

**Annual Quality Report for  
Munster Technological University  
Reporting Period 2021-2022**

[Munster Technological University (MTU)]  
2023

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**Annual Quality Report for  
Munster Technological University (MTU)  
PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM  
Reporting Period 2021-2022**

## PREFACE

The **Annual Quality Report** 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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## Guidelines on Completing the Report

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

### Submission Process and Timeline

The deadline for submission of the AQR each year is in February of the relevant year, with the call for submission sent to institutions in Q4 of the preceding year. Once the call for submission has been made, QQI will provide access of QQI's provider portal, QHub, to the designated institution contact(s) to facilitate submission of the report. Through QHub, each institution will have access to an editable version of its AQR for the previous reporting period. This document can then be amended/updated to reflect any changes or developments that occurred during the current reporting period before submitting the final report to QQI.

### Completing the AQR

- When completing the AQR template, all relevant colleagues in the institution should be consulted.
- Consider whether external audiences will be able to understand the terminology used (particularly local abbreviations and acronyms); it may be helpful to include a glossary.
- Aim to avoid duplication in the report - where information is relevant to more than one section, the first mention may be referenced in subsequent sections.
- When providing reflections on quality enhancement it is interesting to share a broad range of examples including what worked or didn't work.

## Report Structure

### Part A: Internal QA System

Part A of the AQR should provide a succinct outline of the institution's internal quality assurance (IQA) system and include details of the governance and management structures and supports in place, and all policies and procedures underpinning quality across the organisation.

Links to current QA policies and procedures in operation in the institution should be included. Please ensure that all links are correct and functional. As the AQR is submitted in respect of a specific reporting period, it is recommended that the institution establish a unique SharePoint/OneDrive folder (or similar) for that reporting period to archive current versions of the policies and procedures and include relevant hyperlinks that are included in the AQR.

The information contained in Part A is carried from one reporting period to the next and should not require substantial update on an annual basis. However, institutions are asked to update and highlight any significant changes in the structures and published material that support the internal IQA framework as they arise.

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

Part B of the AQR focuses specifically on the effectiveness and impact of the IQA framework on the QA activities and developments across the institution. Here, the institution is invited to document the quality enhancements adopted and implemented during the reporting period and describe concisely the impact of these across a selected range of QA activities. Part B should also be used to demonstrate how plans set out in the previous AQR were progressed during the reporting period. These plans may be linked to strategic objectives, to QQI reengagement recommendations, or to institutional review recommendations.

### Case Studies

In each reporting period, QQI may request updates on thematic areas or may invite the institution to submit case studies in response to specific topics. The institution may also include case studies on topics of their choosing, demonstrating good practice in QA and QE in action. In formulating case studies, the institution is encouraged to

reflect on and highlight areas that may be of interest to other HEIs and would benefit from wider dissemination. Further guidance is provided in Part B.

## 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
8.0 - Monitoring and Periodic Review	2.10	Other Parties Involved in Education and Training	1.9	On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes
9.0 - Details of Arrangements with Third Parties			1.2	Design and Approval of Programmes
2.0 - Programme Development and Delivery	2.11	Self-evaluation, Monitoring and Review	1.9	On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes
8.0 - Monitoring and Periodic Review			1.10	Cyclical External Quality Assurance
4.0 - QA of Research Activities and Programmes	QAG for Providers of Research Degree Programmes			



## Introduction and Overview of Institution

This is the AQR for Munster Technological University for the reporting period **1 September 2021 – 31 August 2022**.

The AQR has been approved by Dr Áine Ní Shé and Dr Brendan O'Donnell, Registrars / Vice-Presidents for Academic Affairs of MTU and is submitted by Eva Juhl on behalf of MTU.

Munster Technological University (MTU) is a multi-campus technological university, contributing to the South-West region through the provision of academic programmes which support student development and opportunities, education and research. MTU has an extensive and impressive regional footprint with six campuses in Cork and Kerry, a student body of 18,000, and over 2,000 staff. MTU supports entrepreneurship, enterprise development and innovation, and serves the community and public interest.

MTU was established on 1 January, 2021, through the merger of Cork Institute of Technology (CIT) and Institute of Technology (IT) Tralee. Fusing the individual strengths, extensive experience and passion for education and entrepreneurship of both institutions, the new university has an ethos of excellence, an ambition to serve the needs of its community and region, and a vision of higher education provision that is innovative, responsive, entrepreneurial and forward-looking. The Mission, Vision and Core Values of MTU are set out in Table 1:

<b>Munster Technological University (MTU)</b>				
<b>Values</b>	Inclusive	Engaging	Dynamic	Bold
<b>Vision</b>	To lead transformation through education			
<b>Mission</b>	To lead change and, through education, empower people for a successful future in a globalised world			

Table 1: MTU Values, Vision and Mission. (From: Munster Technological University, *Our Shared Vision. Strategic Plan 2022 – 2027*, p.7, link [here](#).)

The six MTU campuses are centred in two locations in Munster, Cork and Tralee, and encompass MTU Bishopstown, MTU Crawford College of Art and Design, MTU (Cork) School of Music and the National Maritime College of Ireland as well as MTU (Kerry) North Campus and MTU (Kerry) South Campus.

MTU makes major higher education awards at all levels of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) from Higher Certificate (NFQ Level 6) to PhD (NFQ Level 10), as well as minor and special purpose awards. The University also makes joint awards with University College Cork, as well as offering a number of international cotutelle (double) research awards, most at doctoral level.

Building on the statutory functions and historic strengths of the Institutes of Technology, the Technological Universities (TU) Act of 2018 continues to emphasise career education, technology and provision of regional offerings as distinctive traits of the technological university sector in Ireland, marrying this with a strengthened focus on international research excellence, research-informed teaching and postgraduate provision.

MTU's professional focus is reflected in the broad spectrum of its provision which encompasses both academic programmes and craft and degree apprenticeship programmes leading to both further and higher education awards. This is further reflected in the remarkable extent of professional recognition and accreditation achieved

by MTU programmes across all discipline areas and is also obvious in the manifold professional development offerings for mature, work-based learners, be it through bespoke delivery of modules and short courses at company premises or through the broad and varied portfolio of part-time and evening programmes. Continuous industry input was, and continues to be, a feature of programme design and emphasis on work placement in many higher education programmes across all academic fields.

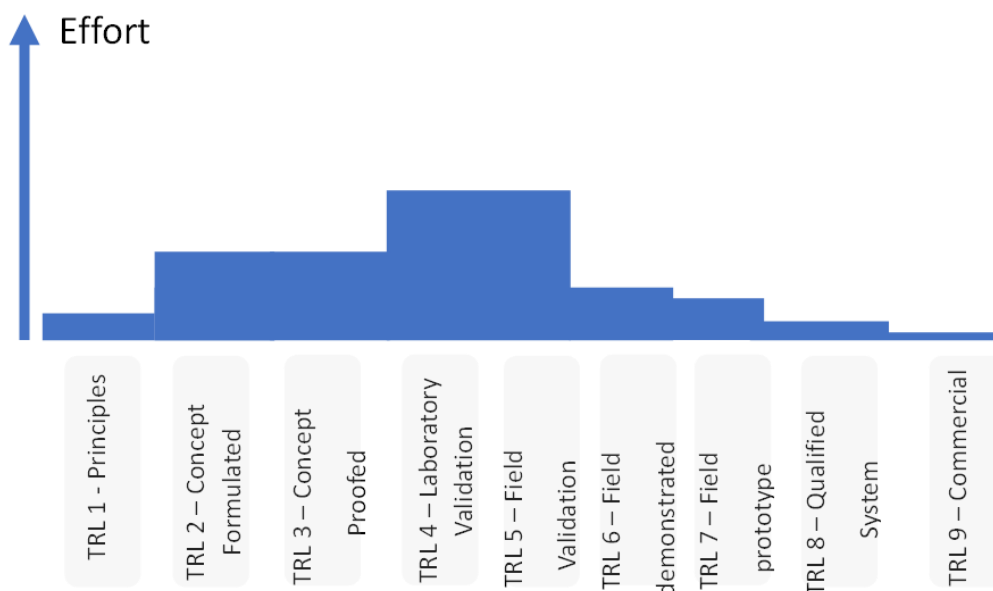
Driving forward internationalisation is central to MTU's ambitions for the future. The University's vision for internationalisation is to develop its graduates as global citizens with the necessary abilities and confidence to live, work, achieve and participate fully in an international environment.

Last but certainly not least, MTU's research has achieved significant national and international impact, as evidenced by a range of recognised key performance indicators including success rates in competitive funding calls, citation rates of scholarly outputs, profile of international collaborators and number of research contracts with industry. The impact profile (see Table 2 below) affirms the excellence of MTU's research activity across the continuum from fundamental to commercialisation. And while MTU focuses on mid-Technological Readiness Level (TLR) activities, MTU research covers the full continuum from fundamental to spin out (commercialisation) (see Graph 1 below).

Impact Parameter (Bold)	MTU Performance	Source / Comment
<b>Scale of Research</b>		
Research Expenditure	Circa €21m	KTI survey 2021
PhD students	Circa 200	PRB annual report 2021 / largest amongst TU's
<b>Knowledge Dissemination</b>		
Field-weighted Citations	1.57	Scopus / Publications cited 57% more frequently than global average in 2021
<b>Knowledge Transfer</b>		
Direct Industry Funding	€3.8m	KTI survey 2021 / largest amongst TU's
International Funding		
H2020	15.2% application success	EU / Third highest in Ireland
H2020	€16m	MTU / More than double predecessor FP7 programme
<b>Supports for Companies</b>		
Use of facilities and equipment	351 contracts signed	KTI / Highest of any university or government agency in Ireland in 2021

Table 2: Research Impact Profile for MTU.

*Legend*: KTI = Knowledge Transfer Ireland



**Graph 1:** Effort expended across the MTU R&I ecosystem as per relative amount of research expenditure (“effort”) across the Technology Readiness Levels (TRLs).

