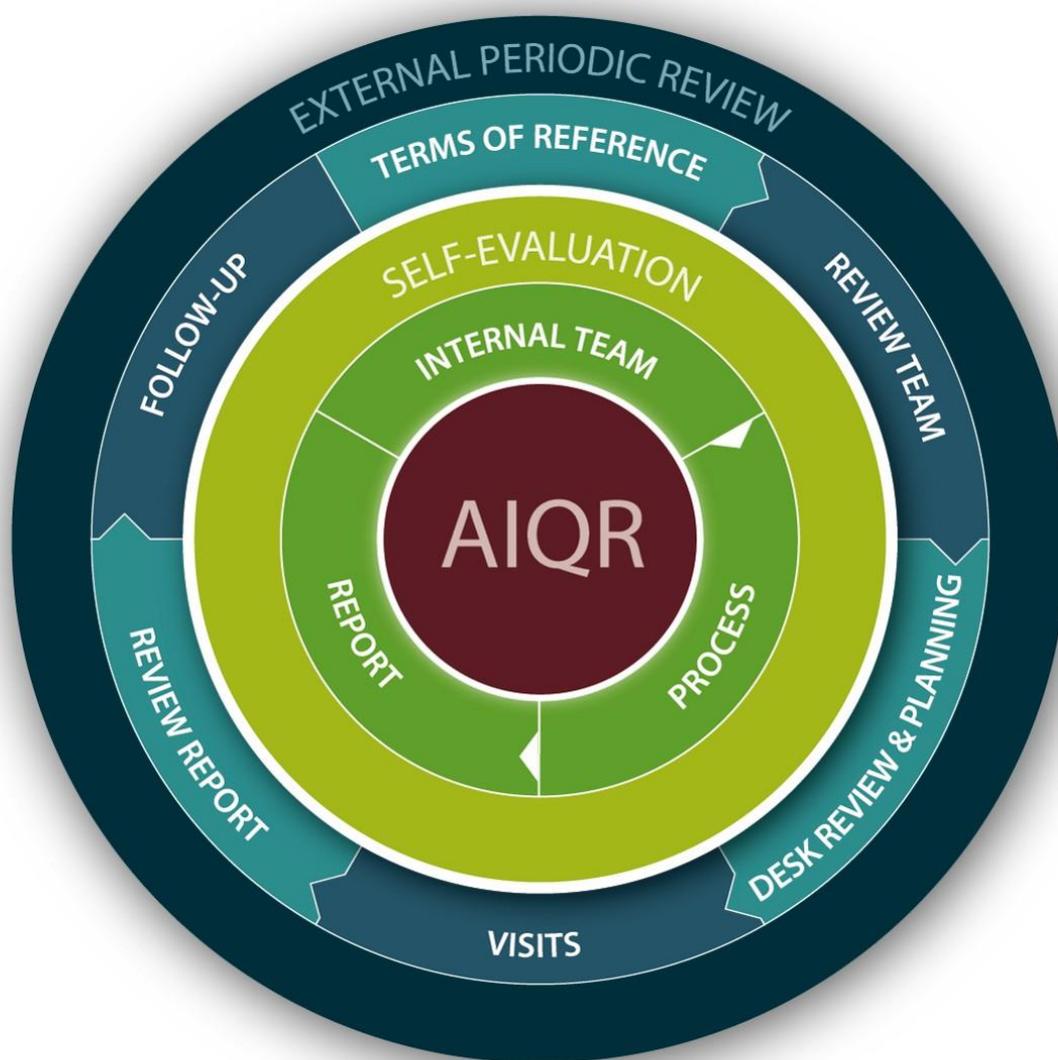


Waterford Institute of Technology

Annual Institutional Quality Assurance Report 2017

Based on the reporting period 1 September 2015 – 31 August 2016



The Cyclical Review Process

Please enter a brief synopsis of the overarching institution quality policy which sets out the links between QA policy and procedures and the strategy and strategic management of the institution.

The overarching WIT philosophy and framework for Quality Assurance is set out in *Quality Assurance Framework for Waterford Institute of Technology* (WQAF) document ([link](#)). The purpose of the WIT quality assurance framework, as described in the WQAF, is to enhance the quality environment of the Institute, and to ensure the dual responsibilities of assuring that standards of awards and the ongoing improvement of activities are achieved. The framework is informed by the European Standards and Guidelines 2015 and by the statutory and regulatory environment in which Irish Education operates, including the application of QQI policies.

The Institute recognises that quality is delivered through all of the activities of the Institute and is committed to engaging all staff in articulating, understanding and delivering on its responsibilities. These responsibilities include:

1. Ensuring all graduates of the Institute meet the standards expected of their award
2. Ensuring our teaching, learning and student support environments deliver appropriately for the diversity of our student body and that we support learners achieve their potential
3. Ensuring the Institute is responsive to the needs of the stakeholder at regional and national levels

The WQAF philosophy and framework is supported by, and expressed in, the Institute's policy, procedure and regulation documents. The [WIT Quality Manual](#) is issued on an annual basis and comprises 4 sections: Section A *Academic Regulations for Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Programmes* (RTP); Section B *Programme Quality Assurance and Enhancement Policy and Procedures* (RPA); Section C *Quality Assurance of Collaborative Programmes, including Transnational Programmes and Joint Awards* (RCP); Section D *Postgraduate Research Degrees: Regulations and Procedures* (RRD). The *WIT Quality Manual* is supported by a number of supplemental and subsidiary policy and procedure documents which are available on the [Policies and Regulations](#) area of the WIT website and will be referred to in later sections of this report.

Please enter a brief description of institution-level quality assurance decision-making fora.

An organisational chart for the Structure of Responsibility for Quality is available in the WQAF ([link](#)). A description of the structure of quality assurance and improvement activities in the Institute is also provided in the WQAF along with a detailed assignment of responsibilities at key stages in the cycle.

The Academic Council is appointed by the WIT Governing Body to assist it in the planning (including the strategic planning), co-ordination, development and overseeing of the educational and research work of the Institute, and to protect, maintain and develop the academic standards of the programmes and activities of the Institute. The Vice President for Academic Affairs and Registrar has overall responsibility for co-ordinating the above processes and reporting to Academic Council and Institute authorities on progress and implementation. To ensure a link between Academic Council and Governing Body, a member of the Academic Council presents a report on the work of Academic Council to the Governing Body at least annually, but preferably once a semester.

The Academic Council has established the following committees: Academic Quality Committee (AQ); Academic Planning Committee (AP); Learning and Teaching Committee (LT); Research, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Committee (RIE); School Boards; Standing Committee; and the Agenda Setting and Correspondence Committee. The Academic Council will normally delegate responsibility for detailed consideration, analysis and drafting of policies, procedures and other matters to its committees. Reports from committees on such matters will be referred to Academic Council for consideration by the larger meeting. Academic Council may adopt or reject such reports or refer them back to committee. A detailed account of the terms of reference and responsibilities of the subcommittees for Academic Council is given in [the WIT Academic Council: Terms of Reference, Code of Practice, Composition and Regulations \(ACC\)](#), particularly section 5, and in [RPA](#), section 1.

An Organisational Chart of the School and Department structure in the Institute, including service departments, and lines of responsibility is available on the [WIT website](#).

Do you have a Policy/Procedure for Programme Design and Approval?

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Programme Design and Approval

The WIT policy and procedures for the design and approval of taught programmes are contained in Section B of the WIT [Quality Manual: Programme Quality Assurance and Enhancement Policy and Procedures 2016-17](#) (RPA). In general, programmes are proposed and designed by an Academic School or Schools, subject to internal and external review, and approved via the Academic Council and its committees. There are a number of processes set out in the RPA for validating new programmes or amending existing programmes.

