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UCC
University College Cork, Ireland
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

Irish Universities Quality Board

Sectoral Project on Teaching and Learning

Interim Report – January 2006

(Drafted by Áine Hyland, UCC. 14th January 2006)

- ***"The challenge for campus leaders now is to make a firmer place for such changes (i.e. changes relating to teaching and learning), to tap into and sustain the groundswell of interest, and give it institutional shape. This is not simply the right thing to do; it's the smart thing. ….the scholarship of teaching and learning brings real benefits for students, signals institutional commitments to learning, helps meet calls for accountability, and provides authentic classroom-based evidence to meet new accreditation standards".***
- *(Lee Shulman in Foreword to Mary Huber and Pat Hutchings The Advancement of Learning: San Francisco, Jossey-Bass, 2005.)*

Background to the IUQB project:

As part of the IUQB Sectoral QA/QI Programme, a proposal was submitted to the HEA in 2003 for funding under the Targeted Initiatives / Strategic Initiatives Fund to support a sectoral initiative on QI in Teaching and Learning. The proposal, which was approved by the HEA and for which funding was provided, reads as follows:

"In the context of quality improvement recommendations in Peer Review Group Reports, and taking account of international practice, this measure is a process to examine developments in universities aimed at improving teaching and learning and to explore possibilities for inter-university co-operation in developing best practice.

In formulating this major objective of this year's initiative, which is to mainstream best practice in the area of "Training and Certification of University Teaching", the IUQB is particularly mindful of the following provision in the Programme for Government which states:

> *"We support efforts to protect and improve the quality of academic teaching and learning at undergraduate level. We will establish a small expert review group to examine the role of funding in supporting excellence in undergraduate programmes and to consider procedures whereby outstanding performance by departments, faculties and institutions can be rewarded".*

There is a strong interest in such an initiative throughout the university sector which would complement the work of the proposed expert review group. It is appropriate that the IUQB should help to drive and co-ordinate this development, given that one of its agreed stated aims is 'to increase the level of inter-university co-operation in developing quality assurance processes'.

Following consultation by IUQB, it was agreed in May 2004 that UCC would lead and co-ordinate this initiative. In its outline document, IUQB had emphasised that *"this should be a collaborative effort involving the appropriate experts in each university – scholars, centres for teaching and learning, departments of education etc."* The IUQB document states that *"it is crucial that scholars should play a leading role in this initiative".*

Representatives of all seven universities met on a number of occasions during the academic year 2004/5, and a background institutional report was prepared by the University of Limerick during that year. Also during 2004/5, staff from Centres and Units for Teaching and Learning in UCD, TCD, NUIM, NUIG, UCC, UL, DCU and the Dublin Institute of Technology worked collaboratively on a publication on Teaching and Learning in the Irish university context – *Emerging Issues in the Practice of University Learning and Teaching,* which was edited by Geraldine O'Neill (UCD), Sarah Moore (UL) and Barry McMullin (DCU) and published in summer 2005. The publication contains 16 articles which are set out in three parts. Part I refers to the *Changing World of Learning and Teaching in Higher Education* and sets a context for the remaining articles in the collection. Part 11 contains articles which relate to *Moving the Focus from Teaching to Learning* and the articles in Part 111 are grouped under the heading *Developing and Growing as a University Teacher. Emerging Issues in the Practice of University Learning and Teaching* should be read in conjunction with this report, as it provides a useful and extended discussion of many of the issues raised here.

In UCC, two collections of articles on Teaching and Learning had also been published and disseminated in the period 2002-2004: *Advancing the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Through a Reflective Portfolio Process* (edited by N. Lyons, Á. Hyland and N. Ryan) was published in autumn 2002, and *University College Cork as a Learning Organisation* (edited by Áine Hyland) was published in 2004. It was clear that there was considerable interest in ensuring and improving quality in teaching and learning in the Irish higher education sector, and that excellence in teaching and learning was high on the agenda of each of the seven universities.

The years 2003/5 saw changes in senior management structures and personnel in a number of universities and for that reason, there was an unavoidable delay in completing and collating the institutional reports in a number of universities. UCD, TCD, UCC, UL, and DCU appointed new Registrars during that period. In the context of university restructuring, the structures and reporting relationships of Centres and Teams for Supporting Teaching and Learning underwent change in some universities and there were a number of new appointments made in Centres and Units for Teaching and Learning. By the beginning of the academic year 2005, the situation had become more stable and it was decided to proceed with drafting the Interim report of the IUQB Sectoral Initiative on Teaching and Learning, and with developing good / best practice guidelines.

Following a meeting of representatives of all seven universities in September 2005, it was agreed that all institutions would write up their institutional reports and by November 2005, these had been completed. Some aspects of these reports were discussed and clarified at a meeting in UL in November 2005, and it was agreed that a first draft of a composite report would be prepared by Áine Hyland, UCC, for

circulation in January 2006. It was recognised that there might still be gaps in the available information and that the initial report might be incomplete but additions, amendments and clarifications could be added following discussion of the draft.

Throughout this draft report, the titles "Teaching and Learning Support" and "Education(al) Development" are used interchangeably. Different universities use the terms "Centre for Teaching and Learning", "Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching", "Teaching Development Centre", "Teaching and Learning Support Staff", and "Educational Developers" to refer to the structures and staff who provide pedagogic support for their teaching colleagues. In the 1980s and early 1990s, the title Teaching Development Officer was generally used internationally to describe a person whose role within higher education was a pedagogic-related one i.e. who supported fellow university staff in developing their teaching skills and pedagogic knowledge. By the late 1990s, such individuals were more often described as being involved in a "Teaching and Learning Centre" or in "Teaching and Learning Support". In the past few years, "Education(al) Developer" is becoming the more often used title in international circles for such individuals[1]. However, this title is not without its problems, as is indicated in a recently published report entitled PROMOTE on alternative ways of fostering educational development in higher education in Scotland, by Jan McArthur et al[2]. The authors suggest that the notion of "development" itself, is always a problematic term. "Whose development" they ask. "*For whom? Whose purposes and directions? ... How, when we are situated in diverse disciplinary communities or practice, do we talk (and how should we talk) about teaching and learning? Whose discourse prevails here, and whose space may be 'colonised' by it".* While this report does not have answers to these questions, the fact that it demonstrates an awareness of the sensitivity of the language or terminology used, is itself important. In the area of "supporting teaching and learning" or "educational development" there are no right answers, and one ventures onto the territory in a spirit of respect for various disciplinary approaches and an openness to learning.

