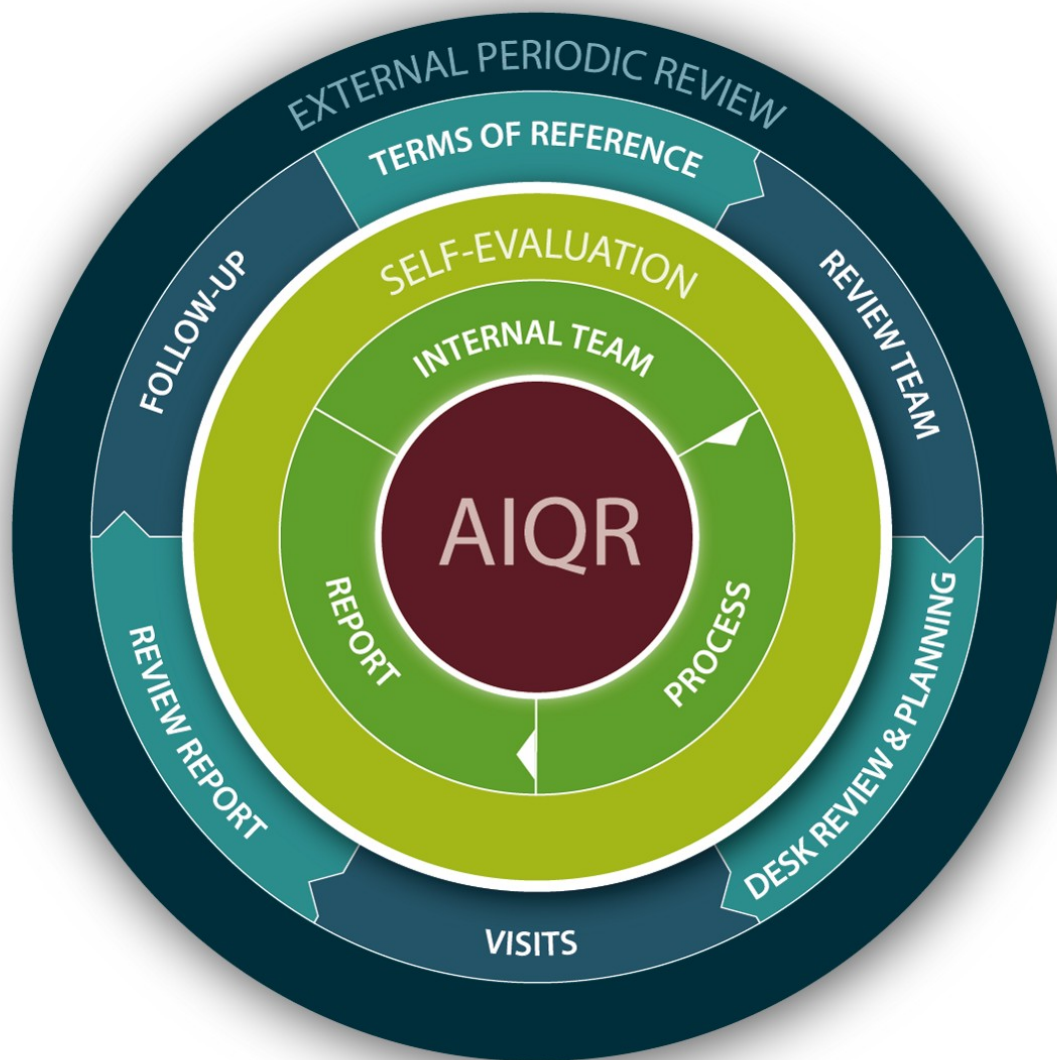


# Institute of Technology, Tralee

## 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.

Institute of Technology, Tralee is a publicly-funded higher education institution established by statute. The Institute, originally designated Tralee Regional Technical College (Tralee RTC), was established in 1977 under the control of the Town of Tralee Vocational Education Committee (VEC). Tralee RTC became an autonomous institution in 1992 under the Regional Technical Colleges Act (1992) with its remit being:

‘To provide vocational, technical education and training for the economic, technological, scientific, commercial, industrial, social and cultural development of the State with particular reference to the region served by the college.’

Tralee RTC was designated as the Institute of Technology, Tralee in 1997. The new designation more closely reflected the modern mission of the Institution. The mission of the Institute is to ‘excel in teaching, research and development work for the benefits of students, industry and the wider community’.

In 2004, the Institute was delegated the authority from Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI, then HETAC) to make awards for its undergraduate programmes and taught masters programmes. The Institute provides undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, full and part-time, at NFQ Levels 6-10. In 2017, the Institute was granted delegated authority from QQI in the making of Research Masters Degrees at NFQ level 9 in areas where the Institute already had approval. The Institute already had Research Approval by QQI to deliver Postgraduate Research Degrees at NFQ Level 10 in particular research areas. The range of programmes has led, not only to a wide geographic spread of Irish students, but to a Higher Education Institution with a broad international appeal. The Institute has currently in excess of 70 nationalities pursuing programmes of study across the three Schools: School of Business, Computing and Humanities; School of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics and School of Health and Social Sciences. The Institute is now home to approximately 350 staff and 3,000 students with programmes being offered across a range of disciplines. The Institute supports a thriving research community of over 150 researchers including academic staff, research professionals and postgraduate students. The Institute has three research centres: Shannon Applied Biotechnology Centre (**Shannon ABC**); Intelligent Mechatronics and RFID (**IMAR**) and **UNESCO Chair Inclusive Physical Education, Sport, Fitness and Recreation**.

The Institutes sixth Strategic Plan was developed in 2017, the year of the Institutes 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary entitled: 'Strategic Plan - A Vision to 2012-2017-2021'. This plan was developed cognisant of the overall national policy framework for the Higher Education sector as outlined in the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030. Recognising that the Institute by itself cannot facilitate the development of a dynamic and entrepreneurial region, in developing this plan the Institute incorporated the relevant aspects of county, regional and national development policies. In particular, the following plans significantly influenced this strategic plan:

*County/ Regional:*

- Kerry County Development Plan 2015-2021;
- Kerry County Council-Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2021;
- South West Region Action Plan for Jobs 2015-2017.

*National/ European:*

- Winning Foreign Direct Investment 2015-2019 IDA Ireland;
- The Action Plan for Jobs 2017;
- Enterprise Ireland Strategy 2017-2020;
- National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2015-2019;
- National Skills Strategy 2025;
- Innovation 2020;
- Europe 2020.

In carrying out the Institutes activities, and in developing plans for the future, the Institute is guided by a number of core principles, which were restated in the new Strategic Plan:

- Excellence - aim towards excellence in all aspects of our efforts, inside and outside the classroom;
- Integrity - act as one in an open and transparent manner;
- Inclusivity - celebrate diversity and strive to ensure that our communities have access to our programmes, campus and facilities;
- Collaboration through connectedness - working together within and outside of the Institute to advance Knowledge and grow the organisations reach and impact;
- Creativity and Innovation - be a responsive, solution driven institute which embraces change.

The vision for the Institute has been recalibrated within the new strategic Plan as 'IT, Tralee will play a transformative role, within the region and beyond. This will be achieved through the creative pursuit of excellence in teaching, learning, research and innovation. This will be realised within an environment of sustainability, fellowship and inclusivity'. To ensure the Institute succeeds as a collective in realising this vision, the Institute has identified five key Strategic Goals:

- Sustainability and Growth;
- Teaching, Learning and Graduate Readiness;
- Research and Innovation;
- Fellowship and Inclusivity;
- Establishment of the Munster Technological University.

The Strategic Dialogue Cycle 4 and the Compact agreed with the HEA informs this new Strategic Plan. This plan going forward will form the bedrock of the new strategic dialogue framework currently under development by the HEA. The compact is the outcome of a process of strategic dialogue that reflects current national objectives in higher education and sets out to align the missions, strategies and profiles of individual higher education institutions with national priorities, and to agree strategic objective indicators of success against which institutional key performance indicators will be measured and funding allocated. The Compact recognises that IT, Tralee is an autonomous institution with a distinctive mission, operating within a regional, national and international higher education environment. The Institute has identified 7 domains within the Strategic Dialogue Process, with key objectives and targets to be achieved by 2016 year end:

1. Regional Clusters;
2. Participation, Equal Access and Lifelong Learning;
3. Excellent Teaching and Learning and Quality of the Student Experience;
4. High Quality, Internationally Competitive Research and Innovation;
5. Enhanced Engagement with Enterprise and the Community and Embedded Knowledge Exchange;
6. Enhanced Internationalisation;
7. Institutional Consolidation.

A new Research and Strategic Plan 2017-2021 was developed in 2017, which firmly underpins the Institutes new Strategic Plan 2017-2021 and builds upon the Institutes research performance over the period of the previous Research and Innovation Strategic Plan ‘Connecting Knowledge Globally’ which was published in 2013. The new Research Strategy establishes the following priorities to strengthen the Institutes reputation for excellence in research and innovation:

- Research Excellence: Internationally Benchmarked and Externally Evaluated;
- Research Impact through Innovation;
- Enhance Research Linkages and collaborative Research Activities;
- High Quality Research Degree Provision to Level 10;
- Enabling and Supporting Research Activity across IT, Tralee.

IT, Tralee is firmly committed to continuing to perform high quality research that will strengthen our relevance as a strong driver of economic and social growth. Only excellent research will secure IT, Tralee’s reputation as a high performing research engaged education provider.

In carrying out its activities, and in developing plans for the future, the Institute is committed to demonstrating the highest quality standards and to continuous quality improvement and enhancement and to the creation of a quality culture through a quality assurance system covering all of its operations. In the development of this quality assurance system, the Institute, as required by the Education and Training Act 2012, has regard to the QQIs Quality Assurance Guidelines, QQIs Policy on Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines, the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education area and the Technological Higher Education Quality Framework (published April 2017). The Institutes internal quality assurance and enhancement system is focused going forward on applying the theqf Principles of Internal Quality Assurance and Enhancement:

- Academic and Student-centred Values;
- Institutional Autonomy and Academic Freedom;
- Quality Culture;
- Informed Practice and Stakeholder Engagement;
- Proportional Implementation;
- Comprehensive, Transparent and Publicly Accountable Procedures;
- Measurement;
- Consistency with Policy and International Effective Practice.

Refer to the Quality Assurance Manual Section A2: Mission and Vision, Governance and Management, Sub Section A2.1 Vision and Mission and Section A3: Principles Underpinning Quality Assurance Procedures and Framework for Continuous Improvement, Sub Section A3.1 General Principles.

The Institutes Quality Assurance Manual (and supporting documentation) is available to both staff and students internally and publically via the IT, Tralee website at [www.ittralee.ie](http://www.ittralee.ie)

The Institutes Strategic Plan - A Vision to 2021 is available internally and publicly through the IT, Tralee website at <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/ProceduresPlansandReports/>

The Institutes Mission Based Performance Compact 2014 is available publicly through the HEA website at: [www.hea.ie](http://www.hea.ie)

The Institutes Research and Innovation Strategic Plan 2017-2021 is available internally and publically through the IT, Tralee website at <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/ProceduresPlansandReports/>

## 2. Quality assurance decision-making fora

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

Under the IOT Act 2006 or RTC Act 1999 (Baseline Act), the Institute is led by a Governing Body, the roles and functions of which are described in the IOT Act 2006. The Institutes Academic Council assists the Governing Body in the planning, co-ordination, development and overseeing of the educational work of the Institute, and to protect, maintain and develop the academic standards of the programmes and activities of the college. The Academic Council is accordingly the primary statutory body with direct responsibility for academic quality. The President and Vice President of Academic Affairs and Registrar are respectively Chairman and Secretary of the Academic Council. Once adopted, relevant decisions of Academic Council meetings are tabled for discussion/decision at Governing Body meetings. The Academic Council has the following Sub-Committee structure:

- Quality Assurance Sub-Committee;
- Research and Development Sub-Committee;
- Programmes and Planning Sub-Committee;
- Student Affairs Sub-Committee.

All of the above Sub-Committees contribute to the development of quality assurance policies and procedures at Institute level. Student representatives are members of the Academic Council, the Governing Body and all of the Academic Council Sub-Committees. In addition to Sub-Committees of Academic Council, working groups are established to scope out best practice and report back to Academic Council in advance of updates to policies and procedures. This practice ensures that quality assurance is relevant, current and embedded within the academic and non-academic communities of the Institute.

The responsibility for ensuring implementation and compliance with these quality policies and procedures rests ultimately with the Executive and particularly within the remit of the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Registrar. The Executive ensures the activities undertaken by the Institute are in line with its Strategic Plan and that elements of associated risk, governance and resource implications are approved before being undertaken.

At School and Department level, Heads of School, Heads of Department and Course Boards have local responsibilities for implementing and monitoring of quality assurance policies and procedures. The academic management of programmes is the responsibility of the Course Boards. Opportunities for enhancement of quality assurance policies and procedures are frequently identified through Course Board feedback (student representatives from programmes are members of the associated Course Board ensuring the student voice is heard at this level) and School Board feedback (which consist of academic staff, school management and school administration).

The service units of Human Resources, Estates Management, Information Technology and Systems, External Services, Academic Administration and Student Affairs, Library and Finance, all report to their line management within the Executive Team. Feedback received through the local staff teams contribute to management decisions with respect to quality assurance and quality enhancement.

Further fora which contribute to the implementation, monitoring and review of quality assurance policies and procedures, and quality enhancement, include the following:

- General Management Team meetings;
- Institute Research Ethics Committee (IREC);
- Institute Postgraduate Committee (IPC);
- Examinations and Assessment Review Committee (EARC); (Note: Students' Union representation on this committee as an observer with respect to Reviews and Rechecks only)
- Examinations and Assessment Appeals Committee (EAAC); (Note: Students' Union representation on this committee as an observer only)
- Institute Disciplinary Committee (IDC); (Note: Students' Union representation on this committee)
- Institute Disciplinary Appeals Committee (IDAC); (Note: Students' Union representation on this committee)
- Institute Vetting Committee (IVC). (Note: Students' Union Representation on this committee)

The Quality Assurance Dissemination Strategy implemented in Academic Year 2016/2017, firmly embeds quality assurance and enhancement within all of the operations across the Institute, both academic and non-academic, and provides for an open, transparent and accountable system of quality assurance and enhancement. This system, implemented by the Office of the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Registrar, records and tracks decisions of the Academic Council and Sub-Committees and provides for a facility to record when decisions are to be acted upon, by whom and when they have to be completed. It also provides a facility for managing agendas and minutes of meetings. The on line publication of the Institutes Quality Assurance Manual and the Institutes Reports and Plans has contributed to this open, transparent and accountable system. All staff and students contribute to this quality culture within the Institute. Staff, students and all relevant stakeholders are formally updated with respect to new and updated quality assurance procedures, and are formally asked for their feedback on the operation of quality assurance procedures. Feedback received is processed formally through the Quality Assurance Sub-Committee.

The Institutes Quality Assurance Manual (relevant sections referred to below) describes the Governing Body, Academic Council and other governance, management and decision making fora with respect to quality assurance and enhancement.

Refer to the Quality Assurance Manual Section A2: Mission, Vision, Governance and Management, Sub Section A2.2: Governance (Governing Body), Sub Section A2.3: Management (Academic Council, Organisational Structure, President, Executive, General Management Team, Academic Council Sub-Committees, Academic Schools and Departments, School Boards, Course Board, Coordination Committees, Central Services Structure), Sub Section A2.4: Standing Orders of the Academic Council, Sub Section A2.5: Management of Agendas and Minutes of Meetings of Academic Council, Sub Section A2.6: Appendices, including the following items: Item 1: Governing Body Membership; Item 2: Role and Function of the Academic Council; Item 3: Role and Function of the Quality Assurance Sub-Committee; Item 4: Role and Function of the Research and Development Sub-Committee; Item 5: Role and Function of the Institute Postgraduate Committee; Item 6: Role and Function of the Programmes and Planning Sub-Committee ; Item 7: Role and Function of the Student Affairs Sub-Committee; Item 8: The Annual Course Board Report Forms CBA1 and CBA2; Section A12: Research

Ethics at IT Tralee, Sub Section A12.1 Research Ethics Policy; Section A5: Assessment of Learners, Sub Section A5.26: Examination and Assessments Review Committee (EARC) and Examinations and Assessments Appeals Committee (EAAC); Section A14: Student Admissions, Progression and Recognition, Sub Section A14.1: Garda Vetting Policy.

See <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/QualityAssurance/>

Refer to the published Institutes Student Handbook for detail regarding Institutes Disciplinary Committee (IDC) and the Institutes Disciplinary Appeals Committee (IDAC). To be published within the Quality Assurance Manual in Academic Year 2017/2018. Student Handbook Academic Year 2017/2018 available at:

<http://www.ittralee.ie/en/media/StudentHandbookSectionA.pdf> and

<http://www.ittralee.ie/en/pdf/RightsandResponsibilites.pdf>



## 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.

Programmes are designed in line with the mission, values, core principles and strategic objectives of the Institutes Strategic Plan and the Strategic Dialogue Compact with the HEA, involving students and other stakeholders, and in response to regional need and national policy objectives of government and governing bodies.

Refer to the Quality Assurance Manual Section A4: Procedures for the Design, Validation and Modification of Programmes and Modules, Sub Section A4.1: Overview of Procedures for the Design, Validation and Modification of Programmes and Modules, Sub Section A4.2: Procedures for the Design and Validation of New Programmes, Sub Section A4.3: Procedures for Modifications to Validated Programmes, Sub Section A4.4: Procedure for Module Development, Modification and Validation and Sub Section A4.5: Appendices, including the following items: Item 1: Programme Proposal Form for Major Awards; Item 2: Programme Proposal Submission; Item 3: Assessors Guide for New Programme Evaluation; Item 4: New Course Evaluation Internal Review Assessors Report; Item 5: New course Evaluation External Panel of Assessors Report; Item 6: Response by the Development Team to Conditions and Recommendations Specified in External Assessors Report; Item 7: Programme Proposal Template for Minor/Supplemental/Special Purpose Awards; Item 8: Assessors Guide for Evaluation of Proposed Modification of Validated Programmes; Item 9: Validated Programmes Major Modifications External Assessors Report; Item 10: Update to Module Descriptors - Template 1 - Major Changes; and Item 11: Update to Module Descriptors - Template 2 - Minor Changes, Item 12: External Panel Nomination Form.

See <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/QualityAssurance/>

## **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 National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 highlights areas for focus over the period to 2030. The mission of the Institute, along with the Institutes stated vision and values within the Institutes Strategic Plan, form the bedrock for the goals highlighted within the Strategic Plan which reflect the National Strategy with respect to the provision of quality student centred teaching, learning and assessment and a quality student experience. Excellent Teaching and Learning and the quality of the student experience is also an agreed strategic objective within the Strategic Dialogue Compact with the HEA.

Refer to the following Sections of the Quality Assurance Manual : Section A5: Assessment of Learners, Sub Section A5.2: Anti Plagiarism Policy and Procedure, Sub Section A5.3: Preparation and Production of Examination and Assessment Material, Sub Section A5.4a: Project and Dissertation Procedure, Sub Section A5.4b: Policy and Procedure for the Request for an Extension of an Assignment Submission Deadline, Sub Section A5.5: Access by Candidates to Relevant Examination and Assessment Material, Sub Section A5.6a: Procedures for the Marking of Examinations and Assessments and Recording of Results, Sub Section A5.6b: Entry of Examination Results, Sub Section A5.7: Pre Examination Board and Meetings, Sub Section A5.8: Board of Examiners and Meetings, Sub Section A5.9: Recording Decisions of Boards of Examiners Meetings, Sub Section A5.9a Progression with Credit Deficit, Sub Section A5.10: Amendment to a Results Broadsheet, Sub Section A5.11: Review of Provisional Examination Results, Sub Section A5.12: Recheck of Provisional Examination Results, Sub Section A5.13: Processing of Alleged Infringements related to Examinations organised by the Examinations Office, Sub Section A5.14: Processing of Alleged Infringements of Examination Regulations Relating to CA and FEO, Sub Section A5.15: Analysis of Examination Results, Sub Section A5.16: External Examiners Policy and Procedures, Sub Section A5.17: Assessment and Standards Revised 2013, Sub Section A5.18: Invigilator Guidelines, Sub Section A5.19: Procedure for the Management of Certified Absence relating to CA Events, Sub Section A5.20: Solas Assessment Regulations, Sub Section A5.21: Protocol for Students Representing the Institute, Sub Section A5.22: Application for Use of a Bilingual Dictionary During Exams, Sub Section A5.23: Student Feedback on Continuous Assessment, Sub Section A5.24: Guidelines for Staff Student Meetings, Sub Section A5.25a: Guide to Citations, Referencing and Avoiding Plagiarism, Sub Section A5.25b: Request for Approval to Depart from Institute Referencing System.

Section A6: Procedures for Ongoing Monitoring of Programmes, Sub Section A6.1: School Boards, Sub Section A6.2: Course Boards, Sub Section A6.3: Course Coordination Committees; Sub Section A6.4: Course Programme Handbook; Sub Section A6.5: Student Liaison, Sub Section A6.6: Students on Course Board.

Section A10: Complaints Procedure, Sub Section A10.1 Complaints Procedures

Section A13: Learning Resources and Student Support, Sub Section A13.3: Student Charter

See <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/QualityAssurance/>

Refer to the following sections of the Student Handbook: Section A: Student Charter; Section B: Student Rights and Responsibilities, Sub Section 2: Academic Conduct; Sub Section 3: General Discipline; and Sub Section 4: Special Regulations.

See Student Handbook Academic Year 2017/2018 available at:  
<http://www.ittralee.ie/en/media/StudentHandbookSectionA.pdf> and  
<http://www.ittralee.ie/en/pdf/RightsandResponsibilites.pdf>

All new programme proposals, and the evaluation and validation of same, and reviews of existing programmes (Programmatic Review), require consideration of programme delivery, with particular focus on curriculum design and teaching, learning, assessment and feedback strategies. This serves to quality assure same and support a student centred approach to same. Statistics on student progression within programmes are reviewed annually and barriers to progression are reviewed at programme level by Course Boards. External Examiners in their roles are required to review the appropriateness of the programme assessment strategy and the assessment procedures, range and type, and flowing from this consider subsidiary module assessment strategies. External Examiners are also required to determine whether or not the applied procedures for assessment are valid, reliable, fair and consistent. External Examiners must report their findings to the Institute and the Institute must respond to same.

See Validation Reports available at:  
<http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/ProceduresPlansandReports/>

See A5.16 External Examiners Policy and Procedures at:  
<http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/QualityAssurance/>

During Academic Years 2015/2016 and 2016/2017 general discussions had been held at a number of Academic Council meetings in relation to enhancement of the student teaching and learning experience to support the students transition to third level, their retention, progression and academic success and provide for a quality engaged student experience.

At a meeting of the Academic Council in November 2015, the decision was made to establish a Teaching, Learning and Assessment Working Group to develop an Institute Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy. After the initial meetings of this working group it was decided to widen the focus of the strategy to include Engagement and to focus initially on the Year 1 teaching and learning student experience. Subsequently this working group was then tasked with the development of a Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Engagement (TLAE) Strategy.

At a meeting of the Academic Council in April 2016, a decision was made to establish a sub-group of the Academic Council to progress with developing Terms of Reference (TOR) for a Review of Semesterisation with a focus on Year 1. At this same meeting it was agreed that progression with the development of the TOR for a Review of Semesterisation in Year 1 and the development of a TLAE Strategy with an initial focus on year 1 are inextricably linked. Therefore, it was agreed that both groups would progress on working together. This work progressed as agreed, and at a meeting of the Academic Council in June 2017, a pilot roll-out of a yearlong de-semesterised year 1 across the Institutes programmes was approved. It was decided that this option would be explored by all Course Boards/Departments in Academic Year 2017/2018, for implementation in Academic Year 2018/2019.

