

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN (QIP) TEMPLATE

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CONTEXT

Maynooth University's overall policy on quality assurance and quality enhancement is set out in the Maynooth University [Framework for Quality Assurance and Enhancement](#). The typical model for all quality reviews consists of five phases: self-assessment; peer review group (PRG) report, quality improvement plan (QIP) outlining how the Unit plans to address recommendations made in the PRG report; publication of the PRG report and the QIP; then follow up and ongoing monitoring.

Note for the purposes of this document a unit is interpreted in a broad sense and is defined in the University's Framework for Quality Assurance and Enhancement as "an academic department/school, research institute, administrative unit, support unit or an amalgamation of units such as a Faculty. It may also be a programme (e.g., an omnibus degree programmes), a set of programmes (e.g., taught postgraduate programmes in a Faculty), a specific initiative (e.g., reform of the first year curriculum) or a theme (e.g., quality and impact of Maynooth University research)"

This current phase, the production of a Unit's QIP, involves a number of steps (outlined in Appendix 1). Provision for consultation within the Unit and with senior members of the University is incorporated into the process. Once finalised, the Unit sets about addressing the various recommendations according to the plan it has laid out in its QIP. 12 months later a report on progress made in addressing the recommendations is submitted to the Quality Office.

1. QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN SUBMISSION FORM

Section 1: Unit details

Name of Unit	Department of Media Studies
Subunits, if any, within Unit¹, that formed part of the review	
Head of Unit	Dr Anne O' Brien
Dates of Peer Review Visit	Monday 1st to Friday 5th November 2021.

Section 2: Stage of QIP

Delete as necessary²	Final
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Section 3: Sign off

Head of Unit (NAME):	Signature:	Date: [DD/MM/YY]
Anne O' Brien		11/04/22

¹ For a School, this would include the departments/subject areas, etc. For a support or service unit, this would include the various service or support subunits that make up the operating unit so for example Registry would list student records & registration, examinations, etc.

² Indicate whether a draft or a final version of the QIP. Are classified as drafts when submitting to the QIP review meeting (see appendix 1).

Section 3: Introduction/Commentary (max. 2 pages)

Provide a brief introduction to the Unit.

The Department of Media Studies is one of 8 academic departments in the Faculty of Arts, Philosophy and Celtic Studies in Maynooth University. The key focus of the Department is on achieving excellence in education, research, service and engagement in both the critical and creative dimensions of the discipline of Media Studies.

Outline the process followed in developing the QIP including details of Unit staff involvement and how they contributed to the QIP preparations.

All staff met to discuss the preparation of the QIP and to reflect on which sections colleagues believed they could make the most valuable contribution. Every member of staff took responsibility for at least one recommendation. They drafted a proposal to address the challenge outlined. These were discussed in detail in a subsequent Departmental meeting with all members of the Department in attendance. Amendments were made and the draft finalised for submission to the Strategy and Quality Office.

Provide a general commentary on the recommendations made and outline the rationale for the Unit's approach in addressing the recommendations.

The recommendations made were for the most part very useful to the Department. Some of them flagged work in areas that colleagues would expect to need to do some development. Specifically articulating the core strengths of the Department, developing our website, formalising administrative meetings, communicating our high level of research, readjusting student intake, planning for renewal of the Kairos contract, furthering research events, expanding our workload model and developing our student feedback mechanisms are all objectives that colleagues fully agreed need to be addressed. We are clear that we can generate short, medium and long term plans to achieve these objectives, as outlined below. Some of the recommendations addressed to the Department however are not entirely within our remit, we are limited in how much desk space, office space and social space we can acquire for PhD students and our workload model is local only to the Department in the absence of an institutional model, more detailed responses to these recommendations are also outlined below.

Indicate in brief, how the actions proposed in meeting the various recommendations will inform the Unit's plans/strategy over the short and the long term.

The actions proposed will be incorporated into the unit's plans over the short to medium term. Most of them can be acted upon immediately or within the next academic year. Once agreed measures will be introduced over the next 12-18 months and thereafter will be monitored to ensure that new practices are maintained.

Additional commentary.

Section 4: Action Plan Responding to Recommendations of Peer Review Group.

A separate table is used for each recommendation made.

