

Limerick Institute of Technology, 2021

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**Annual Quality Report**  
**Limerick Institute of Technology**

**Reporting Period 2019-2020**

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# **Annual Quality Report Limerick Institute of Technology**

## **PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM**

**Reporting Period 2019-2020**

## PREFACE

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.

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## Links to Reference Documents Cited in this Template<sup>1</sup>

### 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](#)

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<sup>1</sup> 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			1.9	On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes
8.0 - Monitoring and Periodic Review				
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			1.2	Design and Approval of Programmes
9.0 - Details of Arrangements with Third Parties				
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

*This is the AQR for Limerick Institute of Technology for the reporting period 1 September 2019 - 31 August 2020.*

*The AQR has been approved by LIT Vice President Academic Affairs and Registrar and is submitted by Head of Quality, Teaching and Learning*

Limerick Institute of Technology (LIT) is a multi-campus Institution strategically located in Ireland's Mid-West region. The Institute provides a diverse range of full time and part time programmes across a broad range of disciplines giving student real opportunities for both career and self-development. The Institute, with its focus on applied learning and employability in addition to the development of the whole person is well placed to play a key role in economic and social development and contribute both at a regional and national level.

The history of the Institute is one of transformation and rebirth across generations and this continues in the contemporary context. LIT traces its roots to the foundation of the School of Ornamental Arts on Hartstonge Street in Limerick in 1852, with its express purpose of delivering technological and artistic education to as many people as possible. The School of Ornamental Arts was succeeded by the Limerick Athenaeum in 1855, which came under the control of Limerick Corporation 40 years later and became the Municipal Technical Institute in 1911. In 1980, this became Limerick College of Art Commerce and Technology (COACT), which relocated to the Moylish Campus, and remains the Institutes main campus since its incorporation as Limerick Institute of Technology in 1997. The Tipperary Institute was founded by the Irish Government in 1998 and opened two campuses in Thurles and Clonmel in September 1999 and these campuses were formally integrated into LIT on 1st September 2011. A number of programmes were offered by the Institute in Ennis, Co Claire and these moved to a new facility in Binding Street which opened in 2019. The story of transformation continues to unfold, and in 2019 LIT and Athlone Institute of Technology (AIT) formed a Technological University Consortium to form a new Technological University to serve our regions to continue our unique approach for the benefit of society into the future.

LIT is proud to be an open, diverse, and contemporary Higher Education Institution (HEI) with a distinctive ethos and Education Philosophy. Our ethos is to provide excellent supports to students and to welcome diversity. Our philosophy of Active Learning centres on fusing theory and practice to equip individuals for professional fulfilment and has become the Institutes signature pedagogy. The Institute also demonstrates active leadership in education, enterprise and engagement, with a strong focus on meeting skills needs (specialist as well as generic and citizenship skills). Since the successful incorporation of the Tipperary Institute in 2011, LIT is a multi-campus institution with a wide geographic reach providing taught and research programmes for Limerick City and County, Tipperary and Clare as its primary catchment areas with programmes delivered in six locations.



LIT has grown to become a community, with over 6,500 students both full-time and increasingly part-time, availing of the ever-expanding range of courses, offered in a flexible and blended/online manner. We anticipate these areas will offer continued growth. In tandem, the student experience in LIT continues to evolve as international student numbers grow year on year. Other significant areas of growth can be seen in Research & Development activities, with emphasis on applied research as well as its translation into new products and processes and the wider innovations and enterprise functions that LIT is now known for.

Today, we are defined by the community-orientation of each of our campuses and on being an accessible and supportive Higher Education Institute. A source of pride and a key differentiator for LIT is our engagement with a wide range of stakeholders across industrial, business, social, cultural and community affairs due to these broad regional campus locations. LIT views itself as a key partner in delivering for the needs of these diverse communities. LIT also has seven enterprise incubation and acceleration centres, each with its own focus and profile and operating in collaboration with relevant agencies and private sector partners.

Our contribution to civic and cultural life is very evident, with our graduates active in every walk of life, from the artistic to the sporting, business, the sciences, industry, technology, engineering and public service. This is the educational heritage that LIT represents, being responsive to the needs of the society which it serves, and always open to all who would benefit from it, irrespective of class, creed or cultural background.

## 1.0 Internal QA Framework

### 1.1 Governance and Management of Quality

Limerick Institute of Technology is committed to academic quality (assurance) and continuous improvement (enhancement). Quality assurance and enhancement plays an important role in delivering the mission and vision of the Institute as described in the [LIT Strategic Plan 2018 - 2022](#). The Strategic Plan states that “as a contemporary, research-informed institution, we will be centred on our students, delivering quality teaching and learning and an excellent student experience”. The core mission of the Institute is stated as one of “*a regionally focused Higher Education Institute with a national and international outlook. We empower our diverse student body by providing a quality higher education experience enabling economic, social and cultural development*”.

The diversity and complexity of the needs of the contemporary student body in higher education requires the Institute to continuously improve and enhance service delivery in line with best practice nationally and internationally. The Strategic Plan further emphasises the importance of Quality in highlighting Excellence as one its core Values. This states that “*we embed continuous improvement in all Institute activities to support the achievement of the highest standards in all aspects of teaching, learning, research and related supports. We provide a higher education environment that nurtures, supports and engages our students, staff and external stakeholders, enabling them to achieve their full potential*”.

The approach of the Institute to the development and implementation of Quality Assurance (QA) systems and processes is effective, active, accountable and robust. LIT’s Quality Assurance is in line with the Standards and Guidelines for the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015), and with national guidelines and criteria for QA procedures, as overseen by the Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) agency. LIT’s Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures are implemented on all of its campuses and learning centres across the counties of Limerick, Tipperary and Clare. These policies and procedures govern the design, delivery and review of its academic programmes on the NFQ framework from Level 6 to Level 10, whilst also assuring quality across its craft apprenticeships, and adult and continuous education programmes.

LIT’s Quality Assurance documentation has been collected and collated into the [LIT Quality Assurance Handbook](#) and annually reviewed, updated, and approved by Academic Council. Consequently, relevant content areas are continuously improved through periodic reviews to assure their comprehensiveness, adequacy, and completeness. They are centrally maintained by the LIT Academic Council Sub-Committee on Academic Quality, Teaching and Learning. The LIT Quality Assurance Handbook document is published in full on the LIT intranet and on available publicly on the LIT Website ([www.lit.ie](http://www.lit.ie)). The LIT Quality Assurance Handbook has been submitted to QQI to support its delegated authority and institutional review processes. This is required under ESG 1.1. The Quality Assurance Handbook contains [Introduction and Summary Guide to Quality Assurance Handbook 2019 - 2020](#) that provides an overview of the different Volumes of the Handbook and their contents. The handbook also contains [National Quality System Resources](#)

document that contains ready access to relevant Legislation, Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines, Discipline Award Standards and IHEQN Documents.

The [LIT Policy on Quality Assurance and Enhancement 2019 - 2024](#) is included in the LIT Quality Assurance Handbook. Previously titled the *Quality Policy Statement* this underwent a fundamental review and was revised and approved by Academic Council on 17th June 2019 with an operational period of 2019 - 2024.

LIT Governing Body ratified a comprehensive new strategic plan during the reporting period 2017 - 2018 which is available at: [LIT Strategic Plan 2018 - 2022](#). LIT also agreed a new [Mission Based Performance Compact 2018-2022](#) with the HEA under the HEA Systems Performance Framework. This strategic plan and the Mission Based Performance Compact will be the key parallel drivers of the strategic and operational plans that will shape LIT's Educational development and activities in the immediate future. LIT's plans will be underpinned by its core values of excellence, innovation, equity, support, and accessibility and these will inform Institutional approaches to the development of both its vision and mission and the associated quality assurance and enhancement systems that support these.

The [LIT Strategic Plan 2018 - 2022](#) represents the next stage in the evolution of LIT as an organisation. The core values outlined that underpin the Strategic Plan provide an anchor for all Institute actions and will influence how the Institute will achieve results and develop its Quality Assurance and Enhancement system as an intrinsic element of both accountability and continuous process improvement. The commitment to this is evidenced in the core Institutional values as listed and in particular in the value of *Excellence*.

LIT's vision to 2022 is to be a leading provider of higher education that is student centred, research-informed, industry relevant, and accessible for all. The mission of LIT is to be a regionally focused Higher Education Institution with a national and international outlook. It empowers its diverse student body by providing a quality higher education experience enabling economic, social and cultural development.

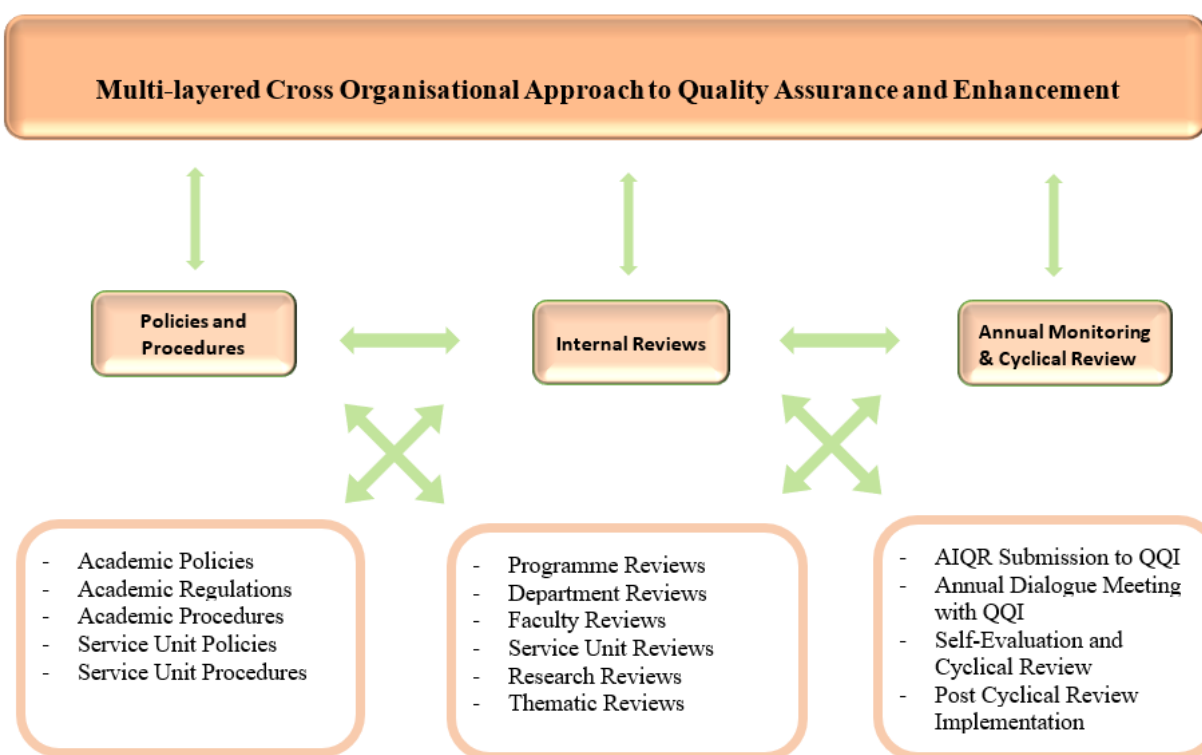
The vision and mission of LIT are underpinned by five core values:

- (i) Supportive: LIT provides a higher education environment that nurtures, supports and engages its students, staff and external stakeholders, enabling them to achieve their full potential.
- (ii) Excellence: LIT embeds continuous improvement in all institute activities to support the achievement of the highest standards in all aspects of teaching, learning, research and related supports.
- (iii) Accessible: LIT enables wider access and participation in higher education by embracing diversity and providing a flexible offering.
- (iv) Equitable: LIT promotes fairness, equal opportunity, respect, and positive outcomes for all its students and staff.

- (v) Innovative: LIT fosters creative and entrepreneurial activities, in all their forms, in collaboration with its stakeholders to address the changing needs of the region.

The QQI Core Statutory Guidelines issued by QQI in 2016, stipulate that the Quality Assurance System is embedded and maintained on a cross-organisational basis, including all levels of management, administration, teaching staff and learners. To achieve compliance and have a fit for purpose quality assurance system the overarching components include:

- i. developing and implementing a comprehensive suite of Institute wide policies and procedures;
- ii. establishing and conducting a broad range of internal reviews; and,
- iii. participating in annual monitoring and reporting to QQI, in addition to participating in periodic reviews in the form of Cyclical Review.



*Figure 1. Overview of the Multi-Layered Cross-Organisational Approach to Quality Assurance and Enhancement*

The Institute takes a multi-layered approach to the governance of quality management, with the first layer consisting of executive structures such as Governing Body, Academic Council and their associated Sub-committees and Working Groups (Figure 2), in addition to Executive and Institute Management structures. These fora and structures play a lead role in reviewing and designing Institute-wide strategies and processes to maintain and continuously improve academic quality.

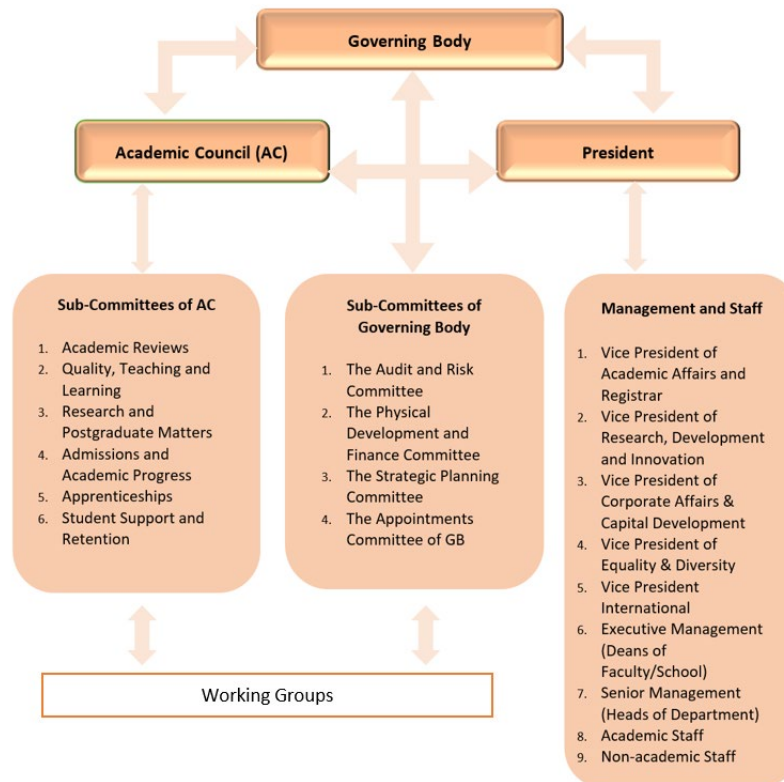


Figure 2. A pictorial summary of LIT's quality assurance decision-making fora during 2017-2018 Academic Year

The Institute complies with statutory and regulatory requirements relating to quality assurance and quality improvement. Under the *Institutes of Technology Acts 1992 to 2006*, the Academic Council protects, maintains and develops the academic standards of the programmes and activities of the Institute [Section 10 (1) of the 1992 Act [3]]. LIT's Quality Assurance is in line with the *Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act (2012)* and the *Standards and Guidelines for the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015)*, and with national guidelines and criteria for QA procedures, as overseen by the QQI.

LIT's Academic Council, by statute, maintains academic standards within the Institute. The Academic Council is committed to continuous improvement with new initiatives being continuously designed and implemented to embed quality policies and practices throughout its operations.

LIT's [Academic Council Documentation 2020-2022](#) includes the Constitution, Composition, Membership, Sub-Committees and Bylaws. ESG standards are also referenced.

The Academic Council has approved the establishment of Faculty/School Boards, Department Boards, and Programme Boards. The terms of reference of each are listed in *ACRP, Section 2: Management of the Curriculum*.

[Academic Council Regulations and Procedures for Taught Programmes: Academic Year 2019/2020, Part 1](#)

Each of these committees has approved templates and pro-formas for formal recording of minutes. These are available at:

[Academic Council Regulations and Procedures for Taught Programmes, Academic Year 2019/2020, Part 2 Forms](#)

## 1.2 Linked Providers, Collaborative and Transnational Provision

The QA procedures for collaborative provisions are consistent with ESG 1.1. The Academic Council has approved policy and procedures for the collaborative provision of programmes. The policy “ensures that programmes delivered in collaboration are consistent with the Quality Standards expected of all LIT provision”.

Further details are available at the LIT Policy for Collaborative Provision and Joint Awards (National and Transnational) which is available at the following link:

[LIT Policy Collaborative Provision 2014-2017.](#)

LIT’s Academic Council has approved a number of collaborations with national and international agencies, bodies and providers including:

- Atlantic Aviation
- Pallaskenry Agricultural College
- Gurteen Agricultural College
- Fáilte Ireland
- Mary Immaculate College
- SOLAS
- University of Limerick
- Florida State University
- Yangzee University China
- 

LIT is currently undertaking a comprehensive review of its policy suite in this area in the context of Designated Awarding Body Status under the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) (Amendment) Act 2019 and Technological Universities Act 2018 in the context of its application for designation as a Technological University as part of the AIT-LIT TU Consortium.

## 2.0 Programme Development and Delivery

### 2.1 Programme Development and Approval

There are several validation processes operated by LIT to ensure that its academic programmes are robustly and successfully validated, and revalidated, thereby achieving adherence respectively to: (i) the European Standard Guideline 1.2 for the Design and Approval of Programmes, and (ii) the QQI Core Validation Policy and Criteria requirements. These processes include:

- Design, development, validation and approval of new major awards;
- Design, development, validation and approval of minor, special purpose and supplemental awards;
- Revalidation of existing programmes;
- Programme reporting;
- Design, development, validation and approval of new modules outside of new programme validation/revalidation.

The Academic Council has approved regulations and procedures for the design and approval of taught programmes, consistent with ESG 1.2. The details are provided in *ACRP, Section 3: Development and Review of Programmes & Modules*.

[Academic Council Regulations and Procedures for Taught Programmes: Academic Year 2019/2020, Part 1](#)

[Academic Council Regulations and Procedures for Taught Programmes, Academic Year 2019/2020, Part 2 Forms](#)

- a) The validation criteria by which new major awards will be assessed during the validation processes undertaken by LIT are outlined in *Section 3.2*.
- b) The new programme proposal and approval processes for major awards are outlined in *Section 3.3.1* to *Section 3.3.3*. New major awards are validated through a two-stage process in LIT:
  - i. An ***Internal-Assessment Process*** conducted through an Internal Review Panel. Details of this review process are outlined in *Section 3.3.4*.
  - ii. An ***External Assessment Process*** conducted through an External Validation Panel. Details of this validation process are outlined in *Section 3.3.7*.
- c) The validation processes for Minor, Special Purpose or Supplemental Awards are outlined in *Section 3.5*.
- d) The reporting arrangements for programmes are set out in *Section 3.6*.
- e) The re-validation process associated with existing major and other awards is set out in *Section 3.7*.
- f) The validation of new individual module(s) outside of new programme validation/revalidation processes is set out in *Section 3.8*.



Any proposed changes to existing programmes outside of programme review require Academic Council approval. Major changes may require revalidation of the programme, if the nature and scope of changes significantly change the award. A change of award title or discipline would require a new validation. Changes to the programme learning outcomes and other minor changes to existing programmes are addressed through the modification to a programme in advance of programmatic review, as outlined in *Section 3.6.5*.

The use of Academic Module Manager software for programme development supports the alignment of programmes to the ESG standards, NFQ levels and QQI award standards. These regulations and procedures are consistent with the *QQI Assessment and Standards (revised 2013)*.

A Faculty/School Board exists within each Faculty/School, whose function is to advise the Head of Faculty/School at strategic level, the academic and resource requirements of all its programmes/modules. Similarly, Department Boards exist for each department and their function is to advise and assist the Head of Department at tactical and operational levels with regard to the academic and resource requirements of programmes/modules within the department. Established Programme Boards will operate for each programme offered by the Institute. The Programme Board has the primary responsibility, under the overall guidance of the Head of Department, for developing and operating the programme.

A Provisional Programme Board has the responsibility for the development of a new programme leading to a major award. Provisional Programme Boards are established to develop a programme proposal and to develop a Programme Submission Document for the new programme and to bring this submission through the Validation Procedures of the Institute. The Provisional Programme Board shall comprise not less than four members including the Head of Faculty/School and Head of Department. The Provisional Programme Board may include lecturers from other departments and external advisers if required. The President is ex officio a member of the Provisional Programme Board.

New Programme Guidelines that clearly document the necessary procedures and requirements for new programme development are updated annually and are distributed to all academic staff each year. They constitute part of the LIT Quality Assurance Handbook which is also available on the LIT intranet. They are available at the following link: [New Programme Guidelines. The LIT Graduate Attributes Framework 2019 - 2022](#) is also available to programme design teams as a resources and guide for programme design.

LIT continues to develop links and to consult with the community, and with industry and professional bodies, to inform the development and review of programmes and modules, to ensure that they are responsive to existing and emerging stakeholder needs. The applied focus ensures that LIT graduates will continue to be highly sought after and recognised regionally and nationally as having a high level of expertise, skill and competency with multiple career opportunities. This approach facilitates the acquisition of a deep understanding in the core area of study in addition to technical competencies and generic transferable skills so that graduates are work-ready.

In addition, the LIT Strategic Plan aims to ‘deepen stakeholder engagement’ so to develop the applied nature of programmes in collaboration with industry that equips graduates with the knowledge and skills to meet industries ever changing needs’. The LIT *Faculty/School Industrial Liaison Advisory Policy* provides a structure for the many and varied contacts with industry and the advice received by the Faculties/Schools at LIT and is available at [LIT Industrial Liaison Advisory Policy 2019 - 2024](#)

LIT also has a policy of inclusion of work placement in programme design and delivery. This allows for assurance of the learning achieved by students via its application in the workplace.

A comprehensive policy framework has been developed for Blended and Online learning programme design and this is available at [LIT Blended and Online Learning Policy 2019-2024](#). The Policy classifies and defines what Face to Face, Blended and Online Learning is within the LIT context. The policy looks at blended and online learning within the organisation, programme and learner experience context. The policy provides an overview of different learning design approaches/frameworks that can be and recommends that following a learning design model or framework should be done as part of the programme design stage to ensure that judicious consideration has been applied to the structure and sequence of the learning activities and assessment. To support the planning and design process of blended and online modules/programmes at LIT, the policy includes templates as part of a mapping exercise to identify any resources or technical setup that may be required for the delivery or assessment. These templates provide an opportunity to align the learning activities to the assessment strategy. The policy provides guidance on technical and operational supports that need to be considered in the design stage and a number of support guides have also been developed to assist staff in designing blended/online modules/programmes. As well as an overview on the different learning design modes/frameworks that can be implemented. As part of the implementation of the policy the templates have been integrated into the New Programme Design Guidelines to ensure that all new online modules/programmes will have completed these templates and can be included in the Validation programme document.

Apprenticeship education remains an important part of the service of the Institute. This includes on-going development of Apprenticeship programmes as validated under QQI. There are close on-going links with SOLAS. The apprentice is fully supported by the academic staff during the apprenticeship and has full access to all the facilities and supports of the Institute. Apprentices are employed by a SOLAS-approved employer for the duration of the programme which is generally between 2-4 years. Apprenticeship programmes provide at least 50% workplace-based learning. In early 2019, LIT and its Department of Applied Science, signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the IBEC /BPCI Apprentice Consortium with the intention of developing and delivering science-based apprenticeship programmes. The consortium led by IT -Tallaght also comprises a representative body of employers operating in the Biopharma, Chemical Manufacturing, Medical Devices and Diagnostics, Food and Drink Analytical Testing Laboratories. There is an Apprenticeship sub-committee which meets several times throughout the academic year in order to ensure continued progress and quality.

## 2.2 Admission, Progression, Recognition & Certification

The Academic Council has approved regulations and procedures for admissions, transfer, progression, recognition, and certification. These are consistent with ESG 1.4 and the QQI Policy on Access, Transfer and Progression (updated 2015).

Cognisant of the national policy on Access, Transfer, and Progression, LIT offers learners access and 'ladders of learning' progression pathways into and along the *National Framework of Qualifications* from Level 6-9 and Level 10. Within these pathways, flexible modular options are available for learners such as multiple entry points, electives, and part-time and flexible study options.

### Admission

The Admissions criteria for each programme are provided in the LIT Prospectus and are, for example, consistent with second-level qualifications for entry. [Undergraduate Prospectus](#)

*Chapters 1-4 of the Admissions Office Policies and Procedures (AOPP)* outline the operational admissions procedures and the various categories of students entering LIT. LIT provides all students with an online registration facility. The LIT Admissions Office Policies and Procedures (AOPP) is available at the following link: [Admissions Office Policies and Procedures](#).

To assure the quality of LIT's engagement with students during their transition a number of measures are delivered.

1. A Student Handbook is provided to all new entrants for ease of entry to third level education in LIT. [LIT Student Handbook](#)

This handbook provides details related to LIT's:

- Operations (calendars, maps);  
Student Diversity Profile (Mature, International, Disabled);
  - Student Support Services (Health, Chaplaincy, Counselling, Careers, Access, Disability, Sport, Accommodation, Transport, Catering);
  - Learning Support services (Tuition in specific discipline areas including Maths, IT, Science; Peer Assisted Learning; Study Guides; learning related workshops including study skills, examination techniques, academic writing);
  - Library and Information Resources services;
  - Computer Services (including Moodle, VLEs);
  - Health and Safety supports;
  - Relevant Policies and Procedures.
2. All students receive a hardcopy *z-card* (business card size - foldable guide) with all the essential student service information.
  3. The LIT ENGAGE Programme supports the transition of all students to LIT. This structured, activity-based induction programme is geared towards getting new students settled in and acquainted with other students and their campus. Together with on-campus Student Leaders this programme provides students with the opportunity to actively engage in college life, get to grips with your course, join a club or society and develop a personal toolkit to live a healthy balanced and enjoyable lifestyle.

As part of LIT's QA processes, the handbook and LIT's programme of induction are reviewed annually by the Student Services Unit of LIT.

**Transfer:**

The transfer criteria are specified in *Chapter 8 of the Admissions Office Policies and Procedures* document.

**Progression:**

The progression criteria are specified in *Chapter 8 of the Admissions Office Policies and Procedures* document.

**Recognition of Learning (RPL):**

LIT recognises the qualifications and prior learning of students. The related regulations and procedures are outlined in *ACRP, Section 5: Recognition of Prior Learning Policy and Procedures*. Details are also provided in the Student Handbook on the treatment of prior learning of students, and the implications for entry and exemptions.

[Academic Council Regulations and Procedures for Taught Programmes: Academic Year 2019/2020, Part 1](#)

**Certification:**

The regulations and procedures for certification are outlined in *ACRP, Section 4.3: Standards for Awards at Different Classifications*.

[Academic Council Regulations and Procedures for Taught Programmes: Academic Year 2019/2020, Part 1](#)

Information relevant to Admissions, Transfer, Recognition, Progression, and Certification is provided in detail to students in the LIT Prospectus, Student Handbook and on the LIT website ([www.lit.ie](http://www.lit.ie)).

LIT Prospectus 2018-2019: [Undergraduate Prospectus](#)

LIT Student Handbook 2018-2019: [LIT Student Handbook](#)

The Institute, through the Academic Council, adheres to the national quality standards and admission norms for the provision of student supports. The expectations and responsibilities for students are described in LIT's [Student Charter](#).

## 2.3 Procedures for Making Awards

As a designated awarding body up to Level 9 of the NFQ, LIT adopted QQI Award Standards at its Academic Council meeting of 6<sup>th</sup> December 2019. The Institute has developed robust procedures for ensuring that its awards are consistent with the relevant award standards and that programme validation including the specification of programme and module learning outcomes, programme delivery and assessment is planned, designed and implemented to ensure that graduates of awards at the cognate levels of the NFQ have attained the requisite standards of knowledge, skills and competency.

The procedures for developing programme learning outcomes are outlined in the Institute's Academic Regulations in Section 3.2 Validation Criteria for New Major Awards.

[Academic Council Regulations and Procedures for Taught Programmes: Academic Year 2019/2020, Part 1](#)

The procedures are consistent with QQI Core Validation Policy and Criteria (Revised 2013) and QQI Sector-specific QAG for Designated Awarding Bodies, Section 6. They include self-assessment, external assessment, report publication and follow-up. Both the self-assessment and the external assessment require explicit criteria.

The validation criteria are outlined as follows:

- Standards: The *minimum intended programme learning outcomes* must be consistent with the relevant *awards standards* and the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) *award-type descriptors*
- Access standard: The *prerequisite learning* for participation in the programme and any other assumptions relating to the programme's *target learners* must be explicit.
- Learning: The programme must enable its *target learners* to attain the *minimum intended programme learning outcomes* reliably and efficiently (in terms of learner effort). The concept of minimum intended programme learning outcomes and its relation to teaching, learning and assessment are explained in QQI *Assessment and Standards* (Revised 2013).

Validation is only possible where the following are explicitly specified:

- (a) The target learners' prerequisite learning and any other relevant assumptions about programme participants
- (b) The minimum intended programme learning outcomes and any other educational objectives of the programme.

Validation requires evidence that the minimum intended programme learning outcomes are consistent with the applicable awards standards (See QQI Award Standards), and the relevant NFQ (National Framework of Qualifications) award-type descriptor(s) (consistent with QQI *Assessment and Standards* (Revised 2013)). As award standards are cumulative, the programme's prerequisite learning specification must include the knowledge, skill and competence specified at lower NFQ levels in the applicable awards standards.

The validation procedures require evidence that target learners may achieve the intended programme learning outcomes and therefore that learner acquires the standard of knowledge,

skill or competence associated with the level of each award within the National Framework of Qualifications

**The programme's content and learning environment must be appropriate to the programme's intended learning outcomes:**

- (i) The programme's staff (assessors, teachers, etc.) as a group must be competent to enable learners to develop (achieve) the intended programme learning outcomes and to assess learners' achievements as required by QQI Assessment and Standards (Revised 2013)
- (ii) The programme's learning environment (physical, social, and intellectual and recognising that the environment may be virtual) including resources (see the final paragraph of this section) and supports, should be consistent with the intended programme learning outcomes; the places at which, or virtual spaces within which, instruction is to be provided should be specified and suitable
- (iii) Programme content including reading lists, lecture notes, and any other material used by the programme should be appropriate

**The programme should involve authentic learning opportunities to enable the achievement of the intended programme learning outcomes.**

- (i) The programme's strategy for enabling learners to move from the minimum access standard to the minimum intended programme learning outcomes should be explicit, realistic and viable. The programme should be provided in a way that its intended learning outcomes can be reliably and efficiently attained by the learners. It is to be expected that all learners who are judged qualified to access a programme should be able to graduate from that programme subject to their making a reasonable effort and complying with the programme's conditions
- (ii) The programme and module assessment should be both clear and appropriate consistent with QQI Assessment and Standards (Revised 2013)). They should provide for the verification of the attainment of the intended learning outcome
- (iii) In the case of a modular programme, the pool of modules and learning pathway constraints should be explicit and appropriate considering the intended programme learning outcomes consistent with QQI Core Validation Policy and Criteria Section 7.0).

To assist programme teams the Institute has developed a guide for Academics in writing and using learning outcomes, available at: [LIT Writing and Using Learning Outcomes, A Guide for Academics](#)

- (iv) The Module Manager software used for programme development further requires extensive mapping to ensure that:
- (v) Programme Learning Outcomes map to the relevant Award Standards.
- (vi) Module Learning Outcomes map to the Programme Learning Outcomes.
- (vii) The module assessment strategies are mapped to individual module learning outcomes.

## 2.4 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

LIT has a range of QAE procedures for assuring the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. These policies and procedures are consistent with QQI Core QAG Section 2.5 - Teaching and Learning; ESG 1.3; Assessment: QQI Core QAG Section 2.6 - Assessment of Learners; ESG 1.3.

The [LIT Strategic Plan 2018 - 2022](#) highlights its mission and values that ensure it prepares learners for fulfilling and challenging futures, fostering the professional, intellectual, social, cultural and personal development of the individual. It defines LIT's Educational Philosophy as being "active learning through a fusion of theory and practice". Providing "high quality teaching and active learning" has been identified as a strategic priority and this signals the institutional commitment to fostering excellence in Teaching and Learning. As an enabler of this the plan further identifies the need to "enrich the student learning experience through innovative course delivery methods supported by technology, work-based learning, internationalisation and positive student engagement". The Strategic Plan sets out the following priority in the area of Teaching and Learning: *Provide high quality teaching and active learning that reflects the needs of industry.*

In order to achieve this priority, LIT will:

- Ensure our academic programme offering and pedagogies are research informed and equip students with practical critical thinking and problem-solving skills;
- Enrich the student learning experience through innovative course delivery methods supported by technology, internationalisation, and positive student-staff engagement;
- Expand work-based learning and work placement opportunities;
- Upskill academic staff to keep pace with new technologies and pedagogies and incorporate these into their teaching and delivery methods.

The Institute Strategic Plan is supported by a revised Teaching and Learning Strategy was approved by Academic Council in June 2018 and is available at:

[Teaching and Learning Strategy 2018 to 2023](#)

The Ethos of this Strategy is the "*Pursuit of Excellence in Teaching and Learning through Engagement, Innovation and Enhancement*". It takes account of the national and international context for teaching and learning in higher education which has been profiled as one of the developments of full human potential through an agenda of innovation and excellence in teaching and learning. This involves developing competencies and raising skill levels, evolving pedagogy, greater use of technology-enhanced learning, deeper engagement with learners and society and widening participation through flexible programme provision. The strategy dovetails with this agenda and is focused on the pursuit of excellence in teaching and learning through engagement, innovation, and enhancement.

The Strategy embodies the values of the LIT Strategic Plan 2018 to 2022 and, in a practical way, supports the mission, vision, and range of strategic priorities and enablers of that strategy. The Teaching and Learning Strategy outlines a range of Higher-Level Principles that underpin the LIT approach. A set of Implementation Themes with actionable Strategic Goals have been developed to progress teaching and learning excellence and to enrich the learning experience of all learners.

These goals represent the core of the strategy and the responsibility for their implementation lies with a range of parties across the institute in multifaceted contexts.

An overview of the Strategy as an Implementation Planning Resource has been developed and is available at:

[Teaching and Learning Strategy, 2018 - 2023 Implementation Planning Resource](#)

This overview of the strategy is designed to facilitate ready access to the core actionable content for implementation planning. The full strategy which contains the detailed pedagogical context and rationale and the implementation planning resource document can be accessed by staff on the staff portal in the Centre of Excellence for Teaching and Learning. A range of additional resources are promoting best practice in Teaching and Learning are available in this site.

The Teaching and Learning Strategy sets out the framework for the student centred Active Learning approach that is the hallmark of the institutes approach to programme delivery. For authentic engagement, it is important that a student-centred approach is taken and that students are provided with the learning outcomes, as this frames the objectives of their engagement with the learning process and sets the parameters for their involvement in learning activities. Student engagement in the learning process is stimulated by their direct involvement in learning and the instant feedback that takes place particularly in the active learning context and model encouraged and supported in LIT. This can involve discussion, debate dialogue, teamwork, presentations, project work, and work placement. It is complemented by other higher cognitive learning activities such as analysis, enquiry, exploration, evaluation amongst others in all the different contexts they emerge in during a programme.

Learners are at the core and focus of activity in LIT and the increasing diversity of the learner population and the diversity of learner needs are recognised and valued. Student centred learning is characterised by a reliance on active learning coupled with an emphasis on deep and authentic learning and understanding, and, increased responsibility and autonomy on the part of the student. It involves a reflexive approach to the teaching and learning process that is a shared responsibility between both teacher and learner.

Two overarching facets of LIT's approach support this in a framework that readily permits a student- centred learning approach:

- 1). LIT's educational philosophy of "active learning through a fusion of theory and practice" provides an agile framework in terms of delivering on innovative approaches to learning, and,
- 2) the use of constructive alignment in which excellence is facilitated in a system where all aspects of delivery, and assessment of learning activities, are aligned to the intended learning outcomes.

Constructive alignment to learning outcomes places the learning process at the centre of all activities while the active learning pedagogy places student centred learning firmly at the core and this dual emphasis fosters deep authentic learning.



