

Dublin City University
2021

[Higher Education Institution]
2021

Annual Quality Report (DCU) Reporting Period 2019-2020

**Annual Quality Report (DCU)
PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM
Reporting Period 2019-2020**

PREFACE

Note: QQI's provider portal, QHub, is currently under development and will be completed in November 2020. AQR 2021 will be submitted via QHub.

The Annual Quality Report (AQR; formerly AIQR) forms part of Quality and Qualifications Ireland's (QQI) quality assurance (QA) framework of engagement with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The AQR provides documentary evidence of the development and evolution of each institution's internal quality system. It provides QQI with assurance that internal QA procedures have been established and are being implemented consistent with regulatory requirements.

The AQR, particularly part A, should assist with **document management** in the institutional review process and will facilitate institutions in providing review teams with procedural QA documentation in preparation for the external review process. It is an important part of the evidence base considered by external **review teams** as part of QQI's CINNTE cycle of institutional reviews, demonstrating that the institution's internal QA system is aligned with QQI's Core and relevant Sector- and Topic-specific Statutory QA Guidelines, and with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area 2015 (ESG). It enables the review team to satisfy itself of compliance with these requirements for the purpose of the institutional review process.

Each AQR is **published in full on QQI's website**, providing transparency on the HEIs' assurance and enhancement of quality to external stakeholders. (As such, institutions should ensure that their submissions do not contain any data that they consider to be commercially sensitive.) Collectively, the AQRs comprise a single national repository of quality assurance practice in Irish higher education institutions.

Each year, QQI produces a synthesis report of the key themes highlighted across the AQRs, primarily arising from Part B of the reports.

CONTENTS

PREFACE	2
Guidelines on Completing the Report	5
Links to Reference Documents Cited in this Template	6
PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM	7
Table 1 Mapping of ESG (2015) to QQI QA Guidelines (QAG)	7
Introduction and Overview of Institution	8
1.0 Internal QA Framework	9
1.1 Governance and Management of Quality	9
Quality Assurance and Improvement Policy Statement.	9
DCU Quality Framework	9
HEA-DCU Performance Based Compact 2018-2021	9
DCU Strategy 2017-2022, Talent, Discovery and Transformation	9
Development of the 2017-2022 Strategic Plan	10
Strategy Implementation	10
DCU Academic Council	11
1.2 Linked Providers, Collaborative and Transnational Provision	14
2.0 Programme Development and Delivery	15
2.1 Programme Development and Approval	15
2.2 Admission, Progression, Recognition & Certification	16
DCU Admissions Principles and Procedures	16
2.3 Procedures for Making Awards	17
Progression of Postgraduate Research Students	18
2.4 Teaching, Learning and Assessment	18
3.0 Learner Resources and Support	20
4.0 QA of Research Activities and Programmes	25
5.0 Staff Recruitment, Development and Support	28
6.0 Information and Data Management	30
7.0 Public Information and Communication	32
8.0 Monitoring and Periodic Review	33
Externally- Led Unit Reviews.	33
9.0 Details of Arrangements with Third Parties	34
9.1 Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies	34
9.3 Articulation Agreements	39
PART B: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM	41
1.0 Quality Implementation and Developments	41
1.1 Strategic QA Updates	41
1.2 Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR	43
1.3 Governance and Management	44
1.4 Internal Monitoring and Review	46
2.0 IQA System - Enhancement and Impacts	49
2.1 Initiatives within the Institution related to Academic Integrity	53
3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period	55

3.1	QA and QE supporting the Achievement of Strategic Objectives	55
3.2	Reviews planned for Upcoming Reporting Periods	56
3.2.1	Reviews planned for Next Reporting Period	56
3.2.2	Reviews planned beyond Next Reporting Period	56
4.0	Additional Themes and Case Studies	57

Guidelines on Completing the Report

The AQR is aligned with QQI's Core, Sector and Topic-specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines and with the ESG (2015). A mapping of the ESG to QQI Core QA Guidelines is included in Table 1 below; the structure of Part A of this report template aligns with the first column of the table. Additional guidance on completing this template and reference material is included in each section. Institutions should adhere to this guidance and have regard to QQI Core, Sector and Topic-specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines. **The guide text within each section should be deleted before submission of the report.**

Submission Process and Timeline

The deadline for submission of the AQR each year is in February of the relevant year, with the call for submission sent to institutions in November of the preceding year. Once the call for submission has been made, QQI will provide access to QQI's provider portal, QHub, to the designated institution contact(s) to facilitate submission of the report. Through QHub, each institution will have access to an editable version of its AQR for the previous reporting period. This document can then be amended/updated to reflect any changes or developments that occurred during the current reporting period before submitting the final report to QQI.

Completing the AQR

- When completing the AQR template, all relevant colleagues in the institution should be consulted.
- Consider whether external audiences will be able to understand the terminology used (particularly local abbreviations and acronyms); it may be helpful to include a glossary.
- Aim to avoid duplication in the report - where information is relevant to more than one section, the first mention may be referenced in subsequent sections.
- Provide reflections on what worked well, but also what may have been tried but did not work.

Report Structure

Part A: Internal QA System

Part A of the AQR comprises a record of each institution's current QA policies and procedures and should provide links to those policies and procedures. Private HEIs may provide links to the policies and procedures approved by QQI during initial access to validation (IAV) or reengagement. It is the responsibility of each HEI to ensure before submission of the AQR that all links are correct and functional, and that the policies and procedures referred to are the most up-to-date versions available. Given that the AQR is submitted in respect of a discrete reporting period, it may be helpful for institutions to establish a SharePoint/OneDrive folder (or similar) for each reporting period that contains the current versions of their policies and procedures, and that hyperlinks to these versions of the documents be provided in the AQR.

Part A is to be completed only if there have been **material** changes to QA policies and procedures during the reporting period. Such changes may include the approval and implementation of new polices or procedures, or significant amendments to existing ones.

Part B: Quality Assurance (QA) and Quality Enhancement (QE)

Part B of the AQR documents and captures QA activities, developments and enhancements undertaken by institutions **during the reporting period** and their **impact**. Insofar as is possible, institutions should demonstrate in Part B how plans set out in the previous AQR were progressed during the reporting period - these may be plans linked to strategic objectives, to reengagement advices, or to institutional review recommendations.

Case Studies

In each reporting period, QQI may request updates on specific thematic areas or may invite the institution to submit case studies in response to specific topics. Further, institutions may include case studies to share good practice on topics of their choosing, demonstrating QA and QE in action. In formulating case studies, institutions are encouraged to reflect on and highlight areas that may be of

interest to other institutions and would benefit from wider dissemination. Further guidance is provided in Part B.

Links to Reference Documents Cited in this Template¹

Legislation

- [Qualifications and Quality Assurance \(Education and Training\) Act 2012 \(as amended\)](#)
- [Regional Technical Colleges Act 1992 \(as amended\)](#)
- [Technological Universities Act 2018](#)
- [Universities Act 1997](#)

QQI Documents

Statutory QA Guidelines (QAG)

- [Core QAG](#)
- [Sector-specific QAG for Independent/Private Providers](#)
- [Sector-specific QAG for Designated Awarding Bodies](#)
- [Sector-specific QAG for Institutes of Technology](#)
- [Topic-specific QAG for Providers of Statutory Apprenticeship Programmes](#)
- [Topic-specific QAG for Providers of Research Degree Programmes](#)
- [Topic-specific QAG for Blended Learning](#)

Other QQI Policy Documents

- [QQI's Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes, and Joint Awards, 2012](#)
- [QQI's Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Education and Training to International Learners, 2015](#)
- [QQI Policy Restatement on Access, Transfer and Progression, 2015](#)

Other National/International References

- [European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area \(2015\)](#)
- [IHEQN Guidelines on Collaborative Provision](#)
- [National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland](#)
- [Ireland's Framework of Good Practice for Research Degree Programmes, 2019](#)
- [HEA National Framework for Doctoral Education](#)
- [The Salzburg Principles](#)
- [The Salzburg II Recommendations](#)
- [SOLAS Code of Practice for Employers and Apprentices](#)
- [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#)

¹ These links will be updated as further guidance documents are published.

PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM

Table 1

Table 1 Mapping of ESG (2015) to QQI QA Guidelines (QAG)				
AQR Part A Section	QQI QAG Core Sub-section No.	QAG Core Sub-section Title	ESG Standard No.	ESG Standard Title
1.0 - Internal QA Framework	2.1	Governance and Management of Quality	1.1	Policy for Quality Assurance
	2.2	Documented Approach to Quality Assurance		
2.0 - Programme Development and Delivery	2.3	Programmes of Education and Training	1.2	Design and Approval of Programmes
4.0 - QA of Research Activities and Programmes				
8.0 - Monitoring and Periodic Review			1.9	On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes
5.0 - Staff Recruitment, Development and Support	2.4	Staff Recruitment, Management and Development	1.5	Teaching Staff
2.3 - Teaching, Learning and Assessment	2.5	Teaching and Learning	1.3	Student-centred Teaching, Learning and Assessment
	2.6	Assessment of Learners		
3.0 - Learner Resources and Supports	2.7	Supports for learners	1.6	Learning Resources and Student Support
6.0 - Information and Data Management	2.8	Information and Data Management	1.7	Information Management
7.0 - Public Information and Communication	2.9	Public Information and Communication	1.8	Public Information
2.0 - Programme Delivery and Development	2.10	Other Parties Involved in Education and Training	1.9	On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes
8.0 - Monitoring and Periodic Review				
9.0 - Details of Arrangements with Third Parties			1.2	Design and Approval of Programmes
2.0 - Programme Development and Delivery	2.11	Self-evaluation, Monitoring and Review	1.9	On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes
8.0 - Monitoring and Periodic Review			1.10	Cyclical External Quality Assurance
4.0 - QA of Research Activities and Programmes	QAG for Providers of Research Degree Programmes			

Introduction and Overview of Institution

The AQR has been approved by Deputy President, Prof Anne Sinnott and is submitted by Director of Quality Promotion, Aisling McKenna

Dublin City University was first established as the National Institute for Higher Education, Dublin (NIHE) and took in its first cohort of students in 1980. NIHE Dublin was set up to fulfil the national requirement for a highly-trained workforce with skills in business, science and electronics, computer technology, communications and languages and as an agent for change in its local community. In September 1987, an international study group established by the Minister of Education recommended that the NIHE be established as an independent university having the title Dublin City University. The Dublin City University Act came into force on 25 May 1989.

Since its inception, DCU has developed a national and international reputation for distinctiveness and innovation in its teaching, research and its engagement with society. DCU was the first Irish university to implement structured, paid internships as part of the undergraduate learning experience.

DCU leads the Irish university sector in its commitment to addressing educational disadvantage, with over 1,100 students enrolled currently in the University through its Access programme to address socio-economic disadvantage in higher education. In 2013, DCU established the concept of the Age-Friendly University and became the world's first university to adopt this brand. This model, and the associated generic principles, has subsequently been adopted by over 60 universities across the world (on four continents).

In December 2017, DCU became Ireland's first University of Sanctuary in recognition of the range of supports it has established to aid the refugee and immigrant community in Ireland. A number of initiatives, including on-campus and online scholarships, have been developed and more will be added as the programme develops. More recently, DCU is the first university globally to be designated as an "Autism-Friendly University".

In 2013, DCU, along with St Patrick's College of Education, Mater Dei Institute of Education and Church of Ireland College of Education initiated a process, which would result in a significant development in Irish higher education, and mark a milestone moment in DCU's history. Together, the four institutions developed an Incorporation Programme, with the goal of coming together as a single institution to form part of the 'new DCU'. The completion of this project has brought many positive changes for The University. Most notably, it has advanced student numbers by 4,000 bringing the total number to approximately 17,000 in 2018, as well as an increase in staff numbers from 1,100 to 1,500 across both academic and professional support units. In addition, the completion of the Incorporation Programme in 2017 enabled the creation of the DCU Institute of Education, the first Faculty of Education in an Irish university, positioning DCU as the leading national provider of accredited education programmes in Ireland. Furthermore, it has also facilitated an enhanced and expanded Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences.

DCU is frequently ranked among the world's top young universities globally by ranking agencies such as Times Higher Top 100 under 50 and the QS Top 50 under 50. A number of subject areas at DCU are ranked within the top 200 globally, according to the QS subject Rankings, including Education and Training, Linguistics, Politics and International studies, and Communications and Media Studies. The University is ranked 12th in the world in the Greenmetric University Rankings, 84th globally in the Times Higher Impact Rankings, and 19th globally for graduate employment rate, an element of the QS Employability rankings.