This report was collated by the Registrar’s Offices and editorially overseen by Ms Juhl. Material from AQRs submitted previously by the predecessor institutions has been integrated into Part A of this submission to the extent that the quality structures and processes described continue to exist in MTU at the time of writing.

Inputs for individual sections were sought in the form of written, or in some few cases, oral contributions from the responsible head of function and/or functional specialists within particular areas as appropriate. While the material received has been editorially prepared to ensure relevance to the purpose of the report and maximise overall coherence and flow, the AQR represents the view of the institution as a whole on its quality systems and activities as expressed by those of its members responsible for and most familiar with the implementation of its individual functions.

As for MTU’s AQR 2022, which described the initial eight-month period following TU designation, intensive work on the development and implementation of new MTU policies, structures and processes has been ongoing during the drafting of this report. AQR 2023 aims to present the most up-to-date and accurate snapshot possible of both the new governance and executive structures introduced during the reporting period and those elements of the inherited quality frameworks and procedures of CIT and IT Tralee which remain in place at the time of writing. With further changes to MTU’s quality framework continuing during drafting and following submission of the report, however, certain features described may have been superseded when the report is published.

## 1.0 Internal QA Framework

### 1.1 Governance and Management of Quality

#### 1.1.1 Governance and Quality Management in the Post-Establishment Period

On 1 January 2021, Munster Technological University (MTU) was established under the TU Act 2018 through the merger of Cork Institute of Technology (CIT) and Institute of Technology (IT) Tralee. With establishment of the new technological university, IT Tralee and CIT stood dissolved.

While MTU is a new legal entity with a separate statutory role and a different governance and management structure, the TU Act 2018 provides for an initial transfer of functions (Section 37), programmes of education and training (Section 59), quality assurance procedures and access, transfer & progression procedures (both Section 61) from the dissolved component institutions to the new technological university on designation day.

##### a. First Governing Body

The first meeting of the Governing Body of Munster Technological University took place on 1 January 2021. At that inaugural meeting, MTU was formally established and Prof Maggie Cusack was appointed as President.

Other items addressed at the inaugural Governing Body meeting included:

- Staff and student representation on Governing Body;
- Approval of the Governing Body Standing Orders;
- Approval of the MTU Code of Governance (not specifically intended to address academic governance);
- Establishment of the MTU Audit and Risk Committee (to independently ensure proper corporate governance of the University and the management of a Risk Register for the University); and
- Approval of the MTU Dignity and Respect Policy and Procedure (published [here](#)).

The MTU Code of Governance provides the framework for the application of best practice in corporate governance by MTU and is published on the MTU website, as is the MTU Dignity and Respect Policy. Both documents may be accessed [here](#).

The MTU Governing Body furthermore ratified the continued application of the legacy regulations, policies and procedures of the dissolved institutions to the respective MTU campuses to which they applied immediately before establishment of the MTU, in accordance with the TU Act (2018). These legacy regulations and policies will remain in place until such time as they are formally amended or replaced by MTU.

Soon after designation, MTU Governing Body commenced the process of expanding its membership, this to be completed within a six-month timeframe, in accordance with the Technological Universities Act 2018. This was to enable the appointment of both student and MTU staff members to Governing Body, along with additional external members. The first meeting of the expanded Governing Body took place on 30 June 2021. The Term of Office of the Governing Body is two years from the date of appointment, with student members appointed for a one-year term.

## b. Transitional Academic Council

At its inaugural meeting, MTU Governing Body ratified the establishment of a small Academic Council to meet the legislative requirements for an Academic Council to be in place from Establishment Day. The membership and responsibilities of this small Academic Council were legislated for under the TU Act (2018) also.

Subsequently, the Governing Body agreed on the establishment of a ‘transitional’ MTU Academic Council. This transitional Academic Council, which commenced on 7 May 2021 and currently continues in existence, has a larger membership with a majority of elected members. A number of Academic Council Committees were also established to support the transitional Academic Council in the discharge of its functions, including the development of new, common academic policies and procedures for MTU.

The committee structure of the transitional Academic Council of MTU comprises an Executive Committee and six “Integration & Development Committees”. Two Academic Legacy Committees (the former Academic Councils of CIT and ITT) were also in operation during the reporting period. The Academic Legacy Committees dealt with legacy processes and local operational issues and had significant delegated authority from the MTU Academic Council to manage quality assurance within the pre-existing QA frameworks. Following completion of the legacy processes still in train and adoption of a number of university-wide QA policies and procedures, including for new programme approvals, the two Academic Legacy Committees were stood down.

See **PART B Section 1** for further detail on Governing Body and Academic Council for the reporting period.

## c. Commencement of MTU Regulations, Policies and Procedures

At its inaugural meeting, 4 January 2021, the MTU Academic Council agreed a number of principles in relation to the status and interpretation of the saved quality assurance policies and procedures of the former Institutes of Technology. These principles were subsequently ratified by Governing Body, as follows:

- The core academic regulations, policies and procedures of MTU are those that previously applied at the Institutes immediately before the establishment of the University. These are to remain in place until such time as they are altered by way of amendment or replacement by MTU.
- MTU (Cork) or MTU (Kerry) Regulations would continue to apply to the modules and programmes to which they applied immediately before the establishment of MTU. Any students on those modules and programmes would be subject to the MTU (Kerry) or MTU (Cork) regulations in respect of any matters covered by those regulations.
- Oversight of the regulations specific to MTU (Cork) and MTU (Kerry) and their implementation was to lie with the Kerry Academic Legacy Committee and the Cork Academic Legacy Committee respectively.
- References in the respective regulations to either of the former Institutes of Technology were to be read as referring to MTU and references to Academic Council were to be read as referring to the respective Academic Legacy Committee, unless explicitly stated otherwise. References to particular offices or posts were to be read as referring to the office or post that applied at the respective Institute of Technology immediately before the establishment of MTU.
- Any doubts, uncertainties, or apparent conflicts as to whether a particular regulation, policy or procedure was to apply in any given case would be resolved by a consensus decision of the two Vice-Presidents responsible for academic affairs.

Since its establishment, MTU has been working at pace to develop and extend its portfolio of university-wide regulations, policies and procedures for all operational areas, including academic quality assurance, governance and administration. Upon coming into force, new MTU policies and procedures replace saved local policies and procedures in all campus locations, normally with immediate effect.

The academic regulations, policies and procedures approved by Academic Council during the reporting period are listed in **PART B Section 1** of this quality report.

All current MTU regulations, policies, and procedures are published on the MTU website at [MTU Policies and Publications](#).

Local academic regulations and policies that remain in force at the time of writing, pending completion and approval of new common MTU policy, are published at:

- [MTU \(Cork\) Academic Regulations and Policies](#) and
- [MTU \(Kerry\) Quality Assurance Procedures](#).

**PART A Sections 2 – 8** below provide further details on specific elements of the MTU academic policy framework.

#### d. MTU Executive

Immediately on establishment of MTU, all members of the former executives of CIT and ITT retained their portfolios. A small Operational Executive and a separate Planning Group were formed to support the President in day-to-day operational and planning activities in the first few months post-designation. At the end of the first semester, the two groups were amalgamated to form the current MTU Executive.

The remit of the MTU Executive, as outlined in its Terms of Reference below, is to assist the President with operational direction, oversight and decision-making in relation to any MTU activities which come within the scope of the President's statutory functions under the TU Act 2018. Executive matters considered by the MTU Executive thus include, amongst others:

- Academic and Student Activities
- Corporate Systems
- Finance and Resourcing
- Staffing & Industrial Relations
- Strategic Planning and University Performance
- Research
- Engagement with Statutory Bodies and other stakeholders
- Transformation Activities
- Building, Estate and Capital Projects
- Marketing & Media/PR.

The MTU Executive meets on a fortnightly basis, and its terms of reference are to:

- Review and monitor the status and performance of key operational plans and provide information for the President to report on to the Governing Body as necessary and appropriate;

- Ensure that risks are identified, managed and reviewed as relevant and appropriate, and provide information for the President to report on to the Governing Body as necessary and appropriate;
- Ensure delivery of MTU’s strategic vision through projects and TUTF-funded initiatives to deliver MTU transformation via the Project Initiation Request process (PIR), and act as champions for the process and the outcomes;
- Communicate the outcomes of University Executive deliberations to all relevant stakeholders, including staff and students;
- Other matters as deemed appropriate by the President.

The MTU Executive is a non-statutory committee of the University, and as such its membership and functions are determined by the President. During the reporting period, the design of the new MTU Executive Structure was completed. A high-level design of the new Professional Services Operating Model has since been completed and implementation work has commenced. At the time of writing, the development of the MTU Academic Operating Model is underway. Thus, the future configuration and scope of the MTU Executive will be dependent on the eventual design and implementation of MTU’s executive organisational structure, professional services operating model, academic operating model, and strategy.

The current membership of the MTU Executive is as follows:

Prof. Maggie Cusack	President
Mr Tim Daly	Head of Strategy / MTU Project Director
Mr Paul Gallagher	Vice-President Finance & Administration
Dr Séamus O’Shea	Executive Head of School of Health & Social Sciences
Mr Tim Horgan	Head of Faculty of Engineering & Science
Mr Michael Loftus	Vice-President External Affairs
Ms Ciara Looney	Vice-President Corporate Affairs
Prof. Hugh McGlynn	MTU Project Director
Dr Áine Ní Shé	Registrar & Vice-President Academic Affairs
Dr Brendan O’Donnell	Vice-President Academic Affairs & Registrar
Mr Gerard O’Donovan	Head of Faculty of Business & Humanities
Ms Mary Rose Stafford	Executive Head of School of Business, Computing & Humanities
Dr Eilish Broderick	Executive Head of School of Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics

A visual representation of MTU (Cork) and Kerry campus organisational structures is provided in [Figures 1 and 2](#) which follow overleaf.

