

Cork Institute of Technology

Annual Institutional Quality Assurance Report 2018

Based on the reporting period 1 September 2016 – 31 August 2017



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.

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. 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 all Science areas. Doctoral research programmes offered by the Institute in other fields of study lead to QQI awards.

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 three 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 an Audit and Risk Committee and a Finance 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 and the Head of Strategic Development. 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 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 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 continuous monitoring and development of the academic programmes is a matter for the 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. 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 \(2008\)](#).

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;
- 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 to CIT](#) 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

In relation to learners experiencing life issues which may fundamentally impede 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)

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

Students can apply for RPL in any valid CIT programme or module. CIT's RPL policy allows for applicants to apply freely in non-award stages, but limits the volume of credit which can be obtained through RPL with regard to modules contributing to the award stage. Recognition of prior learning is 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.

An extensive range of well-established RPL supports is available to candidates through the Institute's [RPL Service](#) which put CIT at the forefront of RPL provision nationally.

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 embed exit awards (generally at Higher Certificate level) which can be applied for by learners who are not in a position to complete their studies towards the target award due to life circumstances; information on these is provided in the [CIT prospectus](#).

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 Unit range from the provision of a modular [MA in Teaching & Learning in Higher Education](#) to a wide range of short staff development seminars, facilitation of communities of practice (e.g. for lecturing staff delivering the Institute-wide *CIT* module, see [Section 6](#) 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 delivered both online and in suitable class-based formats are furthermore [offered by CIT under the Springboard + programme](#).

Last but not least, CIT's successful [Extended Campus](#) has been working with numerous regional and national companies interested in developing their workforce and adding to their employees' skills sets. Extended Campus services include the joint identification of organisational learning needs and of programme offerings and delivery strategies most suited to meet these. Solutions identified may include 'off-the-shelf' programmes as well as development of customised learning pathways 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, societies, the CIT Students’ Union, Institute-wide 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. As a minimum, each descriptor gives a breakdown of the different delivery formats and indicates the 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 methodological development of its [teaching staff](#) with related links are 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, [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

Existing CIT policies on data management include the CIT [Records Management Policy](#) and the [Data Protection Policy](#). 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.

Due to the coming into force of the General Data Protection Regulation in May 2018, CIT has been engaging in a thorough review of its processes for the capture, storage and use of personal data in connection with its programmes of study. The outcomes of this review may necessitate amendments to pertinent existing Institute policies.

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 Procedure for the Annual Programme Status Review (APSR) available on the Gateway server. 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. 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 two external experts must also be obtained prior to submitting any [new modules for approval](#), with detailed criteria for content review available to departments on the CIT Gateway for distribution to the external reviewers.

[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 supplemented by published guidelines for the [selection and appointment of external examiners](#).

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.

Quality assurance 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](#).

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 office with responsibility 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.

[Empty box for additional notes]

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	2016/17
Areas/Units	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. School of Science & Informatics, Phase 1 (Strategic Review) 2. School of Science & Informatics, Phase 2 (Programme Review) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Department of Biological Sciences (including joint review of joint award with University College Cork); b. Department of Computer Science 3. School of Business & Humanities, Phase 2 (Programme Review) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Department of Accounting & IS, BBus (Hons) in Information Systems 4. Teaching & Learning Unit (TLU), Phase 2 (Programme Review) only
Number	9
Link(s) to Publications	Phase 1 and 2 PR Reports for the School of Science & Informatics; Programme Panel Report for the BBus (Hons) in Information Systems; Programme Panel Report for TLU Programmes.

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)
Number	
Link(s) to Publications	

Annual Institutional Quality Assurance Report

Year	2018/19
Areas/Units	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. School of Building & Civil Engineering, Phase 1 (Strategic Review) 2. School of Building & Civil Engineering, Phase 2 (Programme Review) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Department of Architecture b. Department of Construction
Number	
Link(s) to Publications	

Year	2019/20
Areas/Units	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. School of Mechanical, Electrical & Process Engineering, Phase 1 (Strategic Review) 2. School of Mechanical, Electrical & Process Engineering, Phase 2 (Programme Review) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Department of Electrical & Electronic Engineering
Number	
Link(s) to Publications	

Year	2020/21
Areas/Units	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. School of Mechanical, Electrical & Process Engineering, Phase 2 (Programme Review) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Department of Mechanical, Biomedical & Manufacturing Engineering; b. Department of Process, Energy & Transport Engineering
Number	
Link(s) to Publications	

Year	2021/22
Areas/Units	

Annual Institutional Quality Assurance Report

Number	
Link(s) to Publications	

Year	2022/23
Areas/Units	
Number	
Link(s) to Publications	

Year	
Areas/Units	
Number	
Link(s) to Publications	

AIQR - PART 1

Overview of internal QA governance, policies and procedures	AIQR 2016-17 Part-1 CIT FINAL 16-Feb-18.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
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
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
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
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
Date of last review or accreditation	01-04-2016
Next review year	2017
Joint research degrees	1
Joint/double/multiple awards	8
Collaborative programmes	6
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)
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
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
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
Date of last review	28-04-2016
Next review year	2021
Section: Collaborative Provision	Fifth Set of Records
Type of arrangement:	Collaborative programmes
Name of the Body (Bodies)	The Bessborough Centre, Cork, and the Tavistock Institute & Portman Trust, UK
Date of last review	09-06-2016
Next review year	2021
Section: Collaborative Provision	Sixth Set of Records
Type of arrangement:	Joint/double/multiple awards
Name of the Body (Bodies)	University College Cork
Date of last review	26-05-2017
Next review year	2022
Section: Collaborative Provision	Seventh Set of Records
Type of arrangement:	Collaborative programmes
Name of the Body (Bodies)	Teagasc Clonakilty Agricultural College
Date of last review	13-04-2016
Next review year	2021
Section: Collaborative Provision	Eighth Set of Records
Type of arrangement:	Collaborative programmes

Name of the Body (Bodies)	GMIT (Lead Partner), AIT, DIT, LIT, IT Sligo, WIT and the Irish MedTech Association
Date of last review	17-02-2017
Next review year	2022
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	16-02-2018

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.

CIT's quality systems are being developed on an ongoing basis to ensure continual improvement in the standard of the programme provision and the quality of the student experience, and to address any noted issues to the furthest extent and in the timeliest manner possible within current resources. As for most years, developments to the Institute's policies and systems were cumulative rather than major during the reporting period.

Examples of enhancements which contributed to the achievement of the Institute's mission and individual strategic goals (link [here](#)) in 2016/17 include:

- Adoption of Fitness to Practice / Fitness to Study Policies

The Fitness to Practice/Study Policies provide effective support strategies for students as well as for staff dealing with students who present with significant life issues. They contribute to the creation of a conducive learning environment, thereby supporting Strategic Goal 1, Developing and Improving the Student Experience, and Strategic Goal 2, Engaging and Empowering Staff.

- Adoption of an Institute Entrepreneurship Strategy

The Entrepreneurship Strategy supports the consolidation and focused development of the various entrepreneurship activities under Strategic Goal 4, Strengthening and Extending Research, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Activities.

- Achievement of ISO 50001 certification

Accreditation of Cork Institute of Technology under ISO 50001 (Energy Management Standards) supports Strategic Goal 8, the enhancement of the physical environment of the Institute.

- Mainstreaming of the CIT Student Engagement & Retention Initiative

The Institute's Student Engagement & Retention Initiative, which had seen many successes since its initiation in 2012, was mainstreamed under the revised name of AnSEO – The Student Engagement Office, underlining the sustained commitment of CIT to maximising student success under its first Strategic Goal, the development and improvement of the student experience.

Further details on enhancements during the reporting period are given in Part 4 of this report.

Part 1 of this AIQR has also undergone some updating. Most notably, the links to policies and procedures have been embedded in short expository text in order to provide more context on the Institute's quality assurance mechanisms and structures.

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

Appointments and Retirements

New senior staff appointments during 2016/17 included:

- Acting Head of Department of Physical Sciences, January 2017, to cover a career break
- Head of Department of Maritime Studies, National Maritime College of Ireland, April 2017
- CIT Librarian, August 2017. The incumbent had previously held the position in an Acting capacity.

The end of the academic year 2016/17 again saw some significant retirements, chief among them the retirement of the President, Dr Brendan J. Murphy.

Revisions to Academic Policies and Procedures

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

- Updated CIT Examination Code of Conduct (AC Oct. 16);
- Revised Policy Governing Assessment Appeals and Correction of Errors and Omissions in Respect of Assessment (GB March 17)
- Fitness to Practice Policy (GB July 17)
- Fitness to Study Policy (GB July 17)
- Revised Regulations for Modules & Programmes (Marks & Standards), Version 5.0 (GB July 17)

Also approved were

- Interim Principles for the Cessation of CIT awards (AC Oct. 16), with subsequent establishment of an AC Working Party for further consideration of the surrounding issues
- A revision of the normal retention period for assessed work (AC Oct. 16)
- A revised Scoring Scheme for BTEC awards (GB Feb. 17)
- A revised Terms of Reference and Composition for the Academic Planning & Review Committee of Council (AC Feb. 17)
- A recalibration of the CIT Mathematics Examination to align with the new Leaving Certificate grading system (AC June 17).

New Governance Structure for Joint CIT-UCC awards

In February 2017, Academic Council approved a revised governance structure for joint CIT-UCC awards. This replaces the previously separate Joint Academic Standards Board and Joint Programme Management Boards by a single new 'Joint Board'.

Adoption of National Research Integrity Statement

In June 2017, Academic Council adopted the *National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland* (June 2014). Prior to adoption, an Academic Council Working Party had been convened to consider and report to Council on the ramifications of adopting the national research integrity policy. The Working Party acknowledged that adoption would bring a requirement for adequate resourcing and appropriate training, including possibly the establishment of a new position of Research Integrity Officer (RIO) going forward.

Development of a New Institute Strategic Plan

The current *Cork Institute of Technology Strategic Plan 2012 – 2016 (Knowledge at Work)* articulates the Institute's mission, vision and strategic priorities in eight identified strategic areas. One of these is to offer high quality, relevant and flexible programmes, which explicitly commits CIT to a quality improvement ethos. The existing Strategic Plan, which was originally to run to 31 December 2016, was extended by Governing Body to August 2018 to allow time for comprehensive stakeholder consultation and development of a new Strategic Plan during the 2017/18 academic year.

