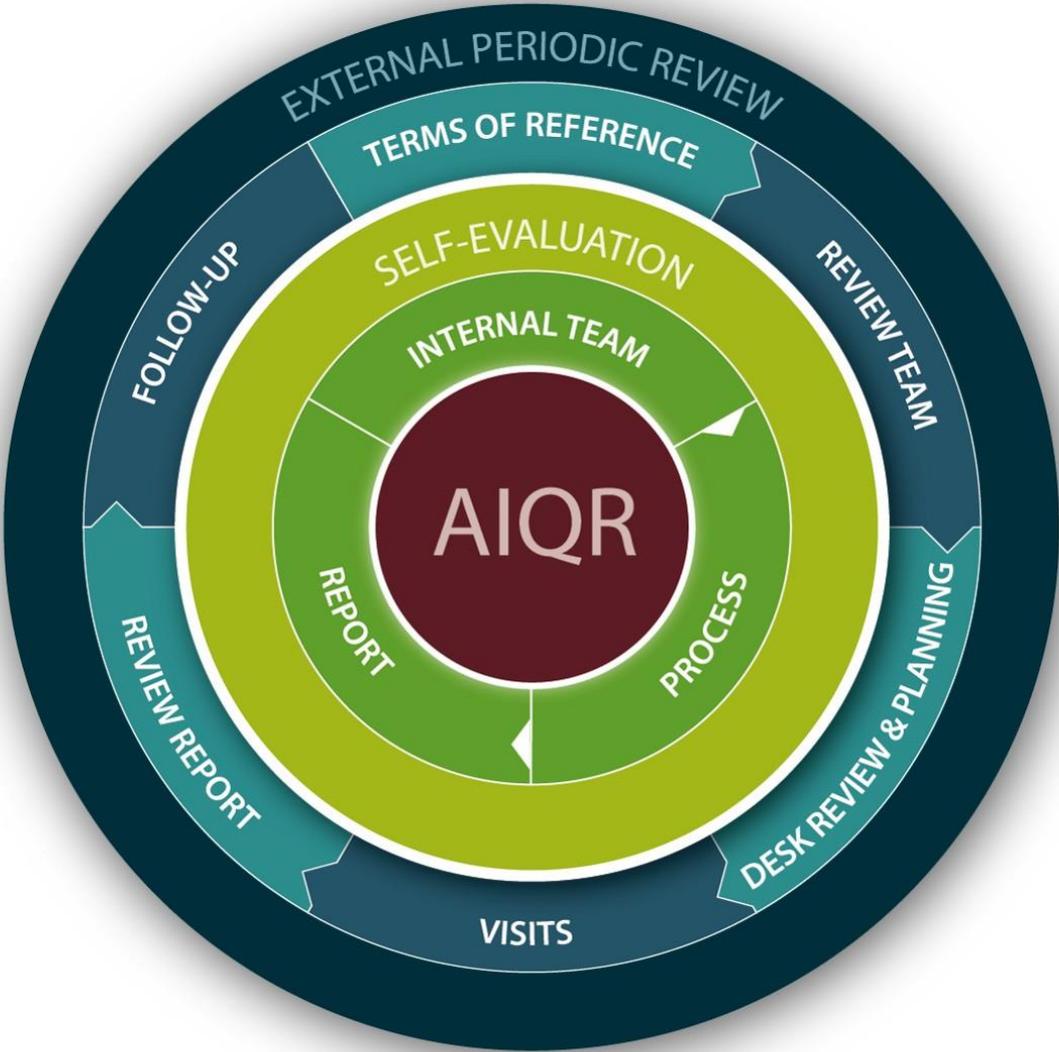


Institute of Technology, Carlow

Annual Institutional Quality Assurance Report 2017

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



The Cyclical Review Process

AIQR - PART 1

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

Founded in 1970, the Institute of Technology Carlow, is an autonomous Institute, established under Irish legislation, specifically the Institute of Technology Acts 1992–2006. Institute of Technology Carlow provides higher educational programmes, along with research and enterprise development opportunities, through its centres in Carlow, Wexford, and Wicklow and has been granted Delegated Authority by QQI. That Delegated Authority empowers IT Carlow to make awards up to Level 9 on the NQF for taught and research programmes.

In addition, IT Carlow has Delegated Authority to Level 10 in the research areas of Biological, Molecular and Environmental Science and research approval to Level 10 in Engineering and Computing.

Institute of Technology Carlow's Strategic Plan 2014-2018

(<https://www.itcarlow.ie/resources/strategicplan.htm>) identifies key goals that aim to contribute to regional and national economic, social and cultural development, informed and enriched by the Institute of Technology Carlow's growing activities and profile. It is this plan which guides the direction of the Institute and the programmes being developed, validated and delivered within it.

The Mission (<http://www.itcarlow.ie/resources/mission-statement.htm>) of Institute of Technology Carlow is to Engage, Learn, Challenge and Innovate. This is articulated through an educational environment and context where learners pursue studies in higher education and research up to doctoral level. Through a culture of enquiry, innovation and excellence, Institute of Technology Carlow challenges its learners, staff, global collaborative partners and other stakeholders to create, apply and share knowledge and values in a supportive and vibrant university-level Institute.

Institutional strategy is informed by wide-scale and regular consultation with learners, staff, graduates, employers and representatives of all of our stakeholders, as well as through periodic external strategic and academic reviews of faculties and external strategic reviews of professional services. This is formulated at senior management level, approved by Governing Body via Academic Council and at that stage it is communicated on an Institute-wide basis.

We are guided by national engagement and feedback initiatives, Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), the technological higher education quality framework, the national forum for the enhancement of teaching and learning, professional bodies, national policy and national and international reports.

The Institute's Strategic Plan 2014-2018 is set out at <http://www.itcarlow.ie/resources/strategic-plan.htm>

- The central role of quality assurance and enhancement is explicitly articulated in our [Strategic Plan 2014-2018](#) which affirms the contribution of quality assurance systems in achieving strategic objectives and maintaining and enhancing all elements of the organisation and the experience of those who engage with us. The plan is centred around five main goals and was formulated following a major institute-wide consultation process:

Goal 1. Learner Experience and Graduate Attributes: We will optimise the learner experience to support the development of graduate attributes that meet the needs of learners and of modern society.

Goal 2. Knowledge Creation, Application and Exchange: We will expand capacity and develop expertise within specific core domains. We will create, develop, apply and exchange knowledge to ensure highly skilled graduates and ideas to drive enterprise creation and development.

Goal 3. Strategic Collaborations and Partnerships: We will build upon our strategic collaborations and partnerships, both nationally and internationally. These enhance our capacity, extend our reach and maximise our impact.

