



QQI

Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann

Reengagement Panel Report

Assessment of Capacity and Approval of QA Procedures

Part 1 Details of provider

1.1 Applicant Provider

Registered Business/Trading Name:	Hibernia College Hibernia College Dublin
Address:	Block B, Merrion Centre, Merrion Road, Dublin 4, Ireland
Date of Application:	27 th September 2018
Date of resubmission of application:	N/A
Date of evaluation:	5 th December 2018
Date of site visit (if applicable):	5 th December 2018
Date of recommendation to the Programmes and Awards Executive Committee:	7 th February 2019

1.2 Profile of provider

Hibernia College (HC) is a private unlimited company that was founded in 2000 to meet the growing demand for flexible, lifelong learning not restricted by location or time. The College is driven by a passion to provide equal education opportunities to learners, particularly those who may have been excluded from various programmes or professions previously due to geography or life circumstances. It does this by delivering technology-enhanced and flexible programmes that are built exclusively around an e-learning model and that prepare students for today's complex professional roles. The College has only ever had a strategy, and associated quality assurance framework, for the provision of blended or online programmes.

Today, the need and demand for access to flexible learning has never been greater and Hibernia College is uniquely positioned to continue to respond to social and employment needs offering learners uniquely flexible opportunities to study.



The College's offerings have a strong focus on professional education and practice-based learning for regulated professions - in particular, teaching and, to a lesser extent, the health sciences. Since its establishment, it has grown to a position where its School of Education now provides a significant proportion of Ireland's teacher education and produces annually the largest number of primary school teachers from any higher education institution. The College also offers an extensive suite of continuing professional development (CPD) programmes.

From its inception, Hibernia College has agreed its quality assurance with QQI (through its predecessor Higher Education and Training Awards Council, HETAC) (first in 2002).

At present, the College has approximately 1,700 students enrolled across two professional programmes leading to QQI awards at Level 9 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ):

- Professional Master of Education in Primary Education (PMEP)
- Professional Master of Education in Post-Primary Education (PMEPP)

Each programme has two intakes a year, in Spring and Autumn. The programmes are recognised and accredited by the Teaching Council of Ireland.

In addition, the following qualifications have been awarded by QQI to Hibernia College students:

- Professional Diploma in Education (last award 2017)
- Higher Diploma in Arts in Primary Education (last award 2017)
- Master of Science in Pharmaceutical Medicine (last award 2017)
- Master of Arts in Teaching and Learning (last award 2017).

To date, there have been approximately 8,000 graduates of Hibernia College. Most graduates completed programmes leading to QQI awards, but arising from a number of collaborations, graduates also completed programmes leading to qualifications of the University of the Western Cape, South Africa, and the University of London.

In 2017, QQI validated a Bachelor of Science (Honours) Degree in Nursing in General Nursing, which is currently before the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI) for accreditation. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. The initial intake will be of 25 students.

Hibernia College also offers a series of online CPD programmes for teachers. These programmes are approved by the Department of Education and Skills (DES), which incentivises Primary School teachers to take such approved CPD programmes by awarding Extra Personal Vacation (EPV) days to participants. Over 2,300 teachers enrolled on these programmes during Summer 2018.

The College is currently developing proposals for additional blended or online programme provision in the future including:

- [REDACTED];
- [REDACTED];
- [REDACTED];



- [REDACTED]

Hibernia College was a research node of Plymouth University (2013 – 2018) approved to offer PhD research supervision to appropriately qualified students, leading to a Plymouth University PhD in Education. The Plymouth partnership enabled the College to offer higher education programmes equivalent to Level 10 of the NFQ.

The College has had a Director of Research since 2013, and over the past five years has grown its research profile significantly. There are two organisational dimensions to research activity. Firstly, as the provider of postgraduate programmes, all current students must undertake a research dissertation as part of their programme. This means that currently there are over 1,700 students undertaking or preparing to undertake a dissertation. In turn, there are over 150 research supervisors, who are supported in their work by the Director of Research.

2017 saw the publication of the first volume of student research papers, *Hibernia College Primary Education Papers*, followed in 2018 by volume two. These publications include a selection of the highest quality dissertations representing a wide range of research topics from across the Professional Master of Education programmes. This student work is set in the context of an institutional commitment to research, which manifests itself in both the development of research partnerships and in the work of the College's academics, both individually and with peers across the world. Since 2012, the College has hosted a biannual Research Conference with international and national speakers, as well as contributors from Hibernia College.

Part 2 Panel Membership

Name	Role of panel member	Organisation
Dr Marion Palmer	Chair	Former Head of Department of Technology and Psychology, IADT
Prof. Grainne Conole	SME	Dublin City University (DCU)
Prof Gary Walsh	SME	University of Limerick (UL)
MS Louise Kearins	SME	Institute of Technology Sligo
Mr Barry Clohessy	Student	USI
Mr Hugh Mc Bride	Secretary	GMIT

Note:

Dr Marion Palmer was the external chair of a Hibernia College committee from December 2016 to January 2017 when the committee completed its work and disbanded.



Part 3 Findings of the Panel

3.1 Summary Findings

The panel considers that Hibernia College's Quality Assurance (QA) procedures, capacity and governance are appropriate and fit-for-purpose of providing blended and online programmes leading to QQI awards in Education, Healthcare, Arts and Social Sciences at Level 8 and 9 of the NFQ.

The panel is satisfied that the College has demonstrated its continuing capacity to meet QQI criteria for QA through its documentation and particularly through the nature of the engagement of College staff with the panel during the site visit. This was commendable and engendered panel confidence in the integrity of the documentation and the College's capacity to deliver on its commitments. The panel were impressed by the openness, honesty, enthusiasm, dedication, competence and coherence evinced by the staff team; the awareness and shared ownership of QA demonstrated by staff across all functions; and by their manifest pride in, and commitment to, a culture of continuing self-reflection and continuous improvement clearly focussed on enhancing the quality of the learner experience which is at the heart of all staff activities and the College identity.

The panel is satisfied that the College has an appropriate structure to assure good governance, with a clear separation of responsibility, authority and accountability between academic and corporate affairs.

The panel noted evidence of a good communication structure throughout the organisation, including active liaison and engagement across different staff roles, levels and functional areas. This was particularly evident in the extent to which the staff were well-informed about the College strategy, plans, operations and QA, and in the level of integration and knowledge-sharing within and across staff teams.

The panel considers that the new QA framework approved in August 2018 is comprehensive, integrated, coherent and user-friendly. The policy template is well structured, consistently applied, and the style of writing provides clarity and intelligibility for users, including students. The panel welcomes the College's understanding of the framework as an iteratively evolving suite of documents and an organic mechanism, and its commitment to continuous incremental improvement based on stakeholder experience of application. The panel commends the College on the scale and scope of the work undertaken in transforming the QA framework.