Teaching and Learning in the Universities' Strategic Plans

The Universities Act (1997) defines the object of a university as including the following:

- *To advance knowledge through teaching, scholarly research and scientific investigation*
- *To promote learning in its student body and in society generally*
- *To foster a capacity for independent critical thinking among its students*
- *To educate, train and retrain higher level professional, technical and managerial personnel*
- *To promote the highest standards in, and quality of, teaching and research*
- *To facilitate lifelong learning through the provision of adult and continuing education.*

[1] It may be relevant to note that a majority of the 600 contributors who presented papers at the recent annual conference of the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (in Higher Education) in Vancouver, referred to themselves as Educational Developers.

[2]

Universities are also required to "*establish procedures for quality assurance aimed at improving the quality of education and related services provided by the university".* In addition, the act requires each university to prepare a plan *"which shall set out the aims of the governing authority for the operation and development of the university and its strategy for achieving these aims"* and to submit it to the HEA and the Minister. The strategic plans of all seven universities include a commitment to excellence in teaching and learning. The following extracts, while not purporting to be a comprehensive statement, give a flavour of the commitment of each Irish university to this goal:

University College Dublin's Strategic Development Plan 2005-2008 explicitly recognises that "*the university must be the ideal environment in which to learn, discover, create and innovate. This requires a vibrant, dynamic and engaged academic community and constant attention to the quality of our educational programmes and learning environment. The strategic plan includes a commitment to establishing UCD as a leading international university where*

- *Excellence in teaching and learning is informed and stimulated by excellence in research and scholarship*
- *The quality of teaching and taught programmes is to the highest international standards".*

In 2003, **Trinity College Dublin** produced a Teaching and Learning Strategy, which was adopted by the Board of the University. Among the recommendations of this strategy was the setting up of a Centre for Academic Practice and Student Learning. The objectives of this centre include the following:

- *To ensure that modes of delivery are modified to suit the promotion of active learning*
- *To ensure that modes of assessment are modified to promote and reward active learning*
- *To explore further the benefits of a peer tutoring system*
- *To increase the emphasis on the quality of student learning and enhance students' learning skills and understanding of their own learning potential*
- *To explore ways of improving the learning opportunities for all staff.*

University College Cork's Strategic Development Plan 2000-2005 *Agenda for Excellence* states that "*in order to deliver on the commitment of the University to excellence in teaching, teaching and learning development will form an important part of UCC's overall strategy in the development of academic staff".* The Plan regards teaching as a form of scholarship and recognizes the need for parity of esteem between teaching and discipline-based research. It states:

"*There should be parity of esteem between teaching and discipline-based research, which should be formalised and validated by recognising effective and innovative teaching and learning practices by giving them the same status as research. Research into the teaching and learning process should itself be recognised and rewarded in the same way as all other forms of scholarship. There is a necessity to encourage and support academic staff in the scholarship and practice of effective teaching"*

These commitments are reiterated in the draft Strategic Plan for 2006-2011, which is currently being finalized.

NUI Galway's vision statement succinctly states the institution's main strategic thrust in the period 2003-2008, as follows:

"The National University of Ireland Galway is a student-centred and research-intensive university of international standing with a faculty and staff committed to academic excellence, providing leadership at national, regional and local levels, and with a particular commitment to the Gaeltacht regions and the Irish language community".

NUIG has written two detailed documents outlining themes, aims and specific objectives for this period: (a) The Strategic Plan and (b) the Academic Plan, both of which were developed after significant levels of consultation.

Excellence in teaching and learning is also central to **NUI Maynooth's** Strategic Plan, which is soon to be published. This plan is driven by a single organizational principle – that of the responsive University redefining excellence in diversified higher education. In practice for NUI Maynooth this means:

- *Adjusting the student intake to key national goals*
- *Empowering the post-graduate and research communities*
- *Transforming the student learning environment*
- *Revolutionizing institutional communication and information usage*
- *Energizing staff and institutional development.*

These aims are at the core of the Strategic Planning process of NUIM, which is designed to facilitate the realignment of the student population, the further development of excellence in teaching, learning and research, and the re-invigoration of the organizational, information and management structures.

The mission of the **University of Limerick** is "*to promote and advance learning and knowledge relevant to the needs of Ireland through teaching, research and scholarship in an environment that encourages innovation and upholds the principles of free enquiry and expression".* The University of Limerick is committed to enhancing further the quality of teaching and learning in all its academic programmes. The goals of the university's teaching and learning strategy include the following:

- *To encourage and enable faculty to improve the effectiveness of their teaching*
- *Advancement of knowledge in teaching and learning by initiating and supporting research that will contribute to a deeper understanding of teaching and learning in university contexts*
- *Development of effective personal learning strategies among students.*

Dublin City University is currently finalizing its strategic plan for the period 2006-2009. This plan will provide the overarching strategy for the development and support for Teaching and Learning within DCU. The key themes of the Teaching and Learning Strategic Plan include:

- *Development of a Research-led / Inquiry-based learning culture*
- *Development of Reflective Practice among staff (teaching portfolios) and students (ePortfolios, problem-based learning, student-managed learning etc).*
- *Increased support and development in the area of Teaching Excellence*
- *Additional flexibility and accessibility for all learners*
- *Further provision of mixed mode learning opportunities including wider use of educational technologies.*

Structures for Supporting Teaching and Learning in Irish Universities.

