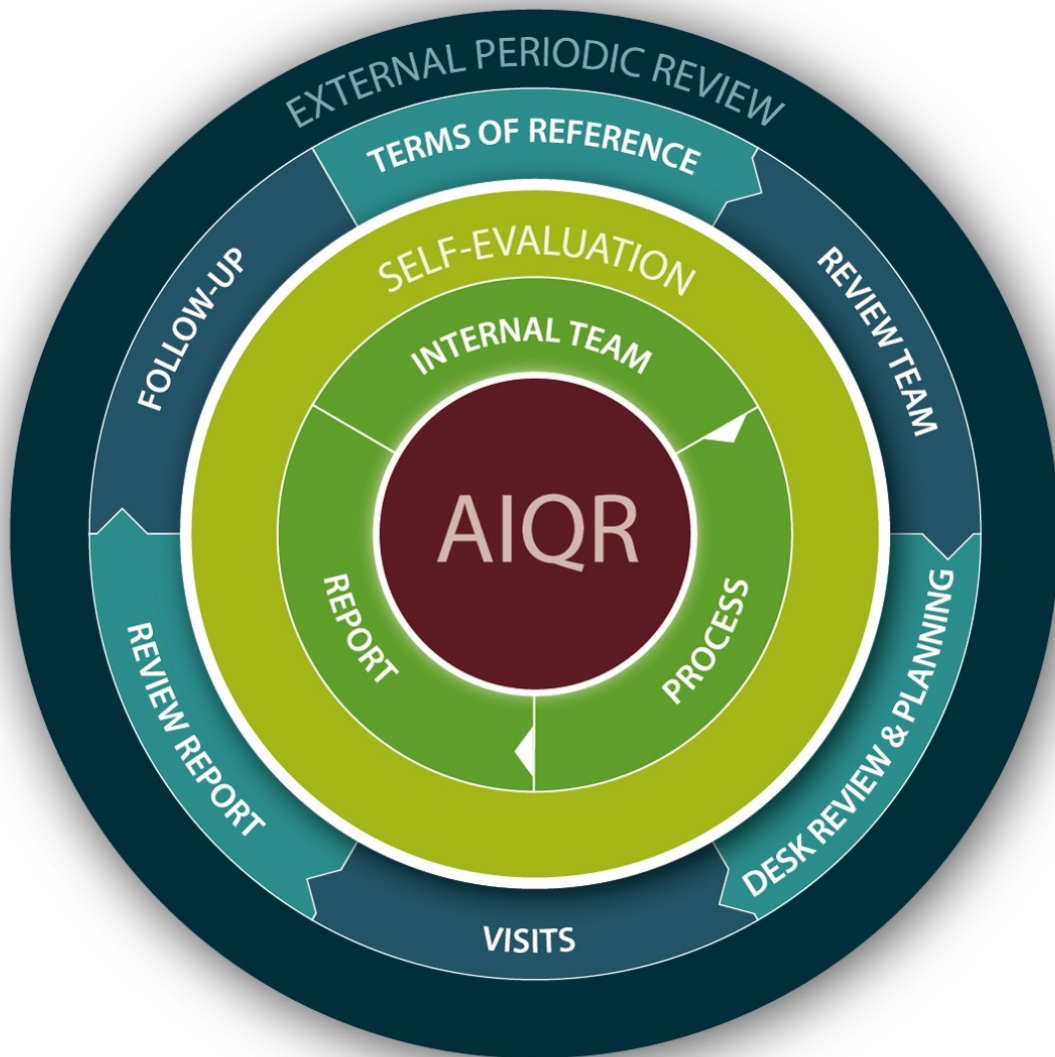


Waterford Institute of Technology

Annual Institutional Quality Assurance Report 2018

Based on the reporting period 1 September 2016 – 31 August 2017



The Cyclical Review Process

Part 1

Overview of internal QA governance, policies and procedures

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

1. Overarching Institution Quality Policy

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

The Waterford Institute of Technology Strategic Plan 2018-2021 sets out our vision to be a community of collaborative, inclusive and innovative educators. The Plan provides a direction for Waterford Institute of Technology that is focussed on those opportunities and outlines the organisation's strategic goals for the coming period, guided by our over-arching vision. The transformational agenda will ensure that by 2021 the Institute will be known:

1. For our provision of high quality educational experiences to students that are student centred and responsive to learner needs
2. As an accessible new university that offers a wide range of learning opportunities, access and progression routes and flexible modes of engagement with learning that reflect learner needs and societal change
3. As a research-led organisation with a demonstrably impactful, innovative, and dynamic research community
4. For being deeply embedded in regional discourse, policy-making, economic, social and cultural activity and as a driver of regional change
5. For our international profile that finds expression in the approach of our students and staff and in our extensive partnerships
6. As an effectively governed and managed organisation that is strategically focussed and demonstrates quality in all its activities.

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.

2. Quality assurance decision-making fora

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. In terms of academic quality and standards the Academic Council is the key decision-making body. 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 Constitution](#), which spells out the Terms of Reference, Code of Practice, Composition and Regulations, 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](#).

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.

1. 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:

The CE1 process is required to make the initial 'business' case proposal for a new programme to consider rationale need, demand, resources, capacity to deliver the programme, and the proposed outline of the programme. It is proposed by an Academic School and reviewed by the WIT Executive Board. The relevant regulations may be found in Section B of the WIT [Quality Manual: Programme Quality Assurance and Enhancement Policy and Procedures 2016-17](#) (RPA), Sections 2.3-2.4, CE1 stage application

The CE2 process is required for a full new programme proposal (leading to Major, Minor, Special Purpose of Supplemental Awards). It is proposed by an Academic School and reviewed by a Panel (comprising an external chair, external academic and industry representatives, student representative, and Registry and Academic Council representative), with the panel report and School response being considered by the Academic Quality Committee and then by the Academic Council. The relevant regulations may be found in Section B of the WIT [Quality Manual: Programme Quality Assurance and Enhancement Policy and Procedures 2016-17](#) (RPA), Sections 2.5-2.7, 2.10-2.11, CE2 stage application.

The CE4 process is required for a full new programme proposal leading a Joint Award programme, or a programme which has collaborative delivery. It is proposed by an Academic School and reviewed by a Panel (comprising an external chair, external academic and industry representatives, student representative, and Registry and Academic Council representative), with the panel report and School response being considered by the Academic Quality Committee and then by the Academic Council. The relevant regulations may be found in Section B of the WIT [Quality Manual: Programme Quality Assurance and Enhancement Policy and Procedures 2016-17](#) (RPA), Section 2.13 and Section C of the [WIT Quality Manual: Quality Assurance of Collaborative Programmes, including Transnational Programmes and Joint Awards](#) (RCP).

