



**University College Dublin**

**Quality Improvement Plan**

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UCD School of Education

July 2020

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## **Contents**

1. Introduction
2. Recommendations for Improvements - Follow-Up Action Taken and/or Planned
3. Prioritised Resource Requirements

## **1. Introduction**

The development of the Quality Improvement Plan was carried out in an inclusive manner by the Head of School and Deputy Head of School, incorporating invited submissions from the Chair of the Research Committee, the Director of Teaching and Learning and Director of Graduate Studies. It was then submitted to the School Executive for approval, prior to circulation to all staff.

The Quality Improvement Plan is a response to the periodic quality review which the UCD School of Education underwent in April 2019, following the submission of a Self-Assessment Report in February 2019. The UCD School of Education was issued with a final Quality Review Report in March 2020 and requested to submit a Quality Improvement Plan. Ordinarily, this would have been developed through a series of meetings of the School Executive and other relevant contributors to the Plan. However, because of the Covid-19 situation, this plan was developed remotely over the course of several weeks. This final QIP has been approved by the School Executive and by staff of the UCD School of Education.

## **2. Recommendations for Improvements – Follow-Up Action Taken and/or Planned**

### **CATEGORY 1:**

Recommendations concerning academic, organisational and other matters which are entirely under the control of the unit

### **Category 1(a) - Recommendations already Implemented**

#### **Recommendation (2.15):**

**Following on from the School's Values Workshop, the RG recommends the School Executive take immediate action to engage with, and listen to, the different perspectives within the School and identify key initiatives/actions that will ensure cohesion and inclusion of these perspectives in implementing the vision for the School.**

#### **Action Taken:**

The UCD School of Education agrees that inclusion and cohesion are cornerstones of any effective organisation. There has always been a focus on cohesion and inclusion within the School. In acknowledgement of the UCD School of Education as an evolving system, with a requisite continuous focus on culture, the School has availed of existing expertise within the School in relation to culture, systemic change management, and organisational development. Two members of staff have been appointed to act as liaisons, one with staff and one with students, in order to foster cohesion and inclusion in implementing a shared vision for the School. In pursuit of this agenda, the Head of School has convened meetings with staff (faculty and administrative) to ensure they feel supported in their role and will continue to follow up with staff regularly and will take account of any issues arising, when engaging in strategic planning for the School over the next few years. The committee structures within the School have been reviewed in order to ensure maximum communication with, and between, all staff. The sabbatical leave policy has also been reviewed and revised to support a collegial and inclusive environment for all colleagues and a schedule for sabbatical leave has been drawn up to include all eligible members of staff.

#### **Recommendation (3.21):**

**The RG recommends the School should consider the creation of a Deputy Head role, with delegated responsibility, in support of the Head of School.**

#### **Action Taken:**

The Head of School appointed a Deputy Head in September 2019 and delegates responsibility to the Deputy Head as appropriate.

**Recommendation (3.22):**

**The RG recommends the School continue to enhance diversity and capacity in the School through developing strategic partnerships with visiting professors, joint appointments, and adjunct appointments.**

**Action Taken:**

The UCD School of Education aims to have a vibrant contribution from adjunct academic staff and scholars on an ongoing basis. To ensure equity and transparency, a policy has been drawn up in relation to the nomination and approval of visiting professorships and adjunct appointments. Nominations will be sought at appropriate times from the academic staff of the School, with all members of staff entitled to nominate a candidate. The list of nominees will be reviewed by the School Executive, with the objective of ensuring diversity and capacity within the School. In situations where the number of nominations exceeds the optimal numbers for adjunct staff, the Head of School will convene an appropriate subgroup of the School Executive to rank the proposed applicants and select those to go forward to the University for evaluation.

**Recommendation (3.26):**

**The RG recommends the School, in consultation with faculty, review the existing workload model to ensure equitable and transparent provision for the allocation of faculty time, taking account of administrative load, teaching demands, including preparation of new courses for the first time, protected research time and professional engagement activities.**

