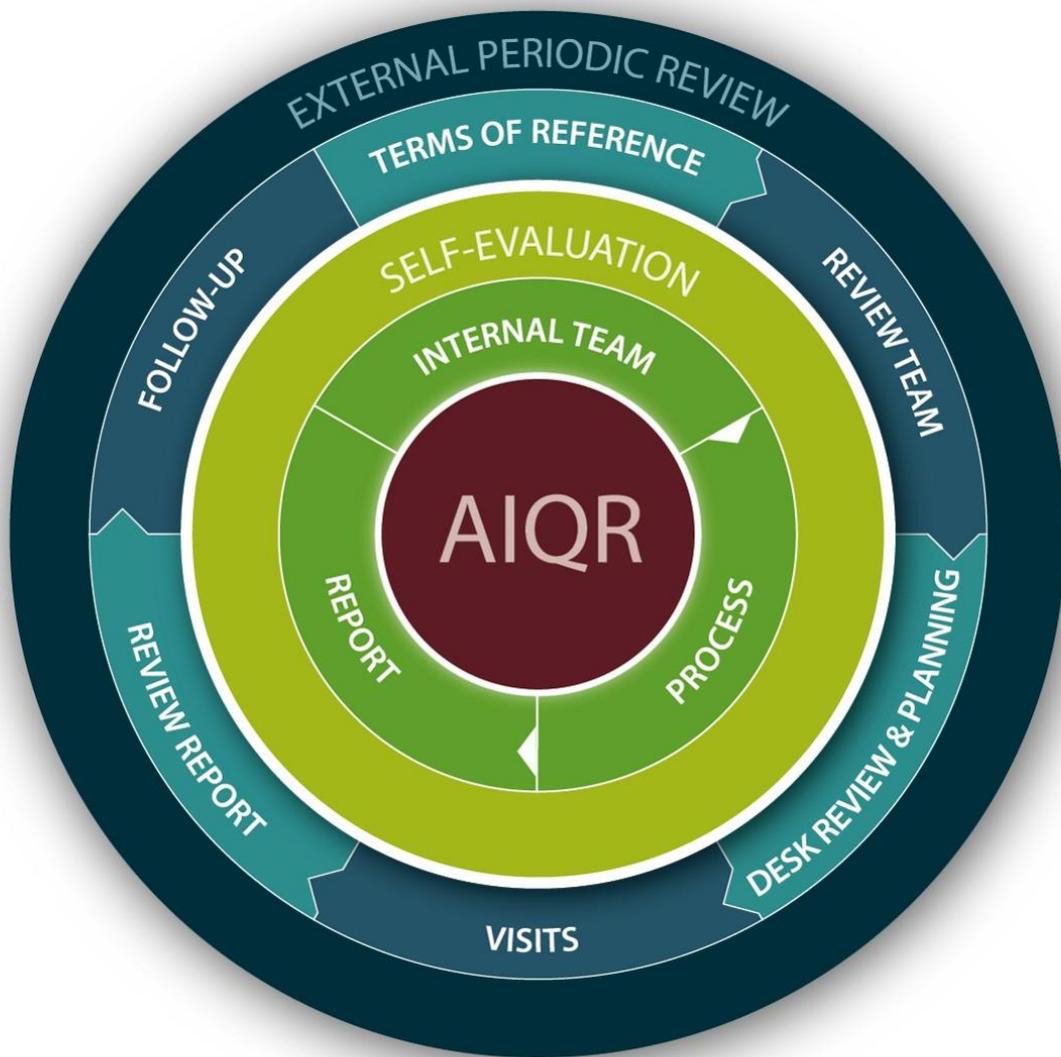


Dublin City University

Annual Institutional Quality Assurance Report 2017

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



The Cyclical Review Process

AIQR - PART 1

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

DCU Strategy 2012-2017, Transforming Lives and Societies

The current DCU Strategic Plan, [Transforming Lives and Societies 2012-2017](#), sets out a clear vision for the university, in which *DCU will be recognised internationally as a research-intensive, globally-engaged University of Enterprise that is distinguished both by the quality and impact of its graduates and its focus on the translation of knowledge into societal and economic benefit.*

The current strategic plan is structured around **four Core Principles** which succinctly capture the identity, culture and multidisciplinary approach expressed in our Mission, Vision and Values: Transformation, Enterprise, Translation and Engagement, and **two Foundations**, which reflect the fundamental prerequisites for any University of quality and impact: Academic Excellence and Operational Excellence.

The implementation of the DCU strategy is informed by 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.

