

Institute of Technology, Sligo

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.

Institute of Technology, Sligo is located in the North-West of Ireland. The campus on the outskirts of Sligo was established in 1970 as a Regional Technical College and today provides a range of third level programmes in Business & Social Sciences, Science, and Engineering, through undergraduate level to Masters and PhD. In addition, apprenticeship programmes are delivered in a dedicated technology facility.

The Institute is accredited as a member of the European Credit Transfer Scheme for Higher Education Awards and was awarded the Extended European Erasmus University Charter in 2007. Delegated Authority was granted by QQI to award academic qualifications in all subject areas up to taught Masters. Delegated Authority was also granted for research at Level 9 and Level 10 in the areas of Environment, Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering.

The Institute approved its new strategic plan, which contains the following pillars:

1. Higher Education Landscape
2. Teaching and Learning Environment
3. Research and Enterprise Engagement
4. Partnerships and External Engagement
5. Meeting Learner needs
6. Organisation and Governance

The Strategic Pillars are underpinned by the organisation, its governance, staff, finances, infrastructure and communication.

The current strategic plan can be found at <https://www.itsligo.ie/about-it-sligo/publications/>

It is the policy of IT Sligo to have procedures in place to ensure that the quality of its programmes and awards meet the internal specifications and those of other bodies empowered to make specifications. The Quality Assurance policy is framed within the context of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), the Quality and Qualifications Act 2012 and the determinations of QQI. The Quality Assurance policy:

- Is designed to ensure the quality of awards, programmes and the teaching and learning process
- provides for openness, transparency and accountability in the work of the institute.
Is subject to continuous review and improvement underpinned by evidence based analysis
- Is published and available publicly

The learning process in IT Sligo is student centred. Quality assurance policy and procedures underpin this by incorporating within the overarching policy the specific requirement of IT Sligo that all learners:

1. Are treated fairly, consistently and with courtesy and respect
2. Are enabled to provide feedback about their academic experience
3. Will have opportunities, as appropriate, to participate in committees
4. While acknowledging competing demands on the budget, will have access to the best student support services that the Institute can provide.
5. to student support services as provided by the Institute
6. Are provided with useful and relevant information in relation to courses
7. Will receive information on programme content, assessment procedures and expectations
8. Will be provided with the relevant institutional regulations and the appropriate penalties for breach of regulations
9. Are exposed to a variety of teaching methodologies
10. Will have reasonable access to lecturing staff for individual consultation
11. Will receive a course timetable
12. Will receive timely, specific and adequate feedback on assessments
13. Will have access to all relevant policies and procedures and that procedures will be in place to cater for all substantiated mitigating circumstances in deciding a student's progression.

2. Quality assurance decision-making fora

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

The Academic Council of IT Sligo is the institution level quality assurance decision making fora. The Academic Council has established a number of committees that carry out specific duties and tasks that are then approved by Academic Council. The committees are

- Planning and Coordination committee
- Academic Processes committee
- Research and Innovation committee
- Learning, Teaching and Assessment committee
- National Higher Education Strategy committee
- Collaborative Monitoring and Review Academic Committee

In quality assurance the majority of the remit will fall to the Academic Processes Committee.

The Academic Processes Committee

The Institute has a responsibility to fairness and consistency in assessment and that the rights of full time and part-time learners are acknowledged and enshrined in its procedures and policies.

This Committee is responsible for establishing procedures and policies in relation to student admissions to the Institute including non-standard and mature students, students attending part time programmes and the recognition of prior learning. It is responsible for maintaining documentation on admission policies and procedures.

This Committee is also responsible for policies and procedures in respect of the academic standards of all programmes and examinations. It is also responsible for recommending the appointment of external examiners to the Academic Council and for agreeing Marks and Standards and for issuing regulations for the proper running of examinations.

However other Academic Council Committees will be involved in Quality Assurance functions relevant to their remit. An example of this would be that the Research and Innovation committee would be involved in Quality Assurance for Research Postgraduates.

Further information of the work of the Academic Council and its Committees can be found here.

<https://www.itsligo.ie/about-it-sligo/administration/registrar/academic-council-committees/>

Quality Assurance in the Institute's operations is achieved, managed and continuously improved through an accredited Quality Management System based on a central Institute Procedures Manual and a comprehensive suite of written Procedures. Procedures are developed and approved through the Executive Committee, the Academic Council or the Governing Body (as appropriate to each sphere of responsibility).

This system is managed by the Quality Assurance unit within the Registrar's Office. The Quality Assurance system is reviewed annually within that unit, which reports on the outcome of the review to the Academic Council. It is also reviewed externally as part of regular Programmatic and Institutional reviews. The Internal Audit Committee, which reports to the Governing Body audits the operation of Procedures on an on-going basis.

Routine Quality Assurance in programme delivery is monitored and developed through Programme Boards who gather data on student and programme performance and report on these through appropriate committees to the Academic Council. Monitoring also includes analysis of feedback from external examiners and from students, through student surveys at module and programme level and via the findings from the national student survey.

New Programme Validations are initially proposed to the Planning and Coordination Committee of the Academic Council. If approved to proceed, a full new programme submission document is prepared. Every new programme is validated by an external panel of experts comprising, typically, a Chairperson (at Registrar or equivalent level), two external academics and at least one representative of the industrial sector. The validation process includes a circulation of the programme documentation to the Panel followed by a site visit and the issuing of a report of the visit with the

findings and recommendations/conditions of the Panel. These recommendation and conditions are audited within 6 months of the programme delivery commencing.

Programmatic Reviews: All existing programmes are re-validated every 5 years or sooner. The process commences with a self-evaluation process whereby each programme board reviews the performance of its programmes including feedback from students, graduates, external examiners and the industry. The programme board also makes recommendations for modifications to the programme, based on the findings from feedback and their own internal review.

All Programmatic Reviews are evaluated by an external panel of experts over a 2.5 day period. The panel typically comprises a Chair with experience of Programmatic Reviews and academic and industry experts in each of the discipline areas being put forward for re-validation. There is also student and graduate representation and where there is a particular issue (e.g. online delivery) an expert in that area is also included.

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.

Chapter 2 of the Quality Manual outlines the academic policies, procedures, work practices and guidelines used in the Institute for the validation of all Higher Education academic programmes and the approval process for delivery of these programmes together with the on-going maintenance of their quality.

The first step in the process is for the programme development team to present a proposed new academic programme to the School Policy Committee.

The second step is for the Head of School to submit a revised EAP 1 to the Executive Committee, who will review the proposed resource requirements and the increased effective use of existing resources arising from the proposal.

The third step is for the Head of Department, together with the Development team to submit the EAP 1 to the Planning & Coordination Committee of the Academic Council. The EAP 1 form is in the process of being revised.

Validation refers to the process by which the Academic Council of the Institute, following a recommendation from an External Peer Review Panel, formally recognises a module or a programme as constituting a body of learning leading to a specified award in a designated discipline area.

Approval of a programme refers to the process by which the Governing Body of the Institute, with a recommendation from the Executive Committee formally agrees to provide the resources to deliver a programme of learning. Chapter 2 of the Institute Quality Manual is located [here](#).

Policies

Embedded Awards Cdev/001

Proposal to Award Bonus Points for Honours LC Mathematics Cdev/002 00

Titles of Programmes to Be Submitted For Validation Cdev/003 00

These policies and procedures will be accessed through links in the new online Quality manual.

