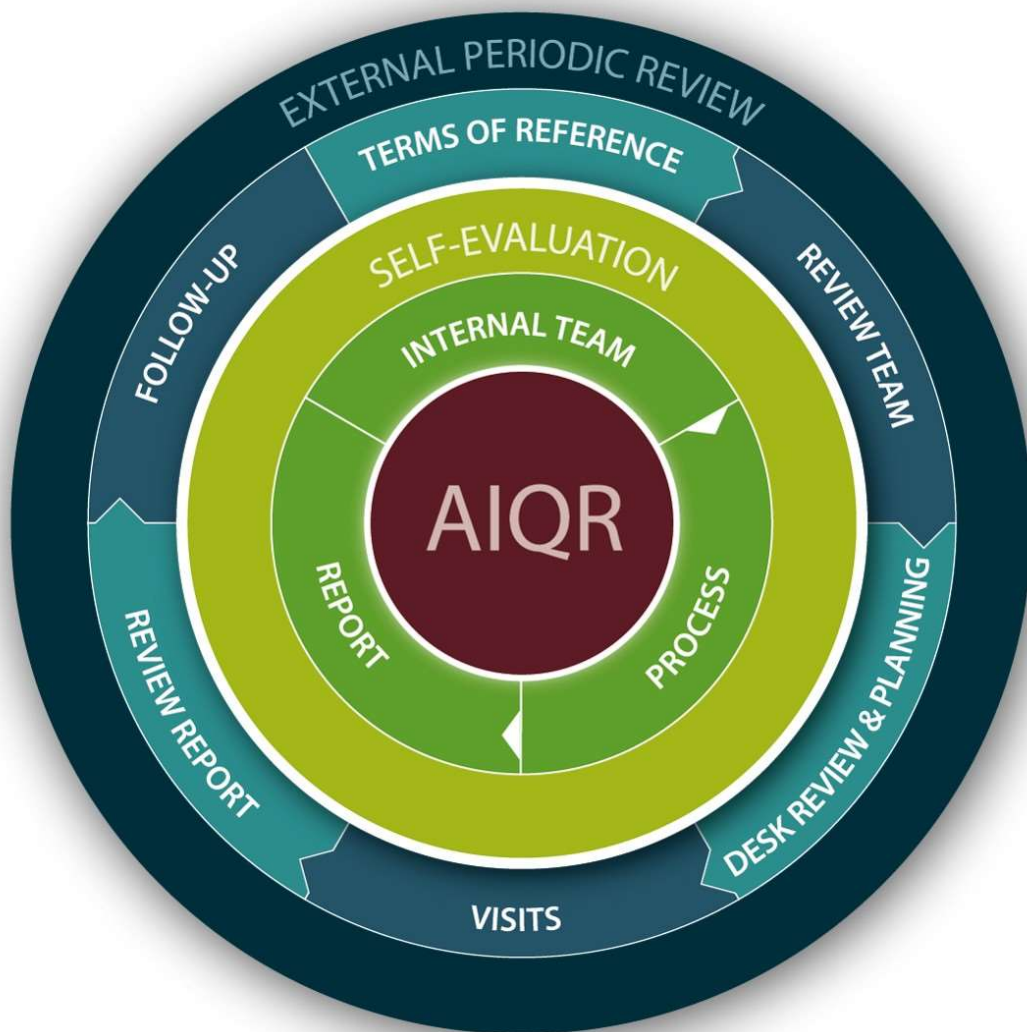# National University of Ireland

Annual Institutional Quality Assurance Report 2020

Based on the reporting period 1 September 2018 – 31 August 2019

The Cyclical Review Process

Part 1:
Overview of internal QA governance, policies and procedures

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

> **1. Overarching Institution Quality Policy**
> A brief synopsis of the overarching institution quality policy which sets out the links between QA policy and procedures and the strategy and strategic management of the institution.

Under its 1908 Charter and Statutes (as amended) the National University of Ireland (NUI) is empowered to recognise colleges of higher education and award degrees and other qualifications in those colleges subject to the University being satisfied that these Colleges so recognised, and the courses they provide, meet appropriate quality standards.[1] The enactment of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012, establishes the NUI as a designated awarding body which reinforces its statutory powers to award its degrees and other qualifications in institutions approved as linked providers.

