

# Dublin City University

## Annual Institutional Quality Assurance Report 2019

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



The Cyclical Review Process

## Part 1

# Overview of internal QA governance, policies and procedures

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## 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.

### DCU Strategy 2017-2022, Talent, Discovery and Transformation

In 2017, DCU developed a new strategic plan, its first since the completion of the Incorporation Programme, which saw the coming together of DCU with St Patrick's College Drumcondra, Mater Dei Institute and Church of Ireland College of Education. The new DCU Strategic Plan, [\*Talent, Discovery and Transformation\*](#), sets out a clear vision for the university, in which *DCU will be a globally significant University of Transformation and Enterprise*, renowned for,

- The development of talent
- The discovery and translation of knowledge to advance society
- Its focus on creativity and innovation
- The advancement and application of technology, and
- Its commitment to sustainability

The current strategic plan, structured around **six key themes** are central to informing our strategic goals, Talent, Discovery, Creativity, Society, Technology and Sustainability.

The plan outlines nine key strategic goals, through which the university will measure its success. These include:

- Provide a transformative student experience;
- Advance our reputation for world-class research;
- Sustain our ambitions through income generation;
- Ensure a coherent, connected university;
- Value and develop our staff community;
- Develop a global university;
- Nurture Creativity and culture across the university;
- Place sustainability at the core of the university;
- Pursue active engagement with our communities.

## Development of the 2017-2022 Strategic Plan

The development of the DCU strategic plan involved a range of consultations within the DCU community and key stakeholders, including a series of President led Town Hall meetings and the establishment of ten cross-institutional working groups to examine a number of potential strategic thematic areas. A centrepiece of the strategic planning process was the hosting of DCU Fuse, a 25-hour online crowdsourcing event providing an opportunity for the University to engage and interact with staff, students, alumni and friends. A cross-institutional project group tasked with overseeing the execution of the initiative drove this online platform, developed by researchers at the Adapt Centre, DCU.

The structure of DCU Fuse was the scheduling and hosting of strategically themed discussion topics. These topics, developed to align with the thematic areas under review within the strategic working groups, included crosscutting regions within the University. The outputs enabled the chairs of each of the strategic working groups to drive discussions on the platform. A review and summary of which were subsequently submitted to the Senior Management Group (SMG) for further consideration.

The implementation of the DCU strategy comes through a process of [rolling planning](#), which includes an annual period of ‘review and renew’. The SMG drive this process, which is co-ordinated by the Quality Promotion Office (QPO) and provides an opportunity for the University to remain flexible and responsive to the dynamic national and global environment.

An alignment of the university’s strategic ambitions and its commitment to quality remain embedded throughout the plan, specifically articulated in relation to teaching quality, the quality and impact of our research, a commitment to operational excellence, as well as the establishment of a strategic partnerships office. The identification of key indicators, enabling the measurement of success and progress, will ensure the effective execution of this plan.

## Strategy Implementation

Since the publication of Transformation, Talent, Discovery in September 2017, the University has commenced a process to develop the following Constituent Strategies, which will provide much greater detail regarding actions at local level to deliver on the plan.

These include thematic plans in the following areas,

- Teaching and Learning
- Research and Innovation
- Internationalisation
- Engagement
- Student Experience

The development of Faculty plans in each of our 5 Faculties,

- Humanities and Social Sciences
- Engineering and Computing
- Science and Health
- DCU Business School
- DCU Institute of Education

The development of strategic plans for our larger professional support units,

- Finance
- Human Resources
- Operations (COO)

These constituent Strategies will be launched summer 2018.

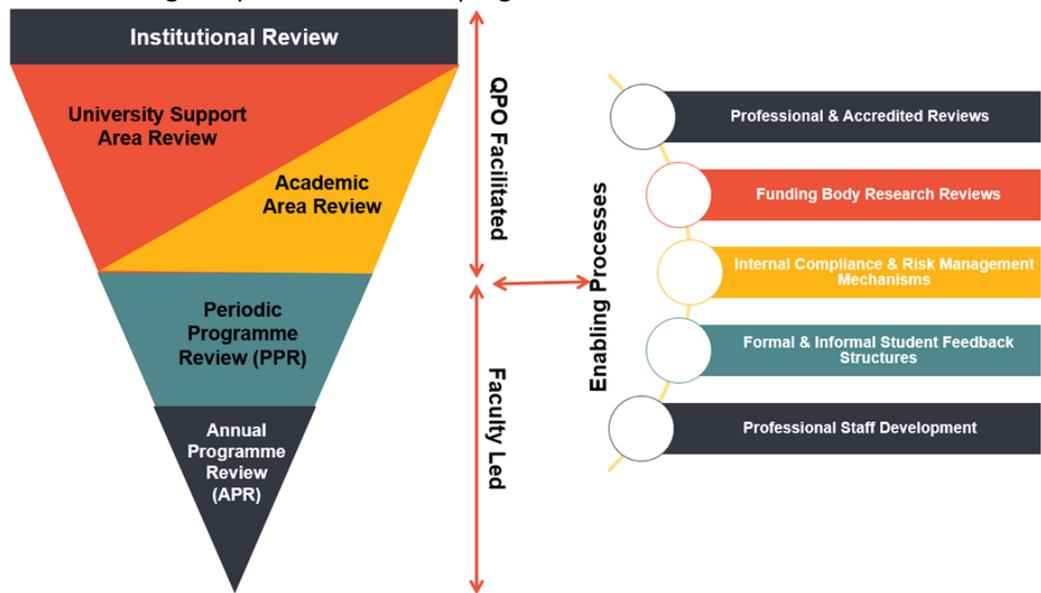
An alignment of the university’s strategic ambitions and its commitment to quality is embedded throughout the plan, and is specifically articulated in relation to teaching quality, the quality and impact of our research, a commitment to operational excellence, and the establishment of a strategic partnerships office. The implementation of the strategic plan will be monitored based on a review of identified indicators of success and progress.

### Quality Assurance and Improvement Policy Statement.

The [DCU Quality Assurance and Improvement Policy Statement](#) has been developed in compliance with the provisions of the Universities Act 1997 and the Qualifications and Quality Assurance Act 2012. It also aligns its activities with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and relevant QQI QA Guidelines.

### DCU Quality Framework

The DCU Quality Assurance Framework provides a cohesive model through which the University can demonstrate quality assurance processes, are embedded, integrated and ongoing with a combination of regular monitoring and periodic review of programmes.



### HEA-DCU Performance Based Compact 2012-2017

The role of quality assurance as a tool for ensuring excellence in teaching, learning and engagement is further reflected in the development of its agreed goals with the Higher Education Authority (HEA) in the [HEA-DCU Performance Based Compact Agreement](#). For the 2012-2017 Performance Based Compact Agreement, focused on the delivery of a number of themes relating directly to the successful achievement of goals in relation the quality of our education and research

**Excellent teaching and learning and quality of the student experience**

- Embrace policies that support quality improvement and quality promotion in all our operations, particularly in relation to its impact on the enhancement the quality of the curriculum through the Annual Programme Review (APR) and Periodic Programme Review (PPR) processes.
- Support our academic faculty in their professional development, including both teaching and research, through the provision of ongoing support for learning innovation and the development of teaching skills as well as providing a broad range of research support services

**High quality, internationally competitive research and innovation**

- Deliver on ambitious goals for all academic units in order to reinforce our reputation as a research-intensive university

In 2018, DCU will complete the agreement of the 2018-2022 Strategic Dialogue goals with the HEA.

**The DCU Quality Promotion Office**

The Quality Promotion Office (QPO) was established to promote, support and facilitate continuous quality improvement activities across academic and administrative units throughout the University. This is undertaken principally through the management of the University's Quality Review process for Schools, Faculties and Units through: the provision of assistance and advice to Heads of Schools, Dean of Faculties and Directors of Units as well as academic and administrative staff engaged in the review process; liaison with external reviewers; tracking of the implementation of recommendations arising from the review process; analysis of the outcomes of the review process at an institutional level; dissemination of good practice arising from the review process.

Since 2016, the DCU Quality Promotion Office has been restructured to include the Institutional Research function of the university. As a result of this restructuring, the QPO now has an expanded remit to include,

- Regular analysis on behalf of the university for student-based performance metrics, including the identification and analysis of students at risk of academic non-progression
- Provision of analysis and reporting to inform and support and evidence-based planning, decision- making and quality assurance and enhancement
- Co-ordination of institutional wide student surveys, including the Irish Student Survey of Engagement (ISSE)
- Completion of statutory returns on students number to a number of state agencies
- Contribution of data for, and analysis of performance in university rankings

The Quality Promotion Office also assumes responsibility for a number of activities relating to strategic planning, including,

- Completion of institutional reporting and monitoring of progress on the goals established as part of the HEA Performance based Compact
- Monitoring and institutional reporting of progress on the implementation of the DCU Strategic Plan.

DCU has a number of institutional level quality assurance decision making fora.

### DCU Governing Authority

DCU Governing Authority (GA) is responsible for the management of the corporate and secretarial functions of the University, and for the oversight of legal functions and activities for both the University and its associated campus companies. The GA has a specific schedule of matters, called reserved functions, for which it alone has the decision-making function in the University, to ensure the appropriate management and control. The membership of the DCU Governing Authority is available [here](#).

The schedule referred to above includes the various statutory functions reserved as set out in the Universities 1997 Act, covering the following areas:

- Section 18 - Functions of a Governing Authority;
- Section 25 - Staff;
- Section 27 - Academic Council;
- Section 34 - Strategic Development Plan;
- Section 35 - Quality Assurance;
- Section 36 - Equality Policy.

GA has an identified member with responsibility for leading the Authority's approach to discussion and approval of School and Unit-level quality reviews at DCU prior to publication of the Peer Review Group Report and Quality Improvement Plan. This member also acts as a liaison between the Authority and the QPC.

### DCU Executive

The primary function of the University's Executive includes contributing to the future direction of DCU by advising the President on issues of major strategic and operational importance. Further, it advises on the promotion of effective communication across all areas of the University and provides a forum, which brings a broad perspective on discussion and decision-making that have University-wide implications. The Executive membership drawn from the University senior leadership, have student representatives and elected memberships representing academic and professional support staff at DCU. Terms of reference for the DCU Executive Committee is available at the following [link](#).

### Quality Promotion Committee

The Quality Promotion Committee (QPC) is a committee of Executive, chaired by the President or President's nominee and draws its [membership](#) from across the DCU academic and professional support departments. More information on the terms of reference of QPC is available at the following [link](#).

### DCU Academic Council

The terms of reference of Academic Council and its three academic subcommittees (Education Committee, University Standards Committee and Graduate Research Studies Board) is available [here](#).

### Education Committee

Among its other functions, Education Committee is responsible for maintaining strategic oversight of the University's portfolio of taught programmes, making recommendations as to proposed changes and evaluating the viability of proposals for new programmes.

### University Standards Committee

University Standards Committee, chaired by the Deputy Registrar / Dean of Teaching and Learning, approves the appointment of all external examiners. It also approves the re-admission of legacy students, derogations from Marks and Standards, and, on an annual basis, Programme Specific Regulations, which complement Marks and Standards. It also formulates policy in a wide range of areas related to Teaching and Learning.

### Graduate Research Studies Board

Chaired by the Dean of Graduate Studies, the Graduate Studies Board (GBS) reports to the University Standards Committee and Academic Council for the development, maintenance and review of postgraduate research regulations, guidelines and good practice. Further, good practice in the structure and delivery of taught doctoral programmes also falls within this remit.

## 2. Quality assurance decision-making fora

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

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The Quality Promotion Committee (QPC) is a committee of Executive. It is chaired by the President or President's nominee. The QPC draws its [membership](#) from across the DCU academic and professional support units. The QPC functions as a committee of Executive. More information on the terms of reference of Quality Promotion Committee at DCU can be found at the following [link](#).

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## 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.

Every proposed new programme must undergo validation involving the assessment of its relationship to the University strategy and its likely viability, and accreditation, which involves scrutiny by a group of external experts surrounding the appropriateness of academic content and standards.

The Education Committee then reviews validation proposals, submitted for approval by the relevant Faculty.

Validation proposals must contain the following elements:

- Summary description of the background to and development of the proposal
- Strategic fit
- Likely demand, and proposed intake
- Entry requirements, and progression and exit routes
- Purpose of the programme
- Programme learning outcomes
- Aptitudes and proficiencies
- Outline structure of programme
- Statement of financial resources required (using the template provided by the Finance Office)
- Statement of physical space requirements:
- Implementation plans
- Membership of the proposed development team
- Membership of the proposed Accreditation Board

Validation proposals are evaluated on the following criteria:

- Evidence of alignment with the University strategic plan and its component strategies
- Evidence of alignment with the strategic plans of the relevant Faculty/Faculties and School(s), as outlined in the validation proposal
- Evidence of a place for the proposal within higher education in Ireland generally, taking into account programmes offered in other institutions
- Evidence of the likely demand for the proposed programme, and the likelihood of achieving the appropriate student intake
- Coherence of the statement of programme purpose and underpinning educational philosophy
- Appropriateness of the programme learning outcomes, and coherence of their relationship to the programme's purpose and educational philosophy
- Reasonableness of the estimate of the resources needed to offer the programme
- Reasonableness of the proposed launch date
- Appropriateness of the proposed development team
- Appropriateness of the proposed members of the Accreditation Board in light of the regulations for the appointment of such members.

