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.

Continuous improvement to the quality of all activities across NUI Galway is the responsibility of every member of staff through their own individual efforts and through various organisational committees and units. Staff are guided in this endeavour through three key external standards:

- Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines
- Sector Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines for Designated Awarding Bodies
- Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area

In addition, staff activities are guided by a number of additional external guidelines published by Quality and Qualification Ireland (QQI) and other bodies including IHEQN and the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education.

Continuous improvement by all staff to improving quality is also guided by the University’s Vision 2020 Strategic Plan that outlines specific goals for quality and performance enhancement and also by performance compacts and higher education landscape initiatives with the Higher Education Authority (HEA).

NUI Galway implements external standards and guidelines through a comprehensive QA system focussed on over 250 internal Policies and Procedures (P&Ps) and that includes specific P&Ps around internal monitoring and Quality Reviews (QRs). QA is also implemented through a comprehensive annual Operational Planning process linked to Strategic Planning.

An extensive number of internal statutes and organisational structures also define the role, duties and responsibilities of key organisational units and committees and the responsibilities of key individual staff.

NUI Galway manages the competing needs of external regulations, internal strategic objectives and risk management through the enhancement of a responsive culture characterised by a willingness by staff to engage with stakeholders including learners in a way that responds to their needs for continuous improvement to quality.
**Documented Approach**

The University has adopted a policy for documenting all policies and procedures. All major policies, procedures, regulations and guidelines (hereinafter termed P&Ps) are made available by various units across the University and guide the behaviour of University staff and students when implementing key University processes. P&Ps are typically documents but may also be manuals, webpages and forms. P&Ps should reflect best practice in the higher education sector and should be written using simple and accessible language for end users. All University P&Ps must be periodically reviewed, and if necessary revised, at least once every seven years.

All University P&Ps must be coded and indexed in the University’s P&P Repository available in the Quality Office website. Additional policies and procedures related to this heading and available from the P&P Repository include:

- QA001 Quality Assurance
- QA002 Policies and Procedures
- P&P Repository
- Quality Office Website

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**2. Quality assurance decision-making fora**

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

The University’s governance structure enforces separation of responsibilities between developers and approvers and their terms of references are known through long-established practice and where appropriate, documented and published.

Decisions around the development and continuous improvement to all internal Policies and Procedures (P&Ps) including those related to internal monitoring and Quality Review (QR) are taken at a number of major committees and meetings. These are led by the Governing Authority (Údarás) and its principle sub-committees that include Academic Council and the Support Services Committee representing all Support Services and the University Management Team (UMT). Decisions around development and changes to P&Ps related to academic activities are taken mainly by the University Management Team (UMT) which now includes Deans of College, the Dean of Graduate Studies, the Academic Secretary and the Director of Human Resources.

Decisions around P&Ps related to internal monitoring and Quality Review (QR) are taken by the Quality & Innovation Committee (QIC) which reports to Údarás through key committees in particular, the Support Services Committee (SSC); Academic Priorities and Resources Committee (APRC) and Academic Council (AC). The Quality Office is responsible for executing P&Ps related to internal monitoring and QR and for supporting all units in the development of internal P&Ps.
Both Údarás and the Academic Council have a number of other key subcommittees that discuss quality improvement on various aspects of the University’s processes and typically meet immediately prior to the meetings noted above and more frequently, as required. These subcommittees are:

- Colleges and School Boards
- Graduate Studies Board
- Research Committee
- Standing and Strategic Planning Committee
- Academic Council - Standing
- Finance and Resources Committee
- Risk Management Committee
- Library Strategy Committee

Quality assurance and enhancement is also covered through the operational planning process where every major unit in the University – Schools, Colleges and Support Services – annually provide details of completed and planned enhancements to members of the UMT.

Learners are represented on all major committees dealing with quality and quality assurance and liaise directly with the University through the committees above and also through the Office of the 

**Vice President for the Student Experience.** In Q1 2019, a new Dean of Students will be appointed, to assume many of the duties of the now retired Vice-President for Student Experience. The Dean of Students will report directly to the Registrar and Deputy-President.

NUI Galway staff also meet regularly with counterparts from other Universities through the **Irish Universities Association (IUA) Quality Committee** to discuss P&Ps across the sector and also with various external stakeholders, in particular, the **Higher Education Authority (HEA), IUA and Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI).** These meetings inform NUI Galway’s key decision-making processes.

NUI Galway has a comprehensive documented approach to Quality Assurance (QA) illustrated initially through its **P&P Repository** and an archive of meeting minutes and records accessible via the **Quality Office website.**

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**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.

NUI Galway’s teaching mission is delivered through taught programmes at **undergraduate**, **postgraduate** and **professional, part-time and evening** levels.
All programmes undergo a comprehensive and rigorous design and approval process. Schools and Colleges prepare **programme and module templates** that include programme objectives, learning outcomes, progression rules, and student workloads (ECTS) and that are compliant with the **National Framework for Qualifications**. All programmes must also have **Programme Boards** who consult various stakeholders including employers and students when designing, revising or evaluating programmes.

NUI Galway’s **Vision 2020** Strategic Plan requires that all new programmes contain **placement opportunities** for students and that these opportunities be provided to appropriate existing programmes by 2020.

Programme approval begins within individual Schools before proceeding to approval by **College Boards**. Then requests for new programmes are considered by Academic Council’s Academic Standing Committee which puts forward its recommendations for consideration by Academic Council. This process separates responsibilities between proposers and approvers and provides oversight by senior officers of the programme design and approval process.