Goal 4. Societal, Economic and Environmental Impact: We will strengthen our engagement with the regions, communities and sectors we serve. We shall ensure access and progression opportunities. We will share our knowledge and resources and we will learn from stakeholder feedback so that we will continue to enhance our contribution to the development of a creative, sustainable and fair society.

Goal 5. Reputation, Public Confidence and Sustainability: We will continue to develop an internationally-oriented organisation, with a robust self-evaluation, peer review and quality enhancement culture, as we strive to embody the highest international standards of provision, transparency and stewardship of resources

We are currently mid-way through our strategic plan and are in the process of engaging in institute-wide consultation on each of our 5 goals

Our quality assurance and enhancement activities align with our strategic plan, are informed by the standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European higher education area (ESG) and with QQI. In terms of linking our institute strategy to our quality policy and procedures, our [quality manual](#) is the guiding document. It provides a road map and overview of our overarching policy and procedures for quality assurance, our governance framework, procedures for quality assurance in teaching, learning and research, on-going monitoring and review, the learner voice, procedure for the design, development, validation and withdrawal of programmes, admission, progression and completion, staff development, learner supports and information management.

Our quality culture is supported by strong corporate governance and a commitment to ongoing organisational, resource and staff development and improvement. We firmly believe in accountability, transparency, and the public provision of information and our quality manual is available on our website alongside our policies on [collaborative provision](#), [joint awards](#), [research](#), [ethics in research](#), [assessment](#), and [academic standards](#). We also routinely [publish the outcomes](#) from quality review processes and reports including our [annual institutional quality report \(AIQR\)](#).

Quality assurance and quality enhancement are therefore inter-related. In the Institute of Technology Carlow, this supports a quality culture that is embraced by all, from the students and academic staff to the institutional leadership and management.

The Institute of Technology Carlow believe and engage in robust self-evaluation and peer review as a key component of our quality enhancement culture across all of our activities including faculty, professional support services and collaborative partner reviews. This philosophy has served us in maintaining a high standard of achievement in recent formal quality assurance reviews.

The ethos and values that drive the culture of our Institution are supported by strong corporate governance and a commitment to ongoing organisational, resource and staff development.

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

At institute level, the [IT Carlow Governing Body](#) is the ultimate statutory authority which guides and oversees the strategic direction and management of the organisation including quality assurance. It is appointed for a five year term and includes representation from institute management, academic and professional support staff, and representative organisations, learners and stakeholders.

The executive management of IT Carlow and its academic and administrative systems rests with the [senior executive team](#) which, through the President, is directly answerable to the Governing Body. Each member of the senior executive is responsible for and represents, at this forum, distinct academic or professional service faculties or departments. Overall responsibility for quality assurance and enhancement, academic standards and programme validation rests with the Registrar & Vice President for Academic Affairs and both the Quality Officer and Assistant Registrar functions assist in this. In addition, each IT Carlow professional learner and

staff support service manager reports directly to a member of this senior executive team.

In terms of quality assurance and informed decision making, a key advisory and communication forum at IT Carlow is the institute management group. Its membership includes the senior executive team and all heads of academic departments and professional services. The relevant IT Carlow management reporting structures are outlined [here](#).

One of the main quality assurance functions of the Governing Body is the appointment of the institute's [Academic Council](#) to assist Governing Body in planning, co-ordination, overseeing and developing the educational work of IT Carlow and to protect, maintain and develop academic standards. This responsibility is discharged by means of a series of six committees and associated working groups, each of which include representation from postgraduate and undergraduate learners, academic staff and institute management. In addition, professional support staff are routinely co-opted to these committees to provide expertise where necessary. The six committees are:

- Academic regulations which makes regulation governing the selection, admission, retention , awards, graduation and exclusion of learners
- Collaborative provision which has oversight of all aspects of collaborative provision
- Programme planning and validation is responsible for the development, monitoring and reviewing of all taught programmes
- Quality assurance and enhancement protects, enhances and develops academic standards for all programmes
- Research and development is responsible for the planning, approval and review of all postgraduate research programmes
- Teaching, learning and support services develops policies to support excellence in teaching and a quality learning experience.

Each committee has clearly defined terms of reference and each committee reports to Academic Council. Therefore Academic Council has an explicit function in the development, validation and quality assurance of all programmes delivered by, approved by or validated by IT Carlow. The ongoing academic management and review of programmes is the responsibility of the programme board or stream comprising the relevant academic staff and departmental management as well as learner representation and these boards or streams report to Academic Council.

At IT Carlow, our quality focus and consultation in decision making extends to all aspects of the organisation. While academic quality processes are extremely well established, the institute has recently approved a 'Professional Support Services (PSS) Strategic Review Policy' (Appendix III Quality Manual) in line with the expectations of the Sector-Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines for Institutes of Technology. This is recognition of the fact that maintaining and developing the quality of academic excellence is supported by a large number of professional services and functions providing a complex and coherent support structure and are key factors in the provision of the unique student centred and supportive environment of IT Carlow which has been emphasised in the detailed strategic and programmatic reviews of each academic unit completed in 2016.

A diagram setting out the governance structure is at (Appendix I Quality Manual), where, (Appendix II Quality Manual) describes the roles and functions of the governance bodies and office holders. The day to day running of IT Carlow may be delegated by the President to specific staff members with defined responsibility for policy implementation as the President deems appropriate.

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

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Programme Design and Approval

Policy

Programmes are designed with overall programme objectives which are in line with the Strategic Plan 2014 – 2018 and meet with the learner's requirement and both Regional and National requirements in line with QQI Quality Assurance Guidelines, both topic and sector specific, and QQI Award Standards. This is additionally informed by International trends. Such programmes in meeting these requirements are reflected in their explicit intended learning outcomes and that lead to a coherent programme of study which facilitates learner progression.

The qualification resulting from a programme is clearly specified and communicated, with reference to the correct level of the national qualifications framework for higher education and to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.

Learners are involved in the design of all programmes and their representation on Academic Council and its Committees that approve all aspects of programme design.

Learner representation within both programme design and the overall Quality Assurance of IT Carlow is reflected in (Appendix IV) Quality Manual, Learner involvement in quality assurance.

<http://www.itcarlow.ie/public/userfiles/files/IT%20Carlow%20%20Quality%20Manual.pdf>

External expertise and reference points are an integral part of programme design and form part of all programme validation panels.

The use of different modes of delivery is carefully planned in the design and scrutinised during the validation process and the expected learner workload is defined.

The formal approval of the programme is independent of the designing or teaching entity where the members of the validation panels have not been involved with any aspect of the programme design process. Such panel members are typically experts, either Industrial or educational.