The panel commends the College for its excellent and dedicated Adjunct Faculty, for the manner in which Adjunct Faculty are valued by the College as an integral part of the staff team, and for the mechanisms in place to support and strengthen the relationship. In this context, the panel noted that the College has recruited Adjunct Faculty to full-time faculty roles and that former full-time faculty continue to work as Adjunct Faculty.

The panel were impressed with the range of learning and teaching research in which the College is involved, the manner in which this feeds into and informs practice, and the culture of welcoming and sharing new ideas. The panel commends the College for the use of up-to-date cutting edge pedagogy including, for example, ABC Learning Design.

In the spirit of constructive criticism and with a view to supporting continuous improvement in QA, the panel have a number of recommendations for QA improvement and enhancement. These are summarised in Part 6 of this report.



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3.2 Recommendation of the panel to Programmes and Awards Executive Committee of QQI

The panel advises QQI that it recommends approval of Hibernia College QA procedures within its approved scope of provision.



Part 4 Evaluation of provider capacity

4.1 Legal and compliance requirements:

- 4.1.1(a) **Criterion:** *Is the applicant an established Legal Entity who has Education and/or Training as a Principal Function?*
- 4.1.2(a) **Criterion:** *Is the legal entity established in the European Union and does it have a substantial presence in Ireland?*
- 4.1.3(a) **Criterion:** *Are any dependencies, collaborations, obligations, parent organisations, and subsidiaries clearly specified?*
- 4.1.4(a) **Criterion:** *Are any third-party relationships and partnerships compatible with the scope of access sought?*
- 4.1.5(a) **Criterion:** *Are the applicable regulations and legislation complied with in all jurisdictions where it operates?*
- 4.1.6(a) **Criterion:** *Is the applicant in good standing in the qualifications systems and education and training systems in any countries where it operates (or where its parents or subsidiaries operate) or enrolls learners, or where it has arrangements with awarding bodies, quality assurance agencies, qualifications authorities, ministries of education and training, professional bodies and regulators.*

Findings

The panel recommends that QQI can be satisfied that Hibernia College meets this criterion and each of the sub-criteria (where applicable).

The applicant is a private unlimited company which has education and training as its principal function. The documentation and supporting evidence provided by Hibernia College includes a copy of the company details verified by the Company Registration Office, clear statements of its principal function, a statement of compliance with all relevant legislation and regulatory requirements applicable to the provision of education and training in Ireland and a Statutory Declaration that the information provided in the application is true and complete.

Hibernia College is not involved in any formal collaborations or partnerships for programme provision at present. A number of proposed collaborations are clearly specified in the documentation which are compatible with the College's scope of provision. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



4.2 Resource, governance and structural requirements:

- 4.2.1(a) **Criterion:** *Does the applicant have a sufficient resource base and is it stable and in good financial standing?*
- 4.2.2(a) **Criterion:** *Does the applicant have a reasonable business case for sustainable provision?*
- 4.2.3(a) **Criterion:** *Are fit-for-purpose governance, management and decision making structures in place?*
- 4.2.4(a) **Criterion:** *Are there arrangements in place for providing required information to QQI?*

Findings

The panel recommends that QQI can be satisfied that Hibernia College meets this criterion and each of the sub-criteria.

The documentation provided by Hibernia College indicates that it is stable and in good financial standing. Supporting evidence includes: a statement of actual Income & Expenditure for FY 2018 and budgeted figures for FY 2019 and FY 2020 which indicate a strong and sustainable financial performance; details of public liability insurance and a current Tax Clearance Certificate.

Hibernia College's business case is based on a clear strategy of providing equal education opportunities for learners, particularly those who may have been excluded from various programmes or professions previously due to geography or life circumstances. It is a strategy grounded in providing access and progression opportunities, outside of the traditional entry pathways to higher education, through blended or online programme provision, currently for people with a vocational empathy for teaching or nursing. This was clearly reiterated by both senior management and staff during discussions with the panel. The success enjoyed by the College over nearly two decades attests to the soundness of its business case and its capacity for sustainable provision and continued growth and development.

During the panel visit, the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) explained the importance attached to cost management, to improving process cost efficiency consistent with enhancing the quality and effectiveness of service provision, and to careful cash management. The annual budget and budgeting process is an important control mechanism in this regard. The budget is prepared in consultation with heads of the various functional areas, and the College plans to devolve responsibility for budgets to department heads to improve the management of financial resources.

The panel is satisfied that the College has fit-for-purpose governance, management and decision making structures in place, with a clear separation and definition of responsibility, authority and accountability for academic and corporate affairs. This is documented in Hibernia College's Policy for Governance and Management and in its Corporate Governance Code.

The panel were provided with an organisation chart, on request, shortly prior to the panel visit. The initial documentation included terms of reference for the Executive Management Team (EMT) and the Academic Board (AB), and job descriptions for the Registrar, Quality Assurance Officer and Faculty Manager. The organisation structure was explicated further by a comprehensive presentation of the organisation chart and a discussion with the EMT during the site visit. This included a clear specification of the formal roles, responsibilities and terms of reference of the various boards, committees and post-holders, and of their formal reporting relationships and lines of communication.



The Board of Directors is the governing authority of the College. The CEO reports to the Board and has the responsibility of ensuring that the day-to-day running of the College and its performance is in accordance with the strategic goals determined by the Board. The EMT reports to the CEO.

The Board of Directors has formally delegated all authority for academic decision-making to the Academic Board (AB), which is the ultimate decision-making body for academic matters. It is chaired by the Academic Dean and it reports directly to the Board of Directors. The composition and membership of the AB and each of its subcommittees are clearly defined and includes elected student representatives, faculty, adjunct faculty and administrative staff representatives. The key role of the Registrar in managing academic affairs and providing leadership in academic quality assurance is clearly acknowledged and understood. The Academic Dean and Registrar are both members of the EMT.

Although it was explained in discussions, the panel recommends that the relationship between the roles of the Academic Dean and Registrar be clarified in the documentation. The panel also recommends that the organisation chart should be dated.

The Human Resources Management (HRM) and Legal functions are both outsourced. The College has confidence in the current arrangements and considers that they are appropriate, beneficial and work well. The arrangements will be kept under review as the College grows. The panel recommends that this arrangement be outlined in the documentation.

Adjunct Faculty are not employees of the College. Rather, they are contracted as independent suppliers for the provision of specified services, requiring a new contract for each particular service delivery. This well-established arrangement has gone through legal proofing and has clearance from the Revenue Commissioners. The Faculty Manager has responsibility for managing the contracting process based on scheduled requirements for programme provision.

