



ICD Business School

2021

Annual Quality Report
ICD Business School
Reporting Period 2019-2020



Celebrating 20 years
2001-2021 ICD Business School

2021

Annual Quality Report ICD Business School
PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM
Reporting Period 2019-2020

PREFACE

Note: QQI's provider portal, QHub, is currently under development and will be completed in November 2020. AQR 2021 will be submitted via QHub.

The **Annual Quality Report (AQR)**; formerly AIQR) forms part of Quality and Qualifications Ireland's (QQI) quality assurance (QA) framework of engagement with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The AQR provides documentary evidence of the development and evolution of each institution's internal quality system. It provides QQI with assurance that internal QA procedures have been established and are being implemented consistent with regulatory requirements.

The AQR, particularly part A, should assist with **document management** in the institutional review process and will facilitate institutions in providing review teams with procedural QA documentation in preparation for the external review process. It is an important part of the evidence base considered by external **review teams** as part of QQI's CINNTE cycle of institutional reviews, demonstrating that the institution's internal QA system is aligned with QQI's Core and relevant Sector- and Topic-specific Statutory QA Guidelines, and with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area 2015 (ESG). It enables the review team to satisfy itself of compliance with these requirements for the purpose of the institutional review process.

Each AQR is **published in full on QQI's website**, providing transparency on the HEIs' assurance and enhancement of quality to external stakeholders. (As such, institutions should ensure that their submissions do not contain any data that they consider to be commercially sensitive.) Collectively, the AQRs comprise a single national repository of quality assurance practice in Irish higher education institutions.

Each year, QQI produces a synthesis report of the key themes highlighted across the AQRs, primarily arising from Part B of the reports.

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Guidelines on Completing the Report

The AQR is aligned with QQI's Core, Sector and Topic-specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines and with the ESG (2015). A mapping of the ESG to QQI Core QA Guidelines is included in Table 1 below; the structure of Part A of this report template aligns with the first column of the table. Additional guidance on completing this template and reference material is included in each section. Institutions should adhere to this guidance and have regard to QQI Core, Sector and Topic-specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines. **The guide text within each section should be deleted before submission of the report.**

Submission Process and Timeline

The deadline for submission of the AQR each year is in February of the relevant year, with the call for submission sent to institutions in November of the preceding year. Once the call for submission has been made, QQI will provide access to QQI's provider portal, QHub, to the designated institution contact(s) to facilitate submission of the report. Through QHub, each institution will have access to an editable version of its AQR for the previous reporting period. This document can then be amended/updated to reflect any changes or developments that occurred during the current reporting period before submitting the final report to QQI.

Completing the AQR

- When completing the AQR template, all relevant colleagues in the institution should be consulted.
- Consider whether external audiences will be able to understand the terminology used (particularly local abbreviations and acronyms); it may be helpful to include a glossary.
- Aim to avoid duplication in the report - where information is relevant to more than one section, the first mention may be referenced in subsequent sections.
- Provide reflections on what worked well, but also what may have been tried but did not work.

Report Structure

Part A: Internal QA System

Part A of the AQR comprises a record of each institution's current QA policies and procedures and should provide links to those policies and procedures. Private HEIs may provide links to the policies and procedures approved by QQI during initial access to validation (IAV) or reengagement. It is the responsibility of each HEI to ensure before submission of the AQR that all links are correct and functional, and that the policies and procedures referred to are the most up-to-date versions available. Given that the AQR is submitted in respect of a discrete reporting period, it may be helpful for institutions to establish a SharePoint/OneDrive folder (or similar) for each reporting period that contains the current versions of their policies and procedures, and that hyperlinks to these versions of the documents be provided in the AQR

Part A is to be completed only if there have been **material** changes to QA policies and procedures during the reporting period. Such changes may include the approval and implementation of new policies or procedures, or significant amendments to existing ones.

Part B: Quality Assurance (QA) and Quality Enhancement (QE)

Part B of the AQR documents and captures QA activities, developments and enhancements undertaken by institutions **during the reporting period** and their **impact**. Insofar as is possible, institutions should demonstrate in Part B how plans set out in the previous AQR were progressed during the reporting period - these may be plans linked to strategic objectives, to reengagement advices, or to institutional review recommendations.

Case Studies

In each reporting period, QQI may request updates on specific thematic areas or may invite the institution to submit case studies in response to specific topics. Further, institutions may include case studies to share good practice on topics of their choosing, demonstrating QA and QE in action. In formulating case studies, institutions are encouraged to reflect on and highlight areas that may be of interest to other institutions and would benefit from wider dissemination. Further guidance is provided in Part B.

Links to Reference Documents Cited in this Template¹

Legislation

- [Qualifications and Quality Assurance \(Education and Training\) Act 2012 \(as amended\)](#)
- [Regional Technical Colleges Act 1992 \(as amended\)](#)
- [Technological Universities Act 2018](#)
- [Universities Act 1997](#)

QQI Documents

Statutory QA Guidelines (QAG)

- [Core QAG](#)
- [Sector-specific QAG for Independent/Private Providers](#)
- [Sector-specific QAG for Designated Awarding Bodies](#)
- [Sector-specific QAG for Institutes of Technology](#)
- [Topic-specific QAG for Providers of Statutory Apprenticeship Programmes](#)
- [Topic-specific QAG for Providers of Research Degree Programmes](#)
- [Topic-specific QAG for Blended Learning](#)

Other QQI Policy Documents

- [QQI's Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes, and Joint Awards, 2012](#)
- [QQI's Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Education and Training to International Learners, 2015](#)
- [QQI Policy Restatement on Access, Transfer and Progression, 2015](#)

Other National/International References

- [European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area \(2015\)](#)
- [IHEQN Guidelines on Collaborative Provision](#)
- [National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland](#)
- [Ireland's Framework of Good Practice for Research Degree Programmes, 2019](#)
- [HEA National Framework for Doctoral Education](#)
- [The Salzburg Principles](#)
- [The Salzburg II Recommendations](#)
- [SOLAS Code of Practice for Employers and Apprentices](#)
- [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#)

¹ These links will be updated as further guidance documents are published.

PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM

Table 1

| Table 1 Mapping of ESG (2015) to QQI QA Guidelines (QAG) | | | | |
|--|---|--|------------------|---|
| AQR Part A Section | QQI QAG Core Sub-section No. | QAG Core Sub-section Title | ESG Standard No. | ESG Standard Title |
| 1.0 - Internal QA Framework | 2.1 | Governance and Management of Quality | 1.1 | Policy for Quality Assurance |
| | 2.2 | Documented Approach to Quality Assurance | | |
| 2.0 - Programme Development and Delivery | 2.3 | Programmes of Education and Training | 1.2 | Design and Approval of Programmes |
| 4.0 - QA of Research Activities and Programmes | | | 1.9 | On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes |
| 8.0 - Monitoring and Periodic Review | | | | |
| 5.0 - Staff Recruitment, Development and Support | 2.4 | Staff Recruitment, Management and Development | 1.5 | Teaching Staff |
| 2.3 - Teaching, Learning and Assessment | 2.5 | Teaching and Learning | 1.3 | Student-centred Teaching, Learning and Assessment |
| | 2.6 | Assessment of Learners | | |
| 3.0 - Learner Resources and Supports | 2.7 | Supports for learners | 1.6 | Learning Resources and Student Support |
| 6.0 - Information and Data Management | 2.8 | Information and Data Management | 1.7 | Information Management |
| 7.0 - Public Information and Communication | 2.9 | Public Information and Communication | 1.8 | Public Information |
| 2.0 - Programme Delivery and Development | 2.10 | Other Parties Involved in Education and Training | 1.9 | On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes |
| 8.0 - Monitoring and Periodic Review | | | 1.2 | Design and Approval of Programmes |
| 9.0 - Details of Arrangements with Third Parties | | | | |
| 2.0 - Programme Development and Delivery | 2.11 | Self-evaluation, Monitoring and Review | 1.9 | On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes |
| 8.0 - Monitoring and Periodic Review | | | 1.10 | Cyclical External Quality Assurance |
| 4.0 - QA of Research Activities and Programmes | QAG for Providers of Research Degree Programmes | | | |

Introduction and Overview of Institution

This is the AQR for ICD Business School for the reporting period **1 September 2019 – 31 August 2020**.

It is to be submitted by **Friday, 26 March 2021**.

The AQR has been approved by **ICD Business School Academic Council** on 24th March 2021 and is submitted by **Janette Hamill, Head of Quality Assurance**.

