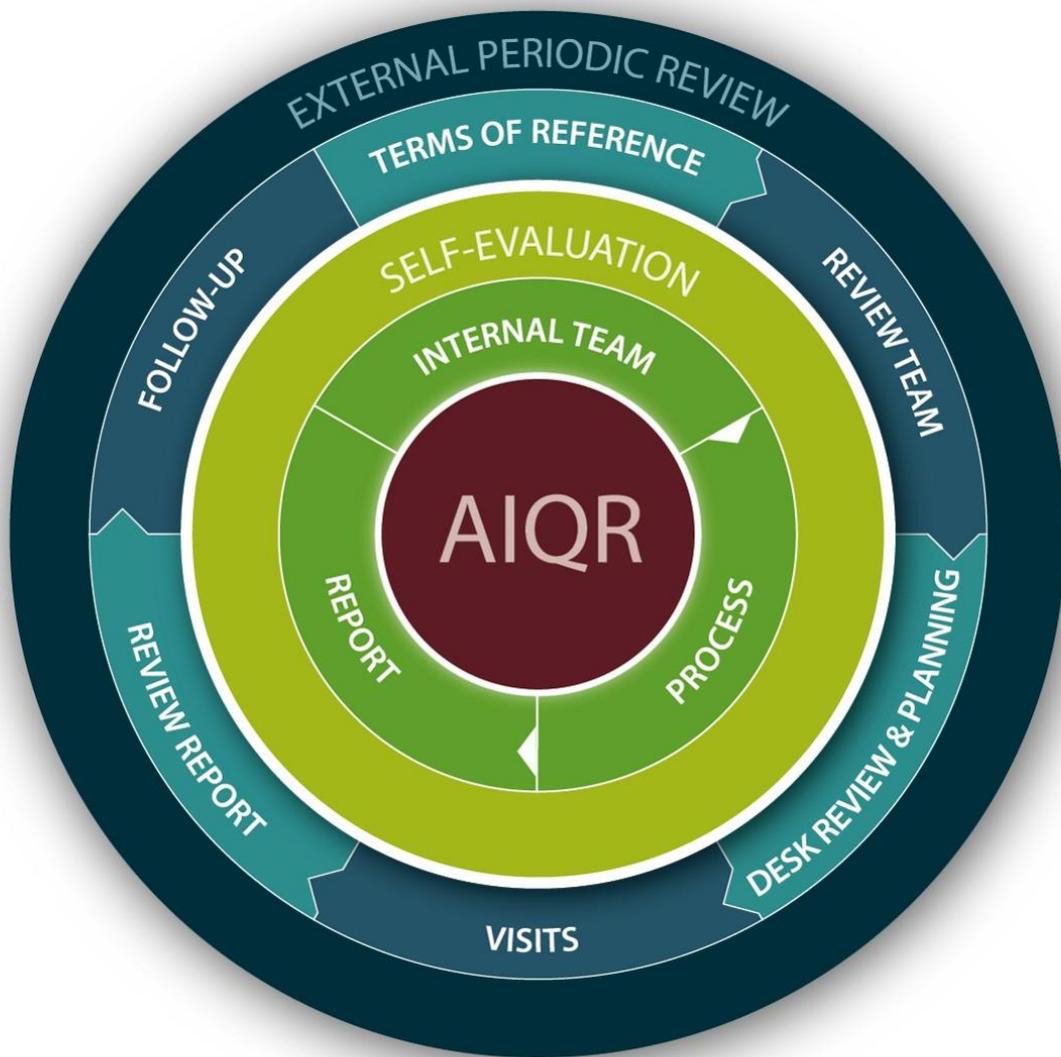# Dundalk Institute of Technology

Annual Institutional Quality Assurance Report 2017

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

The Cyclical Review Process

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.

Founded in 1971, Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) is an autonomous Institute, established under the Regional Technical Colleges Act, 1992. DkIT has ensured a central role for quality assurance and enhancement in its Strategic Plan 2011-16, which affirms the contribution of quality assurance systems in underpinning strategic objectives and continuing to enhance DkIT's reputation. Over the 40 years since 1971, DkIT has earned a reputation as the leading higher education provider in the North East of Ireland. Through the Institute's work in regional development, it has contributed to the transformation of the North East Region with a reputation solidly built by providing quality educational opportunities in a broad range of disciplines from undergraduate degree to doctoral level.

To date, the Institute has put particular emphasis on:
• enhancing access to educational opportunity;
• learning and teaching;
• growing research capacity that impacts directly on learning, teaching, knowledge transfer and regional economic development.
• working with regional and national partners on social, economic and cultural sustainability.

A core focus in the DkIT 2011-16 Strategic Plan has been the Graduate Profile which has seen a commitment to ensure graduates are:
• Excellent in their discipline;
• Able to apply disciplinary and trans-disciplinary knowledge, with special awareness of entrepreneurship and sustainability;
• Able to contribute globally as well as locally;
• Have personal and employability qualities to include an ability to solve complex problems; communication skills; critical thinking; systems thinking and capacity for ongoing learning

See
https://www.dkit.ie/system/files/Strategic_Plan_2013.pdf

Towards the end of the 15/16 academic year, DkIT commenced work on a new three-year Strategic Plan for the Institute which will come into effect from January 2017. This Strategic Plan will take into account the changes which have taken place in the external environment since 2013 and will serve to position the Institute for continued success into the future.

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

The Academic Council at Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) is established in accordance with the Regional Technical Colleges Act, 1992 and any subsequent amendments. The Council assists the Governing Body in the planning, co-ordination, development and oversight of the educational work of the Institute and protects, maintains and develops the academic standards of the programmes and activities of the Institute. The Academic Council is accordingly, the primary statutory body with direct responsibility for academic quality. The President and Registrar are respectively, Chairman and Secretary of the Council. Academic Council approve action plans following reviews and these plans are then assigned to relevant academic and administrative areas for operationalisation.

The membership of Academic Council consists of ex-officio and elected members with the maximum membership currently standing at 54. See the Constitution of the Academic Council at https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/quality-assurance/academic-council.

Once adopted, the minutes of all Academic Council meetings are tabled at Governing Body meetings. Where urgent matters arise, these are brought to the attention of the Governing Body by way of a special motion to facilitate Governing Body approval prior to the formal adoption of the minutes.

The Academic Council has the following sub-committee structure:

- o Standing Committee

- o Programme Evaluation Sub-Committee

- o Academic Quality Sub-Committee

- o Teaching and Learning Sub-Committee

- o Research Sub-Committee

- o Graduate Studies Research Board

- o Ethics Committee

All of the above committees contribute to the development of quality assurance policies and procedures at Institute level. In addition to Sub-committees of Academic Council, working groups are regularly established to scope out best practice and report back to Academic Council in advance of updates to policies. This practice ensures that quality assurance is relevant, current and embedded within the academic and non-academic communities of the Institute.

DkIT continued to strengthen its strategic alliance with Dublin City University (DCU) throught the further development of the DCU-DkIT Graduate School. During 2015/16 the Terms of Reference for the DkIT Graduate Studies Research Board were changed to increase the membership from Academic Schools, with a view to facilitating cross departmental learning and collective experience. The composition of the committee is now in line with the DCU Graduate Studies Research Board. The sharing of best practice with DCU has served to enhance research quality assurance at DkIT.

Details can be found at https://www.dkit.ie/system/files/dkit_academic_regulations_for_research_awards_v8_0.pdf

The responsibility for ensuring the implementation of these quality policies rests ultimately with the Executive Board and falls particularly within the remit of the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Registrar. The Executive Board ensures that activities undertaken by the Institute are in line with its Strategic Plan and that elements of associated risk, governance and resource implications are approved before being undertaken.

At School and Departmental level, Heads of School, Heads of Department and Programme Boards have local responsibilities for implementing and monitoring of quality policies.

The academic management of programmes is the responsibility of the Programme Boards. Opportunities for enhancement of quality policies and procedures are frequently identified through Programme Board feedback and annual reporting to Academic Council. Student representatives from programmes are members of the associated Programme Boards ensuring the student voice is heard at this level. Stage Convenors who provide pastoral care to students and Programme Directors who support Heads of Department in the management and operation of programmes also contribute to Programme Boards providing a robust front line approach to programme management. Programme Boards provide valuable feedback on all issues including quality assurance and enhancement via their Annual Reports at Institute level and also their participation in Faculty Boards at School level which contain academic faculty members, School management, School administration and student representatives.

Further fora, which contribute to the implementation, monitoring and review of quality policies and procedures, include both (i) the **Academic Heads Forum** – consisting of Heads of Schools and Heads of Departments, and (ii) the **Institute Management and Planning Committee**, consisting of academic and functional area managers.

In 2015/16 DkIT continued to ensure that Quality Assurance was firmly embedded within all day to day aspects of work at the Institute to ensure that a quality culture underpins all of its activities. All staff within the Institute contribute to the culture of quality and there is acceptance that this is a 'continual process' as new challenges and new ways of educating students and developing faculty and staff continue to be central to the work of the Institute. The publication of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), 2015 supported this premise and provided support for the important roles of external stakeholders in addition to internal stakeholders. The role of higher education within society and as a platform for development is elucidated which is useful in the regional and national remit of Institutes of Technology.

Do you have a Policy/Procedure for Programme Design and Approval?	Yes
Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Programme Design and Approval	The previous policy on Approval, Design and Monitoring of Awards was replaced with two separate policies to reflect the distinctness of these elements within the ESG (2015). The two policies are as follows: 1. Policy on the Design and Approval of Programmes 2. Policy on the Annual Monitoring of Programmes These were approved by DkIT Academic Council on 20th June 2016. See https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/policy-design-approval-programmes https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/monitoring-programmes-policy As DkIT placed strategic importance on the development of part time programmes during 2015/16, the Registrar's Office developed Guidelines on the Development of Part-Time Programmes. These guidelines provided extensive support on the generation of new programme offerings through the utilisation of appropriate existing modules. They can be viewed at the following link: https://www.dkit.ie/system/files/guidelines_for_design_of_part_time_programmes_0_1.p
Do you have a Policy/Procedure for Programme Delivery and Assessment?	Yes
Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Programme Delivery and Assessment	All programme validation documents are required to present a teaching and learning strategy and an assessment strategy. This ensures that assessment is student centred and presented within the programme in a manageable way to ensure learners are equipped to competently succeed within their programme of study with adequate time allowed for assessment preparation. Associated statistics on student progression within programmes are also reviewed annually and barriers to progression are reviewed at programme level by Programme Boards. At an Institutional level Student Retention has been adopted by Academic Council as an enhancement theme in advance of the 2018 Institutional Review and a Working Group of Academic Council, chaired by the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Registrar, is identifying ways to clearly identify programmes with retention issues so that they can be addressed. Assessment is one method that is being evaluated as part of this initiative. See policy on Programme Design and Approval (link above) Sections 2.7 and 2.8. https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/policy-design-approval-programmes The Institute's Policy on Assessment and Learning may be found at: https://www.dkit.ie/system/files/Assessment%20and%20Learning%20Guidelines%20for%
Do you have a Policy/Procedure for Research Quality?	Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Research Quality

Yes. At DkIT research students can achieve a QQI award if registered prior to September, 2014 and they are goverened by separate policies and procedures from students who registered post September 2014.