NUI is responsible for the academic standards of its degrees and other qualifications awarded in the recognised colleges[2]. It will seek to ensure that the quality of the learning experience offered in these institutions is comparable with that offered in the constituent universities so that NUI qualifications awarded are similarly comparable in standard.

NUI's policy and procedures for quality assurance and enhancement are closely aligned with its current Strategic Plan for 2018-22, specifically referencing Strategic Goal 3 which focuses on the strength of the NUI brand – a major objective is to "ensure recognition of the NUI brand in Ireland and internationally as a mark of the highest quality academic standards". As the strategy notes, "*academic quality underpins the NUI brand, which is shared by the constituent universities and the recognised colleges*".

Effective quality assurance is therefore of the highest significance for NUI, since it underpins the University's mission of upholding the value and prestige of NUI qualifications at home and abroad. NUI's overall quality policy is that responsibility for quality lies with recognised colleges themselves, guided by NUI as the awarding body and in line with national policy[3] and European best practice guidelines.

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[1] NUI Statute LXXXVI (Chapter LIX), 'Recognised Colleges'.

[2] A recognised college may be a Designated Awarding Body in its own right e.g. Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI). Where a recognised college does not have this status it is defined by the 2012 Act as a Linked Provider of NUI. A Linked Provider is 'a provider that is not a designated awarding body but enters into an arrangement with a designated awarding body under which arrangement the provider provides a programme of education and training that satisfies all or part of the prerequisites for an award of the designated awarding body'.

[3] More recently, NUI is also guided in this task by the Statutory Guidelines for the Review of Linked Providers by the National University of Ireland, issued by QQI in March 2019.

NUI has a range of QA policies and procedures in place, and is expanding these in order to strengthen our role as a Designated Awarding Body and meet our strategic objectives for the academic quality of our qualifications and for the national and international impact of the NUI brand. NUI's Governing Body, the Senate, receives regular reports on Quality Assurance matters across the recognised colleges, while the Committee of Registrars of the NUI constituent universities provide advice and support on QA matters as and when required.

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

The management of quality assurance arrangements in the recognised colleges is overseen by the Registrar and designated executive staff in NUI, namely the Head of Academic Services and Registry and the Manager for Academic Affairs. The Registrar reports to Senate at its meetings in January, April/May and November on all issues relating to quality assurance in the recognised colleges.

The operational business between NUI and its recognised colleges is conducted through separate committees for each institution. The committees act as the formal mechanism for oversight of strategic, policy and operational issues between NUI and the recognised college, which also includes the management of quality assurance responsibilities in the case of IPA only (as a linked provider).

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.

All new programmes proposed by NUI recognised colleges which lead to NUI qualifications are subject to approval by the NUI Senate. The following core procedural document outlines the approval process and provides guidelines for the submission and review of programmes submitted by recognised colleges and those that are linked providers. The review of new programmes includes independent peer review in line with best practice nationally and internationally.

Publication:
- NUI (2013), *Procedures and Regulations for the Approval of New Programmes and Programmes where there are Major or Minor Changes to the Content and Overall Learning Outcomes*
  http://www.nui.ie/about/pdf/gvrnce_docs/Programme%20Approval%20Regs.pdf

To note: these procedures and guidelines have recently been updated and are due to be published later in 2020.

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.

This is not directly applicable as NUI is not a provider institution and does not offer programmes directly.

However, NUI in its role as a Designated Awarding Body (DAB) would expect a recognised college (as a linked provider) to produce their own policies for the delivery and assessment of programmes leading to NUI qualifications. Some key areas for effective programme delivery and assessment would include curriculum documents, marks and standards, assessment strategy documents, course / examination handbooks for students and appeals procedures.

NUI would seek to be assured that in terms of delivery and assessment methodologies, programmes in the recognised colleges are comparable with similar programmes and practices adopted in the NUI constituent universities. This comparability is further supported by NUI's statutory function to appoint extern examiners to all programmes leading to NUI qualifications in the recognised colleges.

Publication:
- NUI (2019), *NUI Extern Examiners: Primary Degree and Taught Postgraduate Courses in NUI Recognised college*,
  http://www.nui.ie/about/pdf/policy/NUI_Extern_Examiners_Colleges.pdf

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.