General Overview of Institution

ICD (International College Dublin) Business School (hereafter referred to as ICD) was established in 2001 for the purpose of providing high-quality, third-level qualifications to both EU and non-EU students. The college currently (2020) offers three QQI programmes leading to major awards at levels 8 and 9 of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) in its areas of specialism, namely the BA (Hons) in Accounting & Finance, BA (Hons) in Business Studies, and MA in Accounting and Finance. The college's two undergraduate programmes are recognised for exemptions by the *Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA)*, the world's largest professional accountancy body; with graduates receiving up to 9 exemptions from their ACCA exams.

We are a uniquely diverse higher educational institution, with students and colleagues from over 45 countries globally (and growing), which is proudly approaching twenty years of providing student-focused education in a vibrant and friendly learning environment. Our community of colleagues and students continuously work hard to craft an atmosphere of inclusivity, trust, excellence, and transparency in our teaching and learning strategies and in our approach to ensuring that every student at ICD feels equally valued. ICD has a policy of transparent and non-discriminatory pricing, with academic fees set at the same level for all students irrespective of nationality or EU citizenship.

General Overview of AQR at ICD

The process of development and approval of the AQR has focused on the period of ICD's reengagement with QQI and the implementation of the reengagement-approved ICD QA Policy (28th January 2020). This AQR is the result of extensive meetings between Head of Quality Assurance, Head of Academic Development, Director of Academic Affairs, and the Registrar over the period February 2020 – March 2021 and is ultimately reviewed and approved by Academic Council.

This document is based on review of, inter alia, the following:

- ICD QA Policy (28th January 2020)
- QQI Revalidation of ICD Programmes July 2019
- ICD QA Reengagement submission and report from independent external review panel December 2019 and January 2020.
- ICD Business School Strategic Plan 2020-2025
- ICD Staff and Student Surveys July 2020
- ICD Report on Programme Delivery June 2020 and August 2020.
- ICD COVID-19 Information and Contingency Plans (April-August 2020)

A draft AQR document was circulated to, and feedback sought from, Academic Council, which approved it on 24th March 2021.

Internal QA Framework

1.1 Governance and Management of Quality

Principles of Governance

ICD Business School is committed to upholding the following six principles in all aspects of our academic and corporate governance.

- Student-centred
- Academic independence
- Accountability & transparency
- A culture of self-monitoring & improvement
- An inclusive quality culture
- Internal control & risk management

As QA systems are context dependent (the QQI 'QA Context Principle'), ICD's quality assurance framework has been developed to meet the college's statutory obligations in a manner which is appropriate to its context in terms of institutional capacity, and scale and scope of provision.

ICD Quality Assurance Policy

| Full Quality Assurance Policy | |
|---|--|
| ICD Quality Assurance Policy 28 th January 2020 | ICD Business School Quality Assurance Policy 28th January 2020 |
| Individual Policies | |
| 1 Mission Statement and Provider Context | 1 Mission Statement and Provider Context |
| 2 Policy on External Quality Assurance | 2 Policy on External Quality Assurance |
| 3 ICD Quality Assurance System and Governance | 3 ICD Quality Assurance System and Governance |
| 3.1 ICD Principles of Governance | 3.1 ICD Principles of Governance |
| 3.3 Policy on Governance Reporting and Documentation Requirements | 3.3 Policy on Governance Reporting and Documentation Requirements |
| 3.4 TOR for Academic Council | 3.4 TOR for Academic Council |
| 3.5 TOR for Governing Body | 3.5 TOR for Governing Body |
| 3.6 TOR for the Management Team | 3.6 TOR for the Management Team |
| 3.7 TOR for Examination Boards | 3.7 TOR for Examination Boards |
| 3.8 TOR for Programme Development Subcommittee | 3.8 TOR for Programme Development Subcommittee |

| | |
|---|---|
| 3.9 TOR for Programme Boards | <u>3.9 TOR for Programme Boards</u> |
| 3.10.6 TOR for Student Representative Committee SRC | <u>3.10.6 TOR for Student Representative Committee SRC</u> |
| 3.11 TOR for Board of Directors | <u>3.11 TOR for Board of Directors</u> |
| 3.12 Policy on Policy | <u>3.12 Policy on Policy</u> |
| 3.13 Policy on Risk | <u>3.13 Policy on Risk</u> |
| 4 Policy on Managing Quality Self Evaluation Monitoring and Review | <u>4.0 Policy on Managing Quality Self Evaluation Monitoring and Review</u> |
| 4.1 Policy on Programmatic Review and Programme Development | <u>4.1 Policy on Programmatic Review and Programme Development</u> |
| 4.2 Policy on Staff Recruitment and Performance to Enhance Teaching | <u>4.2 Policy on Staff Recruitment and Performance to Enhance Teaching</u> |
| 4.3 Policy on Quality in Assessment | <u>4.3 Policy on Quality in Assessment</u> |
| 4.3.2 Policy on Security in Assessment | <u>4.3.2 Policy on Security in Assessment</u> |
| 4.3.3 Policy on the Conduct of Assessment and Examinations | <u>4.3.3 Policy on the Conduct of Assessment and Examinations</u> |
| 4.4 Policy on External Examination | <u>4.4 Policy on External Examination</u> |
| 5 Policy on Teaching Learning and Assessment Strategies | <u>5.0 Teaching, Learning & Assessment Policy</u> |

| | |
|--|---|
| 5.1 Policy on Staff and Student Responsibilities | <u>5.1 Policy on Staff and Student Responsibilities</u> |
| 5.2.1 Examination and Assessment Regulations | <u>5.2.1 Examination and Assessment Regulations</u> |
| 5.2.1.1.3 Policy on Extenuating Circumstances and Assessment Lateness or Absence | <u>5.2.1.1.3 Policy on Extenuating Circumstances and Assessment Lateness or Absence</u> |
| 5.2.1.2 Policy on Grading of Assessments | <u>5.2.1.2 Policy on Grading of Assessments</u> |
| 5.2.1.4 Policy on Feedback on Grades for Students | <u>5.2.1.4 Policy on Feedback on Grades for Students</u> |
| 5.2.1.5 Grade Appeals Procedure | <u>5.2.1.5 Grade Appeals Procedure</u> |
| 5.2.1.6 Policy on Breach of Examination and Assessment Regulations | <u>5.2.1.6 Policy on Breach of Examination and Assessment Regulations</u> |
| 5.3 Policy on Learner Diversity and Reasonable Accommodations | <u>5.3 Policy on Learner Diversity and Reasonable Accommodations</u> |
| 5.4 Policy on the Learning Environment at ICD | <u>5.4 Policy on the Learning Environment at ICD</u> |
| 5.5 Policy on Learner Feedback and Student Voice at ICD | <u>5.5 Policy on Learner Feedback and Student Voice at ICD</u> |
| 5.6 Policy on Learner Induction | <u>5.6 Policy on Learner Induction</u> |

| | |
|---|---|
| 5.7 Policy on Work Based Learning | 5.7 Policy on Work Based Learning |
| 6 Policy on Access Transfer and Progression | 6.0 Policy on Access Transfer and Progression |
| 6.1 Policy on Access and Admissions | 6.1 Policy on Access and Admissions |
| 6.2 Policy on Advanced Entry Requirements | 6.2 Policy on Advanced Entry Requirements |
| 6.3 Policy on the Recognition of Prior Learning RPL | 6.3 Policy on the Recognition of Prior Learning RPL |
| 6.4 Policy on Progression | 6.4 Policy on Progression |
| 6.5 Policy on Transfer | 6.5 Policy on Transfer |
| 7 Policy on Support for Learners | 7.0 Policy on Support for Learners |
| 7.1 Policy on Protection of Enrolled Learners | 7.1 Policy on Protection of Enrolled Learners |
| 7.2 Policy on Student Protection Complaints and Appeals | 7.2 Policy on Student Protection Complaints and Appeals |
| 7.3 Policy on International Learner Recruitment Support and Protection | 7.3 Policy on International Learner Recruitment Support and Protection |
| 7.4 Policy on Counselling Service | 7.4 Policy on Counselling Service |
| 7.5 Policy on Fees at ICD | 7.5 Policy on Fees at ICD |
| 7.6 Policy on Providing Opportunities for Learner Integration and Pastoral Care | 7.6 Policy on Providing Opportunities for Learner Integration and Pastoral Care |