Procedure

The two phase procedure for Programme Design is described in Appendix VIII, Section 5, Quality Manual, Policy and Procedure for the Design, Development, Validation and Withdrawal of Programmes at award levels 6-10 in the NFQ

<http://www.itcarlow.ie/public/userfiles/files/IT%20Carlow%20%20Quality%20Manual.pdf>

Additional support IT Carlow support documentation has been developed by the Teaching and Learning (T&L) centre. This information is not yet publicly accessible online but will be made available as part of our ongoing 'Sharepoint' document management project. Resources include: '

- o Academic Toolbox No.1: *Guide to Writing Good Learning Outcomes*
- o Guidelines for *Writing a Programme Assessment Strategy*
- o Referencing Guide (*Credit where Credit is Due*)

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

Yes

Policy

The procedures and processes of programme delivery, assessment, internal and external examination, moderation and programme monitoring processes are modelled on the standard IT Carlow institutional quality assurance procedures.

The IT Carlow Quality Assurance Workplan set out at APPENDIX VI within the Quality Manual illustrates where this policy sits within the overarching Quality Assurance Framework.

<http://www.itcarlow.ie/public/userfiles/files/IT%20Carlow%20%20Quality%20Manual.pdf>

IT Carlow in turn accepts similar requirements from its collaborative partners. For collaborative provision, quality assurance procedures fully describing the proposed provision, site visits, ongoing monitoring, assessment, examination and external quality assurance, and resource provision must be agreed by the consortium. These may be modelled precisely on the IT Carlow procedures or may employ an agreed application of consortium QA principles and procedures.

Appendix IX of the Institute's Quality Manual Policy and Procedure for Teaching and Learning, Appendix XIV Recognised Methods of Assessment (extracted from the Academic Standards and Assessment Regulations Sept.2014), Appendix XV Double, Joint and Anonymous Marking and Appendix XVI Group Projects and Assessment-Fairness and Consistency set out policies in relation to Programme Delivery and Assessment.

Procedure

The IT Carlow Quality Assurance Workplan set out at Appendix VI within our [quality manual](#) illustrates where policies on programmes and awards and assessment of learners are placed within the overarching Quality Assurance Framework and the relevant policies and procedures themselves are presented as:

- Appendix IX: Policy and Procedure for Teaching and Learning
- Appendix X: Policy and Procedure for On-going Monitoring of Programmes
- Appendix XI: Policy and Procedure for Programmatic Review
- Appendix XII: Modes of Programme Delivery
- Appendix XIV: Recognised Methods of Assessment
- Appendix XV: Double, Joint and Anonymous Marking
- Appendix XVI: Group Projects and Assessment – Fairness and Consistency
- Appendix XXII: Policy and Procedure for External Examiner
- Appendix XXIV: Academic Integrity and Anti-Plagiarism Policy

Additional support IT Carlow support documentation has been developed by the Teaching and Learning centre. This information is not yet publicly accessible online but will be made available as part of our ongoing 'Sharepoint' document management project. Resources include: '

- *Academic Toolbox No.2: Guide to Writing Exam Questions*
- *Guidelines for Writing a Programme Assessment Strategy*
- *Screencasts on using new Digital Technologies*
- *TLC - Staff Hub* on Blackboard
- *TLC - Student Hub* on Blackboard
- *Group Assessment Policy* (currently under review)
- *Referencing Guide* (revision of *Credit where Credit is Due*)

Do you have a Policy/Procedure for Research Quality?

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Research Quality

Policy

As set out in the Institute's Policy Statement for Awards by Research, the scope of IT Carlow's research programme provision is delineated by the terms of its delegated authority to make awards at NFQ Level 9 (by research and dissertation) and at NFQ Level 10.

IT Carlow shall not offer programmes outside of the terms of its delegated authority. The limits to IT Carlow's awarding authority, under delegated authority are its validated programmes at National Framework of Qualifications levels 6, 7, 8, taught and research programmes at level 9 and research programmes at level 10 in the area of Biotechnology and Molecular Environmental Science. IT Carlow also has Approved Provider Status for Level 10 awards in Engineering, Computing and Information Technology. The requirements, as set out in HETAC regulations regarding Research Degree Programme Policy and Criteria (2010) are noted.

All research programme activity leading to awards under NFQ Level 9 and NFQ Level 10 is subject to the academic quality assurance policies and procedures approved and adopted by IT Carlow's Academic Council as well as those required by QQI. All research programme activity is subject to the approval of Academic Council which has statutory responsibility for the admission, retention, exclusion and examination of learners. The IT Carlow Academic Council, with the approval of the IT Carlow Governing Body, has established a Research and Development Committee of Academic Council and Postgraduate Research Programme Boards. The purpose of these bodies is to assist the Academic Council in the performance of its functions in relation to programmes of research leading to higher degree awards. Where research programme activity leads to an award it is also be subject to the oversight and approval of QQI. Any award that falls outside the scope of IT Carlow's delegated authority is approved by QQI.

Procedure

As set out in the Institute's Policy and Procedure for Postgraduate Awards by Research and Dissertation (<http://www.itcarlow.ie/public/userfiles/files/POLICY%20STATEMENT%20FOR%20AWARDS%20BY%20RESEARCH%20NFQ%20L9%20AND%20L10>) at NFQ Level 9 and Level 10, individual research programmes are assessed by a process of external review (Appendices C1 and C2). Validation of the research area takes place at discipline level. Application for validation for programmes of research in a new discipline area shall be made to the Registrar by the appropriate school or department using the New Programme Proposal Forms (PP1 and PP2). The form PP2 shall be supplemented by a self-assessment report form detailing how the proposed research area satisfies validation criteria (Appendix B3). Completed Programme Proposal Forms, together with Self Evaluation Reviews shall be submitted to the Office of the Registrar for internal assessment and review prior to the establishment of an external expert panel to review new research proposals. The panel shall have the appropriate expertise to benchmark the proposal against national and international comparators. Following review and site visit the panel shall make a recommendation to validate the proposed programme (or not). The Research & Development Committee shall then consider such recommendation. The Committee shall then make recommendation to Academic Council. Academic Council shall recommend approval of validation to Governing Body. Governing Body shall consider the recommendation and decide on approval. Reports and outcomes of the validation process shall be published. Validation of discipline areas shall be subject to cyclical review (see 7 below).

IT Carlow's Academic Council maintains two registers of learners on programmes for higher degrees by research, as follows:

- A Register of learners attached to programmes toward an award of the Degree of Master (by research and dissertation) – hereafter referred to as “the Level 9 Register” and
- A Register of learners attached to programmes toward an award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy – hereafter referred to as “the Level 10 Register”.

Each individual application for registration is considered separately by the Research and Development Committee of Academic Council.

IT Carlow offers two type of awards resulting from research programmes:

- Degree of Master (by research and dissertation). Candidates for this award shall be expected to meet the Standard for the relevant broad field of learning (Science, Computing, Engineering, Business, Art and Design) defined for awards at level 9 (by research and dissertation) on the NFQ (Appendices A9 and A 10 Postgraduate Policies and Procedures). The NFQ does not specify any minimum programme duration however national and international practice suggests that a learner registered on an NFQ Level 9 research programme shall require between one and two years of full-time study to achieve the required outcomes. In circumstances where a learner does not complete the programme within a four-year (full time equivalent) period from first admission to the Register, then registration will lapse. In circumstances where a learner wishes subsequently to present for the degree, application for re-registration shall be mandatory.