It was agreed that all departments would commence with the exploration as an agenda item at an early Course Board meeting in Academic Year 2017/2018. It was also agreed that this work will include a review of the teaching and learning student experience in year 1 and consequently will contribute to the ongoing co-development of an Institute Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Engagement Strategy. As agreed by this Academic Council, the joint Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Engagement Strategy Working Group and the Review of Semesterisation Sub-group of the Academic Council would meet to draft the Terms of Reference to support the progression of the agreed work by all Course Boards. The following core goals of the TLAE Strategy had already been identified as:

- Goal 1: Student Centred Teaching and Learning (including Learner Supports);
- Goal 2: Assessment as/of/for Learning-Assessment Feedback;
- Goal 3: Curriculum Design;
- Goal 4: Academic Professional Development;
- Goal 5: Learning Environment and Teaching Spaces (developing a physical, social and technological environment that supports learning);
- Goal 6: Engaging with stakeholders in Learning Design, Delivery and 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.

The Institutes Research and Innovation Strategic Plan 2017-2021 sets out the key priorities and describes the goals to be achieved by IT, Tralee during this period. The strategy provides direction and guidance for researchers, staff and stakeholders on the Institutes research, development and innovation mission, values and targets. This strategy is in line with the mission, values, core principles and strategic objectives of the Institutes Strategic Plan 2017-2021 and the Strategic Dialogue Compact with the HEA. The new Institute Strategic Plan identifies ‘Research and Innovation’ as a core goal ‘enhancing the reputation of the Institute as a research engaged institution and continue to improve standards in our delivery of research excellence that will translate into economic growth and societal development in the region we serve’.

Linked to the three academic schools, the Institute has three research centres: Shannon Applied Biotechnology Centre (**Shannon ABC**); Intelligent Mechatronics and RFID (**IMAR**) and **UNESCO Chair Inclusive Physical Education, Sport, Fitness and Recreation**. The Institutes prioritised research themes are driven by the three research centres. In addition, across the three schools, a number of research groups exist (eg. The Centre for Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Development (**CEED**) and the Irish Academy of Hospitality and Tourism (**IAHT**) and new research groups and alliances are emerging where staff are working jointly together across departments and schools and developing advanced competencies in multi-disciplinary areas of research. The Institute continues to identify and support emerging opportunity areas as well as supporting existing research areas. Each of the Institutes research centres has their own individual objectives and performance indicators, aligned with the Institutes Research and Innovation Strategic Plan. The Institute monitors its research centres to ensure each centre is on the correct trajectory to meet its annual research targets and metrics. The research centres are aligned to the National Research Priority areas and Horizon 2020.

The National Strategy of Higher Education to 2030 recommends that ‘every student should learn in an environment that is informed by research, scholarship and up to date practice and knowledge’ (2011, pg. 17). Embedding the research activities of the Institute within the individual academic departments is key to fostering and developing a spirit of curiosity and scholarship amongst the Institute’s undergraduate students.

Maintenance of the highest standards in research and integrity is a recognised critical responsibility of the Institute. In 2013, IT, Tralee performed a self-evaluation of its validated research degree programmes which identified key areas for advancement to enhance the leadership, management and governance structures for post graduate research degree provision at the Institute. As a result, a Research Office, now managed by a Head of Research, and an Institute Postgraduate Committee (IPC) and an Institute Research Ethics Committee (IREC) was established in 2014. The IPC is responsible for reviewing research degree proposal applications and monitoring postgraduate student progress. The Head of Research is secretary to this Committee. The IPC reports to the Research and Development Sub-Committee of the Academic Council, which is chaired by the Vice President of Research, Development and External Engagement. The Institutes Research Ethics Committee (IREC) facilitates

the ethical review of all postgraduate research degree and professional research activities (any research not undertaken by students) of the Institute. Ethical review of undergraduate and taught masters postgraduate research is managed at Department/School level in accordance with a minimal risk approach.

Research Quality Assurance policies and procedures at the Institute are aligned with the QQI Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for providers of Research Degree Programmes. The Office of the Vice President Academic Affairs and Registrar retains responsibility for registration, examination and oversight of the implementation and compliance with all of the relevant research quality assurance procedures.

A number of undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes across the Institute have a Research Project component as follows:

- Bachelor of Business;
- Bachelor of Business (Honours);
- Bachelor of Arts in Culinary Arts;
- Bachelor of Arts in Travel and Tourism Management;
- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Travel and Tourism Management;
- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Animation, Visual Effects and Motion Design;
- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Music Technology;
- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in TV, Radio and New Media;
- Bachelor of Arts in Information Systems Management;
- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Information Systems Management;
- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Animation, Visual Effects and Motion Design;
- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Creative Writing;
- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Design for Interactive Media;
- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Care and Education;
- Bachelor of Science in Computing in Information Technology Support;
- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Computing with Software Development;
- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Computing with Games Development
- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Computing with Digital Media
- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Computing with Mobile Application Development;
- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Field Biology and Wildlife Tourism;
- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Wildlife Biology;
- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Agricultural Science;
- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Pharmaceutical Studies;
- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Agricultural Engineering;
- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Manufacturing Engineering;
- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Civil Engineering;
- Certificate in Quality Management Tools & Techniques in Practice;
- Bachelor of Engineering in Agricultural Engineering;
- Bachelor of Engineering in Civil & Environmental Engineering;
- Bachelor of Engineering in Manufacturing Engineering;
- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Health and Leisure with Massage;
- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Adapted Physical Activity;

- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Health and Leisure Studies;
- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Sports Development;
- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Wellness;
- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Physical Education;
- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Nursing Studies;
- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in General Nursing;
- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Mental Health Nursing;
- Certificate in Wound Care;
- Diploma in Nursing Leadership;
- MSc in Nursing;
- MSc in Nursing (International);
- Master of Science by Research.

Programme Guidelines for students completing research projects within the above undergraduate programmes are provided to quality assure and enhance the completion of same.

Refer to the following Sections of the Quality Assurance Manual: Section A2: Mission, Vision, Governance and Management, Subsection 6: Appendices (Includes Terms of Reference for the Institute Postgraduate Committee (IPC) and the Research and Development Sub-Committee); Section A5: Assessment of Learners, Subsection A5.4: Project and Dissertation Procedure; Section A11: Postgraduate Research Degree Programmes, Subsection A11.1: Introduction, Subsection A11.2: Project Proposal and Approval and Student Registration, Subsection A11.3: Research Degree Programme Supervision and Monitoring, Subsection A11.4: Thesis Submission and Examination, Subsection A11.5: Procedure for the Approval of New Research Areas; Section A12: Research Ethics, Subsection A12.1: Research Ethics Policy, Subsection A12.2: Ethical Review of Undergraduate or Taught Masters Postgraduate Research, Subsection A12.3: Ethical Review of Postgraduate Research Programmes and Professional Research, Subsection A12.4: External Research Requesting Access to Research Participants at IT Tralee.

See <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/QualityAssurance/>

Refer to the Institutes Research and Innovation Strategic Plan 2017-2021: See <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/media/ResearchandInnovationStrategicPlan2017-21.pdf>

Refer to the Institutes Strategic Plan- A Vision to 2021: See [http://www.ittralee.ie/en/media/Strategic\\_Plan.pdf](http://www.ittralee.ie/en/media/Strategic_Plan.pdf)

Refer to the Institutes Mission Based Performance Compact with the HEA - available publicly through the HEA website at: [www.heai.ie](http://www.heai.ie)

#### 4. Student Lifecycle (ESG 1.4)

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

The National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 highlights areas for focus over the period to 2030. The mission of the Institute, along with the Institutes stated vision and values within the new Institutes Strategic Plan 2017-2021, form the bedrock for the goals highlighted within the Strategic Plan which reflect the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 and the National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2015-19, with respect to priority areas of participation, equal access and lifelong learning. The HEA has reported on the Institutes performance through the Strategic Dialogue Cycle 4 and has provided feedback that the Institute is very strong in the area of equity of access. Refer to the Institutes Mission Based Performance Compact with the HEA and Strategic Dialogue Cycle 4 for detail on the Institute objectives agreed with the HEA with regard to Participation, Equal Access and Lifelong Learning- at: [www.heai.ie](http://www.heai.ie)

The inclusion of Access and Lifelong Learning as one of the seven domains of the Strategic Dialogue Process has been an instrumental catalyst in the formation of IT, Tralee's response to the national priorities for access to higher education by under-represented groups. The process has raised the profile of access to higher education nationally, regionally and locally and is transforming what we do, how we do it, why we do it and how we track it. During the course of the strategic dialogue process significant progress in data processing and statistical analysis, Institute-wide, was realised together with greater alignment of Institutional priorities. In its pursuit of the specific key access commitments in Cycle 1 of this Mission-based Performance Compact, the Institute has realised a number of significant achievements and is focussing on enhanced external and internal partnership for continued success:

- To facilitate non-standard admissions: The Institute expanded its Pathfinder Access Programme to all 26 schools in County Kerry. This was informed by an evaluation of the existing Pathfinders programme and has led to the introduction of a new access programme for DEIS schools in collaboration with the Trinity Access 21 programme;
- To facilitate mature learners access to higher education: While the Institute continues to exceed the national targets for new full-time mature entrants, it is experiencing a year-on-year decline in the intake of this cohort. Mature candidates who did not progress to registration were surveyed and IT, Tralee has committed to undertaking research in the wider community in collaboration with local partnership companies to inform relevant development;
- To support students with disabilities to participate fully in the academic life of the Institute: A Reasonable Accommodations policy is before the Academic Council and will, when approved, be implemented through a suite of staff CPD workshops. Through its enhanced pre-entry schools programme, the Institute will reach out to students in a more meaningful and cohesive way. Plans are in place to deliver relevant CPD to the Kerry Branch of the Institute of Guidance Counsellors in September 2017;



- To develop teaching and learning practices that are effective in creating a positive learning environment: The Institute is currently developing its Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Engagement Strategy in which it has embedded inclusive practice and universal design;
- To provide fair, regular and ongoing support through the work of the ESF Student Assistance Fund: The Institute has developed an online application form for students use which has assisted with reporting requirements and streamlined the administration of the fund;
- To facilitate students from all ethnic minorities, especially members of the Travelling Community: A second Traveller Access Officer has been appointed to work with students in Junior Cycle, groundwork included a Minorities Conference for Educators and the dissemination of good practice through a presentation at the EAN Conference and the Traveller Education Seminar 2016;
- IT, Tralee's Access Service is collaborating with Cork Institute of Technology on pre-merger initiatives to develop a model of engagement that promotes a unified student experience;
- The Institutes Strategic Plan 2017-2021 continues to value Access and Lifelong Learning as a priority for the coming years, taking an Institute-wide approach to celebrating diversity and striving to ensure that our communities have access to our programmes, campus and facilities.

The Institutes new Strategic Plan 2017-2021, refers to integrating the goals and objectives of the national access plan into Institutional activities. It identifies the following as measures of the success of same being achieved:

- The Institutes Access Plan will be updated in line with the National Access Plan 2015-2019, specifically the following will be achieved: A bespoke access outreach programme targeting the socio Economic Groupings (Non manual worker group & semi and unskilled manual worker group) at second level; An access champion in each department; Specific monitoring of non-completion for access groups;
- Research to be completed to inform relevant Institutional Access Initiatives. Based on research outputs and demand, we will design and offer a tailored access Foundation Programme providing 20 new places annually;
- Track, monitor and support students of the access programme with the aim of facilitating progression and completion of a higher education award which exceeds the national target for this cohort.

During Academic Year 2016/2017, further to a review of the Pathfinders programme that had taken place the previous year, a new proposal (Access 21) was explored to replace the existing Access Pathfinders Programme. The new project explored was the Trinity Access 21 Project already running at Trinity College Dublin. Working in collaboration with Trinity College, this new project which is to be rolled out at the Institute aims to address diverse societal and educational challenges by supporting schools to develop innovative approaches to formal and informal learning.

The Review Report and Proposal for a New Access Programme, to commence September 2017, was noted at a Student Affairs Sub-Committee of the Academic Council. The Student Affairs Sub-Committee considers quality assurance and enhancement matters related to the student lifecycle. Terms of Reference for the Student Affairs Sub-Committee are available at the following link. See Appendix A2 Item 7 at <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/QualityAssurance/>

A13. 5 Equity of Access and Participation Policy was reviewed by the Student Affairs Sub-Committee and the Quality Assurance Sub-Committee and approved at a meeting of the Quality Assurance Sub-Committee on 14/12/2016, for forwarding to the Academic Council for final approval.

Access21@ITTralee is a new project with DEIS schools in Kerry which constitutes an expansion of the Pathfinders Programme, which is primarily a Pathways to College Programme for Senior Cycle, to a multi-tiered programme comprising additional components of Mentoring, Leadership through Service and 21st Century Teaching and Learning and commencing with students in 2nd year and following through to 6th year of their second level studies.

The approach is based on the insight that a change in classroom pedagogy to incorporate 21<sup>st</sup> Century Teaching and learning approaches, supported by appropriate professional development for teachers (university accredited), combined with a whole school approach to social capital development (as embodied in the College for Every Student practices) provides an environment in which students can grow and develop by taking responsibility for and ownership of their own learning. In such a school environment:

- the effects of inequality (be it economic, racial or gender based) are lessened;
- 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills are developed – in particular critical thinking and computational thinking skills are enhanced;
- the barriers which inhibit people from entering third level education and higher professions are lowered.

The Access 21 project has a number of key goals. They are to:

- raise educational aspirations and attainment of Irish second level students from geographical areas where attendance at third level is historically low;
- support schools to develop and promote 21st Century Teaching & Learning environments;
- increase the STEM/Computer Sciences capabilities of teachers across the Irish second level education system;
- build an evidence base that informs policy and structural change.

The student interventions are based on adapted practices from the US based NGO College for Every Student. These interventions focus on 3 main areas of development for students:

1. Mentoring;
2. Leadership;
3. Pathways to College.

The mentoring programme allows students to develop supportive relationships with roles models who have experience of third level. This involves students meeting in groups with a mentor a number of times a year over a number of years to help increase aspirations as well as communication skills. Mentors are recruited from colleges, local businesses and community groups as well the schools own alumni.

Students from areas under represented at third level are more likely to be the first in their family or peer group to access third level. Confidence and self-direction are thus important factors in the student's ability to overcome the barriers associated with accessing higher education. The leadership component encourages self-confidence and self-direction in students as well as developing important skills like project and time management by engaging them in small projects to help their school or

local community. This element has the added benefit of further developing links between the school and the supportive networks locally.

Pathways to College seeks to address the growing inequality in career guidance for second level students. A recent audit by the Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC 2016) showed an increase in practice hours for counsellors in fee paying schools of 1.9% from 2011/2012 to 2015/2016 while schools in the Free Education System (FES) decreased by 26.7% and in DEIS schools by 30%. This means that students from areas of disadvantage such as Dublin's north inner city have less access to the information they need when considering their future education and career opportunities. Limited resources force schools to focus their guidance effort almost exclusively on senior cycle students but this is often too late as many students will make subject choices affecting their chances of further progression in education long before this. Trinity Access 21 has developed a number of extra-curricular activities for students to engage with from their first year in second level that have been successful in helping students understand the broader educational system and enabling them to make informed choices.

Finally, the project recognises that the key to empowering students is to empower their teachers and to this end the Trinity Access 21 project is built around an innovative teacher professional development programme. A fully accredited postgraduate certificate in 21st Century Teaching & Learning is offered to teachers. As most teachers tend to teach in the way in which they were themselves taught (in school or university) the approach followed in Trinity Access 21 is to empower teachers to teach in a 21st century, collaborative, problem and project based, teaching style by immersing them as learners in that methodology, i.e. the teachers themselves become students and actually experience what it is like to be part of a team that is cooperating to produce a deliverable to address some messy, real world, problem, e.g. create a full media campaign (video, radio programme and poster) addressing a pertinent issue (e.g. cyber bullying). Having been exposed to this way of teaching and learning for relatively easy content, the teachers are then offered progressively more challenging modules which move beyond 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and digital literacy to Computer Technology and Coding, culminating in sophisticated topics such as programming Raspberry Pi inputs and outputs using Python. To facilitate teachers who are not in a position to commit to a full postgraduate certificate the core Computer Sciences modules are also offered not for credit, on an "a la carte" basis. This allows teachers who have existing Computer Technology and Computer Sciences skills to explore more advanced activities while at the same time allowing less technically confident teachers to dip their toe in the water.

The project has developed/will develop as follows:

- **Feb 2017 to April 2017** - Recruit teachers from participating schools by organising meetings with management and hosting information sessions for teachers and parents;
- **May 2017** – Finalise recruitment of teachers and host schools at project showcase event in google with existing project participants nationwide;
- **May 2017 to Sep 2017** – Adapt existing resources for use with more rural school environment;
- **Early Sept 2017** - Launch Initiative by hosting teachers and students from 5 participating schools at an event in ITT (TCD and other partners to attend);
- **Late Sept 2017** - Planning Session with Participating Schools;
- **Oct 2017** – Train the Trainer sessions with Schools (Mentoring & Leadership) - TCD to offer experienced facilitators to deliver in ITT;

- **Nov 2017** – School Visits (Consultation/Troubleshooting with Teachers);
- **Dec 2017** - Check in event with participating schools;
- **Jan 2018 to Mar 2018** – Campus visits for participating schools;
- **April/May 2018** – Joint Showcase event for schools with ITT, TCD and NUIG.

The Institute consistently applies predefined and published regulations and procedures covering all aspects of the student lifecycle, from student admission through to certification. A quality student Induction Programme to the Institute, to the student's academic department and to the student's programme of study is also facilitated. The Institute does not have one overarching set of policies and procedures/ source for all of these matters, but a range of published regulations, policies and procedures apply, as follows:

All information in relation to Admission, Transfer, Progression, Recognition and Certification is available to future and current students on the Institutes homepage:

See <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationFor/FutureStudents/> and select the heading Current Students at <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/>, the Institutes Prospectus See:

<http://www.ittralee.ie/en/media/IT%20Tralee%20Online%20Prospectus.pdf> , the Institutes Student Handbook, See : <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/media/StudentHandbookSectionA.pdf> and <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/pdf/RightsandResponsibilites.pdf>

Refer to the following sections of the Quality Assurance Manual: Section A14: Student admissions, Progression and Recognition, Subsection A14.1: Garda Vetting Policy, A14.2: Guidelines for Recognition of Prior Learning, A14.3: Admissions Policy (developed and approved by the Academic Council Academic Year 2016/2017), A14.4: Progression Policy-Policy for Determining the Order in which Eligible Candidates are made Offers on Add-On Ordinary/Honours Degree Programmes (developed and approved by the Academic Council Academic Year 2016/2017) .

See <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/QualityAssurance/>

The Banner System is the tool used to collect data with respect to student retention, progression and success. Under the management of the Head of Strategy and Institute Performance, a Business Systems Integration Office was established in Academic Year 2016/2017, to centralise quality data collection, analysis and dissemination. The data is processed through the relevant Quality Assurance procedures in place to do so. Refer to the following sections of the Quality Assurance Manual: Section A5: Assessment of Learners, Subsection A5.15: Analysis of Results, Subsection A5.16: External Examiners Policy and Procedures; Section A6: Procedures for Ongoing Monitoring of Programmes. See <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/QualityAssurance/>

### **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.

High quality teaching is central to the success of higher education Institutes. IT, Tralee values all staff and recognises that their expertise, skills and commitment underpin the continuing success of the Institute and the accomplishment of its strategic goals. The Institutes Mission Based Performance Compact with the HEA reflects both the Institutes Strategic Plan and the National Strategy in Higher Education in this regard. The Irish economic and educational landscape are changing. Learners increasing demand for relevant higher education and training programmes delivered in traditional full time, part time modes, as well as in the case of certain programmes, delivery through blended learning mode to facilitate distance and lifelong learning.

The Institutes E-Learning Development and Support Unit (EDSU) was established in 2013. It supports staff in the following ways: Supports staff incorporating technology into their teaching; Provides staff training and user support for Blackboard, IT, Tralee's Learning Management System; Collaborates with staff on developing and delivering online and blended learning programmes.

The Employee Assistance Programme is an employee support service designed to support employees resolve personal or work related concerns, which are having an adverse effect on their health and well-being, their job or their relationships.

The Institute of Technology, Tralee is committed to a policy of encouraging and supporting the development of staff in a manner consistent with their career development goals and the strategic goals of the Institute. The level of funding available in any year will determine the extent of support which can be provided. The available budget will be apportioned between: (a) Institute-wide training organised by the Assistant Registrar and the HR Department; (b) an Institute wide competitive fund to enhance academic qualifications and (c) Schools and Departments for individual staff training, conferences, etc. A Staff Training and Development Policy is in place which relates to staff participation in training programmes, staff attendance at conferences and the attainment of additional qualifications by individual staff. All training, courses of study or conferences must relate directly to the individuals work or be aligned to the anticipated future needs of the Institute. In order to keep up to date with developments in education and in the wider community, staff are encouraged to maintain links with their professional membership bodies which may include attendance at conferences and/or seminars. Of particular importance is the enhancement of professional status through the presentation of papers for publication in peer reviewed journals. Similarly visits or links with other educational establishments and industry may be appropriate. Staff will be encouraged to share with their colleagues any interesting outcomes, research or new developments they encounter when attending.

The Institute provides a comprehensive range of continuing professional development (CPD) workshops each year. The workshops, co-ordinated by the Assistant Registrar, are based on recurring topics relevant to supporting the competence of academic staff and requested topics from academic staff. These workshops dates are built into the academic calendar. The Institute also provides regular

workshops for postgraduate research supervisors under its Supervisor Training Programme. The Research Office co-ordinates same.

The recruitment of staff and budget available for staff development has been impacted by the challenging fiscal environment in which the Irish HEI sector currently operates.

The following policies and procedures are in place around recruitment, support and development of teaching staff.

Refer to the following sections of the Quality Assurance Manual: Section A8: Procedure for Selection, Appointment, Appraisal and Development of Staff, Subsection A8.1: Recruitment and Selection Procedures; Section 10: Complaints Procedure, Subsection A10.2: Dignity and Respect Policy and Procedures. A10: Complaints Policy was reviewed by the Quality Assurance Sub-Committee during Academic Year 2016/2017, was later approved by the Quality Assurance Sub-Committee on 06/09/2017, and went forward for approval to the Institute IR Forum and the Governing Body, and noting at the Academic Council. <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/QualityAssurance/>

Refer to the following policies and procedures available to staff internally through the staff intranet: Induction Booklet for New Staff; Protected Disclosures; Code of Conduct; Child Protection Policy; Code of Practice for the Employment of People with Disabilities; Equality Policy; External Activities Policy; Grievance Procedures; Disciplinary Procedures; Preventing Bullying and Harassment; Working Against Racism; Employee Leave Arrangements; Employee Assistance Programme (EAP); Staff Garda Vetting Policy; Progression from Assistant Lecturer to Lecturer; Superannuation/Pensions; Staff Training and Development.

The new Institute Strategic Plan 2017-2021, identifies ‘Fellowship and Inclusivity’ as a core goal of the plan, to be achieved by:

- Working with and empowering staff to create a better work environment. It identifies the following as measures of the success of same being achieved: Identification of measurements to determine staff engagement rates, to be completed by the end of Academic Year 2017/2018; the Institutes communication strategy will be enhanced to include an internal communication strategy; training needs analysis to be undertaken to formulate an annual Training and Development Plan, to be completed by the end of December 2017; establishment of an Institute social club;
- Benchmark Human Resources supports to highlight good practice and to identify areas for additional focus. This will help ensure the Institutes staff are valued and supported accordingly. It identifies the following as a measure of the success of same being achieved: Enhancing the working environment to support staff in their work life;
- Enhancing the physical environment to better enable staff to administer their roles and responsibilities. It identifies the following as measure of the success of same being achieved: Utilise the campus infrastructure master planning process to enhance the physical environment to facilitate staff to administer their roles and responsibilities in a work friendly physical environment.

