Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology

Annual Institutional Quality Assurance Report 2018

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

The Cyclical Review Process

Part 1

Overview of internal QA governance, policies and procedures

Overarching institution-level approach and policy for QA (ESG 1.1)

1. Overarching Institution Quality Policy
A brief synopsis of the overarching institution quality policy which sets out the links between QA policy and procedures and the strategy and strategic management of the institution.

The last decade has witnessed some significant milestones in the institutional autonomy of GMIT, its validation by external agencies, and by implication its standing within Ireland's higher education sector. In 2004 GMIT was granted delegated authority from HETAC to make awards up to level 8 honours bachelor and level 9 taught masters degrees. In 2005 additional delegated authority was confirmed for research degrees including the awards of Ph.D. in Aquatic Science and Mechanical Engineering. Future anticipated change is the granting of delegated authority to the Institutes of Technology to make their own awards as Designated Awarding Bodies.

GMIT has a robust quality assurance framework (QAF) with a suite of Codes of Practice and Academic Polices approved by Academic Council and Governing Body. These codes and policies in addition to national requirements also embed the 2015 European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance. As a supporter of the European Higher Education Area, GMIT is committed to the implementation of the Bologna process and the Institute operates the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) where all modules are either 5 credits or multiples thereof. Additionally, all programmes were redesigned in 2004 to be aligned with the learning outcomes based approach. Students automatically receive the European Diploma Supplement after graduation and the Institute actively engages in European projects in relation to quality and benchmarking as they arise. Each component of the Quality Assurance Framework is accessible online and updated at least once during the 3-year lifetime of the Academic Council. GMIT's Quality Assurance Framework is implemented uniformly across all campuses. Students are an integral part of this process and are represented on Institute committees, Academic Council and Governing Body. In addition, Institute graduates are members of programmatic review panels.

GMIT remains committed to ensuring that its quality assurance system remains fit for purpose, recognising that its awards are underpinned by this. Additionally, through the development of new quality assurance policies and procedures, GMIT continues to be both proactive and responsive to sectoral protocols emanating from QQI. Recent examples of these include:
- Sectoral protocols for the delegation of authority by QQI to the Institutes of Technology to make joint awards were approved in November 2014. Before IoTs are in a position to exercise this authority they must have internal Collaborative Transnational Policies approved through their Academic Councils. GMIT has such a Transnational Collaborative Policy,

including Joint Awards, approved through Academic Council and has written to QQI to confirm that such a policy is in place.

- A second sectoral protocol was approved in November 2015 for the awarding of Research Masters degrees at NFQ level 9 under delegated authority from QQI to the Institutes of Technology.

Whilst these milestones in the development of the Institutes QAF are significant in terms of the increased autonomy that they confer upon the Institute, the interrelatedness of this QAF with decision making and strategic planning across the Institute requires more consideration.

Strategy

GMIT's Strategic Plan 2010-2015 identified five pillars to guide its development:

- Learning and Teaching
- Student Environment
- Research and Innovation
- Community Engagement
- Internationalisation and Collaboration

The revised plan extended to 2016 to align with the GMIT HEA institutional compact identified the following pillars:

- Learning and Teaching
- Collaboration and Alliances
- Research, Development and Innovation
- Student and Community Engagement

Internationalisation

As the fourth largest IOT in Ireland, GMIT sees itself continuing to increase the provision of STEM focussed programmes at Levels 6/7 (Higher Certificate / Ordinary Degree) and Level 8 (Honours Degree), with advanced entry, exit and transfer opportunities to facilitate student choice and meeting the technology driven skills needs of Ireland. There will also be increased provision of minor and special purpose awards under programmes such as Springboard to support workforce up-skilling and re-skilling in line with Ireland's National Skills Strategy to 2025 and enhanced flexible/online learning opportunities. GMIT will also provide Level 9 structured Masters programmes in a flexible manner to meet the needs of our existing workforce.

The Programmatic Review undertaken in 2013/14 at GMIT was a discipline based review across the Institute to ensure coherence in programme provision. GMIT will continue to enhance the quality of its teaching and learning activities and student support services.

The Centre for Educational Development focuses on pedagogical innovation and the promotion of good practice in teaching and learning, as well as supporting staff development. The Virtual Learning Environment will continue to be developed across all campuses. In addition, the Institute has provided additional resources to support the growing success of its "First5Weeks" induction programme.

Going forward GMIT will focus its research provision at Levels 9 (Masters) and 10 (Doctorate) in specific disciplines where the Institute has the requisite capacity and will work collaboratively with partner HEIs to enhance the quality and relevance of research outputs.

GMIT through its iHubs and designated research centres will continue to support the development of existing as well as new and innovative enterprises.

GMIT is committed to working collaboratively with partner institutions to enhance the regional provision of programmes, research and innovation, enterprise development and shared services. GMIT currently has formal MOUs with the National University of Ireland Galway (NUI Galway), with IT Sligo and Letterkenny IT (LYIT) (the "Connacht Ulster Alliance (CUA)"), and with the National Marine Institute based in Galway and with regional Education & Training Boards.

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

All academic matters are dealt with by the Institute's Academic Council subject to the approval of Governing Body.

As currently constituted the membership of the Academic Council comprises forty seven members, twenty four of whom are elected by the Institute's academic community, with the President as Chairperson. For the purpose of undertaking its workload the Council has eight dedicated sub-committees:

• Academic Standards Committee
• Programme Amendments Committee
• Research Committee
• Collaborations Committee
• Access and Transfer Committee
• Retention Committee
• Disciplinary Committee
• Examinations Appeals Board

Academically GMIT is structured on a school and department basis. The schools in general have a specific disciplinary focus, for example Engineering, Science, Furniture and Business. Some Schools/Centres have a multi-disciplinary focus such as the Mayo Campus and the College of Tourism and Arts.

GMIT is proud to be recognised as a student centred organisation where the student voice is heard – all Programme Boards, which are advisory to the Academic Council, have student representation; the Students' Union is represented on the Academic Council and Governing Body, and training is provided annually to the class representatives on the Quality Assurance Framework. The Institute also provides a range of access supports and resources for students experiencing difficulties with mathematics and academic writing.

Confirmation of QA Policy and Procedures

1. Programme Design and Approval (ESG 1.2)
Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance policy and procedures for the design and approval of new programmes.

As part of its QAF the Institute has a Code of Practice on Validation, Monitoring & Review, available at the following link:

http://www.gmit.ie/sites/default/files/public/general/docs/2.1-validation-monitoring-and-review.pdf

New programmes and related awards are normally proposed within the overall context of an Academic Plan for a College/Centre/Campus/School (hereafter referred to as the 'Academic Unit').

There are two separate but interrelated elements involved in the approval of new programme proposals. Validation is primarily concerned with the academic quality of a proposal and is the responsibility of the Academic Council. However, new programmes may have resource and strategic implications for the Institute. As such, the authorisation to proceed with development, and subsequently to offer the programme following a successful validation, is the responsibility of the Executive Board.

The process is consistent with the generic quality assurance model promoted by the ESG.

2. Programme Delivery and Assessment (ESG 1.3)
Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance policies and procedures for the ongoing delivery and assessment of programmes.

As part of its QAF the Institute has a Code of Practice on Student Assessment: Marks & Standards, available at the following link:
http://www.gmit.ie/sites/default/files/public/general/docs/3.1-student-assessment-marks-and-standards.pdf

The Code of Practice is divided into: Section 1, which deals with the regulatory context of assessment and the general guiding principles; Section 2, which deals with roles and responsibilities; Section 3, which deals with procedures and regulations, and Section 4, which contains appendices.

GMIT will monitor each programme on an ongoing basis to ensure:
- that the programme intended learning outcomes are being attained by students;
- the continuing appropriateness of the curriculum, pedagogy and assessment in relation to the intended learning outcomes;
- that programmes remain current and valid in light of developing knowledge in the discipline and practice in application;
- that issues arising in relation to the academic quality of programme design, delivery and assessment are identified and addressed on a timely basis.

The responsibility for managing and ensuring the quality of academic processes in accordance with Institute policy lies with the Heads of Academic Units and with Programme Boards. Individual members of staff are required to co-operate with the quality management procedures within the academic structures.

The Institute will review and evaluate the effectiveness of programme monitoring processes on a regular and systematic basis.

3. Research Quality (ESG 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.9)
Links and/or text relating to any specific quality assurance procedures for the design, approval, delivery, assessment and monitoring of research programmes, if they exist.