For students who are submitting for QQI Research Awards, see:
https://www.dkit.ie/system/files/Postgraduate%20Degree%20Regulations%202012%20Approved%20AC_0_0.pdf

Since September 2014, registered postgraduate research students are studying for DCU awards through the DCU/DkIT Graduate School. The regulations applying to these latter awards are aligned to DCU regulations for research awards. These regulations were modified during 2015/16 to:

○ Include Music, Composition and Performance regulations

○ Amend the requirements for supervisory teams to bring this into line with DCU requirements.

The amended regulations were approved by Academic Council in Spring and Autumn 2016. They are available at:

https://www.dkit.ie/system/files/DCU_Academic_Regulations_for_Research_Awards_v7.pdf

In line with QQI Sector Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines published in July 2016, DkIT ensures an integrated system of quality assurance in relation to its research activities and has a very successful track record in relevant metrics and peer review. Dundalk Institute of Technology Research Strategy 2014-2016

○ Sets out the recent developments in both National and European research and innovation policy which has informed the strategic positioning of research within the Institute

○ Details the Institute's past performance in terms of its research and innovation agenda

○ Illustrates the concentration and consolidation of DkIT's research into key strengths whilst identifying the need to support emerging areas of activity

○ Details the suite of strategic imperatives, specific actions and associated key performance indicators which will enable the institute to deliver upon its research vision and to remain one the leading research intensive Institutes of Technology

○ Underpins the Institute's current Strategic Plan and builds upon previous research strategies.

As DkIT's Strategic Plan reached the end of its term, work began during 2015/16 to generate a new three-year Strategic Plan with the development of a project plan and the commencement of the research phase. Similarly DkIT's Research Plan has been aligned to a three-year phase also and the review of the Plan commenced during 2015/16.

https://www.dkit.ie/system/files/DKIT_%20Research%20Strategy%202014_2016_Final_0.pdf

Dundalk Institute of Technology has been awarded the HR Excellence in Research Logo in October 2015 in recognition of its commitment to be an attractive, supportive and stimulating environment in which to carry out research and which understands the importance of providing its researchers with the training and means to be competitive and mobile. The award was made in light of DkIT's commitment to aligning its HR policies and practices with the European Commission's European Charter for Researchers and a Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, one of only 4 Institutes of Technology to receive such an award.

DkIT continues to build its research supervision capacity through staff development to PhD qualification level. Standing at 33% DkIT exceeded the sectoral average of 29% of the proportion of full-time academic staff with Level 10 qualifications in 2014/2015. This supports the strategic goal of achieving academic and research excellence (Source: HEA Key Facts and Figures, Higher Education 2014/2015). The number of staff who successfully completed the Institute's formal structured research supervisory programme was 34. In excess of 80 staff were supported through the Institute's formal research skills programme for 2015, well exceeding the stated target of 45 set by the Institute's Research Office.

The primary benchmark employed for research dissemination was the Scopus database (https://www.scopus.com). For 2015, in comparison with other Institutes of Technology, excluding DIT, the Institute was:

Ranked 5th for citations attained in 2015 and 2016

Ranked 3rd across the sector for peer reviewed research articles published in 2015 and 2016.

Ranked 4th in the sector for conference papers.

Do you have a Policy/Procedure in place for Student Lifecycle?	Yes
Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Student Lifecycle	DkIT aims to provide an efficient and student-friendly service on a range of matters from Admission through to Graduation and Transcripts Provision. The Institute does not currently have one overarching policy for all of these matters, but a range of individual policies apply as follows: For applications, admissions and registration see: https://www.dkit.ie/academic-administration For Recognition of Prior Learning, see: https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/recognition-prior-learning-rpl-policy-practice For Equal Access and Participation see: https://www.dkit.ie/system/files/Access_Policy_v2.pdf For Student Supports see: https://www.dkit.ie/home-page/student-supports-dkit In order to extend the range of supports provided by DkIT to students with particular needs, the Academic Council adopted the Policy, Guidelines and Procedures for the granting of reasonable accommodations in examinations to learners with disabilities. See https://www.dkit.ie/staff-portal/disability-office. For Child Protection see: https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/child-protection-policy For On-line Communication and Social Networking Policy, see: https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/communicating-online-use-social-networking-sites-policy For the Institute's Ethics Policy, see: https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/ethics-policy For the Academic Integrity Policy, see: https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/academic-integrity-policy-procedures This was amended in 2015/16 to modify the penalty grid to improve consistency of penalties across academic schools. The change was approved by Academic Council on 20th June 2016. For the Examinations and Assessment Policy and Procedure, see: https://www.dkit.ie/examinations-office/documents-policies/examinations-policy For the Student Voice Policy, see: https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/student-voice-policy For Exit Awards see: https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/exit-awards-policy For Conferring see: https://www.dkit.ie/conferring
Do you have a Policy/Procedure in place for Teaching Staff?	Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Teaching Staff	Dundalk Institute of Technology has adopted a learner-centred approach to its educational provisions, aimed at enhancing the student learner experience and supporting learners through the adoption of innovative learning and teaching strategies. See the Institute's Strategic Plan (2013-2016) at: https://www.dkit.ie/system/files/Strategic_Plan_2013.pdf

Recruitment and training of staff, including teaching staff, is managed through DkIT's Human Resources Department. Teaching staff are recruited in line with the Regional Technical Colleges Act, 1992, Section 11 (1) (b). Additional detailed information is given to Selection Boards on Conflict of Interest and detailed Selection Procedures for Institute and Appointment Process of Staff following Selection Board. All managers are routinely updated on these procedures and their adherence to (a) The Employment Equality Acts, 1998 and 2004; (b) The Freedom of Information Act, 1997 and as amended and (c) The Protection of Employee (Fixed Term) Act, 2003.

https://www.dkit.ie/human-resource

https://www.dkit.ie/human-resource/policies-procedures

The Institute values excellence in pedagogical standards and applicants with teaching qualifications, in addition to their academic/professional qualifications, are scored higher at application stage than those without teaching qualifications.

The Institute is committed to excellence in teaching and learning and actively promotes continuous professional development in this regard. The Institute offers a Master of Arts in Learning and Teaching and to date, 38 members of the Institute's academic staff have completed this programme, while many others have completed the related embedded awards. The Institute's Centre for Learning and Teaching (CELT) delivers this programme. In 2015 the CELT team received the Team Teaching Expert Award from the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning for 'facilitating systematic cultural change'.

The Institute is committed to ensuring that learning and teaching remain research informed. Staff associated with the Institute's Research Centres teach on undergraduate programmes, supervise postgraduate students and engage with undergraduate research projects ensuring they are at the forefront of their field of knowledge.

Standing at 33% DkIT exceeded the sectoral average of 29% of the proportion of full-time academic staff with Level 10 qualifications in 2014/2015. This supports the strategic goal of achieving academic and research excellence (Source: HEA Key Facts and Figures, Higher Education 2014/2015). In 2015/16 the number remains the same with many faculty members continuing their studies. |
| **Do you have a Policy/Procedure in place for Teaching and Learning?** | Yes |

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Teaching and Learning

Teaching and Learning is a constantly evolving activity at DkIT supported by the Institute's Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT). CELT provides online and face-to-face learning and teaching advice and supports for staff and students. See https://www.dkit.ie/centre-learning-teaching
DkIT continued to prioritize continuing professional development for teaching staff. Master Classes and Professional Development events in Learning and Teaching are organised each semester.

The MA/Certificate in Learning and Teaching (MALT) continued to be successful in 2016. Nine faculty members graduated with an MA, nine with a Certificate, another 29 progressed, with a new cohort of 20, including 9 external colleagues (from Further Education and Second Level colleges). To date 108 staff have participated in some way on this programme. This development has been mutually enriching, facilitating dialogue and learning between educators in different educational sectors within the region. The benefit of this experience ensures that educational offerings in the region retain relevance and currency in a changing educational landscape. This point is in line with Section 3 of the QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines published in April 2016. Interaction between DkIT and external stakeholder in Further Education and Second Level education helps inform learner admission, progression and advanced entry routes in accordance with national policies on Access, Transfer and Progression.

A broad range of non-accredited CPD was also provided by CELT, centring around enhancing feedback to students and technology enhanced learning, in keeping with the thematic areas of funded research activities. A total of 229 staff members attended these events in 2015/16.

In 2015 the impact of the programme was nationally recognised as three members of the MALT lecturing team received a Teaching Expert Award from the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning. The MALT Team was one of only seven 'Teaching Experts' selected for a special commendation, in their case for 'Facilitating Systemic Cultural Change (see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OMxMKrWhFj8&list=PLhJYW28cw2ebFoqivYpxNmCD_axLuTWnp&index=5

The impact of MALT and the increased support for, and recognition of, learning and teaching has led to a growth in the Scholarship of Learning and Teaching (SOTL), so much so that this has been recognised as an emerging research area in the 2014-2016 Research Strategy (https://www.dkit.ie/system/files/DKIT_%20Research%20Strategy%202014_2016_Final_0.pdf and see Appendix 3).   This culture of scholarship promotes an evidence-based approach to learning enhancement.