Recommendations for Improvement for the Unit

<p>U.1 OVERALL There is a need for a clearer articulation of the core strengths(s) of the department for the purposes of student recruitment and departmental identity, and to maintain and cultivate those strengths. In an effort to do this, the department approach to curriculum planning could be more developmental rather than reactive.</p>						
	A department with diverse and interdisciplinary strengths across media forms, historical periods, theory and practice, and humanities and social sciences can be mistaken for a collection rather than a collective. It's important to articulate the core strengths of the department as well as the integrity and intentionality of our work together in curriculum design, pedagogy and research.	Develop and circulate identity and mission statement (who we are, what do we do best, and why) for input and agreement within the department. Use the statement at all formal department events, on the department website and in student recruitment materials (internal and external).	Short-term.	Maria Pramaggiore.	Dec. 2022. Academic Year (AY) 22-23.	High.

<p>U.2 STUDENT NUMBERS & RECRUITMENT There is a need for better communicating the high level of research in the department externally, including to use this as a potential tool for recruitment. Also, the department could preferably develop a strategy for further integration of research into teaching and make research visible in courses and the programme.</p>						
No.	Brief Commentary <i>(Complete if needed)</i>	Planned Action item <i>(In brief)</i>	Short/long term action	Person in Unit leading item.	Schedule for completion <i>(Acad. year)</i>	Priority Level <i>(High/Med/Low)</i>
	The department's research profile and output is a valuable tool in attracting postgraduate students at both MA and PhD level in	In conjunction with U.9 regarding the improvement of the department website, we will work to use that new website	Short-term.	Stephanie Rains.	March 2023.	Medium.

	particular, and is well-placed to appeal to potential students interested in either programme given that most full-time members of academic staff contribute to all levels of programme teaching in most years, much of which draws on their research.	design to better promote staff research and (in particular) its direct connection to teaching at all levels but especially on the MA programme. This will also be emphasised in MA promotional material, and we will liaise with the Graduate Studies Office about the promotion of faculty research expertise in the promotion of our MA programme and the recruitment of PhD students.				
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U.3 STUDENT NUMBERS & RECRUITMENT

The department needs to update the recruitment of students at both the BA and MA levels based on improved contact with graduates and data on their post-graduation employment. This includes survey of not only recent graduates, but also those going back e.g. 3, 5 or 7 years.

No.	Brief Commentary <i>(Complete if needed)</i>	Planned Action item <i>(In brief)</i>	Short/ long term action	Person in Unit leading item.	Schedule for completion <i>(Acad. year)</i>	Priority Level <i>(High/Med/Low)</i>
	Currently, there is no standardised mechanism for locating graduates. Alumni data is thin. In the first instance we should create communication channels with graduates.	Develop an exit survey of BA and MA graduating students to facilitate ongoing communication with them post-graduation (opt-in survey for contact details, graduate ambitions/plans)	Short-term.	Sarah Arnold.	June 2022.	Medium.
	A 2018 survey of BA Media Studies and BA Digital Media students already took place, with survey results feeding into BA programme redesign in order to make the programmes more attractive. Future surveys will concentrate on the MA, on the new BA Media Studies and BA Media & Cultural	Carry out survey of, and interviews with BA and MA graduates to understand graduate destinations, education to work transitions in order to gain a better understanding of and to represent to potential students how the programmes support employability. This information will be used in	Medium-term.	Sarah Arnold.	June 2023.	Medium.

	Studies graduates both from the past and more recent years.	programme promotional material including departmental website, prospectuses, and open days.				
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U.4 STUDENT NUMBERS & RECRUITMENT

In order to streamline intake targets, budgeting and workload estimations, the department needs to make a readjustment of student number expectations so as to correlate with actual intake.

No.	Brief Commentary <i>(Complete if needed)</i>	Planned Action item <i>(In brief)</i>	Short/ long term action	Person in Unit leading item.	Schedule for completion <i>(Acad. year)</i>	Priority Level <i>(High/Med/Low)</i>
	Having a predictable number of students entering the BA Media Studies is very important for allocating teaching and student resources and estimating the workload of practice teaching staff. The ideal target number for the BA Media Studies is 40 students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cap the intake for the BA Media Studies at 45. • Notify the Admissions Office of this cap. • Readjust workloads of practice teaching staff to accommodate fewer students across a wider range of practice modules. 	Short-term.	Head of Department Anne O' Brien.	March 2022.	High.