Validation proposals are subject to consideration by Education Committee and, where relevant, Education Committee Standing Committee. Before a programme can proceed to accreditation, the Executive Dean of the Faculty must confirm that all the recommendations of the Education Committee and any recommendations from Academic Council have been implemented.

Accreditation proposals must contain the following elements:

- Summary description of the background to and development of the proposal (using the template provided)
- Entry, progression and exit routes
- Purpose of the programme
- Programme learning outcomes
- Aptitudes and proficiencies
- Outline structure of programme
- Marks and Standards and programme-specific regulations
- Alignment matrix
- Quality assurance and programme evaluation
- Module descriptors
- Curricula vitae of the members of the programme team
- Any necessary appendices (but these should be kept to a minimum)

Accreditation proposals are evaluated on the following criteria:

- Likelihood that the proposed programme will meet the needs which the proposal indicates it is intended to meet
- Appropriateness of the entry requirements and exit routes
- Validity of the purpose and underpinning educational philosophy of the proposed programme
- Linkage of the programme learning outcomes with the purpose and the underpinning educational philosophy of the programme
- Consistency and coherence of the proposed modules in the context of the underpinning educational philosophy and the programme learning outcomes
- Reasonableness of achieving the programme learning outcomes, in the time specified, by the majority of students
- Appropriateness and mix of learning and assessment methodologies
- Coherence between assessment methodologies, per module, and the module learning outcomes
- Coherence of the group of skills and competencies that the student would be expected to have at the end of the programme
- Appropriateness of the quality assurance procedures to be used in relation to the programme the qualification.

Full Information on academic programme validation and approval regulations can be found at the following [link](#).

Additional support Information for proposers of programmes can be found at this following [link](#).

## 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.

### DCU Marks and Standards

Marks and Standards are approved by Academic Council. They are applied consistently at all times and to all taught programmes and modules, including taught modules on research programmes. The Registrar of the University, in the context of his/her wider remit, has ultimate responsibility for the integrity and implementation of Marks and Standards. USC makes recommendation to Academic Council on any changes to DCU Marks and Standards.

The DCU Marks and Standards can be found at the following [link](#).

### Programme Specific Regulations

Information for [Programme Specific Regulations](#) are all contained within a single area within the Registry website. Programme regulations complement Marks and Standards (as noted above) and make provision for specific issues or circumstances pertaining to particular programmes or discipline areas.

### Examination Regulations

The [examination regulations](#) for Dublin City University are published on the University website.

### Regulations and Guidelines for External Examiners

The appointment of external examiners is an important part of the University's quality assurance system. The University ensures that, in approving all external examiner appointments (through the University Standards Committee for taught programmes, Graduate Research Student Board for research programmes), there is consistency of standards across the University and adherence to all relevant University policies. More information on Regulations and Guidelines for External Examiners can be found at the following [link](#).

### Progression and Award Boards

The Progression and Award Boards (PABs) are made up of all of the examiners who teach on a specific programme of study at DCU and the relevant external examiners. Each Board is chaired by the Programme Chairperson or teaching convenor. At the end of each academic year, the PAB meets to collate and review grades in the various modules, and take all relevant information into consideration when approving final results. The PAB has discretion to make decisions in respect of individual student's marks and award classifications within the overall context of Marks and Standards

More information on DCU Progression and Award Boards functions and guidelines can be found at the following [link](#).

### Examination Appeals

Students on taught programmes have the right to appeal against decisions of a Progression and Award Board. Such appeals are processed in accordance with the Examination Appeals Board Regulations, as approved by Academic Council. Students may also apply in certain circumstances to have the recording and collation of marks which determined a module result rechecked, and/or to have a section of their assessment reviewed by an independent assessor. Further information on

examination appeals and related procedures can be found at the following [link](#).

Research Students also have the right to appeal decisions taken at defined points of their research programme. Further details are available on the [Office of Vice-President Academic Affairs website](#).

**DCU Academic Integrity and Plagiarism Policy**

The DCU Academic Integrity and Plagiarism Policy and associated procedures apply to all individuals at Dublin City University engaged in academic work, including all registered students of DCU on both taught and research programmes, and academic staff engaged in assessment of academic work which contributes to an award or credits. More information on the Academic Integrity and Plagiarism Policy can be found [here](#).

**Assessment and Feedback Policy at DCU**

Feedback and assessment are an integral part of teaching and learning and form a critical part of learning for the student. In DCU these elements are articulated in a combined policy which interweave and contribute to teaching and learning at the University. The policies provide structure for assessment and feedback activities which aids both the teacher and the learner. The DCU Assessment and Feedback to Support Student Learning Policy can be found at the following [link](#).

### 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.

Two broad categories of research-related policies and guidelines are in force at DCU. The first consists of those which either advise researchers on good practice or which establish a framework (which may be derived from external regulatory or compliance requirements) for researchers to operate within.

These include:

- [Code of Good Research Practice](#)
- [Code of Practice on Authorship](#)
- [Policy for Responding to Allegations of Research Misconduct](#)
- [Out of Hours Access Policy](#)
- [Hosting International Researchers at DCU](#)
- [Ethics Guidelines for Researchers](#)
- [DCU Position Statement on Open Access to Research Publications](#)
- [Transfer of Equipment to another institution Agreement Template](#)
- [Policy for the Use of Animals for Scientific or Educational Purposes](#)

The second set of policies and guidelines ensure that research effort is of the highest quality and this set is connected to monitoring and review activity. These will be described in more detail in the sections below and they comprise:

- [Research Infrastructure Policy](#)
- [DCU Distribution and Reporting Policy for Research Funding Supports](#)
- [Guidelines for establishing or consolidating a research centre at DCU](#)

There are several policies in place to structure the University's Innovation activity which aim to ensure the highest-quality outcome. These are briefly described below:

#### **Intellectual Property Policy**

DCU's [Intellectual Property Policy](#) is publicly accessible on the DCU Web Site. It was updated during the recent process of incorporation to take account of historic formal and informal policies at each institution and to ensure that the new DCU IP policy was consistent with the requirements of the National IP Protocol governing all state funded research. During 2017 and early 2018 the Higher Education Authority and Knowledge Transfer Ireland conducted a review of intellectual property policies in Irish third level institutions following recommendations made by the Public Accounts Committee. The Director of Innovation at DCU/CEO of Invent DCU is a member of one of the working groups reviewing the National IP Protocol and is familiar with the detailed issues under review.

#### **Conflicts of Interest Policy**

DCU's Intellectual Property Policy also refers to DCU's [Conflict of Interest Policy](#). That policy was approved by DCU Executive in March 2006 and, in the light of the 2018 recommendations issued by the HEA/Knowledge Transfer Ireland, it also needs to be reviewed and updated in 2018.

### **DCU Consultancy Policy**

[DCU's Consultancy Policy](#) is internally accessible to DCU staff members only. It was updated and approved by DCU Executive in December 2012 to clarify procedures and processes for the management of consultancy carried out on behalf of the university and to ensure that the distinction between private consultancy and university consultancy was well documented. The policy does not have a specified date for review other than saying it will be reviewed from time to time in the light of prevailing economic conditions.

Several of the review policies mentioned above and the activities outlined below are carried out by the [University Research Committee](#). This Committee meets five times a year and is chaired by the Vice-President for Research and Innovation (VPRI). Its membership comprises the Associate Deans for Research of each of the University's five Faculties, a research representative from each Faculty, the Dean of Graduate Studies, Director of Invent as well as a representative from the University Research Centres. Committee decisions and business are annually reported through the Vice-President to the University's Academic Council and thence to the Governing Authority.

DCU Invent is structured as a wholly owned subsidiary of DCU Commercial. The technology transfer staff are company employees apart from the Director of Innovation/CEO of Invent who is a DCU staff member. The board of Invent meets quarterly to review the activities and finances of the company and overall strategy. DCU Invent reports knowledge transfer metrics, licensing metrics and collaborative research metrics to Knowledge Transfer Ireland and issues an annual report to KTI covering strategy, resources and business development activities. The operating costs of Invent are funded approximately 50% by Enterprise Ireland, usually for a five-year period. The other 50% comes from DCU Invent company funding and from internal funds provided by DCU, subject to review by DCU Budget Committee. The funding contract requires Invent to be subject to review by a panel of international technology transfer directors typically every two and a half years. Over the three rounds of funding since 2007, Invent has performed very well in these external reviews.

Two bodies which monitor and review investment in, and the operation of, research infrastructure have also been instituted. The Research Infrastructure Advisory Committee is charged with monitoring the purchase of new equipment of significant scale in order to avoid unnecessary duplication, advising the Research Infrastructure Executive Committee on decisions related to the acquisition of new infrastructure and supporting the related selection process, and providing oversight of the annual Equipment Maintenance Fund. The membership of this Advisory Committee is appointed by the Research Infrastructure Executive Committee and is normally made up of a maximum of ten members of relevant DCU staff which include representation from the University Research Centre Directors and/or appropriate representatives of significant groups of locally managed research infrastructure users. It meets on a monthly basis.

The Research Infrastructure Executive Committee makes decisions on the acquisition of new equipment or other infrastructure and prioritises investment decisions. It is also the body responsible for ensuring that all relevant infrastructure-related processes are transparent and auditable by ensuring high standards of record keeping at central and local level. Its membership comprises the VPRI, Director of Research, Director of Innovation, Academic Representative, Chair of the Research Infrastructure Advisory Committee, and the Research Facilities Unit Manager. It meets six times a year.

### **Policies relating to Postgraduate Research Study at DCU**

Policies and procedures relating to quality assurance and enhancement of postgraduate research and doctoral education are led by the Dean of Graduate Studies and the [Graduate Studies Office](#). The Graduate Studies Office supports the development and delivery of research and taught postgraduate programmes across the University and provides a range of support services for its graduate students. The Graduate Research Studies Board (referred to above) is responsible both for a range of policy issues and for making decisions in respect of individual students at certain stages of their progression through their research programmes.

The following links provide further information in relation regulations relating to postgraduate research at DCU:

[Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis](#)

[Academic Roles and Responsibilities in Graduate Research](#)

[Policy on Research Supervision and Awards in Collaboration with Other Institutions](#)

[Recognition of Prior Learning \(RPL\), Policy for Research Programmes](#)

[Guidance for students and supervisors in respect of withdrawing, or early exit from research programmes](#)

The Graduate Studies Office also provides information and support programmes designed to assist and support postgraduate research students. Examples of these supports and further information are detailed below:

[Graduate Training at DCU](#)

[Writing Supports for Graduate Researchers](#)

[Research Integrity Training Programme](#)

A further number of policies exist in relation to wider issues of academic quality and integrity at DCU. Links to relevant policies can be found at the following links:

[Academic Integrity and Plagiarism Policy](#) (noted above also in respect of taught programmes)

[Data Protection Policy- Privacy Policy](#)

[Guidelines on Best Practice in Research Ethics](#)

The [DCU Graduate Research Guide](#) provides students to support them in understanding the administration and policies and procedures relating to postgraduate research study.

#### **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.

##### **DCU Admissions Principles and Procedures**

DCU has developed a number of principles and policies to ensure that admission to the University is determined based on fair, transparent and consistent admissions practices. These include,

[DCU Admissions Principles](#)

[Undergraduate Admissions Policies](#)

[Postgraduate Admissions Policies](#)

##### **Transfer Procedures**

DCU has developed a number of procedures relating to the transfer of students, both within DCU programmes, and for students in other institutions to transfer onto DCU programmes. The following links provide information on the procedures for DCU or other external students to transfer onto DCU programmes:

[Information relating to the transfer procedures for incoming students, transferring to DCU](#)

[Information relating to the transfer procedures for DCU students, transferring to another DCU programme](#)

##### **DCU Legacy Re-admissions Procedure**

Procedures are in place for programme chairs to request the re-admission to a programme made on behalf of a candidate who falls outside the maximum registration period. The process allows for a Programme Chair to make a request for legacy re-admission following agreement by the Programme Board. If subsequently approved by the Faculty Teaching and Learning/Education Committee, the request is submitted for the consideration of the University Standards Committee. More information on this process can be found at the following [link](#).

##### **Repeating an Academic Year at DCU**

Processes are in place within both Student Support and Development, Registry and the Finance Office to provide students with advice and information on the process for repeating, or registering for deferred modules. More information on this process can be found at the following [link](#).

##### **Analysis of Examination Results and Progression Rates at DCU**

At institutional level, DCU student performance in taught modules is monitored by the DCU Education Committee after every diet of examinations, and end of year programme level at programme level. Further, module and programme level pass rates are reviewed and discussed at Programme Boards.