See Strategic Plan at [http://www.ittralee.ie/en/media/Strategic\\_Plan.pdf](http://www.ittralee.ie/en/media/Strategic_Plan.pdf)

## **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.

High quality teaching and learning is central to the success of higher education institutes. It is imperative that strategically the Institute maintains a firm focus on quality teaching and learning as this will directly encourage educational innovation and excellence. 'Excellent Teaching and Learning and Quality of Student Experience' is identified as one of the seven domains of the Strategic Dialogue Process and the new Institute Strategic Plan 2017-2021 identifies 'Teaching, Learning and Graduate Readiness' as a core goal of the plan. The monitoring of teaching and learning and the students experience of teaching and learning is central to this focus, both internal and external monitoring, providing feedback from all of the stakeholders, primarily the student, to inform teaching and learning quality enhancements.

Refer to the following Sections of the Quality Assurance Manual: Section A2: Mission, Vision, Governance and Management, Subsection A2.6: Item 8 - Annual Course Board Report Forms CBA 1 and CBA 2; Section A5: Assessment of Learners, Subsection A5.16: External Examiners Policy and Procedures; Section A6: Procedures for Ongoing Monitoring of Programmes, Subsection: A6.1: School Boards, Subsection A6.2: Course Boards, Subsection A6.3: Course Coordination Committee, Subsection A6.4: Course Handbook, Subsection A6.5: Student Liaison, Subsection A6.6: Students on Course Board; Section A9: Feedback Mechanisms, Subsection A9.1: Surveys and Questionnaires (QA 1 and 3: Survey of Students by Lecturer; Course Survey Questionnaire). See <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/QualityAssurance/>

In Academic Year 2016/2017, it was decided by the Office of the Vice President Academic Affairs and Registrar to pilot an amended version of the Annual Course Board Report Forms (CBA 1 and 2). The amendments were based on feedback from the Heads of Department. On the basis of the pilot in Academic Year 2016/2017, and the requirement of the new Strategic Plan for Academic Department Plans, a full review of the CBA 1 and 2 was planned for the commencement of Academic Year 2017/2018, to be coordinated by the Office of the Vice President Academic Affairs and Registrar. This review will focus on the establishment of data informed decision making and planning.

The External Examiner Policy and Procedures provide for the requirement of Course Boards to produce a 'Summary Report of Action Items/Recommendations for Improvement from External Examiners Reports and Responses by School/Department'. This requirement quality assures that Course Boards consider and provide a response to external examiners recommendations for improvement in the teaching and learning experience.

Student feedback on teaching and learning: The Joint Academic Work Shop (JAWS) forum, involving the student class representative, the class tutor and the Head of Department, provides students with the opportunity to raise feedback/concerns with respect to their teaching and learning experience, as does the student completion of the QA 1 and 3 Forms. See section A9.1 Surveys and Questionnaires at <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/QualityAssurance/>

The HEA-funded Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) initiative has effectively been in operation since 2014. The Assistant Registrar co-ordinates survey-related activity and, in particular, their outputs and response to the survey findings. During the Academic Year 2016/2017, a pilot process was proposed by the Assistant Registrar to the General Management Team and the Executive to embed ISSE as an integral student feedback mechanism within the Institutes quality assurance systems, with the proposal outlining an annual response at department, school and institute level, including both a feed-back mechanism to students/staff and a feedforward mechanism in terms of an action plan based on the feedback received. This pilot proposal was agreed for roll in the Academic Year 2016/2017, following receipt of the data from ISSE in May 2017. Due to the agreed strategic importance of the ISSE data, an executive decision was made that going forward the data analysis would be processed through the newly established Business Integration Office. This office was established under the management of the Head of Strategy and Institute Performance.

The Student Open Forum was launched by the Office of the Vice President Academic Affairs and Registrar in the Academic Year 2012/2013. A minimum of two fora are arranged in each academic year. Membership of the forum includes, Vice President Academic Affairs and Registrar (Chairperson), Assistant Registrar, Academic Administration and Student Affairs Manager (Deputy Chairperson), Students' Union executive, Student class representatives, Admissions Officer, Examinations Officer, Students Services Officer (Secretary), Computer Services Manager, Librarian, Access Officer. The objectives of the forum are to provide an open discussion platform for student experiences of Institute services and facilities, and where particular issues can be presented for resolution where possible. Minutes and matters arising are reviewed at each subsequent forum meeting.

During Academic Year 2016/2017, the Institute became one of a number of HEIs nationally to engage with the National Student Engagement Programme (NStEP). Student engagement is acknowledged by the Institute as a two-way process. Ultimately students are responsible for their own learning and level of engagement. However, student engagement is dependent on the Institutes culture and the Institute providing the conditions that will enable students to get involved. The Institutes implementation of this programme will have a direct impact on enhancing student involvement in decision making processes in relation to governance and management, quality assurance and in teaching and learning.

As per the requirements of NStEP, the Institute in collaboration with the Institutes Students' Union, established an Internal Institute Student Engagement Working Group to progress the 3 work streams of the programme for the remainder of Academic Year 2016/2017 and for the new Academic Year 2017/2018:

1. National Student Training Programme;
2. Institutional Analysis;
3. The five national projects.

During Academic Years 2015/2016 and 2016/2017 general discussions had been held at a number of Academic Council meetings in relation to enhancement of the student teaching and learning experience to support the students transition to third level, their retention, progression and academic success and provide for a quality engaged student experience.

At a meeting of the Academic Council in November 2015, the decision was made to establish a Teaching, Learning and Assessment Working Group to develop an Institute Teaching, Learning and



Assessment Strategy. After the initial meetings of this working group it was decided to widen the focus of the strategy to include Engagement and to focus initially on the Year 1 teaching and learning student experience. Subsequently this working group was then tasked with the development of a Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Engagement (TLAE) Strategy.

At a meeting of the Academic Council in April 2016, a decision was made to establish a sub-group of the Academic Council to progress with developing Terms of Reference for a Review of Semesterisation with a focus on Year 1. At this same meeting it was agreed that progression with the development of the TOR for a Review of Semesterisation in Year 1 and the development of a TLAE Strategy with an initial focus on year 1 are inextricably linked. Therefore, it was agreed that both groups would progress on working together. This work progressed as agreed, and at a meeting of the Academic Council in June 2017, a pilot roll-out of a yearlong de-semesterised year 1 across the Institutes programmes was approved. It was decided that this option would be explored by all Course Boards/Departments in Academic Year 2017/2018, for implementation in Academic Year 2018/2019. It was agreed that all departments would commence with the exploration as an agenda item at an early Course Board meeting in Academic Year 2017/2018. It was also agreed that this work will include a review of the teaching and learning student experience in Year 1 and consequently will contribute to the ongoing co-development of an Institute Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Engagement Strategy. As agreed by this Academic Council, the joint Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Engagement Strategy Working Group and the Review of Semesterisation Subgroup of the Academic Council would meet to draft the Terms of Reference to support the progression of the agreed work by all course boards.

The following core goals of the TLAE Strategy had already been identified as:

- Goal 1: Student Centred Teaching and Learning (including Learner Supports);
- Goal 2: Assessment as/of/for Learning-Assessment Feedback;
- Goal 3: Curriculum Design;
- Goal 4: Academic Professional Development;
- Goal 5: Learning Environment and Teaching Spaces (developing a physical, social and technological environment that supports learning);
- Goal 6: Engaging with stakeholders in Learning Design, Delivery and Enhancement.

The new Institute Strategic Plan 2017-2021 identifies 'Teaching, Learning and Graduate Readiness' as a core goal of the plan 'enable our students to achieve their full potential and contribute to the development of society via the provision of a student centred educational environment which is underpinned by excellence in teaching and learning. Our graduates will be distinctive by virtue of their educational experience and will possess essential skills and attributes relevant to both the workplace and civic society'. The plan identifies the following as measures of the success of the achievement of this goal:

- Enhancing the standard of teaching and learning through the implementation of the TLAE Strategy 2017-2021 and delivering upon the goals contained within;
- Establishment of a Centre for Educational Development, operational in the Academic Year 2017/2018 and supported by a five-year strategy;
- Development and implementation of a rolling five-year retention strategy focusing on the first year cohort;
- Leveraging work placement to facilitate graduate work readiness and to inform market led programmes.

Towards the end of Academic Year 2016/2017 a draft Year 1 Student Retention and Success Strategy was developed by the Assistant Registrar, in consultation with the Heads of Department. The draft is to be forwarded to the Executive for further consideration and approval. This strategy sets out a set of key principles to guide strategies to be actioned at department and Institute level to improve retention and progression and support student academic success and a quality engaged student experience for all students of the Institute.

### **7. Resources and Support (ESG 1.5)**

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

The Institute provides a range of learning resources and student supports which meet the needs of the diverse student population:

- Access Office;
- Office for Learning Difference;
- Counselling;
- Medical Service;
- Pastoral Care Service;
- Careers Service;
- International Office;
- Sports and Recreational Facilities;
- Sports Office;
- GAA Games Development;
- Societies Office;
- Student Services Officer;
- Financial Support (Student Assistance Fund/Benevolent Fund);
- Sports Scholarships;
- Admissions and Examinations Office;
- Library Services;
- Students' Union;
- Student Orientation and Induction Programme;
- Academic department/programme support (including class tutor, peer mentoring, tutor support).

The successful progression and retention of students in higher education is at the forefront of national policy frameworks. Higher education faces many challenges and in particular the difficulties students can encounter with the transition into higher education. The National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 emphasises the importance of a positive first year experience to achieving the goals of higher education, as 'failure to address the challenges encountered by some students in their first year contributes to high drop out and failure rates with personal and system wide implications' (DES, National Strategy, pg.56).

'Every student that drops out of their higher education is a loss: a loss to their college, a loss to the future economy and, above all, a loss to the individual. Equally, students who don't drop out but who fail to achieve their full potential also represent a significant loss to both themselves and society' (Liz Thomas et al, 2017, pg.5).

Within the new Institute Strategic Plan 2017-2021, the Institute identifies one of its key goals to *enable students to achieve their full potential and contribute to the development of society via the provision of a student centred educational environment which is underpinned by excellence in teaching and learning*. One of the action items to achieve this goal has been identified as the *development and implementation of a rolling five-year retention strategy focusing on the first year cohort*. The measures of success of this strategy have been identified as the setting of *specific department targets for the improvement of retention and progression to be specified in academic department plans* and *an increase of a minimum of 10% in the Institute's overall retention rate over the course of this strategic plan*.

Towards the end of Academic Year 2016/2017 a draft Year 1 Student Retention and Success Strategy was developed by the Assistant Registrar, in consultation with the Heads of Department. The draft is to be forwarded to the Executive for further consideration and approval. This student Success Strategy sets out a set of key principles to guide strategies to be actioned at Institute level and department level to improve retention and progression and support student academic success and a quality engaged student experience for all students of the Institute. The development of this strategy has been informed by a review of relevant literature, with a particular focus on national best practice and evidence based research from the HEA, the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning and UK based Liz Thomas et al through her What Works 1 (2012) and What Works 2 (2017) Student Retention and Success Programmes.

Categories of Generic Institute Supports for all first year students:

- Orientation and Induction Programme – Institute Orientation and Department/Programme Induction;
- Social Events;
- Family Information Evening;
- FYI 4-week Induction Programme.
- IT Skills Workshops;
- Sports Clubs and Societies Days;
- Refresher Student Support Information Days (pop-up stands in main student thorough fair (north and south campus) reminding students of services but also ‘Ask us anything’ theme);
- Student Handbook & ITT Study Skills Guide;
- Academic Writing – ‘You’re Actually a Good Writer’ (Ahead publication);
- Library Orientation;
- Time and Study Management in preparation for Examinations;
- Targeted academic department support;
- Live ITT Pilot Health Promotion and Retention Project, launched in April 2017.

IT, Tralee’s pilot Health Promotion and Retention Project supports student (and staff) health and wellbeing, promoting events and projects on campus, to ensure that the Institute as a place of study is health promoting and health enabling. Learning and wellbeing are inextricably linked. When students are well, they can better engage with their learning and living experience, embrace and enjoy the full student experience, both inside and outside of the classroom, and reach their full potential. Live ITT focuses on four main project areas: Move ITT, Change ITT, Mind ITT, Connect ITT.

Categories of Generic Supports for Students of the following cohorts:

- (a) Student with Disability (SWD);

- (b) Student with specific learning difference (SLD);
- (c) Pathfinders.

All supports offered are in line with AHEAD recommended guidelines on good practice for providers of supports and services for Students with Disabilities in Higher Education. Operational practices are reviewed and discussed regularly at department and Institute level.

Students wishing to avail of supports in the categories above must in the first instance register with the respective service early. For students in (a) and (b) their specific needs can be assessed early and a programme of support put in place that will help the student settle, help them explore ways that they can learn – e.g., in class support (via Individual Learning Requirements Document), explore assistive technology that will support and enhance the learning methods of the student, to provide where necessary and outside of the classroom Study Skills or Writing Skills as appropriate, to provide counselling e.g. time management, linking learning with career goals, provide suitable physical environment to support examination accommodation.

Specific support offered to Students registering with ITT Support Services (Access Office and/or Office for Students with Learning Difference – i.e. (a) or (b) category above) include:

- Family Engagement;
- Promoted Ahead Student Toolkit and made it available to all students online;
- Students are offered group training sessions in assistive technologies to improve access to course reading materials - 24 students availed of the training;
- Students who are not eligible for ESF funding are provided with links to freeware for home use to support their proof reading of assignments - e.g. Orato and Grammarly software. This initiative aimed to bypass barriers to accessing Institute based Assistive Technology support experienced due to family/work/life demands;
- Students are referred to a dedicated Subject Librarian/support personnel to avail of support with research skills;
- Students are offered free access to an online study skills tool currently being piloted through the Institutes - New Frontiers Programme;
- Students identified as "at risk" due to reported subject specific difficulties are referred to the relevant Head of Department for additional subject specific support. The Academic Manager is provided with information on the impact of the students learning difference and, where appropriate, possible effective teaching strategies;
- Provision of an Occupational Therapist for specific support – study skills, time management, social skills, social groups (e.g. cinema, meeting friends for coffee);
- Engagement with academic staff on individual student cases around possible appropriate inclusive teaching methods to support the diverse learner;
- Students who are needs assessed as "at risk" due to difficulties with time management and/or study skills and/or academic writing are approved (by lecturer and/or Academic Administration and Student Affairs Manager) for one to one tutor support sessions;
- High needs students are offered regular mentoring to ensure early identification of arising issues with potential to negatively impact on the learning experience - e.g. students with ASD diagnosis, physical and sensory disabilities.

*Enhanced generic supports Pathfinder Students*

A parents/guardians and family information event;

- The introduction of a revised registration process and new student services materials to further facilitate greater, timely and direct engagement with support services;
- A study skills guide and academic writing guide is disseminated to students at registration;
- The use of assistive technologies and freewares is promoted to enhance access to course materials and the fulfilment of course assignments and thereby address barriers that some students were experiencing accessing Institute-based assistive technology support;
- Student Services is represented on the Institutes Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Engagement group promoting inclusive practices and Universal Design for Learning;
- Students are referred to the dedicated Subject Librarian to avail of support with research skills.

*Specific student supports – Students with Disability, Students with Learning Difficulty*

- A suite of reusable learning objects in the form of YouTube screen cast videos was developed with the aim of enhancing student engagement with the service for students with learning difference;
- Students with learning difference are offered access to a new online study skills tool currently being piloted by the Institutes New Frontiers programme;
- The Institute promotes the AHEAD Student Toolkit at orientation, needs assessment and via Blackboard, its eLearning portal;
- The Institute contracts an Occupational Therapist to work with students with disabilities in need of this support;
- A new electronic communication tool which interfaces with Banner was introduced to streamline the provision of information to academic staff on students teaching, learning and assessment needs. Individual Learning Requirements are now available in Self Service Banner and at a glance assigned academic staff can see their relevant students details, programme and module;
- In addition to the new first year orientation and the Pathfinders orientation, a group post-orientation session is facilitated at the end of week 4 to review the student experience, promote the group study skills workshop and remind students of the services available to them;
- After Semester 1 Examination results, Pathfinders and students with disabilities are issued an Examinations Survey Form by e-mail supported by a text message. The purpose of this form is to encourage students to become proactive in identifying their needs, to promote study planning and strategies for repeat exams and to facilitate individual meetings with support services as needed/requested;
- Pathfinders are directly targeted regarding the ESF Student Assistance Fund;
- Permission was sought by Student Services and in most cases granted by the student to furnish Heads of Department with the names, student numbers and programme details for new entrant Pathfinders.

The Access Office and Office for Learning Difference, in their provision of a range of supports and services to students with disabilities, students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, mature students and pathfinders students, are supporting and promoting equity of access and participation through the provision of responsive and appropriate supports.

Prospective students are informed of the resources available to them via Institute open Days/Information Sessions, the IT, Tralee website at [www.ittralee.ie](http://www.ittralee.ie) and the IT, Tralee Prospectus, See <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/media/IT%20Tralee%20Online%20Prospectus.pdf> and existing students are informed via their Orientation and Induction Programme to the Institute, the IT, Tralee website, internally via the Institutes VLE (Blackboard), and the Institute Student Handbook, See <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/media/StudentHandbookSectionA.pdf> and <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/pdf/RightsandResponsibilites.pdf>

The Institute library, based on both the North and South Campus, provides support to all students to support their learning experience. See the Institute library website: <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationFor/CurrentStudents/StudentLife/StudentFacilities/Library/>

The new Institute Strategic Plan 2017-2021 identifies the ‘development and implementation of a Student Services Plan benchmarked against National and International Comparators’ as a core goal of the plan. As a measure of the success of the achievement of this goal, the plan identifies an ‘External review of student services to be completed within the Academic Year 2017/2018. Resultant recommendations to be implemented over the lifetime of the Strategic Plan’.

Refer to the following sections of the Quality Assurance Manual: Section A13: Learning Resources and Student Support, Subsection A13.1: Bereavement Policy, Subsection A13.2: Substance Abuse Policy and Subsection A13.3: Student Charter.  
See <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/QualityAssurance/>

Subsection A13.4: Reasonable Accommodations and Support for Students with Disability Policy and Procedures were reviewed by the Quality Assurance Sub-Committee and approved at a meeting of the Sub-Committee on 29/05/2017, for forwarding to the Academic Council for final approval.

Section A10: Complaints Policy, Subsection A10.1 Student Complaints Policy and Procedures was reviewed by the Quality Assurance Sub-Committee during Academic Year 2016/2017, was later approved by the Quality Assurance Sub-Committee on 06/09/2017, and went forward for approval to the Academic Council.

### **Regional Cluster South - Access Strategy**

The partner members of the Regional Cluster – South (Cork Institute of Technology, Institute of Technology Carlow, Institute of Technology, Tralee, University College Cork and Waterford Institute of Technology) have a shared commitment to promoting access, widening participation and creating diverse and socially inclusive learning environments, that promote equality of opportunities for individuals from a diverse range of backgrounds.

As individual institutions, the Cluster members have demonstrable track records and substantial professional expertise in promoting equity of access. All of the partners are involved in the provision of services which address the needs of non-traditional learners through outreach, post entry support initiatives, scaffolding of transitions between second and third level and further education and third level and development of flexible learning pathways that suit part-time and mature students. Key to the development and delivery of these services is the extensive network of partnerships which partner HEIs have established with relevant community stakeholders in their own geographical area. The identification in the *National Strategy for Higher Education*, of a role for regional Clusters to address local needs through co-operation and co-ordination in relation to resources, programmes of

teaching and learning and the creation of greater flexibility in student pathways and progression, provides opportunities and challenges for the Regional Cluster-South. Significant opportunities exist for strategic alliances which will allow for the sharing of learning and practice across and it is acknowledge among the partner HEIs that each has particular strengths and expertise in relation to various target cohorts and particular initiatives. The partners fully embrace the 'better together' philosophy in relation to the development of strategies and the planning and delivery of access related initiatives. They are also keenly cognisant of the challenges involved in engaging in formal activities, not least those associated with resource allocation and governance. The strategic objective and governance framework outlined below, reflect the commitment to access and to its promotion through a regional focus while acknowledging both the opportunities and challenges associated with working at Cluster level.

**Strategic Objectives:**

- To increase the capacity and responsiveness of the partner members to access and progression needs at regional level through shared strategic planning;
- To deepen partnerships, collaborations and strategic alliances among the Cluster partners;
- To build on and add value to existing expertise through the sharing of best practice in the area of access;
- To build on and learn from existing successful alliances with communities by expanding local networks across the wider region.

**Governance**

The partner HEIs have begun the process of agreeing and implementing a framework for Cluster operation and governance to include:

- The establishment of a Cluster steering group;
- The creation of an MOU for operation of the Cluster;
- Development of a co-ordinated work-plan for the implementation of agreed projects.

**Targets:**

- To undertake a regional mapping profile which outlines opportunities and pathways for non-traditional students and those from socio-disadvantaged backgrounds;
- To develop a Cluster wide strategic planning structure focused on responding to the delivery of national access priorities and capitalising on funding programmes;
- To seek resources to establish the strategic coordination necessary to improve access practice and outcomes across the Cluster.



## 8. Information Management (ESG 1.7)

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

The Institute has published a set of IT policy and information documents to provide direction to the staff of the Institute in the use of, and the management and delivery of IT systems and services that hold information and data relating to the business of the Institute. These policies and information documents are available to staff internally via the staff intranet.

Data Protection Policy, Procedures and information documents are available to staff internally via the staff intranet.

Records Retention Policy is available to staff internally via the staff intranet.

Under the management of the previously appointed Head of Strategy and Institute Performance, a Business Systems Integration Office was established in Academic Year 2016/2017, to centralise quality data collection, analysis and dissemination.

The Institute collects, analyses, and uses data for the effective management of its academic programmes and all other central services activities. The Institute uses a number of Management Information Systems to Manage Student Registrations and Academic Progress (Banner), Finance & Budgets (Agresso), Staff (Core), Library (Koha) and Timetabling (Syllabus+) as its information management tools.

The Banner System is the tool used to collect data with respect to student retention, progression and success. This data, and all other data sourced, is analysed by Institute Management, Service Units and Course Boards, in the context of the requirements of a number of relevant Quality Assurance policies and procedures, and this data used to inform quality enhancement. The following are the relevant Quality Assurance policies and procedures: Section A2: Mission, Vision, Governance and Management, Subsection A2.6 Appendices: Item 8 - Annual Course Board Report Forms CBA 1 and 2; Section A4: Procedures for the Design, Validation and Modification of Programmes and Modules; Section A5: Assessment of Learners, Subsection A5.15 Analysis of Examination Results, Subsection A5.16 External Examiners Policy and Procedures; Section A6: Procedures for Ongoing Monitoring of Programmes; Section A7: Procedures for Evaluation of Programmes; Section A9: Feedback Mechanisms, Form QA 1-Survey of Students by Lecturer, Form QA 2-Summary of Survey of students by Lecturer, Form QA 3-Course Survey Questionnaire. See <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/QualityAssurance/>

At student registration the Institute carries out the HEA Equal Access Survey. The HEA through its National Access Office, promotes equality of access to higher education for people with disabilities, mature students who previously had not the opportunity to access higher education, those facing social and economic barriers and minority groups, including the Traveller community and achieving this full equality of access to higher education is a national priority. Each year the HEA invites us to

collect Equal Access information at the point of registration on the Students socio-economic background, disability and ethnicity and returns it to the Higher Education Authority. With the information that is provided, the HEA is able to measure equality of access to higher education and allocate the resources needed to support students of all backgrounds and abilities. The information gathered during registration is protected by robust data protection policies in the ITT and in the HEA, in full compliance with data protection legislation. The data that is returned to the HEA is collective and students are not identified by name, address or ID number. All students are encouraged to respond to the Equal Access questions. The non-response will not affect the student's registration and enrolment, or their ability to be considered for financial support. However, it is highlighted that non-responses may have implications for the amount of State funding that is allocated to the IT, Tralee and as a result, we may then not be in a position meet the requirements of students with specific needs.