This is not directly applicable as NUI is not a provider institution and does not offer research programmes directly to students. In circumstances where the University may be required to advise in such matters, it will have regard to the policies and procedures for research quality adopted in the NUI constituent universities. Again, the University also has a statutory function to appoint extern examiners for research degrees.

These procedures are currently subject to review. NUI will publish updated procedures for external examiners for research degrees later in 2020.

NUI also offers Degrees in Published Work (higher doctorates) which are awarded directly by the University to scholars who have, over a sustained period, published a substantial body of ground-breaking and influential work in a field of specialisation and who have achieved outstanding distinction internationally in that field. The regulations, criteria and guidelines for these degrees are available here:
http://www.nui.ie/college/docs/published_Work_Regs.pdf

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.

This is not directly applicable as NUI is not a provider institution and does not engage with students directly in the course of their studies. However, NUI in its role as a DAB would have an expectation that the quality assurance procedures within a recognised college would extend to cover the entire student lifecycle within the institution. Some key areas would include but are not restricted to the following: admissions processes and procedures (for undergraduate and postgraduate study), supports for students including academic support services, access and progression routes and the recognition of prior learning.

Publication:
- NUI (2013) *Recognition of Prior Learning* (RPL),
  http://www.nui.ie/about/pdf/gvrnce_docs/Recognition%20of%20Prior%20Learning.pdf

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.

NUI has a statutory function to approve 'the competencies of teaching staff in the recognised colleges' which is governed under statute LXXXV1: Chapter LX of the University.[4]

In practical terms, NUI will always seek to be assured that an institution applying for recognised college status will have robust policies and procedures in place for the recruitment of teaching staff. This is part of the application and approval process for an organisation seeking NUI recognised college status.

The University has included this standard across the full range of its policy and procedures documentation from the granting recognised college status to the review and revalidation of programmes leading to NUI degrees and other qualifications.

Publications:
- NUI (2018), *Guidelines for higher education institutions considering an application for NUI Recognised College status*
  http://www.nui.ie/about/pdf/gvrnce_docs/NUI_RC_ProspectiveApplicants.pdf

- NUI (2017), *Policy and Procedures for the Approval of Quality Assurance Procedures in the Recognised Colleges*
  http://www.nui.ie/about/pdf/gvrnce_docs/Procedures_Approval_Quality_Assurance_Procedures_Recognised_Colleges_2018.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.

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.

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[4] The NUI Statutes are not published on the NUI website. For further information contact, registrar@nui.ie.

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.

As mentioned earlier, one of NUI's strategic goals is to focus on the strength of the NUI brand, which is shared by the constituent universities and the recognised colleges. We strive to ensure the highest quality academic standards that underpin all that the NUI brand represents nationally and internationally.

As such, NUI will always seek to be assured that an institution has been granted Recognised college status (as a Linked Provider) will have robust policies and procedures in place for standards in Teaching and Learning, Resources and Support and Information Management. These policies and procedures will be subject to review periodically by NUI as part of the institutional review of a Recognised college. In line with current best practice in Quality Assurance and Enhancement, NUI seeks to assure itself that Information Management is an integral part of an institution's QA policies and procedures.

Publications:
- NUI (2018), *Guidelines for higher education institutions considering an application for NUI Recognised college status*
  http://www.nui.ie/about/pdf/gvrnce_docs/NUI_RC_ProspectiveApplicants.pdf

- NUI (2017), *Policy and Procedures for the Approval of Quality Assurance Procedures in the Recognised Colleges*
  http://www.nui.ie/about/pdf/gvrnce_docs/Procedures_Approval_Quality_Assurance_Procedures_Recognised_Colleges_2018.pdf

Publication pending:

- NUI (2020), *Guidelines for the Institutional Review of Quality Assurance Effectiveness at Recognised Colleges which are Linked Providers*

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.

NUI has an expectation that all programmes offered by a Recognised college and leading to NUI qualifications will be subject to ongoing monitoring by the institution and will be followed by a review periodically. Programmes that have undergone a review successfully with a positive outcome are recommended to Senate for revalidation. This would typically follow the recommended 5-year cycle, particularly in the case of programmes leading to major awards, however, there may be some exceptions to this timeframe for shorter programmes or where programmes (designated as minor or special purpose awards) form part of a major award.

NUI also reflects on the inputs of the extern examiners, appointed by the University, who contribute to the evaluation of programmes offered in the recognised colleges on an annual basis.

