

Cork Institute of Technology

Annual Institutional Quality Assurance Report 2019

Based on the reporting period 1 September 2017 – 31 August 2018



The Cyclical Review Process

Part 1

Overview of internal QA governance, policies and procedures

Overarching institution-level approach and policy for QA (ESG 1.1)

1. Overarching Institution Quality Policy

A brief synopsis of the overarching institution quality policy which sets out the links between QA policy and procedures and the strategy and strategic management of the institution.

Cork Institute of Technology recently adopted a [new Strategic Plan for the 2018 – 2023 period](#).

This Strategic Plan – the Institute’s third – spans and anticipates one of the most important periods in CIT’s institutional history to date, that of its transformation, jointly with Institute of Technology Tralee, into a leading international Technological University. The Strategic Plan thus sets out and offers a Strategic Vision and a set of institutional Values and Strategic Priorities intended to guide not just the continued growth of Cork Institute of Technology, but also the initial stages in the development of a new and even more diverse technological university, which will be focused on making a positive impact and enriching the social, cultural and economic life of the region and nationally.

To achieve this impact, the new Munster Technological University will continue to provide education, research and other services which are strongly linked to the needs of the university’s stakeholders while also enabling and fostering ambition and innovation within the institution and in the extended region it supports. The technological university will provide offerings across a broad discipline mix encompassing STEM and maritime studies, business studies, humanities, and the creative and performing arts, spanning a broad range of NFQ levels from 6 to 10. This breadth of provision will enable the university to balance the needs of society and enterprise with the ambitions of prospective students and its institutional strategic priorities.

Building an organisational culture which is focused on responsiveness and inclusivity, the new university will provide educational and advancement opportunities to the broadest possible cohort of individuals. Knowledge, and in particular the use of knowledge (which describes the broad range of institutional activities from education and training to research and knowledge exchange/transfer) will remain the principal means by which the technological university fulfils its enduring mission and achieves its strategic goals and priorities.

As the Strategic Plan is being implemented, a set of institutional Values, which articulate the ethos, principles and ideals at the core of CIT’s and the MTU’s organisational culture, will underpin and guide all institutional actions and decisions. These values are Inclusivity, Collaboration, Creativity & Innovation, Integrity, and Excellence.

The 2015 *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education* (ESG) emphasise that “[t]he role of quality assurance is crucial in supporting higher education [...] institutions” in responding to the need for a more student-centred approach, with flexible learning

paths and mechanisms for recognising competences gained outside of formal education, and to the increasing diversification of institutional missions and modes of education provision “while ensuring the qualifications achieved by students and their experience of higher education remain at the forefront of institutional missions”. ([Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area \(ESG\)](#), Brussels, Belgium, 2015, p. 6)

The Strategic Priorities set out in CIT’s institutional strategy for 2018 - 2023 fully resonate with the developmental trends in the European higher education landscape summarised in the ESG:

- Social, cultural and economic impact, regionally and nationally;
- Excellent student experience and high quality education;
- Research, engagement and knowledge transfer which is innovative, relevant and impactful;
- Inclusive access to education opportunities and a diverse student-body.

Cork Institute of Technology’s approach to quality assurance throughout has been to balance a need for institutional agility and responsiveness to learner and stakeholder needs with the absolute requirement to maintain and protect institutional award standards which consistently meet, if not exceed, all relevant national and international benchmark standards, starting with the National and European Qualifications Frameworks. In line with the understanding of quality assurance and its role which informs the ESG, the quality policies and procedures in place at CIT thus fully support the achievement of the strategic institutional priorities of the Institute – and its successor institution – while ensuring that CIT continues to make a significant and positive contribution to the system of higher education qualifications nationally and within the European higher education area.

CIT’s key academic quality processes, overseen by the Institute’s Governing Body and Academic Council and governed by its core [academic regulations and policies](#), focus on the twin aims of ensuring and enhancing the relevance and quality of the academic provision and of the student experience while also safeguarding the high standard and reputation of CIT awards at all levels.

Complementing its policies and procedures, CIT has established and resourced a number of dedicated units to drive and support the achievement of institutional aims, compact targets and national policy objectives in relation to widening access, regional and national engagement, diversification, internationalisation, and the provision of inclusive educational opportunities. Increasingly, the relevant offices and service units are able to derive strategic direction for their day-to-day work from one of the recently adopted service or activity area strategies, including for instance the [Technology-Enhanced Learning Strategy](#) or the [CIT External Engagement Strategy](#). At the same time, the compliance of the work of the different service units with relevant internal and external quality requirements and strategic priorities is subject to intermittent audit as per a schedule determined by the Internal Audit Committee of Governing Body in line with identified institutional priorities.

2. Quality assurance decision-making fora

A brief description of institution-level quality assurance decision-making fora

1. Legislative Context and Statutory Functions

The Irish Institutes of Technology are statutory entities established by act of government. Their functions are governed by the *Institutes of Technology Acts 1992 – 2006* and include provision of courses of study as well as research, consultancy and development work “for the [...] development of the State with particular reference to the region served by the College”. Their institutional mission is professionally orientated, with a strong focus on technology, science and applied research.

Institutes of Technology make awards under delegated authority from Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), the statutory qualifications and quality assurance authority for all providers of third-level education and training in Ireland, at specified levels of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). Continued exercise of the awarding powers is contingent on the successful completion of comprehensive, cyclical external reviews of the institutional governance, management and quality assurance mechanisms. These institutional reviews, organised and overseen by QQI, require a thorough institutional self-evaluation, followed by peer review in the form of a site visit from an independent external panel of national and international experts. All institutional review reports are published on the authority’s public website.

Cork Institute of Technology holds delegated authority to make awards for taught and research programmes to Masters’ level, and makes PhD awards in Electronic, Manufacturing and Mechanical Engineering, Computing and Physical and Life Sciences. Doctoral research programmes offered by the Institute in other fields of study lead to QQI awards. Full awarding powers to doctoral level across all discipline areas will accrue to the Institute on successful designation, jointly with Institute of Technology Tralee, as a Technological University.

2. Institutional Governance and Academic Management Structures

Statutory responsibility for the management of Cork Institute of Technology lies with the President and the Governing Body.

The Governing Body in conjunction with the President manages the affairs and the property of the Institute, with some functions specifically reserved for each. The members of Governing Body are appointed by the Minister for Education & Skills for a period of five years. Membership includes representation from significant external stakeholder constituencies of the Institute, as well as three members elected by CIT academic and administrative staff and two officers of the CIT Students’ Union. Governing Body carries out its work through a number of committees dedicated to particular functions, including long-standing Audit & Risk and Finance Committees and a more recently formed MTU Committee, and has adopted the amended 2012 Code of Governance for Institutes of Technology to govern its business practices.

Academic Council, the second statutory board of the Institute, advises Governing Body on academic matters and is responsible for the protection, maintenance and development of the academic standards and programmes. With over 100 members, the Institute has one of the largest and most

representative Academic Councils in the sector. This ensures that all significant academic issues are widely consulted on and debated across the Institute.

The President is the Institute's chief officer, supported in the execution of his functions by three Vice-Presidents and the Institute Executive Board (IEB).

The Registrar & Vice-President for Academic Affairs, the Vice-President for External Affairs and the Vice-President for Finance & Administration are responsible for managing the key central functions of CIT. The day-to-day administration of these functions is carried out by a number of Central Services Units attached to the office of each Vice-President and headed by a Central Services Manager.

The Institute Executive Board is a non-statutory committee set up in March 2004 with the introduction of a stratified management structure. The IEB is composed of the President, Vice-Presidents, Heads of Faculty, Head of Strategic Development, recently amplified by two Heads of School, the Chair of the Heads of Department Group, and the CIT MTU Project Director. It assists the President in the management of the Institute and formulates strategy and policy on academic and external matters, significant operational issues, and programmes & budgets for approval by the Governing Body.

The academic management structure of CIT is faculty-based. Recently consolidated, the institutional structure now comprises two large faculties distributed over four campuses. The Faculty of Business & Humanities encompasses two cognate schools as well as CIT's constituent music and art & design colleges. The Faculty of Engineering & Science includes three cognate schools and the National Maritime College of Ireland.

Cognate schools and constituent colleges are made up of 2 – 4 academic departments each, with exception of the National Maritime College of Ireland (NMCI). This houses only one academic department, but incorporates a Commercial Services division which manages all commercial activities and training courses. The programmes offered by the NMCI's Department of Maritime Studies also provide for the academic requirements of the Irish Naval Service.

The management of central Institute functions, such as admissions and entry of examination results, is largely handled by the central Institute administration and is supported by a suite of information systems. Individual faculties and colleges have executive responsibilities in matters related to faculty-level strategic planning, academic management and quality control.

As a publicly funded body, Cork Institute of Technology is accountable to the Higher Education Authority of Ireland (HEA) and is subject to external audit of its Annual Statutory Accounts by the Comptroller & Auditor General (C&AG). In addition, PricewaterhouseCoopers has been engaged by the Technological Higher Education Association (THEA) on behalf of the Institutes of Technology to carry out internal audits at national and individual Institute level. These reviews cover the full array of Institute activities, with internal support provided by the Vice-President for Finance & Administration.

3. Quality Assurance of Academic Provision

The validation (accreditation), monitoring and periodic review of academic programmes in Cork Institute of Technology is carried out under CIT's academic and quality assurance regulations as agreed with Quality and Qualifications Ireland.

For new taught programmes, validation is predicated on successful completion of both internal and independent external quality reviews. These include a review of the content and structure of the

proposed programme and of the staffing, resourcing levels and supports envisaged. The final decision on validation is taken by the Governing Body of CIT on the advice of the Institute's Academic Council.

Executive responsibility for the implementation of procedures for the validation and quality assurance of programmes lies with the Office of the Registrar & Vice-President for Academic Affairs. Programme validation is generally granted for five years, after which a review of the operation, enduring quality and continuing relevance of the programme is carried out to establish its eligibility for renewal of validation. This Programmatic Review is carried out on a school/college basis and takes into account the operational and strategic context as well as programme-level elements. The continuous monitoring and development of the academic programmes is a matter for the programme boards, which are comprised of heads of academic unit, programme staff and learner representatives. Assessment results and decisions on progression and award classification require ratification by the Academic Council.

Research degree provision is governed by comprehensive regulations for postgraduate research study. These cover all quality-relevant aspects of postgraduate education, with no distinctions as to process between programmes leading to CIT and QQI awards. Complementary policy documents covering, inter alia, ethical research practice, IP issues and conflict of interest establish a secure legal and ethical framework within which postgraduate education can take place, while strategic development of the institutional research environment falls within the remit of the CIT Research Office. Executive responsibility for maintenance of the research register and for decisions on admission, progression, transfer and submission lies with the Dean of Graduate Studies, who may draw on the advice of a Postgraduate Research Study Board (PRB). Within academic units, the monitoring and development of Structured PhD and Professional Doctorate programmes falls to doctoral programme panels established by the unit head on the advice of the unit's Research Studies Committee. Any taught modules offered as part of a structured research programme are validated and reviewed under the quality assurance process for taught programmes. Recommendations of the Postgraduate Examination Board on attainment are ratified by Academic Council and, for non-delegated authority awards, QQI.

A formal register of all current valid taught and research awards made by Cork Institute of Technology is maintained by the Office of the Registrar & VP for Academic Affairs. This listing, which was previously approved by Quality and Qualifications Ireland under the title 'Order in Council', is now formally adopted by the Institute's Academic Council.

4. Professional Accreditation

In professional fields subject to strong professional regulation or registrations requirements, CIT programmes may also need to achieve and maintain recognition or accreditation from relevant professional bodies or statutory bodies with regulatory powers, such as the Marine Survey Office within the Department of Transport, Tourism & Sport.

While the Institute affirms the primacy of the academic process, it takes professional requirements into account to the greatest extent possible when validating or reviewing the relevant programmes. Conversely, CIT endeavours to ensure the familiarity of the relevant professional organisations with its academic quality assurance procedures and criteria by e.g. inviting representatives onto academic review panels as observers or, where appropriate, professional panellists. CIT programmes are currently recognised by 30 separate professional organisations.

5. Quality Assurance of Collaborative Programmes

Validation/accreditation of collaborative provision is carried out in accordance with national and Institute policy governing quality assurance of collaborative programmes and joint awards. CIT's policies and procedures for making joint awards also align with the 2014 Sectoral Protocol for the Delegation of Authority (DA) by Quality and Qualifications Ireland [...] to make Joint Awards, though it might be worth noting that CIT had at that point already gained delegated authority for joint awards with University College Cork (UCC, 2011) and for named joint media awards with Hochschule Darmstadt, Germany (h_da, 2013). Formal Joint Awarding Agreements, incorporating appropriate provisions covering delegated authority conditions, are in place for all joint awards made by CIT. All collaborative programmes, irrespective of whether they lead to a CIT or joint award, are furthermore subject to detailed agreements governing the arrangements for provision and quality assurance of the programme, including assessment standards, learner protection, and the making of the award. These require prior approval of the CIT Academic Council and Governing Body before the collaborative programme can be validated.

With regard to existing joint awards with h_da and UCC, the joint institutions are operating well-established mechanisms for the validation, operation, ongoing monitoring and periodic review of the relevant programmes, including Joint Management Boards and, in the case of UCC, a Joint Board which makes recommendations to the CIT Academic Council and the Academic Board of UCC.

In the case of transnational awards in particular, some quality assurance processes require the involvement of external quality assurance agencies or statutory bodies. Thus, validation/accreditation and revalidation/re-accreditation of the joint awards with Hochschule Darmstadt necessitated the involvement of both HETAC/QQI and the Agentur für Qualitätssicherung durch Akkreditierung von Studiengängen (AQAS), one of several quality assurance agencies accredited by the German Accreditation Council nationally to carry out programme and system accreditations.

Confirmation of QA Policy and Procedures

1. Programme Design and Approval (ESG 1.2)

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance policy and procedures for the design and approval of new programmes.

The core policy document regulating the design and approval of new programmes at Cork Institute of Technology is the [Handbook for Module and Programme Approval](#).

This is supplemented by a policy and procedures for the [design and approval of Special Purpose, Minor and Supplementary Awards](#) specifically.

An omnibus [policy governing the curricular structure and credit profile of CIT programmes](#) under the Institute's modular framework provides guiding principles and parameters for the design and review of CIT programmes.

Amendments to modules and programme are also subject to approval, following a defined [procedure for module and programme changes](#).

The selection of independent internal and external experts for the review of new modules and programmes is subject to the Institute's [Policy on Conflict of Interest \(relating to the academic activities of CIT\)](#).

2. Programme Delivery and Assessment (ESG 1.3)

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance policies and procedures for the ongoing delivery and assessment of programmes.

CIT's regulations relating to assessment are embedded within the general sectorial framework for determination of assessment grades and award standards set out in [QQI's Assessment and Standards](#).

The specific regulations and procedures for the assessment of CIT programmes and the making of CIT awards are set out in the CIT [Regulations for Modules and Programmes \(Modules and Standards\)](#). These regulations apply to all programmes of Cork Institute of Technology.

With regard to the operation of examinations and continuous assessment, CIT has published policies, procedures and guidelines which

- set out the principles for the selection and appointment of [external examiners](#) and set out the rights and duties of externs (with work on revising the external examiner system underway);
- regulate the [conduct of candidates during examinations](#);
- set out the [Institute's overall policy on academic honesty](#), defining different types of academic dishonesty and misconduct and outlining the follow-up process for potential instances of misconduct;
- set out the [process for a formal inquiry into allegations of misconduct related to examinations and assessment](#); and
- set out a process for submission of [extenuating circumstances](#) related to non-completion of examinations and assessment tasks.

Candidates are furthermore provided with a published [process for notifying observed correction errors and appealing the outcomes of examinations and assessment](#).

Delivery of standard full-time undergraduate programmes takes place over two semesters of 13 weeks each, as per the [CIT framework for modularisation and semesterisation](#). Delivery modalities for postgraduate and part-time programmes are described in the relevant programme literature.

In addition, CIT delivers a number of fully online programmes. Delivery information for these is available on the webpages of the [Department of Technology-Enhanced Learning](#).

The [academic calendar of Cork Institute of Technology](#) is determined annually by a working party of Academic Council, taking into account feedback from the different internal stakeholder groups, and is published on the CIT website.

3. Research Quality (ESG 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.9)

Links and/or text relating to any specific quality assurance procedures for the design, approval, delivery, assessment and monitoring of research programmes, if they exist.

The key document for the quality assurance of research programmes offered by CIT are the Institute's [Regulations for Postgraduate Research Study](#). The postgraduate regulations govern the different stages of the postgraduate research student lifecycle, monitoring and supervision, submission and examination and award classification and also set out appeals and grievance procedures for postgraduate research students. The CIT frameworks for structured PhDs and for professional doctorates are included in appendices.

Guidelines for ethical research conduct are set out in the CIT [Code of Good Practice in Research](#). Ethical issues arising in the course of research which cannot be resolved with reference to the Code must be referred to the CIT Research Ethics Committee.

The [Policy on Conflict of Interest \(Relating to the Academic Activities of the Institute\)](#) is pertinent to the research context also and includes an appendix on avoidance of conflict specifically in the recruitment of external examiners for postgraduate research programmes.

With regard to research outputs, an [Intellectual Property Policy](#) is in place in the Institute, which is made available to researchers together with a number of supporting operational documents.

The quality assurance policies and procedures for postgraduate research study are embedded into the wider [CIT research infrastructure](#).

The strategic development of research is supported and steered by the CIT Research Office, led by the Head of Research. The Research Office has a leading role in developing the CIT Research & Innovation Strategy and also facilitates the implementation of the [CIT Researcher Career Framework](#). Innovation and knowledge transfer activities arising from the research activity are coordinated and supported by the Innovation & Enterprise Office.

Provision and quality assurance of postgraduate research education lie within the remit of the School of Graduate Studies, headed by the Dean of Graduate Studies. Comprehensive information about postgraduate study opportunities, available supports (including the CIT Rísam PhD Scholarships) and key policies and supporting documents can be accessed via the [web pages of the CIT Graduate School](#).

4. Student Lifecycle (ESG 1.4)

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures that are encompassed by the student lifecycle.

Access and Admission

Application for admission into Year 1 of CIT full-time programmes is made through the Central Applications Office (CAO), the agency responsible for processing undergraduate applications on behalf of Irish higher education institutions. The decision on admissions is taken by the Institute, which instructs the CAO to make offers to successful candidates. Application for entry into full-time post-Year 1 programmes is made directly to CIT.

Admissions criteria and information on admission, registration and commencement of studies can be found in the [Student Admissions and Registration](#) area of the CIT website. Procedures for application and admission as well as general and programme-specific entry requirements are also detailed in the [CIT prospectus](#). Admissions requirements and procedures for international students are outlined in the [International Students](#) section of the website.

Procedures and guidelines for mature applicants are provided in the prospectus and on the [Mature Students](#) section of the CIT website.

Extensive information on the Institute's access procedures and supports for learners from under-represented groups, including members of ethnic minorities and learners presenting with disabilities or learning differences, can be accessed through the web pages of [CIT's Access Service](#). CIT also operates schemes for supported progression to higher education from designated DEIS schools ([Linked Schools Programme](#)) and further education colleges (Cork Colleges Scheme).

Student induction is organised by the [AnSEO Student Engagement Office](#) as part of the Institute-wide [Good Start](#) programme. The [New Students](#) section on the MyCIT student portal also provides clear and detailed information on CIT specifically tailored to new students.

Progression

Eligible full-time continuing students are automatically enrolled for each new academic year. Eligible full-time students with programme options and graduates progressing to follow-on programmes at the next-higher NFQ level (e.g. from Level 7 to Level 8) are sent a registration form by the Admissions Office in early August.

General regulations for the progression between programme stages are contained in the [CIT Regulations for Modules and Programmes \(Modules and Standards\)](#).

The general requirements and procedures for transfer and progression between programmes at undergraduate level (in the 'ladder' system) are contained in the [CIT prospectus](#). In addition, the Institute has published [Guidelines for Admission to NFQ Level 8 Degrees \(Post-NFQ Level 7 Award\)](#).

Suitability for Study and Student Welfare

CIT has achieved national and international recognition for its work in the area of student engagement and communication, led by its AnSEO Student Engagement Office in partnership with academic

departments and the CIT Students' Union. One focal area of this work is the First Year Experience. Initiatives such as the [Good Start](#) programme and [Academic Success Coaching](#) aim to build engagement and proactively identify and support learners in need of early-stage intervention during their crucial first few weeks in college. New students challenged by the academic environment or the competing demands of study, work and/or their personal life are supported in acquiring tailored personal and academic success strategies. Unsure or wavering students are supported to systematically explore all available avenues, including alternative programme choices or viable alternatives to academic study, before they continue on a programme to which they are not well suited, limiting their chances of academic success, or else drop out without knowing what to do next.

In relation to learners experiencing other life issues, or creating such issues for others, which may fundamentally impede or negate their ability to continue in study or to safely and effectively practice their intended profession, [Fitness to Study](#) and [Fitness to Practice](#) policies have been implemented in Cork Institute of Technology. These policies are available from the main Institute website and the [MyCIT student portal](#).

Learners with grievances have recourse to a series of steps to resolve these through the Institute's formal [Student Grievance Procedure](#).

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

In the two decades since CIT first established a dedicated RPL resource and began to develop processes to support the recognition of prior learning, a significant body of research and scholarship on RPL has been created at the Institute. Recent areas of investigation include EU-funded projects on the recognition of learning through volunteering and recognition of skills of migrants and refugees to support their integration into learning and work.

Candidates wishing to apply for entry, advanced entry, exemptions, module credit or indeed full awards on the basis of prior learning – be that formal or non-formal/informal learning – can do so in accordance with of CIT's [Policy Governing Recognition of Prior Learning](#).

RPL can be applied for in any valid CIT programme or module. Recognition of prior learning claims are made against complete modules, and applicants must demonstrate that all learning outcomes have been satisfactorily met to gain exemptions (in the case of prior certified learning) or module credit.

