



University College Dublin

Quality Improvement Plan

UCD Sutherland School of Law

April 2016

Introduction

In January 2016, the UCD Sutherland School of Law received the Review Group Report arising out of the October 2015 visit. Prior to this visit the School submitted a Self-Assessment Report drawn up by the School's QA/QI Committee and this Committee has been central in devising this Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). The QIP, which makes reference to the numbered recommendations in the Review Report, was circulated to all members of the School in March 2016 and was the subject of a meeting of the School Committee in April 2016 prior to its submission to the Principal of the College of Social Sciences and Law.

Category 1 – Recommendations concerning academic, organisation and other matters which are entirely under the control of the Sutherland School of Law

(a) Recommendations already implemented

***Recommendation 3.8** – The RG recommends that the Dean develops mechanisms to ensure that all staff are involved in consultation in all decision making. It would be good practice to invite administrative and support staff to school meetings, and to be fully integrated in Away Days.*

***Recommendation 8.5** – The School should ensure active involvement of support staff at all grades across the School and its activities....*

Support staff at management grade level (A02 and above) within the School are already substantially involved in School activities (managing marketing, research and CPD events, degree programmes at both undergraduate and graduate level, attending and participating in the Law Programme Board which governs all undergraduate and graduate taught programmes in the School, managing financial, HR and research administration.

A paper on Governance in the School of Law considered by the School Committee in February 2016 approved changes enabling the support staff to nominate a member of staff to be a member of the Executive Committee. The same meeting also approved a change to the structure of the School Committee, which is now to be constituted by all members of staff, both academic and administrative.

***Recommendation 5.14** – In the development of the UG curriculum and, particularly, when undertaking large reviews of programmes or range of courses to be offered, the SSoL should continue to consult with students, ... and appropriate programme support staff. The School should communicate more clearly with all stakeholders when developing the UG curriculum.*

Changes have already been introduced to the design and operation of the Staff-Student Consultative Forum, notably, the introduction of an agenda which includes a standing item on Curriculum Developments. This new approach allows discussion of planned changes and invites feedback/feedforward from undergraduate students. Alongside this change was a decision to ensure the publication of detailed minutes of these meetings in dedicated folder on Blackboard. Programme Support staff are members of the Law Programme Board which is the final decision-making body in relation to programmes in the School. The Library Liaison person is already a member of the School's Teaching and Learning Committee and so will be aware of the outcome of the curriculum review process noted below.

***Recommendation 8.4** – The Library is the recognised laboratory of the Law Student. The continuing quality and professionalism of Library staff in all areas should be embedded at*

College level with more dedicated Library Support Liaison officers; with multi copy holdings and journals; and improved online resources. The SSoL should monitor and ensure maintenance of up-to-date Library holdings to underpin the recommendations in the quality review.

The School of Law and the Library recognise that the current budget for the purchase of new journals and databases is inadequate for the needs of a research university such as UCD. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the Library's book budget has been greatly increased since 2014. Members of staff at the School of Law are now, once again, asked to submit lists of desired texts on an annual basis. The Library now has a policy of buying e-books where possible that allow multiple students to simultaneously access the material. When that is not possible the Library does try to buy two or three copies of works required for larger modules or works that are in high demand.

The system of providing College Liaison Librarian support was introduced in 2012 in order to provide a more effective approach to supporting the needs of all the component parts of UCD. The importance of the Library to the activities of the School of Law has been realised for a considerable period of time – there is a long tradition within the School of appointing a dedicated Library co-ordinator from among its staff. Communications between the School of Law and the Library were greatly improved by these initiatives and it is expected that additional improvements will follow in the future. In particular, the School of Law recognises the Library's enhanced role in providing on-line tutorials, guides and supports for academic teaching and student learning.

Recommendation 8.6 – *The SSoL should engage with relevant units within the University such as ... Human Resources to develop and strengthen the process of career training and mentoring for all staff within the SSoL.*

The School has regular contact with the HR Partner of the College of Social Sciences and Law. Despite the challenges of serving the Schools within the College, the School believes that the HR partner is an invaluable link between UCD HR and the School. School management have built strong relationships with UCD HR Recruitment, Compensation and Benefits and Staff Development, to mention just some of its teams.

