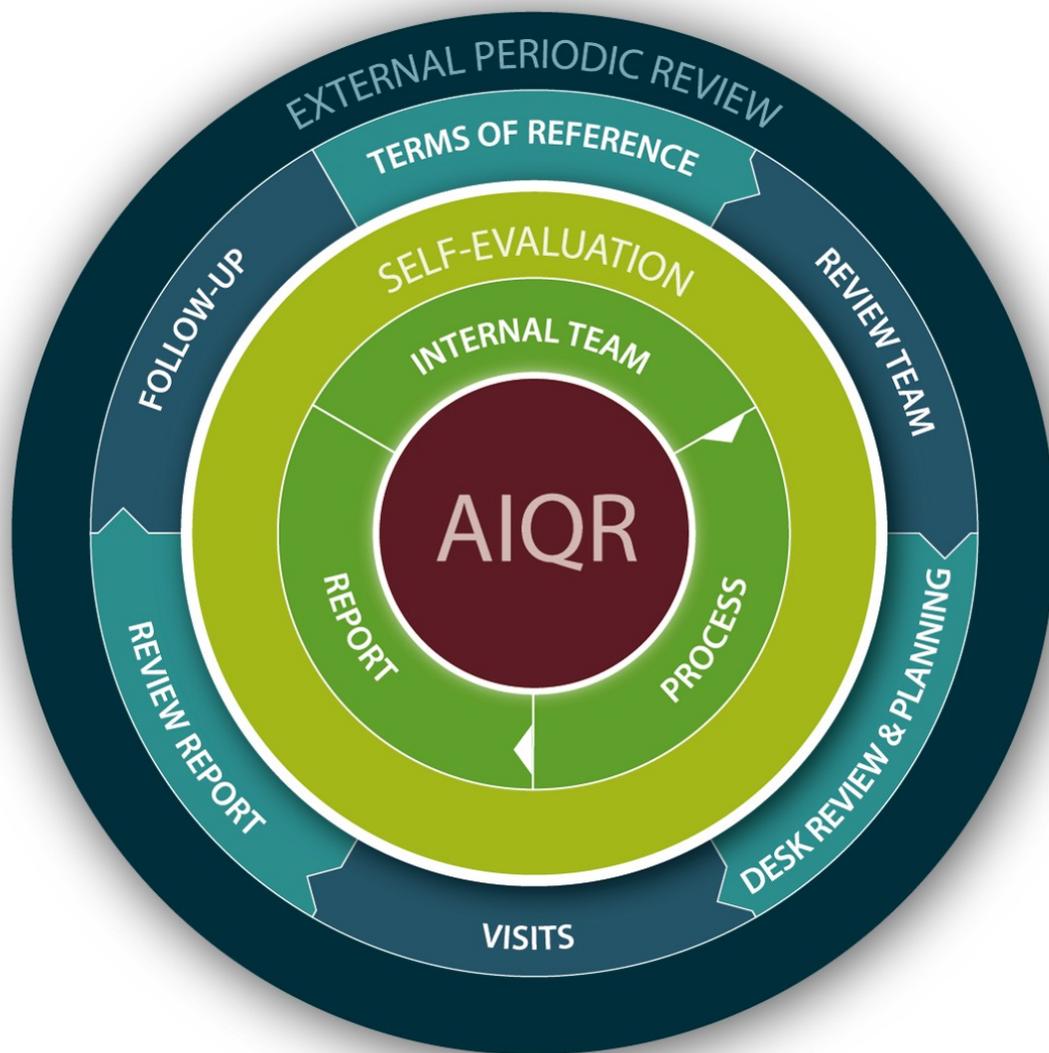


Institute of Technology, Blanchardstown

Annual Institutional Quality Assurance Report 2018

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



The Cyclical Review Process

Part 1 Overview of internal QA governance, policies and procedures

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

1. Overarching Institution Quality Policy

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

The mission of the Institute of Technology Blanchardstown is to serve its students and the community by meeting the skills needs in the economy and increasing the level of participation in third-level education and training, particularly in Dublin Northwest and its environs. The Institute will do this by:

- (1) Achieving consistently high standards of relevance and quality in teaching, research, development and consultancy.
- (2) Offering a welcoming and supportive environment to students from all educational and social backgrounds and to adults wishing to increase or update their level of technical skills.

The Institute has adopted admission and student support policies which ensure that a relatively high proportion of its students are 'non-standard entrants' such as: mature students: applicants without Leaving Certificate qualification, but who can meet entry requirements in other ways; students with disabilities; students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds

The Institute is committed to excellence and quality in the development and delivery of its programmes, service provision and research activities. It is the policy of the Institute to:

- (1) Facilitate a high-quality learning experience for a diverse range of learners that will support lifelong learning and provide skills expected of graduates.
- (2) Value, support and recognise excellence in teaching by academic staff.
- (3) Facilitate learning by providing the academic support infrastructure and environment conducive to the provision of the highest standards in teaching and learning.
- (4) Encourage application of a diversity of teaching practices and methodologies to meet the needs of a wide range of students with a variety of abilities and competencies.
- (5) Value and encourage research activities.

The Institute's commitment to excellence and quality involves continuous improvement, by setting goals and standards for academic and administrative support activities, and evaluating practice against these standards to enhance practice. The concept of quality applies to all the activities, including human and physical resources that combine to underpin the academic programmes of the Institute. It is through the quality assurance process that the Institute can guarantee to itself and stakeholders that the teaching, learning and other services consistently reach a standard of excellence. The concept of quality relies on involvement by stakeholders in helping to determine standards, excellence, value for money, fitness for purpose and meeting stakeholders' needs.

The quality assurance policies and procedures of the Institute are guided by:

- (1) European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area

- (2) All relevant QQI Standards and Guidelines
- (3) National Framework of Qualifications Standards
- (4) Policies and Procedures approved by the Institute's Academic Council
- (5) All other relevant regulatory and professional requirements

In the reporting period, the Institute continued to participate in the Technological University transformation project for which harmonisation of quality assurance and enhancement processes is primary consideration. So far, the compilation of policy inventory has been completed to enable gap analysis, and from which the policies to be retained, and modified/enhanced, and new policies to implement, based on a scan of international best practices have been identified. The Institute has used this opportunity to update its own policies and procedures to meet statutory obligations and adopt best practices to cover the interim period to TU designation.

The Institute is committed to maintaining standards for academic quality assurance that are consistent with European best practice. In this context, the Institute has adopted the European standards and guidelines for internal quality assurance as published by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education ([ESG | ENQA](#)). The Institute also recognising the recently published principles-based framework, the Technological Higher Education Quality Framework ([THEQF](#)), which supports and recognises the established culture of quality and quality enhancement within the sector.

The quality assurance system is sustained through periodical self-evaluation, nationally and internationally referenced peer-evaluation processes, incorporating stakeholder involvement to challenge and affirm the Institute's academic programme standards and the quality assurance procedures. The outputs of the self-evaluation exercises are published in the public domain.

2. Quality assurance decision-making fora

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

The Institute is committed to having policies and associated procedures for the assurance of the quality and standards of its programmes and awards. The Institute is also committed to the development of a culture that recognises the importance of quality, quality assurance and quality enhancement.

Responsibility for Quality Assurance

The Academic Council (AC) is the Statutory Body appointed by the Governing Body under the Regional Technical Colleges Act 1992, to assist in the planning, coordination, development and overseeing the Institute's educational remits. Therefore, specific responsibility for academic quality assurance lies with Academic Council (Policy document: 3GB13 *Academic Council and Academic Council subcommittee terms of reference and standing orders*). Among other roles, the AC is discharged with the responsibility to protect, maintain and develop the academic standards of the courses and the activities of the Institute. The AC advises the Governing Body on all matters relating to the academic standards within the Institute. The AC meets regularly to review academic activities, and is composed of representatives of academic staff, administrative staff, and students. The AC maintains relevant sub-committees to support its work, including:

- Quality Assurance Sub-committee
- Admissions Sub-committee

- Research & Postgraduate Studies Sub-committee

The Institute also maintains an Ethics Sub-committee. The Ethics sub-committee operates under the President's committees, as ethical issues and consideration span all functions of the Institute.

It is Institute policy to vest the responsibility for quality matters to all staff in their assigned roles. However, the management maintains considered oversight to ensure that all staff understand and engage with the necessary protocols in a responsible manner.

Quality Assurance of financial and legislative aspects of the Institute's operations is the responsibility of Governing Body, and are monitored through the internal audit subcommittee. Commitment to quality assurance of services provided by the Institute is identified in policy document 2MP31 Institute Review Policy. The institute received the new Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines in the last reporting (2015-2016), and in this reporting period, managed to put in place a process of reviewing and where necessary updating and publishing the relevant policy and procedural documents to conform.

As part of activities geared to the transformation into a Technological University, the Technological University for Dublin Alliance partners (ITB, DIT and ITT) have commissioned counter-part project team for the harmonisation of Quality Assurance and Quality Enhancement policies and procedures. Harmonisation of the Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures is part of the core forward-planning projects of the Alliance. Drawing from the active quality assurance and quality enhancement policies and procedures individually applied by the three institutes, project management approach has been used to determine: the policies with minor discrepancies requiring simple harmonisation; the policies with major discrepancies requiring adaptation or replacement, and; new policies and regulations to be developed to meet the updated national statutory obligations, and requirements of international best practice. The harmonisation of policies and procedures with major disparities requires deliberate consensus building exercises to enable rational and well-interrogated processes. For example, in order to agree upon the appropriate grading system (i.e. Graded Point Average or Percentage Grading), an externally-moderated workshop has been scheduled to: discuss the grading system core principles; review the existing grading systems in operation in higher education as a whole, and subsequently; agree upon the bases for the TU grading system, including the process for piloting it across the alliance. An Academic Steering Board with appropriate representation from the three institutes is in place to oversee the key decisions in the outlined processes.

The Institute's Strategic Goals and Objectives and the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are outlined in the Strategic Plan 2016-2019, under the following headings: Teaching and Learning; Research, Enterprise and Innovation; Engagement; Human Resources; Infrastructure, and; Structures and Systems. This referred Strategic Plan was developed in conjunction with the Technological University project partners.

Confirmation of QA Policy and Procedures

1. Programme Design and Approval (ESG 1.2)

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance policy and procedures for the design and approval of new programmes.