1.0 Internal QA Framework

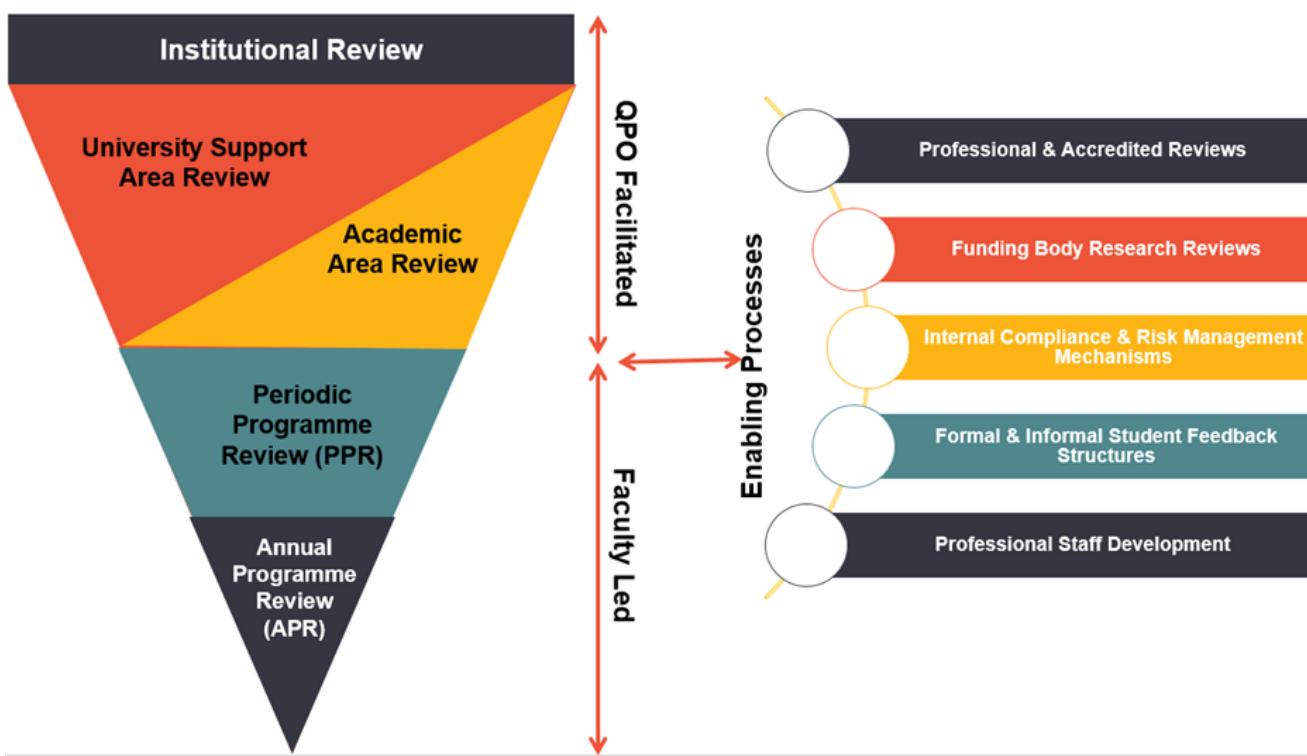
1.1 Governance and Management of Quality

Quality Assurance and Improvement Policy Statement.

The [DCU Quality Assurance and Improvement Policy Statement](#) has been developed in compliance with the provisions of the Universities Act 1997 and the Qualifications and Quality Assurance Act 2012. It also aligns its activities with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and relevant QQI QA Guidelines.

DCU Quality Framework

The DCU Quality Assurance Framework provides a cohesive model through which the University can demonstrate quality assurance processes, are embedded, integrated and ongoing with a combination of regular monitoring and periodic review of programmes.



HEA-DCU Performance Based Compact 2018-2021

The role of quality assurance as a tool for ensuring excellence in teaching, learning and engagement is further reflected in the development of its agreed goals with the Higher Education Authority (HEA) in the [HEA-DCU Performance Based Compact Agreement](#). For the 2018-2021 Performance Based Compact Agreement, focused on the delivery of a number of themes relating directly to the successful achievement of goals in relation to the quality of our education and research.

DCU Strategy 2017-2022, Talent, Discovery and Transformation

In 2017, DCU developed a new strategic plan, its first since the completion of the Incorporation Programme, which saw the coming together of DCU with St Patrick's College Drumcondra, Mater Dei Institute and Church of Ireland College of Education. The new DCU Strategic Plan, [Talent, Discovery and Transformation](#), sets out a clear vision for the university, in which *DCU will be a globally significant University of Transformation and Enterprise*, renowned for,

- The development of talent
- The discovery and translation of knowledge to advance society

- Its focus on creativity and innovation
- The advancement and application of technology, and
- Its commitment to sustainability

The current strategic plan, structured around **six key themes** are central to informing our strategic goals, Talent, Discovery, Creativity, Society, Technology and Sustainability.

The plan outlines nine key strategic goals, through which the university will measure its success. These include:

- Provide a transformative student experience;
- Advance our reputation for world-class research;
- Sustain our ambitions through income generation;
- Ensure a coherent, connected university;
- Value and develop our staff community;
- Develop a global university;
- Nurture Creativity and culture across the university;
- Place sustainability at the core of the university;
- Pursue active engagement with our communities.

Development of the 2017-2022 Strategic Plan

The development of the DCU strategic plan involved a range of consultations within the DCU community and key stakeholders, including a series of President led Town Hall meetings and the establishment of ten cross-institutional working groups to examine a number of potential strategic thematic areas. A centrepiece of the strategic planning process was the hosting of DCU Fuse, a 25-hour online crowdsourcing event providing an opportunity for the University to engage and interact with staff, students, alumni and friends. A cross-institutional project group tasked with overseeing the execution of the initiative drove this online platform, developed by researchers at the Adapt Centre, DCU.

The structure of DCU Fuse was the scheduling and hosting of strategically themed discussion topics. These topics, developed to align with the thematic areas under review within the strategic working groups, included crosscutting regions within the University. The outputs enabled the chairs of each of the strategic working groups to drive discussions on the platform. A review and summary of which were subsequently submitted to the Senior Management Group (SMG) for further consideration.

The implementation of the DCU strategy comes through a process of rolling planning, which includes an annual period of 'review and renew'. The SMG drive this process, which is coordinated by the Quality Promotion Office (QPO) and provides an opportunity for the University to remain flexible and responsive to the dynamic national and global environment.

An alignment of the university's strategic ambitions and its commitment to quality remain embedded throughout the plan, specifically articulated in relation to teaching quality, the quality and impact of our research, a commitment to operational excellence, as well as the establishment of a strategic partnerships office. The identification of key indicators, enabling the measurement of success and progress, will ensure the effective execution of this plan.

Strategy Implementation

Following the publication of Transformation, Talent, Discovery in September 2017, the University has developed the following Constituent Strategies, which will provide much greater detail regarding actions at local level to deliver on the plan.

These include thematic plans in the following areas,
– Teaching and Learning

- [Research and Innovation](#)
- [Internationalisation](#)
- [Engagement](#)
- [Student Experience](#)

The development of Faculty plans in each of our 5 Faculties,

- [Humanities and Social Sciences](#)
- Engineering and Computing
- [Science and Health](#)
- [DCU Business School](#)
- DCU Institute of Education

The development of strategic plans for our larger professional support units,

- Finance
- Human Resources
- Operations (COO)

An alignment of the university's strategic ambitions and its commitment to quality is embedded throughout the plan, and is specifically articulated in relation to teaching quality, the quality and impact of our research, a commitment to operational excellence, and the establishment of a strategic partnerships office.

The implementation of the strategic plan is monitored annually, with progress reported to Governing Authority. An annual implementation report is published internally to communicate progress on implementation within the DCU community.

DCU Governing Authority

DCU Governing Authority (GA) is responsible for the management of the corporate and secretarial functions of the University, and for the oversight of legal functions and activities for both the University and its associated campus companies. The GA has a specific schedule of matters, called reserved functions, for which it alone has the decision-making function in the University, to ensure the appropriate management and control. The membership of the DCU Governing Authority is available [here](#).

The schedule referred to above includes the various statutory functions reserved as set out in the Universities 1997 Act, covering the following areas:

- Section 18 - Functions of a Governing Authority;
- Section 25 - Staff;
- Section 27 - Academic Council;
- Section 34 - Strategic Development Plan;
- Section 35 - Quality Assurance;
- Section 36 - Equality Policy.

GA has an identified member with responsibility for leading the Authority's approach to discussion and approval of School and Unit-level quality reviews at DCU prior to publication of the Peer Review Group Report and Quality Improvement Plan. This member also acts as a liaison between the Authority and the QPC.

DCU Academic Council

The terms of reference of Academic Council and its three academic subcommittees (Education Committee, University Standards Committee and Graduate Research Studies Board) is available [here](#).

DCU Executive

The primary function of the University's Executive includes contributing to the future direction of DCU by advising the President on issues of major strategic and operational importance. Further, it advises on the promotion of effective communication across all areas of the University and provides a forum, which brings a broad perspective on discussion and decision-making that have University-wide implications. The Executive membership drawn from the University senior leadership, have student representatives and elected memberships representing academic and professional support staff at DCU. Terms of reference for the DCU Executive Committee is available at the following [link](#).

Quality Promotion Committee

The Quality Promotion Committee (QPC) is a committee of Executive, chaired by the President or President's nominee and draws its [membership](#) from across the DCU academic and professional support departments. More information on the terms of reference of QPC is available at the following [link](#).

DCU Education Committee

Among its other functions, Education Committee is responsible for maintaining strategic oversight of the University's portfolio of taught programmes, making recommendations as to proposed changes and evaluating the viability of proposals for new programmes. The terms of reference for Education Committee can be found [here](#).

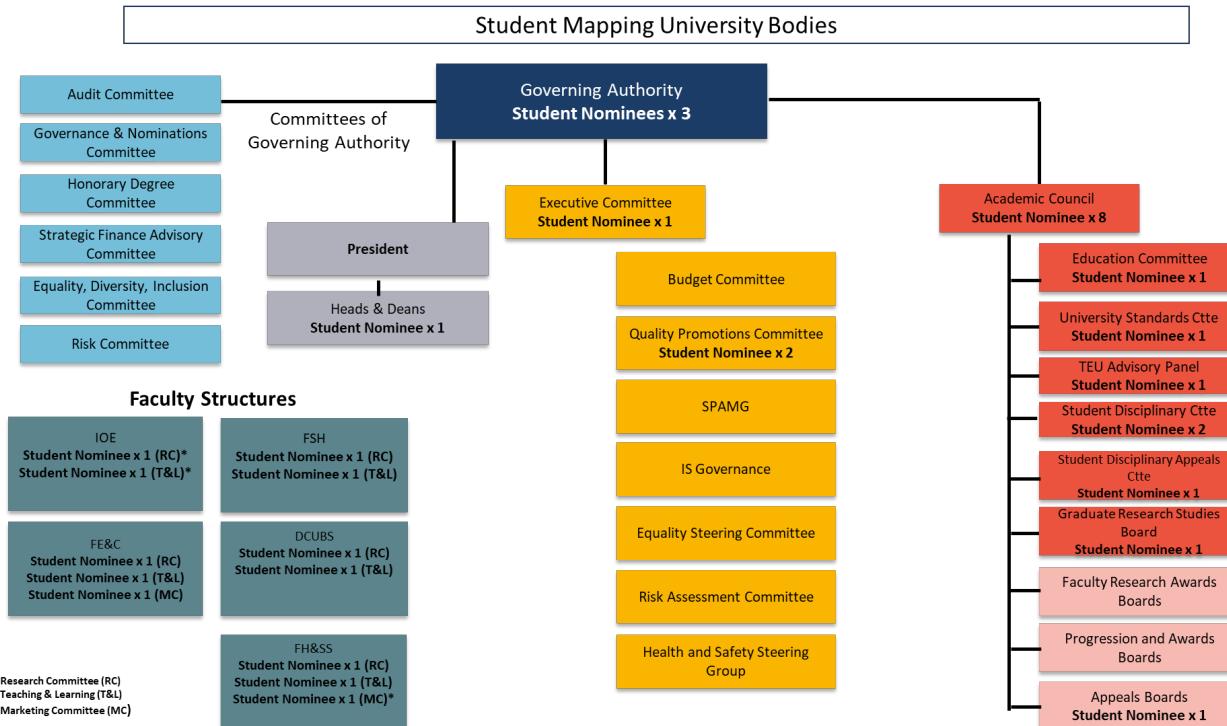
University Standards Committee

University Standards Committee, chaired by the Deputy Registrar / Dean of Teaching and Learning, approves the appointment of all external examiners. It also approves the re-admission of legacy students, derogations from Marks and Standards, and, on an annual basis, Programme Specific Regulations, which complement Marks and Standards. It also formulates policy in a wide range of areas related to Teaching and Learning. The terms of reference of University Standards Committee can be found [here](#).

Graduate Research Studies Board

Chaired by the Dean of Graduate Studies, the Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB) reports to the University Standards Committee and Academic Council for the development, maintenance and review of postgraduate research regulations, guidelines and good practice. Further, good practice in the structure and delivery of taught doctoral programmes also falls within this remit. The terms of reference of GRSB can be found [here](#).

The following figure provides an overview of DCU University committees, noting, where relevant, student representation on individual committees.



The DCU Quality Promotion Office

The Quality Promotion Office (QPO) was established to promote, support and facilitate continuous quality improvement activities across academic and administrative units throughout the University. This is undertaken principally through the management of the University's Quality Review process for Schools, Faculties and Units through: the provision of assistance and advice to Heads of Schools, Dean of Faculties and Directors of Units as well as academic and administrative staff engaged in the review process; liaison with external reviewers; tracking of the implementation of recommendations arising from the review process; analysis of the outcomes of the review process at an institutional level; dissemination of good practice arising from the review process.

Since 2016, the DCU Quality Promotion Office has been restructured to include the Institutional Research function of the university. As a result of this restructuring, the QPO now has an expanded remit to include,

- Regular analysis on behalf of the university for student-based performance metrics, including the identification and analysis of students at risk of academic non-progression
- Provision of analysis and reporting to inform and support and evidence-based planning, decision-making and quality assurance and enhancement
- Co-ordination of institutional wide student surveys, including the Irish Student Survey of Engagement (ISSE)
- Completion of statutory returns on student number to a number of state agencies
- Contribution of data for, and analysis of performance in university rankings

The Quality Promotion Office also assumes responsibility for a number of activities relating to strategic planning, including,

- Completion of institutional reporting and monitoring of progress on the goals established as part of the HEA Performance based Compact
- Monitoring and institutional reporting of progress on the implementation of the DCU Strategic Plan.

1.2 Linked Providers, Collaborative and Transnational Provision

DCU has many forms of relationships with different types of organisations, for a variety of reasons that may include:

- The recruitment of students
- The joint development of courses
- Joint research proposals
- To create sustainable strategic alliances

Types of Agreements

In general, there are three broad levels of cooperation with other Higher Education Institutions that may be supported and formalised through:

Letter of Intent - provides a general framework for future collaboration at School or Faculty level between DCU and those in other institutions

Memorandum of Understanding - provides a general framework for future collaboration at institutional level, or leads to the provision of joint programmes or accreditation

Strategic Alliance - mutually beneficial long-term formal relationship formed between DCU and another party/ parties in order to pursue a set of agreed goals or to meet a critical organisational need while remaining independent organisations

In addition, collaborative EU level arrangements such as the Erasmus programme are coordinated through the International Office.

