

Growing your vision for quality in higher education through collaboration

Farmleigh, Phoenix Park, Dublin
Thursday 28 May 2015



Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann

AGENDA

09.30 Registration (Tea/Coffee)

10.00 Opening Address

10.10 **Professor Frank N. Coton** | University of Glasgow [Developing and sustaining a quality enhancement culture: The Scottish higher education experience](#)

11.00 **Professor Jon Haakstad** | Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT) [External review of quality assurance: Fit for what purpose?](#)

11.30 **BREAK FOR TEA/COFFEE**

11.50 1st Breakout Session

- “Guru”: Next generation academic analysis - David Molloy and Dr Sarah Ingle, Dublin City University (DCU)
- Enabling Creative and Entrepreneurial Mindsets - Prof Suzi Jarvis and Dr Colman Farrell, Innovation Academy, University College Dublin (UCD)
- Clash of the Titans: Innovative use of RPL to respond to regulatory compliance - Ian McKenna, Saint Nicholas Montessori College Ireland
- CIT Strategic Student Engagement and Retention Initiative (CITSSERI): Developing an institute-wide student engagement and retention initiative at CIT, the story so far, what works, next steps, challenges and opportunities? - Marese Bermingham, Cork Institute of Technology (CIT)

12.30 2nd Breakout Session

- Behind the Scenes: Enhancing online learning outside the virtual classroom - Naomi Jackson, Hibernia College
- Quality Enhancement by Process Optimisation - Dr Michael Hall, Institute of Technology Tralee
- Student Feedback in the context of National Strategy - Daniel Coulter, Cora McCormack and Dr Joseph Ryan, Athlone Institute of Technology (AIT)
- UCD Pilot Research Assessment Project - Liam Cleere and Dr Roy Ferguson, University College Dublin (UCD)

13.00 **LUNCH**

14.15 **Professor Sarah Moore** | National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning [Ireland's National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education: Insights on multidimensional, multi-level enhancement processes](#)

14.35 3rd Breakout Session

- Tripartite Approach to Quality Assurance - Dr David O'Sullivan, National University of Ireland, Galway (NUIG)
- Listening to the Student: working together to develop the role of class representatives in DIT - Graham Higginbotham, Mary Scally, Jan Cairns and Nicole O'Neill, Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT)
- Fostering Academic and Professional Writing: The Clanwilliam Institute Writing Support Service - Dr Aine O'Reilly, Clanwilliam Institute
- Beyond Fieldwork: What are institutions doing with their ISSE results - Aisling McKenna, Dublin City University (DCU)

15.10 **Professor Tom Collins** | President Emeritus, Maynooth University & Former President, RCSI Bahrain [Towards a strategy: planning and prioritising for enhancement](#)

15.50 Close

SPEAKER PROFILES



Professor Frank N. Coton

Frank Coton is Vice Principal (Learning and Teaching) and Professor of Low Speed Aerodynamics at the University of Glasgow. He also holds the role of International Dean for South East Asia and is a member of the University Senior Management Group.

In addition to deputising for the Principal when required, Frank has responsibility for the development of all aspects of educational policy and strategy and all teaching quality processes across the University. He is also a member of the Scottish Funding Council Access and Inclusion Committee

and is Chair of the West of Scotland Schools for Higher Education Programme Management Committee which coordinates widening participation activities in the West of Scotland. In a wider context, he is currently Chair of the Russell Group Committee of Pro-Vice Chancellors for Learning and Teaching and Chair of the Student Experience Steering Group of the Universitas 21 global network of research-intensive universities.

Frank's academic background is in Aerospace Engineering and, in particular, aerodynamics. He is a Chartered Engineer and a Fellow of the Royal Aeronautical Society. He has authored or co-authored more than 100 archival and conference papers on unsteady and low-speed aerodynamics and has received awards for his work from the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, the American Helicopter Society, the Royal Aeronautical Society and the U.K. Institute of Mechanical Engineers. He is a former Dean of Engineering at the University of Glasgow and a former Chair of the Applied Aerodynamics Committee of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics.



Professor Jon Haakstad

Jon Haakstad is Senior Advisor in the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT), where he was also Director of analysis and Director of audits and evaluations. Previously, he was Senior Adviser at the Network Norway Council (advisory council to the Ministry of Education on higher education) and has held the positions of Office Manager of the Norwegian Teacher Training Council; Assistant Director of the Tromsø University College and Rector of Tromsø College of Education.