- Degree of Doctor of Philosophy. Candidates for the Level 10 award shall be expected to meet the Standard for the relevant broad field of learning defined for awards at level 10 on the NFQ (Appendix A10 Postgraduate Policies and Procedures). The NFQ does not provide for any minimum programme duration however national and International best practice suggests that a learner working on a typical programme of research towards an award at Level 10 requires between three and four years of full-time study to achieve the required outcomes. In circumstances where a learner does not complete the programme within a period of six years (full time equivalent) of admission to the register, registration shall lapse. If the learner wishes subsequently to present for the degree, application for re-registration shall be mandatory. In circumstances where a learner has transferred from the Level 9 research Register to the Level 10 Register, the registration period shall run from the date of initial admission to the Level 9 Register.

A learner who wishes to transfer from the Level 9 research Register to the Level 10 Register shall make formal application to Academic Council

using the appropriate application form with supporting documentation (Appendix C3 Postgraduate Policies and Procedures). Applications for transfer shall be supported by an independent evaluation by a recognised independent expert assessor in the field of the proposed research and accompanied by a substantial transfer report (Appendix C4 Postgraduate Policies and Procedures). The nomination of the External Expert Reviewer shall have been approved by the Research & Development Committee of Academic Council prior to submission of the proposed programme for review.

Do you have a Policy/Procedure in place for Student Lifecycle?

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Student Lifecycle

Policy

As set out in Section 4 of IT Carlow's Quality Manual we ensures the smooth progress of learners in their academic career is in the best interest of IT Carlow, individual learners, programmes, and systems.

Admission, assessment, recognition and completion procedures, along with the actual academic programme and learner support provided, play an important role, particularly when learners are mobile within and across the higher education system. The admissions process is available in IT Carlow's Prospectus and Student Handbook, both are reviewed annually and offer the learner guidance and alternatives during their student life. Additionally, IT Carlow's Policy and Procedure for Access (Appendix XXV of Quality Manual), guides the learner through the process of application and the facilitation of such application and provides all prospective learners with information, including selection criteria that allows them to make informed decisions on applying to a programme. The Institute has a High Performance Entry scheme (Appendix XXIX of the Quality Manual) recognising achievements outside of formal learning in Innovation/Entrepreneurship, Sport and Active Citizenship in consideration for entry.

Additionally, in further support of the learner in choosing the correct programme, the Policy and Procedure on Transfer (Appendix XXVI of the Quality Manual) offers options and timeframes in the event of the learner requiring the option to change the direction of their study.

Following admission to IT Carlow, induction sessions are conducted throughout the Institute by the President and Registrar, Senior Management within each respective Faculty / Campus, Academic staff and existing learners, providing an introduction to IT Carlow and the respective programme of choice. This provides all prospective learners with as much information on the programme as possible to inform their choice. Additionally, information on progression within programmes is available within IT Carlow's Policy and Procedure for Progression (Appendix XXVII of the Quality Manual).

When choosing a programme, the method of assessment used within IT Carlow and specifically for each programme, is also a factor in the learner's choice of programme, as assessment, whether formative or summative, has a profound effect on the learners' progress and on their future careers.

IT Carlow ensures that: —

- Assessors are familiar with existing testing and examination methods and receive support in developing their own skills in this field. This is reflected in the Policy and Procedure for External Examiners (Appendix XXII) and External Examination – Foundations and Definitions (Appendix XXIII).;
- The criteria for and method of assessment as well as criteria for marking are published within IT Carlow's Academic Standards and Assessment Regulations and relevant abstracts available within this document, for ease of reference, within the following Appendices:
 - Recognised Methods of Assessment (Appendix XIV);
 - Double, Joint and Anonymous Marking (Appendix XV);
 - Group Projects and Assessment – Fairness and Consistency (Appendix XVI);
 - Policy and Procedure for Work Placement of Learners (Appendix XXVIII).

Additionally, IT Carlow's Policy and Procedure on Late submission of Assignments (Appendix XVII), takes into account mitigating circumstances, while Academic Integrity & Anti-Plagiarism Policy (Appendix XXIII) offers clear direction to the learner of institutional standards of acceptability in conducting assignments to maintain IT Carlow's exemplary academic reputation.

- As previously iterated, the achieved learning outcomes are compared to the intended learning outcomes, where learners are given feedback, which, as necessary, is linked to advice on the learning process. This is reflected on the Policy and Procedure for Teaching and Learning (Appendix III) and the Policy and Procedure for Programmatic Review (Appendix XI)

- At IT Carlow, assessment is carried out by more than one examiner, specifically by, Internal Examiners, External Examiners and Examination Boards. This ensures that assessment is consistent, fairly applied to all learners, carried out in accordance with the stated procedures, documented and subject to checks within the quality process. This processes is iterated in IT Carlow's Policy and Procedure for External Examiners (Appendix XXII)

Fair recognition of higher education qualifications, periods of study and prior learning, including the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, are essential components ensuring the learners' progress in their studies, while promoting mobility. As previously indicated, IT Carlow's Policy and Procedure for the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) (Appendix XIII) offers clear pathways to the learner to recognise previous learning conducted and offer every credit to the learner in completing such learning, while ensuring the practice for recognition is in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention <http://www.enic-naric.net/the-lisbonrecognition-convention.aspx>.

In doing so, IT Carlow co-operates with other institutions and collaborative partners and the national ENIC/NARIC centre with a view to ensuring coherent recognition across the country.

Graduations, which occur annually, represents the culmination of the learners' period of study and IT Carlow provides the learners with documentation explaining the qualification gained, including achieved learning outcomes and the context, level, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed. In 2016, IT Carlow established an Alumni office to maintain and build on the IT Carlow graduate network.

Procedure

The relevant appendices as indicated in the policy links are outlined in the Quality Manual at:

<http://www.itcarlow.ie/public/userfiles/files/IT%20Carlow%20Quality%20Manual.pdf>.

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

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Teaching Staff

Policy

IT Carlow has fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of all staff that allow them to assure themselves of the competence of their academic staff. Such internal processes are well documented at

<https://staffportal.itcarlow.ie/functions/HRS/default.aspx>.