As part of its QAF the Institute has a Code of Practice on Research, available at the following link:
http://www.gmit.ie/sites/default/files/public/general/docs/1.2-research.pdf

This Code of Practice specifies the Institute's policy and procedures for the admission, registration, transfer of registration, and assessment of students who embark on programmes leading to the award of degrees by research and thesis or published work. It follows good practice for the organisation of quality assurance for research degrees in Ireland.

It outlines and specifies the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders in the postgraduate research process, viz. the student, Supervisors, Examiners, College/Schools, the Research Office, the Vice-President for Research and Innovation, and the Vice-Presidents' for Academic Affairs & Registrar's Office.

> **4. Student Lifecycle (ESG 1.4)**
> Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures that are encompassed by the student lifecycle.

Attracting, retaining and supporting students are key objectives of GMIT's Quality Assurance system. The Institute's policy on Access, Transfer and Progression is available at the following link: http://www.gmit.ie/sites/default/files/public/general/docs/4.1-access-transfer-and-progression.pdf

GMIT has been successful in broadening access to its programmes through implementation of its access strategy. A workgroup within the Institute is working on developing a new access strategy and it is anticipated that this will be approved by the Institute during the 2017/2018 academic year. Significant growth in participation at GMIT from mature students, students with disabilities and students from target SEGs is testament to the success of its access strategy.

GMIT also seeks to support student access through its policy on the Administration of the Student Assistance Fund and the Student Support Fund (available on the Student Portal) and through its policy on the Provision of Reasonable Accommodations for Examinations and Assessments, available at: http://www.gmit.ie/sites/default/files/public/general/docs/policy-reasonable-accommodations.pdf

The institute actively encourages applications to the Institute on the basis of recognised prior learning and its policy on the Recognition of Prior Learning is available at the following link: http://www.gmit.ie/sites/default/files/public/general/docs/no-6-recognition-prior-learning-december-2009.pdf

In collaboration with its partners in the Connacht Ulster Alliance (CUA), GMIT has developed an on-line tool to facilitate prospective students wishing to apply on the basis of recognised prior learning. The tool is accessible at the following link: http://www.myexperience.ie/.

The retention and progression of students is a priority for GMIT. GMIT has approved a policy for student retention along with an associated implementation plan, available at the following link: http://www.gmit.ie/sites/default/files/public/general/docs/1.5-retention-policy-approved-gb-19022015-untracked.pdf

A Student Engagement & Retention Officer, with responsibility for coordinating the implementation of the student retention strategy, has been appointed. Initiatives include an extended induction programme - First5Weeks, Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS), the Learning and Innovation Skills module and a new Transitions module aimed at easing the transition for students new to third level education.

GMIT produces a retention report annually which allows for the monitoring and analysis of student progression and retention across all programmes and stages. In an effort to support students and improve retention, GMIT is developing new supports for students on an ongoing basis. Examples of recent initiatives in this regard are the establishment of the Maths Learning Centre and the Academic Writing Centre supported through the GMIT library.

Quality assurance procedures in relation to certification and the conferring of awards are outlined in the Code of Practice on Student Assessment: Marks and Standards available at the following link: http://www.gmit.ie/sites/default/files/public/general/docs/3.1-student-assessment-marks-and-standards.pdf

All GMIT graduates receive the European Diploma Supplement, part of the Europass framework transparency tools after graduation. See https://www.gmit.ie/general/european-diploma-supplement

5. Teaching Staff (ESG 1.5)
Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for assuring the competence of teaching staff, including staff recruitment and staff development.

GMIT recruits teaching staff in line with the selection procedures included in the Regional Technical Colleges Act 1992 and GMIT's procedure for the Review of Recruitment and Selection Decisions.

GMIT is committed to supporting the continuous professional development of all of its staff with a view to providing the best possible learning environments for its students. The Institute actively encourages staff to be research active and supports staff engaged in Level 9 and 10 research programmes both financially and through its Scheme for Thesis Write up at PhD Level.

The Centre for Educational Development (CED) was established at GMIT in March 2012 and is aligned to the Teaching and Learning pillar of the Institute's strategic plan. Since its establishment the CED has successfully achieved a wide range of objectives for the enhancement of teaching and learning at GMIT.

GMIT also supports staff engaged in pedagogical upskilling and each year provides a range of teaching and learning development modules originating from the Learning Innovation Network (LIN) programme. More recently, GMIT have designed a flexible blended learning MA in Teaching and Learning.

In addition to supporting staff in their engagement with accredited teaching development modules, GMIT has developed two new online learning courses for staff that incorporate Digital Skills Badges. The programmes are designed for independent learning and flexible engagement. On completion of the online courses, staff can choose to progress further to the MA in Teaching & Learning. The GMIT online learning programmes for staff launched officially in September 2016.

GMIT also supports staff in attending conferences and provides a schedule of professional development workshops as part of its Staff Development Week each year. GMIT's policy on Continuous Professional Development is available at:
http://www.gmit.ie/sites/default/files/public/general/docs/final-policy-continuous-professional-development.pdf

6. Teaching and Learning (ESG 1.4, 1.5, 1.6)
Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for assuring the quality of teaching and learning.

As part of its QAF the Institute has a Learning, Teaching & Assessment Strategy, available at the following link: http://www.gmit.ie/sites/default/files/public/general/docs/7-lta-strategy-28-04-10-ac-7-may-2010-3.2.pdf

At GMIT learning and teaching is a core activity of the institute. Through its academic programmes and approach to learning, teaching and assessment, the Institute will ensure that all graduates have a comprehensive understanding of relevant disciplines, professional knowledge and skills appropriate to their awards.

The need for a formal strategy for Learning, Teaching and Assessment arises from a number of challenges and opportunities for the Institution, which include:

1) The commitment to providing a high quality learning experience for all students.
2) The importance of developing high quality graduates with robust transfer and adaptable skills.
3) The transformation of Irish society, its economy and its cultural and social diversity.
4) The internationalisation of education and the impact of globalisation.

The Institute's vision for the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy is to maintain and further develop quality and engaging environments for all students and staff. This strategy constitutes for the Institute a framework for learning, teaching and assessment. It applies to undergraduate, postgraduate and other programmes which are officially recognised by the Institute. The strategy is aligned to the Institute's Strategic Plan "Your Place - Your Future" 2010-2015 and 2013-2016.

Other Institute policies relevant to learning, teaching and assessment include:
- Student Assessment: Marks and Standards,
- Professional Practice Policy,
- External Examining Policy and Procedures,
- Policy on Plagiarism,
- Policy on the Provision of Reasonable Accommodations for Examinations and Assessments.

All the above are available at: http://www.gmit.ie/general/quality-assurance-framework

7. Resources and Support (ESG 1.5)
Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for assuring funding and resources for learning, teaching and research. Also, links and or text relating to the quality assurance procedures for learning resources and student support.

GMIT provides a range of support services for students which are detailed on the Institute website at: http://www.gmit.ie/student-services

Along with these general supports for students, the Access and Disability Service provides a range of supports and services to students with disabilities, mature students and students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. These supports and services are designed to ensure students have equality of access, participation and outcome. Underpinning the work of the Access and Disability Service is the recognition that certain categories of students experience barriers, and all services and supports provided are designed to address these barriers through the assessment of individual student needs, and the provision of appropriate academic, technological and financial support.

The organisation and delivery of support services for students is documented in the Access and Disability Service Procedures and Reference Manual (Version 5: Updated September 2015). This sets out the aims and objectives of the service, the target group of students, and procedures for the approval and delivery of supports and services. This document is distributed to all staff delivering supports and is shared on the internal staff drive. The document also includes as reference the 'HEA Guidelines for the Fund for Students with Disabilities' and includes the Procedures for the Recruitment and Employment of Support Workers.

Two policies relevant to this area are:
- Policy on the Provision of Reasonable Accommodations for Examinations and Assessments http://www.gmit.ie/sites/default/files/public/general/docs/policy-reasonable-accommodations.pdf
- Policy for the administration of the Student Assistance Fund and the Student Support Fund, http://www.gmit.ie/general/financial-supports available on the staff and student portals.

In the period 2014/2015 the Access and Disability Service was audited on two occasions by the HEA and The Structural Funds Unit, Department of Education and Skills. On both occasions the procedures as adopted by the Access and Disability Service were reviewed and found to be models of best practice.

In addition, GMIT have a number of learning support centres, student leadership programmes, online learning resources, a first year academic development module and a welcome programme. Details of these supports can be found at the following links:
- The PASS and Student Leadership Programme http://www.gmit.ie/general/about-peer-assisted study-sessions
- Learning and Innovation Skills (LIS) Module for all first year students.
- Academic Success: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life – a suite of online learning resources and supports available on the Learning Resource Centre on GMIT virtual learning environment.