Jon has chaired a number of ENQA evaluations of quality assurance agencies in Finland, Austria, Spain, Germany and the EUA and was an external expert in evaluations of higher education in Denmark, Ireland, Austria and Switzerland. He is a frequent presenter at EAIR and EQAF conferences and was a member of AQA's (Austria) Scientific Steering Group from 2008 to 2013. Jon has written several articles, conference papers and public reports on educational quality and quality assurance in higher education and also published a textbook on British history.



Professor Sarah Moore

Sarah Moore is the Chair of the National Forum for Enhancement of Teaching and Learning and Associate Vice President Academic at the University of Limerick. Sarah has researched and published in the areas of organisational behaviour, pedagogical innovation, academic professional development and on a range of topics central to promoting and enhancing teaching and learning in higher education. Sarah has a strong commitment to developing creative and engaging learning dynamics between teachers and students. She has explored the process of academic development and uses what she has found to help

academics, teachers, researchers and students to develop productive patterns of learning, innovation and professional development. Sarah holds an award for excellence in teaching, and has worked to develop a culture that supports and celebrates outstanding teaching and learning across all disciplines in higher education settings. Sarah has published several books and many journal papers on academic and educational development.



Professor Tom Collins

Tom Collins is currently chair of the Governing Bodies of both Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) and Institute of Technology Blanchardstown. Most recently (2011/2012) he was President of RCSI Bahrain. He is Emeritus President, Maynooth University where he was also Professor of Education and Dean of the Faculty of Social Science. Prior to this (2001-2006) he was Director of Dundalk Institute of Technology.

Tom has extensive experience in the field of Further Education and Training.

He was Director of the Centre for Adult and Community Education in Maynooth from 1994 to 2001 and was Government Advisor on the Green Paper (1998) and White Paper (2000) in Adult Education.

INTERNATIONAL SPEAKERS

Developing and sustaining a quality enhancement culture: The Scottish higher education experience

Prof Frank N. Coton, University of Glasgow

In 2013, Scotland celebrated the first ten years of its Quality Enhancement Framework. During this ten year period, the sector has evolved its understanding of what it means to live within a Quality Enhancement Framework rather than a Quality Assurance Framework.

Despite institutions being in direct competition with each other in many aspects of their operations, they have learned to collaborate and share information to advance the quality of the student experience within the sector. This presentation will describe how the Scottish Higher Education system has evolved its approach to Enhancement and how this has brought benefits to individual institutions.

The presentation will also provide an institutional perspective by exploring how the University of Glasgow engaged with the Enhancement Themes in developing the University Graduate Attributes framework. The presentation will then look briefly at the current enhancement focus in Scotland around “Transitions”, exploring both why this theme emerged and what the key areas of focus within the theme are likely to be. The presentation will conclude by exploring some of the lessons learned by the Scottish Sector over the last twelve years and considering how the Quality Enhancement Framework is likely to evolve in the future.

External review of quality assurance: Fit for what purpose?

Prof Jon Haakstad, Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT)

This presentation is based on a paper presented to the 9th EQAF last November and discusses the current status of one of the traditional methods of external quality assurance in European higher education, the institutional quality audit.

Taking its point of departure from a recent booklet about the method by the agency-based “Quality Audit Network”, the paper asks whether today’s audits, via their steering of institutional QA systems, relate sufficiently well to the educational quality of actual provision. Have institutional QA systems, and the external assessment of these, become too large and unfocused, more concerned with performance by statistical indicators than with educational quality? Is the stress too much on “quality strategy” and “quality policy” at the institutional level, at the expense of didactic practice at the programme level? A slimmer and more focused approach, based primarily on information from the level of delivery and audited in a more investigative way, is indicated.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Behind the Scenes: Enhancing online learning outside the virtual classroom

Naomi Jackson, Hibernia College

The expansion of technology presents significant opportunities for higher education. Online or blended education is in demand now more than ever but it isn’t the easy or the cheap option.

Within the walls of colleges and universities we repeatedly hear about programmes or providers “going online”, the implication being that technology and IT know-how converts traditional education into online education. Whilst technological developments have opened vast opportunities for online education, this only represents one piece in the jigsaw.

Hibernia College has been delivering academic and professionally accredited programmes through the online medium for over a decade. It has graduated thousands of students in various disciplines based in multiple countries around the world. The College has won awards and nominations and has received commendations from a host of independent experts and international panels.