While higher education institutions have primary responsibility for the quality of their academic staff and for providing them with a supportive environment that allows them to carry out their work effectively, IT Carlow embraces this responsibility and ensures that it:

- Follows clear, transparent and fair processes for staff recruitment, appointment, promotion and dismissal that recognise the importance of teaching and learning;
- Offers opportunities for and promotes the professional development of academic staff, which takes into account the outcomes of staff evaluation exercises, including peer review and learner feedback.;
- Encourages scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research where staff and learners within IT Carlow are regularly invited to research forums offering discussion on research methodologies and developments.;
- Encourage innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies where staff within IT Carlow have successfully completed IT Carlow's MA in Teaching and Learning;
- Recognise excellence in teaching through academic promotion criteria and public awards such as <http://teachingandlearning.ie/priority-themes/student-led-teachingawards-2014>. These awards were established by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education in partnership with the Union of Students in Ireland (USI) and other student bodies to recognise and celebrate learners' experiences of great teaching throughout all higher education institutions and are presented to individuals who have made an impact at a key transition in a learner's journey in higher education. This award was presented to members of IT Carlow teaching staff in 2014 as voted by their learners.

The role of academic staff is essential in creating a high quality learner experience and enabling the acquisition of knowledge, competences and skills. The diversifying learner population and stronger focus on learning outcomes require learner-centred learning where the role of academia is, therefore, also changing. IT Carlow has measures in place to reflect such change, such as its Policy and Procedure for Learner Involvement in Quality Assurance (Appendix IV).

Procedure

All potential applicants are informed of the Institute's processes for recruitment and selection and all staff are informed of IT Carlow's policy and procedures for Staff Development including pursuit and support of staff undertaking Level 10 qualifications.

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

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Teaching and Learning

[The Teaching and Learning Centre](#) works with colleagues across the Institute to continually improve the student learning experience.

They offer academic professional development through the MA in Teaching and Learning, ongoing workshops, seminars and resources. They provide informal consultancy to individuals and programme teams while also undertaking educational research projects and contribute to the development of institutional and national policy.

The Institute offers opportunities for and promotes the professional development of academic staff, which takes into account the outcomes of staff evaluation exercises, including peer review and learner feedback. All potential applicants are informed of the Institute's processes for recruitment and selection and all staff are informed of IT Carlow's policy and procedures for staff evaluation and development including pursuit and support of staff undertaking Level 10 qualifications.

Other policies in support of our academic staff are our [teaching, learning and assessment policy](#), and our [academic standards and assessment policy](#), as well as, within the [quality manual](#) our policy and procedure for teaching and learning (Appendix IX), our policy and procedure for child protection and welfare (Appendix XX).

The diversifying learner population and stronger focus on learning outcomes require learner-centred learning where the role of academia is, therefore, also evolving. IT Carlow has measures in place to reflect such change, such as its Policy and Procedure for Learner Involvement in Quality Assurance ([quality manual](#) Appendix IV).

IT Carlow encourages scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research where staff and learners within IT Carlow participate in key national and international forums offering discussion on methodologies and developments.

The Institute encourages innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies.

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

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Resources and Support

Learners rely on a range of resources to assist their learning that vary from physical resources such as [library information services](#), [computing services](#), [learning supports](#), and [learner support services](#) around accommodation, transport, health, counselling, careers, finance, access and progression, clubs, sports and societies. All learners are informed about the resources and services available to them via the institute [web site](#).

IT Carlow is an institute that prides itself on being learner- centred and these support activities are provided by a number of professional support services through the departments of: including academic administration and student affairs, library and information services, learner support and student services, sport, teaching and learning centre, quality assurance and collaborations and computer services. These professional support services and functions are key factors in the provision of the unique student centred and supportive environment of IT Carlow which has been emphasised in the detailed strategic peer reviews of each academic unit completed in 2015. They provide a complex and coherent support structure which consists of and involves a very large volume of activity and personnel. Like the academic faculties these professional support services are currently undergoing a quality self-assessment process as per our recently approved Professional Support Services (PSS) Strategic Review Policy available in our [quality manual](#), Appendix III.

All of this learner support activity is supported by the following policies and procedures in our [quality manual](#):

- Appendix IV: Learner involvement in Quality Enhancement
- Appendix XIII: Policy and Procedure for the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)
- Appendix XVIII: Student Disability and Learning Support Policy
- Appendix XX: Policy and Procedure for Child Protection and Welfare
- Appendix XXI: Code of Practice – Working with Students, Children and Vulnerable Adults

The Institute of Technology Carlow is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for students, staff and visitors in accordance with the Health, Safety and Welfare Act 2005. The Institute's [parent safety system](#) is available in hard copy at the reception in the Carlow Campus, the reception in the Wexford Campus, the Art and Design Campus and the Wicklow Campus and it incorporates quality assurance processes to ensure that all resources are fit for purpose, accessible and safe.

Do you have a Policy/Procedure for Information Management?

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Information Management

Reliable data is crucial for informed decision making. IT Carlow collects, analyses and uses relevant information for effective management of programmes and other activities. There are processes in place to collect and analyse information about programmes and activities, feeding into IT Carlow's internal quality assurance processes, such as identified within the Policy and Procedure for the On-going Monitoring of Programmes ([quality manual](#), Appendix X). This information is used to inform academic and professional support service reviews and strategic planning. The type of information routinely gathered and analysed at IT Carlow includes the following:

- Profile of the learner population
- Learner progression, success and drop-out rates
- Learners' satisfaction with their programmes
- Learning resources and learner support available
- Employability of graduates

To comply with freedom of information legislation, IT Carlow has appointed a [freedom of information](#) officer and operates both a [records management policy](#), and a [records retention schedule](#).

Information on IT Carlow's activities is useful for prospective and current learners as well as for graduates, other stakeholders and the public. IT Carlow provides information about their activities, including the programmes they offer, the intended learning outcomes of these programmes, the qualifications they award, the teaching, learning and assessment procedures used, the pass rates and the learning opportunities available to their learners, which are available within Assessment Standards and Assessment Regulations, the Teaching and learning Centre, the Registrar's Office and [our prospectus](#).

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

Yes

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

The Institute believes in robust cyclical self-evaluation and peer review as a major component of our quality enhancement culture assisting us in maintaining the highest standards of achievement in terms of quality assurance, informed by the QQI policy for cyclical review of higher education institutions. As part of this we have just completed a two stage quinquennial strategic and programmatic review of all of our academic faculties (outcomes are published [here](#)). We are undertaking a similar self-evaluation and peer review of all of our professional support services, as per our recently approved Professional Support Services (PSS) Strategic Review Policy available in our [quality manual](#), Appendix III.

As set out in the Institute of Technology Carlow's Quality Manual <http://www.itcarlow.ie/public/userfiles/files/IT%20Carlow%20-%20Quality%20Manual.pdf> specifically Appendix X Ongoing Monitoring of Programmes and Appendix XI Policy and Procedure for Programmatic Review, IT Carlow has detailed policies and procedures for self-evaluation and internal monitoring of programmes. The implementation of these is overseen by the Institute's Academic Council and its constituent committees. Quantitative and qualitative information is used to inform the ongoing monitoring, annual review and quinquennial review processes.