Within the past two decades, various internal structures were put in place by Irish higher education institutions to support teaching and learning. In some institutions, training for staff to update their skills and expertise in teaching was initially regarded as a function of the Training and Development section of the Human Resources Department. In others, as for example in UCC, a dedicated Teaching Development Unit was set up as early as 1984.

By the late 1990s, it was accepted across the university sector, both nationally and internationally, that support for teaching and learning was an academic and scholarly activity and that internal university structures should reflect this. Where there was a lack of connectivity between the structures which purported to provide support for staff involved in teaching and learning, and the academic structures of the university, the courses and support provided for academic staff were likely to lack academic credibility and were at risk of being rejected by academic staff. By the mid 1990s, teaching development units which had focused on providing traditional training courses for university staff began to be replaced by more academic-based structures which recognised teaching as a form of scholarship.

This development was influenced, sometimes explicitly, sometimes implicitly, by the writings of Ernest Boyer, President of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching in the U.S. in the early 1990s. In his book *Scholarship Reconsidered* (1990) Boyer defined teaching in higher education as one of four forms of the scholarship[3] of a university. His writings also emphasised the inextricable link between research and teaching in higher education – a theme which was subsequently developed by eminent U.S. University Presidents and Provosts such as Frank Rhodes, Lee Shulman and Derek Bok[4].

Similar developments also took place on this side of the Atlantic, and by the latter years of the 20th century, EU documents relating to higher education had begun to recognise teaching as a scholarly activity and to focus on the importance of quality teaching and learning in higher education. The Bologna and Bergen agreements on higher education in the EU imply changes in course design and structure in the higher

[3] The four forms of scholarship as articulated by Boyer are (1) the Scholarship of Discovery (2) the Scholarship of Integration (3) the Scholarship of Application and the Scholarship of Teaching. For a further explication and discussion of these four forms of scholarship, see Marian McCarthy and Bettie Higgs' article entitled "The Scholarship of Teaching and its Implications for Practice" in the publication *Emerging Issues in the Practice of University Learning and Teaching.*

[4]

education sector – changes which will require to be supported within and across individual universities in Ireland and the rest of Europe.

The decision of the (Irish) Higher Education Authority to include support for teaching and learning as an area for funding within its programme of targeted initiatives in the late 1990s acted as a catalyst for action in the Irish university sector. The requirement for universities to develop quality assurance measures also contributed to ensuring that quality teaching was high on the universities' agenda. By the early years of the 21st century, all seven universities had either set up or had revitalised existing support centres or units for teaching and learning and each of the universities benefited from grants from the HEA to support this activity – through the Targeted Initiatives scheme or the Training of Trainers scheme or both. The leaders of the new teaching and learning initiatives, units and centres, in almost all Irish universities are academics, who have taught and in many cases continue to teach and carry out research on teaching in higher education. This IUQB Sectoral Project on Teaching and Learning in Higher Education has benefited from the input of these and other scholars, thus delivering on the commitment made by IUQB to the HEA that *"this should be a collaborative effort involving the appropriate experts in each university – scholars, centres for teaching and learning, departments of education etc."* and that scholars would play a leading role in the project.

The HEA Targeted Initiatives scheme (since re-named the Strategic Initiatives scheme) also provided grants for awards for teaching, for research into teaching and for restructuring promotions schemes to give more explicit recognition to teaching, and many universities availed of these grants during the past five years. The HEA Targeted Initiatives scheme required universities to ensure there was an explicit and coherent inter-connection between the various initiatives for supporting, enhancing and rewarding quality in teaching and learning within the university. In recent years applicants for targeted funding were requested to demonstrate the relationship between the University's Strategic Plan and the initiatives being funded.

Different structures have evolved within the seven universities to support Teaching and Learning. Moreover, there are different ways in which coherence and inter-connectivity between initiatives is and can be ensured within and across universities, as will be shown in the next sections.

University College Dublin.
The Centre for Teaching and Learning was set up in UCD in 1997. In 2003, the Centre was established as an academic unit. This was seen as important because of the academic nature of the work of the Centre including research informed teaching and learning programmes and initiatives; postgraduate programmes in learning and teaching; the role of staff in researching and supervising / supporting research in teaching and learning and the emphasis on the scholarship of teaching and learning in higher education. The UCD Centre has a strong research focus and seeks to encourage and facilitate others who wish to conduct research in the area of teaching.

A major restructuring of the university took place in 2005, and this has impacted positively upon the area of teaching and learning. The appointment of Vice-Principals for Teaching and Learning in each College and the establishment of a new Teaching and Learning Board have streamlined the Centre's links with other Colleges. At the

beginning of September 2005, as part of this restructuring, the Centre for Teaching and Learning joined the Adult Education Centre, the Continuing Professional Education Centre and the Education Department to become a School of Education and Lifelong Learning.

The mission of the School of Education and Lifelong Learning is to pursue excellence in educational research, scholarship and creative leadership in learning and teaching at the highest international standards, to support the education of teachers, university staff and other educators, to provide opportunities for professional development, and to facilitate access and participation in learning at all phases of the life-cycle.

Within the School of Education and Lifelong Learning, the Centre for Teaching and Learning has its own distinctive mission. It exists to promote excellence and innovation in teaching in UCD by

- Assisting academic units to foster active, reflective and inclusive student learning by helping academic staff to continually develop and improve their skills and knowledge in the areas of teaching and curriculum development
- Facilitating, creating and providing professional development activities that focus on encouraging and enabling those who teach to become both reflective teachers and reflective practitioners of their subject and discipline
- Promoting reflective practice and scholarly dialogue on teaching and learning within UCD and engaging in the same with colleagues in other third level institutions nationally and internationally
- Promoting, supporting and conducting research into teaching and learning
- Promoting a co-operative and collaborative focus on improving the quality of the learning experience at UCD by fostering effective working relationships between all University staff
- Disseminating information on what constitutes good practice in teaching and curriculum design.

