality in Irish Universities* which can be downloaded from the IUQB web site: *http://www.iuqb.ie/*

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Quality Review Group	Appendix A
UL-QSU Web Site	www.quality.ul.ie
Web Site	http://www.moe.ul.ie
IUQB Web Site	www.iuqb.ie
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Table of Contents

1.0 Background

1.1 Legislative Framework

The University of Limerick, in common with all the universities in the Republic of Ireland, falls within the Universities Act, 1997. This Act specifies the responsibilities of universities in Ireland for Quality Improvement and Quality Assurance. Section 12 stipulates that, 'The objects of a university shall include - … to promote the highest standards in, and quality of, teaching and research'.

Section 35 (1) of the Act further requires that each university Governing Authority 'shall…require the university to establish procedures for quality assurance aimed at improving the quality of education and related services provided by the university'. The Act provides a framework for the universities to develop their quality processes. Section 35 requires each university to review the quality of the work of all faculty, academic Departments and service (including administrative) Departments on a ten-year cycle. In particular 'The procedures shall include … assessment by those, including students, availing of the teaching, research and other services provided by the university'.

Although each university is free to develop its own procedures in fulfilling its obligations under the Act, close co-operation has been achieved through the co-ordinating role of the Irish Universities Association Quality Committee, (IUAQC). Accordingly, the universities have developed a framework comprising a set of common principles and operating guidelines for quality improvement and quality assurance. These principles and guidelines have been integrated into each of the universities procedures, which ensure coherence through the university system, while maintaining the autonomy of each university and its individual institutional culture.

More detail is available at http://www2.ul.ie/pdf/585256597.doc and *www.iuqb.ie*

1.2 The Irish Universities Quality Board

The Governing Authorities of the seven Irish universities established the Irish Universities Quality Board (IUQB) in February 2003. This board comprises representatives of the Conference of Heads of Irish Universities (CHIU) and a number of external members.

The aims of the IUQB are:
- To increase the level of inter-university cooperation in developing Quality Assurance processes
- To represent the Irish universities nationally and internationally on issues relating to quality assurance and quality improvement
- To articulate, on behalf of the Governing Authorities of the universities, the resource implications of recommendations for quality improvement.

The IUQB subsumed the roles and functions formerly carried out by the IUQSC (Irish Universities Quality Steering Committee). More detail is available at *www.iuqb.ie*

1.3 The Quality Review Process

The common framework adopted by the Irish universities for their Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement systems consistent with both the legislative requirement of the Universities Act 1997 and international practice comprise the following stages:

1. Preparation of a self-assessment report by the unit taking into account feedback from students and customers.

2. Quality (Peer) Review involving external experts, both nationally and internationally, who have visited the Department, met the students and studied the Self Assessment.

3. Quality Review Report, made publicly available by the Governing Authority of the university, incorporating the reactions and quality improvement plans of the Division and University.

4. Continuing improvement through implementation within the resources available to the university.

More detail is available at *www.quality.ul.ie*

1.4 Management of Quality in the University

The Vice President Academic and Registrar has overall responsibility for implementation of Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement policy and implementation at the University of Limerick. Implementation is carried out by the Director of Quality. The planned schedule of Quality Review of both academic and support departments was commenced in the year 2000, with the first full cycle of units within the University being reviewed within a seven-year cycle.

Academic departments are reviewed against international standards as described in the document "A Guide to the Quality Review Process for Academic Departments", which is available on the UL website at:
http://www2.ul.ie/web/WWW/Services/Quality/Documents_to_Download .

In 2006, the university decided to implement a bespoke quality management system (QMS) and developed a suitable template with the assistance of external quality experts. This system is described in the document "Quality Management Systems – Standard Framework for Support Departments".