### Active Learning:

The hallmark of LIT's educational philosophy is *Active Learning* which is described in its Teaching, Learning Strategy document. This philosophy is aimed both at the acquisition of knowledge and a deep understanding and competency in the core area of study for the student, in addition to the acquisition of generic skills so that LIT produces rounded graduates. Active learning in LIT is a strategy which encourages students to be active participants in the learning process and allows them to take ownership of their own education. Connecting theory and practice, students apply their learning and develop their understanding through a range of active methods including the usage of case studies, problem-solving exercises, work-placement, reflection, and other activities both on and off campus. As an outcome, graduates are equipped to continuously develop academically, personally and professionally. LIT continues to embed and implement this strategy in academic programme delivery and development across the wider organisation.

### Developing Capacity with Knowledge and Research Skills:

This Teaching and Learning Strategy links with the research agenda and aims to develop and strengthen undergraduate student's critical research skills such as ethos of enquiry, critical thinking, using evidence, formulating and testing hypotheses and citation of sources. These are fundamental to the research process and support the development of strong research groups. The process of creating a learning environment which imparts research skills throughout each stage of a student's academic studies begins with the Institute encouraging and supporting faculty to continue to develop their own academic research skills. Providing a working environment with research opportunities through different projects, research groups and centres across the Institute is an important facilitator of this. The [LIT Research Ethics Guidelines for Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Programmes 2019 - 2022](#) has been developed to support students and staff engaged in research activity at undergraduate level.

### Focus on Applied Learning and the Development of Employability Skills:

LIT places a pivotal focus on the employability of its graduates. It has developed effective mechanisms through its quality assured system of programme development and programme review to ensure that LIT graduates have the necessary knowledge, skills, competencies and experience that employers are looking for. Where relevant it works with Professional, Regulatory and Statutory Bodies to ensure graduates meet the competencies required for recognition and registration purposes. The core philosophy of active learning ensures that graduates emerge as mature and competent practitioners and citizens are equipped to continuously develop personally and professionally. LIT also has a policy of inclusion of work placement in programme where possible. The LIT Placement Guidelines support Students, Faculty and Placement sites and are available at [LIT Placement Guidelines](#). The LIT *Careers & Employability Service* provides a dedicated team to administer work placement, supporting students develop their skills in preparation for work placement; while also acting as a central point of contact to facilitate and manage relationships with placement providers. Ensuring LIT graduates are work-ready with the appropriate relevant skills is central to the Institutions philosophy of 'Active Learning'. The Careers & Employability team work with regional, national and international employers, facilitating activities such as employer class presentations, on-site industry visits, as well as hosting LIT's annual Career Fairs.

### Technology Enhanced Learning:

LIT is continuing to promote the use of digital technology within its teaching practices to enhance the learning experience by rolling out 'Panopto' on all lectern machines across each campus and setting up webcams within each classroom. Faculty also have the option to work with the Quality, Teaching and Learning staff on a one to one basis to develop their teaching and learning and digital literacy skills. These are informal collaborative sessions where, for example, the educational technologist might discuss with staff the different types of digital technology that can be used to create different resources. The *LIT Lecture Recording Policy* has been developed to support staff and students to record synchronous/live lectures/classes and incorporate this activity into teaching practice and learning activities. It is available at [LIT Lecture Recording Policy 2019 - 2021](#)

A specific series of resources on the Staff Portal and a Lecturers Moodle Tel Resources Page has recently included a Technology Enhanced Learning Section which provides access to resources and materials to support faculty in the use of Technology Enhanced Learning in their teaching and assessment

### Professional Development supports Teaching and Learning:

LIT is represented on the Board of the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning and makes a strong contribution to National Forum developments and to the scholarship of teaching and learning. Two faculty members from LIT are appointed as National Forum Associates and represent LIT at National Forum events. The Institute participates in the many regional and national initiatives across the Mid-West Regional Consortium and the National Forum including the National Teaching Excellence Awards, Teaching Tips, Peer Observation, and the Regional Writing programme. LIT staff actively participate in these events and provide a wide range of CPD offerings for all disciplines throughout the academic year.

### **Assessment**

As outlined in its Teaching and Learning Strategy, LIT is committed to best practice in assessment and “*all assessment practices within LIT will be valid, fair and consistent, and appropriate to the learning outcomes with which they are linked. LIT promotes innovative methods in summative assessment, which support active learning and authentic performance, while maintaining standards of validity, fairness and consistency. Assessment for learning (formative assessment) will be used extensively to provide timely and supportive feedback to students from assessment activity*”. LIT is committed to employing a range of assessment approaches and instruments including both formative and summative formats. Best practice principles for assessment include explicit sharing of learning outcomes for the programme/modules and sharing the criteria for success with respect to their assessment. Therefore, specific approaches will be used to ensure alignment between assessment and learning outcomes and to ensure that assessment is appropriate to the stage of learning the student is at. There is a commitment to continually review assessment practices in LIT to ensure they correspond to best practice nationally and internationally.

The Academic Council has approved regulations and procedures for the delivery and assessment of taught programmes and these are outlined in Section 4 *Assessment Regulations for Taught Programmes*.

[Academic Council Regulations and Procedures for Taught Programmes: Academic Year 2019/2020, Part 1](#)

[Academic Council Regulations and Procedures for Taught Programmes, Academic Year 2019/2020, Part 2 Forms](#)

These LIT regulations and procedures are consistent with the *QQI Assessment and Standards (revised 2013)*.

Overall procedures for the assessment of students regulate the authority, role, responsibility and accountability of all persons and committees involved with assessment procedures. Such persons may include: students; internal and external assessors; external examiners; programme boards; department, faculty/school boards; department, faculty/school Deans and Heads of Department; boards of examiners; appeals boards; the Vice President Academic Affairs and Registrar; Academic Council; President and Governing Body.

External Examining:

External examining verifies that the content, teaching and assessment methods and their standards are appropriate for the nature and level of the academic award being reviewed. Feedback is provided annually on the quality of learning via external examiner reports, which are reviewed by the *Academic Council Sub-Committee on Academic Quality, Teaching and Learning*. Any issues raised by external examiners are returned via Faculty and Department management to relevant staff members for identified action and response. Full details of LIT's External Examiner Policy are available at: [External Examiners Policy & Procedures for Taught Programmes](#)

## 3.0 Learner Resources and Support

LIT Learner Resources and Support are consistent with QQI Core QAG, ESG 1.6; QQI Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Education and Training to International Learners and QQI Statutory Topic-specific QA Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes.

### General Resources and Support

Within budgetary requirements, the Institute is strongly committed to the provision of appropriate resources for all programmes. Resourcing is consistent with the provisions of ESG 1.6. During programme validations and revalidations, resources are considered, in line with the validation criteria for a programme to be viable. *LIT Academic Council Regulations and Procedures. Section 3: Development and Review of Programmes and Modules.* Any deficit is identified and reported to Academic Council. The use of Academic Module Manager software for programme development supports the identification of resource requirements for the delivery of each module and each programme. During module definition and validation these requirements are explicitly listed and reviewed. Relevant details are provided in ACRP Section 3.

The Institute endeavours to continuously improve available resources. The academic, social and cultural experience of the student is central to the ongoing development of its resources. For example, the Institute recognises the need for student academic support; the services of a Learning Support Unit are available free to all students. Details of supports for students are described in the Student Handbook: [Student Handbook 2019/2020](#).

The Institute is a growing and multi-campus institution. LIT has received planning permission to construct a major new campus at Coonagh. Primarily focused on engineering, the €14m facility has received planning permission and is currently in the process of completing a first phase of development. It is expected to have students on site by September 2020. LIT has also secured a €20m investment for the construction of a new Applied Science and IT building on the LIT Moylish campus. The building will accommodate science labs, flat teaching facilities, computer labs, tutorial rooms, 'break-out' and meeting spaces. Such infrastructural developments will provide for the expansion and improvement of the learning resources available to LIT students.

### LIT Library and Information Resource Centres:

LIT's Library Services have attracted over €8million in EU funding over the past ten years for the rollout of international library literacy projects. The quality and relevance of LIT's Library resources are ensured and informed by LIT Library's Collection Development Policy (CDP), which provides a framework for the collection management - acquisition, storage, de-selection of library items in consultation with academic staff. The quality of LIT's library services is enhanced by library representation on a number of academic sub-committees, including the sub-committee on Academic Reviews which ensures that additional library resources are made available to support new academic programmes in the Institute.

Please also see: <https://library.lit.ie/>

LIT Library and Information Resource Centres not only provide quality information resources but are committed to ensuring students possess the core skills to locate and access the correct

information when and where they need it, and the supplementary skills to know how to evaluate and use the information effectively and ethically. LIT library supports these goals through its annual library induction programmes and our 'Learning to Learn - Information Literacy Skills Training Programme' which run across LIT library sites in co-operation with academic departments.

The LIT library is committed to seeking out new and innovative quality library services to make library resources and services as accessible as possible on and off its campuses. New innovative services such as 'Library Anywhere' enables students to access a range of library services from their Smartphones. The Information Discovery service 'Summon' enables a 'single search' across multiple library resources, providing fast access to content such as e-Journals and e-Books. LIT Library also supports learning, teaching, and research in the area of referencing, citation and avoiding plagiarism through its publication: *Write it Right: A guide to the Harvard Referencing System*.

[Write it Right: A guide to the Harvard Referencing System](#)

### **Support Services for Students:**

LIT has a dynamic and interactive campus environment. The dedication and commitment of our staff and students is reflected in the energy and enthusiasm that extends to every aspect of our goal to support a positive student experience. Students have many opportunities to participate in activities that support their academic, cultural, social, sporting interests and preferences. We also recognise that college life can be challenging we provide a comprehensive range of services to support students.

### **Access Service (including Disability)**

LIT is committed to promoting equitable access to and successful participation in higher education for all members of society.

Primarily, the Access service works with the following groups;

- Students who experience socio-economic disadvantage
- Students with a Disability and/or Specific Learning Difficulty
- Mature Students
- Irish Travellers and other Ethnic Minorities
- Lone Parents
- QQI Entrants
- Part-Time Students

Through the work of the LIT Access Service, targeted strategies and initiatives are delivered so as to facilitate entry to and successful participation in higher education for underrepresented students. The successful realisation of the widening participation agenda also requires that students' progress in their academic studies and move into graduate employment.

Pre-Entry Access Initiatives Include;

- LIT joined the Disability Access Route to Education (DARE) in 2017-18 and welcomed our first cohort in the 2018-19 academic year.

- LIT joined the Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) in 2018-19 and welcomed our first cohort of HEAR eligible students the 2019 - 2020 Academic Year.
- The Go4IT Access programme engages with primary and secondary school children as they progress through education to third level.
- The PATH 3 - Higher Education Access Fund is designed to increase the number of under-represented groups in the following areas: Students from schools in disadvantaged areas; Lone parents; Students from a Traveller background and Early School leavers. LIT are engaged in delivering the following two initiatives;
  - o Education Programme for Irish Travellers and Early School Leavers
  - o Destination College - Afterschool Study Club
- LIT Access Service, in partnership with LIT Flexible Learning Department established the Certificate in Transition to Higher Education programme in 2016 which aims to provide a foundation pathway for students to acquire the knowledge, skills and competencies required to successfully participate and embark on a degree programme. In the 2019-20 academic year, the Certificate in Transition to Higher Education programme was recognised by the HEA for Performance Funding and awarded €200,000 to develop and grow the programme over a two-year period. Our programme is highlighted on the HEA website at this link:

<https://hea.ie/funding-governance-performance/managing-performance/institutional-stories-of-impact/limerick-institute-of-technology/>

Post- Entry Access Initiatives include;

- Mature students are supported through Information Seminars, Welcome Events, Mature Student Support Network, Mature Student Book Lending Scheme and Mature Student Academic Workshops tailored to support and address the needs of mature students so that they get the most out of their studies.
- The Student Assistance Fund provides financial support to full or part-time students who are experiencing financial difficulties while attending college. The Student Assistance Fund is designed to provide a source of financial support in addition to a SUSI grant and in LIT provides assistance to approximately 20% of all students. The Student Assistance Fund is managed by the Higher Education Authority on behalf of the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science.
- LIT is proud of its record of access and progression of students with disabilities and/or specific learning difficulties. The Disability Support Office supports students with educational support requirements (approximately 10% of the student population) by providing a comprehensive range of services which enables students and thereby positively impacts their time at the Institute. For further information, visit: <https://lit.ie/disability-support>
- A Mentoring Service whereby all first-year students are assigned a mentor that comprises of staff from across the Institute; the aim of which is to enhance the student learning experience in an ongoing supportive relationship that encourages students to stay committed to their studies and to reach their educational goals.

- Our Guided Initiative in Voluntary Engagement (GIVE) programme promotes the participation of LIT students in both institute and community voluntary activities. The studentvolunteer.ie system opens up endless volunteering opportunities for our student volunteers to find and register for volunteer roles, build their volunteering portfolio, manage their volunteering hours and eventually achieve an LIT President's Commendation.
- The PATH 2: 1916 Bursary Fund supports socio-economically disadvantaged new entrants, who are in Year 1 and from one of the national access target groups. LIT awarded 10 bursaries to successful applicants in 19/20, adding to the 20 bursaries previously awarded in 2017/18 and 2018/19 academic years.

Full details of all services provided by the Access Service are available at: <https://lit.ie/access-services>

### **Student Counselling Service**

The Student Counselling Service provides a free, accessible, non-judgmental confidential support to enable students' work through any difficulty, explore possibilities and make decisions for themselves.

The student counselling service is staffed by highly qualified and experienced psychologists, psychotherapists and counselors and assists students on many levels:

- Provides short-term counselling and therapeutic support.
- Responds to crises as appropriate.
- Acts as a referral source for other relevant services both within and outside of the College.
- Provides LIT staff training and consultation.
- Plays a role in prevention, education, and evaluation.

The counselling team supports staff in their work with students, advocates for students and provides support and guidance to Departments, as required, from managing a critical incident, sudden death, to supporting a distressed student.

This student-centred primary care service enables students to achieve their academic goals promoting positive mental health and wellbeing across all campuses. Full service details are available on <https://lit.ie/counselling>

### **Retention Support through LIT Retention Officer**

The LIT Student Retention Officer is available to meet students who may find themselves struggling to settle in to academic life. The Student Retention Officer meets with students on a wide variety of issues, including both personal and academic concerns. Issues may include but are not limited to:

- Not sure if on the right course
- Thinking of leaving a course/withdrawing
- Taking some time out from course/deferring
- Struggling with college work
- Changing course
- Other challenges

The Retention Officer aims to pay attention to a range of issues a student may have (e.g. personal, social, academic) in providing support and in thinking about the best places to make helpful referrals. In addition to meeting with students, the Retention Officer may advocate on their behalf and frequently collaborates with other offices throughout the Institute.

The LIT Student Retention Officer also supplies detailed analysis to Faculties on areas such as Completion Statistics, Retention Statistics, Module Statistics, ISSE (Student Survey) Stats and Withdrawal Figures.

### **Student Health Unit**

The Student Health Unit provides a confidential and caring Health Service through Health Promotion and Healthy Lifestyle Awareness whilst responding to the needs and concerns of all our students.

The nurse led medical service is free and confidential. A doctor's service is provided within a 3km radius of each the campus in the GPs own private practice. The fee for the doctor is €15 for registered students and free for Medical Card holders outside of a 5-mile radius of the relevant campus. Students are also informed of the Out-of-Hours Doctor Service for evenings and weekend cover.

The range of supports delivered includes, but is not limited to;

- Nurse led diagnostic and treatment clinics.
- Provision of day to day student support and medical consultations.
- Facilitate doctor appointments where necessary for students.
- Referrals to in house services e.g., counselling, learning support, etc. and external services such as, physiotherapy, consultant referrals both public and private etc. where the need arises.
- In some circumstances, long term medical care of a student may arise and we cater for their needs.
- Support Exam requirements for students.
- Provide health education to students in a one on one basis.
- Organise health promotion events for a pro-active approach to improving health and wellbeing for students.

For further information, visit: <https://lit.ie/student-health>

### **Careers and Employability Service**

LIT offers a Careers and Employability Service which assists students with all aspects of career planning and the transition from study to the working world. Workshops and seminars relating to key employability skills take place throughout the academic year. These include CV preparation, interview techniques and networking. Arrangements are also made for companies to meet with students in the Institute, including at the annual LIT Careers and Further Options Fair. The Careers and Employability Service also supports Students with work Placement.



LIT graduates are in high demand and are recognised regionally and nationally for having a high level of technical and commercial expertise with multiple career opportunities. For further information on our Careers Service, contact: [careers@lit.ie](mailto:careers@lit.ie). Full details of the services offered, including information on “What do LIT Graduates do” is available at: <https://lit.ie/careers-employability>

### **Learning Support Unit**

Learning Support is a widely acclaimed feature of the active learning model in LIT. An essential part of the Learning Support Unit service is to re-empower learners in areas which they have identified as requiring support, thus supporting the vision, mission, educational philosophy and values of the LIT Strategic Plan, 2018 to 2022.

The LSU annually supports approximately 1000 students. Students apply for tuition by filling in an online application form where the LSU facilitates subject specific support for students across all campuses of LIT. The LSU supports student retention by building confidence, self-esteem and Psychological Capital (PsyCap) in LIT students.

The LSU provides support workshops to first-year students in Mathematics, Academic Writing, Study Skills and IT Skills. Workshops were also provided, to various student cohorts, throughout the academic year in Study Skills, Exam Techniques, Academic English, Maths, Accounting and Economics. These workshops are well attended and feedback from students is consistently positive.

For further information, visit <https://lit.ie/learning-support>

### **Chaplaincy and Pastoral Care**

LIT has a Chaplain and a Pastoral Care Co-ordinator whose services are available to students of all religious denominations and of none. Services are available to help any student/staff member of LIT under four main umbrellas support; Care, Community, Spirituality and other general duties. LIT’s Pastoral Care provides a welcoming, approachable and available service to all students of the Institute’s community and offers spiritual, pastoral care and pastoral counselling to enable students to make the most of their time in the Institute.

For further information, visit <https://lit.ie/chaplaincy>

### **Students’ Union**

The LIT Students’ Union <https://lit.ie/students-union> is the representative organisation of all students in the college and is run by an elected President and elected officers who play a major role in areas such as student welfare, finance, entertainment and clubs and societies at LIT. The Students’ Union is an important organisation in the College giving students a strong voice on the issues that affect them in their daily college lives. The Students’ Union also represents students both locally and at a national level in discussions with Higher Education authorities. Throughout the year, students can use the Students’ Union offices as resource centres for information and advice on a wide variety of areas such as grants, accommodation, student travel, etc.

Given our multi-campus location, LIT has a Students' Union President who is supported by a number of elected officers across all campuses. The Students' Union plays an active part in student life across the campuses and is involved in many activities throughout each year.

The mission on the LIT Students Union is to act as a voice for every student and to enhance the college experience by providing social, academic and cultural support that is effective, reliable and inclusive. The SU are dedicated to providing a multidisciplinary service of advice and understanding for all.

For further information visit <https://lit.ie/students-union>

## 4.0 QA of Research Activities and Programmes

LIT's Research Degree Provision Policies and Procedures and consistent with the QQI Topic-specific QAG for Providers of Research Degree Programmes; Ireland's Framework of Good Practice for Research Degree Programmes (2019); HEA National Framework for Doctoral Education, The 'Salzburg' Principles, The 'Salzburg II' Recommendations; and the National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland.

Research activity is a defining hallmark of higher education, informing teaching and learning, and adding to the global body of knowledge. The [LIT Strategic Plan 2018 - 2022](#) sets the following priority in the area of Research Development and Innovation: "Increase LIT's RDI capacity in areas that have a clear economic and social impact for the region".

In order to achieve this priority, LIT will:

- Grow the quantity, quality, and impact of Research Development and Innovation (RDI) activities and enable knowledge transfer and entrepreneurship;
- Promote a research culture to increase capacity and identify and support staff to be research active;
- Advance key research priorities relevant to the region;
- Further develop enterprise activities that foster innovation and entrepreneurship and shape the entrepreneurs of the future.

LIT's - HEA Research Related Compact Performance Objectives for new three-year period 2018/019 to 2020/2021, aspires to:

- Increase post-graduate research opportunities in line with ambitions;
- Improve LIT's academic standing as a provider of research in specific discipline areas;
- Successfully bid for external, non-exchequer research funding;
- Extend the collaborations within the Shannon Consortium.

LIT will continue to strive to achieve and to build on these objectives into the new reporting periods. LIT provides a physical, intellectual, social and cultural environment which is conducive to the successful pursuit of independent academic research. Good research practice should grow out of good practice in teaching and learning. Relevant research activity can enhance and should never compromise the quality of teaching and learning at Higher Certificate, Bachelor Degree, Honours Bachelor Degree and Taught Masters Level.

The 'knowledge square' of research, innovation, education and society are the drivers of knowledge-based research at LIT delivering impact, value and innovative solutions for our society and economy. At the heart of LIT's research strategy is the ambition to be a strategic knowledge generator and technology transfer partner of choice for companies and organisations facing the challenges of achieving sustainable competitive advantage in their marketplace. The core values that underpin the RDI Strategic Plan for postgraduate research provide an anchor for all our actions and influence how we achieve results. All activities are informed by the Institutes Values of Excellence, Accessible Supportive, Innovative and Equitable as elucidated in the LIT Strategic Plan 2018 - 2022.

LIT has a vibrant and growing research community where the exciting new knowledge developed in partnership with local industry and organisations is transferred into our classrooms by enthusiastic research-active staff. LIT's research strategy provides a development path for institutional research-related activities and specifies the connection between the provision of research degrees and wider research and innovation activities. We target specific research areas where we see opportunities for cooperation across academic departments, relevance for regional industry and the community and benefits to existing undergraduate programmes. Engaging in research is vital for LIT. Research helps us to remain at the forefront of the disciplines we offer and to maintain links with industry. It informs our teaching, and it signifies the final step up the academic ladder for our students, a postgraduate opportunity.

The strategic plan for growing postgraduate research as part of the overall Institutional strategy will build on our past achievements of delivering research excellence with impact on industrial leadership and societal challenges. The strategy responds to the current changing environment for graduate research and scholarship nationally and internationally. Our focus is on innovative applied research, in partnership with indigenous and international organisations and builds on existing and emerging areas of expertise within LIT. It reflects the applied nature of LIT's work in RDI and emphasises its strong role in innovation and enterprise development. LIT's research activity extends internationally and attracts international researchers which it hosts, and educates to Masters and Ph.D. level. LIT continues to develop its postgraduate researcher critical mass and research capabilities and research project funding successes continue to grow.

Our undergraduate curriculum is increasingly research-informed in the discipline areas where we have growing research capability. We will continue to build up our research supervision capacity through staff development to Ph.D. qualification level and targeted recruitment. The ambitious targets outlined in the Institute plan, include increasing the number of postgraduate research students by 120 % along with a 50% increase in research funding. These are in line with our ambitious plans to meet Technological University criteria in conjunction with our partnership with Athlone Institute of Technology (AIT). All of our targets are also in line with or exceed LIT's compact agreement with the HEA. This strategic implementation plan will enhance LIT's reputation for agility, responsiveness, creativity, inclusiveness and collaboration. Our track record as a strategic knowledge generator and technology transfer partner of choice for companies and organisations facing the challenges of achieving sustainable competitive advantage in their marketplace is well proven and we will continue to leverage from the existing and emerging areas of expertise across all of our campuses. Realising this plan in partnership with AIT will enable LIT to deliver on its stated aim to become a Technological University.

## **Regulatory Context and Governance Structures**

LIT provides a physical, intellectual, social and cultural environment which is conducive to the successful pursuit of independent academic research. The Institute recognises that good research practice should grow out of good practice in teaching and learning. Relevant research activity can enhance and should never compromise the quality of teaching and learning at Higher Certificate, Bachelor Degree, Honours Bachelor Degree and Taught Masters Level.

Research activity is a defining hallmark of higher education, informing teaching and learning, and adding to the global body of knowledge. It enhances the reputation of the Researcher and LIT and research activity within LIT is conducted in accordance with relevant LIT Policies and documents:

- [LIT Research Degree Programme Regulations 2019-2021](#)
- [LIT Research Degree Forms 2019-2021](#)
- [LIT Research Integrity Policy 2019-2022](#)
- [LIT Ethics Policy for Researchers 2019 - 2022](#)
- [LIT Intellectual Property for Research 2019-2022](#)
- [LIT Research Publication Policy 2019 - 2022](#)
- [LIT Student Handbook](#)

The quality of postgraduate research delivered at LIT is entrusted to the VP of Research, Development and Innovation, through the Head of Research and Technology Transfer and the Head of Graduate Studies to manage the Graduate and Research Office (GRO) which supports postgraduate students and their Research Degree Programmes (RDPs) from registration right through to graduation. It is this function's remit to ensure that each of LIT's policies to maintain research quality is implemented. LIT recognises the contribution of research to achieving its mission and to ensure it has the most appropriate support structures in place for its researchers. The research degree programme regulations define the Institute's General Policy and Criteria for Postgraduate Research Degrees. LIT operates mutually supporting processes and procedures to promote and maintain high quality research. In the context of these guidelines, 'research' covers a wide variety of activities but always represents a careful study or investigation based on a systematic understanding and critical awareness of knowledge. It covers innovative work in the whole range of academic, scientific, technological and professional fields, business, humanities, and creative and digital arts. In all of these contexts, 'research' is understood to involve the integration of rigour, reflection and critique. Each Research Degree Programme (RDP) is distinct and should be considered individually beyond the point where the thesis/exegesis (or equivalent) has been submitted. This is because for a supervised RDP, unlike a taught programme, a specific learning outcome can only be determined after the programme is complete. Supervised RDPs at Level 9, where LIT has delegated authority, and at Level 10 are assessed in accordance with the 2017 QQI Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Research Degree Programmes. The Vice President Academic Affairs & Registrar ensures that the RDP Regulations are implemented. The RDP Regulations for research degrees at LIT are subject to periodic review (will be reviewed in September 2021 and once every three years thereafter unless otherwise required) as required by the Academic Council.

### **Research Degree Award Standards**

A research Masters Degree is awarded to a Research Candidate who has carried out a programme of research and has attained the standard specified by LIT in accordance with the Level 9 indicators and award-type descriptors of the National Framework of Qualifications. LIT's Generic Standards for the Masters Degree sets the standard (of knowledge, skill and competence) to be acquired for the Masters Degree by research.

The standard for Doctoral Awards is based on the Level 10 indicators and generic award-type descriptors of the National Framework of Qualifications. The Doctor of Philosophy award is made on the basis of knowledge, skill and competency normally gained through a validated supervised RDP resulting in the production of a thesis/exegesis and artistic/creative work/product (where appropriate). The Doctor of Philosophy award is conferred for advanced levels of achievement, in which the Research Candidate demonstrates outstanding scholarship and ability. The Research Candidate must demonstrate that they have conducted original, independent research, have a broad knowledge of a particular field of study, a comprehensive knowledge of the specialist area upon which their research is focused, and have made a novel contribution to knowledge in their field. The standard for the Doctoral Degree requires breadth as well as depth of knowledge and skills and, among other things, 'the creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research, or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy review by peers'. This contribution to knowledge of a publishable (in a Peer Reviewed Research Publication/Information Disclosure Form/Patent Application) standard must be evident in the Candidate's thesis/exegesis. This implies that there is an expectation that each learner completing a Doctoral RDP will (at some stage) generate significant peer-reviewed product from their research (such as publications, patents etc.).

### **Research and Postgraduate Matters Academic Council Subcommittee**

LIT has a dedicated Academic Council Sub-Committee on Research and Postgraduate Matters (RPGM) with general responsibility for:

- Developing and monitoring of the Institute's Research and Development Strategy, policy and regulations for Research, Development & Post Graduate Studies;
- Advising the Academic Council on matters related to Research, Development & Post Graduate Studies;
- Advising Management on Research and Development Strategy;
- The monitoring of progress of individual postgraduate research students;
- Recommending approval of Postgraduate Research Degree Programmes, Supervisors and Examiners;
- The continuing review and maintenance of LIT Research Degree Programme Regulations, research quality, research environment, research performance, and supervised research studies.

The RPGM Sub-committee actively encourages research activity (ranging in nature from basic to applied) that supports the mission and strategic objectives of the Institute. The RPGM Sub-Committee encourages the development of links with external research groups and participation in national and international networks of excellence. To enable the Sub-Committee carry out its functions, membership is comprised of co-opted members with expertise in research management drawn from the Institute's staff, and Student Representatives. The Sub-Committee may also establish working groups comprising of stakeholders including representatives of currently registered Research Candidates. Membership of the Sub-Committee is defined by its Terms of Reference as approved by Academic Council. LIT has a Postgraduate Society which is student-led. The Postgraduate Society supports and contributes to a holistic learning environment

and acts as a representative for all registered Research Candidates in all elements of postgraduate life at LIT.

Programmes of research may be proposed in any field of study within the Institute's range of disciplines, subject to the requirement that the proposed programme is capable of leading to artistic or scholarly research and to its presentation for assessment by appropriate examiners for the Award. In the case of art and design, the body of fine art/design work produced in a practice-based RDP is the knowledge generated, that is, the thesis. An exegesis which supports the body of work may also be produced. All proposed RDPs will be considered for registration on their academic merits. The research proposal, resource deployment and supervisory arrangements should be sufficient so that the Research Candidate has a reasonable expectation of successfully completing their RDP. In the case of a proposed RDP at Level 9, no external assessment of the proposal is required. In the case of Masters tracking PhD and/or direct entry to PhD, external assessment of the proposal is required.

LIT undertakes to offer RDPs in subjects or discipline areas where it has available:

- a) Experienced research supervision by a Principal Supervisor who are themselves engaged in advanced study and research, and other activities relating to practice in the subject or discipline area concerned;
- b) Opportunities for interaction with other Research Candidates and Principal Investigators, both within and outside the institution;
- c) Subject based and/or interdisciplinary seminars to facilitate the dissemination of research results, enabling peer review, quality assessment and personal development;
- d) Opportunities for collaboration with other Higher Education Institutions, industry and commerce, and the Public Sector etc;
- e) Adequate physical facilities including specialised accommodation and library and IT facilities, together with technical and administrative support structures and attendant staff;
- f) Training (practical and pedagogical) in research methodologies and in the use of facilities and equipment, and any additional specialised training dictated by the nature of the research being undertaken;
- g) Necessary Research Candidate welfare and support services;
- h) Research Candidates who are conversant with Institutional requirements, procedures and standards with respect to postgraduate research and scholarship;
- i) Any ethical and health and safety issues are met so far as is reasonably practical to the satisfaction of LIT's Research Ethics Committee and LIT's Health & Safety Committee.

### **Postgraduate Student Development and Support Programmes**

All postgraduate students are encouraged to present at relevant conferences both nationally and internationally. A very thorough induction programme has been developed for new research student and supervisors to train them in postgraduate policies and procedures and support them in their research projects. Some streamlining of this programme may be possible to encourage research students to avail of further workshops and supports. While there are a substantial number of forms and procedures to be adhered to, the effectiveness of research procedures is evident by the high throughput of postgraduate students. To better improve efficiency of documentation, an overall summary of postgraduate forms has been produced (e.g. roadmap) to

better aid the supervisors and postgraduate students on all required documentation. LIT's policies on research (IP Policy, Research Good Conduct Policy, Research Publication Policy and Ethics Policy for researchers in addition to its Research Degree Programme Regulations) all support researchers in the application of good research practice. As a whole a comprehensive range of services are available including training courses and administrative services organised by the GRO office, the GRO student postgraduate Bursary is also offered on a competitive basis annually, from LIT seed funds



## 5.0 Staff Recruitment, Development and Support

LIT has a range of approved policies and procedures for Academic Staff Recruitment, Development and Support which are consistent with ESG 1.5, QQI Core Statutory QAG Section 2.4 and the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, *National Professional Development Framework for All Staff Who Teach in Higher Education*.

The Academic Council has Sub-Committees on Quality and Academic Standards and Teaching and Learning with specific terms of reference to assure the quality of its teaching and learning policies and practices.

### Recruitment

HR recruitment policies are consistent with the approved norms for the sector, including the conditions laid out in the Employment Control Framework and applicable circular letters relating to recruitment and selection. All recruitment is supported by the definition of job specifications. Selection and recruitment practices are regulated and controlled in line with the State's governance requirements. Successful candidates are selected based on merit following a fair, consistent and equitable process.

### Development and Support

LIT works closely with the *HEA National Forum for Teaching and Learning* and with the Teaching and Learning Champions in each institution across the Shannon Consortium. LIT organises a range of staff development events for *Teaching and Learning*, including the *Teaching Tips and Conversations in the Consortium* talks. Each constituent consortium partner organises two events annually and these events are open to and attended by staff from each Institution giving a total of six events annually. Other staff development events include staff development days held in January, February, and September annually. These staff development days are designed to develop the competence of teaching amongst LIT academic staff. They focus on key aspects of best practice in Teaching & Learning with built-in aspects focusing on closing feedback loops where areas for improvement are identified from qualitative and quantitative analysis.

LIT maintains an *Employee Handbook* which assures the quality of its policies and procedures related to: (i) Staff supports and services, (ii) HR practices and (iii) Career Progression. LIT implements an approved *Performance Management Development Systems* (PMDS) and *Training Development Plans* (TDP) unique to the respective cohorts of its employees. Specifically, in relation to employee development, LIT maintains a *Continued Professional Development Policy*, which is available to all LIT staff via its intranet. This identifies the policies and procedures related to various types of development for LIT staff including short, medium and longer duration type development and educational programmes. Regular internally run training workshops are made available to academic staff to support their day-to-day activities. All staff have unlimited access to lynda.com which gives them an opportunity to supplement existing skills and learn new ones.

The *Continued Professional Development Policy* and an Employee Handbook can be accessed at:

## Employee Handbook

### Continued Professional Development Policy

#### Staff Development in Teaching and Learning

The National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning highlights that CPD of staff should facilitate *“meaningful personal and professional development in a variety of ways”*. Therefore, it is important that LIT ensures that the CPD training and supports for staff are flexible and suit the needs of staff collectively and individually. Best practice suggests that they should be inclusive, promote peer collaboration and be underpinned by the scholarship of quality teaching and learning. There are many pathways available for staff as they progress their own scholarship of teaching and learning. LIT is committed to supporting and investing in its staff to facilitate their development. Staff support and training are aligned to both Institutional and National teaching and learning principles. These include *LIT’s Teaching and Learning Strategy 2018-2023* and the *National Professional Development (PD) Framework for all Staff who Teach in Higher Education* which was published by the National Forum in August 2016.

LIT’s CPD policy and practice will continue to be developed in the context of this National PD Framework. The provision of a range of opportunities for CPD for staff in the accredited and non-accredited domains caters for staff whose learning requirements will vary depending on the pathway they are on. These CPD opportunities should also be available as appropriate to all staff (academic and non-academic) within LIT to support personal development and wellbeing. LIT recognises the importance of encouraging and facilitating staff to continuously develop their scholarship of teaching and learning and is committed to supporting staff who are completing research in teaching and learning. The provision of opportunities to facilitate staff to carry out research and publish their work is key to their professional development. The ongoing enhancement of a professional academic environment that is underpinned by research in the scholarship of teaching and learning is key to nurturing professional identity, values and the skills of LIT’s staff. In line with CPD support for research in the scholarship of teaching and learning, the provision of staff support for discipline specific research is also required.

#### Non-Accredited CPD

Structured and at an Institutional level, LIT offers three dedicated Staff development Days to all Staff that are focussed on Teaching and Learning. These days focus on staff development requirements identified in the annual academic staff survey and in closing feedback loops where issues are identified in qualitative analysis. A theme for staff development is identified that ties with key institutional and strategic priorities and each day includes keynote speakers followed by a range of bespoke workshops for skills development. The Quality, Teaching and Learning Office work closely with their colleagues in the Teaching and Learning Centres in the Regional Consortium partner institutions (UL & MIC). Lunch time sessions, regional workshops, seminars as well as Regional Teaching Awards are some of the joint activities that are organised and offered to LIT staff. The collaborative partnership extends the range of non-accredited CPD offerings for LIT staff and provides an opportunity for staff to meet and discuss with peers in the regional partners.