The Centre currently employs 4.5 staff: a Director; a Senior Lecturer in Education Development; a Lecturer in Education Development (half-time); a Senior Executive Assistant and an Executive Assistant.

Trinity College Dublin.
Systematic academic development began in Trinity College in 1995 with the appointment of a Staff Development Manager located in the Staff Office. She was responsible for staff development of both academic and non-academic staff. During the period 1995-2003, the Staff Development Office conducted a comprehensive series of workshops for individuals, Departments, Schools and cross-College professional groups and facilitated a number of strategic planning activities. It also fostered the introduction of Teaching Development Grants and the Provost's Teaching Awards which continue to operate.

In 2003, TCD produced a Teaching and Learning Strategy a key recommendation of which was the creation of the Centre for Academic Practice and Student Learning (CAPSL). This recommendation separated academic and non-academic staff development, with the former becoming the responsibility of the Senior Lecturer's Office while the latter remained with the Staff Office. Under the Plan which was

accepted in 2003, CAPSL will ultimately consist of three sub-units: Academic Development; a Centre for Learning Technology; and Student Learning.

TCD is currently undergoing radical restructuring and it is not yet clear how CAPSL will interact with the new structures or how its funding will be affected by the College's new Resource Allocation Model.

University College Cork.
A Teaching Development Unit was set up in UCC in 1984 and operated successfully for a number of years. The unit reported directly to the Finance Office – it did not have a direct ***academic*** reporting line. The unit was effectively defunct by the mid 1990s and was disbanded a year or so later.

In the year 2000, the newly re-constituted Staff Enhancement and Development Committee of the Academic Council, chaired by Prof. Áine Hyland, Vice-President (Academic), undertook responsibility for Supporting Teaching and Learning within UCC. The SEDC worked closely with the Director of Quality Promotions, Dr. Norma Ryan, who provided advice and support for this initiative. The Director of Quality Promotions is an active member of the SEDC, and the Chair of the SEDC is a member of the Quality Promotions Committee of the University. This internal inter-linking provides a mechanism which ensures that there is congruence between the support provided for teaching and learning, and the needs of teaching staff as identified in Quality Reviews.

One of the responsibilities formally allocated by the Governing Body to the Vice-President (Academic) is Support for Teaching and Learning. A Teaching and Learning Support Team, was set up and a half-time academic co-ordinator, Dr. Bettie Higgs, (a scientist with an academic background in Geology, and a certified member of the UK based Institute for Learning and Teaching - now renamed Higher Education Academy) was appointed. Administrative and secretarial support for Teaching and Learning initiatives, including the administration of the President's awards for teaching scheme, is provided by the Vice-President's Office. The core members of the Teaching and Learning Support Team in 2005/6 are

- Professor Áine Hyland, Vice-President and Professor of Education
- Dr. Bettie Higgs, Academic Co-Ordinator of Teaching and Learning support, whose research interests include Science teaching and learning
- Marian McCarthy, Education Department, whose research interests include Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, Active Learning and Teaching for Understanding
- Dr. Anna Ridgway, Education Department, whose research interests include Student Assessment and Online Learning
- Dr. Grace Neville, French Department, whose research interests include the teaching of literature, especially from an interdisciplinary perspective
- Mary Breen, English Department, whose research interests include course development, outreach teaching and learning and student assessment
- Dr. Ciarán Dawson, An Ghaeilge Labhartha, whose research interests include the application of new technologies to language teaching, and to learning and to teaching generally.

Members of the Teaching and Learning Support team continue to teach in their own departments and work largely on a voluntary basis with the T&L Support Team, providing courses at lunchtimes and Saturdays and responding to queries and requests for support from staff across the university. They come from different disciplinary areas of the university and provide a diversity of teaching and learning expertise.

In addition to the core members of the Teaching and Learning Support Team, other academic members of staff are invited from time to time to contribute to the seminar series and to teaching on the certificated course. Professor John O'Halloran of the Department of Zoology, Ecology and Plant Science, Dr. Declan Kennedy of the Education Department and Dr. Alan Kelly of the Department of Food and Nutritional Sciences are among those who have contributed to the series in recent years. External consultants are also employed from time to time. Dr. Nona Lyons, who is an expert on Portfolios in Teaching has worked with the Teaching and Learning team for a number of years on a consultancy basis as has Cynthia Deane, an expert on curriculum design and student assessment. Staff who receive an award for research on innovative forms of teaching contribute to a seminar series each year in which they present the findings of their research and this approach has proved to be a rich source of discussion.

In addition to the Teaching and Learning Support Team, UCC has a Learning Technologies Unit consisting of three staff who work closely with the Teaching and Learning Support team. This Unit provides staff training on the use of Blackboard. It also provides support for a series of Mobile Classrooms (i.e. wireless laptops which are available in different faculties to support teaching and learning) and is involved in the national initiative on a Digital Learning Repository. Library staff, especially Catherine Sandborn and Margot Conrick, also work closely with the Teaching and Learning Support Team and *inter alia,* provide seminars for teaching staff on Information Literacy

The Vice-President (Academic) directs the activities of the Teaching and Learning Support Team and is Course Director of the Postgraduate Certificate/Postgraduate Diploma / Masters course in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education. As Chair of the Staff Enhancement and Development Committee she works closely with the academic course-co-ordinator, Dr. Higgs, and the Training and Development Unit of the Department of Human Resources in providing a university-wide schedule of training and support courses, seminars and workshops. She also chairs the Steering Committee of the UCC Learning Technologies Unit. To ensure an overall coherence of approach, the Vice-President also oversees the President's Awards scheme for Excellence in Teaching; the Awards scheme for Research on Innovative Forms of Teaching; and played a significant role in reviewing and revising the Senior Lecturer Promotions Scheme in 2002 to ensure that teaching and the scholarship of teaching were explicitly recognised.