WIT's approach to quality assurance is based on an open, transparent and easily assessable set of regulations that are supported by appropriate training. The Institute publishes the quality framework annually, electronically and in hard copy. It maintains dedicated areas on sections of the intranet and Moodle for QA documentation and information. These areas also contain a number of resource files and guidance notes in key areas. In addition, the Office for Quality Promotion and Academic Policy Development has a specific remit in providing training in key QA processes and providing an individualised response to questions. The [Quality Promotion Information Area](#) also hosts a number of documents and videos available from preparing Learning Outcomes to the relevant NFQ (EQF: *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*.)

Do you have a Policy/Procedure for Programme Delivery and Assessment?

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Programme Delivery and Assessment

Programme delivery and assessment are the core of WIT's activities, so the quality assurance policies and procedures for programme delivery and assessment are present in multiple weblinks, both publicly and internally available. These links reflect the variety of students who attend WIT and their needs, offering flexible learning paths, including different modes of delivery and pedagogical approaches.

The Institute has a Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy, which is published on the Institute [website](#) and is intended to enhance learning at WIT by establishing a common framework, aligned with the overall Institute strategy, for decision making across the Institute on the future development of learning, teaching and assessment.

Policies in respect of the programme delivery include:

1. WIT *Quality Manual* 2016-17, particularly Section A *Academic Regulations for Undergraduate and Taught Programmes* (RTP) which is available publicly on the WIT [webpages](#), the WIT Intranet, as well as in the [Academic Council Information Area/Quality Manual](#) and the [Quality Promotion Information Area](#) on Moodle;
2. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy ([link](#));
3. External Examiner Policy ([link](#));
4. Policy on Electronic Examinations ([link](#));
5. Anti-plagiarism Policy ([link](#));
6. Policy on the Conferring of Aegrotat Awards ([link](#));
7. Approval of Minor, Special Purpose, Supplemental Awards ([link](#));
8. Policy on Exit Awards ([link](#));
9. Completing, Granting and Presentation of Awards Policy ([link](#));
10. The Code of Practice of the Disability Office Student Life and Learning ([link](#));
11. Recording Policy: on the Recording of Oral and/or Visual Presentations for Students Registered with the Disability Office ([link](#));
12. The Student Complaints Policy ([link](#)).

The Institute supports these policies in some cases with an operational procedure. For example, admission to WIT is defined in the WIT *Quality Manual*, but this is elaborated on in greater detail in a dedicated webpage:

Procedures

1. Admissions procedure ([link](#));
2. Procedures for external examiners ([link](#));
3. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) ([link](#));
4. Viewing of examination scripts ([link](#));
5. Recheck of Examination Results form available from the Office of the Registrar or [online](#);
6. Procedure to [appeal](#) examination results.

The RTP section of the WIT Quality manual makes specific reference to a range of delivery and assessment policies and procedures including *inter alia* the determination of awards, the balance of assessment, the assessment of group activities, progression criteria and the requirement to produce student handbooks detailing programme information.

Students are involved in programmes and assessment through:

1. Membership of programme boards;
2. School boards;
3. Academic Council and Council committees;
4. Learner representatives on new programme review panels;
5. Membership of appeals panels.

Do you have a Policy/Procedure for Research Quality?

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Research Quality

The quality assurance procedures for the design, approval, delivery, assessment and monitoring of research programmes are captured in Section D of the WIT Quality Manual, *Postgraduate Research Degrees: Regulations and Procedures* (RRD), which is available publicly on the WIT [webpages](#), on the WIT Intranet on Q:PublicRegistrarQuality, as well as in the [Academic Council Information Area/Quality Manual](#) and the [Quality Promotion Information Area](#) on Moodle).

The RRD sets out the regulations in respect of registration, enrolment, supervision, transfer and assessment of research candidates. In addition, the RRD is also supported by policies including:

1. The research strategy (being drafted)
2. Staff Induction and Training Handbook ([link](#))
3. Research Ethics policy ([link](#))
4. Data protection policy ([link](#))
5. The Intellectual Property policy ([link](#))
6. The student complaints policy ([link](#))

The Research, Innovation and Entrepreneurship (RIE: [link](#)) committee advises and makes recommendations to the WIT [Academic Council](#) on matters relating to research. The responsibilities of this committee are defined in the [Academic Council Constitution](#) (section 5.3.4), available on [Moodle](#) and on the WIT [web-pages](#).

The RIE has also created a number of subcommittees to ensure the diverse range of activities under its remit is fully considered. The subcommittees are:

1. The Research Postgraduate Enrolment Group (PGEG): considers postgraduate student ([Future Postgraduate](#) page) registration applications ([Application & Selection](#)) for enrolment ([PG1](#) and QQI Application, if relevant), for transfer from the Masters to Doctoral registers ([PG2](#) and QQI Application, if relevant) and for confirmation of candidature for probationary Doctoral students (PG4). A postgraduate may also apply to PGEG for a variation in candidature (PG3).
2. The Institute's Research Ethics [Committee](#), scrutinises all research which involves humans and animals to ensure it is compliant with statutory requirements and is conducted to the highest ethical principles.

Do you have a Policy/Procedure in place for Student Lifecycle?

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Student Lifecycle

The WIT quality assurance procedures that encompassed the student lifecycle are primarily found in the WIT Quality Manual: Section A [Academic Regulations for Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Programmes](#) (RTP) for taught programmes and Section *Postgraduate Research Degrees: Regulations and Procedures* (RRD) for research programmes. The Quality Manual is supported by a number of supplementary policies and process documents.

Admissions Policies ([link](#))

1. Admission to Programmes of Study Policy Document ([link](#));
2. Other School Leaving Examinations Policy Document ([link](#));
3. Mature Applicant Policy Document ([link](#));
4. Previous Higher Education Policy Document ([link](#));
5. WD019 BBS in Recreation and Sport Management Policy ([link](#));
6. WD186 BSc (H) in Sports Coaching and Performance Policy ([link](#));
7. WD144 Architecture Policy Document ([link](#));
8. Ardscoil na Mara Tramore Computer Studies Link Policy ([link](#));
9. Deferral First Year Entry Policy and Procedure ([link](#));
10. QQI Further Education and Training Awards Council Policy ([link](#));
11. Leaving Certificate Recheck Policy ([link](#));
12. Advanced Entry Applications (A4) Policy ([link](#));
13. Qualification Baccalaureat and Brevet Policy ([link](#));
14. Qualification GCE GCSE & BTEC Policy ([link](#)).

Admission Processes

- RTP, Sections 2-4;
- WIT Access, Transfer and Progression Policy;

- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) policy ([link](#));
- Admissions procedure ([link](#));
- The Code of Practice of the Disability Office Student Life and Learning ([link](#));
- Recording Policy: on the Recording of Oral and/or Visual Presentations for Students Registered with the Disability Office ([link](#));
- WIT Progression Scheme ([link](#));
- Admission to Programmes of Study Policy Document ([link](#));
- Other School Leaving Examinations Policy Document ([link](#));
- Mature Applicant Policy Document ([link](#));
- Previous Higher Education Policy Document ([link](#));
- WD019 BBS in Recreation and Sport Management Policy ([link](#));
- WD186 BSc (H) in Sports Coaching and Performance Policy ([link](#));
- WD144 Architecture Policy Document ([link](#));
- Ardscoil na Mara Tramore Computer Studies Link Policy ([link](#));
- Deferral First Year Entry Policy and Procedure ([link](#));
- QQI Further Education and Training Awards Council Policy ([link](#));
- Leaving Certificate Recheck Policy ([link](#));
- Advanced Entry Applications (A4) Policy ([link](#));
- Qualification Baccalaureat and Brevet Policy ([link](#));
- Qualification GCE GCSE & BTEC Policy ([link](#)).

Student Transfer

- RTP, Section 2.12 (transfer);
- RTP, Section 2.13 (advanced entry);
- Student Life and Learning information section on transfer ([link](#)).

Student Progression

- RTP, Sections 7-11;
- External Examiner policy ([link](#));
- Policy on Electronic Examinations ([link](#));
- Anti-plagiarism policy ([link](#));
- Regulations governing written examinations: RTP, Appendices 2 and 3 and ([link](#)).