Each year the Careers Office surveys graduates using the Graduate Destination Survey. First Destination Survey offers a vision into the first destination of graduates nine months after graduation. Graduate surveys are produced to measure higher education output providing useful information to a wide selection of stakeholders such as higher education institutions, policy makers and prospective students. Results of surveys can also be used to benchmark institutional performance to similar institutions.

Section 1 of the graduate survey focuses on level 8-10 graduates whether graduates are in employment in Ireland or overseas, seeking employment, in work experience schemes or further study. Section 2 looks at the relevance or how graduates rate their qualification to the employment gained while Section 3 outlines salaries reported by graduates 9 months after graduation. Section 4 focuses on location by regional distribution of graduates with a level 8-10 qualification. Section 5 is an overview of employment sector by level, of working graduates in Ireland and overseas nine months after graduation. The final section reviews level 8-10 international graduate's first destination after graduation.

Presently the graduate surveys are created under the limitations of cross sectional data collection approach – a process which is under revision by the HEA currently. It is expected that the new survey (in early stages of longitudinal development) will include:

- Data on graduate qualifications and employment both within Ireland and overseas,
- Relevance of employment to area of study,
- Data on graduate further study,
- Data on graduate unemployment and unavailability for work,
- Career progression of graduates through longitudinal data.

See: <http://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2017/04/What-do-Graduates-do-2015.pdf>

Each year the library surveys students on their experience of the library services. This data is analysed by the library and used to inform enhanced service provision.

Each year Computer Services surveys staff and students on their experience of the IT services. This data is analysed by Computer Services, and used to inform enhanced service provision.

Each year student engagement and satisfaction is measured through the Irish Survey of Student Engagement. During the Academic Year 2016/2017, a pilot process was proposed by the Assistant

Registrar to the General Management Team and the Executive to embed ISSE as an integral student feedback mechanism within the Institutes quality assurance systems, with the proposal outlining an annual response at department, school and institute level, including both a feed-back mechanism to students/staff and a feedforward mechanism in terms of an action plan based on the feedback received. This pilot proposal was agreed for roll in the Academic Year 2016/2017, following receipt of the data from ISSE in May 2017. Due to the agreed strategic importance of the ISSE data, an executive decision was made that going forward the data analysis would be processed through the newly established Business Integration Office. This office was established under the management of the Head of Strategy and Institute Performance.

Feedback is sought and provided from Industry to inform programme enhancement and new programme development. This feedback is sought and provided formally in the context of Programme Work Placement Guidelines and also through other engagements with industry.

### **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.

The Institute monitors and periodically reviews its programmes to ensure that they are achieving the objectives set for them and respond to the teaching, learning and support needs of the students and to the needs of society.

Refer to the following Sections of the Quality Assurance Manual: Section A2: Mission, Vision, Governance and Management, Subsection A2.6: Appendices including the following items: Item 1: Governing Body Membership; Item 2: Role and Function of the Academic Council; Item 3: Role and Function of the Quality Assurance Sub-Committee; Item 4: Role and Function of the Research and Development Sub-Committee; Item 5: Role and Function of the Institute Postgraduate Committee; Item 6: Role and Function of the Programmes and Planning Sub-Committee ; Item 7: Role and Function of the Student Affairs Sub-Committee; Item 8: The Annual Course Board Report Forms CBA1 and CBA2; Section A3: Principles Underpinning Quality Assurance Procedures and Framework for Continuous Improvement, Subsection A3.1: General Principles; Section A5: Assessment of Learners, Subsection A5.15: Analysis of Examination Results; Subsection A5.16: External Examiners Policy and Procedures; Section A6: Procedures for Ongoing Monitoring of Programmes, Subsection: A6.1: School Boards, Subsection A6.2: Course Boards, Subsection A6.3: Course Coordination Committee, Subsection A6.4: Course Handbook, Subsection A6.5: Student Liaison, Subsection A6.6: Students on Course Board; Section A7: Procedures for Evaluation of Programmes, Subsection A7.1: Procedures and Guidelines for the Regular Evaluation of Programmes; Section A9: Feedback Mechanisms, Form QA 1-Survey of Students by Lecturer, Form QA 2-Summary of Survey of students by Lecturer, Form QA 3-Course Survey Questionnaire. See <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/QualityAssurance/>

Programme Validation Reports, Programmatic Review Reports, Annual Institutional Quality Assurance Reports and Institutional Review Reports, Annual Reports are available publicly on the IT, Tralee website. See Reports section at:

<http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/ProceduresPlansandReports/>

Any major risk factors identified by the Executive are incorporated into the Risk Register and are monitored and reviewed. The purpose of the Risk Register is to provide a framework for management to identify, assess and rate risks, and to develop strategies to deal with risks so as to provide reasonable assurance that the Institutes strategic objectives will be achieved. In effect, the Risk Register will establish a framework to identify potential events that may expose the Institute to risk, to manage this risk, to keep it within the Institutes risk appetite and to provide reasonable assurance regarding the achievement of the Institutes objectives.

Overall responsibility for the management of risk within the Institute lies with the Governing Body. The President of the Institute has overall responsibility for ensuring that procedures and processes are in place to enable adherence to the Risk Register.

The Institutes Executive Board is responsible for:

- Implementing the Institutes Risk Register;
- Identifying and monitoring Risks;
- Ensuring that each risk has a 'Risk Owner' responsible for its management;
- Ensuring that controls identified are working, provide periodic positive assurance that they are working and/or report if they are not working;
- Ensuring that individuals understand what level of risk they are assigned to take on behalf of the Institute;
- Ensuring local risks are appropriately managed.

The Audit Committee are a Sub-Committee of the Governing Body. The responsibilities of the Audit Committee currently include:

*Financial Statements:*

- To review the draft annual financial statements of the Institute of Technology, Tralee and consolidated statements, and their format, taking account of all relevant considerations and of accounting standards and legal requirements, before they are submitted to the Governing Body;
- To recommend to the Governing Body whether they should approve any accounts so reviewed by the Committee;
- To determine at least annually whether, in the Committees opinion, the Institute of Technology, Tralee has kept proper books of account.

*External Audit:*

- To review with the Comptroller and Auditor General, the nature and scope of the audit in progress or nearing completion;
- To discuss problems and reservations arising from the audit and any other matters requested by the external auditors;
- To review the external auditors Management Letter and all other audit letters from the external auditors and to consider management's response.

*Internal Controls and Risk Management:*

- To satisfy itself that the arrangements made for and resources available to Internal Audit are suitable, and to monitor performance of Internal Audit;
- To consider the system of internal financial controls and to satisfy itself that the control environment is adequate and that controls are operating effectively;
- To keep under review and advise on the operation and effectiveness of the Institute of Technology, Tralee's risk management systems;
- To provide an opinion annually on the proposed statement of internal controls and on any legal compliance requirements;
- To consider the Internal Audit annual audit programme, to review reports of the Head of Internal Audit and to consider major findings and managements response.

*Other:*

- To consider reports by the Comptroller and Auditor General and managements response;
- To satisfy itself that arrangements are in place to promote economy, efficiency and effectiveness;

- To consider other topics, as requested by the Governing Body or initiated by the Committee;
- To promote co-ordination between the Institute of Technology, Tralee's internal and external auditors.

#### **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.

Engagement with external stakeholders is a central part of both the Institutes Strategic Plan 2017-2021 and the Research and Innovation Strategic Plan 2017-2021.

See: [http://www.ittralee.ie/en/media/Strategic\\_Plan.pdf](http://www.ittralee.ie/en/media/Strategic_Plan.pdf)

and <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/media/ResearchandInnovationStrategicPlan2017-21.pdf>

Engagement with external stakeholders, namely industry and graduates, is embedded within the Institutes Quality Assurance policies and procedures with respect to the procedures for the ongoing monitoring of programmes, procedures for the design, validation and modification of programmes and modules, and the procedures for the evaluation of programmes.

Refer to the following sections of the Quality Assurance Manual: Section A2: Mission, Vision, Governance and Management, Subsection A2.6 Appendices: Item 8 - Annual Course Board Report Forms CBA 1 and 2; Section A4: Procedures for the Design, Validation and Modification of Programmes and Modules; Section A6: Procedures for Ongoing Monitoring of Programmes; Section A7: Procedures for Evaluation of Programmes. See

<http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/QualityAssurance/>

**11. Engagement with Other Bodies (ESG 1.1)**

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

The Institute engages extensively with professional, statutory and regulatory bodies and other Quality Assurance and Awarding Bodies. Specific engagements are included in the online section of this form. The engagements listed in the online form are quality assured through the quality assurance arrangements agreed formally with for example the National Midwifery Board of Ireland and Fáilte Ireland. With respect to programme engagement with professional bodies, the Quality Assurance requirements of the professional body are articulated, adhered to and monitored with respect to the particular programme delivery.

Refer to the following sections of the Quality Assurance Manual: Section A1: Introduction (reference to the requirement that Institute Quality Assurance reflects QQI Quality Assurance requirements); Section A5: Assessment of Learners, Subsection A5.20 SOLAS Assessment Regulations; Section A4: Procedures for the Design, Validation and Modification of Programmes and Modules (reference to Professional Bodies); Section A15: Collaborative Provision, Subsection A15.1: Procedures for the Provision of Collaborative Programmes and for the Provision of Programmes leading to Joint Awards. See <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/QualityAssurance/>



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

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

The Institute is committed to operating in a spirit of openness and transparency with our stakeholders, including staff, learners and the general public, through the provision of relevant and timely information in accessible formats. Refer to Quality Assurance Manual Section A2: Mission, Vision, Governance and Management, Subsection A2.1 Mission and Vision. See the Institutes Guiding Principles and Values at <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/QualityAssurance/>

The Institute publishes information about its activities which is clear, accurate, objective, up-to-date and readily accessible. In line with Section 9 of the QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016) and Section 1.8 of the ESG (2015), the Institute publishes information about its activities including their programmes and programme validations, research and related services; about the Institute and its quality assurance policies and procedures; and about evaluation and findings from quality assurance evaluations. This information is available to staff, prospective and current students, as well as graduates, other stakeholders and the public.

This information is available publicly through the following forums:

- Course Programme Handbooks;
- National publications, for example: HEA publications; ISSE;
- ITT Website;
- ITT Prospectus;
- ITT Student Handbook;
- ITT Promotional Material;
- Careers Office Publications;
- Media;
- Freedom of Information Officer within the Institute to deal with FOI request.

**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.

Nothing to report.

**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.

In 2004, the Institute was delegated the authority from Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI, then HETAC) to make awards for its undergraduate programmes and taught masters programmes. The Institute provides undergraduate and postgraduate programmes at National Framework of Qualifications Levels 6-10. The Institute has Delegated authority in the making of Research Masters Degrees at NFQ Level 9 in already approved areas of research (July 2017) and has approval by Quality & Qualifications Ireland (QQI) to deliver Postgraduate Research Degrees at NFQ Level 10.

**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.

Refer to the following Section of the Quality Assurance Manual: Section A15: Collaborative Provision, Subsection A15.1: Procedures for the Provision of Collaborative Programmes and for the Provision of Programmes leading to Joint Awards. See

<http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/QualityAssurance/>

**16. Additional Notes**

Any additional notes can be entered here.

None.

**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	2016/2017
Areas/Units	School of Business, Computing and Humanities (Programmes)
Number	One
Link(s) to Publications	<a href="http://www.ittralee.ie/en/media/PR_Report_BCH.pdf">http://www.ittralee.ie/en/media/PR_Report_BCH.pdf</a>

Year	2017/2018
Areas/Units	School of Business, Computing and Humanities (School Strategy)
Number	One
Link(s) to Publications	Not yet available

Year	2018/2019
Areas/Units	School of Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics and School of Health & Social Sciences
Number	Two
Link(s) to Publications	Not applicable

Year	2019/2020
Areas/Units	None
Number	None
Link(s) to Publications	Not applicable

## Annual Institutional Quality Assurance Report

Year	2020/2021
Areas/Units	None
Number	None
Link(s) to Publications	Not applicable

Year	2021/2022
Areas/Units	School of Business, Computing and Humanities
Number	One
Link(s) to Publications	Not applicable

Year	2022/2023
Areas/Units	None
Number	None
Link(s) to Publications	Not applicable

## AIQR - PART 1

<b>Overview of internal QA governance, policies and procedures</b>	<a href="#">AIQR-Part-1.docx</a>
<b>PRSBs</b>	2
<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>	Nursing Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI)
<b>Programme Titles and Links to Publications</b>	BSc (Hons) in General Nursing; BSc (Hons) in Mental Health Nursing.
<b>Date of last review or accreditation</b>	16-06-2014
<b>Next review year</b>	2017
<b>Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies</b>	Second Set of Records
<b>Section: Collaborative Provision</b>	First Set of Records
<b>Type of arrangement:</b>	Collaborative programmes
<b>Name of the Body (Bodies)</b>	Royal College of Surgeons Ireland (RCSI), Castel International



<b>Programme Titles and Links to Publications</b>	International Medical Commencement Programme
<b>Articulation Agreements</b>	23
<b>Section: 1 Articulation Agreements</b>	First Set of Records
<b>Name of the Body</b>	University College Birmingham (UCB)
<b>Name of the Programme and Links to Publications</b>	MA in Culinary Arts (UCB Programme delivered at IT, Tralee).
<b>Date of last review of arrangement/agreement</b>	26-03-2013
<b>Next Review Year</b>	2018
<b>Section: Articulation Agreements</b>	Second Set of Records
<b>Name of the Body</b>	Methodist College Kuala Lumpur
<b>Name of the Programme and Links to Publications</b>	Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Early Childhood Care and Education.
<b>Date of last review of arrangement/agreement</b>	29-04-2014
<b>Review year for agreements</b>	2017
<b>Section: Articulation Agreements</b>	Third Set of Records
<b>Name of the Body</b>	St Lawrence College Ontario Canada
<b>Name of the Programme and Links to Publications</b>	BSc (Hons) in Renewable Energy and Energy Management; BSc in Health and Leisure; and BA (Hons) in Music Technology.
<b>Date of last review of arrangement/agreement</b>	18-11-2014
<b>Review year for agreements</b>	2017
<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, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies.</b>	Confirmed
<b>Collaborative Provision.</b>	Confirmed
<b>Articulation Agreements.</b>	Confirmed
<b>Date of Final Submission</b>	14-02-2018

## 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.

The central role of quality assurance and enhancement is explicitly articulated in the Institutes Strategic Plan 2017-2021 which affirms the contribution of quality assurance systems in achieving strategic objectives and maintaining and enhancing IT, Tralee’s position and reputation within Higher Education both nationally and internationally.

A system was developed and implemented in the Office of the Vice President Academic Affairs and Registrar (VPAAR) over the course of the Academic Year 2015/2016 that records and tracks decisions of the Academic Council and its Sub-Committees. This provides a facility of recording when decisions are to be acted on, by whom and when they have been completed. It also provides a facility for managing agendas and minutes of meetings. This system based on ongoing review has been further developed and enhanced during Academic Year 2016/2017.

An ongoing review continued of existing Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures and the Quality Assurance Manual from the perspective of their alignment with ESG 2015, QQI Policy and QQI Quality Assurance Guidelines. Quality Assurance Work Plan for Academic Year 2015/2016 was reviewed in preparation for planning the Quality Assurance Work Plan for Academic Year 2016/2017. Subsequently, the Draft Quality Assurance Work Plan for Academic Year 2016/2017 was approved by the Academic Council. The system of dissemination with respect to Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures was also reviewed in preparation for planning for the dissemination of Quality Assurance procedures in Academic Year 2016/17. A decision was made then to develop, and implement for the new Academic Year 2016/17, a comprehensive strategy of dissemination of the Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures. This strategy was rolled out in Academic Year 2016/2017 which included the following:

- As required by QQI, the publication on the Institutes website of the Institutes Quality Assurance Procedures, Institute Plans and Reports. The Quality Assurance Manual is now only available to staff, students and the public alike through the Institute website. See: <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/QualityAssurance/>
- Developed a template for the development of new Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures;
- E mail notification from the Office of the VPAAR to all relevant stakeholders (including students and the Students' Union) of new and/or updated Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures, reference to their location on the ITT Website and a request for feedback on the operation of the Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures (Template developed for this feedback). Heads of department are also asked to include any new/updated quality assurance procedures on the Course Board agenda. Feedback from individuals/Course Boards is logged in the Office of the Vice President Academic Affairs and Registrar in the template provided. Editing issues are rectified immediately, major issues are referred to the relevant Sub-Committee and minor issues are recorded to be available at the next scheduled review of the particular procedure;
- An academic staff CPD session on the Institutes Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures is held as part of each of the scheduled CPD events across the academic year (three CPD Events per year, consequently three Quality Assurance CPD sessions scheduled each year for academic staff). Academic staff are asked and encouraged here to provide ongoing feedback on the operation of the quality assurance policies and procedures;
- Rolling agenda item placed on the agenda of each Quality Assurance Sub-Committee 'Stakeholder Feedback on the Operation Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures'. The feedback received through the Office of the VPAAR in the template document provided is processed through this agenda item. Feedback is in relation to the operation of quality assurance policies and procedures and quality enhancement of all service units across the Institute. At the closing of Academic Year 2016/2017, feedback was specifically requested to trial this new system with respect to the Summer Exam Board processes. The feedback is then formally fed forward to the relevant forum through the Office of the VPAAR.

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

Changes within Management:  
Appointment of Head of Research;  
Appointment of International Business Development Manager.

Outlined below are the decisions which were made by the Academic Council and Academic Council Sub-Committees during Academic Year 2016/2017 which resulted in changes within the system of Quality Assurance. The recommendations of the Academic Council Sub-Committees are captured and given effect in the decisions of the Academic Council itself.

**Academic Council Decisions:**

Quality Assurance Procedures approved by the Academic Council:

- A4 – Tracking Log of Amendments to a Programme Subsequent to External Panel/Programmatic Review Approval;
- A5.2 Anti-Plagiarism Policy and Procedures;
- A5.4b Policy and Procedure for the Request for an Extension of an Assignment Submission Deadline;
- A5.9a Progression with Credit Deficit;
- A5.14 Processing of Alleged Infringements of Examination Regulations Relating to Continuous Assessment CA and Final Examination Other FEO;
- A5.18 Invigilator Guidelines;
- A5.19 Procedure for Management of Certified Absence relating to CA Events;
- A5.20 SOLAS Assessment Regulations;
- A5.22 Policy and Application for Use of Bilingual Dictionary During Exams;
- A5.23 Student Feedback on Continuous Assessment (CA);
- A5.25a Guide to Citations, Referencing and Avoiding Plagiarism;
- A5.25b Request for Approval to Depart from Institute Referencing System;
- A6.4 Course Programme Handbook;
- A11.2 – Registration Periods for Research Degree Programmes;
- A11.2 – Appendix PG11.2.1 Masters by Research Scholarship Application Form;
- A11.3 – PG11.3.7 Extension Request Form;
- A11.3 – PG11.3.9 Change of Supervisor Request Form;
- A11.4 – Appendix PG11.4.6 Declaration of Work Form;
- A11.5 Procedure for the Approval of New Research Areas;
- A12.1 Research Ethics Policy;
- A12.2 Ethical Review of Undergraduate or Taught Masters Postgraduate Research;
- A12.3 Ethical Review of Postgraduate Research Programmes and Professional Research;
- A12.4 External Research Requesting Access to Research Participants at IT Tralee;
- A14.3 Admissions Policy;
- A14.4 Progressions Policy – Policy for determining the order in which eligible candidates are made offers on Add-on Ordinary/Honours Degree Programmes.

Academic Council Annual Report:

- The Academic Council Annual Report Academic Year 2015/2016 was adopted by the Academic Council in December 2016.

Academic Calendar and Meeting Dates:

- The Academic Calendar for Academic Year 2017/2018 was adopted;
- Schedule of Academic Council and its Sub-Committees meeting dates for Academic Year 2017/2018 were adopted.

Institute Research Ethics Committee (IREC):

- Replacement External Expert approved as a member of IREC.

**Progression with Credit Deficit:**

- Progression with Credit Deficit was approved to be extended to the end of Academic Year 2016/2017;
- A review of the two-year pilot programme to be undertaken by the Quality Assurance Sub-Committee in Academic Year 2017/2018.

**Examination Results Academic Year 2016/2017:**

- Examination Results for Academic Year 2016/2017 were approved.

**Nominations for Postgraduate External Examiners:**

- Nominations for Postgraduate External Examiners received in Academic Year 2016/2017 were approved;
- The Academic Council approved the proposal that the Research & Development Sub-Committee would approve nominations for Postgraduate External Examiners going forward.

**Other Decisions:**

- Quality Assurance Work Plan Academic Year 2016/2017 was approved.

**Research and Development Sub-Committee Approvals:**

The following items were approved by the Research and Development Sub-Committee and were further approved by the Academic Council:

- A11.2 – Registration Periods for Research Degree Programmes;
- A11.3 – PG11.3.7 Extension Request Form;
- A11.3 – PG11.3.9 Change of Supervisor Request Form;
- A11.4 – Appendix PG11.4.6 Declaration of Work Form;
- A11.4 – PG 11.4.8 Internal Examiners Report;
- A11.4 – PG 11.4.9 External Examiners Report;
- A12.1 Research Ethics Policy;
- A12.2 Ethical Review of Undergraduate or Taught Masters Postgraduate Research;
- A12.3 Ethical Review of Postgraduate Research Programmes and Professional Research;
- A12.4 External Research Requesting Access to Research Participants at IT Tralee.

**Student Affairs Sub-Committee Approvals:**

The following items were approved by the Student Affairs Sub-Committee and were further approved by the Academic Council:

- A6.4 Course Programme Handbook;
- A14.3 Admissions Policy;
- A14.4 Progressions Policy – Policy for determining the order in which eligible candidates are made offers on Add-on Ordinary/Honours Degree Programmes.

The following items were also approved by the Student Affairs Sub-Committee:

- Student Charter Poster;
- Protocol for Support for Students for whom English is not a 1st Language;
- \*A13.6 Policy for Students with Disabilities to Record Lectures (to form an appendix to A13.4 Reasonable Accommodations Guide for Lecturers);
- \*A13.7 Student Code of Conduct.

*\*For Academic Council Approval in Academic Year 2017/2018*

**Quality Assurance Sub-Committee Approvals:**

The following items were approved by the Quality Assurance Sub-Committee and were also further approved by the Academic Council:

- A standing agenda item for each Quality Assurance Sub-Committee to be 'Stakeholder Feedback on the operation of Quality Assurance Procedures';
- Procedure for dissemination of Quality Assurance procedures;
- Template for Quality Assurance procedures;
- A5.2 Anti-Plagiarism Policy and Procedures;
- A5.19 Procedure for Management of Certified Absence relating to CA Events
- A5.22 Application for Use of Bilingual Dictionary During Exams-Policy
- A5.23 Student Feedback on Continuous Assessment (CA);
- A5.25a Guide to Citations, Referencing and Avoiding Plagiarism (previously named 'Criteria for Referencing and Submission of Written Work');
- \*A13.4 Reasonable Accommodations Guide for Lecturers;
- \*A13.5 Equal Access Policy.

*\*For Academic Council Approval in Academic Year 2017/2018*

**Programmes and Planning Sub-Committee Approvals:**

The following items approved by the Programmes and Planning Sub-Committee of the Academic Council and further approved by the Academic Council:

- A11.5 Procedure for the Approval of New Research Areas.