Roll-Out of Annual Programme Status Review

During the reporting period, the revised process for the annual review of programmes was rolled out Institute-wide for both CAO and non-CAO programmes. For each programme, the new Enterprise Reporting Portal generates an APSR report template which is already pre-populated with standardised enrolment and student performance data drawn down from the Banner student record system. This enables programme boards to focus on evaluating performance, identifying effective practice and devising enhancement strategies where necessary, rather than having to carry out data collation. The unified reporting format supports the faculty executive in benchmarking programme performance and identifying common trends across the portfolio of programmes.

1.3 The schedule of QA governance meetings.

Governing Body

6 October 2016

6 October 2016 (Special Meeting)

1 December 2016

2 February 2017

2 March 2017

6 April 2017

1 June 2017

12 June 2017 (Special Meeting)

16 June 2017 (Special Meeting)

23 June 2017 (Special Meeting)

6 July 2017

Academic Council

7 October 2016

9 November 2016

14 December 2016

10 February 2017

15 March 2017

5 May 2017

16 June 2017

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 1 (Strategic Review), November 2016
- b. Phase 2 (Programme Review), Department of Biological Sciences, March 2017:
 - Applied Biosciences/Pharmaceutical Biotechnology Panel
 - Food/Nutrition Science Panel
 - Biomedical Science Panel (*includes joint review of the joint BSc (Hons) in Biomedical Science provided and awarded jointly with University College Cork*)
- c. Phase 2 (Programme Review), Department of Computer Science, March 2017:
 - Software Development Panel
 - Information Technology Panel
 - Masters Stream Panel

Total Revalidations: 20 Major Awards / 1 Non-major Awards. In addition, validation of 1 cognate programme leading to a Major Award.

 [Link to Phase 1 and 2 PR Reports for the School of Science & Informatics](#)

2. Programmatic Review of the School of Business & Humanities, Phase 2 (Programme Review), Department of Accounting & IS

- BBus (Hons) in Information Systems, March 2017

Total Revalidations: 1 Major Award

 [Link to Programme Panel Report for the BBus \(Hons\) in Information Systems](#)

3. PR of the Teaching & Learning Unit (TLU), Programme Review only

- Teaching & Learning in Higher Education Programmes, April 2017

Total Revalidations: 2 Major Awards / 1 Non-major Award

 [Link to Programme Panel Report for TLU Programmes](#)

Validation Reviews

1. Major Awards

- [Bachelor of Business \(Honours\) in Culinary Entrepreneurship](#)
- [Postgraduate Diploma in Science / Master of Science in Digital Marketing Strategy](#)
- [Master of Science in Data Science & Analytics](#)
- [Master of Science in Software Architecture & Design](#), validated in the context of 2016-2017 PR of the School of Science & Informatics

2. Non-Major Awards

- [Certificate in the Science of Biotechnological Manufacturing Operations, SPA, NFQ Level 6](#)
- [Certificate in Cleanroom Manufacturing Practices, SPA, NFQ Level 6](#)
- [Certificate in Retail Food Operations, SPA, NFQ Level 6](#)
- [Certificate in Brewing & Distilling Operations, SPA, NFQ Level 7](#)
- [Certificate in Mechanical, Electrical & Plumbing BIM Applications, SPA, NFQ Level 7](#)
- [Certificate in Building Energy Analysis, SPA, NFQ Level 8](#)
- [Certificate in Leadership Development, SPA, NFQ Level 8](#)
- [Certificate in Capital Markets, SPA, NFQ Level 8](#)
- [Certificate in Principles of Sesame Drama and Movement Therapy, SPA, NFQ Level 8](#)
- [Certificate in Designing Innovative Services, SPA, NFQ Level 8](#)
- [Certificate in TV Production, SPA, NFQ Level 8](#)
- [Certificate in Biopharmaceutical Supply Chain Management, SPA, NFQ Level 8](#)
- [Certificate in Advanced Clinical Practice with Children and Families, SPA, NFQ Level 9](#), collaborative programme delivered in conjunction with the Bessborough Centre, Cork, and the Tavistock & Portman NHS Foundation Trust, UK
- [Certificate in Effective Teaching in Higher Education, SPA, NFQ Level 9](#)
- [Certificate in Creativity & Change, SPA, NFQ Level 9](#)

Other Reviews

Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE)

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 2017 Irish Survey of Student Engagement to 26%. Schools which piloted in-class completion of the survey recorded significant increases beyond this (up to 55% of surveys completed in the School of Business). A detailed comparative analysis of the results of ISSE 2016 was again prepared by a staff specialist in the Department of Mathematics and presented to Academic Council in June 2017.

Strategic Library Review

In February 2017, findings from a Strategic Review of the CIT Library conducted from June 2016 – January 2017 were submitted to the CIT Registrar. The review panel was chaired by an external library expert and the panel membership reflected the major stakeholder groups within CIT. Deliberations on the outcomes are ongoing.

ISO 50001 (Energy Management Systems) External Audits

Two audits of the Institute's energy management systems were carried out in June and August 2017 respectively in connection with CIT's successful application for ISO 50001 certification (see Sections 3.1 and 4.1 below).

Internal Audits (Internal Audit Committee of Governing Body)

The annual internal audit plan determined by the Governing Body Audit Committee and managed by the Office of the VP of Finance & Administration had identified and agreed two academic areas for audit during the reporting period, those of research and programmatic review. The audits were carried out by PricewaterhouseCoopers, with reports received by CIT in February and May 2017 respectively.

Internal Audit of Research

The objective of the research audit was to assess if the research strategy was operating as intended, including the development of the Researcher Career Framework and the establishment of the Institute's Research & Innovation Steering Group. The findings relate to six points:

1. Capacity in the Research Office (substantial) - The introduction of a formal designation process for research entities under the Researcher Career Framework had created an increased expectation of Research Office support from the newly designated entities. This additional, and reasonable, expectation of support had however pushed the current staff complement of the office beyond its capacity. This was evidenced by delays in implementing the Research Management System (RMS) and the observation that the CIT website was out of date in relation to research activity and staff.
2. Strategic Planning (moderate) – While there was a dedicated CIT Research & Innovation Strategy in place for 2015 – 2016, a plan for 2017 onwards was not yet formally in development.
3. Research Metrics as Evidence of Achievement (moderate) – The research metrics tracked in CIT did not formally align to the goals and objectives in the Research & Innovation Strategy.
4. Research Entity Designation, Progress Reporting and Quality Control (moderate) – While six research entities had progressed through the designation process, the remaining research entities were either still in progress or had not yet started the process.
5. Institute Research & Innovation Steering Group (moderate) – While the terms of reference for the group require 3 to 4 meetings per year, a gap in meetings from Dec. 2015 to Oct. 2016 was noted.
6. Absence of Formal Communication Channels for Research Staff (minor) - It was found that the absence of formal communication channels for the sharing of research plans and ideas had led to a lack of awareness of similar activities in different departments and research entities. Formal communication avenues would also be required to facilitate the identification and coordination of inter- und multidisciplinary research initiatives, the growth of which had been identified as an objective within the Research Strategy.

It is anticipated that the recommendations of the Research Audit when implemented will contribute to noticeable enhancements in the quality of the research infrastructure and activities in CIT.

Internal Audit of the Programmatic Review Process

The objective of the internal audit of the programmatic review process was to assess whether there is adequate planning, completion and follow-up of programmatic reviews for each programme across the

Institute every five years. The scope of the review was limited to the Schools of Business and Mechanical, Electrical & Process Engineering.

The audit identified a number of good working practices with respect to the CIT PR process, including a quality driven process, dedication of staff to programme development, a large number of Phase 2 sub-panels allowing for a thorough and comprehensive review of programmes, and efforts to support public confidence through the availability of programmatic review panel reports on the CIT website.

A sample of 30 requirements and recommendations (10 from Phase 1, 20 from Phase 2) was audited regarding their implementation status, and analysis confirmed implementation of all requirements and a high level of recommendations.

The findings related to the following points:

1. Programmatic Review Schedule (substantial) – For the most recent programmatic review cycle, most academic units exceeded the 5-year validation duration. In such situations, a request to extend validation for an additional 12 months was submitted to Academic Council. Such extensions were not provided for within CIT's policies for Programmatic Review, and it was also not uncommon for more than one extension to be granted. The auditors considered that there was a risk to programme quality assurance and quality when validation was extended, particularly if this was due to delays in the implementation of approved changes.
2. Programmatic Review Configuration, Phases 1 and 2 (substantial) – Potential weaknesses with respect to the two-phased approach identified by the auditors included the potential for overlap and duplication between Phase 1 and the CIT Strategic Management Framework and between Phases 1 and 2 of PR. PwC also observed a lack of continuity in the panel membership for Phases 1 and 2 which was not in line with CIT's policy and procedural framework for programmatic review.
3. Module Quality Assurance (substantial) – Delays in the process of ensuring the quality of modules contributed significantly to delays in the Institute's programmatic review schedule. Opportunities for improvement identified included higher levels of training and accountability of the academic unit staff, a review of the current feedback process, a cost/benefit analysis to explore the option of adding functionality to the curriculum management software (Akari Document) such as an in-built feedback mechanism and logic checks, and a review of the existing module moderation process with a view to increasing the available capacity.
4. Composition of Phase 2 Panels (moderate) – It was found that some Phase 2 panels did not have an even number of academic and industry panellists, and two panels did not include an industry panellist. The lack of continuity between Phase 1 and 2 panels was also reiterated.
5. Panel Requirements and Recommendations - Implementation and Sign-off (moderate) – While there had been no follow-up reports to the previous review, the process as operated included the verification of the implementation of panel requirements and recommendations by the Registrar's Office, which was not documented in the current policy. The auditors also noted that academic units were not required to provide evidence of the implementation of recommendations.

Some of the observations incorporated in the above findings were reiterated as minor findings on the policy and procedural framework for programmatic review.

The findings of the auditor's report were considered by the Registrar, and follow-up actions commenced by the relevant functions, with a view to completion during the 2017/18 academic year.