The CE3 process is required for a significant amendment to an existing approved programme, which necessitates a change in programme learning outcomes. It is proposed by an Academic School and reviewed by a Panel (comprising external academic and industry representatives, and Registry and Academic Council representatives) with the panel report and School response being considered by the Academic Quality Committee and then by the Academic Council. The relevant regulations may be found in Section B of the WIT [Quality Manual: Programme Quality Assurance and Enhancement Policy and Procedures 2016-17](#) (RPA), Section 2.8.

The Minor Change Request process is required where the proposal is for minor change(s) to an existing approved programme, which does not necessitate a change in programme learning outcomes. It is proposed by an Academic School and reviewed by the Academic Quality Committee and then by the Academic Council. The relevant regulations may be found in Section B of the WIT [Quality Manual:](#)

[Programme Quality Assurance and Enhancement Policy and Procedures 2016-17](#) (RPA), Section 2.9.

The Individual Module(s) Approval process is required where the proposal is to validate stand-alone modules. It is proposed by an Academic School and reviewed by an External subject expert(s), by the Academic Quality Committee and then by the Academic Council. The relevant regulations may be found in Section B of the WIT [Quality Manual: Programme Quality Assurance and Enhancement Policy and Procedures 2016-17](#) (RPA), Section 2.12.

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.*) The Quality Promotion Office also promotes and enables continuous quality improvement across the Institute's academic and administrative units, primarily by managing the Quality Review process for Schools and Units. This work includes support and guidance to Heads of Schools and Directors of Units, as well as academic and administrative staff; engaging and liaising with reviewers; advising on the implementation of recommendations in the review report; analysis of all review process findings.

Finally, the Institute has had a dedicated Continuous Professional Development week in February each year, since 2004, during which staff are offered training on a wide range of topics, including QA processes, such as new programme development/modifying existing programmes and creating NFQ-appropriate module descriptors.

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 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. consistency of standards across the University and adherence to all relevant University policies

The Academic Quality Committee, on behalf of the Academic Council) approves the appointment of all external examiners, both at undergraduate and postgraduate (taught and research) levels. The appointment of external examiners is an important part of the Institute's quality assurance. The Academic Quality Committee ensures that standards are uniformly applied across the Institute. Further information on the External Examiner reporting and setup can be found on the WIT webpage ([link](#)).

Information for Programme Specific Regulations are all contained in the Approved Programme Schedules, available on the WIT Moodle Intranet ([link](#)). Programme regulations are approved by the Academic Quality Committee and then by Academic Council.

Examination Regulations: The examination regulations are published on the WIT website ([link](#)).

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.

3. Research Quality (ESG 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.9)

Links and/or text relating to any specific quality assurance procedures for the design, approval, delivery, assessment and monitoring of research programmes, if they exist.

The 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:\Public\Registrar\Quality, 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. Research Postgraduate Student Induction 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). A step-by-step guide has also been published for research postgraduates and for supervisors ([link](#)).
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.

The Academic Council's Quality Committee also has a function related to research, and that is to oversee the standards in the appointment of external examiners for research activities. The examining process, panel membership and required examiner qualifications and experience are all detailed in the RRD. School Postgraduate examination boards approve the decisions of the examiners.

As a recipient of the HR Excellence in Research Award ([link](#)) from the European Commission, WIT is

committed to developing its supports for researchers, there are also a number of supports for students and supervisors, including

- Institute-wide Generic Skills training for Postgraduates (prior to the advent of the WIT Structured Doctorate);
- Institute-wide Supervisor Training via a module on the WIT MA in Learning and Teaching;
- WIT is also represented on the national Research Supervision Working Group and National Forum for Research Integrity.

The Institute's Research Support Unit developed a Data Management guidance [document](#) to assist researchers in developing a quality Data Management Plan, for European Union H2020 funding proposals and projects.

Finally, research activity of each school area is considered as a key strategic item for each periodic School Review. Schools were required to develop, or amend, their individual School research strategies and research implementation plans. The strategy and plan was to set School-wide priorities and goals for research, with an emphasis on the focus and quality of research, and identify clear metrics for their evaluation.

4. Student Lifecycle (ESG 1.4)

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

The 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](#))
- Deferral First Year Entry Policy and Procedure ([link](#))

Student Transfer

- RTP, Section 2.12 (transfer, [link](#))
- RTP, Section 2.13 (advanced entry, [link](#))

- 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 ([link](#))
- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) policy ([link](#))

Certification (qualification information, documentation)

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

5. Teaching Staff (ESG 1.5)

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for assuring the competence of teaching staff, including staff recruitment and staff development.

The 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](#). In the reporting period, a Code of Conduct for the Responsible Practice of Research was drafted, reviewed by the Academic Council's Research, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Committee, the WIT Executive Board and sent out for consultation to staff unions and the students union. Two other policies that were drafted were the Conflict of Interest Policy and the Intellectual Property Policy (both sent for public consultation in August 2017).

Human Resource Policies include:

1. Staff Handbook ([link](#));
2. Staff training and development strategy ([link](#));
3. Annual Leave Policy ([link](#));
4. E-mail acceptable 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. Respect and Dignity policy ([link](#));
16. Disclosure policy ([link](#));
17. Child protection policy ([link](#));
18. [Computer and Network Security Policy](#) ([link](#));
19. Intellectual Property Policy ([link](#));
20. [Recording Policy](#) ([link](#));
21. [Code of Practice](#) ([link](#));
22. [Cloud Storage Acceptable Usage Policy](#) ([link](#));
23. [Disciplinary Procedure](#) ([link](#));
24. [Procedures for the Resolution of Grievances Disputes](#) ([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, with modules offered in Adult Learning, Research Supervisory Skills, Blended Learning, Academic Enquiry, Educational Theory, Practical Pedagogy, Mentoring, Curriculum and Assessment, Reflective Practice in Education, Research Methods in Education, Perspectives on Further and Higher Education and Independent Learning.

Finally, the Centre For Technology-Enhanced Learning ([link](#)) run training workshops and a community of practice to support the development and utilization of the WIT eLearning infrastructure.

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.

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). The Committee are preparing to revisit the WIT Teaching & Learning Strategy in work plan; the learning, teaching and assessment strategy will support the Institute's strategic plan and will inform the continued development of the learner experience and learner environment. In the reporting period, the Committee also produced a paper on Assessment & Its Management, which was approved by Academic Council, as well as a Practical Guide to writing Learning Outcomes and a draft Green Paper on Computer Based Exams.

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:\Public\Registrar\Quality, 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.

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.