- The First 5 Weeks programme: http://www.gmit.ie/general/first5weeks
- The GMIT Libraries over five campuses http://www.gmit.ie/gmit-libraries
- GMIT Library Information Skills Course https://library.gmit.ie/support/information-skills/
- The Maths Centre https://library.gmit.ie/support/math-learning-centre/ –
- The Academic Writing Centre - https://library.gmit.ie/support/academic-writing-centre/
- The Step Forward – Class Rep Training Programme http://www.gmit.ie/about/teaching-and-learning-project/stepforward-class-rep-leadership-programme
- The My Experience Programme – providing guidance and opportunities to access higher education programmes by RPL and an online ePortfolio assessment tool www.myexperience.ie
- The Student Success Toolbox – www.studentsuccess.ie

GMIT is very active and engaged with a range of national networks advocating for best practice in teaching and learning, and the development of educational resources that benefit both staff and students. National networks where GMIT is represented in teaching and learning development include:
- The National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning. GMIT has been successful in securing funding annually to develop student and staff learning resources www.teachingandlearning.ie
- Education Developers Network in Ireland (EDIN) www.edin.ie
- Student Led Learning (SLL) www.lin.ie/sll
- Learning Innovation Network (LIN) www.lin.ie

8. Information Management (ESG 1.7)
Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for collecting, analysing and using relevant information about programmes and other activities.

As part of Code of Practice No. 2, each Programme Board is required to complete an annual report. The Head of School compiles all of these reports into a School report, which is presented to Academic Council for consideration and review.

The policy and procedures are detailed in Section 6 of Code of Practice No. 2 and Appendix 8 provides further detail. COP No 2 is available at the following link:
http://www.gmit.ie/sites/default/files/public/general/docs/2.1-validation-monitoring-and-review.pdf
Section 6 also details policies covering Student Feedback and the Annual Retention report.

Student engagement and satisfaction is measured, annually, through the Irish Student Survey of Engagement (ISSE). GMIT has been active in increasing response rates each year. A summary report of the feedback received is prepared and circulated to staff and students while a more detailed analysis is provided to the Executive and to each academic unit. A number of new initiatives have been implemented at GMIT as a result of student feedback.

External Examiner feedback is considered at all appropriate levels in the Institute in line with GMIT Policy and Procedures on External Examining (available at:
http://www.gmit.ie/sites/default/files/public/general/docs/9-external-examining-may-2010ac-7-may-10-3.4.pdf.

A quantitative report of external examiner feedback is also considered by Academic Council annually.

In the development of its compact with the HEA, GMIT has identified a number of KPIs and has recently completed an exercise using independent external consultants whereby KPIs have been precisely defined and the validity of the source data assured.

A student profile, along with a variety of reports based on data contained in the HEA SRS, is developed each year. Management information relating to the student population, from a variety of sources, is prepared and analysed to provide the basis for management decision making. GMIT also engages in an academic planning exercise each year and a rolling academic plan is maintained.

The First Destinations Survey provides information on graduate careers and initial employment post-graduation. The First Destinations Report is considered by management and Academic Council each year.

GMIT also participates in U-Multirank and, through this mechanism, benchmarks itself against other European Institutions

9. Self-evaluation and Monitoring (ESG 1.9)
Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for self-evaluation and internal monitoring.

The Institute established a new sub-committee of Academic Council, namely the Monitoring & Review Committee, in 2013/14. This committee has an internal control function in relation to GMIT's academic quality assurance. It informs and advises Academic Council on its findings, and makes recommendations for improvements as necessary.

Any major risk factors identified from analysis are incorporated into the Risk Register and are monitored/reviewed by the Audit Committee. The new Academic Council established in 2016 transferred the functions of the Monitoring and Review Committee to the Standards Committee.

Policies and procedures for (i) programme monitoring, (ii) programmatic review, and (iii) institutional review are detailed in CoP No. 2, available at the following link:
http://www.gmit.ie/sites/default/files/public/general/docs/2.1-validation-monitoring-and-review.pdf

10. Stakeholder Engagement (ESG 1.1)
Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for the involvement of external stakeholders in quality assurance.

All stages of the validation process for new programmes requires stakeholder engagement. Beginning with initial approval and progressing to internal and external validation requires evidence of (i) the rationale and need for the programme, (ii) employment opportunities and potential demand for graduates. This requires conducting research with the relevant industry sector aligned to the new programme.

At the external validation stage the external validation panel always contains an experienced practitioner with necessary knowledge and expertise from the industry/services/professional sector, as appropriate.

The policy and procedures for this area is documented in Section 2 of CoP No. 2, available at the following link:
http://www.gmit.ie/sites/default/files/public/general/docs/2.1-validation-monitoring-and-review.pdf

11. Engagement with Other Bodies (ESG 1.1)
Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for engagement with professional, statutory and regulatory bodies and other quality assurance and awarding bodies (details of specific engagements should be provided in the online section of the form).

GMIT has QA procedures in place for the collaborative provision of taught programmes, including transnational collaborative provision. As a consequence the Institute was successful in obtaining Delegated Authority from QQI for Collaborative Provision including Transnational Collaborative Provision and Joint Awards. The underpinning QA policy is available at the following link:
http://www.gmit.ie/sites/default/files/public/general/docs/5.collaborativepolicy-web1.pdf

While GMIT engages extensively with professional, statutory and regulatory bodies and other quality assurance and awarding bodies, it does not currently have institution-wide quality assurance procedures for such engagement. A policy will be developed to address this more comprehensively.

12. Provision and Use of Public Information (ESG 1.8)
Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for the provision of clear, accurate, up-to date and accessible public information.

The Institute publishes both a printed and on-line version of its prospectus which gives details of the programmes on offer in the Institute along with admission requirements, selection criteria and qualifications awarded, etc. The on-line prospectus is available at:
http://www.gmit.ie/general/online-prospectus

The Code of Student Conduct outlines the general rights of students and what they can expect and what is expected of them in relation to Learning, Teaching and Assessment. This includes, for example, the provision of full information on programmes, an outline of module content, adequate notice of, and feedback following, assessments etc. Most of this information is provided to the student in a Programme Handbook, details of which are included in Code of Practice No. 2. The Code of Student Conduct is available at:
http://www.gmit.ie/sites/default/files/public/general/docs/7.1-code-student-conduct-2017-2018.pdf

At GMIT, the Academic Module Manager is a central repository of all approved programme documents and module descriptors. It is planned to make module descriptors accessible via the public website in the future.

GMIT fulfils its obligations under the Official Languages Act 2003 and its Sceim Ghaeilges available at:
http://www.gmit.ie/about/an-ghaeilge-gmit

13. Linked Providers (for Designated Awarding Bodies) (ESG 1.1)
Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for assuring engagement with linked providers including the procedures for approval, monitoring, review, withdrawal of approval and appeal for linked providers.

14. DA Procedures for use of QQI Award Standards (IoTs only)
Links and/or text relating to the specific procedures for the approval of programmes in keeping with Core Policy and Criteria for the Validation of Education and Training Programmes by QQI, the Sectoral Protocols for the Awarding of Research Master Degrees at NFQ Level 9 under Delegated Authority (DA) from QQI and the Sectoral Protocols for the Delegation of Authority by QQI to the Institutes of Technology to make Joint Awards, May 2014.

The whole of the Institute's Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) is designed to support the Institute's authority delegated to it by QQI to make awards for approved programmes. Policies, Procedures and Codes of Practice underpinning DA are available at the following link:
http://www.gmit.ie/general/quality-assurance-framework

The Institute has developed QA policies and procedures in compliance with the Sectoral Protocols for the Delegation of Authority by QQI to the IoTs to make Joint Awards, available at the following link:
http://www.gmit.ie/sites/default/files/public/general/docs/5.collaborativepolicy-web1.pdf

In addition, the Institute has developed NFQ Level 9 Research Discipline Area Validation Policy and Procedures in compliance with the Sectoral Protocols for the awarding of Research Masters Degrees at NFQ Level 9 under Delegated Authority from QQI, available at the following link:
The NFQ Level 9 Research Discipline Area Validation Policy and Procedures are available at:
http://www.gmit.ie/sites/default/files/public/general/docs/level-9-research-discipline-area-validation-policy-and-procedures-july-13.pdf

15. Collaborative Provision (ESG 1.1)
Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for engagement with third parties for the provision of programmes.