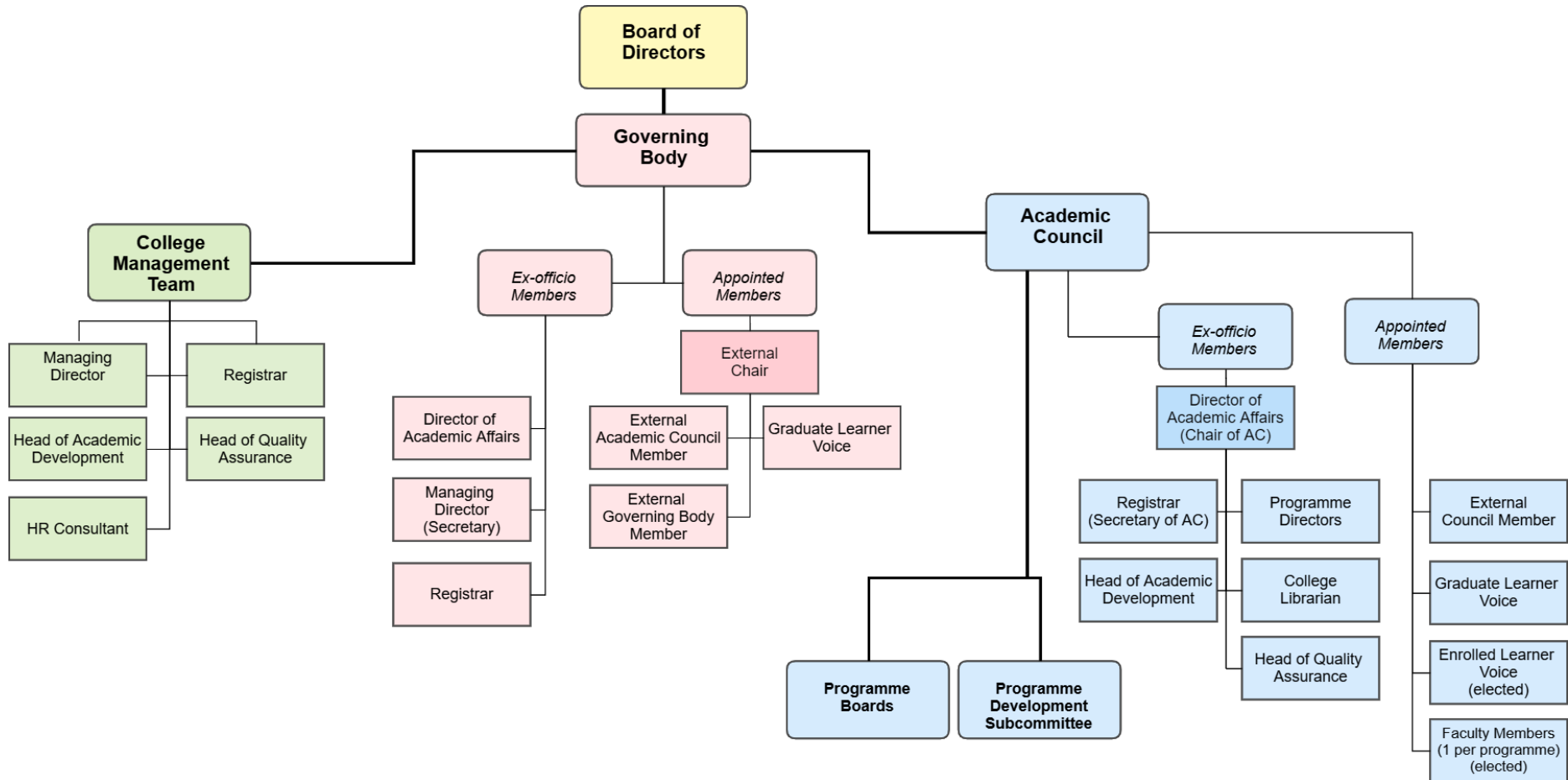
| | |
|--|--|
| 7.7 Policy on Programme Related Services Learning and Physical Resources | 7.7 Policy on Programme Related Services Learning and Physical Resources |
| 7.8 Policy on Learner Progression | 7.8 Policy on Learner Progression |
| 8 Policy on Information and Data Management | 8 Policy on Information and Data Management |
| 9 Policy on Public Information and Communication | 9 Public Information and Communication |

Representation of Learners and External Stakeholders in Governance at ICD

The overriding aim of this QA framework, beyond compliance with statutory requirements, is to promote an institution-wide culture of quality, integrity, and continuous improvement at ICD which aligns with its strategic institutional objectives, is reflected in its policies, procedures, and internal governance structures, and which provides opportunities for all internal stakeholders – including learners and academic staff members – and external stakeholders – including external members of Governing Body and Academic Council – to participate meaningfully in shaping the college’s institutional decision-making and self-evaluation processes.

The following organisational chart visually represents the internal (staff and learner) and external members of the most senior committees at ICD.

ICD Business School's Governance Structure



1.2 Linked Providers, Collaborative and Transnational Provision

This section is not applicable to ICD.

2.0 Programme Development and Delivery

2.1 Programme Development and Approval

Existing Programmes

ICD offers three QQI programmes (2020) leading to major awards at Levels 8 and 9 on the National Framework of Qualifications. These are a BA (Hons) in Accounting and Finance, a BA (Hons) in Business Studies, and an MA in Accounting and Finance.

Existing programmes are managed and monitored in accordance with the following QA Policy developed during this reporting period.

[4.0 Policy on Managing Quality Self Evaluation Monitoring and Review](#)

New Programme Development

Internal development of a new programme, BA in Digital Business, had been completed, prior to September 2019, before the period of this report and prior to the reengagement process with QQI. The independent external review panel for the BA in Digital Business conducted their site visit on 27 September 2019. The programme was subsequently not approved for validation.

ICD was given the opportunity to address the recommendations and conditions from the panel but it was agreed by the Programme Development Subcommittee that the priority was to concentrate on the QA Reengagement process over the subsequent number of months and to incorporate the lessons learnt from the programme development process.

During the period 2019-2020, a new postgraduate programme Post-Graduate Diploma in Accounting and Financial Services, started development with the intention of commencement in October 2020. However, due to the impact of COVID-19, programme development was

significantly delayed and curtailed. The programme was subsequently put forward for validation in the next reporting period 2020-2021.

2.2 Admission, Progression, Recognition & Certification

Access Transfer and Progression on ICD Programmes

ICD developed a comprehensive policy on access, transfer and progression which is available on the ICD website www.icd.ie , on Moodle and is also contained in the ICD Student Handbook.

[6.0 Policy on Access Transfer and Progression](#)

2.3 Procedures for Making Awards

This section is not applicable to ICD.

2.4 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Policies that Assure Quality of Teaching and Learning and Support Academic Integrity

[4.0 Policy on Managing Quality Self Evaluation Monitoring and Review](#)

[5.0 Teaching, Learning & Assessment Policy](#)

Policy on External Examination

[4.4 Policy on External Examination](#)

3.0 Learner Resources and Support

ICD Support for Learners

ICD is one of the most culturally diverse higher educational institutions in Ireland. Our students come from over 45 countries around the world (and growing) and a large proportion of our student body are mature students.

ICD's culture is focused on mutual respect between students and staff. ICD's staff and student culture does not include or tolerate discrimination on the basis of age, race, colour, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, national or ethnic origin, disability or disability status. Equality in educational access is a foundation stone of ICD's philosophy of education delivery with, for example, fully accessible facilities for learners who have diverse access requirements (e.g. fully wheelchair accessible facilities [e.g. classrooms, elevator and restrooms]).

ICD prides itself on minimising the difference between tuition/registration fees for Irish citizens, EU, and non-EU international students. ICD Business School does not participate in price/fees-based discrimination; academic fees are the same for all students irrespective of nationality.

See:

[5.4 Policy on the Learning Environment at ICD](#)

[5.5 Policy on Learner Feedback and Student Voice at ICD](#)

[7.0 Policy on Support for Learners](#)

4.0 QA of Research Activities and Programmes

ICD does not currently offer research programmes/degrees.

5.0 Staff Recruitment, Development and Support

During the 2019-2020 academic year, ICD continued to recruit lecturers and module leaders through public advertising and a formal interview process to ensure the highest possible standards of module/programme delivery. Three new full-time staff were hired to ensure continuous improvement of programmes in their management, planning and delivery (one administrative staff member, a new Quality Assurance Officer and a new Head of Academic Development).

Staff Induction

All new academic staff participate in a formal structured induction. This induction takes place every semester when new lecturing staff are recruited. While it is recognised that a lecturer who is new to ICD may have prior lecturing experience, all lecturers who are new to ICD will be required to participate in a formal ICD induction.

ICD supports staff to develop and improve their teaching and assessment skills through:

- Internal verification and second marking processes to improve assessment skills
- External Examiners provide recommendations to staff on how to improve assessment
- Providing financial and non- financial assistance wherever possible to assist staff to engage in/at research seminars and membership of academic and professional associations and bodies
- The Head of Quality Assurance provides training to staff on usage of Moodle
- The Head of Academic Development advises staff on plagiarism prevention and detection and also the training of staff in the use of Urkund (plagiarism detection software), which was introduced during the AQR reporting period.
- Management team provides resources for training initiatives (e.g. Pearson Higher Education training, summer 2019)

Financial and non-financial support is available to all staff (academic and non-academic) to engage in research or study for the purposes of professional development. These supports are reviewed by the

Academic Council and Management Team who make recommendations to Governing Body regarding how study/research/development supports can be improved.