Research Entity Designation Process

The formal research entity designation process for CIT Research Groups and Centres under the Researcher Career Framework, Part 1, requires a clear determination of distinctive features of the entity, including critical mass, name, and position within the relevant faculty. The formality of the process underscores CIT's commitment to developing high-quality research activities. The process also aids emerging research groups in clarifying their strategy and targets and assists CIT in maintaining a coherent overview of the full scope of research activities. This helps avert duplication and increase the potential for interdisciplinary and collaborative projects where relevant.

Six research groups in CIT successfully completed the research designation process during 2016/17. This involved submission of a formal proposal, followed by a panel review and the production of a panel report with recommendations or otherwise for formal designation. The process further requires that all panel reports are endorsed by the Institute Research & Innovation Steering Group before being forwarded to the President for final decision on designation.

The six CIT Research & Innovation Groups designated during the reporting period are:

- SIGMA – Applying advanced software and computational techniques to real world applications;
- MeSSO – Optimising the performance and design of mechanical systems;
- E3L – Engagement interactions between higher education institutions and external organizations, with a particular focus on experiential learning;
- EdTech – Pedagogically-orientated research into the application of new and emerging technologies to facilitate learning at all levels;
- SIRIG – Engineering infrastructures with an emphasis on sustainability;
- RIOMH – Computing for cloud and distributed systems.

In each case designation was proposed for an initial three-year period and approved by the President in January 2017.

Enterprise Ireland TTSI2 Programme Review

CIT is a member of the Bridge Consortium, a UCC-led knowledge & technology transfer consortium which was created and funded under the second Technology Transfer Strengthening Initiative (TTSI2 2012 – 2016) with CIT, Teagasc and more recently IT Tralee as partners. The remit for managing TTSI2 lay with KTI, the national knowledge transfer office created in 2013 which is supported by Enterprise Ireland with the Irish Universities Association.

On completion of TTSI2, an independent evaluation of the performance of the TTSI2 initiative from 2013 to 2016 was commissioned by Enterprise Ireland and conducted by Frontline Consulting, a policy and impact evaluation consultancy with expertise in providing impact evaluation and cost benefit analysis support to government departments and agencies.

The evaluation concluded that the second round of TTSI programme funding built on the initial phase effectively, delivering value in terms of strong performance outputs and stakeholder and business satisfaction. It further concluded that the creation of technology transfer consortia under TTSI2 worked well, with genuine partnerships developed that led to the sharing of knowledge and expertise.

The outcomes and recommendations of the review have helped focus the Bridge Consortium on improving standards and achieving improved outcomes within its own work. The Enterprise Ireland TTSI2 review report is available [here](#).

IT Services Reviews

Review of Data Quality

In preparation for the implementation of an Exam Paper Management solution, a comparative review was conducted of the data held in Banner and Resource Planner for allocation of lecturers against programme instances delivered. The outcomes of this review were very useful and led to the creation of data integration workflows that will push master data from Resource Planner into Banner and also Blackboard, thus ensuring that a significant amount of 'dirty data' will be cleansed from Banner and Blackboard.

Cyber Security Review

In 2017 IT Services commenced a review of the security measures in the CIT student record system. The initial internal review is to be followed by an independent external review which is to make recommendations on any gaps identified.

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	19
Number of Programme Reviews completed in the reporting year	8
Number of Research Reviews completed in the reporting year	0
Number of School/Department/Faculty Reviews completed in the reporting year	1
Number of Service Unit Reviews completed in the reporting year	1
Number of Reviews of Arrangements with partner organisations completed in the reporting year	0

Annotation: Please note that the methodology for counting programme and school/department/ unit reviews has been revised as against 2015/16, to broadly bring the counts in line with what appears to be the prevalent approach. The number given under Programme Review now reflects the number of panels convened with the purpose of reviewing programme provision, rather than the number of programmes under review, with a comparable change applying to the number given under S/D/F 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	35
National	61
UK	4
EU	0
Student	0
Other (↔ Outside EU)	0

Annotation: The categories under Composition were treated as mutually exclusive, since the assumption has to be that are intended to refer to current institutional affiliation, rather than country of origin. Inasmuch as this is true, all internal panellists would need to be classified as ‘national’, distorting the figure given under the category ‘National’.

Chair Profile	%
Internal	50
Similar Institution	25
Different Institution	25
International	4

Annotation: The counting methodology for Chair Profile was also revised for 2016/17 based on QQI guidance. Category “International” is now treated as *NOT mutually exclusive* with categories “Similar Institution/Different Institution”. The international panel chair was therefore also assigned an institution type (different institution), meaning that the percentages under Chair Profile do 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.

Some examples from different Institute areas of how data usage fed into quality assurance and the management of the student experience in 2016/17 are given below.

Extended Campus – Customer Relationship Management (CRM) System Pilot

Extended Campus CRM System Pilot Review

For several years CIT, through its Extended Campus, had been piloting a Customer Relationship Management System for tracking, categorising and following up leads relating to external engagement activities, such as student placements, internships, joint projects with industry etc.

At the end of 2016/17, an internal review of the pilot CRM was conducted, with a view to either forming a strategy for the further roll-out of the CRM across the Institute or indeed to narrowing its scope to several key areas of priority. The review identified a number of issues in relation to data ownership, decision-making around the review and refreshing of data, and consistency in the exploitation of the CRM across the Institute for purposes of reporting.

Following discussion with the faculties, it was agreed to focus the CRM specifically on larger, more complex clients or partners and to utilise the system primarily for driving new engagements for CIT. This matter is being kept under review.

Introduction of CRM Database Systems to Student Support Services

CRM database systems were also introduced to several of the Institute's student support offices, including the Access & Disability Service and the Careers Service.

While the CRM tool of the Careers Service, set up in the second semester, did not become fully operational during the reporting period, it already enabled automation of several reporting and statistical functions. It is expected that the remaining technical issues will be resolved in 2017/18, allowing the Service to reap the full benefits of the new system.

The Access & Disability Service collaborated with CIT's IT Services department to commence development of a bespoke Access Service CRM tool to capture pre-entry and post-entry engagements. The Service aims to pilot the tool in the academic year 2017/18.

CIT Careers Service – Adaptation of Service Delivery Formats Based on Usage Data

Following analysis of service usage data, the CIT Careers Service was able to increase the effectiveness of its most sought-after services by providing a large number of CV & Advice Clinics, both general (37 clinics) and department-specific (23 clinics).

CV reviews and assistance with employment applications remain the foremost reason why learners contact the service (2016/17: 45% of one-to-one appointments, 61% of drop-ins). The Careers Service found that the clinics freed up over 50 hours of service time as against standard one-to-one

appointments, helping to offset – up to a point – the challenges of reduced staffing levels during part of the reporting period.

CIT Library – Data-Based Service Usage Enhancement Projects

Collaborative Usability Testing Project

Following on from the launch of a new Library website in September 2016, the Library liaised with staff from the Department of Media Communications to develop a brief for a Usability Testing project, which was carried out by Media Communications students from February to May 2017. As part of module assessments on user-centred interaction design, the students evaluated the new library webpages using various research methodologies such as questionnaires, interviews, focus groups and observational methods. The feedback provided in the Media Design Usability Reports submitted by the students has allowed Library staff to further enhance the Library website and to improve the student experience online. Amendments already effected include changes to fonts, colours and layouts that support ease of navigation through visual simplification and strengthen the visual identity of the site.

Commencement of Monthly Service Usage Data Collection

In November 2016, the Library Information Service Desk commenced a monthly collection of quantitative and qualitative service usage data to monitor and analyse the level of demand as well as the nature of information requests.

Data-Driven Energy Management

ISO 50001, which was achieved at CIT in the summer of 2017 (see Section 4. below), specifies requirements for establishing, implementing, maintaining and improving an energy management system. These enable CIT to follow a systematic approach towards achieving continual improvement of energy performance, including energy efficiency, energy use and consumption. In future it may be possible to share the ISO system out into academic provision, where it could be applied to the delivery of certain modules in the area of sustainable energy.

Tailored Student Engagement Initiatives (AnSEO)

Data usage also played a growing role in the context of projects facilitated by CIT's Student Engagement Office, AnSEO. For instance, during the reporting period AnSEO team members met departments to consider possibilities for collaboratively tailoring packages of supports based on their particular needs as well as data from the Irish Survey of Student Engagement and outputs of internal 'SParQ at CIT' consultations.

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

Resourcing

As in previous reporting periods, ongoing lack of institutional resources is a factor that has impacted in various ways on quality and quality assurance, as evident in some sections of this report.

Discipline areas with greater requirements for specialised equipment and facilities such as STEM and Music are adversely affected by the continued application of a costing model which does not reflect the actual cost of provision and upkeep in these areas. This has an impact on quality, and also results in areas such as Business and Humanities subsidising the more cost-intensive Institute areas. This is detrimental at the institutional level, and it is damaging to the national agenda.

Furthermore, over the last decade there has been a 25% growth in higher education enrolments with no change to capital funding. While the Institute's systems have adapted as much as possible to counter this growth by increased efficiency within given resource limitations, the student experience cannot but be affected by the growing gap in the long run.

New Leaving Certificate Grading Scale

During 2016/17 the Institute continued to work towards minimising the impact of the revised Leaving Certificate points system coming into effect in 2017. Preparatory activities encompassed information campaigns as well as further adaptation of relevant access mechanisms (recalibration of the CIT mathematics entrance examination).

Availability of Benchmarking Data

Lack of availability of appropriate and relevant data (local, national and international) for benchmarking in some instances was a factor that impacted on quality assurance during 2016/17. For instance, the interpretation of the Irish Survey of Student Engagement would be significantly aided by the accessibility of more qualitative and quantitative data in relation to the student experience of and performance in higher education.

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3.3 A description of other implementation issues.

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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.

Programmatic Review Process

Validity of Programmatic Review

Some of the outcomes of the quantitative analysis of PR themes for 2015 – 2017 (see Part 3.3 below) would appear to support the validity of the CIT programmatic review process.

Notably, within the four broad themes representing the core ‘dimensions’ of each review phase, the theme which attracted the largest amount of panel commentary per phase – with a clear margin – was the theme which best reflects the specific focus of the respective phase.