**Action Taken:**

The Head of School and School Executive agree that workload is central to ensuring equitable, transparent and effective allocation of staff time. A Workload Sub-Committee was established by the previous Head of School to review the workload model. This committee consulted with all staff and a revised workload model was developed. This model was implemented for the current academic year (2019-20) and will be regularly reviewed, in consultation with staff. The Head of School consulted with each staff member during April 2020 to discuss a range of issues, including their experiences during the current academic year. Suggestions and comments from those consultations will be taken into account in future planning. It should be noted that these consultations were conducted within the context of the Covid-19 situation and future planning will be impacted by the impact of that situation at School, College and University level. However, the Head of School and School Executive will continue to strive for an equitable and transparent distribution of administrative, teaching and supervision duties, while striving to protect research time and professional engagement activities. A review of the sabbatical leave policy to ensure transparency and fairness formed part of this process. The Head of School has invited colleagues to communicate any issues of concern to him or the Deputy Head of School or via the new staff liaison person. Staff well-being is a priority for School management, especially in the current challenging circumstances arising from Covid 19.

**Recommendation (4.23):**

**The RG recommends a strategy for online/blended learning be developed within the scope of the School's Teaching & Learning/Professional Programme Board, to support a more flexible delivery of new and existing programmes. This should include consideration of the current and projected educational technologist complement and faculty workload.**

**Action Taken:**

Some programmes at the UCD School of Education, such as the Education Leadership programmes, have been delivered very successfully online for the past seven years. In addition, during this current academic year, there has been a reorganisation of the Taught Masters programmes and all the part-time Masters programmes will be delivered in blended format during the academic year, 2020-21. This includes three existing programmes, M Ed, MEd Education Leadership and M Ed Inclusive Education, and a new, innovative programme. M Ed Leadership and Inclusion. This initiative had been undertaken prior to the impact of Covid 19, which necessitated all lectures being delivered online for the last five weeks of Trimester 2 as well as some lectures during Trimester 3. This whole process has been greatly facilitated by the appointment of an Educational Technologist (0.5 post) to the UCD School of Education. The School has also recently been awarded a contract by the National Council for Special Education (NCSE), based on a competitive tender process, for the development of a national online training programmes for Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) in schools. This will involve an expansion of Educational Technologist role within the School.

**Recommendation (as listed in Review Group key findings)**

**The RG recommends the School seek to leverage available institutional data, both qualitative and quantitative, for application to (i) school decision-making processes (ii) student feedback analysis and closing the feedback loop (iii) strategic planning including external benchmarking and KPI tracking. Such data includes, for example, funding, publications, esteem indicators, module feedback and any other standardised information that is provided by the University for these purposes.**

**Action Taken:**

The UCD School of Education accesses expertise from across the University in leveraging inter-institutional and intra-institutional data in order to inform strategic decisions. For example, the previous Head of School organised a presentation at a staff meeting from a relevant expert to analyse data relating to research output, publication and other esteem indicators for UCD School of Education and national and international comparator Schools of Education. The Research Partner for the College of Social Sciences and Law has presented to the Research Committee in relation to enhancing research output and formulating a Research Strategy for the School. At a Curriculum Review Day in December 2019, programme teams reviewed their respective programmes and this included taking cognisance of feedback on modules from students. Such feedback also forms part of the External Examiner process in many instances and examining such feedback is within the remit of the Teaching and Learning Committee.

**Recommendation (4.17):**

**The RG recommends that the School undertake a review of the suite of programmes offered by the School with a view to consolidating where appropriate, reducing the number of individual programmes and programme director roles.**

**Action Taken:**

A full review is being undertaken of all programmes and modules being offered in the School, along with a review of the number and roles of programme directors, with a view to rationalising programme and module offerings. The aim is to ensure quality and synergies across programmes, avoid duplication, and to reach a wider target market, by opening more programmes up to blended offerings, thus facilitating access to international students. This is an ongoing process.

**Recommendation (7.11)**

**The RG recommends that professional staff continue proactive engagement with process improvement opportunities as well as participation in training opportunities provided by central support services, as appropriate.**

**Action Taken:**

UCD School of Education management personnel are in full agreement with this and fully endorse it. Relevant personnel are being facilitated in this regard. This issue was addressed, where applicable, during individual consultations between Head of School and members of the professional staff. Such opportunities are somewhat limited by the fact that most current members of the professional staff are relatively recent appointees and are on temporary contracts.

