

# Institute of Technology, Tallaght

## 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

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## 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 Institute of Technology Tallaght (IT Tallaght) was founded in 1992 as an autonomous higher education institute under the Institute of Technology Acts 1992-2006. IT Tallaght provides a suite of taught higher education programmes across Levels 6 to 9 on the National Qualifications Framework in both full and part-time modes. In addition, the Institute engages in applied research and development involving postgraduate research activity at Levels 9 and 10. The research agenda is regionally focused and aligned to the National Research Prioritisation Exercise 2012. IT Tallaght has Delegated Authority from Quality Qualifications Ireland (QQI) to make awards to Level 9 for all of its taught programmes and for research awards to Level 10 in Biology, Chemistry, Engineering, and Humanities.

According to the European Standards and Guidelines 2015<sup>1</sup>, accountability and enhancement lie at the heart of all quality assurance activities, giving confidence in the performance of a higher education institution. The term 'quality assurance' is used to describe all activities within the continuous improvement cycle (i.e. assurance and enhancement activities).

The governance of IT Tallaght is primarily as set out in the Regional Technical Colleges Acts 1992 to 2001, the Institute of Technology Act (IoT Act) 2006, Qualifications (Education & Training Act 1999, the Ethics in Public Office Act 1995, Standards in Public Office Act 2001, Data Protection Act 1988 and Amendment Act 2003, and the Freedom of Information Act.

Academic Council is entrusted primarily with the role of maintaining academic standards and making recommendations to Governing Body regarding academic matters.<sup>2</sup>

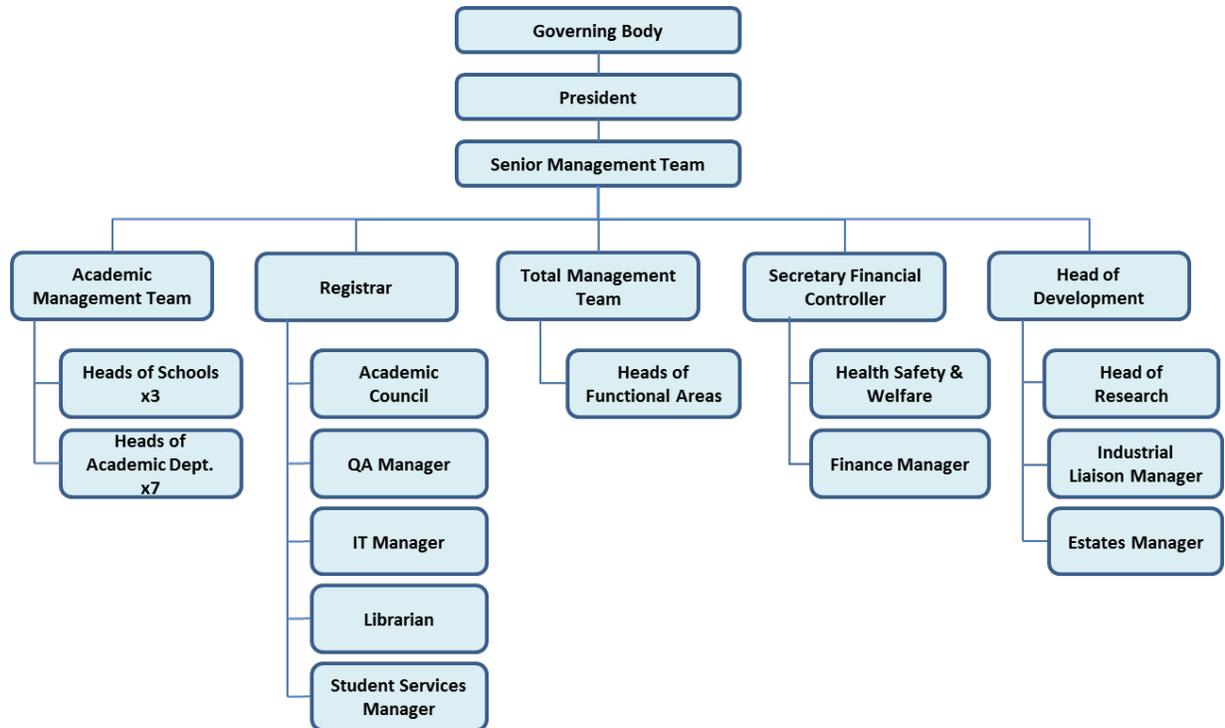
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<sup>1</sup> European Standards and Guidelines 2015. [http://www.enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/ESG\\_2015.pdf](http://www.enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/ESG_2015.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Section 10 of the Regional Technical Colleges Act, 1992.

The Governing Body is (collectively) responsible for the management and control of the affairs of the Institute and ensuring that an effective system of internal financial control is maintained and operated.

Changes were made to the functions of Governing Bodies in the 2006 Institutes of Technology Act specifically with regard to their reserved and executive functions, including reporting on budgets and the keeping of accounts. The responsibilities of the Governing Body were expanded to include strategic development planning. They were also charged with drawing up an equality policy and procedures for the resolution of disputes that arise in the college.



The role and membership of the Governing Body and Academic Council are set out in Chapter 2 of the Institute’s *Quality Assurance Procedures Manual*<sup>4</sup> and are summarised below.

Section 6 of the RTC Act 1992 provided for the establishment of the Governing Body and its functions which were further amended by Section 7 of the Institutes of Technology Act 2006:

- To manage and control the affairs of the college;
- To approve courses of study as it considers appropriate;
- To approve annual programmes and budgets;
- To determine numbers and terms and conditions of staff subject to the approval by the Minister;
- To control and administer the land and other property of the college;

<sup>3</sup> Section 7 of the Regional Technical Colleges Act, 1992.

<sup>4</sup> Available at <http://www.it-tallaght.ie/quality-assurance-enhancement>

- To appoint the Director (now President) and such other staff as it thinks necessary for the purposes of the college;
- To perform such other functions conferred on it by the IoT Act 2006 or any other Act.

Governing Body meets on dates agreed at the beginning of each year, typically seven or eight times per academic year. Special meetings may also be arranged by agreement. In addition to the annual report and accounts of the Institution, the Governing Body is required to submit a comprehensive report to the Minister for Education and Science outlining all financially significant developments affecting the Institution in the preceding year. In carrying out its functions, the Governing Body is guided by the guidelines, policies, procedures and advice of HETAC (now QQI) and by the *Code of Best Practice for Corporate Governance in Third level Institutions* (2004).

The objectives of quality assurance as applied to teaching and learning in higher education are:

- a) To contribute, in conjunction with other mechanisms, to the promotion of high quality and standards in teaching and learning.
- b) To provide learners, employers and others with reliable and consistent information about quality and standards at the institution.
- c) To ensure that educational programmes are identified where quality or standards are unsatisfactory, as a basis for ensuring rapid action to improve them.
- d) To provide one means of securing accountability for the use of public funds received by the institution.

These objectives are secured primarily through the internal quality assurance procedures and audit processes operated by the Institute. Academic quality issues are brought to Academic Council and the relevant Department (below).

The current Strategic Plan for IT Tallaght 2016-2019 was released in Q4 of 2016 ([http://www.it-tallaght.ie/contentfiles/Documents/publications/strategic\\_plan/IT Tallaght Strategy 2016 2019 OLine Version.pdf](http://www.it-tallaght.ie/contentfiles/Documents/publications/strategic_plan/IT_Tallaght_Strategy_2016_2019_OLine_Version.pdf)). The Institute goals focus on achieving designation as a Technological University (TU4D – Technological University for Dublin) in partnership with Dublin Institute of Technology and IT Blanchardstown, providing career focused higher education, excellence in teaching, learning and the quality of the learner experience, strengthening our engagement with enterprise and the community, further internationalisation, and growing research and innovation capacity. The central role of quality assurance and enhancement is articulated throughout the Strategic Plan and is pivotal to the developing reputation of IT Tallaght as a provider of higher education for the South Dublin County region and nationally.

## 2. Quality assurance decision-making fora

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

### Academic Council

The Academic Council of IT Tallaght was established in accordance with the Regional Technical Colleges Act, 1992 and subsequent amendments. The role of the Council is to assist Governing Body in the planning, development, implementation and oversight of the educational remit of the Institute. In particular, it seeks to protect and maintain the academic standards of the educational programmes offered by the Institute in line with national and international norms. The structure, composition, and roles of Academic Council are described in the Institute's Quality Assurance Procedures Manual<sup>5</sup>. Members are both ex-officio and elected members drawn from the academic staff of the Institute, education support staff, and the study body.

