



**UNIVERSITY of LIMERICK**

OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

## **2018 Quality Reviews**

### **Reviewers' Feedback Summary Report**



**Quality Support Unit**  
January 2019

## BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The [Quality Review Process](#) at the University of Limerick is one of the University's cornerstone quality assurance mechanisms. Cycle 3 quality reviews commenced in 2018. The cyclical review schedule, which is available [here](#), incorporates faculties, research institutes, academic and support units and affiliate units. Tailored quality review guidelines are compiled for each stream of reviews and are available [here](#).

Four reviews were held in 2018: Centre for Teaching and Learning (March), UL Student Life/Postgraduate Students' Union (combined panel) (October) and UniJobs (November). As part of our ongoing quality assurance activities, the Quality Support Unit (QSU) conducted a post-review survey with the three quality review groups (QRGs). A total of 16 (7 national and 9 international) reviewers were surveyed, of which 11 responded, giving an overall response rate of 69%. This brief report outlines the key survey findings and the proposed actions to address issues identified.

## QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

### 1. Please indicate how you found the following:

	Very Poor	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Very Good	
1) Communication by the QSU prior to the review	0	0	0	0	11 (100%)	11 responses
2) Quality of documentation provided by the QSU in preparation for the review	0	0	0	0	11 (100%)	11 responses
3) Overview of the process provided by the QSU	0	0	0	0	11 (100%)	11 responses
4) Quality of SAR and appendices provided by the department under review	0	0	0	1 (9%)	10 (91%)	11 responses
5) Timing of documentation sent to reviewers in advance of the review	0	0	0	0	11 (100%)	11 responses
6) Meet-and-greet session on Monday evening	0	0	0	1 (9%)	10 (91%)	11 responses

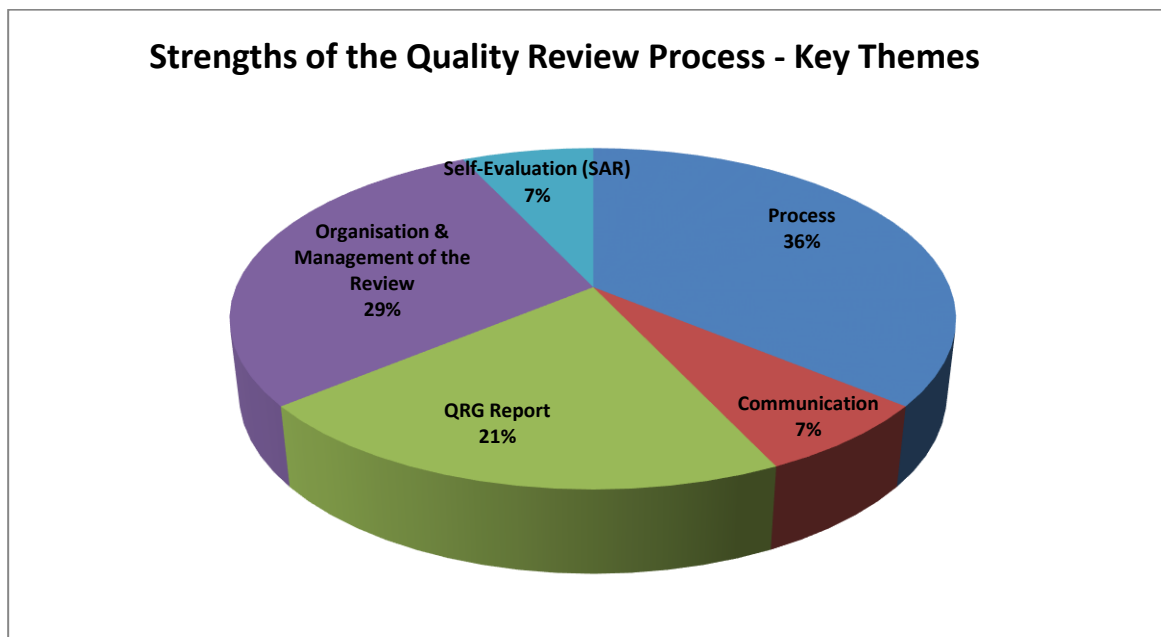
### 2. Please indicate how you found the following:

	Very Poor	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Very Good	
1) The review schedule	0	0	0	2 (18%)	9 (82%)	11 responses
2) Meetings with department staff	0	0	0	1 (12.5%)	7 (87.5%)	8 responses
3) Meetings with stakeholders	0	0	0	0	8 (100%)	8 responses
4) Meetings with senior management	0	0	1 (12.5%)	2 (25%)	5 (62.5%)	8 responses
5) On-site review facilities	0	0	0	2 (18%)	9 (82%)	11 responses
6) Catering	0	0	0	2 (18%)	9 (82%)	11 responses
7) Hotel accommodation	0	0	0	0	11 (100%)	11 responses
8) Taxi transfers	0	0	0	0	11 (100%)	11 responses

## QUALITATIVE RESULTS

Respondents were asked two open-ended questions on the overall quality review process: 1) *What are the strengths of our quality review process?* and 2) *How could we improve the quality review process?* A summary of the findings and representative reviewer comments are given below.

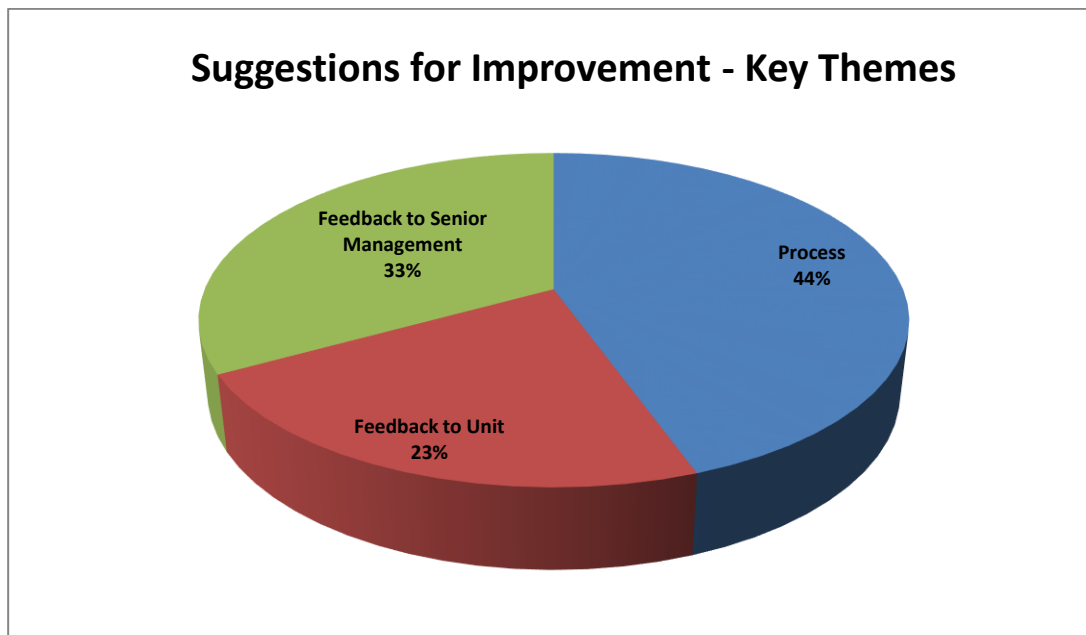
### **Question 1: What are the strengths of our quality review process?**



### **Sample Qualitative Comments:**

- This a very well designed process and I particularly value the principle of completing the report before departure - compared with many other QA processes which involve extensive redrafting for some days/weeks after the review.
- The self review process was robust and comprehensive. The organisation of the process and the information provided (including additional information when requested) was very professional. Writing the recommendations and commendations during the visit and reading these to the area is a good practice. All stakeholders were very engaged in the process and offered open and honest feedback.
- Writing the report on site as a team, again using a well-structured approach and with time to read and refine the document, is efficient and designed to enable discussion and clarification while the QRG is together as a group.
- Detailed design, comprehensively documented. - Formality, with roles and responsibilities clearly defined. University commitment at senior level, led by VPAASE and President's office. Length of process (Quality Team assembly to implementation review) and extent of staff involvement facilitates permanent effects. Exceptional quality of support for Review Team from QSU.
- Good Communication Clear, Simple and Easy to Follow Process Provides Immediate Feedback to Department The process was marked by the following: -Empathy -Caring -Organization -Problem Solving -Understanding -Detail Orientation.
- Projecting the first draft onto a screen, enabling the whole team to evaluate, discuss and refine each commendation and recommendation.
- The fact that the Department does a deep dive on themselves and reflect on both their strengths and weaknesses
- The underlying strength is the quality of the management of the process by the QSU. Nothing is left to chance. Excellent documentation and guidance are provided at all stages of the process.
- The Quality Support Unit at the University of Limerick were phenomenal to work alongside. Not only are they helping to improve teaching, learning and university operations, but they do it with professionalism, kindness, organization, caring and understanding.