**Recommendation (8.17):**

**The RG recommends the School leverage opportunities offered by the current period of change in Irish education, to further develop programmes in middle leadership and in upskilling teachers in subjects where shortages exist.**

**Action Taken:**

The School has developed a new Professional Diploma in Middle Leadership, which will be delivered in blended format from September 2020. The School submitted a tender to the Department of Education and Skills to provide a programme for upskilling teachers of Spanish, but the bid was not successful. There is a new Initial Teacher Education programme being proposed within the UCD School of Education. This will be a concurrent model of Teacher Education for post-primary teachers and is being developed in conjunction with the School of Gaeilge and the School of Languages, Linguistics and Culture, and is thus specifically aimed at addressing the shortage of teachers in these areas within the post-primary sector.

**Recommendation (9.9):**

**The RG recommends that the School continue reflecting on its development as a centre of excellence and as a full-service provider across both primary and secondary teacher education, and to continue the work of building links with professional bodies such as the Teaching Council.**

**Action Taken:**

The School is continuing to build its status as a centre of excellence and is engaging with personnel from the UCD School of Education at the National College of Art and Design (NCAD), to explore possible strategic collaborations. All staff of the UCD School of Education have been involved in discussions around opportunities for collaboration with NCAD. Follow-up meetings of both Schools were organised, but due to the Covid-19 situation, have been temporarily put on hold. As soon as it is safe to do so, a meeting of both Schools will be organised and joint collaborative offerings examined. Discussions will also centre on possible joint research collaborations, including joint funding applications. The aim is to build synergies with NCAD, with a view to jointly approaching the Department of Education and Skills to establish a Centre of Excellence, as recommended in the second Sahlberg Report. On the issue of providing Teacher Education across the spectrum of primary and post-primary sectors, the original proposal to develop a Primary Professional Master of Education (Primary PME) programme is not feasible for the UCD School of Education under the current funding model.

**Recommendation (9.10):**

**The RG recommends, to enable forward planning, continued careful monitoring by the School of the external environmental factors key to the School's teaching activities.**

**Action Taken:**

The Head of School and other members of staff have been liaising very closely with the Teaching Council, the National Council for Special Education and the Higher Education Authority (HEA) and have been involved in various consultation groups in relation to addressing the teacher supply issue, reviewing standards for teacher education and incorporating research into Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programmes. There is regular liaison with other ITE providers at Head of School and Programme Director levels. These developments have featured consistently on the agendas of School Executive and School staff meetings. The proposed development of the concurrent model of Teacher Education for post-primary teachers has emerged from consideration of external environmental factors, as has the successful tender to design and deliver a national online training programme for SNAs

**Recommendation (5.13):**

**The RG recommends that postdoctoral fellows participate in School meetings, be on School committees, are informed about and involved with key directions in the School.**

**Action Taken:**

The UCD School of Education welcomes the increased number of Post-Doctoral colleagues on staff and will continue to work towards increasing their engagement with the life and work of the school. The Head of School and the Director of Research have both sought the views and perspectives of current

postdoctoral researchers during the current academic year. These meetings/consultations will be scheduled regularly from this point forward, and the information they provide will inform school policy and practice in relation to the systematic inclusion/induction of postdoctoral researchers into the whole school community. Representatives of the postdoctoral cohort are already members of the Research Committee and they will be invited to attend staff meetings going forward.

**Recommendation (5.16):**

**The RG recommends the School review the implementation of its sabbatical policy and ensure it remains aligned with University policy and continue to support faculty who wish to avail of research sabbatical leave or protected research time.**

**Action Taken:**

The new Sabbatical Policy, which is aligned with UCD policy, is in place and there are currently three members of staff on sabbatical (one is the former Head of School). Two staff members will be facilitated to take research leave every six months going forward. This policy has been agreed with all staff in a collegial and democratic manner.

**Recommendation (7.12):**

The RG recommends that the School engage with and develop further interaction with UCD Research.

**Action Taken:**

The School is currently working closely with UCD Research, and with Mr Justin Synnott, Research Partner, in particular, in the preparation of the school's Research Strategy. Mr Synnott has been invited to a number of meetings with UCD School of Education staff.

**Recommendation (5.18):**

**The RG recommends that, as part of the School's research strategy, consideration be given to the forging of international partnerships, with a view to winning funding from European sources, for example, European Research Council, EU H2020 and Horizon Europe. The School should draw on the advice and support of UCD Global and UCD Research in advancing such a strategy.**

**Action Taken:**

There is already very strong collaboration between researchers in the UCD School of Education and international researchers and a number of international funding contracts have already been secured. This will be encouraged and developed further as part of the Research Strategy, being developed by the Research Committee, with view to applying for funding contracts at international level.