The extensive range of well-established RPL supports available to candidates and academic assessors through the Institute's [RPL Service](#) positions Cork Institute of Technology at the forefront of RPL practice and policy nationally. A postgraduate-level module on RPL Practice and Pedagogy is available to staff and has also been offered successfully to staff of a number of ETBs.

Making and Conferring of Awards

Cork Institute of Technology makes awards and confers these awards upon successful graduates in line with national [Policy and Criteria for Making Awards](#) as determined by QQI.

Many degree programmes offer – generally embedded – exit awards which may be applied for by learners who are not in a position to complete their studies towards the target award due to life circumstances. Most exit awards are currently offered at Higher Certificate level, with some Ordinary Bachelors and Postgraduate Diplomas also offered.

The principles governing the provision, validation and making of embedded and exit awards are set out in the [Policy on Exit and Embedded Awards in CIT Taught Programmes](#). Information on the exit awards available to deserving learners on specific programmes is provided in the [CIT prospectus](#).

Finally, to safeguard the good standing of CIT and the excellent reputation of its graduates now and in future, the Institute has also adopted a [Policy on the Revocation of CIT Awards](#).

5. Teaching Staff (ESG 1.5)

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for assuring the competence of teaching staff, including staff recruitment and staff development.

CIT has in place a comprehensive framework for the recruitment, induction, progression and professional development of its academic staff. This is supported by a set of policies, procedures and guidelines made available to staff by the [CIT Human Resources Office](#) on the CIT Staff Gateway.

The ongoing development of the professional and pedagogical competence of academic staff is furthermore an important part of the activities of the [CIT Teaching & Learning Unit](#). CPD offerings of the Teaching & Learning Unit range from the provision of a modular [MA in Teaching & Learning in Higher Education](#) to a wide range of short staff development seminars, funding and facilitation of learning communities (e.g. for lecturing staff delivering the Institute-wide *CIT* module, see below) and networking events offered in formats designed to maximise ease of access. In addition, the TLU is engaged in ongoing pedagogical research and frequently pilots new development projects, such as staff induction mentoring scheme.

6. Teaching and Learning (ESG 1.4, 1.5, 1.6)

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for assuring the quality of teaching and learning.

CIT's strategic mission is to provide student-centred, career-focused education and research for the personal, professional and intellectual development of the student and for the benefit of the broader society in the region and beyond. The Institute's approach to teaching and learning is designed to enable and foster the most efficient attainment of its mission, both through the overall structural framework for delivery and the individual methodologies and supports for teaching, enabling learning and assessment.

Flexible Learning Opportunities

Given CIT's sectorally unique breadth of disciplines and programme offerings and its diverse intake of learners, inclusive access to higher education is, and will remain, one of CIT's key commitments and strategic priorities.

One means by which CIT has delivered on this commitment is the strategic expansion of flexible learning opportunities, in particular the Institute's distance learning portfolio. Building on a state-of-the-art e-learning infrastructure and the dedicated pedagogical and technological supports of the [Department of Technology-Enhanced Learning](#), CIT offers a significant [portfolio of flexible online programmes](#), both degrees (at Higher Diploma and Masters level) and shorter certificate courses.

The online provision complements and extends the reach of the Institute's traditionally strong suite of [Continuing Education courses](#), whose access and delivery mechanisms are tailored to the needs of learners unable to participate in standard full-time programmes. A range of short courses developed in consultation with employers and delivered both online and in more traditional formats are furthermore [offered by CIT under Springboard+](#) or in conjunction with local development projects such as [WREN](#).

Last but not least, CIT [Extended Campus](#) works with numerous regional and national organisations interested in developing their workforce and adding to their employees' skills sets. CIT Extended Campus services include Learning Clinics where Extended Campus staff and industry partners together identify organisational learning needs and the programme offerings and delivery strategies best suited to meeting these. Solutions identified may include existing, 'off-the-shelf' programmes as well as collaborative development of customised learning pathways which utilizing modular 'building blocks'; workplace or e-supported delivery; and the integration of learning gained at the workplace through CIT's well-established [RPL and WPL](#) (work-based learning) mechanisms.

Teaching and Learning Strategy Embedded in Programme Design

The Institute's [principles for modular programme design](#) embed certain teaching and learning precepts which are fundamental to the mission and pedagogy of CIT. The attendant design features appear most pronouncedly in full-time undergraduate programmes, where they are aimed at supporting learners new to higher education in transitioning to third-level study and taking responsibility for charting and developing their own learning.

Each ab-initio undergraduate degree programme offered by CIT must include the Institute-wide common [CIT – Creativity, Innovation & Teamwork](#) module in its first semester. The *CIT* Module aims to equip learners with the skills and knowledge for a successful engagement in third-level education and subsequent life-long learning opportunities. Delivery of *Creativity, Innovation & Teamwork* is adapted by each department to the particular context of the discipline, so that no two instances will be exactly alike. Common to all deliveries however is the focus on developing independent learning, thinking and reasoning skills, team-working abilities, and of basic academic writing and referencing skills as appropriate to the field of study. Learners also develop a vision of their ideal career path to set them on the road towards taking ownership of their learning journey.

Most advanced programme stages include both a cognate elective or electives and a Free Choice option. The inclusion of Free Choice in the majority of undergraduate programme stages is designed to further encourage learners to take responsibility for their own learning and their personal and professional development. While many learners avail of cognate modules related to their own specialism as their Free Choice, others opt to broaden their educational experience by taking a module from outside their own field, be it in the form of a language or entrepreneurship module or in pursuit of a ‘niche’ interest, such as the choice of certain engineering modules on the part of music students. Though logistical or resource constraints will often limit the accessibility of modules offered by other Institute areas, the maintenance of the principle of choice as an enabler of competence development is an important one in the pedagogy underpinning the Institute’s modular model.

Learning through Engagement

In keeping with CIT’s mission and ethos, the Institute offers learners numerous opportunities to develop their personal and leadership skills through engagement and participation in activities and initiatives outside of their academic programme, be it through sport, the arts, societies, the CIT Students’ Union, Institute-wide [entrepreneurship competitions](#) such as the annual [CIT Prize for Innovation](#) or [CIT APPrentice](#), or participation in governance through membership of programme boards or boards of study.

In connection with the activities coordinated by AnSEO – the Student Engagement Office, CIT has also validated a number of modules which formally capture, assess and certify the learning of students acting as [peer leaders](#) and [peer mentors](#) in the context of the PALS programme.

Quality Assurance of Teaching and Learning in Modules and Programmes

The design of the formal module descriptor enforces the systematic capture of fundamental elements of the teaching and learning strategy at the module level, defining and describing the module learning outcomes, indicative content, the assessment and re-assessment formats and weightings, and the delivery formats, including the extent of independent learning expected.

At the programme level, CIT’s processes for initial programme validation and programmatic review require departments to comment on the teaching and learning strategy for each programme in the programme self-evaluation report submitted to the external expert panel. The information contained therein, and the qualitative feedback obtained by the panels from their meetings with learners, graduates and lecturing staff, is complemented by quantitative student performance data which give an indication of the success of the programme teaching and learning strategy in relation to the achievement of the learning outcomes by the different cohorts of learners.

The overall programme document provides a curriculum map showing where the intended programme learning outcomes are achieved. Peer reviewers are asked to ascertain that each programme outcome

is supported by a sufficient number of modules to ensure it can be achieved by the average learner, irrespective of elective choice. Furthermore an assessment matrix for each programme is reviewed to ensure that the time and nature of the assessment tasks is appropriate. Reviewers will frequently address issues such as assessment clustering or over-reliance on one form of assessment methodology.

At an earlier stage of programme (re-)development, the appropriateness of the proposed teaching and learning strategies is investigated when faculties seek advice on their programme proposals from employer groups or industry advisory panels. Thus, industry feedback was a significant factor in the decision of the CIT Faculty of Business & Humanities to extend the inclusion of significant work placement periods to the furthest extent possible across its complete portfolio of programmes.

In addition to external peer review, the Institute's quality assurance processes also require that each programme and module undergoes a detailed internal moderation process before it is proposed for (re-) validation. Internal moderation amongst others aims to establish that the teaching, learning and assessment strategies, both at module level and cumulatively at programme level, are sound and suited to the intended module and programme outcomes, programme stage and delivery mode; that the content, teaching & learning methodology and (re-)assessment strategy of each module are well aligned, mutually supportive and appropriate to the module credit weighting; and that learners receive appropriate formative feedback allowing them to improve their academic performance.

Teaching, learning and assessment strategies are furthermore frequently the subject of professional accreditation or recognition processes which aim to ascertain that learners are exposed to strategies best suited to enabling their future professional success in the field.

A brief discussion of CIT's strategies and mechanisms for the development of its [teaching staff](#) with related links is provided in [Section 5](#) above.

7. Resources and Support (ESG 1.5)

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for assuring funding and resources for learning, teaching and research. Also, links and or text relating to the quality assurance procedures for learning resources and student support.

Sources of Income and Budget Allocation

As a statutory entity under the *Institutes of Technology Acts 1992 – 2006*, Cork Institute of Technology is primarily dependent on funding received from the Higher Education Authority (HEA), the statutory planning and development body for higher education in Ireland.

The Institute's two main sources of income, a core grant from the HEA and student fees, are both linked to student numbers. The HEA core grant is based on the student number returns to the authority as part of CIT's annual submission of its Programmes & Budgets. This submission encompasses the previous year's draft accounts, the current year's forecast and the projected income and expenditure for the following four years. The annual budget is reviewed and approved by Institute Executive Board and the Finance Committee of Governing Body prior to submission to the authority.

CIT is statutorily obliged to return a balanced budget, with clear stipulations in the *IoT Acts* for a course of action to be taken in subsequent budgets in the event of a deficit.

Pay allocation is based on requirement and need. The non-pay budget for the academic faculties is allocated on the basis of the HEA-weighted projected student numbers in each discipline area. CIT has however adapted the allocation model to give faculties scope, within certain limits, to balance shortfalls in some areas with surpluses in others, in order to mitigate divergences of actual need from the needs projections inherent in the weightings. The annual budget for the central learning and career development resources and supports, including the CIT Libraries, the Academic Learning Centre and the Access & Disabilities Office, is allocated centrally as a portion of the HEA core grant, while the budget for the other student services, including the Careers & Counselling Service, is allocated on a per-head basis dependent on HEA student number returns.

CIT's financial statements are subject to annual audit by the Comptroller & Auditor General, internal financial controls are reviewed annually by the Institute's internal auditors, and tax may be the subject of a Revenue Commissioner audit. Various aspects of the financial management and governance of the Institute are also included in a schedule of internal audits determined by the Audit and Risk Committee of the Governing Body. A summary Finance Report is included in the [Annual Reports](#) published for each academic year.

Research Funding

All research income is competitively generated, through funding applications to national and international funding agencies for specific research projects under relevant funding calls. The CIT Research Office and the Innovation & Enterprise Office provide support for the research community with regard to the dissemination of funding opportunities and the completion of funding applications.

Quality Assurance of Programme Resources

Following prioritisation of the outline programme proposals by the faculties, the [CIT programme validation process](#) requires that a Feasibility Study is produced for every programme proposed for development. This study presents a detailed projection of the resource requirements of the new programme, vis-à-vis the projected intake and demand trajectory over a five-year period. The Feasibility Study is reviewed by a Working Party of the Institute Executive Board. Except for those rare cases where a programme is of extraordinary strategic significance, proposals require a sound business case to pass this feasibility review, otherwise they are halted by the Institute Executive before they go into full development.

Given the budgetary constraints within which Irish higher education institutions have been operating, a judicious use of efficiencies has been a crucial success factor in new programme development. This has been made possible by CIT's [modularised and semesterised delivery model](#) which allows suitable modules to be delivered across a number of programmes. The Institute has thus been able to remain sufficiently agile in response to market demand for new programme offerings, particularly in the area of new postgraduate and CPD offerings, despite many years of contracting public funding.

The sufficiency of the programme resources and supports also forms part of the criteria of [programmatic review](#). During the site visit peer review panels will discuss the adequacy of the resources and supports in the meetings with programme staff, students/graduates and other stakeholders, and will usually also go on a tour of the relevant facilities.

Quality Assurance of Central Learning Resources and Student Supports

The ongoing review and development of the quality, suitability and performance of the academic learning resources and supports of the Institute, including the CIT libraries, virtual learning environment, and the services of the Academic Learning Centre, fall within the remit of the Learning Resources Committee of Academic Council.

The academic review and development work of the committee is complemented by audits determined by the Audit and Risk Committee of Governing Body as part of its annual Internal Audit Scheme, and by periodic service quality reviews variously initiated by the individual units themselves.

8. Information Management (ESG 1.7)

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for collecting, analysing and using relevant information about programmes and other activities.

Operational Information

From a governance perspective, a set of key performance data and summary statements on developments in the areas of academic provision and supports, engagement activities, finance (including audited accounts), administration and staffing for Cork Institute of Technology are collated and published by the Office of the President on behalf of Governing Body as part of its Annual Reports to the HEA. Annual Reports for foregoing years are published in the [Reports, Plans and Policies](#) section of the CIT Website.

In the context of programme quality assurance, the presentation and analysis of relevant statistical data as well as qualitative information from internal and external sources (such as surveys, focus groups, industry advisory boards, literature etc.) is a key component of the self-evaluation phase within each of the core QA processes ([Validation Review](#); [Annual Programme Status Review](#) – see esp. [Policy Appendix B](#); [Programmatic Review](#)).

Core learner, graduate and staff data are collated centrally in the Institute's Banner Student and CORE HR Staff Records Systems. Relevant Banner and CORE data are made available to authorised users in the faculties and the central administration for purposes of managing and quality assuring the provision and related supports as necessary. Examination records are kept and processed securely on a separate server. Facilities usage is managed and monitored and managed through different systems for a variety of purposes, including timetabling, energy management, etc. The central Institute data repositories are supplemented by 'special purpose' CRM databases maintained by particular Institute functions, e.g. the CIT Alumni Office.

Increasingly, as systems capacity is improving, the preparation and provision of statistical data which had to be carried out manually previously is being automated. Thus, programme performance data considered as part of the Annual Programme Status Review is pre-loaded into the APSR report templates, which can be accessed by authorised users via the Institute's Staff Gateway.

Data Protection and Information Management

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) came into force on May 25, 2018, in all countries of the European Union, replacing the existing data protection framework under the EU Data Protection Directive. The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) has increased the obligations and responsibilities for the Institute in how it collects, uses and protects personal data.

Currently, the Institute is working towards achieving and ascertaining full compliance with GDPR, in accordance with an institutional implementation plan which covers governance, CIT's documentation framework and personal data management processes, training and awareness, and technological capability. New procedures such as the Data Protection Impact Assessments are currently being introduced, but it will take a certain amount of time and several iterations to fully embed these new procedures across all areas of the institution.

A suite of GDPR-compliant data protection policies developed in the context of a THEA (Technological Higher Education Association) sectoral project have been approved by the CIT Governing Body, and on release will replace the existing records management and data protection policies in the [Reports, Plans and Policies section](#) of the CIT website.

The CIT Data Protection Officer oversees the implementation of these policies across the Institute and also processes any freedom of information requests made to the Institute. A log of FOI requests and FOI Model Publication Scheme are accessible on the [Freedom of Information section](#) on the Institute website.

9. Self-evaluation and Monitoring (ESG 1.9)

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for self-evaluation and internal monitoring.

Ongoing monitoring and regular review of the programme provision are central elements of the internal quality assurance system of higher education providers in the European Higher Education Area.

Periodic Review of Programmes

Periodic review of programmes at Cork Institute of Technology encompasses, as a minimum, a thorough self-evaluation of the academic unit hosting the complement of programmes under review, followed by a site visit from a panel of independent external experts with representation from the CIT Registrar's Office. Each review stage generates a detailed report. A positive overall recommendation in the report of the peer review panel forms the basis for revalidation of the programmes by the CIT Academic Council.

The periodic review of programmes at Cork Institute of Technology is governed by CIT's [Academic Policy on Programmatic Review](#).

Annual Programme Status Review

Continuous monitoring of the academic programmes is carried out by the individual programme boards. The boards report annually on programme development and enhancement measures, guided by the CIT [Policy and Procedure for the Annual Programme Status Review \(APSR\)](#). To support and guide programme boards, the Institute's Enterprise Reporting Portal provides authorised users with a standardised report template for each programme. Each template is pre-populated with key performance data for the relevant programme drawn down automatically from the Banner student record system (see the Sample Template for Programme Review Report (CAO) in [Policy Appendix B](#)). In

their analysis, the boards consider qualitative feedback from different sources – such as external examiner reports – as well as a range of quantitative performance indicators (applications and acceptances, enrolment and retention, student and graduate performance).

Evaluation of the Student Experience

The key instrument for the evaluation of the student experience is the annual [Irish Survey of Student Engagement \(ISSE\)](#), in which all public higher education providers in Ireland have been participating since its inception in 2013. The outcomes of the ISSE are analysed by the Institute and discussed by the Academic Council and other relevant units. This comprehensive national learner survey is complemented by various local instruments, such as focus groups organised by AnSEO – the Student Engagement Office in connection with student engagement initiatives. A First Destinations Survey is also carried out by the Institute, and the results are made available to the faculties for analysis.

Internal Audit

At the level of institutional governance, the evaluation of the programme provision is complemented by an annual schedule of Internal Audits commissioned by the Audit and Risk Committee of Governing Body. Internal audits look at all areas, functions and services of the Institute and are carried out by external consultants appointed on a sectorial basis.

10. Stakeholder Engagement (ESG 1.1)

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for the involvement of external stakeholders in quality assurance.

Frequent and intensive liaison with external stakeholders is a constant feature of CIT's activities and programme provision, be it through institution-level participation in national and regional fora such as the [South West Regional Skills Forum](#), the formal engagements of relevant central Institute functions and offices, such as the Office of the Vice-President for External Affairs, the [Extended Campus](#) or the [CIT Alumni Office](#), the stakeholder engagement activities of the faculties, or informally through the extensive network of regional, national or international contacts built up by CIT's academic and research community.

With regard to academic programme quality assurance, externality is a central element in all core processes.

Every programme validation panel, be it for programmes leading to [non-major](#) or [major awards](#), must include independent external experts. In keeping with the career-focused mission of CIT, an appropriate balance between academic and professional expertise is to be sought in the selection. Input from external experts must also be obtained on the content and structure of [new modules to be submitted for approval](#).

[Programme review panels](#) must include a minimum of three external experts with appropriate strategic and management experience for the first, strategic phase of the review. For larger schools, this number will often be greater in order to achieve appropriate coverage of the discipline areas represented. Phase 2 panels, which are tasked with conducting the detailed programme reviews, include at least two external members, one academic and representative of the professions.

Schools and departments are asked to provide information on stakeholder feedback in submission documents for new validations and in the self-evaluation reports collated at unit and programme level for periodic review. Programme boards are prompted to report on stakeholder engagements, feedback and any proposed actions arising from these as part of the Annual Programme Status Review. Templates and guidelines outlining the types of stakeholder inputs relevant or required are made available to departments via the staff Gateway server.

Some departments respectively schools have also established formal professional/industry advisory boards or focus groups which enable an ongoing formal exchange with external stakeholders on the quality and operation of programmes.

The involvement of external examiners is regulated under the Institute's regulations for the assessment and examination of [undergraduate](#) and [postgraduate](#) programmes. Each document sets out detailed procedures for the selection and appointment of the externs and for their role and responsibilities in the examination process. The undergraduate regulations are complemented by published guidelines for the [selection and appointment of external examiners](#) and supplementary policies such as the [Policy on Conflict of Interest](#).

11. Engagement with Other Bodies (ESG 1.1)

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for engagement with professional, statutory and regulatory bodies and other quality assurance and awarding bodies (details of specific engagements should be provided in the online section of the form).

Range of Engagements

The engagement of Cork Institute of Technology with the Higher Education Authority (HEA) and Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), the two statutory authorities with legal and regulatory responsibilities for the Irish higher education sector, is governed by the statutory provisions, national strategies and government policies which determine the remit of each authority vis-à-vis Irish higher education providers.

CIT maintains an ongoing formal and semi-formal engagement with the HEA which includes the annual programmes and budgets process (see [Section 7](#) above) and the annual strategic dialogue as well as other HEA-sponsored programmes and initiatives.

Engagements with QQI range from formal cyclical reviews of the institution as a whole to semi-formal interactions with particular CIT functions or individual Institute members in the context of specific quality initiatives or expertise requirements. The most comprehensive review for which QQI has statutory responsibility is the seven-yearly review of the effectiveness and implementation of the institutional quality assurance mechanisms, entitled CINNTE in its present format. It is intended that this review will draw on the quality information collated through the annual institutional quality reporting process, accompanied by cyclical dialogue meetings between the authority and Institute senior management with a responsibility for quality. Due to CIT's extensive awarding powers at all NFQ levels, formal interactions in the context of QQI's role as an awarding body have become increasingly less frequent over the years.

Given CIT's career-oriented mission, CIT departments across a wide range of disciplines engage with one or more professional, statutory and regulatory bodies to secure and maintain programme recognition or accreditation, thus permitting graduates to apply for professional membership, enter into or obtain exemptions from certain professional examinations, or apply for inclusion on a professional register, depending on the specific field and professional or regulatory body.

Institute Participation in Professional Quality Assurance Mechanisms

For the most part, professional bodies, including Engineers Ireland, the Royal Institute of Architects in Ireland, the Chartered Institute of Building, the Academy of Clinical Science and Laboratory Medicine and accountancy bodies such as Chartered Accountants Ireland, CIMA, ACCA and CPA, to name but a few, operate stringent professional quality criteria and QA processes with regard to the recognition of academic institutions and programmes. CIT engages with these processes to the furthest extent possible in order to maintain the highest professional standards in its programme provision and to maximise the future professional opportunities of its learners. The Institute regularly hosts site visits from professional body delegations and endeavours to enable and ensure adequate Institute representation, both from academic staff involved in programme delivery and central Institute functions as relevant, at all relevant professional accreditation events.