##### **Progression of Postgraduate Research Students**

Procedures are in place for overseeing the annual progression of students studying on postgraduate research qualification. Annual Progress Reviews are carried out at School level, with the relevant report completed by the principal supervisor(s), approved by the supervisory panel and endorsed by the Head of School or nominee. Reports are submitted electronically to the Registry each year on or before the date published in the Academic Calendar.

More information on the process of annual progress reviews for graduate students can be found in [Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis](#)

## 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.

The University asserts that its staff is its greatest asset and that it holds all the various categories in equal esteem. The University is dependent on its staff to fulfill its mission and its success depends on the recruitment and retention of staff of the highest calibre.

The University has adopted a Policy for Recruitment and Selection (including promotion) which aims to ensure that, by using its procedures and accompanying guidelines the most suitable person is appointed or promoted. The University's Policies and Procedures for both Recruitment and Selection and Promotions provide for the application of best human resources practice (having a proper appreciation of employment law) together with a careful application of the principles of equity, fairness and flexibility.

The following links provide further information on appointments and promotion policies at DCU:

[Recruitment & Selection Policies & Procedures](#) (Section 1 of the HR Policies & Procedures Manual)  
[DCU Promotions Policies & Procedures](#) (Section 3 of the HR Policies & Procedures Manual)

Other relevant policies include:

[Policy to Promote Respect and Protect Dignity at DCU](#)  
[DCU Equality & Diversity Statement](#)  
[Code of Practice for the Employment of People with Disabilities](#)

### Staff Learning & Development

The University is committed to meeting employee learning and development needs. This investment in staff development is integral to the achievement of a challenging and ambitious set of priorities in line with the University's *Strategic Plan Talent, Discovery and Transformation 2017 - 2022*. Further information on DCU's HR Learning & Development approach is available at [Learning & Development at DCU](#)

Recognising the considerable increase in our scale and complexity, HR Learning & Development (L&D) has an increasingly broad reach. An annual cross institutional process to identify specific development needs is undertaken in conjunction with key stakeholders from each Faculty. This process is guided by the recently launched [Academic Development and Promotion Framework](#). Appropriate interventions are then designed and implemented to meet these skill, capability and competency requirements.

The resulting opportunities for staff development are available through the following mechanisms:

- [Learning & Development Schedule](#)– provides a comprehensive suite of development opportunities for individual staff development.
- Learning Campaigns & Programmes – designed to meet the development needs of specific groups of staff. Examples include the [Staff Orientation Programme](#) [Mentoring Programme](#), [Professional Skills for Research Leaders](#) and the [University Leadership and Management](#)

### Programme (ULM).

Both the PSRL and the ULM are blended learning programmes and are accredited by the UK Leadership Foundation. The Orientation Programme has been recently redesigned to provide information on the specific resources and supports available for those with teaching responsibilities. The mentoring programme specifically mentions ‘enhancing teaching quality’ as an area that the mentee may choose to discuss with their mentor.

DCU L&D are also currently participating in a project called ‘Crannóg’, funded by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning. The focus of this sector wide initiative is professional development for Heads and Deans in the areas of teaching & learning and building digital capacity. Crannóg is providing a number of targeted workshops/seminars along with access to ancillary resources specifically developed to enhance the digital capability of Heads/Deans for teaching and leadership purposes.

Organisational Development (OD) - involves designing interventions to assist leaders, teams and departments to increase organisational capability through planned changes in processes and systems. L&D offer a bespoke service in this regard. OD interventions include improved communication, better decision-making, enhanced and defining leadership style and behaviours, conflict resolution mechanisms, evidence of effective, functional teams, and interpersonal and group processes. L&D continue to engage with faculties, schools & departments to identify, design and deliver these interventions as required.

In addition to L&D a number of other units across the University contribute to the professional development of staff including the Teaching Enhancement Unit, the Library, Research and Innovation Support (RIS), and Information Systems Services (ISS). A new initiative (working title ‘Learn & Grow’) is underway to provide integrated development opportunities for staff comprising the combined strengths of each of the learning providers within the University.

#### **DCU Mentoring Programme**

DCU offers staff members the opportunity to engage with an active mentorship programme. Mentees will be lecturers, senior lecturers, research and administrative staff. Mentors will be senior academic and research staff including professors and retired members of staff and senior administrative staff. Information on the DCU Mentoring Programme is available [here](#).

#### **DCU Teaching Enhancement Unit**

The DCU Teaching Enhancement Unit’s mission is to, *foster excellence in practice through leadership in teaching, the provision of professional development opportunities for staff, and the scholarship of teaching and learning*. The Unit leads a number of professional development opportunities designed to support the professional development of academic staff. These include leading the delivery of accredited learning opportunities in [Online Assessment, Online Learning and Teaching in Higher Education](#). The Teaching Enhancement Unit further deliver a series of workshops for programme teams and schools covering a wide variety of areas related to teaching and learning. More information on these workshops can be found on the [Teaching Enhancement Unit website](#).

#### **Research Career Framework**

The DCU Research Career Framework (RCF), designed to attract and retain Postdoctoral researchers, provides significant professional development opportunities. The Framework aims to ensure that DCU

remains a University of choice for top class research and researchers in the future. Further information on the Framework and initiatives underpinning the Framework is available [here](#).

### **Research Development Programme**

The Research Development Programme is developed by HR Learning & Development in collaboration with RIS following consultation with Researchers. The programme aims to support the career and professional development of researchers and academics as they undertake the Research Career Framework. This programme provides skills based learning and development opportunities, which encourage both the personal and professional growth of researchers. Currently, there is a total number of 20 courses on topics such as Leadership & Management, Publications, Funding & Intellectual Property, Finance & Budgeting, Project Management, Teaching & Learning and Orientation. In 2018, 282 staff have attended these programmes. The full schedule is available at [Researcher Development Schedule 2018](#)

Research staff also have the opportunity to complete the ILM accredited course, [Professional Skills for Research Leaders](#).

Full details of the Programme available at [Research Development Programme](#)

### **Women in Leadership Initiative**

The Women in Leadership Initiative is part of DCU's commitment in continuing to promote the principles of equality by embracing diversity. The vision for this initiative is that DCU will become a university that explicitly values women as leaders. A wide range of formal and informal initiatives, existing and new, will support the achievement of this ambitious vision. More information on the scope of activity within this initiative is available at the Women in Leadership section of the DCU [website](#).

## 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.

### DCU Teaching and Learning Strategy

DCU delivers over 180 taught academic programmes across its five Faculties and distance education unit, DCU Connected.

DCU's portfolio of undergraduate programmes reflects its focus on inter-disciplinary degrees and the application of knowledge to the needs of enterprise and the wider society. The university's strategic plan commits the university to preparing students to flourish in their personal lives, in civic society, and in the rapidly evolving workplace. The university's connectedness with enterprise and society is reflected in the integration into student learning of applied research, industrial placements and the expertise of practitioners.

Currently, 75% of DCU undergraduates are registered on programmes which include a structured, for-credit period of either work-based learning or study abroad. Many of our programmes, particularly those delivered by the DCU Institute of Education and School of Nursing have work-placement at the core of their programme of learning. Outside of these disciplines, DCU was the first university in Ireland to introduce INTRA, a programme of compulsory integrated work-based learning as part of undergraduate programmes. These placements aim to enrich students' education through real-world experience, and provide a pathway for developing graduate attributes and enhancing employability.

The current DCU Teaching and Learning Strategy is available to DCU students and staff at the following [link](#). (internal access only). A new Teaching and Learning strategy is currently being developed by the university and is due to be completed in Q3 2018. This strategy shall align itself to the Teaching and Learning goals articulated in the 2017-2022 DCU Strategic Plan, *Talent, Discovery and Transformation*.

### DCU Graduate Attributes

Generation 21 is a unique programme of initiatives whose purpose is to shape our graduates into well-rounded individuals, ready to make an impact on society and on the workforce. It includes opportunities such as the INTRA work placement, which sees over 1,000 students participating in paid internships with companies in Ireland and worldwide each year; the Study Abroad experience, where partner institutions in over 100 institutions provide study opportunities for DCU students.

Building on these key university initiatives, DCU staff worked with industry to identify the key skills and competencies which we believe students need to develop during their time at the University in order to become well-rounded graduates ready to make an impact on society and on the workforce. These DCU Graduate Attributes now form an integrated part of the degree programmes at DCU, allowing students to develop them in an integrated and consistent way.

More information on the DCU Graduate Attributes can be found at the following [link](#).

## 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.

### **The DCU Student Experience Strategy**

The development of the new [DCU Student Experience Strategy](#) (internal access only), which closely aligns to the DCU Strategic Plan (2017-22), builds on the concept of an enhanced student journey. Through this journey, students have the opportunity to pass through many stages of transitioning into third level education while entering a supportive and inclusive learning environment. Encountering opportunities for personal growth and discovery, availing of numerous possibilities for ongoing professional development and re-engaging as Alumni of the University. The University will continue to protect and enhance the student experience through the implementation of this newly development plan.

### **DCU Student Charter**

Developed in collaboration with the DCU Students' Union, the charter is designed to provide a framework which will help steer students along their DCU journey and make the most of their university experience. The DCU Student Charter can be found at the following [link](#).

### **DCU Reflect Platform**

The DCU Reflect platform is online tool which will allow its students to create a 'virtual portfolio' of their academic, professional and personal achievements. The platform provides a lifelong support to DCU students in securing meaningful employment on graduation and remaining employable for the rest of their careers. Its functions include the capacity for students to curate their coursework and assignments, create shareable online CVs, upload certificates of achievement and maintain monthly journals of internship experience which can be used to create personal blogs. The development of the platform has been coupled the development of programme led initiatives to embed the use of the Reflect platform with the curriculum at DCU. In 2016/17 there were 17 separate implementation projects underway across DCU involving all five faculties.

### **Student Support at DCU**

The provision of personal and professional support services for students at DCU is delivered through the Student Support and Development Directorate. The Directorate structure services to support both the personal well-being of students, but also services and advice to support future professional development. The Directorate includes the following support office and services,

- DCU Student Advice Centre
- Counselling and Personal Development Service
- DCU Careers Office
- DCU INTRA Office
- DCU Interfaith Centre
- DCU Access Office
- DCU Disability Office
- Mature Students Office
- Sports Development Service
- Student Health Centre

The **personal support services** encompasses a range of student support services. Some examples of activities/services that can assist students in their personal development include healthcare services, counselling, disability support, spiritual guidance, financial assistance and clubs & societies activities. More information on personal support and development areas is available below;

[Clubs & Societies](#)

[Counselling & Personal Development](#)

[Disability & Learning Support Service](#)

[Finance at University](#)

[Health Service](#)

[Inter Faith Centre/Chaplaincy](#)

[Sports Development Service](#)

[Students' Union](#)

A further enhancement of these support mechanisms is the launch of a Leadership & Life Skills Centre, which will open in the new Student Centre in September 2018 and will focus on developing each individual student to reach their full potential by developing 'life skills' along with professional and leadership potential.

The delivery of **academic supports** across a range of mediums include [student workshops](#), [online courses](#), and [online resources](#). While **professional development supports** are available for students to development skills that will enhance their readiness for future career success. Some examples of activities that can assist students in their professional development include careers advice, mature student mentoring, volunteering, integrated work placements and life coaching. The IITD award-winning [Mentorship Programme](#), which links students with alumni, provides a unique platform for students to learn more about the professional world of work and explore their chosen area of interest.

Further information on the range of professional support services for student is available below,

- [Careers Service](#)
- [INTRA Unit](#)  
[Pathways to Success @ University Programme](#)  
[UStart Programme](#)
- [Mature Student Mentoring](#)  
[Volunteering](#)
- [Leadership Award – planned launch in October 2018](#)

### **Access for Under-represented Groups in Higher Education**

DCU has a long commitment to addressing educational disadvantage among groups currently under-represented in higher education. DCU's Access programme, which targets socio-economic disadvantage, is the largest and most comprehensive in the state. DCU is the first university in Ireland to be designated both as a University of Sanctuary and an Age Friendly University. In 2018, DCU was the first university

globally to be designated as an Autism Friendly University. Supports for under-represented groups prior to entry, and through their student life is co-ordinated by a number of dedicated offices within Student Support and Development.

These include,

- [DCU Access Office](#)
- [DCU Mature Student Office](#)
- [DCU Disability Service](#)
- [DCU University of Sanctuary](#)
- [Autism Friendly University](#)

### **Mature Students at DCU**

To assist mature students in their academic, personal and professional development, DCU has designed a range of supports, including one-to-one meetings, access to a range of learning support workshops and online tutorials and careers advice tailored to meet the needs of mature students. Resulting from research carried out amongst mature students, a new 'academic writing week' introduced in September 2016/17 helps students deal with the challenges they may be facing when writing academic papers at this level. Further information on supports for mature entry and student support is available at the following [link](#).