Uniform System of Undergraduate and Postgraduate Programme Weightings have been applied since the AY 2012/2013 – a policy document agreed by Academic Standing Committee (in June 2012) outlines the award, duration, ECTS, NQAI and level (Major or Minor).

P&Ps are largely implemented through committee work as well as a number of online systems (e.g. **AKARI**) and other forms available from NUI Galway’s **Syllabus Team**. Detailed **programme outlines** are available to the public through the main University website.

All programmes undergo annual review through **Programme Boards** and **External Examination** process and periodic review through the **Quality Review** process. **New and major changes** to programmes are available on the Quality Office website.

A sample of additional policies and procedures related to this heading and available from the **P&P Repository** include:

- General Calendar
- Bologna & NFQ Standards and Guidelines
- Course Fee Establishment
- Module Bonding
- New & Changed Modules
- New & Changed Programmes
- General and Academic Calendars

**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.
Programme assessment is dealt with through a variety of Policies and Procedures (P&Ps) and in particular NUI Galway’s [Marks and Standards](#) and the Learning, Teaching & Assessment Strategy (LTA Strategy) supported by the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT). The Examinations Office provide a number of P&Ps related to examinations, re-checks and special circumstances. Local policies and procedures for assessment exist at the College/School or Programme level.

The LTA strategy and associated P&Ps describe how staff engage with the following:

- Bologna Process
- Assessment
- Attendance Requirements

Teachers are made aware of a variety of assessment methods and receive support from CELT through a range of professional development courses and personal advice. This guidance includes marking criteria, formative assessment and assessment rubrics.

NUI Galway offers all students the possibility to inform examiners of mitigating circumstances during the assessment process and to appeal results of the assessment process.

All programmes have marks and standards set up against them. These marks and standards ensure the same process and rules apply to all students within their programme.

Quality assurance and enhancement of academic standards is provided to the assessment process through annual international peer review. External Examiners play a vital role in assuring and enhancing academic standards of modules, programmes and awards. Although primarily involved in the review of assessment grades and standards, External Examiners also provide an important consultative and advisory function in the development of modules and programmes and the enhancement of teaching, learning and assessment practices.

External Examiners review samples of exam scripts to ensure marking is in line with their expectations. All programmes go before Examination Boards, chaired by the Dean of College with representatives from the College in attendance also.

The Examination Board determines the progression of students. Students who have a concern about their results can apply to recheck or appeal their examination results.

A sample of additional P&Ps related to this heading from the P&P Repository include:

- QA228 Undergraduate Marks and Standards
- QA236 Postgraduate Marks and Standards
- QA235 Procedure for the Discussion, Checking and Appeal of Examination Results
- QA005 External Examiners – Taught Programmes Policy
- QA230 Procedures for dealing with breaches of Examination Regulations
- QA248 Holders of QQI Qualification – Policy for the selection of QQI applicants to the University’s degree programmes
- QA254 Occasional Students – Policy for students who wish to study specific modules for a semester or two
• QA228 Undergraduate Marks and Standards – Governs undergraduate student progression
• QA236 Postgraduate Marks and Standards - Governs postgraduate student progression

Other related external policies and procedures include:

• QQI Policy and Criteria for Facilitating the Academic Recognition of Foreign Qualifications
• CAO Leaving Certificate Grading Scale and Revised Common Points Scale
• Agreed CAO entry requirements criteria for WU/EFTA Applicants, CAO Handbook
• NUI Matriculation requirements; Information on MSAP – Mature Student Application Process
• HEAR Scheme - scheme that offers places on reduced points and extra college support to school leavers from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds who are resident in the Republic of Ireland
• DARE Scheme- Scheme that offers places for those who have a disability, have experienced additional educational challenges in second level education.
• HPAT – Medicine Entry Admissions Test
• Diploma Supplement – European Standard transcript
• The National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning - Principles of Assessment OF/FOR/AS Learning

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.

Research and innovation is an integral pillar of NUI Galway’s Strategy 2015-2020 and the University places a strong emphasis on quality impactful research and the quality of training provided to researchers. The standards and guidelines above are reflected in our Policies and Procedures and post-graduate research programmes.

The post of Dean of Graduate Studies and the Graduate Studies Office were established in 2008, with the objective of enhancing postgraduate research in the University. The Graduate Studies Board considers all research degree programmes, and changes to the University Guidelines for Research Degree Programmes and makes recommendations to the Standing Committee of Academic Council. From Autumn 2018 this board previously chaired by the Registrar and Deputy President will be chaired by the Dean of Graduate Studies.

The Research Office, Graduate Studies and Technology Transfer teams provide a variety of P&Ps for all aspects of NUI Galway’s research activities. These P&Ps include codes of practice for research degree programmes, good practice in research, intellectual property, governance and open access.

A key mechanism in the implementation and evaluation of quality research is the Institutional Review of Research Performance (IRRP). The overall aim of the current IRRP cycle (IRRP2016) is to enhance research performance at NUI Galway and to comply with the Irish Universities Act for a peer review of research quality.
Research activity takes place within Schools and Colleges of the University and through Research Institutes/Centres. Every Researcher (academic, contract researcher, PhD student) is aligned to a School. Research Institutes or Centres have a primary affiliation with a College or School and are not stand alone entities. Therefore, in all instances, a reporting relationship exists between a Research Institute or Centre and a College or School, and the reporting line is Principal Investigator (PI), Head of School, Dean of College and President. In December 2018, Údarás na hOllscoile adopted the recommendation from Academic Planning and Resource Committee (APRC), to approve NUI Galway’s Research Integrity Policy. This Policy is aligned to the revised European Code for Research Integrity. As well as revised changes to the relevant national policy, it outlines the procedure for dealing with allegations of research misconduct, and for the first time, in an NUI Galway Policy, defines the role of the Research Integrity Officer in dealing with such allegations. On an annual basis, and through the IUA and the National Research Integrity Forum, NUI Galway reports statistics relating to allegations of research misconduct. Furthermore, through its recently established, Researcher Development Centre, NUI Galway is in the process of providing Research Integrity Training to all researchers, across the Research Career lifecycle.