A significant development in 2015 and 2016 was DkIT's participation in Learning and Teaching   projects funded by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning's Enhancement Fund. DkIT partnered in the following projects:

- o *Supporting Transition: Enhancing Feedback in First Year Using Digital Technologies*(January 2015 to December 2016) http://y1feedback.ie/

- o *Student Success Toolbox for flexible learners: Supporting transitions from thinking about study to the first weeks* (January 2015 to June 2016) http://studentsuccess.ie/project-partners/

- o *Assessment for Learning Resources for First Year Undergraduate Mathematics* Modules (January 2015 to December 2016) . http://www.teachingandlearning.ie/assessment-for-learning-resources-for-first-year-undergraduate-mathematics- modules/

- o Technology Enhanced Learning: What Works and Why. See https://whatworksandwhy.ie

- o Technology Enhanced Assessment Methods (TEAM) in Science and Health Practical Settings.   See http://www.teachingandlearning.ie/technology-enhanced-assessment-methods-team-science-health-practical-settings

These projects have facilitated considerable innovation and development in key areas and have also allowed DkIT to build capacity.

The Institute's Policy on Assessment and Learning may be found at:
https://www.dkit.ie/system/files/Assessment%20and%20Learning%20Guidelines%20for%20DkIT%202.pdf

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

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Resources and Support

To the best of its resourcing ability, DkIT seeks to ensure that environments and resources conducive to both individual and group learning are provided to learners and that learners have access to resources for effective study and to resources which increase educational opportunity. Full details of resources and supports are advised to students at induction when they first come to study at DkIT. Institute Open Days also inform prospective students of the supportive learning environment they will experience at DkIT. Supporting learning is continually reviewed and upgraded despite budgetary constraints because it is seen as the central aspect of the functions of the Institute. Robust feedback channels are in operation to ensure that any deficiencies in service to learners are brought to the attention of the relevant manager in a timely manner. This theme is in line with the QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016) Section 7 which emphasises the need for adequacy of learner resources on an ongoing basis. Some examples of additional work undertaken in 2015/16 is outlined below.

The Dundalk Institute of Technology Library supports teaching, learning and research with a range of supports to learners. Many of these supports are available on line to ensure learners can avail of what they need out of hours. Extensive databases are made available to learners to again support out of hours learning and revision in preparation for examinations. The library extends its opening hours in the two weeks before examination sessions to again support learners and also ensures that core text books can only be borrowed for shorter periods, ensuring maximum sharing of resources.

See: https://www.dkit.ie/dkit-library/support/support-learning

Additional study support for numeracy and literacy and ICT is provided by the Student Academic Support Services. See: https://www.dkit.ie/home-page/student-supports-dkit/student-academic-support-services

The Institute also provides access to a variety of student supports to promote and support learning and ensure student well-being. These are outlined at: https://www.dkit.ie/home-page/student-supports-dkit

The procedure for programme-based funding is managed at a School level. Heads of School currently manage non-pay budgets within their areas and award funding on a per programme basis. This model of support, agreed at Executive Board, ensures that learners on every programme within the Institute can avail of the relevant resources to underpin their programme of learning (including specialist training days, site visits, learning support materials (e.g. on-line logins for specialist activities), software licences for programme-specific software (e.g. SAGE for Accounting Students). Reductions in funding to the IoT sector have greatly impacted this resourcing but the procedure remains intact.

Staffing resources are managed centrally through Human Resources which is the most effective model to work within Employment Control Framework constraints. This model supports interdisciplinary subject delivery by academic faculty members ensuring graduates gain a broad exposure to the application of theoretical underpinnings. While it is acknowledged that DkIT is somewhat restricted in the acquisition of additional human resources at present, it is anticipated that additional central resourcing of the Quality Assurance function will be required in the medium term.

Details of Human Resource policies can be found at: https://www.dkit.ie/human-resource/policies-procedures

Dundalk Institute of Technology places significant emphasis on the importance of research to underpin development, teaching and learning. DkIT's Vision and Strategy to 2016 expresses a commitment to drive research excellence in a number of prioritised areas (i) to ensure that learning and teaching remains research informed, and (ii) delivering real societal and economic impacts regionally, nationally and internationally. Through an internal strategic prioritisation exercise and in line with the National Research Prioritisation exercise and the ambitions set out in Innovation 2020, the Institute has consolidated and concentrated its research into key thematic established areas through the formation of "Research Clusters", in which the Institute possesses a real international reputation namely: (i) ICT, Health and Ageing; (ii) Energy and the Environment and (iii) Creative Arts.

The Research Office offers a number of supports to emerging and established researchers and details of activities, initiatives and supports are outlined at the links.

https://www.dkit.ie/research

https://www.dkit.ie/research/research-support

Do you have a Policy/Procedure for Information Management?	Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Information Management

Dundalk Institute of Technology has published a set of IT Policy documents to provide advice and direction to its user base in the use of, and the management and delivery of IT systems and services that hold information and data relating to the business of the Institute. These policies have been prepared to advise users on the various governance aspects of using the Institute's IT services and the effective operation and delivery of such IT services.

See: https://www.dkit.ie/computer-services/policies-procedures

In relation to Information Management specifically, the Institute is a client of HEAnet and uses Banner, Core, Agresso and Millenium as its information management tools. The HEAnet Network Operations Centre (NOC) is operated from the HEAnet office in Dublin. The NOC implements, maintains and supports the HEAnet network and services. See: http://www.heanet.ie/services

The management of information within the Institute is shared across a number of databases, systems and via the DkIT website.

- Data on student registration, progression, success and drop-out rates is held on Banner.

- The Institute assesses student satisfaction through EvaSys (See: http://www.evasys.co.uk/start.html) and the Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE).

- Detailed information on Study Programmes is held and published on http://courses.dkit.ie/

- At student registration, the Institute carries out the Equal Access Survey on the socio-economic, ethnic/cultural and disability background of new entrants on behalf of the HEA. This information provides for the funding of services and support for students. It also supports the HEA and institutions in fulfilling their core equality functions as set out in legislation.

- Each year the Careers Service surveys graduates using the graduate destination survey. This provides the Institute with information on graduate employment and further training. In 2016, the Institute is piloting a new graduate destination survey with the HEA. This updated survey will be used across the sector from 2017.

    For further detail, see: http://www.hea.ie/en/statistics/statistics-section-publications

Management of DkIT's website rests with the Communications Office who work closely with IT Services.
https://www.dkit.ie/communications-office

Programme level information detailing validated design, content and assessment is held within the curriculum management system AKARI Document with differing levels of access granted to users. This ensures only authorised and recorded changes are made to modules and programmes.

Obligations under Data Protection legislation are regularly updated and notified to all internal users to ensure compliance with requirements. This theme is in line with the QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016) Section 8.7.

At Executive Board level in 2015/16 work has begun to strengthen the user-friendliness of data outputs for executive decision making. This will be an ongoing focus underpinned initially by the appointment of a Data Officer but in tandem with realignment of IT systems to ensure current and robust data searches are easily undertaken. It is proposed to provide, in time, synchronized data to all levels of Institute management to that there is a greater awareness of key metrics within the Institute.

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

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

Programme Boards monitor programme delivery. Programme Boards:

- are focused on critical self-reflection;

- make decisions based on the facts derived from the operation of the programme in the preceding period, including quantitative data relating to, for example, student recruitment and performance;

- identify issues which have been critical in the delivery of the programme that year, in particular any operational issues which are significant and/or unresolved;

- show how any issues raised by external examiners or by other external bodies have been addressed;

- identify mechanisms by which student feedback has been gathered, addressed; and communicated back to students (or if not addressed, the reason why); contain student representatives within their membership

- facilitate input from external stakeholders/employers etc, as appropriate

- report on the outcome of actions undertaken as a result of previous reports;

- provide an action plan for the future, as appropriate.

See

https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/monitoring-programmes-policy

The Institute also works with **External Examiners** to quality assure assessment. For the DkIT policy on External Examiners, see: https://www.dkit.ie/system/files/Extrnal%20Examiners%20Duties%20and%20Procedures_1.pdf

Programmatic review is a quinquennial quality review process which gives the Academic Schools an opportunity to conduct a critical evaluation and review of their programmes. Such review is a core statutory obligation for the Institute under Section 28(2) of the Qualifications, Education and Training Act. It is intended to be a positive, supportive and open process and results in the production of a five year plan for the School and should align with the Institute's Strategic plan.

The self-evaluation process, with inputs from experts and stakeholders (internal and external), involves the production of a self-evaluation report (SER). The self-evaluation comprises a critical evaluation of all aspects of each programme being reviewed – its strategy, learning outcomes, modules, assessment, resources etc. in keeping with current best practice. Review of the SER by external peers results in a Programmatic Review Report which includes a set of recommendations and conditions. The School provides a response to this report and both the report and the response are published on the Institute website. For the Institute policy in this regard, see: https://www.dkit.ie/system/files/Handbook%20for%20Programmatic%20Review%20July%202013%20Ed.pdf

The Institute also undergoes cyclical **Institutional Review** by QQI. See: http://www.qqi.ie/Publications/Cyclical%20Review%20of%20Higher%20Education%20Institutions.pdf The last Institutional Review took place in 2009 and the next one is scheduled for 2018.

Programme validation reports; programmatic review reports and the 2009 Institutional Review Report are available at: https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/quality-assurance-enhancement

Internal self monitoring of learner satisfaction is moving increasingly towards use of ISSE data and reports (Irish Survey of Student Engagement). While response rates vary annually, this survey is seen as an important benchmarking tool for DkIT to gain insight into learner feedback on a comparative basis. Feedback from ISSE surveys is presented at Academic Council and recommendations for enhancement are agreed at this level where the academic community can debate and support each other in these efforts. From time to time external experts in specific aspects of education provision are invited to present to Academic Council to ensure knowledge of best practice is continually enhanced. This theme is in line with the QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016) Section 11.2.