(b) Recommendations to be implemented within one year

Recommendation 2.6 – *The School, together with the College, should embark on a new strategic process to identify a set of clear goals and benchmarks (SMART objectives) on how success is to be assessed within the new College. While the SSoL is clearly successful on any number of evaluative standards, the RG also observed that the School was able to articulate relatively few areas where the School was moving toward clear and measurable goals – this will be particularly important around goals for enrolment growth of the Masters level programmes, growth in the CPD context, and the enhancement of the student experience (for example, the proportion of undergraduate students studying abroad).*

As part of the budget process for 2016/17, the School has discussed how it will implement the targets set for it by the College in the five-year budget submitted last year. Although the School had input into the staff planning aspect of the budget, the income targets set in the five-year budget were not discussed within the School. A School meeting has been set aside for discussion on how to realise the targets for the remainder of the budgetary period which will

involve the adoption of targets in areas such as undergraduate enrolment, graduate taught enrolment, graduate research enrolment and CPD. Targets in the area of global engagement will form part of the Global Engagement Strategy which the Review Group recommended should be developed by the School. This process should ensure that each year there will be a series of targets against which School performance may be measured.

School performance will also be measured against the Key Performance Indicators developed by the University Management Team and over the next year there will be discussions within the School on how the School will meet its Key Performance Indicators.

Recommendation 2.7 – *The RG heard clearly and consistently from the SSoL that it is under-resourced in a number of key areas (including academic, administrative and IT resources). While the present situation is the result of the broader economic crisis in the years following 2008-09, it would be desirable for the School to develop a longer term plan to prioritize the areas of the School most in need, and ensure new revenues retained by the School, when available, are invested to the greatest effect in the most transparent fashion possible.*

An extraordinary School meeting in December 2015 discussed staffing development given the positive income projections for the fee income of the School in the current academic year and a number of staff appointments were prioritized. One of these appointments was made in March 2016 and permission has been given for the advertisement of an academic position to be filled for January 2017. The School has also appointed the McCann FitzGerald Chair in International Law and Business who will join the School before September. This appointment, will be funded by the School as from 2020/21 unless an extension of the funding agreement is reached with the sponsor. Planning for new appointments will be dependent on the School meeting the targets set for it in the multiannual budget and a plan will be developed seeking funding for more professorial appointments in line with the target set by the Development Council that the School should have seven professors. Investment in IT resources come from the non-pay budget and this budget is not projected to increase in the remainder of this budgetary period, so additional expenditure in this area will be dependent on the generation of additional income.

Recommendation 2.9 – *The RG recommends that the School actively pursue the development of new revenue generating activities within the mission and mandate of the School, such as CPD programmes, to provide high quality legal education to the profession and to professionals outside law who seek legal expertise (for example, certificates in labour law for HR professionals). The Sutherland School of Law is able to retain 100% of revenues from such programmes, but will need to make significant investments to build capacity for such activities. The RG observes that other Schools within the College (Education, Psychology, etc) already engage in substantial CPD activities, and cooperation within the new College structure may provide synergies in capacity for the Sutherland School of Law.*

As part of the changes in the governance structure of the School, there will be a Deputy Head of School and part of the remit of that position is to produce a report, in association with the Head of Knowledge Exchange and having consulted within the College, on the development of CPD programmes within the School. This report will be discussed within the School in the next academic year and its recommendations implemented in the following academic year. It should be noted that a number of the School's research centres/groups already offer CPD – resources generated from such activities are used to support the research of members of the centre/group.