**Recommendation (5.17):**

**The RG recommends the School develop a policy on the allocation of research funds for faculty and postdoctoral fellows who have not yet secured research funding. This would facilitate their attendance at international conferences or initiation of their own projects, aligned to their main research interests.**

**Action Taken:**

This issue will be discussed and managed by the Research Committee, which already has plans to make funding available for faculty to attend international conferences and application for such funds will be open to postdoctoral researchers.

**Recommendation (7.13):**

**The RG recommends that the School consult with the Library and University with a view to expanding journal holdings in the School's discipline.**

**Action Taken:**

It was intended to invite UCD Library to the UCD School of Education Research Day to further consolidate relationships. This has been postponed due to the Covid-19 situation and will take place in the next academic year, circumstances permitting.

**Recommendation (4.24):**

**The RG recommends the School continue to engage with Teaching and Learning awards and the supports provided by the University.**

**Action Taken:**

The School has continued to engage with Teaching and Learning awards and supports provided by the University. These areas form a regular discussion item at meetings of the Teaching and Learning Committee and at staff meetings.

**Recommendation (8.16):**

**The RG recommends development of an agreed protocol between the UCD School of Education and partner Schools, outlining the roles and responsibilities of the placement school and placed students, including the number of hours which students teach.**

**Action Taken:**

The UCD School of Education has produced a School Placement Handbook that is underpinned by the Teaching Council's *'Guidelines on School Placement'* This document is shared with all PME students and their placement schools at the start of every academic year. It clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities for the PME students and their placement schools, including specific information about the number of hours that students are required to teach etc. See also - <https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/Publications/Teacher-Education/Documents/SP-Template-Policy-for-Schools.docx>.

**Recommendation (8.18):**

**The RG recommends the School identify opportunities to develop stakeholder engagement, for example, annual fora to share expertise and experiences. This also provides an opportunity to hear feedback from placement Schools as well as monitor impact.**

**Action Taken:**

The School hosts an annual education conference for partner schools. In 2019, the focus was on Junior Cycle reform and, in 2020, the focus was on the teaching of languages. The School will continue to host such events and to maximize opportunities to deepen stakeholder engagement.

**Category 1(b) - Recommendations to be Implemented within One Year**

**Recommendation (2.16):**

**The RG recommends that a communications strategy be developed to reflect the culture of the School and the expectations as a member of faculty and an individual scholar. This would include the articulation of roles and responsibilities. This strategy would ensure all members are aware of key decisions and developments in the School.**

**Action:**

The development and enhancement of communication is an ongoing process within the School and a formal communications strategy, aligning with its other strategies will be articulated. Despite the absence of a formal communication strategy, there is considerable emphasis on communication and all decisions are communicated in a very clear and transparent manner. There is an emphasis on formulating policies and putting systems in place to address issues as they arise. The appointment of a staff liaison person and a student liaison person since September 2020 is an important part of the communication strategy. The Head of School is consulting with all personnel within the School on a regular basis, including postdoctoral colleagues, research project teams and full-time PhD students. The School commits to having a formal communication strategy in place by May 2021.

**Recommendation (3.27):**

**The RG recommends that the School, as a matter of priority, develop a communications policy, linked to the School's communication strategy (see 2.16), outlining agreed standards on the timing and definition of work-related communications.**

**Action:**

In conjunction with the School's communication strategy, a communications policy will be developed, which will outline agreed standards and procedures on the timing and definition of work-related communications, including, but not confined to, issues such as the sending and receipt of work-related emails. This is an issue of particular concern in the current situation arising from Covid 19, where many people are working irregular hours.

**Recommendation (3.19)**

**The RG recommends that the School, as a matter of priority, consult with the College Principal and the University to develop a staffing plan to match the pace of expansion of the School's internal and external portfolios, as well as its teaching and research workload. Such planning would also focus on the distribution of faculty across grades and include Full Professor.**

**Action:**

We agree the importance of having a staffing plan which meets the needs of the School's activities. The UCD School of Education has historically had a high staff/student ratio, relative to other schools in UCD and relative to international norms. To address this issue, a detailed staffing plan was developed in 2017- 2018 in support of strategic initiatives. The UCD School of Education will continue to systematically review its existing staffing structures to identify staffing needs. The Head of School and Deputy Head of School have been consulting with staff, with the College Principal and other University management personnel in reviewing and exploring all strategic development options for the UCD School of Education. These include the development of a staffing plan in keeping with planned developments, taking due cognizance of implications for teaching and research workload. Staffing plans form part of the UCD School of Education Strategic Plan, currently being formulated. The issue of career progression forms part of individual consultations between Head of School and members of faculty. School management are anxious to accelerate the career trajectories of existing members of staff, including up to level of Full Professor.