Publication:
- NUI (2019), *Guidelines for the Periodic External Review of Programmes Leading to NUI Degrees and Other Qualifications in Recognised Colleges that are also Linked Providers of NUI*
  http://www.nui.ie/about/pdf/gvrnce_docs/NUI_Guidelines_External_Review.pdf

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.

NUI is a unique entity within the Irish higher education landscape. During its long history and taking into account its size and structure, it has always actively engaged with a broad range of stakeholders, most notably its broad range of member institutions. Regular dialogue between the senior personnel of the NUI constituent universities and recognised colleges is essential to the delivery of all of NUI's functions and services. Senate sub-committees tend to draw their expertise from NUI member institutions which are also available to support the University with its responsibilities in relation to its quality assurance provision.

Panels have been convened to review the QA provision in recognised colleges, the review of programmes leading to NUI degrees (particularly in cases where collaborative provision is proposed). In the selection of a panel, care is taken to ensure representation from a range of stakeholders including but not limited to the NUI constituent universities, recognised colleges, the wider Irish university sector, Irish higher education state bodies or lobby groups, International experts, employment & regulatory bodies and the student body.

NUI also engages regularly with external examiners, appointed by the University, to review educational programmes leading to the award of NUI degrees and other qualifications.

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).

Following the conferring of medical degrees (MB BCh BAO) in both RCSI (as a Recognised college) and in 3 of the NUI Constituent Universities (UCD, UCC, NUI Galway), sealed lists of the medical graduates are sent by NUI to the Irish Medical Council and the General Medical Council in the UK. The sealed lists of Dental Graduates are also sent to the Dental Council of Ireland post conferring. This only applies to UCC as the sole NUI institution to offer dentistry.

Other links with professional, statutory and regulatory bodies and other quality assurance and awarding bodies are typically determined on a case by case depending on the nature of the engagement. While there is currently no central policy to cover these types of engagement, NUI is of course aware of the wide-ranging relationships in play between the Schools and Departments of the constituent universities and recognised colleges and professional and regulatory bodies in Ireland and overseas.

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.

NUI operates a website which is updated on a daily basis.

As a service provider to graduates, as well as to prospective students of any of the NUI institutions (via the NUI Matriculation exemptions policy), NUI's information must be clear and accessible. NUI also enjoys a constitutional role with regard to the NUI electoral register for Seanad Éireann. The register is a public document and it is imperative that it is as up to date as possible, at any given time. NUI's Senior Management Team includes the Head of ICT and the Head of Academic Services & Registry, both of whom have responsibilities for the register itself and its security. NUI's Senate (Governing Body) has an Audit & Risk sub-committee, which has data-management and security as a regular feature on the agenda.

NUI's internal culture is to prioritise the accuracy of information that we make accessible to our users, and to the public generally. We have a published Web privacy policy and a published Data Protection policy on our website home page.

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.

The conditions for Recognised colleges (linked providers) as set out by Senate are governed under statute LXXXV1: Chapter LIX.

Publications:

- QQI (2019), *Statutory Guidelines for the Review of Linked Providers by the National University of Ireland (NUI)*
  http://www.nui.ie/about/pdf/gvrnce_docs/Statutory_Guidelines_for_the_Review_of_Linked_Providers_by_the_NUI.pdf

- NUI (2018), *Guidelines for higher education institutions considering an application for NUI Recognised College status*

http://www.nui.ie/about/pdf/gvrnce_docs/NUI_RC_ProspectiveApplicants.pdf

- NUI (2017), *Policy and Procedures for the Approval of Quality Assurance Procedures in the Recognised Colleges*
  http://www.nui.ie/about/pdf/gvrnce_docs/Procedures_Approval_Quality_Assurance_Procedures_Recognised_Colleges_2018.pdf

- NUI (2019), *Guidelines for the Periodic External Review of Programmes Leading to NUI Degrees and Other Qualifications in Recognised colleges that are also Linked Providers of NUI*
  http://www.nui.ie/about/pdf/gvrnce_docs/NUI_Guidelines_External_Review.pdf

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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.

NUI has approved a range of programmes in Recognised colleges where there is engagement with third parties. These are governed under the following policies, procedures and guidelines.