Involvement of Professional Bodies in CIT Quality Assurance Mechanisms

Information on the professional recognition or accreditation status of a programme and a summary presentation of the history of professional accreditation events forms part of the programme information required from departments for and considered in [programmatic review](#).

Particularly in the case of statutory organisations such as TÚSLA, or regulatory bodies such as the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, which through its Marine Survey Office regulates entry into the marine professions, CIT seeks to involve the regulator, as far as is feasible, at the programme design stage as well as in the academic quality review of the programme and its operation. With regard to the latter, the Academic Quality Enhancement Office normally invites the relevant statutory or regulatory body to nominate an appropriate person to act as a professional member of the peer review panel. Participation of a member of the regulatory body in programme review ensures both that the regulator develops a detailed awareness of CIT's academic regulations and quality procedures, and that CIT in turn is made aware of any potential regulatory issues arising from the proposed programme specification and has the opportunity to address these prior to the academic (re-)validation of the programme.

Public Information on Professional Accreditation and Exemptions

Information on professional accreditation, exemptions and follow-on professional examinations available for each programme features prominently in the [CIT prospectuses](#) and the public website, and for many potential applicants is a decisive factor in programme choice. Where Continuing Education courses lead to a professional qualification given either in addition to the academic award, or, in some cases, as the only certification requested by and made to graduates, the awarding body and certification offered are clearly indicated, as are any relevant application mechanisms and deadlines for exemptions or subsequent professional examinations.

Staff Engagement

Most academic staff members of the Institute are also active members of one or more relevant professional, statutory or regulatory bodies within their field. Institute staff or departments are also engaged in driving forward the professionalization of their respective sectors and contributing to the development of professional or academic standards within their field on behalf of different professional and statutory bodies and also QQI.

QA arrangements for engagements with other awarding bodies, as well as academic quality assurance agencies other than QQI, in the context and for the purpose of collaborative programme provision are outlined in [Section 15](#) below.

12. Provision and Use of Public Information (ESG 1.8)

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for the provision of clear, accurate, up-to date and accessible public information.

The main repository for public information about Cork Institute of Technology is the [CIT website](#). Amongst others, this offers a [Find a Course](#) section allowing prospective students to obtain the current approved specifications for CIT programmes and modules, as well a section detailing the procedures and current deadlines for [admissions and registration](#). CIT also makes available a range of policies and reports related to the governance, management and quality assurance activities of the Institute, including [Governing Body meeting agendas and digests](#); [academic regulations and policies](#); [general policies, plans and reports](#); and reports on [validations](#) and [programme reviews](#).

These online resources are complemented by information provided through a variety of printed or downloadable programme literature, including the [CIT Prospectus of Full-Time Programmes](#) and the [Continuing Education Prospectus](#).

Information on the Institute and its portfolio of programmes is also disseminated via different social media outlets (including for instance [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) or [YouTube](#)) and regular information events held both on campus and in an outreach format, such as the [CIT Open Day](#), [Postgraduate Fair](#), [Mature Student Evenings](#) or the [CIT STEM roadshows](#).

The responsible office for collating the CIT prospectuses, managing the CIT website and overseeing the provision of public information on the Institute's social media channels is the [CIT Marketing Unit](#).

13. Linked Providers (for Designated Awarding Bodies) (ESG 1.1)

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for assuring engagement with linked providers including the procedures for approval, monitoring, review, withdrawal of approval and appeal for linked providers.



14. DA Procedures for use of QQI Award Standards (IoTs only)

Links and/or text relating to the specific procedures for the approval of programmes in keeping with Core Policy and Criteria for the Validation of Education and Training Programmes by QQI, the Sectoral Protocols for the Awarding of Research Master Degrees at NFQ Level 9 under Delegated Authority (DA) from QQI and the Sectoral Protocols for the Delegation of Authority by QQI to the Institutes of Technology to make Joint Awards, May 2014.

In July 2017 QQI confirmed its approval of CIT's quality assurance procedures, including the procedures for programme approval and review. This formal confirmation concluded the '[re-engagement](#)' of the authority with its obligatory providers necessitated by the coming into force of the *Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012*.

In keeping with QQI's [Sector-Specific Quality Guidelines for Institutes of Technology](#) (July 2016), CIT has in place robust [programme approval procedures](#) aligned with QQI Core Validation Policy and robust [regulations](#) for the assessment of its modules and programmes, both taught and research.

With regard to delegation of authority for Masters by Research awards, CIT had applied to be reviewed for overarching delegation in late 2013/14, at a time when QQI was redeveloping its DA policy and procedures for research awards. However, QQI was amenable to CIT's expressed preference for completing a full external review under saved policy, and enabled the Institute to avail of a previously agreed devolved review process. The panel of national and international experts found that CIT showed compliance with and the capacity to comply with, as relevant, the conditions determined for delegation of authority to make Masters by Research Awards across all discipline areas.

On adoption of the THEA (IoTI) sectoral protocol for Level 9 research awards shortly thereafter, CIT was able to confirm that its processes for the development and quality assurance of Level 9 research degree provision were also fully compatible with the sectoral protocol. CIT's infrastructure for the quality assurance of research programmes is cognisant of the relevant national and international frameworks for research education as referenced in the protocol. CIT has further shown that it possesses a well-established research strategy and a proven capacity to develop, grow, sustain and support research activity across its spectrum of disciplines in line with its institutional research priorities.

CIT's procedures for the QA of collaborative provision are furthermore in keeping with the 2014 Sectoral Protocol on Joint Awards.

Prior to adoption of the sectoral protocol, the Institute had already adopted a [Policy on Collaborative Provision and Joint Awards](#). Approval of this by the Higher Education and Training Awards Council enabled CIT to gain delegated authority for joint awards within the scope of its existing DA with University College Cork in December 2011, and for joint awards in the area of media with Hochschule Darmstadt, Germany, effective February 2013.

Each joint award made by Cork Institute of Technology is established via a formal Joint Awarding Agreement. Consortium Agreements covering the detailed programme quality assurance arrangements are in place for all collaborative programmes, whether leading to joint or a single awards (see also [Section 15](#) below).

For collaborative programmes leading to joint awards, appropriate joint mechanisms for programme validation, operation, ongoing monitoring and periodic review are in operation, including Joint Management Boards and, in the case of UCC, an overarching Joint Board. All of these mechanisms exist in the context of a wider approved QA infrastructure which encompasses published quality assurance provisions for the purposes of establishing, ascertaining, maintaining and improving the quality of education, training, research and related services and provisions for access, transfer and progression in accordance with the 2012 Act.

15. Collaborative Provision (ESG 1.1)

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for engagement with third parties for the provision of programmes.

The [CIT Policy and Procedures for Collaborative Provision and Joint Awards](#) is published on the CIT website.

Arrangements take a variety of forms, ranging from provision and assessment of CIT modules and short courses by CIT staff members in off-campus industry locations to fully-formed joint national or transnational awards.

Collaborative programmes with higher education providers are governed by Consortium Agreements which specify, in detail, the award, award standards and awarding body; programme specification; arrangements for programme delivery, assessment, quality assurance and, where appropriate, making of the award; available student supports, and the arrangements for learner protection and discontinuation of the agreement.

Arrangements wherein professional or industry partners contribute in some way to the provision of a CIT programme, be it through recruitment of a work-based learner cohort, provision of facilities or input into programme design or delivery, are equally governed by detailed agreements. Templates for these are made available by the Institute's legal function through the Extended Campus. In such a case, CIT is identified as the programme provider, and the quality assurance arrangements are those of Cork Institute of Technology.

In addition to the above, collaborative programmes leading to joint awards require that an overarching Institute-level Memorandum of Agreement establishing the joint award is in place before the detailed operational arrangements can be entered into. CIT currently offers joint awards with University College Cork and Hochschule (University of Applied Sciences) Darmstadt, Germany.

16. Additional Notes
Any additional notes can be entered here.

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17. Internal Review Schedule

The internal reviews schedule or cycle at the level of unit of review within the institution. The units of review can be: module; programme; department/school; service delivery unit; faculty. The cycle will usually run over a 5-7 year period and all units should be encompassed over the full period of the cycle.

Year	2017/18
Areas/Units	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. School of Science & Informatics, Phase 2 (Programme Review) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Department of Physical Sciences; b. Department of Mathematics 2. *National Maritime College of Ireland, Phases 1 and 2 (Strategic and Programme Review) - <i>*postponed</i>
Number	2
Link(s) to Publications	Phase 2 Panel Report for the Department of Mathematics (Higher Diploma in Data Science & Analytics)

Year	2018/19
Areas/Units	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. National Maritime College of Ireland, Phase 1 (Strategic Review) 2. School of Building & Civil Engineering, Phase 1 (Strategic Review)
Number	2
Link(s) to Publications	

Year	2019/20
Areas/Units	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. National Maritime College of Ireland, Phase 2 (Programme Review) 2. School of Building & Civil Engineering, Phase 2 (Programme Review) 3. School of Mechanical, Electrical & Process Engineering, Phase 1 (Strategic Review) 4. School of Mechanical, Electrical & Process Engineering, Phase 2 (Programme Review) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Department of Electrical & Electronic Engineering

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Number	4
Link(s) to Publications	

Year	2020/21
Areas/Units	1. School of Mechanical, Electrical & Process Engineering, Phase 2 (Programme Review) a. Department of Mechanical, Biomedical & Manufacturing Engineering; b. Department of Process, Energy & Transport Engineering
Number	2
Link(s) to Publications	

Year	2021/22
Areas/Units	CINNTE Review
Number	
Link(s) to Publications	

Overview of internal QA governance, policies and procedures	AIQR 2017-18 CIT Part-1 FINAL February 2019.docx
PRSBs	30
Awarding Bodies	2
Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies	First Set of Records
Type of Arrangement	PRSB
Name of the Body	Engineers Ireland
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	<p>Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Mechanical Engineering;</p> <p>Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Biomedical Engineering;</p> <p>https://www.cit.ie/course/cr108;</p> <p>https://www.cit.ie/course/CR520;</p> <p>http://www.engineersireland.ie/services/accredited-courses/chartered-engineer.aspx</p>
Date of last review or accreditation	02-06-2017
Next review year	2019
Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies	Second Set of Records
Type of Arrangement	PRSB

Name of the Body	Engineers Ireland
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	<p>Bachelor of Engineering in Mechanical Engineering;</p> <p>Bachelor of Engineering in Biomedical Engineering;</p> <p>https://www.cit.ie/course/CR071;</p> <p>https://www.cit.ie/course/CR075;</p> <p>http://www.engineersireland.ie/services/accredited-courses/associate-engineer.aspx.</p>
Date of last review or accreditation	14-11-2014
Next review year	2019
Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies	Third Set of Records
Type of Arrangement	PRSB
Name of the Body	Department of Transport, Tourism & Sport
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	<p>Higher Certificate in Science in Nautical Studies;</p> <p>Bachelor of Science in Nautical Studies;</p> <p>Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Nautical Science;</p> <p>Bachelor of Engineering in Marine Engineering;</p> <p>Bachelor of Engineering in Marine Electrotechnology;</p> <p>https://www.nmci.ie/undergraduatecourses;</p> <p>http://www.dttas.ie/publications?field_sector_tid=19;</p> <p>http://www.dttas.ie/sites/default/files/publications/maritime/english/examination-directions/engexamdirections2016v101.pdf;</p> <p>http://www.dttas.ie/sites/default/files/publications/maritime/english/examiner-panel/approved-examiner-panel-july-2015.pdf.</p>
Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies	Fourth Set of Records

Type of Arrangement	PRSB
Name of the Body	Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	<p>Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Architecture [joint award with University College Cork];</p> <p>Master of Architecture [joint award with University College Cork];</p> <p>https://www.ucc.ie/en/architecture/;</p> <p>https://www.cit.ie/course/CK606;</p> <p>https://www.cit.ie/course/CRCARCH9;</p> <p>https://www.riai.ie/education/careers/becoming_an_architect/;</p> <p>https://www.riai.ie/education/.</p>
Date of last review or accreditation	07-09-2018
Next review year	2023
Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies	Fifth Set of Records
Type of Arrangement	Awarding Body
Name of the Body	Accounting Technicians Ireland
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	<p>Accounting Technicians Ireland, Years 1 and 2;</p> <p>https://www.cit.ie/course/CRBIATI6;</p> <p>http://www.numbersindna.ie/locations/.</p> <p>This is a tuition-only arrangement. The Accounting Technicians Ireland examinations are conducted by the professional body, which is also the awarding body for all ATI qualifications.</p>
Joint research degrees	1
Joint/double/multiple awards	6

Collaborative programmes	20
Franchise programmes	0
Section: Collaborative Provision	First Set of Records
Type of arrangement:	Joint/double/multiple awards Collaborative programmes
Name of the Body (Bodies)	University College Cork (Joint Centre: Cork Centre for Architectural Education)
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Architecture; https://www.ucc.ie/en/architecture/ ; https://www.cit.ie/course/CK606 ; https://www.ucc.ie/en/architecture/programmeoverview/ ; Master of Architecture; https://www.ucc.ie/en/architecture/ ; https://www.cit.ie/course/CRCARCH9
Date of last review	28-09-2012
Next review year	2020
Section: Collaborative Provision	Second Set of Records
Type of arrangement:	Joint/double/multiple awards Collaborative programmes
Name of the Body (Bodies)	University College Cork
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Biomedical Science; https://www.cit.ie/course/CR320 ; https://www.ucc.ie/en/cr320/ ;
Date of last review	29-03-2017
Next review year	2022
Section: Collaborative Provision	Third Set of Records
Type of arrangement:	Joint/double/multiple awards Collaborative programmes

Name of the Body (Bodies)	University College Cork
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Industrial Physics; https://www.cit.ie/course/CK409 ; https://www.ucc.ie/en/ck409/
Date of last review	26-05-2017
Next review year	2022
Section: Collaborative Provision	Fourth Set of Records
Type of arrangement:	Joint/double/multiple awards Collaborative programmes
Name of the Body (Bodies)	University College Cork
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	Professional Master of Education (Art & Design); https://www.ucc.ie/en/ckd25/
Date of last review	31-07-2013
Next review year	2020
Section: Collaborative Provision	Fifth Set of Records
Type of arrangement:	Joint research degrees Collaborative programmes
Name of the Body (Bodies)	University College Cork
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	Doctor of Philosophy: There are currently 3 postgraduate students pursuing joint doctoral studies in the area of Biological Sciences. Each programme is governed by a separate research collaboration agreement signed by the collaborating institutions on joint review and agreement of the research proposal and the proposed specific arrangements for the doctoral research programme. The agreements are dated 7 Nov. 2018. The "date of last review" indicated below references the date of the overarching Memorandum of Agreement governing joint awards between Cork Institute of Technology and University College Cork.
Date of last review	01-11-2010

Section: Collaborative Provision	Sixth Set of Records
Type of arrangement:	Collaborative programmes
Name of the Body (Bodies)	The Bessborough Centre, Cork, and the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust, UK
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	Certificate in Advanced Clinical Practice with Children and Families (Special Purpose Award, NFQ Level 9, 30 ECTS credits); https://www.cit.ie/course/CRHCPCF9
Date of last review	09-06-2016
Next review year	2021
Section: Collaborative Provision	Seventh Set of Records
Type of arrangement:	Collaborative programmes
Name of the Body (Bodies)	Children's Therapy Centre, Ballymore, Mullingar
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	Certificate in Principles and Theory of Art Therapy; https://www.cit.ie/course/CRAATPY8Y1 ; http://childrenstherapycentre.ie/principles-of-art-therapy-certificate/
Date of last review	28-04-2016
Next review year	2021
Section: Collaborative Provision	Eighth Set of Records
Type of arrangement:	Collaborative programmes
Name of the Body (Bodies)	Teagasc
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	Higher Certificate in Science in Agriculture; Bachelor of Science in Agriculture; Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Agriculture; https://www.cit.ie/course/CR010 ; https://www.cit.ie/course/CRBAGRI8
Date of last review	13-04-2016

Next review year	2021
Section: Collaborative Provision	Ninth Set of Records
Type of arrangement:	Collaborative programmes
Name of the Body (Bodies)	IoT Consortium in collaboration with the Irish MedTech Association (Lead Institution: GMIT)
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	<p>Higher Certificate in Engineering in Manufacturing Engineering [Apprentice Mode];</p> <p>Bachelor of Engineering in Manufacturing Engineering [Apprentice Mode];</p> <p>https://courses.cit.ie/index.cfm/page/course/courseId/1112;</p> <p>http://www.apprenticeship.ie/en/apprentice/Pages/Manufacturing-Engineering.aspx</p>
Date of last review	17-02-2017
Next review year	2022
Section: Collaborative Provision	Tenth Set of Records
Type of arrangement:	Collaborative programmes
Name of the Body (Bodies)	IoT Consortium (Lead Provider: IT Tralee)
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	<p>Bachelor of Arts in Culinary Arts (with embedded Higher Certificate exit award) [Apprentice];</p> <p>Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Culinary Arts [Apprentice]</p> <p>https://courses.cit.ie/index.cfm/page/course/courseId/2057;</p> <p>http://www.apprenticeship.ie/en/apprentice/Pages/ChefDePartie.aspx;</p>
Date of last review	19-05-2018
Next review year	2023
Do you wish to make a final submission?	Yes, this is my final submission

On behalf of the President/Provost/CEO I confirm that the information submitted in this AIQR is accurate and correct.	Confirmed
Overview of internal governance, policies and procedures (Word Template).	Confirmed
Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies.	Confirmed
Collaborative Provision.	Confirmed
Articulation Agreements.	Confirmed
Date of Final Submission	25-02-2019

Parts 2-6

Institution-led QA – Annual Information

Parts 2-6 are completed annually with information pertaining to the reporting period (i.e. the preceding academic year only).

Part 2: Institution-led QA – Annual

Part 2 provides information relating to institution-led quality assurance for the reporting period.

Section 1: Quality Assurance and Enhancement System Developments

1.1 The evolution of quality assurance and enhancement systems in support of strategic objectives in the reporting period.

Cork Institute of Technology continually develops and refines its quality systems to ensure that its taught and research degree programme offerings, research, engagement activities and associated student and stakeholder supports are of the highest possible quality and meet or exceed national and international benchmark standards, underpinned and supported by a sound and sustainable institutional infrastructure.

Most developments to CIT's policies and systems in 2017/18 were incremental or constituted the next step or steps in a multi-year, cross-institutional change process, such as the progressive 'digitisation' of systems and procedures across a variety of Institute areas. The Institute initiated two major new developments however in launching parallel development processes towards the creation of a new Strategic Plan and an Academic Plan for CIT. Cork Institute of Technology also commenced engagement with the Athena SWAN Bronze Award process, signalling its commitment to the systematic identification and removal of gender barriers.

Summary of Key Developments in 2017/18

The following constitutes a selection of developments during the reporting period which will make significant contributions to the achievement of the Institute's mission, vision and strategic goals:

- **Development of a [New CIT Strategic Plan for 2018 – 2023](#)**

The new Strategic Plan for Cork Institute of Technology, developed during the academic year 2017/18 and formally launched in December 2018, will stimulate and guide the growth of the Institute during the period to 2023, and will also inform the process of determining the strategic priorities and values of the succeeding Technological University when the time comes.

- **Development of a New CIT Academic Plan for 2018 – 2023**

Once adopted, the new Academic Plan for CIT, the first to be developed since 1998, will complement the Strategic Plan for the Institute, unfolding and setting out in detail the academic vision, mission and priorities of the Institute with regard to its academic activities along the three core pillars of Ambitious & Visionary Student Scholarship & Teaching; Research and Creative Scholarship; and Community Engagement. With drafting at an advanced stage at the end of the reporting period, the new Academic Plan is due to be launched in the 2018/19 academic year.

- **Athena SWAN Bronze Award Self-Study Process**

In 2017/18 CIT carried out a comprehensive self-study on gender representation and used the findings to develop a gender equality action plan, with a view to submitting an application for the Athena SWAN Bronze Award in November 2018. The Athena SWAN process commits the Institute to the systematic identification and removal of barriers which contribute to gender under-representation. Achievement of a Bronze Award will also be a prerequisite for continued institutional eligibility for research funding from 2019 onwards, and will thus be mission-critical with regard to any of CIT's strategic goals related to research and innovation.

- **Adoption of a Student Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy**

In July 2018, the CIT Governing Body approved a Student Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy, the most recent in a suite of policies aiming to establish a secure policy framework to support and safeguard student and staff wellbeing within and outside of the academic environment.

- **Development of an Exam Paper Management System (MAX^e)**

There was a major push within the Academic Affairs administration to replace a number of paper-based systems in the Admissions and Examinations Offices with online systems, accompanied by an optimisation of the related processes. The most significant systems development was the development of a bespoke, secure online Exam Paper Management System. Once fully rolled-out in the course of the 2018/19 academic year, MAX^e will greatly enhance the quality and integrity of CIT's examination papers while also allowing for papers to be compiled and externally moderated within a shorter timeframe.

Athena SWAN Bronze Award

During 2017/18 work commenced on the achievement of an Athena SWAN Bronze Institutional Award for Cork Institute of Technology.

Background

The Athena SWAN Charter was established in 2005 by Advance HE, an independent non-profit UK agency dedicated to continuous enhancement of teaching and learning, equality and diversity, and leadership and governance in higher education in the United Kingdom and internationally. The Athena SWAN Charter aims to encourage and recognise commitment to advancing the careers of women in science, technology, engineering, maths and medicine (STEMM) employment in higher education and research. The charter has since expanded to recognise work undertaken in arts, humanities, social sciences, business and law (AHSSBL), in professional and support roles, and for trans staff and students. The Athena SWAN process is a commitment to removing barriers that contribute to under-representation and taking a targeted approach to issues that may be of internal or external origin.