See:

[3.4 TOR for Academic Council](#)

[3.6 TOR for the Management Team](#)

[4.2 Policy on Staff Recruitment and Performance to Enhance Teaching](#)

6.0 Information and Data Management

See:

[8 Policy on Information and Data Management](#)

7.0 Public Information and Communication

ICD publishes all information on its courses and quality assurance policies and procedures on its website www.icd.ie

See:

[9 Public Information and Communication](#)

8.0 Monitoring and Periodic Review

ICD ensures ongoing self-monitoring via its main standing committees, the most senior of which are the Governing Body, Academic Council, and Management Team. The TOR/membership of Governing Body and Academic Council include external independent members. External Examiners play a vital role as independent evaluators of teaching, learning, and assessment.

See:

[3.1 ICD Principles of Governance](#)

[3.4 TOR for Academic Council](#)

[3.5 TOR for Governing Body](#)

[3.6 TOR for the Management Team](#)

[3.12 Policy on Policy](#)

[4.0 Policy on Managing Quality Self Evaluation Monitoring and Review](#)

9.0 Details of Arrangements with Third Parties

9.1 Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies

| Type of arrangement | Total Number |
|---------------------|--------------|
| PRSBs | |
| Awarding bodies | 1 |
| QA bodies | |

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body) | ACCA Exemptions |
| Name of body: | ACCA |
| Programme titles and links to publications | <p>BA Hons in Business Studies offers graduates up to 6 ACCA exemptions Link: https://icd.ie/courses/ba-honours-business-studies/</p> <p>BA Hons in Accounting and Finance offers graduates up to 9 ACCA exemptions Link: https://icd.ie/courses/ba-honours-accounting-and-finance/</p> |
| Date of accreditation or last review | 1 Jan 2019 |
| Date of next review | 31 Dec 2023 |

| | |
|---|---|
| 2. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body) | Awarding Body |
| Name of body: | Pearson |
| Programme titles and links to publications | <p>Pearson BTEC Level 4 Higher National Certificate International in Business</p> <p>Pearson BTEC Level 5 Higher National Diploma International in Business (Accounting and Finance)</p> <p>Pearson BTEC Level 5 Higher National Diploma International in Business (Business Management)</p> <p>Pearson BTEC Level 5 Higher National Diploma International in Business (Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management)</p> <p>Pearson BTEC Level 5 Higher National Diploma International in Business (Human Resource Management)</p> <p>Pearson BTEC Level 5 Higher National Diploma International in Business (Marketing)</p> <p>Pearson BTEC Level 5 Higher National Diploma International in Business (Operations Management)</p> |
| Date of accreditation or last review | 27 Feb 2020 |
| Date of next review | 31 Aug 2021 |

9.2 Collaborative Provision

This section is not applicable to ICD.

9.3 Articulation Agreements

This section is not applicable to ICD.



2001-2021 ICD Business School

2021

Annual Quality Report: ICD Business School
PART B: INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE
ENHANCEMENT & IMPACT
Reporting Period 2019-2020

PART B: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM

Guidelines on Completing Part B

As outlined in the general guidelines for this template (p.5), **Part B** of the AQR documents and captures QA activities, developments and enhancements undertaken by institutions **during the reporting period** and their **impact**.

Insofar as is possible, institutions should demonstrate in Part B how plans set out in the previous AQR submission were progressed during the reporting period - these may be plans linked to strategic objectives, to reengagement advices, or to institutional review recommendations.

Part B of the AQR is an opportunity for self-reflection and critical evaluation of the effectiveness of QA activities over the reporting period. Institutions are encouraged to reflect both on what worked well and what did not work well, and to consider impact measures, using both quantitative and qualitative evidence (metrics, benchmarks and feedback/judgement) in how they led to specific QA improvements and enhancement.

Part B provides evidence of quality improvement and enhancement and impact² of QA activities within the totality of an institution's QA system.

Section 1 pertains to internal quality assurance implementation and developments since the previous reporting period.

Section 2 deals with institutional analysis of IQA enhancements and impacts including activities undertaken in respect of academic integrity, and the enhancements and impacts resulting from same.

Section 3 relates to IQA developments and plans for the next reporting period.

Section 4 provides an opportunity for institutions to illustrate IQA in action through case studies in relevant thematic areas.

Institutions are invited, if they wish to do so, to use case studies to demonstrate quality in action and to highlight areas of practice for dissemination at any point in this part of the report.

Case Studies

QQI recommends that written case studies should:

- Be between half a page and two pages in length;
- Relate to a specific time- and subject-bound issue;
- Include an introduction that sets out a brief overview of contextual matters;
- Include any relevant supporting data and data analysis;
- Include links to any sources cited;
- Include a clear concluding paragraph with overview of key outcomes/learning.

Although case studies will generally be in written form, institutions may also provide links to audio-visual/multimedia case studies. QQI does not prescribe a format for case studies.

² The National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education have considered impact and measures leading to development and improvement specifically in terms of teaching and learning. See: <https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/wp-content/uploads/NF-2020-Insights-from-Practice-About-Impact-in-Teaching-and-Learning-web-ready.pdf>. This is a very useful reference, though impact in the context of this report should be considered

1.0 Quality Implementation and Developments

1.1 Strategic QA Updates

The period of AQR 2019-2020 covers a period of root and branch change for ICD as a result of preparing for QQI Institutional Reengagement.

The gap analysis conducted by ICD during 2019 as part of preparation for reengagement identified various areas for strengthening including:

- Internal monitoring and review
- Closing the feedback loop
- Provisions for the admission and support (academic and pastoral) for international learners
- Formalising and clarifying governance structures, TORs for committees and roles, and processes including clarifying and improving the separation between academic and commercial considerations within governance
- Programme reviewing and development processes
- Programme delivery management (teaching, learning, and assessment)
- Assessment moderation procedures
- Internal communications with staff and students
- Academic integrity procedures and processes for prevention and sanctioning misconduct
- Need to invest in improved plagiarism detection software
- Formalising and clarifying internal and external reporting including documentation/recording requirements
- Student representation on senior governance committees
- External membership of senior governance committees
- Lecturer representation on senior governance committees
- Risk identification and mitigation
- Under-utilisation of capacity (need to improve student recruitment)
- Need for greater focus on social media marketing resourcing
- Need for improvement of technological resources for staff and students
- Development of a comprehensive teaching, learning, and assessment strategy
- The need for more comprehensive work-based learning policies
- Improvements to public information and communications (e.g. website)
- Improved communications of QA to those who will use it (e.g. dissemination of policies and inclusion in

Student Handbook)

- Improvement to lecturer and learner feedback procurement

Policies and procedures relating to all of the above were developed and/or enhanced to create an entirely new Quality Assurance policy draft document which was submitted to QQI as part of reengagement. ICD formally applied to have its quality assurance procedures approved by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) in compliance with the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 on 2nd September 2019.

The reengagement panel site visit was held on 21 November 2019. In the interim report following the site visit, ICD was commended in a number of areas notably:

- in relation to its approach to the reengagement process by being receptive to change and engaging in having an open and constructive dialogue.
- the learner-centred orientation of its operations with reference to the needs and preferences of learners in informing decision-making and practices at ICD.
- ICD's provision of a free psychological counselling service for learners. It noted that this service reflects a genuine commitment at ICD to the welfare of learners, and a keen awareness of the experience of international learners in Ireland, who may be undertaking studies at a distance from their families or social support networks.

However, several areas within the QA Policy were identified as requiring further work. As these issues were discreet, ICD was granted six weeks to submit evidence that these changes could be addressed. Specifically, the panel had concerns pertaining to the dimensions of Governance and Management of QA, Documented Approach to QA and Staff Management and Development. It was recommended that

- An appropriately qualified external chair be appointed to the Governing Body.
- The roles of chair and secretary to the Governing Body should be separated.
- The management team at ICD must be expanded to address current gaps, for example in relation to Human Resource Management. In addition, it could be augmented by the addition of the Head of Quality Assurance and Head of Academic Development.
- The balance of learner representation should be shifted to enhance the learner voice on Programme Boards. The learner representatives on Academic Council and Governing Body should be full members, invited to all meetings. Consideration could be given to the potential for introduction of a learner voice,

as opposed to a learner representative, to the Governing Body, for example a graduate.

