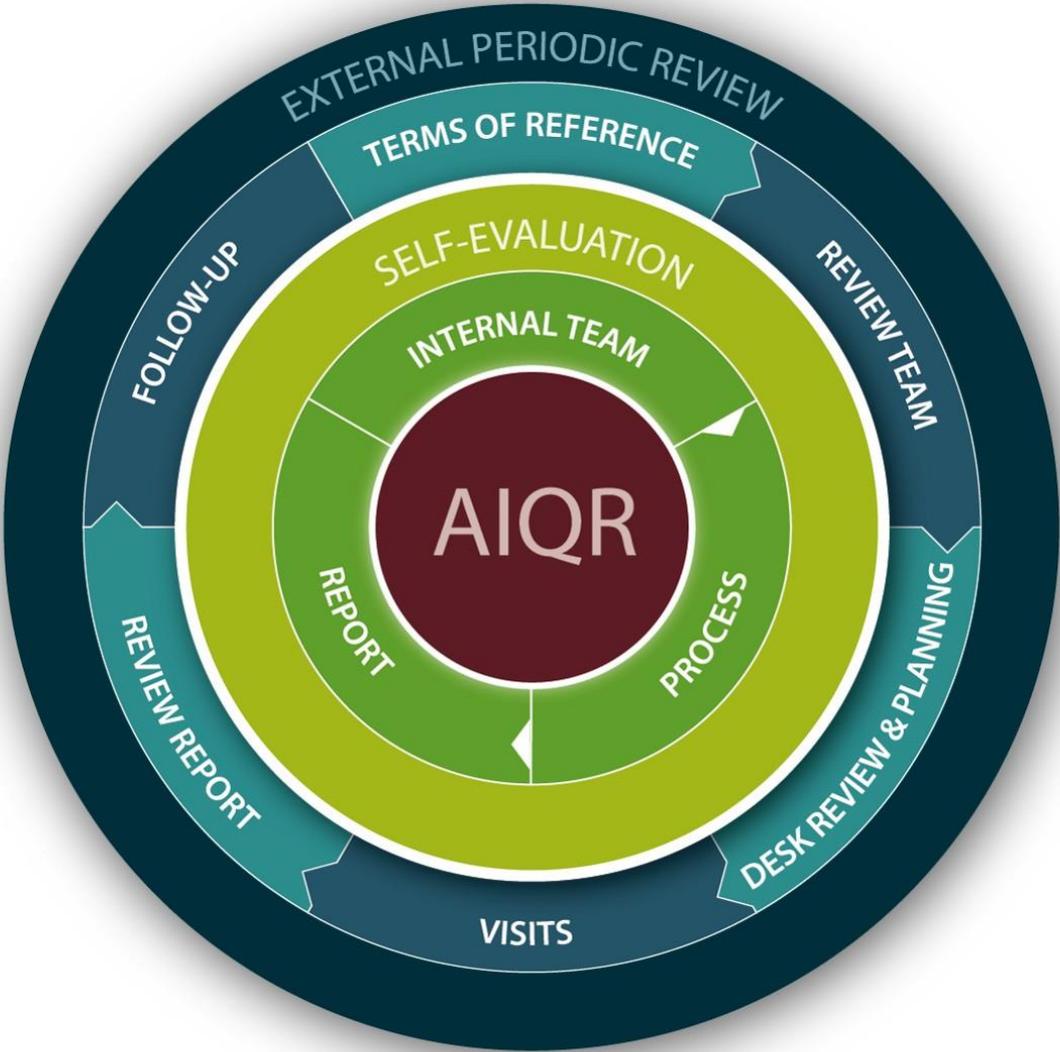


Cork Institute of Technology

Annual Institutional Quality Assurance Report 2017

Based on the reporting period 1 September 2015 – 31 August 2016



The Cyclical Review Process

AIQR - PART 1

Please enter 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. Please enter a brief description of institution-level quality assurance decision-making fora.

1. Legislative Context and Statutory Functions

The Irish Institutes of Technology, including Cork Institute of Technology, are statutory entities established by acts of government (the Institutes of Technology Acts 1992 – 2006). The functions of the Institutes are governed by this legislation and include provision of courses of study as well as research, consultancy and development work “for the economic, technological, scientific, commercial, industrial, social and cultural development of the State with particular reference to the region served by the College”. Their mission is professionally orientated with a strong focus on technology, science and applied research.

Irish Institutes of Technology largely make their own 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 designated levels of the National Framework of Qualifications. Retention of the awarding powers is contingent on the successful completion of comprehensive, cyclical external reviews of the overall institutional governance, management and quality assurance mechanisms organised and overseen by QQI. These institutional reviews require that the Institute submits a detailed self-evaluation report and subsequently undergoes a lengthy on-site external peer review conducted on behalf of QQI by an international panel of experts. All reports from institutional review are published on the authority’s public website.

CIT currently holds delegated authority to make awards for taught and research programmes to Masters’ level and to make PhD awards in the fields of Electronic, Manufacturing & Mechanical Engineering, Computing, and all Science areas. In all other fields of study CIT offers research programmes leading to QQI awards.

2. Institutional Governance and Academic Management Structures

Statutory responsibility for the management of Cork Institute of Technology under the Institute of Technology Acts 1992 – 2006 lies with the President and the Governing Body.

The Governing Body in conjunction with the President manages the affairs as well as 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 three years and include representatives of several significant stakeholder constituencies of the Institute. Governing Body carries out its work through a number of committees dedicated to specific functions, including an Audit Committee and a Finance committee, and has adopted the 2009 Code of Practice for the Governance for State Bodies to govern its business practices.

The Academic Council of Cork Institute of Technology, the second of the Institute’s two statutory boards under the IoT Acts, 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, including all CIT senior managers and an equal number of elected academic staff from across the faculties and colleges, the Institute has one of the largest Academic Councils in the sector, thus ensuring wide consultation and debate on all significant academic issues.

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 the Institute. 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 of CIT originally set up in March 2004 with the introduction of a new stratified management structure. The IEB is composed of the President, Vice-Presidents, Heads of Faculty (and formerly also College), and the Head of Strategic Development. The Board assists the President in the management of CIT and formulates Institute strategy and policy for approval by the Governing Body, including academic and external matters, significant operational issues, and programmes & budgets.

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

Within the faculties, the cognate schools are made up of 2 – 4 academic departments each. Of the constituent colleges, the CIT Cork School of Music encompasses four academic departments, while the CIT Crawford College of Art & Design incorporates two academic departments and two sections. The National Maritime College of Ireland houses only one academic department, but incorporates a Commercial Services division which manages all commercial activities and training courses. The programmes of higher education and training offered by the 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, Deloitte Ireland has been engaged by 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 taught programmes, following internal and independent external quality reviews of a proposed programme – encompassing a review of the programme content and structure as well as of the staffing, resourcing levels and supports envisaged – the final decision on validation is taken by the Governing Body of Cork Institute of Technology 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 granted for a maximum of five years, after which a review of the operation, constant quality and enduring relevance of the programme is carried out to establish its eligibility for renewal of validation. This Programmatic Review is carried out concurrently for all programmes of a specific CIT school/college and takes into account the operational and strategic context as well as programme-level elements. The ongoing performance monitoring and development of academic programmes is carried out by programme boards which comprise 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 which cover all quality-relevant aspects of postgraduate education, with no distinction in the process applicable to programmes leading to CIT or 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 supplied to Quality and Qualifications Ireland for approval under the name "Order in Council", is now formally adopted by the Institute's Academic Council.