The constitution of Academic Council states that at least three meetings should be held during the academic year. The composition of the Academic Council is President, Registrar, Head of Development, three Heads of School, eight Heads of Department, Institute Librarian, three staff members of Governing Body, three elected learners, twelve elected academics - four from each of the three schools, one staff member representing Technical and Library staff, and one staff representative representing all other staff. The President and the Registrar are, respectively, Chairperson and Secretary of the Council and are *ex officio* members of Academic Council sub-committees.

To assist it in exercising its general responsibilities, and in particular its academic quality assurance and enhancement functions, Academic Council delegates appoints specialist committees to examine specific issues in accordance with defined terms of reference. The functions of the Academic Council sub-committees are focussed and evident in their titles. The membership of the sub-committees is drawn from the members of Council as well as other co-opted members as may be required to add additional expertise or insight into particular issues. The decisions of any committees are subject to confirmation by Academic Council. The following are the current committees of Academic Council:

### Marks and Standards Committee:

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<sup>5</sup> Available at <http://www.it-tallaght.ie/quality-assurance-enhancement>

The Marks and Standards Committee has responsibility for the ongoing review and monitoring of the implementation of the IT Tallaght Marks and Standards<sup>6</sup>, and the validation, review and approval of taught programmes as laid down in Book 2 of the Institute Quality Assurance Manual.

**Access, Transfer and Progression Committee:**

The Access, Transfer and Progression Committee is responsible for monitoring and keeping under review the Institute's learner admissions requirements and where appropriate for formulating proposals for enhancing learner access, transfer and progression arrangements.

**Postgraduate Research Board:**

The Postgraduate Research Board is responsible for developing, implementing and monitoring the Institute's research and development policies including the Regulations for Postgraduate Study by Research. IT Tallaght, is engaged with IT Blanchardstown and Dublin Institute of Technology in a proposed merger to form a unitary entity that will seek designation as the Technological University for Dublin (TU4D). As part of this pathway, a Joint Graduate Research School has been established (2015) to provide a common approach to structured PhD provision through a common validated Structured PhD programme. A functioning Graduate Research School Board oversees matters relating to the provision and QA and Enhancement for research degrees with representation (registrar, research staff, and research students) drawn from each partner institution.

**Research Ethics Committee:**

The Ethics Committee provides oversight of all proposed research projects requiring ethical approvals including undergraduate and postgraduate research projects. The committee includes representation from the three TU4D partner colleges and other external experts.

**Teaching Learning and Academic Support Committee:**

The Teaching Learning, and Academic Support Committee is responsible for advising on the development and enhancement of learning and teaching standards and practices within the Institute, including developing and monitoring the Institute's assessment procedures and regulations.

**Library Committee:**

The Library Committee is responsible for advising on, developing and monitoring policies on information storage and retrieval and other library issues within the Institute.

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<sup>6</sup> IT Tallaght Marks and Standards available for download at <http://www.it-tallaght.ie/quality-assurance-enhancement>

### **Programme Board Committees<sup>7</sup>:**

Programme Boards Committees are a cornerstone for the continuing management of programmes in each academic School. The Programme Board Committees are responsible for the quality management of a programme or suite of programmes.

At School/Department level, Programme Board Committees are established for each of the Institutes programmes. The Programme Board will complete and present to Academic Council an Annual Programme Board Report for each programme; in practice this means each semester as modules are predominantly delivered on a semester basis. A Programme Board is comprised of a Head of Department or Head of School or his\her nominee as Chair, all academic staff lecturing on the programme, support staff representative, learner representatives, and others where appropriate.

Issues considered by the Programme Board Committees include but are not limited to:

- a) Programme content, its relevance and currency, and the strategy for delivery of same;
- b) Operation of agreed quality assurance procedures;
- c) Compliance with the Institutes Marks and Standards and related policies;
- d) Monitoring and reporting on general course delivery issues and on learner performance;
- e) Co-ordination of learner assessment, ensuring a balanced distribution of learner effort and burden across all modules and across the semester;
- f) Review of External Examiner reports;
- g) Evaluation of learner feedback outcomes;
- h) Recommendation of minor changes to the content and schedules of accredited programmes within its remit to reflect best practice and the dynamic of the subject area.

Minor changes made to the curriculum annually will be agreed by the Programme Board and signed off by the Chairperson. To introduce significant changes (>20% of curriculum) to a programme will require a new programme validation. Programme Board Annual reports typically cover

- Analysis of learner performance/retention
- Feedback on programme
- External examiners reports
- Training/resources
- Programme modifications
- Quality improvement suggestions.

### **Feedback Mechanisms**

#### **External Examiners**

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<sup>7</sup> Described in Book 2 of the Institute Quality Manual, section 5.5 available at <http://www.it-tallaght.ie/quality-assurance-enhancement>

In accordance with the Institute Marks and Standards, external examiners are appointed to act as independent and impartial advisors for each programme. They provide informed comment on the standards set and learner achievement relative to those standards. They can verify that learning outcomes assigned to a programme or module have been met; they provide comment on the attainment of academic standards comparable to those applied in other higher education institutions; and, they ensure that our assessment processes are operated in a manner that is fair, consistent and transparent, without favour to any learner or cohort of learners.

External examiners are drawn nationally and internationally from academia, professional practitioners, from relevant business/industry and are of senior standing in their fields. External Examiners annual reports are sent to the Office of the Registrar and then onto the relevant School Office for circulated to all relevant academic staff. These reports are discussed at programme board meetings and incorporated into annual programme reports. Issues raised are generally considered locally. Where there are general issues raised that go beyond the remit of a particular board or academic unit, they would normally be considered by the School management team and may be raised by representatives from the School at Academic Council or other relevant committees.

#### **Student Appeals, Reviews and Rechecks**

Where a student is not satisfied with the outcome of their final assessment, they can avail of a multi-stage process available to them to explore the reasons for their grade, to identify where they might improve, or to challenge the outcome.

Stage 1 is an informal engagement between the learner and the academic staff concerned to discuss the marks awarded and identify where improvement might be made. If still not satisfied, the learner may then enter Stage 2 to formally appeal the decision to the Registrar to seek a recheck (an administrative process to check that all elements were assessed and that all marks awarded were added and applied correctly to arrive at the final grade) or a review of their examination script (a full re-examination of the specific module(s) which may include an independent assessment by an external examiner). A final appeal may be made to the President.

Where students feel that the institute processes have not been adhered to, they may appeal further to the Office of the Ombudsman.

#### **Student Viewpoints**

Each year, learners are surveyed on their overall experience in each module they have taken and for their programme as a whole. Module surveys are administered by the academic staff and the programme survey by the Head of Department. Survey results are reviewed by the Programme Boards to identify what is and is not working within the overall learner experience. The Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) is also promoted and the results from this national survey are provided to individual departments and schools for consideration.

ISSE collects information on learner engagement to provide a valuable and informed insight into their experience. This student feedback is considered by the programme boards with actions determined and included in programme board reports.

A Graduate Survey is conducted annually to gather information on first destinations, relevance of employment to their area of study, further study, and their perceptions on the quality of the higher education experience they received.

Learners are represented on all relevant committees in their School and the Institute e.g. Programme Boards, Academic Council, Sports Clubs & Societies, etc. It provides learners, full and part-time, with a means to have their voice heard on day-to-day issues affecting all programmes, the further development of programmes, and on School strategy.

## 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.

Described in the 'Quality Assurance Procedures Manual - Book 2' available at <http://www.it-tallaght.ie/quality-assurance-enhancement>

### 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.

Described in the 'Quality Assurance Procedures Manual - Book 2' available at <http://www.it-tallaght.ie/quality-assurance-enhancement>

### 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.

Described in the 'Quality Assurance Procedures Manual - Book 3': available at <http://www.it-tallaght.ie/quality-assurance-enhancement>

#### **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.

IT Tallaght does not have a specific document describing this. However, the key elements are addressed in the 'Institute Regulations' and the 'Institute's Annual Prospectus' available at [http://www.it-tallaght.ie/contentfiles/Documents/publications/prospectus/ft\\_prospectus.pdf](http://www.it-tallaght.ie/contentfiles/Documents/publications/prospectus/ft_prospectus.pdf) and [http://www.it-tallaght.ie/contentfiles/Documents/publications/Institute\\_Regulations\\_Handbook\\_2017\\_revised%20April.pdf](http://www.it-tallaght.ie/contentfiles/Documents/publications/Institute_Regulations_Handbook_2017_revised%20April.pdf) respectively.

#### **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.

The HR Office and the HR Intranet provide access to all policies governing recruitment, code of conduct, equal opportunities, bullying and harassment, etc. that are applicable for teaching staff. Through HR, staff can also avail of fee supports for CPD activities leading to higher level degrees, typically at Level 9 or 10 relevant to their domain. IT Tallaght teaching staff also have access to, with full fee waiver, CPD related to teaching and learning and other professional practice offered through the DIT Learning and Teaching Centre.