This National PD Framework also highlights the importance of “*personal and professional digital capacity and the application of digital skills and knowledge to professional practice*”. Academic staff need to be supported in developing confidence in using digital technology as part of their professional practice. Across the Institute several other CPD initiatives have been set up to support faculty in the development of their CPD and digital literacy skills. Multi-campus training on new applications in Technology Enhanced Learning including ‘Urkund’ and ‘Panopto’ have been delivered through the Quality Teaching and Learning Office.

The Quality, Teaching and Learning Centre has worked with different departments to identify digital tools and solutions for implementing discipline-specific solutions within their departments. The Quality, Teaching and Learning office provides staff with one to one and group training sessions on the use and implementation of digital technologies as part of their teaching practice.

Approaches for improving digital skills and capacity with LIT have focused on two main areas, putting technology in place that is accessible to staff and providing support and training on how to implement digital tools in the classroom. To increase capacity across the Institute, many lecterns have been fitted with webcams and headsets. This enables staff to walk from one classroom to another and have the equipment setup and install to teach a class online and/or record a class. For staff not delivering to a face to face class, recording booths have been setup within each campus, these provide a dedicated space free from noise and other disruptions and allow staff create learning resources and record classes.

Other developments focus on the applications that are used centrally across the Institute. MS Teams has been rolled out to all staff and students across each campus. This application provides a platform to allow staff to schedule online classes, run online assignments, collaborate with students and distribute coursework. Training and support sessions have been ran to provides technical understanding on how to setup and use the applications but also these sessions provide pedagogical support in best practice in using such application to ensure student engagement in a blended and online learning environment. Applications required will vary from year to year and the role of Quality, Teaching and Learning is to ensure staff have access to a range of digital applications the enable them to develop their personal and professional digital capacity.

### Accredited CPD

The Quality, Teaching and Learning Centre in partnership with the Department of Flexible Learning has developed a suite of Accredited Certificates as Special Purpose Awards. Current offerings include:

1. Designing and Adapting Coursework for Blended and Online Learning (10 Credits).
2. Reflective Academic Practice through Portfolio Building (10 Credits).
3. Research Methods (10 Credits).
4. Pedagogies of Active Learning for Student Engagement (10 Credits).

Each module is a standalone 10 Credit Level 9 award and they are all delivered in the evenings online to provide flexibility for participants.

To further develop CPD opportunities for staff, additional offerings are currently in development to provide a flexible, accessible and relevant pathway of professional development leading to a Structured Masters-Doctorate pathway for staff in Academic Practice.

#### LIT Academic Staff Research Doctoral Write Up Award

To help increase the number of academic staff holding doctoral degrees, the President's Office has developed an award for academic staff to buy-out of teaching duties to support thesis completion and submission. This award is available to LIT academic staff who have reached the final write up stage of their doctoral degree. Applicants should be able to demonstrate that the award will facilitate the submission of their thesis within the given time period. The non-teaching/administrative duties of staff are excluded from the buy-out and remain unaffected by the award.

## 6.0 Information and Data Management

The QA procedures for collecting, analysing and using relevant information about LIT's programmes and its activities are consistent with QQI Core QAG Section 2.8 and ESG 1.7.

Limerick Institute of Technology collects and analyses relevant information for the effective management and operation of its diverse functions as a modern Higher Education Institute. This includes information for Governance and Management, Learner Information and Data and Academic Information Management.

All three pillars of the governance and management system have internal and external management information systems available to them to support their activities in quality assurance and strategic planning. Most of the systems were developed as part of a national project in conjunction with the other institutes of technology in Ireland. They are externally hosted by Hewlett Packard in its Dublin data centre and are managed by an organisation called An Chéim (Collaborative Higher Education Information Management). These systems are not fully integrated but they are connected by interface. Supplementary systems include an Academic Programme/Module Planner and a facility which allows students to download their examination transcripts and European Diploma Supplements. This is a requirement of the Bologna Process for European higher education.

An Information Systems Strategy Group (ISSG) facilitates the development and implementation of a cohesive information systems strategy for LIT by developing and recommending to executive management the strategies and necessary developments required for the effective harnessing of the data which exists, so that the data can be used in such a way as to inform business decisions of the institute. Membership of ISSG includes all relevant stakeholders i.e. system owners, users, management and academic staff.

Decision making strategies are more and more formulated on electronic data and rely on comprehensive quality data. Statistical data from the information systems form the basis for educational and financial decisions at executive and middle management levels. Extracts from LIT's information systems are also used to supply reports and statistics to various external agencies such as the Higher Education Authority and the Department of Education and Science. Data is also provided for freedom of information requests, press reports and in-house annual reports. Reports from the student records system also formulate LIT's contribution to important national rankings such as The Sunday Times league table of higher education institutions. Data protection guidelines are strictly followed when providing data to external bodies.

Management use Power BI for reports to ensure that consistent data is used. Ad hoc reports are provided using Microsoft Access. The Data Analytics function utilises such Information Systems to provide information to management to support service delivery; analyse information in context of Institute Objectives and KPI's and to support Future Planning.

### Overview of Information Systems in LIT

Information System	Brief Context
LIT Website (Internal and External)	Website Context/CAO Micro Site/ Sharepoint Staff Portal etc
Banner System	Banner manages student information throughout a student's interaction with the Institute, from initial contact through to graduation and alumni services. A Curriculum Advising and Program Planning module (CAPP) is to be installed on top of this version during 2010.
GURU	GURU, a secure examination management system, has been implemented across all LIT campuses in 2017/18. GURU's functionality securely supports the implementation of business processes across the range of examination management activities of the Institute. It communicates securely and adequately with relevant stakeholders, both internal and external to the Institute.
Module Manager	Curriculum and syllabus management software system.
Library	Millennium is an integrated library system that supports teaching, learning and research services by providing prompt and comprehensive delivery of information, both on and off campus. Library users can renew or reserve items and access specialist websites.
Power BI	Power BI provides an analytics by Microsoft that supports evidence based decision making.
Agresso	Agresso is the financial management system covering budget management, transactions, procurement, asset management and reporting
CORE HR	CoreHR manages employee resources, automates time recording and processes the payroll. Staff can view payslips, manage expenses and apply for annual leave online.
Syllabus Plus	Syllabus+ is the timetabling system providing programme planning, exam scheduling and reporting and a web interface for querying timetables.
Moodle	Moodle is LIT's virtual learning environment (VLE). This application supports staff and students in blended and online programmes. Moodle provides students with a central space to access all of their coursework and additional learning resources. Moodle has a range of digital functions which allows student to access learning resources, collaborate online, upload assignments and complete online assessments.

### **Computer Services Policies**

LIT provides resources to staff, students and external parties to assist them in performing their duties. It is envisaged that these resources will be used only for activities directly associated with the work of the Institute.

The purpose of the LIT Acceptable Usage Policy is to indicate the requirement for responsible and appropriate use of the Institutes information and communications technology (ICT) resources. It is envisaged that these resources will be used only for activities directly associated with the work of the Institute. The LIT Acceptable Usage Policy is available at: [LIT Acceptable Usage Policy](#)

The IT Security Policy indicates the requirement for responsible and appropriate use of the Institutes information and communications technology (ICT) resources. The IT Security Policy defines the security controls necessary to safeguard LIT information systems and ensure the security, confidentiality, availability and integrity of the information held therein. The policy is available at: [IT Security Policy](#)

The LIT Mobile Device Policy outlines the procedures regarding eligibility and provision of mobile devices in support of its administrative and service functions. LIT recognises that mobile devices are an important ICT tool that can improve the availability, and increase the productivity of its staff. The policy is available at: [Mobile Device Policy](#)

The LIT Social Media Management Policy provides direction for the creation, management and moderation of the Institutes social media presence on appropriate websites including social media platforms, refer to the Limerick Institute of Technology acceptable usage policy for specific acceptable usage rules for social media. The scope of this policy also extends to the management and moderation of online communications on internal and external forums, wiki's, blogs and web technologies yet to become available. The policy is available at: [Social Media Management Policy](#)

## Learner Information and Data

There is a range of information and data collected and held with the Banner Student Information system. The Institute ensures that the database is maintained securely and that data relating to learner assessment is accurate and complete. The learner information collected and stored in Banner is listed below.

### Learner data held within Banner

Information/Data Type	Context
Banner: SPAIDEN Personal Data and Contact Information	Demographic information on the student is stored in Banner in this area.
Banner: ELECTRONIC GRADEBOOK Continuous Assessment Results	All departments are now encouraged to use Electronic Gradebook for entering CA results.
Banner: SHATCKN Assessment Data	Full profile of academic results for all assessments completed on the programme of study for which the student is registered, which are held historically for an unlimited period, starting in 2005
Banner: SMICRLT Stages Completed	Record of all modules and stages attempted by the learner. Full profile of academic record and credits earned including link to details of modules attached to these credits.
Banner: SFAREGS Subject choices	Record of subject choices for the learner for each year of study.
Banner: SHATCKN Results	Record of results entered for each subject and any changes made are recorded here.
Banner: SHADEGR Awards conferred Awards Classification	Record of award, title, year of graduation, date conferred, overall award classification

## Academic Information Management

The Quality Assurance procedures for collecting, analysing and using relevant information about LIT's programmes and its activities are consistent with ESG 1.7. The Academic Council has approved the establishment of Faculty/School Boards, Department Boards, Programme Boards and Staff/Student Liaison Groups for effective information management. The terms of reference for each are listed in LIT *Academic Council Regulation and Procedures (ACRP)*: Section 2, Management of the Curriculum. Programme related issues including examination statistics and completion and retentions rates, are reviewed by Academic Council Sub-Committees and Programme Boards and actioned as appropriate.

LIT compiles and analyses a comprehensive range of statistics and analytics with respect to students and student progression. This quantitative data can be used as benchmarks and key performance indicators



1. A review and standardisation of all statistical calculations/methodology was undertaken.
2. Retention and Completion Statistics are calculated at overall Institute, Department and Programme Level.
3. Non Progression and Progression for first year students are calculated according to HEA methodology. The baseline data specified in the compact is the data provided by HEA with respect to Non Progression for first years is 27% in the 2014/15 Academic Year.
4. As described above, Retention and Completion Statistics are calculated at overall Institute, Department and Programme Level.
5. A module performance trend analysis is conducted as an integral component of data analysis This highlight modules with failure rates that fall outside of expected KPI's and comparison of annual module data serves to identify modules that would benefit from reassessing approaches including teaching and learning strategies.

Programme related issues including examination statistics and completion and retentions rates, are reviewed by Academic Council Sub-Committees and Programme Boards and actioned as appropriate.

LIT participates in the annual, nationwide survey in the higher education sector entitled the Student Survey. This survey is targeted at First Year and Final Year undergraduate and post-graduate students. This is an externally validated, voluntary national survey of third level academic institutions in the University, Institute of Technology, and other provider sectors. LIT has the second highest ISSE participation rates nationally. LIT ISSE results are analysed and utilised at Institute and Departmental level to inform Quality Enhancements. Annual results are notified to LIT's Academic Council and issued to relevant sub-committees of Academic Council and Faculties/Departments to address the results reported, where appropriate, in their policies, initiatives, and activities. LIT also participates in the survey for postgraduate research students (Masters by Research and PhD) (PGR StudentSurvey) which now runs on a biennial cycle.

LIT participates in the annual Graduate Outcomes Survey and analyses and utilises this information as key performance indicator of the Careers and Employability Service.

There is also Statutory reporting to HEA in the form of direct data extracts from the SRMS to HEA External Audit and to Internal Review by Executive Management and Data Analytics Manager. There is Local Reporting for non-aggregated data to individual functional areas via ODBC connection to the SRS Oracle DBMS to aid decision making and data standards.

## **Records Maintenance and Retention**

The LIT Data Retention Schedule provides assistance in determining retention periods but it cannot cover all records held by all areas. It is the responsibility of each functional area in LIT to determine the retention period (i.e. the storage period) for the personal data held and document this in their Personal Data Register. All personal data held should be subject to regular review to ensure adherence to the retention period." PWC in consultation with THEA developed a suite of key GDPR policies to be adopted/adapted by individual Institutes, this includes a Data Retention Policy. Section 4.1 sets-out the policy considerations to be taken into consideration as individual functions determine the duration for which they will retain records. All of the above are to be underpinned by Retention Schedule. The Retention Schedule is - by necessity - a 'living document' for rolling review. This is because as new procedures are created and process

improvements take place, new data-sets will develop over time and others will become redundant requiring on-going additions-to and subtractions-from this document.

THEA Data Retention Policy and Retention Schedule actively being adapted LIT - for completion by end of Jan 2020. Schedule for Rolling Review of Data Compliance, (including Personal Data Processing Registers and Retention Schedules), has been drafted for approval.

### **Data Protection and Freedom of Information**

The LIT Data Protection Policy states that "Schools, Faculties and Functions should identify the minimum amount of personal data needed for a particular purpose, and then align collection volumes and associated retention to this purpose." (Section 5.4 'Data Minimisation'). The LIT Data Protection Procedures state that "Schools, Faculties and Functions must only keep Personal Data for the period necessary for permitted uses as per the LIT Data Retention Policy."

The THEA Data Retention Policy and Retention Schedule is actively being adapted LIT (-for completion by end of Jan 2020). A Schedule for Rolling Review of Data Compliance, (including Personal Data Processing Registers and Retention Schedules), has been drafted for approval.

## 7.0 Public Information and Communication

The procedures for the provision of clear, accurate, up-to-date accessible information are consistent with the QQI Core QAG Section 9 and ESG 1.8.

The Institute provides a wide range of public information. The primary source for stakeholders is the LIT website. The Institute main publications include:

- LIT Annual Reports <https://lit.ie/reports/annual-reports>
- LIT Student Handbook [Student Handbook](#)
- LIT Undergraduate Prospectus [Prospectus](#)
- LIT Flexible Learning Handbooks [Flexible, Part-Time & Evening Courses](#)
- LIT Guide for International Students [International Guide](#)
- LIT Quality Assurance Handbook [Quality Assurance Handbook](#)
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LIT is committed to the principles described in the Freedom of Information Acts. Section 8 of the Freedom of Information Act, 2014 requires public bodies to prepare and publish as much information as possible in an open and accessible manner on a routine basis outside of FOI, having regard to the principles of openness, transparency, and accountability. Accordingly, LIT provides information on its website in the following key areas:

- General information about LIT;
- Information on the functions and services provided by LIT;
- Information on LIT's decision-making procedures;
- Financial information;
- Procurement information;
- Disclosure log and other relevant information deemed appropriate to be published routinely

Please see [www.lit.ie](http://www.lit.ie) for further details.

The LIT website is a vital source of public information for the large and diverse audience. It plays an integral role in the life of those within the LIT community such as current students and staff but is also widely used by those at a national and international level including prospective students, schools, organisations and media outlets.

An ongoing project in 2019/2020 has been the development of the official LIT website. The aim of this project is to develop a site which meets the standards of a modern day website, thereby enhancing the user experience of our website visitors. This will have a very positive effect on the future growth of the institution. The Marketing Office maintains records of School contacts and teachers, marketing photography and list of CAO applicants. All these are retained in a compliant manner and only for the length of time that they are needed and information is destroyed after that time frame.

The brand.lit.ie has been developed by the Marketing office as a means of setting a consistent standard for LIT staff and students and their activities. These guidelines are here to help communicate a deeper understanding of how to use the Brand to share our common values and story. As a team we provide strategic marketing and communication services for LIT, together

with advice and information to support decision making and campaigns. A Brand is more than a logo or symbol. A brand is created by people, culture, perception, behaviour, performance, interactions and opinions. We have created our own brand guidelines because as LIT grows and expands its range of activities, so too our brand must articulate more. When communicating on behalf of LIT it is important to encompass our story and values in a style that is familiar to the end reader. To do this we have created a visual identity system of shared values, logos, typographic elements, colour references, imagery and tone that will help share a story in a consistent and confident way. Our Brand must be clearly identifiable as contemporary, clean, consistent and coherent. It also serves to unite us in our approach to the provision of open, active and progressive education in the Mid-West across multiple campuses and communities.

### **Learner Information**

All learner and programme information is made available to prospective and current learners. This includes both the Admissions Criteria and Award Criteria.

### **Admissions Criteria**

The Admissions criteria for each programme are provided in the LIT Prospectus and are, for example, consistent with second-level qualifications for entry. The Prospectus is available in the LIT website. The Admissions Office Policies and Procedures (AOPP) outlines the operational admissions procedures and the various categories of students entering LIT. LIT provides all students with an online registration facility.

### **Award Criteria**

All programmes delivered by LIT have identified:

- The award that is provided on completion of the programme
- The award recognition on the NFQ and the level on the NFQ
- The QQI Award Standard.

The above information is published through the various communication channels that provide programme information including details of the name of the awarding body associated with a programme. The delegated authority procedures for the use of QQI Award Standards are described in the LIT Quality Assurance Handbook.

The key documents therein are:

- The Academic Council Regulations and Procedures for Taught Programmes (ACRP)
- External Examiners Policy & Procedures for Taught Programmes
- LIT Research Degree Programme Regulations
- Student's Charter

### **Publication of quality assurance evaluation reports**

All Quality review are published on the LIT Website with the new website project for upgrading the interface and focus of this section of the website. This includes publication of:

- LIT Quality Assurance Handbook
- New Programme Validation Reports
- Programmatic Reviews
- AIQR/AQR
- Relevant Quality Enhancement Publications

[https://lit.ie/en-IE/Life-At-LIT/explore-lit/reports-procedures-plans/Quality-Assurance-\(1\)](https://lit.ie/en-IE/Life-At-LIT/explore-lit/reports-procedures-plans/Quality-Assurance-(1))

## 8.0 Monitoring and Periodic Review

The Academic Council has approved regulations and procedures for self-evaluation and monitoring. The regulations and procedures are consistent with QQI core Statutory QAG and ESG 1.1 and 1.9.

LIT implements 'feedback loops' to enable its self-evaluation processes. Formal structures that are utilised include: (i) Staff and Student Liaison Groups, (ii) Programme Boards, (iii) Sub-Committees of Academic Council, (iv) Programmatic Reviews, New Programme Development (v) Industrial Liaison Committees and (vi) External Examiner Reports.

New LIT programmes are validated in alignment with ESG Standard 2.1. New programmes are additionally validated in accordance with LIT's Academic Council Regulations and Procedures (ACRP) Section 3: Development and Review of Programmes and Modules.

Academic Council Regulations and Procedures for Taught Programmes, Academic Year 2017/2018, Part 1

Specifically, the validation criteria include:

- Standards: The minimum intended programme learning outcomes must be consistent with the relevant awards standards and the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) award-type descriptors.
- Access standard: The prerequisite learning for participation in the programme and any other assumptions relating to the programme's target learners must be explicit.
- Learning: The programme must enable its target learners to attain the minimum intended programme learning outcomes reliably and efficiently (in terms of learner effort). The concept of minimum intended programme learning outcomes and its relation to teaching, learning and assessment are in line with those identified by QQI's Assessment and Standards (Revised 2013).

### Programmatic Review

All programmes are periodically reviewed in accordance with Academic Council regulations during formal Programmatic Review processes. Details are described in LIT's Academic Council Regulations and Procedures: Section 3.8: Review of all Awards. The Programmatic Review is carried out by an External Programmatic Review Panel. In order to make its judgements, the Programmatic Review Panel visits the Institute to review the Programmatic Review Documentation, to discuss the programmes/modules with the Programme Boards, students and graduates of the programmes and to review the facilities provided by the provider for the delivery of the programme(s). The Registrar's Office constitutes the Programmatic Review Panel. The size of the Programmatic Review Panel may vary between a maximum of ten members and a minimum of five members. The typical Programmatic Review Panel includes representatives from Industry and Academia, capable of making national and international comparisons with regard to the specific suite of programmes. An enrolled or formerly enrolled student is also included in the Programmatic Review Panel. Normally fifty percent of the panel is drawn from prestigious higher

education and awarding institutions outside the jurisdiction, including professional bodies and multinational corporations.

### Annual Monitoring

In order to provide regular academic quality assurance for each LIT programme, annual monitoring and programme reporting is carried out by the Programme Board, in line with LIT's Academic Council Regulations and Procedures for Taught Programmes: Section 3.7 Programme Reporting. Programme Boards monitors the effectiveness of the delivery, assessment, and quality for all programmes and also reports on risk factors or incidents, which are actioned appropriately. The programme board meets at least once each semester with student representatives across all stages of the programme

[Academic Council Regulations and Procedures for Taught Programmes: Academic Year 2019/2020, Part 1](#)

### Review of Service Delivery Units

The Institute is committed to broadening the range of reviews to include Service Delivery units in line with national policy. To this end the governing Body has approved the LIT Policy for Strategic Review of Service Delivery Units 2019-2024 to facilitate these reviews with an approved framework. The policy is available at:

[LIT Policy for Strategic Review of Service Delivery Units 2019-2024](#)

The purpose of this policy is to outline LIT's approach to quality review of Service Delivery Units and to describe in detail the process as it applies to individual services. The purpose of the quality review of the Service Delivery Unit is to:

1. provide a systematic and structured opportunity for the service to engage in periodic and strategic evidence-based self-reflection and self-assessment of the quality of its activities and processes;
2. self-identify opportunities for quality enhancement and the improvement of the service for its stakeholders;
3. provide a framework by which external peers, in an evidence-based manner, can independently review, evaluate, report upon and suggest improvements to the quality of the unit's activities and processes;
4. provide a framework by which the service can implement quality enhancements in a verifiable manner;
5. provide stakeholders with independent evidence of the quality of the Service Delivery Unit activities and processes;
6. satisfy best practice (national and international) in the context of quality assurance in higher education and meet statutory QA requirements as enshrined in national law.

Under this policy, the review and self-evaluation include a broad range of considerations within the context and culture of the individual Service Delivery Unit. These considerations are broadly informed by the management principles specified in the ISO9001:2015 Quality Management Standard. This standard specifies seven quality management principles and these include:

1. Customer Focus (stakeholder focus);
2. Leadership;
3. Engagement of People;
4. Process Approach;
5. Continual Improvement;
6. Evidence Based Decision Making;
7. Relationship Management.

LIT maintains a close and cordial working relationship with QQI. An external institutional review of LIT is conducted by QQI on a cyclical basis. LIT conducts an Annual Quality Review (AQR) which is published on the QQI website. Annually, the Institute actively reviews the national and international QA policies and procedures and benchmarks its own policies and procedures against best practice. Any relevant changes are incorporated into LIT's own regulations and procedures with the approval of Academic Council.

## 9.0 Details of Arrangements with Third Parties

### 9.1 Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies

Type of arrangement	Total Number
PRSBs	22
Awarding bodies	1
QA bodies	0

### 9.2 Collaborative Provision

Type of arrangement	Total number
Joint research degrees	0
Joint/double/multiple awards	1
Collaborative programmes	3
Franchise programmes	0
Linked providers (DABs only)	0



<b>1. Collaborative provision</b> (Type of collaborative provision)	Collaborative Programme
Name of body (/bodies):	Limerick Institute of Technology Yangtze University, China
Programme titles and links to publications	LC252 BSc (Hons) in Civil Engineering Management <a href="https://lit.ie/Courses/LC252">https://lit.ie/Courses/LC252</a>
Date of last review	25-04-2016
Date of next review	2020

<b>2. Collaborative provision</b> (Type of collaborative provision)	Joint Award
Name of body (/bodies):	Limerick Institute of Technology University of Limerick
Programme titles and links to publications	Professional Master of Education in Art and Design with Digital Media <a href="#">LIT   Professional Master of Education in Art and Design with Digital Media</a>
Date of last review	22-12-2015
Date of next review	2021

<b>3. Collaborative provision</b> (Type of collaborative provision)	Joint Award
Name of body (/bodies):	Limerick Institute of Technology University of Limerick
Programme titles and links to publications	B.Ed. (Hons) in Art & Design Teacher Education <a href="https://lit.ie/courses/lc115">https://lit.ie/courses/lc115</a>
Date of last review	2020
Date of next review	2021

### 9.3 Articulation Agreements

<b>Articulation agreements - Total number</b>	<b>198</b>
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Agreements signed during 2019 -2020 Academic Year

<b>1. Articulation agreement:</b>	
Name of body (/bodies):	Conestoga College
Programme titles and links to publications	LC295 - BA (Hons) Business Studies with Sports Management - <a href="https://lit.ie/courses/lc295">https://lit.ie/courses/lc295</a> LC422 - BSc (Hons) in Sports Strength and Conditioning - <a href="https://lit.ie/courses/lc422">https://lit.ie/courses/lc422</a> LC423 - BSc in Sports Strength and Conditioning - <a href="https://lit.ie/courses/lc423">https://lit.ie/courses/lc423</a> LC228 - Higher Certificate in Sports Development and Coaching - <a href="https://lit.ie/courses/lc228">https://lit.ie/courses/lc228</a>
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	30/03/2020
Date of next review	2023
Detail of the agreement	Articulation agreement allowing for Students to be admitted to a stage of the programmes listed.

<b>2. Articulation agreement:</b>	
Name of body (/bodies):	Fanshawe College
Programme titles and links to publications	LC275 - BEng (Hons) in Electrical Engineering - <a href="https://lit.ie/courses/lc275">https://lit.ie/courses/lc275</a> LC375 - BEng (Hons) in Industrial Automation and Robotic Systems - <a href="https://lit.ie/courses/lc375">https://lit.ie/courses/lc375</a>
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	15/01/2020
Date of next review	2022
Detail of the agreement	Articulation agreement allowing for Students to be admitted to a stage of the programmes listed.

<b>3. Articulation agreement:</b>	
Name of body (/bodies):	Mohawk College
Programme titles and links to publications	<p>LC275 - BEng (Hons) in Electrical Engineering - <a href="https://lit.ie/courses/lc275">https://lit.ie/courses/lc275</a></p> <p>LC375 - BEng (Hons) in Industrial Automation and Robotic Systems - <a href="https://lit.ie/courses/lc375">https://lit.ie/courses/lc375</a></p> <p>LC374 - BEng (Hons) in Renewable and Electrical Energy Engineering - <a href="https://lit.ie/courses/lc374">https://lit.ie/courses/lc374</a></p> <p>LC278 - BEng in Renewable and Electrical Energy Engineering - <a href="https://lit.ie/courses/lc278">https://lit.ie/courses/lc278</a></p> <p>A8117 - BA (Hons) in Animation and Motion Design - <a href="https://lit.ie/courses/a8117">https://lit.ie/courses/a8117</a></p> <p>LC372 - BSc (Hons) in Music Technology and Production - <a href="https://lit.ie/courses/lc372">https://lit.ie/courses/lc372</a></p> <p>LC270 - BSc in Music Technology and Production - <a href="https://lit.ie/courses/lc270">https://lit.ie/courses/lc270</a></p> <p>LC371 - BSc (Hons) in Creative Broadcast and Film Production- <a href="https://lit.ie/courses/lc371">https://lit.ie/courses/lc371</a></p> <p>LC276 - BSc in Creative Broadcast and Film Production- <a href="https://lit.ie/courses/lc276">https://lit.ie/courses/lc276</a></p> <p>A8118 - BA (Hons) in Graphic Design Communication - <a href="https://lit.ie/courses/a8118">https://lit.ie/courses/a8118</a></p> <p>LC225 - BBs (Hons) in Marketing and Management - <a href="https://lit.ie/courses/lc225">https://lit.ie/courses/lc225</a></p> <p>LC222 - Higher Cert in Marketing and Management - <a href="https://lit.ie/courses/lc222">https://lit.ie/courses/lc222</a></p> <p>LC320 - BBs (Hons) in Business - <a href="https://lit.ie/courses/lc320">https://lit.ie/courses/lc320</a></p> <p>LC226 - BBs (Hons) in Enterprise and Innovation- <a href="https://lit.ie/courses/lc226">https://lit.ie/courses/lc226</a></p> <p>LC293 - BA (Hons) in Business Studies &amp; Travel and Tourism Management - <a href="https://lit.ie/courses/lc223">https://lit.ie/courses/lc223</a></p> <p>LC422 - Bsc (Hons) in Sports Strength and Conditioning - <a href="https://lit.ie/courses/lc422">https://lit.ie/courses/lc422</a></p> <p>LC423 - Bsc in Sports Strength and Conditioning - <a href="https://lit.ie/courses/lc423">https://lit.ie/courses/lc423</a></p> <p>LC297 - BA (Hons) in Community and Addiction Studies - <a href="https://lit.ie/courses/lc297">https://lit.ie/courses/lc297</a></p> <p>LC517 - Bsc (Hons) in Creative Media and Design - <a href="https://lit.ie/courses/lc517">https://lit.ie/courses/lc517</a></p>
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	12/12/2019
Date of next review	2022
Detail of the agreement	Articulation agreement allowing for Students to be admitted to a stage of the programmes listed.

[Higher Education Institution]

2021

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**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

##### 1.1.1 Designated Awarding Body Status to Level 9 of the NFQ

Limerick Institute of technology became a Designated Awarding Body to Level 9 of the NFQ in January 2020 in accordance with the provisions of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) (Amendment) Act 2019. The implications and obligations of the Institute as a Designated Awarding Body were discussed a meeting of Academic Council of 6<sup>th</sup> December 2019. As a Designated Awarding Body up to Level 9 of the NFQ, LIT adopted QQI Award Standards at its Academic Council meeting of 6<sup>th</sup> December 2019.

During this period, the Academic Council Documentation 2017 - 2019 were under review as this coincided with the transition to a New Academic Council. The revised Academic Council Documentation 2020 - 2022 was approved at a meeting of Academic Council on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2020 and its constituent *Constitution* and *Terms of Reference of Subcommittees* took account of Designated Awarding Body Status and associated statutory obligations. This included a newly titled subcommittee on Quality and Academic Standards with responsibility for advising Academic Council on matters relating to Designated Awarding Body status.

The revised Academic Council documentation is available at:

[Academic Council Documentation 2020-2022](#)

##### 1.1.2 Formation of the AIT-LIT Technological University Consortium and the RUN-EU Network

During October 2019, Limerick Institute of Technology in conjunction with Athlone Institute of Technology announced their intention to form the AIT-LIT Technological University Consortium and LIT and AIT are now set on a trajectory towards achieving Technological University designation. The goal is to develop a unique new Technological University that will have a clear regional focus with a national and international outlook that will benefit staff, students and the communities the institutions serve. An application for TU designation was submitted to the HEA in November 2020 with an international panel visit scheduled for Quarter 1 of the subsequent reporting period (2020 - 2021) and designation anticipated for the Academic Year 2021 - 2022. The goal of the new TU will be to provide new opportunities and access pathways to learners with the view to sustaining prosperity and industrial growth across Ireland. This will be achieved through practical, experiential learning, strong industry engagement and applied, high-TRL research, and a global mindset.

The AIT and LIT Consortium was successful in its application to join a new, forward-thinking education alliance intended to increase collaboration between Europe's universities. Under the new European Universities initiative, AIT and LIT will join its RUN-EU (Regional University Network - European Union) partners in creating one of several new European universities capable of transcending languages, borders, and disciplines. The European Universities Network is part of an EU-wide ambition to create a centralised European Education Area and will enable students to obtain a degree by combining studies in multiple EU countries. The network, which is expected

to increase the competitiveness of European universities, will be integral to promoting the kinds of future and advanced skills necessary for social transformation across the European Union. An important step forward in AIT and LIT's internationalisation strategy, membership of the European Universities initiative aligns closely with the consortium's aims to develop a technological university which reflects the educational demands and economic needs of Ireland's Midlands and Mid-West.

The RUN-EU network consists of Polytechnic of Leiria (Portugal), Polytechnic of Cávado and Ave (Portugal), Limerick Institute of Technology (Ireland), Athlone Institute of Technology (Ireland), Széchenyi István University (SZE) (Hungary), Häme University of Applied Sciences HAMK (Finland), NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences (Netherlands), and FH Vorarlberg University of Applied Sciences (Austria).

### **1.1.3 Governance of Academic Quality Management and Policy Development**

LIT takes a multi-layered approach to the governance of academic quality management, with the first layer consisting of executive structures such as Governing Body, Academic Council and its' sub-committees and working groups. These structures take a lead role in reviewing and designing Institute-wide strategies and processes to maintain and continuously improve academic quality. The second layer of governance in place has a greater focus on academic quality through operational practice, with faculty, department, exam and programme board structures supporting ongoing programme design, delivery, monitoring and review. There is close linkage between these two layers of governance, creating a holistic and integrated approach to academic quality management in the Institute. Academic quality management is a central focus in LIT and critical to its ongoing success as a leading educator in the region. LIT's approach and development of quality assurance and enhancement systems and processes is effective and sophisticated. Our quality assurance is in line with standards and guidelines for the European Higher Education Area, and with the national guidelines and criteria for QA procedures overseen by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). Staff are aware of national and international best practice in academia and in the profession.

The Institutes Quality Policy Statement was updated during the 2018 - 2019 reporting period for becoming operational in the 2019 - 2020 Reporting period. The policy statement was developed into a more comprehensive Quality Policy Framework titled the LIT Policy on Quality Assurance and Enhancement 2019 - 2024 and is included in the LIT Quality Assurance Handbook. LIT's Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures are implemented on all of its five campuses and learning centres across the counties of Limerick, Tipperary and Clare. These policies and procedures relevantly govern the design, delivery, and review of its academic programmes on the NFQ framework from Level 6 to Level 10, whilst also assuring quality across its craft apprenticeships, flexible learning and continuous education programmes. LIT's Quality Assurance documentation has been collected and collated to form the LIT Quality Assurance Handbook. The LIT Quality Assurance Handbook is reviewed, updated, and approved by Academic Council on an annual basis. As a result, specific content areas are improved through periodic reviews to attest to their comprehensiveness, adequacy, and completeness. They are centrally maintained by the LIT Academic Council Sub-Committee on Quality and Academic Standards

The LIT Quality Assurance Handbook has been re structured in a more logical order to allow for ease of access of its constituent documents. These have been made available to Staff as a set of easily accessible links from a Table of Contents on the Staff Portal. The new volumes of the Handbook are:

- VOLUME 1: NATIONAL AND INSTITUTIONAL SYSTEM OF HE QAE
- VOLUME 2: LIT ACADEMIC COUNCIL & GOVERNING BODY
- VOLUME 3: INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGIES
- VOLUME4: ACADEMIC REGULATIONS, POLICIES & PROCEDURES
- VOLUME 5: STUDENT SUPPORT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
- VOLUME 6: OPERATIONAL POLICIES
- VOLUME 7: QUALITY ASSURANCE OF STAFF
- VOLUME 8: APPENDIX

This revised format for the QA Handbook was approved by Academic Council for the 2019/20 Academic Year. The handbook was further made available as a series of readily accessible links from the Table of Content and is available to all Staff on the Institutes Staff Portal. A review was conducted of the contents of the Handbook benchmarking it with relevant legislation and associate statutory quality assurance guidelines including the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG 2015) and QQI Quality Assurance Guidelines with reporting to the then Quality, Teaching and Learning subcommittee of Academic Council. This informed a comprehensive programme of policy Revisions and New Policy Development with a range of revised/new policies becoming operational in the reporting period.

<b>Revised Policies Becoming Operational in the Reporting Period</b>
LIT Introduction and Summary Guide to the QA Handbook
LIT Policy on Dignity and Respect; Dealing with Harassment and Bullying among Students 2019-2024
LIT Student Code of Conduct and Discipline 2019-2024
LIT Student Disability Policy 2019 - 2024
LIT Student Complaints and Problem Resolution Procedure 2019-2024
LIT Learner Disability Policy 2019-2024
LIT Research Degree Regulations 2019 - 2021
LIT Ethics Policy for Researchers 2019 - 2022
LIT Intellectual Property for Research 2019-2022
LIT Research Integrity Policy 2019-2022
LIT Research Publication Policy 2019-2022
LIT Child Protection Policy 2018-2020
LIT Child Safeguarding Statement 2018-2020
LIT Child Protection Procedures 2018-2020
LIT Industrial Liaison Advisory Policy 2019-2024
Updated LIT Document Control Record Template
LIT Policy on Recognition of Prior Learning 2019-2020 (Integrated component of ACRP)

Revised Policies Becoming Operational in the Reporting Period
LIT Teaching and Learning Strategy Implementation Planning Resource 2018-2023
LIT Blended and Online Learning Policy 2019-2024
LIT Learning Design Guidelines
LIT Operational Guidelines for Blended and Online Learning
LIT Technical Setup Guide for Blended and Online Learning
LIT Lecture Recording Policy 2019-2021
LIT Policy for Strategic Review of Service Delivery Units 2019-2024
LIT Student Fitness to Practise Policy for Relevant Programmes Listed 2019-2024
LIT Policy for the Provision of Lecture Recording as a Reasonable Accommodation 2019-2024
LIT Research Ethics Guidelines for Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Programmes 2019-2022
LIT Policy on Quality Assurance and Enhancement 2019-2024

A central record and review frequency profile of all policies was developed and is being maintained by the Quality Office. This was incorporated into a newly revised Introduction and Summary Guide to the QA Handbook. This is updated annually and allows with next review date indicated allowing monitoring and tracking of the review cycle for each policy. The Handbook has been fully published for the first time during the reporting period and is available on the lit External Website Quality Assurance, Reports, Procedures Plans.