Recommendation 3.12 – *The RG recommends that a clear budget for staff development is established to encourage all staff to engage regularly in training opportunities.*

Recommendation 8.5 – *A strategy should be developed to further enhance aspects of professional development career development of all staff and administrative and support staff. The School should also seek to engage with and develop further connections with the HR unit as part of this process.*

Following the Review Group Report, the School Manager met with UCD HR's Leadership Manager in February 2016 to explore how to further engage and develop the careers of its support staff in order to formulate a School strategy for support staff development. The following University supports will form the basis of such a strategy:

- Continued encouragement for Law support staff to participate in the Open Courses Programme offered by UCD HR. This programme includes a wide variety of technical and soft skills courses.
- Highlighting of the following UCD schemes already in existence:
 - (i) UCD conference allowance fund, which is available to over 50% of the School's support staff,
 - (ii) UCD Staff Fee Concession policy whereby eligible staff may avail of a fee concession where the programme followed is deemed by the Head of School to be beneficial to the overall context of employment within UCD (these concessions are awarded for registration in UCD only, for a certificate, diploma, undergraduate and graduate degree programmes and are valid for four years).
- To-date non-UCD course fees have only been sponsored by the School for staff PhD fees.

The School will now give consideration to the establishment of a staff development fund which would come from the existing non-pay budget. The Dean has set up a working group to look into this proposal and to draft a set of criteria to be used for approval of such funds. It is hoped that this new staff development strategy could be piloted for two years with the aim of becoming a permanent feature of the non-pay budget.

Recommendation 4.5 – *The RG suggest improving the student feedback mechanisms, in particular to share best practices amongst academic staff. Voluntary on-line course evaluation seems to result in very low rates of feedback. In the areas where efforts have been undertaken to hand out print feedback forms have yielded much higher feedback rates. Other options might include taking class time to collectively fill out on-line evaluation forms. Aggregate data from effective evaluations can provide invaluable data around effectiveness of various pedagogy methods, appropriateness of workload and evaluation methods, and where additional support or professional development for academic staff and tutors might be desirable.*

A first step in this area is to engage with the University's Teaching and Learning Centre to ascertain whether the rates of student feedback in Law are lower than in other schools across the University. This will also allow the School to identify Schools with higher rates of student feedback and to draw on best practices in improving feedback rates. Nevertheless, the Teaching and Learning Committee is committed to developing a culture of feedback among both staff and students. There are several strands to this:

- a. Engagement with the University's Teaching and Learning Centre will be completed by August 2016. The Teaching and Learning Committee will encourage teaching staff to be more proactive in ensuring students complete the online end-of-term evaluations. We will

also explore alternative methods of obtaining feedback from students, including informal feedback, minute papers, focus groups etc.

- b. Beginning in Semester 1 2016-17, we will educate students about the value of providing feedback and course evaluations, and encourage them to engage with the module evaluation process. This will be done through the Staff-Student forum; Blackboard and in-class reminders by module coordinators, other lecturing staff and tutors, and other appropriate means. Most of these reminders will take place from weeks 10-12 in each semester.
- c. A pilot will be conducted in the academic year 2016-17 to assess whether using class time (in lectures or, where applicable, tutorials) for completing the on-line evaluation forms would result in an increase in the response rate and the quality of the feedback obtained. If this pilot proves successful, we will seek to introduce it more widely in 2017-18, making student evaluation and feedback an integral part of end-of-term teaching (e.g. during revision classes).
- d. As part of Curriculum Review and Development, we will consider whether we should introduce skills modules (such as the Quinn School's Effective Learning and Development (SBUS10090) and Personal Development Portfolio (SBUS30070)). Such modules are an opportunity for feedback – in both directions. This review will be completed by December 2016 and the proposed changes will be implemented in 2017.

Recommendation 4.6 – *The RG observes that the Teaching and Learning Committee is primarily tasked with interpreting and applying a range of University set policies, including in relation to “extenuating circumstances” and other student petitions for various kinds of relief and accommodations. These tasks have become increasingly onerous, leaving little if any time for the sharing of best practices and policies. The RG suggests that either a sub-Committee of the Teaching and Learning Committee or a separate body take up the development of policy in relation to pedagogy and assessment, either at the College or School level.*

The School Teaching and Learning Committee does not apply University policy to the cases of individual students. Nevertheless, it is true that discussing the application of such policies has taken up a considerable amount of its time and the Head of Teaching and Learning has two particularly time-consuming functions – chairing the School Plagiarism Committee and advising the Standing Committee of the Programme Board that deals with students' extenuating circumstances. In order to allow the Teaching and Learning Committee to focus on practice and policies, from February 2016, the Head of Teaching and Learning will no longer be a member of either of these Committees.