National University of Ireland Galway.
The Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CELT) was established in NUIG in October 2002 with the appointment of its first Director, Dr. Iain MacLabhrainn, whose academic background is in Astrophysics (CHECK). Since its inception, CELT has expanded in terms of responsibilities, staffing, space, and resources. It is charged with leading progress on all items related to teaching and learning in the Strategic Plan and in the Academic Plan.

Its fundamental strategy mirrors that of the university's vision statement in that it aims to foster an environment of the highest level of student engagement in the learning process. To achieve this, CELT provides support in learning technologies, audiovisual resources, academic staff development, pedagogic research and professional development.

CELT is not part of any Faculty and operates as an independent service within the administrative structures of the University. The Director of CELT reports directly to the Registrar and Deputy President and works closely in liaison with Deans, Heads of Departments and others.

The structure of CELT has evolved over the three years in which it has been in existence and is currently comprised of the following "sub-sections":

- Audio-visual services and learning technologies
- Academic Staff Development Programmes
- The Community Knowledge Project
- Research and Special Projects.

At present there are 12 staff working in CELT with a small number of vacancies yet to be filled, most notably that of the Assistant Director. With regards to the Academic Staff Development Programme, this is carried out in collaboration with individual staff in the Education Department, but in the short to medium term, formal appointment(s) will be made to underpin these programmes.

National University of Ireland Maynooth.

Support for Teaching and Learning in NUI Maynooth is situated in the Quality Promotion Office. The structure of the QPO allows teaching and learning development, personal and professional development, and quality assurance and quality improvement to be sustained in a mutually supportive way.

The QPO implements an annual programme of training and development events, facilitates departmentally based training and co-operates with other agencies in the University in training provision. The QPO is the Executive Office of the Quality Promotion Unit; given its placement as a sub-committee of Strategy and Policy, the Office, through the Quality Promotion Unit, informs and is influenced by strategic planning and the implementation of policy within the University.

The staff of the QPO consists of xxx (CHECK). The unit reports to xxxxx (CHECK).

University of Limerick.

In the academic year 1999 – 2000, a senior management position, Dean of Teaching and Learning, was established to assume leadership for enhancing the quality of the teaching and learning environment at UL. This post is currently held by Dr. Sarah Moore whose academic background is in Psychology. Since its inception, the unit has carried out an audit of the teaching resource requirements of faculty. A student satisfaction survey was developed and used with current undergraduate students and

alumni. Feedback provided from the alumni survey was shared with faculty. A central teaching and learning research centre has been established. Teaching workshops have been organised to address skills needs in several areas and alumni assessments have been used as a basis for teaching excellence awards. Within the context of teaching innovation, some online modules have been designed, piloted and delivered to students in Business, Education and Electronics.

The Spring Teaching Series is an annual set of integrated events that help faculty to improve and develop their teaching skills. These interactive workshops and presentations are designed to:

- Help faculty to experiment with their repertoire of teaching / presentation techniques
- Promote conversations about teaching issues
- Encourage the sharing of excellent teaching practice
- Enhance competence and confidence in teaching and learning activities
- Highlight innovative approaches to teaching in a University setting.

All of the workshops and seminars are designed to address different dimensions of the teaching and learning development needs expressed by academic faculty. Themes range from learning to teach more effectively in large group settings, to developing innovative approaches to student assessment. Specific workshops offer priority registration to teaching assistants and graduate students, many of whom may be new to teaching, have high teaching loads and who work in specific types of tutorial settings.

The staff of the Office of the Dean of Teaching and Learning consists of the Dean, Dr. Sarah Moore and Dr. Dearbhal Ni Charthaigh, (who has been seconded from the Education and Professional Studies Department to develop and deliver a Graduate Diploma / Masters programme in Academic Practice) and xxxxx (CHECK).

Dublin City University.
In the late 1990s, Dublin City University appointed a Dean of Teaching and Learning. This post was held for a five year period by Dr. Barry McMullin, whose academic background is in Engineering. In 2001, a Learning Innovation Unit was set up and this has recently become part of the Office of the Vice-President for Learning Innovation and Registrar.

The Learning Innovation Unit provides a wide range of pedagogical and educational technology training, development and support to the staff of DCU. In the past, the unit was largely involved in supporting developments in educational technology but it has recently shifted emphasis to more broad based pedagogical leadership and support.

DCU has also developed a President's Awards Scheme which recognises and rewards excellence in teaching and learning. It also operates a Teaching and Learning Innovation scheme, the primary aim of which is to encourage the development of innovative teaching and learning projects across the university. This is achieved by providing funding for small-scale projects (up to €15,000) to devise, pilot or demonstrate innovative teaching strategies and pedagogical techniques. Recipients of

awards are required to disseminate the results of the projects through reports, publications, seminars etc.

The Learning Innovation Unit consists of two project officers and a newly appointed Head of Learning Innovation (August 2005)

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- The Head of Learning Innovation is employed full-time on a two year contract with responsibility for strategic direction of teaching and learning as well as leadership and management of the unit
- 2 project officers are employed on a full-time contracts providing technical and pedagogical support.

Inter-university networks and collaboration, nationally and internationally

In the context of announcing the 2006 Budget, Brian Cowen T.D., Minister for Finance, referred to the government's intention to set up a Strategic Innovation Fund which would be distributed on a competitive basis for third-level initiatives. In December 2005, the Minister for Education, Mary Hanafin T.D. stated that the Fund would have three distinctive strands:

- Reform and Innovation in Third Level
- Creating a World Class Fourth Level Ireland
- Enabling Initiatives.