- The visibility of the Board of Directors within the governance structure to be made clear within the documentation, and the delegation of responsibilities to the Governing Body should be formalised.
- The external member of the Academic Council, who is also a member of the Governing Body, must be a full member of each and invited to all meetings.
- The risk register format should be expanded to represent the potential consequences of identified risks, to ensure the document is appropriately informative, has practical value and is not unwieldy to all members of the Governing Body. The process of risk identification should be further formalised and reflected within the responsibilities of the college management team.
- That policies and procedures relating to both staff development and the performance management of teaching staff must be formalised within the QA. This should encompass the enhancement of a performance management and development system and be applied to all current and new members of teaching staff.
- Further development was needed in relation to ICD's QA documentation, advising a restructuring to improve navigation and accessibility of policies and procedures and a refinement away from descriptive content in places and toward a more procedural tone.
- ICD reconsider its current process in relation to appeals, taking into account that standard practice in the sector is to only entertain appeals on the grounds of procedural errors and not on the basis of dissatisfaction with grades.

Specific Advice

- To introduce further externality and expand the Governing Body membership.
- To explore opportunities to for staff development within established Communities of Practice in the sector.
- That the registrar is appointed to the role of secretary to the Academic Council.

All reengagement panel recommendations were accepted by ICD and implemented in the revised QA Policy which was submitted to the panel for desk review by the 21st January 2020.

Following which, further additional specific advice was given in relation to:

- Quoracy of exam board.
- Frequency of Governing Board meetings.
- Using a more conventional hierarchical diagram structure within the units of governance.

All reengagement panel advice was discussed, accepted and implemented by ICD in the **QA Policy: 28th January 2020**. This document was approved at the PAEC meeting of 6th February 2020, six months ahead of the deadline.

ICD's reengagement with QQI allowed the organisation to conduct a cross-institutional review of all processes. Challenging as this was for a small academic institution, it afforded us the opportunity to futureproof our systems and approaches and gave us a clear roadmap for the years ahead. The support and feedback received from the reengagement panel was constructive and helpful, as is our continuing engagement with QQI.

The dedicated community of ICD staff, lecturers, and students who contributed an enormous amount of time and energy to the reengagement process has to be recognised. The willingness of students and adjunct lecturers to contribute to the continued development and growth of ICD and the culture of collegiality within the organisation is recognised as a key strength. For a period of months, lecturers attended frequent meetings, rewrote/reviewed documents and actively engaged in the process of examination, reflection and improvement.

These processes enabled ICD to move smoothly to online teaching when the extraordinary events in March 2020 hit. For example, having a clear TLA Strategy committed to and agreed by all lecturers through our staff training and induction days, meant that everyone started from the same baseline. The college moved together in a coordinated, collegiate and productive manner to successfully pivot from a traditional in-person, paper-based college to one successfully delivering eight full weeks of online teaching, learning and the vast majority of assessment for the Spring semester 2020.

1.2 Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR

As this is ICD's first AQR, this section is not applicable.

1.3 Governance and Management

1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule

| Body | Meeting dates |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Governing Body | 3 October 2019 7 th January 2020 |
| Academic Council | 12 th November 2019 7 th January 2020 12 th August 2020 |
| Programme Board | 24 th October 2019 9 th January 2020 Spring 2020 Semester Programme Board Meetings shifted to individual one to one meetings held via telephone & zoom during March & April 2020 between all lecturers and Programme Director due to COVID-19 and the iteratively adapting approach to teaching, learning and assessment at both the module and the programme level. |
| Programme Development Subcommittee | 6 September 2019 20 September 2019 |
| Management Meeting | 3 rd December 2019 7 th January 2020 21 st January 2020 28 th January 2020 20 th February 2020 3 rd March 2020 10 th March 2020 27 th April 2020 30 th April 2020 5 th May 2020 11 th May 2020 |

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| | 18 th May 2020 8 th June 2020 24 th June 2020 14 th September 2020 21 st September 2020 |
| Student Representative Committee | 24 October 2019 10 March 2020 |
| Exam Board | 30 July 2020 24 September 2020 (due to COVID-19 adjustments where semester time was extended the exam board for the repeat period (2019/2020) took place in the next reporting period) |

1.3.2 QA Leadership and Management Structural Developments

The need to Improve Governance Structures, Committees, and Roles

As part of the reengagement process, concluded in February 2020, ICD, as a result of internal and external evaluation, recognised the need for improvement in the following areas of governance and management:

- Improved/new TORs for committees and roles including clarifying and improving the separation between academic and commercial considerations within governance
- Programme delivery management (incl. teaching, learning, and assessment), reviewing and development processes
- Internal communications with staff and students
- Formalising and clarifying internal and external reporting including documentation/recording requirements
- Student representation on senior governance committees
- External membership of senior governance committees
- Lecturer representation on senior governance committees
- An appropriately qualified external chair be appointed to the Governing Body
- The roles of chair and secretary to the Governing Body should be separated.
- The management team at ICD must be expanded to contain more than just two members
- Programme Boards, Academic Council, and Governing Body should include student representation invited to attend all meetings
- A graduate should represent 'learner voice' on Governing Body and Academic Council
- Academic Council should include an external member who also sits on Governing Body
- The Registrar is appointed to the role of secretary to the Academic Council,

Policies and procedures relating to all of the above were developed and/or enhanced to create an entirely new set of TORs for all committees and senior leadership roles at the college.

This entailed the creation of new committees at the college and also the enhancement of policies/TORs for existing committees, including enhanced policies and procedures on governance reporting requirements, new Academic Council TOR, new Governing Body TOR, new Management Team TOR, new Programme Development Subcommittee TOR, new Programme Boards TOR, and a new TOR for the Board of Directors.

See:

[3.3 Policy on Governance Reporting and Documentation Requirements](#)

[3.4 TOR for Academic Council](#)

[3.5 TOR for Governing Body](#)

[3.6 TOR for the Management Team](#)

[3.8 TOR for Programme Development Subcommittee](#)

[3.9 TOR for Programme Boards](#)

[3.11 TOR for Board of Directors](#)

Prior to the AQR reporting period, as part of QQI Reengagement, ICD enhanced TOR for specific roles at the college including the TORs for the Registrar, the Director of Academic Affairs, and Programme Directors. Also, ICD created two new roles, the Head of Academic Development and Head of Quality Assurance. Both have overall responsibility for quality assurance including internal monitoring, external independent oversight coordination, reviewing internal processes, policies, procedures, resources, and programmes in order to recommend continuous improvements to the Academic Council. The Head of Academic Development and the Head of QA also sit on the ICD Management Team.

Regarding specific role TORs please see, in the following document, the enhanced/new TOR for the College Registrar (section 3.10.1), Programme Directors (section 3.10.2), Director of Academic Affairs (section 3.10.3), Head of Academic Development (section 3.10.4), Head of Quality Assurance (section 3.10.5):

[3 ICD Quality Assurance System and Governance](#)

1.4 Internal Monitoring and Review

1.4.1 Overview of Periodic Reviews

| Unit of review for which report has been published during reporting period | Date of completion/reason for conducting review (if not planned) or non-completion (if planned but not conducted) | Links to relevant publications |
|--|--|--------------------------------|
| Report on Programme Delivery for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ BA (Hons) Business Studies○ BA (Hons) Accounting and Finance○ MA in Accounting and Finance | 12 th June 2020 | |
| Website Review and Redesign | 30 October 2019 | |

1.4.2 Expert Review Teams/Panels³ involved in IQA

(i) Expert Review Team/Panel Size and Related Processes

This section is not applicable to ICD.

| | Total | Academic Schools/ Department | Professional Services/Support Unit | Approval/Review of Linked Provider | Programme Approval | Programme Review | Other |
|---|-------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|-------|
| Number of review/ evaluation processes | | | | | | | |
| <i>of those:</i> | | | | | | | |
| On-site processes | | | | | | | |
| Desk reviews | | | | | | | |
| Virtual processes | | | | | | | |
| Average panel size for each process type* | | | | | | | |

* excluding secretary if not a full panel member

³ QQI acknowledges that the terminology used to describe the groups of individuals that conduct peer review/evaluation varies from institution to institution.

2.0 IQA System – Enhancement and Impacts

Governance and Management of Quality

Up to 2019, commercial and academic considerations were separate, but the separation was not adequately formalised in the organisational governance infrastructure. Therefore, formalising and improving pre-existing arrangements led to (summer 2019 onwards) Academic Council being constituted independently from Governing Body with ultimate responsibility for advising the college on all decisions in relation to new and existing provision.

The independence of AC from undue commercial and corporate influence is enshrined in the college's 'principles of governance'. Academic Council and its subcommittees (Programme Boards and Programme Development Subcommittee) and Examination Board carry out ongoing analysis and reporting on enrolment, learner feedback, staff feedback, resources and development.