**Recommendation (4.21)**

**The RG recommends that given the ambitious growth programme envisaged for the School, particularly the PME Primary, the operational implications are thoroughly mapped in advance of full implementation to ensure smooth transition including embedding in School administrative processes.**

**Action:**

While the PME Primary will not be proceeding in the short to medium term, any planned expansion of programmes, such as the proposed expansion of the concurrent model of Initial Teacher Education, will be incorporated into the staff plan referred to above and will be undertaken in consultation with colleagues. It will also form part of the UCD School of Education Strategic Plan 20-24, currently being devised in consultation with College management personnel.

**Recommendation (3.23):**

**The RG recommends as a matter of priority the School ensure all faculty have clear and agreed career trajectories, with appropriate mentoring and support, as well as access to the relevant institutional systems, processes and information.**

**Action:**

The Head of School has discussed career trajectories and the promotions process in the course of individual consultation with faculty and administrative staff, where applicable. School management

will recommend all staff at assistant professor level to avail of the Newly Appointed Assistant Professor Development Programme, where applicable. The Deputy Head of School is a mentor on this programme and has committed to encouraging and assisting colleagues to become involved. The Head of School has also constantly reminded staff in relation to the P4G programme, requesting them to communicate any professional development needs they have. Both the Head of School and the Deputy Head of School will meet with all members of the School commencing January 2021 to agree career trajectories, providing appropriate mentoring and support, and ensuring relevant access to the various institutional systems, processes and information.

**Recommendation (3.24):**

**The RG recommends the School create a mentorship programme for all faculty and allocate a mentor, independent of the immediate reporting line.**

**Action:**

The Head of School and Deputy Head of School will design a mentoring programme for all faculty. This programme will be fully operational by May 2021.

**Recommendation (5.14):**

**The RG recommends the School develop a mentorship programme for early career faculty.**

**Action:**

The mentorship programme referred to above will be particularly targeted at early career faculty and senior faculty members will be designated to act as mentors to more junior members of staff.

**Recommendation (3.25):**

**The RG recommends the School review existing School induction programmes and orientation, given the expected increase in new faculty and staff.**

**Action:**

The Head of School and Deputy Head of School will review existing School induction and orientation procedures, which are quite informal, and commit to the design and operationalisation of a new programme, aligned to the wider College and University programmes, for all faculty and staff by May 2021. This will dovetail with the mentoring programme also under development.

**Recommendation (2.14):**

**The RG recommends that the School include representation for doctoral students and postdoctoral researchers on all School committees and thereby provide opportunities for contribution and leadership.**

**Action:**

There has been involvement of, and participation by, doctoral students and postdoctoral researchers on the Research Committee. On the basis of this recommendation, doctoral students and

postdoctoral researchers will be represented on the Teaching and Learning Committee during the next academic year. It is planned to facilitate the attendance of postdoctoral researchers at staff meetings. It was intended to involve all doctoral students and postdoctoral researchers in a planned Research Day in April 2020, but this had to be deferred due to current circumstances arising from Covid 19. The Head of School has had virtual meetings separately with postdoctoral researchers and the full-time PhD students, in an effort to integrate these cohorts to a greater extent into the life of the School.

**Recommendation (4.18):**

**The RG recommends that the School undertake a review of module assessment practice within each programme, to ensure all modules include formative as well as summative assessment, providing direction and feedback to students about their learning at an early stage of learning in each module.**

**Action:**

A review of module assessment practice was begun by the Teaching and Learning Committee in October 2019. As part of this process, programme directors have agreed to review the suite of assessments their students take, working with module coordinators to make specific changes. Examples of the changes include:

- Staggering student submission dates to avoid assessment ‘pile up’ toward the end of term. An aim of this practice is to embed the idea of writing for learning, whereby students develop their thinking through their writing.
- Lectures and tutorials that help students with their academic writing.
- In 2020/21, the School will continue this process, reviewing changes and applying ‘what works’ to other programmes. While mindful of academic workload, the School will be guided by relevant ‘assessment for learning’ scholarship.