4. Professional Accreditation

In addition, in professional fields subject to strong professional regulation or registrations requirements, Institute programmes need to achieve and maintain recognition respectively 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 CIT had already gained prior delegated authority for joint awards with University College Cork (UCC, 2011) and 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 which 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 Academic Standards Board (JASB) 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 required the involvement of both HETAC/QQI and the Agentur für Qualitätssicherung durch Akkreditierung von Studiengängen (AQAS), one of a number of several national quality assurance agencies accredited by the German Accreditation Council.

**Do you have a
Policy/Procedure for
Programme Design and
Approval?**

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Programme Design and Approval

- General policy and procedure for the design and approval of modules and programmes:
http://www.cit.ie/contentfiles/academic-policies/Handbook_for_Prog_and_Mod_Approval_Sep%202008.pdf;
- Supplementary procedure for the design and approval of programmes leading to non-major (special purpose, minor and supplemental) awards:
http://www.cit.ie/contentfiles/academic-policies/AC%20PROCEDURE_Validation%20of%20SPMSAs_Jan%202013.pdf;
- Procedure for module and programme changes:
http://www.cit.ie/contentfiles/academic-policies/Module%20and%20Programme%20Change%20Process_AC%20Feb%202010.
- Policy on curricular structures and programme credit profiles:
http://www.cit.ie/contentfiles/academic-policies/ACAD.%20POLICY_CIT%20Curricular%20Struct-Credit%20Profiles_Nov%202015.pdf;
- Policy on Conflict of Interest (relating to the academic activities of CIT):
http://www.cit.ie/contentfiles/academic-policies/ACAD%20POLICY_Conflict%20of%20Interest_1.0_Mar%202015.pdf;

Do you have a Policy/Procedure for Programme Delivery and Assessment?

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Programme Delivery and Assessment

- Regulations for Modules and Programmes (Marks and Standards) Version 4.0 (14 June 2013):
http://www.cit.ie/contentfiles/academic-policies/Regulations_Marks_and_Standards_June%202013.pdf;
- Policy on Academic Honesty, Plagiarism and Infringements:
http://www.cit.ie/contentfiles/academic-policies/ACAD.%20POLICY%20-%20Acad.%20honesty%20plagiarism%20and%20infringements_Jul%202013.pdf;
- Code of Conduct for Examination Candidates:
http://www.cit.ie/contentfiles/academic-policies/CIT%20Examination%20Code%20of%20Conduct_March%202016.pdf
- Policy on Individual Extenuating Circumstances:
http://www.cit.ie/contentfiles/academic-policies/ACAD.%20POLICY_Indiv.%20Extenuating%20Circumstances%20inc.%20SUB
- Procedure for Formal Inquiry by the Assessment Infringements Board:
http://www.cit.ie/contentfiles/academic-policies/ACAD.%20PROCEDURE%20-%20Inquiry%20by%20Assessm.%20Infringem.%20Board_Jul%202014.pdf;
- Policy and Process for Examination Appeals:
<http://www.cit.ie/contentfiles/academic-policies/CIT%20Official%20Examination%20Appeals%20Policy%20and%20Process.pdf>
- Policy and Procedures for External Examiners:
http://www.cit.ie/contentfiles/academic-policies/Externs%20Policy%20and%20Procedures_Nov%202001.pdf;
- Policy Governing Recognition of Prior Learning:
http://www.cit.ie/contentfiles/academic-policies/RPL%20Academic%20Policy_Apr%202013.pdf;
- Guidelines for Admission to NFQ Level 8 Degrees (Post-NFQ Level 7 Award):
http://www.cit.ie/contentfiles/academic-policies/Admission%20to%20L8%20post%20L7_Jan_2010.pdf;

Do you have a Policy/Procedure for Research Quality?

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Research Quality

- Regulations for Postgraduate Research Study:
http://www.cit.ie/contentfiles/academic-policies/Regulations%20for%20Postgraduate%20Research%20Study_June%202015.pdf
- Code of Good Practice in Research:
http://www.cit.ie/contentfiles/academic-policies/Code%20of%20Good%20Practice%20in%20Research_Oct%202014.pdf;
- Policy on Conflict of Interest Relating to the Academic Activities of CIT:
http://www.cit.ie/contentfiles/academic-policies/ACAD%20POLICY_Conflict%20of%20Interest_1.0_Mar%202015.pdf;
- CIT Intellectual Property Policy (Full Policy and Summary Sheet):
<http://www.cit.ie/contentfiles/PDFs/CIT%20Intellectual%20Property%20Policy%20Docur>
<http://www.cit.ie/contentfiles/PDFs/CIT%20Intellectual%20Property%20Policy%20Summr>

Do you have a Policy/Procedure in place for Student Lifecycle?

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Student Lifecycle

- Student Grievance Procedure:
http://www.cit.ie/contentfiles/academic-policies/Student_Grievance_Procedure_Sep%202014.pdf;
- Student Disciplinary Appeals Procedure:
http://www.cit.ie/contentfiles/academic-policies/Student%20Disciplinary%20Appeals%20Procedure%20V1.0_Feb%202014.pdf;

Do you have a Policy/Procedure for Information Management?

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Information Management

- Records Management Policy:
http://www.cit.ie/contentfiles/File/records_management_policy.pdf?uid=1272461307019;
- Data Protection Policy:
<http://www.cit.ie/contentfiles/policies/CIT-Data-Protection-Policy.pdf>;

Do you have a Policy/Procedure for Self-evaluation and Monitoring?

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Self-evaluation and Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy and procedure for the cyclical review and revalidation of programmes (programmatic review): http://www.cit.ie/contentfiles/academic-policies/ACAD%20POLICY_PR_adopted%20AC%20Ex%20Dec%202008_V1.1%20-%20Apr%202015.pdf;
Do you have a Policy/Procedure for Provision and use of Public Information?	Yes
Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Provision and use of Public Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Freedom of Information Model Publication Scheme / Log: http://www.cit.ie/freedomofinformation;
Do you have a Policy/Procedure for Collaborative Provision?	Yes
Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Collaborative Provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy and Procedures for Collaborative Provision and Joint Awards: http://www.cit.ie/contentfiles/academic-policies/CIT%20POLICY_QA%20of%20Joint%20Awards_Update%202.1_Sep%202011
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Mechanical Engineering; Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Biomedical Engineering; <p>http://www.cit.ie/course/cr108;</p> <p>http://www.cit.ie/course/CR520;</p> <p>http://www.engineersireland.ie/services/accredited-courses/chartered-engineer.aspx;</p>
Date of last review or accreditation	24-05-2012
Next review year	2017

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

- o Bachelor of Engineering in Mechanical Engineering;
- o Bachelor of Engineering in Biomedical Engineering;

<http://www.cit.ie/course/CR071;>

<http://www.cit.ie/course/CR075;>

<http://www.engineersireland.ie/Services/Accredited-Courses/Associate-Engineer.aspx;>