HR policies are available on the IT Tallaght Intranet: <http://intranet.it-tallaght.ie/human-resources1>

Quality Assurance Procedures Manual - Book 2: Section 7 <http://www.it-tallaght.ie/quality-assurance-enhancement>

**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.

Learning Teaching and Assessment Strategy [http://www.it-tallaght.ie/contentfiles//Documents/publications/strategic%20plan/Learning\\_Teaching\\_Assessment\\_Strategy.pdf](http://www.it-tallaght.ie/contentfiles//Documents/publications/strategic%20plan/Learning_Teaching_Assessment_Strategy.pdf)

**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.

Quality Assurance Procedures Manual - Book 2: Sections 8 and 9 available at <http://www.it-tallaght.ie/quality-assurance-enhancement>

**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.

Yes – a suite of policies exist covering: Computer Security Policy, ITT Email Policy, Policy Admin Rights, Policy use of Third Party Laptops, Web Accessibility Policy, HEANET Acceptable Usage Policy, Institute Web site - Adding / Amending Web Content, Guidelines for storing data on Institute network drives, Disaster Recovery Invocation Process, Business Continuity Plan

[http://intranet.it-tallaght.ie/itsupport\\_policies](http://intranet.it-tallaght.ie/itsupport_policies)

**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.

Quality Assurance Procedures Manual - Book 2: Sections 5, 6, 9 and 10 available at <http://www.it-tallaght.ie/quality-assurance-enhancement>

**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.

QA for new programme validation, for programmatic reviews, and Marks and Standards have embedded requirements for external engagement.

- Quality Assurance Procedures Manual - Book 2: Sections 5, 6, and 10 available at <http://www.it-tallaght.ie/quality-assurance-enhancement>
- Quality Assurance Procedures Manual - Book 3 – Research Degree Programmes: available at <http://www.it-tallaght.ie/quality-assurance-enhancement>
- Marks and Standards: available at <http://www.it-tallaght.ie/quality-assurance-enhancement>

**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).

IT Tallaght does not have a specific policy but the requirement for stakeholder engagement in new programme development, programme validations, external examiners and other fora is described in the Institute Quality Manual.

Quality Assurance Procedures Manual - Book 2 available at <http://www.it-tallaght.ie/quality-assurance-enhancement>

**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.

Public information is provided through the Institute Prospectus, the website which includes specific information from Module Builder on all validated programmes for full-time and part-time learners. The promotional printed material is made available to the public at the Institute itself, on the external web site, and at event exhibitions, conferences and school visits that are organised both on and off campus on a regular basis. IT Tallaght Prospectus is available at:

[http://www.it-tallaght.ie/contentfiles/Documents/publications/prospectus/ft\\_prospectus.pdf](http://www.it-tallaght.ie/contentfiles/Documents/publications/prospectus/ft_prospectus.pdf)

**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.

Not applicable.

**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 IT Tallaght Quality Assurance Procedures Manual covers delegated authority and the relationships between our internal policies procedures and those of QQI.

- Quality Assurance Procedures Manual available at <http://www.it-tallaght.ie/quality-assurance-enhancement>
- Quality Assurance Procedures Manual - Book 3 – Research Degree Programmes:
- available at <http://www.it-tallaght.ie/quality-assurance-enhancement> Marks and Standards: available at <http://www.it-tallaght.ie/quality-assurance-enhancement>

**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.

A supplement to the IT Tallaght Quality Assurance Procedures Manual 2017 describes the procedures and requirements for developing collaborative programmes, transnational programmes and joint awards. It also provides procedures and guidelines for programmes delivered through blended, distance and/or e-learning.

Available at: <http://www.it-tallaght.ie/quality-assurance-enhancement>

**16. Additional Notes**

Any additional notes can be entered here.

None to report.

**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             | Programme Validations   |
| Number                  | 13 programmes validated during 2016/17  |
| Link(s) to Publications | Programme Validation reports are available at <a href="http://www.it-tallaght.ie/programme-validations">http://www.it-tallaght.ie/programme-validations</a> |

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| Year                    | 2016/17   |
| Areas/Units             | School of Business & Humanities   |
| Number                  | 1   |
| Link(s) to Publications | Completion of Stage 2 of the periodic programmatic review process focussed on the School's strategy and operations. Available at: <a href="http://www.it-tallaght.ie/periodic-review">http://www.it-tallaght.ie/periodic-review</a> |

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| Year                    | 2017/18   |
| Areas/Units             | Schools of Engineering, and Science & Computing,  |
| Number                  | 2 (Close out on Periodic Programmatic Review 2013 Stage 2 focussed on the School's strategy and operations) |
| Link(s) to Publications |   |

## Annual Institutional Quality Assurance Report

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|-------------------------|--|
| Year                    | 2017/18  |
| Areas/Units             | Schools of Engineering, Science & Computing, and Business & Humanities |
| Number                  | 3 (periodic programmatic reviews)                                      |
| Link(s) to Publications |  |

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

|                         |         |
|-------------------------|---------|
| Year                    | 2019/20 |
| Areas/Units             |         |
| Number                  |         |
| Link(s) to Publications |         |

|                         |                                  |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Year                    | 2020/21                          |
| Areas/Units             | Institutional Review – scheduled |
| Number                  | 1                                |
| Link(s) to Publications |                                  |

|             |         |
|-------------|---------|
| Year        | 2021/22 |
| Areas/Units |         |
| Number      |         |

Annual Institutional Quality Assurance Report

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Link(s) to Publications |  |
|-------------------------|--|

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

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Year                    |  |
| Areas/Units             |  |
| Number                  |  |
| Link(s) to Publications |  |

## AIQR - PART 1

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Overview of internal QA governance, policies and procedures</b>  | <a href="#">AIQR-Part-1-ITTallaght-2016-17.docx</a><br><a href="#">972 AIQR-Part-1-ITTallaght-2016-17.docx</a> |
| <b>PRSBs</b>  | 9  |
| <b>Awarding Bodies</b>  | 0  |
| <b>QA Bodies</b>  | 0  |
| <b>Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies</b> | First Set of Records   |
| <b>Type of Arrangement</b>  | PRSB   |
| <b>Name of the Body</b>   | Engineers Ireland  |

## Programme Titles and Links to Publications

- Mechanical and Electronic Engineering Programmes <http://www.it-tallaght.ie/fulltimecourses>;
- TA201 Electronic Engineering - Level 6 <http://www.it-tallaght.ie/index.cfm/page/course?id=226>;
- TA202 Electromechanical Engineering - Level 6
- TA203 Mechanical Engineering - Level 6 <http://www.it-tallaght.ie/index.cfm/page/course?id=274>;
- TA213 Mechanical Engineering - Level 7 <http://www.it-tallaght.ie/index.cfm/page/course?id=287>;
- TA215 Sustainable Energy and Environmental Engineering - Level 7 <http://www.it-tallaght.ie/index.cfm/page/course?id=33>;
- TA216 Electronic Engineering - Level 7 <http://www.it-tallaght.ie/index.cfm/page/course?id=251>;
- TA217 Automation Engineering - Level 7;
- TA219 Engineering Software - Level 7 <http://www.it-tallaght.ie/index.cfm/page/course?id=393>;
- TA221 Electronic Engineering - Level 8 <http://www.it-tallaght.ie/index.cfm/page/course?id=292>;
- TA222 Mechanical Engineering - Level 8 <http://www.it-tallaght.ie/index.cfm/page/course?id=107>;
- TA223 Sustainable Energy and Environmental Engineering - Level 8 <http://www.it-tallaght.ie/index.cfm/page/course?id=107>;
- TA225 Automation Engineering - Level 8 <http://www.it-tallaght.ie/index.cfm/page/course?id=440>;
- TA226 Engineering Software - Level 8 <http://www.it-tallaght.ie/index.cfm/page/course?id=296>;
- TA\_EEESD\_M Masters of Engineering in Electronic Engineering in Electronic System Design <http://www.it-tallaght.ie/index.cfm/page/course?id=128>;
- TA\_EAMEC\_M Master of Engineering in Mechanical Engineering <http://www.it-tallaght.ie/index.cfm/page/course?id=254>;

**Date of last review or accreditation**

01-09-2013

**Next review year**

2017

**Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies**

Second Set of Records

**Type of Arrangement**

PRSB

**Name of the Body**

Multiple Bodies - Accountancy & Taxation

**Programme Titles and Links to Publications**

Accountancy & Professional Studies Programmes: <http://www.it-tallaght.ie/fulltimecourses>