In addition, the role and responsibilities of the Teaching and Learning Committee will be more clearly defined, and communicated both to members of the Committee and to other staff within School by September 2016. These will be aligned with the terms of reference for the College Teaching and Learning Committee.

Recommendation 4.7 – *At the moment, the School approach to innovations in pedagogy and assessment is to allow those who wish to experiment or adopt new techniques the freedom to do so, but not to impose such innovations on those who wish to continue to teach and assess as they have in the past. Pluralism is indeed a valuable goal which both reflects academic freedom and may enhance student choice. It remains vital, however, to understand the goals of such pluralism – and its limits. Some initiatives, such as the integration of course software (Blackboard, etc) or the move to computer written exams, will require School-wide investments and buy-in.*

The Teaching and Learning Committee will conduct a review of teaching, learning and assessment strategies within the School, beginning with a review of modes of assessment on all core undergraduate modules. The review of Level 1 and 2 modules will be completed by December 2016, with changes agreed with staff in semester 2 2016-17. Reviews of Level 3 and 4 modules will be completed by December 2017.

Alongside this review process, a number of School policies and guides will be developed for implementation of the next two academic years:

- a. For the academic year 2016/17 a revised School policy on plagiarism and, School guidelines for written assessment; and,
- b. For the academic year 2017/18, a School policy on skills development and, a School policy on feedback

A pilot project on blended learning will also be completed by 2018 on LAW40360 (Advanced Issues in European Competition Law).

The Teaching and Learning Committee will also launch a Teaching and Learning seminar series in September 2016. There will be two seminars per semester, dealing with issues relevant to teaching and learning in the School, including the sharing of good practice among colleagues; the development of the aforementioned policies, teaching innovations and challenges. All teaching staff, including tutors and part-time staff, will be invited to attend. We will also invite UCD Teaching and Learning, the UCD Library and other external bodies to contribute to the seminar series. Such sessions should be lecture captured to allow them to become a valuable resource for colleagues who cannot attend the session on the day in question.

Recommendation 4.8 – *The RG suggests the Teaching and Learning Committee, or a new policy-oriented body, develop shared goals in relation to team teaching. At the moment, it remains unclear how great a priority this remains for the School or what mechanisms are in place to further develop these opportunities within available resources.*

Issues around team teaching will be examined by the Teaching and Learning Committee in the course of the Curriculum Review process noted in response to Recommendation 4.5 above with a view to finalizing a School Team Teaching policy by January 2017.

Recommendation 4.9 – *This Committee should also consider the development of shared goals in relation to external examiners. If it is not possible to implement double-blind grading of each significant written assignment, then having external examiners come in as “consultants” to “audit” a sample of assignments in different grading brackets, or to work with graders on validating their grading standards, all provide important forms of oversight and enhancement of academic integrity within available resources.*

Recommendation 5.16 – *Given the reduction of External Examiners consideration needs to be given to alternative or additional benchmarks to ensure the high quality and robustness of the programmes is maintained.*

The Teaching and Learning Committee produced Guidelines for External Examiners in April 2016 to provide a degree of clarity both for Examiners and for teaching and support staff. It will be updated as necessary and communicated to External Examiners twice a year at the start of each semester. As the role of the External Examiner will no longer be as a ‘second-marker’ for pieces of assessment, the Teaching and Learning Committee will also develop a standard protocol for grading to be implemented for the assessments in Semester 2 of the current academic year. This will involve teaching staff preparing and publishing grading criteria for

each element of assessment, which will be internally reviewed and subsequently made available to students – such criteria will acknowledge that the University already has very clear qualitative grading criteria which should inform the assessment process. So additional School criteria will be consistent with University policy in this area. This protocol was discussed within the School in April 2016. It is expected that this protocol will be modified in line with the curriculum review process and the development of a team teaching policy in the School.