More detail is available at
http://www2.ul.ie/web/WWW/Services/Quality/Academic_Departments/Quality_Review_Process

2.0   The Manufacturing and Operations Engineering Department

2.1   Introduction

The Department of Manufacturing & Operations Engineering (M&OE) was formed in 1994 following the division of the Department of Mechanical & Production Engineering into the Department of Mechanical & Aeronautical Engineering and the Department of Manufacturing & Operations Engineering. Two new programmes had been developed, one in aeronautical engineering and one in manufacturing technology. The opportunity to consolidate the university position in these areas was identified, and the two new departments were formed to support and develop these initiatives.

2.2   Mission Statement

The department is under transition as the decline in student numbers taking our manufacturing taught programmes has required us to develop new undergraduate academic programmes. When complete we will revise our mission statement.

The aim of the Department of M&OE is to provide support to the Irish economy by educating engineers and technology graduates in disciplines they will find both challenging and interesting. A key focus of government policy is to move Ireland to a 'knowledge economy' to ensure the continued prosperity of the people of this country.

The Irish manufacturing industry is being challenged to compete for business in an open economy. Our competitive advantage in low-skilled manufacture has been removed with the advent of more efficient supply chains and world trade agreements. We cannot compete in this space. The opportunities for highly skilled engineers and technology graduates are being provided by new developments in the product design, bio-medical and management sectors. Companies need to grow and evolve if they are to remain successful, and they will need highly skilled graduates to achieve these goals.

Graduates with skills and knowledge in manufacturing process technology, product design and operations management are ideally placed to meet these challenges. Recent surveys on the destination of graduates from Irish third-level institutions show that our graduates achieve good employment, are paid competitive salaries and enjoy good career prospects.

2.3   Department Staff

The department comprises 36 members of staff. This includes 19 faculty members and 4.5 teaching assistants, 8.5 technical officers, one senior laboratory attendant and two administrators.

2.4   Department Programmes

The department's programmes in engineering and technology provide graduates with opportunities to establish interesting, challenging and rewarding careers. The programmes delivered by the department, either wholly or in conjunction with other departments or universities. The department also offers masters and doctoral programmes by research and thesis. See also www.moe.ul.ie

3.0   The Follow-up Process

The Quality Review process occurs on an approximately seven-year cycle at the University of Limerick. An average of five academic Departments are reviewed annually. Once the Peer Review Group report is finalised, the Department concerned immediately sets about planning its response to the issues raised therein.

The self-evaluation process is intended to be a reflective exercise in which a Department/Division should identify many of its strengths and weaknesses and develop plans to strengthen and grow as appropriate. Quite often, the Peer Review Group (PRG) will reinforce these issues and may identify areas of concern that were overlooked. In many cases, the PRG will also highlight the strengths of the Department and encourage faculty and staff to take advantage of these.

After the department and the university have been given time to respond to the issues raised; the Peer Review Group's report will be made available to the wider community through the University's web site. Normally, the report is available within the University less than four weeks after the PRG visit. Responses and plans for action are incorporated into the report and are subject to the approval of the Deans' Council.

Presentation to the University's Governing Authority usually follows within six months of the PRG visit. The Governing Authority will publish the Peer Review report, including reactions and plans, immediately following approval.

It is expected that a review of progress in implementing recommendations and investigating issues raised would occur quarterly for the two years following the Peer Review Visit. Progress Reports will be published as deemed appropriate.

Date	Action
Dec 2009	Manufacturing and Operations Engineering department is issued with Peer Review Group report and required to prepare reactions and plans for Quality Improvement as appropriate. The report is circulated to all members of Management Committee for comment.
Mar 2010[1]	Reactions and plans, from all levels, incorporated into the document. Quality Improvement Action Plan developed and circulated to Deans' Council. Head of Division presents an overview of key issues from Quality Review Report to the Deans' Council. PRG Report with Responses and Quality Improvement Action Plan are tabled at Executive Committee meeting for discussion.
Dec 2010	PRG Report, incorporating reactions, is presented to UL Governing Authority for approval for publication.

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[1] Department response delayed by industrial action.