In 2016/17 DCU will develop a new university strategic plan. This shall be the first strategic plan to be published 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 development of this plan will set out a new vision and strategic objectives for the university for the next 4 years. The process of strategic planning will be supported from within the DCU Quality Promotion Office, and will include considerable institutional analysis to support decision-making during this process. One further aspect of the strategic consultations and discussions will include the review of outputs from quality reviews in the last 5 years to identify key quality related themes which will be considered as part of the planning process.

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.

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 actively aligns its activities with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and relevant QQI QA Guidelines.

HEA-DCU Performance Based Compact

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](#). Goals which are specifically related to quality assurance are outlined within this agreement, as follows:

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

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

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

DCU Governing Authority

DCU Governing Authority 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 Governing Authority has a specific schedule of matters, called reserved functions, for which it alone is has the decision-making function in the University, to ensure the proper management and control of the University. The membership of the DCU Governing Authority can be found [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.

Governing Authority 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 Governing Authority member also acts and as a liaison between the Authority and the DCU Quality Promotion Office.

DCU Executive

The primary functions of the University's Executive include contributing to the future direction of DCU by advising the President on issues of major strategic and operational importance, promoting effective communication across all areas of the University and providing a forum which brings a broad perspective on discussion

and decision-making that have University-wide implications. The Executive membership is drawn from the University senior leadership, student representatives and elected memberships representing academic and professional support staff at DCU. Terms of reference for the DCU Executive Committee can be found at the following [link](#).

Quality Promotion Committee

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](#).

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) can be found [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 to this portfolio, and evaluating the viability of proposals for new programmes.

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

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Programme Design and Approval

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

Validation proposals are submitted for approval by the relevant Faculty, and then undergo scrutiny by the Education Committee.

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
- Financial Resources required (using the template from the Finance Office)
- 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 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.

Before a programme can proceed to accreditation, the Executive Dean of 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:

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

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](#).

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

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Programme Delivery and Assessment

University Standards Committee

University Standards Committee, which is 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.

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 responsibility for the updating, maintenance and publication of the Marks and Standards document rests with the Registry.

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), 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 & Award Boards (PABs) are made up of all of the lecturers who teach on a specific programme of study at DCU and the relevant external examiners. Each Board is chaired by the Programme Chairperson. 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 & Award Board. Such appeals are processed in accordance with the Examination Appeals Board Regulations, as approved by Academic Council. Further information on examination appeals 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 Policy can be found at the following [link](#).

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Research Quality**DCU Research Committee**

Decision-making and strategic-level discussion on research at DCU is led by the [DCU Research Committee](#) and two subcommittees, the Research Advisory Panel and the Research Ethics Committee. Other sites of particular relevance to the research community are as follows:

[Recognition and Review of DCU Research Centres](#)

[Research Integrity Policy at DCU](#)

Research Policies and Guidelines:

[Intellectual Property Policy](#) (internal access)

[Code of Good Research Practice](#)

[Code of Practice on Authorship](#)

[Policy for Responding to Allegations of Research Misconduct](#)

[Conflicts of Interest Policy](#)

[Consultancy Policy](#)

[Research Overheads Reporting Structure](#)

[Out of Hours Access Policy](#)

[Hosting International Researchers at DCU](#)

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](#)

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

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Student Lifecycle**DCU Admissions Principles and Policies**

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 policies 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 Policy

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 and 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

DCU student performance in taught modules is monitored by the DCU Education Committee after every diet of examinations, and end of year programme level pass-rate analysis discussed by Education Committee on an annual basis. The annual analysis includes sub-group analysis and Faculty-level reflection on the reasons for student performance in particularly challenging modules, where module level pass rates are low over a number of academic years.

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](#)

Do you have a Policy/Procedure in place for Teaching Staff? Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Teaching Staff

DCU Appointments and Promotions

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

[DCU Appointment Policy](#)

[DCU Promotions Policy](#)

[Accelerated Progression From Lecturer Below Bar to Lecturer above Bar](#)

[Promotion to Senior Lecturer](#)

[Policy for Targeted Promotion to Senior Lecturer Grade](#)

[Promotion to Associate Professor](#)

[Associate Professor - Policy & Procedures](#)

[Establishment of Personal Chairs at DCU](#)

[Process for Appointment of a Head of School](#)

Academic Staff Professional Development

DCU engages in a cross-institutional approach to delivering an enhanced range of academic staff development opportunities for both accredited and un-accredited professional development opportunities. Further information on the DCU staff training and development policy can be found [here](#).