Publications:
- NUI (2013), *Procedures and Regulations for the Approval of New Programmes and Programmes where there are Major or Minor Changes to the Content and Overall Learning Outcomes*
  http://www.nui.ie/about/pdf/gvrnce_docs/Programme%20Approval%20Regs.pdf

- NUI (2013), *Quality Assurance for Collaborative and Transnational Provision of Academic Programmes Leading to NUI Qualifications,*
  http://www.nui.ie/about/pdf/gvrnce_docs/Collaborative%20&%20Transnational.pdf

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

Nothing to report

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

NUI's first institutional review as a DAB under the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 is scheduled to take place in Q4, 2022. Notwithstanding, NUI's responsibilities in respect of its recognised colleges, consideration is now being given to other areas within the University that should also be included in the review. As part of the preparation for external institutional review, under the CINNTE Review Cycle, an internal review schedule will be drawn up, whereby all relevant functional areas self-assess and self-evaluate their service-provision, and seek external feedback. A formalised internal review schedule will be available later in 2020.

Currently, NUI is working with its recognised colleges/linked providers, under NUI guidelines, to prepare for:
- periodic, external programmatic reviews
- Institutional Review of a Linked Provider

Publication:

- NUI (2019), *Guidelines for the Periodic External Review of Programmes Leading to NUI Degrees and Other Qualifications in Recognised Colleges that are also Linked Providers of NUI*,
http://www.nui.ie/about/pdf/gvrnce_docs/NUI_Guidelines_External_Review.pdf

Publication pending:

- NUI (2020), *Guidelines for the Institutional Review of Quality Assurance Effectiveness at Recognised Colleges which are Linked Providers*

18. Engagement with Third Parties Section

Details of engagement with third parties, including:
1. Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies
2. Collaborative Provision
3. Articulation Agreements

1. Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies

Type of Arrangement	Total Number
PRSBs	3
Awarding Bodies	0
QA Bodies	0

First Type of Arrangement (PRSB/Awarding Body/QA Body):	PRSB
Name of Body:	Irish Medical Council https://www.medicalcouncil.ie/
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	• Honours Degrees of Bachelor of Medicine • Bachelor of Surgery and • Bachelor of Obstetrics • MB, BCh, BAO *(Hons)*
Date of Accreditation or Last Review	*Information available directly from relevant NUI constituent universities and RCSI*
Next Review Year	-

Second Type of Arrangement (PRSB/Awarding Body/QA Body):	PRSB
Name of Body:	General Medical Council, UK https://www.gmc-uk.org/
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	Honours Degrees of Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery and Bachelor of Obstetrics (*MB, BCh, BAO Hons*)
Date of Accreditation or Last Review	*Information available directly from relevant NUI constituent universities and RCSI*
Next Review Year	-

Third Type of Arrangement (PRSB/Awarding Body/QA Body):	PRSB
Name of Body:	Dental Council of Ireland http://www.dentalcouncil.ie/
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	Honours Degree of Bachelor of Dental Surgery *(BDS Hons)*
Date of Accreditation or Last Review	*Information available directly from UCC*
Next Review Year	-

Parts 2-6

Institution-led QA – Annual Information

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

Part 2: Institution-led QA – Annual

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

Section 1: Quality Assurance and Enhancement System Developments

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

NUI launched its Strategic Plan 2018 – 22 on 8 November 2018. One of the main goals outlined for the next 5-year period is to continue to 'develop and capitalise on the NUI brand nationally and internationally, for the benefit of members and the wider sector'. Focusing on the strength of the NUI brand, a major objective is to "ensure recognition of the NUI brand in Ireland and internationally as a mark of the highest quality academic standards". As the strategy notes, "*academic quality underpins the NUI brand, which is shared by the constituent universities and the recognised colleges*".

A key focus of this goal is to further develop policies, procedures and guidelines in support of NUI's role as the Designated Awarding Body (DAB) for NUI degrees and other qualifications in the recognised colleges.

During the current reporting phase, NUI has updated and developed a number of policy and procedural documents relating to its own quality assurance provision and published a range of quality assurance and enhancement guidelines for NUI recognised colleges that are also linked providers.

In particular, NUI has been heavily engaged with the Institute of Public Administration (IPA)[1] as a new linked provider having regard to our enhanced statutory responsibilities for quality assurance under the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012. These activities are aligned with NUI's strategy to ensure recognition of the NUI brand as a mark of the highest academic quality.