### **Students with Disabilities**

DCU has a range of policies relating to the provision of appropriate support services for students with disabilities. Examples of which are available below:

[Provision of Academic Tuition to Students with Disabilities](#)  
[DCU Assistive Technology and Alternative Format Policy](#)  
[DCU Information Technology Policy for People with Disabilities](#)  
[Learning Support Policy Statement for Student with Disabilities](#)  
[Policy on Recording of Lectures for Students with Disabilities](#)

The Disability & Learning Support Office provides initial needs assessments for students entering through the DARE programme and students who register at any point during their academic careers. The services available include drop-in support, examination accommodations, assistive technology, additional tuition and mental health supports.

### **[Access/ Socio-Economic Disadvantage](#)**

The DCU Access Programme is the largest programme of its kind in Ireland. In 2017/18, over 1300 DCU students who come from socio-economically disadvantaged areas, including students from ethnic minorities and students from the traveller community registered with the DCU Access Services. Further information on post-entry supports for students studying at DCU through the DCU Access Programme is available [here](#).

## 1<sup>st</sup> Year Entrant Support Services

DCU has developed a range of support services, specifically developed to address issues relevant to new entrants to higher education. These include,

In 2017/18, a new online resource piloted for first year students called [Discover DCU](#) was implemented. This series of online courses addressed concerns raised by support staff in relation to the transition for first year students to university learning. Importantly, these courses commence as soon as new students have received their offer from DCU in the summer preceding their start date, allowing them to begin their preparations at a much earlier stage than in previous years. The programme has been updated and improved for implementation in August 2018.

An online **'week by week' orientation** provides students with a weekly overview of workshops in skills development such as note-taking, presentation techniques, time management etc. and also highlights key dates in the academic calendar which need to be kept in mind (e.g. module change deadlines)

**Weekly outreach to the students** via Facebook, Plasma Screens, emails, SU channels alerts students to workshops on key skills which First Year students need to develop, e.g. working in groups, academic writing, basic nutrition, and information about vaccinations

In 2015 DCU introduced a 4-week series of workshops called **'Pathways to Success'** which focuses on helping First Year students settle in and set goals for their time at university. This programme, facilitated through DCU staff who qualified as Life Coaches, offers First Year students who are not settling well an opportunity to take part in a group based activity in a safe environment and develop a strategy for 'success'

Staff in the **Student Advice Centre and Careers Unit** dedicate a huge proportion of their time to dealing with emails and walk-in appointments from students who are unsure about their programme. All staff work to a model of triage, dealing with relevant issues and ensuring a smooth referral to a different service, should this be required.

**Learning Support Unit:** provides academic workshops, offers an Academic Writing Centre and provides one-to-one support for students struggling with their academic skills. The Unit works with students from First to final year and up to PhD level and receives many referrals from academic staff who are looking for assistance for some of their students

## Student Health and Wellbeing

**Student Health Centre:** The Centre operates a walk-in service for all students, with GP appointments available throughout the week. The Centre provides updates for students on vaccinations required, information about infectious diseases and liaises with relevant schools about required vaccinations for lab work. With the increase in student numbers in recent years but lack of increased funding to increase the number of GP consultations available, the Centre has struggled to offer outreach activities to enhance students' health through proactivity. In the past, the Centre organised Health Fairs which allowed students browse through information on various health-related matters. They did however partner with the Students' Union in offering a series of Smart Consent workshops to all students in 2017/18. 150 students took part in the workshop and provided extremely positive feedback on the engagement. Plans are currently afoot to deliver a strong sexual awareness campaign in 2018/19 in conjunction with the new Health Promotion Officer.

The Student Health Centre is also a crucial contact point for students who may find themselves in hospital following an accident or incident. The Health Centre ensures continuity of care and a contact point for the students upon returning to the University.

**Counselling / Psychological Support:** Counselling & Personal Development offers an appointment-based service for students in need of psychological or emotional support through their time at University. Students register with the service and are triaged using the internationally recognised CORE triage scoring system – hence ensuring that students who may be ‘at risk’ are identified early in the process. The Service runs at full capacity at most times of the year and the waiting times are sometimes unacceptable – reaching 6 weeks at peak times. Over the years, we have introduced different initiatives to attempt to ensure that students are provided with earlier interventions, in order to address issues before they escalate. These interventions include outreach workshops on reducing stress, dealing with procrastination, life balance, sleep hygiene etc. – offered by our occupational therapists in the Disability & Learning Support Unit.

**Chaplaincy** offers a crucial confidential walk-in service for students of all religions and none. This is a vibrant service which plays a key role in offering a gathering space for students, a confidential ear should the student require advice or guidance, muslim prayer spaces and Christian gatherings. The Chaplaincy team is composed of ordained priests and lay chaplains and focus on providing a communal space for students to gather. This can often be a place of refuge for First Year students who find the new large learning environment daunting.

**Health Promotion Office:** In late 2017/18, DCU appointed its first Health Promotion Officer. This role has long been discussed in the context of the importance of pre-emptive initiatives being the key to helping students become and maintain well-being. Over the coming years, the Office will develop a number of outreach activities, pulling on existing and developing new activities around the areas of physical health, mental health, sexual health, smoking cessation, healthy eating. The development of a ‘culture of health and well-being’ will become very evident and will inevitably permeate new students thinking on self-care.

The model of cross-unit referrals and ensuring that the student has ready access to the relevant service at the time that s/he requires it is at the heart of the work of DCU. DCU Staff are provided with a ‘Guide to Support Services’ and a briefing each year, to inform them of the developments in service offering in order to ensure that they have up-to-date information. They also receive a graphical representation of ‘Dealing with Students in Crisis’, which is a brief overview of the referral process if a student presents in crisis.

### **Maths Learning Centre**

The Maths Learning Centre's role is to provide free extra informal support in a welcoming environment to all undergraduate DCU students taking a mathematics module as part of their degree programme. The Centre is located on the ground floor of the Library on the Glasnevin campus. Students can receive extra one-to-one maths tuition during our drop-in service hours). Students can attend during these hours to use the Centre as a maths study space - where they can work at their own pace with a tutor on hand if they have any questions. Outside of these hours, the Centre is open as a group study space for mathematics during library opening hours. Further information about the Maths Learning Centre can be found [here](#).

### **DCU Writing Centre**

The Writing Centre offers assistance with academic writing to all undergraduate and postgraduate students. Students can attend on their own or in groups to receive expert guidance from a peer tutor. The DCU Writing Centre is located on the ground floor of the Glasnevin Library. Tutorial and one-to-one support provided by the Centre include,

- Guidance in how to structure an assignment at third level.
- Advice on how to research and read effectively for an assignment.
- Support with difficulties with specific aspects of writing e.g. paragraphing, grammar, sentence structure, and transition between points, introductions, and conclusions.

Further information is available [here](#).

### **Professional Development Services**

#### **DCU Careers Service**

The Careers Service is available to all undergraduate and postgraduate DCU students. The team is committed to providing a wide variety of professional services to support you in making career decisions that is best suited to your qualifications, interests, abilities and aspirations.

#### **Development Workshops**

Student Support and Development co-ordinate and host a range of workshops that students can attend to support both academic success and personal and professional development. These workshops are hosted across both the DCU Glasnevin and St Patrick's campuses on a regular basis. More information on types of workshops delivered, and a schedule for upcoming events can be found [here](#).

#### **DCU Uaneen Module**

Forming part of the Student Experience Strategy, DCU formally recognises and rewards the achievement of holistic education by accrediting a module in extra-curricular activities – the Uaneen Module. As mentioned above, the Uaneen module is a unique scheme that formally recognises student achievements and learning acquired in areas of clubs, societies, community work and extra-curricular activity in general. Depending on your degree programme, the Uaneen Module can be either a contributing five-credit elective or a non-contributing optional additional five-credit module. In both cases, successful completion means that students will receive an awarded credit included in the degree parchment. DCU is the first third level institution in the Republic of Ireland to reward extracurricular activity in such a manner and is currently developing an Award, which starts in First Year and encourages students to engage with university and community life from an earlier stage in their academic careers. This Award is expected to launch in September 2018.

### **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.

The University uses a wide variety of systems to manage student records assessment, to management and governance of the Institution. Each of these systems is subject to a rolling review of access control, security applications, and system updates, to ensure that they are secure, robust and fit for use by University staff.

Information is an asset and if managed properly can contribute significantly to the smooth operation of the university. The environment of information management is undergoing a fundamental change, both internally within the university as well as externally, with the development of new technology which has and will provide much greater capability in managing information assets effectively. Specific information management issues which the university will address over the short to medium term are, a) the replacement of the Student Information System (SIS); b) compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018.

To assist in the management of these legislative changes and infrastructural challenges the university recently formed an 'Information Systems (IS) Governance Committee' to advise on the strategic direction of all information sources within the university as well as to ensure that this is consistent with the overall university strategy.

#### **Guru**

The Guru system is a platform which provides student, module and programme information to academic staff and management through a user-friendly interface. In addition to data provision and statistical analysis, it is also used in the digital generation, uploading and external review of examination papers. It is also used for the submission of external examiner reports and permits the appropriate sharing and review of these reports at all levels within the university. More information about the guru system can be found at the following link: <https://gurudevelopments.com/>

#### **Discoverer**

Discoverer is an Oracle Business Reporting Tool which sits on top of the student information system and is used by administrative staff in Units and Faculties. This tool gives power and flexibility for the running of a suite of standard reports and creating ad hoc reports to respond to specific information requests.

#### **IRIS**

Following the recommendations of the IRIU in 2010 an additional BI solution (IRIS) was identified by the university. This is built on Oracle Business Intelligence Enterprise Edition and is integrated with multiple DCU data sources. A number of dashboards of metrics are available to Faculty Management Boards, Programme chairs and Senior Management of the University to provide statistics and metrics for decision making through IRIS.

The University will continue to use both Discoverer and IRIS in the short to medium term. We are currently planning an upgrade of the IRIS platform and associated technologies. However, we are also exploring the use of other modern flexible reporting platforms for comparison. This however is a resource intensive area and future BI requirements will be considered as part of the multi-year SIS Project which is discussed later.

Each of the above mentioned systems provides information to different departments for self-monitoring and planning of their portfolio of activities.

### **Robust & Comprehensive Student (Learner) Information System**

The student information system is supported by ISS in conjunction with a third party provider maintenance and support agreement. Back-ups are taken nightly and in the event of any identified issue the system can be restored to the latest backup. ISS conducts ongoing monitoring and deployment of server security patches, network improvements and system updates to ensure data is secure. Security and performance of the learner information system is subject to ongoing monitoring and review, particularly at key points in the academic calendar such as publication of exam results and on-line registration.

The student information system maintains the core record of approved university curriculum per annum, student biographical, academic records and student fee information. It further permits the recording of additional relevant data for specific groups of students eg postgraduate research students, nursing degree students and those on specific schemes - DARE, HEAR.

The student information system also sustains and facilitates the reliable processing and progression of the students through the entire student lifecycle from admission through to graduation. Registry and ISS meet regularly to review and plan for significant events within the university academic calendar (eg on-line registration, progression and award boards, etc.) Registry managers also meet regularly with Faculty Managers in which issues requiring attention can be raised and subsequently followed up.

The University can ensure that student assessment data is accurate and complete via quality checks carried out at Faculty and Registry levels through the annual assessment review (Progression and Award Boards) and academic structure processes. The student information system is the considered the primary source for all curriculum and student record information and other systems containing this information pull this directly from the primary source.

Access to the student information system is controlled via the use of Function Sets to ensure appropriate access to data. Function sets are audited regularly by Registry to ensure compliance and have subjected to Internal Audit Processes. A test environment is used for thoroughly testing any system developments before deployment on the live environment.

### **Loop**

Our online learning platform is called Loop. Loop allows students to connect with course content, their teachers and fellow learners. It's where students access their notes, participate in discussion fora, construct their ePortfolio and participate in webinars. Loop is an amalgamation of several different learning technologies into one platform. This platform is central to the delivery of high quality learning experiences for all students of DCU.

The University avails of a number of other systems to support the student learning environment and manage the student experience and lifecycle. These are

**Coursebuilder:** maintains module descriptors, learning outcomes, programme learning outcomes, module co-ordinator control and access

**Syllabus Plus:** used to schedule and publish lecture timetables and operate the room booking service for internal and external clients, clubs and societies

**Microsoft Dynamics:** used by Student Support and Development, International office and student

recruitment to assist with providing the broad range of support services to students in DCU and recruitment of new students

The ISS Ticketing system for logging support queries provides an evidence-based approach to tracking reports of any problems encountered. Registry and ISS liaise closely with the provider with regard to identifying issues, troubleshooting and suggesting developments to the system where required.

#### **DCU Institutional Research and Analysis**

Institutional Research and Analysis officer supports the University by gathering and analysing information and evidence for use in university-wide academic and administrative decision making and assessment activities. Since 2017, this function has become part of the DCU Quality Promotion Office.