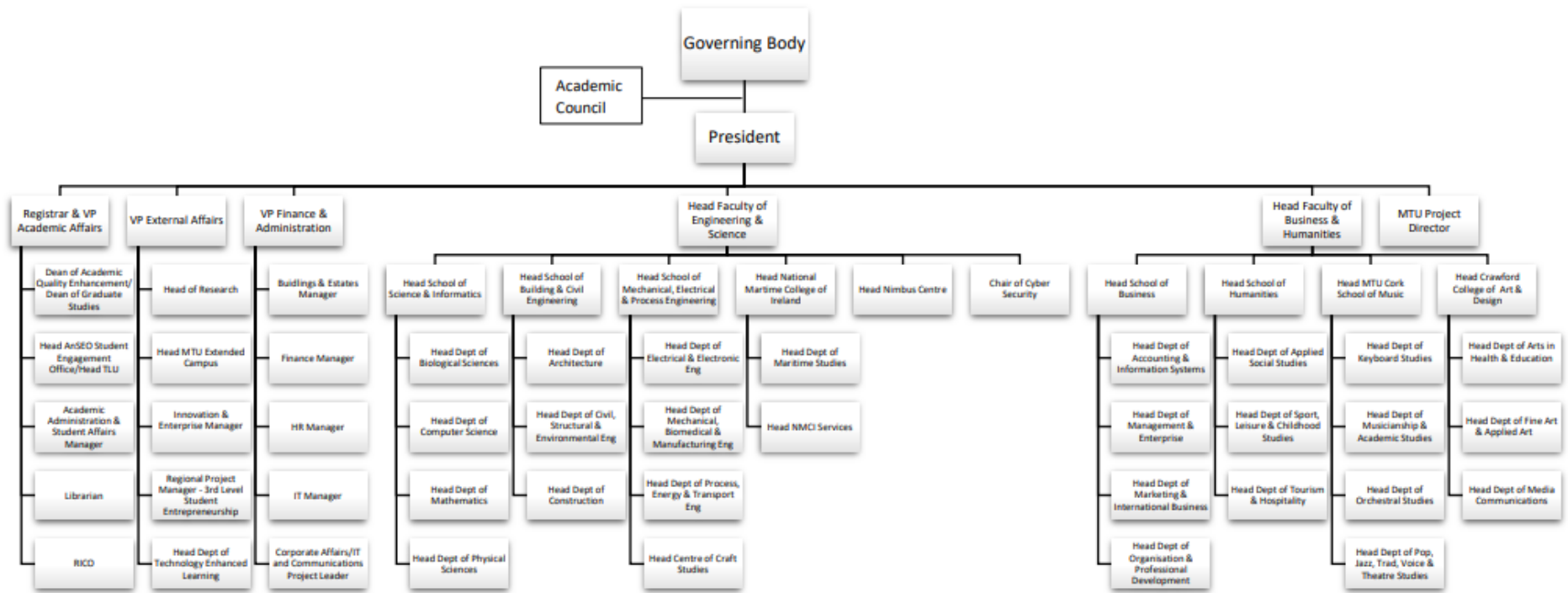


Figure 1: MTU (Cork) organisational structure, February 2022. Note that the post of Research Integrity & Compliance Officer (RICO) jointly reports to both Registrars.



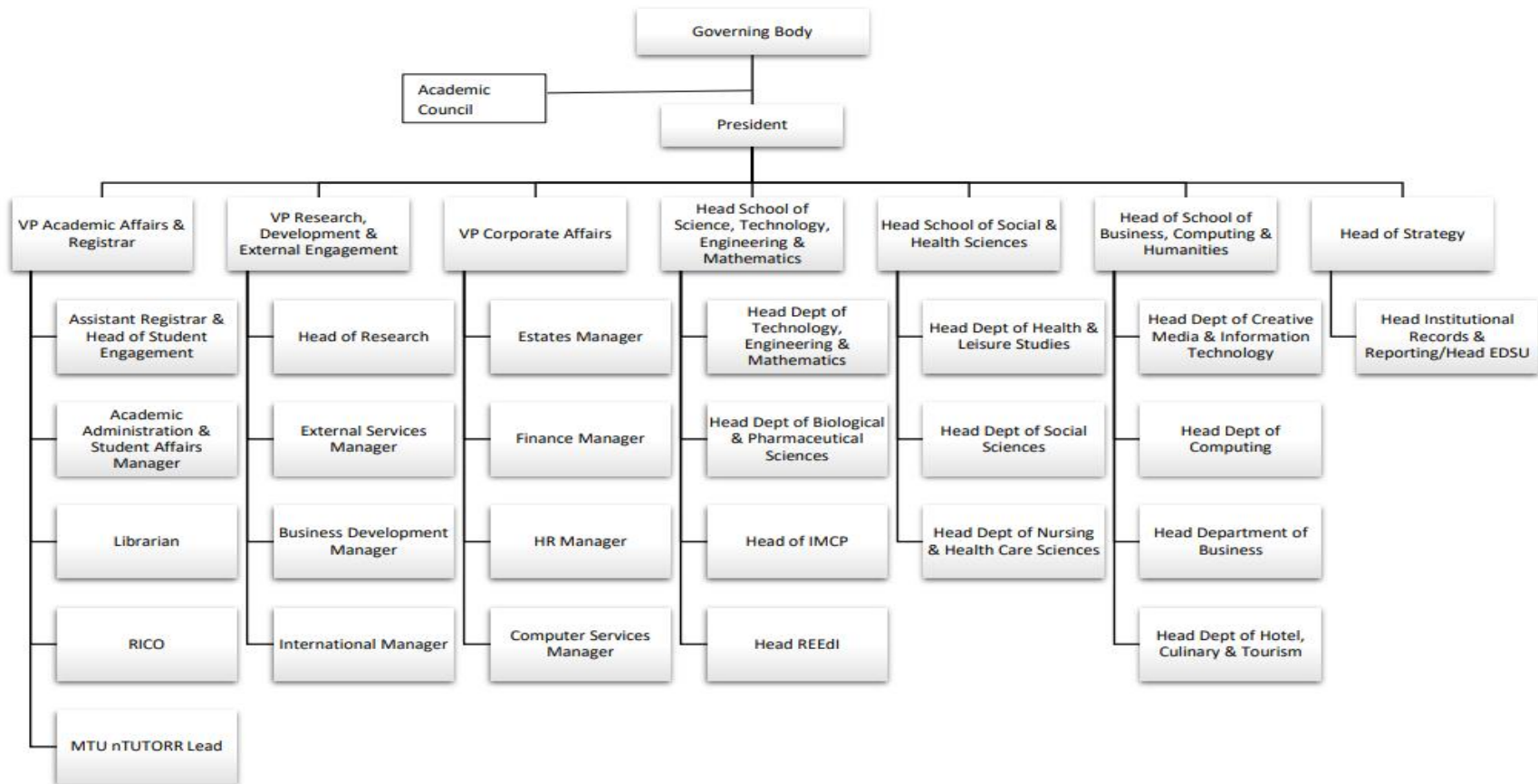


Figure 2: MTU (Kerry) organisational structure, February 2022. Note that the post of Research Integrity & Compliance Officer (RICO) jointly reports to both Registrars. VP Research, Development & External Engagement retired during the reporting period and the portfolio has been reassigned on an interim basis.

### 1.1.2 MTU Strategic Plan

Following broad-based stakeholder engagement and a period of intensive development, the first Strategic Plan for MTU was completed in June 2022 and formally launched by Minister for Higher Education Simon Harris in October 2022.

MTU's "Our Shared Vision. Strategic Plan 2022-2027" is published on the MTU website and is available [here](#).

The Strategic Objectives of "Our Shared Vision" flow from five thematic priority areas which were developed through extensive engagement and consultation. The key strategic themes for MTU's first five years will be:

- To deliver outstanding learner education and experience to produce work-ready graduates;
- To increase investment in MTU's staff and the communities within which MTU is embedded;
- To achieve significant growth and impact across MTU's research, innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem;
- To lead regional development; and
- To adopt a global outlook across all of MTU's activities.

To achieve its strategic outcomes, MTU has identified key Strategic Enablers which will ensure the ongoing success of the University. These are

- The proactive pursuit of equality, diversity and inclusion across all of MTU's activities;
- Embracement of the UN sustainable development goals (SDGs) and the creation of a sustainability culture across all campuses;
- Collective commitment to a multi-campus technological university;
- Strategic investment in a high-performing digital infrastructure and capabilities ("Digital-by-default");
- Development of a state-of-the art physical infrastructure and capabilities across MTU's campuses.

For further detail on the development process for the MTU Strategic Plan during the reporting period see **PART B, Section 1** of this report.

### 1.1.3 Academic Governance and Quality Assurance Framework

As set out in the Technological Universities Act (2018), it is the responsibility of MTU Governing Body to regulate the MTU Academic Council. Pursuant to Section 9 (7) of the Act, MTU Governing Body has delegated to the MTU Academic Council the function of approving all regulations, policies and procedures concerning the academic affairs of the technological university. In accordance with the TU Act 2018, Academic Council may delegate the discharge of any of its functions to any of its committees, as it sees fit. Governing Body reserves the right to revoke any delegated authority provided for under these regulations at any time.

MTU is committed to the highest quality standards, to continuous quality improvement and enhancement and to the creation of a quality culture. The development of an integrated Academic Quality Assurance Framework for the University is being progressed as a matter of high priority. Much of this work is carried out by the Academic Council through its Integration & Development Committees in discharge of its statutory functions under the TU Act 2018. Responsibility for ensuring implementation and compliance with academic quality

assurance policies and procedures rests ultimately with the MTU Executive and particularly within the remit of the respective Vice-President for Academic Affairs and Registrars.

At Faculty, School and Department level, Heads of Faculty, Heads of School, Heads of Department as well as Programme Boards have local responsibilities for implementing and monitoring of quality assurance policies and procedures. The academic management of a department's programmes is the responsibility of Head of Department and the respective Programme Boards. The current academic governance structures of MTU are represented in Figure 3.

Information on the evolution of the MTU framework for academic governance and the management of academic quality assurance during the reporting period is provided in **PART B Section 1** of this report.

The academic regulations, policies and procedures of MTU cover all aspects of its academic activities, including the quality assurance of MTU's programme provision and of its research, knowledge transfer and innovation activities; academic and research integrity; access, transfer and progression; and student and staff welfare.