The panel considers that the structural nature of the relationship between Hibernia College and Adjunct Faculty is fit-for-purpose. However, the panel does not consider that the arrangement is explained with sufficient clarity in the documentation and recommends that this should be done, including outlining the role of the Faculty Manager in the contracting process and in managing Adjunct Faculty.

The panel is satisfied that Hibernia College has appropriate arrangements in place for providing required information to QQI. The Registrar, in particular, has a key liaison role in this regard, and in ensuring and supporting a proactive engagement between the College staff and QQI.

4.3 Programme development and provision requirements:

- 4.3.1(a) **Criterion:** *Does the applicant have experience and a track record in providing education and training programmes?*
- 4.3.2(a) **Criterion:** *Does the applicant have a fit-for-purpose and stable complement of education and training staff?*
- 4.3.3(a) **Criterion:** *Does the applicant have the capacity to comply with the standard conditions for validation specified in Section 45(3) of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act (2012) (the Act)?*



- 4.3.4(a) **Criterion:** *Does the applicant have the fit-for-purpose premises, facilities and resources to meet the requirements of the provision proposed in place?*
- 4.3.5(a) **Criterion:** *Are there access, transfer and progression arrangements that meet QQI's criteria for approval in place?*
- 4.3.6(a) **Criterion:** *Are structures and resources to underpin fair and consistent assessment of learners in place?*
- 4.3.7(a) **Criterion:** *Are arrangements for the protection of enrolled learners to meet the statutory obligations in place (where applicable)?*

Findings

The panel recommends that QQI can be satisfied that Hibernia College meets this criterion and each of the sub-criteria.

Hibernia College has long experience and a distinguished track record in providing blended and online education and training programmes, particularly in the area of teacher education. It is well recognised as such and is highly respected within the sector, including by the Teaching Council of Ireland.

The College full-time employees comprise the EMT, Faculty and Support Staff. In addition to the staff team working in its Dublin premises, it employs a dedicated technical support team in Westport, Co. Mayo. Faculty, technical support and administration staff appear to work closely together as a highly integrated, coherent team with a shared focus and commitment to ensuring students have a high quality experience.

The panel considers that the design and integration of employee roles and the capacity of the employee complement are appropriate to the model, scale and scope of current and planned programme provision. The panel had some concerns that the post of Head of Digital Learning was vacant; however, the vacancy is recent and recruitment to fill the position is at an advanced stage.

The panel also had some concerns about the potential challenge to employee capacity for systematic module and content review and enhancement, arising from the growth in the scale and scope of provision and from the demands of keeping pace with disciplinary, pedagogical and technological developments. The panel was, however, reassured in this regard by the awareness of the staff team of the nature of the challenges ahead and their apparent preparedness to embrace them individually and collectively.

The service contractor model for Adjunct Faculty enables Hibernia College to tap into a deep pool of highly qualified and experienced talent that is available throughout the country, providing it with flexibility in its operations and capacity. At any point in time the College may have service contracts with up to 400 Adjunct Faculty in a variety of academic roles including as tutors, authors, research supervisors and placement support. The College has had no difficulties in recruiting Adjunct Faculty and has an established panel of approved potential contractors to draw on. Adjunct Faculty are greatly valued by the College. They are recognised and treated as an integral part of the academic team with a particular and critically important role in fostering student engagement. In this context, the panel noted that the College has recruited Adjunct Faculty to full-time faculty roles and that former full-time faculty continue to work as Adjunct Faculty.

The College recognises the staffing challenges posed by the planned introduction of the Bachelor of Science (Honours) Degree in Nursing and it is working closely with its collaborative partner hospital group to address these. The initial small scale intake of 25 students will ensure that there is no initial capacity over-reach and will provide a valuable basis for learning from experience.



It is the panel's opinion that Hibernia College has a strong staff team that is fit-for-purpose and stable. The panel were impressed by: the openness, honesty, enthusiasm, dedication, competence and coherence evinced by the staff team during the panel visit; the awareness and shared ownership of QA demonstrated by staff across all functions; and by their manifest pride in, and commitment to, a culture of continuing self-reflection and continuous improvement clearly focussed on enhancing the quality of the learner experience.

Hibernia College has undertaken significant investment since 2015 in upgrading its IT applications, infrastructure and people to provide enhanced capacity and capability in supporting learners. This includes investment in MyHELMS (a virtual learning environment used by students, faculty and staff), Moodle upgrade (from 3.1 to 3.5), InPlace (placement management), Quercus (student information system), Dynamics CRM, Office 365 and Access Dimensions (finance system). The College has regular off-site backups in place and a full replication of the internal infrastructure. It has centralised AV/Malware protection. The process of integrating the various systems remains a work-in-progress. During the visit, the Panel were provided with a demonstration of the MyHELMS system. The panel is satisfied that the IT infrastructure and capacity, including staff technical support and training for use, is fit-for-purpose and appropriate to the model, scale and scope of current and planned blended and online programme provision.

The College has a specific Policy for Access, Transfer and Progression that accords with QQI requirements. It also has structures and processes necessary to ensure fair and consistent assessment of learners as set out in a number of inter-related policy documents within the overall suite of policy documents in the Hibernia College Quality Framework (HCQF).

4.4 Overall findings in respect of provider capacity to provide sustainable education and training

The panel is satisfied that Hibernia College is a reputable and sustainable organisation. It has fit-for-purpose governance, management and decision making structures, and adequate and appropriate staffing and IT infrastructural resources, that are appropriate to the provision of blended and online programmes leading to QQI awards in Education, Healthcare, Arts and Social Sciences at Level 8 and 9 of the NFQ.



Part 5 Evaluation of draft QA Procedures submitted by Hibernia College

The following is the panel's findings following evaluation of Hibernia College quality assurance procedures against QQI's Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (April 2016). This section of the report follows the structure and referencing of the guidelines.

1 GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

Panel Findings:

The panel considers that Hibernia College's arrangements for the governance and management of quality are well planned, comprehensive, coherent, integrated, clearly documented and fit-for-purpose.

The Board of Directors has formally delegated all authority for academic decision-making to the Academic Board (AB), which is the ultimate decision-making body for academic matters. It is chaired by the Academic Dean and it reports directly to the Board of Directors. The composition and membership of the AB is clearly defined and includes elected student representatives, faculty, Adjunct Faculty and administrative staff representatives.

The key role of the Registrar in managing academic affairs and providing leadership in academic quality assurance is clearly acknowledged and understood. The Academic Dean and Registrar are both members of the EMT. Although it was explained in discussions, the panel recommends that the relationship between the roles of the Academic Dean and Registrar be clarified in the documentation.

