

NATIONAL COLLEGE OF IRELAND

2024

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2024

Annual Quality Report (NCI)
Reporting Period 2022-2023

Annual Quality Report (NCI)
PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM
Reporting Period 2022-2023

PREFACE

The **Annual Quality Report (AQR)**; formerly AIQR) forms part of Quality and Qualifications Ireland's (QQI) quality assurance (QA) framework of engagement with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The AQR provides documentary evidence of the development and evolution of each institution's internal quality system. It provides QQI with assurance that internal QA procedures have been established and are being implemented consistent with regulatory requirements.

The AQR, particularly part A, should assist with **document management** in the institutional review process and will facilitate institutions in providing review teams with procedural QA documentation in preparation for the external review process. It is an important part of the evidence base considered by external **review teams** as part of QQI's CINNTE cycle of institutional reviews, demonstrating that the institution's internal QA system is aligned with QQI's Core and relevant Sector- and Topic-specific Statutory QA Guidelines, and with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area 2015 (ESG). It enables the review team to satisfy itself of compliance with these requirements for the purpose of the institutional review process.

Each AQR is **published in full on QQI's website**, providing transparency on the HEIs' assurance and enhancement of quality to external stakeholders. (As such, institutions should ensure that their submissions do not contain any data that they consider to be commercially sensitive.) Collectively, the AQRs comprise a single national repository of quality assurance practice in Irish higher education institutions.

Each year, QQI produces a synthesis report of the key themes highlighted across the AQRs, primarily arising from Part B of the reports.

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Links to Reference Documents Cited in this Template¹

Legislation

- [Qualifications and Quality Assurance \(Education and Training\) Act 2012 \(as amended\)](#)
- [Regional Technical Colleges Act 1992 \(as amended\)](#)
- [Technological Universities Act 2018](#)
- [Universities Act 1997](#)

QQI Documents

Statutory QA Guidelines (QAG)

- [Core QAG](#)
- [Sector-specific QAG for Independent/Private Providers](#)
- [Sector-specific QAG for Designated Awarding Bodies](#)
- [Sector-specific QAG for Institutes of Technology](#)
- [Topic-specific QAG for Providers of Statutory Apprenticeship Programmes](#)
- [Topic-specific QAG for Providers of Research Degree Programmes](#)
- [Topic-specific QAG for Blended Learning](#)

Other QQI Policy Documents

- [QQI's Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes, and Joint Awards, 2012](#)
- [QQI's Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Education and Training to International Learners, 2015](#)
- [QQI Policy Restatement on Access, Transfer and Progression, 2015](#)

Other National/International References

- [European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area \(2015\)](#)
- [IHEQN Guidelines on Collaborative Provision](#)
- [National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland](#)
- [Ireland's Framework of Good Practice for Research Degree Programmes, 2019](#)
- [HEA National Framework for Doctoral Education](#)
- [The Salzburg Principles](#)
- [The Salzburg II Recommendations](#)

¹ These links will be updated as further guidance documents are published.

- [SOLAS Code of Practice for Employers and Apprentices](#)
- [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#)

PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM

Table 1

Table 1 Mapping of ESG (2015) to QQI QA Guidelines (QAG)				
AQR Part A Section	QQI QAG Core Sub-section No.	QAG Core Sub-section Title	ESG Standard No.	ESG Standard Title
1.0 – Internal QA Framework	2.1	Governance and Management of Quality	1.1	Policy for Quality Assurance
	2.2	Documented Approach to Quality Assurance		
2.0 – Programme Development and Delivery	2.3	Programmes of Education and Training	1.2	Design and Approval of Programmes
4.0 – QA of Research Activities and Programmes			1.9	On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes
8.0 – Monitoring and Periodic Review				
5.0 – Staff Recruitment, Development and Support	2.4	Staff Recruitment, Management and Development	1.5	Teaching Staff
2.3 – Teaching, Learning and Assessment	2.5	Teaching and Learning	1.3	Student-centred Teaching, Learning and Assessment
	2.6	Assessment of Learners		
3.0 – Learner Resources and Supports	2.7	Supports for learners	1.6	Learning Resources and Student Support
6.0 – Information and Data Management	2.8	Information and Data Management	1.7	Information Management
7.0 – Public Information and Communication	2.9	Public Information and Communication	1.8	Public Information
2.0 – Programme Delivery and Development	2.10	Other Parties Involved in Education and Training	1.9	On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes
8.0 – Monitoring and Periodic Review			1.2	Design and Approval of Programmes
9.0 – Details of Arrangements with Third Parties				
2.0 – Programme Development and Delivery	2.11	Self-evaluation, Monitoring and Review	1.9	On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes
8.0 – Monitoring and Periodic Review			1.10	Cyclical External Quality Assurance

4.0 – QA of Research Activities and Programmes	QAG for Providers of Research Degree Programmes		
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Introduction and Overview of Institution

This is the AQR for the **National College of Ireland (NCI)** for the reporting period **1 September 2022 – 31 August 2023**.

The AQR has been approved by the NCI Academic Council and is submitted by Patricia Maguire, Director of Quality and Institutional Effectiveness (QIE). The AQR was approved by Academic Council on 28th February 2023. It will also be submitted to the Governing Body on 8th March 2023, as the Annual Report of the Academic Council.

NCI is an independent, not-for-profit College and a registered charity. We have a current student enrolment total of some 6,000 full and part-time students. NCI is partially funded via a core grant through the Higher Education Authority (HEA) and a free fees allocation received for a ‘capped’ number of undergraduate full-time learners. All other funding comes from registration and tuition fees from self-funded or employer-funded learners and labour market initiatives funded by the HEA. In addition, the College has a modest level of commercial income.

NCI’s mission is to change lives through education. Since its foundation in 1951, NCI has developed and evolved in response to various internal and external environmental stimuli. NCI has been committed to supporting the development of Irish society by promoting the principles of access, opportunity, and excellence in education. We are now working towards the achievement of the Strategic Priorities set out in the [2022-27 NCI Strategic Plan](#).

1.0 Internal QA Framework

NCI benefits from a documented set of policies and procedures that together represent the [Quality Assurance and Enhancement System](#) (QAES), which is published online. The QA Handbook has 13 chapters and was approved by QQI as part of the QQI Re-engagement process with NCI in 2018/2019. Each chapter and its policy provisions are aligned with ESG Standards and Guidelines and QQI Core and Sector Specific QA guidelines. Over the 2022- 2024 period, the College has been incrementally reviewing its policies and procedures; updating some provisions and adding new policies in line with strategic priorities. Updates are provided in the sections below.

1.1 Governance and Management of Quality

NCI’s overall governance and management structures, including roles and responsibilities for are outlined in Chapter 2 of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement System (QAES). Additional QAES chapters - indicated below- also identify the opportunities and mechanisms for learners and staff to inform and engage in NCI’s academic governance and quality management structures.

While there were no material changes to Chapter 7: Support Services for Learners, during the reporting period, the College approved two new Learner support policies in the domain of Student Fitness to Continue to Study and Student Mental Health and Wellbeing. Further information is provided in Part B:

section 1.0 Strategic QA Updates. These new policies, once reviewed in 2024, will be incorporated into a revised Chapter 7 of the Handbook.

NCI Quality Assurance and Enhancement System (QAES)	
Relevant Handbook Chapters Approved by QQI in the 2019 Re-engagement Process	Material change made and approved within 2022-23 reporting period
Chapter 1: Introduction	No Material Changes
Chapter 2: Quality Assurance and Enhancement System	No Material Changes
Chapter 5: Learning and Teaching Environment	No Material Changes
Chapter 7: Support Services for Learners	No Material Changes

1.2 Linked Providers, Collaborative and Transnational Provision

NCI is not a Designated Awarding Body (DAB), therefore there are no Linked Providers involved in the delivery of the College's programmes and the College is not involved in making any Joint Awards.

The policies and procedures for collaborative and transnational provision are contained in QAES Chapter 3: Section 6 and are aligned with QQI's *Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes, and Joint Awards (2012)* and benchmarked against IHEQN *Guidelines for the Approval, Monitoring and Review of Collaborative and Transnational Provision*.

NCI does not currently have any arrangements for the transnational delivery of programmes. Further details on active articulation arrangements and collaborations are presented in this AQR, Section 9.3.

During the 2022-23 reporting period, NCI engaged with the Awards Directorate of QQI in relation to progressing suitable QA arrangements for the inclusion of ERASMUS + student mobility within validated programmes leading to QQI awards. NCI's 2019 policy and procedures for collaborative provision (within Chapter 3 of the QA Handbook) defines ERASMUS study exchanges as falling outside the formal definition of collaborative provision. Notwithstanding, NCI is developing new QA policy and procedures on ERASMUS+ study mobility and will recommend these for Academic Council, and subsequent QQI approval, in 2023-24 period.

NCI Quality Assurance and Enhancement System (QAES)	
Relevant Handbook Chapters Approved by QQI in the 2019 Re-engagement Process	Material change made and approved within 2022/2023 reporting period
Chapter 3: Programme Development, Validation and Evaluation	No Material Changes

2.0 Programme Development and Delivery

2.1 Programme Development and Approval

NCI Quality Assurance and Enhancement System (QAES)	
Relevant Handbook Chapters Approved by QCI in the 2019 engagement Process	Material change made and approved within 2022-23 reporting period
Chapter 3: Programme Development, Validation and Evaluation	No material changes to Chapter 3 however refreshed QA processes implemented at programme and module levels. Revised Chapter to be approved and republished in the 2023-24 reporting period. New ERASMUS + study mobility policy and procedures underway. To be approved during the 2023-24 reporting period.
Chapter 12: Provision of Apprenticeship Programmes	No material changes

2.2 Admission, Progression, Recognition & Certification

The policies and procedures relating to admission, progression, recognition and certification are contained with Chapters 4 and 6 as outlined below and are aligned with QCI's *Policy Restatement on Access, Transfer and Progression* (2015) as the current QCI policy in this area. NCI's 2019 Policy includes NCI's well-established procedures for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL) which are utilised for both admissions purposes, in line with QCI-validated entry procedures to programmes, and for the purpose of exemptions to specific modules on programmes for applicant learners with relevant documentation.

NCI's Assessment policies and procedures have been under review since 2023 and this review will be completed in 2024. A revised Chapter 4: Assessment will be approved and published online by the end of the calendar year 2024.

NCI Quality Assurance and Enhancement System (QAES)	
Relevant Handbook Chapters Approved by QCI in the 2019 Re engagement Process	Material change made and approved within 2022/23 reporting period
Chapter 4: Assessment	No material changes
Chapter 6: Admission, Registration and Curriculum	No material changes

2.3 Procedures for Making Awards

Chapter 4: Assessment contains the policies and procedures relating to the authentication and approval of assessment results (Section 4.4 and Section 4.11, respectively) and the certification of

higher education awards (Section 4.18). The notified changes, in Spring 2022, to Sectoral Convention 3 (“Repeat for Honours”) were implemented during the 2022-23 reporting period, with no issues reported.