[https://lit.ie/en-IE/Life-At-LIT/explore-lit/reports-procedures-plans/Quality-Assurance-\(1\)](https://lit.ie/en-IE/Life-At-LIT/explore-lit/reports-procedures-plans/Quality-Assurance-(1))

#### 1.1.4 Strategic Review of Service Delivery Units

The development and implementation of a policy for strategic review of service delivery units will play an important role in the holistic development of a whole Institute approach to Quality Assurance and Enhancement. It will help bridge the activities of academic and other support units and ensure an Institute wide approach to Quality Assurance and Enhancement. This will allow for strategic development at unit level in support and consistent with the overall Institute strategic plan.

The Institute is committed to broadening the range of reviews to include Service Delivery units in line its obligations as a Designated Awarding body and with national policy. To this end the Governing Body has approved the [LIT Policy for Strategic Review of Service Delivery Units 2019-2024](#), which became operational during the reporting period to facilitate these reviews with an approved framework.

The purpose of this policy is to outline LIT's approach to quality review of Service Delivery Units and to describe in detail the process as it applies to individual services. The purpose of the quality review of the Service Delivery Unit is to:

1. provide a systematic and structured opportunity for the service to engage in periodic and strategic evidence-based self-reflection and self-assessment of the quality of its activities and processes;



2. self-identify opportunities for quality enhancement and the improvement of the service for its stakeholders;
3. provide a framework by which external peers, in an evidence-based manner, can independently review, evaluate, report upon and suggest improvements to the quality of the unit's activities and processes;
4. provide a framework by which the service can implement quality enhancements in a verifiable manner;
5. provide stakeholders with independent evidence of the quality of the Service Delivery Unit activities and processes;
6. satisfy best practice (national and international) in the context of quality assurance in higher education and meet statutory QA requirements as enshrined in national law.

Under this policy, the review and self-evaluation include a broad range of considerations within the context and culture of the individual Service Delivery Unit. These considerations are broadly informed by the management principles specified in the ISO9001:2015 Quality Management Standard. This standard specifies seven quality management principles and these include: 1. Customer Focus (stakeholder focus); 2. Leadership; 3. Engagement of People; 4. Process Approach; 5. Continual Improvement; 6. Evidence Based Decision Making; and 7. Relationship Management.

The implementation of this Policy and associated cycle of reviews represents a significant advance in the institutes approach to Quality Assurance and Enhancement its implementation on a cross organisational basis in support of institute Strategic objectives.

One review was scheduled for the reporting period - Student Support Services - an extensive range of self-evaluation exercises were conducted by the associated services with a view to a panel visit in April 2020. However with the onset of the Covid-19 Pandemic this was deferred until September 2020 and was then conducted as a Virtual Panel visit in this subsequent reporting period.

The full cycle of reviews is currently subject to discussion and consultation with a view to adopting an Institute wide approach. Areas that will form part of this review cycle include: Registry/Quality, Teaching and Learning (quality Assurance and Enhancement), Library and Information Services, Corporate Services including Finance, Human Resources, Computer Services, Data Protection and Data Analytics. Research, Enterprise and Innovation & Development and Public Engagement, Careers and Employability, International, Academic Administration and Student Service, President's Office (including Marketing), and Estates, Campus Development and Sports.

### **1.1.5 Cyclical Review Schedule**

Cyclical Review for Limerick Institute of Technology, as part of the CINNTE Reviews Cycle was scheduled for the period 2020 to 2021 with the preparation of the Self Evaluation Report in Quarter 4, 2020. The initial planning visit is scheduled for Quarter 1, 2021 with the Main Review Visit in Quarter 2, 2021.

LIT recognises the central importance of Periodic Review as part of its statutory obligations and to the operation of its Quality Assurance and Enhancement system and particularly recognises the role it plays in:

1. evaluating the overall effectiveness of the Institution wide quality assurance system;

2. measuring accountability for compliance with European standards with respect to expectations and guidelines set out by QQI core and topic specific guidelines; and
3. reviewing/exploring the Institutional Enhancement of Quality in relation to impacts on teaching, learning, research, and engagement.

During the 2019 - 2020 reporting period, LIT initiated its preparation for Cyclical Review with a number of strategic initiatives. This included the development of a Project Management Plan and an Operational Plan to steer the self-evaluation activities and preparations for the Cyclical Review Panel visit. A Cyclical Review Coordinator was appointed and an ISER Steering Group and ISER Team provided planned and participated in a broad range of activities to contribute to the overall self-evaluation. These included:

- Each Academic Department undertaking an externally facilitated Focus Group centred on the Cyclical Review objectives
- A range of ISER team subgroups conducting self-evaluation across specific thematic areas
- A Structured Dialogue Meeting centring on Governance and Management.
- A range of Student Focus Groups across faculties.
- A range of Student Surveys including an online survey of International Student Experience and Flexible Learning Student Survey.
- Self-Evaluation Questionnaires of Academic Council and Academic Council Subcommittees.
- Collation of self-evaluation outputs form a broad range of ongoing institute QAE processes including Student Surveys, External Examiner Reports, Programme and Programmatic Reviews among others.

In addition, the Institute commissioned an internal audit of its quality assurance system and its associated academic regulations, policies, procedures and processes. PWC/Deloitte are LIT's Internal Auditors and as part of their schedule of audits, under the oversight of the Audit and Risk subcommittee of Governing Body, they examined our quality assurance and enhancement systems and procedure. This audit consisted of a high-level review of LIT's policies in relation to the academic quality system and their benchmarking to requirements set out by ESG and QQI. The governance processes and controls in place over the quality system were also reviewed. The audit also included a review of the application of procedures for identifying, managing, reporting and resolving quality issues and an audit of the extent and depth to which the quality assurance and enhancement system are implemented.

The 2019 - 2020 Academic Year saw the establishment of the AIT-LIT TU Consortium with a view to submitting an application under the Technological Universities Act 2018 for Technological University designation, in January 2020. The work of the TU Consortium and Self-Evaluation work for Cyclical Review as scheduled continued in parallel for the duration of the Academic Year. However, with the submission of an application for TU designation in November 2021 the work of Cyclical Review was paused pending the outcome of the application process.

The extensive self-evaluation work already undertaken is currently being collated and compiled into a Critical Self Evaluation of the Institutes Quality Assurance and Enhancement System. This will be presented to an external panel during the current Academic Year as will form part of a Thematic Review in this domain. This will provide valuable input to inform future enhancement in this area and also feed forward into the development of systems in the new Technological University in the event of designation.

## 1.2 Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR

No.	Planned objectives (Previous AQR)	Update on Status
1	Restructuring of the Quality Assurance Handbook (Part 5)	<p>This work culminated in an extensive restructuring of the Quality Assurance Handbook into a 8 Volume Framework with the specific objective of making it more accessible to all stakeholders including external readers. The Handbook has been fully published for the first time during the reporting period and is available at <a href="#">LIT Academic QA Handbook</a></p> <p>The restructure presents material in a more logical order to allow for ease of access of its constituent documents. These have been made available as a set of easily accessible links from a Table of Contents on the Staff Portal and external website. Items that were not directly related to Quality Assurance and Enhancement have been removed from the handbook.</p>
2	Revise the Introduction and Summary Guide to the Quality Assurance Handbook (Part 5)	<p>The Introduction and Summary guide was extensively updated to reflect these changes in October 2019 and is available at: <a href="#">Introduction and Summary Guide to Quality Assurance Handbook 2019 - 2020</a></p> <p>As a further layer of transparency, a <i>Review frequency profile and next revision date</i> summary for constituent items of LIT Quality Assurance Handbook was added to the document</p>
3	LIT is committed in 2019/20 to publish its Quality Assurance Handbook, Programme Validations, Programmatic Reviews, Academic Audits and AIQR reports on the LIT website (Section 1.8)	<p>All now published in a revamped format of the new the LIT website: Available at: <a href="#">LIT Quality Assurance Documentation.</a></p>
4	Review the Policy on Collaborative Provision and Joint Awards Policy and External Examiners Policies	<p>Two working Groups were established reporting to the Quality, Teaching and Learning Subcommittee of Academic Council to review these policies. These working groups commenced the review which is continuing into the next reporting period - the emergence of Covid-19 prevented the presentation of revised policies to AC in the current reporting period. These policies are now prioritised for completion of revisions in the subsequent reporting period.</p>

5	<p>Ongoing development of a series of learning resources that looks at a range of topics in Teaching and Learning. These resources will consist of audio, video and documentation guides that faculty can use as learning aids/supports. These resources can be used by Faculty to further develop their digital literacy skills along with other areas of their teaching practice, such as curriculum design, assessment active learning, and enhancing the student learning experience. (Part 5)</p>	<p>A dedicated Staff repository of learning resources has been developed in a Staff Moodle page called “TEL Resources” that provides user guides, documentation, videos and other supports on teaching, learning and assessment.</p> <p>Developmental work completed on <i>A Compendium of Active Learning Strategies for Student Engagement</i> (Part 1 - 65 Strategies -Individual, Pair and Groupwork). Engagement of 20 Academic Staff in its development via a Practitioner Guide section.</p> <p>Conducted Workshop which included questionnaires on best practices on assessment, active learning and graduate attributes -subsequently analysed and disseminated the findings as a resource.</p>
6	<p>Phased provision of software and hardware for faculty to record class lectures. The successful piloting of a lecture capture application by faculty across the different campuses at LIT has led to an interest by faculty to record lectures as additional learning resources for students. LIT will provide faculty with the necessary hardware, software, technical assistance, and training support to facilitate faculty in creating these resources. LIT recognises the importance of supporting these developments as a means of building digital literacy skills for faculty and on promoting and integrating best practices approaches into daily teaching practice. (Part 5)</p>	<p>The Institute provides all staff with a number of applications and platforms for the development of technology enhanced learning. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Moodle</li> <li>- MS Teams</li> <li>- Panopto</li> <li>- Office 365</li> </ul> <p>LIT has enabled an number of plugins in Moodle to support a comprehensive suite of features that can be accessed within Moodle, these include the integration of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- H5P</li> <li>- Urkund</li> <li>- Panopto</li> <li>- Student Diary Pro</li> </ul> <p>LIT provides all staff and students with access to the full Office 365 suite and MS Teams. All online classes are delivered via MS Teams and the integration of Class Notebook. Several Individual and Group support sessions have been delivered in addition to a number of resources on the use of MS Teams and Class Notebook for reflective journals, student e-portfolios and collaborative group project work.</p> <p>Workshops focusing on enhancing the students learning experience and supporting participation and engagement were delivered These focused on the following digital applications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mentimeter</li> <li>- Padlet</li> <li>- Videoscribe</li> <li>- Screen-cast-o-matic</li> <li>- OBS Studio</li> </ul> <p>The Institute invested in licenses for applications used in development of online resources for online programmes. These include:</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Camtasia</li> <li>- Articulate</li> <li>- Captivate</li> </ul> <p>The Quality, Teaching and Learning Centre and the Flexible learning Department provide ongoing support and guidance to staff using these applications.</p>
7	<p>Developing a flexible pathways approach to professional development encompassing both non- accredited and accredited CPD in a flexible ladder approach. (Page 112)</p> <p>Developing a suite of informal and non-formal professional development activities for which academics can achieve recognition and accreditation for and developing the pathway for that accreditation. (Page 112)</p>	<p>A comprehensive strategy for CPD has been developed for both pedagogical training and assessment in accordance with the LIT's Teaching and Learning Strategy, 2018-2023 and such CPD offerings are aligned to the National Professional Development Framework (NPDF). The CPD programme provides staff with support that is flexible and accessible across the various campuses. This includes unaccredited CPD in the form of ongoing (group and individual) support sessions and ongoing staff development Days in addition to the development of Credited CPD that offers formal training to Staff in this area.</p> <p>A LIT Staff CPD Needs Analysis Survey was conducted and a Staff Presentation/Seminar was held on the Survey Findings. The outputs shaped the developing CPD Pathway.</p> <p>Credited CPD:</p> <p>The following Level 9 10 Credit Special Purpose Awards were developed and had the indicated Staff participation rates during the reporting period indicating the interest by LIT staff in accessible and relevant credited CPD.</p> <p>Designing and Adapting Coursework for Blended and Online Learning (71 Participants to date)</p> <p>Reflective Academic Practice and Building Teaching Portfolios (17 Participants)</p> <p>Research Methods (32 Participants to date)</p> <p>Pedagogies of Active Learning for Student Engagement (32 Participants to date)</p> <p>Research and Innovation Management (In Validation Process)</p> <p>Assessment for Engaged Learning (In Validation Process).</p> <p>The following higher awards are in advanced stage of development for Staff as they accumulate credits in a pathway:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Graduate Certificate</li> <li>- Graduate Diploma</li> <li>- Structured Masters</li> <li>- Taught Masters</li> </ul>

		<p>These will be validate din the subsequent reporting period.</p> <p>A mechanism for the accreditation of informal and non-formal professional development activities was developed through the L9 10 Credit SPA titled Reflective Academic Practice and Building Teaching Portfolios.</p>
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## 1.3 Governance and Management

### 1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule

Body	Meeting dates
Governing Body	5/11/2019 17/12/2019 04/02/2020 24/03/2020 05/05/2020 23/06/2020
Academic Council	11/10/2019 06/12/2019 19/06/2020
Academic Council Standing Committee	12/03/2020 01/04/2020 23/04/2020
Quality, Teaching and Learning Sub-committee	20/9/2019 19/11/2019 30/01/2020
Academic Reviews Sub-Committee	23/09/2019 11/11/2019 03/02/2020
Admissions Sub-Committee	19/09/2019 24/10/2019 20/01/2020 19/06/2020
Apprenticeships Sub-Committee	15/10/2019 22/01/2020
Postgraduate and Research Sub-Committee	16/09/2019 13/11/2019 28/01/2020 12/03/2020
Student Support and Retention Sub-Committee	18/10/2019 20/01/2020



### 1.3.2 QA Leadership and Management Structural Developments

#### Leadership and Management Changes

NAME	NEW POSITION
Mr. Tony Brazil	Chair, Governing Body
Ms. Marian Duggan	VP Academic Affairs and Registrar
Ms. Carole Wrenn	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager
Mr. Terry Twomey	Technological University Project Director
Dr Carole Glynn	Head of Department of Applied Social Sciences
Dr. Daniel Walsh	Head of Department of Applied Science
Dr. Maura Clancy	Head of Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering
Mr. Peter Doyle	Human Resources Manager
Dr Órlaith Borthwick	Career and Employability Services Manager

## 1.4 Internal Monitoring and Review

### 1.4.1 Overview of Periodic Reviews

Unit of review	Date of completion/reason for conducting review (if not planned) or non-completion (if planned but not conducted)	Links to relevant publications
Faculty of Business and Humanities, <i>Department of Marketing, Enterprise and Digital Communications</i>	The Programmatic Reviews for each of the Departments listed for the <i>Faculty of Business and Humanities</i> were scheduled and the self-evaluation and critical self-study in full progress. However, due to the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic and implementation of emergency remote teaching learning and assessment from March 2020, the Validation Panel visits for each Department were deferred, with the approval of Academic Council, until the 2020/21 Academic Year.	N/A
Faculty of Business and Humanities, <i>Department of Applied Social Sciences</i>		N/A
Faculty of Business and Humanities, <i>Department of Sports Leisure and Tourism</i>		N/A
Faculty of Business and Humanities, <i>Department of Business &amp; Financial Services</i>		N/A
Service Delivery Unit Review of Student Support Services	The Service Delivery Unit Review of Student support Services was scheduled and the self-evaluation and critical self-study completed. However, due to the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic the Validation Panel visit was deferred until the 2020/21 Academic Year	N/A

## 1.4.2 Expert Review Teams/Panels<sup>2</sup> 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
<b>Number of review/ evaluation processes</b>	5	0	0	0	5	5	0
<i>of those:</i>		–	–	–	–	–	–
<b>On-site processes</b>	5	–	–	–	–	–	–
<b>Desk reviews</b>		–	–	–	–	–	–
<b>Virtual processes</b>	5	–	–	–	–	–	–
<b>Average panel size for each process type*</b>	5	–	–	–	–	–	–

\* excluding secretary if not a full panel member

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



## 2.0 IQA System – Enhancement and Impacts

### 2.1 Initiatives within the Institution related to Academic Integrity

LIT places significant emphasis on Academic Integrity and is represented on the National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN) established by QQI by its Assistant Registrar. LIT considers the NAIN forum an important instrument for the sharing and dissemination of information relating to the current issues, initiatives and best practice in the academic integrity sphere

Assessment is a key driver of learning in Higher Education and in Ireland there is now a significant focus on the authenticity of assessment and on academic integrity. This co-coincides with a focus on the continuum of Assessment *of, for* and *as* learning by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning. Effective and authentic assessment has the potential to positively influence student engagement across five key domains of: cognitive, social, behavioural, collaborative and emotional development. Assessment can therefore be a key enabler of 21st century graduate attributes such as: critical thinking, creative problem solving, effective team-work, collaborative decision making and inter-disciplinary thinking. Effective Assessment that embeds and enhances learning is therefore a key pillar of LIT'S Teaching and Learning Strategy (2018-2023).

The onset of the Covid-19 and the subsequent tilt in Higher Education towards online teaching an online assessment processes has also expedited an evaluation of assessment practice in LIT. Therefore, throughout the 2019 - 2020 (and 2020 - 2021) Academic Year the Department of Quality Teaching and Learning at LIT has prioritised the development of staff capacity in assessment practice through a series of initiatives including:

1. The provision of staff seminars and workshops on current assessment practice in Higher Education;
2. The facilitation of customised workshops on re-designing assessment with one-to one support for staff (including the use of online assessment tools including: MCQs, Discussion Forums, Wikis, Gradebook);
3. The development of a best practice Rubrics Guide
4. Workshops on Using Open Book Exams & The development of an *Open Book Exams Guide*
5. The development of an accredited (10 ECTS) Special Purpose Award in assessment for engaged learning.

The collective impact of the above initiatives will continue to enhance assessment literacy, authenticity and academic integrity associated with assessment. It will also increase staff capacity to engage students in a greater variety of progressive and authentic assessment practices. The shift towards more continuous assessment and less final summative exams is a noticeable change and must be accompanied by developing capacity in a manner that maintains academic integrity. The movement from final closed book exams to the use of open book exams is also a significant cultural shift, accompanied by the potential for greater student engagement in: critical thinking, application, analysis and problem solving.

The recent development of an accredited (10 ECTS) Special Purpose Award is viewed as a sustainable initiative to further deepen staff capacity in the assessment domain. It will afford participants a space to explore, expand and embed their own knowledge and skills regarding innovative assessment practice in a community of practice type learning dynamic. The programme will provide participants with key competencies to embed effective assessment practices at all stages of curriculum design; from initial programme development, right through to teaching and learning processes, assessment implementation, feedback and evaluation.

### **Focus on Academic integrity in context of Covid-19 and remote teaching, learning and assessment.**

The processes and mechanisms for alternative assessment in lieu of originally planned terminal examination is of relevance. Scheduled Practical Examinations could also not be held but alternative assessments were conducted in their place. The impact of the alternative assessments on the quality of the programme and the graduates was the main concern of academics. All staff reviewed the alternative assessment requirements to ensure the learning outcomes were being assessed. The learning outcomes were the constant and everything was directed and guided by these. The QQI Guiding Principles was an effective guide that needed to be taken into consideration to ensure academic integrity.

Students were required to submit signed declarations that alternative assessment completed was own work, based on personal study and/or research. Using GURU as a 'repository' for the alternative assessments worked well as it was a place where lecturers could upload pdf's that the external examiner could view. It was the main quality control as the external examiner could see it. Without this method, third party QA would be difficult. To be able to validate to students that there is an independent external examining process is recognised as very important.

Although External Examiners were not in a position to visit LIT, the External Examining process continued. Programme leaders and Heads of Department were in communication with the External examiners from the outset. External examiners were notified of the opportunity and means to review assessment material. While there was administrative complexity, the External Examining process worked well. It was a replication of process that the external examiner would do ordinarily if on site at LIT. In fact, it was noted that more external examiners were present at Examination Boards for the Summer Session for the reporting year when compared to previous years, due to ease of attending virtually.

#### What could be improved:

When submitting assessments a standard set of technologies should be used by students. As a minimum, ensure all communication tools and solutions used employ official LIT technologies and platforms.

## 2.2 Governance and Management of Quality

The effectiveness and impact of LIT's quality assurance policies and procedures are reflected in the nature, breadth, depth, and rigour of its targeted QA activities, as reported through internal and external channels, including:

- Governing Body
- Academic Council
- Sub-committees of Academic Council
- Working groups associated with Sub-Committees of Academic Council
- External Examiner Reporting
- Programme Development Validation Panels
- Programmatic Review Validation Panels
- Academic Policies and Procedures
- Department Boards and Faculty Boards.
- Programme Boards, Staff-Student Liaison Boards
- LIT Completion and Retention Statistical Returns to HEA
- LIT's annual primary research and findings related to *Irish Student Survey*
- LIT Annual Reports

### Governing Body

	Number of Meetings
Governing Body	6

### Academic Council and Academic Council Standing Committee

In the 2019/20 period, there were 3 meetings of Academic Council and a further 3 Meeting of the Academic Council Standing Committee after the emergence of Covid-19. During this period, each Faculty and their respective Departments reported on the annual activities that took place to ensure the design, delivery, and review of quality assured practices therein. All proposed changes to existing regulations, policies, and procedures were presented for approval and/or information to Academic Council. The sub-committees of Academic Council formally reported to Academic Council on their annual objectives, initiatives, work, and activities, to ensure quality assurance and satisfy the appropriate governance requirements. Academic Council also reviewed information on attendance to LIT's activities and programmes as provided to external stakeholders, such as the HEA and/or the Department of Education and Skills. The results of primary research conducted in LIT during the reporting period was presented to Academic Council, such as data related to the Irish Student Survey. The consequential impacts of such results on LIT's activities was also reviewed and reported to Academic Council.

QA Forum	Number of Meetings
Academic Council	3

QA Forum	Number of Meetings
Academic Council Standing Committee	5

### Sub-Committees of Academic Council:

A comprehensive set of quality assured policies, practices, initiatives, and reviews was implemented by the work of the sub-committees of Academic Council during the 2018/19 year.

The following table indicates the number of times each of these sub-committee met during the year:

Sub-Committee 2019/2020	Number of Meetings
Quality, Teaching and Learning	3
Academic Reviews	3
Admissions, Academic Progress	4
Research and Postgraduate Matters	3
Student Support and Retention	3
Apprenticeship	2

### Programme Boards:

Each academic programme delivered across LIT locations, through its programme board, reports on the effectiveness of the delivery, assessment, and quality for all programmes. The programme board meets at least once each semester with student representatives across all stages of the programme. The conduct and management of the programme is reviewed during such meetings. Any issues reported are documented, reported, and reviewed by the programme board to ensure efficient and effective resolution. These include strategy, proposed programme changes, resources, assessment, retention, documentation, previous programmatic review, qualifications, contact hours, placement and any other programme changes.

### Annual Report

The LIT Annual Report for the 2019 - 2020 Academic Year is available at [Annual Report](#).



## 2.3 Programmes of Education and Training

There were a total of 5 new programmes (postgraduate and undergraduate) were presented and successfully validated in the reporting year of 2019/2020.

There were no programmatic reviews held as those scheduled for the faculty of Business and humanities were deferred due to the impacts of the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Programme Development/Review during 2019-2020 Academic Year	
Number of new <b>Programme Validations/Programme Approvals</b>	5
Number of <b>Programmatic Reviews</b> completed in the reporting year	0

The 5 Programme Validations occurred in the following LIT Departments

Department	Programme Title	Link to Published Reports
Mechanical and Automobile Engineering	M.Sc in Process Validation & Regulatory Affairs	<a href="#">Published Report</a>
Flexible Learning	MA in Psychotherapy of Relationship Mentoring	<a href="#">Published Report</a>
Built Environment	B.Sc (Hons) in Architectural Technology	<a href="#">Published Report</a>
Sport, Leisure & Tourism	B.Sc (Hons) in Applied Strength & Conditioning	<a href="#">Published Report</a>
Information Technology	M.Sc in Computing (Computer Science for Teachers	<a href="#">Published Report</a>

*The new programme Validation details including validated awards and Validation Panel Memberships are as follows. Note that all panels had Student Membership.*

Department of Mechanical and Automobile Engineering:	
Title	Level
Master of Science in Process Validation and Regulatory Affairs	Level 9
Graduate Diploma in Process Validation and Regulatory Affairs (Medical). Embedded award.	
Graduate Diploma in Process Validation and Regulatory Affairs (Pharmaceutical). Embedded award.	
Graduate Diploma in Process Validation and Regulatory Affairs (Food and Drink). Embedded award.	

### **The External New Programme Review Panel of Expert Assessors included:**

Name	Industry
Prof. Marie Parker-Jenkins	Prof. Emeritus of Education UL (Chairperson)
Dr Una Tiwari	TU Dublin
Dr Olivia McDermott	NUI Galway
Mr. William Riordan	Edwards Lifesciences
Mr. Michael Galvin	BD Limerick
Mr. Keith Tierney	Student Representative

**Department of Flexible Learning:**

Title	Level
Master of Arts in Psychotherapy of Relationship Mentoring	Level 9
Graduate Diploma in Psychotherapy of Relationship Mentoring	Level 9

**The External New Programme Review Panel of Expert Assessors included:**

Name	Industry
Prof. Marie Parker Jenkins	Prof. Emeritus of Education UL (Chairperson)
Dr Patrick McGarty	Senior Lecturer IT Tralee
Prof. Joyce O'Connor	President Emeritus of NCI, Chair of Digital Futures Group IIEA
Dr Terry Lynch	Psychotherapist, Medical Health Author, Educator
Dr Owen Madden	Psychotherapist
Ms. Lorna McCarth	Student Representative

**Department of the Built Environment:**

Title	Level
Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Architectural Technology	Level 8
Bachelor of Science in Architectural Technology	Level 7
Higher Certificate in Science in Architectural Technology	Level 6

**The External New Programme Review Panel of Expert Assessors included:**

Name	Industry
Mr. Damien Courtney	Fellow Emeritus CIT (Chairperson)
Mr. Brian Dempsey	Waterford IT
Mr. Martin Ball	University of Westminster University
Mr. Michael Conroy	Michael Conroy Architects
Mr. Darren Maloney	EML Architects
Ms. Jessica Leamy	Student Representative

**Department of Sport, Leisure & Tourism:**

Title	Level
Bachelor of Science in Applied Strength and Conditioning	Level 7
Higher Certificate in Science in Applied Strength and Conditioning	Level 6
Bachelor of Science in Applied Strength and Conditioning (Add-On)	Level 7
Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Applied Strength and Conditioning (Add-On)	Level 8

**The External New Programme Review Panel of Expert Assessors included:**

Name	Industry
Mr. Tony Quinlan	Formerly Registrar GMIT (Chairperson)
Mr. Laurent Mourot	University de Franche-Comte
Mr. Ross Corbett	GMIT
Mr. Ged McNamara	Head of Munster Rugby Academy
Ms. Maeve Kavanagh	MK Personal Training
Mr. Declan Berry	Student Representative

**Department of Information Technology:**

Title	Level
Master of Science in Computing (Computer Science for Teachers)	Level 9
Postgraduate Diploma of Science in Computing (Computer Science for Teachers)	Embedded Award
Postgraduate Certificate of Science in Computing (Computer Science for Teachers)	Embedded ward

**The External New Programme Review Panel of Expert Assessors included:**

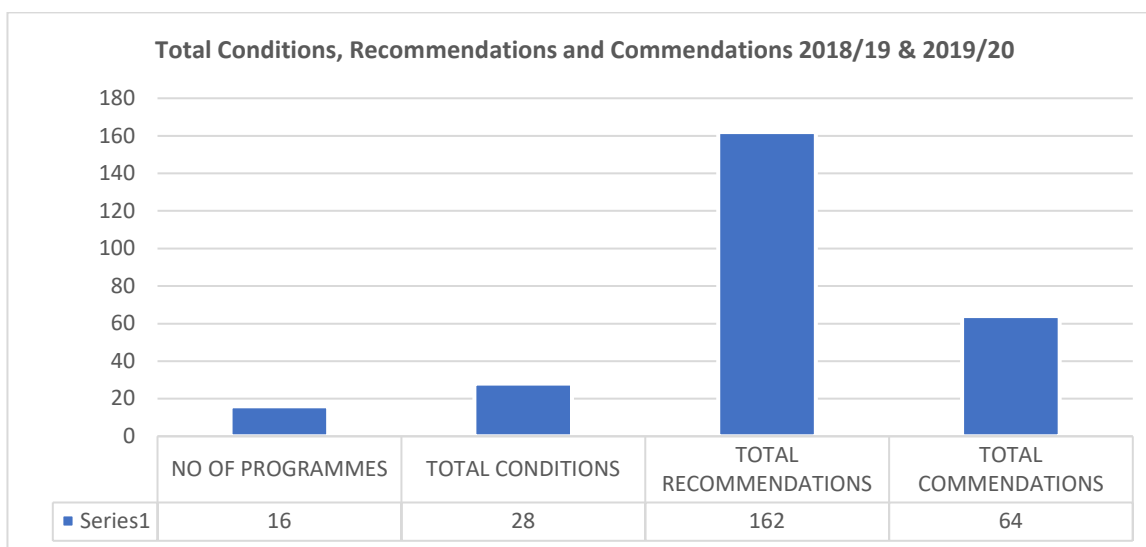
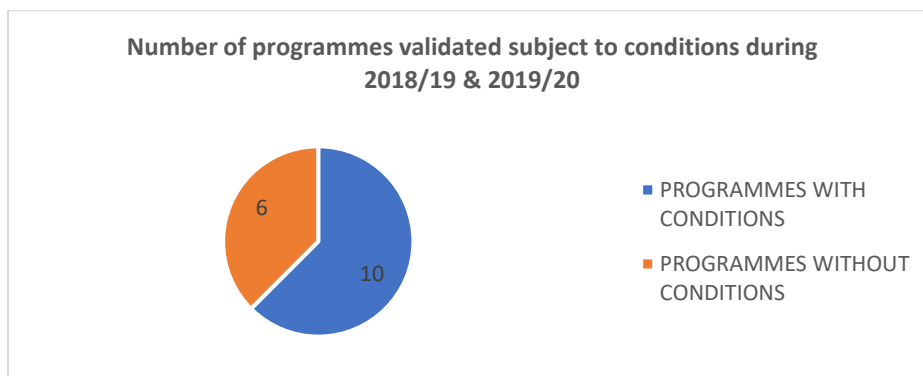
Name	Industry
Prof. Marie Parker Jenkins	Prof. Emeritus of Education UL (Chairperson)
Dr. Niall Seery	Athlone IT
Dr. Cornelia Connolly	NUI Galway
Mr. Tom Farrell	Careers and education News
Mr. John Hegarty	Clongowes Wood College
Mr. David Byrne	Student Representative

**Local Thematic Analysis of Validation Panel Membership and Panel Reports**

A broad thematic analysis of Validation Panel Membership and Panel Reports based on the New Programme Validation Panels from the previous two reporting periods. The combination of two reporting periods was chosen as there was less validation panels in the 2019/20 Academic Year due to the Covid-19 pandemic (5 as indicated). However, combined with the previous year it provided a total of 16 validation events across 9 Departments for analysis. The profile and composition of panel is as follows and the institute is proud that Students are now member of all validation panels and make very effective an important contributions to their outcomes.

Composition of Panels	%
Internal	0
National	90
United Kingdom	10
EU	100
Other	0
Chair Profile	%
Internal	0
Similar Institution	100
Different Institution	0
International	10
Affiliation of Panel	%
Academia	40
Industry	20
Student	40

An external validation panel makes an independent impartial judgement on a programme proposal and in accordance with LIT Academic Regulations can recommend approval of a programme subject to Conditions and Recommendations. Conditions are obligatory and must be implemented, and while Recommendations are advisory in nature, there is full consideration given to their implementation by the respective programme boards and the majority of these were implemented. The following provides a broad statistical analysis of the conditions and recommendations for the two year period.



**- Some Common Themes in the 'Conditions' listed**

- Include full range of embedded awards where appropriate and include their programme documentation in final Programme documents.
- Differentiate further programme learning outcomes for the respective NFQ levels of programme offering.
- Include matrix of mapped programme learning outcomes to NFQ Award Standards.
- Adjustment and corrections to programme schedules with respect to delivery/assessment mechanisms.

**- Some Common Themes in the 'Recommendations' listed**

- Update/revise the Entry Requirements section of programme document to reflect specific contexts highlighted.
- Emphasise the strengths of the programme defining clearly the graduate attributes as relevant to the core employment roles of graduates.
- Review/update specific aspects of modules such as specific learning outcomes, syllabi content, assessment strategies, contact hours, independent learning hours, learning resources.
- Review the assessment strategies to ensure there is no over assessment and include a schedule or template for schedule of assessments the final programme document.
- Consider offering relevant modules for CPD delivered flexibly to generate further entry routes through flexible learning.
- Make increased use of external guest lecturers from industry where relevant.
- Outline more clearly how transferable skills such as critical evaluation, teamwork, communication skills etc are developed throughout the programme.
- Consider how first year students can be supported and what strategies to enhance retention can be developed.
- Recommendations relating to the resourcing of programmes.
- Review the reading lists associated with modules to ensure the most up to date references are used where appropriate

An analysis of the total no of Conditions, Recommendations and 'commendations at Departmental level indicate they are relatively proportional in the context of total number of programme validated.

2018/19 & 2019/2020	NO PROGS.	CONDITIONS	RECOMMENDATIONS	COMMENDATIONS
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	2	3	17	11
BUILT ENVIRONMENT	2	1	27	8
ELECTRONIC AND ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING	1	1	10	3
MECHANICAL & AUTOMOBILE ENGINEERING	4	7	27	9
ART & DESIGN	2	9	25	9
APPLIED SOCIAL SCIENCE	1	2	13	4
BUSINESS & FINANCIAL SERVICES	2	1	22	11
SPORT, LEISURE & TOURISM	1	4	4	5
FLEXIBLE LEARNING	1	0	17	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>64</b>

The outputs from this analysis are fed back to programme development teams and informed revisions to the New Programmes Guidelines particularly with respect to the requirement of the inclusion of embedded awards as appropriate.