The NUI Galway institutional Research Committee reports to Academic Planning and Resource Committee (APRC) of Údarás na hOllscoile and is tasked with advising APRC on the implementation of the University’s Research Strategy as embodied in the University’s Strategic Plan. A key objective of Research Committee is to keep under review, policies on research matters and address short comings and anomalies so as to facilitate quality research activities within the University. Each College is represented on the Committee by a Vice-Dean for Research and each Research Institute is represented by the Director of the Research Institute. Each College has in place its own Research Committee, chaired by the Vice-Dean for Research. The review of the Policy on the Governance and Management of Research Institutes is underway at present. This Policy a framework for the approval, and governance and management of NUI Galway’s six Research Institutes and details the role and composition of an Institute Advisory Board, an Institute-University Board, and an Institute Executive Management Team.

The Research Ethics Committee is responsible for safeguarding the health, welfare, and rights of human subjects and researchers in research studies, and to afford dignity to the handling and treatment of biological materials, taking into account the scientific procedures and concerns of the local community. The Animal Care Research Ethics Committee is responsible for facilitating compliance with relevant legislation, ensuring that NUI Galway operates to best international standards in any research or teaching involving live animals. Both of these committees are administered through the Research Office.

The Research Office is responsible for verifying eligibility for funder programmes at the pre-proposal stage and endorsing applications for submission to external funders. The Office of the Vice-President for Research is also responsible for reviewing and accepting contracts and initiating the set-up of research accounts. To ensure that all research projects are fully costed, NUI Galway has in place an approved requirement that all budget requests in excess of €50K must be reviewed and approved by the Research Accounts Office prior to submission to the funder. At present, Financial management of research activity is covered under the NUI Galway Financial Policy & Procedures Manual for Contract Research (2003). The PI is responsible for the technical and scientific delivery of a research project and the budget holder has fiduciary responsibility.
For the most part, the external funder has an important role in the oversight of research activity and through the PI, the University, is contractually bound for the effective and compliant management of the research grant. In meeting the contractual commitments and technical and financial reporting requirements, the PI is supported by the Research Office, the Research Accounts Office, the Technology Transfer Office (TTO), the Procurement Office, Human Resources and other units. Controls in place to ensure project delivery and the overall quality of the research include project oversight or steering groups with funder representatives, Governance Committees, and rigorous financial audits.

The Technology Transfer Office is responsible for the management of the University’s Intellectual Property (IP) and for all negotiations, evaluation, marketing, licensing, assignment and disposal of this IP. The TTO is also responsible, together with the Secretary of the University for assessing cases under the *Conflict of Interest and Conflicts of Commitments* Policy. In 2017, NUI Galway contributed to the HEA-commissioned review of Intellectual Property Management and Conflicts of Interest.

A sample of additional P&Ps related to this heading from the [P&P Repository](#):

- Code of Good Practice in Research
- Code of Policy and Procedures for Investigating Allegations of Research Misconduct
- QA506 Governance and Management of Research Institutes
- Financial Policy and Procedures Manual Contract Research
- QA512 Research Ethics Committee
- QA500 Animal Care Research Ethics Committee
- QA413 Conflict of Interests and Conflict of Committees
- QA507 Intellectual Property Policy
- Budget sign off
- QA505 University Guidelines for Research Degree Programmes
- QQI Statutory QA Guidelines for Research Degree programmes
- National Framework for Doctoral Education
- National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland
- Inspiring Partnerships – the National IP (Intellectual Property) Protocol Data Management Policy

### 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.

Students can access NUI Galway programmes of learning through a variety of means administered by the Admissions Offices. These include: Leaving Certificate; A Levels, EU & EFTA, Non-EU, International, and Medicine. Access is also provided to Irish, UK and EU/EEA Transfers, Advanced Entry, FETAC, International/Non-EU and Mature Students. All admissions are overseen and approved by senior academic staff mainly through School committees and later approved by University management.
Extensive use is made of the National Academic Recognition Information Centre (NARIC) for assessing applicants coming from outside the Irish education system.

Student access and progression is dealt with through the following key offices that implement a variety of related Policies and Procedures (P&Ps):

- Academic Records, Conferring, & Registration
- Access Office
- Undergraduate Admissions Office
- International Affairs Office
- Postgraduate Admissions Office

Learner admission, progression and recognition

A sample of additional external standards and guidelines and internal processes and documented P&Ps related to this heading from the P&P Repository include:

- QQI Policy on Access Transfer and Progression
- QQI Policy and Criteria for Facilitating the Academic Recognition of Foreign Qualifications
- FAIR Report: Focus on Automatic Institutional Recognition
- CAO Leaving Certificate Grading Scale and Revised Common Points Scale
- Agreed CAO entry requirements criteria for WU/EFTA Applicants, CAO Handbook
- NUI Matriculation requirements
- Information on MSAP – Mature Student Application Process
- HEAR Scheme - scheme that offers places on reduced points and extra college support to school leavers from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds who are resident in the Republic of Ireland.
- DARE Scheme- Scheme that offers places for those who have a disability, have experienced additional educational challenges in second level education.
- HPAT – Medicine Entry Admissions Test
- Diploma Supplement – European Standard transcript
- QA248 Holders of QQI Qualification – Policy for the selection of QQI applicants to the University’s degree programmes
- QA254 Occasional Students – Policy for students who wish to study specific modules for a semester or two
- QA228 Undergraduate Marks and Standards – Governs undergraduate student progression
- QA236 Postgraduate Marks and Standards - Governs postgraduate student progression
- Recognition of Prior Learning
- Student Code of Conduct
- Scholarships & Fellowships
- Student Attendance
- Guidelines for Work Placement
- Access & Disability
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.