NCI Quality Assurance and Enhancement System (QAES)	
Relevant Handbook Chapters Approved by QQI in the 2019 Revalidation Process	Material change made and approved within 2022/2023 reporting period
Chapter 4: Assessment	No material changes

2.4 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

During the reporting period, the Teaching and Learning Support Environment sub-committee of the Academic Council reviewed all sections of Chapter 5 of the QA Handbook, in light of evolving experience and practice since 2019, particularly the significant learnings accrued during the Covid-19 period when the College pivoted all delivery to the fully online mode, under QQI-approved alternative arrangements.

QQI further extended the COVID-19 alternative teaching and learning delivery and assessment arrangements, to include online assessment, until June 2023. During the 2022-23 reporting period, NCI continued to deliver some online, remote-proctored assessments and began a review of procedures for the deployment of the College's remote-proctoring platform, [RPNOW](#). These procedures will be approved by the Academic Council during the 2023-24 year.

NCI Quality Assurance and Enhancement System (QAES)	
Relevant Handbook Chapters Approved by QQI in the 2019 Re engagement Process	Material change made and approved within 2022/2023 reporting period
Chapter 4: Assessment	No material changes
Chapter 5: Learning and Teaching Environment	No material changes
Chapter 13: Technology Mediated Learning	Revised Chapter 13 Policy and procedures approved by Academic Council in October 2022.

3.0 Learner Resources and Support

During the reporting period, NCI approved two new policies in Learner Supports: Fitness to Continue to Study and Student Mental Health and Wellbeing. Further information is provided in Part B, section 1.0. These new policies and procedures will be incorporated into a revised Chapter 7 of the QA Handbook, during the 2024 overall refresh of the Handbook in preparation for CINNTE Institutional Review.

NCI Quality Assurance and Enhancement System (QAES)	
Relevant Handbook Chapters Approved by QQI in the 2019 Re engagement Process	Material change made and approved within 2022/2023 reporting period
Chapter 7: Support Services for Learners	No material changes

4.0 QA of Research Activities and Programmes

During the reporting period, NCI undertook consultation to develop its new Research Strategy, aligned with the 2022-27 Strategic Plan. Revisions and additions to core policies and procedures in Chapter 11 will follow the initial implementation of the new Research Strategy, in 2023-24.

NCI Quality Assurance and Enhancement System (QAES)	
Relevant Handbook Chapters Approved by QQI in the 2019 Revalidation Process	Material change made and approved within 2022/2023 reporting period
Chapter 11: Research	No material changes

5.0 Staff Recruitment, Development and Support

Within the reporting period, our strategic commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) was included in the approved Strategic Plan for 2022-27. The College's pilot Hybrid Working Policy was also approved during the reporting period and the final policy will be incorporated into Chapter 8 during 2024.

NCI Quality Assurance and Enhancement System (QAES)	
Relevant Handbook Chapters Approved by QQI in the 2019 Revalidation Process	Material change made and approved within 2022/2023 reporting period
Chapter 8: Staff Recruitment and Development	No material changes

6.0 Information and Data Management

NCI's Data Protection Policy and associated DPIA and other guidelines were published during the previous reporting period (2021-22) and remain up to date, in line with national and European legislation and good practices.

NCI Quality Assurance and Enhancement System (QAES)	
Relevant Handbook Chapters Approved by QQI in the 2019 Revalidation Process	Material change made and approved within 2022-2023 reporting period
Chapter 9: Information Governance and Compliance	No material changes

7.0 Public Information and Communication

Public information and communication about NCI's programmes of education and training are set out in Chapter 6 (Section 2) and within Chapter 10. Information is coordinated and monitored by the Marketing and Student Recruitment Department (MSRD), who ensure accuracy and consistency across all media platforms, liaising with Quality and Institutional Effectiveness (QIE) in relation to curriculum repository and Registry Admissions and Student Records.

NCI Quality Assurance and Enhancement System (QAES)	
Relevant Handbook Chapters Approved by QQI in the 2019 Revalidation Process	Material change made and approved within 2022/2023 reporting period
Chapter 6: Admission, Registration and Curriculum	No material changes
Chapter 10: Public Information	No material changes

8.0 Monitoring and Periodic Review

During the reporting period, the College strengthened its Programme Review and Revalidation processes and supports, overseen by the Programme Lifecycle Management Executive Sub-Group. NCI also reintroduced a refreshed Annual Programme Monitoring process. Formal updates to Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 of the QA Handbook, to reflect these updated processes, will be completed in 2024.

NCI Quality Assurance and Enhancement System (QAES)	
Relevant Handbook Chapters Approved by QQI in the 2019 Revalidation Process	Material change made and approved within 2022/2023 reporting period
Chapter 2: Quality Assurance and Enhancement System	No material changes
Chapter 3: Programme Development, Validation and Evaluation	No material changes

9.0 Details of Arrangements with Third Parties

9.1 Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies

Type of arrangement	Total Number
PRSBs	7
Awarding bodies	1
QA bodies	1

1. Type of arrangement	Awarding body
Name of body:	Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)
Programme titles and links to publications	Validated programmes and corresponding publications can be accessed here: https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProviderDetails?providerCode=PA00331
Date of accreditation or last review	13/06/2019
Date of next review	30/06/2024

2. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Association of Chartered Certified Accountants ACCA)
Programme titles and links to publications	BA Hons Accounting and Finance (PG24995) BA Hons Accounting and Finance (PG24996) Graduates who meet the criteria decided by ACCA may apply for exemptions from the examinations on completion of these programmes.
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2023
Date of next review	31/12/2027

3. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Chartered Accountants Ireland (CAI)

Programme titles and links to publications	BA Hons Accounting and Finance (PG24995) BA Hons Accounting and Finance (PG24996) Graduates who meet the criteria decided by CAI may apply for exemptions from the examinations on completion of these programmes.
Date of accreditation or last review	01/12/2021
Date of next review	01/12/2026

4. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)
Programme titles and links to publications	BA(H) in HRM Strategy & Practice (PG24940) Diploma in HRM Strategy & Practice (PG24941) Master of Arts in Human Resource Management (PG24917) Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Human Resource Management (PG24931)
Date of accreditation or last review	07/09/2022
Date of next review	

5. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Certified Public Accountants (CPA)
Programme titles and links to publications	BA Hons Accounting and Finance (PG24995) BA Hons Accounting and Finance (PG24996) Graduates who meet the criteria decided by CPA may apply for exemptions from the examinations on completion of these programmes.
Date of accreditation or last review	01/11/2021
Date of next review	01/11/2026

6. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI)
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Psychology (PG23507)
Date of accreditation or last review	30/11/2019
Date of next review	01/01/2024

7. Type of arrangement	PRSB
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Name of body:	Qualifications Advisory Board (QAB)
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) Early Childhood Education and Care (PG24372)
Date of accreditation or last review	30/05/2020
Date of next review	30/05/2024

8. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Teaching Council of Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Educational Practice in Teaching for Further Education (PG24375)
Date of accreditation or last review	30/05/2020
Date of next review	

9. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	CIPD
Programme titles and links to publications	Diploma and Certificate in Professional HR Practice Diploma and Certificate in Professional Learning and Organizational Development
Date of accreditation or last review	31/07/2023
Date of next review	

9.2 Collaborative Provision

Definitions:

QQI's Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes, and Joint Awards, 2012 defines collaborative provision as a process that occurs where two or more providers are involved by formal agreement in the provision of a programme of higher education and training.

The Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 (as amended) defines 'joint award' as a single award made jointly by two or more awarding bodies

The Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 (as amended) defines 'linked provider' as a provider that is not a designated awarding body but enters into an arrangement with a designated awarding body under which arrangement the provider provides a programme of education and training that satisfies all or part of the prerequisites for an award of the designated awarding body.

Type of arrangement	Total Number
Joint research degrees	0
Joint/double/multiple awards	0
Collaborative programmes	7
Franchise programmes	0
Linked providers (DABs only)	0

1. Collaborative provision	Collaborative programme
Name of body (/bodies):	SIPTU College
Programme titles and links to publications	This programme is co-designed by SIPTU College and the NCI School of Business. Following QQI revalidation by QQI, the programme is delivered by SIPTU College. NCI is responsible for admissions and enrolments, authentication and certification of assessment results, and programme monitoring and review. A Collaborative Agreement is in place for this programme. Certificate in Trade Union Studies (PG24390)
Date of last review	27/05/2020
Date of next review	30/05/2025

2. Collaborative provision	Collaborative programme
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Name of body (/bodies):	Quality Matters/The Wheel
Programme titles and links to publications	These programmes are co-designed by Quality Matters/The Wheel and the NCI School of Business. Once validated by QQI, the programmes are delivered by staff provided by Quality Matters/The Wheel, while NCI retains responsibility for managing the delivery and monitoring of the programme. Certificate in Non-Profit Leadership and Management (PG22526)
Date of last review	20/07/2016
Date of next review	31/08/2028

3. Collaborative provision	Collaborative programme
Name of body (/bodies):	Department of Social Protection (DSP)
Programme titles and links to publications	These programmes were co-designed by the Department of Social Protection (DSP). Once validated by QQI, DSP staff are involved in the delivery of the programme, while NCI is responsible for the delivery and monitoring of the programmes. Certificate in Social Protection Studies (PG23734) Certificate in Social Welfare Decision Making (PG23861) Certificate in Community Welfare Service Provision (PG23856) Certificate in Social Protection Investigative Work (PG23859) Certificate in Public Employment Services Provision (PG23858) Certificate in Social Welfare Appeals (PG23860) Certificate in Managing Social Protection Services (PG23857)
Date of last review	31/01/2023
Date of next review	

4. Collaborative provision	Collaborative programme
Name of body (/bodies):	National Recruitment Federation
Programme titles and links to publications	NCI is the Coordinating Provider for the provision of this apprenticeship programme. Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Recruitment Practice (PG24255)
Date of last review	11/06/2020
Date of next review	06/03/2024

5. Collaborative provision	Collaborative programme
Name of body (/bodies):	P-TECH Consortium
Programme titles and links to publications	NCI is the HE Provider for the provision of this NFQ Level 6 programme. The Consortium involves the Department of Education and Skills; Dept. an Taoiseach; NEIC and three second-level schools in Dublin's North-east Inner City. Certificate in P-TECH (Pathways in Technology) (PG24592)
Date of last review	06/08/2021
Date of next review	31/12/2024

6. Collaborative provision	Collaborative programme
Name of body (/bodies):	Financial Services Ireland (FSI)
Programme titles and links to publications	NCI is the Coordinating Provider for the Higher Certificate in International Financial Services (IFS Associate apprenticeship programme) and the Higher Diploma in Financial Services Analytics, which are Consortium-led, listed HET apprenticeships under the National Apprenticeship Office.
Date of last review	19/07/2018
Date of next review	29/03/2024

9.3 Articulation Agreements

Definition:

Per the IHEQN Guidelines for the Approval, Monitoring and Review of Collaborative and Transnational Provision, an articulation agreement may be defined as a process whereby all students who satisfy academic criteria on one programme are automatically entitled (on academic grounds) to be admitted with advance standing to a subsequent stage of a programme of a degree awarding body. These arrangements are subject to a formal agreement between the parties.