For further information on MTU academic policy development in the post-establishment period, see [PART A Section 1.1.1.c](#) above. For details on the quality assurance of research activities and postgraduate research degree provision specifically, see [PART A Section 4](#) below.

Figure 3: MTU Academic Governance and Management Structure in the Post-Establishment Period  
(\* with associated Administrative Offices; \*\* wound down)

### 1.1.4 Learner Representation in Governance and Quality Assurance

Learner representatives are systematically included in MTU governance and management structures at all levels. MTU's active and engaged Students' Unions on the Cork and Kerry campuses are the main vehicle through which learner representation is organised. While separate Students' Unions are still in place in Kerry and Cork at the time of writing, work towards creating a single Students' Union structure for the whole of MTU is nearing completion.

The membership of the MTU Governing Body, appointed in accordance with the TU Act 2018, includes both Students' Union Presidents and a postgraduate representative. The two Students' Union Presidents were also members of the 'Establishment Day' Academic Council. On the current, transitional Academic Council, they have been joined by the two SU Vice-Presidents for Education and a postgraduate representative. The two Students' Union Presidents also sit on the Executive Committee of Academic Council, and all Integration & Development Committees of the Academic Council contain student members.

Learner representatives ('Class Reps') act as the main spokespersons for their cohort at Programme and Stage level. Class reps are elected at the beginning of each academic year to act as principal spokespersons for their cohort and liaise with academic and support staff on its behalf. Each class rep is a member of the Students' Union Council and reports back to the SU Executive at Union Council Meetings on issues of concern to the group.

Learner contribution to programme development and monitoring is systematically catered for through programme board participation. In addition, MTU class reps regularly meet class tutors/programme coordinators and attend academic workshops with programme coordinators or Heads of Department to facilitate continuous monitoring of programmes with regard to issues of concern to learners.

In addition to Governing Body, Academic Council and its Committees, and Course Boards, ca. 60 university committees and boards include student representation.

While not mandatory in new programme development, departmental consultation will often include surveys of existing students and recent graduates on various aspects of the prospective programmes, and student involvement in academic reviews is being strengthened.

### 1.1.5 External Stakeholder Representation in Governance and Quality Assurance

Over half the membership of the MTU Governing Body are external stakeholders from a variety of sectors and organisations, including regional education & training boards, the community, industry organisations, enterprise and government.

In relation to programme provision, a key mechanism for ensuring that external peer perspectives feed into academic quality management is the external examiner system. External examiners are approved by MTU Academic Council and provide oversight in relation to learner assessment and monitoring of programmes. Additionally, all core processes for the approval and review of modules and programmes incorporate external stakeholder representation. A further layer of externality is added by the fact that many MTU programmes are professionally recognised, accredited or regulated.

Lastly, MTU's inaugural Strategic Plan, "Our Shared Vision. Strategic Plan 2022-2027" was developed through a consultative and collaborative approach that sought the views of MTU's external community as well as those of students and staff.

The development of mutually beneficial relationships with stakeholders in the Southwest Region is also at the core of the Strategic Priority Area "Leading Regional Development". The Strategic Objectives in this area include, amongst others, that "MTU will encourage, support and initiate collaborations towards mutually beneficial goals". (MTU, "Our Shared Vision. Strategic Plan 2022-2027", p. 19).

For further details on the MTU Strategic Plan, see [PART A Section 1.1.2](#) above. The MTU Strategic Plan is available [here](#).

## 1.2 Linked Providers, Collaborative and Transnational Provision

With regard to collaborative and transnational provision, the saved policies and procedures of CIT and IT Tralee currently remain in force in the respective campus locations until such time as the legacy policies are altered by way of amendment or replacement by MTU.

To date, MTU has not designated any linked providers.

Under Section 9 of the TU Act 2018, the functions of MTU include collaboration with higher education providers within and outside of Ireland, including on joint research projects and the provision of taught programmes, as well as collaboration with business, enterprise, the professions, the community, local interests and related stakeholders in the region. Promotion of stakeholder involvement in programme design and delivery is also a function of the University under the Act. Governing Body has delegated authority to the President (and other members of the MTU Executive authorised by the President) to sign off on collaborations or agreements related to contracts with external parties on behalf of MTU. Governing Body has however reserved approval for any high-profile matters and/or matters associated with a high level of cost or risk.

Formal Joint Awarding Agreements are in place for all joint awards made by MTU. All collaborative programmes, irrespective of whether they lead to an MTU award or a joint award, are subject to detailed consortium agreements governing the arrangements for provision and quality assurance of the programme, including assessment standards, learner protection, and the making of the award.

Under the existing quality processes, each joint awarding and consortium agreement made in relation to a collaborative programme to be offered by MTU (Cork) requires prior approval of Academic Council and Governing Body before the collaborative programme and, where relevant, joint award can be validated. Formal agreements made in relation to MTU (Kerry) programmes require approval from the President and University Executive, alongside validation of the programme specification by Academic Council.

With regard to the long-standing overarching joint awarding agreement between MTU and UCC, the institutions operate well-established joint mechanisms for the validation, operation, ongoing monitoring and periodic review of the relevant programmes. These include a Joint Board which has oversight of academic, management and resource issues for all joint programmes and makes recommendations to the MTU Academic Council and UCC Academic Board. A (Joint) Board of Studies is also in place for each of the joint programmes.

Refer to the following sections for the applicable QA procedures:

- See [MTU \(Cork\) Academic Regulations and Procedures](#), Section Collaborative Provision, “Academic Policy on the Quality Assurance of Collaborative Provision and Joint Awards”
- See [MTU \(Kerry\) Quality Assurance Procedures](#), Section A15: Collaborative Provision

## 2.0 Programme Development and Delivery

### 2.1 Programme Development and Approval

#### 2.1.1 Evolution of the MTU Programme Quality Assurance Framework

At the time of writing, the programme quality assurance system of Munster Technological University is undergoing rapid development. Building on the quality assurance procedures of MTU's predecessor institutions, but developing these further to reflect the broader reach, scope and ambitions of a technological university in an evolving higher education environment, the University is engaged in an intensive programme of academic policy review and creation. Driven by Academic Council and its Committees and relevant central academic functions of the University, this programme aims to create and implement a comprehensive framework for academic quality assurance and enhancement for the whole of MTU.

As new, university-wide quality assurance procedures are being approved by Academic Council, they supersede the relevant legacy procedures of MTU (Cork) and MTU (Kerry) across all MTU campuses. In the interim, to accelerate implementation of a common quality framework, a number of saved legacy policies and procedures of one MTU campus location have been adopted by the campuses at the other location also, pending policy redevelopment on a whole-of-MTU basis.

#### 2.1.2 Policies and Procedures for Programme Development and Approval

The core MTU policy documents regulating the design and approval of new programmes are the [“Policy for the Design and Approval of Programmes Leading to Major Awards”](#) and associated [“Procedure for the Design and Approval of Programmes Leading to Major Awards”](#).

The MTU programme design and approval policy came into effect in September 2022, replacing a number of separate legacy policies which had continued to govern programme approval processes on the MTU (Kerry) and MTU (Cork) campuses respectively up to the end of the 2021/2022 academic year.

The Policy sets out the parameters and guiding principles for curriculum development and programme approval and regulates the credit profiles of degree programmes at different NFQ levels under MTU's framework for modular programme provision. The accompanying Procedure specifies the procedural steps involved in new programme development and validation review at MTU, as well as the required sequence of approvals.

Incorporation of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Sustainable Development principles are integral elements of the University's approach to programme design. In line with the MTU mission and profile, the University's programme design process furthermore ensures that programme structure and delivery are informed by engagement and connectedness with industry, business, the professions and the community.

Prior to approval and validation, every new programme and module undergoes a rigorous, thorough, multi-step review process which draws on both internal and external expertise. The selection of independent internal and external experts is subject to the [MTU Policy on Conflict of Interest or Commitment and External Work](#).

The design and approval of programmes leading to non-major awards is guided by the supplementary procedure for the [Validation of Special Purpose, Minor and Supplementary Awards](#). This MTU (Cork) legacy procedure was also adopted by MTU (Kerry) at the end of 2021/2022 pending approval of new common MTU policy.

Amendments to existing programmes and modules are also subject to approval, following a defined [procedure for module and programme changes](#). Any major or critical changes to programmes give rise to a differential validation process, which is treated as a new validation of a programme element or elements and – like all new validations – requires Academic Council approval. The programme and module change process follows saved MTU (Cork) legacy policy which was adopted by the MTU (Kerry) campuses at the end of 2022.

At the time of writing, programme development procedures governed by saved policy of MTU (Cork) and MTU (Kerry) continue to be published on the legacy websites under [MTU \(Cork\) Academic Regulations and Procedures](#) and [MTU \(Kerry\) Quality Assurance Procedures](#), even where relevant processes have been adopted across MTU.

Newly (re)developed and approved common MTU academic policies and procedures are published in the Policies and Publications section of the MTU website and may be accessed [here](#).

### 2.1.3 Professional Requirements and Programme Quality Assurance

As a public provider of higher education and training, MTU’s primary obligation is to achieve excellence in programme provision and research against the academic standards and criteria defined in higher education legislation and academic quality frameworks.

At the same time, the TU Act 2018 lists among the functions of a technological university the provision of programmes that reflect the needs of “business, enterprise [and] the professions” and enable graduates to “excel in their chosen careers” (TU Act 2018, Section (9) (1) (b) and (c) respectively).

MTU delivers on these functions by offering a broad portfolio of degree programmes and CPD courses which aim to anticipate the requirements of business, industry and the professions regionally and nationally, delivered flexibly and with curricula designed to develop work-ready graduates at any NFQ level.

Through its programme approval process, MTU ascertains itself that proposed new programmes indeed address the current and developing professional requirements of their respective field and meet the needs of both graduates and employers. The periodic review of existing programme provision, which involves amongst others a scrutiny of graduate performance and industry/employer feedback, confirms that programme curricula have been updated as necessary to keep step with any significant changes in the professional environment.