Academic Council has overall responsibility for quality assurance. This role does have clear support and oversight from the Governing Body. Academic Council engage in ongoing monitoring of quality assurance processes at three (minimum) annual council meetings. Individual subcommittees (programme development, programme boards) and individual roles (Head of Quality Assurance, Registrar, Head of Academic Development) report to the Academic Council at every meeting and consult with the Director of Academic Affairs on an ongoing basis.

Academic Council produces at least one annual report containing all findings resulting from all internal monitoring and review processes. This report is shared with all staff and reported to the Governing Body. Staff and Governing Body respond to and act on the Academic Council annual report as appropriate.

Programmes of Education and Training

Increasing Focus on Technological Facilities

During the reengagement process, the college recognised a need to enhance technological infrastructure in the college learning environment online and offline and to make improvements during the 2019-2020 academic year.

During autumn/winter 2019, and spring 2020, ICD:

- Invested substantial human and financial resources into upgrading hardware and software computing systems across classroom and labs and offices, which are, when open, used by staff and students
- Invested substantial human and financial resources into upgrading hardware (server) backend infrastructure for the ICD Moodle VLE

The latter, Moodle upgrade, has proved vital to ensure the smooth and successful transition to online teaching, learning, and assessment in conjunction with the introduction of Zoom for live online teaching, along with a host of other software improvements/changes and a suite of internally created training courses and guides provided to staff and students on all new and improved software systems used for online delivery.

The above enhancements were identified during the reengagement self-evaluation processes during 2018 and 2019 and had these improvements not begun during the autumn 2019 period, the transition to online TLA would have been even more difficult and potentially impossible.

More Formal Student Representative Committee (SRC)

ICD's SRC had, until summer 2019, been afforded a large degree of autonomy. However, as part of the reengagement process, ICD staff and students agreed that a more active (formal) SRC would benefit the institution as a whole, the student body, and programme management and delivery.

The SRC membership has now (2020) grown to 14 members (out of a student body of 271). Historically the number of SRC members was usually in single digits. While quantity of SRC members does not define quality, having a relatively large and more active SRC has proved essential to gaining student buy-in. This partnership proved a significant asset to ICD in its reengagement with QQI and signalled to students the value of the quantity and depth of proposed changes.

The SRC has had a variety of one-to-one and group meetings with ICD staff and management regarding continuous improvement of the institution. The importance of the SRC's role is exemplified in how they have been the most decisive factor in converting ICD from a college that had never delivered a single online class to one that is fully online for all teaching, learning, and assessment.

During the time immediately following the government closure of HEIs in March 2020, the SRC carried information, requests, and points for discussion back and forth between the student body and the college. These exchanges dealt mainly with the collective difficulties of the early stages of the coronavirus pandemic through to helping the college to coordinate a ballot. In this ballot learners voted 81% in favour of moving to online TLA, with a 47% turnout (ballot carried out via Moodle); a 47% turnout is arguably an excellent response for a survey that was run for only a few days among the student body.

Formal Programme Boards

While ICD, prior to summer 2019, had staff meetings about programme management, formal programme boards, held at least once per semester, to discuss specific programme planning, delivery, quality assurance, and teaching, learning and assessment have been held since the Autumn 2019 semester. The programme boards, from 2020 onwards incorporated a student member to enable an effective learner voice at the programme management level.

While the coronavirus closure prevented a face to face Programme Planning meeting in the Spring 2020 semester, these discussions and deliberations were moved to remote meetings coordinated by the Head

of Academic Development enabling centralised programme planning where learner representatives and module lecturers all had an input into programme planning and management. This proved invaluable during the coronavirus crisis in ensuring that the suite of changes required across programmes as a result of online delivery was agreed with, and satisfactory to, students.

The high levels of participation and engagement reported across all modules since the move to online delivery - in many cases higher than the attendance in face to face classes - was arguably, the result of the collective decisions made between staff and students regarding how to shift to online teaching, learning, and assessment.

Staff Recruitment, Management and Development

Staff Induction

From September 2019 onwards, all new academic staff participate in a formal structured induction. This induction takes place every semester when new lecturing staff are recruited. While it is recognised that a lecturer who is new to ICD may have prior lecturing experience, all lecturers who are new to ICD will be required to participate in a formal ICD induction.

Courses

During this AQR reporting period, 2 members of staff completed a 10ECTS CPD in Higher Education Policy at a different HEI.

Teaching, Learning and Assessment

See [Section 2.1](#)

Supports and Resources for Learners

Enhanced Staff and Student Communications

As a small provider with a strong one-to-one working relationship often existing between staff members and between students and staff, ICD has thrived on traditional communications systems such as face to face communications.

During the reengagement planning process and self-evaluation, ICD identified a benefit in enhancing staff and student communications to make more effective and regular use of IT communication technologies as follows:

- While the ICD Moodle Document Store for Staff existed prior to 2019, it was under-utilised as a resource to both send/post important documents/communications for staff and to receive/read such documents/communications. Since summer 2019, this Moodle page is now regularly updated, and staff access rates have increased substantially.
- In September 2019, ICD launched the Moodle Document Store for Students as a centralised Moodle page accessible to all ICD students that would contain a comprehensive variety of important student related documents, communications, tutorials, guides, and more. This resource has high access rates among students.
- Staff and student communication via Moodle, was under-utilised prior to Sep 2019 at ICD. This vital resource (e.g. discussion forums, announcement sections, a repository for notes/materials) has now been used much more successfully across programmes.
- Reimagined and redesigned ICD Student Handbook (2019–2020). The student handbook was completely redesigned and relaunched in September 2019 to incorporate a variety of important information for all learners both prospective and enrolled.
- More regular meetings and communications between the Student Representative Committee and ICD staff/management. Prior to summer 2019, the SRC were a somewhat informal resource. However, the level of communication between the college and the SRC has increased substantially since October 2019, with student reps providing regular feedback and communications to and from the college and students which assisted greatly in achieving

successful reengagement but also most importantly in continuing to enhance programme delivery since October 2019.

All of the above have benefited the college in innumerable ways, most notably in their foundational importance in providing the platforms that have been used to devise, communicate, and implement delivery of online teaching, learning, and assessment as a result of the coronavirus crisis.

Promoting and Protecting Student Equality

It is the policy of ICD Business School to offer our courses to everyone who can attain the entrance requirements and to allow open access onto our programmes to all applicants. ICD supports the participation of learners with disabilities on all courses. In order to achieve an inclusive educational platform, alternative arrangements can be made by assessment designers (e.g. module lecturers) to accommodate different learning needs. It is the policy of ICD to grant reasonable accommodations as per QQI Policy Assessment and Standards and also with regard to the European Standards and Guidelines.

ICD has an open-door policy when it comes to helping and supporting our students.

Language and Maths Support

Any student can access our language and maths support services. As a small college, ICD is in a position to provide students with one-to-one maths tuition from our experienced lecturing staff, should they face difficulties with mathematics on any of our courses.

English language difficulties may arise for any student in higher education, especially if they are an international student. That is why we are happy to provide students with access to specific English language training. To complement this, ICD has started rolling out dedicated English for Business and Accounting students training sessions with a focus on academic writing (through English) to ensure international learners or non-native English speakers receive extra training. This initiative began in September 2019.

Career Advice and Guidance

CV and interview workshops, career advice and work placement services are provided at ICD by a small and dedicated team of practitioners, lecturers with industry and network experience and relevant external stakeholders.

Postgraduate advice is provided to students who are seeking employment or hope to continue their studies at ICD or elsewhere. The team help develop a plan for the next stages of the student's career journey using an approach that is tailored to their individual goals, qualifications, and aspirations.

College Counselling Service

The college counsellor has been appointed specifically to support students who may be faced with a particular personal difficulty in their lives. ICD provides funding to ensure money is not an obstacle for any student in maintaining their well-being. A counsellor provides the student with a confidential, one-to-one, supportive, and non-judgmental space, where they can voice any difficulties and concerns in a caring, trusting situation. Students requiring this service contact the Student Liaison Manager or the Registrar.

Sports and Clubs

ICD Business School is a member of Student Sport Ireland; the organisation that coordinates intervarsity competitions. ICD's athletes and sports teams have opportunities to meet and compete with students from other colleges across the country. ICD provides students with financial and non-financial assistance to ensure their sporting needs are met.

Information and Data Management

The Quality Assurance policies which were entirely redesigned, restructured, and enhanced during 2019 into early 2020 greatly informed ICD's contingency planning and the adaptability of the college in light of COVID-19.

ICD undertook a survey of its staff and learners to capture their experience of online teaching, learning and assessment over the Spring semester 2020 and this informed the COVID-19 Information and Contingency Planning Document (August 2020 version). This document outlined the roadmap, policies, procedures and protocols for the semester (Autumn 2020).