Naomi Jackson, Registrar of Hibernia College, will present a case study of the strategies for enhancing online education and will demonstrate the important factors for ensuring the success of blended and online education – beyond technology.

Beyond Fieldwork: What are institutions doing with their ISSE results?

Aisling McKenna, Dublin City University (DCU)

This discussion-group will explore how Irish Higher Education institutions are embedding the Irish Student Survey of Engagement (ISSE), and how institutions can implement strategies to more extensively use the results of the survey more fully.

The session will be facilitated by Aisling McKenna, DCU's Institutional Research and Analysis Officer. Following a brief introduction of the approaches that DCU has taken to embed ISSE as an institutional enhancement tool, the group will be encouraged to discuss the opportunities for institutions seeking to more fully exploit ISSE data, and the challenges in applying the survey to improve teaching and learning at institutional level.

CIT Strategic Student Engagement and Retention Initiative (CITSSERI): Developing an institute-wide student engagement and retention initiative at CIT, the story so far, what works, next steps, challenges and opportunities?

Marese Bermingham, Cork Institute of Technology (CIT)

By creating a resourced infrastructure that enables the delivery and support of a mainstream, proactive and collaborative institute-wide student engagement and retention initiative, CIT is placed in a position that enables significant progress towards achievement of HEA compact goals and in a best practice arena as an emerging student-centric technological university.

The development of the CITSSERI is informed by on-going desk research, consultation with CIT management, academic faculty and student support staff, consultation with students and their representatives and consultation with internationally recognised experts in the field of student engagement and retention.

Recognising the need for all staff, at all levels, to continue developing and implementing actions to improve and enhance the student experience, CIT established an Institute Strategic Student Engagement and Retention Initiative (CITSSERI) in September 2012.

Attached to the Office of the Registrar and Vice President for Academic Affairs, the focus of the CITSSERI is to work with academic faculty, school and department staff in co-operation with central student services to review best practices to date, explore current issues, develop proactive and collaborative strategies appropriate to need and facilitate implementation.

This workshop will look back at the development of the initiative to date, its context, what seems to be working, next steps, challenges and opportunities. Workshop presented by Marese Bermingham, Head, Teaching and Learning/Head, CITSSERI.

Clash of the Titans: Innovative use of RPL to respond to regulatory compliance

Ian McKenna, Saint Nicholas Montessori College Ireland (SNMCI)

In 2013, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) commenced a series of regulations for early years' settings, which required, inter alia, that practitioners must have qualifications at prescribed NFQ levels, in order to practice in the first instance, but also to secure higher capitation under the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme.

As a result of this decision, many practitioners who had up to 40 years' experience and did not satisfy the qualification requirements, found themselves faced with two options, viz:

- Close down their operations; or,
- Incur substantial additional expense through employing Level 7 graduates.

The challenge for Saint Nicholas Montessori College Ireland (SNMCI) was to:

1. Respond to **cohorts of practitioners** who had non-formal learning or continuous professional development, as well as experiential learning. In some instances, many had legacy Saint Nicholas Montessori diplomas, which were awarded prior to SNMCI's designation as a recognition college under the National Council for Educational Awards Act, 1979.
2. Substantially review its RPL policy, which would allow it to develop an appropriate response.
3. Plan a delivery model which would balance a learner's working life with the rigours of higher education.
4. Cater for potential learners, who had little experience of structured formal education, without compromising the quality assurance policies underpinning SNMCI's academic governance.

The presentation will focus on:

- Reconciling different regulatory demands from DCYA and QQI;
- Illustration of innovative response of SNMCI to challenges;
- Engagement with unique applicant cohort and their subsequent affirmation as life-long learners.

It is also planned to conclude with research on the impact of this innovative process and engagement with the learner body.

Enabling Creative and Entrepreneurial Mindsets

Prof Suzi Jarvis and Dr Colman Farrell, Innovation Academy, University College Dublin (UCD)

The Innovation Academy is a multi-disciplinary higher educational initiative launched in 2010, which has been designed to enable creative and entrepreneurial mindsets whilst building lasting learning communities. It aims to provide a transformational educational experience for participants for the betterment of society and economy via an action-based curriculum which engages extensively with external organisations and practitioner educators. Initially focused on doctoral research students, the Academy developed an experiential approach to creativity, innovation and calculated risk taking,

whilst building generic life skills of effective communication, teamwork, self-efficacy and resilience. The high levels of engagement, student enthusiasm and positive outcomes of the programme have subsequently led to its expansion to undergraduates, jobseekers and most recently teachers and lecturers from second and third level.