Human Resources (HR) and the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) have developed a comprehensive range of P&Ps for all aspects of teaching and research throughout the employment lifecycle of teaching staff.

HR has developed many P&Ps that support staff from starting employment to staff development and on to end of employment.

In addition, CELT offer staff a number of P&Ps that support learning, teaching and assessment. An Academic Practice Framework has been developed within which modules and qualifications provided by CELT are situated. This offers a range of modules which can either be taken on a 'standalone' basis or combined to build up a series of professional, postgraduate qualifications.

The National Forum’s National Professional Development Framework for all Staff who Teaching in Higher Education in Ireland is being adopted for continuous professional development for staff, through CELT.

The President’s Awards for Excellence in Teaching recognises outstanding efforts of teaching staff to ensure NUI Galway students receive the highest quality learning experience. The scheme is under review in 2018 with a view to launching a new scheme for academic year 2018/19.

CELT is lead partner on the Crannóg project, which aims to support the professional development of those colleagues in leadership roles such as Head of School, Dean, etc. focusing on aspects of leadership of teaching & learning, and the building of digital capacity/capability.

The Graduate Studies Office offers staff training on research supervision, and in 2018, a Researcher Development Centre was set up to support the training and career development needs of NUI Galway’s Research Communities.

NUI Galway operates a comprehensive communication network mainly through committees that involve comprehensive reports that are circulated to all staff. The University also has an internal staff newsletter and many opportunities for staff to engage in discussions surrounding teaching and learning through conferences, seminars and training workshops.

A sample of the many additional P&Ps related to this heading from the P&P Repository:

- Equality and Diversity
- Further Education Policy
- Sabbatical Leave
- Carer’s Leave
- Temporary Absences
- Transition to University Teacher (Grade II)
- Triennial Travel Grant (Academic Staff)
Staff Development

The provider environment is enhancement-focused and utilises the available resources to:

- Offer opportunities for and promote the professional development of teaching staff
- Encourage scholarly activity to strengthen the link between teaching and research
- Encourage activity to strengthen the links between teaching, research and other developments within fields
- Encourage innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies
- Offer Career Development Pathways for Support Service Staff
- Voluntary Employee Review Process
- Coaching and Mentoring Framework

All Staff members have access to support and opportunities for development based on a voluntary approach to the identification of their continuing professional training and development needs.

An internal system of support for newly recruited and newly-qualified staff, or staff with minimal experience in operation in terms of Induction, Probation and Professional/personal development also exists. An annual staff training programme is available to all staff alongside a Further Education Scheme Policy (FEP) to support all staff to engage in further education programmes, supporting both their professional and personal development, funded by the University.

Staff Recruitment

P&Ps for recruitment address:

- Roles, responsibilities and codes of conduct
- Academic/professional/technical standards for all staff
- Pedagogical standards for teaching staff
- Benchmarking staff profiles (at programme level) with those of similar providers
- Recruitment, selection, probation and tenure
- Collection and use of regular and timely learner and other relevant feedback
- Pedagogical training and certification of teaching staff
- Performance management
- Probation for new staff
- Induction for new staff

Gender and Equality

57% of our staff and student body are female. Therefore equality of opportunity not only in the recruitment but in the development of staff and in the work experience and culture of NUI Galway, as articulated in QAG 4.3 and ESG 1.5, is important. This has received significant attention by NUI Galway.

In order to ensure that colleagues in all areas are prepared adequately for the staff recruitment process, since Sept 2015 all members of interview panels receive unconscious bias training in addition
to general interviewing skills. Such unconscious bias training is also relevant in the teaching and assessing arena. Face to face training is augmented and supplemented with online UCB training. This training is also available to all teacher education students as recommended by the HEA National Review of Gender Equality in Irish Higher Education Institutions.

NUI Galway also has in place a Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) incorporating all the recommendations from the NUI Galway Gender Equality Task Force chaired by the Vice President for Equality and Diversity: https://www.nuigalway.ie/genderequality/taskforceactionplan/geapupdate/.

In order to enable the active participation of all staff in meeting and committee work, NUI Galway introduced a Core Hours Meetings Policy in October 2016.

A returner grant for research active academics who are returning from maternity leave, adoptive leave or long term carer leave (>24 weeks leave) is in place since September 2016. This provides a grant of up to €10,000 to support re-integration of academic colleagues particularly into their research programmes and the research activities of their School. To date 8 colleagues have availed of this returner grant.

A one day “Ramp-up” Programme is provided once per semester for those returning from Maternity, adoptive/carer leave, and a series of 2-hour workshops are similarly run each semester for line managers on ‘managing inclusivity at work’. NUI Galway also has a series of family friendly policies and procedures in place and available to colleagues throughout NUI Galway.