Do you have a Policy/Procedure for Stakeholder Engagement?	Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Stakeholder Engagement

Engagement with stakeholders is a central part of DkIT's Strategy. See https://www.dkit.ie/home-page/industry-community-engagement

Such engagement is integral to ongoing programme development and delivery. Each School has an Industry Advisory Board which meets annually to exchange information and to feed into the curriculum. Industry and Community Stakeholders/Practitioners are always consulted when programmes are being developed and it is a requirement that an industry representative/practitioner sits on validation panels. See: Sections 2.3 and 3. of the Institute Policy on Programme Design and Approval at: https://www.dkit.ie/system/files/Design%20and%20Approval%20of%20Programmes.pdf

The Placement Office facilitates placements on 21 programmes at the time of writing across a broad range of disciplines both at Masters and Undergraduate level. This ensures learners are equipped to meet the applied learning outcomes of their programmes. Placement sites are carefully vetted in advance of placement and detailed outlines are provided to the industry partner on the learning required by the student while on placement. Industry sites identify supervisors who are then trained in Placement Supervision by the Placement Office in advance of students going on placement. In some programmes the Placement Supervisors input to the assessment of the student in addition to the academic faculty member. Where this occurs detailed marking schemes and training are provided for industry Placement Supervisors. See: https://www.dkit.ie/placement-office

A working group was established by Academic Council in early 2015/16 to review the student placement procedures. The first of these policy documents (Student Placement Terms and Conditions) was approved by Academic Council in May 2016. https://www.dkit.ie/placement-office/policy-documentation-publications/dkit-work-placement-terms-conditions

Guest speakers enhance student learning. The Institute leverages off its strong engagement with industry through the hosting of its Industry Day and Careers Fair on campus. This provides opportunities for industry to meet with students and potential graduate recruits and for academics to meet with industry to discuss future skills needs and thus provide an additional avenue to feed into programme development.

Similarly the value of tangible links to industry is also reflected in the makeup of interview panels for academic recruitment. Contemporary knowledge in the subject field is tested by industry experts to ensure learners are facilitated in their learning by suitably qualified and experienced academic faculty members.

The Regional Development Centre (RDC) at Dundalk Institute of Technology acting as the commercially oriented interface between DkIT and the industrial, commercial and business life of the region has been an engine for regional economic growth and development since 1989. See: http://www.rdc.ie/

During 2015/16, the RDC had an average occupancy rate of 83%. Client satisfaction surveys are conducted annually at the RDC. For 2015, survey results were very positive with the RDC rated as 'excellent' across all categories.

The RDC supported 82 entrepreneurs/start-ups during 2015. These included (a) regional 'spin-in' entrepreneurs from across the North East region via the Enterprise Ireland funded New Frontiers Entrepreneur Development Programme, (b) general incubation clients from the region, (c) student entrepreneurs via the DkIT 'Ideas Foundry' programme, (d) students from the DkIT Engineering Entrepreneurship Level 8 programme, (e) "virtual incubation" and (f) 3 academic spin-out companies that were founded based on intellectual property commercialised from the DkIT research knowledge base.

The primary enterprise development programme offered is Enterprise Ireland's New Frontiers Entrepreneur Development Programme (NFP). The RDC is a member of the NFP Programme Managers' Network which meets between 8 and 9 times per year to ensure knowledge and best practice sharing across the network.

The RDC has also developed an in-house entrepreneur support programme called the "Ideas Foundry" which is based on "So what? who cares? why you?®" - a proven, systematic methodology to explore the value proposition for business ideas. The methodology is based on more than 20 years of academic and entrepreneurial expertise; and is used by researchers, scientists, entrepreneurs and organisations across 17 countries - including use as a proposal assessment tool by the European Space Agency. The RDCs Ideas Foundry programme can be tailored for one-to-one or group workshops.

The work of the RDC supports the development of the student learner and the quality of the student experience. The RDC engages with the academic community in supporting formal learning processes with extra-curricular activities for students aimed at the development of their entrepreneurial traits and behaviours. Unique to the sector and in collaboration with faculty, the RDC runs the Student Enterprise Internship Programme which sees cross-faculty student interns promoting enterprising and creative activities to the student body. This provides both top-down and bottom-up approaches to entrepreneurial educational provision aimed at enhancing student's employability, as articulated in the Action Plan for Jobs and the National Policy Statement on Entrepreneurship. This policy cites the work of ACE – Accelerating Campus Entrepreneurship Initiative, which was led out by DkIT, positioning the Institute as a best in practice exemplar for embedding entrepreneurship within Higher Education.

Specific achievements under this objective included support / funding for 5 student enterprise interns; a President's Award for Enterprising Students; conducting student-led extra-curricular activities that support the development of an enterprise culture among students; and the delivery of enterprise initiatives that are directly promoted to students across all Schools. The above initiatives for 2015 reflect the broader Studententerprise@DkIT programme that has run since 2007 to help foster entrepreneurial behaviours among students and to support student start-ups - based on the Scottish Institute of Enterprise model.

Do you have a Policy/Procedure for Engagement with other Bodies?	Yes
Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Engagement with other Bodies	Dundalk Institute of Technology formed a strategic alliance with **Dublin City University** in 2012. In 2014 the DCU-DkIT Graduate School was established and DCU became a linked provider of postgraduate research awards at DkIT. See: https://www.dkit.ie/research/dcu-dkit-graduate DkIT is a partner with DCU in the DCU-led consortium under the national TTSI2 programme (Technology Transfer Strengthening Initiative, cycle 2).

DkIT is a member of the **Dublin Leinster II Cluster** (also known as the **MEND Cluster**) together with Dublin City University, Maynooth University and Athlone Institute of Technology. The Cluster has made considerable progress in implementing objectives agreed by the Cluster HEIs with the HEA. These objectives are designed to enhance the quality of teaching and learning, and improve access and transition. They comprise a number of components, namely:

- *Coherence of provision*: the analytic and preparatory work required to enable a more co-ordinated provision, through mapping of existing provision, development of protocols for collaboration, and preparing for interoperable student records systems;

- *Collaboration with Further Education*: a network of FE providers, a regional 'one stop shop' portal, a comprehensive mapping of progression paths, and foundation courses to assist transition;

- *Enhanced Student Learning Supports*: enhanced supports for student learning and retention through increased resourcing and leveraging of complementary expertise across the cluster.

Following the very positive assessment by the Higher Education Authority which reported that "*the cluster has both achieved the minimum outcomes and has moved beyond that to deliver more ambitious outcomes*", the MEND Cluster was considered a best practice exemplar for the sector.

Dundalk Institute of Technology is a founder member of the North East Further & Higher Education Alliance **(NEFHEA),** which is a major regional higher and further education initiative comprising higher and further education institutions in the North East. Other members include Dundalk Institute of Technology, Drogheda Institute of Further Education, Monaghan Institute, Cavan Institute, O'Fiaich College, Dunboyne College of Further Education and Beaufort College.

Formed in 2007, NEFHEA is under-pinned by a Memorandum of Understanding. Members are committed to working together to enhance progression opportunities for students from further to higher education; to collaborating on course design and development in response to regional needs and to sharing expertise and resources. NEFHEA has particularly focussed on enabling more students from further education institutes to join DkIT academic programmes. The section on Progression Arrangements details the arrangements currently in place. In general these progression arrangements enable students from further education institutes who have successfully completed their programmes to join the second year of specific DkIT programmes. See: https://www.dkit.ie/north-east-further-higher-education-alliance-nefhea |

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	The Institute's Policy on Public Information is available in Section 7 of the Quality Manual. See https://www.dkit.ie/system/files/Quality%20Manual%20December%202011.pdf This policy is due for review in 2016/17 to bring it into line with the revised European Standards and Guidelines (2015). DkIT resolved to fully inform potential learners of full details in relation to all programmes of study offered at DkIT. Each semester academic managers undertake a review of their programme information in published Institute prospectus and also on the DkIT website. The DkIT prospectus for 2015/16 is available at : https://www.dkit.ie/news/undergraduate-prospectus-potential-students-considering-applying-entry-september-2016 Details of current programmes on offer at DkIT is available at: https://www.dkit.ie/home-page/study-dkit/courses-dkit Additionally, in line with Section 9 of the QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016) written reports on quality evaluations are also published on the DkIT website to ensure that successes and achievement milestones are communicated to the public. Samples of these reports are available at: https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/quality-assurance-enhancement
Do you have a Policy/Procedure for DA procedures for use of QQI award standards?	Yes
Links for Policy/Procedure relating to DA procedures for use of QQI award standards (IoTs only)	See https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/policy-design-approval-programmes
Do you have a Policy/Procedure for Collaborative Provision?	Yes
Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Collaborative Provision	See: https://www.dkit.ie/system/files/Collaborative_Provision_Transnational_Provision_and_J
PRSBs	6
Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies	First Set of Records
Type of Arrangement	PRSB
Name of the Body	The Nursing & Midwifery Board of Ireland

Programme Titles and Links to Publications	a. BSc (Hons) in Midwifery; b. BSc (Hons) in General Nursing; c. BSc (Hons) in Psychiatric Nursing; d. BSc (Hons) in Intellectual Disability Nursing; See https://www.dkit.ie/nursing-midwifery-health-studies
Date of last review or accreditation	10-12-2015
Next review year	2020
Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies	Second Set of Records
Type of Arrangement	PRSB
Name of the Body	Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA)
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	BA (Hons) in Accounting & Finance https://www.dkit.ie/programmes/ba-hons-accounting-finance
Date of last review or accreditation	01-12-2015
Next review year	2020
Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies	Third Set of Records
Type of Arrangement	PRSB
Name of the Body	Engineers Ireland
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	https://www.dkit.ie/programmes/beng-electrical-electronic-systems; https://www.dkit.ie/programmes/beng-mechanical-engineering; https://www.dkit.ie/programmes/beng-civil-engineering
Date of last review or accreditation	05-11-2014
Next review year	2018
Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies	Fourth Set of Records
Type of Arrangement	PRSB

Name of the Body	North South Education and Training Standards for Youth Work (NSETS)
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	BA (Hons) in Youthwork https://www.dkit.ie/programmes/ba-hons-youth-work
Date of last review or accreditation	10-06-2015
Next review year	2020
Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies	Fifth Set of Records
Type of Arrangement	PRSB
Name of the Body	Veterinary Council of Ireland
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	BSc in Veterinary Nursing https://www.dkit.ie/programmes/bsc-veterinary-nursing
Date of last review or accreditation	05-06-2014
Next review year	2019
Joint research degrees	0
Joint/double/multiple awards	0
Collaborative programmes	2
Franchise programmes	0
Section: Collaborative Provision	First Set of Records
Type of arrangement:	Collaborative programmes
Name of the Body (Bodies)	Dundalk Institute of Technology currently operates two arrangements for collaborative provision in line with DkIT's Policy on Collaborative Provision, Transnational Provision and Joint Awards. Both collaborative arrangements are with providers who presented very high academic and reputational standards during the Due Diligence Process – firstly Cavan Monaghan Education & Training Board (Monaghan Institute), and secondly Teagasc Ballyhaise College, County Cavan - details below.
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	Honours Bachelor of Business https://www.dkit.ie/programmes/bb-hons-business-monaghan-institute
Date of last review	06-05-2015
Next review year	2018