## SPECIAL PURPOSE AWARDS 2019/2020

### Certificate in Reflective Academic Practice through Portfolio Building

Academic Council granted approval to the Faculty of Business and Humanities- Department of Flexible Learning for the development of a Certificate in Reflective Academic Practice through Portfolio Building as a Level 9, 10 Credit Special Purpose Award. (11.10.19)

### Certificate in Foundation Studies for International Students

Academic Council granted approval to the Department of Flexible Learning/ for the development of a Certificate in Foundation Studies for International as a Level 6, 60 Credit Special Purpose Award. (11.10.19)

### Certificate in Digital Factory Technology

Academic Council granted approval to the Faculty Applied Science, Engineering and Technology - Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering for the development of a Certificate in Digital Factory Technology as a Level 7, 30 Credit Special Purpose Award. (06.12.19)

### Certificate in Smart Factory Technology

Academic Council granted approval to the Faculty Applied Science, Engineering and Technology - Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering for the development of a Certificate in Smart Factory Technology as a Level 6, 50 Credit Special Purpose Award. (06.12.19)

### Certificate in Smart Factory Operations

Academic Council granted approval to the Faculty Applied Science, Engineering and Technology - Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering for the development of a Certificate in Smart Factory Operations as a Level 9, 30 Credit Special Purpose Award. (06.12.19)

### Certificate in Change Leadership

Academic Council granted approval to the School of Art and Design- - Department of Design, for the development of a Certificate in Change Leadership as a Level 9, 10 Credit Special Purpose Award. (06.12.19)

### Certificate in Research Methods

Academic Council granted approval to the Department of Flexible Learning/Quality, Teaching and Learning for the development of a Certificate in Research Methods as a Level 9, 10 Credit Special Purpose Award. (06.03.20)

### Certificate in Applied Computer Networks

Academic Council granted approval to the Faculty Applied Science, Engineering and Technology - Department of Information Technology/Department of Flexible Learning for the development of a Certificate in Applied Computer Networks as a Level 9, 30 Credit Special Purpose Award. (06.03.20)

#### Certificate in Coding and Computational Thinking

Academic Council granted approval to the Faculty Applied Science, Engineering and Technology - Department of Information Technology for the development of a Certificate in Coding and Computational Thinking as a Level 9, 10 Credit Special Purpose Award. (06.03.20)

#### Certificate in Network Security

Academic Council granted approval to the Faculty Applied Science, Engineering and Technology - Department of Information Technology for the development of a Certificate in Network Security as a Level 9, 60 Credit Special Purpose Award. (06.03.20)

#### Certificate in Coding for Embedded Systems

Academic Council granted approval to the Faculty Applied Science, Engineering and Technology - Department of Information Technology for the development of a Certificate in Coding for Embedded Systems as a Level 9, 10 Credit Special Purpose Award. (06.03.20)

#### Certificate in Process Validation

Academic Council granted approval to the Faculty Applied Science, Engineering and Technology - Department of Mechanical and Automobile Engineering for the development of a Certificate in Process Validation as a Level 9, 20 Credit Special Purpose Award. (19.06.20)

#### Certificate in Quality Management

Academic Council granted approval to the Faculty Applied Science, Engineering and Technology - Department of Mechanical and Automobile Engineering for the development of a Certificate in Quality Management as a Level 9, 20 Credit Special Purpose Award. (19.06.20)

#### Certificate in Computer Systems Validation

Academic Council granted approval to the Faculty Applied Science, Engineering and Technology - Department of Mechanical and Automobile Engineering for the development of a Certificate in Computer Systems Validation as a Level 9, 10 Credit Special Purpose Award. (19.06.20)

#### Certificate in Regulatory Affairs (Medical/Pharmaceutical/Food and Drink

Academic Council granted approval to the Faculty Applied Science, Engineering and Technology - Department of Mechanical and Automobile Engineering for the development of a Certificate in Regulatory Affairs (Medical/Pharmaceutical/Food and Drink as a Level 9, 20 Credit Special Purpose Award. (19.06.20)



## Changes to Approved Programme Schedules

**Sub Committee:** Academic Council Sub Committee on Academic Reviews

Date	Programme	Changes
23/9/2019	Faculty of Business and Humanities Department of Sport, Leisure & Tourism: BA (Hons) Business Studies with Beauty and Spa Management HLTH06008 - Applied Anatomy and Physiology	Was 60% CA & 40 % end of year exam. Now 40% CA and 60% end of year exam
3/2/2020	Faculty of Applied Science, Engineering and Technology Department of Information Technology: Module Digital Systems Concepts (CNSM)	Was 50% exam & 50 CA. Move to 100% CA, 1 <sup>st</sup> year module.
3/2/2020	Faculty of Applied Science, Engineering and Technology Department of Information Technology: Module Digital Systems Design (CNSM)	Was 50% exam & 50 CA Move to 100% CA, 1 <sup>st</sup> year module.
3/2/2020	Faculty of Applied Science, Engineering and Technology Department Applied Science: Module Farm Enterprise Theory and Practice.	Change to Indicative Syllabus NEW -Practical's are based on farm-based learning such as, animal handling, soil sampling, breed identification, dairy management etc. The proposed amendment better reflects the practical component of the module. Was Two-hour lecture and three hours tutorials. Move to Two-hour lecture and three hours Practical's.
3/2/2020	Faculty of Applied Science, Engineering and Technology Department Applied Science: Module Key Issues in Agriculture.	Change to Indicative Syllabus NEW Practical's are based on access to farm stock, farm forestry, arable crops, farm energy projects and farm waste management resources. The proposed amendment is to better reflect the practical component of the module. Was Two-hour lecture and one hour tutorial Move to Two-hour lecture and one hour Practical.

3/2/2020	Faculty of Applied Science, Engineering and Technology Department Applied Science: Module Sustainable Agriculture.	Change to Indicative Syllabus Practical's are based on access to alternative agricultural enterprises including bioenergy crops, organic production systems and using the college farm to explore agroecology and regenerative agriculture. The proposed amendment is to better reflect the practical component of the module. Was Two-hour lecture and one hour tutorial Move to Two-hour lecture and one hour Practical.
3/2/2020	Faculty of Applied Science, Engineering and Technology Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering. B.Eng (HONS) in Electronic Engineering	Programme title change Some of the modules in the existing programme have a very strong "electronic computer systems" content embedded within. This is particularly evident in year four modules. The proposed alteration to the title of the programme better reflects the existing content of the programme.
3/2/2020	Faculty of Applied Science, Engineering and Technology Department Applied Science: B.Sc in Environmental and Analytical Science	Environmental Chemistry (stage 2) Environmental Chemistry and Toxicology(stage 3) Title change of module in year two of the program from Environmental Chemistry to Environmental Science II. Title change of module in year three of the program from Environmental Chemistry to Environmental Science and Toxicology

## 2.4 Staff Recruitment and Induction

The following profiles recruitment during the reporting period.

Appointments in Total				
	Female	Male	% Female	% Male
<b>Senior Lecturer 3 (Head of School)</b>				
No. of Applicants	0	0		
No. Successful	0	0		
<b>Senior Lecturer 2 (Head of Department/Assistant Head of School)</b>				
No. of Applicants	7	9	44%	66%
No. Successful	1	1	50%	50%
<b>Senior Lecturer 1 (Teaching)</b>				
No. of Applicants	0	0		
No. Successful	0	0		
<b>Lecturer</b>				
No. of Applicants	4	19	17%	83%
No. Successful	3	2	60%	40%
<b>Assistant Lecturer</b>				
No. of Applicants	99	91	52%	48%
No. Successful	13	8	62%	38%

The following induction course were provided to new Staff in the reporting period.

Courses	Attended	Duration of Course	Open to:
Teaching & Learning in LIT Context	20	1 Day	Academic Staff
Pedagogy Skills	19	2 Days	Academic Staff
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>3 Days</b>	

## 2.5 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

LIT achieved its Athena SWAN Bronze Award in March 2020, under the expanded charter and on first-time application. Such an award recognises commitment to the advancement of gender equality, representation, progression and success for all. A four year gender equality action plan has been prepared and is now available on LIT's website. This plan is based on detailed consultations with staff and reviews of policies, practices, systems and arrangements to identify both challenges and opportunities. The plan includes 78 actions of which 4 have been completed, 35 in progress and 27 planned for 2020-2021.

Actions completed include formalising the requirement to have a 60/40 minimum gender balance on interview panels; the introduction of eRecruit - an online recruitment system - to assist in the collection of recruitment and selection data; an updated HR handbook to improve visibility and accessibility of flexible working arrangements. Trainings relating to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion have been underway, including unconscious bias training for management and chairs of interview panels. Workshops on unconscious bias were delivered as part of Staff Development Day in September 2019.

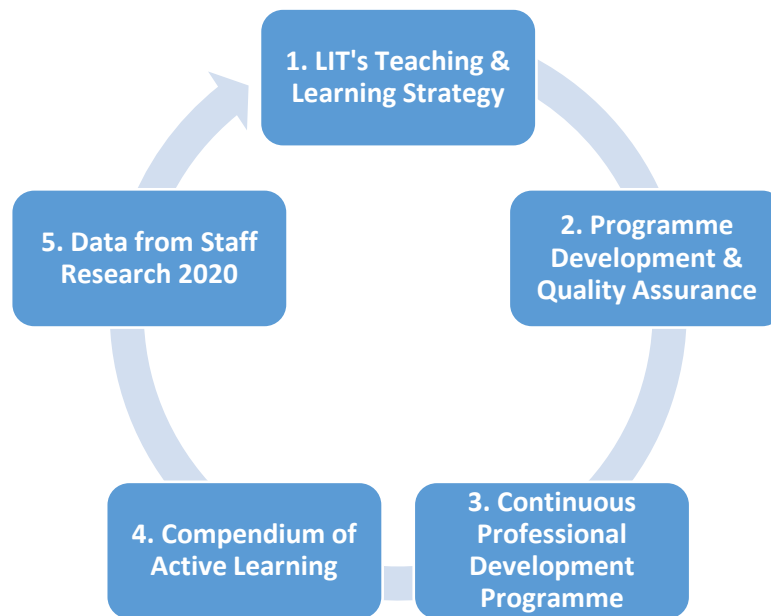
Actions in progress relate to enhancing systems, processes and structures in support of equality, diversity and inclusion; reviewing policies; enhancing support and mentorship as well as lobbying and advocacy activities at national level.

The recruitment process for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager was completed in August 2020, with Dr. Carol Wrenn to commence in November 2020. The Vice President for Academic Affairs & Registrar also holds responsibility for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at Vice President level. This VP sits on the Executive Management team and the EDI Manager will sit on the Management team in LIT.

LIT has established structures, including an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Steering Committee, to oversee and provide guidance and direction for the achievement of equality, diversity and inclusion objectives across the Institute. This committee, which is chaired by LIT's President, includes representatives from Faculty, Human Resources, Student Support Services, EDI and Students Union.

## 2.6 Teaching Learning and Assessment: Five Key QE Mechanisms including Staff CPD

LIT has named Active Learning as its ‘Signature Pedagogy’ for over a decade now. In its current Teaching and Learning Strategy (2018-2023), LIT positions active learning as a means of achieving “Academic Excellence.” LIT has also embedded Active Learning as a core element of its Institute Strategic Plan (2018-2022,p.10-11) Priority 2 - *Provide High Quality Teaching and Active Learning that reflects the needs of Industry.* LIT will “*continue to embed Active Learning in programme design, delivery and assessment processes as a means of continuously striving for innovation and excellence in teaching and learning.*” see Case Study 4.2.2.



Active learning in LIT, is embedded and enhanced, through five higher-level mechanisms outlined below.

### QE Mechanism 1: Implementation of LIT’s Teaching and Learning Strategy (2018-2023)

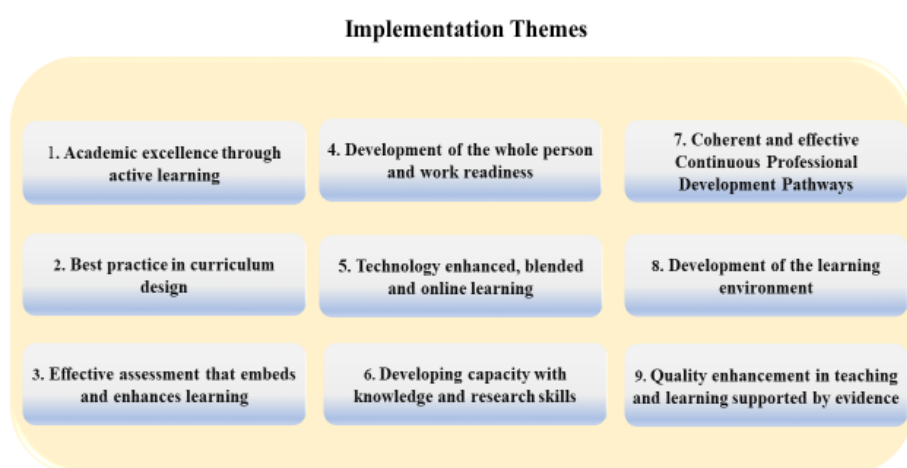
LIT’s Academic Council Sub - Committee on Teaching and Learning engaged in a substantial research and consultation process (2016-2018), regarding the development of its current teaching and learning strategy. A working group of sixteen academic staff (representing different disciplines and teaching and learning champions across LIT) collaborated over a two-year period to review current policy and best practice in Higher Education and; to formulate a robust and comprehensive Teaching and Learning Strategy for LIT, in a rapidly changing Higher Education Environment. The outcome of this extensive review process was the official approval by Academic Council (June 15, 2018) of two significant documents that currently guide the strategic development of Teaching, Learning and Assessment across LIT.

- i. LIT Teaching and Learning Strategy, 2018-2023

ii. Overview of Teaching and Learning Strategy 2018-2023-An Implementation Planning Resource

The full Strategy document (i) details in a comprehensive manner, the policy and practice context of Higher Education for LIT and the rationale for the higher-level principles and implementation themes that formulate its new strategy. The Overview and Implementation Planning Resource (ii) presents the key principles and implementation themes in a summary format. This document was made available to all academic staff and now guides key components of strategic planning and development for Teaching, Learning and assessment across LIT.

The centrality of Active Learning to the eight higher-level principles and nine implementation themes is explicit in both of these documents.



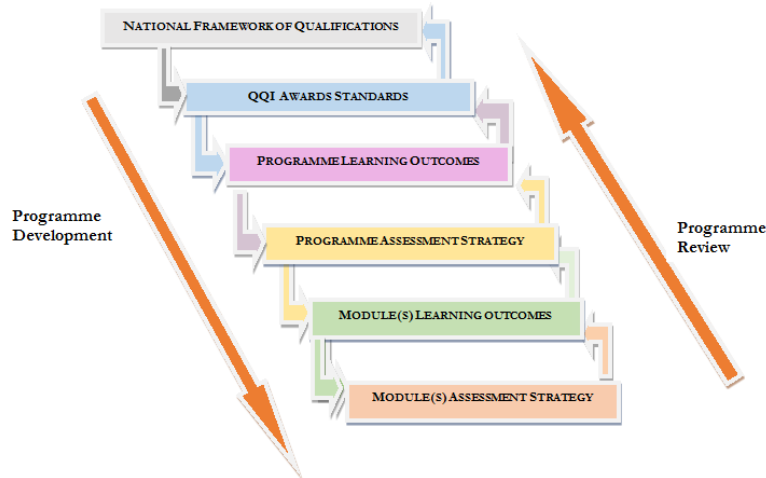
**Teaching and Learning strategy implementation themes.**

**QE Mechanism 2: Programme Development and Quality Assurance**

The importance of the teaching, learning and assessment strategy as an integrated component of curriculum design is increasingly emphasised in LIT programme development and programmatic review processes. There has been a significant shift in assessment strategies at LIT to integrate more continuous assessment. This reflects the increasing implementation of active learning aligned with assessment strategies *for* and *as* learning. Programme teams are now encouraged and enabled to develop customised disciplinary approaches to active learning with particular reference to *Best practice in curriculum design* (Implementation Theme 2- LIT Teaching and Learning Strategy).

The LIT Learning Outcomes Framework aligned to QQI Awards Standards as outlined below ensures an integrated and aligned approach from modular to programme level. Teaching, learning and assessment methodologies must reflect the programme and module learning outcomes. The assessments selected for modules enable the achievement of the learning outcomes for the relevant modules. The customised active learning strategy aligned to assessment strategy is now

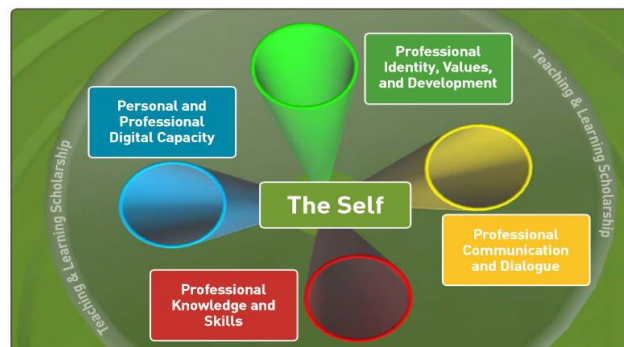
a key component of the curriculum design process. This enhanced programme development process, is enabled by significant support infrastructure through the Quality Assurance process of internal and external panel review, external examiner process and a raft of supportive documentation outlined in ACRP.



**Programme Development Process**

### QE Mechanism 3: LIT's Programme of Continuous Professional Development

The National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning published the National Professional Development Framework for all Staff who teach in Higher Education in August 2016). LIT is working strategically towards the development of a coherent CPD pathway in teaching, learning and assessment (in accordance with implementation theme 7 of its Teaching and Learning Strategy) and in accordance with the five domains of the National framework as outlined below. The provision of accredited and non-accredited CPD programmes at LIT has a strong focus on competency in Active Learning, Assessment, Student Engagement and Digital Capacity.



**The National Professional Development Framework (Domains).**

A LIT Staff CPD Needs Analysis Survey was conducted and a Staff Presentation/Seminar was held on the Survey Findings at a dedicated Staff Development Day in February 2020. The outputs shaped the developing CPD Pathway

### LIT's CPD Provision is enabled by four key components

- a) Annual CPD Programme in Teaching, Learning and Assessment (non-accredited)
- b) Professional Development and Support for Digital Enhanced Teaching and Learning
- c) CPD Accredited Programmes (3 Special Purpose Awards) and progression pathways towards Masters and Doctorate Qualification
- d) LIT-President's Award to support doctoral scholarship
- e) Regional Collaboration in Teaching and Learning Initiatives

#### a) Annual CPD Programme in Teaching, Learning and Assessment

A review of our annual professional development programme indicates how the key pillars above are strongly integrated into CPD provision. The programme outline also affirms the strong and consistent focus on Active Learning and associated competencies.

2018	Innovation, and the role of Technology Enhanced Learning <i>Prof Grainne Conole</i>	Innovative modes of curriculum design Instructional design to create content Live Online Classroom with Adobe Connect Lecture Capture with Panopto Deconstructing Lectures into Segments for Enhanced Podcasts Digital Pens: Old Meets New Effective Feedback to support Formative Assessment Panopto: Audio Capture Demystified Using 'Peerwise'
2019	Enhancing Student Engagement <i>Prof Ray Land</i>	Enhancing student engagement with 'Threshold Concepts' Effective assessment practices that embed learning Integrating Universal Design for learning into curriculum dev Disciplinary Approaches to Threshold Concepts Building e-tivities for the flipped classroom Using Mentimeter to engage students during class Embedding (NStEPS) in LIT - Our Next Steps NSAI: A Guide to its Online Database Shannon Consortium -MA in Teaching & Learning
2020 Feb 20	Moving Forward with Teaching and Learning Strategy	LIT Teaching and Learning Strategy CPD Pathways in Teaching and Learning National Forum Enhancement Initiatives - CPD Needs Analysis Survey findings Building Capacity for the Continuum of Active Learning Effective Assessment and Feedback that Embeds Learning Graduate Attributes; From Framework to Practice



### b) Professional Development and Support for Digital Enhanced Teaching and Learning

The teaching and learning strategy identified building support for digitally enhanced teaching and learning as a key implementation theme. A comprehensive range of professional development and other supports were made available to teaching staff. The Quality, Teaching and Learning (QT&L) team offered support to staff on an individual basis, as part of a programme team/department or as part of an Institute wide support session. During the reporting period Staff could request an individual or programme team training and support session with a member of the QT&L team or attend scheduled group support sessions on key thematic areas. The Group sessions are delivered online and recorded so staff were not restricted by location or time. The recordings of each session as well as an support material and learning resources were made available to all staff in the Technology Enhance Learning Resources page within LIT's instance of Moodle.

During the reporting period, with the transition to Emergency Remote Teaching, there was a particular focus on supporting and preparing staff to delivery online and develop staff personal and professional digital capacity with both Group and Individual support Sessions. The sessions aimed to improve digital awareness of how to use applications to teach and assess students online. Sessions focused initially on teaching in an online class and on how to setup, schedule and record online classes using both Moodle and MS Teams. They focused on student engagement in an online class and the tools that staff could used such as Mentimeter, H5P, MS Teams ClassNotebook and setting up discussion forums and blogs. The second phase of sessions looked at the digital applications and tools for assessment. These included setting up MCQ's, online assignment, creating eportfolios and online reflective journals. The sessions provided an opportunity for staff to look at the use case for each type of application and how best to use them as part of an overall assessment strategy for a module.

Programme team sessions were ran for staff by request and these sessions looked at ways of bringing consistency for the students in the online applications and approaches used for students. The sessions focused on having a consistent approach for use of the online communication tools that were use, aligning CA submission dates so they don't overlap between modules and creating a central programme related space within MS Teams/Moodle for programme level documentation. Overall the increased capacity and use of digital tools and discussions in the support sessions has increase digital literacy of staff and their use of digital enhanced teaching and learning.

#### 1. Ongoing Individual Support & CPD

Sept 2019-Aug 2020	133 Individual Staff Sessions Provided
<p><i>Over the Academic Year there were 133, sessions delivered. Typical Profile of Support Sought and Provided:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Using the Institutes Virtual Learning Environment (Moodle)</li> <li>- Creating and editing class recordings</li> <li>- Setting up online multiple choice quizzes</li> <li>- Adding Grading Rubrics to assignments</li> <li>- Using Urkund assignments and analysing reports</li> </ul>	

## 2. Group Support Sessions with a particular *focus on building digital literacy skills*

September 2019 (7 Sessions as indicated)	59 Participants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Panopto Training</li> <li>- Introduction to Moodle</li> <li>- Setting up a Grading Rubrics in Moodle for Assessment and Feedback</li> <li>- Creating Interactive videos in Moodle using H5P</li> <li>- Setting up Discussion Forum and Wikis in Moodle</li> <li>- Using MS Azure for Virtual Computer Labs</li> <li>- Embedding Audio and Video to Enhance PowerPoint Presentations</li> </ul>	
June 2020: (22 Sessions as indicated)	1934 Participations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learning Design for Blended and Online Learning</li> <li>- Getting the most out of Moodle</li> <li>- Storyboarding and Sequencing your Module</li> <li>- Using MS Teams for Delivering Online Classes</li> <li>- Using Panopto to Record Classes</li> <li>- Moderating Online Groupwork</li> <li>- Adding Audio and Video to PowerPoint</li> <li>- Creating Interactive Online Learning Resources using H5P</li> <li>- Developing E-tivities for Coursework</li> <li>- Programme Team - Electrical Engineering</li> <li>- Drop in Session with Q &amp; A on Previous Sessions</li> <li>- Effective Assessment Practice for Engaged Learning</li> <li>- Approaches to Designing and Implementing Online Assessment</li> <li>- Using MS Teams for CA &amp; Assignment Submissions</li> <li>- Providing Student Feedback and Setting up a Grading Rubrics in Moodle</li> <li>- Using Urkund for Student Assignments</li> <li>- Creating MCQs for Online Assessment in Moodle</li> <li>- Reflective Journals for Online Assessment</li> <li>- E-tivities such as Discussion Forums for Assessment</li> <li>- Creating MCQs for Online Assessment in MS Teams</li> <li>- Drop in Session with Q &amp; A on Previous Sessions</li> <li>- Drop in Session with Q &amp; A on Previous Sessions</li> </ul>	

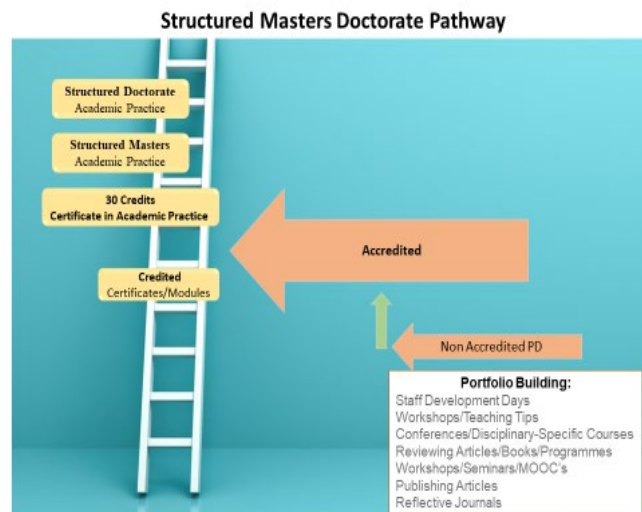
### c) CPD Accredited Programmes

A CPD Pathway is in development that will be composed of:

- A range of L9, 10 Credits SPA's;
- Graduate Certificate;
- Graduate Diploma;
- Structured Masters;
- Taught Masters
- Doctorate

The following Level 9, 10 Credit, Special Purpose Awards were developed and had the indicated Staff participation rates during the reporting period indicating the interest by LIT staff in accessible and relevant credited CPD.

- Designing and Adapting Coursework for Blended and Online Learning (36 Participants)
- Reflective Academic Practice and Building Teaching Portfolios (17 Participants)
- Research Methods (first delivery in 200/21 Academic Year)
- Active Learning Pedagogies for Student Engagement (first delivery in 200/21 Academic Year)



#### d) LIT President's Award to Support Doctoral Scholarship

Since 2017, LIT staff who are pursuing a relevant doctoral study in their disciplinary field or in teaching and learning can avail of a one semester 'write up interval' (exempt from teaching commitments). A number of these doctoral investigations are currently investigating teaching and learning practices. (One study is investigating *student centred pedagogy* and another is investigating *the potential of blended and online programmes for active learning*).

#### e) Regional Collaboration in Teaching and Learning Initiatives

In addition to LIT's annual programme of accredited and non-accredited professional development opportunities, staff also participate in regional conferences and conversations about professional practice. Below are a sample of LIT staff presentations.

Shannon Regional Consortium Seminars Presentation Titles by LIT Staff	
The Assessment Hurdles Race: Ready, Set, Go: Reflections from Renegotiated Practice!	Embracing reflexivity in preparation for practice education: A Transformational Pedagogy in Action.
The Teacher of Tomorrow; How shall we know him/her?	A Pilot Programme for Intercultural Awareness Across Disciplines
Working with long documents in MS Word	Presentation Skills using MS PowerPoint and MS Sway
Using Gradebook and Activity Tracking in Moodle	Formative Feedback - Integrating Self-Assessment into the Contemporary Curriculum
Enabling Deep Learning Through Poster Presentations	Particular Case Training Methodology
Github for Education: Code Management Tool	Continuous Assessment: Negotiating best practice in the messy swamp of practice

### QE Meacham 3.      Compendium of Active Learning

LIT is continually developing and amending its compendium of Active Learning. A new Compendium was developed in the reporting period and is available at

It is envisaged that this updated version will serve as a major enhancement for teaching and learning across the Institute and will enable faculty staff to adopt a range of additional active learning strategies for their disciplinary needs. This publication includes over sixty five Active Learning Strategies. It also includes a Practitioner Guide where practitioners across a range of disciplines provide examples of how they use active learning to engage students.

A further stage of the compendium development, will include a practice-based component where staff will evaluate some strategies that they have implemented and share their learning from the process. This practitioner focus will also be part of the assessment profile for the Special Purpose Award in Pedagogies of Active Learning for Student Engagement.

The Compendium is available at:

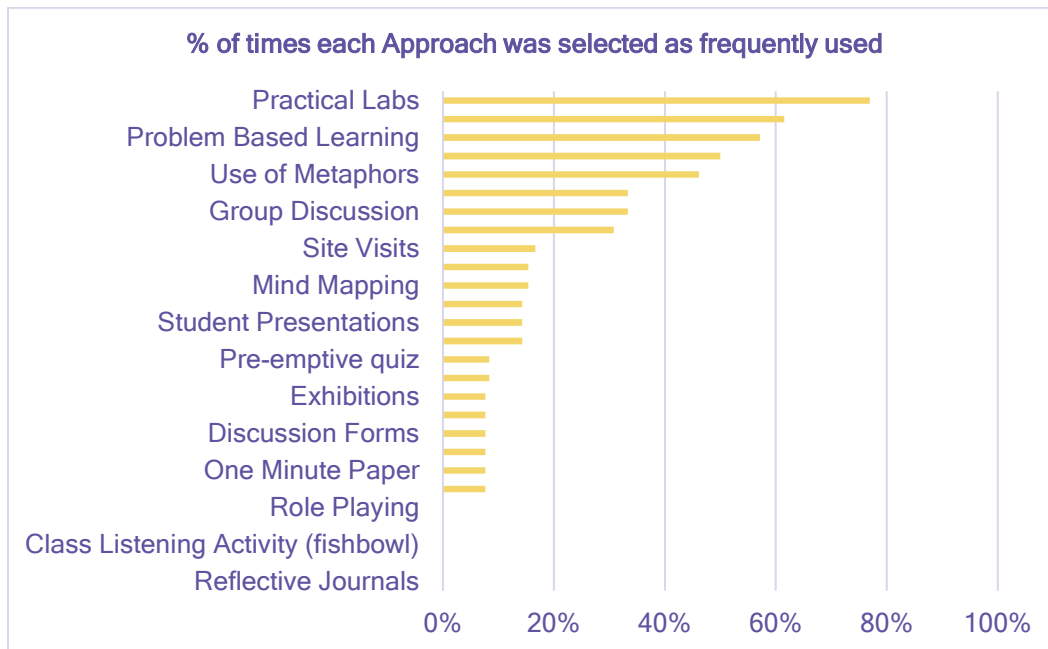
[Compendium of Active Learning: Strategies for Student Engagement](#)

### QE Mechanism 4:      Evidence from staff research 2020

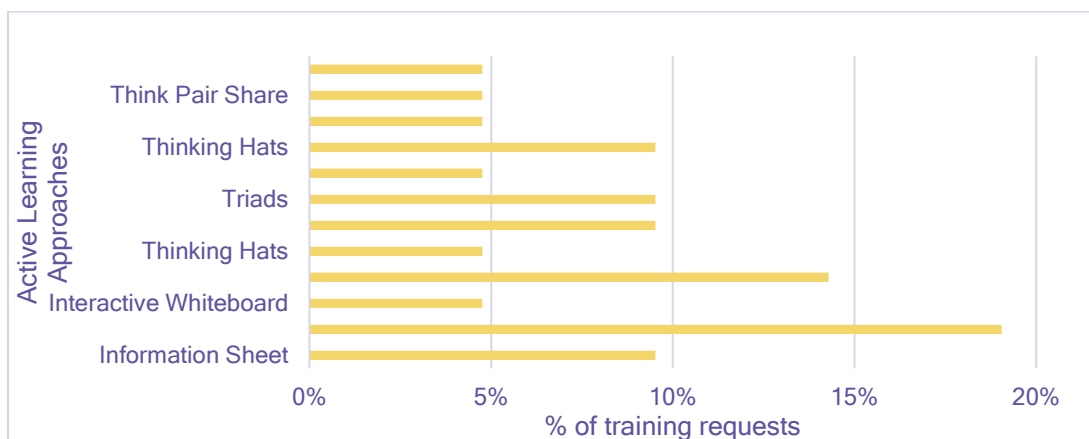
In Spring of 2020, a range of faculty staff focus groups were convened and data gathered as part of the Cyclical Institutional Review process. Initial findings from this data demonstrates that LIT staff have a strong sense of ownership of the LIT signature pedagogy of Active Learning. They are motivated in their Quality Enhancement activities by it. This data would suggest that staff are guided by Institute policy and strategy in this domain. This evidence is strengthened by further research, regarding staff development provision in 2020. In February, as part of LIT's Staff Development Programme, three workshops were facilitated on the themes of:

- *Building Capacity For The Continuum of Active Learning;*
- *Effective Assessment and Feedback that Embeds Learning*
- *Graduate Attributes Framework: Moving from Framework to Practice.*

During these workshops over 70 participants were surveyed to establish current use of active learning strategies and; to establish areas of need for further professional development in each domain. It was clear from the survey, that there was significant use of active learning strategies and considerable demand for further CPD in the area of Active Learning and Assessment that complemented active learning approaches. These recent findings demonstrate that Active Learning has gained significant traction in LIT and that there is an ongoing commitment by staff to continue professional development skills in this domain.



*Active Learning Approaches nominated for further training and support*



These findings will continue to influence further cycles of provision in CPD activities.

## 2.7 Supports and Resources for Learners

### LIT ENGAGE Student Induction Programme 2019 - 2020

The LIT ENGAGE Programme supports students' transition to and retention in third level. During the 2019 - 2020 Academic Year, this programme together with on-campus Student Leaders, provided students with the opportunity to actively engage in college life, get to grips with their course, join a club or society, become a volunteer and develop a personal toolkit to live a healthy balanced and enjoyable lifestyle. During September and October each week was tailored with different events to promote and support a positive start in LIT.

Wk #	Date	Overview
1	September 4th - 5th	<b>Welcome Week:</b> Students will meet staff and support services from across the Institute. <a href="http://www.lit.ie/Prospectus">www.lit.ie/Prospectus</a> <a href="https://lit.ie/student-support">https://lit.ie/student-support</a> <a href="https://lit.ie/students-union">https://lit.ie/students-union</a>
2	September 9th - 13th	<b>Moylish Campus - Freshers Week:</b> <a href="https://lit.ie/student-support">https://lit.ie/student-support</a> <b>LSAD, Thurles &amp; Clonmel - Class Reps Week:</b> <a href="https://lit.ie/student-support">https://lit.ie/student-support</a> Class Reps are appointed to be ambassadors for their class and actively engage with the Institute and organise class based activities such as social and training events. <b>Engage in your College Life - "Clubs and Societies Week":</b> Students are encouraged to get involved in the multiple Clubs and Societies available to them and encouraged to set up their own club/society. <b>Sports:</b> <a href="http://www.lit.ie/Sports/">www.lit.ie/Sports/</a> <b>Societies:</b> <a href="http://www.lit.ie/StudentsUnion">www.lit.ie/StudentsUnion</a> <b>Volunteering</b> <a href="http://www.studentvolunteer.ie/lit">www.studentvolunteer.ie/lit</a>
3	September 16th - 20th	<b>LSAD, Thurles &amp; Clonmel - Freshers Week</b> <a href="https://lit.ie/learning-support">https://lit.ie/learning-support</a> <b>Moylish Campus - Class Reps Week:</b> <a href="https://lit.ie/student-support">https://lit.ie/student-support</a> Class Reps are appointed to be ambassadors for their class and actively engage with the Institute and organise class based activities such as social and training events. <b>Engage in your College Life - "Clubs and Societies Week":</b> Students are encouraged to get involved in the multiple Clubs and Societies available to them and encouraged to set up their own club/society. <b>Sports:</b> <a href="https://lit.ie/sport">https://lit.ie/sport</a> <b>Societies:</b> <a href="https://lit.ie/students-union/clubs-societies">https://lit.ie/students-union/clubs-societies</a>
		<b>Money Matters Week:</b> Additional info sessions will be delivered on each campus this week to assist with financial queries in relation to grants and fees, student assistance fund etc. <a href="http://www.lit.ie/grantsandfees">www.lit.ie/grantsandfees</a> <a href="http://www.studentfinance.ie">www.studentfinance.ie</a> <a href="https://lit.ie/financial-assistance">https://lit.ie/financial-assistance</a>
4	September 23rd- 27th	<b>Academic Support Week:</b> The Learning Support Unit helps students to master the new academic skills and self-directed learning. Workshops include academic writing, mathematics, researching, studying, note-taking, exam revision and a general focus on learning support in all manners of academic advancement. <a href="https://lit.ie/learning-support">https://lit.ie/learning-support</a>
5	October 30th- September 4th	<b>Health &amp; Wellness Week: - (diet, fitness, sexual health and consent)</b> Students are encouraged and supported with staying healthy in college. <a href="http://www.lit.ie/StudentHealth">www.lit.ie/StudentHealth</a> <a href="https://lit.ie/sport">https://lit.ie/sport</a> <a href="https://lit.ie/students-union">https://lit.ie/students-union</a>
6	October 7th -11th	<b>Annual Careers Fair, October 8th 2019</b> <b>Student are encouraged to engage in their Career meet future employers</b> <a href="https://lit.ie/careers-employability">https://lit.ie/careers-employability</a>
		<b>Mental Health Week: - World Mental Health Day Oct. 10th</b> Students are encouraged and supported to be mindful of their mental health. <a href="http://www.lit.ie/Counselling">www.lit.ie/Counselling</a> <a href="http://www.lit.ie/StudentsUnion">www.lit.ie/StudentsUnion</a>
7	October 14th - 18th	<b>Student Volunteer Week:</b> Students are encouraged and invited to be ambassadors for LIT during Open Week. <a href="http://www.studentvolunteer.ie/lit">www.studentvolunteer.ie/lit</a>
8	October 21 <sup>st</sup> - 25th	<b>Student Supports Week</b> Re-introduction of all student support services with additional workshops, information stands and quick query sessions. <a href="https://lit.ie/learning-support">https://lit.ie/learning-support</a>

### **Flexible Learning Student Induction**

Students registered on online programmes within the Flexible Learning Department are provided with an Student Induction Programme and are given access to online supports and resources. Training and supports are focused around the technical aspects of learning online and in relation to the applications and digital tools required for their online programme. The induction session provides an overview of the format for the programme delivery and an introduction to the programme team. The induction session is a chance to run through the technical setup required for participating and completing the online programme and a dedicated Educational Technologist is available within Flexible Learning to provide support for students.