Quality Assurance promotion occurs through workshops in the staff Professional Development week and through material available on [Moodle](#), to help staff engage with the following:

Programme development or alteration, the WIT Module Catalogue, Learning Outcomes, Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, QQI Documents and Policies, Award Standards, Irish Higher Education Quality Network (IHEQN), European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), The Bologna Process and the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

The Centre For Technology-Enhanced Learning ([link](#)) helps staff to offer different modes of delivery, using a variety of pedagogical means, including the Moodle Learning Management System, using a room dedicated to contemporary recording and Turnitin for assignment plagiarism detection.

The WIT Educational Services Unit ([link](#)) supports video conferencing and web conferencing and also provides services to staff for installation, maintenance and booking of educational equipment.

Finally, the Institute has had a dedicated Continuous Professional Development week in February each year, since 2004, during which staff are offered training on a wide range of topics, including lecture delivery, QA processes, interview techniques, health and safety, child protection policy, etc.

7. Resources and Support (ESG 1.5)

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

The 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](#));
4. The Careers Centre ([link](#));
5. Health and promotional activities;
6. Disability office ([link](#));
7. Induction support ([link](#));
8. Peer to peer 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](#));

Procedures and/or operating protocols include:

1. Induction processes ([link](#));
2. Student Handbook ([link](#));
3. Student Counselling ([link](#));
4. 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](#).

A number of changes have been made to the IT network and procedures, to improve the student experience:

1. Upgrade of two thirds of the network. This has seen an improvement in speeds, overall Quality of Service and an overall reduction in the amount of electricity consumed to run the network. This means that WIT now has a faster core network which will last for at least another 15-years;
2. Better wireless experience in response to a growing demand. The replacement of 15 old Wi-Fi access points with 30 high-powered new ones to significantly upgrade the Wi-Fi network for students in the library;
3. Launch of an online student request facility to simplify student request for official documentation.

Extra resources and support have also been put in place to support staff in terms of professional development and enhancing their research. For example, the School of Science staff are supported through the School to upskill to PhD and there is now a Grant Preparation Support Scheme to facilitate researchers to apply for research funding.

Finally, in 2016, the Waterford Institute of Technology successfully retained the [HR Excellence in Research Award](#) from the European Commission, first obtained in 2014, for a further two years. This award is given to institutions which offer an attractive, supportive and stimulating environment in which to carry out research and recognises the importance of providing its researchers with the necessary training and support environment to develop their careers. Following an internal self-evaluation, WIT retains the award at the two year stage and goes forward with an evolved Action Plan for the 2017-2018 period. A further evaluation will be conducted by external peer review, administered by the European Commission in 2018. It is possible to download [the WIT report](#) produced in 2016, reviewing key achievements and progress made against the original action plan 2014, and containing a new action plan for 2016-18.

8. Information Management (ESG 1.7)

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

The primary policy and procedure documents governing information management include:

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

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:\Public\Registrar\Quality, 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.

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.

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:\Public\Registrar\Quality, 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.

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.

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, [link](#));
4. As part of strategic planning and development ([link](#));
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, renewed in the reporting period); and in research.

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

Professional Body Recognition: Several WIT Programmes have Professional Body Accreditation. The [WIT Quality Manual](#) Section A *Academic Regulations for Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Programmes* (RTP); spells out the required approach for dealing with Professional Bodies, for example, for individual modules that can be used to claim exemptions from professional examinations, or the status of professional accreditation of a given programme and, indeed the duties of Programme Boards to maintain the accreditation of the programme.

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).

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. The Institute does draw a distinction between types of external bodies:

1. Professional accreditation: a body that accredits the programme directly, such as CORU (Social Care), Engineers Ireland (Engineering), Bord Altranais agus Cnáimhseachais na hÉireann (Nursing) or the Catholic Hospital Chaplaincy Board (Religious Studies);
2. Professional standards: a body that recommends standards, but accredits graduates based on modules or content covered (Teaching Council).

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

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

The Institute has a published policy on the range and extent of public information that it makes available. As part of this policy, it routinely provides, to the public, an extensive range of quality assurance and other documents including:

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

Freedom of Information: In general, members of the public are entitled to obtain official information from WIT, provided it does not conflict with the public interest and the right of privacy of individuals. The Act, how it relates to WIT and the process of applying are all presented [here](#).

Data Protection aims to protect individuals' right to privacy with regard to the processing of their personal data by those who control such data. The Data Protection Acts of 1988 and 2003 lay down rules about the safeguarding of the privacy of personal data, in both manual and electronic format, covering such areas as the obtaining, processing, keeping, use, disclosure, accuracy, appropriateness, retention and an individual's right to access and correct their personal data.

The WIT Data Protection Policy document, which outlines our Data Protection responsibilities, the personal data we collect and information on how to make a request for access to personal records is all available [here](#).

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.

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:\Public\Registrar\Quality, 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](#)).

14. DA Procedures for use of QQI Award Standards (IoT only)

Links and/or text relating to the specific procedures for the approval of programmes in keeping with Core Policy and Criteria for the Validation of Education and Training Programmes by QQI, the Sectoral Protocols for the Awarding of Research Master Degrees at NFQ Level 9 under Delegated Authority (DA) from QQI and the Sectoral Protocols for the Delegation of Authority by QQI to the Institutes of Technology to make Joint Awards, May 2014.

WIT does not have linked providers.

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

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.

1. Munich University of Applied Sciences: BA (Hons) in International Business and BA (Hons) in International Management. This is a double degree, with a next review date in 2018 ([Link](#)).
2. L'Ecole Supérieure de Commerce Bretagne Brest: Masters of Business (International). This is a Joint degree, with a next review date in 2021 ([Link](#)).
3. WLR FM and Beat 102-103: Certificate in Radio Broadcasting and Presenting. This is a WIT Level 6 Special Purpose Award, with a next review date in 2019 ([Link](#)).
4. Nemeton Teo: Higher Diploma in Arts in Television Production. This is a WIT Award, with a next review date in 2017 ([Link](#)).
5. Nanjing University of Information Science & Technology (NUIST): Bachelors of Science in Software Systems Development. This is a double degree, with a next review date in 2018 ([Link](#)).
6. Social Justice Ireland: MA in Social Justice and Public Policy, Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Social Justice and Public Policy; Certificate in Social Justice (Minor Award: Level 9: 30 ECTS Credits). This is a WIT award, with a next review date in 2021 ([Link](#)).

16. Additional Notes

Any additional notes can be entered here.

Delete this message and insert text here. The box will expand.