Section: Collaborative Provision	Second Set of Records
Type of arrangement:	Collaborative programmes
Name of the Body (Bodies)	Teagasc Ballyhaise College, County Cavan
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	Higher Certificate in Science in Agriculture
	https://www.dkit.ie/programmes/higher-certificate-science-agriculture
	BSc in Agriculture
	https://www.dkit.ie/programmes/bsc-agriculture
	BSc Hons in Sustainable Agriculture
	https://www.dkit.ie/programmes/bsc-hons-sustainable-agriculture
Date of last review	18-03-2015
Next review year	2019
Articulation Agreements	0
Section: Internal Review Schedule	First Set of Records
Year	2017-2018
Areas/Units	Programmatic Reviews: School of Health & Science School of Business & Humanities Institutional Review
Number	3
Link(s) to Publication(s)	https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/quality-assurance-enhancement/periodic-review
Section: Internal Review Schedule	Second Set of Records
Year	2018/19
Areas/Units	School of Engineering School of Informatics and Creative Arts
Number	2
Link(s) to Publication(s)	https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/quality-assurance-enhancement/periodic-review
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

Changes to governance in relation to Quality Assurance during this period included:
Graduate Studies Research Board:
The Terms of Reference for the Graduate Studies Research Board were amended to extend the membership, facilitating the inclusion of more members from academic schools. This change was approved by Academic Council in March 2016.

https://www.dkit.ie/system/files/dkit_academic_regulations_for_research_awards_v8_0.p

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

Quality assurance and enhancement developments during the academic period 2015/16 are listed below:

Regulations for the Conduct of Examinations / **Conduct of Examinations Guidelines (In-Class Assessments).**
These regulations and guidelines were amended to prescribe more clearly the acceptable use and/or required storage of electronic devices during examinations.

Exit Awards Policy:
This policy and procedures were scheduled for revision during 2015/16 and the revised policy and procedures (including a new application form) were approved by Academic Council in December 2015. The policy and procedures are available at:
https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/exit-awards-policy

DkIT Open Access Policy:
This policy was proposed by the Academic Council Research Sub-Committee. It facilitates open access to DkIT peer-reviewed research publications and is managed by the DkIT Library. It can be viewed at:
https://www.dkit.ie/dkit-library/collections/st%C3%B3r-staff-publications

Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis (DCU Awards): These regulations were amended on two occasions during the academic year to:
1, Clarify the roles of members of the research supervisory teams, specifically the role of the Independent Panel Member and the Supervisor Advisor.
2. Include Music, Composition and Performance regulations which were compiled by the Graduate Research Studies Board.
The regulations can be viewed at:
https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/academic-regulations-postgraduate-students-registered-dcu-awards

Policy on Collaborative Provision, Transnational Provision and Joint Awards:
This policy was revised by the Registrar's Office and reviewed by an external panel of peers. The revised policy ensures compliance with the 'Sectoral Guidelines for Institutes Applying for Delegated Authority to make Joint Awards' published by QQI.
The policy can be viewed at:
https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/collaborative-provision-transnational-provision-joint-awards

Student Placement Policies and Procedures:
A working group was established by Academic Council in early 2015/16 to review the student placement procedures. The first of these policy documents (Student Placement Terms and Conditions) was approved by Academic Council on 6th May 2016.
https://www.dkit.ie/placement-office/policy-documentation-publications/dkit-work-placement-terms-conditions

Academic Integrity:
The Academic Integrity Policy and Procedures was reviewed in response to feedback from Academic Departments, resulting in an amendment to the plagiarism penalty grid which was approved by Academic Council in May 2016:
https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/academic-integrity-policy-procedures

Approval, Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes and Awards:
This policy and procedure was divided into two policies, separating the approval and monitoring functions to ensure alignment with revised European Standards and Guidelines. The policies were re-named 'Policy for Design and Approval of Programmes' and 'Monitoring of Programmes Policy'. The policies can be viewed at:
https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/monitoring-programmes-policy
and
https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/policy-design-approval-programmes

Marks and Standards:
An amendment to DkIT Marks and Standards (Appendix II) was made to facilitate the introduction of a formal procedure for students to apply for a deferral of final examinations due to extenuating circumstances. The procedure can be viewed at:
https://www.dkit.ie/examinations-office/repeat-deferred-modules/application-form-deferral-final-exams
DkIT Marks and Standards is available at the following link:
https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/marks-standards

Policy, Guidelines and Procedures for the granting of reasonable accommodations in examinations to learners with disabilities. These can be viewed at:
https://www.dkit.ie/staff-portal/disability-office

Examinations and Assessment Policy and Procedure:
This was amended and can be viewed at: https://www.dkit.ie/examinations-office/documents-policies/examinations-policy

The schedule of QA governance meetings for the period should be inserted here.	There were **five** scheduled meetings of Academic Council during 2015/16 and one special meeting. **Twenty seven** sub-committee meetings took place. Executive Board meetings were normally held on fortnightly basis. DkIT Governing Body held **eleven** meetings during the academic year 2015/16, on a monthly basis with the exception of August 2016. As previously reported, there were changes to governance structures with the establishment of both the Institute Management & Planning Committee (IMPC) and an Academic Heads Forum (AHF) in 2014/15. The IMPC, composed of faculty heads and heads of function is concerned with the operationalisation and embedding of policy throughout the Institute. The AHF comprises of heads of faculty, departments and schools and has been very effective in bringing practical issues relating to policy implementation to the fore. There were 3 meetings of the **Institute Management and Planning Committee (IMPC)** and 5 meetings of the **Academic Heads Forum (AHF).** The topics reviewed at IMPC were student exam deferrals, mature student entry process, operation of Academic Integrity panels, use of Moodle VLE, use of Akari software for programme development, procedures for student placements and the Institute Academic Calendar. The main issues discussed by AHF were student registration issues (e.g. deferrals), academic integrity policy and procedures, continuous assessment / examination policies, school liaison, IT service matters and the upcoming programmatic review.
PART 2 - Section 2: Institution-led QA - Annual	Reviews in the Reporting Period
Area/Unit and links to relevant publications	The following programme validations took place during 2015/16. Panel reports and School responses can be viewed at; https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/quality-assurance-enhancement/approval-programmes/20152016 Programme details can be viewed at: https://dkit.ie/home-page/study-dkit/courses-dkit Full Validation by DkIT: Major Awards; • Master of Science in Computing in Medical Device Software; • Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Applied Early Childhood Studies; • Bachelor of Arts in Digital Marketing, Communication and Public Relations; • Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Global Marketing; • Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Public Relations; • Higher Certificate in Property and Facilities Management (part-time); • Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Construction Project Management; • Bachelor of Business Studies (Honours) in Digital and International Business;
Links to published internal reviews	Second Set of Records

Area/Unit and links to relevant publications	Differential Validation by DkIT; Major Awards: • Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Studies (outreach Cork Chamber of Commerce); • Higher Diploma in Science in Computing (revised); • Bachelor of Business Studies (Honours) (part-time); Special Purpose Awards: • Diploma in Composing for Games; • Certificate in Cultural Landscapes: The Boyne Valley*; • Certificate in Building Energy Management; • Certificate in Lean Sigma (outreach Manor Farm); • Certificate in Employment Law; • Certificate in Understanding and Responding to Domestic Abuse**; *Delivered to 21 students and 5 staff visiting from Molloy College, USA. **In collaboration with a number of external agencies (health and social care services, Gardaí, Women's Aid, Drogheda Women's Refuge, Probation Services) and launched in January 2016 by Minister Aodhan O'Riordan. Minor and Supplemental Awards: • Certificate / Diploma in Food and Agri-Business; • Certificate / Diploma in Food Supply Chain Operations; • Certificate in Psychosocial Interventions; • Certificates in Computing (9 programmes of 10-30 ECTS credits);
Links to published internal reviews	Third Set of Records
Area/Unit and links to relevant publications	Validation of Single Modules: • Soil Science; • Applied Building Structures; • Building Technology; • Business Research Project; • International Tourism Management; • Strength and Conditioning;
Links to published internal reviews	Fourth Set of Records

Area/Unit and links to relevant publications	All DkIT academic programmes were reviewed by the relevant Programme Boards and reported in the Annual Programme Board Reports for 2015/16 which were submitted to the Registrar's Office in December 2016 and January 2017. A review of the APB reports was presented to the Academic Quality Subcommittee of Academic Council in February 2017.

A total of 64 Annual Programme Board reports were submitted to the Registrar's Office, covering a total of 95 academic programmes. Twenty of the reports were submitted on a new template which was developed by the Academic Quality Sub-Committee and is being piloted for 2015/16 reports. The new template brings the reporting of programme level information more into line with the requirements of the Annual Institutional Quality Report to QQI and ensures that programme Boards take cognisance of all relevant information sources when deliberating.

The draft template and an example of a completed 2015/16 report can be viewed at; https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/monitoring-programmes-policy.