The following items were also approved by the Programmes and Planning Sub-Committee:

- New and replacement External Examiners for taught undergraduate programmes;
- Items exempt from a requirement to present changes to the Programmes & Planning Sub-Committee (Quality Assurance Procedure A4.1);
- Department of Health and Leisure - Module Descriptor Changes Academic Year 2016/2017;
- School of Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM) – International Medical Commencement Programme - Module Descriptor Changes Academic Year 2016/2017;
- School of STEM - Module Descriptor Changes Academic Year 2016/2017;
- Department of CMIT - Module Descriptor Changes for the programme BSc (Hons) in Computing with Mobile Apps Development Academic Year 2016/2017;
- Department of Social Sciences - Special Regulation for Intercultural Communications (Programmes Y&C/SS/IMCP);
- Guiding Principles for Academic Calendar;
- Academic Calendar Academic Year 2017/2018;
- Academic Council and Sub-Committee Meeting Dates;
- Approval to develop a 5 credit level 7 module which will be accompanied by an RPL portfolio to enable successful applicants to progress to a level 8 award in Nursing (for Nurses who graduated prior to 1988).

The following Programmes were approved for development by the Programmes and Planning Sub-Committee:

- Higher Certificate in Social Studies (Social Care);
- Higher Certificate in Social Studies (Youth & Community Work Practice);
- Diploma in Social Studies Advanced Professional Practice;

- BSc (Hons) in Construction Management (add-on);
- BSc (Hons) in Civil Engineering (add-on and ab-initio);
- BEng in Mechatronics (online);
- Certificate in Industrial Instrumentation and Automation;
- BA (Hons) in Event Management;
- MSc Bio-economy and Bio-entrepreneurship;
- BSc (Hons) in Wildlife Biology (exit award);
- BSc (Hons) in Field Biology with Wildlife Tour-Leading (exit award);
- National Foundation Programme in Acute Medicine Nursing (in collaboration with DKIT (lead partner), AIT, GMIT, ITT, LKIT and WIT);
- BA in Youth and Community Work for the Digital Age;
- BA (Hons) in Youth and Community Work for the Digital Age;
- Certificate in Applied Computing;
- Certificate in Mechatronics.

**Membership of the Academic Council from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2016:**

Assistant Registrar was appointed to the Academic Council on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2017.

**Academic Council Sub-Committee membership:**

The Academic Council has four Sub-Committees as follows:

- Programmes & Planning;
- Student Affairs;
- Research & Development;
- Quality Assurance.

The following amendments to Sub-Committees Membership were approved by the Academic Council:

- Nomination of current Postgraduate student and current Postgraduate supervisor for Academic Year 2016/2017 to the R&D Sub-Committee were approved;
- Replacement nominee (HOD Business) to Quality Assurance Sub-Committee was approved;
- Head of Research co-opted as an additional member onto the Research and Development Sub-Committee;
- Agreed Chairpersons of Sub-Committees to be members of Academic Council.



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

**General Management Team meetings:**

- Tuesday, 6<sup>th</sup> September 2016;
- Tuesday, 13<sup>th</sup> September 2016;
- Tuesday, 13<sup>th</sup> December 2016;
- Wednesday, 5<sup>th</sup> April 2017;
- Tuesday, 13<sup>th</sup> June 2017.

**Institute Research Ethics Committee (IREC):**

- Friday, 21 October 2016;
- Friday, 09 December 2016;
- Wednesday, 08 February 2017;
- Thursday, 16 March 2017;
- Tuesday, 06 June 2017.

**Institute Postgraduate Committee (IPC):**

- Wednesday, 21 September 2016;
- Wednesday, 14 December 2016;
- Wednesday, 11 January 2017;
- Wednesday, 01 March, 2017;
- Wednesday, 10 May 2017.

**Examinations and Assessment Review Committee (EARC):**

- Thursday, 8<sup>th</sup> September 2016;
- Friday, 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2017;
- Friday, 27<sup>th</sup> January 2017;
- Friday, 10<sup>th</sup> February 2017;
- Friday, 17<sup>th</sup> February 2017;
- Friday, 26<sup>th</sup> May 2017;
- Wednesday, 31<sup>st</sup> May 2017;
- Wednesday, 7<sup>th</sup> June 2017;
- Thursday, 15<sup>th</sup> June 2017;
- Tuesday, 20<sup>th</sup> June 2017;
- Wednesday, 28<sup>th</sup> June 2017;
- Thursday, 14<sup>th</sup> September 2017.

**Examination and Assessment Appeals Committee (EAAC):**

- None.

**Institute Disciplinary Committee (IDC):**

- Thursday, 24<sup>th</sup> November 2016;
- Tuesday, 21<sup>st</sup> March 2017.

Institute Disciplinary Appeals Committee (IDAC):

- None.

Institute Vetting Committee (IVC):

- Tuesday, 21<sup>st</sup> March 2017.

The Academic Council meets six to seven times per Academic Year. Additional meetings are scheduled if required. Its four Sub-Committees has five to seven meetings throughout the Academic Year. The schedules for all committee meetings are agreed in advance of the Academic Year. In addition to the scheduled meetings, a number of supplementary/special meetings are held to accommodate business as it arises. The following meetings of the Academic Council were held during the Academic Year 2016/2017:

- Monday, 03 October 2016;
- Monday, 07 November 2016;
- Monday, 12 December 2016;
- Monday, 06 February 2017;
- Monday, 20 March 2017;
- Monday, 24 April 2017;
- Monday, 15 May 2017;
- Tuesday, 13 June 2017.

In the Academic Year 2016/2017 the **Programmes & Planning Sub-Committee** met on the following dates:

- Monday, 10 October 2016;
- Friday, 04 November 2016;
- Monday, 28 November 2016;
- Monday, 05 December 2016;
- Monday, 23 January 2017;
- Monday, 27 February 2017;
- Monday, 27 March 2017;
- Monday, 22 May 2017;
- Wednesday, 07 June 2017.

In the Academic Year 2016/2017, the **Student Affairs Sub-Committee** met on the following dates:

- Monday, 24 October 2016;
- Monday, 05 December 2016;
- Monday, 20 February 2017;
- Monday, 08 May 2017;
- Monday, 19 June 2017 (postponed).

In the Academic Year 2016/2017, the **Research and Development Sub-Committee** met on the following dates:

- Monday, 17 October 2016;
- Monday, 21 November 2016;
- Monday, 30 January 2017;

- Monday, 20 March 2017;
- Monday, 08 May 2017.

In the Academic Year 2016/2017, the **Quality Assurance Sub-Committee** met on the following dates:

- Monday, 26 September 2016;
- Wednesday, 02 November 2016;
- Monday, 14 November 2016;
- Wednesday, 14 December 2016;
- Monday, 13 February 2017;
- Monday, 06 March 2017;
- Friday, 28 April 2017 (Postponed);
- Monday, 29 May 2017;
- Wednesday, 31 May 2017;
- Friday, 02 June 2017;
- Tuesday, 20 June 2017.

## Section 2: Reviews in the reporting period

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

**New Programme Validations** approved in chronological order. See <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/ProceduresPlansandReports/>

- Certificate in Biopharmaceutical Processing;
- Certificate in Environmental Science;
- BSc (Hons) in Veterinary Bioscience;
- BSc in Veterinary Bioscience (Exit Award);
- Certificate in Front Office Skills;
- Higher Certificate in Science in Animal Science (2 year embedded award in the Level 7 & 8 programmes);
- BSc in Animal Bioscience (3-year ab-initio and embedded award in Level 8 programme);
- BSc in Animal Bioscience (one-year add-on);
- BSc (Honours) in Veterinary Bioscience (one-year add-on programme);
- BA (Hons) in Counselling with Addiction (ab-initio);
- BA (Hons) in Counselling with Addiction (Hons Degree Conversion 18-month programme for practitioners);
- BA (Hons) in Counselling with Addiction (1 year, Level 8, add-on);
- Higher Certificate in Social Studies (Social Care);
- Higher Certificate in Social Studies (Youth & Community Work Practice);
- Diploma in Social Studies (Advanced Professional Practice);
- BSc (Hons) in Civil Engineering (ab-initio);
- BSc (Hons) in Civil Engineering (add-on);
- BSc in Computer Systems and Networking (Ab-Initio);
- BA Business Information Management (add-on Level 7);
- BA (Hons) Business Information Management (add-on Level 8);
- Certificate in Applied Computing;
- Certificate in Mechatronics.

#### **Programmatic Reviews**

- The Programmatic Review process was completed by the School of Business, Computing and Humanities in Academic Year 2016/2017. Panel dates were as follows:
  - Internal Panel – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017;
  - External Panel – 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> May 2017;
  - Academic Council approval – 13<sup>th</sup> June 2017.

Programmes detailed in the Programmatic Review Report have been added to the Institutes Order in Council.

**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>22</b>
Number of <b>Programme Reviews</b> completed in the reporting year	66
Number of <b>Research Reviews</b> completed in the reporting year	0
Number of <b>School/Department/Faculty Reviews</b> completed in the reporting year	0
Number of <b>Service Unit Reviews</b> completed in the reporting year	0
Number of <b>Reviews of Arrangements with partner organisations</b> completed in the reporting year	0

**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	
National	95%
UK	
EU	
Student	5%
Other	

<b>Chair Profile</b>	<b>%</b>
Internal	
Similar Institution	100%
Different Institution	
International	

### 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.

The Institute collects, analyses, and uses data for the effective management of its academic programmes and all other central services activities. The Institute is committed to the enhancement of the students experience and the Institutes quality assurance mechanisms include an emphasis on feedback from students. Data used includes data from the following: Application/Admissions data; Examinations data; Progression/Retention Data; National data on progression and retention and national/international research to enhance the student teaching and learning experience, in particular with respect to retention and what works to support the first year student experience in their transition to third level; Department level Student Surveys; Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE); Library survey; Computer Services survey; QA1-3 surveys; CBA 1 and 2; Student Services surveys; Graduate Employment Surveys; Joint Academic Workshops (JAWS); Student Forum; Feedback from work Placement and Industry; External Examiners Reports. This data is used as a feedback and feedforward mechanism to inform quality assurance and quality enhancement.

Under the management of the previously appointed Head of Strategy and Institute Performance, a Business Systems Integration Office was established in Academic Year 2016/2017, to centralise quality data collection, analysis and dissemination. The Banner System is the tool used to collect data with respect to student retention, progression and success. This data, and all other data sourced, is analysed by Institute Management, Service Units and Course Boards, in the context of the requirements of a number of relevant Quality Assurance policies and procedures, and this data is used to inform quality enhancement. The following are the relevant Quality Assurance policies and procedures: Section A2: Mission, Vision, Governance and Management, Subsection A2.6 Appendices- Annual Course Board Report Forms CBA 1 and 2; Section A4: Procedures for the Design, Validation and Modification of Programmes and Modules; Section A5: Assessment of Learners, Subsection A5.15 Analysis of Examination Results, Subsection A5.16 External Examiners Policy and Procedures; Section A6: Procedures for Ongoing Monitoring of Programmes; Section A7: Procedures for Evaluation of Programmes; Section A9: Feedback Mechanisms, Form QA 1-Survey of Students by Lecturer, Form QA 2-Summary of Survey of students by Lecturer, Form QA 3-Course Survey Questionnaire. See <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/QualityAssurance/>

At student registration the Institute carries out the HEA Equal Access Survey. The HEA through its National Access Office, promotes equality of access to higher education for people with disabilities, mature students who previously had not the opportunity to access higher education, those facing social and economic barriers and minority groups, including the Traveller Community and is achieving this full equality of access to higher education is a national priority. Each year the HEA invites us to collect Equal Access information at the point of registration on the Students socio-economic background, disability and ethnicity and returns it to the Higher Education Authority. With the information that is provided, the HEA is able to measure equality of access to higher education and allocate the resources needed to support students of all backgrounds and abilities.

The information gathered during registration is protected by robust data protection policies in the ITT and in the HEA, in full compliance with data protection legislation. The data that is returned to the HEA is collective and students are not identified by name, address or ID number. All students are encouraged to respond to the Equal Access questions. The non-response will not affect the student's registration and enrolment, or their ability to be considered for financial support. However, it is highlighted that non-responses may have implications for the amount of State funding that is allocated to the IT, Tralee and as a result, we may then not be in a position meet the requirements of students with specific needs.

Each year the Careers Office surveys graduates using the Graduate Destination Survey. First Destination Survey offers a vision into the first destination of graduates nine months after graduation. Graduate surveys are produced to measure higher education output providing useful information to a wide selection of stakeholders such as higher education institutions, policy makers and prospective students. Results of surveys can also be used to benchmark institutional performance to similar institutions.

Section 1 of the graduate survey focuses on level 8-10 graduates whether graduates are in employment in Ireland or overseas, seeking employment, in work experience schemes or further study. Section 2 looks at the relevance or how graduates rate their qualification to the employment gained while Section 3 outlines salaries reported by graduates 9 months after graduation. Section 4 focuses on location by regional distribution of graduates with a level 8-10 qualification. Section 5 is an overview of employment sector by level, of working graduates in Ireland and overseas nine months after graduation. The final section reviews level 8-10 international graduate's first destination after graduation.

Presently the graduate surveys are created under the limitations of cross sectional data collection approach – a process which is under revision by the HEA currently. It is expected that the new survey (in early stages of longitudinal development) will include:

- Data on graduate qualifications and employment both within Ireland and overseas;
- Relevance of employment to area of study;
- Data on graduate further study;
- Data on graduate unemployment and unavailability for work;
- Career progression of graduates through longitudinal data.

See: <http://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2017/04/What-do-Graduates-do-2015.pdf>

Each year the library surveys students on their experience of the library services. This data is analysed by the library and used to inform enhanced service provision.

Each year Computer Services surveys staff and students on their experience of the IT services. This data is analysed by Computer Services, and used to inform enhanced service provision.

Each year student engagement and satisfaction is measured through the Irish Survey of student engagement. During the academic year 2016/2017, a pilot process was proposed by the Assistant Registrar to the General Management Team and the Executive to embed ISSE as an integral student feedback mechanism within the Institutes quality assurance systems, with the proposal outlining an annual response at department, school and institute level, including both a feed-back mechanism to students/staff and a feedforward mechanism in terms of an action plan based on the feedback

received. It was agreed to pilot This pilot proposal was agreed for roll in the Academic Year 2016/2017, following receipt of the data from ISSE in May 2017. Due to the agreed strategic importance of the ISSE data, an executive decision was made that going forward the data analysis would be processed through the newly established Business Integration Office. This office was established under the management of the Head of Strategy and Institute Performance.

Feedback is sought and provided from Industry to inform programme enhancement and new programme development. This feedback is sought and provided formally in the context of Programme Work Placement Guidelines and also through other engagements with industry.

In Academic Year 2016/2017, it was decided by the Office of the Vice President Academic Affairs and Registrar (VPAAR) to pilot an amended version of the Annual Course Board Report Forms (CBA 1 and 2). The amendments were based on feedback from the Heads of Department. On the basis of the pilot in Academic Year 2016/2017, and the requirement of the new Strategic Plan for Academic Department Plans, a full review of the CBA 1 and 2 was planned for the commencement of Academic Year 2017/2018, to be co-ordinated by the Office of the VPAAR. It is planned that the CBA 1 and 2 Forms will be replaced with an online Annual Academic Department Report to inform the Annual Academic Department Plan. The Report will focus on all relevant data and the analysis of same including Programmes Offered, Application Numbers, Offers, Acceptances, Registrations, Student Entry Routes, Progression and Retention Rates, Graduation Statistics, Repeat Students, Statistical comparisons and trends, Stakeholder Feedback-students, industry, graduates, Course Boards, External Examiners, Quality Enhancements, Technology Enhanced Learning and New Programme Development. The Plan will focus on academic planning informed by this data analysis.

The External Examiner Policy and Procedures provide for the requirement of Course Boards to produce a 'Summary Report of Action Items/Recommendations for Improvement from External Examiners Reports and Responses by School/Department'. This requirement quality assures that Course Boards consider and provide a response to External Examiners recommendations for improvement in the teaching and learning experience.

Student feedback on teaching and learning: The Joint Academic Work Shop (JAWS) forum, involving the student class representative, the class tutor and the Head of Department, provides students with the opportunity to raise feedback/concerns with respect to their teaching and learning experience, as does the student completion of the QA 1 and 3 Forms. See section A9.1 at <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/QualityAssurance/>

The HEA-funded Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) initiative has effectively been in operation since 2014. The Assistant Registrar coordinates survey-related activity and, in particular, their outputs and response to the survey findings. During the Academic Year 2016/2017, a pilot process was proposed by the Assistant Registrar to the General Management Team and the Executive to embed ISSE as an integral student feedback mechanism within the Institutes quality assurance systems, with the proposal outlining an annual response at department, school and institute level, including both a feed-back mechanism to students/staff and a feedforward mechanism in terms of an action plan based on the feedback received. This pilot proposal was agreed for roll in the Academic Year 2016/2017, following receipt of the data from ISSE in May 2017. Due to the agreed strategic importance of the ISSE data, an executive decision was made that going forward the data analysis would be processed through the newly established Business Integration Office. This office was established under the management of the Head of Strategy and Institute Performance.



The Student Open Forum was launched by the Office of the Vice President Academic Affairs and Registrar in the Academic Year 2012/2013. A minimum of two fora are arranged in each academic year. Membership of the forum includes: Vice President Academic Affairs and Registrar (Chairperson); Assistant Registrar; Academic Administration and Student Affairs Manager (Deputy Chairperson); Students' Union executive; Student class representatives; Admission Officer; Examinations Officer; Students Services Officer (Secretary); Computer Services Manager; Head Librarian and Access Officer. The objectives of the forum are to provide an open discussion platform for student experiences of Institute services and facilities, and where particular issues can be presented for resolution where possible. Minutes and matters arising are reviewed at each subsequent forum meeting.

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

External factors that have impacted include: The continuing funding restrictions and reductions; the lack of investment in physical infrastructure and reducing staff resourcing; National QQI Developments in Policy, Procedure and Best Practice; The National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030; the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education area; the Technological Higher Education Quality Framework; National Higher Education landscape-ITT Cluster with CIT and UCC; ITT and CIT working towards the establishment of the Munster Technological University; National HEI Best Practices-learning from other HEIs; National focus on Student Engagement (Publication of 'Enhancing Student Engagement in Decision Making' April 2016 and the establishment of NStEP - the National Student Engagement Programme); National focus on the transition to third level for the year 1 student; HEA Studies of Progression in higher Education; National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning; National Access Plan 2015-2019 with the national focus on the provision of inclusive and accessible third level education; National focus on Student Feedback-Irish survey of Student Engagement (ISSE); National focus and requirements on transparency and accountability in the public sector.

The Strategic Dialogue Cycle 4 Reflections on Performance, based on the Compact agreed with the HEA, informs the Institutes new Strategic Plan 2017-2021. This plan going forward will form the bedrock of the new strategic dialogue framework currently under development by the HEA where the Institution objectives and performance indicators will draw directly from the goals and measurements of success as listed in the Institutes Strategic Plan. Consequently, both the Compact and the Cycle 4 Reflections on Performance impact directly on quality and quality enhancement. The HEA in its reflections reported that the Institute sought to use the compact process and engagements in a developmental way, and to enhance the Institutes capacity in this regard. Approaches adopted to target setting, data set identification and the selection of targets with stretch ambition can now be improved upon in the next strategic dialogue. From a data analysis and reporting perspective, the Institute uses a reporting tool which assists area owners in gathering and reporting upon performance.

The Compact is the outcome of a process of Strategic Dialogue that reflects current national objectives in higher education and sets out to align the missions, strategies and profiles of individual higher education institutions with national priorities, and to agree strategic objective indicators of success against which institutional key performance indicators will be measured and funding allocated. The Institute identified 7 domains within the Strategic Dialogue Process, with key objectives and targets to be achieved by 2016 year end:

1. Regional Clusters;
2. Participation, Equal Access and Lifelong Learning;
3. Excellent Teaching and Learning and Quality of the Student Experience;
4. High Quality, Internationally Competitive Research and Innovation;
5. Enhanced Engagement with Enterprise and the Community and Embedded Knowledge Exchange;
6. Enhanced Internationalisation;
7. Institutional Consolidation.

### 3.3 A description of other implementation issues.

Nothing 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 Institute is committed to continuous improvement in the operation of its quality assurance policies and procedures and in quality enhancement. Such a commitment contributes to ensuring the ongoing effectiveness of the Institutes quality assurance policies and procedures.

The decision of the Quality Assurance Sub-Committee, to develop, and implement for the new Academic Year 2016/2017, a comprehensive strategy of dissemination by the Office of the Vice President Academic Affairs and Registrar (VPAAR) of the Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures, has in particular contributed to ensuring the ongoing effectiveness of the Institutes quality assurance policies and procedures. This strategy was rolled out in Academic Year 2016/2017 which included the following:

- As required by QQI, the publication on the Institutes website of the Institutes Quality Assurance Procedures, Institute Plans and Reports. The Quality Assurance Manual is now only available to staff, students and the public alike through the Institute website. See: <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/QualityAssurance/>
- Developed a template for the development of Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures;
- E-mail notification from the Office of the VPAAR to all relevant stakeholders (including students and the Students' Union) of new and/or updated Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures, reference to their location on the ITT Website and a request for feedback on the operation of the Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures (Template developed for this feedback). Heads of department are also asked to include any new/updated quality assurance procedures on the Course Board agenda. Feedback from individuals/Course Boards is logged in the Office of the VPAAR in the template provided. Editing issues are rectified immediately, major issues are referred to the relevant Sub-Committee and minor issues are recorded to be available at the next scheduled review of the particular procedure;
- An academic staff CPD session on the Institutes Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures held as part of each of the scheduled CPD events across the academic year (three CPD Events per year, consequently three Quality Assurance CPD sessions scheduled each year for academic staff). Academic staff are asked and encouraged here to provide ongoing feedback on the operation of the quality assurance policies and procedures;
- Rolling agenda item placed on the agenda of each Quality Assurance Sub-Committee 'Stakeholder Feedback on the Operation Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures'. The feedback received through the Office of the VPAAR in the template document provided is processed through this agenda item. Feedback is in relation to the operation of quality assurance policies and procedures and quality enhancement of all service units across the

Institute. At the closing of Academic Year 2016/2017, feedback was specifically requested to trial this new system with respect to the Summer Exam Board processes. The feedback is then formally fed forward to the relevant forum through the Office of the Vice President Academic Affairs and Registrar.

The quality assurance policy and procedural changes that were progressed through the Academic Council Sub-Committees and approved at the Academic Council, were proposed and progressed in reference to the feedback from the relevant stakeholders that such reviews/new development of quality assurance procedures were required to enhance the effectiveness of the policies and procedures. Ongoing and regular review of the alignment of the existing quality assurance policies and procedures with ESG 2015, QQI Policy and QQI Quality Assurance Guidelines also contributes to ensuring the effectiveness of the policies and procedures.

The effectiveness of the quality assurance policies and procedures is reported through the stakeholders providing feedback within the context of the quality assurance mechanisms in place, both internally and externally, including the following:

- ITT Performance Compact Reporting;
- ITT Completion and Retention statistical returns to the HEA;
- Irish Survey of Student Engagement;
- External Examiner Reporting;
- Programme Development Validation Panels;
- Programmatic Review Validation Panels;
- Formal mechanisms in place for industry feedback;
- Formal mechanisms in place for Graduate feedback;
- Course Boards, Staff-Student Liaison Boards, School Boards;
- General Management Meetings;
- Executive Meetings;
- Governing Body and Audit Committee;
- Central Services Units team meetings;
- Academic Council and its Sub-Committees;
- Institute committees and working groups;
- Formal mechanisms in place for Students' Union feedback.

## 2. Impact

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

As listed in Part 2, Section 1.2, a number of significant specific changes were made to the Institutes Quality Assurance policies and procedures, based on a review of same as per the agreed Quality Assurance Work Plan for Academic Year 2016/2017. A review of the Institutes Staff and Students Complaints Procedures (Section A10 of the Quality Assurance Manual) was progressed during the reporting year, but not completed and approved until the commencement of Academic Year 2017/2018. This resulted in significant changes to the Institutes Staff and Students Complaints Procedures, resulting in a Student Complaints Policy and Procedure, and a Dignity and Respect Policy and Procedure.