17. Internal Review Schedule

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

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Year | 2016/17 |
| Areas/Units | School of Engineering/Various Programmes |
| Number | 37 |
| Link(s) to Publications | link |

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Year | 2017/18 |
| Areas/Units | School of Humanities/Various programmes/ Student Service Units/ Schools' Structured Doctorate Applications |
| Number | |
| Link(s) to Publications | link |

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Year | 2018/19 |
| Areas/Units | Various programmes/ Student Service Units/Institutional Review |
| Number | |
| Link(s) to Publications | link |

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

AIQR - PART 1

| | |
|---|---|
| Overview of internal QA governance, policies and procedures | AIQR-Part-1-WIT.docx |
| Awarding Bodies | 5 |
| Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies | First Set of Records |
| Type of Arrangement | Awarding Body |
| Name of the Body | WIT and Munich University of Applied Sciences |
| Programme Titles and Links to Publications | BA (Hons) in International Business and BA (Hons) in International Management Link |
| Date of last review or accreditation | 01-04-2013 |
| Next review year | 2018 |
| Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies | Second Set of Records |
| Type of Arrangement | Awarding Body |
| Name of the Body | WIT and ESC Bretagne Brest, France |
| Programme Titles and Links to Publications | Masters of Business (International) Link |
| Date of last review or accreditation | 21-11-2017 |
| Next review year | 2021 |
| Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies | Third Set of Records |
| Type of Arrangement | Awarding Body |

| | |
|---|--|
| Name of the Body | WIT |
| Programme Titles and Links to Publications | Certificate in Radio Broadcasting and Presenting with WLRFM and Beat Link |
| Date of last review or accreditation | 14-12-2017 |
| Next review year | 2019 |
| Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies | Fourth Set of Records |
| Type of Arrangement | Awarding Body |
| Name of the Body | WIT |
| Programme Titles and Links to Publications | Awards with Social Justice Ireland: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ MA in Social Justice and Public Policy ○ Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Social Justice and Public Policy ○ Certificate in Social Justice (Minor Award: Level 9: 30 ECTS Credits) Link |
| Date of last review or accreditation | 01-03-2016 |
| Next review year | 2021 |
| Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies | Fifth Set of Records |
| Type of Arrangement | Awarding Body |
| Name of the Body | WIT |
| Programme Titles and Links to Publications | Higher Diploma in Arts in Television Production with Nemeton Teo Ltd Link |
| Date of last review or accreditation | 05-11-2009 |
| Next review year | 2017 |
| Articulation Agreements | 4 |
| 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 | 01-12-2012 |
| Review year for agreements | 2017 |
| Section: Articulation Agreements | Third Set of Records |
| Name of the Body | Shanxi Agricultural University (SXAU) |
| Name of the Programme and Links to Publications | BSc (Hons) in Software Systems Development |
| Date of last review of arrangement/agreement | 01-08-2013 |
| Review year for agreements | 2018 |
| Do you wish to make a final submission? | Yes, this is my final submission |
| On behalf of the President/Provost/CEO I confirm that the information submitted in this AIQR is accurate and correct. | Confirmed |
| Overview of internal governance, policies and procedures (Word Template). | Confirmed |
| Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies. | Confirmed |
| Collaborative Provision. | Confirmed |
| Articulation Agreements. | Confirmed |
| Date of Final Submission | 21-02-2018 |

Parts 2-6

Institution-led QA – Annual Information

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

Part 2: Institution-led QA – Annual

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

Section 1: Quality Assurance and Enhancement System Developments

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

The aim of all Quality Assurance and Enhancement System Developments at WIT is to support the Institute's strategic objectives and to ensure the highest standards and continuous improvement in all of the activities of the Institute. The approach is always guided by national and international standards, as well as national developments, including Guidelines from QQI. In order to instil confidence in the developments, policies, quality review reports and School Implementation Plans and regulations are all published publicly. All quality reviews involve panels that comprising a wide representation that include peers from outside the Institute to provide objectivity and to allow comparisons against external quality standards.

The Waterford Institute of Technology Strategic Plan provides focus and goals to WIT's operational and academic areas. As for all of the Irish Third Level institutions, WIT's strategic planning is drawn up in a context of financial austerity over a period of several years. This is coupled with the challenges of introducing significant change, both internally and externally driven. External drivers include the framework for technological universities and the related merging activity. Internally, the drivers of change include the need to be more cost effective, to have better data reporting and analysis, to continue to enhance governance structures 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. WIT has a strategic focus in its quality development activities, based on 5 strategic themes (ST), originally described in the 2015-16 AIQR, but with ST-TU being extended in this period, at the request of students and staff to be more explicit about the student experience:

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, across teaching & learning, research and the student experience, 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).

This strategic focus to quality assurance and enhancement systems supports the Institution's strategic objectives, presented in The Waterford Institute of Technology Strategic Plan 2018-2021. The Strategic Plan sets out targets, which are supported by the quality development activities' 5 strategic themes (ST). The WIT Strategic Plan envisages that WIT will be known:

- I. For our provision of high quality educational experiences to students that are student centred and responsive to learner needs (ST-A, ST-IS);
- II. As an accessible new university that offers a wide range of learning opportunities, access and progression routes and flexible modes of engagement with learning that reflect learner needs and societal change (ST-TU, ST-IS);
- III. As a research-led organisation with a demonstrably impactful, innovative, and dynamic research community (ST-TU);
- IV. For being deeply embedded in regional discourse, policy-making, economic, social and cultural activity and as a driver of regional change (ST-L, ST-IF);
- V. For our international profile that finds expression in the approach of our students and staff and in our extensive partnerships (ST-IS);
- VI. As an effectively governed and managed organisation that is strategically focussed and demonstrates quality in all its activities (ST-E, ST-A).

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](#)).

In 2016-17 WIT continued to review and enhance its systems in relation to education management, governance and quality in accordance with evolving national and international developments. In the reporting period the following specific improvements supported the implementation of WIT's Quality Framework and Strategic objectives, as follows:

- Student participation and feedback:
 - A core QA source is the feedback from students arising from their participation on programme boards. All programme boards have two student representatives and this year also saw enhanced participation in the Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE), as well as the piloting of anonymous QA3 programme feedback, using the WIT Moodle system (ST-E, ST-L);
 - 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 (ST-E, ST-L);
 - Retention activities continue to be further strengthened through better student engagement online; enhanced Access and School support programmes; the generation of detailed retention reports and the continued roll out of P2P programmes (ST-L);
- Governance and management structures:
 - The Vice President for Academic Affairs and Registrar is leading a new project (with sector-wide ambition) on Academic Governance at WIT, to increase institutional responsiveness and awareness of academic governance. One initial intention is to deliver training to both the WIT Governing Body and to the incoming Academic Council, who begin their 3-year term in the 2017/18 academic year (ST-E, ST-TU);
 - To enhance the Governing Body's role in WIT academic governance, the Annual Institutional Quality Report (AIQR) is to be approved by the Governing Body, prior to submission to QQI (ST-E, ST-TU);
 - WIT has been a lead partner in a sectorial project designed to develop a broad quality assurance and development framework for the technological sector (THEQF), which was launched at the Envisioning the Technological Higher Education Sector event in April 2017 (ST-TU);
- External review of academic processes:
 - The Academic Council's Planning Committee is to oversee the process for reviews of Student Support Areas. The Terms of Reference and operational procedures will be finalised in the next academic year, with the WIT Library being identified as the first unit to be reviewed (ST-A, ST-E);
 - The Course Evaluation processes were further reviewed and refined in the reporting period. (ST-E);
 - New programme QA was further enhanced by an internal audit of the programme evaluation process that helped to underline strengths and suggest some minor improvements (ST-E);
 - A significant activity once again in this reporting period was the preparation and execution of a 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);