A number of sources of evidence and information were utilised by Programme Boards in their discussions, including the following:
• Minutes of programme board meetings
• External Examiner reports
• Student progression data provided by the Registrar's Office
• Student intake data
• Conferring data
• Results of QA3 student feedback survey
• Results of Irish Survey of Student Engagement
• Feedback from class representatives
• School/Faculty board minutes

Reports indicate that programme boards are working well and in accordance with the Institute Monitoring of Programmes policy (https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/monitoring-programmes-policy). Programme boards discussed a range of issues such as:
• Programme entry requirements, content, learning outcomes, delivery modes and teaching/learning/assessment strategies;
• Administrative issues, including timetabling and student attendance;
• Communications with external stakeholders;
• Academic placements;
• Learner academic supports;
• Student recruitment, performance and retention;
• Staff training and professional development. |
| **Links to published internal reviews** | Fifth Set of Records |
| **Area/Unit and links to relevant publications** | A detailed analysis of research performance to date in the School of Health and Science was completed which involved the following research centres undergoing the Institute's external research centre designation process:

• Smooth Muscle Research Centre;
• Centre for Freshwater and Environmental Studies;
• Netwell/CASALA;

Each review was coordinated through the Research Office and involved a detailed analysis of each centres' past performance and strategic plans for the coming three years. The three centres were awarded full designation for 3 years with each external panel highly complementary of each centre's performance, linkage to the academic environment and strategic ambitions. |
| **Links to published internal reviews** | Sixth Set of Records |

Area/Unit and links to relevant publications	The Centre for Learning and Teaching (CELT) carried out a review of the impact of the Student Learning and Development Centre (SLDC) with a view to planning ahead for possible future resource challenges and to enable the centre to prioritise resources where they will have most impact for both staff and students. The impact evaluation developed by the UK Student Services body AMOSSHE was used and the review was overseen by the Academic Council Learning and Teaching Subcommittee. THE SLDC was established in 2010 to offer support to students in basic IT skills, study skills and academic writing (Maths support is provided separately by the Maths Learning Centre in the School of Informatics and Creative Arts). Both one-to-one tutorials and whole class tutorials are provided. SLDC also has responsibility for co-ordinating the induction programme for new students and for training student ambassadors. Resources and support for staff addressing student academic writing have been developed in collaboration with AIT (as part of a SIDF project). Since 2014, the unit has offered specific English for Academic Purposes to students whose second language is English. The impact review included: • gathering data on the use of the service, • a survey of students who had used the services in the past year, • a survey of lecturers to measure their awareness and use of the services • consultations with other student support services. The number of student visits to the Centre has increased from 785 in 2011/12 to 1067 in 2015/16. According to the evidence collected in the review, the service is achieving its objectives and meeting the needs of a wide range of students, including relatively high use by mature and international students. The induction programme is very successful and having a positive impact on the early student experience. Students who used the service reported a positive impact in both skills development and confidence/understanding of their own learning. Details are available at; https://www.dkit.ie/centre-learning-teaching/sldc-impact-review
Links to published internal reviews	Seventh Set of Records
Area/Unit and links to relevant publications	A consortium agreement was signed with Cavan Monaghan Education and Training Board in April 2016 in relation to the collaborative delivery of the Bachelor of Business (Honours). Years 1 and 2 are delivered at Monaghan Institute and learners attend DkIT for the third and final year of the programme.
Links to published internal reviews	Eighth Set of Records
Area/Unit and links to relevant publications	A collaborative provision agreement for the outreach delivery of the BA in Early Childhood Studies was signed between DkIT and Cork College of Commerce in June 2016. https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/academic-policies/collaborative-provision-transnational-provision-joint-awards
Links to published internal reviews	Ninth Set of Records
Area/Unit and links to relevant publications	The BA (Honours) in Accounting and Finance was accredited by the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants in November 2015. The maximum number of ACCA exemptions was achieved in conjunction with validation until 2020; http://www.accaglobal.com/gb/en.html
Links to published internal reviews	Tenth Set of Records

Area/Unit and links to relevant publications	The Bachelor of Science in Veterinary Nursing was re- accredited for 5 years by the Veterinary Council of Ireland in November 2015. Details available at; http://www.vci.ie/Documents/Veterinary%20Nursing%20Qualifications.pdf The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland carried out a site visit and accreditation of Nursing and Midwifery programmes in December 2015.Details are available at; http://www.nmbi.ie/Education
Number of internal approval/evaluations and reviews completed in respect of Validation/Programme Approval	27
Number of internal approval/evaluations and reviews completed in respect of Research Accreditation/Validation.	0
Number of internal approval/evaluations and reviews completed in respect of Programme Review.	0
Number of internal approval/evaluations and reviews completed in respect of Research Review.	1
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.	1
Section	Professional Body Recognition
Number of internal approval/evaluations and reviews completed.	3
Composition of Panels: % Internal	20
Composition of Panels: % National	94
Composition of Panels: % UK	6
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: % Different institution	0
Chair Profile: % International	0
PART 2 - Section 3: Update on Institutional QA Overview	Other Implementation Factors

Student Feedback:

Dundalk Institute of Technology is committed to the enhancement of the student experience and the Institute's quality assurance and enhancement mechanisms place a significant emphasis on the voice of the student in line with European Standards and Guidelines (2015). The Institute recognises that students have a major contribution to make through review and feedback on their experience in college and also as an input to curriculum design.

The following student feedback mechanisms were employed during 2015/16:

- Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) Survey

- QA Forms (QA3)

The data collected by these surveys, and subsequent analysis, enables the Institute to monitor and continuously enhance the student experience along both academic and non-academic dimensions. The feedback is considered by programme boards in each Department and continuous improvement plans are then formulated. These action plans form a constituent part of annual programme board reports. The programme board reports are subsequently considered by the Academic Quality sub-committee of Academic Council.

An analysis of data from the Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) 2015/16 was carried out and presented to Academic Council in December 2016. The response rate was disappointing at only 13.2% (down from 21.7% in 2014/15 and lower than the sector average of 24%).   Efforts are under way to improve the response rate for the 2016/17 survey which will be launched on 13th February 2017. Most of the feedback received was very positive, with respondents expressing satisfaction with their DkIT experience, particularly in relation to the standard of academic delivery and supportiveness of staff. Individual free text comments were sent to the relevant Schools for discussion by programme boards.

Some summary results are as follows:

- 73% of students described their experience as *excellent* or *good*.

- There was positive feedback about lecturers being friendly and supportive and the practical focus of the programmes.

- Some negative feedback was received about learning facilities and student group work.

Other data analysis carried out by the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) included:

- Student Survey on First Year Induction, November 2015

- Student ambassador training feedback, October 2015

Student progression data for 2015/16 was computed and will be presented to Academic Council later in the current academic year.   The overall progression rate was 78%, similar to 2014/15 (79%) and slightly down on 2013/14 (81%). Some specific areas of concern were highlighted.   It was agreed that the enhancement theme of 'Student Retention' would continue during 2016/17 in preparation for the next Institutional and Programmatic Reviews.

Students continue to engage with membership of programme boards and other activities, such as learning and teaching projects.   An example of students acting as partners is evident in the *Technology Enhanced Assessment Methods (TEAM) in Science and Health Practical Setting*s project, a 2 year Irish multi-institution enhancement project led by DkIT and funded by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education. This project is examining the impact of technology on assessment in practical settings in Science and Health disciplines across four Irish Institutes of Technology (DkIT, Athlone IT, IT Carlow and IT Sligo). Students from each partner institute have been recruited to the project team and have been central in discussions on project format, survey/pilot design, project promotion in addition to attending a national workshop held in Athlone IT in June 2016. Here, 17 students attended along with 47 staff to collectively identify best practice and challenges in assessing the practical environment. As some students progressed to graduation, new students have been recruited across the partners to the project further maintaining the key partnering role played by our students. Their contribution is making a significant contribution to the success of the TEAM project.

DCU/DkIT Strategic Alliance:

Work continued in the areas of research strategy, policy and procedures during 2015/16, strengthening the strategic alliance with Dublin City University and the establishment of the DCU/DkIT Graduate School.

As reported in the 2014/15 AIQR, In December 2014 the Institute's Research Strategy 2014-2016 was presented to and approved by Academic Council, having been developed over the previous 12 months by the Academic Council Research Sub-committee.   The strategy can be found at the following link:
https://www.dkit.ie/research/research-themes/research-strategy-2014-2016
During 2015/16, a working group which was established to monitor and report annually on progress against the KPIs in the Research Strategy analysed progress on the KPIs. A new strategy is currently under development.

The following progress on KPIs was achieved in the 2014-2016 strategy:

Target:	Achieved:
2500m^2 dedicated research space	2590m^2 space now available
In excess of 65 postgraduate research students	Approx. 60 postgraduate research students
In excess of 55 postgraduate research supervisors	55 trained research supervisors
More and 30% of staff with level 10 qualification	More than 30% of staff with level 10 qualification
Secure in excess of 10M euros in research funding	Approximately 14-15M euros in research awards
In excess of 300 peer reviewed research publications with greater than 2300 citations	450 peer reviewed outputs with 2920 citations

The following initiatives were launched by the Research and Graduate Studies Office during 2015/16:
https://www.dkit.ie/research

1. Applications were invited for the Inaugural Presidents Awards for Research Excellence for Established and Early Career Researchers in November 2015. The prizes were awarded by the President in May 2016.

2. In May 2016 the total of staff awarded the research supervisory training certificate increased to 55. This training programme was implemented several years ago through the Research Office with the institute being the first to roll out the structured supervisory training programme across the sector.

3. Research Skills Workshops provided for research students and staff included:

    1. Training as a Tutor and Graduate Teaching Assistant

    2. Surviving the Viva.

    3. Training for Research Degree Examiners and Viva Chairs.

    4. Supervisor training programme (completed by 23 staff members in 2015/16)

4. The Postgraduate Research Scholarship Programme was launched in February 2016. This is a mechanism through which potential postgraduate research students can apply for financial support to undertake a Masters or PhD research programme which is not externally funded.

5. The first call of the PhD Transfer Support Programme was announced in February 2016.   This call was open to postgraduate researchers who were transferring to the PhD register and whose funding did not extend to the full duration of a PhD.

6. The DkIT Research Centre Policy was revised to introduce School Research Committees, i.e. bimonthly meetings between the Head of School, Head of Research and Research Centre Directors.

7. The Summer Undergraduate Research Programme was launched in April 2016. This initiative provides financial support for supervised undergraduate research projects which are carried out during the summer months.