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 has, as part of its quality assurance procedures, systematic arrangements for evaluation and for auditing the effectiveness of learner assessment procedures to ensure that they are, in the context of the national framework of qualifications, fair in practice, consistent and in compliance with Institute and QQI standards.

The standard for validation of programmes by QQI, which provides a basis for IT Sligo's policy are described in Section 45 (3) (b) of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 as follows*Establish procedures which are fair and consistent for the assessment of enrolled learners to ensure the standards of knowledge, skill or competence determined by the Authority under section 49 (1) are acquired, and where appropriate, demonstrated, by enrolled learners*

Chapter 3 of the Quality Manual describes the processes and procedures utilized by the Institute related to the assessment of learners.

Chapter 3 of the Institute Quality Manual is located [here](#).

Assessment is covered in the Institute's Marks and Standards (which will become Chapter 13 of the new online Quality manual). See [here](#).

Policies

Guidelines for The Provision Of Assistance To Students With Special Needs During Formal Assessments
Adm/012

Student Practice Placement Corg/003

Arrangements for Sitting Of Continuous Assessments Exam/001

Conduction of Examination Boards Exam/002

Inputting Of Examination Results Exam/003

Role of Course Boards (Programme Boards) Prior To Examination Board Meetings Exam/004

Procedures

Preparation of a Course for Online Delivery Cdev002

Continuous Improvement of an Online Course Cdev003

Fees for Qualifying Exams Exam003

Maintenance and Storage of Examination Materials Exam004

Special Consideration by Exam Board Exam007

Application for Qualifier Examinations Exam008

Provide Reasonable Accommodation in Examinations for Students with Disability or Long-Term Medical Conditions Exam009

Science Attendance at Classes Exam011

RPL for Module Exemption or Credit and For Initial or Advanced Admission to a Programme Exam012

Consideration of Ex Exam Report Exam013

To Effect a Change in Official Examination Result Broadsheet Exam014

Request for Transcript of Examination Results As Issued By Exam Boards Exam015

Plagiarism Exam016

Request for Deferral of an Examination Subject or Subjects Exam019

Request for a Duplicate Parchment And Or European Diploma Supplement Exam020

Disciplinary Procedures for Students (Examinations) Exam024

Collection and Disposal of Obsolete Examination Materials Exam025

Examination-Feedback-Review-And-Appeal Exam027

The Exam Paper Generation Process Exam029

Application for Extension of Continuous Assessment Deadline(S) Exam030

Exit with an Embedded Award Exam031

These policies and procedures will be accessed through links in the Quality manual.

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 Code of Practice for the Quality Assurance of Postgraduate Research is Chapter 8 of the Quality Manual and also a stand-alone document available on the website for staff, students and other stakeholders. It sets out the context of postgraduate research at the Institute, the process flow, the quality assurance of all elements of the process and all relevant procedures and forms.

The Code of practice can be found [here](#).

The associated forms are:

- RES/CoP/F01 Postgraduate Student Registration Form
- RES/CoP/F02 Research Registration/Transfer Proposal Assessment Report Form
- RES/CoP/F03 Student Progress Form
- RES/CoP/F04 Supervisor Progress Form
- RES/CoP/F05 Transfer Between Registers Form
- RES/CoP/F06.1 External Examiner Report Form (Masters), 6.2 (PhD)
- RES/CoP/F07.1 Internal Examiner Form (Masters), 7.2 (PhD)
- RES/CoP/F08 Notice of Intent to Submit Form

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.

Information for applicants applying for 1st year or advanced entry is located

<https://www.itsligo.ie/study-at-it-sligo/applying/how-to-apply-2/>

Access Office

The role of the Access Office is intended to encourage and support students who have not been traditionally represented in third level education. Specifically, the Access Office provides support services and access routes for education for students with disabilities, specific learning difficulties, those from disadvantaged backgrounds and mature students, to make the transition to third level education and to participate fully and progress within the course of study.

For more information, please see our website:

<https://www.itsligo.ie/student-hub/student-support-services/access-office/>

Student Assistance Fund

The Student Assistance Fund aims to ensure that disadvantaged students receive financial supports to enable them to fully benefit from their studies and in particular to assist them in overcoming financial obstacles which may otherwise cause them to abandon their studies. All students attending Full Time Undergraduate or Postgraduate course of not less than one year's duration are eligible to apply. It is expected that applicants would be experiencing acute or unexpected hardship. Any tuition or registration fees must be paid in full before students can receive funding from the Student Assistance Fund.

For more information, please see our website:

<https://www.itsligo.ie/student-hub/student-support-services/access-office/current-students/student-assistance-and-childcare-fund-201415/>

Retention

IT Sligo wants to attract and respond to the needs of a diverse range of students through the provision of a supportive, inclusive and quality learning environment. Our ability to attract, retain and graduate students are issues that require much consideration. A diverse student population, widening participation and different levels of preparedness for higher education combined with many internal and external issues, all have an impact on retention levels. In recognising that many factors can be at play in student's early withdrawal from college, it follows that a collaborative approach is required in order to improve student retention rates. In line with the Strategic Plan, the Student Retention Policy has been devised to address the issues presenting to IT Sligo.

Student Services

The aim of Student Support Services at IT Sligo is to provide a comprehensive and caring service to help our students achieve their full academic and personal potential. Our motto is "Caring for our Students". Services on offer to students include:

- Access Office
- Counselling
- Medical Service
- Pastoral Care Service
- Careers Service
- International Office
- General Services
- Sports and Recreational Facilities
- Student Clubs and Societies
- Student Orientation
- Students Union
- Welfare.

For more information, please see our website: <https://www.itsligo.ie/student-hub/student-support-services/>

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

The RPL Assessment Portfolio Tool on the website, <http://www.myexperience.ie>, help students build an online portfolio to help them gain access or advanced entry into a higher education programme in the Institutes of Technology in the Connacht-Ulster region including Galway-Mayo IT, LYIT and IT Sligo. The toolkit includes an information website and an online RPL application tool for candidates looking for access or advanced entry to a higher education programme.

Digitary

Institute of Technology Sligo now issues academic documents online through a secure electronic document system. This system enables graduates to access their documents online and allows recruiters and others to verify the authenticity of these electronic documents via this secure website hosted at Institute of Technology Sligo. The system uses highly secure technologies and is much more secure than traditional paper verification methods.

The European Diploma Supplement (EDS)

The European Diploma Supplement is issued to graduates of Higher Education Institutions in addition to their degree or certificate. It provides information regarding the award which is not available on the official parchment such as the skills and competences acquired, the level of the qualification and the results achieved.

Policies

Admission Policy - Scoring System - Pass Plus Work Experience Adm/001

Admissions Criteria for Applied Leaving Certificate Candidates Adm/002

Admissions Policy – Add-On Courses Application of Relevance Factor To Results Adm/003

Admissions Policy - Deferrals Adm/004

Admissions Policy for Foundation Level Mathematics and Bun Leibheal Gaeilge Adm/006

Admissions Policy for Quota Places For Ncva/Plc Graduates Adm/007

Admissions Policy –Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme Adm/008

Ncea Policy on Foundation Certificates Adm/009

Students with Learning Difficulties Adm/010

It Sligo Criminal Convictions Adm/011

It Sligo Data Protection Policy Adm/013

Policies and Procedures for the Protection of Children at It Sligo Adm14/00

Procedures

Accs Admissions Procedure for Entry to Full Time Courses Adm002

Application Process Adm005

Assessment Process for Fulltime Applicants Adm006

Deferral Procedure for Fulltime Programmes Adm007

Offer Process for Admission to Programmes Adm008

Applications Assessment Offer and Registration for Part-Time Programmes Adm009

Registration Process Adm010

Payment of Fees Adm011

Recording Stage Waivers in Banner Adm018

Procedure for Students to Make A Complaint about Services Provided By It Sligo Adm019

Student Grievance Procedure Stud001

Child Protection Policy/Procedure Stud003

These policies and procedures will be accessed through links in the new online Quality manual.