- o Higher Certificate in Engineering in Mechanical Engineering;
- o Higher Certificate in Engineering in Biomedical Engineering;

<http://www.cit.ie/course/CR071;>

<http://www.cit.ie/course/CR075;>

<http://www.engineersireland.ie/Services/Accredited-Courses/Engineering-Technician.aspx;>

Date of last review or accreditation

14-11-2014

Next review year

2018

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

- o Higher Certificate in Science in Nautical Studies;
- o Bachelor of Science in Nautical Science;
- o Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Nautical Science;
- o Bachelor of Engineering in Marine Engineering;
- o Bachelor of Engineering in Marine Electro-Technology;

<http://www.dttas.ie/sites/default/files/publications/maritime/english/examination-directions/engexamdirections2016v101.pdf>;

<http://www.dttas.ie/sites/default/files/publications/maritime/english/examiner-panel/approved-examiner-panel-july-2015.pdf>;

<http://www.cit.ie/contentFiles/files/Marine%20Notice%20No%2065%20of%202013.pdf>;

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

- o Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Architecture (Joint Award with University College Cork);
- o Master of Architecture (Joint Award with University College Cork)

<http://www.ucc.ie/en/architecture/>;

<http://www.cit.ie/course/CK606>;

<http://www.cit.ie/course/CRCARCH9>;

http://www.riai.ie/education/policy_standards/qualifications_accreditation/;

http://www.riai.ie/education/policy_standards/standards_of_knowledge/;

http://www.riai.ie/uploads/files/RIAI_Standard_Knowledge_Skill_Competence_Architect;

http://www.riai.ie/education/careers/becoming_an_architect/;

http://www.riai.ie/education/riai_examinations/professional_practice_exam/;

Date of last review or accreditation

11-09-2012

Next review year

2017

Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies

Fifth Set of Records

Type of Arrangement

PRSB

Name of the Body

Accounting Technicians Ireland

Programme Titles and Links to Publications

- Accounting Technicians Ireland, Years 1 and 2;

<http://www.cit.ie/course/CRBIAT16> ;

<http://www.accountingtechniciansireland.ie/>.

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.

Date of last review or accreditation

01-04-2016

Next review year

2017

Joint research degrees

1

Joint/double/multiple awards

8

Collaborative programmes

5

Section: Collaborative Provision

First Set of Records

Type of arrangement:

Joint/double/multiple awards

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;

<http://www.ucc.ie/en/architecture/>;

<http://www.cit.ie/course/CK606>;

- Master of Architecture;

<http://www.ucc.ie/en/architecture/>;

<http://www.cit.ie/course/CRCARCH9>;

Date of last review

28-09-2012

Next review year

2017

Section: Collaborative Provision

Second Set of Records

Type of arrangement:

Joint/double/multiple awards

Name of the Body (Bodies)

University College Cork

Programme Titles and Links to Publications

- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Biomedical Science;

<http://www.cit.ie/course/CR320>; <http://www.ucc.ie/en/cr320/>;

Date of last review	11-06-2009
Next review year	2017
Section: Collaborative Provision	Third Set of Records
Type of arrangement:	Joint/double/multiple awards
Name of the Body (Bodies)	Hochschule (University of Applied Sciences) Darmstadt, Germany
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Multimedia; <p>http://www.cit.ie/course/CR112;</p>
Date of last review	28-04-2016
Next review year	2021
Section: Collaborative Provision	Fourth Set of Records
Type of arrangement:	Collaborative programmes
Name of the Body (Bodies)	Children's Therapy Centre Mullingar
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Certificate in Principles and Theory of Art Therapy, Special Purpose Award, NFQ Level 8, 10 ECTS Credits <p>http://childrenstherapycentre.ie/principles-of-art-therapy-certificate/; http://www.cit.ie/course/CRAATPY8Y1</p>
Date of last review	28-04-2016
Next review year	2021
Section: Internal Review Schedule	First Set of Records
Year	2009-2010
Areas/Units	<p>CIT Crawford College of Art & Design, Programmatic Review, Finalisation of Phase 1 and Phase 2;</p> <p>CIT Cork School of Music, Programmatic Review, Finalisation of Phase 1 and Phase 2;</p> <p>Faculty of Business & Humanities, Programmatic Review, Phases 1 and 2.</p> <p>[Note: The programmes of the Department of Media Communications were included in Phase 2 of the Business & Humanities PR even though the department moved from the School of Humanities into the Crawford College of Art & Design in January 2010.]</p>

Link(s) to Publication(s)	http://www.cit.ie/aboutcit/reports_plansandpolicies/programmatic-reviews/ccad; http://www.cit.ie/aboutcit/reports_plansandpolicies/programmatic-reviews/csm; http://www.cit.ie/aboutcit/reports_plansandpolicies/programmatic-reviews/school-business-humanities.
Section: Internal Review Schedule	Second Set of Records
Year	2010-2011
Areas/Units	<p>School of Science & Computing, Programmatic Review, Phase 1.</p> <p>[Note: In November 2010, Cork Institute of Technology also underwent its cyclical external Institutional Review, facilitated by HETAC.]</p>
Link(s) to Publication(s)	http://www.cit.ie/aboutcit/reports_plansandpolicies/programmatic-reviews/school-science-computing
Section: Internal Review Schedule	Third Set of Records
Year	2011-2012
Areas/Units	<p>School of Science & Computing, Programmatic Review, Phase 2;</p> <p>National Maritime College of Ireland, Programmatic Review, Phase 1.</p>
Link(s) to Publication(s)	http://www.cit.ie/aboutcit/reports_plansandpolicies/programmatic-reviews/school-science-computing; http://www.cit.ie/aboutcit/reports_plansandpolicies/programmatic-reviews/nmci.
Section: Internal Review Schedule	Fourth Set of Records
Year	2012-2013
Areas/Units	<p>Cork Centre for Architectural Education, combined Centre and Programme Review conducted jointly by University College Cork and Cork Institute of Technology;</p> <p>National Maritime College of Ireland, Programmatic Review, Phase 2;</p> <p>Schools of Engineering, Programmatic Review, Phase 1;</p> <p>CIT Cork School of Music, Programme Revalidation, Taught Master of Music (in a modularised and semesterised delivery format).</p>
Link(s) to Publication(s)	http://www.cit.ie/aboutcit/reports_plansandpolicies/programmatic-reviews/ccae; http://www.cit.ie/aboutcit/reports_plansandpolicies/programmatic-reviews/nmci; http://www.cit.ie/aboutcit/reports_plansandpolicies/programmatic-reviews/school-engineering; http://www.cit.ie/aboutcit/reports_plansandpolicies/programmatic-reviews/csm.
Section: Internal Review Schedule	Fifth Set of Records