The AB is advised by a number of standing subcommittees and ad hoc subcommittees that are established as required. The standing subcommittees are: Programme Boards; Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee; Research Committee; Ethics Committee; Board of Examiners. The ad hoc subcommittees are: The Disciplinary Committee; Complaints Committee; Appeals Committee. The composition, membership and terms of reference for each subcommittee are clearly documented. Student representation is provided for other than to the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee and the Board of Examiners. The panel were reassured during the site visit that the student voice is heard and respected. Provision is made for the appointment of external membership to each subcommittee.

The panel recommends that provision be made for the inclusion of student membership and learning designers on the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee.

The panel noted a small but potentially confusing inconsistency in the documentation which refers to Directors of Discipline as members of the AB rather than Programme Board Directors. It recommends that this titling inconsistency be amended.

The panel also noted the recent changes in the academic management structure with the appointment of a Head of School of Education in August 2018, and the potential long-term positive impact this may have for quality assurance and enhancement. The new role is not currently represented within the documentation. Other key structural changes which are yet to be reflected in the documentation are the relocation of the College's Director of Research to report to the Head of School of Education, and the restructuring the role of the Director of Student and Alumni Services to a role entitled Head of Student Services within the School of Education directly reporting to the Head of School of Education.

The panel recommends that the documentation be amended to incorporate the changes that have been made in the academic management structure.



The panel notes and welcomes the proposed introduction of a formally documented academic risk management framework.

The panel welcomes the recognition by Hibernia College in their application for reengagement (section 8.4), and reiterated during the panel visit, of the gap and the related challenge of enhancing the formal, systematic inter-communications between governance and management bodies so that recent changes in management structures are seamlessly integrated with updates to academic governance and its documentation.

2 DOCUMENTED APPROACH TO QUALITY ASSURANCE

Panel Findings:

Hibernia College's AB approved a new QA framework in August 2018, comprising an overarching QA policy document, The Hibernia College Quality Framework (HCQF), and a related suite of documented policies for specific areas of academic process and practice. The HCQF is an infrastructure of strategy, policy, procedure and supporting resources to inform and support decision-making and day-to-day activities in the College.

The panel considers that the new QA framework is comprehensive, integrated, coherent and user-friendly. The policy template is well structured, consistently applied, and the style of writing provides clarity and intelligibility for users, including students. The panel welcomes the College's understanding of the framework as an iteratively evolving suite of documents and an organic mechanism, and its commitment to continuous incremental improvement based on stakeholder experience of application. The panel commends the College on the scale and scope of the work undertaken in developing the new QA framework.

The panel welcomes the recognition by Hibernia College in their application for reengagement (section 8.4), and reiterated during the panel visit, of the gap and the related challenge of systematically embedding the HCQF and specific policies and procedures within the routine functioning of the College's academic governance and management, and of continuing to provide training and support for staff and stakeholders.

The panel had some concerns about possible policy area gaps including in relation to blended and online learning, collaborations, plagiarism and assessment 'marks and standards'. These concerns were addressed satisfactorily during the panel visit, and the College's approach of incorporating these areas into a range of inter-related policy documents using a distributed approach was explained and clarified. In order to ensure visibility of these areas within the framework, to promote policy integration and for user convenience, the panel recommends that the College prepare summary mapping sheets for each of the areas of panel concern, identifying the various policy documents into which the related QA procedures are dispersed and embedded.

The panel also recommends that the College formulate a policy for Intellectual Property as an addition to the HCQF. This should address inter alia any potential issues relating to webinars.



3 PROGRAMMES OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Panel Findings:

Hibernia College offers only blended or online professional education and training programmes. At present it offers two programmes leading to QQI awards at Level 9 on the NFQ:

- Professional Master of Education in Primary Education (PMEP)
- Professional Master of Education in Post-Primary Education (PMEPP)

The programmes are recognised and accredited by the Teaching Council of Ireland.

[REDACTED]

The College also offers a series of online CPD programmes for teachers which are approved by the DES.

The panel is satisfied that the QQI accredited programmes offered by Hibernia College are within its approved scope of provision. The panel is also satisfied that the College's human resource and technological capacity, and its quality assurance framework, are well documented and fit-for-purpose of providing its programmes on a blended or online learning basis, focussed on ensuring the learner has a high quality teaching and learning experience in a stimulating and supportive learning environment.

Comprehensive information about the programmes for prospective students is published on the College website, including entry requirements, fees and payment schedule, and a programme delivery and assessment calendar.

The HCQF includes a Policy for Access, Transfer and Progression (ATP), with a stated aim of ensuring inclusivity and equality of opportunity for prospective and current students and alumni. It states the College's adoption of the AHEAD Charter for Inclusive Teaching and Learning and its commitment to reflecting this in quality assurance policies and procedures, and in the teaching, learning and assessment practices of the College.

The implementation of the policy for ATP is supported by a Policy for Admission setting out recruitment, application and entry criteria for students, a Policy for Recognition of Prior Learning and a Procedure for Admission Interviews.

As a College exclusively dedicated to the provision of blended or online learning opportunities, it does not have a specialised adjunct policy for this form of pedagogy as is the case in many traditional higher education providers. Rather, the thrust of the entire HCQF is on quality assurance for blended and online learning programme provision, which is core to the HCQF and to each of the documented policies for specific areas of process and practice including for the Design of Programmes and Curricula, for the Development and Approval of Programmes, for the On-going Monitoring of Programmes and for Periodic Review.

The panel recommends that the College prepare flow diagrams to illustrate the inter-related processes of programme design, development, delivery, on-going monitoring and periodic review.

Programme Boards (PB) play a key role in programme management. They are supported by a programme administration team who work closely with faculty. Mechanisms used by PBs for on-going programme monitoring include, inter alia: feedback from faculty, from Adjunct Faculty and from support services staff;



student feedback; end of module surveys; external examiner reports; programmes progression, retention and engagement information; graduate destination surveys. Each PB prepares an Annual Report for the AB.

The panel recommends that the systematic ways in which the various feedback loops are closed be clarified further in the documentation. For example, clarify the process for ensuring that issues identified in PB Annual Reports are followed-up and acted on. Similarly, for example, clarify the process for communicating student survey feedback to Adjunct Faculty.

The face-to-face element of programmes is delivered in regional centres. The HCQF includes a Policy for Ensuring and Maintaining the Quality of Physical Learning and Assessment Environments.

4 STAFF RECRUITMENT, MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Panel Findings:

The panel considers that Hibernia College's structures and processes for staff recruitment, management and development are well planned, coherent, clearly documented and fit-for-purpose.