Institution-wide policy and procedures relating to programme design and approval are available both on the Institute's Document Management System (Intranet) and publicly through the Quality Assurance link in the Institute's website:

<http://www.itb.ie/AboutITB/QualityAssurancePolicies/qap.asp>

Specific references to the quality assurance policy and procedures for the design and approval of new programmes include:

[2MP01 Design and validation of new academic programmes](#)

[3AC05 Policy and procedure for the proposal, development and validation of minor, supplemental and special purpose awards](#)

[1QM01 Quality Policy](#)

2. Programme Delivery and Assessment (ESG 1.3)

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance policies and procedures for the ongoing delivery and assessment of programmes.

The Institute undertakes to ensure that learning resources and support mechanisms are readily accessible to students. Policy document '3CD05 Academic programme boards policy and procedures' records Institute policy and procedure as it applies to the operation of academic programme and course boards and support structures in all academic departments.

Institute policy and procedure relating to student assessment is documented within policy document 3AS06 Academic programme assessment policy and procedure available both on the Institute's Document Management System (Intranet) and publicly through the Quality Assurance link in the Institute's website:

<http://www.itb.ie/AboutITB/QualityAssurancePolicies/qap.asp>

The Registrar has overall responsibility for the conduct of examinations and is tasked with ensuring effective implementation of procedures approved by the Academic Council of the Institute regarding conduct of examinations.

Peer-review via the provision for External Examiner process provided by the Institute specifically provides for the learner assessment quality assurance mechanism. The principal role of external

examiners is to ensure that the Institute's programmes match their designation in the NFQ and meet the national and international standards in the assessment of learners, and thereby ensuring public confidence in the academic qualifications conferred by the Institute. Policy document 3AS09 External examiners and reporting arrangements, outlines Institute policy and procedures with regard to the nomination, appointment, duties and responsibilities of external examiners. External examiners for the current academic year are listed within document 4RAS10 External Examiners, published on the Document Management System. Policies and procedures in relation to programme delivery and assessment are also available on same.

3. Research Quality (ESG 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.9)

Links and/or text relating to any specific quality assurance procedures for the design, approval, delivery, assessment and monitoring of research programmes, if they exist.

The Institute's research policy document (2MP19) is currently under review as work is ongoing towards the harmonisation of policies and procedures in relation to the Joint Graduate Research School (JGRS). The JGRS was established under a Memorandum of Understanding dated 28th July 2015, and currently serves as the over-arching entity that is overseeing the Quality Assurance and Quality Enhancement matters in the TU4D alliance (DIT, IT Tallaght and IT Blanchardstown).

In the reporting period, the Institute undertook to devolve the research strategy to its three schools, in recognition of the growing research student numbers, and enhanced staff qualification and experience in the conduct of research. Therefore, each school currently maintains a *Research Strategy* as part of overarching quality assurance process, and as prerequisite to intensifying discipline-specific research.

Other procedural and management Policies and procedures in relation to research quality are available on the Institute's Document Management System.

4. Student Lifecycle (ESG 1.4)

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures that are encompassed by the student lifecycle.

The Institute has a suite of Policies/Procedures covering the Student Life Cycle. These include (among others):

- 3AD08 Admissions Policy, which details both Undergraduate (CAO) and Apprenticeship Programmes, including Advanced Entry Procedures where applicable.
- 3AD13 Procedure for admission of postgraduate students to Masters by research and PhD programmes.
- 3AD14 Administrative procedures for the admission, registration and assessment of students taking courses in part-time mode.

After learner admission, course attendance and management is addressed under policy document 3CD05 Academic Programme Boards - Policy and Procedures which is available at:

<http://www.itb.ie/AboutITB/QualityAssurancePolicies/qap.asp>

Additional information used to guide both course selection and also provide a reference source for continuing students is provided in the Institute prospectus that is published annually and available at: <http://www.itb.ie/StudyatITB/index.html>

The Institute also maintains a Careers Development Office (CDO) with the remit to further enhancing the learners' basic employability skills. The CDO roles cover (among others): structured activities for giving students very early impression of professional identity and insights to the expected professional roles via guest speaker sessions, industry visits, and careers/recruitment events organised towards the end of each academic year. The CDO also provides scheduled training sessions in CV preparation and interview skills. Perennial careers flagship events are the TechTalk sessions with enterprise.

5. Teaching Staff (ESG 1.5)

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for assuring the competence of teaching staff, including staff recruitment and staff development.

Policy in relation to teaching staff is incorporated into policy documents:

- 3HR51 Recruitment & Selection Procedures (All Staff)
- 2MP04 Staff Training and Development Policy.
- 3HR17 Recruitment Selection policy
- 3HR29 Training and development procedure

It is Institute policy to:

- Prioritise the ongoing professional and personal development of staff through optimal use of available budgets. Staff training is currently a priority as part of core requirement to achieve designation to a Technological University.
- Provide for the professional and personal development of staff through the Institute Performance Management and Development System (PMDS).
- Ensure that recommendations for training and development emanating from the PMDS process as agreed by the appropriate line manager and the relevant staff member meet Institute strategic priorities and support individual developmental needs.
- Support training and development activities of staff that will enhance the delivery of Institute services or further the Institute's strategic plan.
- Maintain a structured training and development needs analysis, drawing on data from the Performance Management and Development System (PMDS) and the Institute's quality assurance processes.
- Provide financial support for training and development in line with norms in equivalent academic institutes.
- Celebrate staff development and achievement through reporting of activities in the Institute annual report and reports to Governing Body.

The referred policy documents are available at:

<http://www.itb.ie/AboutITB/QualityAssurancePolicies/qap.asp>

6. Teaching and Learning (ESG 1.4, 1.5, 1.6)

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for assuring the quality of teaching and learning.

2MP20 Teaching and learning policy and principles

<http://www.itb.ie/AboutITB/QualityAssurancePolicies/qap.asp>

Reports on teaching and learning innovation in ITB are published at:

<http://www.itb.ie/AboutITB/QualityAssuranceReports/qar.asp>

Other policies and procedures in relation to teaching and learning are available on the Institute's DMS.

7. Resources and Support (ESG 1.5)

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for assuring funding and resources for learning, teaching and research. Also, links and or text relating to the quality assurance procedures for learning resources and student support.

The HEA approves the annual recurrent grant allocation and the associated financial and governance matters to the Institute, as part of the overall sectoral allocations and oversight. The Department of Education may ring-fence proportions of the recurrent grant for special purposes, as may be specified by its directives that are applicable from time-to-time (e.g., additional spaces for strategic skills needs, Technological University Project, initiatives for flexible learning etc.). The proportion of funding received annually is determined primarily from student numbers, based on the verified SRS returns for the previous academic year with an access weighting based on the Equal Access Survey.

The internal funding disbursements towards supporting learning, teaching and research are based on prioritised allocations that are agreed upon at scheduled planning meetings of the Institute Management Team. Externally generated funds are allocated to the [Learning and Innovation Centre \(LINC\)](#) to provide seed-capital for early researchers under *ITB Postgraduate Fund Scheme*. Through the LINC, the Institute also participates in competitive funded research and innovation calls from a range of agencies, including; the EC Horizon2020 Programmes (e.g., Intelligent Energy Europe), Irish Research Council, Transport Infrastructure Ireland, AIB Innovation Fund, Innovation Voucher Scheme etc.

The overall funding for student support activities is assured by the student contribution charge (See policy document 3GB05 *Distribution of student contribution charge*). In addition to the recurrent grant mentioned earlier, the Institute also receives from the HEA, funding allocation to cater for students with disabilities and a Student Assistance Fund (SAF) to support students with special needs and those who may be struggling financially. From these funds, the Student Services Office is able to provide a range of financial, academic, and personal supports for eligible students, such as:

See: <https://www.itb.ie/CampusStudentLife/studentsservices.html>

As part of the quality assurance procedures for learning (including the provision of appropriate learning resources), student-representation is provided for in all QA process such as: evaluation of course delivery, and; representation in service and review panels, e.g., Governing Body, Academic Council, Institute/Programmatic Reviews etc.

The institution-wide quality assurance procedures for assuring funding and resources for learning, teaching and research as outline above, is governed under policy document 3GB15 *Code of Practice for the Governance of Third Level Institutions* (Superseded by *THEA Code of Governance for Institutes of Technology*, from January 1, 2018). In the reporting period, and as part of the transformation process to Technological University, the institute began working with DIT and IT Tallaght (TU4Dublin Alliance) towards developing a *Financial Resource Allocation Model* that will be applicable across new entity.

8. Information Management (ESG 1.7)

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for collecting, analysing and using relevant information about programmes and other activities.

The institute collects, analyses, and uses relevant student information for the management of programmes and other activities. This information is used to support decision-making within the Institute, and to monitor and measure key performance indicators. Examples of the approaches that are employed institution-wide include:

- Publication of approved course schedules for each programme of study on the Document Management System (DMS), which are available to all staff and students, and publication of programme information in the public domain, both on the Institute's website at <http://www.itb.ie/> and at <http://courses.itb.ie/>.
- Compilation of annual course board reports incorporating year-on-year analysis of applications, registrations, examination performance, progression/completion rates, external-examiner feedback etc.
- Analysis of data captured by student surveys such as the ISSE (see Section 3 in Part 2-6 of this AIQR). Responses and insights gained from such have been used for course enhancement, and where necessary in deployment of support measures (e.g., the peer mentoring programme) to enhance learner experience, revise curricula (e.g., integrating work placement to academic programmes as a means of enhancing graduate employability), and to encourage other supportive extra curricula activities.
- The Institute's Careers Services Office collects (via online survey) and reports on graduate data in the annual *First Destinations Graduates Report* (FDGR). The FDGR survey, which covers the entire graduate spectrum, provides insights into the first occupations of graduates of the Institute (including further study), which provides key points for reflection on the range and relevance of our programmes to the targeted employment opportunities and professional roles and careers. From 2018, the FDGR is to be replaced by the HEA Graduate Outcomes Annual Survey.
- Multiple approaches employed to provide career pathways and employability statements on the Institute's programmes to better inform students, parents and employers. Such include (among others); promotional material with testimonial by industry stakeholders, graduates and continuing students in individual academic programme, signposting of courses accredited/endorsed by professional bodies and employers on Institute website (e.g., For

Engineers Ireland accredited programme, see [Bachelor of Engineering in Mechatronic Engineering Programme](#)) etc. From a survey return to the HEA in the period covered by this AIQR and to which the Institute responded, going forward, the HEA now requires all HEIs to provide *Employability and Employment Guide* to stakeholders as a new initiative in the quality assurance/enhancement framework.