Year	2013-14
Areas/Units	School of Building & Civil Engineering, Programmatic Review, Phase 2; Department of Electrical & Electronic Engineering (in the School of Mechanical, Electrical & Process Engineering), Programmatic Review, Phase 2.
Link(s) to Publication(s)	http://www.cit.ie/aboutcit/reports_plansandpolicies/programmatic-reviews/school-engineering
Section: Internal Review Schedule	Sixth Set of Records
Year	2014-15
Areas/Units	School of Mechanical, Electrical & Process Engineering, all remaining departments, Programmatic Review, Phase 2; Faculty of Business & Humanities, Programmatic Review, Phase 1; CIT Crawford College of Art & Design, Programmatic Review, Phase 1.
Link(s) to Publication(s)	http://www.cit.ie/aboutcit/reports_plansandpolicies/programmatic-reviews/school-engineering ; http://www.cit.ie/aboutcit/reports_plansandpolicies/programmatic-reviews/school-business-humanities ; http://www.cit.ie/aboutcit/reports_plansandpolicies/programmatic-reviews/ccad .
Section: Internal Review Schedule	Seventh Set of Records
Year	2015-2016
Areas/Units	Programmatic Review of CIT Cork School of Music, Phases 1 and 2; Programmatic Review of the Schools of Business & Humanities, Phase 2; Programmatic Review of the CIT Crawford College of Art & Design, Phase 2.
Link(s) to Publication(s)	http://www.cit.ie/aboutcit/reports_plansandpolicies/programmatic-reviews/csm ; http://www.cit.ie/aboutcit/reports_plansandpolicies/programmatic-reviews/school-business-humanities ; http://www.cit.ie/aboutcit/reports_plansandpolicies/programmatic-reviews/ccad .

**PART 2 - Section 1:
Institution-led QA - Annual**

Quality Assurance and Enhancement System Developments

A piece in relation to the evolution of quality assurance and enhancement systems to support strategic objectives in the reporting period. Significant specific changes (if any) to QA within the institution.

Changes to Governance and Academic Management Structures

Just prior to start of the reporting period, a new CIT Governing Body commenced its term of office (April 2015) and held its first meeting on 4 June 2015. A number of induction sessions were provided to incoming Governors subsequently.

In June 2016, a new Academic Council took office also. Council retained its overall composition and size; at over 100 members, half of which elected, the CIT Academic Council thus remains one of the largest and most inclusive Councils in the country. Some amendments were effected to the principles for elected membership however with a view to increasing female representation.

The reporting period saw significant changes to the Institute's academic management structures with the incorporation of the CIT Crawford College of Art & Design (CCAD) and CIT Cork School of Music (CSM) into the Faculty of Business & Humanities in January and September 2016 respectively. Attendant changes in the lines of reporting mean that the Head of Faculty now represents two large Schools as well as two of CIT's three constituent colleges on the Institute Executive Board.

In addition, two academic departments underwent name changes. In May 2015, Governing Body approved the renaming of the Department of Online Learning, a standalone academic unit reporting to the Head of Strategy and Policy, to Department of Technology-Enhanced Learning. The former Department of Art Therapy & Continuing Visual Education was renamed Department of Arts in Health & Community Practice with effect from February 2016.

A restructuring of the International Office to come fully under the External Affairs remit begun in 2014/15 was completed in August 2016.

At that point, the facilities became available to permit the co-location of the merged EU and non-EU services, enabling a seamless provision of service to all incoming and outgoing students.

Senior Staff Appointments and Retirements

Significant new senior staff appointments in the previous two academic years include:

- Head of School of Business (Nov. 2014)
- Head of NMCI Services (Nov. 2014)
- Head of Department of Technology-Enhanced [formerly Online] Learning (March 2015)
- Head of CIT Crawford College of Art & Design (July 2015)
- Head of Department of Accounting & Information Systems (Sep. 2015)
- Head of Department of Management & Enterprise (Sep. 2015)
- Librarian (Acting) (Dec. 2015)

All appointments were internal, with exception of the Head of CCAD, who was recruited internationally. Appointments to senior management positions were made on a fixed-term basis to facilitate structural changes on the eventual establishment of a technological university.

For the Crawford College of Art & Design, the appointment of a new Head of College meant that both the status and the leadership of the college changed between the two phases of programmatic review. No operational issues arose from this for the review.

Significant retirements include that of the CIT Librarian in May 2015. Retirements at the end of the 2015/16 academic year include the Director of the CIT Cork School of Music (whose position ceased, while the post of Head of School remains as the now most senior academic management position in CSM), the Head of Department of Tourism & Hospitality, and the CIT Human Resources Manager.

In addition to the above appointments, there were five Senior Lecturers 1 (Teaching) promotions each in the Faculties of Business & Humanities and Engineering & Science respectively in March 2015 to support the strategic further development of Teaching & Learning.

Finally, the Head of the CIT Student Support, Engagement and Retention Initiative took on the additional role of leading the CIT Teaching & Learning Unit in December 2014, thus bringing together the staff and student development functions in one unit.

Changes to the Academic QA System

a) Annual Programme Status Review Process / Template

Following multi-annual data preparation work and development of an Enterprise Reporting Portal to enable standardised, automated reporting of key performance data held in Banner, a template and detailed operational procedure for the revised Annual Programme Status Review process were presented to the CIT Academic Council in December 2015. (An outline framework for this new process had been agreed in 2012, as the existing course monitoring process had become inoperable.) During Semester 2 the new APSR process was piloted in a number of departments, with a full roll-out of the process to all CAO programmes planned for 2016/17. Operational experience gained during the pilot will furthermore be fed into development of an adapted process for other programme types.

b) Updating of Academic Policy

A review of existing academic policies and procedures commenced during the previous year continued into 2015/16, leading to re-adoption of several updated key policies by Council, including a Policy and Procedural Framework for Programmatic Review (April 2015) and a Policy on Curricular Structures and Credit Profiles of CIT programmes (approved Nov. 2015). An updated Assessment Appeals Policy was also adopted (May 2016). Development of supplementary policy in relation to awards had to be suspended due to the large volume of programme QA activity.

Delegated Authority for Joint Awards

On November 27th, 2015, a formal request for extension of delegated authority to cover all joint awards, as per the IOTI sectoral protocol agreed in 2014/15, was submitted to QQI on behalf of the CIT Academic Council. The protocol requires an Institute's Academic Council to confirm that policies and procedures established in the institution are in accordance with the principles and prerequisites outlined in the protocol. Due to the significant extent of DA for joint awards, both national and international, previously achieved by CIT, the requisite policy and operational framework were already in place for several years prior to the agreement of the protocol.

Research Entity Designation Process

In September 2015, the Institute through its Institute Research & Innovation Steering Group (IRIS) adopted a formal process and criteria for designation of CIT research and innovation entities. A key element of Part I of the Researcher Career Framework, formal research entity designation is designed to afford prioritised support and increased internal and external visibility to the applicant research entity and to aid the research planning and capacity building processes of the academic host unit(s) and the Institute at large. Academic Council and Governing Body noted adoption of the new process, which also includes a fast track element for mature entities.

While all of the Institute's existing research centres and groups will be required to go through the new process to retain their status, applications were initially sought for designation of research group status, with six groups (new and existing) submitting completed applications during the reporting period.

Schedule of QA Reviews

Despite the large number of programmatic review meetings, all 2015/16 panel visits took place within the semester for which they had originally been scheduled. Within this timeframe, all initial review dates needed to be revised however to allow for adequate completion of the large volume of preparatory work, especially at module and programme level. For that reason, only one School was able to complete the downstream work necessary to implement panel requirements and ready the revised programme specifications for re-registration of learners in time for September 2016. In the other areas, delivery of the revised programmes will start in the following academic year. While with current staff resources achievement of realistic timelines for programme review, revision and downstream finalisation will remain a challenge, it should be noted that the turnaround time for the panel-related segments of the process itself was good or adequate in all cases.