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.

Academic Staff Development

The Centre for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching, CELT, is being fully established in 2017/18 as part of the IT Sligo Learning, Teaching and Assessment strategy. The aspirations of CELT are to:

- Support staff in attendance and participation in relevant conferences and in networking with colleagues in other HEAs
- Support staff in the attainment of postgraduate pedagogical qualifications
- Provide training and support for staff in activities related to different modes of delivery and assessment
- Develop a schedule of seminars and workshops for staff training
- Nurture a Community of Practice

First Steps in Teaching and Learning

Offer academic staff the online Induction module called First Steps in Teaching and Learning. The First Steps - online CPD course aims to provide an introduction to teaching, learning and assessment in Higher Education. This online resource pack is designed to provide a condensed, 'just-in-time' introduction to teaching, learning and assessment for new lecturers. In each section participants will have the opportunity to research and engage with a range of resources, and apply ideas to modules they teach. The First Steps online CPD course was developed by LIN (www.lin.ie).

Academic Staff Symposium

This annual staff symposium provides staff with an opportunity for academic staff to exchange ideas and experiences.

Continuous Professional Development

IT Sligo is committed to supporting staff to develop their skills and competencies through the acquisition of academic qualification, in line with the needs and objectives of the Institute. The process

for identifying development needs is the Performance Management & Development Scheme where objectives are agreed and development needs discussed and application will only be considered where they have resulted from a PMDS meeting. Resources will be made available and approvals will be prioritised to those applications which most closely match the Institute's strategic objectives.

Chapter 3 of the Institute Quality Manual covers Programme Delivery and Assessment.

See [here](#).

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.

IT Sligo's Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy (LTA) sets out the underlying philosophy, general principles and key objectives to create and maintain a vibrant and sustainable learning and teaching community. The strategy has been developed by the Academic Council of the Institute, drawing on the expertise of the teaching and administrative staff, student representatives and external stake holders.

The strategy is fit for purpose in the context of rapid change and a diverse student body. It supports the learning and teaching objectives specified in the Institute's Strategic Plan and will inspire continuous improvement in the quality and standard of learning, teaching and assessment.

The strategy is practical, innovative and mindful of financial and resource constraints. It has an implementation plan with measurable outcomes which will be clearly and effectively communicated to the Institute community. The strategy is subject to oversight by the Academic Council and will be formally reviewed by it. The Learning, Teaching & Assessment Strategy is located [here](#).

The Institute's Marks and Standards is intended to provide a framework for the proper assessment of candidates learning and to ensure that all candidates are treated fairly and in a consistent manner. The stipulations therein relate to marks awarded for Modules, for stages of a Programme and for entire Programmes, based on the assessment of the learning as specified in the Approved Programme Schedules, and to the decisions regarding the overall award grade of a candidate.

The current version of IT Sligo Marks and Standards is available [here](#).

Procedures on provision of reasonable accommodation for students are available [here](#), Extension of Continuous Assessment Deadline(s), and [here](#), Request for Consideration.

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.

Student Services

The aim of Student Support Services at IT Sligo is to provide a comprehensive and caring service to help our students achieve their full academic and personal potential. Our motto is “Caring for our Students”. Support services on campus include:

- **ADMINISTRATIVE ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE:** The Admissions Office provides on-going support in such areas as admissions, registration, grants, fees and examinations.
- **ACCESS OFFICER:** Our Access Officer support students who have special learning needs, a disability or any circumstance which might need individual consideration.
- **CAREERS OFFICE:** Our Careers Office provides career guidance for all students.
- **COUNSELLING:** Our counselling services will help students to embrace positive living and work through any concerns they have.
- **PASTORAL CARE SERVICE:** We offer personal support and advice to students of all faiths and none who come to us. Our pastoral care team is always ready to help.
- **HEALTH:** Our student health services, which are free of charge, are available five days a week to help keep students fit and healthy.
- **IT SLIGO STUDENTS’ UNION:** ITSSU has three officers and a number of part-time staff to provide ongoing support, guidance and representation. ITSSU works closely with Institute management to ensure that student welfare and facilities are first class. See www.itssu.ie for more details.
- **LEARNING SUPPORT TUTOR:** A learning support tutor who works with the Access Officer is available to assist students with special needs such as dyslexia or other specific learning challenges
- **Disability Support Services Officer:** Working with the Access Office, the Disability Support Services Officer will work with staff and students to identify assistive technologies appropriate to the needs of students and help them to obtain optimal use from supports available.

For more information please see our website: <https://www.itsligo.ie/student-hub/student-support-services/>

The Higher Education Access Route

The Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) is a college and university scheme that offers places on reduced points and extra college support to school leavers from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds who are resident in the Republic of Ireland as evidence shows that socio-economic disadvantage can have a negative effect on how well a student does at school and whether they go on to college. HEAR applicants must meet a range of financial, social and cultural indicators to be considered for a reduced points place and extra college support. HEAR is for school leavers under the age of 23 as of 1 January in the year of application to college who are resident in the Republic of Ireland.

The Student Success Toolbox

The aim of the Student Success Toolbox is to support transitions from thinking about study to the first weeks of college particularly for flexible learners (undergraduate adult, part-time and online/distance students).

A suite of digital tools has been created to assist flexible learners by helping them assess their own readiness, provide feedback and lay the foundation for successful programme completion.

The Student Success Toolbox project is supported by the National Forum for Teaching and Learning Building Digital Capacity fund. It is a collaborative project involving Dublin City University, Sligo Institute of Technology, Maynooth University and Dundalk Institute of Technology, click on link [here](#).

Academic Success Course

IT Sligo collaborated with a number of national and international colleges and universities to produce an 'Academic Success' course for new students. The course aims to prepare students for life at third level and covers everything a student needs from adapting to college life to developing study skills and academic integrity. The course is available through Moodle to all students of IT Sligo. It comprises 3 modules and takes about 5 hours to complete. Link: <https://www.itsligo.ie/student-hub/academic-success/>

Student Support Handbook

This handbook is given to students at induction but is also available on our website, click on link [here](#).

Maths support

The Mathematics Support Centre is a special inter-school initiative of the institute. It is now well known that many capable students, for a variety of reasons, may find it difficult to achieve the required standards in mathematics to support their degree studies. The purpose of the centre is to support students' mathematics learning across all programmes in the Institute of Technology Sligo by:

- providing a dedicated area with supervised access to help and resources in a relaxed environment
- delivering appropriate support services for students on service mathematics courses
- addressing the mathematics needs of special groups.

