



# Internal Review Student Services Unit

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# **1 INTRODUCTION AND UNIT DETAILS**

## **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

This report covers a Peer Review Group (PRG) inspection of the Students Services Unit at the Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland (RCSI) including a 'site visit' by the four person review team on Wednesday 16, Thursday 17 and Friday 18 May 2012.

The PRG are grateful for the assistance which they received throughout and for the way in which additional colleagues made themselves available, at short notice, to answer questions and to provide background commentary.

It would also like to commend, in particular, the Unit itself, for the comprehensive and detailed Self Assessment Report (SAR) which was so valuable in providing background material which helped the Group to reach its conclusions.

## **1.2 OVERVIEW OF THE UNIT**

The Unit inspected is, in fact, relatively small, comprising of:

1 x Associate Director of Admissions and Student Services  
1 x Student Services Manager  
1 x Administrative Assistant  
1 x Student Services Secretary  
1 x Sports Co-ordinator  
1 x Chaplain/Pastoral Care (job shared by three individuals)  
1 x On Campus Accommodation Manager  
+ Outsourced Counsellors and part-time and contract Sports Coaches and Society Instructors.

It currently reports to the Deputy Chief Executive.

As the SAR indicated, it has, however, a very extensive brief which was described as covering (or making a major contribution to) the following areas:

- Access
- Accommodation
- Chaplaincy/Pastoral Care
- Counselling
- Disability Support Services
- Facilities Management
- Financial Assistance
- First Stop Information Services
- General Student Administration
- Gym
- Induction and Orientation
- Meet and Greet Services
- Merchandising
- Publications
- Relationship Management

- RCSI-Bahrain Exchange Programme
- Societies
- Sports Clubs and Teams
- Student Awards
- Student Events
- Student Facilities
- Student Life Bursaries

Again as stated in the SAR, it does not have responsibility for a number of related areas - such as Library, Catering, 'Welfare', Creche, Careers, Language Support, General Practice Services or IT.

The PRG understood that there were various arguments in favour and against brigading the current 'Student Services' in different ways and under various reporting lines but did not see this as a fundamentally relevant aspect of the Group's Terms of Reference - see below - which were essentially to review the quality of the current provision.

The PRG also felt that it was not necessary to rehearse in any detail, in this report, the justification for Student Services in a higher education institution. It appears now to be universally agreed that, however defined, these make a fundamentally important contribution to student life, student well-being, student success and the overall student experience.

## 2 CONTEXT FOR THE REVIEW

The review, organised by the RCSI Quality Enhancement Office, was undertaken as one of a standard series designed to cover, in turn, key Departments and functions within the College.

The PRG were briefed, on paper and in person, by those within the Unit and by Senior Management on the very significant growth in **numbers of students** (and overseas campuses and partnerships) over recent years. We understand, for instance, that the intake of new students for all undergraduate programmes has increased from just under 300 in 2001 to just over 800 in 2011 - and there has been similar expansion over recent years both at a postgraduate level and by discipline.

This growth is, of course, of particular importance and relevance when considering the scope and adequacy of (however defined) 'Student Services'. We were also briefed, in outline, on the College's plans for new facilities within an entirely new building planned to open in the next two to three years.

It is also not irrelevant to say that in recent years **student expectations** have grown – and become more demanding - and in many areas of life students now expect services to be available to them 'on demand', in an increasingly 24/7, IT savvy and competitive world. All institutions therefore need to consider not just whether services are 'fit for purpose' but also how they contribute to the overall quality of the student experience – and, indeed, to brand, reputation and 'differentiation' from 'competitors'.

As will be noted below, there is also, at the RCSI, the particular consideration that 70% of its students are '**international**' (and paying very substantial fees) and given their dislocation from home cultures, may well need additional support in a number of ways.

There are two other aspects which are important to note in the context of this review.

- Firstly that the College's **Students Union** has elected officers but does not, as opposed to many higher education institutions, have any sabbatical officers. This is largely as, given the particular nature of the RCSI, few undergraduate health sciences students would wish to take a 'year out' to organise student events but does also mean that those in office carry a very heavy load attempting to study intensively but at the same time arranging (or facilitating) a wide portfolio of activities.
- Secondly, the Union does not have any paid staff and so much of the responsibility for organising (or supporting) all clubs and societies and major events is carried by the Unit's small staff.