Articulation agreements - Total number	14
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1. Articulation agreement	Articulation agreement
Name of body (/bodies):	Hebei University
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Human Resource Management (PG22723)
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	30/11/2022
Date of next review	30/11/2032
Detail of the agreement	Students complete three years of the Bachelor's Degree in Human Resource Management in Hebei University before completing Award Stage in the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Human Resource Management.

2. Articulation agreement	Articulation agreement
Name of body (/bodies):	Yunnan Normal University
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Accounting and Finance (PG22719)
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	30/07/2022
Date of next review	31/07/2032
Detail of the agreement	Students complete three years of the Bachelor's Degree in Accounting in Yunnan Normal University before completing Award Stage in Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Accounting and Finance.

3. Articulation agreement	Articulation agreement
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Name of body (/bodies):	Nanchang Hangkong University
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Computing (PG24355)
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	30/09/2021
Date of next review	30/09/2025
Detail of the agreement	Students complete three years of Bachelor's Degree in Network Engineering in Nanchang Hangkong University before completing Award Stage in Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Computing.

4. Articulation agreement	Articulation agreement
Name of body (/bodies):	Rathmines College of Further Education
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Business (PG22721) Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Marketing Practice (PG22899) Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Human Resource Management (PG22723)
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	30/10/2015
Date of next review	28/06/2024
Detail of the agreement	Students who attain a Pass Grade in the Advanced Certificate in Business (6M4985) in Rathmines College of Further Education are eligible for advanced entry into Stage 2 of one of the above programmes.

5. Articulation agreement	Articulation agreement
Name of body (/bodies):	Rathmines College of Further Education
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Computing (PG24355)
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	30/04/2020
Date of next review	28/06/2024
Detail of the agreement	Students who attain a Merit or Distinction Grade in the Award in Software Development (6M0691) in Rathmines College of Further Education are eligible for advanced entry into Stage 2 of the above programme, while students who attain a Pass Grade are eligible for advanced entry into Stage 1 Semester 2.

6. Articulation agreement	Articulation agreement
Name of body (/bodies):	Coláiste Dhulaigh College of Further Education
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Business (PG22721) Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Marketing Practice (PG22899) Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Human Resource Management (PG22723)
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	30/10/2015
Date of next review	28/06/2024
Detail of the agreement	Students who attain a Pass Grade in the Certificate in Management (6M4587) in Coláiste Dhulaigh College of Further Education are eligible for advanced entry into Stage 2 of one of the above programmes

7. Articulation agreement	Articulation agreement
Name of body (/bodies):	Coláiste Dhulaigh College of Further Education
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Computing (PG24355)
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	30/04/2020
Date of next review	28/06/2024
Detail of the agreement	Students who attain a Merit or Distinction Grade in the Award in Software Development (6M0691) in Coláiste Dhulaigh College of Further Education are eligible for advanced entry into Stage 2 of the above programme, while students who attain a Pass Grade are eligible for advanced entry into Stage 1 Semester 2.

8. Articulation agreement	Articulation agreement
Name of body (/bodies):	Inchicore College of Further Education
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Business (PG22721) Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Marketing Practice (PG22899) Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Human Resource Management (PG22723)
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	30/10/2015
Date of next review	28/06/2024

Detail of the agreement	Students who attain a Pass Grade in the Higher National Diploma in Business in Inchicore College of Further Education are eligible for advanced entry into Stage 2 of one of the above programmes.
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9. Articulation agreement	Articulation agreement
Name of body (/bodies):	Blackrock College of Further Education
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Human Resource Management (PG22723) Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Business (PG22721)
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	30/10/2015
Date of next review	28/06/2024
Detail of the agreement	Students who attain a Pass Grade in the Advanced Certificate in Business (6M4985) or Business Studies/Business and Management (5M2102) in Blackrock College of Further Education are eligible for advanced entry into Stage 2 of the BA in Human Resource Management or the BA Hons Business programme.

10. Articulation agreement	Articulation agreement
Name of body (/bodies):	Coláiste Dhulaigh (CDCFE), Whitehall College of Further Education, Inchicore College of Further Education, Marino Institute, Liberties College
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Education and Care (PG24368)
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	31/07/2015
Date of next review	30/05/2024
Detail of the agreement	Graduates of the Level 6 Major Award in Early Childhood Education and Care 6M2007 are eligible for consideration for advanced entry to year two of the following programme(s) Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Education & Care

Annual Quality Report (Institution)
PART B: INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE
ENHANCEMENT & IMPACT
Reporting Period 2022-2023

PART B: INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE ENHANCEMENT & IMPACT

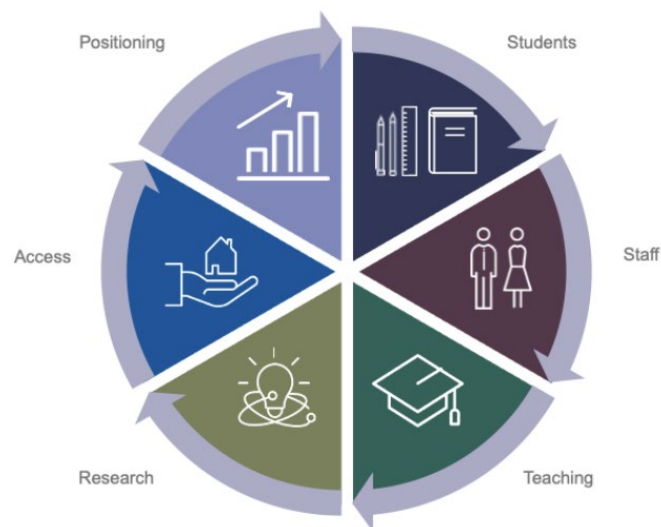
1.0 Quality Implementation and Developments

1.1 Strategic QA Updates

The following section provides information on a range of strategic QA updates during the 2022-23 reporting period. Where possible, section 2.0 provides more information on how these developments have thus far enhanced and impacted on Quality.

NCI Strategy 2022-2027

The [2022-2027 Strategic Plan](#) was publicly launched during the reporting period, in November 2022. The new institutional strategy sets out NCI's aim, by the 2027-28 academic year, to be a distinctive and independent HEA designated institution, with delegated awarding authority, delivering successful graduates, and a world-class model of community engagement, from an 8,500-strong student body, in a state-of-the-art campus in Dublin's Docklands. The six strategic priority areas of the plan are shown below:



Progress on Strategic Plan deliverables is discussed at each Governing Body meeting. The Q3 2023 progress report covers the period to the end of August 2023 and was considered at the October 2023 Governing Body meeting.

Priority	2023 EG Action Status Update Q3 2023							EG Actions for 2023
	Planned	In Progress - 20%	In Progress - 40%	In Progress - 60%	In Progress - 80%	2023 Profiled Actions Fully Completed	Total Overdue	
1. Students	3	0	0	0	18	2	0	23
2. Staff	1	0	0	0	15	1	0	17
3. Teaching	3	0	0	0	13	3	0	19
4. Research	2	0	0	0	13	2	0	17
5. Access	3	0	0	0	10	1	0	14
6. Positioning	2	0	0	0	18	0	0	20
Total	14	0	0	0	87	9	0	110

The dashboard above shows Executive Group (EG) actions to date against the 110 profiled for completion during 2023. In summary:

- 9 action lines (8% overall) were fully completed with no activities scheduled for Q4 2023.
- 87 EG actions (79% of total 2023 commitments) had progressed well, with only Q4 scheduled activities yet to be completed.

14 Actions (12% to total 2023 commitments) were reprofiled for Q4 2023.

The end of COVID-19 restrictions

Following the ending of the Government's COVID-19 health restrictions in February 2022, there was a period of re-adjustment in the College during the second semester of the 2021-22 academic year, as noted in the 2021-22 Annual Quality Report (submitted February 2023).

From September 2022, NCI welcomed all full-time undergraduate and postgraduate learners back on campus, while part-time learners continued or began their programmes of study in our Blended Learning mode.

Developments in Academic Integrity, particularly the advent of Generative AI tools

During the reporting period, the College made significant advances in this strategic QA area. Further information is provided in section 2.1 of Part B.

Academic policies and procedures: Governance and management of Quality

Quality assurance of Technology-Mediated Learning

In October 2022, the Academic Council approved a revised version of NCI's QA Policy and Procedures for technology-mediated programmes (Chapter 13 of NCI's QAE Handbook). This updated policy and procedures underpinned NCI's successful participation in QQI's 2022 pilot validation initiative for the validation of online programmes.

In June 2023, NCI's Higher Diploma (NFQ Level 8) in Data Analytics was successfully revalidated in a fully online mode, combining synchronous and asynchronous teaching and learning pedagogy and assessment methods. The QA enhancement impact of this development will be assessed during the next reporting period.

Programme Lifecycle Management

During the reporting period 2022-23, NCI made significant advances in the development and implementation of new programme development and approval decision-making structures, within the College's wider Quality Assurance and Academic Governance framework.

The Programme Lifecycle Management Executive Sub-Group (PLM-ESG), which had been established in 2021-22, met on five occasions during the 2022-23 period to consider and recommend, to the Executive and to the Academic Council:

- i) the schedule of QQI programme review and revalidations;
- ii) PRSB re-accreditations
- iii) proposals from the Schools of Business and Computing and from the Centre for Education and Lifelong Learning (CELL) for **new** programme development.

The group has demonstrated its ability to deliberate on the strength of proposals for new programme development, informed by structured documentation and presentations from relevant Programme Directors/new programme proposers and, crucially, balancing academic merits with student recruitment, marketing and wider College resourcing implications, in the context of the priorities and themes of the NCI 2022-27 Strategic Plan.

During the reporting period, the PLM-ESG also oversaw the introduction of several Quality Assurance and Enhancement mechanisms focussed on programmes and modules, including a pilot refreshed Annual Programme Monitoring (APM) process; and refreshed QA processes for Programme Teams to propose Major or Minor Changes to current programmes or modules, in line with QQI Guidelines in this domain (QQI Policy and Criteria for the Validation of programmes of education and training (2017)

The provisions of Chapter 3 are being updated during the 2023-24 period to reflect the consolidation of the role of the Programme Lifecycle Management Group and attendant programme management processes. The revised Chapter 3 will be re-published online, following Academic Council, via the Quality and Institutional Effectiveness website in 2024.

ERASMUS study mobility:

NCI was granted the ERASMUS + Charter in 2021. During the 2022-23 reporting period, progress was made with the QQI Awards Directorate regarding options for the quality assurance of ERASMUS + student mobility exchanges as components of new programmes going forward and/or existing validated programmes. Draft procedural documentation was discussed during the period, however with the appointment of a new NCI Academic Partnerships Manager in Summer 2023, work began in earnest in Autumn 2023 on developing the necessary ERASMUS + QA policy and procedures addendum to Chapter 3 of the QAES handbook. The new policy and procedures will be approved by NCI's Academic Council in the 2023-24 academic year and are then subject to QQI approval. A further update will be provided in the 2025 Annual Quality Report.