Recommendation 4.11 – *The RG recommends that the School take a more proactive approach to cultivating the primacy of training and education in developing excellent teachers. For example, some academic staff observed that there is a cost to staff to take some Teaching and Learning professional development (in the area of Ph.D. supervision etc.). While it may be that the School can or does already defray such costs, there appears to be no communication to academic staff of such support. If such support is not already in place, the RG recommends that it be put in place (at least for pre-tenure academic staff). Consideration should also be given to publicizing to staff the on-line resources and subject specific training provided by UCD Teaching and Learning.*

The Teaching and Learning Committee is committed to developing a culture of professional development in relation to teaching and learning. Already a number of teaching staff have accredited higher education teaching qualifications, are Fellows of the Higher Education Academy, or are currently enrolled on a Research Supervisor Support and Development Programme jointly offered by UCD and TCD. To further enhance professional development in this area:

- A Teaching and Learning Budget will be developed by July 2016.
- Members of staff will be encouraged to undertake teaching and learning certificate courses in UCD.
- The Teaching and Learning Committee will also enhance staff awareness of available training opportunities and resources through the planned teaching and learning seminars (beginning in September 2016) and e-mail updates.

Recommendation 4.12 – *Students indicated the desire to take advantage of a diversity of pedagogy approaches and assessment mechanisms. Some students express a preference for presentations while others wish to have more courses assessed by writing essays. Some students wish to have more group work while others worry about their efforts rising or falling on the basis of others. Academic staff take varying approaches to pedagogy and assessment, but there does not appear to be a focus on measuring and evaluating the success of particular pedagogy or assessment mechanism. The RG recommends that the School undertake a review of assessment outcomes and provide greater transparency about the rationales for varying assessment to students.*

As noted above in response to Recommendation 4.9, the Teaching and Learning Committee will undertake a review of modes of assessment within the School. The first phase of this (relating to Level 1 and 2 modules) will be completed by December 2016. Following this review, assessment across the core undergraduate modules will be altered where necessary to ensure a diversity of modes of assessment. The review of Levels 3 and 4 modules will be completed by December 2017 and similar adjustments will be made where necessary.

In relation to non-core modules (options and electives) at both undergraduate and graduate levels, modes of assessment are clearly stated in the module descriptors, allowing students to

choose those modules best suited to their learning style. Given the changing role of External Examiners (see Recommendation 4.9 above), under the new grading protocol, from May 2016 teaching staff will be more involved in reviewing compliance with grading criteria, assessment activities and outcomes within the School.

Additionally, a 'Student Guide to Teaching and Learning in the Sutherland School of Law' will be produced and made available for students by September 2017. This will be updated as required, and will explain the rationales for different methods of teaching and assessment, as well as School policies and guidance in relation to such issues as exams, essays, group work, plagiarism, citing, the grading process, grade descriptors, presentations, seminars, lectures etc.

Beginning in January 2017, grading criteria for each assessment will also be published for students (see Recommendation 4.9 above), providing greater clarity in relation to assessment and grading.

Recommendation 4.13 – *Students expressed a desire for more transparency and feedback in the learning process. Students taking courses in law and other disciplines observed that the assessment in the other disciplines provided more feedback to students. Students in Law indicated it is not uncommon in the undergraduate lecture based courses simply to have 95% of the assessment based on an exam without feedback explaining the grade received. The RG suggests that the Teaching and Learning Committee, or a new policy oriented body, develop a plan for enhancing transparency about different pedagogy and assessment approaches, and improving levels to feedback to students on their progress – ideally in advance of final examinations.*

This point is dealt with in the responses to Recommendations 4.5, 4.9 and 4.12 (above). Feedback is always available to students who wish to avail of it; for example, students can review exam scripts and meet with examiners to receive individual summative feedback. As part of the review of assessment within the School in 2016, the Teaching and Learning Committee will undertake a feedback audit to identify those formative and summative feedback mechanisms already available to students. We will then be in a position both to communicate this more clearly to students (through the Student Guide and otherwise), and to investigate whether additional forms of feedback are necessary. A teaching and learning seminar in 2017 will be dedicated to this issue.