Finally, while there is a 'Student Area' in the basement of the main building, it is limited in terms of both space and facilities. There is also a sports ground some distance from the College.

As far as the PRG was concerned, however, there were, apart from these, no special or immediate considerations which needed to be addressed in this review but all of the above factors formed part of 'the context'.

## **2.1 MEMBERSHIP OF THE REVIEW GROUP**

- Dominic Scott, Chief Executive, UK Council for International Student Affairs (Chair)
- Suzanne Buckley, Support Officer for International Students, University College Cork
- Paula Wilson, Associate Director Corporate Strategy, RCSI
- Celine Marmion, Vice Dean, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences and Senior Lecturer in Chemistry, RCSI

As prescribed, two of the Group were 'external' and the other two 'internal' and one of the external members was invited to Chair the team. The Group had not met before the site visit - and spent the first evening confirming the detailed programme, agreeing key themes and possible areas of lead responsibility.

## **2.2 TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE REVIEW GROUP**

The terms of reference for the PRG were to:

- Clarify and verify details in the SAR
- Verify how well the aims and objectives of the Unit are being fulfilled, having regard to the available resources, and comment on the appropriateness of the Unit's mission, objectives and strategic plan
- Evaluate the Unit's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges as outlined in the SAR
- Discuss any perceived strengths and weaknesses not identified in the SAR
- Assess the suitability of the working environment(s)
- Comment on any recommendations proposed by the Unit in its SAR
- Make appropriate recommendations for improvement, with due consideration of resource implications

### 3 STAFF AND FACILITIES

As noted in the overview of the Unit, the number of staff is relatively small but includes, as the SAR noted, a mix of age, gender and faith (or none).

Those who have management or administrative or secretarial responsibilities appear to have very considerable experience in those areas - which tend to be, arguably, areas where past experience (and 'empathy' and 'customer service') may well be as or even more important than specialist training or qualifications. Notwithstanding this, staff have qualifications ranging from an MSc in International Business, Bachelor in Business Studies, BSc Sport, Health and Exercise, PhD in Philosophy, MA Psychology, MBA and more.

In addition various members of the Chaplaincy team have specialist counselling skills and the Sports Coordinator has a BSc in Sport, Health and Exercise.

As will be mentioned later in the report, a view universally expressed from all the groups met was that regardless of training or qualifications, the group of individuals currently in these posts had the very highest levels of inter-personal skills and were widely respected and appreciated. Their team working skills and 'open door' policy were, in particular, widely praised.

A degree of annual review and appraisal, together with assessment of Professional Development needs, appeared to be in place although, given the slightly ad hoc nature of duties and responsibilities, it is quite possible that a 'formulaic' approach might not be entirely appropriate.

It was clear however that the team were keen to acquire new skills where possible and, in particular, to ensure they were kept closely up to date on changes to the undergraduate curricula - or wider thinking on medical and allied practice - so that they could better understand and support current students.

The main offices for the 'core' team (Student Services Manager, Administrative Assistant, Student Services Secretary and, when in College, Sports Co-ordinator) are easily accessible on the ground floor of the College, located next to the office for the Associate Director for Admissions and Student Services. They comprise two rooms, with no waiting area or meeting space. They are 'adequate' for most purposes though access to a confidential meeting space would clearly be of considerable assistance.

The Chaplaincy/Pastoral care team are based in a separate office in close proximity to the main offices of Student Services.

Also in this region are the 'Friendship Room' (multi-purpose), 'Serenity Room' (inter-faith quiet zone), Muslim prayer areas and related facilities. In a separate area of the building there is an open plan student common room, a music room, a gym, squash court, male and female showers and changing rooms with corridor areas extensively fitted with lockers in virtually every spare space available. The Students Union have a small office in this area and there is also a café and multi-purpose/basketball court.

In 2011, the Unit, having put a successful business case to the Senior Management Team, took over the management of the on-campus accommodation, previously outsourced. This was followed by the appointment of an on-campus accommodation manager. At the time of

the takeover, the accommodation was found to be in very poor condition. Within a matter of days, the Unit transformed this accommodation to a high standard prior to the arrival of students at the start of the academic year.