Access, Transfer and Progression

NCI enthusiastically welcomed the creation and launch of the government's new National Tertiary Office (NTO) in July 2023 and is currently engaged in a ground-breaking tertiary degree-partnership development with the City of Dublin ETB, focussing on providing HE progression opportunities for Leaving Certificate students in Dublin's North-East Inner City (NEIC) schools who have completed the P-TECH programme (Pathways to Technology). Further information on this major Enhancement initiative, which got underway during the

reporting period, will be provided in the next Annual Quality report, as well as NCI's Institutional Self-Evaluation Report under the ATP theme.

NCI keenly follows sectoral national and international developments in the broad area of Access to Higher Education. NCI noted with interest the QQI (2023) *Insights* Publication on Access, Transfer and Progression in the Irish FET and HET sectors entitled *From Counting to Cultivating Successful Participation: a Review of the Landscape of Practice Supporting Access, Transfer and Progression in Irish Education and Training*.

Academic policies and procedures: students and the student voice

During the reporting period, the Academic Council approved updated academic policy and procedures in several student-related areas. The implementation and impact of these policies and procedures will be monitored and assessed during the 2023-24 academic year:

- Academic Integrity (updates to existing policy: further detail is provided Part B, section 2.1
- Students' Fitness to Continue in Study:

This policy and its procedures are intended to guide the College in its support for students who may be in distress and for others who may be adversely impacted by this distress, and to support decision-making about such students' capacity to continue with their studies.

- Student Mental Health and Well-Being:

This policy ensures that all staff members are aware of their roles and responsibilities in supporting students' mental health and well-being. The policy serves as a practical guide for staff members, giving them information on how to identify students experiencing mental health issues, respond to students in distress, and refer them to appropriate resources. The policy also sets out the different support services available to students, such as the NCI counselling service and access arrangements to the Hanover medical centre.

Student feedback on Module Quality

During 2022-23, the Quality and Institutional Effectiveness Office (QIE) led a Student Module Survey Working group to design a refreshed, shorter, standardised module evaluation survey for all registered learners. This was approved by Academic Council in February 2024 and implemented across 270 modules in a pilot phase. The full roll-out of the new survey took place in Autumn 2023 and the impact of this set of quantitative and qualitative student feedback on modules will form part of the NCI Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER) for the CINNTE Institutional Review in 2024.

Policies and procedures: NCI Staff

College Hybrid Working Policy

Following the end of Government's Covid-19 restrictions in February 2022, NCI assessed and evaluated staff experiences of hybrid working and moved to formalise the College's Hybrid Working Policy. The new policy was approved for implementation on a pilot basis in Autumn 2023 and will be assessed and reviewed after one year in operation, during Autumn 2024.

1.2 Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR

A range of Objectives were set out for the 2022-23 academic year, aligned with the six Pillars of the NCI Strategic Plan 2022-27:

Figure 1: Table of Major Objectives assigned to QIE for the 2022-23 period (replicated from 2023 AQR)

Priority	Executive Group Actions	KPI/Evidence of Success	Owner	2022	2023		
				Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3
1. Students	Be responsible for monitoring that the student voice is used to inform planning and decision making	Student feedback gathered, analysed and reported on annually at programme, School and College level	Director of Quality and Institutional Effectiveness	Completed. Evidence from surveys and participation by current students included in all planned programme reviews and revalidations	Refreshed Module Learner Evaluation Survey approved by Academic Council and launched	Refreshed Annual Programme Monitoring Pilot launched, including results of module surveys.	Student Survey (module and programme) data used in scheduled programme reviews and revalidations.
2. Staff	Provide effective and efficient clarity, guidance and support to academic leaders and programme teams preparing for QQI programme validation and revalidation	100% success rate achieved for all programmes submitted to QQI for validation and revalidation, enhancing the likelihood of success in the DA and HEA Designation processes	Director of Quality and Institutional Effectiveness	Completed. Internal Working Group established to lead on NCI ISER Preparations	Completed. 7 existing Major Award programmes recommended for revalidation to QQI by external panels	4 new major award programmes recommended, plus a suite of micro-credentials. 1 existing programme recommended.	3 new major award programmes recommended. Two School of Business Special Purpose award programmes recommended for revalidation.
3. Teaching	Ensure robust data is used throughout the Programme Lifecycle Management structure to inform effective decision making across NCI's portfolio of programmes, highlighting SDG 4 Quality Education contributions and SDG references within NCI programmes	Data on programme demand (applications and enrolments), quality (progression, attrition, completion, grade classifications), SDG relevance, EDI, and currency explicitly used in programme, school and institutional decision making.	Director of Quality and Institutional Effectiveness		Completed. Quantitative data supplied to all programme teams engaged in programme review, revalidation and annual monitoring processes in 2023	i) LTAC to consider collated learning's from 2021-22 and 2022-23 QQI Revalidations, on programme design and assessment topics ii) PLM ESG approval gained for new programmes identified and agreed for development and validation in 2023/24	Academic Council approval secured for refreshed internal programme quality policies and procedures, including for online delivery
4. Research	Gather and analyse data on the postgraduate student needs and experiences to drive effective decision making across NCI	The postgraduate student experience demonstrably informs relevant programme and institutional decision-making	Director of Quality and Institutional Effectiveness		Encourage the NCI SU and Student Services to target promotions to postgraduate students to participate in internal and external student surveys	PG student feedback captured as a part of refreshed Module learner evaluation survey	PG student feedback (research projects) captured and analysed as part of refreshed Module learner evaluation survey
5. Access	Identify and support opportunities for innovation with programme access routes, FE/HE partnerships and diversity of delivery modes in line NCI and national strategic goals	Increased diversity in NCI's student body and portfolio of programmes	Director of Quality and Institutional Effectiveness		Completed. Access innovation (FE entry pathways) supported in the revalidation of the BA(Hons) in Business and Higher Certificate in Business programmes	Support the validation of the new MSc in Open Data Management programme, designed and delivered with European partner institutions	i) Support the review and revalidation of NCI's suite of apprenticeship programmes and the development of a new P-TECH apprenticeship programme
6. Positioning	Lead NCI's preparations for success in the 2024 CINTE process	Successful CINTE process outcomes achieved in 2024	Director of Quality and Institutional Effectiveness	Completed. ISAR Steering Group established	Annual Quality Report (AQR) approved by Academic Council and submitted to QQI	Refresh undertaken of quality assurance policies and procedures for approval by Academic Council	Case studies gathered across NCI for use in CINTE-DA and HEI Designation Process
	Manage and maintain NCI's register of accreditations to ensure accuracy and completeness	NCI maintains compliance with PRSB accreditation requirements for all validated programmes	Director of Quality and Institutional Effectiveness	Completed. Review of all PRSB accreditations		Online Register available via NCI Knowledge Support Hub, to staff	

2022-23 objectives: completed

The College achieved, or significantly progressed the majority of the QA Objectives set for the 2022-23 reporting period, set out in Figure 1 above:

- ✓ Refreshed Module Evaluation Learner Survey (shorter survey with revised standardised questions) approved by Academic Council in February 2024 and implemented, as a pilot, in April 2023. **270 modules** across 15 pilot programmes were surveyed during the pilot. Named module lecturers (and the respective Dean/Director of CELL) were given access to view or download reports containing the results, via the EVASys online survey platform and asked to discuss these with their Deans/Director of CELL. 29% of the cohort of module lecturers on the pilot (32 faculty/AF) responded anonymously to a post-pilot review survey. 84.4% of respondents (n=27) responded that the core questions in the module evaluation survey were useful for getting feedback from learners about the module.

- ✓ Revised Annual Programme Monitoring Process launched in June 2023 with a pilot group of programmes across Business, Computing and Education. The APM reports and outcomes were reported to the Deans and Director of CELL, in Autumn 2023 and discussed by the Academic Council in December 2023. A fuller assessment of the pilot process is underway during the 2023-24 year and the roll-out of the APM across all programmes is planned for the June – October period 2024.

- ✓ Successful QQI (re)validations: all new programme proposals and scheduled QQI programme revalidations progressed successfully through the (re)validation process, securing validation to deliver education and training for the 2024-2029 period.

2022-23 Objectives: Work in progress

We had delays in the achievement of some planned 2022-23 objectives:

- ❖ The further development of NCI's QA procedures for online programme delivery, as the College awaited the final publication of QQI's updated Statutory QA Guidelines for Blended and Online programmes (these were published in September 2023, just after the 2022-23 reporting period). However, during quarters 2 and 3 of the reporting period, NCI participated in QQI's sector-wide consultation on the draft, emerging statutory guidelines.

- ❖ We progressed, but did not complete, the planned collation of case-studies for use in the Institutional Self-Evaluation process (CINNTE). This work gathered pace with QQI's publication of the Terms of Reference and cyclical review handbook for the Independent and Private HE providers, such as NCI, in Autumn 2023, followed by agreement with NCI, in December 2023, on the 2024 timelines for CINNTE Review. NCI anticipates completion of the Institutional Quality Review Self-Evaluation process by the end of the 2023-24 reporting period.

1.3 Governance and Management

1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule

Body	Meeting Dates
Governing Body	21st October 2022 9th December 2022 24th March 2023 23rd May 2023
Academic Council	12th October 2022 14 th December 2022 22 nd February 2023 28 th June 2023
Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee	26 th January 2023 1 st June 2023
Research Committee	5 th October 2022 15 th February 2023 14 th June 2023

1.3.2 QA Leadership and Management Structural Developments

Following the appointment of the new Director of QIE and her team in 2021-22, there were no further changes to the QA leadership and management structure during the 2022-23 reporting period.

1.4 Internal Monitoring and Review

1.4.1 Overview of Periodic Reviews

Unit of review for which report has been published during reporting period	Date of completion	Links to relevant publications
Programme Validation		
Certificate in Technology Enhanced Learning and Digital Learning Design (micro-credential)	May 2023	Irish Register of Qualifications (irq.ie)
Diploma in Professional Human Resource Practice Certificate in Human Resource Practice Certificate in Professional Employment Law & Practice	April 2023	Irish Register of Qualifications (irq.ie)
Diploma in Professional Learning & Organisational Development Certificate in Professional Learning & Organisational Development	April 2023	Irish Register of Qualifications (irq.ie)
Master of Science in Open Data Practice Postgraduate Diploma in Open Data Practice Certificate in Open Data Practice	June 2023	Irish Register of Qualifications (irq.ie)
Programme Revalidation		
BA (Hons) Psychology	January 2023	Irish Register of Qualifications (irq.ie)
BA(Hons) Business (180-ECTS and 240-ECTS versions)	February 2023	Irish Register of Qualifications (irq.ie)
Higher Certificate in Business	February 2023	Irish Register of Qualifications (irq.ie)
BA(Hons) Human Resource Management (180-ECTS and 240-ECTS versions)	February 2023	Irish Register of Qualifications (irq.ie)
BA (Hons) in Marketing (180-ECTS and 240-ECTS versions)	March 2023	Irish Register of Qualifications (irq.ie)

Master of Science in Marketing	March 2023	Irish Register of Qualifications (irq.ie)
Certificate in Non-Profit Leadership & Management	May 2023	Irish Register of Qualifications (irq.ie)
Master of Science in Cybersecurity Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Cybersecurity	November 2022	Irish Register of Qualifications (irq.ie)
Master of Science in Fintech Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Fintech	November 2022	Irish Register of Qualifications (irq.ie)
Differential Validation		
None during the reporting period		
Thematic/Department/Support Service Review		
Central Timetabling Office	March 2023	Internal Report, not published.