Public Information and Communication

The ICD website was completely overhauled and relaunched in early November 2019 to both satisfy legal requirements regarding information provision to prospective learners more effectively and also to enhance information provision to enrolled learners (e.g. QA Policy). This occurred as a result of one outcome from the overall self-evaluation processes engaged in by ICD during QQI Reengagement preparations.

Other Parties Involved in Education and Training

In addition to quinquennial QQI revalidation, ICD submits its accounting programmes to the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) for exemption accreditation. During the reporting period, both of ICD's undergraduate programmes offered students ACCA exemptions (9 on one programme, which is the highest number of exemptions possible). As part of this process, the college is required to provide detailed programme documents, syllabus materials, and examination papers to ACCA's professional qualifications approval team, who review ICD's offerings for quality and comparability. In this sense, ACCA acts as an effective external quality control for ICD's relevant programmes. Graduates from ICD programmes often go on to attempt and complete ACCA papers in addition to those they receive exemptions from and ACCA monitors progress and completion rates for these ICD graduates as measures of quality assurance.

Self-evaluation, Monitoring and Review

Formal Internal Verification / Second Marking

Across the sector multiple phrases are used to describe:

- Second marking
- Internal moderation
- Internal verification

While each one may be taken to involve distinct activities, ICD has, through the process of reengagement adopted procedures to follow them all. The process at ICD entails:

- Internal moderation/verification of all assessment briefs (low-stakes, high-stakes), where an assigned second marker, for each module, receives the assessment brief/paper and marking scheme and/or solutions. The second marker then negotiates with the first marker (module lecturer) to come to an agreed 'final' assessment brief/paper before it is released to students.
- Formal second marking of a sample of all graded assessment elements (low-stakes, high-stakes), where an assigned second marker, for each module, reviews a sample of graded material from the first marker and both markers collectively agree a 'final' grade (pre External Examiner review, and pre Exam Board).

Both of the above processes were already being carried out before summer 2019. However, they tended to be less formalised and more ad-hoc, with a focus on newer staff for example. Since summer 2019, as part of the reengagement process, ICD's Academic Council and Programme Development Subcommittee developed a comprehensive and formalised system for internal verification and second marking.

This process received widespread support but also a degree of suspicion and opposition due to two issues identified by some colleagues:

- They were not being fully trusted
- Or, this was/is extra workload

The process of culture change during the Autumn 2019 semester at the college to ensure complete adoption of the new procedures was not without its difficulties and opposition. However, the lecturers

found the process, once completed, to be worthwhile and beneficial to ensuring high standards of assessment/grading, transparency in assessment/grading, and consistency in assessment/grading.

Programme Level Assessment Sequencing

While the sequencing (dates) for 'final exams' has always been centrally planned at ICD, the dates for module-level assignments, or continuous assessments, had not been so formally planned, prior to summer 2019.

As part of the reengagement process, ICD introduced programme level assessment sequencing planning. This approach has enabled, at the programme level, assurance of learner workload spread in a fair and approximately even fashion that may or may not occur in scenarios where individual module assessments are planned in isolation from other modules on the same programme stage.

This process has also been vital during the coronavirus crisis where a number of changes needed to occur to assessment strategies at the module level and this led to a large number of assessment deadline extensions due to the coronavirus closure.

ICD has always encouraged learner feedback on assessment due dates on the majority of modules and this practice continues to be an invaluable quality assurance mechanism from the perspective of learner workload management. Lecturers and students are collectively agreeing dates for assessment deadlines and making alterations where beneficial and practical.

Internationalisation

As previously stated, in the overview of our institution, ICD is an international college and the process of internationalisation is at the core of all processes and procedures.

Key Initiatives

- Transparent and non-discriminatory pricing, with academic fees set at the same level for all students irrespective of nationality or EU citizenship.

- Language supports including the expanded suite of sessions and materials focusing on English for Business and Accounting students which are accessible to all students on all stages and delivered in every semester given ICD's high proportion of international learners. See [Supports and resources for learners](#).
- The majority of support / admin staff come from an international non-native English-speaking background and have direct experiential and organisational knowledge of issues relating to being an international student e.g., visa issues.
- Ongoing partnership with ICOS (the Irish Council for International Students) includes:
 - Workshops on Studying and Working in Multi-cultural Environments are made available to all staff and students
 - Key learnings from the ICOS workshops have been made a standard component in all new staff induction sessions.
 - Material from the workshops is available in Staff and Student Document Stores on Moodle.
- Reverse Semesterisation as an effective structured built-in peer mentoring system (see below)

Reverse Semesterisation

ICD has two intakes annually – one enrolling in Autumn, and another enrolling in Spring. Where there are no pre-requisite modules in the same stage/year of a programme, ICD operates a reverse semesterisation model. In practice this means that the Spring intake, for example, will spend their first semester taking what are the Autumn intake's second semester classes, and so on.

The only exceptions to this reverse semesterised model are BA in Business Studies (BABS) Year 3 and Student Induction. The following are not reverse semesterised:

- The student induction programme, which runs every semester and is available to all learners regardless of programme, stage, or intake date
- BABS3: the work experience year, which consists of two modules (BS17 Work-based Learning; BS18 Work Experience). BS17 is a preparatory module for BS18. Therefore, BABS3 is not reverse semesterised. This means that BS17 runs every semester for stage 3, semester 1 learners. BS18 runs every semester for stage 3, semester 2 learners.

A primary rationale for facilitating Autumn and Spring intakes is that it offers a flexible point of entry to learners, rather than just one per year, whether they are international learners, Irish learners, or mature learners.

The reverse semesterisation approach, which places stage 1 semester 1 learners with stage 1 semester 2 learners, is also an effective structured built-in peer mentoring approach. The benefits of peer mentoring include 'existing learners' helping 'new learners' to settle into the new college environment. The existing learners pass on a variety of information about the college, the specific programme, specific modules, learning and assessment, and more, as well as offering an already engaged network of peers to learn alongside. While other colleges have peer mentoring programmes, with similar benefits, those HEIs tend to make these offerings voluntary and usually do not involve the existing learner actually attending the same modules as new learners.

2.1 Initiatives within the Institution related to Academic Integrity

Prior to reengagement and as a result of an internal review on academic misconduct, ICD enhanced the student induction process to promote student awareness of academic integrity/misconduct issues. Students are given training in study skills and referencing, and in how to complete assessments with integrity. This initiative has been received well by students and has been expanded to every semester for *all* learners, not just new students. In light of ICD's high proportion of international learners, the initiative has also been expanded to include a suite of sessions and materials focusing on English for Business and Accounting students. ICD's focus on promoting academic integrity also led to the procurement and implementation of the new Urkund system of plagiarism detection software to be used by staff and students to *both* prevent academic misconduct and to help investigate possible cases.

Urkund

ICD historically, pre-summer 2019, used an alternative plagiarism detection software system. That system was regarded as not very user friendly by staff and students and as a result was under-utilised by students as a means of learning how to avoid plagiarism (e.g. self-checking their work to identify where they are going wrong with regard to plagiarism) and under-utilised by staff as a means of preventing and detecting plagiarism. The replacement, URKUND, was installed on ICD's Moodle system in summer 2019.

The increased use of Urkund across the college has led to greater plagiarism prevention and detection. Prior to summer 2019 plagiarism detection was confined to just a few modules; it is now used to scrutinise the entire array of assessments submitted via Moodle. Staff and students are regularly informed in training and guide documents about how to use Urkund to prevent and detect plagiarism issues.

Digital Submission of Assignments

Prior to summer 2019, only a small minority of modules required digital submission of assignments for the purposes of grading and/or plagiarism checking. Introducing Urkund, during summer 2019,

required a focus on modules requiring assignment submissions to be made digitally wherever practical (e.g. not including handwritten exams) in order to promote and ensure academic integrity.

The feedback on receiving digital submissions has been positive from lecturers from various perspectives, not least in reducing administrative requirements when accepting assignments. Lecturers who were previously uncertain regarding issues pertaining to academic integrity testing are now provided with Urkund as a vital tool to assist them in verifying authorship.

The coronavirus pandemic closure led to the college not accepting paper-based submissions of assignments from 13th March 2020 onwards. Therefore, the Urkund and Moodle assignment submission link systems coupled with the training provided during autumn 2019 proved critical factors for testing learning outcomes and checking integrity concerns.

Declaration of Authorship Sheets

The requirement to submit a 'Declaration of Authorship' sheet to accompany all assignments became mandatory in ICD from September 2019 onwards. As part of a broader suite of measures to foster academic integrity this requirement has served to underscore the importance of ethical best practice among our learners.

Plagiarism Detection Handling Process

In conjunction with other academic integrity promotion initiatives, ICD introduced a formal plagiarism detection handling process which is a standardised procedure that is now followed when plagiarism is suspected at the college.