4.0   Preliminary Comments of the Peer Review Group (PRG)

The PRG appreciated the department's thorough preparation for the quality review and also the comprehensive SAR which greatly facilitated the task of the peers. The frank and open engagement with members of the department during meetings was welcomed. Faculty members and members of technical staff were found to be enthusiastic and this enthusiasm was also commented upon during discussions with students.

The department's eight undergraduate and three postgraduate programmes in engineering and technology provide students with opportunities to establish interesting, challenging and rewarding careers.

Changes in recent years have resulted in a situation where the title of the department does not accurately reflect its main thrust or adequately match its mission. A change of title and revision of the mission is urgently required.

It was noted that the department had developed programmes and staff expertise in three different but related areas: teacher training, engineering and product design. To maximise education and research opportunities as well as introducing efficiency savings the department needs to consider strategies to integrate more closely these three areas of activity.

The BTech (Education) in Materials and Construction Technology, to which the department of M&OE makes a substantial teaching contribution, appears to be owned by the department of Education & Professional Studies and the PRG detected some discomfort with the arrangements for managing this programme.

Although all members of the department are research-active, this activity is not appropriately spread and the department would benefit greatly from the appointment of senior personnel, preferably at professorial level, to lead research.

The Quality Improvement Plan presented by the department is a good start but the lack of timelines and budgetary considerations indicates that there is room for further development.

5.0   The Report of the Peer Review Group

5.1   Mission

Commendations
The PRG commends the following:

5.1.1   The recognition by the department that its currently used mission and name no longer accurately reflect the activities of the department.

5.1.2   The significant changes which the department has gone through. It now teaches the largest number of undergraduates of any department in the Faculty. More than 50% of these students are pursuing a teaching qualification while another large cohort studies product design.

5.1.3   The growth of product design which is welcomed as an exciting development.

Recommendations

5.1.4   A new mission statement should be developed for the department that sets future direction and reflects the changes that have occurred.

5.1.5   As part of this mission the department should consider taking over responsibility and ownership of the teacher training programmes. This would more accurately reflect the actual situation that has emerged.

Response of Departmental Quality Team: > The department is committed to working with the education department to develop a sustainable structure that ensures the quality of the initial teacher education programmes (B. Tech. (Education) in Materials and Construction Technology and B. Tech. (Education) in Materials and Engineering Technology)

5.1.6   · In order to address the change recommended in 5.1.5 successfully, it is important that a conscious decision be made about the importance, or otherwise, of teacher training to the department.

Response of Departmental Quality Team: > The treatment, delivery, and development of the teacher education programmes are considered important activities within the department.

5.1.7   Reflecting the new mission, an appropriate name must be found for the department. This must set a direction that provides all staff and students with a sense of team membership and more adequately describes the department to external stakeholders.

Response of Departmental Quality Team: > The department is active in developing a new and appropriate identity.

5.0   The Report of the Peer Review Group

5.2   Design and Content of Curriculum

Commendations

The PRG commends the following:

5.2.1   In the sense that the curriculum describes the student experience as a whole, the excellent environment provided by the University. This includes an attractive campus which offers an admirable range of facilities and opportunities for culture, sport and learning.

5.2.2   The cooperative placement system which is a significant additional benefit to the curriculum experience for students, reinforcing the link between theory and practice.

5.2.3   The department rising to the challenge of reviewing its provision and developing new programmes which recruit and offer a positive contribution to students, the university portfolio and the national economy.

Recommendations

5.2.4   The department must improve coherence by simplifying to three curriculum strands: manufacturing technology, product design and teacher training in technology. Each should be led by one programme director.

Response of Departmental Quality Team: > The department is committed to identifying appropriate curriculum strands, however this may be limited by the cross curriculum overlap

5.2.5   The manufacturing technology strand would improve recruitment and coherence by adopting a common first and second year and specialisation in subsequent years.

Response of Departmental Quality Team: > This recommendation is seen as an advantageous move and one that the department will develop

5.2.6   The development of the two strands of initial teacher education is hampered by the lack of departmental ownership. Now is the time to develop this provision into one programme with an appropriate title and specialist strands around a clear common design core.