It should be noted here that upon completion of the formal grading process, all students are invited to review examination scripts and to read the comments of their examiners, and following this, students are entitled to meet with their examiners to discuss their performance. So, it is incorrect to say that students in the School of Law are assessed by way of examination 'without feedback explaining the grade received'. All students who seek such feedback are accommodated.

Recommendation 5.14 – *In the development of the UG curriculum and, particularly, when undertaking large reviews of programmes or range of courses to be offered, the SSoL should continue to consult with ... employers, University support services The School should communicate more clearly with all stakeholders when developing the UG curriculum.*

The Dean and the Head of Teaching and Learning will communicate with a range of employers over the next few months to explain the curriculum review being undertaken within the School and seek their input into this review, addressing in particular how they can be more actively involved in the delivery of the School's objective of delivering education of excellence.

Recommendation 6:13 – *The RG recommends that the School develops a research strategy which is aligned with Objective 4 of the University’s mission (strong interdisciplinary research and education in important areas of national and global need) and with UCD’s strategy for research, innovation and impact. Law has the potential to contribute to any of the six themes in the latter: agri-food, culture, economy and society, energy, environment, ICT and health. An articulation of law’s priorities across these themes would assist in focusing on sources of research income within and beyond UCD, and in fostering interdisciplinary and international initiatives.*

The School of Law welcomes this recommendation which will be addressed alongside the external review of research quality in the School in Recommendation 6:15 (see below). It is hoped that an articulation of the School’s priorities across these themes will assist in focusing on sources of research income within and beyond UCD, and in fostering interdisciplinary and international initiatives. This will undoubtedly be assisted by the recruitment of another part-time temporary Research Manager, which occurred in March 2016. Work has also begun within the School to increase the focus on research. In particular, a Report from the Working Group on Research Facilitation, *Enhancing Research Culture*, has been produced and will form part of the development of a new Research Strategy for the School, which is one of the planned outcomes for next year for the School’s Head of Research.

Recommendation 6:14 – *The RG recommends that the School develops specific criteria aligned with international benchmarks (e.g., UK REF) for assessing research quality. This would assist colleagues in self- evaluation, and in developing annual via appraisal or other career development routes and research goals.*

Recommendation 6:15 – *The RG recommends that the School considers undertaking an external research quality assessment audit.*

The School is committed to undertaking an external research quality audit assessment in the next 12 months largely based on the informative and fruitful assessment it last held 7 years ago and hopes to draw on the recent experience of the School of Archaeology in conducting a similar review. In doing so, the School will appoint two assessors, who may be from the comparators institutions identified by UCD, who have extensive experience of research evaluation. In doing so, it will seek to set down benchmarks for rigorous research and, as on the previous occasion, arrange for the assessors to visit the School in order to conduct a hands on evaluation and to meet staff members individually to discuss their work, thus going further and deeper than a purely paper-based REF exercise. The results of this external research quality audit assessment will form a key input into the new Research Strategy to be developed by the School.

Recommendation 6:16 – *The RG recommends that the School considers mechanisms for including all academic staff in the research groupings. For example, property lawyers can engage with legal history or business law; or a miscellany group could be formed (the Society of Legal Scholars, SLS, subject groups could be used as a model).*

The School has always supported both individual and collaborative research but given the extra visibility, peer support and resources that accrue to the research groupings, will set in place a mechanism for each staff member to be formally identified with a research group, thus ensuring that all staff are supported and included in the research mission of the School. This will be an issue addressed internally and by the external research quality assessment audit as part of the new Research Strategy for the School.

Recommendation 6:17 – *The RG recommends that all staff be encouraged to engage in the SLS especially as the Annual Conference will be hosted by the School during Professor Imelda Maher’s Presidency 2016-17, a major opportunity to showcase the School and University.*

Planning is well under way for the SLS Conference from September 5-8 2017. The School appreciates the endorsement of the assessors for this event. It is a significant occasion for the School as it is the first time in the 115-year history of the Society of Legal Scholars of the UK and Ireland that the annual conference will be held outside of the UK and is an important opportunity for the School to raise its profile with the 500+ academics who will attend, the vast majority of whom will come from outside Ireland. The School is actively considering institutional membership of SLS for the next two years which would allow all members of staff to participate in the SLS Conference.