Any other implementation issues of interest can be noted here.	**MEND Cluster:** Dundalk Institute of Technology, Dublin City University, Athlone Institute of Technology and Maynooth University (DkIT, DCU, AIT, and MU) form the Dublin-Leinster Pillar II cluster as envisaged by the Higher Education Authority and the Department of Education and Skills. The partner institutions are strongly committed to the concept and practice of regional clustering, and the collaborative relationships that underpin the cluster pre-date the formal establishment of clusters by the HEA. These include the formation of bilateral relationships between DCU and DkIT and MU and AIT. It should be noted that these bilateral partnerships are as, or more important in achieving the overall aims of coherence and co-operation as 'whole-of-cluster' activities. The cluster has as its ultimate goal is to *"develop a regional approach to access, transfer and progression."* Initiatives funded under the SIDF project are targeted towards this goal, which will work through enhanced collaboration both among cluster partners and between the cluster and Further Education partners and designated communication pathways to learners. Progress in relation to the MEND (Mid Midlands, East and North Dublin) Cluster during 2014/15 was as follows: The HEA undertook to assess all regional clusters in respect of their initial activity against the Authority's stated goals and reported accordingly to the institution presidents in November 2015. The report noted that considerable progress was made during 2014. They identified funding to support a specific project to be developed by the cluster going forward. The project has 4 specific strands: Higher Education and Further Education and Training Network: 1. A network of Higher Education and Further Education training providers has been established (FET2HE Regional Network) within the Leinster Pillar II Cluster, the aim of which is to collaborate on access, transfer and progression pathways (ATP) across the region. 2. Portal Phase II: During 2015 the MEND Cluster worked with a project team at the All-Island Research Observatory in NUI Maynooth and developed a pilot portal that was designed to improve knowledge on access routes from Further Education to Higher Education <u>in the cluster area</u>. The existing portal is operational and can be viewed at: http://pathways.maynoothuniversity.ie/ During the second phase the portal information will be updated and its development on a national scale will be scoped out. 3. Academic Planning: The cluster partners are working together to develop a medium term academic plan for the cluster, intended to ensure provision of programmes across the cluster is coherent and meets the needs of students in its catchment area. 4. A new aspect of the MEND project involves the mapping of small and medium enterprise across the region and developing systematic engagement with SMEs. DkIT Vice President for Academic Affairs and Registrar chaired the Cluster Executive to December 2016 and took responsibility for Strand 2: FE to HE portal. DkIT has membership on all of the project teams. The project deliverables have been achieved at the time of writing this report and will be outlined in the 2016/17 AIQR.
PART 3	Effectiveness and Impact

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

External Examiners:

External Examiners are approved by Academic Council with a term of office of three years, which may be extended by one year in exceptional circumstances. External Examiners report to the Registrar. Copies of External Examiners reports are then circulated to the relevant programme boards for their consideration, action and feedback.

Feedback was generally very positive, with External Examiners commenting on programmes/modules being of a high standard, faculty open and engaged, exam papers well designed and the assessment process carefully managed. A number of External Examiners commented on the good balance between theory and practice on programmes and several External Examiners specifically acknowledged the high standard of final year projects that they had reviewed.   A number of External Examiners commented on the good balance between theoretical and practical assessment within modules. A small number of External Examiners requested more detailed or aligned marking schemes and these requests have been highlighted by the Registrar to the relevant Head of Department for follow up.

Similarly, a small number of External Examiners advised a review of procedures regarding the provision of materials to them from School offices and this again has been referred to the relevant Head of School. Some quotations follow:

"I found this department to be well managed and run in accordance with the highest national standards."

"The imaginative range of assessments, approach to marking and flexibility evidenced…is to be commended."

External Examiner training, delivered collaboratively by the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) and the Registrar's Office continued during 2015/16.

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

Annual Programme Board Reports:

An analysis of annual programme board reports for 2015/16 was carried out by the Registrar's Office and was presented to Academic Quality Sub-Committee in February 2017.   The following is a summary of this analysis.

Positive outcomes:

1. Students were largely very satisfied with programme content, the quality of their learning experience and the approachability and support of academic staff.

2. External Examiners expressed broad satisfaction about the high standard of programmes, openness and engagement of staff and careful management of assessment processes.

3. Staff, students and External Examiners all commented positively on the good balance between theory and practice on programmes.

4. Programme teams displayed a very positive attitude and a high level of proactivity regarding the provision of academic support to students.   Many areas have specific academic support initiatives in place.

5. Most programme teams expressed satisfaction with student recruitment and retention rates.

6. Work placements are valued very highly by both staff and students.

7. There is considerable evidence of the increasing use of technology enhanced learning, teaching and assessment methods by academic staff across the Institute.

8. Significant levels of external engagement are taking place across the Institute.

   Areas for concern and/or follow-up:

1. The quantity and frequency of assessment is a source of concern from students across the Institute. In particular, group-work is referenced as an issue for concern by both faculty and students, although the value of group assessments is acknowledged as important preparation for future work-based team working. This feedback has provided an opportunity for DkIT to review its guidelines on group assessment.

2. Students expressed dissatisfaction with timetables, requesting more condensed schedules that facilitate bus timetables and part-time work although Programme Boards have explained the importance of self-directed learning time between classes to facilitate assimilation of theoretical information. Further communication is required on this issue.

3. The quality of IT infrastructure and Wi-Fi provision are subjects of considerable feedback from both staff and students as the Institute works to ensure complete Wi-Fi coverage across campus. The current plans will require additional investment over coming years and this has been agreed at Executive level.

4. Significant feedback from both staff and students was conveyed in relation to institute facilities, in particular the urgent need to upgrade accommodation and equipment and the desire for more space or specialist space for programme delivery. Executive Board are actively seeking capital funding to refurbish the older campus buildings housing the School of Engineering and the School of Business & Humanities. Current accommodation dates from 1970s and despite regular maintenance, is in need of a more comprehensive updating.

5. A number of programme teams expressed concerns about the standard of student academic writing which has been referred to Centre for Excellence in Learning & Teaching (CELT) to action additional supports in this area.

6. Student recruitment and/or retention continue to be a source of concern in a small number of areas.   The Registrar is currently working on a Student Retention Policy for the Institute which will support areas with retention concerns.

7. Concerns were expressed by faculty about support for faculty professional development activities, both in relation to funding and teaching remission. It is acknowledged that generous supports have been available to date but that budgetary constraints have impacted somewhat in the slightly reduced budget for continuing professional development.

There was generally significant satisfaction with the implementation and effectiveness of quality assurance policies and procedures in most areas. Some areas for further work were identified.

The principal thematic areas that arose through the implementation of Quality Assurance procedures during 2015/16 were as follows:

1. Technology-Enhanced Learning.

   There was significant development and validation of part-time and blended learning programmes during 2015/16 (21 new programmes) and this will continue. This highlighted the need for guidelines and training for academic staff on the design and delivery of part-time and blended learning programmes, in tandem with an increased capacity of knowledge and skills in the area of Technology Enhanced Learning. Guidelines on the design of part-time were developed during 2015/16 and approved by Academic Council in early 2016/17.

   During 2015/16 the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching underwent significant capacity building in the area of technology-enhanced learning, shaped by the 'What Works and Why Project' funded by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning'.

   Six staff development sessions were delivered in semester 2, including a symposium dedicated to sharing good practice ('TEL Tales').   http://eprints.dkit.ie/525/

   Eleven DkIT staff members were awarded funding to implement small-scale innovations (see https://whatworksandwhy.ie/what-works-for-teachers/)
   Support was provided to TEL Teaching Groups (TEL and Academic Writing Group and Digital Citizenship Group). The work of both of these groups was presented to EdTech 2016.

   Eighteen DkIT staff contributed to 9 presentations at the 2016 EdTEch Conference.   One of the DkIT staff members was awarded the Jennifer Burke Award for her work on telecollaboration (https://www.dkit.ie/news/dkit-lecturer-wins-presigious-jennifer-burke-award).

1. Student Group Work:

   A significant body of work was carried out in relation to student group-work management and assessment.   The Academic Council Learning and Teaching Subcommittee developed a set of guidelines for staff and students in relation to group-work:

   https://www.dkit.ie/system/files/groupwork_framework guidelines 2016.pdf

   Training of academic staff in relation to these guidelines is being rolled out by the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT). The Student Learning & Development Centre is providing additional tutorial support for students   The Registrar's Office and CELT are working jointly in the dissemination of information about the group-work guidelines to students through their programme board representatives.

2. Student Retention

   Student retention has been identified as an enhancement theme in preparation for the 2018 Institutional Review. The Vice President for Academic Affairs has raised the issue at Executive Board level which will result in additional resources being assigned in order to develop an Institute Policy on Student Retention. The need for additional management information in the form of a Data Analyst has also been supported.

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).

Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching:

Staff Training and Scholarship:

At DkIT, the development of excellence in learning and teaching is led by the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT). Academic supports are provided to students through the Student Learning and Development Centre (SLDC) which is managed by CELT. An essential element in enhancing learning and teaching has been the establishment of a professional development pathway through the Institute's Master of Arts in Learning and Teaching. Since 2010, 108 staff members have participated in this programme and since 2015, colleagues from the second level and further education sector have accessed the programme. The impact of the programme has been recognised nationally. In December 2015 three members of the core teaching team were awarded 'Teaching Experts', selected for a special commendation for 'Facilitating Systemic Cultural Change'. See: http://www.teachingandlearning.ie/priority-themes/learning-impact-awards/teaching-expert- awards-2015/teaching-expert-team-awardees-2015/)

Activities of the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching during 2015/16 included the following:

Another cohort of DkIT academic staff completed the MA in Learning and Teaching in 2015/16. There were 9 MA and 9 Certificate graduates and 29 additional faculty members and external colleagues progressed on the programme. There was a new intake of 11 DkIT faculty members and 9 external colleagues. A broad range of non-accredited CPD training was also offered during the year. This level of participation, completion and the continued institutional support for the programme demonstrates the commitment to learning and teaching at the levels of both lecturers and senior management. Its effectiveness as a driver of cultural change within the institution cannot be underestimated. A significant element of the CPD centred around enhancing feedback to students (linked to the Y1 Feedback Project) and technology enhanced learning (linked to the What Works and Why project). Training was also offered for Programme Directors and Stage Convenors. A total of 229 staff members attended the following sessions:

Masterclasses:

- o Researching your practice the action research way (Dr. Pip Ferguson, DCU)
- o Inclusive Teaching (AHEAD)
- o Using Technology to enhance feedback (Y1 Feedback Project) (Lisa O'Regan and Morag Munro, NUIM)
- o Learning Analytics (Dr. Mark Glynn DCU)
- o Support first-in-family learners (Dr. Sarah O'Shea University of Wollongong)
- o 21st Century Learning and Assessment (Dr. Leo Casey, NCI)

Sharing Practice:

- o 'TEL Tales: Sharing Experiences of TEL Initiatives at DkIT'http://eprints.dkit.ie/525/

- o School of Informatics and Creative Arts – Sharing Learning and Teaching Practice

  Specific training/briefings:

- o CPD for part-time lecturers (delivered by blended learning at evenings / weekends):
  - o Student Centred Learning
  - o Classroom Technique
  - o Assessment and Feedback
  - o Academic Administration

- o External Examiner briefings
- o Programme Director and Stage Convenor training

Technology Enhanced learning:

- o Using lecture capture
- o Using Epson interactive tools for the whiteboard
- o Using screencasts to enhance feedback to students
- o Assessment and feedback using Moodle quizzes
- o Assessment and feedback using Turnitin assignments in Moodle
- o Using Socrative for formative assessment and classroom interaction
- o Screencasting for learning, assessment and feedback
- o Skype's the Limit: Telecollaboration for creating a transformative learning environment for students of modern languages.