Policies and procedures in relation to information management are accessible by staff and students via the Institute's Document Management System.

9. Self-evaluation and Monitoring (ESG 1.9)

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for self-evaluation and internal monitoring.

Academic Programme Boards (APB) have the responsibility for the ongoing development, administration and review of programmes and courses within the Institute. The boards are required to meet at least twice per semester. The APBs oversee the totality of the learning experience constituted in each academic programme of study. The APBs are tasked with; the strategic design and development, and monitoring and management of its constituent courses to ensure:

- Appropriate engagement with community and industry stakeholders;
- Programme learning outcomes are specified in accordance with a rigorous research and key stakeholder consultation process;
- Programme learning outcomes are aligned to individual module learning outcomes
- Programme objectives and learning outcomes are achieved;
- Suggest how emerging teaching and learning methods and technologies may be integrated into constituent courses to enable learners engage with subject matter effectively and more effectively.

Course boards, a sub division within academic programme boards assist in (i) programme monitoring and review (ii) quality assurance and (iii) operational issues. Relevant policy documents are:

- 3AC05 Academic programme boards – policy and procedures
- 3CD06 Course monitoring policy and procedure

Available at <http://www.itb.ie/AboutITB/QualityAssurancePolicies/gap.asp>

It is Institute policy to review and evaluate academic programmes every 5 years. This review process is primarily designed to evaluate programme quality and flexibility in response to changing needs. For a detailed description of this process see 'Section B: Monitoring and evaluation of academic programmes' within policy document 2MP31 available at: [2MP31 Institute review policy](#)

Evaluation of facilities and services

It is Institute policy to evaluate facilities and services involved in the delivery of academic programmes every 5 years, with the output of that review available in advance of completion of a self-evaluation report as part of Institute review. For a detailed description of this process see 'Section C: Evaluation of

facilities and services involved in delivery of academic programmes' within policy document 2MP31 referred previously.

Effectiveness of Institute academic quality assurance policies and procedures

It is Institute policy to review the effectiveness of Institute academic quality assurance policies and procedures every 5 years, with the output of that review available in advance of completion of a self-evaluation report as part of Institute review. For a detailed description of this process see 'Section D: Review of effectiveness of the Institute quality assurance procedures' within policy document 2MP31 referred previously.

Institute Review

Institute review is required under agreed protocols with Qualifications and Quality Ireland (QQI) to comply with ongoing requirements regarding delegation of authority to confer awards. The institute review is scheduled for the year 2020 in the QQI CINNTE quality review cycle, 2017-2023. It will involve the submission of institutional self-evaluation report, planning of visit, and main review visit in the second quarter, third quarter and the fourth quarter of the year, respectively. The review will also run concurrent for the three TU4Dublin Alliance partners.

Other policies and procedures supporting the self-evaluation and monitoring are available on the Institute's DMS.

10. Stakeholder Engagement (ESG 1.1)

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for the involvement of external stakeholders in quality assurance.

The Institute is committed to fostering visible and effective engagement with our key stakeholders. The Institute aims to achieve this by (See Strategic Plan at www.itb.ie/AboutITB/strategicplan.html):

- Further developing strong links with business, enterprise, the professions and other stakeholders in the region to support civic and industry engagement.
- Ensure procedures are in place for the development of programmes that respond to the needs of the Institute's stakeholders, showing evidence of engagement with industry in programme design and delivery.
- Promote a culture of collaboration with our communities
- Enhance the internationalisation of the Institute

Learner involvement in quality assurance

The Institute recognises the impact and importance of quality assurance procedures on the learner and therefore seeks to involve learners in quality assurance activities.

Learner involvement includes:

Student evaluations of course delivery

4FCD06 QA 1: Institutes of Technology Survey of Students by Lecturer (on the Document Management System) This survey gives students the opportunity to provide a rating to a range of issues relating to the presentation of a subject or subject component.

Student surveys conducted at the programme level

4FCD08 QA 3: Survey of Students by Department (on the Document Management System)

This survey gives students the opportunity to provide an overall evaluation of their programme as an entirety rather than a narrow focus on any particular element on their programme.

Student representation on course boards

3CD05 Academic programme boards - policy and procedures (on the Document Management System)

There is learner representation on each course board.

Student representation on committees and service review panels

ITB endeavours to enshrine the value of student participation in quality assurance activities not only at programme level but also at departmental, school and institutional levels, by encouraging student participation on committees and service review panels including:

- Governing Body
- Academic Council and the sub-committees
- Institute Review
- Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) <http://studentsurvey.ie/>

External experts on programme validation and review panels

Roles and responsibilities of external experts participating on review panels as part of Institute quality assurance procedures are recorded in policy document 2MP17 available on the Institute's Document Management System.

Other supporting policies and procedures in relation to stakeholder engagement are available on the Institute's Document Management System.

The Carnegie Community Engagement First-Time Classification Framework Application Document, which provides the blueprint for alignment of Civic Engagement activity in ITB with the ITB Strategy 2016 -2019. (Ref. Sections 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 4.1, 4.2) is available at:

<http://www.itb.ie/AboutITB/civic.html>

11. Engagement with Other Bodies (ESG 1.1)

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

The Institute maintains its statutory obligations through a number of external engagements, including HEA Systems Performance Framework (HEA Compact), the annual engagement with QQI in the AIQR, and the periodic engagements with professional accreditation bodies such as Engineering Ireland, Accounting Technicians Ireland, and Marketing Institute of Ireland.

Through the engagement with the accountancy bodies, accounting and finance, students are granted appropriate professional examination exemptions by a range of the accounting bodies including ACA, CCA, CIMA, ICAI and ATI. In the reporting period, academics in the school of Business also worked with

the Marketing Institute of Ireland to prepare final year students undergraduate students for the Qualified Marketers Examination.

Professional Body Accreditations

Engineers Ireland (EI):

- BN121 Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Mechatronic Engineering (ab initio, NFQ level 8, 240 ECTS credits)
- BN009 Bachelor of Engineering in Mechatronic Engineering (ab initio, NFQ level 7, 180 ECTS credits)
- BN903 Higher Certificate in Engineering in Mechatronic Engineering (ab initio, NFQ level 6, 120 ECTS credits)
- BN422 Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Mechatronic Engineering (add on to BN009, NFQ level 8, 60 ECTS credits)
- BN117 Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Computer Engineering in Mobile Systems (ab initio, NFQ level 8, 240 ECTS credits)
- BN012 Bachelor of Engineering in Computer Engineering (ab initio, NFQ level 7, 180 ECTS credits)
- BN001 Higher Certificate in Engineering in Computer Engineering (ab initio, NFQ level 6, 120 ECTS credits)
- BN423 Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Computer Engineering in Mobile Systems (add on to BN012, NFQ level 8, 60 ECTS credits)
- BN301 Bachelor of Engineering in Computer Engineering (add on to BN001, NFQ level 7, 60 ECTS credits)

Date of last accreditation visit was in 19/10/2015, and next review will be in the year 2020.

Accounting Technicians Ireland:

BN709 Certificate in Accounting Technician (Accounting Technicians Ireland) (Special Purpose Award, NFQ level 6, 32 ECTS credits)

In the period covered by this return, and as part of the TU4Dublin Alliance with strategic intent for designation as a Technological University, ITB continued in its engagement with DIT and IT Tallaght partners in core projects including establishment of the Joint Graduate Research School, and a range of different working groups that address different elements of the Technological University Designation Criteria. The Alliance has also established the Canadian-Ireland [Centre for Higher Education Research, Policy & Practice \(CFHERPP\)](#) as an international collaborative project hosted by the University of Ontario Institute of Technology, Durham College, and the TU4Dublin Alliance. Other policies and procedures supporting the engagement with other bodies are available on the Institute's Document Management System.

12. Provision and Use of Public Information (ESG 1.8)

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for the provision of clear, accurate, up-to date and accessible public information.

The Institute undertakes to provide detailed, up-to-date, impartial and objective information on its programmes and awards to the public. Programme information is available to the public and can be accessed through the ITB website www.itb.ie or at <http://courses.itb.ie>

The Institute Prospectus can be accessed at: <http://www.itb.ie/StudyatITB/index.html>

Published policies

The Institute quality assurance policies and procedures are available at:

<http://www.itb.ie/AboutITB/QualityAssurancePolicies/qap.asp>

Published quality assurance reports

The published quality assurance reports are available at:

<http://www.itb.ie/AboutITB/QualityAssuranceReports/qar.asp>

Strategic plan

The current Strategic Plan 2016-2019 is available at:

<http://www.itb.ie/AboutITB/strategicplan.html>

Annual report

The published reports are available at: <http://www.itb.ie/AboutITB/annualreport.html>

13. Linked Providers (for Designated Awarding Bodies) (ESG 1.1)

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for assuring engagement with linked providers including the procedures for approval, monitoring, review, withdrawal of approval and appeal for linked providers.

Institute of Technology Blanchardstown is not a Designated Awarding Body.

14. DA Procedures for use of QQI Award Standards (IoTs only)

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

The specific procedures for the approval of programmes in keeping with Core Policy and Criteria for the Validation of Education and Training Programmes by QQI are specified in ITB Policy Document:

- 1QM01 Quality Policy.
- 2MP01 Design, validation and accreditation of new academic programmes

The Sectoral Protocols for the Awarding of Research Master Degrees at NFQ Level 9 under Delegated Authority (DA) from QQI is covered in ITB Policy 3AS06 Academic programme assessment policy and procedure.

The Institute currently does not provide for Joint Awards.

15. Collaborative Provision (ESG 1.1)

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for engagement with third parties for the provision of programmes.

Name of Awarding Body: SOLAS

Programme title: Plumbing – Apprentice Phase IV and Phase VI

Date of last review or accreditation: 14/04/2014

A new SOLAS Plumbing syllabus was accredited by the QQI in the period covered by this AIQR. The Institute has since evaluated the implications of reconfiguring its plumbing workshop and facilities for implementation of the new syllabus, and the necessary works are scheduled for 2018-2019.

16. Additional Notes

Any additional notes can be entered here.

The last Programmatic Review was in 2015. The next Programmatic Review year as provided for in the policy document 2MP31 will be in 2020. It will coincide with the scheduled Institutional CINNTE Quality Review for all three TU4Dublin Alliance partners.