*School of Business, Computing and Humanities Programmatic Review-changes to policy and procedure based on the outcomes of the review process*

- Outcome condition: Develop a School Strategy in the context of the Institutes Strategic Plan 2017-2021, to include detailed department level plans, to be completed by the end of calendar year 2017. This outcome condition of the programmatic review process has contributed to the decision to review in Academic Year 2017/2018 section A7 of the Quality Assurance Procedures-Procedures for Evaluation of Programmes.
- Outcome recommendation: The Institute mandatory 50% minimum requirement for progression on a number of add on programmes from year 2 to 3 and year 3 to year 4 (level 6 to level 8, level 7 to level 8) should be removed and replaced with a 40% GPA (pass). When raised by the panel with the programme teams, the panel noted that no strong justification was presented for maintaining such a barrier to progression. This to be referred for consideration to the Quality Assurance Sub-Committee of Academic Council. In Academic Year 2017/2018, this was referred to the Quality Assurance Sub-Committee and subsequently approved by the Academic Council.

*School of STEM Programme Validations-changes to policy and procedure based on the outcomes of the review process*

- Outcome condition: The anomaly of the 50% GPA progression requirement going from the Level 7 to the Level 8 one-year add-on programme to be resolved. In Academic Year 2017/2018, this was referred to the Quality Assurance Sub-Committee and subsequently approved by the Academic Council.

### **3. Themes**

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

Key themes include the following:

- Strategy Development;
- Data and Information Management-data informed planning and decision making;
- Stakeholder Feedback - in particular Student Feedback (Irish Survey of Student Engagement);
- Equity of Access to Third Level and Learner Support;
- Enhancing the Student Experience (including Campus Development);
- Enhancing Student Engagement;
- Student Retention and Success, with a focus on supporting the students transition to third level in Year 1;
- Quality Student Centred Teaching, Learning and Assessment;
- Research Quality;
- Quality Assurance, Quality Control and Quality Enhancement of Student Work Placement;
- Enhancement of Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures and Quality Assurance systems;
- Publication of Quality Assurance Procedures, Plans and Reports;
- Building a Quality Assurance and Quality Enhancement Culture Institute-wide.

## 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.

The Institutes sixth Strategic Plan was developed in 2017, the year of the Institutes 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary: ‘**Strategic Plan- A Vision to 2012-2017-2021**’. The Institute has identified five key Strategic Goals:

- Sustainability and Growth;
- Teaching, Learning and Graduate Readiness;
- Research and Innovation;
- Fellowship and Inclusivity;
- Establishment of the Munster Technological University.

A new **Research and Innovation Strategic Plan 2017-2021** was developed in 2017, which firmly underpins the Institutes new Strategic Plan 2017-2021 and builds upon the Institutes research performance over the period of the previous Research and Innovation Strategic Plan ‘Connecting Knowledge Globally’ which was published in 2013. The Strategy establishes the following priorities to strengthen the Institutes reputation for excellence in research and innovation:

- Research Excellence: Internationally Benchmarked and Externally Evaluated;
- Research Impact through Innovation;
- Enhance Research Linkages and collaborative Research Activities;
- High Quality Research Degree Provision to Level 10;
- Enabling and Supporting Research Activity across IT, Tralee.

A system was developed and implemented in the Office of the Vice President Academic Affairs and Registrar (VPAAR) over the course of the Academic Year 2015/2016 that **records and tracks decisions of the Academic Council and its Sub-Committees**. This provides a facility of recording when decisions are to be acted on, by whom and when they have been completed. It also provides a facility for managing agendas and minutes of meetings. Following an ongoing review, the system has been further developed and enhanced during Academic Year 2016/2017.

**Ongoing review of existing Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures and the Quality Assurance Manual from the perspective of their alignment with ESG 2015, QQI Policy and QQI Quality Assurance Guidelines.** The system of dissemination with respect to Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures was also reviewed in preparation for planning for the dissemination of Quality Assurance

procedures in Academic Year 2016/2017. A decision was made then to develop, and implement for the new Academic Year 2016/2017, a **comprehensive strategy of dissemination** of the Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures. This strategy was rolled out in Academic Year 2016/2017 which included the following:

- As required by QQI, the publication on the Institutes website of the Institutes Quality Assurance Procedures, Institute Plans and Reports. The Quality Assurance Manual is now only available to staff, students and the public alike through the Institute website. See: <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/QualityAssurance/>
- Developed a template for the development of Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures;
- E-mail notification from the Office of the VPAAR to all relevant stakeholders (including students and the Students' Union) of new and/or updated Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures, reference to their location on the ITT Website and a request for feedback on the operation of the Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures (Template developed for this feedback). Heads of department are also asked to include any new/updated quality assurance procedures on the Course Board agenda. Feedback from individuals/Course Boards is logged in the Office of the VPAAR in the template provided. Editing issues are rectified immediately, major issues are referred to the relevant Sub-Committee and minor issues are recorded to be available at the next scheduled review of the particular procedure;
- An academic staff CPD session on the Institutes Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures is held as part of each of the scheduled CPD events across the academic year (three CPD Events per year, consequently three Quality Assurance CPD sessions scheduled each year for academic staff). Academic staff are asked and encouraged here to provide ongoing feedback on the operation of the quality assurance policies and procedures;
- Rolling agenda item placed on the agenda of each Quality Assurance Sub-Committee 'Stakeholder Feedback on the Operation Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures'. The feedback received through the Office of the VPAAR in the template document provided is processed through this agenda item. Feedback is in relation to the operation of quality assurance policies and procedures and quality enhancement of all service units across the Institute. At the closing of Academic Year 2016/2017, feedback was specifically requested to trial this new system with respect to the Summer Exam Board processes. The feedback is then formally fed forward to the relevant forum through the Office of the VPAAR.

Under the management of the Head of Strategy and Institute Performance, a **Business Systems Integration Office was established in Academic Year 2016/2017, to centralise quality data collection, analysis and dissemination**. There is detailed analysis of entry routes and prior educational attainment with comparison to year 1 retention/progression to assist in identifying students at risk with a view to providing targeted supports (including benchmarking against HEA Non-Progression Report).

Withdrawal data is available to analyse and establish if patterns could be identified that could be acted upon.

In Academic Year 2016/2017, it was decided by the Office of the VPAAR to pilot an amended version of the Annual Course Board Report Forms (CBA 1 and 2). The amendments were based on feedback from the Heads of Department. On the basis of the pilot in Academic Year 2016/2017, and the requirement of the new Strategic Plan for Academic Department Plans, a full review of the CBA 1 and 2 is planned for the commencement of Academic Year 2017/2018, to be co-ordinated by the Office of the VPAAR. It is planned that the CBA 1 and 2 Forms will be replaced with an **online Annual Academic**



**Department Report to inform the Annual Academic Department Plan.** The Report will focus on all relevant data and the analysis of same including Programmes Offered, Application Numbers, Offers, Acceptances, Registrations, Student Entry Routes, Progression and Retention Rates, Graduation Statistics, Repeat Students, Statistical comparisons and trends, Stakeholder Feedback-students, industry, graduates, Course Boards, External Examiners, Quality Enhancements, Technology Enhanced Learning, New Programme Development. The Plan will focus on academic planning informed by this data analysis.

The HEA-funded **Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE)** initiative has effectively been in operation since 2014. The Assistant Registrar co-ordinates survey-related activity and, in particular, their outputs and response to the survey findings. During the Academic Year 2016/2017, a pilot process was proposed by the Assistant Registrar to the General Management Team and the Executive to embed ISSE as an integral student feedback mechanism within the Institutes quality assurance systems, with the proposal outlining an annual response at department, school and institute level, including both a feed-back mechanism to students/staff and a feedforward mechanism in terms of an action plan based on the feedback received. This pilot proposal was agreed for roll in the Academic Year 2016/2017, following receipt of the data from ISSE in May 2017. Due to the agreed strategic importance of the ISSE data, an executive decision was made that going forward the data analysis would be processed through the newly established Business Integration Office. This office was established under the management of the Head of Strategy and Institute Performance.

The successful progression and retention of students in higher education is at the forefront of national policy frameworks. Higher education faces many challenges and in particular the difficulties students can encounter with the transition into higher education. The National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 emphasises the importance of a positive first year experience to achieving the goals of higher education, as ‘failure to address the challenges encountered by some students in their first year contributes to high drop out and failure rates with personal and system wide implications’ (DES, National Strategy, pg.56).

‘Every student that drops out of their higher education is a loss: a loss to their college, a loss to the future economy and, above all, a loss to the individual. Equally, students who don’t drop out but who fail to achieve their full potential also represent a significant loss to both themselves and society’ (Liz Thomas et al, 2017, pg.5).

Within the new Institute Strategic Plan 2017-2021, the Institute identifies one of its key goals to *enable students to achieve their full potential and contribute to the development of society via the provision of a student centred educational environment which is underpinned by excellence in teaching and learning.* One of the action items to achieve this goal has been identified as the *development and implementation of a rolling five- year retention strategy focusing on the first year cohort.* The measures of success of this strategy have been identified as the setting of *specific department targets for the improvement of retention and progression to be specified in academic department plans* and *an increase of a minimum of 10% in the Institute’s overall retention rate over the course of this strategic plan.*

Towards the end of Academic Year 2016/2017 a draft **Year 1 Student Retention and Success Strategy** was developed by the Assistant Registrar, in consultation with the Heads of Department. The draft is to be forwarded to the Executive for further consideration and approval. This Student Retention and Success Strategy sets out a set of key principles to guide strategies to be actioned at Institute level

and department level to improve retention and progression and support student academic success and a quality engaged student experience for all students of the Institute. The development of this strategy has been informed by a review of relevant literature, with a particular focus on national best practice and evidence based research from the HEA, the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning and UK based Liz Thomas et al through her What Works 1 (2012) and What Works 2 (2017) Student Retention and Success Programmes.

In support of the student's academic, social and personal transition to third level, an **enhanced Institute Orientation and 4 week FYI Induction Programme** (including 'FYI at IT Tralee' Facebook page) was provided by the Institute to all incoming first year students. For the September 2016 intake, the following initiatives were introduced to meet the goals and objectives set from benchmarking in April/May 2015 (post event survey-86% of students rated their first year orientation and induction experience as satisfactory or very satisfactory):

- New online Student Induction Guides and timetables (post event survey - 98% of students reported that they found the information easy to find and understand);
- Orientation colour coded wristbands - different colour bands for each class group;
- Wallet business card with Student Services contact numbers and calendar;
- Welcome from the President;
- Structured briefing on all of the Student Services (post event survey - 94% of students said they found the information helpful and easy to understand);
- Enhanced academic department induction;
- Enhanced IT Skills Sessions for individuals and groups;
- Enhanced Student Leadership training and consequently enhanced experience by the student groups under the leadership of the Student Leaders;
- A Guide for Parents/Guardians of New Students printed and also an App developed and available on the Institutes website annually at the commencement of the new Academic Year [www.ittralee.ie/parents](http://www.ittralee.ie/parents) ;
- Parent/ Guardian Information Session. All parents of new students were invited to attend an information session on the Sunday afternoon before the beginning of Semester 1, with the Academic Heads of Department and the full Student Services Team present to meet with parents and advise on the student supports and services available, and how parents can support with the transition to third level. When parents/guardians were surveyed after the event - 97% said the session was beneficial in supporting their student son/daughter in Semester 1;
- Student Services Pop Up stands and student Services Days - student services available to remind students of the Student Services available and to answer student queries on a one-to-one basis.

**An Institute-wide Health and Wellbeing Working Group (in collaboration with the Students' Union)** was established in Academic Year 2016/2017, renamed from sip ITT to LIVE ITT, extending the Health Promotion and Retention Project and associated activities to students across the whole Institute. Initially one department (Department of Health and Leisure) was promoting and engaging with activities under sip ITT. This grew to four departments (Departments of Health and Leisure, Social Sciences, Nursing and Engineering) and now under LIVE ITT will expand Institute wide within all 8 departments of the Institute in Academic Year 2017/2018. The Institute, through the LIVE ITT Working group, is continuing to work towards becoming a Health Promoting Campus (Healthy Ireland HSE Action Plan 2013-2025). IT, Tralee's pilot Health Promotion and Retention Project supports student health and wellbeing, promoting events and projects on campus, to ensure that the Institute,

as a place of study, is health promoting and health enabling. Learning and wellbeing are inextricably linked. When students are well, they can better engage with their learning and living experience, embrace and enjoy the full student experience, both inside and outside of the classroom, and reach their full potential. Live ITT focuses on four main project areas: Move ITT (initiatives to enhance physical health and physical activity); Change ITT (initiatives to support students to change lifestyle habits that are negatively impacting on their health, and consequently their learning); Mind ITT (initiatives to support mental health, personal safety, informed sexual consent, sexual health); Connect ITT (initiatives to support social connectedness and belonging, student volunteering, and connecting students with their future careers). The Health Promotion and Retention Project and its initiatives are introduced to Year 1 students during their Induction Programme in the context of Health and Wellbeing Workshops. In Academic Year 2016/2017, within the Health and Wellbeing workshops, student led workshops were held with the incoming Year 1 students on the topic of sexual consent.

During Academic Years 2015/2016 and 2016/2017 discussions were held at a number of Academic Council meetings in relation to the enhancement of the student teaching and learning experience. The academic sphere is the most important site for nurturing participation. Student centred active teaching and learning is at the heart of student success. Research shows that ongoing improvement in the overall learning experience is the best route towards supporting student retention and success. The questions being discussed were: Is the current semesterised structure and format providing for an optimal Year 1 student experience? Is the current teaching, learning, assessment, curriculum design and delivery of the programmes providing for an optimal Year 1 student experience, that supports the student's academic, social and personal transition to third level, and supports their retention, progression and academic success and provides for a quality engaged student experience for all students.

At a meeting of the Academic Council in November 2015, the decision was made to establish a Teaching, Learning and Assessment Working Group to develop an Institute Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy. After the initial meetings of this working group it was decided to widen the focus of the strategy to include Engagement and to focus initially on the year 1 teaching and learning student experience. Subsequently this working group was then tasked with the development of a **Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Engagement (TLAE) Strategy**.

At a meeting of the Academic Council in April 2016, a decision was made to establish a sub-group of the Academic Council to progress with developing **Terms of Reference (TOR) for a Review of Semesterisation with a focus on Year 1**. At this same meeting it was agreed that progression with the development of the TOR for a Review of Semesterisation in Year 1 and the development of a Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Engagement Strategy with an initial focus on year 1 are inextricably linked. Therefore, it was agreed that both groups would progress on working together. This work progressed as agreed, and at a meeting of the Academic Council in June 2017, a pilot roll-out of a yearlong de-semesterised year 1 across the Institutes programmes was approved. It was decided that this option would be explored by all Course Boards/departments in Academic Year 2017/2018, for implementation in Academic Year 2018/2019 if agreed. It was agreed that all departments would commence with the exploration as an agenda item at an early Course Board meeting in Academic Year 2017/2018. It was also agreed that this work will include a review of the teaching and learning student experience in Year 1 and consequently will contribute to the ongoing development of an Institute Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Engagement Strategy. As agreed by this academic council, the joint Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Engagement Strategy Working

Group and the Review of Semesterisation Sub-group of the Academic Council would meet the draft the Terms of Reference to support the progression of the agreed work by all course boards. The following core goals of the TLAE Strategy had already been identified as:

- Goal 1: Student Centred Teaching and Learning (including Learner Supports);
- Goal 2: Assessment as/of/for Learning-Assessment Feedback;
- Goal 3: Curriculum Design;
- Goal 4: Academic Professional Development;
- Goal 5: Learning Environment and Teaching Spaces (developing a physical, social and technological environment that supports learning);
- Goal 6: Engaging with stakeholders in Learning Design, Delivery and Enhancement.

**Student Support Services:**

**Individual Learning Requirements Document/Agreement (ILR):** An ILR is a document which details the specific learning and examination requirements of a student with a disability, dyslexia or learning difficulty. It explains why the student requires academic support in the classroom and also gives details of accommodations for examinations or continuous assessment. Classroom or Academic Accommodations are based on individual need and are determined with each student when they attend for a Needs Assessment. The ILR is created at source ie. student gets a copy of the agreement at the needs assessment visit.

ILR details are automated Live to both the Student and the relevant staff through Self-Service Banner. Automated reports are available for Examination Accommodations to be put in place where applicable. Automated group e-mail lists are based on categories which is generated at source. The Institute continues to improve the process by developing pre-entry registration (online). The Institute will then be in a position to provide supports earlier beyond official enrolment.

**Continuous Assessment (CA) Examination Accommodations:** Students availing of examination accommodations can request support for accommodations for CA (pre-agreed and needs based). There is an online booking system and workflow process to go through stages of arranging CA Accommodation. Plans have been identified to develop in Self-Service Banner for greater efficiency.

**Student Assistance Fund (SAF):** Online application System - Students apply using an online form – paper format not necessary. Student receives an e-mail with a link to their application if they want to keep it for their own records. Students are no longer required to provide receipts for expenditure. The process uses 5 systems which do not integrate with one another. We continue to further develop our middleware utility to enhance the service for student applicants and for staff of the Institute. This will assist with the national roll-out of e-Cohesion. Students receive e-mail or text of the outcome details. Students will be paid directly into their nominated bank account. Plans have been identified to develop in Self-Service Banner for greater efficiency. Process and procedures for handling SAF applications to be reviewed.

**Assistive Technology:** The Institute continues to enhance the training provided to students availing of Assistive Technology and also engages in ongoing research into the products available to better ensure students get access to the most suitable products to meet their needs.

**Graduation:** Students now register online to attend graduation. An additional graduation date was added to allow graduates and guests to have more time to enjoy their graduation experience at the

venue. This has worked well with the exception of the additional cost involved in running the event over 2 days. Annual post event survey informs the planning for the following year's event.

**Student Services Administration staff:** Student Services administration staff now based in the building where the student support service providers are based (Q Block), and are consequently more accessible to students and service providers. Longer opening hours have also been introduced. Students can book appointments with the student support services online via zimbra connector functionality and continue to access student support services information through online Student Services Information.

**Institute Student Handbook:** Changed the layout to A4 size to facilitate adding the Institutes Study Skills Guide on the reverse of the handbook. Very positive feedback received from staff and students on this initiative.

**Student Charter:** This sets out what students can expect from the Institute and what the Institute can expect from the student. The Student Charter was changed to a table format and posters of same printed for display on public notice boards.

**Nurse Triage Service introduced within the Institutes Health Centre:** The primary role of the triage nurse is to make a first assessment on any registered student-patient who feels unwell. The assessment includes a quick evaluation of the patient's physical and/or mental condition and refers them to GP if appropriate. Only the GP can now provide a sick leave medical cert to students. The new service and associated policies and procedures have enhanced the speed in which a patient can be assessed and referred. The policies and procedures will continue to be reviewed regularly to remain in line with appropriate management of sick leave or referral to medical or other support service. The new system took time for staff/students to adapt to. The changes made such as a reduction in sick leave certs have led to a more transparent and better run service.

**Office for Students with Learning Difference:**

- A suite of information videos outlining the Needs Assessment process were developed and piloted at the Institute Orientation for the Academic Year 2016/2017. This resource was designed for the information of incoming students and their families so that they would understand what to expect when registering with the Service for Students with Learning Difference and have a reference point after their needs assessment meeting to clarify information. The videos were also available for viewing at the Parents/Guardians Information Day in September (post event survey-feedback from students and parents has been positive). This initiative has been shared with DAWN members who have stated their interest in replicating this initiative in their respective HEIs;
- The introduction of a Trainee Educational Psychology Doctorate student (UCD) to the Student Services team led to the initiation of new inter service activities which have yielded benefits to the student body. The trainee Educational Psychologist, under the supervision of the Officer for students with Learning Difference, developed two group session training packages: Study Skills and Examination Strategies which were delivered over 4 group sessions to the mainstream student body targeting First Year students in particular. Students benefited from this intervention and session feedback reports indicated a high level of student satisfaction. In addition, two students underwent psycho-educational assessment, with assessment reports signed off by joint UCD/ ITT Supervisors. Thus two high needs individual students could

progress to access Disability Services and benefit from funded support and assistive technologies;

- The Officer for Learning Difference in collaboration with the Access Officer developed a draft disability plan “Draft Plan for Student Success: Students with Disabilities 2016-2021” which promotes a pan-Institute approach to the support of students with disabilities and embeds universal design and the incorporation of inclusive practices into all aspects of mainstream Institute life. This draft plan will be included within the Institutes Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Engagement strategy, currently under development, and is aligned with the goals of the Institutes Strategic Plan 2017-2021. The draft plan also serves as a means of delivering on the outcomes of the AHEAD International conference on UDL 2017 and as a means of delivery of the core elements of the joint DAWN/AHEAD “Inclusive learning and the Provision of Reasonable Accommodation to Students with Disabilities in Higher Education in Ireland 2017” due for launch March 2018;
- The Officer for Learning Difference undertook the promotion of two freewares - ORATO and Grammarly to non-funded students with disability to ensure equitable home access to course reading materials and to enhance proof reading skills for all students with literacy issues. These have been well received by students, in particular, by the more diverse non-traditional mature learner who may not be eligible to register as a student with disability in the Institute but who struggles with literacy and access to course materials.

**Access Office:**

- New Mature Student entrant figures are falling in recent years. Mature Student research was agreed under the Institutes Strategic Plan 2017-2021 and the Access Officer and Lifelong Learning Co-ordinator engaged in dialogue with NEWKD and SKDP to inform and support the research by identifying suitable participants and requesting funding through the imminent SICAP application to implement findings;
- Pathfinders Second Level Schools Access Programme fully evaluated;
- Pathfinders Admission Route opened up to all schools and eligible VTOS students in Kerry for entry September 2017;
- ITT committed to joining HEAR and DARE for entry beginning in 2019;
- Access21 is introduced to 5 DEIS schools at ITT in April 2017;
- New Pathfinders Co-ordinator appointed on a full-time basis;
- Introduction of Full Time Access Administration Support;
- Traveller Access Officer for Junior Cycle students appointed;
- Code of Practice introduced to new students registering with the Access Office;
- IT, Tralee ‘Reasonable Accommodations and Support for Students with Disability-Policy and Procedures’ developed and put forward for consideration/approval to the Quality Assurance Sub-Committee/Academic Council;
- Plan for ‘Student Success 2016 – 2021 Students with Disabilities’ drafted by Access Officer and Officer for Students with Learning Difference;
- Pursuing CPD for Guidance Counsellors on promoting and supporting access to higher education for students with disabilities. AHEAD to deliver this CPD at the Guidance Counsellors visit to IT, Tralee in Semester 1 of 2017/2018;
- Occupational Therapy Service introduced for Students with Mental Health disabilities in May 2017;
- HEA review of the ESF Fund for Students with Disabilities commenced with a workshop in October 2016 facilitated by external consultants, PACEC. The Access Officer subsequently represented the IOT sector on the HEAs working group;

- Work continued on the DAWN Reasonable Accommodations Guidelines and the Access Officer continued to be one of the IOT sector representatives on this working group. This publication is due to be launched in December 2017;
- HEA Lone Parents Survey completed which is expected to inform the provision of dedicated financial support to Lone Parents in higher education;
- The HEAs review of the ESF Student Assistance Fund was published. ITT fully engaged in the process and the Institutes Vice President Academic Affairs and Registrar facilitated further consultation with a sub-group of Access Officers including ITT to inform the development of a national model of good practice for implementing the fund;
- Institutes 'Equity of Access and Participation Policy' reviewed and updated and put forward for consideration/approval to the Quality Assurance Sub-Committee/Academic Council.