- The Institute continues to benchmark and report on its performance against the Technological University expected criteria, for example in the Self-Evaluation Strategic Dialogue Cycle 4 report, produced in May 2017 for the HEA. In particular, the external review of the proposed Structured Doctorate and associated Universal Path modules has occurred. This resulted in approval for the modules and recommended changes in the approach to doctoral education (ST-TU).
- The Academic Council are considering the publication of all minutes of its meetings on a public site to enhance openness and transparency.

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

- The Strategy Office was re-established at Waterford Institute of Technology in January 2017. The Institute's investment in Strategy is in recognition of the centrality of Strategic Planning to institutional governance, management and organisation (ST-TU, ST-E);
- The development of the strategic plan has been underpinned by wide-scale and significant public, stakeholder and staff engagement. In total 25 meetings and events took place (ST-TU, ST-E);
- The Institute's Strategic Plan 2018-2021 prioritises:
 - Developing the Institute's impact regionally and nationally through its programme portfolio, curriculum, and other activities (ST-A, ST-TU);
 - Enhancing the teaching and learning environment (ST-E, ST_L);
 - Expanding access to education (ST-A);
 - Developing the Institute's international agenda (ST-IS);
 - Increasing critical mass in research (ST-TU, ST-L, ST-IF);

- Improving governance and the effectiveness with which resources are managed (ST-E);
- The Institute appointed a Strategic Information Manager and Analyst in April 2017 reporting to the VP Strategy with responsibility for developing the Institute’s reporting capability and enhancing the Institute’s ability to review its own performance against national and international benchmarks. The focus of this office has been on:
 - Developing reports that integrate student enrolment data and resource deployment data to refine the Institute’s capacity to measure the effectiveness and efficiency of its programme delivery (ST-E, ST-L);
 - Enhancing the Institute’s understanding of student retention and success data (ST-E, ST-L);
 - Understanding the Institute’s staff deployment strategy and reporting on resource implications of current practice (ST-E, ST-L).

1.3 The schedule of QA governance meetings.

[Seventh Academic Council Meetings for Academic Year 2016/17 \(link and minutes\)](#)

| <i>Agenda Setting</i> | <i>Academic Council</i> | <i>Academic Quality</i> | <i>Research</i> | <i>Academic Planning</i> | <i>Teaching & Learning</i> |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 27/09/16 | 04/10/16 | 13/09/16 | 13/09/16 | 20/09/16 | 20/09/16 |
| 08/11/16 | 15/11/16 | 11/10/16 | 11/10/16 | 18/10/16 | 18/10/16 |
| 29/11/16 | 06/12/16 | 22/11/16 | 22/11/16 | 29/11/16 | 29/11/16 |
| 24/01/17 | 31/01/17 | 10/01/17 | 10/01/17 | 17/01/17 | 17/01/17 |
| 28/02/17 | 07/03/17 | 07/02/17 | 07/02/17 | 14/02/17 | 14/02/17 |
| 28/03/17 | 04/04/17 | 14/03/17 | 14/03/17 | 21/03/17 | 21/03/17 |
| 09/05/17 | 16/05/17 | 02/05/17 | 02/05/17 | 09/05/17 | 09/05/17 |
| 06/06/17 | 13/06/17 | 30/05/17 | 30/05/17 | 06/06/17 | 06/06/17 |

Standing Committee of Academic Council

18th July 2017

8th September 2017

14th September 2017

Research Ethics Committee

Monday 3rd October 2016

Thursday 27th October 2016

Monday 12th December 2016

Monday 23rd January 2017

| |
|--|
| <i>Monday 27th February 2017</i> |
| <i>Monday 3rd April 2017</i> |
| <i>Monday 8th May 2017</i> |
| <i>Monday 12th June 2017</i> |
| <i>Tuesday 13th June 2017</i> |
| <i>Postgraduate Enrolment Committee</i> |
| 23 rd September, 2016 |
| 21 st October, 2016 |
| 25 th November, 2016 |
| 16 th December, 2016 |
| 20 th January, 2017 |
| 17 th February, 2017 |
| 24 th March, 2017 |
| 28 th April, 2017 |
| 26 th May, 2017 |

Section 2: Reviews in the reporting period

| | |
|---|--|
| 2.1 Internal reviews that were completed in the reporting period. | |
| <p>One School Review was carried out in this period and the report has been made available publicly on the WIT website.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Review of the School of Engineering (Published Report); <p>Other reports include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. 36 (2 Major and 24 Minor/SPA Awards) new programme validations, 4 major programme changes and 1 collaborative programme validation were conducted through external peer review. In addition, 21 (1 Major and 20 Minor/Special Purpose Awards) permissions for new programme development were approved; ii. 57 minor changes (modules and programmes) submitted to the Academic Quality Committee of the Academic Council; iii. An Internal Audit Review was carried out by Price Waterhouse Coopers, to provide an independent evaluation of the Quality Assurance in relation to the Procedures and Guidelines for the Design and Validation of New Programmes (for the Governing Body Audit Committee); iv. Review of the proposed structured doctorate framework and approval of the universal path modules; v. Review of the WIT PhD Scholarship Programme over the period 2013 – 2015, and subsequently modified, based on external expert review conducted by Dr Conor O’ Carroll, SciPol, in May 2016 and pending role out of the structured doctorate framework. A co-funded programme was added to the scheme to drive collaborative research with external partners (link). | |

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

One School Review (School of Engineering) was carried out, and the panel had one student representative. The Chair for this Review, Dr. Bill Harvey is the retired Director of the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) for Scotland. An external review was also carried out on the proposed WIT Structured Doctorate framework and associated Universal Path modules.

Excluding representatives from the Office of the Registrar and the WIT Academic Council, there were 6 panellists for the main part of the reviews, with 2 from universities in England and Wales, 1 representative of ENAEE, the European Network for Accreditation of Engineering Education and the remaining 3 were Heads of School or Department from Institutes of Technology.