### **Supporting Students during Covid-19 - 2019- 2020 Academic Year Context**

The emergence of Covid-19 proved to be an unforeseen and distressing complication for students and staff during the 2019-2020 academic year. Following the Institute's closure on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2020, Student Support Services along with the whole Institute community had to adjust radically and quickly to a remote working and learning environment. Student Support Services transitioned to working remotely and were provided with Institute owned laptops/devices. MS Teams was mobilised to allow secure contact with students and LIT colleagues. A focused and concerted effort was instigated with supporting students as they navigated through the end of the academic year and the assessment period. Staff were upskilled in the use of technologies to enable and support new methods of delivering a high-quality engaged student service.

### Health Unit

The Health Unit played a crucial role in providing a safe, effective, 24/7 response to all our students who were concerned about COVID. The Health Unit updated Institute Management with all relevant information coming from Public Health or the medical sector to ensure an effective and appropriate Institute response.

### Counselling

Student Counselling was delivered remotely by core staff. In line with national guidelines and standards interns and trainees are not permitted to deliver remote counselling therefore they were obliged to cease working with their students. In these instances, students who wished to continue with Counselling were transferred to a core member of the team. Students were engaged with the service or new students seeking counselling were contacted and offered remote counselling via phone or video via Microsoft teams. Due to the personal impact of COVID on the Mental Health of our students a full service was provided throughout the summer with staff managing leave accordingly.

### Disability Support

With respect to Students with Disabilities remote communication and support was undertaken including communication with the Exams Dept to plan revised exam supports for students with requirements undertaking online assessment. The Educational Support Workers made increased and regular individual contact with each of their students via phone calls, text and email.

### Retention Support

Students contacted the Retention Officer in relation to gaining supports with the Emergency Remote Online Learning aspect of their course due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Retention Officer made appropriate referrals to Heads of Department, Academic Staff and the Learning Support Unit where appropriate.

### Learning Support Unit

The Learning Support Unit successfully managed the transition to remote delivery of Learning Support services and this was really appreciated by all students. The Quality Teaching and Learning provided a training session in MS Teams, to all LSU tutors, just before the Institute closure in March. The Disability Service offered LSU tutors an online presentation on a study skills programme, aimed at supporting students with learning difficulties and mature students with a particular focus on practical and online resources.

After the Institute closure in March, LSU tutors provided remote tuition using a range of platforms.

Platform:	Percentage Usage Reported:
Zoom	43%
WhatsApp	21%
MS Teams	14%
Email	7%
Skype	3%
Discord	7%
Anydesk	3%
Appear.in	3%
Jitsi	3%

The following is one student testimonial received which reflects the positive impact of the LSU service provided during COVID. *“(Tutor) helped me so much especially with the self-doubt I had in my work due to the outbreak of Covid-19 and not being able to communicate properly with other students and sometimes lecturers within my course”*

The level of emergent factors presented both personal and professional challenges for students, service providers, internal and external personnel and stakeholders. Notwithstanding these immense difficulties the relationship and engagement with the students remained paramount and in keeping this student-centred focus the support services managed, despite COVID, to ensure an engaged, responsive and safe provision of all services.

### **LIT Student Code of Conduct and Netiquette Requirements for Blended and Online Learning**

This code of conduct has been developed to inform and advise students of standards and norms that are required when participating in an online class and engaging with all members of the Institute community. The Code of Conduct covers three main areas, first, students accessing online course material and the conduct around their participation in live/synchronous online classes. Secondly, if classes are being recorded specific instructions around the access, sharing and distribution of these recordings are outlined. Finally guidelines around student participation in asynchronous online class activities such as discussion forums and message boards are detailed. Advice on how to achieve the most from an online class and setup a dedicated learning space is provided to help students navigate through this formal online learning class.

As part of an Institute approach to support student’s learning experience in a blended and online class a number of resources and supports have been provided. Online video learning resources were created and made available to students in a dedicated Moodle page. There are also a number of video resources on tools and applications used by students to complete coursework and access learning content. Using Microsoft Teams, Using Announcements and Submitting



Assignment are some of the resources on this page. Assignments can be setup in Moodle using Urkund and there are a number of resources on this application available on this page also.

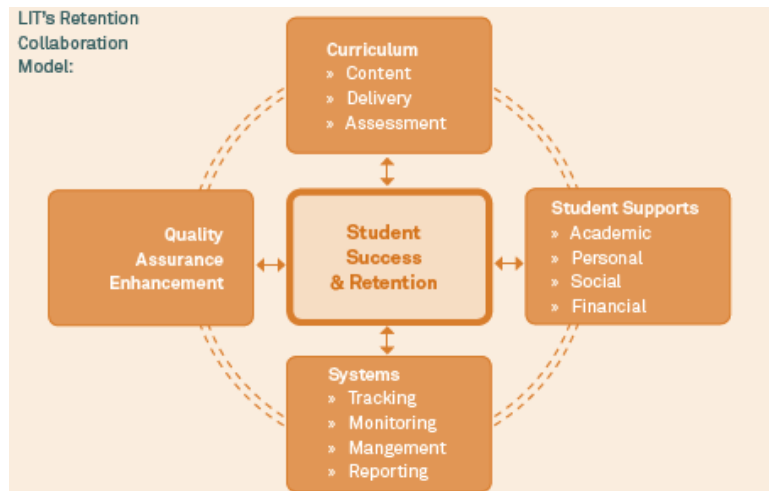
Urkund is the institutes dedicated plagiarism detection application. It is integrated into the institutes Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), Moodle and is used by staff for students submitting essays and reports via the assignment tool. A similarity index/percentage is generated along with a report highlighting each section of a student's assignment that was found elsewhere on the internet or in an assignment repository. The assignment can be setup to allow students to view the similarity index/percentage, the sections reference incorrectly and the details of the report. Urkund is an excellent tools for teaching students how to reference and paraphrase appropriately. To support students in using these application and understanding the report support sessions are delivered to groups and classes on request from academic staff using Urkund. Video resources and user guides have also being created and made available to students. These resources go through the sections of the report and provides guidance about the meaning of the similarity index/percentage.

A Moodle Student Resources page has now been developed and this page acts as a central location to access video resources from the LIT Library, Student Support Services, Computer Services and Quality, Teaching and Learning.

During the reporting period, the Careers & Employability team brought a new innovative online interview platform to help students prepare for Graduate and Work Placement roles. [Practice interviews - Interview Marketplace \(shortlister.com\)](#) The interactive online interview preparation platform which facilitates mock interviews, has been made available to all LIT students. Students can browse and select practice interviews - accessing a bank of real world interviews from a range of companies across thematic areas. Students are asked a series of interview questions, their answers are recorded and played back and once they've submitted their answer they are presented with guidance on what the interviewer was looking for, allowing them evaluate how they did. Students are also encouraged to submit their interview to the Careers & Employability Team, who will provide them with a detailed report on what steps they could take to improve the structure and content of answers as well as communication skill

### **Supporting Student Retention**

LIT's Student Retention Strategy is designed to be an over-arching strategy, serving to draw together relevant themes and key activities in order to support the retention of students and the completion of their studies. The intended audience for the retention strategy is all LIT staff. As an active and iterative strategy, it is designed to support LIT's commitment to provide excellent, inclusive higher education with first class student support and facilities, and outstanding opportunities for learning for local, national and international students. The strategy also supports the Institute's aim to provide an outstanding student experience, which is academically rewarding and personally fulfilling for students. Diagrammatically, the influence of QA and improvement is depicted in the LIT Retention Collaborative Model. High retention rates reflect a positive student experience and high levels of student satisfaction amongst our students. Retention, Completion and Non-Progression figure are presented in Section 2.10 Information and Data Management (including the national Student Survey).



*LIT Retention Collaboration Model*

The LIT Retention Officer is available to listen to Student issues and assess all the circumstances of the Student (e.g. personal, social, academic). The Retention Officer provides information and support where possible and/or also make helpful referrals as appropriate. In addition, the Retention Officer can meet with Students upon request, enquire on their behalf where appropriate, and collaborate with other offices throughout the Institute.

At beginning of the 2019- 2020 academic year all students receive a welcome email from LIT Retention Office advising them of role of Retention Officer and how to contact should a student have any queries. The Retention Officer held one to one meetings with students throughout the 2019 -2020 academic year. Out of the 66 students who successfully transferred to first year of another programme in LIT in the 2019/20 academic year, the Retention Officer referred 21 of these students. The Retention Office received 44 students referrals from Students Support Services and other areas in LIT (Counselling, Access, Grants & Fees, Admissions and school offices). Over 80 students contacted the Retention Office directly with queries relating to Grants, Fees, Learning Support, Accommodation issues and personal issues.

When the Retention Officer is notified of a student handing in a withdrawal form, an exit interview was carried out if contact was able to be made with the student. The Retention Officer attempts to contact student a maximum of 2 times as per exit form procedure.

- There were 199 withdraws at the end of the academic year 2019/2020. This is down 14% from the previous academic year (231).
- The Retention officer was notified of 121 withdrawals throughout the academic year, of this number, 78 exit interviews were successfully carried out. The remaining 43 students were contacted twice but did not engage with the process to carry out the interview.
- The Retention Officer with and mentored students at risk of withdrawing in order to ensure students are referred to appropriate student (support) services.

- The Retention Officer provided students with individual guidance regarding change of course, deferral, withdrawal and associated issues e.g. SUSI grants, tuition/registration fees etc.
- The Retention Officer liaised with different departments (Admissions, Grants & Fees, School Offices etc.) on behalf of the student in order to deal with queries in timely manner.

An analysis of the reasons Students cited for withdrawing from their programme of study during the 2019 - 2020 Academic Year indicates that main reasons indicated were *Personal Reasons, Health Reasons, Disliked Programme, and Found Programme Difficult*.

**2019/2020 Withdrawal Analysis – Limerick Institute Of Technology:**

Ranking	Reason	Student Percentage
1	Personal Reasons	26.63%
2	Health Reasons	22.11%
3	Disliked Programme	19.60%
4	Found program difficult	11.05%
5	Employment Offer	8.42%
6	Financial Reasons	5.93%
7	Undertaken Apprenticeship Prog	2.50%
8	Unknown Reasons	2.21%
9	Repeating Leaving Certificate	1.50%
10	Leaving Certificate Upgrade	0.05%

In order to further enhance the supports available to students, The Retention Officer is currently involved in planning and delivery of a pilot Peer to Peer Mentoring programme in conjunction with colleagues in Student Support Services.

## 2.8 Flexible Learning

IT's Flexible Learning offering has expanded significantly over the past number of years. The Institute offers over 100 flexible learning programmes ranging from NFQ Levels 6 to 9 across Science, Engineering, IT, Business, Art and Design. These programmes are delivered through a variety of modes including traditional classroom, practical, laboratory, online and blended teaching. Following significant investment aimed at facilitating online delivery modes in particular, the Institute delivered fully online and blended programmes to approximately 1,600 learners in the 2019/20 reporting period. This significantly minimised the impact of the restrictions around Covid-19 on LIT students during the 2019 - 2020 reporting period.

Since 2018 an agreed process of engagement between the Department of Flexible Learning and other Academic Departments in LIT has resulted in annual plans for Flexible Learning programme development and delivery. Programme portfolios are reviewed in February/March each year in preparation for the following academic year student intake. These plans are developed in conjunction with individual programme teams, the relevant Head of Department and the Head of

Flexible Learning. The portfolio plans are developed with input from industry, research and other relevant resources available within the academic department. The portfolio planning process has resulted in 13 new flexible learning programmes being developed as well as removal of underperforming programmes from the portfolio. In 2020 the Institute was successful in securing support under the Springboard+, HCI Pillar 1 and 3 and July Stimulus funds. The Flexible Learning Department has worked with industry partners and networks such as the Regional Skills Forums to ensure that the Institutes programme development and portfolio is responsive to regional needs and demands. As a result of ongoing programme initiatives and programme development during the reporting period LIT will register over 2,000 students on Flexible Learning programmes for the Academic Year 2020/21. The Head of Flexible Learning in conjunction with the academic Heads of Department and the Registrar's Office has developed a set of guidelines for the development of new Flexible Learning programmes. For programmes to be funded for development by the flexible learning development plan they are required to follow these guidelines. This process was complete in March 2019 and all new programme development continues to follow these guidelines. They are reviewed as required and in line with LITs commitment to Quality Assurance

## 2.9 Internationalisation

The Office of International Services (OIS) staffing increased from 6 full-time staff in the 18/19 academic year to 7 full-time staff in the 19/20 Academic Year. Each staff member has a clear set of duties and responsibilities with an appropriate amount of overlap to ensure strategic goals and targets can be achieved. The Office of International Services is now feeding into the design of new programmes to ensure that the important international dimension is incorporated. In addition to this, the OIS conducts research of international markets and feeds into the programme review and development process in LIT

Encourage international staff exchanges offers lecturing staff the opportunity to visit international partners to build deeper links within faculties. A number of LIT academic staff members travelled abroad with the OIS during Semester 1 of the 19/20 Academic year. Staff from the Department of the Built Environment and the Department of Art & Design travelled to Malaysia in October of 2019. During this visit LIT staff presented guest lectures in key partner institutes of LIT including TAR UC, Dasein Academy of Art and Malaysian Institute of Art.

The covid-19 pandemic reduced the number of outward trips by academic staff in the second semester to key recruitment areas. These areas include Canada, where LIT has a large number of academic partners have requested guest lectures and presentations from LIT, and China where we have a joint-programme agreement in place requiring a number of guest-lectures each year. However, with the emergence of Covid-19 in early 2020 this travel was cancelled and alternative online sessions went ahead in their place. With regards to the Erasmus programme, 5 staff undertook mobilities in 2019/20 (compared to 11 in 2018/19). A further 8 applications had been submitted for 19/20, however these were not all completed due to Covid-19

## 2.10 Careers and Employability Service Developments in 2019 – 2020 Reporting Period

The Careers and Employability Services Centre provides students and recent graduates of LIT with support and advice on Careers, Employability Skills and Work Placement, with a focus on:

- Enhancing student employability skills, supporting students achieve their full career potential,
- Working in partnership with academic departments and placement providers in supporting student work placement opportunities,
- Enabling, facilitating and enhancing employer collaborations.

The Careers & Employability service offers a range of services and supports for students, from operating an online Jobs Boards, providing CV and Interview preparation clinics and workshops, offering One-to-One Career Advice sessions. The Service supports Students to identify their career objectives and achieve their full personal and professional potential. The service works in partnership with Academic and other Institute Departments to support students in the attainment of real-life work experiences where they can apply their academic and technical skills and enhance their discipline competencies and employability. It offers one to one guidance including: CV review; Graduate applications; Course change; Withdrawal; Postgraduate opportunities; and Preparing for interview. It also offers Group support including: CV Preparation; Interview Skills; Using your Network and Effective Job Searching; LinkedIn for Job Seekers; Profiling for Success; and CV Review Clinics.

LIT's Strategic Plan 2018 - 2022 seeks to "deliver a greatly improved student experience" whilst expanding its "philosophy of active learning". One of LIT's priorities set out in its Strategic Plan 2018 - 2022, is to "Expand Work Based Learning and Work Placement Opportunities". The Higher Education System Performance Framework 2018-2020 sets out the Government's key objectives for higher education over the next three years. One of the high level targets set out in the framework is that "All students will have the opportunity to undertake a work placement or work-based project as part of their course by 2025". Additionally, in LIT's Draft Mission-based Performance Compact 2018-2021 agreement with the HEA, the Institute states that "LIT aspires to being a leading provider of high quality teaching and active learning which reflects the needs of industry and has identified the expansion of work based learning and work placement opportunities across all academic programmes including apprenticeships as a key strategic priority."

As an Institution LIT recognises the importance of supporting students develop their employability skills and Work Placement is a key priority for LIT. To support the delivery of the strategic ambitions of LIT in this domain a Careers and Employability Central Services Manager (CSM) was appointed in September 2019, and the Service Centre was thus established. Prior to the establishment of the Services Centre, there existed a Careers Service, delivered by a Careers Officer, supported by an administrator, under the operational area of Student Support Services. While the administration of Work Placement was a decentralised function operated individually within each Department, with varying levels of support offered; with no central oversight or administrative support processes or resources. Within the newly created structure, the CSM

reports directly to the Dean of Work Based Learning, who is also the Vice-President International, and sits on LIT's Executive Committee. As at May 2020 the Service Centre has six staff. The new structure provides a centralised administrative support to work placement. New staff resources were on-boarded in the academic year 2019/20.

Since its establishment in 2019, LIT's Careers and Employability Service has acted as a link with companies and organisations seeking to recruit graduates and students at all levels. The proportion of LIT programmes offering work placement has increased from 75% to 88% during that period. This increase can be attributed to Academic Faculty and Departments integrating Work Based Learning as a core component of our academic offerings. The Careers and Employability Service has engaged closely with all Departments and Faculties to ensure that these work based learning opportunities are fully supported. Currently 1,200 students go on work placement annually.

## 2.11 Information and Data Management (including the national Student Survey)

The LIT Student Retention Officer supplies detailed analysis to Faculties and Departments on areas such as Completion Statistics, Retention Statistics, Module Statistics, Student Withdrawals and National the Student Survey results. The retention officer plans, co-ordinates and implements the Institutes approach to the Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE National Survey).

Statistics for retention rates indicate that the overall retention rate achieved in 2019/20 reached an overall high of 93.42%. The rates across academic years 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019 are highlighted in the table below:

<b>Retention Rates</b>	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
(a) Institute overall retention rate	94.42%	94.94%	94.89%	93.42%
(b) Year 1 retention rate	92.92%	93.55%	92.75%	90.61%

Statistics for completion rates indicate that the overall completion rate achieved in 2019/20 reached an overall high of 89.42%. The rates across academic years 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019 are highlighted in the table below:

<b>Completion Rates</b>	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
(a) Institute overall completion rate	85.27%	85.48%	84.10%	89.42%
(b) Year 1 completion rate	81.22%	80.45%	78.68%	83.39%

- **Completion Rates** (Methodology: The total number of students who successfully complete the programme stage expressed as a percentage of the number of students registered on the programme at the end of the academic year)
- **Retention Rates** (Methodology: The total number of students who sit end of year examinations expressed as a percentage of the number of students who were registered\* on the programme at the end of term (EOT) plus the students who withdrew from November 01st (HEA Census Date) to the end of the academic year)
- **Withdrawal Form Analysis** (Shows all students who withdrew from their programmes in each Department with details of Programme, Stage, Withdrawal Date, Campus and Reason for Withdrawal.
- All Student Survey results were analysed at Departmental Results were produced under the 9 Indices Higher Order Learning, Reflective & Integrated Learning, Quantitative Reasoning, Learning Strategies, Collaborative Learning, Student Faculty Interaction, Effective Teaching Practices, Quality of Interactions and Supportive Environment.
- The results under each question showed the result of the Department 2020, All LIT 2020, All IOT's 2020 and All of ISSE 2020.

## Retention: By Department and Faculty

<b>Stage 1</b>	<b>2016/17</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>
Dept. of Electrical & Electronic Eng.	95.10%	94.38%	90.12%	<b>90.36%</b>
Dept. of Information Technology	92.61%	92.77%	91.14%	<b>92.19%</b>
Dept. of Applied Science	91.03%	89.03%	91.61%	<b>90.71%</b>
Dept. of the Built Environment	84.50%	86.96%	89.17%	<b>90.96%</b>
Dept. of Mechanical & Automobile Eng.	81.19%	88.60%	91.51%	<b>93.44%</b>
Dept. of Applied Social Sciences	97.01%	94.19%	95.34%	<b>91.28%</b>
Dept. of Sport, Leisure & Tourism	92.31%	92.65%	90.73%	<b>91.78%</b>
Dept. of Business & Financial Services	90.91%	93.84%	89.25%	<b>92.74%</b>
Dept. of Marketing, Enterprise & Digital Communication	92.04%	87.30%	95.30%	<b>91.38%</b>
Dept. of Design	98.33%	98.46%	96.12%	<b>85.50%</b>
Dept. of Fine Art	95.26%	96.98%	93.64%	<b>91.48%</b>
Faculty of App. Science, Eng. & Technology	88.89%	90.35%	90.71%	<b>91.53%</b>
Faculty of Business and Humanities	93.06%	91.99%	92.65%	<b>91.80%</b>
School of Art & Design	96.80%	97.72%	94.88%	<b>88.49%</b>
<b>Institute Retention (Stage 1)</b>	<b>92.92%</b>	<b>93.55%</b>	<b>92.75%</b>	<b>90.61%</b>

<b>All Stages</b>	<b>2016/17</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>
Dept. of Electrical & Electronic Eng.	92.41%	94.81%	94.54%	<b>91.70%</b>
Dept. of Information Technology	93.53%	95.40%	94.20%	<b>89.25%</b>
Dept. of Applied Science	92.54%	92.08%	93.84%	<b>93.84%</b>
Dept. of the Built Environment	90.72%	91.15%	94.69%	<b>93.39%</b>
Dept. of Mechanical & Automobile Eng.	84.18%	91.53%	91.61%	<b>94.41%</b>
Dept. of Applied Social Sciences	97.24%	95.61%	97.19%	<b>95.49%</b>
Dept. of Sport, Leisure & Tourism	95.98%	95.64%	94.21%	<b>94.57%</b>
Dept. of Business & Financial Services	93.57%	95.76%	93.41%	<b>95.18%</b>
Dept. of Marketing, Enterprise & Digital Communication	94.72%	91.38%	96.14%	<b>95.64%</b>
Dept. of Design	97.84%	97.35%	96.11%	<b>91.22%</b>
Dept. of Fine Art	96.55%	97.42%	95.19%	<b>93.84%</b>
Faculty of App. Science, Eng. & Technology	90.67%	92.99%	93.78%	<b>92.52%</b>
Faculty of Business and Humanities	95.38%	94.60%	95.24%	<b>95.22%</b>
School of Art & Design	97.19%	97.38%	95.65%	<b>92.53%</b>
<b>Institute Retention (All Stages)</b>	<b>94.42%</b>	<b>94.94%</b>	<b>94.89%</b>	<b>93.42%</b>



### Completion (Exam Statistics) By Department and Faculty

Stage 1	Completion 2016/17	Completion 2017/18	Completion 2018/19	Completion 2019/20
Dept. of Electrical & Electronic Eng.	76.69%	77.85%	82.14%	<b>76.92%</b>
Dept. of Information Technology	71.68%	66.46%	69.13%	<b>81.10%</b>
Dept. of Applied Science	78.10%	76.35%	69.18%	<b>92.48%</b>
Dept. of the Built Environment	64.42%	79.87%	73.15%	<b>81.88%</b>
Dept. of Mechanical & Automobile Eng.	81.72%	76.79%	83.81%	<b>84.87%</b>
Dept. of Applied Social Sciences	93.55%	86.29%	84.32%	<b>87.26%</b>
Dept. of Sport, Leisure & Tourism	73.74%	77.17%	68.75%	<b>79.91%</b>
Dept. of Business & Financial Services	78.23%	79.62%	70.65%	<b>80.57%</b>
Dept. of Marketing, Enterprise & Digital Communication	84.68%	82.64%	82.24%	<b>86.84%</b>
Dept. of Design	85.65%	78.79%	79.71%	<b>83.06%</b>
Dept. of Fine Art	87.50%	90.10%	88.44%	<b>89.72%</b>
Faculty of App. Science, Eng. & Technology	74.52%	75.46%	75.48%	<b>83.45%</b>
Faculty of Business and Humanities	82.55%	81.43%	76.49%	<b>83.65%</b>
School of Art & Design	86.57%	84.45%	84.07%	<b>83.06%</b>
<b>Institute Completion (Stage 1 Total)</b>	<b>81.22%</b>	<b>80.45%</b>	<b>78.68%</b>	<b>83.39%</b>

All Years	Completion 2016/17	Completion 2017/18	Completion 2018/19	Completion 2019/20
Dept. of Electrical & Electronic Eng.	76.91%	80.00%	72.77%	<b>79.68%</b>
Dept. of Information Technology	73.48%	74.85%	73.68%	<b>82.03%</b>
Dept. of Applied Science	81.01%	80.05%	76.73%	<b>93.67%</b>
Dept. of the Built Environment	75.43%	81.27%	78.39%	<b>86.27%</b>
Dept. of Mechanical & Automobile Eng.	83.45%	79.66%	79.17%	<b>89.91%</b>
Dept. of Applied Social Sciences	94.24%	90.72%	91.05%	<b>91.85%</b>
Dept. of Sport, Leisure & Tourism	81.57%	83.88%	81.18%	<b>90.46%</b>
Dept. of Business & Financial Services	85.90%	85.34%	80.31%	<b>87.50%</b>
Dept. of Marketing, Enterprise & Digital Communication	87.79%	83.49%	82.93%	<b>92.73%</b>
Dept. of Design	89.25%	91.72%	88.97%	<b>90.25%</b>
Dept. of Fine Art	91.52%	91.11%	90.98%	<b>92.38%</b>
Faculty of App. Science, Eng. & Technology	78.06%	79.17%	76.15%	<b>86.31%</b>
Faculty of Business and Humanities	87.38%	85.86%	83.87%	<b>90.63%</b>
School of Art & Design	90.38%	91.41%	89.97%	<b>91.32%</b>
<b>Institute Completion (Undergraduate Total)</b>	<b>85.27%</b>	<b>85.48%</b>	<b>83.33%</b>	<b>89.42%</b>

### HEA Stage 1 Non Progression

One of the key objectives outlined in LIT's Compact with the HEA in respect of 'Our Student Supports' was to improve first year and overall progressions rates year on year within LIT. One of the key indicators that will enable LIT to judge whether it is successful in achieving its ambitions in relation to student retention and completion will be reflected in meeting the HEA Compact Performance Objectives targets for new three year period 2018/019 to 2020/2021.

Year-on-year improvements in LIT's achievement of improved retention for both overall and Year 1 students has been demonstrated. Bridging the gap between the targets and annual achievements for both cohorts is being actively monitored.

Year	HEA Published %
2015/16 - 2016/17	23%
2016/17 - 2017/18	19%
2017/18 - 2018/19	20%
<b>2018/19 -2019/20</b>	<b>17%</b>

### LIT's Annual Primary Research and Findings related to National Student Survey

LIT participates in the Irish National Student Survey. This is an annual, externally validated, national survey which measures and reports on LIT's performance re: teaching and learning as reported by targeted LIT students (first year and final year undergraduate and post-graduate) respondents. Since its inception in 2013, this national survey aims to collect information annually across the third level education sector on student engagement in order to provide a more valuable, comparative, and informed insight into students' experiences than is possible from other information sources. The intention is that the annual survey results add evidence to the value of LIT activities and policies implemented.

LIT has consistently achieved high student participation in the National Survey which has been viewed by the institute of significant strategic importance and supported at all levels of the organisation. This is evident in year on year participation rates.

Year	Response Rate (%)	National Comparison of Participation
2014/15	29.5	Second Highest
2015/16	31.3	Fifth Highest
2016/17	34.4	Fifth Highest
2017/18	48.0	Second Highest
2018/19	62.2	Second Highest
2019/20	51.0	Second Highest

In 2020, out of 3,340 eligible students, 1,698 students from LIT responded to the survey which equates to 51% of the eligible student population. Out of these students, 53.4 % were male and 46.6 % were female, and 72.1% were 23 years old or younger. The LIT response rate has increased year on year since the survey was first introduced in 2014. Participation and completion of ISSE by students is considered a key strategic objective of the LIT.

The facilitation of completion of the ISSE Survey by students in class was a key component of success in 2019. The Survey was co-ordinated by Head of Quality, Teaching and Learning and LIT Retention Officer.

- ISSE email was sent to all eligible students inviting them to take part in the survey via a link to the survey on Monday 25th February.
- LIT Retention Officer sent an SMS to all eligible students providing them with a link to the survey on their mobile phones.
- The LIT President officially launched ISSE by issuing an email to all students on Tuesday 19th February identifying the institutional importance of ISSE and its facilitation. The email included a short promotional video clip with input from the LIT President and the SU President.
- Student were facilitate to complete the survey in class using a structured fixed schedule approach.

As an Institute, LIT outperformed or was above the average of all studentsurvey.ie (third level colleges) in two out of the nine indices: Student-Faculty Interaction and Collaborative Learning. LIT was comparable in all the remaining indices including Higher Order Learning, Reflective and Integrated Learning, Quantitative Reasoning, Learning Strategies, Effective Teaching Practices, Quality of Interaction and Supportive Environment.

**Performance on Indices (All Years)**

	LIT 2020	All IoTs 2020	All SS.IE 2020
Higher-Order Learning	34.0	34.9	36.4
Reflective & Integrative Learning	29.2	30.0	31.5
Quantitative Reasoning	20.1	20.6	21.1
Learning Strategies	29.2	30.6	31.7
Outperforming Collaborative Learning	33.0	32.1	31.3
Outperforming Student-Faculty Interaction	17.3	15.3	13.9
Effective Teaching Practices	35.5	35.6	34.9
Quality of Interactions	38.6	38.9	38.5
Supportive Environment	26.7	27.1	28.0

Blue = Above or Comparable All IoTs 2019  
Red = Below all of IoTs 2019

In summary, LIT has once again performed well on the 'relationship' oriented aspects of its engagement with students as measured by its: (i) collaborative learning; (ii) student-faculty interaction. LIT results are notified to LIT's Academic Council annually and issued to relevant sub-committees of Academic Council and Faculties/Departments to address the results reported on teaching and learning, where appropriate, through their policies, initiatives, and activities.

## 2.12 Public Information and Communication

The LIT website is a key platform in the Institutes provision of public information and communication activities. During the reporting period LIT launched a new and improved website (December 2019) at <https://www.lit.ie/>



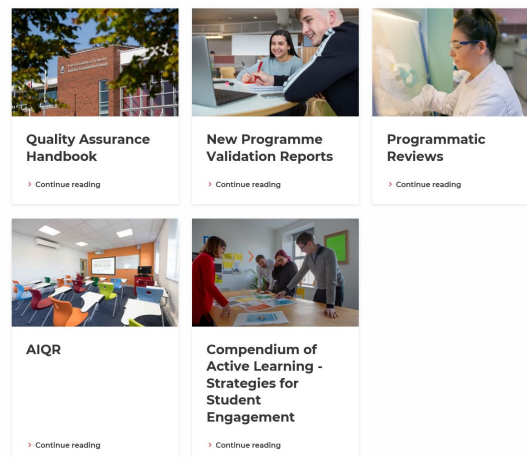
The development of the new website had commenced in February 2019 and involved extensive research and consultation with key stakeholders. The key aim of the project was to create a modern and engaging website which could portray the vibrancy and diversity of LIT as a modern day third level institution. The highly visual design of the website coupled with a simplified information architecture, allows online users to gain a visual image of LIT while also being able to easily find the information they need. The new website is easily accessible to people of all abilities in the community and can be freely used on any device. Since launching the website, staff from the various departments and offices in LIT have been trained to use the content management system behind the website. As a result of this training staff can now keep the information on their pages relevant and up to date for visitors to the website.#

### Publication of Quality Assurance Documents

A dedicated section was developed to allow for publication of the following key quality assurance documentation.

- LIT Quality Assurance Handbook
- New Programme Validation Reports
- Programmatic Reviews
- AIQR/AQR
- Relevant Quality Enhancement Publications

#### Quality Assurance Reports, Procedures, Plans



[https://lit.ie/en-IE/Life-At-LIT/explore-lit/reports-procedures-plans/Quality-Assurance-\(1\)](https://lit.ie/en-IE/Life-At-LIT/explore-lit/reports-procedures-plans/Quality-Assurance-(1))

## 2.13 Quality Assurance and Enhancement of Research Degree Provision

### Research Centres and Groups Prioritisation Areas

Research activities have grown substantially during the reporting year. Research student numbers have grown by almost 60% in 2019/20 compared to the previous year and this was largely facilitated by Landscape funding from HEA.

The Institutes Research centres during the Academic Year 2019/2020 align with the Academic Faculty structures in LIT during this period. LIT research activities continue to have a strong applied focus, delivering specific innovative outputs in partnership with industry, community and other external stakeholders. LIT's key strategic areas of focus and growth for the future aims to connect relevant faculties, departments and academic staff with research centres and groups within the Institute. This will help to ensure that RDI activity is transferred to taught programmes given our Institutional ethos of research informed teaching. Each faculty has a dedicated knowledge hub that is supported both centrally through the Graduate Studies and Research Office (GRO), the Development Office and the Innovation team and at faculty level through the faculty research champions, supported by Faculty Deans.

The areas of Biotechnology and Food, Energy/Sustainability Decarbonisation and Climate Action, Manufacturing and Materials Engineering, ICT, Data and Industry 4.0 are the key themes within the Faculty of Applied Science, Engineering and Technology (ASET). The Faculty of Business and Humanities has a clear focus on Social Sciences, Health, Wellness and Sport, Enterprise and Innovation. For example, the purpose of Social Sciences ConneXions, an umbrella research centre of five distinct research groups within the department of Applied Social Sciences, is to promote social inclusion, provide a voice for those who are not heard, and enrich the body of academic knowledge informing social and community practitioners from a variety of disciplines. Limerick School of Art and Design (LSAD) is focused on Art, Design, Creative Technologies and Interactive Systems.

Each of these themes have particular priority areas as outlined in Table 3. The Research Centres and Groups are and will continue to be aligned with the themes and priority areas. These priority areas will be the focus in the short to medium term and are anticipated to evolve and change over time. Continuous horizon scanning and engagement with stakeholders has the potential to identify other areas and themes, which can be incorporated into the RDI portfolio. A number of the themes and areas are interdisciplinary in nature and this approach is supported by many of LIT's research centres and groups. Where opportunities emerge for collaboration across thematic areas these will be exploited e.g. Social Sciences and Climate Action; Technology and Arts as interdisciplinary RDI is a key focus and strength of LIT.

We will aim to be increasingly recognised as a leader for educating high-achieving, motivated postgraduate research students who seek an individualised and transformative experience at an institution that generates and transfers knowledge through high-quality research partnerships, scholarships, business engagement and creative activities. The hallmark of our educational philosophy is active learning through a fusion of theory and practice. We promote the highest

academic standards in our research scholarship. Our Students are central to everything we do and our core function is to provide them with an excellent supportive learning environment and holistic personal development. We will continue to link our research activities to our teaching practices demonstrating method driven approaches to the development of Level 9 and 10 knowledge skills and competencies in our areas of research strengths.