**Recommendation (4.19):**

**The RG recommends that the School undertake a review of programme learning outcomes against objectives, to supplement student feedback about their experience of learning in each module, to ensure that all objectives are met efficiently without unnecessary module duplication, and to provide a holistic overview of the programme’s integration.**

**Action:**

This action overlaps significantly with the one above. In 2019, the Teaching and Learning Committee began a review of programme learning outcomes. Working with relevant staff, external examiner reports, and relevant literature, the members of the committee have:

- Consulted with all academics in the School, via the Curriculum Review day in Dec 2019. At this event, programme directors led conversations on the values, practices, and communities associated with each programme. Programme directors were invited to share strengths and areas for improvement with the School Executive.
- Presented issues arising from the Curriculum Review day to the School Executive (early 2020).

These included: i) staffing our programmes, ii) resourcing our programmes, iii) growing our programmes. While a great deal of the associated work has been led by the programme directors (e.g. rationalizing our masters programmes, changing the structure of the teacher education degrees), the School has engaged with the College on many items (e.g. increasing the number of academic staff in our School).

- The Teaching and Learning Committee will continue this work in the coming 2020/21 academic year. Priorities will include; student voice; in-School communication on Teaching and Learning matters; and a greater emphasis on research-informed action.

**Recommendation (4.20):**

**The RG recommends that the School develop a range of strategies to streamline PME thesis supervision, to reduce the significant workload of supervision on faculty, including alternatives such as internships, as well as more CPD, CV-enhancing options, for those choosing the non-research pathway. The urgency of this recommendation increases with the extra supervision required when the PME Primary is operational.**

**Action:**

The PME Programme Team constantly review all aspects of the PME programme, including the Research Methods and Thesis components. The options in this regard are somewhat constrained by the requirements of the Teaching Council in relation to research on the PME programme, which state that students must engage in some data-gathering, thus being required to complete a form of traditional thesis. The PME Programme Team will always aim to ensure that a rich research experience is offered to students, within the guidelines prescribed by the Teaching Council. The reference above to PME Primary is no longer applicable but will eventually be an issue on the proposed post-primary concurrent ITE programme.

**Recommendation (8.19):**

**The RG recommends that the tension faced by faculty members, in the competing pressure of professional requirements for the training of teachers and the academic role be acknowledged in both workload and contribution to the School's output.**

**Action:**

The Head of School and Deputy Head have been involved in directing professional programmes over many years and are very aware of the challenges involved in directing a professional programme and organising and supervising professional placements, especially with large student numbers. Every effort will be made to take cognizance of such challenges when allocating workload and to ensure the appropriate administrative support is in place. The Head of School and Deputy Head liaise very closely with the PME programme team to support the team.

**Recommendation (5.14):**

**The RG recommends the School develop a mentorship programme for early career faculty.**

**Action:**

As indicated above, the Head of School and Deputy Head of School will design a mentoring programme for all faculty and designate various faculty members to act as mentors to early-career faculty. This programme will be fully operational by May 2021. This mentoring programme will also be applied to postdoctoral researchers. Experienced colleagues will be requested to support one post-doctoral fellow in preparing papers for publication, applying for funding, enriching CVs and job applications.

This initiative is fully supported by the Head of School and the Chair of the Research Committee and will be included in the forthcoming Research Strategy. There is mentoring in place for post-doctoral colleagues, albeit largely on an informal basis, as PIs and Project Leaders provide guidance and support to post-doctoral researchers on their project teams.

**Recommendation (5.15):**

**The RG recommends that the workload allocation model is clear on how research success is to be accommodated.**

**Action:**

The workload model is based on a 40-40-20 allocation, respectively, for Teaching, Research and Administration. Consultations will take place between the Head of School, the School Executive and the Research Committee in relation to the workload allocation model to ensure the fair and equitable distribution of roles and responsibilities in the School and to facilitate and encourage research success. The new sabbatical policy will also be a facilitating factor in this initiative.

**Recommendation (4.22)**

**The RG recommend that development and support opportunities be available to professional staff to facilitate ongoing analysis of aggregated data and how best to integrate and make use of institutional data and feedback sources in the closing out of the student feedback loop.**

**Action:**

There is ongoing monitoring of institutional data to take cognizance of student feedback. It is acknowledged that a more structured system of analyzing aggregated data, implementing changes, where required, and subsequently monitoring the impact of such changes, is required. Such a system will be implemented in the forthcoming academic year.