U.5 PRODUCTION

Outline a plan for the renewal of the Kairos contract which does not transfer more leverage to Kairos in terms of facilities and teaching.

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	Having access to TV and Radio studio facilities at Kairos is beneficial to students on the Media Studies programme. Having operations support staff available to students is equally beneficial. Acquiring MAC	Before the end of the current contract there is a need for the department to identify best value options for the provision of facilities, which will provide students with optimal access to practice	Long-term.	Head of Department in AY 2023-24.	May 2024.	High.

	Labs and software through the Kairos contract gives flexibility in expenditure over the period of a contract. Dedicated spaces for Media Studies students enhances their experience of the programme. However, lack of direct line management of the staff delivering modules results in rigidities in the programme and a lack of capacity to adapt flexibly to changing contexts and circumstances.	learning facilities and the best experience for the practical element of their degree.				
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U.6 PRODUCTION

Continue engagement between Kairos and University teaching staff established during the teaching fellowship to enhance cohesion between the two “sides” and to facilitate theory to inform the teaching of practice.

No.	Brief Commentary <i>(Complete if needed)</i>	Planned Action item <i>(In brief)</i>	Short/ long term action	Person in Unit leading item.	Schedule for completion <i>(Acad. year)</i>	Priority Level <i>(High/Med/Low)</i>
	MU media studies teaching takes place on campus and on location in Kairos with Kairos based teaching staff. Continued measures to ensure cohesion between both sets of teaching staff is necessary to ensure cohesion in curriculum, pedagogy and teaching practices in order to maintain quality educational practices and delivery.	Invite Kairos teaching staff to department events such as departmental teaching day. Continue practice teaching meetings that take place once a semester and include Maynooth University (MU) campus and Kairos practice teaching staff.	Short-term and long-term.	Head of Practice.	Ongoing.	Medium.

U.7 RESEARCH & RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT

Research events (seminars, colloquia, etc.) should be furthered in order to make research more visible at the department level. And, to further collaboration, research clusters that include other departments should be reconsidered in order to create a better sense of community and involvement of research students.

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	The return to campus post-Covid as well as this recommendation have led to an immediate focus on research student integration. They have been consulted on and co-developed the action items featured. The success of the department in achieving research funding has informed recent discussions as to how best to build research clusters and spaces/processes of collaboration.	<p>Regular meetings with the PhD cohort.</p> <p>One research student event per semester, co-designed with PhD cohort.</p> <p>Research away-day with staff to re-build research community post-Covid period.</p> <p>Research and training seminars involving staff, PhD students and invited specialists.</p> <p>Strategy to ensure overview and where relevant coordination of research funding and research funding applications.</p>	<p>Short-term.</p> <p>Short-term/ long-term.</p> <p>Short-term.</p> <p>Long-term.</p> <p>Long-term.</p>	<p>Research Coordinator.</p> <p>Research Coordinator.</p> <p>Research Coordinator.</p> <p>Research Coordinator.</p> <p>Research Coordinator.</p>	<p>2021-2022.</p> <p>2021-2022.</p> <p>2021-2022.</p> <p>2022-2023.</p> <p>2022-2023.</p>	<p>High, completed.</p> <p>High, instigated.</p> <p>High, completed.</p> <p>High.</p> <p>Medium.</p>

U.8 ADMINISTRATION

A formal meeting between administrative staff and HOD on a regular basis, with an agreed agenda, would be a useful addition to the current ad hoc arrangements to ensure efficient communication and management of the department. At an institutional level, the University needs to provide better opportunities for promotion and career advancement for administrative staff, as well as giving due consideration to the effects of changing policies and procedures on the workload and of departmental administrators.

No.	Brief Commentary <i>(Complete if needed)</i>	Planned Action item <i>(In brief)</i>	Short/ long term action	Person in Unit leading item.	Schedule for completion <i>(Acad. year)</i>	Priority Level <i>(High/Med/Low)</i>
	<p>Although the department has regular monthly meetings, the Head of Department (HOD) and administrative staff meet on an ad hoc basis. The department would benefit from a more formal structure, to allow for a consistent communication between the HOD and administrative staff.</p> <p>The delayed administrative promotions (last round 2015), means there is no clear path for progression within current roles and the lack of promotional opportunities are de-motivating for administrative staff. At departmental level there is an overall acknowledgement and recognition of the role, that is lacking at instructional level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With immediate effect from the PRG report the HOD, and administrative staff scheduled meetings, one day prior to the monthly department meeting. • Continue to contribute on areas of professional opportunities and promotions for administrative staff. 	Long-term.	Department Administrator Anne Byrne.	Ongoing.	Medium.