- QA120 Meetings During Core Working Hours
- QA119 Flexible Working Hours Scheme (Admin Staff)
- QA151 Research Grant for Returning Academic Carers
- QA135 Paternity Leave Scheme
- QA103 Career Break Scheme
- QA111 Carer’s Leave Scheme
- QA128 Compassionate Leave Scheme
- QA131 Force Majeure Leave Scheme
- QA133 Job Share Scheme for Academic Staff
- QA102 Parental Leave Scheme
- QA104 Part-time Working Scheme for Support Services Staff
- QA141 Shorter Working Year Scheme
- QA152 Equal Opportunities
- QA153 Equal Opportunities Grievance
- QA157 Disability Code of Conduct
- QA156 Disability Complaints

Staff Communication

Effective two-way internal communications is vital to the promotion of a culture of quality throughout any organisation, particularly one as large and diverse as NUI Galway. The University is committed to internal self-monitoring and ensuring that staff are kept informed of issues, changes and enhancements to our work practices.
The University’s Internal Communications Officer works with colleagues across campus to provide a cycle of internal communications aimed at staff. These channels are used to raise awareness of changing work practices and policies, and to celebrate success and achievement across the wide range of University activities. They include:

- An Díalann: weekly staff news and events eZine
- Ollscéala: quarterly staff magazine
- Campus screen network
- Presidential All-Staff Addresses
- New Staff Calendar system

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.

Students are engaged in programmes using a variety of Policies and Procedures (P&Ps) captured in NUI Galway’s Learning, Teaching & Assessment (LTA) Strategy developed by the LTA Committee and supported by the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT).

This strategy and associated P&Ps describe how staff engage with the following:

- Bologna Process
- Learning Outcomes
- Academic Integrity
- Accessibility
- Attendance Requirements
- Feedback Policy
- Teaching Evaluation

Different modes of delivery are encouraged and supported and using a variety of pedagogical methods that include the Blackboard Learning Management System. NUI Galway also provides support for a comprehensive suite of teaching technologies that includes:

- Clickers - TurningPoint Cloud (TP7)
- Kaltura - MediaSpace
- Language Lab
- Lecture Capture - Echo360
- Qwickly Attendance
- Recording Studio
- Turnitin
- Video Conferencing
- Webconferencing

When a student registers for a module on the Student Record System, they are given access to the corresponding course on the VLE within 24 hours.
CELT also hosts one of Ireland’s major conferences on teaching, learning and assessment.

Colleges and Schools across the University have developed an extensive suite of teaching and research focussed laboratories. These laboratories extend to local industry, arts events and the local environment including archaeological sites and weather stations. Details are available within School websites.

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

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

Student resources and support is provided through a number of P&Ps delivered primarily through the offices of Student Services, the Library and the Student Information Desk (SID).

Student Services is supported by P&Ps around: student access, accommodation, careers development, counselling, disability services, health promotion, sports and societies.

The Library implements a number of services considering:

- Academic Skills
- Training
- Support for Researchers
- Archives Support
- Special Collections Support
- Assistive Technology Service

The Library also has a P&Ps for providing dedicated study space for students and supports students through the Academic Writing Centre. The Student Information Desk offers support that interface between students and administration services including access, transfer and progression, admissions and examinations.

The centre for Support for Undergraduate Maths Students (SUMS) offers all students support with learning Mathematics. The Computer Programming Drop-In Support Centre supports students from all Schools and Colleges with self-directed learning in computing programming and computer related topics and in addition to supports provided by the Information Solutions and Services.

### Internationalisation

The International Office implements a range of P&Ps focussed on NUI Galway’s international community and that includes admissions, Erasmus, accommodation, financial assistance, mentoring and local assistance.
The external standards and guidelines encompass both broad and specific activities and functions of the University. QAG 5.3 addresses international effective practice, guiding the University to engage with its international peers to enhance teaching and research. Both QAG 7.1 and ESG 1.6 address learning support, guiding the University to ensure that international learners benefit from appropriate teaching and learning resource availability, pastoral care, access (e.g. to services and programmes), representation (e.g. via feedback systems) and guidance (e.g. orientation).

At NUI Galway, international learners fall broadly within two categories: (a) inbound migrating learners who travel to Galway in order to pursue studies at NUI Galway (commonly referred to as ‘international students’); and (b) domestically resident non-citizen or non-ethnically Irish learners who ordinarily reside in Ireland and choose to attend NUI Galway (commonly thought of as ‘minority ethnic students’). Given the particular circumstances of Galway as Ireland’s most internationally diverse city – in which one-in-five of the population are either born abroad or are of non-Irish descent – the latter group represent a significant and frequently overlooked (e.g. poorly audited) subset of international learners.

At NUI Galway, the International Affairs Office supports the broader University community in fulfilling the principles relating to, for example, international engagement, access, pastoral care, representation, and guidance (academic Schools and Colleges are active in fulfilling principles relating to teaching and learning resource availability). For example, the International Office:

- represents NUI Galway at international fairs and symposia, and manages inbound visits by delegations from international Universities, supporting Schools, Colleges, and the Research Office (inter alia) in cultivating international teaching and research partnerships
- provides dedicated pastoral care to international learners, including crisis counselling
- ensures smooth-running access to services and programmes for international learners, through co-ordinated collaboration with central University services (e.g. admissions and examinations offices), as well as formal support to international learners on immigration and visa matters
- provides representational opportunities for international learners by, for instance, liaising with representative groups and societies and operating an international student ambassador scheme
- provides ongoing guidance to international learners by, for example, organizing orientation and cultural awareness programmes

Library

The Library prioritises the following to enable teaching, learning and research:

- A compelling place for academic engagement
- Access to excellent and relevant collections
- Connectivity through partnership, communication and community
- Graduates who think critically and have lifelong academic skills
- High-impact publication of research, data and digital content
- Expert staff, skilled to help in person or online
The Library provides collections, training in information use and a range of spaces in its building to enable different modes of learning and research. An annual budget for information resources is allocated to provide access to books, journals, archives and other collections across all disciplines. Staff are organised in five teams:

- **Operations**: aligning Library space and staffing with changing needs
- **Collections**: integrating management, development of and access to, information resources
- **Marketing and Engagement**: promoting the Library and understanding user needs
- **Research and Learning**: enabling research and developing academic skills
- **Digital Publishing and Innovation**: creating digital collections for innovative research

A sample of published policies and procedures include:

- QA237 Open Access to Research Outputs
- QA801 Library Code of Conduct
- QA802 Collections Strategy
- QA803 Customer Charter
  QA807 Exhibiting at the NUIG Hardiman Research Building
- QA808 Library Complaints Procedure

Other library strategies include:

- The Journey to 2020
- Archives Strategy
- Digital Scholarship Enablement Strategy

Annual operational plans to progress the strategy to 2020 are drafted, approved and monitored. An annual survey of all users generates feedback to inform plans. Enhancements are reported to users.

The main Library IT system is Alma, supplemented by others including Primo (discovery), CALM (archives), DSpace (institutional repository), Islandora (digital collections) and Talis Aspire (reading list management).

Other supports provided in the Library Building include assistive technology, academic writing and IT.

**Student Supports**

Students are made aware of resources available to support their learning through an online hub which also signposts specific training sessions throughout the academic year [http://www.nuigalway.ie/academic-skills/](http://www.nuigalway.ie/academic-skills/). These are in addition to programme specific supports. The adequacy of resources are determined annually by analysing the response of students to questions related to the Supportive Environment in ISSE.

First year students are informed at Orientation, through general and College-specific sessions, of the learner supports available to them. They are provided with a Student Guide which outlines these supports and each first year student is enrolled in a The Learning Centre on Blackboard. The development of the Academic Skills Hub brings all the resources together in one place and ensures
that different learner support/resource units benefit from networking. The range of supports include the following: IT and Digital skills available online; Academic Skills Team in the Library; the Academic Writing Centre which offers one-to-one tutorials on writing skills to over 500 students annually; Support for Undergraduate Maths and Statistics (SUMS) which is a free drop-in center for undergraduate students where tutors provide support for any area of Mathematics and Statistics; Smart Life/Smart Study courses which offer targeted support around study and preparation for examinations. Learners are also supported through Peer Assisted Learning: ‘Céim’, in the Colleges of Engineering & Informatics, and disciplines of Law, Geography and Sociology and Politics, and ‘PAL’ in the School of Business and Economics.

A sample of additional P&Ps related to this heading from the P&P Repository include:

- Students' Union Services
- Pastoral Care
- Learner Representation
- The Language Laboratory
- Placement Services
- Student Fees & Grants
- Career Development
- Accommodation Services
- Community Knowledge Initiative (CKI)

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.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are provided by the Institutional Research Office (IRO) and are used extensively throughout NUI Galway and during quality reviews. These indicators are defined largely by NUI Galway’s Vision2020 Strategy and the HEA’s Mission Based Performance Compact and include data on student population profiles, student progression, student completion rates, international and non-traditional student participation, and career paths, as well as a wide range of research performance data. Indicators are also informed by University and Subject Area ranking schemes, in particular those developed by THE and QS University ranking agencies.

The impact of QA and enhancement activities are measured through qualitative and quantitative indicators. Quantitative indicators have been defined and are regularly used at all major meetings.

Student Satisfaction and Feedback data are developed from results of the National Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) and NUI Galway’s student feedback policy (QA221 Feedback on Modules and Programmes) where all staff receive and act on student feedback. Other survey data collected include surveys of Graduates, First Year Students, International Students, Graduate Employment and Facilities.
NUI Galway operates a number of learner information systems supported by comprehensive information systems services and supports. The Quercus student record system is the provider and consumer of data to and from a number of other University information systems, including, Blackboard, Campus Account Self Service (CASS), Akari, OAS, Email (Microsoft Active Directory), Discoverer and Microsoft Dynamics CRM. Quercus provides integrated data and data archives for:

- Student Records
- Registration Records
- Exam Records
- Graduation Records

Other information systems provided and supported by NUI Galway are available through the Information Systems service catalogue.

NUI Galway operates a Freedom of Information Office for servicing information requests from students, staff and the public.

Other P&Ps related to this heading from the P&P Repository:

- Institutional Research Services
- Institutional Research Information Systems (IRIS)
- ISS Policies and Procedures

The Office of Planning & Institutional Research prepares a number of management information reports to senior management, Colleges and Schools to fulfil the principles relating to data to inform self-monitoring, planning and help feed into the internal quality assurance system. For example regular reports prepared and disseminated by the Office of Planning & Institutional Research include:

- Annual Key Performance Indicator reports for the overall University, each College and each School, with historic data including data on research performance, student body composition, International students, non-traditional students and retention rates for the annual operational planning process to help inform the Annual Operational Planning process.
- Market Analysis reports detailing CAO applicants, their demographic and national trends and demand at key points during the year
- Annual ISSE report – analysis and dissemination of the Irish Survey of Student Engagement, for the University, each College and programme each year. Includes national benchmarking data.
- HEA institutional profile each year, detailing a number of staff and student metrics including forecast profiles to help inform University’s progress of HEA Compact targets.
- Annual international QS Subject Ranking analysis including Scival benchmarking and research metrics
- Provision of bibliometric research data from SciVal and the KPIs for the Institutional Review of Research Performance process, internal promotion and external hiring processes.
- Annual analysis of PHD cohort, completion rates and times for Graduate Studies

Much of this data is available to all staff through the Institutional Research Office intranet.
QA Record Maintenance and Retention

Most records related to the quality review process are made publically available through the Quality Office website. Records available to the public include policies and procedures, review schedules, review reports and actions plans, review team names and affiliations and quality enhancements.