Graduates for this programme qualify for exemptions in the professional body examinations for the following:

Chartered Accountants Ireland ICAI

Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA)

Institute of Certified Public Accountants in Ireland (CPA)

Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA)

Institute of Incorporated Public Accountants (IIPA)

Institute of Chartered Secretaries & Administrators (ICSA)

Irish Taxation Institute (ITI)

TA111 Bachelor of Business in Accounting & Finance: <http://www.it-tallaght.ie/index.cfm/page/course?id=235>;

TA121 Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Accounting & Finance: <http://www.it-tallaght.ie/index.cfm/page/course?id=157>;

TA106 Business (Common entry): <http://www.it-tallaght.ie/index.cfm/page/course?id=172>;

**Date of last review or accreditation**

01-05-2012

**Next review year**

2018

**Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies**

Third Set of Records

**Type of Arrangement**

PRSB

**Name of the Body**

Chartered Society of Forensic Sciences - UK

**Programme Titles and Links to Publications**

TA315 DNA and Forensic Analysis - Level 7 <http://www.it-tallaght.ie/index.cfm/page/course?id=189>;

TA326 DNA and Forensic Analysis - Level 8 <http://www.it-tallaght.ie/index.cfm/page/course?id=190>;

**Date of last review or accreditation**

14-12-2015

**Next review year**

2018

**Joint research degrees**

1

**Joint/double/multiple awards**

4

**Collaborative programmes**

2

**Franchise programmes**

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|---|---|
| <b>Section: Collaborative Provision</b>           | First Set of Records  |
| <b>Type of arrangement:</b>                       | Joint research degrees  |
| <b>Name of the Body (Bodies)</b>                  | Universite Rennes 2, France   |
| <b>Programme Titles and Links to Publications</b> | Co-tutelle arrangement for PhD provision in Humanities  |
| <b>Date of last review</b>                        | 01-05-2011  |
| <b>Next review year</b>                           | 2017  |
| <b>Section: Collaborative Provision</b>           | Second Set of Records   |
| <b>Type of arrangement:</b>                       | Joint/double/multiple awards  |
| <b>Name of the Body (Bodies)</b>                  | Nanjing Technical University, China   |
| <b>Programme Titles and Links to Publications</b> | BEng Hons Electronic Engineering <a href="http://www.ittallaght.ie/index.cfm/page/course?id=250">http://www.ittallaght.ie/index.cfm/page/course?id=250</a> ; BEng Hons Mechanical Engineering: <a href="http://www.it-tallaght.ie/index.cfm/page/course?id=259">http://www.it-tallaght.ie/index.cfm/page/course?id=259</a> ; BSc Hons Pharmaceutical Science: <a href="http://www.it-tallaght.ie/index.cfm/page/course?id=199">http://www.it-tallaght.ie/index.cfm/page/course?id=199</a> ; |
| <b>Date of last review</b>                        | 26-6-2014   |
| <b>Next review year</b>                           | 2019  |
| <b>Section: Collaborative Provision</b>           | Third Set of Records  |
| <b>Type of arrangement:</b>                       | Joint/double/multiple awards  |
| <b>Name of the Body (Bodies)</b>                  | Shanghai Institute of Technology, China   |
| <b>Programme Titles and Links to Publications</b> | BEng Hons Electronic Engineering <a href="http://www.ittallaght.ie/index.cfm/page/course?id=250">http://www.ittallaght.ie/index.cfm/page/course?id=250</a> ; BEng Hons Mechanical Engineering <a href="http://www.it-tallaght.ie/index.cfm/page/course?id=259">http://www.it-tallaght.ie/index.cfm/page/course?id=259</a> ;   |
| <b>Date of last review</b>                        | 23-10-2015  |
| <b>Next review year</b>                           | 2020  |
| <b>Section: Collaborative Provision</b>           | Fourth Set of Records   |
| <b>Type of arrangement:</b>                       | Joint/double/multiple awards  |
| <b>Name of the Body (Bodies)</b>                  | Hue University, Vietnam   |
| <b>Programme Titles and Links to Publications</b> | Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Management <a href="http://www.ittallaght.ie/index.cfm/page/course?id=179">http://www.ittallaght.ie/index.cfm/page/course?id=179</a> ;  |

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|---|--|
| <b>Date of last review</b>                        | 10-03-2016   |
| <b>Next review year</b>                           | 2021   |
| <b>Section: Collaborative Provision</b>           | Fifth Set of Records   |
| <b>Type of arrangement:</b>                       | Joint/double/multiple awards   |
| <b>Name of the Body (Bodies)</b>                  | Institute of Project Management  |
| <b>Programme Titles and Links to Publications</b> | Certified Project Management Diploma; Strategic Project Management Diploma   |
| <b>Date of last review</b>                        | 13-11-2015   |
| <b>Next review year</b>                           | 2020   |
| <b>Section: Collaborative Provision</b>           | Sixth Set of Records   |
| <b>Type of arrangement:</b>                       | Collaborative programmes   |
| <b>Name of the Body (Bodies)</b>                  | Innopharma Labs, Ireland   |
| <b>Programme Titles and Links to Publications</b> | Master of Science in Food Business Management and Technology<br><a href="http://www.ittallaght.ie/index.cfm/page/course?id=358">http://www.ittallaght.ie/index.cfm/page/course?id=358</a> ;<br>Masters in Pharmaceutical Manufacturing & Process Technology<br><a href="http://www.ittallaght.ie/index.cfm/page/course?id=369">http://www.ittallaght.ie/index.cfm/page/course?id=369</a> |
| <b>Date of last review</b>                        | 10-01-2016   |
| <b>Next review year</b>                           | 2021   |
| <b>Section: Collaborative Provision</b>           | Seventh Set of Records   |
| <b>Type of arrangement:</b>                       | Collaborative programmes   |
| <b>Name of the Body (Bodies)</b>                  | Priory Institute Tallaght  |
| <b>Programme Titles and Links to Publications</b> | MA in Biblical Studies: <a href="https://prioryinstitute.com/courses/undergraduate/programmes/ba-(honours)-in-theology">https://prioryinstitute.com/courses/undergraduate/programmes/ba-(honours)-in-theology</a>  |
|   | </p>   |
| <b>Date of last review</b>                        | 16-3-2017  |
| <b>Next review year</b>                           | 2022   |
| <b>Articulation Agreements</b>                    | 3  |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Section: 1 Articulation Agreements</b>  | First Set of Records  |
| <b>Name of the Body</b>  | Nanjing Technical University, China   |
| <b>Name of the Programme and Links to Publications</b>   | BEng Hons Electronic Engineering <a href="http://www.ittallaght.ie/index.cfm/page/course?id=250">http://www.ittallaght.ie/index.cfm/page/course?id=250</a> ;<br>BEng Hons Mechanical Engineering <a href="http://www.it-tallaght.ie/index.cfm/page/course?id=259">http://www.it-tallaght.ie/index.cfm/page/course?id=259</a> ;<br>BSc Hons Pharmaceutical Science <a href="http://www.it-tallaght.ie/index.cfm/page/course?id=199">http://www.it-tallaght.ie/index.cfm/page/course?id=199</a> ; |
| <b>Date of last review of arrangement/agreement</b>  | 20-06-2014  |
| <b>Next Review Year</b>  | 2019  |
| <b>Section: Articulation Agreements</b>  | Second Set of Records   |
| <b>Name of the Body</b>  | Colleges Ontario, Canada  |
| <b>Name of the Programme and Links to Publications</b>   | Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Management <a href="http://www.ittallaght.ie/index.cfm/page/course?id=179">http://www.ittallaght.ie/index.cfm/page/course?id=179</a> ;  |
| <b>Date of last review of arrangement/agreement</b>  | 10-01-2015  |
| <b>Review year for agreements</b>  | 2020  |
| <b>Section: Articulation Agreements</b>  | Third Set of Records  |
| <b>Name of the Body</b>  | France Business School - Brest Campus   |
| <b>Name of the Programme and Links to Publications</b>   | Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Management <a href="http://www.ittallaght.ie/index.cfm/page/course?id=179">http://www.ittallaght.ie/index.cfm/page/course?id=179</a> ;  |
| <b>Date of last review of arrangement/agreement</b>  | 9-9-2013  |
| <b>Review year for agreements</b>  | 2018  |
| <b>Do you wish to make a final submission?</b>   | Yes, this is my final submission  |
| <b>On behalf of the President/Provost/CEO I confirm that the information submitted in this AIQR is accurate and correct.</b> | Confirmed   |
| <b>Overview of internal governance, policies and procedures (Word Template).</b>   | Confirmed   |

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| <b>Arrangements with PRSBs,<br/>Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies.</b> | Confirmed  |
| <b>Collaborative Provision.</b>                                 | Confirmed  |
| <b>Articulation Agreements.</b>                                 | Confirmed  |
| <b>Date of Final Submission</b>                                 | 07-02-2018 |

## 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).

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#### 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.