We will give a brief overview of our educational ethos, highlighting participant feedback, challenges and reflections on the establishment and ongoing development of the Innovation Academy.

Fostering Academic and Professional Writing: The Clanwilliam Institute Writing Support Service

Dr Aine O'Reilly, Clanwilliam Institute

The Clanwilliam Institute, Dublin, provides postgraduate training programmes in systemic (family) psychotherapy. Fostering academic skills and critical abilities, and enhancing the transferability of these skills to professional practice, are central goals of the Institute's Teaching and Learning Strategy. Student writing has been a particular area of focus for the Institute under these goals. This session will provide a brief account of the Institute's activities in enhancing student writing in the current academic year.

The Writing Support Service began in 2015 as an initiative to enhance the effectiveness of student writing. This service is available to all students who seek to improve their academic and professional writing skills. The core activity is a one-to-one tutoring service that focuses on student-identified writing issues. Student-centred learning is a core feature of this approach, with students identifying the text and the writing issues that are the focus of a tutorial.

This session will outline the background, aims, principles and practices of the writing support service. First, it will describe the development of the writing support service. Second, it will show how fostering student engagement with writing is carried out through diverse activities such as individual and group tutorials, classroom learning and the provision of online resources. Third, it will outline future plans for the service, in particular in increasing its focus on professional writing skills and transferring academic writing skills into diverse workplace settings. It will end with reflections on the benefits of a writing centre for students, institutions and tutors.

“Guru”: Next generation academic analysis

David Molloy and Dr Sarah Ingle, Dublin City University (DCU)

Guru is a “Student Information Platform”, designed and developed within Dublin City University (DCU). There are two core purposes of the system:

- **Data Presentation and Graphical Analysis:** To provide a graphical, user-friendly interface for the presentation and analysis of institutional information aimed principally at academics, institutional units, external examiners and accreditation bodies.
- **Sub-system Development:** To provide a platform for the rapid but focused development of new sub-systems which can harness this data effectively to improve academic processes.

While a number of components have been built to date, the focus for this session will be in the following areas:

1. **Student Retention:** identifying “at-risk” students through a personal tutee system and traffic light indicators.
2. **Programme Statistics:** graphical presentation of data relating to grade inflation, comparative module difficulty, programme paths, failure analysis etc.
3. **Digitalisation of the Examination Process and External Examiner Assessment (professional accreditation and review):** The Guru system has revolutionised the examination paper process at DCU by providing an end-to-end system for examination papers and external quality review.

Since the introduction of Guru at DCU, considerable time/cost savings have been generated, examination paper quality has improved, deadlines have become less problematic, numerous disability issues have been overcome and security of examination papers has been strengthened. More importantly, Guru allows the institution to properly assess the external examiner quality review process, identifying both where it is succeeding and where it is failing.

Listening to the Student: Working together to develop the role of class representatives in DIT

Graham Higginbotham, Mary Scally, Jan Cairns and Nicole O'Neill, Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT)

Student representatives are critical to the successful implementation of academic quality assurance processes. In DIT, each class elects a class representative. The role of the class representative is to ensure that the student perspective is heard. Student representatives bring forward issues requiring the attention of programme managers and tutors in a timely manner. Student representatives are full members of the Programme Committees whose members are responsible for the monitoring and continual development of the Institute's academic programmes.

This presentation will outline how student representatives are actively supported and empowered by the Students Union (SU). It reveals the behind the scenes work undertaken by the SU in encouraging students to undertake the role of class representative and it outlines the range of comprehensive supports provided to class representatives. Efforts to enhance the role by the provision of professional training for class representatives are discussed.

Student representatives also have an active role in the formal quality assurance committees in DIT and participate in the Institute's periodic review processes. The presentation will conclude with a discussion on how the role of student representatives can be further developed to influence the future academic development.

Quality Enhancement by Process Optimisation

Dr Michael Hall, Institute of Technology Tralee

The Institute of Technology Tralee administrative/technical staff have developed supplementary online features for students and staff, which include:

- Online Individual Learning Requirements (ILR);
- Post-examination staff/student meeting booking system;
- Secure Drop Box for External Examiners.