### 2.1.4 Programme Validation and Professional Accreditation

In addition to academic validation, where fields of employment are subject to professional regulation or where successful professional practice is predicated on professional registration, academic programmes generally need to achieve recognition or accreditation from professional bodies or statutory regulators such as CORU, the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI), or the Marine Survey Office (MSO) in the Department of Transport, Tourism & Sport.

MTU strives to facilitate and support academic units required or wishing to undergo external professional programme accreditation processes in any way feasible. To support units in minimising unnecessary reduplication of effort, the University may allow for elements or outcomes of a professional review to be recognised against some or all academic (re)validation requirements, provided there is sufficient alignment between the professional and academic review procedures and criteria.

Conversely, the University endeavours to familiarise relevant professional organisations with its academic quality assurance procedures and criteria whenever an opportunity offers. In addition to inviting engagement in



the context of various industry liaison fora, MTU may arrange for representatives of regulatory or professional bodies to sit in on academic review panels as observers or, for certain areas, invite them to participate in academic review as panel members. MTU programmes are currently recognised by ca. 30 separate professional organisations.

### 2.1.3 Apprenticeship Provision and Work-Based Learning

#### a. Apprenticeship Programmes and Work-Based Learning

In keeping with the long-standing focus on career-oriented education and training of its predecessor institutions, MTU continues to offer both traditional craft and new ('post-2016') apprenticeship programmes.

MTU delivers apprenticeship training for a number of different trades. Apprenticeship programmes for the larger trades, such as plumbing or carpentry & joinery, are delivered by multiple providers, while other apprenticeships are delivered in one location only. MTU continues to be the sole provider for apprenticeship programmes in construction plant fitting, pipe fitting (Phase 6) and plastering.

Degree apprenticeships in the area of hospitality (NFQ L7 Chef de Partie and NFQ L8 Sous Chef) were introduced at IT Tralee and CIT in 2018 and continue to be provided by MTU. MTU is also a provider of consortia-led apprenticeship programmes leading to NFQ L6 Logistics Associate; NFQ L6 Manufacturing Technician and NFQ L7 Manufacturing Engineer; and NFQ L6 Laboratory Technician and NFQ L7 Laboratory Analyst awards.

MTU furthermore offers a novel Bachelor of Engineering in Engineering Services Management. This is a part-apprenticeship programme which affords craftspersons the opportunity to gain an NFQ Level 7 degree. MTU is the coordinating academic provider for this programme which is led by the Confederation of Irish Industry (CIF). MTU actively participated in the 2022 review of consortia-led apprenticeship commissioned by QQI and welcomes the publication of the review report ("A Review of Consortia-Led Apprenticeships in Ireland", link [here](#)) in September 2022.

In addition to apprenticeship provision per se, a broad – and expanding – range of academic degree programmes incorporate significant work placement, ranging from embedded service learning, a standard 5 ECTS-credit modules to full placement semesters worth 30 ECTS credits.

Exciting new hybrid models are also on offer at MTU. Through a differential validation process, a novel 2-year part-time 'apprenticeship' pathway was added to the existing MSc in Software Architecture & Design which parallels the capstone project with workplace learning. Development of this pathway arose from efforts made in 2018 by a consortium led by LERO (the SFI Research Centre for Software) in conjunction with the University of Limerick. The new pathway gained HEA/SOLAS funding on the grounds that there was a clear and identifiable need for this type of graduate. Coordination of the consortium programme was later transferred to MTU (Cork) as it had an existing matched programme and the expertise and experience to deliver a pathway of this nature.

#### b. Quality Assurance of Craft Apprenticeships

Traditional craft apprenticeships lead to further (rather than higher) education and training awards. At the point of writing, they are subject to a separate national quality assurance framework maintained by SOLAS, the state agency established in 2013 to oversee and manage further education and training in Ireland. The implementation of the National Plan for Apprenticeship (2021) will lead to far-reaching systemic changes which will fundamentally alter the role of SOLAS in the process and will align and integrate the overall approach to the

quality assurance of craft apprenticeships with the system for quality assuring higher education provision within the providing institutions.

In terms of curricular structure, craft apprenticeships are delivered in a phased manner over four years. Phases 1, 3, 5 and 7 are work-based, while Phases 2, 4 and 6 consist of ‘off-the-job training’ delivered by regional ETB Training Centres (basic skills training, Phase 2) and associated education providers, predominantly Institutes of Technology respectively Technological Universities. The trades apprentice calendar does not follow the academic year but consists of three terms spread across the calendar year. For that reason, the timetabling of staff lecturing across both further and higher education programmes and managing demand fluctuations for relevant facilities and equipment are some of the endemic challenges of concurrent provision of apprenticeship and academic programmes for the providing institution.

As it stands, the development of, curriculum and assessment design for, and review of apprenticeship programmes lie within the sole responsibility of SOLAS. While individual lecturers are frequently consulted by SOLAS in the context of these QA processes, this is in the capacity of individual subject expert rather than provider representative. The chief vehicle for interaction between SOLAS and the apprenticeship providers on programme quality issues is the – what is still termed – Institutes of Technology Apprenticeship Committee (ITAC), composed of representatives from providing institutions. Normally, SOLAS will first informally advise ITAC members about impending programme changes during tri-annual meetings with ITAC held at the start of each term. These meetings also provide an opportunity for provider representatives to give feedback on and discuss operational or curricular issues arising during the previous term. Subsequently, formal notification about any amendments to apprenticeship programmes is given to the providing institutions by SOLAS. Review of apprenticeship programmes is to take place annually, though for some trades the review intervals – and consequent changes to apprenticeship programmes – can on occasion be longer.

Underneath this top-level structure, cognate trades are organised into Institutes’ Fields of Trades Committees, or ‘IFOTs’. IFOTs are composed of representatives of all providers which offer apprenticeship programmes in the relevant field, and generally also meet once per term to discuss technical issues. Conclusions or suggestions arising from IFOTs meetings are reported onward to ITAC for further transmission to SOLAS.

All assessments are centrally set by SOLAS. While the timing of practical assessments is up to each provider, all written theory examinations are ‘sat’ at the same time nationwide. Marks are determined by local apprentice examination boards based on a common marking scheme set by SOLAS. Recent adaptations of the scheme now allow providers to return marks which represent a more detailed and accurate reflection of apprentice performance in the theory exam. Operationally, the existing, somewhat circuitous processes for apprentice assessment and results processing still present some challenges for providers. Apprentice marks are not released by the providing institutions directly, for instance, but are forwarded to the local Education & Training Boards (ETBs) for release to candidates on behalf of SOLAS. However, assessment appeals are to be dealt with under the appeals procedure of the provider. Where this foresees a specific timeframe for lodgement of an appeal tied to the release date, as is the case at MTU, but the provider is not privy to the release date information when the appeal is lodged, this can make it difficult to determine if an appeal is allowable.

### c. Quality Assurance of Degree Apprenticeship Programmes

From 2017 onwards, ‘new’ apprenticeship programmes leading to higher education awards at Higher Certificate (NFQ Level 6) or Ordinary Bachelor (NFQ Level 7) level have also been delivered at both MTU campus locations.

The delivery structure of degree apprenticeships varies; some delivery models combine days of workplace-based learning with days of academic study in one and the same week, while others are phased. However, in the case of phased programmes, certain academic projects may continue during workplace-based phases in order to retain apprentices' connection with academic learning throughout.

Degree apprenticeship programmes fall under the academic quality assurance framework for higher education. By default, delivery and assessment, validation, continuous monitoring and periodic review of the new apprenticeships thus follow the standard MTU QA processes as described in this report. However, in the case of consortium programmes (see next paragraph), it is frequently the regulations and procedures of the lead provider that apply, as governed by the individual consortium agreement. The involvement of SOLAS in the operation and quality assurance of degree apprenticeships is far more limited than in the case of trade apprenticeships, being generally restricted to apprentice registration.

Many new apprenticeships are developed for consortium delivery in the Technological Universities and Institutes of Technologies sectors, with professional organisations also often involved in programme development and delivery of work-based elements in particular. The academic lead institution within a consortium normally takes responsibility for validation of the programme specification and for overseeing programme operation across the consortium partners, for instance by facilitating joint programme board meetings involving all participating providers. The arrangements for quality assurance and delivery are specified in a consortium agreement.

Since degree apprenticeship is a relatively new model of provision, the QA parameters for consortium delivery have not – yet – been standardised in all respects. This means, for instance, that the applicable delivery and assessment regulations and ownership of the award are currently agreed separately for each new degree apprenticeship. The resulting variations, even between apprenticeship programmes offered by one and the same consortium with the same lead institution, are tempered by the fact that the academic quality procedures across the IoT and TU sectors are informed by a historically common sectoral framework.

MTU is a member of the Higher Education Apprenticeship Providers (HEAP) group and participated in the development of the discussion paper “Towards the Implementation of the Action Plan for Apprenticeship”, which was published and issued to all relevant stakeholders on 13 March 2023. HEAP plans to hold a series of follow-up meetings to consider and progress the recommendations contained in the discussion paper.

## **2.2 Admission, Progression, Recognition & Certification**

### **2.2.1 Student Lifecycle**

#### **a. Admissions Policy and Information for Prospective Entrants**

The overarching general principles on admission to MTU programmes are set out in the University's [Admissions Policy](#). The Admissions Policy underpins all other policies and procedures relevant to the admissions process at MTU. It is published in the Policies and Procedures section of the MTU website and may be accessed [here](#).

The MTU Admissions Policy sets out the requirements and procedures for admission to all stages of all taught and research programmes offered by MTU. This includes admission to programmes designed and/or delivered with or on behalf of external partners, whether leading to awards of MTU or not. The Admissions Policy also regulates admission to individual modules leading to single subject certification, as well as admission to any

other educational and training offerings of the University. Provision is also made for applicants to appeal admissions decisions within a specific period of time, subject to valid grounds being demonstrated.

MTU is committed to having clear, fair, equitable and consistent admissions procedures. As a rule, programme applicants are required to meet minimum entry requirements and participate in a competitive process. The MTU admissions procedures also give due regard to international, national and regional initiatives which are designed to broaden participation in third-level education.