**Recommendation (7.14):**

**The RG recommends that advisory supports for the School's primarily graduate student cohort is reviewed and a corresponding support strategy developed.**

**Action:**

There is a very strong ethos of student support within the UCD School of Education, which operates largely on an informal basis. This is most evident, for example, in the acknowledgements which students insert when submitting research theses. It would be desirable to articulate this support within a formal Student Support Strategy, with a view to formulating a Student Charter. The appointment of one member of faculty to act as Student Liaison person is the first step in formalizing such a strategy. The Quality Review Committee made specific reference to the excellent support being made available to students on the PME programme who are experiencing difficulties, whether professional, personal or financial. Where appropriate, students are also referred on the UCD Student Advisory Service and, if necessary, to the Student Counselling Service or Student Disability Service.

**Category 1(c) - Recommendations to be Implemented within Five Years****Recommendation (6.19):**

**The RG recommends that the School examine alternative entry routes, funding sources, progression pathways and modes of delivery for the current PME programme that would reduce barriers to entry for students.**

**Action:**

Part of the rationale for the development of a concurrent programme in Post-primary Teacher Education is to widen participation in the teaching profession, especially with regard to students from so-called 'non-traditional' backgrounds. Being an undergraduate, rather than a postgraduate, programme, it will be much more affordable than the current PME option for such students. This is keeping with UCD EDI policy and with the ethos of the UCD School of Education. The first intake on to that programme is planned for September 2022.

In the interim, the School is pursuing the issue of funding for current PME programmes to reduce barriers to entry for students. This includes competitively awarded funding from the Higher Education Authority and the provision of scholarships for fee waivers. The School is very committed to a more inclusive approach to Teacher Education. Entry routes into the profession are the remit of the Teaching Council and the School has little control over this but will continue to make representations to the Council in relation to widening participation in the teaching profession to foster inclusion. Progression pathways are again the remit of the Teaching Council, but the School commits to continued dialogue with the Council on the examination of both alternative routes and progression pathways. The School will also examine modes of delivery for the current PME programme with a view to examining how this can be delivered in a more blended/online manner in order to provide for greater accessibility. It will base its response to the development of a blended/online model on its experience of rolling out a national online training programme for the professional development of Special Needs Assistants, recently awarded to UCD School of Education, by the National Council of Special Education (NCSE). The School commits to having a clearly articulated strategy on this in place within five years.

**Recommendation (6.17):**

The RG recommends the establishment of procedures for measurement and management of research quality by benchmarking with other Schools of Education nationally and internationally.

**Action:**

UCD School of Education is a leader in the field of educational research, both nationally and internationally. Faculty members work regularly and systematically with personnel from other Schools of Education on a variety of research projects. Our external examiners have praised the quality of the School's research and provide School personnel with advice on how to optimise our research dissemination. Over the next two years, the School will seek to formalise these structures by partnering with another school internationally- yet to be identified - to act as a critical friend and to benchmark our successes against international good practice.

**Recommendation (6.20):**

**The RG recommends that the School explore opportunities for collaboration with the UCD School of Psychology in the context of the Professional Doctorate in Educational Psychology.**

**Action:**

There are informal collaborations ongoing with the UCD School of Psychology, with some exchange of lecturers between the two Schools. There has been some collaboration in relation to doctoral thesis supervision. A member of faculty from School of Psychology sits on the Taught Masters Research Ethics Committee in the UCD School of Education. There are plans to explore the establishment of a new concurrent programme, B Ed Education and Psychology, from which graduates would have the equivalent of a Degree in Psychology and thus be eligible to pursue professional postgraduate training in Psychology and also be qualified to teach one subject in post-primary schools. Initial discussions have taken place in relation to this initiative.

**Category 1(d) Recommendations which will not be implemented****Recommendation (3.20):**

**The RG recommends that the College make representation to the University for the strategic appointment of an internationally recognised Professor to the School.**

**Action:**

It is the view of the School Executive, in consultation with the entire staff, that any new appointments would be based on the need to provide additional personnel in key areas and to assist the whole School in the development of its blended/online strategy. Hence, the School would prefer, funding permitting, to appoint two junior members of faculty in areas currently under-resourced in the School, rather than appoint a Full Professor of international standing. This decision has also been taken in the context of the new financial situation the University faces following the Covid-19 crisis. There is also a focus in the School on accelerating the career trajectories of existing members of staff.