U.9 ADMINISTRATION

We recommend developing a more professional departmental website and regular updating of this and other social media. This could be aimed at attracting undergraduate and postgraduate students and overcoming the perception of Media Studies as “one of Maynooth University’s best kept secrets”.

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	<p>The website could benefit from more frequent updates about department activity. Social Media would be a more effective way of attracting students. The department has an active presence on Twitter, but to reach undergraduate students in particular, platforms like Instagram or TikTok would be more effective. It is possible that the effects of this work may not be visible immediately, but the expectation would be that by the 2023 intake period the impact would start to show.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Media Studies Instagram has just been established. This will be used to display student work. We will visit third year classes and appeal to the students to follow the account and submit their work, which could be a boon to them as they enter the working world. • The student showcase for the Digital Projects module will be taking place on May 10th – the student's work will be spread widely across social media. • Video footage from the Kairos studios would be useful for Instagram/TikTok. • More frequent updates to the dept. website, an updated Twitter widget, and an Instagram widget if possible. 	Long-term.	Department Administrator Stephanie Mclelland.	Ongoing.	Medium.

U.10 WORKLOAD AND TEACHING

In order to clarify workloads, the department needs to investigate and introduce a more comprehensive workload model to be used in staffing decisions. In the absence of a broader university model, this could be done at department level.

No.	Brief Commentary <i>(Complete if needed)</i>	Planned Action item <i>(In brief)</i>	Short/ long term action	Person in Unit leading item.	Schedule for completion <i>(Acad. year)</i>	Priority Level <i>(High/Med/Low)</i>
	Teaching load allocations and service roles are already mapped and made available in SharePoint. A plan to develop a departmental workload model was articulated in the Research Strategy Plan devised in 2018. However, this was deferred when the University Strategic Plan and Athena Swan applications indicated the University would develop a full-scale model. The University work on this is to begin soon.	Identification and implementation on the existing departmental spreadsheet of additional mechanisms to measure workloads relating to: PhD supervision. Taught MA dissertation supervision. BA dissertation supervision.	Short-term.	Kylie Jarrett.	Start of 2022-23 AY.	Medium.

U.11 STUDENT FEEDBACK

Ensure student evaluation participation by making the evaluation a component of every class (perhaps literally setting aside time in a lecture to do it), e.g. as a combination of oral discussion in class and written questionnaire. Ensure a format for taking student evaluations into account and directed toward creating a better learning space.

No.	Brief Commentary <i>(Complete if needed)</i>	Planned Action item <i>(In brief)</i>	Short/ long term action	Person in Unit leading item.	Schedule for completion <i>(Acad. year)</i>	Priority Level <i>(High/Med/Low)</i>
	The Department recognises the need to address its feedback processes and to find a pedagogically and technologically sound way	A working group will be formed to review resources on feedback available through the Centre for Teaching and Learning.	Long-term.	Maria Pramaggiore and Anne O' Brien.	AY end 2023.	High.

	of gathering robust and accurate feedback from students.	Some best practices for Media Studies will be selected. Former and current practices will be reviewed. An agreed approach that works across the Department will be outlined and implemented.				
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U.12 PHYSICAL LOCATIONS FOR STAFF/STUDENTS

There is a distinct need for dedicated desk space, offices and social space for PhDs students, both to facilitate their research and teaching roles and to contribute to the development of a research community within the Department.