DCU Learning and Development Section

The Learning and Development section of the Human Resources Department committed to supporting the training and development of all staff in DCU. Information on the range of development opportunities and services provided to staff can be found on their [website](#)

Research Career Framework

The Research Career Framework at DCU is designed to attract and retain Postdoctoral researchers, provide significant professional development and give the best opportunities in terms of their wider career path. 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 which underpin the Framework can be found [here](#).

DCU Mentoring Programme

DCU offers DCU 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 can be found [here](#).

Incorporation Programme Workshops

During the DCU Incorporation Programme, the DCU Training and Development Section facilitated over 50 workshops in 2015 and 2016. These sessions were designed to support meeting a need identified through the staff engagement focus groups for more face to face communications and will provide the opportunity for staff to meet colleagues from across the New DCU and engage with the Incorporation Programme. More information on these workshops can be found at the following [link](#).

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](#).

Do you have a Policy/Procedure in place for Teaching and Learning?

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Teaching and Learning

DCU Teaching and Learning Strategy

DCU's teaching focus is on interdisciplinary degrees, the application of knowledge, and responsiveness to the needs of industry and the broader society is unique in the Irish context, and continues to inform our teaching and learning strategy. Our teaching is guided by an inquiry-led pedagogy, reflecting DCU's guiding principles of translation and transformation; the translation of knowledge and the transformation of our students will continue to be cornerstones of our teaching and learning activities.

Almost 70% of our undergraduate students will take part in a structured internship or study abroad experience as part of their degree programme. In addition, the DCU undergraduate experience formally recognises and rewards the achievement of holistic education by accrediting a module in extra-curricular activities – the Uaneen Module. The Uaneen Module is a unique scheme that formally recognises the work undertaken and learning acquired by students in clubs, societies, community work and extra-curricular activity in general. In the 16 years since its launch, over 1,000 students have completed the Uaneen module at DCU.

The DCU Teaching and Learning Strategy is available to DCU students and staff at the following [link](#). (internal access only)

Do you have a Policy/Procedure in place for Resources and Support?

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Resources and Support

The DCU Student Experience Strategy

[The DCU Student Experience Strategy](#) (internal access only) builds on the concept of a student journey, a journey that passes through the stages of transitioning into third level education, entering a supportive and inclusive learning environment, encountering opportunities for personal growth and discovery and availing of numerous possibilities for ongoing professional development.

A key element of the DCU Student Experience Strategy is the Generation 21 Initiative and the 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 just under 900 students take up 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 and the Uaneen module, referred to as above.

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](#).

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](#).

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. More information on supports for mature entry and student support can be found at the following [link](#).

Information on the mature entry process for prospective students can be found [here](#).

Students With Disabilities:

DCU has a range of policies relating to the provision of appropriate support services for students with disabilities. Examples of a range of these policies are included 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](#)

Access/ Socio-Economic Disadvantage

The DCU access programme is the largest programme of its kind in Ireland. In 2015/16, over 1000 DCU students who come from socio-economically disadvantaged areas, including students from ethnic minorities and students from the traveller community were registered with DCU Access Services.

Further information on the procedures for access to the DCU Access Programme can be found [here](#).

Further information on post-entry supports for Students studying at DCU through the DCU Access Programme can be found [here](#).

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](#).

Skills4studycampus provides a range of online tutorials, accessible to students on the DCU Virtual Learning Environment, Loop. The modules are focused on general academic study skills, each module offers an optional diagnostic test which helps students focus on the areas where they will benefit most. Modules include Getting Ready for Academic Study, Reading and Note-Making, Critical Thinking Skills, Assignment Writing Skills, Group work and Presentations, Exam Skills, Projects, Dissertations and Reports, and Time Management. More information on Study4Skills can be found [here](#).

Do you have a Policy/Procedure for Information Management?

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Information Management

Information Management Policies at DCU

The university has a range of policies relating to the collection, storage and use of data and information within the university. Relevant policies and links to these policies are provided below:

[DCU Data Handling Guidelines](#)

[DCU Data Protection Guidelines](#)

[DCU Data Breach Code of Practice](#)

[DCU Social Media Usage Policy](#)

Guru

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](#).

DCU Institutional Research and Analysis

Institutional Research and Analysis assists the Univeristy 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.

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

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Self-evaluation and Monitoring

The [DCU Quality Assurance Structure](#) 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](#).

Do you have a Policy/Procedure for Stakeholder Engagement?

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Stakeholder Engagement

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.

Do you have a Policy/Procedure for Engagement with other Bodies?

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Engagement with other Bodies

DCU's strategic plan 2012-2017 identified *Engagement* as a core strategic principle for the university. Leadership for initiatives on external engagement in DCU are led through the [Office of the Vice-President for Academic 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.