17. Internal Review Schedule

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

Year	2016/17
Areas/Units	None
Number	-
Link(s) to Publications	-

Year	2017/18
Areas/Units	None
Number	-
Link(s) to Publications	-

Year	2018/19*
Areas/Units	Human Resources; Estates Management; Library; Student Services
Number	3
Link(s) to Publications	

Year	2019/20*
Areas/Units	Finance; Marketing, Industrial & External Services; Information Technology
Number	3
Link(s) to Publications	

Year	2020/21*
Areas/Units	Programmatic Review: Department of Business; Department of Engineering; Department of Humanities, and; Department of Informatics
Number	4
Link(s) to Publications	

* Where appropriate, the facilities and services will be reviewed in the context of ongoing transformation to Technological University.

AIQR - PART 1

Overview of internal QA governance, policies and procedures	AIQR-Part-1-2016-17 (Final 16-02-2018).docx 972 AIQR-Part-1-2016-17 (Final 16-02-2018).docx 972 AIQR-Part-1-2016-17 (Final 16-02-2018).docx
PRSBs	3
Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies	First Set of Records
Type of Arrangement	Awarding Body
Name of the Body	SOLAS
Date of last review or accreditation	14-04-2014
Next review year	00
Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies	Second Set of Records
Type of Arrangement	PRSB
Name of the Body	Engineers Ireland

Programme Titles and Links to Publications	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. BN121 Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Mechatronic Engineering (ab initio, NFQ level 8, 240 ECTS credits) 2. BN009 Bachelor of Engineering in Mechatronic Engineering (ab initio, NFQ level 7, 180 ECTS credits) 3. BN903 Higher Certificate in Engineering in Mechatronic Engineering (ab initio, NFQ level 6, 120 ECTS credits) 4. BN422 Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Mechatronic Engineering (add on to BN009, NFQ level 8, 60 ECTS credits) 5. BN117 Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Computer Engineering in Mobile Systems (ab initio, NFQ level 8, 240 ECTS credits) 6. BN012 Bachelor of Engineering in Computer Engineering (ab initio, NFQ level 7, 180 ECTS credits) 7. BN001 Higher Certificate in Engineering in Computer Engineering (ab initio, NFQ level 6, 120 ECTS credits) 8. BN423 Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Computer Engineering in Mobile Systems (add on to BN012, NFQ level 8, 60 ECTS credits) 9. BN301 Bachelor of Engineering in Computer Engineering (add on to BN001, NFQ level 7, 60 ECTS credits)
Date of last review or accreditation	19-10-2015
Next review year	2020
Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies	Third Set of Records
Type of Arrangement	QA Body
Name of the Body	Accounting Technicians Ireland
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. BN709 Certificate in Accounting Technician (Accounting Technicians Ireland) (Special Purpose Award, NFQ level 6, 32 ECTS credits)
Date of last review or accreditation	20-05-2015
Next review year	2020
Joint research degrees	0
Joint/double/multiple awards	0
Collaborative programmes	0
Franchise programmes	0
Linked providers (DABs only)	0
Articulation Agreements	0

Do you wish to make a final submission?	Yes, this is my final submission
On behalf of the President/Provost/CEO I confirm that the information submitted in this AIQR is accurate and correct.	Confirmed
Overview of internal governance, policies and procedures (Word Template).	Confirmed
Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies.	Confirmed
Collaborative Provision.	Confirmed
Articulation Agreements.	Confirmed
Date of Final Submission	17-02-2018

Parts 2-6

Institution-led QA – Annual Information

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

Part 2: Institution-led QA – Annual

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

Section 1: Quality Assurance and Enhancement System Developments

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

Enhancement of teaching and learning is a key strategic objective. Overarching policies and procedures provide the necessary framework for maintenance of standards teaching and learning. In order to offer high quality learner experience, the enhancement of teaching, learning and assessment is at the centre of the Institutes core activities. Apart from the targeted enhancement of the future prospects of learners in the labour market, the evolution of quality assurance and enhancement systems are geared to initiating and maintaining the necessary learner engagement with both course-related activities and other transformative interactions with both enterprise and social community partners. These have been achieved through the creation of a rich learning environment through innovative, flexible and multi-disciplinary curriculum model for all students; expansion of innovative use of technology to further enhance the teaching and learning environment, and; continued development of a learner-centred approach to quality enhancement. The following actions undertaken in the reporting period exemplify how the institute strives to meet these objectives:

The Institute has been undertaking purposeful initiatives aimed at enhancing student retention while maintaining high quality standards as key consideration in all programmes. Such require periodic review and adjustment of module assessment strategies where necessary as an attempt to regulate the assessment load through the semesters. For example, in the reporting period, the Horticulture programme adjusted the Continuous Assessment to Examination weighting of a number of Year 1 modules with the intention of spreading the student workload throughout the semester, rather than experiencing peak-loads from multiple examination at the end of each semester.

In AIQR for 2015-16 academic year, the Institute reported on the initial offering of its MEng in Internet of Things Technologies with 60 ECTS Credits Research Project Pathway. In 2016-17, the programme initiated the first group of student to Research Methods Module encompassing project identification and proposal writing as formative assessment component accounting for 20% of the final grade for the research thesis. Department of Engineering also reviewed the integration of Work Placement, which was initiated in 2015-2016 academic year. Unlike the first offering where part of the student preparation for the placement (i.e., interview and placement allocation) was facilitated by our industry

training partners, in 2016-17 academic year, the process was successfully managed internally, after developing internal capacity for coordination and management of the entire process.

The institute continued to invest on building facilities and expertise (including accommodation of external partnerships), to initiate and expand infrastructure in order to enhance impact. For example, in August 2017, through symbiotic partnership with [VT Networks](#) as industry partner supporting the MEng in Internet of Things Technologies programme, the institute negotiated free installation of a [SigFox base station](#). The facility currently supports research in IoT, and students have also benefited from the ongoing partnership as VT Networks delivered two on-site demonstrations of SigFox technology to the research students.

As the institute works towards designation as Technological University, the TU4Dublin alliance formally agreed to a Joint Graduate Research School (JGRS) under an MOU signed in 2015. In the reporting period, and as part of the Structured PhD Programme of the JGRS, selected NFQ Level 9 modules at ITB were offered to students from DIT and ITT. The wider discipline range of student enrolment to the cross-campus shared modules has provided ITB students with a richer class environment. The masters students have greatly benefited from interacting with students undertaking PhD research and this experience has helped them to consider further research study as an option after completion of their masters level studies.

As a strategic objective to meet one of the Technological University designation criteria, intensification of postgraduate/research student recruitment enabled the Institute to double the numbers in its postgraduate student register. In QA-QE context, this positive outcome has necessitated the need to concurrently build adequate staff-capacity for research supervision (see description of the impacts of institutional review within the institution in Section 6.1 later) by concurrently supporting staff-development, and subsequently mentorship for newly qualified staff to enable them to undertake research supervision. In instances where there has been shortfall in internal capacity, the Institute has formally agreed and implemented co-supervision arrangements with other subject areas experts in the TU4Dublin Alliance (DIT, ITT).

Benchmarking of impacts and learner experiences, both nationally and internationally, are important in determining the pedagogical and research performances and impact, and determine other supports that learners will expect. It also enables the identification of room for possible improvement against best practice employed elsewhere in the HE sectors. In the reporting period, the Institute enrolled to [U-Multirank](#) a multidimensional, user-driven international ranking system of Higher Education Institutions (HEI). U-Multirank allows for comparison of performances in the five broad dimensions, including: Teaching & Learning; Research; Knowledge Transfer; International Orientation &; Regional Engagement. The Institute submitted data that could allow for institutional level comparisons in the 2018 reporting period.

As part of integrated supports for learners, the Institute maintains a *Careers Development Office* with the remit of supporting learner-preparation for and transition-into the workplace environments. This is facilitated by validation of industry relevant courses and programmes, some of which are in partnerships with Government Skills Programmes. For example, in the reporting period, ITB partnered with Technology Ireland ICT Skillnet to develop programmes in the Networking Technologies area, geared to providing work-ready graduates that are responsive to the changing needs of the industry. Information is also provided via scheduled discipline-specific career presentation events/forums by

potential employers from both the local and the EU labour markets, including eclectic multinational technology companies and pharmaceuticals industries.

Per the QQI Statutory Quality Guidelines, the Institute continues to maintain its documented policies and associated procedures for the assurance of the quality and standards of provision. This requires that such provisions forms part of the strategic management and be fit for purpose and appropriate to the Institute's context, which require periodic review and update of such policies. In the period covered by this report, the Institute reviewed a range of it policies that relate to the Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines. These include:

- 3AD08 Admissions Policy;
- 3HR51 - Recruitment & Selection Procedures (All Staff)
- 2MP04 Training and development policy
- 3HR29 Training & Development Procedure
- 3AD13 Procedure for admission of postgraduate students to masters by research and PhD programmes
- 3AD03 Registration of Full-time Students
- 3AD04 Research student induction and training
- 2MP19 Research Policy
- 3HR22 Performance Management and Development System (PMDS) Handbook
- 3CD07 Postgraduate student handbook
- Institute Teaching and Learning Strategy

As part of initiatives for harmonisation of policies and procedures towards developing unitary policy/procedures systems for the transformation to Technological University (TU), a range of project working groups were commissioned to start work in the formulation of policies and procedures covering the following areas that are specific to Quality Assurance and Quality Enhancement (QA, QE):

- QA-QE policies and procedures to taught programmes;
- QA-QE policies and procedures for research.

Other areas requiring harmonisation of policies and procedures as part of the Statutory QA Guidelines and for which work was commissioned in the reporting period include: Annual Leave for Academic/Non Academic Staff; Child Protection & Garda Vetting; Dignity at Work; Disciplinary Procedures; Grievance Procedures; Flexible working hours for new administrative and Library staff; Staff Progression Recruitment Policy / Selection Procedures, and; Starting Salary & Incremental Credit.

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

During the reporting period, the School of Business & Humanities, having achieved the critical mass in enrolled student numbers, was separated into two schools comprising; the School of Business, and the School of Humanities. Implementation of ITB Strategic Plan 2016-2019 is therefore undertaken by three schools, requiring each to structure and/or adopt any discipline specific QA-QE prescriptions related to; academic programme coverage, industry and social engagement, research, internal and external collaborations including international), infrastructure development etc.