**Examinations Office:**

- Introduction of online payment for replacement of lost or stolen t-card;
- Introduction of the Digitary System;
- Developed Digitary system for the European Diploma Supplement for graduates- the European Diploma Supplement is for graduates of the Institute. This will be a full statement of exam results from when the student started at the Institute. This project while progressed in Academic Year 2016/2017, it continues as a work in progress at present and is not yet available to ITT graduates. Once the project is complete the European Diploma Supplement will be available to graduates via Digitary;
- Student can order past transcripts online and pay online (for transcripts pre Academic Year 2016/2017 which are not available on the new Digitary system):
  - When students order they complete form online providing all relevant details required. An e-mail is sent automatically to [exams@ittralee.ie](mailto:exams@ittralee.ie) with details. Students no longer have to e-mail request and send money by post. Exams office no longer receiving requests and money by post;
- Staff/Student meetings - students allowed to indicate online if they are being accompanied to meetings:
  - Staff know before meetings that student will be accompanied to meetings. This allows staff member to arrange someone to accompany them to meetings if appropriate;
- From June 2017 Statement of Exams Results available online to students via Digitary:
  - After results are ratified by the Academic Council, students are issued with a Statement of Examination results online through Digitary. Students have a permanent electronic copy of their results. They can share results through a secure electronic system with prospective employers or other colleges etc. Transcripts are no longer sent by post;
- Students register and pay online for Autumn Repeat Examinations (Autumn examination session only).

Student can register for Autumn examinations online wherever they are in the world. There is no longer a need to complete paper exam entry form and go to bank to pay fee through bank giro. Once online system closes at the end of June all late applicants have to follow old paper system. See <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationFor/CurrentStudents/Examinations/>  
<https://core.digital.net/#/user/login>

The online **National Student Volunteering database** was launched on campus in December 2015 ([www.studentvolunteer.ie](http://www.studentvolunteer.ie)). The Institute is represented on the National Student Volunteering working group. Across 2016/2017, the Institute focused on encouraging students to get involved in student volunteering and apply for the **Institutes President Civic Spirit Award**. The Institutes President Civic Spirit Awards were established in 2013. These awards recognise students volunteering contribution to Institute clubs and societies and community based organisations. The annual number of applicants for the Awards has grown as follows: 2013 (2); 2014 (7); 2015 (13); 2016 (17). The Institute hosts an annual Student Volunteer Fair to promote and encourage student volunteering.

During Academic Year 2016/2017, the Institute became one of a number of HEIs nationally to engage with the **National Student Engagement Programme (NStEP)**. Student engagement is acknowledged by the Institute as a two-way process. Ultimately students are responsible for their own learning and level of engagement. However, student engagement is dependent on the Institutes culture and the Institute providing the conditions that will enable students to get involved. The Institutes implementation of this programme will have a direct impact on enhancing student involvement in decision making processes in relation to governance and management, quality assurance and in teaching and learning.

As per the requirements of NStEP, the Institute in collaboration with the Institutes Students' Union, established an Internal Institute Student Engagement Working Group to progress the 3 work streams of the programme for the remainder of Academic Year 2016/2017 and for the new Academic Year 2017/2018:

1. National Student Training Programme;
2. Institutional Analysis;
3. The five national projects.

**KOHA - Implementing a new Library Management System.** The Koha Library Management System (LMS) went live in IT Tralee on Thursday, 10th August 2017. Koha is an advanced open-source Integrated Library System. Implementation was commenced in June and completed by August 2017. **EDS Discovery** was introduced in addition to the KOHA system in September 2017. EDS is the software through which we search our Library and Online Resources, searching most of our online databases and other resources simultaneously. Both of these new online resources will lead to improvements and enhancements, both directly and indirectly through cost savings as they will allow us to roll out additional online services over the next 1-2 years.

**The Department of Hotel Culinary and Tourism**, one of the eight academic departments within the Institute, held training for academic staff focused on improving and enhancing the teaching and learning experience:

- Enhancing Your Performance in the Classroom - Speech & Presence;
- Assessment Strategies.

**The Department of Computing**, one of the eight academic departments within the Institute, provided a Peer Programming Initiative to improve student retention and progression.

**The Department of Health and Leisure Studies**, one of the eight academic departments within the Institute, continues to ensure the effective operation of processes and initiatives in support of improved retention of its students, as follows:



Ongoing Quality Assurance Processes include:

- Monthly Course Board meetings with fixed 'student progress' agenda item;
- Working Groups established to address issues that may arise from time to time;
- Joint Academic Workshops as a formal staff-student engagement process to seek to enhance the learning environment;
- Programme Handbooks for each programme to ensure that students have written version of local department philosophies, options, expectations, rules and special regulations;
- Comprehensive Student Induction programme for first year students to demonstrate and discuss the nature of the Health and Leisure programmes and career prospects;
- Class Tutors (nominated academic staff) to flag to the course board any class or student related issues;
- Class (Student) Representatives who represent their class group on arising matters and attend the Joint Academic Workshops;
- QA1 surveys are conducted with nominated years and modules each year, the outcomes of which are summarised on QA2 forms and held for reference for programmatic review;
- External Examiner visits.

Initiatives include:

- Guest academic and industry visitors;
- Increased promotion of ERASMUS student and staff mobility, to offer opportunities for enhanced third level and CPD experiences, respectively;
- Live ITT programme, including the Try-and-Move ITT event. This is an Institute-wide initiative, first piloted in the Health and Leisure department, which aims to deepen the students personal development, personal responsibilities and understanding of life skills what promote a greater quality of life through longer-term good health;
- A comprehensive programme of student/stakeholder (e.g. community groups, medical practitioners, school children, etc.) engagement that ensures students receive authentic, real-world tuition by experiencing authentic, real-world situations in weekly time-tabled activities;
- Community Service Initiative and Community Leadership modules: students can gain credit for volunteering activities in two modules (second year and fourth year) in Health and Leisure programmes;
- Induction days for prospective students from the local National Learning Network. This initiative aims to ensure prospective students have a first-hand understanding of the nature of Health and Leisure programmes – timetables, workload, embedded qualifications and certifications, expectations and responsibilities. The initiative helps with course choice and therefore, retention;
- Initiation of greater engagement with local Youthreach by students and staff on health promotion initiatives through Healthy Ireland-funded development work. Staff and students are set to work with local Youthreach centres to voluntarily provide bespoke physical activity programmes aimed at increasing self-confidence, engagement with education and motivation to continue in education. These initiatives enhance the sense of relevance and authenticity to students' and staff competence and expertise;
- Greater engagement with local HSE and other health providers by staff and students towards development, through bespoke programme modules, of greater adherence among targeted patient groups to life-long physical activity;
- Initiation of greater engagement with the local International (migrant, asylum seeker) Resource Centre towards greater openness by the institute to users of the above service;

- The department is considering the optimisation of the first year students first experience of third level education by developing an alternative first year academic calendar with greater emphasis on a year-long learning process. This initiative aims to further underpin other improvement of retention initiatives.

**Department of Social Sciences**, one of the eight academic departments within the Institute, continues to ensure the effective operation of processes and initiatives in support of improved retention of its students, as follows:

Ongoing Quality Assurance processes within the Department of Social Sciences during Academic Year 2016/2017:

- Student progress is discussed as an agenda item at regular Course Board meetings;
- Class Tutors are assigned at the first Course Board in September. These assigned staff members are usually teaching the relevant class cohort and are the first contact when issues arise or simply act as a point of information or liaison with the Course Board;
- Class Reps are appointed per class group with the support of the Students' Union;
- Joint Academic Workshops are held on a regular basis throughout the academic year, and are an agenda item on Course Boards. These are three-way meetings with Class Reps, Tutors and the Head of Department and aim to address ongoing issues for student cohort to help enhance their student experience and engagement with their studies;
- Programme Handbooks have been developed during the Academic Year 2016/2017, one for each programme running in the Department, with specific information per class cohort including contact details of administration and support staff and the Head of Department as well as programme specific details around assessments, submissions, placement for example;
- QA1 (module feedback forms) surveys are disseminated each semester across a selection of modules on each programme. The feedback is collated and feeds into Programmatic Review in particular for overall programme improvement but feedback is also noted by the individual lecturers for subsequent iterations of the module delivery;
- External Examiners review assessments and examination material each semester, and visits the Institute on an annual basis to oversee the examinations process;
- The programmes on offer in the Department are very applied and involve two full semesters of work placement (2 x 30 credit modules). As such, we have developed a wide and diverse network of sectoral engagements with agencies who deliver services in the field. Staff from these agencies regularly delivery guest lectures and workshops, to both pre-and post-placement students and to support staff CPD;
- Staff attend seminars and deliver at conferences on a regular basis, which further informs teaching and learning in the class room;
- International students (ERASMUS) are particularly attracted to the placement semesters in the area of Social Care and we have developed links with colleges in Canada and Malaysia whereby students come to the ITT for the final award years of the BA (Ord/Hons) in Early Childhood Care and Education programmes (level 7, level 8). International students enhance the student experience for the wider cohort in general but in particular, it helps broaden the undergraduate experience for a peripheral third level college like the ITT;
- The Department is part of the Live ITT initiative which is run across the School (Health & Social Sciences). It aims to add to the student's personal development and understanding of life skills for a greater quality of life and long-term physical and mental health.

Specific Initiatives Academic Year 2016/2017:

- The Department undertook a review of assessment procedures across all three programmes (Early Childhood Care & Education, Social Care, Youth & Community Work Practice). Seminars and workshops were delivered to the Course Boards and the staff reviewed all the assessment strategies used in the Department across different discipline strands and modes of delivery. Marking rubrics were developed and refined for adoption across all programmes and at all levels, for continuous assessment and final examinations;
- Professional regulation is currently an important issue in the areas of both Social Care and Early Childhood Care & Education. The Department is engaging with CORU on the programme approval process to ensure that our graduates will be eligible for registration as Social Care Workers from 2019 onwards and hosted a meeting with Registrar/CEO of CORU to ensure that we are fully informed on the process ahead. The issue of professionalisation and registration is also becoming an important one in the area of Early Childhood Care & Education. Department staff attend PLE (Pedagogy, Learning and Education Association) meetings and are keeping abreast of developments and regularly inform the Course Board on updates to this process.

**The Department of Nursing and Healthcare Sciences**, one of the eight academic departments within the institute, engaged in the following initiatives, activities and events aimed at improving quality:

- PhD/Doctorate activity amongst Department staff has increased from 3 to 6 between 2016-2017;
- There has been an increase in research activity and publications amongst staff that is reflective of this ongoing education within the Department,
- CPD relating to teaching and learning activities is an ongoing process with the majority of the lecturers holding both professional nursing qualifications as well as specialist teaching qualifications. Three lecturers engaged in formal teaching and learning courses during this reporting period;
- One staff member was identified as a Teaching Hero by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching & Learning in Higher Education in 2015 and this reporting year three other staff members have been awarded Teaching Hero recognition;
- The Department was the first in Ireland to introduce the implementation of electronic portfolios for nursing students;
- In 2016 the Department partnered with nursing staff in UCC and WIT in the development of the first Honor Society for Nurses in Ireland. In 2017 there were 80 members recruited to this SIA Society;
- Department Careers event where graduates spoke with students on career options and experiences;
- Internship Nursing Student Team Building Outing to Killarney National Park in Summer 2017. This event was a partnership (and co-funded) between the HSE/Bon Secours Hospital and the department of Nursing and Healthcare Sciences;
- The delivery of an Access based blended programme, enabling practicing nurses to engage in recognised prior learning and enhance their readiness to apply and successfully undertake nursing programmes. The Advanced Professional Scholarship programme is unique to the department, and was developed in 2016 and delivered in 2017;
- A number of staff elected to National committees as follows:

- HEI representative for Department of Health Steering Committee-Community Nursing & Midwifery response to an integrated model of care;
- IOT representative to the National Older Person Strategy;
- IOT representative to the National Critical Care Network;
- IOT representative to the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland Ethics Committee;
- A number of conferences were hosted by the department:
  - November 2016: International Conference on Addiction (co-hosted with Cuan Mhuire, the largest provider of addiction support in Ireland).
  - April 2017: Hallmarks of Excellence in Nursing (co-hosted with Associated Health Service Partners – Acute Hospitals);
  - April 2017: International summit on Advancing Nursing Practice (co-hosted with Sacred Heart University, Connecticut, USA);
  - November 2016: International Conference on Addiction (co-hosted with Cuan Mhuire, the largest provider of addiction support in Ireland).

**The School of STEM** (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) organised the following:

- Science Festival Programme involving students in delivery of Science activities to general public
- Science Festival Programme involving a significant outreach element whereby the Institute engaged with a wide variety of enterprises and community groups and assisted in the dissemination of science and its impact on everyday life
- Assisted students in:
  - Re-establishing the Wildlife Society
  - Re-establishing the Agricultural Science Society
  - Re-establishing the Young Agricultural Engineering Society
  - Establishing a new Bird-Watching Society
- Wildlife Society organised two events connected with Science Week 2016:
  - Visiting Lecturer from the Marine Institute
  - Evening with Wildlife Biology Students and their Work Placement experience

The initiatives above assisted with student engagement with their programmes and in the development of a professional approach to their studies. They also assisted in engagement with the wider community.

The **Department of Biological & Pharmaceutical Sciences** also increased its collaboration with the Institute's Shannon Applied Biotechnology Centre in terms of the centre's facilitation of undergraduate research projects. This enhanced the level of laboratory resources that final year students could access and so improved their technical skills and also provided them with exposure to a commercial research environment similar to that they will enter as graduates.

The **Department of Biological & Pharmaceutical Sciences** also entered into new collaborations with Teagasc Research Centres to enhance the quality of programmes in the area of agriculture. In addition, a new programme of visits to Teagasc Research Centres also provided undergraduates with first hand contact with state of the art research facilities and cutting edge research undertaken by top researchers in their fields.

The **Department of Technology, Engineering & Maths** has increased the level of collaboration with IMAR (The Intelligent Mechatronics and RFID Technology Gateway) with a number of final year

projects taking place in IMAR and also the use of Researchers in teaching modules on programmes. Also a number of students undertook their work placement within IMAR.

In an attempt to improve the pass rate of the Engineering Maths 1 module the following initiatives were introduced

- o Small class groups, maximum size 16 students
- o Extra tutorials were put on for students with low leaving cert mark in Maths (<03)
- o Also tutorials put on in semester 2 for those who failed in semester 1 to help increase the pass rate in the repeat exam.

Agricultural and Mechanical Engineering students took part in an internal team competition with the winners heading to the UK to take part in IAgRE (Institute of Agricultural Engineers) student competition where they won first prize.

A programme of Summer Tutorials was initiated for Autumn Repeat Students to assist those with difficulties in particular subject areas

#### **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.

During Academic Year 2016/2017, further to a review of the programme that had taken place the previous year, a new proposal (Access 21) was explored to replace the existing Access Pathfinders Programme. The new project explored was the Trinity Access 21 Project already running at Trinity College Dublin. Working in collaboration with Trinity College, this new project to be rolled out at the Institute aims to address diverse societal and educational challenges by supporting schools to develop innovative approaches to formal and informal learning.

Access21@ITTralee is a new project with DEIS schools in Kerry which constitutes an expansion of the Pathfinders Programme, which is primarily a Pathways to College Programme for Senior Cycle, to a multi-tiered programme comprising additional components of Mentoring, Leadership through Service and 21st Century Teaching and Learning and commencing with students in 2nd year and following through to 6th year of their second level studies.

The approach is based on the insight that a change in classroom pedagogy to incorporate 21<sup>st</sup> Century Teaching and learning approaches, supported by appropriate professional development for teachers (university accredited), combined with a whole school approach to social capital development (as embodied in the College for Every Student practices) provides an environment in which students can grow and develop by taking responsibility for and ownership of their own learning. In such a school environment:

- the effects of inequality (be it economic, racial or gender based) are lessened;
- 21<sup>st</sup> century skills are developed – in particular critical thinking and computational thinking skills are enhanced;

- the barriers which inhibit people from entering third level education and higher professions are lowered.

The Access 21 project has a number of key goals. They are to:

- raise educational aspirations and attainment of Irish second level students from geographical areas where attendance at third level is historically low;
- support schools to develop and promote 21st Century Teaching & Learning environments;
- increase the STEM/Computer Sciences capabilities of teachers across the Irish second level education system;
- build an evidence base that informs policy and structural change.

The student interventions are based on adapted practices from the US based NGO College for Every Student. These interventions focus on 3 main areas of development for students:

1. Mentoring;
2. Leadership;
3. Pathways to College.

The mentoring programme allows students to develop supportive relationships with roles models who have experience of third level. This involves students meeting in groups with a mentor a number of times a year over a number of years to help increase aspirations as well as communication skills. Mentors are recruited from colleges, local businesses and community groups as well the schools own alumni.

Students from areas under represented at third level are more likely to be the first in their family or peer group to access third level. Confidence and self-direction are thus important factors in the student's ability to overcome the barriers associated with accessing higher education. The leadership component encourages self-confidence and self-direction in students as well as developing important skills like project and time management by engaging them in small projects to help their school or local community. This element has the added benefit of further developing links between the school and the supportive networks locally.

Pathways to College seeks to address the growing inequality in career guidance for second level students. A recent audit by the Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC 2016) showed an increase in practice hours for counsellors in fee paying schools of 1.9% from 2011/2012 to 2015/2016 while schools in the Free Education System (FES) decreased by 26.7% and in DEIS schools by 30%. This means that students from areas of disadvantage such as Dublin's north inner city have less access to the information they need when considering their future education and career opportunities. Limited resources force schools to focus their guidance effort almost exclusively on senior cycle students but this is often too late as many students will make subject choices affecting their chances of further progression in education long before this. Trinity Access 21 has developed a number of extra-curricular activities for students to engage with from their first year in second level that have been successful in helping students understand the broader educational system and enabling them to make informed choices.

Finally, the project recognises that the key to empowering students is to empower their teachers and to this end the Trinity Access 21 project is built around an innovative teacher professional development programme. A fully accredited postgraduate certificate in 21st Century Teaching &

Learning is offered to teachers. As most teachers tend to teach in the way in which they were themselves taught (in school or university) the approach followed in Trinity Access 21 is to empower teachers to teach in a 21st century, collaborative, problem and project based, teaching style by immersing them as learners in that methodology, i.e. the teachers themselves become students and actually experience what it is like to be part of a team that is co-operating to produce a deliverable to address some messy, real world, problem, e.g. create a full media campaign (video, radio programme and poster) addressing a pertinent issue (e.g. cyber bullying). Having been exposed to this way of teaching and learning for relatively easy content, the teachers are then offered progressively more challenging modules which move beyond 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and digital literacy to Computer Technology and Coding, culminating in sophisticated topics such as programming Raspberry Pi inputs and outputs using Python. To facilitate teachers who are not in a position to commit to a full postgraduate certificate the core Computer Sciences modules are also offered not for credit, on an “a la carte” basis. This allows teachers who have existing Computer Technology and Computer Sciences skills to explore more advanced activities while at the same time allowing less technically confident teachers to dip their toe in the water.

The project has developed/will develop as follows:

- **Feb 2017 to April 2017** - Recruit teachers from participating schools by organising meetings with management and hosting information sessions for teachers and parents;
- **May 2017** – Finalise recruitment of teachers and host schools at project showcase event in google with existing project participants nationwide;
- **May 2017 to Sep 2017** – Adapt existing resources for use with more rural school environment;
- **Early Sept 2017** - Launch Initiative by hosting teachers and students from 5 participating schools at an event in ITT (TCD and other partners to attend);
- **Late Sept 2017** - Planning Session with Participating Schools;
- **Oct 2017** – Train the Trainer sessions with Schools (Mentoring & Leadership) - TCD to offer experienced facilitators to deliver in ITT;
- **Nov 2017** – School Visits (Consultation/Troubleshooting with Teachers);
- **Dec 2017** - Check in event with participating schools;
- **Jan 2018 to Mar 2018** – Campus visits for participating schools;
- **April/May 2018** – Joint Showcase event for schools with ITT, TCD and NUIG.

## 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.

Refer to the Institutes Strategic Plan 2017-2021-See [www.ittralee.ie](http://www.ittralee.ie)

The following quality assurance and enhancement plans are to be progressed in Academic Year 2017/2018 (Ref. Institutes Strategic Plan 2017-2021):

- Ongoing review of existing Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures and the Quality Assurance Manual from the perspective of alignment with ESG 2015, QQI Policy and QQI Quality Assurance Guidelines;
- Continued execution of the campus masterplan to achieve a single integrated campus (in addition to progressing with the completion of the Institutes 16.5 million Sports Academy Building);
- Development and delivery of Annual Academic Department Reports and Plans (to include specific departmental targets for the improvement of retention and progression targets);
- Focus on data informed planning and decision making;
- Establishment of a Centre for Educational Development;
- Enhancement of inclusive teaching and learning through the development and implementation of a Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Engagement (TLAE) Strategy;
- The development of the TLAE Strategy to be informed by a review of year 1 teaching and learning practices and a review of semesterisation in year 1 across all of the Institutes programmes: Questions to be addressed in the review: Is the current semesterised structure and format providing for an optimal year 1 student experience? Is the current teaching, learning, assessment, curriculum design and delivery of the programmes providing for an optimal year 1 student experience, that supports the student's academic, social and personal transition to third level, and supports their retention, progression and academic success and provides for a quality engaged student experience for all students;
- A focus on building staff capacity and engagement with digital/online teaching and learning, to support the development of modules/awards across all schools in blended learning formats. The Institute to develop enabling policies for digital teaching and learning and academic staff to be provided with the necessary CPD to build their capacity and consequent engagement with digital/online teaching;
- Development and implementation of an Institute Year 1 Student Retention and Success Strategy;
- Integration of the goals and objectives of the National Access Plan 2015-2019 into institutional activities (incl. the roll out of the Access21@ITTralee Project);
- Leveraging and enhancement of work placement/practice experience/industry exposure to facilitate graduate work readiness and career focus;
- Strategic Engagement with Alumni (including each school to host an Alumni event each year);



- Enhancement of the Institutes reputation as a research engaged Institution and continued improvement in the standards of delivery of research excellence that will translate into economic growth and societal regional development;
- Working with and empowerment of staff to create a better work environment (incl. Enhancement of the Institutes Communication Strategy; a training needs analysis to be undertaken to formulate an annual Training and Development Plan;
- External review of Student Services to inform the development and implementation of a Student Services Plan;
- Enhancement of the health and wellbeing of the Institutes student community through the work of the Institute-wide Health and Wellbeing Working Group (LIVE ITT), benchmarked against the 'Healthy Campus Guidelines' (Ref. Healthy Ireland HSE Action Plan 2013-2025)
- Work in partnership with the Student Union to roll out within the Institute the National Student Engagement Programme (NStEP);
- Enhance both student and staff engagement with the Irish survey of Student Engagement (ISSE). Further embed ISSE as an integral student feedback mechanism within the Institutes quality assurance systems, with an annual response at department, school and institute level, including both a feed-back mechanism to students/staff and a feedforward mechanism in terms of an action plan based on the feedback received.

## 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.

No planned Programmatic Reviews, as per the internal review cycle.

However, an External Panel meeting is planned for the completion of the previously derogated Chapters 10 and 11 (Proposed Programme Summary and Module and Course Schedules) of the Self-Study Programmatic Review Process commenced in 2014 with respect to the programmes within the Department of Nursing and Health Care Sciences at the Institute of Technology, Tralee.