Recognition (qualifications, periods of study, prior learning)

- RTP, Section 6;
- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) policy ([link](#)).

Certification (qualification information, documentation)

- RTP, Section 12;
- Policy on the conferring of Aegrotat Awards ([link](#));
- Policy on Exit Awards ([link](#));
- Completing, Granting and Presentation of Awards Policy ([link](#)).

**Do you have a
Policy/Procedure in place for
Teaching Staff?**

Yes

The appointment of teaching staff is based in the first instance on nationally agreed DoES circulars. WIT applies this standard as a baseline, but ordinarily appoints staff who have qualifications far in excess of the standard. Recruitment procedures are in place to define person specifications, minimum and desirable qualities prior to the initiation of recruitment. In general, the WIT HR policies are listed on the dedicated staff [webpage](#).

Human Resource Policies include:

1. Staff Handbook ([link](#));
2. Staff training and development strategy ([link](#));
3. Annual Leave Policy ([link](#));
4. E-mail usage policy ([link](#));
5. Email policy for staff communicating with students ([link](#));
6. Institute safety policy ([link](#));
7. Compassionate Leave policy ([link](#));
8. Force Majeure Leave policy ([link](#));
9. Leave for Appointment policy ([link](#));
10. Maternity Leave policy ([link](#));
11. Sick Leave policy ([link](#));
12. Marriage and Civil Partnership Leave policy ([link](#));
13. Parental Leave policy ([link](#));
14. Code of Conduct policy ([link](#));
15. Dignity and Respect policy ([link](#));
16. Disclosure policy ([link](#));
17. Child protection policy ([link](#));

The Institute has a dedicated staff resource to training and development and an Institute-wide Training and Development Committee that develops policy and procedures in respect of training and development of staff (academic, administration and support), including the organisation of the annual training and development week in semester 2.

WIT offers opportunities for, and promotes, the professional development of teaching staff. The Training and Development Committee report to the WIT Executive Board and have developed the Staff Training and Development Strategy Plan 2012-2017 ([link](#)). WIT is committed to encouraging and facilitating staff to pursue professional and personal training and development both in the interests of performing their duties at the highest level possible for the accomplishment of the strategic objectives of the Institute and also for self-fulfilment. Key priorities include: an expansion of teaching and research at levels 9-10, with a corresponding improvement of developing knowledge competency of staff in both upper level occupational training and applied research; the further strengthening of networking with industry and community organizations in training and research; and an expanded international orientation and portfolio of international activity. The Training and Development Committee plan also included a number of areas such as teaching and learning (such as modules in Practical Pedagogy, Blended Learning, etc.), management training, academic management, leadership and supervision (including a popular Research Supervision module) and other relevant areas, which emerged after the all-staff consultation process, including health and safety, dignity and respect, course leader training, team building at administrative and support level.

The Institute's School of Lifelong Learning and Education provides development opportunities to staff, by providing modules from their portfolio of programmes, including the Master of Arts in Teaching and Learning in Further and Higher Education ([link](#)), for continuous professional development.

Do you have a Policy/Procedure in place for Teaching and Learning?

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Teaching and Learning

The Learning and Teaching Committee of the WIT [Academic Council](#) is the policy formation and oversight committee tasked with the development of teaching learning and assessment policy. The Committee developed a Teaching, Learning and Assessment strategy ([link](#)) and has regulations regarding the delivery, assessment and progression of students embedded in its Quality Manual (RTP and RRD sections). Procedures in respect of teaching and learning strategy for each programme are established as part of the programme validation (RPA section) and through the periodic School Review process.

Quality assurance of teaching is provided via the School Review (most recent review reports are [publicly](#) available) and also through the external examiner process. The WIT [Policy](#) on External Examining can be found in the Academic Council Information Area on Moodle and also in the WIT Quality Manual: RTP section, which is available publicly on the WIT [webpages](#), on the WIT Intranet on Q:PublicRegistrarQuality, as well as in the [Academic Council Information Area/Quality Manual](#) and also in the [Quality Promotion Information Area](#) on Moodle.

Quality assurance is also provided using student feedback through representation on programme boards, local course-specific feedback, the national Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) and this year, via the standard surveying of QA3.

Do you have a Policy/Procedure in place for Resources and Support?

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Resources and Support

The student environment is composed of academic and welfare support activities, which, while separate, are strongly related. There are a number of functional units dealing with these areas. Broadly, they all come under the remit of the Office of the Registrar.

Academic support activities include:

1. Library resource ([link](#));
2. Computer services ([link](#));
3. Virtual learning (Moodle) [support](#);
4. Computing and maths learning [support](#);
5. WIT Research Support [Unit](#);
6. Access support ([link](#));
7. Retention Office ([link](#));
8. International Office ([link](#));

In addition to Academic support there are a range of other services targeted at broad student welfare. These are generally coordinated by the Student Life & Learning ([link](#)); as are many of the above academic resources. The general support activities include:

1. Student Assistance Fund (SAF , [link](#));
2. The Regional Educational Guidance Service (REGSA, [link](#));
3. Student Counselling [service](#) ([link](#));The [Careers Centre](#) ([link](#));
4. Health and promotional activities;
5. Disability office ([link](#));Induction support ([link](#));

These activities are underpinned by a policy and procedures based approach to activities.

Policies include:

1. WIT Quality Manual, particularly the RTP and RRD sections;
2. REACH Programme (access) Policy ([link](#));
3. Access, transfer and retention policies set out in the RTP section of the WIT Quality Manual ([link](#));
4. Code of Practice for the Disability Office ([link](#));
5. Policy on recording of oral and/or visual presentation in WIT ([link](#));
6. Student Assistance Fund Policy and Procedure ([link](#));
7. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL, [link](#));
8. Additional points policy ([link](#));
9. Procedures and/or operating protocols include:
10. Induction processes ([link](#));
11. Student Handbook ([link](#));
12. Student Counselling ([link](#));
13. Retention, deregistration and programme transfer procedures ([link](#));

Student Finance is managed by the Office of the Vice President of Corporate Affairs and Finance. Policies in respect of student finance and FAQs are available at [link](#).

Do you have a Policy/Procedure for Information Management?

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Information Management

The primary policy and procedure documents governing information management include:

1. Data protection policy ([link](#));
2. Social Media Policy ([link](#));
3. E-mail usage policy ([link](#));
4. Email policy for staff communicating with students ([link](#));
5. OneDrive AUP – acceptable usage policy currently being approved;
6. WIT Computer and Network Security Policy 2011 (Intranet) ;
7. Staff File-Folder Access Form (Intranet);
8. 2011 Non-Staff WIT Computer Access Form (Intranet);
9. 2016 WIT Computer Access Form (Intranet);
10. Email Proxy Access Form (Intranet);
11. Email Proxy Account Setup Form (Intranet);

WIT has a dedicated student record system (Banner), which records each student's progress from registration onto to the completion of the programme of study. This system provides key data, such as establishing a profile of the student population and monitoring student progression, success and drop-out rates. This in turn has been used to inform decision-making and improvements to programmes. For example, the statistics on access, progression and awards were presented and analysed, by each school for their School Review. WIT's MIS team produce dedicated report writing and data analysis facilities under a request system.

As well as data policies, regulations exist to guide the collecting, analysing and using of relevant information. The quality assurance procedures for programme boards, who collect and use data in reports to the Academic Council are defined in Sections A (RTP) and B (RPA) of the WIT Quality Manual 2016-17, which is available publicly on the WIT [webpages](#), on the WIT Intranet on Q:PublicRegistrarQuality, as well as in the [Academic Council Information Area/Quality Manual](#) and also the [Quality Promotion Information Area](#) on Moodle. Programme board responsibilities include collecting, analysing and using relevant information that range from reflecting on the outputs of teaching and learning strategies, examination performance, award distribution, and taking or recommending appropriate remedial action when required.