#### **Information on DCU Policies and Procedures**

DCU has dedicated a section of its website for the collation, in a single location, to a full range of the university's policies and other important governance documentation. The website also contains information on guides for the writing of DCU policies, and has a dedicated area for key policies which are most pertinent to new staff at DCU

[University Policies Website](#)

[Policy Starter Pack for new staff](#)

[Guides for the development of policies at DCU](#)

#### **Information System Compliance with Data Protection Legislation**

DCU has completed a comprehensive process to ensure compliance with GDPR Regulations in line with the May 2018 enforcement deadline. The Deputy COO has been appointed as the Data Protection Officer for the university and the Data Protection Office has additional resources assigned to deal with the increased compliance requirements around GDPR. Data Champions were identified in most schools and units across the organisation who have all undergone a detailed training programme provided by external consultants. This approach was taken in order to embed the required mind-set and expertise across the organisation to ensure that DCU continues to meet all our compliance requirements into the future. The University has a dedicated Data Protection webpage where guidance on its policies and practices with regard to personal data matters can be found at the following [link](#).

#### **Planned Activity for Future Development**

DCU has recently begun a multi-year project to upgrade/replace our student information system. The student information system is in ways the central nervous system of the organisation. A large number of our key IT systems and business processes depend on a robust, available, flexible and secure student information system. As such the system also plays a key role in the experience of our students both on and off campus.

The existing student information system has been extremely secure and robust over the years since installation over twenty years ago. However, DCU has grown significantly over the last number of years in student numbers and complexity in relation to IT architecture and business requirements. As a result, the current system is no longer meeting our needs in terms of key strategic and operational requirements.

Phase one of this project completed in January 2018. This phase consisted of a significant collaborative effort across the organisation to analyse our operational and strategic business requirements. Workshops and interviews held with a wide range of stakeholders across the organisation and have resulted in a list of approximately 240 requirements to feed into the next phase of the project. The competitive dialogue phase began in Q1 2018 which will allow us to engage with vendors in order to fully understand the alignment of DCU requirements with the current market offerings. The tender phase will begin in Q3 2018 with the implementation (phase 4) to being in Q1 2019.

As this project is so significant for DCU strategy and operations there will be many other decisions around systems and processes which can only be made after the future SIS platform has been agreed. In particular this will impact on management information reporting.

However, as an organisation we understand the importance of our data and the value held within all our information systems. The university engaged PWC in 2015 to perform an analysis across the organisation with a view to developing an information strategy. As a result of this focus on our information management a new group was established in Q1 2018 to focus specifically on strategic intelligence. This group will work collaboratively across the organisation to build on work already completed in this area to accelerate the benefits realisation available from focusing on the value held within our information systems.

### **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.

The [DCU Quality Assurance Framework](#) has been developed to build a cohesive framework through which the university can demonstrate that quality assurance processes are embedded, integrated and ongoing, and involve a combination of regular monitoring and periodic review of programme.

#### **Annual and Periodic Programme Review**

The Annual Programme Review (APR) process for all taught programmes is now fully embedded within DCU. In addition, Periodic Programme Review (PPR) is conducted on a 5-year rolling schedule, allowing DCU to meet both internal and external quality assurance requirements in an embedded procedure which is sufficiently robust to withstand external review. Compliance with, and progress on the completion of, Periodic Programme reviews are reported by Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning at DCU's Education Committee. Reports on progress are noted in the Education Committee minutes of the October 2014 and May 2015. In the academic years 2014/15 and 2015/16, 41 taught programmes completed PPR (programmes in DCU Business School were not subject to PPR in 2015/16 owing to the Faculty-wide evaluation which led to accreditation by the AACSB (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business)). The comprehensive roll-out of annual and periodic programme review is included in the DCU-HEA Performance based compact. In the Compact, DCU established the target of 80% of all taught programmes having completed Periodic Programme Review by the end of 2016.

More information on Annual and Periodic Programme Review can be found at the following [link](#).

#### **Externally- Led Unit Reviews.**

The Quality Promotion Office is responsible for facilitating and co-ordinating the cyclical review of units at DCU, on a 7-year rolling cycle. The reviews are based on a self-assessment approach, followed by a peer review group visit, and conclude with the development of a quality improvement plan by the unit under review in response to the recommendations of the peer review group. The academic and support unit reviews are primarily focused on the evaluation and exploration of strategic, organisational and management issues and external relations.

Detailed information on procedures, documents and templates relating to these unit level reviews can be found at the following [link](#).

## 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.

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More information on annual and periodic programme review can be found at the following [link](#).

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The Quality Promotion Office is responsible for facilitating and co-ordinating the cyclical review of units at DCU, on a 7-year rolling cycle. The reviews are based on a self-assessment approach, followed by a peer review group visit, and conclude with the development of a quality improvement plan by the unit under review in response to the recommendations of the peer review group. The academic and support unit reviews are primarily focused on the evaluation and exploration of strategic, organisational and management issues and external relations.

The quality review process includes 4 key stages,

- **Self-Evaluation Report**- the completion of a comprehensive self-evaluation of an academic or professional support area, led by an internally selected quality review committee. Themes explored during self-evaluation both build on previous quality reviews, and other internal and external review activity, and area aligned to the quality assurance requirements outlined in the QQI Guidelines and European Standards and Guidelines. The process of self-evaluation requires an evidence-informed approach to self-evaluation, and units undergoing review are encouraging to use both existing sources of data and information, and seeking new information from relevant stakeholders to support the completion of self-evaluation
- **Peer Review Visit and Report**- The Peer Review visit is conducted by a five person team, constituted of three external members, and two internal reviewers. Membership of Peer Review Groups are drawn from national and international experts, both from higher education and a peer from outside of the higher education sector. The Peer Review visit aims to verify and evaluate the self-evaluation report, and meet with staff, students, and other stakeholders to discuss key issues identified. The visit is followed by the completion a Peer Review Group Report, which summaries the Group's findings and makes commendations and recommendations for future quality enhancement within the Area under review.
- **Quality Improvement Planning**- following receipt of the final Peer Review Group report, the area develop a Quality Improvement Plan (QuIP) in response to the report. This involves both

an Area, and University level response to the PRG recommendations. The QuIP is discussed and agreed at a follow-up meeting, attended by at least one external member of the Peer Review Group

- **Publication of Review Outputs-** following consideration and discussion of both the Peer Review Group Report and Quality Improvement Plan at University Executive and DCU Governing Authority, both documents are published on the DCU website.

Detailed information on procedures, background and guidance documents, and templates relating to these unit level reviews can be found at the following [link](#).

### 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).

The Peer Review Group for Quality Reviews of Academic and Support groups at DCU are externally led.

Generally external members of the PRG are drawn from each of the following categories

- A senior person from another Higher Education Institution **within Ireland** (normally a Head/Dean/Director responsible for an area similar to that under review)
- A senior person from another Higher Education Institution **outside of Ireland** (normally a Head/Dean/Director responsible for an academic area similar to that under review)
- A senior person from outside the Higher Education Sector (industry, business, professions or the public service).

Four nominations under each category to the peer group are proposed by the area under review, and a QPC sub-committee meets to approve and rank proposed members. The review is required to confirm that all of the nominees above have had no formal links with the area under review during the last five years, and that there is no potential conflict of interest in the nominee being a member of the peer review group for the quality review being undertaken.

The template for nomination of PRG external members can be found at the following [link](#).

In the nomination process, it is ensured that there is a mix of academic discipline or relevant professional expertise to reflect the breadth of activity within the area under review. Areas under review are also requested to ensure a gender balance within in their nomination proposals.

### ***Engagement with Other Bodies***

Profession, Regulatory and Statutory Body (PRSB) accredit a large number of programmes across all five faculties at DCU. The duration of accreditation is for a specific period therefore programmes are subject to future cyclical review by the PRSB. Relationships between DCU and relevant PRSBs is managed at School and Faculty level.

DCU's strategic plan 2017-22 identified *Society* as a core strategic principle for the university. The University's ambitions relating to external engagements are reiterated within this plan in a local, regional, national and international context. The identification and development of strategic engagement activities is co-ordinated by the [Office of the Vice-President for External Affairs](#).

[The DCU Civic Engagement Office](#) is responsible for leading a number of projects that support the University's role in social and economic development in our local and regional community.

DCU's Innovation and Enterprise Centre, [INVENT](#) is based on the Glasnevin campus and leads the identification of opportunities for partnership between DCU and industry through state funded innovation partnerships. Furthermore, INVENT promotes and encourages industry sponsored PhD

programmes, student placements and industry sponsored post-doctoral fellowships availing of financial incentives from national funding agencies such as, Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) and the Irish Research Council. INVENT also provides business incubation facilities in DCU Alpha, entrepreneurship training programmes and a range of supports for start-up technology businesses.

The [DCU Communications and Marketing Office](#) manage DCU's public relations, media and marketing activities. A primary focus of the office is the communication of DCU's achievements in research, innovation and teaching to a variety of audiences, including national and international media, corporate partners, our students as well as the general-public.

The [INTRA Office](#) and [Careers Service](#) interact with hundreds of external organisations who employ DCU students during their internship period and beyond graduation. These employers offer skills development sessions with Careers' Advisors to current students, ensuring students receive up-to-date training underpinned by models of careers' development.

**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.

**Publication of Quality Review Reports**

The Peer Review Group Report (PRG report) and subsequently developed Quality Improvement Plan are published on the Quality Promotion Office website. Published reports can be found at the following [link](#).

**DCU Policies and Procedures**

DCU provides access, via a single website location, to those policies and other important supporting documents which deal with the administration of the business affairs of the University. These webpages are managed by the Office of the Chief Operations Officer and day-to-day responsibility for their maintenance and contents rests with the Risk & Compliance Officer. Where appropriate, these policies are publicly available. More information can be found at the following [link](#).

### **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.

#### **DCU Definition of Linked Provider Relationships**

Linked Providers are legally independent organisations who enter into formal arrangements with a designated awarding body, under which arrangement the provider provides a programme of education and training that satisfies all of the prerequisites for an award by the designated awarding body.

#### **Approach Taken on Implementation of Statutory Responsibilities for Linked Providers**

In cases where Linked Providers are subject to independent statutory engagement with QQI under the QQI Act (2012) (Sections 28, 30 and 34-35), DCU shall recognise the findings of engagement with QQI with respect to institutional level procedures and the effectiveness of their implementation. In these instances, DCU shall implement a range of procedures, specifically addressing the approval, and subsequent review of implementation and effectiveness at programme type and/or level of award of programmes leading to a DCU award.

In cases where Linked Providers are not subject to independent engagement with QQI for the approval and ongoing review of QA implementation, such providers shall be subject to DCU led review of the effectiveness of both the establishment and implementation of quality assurance procedures for linked providers, as per Section 32-33 and Sections 37-39 of QQI Act (2012).

Based on this current definition and approach, DCU considers that it has one relationship which constitutes that of a Linked Provider, Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT). DCU current accredits all postgraduate research awards at NQF Levels 9 & 10 through the DCU-DkIT Graduate School.

As a linked provider of DCU for postgraduate research awards, DCU takes the following approach in meeting the requirements meeting the requirements of the QQI Act (2012) and QQI Guidelines for Designated Awarding Bodies (2016).

#### **Approval of the Quality Assurance Procedures of Linked Providers.**

The 2015 'Linked Provider Schedule for Dublin City University and Dundalk Institute of Technology' agreed by both institutions contains detailed information on the agreed QA and procedures for operation of the programmes. As such, this signed agreement constitutes formal approval of the QA procedures by DCU for postgraduate research programmes delivered by DkIT.

#### **Monitoring of Programmes**

Currently DkIT report annually on the implementation of PG research programmes to the DCU Graduate Research Studies Board. Further, there is membership of the DkIT's Head of Research as the DkIT representation on DCU Graduate Research Students Board, and the membership of the DCU Dean of Graduate Studies on the DkIT Graduate Studies Board. As such, DCU considers that this oversight meets the requirements for ongoing monitoring of postgraduate research programmes in the DCU-DkIT Graduate School.

**Protection of Enrolled Learners**

Section 9 of the current Schedule notes, 'In the case of termination of the Schedule, DkIT research students who are pursuing, and have partially completed, a DCU accredited research award will be given at least 3 months' notice of the termination of the Schedule and will be facilitated to award completion.'

**Review of Effectiveness of the Quality Assurance Procedures**

As per the QQI Act (2012) DCU is required to conduct a review of the effectiveness of the QA procedures of the DCU-DkIT Graduate School at least once every 7 years. This review is currently scheduled for Q4 2020.

**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.

### **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.

DCU is currently implementing a recently approved policy in relation to protocols for collaboration with external institutions. The protocols span entry to programmes to granting of full awards by DCU and/or partner organisations. In the context of a growing and more diverse set of collaborations, the protocols recognise the need to develop a systematic and transparent process of approval and review so that we can adequately provide quality assurance in respect of these collaborations

Various levels of approval are based on the scope and risk associated with each model, and are also linked to a level of due diligence as to the standing of the particularly proposed partner. Two core elements of the process design include:

- Partner assessment, separate to a decision to engage collaboratively, is undertaken under the auspices of the Vice-President External and Strategic Affairs, and involves School / Faculty input as well as input from the International office, the Finance Office and the Office of the Chief Operations Officer as appropriate to the level of due diligence required (0-4, level 0 being the lowest and 4 the highest).
- The approval protocols, once agreed at Education Committee, will be embedded in a module within the Guru system which will facilitate approval of agreements and will be captured in the [Signing Authority Policy](#).