It is quite clear that space is at a premium at the College – with the need for lockers for so many students and storage proving to be real challenges. This is an issue, however, which goes far wider than the Student Services team and they have clearly done whatever they can to ensure the current facilities are used as effectively as possible and that whatever facilities are available to them and for the students are as bright and welcoming as possible.

There is, however, clearly a need for enlarged facilities for students as the numbers grow and it is hoped that these might become available when the College expands into a new building in the next two to three years.

### **3.1 COMMENDATIONS**

3.1.1 The PRG commend the staff of the Student Services Unit on the quality and diversity of services, provided to students, specifically;-

- Their 'can do' attitude and excellent interpersonal skills
- The open and welcoming atmosphere created for students
- For adding value to the student experience
- For facilitating and encouraging the holistic personal development of students
- For providing a constant presence during out-of-hours activities, including the provision of mobile phone numbers of staff
- For being an advocate for all students and the "student voice".

3.1.2 The PRG also commend the staff of the Student Services Unit (and others) on their efforts in making the on-campus accommodation available to students in the very short timeframe available to them. They also strived not just to provide decent housing but to create a "home away from home" through residency committees and organising events for residents.

## **3.2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.2.1 The PRG recommend that the Unit ensure that the strategic importance of Student Services, at an institutional level, is fully recognised
- 3.2.2 The PRG recommend that the critical role played by Student Services be taken into account in the design of any future buildings/facilities
- 3.2.3 Recognising the substantial increase in student numbers, the PRG recommend that the adequacy of current staffing levels be considered
- 3.2.4 Whilst the main offices for the core Student Services team are adequate for the most part, the PRG recommend that the Unit be given access to a private meeting room, if possible

## 4 MISSION, STRATEGIC PLANNING, ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE UNIT

The Unit describes its **mission** as:

'To deliver a host of quality driven non-academic supports and services which are responsive, accessible, inclusive and user-friendly, which serve to support student development and enhance the student journey. The Student Services Office strives to identify, understand and respond to the changing and diverse needs of RCSI's unique student body (30% Irish/EU and 70% International) studying health and health related disciplines.'

Beneath this it lists seven aims and objectives and links all these to the 'Personal and Professional Development' outcomes in the RCSI's 'Medical Graduate Profile'.

This very credibly articulates the purpose and activities of the Unit with the overall goals of the RCSI.

The role of Student Services in the non-academic personal development of students should not be underestimated. Indeed, recognition, at an Institutional level, of non-academic achievements can often distinguish a candidate when seeking employment. This was nicely articulated by one of the graduates that we met.

The Unit has regular weekly meetings for the five staff who work as the generic 'core team' (Student Services Manager, Administrative Assistant, Student Services Secretary, Sports Co-ordinator and Accommodation Manager) and the Student Services Manager and Associate Director also meet weekly. The Student Services Manager also has weekly meetings with the Vice-Dean for Student Affairs.

All these - except for the Associate Director - also have monthly meetings which are joined additionally by the Chaplaincy/Pastoral Care team and the Associate Vice-Deans for Student Affairs. Annual review meetings are also held in the summer to consider both past performance and changes to procedures for the following year.

The Associate Director also has meetings with or is a member of a number of College committees ensuring the Unit's work is appropriately aligned with wider College objectives.

The PRG were content that these 'internal structures' were, as far as the PRG could assess, both appropriate and effective.

We understand that lately additional meetings have been established with the two Student Welfare Officers, who also have a pastoral and personal role with students, but who are, in fact, based in the Faculty Centre as opposed to Student Services.

With responsibility for 'welfare' based in a range of posts and Departments, these sorts of meetings are clearly essential to ensure adequate monitoring and coordination.

## **4.1 COMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1.1 The PRG commend the Unit on expanding their meetings with the Vice-Dean and Associate Vice-Deans for Student Affairs and chaplains to now include the Student Welfare Officers

## **4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.2.1 The PRG recommend that the Unit consider how best to highlight and promote, at an Institutional level, recognition of student non-academic excellence. This could be achieved, for example, in the form of an Institutional Award presented at graduation ceremonies.
- 4.2.2 The PRG recommend that the Unit consider the benefits of introducing a Student Charter, to reflect RCSI's commitment to students.

## 5 SERVICES, PROCEDURES AND PERFORMANCE

Section 1 of this report outlined the extensive range of services which the Unit delivers. For each there appear to be - accessible on the Moodle site - a similarly extensive and very comprehensive range of 'service descriptors' and related policies.