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of new Programme Validations/Programme Approvals completed in the reporting year | 37 |
|--|----|

| | |
|---|---|
| Number of Programme Reviews completed in the reporting year | |
| Number of Research Reviews completed in the reporting year | 1 |
| Number of School/Department/Faculty Reviews completed in the reporting year | 1 |
| Number of Service Unit Reviews completed in the reporting year | 0 |
| Number of Reviews of Arrangements with partner organisations completed in the reporting year | 0 |

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

| Composition of Panels | % |
|------------------------------|----------|
| Internal | 20 |
| National | 58 |
| UK | 11 |
| EU | 1 |
| Student | 10 |
| Other | |

| Chair Profile | % |
|-----------------------|----------|
| Internal | 0 |
| Similar Institution | 47 |
| Different Institution | 45 |
| International | 8 |

Section 3: Other Implementation Factors

3.1 A description of how data is used to support quality assurance and the management of the student learning experience.

Data is used to support quality assurance and the management of the student learning experience, in key processes, including annual and periodic monitoring, School reviews, programme reviews and programme annual reporting. The data considered related to student recruitment (CAO points, programme preferences, demographics and geographical origin) and student performance (progression, retention and award), student feedback and external examiner reports.

Student feedback in relation to both their programme and their Institute-wide experience is a key component of data that informs WIT Quality Assurance. Opportunities for student feedback range from participation on programme boards, the Class Representative Council and surveys such as ISSE and the standard QA3 programme survey. All programme boards have two student representatives. Also, the Institute works closely with the Students' Union in the development and training of student representatives (which should lead to greater engagement in future years' Class Representative Councils) 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. However, the Institute has struggled to develop actions on the basis of some of the feedback, especially the national ISSE survey.

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. School Committee reporting, informed by the School Programme Boards, has been enabled in post-School Review Schools, and will be presented to Council in the next Academic Year.

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).

The Institute Marketing Office, introduced a number of key initiatives to enhance engagement with applicants, both to inform and to support the applicant in choosing the right course. The initiatives included Open Days and Campus Tours, in addition to Ask WIT Events to help students and give support to parents. The Ask WIT Events consisted of live online Q&As, drop-in centres, and phone support. The

Institute also ran Online Live Q&A sessions, where WIT academics and admissions staff were on hand to answer questions live with a library of all Q&As tracked and made available to browse post these events. The Institute's Marketing Office also launched the [How to research your CAO options](#) booklet with worksheets to help all CAO applicants figure out their interests and choose the right courses. The success of the rollout of the booklet led to a subsequent booklet being released to support the parent/guardian [The Parent's Guide – College Choices](#).

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.

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, as WIT worked hard to increase the participation rate, from 12% in 2015/6 to 18% in 2017/18. This increase in response rates, makes taking well-informed action more realistic, where in previous years ISSE data had not been heavily relied on, due to low participation rates.

The analysis of the WIT PhD Scholarship programme included the impact on the numbers registered for postgraduate research awards, which will also later be used in evaluating one of the Technological University criteria. The numbers of registered masters students is in decline (2012/13 83 students falling to 45 students in this reporting period). On the other hand, the number of registered PhD students has increased year-on-year (from 64 students in 2012/13 83 rising to 164 students in this reporting period). This increase in the number of Doctoral (PhD and DBA) students contrasts with the national trend towards a reduction in doctoral student registrations.

Another national initiative, the First Destinations Survey, which surveys graduates 9 months after leaving college, is also used to inform decision-making. The data is used nationally by the Higher Education Authority for its annual composite report on the destinations of graduates. Locally it is used to improve employability, by identifying employment trends, and also both employers and positions that our graduates find fulfilling.

Research metrics are gathered and reported on by the WIT Research Support Unit that supports the quality enhancement of activities such as research funding, publications, research masters and PhD performance.

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

A number of factors have impacted on quality and quality assurance in the past year. Since the previous reporting period highlighted the on-going lack of investment in HE, very little has changed for the better. Such challenging financial constraint has heavily influenced the Institute in terms of both strategy and operation.

WIT has been a lead partner in a sectorial project designed to develop a broad quality assurance and development framework for the technological sector (THEQF), an important project which was broadened to include all IoTs and not just those who are seeking Technological University designation. The THEQF was launched at the Envisioning the Technological Higher Education Sector event in April 2017.

3.3 A description of other implementation issues.

WIT began a project on academic governance in 2016, which included a best practice review from our legal experts on the practices of academic governance generally. This has been further strengthened in the reporting year, to include training of the next Academic Council (beginning in September 2017) and the WIT Governing Body, to include the definition of academic governance and the associated roles and responsibilities of various parties.

In the reporting period, all WIT Schools have been invited to propose their own embedded awards, which is an award that is generic to the overall School, 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. 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.

WIT had experience of a complex joint programme with the Irish Prison Service (IPS), matching the demands of the IPS and the programme's validation requirements.

Also, in this reporting period, all WIT Schools have been invited to identify the manner and means by which the School proposes to operate the new WIT structured doctorate. This involves codifying for each applicant School:

- their discipline areas of strength;
- a well-articulated School research strategy;
- how the School can sustain a doctorate programme in terms of the research environment, training opportunities, as well as suitable Level 9 project path modules and the presence of a community of practice;
- evidence of research productivity, research collaborations, existing research supervisory capacity and submit a list of dissertations approved for higher degrees;
- a Research Programme Board to co-ordinate activities, including monitoring access and progression, examiner appointments and reporting to the School Board.

Part 3: Effectiveness and Impact

Part 3 provides information relating to the effectiveness and impact of quality assurance policy and procedures for the reporting period.

1. Effectiveness

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

WIT has established Quality Assurance policies and procedures, based on national and international best practice, including the Core Statutory Guidelines for Quality Assurance. In 2016/17 the effectiveness of QA policies and procedures at WIT was assessed in a number of ways, including:

- external audit;
- evaluation and revision of the WIT Regulations (Quality Manual);
- the performance of and feedback from peer review panels;
- engagement with the WIT students and Students Union;
- School and Central Office reports to Academic Council (including progression rates, pass/fail rates, etc.);
- Academic Council Committees reporting to Council;
- Professional Bodies reviewing WIT programmes;
- the evaluation of School responses to their Peer Review Group reports, through their Post School Review Implementation Plans.

WIT evaluates its quality assurance and enhancement policies continuously, in order to ensure that they are fit for purpose, primarily through the Academic Council and its committees. The Academic Council also reviews and revises the WIT Regulations (Quality Manual) on an annual basis and publishes the updated Regulations [here](#).