The schedule of QA governance meetings for the period should be inserted here.

Meetings of the Academic Council

9 October 2015
11 November 2015
16 December 2015
12 February 2016
16 March 2016
20 April 2016
20 May 2016
15 June 2016

Governing Body Meetings

5 November 2015
3 December 2015
26 January 2016 (Special Meeting)
4 February 2016
7 April 2016
2 June 2016
30 June 2016

Meetings of the Institute Executive Board

25 August 2015
22 September 2015
3 November 2015
15 December 2015
5 January 2016
2 February 2016
19 February 2016
25 February 2016
1 March 2016
8 April 2016
10 May 2016
7 June 2016

PART 2 - Section 2: Institution-led QA - Annual

Reviews in the Reporting Period

Area/Unit and links to relevant publications

Programmatic Review of the School of Business (Phases 1 and 2);
http://www.cit.ie/aboutcit/reports_plansandpolicies/programmatic-reviews/school-business-humanities;

Links to published internal reviews

Second Set of Records

Area/Unit and links to relevant publications	Programmatic Review of the School of Humanities (Phases 1 and 2); http://www.cit.ie/aboutcit/reports_plansandpolicies/programmatic-reviews/school-business-humanities ;
Links to published internal reviews	Third Set of Records
Area/Unit and links to relevant publications	Programmatic Review of the CIT Crawford College of Art & Design (Phases 1 and 2); http://www.cit.ie/aboutcit/reports_plansandpolicies/programmatic-reviews/ccad ;
Links to published internal reviews	Fourth Set of Records
Area/Unit and links to relevant publications	Programmatic Review of the CIT Cork School of Music (Phases 1 and 2); http://www.cit.ie/aboutcit/reports_plansandpolicies/programmatic-reviews/ccad ;
Links to published internal reviews	Fifth Set of Records
Area/Unit and links to relevant publications	Programme Validation Reviews 2015/16 (Major/Non-Major Awards); http://www.cit.ie/aboutcit/reports_plansandpolicies/validation-reports/2015-2016 ;
Links to published internal reviews	Sixth Set of Records
Area/Unit and links to relevant publications	Analysis of Programmatic Review Reports 2015/16; http://www.cit.ie/aboutcit/reports_plansandpolicies/programmatic-reviews ;
Number of internal approval/evaluations and reviews completed in respect of Validation/Programme Approval	13
Number of internal approval/evaluations and reviews completed in respect of Programme Review.	91
Number of internal approval/evaluations and reviews completed in respect of School/Department/Faculty Review.	19
Number of internal approval/evaluations and reviews completed in respect of Service Unit Review.	1
Composition of Panels: % Internal	22.8
Composition of Panels: % National	72.4

Composition of Panels: % UK	3.1
Composition of Panels: % EU	1.6
Composition of Panels: % Student	0
Composition of Panels: % Other	0
Chair Profile: % Internal	7.7
Chair Profile: % Similar institution	53.8
Chair Profile: % Different institution	26.9
Chair Profile: % International	11.5

PART 2 - Section 3: Update on Institutional QA Overview

Other Implementation Factors

This institution can use this section to set out the ways in which data is used to support quality assurance and the management of the student learning experience.

Irish Survey of Student Engagement

An in-depth statistical analysis of CIT's performance against the 11 indices of the Irish Survey of Student Engagement was piloted by the Department of Mathematics for two years of fieldwork (2014 and 2015) during the first semester. While student participation had improved year on year, the percentage of returns from the initial years of ISSE was however not deemed high enough to ensure adequately representative results. As a consequence, the CIT Strategic Student Engagement and Retention Initiative (CITSSERI) in collaboration with the Students' Union took on the organisation of a concerted drive to raise ISSE 2016 participation levels to at least 10% so that the analysis during the following period would be underpinned by more reliable results. This initiative resulted in a much improved average participation level of 12% across CIT in early 2016. In addition, a working party of Academic Council was established to examine in more detail the findings of the survey.

The institution may choose to highlight in this section information relating to factors that have impacted on quality and quality assurance in the reporting period. These may be factors relating to national developments or initiatives, such as clusters/alliances/mergers, other external factors or intra-institutional factors.

Funding

The continuing funding restrictions and reductions in funding are impacting on programme delivery and sustainability as evidenced in QQI's report "Quality in an Era of Diminishing Resources, Irish Higher Education 2008-15", and the HEA's report on funding "Financial Review of the Institutes of Technology" (2016). Against the backdrop of what is now a funding crisis, it is difficult to maintain quality delivery of programmes in compliance with standards, with diminishing leeway for considerations of quality enhancement.

There is a particular concern in the STEM areas, where CIT is a major national player. Thus, for example, the shortfall per Engineering student in the yearly contribution is €2100, where with a student contribution component of €3000 the yearly income per student should have been €3000 X 1.7 = €5100. Whereas CIT is actively promoting the government agenda of producing profession-ready STEM graduates, in effect it is being penalised for doing so. Engineering programmes are currently being subsidised (or even maintained?) by strong Business & Humanities enrolment. Targeting of this latter area by competitor institutions would pose serious, if not critical, difficulties for CIT.

Ongoing funding issues in Music (CIT CSM) and in the Craft Apprenticeship areas continue to drain additional resources from the annual budget.

Funding restrictions also constrain the Institute's ability to further upgrade some of its MIS systems, for instance the module database, to the extent requisite to keep pace with emerging needs and to effect further enhancements in the way the systems support programme development and quality assurance. While CIT's administrative systems operated smoothly throughout the reporting period, very lean staffing levels in the central administration and services pose a significant ongoing risk, since losses of even individual staff members in key positions have the potential to cause significant operational disruption.

New Points System

The ramifications of the new CAO points scale to be introduced for the 2017 Leaving Certificate cohort were considered by CIT academic and administrative units and the Institute's Academic Council during the reporting period. There was consensus that initially at least the changeover will add significant uncertainty regarding requirements for entry to CIT programmes for prospective students and programme planners, and that it may increase the divergence between offers and acceptances, and at a later stage between acceptances and registrations, with potential ramifications for the calculation of retention rates. Particular programmes may take in a more diverse range of entrants than previously, which may impact negatively on quality of performance of 1st Year students.

Changes in QA for Research Validation / DA at NFQ Levels 9 and 10

It is the view of CIT that the 'self-assessment'/ 'self-validation' approach to delegation of authority for Level 9 research awards across the IoT sector may not be advantageous for the sector. Similarly, the achievement of delegated authority to PhD level in one specific discipline area cannot be considered a sufficiently rigorous test of the quality of research provision institutionally to allow for an extension of Level 10 DA to all areas within an institution on that basis.

CIT would appreciate an early completion of its dialogue with QQI on an agreed (sectoral) process whereby ability to extend Level 10 accreditation/DA can be put in place by a suitably rigorous QQI-mediated validation process.

Cross-Agency Development

CIT welcomes the on-going development of the QQI – HEA MoU launched in April 2015. It is confident that the further fine-tuning of cross-agency cooperation will be beneficial for the HE sector. Amongst others it is hoped that this will lead to lessening the burden on individual institutions to concurrently fulfil the separate reporting requirements of multiple agencies.