Response of Departmental Quality Team: > The department will continue to work closely with the Education and Professional Studies Department to ensure the development and quality of the initial teacher education programmes

5.2.7   Staff should be encouraged to publish on the basis of their curriculum development and pedagogy initiatives as well as in their subject areas. There are a number of good developments which are not being promulgated as well as they might, either within the department, for example in departmental staff teaching seminars, or to the wider educational community.

Response of Departmental Quality Team: > Members of the Technology Education Research group have published a number of peer-refereed papers on these topics in recent months. The department will continue to encourage further development in this area

5.2.8   External examiners need greater exposure to programmes and students/staff if they are to be able to give useful feedback on the performance and development of curriculum.

Response of Departmental Quality Team: > The department will support external examiners in achieving the full potential of the review process

5.2.9   Programmes within the department would benefit from a set of clear core modules over the whole programme, which actively seek to link elements from other modules. A logical core is the activity of designing, whether in product or engineering subjects.

Response of Departmental Quality Team: > This the department feels is not possible across the three strands of the department. This is because the Technology Teaching programmes use a concurrent model for delivery of the courses. This mitigates against developing core modules across three strands.

5.2.10   The department should review the methods used to gain feedback from students and the integration of such feedback into curriculum development. Current methods, centred largely on questionnaire techniques, are failing to engage students in the development process. More direct methods would encourage engagement and convince students that their feedback matters.

Response of Departmental Quality Team: > The department has introduced some new measures to achieve this. Course leaders meet with class reps in week 4 to get feedback. The department will continue to develop ways of obtaining meaningful feedback from students.

5.3   Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Commendations

The PRG commends the following:

5.3.1	The development and growth of programmes in Product Design and Technology and in Technology Education. These programmes now attract the majority of students in the department and provide a strong basis for its future shape and focus.
5.3.2	The quality of teaching and learning which results in graduates who readily find employment in industry and education. Staff teaching and learning capability is maintained though, for example, the high level of staff participation in Centre for Teaching and Learning workshops, educational research and University seed funded education programmes. Relevance of programmes is maintained through a high level of interaction with industry and education sectors.
5.3.3	The use of a variety of pedagogical approaches appropriate to module learning objectives. Of particular note is the development of project based learning approaches on the Product Design and Technology programme supported by investment in studio spaces and facilities.
5.3.4	The introduction of learner support programmes by the Centre for Teaching and Learning and by the department. These are well attended by students and are making a significant impact on performance in areas where students are experiencing difficulties.
5.3.5	Good use of a range of formative and summative assessment methods.

Recommendations

5.3.6   A formal review of the overall undergraduate degree portfolio should be undertaken. This should address subject area focus, revised programme portfolio and the development of a common programme structure or framework to support all degree programmes. As a part of this review, consideration should be given to an engineering focussed product design programme. Input from industry and education stakeholders, through an advisory group, should be included as a part of this process.

Response of Departmental Quality Team: > The department is committed to developing the core curriculum strands with a view to exploring potential programme opportunities

5.3.7   Explore the use of open ended/project based pedagogical approaches across all departmental programmes and implement a related staff development programme.

Response of Departmental Quality Team: > These methods are widely used across the Teacher Education and Product Design programmes.

5.3.8   Create a strategy for the development of postgraduate instructional and CPD programmes.

5.3.9   Establish a process for coordinating assessment submission deadlines across each programme, communicating these to students within the 1st week of each semester.

Response of Departmental Quality Team: > As far as is possible, assessment deadlines align generally across the programmes. It is the practice within the department to provide students with all submission deadlines within the 1st week of term.

5.3.10   Develop a process for providing students with timely assessment feedback and establish standards for level of feedback and timescales.

Response of Departmental Quality Team: > Course leaders will continue to work with module lecturers to ensure timely and standardised feedback to students.