It is important to note however the range and diversity of **types of service**.

- Some are, by their nature, very formally defined and managed with set procedures - such as Disability Support or Financial Assistance.
- Others will have a set architecture but considerable flexibility in implementation - such as Orientation.
- Perhaps the largest number however 'enjoy the challenge' of working to support students as they organise their own events and so a considerable degree of discretion and judgement (and trust and flexibility) will be required.

There are also a range of duties which depend almost entirely on demand and although these are perhaps less obviously (or transparently) listed, they would appear to make a critical contribution to the success of the College. These would include the preparation and dissemination of pre-arrival briefing materials, handling related non-academic queries and spending often quite considerable time with students and parents (often of international students), prior to either admission or registration, answering general questions on life in the RCSI and in Dublin.

The **Chaplaincy/Pastoral Care** team operate, virtually by definition, to a very flexible brief and it was encouraging to hear how much they seemed to be valued by students of all faiths (or none). Students continually commented that they were supportive and available and an essential element within the overall support structure.

In various areas, formal feedback measures are used - such as end of year reports by sports team captains. In practice, however, most feedback is gathered on an entirely informal basis from the constant interaction with students (morning, noon and often until late into evenings when events are being held).

The PRG were entirely content that these various measures and approaches enabled the team to monitor both satisfaction with its own services and, indeed, with student life in general at the College - see also sections 7 and 8 for related points under this topic.

As mentioned in Section 3, feedback received by the Review Group from an extensive range of focus group discussions with different year groups (and graduates) was universally positive on the performance and value of the Unit and the individuals within it and the following quotes are merely a sample of those received:

### **Quotes from students:**

“There is just nothing they don’t do”; “They have always been there to support us in every way”; “As people they are very approachable”; “They eased me into the place”; “...almost a parental role...”; “Student services are a really good sounding board”; “They always remember your name”; “They are the voice of the student”; “They know what they are about”; “They promote a sense of community”; “We are proud of them and they are proud of us”; “As the place gets bigger their role is even more important”; “Their role is vital to keep our reflection of the place going”; “Open Door policy ... that’s what they do best”; “X solves 90% of small issues” and “Y is my hero”; “They still keep track of us when we go back” referring to students going back for clinical years in Malaysia.

### **Quotes from staff:**

“They are the advocates of what students require”; “They add value to the student experience”; “They are a network of support”; “Satisfied students mean satisfied alumni, the College’s greatest ambassadors”; “They manage the relationship”.

The contribution this makes to, amongst many other things, satisfaction, loyalty and alumni relations, is clearly very considerable.

## **5.1 COMMENDATIONS**

5.1.1 The PRG would like to commend the Unit on the universally positive feedback it received from the various focus groups it met over the review period. The quality of service and dedication provided to students was abundantly clear to all members of the review group.

5.1.2 In particular, the Unit’s ability to multi-task in a teamwork environment, the personal one-to-one advice and services provided to parents, students and sponsors and the discretion shown by the Unit in relation to issues around access and disability, is to be commended

## **5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

5.2.1 The PRG is of the view that the full scope of the services provided by the Students Service Unit is not known or fully understood by all staff (academic and other). In this context, the PRG recommend that the Unit consider how it might enhance its visibility and optimise ways of communicating their services to Schools/staff

5.2.2 The PRG concur with the Unit’s assertion that it would benefit from briefings/updates in relation to the curricula. The PRG recommend that a forum be established to brief the Unit in this regard on a timely basis

- 5.2.3 The PRG is of the view that the term “chaplaincy” may be a barrier in some circumstances and recommend that this be reviewed
- 5.2.4 The PRG recommend that the Unit introduce additional/ongoing induction sessions for students, particularly for those who, for genuine reasons (for example, upgrades following Leaving Certificate rechecks), may have missed the formal Orientation Day

## 6 RESOURCE MANAGEMENT: STAFF, FACILITIES, BUDGET AND FINANCIAL ISSUES

The budget for the Unit is, we understand, relatively substantial although it is important to note that at least 60% of it is committed to mandatory expenditure on 'peripheral' accommodation (the system in which students have their temporary accommodation costs covered for periods of weeks when they are on clinical attachments outside the Dublin region).

The amount allocated for specific schemes (such as 'Hardship' or 'Disability') appears to be reasonably adequate.