**Question 2: How could we improve the quality review process?**

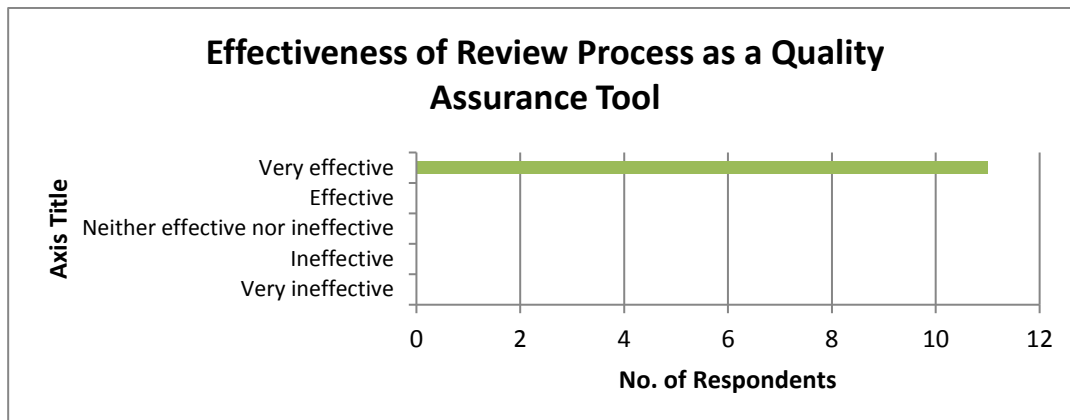


**Sample Qualitative Comments:**

- The process is very good but sometimes it would be helpful to have a session with relevant senior management to discuss issues of strategic support for the unit under review. In the current case that couldn't really happen because the relevant role was vacant
- I found the recommendations read-out to department artificial. I wouldn't have minded to also give the justifications for the recommendations.
- Sometimes I wonder if it would be better to have the student stakeholders' meeting on the second day, though they are of course the primary concern of the university. The contribution of employers often provides rich insights which might be relevant in further discussions with the QRG.
- The chair deviated significantly from the process, thereby creating a number of problems.
- The intensity of the review visit can lead to issues being missed by the Review Team, and can also result in less than full understanding of the recommendations on the part of the Unit under review. The process would benefit from a discussion of draft recommendations with the Unit's senior management. Whether the benefit would outweigh the disadvantage of extending the Review Team visit would need to be considered.
- Provide a brief one-on-one check-in with the review team to determine if there are any challenges, concerns or issues that need to be addressed on-the-spot to improve the review process.
- Underlining the importance of sticking to what is in place. Unfortunately, during the review in question, there was considerable deviation from the process.

## OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE QUALITY REVIEW PROCESS

Respondents were asked one final question: *As a quality assurance tool, how effective did you find the review process?* One hundred percent of respondents (i.e. 11) answered this question and all considered the review process to be a 'very effective' quality assurance tool.



## QSU PROCESS ENHANCEMENTS ON FOOT OF REVIEWER FEEDBACK

### 1. Process:

- a. **Briefing for review chairs:** When a chair is new to the role or, in the case of a once-off subject-specific chair, hold a separate briefing meeting on the Monday evening, prior to the meet and greet session, to update them on the requirements of the role. Also, send the Chair briefing document to them in advance of the meeting.
- b. **Site visit schedule:** Revise the schedule to facilitate stakeholder meeting with students on Day 2 of visit, after the visit with employers and other stakeholders.

### 2. Feedback to senior management:

- a. Where the Vice President Academic Affairs and Student Engagement (VPAASE) or the Chief Operations Officer/Registrar (COOR) are not available to attend the scheduled feedback meeting, ask them to nominate an individual to attend the meeting in their place.
- b. When time allows, send summary recommendations to the VPAASE/COOR in advance of the feedback meeting with the review team.

### 3. Feedback to unit:

- a. Where the review team feels that reading out the 'justification' for a particular recommendation would provide greater clarity to the unit on that recommendation, make provision for this in the report read-back process.

## TIMEFRAME

The actions outlined above will be incorporated into all future quality reviews, commencing in February 2019.

The Quality Support Unit would like to thank all of the reviewers who took the time to provide such comprehensive feedback.

*Kim O'Mahony*  
*Quality Support Unit*  
*January 2019*