Academic Writing support

The centre is a free writing support service available to all students in the Institute of Technology, Sligo. For many students writing can pose a barrier to academic success. The purpose of this service is to give students the tools to develop their writing skills in one-to-one sessions with qualified tutors. Support is provided in the following areas:

- writing clear, concise and direct sentences
- grammar and punctuation
- how to proof read and revise one's own work
- stages of the writing process
- paraphrasing and quoting sources
- referencing.

Chapters 7,9 and 10 of the Institute Quality Manual covers this. See [here](#).

Policies

ITS Child Protection Policy SAF/001

Reporting of Accidents occurring in Aula Maxima or on Playing Fields SAF/002

Student Mental Health Policy STUD/001

Procedures

Library desk reserve material Lib001

Library financial reporting on programme budgets Lib003

Library book purchases : budget allocation and item selection Lib005

Accessing information on library book requisitions Lib006

Library purchase ordering Lib007

Library basic regulations Lib008

Sample monitoring of supplier book prices Lib009

Gate alarms Lib010

Noise control and user discipline Lib011

Updating the library website Lib012

Masters Theses in Partial Fulfillment : deposition in the Library Lib013

Undergraduate Assignment Projects Lib014

Trial of Library On-line Databases Lib015

Masters by Research Theses : deposition in the library Lib016

PhD Theses : deposition in the Library Lib017

Replacement ID Cards Lib018

Posting of ID cards to students Lib019

Booking of Library Seminar Room Lib020

Lost Property Handed in to Library – Money Lib021

Library Subscriptions – Setting up Supplier/Vendor Information and Access Lib022

Lending of Microsoft Office Disks to Institute Staff Lib023

Urgent ID card requests at exam time Lib024

Library Related Payments through Booknest Lib025

Library Access while Preparing Research Proposals Lib026

Off Campus Activities SAF001/170/0

Out of Hours Access SAF002/171/0

Reporting and Investigation of Accidents and Incidents at IT Sligo SAF003

Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) and Cardiac First Response Procedure SAF004

Organisation of Events on campus SAF005

Pregnant, Postnatal and Breastfeeding Employees SAF006

These policies and procedures will be accessed through links in the new online Quality manual.

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.

Programme Committee

The Programme Committee is intended to provide a structure for:

- a) routine monitoring of a programme to ensure that it is being delivered according to the approved programme schedule and to identify any impediments to student learning
- b) feedback from staff and students regarding the programme design, development and delivery.

The remit of a Programme Committee is to:

- monitor programme delivery and monitor student performance
- Review feedback from students and staff on the delivery of the current programme
- carry out programme planning and development including modifications of existing programmes and the introduction of new programmes.

While these activities are not necessarily mutually exclusive, for the purpose of clarity and describing the functionality of Quality Assurance it is useful to outline them separately.

- Monitor programme delivery and monitor student performance
- Identifying on-going issues related to delivery and student progress on current programmes
- Planning, organising and reviewing student induction
- Analysing examination results
- Responding to External Examiner Reports
- Identifying resource requirements
- Monitoring student progress
- Documenting actions and decisions.

A primary function of a Programme Committee is student performance analysis and Programme Development.

Membership of Programme Committee

The membership generally comprises all of the lecturers who deliver the programme modules, as well as two elected students with limited attendance rights. The Head of Department is an ex officio member.

ISSE

The Irish Survey of Student Engagement is open to first year, final year undergraduate, and taught postgraduate students in participating higher education institutions each February – March. The main purpose of the survey is to provide benefits to each institution and its students by helping to improve feedback and appropriate action. Objectives include:

- To increase transparency in relation to the student experience in higher education institutions
- To enable direct student input on levels of engagement and satisfaction with their higher education institution
- To identify good practice that enhances the student experience
- To assist institutions to identify issues and challenges affecting the student experience
- To serve as a guide for continual enhancement of institutions' teaching and learning and student engagement
- To document the experiences of the student population, thus enabling year on year comparisons of key performance indicators
- To provide insight into student opinion on important issues of higher education policy and practice
- To facilitate comparison with other higher education systems internationally

IT Sligo works closely with the Students Union, Class representatives and staff to encourage students to participate in this survey.

First Destination Survey

The HEA First Destinations Survey is carried out every year, approximately six to nine months after graduation, and the results of this survey benefit policy makers, students, guidance counsellors, teachers and all with an interest in education. Graduate destinations data reflects higher education's contribution to the economy through the provision of graduate labour from undergraduate and

postgraduate programmes, and gathering and communicating graduate destinations data is particularly relevant in the current economic climate in Ireland.

Key Performance Indicators

The Institute has a number of Key Performance Indicators that it uses in both its Strategic Plan and its Mission Based Performance Compact with the HEA.

The current strategic plan can be found at <https://www.itsligo.ie/about-it-sligo/publications/>

Policies

Data Protection Policy COMM/001

Social Media Policy COMM/002

These policies and procedures will be accessed through links in the new online Quality manual.

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.

Programmatic Review

The Programmatic Review process was evaluated and it was agreed that the process would be enhanced by separating the process of Programme Revalidation from the process of School Planning. Furthermore, these two processes do not need to occur at the same time.

There are therefore two stages.

- The planning of a School for its future development
- The revision of programmes for the purposes of revalidation.

Typically, the School Planning process precedes the revalidation process and encompasses the entire activities of the School, within the wider sphere of education, business and the community. The whole School will carry out a Planning process every 5 years.

The revision of programmes may comprise the review of a single programme or of a suite of programmes. In any case, the entire process must normally be carried out at least once every 5 years. The procedures and practices outlined in this section are in accordance with the established practice of the Institute, with best practice of the IT sector and with international best practice. This is achieved by ensuring that membership of the internal and external evaluation panels comprise personnel from the Institute, from other higher education institutions in Ireland and from overseas, members of the business community and of professional bodies.

Chapter 5 of the Institute Quality Manual covers this. See [here](#).

Academic Quality Structures

Academic quality structures have been streamlined across the Institute and consist of:

- Programme Committees
- School Policy Committee

Purpose and Functions of Programme Committees

The Programme Committee is intended to provide a structure for:

- a) routine monitoring of a programme to ensure that it is being delivered according to the approved programme schedule and to identify any impediments to student learning
- b) feedback from staff and students regarding the programme design, development and delivery.

The remit of an Programme Committee is to:

- (i) monitor programme delivery and monitor student performance
- (ii) Review feedback from students and staff on the delivery of the current programme
- (iii) carry out programme planning and development including modifications of existing programmes and the introduction of new programmes.

While these activities are not necessarily mutually exclusive, for the purpose of clarity and describing the functionality of Quality Assurance it is useful to outline them separately.

(i) Monitor programme delivery and monitor student performance

☒ Identifying on-going issues related to delivery and student progress on current programmes

☒ Planning, organising and reviewing student induction

☒ Analysing examination results

☒ Responding to External Examiner Reports

☒ Identifying resource requirements

☒ Monitoring student progress

☒ Documenting actions and decisions.

A primary function of a Programme Committee is student performance analysis. This is key to the identification of necessary programme modifications, programme terminations and new programme development. A Programme Monitoring Report (EAP7), see Appendix 4.1, is prepared for each year of each programme and submitted to the Head of Department annually on or before 31st October. The inclusion of key performance indicators (KPI) to allow five year trend analysis is an important part of the monitoring process. The EAP 7 report includes:

i. CAO Applicants

ii. CAO Average Points

iii. Registrations (at 20th September)

iv. Census (at 31st October and 31st March)

v. Pre-Exam Attrition

vi. Pass and Retention Rates

vii. Student Feedback

viii. Feedback from External Examiner reports

The Programme Committee is required to analyse the data and recommend actions to be taken (with persons responsible identified). The Head of School, together with the Heads of Department review Programme Monitoring Reports and prepare a summary of actions for the School. This is presented to Academic Council for approval.