[Invent](#) is DCU's Innovation and Enterprise Centre based on the main DCU campus. Invent lead the identification of opportunities for partnership between DCU and industry through state funded innovation partnerships. Invent promotes and encourages industry sponsored PhD programmes, student placements and industry sponsored post-doctoral fellowships availing of financial incentives from Science Foundation Ireland and the Irish Research Council. Invent also provides business incubation facilities, 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 and the general public.

Do you have a Policy/Procedure for Provision and use of Public Information?

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Provision and use of Public Information

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](#).

Do you have a Policy/Procedure for Linked Providers?

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Linked Providers (DABs only)

Quality assurance procedures for validation and accreditation of programmes delivered by Linked Colleges were subject to the same procedures as DCU proposed programmes, and follow the same process outlined in section 2.2 of this report.

In recent years, DCU Quality Promotion Office and the relevant Officers in incorporating institutions worked together closely to align processes in relation to the area reviews within linked colleges, supporting the introduction of programmatic review structures where relevant, and preparing for the Incorporation of three of the linked colleges, which was finalised and then formally implemented.

Do you have a Policy/Procedure for Collaborative Provision?

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Collaborative Provision

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

More information on the DCU Policy on Joint Research Supervision and Awards can be found at the following [link](#).

Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies

First Set of Records

Type of Arrangement

PRSB

Name of the Body

Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business

Programme Titles and Links to Publications

All Business Programmes delivered and awarded by Dublin City University

Date of last review or accreditation

21-04-2016

Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies

Second Set of Records

Type of Arrangement

PRSB

Name of the Body

An Bord Altranais

Programme Titles and Links to Publications	All undergraduate nursing programmes
Date of last review or accreditation	01-01-2015
Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies	Third Set of Records
Type of Arrangement	PRSB
Name of the Body	The Teaching Council
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	Professional Master of Education (PME)
Date of last review or accreditation	12-05-2014
Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies	Fourth Set of Records
Type of Arrangement	PRSB
Name of the Body	Engineers Ireland
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	BEng Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering BEng Biomedical Engineering
Date of last review or accreditation	01-01-2015
Next review year	2020
Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies	Fifth Set of Records
Type of Arrangement	PRSB
Name of the Body	Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI)
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	BSc in Psychology
Date of last review or accreditation	01-01-2013
Next review year	2018
Joint/double/multiple awards	5
Collaborative programmes	2

Linked providers (DABs only)	2
Section: Collaborative Provision	First Set of Records
Type of arrangement:	Joint/double/multiple awards
Name of the Body (Bodies)	Northeastern University, Boston Neoma Business School, Reims, France European School of Business, Reutlingen, Germany ICADE at the Universidad Pontificia Comillas, Madrid, Spain Brock University, Ontario, Canada
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	BA in Global Business (France) 126 BA in Global Business (Germany) 121 BA in Global Business (Spain) 77 BA in Global Business (USA) 47 BA Global Business Canada 7
Section: Collaborative Provision	Second Set of Records
Type of arrangement:	Collaborative programmes
Name of the Body (Bodies)	3U Partnership- DCU, RSCI, Maynooth University
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	MEng in Healthcare Technologies 4 MSc in Humanitarian Log & Emergency Mgt 18
Section: Collaborative Provision	Third Set of Records
Type of arrangement:	Linked providers (DABs only)
Name of the Body (Bodies)	Dundalk Institute of Technology
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	MA Research PhD
Type of arrangement:	Linked providers (DABs only)
Name of the Body (Bodies)	Ballyfermot College of Further and Higher Education
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	BA Media Production Management
Articulation Agreements	1
Section: 1 Articulation Agreements	First Set of Records

Name of the Body	Coláiste Dhúlaigh College of Further Education
Name of the Programme and Links to Publications	BSc Business Studies
Section: Internal Review Schedule	First Set of Records
Year	2015/16
Areas/Units	Library 14th – 16th October 2015 School of Biotechnology 2nd – 4th December 2015 Faculty of Engineering and Computing 22nd – 24th April 2016
Number	3
Link(s) to Publication(s)	http://www.dcu.ie/qpo/published-reviews.shtml
Section: Internal Review Schedule	Second Set of Records
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 Publication(s)	http://www.dcu.ie/qpo/published-reviews.shtml
Section: Internal Review Schedule	Third Set of Records
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, March 2018.
Number	3
Submission	Final Submission

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

A piece in relation to the evolution of quality assurance and enhancement systems to support strategic objectives in the reporting period.

Quality Assurance and Enhancement System Developments

Over the period of review, the quality assurance structures remained relatively stable.