Successful applicants will have conducted a thorough analysis of institutional data, identified key issues, and established an action plan for the next three years to address those issues.

Figures published by the Higher Education Authority highlight gender inequality as an issue for the Irish higher education sector, and the Athena SWAN Charter was launched in Ireland in early 2015. From 2019 onwards, achievement of an Athena SWAN Bronze Award and a demonstrated commitment to gender equality will be necessary for Irish HE institutions to remain eligible for future research funding.

Athena SWAN Self-Study Process in CIT

In Cork Institute of Technology, an Athena SWAN Self-Assessment Team under the aegis of the Vice-President for External Affairs was established in August 2017, with the first meeting held in September 2017. A staff survey was completed in November 2017, followed by four focus groups investigating areas of interest highlighted by the survey. These areas included concerns over promotions, experience of various forms of leave, opportunities for performance enhancement, and organisation structure and working environment. Data analysis and planning for actions consumed the first half of 2018, with the aim of submitting for the Bronze Award in November 2018.

High priority actions will include the development of a CIT Gender Equality Policy and the establishment of an overall framework within CIT for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, including the provision of adequate resourcing to ensure delivery of the actions. Other specific actions relate to the provision of unconscious bias training for all members of selection committees and the provision of mentoring opportunities for those seeking promotion. This latter action is especially significant, given that the survey highlighted that only 27% of female respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they had access to the training and mentoring needed to help meet the criteria for promotion.

Finally, while CIT is engaged in much excellent work aimed at attracting more women into STEM courses and careers (e.g. the IWISH CIT campus week), led by many strong female role models among our staff and alumni communities, more can be done to support existing female students in disciplines in which they have been historically underrepresented.

Development of a New Strategic Plan and a New Academic Plan for 2018 – 2023

Academic and Strategic Planning at Cork Institute of Technology

Linked to review and planning processes in the run-up to delegation of authority, Cork Institute of Technology had agreed and adopted its first Academic Plan in 1998. Intended as a framework for the academic development of the Institute, this plan set out an institutional mission statement, Institute ethos and six strategic goals. In 2004/05, on foot of the introduction of a new, more complex management structure, two major interlinked planning exercises were commenced, with the intention to update the existing Academic Plan and complement this with a new Strategic Plan.

Around this time, driven by both external and internal factors, Cork Institute of Technology was undergoing a series of fundamental changes not just to its academic management structures and processes, but also to the organisation and scope of its academic provision. Over the first decade of the new millennium, major changes included, in rapid sequence, the alignment of all programmes with the newly-established National Framework of Qualifications (the ‘NQAI bus’); the accreditation of research degree programmes in several areas, followed by the extension of delegated authority to postgraduate level, incorporating both taught and research awards to PhD level; and finally the comprehensive modularisation and semesterisation of CIT’s taught programmes, accomplished within a two-year timeframe. These changes coincided with a rapid growth in student numbers and in the number of

programmes and awards offered. The continuous development and implementation of new academic practices, policies and procedures which followed on from these changes tied up the available resources of Academic Council and the central administration for a considerable length of time.

As a consequence, the strategic planning process, overseen by a dedicated staff resource, was brought to completion and the Institute's first Strategic Plan launched in 2005, while the revision of the Academic Plan was halted. The mission, vision and goals of the first Strategic Plan however related to academic provision and quality as well as institutional infrastructure, resources and community engagement. A second Strategic Plan for the 2012 – 2016 period was subsequently developed and adopted (see the section on [Development of a New Strategic Plan for 2018 – 2023](#)).

Development of a New Strategic Plan 2018 – 2023

Parameters and Preparatory Review

Following preparatory groundwork and review during the preceding academic year, 2017/18 was a period of intensive development and a series of consultations towards the creation of a new Strategic Plan, carried out under the aegis of the Strategic Development Office. While developed as a Strategic Plan for CIT, this document is also intended to provide reference points for the strategic development of the future Technological University as and when it is established.

The aim was to achieve an ambitious and challenging Strategic Plan, grounded in CIT's enduring mission and values and inspired by the Institute's exciting strategic vision and institutional trajectory. This Strategic Plan will stimulate and guide the growth of the Institute during the period to 2023, with a view also to feeding into the process of setting the strategic priorities for the succeeding Technological University when the time comes.

Prior to the commencement of the current planning process, the outcomes of the previous strategic planning cycle were reviewed. In addition, the Institute's strategic management framework was the subject of an internal audit process. Both the strategic planning process and the strategic management framework were amended following these reviews. The main changes were:

- An amplified role for the Institute Executive in the implementation of the strategic management framework;
- An amplified role for Governing Body (through its Strategic Development Committee) in the strategic planning and strategic management processes;
- The inclusion of Strategic Enablers in the new Strategic Plan, to ensure that the plan can capture and accurately reflect factors that are essential precursors to successful implementation of the strategy;
- Greater alignment between the strategic management framework and other processes such as risk assessment, programmatic review, institutional review and the strategic dialogue process.

Multi-Stage Development Process

In developing the CIT Strategic Plan, the Strategic Development Office implemented a multi-stage process which involved environment scanning and institutional research, internal and external consultation, and review/approval from the Institute Executive and Governing Body.

The key stages in the process are summarised as follows (dates are indicative):

- October 2017: Environment scanning and institutional research to create content for a Strategic Briefing Document;
- December 2017: Finalisation of Strategic Briefing Document and Consultation Process and review of both by the Institute Executive Board and Governing Body;
- January – February 2018: Internal exploratory consultation – face-to-face workshops with staff for academic and administrative units across the Institute and with CIT students;
- March 2018: Synthesis of consultation feedback and development of an initial draft Strategic Plan;
- March 2018: Review of the initial draft plan, including review by the Institute Executive and Governing Body review;
- April – May 2018: Second round of consultations (on the draft plan), which included consultation with external stakeholders;
- June 2018: Development of final draft of plan, review of final draft by the Institute Executive and Governing Body, finalisation and submission for Governing Body approval;
- July 2018: Governing Body approval process.

The initial internal consultation (January – February 2018) involved over 30 face-to-face workshops with over 400 participating CIT staff and students.

In the subsequent second (April – May 2018) consultation stage all staff and students were afforded the opportunity to provide input and feedback on the draft Strategic Plan. The external consultation which also happened during that phase consisted of a workshop with external stakeholders from enterprise, the professions and community groups.

The Institute Executive Board and the Strategic Development Committee of Governing Body were actively involved throughout the whole progress and carried out review/approval at three key milestones during the process, as per the above summary timetable.

The new CIT Strategic Plan was approved by the CIT Governing Body on July 5th 2018 and was formally launched by the President of the Institute in December 2018.

Strategic Priorities, Strategic Enablers and Institutional Values

The CIT Strategic Plan 2018 to 2023 identifies CIT's Strategic Priorities (i.e. the key areas where the Institute will have substantial achievements during the timeframe of the Strategic Plan) as well as the Strategic Enablers which are essential to the Institute's strategic success. In the case of both Strategic Priorities and Enablers the plan sets out ambitious high-level objectives as well as the actions and initiatives required to achieve these objectives.

In addition, the new Strategic Plan also gives explicit expression to CIT's Values, rather than transporting these by implication within other elements as in the previous version of the plan.

The CIT Strategy Map illustrates the key elements of the CIT Strategic Plan 2018 – 2023:

Vision	To empower individuals and enrich society through the innovative use of knowledge				
Mission	To provide student-centred, career-focused education and research for the personal, professional and intellectual development of the student and for the benefit of the broader society in the region and beyond.				
Values	Inclusivity	Collaboration	Creativity & Innovation	Integrity	Excellence
Strategic Priorities	Social, cultural and economic impact, regionally and nationally	Excellent student experience and high quality education	Research, engagement and knowledge transfer which is innovative, relevant and impactful	Inclusive access to education opportunities and a diverse student-body	
Strategic Enablers	Engaging and empowering staff	Organisational maturity and operational excellence	Effective and sustainable provision of requisite infrastructure	Ensure financial sustainability and fiscal responsibility	

Development of a New Academic Plan 2018 – 2023

Establishment of Academic Plan Working Party

In 2016/17, arising from discussions around the commencement of the next strategic planning process, it was decided that a new Academic Plan should be drawn up alongside the Strategic Plan to unfold and detail the vision, mission and priorities of the Institute with regard to its core academic activities.

By May 2017, Academic Council had approved a Terms of Reference for an Academic Plan Working Group (APWG) developed by the Academic Planning & Review Committee of Council (APRC). Subsequent to this, an Academic Plan Working Group was formed, composed of the Registrar, heads of faculty and representatives from all academic schools, the academic support services and the Extended Campus, the Head of Research and representatives of the research community, student representatives, a member of the Strategic Development Office, and APRC members. The Working Group was to report to the Academic Planning & Review Committee in the first instance. The Chair of the Academic Planning & Review Committee was elected to chair the APWG also.

Approach to Development

Development of an initial draft of the Academic Plan was conducted through a series of three workshops in January, February and April 2018 respectively, facilitated by Prof Emeritus (UL) Eamonn Murphy, Managing Director of the Irish Centre for Business Excellence, Limerick.

Each workshop had a distinct purpose, with the first workshop dedicated to the establishment of ‘rules of engagement’ and a working process within the APWG.

Generation of Content, Overall Structure and Tone

Development of the content and structure of the Academic Plan commenced in the second workshop. This workshop was dedicated to the generation of 'raw material' and featured group work at three facilitated tables, each of which was assigned a specific task, with some opportunity for participants to feed into the material generated at the other tables through rotation.

Table 1 explored consensus by means of eight key questions in order to explore and uncover the subgroup's thoughts, understanding and ambitions for the academic plan. The questions focused on the Institute's primary and secondary customers; the nature of the service and of its delivery; critical service components and impediments; competing messages and CIT's USP.

Table 2 undertook a peer analysis of an international sample of academic plans (of Concordia University, Montréal, Canada, the University of Rhode Island, United States, and excerpts of the academic plan of Charles Sturt University, New South Wales, Australia). Participants identified which elements they wanted to see included in the CIT academic plan from each of these plans, or conversely what they did not like. The participants at this table also identified their preference for the overall structure, content, tone and appearance of the CIT academic plan.

Table 3 analysed the content and structure of the CIT Strategic Plan 2010 – 2016 in terms of what was missing, what should be added and what should be omitted.

The second and third tables identified the future goals of the Academic Plan. They also recommended that each goal should be linked to appropriate actions, and why they mattered to CIT.

Drafting and Revision

The outputs and contributions were compiled by the Chair of the APWG / Academic Planning & Review Committee and used to formulate an initial draft of the Academic Plan.

Revision 1.5 of this was tabled and discussed at the third and final workshop of the Academic Plan Working Group in April 2018. Again working at three facilitated tables, its members explored the draft content and structure of the three identified pillars of the plan: Ambitious & Visionary Student Scholarship & Teaching; Research and Creative Scholarship; and Expand and Deepen Engagement with our Community.

Revision 1.9 of the draft Academic Plan was reissued to the members of the Working Group and was also issued to the Academic Planning & Review Committee for commentary, with a subsequent version going to the full Academic Council. Following completion of further revisions based on feedback received in these fora, it is anticipated that the new Academic Plan for the Institute will be approved and launched during the 2018/19 academic year.

Evolution of the CIT Researcher Career Framework

The CIT Researcher Career Framework (RCF) addresses three strategic key issues relating to the research community within the Institute:

- The structure of research & innovation entities and the reporting mechanism for each entity;
- The processes associated with recruitment, pay and conditions and HR entitlements, such that they are harmonised across the Institute; and

- The assessment of the career development needs of researchers and the provision of individualised training and other supports.

During 2018, the Researcher Career Framework underwent significant revisions based on feedback from a pilot scheme in 2017 involving over 60 researchers. The most important of these was a move away from ‘performance management’ with its associated formal reviews, to ‘performance achievement’ in which the focus lies on improving the researcher’s career prospects in a constructive and positive manner. The RCF now also identifies increments in line with those pertinent to staff on academic contracts, helping to address the key issue of integrating the conditions of contract and academic staff within one and the same research centre or group.

Taken together, the evolution of the Researcher Career Framework in the reporting period means that the framework is now more finely balanced between the needs of researchers and the capacity respectively commitment of CIT to take advantage of the improved knowledge of the requirements of a maturing research ecosystem to be successful and to scale up.

In the implementation of the Researcher Career Framework, the Research & Innovation Strategy continued to be the strategic mainstay of activity. There was no change to the strategy in the reporting period; continuing resource constraints made it necessary for the Research Office to focus enhancement activity on the QA process most critical to building capacity and growing the CIT research community (see also Part 3, Section 2, [Impact](#)). It was decided that enhancements to the Researcher Career Framework had the potential to pay the greatest dividends in this regard, on the basis that excellent researchers, properly motivated and appropriately remunerated, are critical to a successful research ecosystem.

Digitisation of Systems and Processes for Admission and Examinations

A major push towards process digitisation was reported by the Academic Affairs Administration. A number of offices in this area completed or commenced several important projects whose combined effect on implementation will be to significantly streamline and enhance CIT’s systems and processes for the management and quality assurance of the student lifecycle. Initial feedback received already supports this, indicating that changes introduced to date have positively impacted the student and staff experience.

The majority of the projects consisted of replacing traditional paper-based processes by purposefully developed online systems, accompanied by a general review and optimisation of the attendant processes. Projects completed or initiated in 2017/18 include the following:

Development of MAX^e Exam Paper Management System

The major project initiated by the Examinations Office was the development of a bespoke Exam Paper Management System (MAX^e) which will enable automated submission of end-of-semester exam papers for examiners on all Institute campuses. The reporting period encompassed the tendering and design phases of this project as well as a short pilot stage in a small number of departments.

Academic staff and a number of external examiners were consulted during the development process. This system allows multiple authors to collaborate on exam paper in a secure environment. It also enables the paper then to be transmitted to the External Examiner in a secure on-line manner. Upon review comments made by External Examiners go directly to the paper authors (Internal Examiners), who then finalise the end of semester paper based on the feedback and mark it exam ready. This new

system enhances the quality assurance and integrity of CIT's exam papers, and can also significantly reduce the timeframe from compilation to the integration of the external examiner feedback.

It is expected that the full roll-out of MAX^e will be completed during the 2018/19 Academic Year.

Streamlining of Admissions Office Processes

Examples of some of the Admissions Office processes which were moved online from a traditional 'paper base' or an email-based system include:

- Introduction of Online Withdrawal Request

A new online 'Request of Withdrawal' form was introduced during the reporting period, designed in a collaborative effort between the Admissions, Fees, AnSEO and Careers Offices.

By being able to submit an online withdrawal request at a time of their choosing, rather than waiting to submit a paper form during Admissions Office opening hours, students who have arrived at the decision to withdraw are accommodated to communicate their request to CIT promptly and without delays which might result in additional fees being due. Following the introduction of the online process, Admissions Office staff observed that several withdrawal requests were indeed submitted late in the evening or during holidays, this being times during which big decisions of this nature are often made.

To ensure however that learners are given every opportunity to make a considered and informed decision about withdrawing, the online process highlights the many support services and future options for students before it allows students to confirm their intention to withdraw.

Additionally, academic departments are now automatically notified of withdrawal requests, whereas this information had not always been transmitted in a timely manner previously.

- Booking System for Continuous Assessment Support

Another systems change was the development of an online booking system for students requiring special examination supports for continuous assessment from the Disability Support Service, which replaced the previous email-based system. The new streamlined process ensures that appropriate resources and arrangements can be allocated in a more timely and efficient manner. This is particularly important as the number of students with disabilities requesting supports is growing year on year while staffing levels have remained unchanged, meaning that process improvements are the only way to prevent and resolve 'bottlenecks' in the short to medium term.

- Streamlined Mechanisms for FE Progression and CAO Advanced Entry

A new online application mechanism was also introduced for the Cork Colleges Progression Scheme (CCPS), enabling smoother and timelier communication between the applicant, CIT and the relevant Further Education College.

In addition, the process for CAO advanced entry (post-Year 1) into full-time undergraduate courses was streamlined in time for the 2018/19 intake. All responsible academic staff were trained and obtained access to the CAO Advanced Entry system, which allows secure approval of advanced entry applications within an online system. Use of this system allows CIT to leverage the CAO upload functionality directly into its Banner student records system.

Evolution of the Annual Institutional Quality Report, Part 1

In addition to the annual developments as described in Parts 2 – 6 of this report, the description of the CIT quality framework in Part 1 of this AIQR has undergone some revision. A new summary of the relationship between CIT’s overarching approach to quality and its institutional strategy was included following adoption of a new Strategic Plan. Other revisions are minor in nature and mostly concern the updating of links and data where relevant, some lesser amendments or clarifications in the descriptive text, and the referencing of new policies adopted since publication of the last Annual Institutional Quality Report.

1.2 Significant specific changes (if any) to QA within the institution.

Appointments, Retirements, and Changes to the Management Structure

New senior staff appointees who took up duty in 2017/18 included:

- Interim President, Dr Barry O'Connor
- Registrar & Vice-President for Academic Affairs, Dr Áine Ní Shé (Acting)
- Head of Faculty of Business & Humanities [appointee had held the post in an acting capacity]
- Head of National Maritime College of Ireland
- Head of Department of Arts in Health & Education (Acting)
- Head of Department of Management & Enterprise (Acting)
- Acting Head of Department of Mathematics (Acting)

The end of the academic year 2017/18 also saw the retirements of the Head of School of Business, the Head of Department of Applied Social Studies, the Head of Department of Art in Health and Community Education, and the Head of Academic Affairs in the School of Graduate Studies.

Following retirement of the Head of Department of Art in Health & Community Education in the CIT Crawford College of Art & Design, the department was amalgamated with the Department of Art & Design Education to form a new Department of Arts in Health & Education.

Significant external developments include the appointment of Professor Irene Sheridan, Head of the CIT Extended Campus, to the Board of QQI in April 2018, and the appointment of Dr Ní Shé to the Athena SWAN Ireland Committee as the representative of the Technological Higher Education Association (THEA).

Academic Policies and Procedures

Policy Development

A number of new or updated academic policies and regulations were adopted by the Institute during the reporting period. These encompassed the following:

- Revised Code of Good Practice in Research, Version 1.5 (AC June 17)
- Revised Policy on Programmatic Review, Version 1.2 (AC Dec. 17)
- Student Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy (GB July 18)
- Revised Regulations for Modules & Programmes (Marks & Standards), Ver. 6.0 (GB July 18)

Two additional new draft policies, on exit and embedded awards and on the revocation of CIT awards respectively, were developed during the year and introduced at the Academic Council meeting of June 2018, with a view to enabling adoption early in the new academic year.

Integrated Masters Framework

In addition, Academic Council approved the principles and structural framework for 5-year Integrated Masters programmes in the area of Engineering, which had been proposed in the wake of changes to Engineers Ireland professional membership requirements for Chartered Engineer status.

Adoption of Student Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy

A significant new policy introduced in the reporting period was the [Student Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy](#), approved by Governing Body in July 2018. This policy is intended to complement the Fitness to

Practice and Fitness to Study Policies adopted in 2016/17, with the aim of putting in place a comprehensive CIT policy framework to safeguard and support the wellbeing of students and staff within and outside of the academic environment.

The Student Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy has three main aims:

- To promote a learning environment which is supportive of mental health and wellbeing and in which mental health difficulties are openly acknowledged and not stigmatised;
- To direct students with mental health difficulties or concerns to advice and information on the available supports and on how to access these; and
- To direct staff to procedures to be followed when encountering mental health difficulties in students, in both emergency and apparent non-emergency situations.

The policy section outlines resources and procedures for four levels of intervention, from promotion of positive mental health to accessing professional intervention where it is urgently required, and also describes the responsibilities of staff and students. Staff members are asked to familiarise themselves with the policy, while the role of students is to safeguard their own mental health, seek support if necessary, and disclose any mental health difficulties.

The procedural section describes how staff should respond to students in distress, and includes flowcharts visualising the steps to be taken in three scenarios: where students have concerns about themselves or other students; where staff members have non-urgent concerns about a student; and where staff members have urgent concerns about a student. Lists of CIT mental health supports and contact details for the CIT Safety Response Team are provided in an appendix.

Academic Council Working Parties

During the first half of its term, Academic Council activity with regard to initiating development or review of academic policy and procedures had been dampened somewhat by initial uncertainties over the implications and pace of the Technological University process. Coming up to the reporting period Council members however regained some assurance on the need for a continuity of academic work, both over the full lifespan of the Institute and between CIT and any successor institution. One sign of this was the fact that, in addition to its standing Committees, the Academic Council established (or reconvened) a number of Working Parties to carry out various aspects of its academic work.

The following Working Parties of Academic Council took up work or continued to be active during the reporting period:

- Working Group on Online Proctoring (from May 2016)
- Academic Plan Working Group (from May 2017)
- Programmatic Review Working Party (Oct. 2017)
- Academic Calendar Working Party (reconvened Oct. 2017)
- Working Party on the Review of the Student Ombudsman Role (Nov. 2017)
- Technological University Working Party (Nov. 2017)
- Working Party on Exit Awards (Dec. 2017)
- Working Party on the Student Grievance Procedure (Mar. 2018)
- External Examiners Working Party (Mar. 2018)

1.3 The schedule of QA governance meetings.

Governing Body Meetings

12 October 2017
6 November 2017 (Special Meeting)
7 December 2017
1 February 2018
12 April 2018
3 May 2018
7 June 2018
5 July 2018

Academic Council Meetings

6 October 2017
8 November 2017
13 December 2017
19 January 2018 (Special Meeting re. Academic Calendar)
9 February 2018
14 March 2018
20 April 2018
16 May 2018
15 June 2018

Section 2: Reviews in the reporting period

2.1 Internal reviews that were completed in the reporting period.

Programmatic Reviews

1. Programmatic Review of the School of Science & Informatics

- a. Phase 2 (Review of Programmes), Department of Physical Sciences, April 2018
- b. Phase 2 (Review of Programmes), Department of Mathematics, May 2018:
 - Higher Diploma in Data Science & Analytics

Total Revalidations: 1 Major Award revalidated. Revalidation of 8 further Major Awards / 3 Non-Major Awards to be concluded.