5.3.11   Review the management of the undergraduate programme portfolio. This review should consider the role of programme or theme directors, coordination and development of teaching and assessment practice and the relationship with other Faculties (in particular Education and Health Sciences) and departments.

Response of Departmental Quality Team: > The Department is committed to exploring the recommendation of appointing programme directors

5.4   Faculty and Support Staff

Commendations

The PRG commends the following:

5.4.1   The active approach to learning via studio/laboratory and workshop work promoted by the majority of staff.

5.4.2   The high proportion of staff entered for teaching excellence awards and involved in innovative teaching development.

5.4.3   The effective university systems to support staff in relation to teaching.

5.4.4   The very positive management by staff of a considerable transition over the last five years.

Recommendations

5.4.5   The process of staff probation needs to promote effective development in teaching and research by reducing the average teaching load in the first year to enable more reflective analysis on teaching and time for learning research skills.

5.4.6   There is a perception that research output is more heavily rated than teaching achievement in relation to promotion. The University must reward excellence in teaching, providing this is supported by appropriate publication.

5.4.7   A more structured continual staff development process is required to ensure that all staff achieve appropriate standards of teaching and learning.

5.4.8   The current financial climate appears to have caused considerable confusion and anxiety in relation to staffing; both recruitment and promotion systems. This will need to be clarified soon if staff morale is to be maintained.

5.5 Facilities and Learning Resources

Commendations

The PRG commends the following:

5.5.1	The development of well equipped design studio facilities to meet the needs of the Product Design and Technology programme. The facilities meet the existing needs of the programme and have sufficient capacity to address current peak demand. Ongoing investment in appropriate software and modelling/prototyping hardware ensures that student needs are met.
5.5.2	The comprehensively stocked library with a clear mechanism for ensuring that texts and journals necessary to support teaching and research programmes are available. The department is allocated an annual budget and fully utilises this.
5.5.3	The well equipped traditional engineering workshop facilities which provide support for educational and engineering programmes. The facilities are tailored to the needs of the programmes.
5.5.4	The high quality teaching rooms and campus facilities.

Recommendations

5.5.5   Develop a departmental space strategy that addresses future studio, workshop, teaching, research and staff needs. This should include consideration of collocation of studio/workshop and staff space. The strategy should be used as a part of Faculty and University strategic planning.

Response of Departmental Quality Team: > It is department policy to reduce when possible the spread of department offices and laboratories across the campus, it is also the aim of course directors to change some modules from the current mode of teaching labs to studio based learning. Both of these policies/aims are contingent on suitable space being made available to the department/faculty. This is a very long term strategy.

5.5.6   A facilities plan should be developed to identify future equipment, hardware and software needs. This should inform future spend and fund raising activities.

Response of Departmental Quality Team: > An informal facilities plan is in existence it is informed by members of staff attending exhibitions and trade shows, web research and visits to other facilities. Purchase decisions for any equipment are based on improving the undergraduate teaching/learning experience and or facilitating research. Purchases are dictated by available funding.

5.5.7   Review student access to IT facilities (hardware and software) and address restrictions caused by scheduled classes.

Response of Departmental Quality Team: > With increased laptop ownership among students, ready access to wireless network connectivity and increased availability of student versions of software, access to the PC labs outside scheduled hours is becoming less of an issue.

5.5.8   Establish departmental resources to support open ended project based activity e.g. information room, product/component library.

Response of Departmental Quality Team: > There is a range of relevant product and component catalogues available to the students, these are located SR2-058.

5.5.9   Increase internal and external visibility of cross departmental teaching and research based activity through standing exhibitions, poster displays and other relevant media.

Response of Departmental Quality Team: > There are a number of initiatives already in place to achieve this. For example, Final Year Project displays are high-profile events that attract large numbers of visitors, both internally and externally. In addition, standing displays of student work have been run over the summer in open areas. The Product Design showcase has consistently attracted widespread University and Media attention. Another initiative is the continuing development of web presences for research groups such as the TERG.