CIT is happy to contribute to the QQI / PARN (Professional Association Research Network) initiative which offers the potential to harmonise QQI Validation and Professional Body Accreditation processes.

National HE Landscape

Having successfully completed Stage 3 of the process towards technological university designation, during the reporting period the MTU project was awaiting enabling legislation before progressing to Stage 4. This legislation was initiated, but the process of enactment was not completed during 2015/16.

Any other implementation issues of interest can be noted here.

Strategic Area Plan Review Finance & Administration

In July 2016, the areas under the VP for Finance & Administration conducted a final review of achievement against their strategic planning targets for the 2011 – 2016 period to inform development of the next area strategic plan. Of the original 32 objectives, 21 (66%) were deemed completed with a further 8 (25%) addressed in some significant manner. 3 (9%) remained outstanding, largely attributable to the unavailability of planned resource. While many targets do not impact academic quality directly, several feed into the quality framework established by the ESG standards.

Estates targets recorded as complete by the 2015/16 academic year included implementation of an effective, Institute-wide health & safety management system as well as significant upgrading and refurbishment of the educational facilities on the main campus, including the opening of a large new fit-for-purpose Examination Centre, Technology-Enhanced Learning Suite and IT Centre in an adjacent former industrial premises.

Completed enhancements with a direct impact on the student experience include implementation of an online student fee payment system and the streamlining of the Garda Vetting process for students and its relocation to the Office of the Registrar.

Staff-related objectives which were deemed fully or substantially met included the launch of an Employee Assistance Programme (albeit without the support of a planned Welfare function), development of a Researcher Career Framework and implementation of an Induction Plan for new staff.

It should be noted that implementation of some staff-related initiatives had to be curtailed due to resource constraints and the prioritisation of frontline services. Two planned dedicated Staff Welfare and Staff Training & Development functions in the HR Office could thus not be filled within the lifetime of the plan. While the offerings of the CIT Teaching & Learning Unit were designed to address the pedagogical development needs of academic staff (see Part 4), the roll-out of the Training Needs Analysis / PMDS system to staff was not progressed.

PART 3

Effectiveness and Impact

A commentary about the effectiveness of QA policies and procedures in the reporting period may be inserted here.

Effectiveness of Student Engagement and Retention Initiatives

Given the number of dimensions feeding into academic quality, establishing reliable causal links between implementation of specific quality measures and the achievement of particular outcomes is not without its challenges, particularly in the short term. Furthermore, not all quality-relevant outcomes, positive or negative, can be quantified or measured in a straightforward manner.

With these provisos in mind, a comparison of first year non-progression rates for full-time programmes at NFQ levels 6, 7 and 8 in 2014/15 and 2015/16 would seem to provide some evidence that the effectiveness of the retention initiatives developed by CIT's Student Support, Engagement and Retention Initiative grew in line with their increasing breadth and depth of implementation (see Part 4). At each level, the non-progression rates show a significant drop: at NFQ Level 6 (two programmes only), from 30% to 24%; at Level 7, from 25% to 15%; and at Level 8, from 16% to 12%. It should be noted that the great majority of learners are enrolled in Level 8 programmes.

Some additional relevant observations are included elsewhere in this report.

An evaluation of the impact of QA policies and procedures through their implementation in the reporting period should be inserted here.

Industry Involvement in Programmes

Greater formal involvement of industry advisory panels in programme development and QA (in addition to informal relations, which were invariably deemed to be very strong) had been a theme of previous programme reviews, amongst others the 2009/10 Programmatic Review of the Faculty of Business & Humanities. In the period preceding the 2015/16 review of Business & Humanities programmes, faculty management therefore put strong emphasis on systematic involvement of industry advisory panels in the development stage of new modules and programmes. This meant that the content and direction of the programmes was better informed by industry earlier on, which also reduced the workload for staff in subsequently preparing the programmes for review. The results of the thematic analysis of programmatic review reports (see below) might be taken to provide some indication of the effectiveness of this approach, though this should not preclude a more detailed analysis of the review outcomes on the part of the faculty.

Programme Performance Reports

Implementation of the Enterprise Reporting Portal (see Part 4) enabled the faculties to make available summary reports on key programme performance indicators – including CAO statistics, retention, assessment results and award classification – to heads of department and programme boards, thus enabling identification of positive outputs and areas for change on a programme-by-programme basis.

Some additional observations on impact are incorporated elsewhere in this report.

This section should highlight an analysis of the key themes arising within the implementation of QA policies and procedures, primarily through a thematic analysis of key recommendations, commendations and conditions for the reporting period.

Themes Arising from Programme Review

1. 2015/16 saw a high level of programmatic review activity in CIT. One constituent college underwent both phases of the review, while two Schools and another College finalised Phase 1 and underwent Phase 2, having had the Phase 1 site visits in May and June 2015 respectively. This activity resulted in 23 expert panel reports. Thematic analysis of the transferable commendations, recommendations and requirements (CRR) therein yielded 384 thematic units.

For Phase 1 (unit-level strategic review), the largest group of CRR analysed related to operational issues (40%), encompassing governance and management processes and performance of institutional functions. For Phase 2 (programme review), almost half (48%) of the overall CRR, and over half (53%) of the recommendations and requirements alone, related to programme design issues, while programme operation and performance attracted the most commendations (42%).

Of 16 Phase 1 themes identified, four themes attracted distinctly greater panel interest than the remainder: *Student Supports, Welfare & Feedback*; *Research & Postgraduate Research Study*; *Staffing & Staff Development*; and *External Engagement*. Together, these top four themes attracted over half (54%) of the Phase 1 panel commentary.

While there were no clear 'peaks' in panel attention among the 23 common themes determined for Phase 2, half of the Phase 2 CRRs relate to 5 top themes: *Professional Value, Graduate Profile & Career Path*; *Assessment Methodology & Scheduling*; *Work Placement*; *Programme Structure & Subject Streams*; and *Student Supports, Welfare & Feedback*.

2. Of the themes running across both phases, one theme which clearly stood out was *Student Supports, Welfare & Feedback*. This theme gained the most panel attention overall and the highest number of commendations per phase. In each phase it was also the only theme where commendations exceeded recommendations, in Phase 2 by a significant margin (19:9).

The commendations are distributed and relate to arrangements for academic provision, welfare supports and features of the physical and social learning environment, including the approachability of staff. The spread of commendations may be an indication that the areas reviewed did not limit their efforts to isolated headline initiatives, but strove to foster learner welfare across all aspects of the learning environment.

By contrast, all recommendations and requirements bar one focus on two aspects, Student Feedback Mechanisms and Individual Welfare Supports, of which the former is the more prominent. While programme review panels frequently commend informal staff-student relations at CIT, the Institute had previously identified formal learner involvement in programme quality assurance and development as an enhancement theme, and took active steps to address this during 2015/16, notably with the launch of the SParQs initiative. The impact of such measures would not have fed through to the review findings of the same year however.

3. A second theme which gained significant panel interest and a high number of commendations was *Professional Value, Graduate Profile & Career Path*. Of the 11 Phase 2 themes under which commendations were made, *Student Supports, Welfare & Feedback* and *Professional Value, Graduate Profile & Career Path* were the two highest-ranked by far and together attracted over half (53%) of all commendations.