GMIT has QA procedures in place for the collaborative provision of taught programmes, including transnational collaborative provision. As a consequence the Institute was successful in obtaining Delegated Authority from QQI for Collaborative Provision including Transnational Collaborative Provision and Joint Awards. The underpinning QA policy is available at the following link:
http://www.gmit.ie/sites/default/files/public/general/docs/5.collaborativepolicy-web1.pdf

16. Additional Notes
Any additional notes can be entered here.

17. Internal Review Schedule
The internal reviews schedule or cycle at the level of unit of review within the institution. The units of review can be: module; programme; department/school; service delivery unit; faculty. The cycle will usually run over a 5-7 year period and all units should be encompassed over the full period of the cycle.

Year	2016/17
Areas/Units	Research Review: Science Research
Number	1
Link(s) to Publications	

Year	2017/18
Areas/Units	Functional Reviews: Computing Services Research Reviews: Engineering Research, Heritage Research
Number	3
Link(s) to Publications	

Year	2018/19
Areas/Units	Functional Reviews: Research Office, Buildings & Estates, International Office, Student Services Library, Marketing & Communications, Finance, HR, Academic Affairs, Lifelong Learning Stage 1 of Programmatic Review: School of Science & Computing, School of Engineering, School of Business, Galway International Hotel School, Galway School of Design and Creative Arts, Mayo Campus
Number	16
Link(s) to Publications	

Year	2019/20
Areas/Units	Stage 2 of Programmatic Review: All Programmes

Number	
Link(s) to Publications	
Year	2020/21
Areas/Units	
Number	
Link(s) to Publications	

Year	2021/22
Areas/Units	Institute Review
Number	1
Link(s) to Publications	

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

Year	
Areas/Units	
Number	
Link(s) to Publications	

Overview of internal QA governance, policies and procedures	AIQR-Part-1-2016-17 - Final.docx
PRSBs	11
Awarding Bodies	1
QA Bodies	1
Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies	First Set of Records
Type of Arrangement	PRSB
Name of the Body	Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA)
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	BB (Hons) in Accounting http://www.accaglobal.com/ie/en/help/exemptions-calculator.html
Date of last review or accreditation	25-2-2015
Next review year	2020
Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies	Second Set of Records
Type of Arrangement	PRSB
Name of the Body	Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (MMB)
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	BSc (Hons) in General Nursing BSc (Hons) in Psychiatric Nursing https://www.nmbi.ie/Education/Higher-Education-Institutions
Date of last review or accreditation	28-09-2010
Next review year	2021

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	BEng in Mechanical Engineering http://www.engineersireland.ie/Services/Accredited-Courses/Associate-Engineer.aspx
Date of last review or accreditation	02-03-2016
Next review year	2021
Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies	Fourth Set of Records
Type of Arrangement	PRSB
Name of the Body	Engineers Ireland
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	BEng in Civil Engineering http://www.engineersireland.ie/Services/Accredited-Courses/Associate-Engineer.aspx
Date of last review or accreditation	03-03-2016
Next review year	2021
Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies	Fifth Set of Records
Type of Arrangement	PRSB
Name of the Body	Academy of Clinical Science & Laboratory Medicine
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	BSc Hons in Medical Science https://www.acslm.ie/membership https://www.ibms.org/
Date of last review or accreditation	15-06-2016
Next review year	2021
Joint research degrees	0
Joint/double/multiple awards	2

Collaborative programmes	0
Franchise programmes	0
Linked providers (DABs only)	0
Section: Collaborative Provision	First Set of Records
Type of arrangement:	Joint/double/multiple awards
Name of the Body (Bodies)	Ghent University (BE), University of Pierre and Marie Curie (FR), University of Western Brittany (FR), University of the Algarve (PT), University of Oviedo (ES), Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology (IE), University of the Basque Country (ES), Polytechnic University of Marche (IT), University of Bergen (NO)
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	International Masters in Marine Biological Resources Www.imbrsea.eu
Date of last review	13-07-2016
Next review year	2019
Section: Collaborative Provision	Second Set of Records
Type of arrangement:	Joint/double/multiple awards
Name of the Body (Bodies)	Bodies: Ghent Uni, GMIT, Flanders Marine Institute, Bremen Uni, University of Algarve, University Pierre and Marie Cure, University of Bologna, Klaipeda University, Royal Dutch Institute for Sea Research Foundation, University of Gdansk, University of Algarve, University of Plymouth Reasmus Mundus Joint Doctoral Programme in Marine Ecosystem Health to Conservation (MARES)
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	Erasmus Mundus Joint Doctoral Programme in Marine Ecosystem Health to Conservation (MARES)
Articulation Agreements	2
Section: 1 Articulation Agreements	First Set of Records
Name of the Body	SOLAS
Name of the Programme and Links to Publications	BEng in Electrical Services and Automation Engineering ACC Electrical Installation L6
Date of last review of arrangement/agreement	20-06-2010
Next Review Year	2019
Section: Articulation Agreements	Second Set of Records

Name of the Body	Galway Technical Institute
Name of the Programme and Links to Publications	Advanced Certificate in Business Management and Information Systems L6
Date of last review of arrangement/agreement	20-06-2012
Review year for agreements	2018
Do you wish to make a final submission?	Yes, this is my final submission
On behalf of the President/Provost/CEO I confirm that the information submitted in this AIQR is accurate and correct.	Confirmed
Overview of internal governance, policies and procedures (Word Template).	Confirmed
Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies.	Confirmed
Collaborative Provision.	Confirmed
Articulation Agreements.	Confirmed
Date of Final Submission	16-02-2018

Parts 2-6

Institution-led QA – Annual Information

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

Part 2: Institution-led QA – Annual

Part 2 provides information relating to institution-led quality assurance for the reporting period.

Section 1: Quality Assurance and Enhancement System Developments

> **1.1** The evolution of quality assurance and enhancement systems in support of strategic objectives in the reporting period.

Quality assurance in GMIT is a process designed to foster and embed a culture of continuous improvement. The Academic Council is responsible for developing appropriate procedures for academic quality assurance in the design, delivery, learning and assessment methodologies of programmes having regard to change and best practice. The underlying thrust of these procedures is towards continuous improvement in practices relating to the development and operation of programmes as well as fostering high academic standards across the Institute.

A new Academic Council took office for a three -year period starting in 2016/17. Aligned with this development the Institute continued to afford all staff the opportunity of engaging in the upgrade and review of our Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) through the establishment of fifteen QA workgroups to support the work of Academic Council.

Other specific activities of note in support of the evolution of quality assurance and enhancement systems include:
- The Institute QA procedures were approved by QQI following a successful annual dialogue meeting (ADM) signifying the completion of the re-engagement process with QQI.
- The continued roll-out of recommendations following the programmatic review that took place in 2013/14.
- The members of the outgoing Academic Council were surveyed to self-evaluate the effectiveness of Academic Council over the previous three years. The findings suggest there is general satisfaction with:
  - The size of the Council,
  - The EUA review of the Institute,
  - Expansion, review and update of the QAF,
  - The use of workgroups to support the work of Council,

- o Scheduling presentations to Council on key topics by both internal and external personnel,

  Council felt improvements could be made in the areas of:
  - o Sub-committees reporting back to Council,
  - o Increased regulation to ensure there is compliance with the QAF,
  - o Greater effort to further embed a quality culture across the organisation.
- A Cluster Inter-institutional articulation agreement (2016-2021) was approved by the member institutions and by GMIT's Academic Council.
- Council engaged in preliminary planning for the next Programmatic Review cycle, which is scheduled to take place from 2018 to 2020. A decision was taken to engage in a two-part process. The first part will concentrate on a review of the strategic focus of each academic unit (school/centre) scheduled to take place during the 2018/19 academic year and the second part scheduled to take place in the 2019/20 academic year will concentrate on a review of all programmes in all academic units. 2017/18 will be used to develop a planning framework for both parts.
- The Institute agreed a schedule of Functional Reviews to take place in 2018 and 2019, ahead of the next Programmatic Review. Reviews will cover Computing Services, Student Services, Academic Affairs, Library, Buildings & Estates, Finance, International Office, Marketing & Communications, Research, Human Resources and Lifelong Learning. A self-evaluation template to assist units in conducting Functional Reviews was approved by Academic Council.
- Following the presentation of the 2015/2016 Retention Report to Academic Council it was agreed that Retention Reports will be agenda items at future Programme Board meetings and should have high prominence at least at one Programme Board meeting annually if not all Programme Board meetings. The Institute's Retention Plan is being implemented, and the Retention Committee met with the executive from each School/Campus to review their retention plans and statistics, making recommendations for improvement.
- The MA in Teaching & Learning programme was validated, and the Institute will fund staff who wish to participate in some, or all, of the programme. The MA will benefit both new lecturers to identify and implement good practice, and enhance the teaching of longer serving staff.   The MA contains modules relating to areas which have been identified as strategically important to the institute such as Student-Centred Learning, RPL and Technology Enhanced Learning.
- The Registrar has instigated Quality Assurance Dialogue meetings with Schools/Campuses. The initial meeting discussed the implementation of the Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) and identified areas for improvement. It is planned to continue to hold these meetings annually to assure and enhance engagement with the Institute's QAF.
- A review of the Student Complaints procedure was undertaken, and the procedure was revised to remove barriers to the resolution of student complaints and to improve the responsiveness of the Institute in addressing student concerns.