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[1] The Institute of Public Administration (IPA) was approved as a Recognised College by NUI Senate from September 2018. Previously, IPA had been a Recognised College of University College Dublin (2011 – 2018) and a Recognised College of NUI (2001 – 2011).

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

There have been no significant changes to NUI's fundamental approach to quality assurance within the reporting period. Recognised colleges continue to have responsibility for their own quality assurance and NUI as their DAB provides support and oversight through a range of policies and guidelines. These have been expanded and strengthened during the reporting period.

1.3 The schedule of QA governance meetings.

Schedule of QA governance meetings for 2018-19:

NUI Senate meetings:
8 November 2018
17 January 2019
9 May 2019

NUI-IPA Committee Meetings:
27 November 2018
26 March 2019

NUI-RCSI Committee Meetings:
15 November 2018
14 May 2019

Section 2: Reviews in the reporting period

2.1 Internal reviews that were completed in the reporting period.

NUI has no 'internal reviews' of specific areas or units within the organisation to report during this period. An internal review schedule is currently under review and will be available later in 2020.

However, there are a number of reviews that have taken place in NUI Recognised colleges/Linked Providers, under NUI guidelines, in particular:

- Preparation for and scheduling of a periodic, external review of the BA Hons suite of programmes in the IPA. A site visit is scheduled for March 2020.
- Programmatic reviews in RCSI[2] during the reporting period.

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

Number of new **Programme Validations/Programme Approvals** completed in the reporting year	5
Number of **Programme Reviews** completed in the reporting year	1
Number of **Research Reviews** completed in the reporting year	0
Number of **School/Department/Faculty Reviews** completed in the reporting year	N/A
Number of **Service Unit Reviews** completed in the reporting year	N/A
Number of **Reviews of Arrangements with partner organisations** completed in the reporting year	0

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[2] NUI does not have a role in relation to the monitoring and reporting on QA unit reviews within RCSI. The RCSI is accountable to QQI directly for its internal QA reviews, the exception being its periodic programme reviews, where NUI does have a role given that academic programmes leading to NUI qualifications must be revalidated by NUI Senate following the review.

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

There is nothing to report in this reporting period.

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.

As NUI is not a provider institution, it does not directly manage the learning experience of students registered on programmes leading to NUI degrees and other qualifications. This responsibility lies principally with the NUI Recognised colleges who offer the programmes.

NUI Recognised colleges use extensive student feedback data and external examiner data to support their overall quality assurance provision and as part of all programme reviews.

In terms of qualifications directly awarded by NUI, it may be noted that in 2019 NUI undertook a benchmarking study comparing its regulations on higher doctorates with those of nine leading universities internationally, using the findings to enhance NUI practice in this area.

Publication:
- NUI (2018), *Regulations, Criteria, Guidelines and Application Procedures: Degrees on Published Work awarded by the National University of Ireland,* http://www.nui.ie/college/docs/published_Work_Regs.pdf

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

The re-affiliation of IPA to NUI, as a recognised college and linked provider, has had a major impact on quality and quality assurance in this period and has accelerated the development of a range of procedures and guidelines during this period. While the QA documents listed below were developed during the reporting period, they were subsequently published later in 2019 / 2020.

They have been included here for information.

Publications:
- QQI (2019), *Statutory Guidelines for the Review of Linked Providers by the National University of Ireland (NUI),* http://www.nui.ie/about/pdf/gvrnce_docs/Statutory_Guidelines_for_the_Review_of_Linked_Providers_by_the_NUI.pdf

- NUI (2019) *Guidelines for the Periodic External Review of Programmes Leading to NUI Degrees and Other Qualifications in Recognised Colleges that are also Linked Providers of NUI*
  http://www.nui.ie/about/pdf/gvrnce_docs/NUI_Guidelines_External_Review.pdf

Publications pending:
- NUI (2020), *Guidelines for the Institutional Review of Quality Assurance Effectiveness at Recognised Colleges which are Linked Providers*

NUI (2020), *The Quality Assurance Relationship between the National University of Ireland and the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland – University of Medicine and Health Sciences*

3.3 A description of other implementation issues.

NUI's position as a DAB, but not a provider of higher education, is unique in the Irish higher education system. This has implications for the implementation of quality assurance as NUI is focussed on supporting its Recognised colleges, particularly IPA as a Linked Provider, by seeking to uphold quality standards comparable with those of the NUI constituent universities.