## **CATEGORY 2:**

Recommendations concerning shortcomings in services, procedures and facilities which are outside the control of the unit.

### **Category 2(a) Recommendations already implemented**

#### **Recommendation (3.30):**

**With the increase in programme offerings and faculty and staff recruitment putting pressure on space and facilities, the RG recommends that the School, in consultation with the College Principal and University, urgently undertake a space audit on the future requirements for teaching space and facilities.**

#### **Action:**

The UCD School of Education agrees that space which is fit for purpose is an issue of pressing concern for the School as it continues to expand. Some re-organisation of office and research space has been undertaken which meets all current space needs for faculty and research staff. This included the redevelopment of the Head of School office space to a dedicated research space for the expanding post-doctoral cohort. In anticipation of the eventual re-location of the UCD School of Education to the Newman Building, two members of staff (one faculty and one administrative) have been nominated to the Newman Building Users Forum. It is anticipated that these staff members will be centrally involved in discussions re the re-location of the UCD School of Education back to the Newman Building. In the interim, the Head of School has had a number of discussions with the College Principal in relation to the needs of the UCD School of Education with respect to space.

#### **Recommendation (3.29)**

**The RG recommends as a matter of priority the School consult with UCD Estates Services about how office space issues will be addressed for the projected increased number of six faculty and two professional staff.**

#### **Action:**

The projected increased number of staff and related space issue was linked to the proposed Primary PME programme, which will not be proceeding in the short to medium term. Nevertheless, as indicated above, there is a problem with space, which needs to be resolved and the initiatives outlined above are designed to address that issue.

**Recommendation (6.18)**

The RG recommends, to encourage more interactions between faculty and students, the provision of common areas and hangout spaces are included in any planned building design, to enable informal feedback. Such spaces would support responsive teaching and learning to take place outside traditional venues and enhancement of student experience.

**Action:**

This issue will be addressed as part of negotiations about future location of, and space facilities for, the UCD School of Education

**Recommendation (3.31):**

The RG recommends that the School study space, currently set aside for Educational Psychology doctoral programme, be also available to all PhD students.

**Action:**

The study space is not confined to Educational Psychology students and is currently being used predominantly by students on the Graduate Diploma in Inclusive and Special Education, as the teaching resources for that programme have been moved to that space. There is a dedicated room for PhD students, which is currently adequate to meet the demand for study space for these students.

**Recommendation (3.28):**

The RG recommends that the University address promotion opportunities for professional staff, to ensure expertise in the management and administration of the complex and large teaching programmes is maintained and quality ensured.

**Action:**

The School has no jurisdiction here beyond making representations at College and University level for this recommendation which the School fully endorses. However, the School is proactive in funding professional development of professional staff, where appropriate, and is supportive of staff in engaging with initiatives such as the Job Sizing Framework. The fact that a number of professional staff are recently appointed and are on temporary contracts, limits the opportunities for School management to further support professional staff in relation to promotional opportunities, because such opportunities are not available to them.

**Recommendation (6.16):**

To ensure the quality of delivery and smooth operation, the RG recommends that the School take action to ensure that the contractual positions of faculty responsible for major elements of core programme delivery be stabilised.

**Action:**

The School has no jurisdiction here beyond making representations at College and University level for this recommendation which the School fully endorses. The contractual positions of some core

personnel, who do fulfil core roles within the School, are determined by factors totally outside the control of School management.

**CATEGORY 3:**

Recommendations concerning inadequate staffing, and/or facilities which require recurrent or capital funding

**Prioritised Resource Requirements**

**Appropriate fit-for purpose space.**

It is essential that the UCD School of Education has appropriate space that is fit for purpose. The School is currently based in the Roebuck Offices, located at the edge of the main Belfield campus. Concerns were raised by the RG in respect of the current facilities being fit for purpose for the delivery of the current Professional Master of Education (PME) as well as proposed new programmes. While the School space has been refurbished to a high standard, from the School's own budget, the current office space is too small to accommodate the projected number of new faculty and staff to be recruited. There is currently no place where people can mix in a more informal way apart from the kitchen. The need for a communal space becomes even more pressing with the projected growth of faculty, professional staff and postdoctoral researchers and their integration into the School.