1.4.2 Expert Review Teams/Panels² involved in IQA

Guide:

As the external QA agency responsible for oversight of institutional IQA system, QQI collects and makes a range of data available, including diverse data relating to internal QA processes through the AQR. The criteria for the engagement of peer reviewers (both internal and external) is part of the internal institutional-led QA process. The information in this section provides data and transparency in relation to peer reviewers/evaluators and their involvement in institutional-led internal QA systems.

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(i) Expert Review Team/Panel Size and Related Processes

Guide

Details in respect of review/evaluation processes that concluded during the reporting period should be set out below.

Please use whole numbers rather than percentages.

	Total	Academic Schools/ Department	Professional Services/Support Unit	Approval/Review of Linked Provider	Programme Approval	Programme Review	Other
Number of review/ evaluation processes	11		1	0	2	6	3
<i>of those:</i>							
On-site processes	0		1				
Desk reviews	0						
Virtual processes	11				2	6	3
Average panel size for each process type*	6		3		6	6	4

* excluding secretary if not a full panel member

² QQI acknowledges that the terminology used to describe the groups of individuals that conduct peer review/evaluation varies from institution to institution.

(ii) Composition of Expert Review Teams/Panels involved in IQA

Guide

Details in respect of the composition of the panels convened by the institution for review/evaluation/approval processes that concluded during the reporting period should be set out below. Panel composition should be represented as whole numbers rather than as percentages.

'Similar institution' denotes an institution with a similar scope and mission – for an IoT, this might be another IoT or a university of applied science, for example.

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Type of Expert/ Role on Panel	Total	Gender			Internal	National	International			Institution Type	
		Male	Female	Other, or unspecified			UK, incl. NI	Other European	Outside of Europe	Similar	Different
Chair	12	10	2		4	8				4	7
Secretary	11	5	6		3	8				4	7
Academic/Discipline Specific	21	10	11		1	18	2			2	15
Student Representative	10	5	5		2	8				4	3
QA											
Teaching & Learning	11										
External Industry /Third Mission	11	6	5			11					11

2.0 IQA System – Enhancement and Impacts

A. Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Learning from Programme review and revalidation: enhancement of teaching, learning and assessment

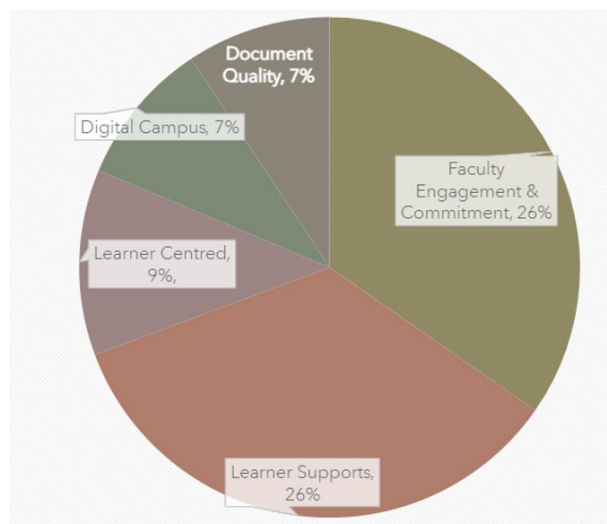
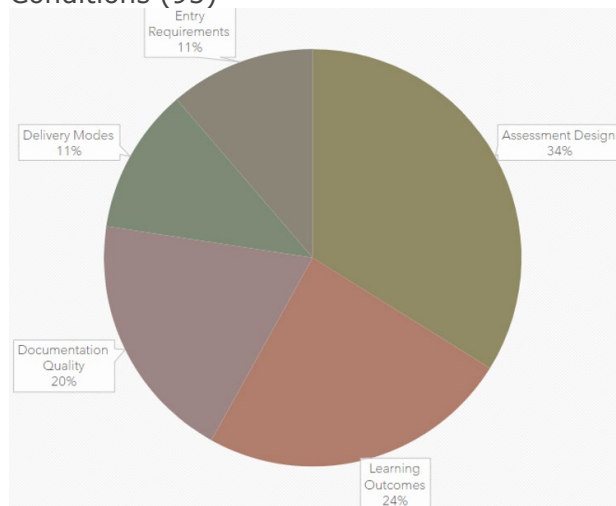
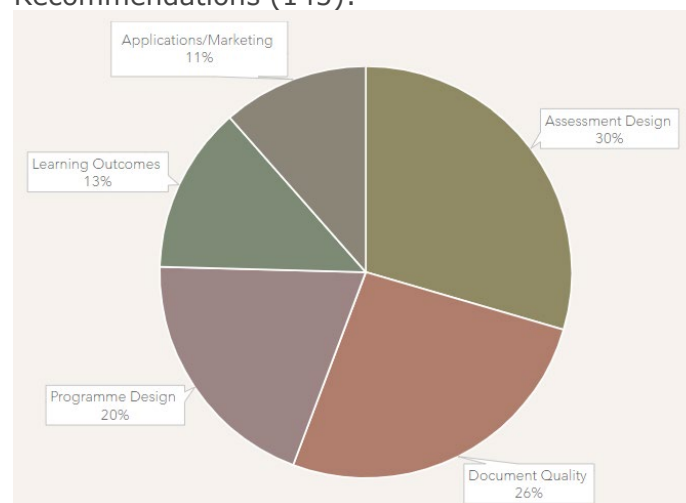
The College made significant progress during the reporting period, on this theme. We undertook in-depth programme review and secured QQI validation (new programmes) or revalidation (existing programmes) for **20** undergraduate and postgraduate business and computing degree, diploma and certificate programmes. This represents almost a quarter of NCI's programme portfolio in a single 12-month period.

This high level of programme review activity in a single year represented an intense effort on the part of the relevant Programme Teams, working with the Quality and Institutional Effectiveness Office (QIE). Significant learning arose from this work, not least of which the identification of teaching, learning and assessment strengths, weaknesses and opportunities within individual programmes, but at an aggregate level, across the Schools and the College as a whole. The Quality Enhancement impact of the revisions made to existing programmes will be monitored and assessed during the 2023-24 year, as we implement Year 1 of our new programmes and our refreshed and revalidated programmes. We anticipate reflecting on this impact, albeit at a relatively early-stage, in our Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER), a key deliverable within the Institutional Quality Review (CINNTE) process in 2024.

The list of programmes (re)validated in 2022-23 is set out in section 1.4.1 of this AQR. During the period, nine Independent Evaluation Panels, acting on behalf of QQI, reviewed programme documentation and met with over 100 staff, comprising:

- NCI programme teams (Programme Directors and academic teaching staff)
- NCI senior management and School leadership teams
- NCI staff from a wide range of central Registry services (admissions, exams, student welfare and learner support staff), the International Office, the Careers & Employability team; the Library and (student) Academic Support Services; the Teaching Enhancement Unit and the Digital Learning Design team.

As the academic year 2022-23 drew to a close, the Registrar presented an analysis to Academic Council on the recurrent themes and trends arising from the QQI Review Panels held between 2019/20 - 2022/23. The analysis covered 32 QQI Panel Reports, spanning 65 programmes. It identified that NCI was a leader in innovations engaging in QQI pilots for Micro-Credentials; Fully online and P-TECH programmes. It also identified some recurrent themes within Panel commendations, conditions and recommendations as follows:

Commendations (58):**Conditions (95)****Recommendations (145):****Next Steps/Actions for 2023/24 as a result of the analysis included:****Assessment Design:**

Assessment Review 2023-24

Guidelines and Training via Teaching Enhancement

Learning Outcomes:

Peer-to-peer supports for the design of MIMLOs and MIPLOs faculty

Good practice guidelines (and exemplars per NFQ level) to be prepared and shared by QIE.

Document Quality:

QIE Guidelines & Timelines

QQI Engagement and clarity on expectations - Devolved Responsibility

Student-Centred Institution:

Streamlining Student Success

Student Success Strategy

MIS Project (Management Information Systems - dashboard student-data reporting)

CTO Pilot Project

Strategic Plan - Exec Implementation Plan Priorities - Refresh for 2024 onwards

Governing Body - Academic Report (Oct 2023)

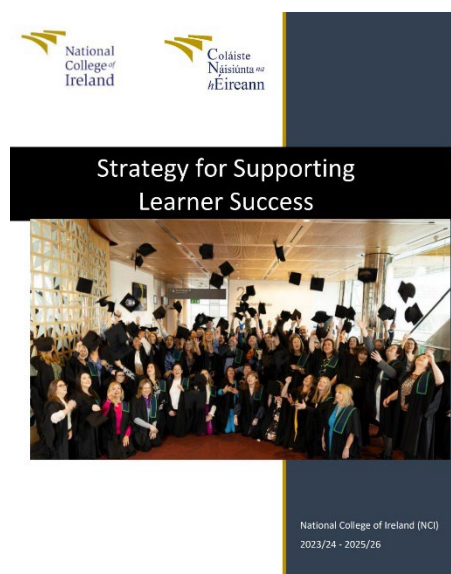
B. Learner Success

Figure 2: NCI's new Learner Success Strategy 2023-25

During the reporting period, NCI's Registrar led the development of a new Learner Success Strategy for the 2023-2025 period, which set out major objectives that would support the delivery of the College's Strategic Plan commitments relating to Students. This new strategy represents the culmination of significant work undertaken by many staff and students through the Streamlining Student Success Initiative, reported on in the previous AQR (2021-22).

This Learner Success Strategy was approved and launched in Autumn 2023 and its' early-stage implementation will be assessed and included as a Case-study in our Institutional Self-Evaluation Report in August 2024. The Strategy commits the College, supported by its Registry, Quality and Institutional Effectiveness and other support services, to prioritise resources and put effort into evidence-based interventions to promote learner success. It includes a commitment to measuring the impact of these interventions over the coming strategic plan period.

C. Programmes of Education and Training

During the academic year 2022-23, the College pursued innovative new programme developments in a range of disciplines, in line with our Strategic Plan 2022-27 priorities.

The Centre for Education and Lifelong Learning (CELL) was active in developing further new micro-credential programmes aimed at individuals working in education development or teaching roles and seeking to upskill or reskill at postgraduate level. The latest addition to the micro-credential portfolio was a certificate in Digital Learning Design and Technology-Enhanced learning at NFQ Level 9. The CELL suite of micro-credentials is a significant portfolio supporting lifelong learner for educators.

During the year, the School of Business secured QQI Validation for some of NCI's most popular and long-standing CIPD-awarded Diplomas and Certificates in the professional HR and Learning and Development fields. This strategic move will serve to further strengthen the reputation of these programmes in the Irish (and wider EU) HR domain and make it easier for graduates of the programmes to progress further in the Irish HE sector, since their qualifications will henceforth be recognised as fully aligned with the NFQ as well as fully aligned with CIPD's professional standards.