Included in self-evaluation and monitoring is the comprehensive review of all IT Carlow policies and procedures. A document management system is in place where each policy and procedure incorporates its own revision control history in addition to a log which documents the revision status and reasons for change for each reviewed document, which can be seen in (Appendix V). To support this document management system, a comprehensive Quality Work Plan is reviewed, at a minimum, twice annually, to capture the ongoing review and evolving nature quality assurance and enhancement within the Institute. The Quality Work Plan can be seen in (Appendix VI).

Do you have a Policy/Procedure for Stakeholder Engagement?

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Stakeholder Engagement

External Stakeholders play a central role in Quality Assurance within the Institute. As set out in the Institute's Quality Manual, their roles encompass the programme lifecycle.

<http://www.itcarlow.ie/public/userfiles/files/IT%20Carlow%20-%20Quality%20Manual.pdf>

This includes *inter alia*:

- Programme design and development (Appendix VIII)
- Programme validation (Appendix VIII)
- Ongoing Monitoring - external input (Appendix X)
- Programmatic Review (Appendix XI)
- External Examining (Appendix XXII)

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

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Engagement with other Bodies

As set out in the Institute Quality Manual and guided by the Institute's strategic priorities, Institute of Technology Carlow has policies and procedures in place to maximise the opportunities available for learners on its programmes through engagement with the appropriate professional, statutory and regulatory bodies.

Where this occurs we generally adhere to the guidelines and regulations set out by those bodies. Examples include the Irish Aviation Authority, the Honourable Society of Kings Inns, Engineers Ireland and RIAI.

IT Carlow maintains a register of programmes with or undergoing approval with professional bodies at <http://www.itcarlow.ie/public/userfiles/files/Register%20of%20Professional%20Body%20>

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

Yes

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

Information on IT Carlow's activities is useful for prospective and current learners as well as for graduates, other stakeholders and the public. Therefore, IT Carlow provides information about their activities, including the programmes and modules they offer, the intended learning outcomes of these programmes, the qualifications they award, the teaching, learning and assessment procedures used, the pass rates and the learning opportunities available to their learners, which are available within Assessment Standards and Assessment Regulations, the Teaching and learning Centre, the Registrar's Office and <http://www.itcarlow.ie/study-at-itc/prospectus.htm>

As outlined previously, the Institute website has a detailed section on quality to include policies, procedures, publications and outcomes (including validation, review, learner feedback analysis), programmes and registers as well as contact details for the Institute Quality Office.

<http://www.itcarlow.ie/resources/quality.htm>

Do you have a Policy/Procedure for DA procedures for use of QQI award standards?

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to DA procedures for use of QQI award standards (IoT's only)

The Institute of Technology Carlow adopts for use QQI award standards as published at <http://www.qqi.ie>.

The Institute of Technology Carlow through its policies and procedures set out in its Quality Manual <http://www.itcarlow.ie/resources/quality/quality-policies-procedures.htm> specifically Appendix VIII Policy and Procedure for the Design, Development & Validation of New Minor and Major Awards at level 6-10 NFQ; Appendix X Policy and Procedure for On-going monitoring of Programmes and Appendix XI Policy and Procedure for Programmatic Review integrates the QQI award standards in all of its programme activity.

Do you have a Policy/Procedure for Collaborative Provision?

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Collaborative Provision

The development and provision of inter-institutional, regional, national and international collaborative programmes, joint awards, and transnational programme provision have become significant features of the higher education landscape.

Such programmes serve to enhance institutional research and teaching profile and they also contribute to the enhancement of capacity to develop and deliver programmes to a range of approved external partners and collaborators.

In engaging in collaborative provision IT Carlow remains cognisant of all legislative requirements underpinning the various strands of collaboration engaged in. Collaborative provision can take a number of forms. To date IT Carlow has been involved in the following types of collaboration partnership:

- o Accreditation
- o Articulation
- o Exchange
- o Off-site delivery
- o Validation

IT Carlow's policies and procedures for Collaborative, Transnational and Joint Award provision are set out at:

<http://www.itcarlow.ie/public/userfiles/files/IT%20Carlow%20-%20Joint%20Awards%20Policy.pdf>

These have been reviewed with reports shown at:

<http://www.itcarlow.ie/resources/quality/quality-policies-procedures.htm>

At present, IT Carlow has a range of partnerships, exchanges and collaborations of varying degrees of complexity and engagement. IT Carlow's registers of Collaborative Partner Institutes are shown at <http://www.itcarlow.ie/resources/quality/quality-programmes-registers.htm>

These registers are maintained by the Quality Assurance and Collaborations Officer within the Office of the Registrar.

Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies

First Set of Records

Type of Arrangement

Awarding Body

Name of the Body

Irish Aviation Authority (the national competent authority recognised by EASA)

Programme Titles and Links to Publications

BEng in Aircraft Systems

<https://www.iaa.ie/personnel-licensing/maintenance-engineer---amel-licensing/part-147-approved-training-organisations-1>

Date of last review or accreditation

07-11-2014

Next review year

2016

Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies

Second Set of Records

Type of Arrangement	PRSB
Name of the Body	The Honourable Society of King's Inns
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	LLB https://www.kingsinns.ie/cmsfiles/entrance-examination/ScheduleOfApprovedDegrees2015.pdf
Date of last review or accreditation	01-09-2008
Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies	Third Set of Records
Type of Arrangement	PRSB
Name of the Body	Engineers Ireland
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	http://www.engineersireland.ie/Services/Accredited-Courses.aspx Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Civil Engineering Bachelor of Engineering in Civil Engineering Bachelor of Engineering in Mechanical Engineering Bachelor of Engineering in Electronic Engineering Bachelor of Engineering in Electronic Engineering (Military Communications Systems) Bachelor of Engineering in Aircraft Systems
Date of last review or accreditation	1-10-2014
Next review year	2019
Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies	Fourth Set of Records
Type of Arrangement	PRSB
Name of the Body	Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	http://www.riai.ie/education/careers/becoming_an_architectural_technologist/ Bachelor of Science in Architectural Technology Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Architectural Technology
Date of last review or accreditation	01-06-2015
Next review year	2018
Collaborative programmes	2
Section: Collaborative Provision	First Set of Records
Type of arrangement:	Collaborative programmes