The effectiveness of quality assurance processes and their impact are evaluated through periodic reviews. The scope of such quality reviews is comprehensive and covers topics such as strategy, student perspective, research activity, learner engagement, stakeholders' perspectives and management of QA. Peer review panels are carefully selected nationally and internationally, with academic and industry expertise, and are a good source of guidance and support for both the programme teams and also the Quality Assurance team, who are coordinating the review, in terms of the effectiveness of the process.

In 2016/17, two Schools presented their formal response and planned actions to their Peer Review Group reports to the WIT Academic Council's Quality Committee and a further School presented their formal response and planned actions to their Peer Review Group itself.

The Office of the Registrar encourages strong communication with the WIT Students Union as a means to enhance student engagement with quality-related activity. This includes regular meetings with Student Sabbatical Officers, from the moment they take up office. The student representatives

participate in open dialogue and offer feedback from their students, which in turn helps improve participation in quality-related activity.

The formal implementation of a strategic planning office led at vice-president level, has been implemented in 2017/8. This will further develop the institutional capacity for data analysis and data informed decision-making.

In the reporting period 2,147 students successfully graduated with major awards, and a further 341 students graduated with minor and special purpose awards. Moreover, 24 students graduated with Level 9/10 awards, while there were 51 new postgraduate student registrations.

Finally, the effectiveness of the Institute's QA is also visible in the realisation of the agreed goals in the Compact with the HEA, published on the 16th of May 2017.

2. Impact

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

There has been a number of quality-led strategic initiatives in the reporting period, with both immediate and also long-term benefit through their implementation. Post School Review Implementation Plans have embraced the advice for the Peer Review Groups, set up School Boards and generated positive initiatives in admissions, recruitment and retention, student feedback, awards range, research QA, blended learning and lifelong learning and access. For instance:

1. post School Review Implementation Plans and the new School Boards have led to an increased consideration of non-major awards. This improves the opportunity for external engagement, including meeting industry's continuous professional development needs (ST-A, ST-IF);
2. more targeted approaches across the Institute to address the quality of the education experience, with a view also to enhance retention. For example, A First Year Retention Scheme (FYRS) was developed in the Department of Science where students struggling with chemistry or physics, but demonstrating engagement with the online learning tools, were provided with extra tuition/grinds in the identified problem areas (ST-A, ST-E);
3. peer-to-peer mentoring has been piloted in two different forms in the School of Engineering and in the School of Health Sciences, with this form of mentoring being extended in the reporting period, to the School of Humanities and the Criminal Justice programme. The numbers in Engineering at dedicated events grew from 30-55 in 2015/16 to 40-65 in 2016/17. In Health Sciences and Humanities a total of 255 first year students received mentoring from 48 mentors, in this reporting period (ST-L, ST-TU);

4. student feedback at a programme level has been piloted across the WIT Departments, through the nationally recognised QA3 form and given the success of the pilot, this form of feedback will be offered on all programmes henceforth (ST-L, ST-E);
5. student feedback at an Institute-level was promoted heavily in the reporting period, with a consequent surge in the responding rate. This has offered the potential of more meaningful data to the WIT Schools and will consequently be similarly promoted in coming years (ST-L, ST-E);
6. WIT has been selected by the National Working Group of the National Student Engagement Programme (NStEP) to lead a national project for 18 months to establish guidelines on Student Feedback Opportunities, Data and Follow Up, which will also feed back into the future WIT approach to student feedback (ST-L, ST-E);
7. the proposed framework for a WIT structured doctorate was proposed, externally evaluated and endorsed at Academic Council and the Research, Innovation and Entrepreneurship committee were tasked with producing the revised research regulations (ST-TU);
8. the continuing enhancement of staff was furthered through educational opportunities in blended and online delivery techniques, which were provided through a new Community of Practice, a 10-credit module and as a lecture during the Institute’s Continuous Professional Development week (ST-A, ST-TU, ST-IF);
9. the Institute appointed a Strategic Information Manager and Analyst in April 2017, with responsibility for developing the Institute’s reporting capability and enhancing the Institute’s ability to review its own performance against national and international benchmarks. These reports have begun to inform decision-making at School and Department level around resource deployment but particularly around improvement with regard to retention (ST-A, ST-E, ST-L).

The activities completed by the committees of Council during the reporting year (2016-2017) were as follows:

| Activity | No. of approvals | No. Referred, not approved or withdrawn |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| New programmes granted permission | 36 | 1 |
| New programmes/variations | 4 | 1 |
| Minor changes proposed | 31 | 26 |
| External Examiners Programmes | 150 | 7 |
| External Examiners Research | | |
| Ethical Approvals | 27 | 11 |
| Postgraduate Registrations | | |
| Collaborative programme validations | 1 | 0 |

3. Themes

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

During the reporting period, themes that arose include post-school review implementation plans and the related conditions proposed by the review panels; canvassing student opinion to a greater degree, both in terms of number of students engaging and in terms of the nature of the feedback; and the extension of the review process into student service areas.

Common Themes in School Review Recommendations

- i. Strengthening School academic governance: operating School Boards fully so that quality assurance is adequately delegated and understood by its various boards, committees and individuals, to facilitate the implementation of a consistent quality assurance environment across the School.
- ii. Connecting School Strategy to Institute Strategy: School's are encouraged to develop their own strategies, drawn from the Institute's own Strategy, concentrating on their priority areas. Clear metrics are to be employed to periodically measure progress and return on resources invested.
- iii. School Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy: As for the School strategy, the Institute also applies the principle of subsidiarity to Schools on their Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy, leading to a School-wide approach to pedagogy delivery and assessment, including a common rubric for assessing and marking. For example, the School of Science finalised assessment schedules for all programmes to ensure a balanced workload for students in the school.
- iv. Currency of Curriculum Design to be enhanced: Schools were encouraged to develop a clear approach to curriculum design to enhance the learner experience.
- v. Online/Flexible Learning and Minor/Special Purpose Awards: The Schools were encouraged to make greater use of e-learning in their catalogues, to facilitate flexible learning and to increase the diversity of their offering through the creation of minor and special purpose awards.

Part 4: Quality Enhancement

Part 4 provides information which goes beyond the description of standard quality assurance procedures. Quality enhancement includes the introduction of new procedures but also extends the concept of quality assurance to other initiatives, activities and events aimed at improving quality across the institution.

4.1 Improvements and Enhancements for the Reporting Period

Improvements or enhancements, impacting on quality or quality assurance, that took place in the reporting period.

WIT continued to focus on the Strategic theme work-packages for 2016/17.