Prospective entrants may obtain information on admission to MTU programmes from the MTU Admissions Office portal (accessible [here](#)). Bespoke access points for undergraduate, postgraduate, international and part-time learners link to sections detailing entry requirements and application procedures and providing contact information for different types of applicants, including entrants with QQI FET awards, entrants with a disability and entrants from disadvantaged communities. Comprehensive information on flexible study modes, including the ACCS route and the procedures for Recognition of Prior Learning, may also be accessed through the Admissions Office portal, as can information on MTU's student supports and services.

Detailed listings for all full- and part-time programmes of MTU are accessible from any part of the MTU website and may be found [here](#). Each entry indicates the specific entry requirements and progression opportunities for the programme, provides an online application link where this is possible, and supplies a University contact for further information. For further orientation, the annual prospectus of MTU full-time programmes (available [here](#)) and part-time programmes (available [here](#)) may also be downloaded from each entry as applicable.

### b. Entry and New Student Induction

Standard entry into Years 1 – 4 of full-time undergraduate programmes of MTU is through the Central Applications Office (CAO). CAO entrants apply through the CAO website ([www.cao.ie](http://www.cao.ie)). The CAO Hub on the MTU website (linked [here](#)) provides a 'one-stop-shop' of resources where Leaving Certificate undergraduate students and their supporters can access information on CAO programmes, Open Days and application procedures as well as on campus life, library offerings and available student services and supports in all MTU campus locations.

Application for entry into all other programmes, including taught and research postgraduate, part-time and Springboard programmes, is made directly to MTU. Mature applicants (23 year and older) and non-EU applicants residing outside of the European Union apply directly to the University for entry to any programme.

Building on a second chance mathematics opportunities for Leaving Certificate students offered on both Kerry and Cork campuses for many years, a single MTU August Mathematics Examination for Leaving Certificate students is now offered across MTU campus locations.

On the MTU (Cork) campuses, new student induction is organised centrally by the [AnSEO Student Engagement Office](#) as part of the [Good Start](#) programme. Resources for new students starting at the MTU (Kerry) campuses can be accessed via the New Students webpage on MTU (Kerry) website (linked [here](#)). This provides campus-specific information on MTU (Kerry) orientation and induction events and registration procedures as well as on campus life and student services.

### c. Stage and Programme Progression

Pending approval of jointly developed, MTU-wide regulations on progression, the legacy regulations of MTU (Cork) and MTU (Kerry) continue to apply to the students enrolled in the respective campus location, albeit with certain local adaptations to ensure equitable treatment of learners across all MTU campuses.

The applicable progression regulations for students on the MTU (Cork) campuses are set out in the [Regulations for Modules and Programmes \(Marks and Standards\)](#), published on the [Academic Regulations and Policies](#) page of the MTU (Cork) legacy website.

The core policy document regulating progression in MTU (Kerry) is QQI's [Assessment and Standards, Revised 2013](#). This constitutes Section A5.17 of the saved MTU (Kerry) Quality Assurance Procedures, which may be accessed [here](#).

In November 2022, the MTU Academic Council approved the adoption of some elements of the MTU (Cork) assessment and progression regulations by MTU (Kerry) to remove any semblance of differential treatment of students based on campus location. In relation to progression, the updated provisions relate to progression with a credit deficit and pass by compensation. The amended MTU (Kerry) regulations on progression are published as Sections A5.9a and A5.9b of the MTU (Kerry) QA Procedures (linked [here](#)).

Certain supplementary local policy elements regarding progression also still remain in force at the time of writing. In MTU (Kerry), this concerns the [Policy for Determining the Order in which Eligible Candidates are made Offers on Add-On Ordinary/Honours Degree Programmes](#) (Section 14.4 of the MTU (Kerry) QA Procedures).

MTU (Cork) currently retains its legacy [Academic Policy for Admission to NFQ Level 8 Programmes Post Level 7](#), which is available from MTU (Cork)'s Academic Regulations and Policies page (link [here](#)) together with a policy supplement regulating progression of specific Level 7 graduate cohorts during the Covid-19 emergency.

Eligible continuing full-time students enrol online and are then automatically progressed by the Banner Student Record System. Full-time students with programme options and graduates progressing to follow-on programmes at the next-higher NFQ level (e.g. to an add-on Level 8 degree) are processed through MTU's proprietary online registration system, OLAPS.

General and programme-specific information on procedures for progression and transfer between undergraduate programmes at different levels may be obtained from the MTU [full-time prospectus](#) and through the MTU Admissions Office (accessible [here](#)).

MTU's postgraduate transfer procedures are described in [PART A, Section 4](#) of this report.

#### d. Academic Engagement and Fitness to Study/Practice

Munster Technological University has achieved national and international recognition for its work in the area of student engagement and communication. These successes are testimony to long-established collaborations between academic departments/schools/faculties and the Student Engagement, Access & Disability and Student Services Offices, as well as ongoing effective partnership with the Students' Union.

A focal area of work in MTU is the First Year Experience. Campus initiatives such as the Good Start programme and the FYI programme aim to build engagement and proactively identify and support learners in need of early-stage intervention during their crucial first few weeks in college. New students challenged by the academic environment or the competing demands of study, work and/or their personal life are supported in acquiring tailored personal and academic success strategies through academic success coaching available on both the Cork campuses (ANSEO Academic Success Coaching; further information [here](#)) and the Kerry campuses (through the Academic Success Centre; accessible [here](#)). Unsure or wavering students are supported to systematically explore all available avenues, including alternative programme choices or viable alternatives to academic study, before

they continue on a programme to which they are not well suited, limiting their chances of academic success, or else drop out without knowing what to do next.

In relation to learners experiencing other life issues which may fundamentally impede or negate their ability to continue in study or to safely and effectively practice their intended profession, or creating such issues for others, Policies and Procedures to Support and Regulate a [Student's Fitness to Study](#) and a [Student's Fitness to Practice](#) have been implemented MTU-wide. Both policies may be accessed from the MTU website (link [here](#)). The policy frameworks on fitness to study and fitness to practice are complemented by a wide range of well-established academic and welfare supports offered to learners in addressing academic and life issues before they can cause disengagement and, ultimately, failure or non-completion of the academic programme. Targeted supports are furthermore available to international students. The range of MTU student services and supports across all campuses is outlined below in [PART A Section 3](#) of this report.

## 2.2.2 Widening Participation

MTU's commitment to the region and the social and economic welfare of all of its people means that fostering inclusive access to higher and further education has always been and remains one of MTU's key institutional commitments and strategic priorities.

For many decades, MTU and its predecessor institutions have offered a broad and varied spectrum of programmes in a variety of delivery modes attracting an ever more diverse learner intake. A comprehensive set of resources and initiatives is in place to proactively widen participation in higher and further education in the region and beyond, and to enable every learner who enters a programme to successfully complete their studies and reach their full academic potential, irrespective of background or circumstance.

### a. Equity of Access and Participation

#### i. Access and Participation Policies and Procedures

MTU is committed to social inclusion and equity of access and participation in all interactions throughout the educational lifecycle of the student. The University welcomes students from all backgrounds, preparing and supporting them to participate in activities related to higher education from pre-entry through to graduation and beyond. Central to this is the cultivation of a sense of belonging among all students and alumni. Promoting access to higher education for under-represented groups is a priority. In these endeavours, the University is guided by the goals and objectives of the ["National Access Plan: A Strategic Action Plan for Equity of Access, Participation and Success in Higher Education 2022-2028"](#), as well as its obligations under other relevant national legislation and policy documents.

MTU's many and varied initiatives and activities to foster access and inclusion are underpinned by the University's core [Equity of Access and Participation \(Student\) Policy](#). This policy commits MTU to providing equitable opportunities for participation in higher education and striving to ensure that the MTU student body reflects the diversity and social mix of Ireland's population. The University will work to achieve these goals by implementing access initiatives and creating alternative pathways to higher education, devised and delivered in partnership with students and stakeholders to incorporate their voices and respond to their needs. MTU further aims to support and enable communities to identify and address issues in relation to access to education in their own areas and to embed universal design thinking and inclusive practice across the MTU community.

The University's overarching access policy is complemented by the [MTU Reasonable Accommodation \(Student\) Policy](#), which provides a framework for the provision of reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities,



learning differences or significant ongoing health conditions studying in MTU. A supplementary [Procedure for Conducting an Oral Examination as a Reasonable Accommodation](#) is also in place.

The MTU policies and procedures governing access and participation are published on the University's website and may be accessed [here](#).

## *ii. Access Resources and Initiatives*

Spear-headed by the [MTU Access Service](#) and building on the strong tradition of offering accessible education in both of its founding institutions, MTU continues to provide an extensive range of outreach activities and pre-entry, entry and post-entry support initiatives (including personal, academic, and financial supports) for target under-represented groups. The MTU Access Service delivers and aims to continually enhance this programme in collaboration with academic departments and schools and various central units of the University, as well as with regional and national community groups, organisations and initiatives.

The MTU Access Service is dedicated to widening participation, increasing access opportunities and supporting positive educational outcomes for under-represented groups while providing a high-quality, professional and student-centred service. This is achieved by a strong commitment to the principles of social inclusion and by working in partnership with key stakeholders locally, regionally and nationally.

Extensive information on MTU access procedures and supports for learners from under-represented groups, including members of ethnic minorities and learners presenting with disabilities or learning differences, can be obtained through the web pages of the MTU Access Service (accessible [here](#)).

The [Mature Students](#) section on the MTU Access Service web pages (link [here](#)) also provides targeted information for prospective mature entrants (i.e. entrants over 23 years of age). While MTU continues to attract a high number of full-time mature entrants, in line with national trends it has been experiencing a year-on year decline in the intake of this cohort (see amongst others the 2021 [“Study of Mature Participation in Higher Education”](#) commissioned by the Irish Higher Education Authority). Mature applicants who do not progress to registration are therefore surveyed, and the University has committed to undertaking research in the wider community in collaboration with local partnership companies to inform the development of bespoke access initiatives for this target group.