For Phase 1 (the Strategic Phase), this was *Governance, Management & the Operation of Institutional Functions*, which received roughly twice as many comments (33, or 42.9% of the phase total) as the next two broad themes. For Phase 2, 47.6% of the commentary (283) related to *Programme Design & Specification*, again clearly in excess of the comments under the next-highest broad theme. While on the surface of it these results appear somewhat self-evident and ‘unexciting’, they may be taken as indicators of a functioning review process which, in broad terms at least, measured what it was designed to measure.

Timescale of Programmatic Review Process

However, a stronger emphasis on systematically ascertaining the implementation of all requisite changes prior to revalidation in the last few years has been affecting time to completion of the PR process for some departments. This was also the most significant weakness of the process found in internal audit.

In contrast to previous practice, programmes are no longer recommended to Academic Council for revalidation unless completion of all requirements arising from both the panel review and the internal module moderation process has been signed off on by the Registrar’s Office. Thus, CIT ensures that the revised programme specification will only run and be visible on the Institute website once a sufficiently high quality standard is demonstrably attained.

With the significant overall workloads of all staff feeding into the process and the volume of work inherent not just in PR preparations per se, but also in the detailed module review and the downstream MIS processes, this meant that a good few programmes which underwent panel reviews in spring/summer 2016 were revalidated in 2016/17 only (for commencement of the revised programme in September 2017), with the same being true for earlier years.

A PR Process Working Party of Academic Council was formed during the reporting period to consider ways how the programmatic review might be rebalanced respectively reconfigured to reduce average revalidation times without loss of quality and standards. This working party has since taken up work.

First Destination Survey

The First Destinations Survey 2016 was carried out in April – May 2017 by a cross-functional team under the joint coordination of the Careers Service and the Alumni Office. The 2016 survey, which was in a revised format in line with new HEA recommendations, was completed by 53.2% of the graduates. This was considered a good completion rate, but showed a decrease as against previous years.

On review, several contributory factors were identified. One internal factor was the timing of the Easter holidays, which meant that the survey collided with end-of-semester study and examinations. Other factors included the use of email addresses given at point of registration, with manual amendment to 'myCIT' addresses yielding some additional returns.

Changes to the survey format made by the HEA were also considered to have contributed. The survey was now much longer and included many questions requiring free text answers, as well as some difficult or repetitive questions. Though the reasons for non-completion could not be formally ascertained, it was noted that 'incomplete survey' respondents had repeatedly given up at certain points.

Entrepreneurship Education

While CIT's Rubicon Centre, the Innovation & Enterprise Office and, more recently, the Hincks Centre for Entrepreneurship Excellence are not components of the CIT quality assurance system in the immediate sense, these entities – in conjunction with the academic departments – have played an important role in increasing the visibility of entrepreneurship as a career option and in fostering an entrepreneurship culture in CIT and in the wider Cork region. Their activities have strongly contributed to realising the Entrepreneurship Vision in the CIT Strategic Plan that "CIT will be an internationally recognised centre of excellence in the provision of career-focused education which produces effective, ethical professionals capable of entrepreneurship, innovation and creativity".

Some evidence for the long-term effectiveness of CIT's combined entrepreneurship initiatives can be taken from the 2016 First Destinations Survey. This indicated that 6% of CIT graduates who responded to the 2016 survey declared themselves self-employed, up from 5% in 2015 and only 1% in 2011.

2. Impact

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

Common Entry Options in the Faculty of Engineering & Science

The use of programme common entry options has been explored in detail by the Faculty of Engineering & Science, based on an analysis of annual programme and student performance data.

1. In the School of Science & Informatics, common entry options were provided at NFQ Level 7 and NFQ Level 8 for a number of years, allowing subsequent progression to denominated programmes in the domains of life and physical sciences. The intended outcome was to provide students with the opportunity to gain experience and insights across all science areas, so that they could make well-informed decisions in relation to denominated programme selection subsequently. Unfortunately, enrolment and student performance data obtained over a number of years showed that common entry was used in the main as an alternate entry route into a narrow selection of life sciences programmes, thus defeating the original aim of broadening entrants' horizons with regard to their choices.

In the run-up to the 2016/17 programmatic review of the School of Science & Informatics, common entry to life sciences programmes was therefore separated from common entry to physical sciences programmes to take account of the findings above. The results obtained to date seem to indicate that the adoption of this approach has resulted in a good balance between the provision of a meaningful set of student choices and the manageability of same within the constraints of finite resources.

2. Conversely, in the Department of Computer Science, a common first stage has been introduced across all programmes, but retaining denominated entry. Adoption of this approach has ensured that the students can be admitted to specific programmes based on their CAO points but have the option of transferring into different programmes later on, depending on their performance in higher education as distinct from their terminal performance in the post-primary sector.
3. Common entry to CIT engineering programmes is currently under review. Currently, this common entry pathway provides student with access to four denominated programmes at NFQ Level 8, all professionally accredited. Enrolments via this pathway have increased significantly in recent years, possibly at the expense of denominated programmes not accessible via the common entry route. The lessons learned from the School of Science & Informatics' experience and that of the Department of Computer Science will be used to help determine the optimal direction in which to proceed in relation to the further development of this option for CIT engineering.

Careers Service Strategy Development

As an outcome of the annual internal Careers Service review, development of a draft Strategy/Three-year Plan for 2017 – 2020 for the Careers Service was commenced during the reporting period. The new Careers Service Strategy proposes a number of strategic priorities and associated long-term goals and is to be finalised in 2017/18.

Among the strategic priorities determined is the development of an Employability 'Curriculum' in CIT. Employability statements are now a required reporting requirement for all CIT Programmes. Attached

goals include the development of evidence-based, accredited Careers Education in CIT, and the development of a suite of CIT Careers Workshops appropriate to the stages of the employability programme.

Fitness to Practice / Fitness to Study Policies

During the 2015/16 programmatic review of Humanities, a requirement was issued by one of the panels for a Fitness to Practice / Fitness to Study policy to be put into place for programmes in Applied Social Studies in the first instance.

Initial presentation of the review reports to Academic Council in June 2016 prompted a decision by the Institute Executive that it would be desirable at this point to commence development of such policies for Institute-wide implementation to support all academic departments in addressing concerns over any learner's capacity for safe, effective and responsible professional practice, e.g. in the context of clinical or work placement or upon graduation. Following a period of consultation and development, finalised draft Fitness to Practice and Fitness to Study Policies were subsequently approved by Academic Council and Governing Body in June and July 2017 respectively, with an implementation date of September 2017.

While the Fitness to Practice Policy is applied as an opt-in process where academic departments put particular programmes on the list, Fitness to Study applies to all registered students. The two policies were welcomed by staff, students and associated professionals as essential support structures for staff and students, enabling fairness and consistency of treatment and support for all students. It is intended that they will be complemented by further related policies, including a Student Mental Health Policy, to create a suite of policy supports for student well-being.

Access Service – Impact of Resourcing Issues on Frontline Services

Despite resource issues along the way, the Access Service team delivered significant work over the course of the academic year 2016/17. All HEA compact targets in relation to mature students, students with disabilities and socio-economic access were met. The Access Service also launched or participated in a number of significant new ventures, which included organising a national Traveller education seminar and hosting one 'leg' of the 3rd UNESCO Conference on Learning Cities 2017.

At the level of the individual student, however, the provision of effective access and disability supports is resource-intensive, requiring ongoing one-to-one interventions for some learners. In this regard, the temporary loss of two respectively three members of staff due to maternity and secondment clearly had a detrimental impact on the supports the service was able to provide. None of the vacant positions could be backfilled during 2016/17 due to the ongoing lack of resources. Work therefore had to be prioritised, and anecdotal evidence suggests that post-entry supports for Linked Schools and mature students suffered. Data analysis thus indicated that a higher number of Linked Schools entrants than previously (10) did not succeed in completing first year. Linked Schools Parent liaison is another area where staff had to scale back activities, resulting in 66 parent visits to the CIT campus only, versus 191 parents in the previous year (though the very impactful outreach activities in the schools continued, with 400+ parents in attendance).

3. Themes

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

Key Themes Arising from Programmatic Review (Thematic Analysis of CIT Programmatic Review Reports 2015 – 2017)

Overview

As for the previous year, a detailed analysis of programmatic review reports produced in 2016/17 was carried out and reported on by the CIT Registrar's Office. Since thematic analysis derives value from drawing on the broadest data set possible, the follow-on report integrated the data for the two consecutive reporting years 2015 – 2017, both for the statistical analysis and the presentation of Phase 2 thematic strands.

On foot of last year's observation that many panel comments captured elsewhere were also relevant to ESG 1.8, thematic units pertaining to *Programme Information & Documentation (ESG 1.8)* were now specifically counted for the two years of reviews. Comments on this theme had not been included the data counts initially as the current PR criteria do not posit the quality of the programme information as a separate review criterion. In addition, the methodology for the compilation and thematic assignment of the panel comments was refined somewhat, leading to a slight adjustment of the data counts for 2015/16 for purposes of analysing the 2015 – 2017 data set.

Highlights from the Analysis of the Collated Data Set for 2015 – 2017

1. The overall 2015 – 2017 data set consists of 672 thematic units, of which
 - 168 (25%) are Commendations (COM);
 - 504 (75%) are Recommendations or Requirements (RR);
 - 77 (11%) COM/RR derive from Phase 1 (Strategic Phase); and
 - 595 (89%) COM/RR derive from Phase 2 (Programme Phase).
2. The reviews conducted during the 2015 – 2017 period relate to one PR cycle per academic unit only; the data obtained should therefore be perceived as part of a multi-year process of establishing an institutional baseline. In the absence of this and any readily accessible external benchmarks, the overall ratio of Commendations to RR of 1:3 determined for this period should be considered preliminary. However, it does not seem out of line with PR guidance or a general understanding of the purpose of programme review.
3. The thematic area which saw the strongest panel engagement overall was *Assessment Methodology & Scheduling*, regardless of the fact that it did not feature in Phase 1.
Assessment ... received both the highest number of overall panel comments (72 COM/RR, or 11% of the total) and of recommendations/requirements (64, or 13% of all RR).
4. Second in overall panel engagement came *Student Supports, Welfare & Feedback*, with 65 COM/RR (10% of the total) received across both phases of PR (14 in Phase 1; 51 in Phase 2).