HCQF includes a draft Policy for Assuring the Quality of Adjunct Faculty. It also includes a corporate Policy for Recruitment/Internal Selection and procedural Guidelines for Recruitment Process.

The Faculty Hub and staff induction site are important tools to support staff and faculty. These two online locations on MyHELMS house training and information for faculty and staff across a range of role specific areas. Within each location there is a mandatory section on the HCQF and also a section specifically for student facing staff providing training on the implementation of certain key policies and procedures. The College plans to provide a digital badge in QA for those who complete all elements of the training.

In addition to on-going training for the blended and online environment, staff development mechanisms include fee support to pursue further qualifications, support for attendance at conferences, Erasmus+ (staff mobility), Hibernia College's own publication for internal research and internal webinars.

The panel noted evidence of a good communication structure throughout the organisation, including active liaison and engagement across different staff roles, levels and functional areas. This was particularly evident in the extent to which the staff were well-informed about the College strategy, plans, operations and QA, and in the level of integration and knowledge-sharing within and across staff teams. Management have on-going engagement with faculty regarding budgets and programme delivery and operate an open door policy including for new ideas and proposed changes.

Adjunct Faculty are contracted for the provision of specified services based on defined programme need within a highly structured delivery planning process, including taking account of the regional distribution and location of students. Adjunct Faculty roles include tutor, author, research supervisor and placement support. Candidates for each of the roles are typically individuals working within the sector, who are qualified both professionally and academically at Level 9 or higher and are adjudged to have the necessary specialised knowledge, skills and competence required for the defined service role. The College has an established panel of approved Adjunct Faculty located throughout the country.



The service contractor model for Adjunct Faculty enables Hibernia College to tap into a deep pool of highly qualified and experienced talent that is available throughout the country, providing it with flexibility in its operations and capacity. At any point in time the College may have service contracts with up to 400 Adjunct. Adjunct Faculty are greatly valued by the College. They are recognised and treated as an integral part of the academic team with a particular and critically important role in fostering student engagement. In this context, the panel noted that the College has recruited Adjunct Faculty to full-time faculty roles and that former full-time faculty continue to work as Adjunct Faculty.

Following recruitment, Adjunct Faculty are provided with full access to the Faculty Hub and staff induction site on MyHELMS for initial orientation, induction and training. Other training mechanisms include initially shadowing other experienced Adjunct Faculty, a 'buddy' system, regular face-to-face and online meetings with module leads and participation in training days throughout the year. Mechanisms for monitoring Adjunct Faculty performance and for ensuring consistency of approach include providing each tutor with the same learning materials and delivery plan, onsite float visits by module leads, listening back to webinars and tutorials, student feedback and by statistical review and comparative regional analysis of student assessment results. When issues are identified, faculty and management will follow-up with advice or further training. In the event that Adjunct Faculty performance continues to be unsatisfactory, service contracts will be rescinded and contractors will not be reengaged.

All staff development support mechanisms are also available to Adjunct Faculty.

5 TEACHING AND LEARNING

Panel Findings:

The panel considers that Hibernia College's approach to blended and online learning is well planned, coherent, adequately resourced, clearly documented and fit-for-purpose.

The College has a learner-centred Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy which is scheduled for review. The panel recommend that this review be undertaken and completed as a matter of urgency. The College also has a Policy for Academic Good Practice that applies to both student and faculty.

The panel considers that Hibernia College has competent, highly motivated, well integrated and adequately resourced teams of teachers, subject area experts, authors, learning designers, multi-media experts, content editors and learning technologists; all working together in a planned, systematic and structured framework, creating engaging content for students; all with a shared ownership of the process; and all with a shared focus on ensuring that students have a high quality learning experience.

The panel was impressed with the range of learning and teaching research in which the College is involved, the manner in which this feeds into and informs practice, and the culture of welcoming and sharing new idea. The panel commends the College for the use of up-to-date cutting edge pedagogy including, for example, ABC Learning Design.

The panel recommends that the application of the Universal Design approach, to which the College is committed through its adoption of the AHEAD Charter for Inclusive Teaching and Learning, be more clearly reflected in documentation.



The panel had some concerns about the potential challenge to employee capacity for systematic module and content review and enhancement due in particular to the expansion in the scale and scope of provision and to the demands of keeping pace with disciplinary, pedagogical and technological developments. The panel was, however, reassured in this regard by the awareness of the staff team of the nature of the challenges ahead and their apparent preparedness to embrace them individually and collectively.

The MyHELMS online virtual learning environment is fit-for-purpose, is readily accessible to users, and is supported by a dedicated team who control and administer access, content, calendar and technical support. The team is available to students and Adjunct Faculty by phone, email and Live Online Chat.

The documentation provided to the panel included a Compendium of SOPs and Guidelines (Appendix 21). The panel consider that this is a relevant and important document, but that it requires a significant overhaul in terms of its current form and presentation. Elements of the document were originally intended for use through a SharePoint Directory rather than as a single integrated document. The panel recommends that this document be revised to improve its form and presentation.

6 ASSESSMENT OF LEARNERS

Panel Findings:

The panel is satisfied that Hibernia College's quality assurance procedures for the assessment of learners are comprehensive, clearly documented and fit-for-purpose.

Learner assessment mechanisms include a combination of written exam and oral exams (Gaeilge), and continuous assessment including placement assessment. Students engage in educational research through the completion of a supervised research thesis. In its approach to assessment, the College is cognizant of and respects Teaching Council requirements.

Assessment is subject to moderation by External Examiners and summative assessment decision-making is the responsibility of a Board of Examiners. The Board of Examiners monitor and review assessment performance statistics by region for each module.

The College has a Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy which is scheduled for review. The panel recommend that this review be undertaken and completed as a matter of urgency. The College also has a Policy for Academic Good Practice that applies to both student and faculty.

Quality assurance arrangements within the HCQF are distributed across a range of inter-related policy documents including for Assessment, Grading and Certification, for Reasonable Accommodation, for Extenuating Circumstance, for Appeals. These are supplemented by supporting procedure documents including for External Examining, for Grading Student Effort and for Discussion of Examination Scripts (or Equivalent) with Assessors.

The panel recommends that the College prepare a summary mapping sheet providing an overview of the various policy and procedure documents across which the assessment procedures are distributed.

The panel had some concerns that assessment is excessively summative in nature and orientation. Provision for formative assessment and feedback is embedded into the research and placement modules.



For example, research supervisors provide students with regular progress reports and placement tutors provide students with feedback based on a virtual visit prior to the school placement assessment. Other mechanisms to support students include an interactive assessment forum for each module giving feedback and advice on specific issues (for example, on referencing) and preparation webinar on teaching assignments. The panel recommends that particular consideration be given to developing and incorporating further opportunities for formative assessment into programmes as part of the review of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy. It also recommends that the mechanisms used for formative assessment be clearly documented in the strategy and programme documents.