IT Tallaght is committed to the continuing review and enhancement of its academic quality assurance (QA) procedures in line with QQI core and sectoral guidelines. They may be divided between institution level initiatives, activities at local School/Department level, and actions underpinning the proposed formation of a Technological University between IT Tallaght, IT Blanchardstown and the Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT). The evolution and enhancement of QA systems is not solely focused on academic issues and standards, but on the holistic learner experience.

##### **Institution Level Initiatives**

Ongoing institution initiatives throughout the academic year 2016-17 have focused on various aspects of QA. Highlights include:

##### **Academic Council Decisions/Actions:**

- **Review and update of the quality assurance procedures for taught programmes** – completed and approved at Academic Council, June 2017 (QA manual available at <http://www.it-tallaght.ie/quality-assurance-enhancement>)
- **A review of examination appeals process** led to an improved process being approved at Academic Council, May 2017. Enhancements included greater clarity provided to applicants regarding the process and expectations from it; extending the period of review available to students from 3 to 5 working days' post issue of examination results; strengthening of the formal review stage to include a departmental academic panel approach as opposed to review by the lecturer. Information is also provided to students on their right to appeal to the office of the Ombudsman.
- **Revised Marks & Standards** (adopted by Academic Council, June 2017; available at <http://www.it-tallaght.ie/quality-assurance-enhancement>) following a review of processes allowing students carrying a single F grade together with a GPA corresponding to an honours award classification to repeat examinations to retain the honours award classification (Section 4.9). This was updated and improved to ensure greater consistency of approach in its implementation.
- **Revised Marks & Standards** section on managing any impasse arising at an examination board meeting, and guidelines for dealing with such occurrences to bring greater clarity to the process to be followed in dealing with these rare events.
- Update of the **Institutional Guidelines for Periodic Programmatic Review** (presented to Academic Council, May 2017). These inform planned periodic reviews for 2017/18.
- Adoption of a revised **Code of Conduct for Research** (April 2016)
- Adoption of **Foundation Level Maths** common approach to support improved access for non-standard applicants.
- Under **Access**, IT Tallaght has joined the HEAR scheme and continues to cater for applicants from disadvantaged socioeconomic groups and those with a disability. A total of €208k was allocated for Student Assistance Funding in 2017/18 which will support 436 students full and part-time. IT Tallaght in association with its TU4D partners will also apply to the HEA Access funding schemes for Path 2 & 3. In 2016/17 South Dublin County Council provided €40,000 in bursaries for 16 IT Tallaght students to support widening of access to higher education for persons suffering socioeconomic disadvantage.

### Enhancements through Student Services

- a) IT Tallaght participates in the national ISSE survey. In 2016/17, we also participated in the HEA-led pilot **National Graduate Survey** and will continue in the full roll-out in 2017/18. Results from the survey are circulated to relevant functional areas.
- b) The Careers Office coordinates a Special Purpose Award (SPA) - **Volunteering Certificate** to support IT Tallaght's civic engagement activities and encourages students to challenge themselves, stretch themselves and pursue new interests whilst also broadening their networks and giving back to the wider community outside of IT Tallaght.
- c) Structural re-organisation of the Office of the Registrar to **improve services to students** and academic functional areas including improved communications plans for dissemination of information to students on examinations, online access to results, and online registration (Student Self-Service Banner). A START-ITT app was launched in 2017 to provide dynamic information to new registrants and support their transition to third level.
- d) Enhanced training for academic staff on the use of **Gradebook** (face-2-face, FAQ, video links) to ensure streamlined input of accurate data on examination performance.
- e) Surveys of student experiences on accessing and use of **Student Counselling Services** were conducted in 2016 leading to the identification of a need for additional supports. Recruitment of a sessional Counsellor was undertaken in 2017 to provide additional hours of counselling for students in need.
- f) The **Careers Service** at IT Tallaght has engaged in discussion with counterparts in IT Blanchardstown and DIT as part of TU4D discussion to align service provision. A strategic move was undertaken in 2016/17 to have more group and fewer 1:1 advisory sessions to have greater impact in providing awareness and support to students on career opportunities. An online booking system operates for those seeking a 1:1 session. Over 2016/17, the Careers Service reached out to 1938 students in total via classroom presentations (844 students), employer-led events (767 students) and 1:1 sessions (327 students).

### Internal Audit

In 2016/17, PWC carried out an internal audit to review the Academic Quality Programme System and the key controls and processes in place. Areas of focus included governance, oversight and understanding the Academic Quality System frameworks including operation, monitoring and follow-up. The audit identified a number of good working practices including governance structure's in place with various committees set up who are responsible for academic quality. Each committee has its own terms of reference. There are formal internal and external review and approval processes in place for proposed new programmes to be added to the curriculum. Active monitoring mechanisms to ensure issues in relation to quality assurance are identified in a timely manner are in place.

The audit also identified a number of issues, which have been or are being addressed going into 2017/18 including:

- a) A number of QA policy and procedure documents within the Institute were not reviewed on a periodic basis; thus, some policies have become outdated and may not be reflective of current best practice.

During 2016/17, steps were initiated to review a number of these key QA documents. Items since updated and approved include the **Quality Assurance Manual for Taught Programmes (Sept 2016)**, **Marks and Standards (June 2017)**, **Examination Appeals Process, Guidelines for Periodic Programmatic Review (September 2017)**. <http://www.it-tallaght.ie/quality-assurance-enhancement>

Others targeted for review in 2017/18 include **Quality Assurance Manual for Research Degree Programmes**, and **Guidelines for New Programme Validation**.

- b) Formal minutes of the meetings are documented and details the actions to be implemented are noted. However, it found that formal tracking and reporting on agreed actions at subsequent meetings was inconsistent (i.e. Academic Council, subcommittees of the Academic Council, Programmes Boards and Programmatic reviews). For 2017/18, a focus is being placed on review of processes to better document such actions and responses to them. A specific focus is being placed on Programme Board reports and External Examiner reports.
- c) Subcommittees of Academic Council require revised formal terms of reference to include the committee's responsibilities/mandate, membership, reporting outputs, and frequency of meetings. A review of terms of reference for each sub-committee will be undertaken in 2017/18

**Academic School / Department Level Activities**

IT Tallaght is committed to a continuing review and improvement of its education programmes and supporting quality systems. Within each academic School and its constituent Departments, academic programmes are assigned a programme coordinator to act as a point of contact between the student body and the Department. Each programme produces an Annual Programme Board Report reviewing the status of the programme over the previous year. This Board includes elected student representatives, teaching and other support staff. The Board makes recommendations for improvement of programme content, teaching, learning and assessment strategies, and changes to QA policy. Programme Board Reports are provided to Academic Council.

**TU4D Actions**

A key strategic objective of IT Tallaght is its engagement with our TU4D partners, IT Blanchardstown and DIT, on a journey towards becoming a Technological University (TU). The stated aim of the TU4Dublin Alliance is to create a new Technological University for Dublin through consolidation of three existing Institutes. The Alliance has successfully completed three stages of the four stage process for designation as a Technological University as originally set out by the HEA and proposed TU Legislation (revised draft legislation has since reduced this to a single stage process). The TU4Dublin Alliance is on target to achieve designation in 2018 subject to enactment of the required legislation by Government.

Our strategic objective is to continue to maintain a high level of regional community engagement, organising social innovation, artistic, cultural, and scientific events/ activities/ projects for and in conjunction with our local community/partners. A stated objective of our Strategic plan 2016-19 (p.17) ([http://www.it-tallaght.ie/contentfiles/Documents/publications/strategic\\_plan/IT Tallaght Strategy 2016 2019 Print Version.pdf](http://www.it-tallaght.ie/contentfiles/Documents/publications/strategic_plan/IT_Tallaght_Strategy_2016_2019_Print_Version.pdf)) is to: “make engagement with industry and community a central tenet of our research activities, academic programmes and civic engagement initiatives”. This is in keeping with the particular mission envisaged for the future Technological University (Strategic Plan 2016-19, p.18), which is to work closely with industry, enterprise, community, and other HEIs in the region to support national objectives for higher education.

From an academic QA perspective, this will require, amongst other actions, the development of a unitary academic QA system to operate across the three campuses post-merger and designation as a

TU. While a transition period is envisaged during which current local QA systems will continue, it is recognised that the adoption of a single unitary approach will be required to ensure consistency of approach and student experience across the proposed multi-campus TU.