Not only did panels show a strong interest in student support and feedback mechanisms, much of the commentary was complimentary of departmental, School or Institute efforts in this regard: with 36 commendations (22.1% of all COM), *Student Supports ...* was the most commended theme in the 2015 – 17 review period.

A large number of the commendations focused on a few specific aspects, notably Student Success and Engagement Measures. Both departmental and Institute-wide measures were referenced in this respect. This reflects not just that these measures are widely considered a success, it also illustrates the merit of adopting an appropriate strategy for promoting the engagement initiatives within the Institute from the outset, while not neglecting to evidence the value of the work through gathering relevant performance data.

5. Of the themes generating both COM and RR, *Student Supports ...* and *Professional Value, Graduate Profile and Career Path* are the only areas for which commendations exceed recommendations/requirements (*Student Supports ...*: 36 COM : 29 RR; *Professional Value ...*: 35 COM : 23 RR).

This result reinforces the finding on these themes in the first Thematic Analysis, not least since the ratio of COM to RR for *Professional Value ...* strongly improved as against 2015/16 alone.

The initial report noted that it could “probably be stated [...] that the distribution of commendations aligns well with the CIT mission of providing ‘student-centred, career-focused education and research’”. Even with the revised first year data counts, the collated results for 2015 – 2017 would seem to support the validity of the original conclusion.

6. For both review phases, the distribution of Broad Themes aligns well with the focus and aims of the phase in question.

In Phase 1, *Governance, Management & the Operation of Institutional Functions* received roughly twice as many comments (33, or 42.9% of the phase total) as the next two broad themes (*Features of the Taught Provision*, 22.1%, and *Institutional Identity & Societal Role*, 20.8%), with COM and RR attracting fairly comparable percentages of their respective totals. *Research & Postgraduate Research Study* finally attracted 14.3% of the Phase 1 commentary.

In Phase 2, 47.6% of the comments (283) related to aspects of the *Programme Design & Specification*, clearly in excess of the 201 comments (33.8% of the phase total) on the next-highest area, *Programme Operation & Performance*. This was followed by commentary on *Professional Value, Graduate Profile, Career Path & Award*, 15.5%, and ‘Other’ themes (encompassing *PR Process; Research and PG Research Study; and Internationalisation & ERASMUS*), 3.2%.

In each case, the clear preponderance of the highest-ranked broad theme seems ‘unsurprising’. If nothing else, this may be taken to indicate that the review process functioned as intended, with both faculties and panels fulfilling the remit they had been given.

7. Looking at the programme phase alone, 49% of the overall Phase 2 panel commentary (in thematic units) went on 5 themes (= 20.8% of 24 themes determined). These are:
- *Assessment Methodology & Scheduling* (72 comments, 12%)
 - *Module Content & Delivery* (57 comments, 10%)
 - *Professional Value, Graduate Profile and Career Path* (56 comments, 9%)
 - *Programme Structure and Subject Streams* (56 comments, 9%)

- *Student Supports, Welfare & Feedback* (51 comments, 9%)

8. While not one of the 'top five', *Programme Information & Documentation (ESG 1.8)* received a considerable level of interest from Phase 2 panels in both years, gaining 2 COM and 34 RR (6% of total Phase 2 comments, resp. 5% of overall thematic units for 2015 – 2017).

Comments are spread over a range of aspects, with the need for clarity and completeness of the programme documentation and a need to formalise and document guidance on skills development pathways and elective streams standing out.

9. *Work Placement* continued to generate good panel interest in 2016/17, despite the fact that only one report related to a Business programme. As for 2015/16, all panels supported the inclusion of work placement or an extension of its duration, and any recommendations focused on the operational supports necessary to make placement a success.

10. Distinct new topics which appeared in panel Commendations or Recommendations include *Internationalisation & ERASMUS* and *Gender Balance / Female Participation*.

The number of comments here is modest (2 Ph. 2 RR for *Internationalisation ...*; 1 COM / 3 RR across both phases for *Gender Balance ...*). However, the emergence of any distinct new themes in panel commendations or recommendations which were not specifically referenced in faculty or panel guidance may merit some attention. Provided that panels keep to the remit of PR in other respects, and occasional 'pet themes' aside, the reflection of such topics at the level of COM or RR may signal issues of sufficient importance sectorally that sectoral peers feel the need to encourage continuation of good practice, or provide advice towards enhancement of practice, even where they were not explicitly asked to.

The full Thematic Analysis of CIT PR Reports for 2015 – 2017 may be accessed [here](#).

Key Themes Arising from Annual Programme Status Review (Programme Monitoring) Reports

In parallel with the roll-out of the new Annual Programme Status Review process to all CAO programmes, the Faculty of Business & Humanities (FBH) presented its first comprehensive analysis of Programme Status Review Reports, based on the two foregoing two academic years (2014 – 2016). A comparable analysis was undertaken by the Faculty of Engineering & Science (FES).

Key findings from these analyses, which frequently correspond to or complement the themes arising from PR, were:

Enrolment, Retention and Progression

1. Both faculties reported growth in total full-time degree programme enrolments over the respective period. The Faculty of Engineering & Science noted that CAO applications largely tracked enrolment levels. Common entry programmes in engineering and science, a growing demand for Level 8 programmes and underlying demographic trends were found to have impacted demand in FES.
2. In terms of demand for individual programmes, cyclical fluctuations were reported by both faculties, with some areas experiencing drop-offs as other areas, including apprenticeships and all construction-related areas, were recovering and strengthening after the economic crash of 2008.

3. With regard to gender balance, female students in the Faculty of Engineering & Science were attracted to biological sciences, biomedical engineering, architecture and chemical & biopharmaceutical engineering to a far greater extent than the traditional engineering disciplines or “the more technical programmes” of the School of Science & Informatics. The Faculty of Business & Humanities noted that gender balance required some further consideration in a small number of programmes.
4. General retention levels across the Faculty of Business & Humanities were reported to be high, while the Faculty of Engineering & Science indicated that attrition and progression rates varied significantly by stage, programme level and discipline area during the period reviewed, in keeping with general sectorial experience. NFQ Level 8 programmes offered by the faculty generally exhibited lower attrition and higher progression rates than their Level 6 and 7 counterparts.
5. Both faculties reported an observable link between CAO intake points and retention levels, with a rise in average CAO points contributing to improved retention rates in the Faculty of Business & Humanities. The Faculty of Engineering & Science reported that LC Mathematics and English grades also influenced retention.
6. With regard to specific engagement & retention initiatives, the Faculty of Business & Humanities reported that Good Start, PALS and SPARQS were all thought to assist retention, though the degree of their contribution was difficult to measure. Similarly, the FES report noted that engagement with the AnSEO initiative and the Good Start Programme had been highly beneficial to students.
7. Stage 1 consistently presented the biggest challenge for incoming Engineering & Science students, while modules requiring strong analytical competence generally presented the most significant barriers to progression. Many FES lecturers were of the view that the changes in the teaching and learning of Mathematics at post primary level had had a negative impact in this context.

In the School of Business and the School of Humanities, initiatives in Economics and Maths, a review of modules with higher failure rates, and the availability of small-group tutorials to supplement lectures were considered by the programme boards to have contributed to increases in retention.

While Mathematics was considered an ongoing challenge for FBH entrants with fewer points, it was not regarded as a problem, and support from the Academic Learning Centre (ALC) was available. In the Faculty of Engineering & Science, uptake of ALC support options by students experiencing academic difficulties was reported as being less than might be expected.

Generally student engagement in the Faculty of Engineering & Science was very positive, however, with many students expressing a preference for modules that featured ‘hands-on’ learning. FES learners also benefitted from the relatively small class sizes. In recent years, a significant increase in the number of student scholarships supported by industry had also been achieved. The faculty also noted that the index values for FES student engagement in the Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) were in line with those presented for the IoT sector as a whole.
8. Progression rates in the Faculty of Business & Humanities were very strong overall, with any hurdles to progression being successfully tackled.

In the School of Humanities, a clear link between attendance and progression rates could be established in a department offering several programmes with a large amount of practical skills

training. On foot of this, the faculty was investigating possibilities for an attendance monitoring solution in collaboration with the Institute's IT Services.

The importance of consistent attendance for learning activities was also emphasised in many of the individual Engineering & Science reports. Furthermore, many FES programme boards reported that the high level of external employment undertaken by many students to fund their education and living requirements presented a barrier to the students achieving their full academic potential.

9. The increasing use of common entry options needs to be carefully managed in order to prevent unwanted side effects such as suboptimal use of resources and creation of 'back door' entry options for high-demand programmes.

Graduate Performance

The Faculty of Engineering & Science reported that industry demand for high quality graduates continued to exceed supply across the disciplines, with many learners securing employment ahead of graduation. As a consequence of a growth in employment opportunities, the proportion of graduates of programmes at lower NFQ levels going into employment (rather than progress to further study) was also increasing. Industry feedback received by FES indicated that the ability of graduates to 'hit the ground running' was recognised as a strength of Engineering & Science graduates, while the need for stronger graduate 'soft skills' was mentioned by some industry sources.

Assessment

The Faculty of Business & Humanities reported that External Examiner reports were generally very positive on the standard of student work and the support provided to students by staff. Comparably, the Faculty of Engineering & Science indicated that external examiner feedback was generally very positive across the Faculty's offerings.

Suggestions for enhancement made by FBH externs included the need to improve marking schemes, overassessment, the need to achieve a balance between summative and terminal exams, the need to standardise rubrics and feedback mechanisms. Training in the preparation of examination papers for new staff was also suggested. Several points made by external examiners are echoed in some of the findings on assessment by the programmatic review panels.

With regard to the organisation of the external examiner system, the lack of programme versus module externs was raised by a department.

In the Faculty of Engineering & Science, programme boards reported that students had expressed a preference for a more even spread of the assessment workload across the academic year.

A number of planned measures for the enhancement of assessment were outlined by the Faculty of Business & Humanities, including additional training opportunities for staff on marking schemes and rubrics. The faculty also intends to report to Council on the importance of supporting both programme and module externs.

Work Placement (Faculty of Business & Humanities)

In relation to the assessment of work placement, some concern was expressed about the weighting attached to employer feedback. Planned faculty follow-up includes a review of the work placement process and a stakeholder workshop.