Recommendation 8.6 – *The SSoL should engage with relevant units within the University such as Teaching and Learning, Human Resources to develop and strengthen the process of career training and mentoring for all staff within the SSoL.*

University strategy sets out that a performance development programme should be put in place. The three Working Groups, set up in 2015 by the President and tasked with making recommendations to UMT with regard to faculty and staff “development, reward and recognition”, have already published their findings with regard to academic staff, with findings for administrative staff to be published shortly. The School will actively progress those of its findings which improve and broaden opportunities for career training and mentoring for all its staff.

The School continues to work collaboratively with UCD Teaching and Learning. The most recent example of the School’s active cooperation with the innovative teaching projects is the approach from Dr David Jennings of UCD Teaching and Learning to the School to explore a broader framework UTL CPD initiative – a self-directed CPD Programme for a Certificate of Learning Enhancement. Discussions on this will commence shortly.

Recommendation 9.8 – *The RG commends the establishment of a Global Engagement Team and its policy to select partners that not only will provide an enhanced student experience but also opportunities to develop high quality research links (e.g. links with leading Chinese Law Schools). However, some clarity about the role and tasks of the Team, and its relationship with University central services such as the International and Marketing Office, would be advisable.*

Recommendation 9.9 – *The School should consider developing a 5-year internationalisation strategic plan (with SMART objectives) and how this informs teaching and research ambitions. Such a plan should address opportunities for staff to engage in joint research collaboration/grant application.*

Recommendation 9.10 – *The School could adopt an Action Plan with specific annual targets to increase the percentage of UG students going abroad.*

A Review of Global Engagement is currently being undertaken within the School which will examine the following issues, amongst others:

- The terms of reference of the Global Engagement Team within the School and its relationship with the structures in the College (in particular the Vice-Principal for Global Engagement) and the wider University (in particular, the International Office and various UCD Offices overseas).

- The mainstreaming of Global Engagement activities in the teaching and research activities of the School;
- The identification of key strategic partners across the world to facilitate student exchanges (undergraduate, graduate and doctoral) and staff exchanges that facilitate teaching and/or research.
- The identification of key partners to facilitate the continuing development of the pre-Masters programme in Law and the Study Abroad programme.

The results of this Review – in the form of a five-year strategic plan, with annual performance indicators – will be presented to the School at the first School Committee meeting of the next academic year and any proposed changes will be implemented as soon as practicable.

(c) Recommendations to be implemented within five years

Recommendation 3.11 – *The RG recommends that relevant opportunities for career development of all staff, including administrative staff, are more clearly articulated and aligned with annual appraisals.*

As noted above – Recommendations 3.12 and 8.5 – over the next year the School will work on a staff development policy and implementation of the agreed policy thereafter should satisfy this recommendation.

Recommendation 3.13 – *The RG recommends that the SSoL develops and establishes research support for academic staff as part of their career development and research goals of the School (see also Section 6).*

As noted above – Recommendations 6.13, 6.14 and 6.15 – the School will over the course of the next academic year develop a new Research Strategy which will address this recommendation.

Recommendation 4.10 – *In addition, consideration should be undertaken by the Committee to developing shared goals in relation to digital legal education, including the development of and policies related to on-line courses, hybrid courses (flipped classrooms, etc.) and the use of course software and other technological enhancements to the teaching, learning and assessment methods. The goal of such planning is not to impose particular approaches on faculty. The commitment of the School to pluralism is positive and to be nurtured.*

As noted in response to Recommendation 4.7 (above), a pilot project on blended learning will be completed by 2018. The Teaching and Learning Committee will develop School guidelines on digital legal education by December 2018. This will be developed in conjunction with the School's Working Group on Technology; through the proposed Teaching and Learning seminars, and in collaboration with UCD Teaching and Learning.

Recommendation 5.15 – *In the development of PGT programmes, it may be useful to have input from appropriate University services such as the Library (as to resource implication), International and Marketing Offices (as to the market and advertising), Careers Office (as to employability prospects); programme support staff.*

As new graduate taught programmes are developed the School will seek the input of those units noted above.