Once those amounts are subtracted, funds left for more discretionary spending – on clubs, societies, sports and miscellaneous events - are far more limited but again, though more would be appreciated, appear to be reasonably adequate.

The PRG had no concerns on the management of financial resources or on the general systems in place to account for money spent.

We understand that in earlier years, Units and Departments were asked to bid for funds for the forthcoming year but more recently allocations have stayed relatively un-changed unless new requirements emerge. The budgeting process therefore seems relatively simple although we would hope that there are mechanisms in place to register requests for additional funds should additional services be introduced or in the context of increased student numbers and workload.

There are, for instance, two issues noted in the SAR and discussed during the visit:

- The case for a (probably part-time) post to work as secretary to the Students Union (given the limited amount of time student officers have, given their workloads; and the need for continuity of experience).
- The possibility that the Unit should take on, more formally or more comprehensively, responsibility for various elements of support to postgraduate students.

Both of these issues need to be considered carefully and strategically, alongside other priorities.

It might also, over the longer term, be helpful for the Unit to develop more **measures** – both qualitative and quantitative – to record (and have recognised) the range and scope of the services they provide as a baseline for reviewing their staffing and budgeting needs in the future. The peripheral accommodation, for instance, requires a mass of transactions annually and some events (such as the Graduation Ball) are complex, multi-dimensional projects. There may also be some value in attempting to monitor not just the number of events but also attendees at events as well as the percentage of students who attend them to assess (and demonstrate) the reach and value of Student Services to College life.

## **6.1 COMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1.1 The PRG commend the Unit on how it has made the best use of the limited student space and the efforts in continuously striving to improve facilities for students
- 6.1.2 The PRG commend the Unit on the successful management of student accommodation at peripheral sites throughout the country while students are on clinical attachments

## **6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.2.1 The PRG recommend that priority be given to establishing a Student Union Secretariat in order to ensure retention and continuity of corporate memory and to ease the administrative burden on the President of the Student Union
- 6.2.2 The PRG recommend, over the medium term, that the Unit develop both qualitative and quantitative measures to record, and have recognised, the range and scope of services provided. Such data would serve as a baseline for reviewing staffing and budgeting needs into the future.

## 7 SERVICE USERS AND FEEDBACK

The Unit produces very considerable **information**, in a wide range of ways – electronic, print, face to face and, at times, through video conferencing. There are:

- Formal publications (Orientation Guide, Disability Guide, Clubs and Societies Guide, Yearbooks, etc),
- More informal methods (notice boards, Open Days, Facebook, etc) and
- Use of the College's Virtual Learning Environment (Moodle).

The Moodle has the potential to be a very powerful tool – and the Unit has used it well to provide relevant information in relation to the services they provide - although some respondents commented that they currently found information difficult to find. This is clearly a work in progress and the Unit will wish to see what further improvements to both content and navigation can be made and/or investigate further to ensure this is the most effective platform.

Students also commented that they found the 'RCSI-Eye' pre-arrival briefing material available on Moodle to be an invaluable resource.

It should be noted, however, that whilst technology can be a very effective (and cost effective) way of disseminating information, many students (and especially some international students) may continue to expect or prefer information to be provided on a face to face and more personal basis.

In terms of **feedback**, as noted earlier, the Unit is clearly in continual contact with students and the Review Team had little doubt that the views expressed would be any less open than those expressed to it in focus group discussions. There appeared to be a very healthy, frank and constructive dialogue between students and Unit staff both on the Unit's activities and on Student Life in general at the College.

The establishment of a Mercers Court Residence Committee has also provided a useful vehicle to gather opinions – and especially on the nature of future refurbishments.

Feedback on the new arrangements for Garda Registration was effectively gathered – and was universally positive.

We understand that more formal **surveys** have not recently been encouraged to avoid 'survey fatigue' with priority being given to those on teaching and learning issues. Many institutions, in Ireland and elsewhere, however, now survey students relatively regularly on a wider range of topics to assess satisfaction with all aspects of institutional life and it may therefore be timely to expand the College's survey methodology to (what is called in the prospectus) 'Student Life'.