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

The new Academic Council was appointed for the period 2016/17 to 2018/19. The composition is similar to the previous Council, but there was greater interest from academic staff in getting elected on this occasion. Sub-committees were constituted as follows:

- Academic Standards Committee
- Programme Amendments Committee
- Research Committee
- Collaborations Committee
- Access and Transfer Committee
- Retention Committee
- Disciplinary Committee
- Examinations Appeals Board

Significant Personnel Changes:

- The Minister for Education & Skills appointed a new Chairperson to GMIT Governing Body for five years with effect from 29th March 2017.
- Following the resignation of the Head of Mayo Campus, an interim Head of Campus was appointed.
- An interim Academic Affairs Manager was appointed following the retirement of the previous holder of the position.
- The Institute has embarked on a new plan to re-energise and restructure its International Engagement function with the appointment of a dedicated Director of International Engagement in September 2016.
- The Institute appointed its first Teaching & Learning Officer, to develop the teaching and learning function in GMIT based on best practice.

A number of policies from the Institute's Quality Assurance Framework were revised, namely the following:

- Code of Practice No. 2 (Validation, Monitoring & Review)
- Code of Practice No. 3 (Student Assessment: Marks & Standards)
- Code of Practice No. 4 (Access, Transfer & Progression)
- Code of Practice No. 5 (Research)
- Code of Practice No. 7 (Code of Student Conduct)
- Garda Vetting Policy and Procedures

An exam processing system which provides an end-to-end secure solution for the processing and external quality review of examination papers was introduced. The system has been piloted in three academic units in GMIT and feedback from users has been overwhelmingly positive. The system allows for the secure transmission of exam material from creation by internal examiners, to review by external examiners, to submission of final papers to the Exams Office for printing. External Examiners can provide feedback and submit final reports within the system. It is planned to implement the system across the Institute in 2017/2018.

The "Sectoral Protocol for the Awarding of Research Master's Degrees at NFQ Level 9 under delegated authority (DA) from Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)" were published in 2014, and subsequently GMIT developed "NFQ Level 9 Research Discipline Area Validation Policy and Procedures". The Institute had its first research validation panel under this policy on 15th February 2017. This was to evaluate the capacity/capability to run research Masters programmes (level 9) in the discipline of science. The external panel deemed that the school has the appropriate capacity and capability to run research masters programmes in the broad area of science as proposed, and recommended that the School of Science & Computing be awarded delegated authority for level 9 research programmes.

1.3 The schedule of QA governance meetings.

Academic Council Meetings
Friday 2nd September 2016
Friday 21st October 2016
Friday 2nd December 2016
Friday 10th February 2017
Friday 5th May 2017
Thursday 15th June 2017

Programme Amendments Committee
Wednesday 22 March 2017
Tuesday 23 May 2017

Academic Standards Committee
Monday 24 April 2017

Research Committee
Monday 5th September 2016
Thursday 8th December 2016
Thursday 9th February 2017
Thursday 16th March 2017
Thursday Wednesday 27th April 2017
Tuesday 13th June 2017

Collaborations Committee
Friday 22nd September 2016

Access and Transfer Committee
Monday 28th August

Retention Committee

Wednesday 14th December 2016
Friday 10th February 2017
Monday 8th May 2017
In addition, a sub-group of the Retention Committee met with the executive of each School/Campus as follows:
Friday 24th March 2017 Mayo Campus
Friday 24th March School of Business
Friday 24th March Letterfrack Campus
Thursday 25th May 2017 School of Engineering
Thursday 25th May 2017 School of Science & Computing
Tuesday 30th May 2017 College of Tourism and Arts

Disciplinary Committee
Monday 5th September 2016
Friday 17th February 2017
Thursday 4th May 2017
Thursday 1st June 2017

AC Standing Committee
Thursday 15 September 2016
Tuesday 21 Feb 2017

Examinations Appeals Board
Friday 7th October 2016

Section 2: Reviews in the reporting period

2.1 Internal reviews that were completed in the reporting period.

New Programme Validations:
- BA (Hons) in Culinary & Gastronomic Sciences (embedded exit award Higher Certificate in Culinary Arts)
- BA in Culinary and Gastronomic Sciences (embedded exit award Higher Certificate in Culinary Arts)
- BB (Hons) in Food Innovation & Enterprise (embedded exit Award Higher Certificate in Business in Food Innovation)
- BB in Food Innovation & Enterprise (embedded exit Award Higher Certificate in Business in Food Innovation)
- BB (Hons) in International Tourism Management
- BEng (Hons) in Agricultural Engineering
- BEng in Agricultural Engineering
- BEng (Hons) in Biomedical Engineering
- BEng in Biomedical Engineering
- BEng (Hons) in Engineering (Common Entry to Manufacturing/Agricultural/Biomedical/Energy/ Mechanical Engineering)
- BEng) in Engineering (Common Entry to Manufacturing/Agricultural/Biomedical/Energy/Mechanical Engineering)
- BEng in Manufacturing Engineering (Apprenticeship Mode)
- Higher Certificate in Manufacturing Engineering (Apprenticeship Mode)
- BEng in Manufacturing (One Year Add-on)
- BEng in Manufacturing Engineering Design
- Higher Certificate in Manufacturing Engineering Design
- BEng (Hons) in Software & Electronic Engineering (with embedded exit awards of BEng in Software & Electronic Engineering and Higher Certificate in Software and Electronic Engineering)
- BSc (Hons) in Quality for Industry
- Certificate in Quality for Industry
- BSc (Hons) in Public Health Nutrition (with embedded exit awards of BSc in Public Health Nutrition and Higher Certificate in Nutrition)
- Certificate in Traditional Signwriting
- Certificate in Textiles and Costume for Visual and Cultural Industries
- Certificate in Introduction to Digital Media for the Creative Arts
- Certificate in Pastry and Baking
- Certificate in Training & Development Skills
- Certificate in Learning Theory and Instructional Design
- Certificate in Training Delivery & Evaluation
- MA in Teaching & Learning
- Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching & Learning
- Certificate in Teaching & Learning

- Certificate in Mentoring
- Certificate in Recognition of Prior Learning
- Certificate in Educational Leadership and Management
- Certificate in Assessment and Evaluation
- Certificate in Research Cycle: Foundation
- Certificate in Student-Centred Learning
- Certificate in Technology Enhanced Learning
- Certificate in Learning & Teaching e-Portfolio
- Certificate in Research Cycle Applied
- Certificate in Sales, Customer Service with a Language (French or Spanish)
- BA (Hons) in Culinary Arts (with embedded exit award of BA in Culinary Arts)
- BB (Hons) in Event Management with Public Relations
- BB (Hons) in Retail Management

Differential Validations:
- BEng in Software & Electronic Engineering (with embedded exit award of Higher Certificate in Software & Electronic Design)
- BB (Hons) in Accounting

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

Number of new **Programme Validations/Programme Approvals** completed in the reporting year	45
Number of **Programme Reviews** completed in the reporting year	0
Number of **Research Reviews** completed in the reporting year	1
Number of **School/Department/Faculty Reviews** completed in the reporting year	0
Number of **Service Unit Reviews** completed in the reporting year	0
Number of **Reviews of Arrangements with partner organisations** completed in the reporting year	1

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

Composition of Panels	%
Internal	30%
National	67%
UK	2%
EU	1%
Student	0%
Other	0%

Chair Profile	%
Internal	18%
Similar Institution	82%
Different Institution	0%
International	0%

Section 3: Other Implementation Factors

> **3.1** A description of how data is used to support quality assurance and the management of the student learning experience.

GMIT annually produces retention reports which are broken down by programme stage. A report showing trends overtime is also available. This data is used by programme boards in their annual Programme Board reports and by School/Campus executives in developing their retention strategies. To enhance the usability of these reports the Institute has identified targets for different programme stages and has developed a traffic light system to indicate how programme stages and Schools/Campuses are performing. Programme stages which are identified as performing less well are identified and discussed when School Executives meet with the Retention Committee.