Implementation of ITB Research Strategy was devolved to respective academic schools in recognition of enhanced staff qualification and growing experience in the conduct of research. The need to expand discipline specific research, enhancement of international collaborations, and academic-corporate collaborations are highlighted by the overall research performance indices declared in Part 3: Effectiveness and Impact (Section 2) covering the evidence of the impact of QA policies and procedures during the reporting period.

1.3 The schedule of QA governance meetings.

The following QA Governance meetings were held during the reporting period:

Governing Body Meetings:

09/09/2016;14/10/2016; 02/12/2016; 03/02/2017; 10/03/2017; 28/04/2017; 16/06/2017

Governing Body Audit & Risk Committee Meetings:

Year 2016: 23/02/2016; 22/03/2016; 28/07/2016; 23/08/2016; 28/11/2016

Year 2017: 24/02/2017; 06/06/2017; 05/09/2017; 28/11/2017

Academic Council (AC) Meeting:

19/09/2016; 18/10/2016; 15/11/2016; 08/12/2016; 10/02/2017; 05/04/2017; 09/06/2017

QA Subcommittee of AC Meetings:

17/10/2016; 15/03/2017

Research and Postgraduate Studies Committee of AC Meetings:

12/10/2016; 05/12/2016; 20/02/2017; 02/06/2017

Admissions sub-committee of AC Meetings:

24/10/2016; 23/02/2017

Course Board Meetings

Per the ITB QA Policy 3CD05 Academic Programme Boards-Policy and Procedures, all course boards are required to meet at least two times per semester, usually at the beginning of each semester. The course board retains records of its meetings and such records are available to other staff members involved in teaching the course(s). The following course board meeting were held in the reporting period:

Department of Business

Accounting & Finance: 17/11/2016; 23/03/2017

Business & IT: 27/10/2016; 29/03/2017

Digital Marketing: 15/11/2016; 30/03/2017

General Business: 22/11/2016; 15/03/2017

International Business: 08/11/2016; 04/04/2017

Sports Management & Coaching: 2 January 2017; 6 February 2017

Department of Engineering

Full Time Programmes: 02/11/2016, 30/03/2017, 05/04/2017

Part Time Programmes: 12/09/2016, 16/11/2016, 09/02/2017, 07/06/2017

Horticulture: 30/09/2016, 01/11/2016, 06/02/2017, 23/02/2017, 02/03/2017, 26/04/2016

Trades (Plumbing): 19/09/2016, 03/01/2017, 04/04/2017

Department of Humanities

Applied Social Studies in Social Care: 08/03/2017, 15/03/2017, 23/10/2017

Early Childhood Care and Education: 15/02/2017, 08/03/2017, 25/04/2017, 23/10/2017

Social & Community Development/Community and Youth Development: 08/03/2017, 23/10/2017

Department of Informatics:

Computing: 30/09/2016, 07/10/2016, 10/10/2016, 12/10/2016, 15/10/2016, 17/10/2016, 20/10/2016, 25/10/2016, 28/10/2016, 05/12/2016, 07/12/2016, 10/12/2016, 16/12/2016, 20/12/2016, 15/01/2017, 24/01/2017, 02/02/2017, 03/02/2017, 08/02/2017, 14/02/2017, 16/02/2017, 18/02/2017, 20/02/2017, 02/03/2017, 08/03/2017, 14/03/2017, 15/03/2017, 22/03/2017

Creative Digital Media: 17/11/2016, 05/10/2016, 07/12/2016, 26/01/2017

Section 2: Reviews in the reporting period

2.1 Internal reviews that were completed in the reporting period.

New programme validations 2016/17

Programme validation reports are published and available at:

<http://www.itb.ie/AboutITB/QualityAssuranceReports/gar.asp>

The new programmes that were validated in the reporting period were:

- BN045 *Higher Certificate in Science in Horticulture* (including BN310 Bachelor of Science in Horticulture, Level 7 Add-on)
- BN046 *Bachelor of Science in Process Instrumentation & Automation* (including BN315 Bachelor of Science in Process Instrumentation & Automation, Level 7 Add-on)
- BN772 Certificate in Digital Enterprise (Minor award of the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Digital Marketing).

Other internal course reviews

In respect of the Department of Engineering programmes, a review of Module ELTC H3013 Software Design & Quality introduced reflective practice as an assessment strategy. It introduced team-based assignment including presentation skills, and also increased the number digital learning objects available through Moodle VLE to support learning. Review of module ELTC H3027 Computer Architecture & Computer Systems reduced the number of stand-alone assessments, replacing them with a more integrative assessment approach. It introduced the use of case studies to aid learning, by requiring student engagement prior to introduction of course concepts in the classroom scenarios (flipped classroom)

For the School of Humanities, a review of placement programmes was undertaken and completed in June 2017. The review exercise covered identification of additional placement organisations, relationships with placement organisations, the timing of placement across three main programmes, and adequate resourcing of the planning and implementation. Module SACD H3045 *Skills for Professional Practice* was reviewed, with adjustment to the assessment breakdown adjusted to enhance the link between assessment and learning outcomes.

For the Department of Informatics, the following modules were reviewed and assessment breakdown moderated to commensurate with the expected learning outcomes: COMP H6038 Software Engineering 2; COMP H1033 Personal & Professional Development CFSM H1013 Computer Networks 1; COMP H6039 Computer Systems; DFCS H4019 Business Continuity Management & Cloud Security; MACS H6014 Secure Communications & Cryptography.

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

Number of new Programme Validations/Programme Approvals completed in the reporting year	3
Number of Programme Reviews completed in the reporting year	0
Number of Research Reviews completed in the reporting year	0
Number of School/Department/Faculty Reviews completed in the reporting year	0
Number of Service Unit Reviews completed in the reporting year	0
Number of Reviews of Arrangements with partner organisations completed in the reporting year	Not applicable

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

Composition of Panels	%
Internal	0
National	84
UK	8
EU	0
Student	0
Other (USA)	8

Chair Profile	%
Internal	0
Similar Institution	100
Different Institution	0
International	0

Section 3: Other Implementation Factors

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

A range of data are analysed and considered at the annual Strategic Planning Meeting of the Institute management team. Such include, among others: data for student recruitment/CAO forecasts by programme, learner progression, staffing allocations and programme budgets, ongoing research and industry engagement, and graduate recruitment events and first destination records. The programme and course board meetings that are scheduled in each semester consider student performance in continuous assessment examinations, and upon which extra supports to weaker learners are allocated where necessary. Course Board reports generated by the Quality Officer in the Registrar's Office are used to review external examiner comments and monitor learner success rates by individual programme modules. Relevant procedures requiring the use of data and the guideline for securing such data are covered under document such as:

- *3AD08 Admissions Policy;*
- *3AD14 Administrative procedures for the admission, registration and assessment of students taking courses in part-time;*
- *2MP27 Data Protection Policy.*

The Institute has continued to draw from the outcomes of the ISSE surveys. The Institute is cognisant that the staff and students are best placed to interrogate the ITB-specific data in ISSE surveys, understand its contexts, and thereby be able to plan for appropriate corrective actions/interventions to enhance learning experience. Therefore, the data has usually been presented to and considered by: the various Departments in the course of Curricula Design; Admission, Examinations and Quality Assurance sections in Registrar's Office, among others. For example, in the respective academic departments and schools, the data has been used to query any possible disparities between delivery full-time and part-time versions of similar programmes in respect of engagement, and subject specific challenges encountered by the respective groups.

In 2016, the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education launched its Learning Analytics and Educational Data Mining for Learning Impact project. The Institute was admitted as a partner in the Data-Enabled Student Success Initiative (DESSI). The project partners currently work collaboratively with the National Forum and other partners to develop Learning Analytics (LA) capacity at each partner institution. The project is also designed to identify common requirements across institutions that can be developed at a national level, including policy recommendations and/or tools. The project's four core principles are that: developments in learning analytics should support a holistic view of student success; taking a strategic institutional approach to learning analytics is both valuable and necessary; resources, tools and services should only be employed by HEIs to support learning analytics following a review of their suitability, scalability and adaptability to the specific context; and every effort should be made to share learning analytics services across the sector to avoid inefficiencies or duplication of effort. Future project area considerations include: developing common guidelines relating to data protection and compliance with GDPR, cross-institutional research projects to support evidenced-based learning analytics initiative, and development of simple analytics tools to aid in early identification of at-risk students and could be deployed in all institutions. For example, a research project on Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) data analysis and visualisation for use in the identification of students at risk of non-progression commenced

in late 2017. The project aims to create tools and process for the examination of VLE student data with a view to providing intervention mechanisms to discourage and/or minimise student withdrawal.

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

Enrolment in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) courses in pedagogy and learner assessment has enabled academic staff to enhance the range and quality of their approach to teaching and learning, including learner assessment. Enhancement of expertise in online delivery of courses specifically, has enabled academic staff to enhance flexibility of the Part-Time programmes thereby contributing to the strategic objective of expanding the enrolment of non-standard students in the Institute. The staff participation fees for any qualifying CPD programme is covered under existing staff educational support scheme. For example, the CPD events are offered on an ongoing basis by the Learning, Teaching and Technology Centre (DIT), the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, Athlone Institute of Technology's Learning and Teaching Unit, etc.

Other staff development efforts, specifically intended to enhance quality and quality assurance in teaching and research, and also to enable the institute to meet requirement of the Technological University designation criteria, have been encouraged and highly supported. For example, in the School of Humanities, 2 members of staff completed their doctorate programme in the reporting period. The school now has one third of academic staff (12) with level 10 qualification, and a further 8 academic staff are on PhD/EdD programmes. Engagement in CPD in teaching and learning in higher education continues to be facilitated across various programmes. Staff engagement with online delivery of courses, particular the *Information Provision and Advocacy Practice programme (IPAP)*, delivered to employees and volunteers across Citizen's Information Services. The IPAP programme was designed in collaboration with the Citizen's Information Board (CIB).

Staff development in the School of Informatics and Engineering has seen two staff gain their Masters and PhD qualifications, while several more are due to submit for examination in 2018. Also, in the reporting period, several staff qualified to progress from Assistant Lecturer to Lecturer Grade, having demonstrated qualification and commitment to supporting the school in the implementation of the strategic plan. Staff in the school continually engage with new technology and education supports in the development of their discipline areas. In the reporting period, a collaborative project aimed at developing a Competence-based Professional Development (CPD) framework for engineering staff who teach in higher education was initiated with the TU4Dublin Alliance partners. When completed, the framework will be used to recognise and support the alignment of formal and informal professional learning activities at different career stages of engineering educators.