7 SUPPORT FOR LEARNERS

Panel Findings:

The panel considers that Hibernia College has appropriate supports for learners that are accessible, documented, adequately resourced, linked to the management and delivery of programmes, and fit-for-purpose. The panel is satisfied that the learner voice is heard and respected.

The College has a dedicated Department of Student Affairs within its School of Education, including a Student Support Officer and a Student Services Officer. The IT team provide students with dedicated technical support by phone, email and Live Online Chat.

The HCQF includes a Policy for Student Support, a Policy for Reasonable Accommodation and a Student Charter. These are in addition to a comprehensive suite of policies documenting: access, transfer and progression; admissions; recognition of prior learning; orientation; assessment and certification; student conduct; student complaints and appeals; temporary suspension and withdrawals.

Student representation is formally provided for on the AB and its various subcommittees other than the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee and the Board of Examiners. The panel recommend that provision be made for student membership on the former subcommittee.

The College supports student representative participation in the pilot NStEP programme.

The College has a range of formal and informal communication and feedback mechanisms for learners. Each new student intake cohort is provided with a structured orientation programme. Students are formally surveyed at the end of this programme with a view to identifying possible areas for improvement. Students are also formally surveyed at the end of each module and this information is fed back to Programme Boards.

Adjunct faculty play a key role in supporting and mentoring learners, particularly through their personal relationship with students arising from their face-to-face contact and interaction.

Academic mentoring is a core element of the research and placements modules, and additional face-to-face and on-line mentoring workshops are provided for students who may be struggling.

Staff in the Department of Student Affairs are available to support and work with student representatives, and to counsel and advise individual students, in facilitating the identification and resolution of issues including helping to bring student concerns to the attention of relevant persons.



The panel questioned the readiness of the College for dealing with the potentially different type of challenge posed by an undergraduate cohort of nursing students on the planned new programme. The College expressed confidence in its capacity and capability to meet any such challenges, particularly given the profile of the potential programme entrants, the professional context and the requirement that each learner have a dedicated personal mentor.

8 INFORMATION AND DATA MANAGEMENT

Panel Findings:

The panel considers that Hibernia College's arrangements for information and data management are fit-for-purpose and appropriate to the model, scale and scope of its current and planned operations.

The College has undertaken significant investment since 2015 in upgrading its IT infrastructure and in related staff technical support and training, providing enhanced capacity and capability in information and data management.

The integration of the various IT systems remains a work-in-progress however, and it is envisaged that it will take another 12 months to complete this process.

The systems are used to analyse data and to generate a range of relevant periodic information reports as appropriate to support each level of corporate and academic management including the Board of Directors, the EMT, the AB, Programme Boards and Boards of Examiners. For example: information on student numbers is reported monthly to the EMT as part of the monthly management accounts; Boards of Examiners are provided with statistical overview reports on student performance; Programme Boards are provided with information about student progression, retention and academic engagement through the virtual learning environment.

The College has an on-going project around the development of a model to manage academic, financial and sustainability risk based on the Australian Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Risk Assessment Framework. The panel documentation included a working draft of the model. This provides a framework for information performance monitoring and reporting, including the use of a traffic light attention-directing and signalling tool.

The College has regular off-site backups in place and a full replication of the internal infrastructure. It has centralised AV/Malware protection. Staff have been provided with training in GDPR.

The HCQF includes a specific Policy for Data and Records and a Procedure for Managing Personal Data Security Breaches.

**9 PUBLIC INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION*****Panel Findings:***

The panel considers that Hibernia College's approach to public information and communication is documented and fit-for-purpose.

The College's website includes comprehensive information and is easy to navigate. It also communicates with the public via social media including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube.

The College publishes all elements of the HCQF on its website, including a specific policy for Public Information Promotion and the Recruitment of Students.

10 OTHER PARTIES INVOLVED IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING (incl. Apprenticeships)***Panel Findings:***

The panel considers that Hibernia College's approach to engagement and collaboration with other stakeholder parties involved in education and training is fit-for-purpose.

The College has a proactive engagement with sector regulatory agencies including QQI, the Teaching Council of Ireland and the NMBI.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Hibernia College's relationship with schools and with hospitals is particularly important in the context of the student placement element of programme provision.

The College is involved in a partnership network with over 500 schools. Mechanisms for interaction include annual regional meeting with school principals. At present, however, feedback through this partnership network is primarily informal and ad hoc in nature.

The panel recommends that a systematic approach to harvesting feedback from collaborative partners and other external stakeholders is adopted.

**11 SELF-EVALUATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW*****Panel Findings:***

The panel considers that Hibernia College's self-evaluation, monitoring and review process is clearly documented and was fit-for-purpose.

The approach taken to self-evaluation, monitoring and review for the re-engagement process is summarised in the College's application document. It was also clearly set out and explained in detail as part of the presentation made by the EMT to the panel. The process was characterised as a non-linear iterative process akin to a spiral-loop concerned with reframing opportunities. It involved an extensive internal consultation process requiring active participation by staff in each of the functional area. Staff considered that the review exercise in itself was informative and beneficial, generating a renewed awareness of the importance of QA and its relevance and application to all activities. Staff expressed ownership of QA and a confidence that the various policies were living documents and would be tweaked and amended as required based on the experience and evidence from practice. However, there was also a suggestion of a degree of staff 'change, or improvement fatigue'.

The self-evaluation process also included a site visit by a QQI pilot panel in January 2018. One of the members of the current evaluation panel also served on the pilot panel and attested to the significant improvement in the QA framework between the panel visits.

The panel commends the College on the scale and scope of the work undertaken in transforming the QA framework, and the manifest commitment of the management and staff to a culture of continuing self-reflection and continuous improvement clearly focussed on enhancing the quality of the learner experience which is at the heart of all staff activities and the College identity.

Evaluation of draft QA Procedures - Overall panel findings

The panel considers that the procedures submitted by Hibernia College are fit-for-purpose and satisfy QQI requirements.

The panel advises QQI that it recommends approval of Hibernia College QA procedures within its approved scope of provision.