Types of Activities for Agreements

National and international partnerships are based upon a broad strategic fit with university strategy in potentially the following areas:

- Research collaboration & pursuing funding opportunities
- Academic collaboration in learning innovation
- Student recruitment
- Joint ventures such as joint location in third party countries
- Benchmarking various elements of the university
- Other elements such as student, staff exchange, guest speakers, networking

DCU has a range of policies and procedures to support the establishment and ongoing quality assurance of collaborative proposal for programmes of study. These are managed by the Office of the Vice President Academic Affairs and can be accessed at the following link:

[Collaborative Provision at DCU](#)

2.0 Programme Development and Delivery

2.1 Programme Development and Approval

Guide:

Every proposed new programme must undergo validation involving the assessment of its relationship to the University strategy and its likely viability, and accreditation, which involves scrutiny by a group of external experts surrounding the appropriateness of academic content and standards.

The Education Committee then reviews validation proposals, submitted for approval by the relevant Faculty.

Validation proposals must contain the following elements:

- Summary description of the background to and development of the proposal
- Strategic fit
- Likely demand, and proposed intake
- Entry requirements, and progression and exit routes
- Purpose of the programme
- Programme learning outcomes
- Aptitudes and proficiencies
- Outline structure of programme
- Statement of financial resources required (using the template provided by the Finance Office)
- Statement of physical space requirements:
- Implementation plans
- Membership of the proposed development team
- Membership of the proposed Accreditation Board

Validation proposals are evaluated on the following criteria:

- Evidence of alignment with the University strategic plan and its component strategies
- Evidence of alignment with the strategic plans of the relevant Faculty/Faculties and School(s), as outlined in the validation proposal
- Evidence of a place for the proposal within higher education in Ireland generally, taking into account programmes offered in other institutions
- Evidence of the likely demand for the proposed programme, and the likelihood of achieving the appropriate student intake
- Coherence of the statement of programme purpose and underpinning educational philosophy
- Appropriateness of the programme learning outcomes, and coherence of their relationship to the programme's purpose and educational philosophy
- Reasonableness of the estimate of the resources needed to offer the programme
- Reasonableness of the proposed launch date
- Appropriateness of the proposed development team
- Appropriateness of the proposed members of the Accreditation Board in light of the regulations for the appointment of such members.

Validation proposals are subject to consideration by Education Committee and, where relevant, Education Committee Standing Committee. Before a programme can proceed to accreditation, the Executive Dean of the Faculty must confirm that all the recommendations of the Education Committee and any recommendations from Academic Council have been implemented.

Accreditation proposals must contain the following elements:

- Summary description of the background to and development of the proposal (using the template provided)
- Entry, progression and exit routes
- Purpose of the programme
- Programme learning outcomes
- Aptitudes and proficiencies
- Outline structure of programme
- Marks and Standards and programme-specific regulations
- Alignment matrix
- Quality assurance and programme evaluation
- Module descriptors
- Curricula vitae of the members of the programme team
- Any necessary appendices (but these should be kept to a minimum)

Accreditation proposals are evaluated on the following criteria:

- Likelihood that the proposed programme will meet the needs which the proposal indicates it is intended to meet
- Appropriateness of the entry requirements and exit routes
- Validity of the purpose and underpinning educational philosophy of the proposed programme
- Linkage of the programme learning outcomes with the purpose and the underpinning educational philosophy of the programme
- Consistency and coherence of the proposed modules in the context of the underpinning educational philosophy and the programme learning outcomes
- Reasonableness of achieving the programme learning outcomes, in the time specified, by the majority of students
- Appropriateness and mix of learning and assessment methodologies
- Coherence between assessment methodologies, per module, and the module learning outcomes
- Coherence of the group of skills and competencies that the student would be expected to have at the end of the programme
- Appropriateness of the quality assurance procedures to be used in relation to the programme the qualification.

Full Information on academic programme validation and approval regulations can be found at the following [link](#).

Additional support Information for proposers of programmes can be found at this following [link](#).

2.2 Admission, Progression, Recognition & Certification

DCU Admissions Principles and Procedures

DCU has developed a number of principles and policies to ensure that admission to the University is determined based on fair, transparent and consistent admissions practices. These include,

[DCU Admissions Principles](#)

[Undergraduate Admissions Policies](#)

[Postgraduate Admissions Policies](#)

Transfer Procedures

DCU has developed a number of procedures relating to the transfer of students, both within DCU programmes, and for students in other institutions to transfer onto DCU programmes. The following links provide information on the procedures for DCU or other external students to transfer onto DCU programmes:

[Information relating to the transfer procedures for incoming students, transferring to DCU](#)

[Information relating to the transfer procedures for DCU students, transferring to another DCU programme](#)

DCU Legacy Re-Admissions Procedure

Procedures are in place for programme chairs to request the re-admission to a programme made on behalf of a candidate who falls outside the maximum registration period. The process allows for a Programme Chair to make a request for legacy re-admission following agreement by the Programme Board. If subsequently approved by the Faculty Teaching and Learning/Education Committee, the request is submitted for the consideration of the University Standards Committee. More information on this process can be found at the following [link](#).

Repeating an Academic Year at DCU

Processes are in place within both Student Support and Development, Registry and the Finance Office to provide students with advice and information on the process for repeating, or registering for deferred modules. More information on this process can be found at the following [link](#).

Analysis of Examination Results and Progression Rates at DCU

At institutional level, DCU student performance in taught modules is monitored by the DCU Education Committee after every diet of examinations, and end of year programme level at programme level. Further, module and programme level pass rates are reviewed and discussed at Programme Boards.

Progression of Postgraduate Research Students

Procedures are in place for overseeing the annual progression of students studying on postgraduate research qualification. Annual Progress Reviews are carried out at School level, with the relevant report completed by the principal supervisor(s), approved by the supervisory panel and endorsed by the Head of School or nominee. Reports are submitted electronically to the Registry each year on or before the date published in the Academic Calendar.

More information on the process of annual progress reviews for graduate students can be found in [Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis](#)

2.3 Procedures for Making Awards

Progression and Award Boards

Progression & Award Board (PAB) is made up of all of the lecturers who teach on a specific programme of study at DCU and the relevant external examiners. It is chaired by the Programme Chairperson. At the end of each year, the PAB meets to collate and review grades in the various modules, and take all relevant information into consideration when approving final results.

The functions of PABs are to:

- a. Approve student progression as appropriate
- b. Approve the award and classification of students
- c. Consider applications for extenuating circumstances which have been referred to the PAB

External Examiners on PABs are full voting members, and may advise the Board on the general standard of student performance in relation to those elements of assessment that they have scrutinised. They should be satisfied that all decisions are appropriate and consistent, and that the management of the assessment and the decision-making process is appropriate and consistent, and comment on the academic quality of the cohort examined relative to the learning outcomes of the programme. Results remain provisional and ECTS credits are not applied until reviewed by the Progression and Award Board. Further information on the Conduct of PABs can be found here.

[DCU Programme Regulations](#), which are updated annually, provide staff and learners within information relation to the examinations, assessment and other regulations within individual programmes.

Progression of Postgraduate Research Students

Procedures are in place for overseeing the annual progression of students studying on postgraduate research qualification. Annual Progress Reviews are carried out at School level, with the relevant report completed by the principal supervisor(s), approved by the supervisory panel and endorsed by the Head of School or nominee. Reports are submitted electronically to the Registry each year on or before the date published in the Academic Calendar.

More information on the process of annual progress reviews for graduate students can be found in [Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis](#). These regulations include (p.33) information on the establishment of Faculty Award Boards for Research Degrees, who are responsible for making recommendations to Graduate Research Studies Board on the awarding of postgraduate research awards at DCU.

2.4 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

DCU Teaching and Learning Strategy

DCU delivers over 180 taught academic programmes across its five Faculties and distance education unit, DCU Connected.

DCU's portfolio of undergraduate programmes reflects its focus on inter-disciplinary degrees and the application of knowledge to the needs of enterprise and the wider society. The university's strategic plan commits the university to preparing students to flourish in their personal lives, in civic society, and in the rapidly evolving workplace. The university's connectedness with enterprise and society is reflected in the integration into student learning of applied research, industrial placements and the expertise of practitioners.

Currently, 75% of DCU undergraduates are registered on programmes that include a structured, for-credit period of either work-based learning or study abroad. Many of our programmes, particularly those delivered by the DCU Institute of Education and School of Nursing have work-placement at the core of their programme of learning. Outside of these disciplines, DCU was the first university in Ireland to introduce INTRA, a programme of compulsory integrated work-based learning as part of undergraduate programmes. These placements aim to enrich students' education through real-world experience, and provide a pathway for developing graduate attributes and enhancing employability.

The current DCU Teaching and Learning Strategy is available to DCU students and staff at the following [link](#). This strategy is aligned to the Teaching and Learning goals articulated in the 2017-2022 DCU Strategic Plan, *Talent, Discovery and Transformation*. Progress on initiatives relating to this strategy are monitored regularly by the University's Education Committee.

DCU Marks and Standards

Marks and Standards are approved by Academic Council. They are applied consistently at all times and to all taught programmes and modules, including taught modules on research programmes. The Registrar of the University, in the context of his/her wider remit, has ultimate responsibility for the

integrity and implementation of Marks and Standards. USC makes recommendation to Academic Council on any changes to DCU Marks and Standards.

The DCU Marks and Standards can be found at the following [link](#).

Programme Specific Regulations

Information for [Programme Specific Regulations](#) are all contained within a single area within the Registry website. Programme regulations complement Marks and Standards (as noted above) and make provision for specific issues or circumstances pertaining to particular programmes or discipline areas.

Examination Regulations

The [examination regulations](#) for Dublin City University are published on the University website.

Regulations and Guidelines for External Examiners

The appointment of external examiners is an important part of the University's quality assurance system. The University ensures that, in approving all external examiner appointments (through the University Standards Committee for taught programmes, Graduate Research Student Board for research programmes), there is consistency of standards across the University and adherence to all relevant University policies. More information on Regulations and Guidelines for External Examiners can be found at the following [link](#).

Progression and Award Boards

The Progression and Award Boards (PABs) are made up of all of the examiners who teach on a specific programme of study at DCU and the relevant external examiners. Each Board is chaired by the Programme Chairperson or teaching convenor. At the end of each academic year, the PAB meets to collate and review grades in the various modules, and take all relevant information into consideration when approving final results. The PAB has discretion to make decisions in respect of individual student's marks and award classifications within the overall context of Marks and Standards

More information on DCU Progression and Award Boards functions and guidelines can be found at the following [link](#).

Examination Appeals

Students on taught programmes have the right to appeal against decisions of a Progression and Award Board. Such appeals are processed in accordance with the Examination Appeals Board Regulations, as approved by Academic Council. Students may also apply in certain circumstances to have the recording and collation of marks which determined a module result rechecked, and/or to have a section of their assessment reviewed by an independent assessor. Further information on examination appeals and related procedures can be found at the following [link](#).

Research Students also have the right to appeal decisions taken at defined points of their research programme. Further details are available on the [Office of Vice-President Academic Affairs website](#).

DCU Academic Integrity and Plagiarism Policy

The DCU Academic Integrity and Plagiarism Policy and associated procedures apply to all individuals at Dublin City University engaged in academic work, including all registered students of DCU on both taught and research programmes, and academic staff engaged in assessment of academic work which contributes to an award or credits. More information on the Academic Integrity and Plagiarism Policy can be found [here](#).

Assessment and Feedback Policy at DCU

Feedback and assessment are an integral part of teaching and learning and form a critical part of learning for the student. In DCU these elements are articulated in a combined policy which interweave and contribute to teaching and learning at the University. The policies provide structure for assessment

and feedback activities which aids both the teacher and the learner. The DCU Assessment and Feedback to Support Student Learning Policy can be found at the following [link](#).

3.0 Learner Resources and Support

The DCU Student Experience Strategy

The development of the new DCU Student Experience Strategy, which closely aligns to the DCU Strategic Plan (2017-22), builds on the concept of an enhanced student journey. Through this journey, students have the opportunity to pass through many stages of transitioning into third level education while entering a supportive and inclusive learning environment. Encountering opportunities for personal growth and discovery, availing of numerous possibilities for ongoing professional development and re-engaging as Alumni of the University.

DCU Graduate Attributes

Generation 21 is a unique programme of initiatives whose purpose is to shape our graduates into well-rounded individuals, ready to make an impact on society and on the workforce. It includes opportunities such as the INTRA work placement, which sees over 1,000 students participating in paid internships with companies in Ireland and worldwide each year; the Study Abroad experience, where partner institutions in over 100 institutions provide study opportunities for DCU students.

Building on these key university initiatives, DCU staff worked with industry to identify the key skills and competencies which we believe students need to develop during their time at the University in order to become well-rounded graduates ready to make an impact on society and on the workforce. These DCU Graduate Attributes now form an integrated part of the degree programmes at DCU, allowing students to develop them in an integrated and consistent way.

More information on the DCU Graduate Attributes can be found at the following [link](#).

DCU Reflect Platform

The DCU Reflect platform is online tool that allows students to create a ‘virtual portfolio’ of their academic, professional and personal achievements. The platform provides a lifelong support to DCU students in securing meaningful employment on graduation and remaining employable for the rest of their careers. Its functions include the capacity for students to curate their coursework and assignments, create shareable online CVs, upload certificates of achievement and maintain monthly journals of internship experience that can be used to create personal blogs. The development of the platform has been coupled the development of programme led initiatives to embed the use of the Reflect platform with the curriculum at DCU. Further information is available [here](#).

DCU Student Charter

Developed in collaboration with the DCU Students’ Union, the charter is designed to provide a framework which will help steer students along their DCU journey and make the most of their university experience. The DCU Student Charter can be found at the following [link](#).

DCU Connected

Open Education students can avail of a wide-variety of supports to ensure they have an enhanced online learning experience. Further information is available [here](#).