Other:

- o Principles of good feedback: Best practice in providing feedback to students.
- o Writing to Learning: Embedding writing activities in your teaching.
- o Giving students feedback on their academic writing.
- o Motivation and emotion: understanding the psychology of feedback.

CELT continued to promote good practice in assessment through the following initiatives:

- o Delivery of a new 15-credit module on the MA in Learning and Teaching called Assessment and Feedback. A total of 28 learners completed the module.

- o Assessment of group work was identified as a particular area for action in 2014/15. This was extensively researched through a literature review, consultation with student focus groups and academic staff and feedback from programme directors and stage convenors. The result was a framework for assessing group work which was presented to Academic Council in December 2016. https://www.dkit.ie/centre-learning-teaching/information-staff/documents-policies

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.

National Forum for Learning and Teaching:

DkIT has two National Forum Associates who actively engage with the forum on an ongoing basis. Two other academic staff members have been partially seconded to the National Forum's Professional Development Expert Group for 2016/17.
In partnership with MEND Cluster partners, DkIT was successful in obtaining funding under the National Forum for Learning and Teaching Enhancement Funds in both 2014 and 2015. DkIT is a partner in 3 projects, each of which involves collaboration with at least two MEND partners, which commenced in 2014/15 and continued during 2015/16. The project details are as follows:

1. Supporting Transition: Enhancing Feedback in First Year Using Digital Technologies. Involving NUIM (Lead), DkIT, AIT and DCU. See http://y1feedback.ie/

2. Student Success Toolbox for Flexible Learners: Supporting Transitions from thinking about study to the first weeks. This project involves DCU (Lead), DkIT, NUIM and IT Sligo. Http://studentsuccess.ie/

3. Assessment for Learning Resources for First year Undergraduate Mathematics Modules. This project involves NUIM (Lead), DkIT, AIT and DCU.
http://www.teachingandlearning.ie/assessment-for-learning-resources-for-first-year-undergraduate-mathematics-modules/

Two additional projects commenced in 2015/16:

Technology Enhanced Assessment Methods (TEAM) in Science and Health Practical Settings. This is led by DkIT with partners AIT, IT Carlow and IT Sligo. See http://www.teachingandlearning.ie/technology-enhanced-assessment-methods-team-science-health-practical-settings/

Technology Enhanced Learning: What Works and Why. This project is led by DCU with partners DkIT and AIT. See https://whatworksandwhy.ie

Entrepreneurship and External Engagement:

The Institute plays a key role in the economic, social and cultural development of the region. DkIT is part of a wider business and local community and with the Regional Development Centre and Lifelong Learning Centre both providing support to the business and general community.
Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) has been identified as a leading exemplar for embedding entrepreneurship in higher education by global economic advisory forum, The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). A case study released by the OECD describes a strong culture of enterprise and innovation that permeates DkIT and examines its strategic approach to enterprise education as a best practice for developing entrepreneurial behaviours and traits amongst its students and staff. The Institute, through the activities of the four academic schools and the Regional Development Centre, has adopted a bottom up and peer to peer approach to developing Campus Entrepreneurship and Entrepreneurial students using Student Enterprise Interns to encourage students to explore starting a business as a career option.
http://www.rdc.ie/campus-entrepreneurship

In February 2016, the Regional Development Centre was successfully awarded continuation of its I.S. EN ISO 9001:2008 accreditation for a further 3 years. The assessment was based on a review of the organisation's documented system and samples of records, activities and personnel. No areas of weakness were identified during the course of the audit. Particular areas of strength noted were:

1. The strong level of management commitment to effective implementation of the quality management system.

2. The strong ethos of customer focus and continual improvement within the Centre

3. The maturity and effectiveness of the Quality Management System in place.

4. The high level of customer satisfaction.

Industry Day:

Co-ordinated through a cross campus working group, DkIT held its inaugural Industry Open day on Wednesday April 15th 2015. The second of these Industry Open Days was held on 9th November 2016, sponsored by Osborne Recruitment.   This provided an opportunity for local industry and businesses to work more closely with the institute as well as meet students and graduates to explore employment and placement opportunities.   A number of careers workshops and presentations took place (e.g. IBEC, ACCA).   Over 60 companies across a range of sectors attended the day and exhibited at the Industry Fair and approximately 2000 students attended the event, a very significant increase on the previous year.

PART 5	Objectives for the Coming Year

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

Assessment:

The Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) will continue to promote good practice in assessment. Specifically a framework for assessment of student group work was launched in early 2017 and associated staff development provision and support for students will continue. Work will also continue on the TEAM project which is exploring the potential offered by digital technologies in the assessment of practical skills in science and health disciplines.
The institute is committed to building on the capacity developed in the course of participation in National Forum funded enhancement project to inform planning for programmatic review and the Assessment & Learning policy. CELT is actively exploring ways to ensure that these enhancements are sustainable and have wide impact.

Part-time and Blended Learning Programmes:

The Centre for Learning and Teaching will build on existing strengths and developments with emphasis on technology-enhanced learning and part-time provision, in line with the Institute's strategic priority to increase the provision of flexible and part-time programmes.   Guidance for academic staff on the design and development of part-time programmes are being developed during 2016/17.

External Examiners:

Training for external examiners will continue and improve, incorporating feedback and inputs from academic departments.

Student Retention:

In line with the Institute's strategic priorities (Goal 1 Learning and Teaching), the Institute will continue with the Quality Enhancement theme of Student Retention for the academic year 2016/17.

Programme validations planned for 2015/16 are:

- o Certificate in Management and Quality Initiatives in ID Services

- o Certificate in Community Nursing

- o Higher Certificate in Science in Computing and Business

- o Higher Certificate in Front Office Management

- o Higher Certificate in Property and Facilities Management (Full-time)

- o BSc in Engineering Technology and Management

- o BSc (Hons) in Agri-Food Production

- o BSc (Hons) in Veterinary Nursing (1 year add-on)

- o BEng (Hons) in Engineering (Common entry to BEng (Hons) Mechanical/Manufacturing, Civil, Electrical/Electronic)

- o Higher Diploma in Science in 3D Computer Animation

- o Higher Diploma in Science in Computing (Part-time provision)

- o Master of Arts in Tourism

The School of Business and Humanities is involved in a collaborative apprenticeship application for a level 9 Masters award in Accounting.

Policies due for development or review in 2016/17:

- o Institute Policy on Public Information (new).
- o Programmatic Review Handbook.
- o Intellectual Property Policy.
- o Social Networking Policy (to incorporate the Institute Digital Citizenship Initiative)
- o Assessment and Learning Policy

Other:

1. Marks and Standards:

   Ongoing work on the revision of Marks and Standards will continue

New Developments:

Discussions about the upcoming **Programmatic Reviews** have commenced, including structures, principles and policies, guidelines and operational templates for same.   These will be incorporated into a Programmatic Review Handbook for approval by Academic Council before the reviews commence.   It is likely that the reviews will consist of two stages, the SER (Self Evaluation Report) phase followed by a review of programmes and other academic activities. Two academic schools (School of Health and Science and School of Business and Humanities) are due to complete the programmatic review process by September 2018.   One of the issues raised in annual programme board reports for 2014/15 and 2015/16 was the difficulties posed by the transition from old to revised programmes post review.   This will be considered as a component of the planning process for the next round of reviews.

Review Plans: Area/Unit and Number	The School of Engineering will undergo the following professional accreditation events in 2016/17:
	o The Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland accreditation of the Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Building Surveying.
	o The Chartered Association of Building Engineers Accreditation of the Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Building Surveying.
Any further information with respect to plans for the coming period.	With the changes to the teaching allocation within academic contracts on foot of the TUI agreement, the class contact hours within DkIT will be compared with the sector norms in order to benchmark best practice. It has been some time since a review of this type has been conducted and it is expected to be an informative exercise.
PART 6	Preparation for Periodic Review
A description of the impacts of institutional review within the institution.	Institutional Review is due in 2018 and is currently being planned for.
A short evaluative and reflective summary of the overall impact of quality assurance in the reporting period or, over a more extensive period, in the review cycle.	Quality Assurance remained a central and prioritised activity at DkIT during the academic year 2015/16. The ownership of QA continued to be relevant to all staff members within the Institute and there is a keen willingness to embrace continuous improvement and enhancement within the organisation.

Developmental themes of importance to the institution which will be relevant to periodic review.	**Student Retention** This continued as the Institute Quality Enhancement theme for 2015/16.

CELT initiatives to support student retention:

- The student induction process has been reviewed and a dedicated induction for advanced entry students was introduced and a leaflet developed for friends and family on supporting students.

- Training for stage convenors and programme directors was carried out, including a session on supporting successful transitions delivered by Nuala Harding from AIT.

- The Student Learning and Development Centre offered pre-induction academic writing tutorials and basic IT tutorials to mature students.

- Support on academic writing is being provided to part-time students.

- Training on Learning and Teaching is now offered as part of the new staff induction programme.

- Specific programmes on Learning and Teaching have been provided to groups of staff delivering on part-time programmes.

Initiatives by Registrar's Office to support student retention:

- Student progression data provided on a programme and stage basis to each academic department, for discussion by programme boards.

- Institute Retention Report for 2014/15 presented to Academic Council in November 2015.

- Presentation on student retention by Registrar and Head of Learning and Teaching to Academic Council in June 16.

- A new initiative to support student retention was developed by the VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar during 2015/16 and approved by the DkIT Executive Board in early 2016/17. This initiative will roll out during 2016/17 and result in the development of a DkIT Student Retention Policy, which will include definitions, metrics and targets. There are several beneficial outputs to the initiative which will enhance DkIT as in Institute. They include:

- Greater emphasis on the student experience

- Greater awareness among faculty members of best practice in student retention

- Enhanced profile within the sector on student retention metrics

- Increased student numbers for funding purposes

- Provision of vital information for annual programme review and 5-yearly Programmatic Review purposes