The commendations on *Professional Value* ... again cover a range of both design and operational aspects, and also include comments indicating that CIT programmes and the capabilities of their graduates enjoy a good reputation within the professional community. Recommendations centre on entrant demand and the 'professional value proposition', professional aim, measures to develop the range of graduate opportunities and learner awareness of these, and additional opportunities for professional recognition and certification.

4. Across both review phases, the top two commended themes (*Student Supports, Welfare & Feedback*; followed by *External Engagement* in Phase 1 and *Professional Value, Graduate Profile & Career Path* in Phase 2) align well with the CIT mission of providing "student-centred, career-focused education and research", and the distribution and ratio of commendations for these would seem to provide some indication that the efforts of the areas reviewed to meet the strategic commitments of CIT were effective.

5. Various aspects of *Assessment Methodology & Scheduling* attracted the highest number of recommendations and requirements, though not all programme panels commented on this theme. Several examples of good assessment practice were also singled out for commendation.

Assessment issues with several references included 'bunching' of assessments; imbalances in assessment weighting relative to effort or across modules; a high number of (especially low-weighted) assessments; formalisation of continuous assessment in skills-based modules; and aspects of formative feedback. While some of these can be resolved at the module or programme design level, others will require (nothing more or less than) ongoing operational attention. Panel suggestions to tackle pressure points reflect this, encompassing improved coordination and production of programme assessment strategies and schedules, with the latter already implemented in many areas. Teaching, learning & assessment instruments favoured by the panels included cross-modular assessment and reflective journals or portfolios.

6. The relative prominence of *Work Placement* in the 2015/16 reviews is due mainly to the – well-flagged – decision of the Schools of Business and Humanities to include a placement element across their complete programme portfolio wherever appropriate to the programme aim and outcomes. This decision gained broad support from the panels, with the vast majority of recommendations advising departments of planning, organisational and quality control issues to be considered to ensure the success of this element.

7. While the current programmatic review criteria do not explicitly elicit comment on information management or the quality of the public information provided by the areas under review, several panel comments were relevant to an evaluation of performance against ESG standards 1.7 and 1.8. One enhancement theme which emerged from a number of comments on programme structures was the provision of formal guidance for learners on the development of competences and specialisms in programmes with multiple electives.

8. Several comments on *Staffing* in both phases relate to the extra work arising from the administration and coordination of new programme start-ups and placements, with calls for additional administrative support and for adequate recognition of extra duties in the workload allocation of teaching staff. As in previous reviews, some commentary on 'lean' staffing levels was also received. Recommendations on *Staff Development* include suggestions to leverage internal staff expertise e.g. in facilitation to create new CPD opportunities for CIT staff and the wider community.

9. Finally, while physical facilities were discussed extensively during the site visits and provision of adequate teaching & learning spaces and an up-to-date technical infrastructure remains an ongoing concern for many areas, there was also recognition of the progress made, despite an adverse funding environment, in addressing significant building maintenance issues referenced in previous reviews, particularly in relation to historic building stock. Calls for additional investment were generally put more cautiously than they might have been in the past, stating or implying that such investment would be "subject to budget constraints". Proposals for addressing budgetary constraints amongst others included gaining external sponsorship of specific project work.

Themes Arising from Programme Validations

Several of the themes and concerns of programmatic review are echoed in the validation panel reports for the reporting period. In particular, comparable points were raised by validation panels under the themes of Assessment (assessment matrix, assessment load, suggested use of a reflective journal, alignment of assessment and learning outcomes), Public Information and (International) Placement (including the need for an appropriate 'contingency' alternative to enable programme completion).

A description of improvements or enhancements, impacting on quality or quality assurance, that took place in the reporting period, identifying the reasons for the improvements (for example an evaluation of effectiveness and impact from the previous period or objectives set out in strategic compacts).

Information Technology Infrastructure Enhancements

A key enabler of the redevelopment of the annual programme status review noted elsewhere was the implementation of an institute-wide Enterprise Reporting Portal. Initially created to support the School of Science & Informatics in responding to a panel requirement for supplementary retention and progression data during Phase 1 of its 2011/12 Programmatic Review, the portal was developed further and rolled out to academic staff and administrators institute-wide in the year of reporting. Putting Business Intelligence (BI) into the hands of academic departments has created a platform for giving staff more visibility of key student performance data, facilitating ongoing monitoring of programme performance and identification of previously unseen opportunities for continuous improvement of student achievement and retention.

The IT Services Department furthermore adopted the Service Design methodology to review, document and improve process right across the Institute. This implies that a process design review is included in all IT development requests from the outset to ensure development requirements and objectives are transparent to all.

Enhancements to Library Resources

A number of enhancements to CIT's Library Services were also carried out during 2015/16, improving both the physical and virtual accessibility of the libraries. Extended late summer opening hours received good take-up from postgraduates in particular. Construction also commenced on five flexible 'study hubs' for group study for completion in September 2016. Enhancements to the virtual library infrastructure included a link-up with Google Scholar and a thorough redesign of the CIT Library Website. The new website, which was launched in September 2016, offers a more user-friendly interface which is optimized for mobile and is level 'AA' compliant under W3C's Web Accessibility Initiative.

Faculty Quality Process Enhancements

Process enhancements reported by the faculties during the reporting period include standardisation of programme development templates, for the particular benefit of new heads of department and staff, and improved sharing of QA documentation in the Faculty of Business & Humanities through use of shared server space, enabling easier auditing and updating by relevant staff.

An analysis of quality enhancement activities that were initiated by the institution. This could also include reference to any national or international quality assurance developments in which the institution is engaged. The institution is encouraged to highlight areas that may be of interest to other institutions and would benefit from wider dissemination.

Student Engagement Highlights

Building on several years of significant, widely recognised work in the student engagement space by CIT's Student Support, Engagement and Retention Initiative (CITSSERI) which saw significant capacity building and exploration of new initiatives in 2014/15, the reporting period was dedicated to consolidation and pulling together the diverse projects into a cohesive 'ecosystem' of sustainable, complementary engagement activities addressed at both learners and academic staff. In this, a strong emphasis on shared ownership from the outset yielded dividends, as evidenced for instance in the continuing success of *Transitions to CIT*.

a) Expansion of Existing Projects (Good Start, Just Ask!, Transitions to CIT, PALS)

In 2015/16 several projects gained additional strands in response to student demand:

- The *Good Start* First Year retention initiative was supplemented by Semester 2 activities aimed at returning students. In addition, trained Good Start leaders offered *Get Connected* events as a service to academic departments.
- The *Just Ask!* pop-up student help desk campaign was expanded to also include dedicated IT, library and examinations help desks, resulting in over 2,000 student visits to Just Ask! desks during the first two weeks of 2015/16 alone.
- The *PALS* (Peer-Assisted Learning and Support) initiative was extended to include social support and mentoring.
- Following initial delivery of 25 department-led *Transitions to CIT* projects in 2014/15, 20 *Transitions* projects were expanded for re-delivery in the reporting period. The *Transitions* initiative aims to ease the transition of school leavers to third level through supporting bespoke projects conceived and led by individual academic departments.

b) New Projects (Academic Success Coaching, SParQs)

Strategic engagement projects launched respectively rolled out during 2015/16 were:

- *Academic Success Coaching*, an early intervention programme designed to help academic departments identify and support incoming First Year students at risk of disengaging; and
- The *SParQ* (Student Participation in Quality) initiative, in collaboration with SParQ's Edinburgh office and the CIT Students' Union.