Learner Supports

Through a variety of supports available through Student Support and Development, students can seek advice and guidance to support their personal development for the duration of their learning experience. These supports include healthcare services, counselling, disability support, spiritual guidance, financial assistance and clubs & societies activities. More information on personal support and development areas is available below;

- [Clubs & Societies](#)
- [Counselling & Personal Development](#)
- [Disability & Learning Support Service](#)
- [Finance at University](#)
- [Health Service](#)
- [Inter Faith Centre/Chaplaincy](#)
- [Sports Development Service](#)
- [Students' Union](#)

A further enhancement of these support mechanisms is available through the Leadership & Life Skills Centre, located in the U facilities which focuses on developing each individual student to reach their full potential by increasing their life skills along with professional and leadership potential. Further information including a virtual tour is accessible [here](#).

The delivery of academic supports across a range of mediums include student workshops, online courses, and online resources. While professional development supports are available for students to development skills that will enhance their readiness for future career success. Some examples of activities that can assist students in their professional development include careers advice, mature student mentoring, volunteering, integrated work placements and life coaching. The IITD award-winning Mentorship Programme, which links students with alumni, provides a unique platform to learn about the professional world of work and explore their chosen area of interest.

Orientation

First-year students are invited to participate in a comprehensive orientation which is continually reviewed and adjusted to ensure the best possible start to university life. A detailed overview of the orientation process is available [here](#).

Orientation for International Students

A detailed orientation schedule is also extended to all International students to help them settle into their new living and learning environment. University staff engage with students in advance of their arrival to outline supports and services available. Further information outlining the extent of supports is available at the following links - International Student Orientation, Start-up Support, International Student Policies and Procedures.

Access for Under-Represented Groups in Higher Education

DCU has a long commitment to addressing educational disadvantage among groups currently under-represented in higher education. DCU's Access programme, which targets socio-economic disadvantage, and is the largest programme of its kind in Ireland. DCU students who come from socio-economically disadvantaged areas, including students from ethnic minorities and students from the traveller community registered with the DCU Access Services. Further information on post-entry supports for students studying at DCU through the DCU Access Programme is available [here](#).

DCU was the first university in Ireland to be designated both as a University of Sanctuary and an Age Friendly University. Further, as the first university globally to be designated as an Autism Friendly University DCU provides significant support for under-represented groups prior to entry, and throughout their student life journey. These support services are coordinated by a number of dedicated offices within Student Support and Development function and include;

- [DCU Access to the Workplace](#)
- [DCU Mature Student Office](#)
- [DCU Disability Service](#)

- [DCU University of Sanctuary](#)
- [Autism Friendly University](#)

DCU Access to the Workplace

Establishment in 2019, DCU's Access to the Workplace has received widespread recognition for its excellence and innovation, winning the Best Business and Third Level Institution Collaboration prize at the Education Awards in 2020. DCU Access to the Workplace is also backed by Rethink Ireland's Children and Youth Fund, which is supporting the programme's growth and development over the next three years. Access students are a part of DCU's Access Programme, the largest programme of its kind in Ireland, supporting nearly 1,200 students in the 2020/2021 academic year. It makes third level education attainable to talented students from socio-economic disadvantaged backgrounds and provides a range of personal, financial and academic support to enable students to thrive and excel in their studies in DCU. Further information on access to the workplace is available at the following [link](#).

Mature Students at DCU

To assist mature students in their academic, personal and professional development, DCU has designed a range of supports, including one-to-one meetings, access to a range of learning support workshops and online tutorials as well as careers advice tailored to meet their specific needs. Further information on supports for mature entry and student support is available at the following [link](#).

Students with Disabilities

DCU has a range of policies relating to the provision of appropriate support services for students with disabilities, information on which is provided [here](#).

The Disability & Learning Support Office provides initial needs assessments for students entering through the DARE programme and students who register at any point during their academic careers. The services available include drop-in support, examination accommodations, assistive technology, additional tuition and mental health supports.

1st Year Entrant Support Services

DCU has developed a range of support services specifically developed to address issues relevant to new entrants to higher education. These include,

DEVELOP is a central digital repository of resources developed to assist students throughout their learning experience. The hub contains information about opportunities and supports to help students make the most of their university experience, irrespective of the students starting point or prior educational experience. The diversity of this services reflects a truly enhanced student experience filled with new learning, skills development, personal fulfilment and new opportunities. This online resource provides access to a variety of life and digital skills to provide a truly transformative student experience and is accessible via the student VLE.

Pathways to Success is a 4-week series of workshops introduced to DCU students in 2015, which continues to focus on helping First Year students settle in and set goals for their time at university. This programme, facilitated through DCU staff who qualified as Life Coaches, offers First Year students who are not settling well an opportunity to take part in a group based activity in a safe environment and develop a strategy for 'success'. Further information on the programme and access to the 2019 Annual Report is available [here](#)

Staff in the **Student Advice Centre and Careers Unit** dedicate a huge proportion of their time to dealing with emails and walk-in appointments from students who are unsure about their programme. All staff work to a model of triage, dealing with relevant issues and ensuring a smooth referral to a different service, should this be required.

Learner Supports

DCU provide a host of support services to learners across three academic campuses. Specifically, learners have access to resources first to final year and up to PhD level to enhance their skills and overall learning experience through a variety of supports. Resources are tailored to meet the needs of a diverse and growing student population. Further information of these support services are highlighted below;

- [Learning Support](#)
- [Maths Centre Support](#)
- [Writing Centre Support](#)
- [SensusAccess](#)

Maths Learning Centre

The Maths Learning Centre's role is to provide free extra informal support in a welcoming environment to all undergraduate DCU students taking a mathematics module as part of their degree programme. The Centre is located on the ground floor of the O'Reilly Library on the Glasnevin campus. Students can receive one-to-one tuition support during our drop-in service hours where they can work at their own pace with a tutor on hand if they have any questions. Outside of the access hours, the Centre is open as a group study space for mathematics in line with the Library general opening hours. Further information about the Maths Learning Centre can be found [here](#).

DCU Writing Centre

The Writing Centre offers assistance with academic writing to all undergraduate and postgraduate students. Students can attend on their own or in groups to receive expert guidance from a peer tutor. The DCU Writing Centre is located on the ground floor of the Glasnevin Library. Tutorial and one-to-one support provided by the Centre include,

- Guidance in how to structure an assignment at third level.
- Advice on how to research and read effectively for an assignment.
- Support with difficulties with specific aspects of writing e.g. paragraphing, grammar, sentence structure, and transition between points, introductions, and conclusions.

Further information is available [here](#).

SensusAccess is an automated document conversion service provided by the Library enabling students to convert readings into formats that are more useful or easier to work with such as MP3 files, E-books and Digital Braille books. Further information is available [here](#).

Library Support Services

DCU students have unlimited access to a variety of services available to enhance their learning experience in both the O'Reilly Library on the Glasnevin Campus and the Cregan Library on our St Patrick's Campus. Support in developing their citing & referencing skills, access to independent and group study space and access to e-books and in-print publications are some of the resources available. Further information on the full suite of services is available [here](#).

IT Infrastructure

The University provide a variety of IT supports, new technologies and guidance to ensure every student is enabled to effectively participate in all aspect of their learning through the digital infrastructures in place. The full extent of services and supports available to student is accessible [here](#) along with [policies and procedures](#) relating to the IT function.

Student Health and Wellbeing

Student Health Centre: The Centre provides medical care to registered students of DCU and operates a walk-in service, with GP appointments available throughout the week. It provides updates for students on vaccinations required, information about infectious diseases and liaises with relevant schools about

required vaccinations for lab work. In the past, the Centre organised Health Fairs which allowed students browse through information on various health-related matters. Further information on the extent of services provided is available [here](#).

Counselling / Psychological Support: Counselling & Personal Development offers an appointment-based service for students in need of psychological or emotional support through their time at University. Students register with the service and are triaged using the internationally recognised CORE triage scoring system - hence ensuring that students who may be 'at risk' are identified early in the process. The Service runs at full capacity at most times of the year. The service has recently introduced a variety of new initiatives to ensure students are provided with earlier interventions, in order to address issues before they escalate. These interventions include outreach workshops on reducing stress, dealing with procrastination, life balance, sleep hygiene etc. - offered by our occupational therapists in the Disability & Learning Support Unit. This information is also available through DEVELOP which is accessible to all students via the student VLE.

Chaplaincy offers a crucial confidential walk-in service for students of all religions and none. This is a vibrant service which plays a key role in offering a gathering space for students, a confidential ear should the student require advice or guidance, Muslim prayer spaces and Christian gatherings. The Chaplaincy team is composed of ordained priests and lay chaplains and focus on providing a communal space for students to gather. This can often be a place of refuge for First Year students who find the new large learning environment daunting.

Health Promotion Office: The Health Promotion Officer continues to offer support and guidance to maintain health and well-being for all staff and students. The Office has developed a number of outreach activities, pulling on existing and new activities around the areas of physical health, mental health, sexual health, smoking cessation and healthy eating. As a multi-cultural community, DCU aims to embed health and well-being within the university to foster an atmosphere of happy, healthy students.

The model of cross-unit referrals and ensuring that the student has ready access to the relevant service at the time that s/he requires it is at the heart of the work of DCU. DCU Staff are provided with a 'Guide to Support Services' and a briefing each year, to inform them of the developments in service offering in order to ensure that they have up-to-date information. They also receive a graphical representation of 'Dealing with Students in Crisis', which is a brief overview of the referral process if a student presents in crisis.

DCU Engagement Award

The DCU Engagement Award is an opportunity for students to receive formal recognition for engagement with university life and civic society. It provides a clear and structured approach to self-development and achievement outside the formal curriculum and will develop participants personal and professional skills, gain confidence, boost overall career prospects and enhance the student experience.

With 3 levels of the DCU Engagement Award Bronze, Silver and Gold, student can participate and develop personal, professional and academic skills at every level, enabling a deep reflection on university life. Further information is available [here](#).

DCU Careers Service

The DCU Careers Service is available to all undergraduate and postgraduate DCU students. The team is committed to providing a wide variety of professional services which include;

- [Career and further study options](#)
- [CV and Interview preparation](#)
- [Improve your applications and postgraduate personal statements \(referral from Quick Query Clinic\)](#)
- [Highlight your skills and identify any gaps](#)
- [Help you if you're thinking of changing or leaving your course](#)
- [Digital Toolkit to help build a career](#)

Further information on the career services provided is available [here](#).

INTRA Office

The INTRA programme is an accredited and highly valued part of student learning at DCU. It is a compulsory element of many degree programmes and must be completed in order to graduate. INTRA provides an opportunity for employers to benefit from the talent and skills of students across a range of disciplines including Business, Science, Computing, Engineering and Humanities. Our hard working and enthusiastic students have spent their first years of college learning the theory and pursuing the practical. The INTRA programme provides an opportunity for real-time experience in the workplace. Further information is available [here](#).

Development Workshops

Student Support and Development co-ordinate and host a range of workshops that students can attend to support both academic success and personal and professional development. These workshops are hosted across both the DCU Glasnevin and St Patrick's campuses on a regular basis. More information on types of workshops delivered, and a schedule for upcoming events can be found [here](#).

DCU Uaneen Module

Forming part of the Student Experience Strategy, DCU formally recognises and rewards the achievement of holistic education by accrediting a module in extra-curricular activities - the Uaneen Module. This module is a unique scheme that formally recognises student achievements and learning acquired in areas of clubs, societies, community work and extra-curricular activity in general and is the final level of the DCU Engagement Award. Depending on your degree programme, the Uaneen Module can be either a contributing five-credit elective or a non-contributing optional additional five-credit module. In both cases, successful completion means that students will receive an awarded credit included in the degree parchment. Further information is available [here](#).

4.0 QA of Research Activities and Programmes

Policies relating to Postgraduate Research Study at DCU

Policies and procedures relating to quality assurance and enhancement of postgraduate research and doctoral education are led by the Dean of Graduate Studies and the [Graduate Studies Office](#). The Graduate Studies Office supports the development and delivery of research and taught postgraduate programmes across the University and provides a range of support services for its graduate students. The Graduate Research Studies Board (referred to above) is responsible both for a range of policy issues and for making decisions in respect of individual students at certain stages of their progression through their research programmes.

The following links provide further information in relation to regulations relating to postgraduate research at DCU:

- [Academic Roles and Responsibilities in Graduate Research](#)
- [Annual Progression Process - A DCU Research Guide](#)
- [Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis](#)
- [Deferral Guidelines for Research Students](#)
- [Format of 'PhD/MA by Artefact' - Guidelines for Candidates, Supervisors and Examiners](#)
- [Format of 'PhD/ MA through Creative or Performance Practice' - Guidelines for Candidates, Supervisors and Examiners](#)
- [Format of 'PhD by Publication' - Guidelines for Candidates, Supervisors and Examiners](#)
- [Graduate Research Guide 2020-21](#)
- [Independent Panel Member - Appointment and Remit](#)
- [Orientation Guide for Research Students 2020-21](#)
- [Payment Mechanism for Research Students Contributing to Research Activities](#)
- [Policy on Research Supervision and Awards in Collaboration with Other Institutions](#)

- [Quality Assurance of Graduate Training Elements \(GTEs\) Guidelines](#)
- [Recognition of Prior Learning \(RPL\), Policy for Research Programmes](#)
- [Remote Supervision of Research Students - guidance document](#)
- [Research Supervision and Awards in Collaboration with Other Institutions](#)
- [Resolving Difficulties Informally - Guidance for Research Students and Supervisors](#)
- [Thesis Submission and Oral Examination - A DCU Doctoral Student Guide](#)
- [Withdrawing or Early Exit from Research Degree Programme](#)
- [Guidance for students and supervisors in respect of withdrawing, or early exit from research programmes](#)

In addition, the Graduate Studies Office also provide detailed information to further assist and support postgraduate research students throughout their studies. Examples of these supports are detailed below:

- [Graduate Training at DCU](#)
- [Writing Supports for Graduate Researchers](#)
- [Research Integrity Training Programme](#)

A further number of policies exist in relation to wider issues of academic quality and integrity at DCU. Relevant policies can be found at the following links:

- [Academic Integrity and Plagiarism Policy](#)
- [Data Protection Policy- Privacy Policy](#)
- [Guidelines on Best Practice in Research Ethics](#)

The [DCU Graduate Research Guide](#) provides students with support in understanding the administration and policies and procedures relating to postgraduate research study.