Student satisfaction surveys are a growing part of the information strategy. While currently sought through student representation on programme boards and local course-specific feedback, the Institute is strategically developing the use of the national Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE), and the initial roll-out of an electronic version of the nationally agreed QA3. The evaluation of the ISSE data is available through the Office of the Head of Quality Promotion and offered to each school for school-wide use.

Do you have a Policy/Procedure for Self-evaluation and Monitoring?

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Self-evaluation and Monitoring

Internal review and monitoring is a central part of the overall WIT quality strategy and framework (see diagram in the Institution-Led QA Section). All activities are subject to review and enhancement in line with good governance principles. Monitoring is based upon:

1. Internal review of activities (i.e. programme management structures sections RRD and RTP of the Quality Manual) which may also include user feedback (i.e. students or employers);
2. External review of the activities, which are led from the Institute regulations (i.e. external examining in RRD and RTP sections of Quality Manual, [link](#)), the commissioned review of an activity (i.e. the enhancement review of international office admissions or the operation of the research scholarships) or from the production and evaluation of a self-evaluation report such as school and programmatic reviews ([link](#))

The quality of programmes is monitored on an ongoing basis. Programme Boards, which include student members, report annually to WIT Academic Council. External Examiners validate the quality of assessment activity and work with staff on the ongoing development of programmes. Annual reporting is primarily managed and administered by the School Offices. These regulations are set out in the appropriate sections of the WIT Quality Manual.

The WIT External Examiner Policy ([link](#)) is presented in the Academic Council [Policies](#) on Moodle and also in Chapter 8 (Examination Boards and External Examining) in Section A (RTP) of the WIT Quality Manual: *Academic Regulations for Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Programmes 2016-17*, which is available publicly on the WIT [webpages](#), on the WIT Intranet on Q:PublicRegistrarQuality, as well as in the [Academic Council Information Area/Quality Manual](#) and also in the [Quality Promotion Information Area](#) on Moodle.

Programme boards are key to internal monitoring at a programme level. The overall role and makeup of programme boards is laid out in section 3.2 of Section B (RPA) of the WIT Quality Manual ([webpage](#)). Every postgraduate is considered a programme in his/her own right, and progress is monitored annually by progression boards ([link](#)).

Students' expectations, needs and satisfaction with their programmes, the learning environment and support services, and their fitness for purpose, is sought through student representation on programme boards, local course-specific feedback, the national Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) and, this year, via the standard surveying of QA3 (programmes). The evaluation of the ISSE data is available through the Office of the Head of Quality Promotion and offered to each school for schoolwide use.

Do you have a Policy/Procedure for Stakeholder Engagement?

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Stakeholder Engagement

The Institute's Quality Manual has sections that deal with the engagement of stakeholders across a number of institutional activities. These include:

1. The design of programmes of study ([link](#));
2. The external validation of programmes of study ([link](#));
3. The evaluation of research proposals and activity (RSU);
4. As part of strategic planning and development;
5. As part of the School Review process ([link](#));
6. As part of industrial and work placement ([link](#));
7. Through industry partnerships and MOUs in teaching (e.g. Teagasc); and research.

The Institute strategy emphasises our closeness to industry and the engagement of partnerships in teaching, learning and research.

Do you have a Policy/Procedure for Engagement with other Bodies?

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Engagement with other Bodies

WIT does not have dedicated, institution-wide, quality assurance procedures for engagement with professional, statutory and regulatory bodies and other quality assurance and awarding bodies. Notwithstanding this, each school area maintains professional accreditation in line with the discipline norms. It is the strategy of the Institute to support wide professional accreditation.

Do you have a Policy/Procedure for Provision and use of Public Information?

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Provision and use of Public Information

The Institute does not have a published policy on the range and extent of public information that it makes available. It does, however, routinely provide to the public an extensive range of quality assurance and other documents including:

1. Operational and financial policies, including data protection and freedom of information policies;
2. Statutory information such as annual reports and strategic plans;
3. Advice and guides to students, including handbooks;
4. Programme information including award levels, progression opportunities and indicative programme content;
5. Minutes of Governing Body meetings;
6. Information on complaints procedures;
7. Contact information;
8. All of its quality policies and procedures
9. Outputs of quality processes, including:
 - a. Programme validations;
 - b. School Review reports.

Do you have a Policy/Procedure for DA procedures for use of QQI award standards?

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to DA procedures for use of QQI award standards (IoT only)

The procedures for maintaining Delegated Authority in line with QQI awards standards are incorporated in the Quality Manual Sections B (RPA, Undergraduate), D (RRP, Postgraduate) and C (RCP, collaborative provision). WIT does not yet have approved procedures for full delegation at Level 9.

Do you have a Policy/Procedure for Collaborative Provision?

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Collaborative Provision

Section C (RCP) of the WIT Quality manual, Collaborative Provision 2016-2017, collates and describes all the academic regulations of the Institute relating to collaborative programmes, including transnational programmes and joint awards, both undergraduate and postgraduate. This is available publicly on the WIT [webpages](#), on the WIT Intranet on Q:PublicRegistrarQuality, as well as in the [Academic Council Information Area/Quality Manual](#) and also the [Quality Promotion Information Area](#) on Moodle. WIT has entered into collaborative provision, joint and double degrees, following the QQI policy entitled *Policy and Criteria for the Delegation of Authority to the Institutes of Technology to make Higher Education and Training Awards (including Joint Awards)*.

Current agreements in place are listed on the WIT website and include:

1. [The BA \(H\) in International Business](#), which is a double degree programme with the Munich University of Applied Sciences;
2. The [Master of Science in International Business/Master of Business in Internationalisation Collaborative Programme](#), which is a joint degree programme with the École Supérieure de Commerce, Bretagne, Brest;
3. The [Higher Diploma in Arts in Television Production](#), which is co-delivered by WIT with Nemeton TV;
4. [Certificate in Radio Broadcasting and Presenting WLR FM and Beat 102-103](#), WIT Level 6 Special Purpose Award;
5. Double BSc degree with the Nanjing University of Information Science & Technology (NUIST) ([link](#));
6. MA in Social Justice and Public Policy, a collaborative provision with Social Justice Ireland (Collaborative provision, [link](#)).

Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies

First Set of Records

Type of Arrangement

PRSB

Name of the Body

Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI)

Programme Titles and Links to Publications

BA (Hons) in Psychology, BA (Hons) International in Psychology

Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies

Second Set of Records

Type of Arrangement

PRSB

Name of the Body

Board of the Honorable Society of King's Inns

Programme Titles and Links to Publications

BA (H) Legal with Business
LLB Bachelor of Laws
BA (Hons) in Legal Studies with Business

Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies

Third Set of Records

Type of Arrangement	PRSB
Name of the Body	Teaching Council of Ireland
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching in Further Education Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Teaching in Further & Adult Education
Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies	Fourth Set of Records
Type of Arrangement	PRSB
Name of the Body	ACCA
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	Higher Certificate in Business, Bachelor of Business (Hons), BA (Hons) in Accounting, BBS (Hons)
Date of last review or accreditation	01-01-2013
Next review year	2015
Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies	Fifth Set of Records
Type of Arrangement	PRSB
Name of the Body	Bord Altranais agus Cnáimhseachais na hÉireann
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	BSc (Honours) in General Nursing BSc (Honours) in Psychiatric Nursing BSc (Honours) in Intellectual Disability Nursing Postgraduate Diploma in Nursing Master of Science in Nursing Postgraduate Diploma in Cognitive Therapy and Motivational Interviewing for Practice Master of Science in Cognitive Therapy and Motivational Interviewing for Practice Certificate in Cognitive Behaviour Therapy Certificate in Psychosocial Interventions
Date of last review or accreditation	15-09-2014
Next review year	2019
Articulation Agreements	6
Section: 1 Articulation Agreements	First Set of Records
Name of the Body	Chengdu University of Information Technology (CUIT)
Name of the Programme and Links to Publications	BSc (hons) in Software Systems Development

Date of last review of arrangement/agreement	13-03-2013
Next Review Year	2018
Section: Articulation Agreements	Second Set of Records
Name of the Body	Shanghai Institute of Tourism (SIT)
Name of the Programme and Links to Publications	HDip in International Hotel Management
Date of last review of arrangement/agreement	15-12-2012
Review year for agreements	2017
Section: Articulation Agreements	Third Set of Records
Name of the Body	Shanghai Normal University (SHNU)
Name of the Programme and Links to Publications	BSc (Hons) in Construction Management & Engineering
Date of last review of arrangement/agreement	15-04-2011
Review year for agreements	2016
Section: Internal Review Schedule	First Set of Records
Areas/Units	15/16 School of Lifelong Learning & Education 15/16 School of Health Sciences 15/16 School of Science
Number	3
Link(s) to Publication(s)	https://www.wit.ie/about_wit/documents_and_policies/quality_assurance_documents
Submission	Final Submission

A piece in relation to the evolution of quality assurance and enhancement systems to support strategic objectives in the reporting period.