To complement the Institute's Annual Retention Reports a suite of module performance reports have been developed for use by Programme Boards. The purpose of these reports is to review the performance of cohorts of students in their assessment in each module in an exam sitting, and over time. These are not retention or progression reports, but rather focus on one of the factors which impacts on student retention and progression i.e. their success or otherwise in their module assessment. The module performance reports available are as follows:
- Module Performance by Examination Sitting
- Programme Specific Module Performance
- All Programmes Module Performance
- Result Category Crosstab
- Trends in Overall Module Performance

An interactive dashboard to display HEA SRS data relevant to decision makers has been developed. The dashboard allows managers to extract the required information easily and to view trends in student statistics over time.

Both quantitative and qualitative analysis of External Examiner reports was conducted and presented to Academic Council.

To assist in the academic planning process and in the development of realistic and viable academic plans, the Institute has developed a series of reports to assist those involved in the academic planning process. These include target student numbers, planned vs. actual intakes in prior years, retention rates by programme and stage, summary charts of various student cohorts, etc.

To make the feedback from ISSE surveys more accessible a data model was developed to visualise student feedback. The visualisation includes benchmarking of GMIT scores against the scores of all IOTs, both at index and individual question level. It also allows for the comparison of ISSE scores between academic units within GMIT, trends in scores over time and easy access to responses to free text questions. GMIT scored better than the IOT average in 7 of the 9 indices.

The 'Graduate Survey' is a report produced annually by the Careers Service to provide an indication of the destination of Graduates of GMIT following graduation. The report includes analysis of those employed and those seeking employment, in addition to levels of participation in further study and training. The survey gives information concerning the salaries, region of employment and migration patterns of graduates. It also provides feedback on the student experience at college and course level. This report is presented annually to Academic Council and published for Schools and programme boards to consider and make improvements as relevant.

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

Connacht Ulster Alliance (CUA)
The Connacht Ulster Alliance received approval to proceed to the next stage of the Technological University Process. Four workgroups are planned with the objective of achieving the criteria for TU designation:
- WG1 :   Mission, Vision and Positioning,
             Governance, Organisation and Communication
             Presidents, Chair CUA, PM
- WG2 :   Research, Knowledge Exchange and related Engagement
             Heads of research/development; seconded position 1
- WG3 :   Academic Profile, Teaching and Learning
             Quality. Registrars, seconded position 2
- WG4 :   Corporate Services
             SFC's; seconded position 3

It is envisaged that a TU for the West\North-West region will provide:
- **graduates** with an internationally branded qualification
- **regional access** to international standard education
- stronger **international competitiveness** in research and learning and teaching
- **enhanced academic quality**
- **graduate employment** by supporting a long term economic, social and cultural regional balance across Ireland
- **graduate employment** by fostering business networks and developmental clusters, to enhance the attraction of the region for inward investment and business start-ups
- **a balanced provision of HE** across the country, in synergy with system-level political vision
- increased opportunities for **cross-border collaborative projects** and funding

A report from an external consultant, Professor John L. Davies identified the challenges of progressing this project during the reporting period as follows:
- the uncertainty raised by the formation of a new government and failure to progress the TU bill. It also identifies the possibility of TUI industrial action
- that 'full engagement of academic and administrative colleagues and external stakeholders has yet to be completely realised'

- that a number of Working Groups have not been established
- that a full consultation process is dependent on the operation of the working groups
- the existence of 'embryonic' statements on vision, mission and governance.

World Technology Universities Network (WTUN)
In an effort to engage in benchmarking international best practice the CUA became a founding member of WTUN. WTUN commits to:
- recognising the role of the technology university and its defining characteristics;
- working together to establish a World Technology Universities Network.

The WTUN believes that the technology university has the following characteristics. It:
- delivers teaching and research which has a direct impact on the world;
- develops graduates who are global citizens, and capable of being the leaders of the future;
- produces research and innovation with direct benefits to people and society;
- calls on a broad range of disciplines and inter-disciplinary approaches;
- works with government, industry and other organisations, to the benefit of people and society;
- commits to collaborating with other technology universities across the world.

The vision of the WTUN is 'a network of global technology universities committed to undertaking cutting-edge applied research with direct benefits to people and society, and providing education for the next generation of world leaders who will have to solve the world's 21st century problems.'

Carnegie Community Engagement Assessment Framework Ireland
GMIT engaged in the above Carnegie pilot project along with a number of other HEIs. The report from the pilot concluded the following:

> 'It is apparent in the application that there are unique circumstances that shape community engagement at GMIT. The multi campus structure makes it difficult for the community to know how to access the Institute. The economic downturn and the changes in work conditions means that staff are working longer hours limiting the ability to coordinate/facilitate projects with external groups on behalf of the institute. At the same time, there are what one survey respondent referred to as "a lot of people independently engaged with community groups outside GMIT. It does crossover into teaching and trying to acknowledge this is a challenge, with so much happening, it can be difficult to address this without resources to support CE." Thus, it seems that GMIT is poised to capitalize on strong foundations and an ethos of involvement with the local communities to build a strong academic focus on community engagement. There also is a certain urgency to this because of an impending strategic planning process that will guide the Institute planning for the next half decade.'

Sustainability Challenge at GMIT and the Mayo Campus
GMIT operates across 5 different campuses in Galway and Mayo. The Institute is facing significant financial challenges, with operating deficits in each of the last four years leading to rapidly declining reserves. This prompted its categorisation as one of six vulnerable IoTs in early 2016, with GMIT agreeing to prepare an externally validated three-year plan to bring the institute back into a balanced

budget position. GMIT has taken significant remedial action to address its deficit, with this new financial plan identifying key actions including:

- New programme development to increase student numbers
- Addressing over-staffing and significantly reducing staff costs
- Further implementation of a new retention strategy
- Differentiating GMIT's offering from other HEIs to increase demand

While these actions reflect institute-wide issues, there has been particular concern over the financial performance of the Mayo Campus, with a deficit of €1.6m budgeted for operations on this campus in 2017 alone (before the application of any central overhead costs). The Department of Education and Skills (DES), the Higher Education Authority (HEA) and GMIT itself have stressed that the Mayo campus must remain an integral part of the institute, and that a sustainable way forward must be found. Nevertheless, there has been strong and growing concern from the staff, students and wider community in Mayo that the future of the college was under threat, and that affirmative action was required in order to safeguard its future.

In response to these issues, in March 2017, the Taoiseach and the Minister for Education and Skills announced the establishment of a Working Group to formulate a plan for a sustainable future and growth options for the GMIT Mayo Campus in Castlebar. The Working Group was chaired by Mr Andrew Brownlee, Head of System Funding at the HEA and it was charged with providing a report to the HEA's Finance Committee by the end of the third quarter of 2017.

Degree Apprenticeships
GMIT, as the coordinating provider, signed a collaborative agreement with the Irish Medtech Association and a number of provider consortium members (listed below), that outlines the guidelines for the design, delivery, review and development of the programmes leading to the award of HC Manufacturing Technology and BEng Manufacturing Engineering. The provider consortium partners recognise the requirement of the National Apprenticeship Council (NAC) for single national programmes leading to the HC and BEng awards which prepare the apprentice for the professional occupations of Manufacturing Technician and Manufacturing Engineer. Recruited and selected for apprenticeship training by employers, the apprentices will be registered with SOLAS as Apprentices, issued contracts of apprenticeship consistent with SOLAS Apprenticeship Code of Practice for Employers and Apprentices, and registered on the HC Manufacturing Engineering and BEng Manufacturing Engineering programme (as appropriate) delivered by the provider consortium partners.

The two new programmes were developed by a consortium of industry and academia representatives involving Ibec's Irish Medtech Association. GMIT's Mechanical and Industrial Engineering Department led the academic development of the programme. It is the first time a manufacturing engineering degree and national certificate are being made available through apprenticeship mode in Ireland.

The provider consortium partners include:
- Athlone Institute of Technology (AIT)
- Cork Institute of Technology (CIT)
- Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT)
- Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology (GMIT)
- Limerick Institute of Technology (LIT)
- Institute of Technology Sligo (IT Sligo)

- Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT)

The agreement provides for the management of the Provider Consortium, programme quality assurance, apprentice assessment and provider awards.

3.3 A description of other implementation issues.

We achieved most of what was planned for this reporting period. However, the institute is continuing to work towards finalising its strategic plan. This has taken longer than anticipated.

We're continuing to review our QAF to incorporate any remaining outstanding issues from the gap analysis previously undertaken. This is being managed through our Quality Improvement Planning process.

Part 3: Effectiveness and Impact

Part 3 provides information relating to the effectiveness and impact of quality assurance policy and procedures for the reporting period.