School Policy Committee

The School Policy Committee is concerned with overseeing and implementing the School Plan. Because it is not concerned with operational issues it confines its business to actions required to ensure implementation of strategic initiatives.

The tasks include, but are not confined to:

- Interpretation of the Institute Strategic Plan in respect of School activities
- Appraising academic developments
- Advising the School on physical resource implications
- Advising the School on likely staff recruitment and development of specialist discipline areas.

Chapter 4 of the Institute Quality Manual covers this. See [here](#).

Risk Register

The purpose of the Risk Register policy is to ensure that risks to IT Sligo are identified, analysed and managed so that they are maintained at acceptable levels. The goal is to identify risks and determine how they may be treated, tolerated, transferred or terminated. IT Sligo is committed to establishing and maintaining a systematic approach to the identification and management of risk.

Objectives of Risk Management

The objectives of the Institute's risk management process are:

1. To protect the assets and reputation of the Institute and to ensure its continued financial well-being.
2. To support better decision making through a good understanding of risks and their likely impact.

Risk Policy statement

1. Risk management and oversight is an Institute-wide responsibility that calls for the active involvement and cooperation of management and staff.

2. The Institute's Governing Body is ultimately responsible for exercising oversight over the Institute's system of risk management. The Executive is responsible for coordinating the
 1. development and maintenance of the risk management function and the Executive members will be the members of the Risk Management Committee.
 2. Heads of functions are responsible for the day-to-day management of risks under their control. They will be assisted in this role by more senior management as necessary and will cooperate
 3. with the Risk Management Committee.
 4. An Institutional Risk Register will be maintained which contains risks which will either have the potential to affect the Institute as a whole or be of significantly serious level at both a
 5. functional and Institute level to merit their inclusion. Potential risks for inclusion in this high level register will be reviewed by the Risk Management Committee, the Audit Committee prior to final
 6. approval by the Governing Body.
1. The Risk Management Committee will develop and implement operating procedures to ensure that risk management is embedded across all decision making functions of the Institute.
2. The Institute will review its risk appetite annually in light of changing circumstances in its wider environment and its capacity to bear risk.

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.

Validation and Approval of Learning

Validation refers to the process by which the Academic Council of the Institute, following a recommendation from an External Peer Review Panel, formally recognises a module or a programme as constituting a body of learning leading to a specified award in a designated discipline area.

Approval of a programme refers to the process by which the Governing Body of the Institute, with a recommendation from the Executive Committee formally agrees to provide the resources to deliver a programme of learning.

In exceptional circumstances, a newly validated programme may not be approved for delivery where circumstances have materially changed within the Institute since the programme was submitted to the External Peer Review Group for validation.

The Registrar establishes a Panel of experts to consider the validation of the programme. The Validation Panel comprises:

1. a Chairperson (normally a senior academic from another Institute of Technology or University or a suitably qualified person from the world of work);
2. two senior academics with relevant qualifications and experience in the area under evaluation (typically one member from an Institute of Technology and another member from a University); and
3. a representative from the world of work, preferably with state-of-the-art experience in the discipline area under consideration.
4. The Assistant Registrar or nominee as rapporteur.

All of the Panel members are external to the Institute and there should be a balance of gender on the Panel. The submission documents are circulated to the Panel no less than three weeks before they

visit the Institute to conduct an oral validation meeting with the programme development team and staff. Chapter 2 of the Institute Quality Manual covers this. See [here](#).

Strategic Plan Consultation

The Institute fully engages with Stakeholders in its consultation process for the development of the Strategic Plan. A series of meetings with external stakeholders was conducted during the period of the development of the strategic plan.

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).

Policy and Procedures for Collaborative and Trans-National Provision and for Programmes leading to Joint Higher Education Awards

The Institute defines collaborative provision as *any programme directly leading to a HE award (QI or professional body) which is delivered in part or in whole through an arrangement with a partner organisation*. A partner organisation may be another education provider, professional body, business or community organisation.

There is a range of different forms of collaborative provision. There may be collaboration in the development and validation of the programme, in the academic monitoring of the programme, in the teaching, in the assessment, and in the awarding etc, or a combination of any of these. Anyone one of the partners may or may not be a lead partner.

In order to ensure the academic quality of these emerging multiple-provider, customer-led, programmes it is essential that providers of higher education have robust procedures in place to adequately protect the learner and to ensure that each programme as delivered is of a recognised national and international standard. Where two or more providers are collaborating in the development, validation and delivery of a programme, and maybe in joint awarding, then procedures must be in place to not only protect the learner but also the providers.

Chapter 14 of the Institute Quality Manual covers this. See [here](#).

Professional Body Recognition

Many of the Institutes Programmes have Professional Body Accreditation. Guiding Principle 7 of the Learning Teaching and Assessment Strategy is

*The reflective practice and experience of our educators is valued. Educators are **actively supported** by the Institute in the development of their own professional knowledge, research, skills and competencies*

and to be capable of responding to the external environment through feedback and dialogue with employers and professional bodies.

The Learning Teaching and Assessment Strategy can be found at

<https://www.itsligo.ie/about-it-sligo/administration/registrar/Itastrategy/>

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.

Website and Publications

The Institute makes its information available to the public through its website and by institute publications.

The Institute Website is www.itsligo.ie

The current strategic plan and Annual Reports can be found at

<https://www.itsligo.ie/about-it-sligo/publications/>

The Institutes Prospectus can be found at <https://www.itsligo.ie/study-at-itsligo/applying/fulltime-prospectus/>

Freedom of Information

Section 8 of the Freedom of Information Act 2014 requires FOI bodies to prepare and publish as much information as possible in an open and accessible manner on a routine basis outside of FOI, having regard to the principles of openness, transparency and accountability as set out in Sections 8(5) and 11(3) of the Act. This allows for the publication or giving of records outside of FOI provided that such publication or giving of access is not prohibited by law. The scheme commits FOI bodies to make information available as part of their normal business activities in accordance with this scheme.

In the IT Sligo Publication Scheme provides links to pages with relevant information in the category as well as links to relevant information on the IT Sligo website. Where information is not currently available publicly, an FOI Request may be made to request access to the information.

The FOI section of the website is at <https://www.itsligo.ie/foi/publications/>

Student Charter & Service Level Agreement

The Institute of Technology Sligo (IT Sligo) provides educational opportunities to the maximum sustainable extent through high quality teaching, and research and development. IT Sligo is a regional Higher Education Institution with a national dimension and international perspectives. IT Sligo has a particular duty to support the development of its region in economic, social and cultural terms. Recognising the history and traditions of its region, IT Sligo is founded on moral and ethical values and the principles of equality, justice and academic freedom.

The Institute has in place a student charter and service level agreement, alongside procedures relating to these.

Student Charter

Service Level Agreement

The Student Charter & Service Level Agreement can be found at

<https://www.itsligo.ie/student-hub/student-help/student-charter/>

Student Complaint Form

Student Code of Conduct

ITSligo Criminal Convictions Policy

Policies

Data Protection Policy COMM/001

Social Media Policy COMM/002

IT Sligo is currently identifying further Policies and Procedures for Provision and use of Public Information. These policies will be available through links in the Quality manual.