## Research Centre and Groups Prioritisation areas.

### A) KNOWLEDGE HUB: Faculty of Applied Science, Engineering & Technology

THEME	RESEARCH INSTITUTE/ CoP/ CENTRE/ GROUP	PRIORITY AREA: 2020-2022
<b>BIOTECHNOLOGY FOOD AND ENVIRONMENT</b>	Shannon ABC Applied Biotechnology Centre (BIO-GATE) Food@LIT CELLS Controlled Environment Laboratory for Life Sciences	Biotechnology, Bioprocessing and Analytical Science Smart and Sustainable, Food Development, Production and Processing Life Sciences and Environmental Sustainability
<b>ENERGY, SUSTAINABILITY, CLIMATE ACTION</b>	CEED Centre for Energy Efficiency and Deep Decarbonisation	Energy Transition: Built Environment, SMEs, Industry and Renewables Sustainable and Rural Development Environmental Impact and Climate Change
<b>CONVERGENCE - MANUFACTURING, MATERIALS ENGINEERING AND ICT</b>	ACORN - IDEAM Institute for Digital Engineering and Advanced Manufacturing  CAIR - Computing and Informatics Research	Manufacturing Digitalisation, Advanced Smart Manufacturing, Robotics & Automation Manufacturing and Novel Materials Precision Engineering Future Networks, Communications, AR, VR Internet of Things, AI, Machine Learning Data Analytics, Digital Platforms, Content and Applications

### B) KNOWLEDGE HUB: Faculty of Business and Humanities

THEME	RESEARCH INSTITUTE/ CoP/ CENTRE/ GROUP	PRIORITY AREA: 2020-2022
<b>SOCIAL SCIENCES</b>	Social Sciences Connexions Research Institute	Social and Community Practice Equality and Diversity Inclusion, Support, Empowerment Lifespace Research
<b>HEALTH, WELLNESS AND SPORT</b>	IHCoP Interdisciplinary Health Community of Practice	Connected Health, Health Promotion and Independent Living Strength and Conditioning Sports Management
<b>ENTERPRISE AND INNOVATION</b>	CEIDE - FORGE Interdisciplinary Research Centre for Creativity, Enterprise, Innovation, Design and Engagement	Tourism, Hospitality and Heritage Entrepreneurship and Social Enterprise Digital Marketing

### C) KNOWLEDGE HUB: School of Art and Design

THEME	RESEARCH INSTITUTE/ CoP/ CENTRE/ GROUP	PRIORITY AREA: 2020-2022
ART, DESIGN AND CREATIVE TECHNOLOGIES	ACADEmy Research Centre Art, Curatorial Studies, Applied Design and Art and Design Education ISRG - Interactive Systems Research Group	Applied Design Fine Art Fashion and Curatorial Studies Animation Creative Broadcast & Film and Music Production Interactive Systems, Gaming, Audio and Gesture

The Institute has excellent state-of-the-art dedicated research facilities and equipment for the delivery of research. Previous success in securing national and international funding means that space and its allocation is managed efficiently and is currently being addressed to ensure continued expansion of research activities. The Faculties/Departments offer a range of undergraduate programmes and develops new programmes accordingly to ensure progression routes to the range of research disciplines available.

Achieving LITs ambitious targets in relation to RDI will require engagement from staff and the provision of relevant supports and enablers to ensure that they are in a position to contribute actively and efficiently. Staff capacity to engage in R&D activities will require provision of training, capacity building and relevant facilities and resources to positively contribute. The existing resources and activities which are provided can be expanded while new methods and solutions for enabling staff to expand their RDI activities are also needed. Enhancing the RDI Culture within LIT will be a transformative process which will require a range of supports and structures to be put in place. Increasing the range of opportunities for staff to engage in RDI through their Departments, Faculties and relevant research centres and groups will be key as well as ensuring that information is transferred through the Departments in a clear manner will be key to achieving this.

#### Researcher Skills Development at LIT

The LIT Graduate Studies and Research Office (GRO) facilitate a comprehensive programme of generic and transferable skills workshops to which research postgraduates, research supervisors, and staff have access. All new research postgraduates must attend Research Postgraduate Induction which provides an overview of governance and compliance structures within which research at LIT takes place, as well as an introduction to the researcher support services and the research community at LIT. Their research supervisors are also invited (but not obliged) to attend Induction.

General and discipline specific training in health and safety protocols is provided by the LIT Health and Safety Officer in collaboration with the GRO. Additional generic and transferable skills workshops are provided for research Candidates and their supervisors through all stages of the research degree programme. This programme of workshops broadly aligns with the principles enshrined in the European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers (Charter and Code).

Based on demand, a broad range of workshops may be facilitated under the following broad areas:

- Research Skills and Techniques
- Research Environment
- Research Management
- Personal Effectiveness
- Communication Skills
- Networking and Teamworking
- Career Management.

Other training and development opportunities at other institutions/organisations over the course of the research degree programme are identified jointly by the student and their Supervisory Panel using the LIT Personal Development Planner. The opportunities identified are then prioritised and submitted to GRO who provide support to attend where possible. In addition to Chairperson and Examiner training for LIT Staff, GRO also facilitates research supervisor development through the Research Supervision Lifecycle programme. Developed at LIT, the programme is based on the principles of the Supervision Lifecycle framework published in June 2012 by the National Academy for the Integration of Research, Teaching & Learning (NAIRTL). A Research Supervision Certificate is presented by the President of LIT to those who successfully complete the following four stages of the programme:

- Initial phase: Getting Started
- Moving Forward
- Progress to Completion
- Demystifying the Viva and beyond.

The following illustrates the Support Programme provided during the 2019-2020 Academic Year.

### Semester 1 Research Students Support Programme 2019 - 2020 Academic Year

Title	Date	Type of Activity	Attended by:
Changes to the LIT Research Degree Programme Regulations	September 2019 (13 sessions across all campuses)	Information Session	PG Researchers
Irish Research Council Funding	September 2019	Information Session	PG Researchers & Staff
Research Postgraduate Induction	October 2019	Training	PG Researchers & Staff
Advanced Degrees at LIT (joint session with Careers Office)	November 2019	Information Session	Undergraduates
Research Postgraduate Exams Process	December 2019	Information Session	PG Researchers & Staff
Transfer to PhD Process	December 2019	Information Session	PG Researchers & Staff
Research Supervisor Development - Supervisor Lifecycle (NAIRTL)	December 2019	Training	Staff
Chair & Examiner Training	December 2019	Training	Staff
Personal Development Planning	December 2019	Workshop	PG Researchers
Surviving the Viva	December 2019	Workshop	PG Researchers



## Semester 2 Research Students Support Programme

Title	Date	Type of Activity	Attended by:
Research Postgraduate Induction	January 2020	Training	PG Researchers & Staff
Research Ethics	January 2020	Workshop	PG Researchers & Staff
Tutor Training	February 2020	Workshop	Y4 & PG Reserachers
Library services (advanced searching)	February 2020	Workshop	PG Researchers
Critical Thinking	February 2020	Workshop	PG Researchers
Facilitating Focus Groups	February 2020	Workshop	PG Researchers
Research Ethics	February 2020	Workshop	PG Researchers & Staff
Basic Statistics for Researchers	February 2020	Workshop	PG Researchers & Staff
Introduction to SPSS	February 2020	Workshop	PG Researchers & Staff
Profiling for Success - Researcher Career Paths	February 2020	Workshop	PG Researchers
Health Research Board Funding	February 2020	Information Session	PG Researchers & Staff
Research Postgraduate Orientation	February 2020	Training	PG Researchers & Staff
Fulbright Ireland Awards	March 2020	Information Session	PG Researchers; Staff & Y4
Introduction to Research at LIT	October 2020	Online Information Session	PG Researchers & Staff
The Postgraduate Path	October 2020	Online Information Session	PG Researchers & Staff
Research Support Services (1) - Library Services & Resources; Computer Services & Resources	October 2020	Online Information Session	PG Researchers & Staff
Research Ethics & Research Integrity (including GDPR)	November 2020	Online Information Session	PG Researchers & Staff
Becoming an Independent Researcher	November 2020	Online Information Session	PG Researchers & Staff
Postgrad Welfare - Health & Safety; Student Support Services & PG Society	November 2020	Online Information Session	PG Researchers & Staff
Research Support Services (2) - Mobility, Careers & Funding Supports	November 2020	Online Information Session	PG Researchers & Staff
Intellectual Property & Knowledge Transfer	November 2020	Online Information Session	PG Researchers & Staff
Publication & Dissemination	December 2020	Online Workshop	PG Researchers

## 2.14 Enterprise and Innovation

LIT has the most extensive enterprise centre programme of any higher education Institute in the country. LIT has, and continues to operate and support six enterprise, acceleration, and incubation centres across two counties sitting across two economic regions, the Mid West and South East. LIT provides entrepreneur development programmes, leadership development workshops, mentoring and startup clinics as well as supporting our entrepreneurs will access to an active global network. This network includes investors, mentors, supply chain connections, research organisations, other startup ecosystem leaders, entrepreneurs and many more key individuals and organisations to help entrepreneurs start and grow a global business. LIT has also a strong Entrepreneur in Residence Programme across our centres who give their valuable time and experience to the team and centre clients. LIT has recognised the need to take an active lead in enterprise development and has been recognised nationally for its efforts in supporting startups.

### Highlights: 2019/2020 - Total number of centres: 6

#### Owned/Operated:

- Hartnett Enterprise Acceleration Centre (HEAC), Moylish
- LIT Startup Hub (LEDP), Limerick
- Thurles Chamber Enterprise Centre (TCEC)
- LIT Questum Innovation & Acceleration Centre, Clonmel
- The Midwest Design Centre (virtual)/ IFIL, LSAD

#### Supporting:

- Croom Community Enterprise Centre (CCEC)

#### Of note during this Period:

- 166 direct centre based jobs (excluding LIT R&D teams and staff based in the centres)
- + 31 direct jobs off site by companies based in our centres
- + 120 jobs created by client companies based remotely
- 100+ entrepreneurs supported annually through our programmes, clinics and entrepreneur in residence supports.
- ~€8m funding raised by entrepreneurs supported at LIT enterprise centres during the period.
- COVID Response:
  - Risk assessments done and action taken for all our enterprise centres and clients, and programme participants.
  - Programme of support moved online including mentoring and clinics.
  - Continued client check-ins and open peer to peer support via meet-ups online

## Events and Awards

The Innovation and Enterprise team are a highly engaged team with our key stakeholders in the startup ecosystem. Each year the team organizes, partners, facilitates and collaborates on numerous events to support the continued development of a strong and vibrant startup and business ecosystem.

The team organised and/or played a leading role in the following major events:

Date	Event
16/10/2019	Limerick Chamber Regional Business Awards Shortlisting Event
18/10/2019	Tipperary Chamber Business Awards
23/10/2019	Trick or Treat in aid of Temple Street which raised €500 for the charity.
16/10/2019	Lunch & learn - Demystify Mindfulness (Stephen Pitcher)
13/11/2019	Lunch & Learn - Planning a successful meeting (Frank Guy)
15/11/2019	Limerick chamber Regional Business Awards
27/11/2019	Money Matters - Linda Ryan (BOI)
12/12/2019	Startup Grind - Webio (Cormac O'Neill and Paul Sweeney)
11/12/2019	Lunch & Learn - Innovative Networking (Stephen Pitcher)
18/12/2019	Intertrade Ireland Workshop (Drew O'Sullivan)
06/01/2020	Lunch & Learn - How to give straight-up feedback reservation (Frank Guy)
10/01/2020	Entrepreneurs Day, hosted at LIT Questum by LIT Entrepreneur in Residence, Tom Brennan together with 8 EY EOY finalists and winners.
06/02/2020	Startup Grind with Tom Brennan
12/02/2020	Lunch & learn - Essential Sales Development Tips for Business reservation
05/03/2020	Startup Grind - Peter Melerud, Kemp Technologies
11/03/2020	Lunch & Learn - Coping Effectively When Working Flat Out at Work reservation
22/04/2020	Lunch & Learn - The hats we wear when we lead and motivate a team reservation (Frank Guy)

## LIT's Enterprise Centres Response to Covid

LIT worked on mitigating the impact of covid19 by developing health & safety protocols and full suites of risk assessments for each of its enterprise centres; LIT's Hartnett Enterprise Acceleration Centre, LIT Questum, TCEC on campus in Thurles and the LIT Innovation Hub at the LEDP. We liaised with the ICM (Incubation Centre Manager) Network which is a network of managers from across the Institutes of Technology and Technological Universities, on the development of a return to work protocol and business model impact study.

Fortunately most of the startup companies in our centres weathered the severe disruption to their businesses, but there was significant impact to business operating in TCEC in particular, and a couple of clients each in the Hartnett Centre and Questum. We engaged with relevant government agencies and directed affected companies towards the government supports on offer.

A number of resident-clients in the Tipperary and Limerick Enterprise centres are actively involved in projects associated with tackling the COVID19 crisis:

Some example of some collaborations/projects:

- Ensuring continuity of power supply to hospitals and medical centres so they can operate at above normal capacity
- Maintaining high voltage links between wind farms and the national grid
- Testing buffer solutions for the HSE
- Adapting production lines to manufacture hand sanitiser, which was distributed free to community groups throughout the south-east and mid-west
- Working with Queens University to treat water with cold plasma to create a sterilising spray
- Developing a cold plasma unit to change the surface structure of agar, to speed up testing timeframe of covid19 cultures
- Advising the HSE South-East Crisis Management Team
- Planning a clinical trial application in conjunction with SFI for rapid response research against COVID19
- Providing COVID19 screen service
- Mental-health and stress-management mentoring, to small business owners and employees whose business and health are impacted by COVID19
- Thomond Gate Whiskey worked with colleagues in the sector to adapt their work in whiskey to make hand sanitiser.
- MyBev donated one of his drinks machines to the University Hospital Limerick. MyBev is the world's first custom nutritional beverage dispensing system.

## 2.15 Integration of UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)

Within LIT the UN SDGs have come to the fore across a range of activities and initiatives in 2019/2020. This increase in focus builds on existing academic teaching where SDGs are already integrated across a number of academic programmes as content covered within modules. Specifically the BSc in Environment Science and Climate and BSc in Community Development and Addiction Studies integrate the SDGs within foundation modules focused on sustainable development and community development. Graduates from these programmes emerge with a thorough understanding of the SDGs and their relevance to their particular field of study and future work.

In January 2020 strategic planning process was commenced for the LIT Thurles Campus. Following consultation and review a new strategic direction was agreed for the campus and the SDGs are the framework upon which the campus will define all of its activities. This significant strategic decision will see the academic programmes, R&D activities and external engagement processes refined and refreshed to reflect the SDGs across all aspects of the campus. Furthermore, the LIT Thurles campus will become the focal point upon which specific expertise and knowledge of SDGs and sustainable development will be radiate out to the entire organisation, and ultimately to the proposed Technological University.

The Development Unit, which is part of the Research, Development and Innovation function within LIT has been to the forefront on delivering on the sustainability agenda within LIT since its inception in 2011 and is now recognised Nationally and Internationally for its work. With a particular focus on sustainable energy, climate action, social enterprise, rural development and technology for education, the Unit team leads and partners in projects and activities while working closely with academic staff and experts across the Institute.

The Unit has been particularly successful in securing funding from an array of EU programmes (H2020, Interreg, Erasmus+, COSME and others) both as coordinators and as partners/co-beneficiaries. Key metrics for the Unit include

- Staff (head count) of 29 people (20 FTE) working on projects
- 28 on-going projects with a total value of €33m (LIT income of €7.3m)
- 12 of the on-going projects are being coordinated by LIT
- A network of over 150 partners across Europe with connections in most European Countries

The Development has particular expertise relevant to the following SDG areas

- SDG 4: Quality Education - through its works on innovation education and training content within Social Enterprise, Sustainable Building
- SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy - through its work on sustainable building and renewable energy solutions

- SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth - through its work on social enterprise and rural development
- SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities - through its work on sustainable energy, community development, climate action
- SDG 13: Climate Action - through its work on climate mitigation and climate adaptation.

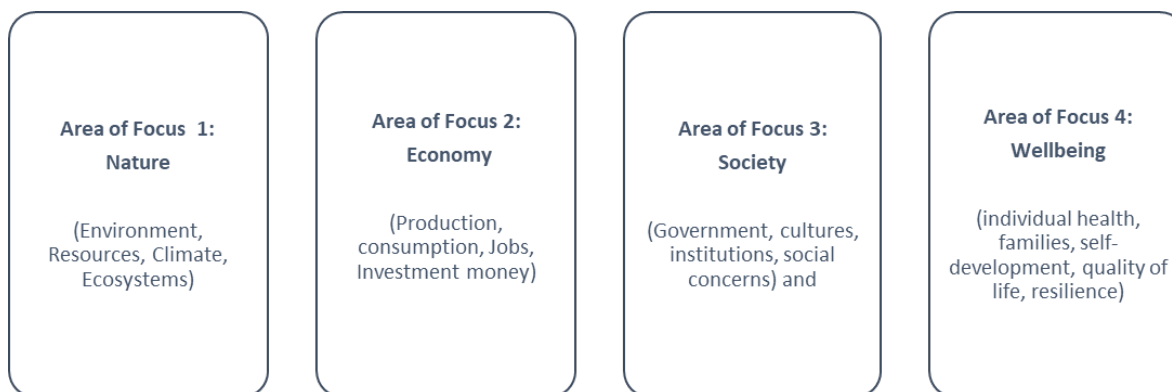
Emerging from the LIT Thurles Strategy and the work of the LIT Development Unit a new Sustainable Development Research Institute (SDRI) is being established which will deliver on LIT and TU's ambition to be at the forefront of sustainable development in the TU Region, by delivering inter-disciplinary research and building new knowledge and delivering positive impacts for and outcomes for society. It will build on the extensive foundation of applied research within the LIT Thurles campus to create a Nationally and Internationally recognised centre of excellence which enables communities, enterprise and industry to contribute to the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Focused around the themes of Nature; Economy; Society and Wellbeing, SDRI will deliver a step change in LIT/TU's contribution to the sustainable development agenda, delivering on the TU ambition of being a research informed organisation and inform future policy through active collaboration with HEIs, RPOs and policy makers Nationally and Internationally.

The aim of the Sustainable Development Research Institute (SDRI) is to maximise the impact of LIT, and the TU, on the sustainable development of the region through high quality, applied research informed and aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. SDRI will become an exemplary of multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary research producing high quality outputs through funded R&D projects, postgraduate research and publications. SDRI will re-enforce LIT's position as a leading actor in the sustainable development sector.

The core objectives of the proposed Institute will be

- To build upon the existing critical mass and expertise in the field of Sustainable development that exists within LIT generally and within LIT Thurles and the LIT Development Unit specifically.
- To engage in research, demonstration, consultancy and project development activities in the fields of Sustainable Development and to align this activity with the UN SDGs. The Institute aligns its interdisciplinary research within the themes of the Nature; Economy, Society and Wellness.
- To create synergies with other Institutes/Centres/Groups and Academic Departments in LIT/TU with a view to promoting the concept of sustainable development within all areas of LIT's and TU activities
- To engage in networks at a National, European and International level to further promote and develop LIT's presence in the Sustainable development arenas.
- To attract new expertise and researchers to join the SDRI team

SDRI will focus its activities around the following 4 areas:



The SDGs are also influencing LITs activities across its estates, student services and outreach functions. Relevant initiatives include

- Investment in energy efficiency and renewable energy solutions to reduce LITs carbon footprint (SDG7)
- Engagement with disadvantaged and marginalised groups to support access to education (SDG 4)
- Shared facilities within further education partners (SDG 4)
- Support to industry networks such as Limerick for Engineering (SDG 9 Industry and Innovation)

Some highlights are provided of relevant activities and projects completed and commenced in 2019/2020 which further emphasise the influence of the SDGs on LITs activities.

#### Sample of Completed Research Projects

Finish date	SDG	Project Acronym	Summary
23/04/2019	7	Superhomes 2.0	Developing new solutions for Air Source Heat Pumps within residential buildings
01/06/2019	4	MacraCPD	Developing a CPD programme for Macra Na Feirme
01/12/2019	8	IntSenSe	International Training for Social Enterprise - Education and Training resources
01/10/2020	8, 11	NYCI STEAM	Using games to support Youth Workers engage with the topic of sustainable development

#### Sample of On-Going Research Projects

Start date	SDG	Project Acronym	Summary
01/10/2019	4	PuRPOSE	Promoting innovation and entrepreneurship in HEIS
01/10/2019	11, 15	FARCURA	Social Farming as an alternative farm activity support marginalised communities

01/11/2019	4, 8	SocialB	Co development of social enterprise training resources for HEIs and SMEs
01/10/2020	11, 13	Climate Leaders	Training for Local Authorities on Climate Adaptation and Climate Mitigation
01/09/2020	11	COSY	Integrating sustainable development and complex systems into HEI education.
01/10/2018	3, 4, 8	FOLM	Outdoor learning as a means to support youth to re-engage with education, training and employment
01/09/2020	4	DASBE	Digital Hub for education and training on sustainable building

Other key highlights during the period include:

- Dean of Flexible Learning and Work Based Learning and previous Development Unit Manager, Mr. Seamus Hoyne recognised by SEAI for his contribution to sustainable energy when awarded the Outstanding Contribution to Sustainable Energy Award in 2020. Furthermore he was selected by the EU Commission as EU Green Ambassador in 2017
- LIT secured €1.5m in funding for the REMARKABLE project. Due to commenced in 2021 the focus of REMARKABLE is on Climate Leadership and integrates the expertise within LIT and the consortium on leadership/behaviour change with technical expertise on energy and climate planning.

Finally, during the period 2019/20 multiple staff and teams input the development process for the proposed TU within Athlone Institute of Technology. Sustainability and sustainable development are integrated into the framework of the TU and the SDGs are identified as a key principle which will inform the activities and strategic direction of the TU.



## 2.16 Third-mission activities, societal and community engagement

The Institute is proud of its society and community engagement activities and these have evolved across a broad sphere of Institute activities. A snapshot of these activities is represented in the following samples of related news items in the Institutes Presidents Newsletter for the reporting period.

**10th Anniversary of MarketLink Christmas Market!**

Christmas started with a flourish in LIT with our tenth MarketLink Christmas event on November 28th. This year's student nominated charities were Limerick Suicide Watch, Brú Columbanus, Jigsaw Limerick, The Butterfly Club Limerick and Cork City Hospital Children's Club.

As always this event was organised by students from across a wide-range of Business & Humanities programmes. The turnout and support from staff, students, local schools, charities and residents was fantastic. The feedback from both the customers and the students who participated in the programme was extremely positive. The choir who performed from the local Gaelscoil Sáirseal were also a big hit.

A big thank you to all staff and students for their efforts in making this such a successful MarketLink Christmas market event and raising €10,000 for charity!



### Development Unit beginning work on new sustainable energy projects

LIT's Development Unit will begin work later this summer on three new sustainable energy projects, worth a combined €500,000 to the institution, and valuing a total of €3 million.

The work is in addition to six energy projects currently ongoing at the Unit which have an overall worth of over €1.1 million to LIT.

HP4All, which will be coordinated by LIT, focuses on heat pumps for the construction of NZEB (Nearly Zero Energy Buildings). The project aims to ensure that energy gains afforded by heat pumps are realised, with the focus on the training and re-training of workers to achieve EU policy in the sector. The 2016 EU Heating and Cooling Strategy found expertise was lacking across green technology, with HP4All looking to provide the skills to workers to install and operate green technologies. LIT will co-operate with partners from Belgium, Spain, Austria and Italy.

Superhomes is a deep retrofit service for residential buildings, operated by Tipperary Energy Agency and supported by LIT, since 2015. The Superhomes2030 project aims to extend the initial service and scale up the Superhomes offering from €6m worth of retrofits per year in 2019, to €36m in 2023 and up to €150m per annum by 2030. The Development Unit will bring its team expertise in the form of architecture, engineering and data analysis to the project, which will also explore the possibility of extending the Superhomes model beyond Ireland and elsewhere in Europe.

The BUSLeague project is dedicated to stimulating demand for sustainable energy skills in the construction sector. LIT will partner with institutions from the Netherlands, Slovenia, France, Bulgaria, Spain and Austria on the initiative, which aims to support legislative changes that will stimulate the demand for sustainable energy skills in the industry. BUSLeague focusses on a blend of four elements: mutual recognition of energy skills, awareness raising, capacity building and legislative changes.

Kick-off meetings for the three projects will take place imminently, with the Superhomes2030 initial meeting having taken place virtually on June 3rd.

## NEWS - DEVELOPMENTS



Pictured at the Leaders@LIT scholarship ceremony are Alan Spillane, Scholar; John Kiely, Limerick Hurling Manager; Jade Foyne, Scholar and LITSU Vice President.

### **More than €1million investment in LIT scholarships ensures accessibility to higher education for more than 100 students.**

More than €1 million has been invested in LIT's scholarship programme in just five years, thereby ensuring higher education accessibility through financial support to more than 100 students.

This academic year alone 45 LIT students received scholarships - 26 through the Leaders@LIT Student Scholarship Programme and a further 19 via the HEA 1916 Bursary Fund – Programme for Access to Higher Education.

The recipients, along with the donors who have contributed more than €1million to the scholarship fund to date, were recognised at a special ceremony earlier this week at Limerick Institute of Technology, Moylish Campus.

Congratulating the scholarship recipients guest speaker, Limerick's All Ireland Hurling Winning Manager and School Principal, John Kiely, compared them to a "great full forward" taking advantage of every opportunity. But he added, "No one said it was going to be easy."

Mr Kiely said, "You the scholarship winners have demonstrated you have the work ethic and ability to achieve in your studies over the coming years and in your professional lives, and this scholarship will give you the best opportunity to maximise that potential.

"You are about to join an elite group of those that went before you, a group that can and will go on to make significant difference in many fields of work in Ireland, Europe and the world in years to come."

In its fifth year the LIT student scholarships aims to alleviate financial strain experienced by targeted student, allowing the recipients to concentrate fully on their education and finish their course of study. The programme has proved hugely successful and popular among students who may otherwise struggle to attend college.

## NEWS - DEVELOPMENTS

### LIT Brings Science Week to our Local Communities

Science Week 2019 took place from November 10th to 16th and once more LIT took the opportunity to bring science to our Limerick communities.

LIT collaborated with the Southill Area Centre and throughout the week hosted gardening workshops for 120 local school children to teach them about natural habitats and how to grow their own vegetables. Barbara Mulcahy who runs Southill Area Centre's community garden introduced students from Our Lady Queen of Peace National School, Gaelscoil Sheirse Clancy and Le Chéile National School to bee hives, wormeries and planting seeds. The photo below shows Barbara and pupils from Our Lady Queen of Peace National School.



LIT also collaborated with Pauline O'Brien (Be Your True Self Limerick) to deliver a workshop entitled 'The Science of Mindfulness: Some tools for our path to Wellbeing' to staff of Limerick's Adapt House and Limerick Social Services. In the workshop Pauline explained the science behind mindfulness and introduced tools skills which these caring staff can use in daily life to manage daily stresses and promote their own wellbeing.

These Science Week events were part of a programme for Limerick Festival of Science which is a collaboration between LIT, Mary Immaculate College and the University of Limerick. The Festival is funded by Science Foundation Ireland. The LIT programme included a series of shows and workshops in Moylish and in LSAD. There were other community events in Limerick City, County Limerick and Shannon. Thanks to all LIT staff and students who helped make these events so positive and engaging for all participants.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT



Staff of Adapt House attending LIT's 'The Science of Mindfulness' Science Week workshop.



Staff of Limerick Social Services attending LIT's 'The Science of Mindfulness' Science Week workshop.

## NEWS - DEVELOPMENTS

### Volunteers from LIT involved in making up to 5,000 Face Shields per week for Nursing Home Staff in the Mid West

A community of volunteers from across industry and education in the Mid West have begun producing up to 5,000 face shields per week for nursing home workers and other frontline staff.



The headbands for the shields, known as Aula Max Visors, are being produced from 3D printers in homes across Clare, Limerick and Tipperary, in schools, and on LIT campuses. Thousands of headbands are then collected by members of Bike Marshals Ireland and transported to LIT for sanitation and assembly.

The need for PPE, especially in the nursing home sector, inspired the group of engineers, scientists, 3D printing enthusiasts and educators to create the Aula Max PPE Hub, which is co-ordinated and run from Limerick Institute of Technology and based on the Benchspace Network model. Already 15 nursing homes and care services have contacted the Hub for supplies, and that number is expected to increase significantly over the coming days.

The Aula Maxima in LIT's Moylish Campus has been set up as a production operation for cleaning and assembling the face shield packs for the nursing homes and other facilities. This element of the work is carried out by teams of volunteers from LIT and local industry. Some "shifts" take place in the evening, when volunteers have finished work or study for the day.

President of LIT Professor Vincent Cunnane said, "What we do best in LIT and in this region is collaboration. This is a regional effort facilitated by LIT, with the community and voluntary sector, industry, second level and higher education coming together to meet a local need. This is help for the Mid-West by the Mid-West.

"The Aula Max Visor is really a symbol of co-operation in a time of adversity, it's a ground-up regional product and is only possible because of the relationships that exist between people and organisations here."

Programme Leader in Precision Engineering at LIT, Department of Mechanical and Automobile Engineering, Ciaran O'Loughlin said, "We plan to produce between 4,000 and 5,000 face shields every week and donate them to nursing homes and other health care facilities as required. This network is adaptable to meeting future PPE needs should they arise in the future."

An RTE report on the initiative can be [viewed here](#).

## 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period

### 3.1 QA and QE supporting the Achievement of Strategic Objectives

#### 3.1.1 LIT Strategic Plan 2018-2022:

The Strategic Plan 2018-2022 continues to play a strong role guiding Quality Enhancements across the Institute. Through the emphasis on the value of Excellence it seeks to embed continuous improvement in all Institute activities to support the achievement of the highest standards in all aspects of teaching, learning, research and related supports. It places a strong focus increasing LIT's impact on the region through the growth of student numbers and the provision of an enhanced quality teaching and learning experiences that enhances student learning and reflects the needs of industry. The strategy highlights the need to develop staff engagement as an enabler for fostering a culture of cross-disciplinary working, compliance, quality assurance, and continuous improvement.

Key priorities are to:

- Grow student numbers and diversify our student population
- Provide high quality teaching and active learning that reflects the needs of industry
- Increase LIT's RDI capacity in areas that have a clear economic and social impact for the region
- Deepen stakeholder engagement and increase our impact on the region
- Deliver on LIT's campus development plan to enhance the student experience

The implementation of the Institute's strategic plan is a cross functional activity involving all levels of the organisation. A broad range of Institutional functional area strategic plans and strategic Initiatives have been developed to support the implementation of the Institute Strategic plan. These initiatives form a key part of reporting to the HEA under Mission Based Performance Compact 2018-2021 agreed between Limerick Institute of Technology and The Higher Education Authority. The Compact provides a strategic framework for the relationship between the Higher Education Authority and Limerick Institute of Technology and sets out how the Institutes mission and goals align with national goals for higher education.

The objectives outlined below together with the associated planned actions and indicators further support the achievement of these key Instructional priorities as relevant. The objectives span a range of thematic areas and are designed to progressively support the priorities and deepen the impact of the associated academic activities into the next reporting period and in the context of anticipated Technological University designation. The range of quality enhancement activities demonstrates the commitment of the Institute to quality and academic excellence.

No.	Relevant objectives	Planned actions and indicators
1.	Conduct a thematic review of the Institutes Quality Assurance and Enhancement System	1. Complete a self-evaluation process and report and hold a Peer Review Panel Visit.
2.	Support the development of the AIT-LIT Technological University developing an integrated Quality Assurance and Enhancement System.	1. Development of a new integrated Academic Quality Assurance Handbook in anticipation of Technological University Designation. 2. Further updating of Quality Drive to reflect new governance Structure including Academic Council Subcommittees, Faculties and & Departments.
3.	Review/develop the Institutes Policy framework on Collaborative Provision including linked provision in the context of Designating Awarding Body Status.	1. Revised Policy on Collaborative Provision included in QA Handbook. 2. New Policy and Framework for Linked Providers included in QA Handbook.
4.	Develop a Credited CPD pathway to enable Institute Staff engage in accessible and flexible CPD in Academic Practice	1. Develop the following CPD Programmes in Academic Practice - Graduate Certificate - Graduate Diploma - Taught Masters
5.	Develop a range of resources and CPD opportunities that support staff in developing capacity for implementing Active Learning as the Institutes signature pedagogy. -	1. Development of a Compendium of Active Learning Strategies for Student Engagement. 2. Development of A Communities of Practice Initiative around Active Learning for Student Engagement. 3. Development and Delivery of the following L9, 10 Credit SPA's - Pedagogies of Active Learning for Student Engagement - Assessment for Engaged Learning
6.	Make Student Information and Resources more accessible to Students.	1. Develop of a dedicated Moodle Student Resources page - a one stop shop of student information and resources.
7.	Enhance Student Feedback by deepening the impact of the National Student Survey.	1. Maintain high participation rates in National Student Survey. 2. Participate in optional additional questions to maximise national benchmarking opportunities 3. Participate in the Postgraduate Student Survey scheduled for 2020/21. 4. Deepen the impact of the survey feedback at all levels of the organisation including at Departmental level.

8.	Provide effective supports remote teaching and learning which will be an integral part of Institute life during the next reporting period	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continue to offer both unaccredited and credited CPD opportunities to staff with a focus on digital enhanced teaching and learning.</li> <li>2. Continue to add to a dedicated Staff repository of learning resources in a Staff Moodle page called "TEL Resources" that provides user guides, documentation, videos and other supports on teaching, learning and assessment.</li> <li>3. Host a related National Forum Seminar Series on Enhancing Student Engagement through Technology Enhanced active Learning</li> </ol>
9.	Provide Professional Development supports and enabling resources to develop staff capacity to engage in innovative and authentic assessment practices.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop and deliver a range of unaccredited CPD supports for staff.</li> <li>2. Develop a range of resources and best practice guides to support a variety of different modes of assessment.</li> <li>3. Develop a 10 Credit Special Purpose award in Assessment for Engaged Learning.</li> <li>4. Increase the diversity of assessment methods employed by staff and programme boards.</li> </ol>
9.	Provide Institute-wide access to suitable platforms that enable the use of technology enhanced learning.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Roll out of Webcams to all LIT Classrooms.</li> <li>2. The integration of the MS Teams plugin into Moodle to allow staff and students link seamlessly between the two platform for an enhanced teaching and learning experience.</li> <li>3. Upgrade to the latest version of H5P to allow staff to access additional tools for building interactive learning resources.</li> <li>4. Develop a number of Recording booths across each campus within LIT. These recording booths will have sufficient hardware and software to allow staff to delivery online classes and development online learning resources.</li> </ol>
10.	Enhance the impact of Student Support Services and their engagement with all stakeholders.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop follow up plans further to the Strategic Review of Student Support Services.</li> <li>2. Create online platforms to support virtual engagement for all students with the relevant support services</li> <li>3. Enable continued access to all services in the context of covid-19 and the need for remote access where appropriate.</li> </ol>
11.	Implement the LIT Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP), with a particular emphasis on actions to strengthen equality, diversity and inclusion within Academic Practice	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensure that each future Staff Development Day includes workshops relevant to professional development of academic staff and PMSS and incorporates aspects of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion</li> <li>2. Amend and update relevant policies and procedures on the design, development and validation of new programmes to ensure the gender dimension is integrated into the proposed new curricula. Programmatic Reviews</li> </ol>

		<p>will provide an opportunity for Institutes to review existing curricula. Training will be provided for academic staff on the consideration of Equality and Diversity issues in the development of curricula</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. LIT will monitor the gender balance, attendance and the gender of chairpersons across institutional committees and subcommittees to ensure gender balance and take corrective action (rotating roles, co-options, etc.) if required, to emphasise LIT's commitment to gender equality and to increasing the visibility of women in leadership roles.</li> <li>4. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) is embedded within Staff Continued Professional Development Pathway</li> <li>5. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Champions Structure established within LIT to ensure that awareness of EDI is mainstreamed and integrated into LIT discussions and activities across faculties and functions</li> </ol>
12.	Deepen knowledge of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) across the Institute and with External Stakeholders	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Deliver short training on SDGs for all LIT staff through relevant staff development fora.</li> <li>2. Engage with external stakeholders to reinforce the positioning and focus on SDGs within relevant local/regional actions and policy. LIT RDI and Development Unit</li> </ol>
13.	Expand the range and scale of activities relevant to SDGs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establish specific Research Institute with a focus on Sustainable Development. RDI and Research Community</li> <li>2. Develop new academic Programmes at L8 and L9 with a specific focus on Sustainable Development</li> </ol>
14	Continued implementation and mainstreaming of the Service Delivery Unit Reviews as an important element of the Institutes Quality Assurance and Enhancement System	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Conduct reviews as planned, student Support Services and thematic Review of quality assurance and enhancement system.</li> <li>2. Develop a Review Schedule for all functional areas on a cross organisational basis.</li> </ol>



## 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
Faculty of Business and Humanities, <i>Department of Applied Social Sciences</i>	AY 2020- 2021	AY 2015 - 2016
Faculty of Business and Humanities, <i>Department of Sports Leisure and Tourism</i>	AY 2020- 2021	AY 2015 - 2016
Faculty of Business and Humanities, <i>Department of Marketing Enterprise and Digital Communications</i>	AY 2020- 2021	AY 2015 - 2016
Faculty of Business and Humanities, <i>Department of Business &amp; Financial Services</i>	AY 2020- 2021	AY 2015 - 2016
Strategic Review of Support Services Panel Visit	AY 2020- 2021	N/A
Thematic Review of Registrar's Office, Quality Assurance and Enhancement	AY 2020- 2021	N/A

### 3.2.2 Reviews planned beyond Next Reporting Period

Unit to be reviewed	Date of planned review	Date of last review
Faculty of Applied Science, Engineering and Technology, <i>Department of Built Environment</i>	AY 2021- 2022	AY 2017/18
Faculty of Applied Science, Engineering and Technology, <i>Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering</i>	AY 2021- 2022	AY 2016/17
Faculty of Applied Science, Engineering and Technology, <i>Department of Mechanical and Automobile Engineering</i>	AY 2021- 2022	AY 2016/17
Faculty of Applied Science, Engineering and Technology, <i>Department of Applied Science</i>	AY 2021- 2022	AY 2017/18
Faculty of Applied Science, Engineering and Technology, <i>Department of Information Technology</i>	AY 2021- 2022	AY 2015/16
School of Art and Design, <i>Department of Fine Art</i>	AY 2021- 2022	AY 2016/17
School of Art and Design, <i>Department of Design</i>	AY 2021- 2022	AY 2016/17
School of Art and Design, <i>Department of Digital Media</i>	AY 2021- 2022	AY 2016/17

## 4.0 Additional Themes and Case Studies

### 4.1 IQA Response to Emergency Situations/Covid-19 Pandemic

#### 4.1.1 Governance and Management Response

The Institute has a clearly defined quality assurance framework and governance and management structures. These were utilised effectively and enabled Management and Staff to respond adequately in the context of the presenting crisis. Programme and Department Boards met at short notice in emergency session immediately prior to the shut down and continued to meet online thereafter. A Standing Committee of Academic Council (as constituted per its Bye-Laws) met three times (12/03/2020, 1/04/2020 and 23/04/2020) to enable planning, oversight and approval of alternative arrangements around delivery and assessment and overall issues pertaining to the crisis. A Critical Incident Management Group was established, chaired by VP Corporate Services and Capital Development, to manage Institute's response to health and safety measures, business continuity plans and Institute's Communications. .