1. Effectiveness
Evidence of the effectiveness of QA policies and procedures during the reporting period.

We were successful in getting one of the first higher education apprenticeships approved, acting as the lead provider with a consortium of eight members. GMIT's quality assurance procedures will be used in relation to all learners on this programme.

GMIT operates a two- stage validation process for new programme approvals. The internal panel stage is rigorous and ensures that programmes which arrive at external validation stage are appropriate and will provide the learner with knowledge, skills and competencies relevant to the level of the award and the needs of stakeholders. In the period being reported on, all programmes which went to external validation were recommended for approval. Equally, GMIT utilises a two-stage process for the authorisation of delegated authority for research. This delivers a more seamless progression through the external validation stage.

While there is always room for improvement there is strong engagement by staff with quality assurance in the college as evidenced by the number of staff who volunteered for Academic Council workgroups. A call issued to staff interested in participating in workgroups outlined below was enthusiastically responded to by staff across the Institute:
- Code of Practice No. 1 (The Academic Council) Review Group
- Code of Practice No. 2 (Validation, Monitoring & Review) Review Group
- Code of Practice No. 3 (Student Assessment: Marks & Standards) Review Group
- Code of Practice No. 4 (Access, Transfer & Progression) Review Group
- Code of Practice No. 5 (Research) Review Group
- Code of Practice No. 6 (Recognition of Prior Learning) Review Group
- Learning, Teaching & Assessment Strategy
- Online Learning Policy
- Plagiarism Policy
- Institute Access Policy
- Research Ethics Policy
- Disciplinary Policy for Nursing Students During Placement
- Fitness to Practice Policy
- Mental Health Policy

This year we moved to a different model of working with Schools/Campuses to ensure that they were engaging with and implementing the QAF. We held a quality assurance dialogue meeting with each

School, and issues identifies for change or improvement fed into the Institute's Quality Improvement Plan. We expect that the input, format and output of these meetings will evolve as the process becomes embedded in our quality mechanisms.

The work of external examiners is important in assuring quality and inspiring public confidence. To optimise the work of external examiners and ensure that they are familiar with the GMIT QAF an annual workshop is provided where an overview of relevant policies and procedures is provided in addition to the opportunity to engage in dialogue.

We rolled out the student representative training programme, Step Forward, with Student Union teams in Galway, to optimise student input into programme boards and other Institute activities.

The Institute has placed considerable focus on student engagement and retention, and the implementation of the retention plan. There is evidence of the positive impact these activities are having with a 3% increase in first year student retention over the last three years, and a 1% increase overall. However, the Institute is committed to further improve these figures through supporting students through the student lifecycle.

The 2016 Graduate Report found that 94% of level 8 students were in employment (84%) or in further study (10%) eight months after graduation. Whilst indicative of a growing economy, we feel that this is also representative of the preparedness of our graduates for the workplace and the confidence of employers that our programmes produce graduates with the requisite knowledge, skills and confidence.

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

A review of retention statistics resulted in many decisions and initiatives being taken throughout the college. For example, retention rates on engineering programmes suggested the need for a review of the entry requirements, and following a review of points and subsequent student attainment, it was decided to introduce a minimum threshold for maths commencing in 2017/18. The impact of this on retention will be closely monitored. It was also felt that we needed to engage students better in the period prior to their arrival in GMIT, building relationships and fostering a sense of belonging from early on. This resulted in the development of a 'Welcome' section on the website and a welcome text to students on acceptance of their place in GMIT. The complex and multi-faceted nature of retention was recognised by the acknowledgement of the need for individual Schools, and programmes, to consider the causes of attrition and the contextualised actions required. This was realised by School/Campus level plans which are reviewed by the Retention Committee.

The implementation of our Continuing Professional Development policy has seen further staff pursuing funded level 9 and level 10 programmes with 23 staff continuing on PhD programmes joined by an additional 6, while 4 staff completed their level 10 qualifications. In addition, Staff Development Week has become an established part of the Institute Calendar, with Schools now

adopting one of the days for contextualised staff development, increasingly using their own staff to disseminate knowledge and skills to others within the School/Campus. Although, only validated, there is a strong level of interest from staff in our MA in Teaching and Learning which will commence in 2017/18.

A review of exam security was conducted resulting in significant changes to the examination process. These included increased security around the processing, printing, transmission, transport and storage of exam papers. *A Protocol for the Secure Preparation, Printing and Storage of Examination Material* has been approved.

There has been increased admissions through RPL because of a more visible and online RPL system and supported by more staff engaging with a Level 9 RPL module delivered in-house.

To support our Plagiarism Policy, we have included a mandatory online Academic Integrity component in our first-year transition module, Learning & Innovation Skills. This 'must pass' element requires all students to demonstrate an understanding of plagiarism and to demonstrate competency in relation to referencing.

GMIT approved a Progression Policy for Nursing Students. The policy outlines the criteria for nursing students' progression when undertaking the practice component of the practice placement module, through each year of the BSc (Hons) in General and Psychiatric Nursing programmes.

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

A review of programme validation reports has highlighted three key areas requiring improvement namely, developing and articulating assessment strategies, and writing both module and programme learning outcomes. This will inform our programme for staff development and preparations for programmatic review.

The focus of Continuing Professional Development has been on the acquisition of formal level 9 and 10 qualifications, but increasing there is a shift in the focus of staff development with increased demand for more local, contextualised training, in line with Institute or School/Campus objectives.

Transition has been a key theme for the Institute for a number of years, but the focus was primarily on 'transition in', particularly for first year students. There is increased evidence of a focus on 'transition out' through the incorporation of modules such as 'Next Step' and the inclusion of work placements in programmes. Professional practice is becoming more dominant throughout the college, with professional practice in some guise increasingly incorporated into new programmes.

GMIT is approved to offer over 260 free places on a range of Springboard courses in Business, Culinary Arts, Engineering, Science and Computing. This continues the trend the institute has established of identifying, designing and developing programmes of relevance to industry.

The quality underpinning the diverse range of programmes we offer is regularly recognised through awards. Some evidence to support this theme includes:

- Staff in the GMIT Department of Building & Civil Engineering and BAM Ireland scooped a major accolade, the third in the reporting period for the GMIT Department and industry partners, for its development of an innovative practical resource efficiency toolkit for the Irish construction sector.
- Four final year GMIT Business students win top prize in this year's Irish Tax Institute, Fantasy Budget competition.
- Cian Mulligan from Rathcoole, Co Dublin, made history on 9 December, 2016, by becoming the first student to hold three Ireland Skills titles in Carpentry, Joinery and Cabinetmaking. A total of seven GMIT Letterfrack students competed in three finals, two of whom won awards, affirming GMIT Letterfrack's position as the National Centre for Excellence in Furniture Design & Technology.

Part 4: Quality Enhancement

Part 4 provides information which goes beyond the description of standard quality assurance procedures. Quality enhancement includes the introduction of new procedures but also extends the concept of quality assurance to other initiatives, activities and events aimed at improving quality across the institution.

4.1 Improvements and Enhancements for the Reporting Period
Improvements or enhancements, impacting on quality or quality assurance, that took place in the reporting period.

In 2016/17, the Institute appointed an administrative officer with responsibility for Data Protection. Her role is to work with the VP for Finance & Corporate Services to develop a data protection programme in the Institute with the aim of ensuring compliance with data protection laws. Work undertaken during 2016/17 included:

- Developing policies and protocols to enable compliance with the principles of data protection
- Working collaboratively across all departments to develop records of personal data processing activity within the Institute
- Promoting transparency of personal data processing by publishing privacy notices
- Providing practical advice in relation to current legislation
- Providing information about the changes required to the Institute business processes in order to ensure compliance with the forthcoming EU General Data Protection Regulation
- Delivering awareness sessions to staff regarding the fundamentals of data protection
- Processing data access requests and acting as a point of contact for the national data protection authority.

In recognition of the expanding role of MIS in supporting quality assurance, an MIS Officer was appointed to optimise the use of available functionality and to improve access to management information.

Following a review of exams processing, an exam processing system which provides an end-to-end secure solution for the processing and external quality review of examination papers has been piloted in three academic units. It is planned to implement the system across the Institute in 2017/2018.

GMIT signed an MOU in September 2016 with Galway Community College (GCC), a DEIS second level and Further Education provider located in the locality. This was aimed at promoting and improving equity of access to higher education for second level students of the community school and for providing progression routes for PLC students. Considerable activity was engaged in during 2016/17 to implement the MOU. For second level students this included a college taster programme for pre-leaving certificate students and an art programme for transition year students.   A mapping of Further Education programmes for advanced entry was undertaken, a pilot scheme was instigated to provide entry to GMIT's Sports and Exercise students, and Biomedical Science students from Galway

Community College visited labs in GMIT. Meanwhile TV and documentary students in GMIT are facilitated to use relevant facilities in GCC.