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

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



14. DA Procedures for use of QQI Award Standards (IoT's 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.

Quality Assurance Policy

It is the policy of IT Sligo to have procedures in place to ensure that the quality of its programmes and awards meet the internal specifications and those of other bodies empowered to make specifications.

The Quality Assurance policy is framed within the context of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), the Quality and Qualifications Act 2012 and the determinations of QQI.

- It is informed by the mission, vision and strategic development of the institute (ref current Strategic Plan, proposals for TUQF and draft ISO draft International standards for QA in Education)
- Is designed to ensure the quality of awards, programmes and the teaching and learning process
- It provides for openness, transparency and accountability in the work of the institute.
- It is subject to continuous review and improvement underpinned by evidence based analysis
- It is published and available publicly

The learning process in IT Sligo is student centred. Quality assurance policy and procedures underpin this by incorporating within overarching policy the specific requirement of IT Sligo that all learners:

1. Are treated fairly, consistently and with courtesy and respect
 1. Are enabled to provide feedback about their academic experience
 2. Will have opportunities, as appropriate, to participate in committees
 3. While acknowledging competing demands on the budget, will have access to the best student support services that the Institute can provide.
 4. to student support services as provided by the Institute

5. Are provided with useful and relevant information in relation to courses
6. Will receive information on programme content, assessment procedures and expectations
7. Will be provided with the relevant institutional regulations and the appropriate penalties for breach of regulations
8. Are exposed to a variety of teaching methodologies
9. Will have reasonable access to lecturing staff for individual consultation
10. Will receive a course timetable
11. Will receive timely, specific and adequate feedback on assessments
12. Will have access to all relevant policies and procedures and that procedures will be in place to cater for all substantiated mitigating circumstances in deciding a student's progression.

NFQ LEVEL 9 RESEARCH DISCIPLINE AREA VALIDATION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

'Level 9 Research Discipline Area Validation Policy and Procedures' sets out the procedures to be followed in seeking to validate new research discipline areas (OECD/Frascati Specific Field of Science Codes) arising from Delegation of Authority to award research degrees at level 9 from Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). The quality assurance policies and procedures described herein are part of a broad institutional Quality Assurance System which supports or makes direct provision for:

- the linking of particular research degree programmes to the Institute's Strategic Plan and Research Strategy, and to relevant national strategies.
- the formation of postgraduate students as work-ready graduates and/or early career researchers through structured research training
- the building of individual and institutional research capability in a collegial and stimulating environment
- the building of the necessary research infrastructure
- the maintenance of award standards.

The Institute will validate new discipline areas where there is a sustainable capacity to provide relevant Masters Degree programmes.

This policy was informed by the following documents:

- Institutes of Technology Ireland Sectoral Protocol for the Awarding of Research Masters Degrees at NFQ Level 9 under Delegated Authority (DA) from Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) (2015)
- National Framework for Doctoral Education (2015)
- QQI (formerly HETAC) Research Degree Programme Policy and Criteria (2010)
- QQI (formerly IUQB) Good Practice in the Organisation of PhD Programmes in Irish Higher Education (2nd ed., 2009)
- Technological University Quality Framework (TUQF), Quality Enhancement and Assurance of Research (2014)
- Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (2015)
- EUA's 'Salzburg Principles' and 'Salzburg II Recommendations' European Commission Directorate-General Research and Innovation, Principles for Innovative Doctoral Training (2011) The EU European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.

The Level 9 Research Discipline Area Validation Policy and Procedures, chapter 15 of the Quality manual, covers this. See [here](#).

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.

Policy and Procedures for Collaborative and Trans-National Provision and for Programmes leading to Joint Higher Education Awards

The Institute defines collaborative provision as any programme directly leading to a HE award (QQI or professional body) which is delivered in part or in whole through an arrangement with a partner organisation. A partner organisation may be another education provider, professional body, business or community organisation.

There is a range of different forms of collaborative provision. There may be collaboration in the development and validation of the programme, in the academic monitoring of the programme, in the teaching, in the assessment, and in the awarding etc, or a combination of any of these. Anyone one of the partners may or may not be a lead partner.

In order to ensure the academic quality of these emerging multiple-provider, customer led, programmes it is essential that providers of higher education have robust procedures in place to adequately protect the learner and to ensure that each programme as delivered is of a recognised national and international standard. Where two or more providers are collaborating in the development, validation and delivery of a programme, and maybe in joint awarding, then procedures must be in place to not only protect the learner but also the providers.

Chapter 14 of the Institute Quality Manual covers this. See [here](#).

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

[Empty box for additional notes]

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	
Number	
Link(s) to Publications	

Year	2017/18
Areas/Units	School of Engineering and Design due 2017/2018 (Programmatic Review School of Engineering and Design 17-19 April 2013) School of Science due 2017/2018 (Programmatic Review School of Science 24-26 April 2013)
Number	2
Link(s) to Publications	

Year	2018/19
Areas/Units	
Number	
Link(s) to Publications	

Year	2019/20
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Annual Institutional Quality Assurance Report

Areas/Units	
Number	
Link(s) to Publications	

Year	2020/21
Areas/Units	School of Business and Social Sciences due 2020/2021 (Programmatic Review School of Business and Social Sciences 24- 25 May 2016)
Number	1
Link(s) to Publications	

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

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

Year	
Areas/Units	
Number	

Link(s) to Publications	
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AIQR - PART 1

PRSBs	3
Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies	First Set of Records
Type of Arrangement	PRSB
Name of the Body	Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA)
Date of last review or accreditation	02-02-2013
Next review year	2018
Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies	Second Set of Records
Type of Arrangement	PRSB
Name of the Body	Chartered Accountants Ireland
Date of last review or accreditation	25-05-2016
Next review year	2021
Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies	Third Set of Records
Type of Arrangement	PRSB
Name of the Body	Engineers Ireland
Date of last review or accreditation	17-03-2013
Next review year	2018

Joint research degrees	0
Joint/double/multiple awards	2
Collaborative programmes	2
Franchise programmes	0
Linked providers (DABs only)	0
Section: Collaborative Provision	First Set of Records
Type of arrangement:	Joint/double/multiple awards
Name of the Body (Bodies)	University of Ulster
Date of last review	10-02-2015
Next review year	2018
Section: Collaborative Provision	Second Set of Records
Type of arrangement:	Joint/double/multiple awards
Name of the Body (Bodies)	National University of Ireland Galway
Date of last review	22-05-2015
Next review year	2018
Articulation Agreements	12
Section: 1 Articulation Agreements	First Set of Records
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

19-02-2018

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.

During the reporting period, the Institute completed a number of workshops for the preparation of its strategic plan. The workshops focussed on quality related issues and improvements that are linked to the achievement of the objectives of the strategic plan.

The Institute is working towards the achievement of objectives for quality assurance and enhancement that were set out in the previous AIQR.

The Institute conducted a pilot of Gradebook in one department in the Institute in order to gain feedback on the use of the system for recording component grades of modules. Participation in the pilot was reasonable, and feedback was received from participants. Based on the feedback, a decision was made to roll it out across the entire Institute. It is hoped that this will ensure greater consistency in the recording of grades in all Schools.