Evidence is provided by publicly accessing records through the Quality Office website. Non-public records are available through the Quality Office intranet.

Data Protection and FOI

Data Protection aims to protect individuals’ right to privacy about the processing of their personal data by those who control such data. The legislation governing this is the Data Protection Acts, 1988 and 2003 which lay down rules about the safeguarding of the privacy of personal data, and an individual’s right to access and correct their personal data. The European General Data Protection Regulation is to come into effect on 31 May 2018 and introduces further safeguards regarding the protection of personal data. NUI Galway holds a large amount of personal data to perform its various functions and takes its obligations to protect personal data very seriously. The University has developed a Data Protection Policy, A Data Breach Procedure and a Record Retention Policy. Staff are supported through Data Protection training.

The University is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2014 (the “FOI Act “) which provides a legal right of access to records held by the University. The right applies to individuals including members of the public, journalists, employees and students. Freedom of Information requests must be treated as priority matters. The rights of FOI requests are protected and enforced under the FOI Act. The Freedom of Information Commissioner has powers of enforcement and sanction and has the power to enter premises to inspect and compel bodies to provide records. There may also be reputational damage to the University if we fail to comply with our obligations. The FOI Act also sets out rules and procedures to be followed by public bodies when a request is received. In NUI Galway, the process is that responsibility to comply with FOI requests received is delegated to the Head of School or Head of Unit (or nominee), to act as local decision makers with overall responsibility for the initial decision on FOI requests from their School or Unit, i.e. to decide whether to release all the records, partially release the records or deny access. Advice is provided by the University Freedom of Information team. Timelines involved in processing an FOI request are reflective of the time obligations imposed by the FOI Act which provides that requests, save for limited circumstances, must be responded to within four weeks.

The University is acutely aware of its duties in relation to Data Protection and Freedom of Information legislation. The Office of the Secretary oversees compliance in these areas. Freedom of Information and Data Protection requirements are overseen by the University Secretary, the Data Protection Officer, the University Solicitor and an Administrative Assistant.

A sample of policies in place regarding Data Protection and FOI include the following:

- QA400 Data Protection
- QA401 Data Handling
- QA402 Data Classification
- QA412 Student Data Usage
• Data Breach Procedure
• Record Retention Policy
• GDPR Training provided to key units and to Unit/Department Heads and Administrative Officers.
• FOI informational letter sent by An Rúnai to Heads of Unit (see ‘Standards and Guidelines’ above).

Information Solutions and Services

The Information Solutions and Services unit provides IT services to the entire University. IT change projects are delivered using key elements of the PRINCE 2 methodology.

Development: ISS has established a governance process based around the University IT Strategy and its programmes. High level governance is provided by the Information Technology Planning and Priorities Committee (chaired by the Chief Operating Officer). This is underpinned by a series of programme boards and associated project boards. ISS operates a Change Review Board to manage the initiation of all projects and ‘small changes’. Where a project/change results in a release of software or configuration change the change must be approved at the ISS Release Management Board before being put into production. Evidence of appropriate user testing and signoff is required by the Board.

Operations: ISS has developed a defined Service Catalogue. Public facing services have a customer facing service definition published on the ISS website. For each service a Service Delivery Plan has been developed. Incidents and service requests are tracked against the individual services. All logged tickets are assigned to technicians for resolution. Service targets have been established for fulfilment of Service Requests against a number of services. Escalation procedures are defined. Security incidents are notified to the IT Security Committee and all critical incidents are managed through the Critical Incident process. The ISS Service Group meets monthly, chaired by the Assistant Director for Operations, to review service targets and review major incidents.

Below is a sample list of a large number of policies, procedures, processes and IT systems:

• QA404 Password Policy
• QA405 Partnering Policy
• QA406 Remote Access Policy
• QA407 IT Asset Protection Policy
• QA408 Logical Access Policy

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 Galway has a number of key policies related to self-evaluation and monitoring and that include the topics Quality Review (QR), Operational Planning, External Examinations and Student Feedback. Specific Quality Assurance P&Ps related to this heading are listed below and available from the Quality Office:

- QA001 Quality Assurance
- QA002 Policies and Procedures
- QA003 Review of Schools
- QA004 Review of Research Performance
- QA005 External Examiners (Taught)
- QA007 Operational Plans
- QA008 Programme Boards
- QA009 Review of Linked Providers
- QA012 Review of Research Institutes
- QA013 Review of Services

The QR process is comprehensive and involves key steps around self-assessment, benchmarking, independent peer review, stakeholder interviews and surveys, recommendations for quality enhancement and action planning.

The independent peer review process begins with the selection of expert panellists, examiners and authenticators from similar organisations outside Ireland who are prepared to declare their ability to maintain confidentiality, that they have no deep or long-standing relationships with the unit being assessed and that they have received gender bias training. All panellists, examiners and authenticators receive payment for their services in return for providing value to the University in terms of a thorough and comprehensive review of quality and statements of recommended changes that will enhance quality.