#### **Joint Research Supervision and Awards**

With specific relation to research awards, DCU has developed a policy which aims to create shared understanding across the University about the extent to which it is desirable to formalise co-supervision arrangements with other institutions, and brings clarity to the context in which DCU supports joint supervision and joint award arrangements for research degrees. The policy is built upon a framework of categories of collaboration and guides colleagues to the most appropriate type of collaboration to reflect their particular circumstance and the type of agreement or approval required, when appropriate.

**16. Additional Notes**

Any additional notes can be entered here.

Empty box for entering 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	School of Chemical Sciences 7th - 9th December 2016 School of Nursing and Human Sciences 8th - 10th March 2017 School of Health and Human Performance - 17th - 19th May 2017
Number	3
Link(s) to Publications	<a href="http://www.dcu.ie/qpo/published-reviews.shtml">http://www.dcu.ie/qpo/published-reviews.shtml</a>

Year	2017/18
Areas/Units	President's and Deputy President's Office Review, 7-9th December, 2017. Office of Vice-President External Affairs, 7-9th March, 2018. School of Mathematical Sciences, 27-29 <sup>th</sup> March, 2018
Number	3
Link(s) to Publications	<a href="http://www.dcu.ie/qpo/published-reviews.shtml">http://www.dcu.ie/qpo/published-reviews.shtml</a>

Year	2018/19
Areas/Units	DCU Cinnte Institutional Review, October 2018 Office of Student Life, February 2018 Student Support and Development, March 2018 Offices of the Chief Operating Officer, May 2018
Number	4
Link(s) to Publications	<a href="http://www.dcu.ie/qpo/published-reviews.shtml">http://www.dcu.ie/qpo/published-reviews.shtml</a>

Year	2019/20
Areas/Units	Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Offices of the Vice President Academic Affairs Registry

## Annual Institutional Quality Assurance Report

	TBC: Thematic Review- Digital Learning
Number	4
Link(s) to Publications	<a href="http://www.dcu.ie/qpo/published-reviews.shtml">http://www.dcu.ie/qpo/published-reviews.shtml</a>
Year	2020/21
Areas/Units	Human Resources, Q4 2020 NIDL/ Open Education, Q4 2020 Information Systems and Support, Q1 2021 Faculty of Science and Health (+ Research Centres) Q2 2021 Finance Office, Q2 2021
Number	5
Link(s) to Publications	<a href="http://www.dcu.ie/qpo/published-reviews.shtml">http://www.dcu.ie/qpo/published-reviews.shtml</a>

Year	2021/22
Areas/Units	Office of the Vice President Research and Innovation, Q4 2021 School of Physical Sciences, Q4 2021 DCU Institute of Education, Q2 2022 Estates Office, Q2 2022 Comms and Marketing, Q2 2022
Number	4
Link(s) to Publications	<a href="http://www.dcu.ie/qpo/published-reviews.shtml">http://www.dcu.ie/qpo/published-reviews.shtml</a>

Year	2022/23
Areas/Units	DCU Library Q3 2022 School of Biotechnology, Q4 2022 Faculty of Engineering and Computing, Q1 2023 DCU Business School, Q2 2023 TBC: Thematic Review Q2 2023
Number	4
Link(s) to Publications	<a href="http://www.dcu.ie/qpo/published-reviews.shtml">http://www.dcu.ie/qpo/published-reviews.shtml</a>

# AIQR - PART 1

## Overview of internal QA governance, policies and procedures

[AIQR-Part-1 DCU 2019.docx](#)

## PRSBs

14

## Awarding Bodies

0

## QA Bodies

0

## Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies

First Set of Records

## Type of Arrangement

PRSB

## Name of the Body

AACSB

## Programme Titles and Links to Publications

All Business Programmes delivered by DCU: BA in Accounting and Finance;

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BA in Global Business;

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BA in Global Business (Canada);

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BA in Global Business (France);

</p>

BA in Global Business (Germany);

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BA in Global Business (Spain);

</p>

BA in Global Business (USA);

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Bachelor Business Studies International;

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Bachelor of Business Studies;

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Bachelor of Business Studies (Exchange) ;

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BBS (International Finance);

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BSc in Aviation Man with Pilot Studies;

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BSc in Aviation Management;

</p>

BSc Marketing, Innovation & Technology;

</p>

Business Studies ( with INTRA );

</p>

M.Sc. in Human Resource Strategies;

</p>

Masters in Business Administration;

</p>

MSc in Accounting;

</p>

MSc in Business Administration;

</p>

MSc in Digital Marketing;

</p>

MSc in Electronic Commerce (Business);

</p>

MSc in Emergency Management;

</p>

MSc in Finance;

</p>

MSc in Human Resource Management;

</p>

MSc in Investment, Treasury & Banking;

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MSc in Leadership & Organis. Behav;

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MSc in Management (Aviation Leadership);

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MSc in Management (Business);

</p>

MSc in Management (Strategy);

</p>

MSc in Work & Organisational Behaviour;

</p>

MSc in Work & Organisational Psychology;

</p>

MSc International Management

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<b>Next review year</b>	201819
<b>Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies</b>	Second Set of Records
<b>Type of Arrangement</b>	PRSB
<b>Name of the Body</b>	Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI)
<b>Programme Titles and Links to Publications</b>	BSc Nursing (General); Bsc Nursing (Mental Health); Bsc Nursing (Intellectual Disability); BSc Nursing (Children's and General integrated); Children's Nursing (Higher Diploma); MSc in General Nursing Practice;
<b>Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies</b>	Third Set of Records
<b>Type of Arrangement</b>	PRSB
<b>Name of the Body</b>	Teaching Council
<b>Programme Titles and Links to Publications</b>	Professional Masters in Education (Primary) (PMEP); Certificate in Religious Studies; Bachelor of Religious Education and English; Bachelor of Religious Education and History; Bachelor of Religious Education and Music; Bachelor of Primary Education; BSc Physical Education with biology; Bsc Physical Education with Maths; BSc Science Education

<b>Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies</b>	Fourth Set of Records
<b>Type of Arrangement</b>	PRSB
<b>Name of the Body</b>	Engineers Ireland Accreditation
<b>Programme Titles and Links to Publications</b>	B.Eng. Mechanical & Manufacturing Eng; MEng in Mechatronic Engineering; MEng in Mechanical and Manufacturing Eng; BEng Electronic & Computer Engineering
<b>Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies</b>	Fifth Set of Records
<b>Type of Arrangement</b>	PRSB
<b>Name of the Body</b>	Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI)
<b>Programme Titles and Links to Publications</b>	MSc in Work & Organisational Behaviour, BA Humanities (Psychology), BSc Psychology
<b>Joint research degrees</b>	0
<b>Joint/double/multiple awards</b>	4
<b>Collaborative programmes</b>	3
<b>Franchise programmes</b>	0
<b>Linked providers (DABs only)</b>	1
<b>Section: Collaborative Provision</b>	First Set of Records
<b>Type of arrangement:</b>	Joint/double/multiple awards
<b>Name of the Body (Bodies)</b>	Brock University (Ontario), (BSc Global Business Canada) Northeastern University, (Boston) (BSc Global Business USA) University of San Diego, (BSc Global Business USA) European School of Business (Reutlingen), (BSc Global Business Germany) ICADE at the Universidad Pontificia Comillas (Madrid). (BSc Global Business Spain) Neoma Business School, (BSc Global Business France)
<b>Programme Titles and Links to Publications</b>	BSc Global Business <a href="https://business.dcu.ie/Global-Business-France">https://business.dcu.ie/Global-Business-France</a> <a href="https://www.dcu.ie/courses/undergraduate/dcubs/global-business-canada.shtml">https://www.dcu.ie/courses/undergraduate/dcubs/global-business-canada.shtml</a> <a href="https://business.dcu.ie/Global-Business-USA">https://business.dcu.ie/Global-Business-USA</a> <a href="https://business.dcu.ie/Global-Business-Spain">https://business.dcu.ie/Global-Business-Spain</a> <a href="https://www.dcu.ie/courses/undergraduate/dcubs/global-business-germany.shtml">https://www.dcu.ie/courses/undergraduate/dcubs/global-business-germany.shtml</a>
<b>Articulation Agreements</b>	1

<b>Do you wish to make a final submission?</b>	Yes, this is my final submission
<b>On behalf of the President/Provost/CEO I confirm that the information submitted in this AIQR is accurate and correct.</b>	Confirmed
<b>Overview of internal governance, policies and procedures (Word Template).</b>	Confirmed
<b>Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies.</b>	Confirmed
<b>Collaborative Provision.</b>	Confirmed
<b>Articulation Agreements.</b>	Confirmed
<b>Date of Final Submission</b>	20-02-2019

## Parts 2-6

### Institution-led QA – Annual Information

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

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## 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.

#### **Development of Constituent Strategies to support DCU Strategy, 2017-2022**

Talent, Discovery, and Transformation, committed to the development of a range of aligning strategies to further develop and embed the implementation of the strategy in key thematic areas, and within the major academic and professional support areas.

During 2017/18 the University has completed the development of 5 Constituent strategies,

- Teaching and Learning Strategy
- Research and Innovation Strategy
- Internationalisation Strategy
- Engagement Strategy
- Student Experience Strategy

These strategies are now complete, and available on the DCU website.

Faculty strategies have also been developed during 2017/18, which align the goals from Talent, Discovery and Transformation and the constituent strategies to the ambitions of individual Faculties.

#### **Development of 2018-2022 Mission Based Performance Compact**

During 2017/18 DCU, in consultation with the HEA, has developed a range of strategic goals and quality targets as part of the 2018-2021 Performance Compact Agreement. The identified goals and targets within the Compact Agreement are aligned to the objectives and initiatives of the 2017-2022 DCU Strategy, Talent, Discovery and Transformation. The goals identified further contribute to the overall achievement of national targets described under the HEA's six Key System Objectives,

- Providing a strong talent pipeline combining knowledge, skills & employability which responds effectively to the needs of our enterprise, public service and community sectors, both nationally and regionally, and maintains Irish leadership in Europe for skill availability

- Creating rich opportunities for national and international engagement which enhances the learning environment and delivers a strong bridge to enterprise and the wider community
- Excellent research, development and innovation that has relevance, growing engagement with external partners and impact for the economy and society and strengthens our standing to become an Innovation Leader in Europe.
- Significantly improves the equality of opportunity through Education and Training and recruits a student body that reflects the diversity and social mix of Ireland's population
- Demonstrates consistent improvement in the quality of the learning environment with a close eye to international best practice through a strong focus on quality & academic excellence
- Demonstrates consistent improvement in governance, leadership and operational excellence.

### **'Review and Renew' on Year 1 Implementation of Talent, Discovery and Transformation**

The implementation of the DCU strategy is monitored through a process of rolling planning, which includes an annual period of 'review and renew'. A rolling approach to planning provides DCU with an opportunity to be flexible and responsive to the dynamic national and global environment. This process is led by members of the Senior Management Group at DCU, and co-ordinated by the Quality Promotion Office.

The alignment of the university's strategic ambitions with its commitment to quality is embedded throughout the plan, and is specifically articulated in relation to teaching quality, the quality and impact of our research, a commitment to operational excellence, and the establishment of a strategic partnerships office. The implementation of the strategic plan will be monitored based on a review of identified indicators of success and progress.

During 2017/18, the Quality Promotion Office supported establishment of Year 1 implementation priorities for the DCU 2017-2022 Strategic Plan, and the subsequent co-ordination of performance reporting on strategic implementation within the academic year. Internal reporting on strategic implementation in 2017/18 was also completed during 2018, and shared with all DCU Governing Authority and DCU staff.

In October 2018, the University Senior Management Group, in considering progress to date of the current strategy, and having regarding for emerging challenges and opportunities, considered the renewal of the strategic goals and associated specific actions. The outcomes this review and renew process did not recommend any changes to the strategic plan for 2018/19

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

### **Renewal of DCU Quality Assurance Statement**

The University's Quality Assurance and Enhancement Statement was reviewed and revised by the DCU Quality Promotion Committee in 2018, and the new Policy approved by University Executive in May 2018. The Quality Policy statement is accessible on the DCU website. The main revisions to the policy statement following the 2018 review include:

- A clearer alignment of quality assurance and enhancement processes to the achievement of the University's mission and strategy;
- A revised internal Quality Framework, acknowledging the role and impact of several enabling processes and activities which contribute to internal quality review procedures;
- A revision of the principles through which quality assurance procedures and activities are developed and implemented;
- An acknowledgement of the role of staff, students, and external stakeholders in contributing to the development and implementation of quality assurance procedures at DCU;
- A definition of the University's understanding of Linked Provider relationships, and the general approach to the implementation of Designated Awarding Body (DAB) responsibilities under the QQI Act 2012.