3.3 A description of other implementation issues.

The Technological Higher Education Quality Framework (THEQF) was presented and adopted by the Academic Council as supplementary quality guidance documents. The framework contains a set of high-level, strategic principles developed specifically for the transformational Technological Higher Education Institutions to help them prepare for external QA engagements with agencies such as QQI and the HEA. The framework covers, principles of internal QA-QE in taught provisions, research, and engagement.

Through the Academic Council (Minutes February 10, 2017), it was highlighted that, from the QQI Annual Conference on December 15, 2016, there was a shift in quality approach from purely QA focus to continuous Quality Enhancement (QE). Subsequently, it was recommended that this was to guide all programmes and services in quality implementation matters.

Part 3: Effectiveness and Impact

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

1. Effectiveness

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

Per the requirements of the QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines, the Institute has in place a system of governance whose function, among others, includes the identification, assessment and management of risk. For objective periodical assessment of its systems, the Institute retained the services of PriceWaterhouseCoopers (PwC) under a three-year audit plan, starting from 2015. The functional categories of the audit coverage includes; strategic, regulatory/industry compliance, operational, financial, and information technology. The areas audited in this reporting period included, IT Systems Security and Controls, and the Student Identification and Retention. From the latter, as an example of effectiveness of QA policies and procedures, the audit identified that there was disparity in the way institutional data were communicated to staff and management to effect timely self-monitoring and planning purposes that could enhance learning experience. Therefore, a review and update of the roles and responsibilities of first year coordinators was updated to include the responsibility of ensuring the consistent and standard distribution of student retention related data.

The risk considerations extend to the maintenance of academic integrity of the Institute's programmes. During the reporting period, a range of integrity breaches in the form of plagiarism were recorded, investigated, and recommendations acted upon in line with Institute Policy [3AS08 Institute Procedural Guidelines for Dealing with Instances of Plagiarism in Assignments and Examinations](#). While the focus on plagiarism detection and prevention within the student community has been effective in minimising breaches, the Institute considers that it is a one-way conversation with learners. Therefore, as part of the overall reassessment of teaching and learning, and openness to good practices in the reporting period, the Institute sought for a broader pedagogical approach to further developing and fostering of academic integrity skills across the whole academic community. Towards the end of the reporting period, the Institute joined an international collaborative group that is working towards developing online tools for informing and fostering academic integrity as part of its core QA-QE processes. The [Academic Integrity](#) project consortium is led by [Epigeum Learning Solutions](#), which is part of the Oxford University Press. The output is scheduled for release in February 2019.

The institute has sought for and gained professional accreditations as QA marks for programmes for which it is deemed critical for competitiveness of graduates. Where applicable, such have continued to serve our graduates well. For example, professional accreditation of the different tiers of engineering programmes, for which mutual recognition of awards, based on verifiable *Substantial Equivalence* in the various professional engineering accords have enhanced graduate mobility internationally. Also, applicants to the Institute's Engineering programmes offered in part-time modes, are more aware of the significance of professional accreditation to their job mobility; hence, the applicants inquire on the same prior to registering for the programmes. Professional accreditation of programmes, where they apply, have also enabled the embedding of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) courses as viable pathways/opportunities for lifelong learning initiatives.

For the School of Humanities, the Social and Community Development/Community and Youth Development programme enhanced the engagement with its social partners. The programme, submitted an application for recognition by the All Ireland Endorsement Body (AIEB) for community work¹ (see: <http://communityworkendorsement.com/>) upon which it is anticipated that an AIEB review panel will visit the School in March 2018. A similar process for recognition of Youth Work by NSETS is at an early stage of development. For the Applied Social Studies – Social Care programmes, meetings and consultation with [CORU--the regulator for Health and Social Care Professionals](#) regarding the requisite registration continued through 2017. This was in preparation for the registration process that is scheduled to commence across all Social Care education providers in 2019. Internal preparations through review of placement and CORU education and training standards were initiated and are still ongoing in anticipation of this process. The Early Childhood Care and Education programme participated in an industry consortium that submitted an application to the Apprentice Council (AC), for a new apprenticeship in Early Childhood Studies and Practice. Although the application was unsuccessful, following the feedback received from the AC, the National Childhood Network (NCN) led consortium in which ITB are the co-ordinating education provider are currently undertaking appropriate industry consultations, and it is envisaged that the proposal will be resubmitted in the next call.

Graduates of the ITB School of Business currently gain exemptions in parts of professional examinations for the following professional bodies:

- (a) Institute of Chartered Accountants (ACA)--Full exemption for CAP 1 examination for 2.2 Honours graduates, based on a candidate obtaining 50% or more in examinations of relevant subjects;
- (b) Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA)--Exemption from F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, F7, and F9 at fundamental level.
- (c) Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA)--Exemption from C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, P1, F1, E1., P2, F2 E2.
- (d) Institute of Certified Public Accountants in Ireland (ICPAI)--Including: Full exemption for Formation Levels; Professional Level 1-- Auditing, Managerial Finance, based on students obtaining 50% or more in examinations of relevant subjects.
- (e) Irish Tax Institute (AITI): exemption from Accounting and Law Part 1.

Exemptions (a) through (e) are subject to five-year review cycles and revision by the respective professional bodies, and are based on students achieving clear passes in completion of specific modules.'

¹ The AIEB seeks to build an inclusive framework for endorsement of community work education and training at all levels in order to ensure the principles for quality community work as laid out in Towards Standards for Quality Community Work.

2. Impact

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

Teaching and Learning

A key institute-wide outcome from Programmatic Review in 2015-2016 was the prioritisation for the integration of substantial credit-bearing work-placement into applicable undergraduate programmes, as a means to foster work-readiness of the Institute graduates. For example, in the School of Business work placement was introduced as an elective to the Year 3 of the Accounting and Finance programme. The necessity for work placement in academic programmes had been reinforced by the outcomes of the 2016 ISSE survey, where its implementation in the Institute's programmes fared below the national average.

Considering that the timing, duration and specific learning objectives of work-placement modules vary between academic programmes of the Institute, there was need to develop compatible policy guidelines, i.e., that cover both the overarching cross-discipline requirements (employability skills), and the programme-specific requirements (technical skills). This was to enable effective implementation and continuous monitoring and evaluation. In the reporting period, the Academic Council constituted a working group to draft the policy for consideration in the second quarter of 2017-2018 academic year.

Research

The table below summarises the overall Institutional research performance (2012-2016).

Institution	Scholarly Output	Citation Count	Authors	Citation per publication	FWCI ²	h5-index ³
IT Blanchardstown	39	405	29	10.4	1.60	9

Other relevant performance indicators for ITB are:

- Publications in top 10% most cited worldwide 17.9% [Against 17.4% Ireland]
- Publications in top 10% journals by [CiteScore Percentile](#), 21.1% [Against 35.1% Ireland]
- Publications co-authored with international partners, 5.1% [Against 52.7% Ireland]
- Publications with both academic and corporate affiliations, 0.0% [Against 3.5% Ireland]

Whereas the overarching Institutional Research Strategy and underpinning QA policies and procedures have enabled the impacts depicted in the table above, the data highlights areas for possible improvement in the implementation of the elements of the institutional strategic plan related to research and scholarship. From the outlined research performance data, coupled with the overall institutional strategy and priorities in the transition to TU, adoption of the school/discipline-specific research strategies are intended to:

- (1) Place research informed learning at the heart of academic programmes, and upon which staff may elect to become research-active without undermining the efficiency of our undergraduate programme provisions and NFQ Level 6 through Level 8⁴.

² Field Weighted Citation Impact. This data is sourced from [SciVal](#) and explains how the number of citations compares with the average number of citations received by all other similar publications indexed in the Scopus database. FWCI of 1.00 indicates world average for similar publications. The FWCI 1.6 indicates that ITB publications have been cited 60% more than the world average for similar publications.

³ h5-index is the h-index for articles published in the last 5 complete years. h-index is an author-level metric defining both the productivity and citation impact of the author/scholar.

⁴ IOTI. 2013. A strategic position paper development by Heads of Research Group. IOTI, 13 pp.

- (2) Increase the number of postgraduate students undertaking research in each schools, and specifically train high calibre researchers through our innovative structured Masters and PhD Programmes.
- (3) Enhance collaborations with our stakeholders and within the current national research priority framework for Science Technology and Innovation (STI)⁵, to define the current and the near-future research priorities in order to develop the critical mass for the identified specialist research areas and subjects/themes.
- (4) Align research areas in each academic discipline with the national research priorities in STI.
- (5) Conduct world-class research in the areas identified in points (1), (2), and (3) above.
- (6) Enhance interdepartmental, interschool and external collaborative research, in order to gain insights into other disciplines that could be embedded into our research.
- (7) Continually collaborate with our stakeholders from industry, local communities, and other Science, Technology and Engineering consumer/user clusters in the application and extension of our research.
- (8) Aim for and achieve high research impacts of local and international importance, through our publications (short communication, conference papers, peer-reviewed journal papers, books etc.), innovations and patents, and other research spin-offs.

The outlined approach will ensure that on TU designation, the Institute will contribute to and draw from an enhanced and focused research management infrastructure, which will coordinate more extensive and focused research themes to ensure national impact.

3. Themes

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

Student Retention

Student retention information and data are captured for informed decision-making across all schools (e.g. Banner, Moodle and other staff records etc.). Extracts for the standardised formal course board reports, which detail the statistical information on student retention and non-progression rates, are also produced on an annual basis at the end of each academic year.

Enhancement of Learner Engagement

In response to an ISSE survey of 2017 questions: What does your institution do best to engage students in learning? What could your institution do to improve students' engagement in learning? The majority of responses (75% of all categorised responses) relate to four main themes, namely, need for:

- (a) Effective teaching provision— e.g., tutorials, seminars and other small group work, including the importance of timely feedback;
- (b) Quality of interactions— with staff and, to some extent, with other students + external help;
- (c) Linkages to the “real world”;
- (d) Technology enhanced learning.

⁵ Forfas. 2012. Report of the Research Prioritisation Steering Group, February 2012. 96 pp.

- (e) Means for tracking new students through to becoming proficient in independent learning (e.g., by offering more focused direction, incentivising attendance, compulsory group projects, regular meeting with tutors etc).