Other Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures Supporting Research Activity

Two broad categories of research-related policies and guidelines are in force at DCU. The first consists of those which either advise researchers on good practice or which establish a framework (which may be derived from external regulatory or compliance requirements) for researchers to operate within.

These include:

- [Code of Good Research Practice](#)
- [Code of Practice on Authorship](#)
- [Policy for Responding to Allegations of Research Misconduct](#)
- [Out of Hours Access Policy](#)
- [Hosting International Researchers at DCU](#)
- [Ethics Guidelines for Researchers](#)
- [DCU Position Statement on Open Access to Research Publications](#)
- [Transfer of Equipment to another institution Agreement Template](#)
- [Policy for the Use of Animals for Scientific or Educational Purposes](#)

The second set of policies and guidelines ensure that research effort is of the highest quality and this set is connected to monitoring and review activity. These will be described in more detail in the sections below and they comprise:

- [Research Infrastructure Policy](#)
- [DCU Distribution and Reporting Policy for Research Funding Supports](#)
- [Guidelines for establishing or consolidating a research centre at DCU](#)

There are several policies in place to structure the University's Innovation activity that aim to ensure the highest-quality outcome. These are briefly described below:

Intellectual Property Policy

DCU's [Intellectual Property Policy](#), updated in late 2020 is publicly accessible on the DCU Web Site. The University's role in the discovery and transmission of knowledge, and the provision of public service creates an environment which is highly conducive to the conception and development of many forms of intellectual property. There is always the possibility that such developments may have commercial value and DCU therefore remain committed to exploit such opportunities to the benefit of the Irish economy, the inventors, collaborative partners and the university. Further information is available [here](#).

Conflicts of Interest Policy

DCU's [Conflict of Interest Policy](#), helps ensure the highest standards of practice in its educational, research and commercialization mission. DCU gives a great deal of freedom to its Staff, but in so doing needs to put in place a mechanism to protect its Staff, and itself, from reputational damage and other liabilities.

DCU Consultancy Policy

DCU's Consultancy Policy is internally accessible to DCU staff members only and provides clarity around procedures and processes for the management of consultancy carried out on behalf of the university. The policy ensures that the distinction between private consultancy and university consultancy is well documented.

Research Committee

The University Research Committee is responsible for the organisational structure of research at DCU and consists of the Research Committee and two subcommittees the [Research Advisory Panel](#) and the [Research Ethics Committee](#).

The committee has overall responsibility for the following:

- The formulation and implementation of the research strategy of the University.
- The selection of elements for future funding rounds of the institutionally orientated state funding mechanisms.
- Managing institutional submissions for funding.
- The allocation of University funds, derived from the budgetary system, to the Research Advisory Panel, following annual bids for these funds from the Panel.
- The allocation of other research income as may accrue to the University.
- Monitoring research output quality across the University and recommending remedial action.
- Ethical issues relating to research.
- Reporting to Academic Council on an annual basis on research issues.
- Reporting to Executive Committee on budgetary matters.
- Maintaining accurate minutes of the meeting's procedures.

Further information regarding the committee structures and processes is available [here](#).

DCU INVENT

DCU Invent is the University's commercialisation and technology transfer unit who engage with companies and organisations to bring university research to the marketplace. Further information is available [here](#).

5.0 Staff Recruitment, Development and Support

The University asserts that its staff is its greatest asset and that it holds all the various categories in equal esteem. The University is dependent on its staff to fulfill its mission and its success depends on the recruitment and retention of staff of the highest calibre.

The University has adopted a Policy for Recruitment and Selection (including promotion) which aims to ensure that, by using its procedures and accompanying guidelines the most suitable person is appointed or promoted. The University's Policies and Procedures for both Recruitment and Selection and Promotions provide for the application of best human resources practice (having a proper appreciation of employment law) together with a careful application of the principles of equity, fairness and flexibility.

The following links provide further information on appointments and promotion policies at DCU:

[Recruitment & Selection Policies & Procedures](#) (Section 1 of the HR Policies & Procedures Manual)

[DCU Promotions Policies & Procedures](#) (Section 3 of the HR Policies & Procedures Manual)

Other relevant policies include:

[Policy to Promote Respect and Protect Dignity at DCU](#)

[DCU Equality & Diversity Statement](#)

[Code of Practice for the Employment of People with Disabilities](#)

Staff Learning & Development

The University is committed to meeting employee learning and development needs. This investment in staff development is integral to the achievement of a challenging and ambitious set of priorities in line with the University's Strategic Plan *Talent, Discovery and Transformation 2017 - 2022*. Further information on DCU's HR Learning & Development approach is available at [Learning & Development at DCU](#)

Recognising the considerable increase in our scale and complexity, HR Learning & Development (L&D) has an increasingly broad reach. An annual cross-institutional process to identify specific development needs is undertaken in conjunction with key stakeholders from each Faculty. This process is guided by the recently launched [Academic Development and Promotion Framework](#). Appropriate interventions are then designed and implemented to meet these skill, capability and competency requirements.

The resulting opportunities for staff development are available through the following mechanisms:

- [Learning & Development Schedule](#)- provides a comprehensive suite of development opportunities for individual staff development.
- Learning Campaigns & Programmes - designed to meet the development needs of specific groups of staff. Examples include the [Staff Orientation Programme](#) [Mentoring Programme](#), [Professional Skills for Research Leaders](#) and the [University Leadership and Management Programme \(ULM\)](#).

Both the PSRL and the ULM are blended learning programmes and are accredited by the UK Leadership Foundation. The Orientation Programme has been recently redesigned to provide information on the specific resources and supports available for those with teaching responsibilities. The mentoring programme specifically mentions 'enhancing teaching quality' as an area that the mentee may choose to discuss with their mentor.

Organisational Development (OD) - involves designing interventions to assist leaders, teams and departments to increase organisational capability through planned changes in processes and systems. L&D offer a bespoke service in this regard. OD interventions include improved communication, better decision-making, enhanced and defining leadership style and behaviours, conflict resolution mechanisms, evidence of effective, functional teams, and interpersonal and group processes. L&D continue to engage with faculties, schools & departments to identify, design and deliver these interventions as required.

In addition to L&D a number of other units across the University contribute to the professional development of staff including the Teaching Enhancement Unit, the Library, Research and Innovation Support (RIS), and Information Systems Services (ISS). A new initiative (working title 'Learn & Grow') is underway to provide integrated development opportunities for staff comprising the combined strengths of each of the learning providers within the University.

DCU Mentoring Programme

DCU offers staff members the opportunity to engage with an active mentorship programme. Mentees will be lecturers, senior lecturers, research and administrative staff. Mentors will be senior academic and research staff including professors and retired members of staff and senior administrative staff. Information on the DCU Mentoring Programme is available [here](#).

DCU Teaching Enhancement Unit

The DCU Teaching Enhancement Unit's mission is to, *foster excellence in practice through leadership in teaching, the provision of professional development opportunities for staff, and the scholarship of teaching and learning*. The Unit leads a number of professional development opportunities designed to support the professional development of academic staff. These include leading the delivery of accredited learning opportunities in [Online Assessment](#), [Online Learning and Teaching in Higher Education](#). The Teaching Enhancement Unit further deliver a series of workshops for programme teams and schools covering a wide variety of areas related to teaching and learning. More information on these workshops can be found on the [Teaching Enhancement Unit website](#).

Research Career Framework

The DCU Research Career Framework (RCF), designed to attract and retain Postdoctoral researchers, provides significant professional development opportunities. The Framework aims to ensure that DCU remains a University of choice for top class research and researchers in the future. Further information on the Framework and initiatives underpinning the Framework is available [here](#).

Research Development Programme

The Research Development Programme is developed by HR Learning & Development in collaboration with RIS following consultation with Researchers. The programme aims to support the career and professional development of researchers and academics as they undertake the Research Career Framework. This programme provides skills based learning and development opportunities, which encourage both the personal and professional growth of researchers. Information on the full range of research courses, the Researcher Development Programme and information on the DCU Research Career Framework are located on the [Researcher Development Hub](#).

Women in Leadership Initiative

The Women in Leadership Initiative is part of DCU's commitment in continuing to promote the principles of equality by embracing diversity. The vision for this initiative is that DCU will become a university that explicitly values women as leaders. A wide range of formal and informal initiatives, existing and new, will support the achievement of this ambitious vision. More information on the scope of activity within this initiative is available at the Women in Leadership section of the DCU [website](#). The Women in Leadership initiative includes a range of training and development supports for staff including opportunities for mentoring, leadership development and Unconscious bias training. Information on the programmes available are available on the [DCU Women in Leadership website](#).

6.0 Information and Data Management

The University uses a wide variety of systems to manage student records assessment, to management and governance of the Institution. Each of these systems is subject to a rolling review of access control, security applications, and system updates, to ensure that they are secure, robust and fit for use by University staff.

Information is an asset and if managed properly can contribute significantly to the smooth operation of the university. The environment of information management is undergoing a fundamental change, both internally within the university as well as externally, with the development of new technology, which has and will provide much greater capability in managing information assets effectively. Specific information management issues which the university will address over the short to medium term are, a) the replacement of the Student Information System (SIS); b) compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018.

To assist in the management of these legislative changes and infrastructural challenges the university recently formed an ‘Information Systems (IS) Governance Committee’ to advise on the strategic direction of all information sources within the university as well as to ensure that this is consistent with the overall university strategy.

Guru

The Guru system is a platform that provides student, module and programme information to academic staff and management through a user-friendly interface. In addition to data provision and statistical analysis, it is also used in the digital generation, uploading and external review of examination papers. It is also used for the submission of external examiner reports and permits the appropriate sharing and review of these reports at all levels within the university. More information about the guru system can be found at the following link: <https://gurudevelopments.com/>

Discoverer

Discoverer is an Oracle Business Reporting Tool which sits on top of the student information system and is used by administrative staff in Units and Faculties. This tool gives power and flexibility for the running of a suite of standard reports and creating ad hoc reports to respond to specific information requests.

IRIS

Following the recommendations of the IRIU in 2010 an additional BI solution (IRIS) was identified by the university. This is built on Oracle Business Intelligence Enterprise Edition and is integrated with multiple DCU data sources. A number of dashboards of metrics are available to Faculty Management Boards, Programme chairs and Senior Management of the University to provide statistics and metrics for decision making through IRIS.

The University will continue to use both Discoverer and IRIS in the short to medium term. We are currently planning an upgrade of the IRIS platform and associated technologies. However, we are also exploring the use of other modern flexible reporting platforms for comparison. This however is a resource intensive area and future BI requirements will be considered as part of the multi-year SIS Project which is discussed later.

Each of the above mentioned systems provides information to different departments for self-monitoring and planning of their portfolio of activities.

Robust & Comprehensive Student (Learner) Information System

The student information system is supported by ISS in conjunction with a third party provider maintenance and support agreement. Back-ups are taken nightly and in the event of any identified issue the system can be restored to the latest backup. ISS conducts ongoing monitoring and deployment of server security patches, network improvements and system updates to ensure data is secure. Security and performance of the learner information system is subject to ongoing monitoring

and review, particularly at key points in the academic calendar such as publication of exam results and on-line registration.

The student information system maintains the core record of approved university curriculum per annum, student biographical, academic records and student fee information. It further permits the recording of additional relevant data for specific groups of students eg postgraduate research students, nursing degree students and those on specific schemes - DARE, HEAR.

The student information system also sustains and facilitates the reliable processing and progression of the students through the entire student lifecycle from admission through to graduation. Registry and ISS meet regularly to review and plan for significant events within the university academic calendar (eg on-line registration, progression and award boards, etc.) Registry managers also meet regularly with Faculty Managers in which issues requiring attention can be raised and subsequently followed up.

The University can ensure that student assessment data is accurate and complete via quality checks carried out at Faculty and Registry levels through the annual assessment review (Progression and Award Boards) and academic structure processes. The student information system is the considered the primary source for all curriculum and student record information and other systems containing this information pull this directly from the primary source.

Access to the student information system is controlled via the use of Function Sets to ensure appropriate access to data. Function sets are audited regularly by Registry to ensure compliance and have subjected to Internal Audit Processes. A test environment is used for thoroughly testing any system developments before deployment on the live environment.

Loop

Our online learning platform is called Loop. Loop allows students to connect with course content, their teachers and fellow learners. It's where students access their notes, participate in discussion fora, construct their ePortfolio and participate in webinars. Loop is an amalgamation of several different learning technologies into one platform. This platform is central to the delivery of high quality learning experiences for all students of DCU.

The University avails of a number of other systems to support the student learning environment and manage the student experience and lifecycle. These are

Coursebuilder: maintains module descriptors, learning outcomes, programme learning outcomes, module coordinator control and access

Syllabus Plus: used to schedule and publish lecture timetables and operate the room booking service for internal and external clients, clubs and societies

Microsoft Dynamics: used by Student Support and Development, International office and student recruitment to assist with providing the broad range of support services to students in DCU and recruitment of new students

The ISS Ticketing system for logging support queries provides an evidence-based approach to tracking reports of any problems encountered. Registry and ISS liaise closely with the provider with regard to identifying issues, troubleshooting and suggesting developments to the system where required.

DCU Institutional Research and Analysis

Institutional Research and Analysis officer supports the University by gathering and analysing information and evidence for use in university-wide academic and administrative decision-making and assessment activities. Since 2017, this function has become part of the DCU Quality Promotion Office.

Key functions include:

- Provision of analysis and reporting to inform and support an evidence-based approach to university planning, decision making and quality enhancement.
- Design, analysis and reporting on institution-wide student feedback surveys.