### **DCU Agreement on Definition and Approach to Linked Providers**

During 2017/18, DCU Education Committee agreed a working definition and broad approach to management of QA of Linked Provider relationships.

### **DCU Definition of Linked Provider Relationships**

Linked Providers are legally independent organisations who enter into formal arrangements with a designated awarding body, under which arrangement the provider provides a programme of education and training that satisfies all of the prerequisites for an award by the designated awarding body.

### **Approach Taken on Implementation of Statutory Responsibilities for Linked Providers**

In cases where Linked Providers are subject to independent statutory engagement with QQI under the QQI Act (2012) (Sections 28, 30 and 34-35), DCU shall recognise the findings of engagement with QQI with respect to institutional level procedures and the effectiveness of their implementation. In these instances, DCU shall implement a range of procedures, specifically addressing the approval, and subsequent review of implementation and effectiveness at programme type and/or level of award of programmes leading to a DCU award.

### **Revision and Renewal of Academic Regulations and Policies by Academic Council**

During 2017/18, DCU Academic Council approved revisions to two policies,

- Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis (June 2018)
- DCU Academic Integrity and Plagiarism Policy (June 2018)

### **1.3 The schedule of QA governance meetings.**

**Quality Promotion Committee Meetings**

20<sup>th</sup> September 2017, 15<sup>th</sup> November 2017, 17<sup>th</sup> January 2018, 14<sup>th</sup> March 2018, 16<sup>th</sup> May 2018, 27<sup>th</sup> June 2018 and 19<sup>th</sup> September 2018.

**Governing Authority Meetings**

7<sup>th</sup> September 2017, 19<sup>th</sup> October 2017, 8<sup>th</sup> December 2017, 8<sup>th</sup> February 2018, 26<sup>th</sup> April 2018, 21<sup>st</sup> June 2018, 6<sup>th</sup> September 2018, 25<sup>th</sup> October 2018 and 7<sup>th</sup> December 2018

**Education Committee Meetings**

20<sup>th</sup> September 2017, 18<sup>th</sup> October 2017, 15<sup>th</sup> November 2017, 13<sup>th</sup> December 2017, 17<sup>th</sup> January 2018, 14<sup>th</sup> February 2018, 14<sup>th</sup> March 2018, 4<sup>th</sup> April 2018, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup> May 2018, 19<sup>th</sup> September 2018.

**University Standards Committee Meetings**

7<sup>th</sup> September 2017, 9<sup>th</sup> November 2017, 11<sup>th</sup> January 2018, 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2018, 5<sup>th</sup> April 2018, 31<sup>st</sup> May 2018, 6<sup>th</sup> September 2018.

**DCU Executive**

5<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> September 2017, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> & 31<sup>st</sup> October 2017, 14<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup> November 2017, 12<sup>th</sup> December 2017, 9<sup>th</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2018, 6<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> February 2018, 6<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> March 2018, 3<sup>rd</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> April 2018, 1<sup>st</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup> May 2018, 12<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> June 2018, 10<sup>th</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup> July 2018, 4<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> September 2018.

**Academic Council**

4<sup>th</sup> October 2017, 6<sup>th</sup> December 2017, 7<sup>th</sup> February 2018, 11<sup>th</sup> April 2018, 6<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> June 2018.

**Graduate Research Study Board**

4<sup>th</sup> September 2017, 19<sup>th</sup> October 2017, 30<sup>th</sup> November 2017, 18<sup>th</sup> January 2018, 1<sup>st</sup> March 2018, 26<sup>th</sup> April 2018, 24<sup>th</sup> May 2018, 21<sup>st</sup> June 2018, 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2018.

**Research Committee**

20<sup>th</sup> September 2017, 15<sup>th</sup> November 2017, 17<sup>th</sup> January 2018, 21<sup>st</sup> March 2018, 16<sup>th</sup> May 2018

**Section 2: Reviews in the reporting period**

**2.1** Internal reviews that were completed in the reporting period.

**Programme-related approvals by Academic Council 2017-2018**

***Validation recommendations towards accreditation***

- MSc in Climate Change: Policy, Media and Society
- MA in European Law and Policy
- MA in Creative Writing
- MSc in Diagnostics and Precision Medicine
- MSc in Psychology and Well-being

- MSc in Psychology (Conversion)
- BEd leading to the following awards:
  - BEd in Gaeilge and French
  - BEd in Gaeilge and German
  - BEd in Gaeilge and Spanish
- MEd (Autism Spectrum)

***Accreditation recommendations in respect of new programmes***

- MSc in Climate Change: Policy, Media and Society
- MSc in International Accounting and Business
- MA in Creative Writing
- MA in European Law and Policy
- MSc in Diagnostics and Precision Medicine
- MSc in Psychology and Well-being
- MSc in Psychology (Conversion)
- BEd leading to the following awards:
  - BEd in Gaeilge and French
  - BEd in Gaeilge and German
  - BEd in Gaeilge and Spanish

***Retitling of programmes***

- MSc in Multimedia **to** MSc in Emerging Media
- MSc in Science Communication **to** MSc in Science and Health Communication
- MA in Film and Television Studies **to** MA in Contemporary Screen Industries
- BA in Theology and Lifelong Education **to** BA in Theology and Religious Studies
- Correction to title MSc in Climate Change: Policy, Media and Society
- BA in Contemporary Culture and Society **to** BA in Social Sciences and Cultural Innovation
- Higher Diploma in Science in Software Development **to** Higher Diploma in Software Development

***Restructuring of programmes***

- BEng/MEng in Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering and BEng/MEng in Biomedical Engineering
- Doctor of Education
- Introduction of an optional year-long INTRA work placement option to the following programmes for those entering first year in 2018:
  - Bachelor of Arts: Joint Honours
  - BA in International Relations
  - BA in Economics, Politics and Law
  - BA in Applied Languages and Translation Studies
  - BA in Contemporary Culture and Society / BA in Social Sciences and Cultural Innovation
- International Foundation Programme (EduCo ) as entry pathways at undergraduate and postgraduate level

***Newly-constituted programmes***

- New entry route and pathway: BEd through the Medium of Irish (Boid trí Ghaeilge)
- Bachelor of Education, Irish Sign Language route/pathway

- BSc in Nursing (restructure in line with standards and requirements of Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI))
- MSc in Nursing/Health Care Practice additional streams
- Bachelor of Arts: Joint Honours: Additional stream Addition of Philosophy as a subject option

***Collaborative Provision arrangements, taught programmes/Change of mode of delivery***

- MEng in Electronic and Computer Engineering with Wuhan University, People's Republic of China
- MSc in Diagnostics and Precision Medicine with Arizona State University
- MEng in Electronic and Computer Engineering with Beijing Normal University (BNU)

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

Number of new <b>Programme Validations/Programme Approvals</b> completed in the reporting year	<b>8</b>
Number of <b>Programme Reviews</b> completed in the reporting year	8
Number of <b>Research Reviews</b> completed in the reporting year	16
Number of <b>School/Department/Faculty Reviews</b> completed in the reporting year	1
Number of <b>Service Unit Reviews</b> completed in the reporting year	2
Number of <b>Reviews of Arrangements with partner organisations</b> completed in the reporting year	3

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

External Affairs, 2 Internal, 3 External (2 Irish and 1 UK) Chair was Irish Industry Presidents Office, 2 Internal, 3 External (2 Irish and 1 UK) Chair was Irish Similar Institution) School of Maths, 2 Internal, 3 External (2 Irish and 1 UK) Chair was UK Similar Institution)

<b>Composition of Panels</b>	<b>%</b>
Internal - 6	<b>40</b>

National - 6	40
UK - 3	20
EU	
Student	
Other	

Chair Profile	%
Internal	0
Similar Institution -1	33
Different Institution -1	33
International -1	33

### 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.

#### **Data used to inform Annual and Periodic Programme Review**

APR and PPR are developed as a tool to facilitate critical reflection on a programme based on data and information from 3 sources:

- **Student profile and performance data** (including progression, award classification profiles, student growth, entry tariff information, widening participation information)
- **Student feedback information**- either feedback provided during programme award boards, informal feedback, or student surveys. The DCU Quality Promotion Office provides a 3-year consolidated report of ISSE results at subject area, and where possible programme level to support annual and periodic programme review. Student feedback received at modular level as part of the Quality and Enhancement of Student Teaching (QuEST) also informs the student feedback element of annual programme review.
- Module reports submitted by **external examiners**.

- Additional student performance information is reviewed during periodic programme review, including **prior education attainment profiles of registered students, graduate and outcome information** from the HEA First Destination Report among others.

### **Data used to inform Unit, School and Faculty Reviews**

Units are encouraged and supported by the institutional research function within the university to collect and use both quantitative and qualitative information to support self-assessment. This data may include,

- A student statistical profile pack, providing a range of student applications, intake, progression and other profile information.
- For academic areas under review, information relating to the number of research active staff within the area, and the proportion of research outputs published within top quartile journals.
- Irish Student Survey of Engagement reports, relevant to the Area under review (e.g. School/ Faculty level reports) are provided to the quality review teams to support self-assessment
- Information and data on overall budgets within the area under review, with further data on research income, including the source of research funding
- Information on space allocated within an area under review
- Information and data pertaining to benchmark performance in key areas, including rankings, research performance and comparable funding benchmarks.
- Where appropriate, the presentation of bibliometric reporting systems, including SciVal to report on and benchmark research outputs published in journals reflected in the Scopus Database.

### **Data Analysis Reports used by University Committees**

Committees with responsibilities for decision making and discussion on quality assurance and enhancement within the university frequently use quantitative analysis of operations to support decision-making on quality enhancement and planning. These include regular analysis reports supplied to DCU Education Committee, Graduate Studies Committee, DCU Executive, Academic Council and Heads and Deans Group.

Since January 2010, Education Committee has actively identified and monitored progression of students identified as ‘at risk’. Students were identified as being “at risk” of non-progression in cases where individuals receive a fail grade in two or more modules completed in the first semester of their programme. Identified students were subsequently profiled relative to all undergraduate entering students. To date, this profiling has focused on prior educational attainment, student entering from underrepresented groups in higher education, and the CAO preference of their programme of study. The number of “at risk” students identified in the current model typically represent between 10-12% of the total undergraduate entering cohort, but represent just under half of all non-progressing students at DCU. Information relating to students is provided to faculties and schools for follow-up contact to offer appropriate supports.

### **DCU Participation in the Irish Student Survey of Engagement**

During 2017/18 DCU continued its commitment to encouraging relevant student cohorts to participate in the Irish Student Survey of Engagement. In 2017/18, the University, in partnership with the DCU Students’ Union co-ordinated across a multi-campus DCU, with promotional activity on all 3

teaching campuses. Incentives, funded by both the DCU Quality Promotion Office and the DCU Students' Union were also used to increase participation rates.

In 2017/18, The QPO improved reporting of ISSE analysis and results to the DCU Community through the development of dynamic Tableau-based reports.

### **Data provided to staff using the Guru System**

The Guru System is a student information platform which provides student, module and programme information to academic staff at DCU through a user-friendly interface. In addition to data provision and statistical analysis, it is also used in the digital generation, uploading and external review of examination papers. More information about the Guru system can be found at the following [link](#).

The Guru system at DCU currently delivers the following statistical information to academic staff members on student registrations/performance:

- Student performance over time
- Student performance in individual modules compared to module trend
- Module Registrations (broken by categories of registrations)
- Module Comparative Difficulty (Linear Regression - broken down by Programme intake)
- Module Results Banding (CA/Exam/Overall clustering)
- Module Box Plots (showing upper and lower quartiles)
- Programme Registrations over time
- Programme Level View of Module Level Difficulty
- Programme Results Banding
- Programme Box Plots
- Retention Statistics and Graduation Rates for a Cohort
- Programme View of Module level registrations
- Module Pass/Fail Rates on a Programme
- Grade Attainment over Time (Programme)
- Geographical Location of Students on Programme (Anonymised)
- Traffic Light Student View (Highlighting struggling students)
- School Registrations (by category)
- Grade Attainment over Time (School)
- Pass/Failure Rates by Category (School)
- Faculty Registrations (by category)
- Grade Attainment over Time (Faculty)
- Pass/Failure Rates by Category (Faculty)

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

**DCU Participation in the Cinnte Institutional Review**

In 2018, DCU was the first Irish University to participate in the Cinnte Institutional Review process. The main review visit took place in October 2018, and during 2017/18 the University completed its Self-Evaluation Report for this review.

In December 2017, to initiate the process of self-evaluation for this review, DCU Executive Committee established an Institutional Review Steering Group to lead the institution’s self-evaluation and planning for the CINNTE Institutional Review. Chaired by the DCU Deputy President, Prof. Daire Keogh, the 26-member group included membership from among senior academic and professional staff from across the institution, as well as three student representatives. The Steering Group was first convened on 13th December 2017 and met monthly during January to June 2018. In addressing the objectives of the CINNTE Institutional Review, the Steering Group utilised, where possible, existing sources of data and analysis to inform its self-reflection. In addition, the Steering Group established three sub-groups to define the scope of data collection activities within three identified stakeholder groups, i.e. DCU staff, DCU students and external stakeholders. For each of the three identified stakeholder groups, the University designed and developed additional approaches to gain insights on specific items of relevance to this review.