Part 6 Changes to QA Procedures and Specific Advice

6.1 Mandatory Changes

N/A

6.2 Specific Advice (*Advisory*)

In the spirit of constructive criticism and with a view to supporting continuous improvement in QA, the panel recommends:

1. That the relationship between the roles of the Academic Dean and Registrar be clarified in the documentation. (4.2.3 and 5.1)
2. That the organisation chart be dated. (4.2.3)
3. That the outsourcing arrangement for the HRM and Legal functions be outlined in the documentation (4.2.3).
4. That the structural nature of the relationship between Hibernia College and Adjunct Faculty as service contractors rather than employees be clarified in the documentation (4.2.3).
5. That the role of the Faculty Manager in contracting and managing Adjunct Faculty be clarified in the documentation (4.2.3).
6. That provision is made for the inclusion of student membership and learning designers on the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee (5.1 and 5.7).
7. That the title Directors of Discipline be changed to Programme Board Directors in the documentation (5.1).
8. That the documentation be amended to incorporate the changes that have been made in the academic governance and management structure following the appointment of the Head of the School of Education in August 2018 (5.1).
9. That summary mapping sheet documents be prepared for blended and online learning, collaborations, plagiarism and assessment 'marks and standards', identifying the policy documents within HCQF across which the related QA procedures are distributed and embedded (5.2 and 5.6).
10. That a policy for Intellectual Property be formulated as an addition to the HCQF (5.2).
11. That the College prepare flow diagrams to illustrate the inter-related processes of programme design, development, delivery, on-going monitoring and periodic review (5.3).
12. That the systematic ways in which feedback loops are closed be clarified further in the documentation (5.3).
13. That the scheduled review of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy be undertaken and completed as a matter of urgency (5.5 and 5.6).
14. That the application of the Universal Design approach be more clearly reflected in documentation (5.5).



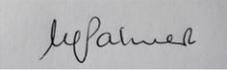
- 15. That the College revise the Compendium of SOPs and Guidelines document to improve its form and presentation (5.5).
- 16. That consideration is given to developing and incorporating further opportunities for formative assessment into programmes as part of the review of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy (5.6).
- 17. That the mechanisms used for formative assessment be clarified in the strategy and the programme documents (5.6).
- 18. That a systematic approach be taken to harvesting feedback from collaborative partners and other external stakeholders (5.10).

Part 7 Proposed Approved Scope of Provision for this provider

NFQ Level(s) – min and max	Award Class(es)	Discipline areas
Level 8 and Level 9	Major	Education, Healthcare, Arts, Social Sciences

Part 8 Approval by Chair of the Panel

This report of the panel is approved and submitted to QQI for its decision on the approval of the draft Quality Assurance Procedures of Hibernia College.

Name:  Dr Marion Palmer

Date: 11 January 2018



Annexe 1: Documentation provided to the Panel in the course of the Evaluation

Document	Related to
Re-engaging with QQI	Copy of presentation by EMT during panel site-visit
School Placement Tutor Feedback form	Sample illustrative document
Pedagogy 2 Remainder	Sample illustrative feedback document
Adjunct Faculty Memoranda of Understanding	Adjunct faculty contract for services

Annexe 2: Provider staff met in the course of the Evaluation

Name**Role/Position****Session 1**

Dr Seán Rowland

President

David Carpenter

Chief Executive Officer

Eileen Mooney

Chief Financial Officer

Robert O'Neill

Director of IT

Denis Cummins

Academic Dean

Dr Tara Ryan

Registrar

Mary Kelly

Head of School of Education

Ruth Ní Bheoláin

Quality Assurance Officer

Session 2- Academic

Denis Cummins

Academic Dean



Mary Kelly	Head of School of Education
Dr Lorraine Duffy	Head of School Placement
Dr Rita Collins	Programme Director Nursing
Ruth Ní Bheoláin	Quality Assurance Officer
Dr Tara Ryan	Registrar

Session 3

Allison McKay	Learning Design Manager
Aodh O'Gallchóir	Lecturer in Education Gaeilge
Dr Siobhán Cahillane McGovern	Adjunct Faculty
Dr Aoife Lynam	Director of Research
Dr Brian Carroll	Lecturer in Education
Dr Linda Butler	Lecturer in Education
Dr Michael Flanagan	Adjunct Faculty
Dr Ray Walsh	Adjunct Faculty
Edel Gavan	Learning Designer
Fiona Richardson	Lecturer in Education
Irene O'Dowd	Learning Designer
Naomi Pasley	Lecturer in Nurse Education
Rita Walsh	Learning Designer
Rob Lowney	Learning Technologist
Ruth Ní Bheoláin	Quality Assurance Officer

**MyHELMS Demonstration****Session 4**

Adrian McAnulty	Financial Controller
Allison McKay	Learning Design Manager
Audrey Geraghty	Librarian
Brid O'Connell	Student Support Officer
Christopher Bond	Records and Data Manager
Ciara O'Toole	Head of Student Affairs
Darren Myler	Awards and Assessments Manager
Mary Mulcahy	Director of Marketing
Michelle Howe	School of Education Administrator
Orla Bolger	Admissions Manager
Rossa Dolan	IT Senior Systems Administrator
Ruth Ní Bheoláin	Quality Assurance Officer
Sarah Dundon	School of Education Administrator
Sarah Haugh	School of Education - School Placement Officer

Session 5

Sueanne O'Halloran	Faculty Manager
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Session 6

David Carpenter	Chief Executive Officer
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QQI

Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann
Academic Dean

Denis Cummins	Academic Dean
Dr Tara Ryan	Registrar
Mary Kelly	Head of School of Education
Ruth Ní Bheoláin	Quality Assurance Officer



QQI

Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann

6th March 2019

Dear Walter,

Thank you for the Report of the Panel in respect of Hibernia College's Re-Engagement application.

Hibernia College would like to thank QQI and the appointed review panel for the work undertaken in reviewing and evaluating the documentation submitted as part of the College's application. The collegiate approach of the panel, both in advance of the visit, and particularly during the site visit is appreciated. We particularly note the opportunity provided by the panel to staff at all levels to showcase their pride in, and commitment to their work with and for students.

Enclosed is our response to the Panel's Report; we have considered and responded to each of the recommendations in the enclosed document.

May I take this opportunity to thank you and your colleagues in QQI for the professional, open and helpful way in which you have both managed this process and communicated with ourselves. Your approach made it both a transparent process and a somewhat stress-free one.

Yours sincerely,

Denis Cummins

Academic Dean



Summary of Panel Findings and Commendations

Commendation- Staff Engagement with Panel and QA

The panel is satisfied that the College has demonstrated its continuing capacity to meet QQI criteria for QA through its documentation and particularly through the nature of the engagement of College staff with the panel during the site visit. This was commendable and engendered panel confidence in the integrity of the documentation and the College's capacity to deliver on its commitments. The panel were impressed by the openness, honesty, enthusiasm, dedication, competence and coherence evidenced by the staff team; the awareness and shared ownership of QA demonstrated by staff across all functions; and by their manifest pride in, and commitment to, a culture of continuing self-reflection and continuous improvement clearly focussed on enhancing the quality of the learner experience which is at the heart of all staff activities and the College identity.