Speaking directly to NCI's Strategic Plan ambitions for teaching and research, the 2022-23 academic year saw the development and successful QQI validation of a ground-breaking new suite of postgraduate programmes in the emerging field of Open Data Practice. In partnership with research-intensive partners in universities in Rome, Vienna and Bucharest, the Cloud Computing team in the School of Computing worked with industry to develop exciting new Master's, PG Diploma and Certificate programmes in Open Data Practice. These are, we believe, the first fully accredited postgraduate education and training offerings in Open Data in the Irish HE sector and among the first across the EHEA. The College will target recruitment of post-doctoral researchers and individuals working to realise Open Data objectives across public sector and industry settings, both nationally and internationally.

2.1 Initiatives within the Institution related to Academic Integrity

Between May and September of 2023, the Learning Teaching and Assessment subcommittee, Library and Digital Learning Design teams worked to produce guiding principles for students and staff regarding the use of AI in assessment, which were published to staff and students in September of 2023. These documents are advisories that work under the existing [Policy on Assessments and use of AI Generated Material such as ChatGPT](#) which was published to staff and students in June 2023.

Use of AI in Teaching and Learning: Student Guide

How AI can be used responsibly while studying in NCI

[Student Guide](#)
[AI Text Generators Resources](#)
[Referencing & Avoiding Plagiarism](#)
[Turnitin](#)
[Library Academic Support Centre](#)
[Academic Integrity](#)

Looking to reference the use of AI in your assignment?

Figure 3: Library guides on AI in assessment for students

The College position is that AI tools can be positive and powerful supports for learners and staff when used in ethical and acceptable ways. The documents/guidelines mentioned above are aimed at spreading awareness of ethical usage, while giving staff and learners guidelines to follow to ensure that this is the case.

Importantly, the emphasis of these guides is that students need to provide evidence of any AI usage, so that staff can make informed decisions; and in turn staff need to ensure that they are clear as to what constitutes appropriate AI use in their assignment descriptors.

The main documentation consists of the following:

- [Student Guide](#)
- [Updated Assignment Cover Sheet](#)
- [Staff Advisory](#)

The college's LMS, Moodle, was updated with a homepage announcement of this, as well as a new section of the navbar which holds the student-centered documents.

AI and avoiding Plagiarism

With the advent of generative AI tools like ChatGPT, NCI has established clear guidelines for their ethical and proper use in academic learning and assessments. You can access this guide [here](#), as well as under the "Avoiding Plagiarism" dropdown at the top of this page. If you plan to use AI into your assignments in any capacity, please ensure that you:

1. **Discuss with your lecturer.**
2. Thoroughly review both the 'Use of AI Student Guidelines' and the assessment guidelines set by your lecturer.
3. Document any AI usage on the 'Project Cover Sheet' found in the 'Avoiding Plagiarism' dropdown above.

Figure 4: Pinned Moodle Announcement

The library continues to develop additional supports for Academic Integrity on the College website, <https://www.ncirl.ie/Students/Academic-Integrity> and there is an extensive Academic Integrity presence on the Library Website <https://libguides.ncirl.ie/academicintegrity> - with (sub-tab – questions & concerns; staff/instructor resources/NAIN/Use of AI in Teaching & Learning; Referencing & Avoiding Plagiarism; Turnitin; Plagiarism Tutorial

Academic Integrity at NCI
At National College of Ireland, we are committed as staff and students to acting responsibly and ethically; to embrace integrity in all of our actions and interactions.

Policies
Policies relating to academic integrity and that outline how students and staff are expected to behave in an ethical and responsible manner are available to view and download, these are regularly refreshed and approved by our Academic Council.

- o [Academic Integrity Statement](#)
- o [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- o [Guidance on use of ChatGPT and other artificial intelligence](#) - This is a draft policy prepared by Professor Leo Casey. It is intended to supplement and clarify existing policy not as a replacement to any existing policy.

Academic Integrity Supports

Library Initiatives:

[Academic Integrity Newsletter](#): - NCI Faculty and Staff newsletter on developments in Academic Integrity @NCI.

[Academic Integrity Workshop with International Students](#) : the first of this new series of workshops took place in January 2023 (workshop given by College Librarian & Academic Support Librarian). This will become a regular feature of the Library's Academic Support services for students.

LASC: Library Academic Support Centre – Academic Writing Skills Module:

https://libguides.ncirl.ie/academic_writing_skills

https://libguides.ncirl.ie/academic_writing_skills

My Print Center Myapps portal Scopus Certification... LibApps Home - Lib... International Centre... JFLA World Library a... Planned Mainten... Planned Mainten... LPG FOREST Fram... #Act4DiamondDA... Library Publishing...


NCI WEBSITE COURSES STUDENTS STAFF

NCI LIBRARY Library Login




Home Collections Guides and Help About Archive

Academic Writing Skills Guide: Home

Home What is Academic Writing? Planning & the Writing Process Beginning Your Writing Paragraphs, Introductions & Conclusions Revising, Editing & Proofreading Further Improve Your Writing



LIBRARY ACADEMIC SUPPORT CENTRE | **STUDY SKILLS**

Keep up to date on any library news and resources by following @NCILibrary on   

Communications from the Library: Please note all communications from the library concerning renewal of books, overdue books and reservations will be sent to your NCI student email account.

3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period

3.1 QA and QE supporting the Achievement of Strategic Objectives

No.	Relevant objectives Note: Include reference to the relevant section of the preceding AQR, where applicable Relevant objectives from the 2022-27 Strategic Plan: Implementation Plan (Governing Body 2023-24)	Planned actions and indicators <i>Note: Include details of unit responsible, and how planned action will address the relevant strategic priority and/or reengagement advice/CINNTE recommendation.</i> <i>If the institution is preparing for cyclical review, include how the planned actions will address the relevant review objective(s).</i>
1	Students Be a recognised leader in sustainability, with our commitments evident across our physical infrastructure, academic programmes, research & graduate attributes	Working with others across the College, the Quality and Institutional Effectiveness Office in NCI will support the achievement of the following planned actions during the 2023-24 year/AQR reporting period: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Update to QA Policy and Procedures on Programme Development, Approval, Review and Revalidation (including new QA procedures to facilitate ERASMUS study mobility) The above action will address CINNTE Objective on <i>Governance and Management of Quality</i> . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii) Refresh student data reporting structures, processes and key roles and responsibilities, improving access to reliably accurate student-related data which supports programme and module sustainability. The above action will address CINNTE Objectives on <i>Teaching, Learning and Assessment</i> and on <i>Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review</i>

		<p>iii) Learning Outcomes for Sustainability: Audit of curriculum repository</p> <p>The above action will address CINNTE Objectives on <i>Teaching, Learning and Assessment</i> and on <i>Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review</i></p>
2	<p>Students</p> <p>Embed sustainability informed globalisation as an explicit feature of NCI International programmes & graduates</p>	<p>i) Successfully complete the IEM (International Education Mark) QQI application process.</p> <p>The above action will address CINNTE Objective on <i>Governance and Management of Quality</i></p> <p>ii) Extend QA Scope of Provision to enable online national and transnational programme delivery and agree a project plan for transnational, online programme development.</p> <p>The above action will address CINNTE Objective on <i>Governance and Management of Quality and Teaching, Learning and Assessment</i>.</p>
3	<p>Teaching:</p> <p>Future-Proof NCI's Portfolio of Programmes & Ensure Alignment with Sustainability Strategy.</p>	<p>Working with others across the College, the Quality and Institutional Effectiveness Office in NCI will support the achievement of the following planned actions during the 2023-24 year/AQR reporting period:</p> <p>i) Ensure data from annual programme monitoring, and other QA feedback processes informs decisions across the Programme Lifecycle.</p> <p>The above action will address CINNTE Objectives on <i>Governance and Management of Quality, Teaching, Learning and Assessment</i> and <i>Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review</i></p>

		<p>ii) Ensure that resource implications arising from programme development/review are shared in advance with relevant Services including; admissions, exams, the Library, Work placement (Careers), IT, Teaching Enhancement and Digital Learning Design, and Academic Operations).</p> <p>The above action will address CINNTE Objectives in <i>Teaching, Learning and Assessment</i></p>
4	NCI Positioning	<p>Working with others across the College, the Quality and Institutional Effectiveness Office in NCI will support the achievement of the following planned actions during the 2023-24 year/AQR reporting period:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) QQI deadlines achieved to support success in the Institutional Review Process (CINNTE). ii) Project team established to assess NCI requirements prior to making a Delegated Authority Application to QQI.

3.2 Reviews planned for Upcoming Reporting Periods

Unit to be reviewed	Date of planned review	Date of last review
Programme Validation		
MSc/PG Dip in Business Analytics for Decision-Making	27 th March 2024	n/a
Department of Social Protection Certificate in Operations Management	6 th March 2024	n/a
Programme Revalidation		
Higher Certificate in International Financial Services (Apprenticeship)	14 th February 2024	July 2017
MSc PG Dip in Data Analytics	21 st February 2024	July 2019
Department of Social Protection Certificates (suite of bespoke programmes)	6 th March 2024	September 2018
BA (Hons) Recruitment Practice (Apprenticeship)	13 th March 2024	June 2020
Higher Diploma in Financial Service Analytics (Apprenticeship)	17 th April 2024	July 2017
BSc (Hons) Data Science (plus embedded programmes)	8 th May 2024	June 2019
Thematic/Support Service Review		
Review of Unified Academic Operations Structure	29 th February 2024 Other dates to be determined.	June 2018

3.2.1 Reviews planned for Next Reporting Period (2024-2025)

Institutional Review
Institutional Quality Review (CINNTE)

Programme Revalidation
Certificate in Emerging Digital Technologies
Certificate in Trade Union Studies
MSc/PG Diploma in Cloud Computing
Certificate in Educational Practice for P-Tech, Certificate in Strategies of Learning and Teaching for P-Tech
MSc/PG Diploma in Cloud Computing
Certificate in Business Analysis
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Education and Care
Higher Certificate in Arts in Early Childhood Education and Care
Certificate in Curriculum and Pedagogical Practice for Early Childhood Home Visiting
Certificate in Leadership, Governance and Change Management in Early Childhood Home Visiting
Certificate in Early Childhood Education and Care
MA in Educational Practice.
PG Diploma in Educational Practice in Teaching and Learning for Further Education
Certificate in Learning and Technology (CLTECH), Certificate in Technology Enhanced Learning (CTEL) Level 7
Micro-Credentials: Certificate in Digital Capabilities and the Learner Experience, Certificate in Technologies for Teaching and Learning, Certificate in Technologies for Assessment, Feedback and Learner Support
Thematic/Support Service Review
Review of NCI Library Services

3.2.2 Reviews planned beyond Next Reporting Period

N/A

4.0 Additional Themes and Case Studies

QQI Theme: Access, Transfer and progression: exploring pathways and innovations from FE – HE

Case-study A: Widening Access from Further to Higher Education: The NCI Higher Certificate in Business

1. Introduction & Context

The Higher Certificate in Business has been a cornerstone of the academic programmes provided by NCI for over two decades. It is a multi-purpose award with a broad educational base in business designed to maximise entry, transfer, and progression for a wide range of learners. The programme consists of applied and conceptual modules that provide learners with a solid foundation in the field of business that provide the opportunity for graduates to progress further in their education or enter supervisory or administrative roles should they decide to leave education following the completion of this programme of study. Despite the changes and challenges to the third level landscape this programme continues to provide learners with access to third level education, progression routes to further qualifications, and career opportunities. Importantly the Higher Certificate in Business provides life chances as it leads to the development of knowledge and skills, but also self-esteem and self-confidence. The revalidation of the Higher Certificate in Business provided the valuable opportunity to further widen access to those from Colleges/Institutes of Further Education.