- Co-ordinating the implementation and monitoring of Key Performance Indicators at institutional level.
- Analysis of the external environment, including benchmarking activities.
- Supporting the implementation of Business Intelligence Systems to deliver user-friendly reporting across the university.
- Supporting the completion, submission and analysis of data to the Higher Education Authority (HEA) and other Government Agencies

7.0 Public Information and Communication

Information on DCU Policies and Procedures

DCU has dedicated a section of its website for the collation, in a single location, to a full range of the university's policies and other important governance documentation. The website also contains information on guides for the writing of DCU policies, and has a dedicated area for key policies which are most pertinent to new staff at DCU

[University Policies Website](#)

[Policy Starter Pack for new staff](#)

[Guides for the development of policies at DCU](#)

Information System Compliance with Data Protection Legislation

DCU has completed a comprehensive process to ensure compliance with GDPR Regulations in line with the May 2018 enforcement deadline. The Deputy COO has been appointed as the Data Protection Officer for the university and the Data Protection Office has additional resources assigned to deal with the increased compliance requirements around GDPR. Data Champions were identified in most schools and units across the organisation who have all undergone a detailed training programme provided by external consultants. This approach was taken in order to embed the required mind-set and expertise across the organisation to ensure that DCU continues to meet all our compliance requirements into the future. The University has a dedicated Data Protection webpage where guidance on its policies and practices with regard to personal data matters can be found at the following [link](#).

Planned Activity for Future Development

DCU has recently begun a multi-year project to upgrade/replace our student information system. The student information system is in ways the central nervous system of the organisation. A large number of our key IT systems and business processes depend on a robust, available, flexible and secure student information system. As such, the system also plays a key role in the experience of our students both on and off campus.

The existing student information system has been extremely secure and robust over the years since installation over twenty years ago. However, DCU has grown significantly over the last number of years in student numbers and complexity in relation to IT architecture and business requirements. As a result, the current system is no longer meeting our needs in terms of key strategic and operational requirements.

Phase one of this project completed in January 2018. This phase consisted of a significant collaborative effort across the organisation to analyse our operational and strategic business requirements. Workshops and interviews held with a wide range of stakeholders across the organisation and have resulted in a list of approximately 240 requirements to feed into the next phase of the project. The competitive dialogue phase to select a vendor was conducted during 2018/19, with contract negotiations to select a new vendor completed in October 2019.

During 2019/20 DCU will commence the implementation of the chosen solution. The new Student Information System project forms part of a broader range of activities

8.0 Monitoring and Periodic Review

Annual and Periodic Programme Review

Academic programmes at DCU are subject to internal programmatic review, both annually (APR), and on a five-year cyclical schedule of periodic programmatic review (PPR). In addition, 56% of our taught programme portfolio is subject to ongoing external accreditation by Professional, Regulatory, and Statutory Bodies (PRSBs). APR is conducted during October of each academic year, reviewing the programme for the previous academic year. The outputs of APRs are presented and discussed at Faculty Teaching and Learning Committees, with a summary report on the key issues relating to programme delivery and student attainment discussed at Faculty Management Board. In addition, each Faculty prepares a short report identifying issues raised that are managed beyond faculty-level to the University Education Committee in March following APR completion. Building on annual cycle, periodic programme review (PPR) is typically conducted on a five-year cyclical basis. The internal PPR process is completed using a standardised template and reporting structure, however, in cases where programmes are also subject to external reviews by PRSBs, the self-evaluation and outputs of these externally led reviews can be used as a substitute for the internal review process, where appropriate. More information on Annual and Periodic Programme Review can be found at the following [link](#).

Externally- Led Unit Reviews.

The Quality Promotion Office is responsible for facilitating and co-ordinating the cyclical review of units at DCU, on a 7-year rolling cycle. The reviews are based on a self-assessment approach, followed by a peer review group visit, and conclude with the development of a quality improvement plan by the unit under review in response to the recommendations of the peer review group. The academic and support unit reviews are primarily focused on the evaluation and exploration of strategic, organisational and management issues and external relations.

The quality review process includes 4 key stages,

- **Self-Evaluation Report-** the completion of a comprehensive self-evaluation of an academic or professional support area, led by an internally selected quality review committee. Themes explored during self-evaluation both build on previous quality reviews, and other internal and external review activity, and area aligned to the quality assurance requirements outlined in the QQI Guidelines and European Standards and Guidelines. The process of self-evaluation requires an evidence-informed approach to self-evaluation, and units undergoing review are encouraging to use both existing sources of data and information, and seeking new information from relevant stakeholders to support the completion of self-evaluation
- **Peer Review Visit and Report-** The Peer Review visit is conducted by a five-person team, constituted of three external members, and two internal reviewers. Membership of Peer Review Groups are drawn from national and international experts, both from higher education and a peer from outside of the higher education sector. The Peer Review visit aims to verify and evaluate the self-evaluation report, and meet with staff, students, and other stakeholders to discuss key issues identified. The visit is followed by the completion a Peer Review Group Report, which summarises the Group's findings and makes commendations and recommendations for future quality enhancement within the Area under review.
- **Quality Improvement Planning-** following receipt of the final Peer Review Group report, the area develops a Quality Improvement Plan (QuIP) in response to the report. This involves both an Area, and University level response to the PRG recommendations. The QuIP is discussed and agreed at a follow-up meeting, attended by at least one external member of the Peer Review Group
- **Publication of Review Outputs-** following consideration and discussion of both the Peer Review Group Report and Quality Improvement Plan at University Executive and DCU Governing Authority, both documents are published on the DCU website.

Detailed information on procedures, background and guidance documents, and templates relating to these unit level reviews can be found at the following [link](#).

9.0 Details of Arrangements with Third Parties

9.1 Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies

Type of arrangement	Total Number
PRSBs	19
Awarding bodies	0
QA bodies	0

1. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	
Name of body:	The Teaching Council / An Chomhairle Mhúinteoirachta
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc in Physical Education with Mathematics BSc in Physical Education with Biology BSc in Science Education BSc in Education & Training Bachelor of Education Bachelor of Religious Education and English Bachelor of Religious Education and History Bachelor of Religious Education and Music Bachelor of Education in Gaeilge and French, German or Spanish Professional Master of Education (Primary Teaching) Professional Master of Education (Post-Primary Teaching)
Date of accreditation or last review	2018
Date of next review	Est 2022/23

2. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	
Name of body:	Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland / An Bord Altranais
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc in Nursing (General)

	BSc in Nursing (Mental Health) BSc in Nursing (Intellectual Disability) BSc in Nursing (Children's and General) Higher Diploma in Children's Nursing MSc in Dementia Health Care Practice MSc in Dementia Nursing Practice Masters in General Health Care Practice MSc in General Nursing Practice MSc Intell. Dis. Health Care Practice MSc in Int. Dis. Nurs. Practice Masters in Mental Health Nursing Practice MSc in Mental Health Care Practice
Date of accreditation or last review	2020
Date of next review	2025

3. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	
Name of body:	Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB)
Programme titles and links to publications	BA in Accounting and Finance BSc in Aviation Management BSc in Aviation Man with Pilot Studies Bachelor of Business Studies Bachelor of Business Studies (Exchange) Business Studies (with INTRA) BA in Global Business BA in Global Business (Canada) BA in Global Business (France) BA in Global Business (Germany) BA in Global Business (Spain) BA in Global Business (USA) Graduate Cert in Management (Business) Graduate Diploma in Business Analytics Bachelor Business Studies International Masters in Business Administration MSc in Accounting MSc in Electronic Commerce (Business) MSc in Finance M.Sc. in Talent, Leadership & HR Strateg

	<p>MSc in Human Resource Management MSc International Accounting & Business BSc Marketing, Innovation & Technology BSc Marketing, Innovation & Tech(INTRA) MSc in Investment, Treasury & Banking MSc in Management of Operations Graduate Cert in Management of Operation MSc in Work & Organisational Psychology MSc in Management (Aviation Leadership) MSc in Management (Business) MSc in Business Administration MSc in Digital Marketing MSc in Emergency Management MSc in Management (Insights & Innovation) MSc in Work & Organisational Behaviour MSc in Management (Strategy)</p>
Date of accreditation or last review	2021
Date of next review	2026

4. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	
Name of body:	Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI)
Programme titles and links to publications	<p>MSc in Work and Organisational Psychology/Behaviour BSc in Psychology MSc in Psychology BA in Humanities (Psychology Major)</p>
Date of accreditation or last review	2017 and 2018
Date of next review	2022 and 2023

5. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	
Name of body:	Engineers Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	<p>B.Eng. in Biomedical Engineering B.Eng. in Biomedical Engineering MEng in Biomedical Engineering B.Eng. Mechanical & Manufacturing Eng B.Eng. in Mechanical & Manufacturing Eng</p>

	MEng in Mechanical & Manufacturing Eng B.Eng. in Common Entry into Engineering BEng Electronic & Computer Engineering B.Eng. in Mechatronic Engineering MEng Electronic & Computer Engineering MEng In Electronic & Comp Eng. (Wuhan) MEng in Mechanical and Manufacturing Eng
Date of accreditation or last review	various
Date of next review	various

9.2 Collaborative Provision

Type of arrangement	Total number
Joint research degrees	
Joint/double/multiple awards	5
Collaborative programmes	3
Franchise programmes	
Linked providers (DABs only)	1

1. Collaborative provision (Type of collaborative provision)	Double Awards
Name of body (/bodies):	Northeastern University, Boston Neoma Business School, Reims, France European School of Business, Reutlingen, Germany ICADE at the Universidad Pontificia Comillas, Madrid, Spain Brock University, Ontario, Canada
Programme titles and links to publications	BA in Global Business (France) BA in Global Business (Germany) BA in Global Business (Spain) BA in Global Business (USA) BA Global Business Canada
Date of last review	2016
Date of next review	2021

2. Collaborative provision (Type of collaborative provision)	Linked Provider
Name of body (/bodies):	Dundalk Institute of Technology
Programme titles and links to publications	Research Masters and Research PhD
Date of last review	n/a
Date of next review	Currently under review

9.3 Articulation Agreements

Definition:

Per the IHEQN Guidelines for the Approval, Monitoring and Review of Collaborative and Transnational Provision, an **articulation agreement** may be defined as a process whereby all students who satisfy academic criteria on one programme are automatically entitled (on academic grounds) to be admitted with advance standing to a subsequent stage of a programme of a degree awarding body. These arrangements are subject to a formal agreement between the parties.

Guide:

If the institution has articulation agreements with other bodies in place, indicate the total number in the first box, then, in the subsequent boxes, provide details of the any new or updated articulation agreements. Details of more than five arrangements may be included if necessary. If available, links to any publications related to the arrangement may be included alongside details of the arrangement.

If available, include links to a list of all other relevant arrangements entered into prior to the reporting period.

Articulation agreements - Total number	1
1. Articulation agreement:	
Name of body (/bodies):	Coláiste Dhúlaigh College of Further Education
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc Business Studies
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	
Date of next review	
Detail of the agreement	

[Higher Education Institution]
2021

Annual Quality Report (Institution)
**PART B: INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE
ENHANCEMENT & IMPACT**
Reporting Period 2019-2020

PART B: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM

1.0 Quality Implementation and Developments

1.1 Strategic QA Updates

Progress on DCU Strategy Implementation in 2019/20

The implementation of the DCU strategy is monitored through a process of rolling planning, which includes an annual period of ‘review and renew’. A rolling approach to planning provides DCU with an opportunity to be flexible and responsive to the dynamic national and global environment. This process is led by members of the Senior Management Group at DCU, and coordinated by the Quality Promotion Office. During 2019/20, internal reporting on Year 3 of implementation was completed and shared with DCU Governing Authority and DCU staff.

A number of highlights of progress made during 2019/20, aligned to quality assurance themes of the QQI Core Guidelines and European Standards and Guidelines include,

Programme Development and Approval

- First students registered on teacher education programme for second-level teachers in Irish and European languages, to meet a national skills shortage of graduates.
- Substantial funding secured (€20m) under the government's Human Capital Initiative (Pillar 3 Innovation & Agility) funded by the National Training Fund, to include the development of 5 new undergraduate programmes addressing identified skills gaps.

Support for Learners

- Discover DCU online pre-orientation programme fully reviewed and revised, and integrated into a new First Year and Postgraduate platform on Loop.
- The DCU Student Engagement Awards fully integrated into the Discover DCU platform
- A new Digital Hub has been developed on Loop which allows students a one-stop-shop access point for resources such as Study Skills, Mental Health, Careers Advice & Resources

Staff Recruitment, Management and Development

- New programme proposal for Postgraduate Certificate in Innovation in Teaching and Learning approved by Education Committee to proceed to Accreditation.
- The Our DCU Framework was launched in December 2019. Initiatives within the implementation plan include the Staff Recognition Awards and activities and events to support the DCU charity partner, Barrettstown Children’s Charity.
- Significant progress has been made in relation to DCU Coaching and Mentoring programmes
- The DCU University Leadership and Management Programme (ULM) continued to be delivered in 2019/20 to 27 staff members
- Submission of the University recertification application for **Athena Swan** was completed in April 2020 and the University was successful in retaining the Bronze Certification.

Quality Assurance of Research Activities and Programmes

- Significant progress on the completion and engagement of **Citation Action Plans** across the five faculties.
- Establishment of the **DCU Covid Research Hub**, initially funding 16 multi-disciplinary projects to work exclusively on the addressing the challenges of COVID-19.
- Second cycle of **Research Impact Awards** completed

Information and Data Management

- The procurement phase of the new Student Information System (SIS) programme was completed in 2019/20; funding for implementation was approved by Governing Authority and the

programme is now mobilised. Work across all SIS delivery streams is progressing with the first new project, CRM recruit going live in November 2020.

DCU Response to HEA Human Capital Initiative Funding Calls

During 2019/20 DCU was successful in its application under the HEA-funded Human Capital Initiative (Pillar 3) funding call for a new initiative, called [DCU Futures](#). DCU Futures will see a transformation in approaches to teaching and learning at DCU, embedding challenge and experiential-based learning as well as hybrid elements and industry input. This initiative shall include the development of 5 new programmes, or significant new learning tracks in a number of existing programmes, across four Faculties. Modules on digital literacy and a language and culture programme will be made available across multiple programmes. The development and implementation of a Transversal Skills Framework will be further progressed through the DCU Futures initiative, with instruments to measure progression in cross-disciplinary skills attainment and an approach to developing student capabilities relating to receiving and acting on feedback in relation to such skills development. DCU Futures will also create capacity for an additional 1,000 students at DCU over the lifetime of the initiative.