She added that the Fund will "promote teaching and learning reforms, including enhanced teaching methods and programme re-structuring at third and fourth level, modularisation and e-learning". In expanding on the focus of the Fund, the Minister indicated that "promoting collaboration" would be a "very deliberative strategy" of this initiative.

In recent years, there has been growing collaboration between the seven Irish universities in relation to teaching and learning initiatives. Such collaboration has been encouraged by the availability, through the HEA Strategic Initiatives Fund, of grants for collaborative projects. A variety of different collaborative projects have been funded by the HEA in the past five years, with different universities leading different projects. Among the examples of successful collaborations are (1) the development of a Digital Learning Repository, involving five (?) universities, led by Trinity College Dublin, (2)xxxx (3) xxxxx (4) xxxx *(Add some more collaborative projects here).*

A number of associations and organisations were set up in Ireland within the past five or six years to encourage and support networking between higher education staff involved in or with a special interest in training and development, including educational development. The Irish Universities Training Network was the first of these and was led by staff involved in staff training in the Human Resources and Staff offices of Universities. The All Ireland Society for Higher Education (AISHE) was set up about six years ago and membership of this society is open to all university staff who have an interest in teaching and learning and other aspects of higher

education. The more recently formed Education Developers of Ireland Network (EDIN) is, as its name suggests, a network of education developers in higher education institutions in Ireland. It includes education developers from Institutes of Technology and other higher education institutions a well as from the university sector.

Whereas the Irish Universities Association (formerly CHIU) includes formal networks of senior officers and offices across the seven Irish universities e.g. Presidents/ Provost, Registrars, Finance Officers, VPs and Deans of Research, Directors of Quality Promotion, Admissions Officers, Access Officers etc., no such formal network exists of Education Developers. It can be argued that there would be advantages in setting up a formal network of this kind for educational developers within the Irish university sector. A formal network within the IUA is regarded nationally (for example by the HEA and the DES) as the voice of the university sector on issues relating to the brief of that network. For example, the National Office for Equity of Access set up by the HEA, ensures that there is ongoing consultation with the network of Access officers in relation to any proposed developments or change on access issues. Networks are kept aware on an ongoing basis of national developments within their relevant fields. Finally, networks are supported by the secretariat of the IUA when required, and by the Presidents / Provost and senior officers of the universities – who ensure that collaborative bids or statements issued by relevant networks are congruent with overall university policy and strategy. The chair of existing IUA networks rotates annually in line with the Chairmanship of the IUA.

The setting up of a formal IUA network of educational developers need not result in a discontinuance of EDIN, which might wish to continue to maintain the link between universities and Institutes of Technology and other higher education institutions. In the longer term, the issue of collaboration overall between Universities and Institutes of Technology will have to be addressed at a sectoral level if and when the HEA takes over responsibility for funding all higher education institutions.

As regards ***international networking,*** Irish educational developers, both individually and as a group, keep in touch with international developments in university teaching and learning. The Irish-based AISHE collaborated some years ago with the U.K. organisation, SEDA (Staff Education Development Association), in organising a conference on Teaching and Learning in Higher Education in Dublin and this collaboration continues. Some Irish educational developers are certified members of the UK organisation, Institute of Learning and Leaching (ILT) now renamed the Higher Education Academy. Others have a close relationship with the U.S. based Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching where Dr. Bettie Higgs (UCC) is currently a CASTL scholar (Center for the Advancement of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning). Others are involved with other educational networks in the U.S. UCC is a member of a European Universities Association Network on Quality Culture in Teaching and Learning, focusing specifically on Learning Outcomes. *(Are there any other networks for mention here??)*

Irish education developers have contributed to the international body of knowledge about teaching and learning in higher education by publishing articles in international peer-reviewed journals or contributing chapters to books on the subject. Examples of these include Terry Barrett's chapters on Problem Based Learning in an Open

University publication and in a publication by Tampere University Press (Finland); Geraldine O'Neill's article on PBL in a forthcoming book edited by T. Barrett and and Iain McLabhrainn (NUIG): and articles by Sarah Moore and Geraldine O'Neill in the *Journal of Education and Lifelong Learning* and the *Journal of Further and Higher Education. (More to be included here??)*

Irish educational developers have presented papers and given presentations at various national and international conferences, including the International Conference on Human Resource Management held in UL: the Annual conference of the Association for Medical Education in Europe held in Amsterdam; annual Conferences on Teaching and Learning held in NUI Galway; and the annual conference of the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning held in 2005 in Vancouver, Canada; a conference on the Scholarship of Teaching in University College Cork in May 2004; etc. *(Any more to add??)*

An overview of the types of courses offered by various universities:

All of the universities provide a wide range of courses, seminars and workshops on teaching, learning and assessment as well as supporting formal and informal networks of university staff who regard teaching and learning as a form of enquiry and scholarship, and who, as reflective practitioners, wish to share their reflections with colleagues.

In providing courses, and organising seminars and workshops, some universities distinguish between courses provided for postgraduate students involved in tutoring or laboratory work with undergraduate students, courses for "beginning" staff and courses for experienced staff. Almost all universities offer induction courses in teaching and learning for new staff.

While not precluding the provision of subject or disciplinary-specific courses, the emphasis in recent years in all universities has tended to favour generic-type courses such as the following:

- Small group teaching
- Problem-based learning
- Teaching for Understanding
- Designing courses using a Learning Outcomes approach
- Peer-Evaluation of Teaching
- Training for Mentoring
- Reflecting on and evaluating practice
- Using learning journals
- Developing teaching and/or course portfolios
- Curriculum Design and Planning
- Assessment for Learning
- Using Authentic Forms of Assessment
- Online Teaching and Learning
- Virtual learning environments – developing good pedagogic practice
- Training for Peer-Assisted Learning
- Inviting and responding to student evaluation of teaching

- Learning preferences
- Engaging students in large classes
- Supporting diverse groups of students
- Group dynamics in the classroom
- Active learning methodologies
- How people learn – memory
- Developing Critical Thinking skills among students
- Supporting innovative and creative approaches to teaching
- Exploiting modularization - supporting staff in the provision of inter-disciplinary approaches to teaching.
- Researching one's own teaching and learning.