DCU Incorporation Process

The completion of the legal phase of the Incorporation Programme was completed on 1st October, 2016, with the coming together of DCU with St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Mater Dei Institute of Education and Church of Ireland College of Education. The programme has resulted in the creation of the DCU Institute of Education, the first university Faculty of Education in Ireland, and the development of a significantly enhanced Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at DCU.

Restructuring of the Quality Promotion Office in 2015/16

In November 2015, DCU appointed a new Director of Quality Promotion and Institutional Research, to lead a Quality Promotion Office. The newly extended remit of the Quality Promotion Office now includes Institutional Research and Analysis and support for the strategic planning activities of the university. It is hoped that this restructuring will facilitate enhanced alignment between institutional analysis, quality review and promotion, and support for strategic planning at DCU.

Furthermore, following the completion of the Incorporation process, the requirement for a Quality Officer role was identified. Since September 2016, the Quality Promotion Office team has extended to 3.8 FTEs. More information on the team and their respective roles can be found on the DCU Quality Promotion Office [website](#).

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

Collaborative Academic Offerings at DCU

In 2015/16 the Graduate Studies Office, on behalf of the DCU Education Committee led the development of a process and system to facilitate the completion and submission of proposals for collaboration on academic offerings with external institutions. To date, progress has been made in the following areas:

- Division of responsibilities agreed with Executive
- Taxonomy of the breadth of academic activities approved
- Protocols for review and approval of proposals agreed
- The development of a prototype using the Guru system to facilitate review & capturing of approvals

Review of the templates for Annual Programme Review

During the reporting period, the template for Programme Chairs to complete Annual Programme Review (APR) has been reviewed by the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning at DCU, with the development of a revised template agreed and rolled-out during the academic year. It is anticipated that a review of the template and documentation required for Periodic Programme Review (PPR) will take place during 2016/17.

Approval of DCU Admission Principles

In February 2016, DCU Academic council approved a set of overarching Admissions Principles, providing a core set of values to underpin admission to the University. Details of the agreed principles can be found at the following [link](#).

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

Quality Promotion Committee Meetings for 2015/2016

16 September, 18 November 2015

20 January, 16 March, 18 May, 29 June, 21 September 2016

Governing Authority Meetings for 2015/2016

10 September, 22 October, 11 December 2015

11 February, 28 April, 23 June, 22 September, 28 October, 9 December 2016

Education Committee Meetings for 2015/2016

2, 30 September, 28 October, 2 December 2015

13 January, 17 February, 16 March, 6 April, 4 May, 1 June, 31 August 2016

University Standards Committee Meetings for 2015/2016

10 September, 12 December 2015

14 January 25 February, 31 March, 26 May, 8 September 2016

DCU Executive

6, 20, October, 3, 17 November, 1, 15 December 2015

12, 26 January, 9, 23 February, 8, 22 March, 5, 19 April, 3, 17, 31 May, 14, 28 June, 6, 20 September 2016

Academic Council

7 October, 9 December 2015

10 February, 13 April, 8, 20 June 2016

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

Reviews in the Reporting Period

Area/Unit and links to relevant publications

Library 14th – 16th October 2015
<https://www.dcu.ie/qpo/published-reviews.shtml>

Links to published internal reviews

Second Set of Records

Area/Unit and links to relevant publications

School of Biotechnology 2nd – 4th December 2015
<https://www.dcu.ie/qpo/published-reviews.shtml>

Links to published internal reviews

Third Set of Records

Area/Unit and links to relevant publications

Faculty of Engineering and Computing 22nd – 24th April 2016
<https://www.dcu.ie/qpo/published-reviews.shtml>

Number of internal approval/evaluations and reviews completed in respect of Validation/Programme Approval

15

Number of internal approval/evaluations and reviews completed in respect of Research Review.	0
Number of internal approval/evaluations and reviews completed in respect of School/Department/Faculty Review.	2
Number of internal approval/evaluations and reviews completed in respect of Service Unit Review.	1
Number of internal approval/evaluations and reviews completed in respect of Review of arrangements with a partner organisation.	0
Composition of Panels: % Internal	40
Composition of Panels: % National	80
Composition of Panels: % UK	20
Composition of Panels: % EU	0
Composition of Panels: % Student	0
Composition of Panels: % Other	0
Chair Profile: % Internal	0
Chair Profile: % Similar institution	100
Chair Profile: % International	100
PART 2 - Section 3: Update on Institutional QA Overview	Other Implementation Factors

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

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 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 application, 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.
- Area level input from student surveys, including any relevant analysis from the Irish Student Survey of Engagement.
- 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, 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 2015/16 DCU continued its commitment to encouraging relevant student cohorts to participate in the Irish Student Survey of Engagement. In 2015/16 a programme of activities to encourage participation was co-ordinated by the DCU Students' Union and the DCU Quality Promotion Office. For the first time, the ISSE survey fieldwork was co-ordinated simultaneously among all relevant cohorts in DCU, St Patrick's Drumcondra and Mater Dei Institute of Education. Incentives, funded by both the DCU Quality Promotion Office and the DCU Students' Union were also used to increase participation rates. At 32%, DCU has the highest rate of participation in the 2016 ISSE among Irish universities.