Staff Development

As the Institute progresses towards the transformation to a Technological University, there is cognisance that change creates uncertainty for staff, with latent potential to incur negative impacts on quality matters; therefore, engagement and communication throughout the change process is extremely important. To address the needs towards this transformation, the current strategic plan provides for development opportunities for both individual staff and course/programme teams. In the reporting period of this AIQR, up to 46 staff had enrolled in diverse courses at NFQ Level 9 and Level 10, aimed at supporting their work roles at ITB. Nine of the staff received their masters/doctorate awards in the reporting period.

Engagement/Collaborations with Enterprise and Social Partners

In May 2017 the Institute hosted a seminar on 'Brexit - the challenges and opportunities', delivered by a panel which included, Regina Doherty, TD, John McGrane, British Irish Chamber of Commerce and Anne Lanigan EI Brexit Manager. Stakeholders in attendance included, 30 representatives from the local industry, the Fingal Chamber network, Fingal County Council, the Local Enterprise Office, Enterprise Ireland clients and IDA clients. The event was organised by ITB School of Business, which also capitalised on this opportunity to identify how the School could collaborate with the stakeholders in education and training. Transactions at the seminar highlighted desirable graduate attributes as; communication skills, organization skills and interpersonal skills, experience gained from work placement, in addition to the expectation of appropriate technical expertise in the award domains.

Careers Planning and Orientation

The Institute maintains a Careers Development Office (CDO) with the remit to further enhancing the learners' basic employability skills. The CDO roles cover (among others): structured activities for giving students very early impression of professional identity and insights to the expected professional roles via guest speaker sessions, industry visits, and careers/recruitment events organised towards the end of each academic year. The CDO also provides scheduled training sessions in CV preparation and interview skills. Perennial *careers flagship events* include TechTalk sessions with enterprise. An example of such event is captured in the [Intel Ireland TechTalk Video](#), which highlights the positive benefits of this proactive approach to enhancing the employability of our graduates.

Benchmarking

Benchmarking is necessary for performance quality assessment and enhancement of academic and research programmes, and other supports provided to learners. These are typically benchmarked against standards of best practice both nationally and internationally. The Institute enrolled to U-Multirank as the initial process to benchmark itself against similar institutions worldwide, including providing the necessary platform for the future rating of individual academic programmes.

Part 4: Quality Enhancement

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

4.1 Improvements and Enhancements for the Reporting Period

Improvements or enhancements, impacting on quality or quality assurance, that took place in the reporting period.

In the reporting period 2016/2017, the Institute continued to implement the recommendations from Programmatic Review 2015. The referred implementation activities primarily included (among others); the requirement for individual programmes to clearly articulate the assessment strategies that appropriately balance the proportions of formative and summative assessment events. This considered factors such as modular assessment breakdown, number and type of assessment events used, linkage of assessment events to learning outcomes, and clearer specification of reassessment opportunities and schedules. Clearer descriptions of the nature of the feedback (i.e., how, where and when they are delivered to learners) and assessment-feedback loops that ensure that all learners obtain the benefit of this feedback in a timely manner are to be agreed and implemented. In order to minimise and where possible avoid duplication of assessments, programmes were required to identify possibilities for cross-modular assessment that could validate the learning, while enhancing the learner experience.

In addition to the above, the School of Humanities engaged in the following activities that impact on quality assurance and enhancement; Planning and preparation for Registration of APSS Social Care programme(s) with CORU; Submission to AIEB for recognition of our Social and Community Development/Community and Youth Development programme(s), and; engaged in new apprenticeship programme development and processes, e.g., development of occupational profiles, and implantation of professional awards standards.

The Institute continued to offer the Peer Mentoring Programme (PMP) to all incoming student to Year 1 of study. Learner feedback to-date has continued to indicate that PMP contributes to the decision by some students to continue with their courses after the first year of study, and also assisted others to settle at ITB during the transition into higher education.

4.2 Quality Enhancement Highlights

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

The School of Business integrated the Microsoft Office Specialist Certification (MOS) to the Information Systems modules across all Year 1 and Year 2 of programmes. This accords learners with the opportunity to complete the industry certification of proficiency in Microsoft Office suite of products as a supplement to their final awards. The department also runs cross-modular integrated assessment with a capstone module in BN772 Digital Enterprise programme, which is purposely intended to enhance the cross-functional skill of graduates in anticipation of their employment role. The Institute extended the piloting the Global Classroom Concept in partnerships with Durham College (Canada) and a range of international facilitators, with the aim of providing learners with an international learning experience. The learning activities cover diverse topical issues within the academic programmes in the School of Business. In practice, a Global Class runs for 90 minutes and employs interactive videoconferencing to bring together students from different international locations, with a selected topic/subject matter guest leading the classroom presentation and activity from a fourth location. In the reporting period, the global classroom pilot covered (among others): Inequality in Society – Facing up to the challenges; World View; The interactive classroom; Racial Diversity; Health and Wellness; Sustainability and Peak Oil. The various sessions had student participant from ITB, Durham College (Canada), Zambia, Christ College (Bangalore, India), Sakhnin College & the Moffet Institute (Tel Aviv, Israel), and Budapest Business School (Hungary).

In the reporting period, the School of Informatics and Engineering undertook the development of two *Learn + Work Programmes*, which are intended to enhance graduate employability skills by concurrently offering students opportunities for learning in the work-place. The referred courses include:

- [Bachelor of Science in Process Instrumentation & Automation](#);
- [Higher Certificate in Science in Computing in Networking Technologies](#).

The *Learn + Work* curriculum model requires student to attend lectures and practical sessions in college for 4 months annually, followed by 8 months in the work place, but with one day per week back in the college. For the Higher Certificate programme, the one-day attendance at ITB is used to train and prepare the students for industrial-certification exams, which offers a dual-certification value to the course and strengthens their qualification and employability on successful completion. The programmes have received significant attention from prospective partners/employers/businesses such that the [ICT Skillnet Ireland](#) has stepped in to fund these courses. The ICT Skillnet Ireland is also funding two unique part-time and fully online upskilling courses at masters level (NFQ Level 9), including;

- [BN528 Master of Science in Computing \(Applied Cyber Security\)](#), and;
- [BN529 Master of Science in Computing \(Applied Data Science & Analytics\)](#)

Work began on the tender for a new Library Management System (LMS) started in Sumer 2016, as part of the Educampus Refresh Project of software applications covering library functions (www.educampus.ie/applications/library). Koha Open-source Integrated Library System (www.koha.org/) was subsequently selected as the new LMS for the 13 Institute of Technology Libraries, and implementation began in early 2017 and all systems are now live on Koha. Upgrade features of the new LMS that enhance the student learning experience include: DSpace digital

repository (ITB currently uses Arrow <https://arrow.dit.ie/>); Coral – Electronic Resource Management tool; Room booking software; PC reservation; Past Examination Papers resources; WordPress for personal website or blogs; Kortext reading list tool (www.kortext.com/), and; MARC uplift – enhancement of catalogue records. Access to library resources online is now based on the Single-Sign-On system, i.e., students now need only a single username and password (i.e., ITB username and password) to login to their Library account and all online databases. The library subscribed to additional business/marketing database (Marketline) which has had a higher usage statistics since January 2017. The library staff delivered 61 tutorial session to students in 2016-17, and also enhanced the online tutorials on Moodle VLE. Fund acquired through the AIB Innovation Fund Scheme was used to develop both hard copy and electronic tutorial material covering academic writing including approach to literature review as part of project/research work.

Part 5: Objectives for the coming year

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

5.1 Quality Assurance and Enhancement System Plans

Plans for quality assurance and quality enhancement relating to strategic objectives for the next reporting period.

The ITB Strategic Plan 2016-2019 which also encapsulates the progressive transformation into a Technological University, focuses on six thematic areas, namely: Teaching and Learning; Research Enterprise and Innovation; Engagement; Staff Empowerment; Infrastructure Expansion, and; Structure and Systems Expansion. Implementation of the plan under all the referred themes, and which has substantially been devolved to Schools and Departments with appropriate overarching oversight, will require continuous monitoring and reviews per the QQI Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines, and THEQF Part IV (Internal Quality Assurance & Enhancement of Engagement).

The following sample extracts summarise a range of initiatives that will contribute to quality assurance and quality enhancement relating to the outlined strategic objectives:

- (1) ITB will continue to use the ongoing development of the QA-QE processes for the TU to update its own policies and procedures to meet statutory obligations and also adopt best practices to cover the interim period to TU designation. For example, the Quality Assurance/Enhancement (QA-QE) working group of the TU4Dublin Project has scheduled a workshop that will lead the interrogation of the grading systems used in the Alliance towards their harmonisation as part of the Technological University (TU) project. The workshop to be delivered by external consultants with vast experiences in assessment and academic integrity will specifically cover: Purposes of assessment and matters of academic judgement; Core principles of grading systems; Review international systems for grading including institutional examples; regulations and operational issues associated with grading and final awards, and; need for consensus building towards harmonisation of quality guidelines. It is envisaged that ITB will use outcomes of the workshop to update its own policies and procedures, and also adopt elements of best practice to cover its interim operations.
- (2) Section 3.1 provides a description of how data is used to support quality assurance and the management of the student learning experience at ITB. Through a proposal supported by the Academic Council, the Institute has established a working committee for Learning Analytics policy development and the commissioning of LA focused projects that could aid in overall strategic decision-making.
- (3) Through the devolution of elements of the strategic plan implementation to its three schools and four departments, the Institute will strive to enhance the KPIs supporting taught programmes and discipline-specific research. For example (see summary performance in Part 3 of this report): increasing focus on publications covering high impact journals; seek international collaborations in policy research through its membership of the Centre for Policy Research and Practice, and; seek publications with corporate partners.
- (4) The institute management has adopted a new mode of Strategic Planning and Quality Enhancement process that identifies (on an annual basis, and as part of the planning process) and prioritises activities specifically geared towards the enhancement of learning experience.

5.2 Review Plans

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

The School of Business is reviewing its Business and Information Technology programme (BN010) to include coverage of cyber security, business intelligence and data mining. The school is also enhancing its external partnerships and collaborations with different sports agencies, through the National Sports campus. Through such partnerships, it is envisaged that the latent opportunities to support the development of programmes to meet the needs of such agencies, e.g., Irish Amateur Boxing Association (IABA), will be purposefully evaluated, and supported. This could be in the form of in new course provisions, or CPD training within the National Framework of Qualifications.