MTU is a member of a number of national higher education admissions schemes, including HEAR (Higher Education Access Route), which offers places on reduced points and extra college support to school leavers under 23 years, and DARE (the Disability Access Route to Education), which can allocate reduced points places to eligible school leavers under 23 years old with learning differences, health conditions and disabilities. Information on the HEAR and DARE schemes may also be obtained from the Access Service web pages.

The University also leads or participates in a number of regional access initiatives.

The Linked Schools initiative works in partnership with school staff, local communities, MTU staff, and students from 27 designated primary and second level schools in the Cork/Kerry region to support greater participation in higher education by students in those schools. Academic, personal or social supports are provided for eligible candidates transferring into MTU from Access Linked Schools. Information on the Linked Schools scheme is available from the MTU Access Service webpages (link [here](#)).

In each campus location, MTU also operates long-standing supported progression schemes for graduates of Further Education Colleges based in the respective region. This links certain MTU programmes to specific FE courses offered in the region, creating supported progression pathways between the linked

programmes/courses. MTU reserves a number of places on these linked programmes for applicants who achieve specified levels and other requirements in their QQI FE award. New University-wide progression initiatives between MTU and the FE sector in the Cork/Kerry region are being explored. MTU is partnering with UCC, Cork ETB and Kerry ETB on a collaborative FET-HE Pathways Project which is one of the initiatives under the joint SOLAS/HEA National Tertiary Office. It aims to strengthen existing and develop new opportunities for learner pathways and transitions between the sectors in order to deliver on the ambition of the Department of Further and Higher Education, Innovation, Research and Science (DFHERIS), as set out in its vision paper for “*Progressing a More Unified Tertiary System for Learning, Skills and Knowledge*” (May 2022).

The [SOAR \(Inter-Institutional Collaboration for Access\) Project](#) (PATH 3) brings together the South Cluster (IT Carlow, MTU, UCC, and WIT) with community partners to collaborate on strategies to increase access to higher education for under-represented groups. It has enabled the member institutions to build on existing access practice, consolidate community partnerships and develop new initiatives to further the cluster’s collective ambition of widening participation for access target groups. SOAR workstreams are multi-dimensional, including amongst others [Enabling Transitions](#), aimed at easing the transition of students with disabilities to higher education through use of assistive technologies, and [Travellers in Education](#). MTU Traveller Access Programmes delivered under the Travellers in Education umbrella include MTU (Kerry)’s junior- and senior cycle [Star Pupil Traveller Access to Education](#) programmes as well as [post-entry and early career mentoring for Traveller students and graduates](#) delivered by the Traveller Education Coordinator at MTU (Cork).

MTU also makes available a range of financial supports to enable students from under-represented groups to enter and remain in higher education. These include the [MTU \(Cork\)](#) and [MTU \(Kerry\)](#) Student Assistance Fund – which at the time of writing remains under separate administration at each campus location – as well as scholarships offered under the [1916 Bursary Fund](#) (part of the SOAR initiative) and the [MTU Sanctuary Scholarship](#) scheme for asylum seeker and refugee students. Information on these financial supports is also accessible from the web pages of the MTU Access Service (link [here](#)).

### *iii. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Policy and Resources*

Cognisant of its diverse student population, MTU is committed to providing an inclusive learning environment for all students. The pursuit of equality, diversity and inclusion forms an integral part of the MTU Strategic Plan and is understood as a key enabler for the successful achievement of the University’s strategic objectives (see [PART A Section 1.1.2](#) for further details on the MTU Strategic Plan). Steered and overseen by the EDI Committee of Governing Body, MTU’s activities to foster equality, diversity and inclusion among its students and staff are supported by a number of dedicated University posts, including an EDI Manager and EDI Officer. At the time of writing, an EDI policy for the University is at an advanced stage of development.

Further details on EDI procedures and supports are given in [PART A Section 3.1](#), Policies and Procedures Related to Student Welfare and Community Standards, and [PART A Section 5](#), Staff Recruitment, Development and Supports, below.

### **b. Flexible and Lifelong Learning Opportunities**

One of the actions under MTU’s ongoing commitment to inclusive access to education opportunities and a diverse student body is to increase opportunities for mature, work-based, lifelong, part-time and flexible learners through part-time, blended or online programme delivery. MTU already has a sizeable population of learners who avail of learning opportunities later in life, either as returning or as first-time students, and is



committed to further expanding its range of options for lifelong access to higher education to optimise opportunities for life-long learners to achieve a third-level qualification whilst recognising the many work, family and life commitments they invariably have.

One means by which MTU has been delivering on this commitment is the strategic expansion of flexible learning opportunities, in particular the distance learning portfolio. Building on e-learning infrastructure and the dedicated pedagogical and technological supports of the [Department of Technology-Enhanced Learning \(TEL\)](#) and the [E-learning Development and Support Unit \(EDSU\)](#), MTU offers a significant [portfolio of flexible online programmes](#) at undergraduate and postgraduate level, both degree programmes (many of which Masters) and shorter courses leading to special purpose or minor awards. The significant expertise built up by TEL and EDSU also served MTU well in its move to predominantly or exclusively online delivery of all its programmes for the duration of the Covid-19 restrictions across higher education institutions.

The online provision complements and extends the reach of MTU's traditionally strong suite of continuing education programmes and lifelong learning programmes with access and delivery mechanisms that are tailored to the needs of learners unable to participate in standard full-time programmes. A range of short courses developed in consultation with employers and delivered both online and in more traditional formats are furthermore offered under Springboard or in conjunction with local development projects.

MTU's [Extended Campus](#), based in Cork's Bishopstown campus, works with numerous regional and national organisations interested in developing their workforce and adding to their employees' skills sets. Extended Campus services include Learning Clinics where Extended Campus staff and industry partners together identify organisational learning needs and the programme offerings and delivery strategies best suited to meeting these. Solutions identified may include existing, 'off-the-shelf' programmes as well as collaborative development of customised learning pathways which utilizing modular 'building blocks'; workplace or e-supported delivery; and the integration of learning gained at the workplace through MTU's well-established RPL and WBL mechanisms.

The [Lifelong Learning Office](#) in MTU (Kerry) is committed to providing a high-quality and relevant education service to all part time students. Its course offerings allow learners to enhance existing or gain new qualifications to advance careers. A number of courses also offer the opportunity to progress to full-time programmes at the University in future years, gaining exemptions from the modules successfully completed. To support adult learners, an increasing number of programmes are delivered both on and off campus through a combination of online and distance learning. The Lifelong Learning Office also offers programmes under the Springboard+ initiative, enabling eligible candidates to gain qualifications across a variety of industries and sectors. All programmes selected for funding under Springboard+ are in areas of identified enterprise skills needs.

In areas of high industry demand, Lifelong Learning works with businesses and industry to provide customised company courses and training. Through a process of programme design and development in conjunction with industry partners, these bespoke solutions address challenges and opportunities identified by the employer. Courses are delivered at a time, place and frequency that suits the employer and employee. The Lifelong Learning Office has worked with national and international industry partners based in Kerry to design and delivery custom employee training programmes.

### 2.2.3 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Candidates wishing to apply for entry, advanced entry, exemptions, module credit or indeed full awards on the basis of prior learning – be that formal or non-formal/informal learning – can do so in accordance with the MTU [Recognition of Prior Learning Policy](#) published on the University's website (accessible [here](#)).

RPL can be applied for in any valid MTU programme or module. Recognition of prior learning claims are made against complete modules, and applicants must demonstrate that all learning outcomes have been satisfactorily met to gain exemptions (in the case of prior certified learning) or module credit.

A range of well-established RPL supports are available to candidates and academic assessors across the University through the [MTU RPL Service](#) based on the MTU (Cork) Bishopstown campus and the MTU (Kerry) Registrar's Office. This positions MTU at the forefront of RPL practice and policy nationally. Potential applicants may access information on RPL processes and supports through the web pages of the [MTU Admissions Office](#).

MTU collaborates in the HCI Pillar 3 RPL in Higher Education and Lifelong Learning project (commenced in April 2021), an innovative and ambitious collaboration of Institutes of Technology, Technological Universities and Universities to build a consistent and coherent approach to recognition of prior learning within and across the entire public higher education sector. The project provides the opportunity to build on the existing extensive expertise of the University in RPL and to identify opportunities for further enhancements, specifically in engagement with enterprise.

MTU has a long-established national and international reputation in RPL policy, process, practice and scholarship. MTU's RPL activities include engagement with industry for the purpose of customised and collaborative course development incorporating the recognition of informal and nonformal learning acquired within the workplace. In keeping with the development of a coherent tertiary education sector, MTU has engaged with the Further Education & Training sector on RPL CPD, policy, process and practice development to develop a consistent approach to prior learning recognition. The University has invested in RPL since 1999 and has continuously striven to embed the culture of RPL within programmes and modules, working with staff across all University areas to achieve this strategic ambition.

Development of MTU policy and procedure in relation to micro-credentials is underway.

## 2.2.4 Portability of Qualifications and Credit

### a. Curricular Features Supporting Credit Transfer

MTU's programmes are designed to ensure maximal portability of credit for their graduates, not just within Ireland, but within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). Programme features specifically designed to support transferability include modularised and semesterised delivery and a standard module credit volume of 5 ECTS credits, as set out in the MTU Policy for the Design and Approval of Programmes Leading to Major Awards (available [here](#)). Modules attracting multiples of 5 credits are allowable where the optimal learning experience demonstrably involves integrated learning and assessment, meaning that the learner is required to address complex authentic problems, synthesise previously acquired knowledge and skills, and largely self-direct her or his learning. Typical examples of larger modules are performance-based modules and final year theses or 'capstone' projects, which may attract up to 30 ECTS credits.

### b. Alignment of Awards with the National Framework of Qualifications

MTU awards align with the National Framework of Qualifications, as confirmed through all standard MTU programme quality assurance processes. This alignment underpins the recognition and thus portability of MTU qualifications within Ireland and – through alignment of the NFQ with the [European Qualifications Framework \(EQF\)](#) under the [Bologna Agreement](#) – within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

## 2.2.5. Certification

All student assessment performance and award records of MTU students are securely stored by the Examinations Office in the central student records database, for which strict data access and protection protocols apply.