(Any more to add??)

In addition, some universities subsidise or pay the fees of staff who wish to undertake online and other professional development courses related to teaching and learning. An example of this is the support provided by UCC to enable staff to undertake courses offered on the WIDE platform on aspects of teaching and learning from the Harvard Graduate School of Education. These courses cover aspects of teaching such as Multiple Approaches to Teaching and Learning, Teaching for Understanding, Learning with Technology etc. Apart from the skills and knowledge gained from such courses, it has proved useful for university staff to experience e-learning from a learner's perspective as well as from a teacher's perspective.

A major area of activity of all universities in recent years has been the provision of training, advice and ongoing support to staff who are using virtual learning environments (VLEs) as part of their repertoire of teaching approaches. As well as providing training courses on the technical and pedagogical aspects of e-learning, Centres for Teaching and Learning facilitate regular and ongoing seminars which facilitate staff in sharing "what works" in teaching and learning in VLEs.

Certificated Courses in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education:

The provision of certificated courses for staff on Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, is a relatively new development in Irish higher education. Such courses have been available in U.K universities for many years, and are now mandatory for new university staff. In some U.S. and U.K universities, courses or modules on teaching and learning are made available to postgraduate students as part of their doctoral training. The need for such training for doctoral students in Irish Universities was referred to in the recently published IUQB Good Practice in the Organisation of Ph.D. programmes in Irish Universities., which recommended that

- *When research students are also to be employed as tutors and demonstrators, basic training in appropriate teaching and supervisory skills is provided, with a sufficiency of such training given in advance of the commencement of teaching.*
- *Provided it does not impinge on progress with the PhD project, and with the agreement of the supervisor(s), it is possible for students planning an*

academic career to acquire a formal teaching qualification, such as a certificate in higher education.

Over a decade ago, in a paper delivered at a NUI conference on the Future of University education in Ireland, the author of this report pointed out that while primary and second level teachers were required to undertake training before they were appointed to a teaching position, no such requirement existed for university teachers. She advocated the introduction of a Higher Certificate or Diploma for Teachers in Higher Education, but this proposal was not acted upon at that time[5].

However, the situation has changed in recent years and the availability of HEA Targeted Initiatives funding for pilot schemes to develop such courses gave the required fillip to this proposal. By 2005, academic approval had been sought and obtained in University College Dublin, University College Cork, NUI Galway and the University of Limerick for a certificated course for staff. In UCD, UCC and NUIG, the first group of university academics graduated or will graduate from a certificated course in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education during the current academic year (2005/6).

In **UCD,** the first intake of students on to the Higher Diploma course in University Teaching and Learning was due to complete the course in December 2005. A total of 22 were expected to complete. The UCD course encourages the participant to develop as a self-directed, lifelong learner and promotes reflection on their teaching and student learning. The course consists of four modules, which are progressive but some of them can be taken concurrently. The expected time taken to complete the Higher Diploma on a part-time basis is 2 to 3 years.

In **UCC,** academic approval was sought and obtained in 2003/4 for a Postgraduate Certificate / Diploma / Masters in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education. The Postgraduate Certificate course consists of two 15 credit module and participants who successfully complete the Certificate course may proceed onto the Diploma course which consists of a further two 15 credit modules. Those who successfully complete the Certificate and the Diploma may proceed to the Masters course which is a 60 credit course – 45 credits of which are for a dissertation. While the UCC courses have been approved on a credit accumulation basis, participants are encouraged to complete two modules each year, as it is currently not possible to offer all modules every year. The first intake of UCC staff completed the Postgraduate Certificate course in summer 2005 and 58 received their NUI certification in November 2005. Forty of these have continued on the Postgraduate Diploma course during the current academic year, and are expected to complete the course in summer 2006. The contact sessions for both the Postgraduate Certificate and Diploma courses are scheduled on Saturdays and during weekday lunchtimes to enable as many staff as possible to attend, while also undertaking their own teaching and research duties in the university. A significant amount of self-directed learning is also required and some elements of the course are delivered online. It is anticipated that about 50% of these participants will undertake a Masters course in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education in 2006/7.

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In **NUI Galway,** 30 academic staff are currently enrolled on the course leading to a Postgraduate (Diploma?) in Teaching and Learning. This first group of participants are expected to graduate during the current academic year *(More details required here please!)*

In the **University of Limerick** xxxxx *(more information please about the proposed certificated course).*

Issues relating to Teaching and Learning which were raised in Quality Review reports in various universities:

This section will attempt to give an overall picture across the seven universities of the various issues relating to Teaching and Leaning which are raised in the Quality Reviews of Departments. The following are among the key issues raised by the Peer Review Group reports in recent years. Possible responses to these and other issues will be provided in the later section on "Suggested Good Practice Guidelines":

- A significant issue among academic staff in all universities is the lack of time and opportunity to develop teaching skills. In some universities, staff complain that Teaching and Learning support courses are scheduled during term time when the heavy teaching and administrative load make it difficult if not impossible for academic staff to attend.

- In some multi-campus universities, staff who are located off campus, complain that support courses are usually offered only on the main campus of a university – thus making it very difficult if not impossible for them to avail of such courses.

- Adjunct staff in some universities indicate that no professional development courses are available for them. In some cases, this may be the result of a misunderstanding or of poor communication. In other cases, the support which they require may not be teaching and learning support but may be related to their specific professional needs e.g. library or audio-visual staff who may require specialised support courses. The question of whether such support falls within the remit of the Teaching and Learning Support staff or whether it is a matter for the staff of the Human Resources Department, is sometimes not clear.