WIT aligns strategy and Quality Assurance through the Executive Structure, School Review process and programme design and development (via the Academic Council). Specific roles are defined for the Office of the President, Office of the Registrar and the various committees of Academic Council. The responsibilities are generally defined within the quality assurance framework document ([link](#)) and in the WIT Quality Manual ([link](#)), Academic Council *Terms of Reference, Code of Practice, Composition and Regulations* (constitution, [link](#)) and the Governing Body Code of Conduct for Governing Body Members ([link](#)).

WIT has published its strategic plan that guides the direction and targets within the functional and academic areas. WIT's context for strategic planning is, like many other IoTs, impacted upon by the financial austerity faced over the past number of years. Notwithstanding this constraint the Institute has been tasked with multiple change activities, both internally and externally driven. External drivers include the framework for technological universities and the clustering activity. Internally, the drivers of change include the need to be more cost effective, to have better data reporting and analysis, and to increase the range of income generation across all of the activities. An outcome of the pressures on the institution to cope with multiple demands has been an extent of fragmentation in the planning process and a greater need to articulate key devolved strategic priorities at unit levels. This has been evident through the school review processes undertaken in the reporting period. Notwithstanding this, WIT has a strategic focus its quality development activities based on 5 strategic themes (ST) and with associated work packages:

1. To increase the type and variety of **awards** and to enhance the process by which awards can be created as a means of being more flexible and responsive (ST-A);
2. To meet the QA performance criteria of the proposed Technological University (ST-TU);
3. To enhance **learning** opportunities across access and life-long learners (ST-L) and **international student** (ST-IS) markets,
4. To enhance **industry focus** by offering greater pathways for continuous professional development and up-skilling in industrial and commercial settings (ST-IF).
5. To improve the **effectiveness** and responsiveness of administration and quality assurance governance (ST-E)

A driving force behind these initiatives is clearly the wider context of funding for third level generally and more specifically the need to ensure financial stability and growth for WIT. Quality assurance and enhancement evolved to support these strategic work-packages, as follows:

1. WIT enhanced the quality infrastructure for non-major awards clarifying, simplifying and embedding new regulations for the approval and management of these types of awards. This increases capacity for improvements to external engagement, including meeting industry's continuous professional development needs. Changes to our timetabling procedures have also been developed to present the timetabling of modules in a more accessible method to facilitate and encourage the use of short-duration award types (ST-A, ST-E).
2. Course evaluation processes were also more generally reviewed with particular emphasis on defining the roles and responsibilities of the various participants and the formulation of a Service Level Agreement that codified the expectations and timelines of the process. This was further enhanced by an internal audit process that helped to identify the particular areas upon which future focus of the WIT Executive Board might be best spent (ST-E).
3. A significant activity in the reporting period was the preparation and execution of periodic School Review (school reviews consist of a strategic and programmatic element). The School Review process was designed to review key (and evolving) organisational objectives such as the use of minor awards, external engagement and the strategic management of the academic portfolio (ST-TU, ST-A, ST-L, ST-IF).
4. One key contribution to the success of Lifelong Learning and Access in WIT has been the commencement of a fully on-line module catalogue, which will be fully populated once the School Reviews are completed. The catalogue will be useful in identifying and promoting learning opportunities (e.g. the Teaching Council requirement of teachers to take certain modules of subject specific learning) (ST-L, ST-IF).
5. The Institute continues to benchmark and report on its performance against the Technological University expected criteria. In particular, investment in a Graduate Office has been designed to specifically focus resources in developing the range, type and quality of post-graduate awards. This has resulted in new forms of graduate education being discussed and a structured approach to doctoral education proposed (ST-TU).
6. In addition, WIT has been a lead partner in a sectorial project designed to develop a broad quality assurance and development framework for the technological sector (ST-TU).
7. The WIT postgraduate admissions process was also reviewed with changes made to the admissions processes (ST-L, ST-E).
8. An international process review was carried out, which led to a review of admissions (including engagement with NARIC), a review of entry requirements and English language requirements, a review of the contract agreement process, a codified need to homogenise an International Student Handbook, and a focus on student services for International students (ST-IS, ST-E).
9. Significant work was also completed in the reporting period on codifying access routes into the Institute from FE providers and the creation and publishing of progression routes from the FE sector, both individual providers and at ETB level. Work concentrated on developing, enhancing and extending existing FE progression agreements in the period under review with the number of agreements growing to 1 ETB and 21 FE providers. This required new policy and procedural development (ST-L).

Retention activities were also strengthened through stronger student engagement online; enhanced Access and School support programmes; the generation of detailed retention reports (ST-L).

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

The Institute reviews its academic regulations regularly. All core QA regulations were reviewed in the period and in addition the following new policies were developed:

1. Quality Assurance Framework for Waterford Institute of Technology;
2. Framework for structured doctoral education (White paper)

A key issue for the year was that industrial action by a staff union resulted in Academic Council meetings not meeting quorum targets for most of 2015/16. Committees of the Council however continued to meet and the approval for academic activity was granted directly by the Governing Body in the absence of Council.

The Office of the Registrar had one change in key personnel, with the departure of Dr. Séamus Ó Diollúin as Head of Quality Promotion and Policy Development and his replacement by Dr. Paul O'Leary.

The schedule of QA governance meetings for the period should be inserted here.

Seventh Academic Council Meetings from 07/10/14 to 06/12/16

Date	Meeting Status
07/10/2014	Meeting Held
04/11/2014	Meeting Held
02/12/2014	Meeting Held
27/01/2015	Meeting Held
03/03/2015	Meeting Held
28/04/2015	Meeting Held
19/05/2015	Meeting Held
16/06/2015	Meeting referred to GB
06/10/2016	Meeting Held
10/11/2015	Meeting referred to GB
02/02/2016	Meeting referred to GB
08/03/2016	Meeting referred to GB
19/04/2016	Meeting referred to GB
17/05/2016	Meeting referred to GB
14/06/2016	Meeting referred to GB
04/10/2016	Meeting referred to GB
15/11/2016	Meeting referred to GB
06/12/2016	Meeting referred to GB

Standing Committee of Academic Council Meetings 2015/2016 – 8 Members

Meeting Date	Meeting Status	Number of Attendees
4th September 2015	Meeting Held	6
2nd September 2016	Meeting Held	6

Learning & Teaching of Academic Council Meetings 2015/2016 - 15 Members

Meeting Date	Meeting Status
22nd September 2015	Meeting Held
20th October 2015	Meeting Held
17th November 2015	Meeting Not Held
19th January 2016	Meeting Not Held
01st March 2016	Meeting Not Held
12th April 2016	Meeting Not Held
3rd May 2016	Meeting Not Held
31st May 2016	Meeting Not Held
20th September 2016	Meeting Not Held
18th October 2016	Meeting Not Held
29th November 2016	Meeting Not Held

Research, Innovation & Entrepreneurship Meetings 2015/2016 – 17 Members

Meeting Date	Meeting Status
15th September 2015	Meeting Held
13rd October 2015	Meeting Held
24th November 2015	Meeting Not Held
12th January 2016	Meeting Not Held
9th February 2016	Meeting Not Held
15th March 2016	Meeting Not Held
26th April 2016	Meeting Not Held
24th May 2016	Meeting Not Held
13th September 2016	Meeting Held
11th October 2016	Meeting Not Held
15th November 2016	Meeting Held