In terms of **structures**, the Unit together with the Students Union, gather agenda issues for the Student Affairs Committee which is the main forum for addressing student issues with representatives from both academic and administrative staff. This appeared to be useful, to a degree. There were, however, suggestions that some issues were not adequately addressed in this forum or beyond and that a smaller group of administrative staff, perhaps chaired by or reporting to the Deputy Chief Executive, might ensure operational issues were addressed or resolved more swiftly.

Finally the Unit indicated – and students and some academic staff confirmed – that there was currently some ambiguity over the Unit’s responsibilities for **postgraduate students**. There would seem, in theory, no reason why they should not receive, from the Unit, the same support and services as undergraduate students and that this might even lighten the current load on academic departments. This would seem to be sensible – although the Unit’s staffing and resources might, as part of this process, need to be reviewed.

## **7.1 COMMENDATIONS**

- 7.1.1 The PRG commend the Unit on the introduction of new arrangements in relation to Garda Registration
- 7.1.2 The PRG commend the Unit on the introduction of the pre-arrival information available to new students via Moodle
- 7.1.3 The PRG also commend the critical contribution that the Unit makes towards Alumni loyalty

## **7.2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 7.2.1 The PRG are of the view that the Unit should consider the establishment of an ‘Operational Steering Group’ which would bring together key administrative representatives involved with student activities
- 7.2.2 The PRG recommend that the Terms of Reference of the Students Affairs Committee be reviewed to ensure that key student issues raised are adequately addressed and in a timely manner
- 7.2.3 The PRG acknowledge that the Unit provides services to postgraduate students on an ad-hoc basis. It is the recommendation of the PRG that the provision of non academic support services to postgraduate students, in consultation with the School of Postgraduate Studies, be put on a more structured basis and communicated to staff and students accordingly
- 7.2.4 The PRG recommend that student feedback on the Student Services Unit and ‘student life’ in general form part of the bi-annual student evaluation survey

## **8 COMMUNICATION AND STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS**

As noted throughout this report, the Unit is in constant contact with its user groups. It also services a dialogue with administrative and academic staff through the Student Affairs Committee. The Associate Director for Admissions and Student Services is also well connected with other parts of the College through membership of other committees and his direct reporting link to the Deputy Chief Executive.

On pastoral care there are now good links with the Student Welfare Officers in the Faculty of Medicine & Health Sciences which enable an appropriate level of dialogue whilst respecting aspects of confidentiality and differing roles and perspectives.

The Unit is also seen more widely as the 'voice of the students' and has the information and insight to surface wide ranging but representative views from students (and those providing services to them) on all aspects of life at College.

In the course of this review, for instance, considerable feedback was obtained from students and staff/stakeholders on the impact of outsourcing contracts and the way in which this has made it more difficult for students to use the College, especially outside 'core hours'. For example, access to rooms for informal meetings or study space and hosting student-led social events appear to be negatively affected as a result of this outsourcing.

### **8.1 COMMENDATIONS**

8.1.1 The PRG commend the Student Services Unit for fostering a sense of belonging and contributing significantly to the development and cultivation of the RCSI community.

### **8.2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

8.2.1 Staff and students expressed concern regarding the shift in hosting extra-curricular student activities off campus site. The PRG recommend that the Unit assess the impact of this shift on the overall student experience and report their findings to the Senior Management Team

## 9 ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The Unit's SWOT analysis covers all the main areas of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats but it is interesting to note that the key features of this and the recommendations made by the Unit, fall into two categories – those which are largely under the control of the Unit and those where decisions and resources lie with other parts of the College.

The Review Team agree that strengths include, amongst other things, range and depth of staff experience, team working and team spirit, open door policy, strong service philosophy, excellent communications with students, loyalty, dedication and commitment.

The analysis also highlights a number of areas of opportunity where the Unit itself plans to develop – such as services for postgraduate students, linkages with overseas campuses, better use of technology and enhanced professional development.

The SWOT also registers, however, that a number of the Unit's aspirations, for itself and for the student body, require additional space or facilities and it is recognised that both of these are currently at a premium. It is hoped that when the new building opens in some two years time, more space might be found both for the Unit, however configured, and for student activities.

The PRG considered all the recommendations made by the Unit and our comments appear in the respective sections.

Finally, and **in summary**, the Review Group would like to record that it was entirely clear that this was a well managed and high performing team producing and delivering services which were both well designed and hugely valued. Any recommendations made are given in that context and many of them are, in any case, endorsements for action proposed by the Unit itself.