 [Link to Phase 2 PR Report for the HDip in Data Science & Analytics](#)

2. Other / Differential Revalidations

4 further major awards were revalidated in 2017/18. Three of these saw significant revisions to content and title arising from the recommendations of earlier programmatic reviews and underwent differential validation processes.

Total Revalidations: 4 Major Awards

Validation Reviews

1. Major Awards

- [Bachelor of Arts \(Honours\) in International Business with Aviation Studies](#)
- [Bachelor of Science \(Honours\) in Agri-Biosciences, with embedded BSc exit award](#)
- [Master of Science in Artificial Intelligence](#)
- [Master of Business Administration in Strategy](#)
- Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science and Sustainable Technology, with embedded HC in Science exit award

Validation panel review carried out in the context of the Programmatic Review of the Department of Physical Sciences. Validation process to be concluded.

2. Non-Major Awards

- [Certificate in Sales Strategy and Techniques, Minor Award, NFQ Level 8](#)
- [Certificate in Enterprise Development, SPA, NFQ Level 6](#)
- [Certificate in Lean Sigma Yellow Belt for Operations & Service, SPA, NFQ Level 6](#)
- [Certificate in Lean Sigma Master Black Belt, SPA, NFQ Level 9](#)
- [Certificate in Validation Science, SPA, NFQ Level 7](#)

3. Other Validations and Approvals

Embedded Exit Awards

- Bachelor of Arts in Contemporary Applied Art (Ceramics, Glass, Textiles).

New embedded NFQ Level 7 exit award of the BA (Honours) in Contemporary Applied Art (Ceramics, Glass, Textiles). Desk review.

Apprenticeship Programmes (IoT Consortium-Based)

- Higher Certificate / Bachelor of Engineering in Manufacturing Engineering [*Apprentice Mode*]
Developed and offered by a GMIT-led IoT consortium in collaboration with the Irish MedTech Association. These programmes aim to prepare apprentices for the SOLAS-registered occupations of Manufacturing Technician and Manufacturing Engineer. Validated by Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology through GMIT QA processes. To be operated under GMIT Marks & Standards but leading to a CIT award.
- Bachelor of Arts in Culinary Arts, with embedded Higher Certificate in Arts exit award / Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Culinary Arts [*Apprentice Mode*]
4-year and add-on 2-year apprenticeship programmes validated by IT Tralee.

In the apprenticeship area in particular, programmes offered by Institute of Technology consortia have become somewhat of a feature of provision over recent years. These tend to be developed and delivered under the leadership of a particular Institute, with QA processes and programme regulations which follow the quality system of the lead institution.

However, where regulations diverge between institutions, this model can create anomalies with regard to the standard of comparable awards within the ‘host’ institution. In addition, differing regulations within the programmes offered by one and the same academic unit bring considerable operational challenges, especially where there are multiple instances.

If this type of consortium provision is to become a standard feature of sectoral programme provision, for reasons of equity and maintenance of award standards, it may become necessary to address and regularise the anomalies arising at a sectoral level through THEA.

Joint Programmes and Awards

- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Industrial Physics
Joint programme leading to a joint award with University College Cork. Jointly validated in UCC following the UCC QA process.

Integrated Masters Framework

- Outline Structure for 5-year Integrated Masters Programmes in Engineering
The structural framework for a 5-year integrated programme sequence leading to a Masters qualification was approved for introduction in the area of Engineering. The structure was developed in response to the coming into force of revised, higher academic requirements of Engineers Ireland for the achievement of Chartered Engineer status. Similar structures were already on stream in several Irish universities.

For most Engineering specialisations, the Integrated Masters will initially sit alongside and eventually replace the existing programme sequence towards an MEng, constituted by a 4-year Honours Bachelor and a 90-credit Masters programme. Learners who do not wish to

progress to postgraduate study will continue to have the option of transferring into a separate undergraduate award stage in order to exit with a BEng (Honours).

The CIT Integrated Masters framework incorporates a minimum of 60 ECTS module credits at Expert (i.e. postgraduate) level and will enable learners to attain 300 ECTS credits overall over the course of five years.

Other Reviews

Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) & Pilot ISSE for Postgraduate Research Students

A strong promotional push spearheaded by the Student Engagement Office which encompassed information campaigns through various media, student leader activity, and more direct engagement of the academic departments, raised the completion rate of the main 2017 Irish Survey of Student Engagement to 32.4%. In addition, the national pilot for an engagement survey for postgraduate research students, ISSE-PGR (Pilot), was run for the first time during the reporting period. This was completed by 43% of CIT's registered research students.

Three detailed analyses in total were presented to Academic Council arising from the two surveys: an Institute ISSE Report, a Programme & Departmental ISSE Report, and an ISSE-PGR (Pilot) Report.

Institute ISSE Report

This detailed comparative analysis of the results of ISSE 2017 contained sections relating to

1. Summary of student participation from 2013 to 2018;
2. Meta-analysis on Institutional comparisons (2016 – 2018) across the nine indices;
3. Changes across indices within CIT from 2016 to 2018;
4. Highlights of changes across indices within CIT from 2016 to 2018 with respect to gender, student type/stage, student age, mode of study, and nationality (Irish/non-Irish).

All statistical analyses were carried out using *RStudio*. Results were presented in terms of *p*-value (significant/insignificant) and effect size (strength of a statistically significant result). In particular, results were highlighted where the comparison between CIT and other higher education institutions was significant.

Programme and Departmental ISSE Report

In addition, an initial proof of concept was undertaken on the basis of ISSE 2017 year to determine if ISSE results could be made more meaningful for academic units by reporting results at programme and departmental level.

Historically, due to relatively low response rates, results at a more granular level had unacceptably high margin of error or unacceptably low level of confidence. The premise used was to combine cohort responses over a number of years to create a larger data set for the given cohort. For both the sample programme and sample department, the report contained an analysis of the response rate; an overview analysis on indices; an exploratory analysis on individual questions and a summary of responses to open-ended questions.

ISSE-PGR (Pilot)

The Irish Survey of Student Engagement for Postgraduate Research (ISSE-PGR) is the first national activity to comprehensively seek the views of postgraduate research students enrolled in Irish higher education institutions. At the time of the pilot study, CIT had 163 registered research students, of which 71 (43.6%) students responded to the survey. CIT was classified in the <250 cohort of HEIs together with the remaining of Institutes of Technology excluding Dublin Institute of Technology.

From the 88 question responses, student experiences in CIT are in line with 74 (84.1%) question responses from Cohort ≥ 250 and 83 (94.3%) question responses from Cohort < 250.

Responses where reported CIT student experiences differ from the overall cohorts may be summarised as follows:

1. Research Infrastructure and Facilities

- a. CIT responses to the statement *I have access to the specialist resources and facilities necessary for my research* are more negative than Cohort ≥ 250 and are in line with Cohort < 250;
- b. *My funding covers research materials* is more positive in CIT than for Cohort ≥ 250 ;
- c. Under *My funding covers specialist training* the reported student experience is more negative in CIT than both Cohort ≥ 250 and Cohort < 250.

2. Supervision

- a. In relation to the number of supervisors, CIT students report having more supervisors than students from Cohort ≥ 250 . All CIT doctorate candidates are enrolled on structured doctoral programmes and would have a panel of supervisors assigned.

3. Research Culture

- a. More students from Cohort ≥ 250 state that *My department provides access to a relevant seminar programme* than students in CIT.

4. Development Opportunities

- a. Under *Receiving training to develop my other transferable skills* the reported student experience is more negative in CIT than Cohort ≥ 250 and Cohort < 250;
- b. Under *Working collaboratively with industry* the reported student experience is more positive in CIT than Cohort ≥ 250 and Cohort < 250;
- c. Under *You have been given appropriate support and guidance for your teaching/demonstration* CIT students' reported experience is more negative than Cohort < 250.

5. Research Skills

- a. CIT students' experience in *My skills in applying appropriate research methodologies, tools and techniques have developed during my programme* is more positive than Cohort ≥ 250 .

6. Transferrable Skills

- a. CIT students' experience in *My ability to manage projects has developed during my programme* is more positive than Cohort ≥ 250 .

7. Overall Experience

- a. CIT students' belief in *I am confident that I will complete my research degree programme within my institution's expected timescale* is more negative than Cohort ≥ 250.

The detailed benchmarking analysis of ISSE-PGR (Pilot) permits targeted follow-up of individual areas for enhancement. The report has been brought to the Postgraduate Research Studies Board for review and the identification of suitable actions arising from the report. It is envisaged that a series of focus groups will also be held with postgraduate research students to qualitatively explore the issues highlighted by the students in the survey.

Internal Audits (Governing Body Internal Audit Committee)

Two internal audits were completed and reports presented during 2017/18:

- Internal Financial Controls Review
- Follow-Up Review.

ISO9001-2015 Review and Certification of the National Maritime College of Ireland (NMCI)

The National Maritime College of Ireland faces quality and management challenges of unusual breadth, depth and complexity as a result of its public-private partnership structure and because of the combined effects of regulatory and academic course content and quality obligations that underpin many of NMCI's programmes. NMCI's academic degree programmes provide students with both an academic qualification awarded by CIT and aligned to the National Framework of Qualifications, and an internationally recognised professional maritime qualification under the International Maritime Organisation's (IMO) International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW) system.

To effectively address these complexity challenges, NMCI put in place a structured management and quality system. Following an ISO review during the 2017/18 academic year, NMCI's management and quality system has now been certified to the ISO9001-2015 standard, making NMCI the only third-level institution on the island of Ireland to hold such quality management certification. Managing operations and quality under ISO9001-2015 at NMCI ensures effective and quality programme delivery in the College. NMCI plans to further extend its management systems by achieving the ISO 45001, Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems Quality Standard, by 2020.

2.2 Profile of internal approval/evaluations and review completed in the reporting period.

Number of new Programme Validations/Programme Approvals completed in the reporting year	10
Number of Programme Reviews completed in the reporting year	2

Number of Research Reviews completed in the reporting year	0
Number of School/Department/Faculty Reviews completed in the reporting year	2
Number of Service Unit Reviews completed in the reporting year	0
Number of Reviews of Arrangements with partner organisations completed in the reporting year	0

Annotation: The number given under Programme Review indicates the number of panels convened with the purpose of reviewing programme provision, rather than the number of programmes under review. The same number is entered under S/D/F review as the overall development, facilities, supports, staff complement and external engagements of the department also form part of the programme review. Additional guidance would still be helpful to ensure the reliability of inter-institutional comparisons based on the numeric information gathered in this section.

2.3 Profile of reviewers and chairs internal approval/evaluations and review for reviews completed in the reporting period.

Composition of Panels	%
Internal	36

Annual Institutional Quality Assurance Report

National	62
UK	2
EU	0
Student	0
Other (↔ Outside EU)	0

Annotation: The categories under Composition were treated as relating to institutional affiliation and, by dint of this, mutually exclusive. “National” was thus taken as meaning ‘affiliated with an institution or organisation based in Ireland other than CIT’, and so forth.

Chair Profile	%
Internal	50
Similar Institution	50
Different Institution	0
International	0

Annotation: The Category “International” is treated as *NOT mutually exclusive* with regard to “Similar Institution” and “Different Institution”. Where the panel chair is affiliated with an institution or organisation based outside of Ireland, the percentages may therefore not add up to 100%.

Section 3: Other Implementation Factors

3.1 A description of how data is used to support quality assurance and the management of the student learning experience.

Measuring Research Impact and Excellence

The Research Office continually monitors the impact and quality of research activities conducted at Cork Institute of Technology, using data collated by three primary independent sources to determine both excellence and impact.

Excellence in scholarly outputs is determined using the Scopus database, a bibliometric tool which enables the Research Office to compare the quality (measured as citation impact) of the Institute, of research centres/groups or of individuals, using peer-reviewed publications. CIT's overall performance in 2018 indicates that our publications have 53% more citations than the global average (with other metrics showing similarly).

Excellence in quality of applications and research activities with external stakeholders is evidenced by the Research Income, which is of the order of €14m, second-highest in the IoT sector in 2018. Data for this metric are obtained from HEA returns.

Excellence in impact is measured using Knowledge Transfer Ireland data, which capture intellectual property generated and spin-out companies. CIT's performance is significantly above the average as compared to the University sector.

Consolidation of Extended Campus Customer Relations Management System

Following on from a successful pilot implementation of the Dynamics CRM System in the CIT Extended Campus, further refinement of the system in the form of a data cleansing exercise was carried out in 2017/18, with additional training in report generation.

The pilot showed that the CRM system is indeed effective in supporting and evidencing engagement interactions with public, private and not-for-profit organisations through a codification system. Engagement data collected through the CRM are utilised for mapping and impact measurement exercises and improve the quality and response time of further interactions.

Following requests presentations and demonstrations on the system were provided to Waterford Institute of Technology and Institute of Technology Sligo.

Data-Based Service Usage Enhancement in the Careers Service

The ongoing monitoring of usage data continued to inform the decisions taken by the Careers Service in its bid to continually enhance the effectiveness and quality of the services provided to students in the reporting period.

Though there was a further reduction in the volume of individual appointments for CV and application form reviews (2017/18: 35%; 2016/17: 45% of service provision) on foot of the introduction of CV &

Advice Clinics last year, these appointments remained the most sought-after activity within the service, followed by interview preparation and career options talks (both at 15%).

To make still more effective use of staff time, a new process was therefore introduced for CV and application form reviews during the reporting period. All students requesting a review were first seen at either a lunchtime clinic or drop-in session which offer 15-minute sessions. To accommodate this new process, additional drop-in sessions were introduced each week. The result of this change meant that students had more choice for when to meet the Careers Service and the number of 30-minute booked appointments required for CVs was greatly reduced.

3.2 Factors that have impacted on quality and quality assurance in the reporting period.

Technological Universities Act

The Technological Universities Act was passed by both Houses of the Oireachtas and subsequently signed into law by the President of Ireland in March 2018, making technological universities a reality in Ireland. This, together with the subsequent successful application of the TU4D consortium for designation as Technological University Dublin, accelerated the pace of progress on the application of the MTU Consortium (CIT and IT Tralee) for designation as a technological university. This acceleration became more marked over the summer months, and coincided with the appointment of the project leaders for two key areas of the merger project, Academic Affairs and Research & Engagement.

At a top strategic level, a set of organisational principles was developed, which will inform the significant work to be carried out in 2018/19 to identify and prioritise those activities which are critical to the success of the TU application and to the foundation and consolidation of the new entity on designation. For the respective academic faculties, Registrar's Offices and Academic Affairs Administration staff in particular, this will entail significant additional work to align programmes, programme regulations, and academic quality assurance frameworks and processes.

New Mission-Based Performance Compact with the Higher Education Authority

During the reporting period, the Institute commenced work on the development and agreement of a new mission-based performance compact with the Higher Education Authority (HEA). Through iterative drafts and a series of dialogue meetings with the HEA, CIT worked towards setting out how it will endeavour to contribute to the regional, national and system objectives as set out in the 2018 – 2020 Higher Education System Performance Framework.

During the lifetime of the agreed mission-based compact, the HEA will continue to measure the Institute's performance against the compact targets under the different objectives, which impacts on academic quality enhancement in many ways. Some examples are explored below.

Timeframe for Programme Development in Response to Employment Initiatives

In relation to the first system objective (employment) there is a national impetus for offerings such as apprenticeship programmes and Springboard programmes. In many instances, the Institutes are expected to respond with alacrity, responding to calls and realising programmes on the ground in a relatively short time. The current contractual workload model for academic staff (typically 16 – 18 contact hours per week) in the IoT sector impacts on Institute ability to realise a fast turnaround, most especially when a new programme is required to be created and submitted through the CIT programme validation process. It is challenging to strike a balance between the achievement of a timely response to such calls and the ongoing business of programme delivery, monitoring and development, as well as cyclical programmatic reviews, particularly given the number and range of CIT programmes, with module sharing between programmes also a norm.

Consortium Programmes

Certain of the programmes created specifically under the employment objective are developed by provider consortia. There is a variety of QA arrangements for these programmes, all of which add significant complexity to each provider's QA systems and administrative procedures.

In some instances, all providers work according to the marks & standards and QA framework of the lead provider. In these cases, there are additional complexities and effort in relation to (i) communication of the lead provider's regulations to relevant staff of all providers; (ii) the encoding of

the marks & standards of the lead provider in the MIS of all providers; and (iii) principles of fairness and consistency as they apply to all learners of each single provider. In other instances, each provider delivers the programme under its own set of marks and standards. Where this is the case, additional care is needed to ensure fairness and consistency to all learners of the programme across all providers.

There are similar issues in relation to the validation. While this may appear to be more efficient as the validation by the main provider is assumed by all others, it is still necessary for each provider to set up modules and programme schedules in its own systems to enable VLE, results processing, etc.

Typically, many consortium programmes are proposed and developed with the support of key industry stakeholders, for example the Restaurants Association of Ireland (RAI) or the Construction Industry Federation (CIF), along with the active support of the HEA. However, it can sometimes prove more difficult for 'receiving' providers to place apprentice students on the ground, notwithstanding the active support at senior levels of industry.

Furthermore, the level of HEA funding, which is on a per student basis, is not of the order to guarantee a break-even situation. With the improvement in the employment rate, the demand for Springboard programmes has decreased. So, while resources are invested in the development of such programmes, these programmes may not be long-lived. In certain cases, such as Computer Science programmes funded under the IT Skills initiative, programmes which were originally campus-based are now delivered online, thus meeting the demand for flexible offerings both in HEA Compact and on the ground from part-time learners. Where this change is made, the necessary quality assurance work is done in relation to ensuring consistency of all delivery modes, particularly in relation to integrity and consistency of assessment. Again, however, in these cases additional effort is required from the providers to make the programmes in question sustainable beyond the initial delivery.

National Skills Strategy

Seeking to respond to other national policy objectives such as those set out in the National Skills Strategy, CIT remains committed to delivering high quality programme which are practitioner-focused.

In the context of the Institute's STEM offerings, for example, this entails the commitment of significant resources, both pay and non-pay budgets, to the delivery of practical components, maintenance of physical facilities, materials and equipment, in order to provide work-ready graduates. CIT's achievement of its mission is borne out by the strong employer demand for the Institute's STEM graduates regionally and nationally.

CIT has engaged with the HEA and the Department of Education & Skills in relation to the funding model for STEM, demonstrating how the introduction of the student contribution has resulted in a dilution of the weighted funding for STEM. CAO trends show sustained interest in programmes in Computer Science and in Life Sciences. There are far greater challenges involved in attracting Leaving Certificate applicants to programmes in Physical Sciences, with the evidence suggesting that this may arise from the relatively low uptake of Physics and Chemistry by Leaving Certificate students.

Given that the graduate numbers in these areas do not meet employer demand, more will need to be done at a national level to grow interest among post-primary students in these subjects.

National Access Plan

The National Access Plan sets out a set of ambitious targets in relation to equity of access to higher education. CIT is proud of its track record on access and student engagement, and welcomed the opportunity to discuss its own work and targets in relation to the fourth system objective with the HEA.

With the decreased unemployment rate, a downward trend in mature applications could be observed during the reporting period and beyond, nationally and in CIT. In relation to other targets, however, particularly in relation to numbers of students with disability, the trend has been upwards. While this has resulted in increased funding for students with disabilities, the increased numbers have brought additional pressures regarding the provision of assessment supports, particularly in relation to space, which cannot be easily increased in the short term.

Academic Framework and Professional Accreditation and Regulation

Impact of Professional Body Requirements on Academic Processes and Structures

While CIT has always placed great value on accreditation of programmes by professional and regulatory bodies, it is becoming increasingly apparent that the recommendations of such bodies may not always be in complete alignment with CIT's curriculum framework, academic regulations and overall approach to teaching & learning. This may lead to programme teams requesting derogations from Institute requirements in relation to elective choice, maximum number of terminal written examinations or compensation, for instance. Where derogations are given, these frequently necessitate additional work to the Institute's management information systems, which in turn leads to additional resource and time requirements.

Given the breadth of CIT's provision and its career-oriented mission, this is not an exceptional phenomenon, but affects an ever-growing number of Institute areas and programmes. This raises several questions for the Institute, not just with regard to learner equity, but also more fundamentally with regard to the extent of academic leadership of higher education institutions in the technological higher education sector, and the concomitant extent of their institutional freedom and obligation to determine the pedagogical and curricular parameters of their academic provision in line with the collective methodological and subject expertise of their academic staff.

CORU Registration of Social Workers

With the continuing national drive towards the professionalisation and regulation of occupations related to health and social care, additional regulatory frameworks will come to bear on CIT's provision in the near future. Currently this particularly concerns Social Care, which recently came under the statutory professional registration requirements of CORU, the national health regulator, under the Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005. For the relevant CIT programmes to achieve and maintain CORU approval, allowing graduates to apply for entry onto the Register of Social Workers, CIT must show that any and all programme deliveries meet both CORU's general criteria for education and training programmes and the twelve discipline-specific proficiency standards for social work.

In this, the institutional relationship with CORU in the context of the approval and monitoring processes will have quite a different quality to any other existing relationships of the Institute with either regulatory or professional bodies. CORU expects that it will interact with the provider as a whole, rather than primarily with and through the specific discipline area as is the case with other regulatory or

professional bodies. The regulator also envisages that regulatory functions will be carried out through the internal academic quality structures of the institutions, chiefly the Registrar's Office.

This adds yet another facet to the issues raised above, and may raise additional questions regarding institutional autonomy and the separation of functions and responsibilities between public higher education institutions and other statutory bodies.