Therefore, in terms of implementation, NUI's relationships with the quality officers in the constituent universities are important and enable the University to support the recognised colleges more effectively so that equivalent quality provision and enhancement practices are reflected more widely. NUI also draws on national and international expertise and standards of good practice.

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.

Programme approval, which forms part of the overall QA framework, is ongoing and NUI's procedures appear to be working well in terms of enabling expert peer review to influence new programme design and delivery. Programmes are monitored on an annual basis by NUI-appointed external examiners and are subject to periodic review by the recognised college. At each stage, the outcomes are reported to Senate.

At this time, it is difficult to assess the overall effectiveness of recently updated NUI QA policies and procedures for this reporting period as they have yet to be tested by a recognised college. The review of IPA's BA Hons programme is scheduled for Q1 of 2020 and will be followed by its institutional review in 2020/21. A more detailed commentary on the effectiveness of new QA policies and procedures will be available at this time and will be included in NUI's ISER.

The benchmarking study carried out of NUI's policies and procedures governing higher doctorates, mentioned at 3.1 above, provided evidence of a high degree of comparability between NUI's requirements, criteria and structures and those of nine leading universities making similar awards.

NUI staff in this area are also a source of expertise for RCSI and IPA personnel.

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

Further evidence relating to IPA, as a linked provider, is not available at this time but should be available for the next reporting period. It is useful to note that the submission of reports on an annual basis by NUI-appointed extern examiners also provides useful inputs into internal reviews within the recognised colleges and contributes to recommendations for any changes in policy and enhancements of practice.

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

There is no update for this reporting period. However, as mentioned in part 1, with the upcoming institutional review in IPA, scheduled in 2021, it is expected that a number of themes will emerge, and these reviewed closely by NUI to better inform and update the existing QA policies and procedures.

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.

Through the NUI – IPA and NUI – RCSI governance structures improvements and enhancements to quality within the recognised colleges were noted e.g. IPA reported enhancement of its learner feedback system during the reporting period.

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.

NUI's published policy guidelines for programme reviews in linked providers were developed to facilitate a broad range of institution types, taking into consideration the main business area and professional, regulatory or statutory requirements. These are guidelines that may be informative to other DABs in the Irish higher education sector.

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 2018 – 31 August 2019).

5.1 Quality Assurance and Enhancement System Plans
Plans for quality assurance and quality enhancement relating to strategic objectives for the next reporting period.

The main focus for NUI in the next reporting period 2019-20, based on its current strategic objectives, will be to:
- assist IPA with the programmatic review of their BA programme and use these outputs to update and enhance NUI policy and procedures in this area.
- await the outcome of RCSI scheduled programmatic reviews and consider the findings and recommendations of the reports submitted.
- finalise arrangements, including the terms of reference, for the institutional effectiveness review of IPA in 2020-21.

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.

During the forthcoming reporting period NUI will be putting preliminary plans in place for IPA's institutional review in 2021. A Chair for the Panel has been confirmed and work is ongoing to complete the membership of the Panel by Q3, 2020. NUI is currently working with IPA to finalise the terms of reference before the next meeting of Senate in May 2020.

It will also be engaging in internal preparations for its ISER scheduled institutional review in 2022/23. The primary focus will be on self-reflection and organising a range of self-evaluation activities in the reporting period during the 2020-21 period.

5.3 Other Plans

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There is nothing further to report here.

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.

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.

There is nothing to report at this time for sections 6.1 and 6.2, however, there will be more detail regarding the plans and preparations for NUI's first external review to convey in the next reporting period.

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

In 2022/23, NUI will undertake its first external institutional review under the CINNTE Cycle. While preliminary preparations are underway for an internal review of some key areas, other developmental themes of importance will be determined in conjunction and consultation with other NUI member institutions and with QQI during 2020/21. NUI will be seeking to determine what themes are relevant for the ISER and the terms of reference for the CINNTE Review. This will tie in with the mid-term review and assessment of NUI's current strategic plan 2018-22. The uniqueness of NUI as a DAB, but not a provider institution, will have some impact on the terms of reference of the review. It is important for NUI that the effectiveness of the QA provision in the University can be appropriately examined and benchmarked.