2. Programme Revalidation Objectives

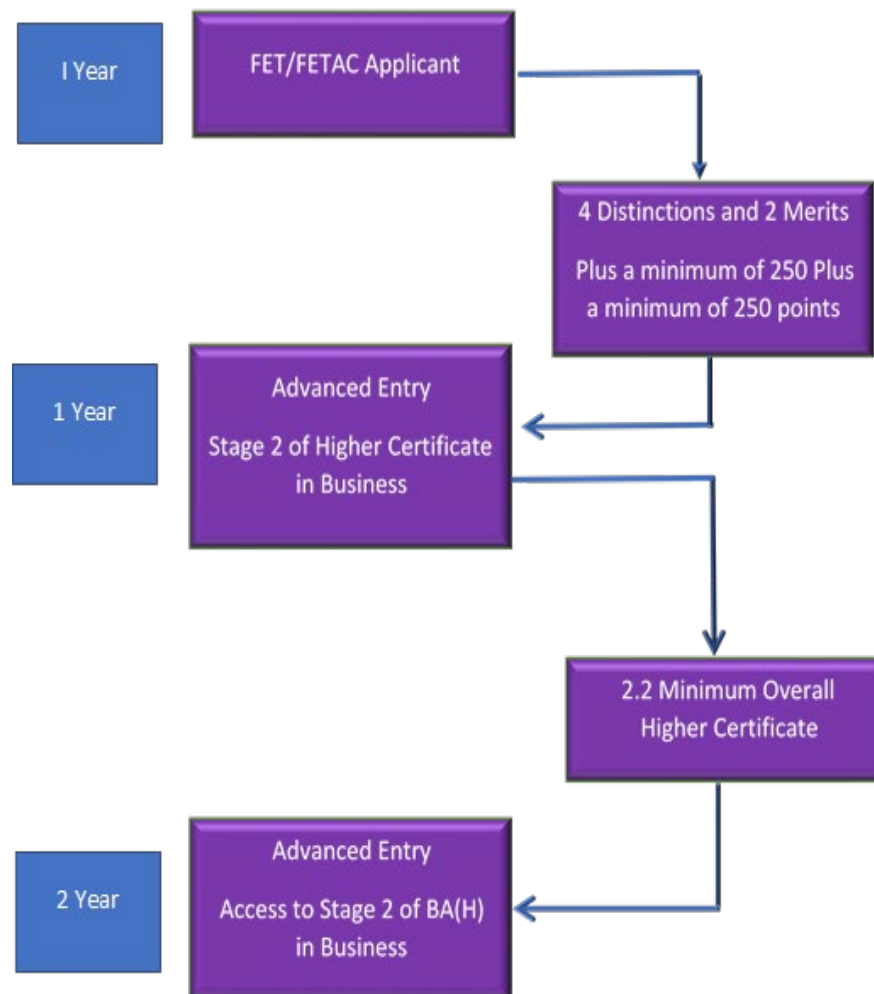
The Higher Certificate in Business was revalidated in 2023 and one of the key objectives of the revalidation was to support Government policy to extend and expand pathways and access opportunities to learners coming from Colleges/Institutes of Further Education. In preparation for the revalidation the courses provided by Further Education Colleges/Institutes were researched and consulted with to evaluate the possibility of widening access to the Higher Certificate in Business in NCI.

Following consultation with a range of stakeholders including current and past students, the programme team, and those with experience and expertise in Further Education, the programme was revised. The practical skills and theoretical foundation in business required to complete the HCBS were considered, and fundamental changes were made to the programme schedule for Stage

1/Year 1 and Stage 2/Year 2 of the programme. In Year 1 the objective was to embed key knowledge and skills required for business and in Year 2 to provide a solid foundation in the field of business. This revised structure provided for the development of key skills and knowledge, but also significantly for the widening of access for learners to the programme as admission to the programme would now be possible in both Year 1 and Year 2.

Following the revalidation of the programme access to the Higher Certificate in Business has been widened to include school leavers who apply under the CAO system, mature, and DARE/HEAR applicants, but also applicants from FET/FETAC Level 5 will now be considered for entry to Stage 2 of the programme on successful achievement of 3 distinctions and the equivalent of 250 CAO points.

Figure 5: Pathways to entry and progression from the Higher Certificate



3. Programme Progress

The academic year 2023/2024 is the first year of the programme post-programmatic review. The uptake of places on the programme has significantly increased on previous years. There are currently over 30 students registered on this programme which compares favourably with a total of 21 registered learners in 2021. Based on the feedback from students they are enjoying the modules and learning challenges presented. They have demonstrated a high level of success in completing the required assessments.

4. Looking Forward

As Year 2 of the revalidated programme will commence in September 2024 attention now turns to reaching out to connect and communicate with College/Institutes of Further Education to inform them that access to the Higher Certificate in Business programme is available to their students for both Stage 1/Year 1 and Stage 2/Year 2, subject to the required entry requirements, for the academic year 2024/25. As part of NCI's revised Annual Programme Monitoring (APM) process and student feedback mechanisms, we will actively monitor and assess the impact of the revised FE entry pathways in the coming period.

5. Every Learner Matters

The Higher Certificate in Business programme speaks to current Government policy and the College's mission to widen access and participation at third level education, as well as our core belief that every learner matters. This programme aims to provide a wider range of learners with the skills and knowledge to position themselves as business studies graduates and to provide them with the opportunity to progress further in their personal, academic, and career development. The inclusion of students from Colleges/Institutes of Further Education will provide enhanced learning opportunities for all involved in the programme.

QQI Theme: Access, Transfer and progression: exploring pathways and innovations from FE – HE

Case-study B: BUILDING REFLECTIVE SKILLS TO SUPPORT LEARNING AND TRANSITIONING TO EDUCATION BEYOND POST PRIMARY: NCI CERTIFICATE IN P-TECH PROGRAMME

CONTEXT

The P-TECH initiative was launched in 2021 Dublin's North-East Inner City (NEIC), to provide secondary students in the area with an enriching, and early experience of Higher Education, aiming to help them to develop a range of skills, realise their potential as learners and connect to new learning and career pathways beyond school. P-TECH is an innovative model of education-industry collaboration that was developed in the USA by IBM and local educators to build technology skills. In Ireland, the model has been adapted within a partnership collaboration across Higher Education (HE), schools, government and industry partners. Supported by the Department of Education and Skills in and in partnership with the NEIC and Industry partners, the National College of Ireland (NCI) as academic partner had the responsibility of designing, developing and supporting the delivery of a new *Certificate in P-TECH* programme.

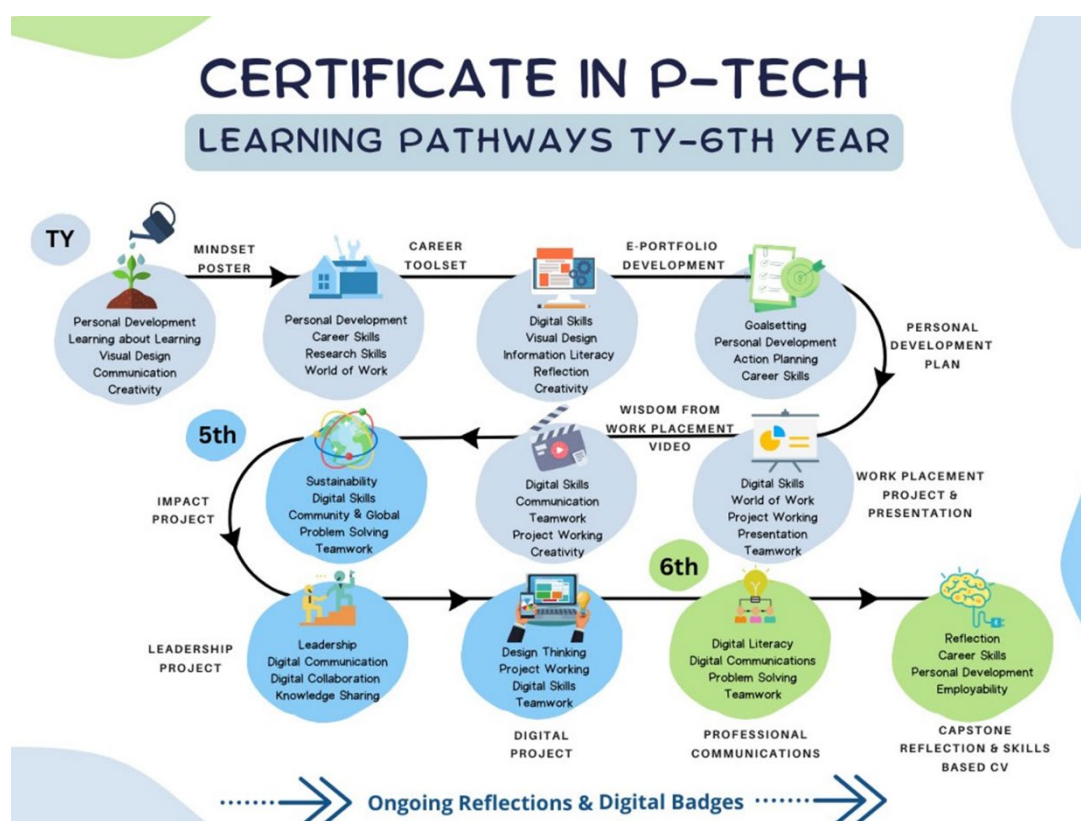
The *Certificate in P-TECH* is a QQI Level 6 Special Purpose Award (10 ECTS) which is delivered in the senior cycle of schools offering a second transcript to students in addition to the Leaving Certificate. The programme has been designed to provide students with foundational skills and experiences to enhance their learning and to provide a 'bridge' to their future employability and learning. The programme comprises two modules which introduce students to digital skills, business knowledge, 21st Century skills and tools for their personal development.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE IN THE PROGRAMME

Among its programme objectives, the *Certificate in P-TECH* aims to embed important personal development learning opportunities that will help students to manage their learning, future career choices and personal development. The programme seeks to empower students and creates multiple opportunities for students to learn about collaboration, project working, problem-solving and also how to reflect on learning and experiences. From a pedagogical perspective, reflection is considered an important way for students to enhance their learning, to build greater autonomy and awareness

of their role in learning, to build confidence in their abilities and achievements and to build a habit of identifying actions or solutions.