- Business Continuity Plans were prepared by all Faculty/Departments/Service Delivery Units and submitted to the Critical Incident Management Group. The Faculty/Department Business Continuity Plans were also considered by the Academic Council Standing Committee at its meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2020 and kept informed of their progress in later meetings.
- The primary mode of programme delivery in LIT is Face to Face Delivery in a 15 Week Semesterised Format. Delivery changed from this classroom based face-to-face teaching and learning mode to remote learning from Week 9 of the semester. Because the crisis arose in Week 9 of Semester 2, the online teaching element was directed to completing syllabi and moving to online support of students in preparation for assessment. There was an element of crisis management throughout rather than a generalised change over to systematic online teaching. Given the timeframes, the switch to support for students was the main focus and staff engaged with students in a wide variety of ways and contexts to achieve the completion of the modules.
- The Academic Council Standing Committee approved a document titled *Business/Academic Continuity Planning - Summer Assessment Phase* at its meeting of 1st April 2020. This outlined in detail the underpinning Principles and Assumptions with respect to alternative assessment, the internal mechanisms for the Quality Assurance of proposed alternative assessments in addition to detailing particular Stage arrangements for alternative assessments.
- The Registrar's office supported lecturing staff to amend assessment and examination modes as required. There was a robust process in place, built around the concept that the nature or quantum of assessment was going to change and there was flexibility in terms of the ability to re-design assessment.
- The Examinations Management System, GURU, was used effectively to collate alternative assessments. A dedicated site within GURU was established for the submission by staff of alternative assessment briefs and associated documentation.
- At its meeting of 23<sup>rd</sup> April, the Academic Council Standing Committee approved an Extension of Alternative Arrangements for to the Autumn Examination Repeat Sitings.

The use of existing Governance Structures such as Programme & Departmental Boards and the Academic Council Standing Committee enabled and empowered staff to adapt and amend teaching and learning delivery methods and assessment. It enabled staff to work within structures they were

familiar with and had confidence in. The ability to be flexible and adapt within these structures has been referenced by Staff as of huge benefit. The Programme board was instrumental in terms of decision-making and communication in the context of sustaining a new plan at short notice. They met to develop solutions around the alternative assessments and a descriptive approach was developed that was circulated to all students outlining the changes. From an academic management perspective, the move to online assessment was established efficiently and successfully and it was undertaken while maintaining a quality assured system. The dedication of staff was apparent, despite the anxiety and nervousness that comes with a crisis.

#### 4.1.2 Academic Regulations and Procedures

There were a number of targeted and proportionate revisions to Academic Regulations and Procedures to enable continued delivery and assessment of programmes of education and training at LIT. These included:

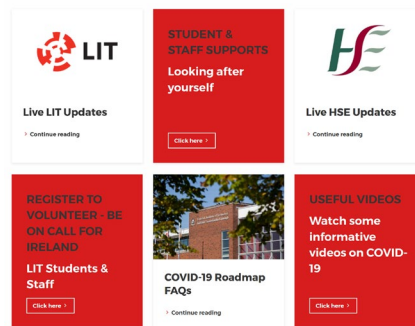
- Revisions to Academic Council Standing Orders with respect to Frequency of Meetings, Notice of Meetings and to Extraordinary Meetings to facilitate for Covid-19 and similar emergency scenarios. In addition, to allow for incorporeal meetings (virtual) in exceptional circumstances.
- Revision to Academic Council Regulations and Procedures, Deferral of an Assessment, to allow Covid-19 as a reason for seeking a deferral.
- Revision to the *External Examiner Policy & Procedures* with respect to the requirement of External Examiners to attend on campus.
- GURU was utilised effectively as a repository and source of evidence for all alternative assessments designed and implemented by each department, programme board and module owners.

#### 4.1.3 Communication

##### At Institute Level

- The Institute viewed regular, clear communication of the most up-to-date information to both Students and Staff as a key element of its overall response to the Covid-19 emergency. This was led by the Institute President who sent regular email updates with key information about health and safety measures in addition to updates on the current context, ongoing planning steps, and when to expect significant announcements, particularly with respect to delivery, assessment and examinations.
- To augment this and ensure all relevant parties were receiving official information a dedicated LIT Covid-19 Webpage was established at <https://lit.ie/Covid19> as the only source of up to date official LIT information. This site contained live updates with the latest information, health and welfare information on Student and Staff Supports, HSE Updates, FAQ's, Video Resources and a portal to facilitate Volunteering.

### COVID-19 Information



<https://lit.ie/Covid19>

#### At Faculty and Department Level:

- The Institute level Communication to Students was complemented at this local level by Communication at Faculty, Department and Programme Board/Programme Leader level. Prior to closure this included keeping students fully informed of the emerging situation on a face-to-face basis and after closure via email and online using various modes. The important initial message included ensuring that Students understood that the Institute was not closed, that learning would adapt from face to face to online delivery and that there would be end of term assessments though the precise nature/format would be determined.
- Staff/student interaction had to be and was modified and adjusted, in a short period of time, to communication and feedback loops utilising email, MS Teams, Zoom and Moodle.
- Communication to students was seen an essential element as the student's anticipation and expectations, particularly around the examinations and assessment processes, had entirely changed. The sit-down, written exam would be gone, and a new alternative assessment conducted online which they had not experienced before, was being presented. This involved an element of anxiety for both Students and Staff, and therefore needed to be managed, through open and clear communication.
- It was also important to give consideration around doing assessments remotely and the logistical and communication difficulties therein. Having a good internet connection was important and providing optional formats for submission was important also, especially if students had logistical issues.

#### **4.1.4 Institutional/Organisational Supports**

- The Institutes Student Support Services continued to operate an extensive range of services online, including critical services such counselling and medical.
- Information Technology and Computer System Supports: The Institute's Computer Services and Helpdesk function provided a broad range of supports and solutions to both staff and students and had to adapt rapidly to assist with required technical solutions and supports. A total of 29 computer services technicians were re-directed to answer support calls and helpdesk tickets.
- Teaching and Learning Support: The Teaching and Learning centre provided individual 1 to 1 support to all staff where requested and this included answering emails, online support and supported the efforts of the helpdesk and computer services where possible. In terms of preparing for delivery for A/Y 2020/21, the Quality, Teaching and Learning Centre has designed and delivered a series of training programmes over a two-week period in June to staff on creating online learning resources, online delivery and online assessment. The Centre has also

assisted and provided support to staff both individually as well as at programme team and department level. Training will be offered again in September, with a range of Technology Enhanced Learning resources and guides being made available to staff and this offering is continually expanding.

- Structural Institutional Support/Governance: This Institute has a clearly defined quality assurance framework and governance structure. The use of existing governance structures such as Programme & Departmental Boards and the Academic Council Standing Committee enabled and empowered staff to adapt and amend teaching and learning delivery methods and assessment. The ability to be flexible and adapt within these governance structures was of huge benefit. These structures supported and enabled Management and Staff to respond adequately in the context of the crisis.

#### 4.1.5 More Granular Supports Support's at a Local Level:

- LIT is noted for its very high and positive Student/Staff interaction, as repeatedly evidenced in a range of surveys. This high level of student/staff interaction and engagement continued in the remote learning context and this provided an invaluable level of support to students throughout the remainder of the Semester.
- Of particular note was that desire/expectation for one- to -one tuition in the online environment. The group class context and the fact that there are other class members became blurred and students had a tendency to see themselves as singular. That is positive if it can be encouraged and supported but it is very challenging from a lecturer's perspective, to go from a large class interaction to multiple individual interactions.
- E-mail address and phone number for the both Exams Office and Computer Services Helpdesk circulated to all students, to be contacted if experienced difficulties during online assessments e.g. uploading answer through Moodle.
- In terms of Student Supports for assessment purposes, a number of Students required scribes for Examinations and/or Assessments. The Institute normally provides this support, but it was not possible under the existing Covid19 conditions. To enable the continuation of this essential support for these Students, the Academic Council Standing Committee at its meeting of April 23<sup>rd</sup> approved the Scribe or Reader could be a family member of the relevant Student.

#### 4.1.6 Other Resource and Supports:

- Student Support Services provided links to a range of information, websites and resources relating to physical and mental health well-being.
- Computer Services offered links to a variety of their internal supports including how-to fact sheets, manuals, training video resources within a general ethos of common solutions to common problems.
- The following Institute Policies were also a useful resource:

[LIT Blended and Online Learning Policy](#)

[LIT Learning Design Frameworks](#)

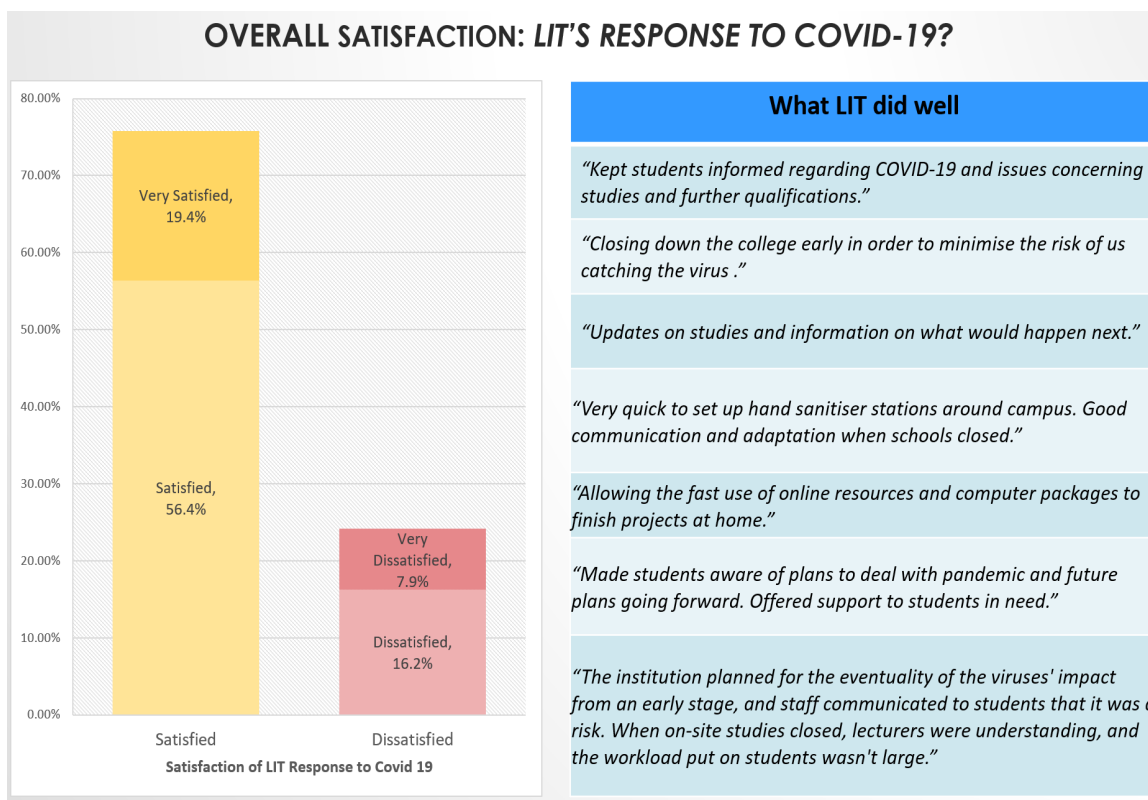
[LIT Lecture Recording Policy](#)

- The Quality Teaching and Learning Centre is providing access to a dedicated Moodle Page for Technology Enhanced Learning Resources (**TEL Resources Page**), which includes recorded training sessions, how-to video resources, manuals and training guides (**See Case Study 4.2.1**).

### 4.1.7 Covid-19 Barometer Survey Findings

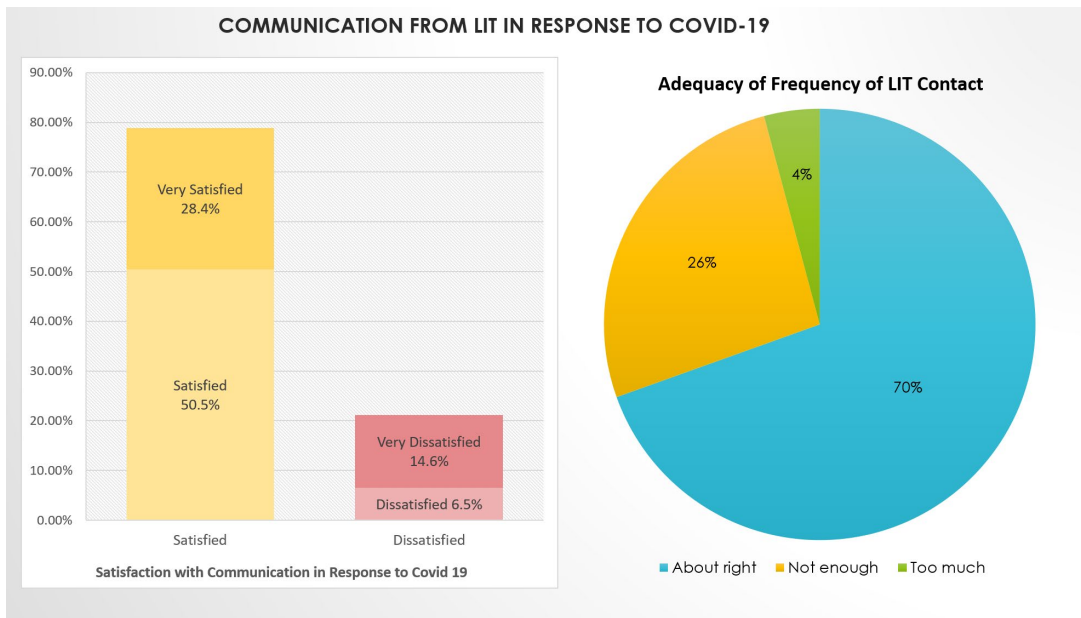
In June 2020, the Institute participated in an international survey titled COVID-19 Response Barometer. The survey was facilitated by I-Graduate (United Kingdom) who also facilitate the National Student Survey. The survey examined higher education Institutions responses to Covid-19 facilitating institutional analysis and providing a high level global benchmark. There was excellent engagement by LIT students with the survey with a total of 1195 students participating (392 1<sup>st</sup> Years, 262 Final Year and 541 Other Years).

A significant majority of Students (75.8%) were Satisfied with the Institutes Response to Covid-19. Satisfaction with Communication from LIT was also high (78.9 %). Some representative comments with respect to what LIT did well are shown below.

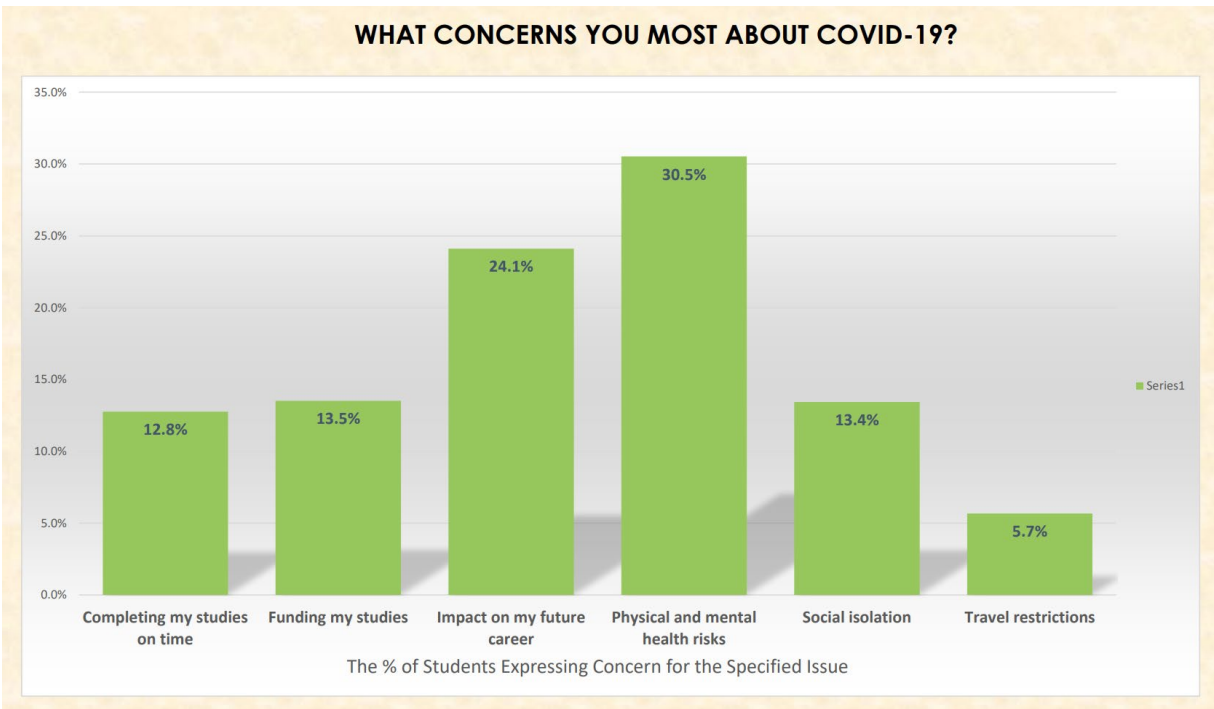


LIT outperformed the Global Benchmark in all Five overall parameters as indicated below. The global benchmark consisted of 13, 156 Students at the point of analysis.

Parameter	LIT Result (%)	Global Benchmark (%)
Student Satisfaction with the Institute Response to Covid-19	75	66
Student Satisfaction with Online Learning	65	63
Student Satisfaction with Communication	78	75
Students Concerned about Completing Studies	66	68



Physical and Mental Health Risks and impact on future Career and Funding my Studies were identified as a primary concerns for Students with respect to Covid-19. These results indicated the importance of providing the full complement of Student Supports Services to assist students during the Covid-19 period.



While 63.5% of Students expressed satisfaction with Online Delivery, students did indicate that they were dissatisfied with specific aspects such as feedback, groupwork, accessibility, and learning resources in open text responses. This feedback was informative and formed the basis of important learning to improve remote learning going forward. The Survey findings were analysed in detail and the following represent the top five recommendations that the Institute would take fully on board into the next reporting period.

<b>Five Top Recommendations</b>	
1	Continue to develop an effective strategy to communicate the availability of Student Supports Services and how they can be accessed remotely. In light of survey, ensure adequate mental health supports are available.
2	Provide dedicated training to Staff for facilitating effective online delivery and assessment. Particular emphasis on facilitating effective online groupwork and providing feedback on assessment.
3	Further develop systems to induct and support students for remote learning including supporting accessibility/laptop/IT issues and supporting students for effective participation in online groupwork.
4	Develop strategies to ensure the Students are adequately prepared for remote/alternative assessments. Develop a clear communication strategy with respect to how assessment will operate and communicate this well in advance. Ensure adequate time for completing online exams/alternative assessments.
5	Programme Boards/Careers and Employability Services consider how to address and support Student concerns about Impact of Covid-19 on Careers and Career Planning.



## **4.2 Case Studies**

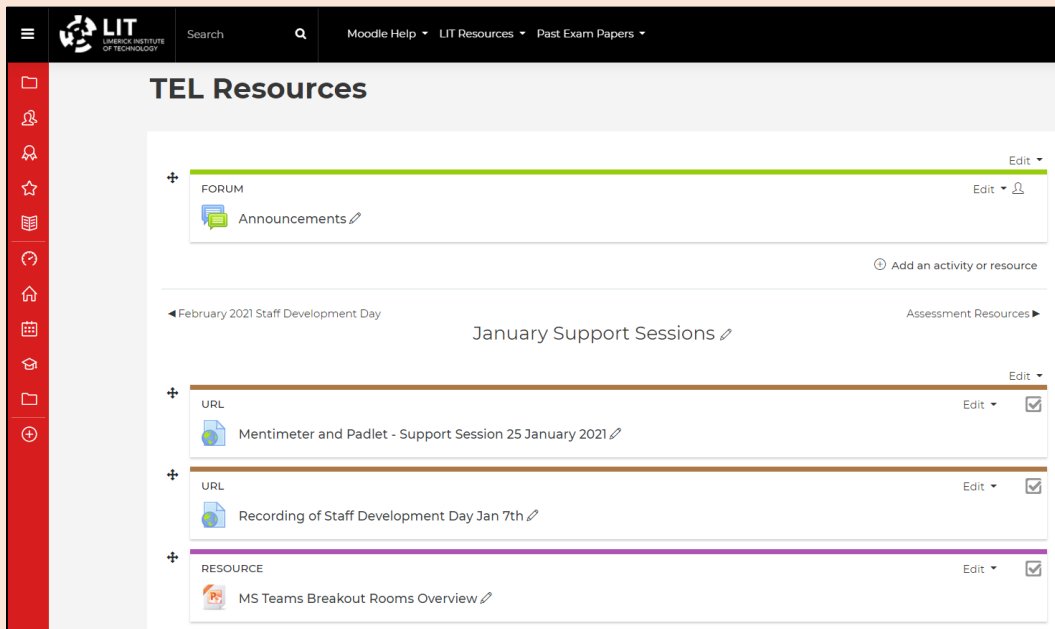
**4.2.1 Utility of dedicated Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) Resources Moodle Page during Covid-19**

**4.2.2 Active Learning as a Signature Pedagogy at LIT**

**4.2.2 Enhancing the Approach to Self-Evaluation in QAE Processes**

## Utility of dedicated *Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) Resources Moodle Page* during Covid-19

The TEL Resources page is a dedicated online page that has been setup in the Institute's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), Moodle with the intention of having a central online space for sharing resource and support material with staff across the Institute. The Moodle Page contains 50 recorded support sessions and over 40 guides, and relevant support documentation for staff to use. The page was setup by the Academic Developer in Quality, Teaching and Learning as an easily accessible tool for distributing learning resources and support material for staff. All staff across the Institute have access to Moodle and can enrol on the page and view resources online at any time. The page consists of a series of sections/topics on various digital applications and approaches for teaching and learning that are supported within the Institute.



In addition to providing support material on specific digital tools and applications there are resources on innovative approaches for implementing active learning, digital learning, and online assessment. Sections are added to the page based on new/updated application that become available to staff such as Urkund, MS Teams etc. The learning resources include links to videos, user guides and interactive learning resources that have been developed in-house by members of the Quality, Teaching and Learning Team. There are also links to relevant website, journal articles and videos on relevant topics. Throughout the academic year the Institute runs several staff development days and workshops on various topics related to teaching and learning. Additional user guides are sometimes created to support staff in the workshops. All online sessions are recorded and the recordings along with any slides or documentation from these session are made available to staff from the TEL Resources page.

After the transition to emergency remote teaching in March 2020 a specific training programme was delivered by the Academic Developer from Quality, Teaching and Learning. This programme involved daily online sessions over a two-week period in June, with the first week focusing on setting up and delivering classes online and the second week focusing on online teaching, continuous assessment, and online exams. Each session was recorded and made available through the TEL Resources page. Supporting documentation was created and made available through the page also. Having this dedicated space allows for staff to access the recordings from any session afterwards and go through the material in their own time. This has been seen as a really useful approach for supporting staff in that they can attend the live session and ask questions but also go through the recorded session at a later date when they need to setup and use tools/applications.

## Active Learning as a Signature Pedagogy at LIT

LIT has named Active Learning as its Educational Philosophy and *Signature Pedagogy* for over a decade now. In its current Teaching and Learning Strategy (2018-2023), LIT positions active learning as a means of achieving “Academic Excellence.” LIT has also embedded Active Learning as a core element of its Institute Strategic Plan (2018-2022) which identifies as a strategic priority to *Provide High Quality Teaching and Active Learning that reflects the needs of Industry*. The institute strives to embed Active Learning in programme design, delivery and assessment processes as a means of continuously striving for innovation and excellence in teaching and learning.

### Active Learning and Student Engagement

Active Learning at LIT is an educational process where students become **vigorously engaged** in assimilating the material being explored, rather than passively absorbing that taught by others. *Active learning* is an umbrella term that refers to several models of instruction. LIT has also developed six active learning principles to underpin its approach to active learning approach. Figure 1. The implementation of these involves the creation of a dynamic learning environment of four learner interactions: student to teacher; student to content; student to student and student to practice settings.

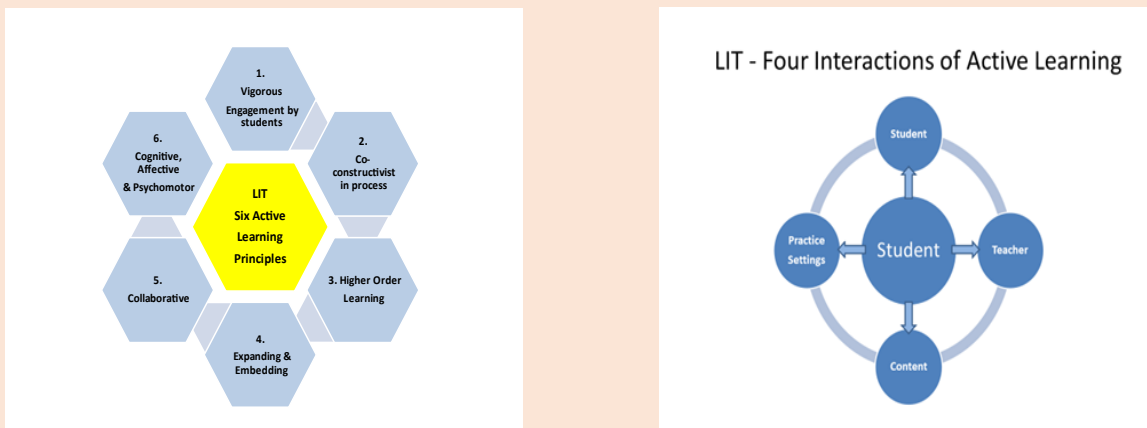
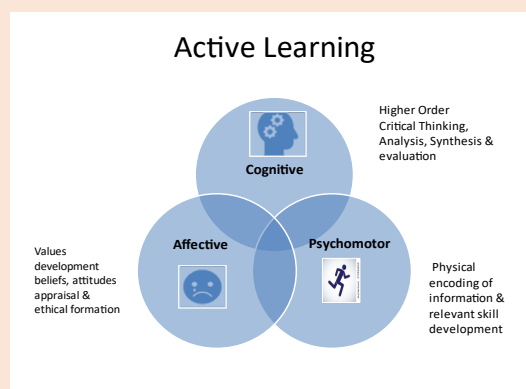


Figure 1 The Principles of Active Learning and its four interactions.

Active Learning can range from traditional instructional models to more constructivist and co-constructivist approaches (inclusive of face to face, blended and online learning). With active learning, lecturers have the opportunity to become: *activators of meaningful learning, not just facilitators, being creative in choosing from a wide palette of strategies to be mixed and adjusted to context and learner*<sup>[1]</sup>. Active learning for student engagement embraces new possibilities afforded by technology enhanced learning and the *flipped classroom*. Active Learning methodologies can occur along a continuum from: individual-based activities, to pair and group-based episodes of collaborative engagement including *extended case-study method* and *enquiry-based learning*.

At LIT - active learning across a range of disciplines involves the ongoing development of three learner domains; cognitive, affective and psychomotor, ensuring that learner engagement and learner development is holistic, comprehensive, challenging and relevant to industry needs (Figure 2).



## The Rationale for Active Learning at LIT

- *Pedagogical evidence-based studies:* These demonstrate that active learning enhances student engagement and knowledge retention.
- *LIT Graduate Attributes, work readiness & development of the whole person:* Life-long skills such as: adaptability, critical thinking, creativity, teamwork, problem solving and reflective practice are nurtured through well-designed active learning strategies and professional practice placements
- *Applied Disciplinary Domains:* Our undergraduate suite of programmes includes a range of skills-based programmes, where ongoing competency development is integral to the learning experience and future employability. In an LIT graduate survey 2018, almost 90% of LIT's 2017 graduates, were employed within the Mid-West.
- *Diversity and learner inclusivity:* Students in LIT display a range of multiple intelligences and ability levels. Learner diversity is best facilitated and enabled through a range of active learning strategies - complemented by assessment *of, for* and *as* learning.
- *Learning Outcomes & Constructive Alignment.* Learning outcomes are sets of competencies expressing what a student shall know, understand or be able to do after a process of learning. They are an essential part of the learning model known as Constructive Alignment where there is *coherence* between assessment, teaching strategies and intended learning outcomes in an educational programme.
- *Active Learning in preparation for Lifelong Learning:* LIT graduates are equipped to develop professionally and personally. It is widely recognised that 21<sup>st</sup> century graduates will need to engage in continuous professional development. A positive undergraduate experience is therefore vital to the development of learner motivation.
- *Disciplinary Excellence in Learning, Teaching and Assessment.* The emerging focus on Disciplinary Specific Pedagogies (National Forum) provides a national policy momentum for specific disciplines in LIT to continue to develop and design customised active learning curriculum initiatives.

## Strategic Initiatives to support ongoing development and innovation in Active Learning

1. During 2019-2020 LIT supported by National Forum Funding (Strategic Alignment for Teaching and Learning Enhancement) published and disseminated *A Compendium of Active Learning for Student Engagement*. This publication includes over sixty five Active Learning Strategies. It also includes a Practitioner Guide where practitioners across a range of disciplines provide examples of how they use active learning to engage students.

The Compendium is available at: [Compendium of Active Learning: Strategies for Student Engagement](#)

2. LIT also developed an accredited Special Purpose Award (10 ECTS) in *Pedagogies of Active Learning for Student Engagement* for LIT staff. These initiatives and other Staff Development initiatives continue to support the expanding infrastructure of Active Learning at LIT.

## Reference

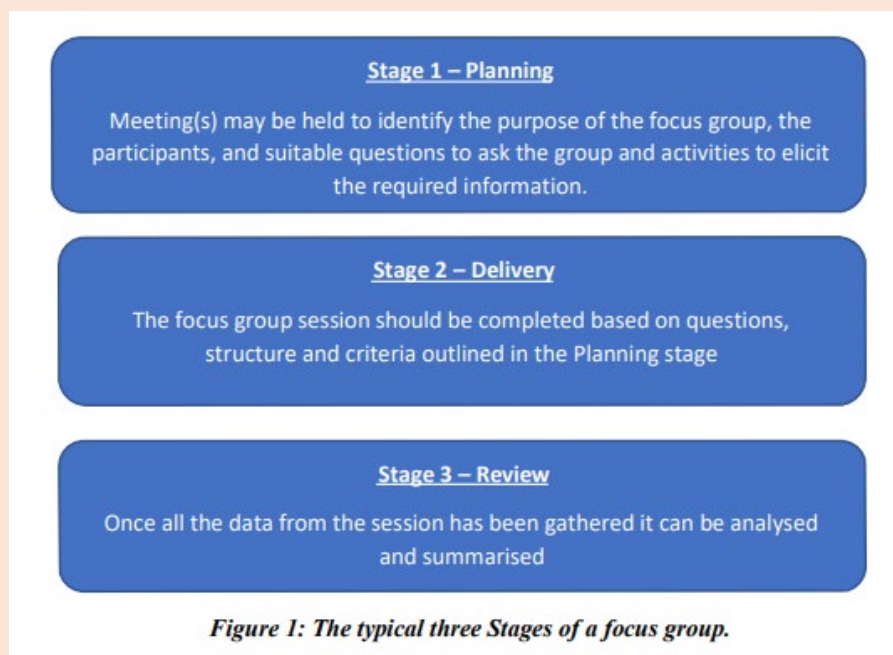
- [1] Caena, F. and Redecker, C., (2019). Aligning teacher competence frameworks to 21st century challenges: The case for the European Digital Competence Framework for Educators (DIGCOMPEDU), *European Journal of Education* ISSN 0141-8211 (online), 54 (3), 2019, p. 356-369, JRC117352.

## Enhancing the Approach to Self-Evaluation in QAE Processes

Self-evaluation forms a critical part of many Quality Assurance processes including *Programmatic Reviews, Thematic Review, Service Delivery Review and Cyclical review*. To enhance the quality of the self-evaluation review process, Best Practice Guidelines have been developed. The aim of these guidelines is to help professionalise the approaches of the various Institute teams to critical self-study and self-evaluation processes intrinsic to these QAE processes.

The guidelines offer direction and guidance and are available as a reference guide for planning, structuring, and implementing a focus group session. The guidelines have been created as a resource to support staff who are running focus groups as an approach for self-valuation exercises, information gathering and collation with LIT Staff or Students. The Guidelines are available at: [LIT Focus Groups, Best Practice Guidelines](#)

The guidelines are divided into three stages Planning, Delivery and Review.



### Stage 1 - Planning

Begins with how best to plan a focus group and for staff to identify what the overall purpose and aim of the review process is. This is a key stage and will determine the format for the focus group, the participants, the activities, what questions get asked and the type of data collected.

### Stage 2 - Delivery

Based on the criteria identified in stage 1 and the Best Practice Guidelines this provides guidance on the format for the focus group and how to run/moderate the focus group session. Staff are asked to consider the role of the moderator, how icebreakers and activities will be used, how feedback will be gathered and advise on how to summarise the discussion held during the focus group.

### Stage 3 - Review

This goes through the steps and considerations for collating and analysing the data and developing a report on the findings. Guidance on the structure of the report and the key areas to be address are provided. Links to references and related resource material are provided in the document as well.

In November 2019, the Quality, Teaching and Learning Centre organised a staff workshop on planning and delivering Focus Groups. An external facilitator was brought in to run the workshop and staff across the Institute involved in different review processes were invited to attend the workshop. The Best Practice Guidelines were referred to during this workshop along with additional resources provided by the external facilitator. The workshop and the Best Practice guidelines provided participants with the opportunity to review the steps involves in running a focus group and identify key considerations for their own self-evaluation reviews. Positive feedback from Staff indicated the utility of this approach in supporting various