Case Study: Academic and Professional Standards and Regulations at NMCI

As a corollary of the ISO9001-2015 implementation at the National Maritime College of Ireland, the review process again confirmed that the College faces unusually severe module and programme delivery challenges resulting from the combination of CIT's academic quality requirements under the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 and regulatory compliance obligations for maritime education and training under the IMO International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW) system as enforced by the Irish Maritime Administration.

Increased STCW requirements over recent years have meant that the limits of what can be delivered within the semester system and the academic year are being reached. Combined with a recent renewal of NMCI senior management due to retirements and restructuring, the College was also consequently not in a position to adequately engage with the most recent programmatic review cycle during the reporting period.

While the management system certified under ISO9001-2015 will assist the College in addressing some of the noted pressures in a structured manner, a re-evaluation of the structure, content and delivery methods for those NMCI programmes that must be compliant with both academic and regulatory standards will also be urgently required at the next possible occasion.

SOLAS Apprenticeship Programmes

The number of apprentice students on SOLAS programmes continued to increase during 2017/18, in line with economic and demographic trends. Recently, SOLAS made a number of innovations, notably the introduction of online assessment into some subjects. This has caused some additional spatial pressures, with the need to provide IT laboratories for online testing for a large number of students.

A more recent, and possibly more intractable, issue which arose was SOLAS' expectation that CIT, as provider, would consider and review learner requests for re-evaluation of assessments under CIT policy. While this is a straightforward exercise for written assessments or practical work, it is a more difficult task when the request relates to an online assessment, since the student's work resides in the SOLAS system and is difficult to retrieve for consideration by CIT. Deliberations on this issue are ongoing.

Changes to CIT Senior Management and Quality Assurance/Enhancement Roles

As set out elsewhere in this document, the reporting period saw significant changes to the senior management team of CIT, in particular the appointment of a new President and a new Registrar & Vice-President for Academic Affairs. Prior to her appointment, the new Registrar had held the position of Head of Department. Within the quality assurance and enhancement function, another Head of Department was seconded to the role of Curriculum Development Facilitator, following the secondment of the previous incumbent to the Strategic Development Office.

With all of the noted appointments being internal, the obligation to ‘backfill’ the vacated posts in accordance with HR policy and procedure meant that some of the newly appointed staff had to take on double duties for a period of time, while for other appointees the effective date on which they could take up their new duties was delayed, each for a considerable number of weeks.

All of the relevant positions – including the Head of Department posts which had to be refilled – encompass significant duties in relation to quality enhancement and assurance. Between delays, double work and an initial lack of familiarity with aspects of the new role, some level of impact of these changes on quality assurance and enhancement tasks, such as the timescale for completion of programmatic reviews, while not easily quantified, was likely unavoidable.

Implementation of New Leaving Certificate Grading Scale / CAO Points Scheme

This reporting period saw the successful implementation of the new CAO points scheme arising from a new Leaving Certificate Grading Scale first applied to the 2017 LC cohort. Extensive preparations had been conducted in the Institute for some years prior to the change-over, in terms of adapting the Admissions Office systems, alignment of programme entry requirements, and staff training.

Admission of the first CAO cohort under the new points scheme for entry in September 2017 therefore went smoothly, with no operational or academic issues of any significance reported. If anything, the Admissions Office reported that the higher level of granularity in the new CAO points scale meant that far fewer applicants were on the same CAO points level and thus subject to ‘random ranking’ within that level, meaning that in this respect at least the new scale worked as intended.

Research Environment

Research quality is determined, in part, by the support that can be brought to bear on the research community. Many of these supports relate to the work environment. An example is nurturing the sense amongst researchers that CIT is committed to them having a fulfilling and successful research career. In turn, this translates into a Researcher Career Framework which can make provision for career advice, mentoring and pastoral support that is tailored to the needs of individuals.

The ability of CIT to deliver such a quality environment is impacted by financial constraints for the most part, not by a lack of maturity in the organisation or lack of experts to perform the necessary duties, with lack of financial support in turn impacted by the core funding model. This backdrop informs the somewhat divergent observations on the development of the CIT research environment elsewhere in this report, which show a very positive trajectory in priority areas on which the limited resources were brought to bear, but not the same amount of progress in areas to which the funding did not stretch.

Strategic HEA Review of IReL

Towards the end of the reporting period, work commenced on a [strategic review of the Irish Research eLibrary \(IReL\)](#), facilitated by the HEA at the invitation of the IULLC Governance Committee.

For most of 2017/18 full access to this resource, then hosted by Maynooth University, was limited to the university sector, with DIT gaining full access in mid-2018. The Institutes of Technology have access to two journal collections via IReL.

Within CIT, the Registrar, Librarian, and Head of Research worked together and in collaboration with their respective sectoral groups to keep the CIT research community updated on developments and to seek the timely completion of this review. From CIT's perspective, it will be necessary for all parties to collaborate to ensure that access to online resources is made available in a fair and consistent manner, with due regard for value for money.

3.3 A description of other implementation issues.

Part 3: Effectiveness and Impact

Part 3 provides information relating to the effectiveness and impact of quality assurance policy and procedures for the reporting period.

1. Effectiveness

Evidence of the effectiveness of QA policies and procedures during the reporting period.

Feedback from the Researcher Career Framework Pilot Study

As noted in [Part 2, Section 1.1](#), detailed feedback was collated from 60 researchers participating in a pilot study of the Researcher Career Framework in 2017, which informed the adaptation and further enhancement of the framework in 2017/18.

Overall the feedback received was very positive, with over 90% of participants commenting that they found the introduction of the framework helpful to their career development.

Effectiveness of Entrepreneurship Education

The Institute's strategic focus on fostering integrated entrepreneurship education and an entrepreneurship culture within CIT and the region continued to prove effective in delivering on CIT's strategic aims. Amongst others this was reflected in the further increase in recent graduates declaring themselves self-employed in the annual Graduate Outcomes (First Destination) Surveys. Thus, in the 2017 survey 6.6% of respondents reported themselves self-employed, up from 6% in 2016, 5% in 2015 and only 1% in 2011.

Indirect evidence for the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education at CIT may also be derived from the fact that the Institute was honoured with an inaugural DELTA Award of the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching & Learning in Higher Education for its activities in the area of entrepreneurship; see Section 4.2 *Quality Enhancement Highlights* below.

2. Impact

Evidence of the impact of QA policies and procedures during the reporting period.

Disseminating Exemplary Practice in Provision of Flexible Learning Opportunities and in Student Engagement

The purposeful, strategic and sustained engagement of different Institute units with national and international organisations, academic and professional networks and communities of practice not only brings important learning opportunities for CIT, it also allows CIT to showcase, share and disseminate exemplary approaches and practices developed and implemented at the Institute.

Three examples from the reporting period show how CIT's work in the areas of RPL/WBL and of student engagement is gaining national and international exposure and recognition. This allows CIT to both significantly broaden the impact of its own exemplary practices and to gain significant opportunities to learn from other exemplars in these spaces:

European Commission European Validation Festival, June 2018 (CIT Extended Campus)

CIT's development of customised and flexible learning opportunities for a wide range of learners incorporating RPL and WBL was showcased at the European Commission's [European Validation Festival](#), which took place in Brussels on 14 – 15 June 2018. This Europe-wide stakeholder conference aimed to share practices and exchange ideas and knowledge on validation of informal and non-formal learning across the European Higher Education Area.

CIT's Extended Campus was chosen to show the Institute's work in the area at the '[Marketplace](#)', one of only three HEIs among the exhibitors from across the European Union with a dedicated stand. In addition, practitioners and industry stakeholders of CIT's RPL Service were also featured in the [Unlocking Talent: Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning video](#) on the European Commission Audiovisual Services website.

Student Engagement & Communications Awards 2017 and 2018 (AnSEO Student Engagement Office)

For two years running, in April 2017 and 2018 respectively, Cork Institute of Technology won the [Student Engagement & Communications Award](#) category at the annual Irish Education Awards (IEA). While the IEA awards, launched by Business River in 2017, are commercial awards, the number and quality of the entries from across the full spectrum of public and private higher education institutions in Ireland to date still make them a useful yardstick of performance against national competitors in the chosen categories. The repeat success of CIT's IEA application is testament to the dynamic growth and overall breadth and depth of the student engagement and communication activities across the Institute, developed and coordinated by CIT's AnSEO Student Engagement Office.

Visible external successes such as the Irish Education Awards build on many years of incremental development during which sound, trustful working relationships were established between the AnSEO team and staff and students across the Institute. These relationships were a critical success factor in growing an 'engagement' culture in which a shared concern and enthusiasm for fostering student success through engagement have become focal points for the work of the academic departments, central services units and the CIT Students' Union throughout the academic year.

European First Year Experience Conference 2019 (AnSEO Student Engagement Office)

A final example is the successful bid of the Institute's Student Engagement Office to host the prestigious annual European First Year Experience (EFYE) Conference at Cork Institute of Technology in June 2019, which typically attracts well over 300 delegates from across the European Union.

AnSEO is committed to creating national and international links with key organisations to help identify models of best practice. On foot of a presentation of CIT's student engagement work at a 2017 conference of the highly regarded Education Development Service of Birmingham City University, the AnSEO team was invited by members of the EFYE Network Committee to apply on behalf of CIT to host EFYE 2019. At the 2018 EFYE Conference, held in Utrecht in March 2018, it was formally announced that Cork Institute of Technology had been selected as host institution for EFYE in June 2019. In setting out the reasons for its selection, the EFYE Network Committee lauded CIT's outstanding energy and commitment to enhancing student experiences and opportunities, and noted that the strong relationships with staff and students built by AnSEO enabled the team to achieve substantial impact.

A summary of AnSEO's further student engagement activities in 2017/18 is given in [Part 4: Quality Enhancement](#).

Extended Campus Engagement Mapping

Working with some of its key collaborators, the Extended Campus developed and piloted a mechanism to map engagement, and was able to record some initial success in identifying new opportunities and new interfaces. Based on the success of this pilot mapping exercise, the Extended Campus is working towards translating the pilot into a mechanism to evidence and measure impact. Once in place, this mechanism will support the service in further evidencing the value of its engagement activities both within the Institute itself and to CIT's external enterprise partners, thus opening the door to additional engagement opportunities.

Graduate Outcomes (formerly First Destinations) Survey

From April to May 2018, a cross-functional team jointly coordinated by the Careers Service and the Alumni Office carried out the annual Graduate Outcomes Survey 2017. In line with HEA requirements, this was completed by 51.54% of the graduating class.

While still a good completion rate, this represents a further continuation of the downward trend in completion already commented on in the 2016/17 AIQR (under the heading First Destinations Survey). Analysis carried out at the time suggested that the drop was likely connected to the revised survey format then introduced by the HEA. The revised survey is longer than had been the case for previous First Destinations Surveys. It also includes more questions requiring free text answers and several questions which can be perceived as difficult or repetitive.

Relevant feedback and concerns regarding the negative impact of the new format on completions were shared with the HEA during review meetings attended by the CIT Careers Service and Alumni Office. This included the renewed observation that – though the reasons for non-completion could not be formally established –, 'incomplete survey' respondents tend to exit the survey at specific points.

Common Entry Engineering

As in Biological Sciences, interest in the Common Entry route also remained strong in Engineering during the reporting period. All learners who successfully complete Common Entry Engineering are guaranteed their choice of one of four denominated, Engineers Ireland-accredited Engineering

programmes in Stage 2. While the Faculty of Engineering & Science (FES) acknowledged that this has the potential to create certain operational difficulties down the line, it noted that evidence suggests the freedom to choose is part of the appeal of the Common Entry programme to prospective applicants. To 'level the playing field' for Engineering programmes which are not currently accessible from Common Entry Engineering, the FES Board of Studies is currently considering the possibility of associating at least one more Engineering programme with this route. This may require a review of differential entry requirements between programmes.

Impact of 2016/17 Research Audit

The 2016/17 Internal Audit of Research, commissioned by the Governing Body Internal Audit Committee and conducted by PriceWaterhouseCoopers, had aimed to establish whether the research strategy launched the previous year operated as intended, including the development of the Researcher Career Framework and the newly established Research & Innovation Steering Group (IRIS).

The PWC report presented a number of findings, the most substantial of which was a need to address capacity in the Research Office in order to maintain adequate levels of support in the face of the growing number of researchers and research units.

While business cases for additional Research Office staff were drawn up, it was not possible to fund additional posts during the reporting period. This meant that non-critical deficiencies related to lack of capacity could not be addressed. In the short term, this led to a sense that the audit report actually had a somewhat negative impact as it clearly and concisely stated deficiencies which CIT was not in a position to address.

Notwithstanding this, significant progress was made on key developments. Research entity designation progressed steadily, with seven research groups and one research centre now formally established. IRIS, irrespective of the hiatus in meeting activity observed by PWC, met more frequently than scheduled during the annualised period, and is now meeting at least quarterly.

With regard to the development of the Research & Innovation Strategy, the Office of the Vice-President for External Affairs and the Research Office in conjunction with the IRIS Committee concluded that the existing strategy, launched in 2015/16, was in fact suited to support and provide direction for research development in the medium term, beyond the originally envisaged time period. The decision was therefore taken to roll over the existing Research & Innovation Strategy on an annual basis pending the application for TU designation.

Observations made elsewhere in this report ([Part 3, Section 1](#), and [Part 2, Section 1.1](#)) confirm the positive impact of the Researcher Career Framework since its introduction to date, to the extent that the framework is being looked at as a potential [national model](#).

Access & Disability Service

During the reporting period, the Institute decided to affiliate itself to the national [HEAR \(Higher Education Access Route\) scheme](#), and this will be in effect from CAO 2019.

CIT also continued to work on streamlining access routes from the FE sector and to enhance the range of options and quality of information available to applicants. At the local level, an FE Working Group, with membership drawn from the Institute, Cork ETB, and FE colleges, remained active.

Impact of IT Systems Upgrades on Library Service Provision and Experience Management

During the reporting period, the CIT Library upgraded and replaced several of its IT systems, with divergent experiences regarding initial impact of the respective migration on service provision and user experience management.

Upgrade of User Self-Service Kiosks and Security Systems

In September 2017, CIT Library commenced an upgrade of its RFID-based security and tracking hardware and software systems on the Bishopstown and Crawford College of Art & Design campuses, which had been in place since 2011. Advancements in RFID technologies for libraries meant that the new solution now includes security exit gates with integrated patron counters for statistical purposes going forward. In addition, new Self-Service Kiosks which include an electronic fines payment system for patrons via smart card technology now feature in both the Bishopstown and CCAD libraries. Integration with CIT's Smart Card system was previously unavailable on the outdated kiosks, meaning a member of library staff was required to personally process the fine payment every time a student had exceeded the fine limit for borrowing new titles.

Since going 'live', the equipment upgrade has had an immediate and measurably beneficial impact on process quality and the quality of the customer service and user experience for students wishing to avail of self-service technologies. Some usage figures from the end of November, 2017, to the end of August, 2018, may serve to illustrate this: even with some of the equipment coming on-stream in February 2018 only, combined figures still show a total of 4,575 kiosk issues and 5,211 kiosk returns in the two libraries for the initial 9-month period, thus freeing up library staff to take on other, less 'mechanical' tasks.

Introduction of KOHA Library Management System

In December 2017, the CIT libraries migrated to a new Library Management System, KOHA, as part of an overall roll-out for THEA libraries (excluding DIT at the time), where the procurement process had been managed by Educampus.

The act of searching the library catalogue is the central point at which learners, academic staff, researchers and library staff interface with the library resources, and is frequently the access point for first-time users of the Institute's learning resources. Since the move to the KOHA Library Management System, serious concerns regarding the performance of the library search facility have been raised. Examples of qualitative data collated which justify such concerns have included:

- Unexpected search results which frequently bear only a distant connection to the search term. A 'Title' search, for instance, may pull in results that do not have the queried term in the title;
- Unpredictable outcomes of searches employing standard search conventions using wildcards (asterisk and question mark) and of searches involving apostrophes. For example, a CIT catalogue search for "the design student's handbook" resulted in zero hits if "the design students handbook" was input (of at least 11 directly relevant items in the collection);
- Unclear navigation, with a complex and fussy interface to be manoeuvred (Boolean display);
- Questionable weighting of search results – less relevant results appear higher;
- Anticipated search functionality improvements, e.g. fuzzy matching, truncation and stemming, lead to slower and degraded overall system performance, and therefore had to be turned off, rendering them entirely redundant and ineffective.

The full impact of the observed issues on student learning and the staff experience will be hard to establish. Given the nature of the functional errors reported, however, it has to be assumed that both individually and cumulatively the impact on the quality of learning outcomes for students utilising this resource could be considerable. The issue has been brought to the attention of the Institute Executive and is under consideration.

3. Themes

Analysis of the key themes arising within the implementation of QA policies and procedures during the reporting period.

Programmatic Review Themes

Two academic departments underwent review of their taught programme provision in 2017/18, but the review process could only be concluded for the Higher Diploma in Data Science & Analytics hosted by the Department of Mathematics (the bulk of whose offerings consist of service provision). The number of recommendations in relation to a single programme was too small however to have made any notable difference to the strength and ranking of the PR themes as collated during the previous two years. With a single programme being the focus of the review, the recommendations were also at a more granular level, with far greater emphasis on individual modules.

In the interest of a judicious use of limited staff resources, it was therefore decided to postpone further review of programmatic review themes until all areas have fully completed the present PR cycle. The differing levels of granularity will have to be taken into account in the final analysis.

Key Themes Arising from Annual Programme Status Review Reports

The following represents a summary of key themes from the 2018 analyses of programme status review reports produced for Academic Council by the Faculty of Business & Humanities (for 2016/17) and the Faculty of Engineering & Science (for the time period 2012/13 – 2016/17). The different timeframes of the Business & Humanities (FBH) and the Engineering & Science (FES) reports should be taken into account when considering the collated observations on trends and themes.

The themes, observations and conclusions of the two reports were broadly in line with those previously reported. This is only as is to be expected: Changes to programme, learner and graduate performance patterns tend to manifest gradually over a number of years, and true 'watershed events' leading to clear and immediate turnabouts are normally few and far between. Similarly, the full impact of Institute initiatives and environmental changes may take several years to determine with any confidence.

Some observations and developments to note from the faculty APSR report summaries presented to the Academic Council in 2018 are summarised below.

Demand and Enrolment

1. Enrolments in full-time, major award programmes of both faculties continued to grow to the end of 2016/17, though the growth rate in FES was adjusted downwards somewhat for the updated interval, to 4%. In FBH, the continuing growth in enrolments resulted largely from an increased demand for Level 8 programmes, whereas demand for Level 6 offerings continued to decline, replicating trends for the period 2014 – 2016.
2. A further growth in CAO demand for construction-related areas appeared to have come at the expense of CAO demand for Computer Science programmes. This was significantly compensated for by increased Computer Science enrolments through the Cork Colleges Progression Scheme.

Some programmes of the CIT Crawford College of Art & Design (CCAD), some Culinary programmes and Early Years Education also experienced drops in CAO applications. With regard to CCAD, external examiner commentary suggested improved marketing as a potential measure.

The programmes of the Departments of Biological Sciences, Computer Science and Mechanical, Biomedical & Manufacturing Engineering continued to attract over 50% of all FES enrolments, with Common Entry Engineering also growing in popularity. Enrolments in other FES areas remained static or declined slightly in the adjusted period.

3. Where reported, gender-specific enrolment trends also remained unchanged. Female representation in FES was considerably higher in biological sciences, biomedical engineering, architecture and chemical & biopharmaceutical engineering than in the traditional engineering disciplines and the 'more technical' programmes of the School of Science & Informatics.

Student Performance, Retention and Progression between Stages

1. The overall 2016/17 faculty retention rate for the Faculty of Business & Humanities was 85.7%, above the rate set with the HEA.
2. Stage 1 continued to be the most challenging programme stage for learners in both faculties, with modules requiring strong numerical and/or analytical competence levels remaining the most significant challenge respectively progression barrier, particularly for weaker students.

Learners enrolled on NFQ Level 8 programmes of the Faculty of Engineering & Science continued to experience higher progression and lower attrition rates than their Level 6 and 7 counterparts. The Business & Humanities report noted that retention rates were also correlated to intake points, with higher points at intake corresponding to higher retentions levels.

Both faculties reported significant efforts to monitor progression and, both locally and in partnership with AnSEO and the Academic Learning Centre, to maximise opportunities for academic success for all students.

The Faculty of Business & Humanities reported that targeted reviews of modules with higher failure rates carried out in the faculty contributed to an overall improvement in retention where initiatives were put in place. Numerical subjects, while still presenting a challenge to some students, were thus no longer regarded as a problem.

In this context, the FES report noted that the uptake for the support options of the Academic Learning Centre from students who experienced difficulties in completing their programme was less than expected.

3. The FES report also pointed out that the high level of external employment undertaken by many students to fund their education and living requirements continued to present a barrier to students achieving their full academic potential across many programmes.
4. Attendance levels were again highlighted as a challenge faced by programme boards in both faculties. As for the 2014 – 2016 period, in the Faculty of Business & Humanities clear links could be drawn between attendance levels and pass/progression rates in programmes where attendance was an issue. While CIT's academic regulations do not foresee attendance marks, the FBH faculty indicated it was working with the CIT IT Services towards an attendance monitoring solution.

Taken together, the observations on attendance and on the – somewhat surprising – lack of uptake of ALC supports by struggling FES students appear to further support the conclusion that the investedness of learners in their studies is a critical factor in their academic success. This underscores the validity of the strong CIT focus on building student engagement as a key enabler of learner progression.

5. Lastly, the FES report noted that an increasing diversity of student ability was evident across part-time programmes, possibly linked to rising employment rates in the economy. This trend presented challenges in relation to the consistency of student performance and the student experience in some areas.

Graduate Performance and Progression

1. The Faculty of Engineering & Science reported that level of demand for STEM graduates specifically continued to exceed supply. With the ongoing expansion of STEM-based industries in the region, the faculty noted that this is set to become a critically important issue for CIT and the region.