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, across teaching & learning, research and the student experience, 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)

Repeat Learner Category

WIT introduced a new category of Repeat Learner, to replace the old categories of 'exam only' and 'repeat attend', as these categories no longer reflected the realities of the Institute. The Institute introduced the Repeat Learner category to facilitate the provision of adequate, quality, engaged support to a learner for any module that they must repeat. The Repeat Learner category ensures that the student is a fully registered learner at the Institute with full access to the academic resources of the Institute including, Library and Moodle. The student also has the right to engage with lecturers as appropriate and additionally the right, but not the obligation, unless specified on the Approved Course Schedule, to attend lectures if practical to do so. A total of 404 students in 2015/2016 and a further 433 students in 2016/2017 embraced the opportunity to engage with the Institute at such a level under this new category of learner, affording themselves the opportunity to foster engagement with the academic community and thereby supporting themselves in the completion of their award. In the current term, 319 students to date have registered as Repeat Learners.

Furthermore, the previous report highlighted the role WIT has played in developing the system-wide quality assurance framework for the technological sector serving as the project sponsor and leading significant work on the project. In this reporting period, this broad quality assurance and development framework for the technological sector (now known as the THEQF) was launched at the Envisioning the Technological Higher Education Sector event in April 2017.

WIT took on a role in the National Student Engagement Programme (NStEP) 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 has continued into this reporting period, with WIT being selected by the National Working Group to lead a national project for 18 months to establish guidelines on Student Feedback Opportunities, Data and Follow Up, which will also feed back into the future WIT approach to student feedback. This project will continue on through 2017/18.

Right-student right-programme initiative

WIT recognises the important of information to prospective applicants to the Institute, particularly in their need to make informed decisions about programmes and programme choices. In that regard, the Institute initiated and continues to develop an academic recruitment strategy, designed to better engage students and create a better fit between the student and the career choices they select. More informed decision-making should, in the long run, improve student satisfaction, increase retention and better empower achievement by individual learners. This strategy is the *right-student right-programme* initiative, a set of interrelated activities that is designed to support learners selecting the right programme (for them) by ensuring that they can:

1. Access the right information (including the use of specialist guides, social media and on-line Q&A facilities);
2. Know the right questions to ask (research options guide and parent guides, all downloadable from the website);
3. Have open access to WIT to explore their thinking and to clarify choices;
4. Have a range of options for entry that allows flexibility and places the learner in control of their degree choices. This includes the proposed introduction of a second semester transfer opportunity that permits students to transfer to a nominated programme, subject to certain conditions;
5. Have a common entry option in each academic area that permits students to make degree choices at the end of their first year of study or later;
6. Have a range of level 6, 7 and 8 options to enable them to select the most appropriate entry route for them. All level 6 or 7 students will have the option of achieving a level 8 award through progression opportunities;
7. Have the opportunity to get awards for the learning they have achieved as they progress through their studies (embedded awards).

This strategy is underpinned by a strong, focused communication and engagement process, and by a unified institutional curriculum design strategy.

4.2 Quality Enhancement Highlights

Analysis of quality enhancement activities that were initiated during the reporting period and which would be of interest to other institutions and would benefit from wider dissemination.

There were a number of quality enhancement activities, initiated by the institution in the reporting period and these include:

1. completing the ongoing work regarding School Reviews, including closing off two reviews (Business and Health Sciences) in the reporting period (ST-E);
2. Continuing to improve the Module Catalogue (ST-L, ST-E);
3. embedding a structured doctorate award (ST-TU, ST-A);
4. expand and improve on the postgraduate WIT Research Day ([link](#)) through the dissemination of research outputs and researcher networking (ST-L, ST-TU);
5. implementing the new external examining system (ST-L);
6. student feedback implemented Institute-wide at QA3 and enhanced responses on ISSE (ST-L);
7. continuing the Academic Governance initiative and widening it sectorally (ST-E);
8. be even more open in publishing evaluations of performance at module, programme, School and Institution levels (SL-E).

Part 5: Objectives for the coming year

Part 5 provides information about plans for quality assurance in the institution for the academic year following the reporting period (in this instance 1 September 2017 – 31 August 2018).

5.1 Quality Assurance and Enhancement System Plans

Plans for quality assurance and quality enhancement relating to strategic objectives for the next reporting period.

WIT will continue 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 QA performance criteria, across teaching & learning, research and the student experience, 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).

In tandem with the phased roll-out of the new approach to external examining, WIT will examine systemic approaches to QA in this area, including better monitoring of the process flow, uniform approach to the exam paper layout and improved monitoring of external examiner reporting

5.2 Review Plans

A list of reviews within each category (module, programme, department/school, service delivery unit or faculty), as per the internal review cycle, planned for the next reporting period.

The final School Reviews (Humanities) is planned for the second half of 2017/18. There are also a number of new programmes, for example Springboard+ programmes in many areas and in Financial Services, which will go through the programme approval process. With the emphasis on offering education to employed candidates, the Springboard+ format favours programmes that are short-duration (typically 30 ECTS credits) and delivered in a block format or online.

Each WIT School has been invited to apply to participate in the WIT Structured Doctorate programme, by showing research capacity in terms of supervisory capacity, expertise (based on peer indicators, including papers published, PhDs graduated, funds raised, etc.).

At least one of the WIT student service areas will undergo external panel review in the coming period.

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

5.3 Other Plans

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Part 6: Periodic Review

Part 6 provides information that acts as a bridge between the AIQR and periodic external review.

6.1 The Institution and External Review

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

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;
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.

6.2 Self-Reflection on Quality Assurance

A short evaluative and reflective summary of the overall impact of quality assurance in the reporting period or, over a more extensive period, in the review.

The theme and issue of academic governance is strongly associated with all of the activities of WIT in 2016/7 and in the strategic outlook and activities for the coming year. Academic Governance needs to be constructed in the broadest terms to include an understanding of the appropriate academic actions and responses for any given circumstance. The challenge of balancing financial and operational factors, with ethical and academically sound judgment, is not without its complexity. This challenge is informed both by a robust policy framework and also by a need for strong ownership and clear understanding. It is evident, like many other institutions that WIT can continue to learn to engage and enhance its understanding of these matters and to contribute to the wider national debates on academic governance and quality assurance.

Of particular note throughout the themes that emerged in the year, is the tension that arises between centrally formed policy and the need for the local adaptation and adoption of that policy. A recurrent theme was the need for subsidiarity within policy development, particularly in the context of School-led initiative in the teaching and learning space. The role of central functions in training and development, and the role of Academic Council in fostering confidence and desire to enhance the central policy framework through local adaption, may be fruitful issues for future expansion.

6.3 Themes

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

Academic governance will continue to be promoted heavily, within the Institute's Schools, Executive Board, Academic Council and Governing Body, as well as sectorally, outside of WIT.