DCU has also actively responded to funding calls for the development of programmes under the Springboard Initiative, Skillnet programmes, HCI Pillar 1 & 2, and the July Stimulus initiative, developing and delivering a range of programmes and stand-alone modules to meet the emerging skills needs demands of the workforce. These include a range of specialisms within the MSc in Computing, e.g. Artificial Learning, Blockchain, and Internet of Things.

1.2 Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR

No.	Planned objectives (Previous AQR) Note: Include reference to the relevant section of the preceding AQR, where applicable	Update on Status Provide brief update on status, whether completed or in progress. If an action was planned in the previous AQR, but not completed, provide reasons/short reflections for the delay/non-completion.
1	Initiation of Implementation of new Student Information System	The procurement phase of the new Student Information System (SIS) programme was completed in 2019/20. Following funding approval by Governing Authority, the programme delivery is now mobilised. Work across all SIS delivery streams is progressing with the first new project, CRM recruit having gone live in November 2020.
2	DCU Thematic Review of Digital Learning	DCU initiated self-assessment for the Thematic Review of Digital Learning in December 2019, led by a cross- institutional steering group and chaired by the DCU Deputy Registrar and Dean of Teaching and Learning, Mr Billy Kelly. The Peer Review Visit was initially scheduled for May 2020. In order to prioritise the academic management of the Covid pandemic, and in the hope that an on-site visit could be facilitated, the visit was rescheduled to December 2020, The review was completed as an online review visit, and the Peer Review Group report was received in January 2021.
3	N-Step Institutional Workshop Participation	DCU participated in an N-StEP facilitated workshop in March 2020, to explore new and emerging models for student partnership. The output of the workshop informed the development of a Student-Staff Partnership Framework, developed by Quality Promotion Committee, and agreed in June 2020.
4	INDEx Survey Participation	DCU participated in the INDEx survey in October and November 2019. The results of the survey were used to inform self-reflection as part of the thematic digital review.
5	DCU as a JED Campus	DCU remains committed to working with the JED Foundation to make DCU a JED campus. Implementation has been postponed as a result of managing the Covid campus closures.

1.3 Governance and Management

1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule

https://www.dcu.ie/sites/default/files/registry/university_schedule_of_meetings_2019-2020.pdf

Body	Meeting dates from Sept 2019 - 2020
Governing Authority Committee Meetings	5 th September, 2019 24 th October, 2019 5 th December 2019 27 February 2020, 23 April 2020, 26 June 2020, 10 September 2020, 29 October 2020, 4 December 2020
Executive Meetings	17 th September 2019, 1 st , 15 th , 19 th October 2019, 12 th 26 th November 2019, 10 th December 2019, 7 th , 21 January 2020, 4 th , 18 th February 2020, 3 rd , 31 st March 2020, 14 th , 28 th April 2020, 12 th , 26 th May, 9 th 2020. 23 rd June 2020, 7 th 21 st July 2020, 1 st , 15 th , 29 th September 2020
Quality Promotion Committee Meetings	18th September 2019, 20th November 2019, 15th January 2020, 18th March 2020, 20th May 2020, 17th June 2020, 16th September 2020
Academic Council Meetings	09 October 2019 04 December 2019, 5 February 2020, 8 April 2020, 3 June 2020, 22 June 2020, 14 October 2020,
Education Committee	18 th September 2019, 16 th October 2019 13 th November 2019, 11 th December 2019 15 th January 2020, 12 th February 2020, 11 th March 2020, 1 st & 29th April 2020, 27 th May 2020, 16 th September 2020

1.3.2 QA Leadership and Management Structural Developments

In July 2020, Prof Daire Keogh assumed the role of President of DCU, following the completion of the 10-year term of Prof Brian MacCraith. Since July 2020 Prof Keogh and his leadership team have undertaken a significant review of the existing DCU strategic plan and progress to date on current initiatives and priorities. The renewal of the current plan as a “transitional strategy” prioritising our *People, Focus* on activities aligned to our mission, and sustainable and measurable *Impact* for the University has been completed. This plan will drive University activity until 2022, when a new university strategic plan shall be developed.

1.4 Internal Monitoring and Review

1.4.1 Overview of Periodic Reviews

Unit of review for which report has been published during reporting period	Date of completion/reason for conducting review (if not planned) or non-completion (if planned but not conducted)	Links to relevant publications
Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences	3 rd - 6 th December 2019	https://www.dcu.ie/qpo/published-quality-review-reports-quality-promotion-office
Human Resources Department	25th - 27th March 2020 Rescheduled to the 24th - 26th June, 2020.	https://www.dcu.ie/qpo/published-quality-review-reports-quality-promotion-office
Registry	22 nd - 24th April 2020 Rescheduled to the 17th - 20th November 2020	https://www.dcu.ie/qpo/published-quality-review-reports-quality-promotion-office
Digital Learning Remote Review	Wednesday 13th - 15th May 2020 Rescheduled to 8th - 11th December 2020.	https://www.dcu.ie/qpo/published-quality-review-reports-quality-promotion-office

1.4.2 Expert Review Teams/Panels² involved in IQA

(i) Expert Review Team/Panel Size and Related Processes

	Total	Academic Schools/ Department	Professional Services/Support Unit	Approval/Review of Linked Provider	Programme Approval	Programme Review	Other
Number of review / evaluation processes	2	1	1				
<i>of those:</i>							
On-site processes	1	1					
Desk reviews							
Virtual processes	1		1				
Average panel size for each process type*	5						

* excluding secretary if not a full panel member

² QQI acknowledges that the terminology used to describe the groups of individuals that conduct peer review/evaluation varies from institution to institution.

(ii) Composition of Expert Review Teams/Panels involved in IQA

	Total	Gender			Internal	National	International			Institution Type	
Type of Expert/ Role on Panel		Male	Female	Other, or unspecified			UK, incl. NI	Other European	Outside of Europe	Similar	Different
Chair	2		2		2		2			2	
Secretary											
Academic/Discipline Specific	9	5	4		5	4	5			5	
Student Representative	0	0	0		0	0					
QA											
Teaching & Learning											
External Industry /Third Mission	2	2				2					2

2.0 IQA System – Enhancement and Impacts

Initiatives to Support and Assure the Quality of Teaching and Learning at DCU during the Covid-19 Pandemic

On 12 March 2020, University Standards Committee approved an amendment to DCU Marks and Standards and Examination Regulations to facilitate the Vice-President Academic Affairs/ Registrar of the University to replace aspects of programme regulations with alternative arrangements in the case of a force majeure event, for a defined period of time.

DCU responded quickly to campus closures in early March 2020 and the rapid pivot to teaching online due to the Covid-19 crisis. Initiatives include,

- Immediate shift from pilot to full implementation of Zoom across DCU
- Immediate increase to capacity of DCU's Moodle hosting service.
- Initially daily online workshops on using Loop and Zoom for teaching.
- Launch in March 2020 of the NIDL [Online Teaching Resource Bank](#).
- Launch in March 2020 of 6 weekly NIDL *Teaching@DCU* electronic newsletters to support teaching online.
- Launch in March 2020 of [OpenTeach](#), a free online course on teaching online funded by the National Forum which attracted 500 educators.
- Development in March 2020 of *DCU Key Principles to Inform and Further Develop Alternative Assessments and Advice for Choosing Alternative Assessments*.
- Development and launch in April 2020 of the FutureLearn course on [How to Teach Online](#) that went on to attract over 80,000 educators.
- Launch in April 2020 of free online on [Making Blended Education Work](#) through the FutureLearn platform attracting over 2,000 educators.
- Launch in April 2020 of [Circle Online](#), peer mentoring circles to support staff teaching online
- Establishment in April 2020 of an online examination working group,
- Signing of DCU campus contract with FutureLearn, providing access to FutureLearn partners content and its use as open educational resources for both DCU staff and students.

In April 2020, the University's Senior Management Team undertook a scenario planning exercise to identify challenges and to support planning for the delivery of the 2020/21 curriculum. In May 2020, the University made the decision that Semester 1 of the 2020/21 academic year would be delivered in a hybrid mode. To support this, the University committed funding under a number of headings to support this change in delivery for on-campus students:

- Capital expenditure that included digital maker spaces, simulations, and specialist technical equipment for staff in some disciplines
- A substantial increase in the number of teaching assistants to support greater amounts of small group learning
- The establishment of a new Digital Learning Design Unit comprising 10 new staff in a central unit to support faculties in development of resources for online delivery.

To support staff and students, a number of new DCU initiatives were developed for the start of the 2020/21 academic year, including,

- Development and launch in September 2020 of MyDCU with a suite of updated Discover DCU online readiness courses.
- Relaunch in September 2020 of the [OpenTeach](#) online course on how to teach online with around 200 DCU staff registrations.

- Second offering in September 2020 of Making Blended Education Work through the FutureLearn platform.
- Development and launch in September 2020 of a free online FutureLearn course on [A Digital Edge: Essentials for the Online Learner](#), which attracted over 5,000 learners worldwide. More than 1,400 DCU students completed the online course.

Progress on activities to address the Recommendations of the Cinnte Institutional Review

Following consultation and dialogue with internal stakeholders, an Implementation Plan was developed in response to the recommendations of the Review, led by the departments with leadership and operational responsibility for relevant recommendations. Where appropriate, a clear alignment was established between actions planned as part of the implementation of the DCU strategic plan and activities planned in response to recommendations from the Cinnte Review. During 2019/20, progress has been made addressing a number of recommendations. Highlights of this activity include,

- The development of a comprehensive briefing programme has been developed for incoming student representatives to Governing Authority, led by the Office of the Chief Operations Officer (in response to Cinnte Institutional Review, Recommendation 1)
- Faculty-level Student-Staff Forums are now active in all five Faculties, and are held twice in each academic semester. These meetings are facilitated by the Quality Promotion Office. Discussion topics and agreement are noted and progress monitored by members of the Staff-Student Forums on an ongoing basis. (in response to Cinnte Institutional Review, Recommendation 3)
- Module level hand-books were made available on the DCU Learning Management System (Loop) at the start of the 2020/21 academic year. These include, information on the types of learning activities expected during the module, anticipated weekly milestones and information on assessments, including submission deadlines. (in response to Cinnte Institutional Review, Recommendation 5)
- The final *Our DCU Framework* was communicated to staff in December 2019 and the accompanying *Our DCU Implementation Plan* was shared with staff in January 2020. (in response to Cinnte Institutional Review, Recommendation 5)

The implementation of emergency measures to manage the containment of the covid-19 virus have created unprecedented changes in how the DCU community works and learns together. Teaching and learning at DCU had to change rapidly in response to the emergency measures, with procedures activated to ensure that staff can continue to teaching and support learners, continue research and provide professional support to the University's operations. The launch and completion of a small number of planned initiatives scoped for delivery in 2020 within the Implementation Plan have been reprioritised as a result.

Other Changes to Academic Policies and Procedures

During 2019/20, DCU Academic Council approved a number of changes to academic oversight and governance in a number of areas.

- In December 2019, Academic Council approved, following a 2-year pilot, an amendment to procedures for examination appeals, providing provision for students to apply for a module mark recheck or module assessment review as part of Academic Appeals Board processes
- In February 2020, Academic Council approved a change to the institutional language requirements for international students for entry to DCU programmes. This change was proposed to create alternative criteria for international applicants at DCU to provide evidence of "equivalent English language attainment", removing requirements for the completion of an IELTS

test score where a number of alternative requirements for applicants who have experience living and working in an English-speaking country can be evidenced by applicants.

Programmes of Education and Training

New Programmes Accredited by DCU during the 2019/20 Academic Year

The following programmes completed programme accreditation at DCU

- M.Ed Early Education (23 April 2020)
- BSc in Psychology and Mathematics (1 May 2020)
- Doctor of Elite Performance (Sport) (12 May 2020)

Self-evaluation, Monitoring and Review

Revision of Procedures for Faculty-Level Reviews

During 2019/20, DCU developed and piloted enhanced procedures specifically designed for the conduct of Faculty-level reviews. The revised procedures were developed to ensure that academic area reviews can be fully and effectively conducted at faculty-level, balancing consideration of the effectiveness of Executive Faculties as the strategic unit of academic leadership and management within the University, while reflecting the size and disciplinary diversity within DCU Faculties.

The following revisions were agreed by the DCU Quality Promotion Committee:

- Revision to the Faculty Self-Assessment templates to provide guidance and structure for a self-assessment process within Faculties. This included provision for academic School-level SWOC analysis to be completed as part of a Faculty review.
- Increasing the size of Faculty Peer Review Groups to 6 persons (4 external) to provide additional opportunities to reflect the diversity of academic disciplines within a Faculty.
- Extension of the Peer Review Group visit, and facilitation of parallel streams of meetings, to facilitate greater numbers of staff, students and stakeholders to engage with the review visit.

The first faculty-level review to adopt these new procedures was the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in 2019/20. Following this review and feedback from the Faculties and peer reviewers, procedures have been further revised, for adoption in all future Faculty-level reviews.

Development of Remote Quality Reviews during the Covid-19 Pandemic

Central to the DCU quality review process, is the Quality Review Visit, conducted over 2.5 days by an externally-led peer review group. Working together, Peer Review Groups meet with staff, students, and external stakeholders to verify and discuss the findings of the self-assessment process, and develop recommendations to support quality improvement for the area under review. Given the current campus and travel restrictions since March 2020, DCU has been unable to host Peer Review Groups for the purposes of conducting on-campus quality review visits. In April 2020, the QPO, working with peer review groups, developed procedures for remote reviews, as an emergency measure, to facilitate scheduled quality reviews, particularly in cases where self-assessment had been completed prior to March 2020. The first of these was hosted for Human Resources in June 2020. Some features of the remote reviews included,

- Hosting the quality review over 4 half-day sessions, rather than 2.5 days
- Reducing the overall number of meetings within the review schedule, while maintaining the core stakeholder meetings with staff and students
- Note-taking support for peer review groups provided for all meetings
- Additional peer review group meeting time built-into daily schedules to facilitate peer review group deliberations on commendations and recommendations.