Overall, however, in line with the view taken by the programmatic review panels, external examiners were positively disposed towards the inclusion of work placement, with a proposal made for the embedding of work placement on all Tourism, Culinary, Bar and Hospitality programmes. Implementation of this will be followed up by the faculty.

Programme Information (ESG 1.8) (as commented on in External Examiner Reports)

One FBH extern made the point that students should clearly understand the demand of their chosen programme before entering CIT.

Faculty Participation in CIT Engagement and Retention Initiatives

Different departments in both faculties had participated in one or more of the Institute's student engagement and retention initiatives, including SPaRQs, PALS, Good Start, and Academic Success Coaching (see also Part 4 Enhancements). Participation in these initiatives had been found to be very successful and empowering for students in both faculties.

The Faculty of Business & Humanities indicated that, where participation had been on a pilot basis, the faculty executive planned to progress the extension of these initiatives across the whole faculty with faculty senior staff.

Good Practice Suggestions

Finally, faculty self-analysis identified some good practice suggestions which could be replicated elsewhere.

These included:

- The use of female role models to encourage potential female students;
- The inclusion of work placement as standard across the taught programme portfolio;
- Production of dedicated programme handbooks for both full-time and part-time students;
- Obtaining support from graduates/alumni for prospective students at outreach events (such as STEM 'roadshows'). To date graduates have provided support by taking part in discussion panels and acting as advisors to prospective students;
- Development of an online 'Showcase Page' on the CIT Cork School of Music website where final year students and graduates could post their CVs and services.

In addition, the appointment of a Campus Liaison Officer (to support the linkages between the suburban main campus of CIT and its constituent colleges in the city centre, CIT CCAD and CIT CSM) had been found to be extremely beneficial for students in the city-centre art and music colleges.

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.

Retention and Engagement Activities (AnSEO)

2016/17 saw the further expansion and enhancement of the engagement initiatives under the aegis of AnSEO, the renamed CIT Student Engagement Office (see also Section 4.2, Quality Enhancement Highlights). The expanded AnSEO activities during the reporting period include:

Good Start – First-Year Induction Programme

- *Good Start* was developed beyond the initial six weeks, with *Good Start/Just Ask ...* projects delivered across the academic year.
- An expanded *Just Ask...* campaign resulted in over 2000 visits to *Just Ask!* desks during the first 2 weeks alone. There was also an increase in Get Connected events, involving students getting to know each other through fun icebreakers, which were run by trained Good Start leaders for various academic departments.
- *Good Start* 2016/17 also developed a stronger social media campaign from pre-entry to welcoming incoming first-year students to CIT.

Collaborative Projects with Academic Departments, Schools and Faculties

The AnSEO team continued to meet with academic managers to develop area-specific plans for improved student engagement and retention activities, with 74 meetings held during 2016/17. Funding incentives were again available for the development of the interventions identified.

This stimulated purposeful conversations in departments, resulting in very active staff involvement in student engagement and a significant increase in the number of *Transition to CIT* projects (25) subsequently delivered. Developed collaboratively and led by individual departments, the *Transition to CIT* projects greatly increased AnSEO's reach and impact during the reporting period.

Academic Learning Centre (ALC)

Ongoing needs analysis and consultation with academic departments together with data on challenging modules informed an expanded programme of well publicised, targeted, academic supports in a range of Science and Business subjects as well as Academic Writing/Technical English. New online packages on Study Skills and Academic English were also made available to students.

During the 2017 Easter break, the ALC ran a number of support courses for modules that students find challenging, which were attended by up to 75 students. The 2017 summer programme for students repeating exams in the autumn was attended by 164 students (382 visits).

Peer Assisted Learning and Support (PALS)

PALS (Peer Assisted Learning and Support) at CIT has 2 complementary components, PALS Study Support and PALS Mentoring (Social Support/Buddy System). The ongoing development and expansion of PALS was a priority for AnSEO. New or ramped-up PALS activities during the year included development of comprehensive role descriptors for PALS Study and PALS Mentoring and a streamlined recruitment campaign; provision of in-house training for PALS Peer mentoring with a newly-developed training pack; and development of a CIT PALS social media presence.

Academic Success Coaching (ASC)

Academic Success Coaching in CIT provides proactive, supportive early intervention to identify the passive failing/wavering student before their options (e.g. transfer to a more suitable programme) run out or before their disengagement from study significantly impedes their ability to get back on track. Where appropriate, students are referred to more involved services such as Careers and Counselling, the Access Service, or the Student Hardship Fund.

ASC activities in 2016/17 included:

- The profiling of 1,400 students in their classes in collaboration with academic departments. Based on this, the Academic Success Coaches made email or telephone contact with some 370 students and also provided one-to-one coaching to support students' progress through their first year.
- Delivery of 21 workshops to staff on helping students engage in their learning.
- Development of a very strong ASC social media campaign.
- Commencement of work on broadening the applicability of ASC to become a tool for recognising and valuing engaged students, who in turn become significant agents of change for others.

Students as Partners in Quality – SPaRQ@CIT

SPaRQ activities included faculty fora in the Faculty of Engineering & Science as well as table talks and facilitated discussions between departmental staff and students in the Business & Humanities Faculty. The 11 SPaRQ@CIT events throughout the year were attended by 295 students and 87 staff.

On the strength of CIT's student partnership activities, CIT was one of the original pilot institutions selected to lead the development of the NStEP (National Student Engagement Programme) of the HEA, QQI and USI.

Enhancements in the Areas of Access and Disability

Despite severely curtailed staff resources, as outlined above, the CIT Access and Disability Service met all HEA compact targets in relation to mature students, students with disabilities and socio-economic access. Some of the additional enhancement activities during 2016/17 are outlined below.

The Student Voice

Following on from last year's 'Student Voice' publication, the CIT Access Service produced [15 short Access videos](#) highlighting student stories and available supports. The videos, available on YouTube,

gave students the opportunity to share their personal educational story. It has been shown that student testimonials have enormous impact, and the students' honesty in highlighting their challenges and how they overcame them with adequate support is enlightening and inspiring for prospective students, parents and other stakeholders.

Linked Schools Programme

A wide variety of activities aimed at students, parents, guidance counsellors and teachers were carried out under the Linked Schools Programme. Examples of student-facing activities include:

- 'My Art, My Future' art competition/exhibition for TY students held in CIT's James Barry Exhibition Centre (in collaboration with the CIT Arts Office and CIT CCAD). This project encouraged students from seven Linked Schools to creatively visualize their future progression through education.
- Launch of Phase 4 of the 'Access to Education, Bridge to Employment' programme delivered in collaboration with industry partners. Phase 4 aims to encourage and assist third-year students to remain in school and progress to further and higher education, with a particular focus on STEM areas. Three ATE-BTE bursaries were also awarded to Leaving Cert students in 2016/17.
- 'You Get What You Give' drama workshops and DJ workshops aimed at developing the awareness of transition year students of their personal capacities and aims. The workshops were delivered by Graffiti drama company and attended by 335 students.
- An 'Xperience CIT/UCC Summer Camp' attended by 90 13- to 14-year-old students from CIT's Linked Schools in June 2017. The students spent a day in each institution, experiencing workshops in Chinese, Science, Art, Sport, Computing and Multimedia. Since research shows that young people decide as early as second year whether they will commit to their education, the Xperience CIT/UCC Camp aims to motivate young people to explore learning opportunities beyond second level.
- Interactive, small-group 'Pick Your Brain' study & wellbeing skills sessions delivered to 270 Leaving Certificate students and 30 'Leaving Cert parents' in CIT and in different schools.

Science for Life

The Access Service also participated in a broad range of activities promoting STEM education, including a collaborative 'Science Buddies' programme for primary and post-primary students and their parents and the popular Dell EMC [VEX Robotics Competition](#) for primary and post-primary schools, which was held in CIT's Nexus Student Centre.

A new 'January Labs' pilot programme for first-year science labs was trialled in two schools on the Mondays of January 2017. Complementing the existing senior cycle labs in different science subjects, the first-year pilot met with great success and will be continued in future.

Mature Students

Mature Student initiatives included a pilot Mature Student selfie competition during College Awareness Week in November 2016. Initiated by Mature Student Ireland, the competition aimed to highlight and gather the experiences of mature students in Irish HEIs. Participating students took a photo in a 'selfie' frame and posted their 'Top 3 tips for being a successful mature student' on the MSI Facebook page.

Ongoing initiatives included the successful 'Maths for Matures' programme, which aims to (re)acquaint mature applicants to CIT full-time programmes with some of the elementary mathematics required in

the first year of STEM programmes, the Mature Student Orientation Programme, and a wide variety of Lifelong Learning Festival events.

Disability Service

The main focus of the enhancement work of the Disability Service during 2016/17 was on Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Inclusive Practice under the first goal of the National Access Plan 2015 – 2019, which is mainstreaming the delivery of equity of access in institutions. This requires a shift in focus from an add-on approach to supports to a fully inclusive educational environment institution-wide, based around a universal design approach. Significant enhancements were also achieved in the area of assistive technology.

The Disability Service also worked towards reorganising the operation of the DARE (Disability Access Route to Education) scheme, which CIT operates as one of only four Institutes of Technology. A restructuring of the national scheme following review means that operational services, previously delivered by a central unit based in the IUA, will have to be shared between working groups, HEIs and the CAO from 2017/18 onwards.

Finally, the Access & Disability Service also prepared to host one of three days of the 3rd UNESCO International Conference on Learning Cities 2017, for which over 650 international UNESCO delegates from 95 countries were expected in Cork in September 2017, following its successful bid for Global Learning City status in 2016.

Staff Development Activities (Teaching & Learning Unit)

The Teaching & Learning Unit (TLU) revitalised its staff development activities during 2016/17. In this, it aimed to encourage and facilitate excellence in teaching and learning through a range of relevant and accessible professional development opportunities, enhance the learning and development experience for CIT staff and students, and encourage scholarship, research and innovation in teaching and learning.