5.6 Student Guidance and Support

Commendations

The PRG commends the following:

5.6.1	The University-wide structures for student pastoral and academic support which are excellent and are enhanced by the rich provision of student sporting, cultural and recreational opportunities.
5.6.2	The student recruitment programme, including Open Days and summer sampler programmes which are well conceived, well organised and also present a welcoming and engaging experience to new and potential students.
5.6.3	The department being highly aware of the importance of the staff-student relationship. Particularly commendable are the roles of technical staff, teaching assistants and faculty in the academic and pastoral support of students.
5.6.4	The provision of academic support centres which is especially constructive and helpful for student progress.
5.6.5	The integration of Career Guidance with course programmes through the Cooperative Education and Teaching Practice modules which is an excellent practice.

Recommendations

5.6.6   The department should give consideration to exploring ways of becoming more proactive in identifying early behaviour patterns indicative of student difficulty.

> Response of Departmental Quality Team: > The department ensures that first year students are assigned to an academic adviser who is involved in teaching these students and who has a strong affinity with the student's course. First year students are actively encouraged to meet with their academic adviser.

5.6.7   The department needs to develop strategies to reduce the "drop out" rate including working with 2nd level, to minimise turbulence during transition to the new environment of 3rd level.

> Response of Departmental Quality Team: > Attrition is not a significant problem within the Product Design and Education programmes. A number of actions are in place to help reduce the drop out rate within engineering. For example 1. Scheduling tutorials and labs of year one students together to help develop a programme identity and a collaborative network. 2. Organising company visits to ensure students have a clear context for the learning activities.

5.6.8   Consider reviewing the role of the advisor so that early indications of instability in student progress may be identified and responded to.

> Response of Departmental Quality Team: > It is department policy for all Faculty to partake in the advisor programme. This is a University wide initiative and not necessary to duplicate at department level.
> The department also supports the introduction of the 'first seven weeks programme' at the University which is designed to ensure the successful early adjustment of new students to life as a higher education student.

5.6.9   Consider giving periodic and routine informal reminders to students, not only regarding academic pitfalls as is currently the practice, but also regarding the range of pastoral supports available.

> Response of Departmental Quality Team: > Students are well informed of the range of pastoral supports provided by the University through the Student Affairs Division of the University.

5.6.10   Consider ways of acquiring decisive influence in the appointment and induction of Teaching Practice tutors.

> Response of Departmental Quality Team: > The Course Directors will continue to work with the education department and the cooperative education office to ensure the quality of teaching practice supervision

5.7   Research Activity

Commendations
The PRG commends the following:

5.7.1   The pockets of research excellence in the department which are exemplified by the number of research grants awarded. The total grants awarded in 2008 and 2009 amounted to over 2MEuros with 6 grants of over 100KEuros.

5.7.2   The University's structure for Research Groups, Centres and Institutes which is well developed. The department leverages these effectively, for example the Faculty level Enterprise Research Centre (ERC).

5.7.3   The encouragement and support for staff to gain higher degrees as evidenced by the fact that a number of staff have gained PhDs in the last few years.

Recommendations

5.7.4   Develop a strategy for research across the department to include identifying new areas for emerging research activities.

Response of Departmental Quality Team: > The department is committed to developing core research groups with the remit to identify new research activities

5.7.5   Make better use of the University support mechanisms available (e.g. Mentoring Scheme and seed-corn funding) to support underdeveloped areas of research within the department.

5.7.6   Develop a formal system where more than one supervisor is allocated to the supervision team to enable inexperienced supervisors to gain valuable experience and also for students to gain another perspective.

Response of Departmental Quality Team: > This has been common practice for a number of years in the department.

5.7.7   Consider producing an annual research report for both internal and external purposes to highlight the successes of research activities.

5.7.8   To enable the department to develop a research culture, consider planning a programme of regular research seminars for both staff and research students to present their work to their peers.