Proposed measures to grow STEM enrolments included structured engagement with students who have expressed an interest in CIT STEM programmes in their CAO form.

2. Employer-led demand for FES graduates resulted in increased employment opportunities for NFQ Level 7 graduates, with decreasing enrolments in the add-on stages of NFQ Level 8 programmes as a consequence. Down the line, however, the faculty felt that this development might translate into in a need for increased part-time provision in line with career development requirements.

Teaching, Learning & Assessment

6. Linked to the Institute's 'employability agenda', the increasing use of site visits and guest lectures to better contextualise classroom-based learning was mentioned in APSR reports in FES.
7. The industry experience of lecturers was identified as being of significant value by students enrolled on some part-time programmes in Engineering & Science.

The Faculty of Business & Humanities referenced I comments from external examiners regarding exemplary elements of the approach to teaching, learning & assessment and its description in the programme materials, including the blend of assessment methods and the clearly articulated learning outcomes. The work done in the entrepreneurship area was also praised.

8. A proposed action in the Faculty of Business & Humanities was the promotion of more online engagement for students during their learning.

Programme Operation, Management and Promotion

1. Enhancement requests received by programme boards from students in the main related mainly to the organisation and resourcing of programme delivery and to the organisation of assessment.

Requests for operational improvements concerned the structure and timely distribution of the weekly timetable, work placement and programme promotion. Requests regarding resources and facilities related to room sizes and available space, access to facilities for project work, broader availability of programme-specific software, ventilation, and bathrooms. Assessment-related issues discussed concerned assessment load and timing, the clarity of marking schemes and group work, and the need for timely feedback.

A number of issues raised by boards in the Faculty of Business & Humanities were to be addressed by the FBH Quality Working Group. The FBH report also set out several specific actions to be taken by the faculty, such as provision of training in assessment rubrics and marking schemes.

2. A need to support more structured engagement with part-time students and potential applicants looking to enter programmes in the summer months (e.g. Springboard+) was noted by the Faculty of Engineering & Science.
3. FES staff remained strongly engaged in programme promotion, with high levels of voluntary participation in school visits, roadshows, exhibitions and programmes such as [IWish Campus Week](#) (to encourage young female students to pursue STEM careers), [SciFest](#), Engineering Your Future and VEX Robotics.

4. The FBH report noted that feedback from some external examiners was limited, with provision of extern training suggested as a possible enhancement action.

Industry Engagement, Work Placement and Professional Competence Development

1. The Faculty of Engineering & Science reported that industry scholarships had been secured in several programmes. These benefitted not just the students, but also the profiles of the relevant programmes, the sponsoring organisations and the promotion of STEM in general. Details of the scholarships on offer to FES students can be found in the [Scholarships section of the CIT website](#).
2. Staff participation in professional and regional industry bodies was found to be exceptionally strong, ensuring that industry engagement is proactive and multidimensional.
3. Industry stakeholder feedback during the development of the CIT Strategic Plan indicated an industry preference for longer work placements, in line with those offered in other HEIs.
4. At the same time, increased levels of competition for student placement opportunities from other HEIs were also reported by some FES areas.

Good Practice Suggestions

The FBH report also identified good practices emerging from the various faculty APSR reports for potential replication across other programmes. New good practice suggestions from the 2016/17 reports included:

1. Showcasing existing online delivery methodologies to programme teams
2. Formalising best practice in delivering feedback to students
3. Developing LinkedIn Profiles and Class Groups for all final year students
4. Making technology support for group work (e.g. Teamviewer) more widely available

Part 4: Quality Enhancement

Part 4 provides information which goes beyond the description of standard quality assurance procedures. Quality enhancement includes the introduction of new procedures but also extends the concept of quality assurance to other initiatives, activities and events aimed at improving quality across the institution.

4.1 Improvements and Enhancements for the Reporting Period

Improvements or enhancements, impacting on quality or quality assurance, that took place in the reporting period.

Student Engagement Enhancement Activities (AnSEO – the Student Engagement Office)

AnSEO – the Student Engagement Office drove the further development of CIT’s student engagement and communication activities during the reporting period, focused on three interrelated key dimensions: collaborative engagement; communication & information provision; and strategic external partnerships and dissemination.

Growth of Collaborative Student Engagement Initiatives

The various student engagement initiatives continued to grow and extend their reach, with further consolidation and development under six core programme strands:

- The Good Start Induction Programme;
- Early Alert & Intervention / Academic Success Coaching;
- Peer Assisted Learning and Support (PALS);
- The Academic Learning Centre (ALC);
- SPaRQ@CIT (Student Partnership in Quality) / NSteP; and
- Transitions to CIT (department-led induction projects supported by AnSEO).

In developing these strands, the AnSEO team was committed to a ‘working together is better’ approach, seeking to build prospering collaborations with all 28 academic departments (management, teaching teams and their students). Specific AnSEO team members were allocated to particular disciplines to enable the building of solid, long-term working relationships and to provide reliable channels for direct communication in both directions.

A sample of student engagement enhancements in the reporting period includes:

- *Good Start* – AnSEO registered ca. 8,000 direct interactions with students during the Good Start programme in Semesters 1 and 2, of which more than 80% occurred in the First Semester. In this, the AnSEO team was again joined by 12 Good Start [Student Ambassadors](#) who had responded to an open invitation to co-create and deliver Good Start.

The *Get Connected* social induction events delivered as part of Good Start were particularly successful. 17 Get Connected events were delivered jointly with academic departments to 1,055 participating students and staff.

- *Academic Success Coaching* – Academic Success Coaching also broadened its reach significantly. AnSEO success coaches interacted with ca. 2,100 new First Year students through in-class workshops offered jointly with an increased number of CIT academic departments. Students identified as unsure or wavering by the presence of certain well-researched ‘trigger indices’ were immediately contacted via email or telephone to provide reassurance and/or support as necessary, including 100 one-to-one coaching sessions where appropriate.
- *Transitions to CIT* – AnSEO supported 44 department-led *Transitions* projects aimed at building student engagement and a sense of belonging between department staff and incoming students. Projects included staff-student ‘meet & greets’, welcome breakfasts, ice-breaker and team-building activities, role model seminars, site visits and *Meet Our Graduates* events.
- *SPaRQ@CIT* (Student Partnership in Quality): A total of 20 SPaRQ events at department, school or faculty level ran in the Faculty of Business & Humanities and the Faculty of Engineering & Science in 2017/18, with 438 student and 135 staff participants. These events were

accompanied by trained AnSEO team members and the CIT Students' Union Executive and offered an opportunity for facilitated student-staff dialogue on teaching and learning, to explore and gain an understanding of challenges, the potential for improvement and possible actions to be taken in the enhancement of student experience space.

- *NSteP*: On the strength AnSEO's work on SPaRQ to date, Cork Institute of Technology was invited by the HEA, QQI and USI to host the national launch of NSteP Networks in November 2017, marking the second phase of the roll-out of NSteP.
- The *Academic Learning Centre (ALC)*, which provides ongoing academic support sessions for challenging modules predominantly in STEM areas, saw weekly walk-in attendances of ca. 150 students on average, in addition to good attendance at intensive Easter and summer revision programmes (475 visits in the 2017 calendar year).
- *PALS*: 112 students were trained by AnSEO as PALS Study Leaders and PALS Social Mentors.

Enhanced Communication and Information Provision

Online activity is central to the communications strategy of AnSEO. During 2017/18 the team successfully grew its online presence and further extended its reach in CIT through all available communication channels. Some examples:

- *New CIT AnSEO Website*: In September 2017, AnSEO launched its new and interactive [CIT Student Engagement Office website](#), providing an overview of the Institute's student engagement programmes. The content-rich, user-friendly new website is a useful tool for promoting AnSEO's linked activities and events. It also enables students to make appointments, look at resources and timetables, ask questions or request a call back from the AnSEO team. During its first year in operation the site had over 10.5K unique visitors.
- *Social Media Presence*: AnSEO continued to extensively use the CIT social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat) to connect with students and staff on platforms favoured by them. The Good Start social media 'takeover' in September 2017 gained 1,231 extra likes on the CIT Facebook page, resulting in 31% more Good Start followers on Facebook than in 2016. Good Start also gained 266 extra followers on CIT Twitter and 156 extra followers on CIT Instagram, all from organic posting. The most successful post had an organic reach of over 15,000 people. AnSEO also successfully increased usage of Snapchat and Instagram stories during events and to run competitions.
- *Dedicated Student Engagement Email Address*: In addition, the creation of a dedicated studentengagement@mycit.ie email address in August 2017 now allows for AnSEO student engagement emails to be sent directly to all CIT students. This allows AnSEO to communicate directly with each and every student and has created a sense of enthusiasm and a greater awareness of AnSEO activities amongst the student body.

External Partnerships and Sharing of Good Practice

AnSEO continued to purposefully grow and strengthen its portfolio of strategic linkages and collaborations with national and international student engagement exemplars, networks and projects. Amongst others AnSEO connected with, or continued to work with, the Student-Led Learning Network; the Learning Innovation Network (LIN); SPaRQS (Scotland); BCU; NSteP; the European Centre for Peer-

Assisted Learning and Support (SI-PALS) at University of Lund; MMU; and the National Centre for the First Year Experience at the University of South Carolina.

AnSEO's purposeful external engagement activity also opened up an increased number of opportunities for the team to share its expertise in student engagement principles and practice.

Recognised as an exemplar of Student Engagement & Communication by the HEA in 2016, AnSEO was invited to present on its work at several annual review and strategic dialogue meetings commencing in June 2018. Further examples of dissemination opportunities arising from AnSEO's external linkages may be found in [Part 3, Section 2, Impact, Disseminating Exemplary Practice.](#))

These partnership activities were complemented by the staff development programme of the Teaching & Learning Unit (TLU) offering CIT staff numerous opportunities to attend workshops and seminars by well-respected international experts on student and staff engagement, such as Prof Sally Brown and Prof Phil Race. A summary of TLU enhancements it provided in the next section.

Development of Teaching & Learning (Activities of the Teaching & Learning Unit)

The aims of the Teaching & Learning enhancement function are to encourage and facilitate excellence in teaching and learning by providing a range of relevant and accessible professional development opportunities and supports; to enhance the learning and development experience for CIT staff and students; and to encourage scholarship, research and innovation in teaching and learning. The different strands of enhancement activities offered by the TLU in 2017/18 are summarised below.

MA in Teaching & Learning in Higher Education

A set of new or revised and amplified modules for the *MA in Teaching & Learning in HE (MATHLE)* was rolled out in the reporting period following the 2016/17 programmatic review of MATHLE. The revised programme was promoted for new intakes in September 2017, with 30 staff enrolling.

The key change was the introduction of larger, 10-credit modules to reduce the overall workload on students – all of which are current academic staff of CIT – and thus improve progression rates through the full programme. The objective was to maintain, in so far as possible, the existing programme strengths, such as the deep approach to learning and quality and the integration of theory with reflective practice. Where a natural symbiosis existed, existing 5-credit modules were combined, and the number of associated learning outcomes reduced, while ensuring that the module learning outcomes overall still fully supported the intended programme outcomes. Simultaneously, the heavy assessment load was lightened across both revised and new modules.

In addition to a cohort of staff members working towards a Masters, there are other participants who take individual modules only. Some staff simply attend for the learning and content but do not wish to complete assignments or obtain credit, while others complete certain modules for credit, but do not continue to the award (with 36 staff successfully completing MATHLE modules in 2017/18 and Sem. 1 of 2018/19). The TLU team is therefore engaging in discussions at Institute level about how CIT can value and recognise the time and effort colleagues put into CPD given their heavy workloads, particularly as this challenge pertains to MATHLE participants who may not be in a position, or may not feel the need, to gain an award.

Certificate in Effective Teaching in Higher Education

This Special Purpose Award at postgraduate level is aimed at experienced CIT staff who wish to obtain formal recognition and certification of the knowledge and skills in teaching, learning support and assessment they have built up throughout their teaching practice. The newly validated SPA was piloted with 5 staff members in the reporting period, who successfully completed the programme requirements and gained 20 ECTS credits at NFQ Level 9. The model is currently being reviewed in order to create a bridge to the *MA in Teaching & Learning in HE*.

CPD Seminars and Workshops

A variety of CPD seminars and workshops are offered by the TLU throughout the academic year to reflect the needs of staff. The topics are determined based on information gathered through the unit's ongoing work and consultation with staff from across the Institute, both academic and non-academic.

In 2017/18 this resulted in the organisation of the following series of seminars/workshops:

- *Breakfast Seminar Series*: This is a series of short, early-morning breakfast CPD workshops on different annual themes associated with teaching and learning. For 2017/18, the theme was "[Using Assessment to Develop Independent Learners](#)", with 10 sessions attracting an attendance of 128 staff members over the duration of the series.
- *Conversations on Teaching & Learning* (Winter and Summer Programmes): *Conversations ...* is a series of short seminars and workshops that address the needs of staff and students based on feedback and demand. This series frequently includes seminars funded by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (NFTEL) as part of its National Seminar Series.

In January and May 2018, the TLU delivered two series of [Conversations in Teaching and Learning](#) seminars and workshops. The topics varied widely and ranged from The Importance of Mental Health Policies and Processes, Increasing Resilience, Providing Instruction around the Literature Review, Data Management and Protection, Empowerment, Exploring the Role of Peers in Enhancing Student Success, and 'Nuts & Bolts Workshops' on Plagiarism and the CIT Marks & Standards to seminars, workshops and masterclasses on teaching and assessment methodology.

Presenters included both CIT staff and well-known international experts in the relevant field. Seminar resources were subsequently made available to all CIT staff through the TLU website.

Two of these seminars were funded by NFTEL, namely "Building Capacity through Professional Development", delivered by Prof Sally Brown, Emerita Professor at Leeds University, through presentations and a collaborative workshop; and "Exploring Approaches to Work-Based Assessment", delivered by Dr Jon Talbot, Senior Lecturer (Associate Professor) at the Centre for Work-Related Studies, University of Chester, and Prof Irene Sheridan of the CIT Extended Campus.

The *Conversations on Teaching & Learning* seminars and workshops were extremely well received, with 571 staff in attendance over the two series delivered in 2017/18.

Staff Induction Workshop and "Staff Induction – Starting Off Essentials" Guide

In collaboration with the Human Resources team, the TLU furthermore developed a Staff Induction Workshop which is to be offered to new staff members at various times of the academic year.

The workshop introduces new staff to the Institute, its physical infrastructure and organisational structures; makes them aware of the role, key staff, and core policies and procedures of various CIT functions; and introduces them to the activities of the Sports & Social Committee and other ways of getting to know the CIT community. In 2017/18, an initial Staff Induction workshop was delivered for 12 new staff members, with the intention of increasing the number of workshops the following year.

A new “Staff Induction - Starting Off Essentials” Guide was also developed to complement the workshop. This guide, which aims to ease the transition of new staff members into their role by providing them with essential information about CIT, was distributed widely throughout the Institute.

Teaching & Learning Development Fund

In 2017/18 the TLU continued to support a variety of departmental projects through its Teaching & Learning Development Fund. Altogether, between 2015 and 2017 the fund supported 25 individual projects in 9 departments across both faculties. The topics chosen were wide-ranging and indicative of the initiative shown by academic and non-academic staff within CIT. Projects typically ran for a full semester, with a variety of outputs including new T&L data, videos, seminars, conference proceedings, publications, websites, new assessment practices and inter-institutional collaborations. The outputs from the projects run to date will be showcased in a booklet to be published in 2018/19. Based on the success of this initiative, the TLU will continue to invest in the Teaching & Learning Development Fund, and is working towards encouraging an increased number of project applications.

Staff Mentoring Initiatives

The Staff Mentoring Pilot Project was developed to the next stage in the reporting period. This project is aimed at providing an immediate source of advice and support for staff wishing to enhance their teaching methodologies or classroom management techniques in a safe and unpressurised environment. Most of the work in the reporting was directed towards enabling Induction Mentoring for New Staff, with over 100 CIT educators identified and trained to provide voluntary mentoring support to new lecturers. This enabled TLU in 2017/18 to successfully match all new lecturing staff who expressed an interest in being mentored with suitable induction mentors.

The TLU is furthermore in discussions with the European Mentoring and Coaching Council regarding accreditation and recognised standards for its ongoing work in this area.

National Digital Badges

In 2017/18 CIT’s TLU was awarded funding to work with the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching & Learning in Higher Education on a short (25 hour) CPD programme on “Teaching Strategies for New Lecturers”. The Academic Project Lead was Dr Eileen O’Leary, Department of Physical Sciences/TLU, who is also a NFETL ‘Teaching Hero’. CIT’s Hincks Centre led the development of a second badge under the same initiative on “Entrepreneurship Education”, while CIT’S Technology-Enhanced Learning Department partnered with other HEI’s to develop “Getting Started with Online Teaching”.

TLU Website / Online Teaching & Learning Resources

Sustained effort also went into the further development the TLU Website and of several online ‘Toolkits’ for CIT teaching staff, including a CIT Staff Induction Toolkit, a Teaching Toolkit, a Mentoring Toolkit, a First Year Coordinator/Lecturer’s Toolkit, and further resources. These toolkits are available from the [Resources](#) section of the [CIT TLU Website](#).

Learning Communities and Networks

Finally, the TLU was engaged in fostering the formation of learning communities among CIT lecturing staff and in providing ongoing financial, logistical and developmental support post-establishment as required. Most learning communities are discipline-based, but in 2017/18 the TLU supported the creation of a new Learning Community for New & Early Career Lecturers, which was formally launched in March 2018.

Careers & Employability Enhancements

Careers Service Strategy Development

A Careers Service Strategy for 2017 – 2020, developed on foot of an internal service review, was finalised in 2017/18 and presented to the Registrar, Academic Administration & Student Affairs Manager, and Student Services Officer for input and approval in January 2018. Priority areas for development over a number of years include the embedding of an employability agenda in CIT and the digitisation of Careers Services resources and careers education tools.

Enhancements in Careers & Employability Education

In 2017/18 uptake for the offerings of the CIT Careers Service either grew or remained at its consistently high level. The service launched several new initiatives and reported an increased total of 6,300 interactions with students. This includes 3,669 interactions ranging from one-to-one student work, CV ‘clinics’, mock interviews, class talks and workshops to various employer engagement activities (with over 600 employer contacts on CRM). A record 2,700 students also accessed 89 stands at the annual CIT Careers & Employability Fair in September 2017.

The standout Careers & Employability-related initiative of the year was the inaugural “Employability for 21st Century Work” conference in May 2018; see Quality Enhancement Highlights (4.2) below.

A selection of other impactful activities and initiatives:

Integration of Careers & Employability Content into Academic Programme Delivery

In line with the priorities of the new Careers Service Strategy, the service developed specific Employability segments for integration into several undergraduate (BIS, Business, Marketing) and postgraduate (MA in Public Relations with New Media) programmes. These segments were delivered by Careers Service staff from February through April 2018.

Joint Mentorship Programme

The award-winning CIT Joint Mentorship programme, jointly offered by the Careers Service and the Alumni Office, continued, with 24 pairs of Student Mentees and Industry Mentors from areas as diverse as Engineering, Pharmaceutical, Finance and Hospitality engaging over a six-month period from November 2017 to April 2018. The mentors were a mix of CIT Alumni – including graduates who had taken part in the programme as students and now wanted to ‘give back’ – and ‘friends of the Institute’.

Evidenced not least by the fact that former participants are returning as mentors, the impact of programme on the student experience has been consistently positive. As in previous years, all mentees indicated they would strongly recommend the programme to their peers. Most also reported an increase in self-confidence as a result of the experience. In the context of the Graduate Outcomes (First Destinations) Survey, some graduates indicated they had found employment through the programme.

To develop the programme further, the joint services began to actively seek endorsement from professional bodies and local and national organisations in June 2018. To date endorsements have been received from the Cork Chamber of Commerce, IBEC, Network Cork and ACCA.

Dedicated SME Careers Events

A new initiative of the Careers Service was a dedicated SME Careers Event in November 2017, followed by a second SME event in April 2018 hosted jointly with the Extended Campus.

Enhanced Careers Information Provision

The reach and impact of information provided on Careers & Employability events and services was enhanced through increased social media activity of the Careers Service, resulting in increased followers and connections. YouTube and Instagram accounts were created in January 2018. In addition, face-to-face information sessions for academic departments to run at the start of each academic semester were introduced in September 2017 and provided again in January 2018.

These additional activities complement successful existing mechanisms for disseminating information on service offerings, such as participation in the annual CIT Guidance Counsellors' Information Day.

Access and Disability Service Enhancements

Noteworthy enhancement activities of the CIT Access & Disability Service during 2017/18 include:

3rd International UNESCO Conference on Learning Cities 2017

During 2016/17, CIT had been involved in the "Growing Lifelong Learning in Cork" initiative and worked collaboratively with colleagues in Cork City Council, CETB and UCC on a successful bid to UNESCO to be declared a Learning City and bring the 3rd International Conference on Learning Cities to Cork.

In September 2017, Cork hosted this three-day Learning Cities Conference which brought together over 500 representatives of the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities. Conference events were held in different venues across Cork, with all 10 events of the 3rd day hosted by Cork Institute of Technology on its different campuses.

Learning Neighbourhoods

The Learning Neighbourhoods programme aims to continue to build a culture of lifelong learning across Cork City's neighbourhoods. The programme was piloted by UCC and now involves collaboration between UCC, Cork City Council, CIT and Cork Education and Training Board (ETB). The programme works with the learning and education organisations and residents in each area to promote and develop active local lifelong learning.

Cork Prison Service Programme

During the reporting period CIT established a relationship with colleagues from the Cork Prison Service. The Access Officer organised for more than 20 CIT staff to visit Cork Prison Open Day, where staff had an opportunity to engage with prisoners and view the education facilities there.