The SParQ initiative aims to provide improved training for class representatives and institutional support for the cultural changes necessary to underpin a meaningful and authentic partnership with students in commenting on and shaping their own learning experience.

A period of joint project development early on in the year was followed by a series of activities which focused, initially, on introducing staff and students to the SParQ model. These included faculty fora, table talks and facilitated discussions between students and staff at department level. Altogether, 2015/16 SParQ events registered ca. 180 attendances, of which 90 staff and 90 students, including CITSU officers.

- In addition, research and development commenced on the multi-campus health promotion initiative *A Healthy CIT*, which is to be launched during 2016/17.

c) NStEP Pilot

CIT was chosen as one of five institutions to pilot the National Student Engagement Programme (*NStEP*) led by HEA/QQI/USI, announced formally on April 14, 2016. NStEP is a collaborative initiative under development by the Union of Students in Ireland (USI), the Higher Education Authority (HEA) and Quality & Qualifications Ireland (QQI) in consultation with Student Partnerships in Quality Scotland (SParQS).

The implementation of NStEP at CIT will benefit significantly from the ability to draw on operational experience from the roll-out of the SParQ initiative during the reporting period.

d) Dissemination and Recognition of Student Engagement Work at CIT

During 2015/16 CITSSERI staff shared insights gained from work on the diverse student engagement initiatives at two international conferences, UKAT 2016 (UK Advising & Tutoring Conference, Solent Southampton) and RAISE 2016 (Researching, Advancing & Inspiring Student Engagement, Loughborough University), through both presentations and poster presentations.

External recognition of the student engagement work carried out by the CITSSERI over recent years, in 2015/16 included:

- Selection of CIT as a lead institute for participation in NStEP by QQI/HEA/USI;
- Naming of CIT as a national exemplar for student engagement by the HEA;
- Shortlisting of the Head of CITSSERI / TLU, Marese Bermingham, as one of 5 semi-finalists (selected from 85 nominees altogether) by The National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition, University of South Carolina, in the annual international search for Outstanding FY Champions.

Staff Development Highlights

The strategic staff development initiatives rolled out by the Institute's Teaching and Learning Unit (TLU) focused on extending reach with limited resources. This was achieved through targeted development actions based on focus group consultations in the preceding semester. Emphasis was also placed on growing a sense of shared ownership, as shown for instance in the success of the TLU Development Fund initiative in its first offering.

New staff development initiatives in 2015/16 included:

- 3 Conversations on Teaching & Learning weeks and 15 Teaching & Learning staff seminars with ca. 300 attendances;
- An inaugural TLU Breakfast Seminar series with 13 events and over 130 staff attendances;
- CIT's first TLU Development Fund call for proposals issued in November 2015.

Under this, more than 30 proposals were received, 27 funded, 24 progressed and 15 completed, with 9 still in progress on 1 September 2016. Project development involved over 70 academic staff, and the resulting projects have benefited more than 475 beneficiaries (staff and students) to date.

Module offerings for the MA in Teaching & Learning, designed to provide an opportunity for staff to obtain a postgraduate qualification in higher education pedagogy, also received good take-up during this year.

In addition to these, research and development work commenced on a staff mentoring project, including a pilot mentoring project with 8 trained staff mentors (experienced academics) and 8 mentees (new/early career academics), and on a staff induction and teaching toolkit resource pack.

Enhancing Access to Education

During the reporting period, the CIT Access Service launched or continued to engage in several initiatives aimed at enhancing learner access to CIT programmes as well as widening access to higher education in the community.

In the context of CIT's broader STEM engagement strategy, the Service in cooperation with the Computing Department launched an initiative to target prospective Computing students, both school leavers and Further Education students.

The Service also continued its work on the Interagency Traveller Education group, which financially supported 5 schools in Cork to provide mentors to the traveller students in the school during the reporting period.

During Cork's Lifelong Learning Festival, CIT launched a new publication called "Access – the Student Voice". Highlighting the personal stories of 12 students and graduates supported by the CIT Access Service, this publication allows students a voice, an opportunity to share their personal educational journey. Their honesty in describing what challenges they met and how, with adequate support, they overcame these challenges, is inspiring, refreshing and enlightening. One aim in sharing these journeys was to provide an impetus for others in similar circumstances to overcome their doubts and fears and take the first step towards obtaining a higher education qualification. The publication may be accessed on the CIT Access Service's website, at

http://www.cit.ie/studentlife/access_disability/access-the-student-voice.

Finally, the CIT Access Service was also recognised as one of three outstanding contributors from the higher education sector for organising multiple events in connection with *College Awareness Week* 2016, a nationwide campaign to encourage young people to progress to third level.

Careers and Employability Enhancement Highlights

Following receipt of a Silver AHECS (Association for Higher Education Careers Services) Employability Award for the CIT Joint Mentorship Programme at the Gradireland Awards in April 2015, the CIT Alumni Office and CIT Careers Service continued their collaboration in offering a third instalment of this programme in 2015/16. The Joint Mentorship Programme aims to link up students and professional mentors across a variety of disciplines to discuss career goals and network while assisting students to enhance their professional skills.

Mentor and mentee pairs were in contact monthly, either meeting face-to-face or via different means of electronic communication. Students presented about their experience and the benefits gained at a closing meeting at the end of the academic year. 13 Final Year students participated in the programme during the reporting period.

PART 5

Objectives for the Coming Year

A piece in relation to strategic objectives in the coming period and plans for quality assurance and enhancement.

Academic QA Systems Development

In the coming year the Institute intends to extend its revised programme monitoring process to non-CAO entry programmes. The programme monitoring report will facilitate programme teams in reviewing learner performance benchmarked against similar programmes within the Institute, reviewing external examiner recommendations and responding to feedback from stakeholders such as learners, graduates and employers.

Enhancing Teaching & Learning

In respect to quality enhancement of teaching, CIT is planning to further develop initiatives such as peer-mentoring of academic staff and a digital badge entitled “Teaching Strategies for New Teachers” in conjunction with the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning, and to provide funding to staff to support teaching initiatives within the Faculties. CIT also intends to offer a new Special Purpose Award “Certificate in Effective Teaching Practices in Higher Education”. This novel programme, which will be based on a work-based learning modality, is designed to recognise staff who are currently engaged in good practice in teaching, assessment and curriculum design. Participants in the programme will, through a reflective process, document their existing good practices and its positive impact on student learning.

Review Plans: Area/Unit and Number

- Programmatic Review Phase 1:

School of Science – School/Department/Faculty Review (5)

- Programmatic Review Phase 2:

Department of Accounting & IT – Programme Review (1)
School of Science – Programme Reviews (56)

- Validation/Programme Approval:

National Maritime College of Ireland – (1)
School of Business – (2)
School of Science – (1)
Teaching & Learning Unit – (1)

Additional validation reviews may be scheduled following successful completion of feasibility studies, subject to availability of QA resources.

Any further information with respect to plans for the coming period.