In Sept 2016, GMIT commenced a new programme in Sport and Exercise Science. To ensure the best possible experience for the students, GMIT entered into an agreement with Galway GAA for use of the Centre of Excellence facilities which include outdoor pitches, a very large gymnasium, a kitchen for nutrition studies, and adjacent learning rooms. GMIT has invested in specialised equipment and has fitted out the learning room and has based a technician in the Centre on a full-time basis. GMIT will provide sports science expertise to Galway GAA. When the programme is running fully, it is expected that approximately 180 students will be using the facility.

GMIT launched Get Ready.Education MOOC in 2016-17, a collaborative project with IT Sligo, University of Limerick, NUI Galway, GMIT, Limerick IT, Mary Immaculate College and Letterkenny IT. The MOOC was designed to address the needs of students making the transition from second to third level education, and is available to second level students in Ireland from transition year to leaving certificate.

The CUA (GMIT, IT Sligo and LYIT) initiated a project to inform, support and facilitate Irish or international applicants in applying for RPL to gain entry onto a programme or seek exemptions from parts of a programme.

4.2 Quality Enhancement Highlights
Analysis of quality enhancement activities that were initiated during the reporting period and which would be of interest to other institutions and would benefit from wider dissemination.

Annual Dialogue Meetings with Schools: This year we moved to a different model of working with Schools/Campuses to ensure that they were engaging with and implementing the QAF. We held a quality assurance dialogue meeting with each School, and issues identifies for change or improvement fed into the Institute's Quality Improvement Plan. We expect that the input, format and output of these meetings will evolve as the process becomes embedded in our quality mechanisms.

First Steps in Teaching and Learning: Developed an online course titled 'First Steps in Teaching and Learning' in consultation with the LIN CPD group for lecturers new to teaching at Higher Education. This online resource pack is designed to provide a condensed 'just-in-time' introduction to teaching, learning and assessment for new lecturers and is available at www.cpdlearnonline.ie

Recognition of Prior Learning: an open online course on Recognised Prior Learning assessment and mentoring skills was launched, and is available at www.cpdlearnonline.ie to all staff in higher education working in an RPL role.

Teaching & Learning Showcase: Staff are invited to participate in an annual teaching and learning showcase, to highlight and demonstrate innovative practice to colleagues during Staff Development Week. It showcases excellence in retention initiatives, learning technologies, assessment tools, community engagement, student centred learning, online learning approaches and teaching methodologies.

West / North-West Cluster: This group developed a framework for Collaborative Research Masters / PhD Cluster provision. This framework offers a student pathway from Masters L9 that leads towards a PhD L10, with co-supervision by both Masters supervisor and PhD supervisor throughout. The cluster partners developed an Interinstitutional Articulation Agreement (2016-2021), committing to the following to ensure the efficient and effective movement among partner institutions in enhancement of students' continuous advancement in learning:

- To provide high quality higher education programmes which builds upon the strengths and expertise of the partners
- To map programme provision from levels 6-10 in West/North West region
- To enhance progression routes to programmes provided by the partner institutions.
- As far as is practicably possible, facilitate transfers by students by direct application across each of the partner institutions within similar programmes
- As far as is practicably possible, facilitate access across partner institutions from level 6 programmes to appropriate level 7 or 8 programmes
- As far as is practicably possible, facilitate access across partner institutions from level 8 programmes to relevant level 9 programmes
- As far as is practicably possible, facilitate access across partner institutions to level 10 programmes
- To increase access to educational opportunities for students in the West/North West region
- To identify gaps in provision and opportunities for new programmes linked to recognised national and regional needs

Teaching and Learning Champions (TLC) Project: GMIT is participating in the Teaching and Learning Champions (TLC) Project funded by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (NFETL) across this regional cluster area. This project aims to enhance the capacity of middle and senior managers for leadership in digitally engaged teaching and learning through the National Professional Development Framework and the Roadmap for Enhancement in a Digital World, both key NFETL publications.

ISSE Data Visualisation: To make the feedback from ISSE surveys more accessible a data model was developed to visualise student feedback. The visualisation includes benchmarking of GMIT scores against the scores of all IOTs, both at index and individual question level. It also allows for the comparison of ISSE scores between academic units with GMIT, trends in scores over time and easy access to responses to free text questions. GMIT scored better than the IOT average in 7 of the 9 indices.

Exam Processing System: An exam processing system which provides an end-to-end secure solution for the processing and external quality review of examination papers was introduced. The system has been piloted in three academic units in GMIT and feedback from users has been overwhelmingly positive. The system allows for the secure transmission of exam material from creation by internal examiners, to review by external examiners, to submission of final papers to the Exams Office for

printing. External Examiners can provide feedback and submit final reports within the system. It is planned to implement the system across the Institute in 2017/2018.

Part 5: Objectives for the coming year

Part 5 provides information about plans for quality assurance in the institution for the academic year following the reporting period (in this instance 1 September 2017 – 31 August 2018).

5.1 Quality Assurance and Enhancement System Plans
Plans for quality assurance and quality enhancement relating to strategic objectives for the next reporting period.

The following are some of the activities planned for 2017/18:

- Apply to become a member institution of the HEAR and DARE schemes to further widen access to students from disadvantaged backgrounds and with disabilities.
- We will continue to work towards compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in all aspects of our work.
- Develop a policy in relation to student access to exam scripts.
- Move from using student names to student numbers on all assessment components.
- Develop online resources for external examiners and students providing an overview of key features of our quality assurance framework.
- Engage in Functional Reviews in accordance with our agreed schedule.
- Plan for Programmatic Reviews.
- Review of our policies relating to:
    - Validation, Monitoring & Review;
    - Marks and Standards;
    - Recognition of Prior Learning
- Establish working groups to develop policies relating to:
    - Student Attendance;
    - Healthy Campus, including mental health
    - Child Protection Reporting
    - Equality
    - Social Media
    - External Examiners
    - Academic Framework
    - Document Management
    - Learning, Teaching and Assessment
    - Online Learning
    - Access Strategy
- Improve QA communications through the development and population of the Registrar's Sharepoint.
- Develop a joint NUIG GMIT Foundation programme.
- Conduct a Research review of the engineering discipline.
- Approve a policy for undergraduate research ethics committees.
- Agree and implement a resource allocation model to support work placement.

- Ensure more regular feedback from sub-committees and workgroups to Academic Council.
- Review the academic planning process, making improvements as appropriate.
- Develop, approve and publish a Quality Improvement Plan.
- Become a member of the European University Association, specifically with a view to benchmarking with other institutes.
- Enhance management and staff capacity in the use of technology in education.
- Develop 'transition out' tools to enhance graduate employability.
- Develop 'You Said, We Did' posters to demonstrate to students that we are listening and responding.

5.2 Review Plans
A list of reviews within each category (module, programme, department/school, service delivery unit or faculty), as per the internal review cycle, planned for the next reporting period.

The following functional reviews are scheduled for 2017/18:
- Computing Services

The following research reviews are planned:
- Engineering
- Heritage

5.3 Other Plans

- The Institute intends to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the partnership between Connemara West and GMIT in delivering programmes at the Letterfrack Campus.
- Planning permission will be sought for the expansion of the iHub building to ensure its sustainability and to provide increased entrepreneurial opportunities to our students.
- Progress the design and approval of the STEM building to reduce pressure on the current capital infrastructure and thereby improve the student experience.
- The Institute will adopt the findings of the HEA/DES review of the Mayo Campus and take steps to start implementing the recommendations.
- GMIT will continue to work towards the achievement of the TU criteria to further its ambition to obtain designation as a Technological University.
- A planning framework will be approved for conducting the next programmatic review, scheduled to take place from 2018 to 2020 in advance of the next institutional review scheduled to take place in 2021.

- A review of the Student Counselling Service will be conducted as part of an overall review of Academic Affairs.
- The institute will continue its focus on reviewing existing Agreements and signing new Agreements, particularly with the Education & Training Boards, Mountbellew Agricultural College, Connemara West and Volunteering Galway.
- The institute will continue to support collaborations with members of the regional cluster in pursuit of national objectives.

Part 6: Periodic Review

Part 6 provides information that acts as a bridge between the AIQR and periodic external review.

6.1 The Institution and External Review
A description of the impacts of institutional review within the institution.

6.2 Self-Reflection on Quality Assurance
A short evaluative and reflective summary of the overall impact of quality assurance in the reporting period or, over a more extensive period, in the review.

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