At the time of programmatic review, in March 2014, the Department sought a derogation from the Office of the Vice President Academic Affairs and Registrar from presenting changes to its undergraduate BSc Honours General and Mental Health Nursing programmes. At this time, revisions by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI) of the Standards and Requirements for Nurse Registration Programmes 3rd edition (An Bord Altranias, 2005) arising from the Report of the Review of Undergraduate Nursing and Midwifery Degree Programmes (DOHC, 2012), were not yet published. Therefore, it was proposed that to proceed to present changes to the undergraduate Approved Course Schedules and Modules, in the absence of the revised Standards and Requirements would be untimely. On this basis, a derogation was granted. These were subsequently published in November 2015 and launched by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland in February 2016. The Higher Education Institutions and Associated Health Providers were given a 2 year lead in time to develop curricula to meet the new standards and requirements from the date of their launch (NMBI, 2016). The proposed curricula will therefore be rolled out in September 2018 following any revisions as a consequence of the completion of the Programmatic Review process, and subsequent presentation and approval by NMBI.

### 5.3 Other Plans

Academic Council and Sub-Committee Plans for meeting in Academic Year 2017/2018:

**Academic Council Meeting Dates Academic Year 2017/2018:** Monday, 18 September 2017; Monday, 02 October 2017; Monday, 06 November 2017; Monday, 11 December 2017; Monday, 22 January 2018; Monday, 05 February 2018; Monday, 09 April 2018; Monday, 14 May 2018; Monday, 11 June 2018.

**Programmes & Planning Sub-Committee Meeting Dates Academic Year 2017/2018:** Monday, 09 October 2017; Monday, 13 November 2017; Monday, 04 December 2017; Monday, 15 January 2018; Monday, 12 February 2018; Monday, 16 April 2018; Monday, 30 April 2018.

**Quality Assurance Sub-Committee Meeting Dates Academic Year 2017/2018:** Wednesday, 6 September 2017; Monday, 25 September 2017; Wednesday, 01 November 2017; Monday, 27 November 2017; Monday, 15 January 2018; Monday, 19 February 2018; Monday, 12 March 2018; Monday, 23 April 2018; Monday, 28 May 2018.

**Research & Development Sub-Committee Meeting Dates Academic Year 2017/2018:** Monday, 16 October 2017; Monday, 20 November 2017; Monday, 29 January 2018; Monday, 05 March 2018; Monday, 18 June 2018.

**Student Affairs Sub-Committee Meeting Dates Academic Year 2017/2018:** Monday, 18 September 2017; Monday, 23 October 2017; Monday, 22 January 2018; Monday, 26 February 2018; Monday, 21 May 2018.

Plans for **Academic Council:**

- Ratification of Examination Results (Summer and Autumn);
- Quality Assurance Work Plan for Sub-Committees of the Academic Council;
- Academic Council Annual Report;
- Academic Calendar;
- Analysis of Examination Results;
- External Examiners Summary Reports;
- Programme Approvals;
- Items approved and/or referred from Programmes and Planning Sub-Committee for Academic Council Approval;
- Items approved and/or referred from Quality Assurance Sub-Committee for Academic Council Approval;
- Items approved and/or referred from Research and Development Sub-Committee for Academic Council Approval;
- Items approved and/or referred from Student Affairs Sub-Committee for Academic Council Approval.

Plans for **Programmes & Planning Sub-Committee:**

- Plan implementation of Quality Assurance Work Plan;
- Review of proposed amendments to module descriptors;
- Approval of undergraduate External Examiners;
- Review of revised Terms of Reference for the Academic Council and Sub-Committees;

- Review of Quality Assurance procedure A7 Procedure for the Evaluation of Programmes;
- Review of Quality Assurance procedure A3.1 General Principles;
- Review of Quality Assurance procedure A4 Procedures for the Design Validation and Modification of Programmes and Modules;
- Review of Quality Assurance procedure A15 Collaborative Provision;
- Review of Quality Assurance procedure AZ.1 Core Principles for Semesterisation and Modularisation.

Plans for **Quality Assurance Sub-Committee:**

- Plan implementation of Quality Assurance Work Plan;
- Review of Quality Assurance procedure A10.1 Student Complaints Policy and Procedures;
- Review of Quality Assurance procedure A10.2 Dignity and Respect Policy and Procedures;
- Review of Stakeholder Feedback on the operation of Quality Assurance Procedures;
- Review of stakeholder feedback received in relation to Summer 2017 Examination Board Processes and Procedures;
- Review of Progression Regulation (40% or 50%) for add-on applicants;
- Awarding of Honours Degree in Final Stage of a Programme (with repeated module(s));
- Procedure for the revocation/removal of award;
- Review of Quality Assurance procedure A5.16 External Examiners Policy and Procedures;
- Review of Quality Assurance procedure A5.9a Progression with Credit Deficit;
- Review of Quality Assurance procedure A5.9 Recording Decisions of Board of Examiners Meetings;
- Review of Quality Assurance procedure A5.24 Staff Student Meeting Guidelines for Students and Academic Staff;
- Review of Quality Assurance procedure A5.4a Project & Dissertation Procedure;
- Review of Quality Assurance procedure A5.21 Protocol for Students Representing the Institute;
- Review of Quality Assurance procedure A6.1 School Boards;
- Review of Quality Assurance procedure A6.2 Course Boards;
- Review of Quality Assurance procedure A6.3 Course Coordination Committee;
- Review of Quality Assurance procedure A6.5 Student Liaison;
- Review of Quality Assurance procedure A6.6 Students on Course Board;
- Review of Quality Assurance procedure A5.15 Analysis of Examination Results;
- New Quality Assurance Procedures for Drafting: Application for Special Circumstances and Developing new MOUs.

Plans for **Research & Development Sub-Committee:**

- Plan implementation of Quality Assurance Work Plan;
- Approval of post-graduate External Examiners;
- Review of Research & Development Sub-Committee Terms of Reference;
- Extension of DA research approval at Level 10;
- Replacement PG Supervisor and Student Representation on the Research & Development Sub-Committee.

Plans for **Student Affairs Sub-Committee:**

- Plan implementation of Quality Assurance Work Plan;
- Review of Quality Assurance Procedure A14.1 Procedure for Vetting Students for Placement in Environments with Children or Vulnerable Adults\_Garda Vetting Policy;

- Review of Quality Assurance Procedure A13.1 Student Bereavement Policy;
- Review of Quality Assurance Procedure A13.2 Substance Abuse Policy;
- Review of Quality Assurance Procedure A13.3 Student Charter;
- Review of Quality Assurance Procedure A9 Feedback Mechanisms;
- Development of a Fitness to Practice Policy;
- Development of a Fitness to Continue in Study Policy;
- Development of a 1<sup>st</sup> year Internal Transfer Protocol;
- Development of a Student Success Policy with respect to students with disabilities.

## 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.

The Institutes last Institutional Review took place 2004-2009. See <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/ProceduresPlansandReports/>

The Institutes Self-Evaluation Report for the upcoming Institutional Cyclical Review is due Q4 2018. Preparation is taking place in planning for same. The Institutes Self-Evaluation Team is being established and an initial planning meeting of the team is being organised with QQI. Below are the recommendations/Institute responses with respect to the Objectives of Institutional Review 2004-2009:

#### Objective 1 - Public Confidence

1. Continue to build on and develop the entrepreneurship activities on which it has embarked.

#### *2010 Response*

The development of a suite of entrepreneurship activities is a key initiative arising from the implementation of the Institutes Strategic Plan 2008-2013. The initiative significantly supports two of the four goals of the Strategic Plan:

- achieving greater significance in the region;
- enhancing academic differentiation.

#### Actions:

The current and planned actions to further develop the entrepreneurship agenda include:

- **Young Entrepreneur Programme (YEP)** - YEP has been very successful at fostering an entrepreneurship culture among 2nd level Kerry students and teachers and also ITT students;
  - **Endeavour** - The Endeavour programme is an intensive development programme for new entrepreneurs, including mentoring by experienced and successful entrepreneurs;
  - **Academic Integration** - Inclusion of free choice (from menu) modules on many programmes introduced as part of modularisation, known as Educational Broadening Modules (EBMs).
2. Consider the appointment of a dedicated Industrial Resource person in an effort to strengthen the interface with the Kerry Technology Park.

#### *2010 Response*

ITT shares its campus with Shannon Developments Kerry Technology Park (KTP). The campus is unique in the IOT sector as it was developed as an integrated education and enterprise campus on a greenfield site. The integration and development of the campus is overseen by a steering group

comprising the President of ITT and CEO of Shannon Development; key staff from ITT and Shannon Development; representatives from EI, IDA, Kerry County Council and Tralee Town Council. In addition, a management group led by the Head of Development, ITT and the Manager of KTP work closely together on all key initiatives including YEP and Endeavour, and the branding project, as well as marketing/PR.

3. Review and further develop the Institutes website.

*2010 Response*

The Institute website has over the last number of years continued to evolve as new requirements and functionality are identified and will continually change and further evolve over time. Over the last number of years additional features/functionality have been added to the site that allow stakeholders to search for Accommodation, allow basic Booking & Online Payment for Part-Time courses, search for staff & department lists/contact details which are dynamically updated from integration with Core/Banner, provide the ability to search courses that are dynamically updated using live data from Banner (student registration and course management application), allow full approved course schedule (currently with restricted Module Details for each course that is dynamically retrieved from banner) to be viewed online, new course pages that reflect modularised courses/programmes, allow modules to be searched with up to date live data from Banner, interact with some video that has been added to some sections of the site and allow some of the most accessed sections of the site to be available through Irish.

The Institute plans to further enhance the public website with the following items:

Actions:

- Allow Part-time program registration and online payment that retrieves courses from banner and investigation option of being able to upload registrations to banner;
- Revised Nursing Website with multimedia content & virtual tour;
- New Alumni Application which past students will be able to register on, allow class and interest groups to be joined, integrate with Facebook, update profile etc.;
- Redesign Home Page and News & Events Section;
- Introduce additional video and virtual tours onto the site;
- Create Facebook site for either the Institute or one of the academic schools and evaluate development of further sites;
- Update and maintain the Institutes Twitter site with News, Events etc.;
- Make sections of the Institutes website available on mobile devices – smart phones etc.;
- Review Accessibility of Site and improving sites current rating of AA of the Web Accessibility Initiatives Web Content Accessibility Guidelines version 2 (WCAG WAI Level 2) to a AAA rating where feasible.

4. Raise its profile by developing strong media links.

*2010 Response*

A re-structuring of academic and central services departments is planned to enable the Institute to respond more effectively to the changing higher education landscape.

Action:

A key element related to this recommendation is the creation of a post of Assistant Registrar with expertise in marketing who will manage and co-ordinate the Institutes marketing and PR activities,

currently in different areas. This will result in a co-ordinated approach in the media to the Institutes wide spectrum of student, academic and development activities.

5. Continue with the Kerry Technology Park/IT Tralee rebranding project.

*2010 Response*

As noted in 2 above, ITT and KTP shared an integrated education and enterprise campus, but with independent ownership of various elements. The ITT/KTP joint working group recognised that an overall brand for the joint enterprise was desirable while maintaining individual identities. The ITT also wished to consider the inclusion of Kerry in its designation. A project to re-brand the entity had progressed satisfactorily but the instigation of Institutional Review, IT, Tralee the Higher Education Review necessitated its deferral pending the outcomes of the review, now expected in July 2010.

Actions:

- Following receipt of the HE review report, ITT will consider the implications in terms of the likely structure of the sector, possible collaborations or mergers, and institution titles;
- ITT will determine its desired positioning in the new HE structure and identify potential partners;
- Assuming a desired outcome is agreed with partners, discussions will be held with HEA to seek approval to implement.

Again, assuming national agreement, plans to implement an agreed outcome will take place. Consideration of the ITT (or new entity) KTP branding will occur in parallel with the above. Clearly, it is not possible to be more definitive at this point.

**Objective 2 - Strategic Planning & Governance**

6. & 7. More strongly reflect its plans on Entrepreneurship in the Strategic Plan

*2010 Response*

The structure of the current Strategic Plan 2008-2013 “Creating our Future” is, as recognised by the panel, built around a model where the plan sets out in broad terms the desired focus and future direction of the Institute, with individual Departments building their plans in alignment with the overall Institute objectives.

As a result, the Institute did not wish to be overly prescriptive in specifying particular areas for attention as it wished the Departments to explore and develop these areas of focus and differentiation.

Over the course of the past few years, the role of the Institute in entrepreneurship development in the region has clearly emerged as an area of academic differentiation along with existing niche areas of agricultural engineering, health and leisure studies, adapted physical activity and the medical commencement programme, among others.

Actions:

The Institute will carry out a mid-term review of the Strategic Plan in the first half of 2011. This will encompass an overall assessment of progress on each of the four goals. As part of the review, the developments and plans for entrepreneurship will be highlighted as a key strategy in supporting the delivery of the overall institutional goals. (Recommendation 8).

In addition, the review will expand on the concept of academic differentiation as recommended in the Institutional Review Report, along with a statement on the niche areas identifier in the first half of the plan. (Recommendation 7).

**Objective 3 – Quality Assurance**

8. Establish an Institute-wide Ethics Committee based on the existing nursing model in place

*2010 Response*

The current Ethics Committee operates within the Department of Nursing and Healthcare Studies and the Department of Social Care and Humanities, as it is these areas that research and project work is particularly sensitive due to the nature of the work and the human interaction issues.

The Institute agrees with the panel that the ethical issues have an Institute-wide dimension.

Actions:

In Academic Year 2010/2011 the Institute will develop an ethics policy with application in the areas of research and project work which will have Institute-wide applicability. At the same time the Institute will explore whether one Institute-wide Ethics Committee or perhaps a number of school/faculty based committees is more effective taking into account the different academic disciplines involved and the potential workload. If more than one committee is utilised, they will operate within a common policy and framework.

9. Investigate why, in spite of wide student communication mechanisms, students do not feel engaged with the Institute. Following this, it should initiate remedial action.

*2010 Response*

The Institute is particularly concerned at this finding and quite surprised to say the least. The Institute has a long and very positive relationship with its students and the Students' Union at all levels of Institute activity including the Governing Body, Academic Council and Student Services Forum, at course level and through the sports and societies programmes. Nevertheless, the Institute will investigate the finding and take all appropriate actions.

Actions:

- Initial consideration of the finding has already taken place with the Students' Union and a factor may have been the concern of a number of students embarking on a fully semesterised programme for the first time having been familiar with the year-long system;
- One or more focus groups will be held with students and class representatives in 2010/11 in order to ascertain any issues relating to the level of engagement by students with the Institute and identify areas for improvement. This will be undertaken in conjunction with the Students' Union;
- An online survey will be developed and all students invited to participate to explore and consider the issues arising from the focus groups;
- The annual online surveys will also be held as is normal practice in the Institute, to ascertain satisfaction levels with key Institute services such as information technology, library and student services;
- A programme of initiatives to address any issues arising from the above will be developed through the student services forum and with the full involvement of the Students' Union.



10. Continue to develop and support the CED as a key instrument in the creation and nurturing of a quality ethos.

*2010 Response*

The Centre for Educational Development was put in place to enhance the quality of teaching and learning in the Institute. Initiatives range from the learning styles assessment administered to all first year students to e-learning support for staff and pedagogic training. The Strategic Innovation Fund has facilitated many developments in this area. The implications of the cuts in budgets and in particular, in the restrictions of staff numbers required by the Employment Control Framework has inevitably and unfortunately impacted on Institute plans in this important area.

Actions:

- The various training initiatives will be evaluated and those deemed most appropriate will be main-streamed through the CPD programme offered across the Institute;
- In co-operation with our partners in the Shannon Consortium (University of Limerick, Limerick IT, and Mary Immaculate College), a shared service model is being developed to deliver pedagogy and other training including post-graduate supervisor and student supports on a shared service basis;
- The contract for staff support for e-learning is being extended to a near full-time basis in 2010/11;
- A Learning Support Tutor for Mature Students has been appointed on a two-year contract;
- A Traveller Community Liaison has been appointed on a two-year contract;
- The post of Assistant Registrar will develop and co-ordinate initiatives in the CED to ensure a more effective platform for delivery across the Institute.

11. Review the assessment protocols in the Quality Assurance manual so that all types of assessment are covered.

*2010 Response*

The Institute agrees with the recommendation that assessment protocols need to be reviewed in order to consider the impacts of full modularisation upon the assessment processes. This matter is currently being considered.

Action:

- Review of the impact of modularisation upon the type, content and amount of assessment across programmes;
- Review the treatment of learning outcome based assessment in relation to assessment strategies and in particular upon repeat assessment strategies;
- Review and revise the relevant sections of the Quality Assurance manual, if appropriate.

12. Ensure that the QA1, 2 and 3 system is promulgated and implemented across the Institute. The system should be used to the best advantage of the data it provides, while recognising that it is nationally agreed and may not be the instrument of first choice.

*2010 Response*

The current quality assurance feedback process is built upon a nationally agreed system of manually-based forms known as QA1 (feedback to lecturer by students), QA2 (summary of QA1 prepared by lecturers for Head of Department) and QA3 (student feedback on programme). There is general

consensus that this system is less than optimum, and, in any event is not operational as the TUI have instructed their members not to participate in same.

Action:

- Assuming the outcome of the national pay agreement is positive and the TUI allow their members to participate the Institute will implement the QA1, QA2 and QA3 system as recommended by the Committee. However, the Institute wishes to record that the current paper-based system results in significant additional work without any obvious benefits and may result in more strategic developmental work being delayed.

13. Build a Business Intelligence capacity to develop tools in order to better exploit the data stored in the Management Information Systems, e.g. develop reports to better inform management and to monitor key performance indicators in the Institute.

*2010 Response*

As part of the enhancement of MIS systems, the Strategic Innovation Fund allowed the first phase of implementation of a Business Intelligence System facilitating 2<sup>nd</sup> generation reporting from the current MIS suite. However, the remaining phases, which would have allowed advanced data and information reporting capability, cannot proceed due to funding cutbacks.

Action:

- Through a programme of training provided through An Chéim familiarise managers and other key users with the capabilities of the recently installed BI system;
- Generate a tailor-made reports providing enhanced management information.

14. Amend the Prospectus presentation to reflect more realistically the structure of the programmes on offer.

*2010 Response*

Action:

Although the Institute feels the information on programme structure provided in the current Prospectus for 2011 entry is appropriate, the Institute will review in detail such information for the 2012 Prospectus and amend any information which might lead to a misunderstanding.

15. Amend its documentation to unequivocally distinguish between the course committee and JAWs (Joint Academic Workshops) approaches to programme monitoring.

*2010 Response*

A number of years ago the Institute decided to facilitate students having a greater input to their programme through involvement in the Course Committee process. Two options have been made available to Course Committees to effect this participation:

- (a) Participation as members on the Course Committee for particular agenda items (e.g. not student progress issues, etc.);

or

- (b) The Head of Department could create a Joint Academic Workshop (JAWs) comprising the Head of Department, class representatives and a small number of academic staff. It was felt the JAWs mechanism was a forum more amenable to open discussion.

Both formats operate across the Institute.

Actions:

- The Institute will review the relevant documentation to ensure the distinction between both formats is clear, as recommended by the Institutional Review panel;
- The Institute plans to adopt one of the two existing formats of the standard method of engagement at programme level.

**Objective 4 – Qualifications Framework, Access, Transfer and Progression**

16. Establish clarity on level of minor awards to align with HETAC guidelines. The level of the minor awards should reflect HETAC guidelines in the establishment of their levels on the framework.

*2010 Response*

Action:

The Institute will carry out a review of the award level specified on its current range of minor and special purpose awards, as recommended by the panel, and ensure the level is reflective of the award.

17. Take steps to further enhance its RPL systems as soon as possible

*2010 Response*

The Institute will, over the next few years, explore other well developed RPL systems such as those developed by Lionra and DEIS in Cork Institute of Technology, and decide upon a best-practice module (Recommendation 17).

18. Take steps to provide opportunities for more of its students to achieve an overseas learning experience

*2010 Response*

**Outbound Student Mobility:**

While the percentage of Students from Ireland and the UK participating in the Erasmus study abroad programme is much lower than that exhibited in the rest of the EU, higher levels of interest and participation have recently become apparent, largely due to two factors. One is the inclusion in the Erasmus programme of grant funding for work placements carried out in other EU countries. More Institute programmes now incorporate work placement as an integral part of the syllabus. The other factor is the changing macroeconomic environment, which appears to be having the effect of broadening student's horizons causing them to consider international study and work options that hadn't been so popular with their peers of the recent past.

**Work Placements:**

Work placement in other EU countries has been identified as an area of growth for outbound student mobility. It is relatively easier to find viable work placement opportunities when compared to study opportunities, as language barriers can be more easily surmounted in a work environment for English language speakers. Over the last two years the Institute has experienced growth in outbound student mobility on work placement in the following academic areas: Nursing; Interactive Multimedia; Early Childhood Learning; Applied Social Studies; Computing.

**Study Overseas:**

Study overseas is a significantly more difficult proposition when compared to work placement as a form of mobility as students need to have a good working knowledge of the language of instruction and this can often be absent. Therefore, it is incumbent on the Institute to source study opportunities where the language of instruction is English. This is becoming more achievable in Business studies and Tourism as we have been able to start identifying partner institutes who deliver appropriate English programmes. Other academic fields will continue to be explored but have yet to yield positive results.

**Actions:**

- Continue to develop and grow existing outbound partnerships will be a key element in the effort to provide more outbound learning opportunities. In Academic Year 2010/2011 and 2011/2012 the following areas have been targeted to develop additional outbound opportunities: Adventure Tourism; Hotel & Resort Tourism; Marketing (when the new programme is implemented); Engineering. When new work placement modules are added to Institute programmes they will be added and targeted for development in this regard;
- Over the course of Academic Years 2010/2011 & 2011/2012 the International office will continue seek to identify and develop links with partner institutes that have suitable programmes where the language of delivery is English. 4 to 6 partners would be sufficient for Business studies with efforts continuing to identify suitable partners for other academic areas;
- The Institute will make a submission to be considered as an intermediary organisation under the EU “Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs” programme. Postgraduate participation in this programme, both inbound and outbound would form another strand in the range of opportunities available for international mobility;
- It is planned to develop 25-40 relationships/exchanges which would be achieved by October 2010.

**Objective 5 – Operation and Management of Delegated Authority**

19. The panel recommends that Delegated Authority granted to Institute of Technology Tralee be continued as provided for in the Qualifications (Education & Training) Act 1999

*2010 Response*

Noted.

**Objective 6 – Recommendations for Enhancement**

20. Proceed with the plans/actions as identified in the SER

*2010 Response*

As part of the Institutional Review self-study, a significant number of enhancements to current processes were identified across the range of activities undertaken by the Institute.

**Actions:**

- The Institute will collate the various plans and actions identified in the SER;
- A project management approach will be adopted to develop a timeline for the implementation of the actions and assign a person responsible for implementation of each action;
- Progress on implementation of the project actions will be monitored by the Executive on a quarterly basis.

21. Endeavour to establish a balanced flow of international exchange students.

*2010 Response*

Growing the number of overseas learning experience opportunities available to the Institutes students will have the effect of balancing the flow of inbound exchange students with more outbound students. Continuing to diversify the makeup of the incoming cohort of students will also contribute to a better balance.

Actions:

- Creating inbound places in academic departments that previously did not participate in exchange, recognising that the number of inbound numbers may be small and will of course be subject to capacity and regulatory restrictions;
- Targeting new Institutes in countries where the Institute has not previously had active partnerships, with a view to increasing the demographic diversity of the inbound student cohort;
- Throughout AY 2010/11 & 2011/12 the Institute will establish inbound mobility to all possible departments throughout the Institute. In the same time frame it is forecast that new partnerships will be created with Institutes in a minimum of 3 to 5 additional countries where productive partnerships have not previously existed.

**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.

Preparation is only now taking place in planning for the upcoming Institutional Cyclical Review.

### **6.3 Themes**

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

The Institutes new Strategic Plan- A Vision to 2012-2017-2021, has identified five key strategic goals and these will be relevant to Institutional Cyclical Review:

- Sustainability and Growth;
- Teaching, Learning and Graduate Readiness;
- Research and Innovation;
- Fellowship and Inclusivity;
- Establishment of the Munster Technological University.