Good Governance

The panel is satisfied that the College has an appropriate structure to assure good governance, with a clear separation of responsibility, authority and accountability between academic and corporate affairs.

Good Communication

The panel noted evidence of a good communication structure throughout the organisation, including active liaison and engagement across different staff roles, levels and functional areas. This was particularly evident in the extent to which the staff were well-informed about the College strategy, plans, operations and QA, and in the level of integration and knowledge-sharing within and across staff teams.

Commendation- HCQF

The panel considers that the new QA framework approved in August 2018 is comprehensive, integrated, coherent and user-friendly. The policy template is well structured, consistently applied, and the style of writing provides clarity and intelligibility for users, including students. The panel welcomes the College's understanding of the framework as an iteratively evolving suite of documents and an organic mechanism, and its commitment to continuous incremental improvement based on stakeholder experience of application. The panel commends the College on the scale and scope of the work undertaken in transforming the QA framework.

Commendation- Excellent, Dedicated and Valued Adjunct- Faculty

The panel commends the College for its excellent and dedicated Adjunct Faculty, for the manner in which Adjunct Faculty are valued by the College as an integral part of the staff team, and for the mechanisms in place to support and strengthen the relationship. In this context, the panel noted that the College has recruited Adjunct Faculty to full-time faculty roles and that former full-time faculty continue to work as Adjunct Faculty.

Commendation- Cutting-Edge Pedagogy

The panel were impressed with the range of learning and teaching research in which the College is involved, the manner in which this feeds into and informs practice, and the culture of welcoming and sharing new ideas. The panel commend the College for the use of up-to-date cutting edge pedagogy including, for example, ABC Learning Design.

Hibernia College Response to Panel Commendations

The College is delighted to receive the panel's commendations. The affirmation that the College is operating to high standards across its QA platform is particularly gratifying and provides sound confirmation for all staff, faculty and adjunct faculty that their hard work is being recognised. It also confirms for all stakeholders, especially students, that the College operates in a secure and positive learning environment which demonstrates a high commitment to educational excellence.



Hibernia College Response to Panel Recommendations

1. That the relationship between the roles of the Academic Dean and Registrar be clarified in the documentation. (4.2.3 and 5.1)
The role of the Academic Dean and of the Registrar are specified in the Policy on Governance and Management. The Registrar reports to the Academic Dean.
2. That the organisation chart be dated. (4.2.3)
The College notes this recommendation and organisational charts are now dated.
3. That the outsourcing arrangement for the HRM and Legal functions be outlined in the documentation (4.2.3).
The College notes this recommendation and confirms that the Policy on Governance and Management will be updated to include these arrangements.
4. That the structural nature of the relationship between Hibernia College and Adjunct Faculty as service contractors rather than employees be clarified in the documentation (4.2.3).
The College notes this recommendation and the documentation has been updated.
5. That the role of the Faculty Manager in contracting and managing Adjunct Faculty be clarified in the documentation (4.2.3).
The College notes this recommendation and the documentation has been updated.
6. That provision is made for the inclusion of student membership and learning designers on the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee (5.1 and 5.7).
The College notes this recommendation and the proposed changes to ex-officio memberships of subcommittees in this regard will be considered by the Academic Board for approval and roll-out during 2019.
7. That the title Directors of Discipline be changed to Programme Board Directors in the documentation (5.1).
The College commits to updating the Hibernia College Quality Framework (HCQF) to ensure terminology accurately reflects changes to the governance and management structure as and when changes occur.
8. That the documentation be amended to incorporate the changes that have been made in the academic governance and management structure following the appointment of the Head of the School of Education in August 2018 (5.1).
The College notes this recommendation and the documentation will be updated to ensure it reflects the current school structure.



9. That summary mapping sheet documents be prepared for blended and online learning, collaborations, plagiarism and assessment 'marks and standards', identifying the policy documents within HCQF across which the related QA procedures are distributed and embedded (5.2 and 5.6).

The College notes this recommendation and is currently developing a series of mapping documents, where appropriate, to facilitate ease of understanding and navigation of the HCQF.

10. That a policy for Intellectual Property be formulated as an addition to the HCQF (5.2).

Intellectual Property is currently detailed in both staff and faculty contracts with the College. The College acknowledges that the addition of an Intellectual Property Policy to the HCQF would increase transparency and mitigate risk in this area. This is being developed as part of the 2019 Academic Board work-plan.

11. That the College prepare flow diagrams to illustrate the inter-related processes of programme design, development, delivery, on-going monitoring and periodic review (5.3).

As part of the HCQF, the College has flow-charts to support the different processes of programme design, development, delivery, on-going monitoring and periodic review. As part of future development, The College will continue to develop mapping documents, where appropriate, to facilitate ease of understanding and navigation of the HCQF.

12. That the systematic ways in which feedback loops are closed be clarified further in the documentation (5.3).

The College notes and accepts the panel's recommendation to clarify the mechanisms by which feedback from students, staff, faculty, adjunct faculty and other stakeholders is acted on and responded to.

13. That the scheduled review of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy be undertaken and completed as a matter of urgency (5.5 and 5.6).

The scheduled review of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy has been prioritised on the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee work-plan and will be updated in 2019.

14. That the application of the Universal Design approach be more clearly reflected in documentation (5.5).

The College welcomes the panel's acknowledgement of our commitment to the Universal Design approach and will update the documentation to clearly reflect this.

15. That the College revise the Compendium of SOPs and Guidelines document to improve its form and presentation (5.5).

The College operates as a blended learning provider and is satisfied with the presentation and form of SOPs and Guidelines documents. These are maintained and navigated via the College's internal SharePoint Library, which uses a meta-data filtering tool, rather than a traditional book format with a table of contents and page-numbering structure.

The SOPs and Guidelines provided to the panel were in pdf format for review purposes, which is not their practical presentation format.



16. That consideration is given to developing and incorporating further opportunities for formative assessment into programmes as part of the review of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy (5.6).

The College will consider assessment strategies as part of its programme reviews and re-validation processes.

17. That the mechanisms used for formative assessment be clarified in the strategy and the programme documents (5.6).

Those that are currently in practice will be further developed and further opportunities will be considered and introduced as appropriate. These will be reviewed as part of the review of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy and during upcoming programme review and re-validation processes.

18. That a systematic approach be taken to harvesting feedback from collaborative partners and other external stakeholders (5.10).

The College is reviewing its systematic approach to harvesting feedback at all stages of the programme life-cycle from initial proposal to validation and review.