No.	Brief Commentary <i>(Complete if needed)</i>	Planned Action item <i>(In brief)</i>	Short/ long term action	Person in Unit leading item.	Schedule for completion <i>(Acad. year)</i>	Priority Level <i>(High/Med/Low)</i>
	Office space on the ground floor of the lontas building where the department is located is oversubscribed, with some full-time staff members occupying offices in Education House. The department has recently paid for the conversion of a teaching room into two offices, one of which will be occupied by a colleague in English. PhD students receiving either Irish Research Council (IRC) or Hume funding are accommodated contractually in the shared office space provided by MU Arts and Humanities Institute on the first floor of lontas, with students without funding allocated additional available spaces in this room. PhD students with teaching duties can	The Department has already reconfigured the use of space on the ground floor of the lontas building so that all staff are now housed in a single building. This reconfiguration has in turn allowed the Department to repurpose the spaces available to us in Education House as dedicated spaces for postdoctoral students and PhD students.			Completed.	

	use a shared office. The galley kitchen shared with colleagues in English provides some facilities to cook and store food but none for sitting and socializing with colleagues or research students.					
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Institutional or Strategic Recommendations

S.1 PRODUCTION Engage with relevant departments/faculties to arrive at a solution to updating and supporting the MacLab internally.						
No.	Brief Commentary <i>(Complete if needed)</i>	Planned Action item <i>(In brief)</i>	Short/ long term action	Person in Unit leading item.	Schedule for completion <i>(Acad. year)</i>	Priority Level <i>(High/Med/Low)</i>
	Since the PRG visit the MAC Labs have been updated.				Completed.	

S.2 RESEARCH & RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT Internal university communication needs to be enhanced regarding e.g., research support, funding, applications, etc.						
No.	Brief Commentary <i>(Complete if needed)</i>	Planned Action item <i>(In brief)</i>	Short/ long term action	Person in Unit leading item.	Schedule for completion <i>(Acad. year)</i>	Priority Level <i>(High/Med/Low)</i>
	The Faculty recognises the need to enhance communication about and information	An Associate Dean for Research and Engagement will be appointed within the	Short-term.	Associate Dean for	2022-23.	High.

	flows on research supports and funding opportunities.	Faculty in 2022-23 and part of the role will be to enhance information flows on research opportunities.		Research and Engagement.		
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S.3 ADMINISTRATION

There is a need for increased technical support for staff and students beyond the current arrangement with Computer Science.

No.	Brief Commentary <i>(Complete if needed)</i>	Planned Action item <i>(In brief)</i>	Short/ long term action	Person in Unit leading item.	Schedule for completion <i>(Acad. year)</i>	Priority Level <i>(High/Med/Low)</i>
		The Faculty will work with the Department to scope out the best overall solution to facilities provision, including technical support.	Medium-term.	Dean/Head of Department.	2023-24.	High.

S.4 ADMINISTRATION

There is a requirement for increased support to staff administering larger research projects. There is also a need for better communication from the University and via HOD regarding any such administrative support available to staff.

No.	Brief Commentary <i>(Complete if needed)</i>	Planned Action item <i>(In brief)</i>	Short/ long term action	Person in Unit leading item.	Schedule for completion <i>(Acad. year)</i>	Priority Level <i>(High/Med/Low)</i>
	See S2 above for solution	As per S2 above, with Associate Dean to provide an understanding of what support is currently lacking.	Medium-term.	Associate Dean for Research and Engagement.	2023-24.	Medium.

S.3 PHYSICAL LOCATIONS FOR STAFF/STUDENTS

At an institutional level, there is an urgent need for more spaces for students to socialise on campus.

No.	Brief Commentary <i>(Complete if needed)</i>	Planned Action item <i>(In brief)</i>	Short/ long term action	Person in Unit leading item.	Schedule for completion <i>(Acad. year)</i>	Priority Level <i>(High/Med/Low)</i>
S5		Appointment of Associate Dean for Research and Engagement.	Medium-to long-term.	UE.	Ongoing.	High.

2. APPENDIX 1

There are several steps involved in the Quality Implementation Plan as part of the Quality Review process.

1. The Quality Office shares the finalized Peer Review Group (PRG) report with the Unit and is asked to submit a draft QIP.
2. The Unit discusses the recommendations and drafts a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) addressing each recommendation.
3. The draft document is used to inform discussions at the QIP Review Meeting between the President, the VP Academic and/or Dean of the Faculty/Head of Administrative Area with responsibility for the Unit, the Director of Quality and the Head of the Unit.
4. Following the meeting, the Head of Unit updates the draft QIP if and as needed.
5. The final QIP is submitted to the Quality Office.
6. The final QIP document is submitted to the Quality Committee and Academic Council for note.
7. The QIP is published on the website of the Quality Office.
8. 12 months post finalisation of the QIP a follow up report is submitted to the Quality Office from the Head of Unit outlining progress made with actions outlined in the QIP.