QA001 Quality Assurance and QA002 Policies and Procedures guide the development of all P&Ps in use across NUI Galway. While the majority of P&Ps are contained on website pages, manual and online forms, internal statutes and committee reports, a number now follow NUI Galway’s ‘QA’ P&P template that aids policy writers in the design of P&Ps that improve communication, encourage revision and lower risk. Most P&Ps are made available to the public in a variety of formats through the University’s public websites.

Programme Review

All Taught Programmes (e.g. BSc, MSc) must be reviewed in compliance with QA003 Review of Schools. Programmes must also be monitored by Programme Boards and External Examiners annually in compliance with QA005 External Examiners (Taught). Taught Programmes may be reviewed at least once every seven years in compliance with QA006 Review of Taught Programmes. Some Taught Programmes may be reviewed by professional, regulatory or statutory bodies (PRSBS) and in compliance with QA244 Accredited Programmes and are deemed to have met compliance with QA006 above. All new and major changes to Taught Programmes are approved by the Academic Council Standing Committee.
Monitoring Student Feedback

Student feedback is vital to maintaining the quality of our teaching. Students are surveyed across all modules, and this feedback is collated and shared with academic colleagues at a College, School and Discipline level.

All modules and programmes are required to conduct student feedback either mid or end of term. The policy QA221: Feedback on Modules and Programmes requires all academic staff to gather student feedback, create and implement action plans and communicate changes to students typically in the following year. The process is independently monitored by the Head of School or nominee (e.g. Head of Discipline) and annual compliance reports can be requested by the Registrar and Deputy President. The University is a strong supporter of the Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) and consistently performs well against other Irish Universities in our participation rates. The University produces reports on the ISSE indices at a College and programme level, which are presented to Academic Council and filtered down to staff through their College.

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 Galway’s policy is to engage widely with all of its stakeholders. Stakeholders include learners, Schools, other Colleges and Universities, research funding agencies, general public, industry, national and local government and many more.

Key stakeholders in the context of quality assurance include:

- Irish Universities Association
- Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)
- Higher Education Authority (HEA)
- Irish Higher Education Quality Network (IHEQN)
- European Universities Association
- North-West Cluster (GMIT, LYIT, ITSligo)
- Research Funding Bodies (SFI, HRB, etc.)
- NUI Galway-University of Limerick Alliance

Students are a primary stakeholder and regarded by NUI Galway as competent, active and constructive partners as opposed to consumers. Students are regularly invited to engage in programme design, governance and corporate image while also engaging with their own learning.

External panellists, examiners and authenticators
There are explicit criteria laid down in a number of P&Ps for the recruitment and engagement of external independent panellists, examiners and authenticators. The following P&Ps lay down explicit criteria for the retention of panellists, examiners and authenticators:

- QA003 Review of Schools
- QA004 Review of Research Performance
- QA005 External Examiners (Taught)
- QA006 Review of Taught Programmes

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).

NUI Galway has a policy of engaging widely with many other external bodies through all of the teaching, research and governance activities outlined earlier including:

- Professional, Regulatory and Statutory Bodies (PRSBs)
- Linked Providers and Collaborative Partners

The Quality Office provides links on its public website to details of all accredited programmes and collaborative providers (links above).

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 Galway has a policy of providing a wide variety of Teaching, Research and QA related information to the public. This is done mainly through the comprehensive main public website but also through public websites of all its Schools, Colleges and Student Services. Other mechanisms include information booklets and press releases from the Press and Information Office.

Publicly accessible information includes results of all Quality Reviews and access to publicly available Policies and Procedures. Academic staff also use the Library’s publicly accessible ARAN repository for research publications. Other information is available under Freedom of Information.

A sample of other information sources are outlined below for illustration with links provided.
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.

NUI Galway provides a list of linked providers under the heading ‘collaborative providers’ on its public website and relies on two national guidelines (IHEQN and QQI) to define and implement P&Ps in this area for all Schools and Colleges.

- Guidelines for the Approval, Monitoring and Review of Collaborative and Transnational Provision (IHEQN)
- Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes and Joint Awards (QQI)

One internal policy defines the cyclical review process for Linked Providers and draws on legislation:

- QA009 Review of Linked Providers

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 Galway P&Ps cover all such arrangements including sub-contracting of provision. This is done through Memorandums of Agreement/Understanding and also internal P&Ps for the review of such agreements.

NUI Galway provides a list of collaborative providers on its public website and relies on two national guidelines (QQI and IHEQN) to define and implement P&Ps in this area for all Schools and Colleges:

- Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes and Joint Awards (QQI)
- Guidelines for the Approval, Monitoring and Review of Collaborative and Transnational Provision (IHEQN)
## 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.

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School of Natural Sciences  
School of Mathematics, Statistics and Applied Mathematics  
School of Medicine  
School of Political Science and Sociology  
Centre for Adult Learning and Professional Development (CALPD)  
Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT)  
Information Solutions & Services (ISS) |
| Number   | 8 |
| Link(s) to Publications | http://www.nuigalway.ie/quality/reviews/ |

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School of Geography & Archaeology  
School of Physics  
Buildings & Estates Office  
Human Resources Office  
International Office |
| Number   | 6 |
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School of Health Sciences  
School of Law  
School of Psychology  
Acadamh  
Marketing and Communications Office  
Student Services |
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### Overview of internal QA governance, policies and procedures

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<td>On behalf of the President/Provost/CEO I confirm that the information submitted in this AIQR is accurate and correct.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Full Name</td>
<td>Maureen Linnane</td>
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<td>E-mail</td>
<td><a href="mailto:quality@nuigalway.ie">quality@nuigalway.ie</a></td>
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