Data provided to staff of 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)

1st Year Student Experience Survey, 2015/16

DCU currently conducts a biennial 1st Year Student Experience Survey. In 2015/16, the survey focused on the following aspect of student life for new entrants to DCU:

Factors influencing a decision to attend DCU or other institutions

Awareness of Incorporation, and travel between campuses

Preparedness for aspects of university life

Satisfaction with a range of pre and post-entry supports

Interest in availing of study supportsThe results of the survey were reported to DCU Education Committee, DCU Heads and Deans Groups and the St Patrick's Drumcondra Quality Promotion Committee and St Patrick's Drumcondra Academic Council.

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

The DCU Incorporation Programme

During the reporting period, the Directors of Quality in DCU and St Patrick's College, Drumcondra in particular, have sought to align, where possible quality assurance processes. The Director of Quality Promotion at DCU has attended the St Patrick's Drumcondra Quality Promotion Committee meetings, and the Directors of Quality in both institutions have worked closely on the alignment of practice between both institutions. It is expected that the Incorporation Programme will continue to impact on the timing, format and outcomes of quality reviews regularly in the coming years.

Funding within Higher Education.

As noted in in the 2016 QQI report, 'Quality in an Era of Diminishing Resources', the impact of continued funding cuts and the Employment Control Framework have continued to impact on the institution's capacity to deliver the highest quality education during the reporting period. The impact of funding restrictions and the strain on current resources is identified regularly by Peer Review Groups as part of the Quality Review Cycle at DCU. During the reporting period, the university has attempted to manage funding and resource restraints through the consolidation of teaching into larger groups, and the reduction in the number of specialist pathways of study within programmes.

PART 3

Effectiveness and Impact

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

Quality Improvement Planning and Follow-up Meeting

Both the Universities Act (1997) and the Qualifications and Quality Assurance Act (2012) note the responsibilities of the university to implement each of the recommendations of the PRG Report, unless it would be impractical or unreasonable to do so. The decisions on improvement made in the follow-up process provide a framework within which each Area can continue to work towards the goal of developing and fostering a quality culture in the University.

Typically, the process of Quality Improvement Planning (QuIP) at DCU will be led by the Head of the Area under review, and will include broad consultation across the Area. The QuIP will address all the recommendations in the Peer Review Group report, and develop an action plan for quality improvement, including a timeframe for implementation. A draft Quality Improvement Plan is usually developed within 3 months of the Peer Review visit, and is provided to the university Quality Promotion Office, Senior Management Team, and two members of the Peer Review Group (one internal, one external) as the basis of a follow-up meeting, at which the Area's Quality Improvement Plan is agreed.

The draft Quality Improvement Plan should include:

- (a) A list of goals which can realistically be achieved in the following year
- (b) A list of longer-term goals to be achieved over three years.

In addition to the Area response to the PRG Report, the university leadership also submit an agreed university response to relevant aspects of the PRG report.

The Area under review also has an opportunity to apply for additional funding to support the implementation of specific projects identified within the Quality Improvement Plan. These are considered by the university Quality Promotion Committee and the Budget Committee of the University Executive, having regard to the resources available to the university for quality improvement purposes.

The Quality Improvement Plan is discussed and agreed at the **Follow-Up Meeting** with an external member of the Peer Review Group (PRG) who returns to DCU at the conclusion of the Quality Improvement Planning phase. This meeting is attended by the Deputy President of DCU, Director of Quality Promotion and Institutional Research, and two Peer Review Group members, usually the external Chair of the Peer Review Group and the internal rapporteur, who is also a member of the DCU Quality Promotion Committee. The purpose of the meeting is for the Head of the Area under review to update the PRG on progress made since the finalisation of the PRG Report, and discuss and agree the Quality Improvement Plan with the Area under review.

Reporting of Issues Raised within Annual Programme 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 issues raised are actioned for response.