The procedure has been adopted and used effectively since its introduction and has proved successful as a means of providing a formal platform on which academics and students invited to the meeting can communicate formally and openly about any concerns held about plagiarism in a manner that enables the college to both promote academic integrity and safeguard it when suspected breaches are found

to occur, while also, as much as practical, devising educative responses to plagiarism that are in the least punitive, and in the most educative, while also safeguarding students' right to a fair hearing.

To augment the new enhanced approach to student induction, ICD also increased the amount and detail of material in the Student Handbook (2019-2020), in the ICD Quality Assurance Policy (Sep 2019 versions onwards) and on the ICD website to amplify the importance of academic integrity. ICD created entirely new Moodle pages, accessible to all ICD students:

- dedicated Student Induction Moodle pages (launched Sep 2019) containing information about academic integrity/misconduct, academic writing (how to complete assessments), study skills, research skills, referencing, and English for Business and Accounting students.
- the ICD Document Store for Students (launched Sep 2019), which contains a variety of information, along with, importantly, material relating to academic integrity and how to practice it.

3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period

3.1 QA and QE supporting the Achievement of Strategic Objectives

| No. | Relevant objectives Note: Include reference to the relevant section of the preceding AQR, where applicable | Planned actions and indicators <i>Note: Include details of unit responsible, and how planned action will address the relevant strategic priority and/or reengagement advice/CINNTE recommendation.</i> <i>If the institution is preparing for cyclical review, include how the planned actions will address the relevant review objective(s).</i> |
|-----|--|--|
| 1. | Move towards institutional approval for blended delivery of all programmes | Academic Council |
| 2. | Build on the advances made in the online management of online student registration and records management | Management Team |
| 3. | Enhance annual professional development and performance management initiatives | Management Team |
| 4. | Create workload equivalence guidelines for assessment | Academic Council |
| 5. | Engage dialogue with student body for feedback on class timetabling to ensure student college-life-work balance | Management Team |
| 6. | Explore enhancements to technology (hardware and software) to continuously enhance programme delivery (online and offline) | Management Team |
| 7. | Enhance approach to online assessment | Academic Council |
| 8. | Enhance career planning supports for learners | Management Team |

| | | |
|----|--|------------------|
| 9. | Explore short course delivery offerings to enhance public awareness of the college and to provide more diverse offerings to prospective learners not in a position to complete traditional long programmes | Academic Council |
|----|--|------------------|

3.2 Reviews planned for Upcoming Reporting Periods

3.2.1 Reviews planned for Next Reporting Period

| Unit to be reviewed | Date of planned review | Date of last review |
|----------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| BA in Business Studies | August 2021 | August 2020 |
| BA in Accounting & Finance | August 2021 | August 2020 |
| MA in Accounting & Finance | August 2021 | August 2020 |

3.2.2 Reviews planned beyond Next Reporting Period

Annual Quality Report 2020-2021

February 2022

4.0 Additional Themes and Case Studies

IQA Response to Emergency Situations/Covid-19 Pandemic

Traditionally ICD commences semester approximately 2 weeks after the majority of other HEIs. This is to allow for extra time with visa and immigration so that students do not miss the first few vital weeks of semester. So unlike other HEIs, who may have started their Spring Semester on around 27th January 2020, ICD was in Week 4 of the Spring semester when the closure of schools and colleges due to coronavirus was announced on the 12th March 2020.

Given the unprecedented impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, ICD recognised that with an international student body and a teaching staff of mainly adjunct lecturers a carefully planned and measured approach to the pivot to online teaching with buy-in from all stakeholders was required.

Online teaching commenced on 20th April 2020 which meant that, from the initial announcement, four full weeks of lectures were postponed, with eight weeks of the semester left to complete following the restart, extending the semester into June. The existing timetables were extended using the same hours/days as the original schedule.

This time period (12th March- 20th April 2020) was used to deliberate, discuss, plan, agree, and communicate the changes with students, lecturers, and external stakeholders such as QQI and ACCA.

- A Student Representative Committee meeting was held just before the shutdown was announced where the draft contingency plans were communicated and steps were put in place to allow clear communication between management, lecturers and the student body should the anticipated shutdown proceed.
- An online student survey was conducted (with 47% response rate) asking if the students were ready and willing to engage with online teaching, learning, and assessment (81% in favour). Those students who had issues concerning accessing online teaching were contacted and where possible advice/technical support was provided.
- All students were telephoned directly by our Student Liaison Manager to check on their personal wellbeing and direct any concerns or queries they had.
- All lecturers were telephoned and assured that the move to online teaching would not impact negatively on the commitment to contact hours originally promised to them by ICD. Any technical issues were discussed and resolved where practical.

- All lecturers were provided with professional level Zoom accounts and adequate resources to prepare their teaching and minimise stress.
- It allowed time to access training and develop plans, guidelines and user guides for online teaching both for staff and students, benefiting from the feedback and experience in other institutions to ensure the transition was smooth and that quality of teaching, learning, and assessment was maintained.
- All staff and students access a continuously updated Contingency Plan document in the ICD Moodle Document Store. This plan is supplemented with Department of Health guidelines, Government advice on immigration and visa issues
- The Document Store was enhanced to contain a newly added Student Wellbeing section.
- Programme Board Meetings were replaced with over the phone programme planning phone calls between staff and the Student Representative Committee coordinated by the Head of Academic Development during the week of the 16th – 20th March 2020.

In the interest of effective student workload management, certain adjustments had to be made for students and lecturers to pivot to online teaching, learning, and assessment. ICD ensured that all module teaching focussed on covering the syllabus from the module descriptors so that students could achieve the module learning outcomes. Where alternative forms of assessment were used (due to factors beyond our control), students were provided with optimum opportunity to demonstrate their achievement of MIMLOs and provide evidence of same.

Summarily, the changes for the Spring Semester (Feb 2020 – June 2020) were:

INTERNAL VERIFICATION OF ASSESSMENT BRIEFS: The adaption/altering/ discussion of individual assessments was agreed and managed by the lecturers and the Head of Academic Development on a case by case basis due to the continuously, rapidly, and iteratively changing nature of the situation, and given the different nature of module disciplinary areas and assessment modes.

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS: Given the hardship and uncertainty many students faced during the coronavirus crisis, lecturers were advised to maintain an open mind regarding any personal mitigating circumstances students had that impacted on their ability to attend classes or to complete assessments from March 2020. However, students were still required to complete assessments on all modules in order to ensure they had achieved learning outcomes.

CHANGES TO TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES WITHIN MODULES: Two thirds of the originally planned face to face contact hours were delivered online instead of face to face during the

Spring 2020 semester.

Lecturers used a number of different options to help students such as:

- **Moodle Discussion forums:** To enable dialogue between lecturers and students about the module and/or assignments.
- **PowerPoint presentations:** These may or may not contain pre-recorded audio slideshows, screen recordings/sharing sessions live or pre-recorded.
- **Pre-recorded lectures:** Videos uploaded to Moodle by a lecturer for students to watch and learn from.
- **Zoom lectures (live):** Zoom lectures live online.

ASSESSMENT DEADLINE CHANGES: Assessment deadlines, set before 14 March 2020, were, in most cases extended.

NUMBER OF ASSESSMENTS: Various factors contributed to reducing the number of assessments on some modules:

- **Removal of exams/tests on some modules:** Assessment strategies on some modules, primarily qualitative modules, were altered to replace the test/exam with an assignment.
- **Reduction in the number of assessments to minimise the potential for over-assessment:** The direction of travel across higher education is to guard against over-assessment. ICD sought to reduce the quantity of assessments on modules that have three or more assessments, especially in cases where the same MIMLO(s) were being tested (e.g. reduced from 3 to 2).
- **Overassessment can be a contributory factor in academic misconduct:** It is increasingly accepted in higher education that over-assessment may contribute towards academic misconduct.
- **Removal of face to face PowerPoint Presentation assessments**
- **Removal of some group assessments**

PRESENTATION ASSESSMENTS: All lecturers were advised that if they had previously planned to run a presentation assignment (e.g. PowerPoint presentation), they should consider the potential to alter this approach to, for example, a written assignment.

GROUP/TEAMWORK ASSESSMENTS: Lecturers were advised wherever possible to use individual assessment rather than team/group assessment or to at least make it optional for the students.

CLASS TESTS & FINAL EXAMS: On various modules, primarily quantitative/accounting modules, traditional face-to-face exams or class tests have been replaced with online time limited tests/exams.

MOCK TESTS/EXAMS: Live student tutorials for online exams and tests (mock exams/tests) were provided on a module by module basis for all cohorts via Zoom. These 2-hour tutorials were recorded and made available to students via the individual Moodle pages for reference. Online tests and exam guides (how-to documents) were circulated via the Student Document Store in Moodle.