Name of the Body (Bodies)	Defence Forces
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	12 programmes
Date of last review	03-09-2012
Next review year	2016
Section: Collaborative Provision	Second Set of Records
Type of arrangement:	Collaborative programmes
Name of the Body (Bodies)	An Cosan
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	9 Programmes
Date of last review	03-09-2012
Next review year	2016
Section: 1 Articulation Agreements	First Set of Records
Name of the Body	Various
Name of the Programme and Links to Publications	As set out at http://www.itcarlow.ie/public/userfiles/files/Register%20of%20Collaborative%20Provision%20Jan%202016.pdf
Section: Internal Review Schedule	First Set of Records
Year	2016-2017
Areas/Units	Defence Forces Collaborative Review September 2016 An Cosan Collaborative Review October 2016 Validation of various major, minor and special purpose programmes from NFQ levels 6-9. Validation of new research degree programme with QQI in the area of health sciences Professional Support Services Reviews 2016-2018
Submission	Final Submission

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

Quality Assurance and Enhancement System Developments

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

The central role of quality assurance and enhancement is explicitly articulated in the Institute's Strategic Plan 2014-2018 (<http://www.itcarlow.ie/resources/strategic-plan.htm>) which affirms the contribution of quality assurance systems in achieving strategic objectives and maintaining and enhancing IT Carlow's reputation and position within Higher Education both nationally and internationally. The Strategic Plan 2014-2018 establishes five key goals to contribute to regional and national economic, social and cultural development, informed and enriched by IT Carlow's growing activities and profile. This plan guides all Institute activities, including quality, engagement, research and learning & teaching and the programmes being developed, validated and delivered.

The development and provision of inter-institutional, regional, national and international collaborative research programmes, joint research awards, and transnational research programme provision have become significant features of the higher education landscape. IT Carlow has been granted delegated authority from QQI for all provision up to and including taught and research level 9 and is working towards delegated authority for Joint Research at level 10 across a broader suite of areas.

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

Cognisant of the review of the ESG guidelines (2015), IT Carlow reviewed its Quality Management System (QMS) to reflect the restructure. In June 2015, IT Carlow approved and published its Quality Manual amended to align to the new guidelines.

IT Carlow extended its DA under Sectoral protocols agreed by QQI and IoTI. In 2014/2015, QQI extended DA to IT Carlow to cover Joint Awards. In 2015/16, under the Sectoral Protocols, IT Carlow received extension of its Delegated Authority to cover all activities to Level 9.

IT Carlow, in February 2015, appointed an Assistant Registrar. This new role reflects IT Carlow's commitment to Quality Assurance and Enhancement and builds upon the work undertaken by the Quality Office.

IT Carlow continues to implement and review its QA work-plan which is available in Appendix VI of the Institute's Quality Manual.

In May/June 2015, IT Carlow implemented Part II of its Programmatic Review processes which incorporates a Programmatic Review of all faculties and campus.

In December 2016, following the submission of AIQR 2014/15 and the agreement of the meeting note of the Annual Dialogue Meeting, IT Carlow successfully reengaged with QQI.

In 2015/2016, the Institute considered the Core Statutory Guidelines for Quality Assurance under the review of its Quality Manual. IT Carlow has also considered the Sector-Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines for Institutes of Technology for integration in the Quality Manual. Work is ongoing on key aspects of this including the reviews of the Professional Support Services in the Institute.

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

IT Carlow's Governing Body met on ten occasions in 2015/2016.

IT Carlow's Academic Council met on 12 occasions in 2015/2016 Academic Year.

The committees of Academic Council met as follows:

- o Programme Planning and Validation Committee - met 6 times (2015/2016)
- o Academic Regulations Committee - met 6 times (2015/2016)
- o Quality Assurance & Enhancement Committee - met 6 times (2015/2016)
- o Collaborative Provision Committee - met 5 times (2015/2016)
- o Teaching, Learning and Student Support Committee - met 7 times (2015/2016)
- o Research & Development Committee - met 8 times (2015/2016)
- o Ethics Committee - met 4 times (2015/2016)

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

Reviews in the Reporting Period

Area/Unit and links to relevant publications

<http://www.itcarlow.ie/resources/quality/quality-publications-outcomes.htm>

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

97

Number of internal approval/evaluations and reviews completed in respect of Research Accreditation/Validation.	0
Number of internal approval/evaluations and reviews completed in respect of Programme Review.	5
Number of internal approval/evaluations and reviews completed in respect of Research Review.	0
Number of internal approval/evaluations and reviews completed in respect of School/Department/Faculty Review.	5
Number of internal approval/evaluations and reviews completed in respect of Service Unit Review.	2
Number of internal approval/evaluations and reviews completed in respect of Review of arrangements with a partner organisation.	0
Composition of Panels: % Internal	13
Composition of Panels: % National	63
Composition of Panels: % UK	5
Composition of Panels: % EU	4
Composition of Panels: % Student	5
Composition of Panels: % Other	10
Chair Profile: % Internal	18
Chair Profile: % Similar institution	70
Chair Profile: % Different institution	9
Chair Profile: % International	0

PART 2 - Section 3: Update on Institutional QA Overview

Other Implementation Factors

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

Key themes arising include:

- DA for Research to Level 10
- Collaborative provision integration and expansion to Level 9 including
 - Work-based Learning (incl. Work Placement)
 - Recognition of Prior Learning
 - Adjunct faculty
- Graduate Attributes
- Design Thinking (as part of Technological gateway (Design +) application, implementation and integration

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

Factors that have impacted include:

- Ongoing QQI work on guidelines including Cyclical Review
- The HEA strategic dialogue process – Cycle III undertaken in 2015/2016
- IT Carlow's involved in regional initiatives including the South Cluster of HEIs; Regional Skills Fora in South East, Mid East and Midlands and Regional Action Plans for Jobs.
- National initiatives in research, teaching and learning and provision to include Springboard +
- Recognition of programmes- professional bodies, regulatory and governmental

Any other implementation issues of interest can be noted here.

No other factors identified at this time

Submission

Part 2 Submission

PART 3

Effectiveness and Impact

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

Cognisant of the review of the ESG guidelines (2015), IT Carlow reviewed its Quality Management System (QMS) to reflect the restructure. In June 2015, IT Carlow approved and published its Quality Manual amended to align to the new guidelines. In continuing to review these, the Institute is mindful of the publication of QQI guidelines including the Core Statutory Guidelines, topic-specific and sector-specific.

IT Carlow extended its DA under Sectoral protocols agreed by QQI and IoTI. In 2015/2016, QQI extended DA to IT Carlow to cover research to Level 9.

IT Carlow continues to implement and review its QA work plan which is available in Appendix VI of the Institute's Quality Manual.

In May/June 2016, IT Carlow implemented Part II of its Programmatic Review processes which incorporates a review of all programmes in all faculties and campus. These coupled with Professional Support Services Reviews implemented in 2015/2016 and planned for 2016/17 further embed Quality Enhancement.

IT Carlow's ongoing work in Collaborative Provision and the structures surrounding partnerships in this space will be reviewed through the review of the partnerships with the Defence Forces and An Cosán with an emphasis on Work Based Learning and RPL.

The QA procedures are made more effective through Academic Professional Development activities.