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

Quality Improvement Funding

In 2015/16 the Quality Promotion Committee agreed to provide €125k funding across 4 academic and professional support Areas, in response to applications made to support the implementation of projects identified during the Quality Improvement Planning phase of Quality Review. Funding was provided for a range of initiatives including,

Match-funding to enable a significant upgrade of the DCU Business School website

Training and Development initiatives in the DCU Library and Estates Office

Funding for consultancy services in the DCU Library and School of Biotechnology to inform and develop strategic initiatives

Development of an industry engagement space within the DCU Business School building.

Pilot-testing for RFID-based asset tagging in Estates to enhance efficiency in plant and equipment servicing

Investment in the development of student-focused space within the DCU Library

Equipment purchase within laboratory space in the School of Biotechnology

Funding for the digitisation of building drawings in a number of DCU buildings

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

Professionalism and Dedication of Staff

In all the reviews conducted in 2015/16 Peer Review Groups noted and commended the ongoing professionalism and dedication of DCU staff in their teaching, research, engagement and professional support services. The review teams noted the impact of the Employment Control Framework and significant budgetary constraints in contributing to strain on staff attempting to continue to produce and deliver the highest levels of quality, in their work.

Engagement of Areas with the Quality Review Process

All Peer Review Groups noted the thorough and comprehensive self-assessment conducted by Areas under review. They further noted that staff were very open with Peer Review Group members in their discussions during the Quality Review visit.

High Quality Learning Experiences

For the two academic Areas reviewed during 2015/16, both peer review group teams noted the very positive feedback received from graduate employers on the quality of DCU graduates from programmes delivered within these Areas. For the Faculty of Engineering and Computing, the continued distinctiveness of the INTRA experience was noted, and the PRG report contained recommendations for the faculty to continue to develop and enhance this experience as a distinctive aspect of the DCU student learning experience. For programmes delivered by the School of Biotechnology, the programmes were identified as being particularly industry relevant, and provided students with a strong “hands-on” approach to learning.

Strategic Planning Initiatives

The importance of the development of a strategic plan, closely aligned with that of the institution where identified by a number of Peer Review Groups. A related issue raised in a number of academic units was the development of a clearly defined and well-articulated sense of *identity* as an important foundation for future development.

Funding Diversity and Financial Planning within Academic Areas

The importance of a clearly articulated strategic plan or set of strategic priorities was noted by several Peer Review Groups, including the development of robust, evidence-based business cases for future development of learning, research and enterprise engagement activities. A number of recommendations focused on the development of plans to increase non-exchequer revenue.

Enhanced Internal and External Communication and Collaboration

Internal communications, both between colleagues within Areas under review, and between the Area under review and the broader university community were raised by a number of Peer Review Group Reports. These led to recommendations on the enhancement of Area structures and committees for consultation and decision-making, and improved communication central administration processes to transparency in how processes are completed.

Equipment and Facilities Maintenance and Planning

The impact of ongoing funding restrictions within higher education is noted in a number of aspects of peer review group reports. One area where this was raised on a number of occasions was with regard to teaching and laboratory equipment, and the funding challenges for maintaining physical infrastructure to a high standard of some campus buildings. A number of recommendations with respect to multi-year lifecycle planning for teaching and laboratory equipment were made.

An Engaged Learning Experience

A number of Peer Group Reports highlighted the positive feedback received from students on the quality of the interactions reported by students of academic programmes. In all reviews, Peer Review Groups noted that students spoke warmly and enthusiastically about their interactions and relationships with the Areas under review. A number of Peer Review Group Reports included recommendations on the development of clear policies and criteria for feedback on assessment. One report recommended the inclusion of student consultation as part of academic programme development.

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

DCU AACSB Accreditation

In April 2016, DCU Business School was been awarded accreditation by the world's oldest and most prestigious global accrediting body for business schools, AACSB. AACSB's international accreditation panel highly commended DCU Business School on its spirit of innovation and outstanding level of industry engagement, "*DCU Business School is innovative and distinctive. It has excellent engagement with industry as evidenced in research projects, industry-led or co-developed business internships and consulting projects for Irish and international companies. The school has a clear commitment to infusing an application-oriented, cutting-edge curricula throughout its programmes. There is internal and external validation of outcome measures. The very high employment levels for its students also speak to the relevance of its curriculum.*"

External Examiner reports on GURU

In 2016, a system for the online management and submission of external examiner reports using the Guru system was fully implemented across DCU. The system facilitates examination paper review, final report submission, sharing of documentation and secure submission of financial payment information on a single online interface. In addition, Guru provides a complete system for the management of these external examiners, including nomination and approval at an institutional level.

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

Development of a Quality Enhancement Topic

In 2015/16, the DCU Quality Promotion Committee agreed to develop an Annual Quality Enhancement Topic.