In that vein, a project management approach to the review of current processes, identification of best practice, and benchmarking against external similar higher education institutions was commenced in 2016/17. Inter-collegiate working groups have been established to examine a variety of areas including, within the realms of academic QA, working groups focused on creating a unitary QA system for taught programmes, developing a TU4Dublin Curriculum Framework, and a unified approach to research management including research degree programmes.

Under the unitary QA system working group, specific activity undertaken included:

- a) Terminology review and standardisation of terms for QA, incorporating General Assessment Regulations / Marks and Standards;
- b) Harmonisation of current processes / steps / policies / practices in respect of QA for Taught Programme Activities
- c) Developing TU4Dublin Overarching Policy & Procedures for QA
- d) Building on Internal Review and setting out current processes / steps / policies / practices in respect of QA and Marks & Standards for Research Activities.
- e) Development of externally benchmarked recommendations for a TU Handbook for QA of Graduate Research Programmes

#### **TU4D Curriculum Framework**

- a) Graduate Attributes for the TU4Dublin have been developed.
- b) The underlying characteristics of the Curriculum Framework for all TU4D programmes - including practice based teaching and learning, research informed teaching, progression pathways, work based learning, and employer links in curriculum design, strong professional/vocational focus, flexible delivery, regional provision, multi- and trans-disciplinary themes in programme design and delivery, and a commitment to lifelong learning are being developed.

- c) Alignment of existing Level 6 to Level 8 programmes to the TU4D Curriculum Framework has commenced with a pilot in Engineering.
- d) A number of programmes have been developed collaboratively between the TU4Dublin partners including:
- Masters in Applied Culinary Nutrition
  - MA in Management for the Non-profit Sector
  - MEng in the Internet of Things Technologies
  - MA in Social Research
- e) Planning towards an integrated approach to student services for the TU4Dublin is developing a student services transition plan for implementation upon confirmation of TU designation. Work packages underway with a target delivery for September 2018 include:
- Application to acceptance process for applicants.
  - Student recruitment and marketing of programmes.
  - Registration and fee payment.
  - Identification of enhanced programme opportunities for current students
  - TU exams process.
  - Induction and orientation.

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

**Changes to the review schedule necessitating a delay or advance in a review date**

- Completion of the Stage 2 of Programmatic Reviews in the School of Engineering and the School of Science & Computing
- Planning for Programmatic Review in each School for 2017/18

**Changes to QA policies, procedures, governance and management**

- Review and update of the QA procedures for taught programmes – completed and approved at Academic Council, June 2017 <http://www.it-tallaght.ie/quality-assurance-enhancement> Review of examination appeals processes approved at Academic Council ([http://www.it-tallaght.ie/contentFiles/Documents/Registrar's%20Office/FinalExam Appeal Form for AUG UST 2017.pdf](http://www.it-tallaght.ie/contentFiles/Documents/Registrar's%20Office/FinalExam%20Appeal%20Form%20for%20AUG%20UST%202017.pdf)). Enhancements made to the process included
  - Brining greater clarity to applicants regarding the process and expectations from it;
  - Extending the period of review available to students from 3 to 5 working days' post issue of examination results;
  - An informal review is provided as a first stage with formal review (recheck or full review) following should the student require it. The review process has adopted a departmental academic panel approach as opposed to review by the lecturer.
  - Final internal appeals are made to the Registrar.
  - Information is provided in the forms on the student's right to access the Ombudsman and the process involved.
- Revised Marks & Standards (adopted by Academic Council **June 2017**)
  - Section 4.9 describes a process allowing students carrying a single F grade together with a GPA corresponding to an honours award classification to repeat their examination to retain the honours award classification. This was updated and improved to ensure greater consistency of approach in its implementation. The process also included an update of awards standards for honours classification. Examination results database queries have been created and their outputs employed to identify students to which this protocol applies. Preliminary examination board meetings for collation of results have proven useful in relation to this cohort of students.
  - In response to an unusual impasse arising at an examination board meeting, guidelines for dealing with such occurrences were re-drafted to bring clarity to the process to be followed in dealing with such rare events.
- Update of the Institutional Guidelines for Periodic Programmatic Review (adopted by Academic Council **Sept. 2017**).

**Changes to key personnel in QA**

- In 2016/17, a new post for QA Manager, reporting to the Registrar, was created. The person appointed provides support on the organisation and operation of programme validation panels, periodic programmatic review processes, interface between QA and MIS to ensure the student record systems reflect programme content and/or changes.

**Pilots for new QA procedures implemented in the reporting period**

IT Tallaght participated in the HEA-led pilot National Graduate Survey in 2016/17 and will continue in the full roll-out in 2017/18

**1.3 The schedule of QA governance meetings.**

**Academic Council meeting dates:**

- 12<sup>th</sup> January 2017 / 8<sup>th</sup> February 2017 / 9<sup>th</sup> March 2017 / 5<sup>th</sup> May 2017 / 13<sup>th</sup> June 2017

**Governing Body Meeting dates:**

- 8<sup>th</sup> November 2016 / 15<sup>th</sup> December 2016 / 13<sup>th</sup> April 2017 / 15<sup>th</sup> June 2017
- 10<sup>th</sup> May 2017 – strategy meeting for the joint TU4D Governing Bodies

**Programme Board Meeting dates:**

- School of Engineering: Programme Boards meet once during each semester
- School of Business & Humanities: Programme Boards meet once during each semester
- School of Science & Computing: Programme Boards meet once during each semester

**Section 2: Reviews in the reporting period**

**2.1 Internal reviews that were completed in the reporting period.**

| Validation / New Programme Approvals  | Link to relevant document (url)   |
|---|---|
| 1. Ordinary Bachelor of Business in International Business (2017)   | <a href="http://www.it-tallaght.ie/programme-validations">http://www.it-tallaght.ie/programme-validations</a> |
| 2. Bachelor of Arts in Digital Marketing (2017)   | <a href="http://www.it-tallaght.ie/programme-validations">http://www.it-tallaght.ie/programme-validations</a> |
| 3. BA in Culinary Arts_L8 Add-on 2016   | <a href="http://www.it-tallaght.ie/programme-validations">http://www.it-tallaght.ie/programme-validations</a> |
| 4. Bachelor of Business (Honours) in International Business (2017)  | <a href="http://www.it-tallaght.ie/programme-validations">http://www.it-tallaght.ie/programme-validations</a> |
| 5. BEng (Hons) in Automation Engineering (1 year add-on) with embedded Minor Award in Industrial Automation (10 ECTS) | <a href="http://www.it-tallaght.ie/programme-validations">http://www.it-tallaght.ie/programme-validations</a> |
| 6. BEng (Hons) Biomedical design (2017)   | <a href="http://www.it-tallaght.ie/programme-validations">http://www.it-tallaght.ie/programme-validations</a> |
| 7. BSc (Hons) in Pharmaceutical Science (Differential Validation) (2017)  | <a href="http://www.it-tallaght.ie/programme-validations">http://www.it-tallaght.ie/programme-validations</a> |
| 8. Higher Diploma In Science & Computing (differential validation) (2017)   | <a href="http://www.it-tallaght.ie/programme-validations">http://www.it-tallaght.ie/programme-validations</a> |

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| <p>9. Master of Arts in Biblical Studies with the embedded award of Graduate Diploma in Biblical Studies (2017)</p>                          | <p><a href="http://www.it-tallaght.ie/programme-validations">http://www.it-tallaght.ie/programme-validations</a></p> |
| <p>10. Masters in Arts in Media in Electronic Arts with exit awards at Post Graduate Diploma in Arts in Media and Electronic Arts (2017)</p> | <p><a href="http://www.it-tallaght.ie/programme-validations">http://www.it-tallaght.ie/programme-validations</a></p> |
| <p>11. MSc in Computing with specialisations in Cloud and Mobile Computing / Data Analytics / Information Technology Management (2017)</p>   | <p><a href="http://www.it-tallaght.ie/programme-validations">http://www.it-tallaght.ie/programme-validations</a></p> |
| <p>12. MSc in (Bio)Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Technology (2017)</p>  | <p><a href="http://www.it-tallaght.ie/programme-validations">http://www.it-tallaght.ie/programme-validations</a></p> |
| <p>13. BSc (Hons) in Computing (differential Validation) with Software Development/Information Technology Management (2017)</p>              | <p><a href="http://www.it-tallaght.ie/programme-validations">http://www.it-tallaght.ie/programme-validations</a></p> |
| <p><b>Total number of reviews:</b></p>   | <p><b>13</b></p>   |