**3.3 A description of other implementation issues.**

As above.

## 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.

#### DCU Institutional Review

The effectiveness of DCU QA processes and procedures shall be fully explored within the Cinnte Institutional Review, which will be completed during the 2018/19 academic year. As part of Cinnte Institutional Review self-evaluation process, in 2017/18 DCU conducted a number of surveys of external reviewers on Programme Accreditation and Internal Quality Reviews.

#### External Feedback from Reviewers on Programme Accreditation Processes

This DCU-designed survey included questions on the quality of information and documentation provided prior to an Accreditation Board, the value of the Accreditation Board, and completion of the final Accreditation Report as an output of the Board. Of the 55 external members invited to participate, DCU received 21 responses (38%).

The survey results indicate very high levels of satisfaction with the information provided to external accreditation board members, including the documentation provided, the clarity of the assessment criteria and time allowed for review of proposal documentation.

In relation to the quality of the programme proposal, external reviewers were generally satisfied with the completeness of the programme proposal document, with at least 75% of respondents considering the documentation either 'good' or 'very good'.

Similarly, survey respondents noted very high levels of satisfaction with the conduct of the accreditation board, and the completeness and promptness of the final accreditation report, compiled at the conclusion of the Board's deliberations, with at least 80% considering the process to be either 'good' or 'very good'.

#### External Feedback from Reviewers on Internal Quality Reviews

DCU distributed a short survey to all external PRG members, who had participated in a quality review since 2015/16. The survey asked a number of satisfaction based questions on aspects of the quality review process, including documentation and preparation ahead of a PRG visit, arrangements and the quality of interactions with stakeholders during the PRG visit, and satisfaction with follow-up procedures following the review visit. The survey, disseminated to 37 reviewers, received an overall response rate of 51%. Full results of the survey are included in Appendix 2.

External review members expressed high levels of satisfaction with the quality and timeliness of the documentation received prior to the PRG visit, and the quality of communication with the QPO ahead of the visit, which included the clarity of the briefing provided to PRG members at the start of the visit.

Similarly, external reviewers expressed high levels of satisfaction with logistical arrangements to support the review, and the availability of additional information provided to PRG members during the review to support their discussions and findings. Respondents to the survey were equally satisfied with the quality of the interactions with staff and senior management during the review, including the availability of relevant stakeholders throughout the timetable, which facilitated the group in their findings.

Over 90% of respondents also cited high levels of satisfaction with the follow-up procedures following the PRG visit.

## 2. Impact

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

### Progress on Quality Improvement Plans in 2017/18

Progress has been made during 2017/18 on the implementation of a number of Quality Improvement Plans developed in response to internal quality reviews at DCU. Examples of implementation during 2017/18 include,

- The **School of Chemical Sciences** has implemented a renewal of both the BSc in Chemical and Pharmaceutical Science and BSc in Analytical Science degrees. This process was completed with significant input from Industry and has addressed the future needs of industry.
- The **School of Nursing and Human Science** has conducted an externally-facilitated review and consideration of future structures for the School, resulting in an agreed restructure model that will lead to the creation of two Schools– a School of Psychology, and a School of Nursing, Psychotherapy and Community Health.
- The **School of Health and Human Performance** established new School management structures. The new management team includes the Head of School, Deputy Head, 3 Programme Chairs and one other senior academic. Meetings are now conducted monthly within the School.
- The **President's Office** have made a number of appointments in response to their Quality review, including increasing capacity in relation to event management and co-ordination by the Office.

### 3. Themes

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

#### Themes identified in Programmatic Review

The process of Annual Programme Review (APR) is managed within the faculties at DCU, and the outputs of individual programme reviews are discussed at Faculty Teaching & Learning Committees and, in turn, a summary of the issues raised are considered by Faculty Management Boards. Issues that can be resolved at Faculty level are actioned at that level; issues that cannot be (fully) resolved at faculty level are brought to the DCU Education Committee, where the key issues are discussed and where appropriate issued raised are actioned for response. The 2017/18 programmatic reviews relate to the academic 2016/17. In 2017/18 these reviews include programmes from the DCU Institute of Education for the first time. Examples of themes arising from the 2017/18 programme review cycle include,

- Acknowledgement of the positive impact of teaching facility refurbishment, and investment in teaching and laboratory equipment in a number of areas
- Noting of challenges in relation to increases in academic administration for Programme Chairs, alignment of academic calendars, and cross-campus travel for students as a result of the completion of the Incorporation process.
- Noting of the continued challenge of meeting ambitions for high quality programme delivery given funding constraints, particularly in relation to staffing and equipment
- A number of Faculties note the imminent curriculum renewal to be delivered as part of the DCU Strategy. These include the extension of work-based learning opportunities into Humanities and Social Sciences

#### Themes identified in the Internal Review Cycle

Cyclical quality reviews are by their nature, unique, given the particular focus on an individual School, Faculty or professional support unit. However, they can also be reflective of the effectiveness of the implementation of institutional policy, practice, strategy and priorities at unit level. The 2017/18 reviews focus on one academic School, and two professional support offices. A selection of some of the themes identified from these reviews include,

- Identified opportunities for a focused re-engineering of administrative processes in a number of areas using Lean approaches to process design, in collaboration with the Director of Strategic Information and Operational Excellence
- Establishment of cross-institutional structures to oversee and drive the implementation of the DCU Internationalisation and DCU Engagement Strategies
- The importance of planning for facilities development for teaching and learning to meet future requirements of professional accreditation of programmes

## 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.

#### **Quality Improvement and Development Funding (QuID), 2017/18**

In 2017/18, the Quality Promotion Committee led an internal competition for small funding grants for initiatives and projects which focus on quality improvement and development. In 2017/18, invitations were sought from both academic and administrative units on all campuses to apply for funds for projects aligned to the 2017/18 quality enhancement theme, “Enhancing Internal communications”. In total 22 applications were received, and 11 successful projects were funded, from a funding allocation almost €23,000.

#### **DCU Participation in N-STEP**

In 2017/18, DCU participated in the NStEP initiative, a national programme co-sponsored by the HEA, QQI, and USI. To lead the University’s participation, a cross-institutional working group was established, co-chaired by the university Deputy President and the President of DCU Students’ Union. The purpose of working group was to analyse and evaluate the role of student representation and engagement in contributing to the direction of learning at DCU.

As part of the NStEP initiative, the university conducted a review of the breadth of student representation on University and Faculty level decision-making bodies. Whilst student representation has always formed a significant part of these structures, this review provided an opportunity to identify the appropriateness of the level of student representation across all key university committees and decision-making structures. The working group also aimed to create a model of partnership between the University and DCU Students’ Union to encourage increased participation in the ISSE survey. The result of the implementation of this plan saw participation rates between 2016/17 and 2017/18, increase from 26% to 34%, with increases in participation in all Faculties of the University.

A further initiative piloted as part of the NStEP initiative was the piloting of a Student Voice Forum in one school (School of Applied Languages) and one Faculty (Engineering and Computing).

#### **Introduction of INTRA Placements to programmes in Humanities and Social Sciences**

During 2017/18 DCU Education Committee approved a proposal for the development of optional year-long INTRA work-placements on a number of programmes delivered by the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. The implementation of this proposal will see INTRA placements being made available to an additional 1,000 undergraduate students by 2019/2020.

#### **Initiation of a Project to delivery new Student Information System**

A project that will lead to the procurement and rollout of a new Student Information System (SIS) was initiated in 2017. Phase one of the project was completed in January 2018, with the identification of the functional and technical requirements of the system. This process involved a series of collaborative workshops and interviews across the institution. The procurement of a new SIS system will play a key role in the experience of students both on and off campus. Given the complexity of the system and its requirement to interface with a range of other key IT systems and business processes, the new SIS will also enable a new phase of reporting capabilities for the university. Functionality for reporting and analytics is included as part of the critical requirements identified.

#### **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.

#### **Discover DCU**

A major development in 2017/18 has been the development of an online series of courses called 'Discover DCU', which provides interactive sessions with students to help them navigate their new campus environment. Modules are made available to students accepting offers at DCU, prior to formal registration and orientation. The resource covers the campus community and introduces ways of becoming involved; explores study skills and provides guidance on how to improve on these and where to find additional resources; explains the VLE and how this will be used throughout their studies; and outlines how to approach writing a piece of academic work at third level.

## **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 2018 – 31 August 2019).**

#### **5.1 Quality Assurance and Enhancement System Plans**

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

### **DCU Institutional Review- Main Visit and Outcomes**

During 2018/19, DCU shall participate in the Main Review visit of the Cinnte Institutional Review, and anticipate the publication of the final report of the review team in April 2019. Upon receipt of the final report, DCU will response to the report and prepare a quality improvement action plan in line with the recommendations of the review team.

### **Curriculum Renewal at DCU**

The 2017-2022 Strategic plan commits the University to a systematic review of the curriculum and learning design of our degree programmes with a focus on the learning experience of the individual student and their ability to flourish in the outside world. During 2017/18, curriculum renewal has been embedded as a key priority of the DCU strategies and work on learning design and implementation of renewal shall be progressed during 2018/19

### **DCU FutureLearn Partnership**

In September 2018 DCU became a global strategic partner of FutureLearn. This partnership is likely to provide significant opportunities in the student experience, teaching and learning, and internationalisation. In December 2018, DCU was successful in securing €1.4million from the HEA Innovation and Transformation Fund to implement teaching and learning initiatives and projects through this partnership.

### **Final Agreement with HEA on Mission-based Performance-Based Compact**

During 2018/19, DCU will reach final agreement and begin work toward achievement of objectives and targets for HEA Compact Agreement. These targets, for implementation between 2018/19 and 2020/21 are aligned to 6 broad national thematic areas and reflect the priorities of the DCU Strategic Plan 2017-2022.

## **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.

### **Cinnte Institutional Review**

Main Site Visit- 22<sup>nd</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> October, 2018

### **Internal Reviews**

28<sup>th</sup> February-1<sup>st</sup> March 2019- Office of Student Life

27<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> March 2019- Student Support and Development

22<sup>nd</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> May 2019- Office of Chief Operations Office

## **5.3 Other Plans**

Initial planning will take place in 2018/19 to develop a scope and terms of reference for a thematic review of Digital Learning at DCU, due to be completed during 2019/2020.

## 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.

During 2017/18 DCU spent significant time in preparation for participation in the Cinnte Institutional Review.

In December 2017, DCU Executive Committee established an Institutional Review Steering Group to lead the institution's self-evaluation and planning for the CINNTE Institutional Review. Chaired by the DCU Deputy President, Prof. Daire Keogh, the 26-member group included membership from among senior academic and professional staff from across the institution, as well as three student representatives. The Steering Group's Terms of Reference (TOR) included coordinating the University's response to the QQI CINNTE Review. Further, the group were responsible for contributing to the collection of information and data to support the analysis and completion of the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (I-SER).

The Steering Group was first convened on 13th December 2017 and met monthly during January to June 2018. In addressing the objectives of the CINNTE Institutional Review, the Steering Group utilised, where possible, existing sources of data and analysis to inform its self-reflection. In addition, for each of the three identified stakeholder groups, the University designed and developed additional approaches to gain insights on specific items of relevance to this review. The Steering Group established three sub-groups to define the scope of data collection activities within three identified stakeholder groups, i.e. DCU staff, DCU students and external stakeholders.

The University submitted its Institutional Self-Evaluation Report to QQI on 23<sup>rd</sup> July, 2018, in preparation for the planning and main site visit by the Peer Review Team in September and October 2018.

### 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.

DCU's participation in the QQI CINNTE Review comes at a time of significant change for the institution, and during a dynamic and challenging time for Higher Education in Ireland. The University has transformed considerably since its participation in the Institutional Review of Irish Universities (IRIU) in 2010, most notably, as a result, of the completion of the incorporation of DCU with three teacher education colleges, St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Mater Dei Institute of Education, and Church of Ireland College of Education. In developing its latest strategy (2017-2022), Talent, Discovery and Transformation, DCU has established objectives that will see the University leverage the strengths of our extended University community. The objectives and goals outlined in the strategy will support the University in delivering on our ambitions through meeting the highest standards in teaching, research, innovation and engagement with our stakeholders.

The Cinnte Institutional Review was therefore considered to be a useful tool in evaluating the effectiveness of the quality assurance processes and procedures that assure the University of the effectiveness and quality of our activities and alignment of these to our strategic goals and overall mission.

### **6.3 Themes**

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

The process of self-evaluation has led to the identification of a number of themes and identified areas of improvement by DCU. These themes have been considered by the Institutional Review Steering Group, and will be discussed and considered further through the peer-review element of Institutional Review in October 2018.