Research Ethics Committee Total number of members: 18 members

Meeting Date	Meeting Status
5th October 2015	Meeting Held
2nd November 2015	Meeting Held
7th December 2015	Meeting Held
4th February 2016	Meeting Held
9th February 2016	Meeting Held
26th February 2016	Meeting Held
4th April 2016	Meeting Held

11th April 2016	Special meeting
29th April 2016	Meeting Held
16th May 2016	Meeting Held
13th May 2016	Meeting Held
3rd October 2016	Meeting Held
27th October 2016	Meeting Held
12th December 2016	Meeting Held

Postgraduate Enrolment Committee

Total number of members: 10 members

29th September 2015	Cancelled
16th October 2015	Meeting Held
20th November 2015	Cancelled
22nd January 2016	Meeting Held
26th February 2016	Meeting Held
8th April 2016	Meeting Held
11th May 2016	Meeting Held
1st June 2016	Meeting Held
23rd September 2016	Meeting Held
21st November 2016	Meeting Held
25th November 2016	Meeting Held
16th December 2016	Meeting Held

Academic Quality Meetings of Academic Council 2015/2016

Meeting Date Meeting Status

15th September 2015	Meeting Held
13th October 2015	Meeting Held
24th November 2015	Meeting Deferred
12th January 2016	Meeting Held
9th February 2016	Meeting Held
15th March 2016	Meeting Held
26th April 2016	Meeting Held
24th May 2016	Meeting Held
13th September 2016	Meeting Held
11th October 2016	Meeting Held
22nd November 2016	Meeting Held

Academic Planning Meetings of Academic Council 2015/2016

Meeting Date Meeting Status

22nd September 2015	Meeting Held
20th October 2015	Meeting Held
17th November 2015	Meeting Held
19th January 2016	Meeting Held
1st March 2016	Meeting Held
12th April 2016	Meeting Held
3rd May 2016	Meeting Held
31st May 2016	Meeting Held
20th September 2016	Meeting Held
18th October 2016	Meeting Held
29th November 2016	Meeting Held

PART 2 - Section 2: Institution-led QA - Annual

Reviews in the Reporting Period

Area/Unit and links to relevant publications

Review of the School of Lifelong Learning and Education;
Link to published report:
https://www.wit.ie/about_wit/documents_and_policies/quality_assurance_documents

Links to published internal reviews

Second Set of Records

Area/Unit and links to relevant publications

Review of the School of Health Science, Link to published report:
https://www.wit.ie/about_wit/documents_and_policies/quality_assurance_documents

Links to published internal reviews

Third Set of Records

Area/Unit and links to relevant publications

Review of the School of Science and Computing, Link to published report:
https://www.wit.ie/about_wit/documents_and_policies/quality_assurance_documents

Links to published internal reviews

Fourth Set of Records

Area/Unit and links to relevant publications	Other reports include: i. 6 new programme validations, 3 major programme changes and 2 collaborative programme validations where conducted through external peer review. In addition, 7 permissions for new programme development were approved; ii. 48 minor changes (modules and programmes) submitted to the Academic Quality Committee of the Academic Council; iii. An Internal Audit Review was carried out by Deloitte on the WIT QA framework (for the Governing Body Audit Committee); iv. Review of administration of the International Office (not published).
Number of internal approval/evaluations and reviews completed in respect of Validation/Programme Approval	6
Number of internal approval/evaluations and reviews completed in respect of Programme Review.	48
Number of internal approval/evaluations and reviews completed in respect of School/Department/Faculty Review.	3
Composition of Panels: % Internal	20
Composition of Panels: % National	60
Composition of Panels: % UK	20
Composition of Panels: % EU	0
Composition of Panels: % Student	10
Chair Profile: % Internal	0
Chair Profile: % International	100
PART 2 - Section 3: Update on Institutional QA Overview	Other Implementation Factors

This institution can use this section to set out the ways in which data is used to support quality assurance and the management of the student learning experience.

Standard reports produced by the Institute and discussed at faculty level include:

1. Module mark ranges and award distribution for each programme for examination boards;
2. Programme board reports;
3. External examiner reviews;
4. Research centre annual reports.

A number of standard reports are also provided to Academic Council annually and these include:

1. External examiner statistics;
2. Reports on appeals and viewing of scripts;
3. The national student survey results;

Regular management reports linked to QA also include:

1. Analysis of retention;
2. Analysis of CAO intakes and demand patterns;
3. Unit cost and performance data at programme levels;
4. Internal audit reports (specifically on the QA framework).

It is also policy that any initiatives undertaken by the Institute undergo evaluation, for instance research scholarships, peer-to-peer and other retention initiatives. These reviews aid the evaluation of the initiative and are generally a precursor to continued funding.

A core data source is the feedback from students arising from their participation on the programme board. All programme boards have two student representatives. The Institute works closely with the Students' Union in the development and training of student representatives and is also a participant in the national NSTEP programme, designed to enhance connectivity and integration of students in the decision-making process of the Institute.

WIT uses the Banextra software to manage its student database, the Student Record System (SRS), and in terms of Quality Assurance, to track access, progression, retention, pass rates, et cetera. The Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) is also used, but not heavily relied on due to low participation rates (an issue WIT is attempting to remedy). Another national initiative, the First Destinations Survey, is also used to inform decision-making.

Ad hoc reports conducted during the year include a review of International Office and an analysis of the programme evaluation (CE) process, (length of time taken for each phase, interactions with programme teams, et cetera) to confirm the process duration was in line with best practice.

The institution may choose to highlight in this section information relating to factors that have impacted on quality and quality assurance in the reporting period. These may be factors relating to national developments or initiatives, such as clusters/alliances/mergers, other external factors or intra-institutional factors.

Quality and quality assurance was impacted by national and local factors in the past year. Nationally, the on-going lack of investment in HE, has forced strategic and operational changes in the Institute and created a very challenging financial position for the Institute. WIT continues to engage with the HEA System Performance Framework and to be held accountable for performance against a set of clearly defined national priorities and key system objectives. WIT was assessed across seven key areas: regional clusters; participation, equal access and lifelong learning, excellent teaching and learning, and quality of the student experience; high quality, internationally competitive research and innovation; enhanced engagement and knowledge exchange; enhanced internationalisation; and institutional consolidation and was awarded a Category 1 status for its high performance. These outcomes include improved access, provision of skilled graduates to meet economic needs, better research, development & innovation, greater internationalisation and an enhanced quality of teaching and learning.

TUI industrial action in the reporting period also impacted on quality and quality assurance, most notably in the withdrawal of members of the TUI from the Academic Council and Council committees. Council sub-committees continued to discharge their remits and the Institute provided alternative arrangements through the Governing Body, to ensure the approval work required by the QA framework was completed.

Clarity on the Technological University legislation and indeed on the expectation of cluster activity continues to be problematic. For instance, the current cluster in the South spans two different skills regions with two regional skills forums being serviced by individual parts of the southern cluster. The lack of clarity makes strategic performance planning more uncertain and problematic.

Any other implementation issues of interest can be noted here.

Resulting from the strategic theme work packages, on creating new award types the Institute is seeing a growth in the use and uptake of minor and special purpose awards, with 309 minor/special purpose awards made in 2016. In addition, it is working to recognise the progressive nature of learning and the learners' achievement of different levels (defined by the NFAQ) of awards as they progress. A new structure to recognise this progression is the embedded award, an award that is generic to the overall programme based on the numbers of credits and learning achieved as the learner progresses (i.e. recognise a level 6 award after two years of appropriately mapped learning) regardless of whether or not the learner exits. It would therefore be only available to learners on application and would not form any part of the expected learner progression pathway. This approach has been approved by the Academic Council and the necessary infrastructure is being built to allow it to be implemented in 2017/8.