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

The Institute Educational Development Manager left in August 2017. A new Educational Development Manager took up the post in December 2017 and has commenced setting up the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT), as well as contributing to wider quality related activities.

1.3 The schedule of QA governance meetings.

Academic Council:

9 September 2016
28 October 2016
30 November 2016
9 December 2016
30 January 2017
6 February 2017
10 March 2017
05 May 2017
9 June 2017
12 June 2017
20 June 2017

Academic Processes Committee:

22 September 2016
20 October 2016
24 November 2016
9 December 2016
23 January 2017
23 February 2017
6 April 2017
2 May 2017
25 May 2017

Section 2: Reviews in the reporting period

2.1 Internal reviews that were completed in the reporting period.

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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	12
Number of Programme Reviews completed in the reporting year	
Number of Research Reviews completed in the reporting year	
Number of School/Department/Faculty Reviews completed in the reporting year	
Number of Service Unit Reviews completed in the reporting year	
Number of Reviews of Arrangements with partner organisations completed in the reporting year	

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

Composition of Panels	%
Internal	2.9%
National	80%
UK	14.3%
EU	2.9%
Student	0%
Other	0%

Chair Profile	%
Internal	8.3%
Similar Institution	16.7%
Different Institution	75%
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.

IT Sligo uses data in a number of ways to support quality assurance and the management of the student learning experience.

In its quality system IT Sligo has a Programme monitoring report (EAP7). Programme Monitoring form EAP 7 is located in Chapter 4 of the Institute Quality Manual [here](#). This form is part populated with data from the Banner Student Registration System. Errors were found in the calculations carried out by banner and this was notified to the software vendor. The software was modified and the calculations are now correct.

IT Sligo also uses the student survey QA1, QA2 and Staff form QA3. These are located in Chapter 4 of the Institute Quality Manual [here](#).

The Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) reports have been modified to segregate data to programme level. This will allow programmes to compare to department, School, and Institute level. Training is required for programme teams on the use of this data.

IT Sligo is also working on extending the data sets available to programme boards. For example progression rates are published nationally for 1st to 2nd year. IT Sligo are expanding this to all years progression. In addition module pass rates and award bands are being developed for programmes.

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

IT Sligo is also in an alliance with Galway Mayo Institute of Technology and Letterkenny Institute of Technology to form a Technological University for the region. The alliance submitted its stage 2 application to the HEA in March 2015.

IT Sligo is in the HEA designated West /North West Region with Galway Mayo Institute of Technology, Letterkenny Institute of Technology and National University of Ireland Galway.

3.3 A description of other implementation issues.

During the reporting period, it became apparent that an additional resource would be required in order to fully implement improvements to the quality system, in particular, to move the quality manual online. It transpired that this was more complex than originally anticipated as it required extensive work linking with the staff portal and updating policies and procedures.

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.

The Institute continued to review and update QA policies and procedures during the reporting period. Work is continuing on the implementation of improvements identified in the Douglas report, as described in the previous AIQR. Work commenced on a complete review of Marks and Standards in collaboration with Academic Council.

The effectiveness of QA policies and procedures was reviewed during the reporting period and revisions suggested to procedures dealing with examination disciplinary issues. A new procedure for online invigilation of examinations was developed and approved by Academic Council, which improved the process for exam paper submission and for specifying requirements for online examinations.

Work has continued in enhancing the information available on the Institute website.

During the reporting period, work was undertaken for Institutional Review and this provided feedback from a cross section of staff relating to the effectiveness of QA policies and procedures. It was found that the policies and procedures could be made more easily accessible and available to all staff, and that an enhanced system of communication of revisions and updates would be beneficial.

2. Impact

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

There were no internal reviews during the reporting period, however, the Institute did undertake preparatory work for Institutional Review. This provided information on the impact of QA policies and procedures and this will guide future developments.

3. Themes

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

- Continued with full review of Marks and Standards in line with QQI guidelines
- Continued review of management of External Examiners in line with QQI and ESG guidelines.
- Continued work on the creation of an online Quality assurance manual
- Ongoing review of Manuals to reflect landscape changes

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.

Pilot of the Examination Online System – Guru

GURU is a secure online system for examination paper submission and external examiner review.

Guru will provide IT Sligo with:

Examination Paper Submission and Flow Control: Guru drastically reduces the administrative workload for all individuals involved with the examination paper process. Academics can submit examination papers remotely, from any location or device and receive external examiners reviews directly to their Inboxes. Local academic office staff can process papers quickly, passing them for viewing to external examiners - no more envelopes or complicated digital setups.

Paper Security: Guru eliminates the risk of lost courier packages and ensures that all examination papers only have the absolute minimum number of users interacting with them. Full audit trails are in place to show every user who has viewed or interacted with examination papers. Digital security is ensured through strong encryption approaches, combined with best practice models such as Two-Factor Authentication.

External Examiner Interface: Guru provides a "one-stop shop" for all external examiner activities, including examination paper review, final report submission and management of financial payment details. Having everything in one place, combined with a notification system provides a more streamlined user interface for external examiners.

It has been run on a pilot basis in the Departments of Business, Computing and Creative Practice and Life Sciences. This provided a representative range of examination paper types from each School, to test the system capabilities. More than 50% of the papers were submitted using GURU in the Depts. of Business and Life Sciences.

Gradebook

Implementation of Gradebook System on Banner

The gradebook facility of banner was piloted in one department within the institute. This facility allows lecturing staff to input the student's results in their constituent parts rather than just a final mark.

Working group on Group Work initiated. The purpose of this working group of academic council is to examine best practice and QQI guidelines on groupwork practices, to disseminate this information, and to ensure robust group assessment processes.

First Steps in Teaching and Learning

IT Sligo offered new academic staff the online Induction module called First Steps in Teaching and Learning. The First Steps online CPD course aims to provide an introduction to teaching, learning and assessment in Higher Education. This online resource pack is designed to provide a condensed, 'just-in-time' introduction to teaching, learning and assessment for new lecturers. In each section participants will have the opportunity to research and engage with a range of resources, and apply ideas to modules they teach.

National Student Engagement Programme

NSTEP, the National Student Engagement Programme is a collaborative initiative under development by the Union of Students in Ireland (USI), the Higher Education Authority (HEA), and Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). A national working group has been established to develop the programme. A call for institutions to express interest in the programme was issued in December 2016 and in April 2017, the Pilot Working Group will select 5 national work streams which will be open to institutions outside of the pilot. IT Sligo has expressed an interest in participating in the programme.

Centre for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching

The Centre for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching, CELT, was initiated as part of the IT Sligo Learning, Teaching and Assessment strategy. The aspirations of CELT are:

- Support staff in attendance and participation in relevant conferences and in networking with colleagues in other HEAs
- Support staff in the attainment of postgraduate pedagogical qualifications
- Provide training and support for staff in activities related to different modes of delivery and assessment
- Develop a schedule of seminars and workshops for staff training
- Nurture a Community of Practice

Centre for Academic Learning support

This centre will provide students across all Schools with academic support to help them maximise their potential in areas such as Maths, Academic writing, English as Second Language, ICT skills and other general study skills.

There were a number of pilots in Maths, Programming and Academic Writing. In addition support was provided for the first time for students sitting autumn repeat exams.

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.