The Department of Engineering currently offers a Certificate in Industrial Automation ([Programme BN 742](#)) as a Special Purpose Award. In the period covered by this report, the Department rolled out the [Bachelor of Science in Process Instrumentation and Automation](#) (NFQ Level 7). For the next reporting period, the department will undertake a mapping exercise of modules offered in the Special Purpose Award to the equivalent modules in the referred BSc programme, with the objective of defining the criterion for progression to the full award and consider any exemptions if justifiable from equivalence of the individual module contents.

New programmes that are under consideration by the School of Humanities include: Special Purpose Award in Leadership in Intercultural Communities; Special Purpose Award in Volunteer Management; Bachelor of Arts Honours in Counselling and Psychotherapy; Delivery of a work-based Bachelor of Arts (Ordinary) in Early Childhood Care and Education, and; an Add-on Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Applied Social Studies – Social Care.

In cognisance of the impending CINNTE Quality Review Cycle in 2020, the Institute has scheduled the review of its facilities and services beginning in September (see Section C: Timetable for review of facilities and services in policy document 2MP31 *Institute Review Policy*). The outputs of this process will contribute to the Institutional Self-Assessment Report (ISER). In the meantime, the Institute has been reviewing and updating the various QA-QE policies to conform to the current strategic plan and to lead the ISER process.

5.3 Other Plans

- (1) The Institute was invited to and has joined an international consortium for the development of *Academic Integrity* online courses. The project has been commissioned by [Epigeum Learning Solutions](#) (part the Oxford University Press). The [Development Group Members](#) are working in conjunction with an international team of higher education curriculum experts to determine best practice in academic integrity. The project outcome is expected to be a suite of online courses for both student and academic staff, forming a flexible multi-stream approach to fostering integrity culture in higher education. The expected date of completion is September 2018.
- (2) In September 2017, the HEA communicated the requirement for HEIs to develop and maintain “*Employability and Employment Guide*” covering all their academic programmes. The

requirement covers substantial aspects of implementation of quality assurance and quality enhancement relating to institutional strategic objectives for the next reporting period, including:

- (a) approach to employability in the context of curriculum content (including work placement opportunities);
- (b) Career planning, employment services and employment outcomes (employment rates);
- (c) External stakeholder participation in course development and delivery;
- (d) Courses accreditation/endorsement by professional and/or state bodies;
- (e) Overall approach to the promotion of enterprise and entrepreneurship;
- (f) Approach and opportunities for personal development and opportunities for development of employability skills outside the curriculum

The Academic Council has subsequently authorised the development of a strategy to align the careers services with student life-cycle starting from enrolment, and to partner with academic programmes in the development, integration and delivery of employability skills and career development learning in the curriculum. To meet the referred requirements, ITB intends to amend a number of QA-QE related policies and procedures, including (among others): 2MP01 *Design, validation and accreditation of new academic courses*; 3AC05 *Policy and procedure for proposal, development and validation of minor, supplemental and special purpose award types*. The implementation will require additional information on ITB website and subsequent integration with Akari Curriculum Management.

- (3) As part of its strategic plan for expansion of capacity and reach, the institute has set an ambitious target for 4,500 enrolled students by 2020 (at approximately 200 FTEs year-on-year increment). This is aimed at meeting regional skills demand while maintaining a balance of NFQ levels, by developing new demand-focused academic programmes each year to support achievement of the ambitious student-growth targets.
- (4) In order to expand the reach and flexibility of programmes and to provide for the requirements for lifelong learning supports, the Institute intends to further develop the infrastructure for online delivery of programmes to enhance learning experiences. These plans are cognisant of the requirement to observe good practice as outlined in the Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Flexible and Distributed Learning⁶.
- (5) Through staff development and effort consolidations by the academic schools, the Institute plans to extend its international partnerships and collaborations with the industry sectors pertaining to its academic disciplines where it is currently underperforming against the national benchmarks (see Part 3, Section 2-Impact).

⁶ QQI. 2016. Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Flexible and Distributed Learning. White Paper published for consultation. 28pp. [This has since been re-orientated and retitled to; Topic-Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines for Blended Learning, and is due to publication in 2018].

Part 6: Periodic Review

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

6.1 The Institution and External Review

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

In the reporting period, the Institute continued to implement the recommendations arising from Programmatic Review 2015, namely:

- (1) Restructuring of relevant programmes to enable inclusion of Work Placement to enhance a range of transferable skills and enhance work-readiness of graduates. To implement this, the Institute has revised policies that relevant to all students undertaking placement/field work as part of their programmes of study.
- (2) That programmes promote and/or explores how students may access opportunities for industry accreditation in parallel with their programmes of study;
- (3) Establishment of a more sustainable staffing model and support groups for the delivery of online learning.
- (4) Development of strategies within schools for supporting staff development in teaching, learning and research. It is noteworthy that in for the reporting period of this AIQR, up to 46 staff had enrolled in diverse courses at NFQ Level 9 and Level 10 and aimed to support their work roles at ITB. Nine of the staff received their masters/doctorate awards in the reporting period.
- (5) Development of formal school research plan/strategy to provide guidance, and foster research initiatives and promote greater research activity across disciplines within the school. Capacity building is being fostered through mentorships provided for new research supervisors.
- (6) Revisions of programme assessment strategies to ensure balance between formative and summative assessment events (refer to section 4.1 earlier).

Through the communications and briefs received at the QQI Launch of the CINNTE quality review cycle for higher education institutions, ITB is cognisant of the schedule of its next Institutional Review in 2020. The Institute is also aware that the referred review is synchronous to the review of DIT and IT Tallaght who are its partners in the TU4Dublin Alliance.

6.2 Self-Reflection on Quality Assurance

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

For about five years now, the Institute has been working with partners towards designation as part of the first Technological University in Ireland (TU). The expected performance criteria include (among others): provide teaching and facilitate learning that is informed by research; provide opportunity for staff and students to conduct research; collaborate on joint research projects with other institutions, and; support a body of research and pursue excellence in the conduct of such research. All three require a robust quality framework to attain success and make impact.

For taught programmes, all academic departments review their teaching, learning and assessment practices on an ongoing basis, and specifically aimed at quality enhancement. The processes are managed by the Academic Programme Boards and Course Boards under 3CD05 Academic Programme Boards-Policy and Procedures, under course monitoring policy and procedure (Policy document 3CD06).

As part of the Strategic Plan 2016-2019, the Institute set out to strengthen its research, enterprise and innovation capability, by: developing the research culture to foster and support research, innovation and enterprise initiatives; broadening the research, enterprise and innovation capacity, build capability and enhance performance, and; deepening the integration of research and scholarship into academic programmes. Prior to 2016, the Institute maintained an overarching Research Policy and Strategy that served it well (Policy document 2MP19), considering the small numbers of registered postgraduate students. Subsequently, and in the period covered by this report, the Institute has proactively engaged in expanding both its research capacity in respect of staff conducting research, and also the number of postgraduate students registered in research programmes at both masters and doctorate levels. With the growing research student numbers, in 2017 the Institute undertook to devolve the research strategy to the respective three schools. Each school currently maintains a Research Strategy as part of overarching quality assurance process. The aim is to grow discipline-specific research. See Part 3 for outline of effectiveness and impact of ITB's quality assurance process covering research.

6.3 Themes

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

Together with our partners in the TU4Dublin Alliance, the Strategic Objectives of the Institute in the reporting period was to advance the development of the framework for transforming into a Technological University. The implementation of Strategic Plan 2016-2019 has focused on maintaining the support to learning experience at ITB, while setting the core activity pathway towards meeting the eligibility criteria, and the prescribed developmental trajectories subsequent to designation as a Technological University. The plan has outlined six primary strategic goals, which form the important developmental themes that will be relevant to the periodic review of ITB. They include:

- (1) Enhancement of teaching & learning;
- (2) Strengthening the social and economic impact of research, enterprise and innovation;
- (3) Foster if visible and effective engagement with key stakeholders;
- (4) Staff development and empowerment towards TU designation;
- (5) Expansion of capacity and reach of the Institute, and;
- (6) Enhancement of service provisions to enrich learning experience.

Through collegial efforts, the Institute has drawn comprehensive lists of *Indicative Actions* under each of the above headings. While generally lining up actions in areas with potential to achieve high impact, each school/ department is now required to focus on areas that will maximise contribution to all the six themes, thereby enabling a cumulative return depicting effectiveness and high impact in its mission.

The HEA System Performance Framework (SPF) considers national educational priorities upon which it has set out the process for evaluation of institutional performance under seven themes, namely:

- Regional clusters;
- participation, equal access and lifelong learning; excellent teaching and learning and quality of student experience;
- high quality, internationally competitive research and innovation;
- enhanced engagement with enterprise and community and embedded knowledge exchange; enhanced internationalisation, and;
- institutional consolidation.

It has been established that requirements in the SPF outlined above, are congruent to the themes of the Institute's Strategic Plan as outlined above. Implementation of ITB Strategic Plan currently focuses on KPIs associated with the stated themes and having regard to our Institution Mission. Therefore, performance and effectiveness/impact of the quality assurance and quality enhancement policies and procedures under these themes will continue to be relevant in the subsequent periodic review.

The Institute is also cognisant of key national priorities and goals that are envisioned in a range of active national education and training strategy documents, e.g., National Skills Strategy 2025, National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030, Action Plan for Education 2016-2019 etc. For example, Action Plan for Education 2016-2019⁷, targets to: Improve the learning experience and the success of learners; Improve the progress of learners at risk of educational disadvantage or learners with special educational needs; Help those delivering education services to continuously improve; Build stronger

⁷ DOES. 2016. Action Plan for Education 2016-2019, Department of Education and Skills Strategy Statement. 70 pp.

bridges between education and the wider community, and; Improve national planning and support services. The Institute believes that Key Performance Indicators in implementation of its current Strategic Plan 2016-2019 captures the spirit of the outlined national endeavours, and therefore intends to make the necessary impact by addressing them effectively. The Institute's focus will be on achieving alignment with such priorities for maximum impacts for the region it serves; therefore, initiatives towards such alignments and/or realignments with the national/regional educational priorities will be relevant in the subsequent periodic review.

Lastly, the Institute is also aware of the importance, hence, the imperatives for equality provisions in its operations. Therefore, it has constituted a representative working group to lead deliberations on equality issues such as gender equality and race equality in order to probe and understand its own contexts, and to develop and foster best practice for compliance (Athena SWAN Charter, Gender Equality Charter, and Race Equality Charter). These and related themes have a bearing on establishment of a conducive working and learning environment; hence, on learning experience, and therefore will be relevant in the subsequent periodic review.