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

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| Number of new <b>Programme Validations/Programme Approvals</b> completed in the reporting year      | <b>13</b> |
| Number of <b>Programme Reviews</b> completed in the reporting year                                  | 1         |
| Number of <b>Research Reviews</b> completed in the reporting year                                   | 1         |
| Number of <b>School/Department/Faculty Reviews</b> completed in the reporting year                  |           |
| Number of <b>Service Unit Reviews</b> completed in the reporting year                               |           |
| Number of <b>Reviews of Arrangements with partner organisations</b> completed in the reporting year |           |

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

| <b>Composition of Panels</b> | <b>%</b>              |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Internal                     | 23                    |
| National                     | 40                    |
| UK                           | 2                     |
| EU                           | 4                     |
| Student                      |                       |
| Other                        | 31 (Industry – Irish) |

| <b>Chair Profile</b>  | <b>%</b> |
|-----------------------|----------|
| Internal              | 0        |
| Similar Institution   | 64       |
| Different Institution | 27       |
| International         | 9        |

### 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.

QA and the student experience are actively managed across academic Departments, Schools and the Office of the Registrar. Data informing the management and enhancement of QA and the student learning experience derive from several sources including but not limited to:

- Examination performance data available to examination and programme boards – data is reviewed to identify areas of difficulty or underperformance and to support implementation of appropriate remedial actions.
- During semester, information is collated by course coordinators relating to learner participation and performance to help early identification of students at academic risk. Typical responses include students being directed to additional tutorial support in problem modules including where feasible small group tuition/support.
- The profile and balance of appointed external examiners across the institute has changed to include a greater proportion of business/industry based examiners. The current profile (*2015/6 figures in brackets*) has 92% (93) Irish, 8% (7) international, 33% (20) business/industry based and 8% (12) University based. External examiners submit annual reports to the Registrar copies of which are circulated to the relevant Heads of Department for consideration, action and feedback by Departmental and Programme Boards. For 2016-17, 92% (54%) of examiners submitted reports by the due date, a significant improvement.

While most extern reports are very positive, some matters of concern are also raised requiring action by the affected department e.g. inconsistencies in the provision of marking schemes, concerns over the distribution of grades in some modules, and inconsistency between component breakdowns used in examinations and those in published course schedules. Individual Departments respond to and act upon the recommendations of external examiners.

- Student feedback collected locally via QA1-3 and the national ISSE survey are available to all Academic Departments to inform ongoing monitoring of programmes, permit benchmarking

against other Departments and other HEIs. Additional information from external examiner reports and direct feedback from student representatives on Programme Boards further enrich the data available.

- The 2016 Graduate Survey indicates that 67% of graduates were in employment, 15% in further education or research, 15% seeking work, and 3% not available for work or study. This suggests the qualifications achieved by graduates are relevant and well recognised beyond the institute.

**Examples from the different academic Schools include:**

**School of Engineering:**

- A year coordinator maintains data on student performance and attendance throughout the academic year. This helps identify students at risk or those finding coursework challenging, allowing for early interventions.
- Examination performance is monitored for each student cohort to determine if any structural or delivery modifications are necessary to remedy student difficulties.

**School of Business & Humanities:**

- Statistics and information from Programme Board reports, and Banner inform key strategies within the Department especially retention initiatives. First year is viewed as a priority.
- A review of student progression data in the BBus in Management resulted in a student-led request to merge smaller groups into a larger group, a change introduced for the 2017/18 academic year.

**School of Science & Computing:**

- Through Programme Boards, cohorts of students who may be at risk academically, whether in programmes or specific modules are identified and appropriate actions implemented. SMT and the President have been instrumental in providing additional resources buy way of more tutorials or classes to address these at risk cohorts.

Schedules of CAs and coursework deadlines are discussed and published in advance for students so that they are aware of these important dates and avoid any needless clashes or crowding of workload.

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

TU4D and the potential merger of IT Tallaght, IT Blanchardstown, and DIT into a Technological University continues to take time and attention. Actions relating to the QA impact of this initiative are described in Part 2 Section 1 above.

In summary, with regard to academic QA, this work seeks to deliver:

- TU designation in 2018 subject to the passing of enabling legislation
- A unitary academic QA system to operate across the three campuses post-merger and designation as a TU. This includes a common lexicon of QA terminology, establishing frameworks for unitary General Assessment Regulations (Marks & Standards), and a shared QA handbook for taught and research programmes.
- A shared statement on graduate attributes for the TU
- A common Curriculum Framework for all TU4D programmes

An integrated approach to student services for the TU4Dublin incorporating processes from recruitment to student application and acceptance, registration and fee payment, Induction and orientation, and examinations.

**3.3 A description of other implementation issues.**

None to report

## 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 IT Tallaght QA Manual addresses key aspects for the design, delivery, assessment and monitoring of it's taught and research programmes and the student experience in general. In 2016/17, the QA manuals were revised to reflect recent developments arising from the European Standards and Guidelines 2015 and QQI Core and Sectoral Guidelines affecting various aspects of the QA system.

In 2012, the process for Periodic Programmatic Review was divided into two discreet phases, (i) programme review and (ii) strategic positioning of the School. This had the effect of creating an unfortunate hiatus between the two stages which remained unresolved. While programme structures and content were reviewed in 2012/13 across all Schools, the strategic review of School operations remained unfinished. In 2016/17, the School of Business closed out on their Periodic Programmatic Review and a plan was put in place to bring the remaining School reviews to completion in early 2017/18. A review of the Periodic Programmatic Review process to re-align the two stages of the process into concurrent activities will also be undertaken in 2017/18 in time for the next planned Periodic Programmatic Reviews in 2018.

The QA systems are augmented by additional systems of review where external validation of programmes is deemed necessary or desirable, for example the approval of engineering programmes by Engineers Ireland, eligibility for exemptions from professional body examinations in the different Accountancy bodies, and accreditation of graduates of the BSc Honours in DNA & Forensic Science by the he Chartered Society of Forensic Sciences.

In 2016/17 13 new parent programmes across levels 8 and 9 were validated by external peer evaluation. Stakeholder involvement in the QA processes is seen as a critical element of the system including

representation where appropriate for students, graduates, employers and others both in the programme design phases and in the Panel composition.

Each year, learners are surveyed on their overall experience in each module they have taken and for their programme as a whole. Module surveys are administered by the academic staff and the programme survey by the Head of Department. Survey results are reviewed by the Programme Boards to identify what is and is not working within the overall learner experience. The Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) is also promoted (27% participation rate) and the results from this national survey are provided to individual departments and schools for consideration; ISSE provide a Departmental breakdown of this data for finer analysis locally. Some findings from ISSE 2017 include :

- 71% found 'course goals and requirements are clearly explained'
- 67 were 'taught in an organised way'
- 47% had 'prompt and detailed feedback on tests or completed assignments'
- 44% were 'provided feedback on a draft or work in progress'
- 59% rated interactions with academic advisors as 5-7 (scale 1 low – 7 excellent)
- 68% rated interactions with academic staff as 5 – 7
- 59% rated interactions with admin functions as 5 – 7
- 53% indicated that they found a supportive environment helping students succeed academically

A Graduate Survey is conducted annually to gather information on first destinations, relevance of employment to their area of study, further study, and their perceptions on the quality of the higher education experience they received.

The student record system contains a rich source of data on programme performance with respect to recruitment, retention, progression, examination performance, and graduation. A loss of expertise in data analytics in 2016/17 severely limited capacity in this regard. Efforts to re-build capacity and capability in MIS are being addressed in 2017/18. A new MIS Manger was appointed in 2016/17, a project on the development of enhanced data reports from the student record system was commenced, and another appointment to the team is expected in 2017/18.

## 2. Impact

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

In 2015/16 a facility was introduced enabling students at award stage having achieved a GPA equivalent to an honours classification but carrying a single failed module valued at < 10 ECTS to repeat to retain honours. Only 6 students applied to avail of the facility. A further 54 were identified as being eligible and were also considered (it was felt that the timing of introduction of the policy may not have allowed sufficient opportunity to fully inform students of the process and rather than disadvantage anyone, all eligible candidates were considered).

Annual evaluation of postgraduate research student progress was improved through the rollout of new procedures for their annual evaluation. Departmental evaluation teams assist in the process adding greater objectivity and independence.