The expanded range of TLU staff development activities included:

- Delivery of three series of short “Conversations on Teaching and Learning” seminars/workshops responding to some of the immediate development needs expressed to the TLU in its ongoing work and consultations with staff and students, and delivery of two series of “Breakfast Seminars”.
- Roll-out of the annual Teaching and Learning Development Fund for 2016/17, which supported 22 small projects from a variety of academic disciplines.
- Design and development of resources for an online T&L toolkit.
- Further development of the staff peer-mentoring pilot project to its next stage, with the aim of providing an immediate source of advice and support for staff wishing to enhance their teaching methodologies/ classroom management techniques.

In addition, the MA in Teaching & Learning in Higher Education and associated awards offered by the Teaching & Unit successfully underwent programmatic review. Several modules of the MA were offered to interested staff members during the academic year.

Optimising Student Success in STEM Subjects

The Faculty of Engineering & Science engaged extensively with the AnSEO Team in the shared mission of optimising student success. As part of this, the faculty used all available data sources in a pilot

exercise to achieve advance identification of students ‘at risk’ in relation to non-progression, with a view to facilitating early intervention by referral to the CIT Academic Learning Centre, peer mentors or one-to-one staff support. The outcomes of the project will be reviewed to determine if the pilot should be developed into a full-scale faculty-wide initiative in 2017/18.

The Faculty also invests a significant level of effort annually in seeking to help prospective STEM students choose programmes that best match their abilities and aspirations in CIT before completing enrolment, so as to maximise student chances of success.

The numerous pre-entry engagements of FES in the reporting period included STEM ‘Roadshows’ (delivered to ca. 4,000 prospective students and their families to date, with support from FES research students acting as STEM Ambassadors); STEM-related exhibitions for primary and post-primary students held in CIT (Engineers Week, the long-running SciFest, CIT Engineering Exhibition); intensive on-campus programmes for Transition Year students (Exploring CIT, with ca. 520 TY participants annually; and the Engineering Your Future TY Programme) as well as CoderDojo.

As part of the fast-growing [IWish initiative](#) launched in Cork three years ago which aims to encourage and inspire young female students to pursue careers in STEM, FES also ran its second successful IWish Campus Week in January 2017. This hands-on STEM immersion programme for female TY students attracted ca. 100 participants to the CIT campus.

Finally, publicly accessible attractions such as CIT’s Blackrock Castle Observatory, which drew over one million visitors since operations began in 2007, allow the Institute to reach out to a future generation of third-level students for the region’s STEM economy.

Recognition of Prior Learning

A new 10 credit module in “RPL: Policy, Practice and Pedagogy” (link [here](#)) was developed and approved for inclusion within the *MA in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education* as well as being available for single subject certification. Validation and delivery of this module highlights the ongoing strong commitment to the Recognition of Prior Learning in CIT.

Other RPL activities conducted by CIT further underline that commitment, including the co-convening by Extended Campus staff member Deirdre Goggin of the Irish RPL Practitioner Network and the completion of several pieces of research in this area for QQI.

Enhancements in Careers & Employability Services and Alumni Relations

Cross-functional engagement across the Institute continued to be a core feature of the activities of the CIT Careers Service and Alumni Office throughout the year.

Careers Service

The Careers Service had over 3200 interactions with students across 2016/2017, not counting attendance at the 2016 Careers & Employability Fair. In addition to CV clinics and co-coordination, with the CIT Alumni Office, of the First Destinations Survey, activity highlights were:

- The largest CIT Careers & Employability Fair to date, with over 2,500 students accessing 83 stands in September 2016.
- An expanded CIT Joint Mentorship Programme which saw 25 pairs of Student Mentees and Industry Mentors from areas as diverse as Biomedical Devices, Childcare and the Motor trade engage over six months, an increase in 15 pairs over 2015/16. Feedback on completion indicated that all

mentees would strongly recommend the programme to their peers. Many mentors were CIT alumni.

- Roll-out of an Employability Programme delivered in collaboration with the Department of Marketing & International Business to all year groups except Stage 3, who were on placement.
- Introduction of additional social media accounts (Facebook & LinkedIn) to further promote the Careers Service and advertise events and jobs. In addition, the Careers website (www.mycit.ie/careers) was updated and expanded. An intensive accompanying promotion led to a large increase in traffic and 'likes' on the site, as confirmed by Google Analytics. A targeted email campaign at the end of June 2017 furthermore led to increased student interactions during the first two weeks of the summer break.

Other ongoing activities included Career Education Talks (attended by ca. 1,100 students), employer liaison, participation in the annual CIT Guidance Counsellors' Information Day, and mock interview sessions for academic departments.

Alumni Office

Noteworthy developments in alumni engagement included:

- The Student Alumni Ambassador Programme generated 50 hours of volunteering from students for alumni activity across 2016/17. Alumni Ambassadors act as a bridge between alumni and current members of CIT in order to develop positive relations between alumni, students and staff.
- The Alumni Office worked with external consultants, staff, alumni and potential supporters of CIT on behalf of the CIT Foundation Board to pinpoint key issues and assets for the establishment of a CIT Foundation. This resulted in development of a Fundraising Strategy for the Institute.
- Uptake of the different CIT alumni engagement offers exhibited clear growth during 2016/17, as shown for instance in an increase in registrations with the CIT Alumni Association via their online portal (137, up from 98 in 2015/16) and in Alumni Library Card requests (44, up from 34).

Academic Support Infrastructure Enhancements (CIT Library)

Five new group study hubs constructed during the previous year were launched in the main CIT Library in September 2016. The hubs offer more diverse study spaces than traditional library seating and have increased the overall library seating capacity by 7%.

Learner demand for the study hubs has been very strong from the outset, with close on 20,000 hourly users (including repeat visits) registered during the 2017 calendar year. The greatest demand for the hubs has come from 4th Year and 3rd Year students, with 7,000+ / 5,000+ usage hours respectively.

ISO 50001 Certification

Enhancing and Sharing the Physical Environment of CIT is one of the strategic goals outlined in the current Strategic Plan for the Institute (Cork Institute of Technology, *Strategic Plan 2012 – 2016, Knowledge at Work*, p.8).

An important milestone under this goal was CIT's achievement of certification under ISO 50001 (Energy Management Standard). The accreditation process initially entailed adoption of an Institute Energy Policy, which was drafted by the Buildings & Estates Office during the first semester and ratified by Governing Body in December 2016. The implementation of the Institute's energy management systems

underwent successful audits in June and August 2017, following which CIT received ISO 50001 certification in August 2017.

Enhancements in Entrepreneurship Education and Knowledge Transfer Activity (Innovation & Enterprise Office)

Development of a CIT Entrepreneurship Strategy

During 2016/17 the CIT Innovation & Enterprise Office in conjunction with the Hincks Centre and input from the faculties developed a CIT Entrepreneurship Strategy, making CIT one of the first HEI's in Ireland to do so.

CIT's Entrepreneurship Mission is to "inspire, support, educate and research" current and future entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship in CIT, nationally and internationally. The Entrepreneurship Vision is to produce entrepreneurial graduates across all disciplines and be a key player in job creation for the region, in line with the entrepreneurship vision in the CIT Strategic Plan.

Links with Industry – Knowledge Transfer

In 2016/17 there was a growth in the number of research projects delivered with industry, bringing the number of collaborative research agreements and research contracts to 173. 20% of research funding came from industry.

CIT maintained its significant technology transfer/knowledge exchange activity which reflected the existing high level of performance targets agreed with Enterprise Ireland and current resourcing levels. In 2016/17, this yielded 6 licences, options & assignments (LOA), 3 patents, 3 spinouts, 20 invention disclosures and 89 new collaborative research agreements with companies. Two "Inventor's Guides" to Spinout Companies and Technology Transfer at CIT respectively were also produced.

IT Infrastructure Enhancements (Cyber Security Awareness Campaign)

As one measure to deal with the increase in cyber security threats, CIT's IT Services department launched two related awareness campaigns among staff and students under the taglines #AreUPatchedGreen and #ThinkB4Uclick. The campaigns are aimed at creating awareness of potential cyber threats and instilling principles of good practice in avoiding them, with a view to reducing both personal risk and risk to the institutional IT infrastructure.

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.

Student Engagement Highlights 2016/17

In addition to the enhancement activities outlined in 4.1 above, some particularly noteworthy developments in the student engagement space are summarised below.

Mainstreaming of AnSEO – The Student Engagement Office

Since September 2012, CIT has been proactively working to improve student engagement, progression and success through the establishment and resourcing CIT Strategic Student Engagement and Retention Initiative (CITSSERI) in the Office of Registrar & VP for Academic Affairs. This focused initiative has built on the strong and hard-earned reputation of CIT for student care by developing several targeted student support projects/interventions that reflect best international practice.

In 2016/17 CIT mainstreamed the pilot project and designated it as a permanent Institute office, accompanied by a change of name to “AnSEO – The Student Engagement Office”. The name change was designed to remove any suggestion of temporality and thus to underscore the sustained commitment of CIT to supporting and developing student engagement and success measures as central components of the CIT student experience. A link to the AnSEO website is [here](#).

Shortlisting of AnSEO as Outstanding First-Year Student Advocate

Any action proposed and implemented by AnSEO is informed by on-going desk research, consultation with all CIT stakeholder groups, including the CIT Student’s Union, and consultation with internationally recognised experts in the field. AnSEO has worked with Prof Liz Thomas (leader of the “What Works” research on Student Engagement and Retention for HEAUK); Ms Eve Lewis and Mr Simon Varwell, Student Participation in Quality, Scotland (SParQS); the National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition at the University of South Carolina; UKAT (UK Advising and Tutoring); Birmingham City University; and Glasgow Caledonian University.

The well-documented work of CITSSERI/AnSEO has attracted attention at a national level from QQI, HEA and several IoTs who wish to replicate the CIT model. Internationally, CIT was shortlisted, to the last 5 institutions, at the 2016 Conference of the University of South Carolina National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience as an Outstanding First Year Student Advocate from a field of 85 contenders.

Teaching & Learning Unit (TLU)

Noteworthy new initiatives of the Institute’s Teaching & Learning Unit in 2016/17 include:

National Forum for Teaching & Learning in Higher Education

During the reporting period, TLU staff participated in and delivered specialist seminars under the annual National Seminar Series of the National Forum for Teaching & Learning in Higher Education.