A new external examining policy has been approved by Academic Council, and is now moving towards a phased rollout.

WIT began a project on academic governance in 2016. A combination of factors such as an internal audit on the overall approach to the Institute's quality system (suggested by the Office of the Registrar), the subsequent crystallisation of a policy on the academic framework, as well as performance issues such as the industrial action affecting the Academic Council, all drew attention to the necessity to be more explicit in the definition of academic governance and the associated roles and responsibilities of various parties. To this end the Institute has initiated a best practice review from our legal experts on the practices of academic governance generally. Recently, this project has been identified as having sectorial wide significance and is likely to be developed for the IoT sector more generally.

A commentary about the effectiveness of QA policies and procedures in the reporting period may be inserted here.

WIT approaches its QA and QI activities from the philosophy of continuous on-going development. This is evidenced by activities, such as annual reviews of the academic regulations and the regular review of the operational and policy impacts of the activities on the ground. Changes to the programme evaluation procedures and the creation of service level agreements are clear examples of this philosophy in action. Academic Council committees are active and empowered to identify key areas for development. For instance, the research committee initiated the review of research supervision regulations and the development of a structured doctoral programme.

At the centre of good evaluation is the availability of good data and of the appropriate reporting of that data for decision-making and review. The Institute is investing in the development of data analysis capability and have allocated resources to that end. The formal implementation of a strategic planning office led at vice-president level, will be implemented in 2017/8. This will further develop the institutional capacity for data analysis and data informed decision-making. It remains a regret of the Institute that central funding is not available to the sector as a whole to enhance institutional research capabilities at a time where all IoTs are under increasing reporting demands. The Institute will continue to emphasise data reporting and data-led review at all levels of the Institute.

A significant part of the effectiveness of the quality system is the extent to which compliance with it is maintained and overseen. Bodies with oversight obligations include:

1. Governing Body has the overall oversight requirements to ensure the institute operates appropriately;
2. The President as the accounting office of the Institute;
3. Academic Council and its committees (including school-based committees, such as examination or programme boards). Individual committees have defined roles and responsibilities with regard to specific compliance issues, such as programme validation, approval of external examiners, approval of appropriate supervisory arrangements for post-graduates, ethical approvals, award and progression rules and so on. Committees have the capacity to approve or reject submissions and while most decisions are approval orientated a full range of decisions are made routinely.
4. Individual management functions also have oversight functions and these include Heads of Schools and Departments, as well as central managers such as in Admissions. In these cases responsibilities are to implement policies or procedures.

The Institute's desire is to have devolved responsibility and ownership of quality assurance (to unit level) and this devolution brings with it additional compliance risks. While devolution brings flexibility and responsiveness at local level it also increases the challenges of good overall academic governance. An onus therefore exists to improve the training and development of all staff on QA responsibilities and, accordingly, the training role of the Head of Quality Promotion and Academic Policy Development has been enhanced. Notwithstanding this change, the Institute is aware of the challenges in ensuring that the QA framework is applied consistently and appropriate throughout all of the activities.

A by-product of developing the overall quality assurance framework was to highlight the extent to which each oversight function (i.e. Governing Body, Academic Council, Executive Board) is aware of and responding to their obligations and more significantly how errors or instances of non-compliance are managed and reported. The academic governance project referred to earlier arose directly from this consideration. Further system enhancements to increase awareness for effectiveness will be developed in 2017/8, including a more formal system for variation reporting to the academic, executive management and governance functions.

An evaluation of the impact of QA policies and procedures through their implementation in the reporting period should be inserted here.

The impact of QA policies has been positive, with some impacts being more visible than others. For example, significant improvements with the extent and quality of constructive alignment have made through the recent School Reviews (Schools of Lifelong Learning and Education, Science and Health Sciences).

WIT has also developed a number of quality-led strategic initiatives, which have had a positive impact through their implementation in the reporting period. Impact has been generated in activities such as awards range, Research QA, Lifelong Learning and Access, Timetabling, International (Recruitment and Student services & support) and in Recruitment and Retention. For instance:

1. stronger and more accessible regulations for Minor, Special Purpose Awards and Single Module Awards were approved are now growing in use. There were also changes made to the course evaluation process and Service Level Agreements established between central offices and the academic areas, which has impacted on the knowledge and expectation around good programme development practices and responsibilities. The periodic School Review design included enhanced external engagement and a strong focus on constructive alignment (ST-A, ST-E);
2. the development of a module catalogue, which will have all validated modules once the School Reviews are completed, is impacting positively on the ability to better articulate curriculum expectations to learners, teachers and stakeholders. The catalogue will be used in this regard to identify and promote learning opportunities (e.g. the Teaching Council requirement of teachers to take certain modules for subject-specific learning (ST-L);
3. the WIT postgraduate admissions process was improved by requiring all applicants to apply through the Postgraduate Applications Centre (PAC) (ST-IS, ST-E);
4. a proposed framework of structures and regulations for a WIT structured doctorate is being considered by the Research, Innovation and Entrepreneurship committee of Academic Council (ST-TU);
5. the international process review led to a number of impacts in the international processes including: a review of admissions (including engagement with NARIC), a review of entry requirements and English language requirements, a review of the contract agreement process, an International Student Handbook, and a focus on student services for International students (ST-IS);
6. the formalisation of the WIT Further Education progression policy resulted in a greater visible connectivity between HE and FE, as well as increased access and growing student numbers transferring into WIT from FE (ST-L);
7. ongoing administrative reviews resulted in a greater number of student activities being processed on-line, including admission, registration and information activities (ST-E);
8. the generation of detailed retention reports and the creation of enhanced retention initiatives (such as peer-to-peer and Broadening Your Third Level Experience (BYTE) initiatives) have enhanced retention activities (ST-L);
9. significant development of the financial systems has enhanced the financial data available at school level and better information decision-making locally.

Industrial action during the period resulted in the plenary session of Academic Council not meeting and the work of the Council being transferred to the Governing Body. The activities completed by the committees of Council during the period of industrial action period (October 2015-December 2017) were as follows:

Activity	No. approvals	No. Referred, not approved
New prog.s granted permission	6	
New programmes/variations	15	3
Minor changes proposed	41	9
External Examiners Programmes	154	5
External Examiners Research	75	2
Ethical Approvals	67	9
Postgraduate Registrations	159	10
Collaborative programme validations	1	

This section should highlight an analysis of the key themes arising within the implementation of QA policies and procedures, primarily through a thematic analysis of key recommendations, commendations and conditions for the reporting period.

While programme evaluations (CE process) and the recent School Reviews highlighted a number of issues requiring local, School-related responses there were some themes common to each review. These include:

1. improving the awareness and practice of constructive alignment;
2. the impact on quality of the current lack of investment in this sector;
3. the need for effectively operating School Boards and Teaching and Learning committees in each School;
4. the need for a strong strategic framework at both Institute and School level, with appropriate management activity to support its implementation.

Student feedback mechanisms, including contributions to programme boards and school level reviews, have generally been very positive and the strength of the Institute's practices in student engagement is very positively regarded by students. Reviews have highlighted, however, the need for:

1. better information availability and/or visibility provision through course handbooks and assessment guidelines or marking schemes;
2. enhanced resources and facilities particularly around physical infrastructure and access to facilities outside of normal hours.

PART 4

Quality Enhancement

A description of improvements or enhancements, impacting on quality or quality assurance, that took place in the reporting period, identifying the reasons for the improvements (for example an evaluation of effectiveness and impact from the previous period or objectives set out in strategic compacts).

WIT has started a number of initiatives, activities and events aimed at improving quality across the institution. These include:

1. the development of a Structured Doctorate programme;
2. the piloting of nStep (National Student Engagement Programme), with the Union of Students in Ireland (USI), the Higher Education Authority (HEA), and Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI);
3. the phased roll-out of student feedback through the QA3 process;
4. the rollout of a new approach to external examining, by subject area and at School-level;
5. enhanced reporting (entry, exam result, retention, et cetera);
6. the appointment of a new position of the Vice President of Strategy and Institutional Transformation, together with new supporting roles in institutional analysis;
7. improved openness through a new publishing policy of external evaluation reports;
8. the proposed creation of senior lecturing positions (SL1) with a Quality Assurance remit.