IT Tallaght actively supports staff development and facilitates where possible staff engagement professional development activity. A range of training seminar/workshops were provided throughout 2016/17 to address a variety of topics including:

- Equality in Education - Current models of disability / Concept of equality in education / Impact of Inclusive Education / Supporting Inclusive Education / Action Planning / Supporting Technologies – delivered by WALK
- Understanding the Challenges of Student with Disabilities - AHEAD - Association for Higher Education Access and Disability
- Assessment Of, For and As Learning: shifting the balance in the purpose of assessment - Dr Geraldine O’Neill National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning.
- CPD MA in HE Higher Education Policy (6 week 10 ECTS CPD module) - Dr Jen Harvey and Dr Sheila Flanagan
- Work Placement Modules - Management and Assessment - Dr Julie Dunne, DIT
- Technology Enhanced Learning and Assessment (TELA) - Dr Barry Ryan, DIT
- Teaching and Learning in an Intercultural Context - Emma Dwyer, ICOS (Irish Council for International Students)

- The Challenges of Postgraduate Research Supervision - Prof Mary McNamara, GRSC, PhD, FRSC, Head of the Graduate Research School, DIT.

### 3. Themes

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

A key theme in 2016/17 was the review and update of academic QA documents and protocols. A significant number of the main documents have been reviewed and approved by Academic Council. The revised documents are publically available at <http://www.it-tallaght.ie/quality-assurance-enhancement>.

Enhancement of the capability of the MIS team (Management Information Systems) was commenced with the recruitment of a new MIS Manager. Approvals have been obtained for two additional posts to be filled but there has been delay in finding suitably qualified persons. The objective is to enhance the data analytics capacity of MIS and develop new dashboards of reports for managers to aid in identification of problem areas and evidence-based decision making.

Programme renewal and validations were a significant focus in 2016/17 with 20 programmes undergoing review and/or renewal/replacement across all areas.

The Centre for Learning and Teaching (CeLT) was reorganised, placed under the management of the School of Business and Humanities, and had 2 new persons appointed. Moodle, the online learning platform used at IT Tallaght was upgraded to version 3.2 and a suite of training provided to staff; additional support was also provided to students. This is now used across all full and part-time programmes to support access, delivery and assessment.

## 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.

Protocols for periodic programmatic review were revised and approved by Academic Council. A key change is the removal of the two-stage process which did not work for IT Tallaght. The process has reverted to a single stage process involving a critical evaluation of the strategic development of the School under review including programme offering and performance. A review of programme validation protocols is underway for 2017/18.

Compliance with deadlines for, and the accurate input data in the Gradebook (examination/assessment results) was enhanced via the provision of additional staff training, particularly for new and associate staff, development of 'how to' video clips and FAQ's on correct use of Gradebook available to all staff. A new business intelligence report available to all Schools allows tracking of grade input and early identification and remedy for potential problems. Preliminary examination board meetings are provided to preview and quality control broadsheets. These actions have had an overall impact on the quality and accuracy of data available to examination boards with the overall time allocated for final broadsheet consideration by Examination Boards being significantly reduced leading to greater holistic discussion regarding overall student performance.

The Class Representative Council of the Students Union has been expanded with the aim of improving student engagement and their contribution to planning and involvement in College activity. Student's

Union officers also engaged with the NSTEP programme for training and to promote more effective representation of student issues at relevant forums.

Examination deferral procedures and examination appeals procedures were revised through a sub-committee of Academic Council. The purpose was to provide greater clarity on application, grounds for deferral or appeal and to enhance the appeals process. Enhancements to the appeals process included extending the time period for review of grades, move to an independent departmental academic panel for reviews rather than it being done by the lecturer concerned, and highlighting the role of the Ombudsman as an additional avenue of appeal.

#### **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.

##### **Careers Office:**

In preparation for TU4Dublin the Careers Services in Tallaght, Blanchardstown and DIT have been reviewing models of best practice and revising current strategies and practices. The Careers Service continues with a strategic move in 2016/2017 to have less 1: 1 session and more group sessions (through classroom work) to have a greater impact amongst the students and create a greater awareness of the support service whilst making more efficient use of time. In 2016/17, 1938 students accessed the Careers Service. During the year, 35 employers were involved in careers events with 767 students attending; 30 in-class presentations were provided to a collective audience of 844 students.

An online booking system was implemented for Careers Appointments, Students can see in advance when the Service is available and can plan ahead. This provides for better quality appointments. Over the reporting period, 327 students availed of a 1:1 session with the Careers Office. 60% of students surveyed indicated that these meetings were the most useful. 72% had appointments within 1-2 days.

Other support Services also use this booking system e.g. Access

**School of Business & Humanities**

The Dept. of Management introduced a guest lecture series to enhance student learning experience and broaden the horizons of knowledge application.

Responsibility for the overall management of the Erasmus programme has been moved under Development & External Services allowing the Institute's international policies and procedures to be developed centrally and promoting QA in all areas.

The Department of Marketing & Business Computing has introduced in 2016/17 attendance monitoring as part of its retention strategy. Students at academic risk are identified, contacted by email / SMS to offer them supports. The Department has also initiated enhanced use of social media to forge connectivity between students, lecturers and administration.

**School of Science**

A forum was established in the Department of Science for 'Scholarship of Teaching in Science' to promote discourse on and sharing of ideas. Themed meetings are held during the year supporting new and existing staff to develop best practice.

**School of Engineering**

The Department of Electronic Engineering has actively initiated travel to other HEI's as a means of enhancing retention and encouraging deeper engagement of students with their study programmes. Student's teams travelled to Belgium and China (Shanghai) to complete modules and coursework.

## 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.

Objectives for 2017/18 with respect to QA and enhancement include:

- Completion of outstanding elements of periodic programmatic review for the Schools of Science & Computing and Engineering. Commence periodic programmatic review (2013-18) for each of the three academic schools.
- Review of the process for new programme validation.
- The Department of Electronic Engineering will review the handling and response to matters raised by external examiners, and the operation of programme boards and responses to matters raised (the 'feedback loop').
- Review and update of the Code of Conduct for Research including research degree programmes.

In the context of the proposed TU4D, work continues TU4D partners to harmonise QA&E systems such that they can support a consistent approach across the three partner campuses. Elements of this process include:

- Continuation of work with TU4D partners on the alignment and harmonisation of academic QA to establish a unitary approach for the TU if and when designated.
- A SWOT analysis of the current status of undergraduate and graduate research education programmes across the Institutes

- An environment scanning and benchmarking exercise to identify opportunities and best practice internationally for education programmes and to ensure compliance with QQI (2016) Sector Specific QA Guidelines (IoT).
- Create a development plan to underpin the implementation of the Structured PhD Programme across the three TU4D institutes
- Conduct an analysis of recruitment, admission, retention, performance and employment. data about research students in the context of national/international trends and TU4D educational and research objectives
- Develop a Handbook for Quality Assurance and Enhancement of Graduate Research Education in keeping with the QA&E best practice requirements set down by QQI, the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG-2015) and the THEQF (Technological Higher Education Quality Framework).

### 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.

In 2017/18 IT Tallaght will commence programmatic review processes across all three academic schools.

### 5.3 Other Plans

None to report.

## 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.

All three academic Schools are due to commence periodic programmatic reviews in 2017/18 including a critical self-evaluation of academic operations and QA, review of programmes with a view to renewal of validation and/or replacement of programmes through separate validation procedures.

### 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.

IT Tallaght commits itself to continuing the review and enhancement of academic QA (QA) procedures in line with QQI core and sectoral guidelines. The enhancement of academic QA is addressed through ongoing review and revision of its framework of QA policies and procedures.

During 2016/17, review of academic QA procedures was commenced and a number of key elements revised as reported here. This is building towards Institutional Review expected in 2020.

In the context of progress towards TU designation, work continues on QA&E and the harmonisation of quality systems across the 3 partner institutions. The re-engagement of TUI members should help further this effort.

Structural reorganisation of the Office of the Registrar is supporting a more efficient operation and steps are in train to enhance data analytical capabilities to better enable data informed decisions and evaluations.

Review of external examination has increased the proportion of industry/practice based subject experts which is appropriate given the applied focus of the academic programmes offered.

Outstanding elements of periodic programmatic reviews for Engineering and Science will be concluded in 2017/18 with preparations being made for a next round of review. This will be based on agreed revised guidelines intended to streamline the process and avoid the separation of the review stages experienced previously.

Allied to this, the School of Engineering will undergo an Engineers Ireland Accreditation review for all programmes in early 2017/18.

### **6.3 Themes**

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

Developmental themes aligned to the Institutes strategic objectives

Quality Review Group providing a rolling review of quality systems and their enhancement

Harmonisation of quality systems between the TU4D partner colleges

Enhancement of processes for collaborative provision of programmes to broaden participation, provide access to quality education for people at work, and internationalisation of educational opportunity

Ongoing attention to student engagement, retention and progression. In support of this we continue to provide targeted support for students at risk, and classes/revision sessions based on student feedback Improved quality of equipment in laboratories to enhance student learning experience.