(d) Recommendations which will not be implemented

Recommendation 3.9 – *The RG recommends that the Dean, Office Holders and the School Manager should develop a communication strategy to ensure that all staff are informed of developments and initiatives at College and University levels and any associated implications are clearly explained.*

The School has a communication strategy already in place involving a monthly newsletter from the Dean outlining notable dates in the month to come and reminding colleague of upcoming deadlines. Minutes of the various School meetings are available to all members of staff via Google Drive. There is also a bi-annual report to the School on research publications and engagement in other research activities.

The School will keep this policy under review so as to ensure that all members of staff are fully informed of developments at the School, College and University levels.

Recommendation 9.10 – *The School could adopt an Action Plan with specific annual targets to increase the percentage of UG students going abroad. This could usefully be linked with law firms, as many internationally leading law schools are currently doing. (Moderate financial support for students unable to benefit from the opportunity for financial reasons might be sought from law firms).*

No foundation is given in the RG Report for its final comment that ‘many internationally leading law schools are currently linking’ international exchange opportunities with paid support from domestic law firms. No discussion of this practice occurred during the exit interview with the RG nor is there any substantive detail of it provided in the RG Report. Moreover, it is not something of which the School of Law is aware is a practice in any of our competitor law schools. Nevertheless, the School will investigate this matter more fully as part of the review of Global Engagement noted above.

Category 2 – Recommendations concerning shortcomings, procedures and facilities which are outside the control of the Sutherland School of Law

(a) Recommendations already implemented

(b) Recommendations to be implemented within one year

Recommendation 2.8 – *The RG recommends that the School, in collaboration with the College, engage in longer-term planning to benefit from a multi-year budgeting framework that is being implemented across the University.*

As noted above, the School had limited input into the five-year budget submitted by the College last year and the School has discussed how to meet the income targets set by that budget.

However, this year the School has been more fully involved in the budget planning process. It is anticipated that discussion of how the School will realise its Key Performance Indicators in the years to come will feed into the fee income targets set by the budget.

(c) Recommendations to be implemented within five years

(d) Recommendations which will not be implemented

***Recommendation 3.10** – The RG recommends that the Dean and Director of Research consults the College and University to ensure that the definition of ‘research active’ staff is appropriate for scholarly research in law.*

Whilst such a change would increase the number of research active staff in the School of Law, implementation of this recommendation would involve a change to University policy which is unlikely to be realised. The School will engage with the relevant University officers on this issue.

Category 3 – Recommendations concerning inadequate staffing, and/or facilities which require recurrent or capital funding

(a) Recommendations already implemented

(b) Recommendations to be implemented within one year

(c) Recommendations to be implemented within five years

Recommendation 8.4 – *The Library is the recognised laboratory of the Law Student. The continuing quality and professionalism of Library staff in all areas should be embedded at College level with more dedicated Library Support Liaison officers; with multi copy holdings and journals; and improved online resources. The SSoL should monitor and ensure maintenance of up-to-date Library holdings to underpin the recommendations in the quality review.*

Although it has been noted that our relationship with the Library has improved, the School continues to have on-going concerns about the Library which has consistently been under-resourced within the University. As noted above, the School welcomes the new policy on book purchases, it should be noted that over several years, especially in relation to journals, holding were reduced. Despite the reduction of expenditure on journals, it is next to impossible to order new journals thus jeopardising the School's ability to keep up with new developments. This has had a significant impact on the graduate taught and doctoral programmes in the School. The Library just about meets the needs of teaching at the undergraduate level and even here it should be noted that old stock has not been removed from the shelves – this should be addressed by the Library.

It should also be noted that the Society of Legal Scholars are about to issue its authoritative statement on library holdings. It is essential that if the School is to realise its ambition of being in the top 50 Law Schools in the world according to the QS rankings that we work with the Library to ensure that it not only meets this statement but that our holdings are comparable to those in our comparator universities. This work may require a realignment of the purchasing priorities of the School and there is little doubt that it will also require funding from the University.

(d) Recommendations which will not be implemented

Prioritised resource requirements