A Dual-Pathway MOOC to Improve Student Transition from Second to Third Level

“Get Ready Education – A Learning Journey” is a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) that was designed to help second level students prepare for the transition into higher education. The project was a collaboration 7 Irish universities and IoTs, led by IT Sligo. It was funded in 2015 by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning under the ‘National Roadmap for Building digital Capacity in Irish HE’.

There are two discrete pathways within the MOOC - a self-directed pathway, intended primarily for first year undergraduates and those with MOOC experience; and a teacher-facilitated pathway where participants are supported and directed through elements of the MOOC by a teacher in their secondary school or FE College using a blended approach to learning. MOOC participants are also supported by e-moderators (working in one of the collaborating HEIs) whose role is to stimulate and support discussion.

The MOOC consists of 5 modules and a reflection piece. The courses are open and available to allow school teachers to choose the modules they wish to run with their classes providing flexibility in terms of time and participation. It also provides for MOOC participants to focus on areas they have identified as particularly relevant to them.

Modules
MOOC Orientation
Discover Learning
Critical and Creative thinking
Digital Literacy & Communications
Responsible Citizenship
Reflection

Academic Success - Preparation for 3rd Level

These short, open, online courses were developed in collaboration with a number of other universities and colleges in Ireland, UK, Australia and New Zealand and led by Epigeum - a spin-out company of the Imperial College London and now owned by Oxford University Press. It has been designed for online, full-time and part-time students at IT Sligo. The courses aim to prepare students for college life and give helpful tips and advice on how to find information. They cover issues from adapting to college life to managing study skills and academic integrity.

The courses are hosted on the Institute’s VLE, Moodle and lecturers have been encouraged to incorporate them into existing, relevant modules and/or align with learning outcomes. A number of lecturers in the School of Business and Social sciences have incorporated the courses but information about the benefits for students needs to be more widely disseminated.

The courses are openly available to all students registered with IT Sligo and available at:

<https://www.itsligo.ie/student-hub/academic-success/>

Student success Toolbox

The aim of the Student Success Toolbox is to support transitions from thinking about study to the first weeks of college, particularly for flexible learners (undergraduate adult, part-time and online/distance students). A suite of digital tools has been created to assist flexible learners by helping them assess their own readiness, provide feedback and lay the foundation for successful programme completion.

The Student Success Toolbox project is supported by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning's 'Building Digital Capacity' fund. It is a collaborative project involving Dublin City University, Institute of Technology Sligo, Maynooth University and Dundalk Institute of Technology. The Student Success Toolbox is openly available to all students registered with IT Sligo and available at: <https://www.itsligo.ie/onlinelearning/about/student-success-toolbox/>

Maths MOOC

A free, online, pre-degree Mathematics Open Course - The MOOC is particularly suitable for CAO Leaving Certificate applicants who may not meet the Mathematics entry requirements for their preferred honours degree programme. A pass in this special exam will be deemed equivalent to meeting the Mathematics entry requirement.

Available at: <https://www.itsligo.ie/2017/08/14/pre-degree-mathematics-open-course-at-it-sligo/>

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.

Examination Online System – Guru

GURU is a secure online system for examination paper submission and external examiner review. It is intended to widen the pilot to the whole institution to evaluate if it should be implemented permanently.

Gradebook

The Implementation of Gradebook System on Banner will be rolled out to all schools and departments.

Establish a Centre for Academic Learning support

Following the pilots it is planned to develop the work of the centre. The support would take the form of open weekly tutorials in core subjects, comprehensive online resources on a dedicated web page as well as targeted tutorials if identified and requested by Heads of Departments. The work of the Centre will be advised by referrals from lecturers, feedback from the three Schools on retention and attrition rates and will be augmented by initiatives such as induction and mentoring. It will be an integral part of the Institute's commitment to student engagement and be aligned with Pillars 2 and 5 of the new Strategic Plan 2016/17-2021/22.

Personalised Exam Timetable

Following Gradebook implementation it is proposed to develop a personalised student exam timetable facility.

Introduction of a Student Engagement System: Student retention is an important performance indicator for higher education institutes.

Non-attendance at lectures is an indicator of students who are at risk of dropping out. IT Sligo is reviewing options for introducing a Student Engagement System acknowledging the need for access to timely data on student attendance in order to actively target students and put initiatives in place to prevent students leaving college where possible. A suitable system has been identified and will be piloted.

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.

School Programmatic Review

The schools of Engineering and Design, and Science will undertake programmatic review in early 2019. These were extended slightly to accommodate the Institutional Review. Both Schools will be undertaking the School Planning process during this year.

Service Unit Review

Up to now these functions have been included in the Institutes Internal Audit plan. IT Sligo is currently developing a Service Unit Review for its Central Service Functions. These include

- Academic Administration/Registry
- Student Services
- Library
- Computer services
- Online Learning
- Research, Innovation and Engagement
- International
- Timetabling
- Finance
- Human Resources
- Estates

The Institute is developing a procedure for this process and will take it through Executive and Academic council. It will pilot it in the Library.

5.3 Other Plans

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.

An Institutional Review was carried out on 2008/2009.

The objectives of the process were:-

1. To enhance public confidence in the quality of education and training provided by the institution and the standards of the awards made;
2. To contribute to coherent strategic planning and governance in the institution;
3. To assess the effectiveness of the quality assurance arrangements operated by the institution;
4. To confirm the extent that the institution has implemented the National Framework of Qualifications and procedures for access, transfer and progression;
5. To evaluate the operation and management of delegated authority where it has been granted;
6. To provide recommendations for the enhancement of the education and training provided by the institution.

Since then Programmatic Reviews were carried out as follows:-

May 2011 School of Business & Humanities

April 2013 School of Engineering and Design

April 2013 School of Science

May 2016 School of Business & Social Sciences

The institute commenced the Self-Evaluation process for the upcoming Institutional Review during this year. There were a number of Information Sessions with Staff and Student Union Class Representatives to introduce the Institutional Review and the ISER. Presentations were made to School and Functional Teams. Focus Groups were held a number of times for staff on Quality Systems and Student Lifecycle.

The Institutional Self Evaluation Report and Institutional Review will be completed in the next academic year.

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.

During this reporting period, IT Sligo has continued with a comprehensive review of its Quality Manual and the associated policies and procedures. There has also been a continuation of the review of Marks & Standards. The proposed new Quality Manual will be clearer and more accessible, providing a better means of quality assurance and quality enhancement. However, the implementation of the approved changes has taken longer than anticipated and the Institute has approved a resource dedicated to getting the manual online as well as making improvements to the website and the provision of public information. Part of this reporting period also included preparation for Institutional Review and the production of the ISER. The Institute conducted a number of sessions whereby the relevant stakeholders could reflect on the quality system and the learning experience.

Priorities for the next reporting period:

Full implementation of the new online Quality Manual, to be available with hyperlinks to relevant policies, procedures and forms.

Institute- wide pilot of GURU

Greater uptake of Institute- wide pilot of Gradebook

Improvements in provision of information to external examiners

Improvements in website and information available to learners and the general public

Rollout of NStEP

Fully establish the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching

6.3 Themes

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

These are the strategic pillars included the Strategic Plan 2017- 2022.

1. Higher Education Landscape
2. Teaching and Learning Environment
3. Research and Enterprise Engagement
4. Partnerships and External Engagement
5. Meeting Learner needs
6. Organisation and Governance

The full Strategic Plan can be found [here](#).