- For some courses in some universities, large group lecturing (e.g. lecturing to groups of 300 or 400 students) has been replaced by small group seminars and workshops. In some cases departments have introduced a problem-based or task-based learning approach and staff complain that no training was provided to enable them to cope with this new and different approach.

- Most universities have adopted some form of e-learning, whether Blackboard (UCD, UCC and NUI Galway), or WebCT or the public-domain software, Moodle (DCU and NUI Maynooth), or a combination of some or all of these (TCD). There is widespread welcome for this development and requests from students for an increased use of e-learning opportunities. However, some

comments made by staff or by peer reviewers in relation, for example, to the implications of e-learning for student attendance at lectures, indicate that inadequate consideration has been given in some cases to the pedagogical advantages and disadvantages of e-learning and that in some cases, the approach to the adoption of e-learning has been naïve and underdeveloped.

- Many students complain that the assessment and examination system has not kept pace with curricular and pedagogical developments and that there is a lack of congruence between teaching and learning, and assessment.

- Review teams have pointed out that assessment criteria for some modules are not transparent and are not obviously related to the learning outcomes of the modules.

- Some reviews have suggested that Departmental staff would benefit from advice from Teaching and Learning staff on the balance between "taught delivery" and independent learning on the part of students.

- Many of the reviews, especially in the Arts/Humanities areas where student numbers are high, point to a disjuncture between the lectures and support tutorials, and indicate that there is a lack of training of tutors (most of whom are postgraduate students) in the skills of teaching and learning.

- A Peer Review report of a department in one university suggested that the department should systematically map and critique the diversity of teaching, learning and assessment approaches in its courses, to explore how good practice in one area might be of benefit to another.

(Any more to add??)

Guidelines for Good Practice

(At this stage, these guidelines are simply initial suggestions to set the ball rolling. Comments and views are invited).

- **Consideration should be given to formalising the existing informal inter-university network of Educational Developers. This would best be done through the Irish Universities Association (formerly CHIU) on the same basis as other university networks i.e. the network of Registrars, Finance Officers, Research VPs or Deans, Quality Promotion Officers, Admissions Officers, Access Officers etc. This will provide a formal basis for the existence of an Educational Developers Network, a structure for regular meetings and a mechanism for rotating responsibility for the network.**

- **In the context of the proposed change in the funding mechanisms of the HEA, it is likely that funding for Support for Teaching and Learning in future will be incorporated into the Strategic Innovation Fund and that collaborative bids will be invited from within the sector. In that context, it would be advisable that appropriate protocols, including memoranda of**

understanding or agreement be put in place in advance to which all universities involved in a collaborative bid, would commit.

- **Administrative structures within universities for supporting Teaching and Learning should reflect the *academic* nature of this activity. In the context of a commitment by Irish universities to research-led teaching, university structures should reflect a parity of esteem between teaching and research. In practical terms, this would mean that where Deans or Vice-Deans of Research are appointed in Faculties or Colleges, consideration should be given to mirroring these appointments by the appointment of Deans or Vice-Deans of Teaching and Learning.**

- **The agenda of meetings of the University or Executive Management Group in each University should give the same attention to Teaching and Learning as to Research, and T&L should be a regular item on the agenda.**

- **Structures within universities should be such as to ensure that there is a coherent overall approach to issues relating to teaching and learning e.g. Curriculum, Assessment and Educational Development, Awards for Teaching, Research on Innovative Forms of Teaching, Recognition of Teaching in Promotions schemes etc.**

- **Structures within universities should be such as to ensure ongoing communication between the Quality Promotions Office and the Teaching and Learning Support Centre or unit so that the T&L Unit can respond effectively and efficiently to issues raised in Quality Reviews.**

- **As recommended by the EUA Review of Irish Universities, student evaluation of teaching should be regular and systematic. T&L Centres should respond where possible, to issues raised by students.**

- **The complexity and variety of good teaching, and the variation across disciplines, should be recognised and respected. There is no "one size fits all" solution to issues related to teaching and learning. This should be reflected in the structures, staffing and variety of courses, seminars, workshops and learning opportunities provided for teaching staff in universities.**

- **Support for Teaching and Learning should be available, where relevant and appropriate, to all staff involved in teaching whether full-time or part-time, academic or non-academic. However, sometimes the professional development needs of ancillary staff are not best met by the courses on offer by Centres for Teaching and Learning. In some cases, the HR department or Staff Office may be the more appropriate agency for providing or arranging such training.**

- **Support for Teaching and Learning should take account of the diversity of the student body and the diversity of student learning. Educational Developers should work closely with the staff of Disability Centres and**

the Access Offices of Universities in devising and providing courses for staff.

- **In the delivery of courses, seminars and workshops relating toT&L, the expertise of academic staff from different disciplines within the University should be used where possible and relevant. Where a Teaching Awards scheme is in place, award-winning staff are an obvious group from which seminar leaders etc can be drawn.**

- **Academic staff should be encouraged and supported to carry out research on teaching in their own disciplinary areas. The results of this research could then form the basis of a series of seminars on teaching both within and across disciplines.**

- **Induction** *(Expand this point)*

- **Teaching and Learning Centres should offer courses in Teaching and Learning for Postgraduate Research Students, especially those involved in providing tutorial or lab support for undergraduate students. These courses should attract credits and should appear on the students' Diploma Supplement. This should be done in collaboration with the Research / Postgraduate Office,**

- **Revision of Curricula within the Bologna/Bergen process** *(Expand this point)*

- **e-learning - universities should facilitate sharing of "what works well" in this rapidly changing area.**

- **Location of Training**

(Any ideas on how the student voice could be more explicitly included in this document would be welcome).