Individual Learning Requirements: ILR are recorded on the Institute's Banner System. Following sign off by the student and Student Services, the information becomes available to authorised personnel through Self Service Banner. The information is live, up-to-date and eliminates printing and e-mailing of the documentation.

Staff/Student Meetings: To support the Institute's process where students request meetings with academic staff for feedback on end-of-semester examinations, the Institute has developed an online booking system for post-examination meetings. The online booking system becomes available after students have received their results online through Self Service Banner. All communication around the process is automated. It previously required up to 4 administrative staff to manage bookings during a 1.5-2 day window.

External Examiner Drop Box: The Institute has also developed a secure password protected drop-box system for external examiners to review examination papers. Each external examiner is assigned a dedicated drop-box. The drop-box contains examination papers and associated documentation. External examiners upload comments to the drop-box. It replaces the practice of transporting hardcopy documentation to and from external examiners by courier.

These examples represent products of the Institute's strategy to identify and devise solutions for activities that cause significant demand on resources during critical peak times.

Student Feedback in the context of National Strategy

Daniel Coulter, Cora McCormack and Dr Joseph Ryan, Athlone Institute of Technology (AIT)

It was recommended in the National Strategy for Higher Education 2030 that higher education institutions put in place systems to capture student feedback that can inform institutional and programme management as well as national policy. Recommendation number two under Teaching and Learning states that a national student survey system should be put in place and the results published. AIT, by participating in the Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) has taken major steps to fulfil this task and is proud of the fact that there has been strong support from both staff and students for this initiative. The survey which was managed through the Institute's quality office and supported by the academic staff and Students' Union has obtained valuable feedback which is being employed to improve the quality of the experience of both undergraduate and postgraduate students of the Institute. It also serves as a guide for continual enhancement of the Institute's teaching and learning. The Institute is cognisant of the fact that the outcomes of this national survey be disseminated to both staff and students in an effective and timely manner.

This has raised the question of any individual institution's capacity to analyse and disseminate the considerable body of data that has been captured through the ISSE. This brief presentation, shared between the project manager, the president of the Students' Union in AIT, and the academic registrar reflects upon the processes and learnings from the first two iterations of the ISSE.

Tripartite Approach to Quality Assurance

Dr David O'Sullivan, National University of Ireland, Galway (NUIG)

In 2010, one HEI went through an institutional quality review by five international experts who commended the HEI for its tripartite approach to quality assurance: "quality ... was integrated with strategic planning and (performance) as a tripartite framework... The role of ... Quality is seen as ... an innovation manager."

Key features of the tripartite approach included strategic and operational planning, annual personal appraisals, routine benchmarking, minimum critical performance metrics, quality manual, annual enhancement reports, performance based self-assessment, thematic quality reviews, research assessments, early reviewer engagement, reviewer creativity and ideation and lean knowledge management.

This session will present the tripartite approach to quality assurance used at one HEI that integrates quality, strategy and performance. The HEI has 17,000 students including 800 PhD enrolments. The tripartite approach emerged in 2009 following an extensive survey of quality enhancement and survey of the opinions of a broad number of stakeholders. At that time the HEI was ranked at 368th in the QS World University Ranking. Five years after implementation of the tripartite approach, the HEI is now ranked at 248th - a 32% improvement. A major cause of the improvement is cited as greater staff engagement in quality, strategy and performance and a leaner more focussed approach to quality and performance enhancement.

UCD Pilot Research Assessment Project

Liam Cleere and Dr Roy Ferguson, University College Dublin (UCD)

The UCD School of Archaeology, working with the University's Quality Office and Research Office, is undertaking a pilot research assessment exercise to evaluate its research activity and research environment, benchmarked internationally. An external panel will be established to determine an overall quality profile assessment for the School. Panel members will exercise their knowledge, judgement and expertise to reach a collective view on the quality profile of research presented in the submissions, that is, the proportion of work in each submission that is judged to reach each of five quality levels. Research quality will be evaluated under three criteria: environment; published output and impact. Impact case studies will also form part of the evidence chain. The Panel will be asked to provide a descriptive statement of their view of the overall quality of research activity in the School. The Panel will also be asked to comment on the totality of research activity and performance in the context of the research environment in which the School is working and to make recommendations for improvement. The session will, *inter alia*, present UCD's work-in-progress, including definitions of the assessment criteria; submission structure and templates and data resource aspects of the project.



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