The purpose of a topical Annual Theme for quality enhancement at DCU is to,

- Provide a topical focus for discussion at Quality Promotion Committee, particularly in relation to ongoing quality enhancement policies, initiatives and activities at DCU
- Facilitate discussion and the development of initiatives in response to recurring issues from DCU quality reviews and quality related issues currently being highlighted nationally and internationally
- Encourage collaboration and the creation of new initiatives between the QPO and other units and departments tasked with quality enhancement at DCU.
- Provide an opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate good practice in relation to quality enhancement across the university in line with particular 'topics'

At its May 2016 meeting, the QPC agreed that the Quality Enhancement Topic for 2016/17 would be "The Student Voice".

What Works and Why Initiative

In January 2016, DCU initiated work on the *What Works & Why Project*. DCU is the lead partner on the project, which is funded by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning. The project aims to build digital literacy and engagement for students and teachers by exploring the question: "What works and why?"

Focusing on supporting innovative pedagogy through learning technologies in discipline specific contexts, the project partners will offer a range of workshops, technology exploration sessions, formation of teaching groups and funding for TEL Innovation initiatives. Teachers will be supported in redesigning teaching and learning activities through technology integration leading to more rewarding learning experiences for students. The project will have a strong focus on the discipline specific contexts in which teaching and learning takes place, with a common goal of helping to promote better outcomes for learners. To enhance the long-term impact of the project Teaching Groups/Peer Mentoring Circles initiatives to build stronger communities of practice across our cluster and within disciplines will be launched.

Launch of VLE-hosted Learning Portfolios

Loop Reflect is a learning portfolio platform available to all DCU students and faculty since 2015/16. The digital portfolio makes learning visible through the creation of a personalised and reflective living showcase of academic, professional, and personal achievements. This online portfolio can be shared with peers, teachers, employers and others supporting life-long and life-wide learning

Objectives for the Coming Year

DCU Strategic Planning

In 2016/17, DCU will develop a new university strategic plan. The development of this plan will set out a new vision and strategic objectives for the university for the next 4 years. The process of strategic planning will be supported from within the DCU Quality Promotion Office, and will include considerable institutional analysis to support decision-making during this process. A further aspect of the strategic consultations and discussions will include the review of outputs from quality reviews in the last 5 years. This review will be used to identify key quality related themes which will be considered as part of the planning process.

Implementation of the Quality Enhancement Topic

The Quality Promotion Office will increasingly work with other academic and professional support units throughout the university to encourage and facilitate activities which support the Quality Enhancement Topic, The Student Voice. Activities will include,

- Presentations to Quality Promotion Committee on identified areas of good practice aligned to the Student Voice Theme
- A Quality Improvement and Development Fund call, inviting applications for quality enhancement projects aligned to the Quality Enhancement Topic
- Support for student-led research into expectations and experiences of student feedback on assessment at DCU
- Application to participate in the national N-Step to support students engagement and representation across all areas of student life
- Continued development of partnership approach between DCU and DCU Students' Union to encourage participation, and use of the ISSE survey as a student feedback tool
- Exploring opportunities for collaboration with the DCU Teaching Enhancement Unit and DCU Student Support and Development on Student Voice related projects and initiatives

Institutional Research as a tool to Support Self-Assessment.

During 2016/17, the DCU Quality Promotion Office will review with a view to enhancing the use of standardised reports to support areas undergoing quality review. This shall include,

The provision of a student- focused "stat pack" with key statistics on the DCU student body profile, student progression, graduate outcomes and application information on programmes in areas under review

Support in providing reports on the research profile of the area under review, including information on research active staff, research outputs and benchmarking information, where appropriate

The development of ISSE reports for the Area under review, based on a consolidation of 3 years of student responses.

Review of DCU Policies and Procedures in light of QQI Core Guidelines

During 2016/17, DCU will review an ongoing review of all relevant policies and procedures to assure itself of alignment with regard for the Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines.

Further Alignment of DCU Policies and Procedures in line with QQI QA Guidelines for Universities and Other Designated Awarding Bodies

During 2016/17 DCU will finalise and agree its approach to,

The approval of the quality assurance procedures of linked providers

Monitoring of programmes leading to awards of the designated awarding body

Arrangements for the protection of enrolled learners, in the event that the initial provider cease to offer the programme(s)

Process for the cyclical review of the effectiveness of the linked providers quality assurance procedures, including withdrawal by the designated awarding body of approval of a linked provider's quality assurance procedures as a result of review

**Review Plans: Area/Unit and
Number**

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