Students are introduced to reflection during Transition Year (TY) and learn how to write structured reflections using the *What, So What, Now What* model (Rolfe et al., 2001; O’Driscoll, 2007). Reflections are embedded within many assessments throughout the programme offering students an opportunity to write a reflective blog or to complete a reflection using a vlog within their ePortfolio. A list of required reflections is provided but students are also free to include additional reflections. The following graphic illustrates the learning pathways and assessments on the programme. Reflective tasks are embedded into assessments to encourage students to think about what they have learned and how to transfer this learning to other activities in the programme.



In addition to capturing reflections on learning, reflective practice serves as a tool *for* learning on the programme. Following their TY work placement, students work collaboratively to create a “Wisdom from Work Placement” video which is their reflection on what they did, what they learned and what they might do differently. The video is created as a useful resource for future TY students and provides an opportunity for students to share their learning. Reflection is also used as a tool to build confidence and self-awareness on the Certificate in P-TECH. At the end of the programme, 6th Year students

complete a capstone reflection to identify the skills they have gained. The process of reflecting helps the development of a skills-based CV and provides a useful pause for students to acknowledge their achievements and to articulate their skills. The box below illustrates how reflection is embedded into assessment activities. As part of their learning about how to develop an ePortfolio, students are prompted to reflect.

STAGE 5: YOUR REFLECTION ON LEARNING – TO BE ADDED TO BLOG (20%)

EPORTFOLIO REFLECTION ON MY LEARNING

This is your chance to show your learning on this project. By developing an ePortfolio, you have learned new digital skills, how to create content and also how to make changes when you get feedback. You have also learned about your own abilities and perhaps how you manage creative work, writing or challenges. Here are some prompts to help you reflect:

- What have you learned about yourself while building your ePortfolio?
- What have you learned about working on an extended project like building an ePortfolio?
- What digital skills have you gained from building your ePortfolio?
- What have you learned about the importance of including relevant and appropriate content?
- What was the hardest part of developing your ePortfolio?
- What did you enjoy the most?
- What, if anything, would you do differently next time?
- How will you make sure you maintain and develop your ePortfolio over the P-TECH programme?

CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

Initially, student responses to reflective writing were not positive. Reflections were seen as quite onerous and many students did not see the value of writing reflections at all. Teachers reported that for certain students, the task was difficult and motivation was low. At the beginning of the pilot, two reflective frameworks were introduced and this proved confusing. Some explanations in the accompanying course book proved too difficult and there was a lack of exemplars to guide students and teachers. The feedback provided an opportunity to enhance the role of reflection in the programme rather than remove the opportunity of benefiting from it.

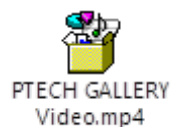
In response to feedback, the reflection course book was amended and simplified. Instead of introducing two reflective frameworks to classes, this was reduced to one (What, So What, Now What)

and the course book added resources such as videos, activities and examples of student reflections. The number of required reflections was reduced and the topic of reflection was introduced at a later stage in the programme so that students were more ready to engage with it. While reflective writing remained a feature of the programme, a choice of using vlog entries was also introduced to encourage wider engagement.

IMPACT FROM TY TO 6th YEAR

A Dept. of Education interim evaluation of the programme pilot observed that the P-TECH students were *“particularly articulate and confident in their discussions during the evaluation; this was notable. Very high levels of student confidence was something that was also common across the three schools.”*(DOE, 2023).

While there are many other skills and areas of learning to account for student development in the programme, the ability to articulate their learning can be seen as connected to students’ ability to reflect on their learning. At the end of the first year of the pilot, an internal review of students’ reflective work was undertaken to explore students’ reflective practice. The following video captures a cross section of students’ reflection and contains direct quotes from their reflective work. While, at this stage, there were many students who continue to struggle with reflection, the video clearly demonstrates students’ capacity to engage with thinking about their learning and experiences.



Now, at the third year of the pilot, discussions with teachers in the P-TECH schools reveal that many students manage their reflections more seamlessly and that the current 6th Year students have an increased awareness of the purpose and benefits of reflection. Teachers have reported an elevated level of competence among 6th Year students in discussing their learning, their strengths and skills.

While there is a need to engage in more formal research, there is emerging evidence that the programme’s incremental and sustained approach to creating reflective habits has helped students to build greater confidence and awareness while also helping them to be more proactive and positive about their continuous development. The following excerpts from recent 6th Year reflections seem to indicate an understanding of what they have gained and how this can benefit them as they embark on their next steps.

Samples of 6th Year Reflections

“I think the most useful skill I learned was the teamwork and collaboration skill. I was always a reserved student, preferring to work by myself. But the P-Tech course allowed me to reach beyond my comfort zone and work with classmates I never talked to and learn to utilise our unique individual skills, towards a united goal. I feel I have become more comfortable working in groups and engaging in teamwork. In our interconnected world, everything is done through teamwork, and now I feel I am capable of entering the workspace with my expanded abilities. In conclusion, the P-Tech course has been enlightening. The connection between the world of work and our education system has prepared me enough so now that I feel ready to enter the next step of my journey.”

...

“Throughout the P-Tech course I have managed to learn many useful abilities. The ability to do teamwork and collaboration, project working and personal development. I had a general idea of teamwork even before P-Tech, due to school and group work, but I feel like I learnt more about it with the P-Tech assignments. One example of when I learnt more about teamwork and collaboration was during the P-Tech internship when I was part of the marketing team. We were told to organise our team by distributing various roles to each member. This was the first time I came across such an efficient way of working as a team. I feel like this skill will be important regardless of what I decide to work as. Teamwork is crucial when doing something.

Project working is another skill that I also had a bit of knowledge about before doing P-Tech as I had completed a few CBAs at school. However, project working was taken to a whole new level in P-Tech. Along with the enhanced teamwork the projects required more input and thinking than the school ones. Now I don't have any main problems with harder project, while before P-Tech I might have struggled with deciding what to start with or maybe I wouldn't know how to polish up my project. I feel like this skill is important if I end up working in a job which has a lot of project working.

Finally, I feel like my personal development has been a lot more effective ever since I started P-Tech. During 4th year I learnt about the SMART goals which are perfect for personal development. Now I know how to set realistic goals and how to achieve them. I think this is a skill that is crucial in any

part of life. In conclusion, the P-Tech course has been very educational. Now, I feel prepared to go onwards in my life's path at this point.”

QQI Theme: Development and use of Learner Assessment.

CASE-STUDY C: UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING (UDL) STRATEGIES FOR ASSESSMENT at NFQ Level 9

1. Introduction and Context:

The concept of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) has gained significant traction as a means to ensure inclusivity and accessibility for all learners. UDL principles advocate for the creation of flexible learning environments, materials and strategies that accommodate diverse learning preferences, and needs. In this case study, we explore the implementation of UDL principles in assessment design within the context of a Level 9 module on *Technology Enhanced Learning*.

2. Summary of the Initiative: Aims, Objectives, Rationale:

The initiative aimed to showcase to students how to implement UDL strategies for assessment design, leveraging technology while providing choice in submission formats. The first assignment (CA1) allowed students to develop various types of reports such as podcasts, blogs, vlogs, narrated PowerPoint presentations, rather than a traditional written report:

*“You are tasked with engaging with a learning technology/digital medium of your choice. You must evaluate and analyse this technology in relation to your teaching area and present your findings. Findings should be compiled into a report on the potential usage of this technology with either an existing group of learners or a group that you potentially will teach. This may be delivered using a digital medium of your choice (e.g. video, written essay, podcast, blog posts).
Indicative effort: 2000 words (essay, blog posts)/15 minutes (video essay/audio podcast)”*

This flexibility catered to different learning preferences and skills, promoting inclusivity within the classroom.

For the second assessment (CA2), students were tasked with creating a short course on a learning management system:

*“You are tasked with developing a short course through a learning management system for a cohort of students of your choosing.
This short course must combine several appropriate technologies in order to create educational resources that addresses Content delivery (blended, online and face-to-face potential), Peer*

interaction and assessment of learning. The development of this short course will be anchored by an inquiry cycle, which will support your reflective process in considering how a combination of technologies and design approaches will enhance the learning of your target students/target audience.”

Typically, this assessment requires individualised support, scaffolding and formative feedback. In support of this, students were provided with a virtual **T**eaching-**A**ssistant trained on the module brief and a list of FAQs to answer any ongoing questions, thereby enhancing “*just in time*” supports for students as they progressed through the task.



Yes, you can create your own learning outcomes for your course.



Does my course have to be a real course or can I pick a topic that I am interested in?



You can create a course of your own choice, within reason (hobby, special interest). Please reach out if you are creating a topic based on a hobby so I can best support you.

Image 1.1: “Meta Mike” AI virtual teaching assistant

3. Findings:

Since the implementation of UDL in assessment design, several notable outcomes have emerged. Firstly, students reported a heightened sense of *engagement and motivation* as they were empowered to choose submission formats aligned with their strengths and preferences. Secondly, the provision of a virtual teaching assistant significantly reduced barriers to access information and support, particularly for students with specific learning difficulties or disabilities or those requiring additional assistance.

Additionally, analysis of student performance for CA1 indicated a slight difference in assessment outcomes between those who opted for traditional written reports and those who chose alternative formats:

Assessment Submission Type	Average Marks %
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CA1 Average marks for traditional written reports	69.4%
CA1 Average marks for alternative UDL production	70%

Table 1.1.: Analysis of performance.

This suggests that UDL strategies do not compromise academic rigor or potential performance but if anything, they can serve to enhance accessibility and engagement. A final analysis of the assessment strategy for this module was offered from the external examiner, who was particularly supportive of the inclusive approach demonstrated:

"Again, it is clear that there is really strong work going on across this module. The reports produced in the first assignment reveal insightful analysis on TEL within FE contexts. Again, in relation to assignment two, and as with last year, I was also very impressed with the high quality of the TEL courses created in Moodle by the students. They really seem to be applying some of the learning from other modules (eg. Strategies and Diversity and Inclusion) in terms of design but also inclusive design following UDL principles. Again, I want to stress how that the screencast walkthrough of assignment two was particularly helpful. More generally, the assessment briefs are clear, inclusive and marking is aligned to rubrics and learning outcomes. The quality of work and the grades are clearly appropriate for the programme level. The students are really benefiting from very in-depth and developmental feedback."

External Examiner feedback, Jan, 2024

4. Future Plans and Lessons Learned:

Looking ahead, there are several considerations for future implementation.

- Continuous training and professional development for educators is are essential to ensure effective integration of UDL principles into assessment design.
- The utilisation of artificial intelligence as a way to enhance support processes, such as a virtual teaching assistant, merits continued exploration.

Lessons learned from this initiative underscore the importance of flexibility, empathy, and student collaboration in designing inclusive assessments. By prioritizing the diverse needs of learners and embracing innovative approaches, educators can create meaningful learning experiences that empower all students to succeed.

5. Conclusion:

The implementation of UDL in assessment design represents a significant step towards creating inclusive environments for learners. By providing choice, flexibility, and support, educators can foster better engagement, promote equity, and unlock the full potential of every learner. This case study

serves as a testament to the transformative power of UDL and AI in education and underscores the importance of continued efforts to advance inclusive practices in assessment design.