As of March 2021, 4 remote peer review visits have been completed across a range of areas. Feedback provided by staff, students and peer reviewers continues to inform the organization and conduct of these remote reviews until such time as in-person peer review group visits can be hosted.

Other Strategic Initiatives

In March 2020, DCU staff and students participated in a Culture of Partnership Workshop led by the National Student Engagement Programme (NStEP). The purpose of the workshop was to explore the concepts of student engagement and partnership at DCU, considering the institution's priorities and experiences of staff-student partnership currently. The workshop also included the development of action plans to support staff-student partnership at DCU, and the vision and values that underpin that partnership. The workshop resulted in the development of a Student-Staff Partnership Framework for DCU, This Framework, focusing on three pillars: representation, feedback and dialogue and student-staff activities, included a commitment to include student representation on DCU quality reviews from 2021.

2.1 Initiatives within the Institution related to Academic Integrity

Under the Teaching Enhancement Unit (TEU) leadership, DCU was one of the first Irish universities to become a member of the International Center for Academic Integrity (ICAI) in October 2019. Taking influence from the ICAI Integrity Day of Action, the TEU ran an academic integrity awareness campaign over the course of a week. This was repeated in 2020, and with the support of DCU Library, Students Union, and academic staff, Further evidence of DCU's leadership in promoting academic integrity, is the role of Billy Kelly, DCU Dean of Teaching and Learning, as Chair of the National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN). DCU staff members Dr. Fiona O'Riordan and Dr. Gillian Lake are NAIN members.

Enhancing Digital Teaching and Learning (EDTL)

[Enhancing Digital Teaching and Learning](#) (EDTL) is a three-year academic staff professional learning programme coordinated by the Irish Universities Association (IUA) and funded by the Higher Education Authority (HEA). The project aims to support university teachers to develop their digital skills so that students' learning experiences can be enhanced with technology. In turn, the development of digital skills for teachers will expose students to technology for teaching and learning and support them to develop their own digital skills.

DCU staff participating in the EDTL are supported through [tailored professional development](#) in the area of digital assessment, which is available to DCU programme or school teams through the EDTL project. Resources have also been made available to provide exemplars of good practice, that can offer inspiration and guidance for academics who are initially developing digital assessment.

EDTL builds on work of the "[Y1Feedback](#)" project led in DCU by the Open Education Unit and "Integrity" project led by the TEU. "Students as Partners in Assessment" is an area of current focus and aligns with national initiatives such as [NSTeP](#). We have also formed a community of practice around the use of Interactive Orals as an approach to improve academic integrity.

Academic Integrity Principles for Assessment Design

DCU Teaching Enhancement Unit (TEU) worked with partner universities on the INTEGRITY project, funded under the KA2 strand, aimed at enhancing the quality of teaching and learning processes that are based on the principles of academic integrity, supported by policies, mechanisms, and tools that help prevent and detect cases of plagiarism in higher education. As part of this collaboration, TEU developed a resource toolkit for academics to support them in designing assessments that actively encourage academic integrity. The suite of resources advanced for the toolkit includes a [literature review publication](#); a [set of twelve principles](#) and related explanations; interactive glossary; self and team checklists; animated scenarios; and a collection of case studies.

Academic Integrity Week

DCU promotes shared responsibility and a holistic approach to promoting academic integrity. This shared approach is highlighted through the 'Promoting Academic Integrity Week', delivered by DCU in October 2019. This week-long initiative comprised a number of synchronous and asynchronous online events for students and staff to prompt them to think about academic integrity, understand its importance, and learn about how they can uphold it (full programme on TEU website linked [here](#)). Some of the highlights of the week include over 1,500 students engaged in both academic integrity and library challenges. Almost 350 students pledged their commitment to academic integrity in the collaborative declaration bank (some examples of student declarations can be found on the TEU website linked [here](#)). Almost 100 staff and students took part in the spotlight panel webinar to discuss the ethics of academic integrity.

Academic Integrity Hub

An online Academic Integrity Hub, hosted on the DCU VLE, Loop, is aimed at academic staff involved in designing assessment and who are interested in embedding academic integrity principles and practices. It contains multiple self-paced resources that academic staff can engage with in their own

time, and revisit as often as they like. An introductory video to the DCU Academic Integrity Hub can be found [here](#).

Students as Partners in Assessment

Engaging students as partners in their learning journey is a powerful tool that benefits both students and academics. Partnership opportunities empower students by engaging and motivating them to take ownership and responsibility for their learning. These are attributes that contribute to successful assessment, evidenced in quality assessment outputs that authentically showcase the efficacy of students' achievement. The literature demonstrates that partnering students in assessment does not have to be complex. Moreover, evidence demonstrates that when students are partners in the assessment process academic integrity is enhanced.

Interactive Oral Assessments

The TEU is collaborating with Griffith University, Queensland, Australia, to pilot interactive orals as a viable alternative assessment to the traditional end-of-semester exams. An interactive oral is a natural conversation or exchange which explores a student's understanding in a simulated authentic learning environment. There is a small group of about 8 DCU academics piloting this approach, led by the TEU in collaboration with Griffith University. Griffith University has extensive experience, and a body of evidence-based research to show that interactive orals are an authentic assessment approach that effectively helps prepare students for employment, and when used as part of strategically designed integrated assessment, promotes academic integrity. Whilst being an effective alternative assessment tool to end-of-semester exams, it is also proven to be efficient and scalable.

DCU University-wide Academic Integrity Awareness Campaign

Being influenced by the work of NAIN (National Academic Integrity Network), and building on existing DCU TEU projects and initiatives DCU is engaging in a year-long (March 2021-February 2022) University-wide, National Forum funded research project. This two-phased research project will act as a tool for more focused conversations around academic integrity. It is envisaged that this work will build capacity and raise awareness of academic integrity with all DCU stakeholder groups. This, in turn, will we hope, influence both cultural and ethical changes across the university, through a renewed sharing of responsibility for the promotion of academic integrity.

3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period

3.1 QA and QE supporting the Achievement of Strategic Objectives

No.	Relevant objectives <small>Note: Include reference to the relevant section of the preceding AQR, where applicable</small>	Planned actions and indicators <small>Note: Include details of unit responsible, and how planned action will address the relevant strategic priority and/or reengagement advice/CINNTE recommendation. If the institution is preparing for cyclical review, include how the planned actions will address the relevant review objective(s).</small>
1	Continued implementation of initiatives to address the recommendations of the Cinnte Review 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued progress on the development of data analytics to support the quality framework and strategic decision-making at DCU. Progress on the development of CORE Recruit for staff recruitment, with further automation of the recruitment tracking to improve the effectiveness and turnaround time for staff recruitment Progress on the full roll-out of the University Performance Review and Development (PRD) Scheme.
2	Development of procedures to include student reviewers on all DCU Quality Reviews	Development of procedures for the inclusion of student reviewers as full members of DCU quality review Peer Review Groups, for all reviews from 2021.
3	Completion of a strategically focused Thematic Review of Digital Learning at DCU	Completion of an institution-wide thematic review of Digital Learning at DCU, adopting a broad and inclusive approach to considering the perspectives and understanding of key stakeholders across DCU. The review considered the progress made by DCU, both strategically and operationally in the delivery of digital learning; how staff and students are supported in developing competencies to engage effectively with online learning; benchmark DCU's online learning provision with recognised national and international best practice and research.
4	Development of a DCU Operating Framework to guide business transformation and operational effectiveness at DCU	Development of an institution-wide Operating Framework to guide the implementation of the Student Information System, and broader organisational change with the goal of operational effectiveness and impact in our activities

3.2 Reviews planned for Upcoming Reporting Periods

3.2.1 Reviews planned for Next Reporting Period

Unit to be reviewed	Date of planned review	Date of last review
DCU Registry (postponed from Q2 2020)	17 th -20 th November 2020	28 th -30 th November 2012
Thematic Digital Learning Review (postponed from Q2, 2020)	8 th -11 th December 2020	n/a
Information Systems and Services	28 th -30 th April, 2021.	1 st -3 rd May 2013
Finance Office	26 th - 28th May 2021.	2nd - 4th April 2014

3.2.2 Reviews planned beyond Next Reporting Period

<https://www.dcu.ie/qpo/about-review-process-quality-promotion-office>

DCU Quality Review Schedule- 2020/21-2024/25				
2020/21	Registry (Q4 2020- TBC)	Digital Learning (Q4 2020)	Finance Office (Q2 2021)	ISS (Q2 2021)
2021/22	Estates Office (Q1 2022)	DCU Institute of Education (Q2 2022)	Faculty of Science and Health (Q2 2022)	OVPA (Q2 2021)
2022/23	DCU Library (Q4 2022)	NIDL/ Open Education (Q1 2023)	DCU Business School (Q1 2023)	OVPR (Q2 2023)
2023/24	Faculty of Eng and Comp (Q4 2023)	Sport and Wellbeing (Q4 2023)	OVPEA (Q1 2023)	President's Office (Q2 2023)
2024/25	SS&D (Q4 2024)	OSL (Q1 2025)	Thematic (TBC): (Q2 2025)	OCOO (Q2 2025)

4.0 Additional Themes and Case Studies

DCU Student-Staff Forums 2019/20

Introduction

Empowering our students to contribute to the ongoing advancement of the education and strategic decision-making process remains a priority for DCU. While student representation on formal structures remains strong, DCU recognizes, encourages, and supports opportunities for informal dialogue to enhance the learning environment across every aspect of the student experience.

The Staff-Student Forums, now entering the third consecutive year in practice, provide an additional pathway for student feedback through meaningful conversation in an informal setting with academic staff members. The recruitment process for both staff and student participants aims to ensure a broad range of expertise to maximize the quality of dialogue and overall impact. Staff and students commit to engaging for one academic year, participating in 2 one-hour meetings each semester, facilitated by the Quality Promotions Office (QPO). The recruitment process recommends,

- Staff representatives, to include a Faculty Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning (or nominee), a Programme Chair, Teaching Convenor and other academic staff with membership on a faculty or school level decision-making structure and,
- Student representatives, to include a nominee from the SU Leadership Team, Faculty Rep, and a variety of class representatives from across several programs and years of study.

2019/20 Academic Forums

During this academic term, staff and students across all five faculties engaged in this important initiative with a total of just over 60 participants (18 staff / 40 students). All meetings took place during weeks 4 and 11 respectively of, Semester I and II, with the final forum taking place remotely during the first COVID lockdown (March 2019). A Summary Report, developed by the QPO issued to all participants and a copy submitted to the Executive Dean of each Faculty for noting and further consideration. A sample of issues raised, along with some student testimonials, are outlined in Table 1;

Faculties	Areas for Improvement	Student Testimonials
Business School	VLE – consistency relating to access of course material and or general updates across programmes/faculties;	"It has been an absolute pleasure getting to bring student's views to the forums. Thank you for organising them, I do believe they'll improve communications and make the student life better"
Humanities & Social Sciences	Communication - early access to module descriptors and assessment deadlines to support organisation and time management;	"Thank you so much for inviting me again, it's was a brilliant experience and I loved getting to meet the different staff especially with the year that's in it. Thank you so much"
Engineering & Computing	Extending the Forums - engage with key support units to help address areas that may not be specific to any one faculty (i.e. technical issues with loop and timetabling);	"So lovely to be part of it, and always love the opportunity to get other students opinions across. I have to say it was so nice that all the staff across lots of different departments were so willing to take part"
Science & Health		
Institute of Education		

Table 1 - Staff-Student Forums: Thematic Areas, 2019/20

As referenced above, the final Staff-Student Forums 2019/20 were facilitated remotely during week 11 (w/b 6th - 10 April) providing, an opportunity to share experiences and highlight any concerns relating to the temporary remote T&L environment in advance of the final assessment period. Concerns highlighted were promptly addressed and, where possible, resolved by the University.

Professional Support Units

Since the establishment of the forums in 2018, students have consistently highlighted issues that may not always be directly relevant to one specific faculty but may require input from professional support functions across the University. In recognising this and the important-role of support units in assisting faculties in delivering a transformative and enhanced student experience, a plan was developed to implement a pilot forum with one supporting function. Subsequently, in January 2020, a Staff-Student Forum was held with the DCU Registry, providing valuable insight into how the unit interacts and communicates with the student body. This insight enabled a review of the effectiveness of communications methods and an opportunity to make any necessary adjustments in real-time.

Leveraging success from this pilot, staff from five additional support functions will engage in the 2020/21 schedule to listen to student concerns relating to non-academic aspects of the student life-cycle. The 2020/21 schedule for Professional Support Units is highlighted in Table 2.

Timeframe	Support Area
Semester I, 2020/21 (WK 5)	Student Support & Development; Finance Office (Accounts Payable); Registry Unit
Semester II, 2020/21 (WK 5)	Library; Estates Office; IT Department

Table 2 – Staff-Student Forums Schedule: Professional Support Units, 2020/21

Conclusion

The Staff-Student Forums have enabled constructive, honest, and open conversations between staff and students addressing all aspects of the student experience. Preliminary findings indicate advancements in building trust, nourishing longitudinal relationships, promoting the value of evidence-driven dialogue, and delivering an overall improvement in the level and quality of communications between staff and students. The decision to include Professional Support Units under this engagement model has enabled us to truly empower the student voice inside and outside of the classroom, resulting in a deeper understanding of the student perspective. Consequently, the forums have provided a sustainable platform for the following;

- a holistic oversight of emerging trends and valuable insight into the student perspective;
- student acknowledgment around the level of support from staff and their willingness to work in collaboration to enhance the student experience;
- staff appreciation and respect for the student's voice and for the opportunity to listen to important and constructive views/opinions;
- the willingness of all faculties to nourish and sustain staff-student relations, driving the development and success of future initiatives.