Previously School Review reports were only available internally in WIT on the Intranet. However, for this reporting period, the three reports for the Schools reviewed have been published online, along with the report for the School of Business (reviewed in the previous academic year, 2014-15). Also, Assessors' Reports to Academic Council for new course developments (CE2) have now been published in this reporting period as have assessor reports for major programme changes (CE3) and collaborative provision (CE4).

An analysis of quality enhancement activities that were initiated by the institution. This could also include reference to any national or international quality assurance developments in which the institution is engaged. The institution is encouraged to highlight areas that may be of interest to other institutions and would benefit from wider dissemination.

WIT has been at the forefront of developing the system-wide quality assurance framework for the technological sector serving as the project sponsor and leading significant work on the project.

WIT took on a role in the National Student Engagement Programme in collaboration with the Union of Students in Ireland (USI), the Higher Education Authority (HEA) and Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) to improve our engagement capacity and to develop student capabilities, through a student training programme and by providing high quality opportunities for learners to engage. This initiative will continue on through 2017/18.

Other enhancements initiated include:

1. improving admission procedures for international and postgraduate applicants (SL-IS and SL-E);
2. new regulations for research postgraduate students, to support the structured doctorate framework (ST-L, ST-TU);
3. WIT has commenced a potential national initiative (with THEA and with support from QQI) on academic governance in the IoT sector (ST-E). The institute believes this has significant capacity to influence sector wide QA;
4. the roll-out of a new external examining process, with subject area examiners and module examiners (ST-L);
5. WIT is also looking at the development of institution-wide, quality assurance procedures for engagement with professional, statutory and regulatory bodies and other quality assurance and awarding bodies (ST-IF);
6. more open publishing will happen, in particular, external and student evaluations of performance at module, programme, School and Institution levels (SL-E).

PART 5

Objectives for the Coming Year

A piece in relation to strategic objectives in the coming period and plans for quality assurance and enhancement.

WIT is continuing to focus on the Strategic theme work-packages for 2017.

1. To increase the type and variety of awards and to enhance the process by which awards can be created as a means of being more flexible and responsive (ST-A);
2. To meet the performance criteria of the proposed Technological University (ST-TU);
3. To enhance **learning** opportunities across access and life-long learners (ST-L) and **international student** (ST-IS) markets;
4. To enhance industry focus by offering greater pathways for continuous professional development and upskilling in industrial and commercial settings (ST-IF);
5. To improve the **effectiveness** and responsiveness of administration and quality assurance governance (ST-E).

These will include:

1. Strengthening the Policy Framework (ALL);
2. Embedding a structured doctorate award (ST-TU, ST-A);
3. Implementing the new external examining system (ST-L);
4. Student feedback implemented at QA3 and enhanced responses on ISSE (ST-L);
5. Complete Academic Governance initiative (ST-E)
6. Completing the ongoing work regarding:
 - a. School Reviews (ST-E),
 - b. Module Catalogue (ST-L, ST-E),
 - c. Opening Access Routes & Flexible Learning Opportunities (ST-IS, ST-L, ST-IF, ST-A).

Review Plans: Area/Unit and Number

The final two School Reviews (Engineering and Humanities) will happen in the second half of 2016/17. There are also a number of new programmes, for example Springboard programmes in Culinary Science and in Financial Services, which will go through the programme approval process.

Preparations will continue in the year for the WIT Institutional Review which will happen in the 2018/19 academic year.

As mentioned earlier proposals for a modified the Section D of the WIT Quality Manual, Research Degree Regulations, will be made, partly due to the introduction of a WIT Structured Doctorate programme in the second half of the year.

Any further information with respect to plans for the coming period.

PART 6

Preparation for Periodic Review

A description of the impacts of institutional review within the institution.

This is a brief synopsis of progress to date on the Institutional Review, where improvements had been suggested in the previous Review. The improvements are typically too multi-faceted to spell out in detail, so examples only are offered here:

1. Public confidence in the quality of WIT Education & Standards of Awards: This has been addressed in several ways, including the redevelopment of the Institute's website to enhance the communication of relevant information to defined audiences;
2. Strategic Planning & Governance: The Institute, through its Governing Body and Committees, and in light of national strategy for Higher Education, is actively engaged in a process of structured consultation with internal and external stakeholders. The Institute continues to engage with the HEA and other national bodies regarding evolving national strategy;
3. Policy & Procedures for Quality Assurance: School Boards are in the process of being established (usually from the Quality Review Committee) in all Schools with devolved responsibility for monitoring implementation of quality policy. School Review processes have, however, indicated variation and issues with the operation of School Boards, which will need to be addressed further. School Boards should report to Academic Council on issues arising and actions taken arising from the annual QA monitoring processes in the previous academic year and on progress regarding enhancements recommended in the periodic School Reviews;
4. Approval, Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes and Awards: Academic Council has published guidelines for Schools that set out the documentation that must be sent to external examiners as well as best-practice guidelines for the consideration of continuous assessment, examination scripts, and other aspects of the external examiner process;
5. Criteria, Regulations and Procedures for Assessment: A green paper on assessment and its management has been published to the community for consultation. The School Quality Review Committees in the School Reviews are tasked with considering assessment strategy within the School. Evaluation of the impact of these actions arising from the School Review process indicates that additional work is required;
6. Quality Assurance of Teaching Staff: The Institute's draft revised Staff Training & Development Strategy & Plan was completed through staff and committee consultation and published in 2012. It included sections on identifying individual staff CPD needs and on Planning and recording professional development;
7. Learning Resources & Student Supports: The Student Handbook, referencing all supports available and how to access them, is provided for all incoming students. All student services information is available on the website ([link](#)), on designated notice boards, via text messaging, social media and at helpdesks. The Student Life and Learning unit also contribute to training for student class representatives;
8. Public Information: The Marketing Office has engaged with stakeholders and maintains and continues to develop an active presence on behalf of the Institute in key social media environments. Institute policy has evolved to include the publication of a wider range of quality documentation including the results of quality assurance reports;
9. National Framework of Qualifications / Access, Transfer and Progression: Academic Council approved a revised institutional RPL policy.

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 cycle.

WIT made significant and wide ranging enhancements in the 2015/6 year driven by a number of factors both internal and external. In times of change and particularly change driven by financial and resource constraints the need to ensure the Institute continues to do the right things, strategic, operational and within its quality ethos is critical and challenging. The drive is to do things quicker and more efficiently and this has been the orientation that WIT has seen embedded into its thinking processes. The connection between governance, sustainability and quality has been brought into focus through the initiatives over the past year. As IoTs generally take more responsibility for their activities across a wider spectrum of activities there is a growing imperative that we more tightly codify accountability for and ownership of key institutional processes with corresponding oversight and review. WIT hopes to lead national debate within this area.

Tightly coupled to the general area of governance is the need to ensure that we have a well-defined strategic planning and implementation framework that can direct and lead action and performance through the alignment of activities at unit level. Common with many other HE institutions, WIT struggles with the on-going need to roll-out and embed best practice in a highly devolved environment and ensure consistency of the learner experience. The creation of a new office in strategic planning is a major step in addressing this challenge for future years. It is also encouraging that the School review cycles have challenged academic areas directly in addressing this tension.

Finally, we reflect on the changing dynamics of HE generally. New types of programme delivery, new types of awards and new types of learners, coupled with international developments in the understanding of quality in HE, are having, and will have, a profound effect on what we do into the future. The student is becoming even more central in the activity of the Institute (note for instance the NSTEP programme) and the need to encourage a constructive and embraced voice for the learner will be an on-going challenge. Creating the physical and cultural infrastructure necessary to be the enabling mechanism for this to occur will involve significant work for 2017 and beyond.

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