Report on the Quality Mailshot Initiative (2020-2021)

A) Introduction

In 2019, the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) launched the Quality Mailshot initiative in order to showcase good quality practices taking place across campus by means of occasional mailshots sent to staff and students. The mailshots feature a brief text with an accompanying image, drafted in cooperation with the entity relevant to the mailshot's content. A standard operating procedure (ZQA-001-02) has been developed and updated to outline the whole process.

The schedule devised for the dissemination of these mailshots takes into account examination sessions and recess periods, with at least fourteen days between each mailshot. A degree of flexibility is maintained whenever time-sensitive issues arise, whereby some mailshots are shifted around or retained for future use in order to release mailshots deemed more relevant to the current circumstances. The full schedule of mailshots for academic year 2020-2021 is available at the end of this report.

Following the success of the first series of mailshots disseminated during academic year 2019-2020, the initiative was renewed for academic year 2020-2021. Similar positive reactions have been noted, as further explained below.

B) Overview of Feedback Received

During the academic year 2020-2021, a total of **15** mailshots were sent, and **29** responses were received, thus averaging around two responses per mailshot. These responses generally fell under the following broad categories:

1) *Suggestions for future mailshots*: At the end of every mailshot, recipients are invited to contact the QAC with examples of good quality practices from their own entity, for consideration as potential future mailshots.

2) *Positive feedback for the practices shared*: A number of recipients thanked the QAC for sharing these positive practices.

3) *Queries stemming from the mailshot*: Some recipients had queries related to the mailshots sent.

4) *Feedback and suggestions for further action*: Some recipients got in touch with further feedback and proposed further relevant action in relation to the mailshot.

5) *Other*: A few generic responses did not fit under any of the above categories.

Below is a chart outlining the type of feedback received:
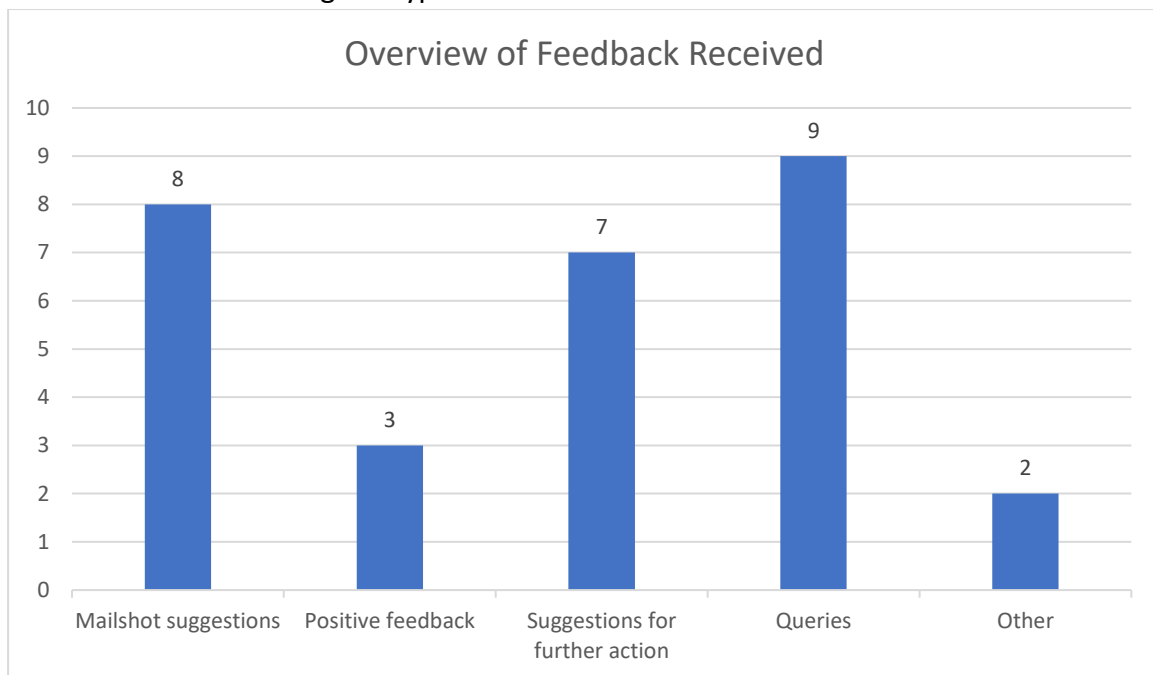
C) Overview of Action Taken

Whenever deemed necessary, relevant action was taken in line with the response received. Below is an overview of the type of action taken:

• Certain queries that could be dealt with expediently were answered by the QSU or the Pro-Rector himself. Responses asking for particular details were forwarded to the most relevant entity for follow-up.