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

In 2015/2016, IT Carlow's DA was extended to include research to Level 9.

IT Carlow has also concluded its two phase Programmatic review for the first time in 2014/15 with the second part undertaken in all faculties and campus.

As previously iterated, Academic Council, supported by its associated committees recommends new and modified policies and procedures for approval to Governing Body.

Once approved by Governing Body these policies and respective procedures are published on the IT Carlow website into the Public domain. Included in the comprehensive review of all IT Carlow policies and procedures, a document management system is in place where each policy and procedure incorporates its own revision control history in addition to a log which documents the revision status and reasons for change for each reviewed document, which can be seen in (Appendix V Quality Manual). To support this document management system, a comprehensive Quality Work Plan is reviewed, at a minimum, twice annually, to capture the ongoing review and evolving nature quality assurance and enhancement within the Institute.

The Quality Work Plan can be seen in (Appendix VI Quality Manual).

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

Key themes arising include:

- DA for Research to Level 10
- Collaborative provision integration and expansion to Level 9 including
 - Work-based Learning (incl. Work Placement)
 - Recognition of Prior Learning
 - Adjunct faculty
- Graduate Attributes
- Design Thinking (as part of Technological gateway (Design +) application, implementation and integration
- Professional and Regulatory Body Recognition

Submission

Part 3 Submission

PART 4

Quality Enhancement

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

In 2015/2016, IT Carlow undertook a series of Programmatic Reviews across all faculties and campus. These formed part II of the Programmatic Review process in all areas.

As part of this all faculties and the Wexford Campus undertook self-evaluation of all programmes and then the output was considered by international peer review panels who made commendations and identified a series of recommendations that will inform the second part of the programmatic review process.

Quality Enhancement activities were enabled by a number of significant developments during the period including:

- Significant development in staff profile with a greater number of staff with higher qualifications- Masters and Doctorates
- Continuing staff development both formal and informal with a further graduating class from the Institute's MA in Teaching and Learning
- Enhancement and consolidation of internal QA/ QE systems and processes;
- Expansion and Enhancement of facilities and the physical environment including:
 - Ongoing population of the Dargan Centre (the Institute's primary Research and Development Building to accommodate the continued expanding cohort of postgraduate researchers)
 - Expansion of the Institute's Centre for Aerospace Engineering
 - Commencement of the construction of the Institute's Haughton Building – aimed primarily at Teaching and Learning
- Continued review and enhancement of programme offerings across all levels with a focus on Springboard+ programmes including Higher Diplomas
- Continued expansion of registered postgraduate learners on taught and research programmes at Level 9
- The implementation of the Institute Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy including the recruitment of the new Head of Centre
- Enhanced collaborative activity with the Defence Forces and An Cosán leading to Collaborative Review in Autumn 2016

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

In 2016/17, IT Carlow will continue to develop in line with its Strategic Plan 2014-18.

Future developments include:

- Completion of the construction of a new 5,000m² Teaching and Learning facility which will significantly enhance infrastructure, facilities and the learner experience;
- Validation of new programmes across NFQ levels 6-10
- Enhancement of existing and development of new collaborative partnerships including collaborative review of Defence Forces and An Cosán;
- Building research capacity and embedding enquiry based learning across all programme areas.
- Continued internationalisation of the institution both in terms of learners, staff profile and programme orientation.
- Further undertaking of area reviews of Professional Support Services

These developments will be led by a mid-term Strategic Review of the Institute's

Strategic Plan due for completion in late 2016.

The appointments of an Assistant Registrar and a new Head of Teaching and Learning Centre will continue IT Carlow's work in this area.

Submission

Part 4 Submission

PART 5

Objectives for the Coming Year

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

IT Carlow has for 2016/2017 mapped out an ongoing programme of reviews and Quality Assurance and Enhancement activities.

The review plans are detailed below.

These are underpinned by ongoing Quality Assurance and Enhancement activities managed by the Institute's Registry, tracked through the Institute's QA work-plan, informed by Staff Development and communicated to all stakeholders.

Review Plans: Area/Unit and Number

- Professional Support Service Reviews: 2 complete; 5 ongoing
- Institute Mid-term Review of Strategic Plan 2014-2018: 1
- Collaborative Review- Defence Forces: 1
- Collaborative Review- An Cosán: 1
- Programme Validations: 8-10 at levels 6-9 NFQ including the areas of Counselling and Psychotherapy; 2 at Level 10 NFQ (QQI)

Any further information with respect to plans for the coming period.

- Collaborative Provision Biennial Seminar – April 2017
- Rollout of ongoing academic and professional services staff development for new and serving staff
- Revision of Quality Manual in light of new QQI guidelines publication

Submission

Part 5 Submission

PART 6

Preparation for Periodic Review

A description of the impacts of institutional review within the institution.

Institute of Technology Carlow underwent Institutional Review in 2010 with the report finalised in 2011. In responding to the outcomes of this review, significant organisational change occurred across all levels of the Institute.

A comprehensive review of the QA system was undertaken to include a rewrite of the Institute Quality Management System with full alignment to the ESG Guidelines (and amended 2015).

In constructing the Quality Management System the processes underpinning programme design, development, approval ,ongoing monitoring and assessment together with those set out for Programmatic Review were addressed.

The implementation of the revised system culminated in 2015/16 with the second stage of the Programmatic Review across all faculties and campuses.

Additionally, the Strategic Plan 2014-2018 and specifically Goal 5 have placed Quality Assurance and Enhancement as a central pillar of Institute activities.

This activity coupled with a mid-term review of the Strategic Plan in 2016 will together with the QQI guidelines for Cyclical Reviews of Institutions will inform preparations for Institutional review in 2018/19.

A short evaluative and reflective summary of the overall impact of quality assurance in the reporting period or, over a more extensive period, in the review cycle.

The Strategic Plan 2014-2018 (<http://www.itcarlow.ie/resources/strategic-plan.htm>) and specifically Goal 5 have placed Quality Assurance and Enhancement as a central pillar of Institute activities.

Activities culminating from this in 2015/2016 include Programmatic Reviews (<http://www.itcarlow.ie/resources/quality/quality-publications-outcomes/programmatic-reviews-20152016.htm>), ongoing comprehensive programme management; collaborative activities and professional support services reviews (in Computing Services and Library) demonstrate the impact of Quality Assurance throughout Institute activities.

These are apparent through a range of Quality Enhancement initiatives including staff development, work based learning, recognition of prior learning, enhanced access for those from Further Education and lifelong learning.

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

The mid-term review of the Strategic Plan 2014-2018 due for publication in early 2017 will offer definitive guidance on the key developmental themes of importance in Quality Enhancement for Institutional Review 2018/19.

It is envisaged that the outcome from this mid-term review will enhance the Quality Assurance Activities undertaken by the Institute since the Institutional Review of 2010/11.