Staff Induction Initiatives

TLU launched several induction initiatives for new academic staff, including:

- Launch of Version 1 of a web-based CIT Staff Induction resource;
- Provision of induction mentoring to new/ early career teaching and learning staff;
- Delivery of Induction Seminars on various topics, including “In the Deep End...”, “Nuts and Bolts of CIT Academic Quality Systems”, “Assessment & Feedback”, “Enhancing Student Engagement”, “Recognising and Referring Distressed Students”, etc.

Certificate in Effective Teaching in Higher Education

Lastly, a unique new 20-credit Special Purpose Award at NFQ Level 9, the *Certificate in Effective Teaching in Higher Education* developed by the Teaching & Learning Unit was validated during the reporting period.

Through application of RPL methodologies, this CPD programme for CIT staff aims to recognise and reward high quality teaching and learning practices that staff members have developed through their experiences of designing, teaching and assessing modules. By providing an alternative route to gaining pedagogical certification for experienced staff, the new SPA thus contributes to the professionalization of the higher education sector. Graduates will demonstrate a broad range of key skills including the ability to design aligned modules; design and deliver engaging learning experiences; design appropriate assessments; use technology to enhance those experiences; and evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching practice and engage in reflective practice.

Access and Disability Service

Highlights in the schedule of activities of the CIT Access and Disability Service in 2016/17 were:

- Organisation of a national seminar on the theme of “Irish Travellers and Higher Education: Supporting Progression”, which attracted over 80 participants from across Ireland to Cork City Hall in October 2016.
- Development and delivery of a Mental Health Awareness Day, a new initiative focused on promoting positive mental health to students of CIT’s post-primary Linked Schools.

In January 2017, 210 second-level students came on campus for an interactive informal ‘couch talk’ session where CIT alumni Paul Kerrigan (Cork Football Captain) and Jamie Googan (Access Intern and member of the Irish Traveller Community) discussed topics such as depression, anxiety and low self-esteem, with additional inputs from CIT Access and Counselling Service staff.

‘Mobile Librarian’ Outreach Project

From September to October 2016, the CIT Library ran a ‘Mobile Librarian’ outreach pilot project for first year students in conjunction with the School of Humanities. The pilot project redesigned the Library’s conventional delivery of Library Orientation via first year library tours, by relocating library orientation to a more definitive academic setting, i.e. classrooms/labs within the School.

The project aimed to proactively reach out to and engage first year students; to promote Library services and make students aware of the academic supports available to them via an interactive and

customized classroom setting; to highlight the role of the Library in the pursuit of academic achievement; and to emphasise the value of availing of further library training.

The 45-minute outreach Library Induction sessions delivered in Week 3 focused on the basic library services and resources (both physical and virtual) in order not to overload students during the early stages of their Third Level experience. The sessions were attended by 445 first year Humanities students, who gave very positive feedback on the confidence and new knowledge gained.

30th Space Studies Programme of the International Space University

From June to August 2017, CIT hosted the [30th Space Studies Programme of the International Space University](#), under the coordination of the CIT Research Office. The International Space University was established at a founding conference in MIT in 1987, and its prestigious Space Studies Programme (SSP) is hosted by a different HE institution every year following a rigorous selection process.

The International Space University (ISU) is a private not-for-profit higher education institution with a central campus in Strasburg. It is recognised by the French Ministry of Education and is a full EURASHE member institution. ISU aims to develop future leaders of the world space community by providing interdisciplinary educational programmes to students and space professionals in an international, intercultural environment. It also serves as a neutral international forum for the exchange of knowledge and ideas on challenging issues related to space and space applications.

Preparations for ISU's 30th Space Studies Programme spanned two years. From the outset, the CIT Research Office sought to maximise the benefits of this significant event to both the Institute itself and the region by involving many internal and external stakeholders, chief among these the main sponsors of SSP 2017, Cork County Council, SFI and the CIT Blackrock Castle Observatory.

SSP17 was attended by 112 participants from 26 countries and a variety of disciplines. The programme of studies, built around 63 core lectures, was presented by 225 international space experts and 6 astronauts. In addition to the lectures, the SSP delivered by ISU's 7 departments also encompassed 98 departmental activities and external engagements. SSP17 included 18 public engagement events coordinated by the Research Office and was accompanied by a ["Summer of Space"](#) organised by CIT Blackrock Castle Observatory with support from Cork County Library, with a further 50 public events.

With these metrics, SSP17 was the largest conference programme hosted by CIT to date and one of the largest ever hosted in Cork, with over 11,000 bed/nights. The event had enormous media impact, a direct benefit of over €2m to the economy, and has highlighted the opportunities for Ireland in the new and rapidly growing commercial space sector. One of the outputs of SSP17 is a report entitled "ARESS – A Roadmap for Emerging Space States", which is of direct relevance to the development of the space industries in Ireland.

While not contributing to the enhancement of CIT's quality system in a direct sense, it is anticipated that CIT and the Cork region will continue to reap the benefits of SSP17 in terms of enhanced opportunities for building research networks and participating in the emerging space economy.

Entrepreneurship Education

10th Anniversary of the Rubicon Incubation Centre

In 2016, the Rubicon Centre, CIT's campus incubator with over 50 start-up companies, celebrated its 10th Anniversary. In the ten years since the Rubicon opened its doors, it has played a significant part in

the development of the start-up eco-system in the Cork region. Some key performance indicators from this period encompass:

- €8.3m total finance raised by Rubicon companies;
- 34 Rubicon High Potential Start-Ups;
- 896 jobs created by Rubicon Companies;
- 48% of Rubicon companies engaging with CIT;
- 73% survival rate of Rubicon companies.

Direct Academic Programme Support

The Rubicon also has a growing involvement in directly supporting academic programme provision, thereby contributing to the delivery of CIT's mission to provide career-focused education and research.

During 2016/17 this support was mainly provided through hearing presentations or 'pitches' of business ideas and plans developed by students in the context of relevant modules. During the reporting period, the Rubicon team received and responded to presentations from 546 first year students (presenting their business ideas by way of the Business Model Canvas), 100 third year Venture Planning students, and 130 third year Innovative Product Development Students working in multi-disciplinary teams.

In addition, the Rubicon Centre team facilitated student competitions, conducted class visits, and met 34 individual students to discuss their business ideas.

Enterprise Ireland Student Award Finalists

Having secured all the prizes at the 2015 Enterprise Ireland All-Ireland Student Awards – the first time this was achieved by any HEI –, CIT had another very successful campaign for the 2016/2017 competition. From 560 entries from across the island of Ireland, CIT had 3 projects in the final 10. The quality of the work done by the academic departments with support from the Rubicon Centre and the Innovation & Enterprise Office in the area of entrepreneurship education is evident in CIT's track record in this national student entrepreneurship competition.

Student Inc.

Over the summer of 2017, another 10 student businesses took part in the Student Inc. programme, Ireland's first student accelerator programme which has been running in CIT since 2011.

For the duration of Student Inc., the students worked on their businesses full-time in the Rubicon Incubation Centre, side by side with the more seasoned entrepreneurs based in the Centre. This allowed them to explore entrepreneurship in a safe environment. 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 of the programme.

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.

Strategic Planning Process

Cork Institute of Technology intends to develop a new Strategic Plan during the 2017/18 academic year. The development of this plan will be led by the Institute Executive Board, supported by the Strategic Development Office.

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. Programmatic Review of the School of Science & Informatics
 - a. Phase 2 (Programme Review), Department of Physical Sciences
 - b. Phase 2 (Programme Review), Department of Mathematics
2. National Maritime College of Ireland

Both Programmatic Review Phases (Strategic and Programme Review)
3. PR Finalisation

Confirmation of the implementation of PR requirements, including from module moderation, for several programmes of the Departments of Applied Social Studies and Sports, Leisure & Childhood Studies

5.3 Other Plans

Exam Paper Management System

Information system enhancements planned by the Institute's IT Services department for 2017/18 include implementation of an online Exam Paper Management solution. Following on from an internal review during the reporting period, an independent external review of cyber security in the CIT student record system is also planned.

Analysis of Programmatic Review Reports

The CIT Registrar's Office intends to continue its thematic analysis of programmatic review reports until all areas have completed one review cycle. At that point, the overall outcomes of the project will be considered to determine if the additional learning to be gained from analysis of a second cycle of reviews would be valuable enough to make up for the considerable draw on staff time.

Articulation Arrangements

The CIT International Office, in support of several academic units, proposes to facilitate the establishment of 2+2 articulation arrangements with international partner institutions. It is intended to initiate an investigation of the quality assurance requirements of such arrangements by the CIT Academic Council or its Admissions Committee.

AnSEO – The Student Engagement Office

Examples of planned developments in the student engagement space include:

Good Start – First-Year Induction Programme

- Possible introduction of pre-entry induction activities, accompanied by a well-designed social media campaign for students as they accept their offers, based on UK models such as Level Up at Birmingham City University.
- Recognition for Good Start volunteering within the Student Engagement Badging project
- Branding of Get Connected events

Collaborative Projects with Academic Departments, Schools and Faculties

- Provision of 'seed funding' from AnSEO to incentivise the establishment and mobilisation of Faculty Implementation Groups for faculty-led student engagement initiatives
- Resources permitting, creation of an online repository/compendium of interventions for dissemination on AnSEO website

Peer Assisted Learning and Support (PALS)

- Establishment of a PALS Mentoring Scheme for Final Year students
- Hosting of an international PALS conference in CIT in November 2017

Students as Partners in Quality – SParQ@CIT

Development of a sustainable and vibrant Student Partnership model in conjunction with the national NStEP programme to make CIT a national model of best practice in line with current national policy.

Strategic Review of CIT Sport

The CIT Student Services Office is planning a strategic review into CIT Sport and its future development, with completion expected for May 2018. CIT Sport is a key part of the education process as it promotes wellbeing, enhances the student experience and assists students in their holistic development.

Careers Service and Alumni Office Plans

In addition to finalisation of the Strategy 2017 – 2020, the Careers Service activities planned for 2017/18 include an additional, smaller Careers Fair in Semester 1 specifically for SMEs and student placement. Alumni Office plans include development of an Alumni Strategy for 2017 – 2021 and further development of the 'Raiser's Edge' Alumni database.

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.