Arising from this initial engagement CIT Access Service organised a six-week pilot 'Lecture Series' programme for Prisoners. Lectures covered a range of different themes and were delivered voluntarily by colleagues from across the Institute. As part of the programme CIT also engaged with the wives, partners and mothers of prisoners through the Dillon's Cross Project and offered them an opportunity

to avail of the same lectures. As a result of these activities, the Academic Affairs & Student Administration Manager was appointed to the Board of the Dillon's Cross Project.

City of Sanctuary

The Cork City of Sanctuary (COS) movement is committed to making Cork a place of welcome, support and safety for Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Migrants and persons of migrant origin, where diversity is recognised and celebrated. The CIT Access Officer represented CIT on the City of Sanctuary Working Group, and CIT is committed to moving forward the Institute of Sanctuary status for CIT agenda.

Postgraduate Research Degree Education

Collaborative Transnational PhD Research Degree Provision

In December 2016, Cork Institute of Technology had signed a Joint Research Collaborative Agreement with the University of Applied Sciences, Karlsruhe, Germany, to foster common areas of interest and research and to develop the number of Master and PhD research students in both institutions. This agreement was based on similar agreements that CIT has with the Universities of Applied Sciences in Darmstadt and Fulda, also in Germany. In 2017/2018, the first enrolment onto CIT doctoral programmes of candidates based at the University of Applied Sciences, Karlsruhe took place. These candidates pursue structured doctorates under the CIT Regulations for Postgraduate Research Study, and are supervised by graduate supervisory panels composed of supervisors based in both Cork and Karlsruhe. Supervisors based in Karlsruhe are designated as Adjunct Faculty of CIT.

Postgraduate Register

The overall number of candidates registered on the CIT postgraduate register continues to increase, with a total of 186 registrations in April 2018 (126 PhDs / 50 Research Masters). In the reporting period, the Institute saw students predominantly registering as doctoral rather than research Masters candidates. This change perhaps reflects the growth in taught Masters provision across CIT whereby students wishing to pursue a Masters qualification are more likely to pursue a taught rather than a research programme of study.

Structured Modules

The Institute also further expanded its provision of structured PhD modules. Students are required to undertake a research skills module together with generic modules coordinated by the Graduate Studies Office in areas such as research communication and entrepreneurship for researchers. Additional modules developed and approved in the reporting period through the academic quality process recognise learning achieved through work placement and at external seminars and workshops.

Furthermore, the *Statistics for Research* module was redesigned as a 10 ECTS module. The revised module provides the learner with advanced training in statistical methods with R, relevant to data analysis in the design and planning of experiments as part of the research process. On completion of the module, using R and associated R Markdown, learners have produced a verifiable and transparent map of their analysis from collection of data to tabular or graphical output in research publications. This module is one of the initiatives to support the Institute's continued drive to promote and support research practices aligned with its commitment to research integrity.

RÍSAM Scholarships and Staff PhD Scheme

The Institute continued to award its RÍSAM PhD scholarships, with 5 scholarships granted in the reporting period. By supporting doctoral students and early career researchers, the RÍSAM scholarships promote high-end research directed towards the generation and application of new knowledge, and play a vital role in developing the research mission and infrastructure of the Institute.

The support provided by the RÍSAM Scholarships is particularly valuable in discipline areas within CIT where external funding opportunities are difficult to source, or for areas looking to scale up and establish a track record which will allow them to access external funding. Scholarships are awarded on foot of an external review process which evaluates the both quality of the research proposal and the applicant.

In addition, one PhD student was in receipt of a scholarship from the School of Science, while the Faculty of Business & Humanities Faculty sponsored a research Masters.

Lastly, the School of Graduate Studies continued to fund staff members to pursue doctoral studies under the Staff PhD Scheme, with 7 staff funded in the reporting period. All funded staff are pursuing their studies externally.

Collaborative Provision with University College Cork

In addition to the validation of the new joint BSc (Honours) in Industrial Physics, the reporting period saw the graduation of the first joint CIT/UCC PhD, in February 2018.

The Cork Centre for Architectural Education, which is run jointly by UCC and CIT, furthermore completed its move to a purpose-built new premises located in the historic city centre of Cork.

Entrepreneurship Education

Enhancement Activities of the Rubicon Centre and Innovation & Enterprise Office

In addition to successfully fulfilling its business incubation function, resulting in over 400 enquiries and a 93% occupancy rate (with 70% of client companies linked to CIT) for the CIT Rubicon Centre in 2017/18, the Rubicon continued to contribute directly to the CIT mission of providing career-focused education and training.

This was achieved through delivery of training to entrepreneurs based in the Rubicon itself or in the wider region, and through direct involvement of centre staff in the delivery of academic programmes.

Relevant metrics for 'outreach' training for entrepreneurs include delivery of Rubicon programmes (with 118 participants in total) as well as of 125 stand-alone training sessions for entrepreneurs.

In the context of academic provision, the Rubicon team together with the Innovation & Enterprise Office and Enterprise Interns adjudicated on the business pitches of 900 First Year students from different disciplines by way of the Business Model Canvas (up from 546 in 2016/17); heard presentations of 150 Third Year teams (some multi-disciplinary) in the context of Venture Planning and Product Development modules; and discussed business ideas with 34 individual students.

The Rubicon Centre and the Innovation & Enterprise Office also engaged with 230 students in the context of the CIT Prize for Innovation, and subsequently supported applicants in the very successful

campaign for the Enterprise Ireland Student Awards, resulting in an overall win for the Institute (see 4.2. *Quality Enhancement Highlights* below).

Lastly, in the summer of 2018 the Rubicon Centre ran another instalment of Student Inc., Ireland's first student accelerator programme which commenced in 2011. The 2018 programme was delivered to a slightly increased number of 12 participants from CIT, with 7 international students from Vietnam joining in part of the programme. Student Inc. allows learners to work on setting up their own business side by side with more seasoned entrepreneurs based in the Rubicon. Participants receive various supports in the form of training, mentoring and seed funding, and obtain 5 ECTS credits at NFQ Level 8 on successful completion.

Implementation of the CIT Entrepreneurship Strategy

Implementation of the CIT Entrepreneurship Strategy with its mission to “inspire, support, educate and research” gathered pace during the reporting period. Planned actions were commenced, or in some cases completed, under 25 specific objectives linked to the four core goals.

Actions initiated included the securing of sustainable resources to grow and staff entrepreneurship activities and programmes (e.g. to allow the embedding of Enterprise Interns in every academic school); measures to further increase cross-campus cooperation on entrepreneurship initiatives, give recognition to entrepreneurial thinking with organisational or societal benefits among staff and students, promote entrepreneurship among researchers, and foster entrepreneurial behaviour within wider society (e.g. youth and senior entrepreneur); and measures to expand the range of start-up supports available in the Rubicon, e.g. to include specific post-incubation supports.

The academic offering of the Institute was augmented by the validation of a Certificate in Enterprise Development (20-credit Level 6 SPA) developed by the Department of Management & Enterprise, with further Special Purpose Awards in the area of entrepreneurship in planning.

The importance of entrepreneurship education as a key component of the present institutional profile and future institutional strategy was also highlighted throughout the development of the new CIT Strategic Plan and of the Stage 4 submission for the planned Munster Technological University.

CIT Library Service

Enhancements to Online Library Resources

In Summer 2018, CIT Library together with the Faculty of Business and Humanities purchased perpetual access to the SAGE Business Cases platform. SAGE Business Cases is a collection of 2,500 peer-reviewed case studies designed to provide complete discipline coverage, mapped to the core curricular needs of business programmes. CIT Library provides campus-wide and remote access to the entire collection of cases for both academic staff and students.

CIT Library also subscribed to a new online resource, SAGE Research Methods. The package includes access to more than 1000 books, reference works, journal articles, and instructional videos by world-leading academics from across the Social Sciences, including the largest collection of qualitative methods books available online from any scholarly publisher. The site includes a number of research support tools, including a Methods Map designed to help users identify the most useful research technique for their project, and a Project Planner.

User Service and Accessibility Enhancements

Library engagement and outreach continued to grow for the academic year 2017/18. Overall there was an 11.5% increase in attendance of library inductions and workshops by library stakeholders.

In December 2017, the CIT CSM Fleischmann Library piloted late evening opening hours during the Christmas exam period. The pilot was a success and extended opening hours during Christmas and Summer exam periods are now offered in the CSM Fleischmann Library on a long term basis.

Lastly, in the summer of 2018 the CIT Library secured funding via AnSEO's *Transitions to CIT* project to redesign and replace existing directional and Dewey decimal signage throughout the Bishopstown library. This resulted in the installation of new physical library maps on each floor of the library (with a digital version published on the library website) and simple, user-friendly subject area signage placed throughout the library to ensure ease of access to physical resources and an overall improvement in the physical user experience.

Alumni Engagement

Despite limited resources, the Alumni Office delivered significant work over the reporting period, engaging with all units and departments across CIT. In addition to the Joint Mentorship Programme, activities included early-stage alumni engagement initiatives such as the annual Conferring Campaign (with an organic reach of over 6,800 and over 530 engagements on the CIT Alumni Facebook page relating to the 2017 conferrings); production and distribution of the CIT Alumni E-News (circulated to 19,591 alumni in June 2018); the CIT Alumni Library Card initiative; and programmes such as the Student Alumni Ambassadors or Meet the Graduate, to mention a few. Work on development of a CIT Foundation is ongoing.

As a result of the coming into force of GDPR legislation, the CIT Alumni Office also updated and published the Alumni Privacy Notice in order to protect the personal information of CIT alumni or friends of the Institute.

Knowledge Transfer and Industry Research Links – Innovation & Enterprise Office

In 2017/18 the number of research projects delivered with industry also grew, bringing the number of collaborative research agreements and contracts to 175. 20% of research funding came from industry.

During the reporting period CIT maintained its significant technology transfer/knowledge exchange activity commensurate with existing high performance targets agreed with Enterprise Ireland and resourcing levels. In 2017/18, this activity yielded 5 LOA's, 2 patents, 1 spinout, and 18 invention disclosures. 78 companies were supported through the Rubicon Centre.

4.2 Quality Enhancement Highlights

Analysis of quality enhancement activities that were initiated during the reporting period and which would be of interest to other institutions and would benefit from wider dissemination.

CIT Researcher Career Framework as a National Model

The CIT Researcher Career Framework was discussed in many national fora during the reporting period, including THEA meetings of the Technological Higher Education Association (THEA) and at the Higher Education Research Group chaired by the Department of Education & Skills.

Lessons from the framework pilot, and the ethos of the CIT Researcher Career Framework itself, were discussed in relation to the National Researcher Career Framework that is being spearheaded by the Irish Universities Association.

Student Engagement Highlights

8th PASS/PAL (Peer Assisted Learning and Support) Leader Conference

From November 3rd to 5th, 2017, the AnSEO Student Engagement Office, in collaboration with the European Centre for Peer Assisted Study Support (SI-PASS) at Lund University, Sweden, hosted the 8th annual PASS/PAL Leader Conference 2017 in Cork Institute of Technology. The 2017 PASS/PAL conference – the first to be held on the island of Ireland – ran under the theme *The Power of We: Exploring and Upskilling for Collaborative Learning* and attracted over 100 students and staff from 25 higher education institutions in Germany, Ireland, Sweden and the UK. Over three days, staff and students together reflected on ways to improve student engagement, communications and progression by tapping into the strengths of peer-to-peer communication and support.

For having hosted the 2017 PASS/PAL Leader Conference, CIT was also honoured with a Cork Conference Bureau Ambassador Award, in recognition of the positive impact of the event on the region.

Entrepreneurship Education

Inaugural Delta Learning Impact Award 2018 for Entrepreneurship Education

The DELTA (Discipline Excellence in Learning, Teaching & Assessment) Awards are discipline-focused, bi-annual learning impact awards inaugurated by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching & Learning in Higher Education in 2018, to complement the individual Teaching Hero and Teaching Experts awards initiated in 2014 and 2015. The DELTA Awards aim to recognise discipline groups within institutions who can demonstrate sustained achievements in enriching teaching and learning, and articulate a plan for further enhancement that can be shared as good practice across the sector. In addition to gaining national recognition for teaching and learning excellence, recipients are afforded the opportunity to contribute to a national teaching and learning resource for the discipline area.

In March 2018, eleven projects from seven HE institutions were announced as awardees of the inaugural DELTA Awards by the then Minister for Higher Education, including one CIT project.

CIT received an inaugural DELTA Award in the area of Business for “Entrepreneurship Education at Cork Institute of Technology”. The CIT submission was based on the work of the ACE (*Accelerating Campus Entrepreneurship*) initiative, consisting of academic departments across the four CIT campuses as well as the Hincks Centre for Entrepreneurship Education, the Innovation & Enterprise Office, the Rubicon Incubation Centre and the CIT Students’ Union, supported by student interns. CIT’s project was one of the broadest and most ambitious projects awarded, demonstrating an integrated, student-centred approach to entrepreneurship education and provision of opportunities for entrepreneurial activity for

learners across the whole institution. Relevant entrepreneurship initiatives operationalised by ACE include, for instance, Student Inc. and the Business Model Canvas.

Enterprise Ireland Student Entrepreneurs of the Year 2018

The consistently high quality of the work carried out by the academic departments with support from the Rubicon Centre and the Innovation & Enterprise Office in the area of entrepreneurship education was also evident in the outstanding performance of CIT in the 2017/18 Enterprise Ireland Student Entrepreneur Awards.

Of the 50 final projects chosen from a field of over 1000 entries from across the island of Ireland, 11 had been submitted by CIT students. In June 2018, having previously won Best Product Concept Design in CIT's own Prize for Innovation, a multi-disciplinary student team built on the Institute's excellent track record in this national competition to win the overall title of College Entrepreneur of the Year 2018. Their winning project, 'MacGlas', constitutes a novel vision aid for sufferers of macular degeneration. With this, CIT students have won the competition more times than learners from any other Irish higher education institution.

"Employability for 21st Century Work" Conference, May 2018

A highlight of the Careers Service calendar in 2017/18 was the organisation and hosting of its inaugural annual conference "Employability for 21st Century Work" in May 2018, attended by over 100 delegates in its first year.

This half-day conference was open to invited regional stakeholders and CIT staff and featured headline presentations on cutting-edge topics, such as 'brilliant disruption' in the workplace, the neurophysiology of change, entrepreneurial skills & employability and labour market trends, as well as panel discussions around organisational case studies. Feedback received from delegates indicated that 75% of respondents felt the conference 'absolutely' met their reasons for attending, while the remaining 25% said it 'somewhat' met their reasons.

Establishment of the Cork School of Music Archive at the CIT CSM Fleischmann Library

In September 2017, CIT Library introduced the Cork School of Music Archive at the CIT CSM Fleischmann Library. The collection includes CSM Professors' and Teachers' Day Books 1878 – 1958, CSM Committee Minute meetings from 1878 – 1885 and CSM Registers of Students 1879 – 1976, complementing related primary records already in the Fleischmann Library, such as attendance rolls of the choir of St. Mary and St. Anne's, North Cathedral. These primary source records provide a rich insight into the historical and cultural heritage of CIT's Cork School of Music and the wider Cork community and are available for public viewing and research purposes.

Part 5: Objectives for the coming year

Part 5 provides information about plans for quality assurance in the institution for the academic year following the reporting period (in this instance 1 September 2017 – 31 August 2018).

5.1 Quality Assurance and Enhancement System Plans

Plans for quality assurance and quality enhancement relating to strategic objectives for the next reporting period.

Academic Quality Assurance and Enhancement Policies and Procedures

In anticipation of the establishment of the Munster Technological University, Cork Institute of Technology does not plan any major changes to its quality assurance and enhancement policies and procedures in 2018/19. Necessary minor updates will continue to be made. Any drafting, review or revision processes already commenced will be completed as far as feasible.

Roll-Out of Phase 2 of the Revised Researcher Career Framework

The second phase of the revised Researcher Career Framework will be rolled out during the 2018/19 academic year. The key enhancements will be structured to ensure a framework that is more responsive to researchers along the full career trajectory from research assistant to senior research fellow, with more targeted training and skills development of individual researchers. The scale of the impact from these enhancements will be measured through various feedback mechanisms (survey, focus groups, workshops, etc.).

5.2 Review Plans

A list of reviews within each category (module, programme, department/school, service delivery unit or faculty), as per the internal review cycle, planned for the next reporting period.

Programmatic Review Plans

1. School of Building & Civil Engineering

Programmatic Review Phase 1 (Strategic Review)

2. National Maritime College of Ireland

Programmatic Review Phase 1 (Strategic Review)

3. PR Finalisation

Confirmation of the implementation of PR requirements, including from module moderation, for programmes of the Departments of Applied Social Studies and Physical Sciences.

5.3 Other Plans

AnSEO – The Student Engagement Office

Planned developments in the student engagement space include:

- EDGE³ Graduateness Project

CIT is keen to develop student engagement across the whole student lifecycle, by recognising, incentivising and valuing skills and knowledge attained by engaged CIT students that add significantly to their ‘graduateness’. AnSEO has therefore researched a number of exemplars in Ireland and in the UK, with the intention of preparing a proposal for the development of a graduateness project in CIT. The proposed working title for this project is EDGE³ - Engaging and Developing Graduates for Employability, Entrepreneurship and Effective Citizenship.

- AnSEO Website

The AnSEO team plans to continue to build an online repository/compendium of engagement interventions for dissemination on AnSEO website.

- Branding

The branding of events such as Get Connected will also be further developed, as it was found that branding efforts had contributed strongly to the growth of relevant events in previous years.

- SParQ@CIT / NSteP

Work will also continue on further development of a model for student partnership in quality, in conjunction with the national NSteP programme.

In addition, the AnSEO team will be engaged in preparations for European First Year Experience Conference to be held in June 2019.

Teaching & Learning Unit

Tús Maith Seminar Series

In reviewing its work at the end of the reporting period, the TLU saw an opportunity to further enhance the offerings that were particularly attractive to new staff and to develop a new series of seminars and workshops which would target this group specifically. This new series was launched in September 2018 under the title Tús Maith (Good Start).

Based on feedback from new staff attending TLU seminars in 2017/18, which indicated that some inputs were needed earlier in the year, it is planned to offer some Tús Maith seminars at the start of each academic year, with follow-on seminars to be delivered in a just-in-time fashion throughout the year to coincide with later milestones of the academic calendar.

While focused on the needs of new staff, the Tús Maith seminars and workshops may also be of interest to more experienced staff who want to get a new academic year ‘off to a good start’.

Staff Mentoring

In 2018/19 the TLU also plans to work with the European Mentoring and Coaching Council to further develop staff development opportunities in the mentoring and coaching space. An increasing focus of

this work will lie on peer-to-peer coaching, coaching skills for lecturers working with increasingly diverse student groups, and coaching and mentoring skills for research supervisors in relation to the personal and professional development needs of postgraduate students.

National Digital Badges

In 2018/19, with further support from the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching & Learning in Higher Education (NFETL), TLU will convert the *Teaching Strategies for New Lecturers* CPD programme recently developed under the NFETL National Digital Badge initiative into a fully-online course for ease of roll-out and accessibility nationally.

Learning Communities

The TLU funding programme for Learning Communities will continue in 2018/19, with the level of interest among staff such that 11 new Learning Communities were established and funded in January 2019, instead of the projected 5. Plans are underway to integrate these Learning Communities into a more structured and supportive network coordinated by the TLU whereby outputs and practices can be shared and showcased to the benefit of all.

Showcasing Successful Departmental Teaching & Learning Initiatives

Last but not least, the TLU will also publish a booklet showcasing the themes and outputs from the departmental teaching & learning initiatives projects supported by the Teaching & Learning Development Fund., which is to be launched in Semester 2 of 2018/19.

Based on the success of these ‘early ambassadors’, the TLU is also planning to encourage and invest in an increased number of department-led projects in the 2018/19 academic year, with 24 approved projects to date. The outputs from these will again be collated and reported on subsequently.

Alumni Office Plans

Alumni Office plans include development of an Alumni Strategy for 2018 – 2023, further development of the “Raiser’s Edge” Alumni database, and work towards ringfencing funding for the alumni internship programme.

CIT Library Planning

One of the Strategic Priorities of CIT’s new Strategic Plan 2018 – 2023 is “research, engagement and knowledge transfer which is innovative, relevant and impactful”. Increasingly, research ‘impact’ is an essential metric that has to be measured and demonstrated. The CIT Library in collaboration with the Head of Research has secured funding to subscribe to an open access repository in order to enable CIT researchers to build strong impact narratives that can be communicated widely. Following a tendering process, it is intended to have the repository in place for June 2019.

In connection with this, funding has been secured to advertise for two librarian posts dedicated to developing library metadata and repository management processes as well as training programmes and supports in digital scholarship, initially for a 12-month period. The additional posts are due to come on stream during the 2018/19 academic year.

Part 6: Periodic Review

Part 6 provides information that acts as a bridge between the AIQR and periodic external review.

6.1 The Institution and External Review

A description of the impacts of institutional review within the institution.

Delete this message and insert text here. The box will expand. This is a paragraph describing the impacts of institutional review within the institution. This may include reference to: an overall evaluation of the impact of actions taken to date in response to recommendations of preceding external review; a description of plans and preparations undertaken for the next external review.

6.2 Self-Reflection on Quality Assurance

A short evaluative and reflective summary of the overall impact of quality assurance in the reporting period or, over a more extensive period, in the review.

Delete this message and insert text here. The box will expand. This is a short evaluative and reflective summary of the overall impact of quality assurance in the reporting period or, over a more extensive period, in the review cycle. This may include highlighting good practice(s) and strengths in quality and quality assurance. It may also include information that the institution wishes to draw to the attention of QQI in relation to QA activities undertaken in this reporting period and/or priorities to be pursued in the next reporting period.

6.3 Themes

Developmental themes of importance to the institution which will be relevant to periodic review.

Delete this message and insert text here. The box will expand. This is a short paragraph outlining any developmental themes in quality and quality assurance which are of importance to the institution and relevant to periodic review. These may be linked to the strategic objectives of the institution.