5.8   Quality Management

Commendations

The PRG commends the following:

5.8.1	The departmental management structure with clear allocation of responsibilities and a strong operational culture.
5.8.2	The alignment of the department with the Faculty and University through faculty participation on committees.
5.8.3	The effective use of external accreditation; from Engineers Ireland for Chartered Engineer and the Teaching Council for Technology Teacher.
5.8.4	Department monthly meetings which are effective and are well attended by department staff.
5.8.5	The platform for department development and improvement provided by the SWOT analysis carried out in April 2009.

Recommendations

5.8.6   The department needs a clear strategic plan identifying expected outcomes, actions, owners and timelines. A similar rigour needs to be applied to all decision making.

Response of Departmental Quality Team: > The department is establishing management groups to address this issue.

5.8.7   Research outcomes such as publications, funding awards etc. should be celebrated and communicated as a means of developing cross-departmental pride and encouraging further engagement in research.

Response of Departmental Quality Team: > The establishment of defined research groups within the department will facilitates achieving the research agenda

5.8.8   Develop a mechanism that limits the large teaching load on new members of faculty so that they can embark on research.

Response of Departmental Quality Team: > The department is committed to facilitating research activities. This is dependent on the financial limitations

5.8.9   An ongoing management training programme should be provided for department Heads and other staff with management responsibility on a university-wide basis.

5.8.10   The department should review the departmental management structure and establish a management group. Consideration should be given to creating posts such as teaching and learning coordinator, research coordinator etc.

Response of Departmental Quality Team: > The management groups mentioned in 5.8.6 will address this issue.

5.8.11   Mission meetings and operational or information meetings should be kept separate to increase effectiveness.

5.9   Quality Improvement Plan

Commendations

The PRG commends the following:

5.9.1	The drawing up of an outline Quality Improvement Plan which identifies areas for development.

Recommendations

5.9.2	Develop a strategic management process that includes a rolling departmental strategy.
5.9.3	Develop a comprehensive Quality Improvement Plan to include recommendations from this report and cluster related activities. This should include prioritisation, timelines, milestones and review mechanisms.
5.9.4	Add a risk analysis to the plan.
5.9.5	Set up an advisory panel including key external stakeholders.

Appendices

A   Membership of the Peer Review Group:

Dr David Whan   (Chair), Quality Consultant, UK.

Professor Hefin Rowlands   Director of Research & Enterprise, Research &
Enterprise Department, University of Wales, Newport

Dr Howard Denton   Department of Design and Technology,
Loughborough University, Loughborough, UK.

Dr Bill Ion   Director DMEM, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow,
UK.

Mr Tom Foley   Principal, St Brendan's Community School, Birr,
Co. Offaly, Ireland

Dr Natalie Nic an Ghaill   PRG Recording Secretary, Quality Support Unit,
University of Limerick, Limerick, Ireland.

Mr Frank Turpin   Education Consultant, Dublin

B   Membership of the MOE Quality Team:

Dr Cathal Heavey   Head of Department, Operations Management

Dr Pat Phelan   Associate Registrar (former Head of Dept)

Dr Thomas Waldmann   Lecturer – Industrial Psychology

Mr Vincent Warfield   Chief Technical Officer

Ms Muireann McMahon   Lecturer – Design for Responsibility, Product Design &
Contemporary Design Culture

Dr Niall Seery   Lecturer – Engineering Design Graphics & Technology

Dr Peter Tiernan   Lecturer – Manufacturing Processes & Automation

C   Contact

The Peer Review Group were given the opportunity over three days to talk to the Manufacturing and Operations Engineering Quality Team both formally and informally. Meetings with staff, postgraduate & undergraduate students and others were scheduled as group sessions. The Review Group was given the opportunity to meet all Manufacturing and Operations Engineering staff during a visit to the facilities of the department and this was most helpful.

All the meetings provided extremely useful additional information to support the SAR.

Quality Review, Department of Manufacturing and Operations Engineering, University of Limerick.

END of Report

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