• Suggestions for future mailshots were considered and those that were deemed relevant for dissemination were included in this year's series, or kept in the pipeline for the next academic year.

- Certain practices shared by respondents were deemed relevant for dissemination on other platforms, e.g. during a Faculty Officers' meeting, or as a news item on Newspoint.

- With regard to the mailshot concerning the donation of publications to the UM Library, six UM scholars got in touch to donate their publications, and were assisted in doing so in cooperation with the Library's Acquisitions Department.

- With regard to the mailshot concerning the 'I Belong' programme, an individual who expressed an interest to contribute was put in contact with the Head of Department overseeing the programme.

- The Standard Operating Procedure governing the Quality Mailshots Initiative was revised to take into account relevant feedback received from academic staff.

D) Conclusion

A dedicated section on the QAC website features an archive of all mailshots sent to date. Apart from the mailshot text, the full mailshots are also made accessible in PDF format (*example*). For the second year running, the Quality Mailshot Initiative has been well-received by the University community and has generated appreciable interest. A number of practices have already been earmarked for sharing during the next academic year, following a steady flow of suggestions for future mailshots. The success of this initiative is the result of joint efforts from the staff of the Quality Support Unit (QSU), the Communications, Marketing & Alumni Office, IT Services, and staff members from the UM entities involved in the mailshots themselves.

E) Full List of Mailshots

Academic Year 2019-2020

Mailshot 1 - **Quality Mailshot Initiative** *(4th December 2019)*

Mailshot 2 - **UM ranking in U-Multirank** *(18th December 2019)*

Mailshot 3 - **UM ranking in Webometrics** *(8th January 2020)*

Mailshot 4 - **Citations in Google Scholar** *(5th February 2020)*

Mailshot 5 - **Reviewing courses through department-led student feedback** *(19th February 2020)*

Mailshot 6 - **SOP Portal** *(4th March 2020)*

Mailshot 7 - **Online learning** *(18th March 2020)*

Mailshot 8 - **Peer-to-peer observation and reflection** (*1st April 2020)*

Mailshot 9 - **Disposal of chemical hazardous waste** *(22nd April 2020)*

Mailshot 10 - **Upskilling of UM staff** *(6th May 2020)*

Mailshot 11 - **Most cited publications by UM scholars** *(20th May 2020)*

Mailshot 12 - **The University's institutional repository** *(27th May 2020)*

Mailshot 13 - **INACSL certification for nursing labs** *(3rd June 2020)*

Academic Year 2020-2021

Mailshot 14 - **Quality practices in translation studies** *(20th October 2020)*

Mailshot 15 - **UM's top scholar by H-Index** *(3rd November 2020)*

Mailshot 16 - **Positive QA initiatives by MATSEC** *(17th November 2020)*

Mailshot 17 - **Student progress meetings** *(1st December 2020)*

Mailshot 18 - **Recognition of CLS work with Eurofound** *(15th December 2020)*

Mailshot 19 - **The NOHA master's programme in international humanitarian action** *(5th January 2021)*

Mailshot 20 - **The KSU Buddy System** *(19th January 2021)*

Mailshot 21 - **UM improves Webometrics Ranking** (*23rd February 2021)*

Mailshot 22 - **Donation of publications to UM Library** *(9th March 2021)*

Mailshot 23 - **Assisting migrant integration through education** *(23rd March 2021)*

Mailshot 24 - **UM academics: publications and citations** *(13th April 2021)*

Mailshot 25 - **E-portfolios for nursing students** *(27th April 2021)*

Mailshot 26 - **Away Day for freshers** *(11th May 2021)*

Mailshot 27 - **The use of AI in digital games** *(25th May 2021)*

Mailshot 28 - **Student-centred curricula at the Department of Mental Health** *(14th July 2021)*