Achievement of an award of MTU is certified through the issuing of a formal award parchment, bearing the University seal, and of a transcript of award stage results (Diploma Supplement) to the successful graduate by the MTU Examinations Office.

Parchments for major awards record the NFQ level of the award, the named award and detailed programme specialisation, the award classification and the date of the award. Parchments for non-major (special purpose or minor) awards present the same information, together with the credit value of the award and the title of the linked major programme in the case of minor awards.

Parchments for joint awards require the agreement of bespoke parchments formats between the providers respectively awarding bodies, as well as relevant national authorities in the case of international awards. Succeeding long-standing joint awarding arrangements between Cork Institute of Technology and University College Cork and following consultation between MTU, UCC and the National University of Ireland (NUI), an agreed MTU-UCC joint parchment is in place which is awarded to graduates of a range of collaborative programmes leading to joint awards of the two institutions.

The award information on the formal parchment is complemented by the detailed transcript of stage results, recording the academic year and examination 'sitting', full award and programme title and programme delivery mode, overall classification of the stage result, and the credit value and percentage grade achieved for each module completed within the stage.

Through the [Digitary](#) Secure Online Credentials solution, learners of MTU (Kerry) are also able to obtain a statement of their award results in the form of a ['Europass' Diploma Supplement](#). Through Digitary, the learner/graduate can securely receive, download and print digitally certified, official documents online, and also share these electronic documents with third parties (e.g. prospective employers, other HEIs) in a secure and verified manner. Following completion of a University-wide upgrade of the Banner Student Records System to Version 9 in March 2023, this facility is being extended to all learners of MTU. In addition to the stage results, the Europass Diploma Supplement provides contextual information on the qualification, awarding institution, grading scheme and applicable assessment and award regulations, as well as brief standardised summary of the national higher education and training system. Together, the award documentation issued facilitates clear alignment of a graduate's award with the National Framework of Qualifications and indicates its transfer value for academic progression and, where applicable, professional status of the graduate within the European Higher Education Area.

As per national policy as well as custom and practice, successful graduates of Munster Technological University are formally conferred with their award at a public conferring ceremony at which prescribed academic dress is worn. Graduates of the joint UCC-MTU programmes are all conferred at an annual joint conferring ceremony, with the venue alternating between MTU and UCC.

## 2.3 Procedures for Making Awards

### 2.3.1. Award Standards

The QQI award standards were adopted by the MTU Establishment Day Academic Council as the interim award standards of Munster Technological University, pending adaptation or further development by MTU.

### 2.3.2. Development and Review of Module and Programme Learning Outcomes

#### a. Development of Graduate Profile and Programme Learning Outcomes

The development of a new MTU programme almost always commences with determination of the desired graduate profile and associated programme learning outcomes. The 'Backward Design' process typically employed by the curriculum design team encompasses three major design phases, whereby the team:

1. Researches and describes the desired knowledge, skills and competences to be gained by the learner upon successful completion of the programme or module. These are expressed as intended learning outcomes for the programme or module under development.
2. Develops an assessment strategy to measure achievement of these prescribed learning outcomes. For programmes, a curriculum map is developed which maps intended module learning outcomes (MLOs) to programme outcomes indicating how the achievement of programme learning outcomes is supported. For modules, based on the concept of constructive alignment, module assessment items are mapped to MLOs. Through purposeful design of module assessment strategies, the achievement of MLOs and hence programme learning outcomes is assured.
3. Describes the teaching and learning strategy to be employed in the curriculum unit. For programme design, the strategy will prescribe the approved programme schedule detailing the modules to be undertaken by the learner. For modules, the module descriptor details the balance of directed and independent learning and class contact hours.

When seeking to validate a programme, the proposers are required to undertake consultation with appropriate stakeholders (industry, professional bodies, regulators, alumni, learners) to determine a graduate profile for the programme under development. In revalidation, stakeholder consultation is conducted to ascertain that the graduate profile continues to meet current professional or progression requirements, and furthermore that the level of knowledge and skills shown by graduates in 'real world' contexts reflects the intended graduate profile. Once determined, the intended graduate profile is expressed in terms of intended programme learning outcomes which describe the knowledge, skills, and competences of the graduate of the programme. The intended programme learning outcomes are then mapped to the MTU award standards to ensure alignment with the target NFQ level and award descriptor for the programme. Programme development teams are supported through this process by the Registrars' Offices.

#### b. Development of Module Learning Outcomes

The equivalent process at module level sees the module author determine the learning to be achieved by the learner upon successful completion of the module. The learning is described in a set of intended module learning outcomes. Depending on the starting point of module development, the MLOs are then evaluated to either establish the level of the prescribed learning, or to confirm that the volume and complexity of the intended learning as described match the target level of the module. This involves interrogating the learning outcomes to determine the nature of the ability/understanding described and the context in which the learning is to take

place. The level of the expected ability/understanding is normally determined from the chosen verbs which are reviewed against appropriate taxonomies. The context is evaluated by considering the inherent complexity of the learning and the degree of autonomy and originality expected of the learner. Module authors are supported through this process by the Registrars Offices.

### c. Review of Module and Programme LOs and their Alignment with the Award Standards

As part of the overarching quality assurance system, programme and module learning outcomes undergo both an internal and external review process. Particular attention is paid to the alignment of module and programme outcomes with the award standards in programme design and review in the context of collaborations with providers whose education and training provision is not in itself aligned to the National Framework.

### 2.3.3 Exit and Embedded Awards

In addition to the target award, many degree programmes offer an exit award or awards. Exit awards may be sought by learners who are not in a position to complete their studies towards the target award due to life circumstances. Depending on the target award programme, exit awards may be offered at Higher Certificate, Ordinary Bachelors or Postgraduate Diploma level.

Many Higher Certificates (120 ECTS credits) embedded as exit awards in long-standing Bachelor programmes were created through conversion of the first target award in a 'ladder' suite of programmes, typical of the programme provision in the Institutes of Technology sector in its early years. By contrast, exit awards offered within more recently validated MTU degree programmes are normally created as such and validated together with the target award. Validation of an exit award entails, as a minimum, submission of a set of programme outcomes and a statement of professional value for the exit award as part of the new programme review documentation for the proposed target award programme.

While most exit awards are embedded into the main programme, use of existing cognate lower-level awards as non-embedded exit awards is also possible. This requires a 'differential validation' based on a detailed demonstration of how the minimum intended outcomes of the exit award programme are met through successful completion of the relevant exit stage of the target programme.

Principles governing the provision, validation and making of embedded and exit awards are set out in the MTU Policy for the Design and Approval of Programmes Leading to Major Awards (available [here](#)), with supplementary saved [Policy and Procedure on the Validation of Exit and Embedded Awards](#) of MTU (Cork) (published [here](#)) also remaining in force at the time of writing.

To safeguard the good standing of the University and the excellent reputation of its graduates now and in future, both MTU (Cork) and MTU (Kerry) have in place local legacy policies on the revocation of awards. In MTU (Kerry), this forms part of [Section A5.26](#), Examinations and Assessments Review Committee (EARC) and Examinations and Assessments Appeals Committee (EAAC), of the MTU (Kerry) QA Procedures (accessible [here](#)), while a standalone [Policy on Revocation of \[...\] Awards](#) remains in force at MTU (Cork) (published [here](#)).

### 2.3.4 Validated Awards Register

A formal register of all valid taught and research awards made by Cork Institute of Technology and Institute of Technology Tralee maintained by the Office of the Registrar & VP for Academic Affairs continues to be maintained by the Registrars' Offices.

## 2.4 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

As new, university-wide quality assurance procedures are being approved by Academic Council, they supersede the saved legacy procedures of MTU (Cork) and MTU (Kerry) across all MTU campuses. For policy areas and procedures where no common MTU policy has yet been approved, the legacy procedures of MTU (Kerry) and MTU (Cork) continue in force at each campus location as relevant.

### 2.4.1 Teaching and Learning

A number of core principles governing Teaching, Learning and Assessment are set out in the MTU [“Policy for the Design and Approval of Programmes Leading to Major Awards”](#) and associated [“Procedure for the Design and Approval of Programmes Leading to Major Awards”](#) published on the MTU website (link [here](#)). Their application to module and programme design and development is detailed in the following sections.

#### a. Pedagogical Principles in Module and Curriculum Design

When a new module is developed, the design of the formal MTU module descriptor enforces the systematic capture and constructive alignment of fundamental elements of the module teaching and learning strategy from the outset. The descriptor thus defines, describes and encourages an interlinkage between the module learning outcomes, indicative content, the assessment and re-assessment formats and weightings, and the delivery formats, including the extent of independent learning expected.

At the curricular level, MTU’s principles for modular programme design – summarised in the [Policy for the Design and Approval of Programmes Leading to Major Awards](#) – embed a number of precepts fundamental to the mission and pedagogy of the University. The attendant design features appear most pronouncedly in full-time undergraduate programmes, where they are aimed at supporting learners in transitioning from second level to higher education and in taking responsibility for charting and developing their own learning.

The first year of each ab-initio undergraduate degree programme offered by MTU must include a bespoke, University-wide academic skills module to support learners in their transition to third-level education and equip them with the skills and knowledge for successful engagement with their studies and with subsequent life-long learning opportunities. Delivery of this module is adapted by each department to the particular context of the discipline, so that no two instances will be exactly alike. Common to all deliveries however is the focus on developing independent learning, thinking and reasoning skills, team-working abilities, academic integrity precepts and basic academic writing and referencing skills as appropriate to the field of study. Learners also develop a vision of their ideal career path to start them out on the journey of taking ownership of their learning.

In addition, to develop graduates who have the skills, knowledge, and ways of thinking to address the sustainable development challenges posed by the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), each new ab-initio programme is required to conduct a mapping exercise at the programme design stage to ensure that SDGs are addressed throughout the lifespan of the programme. A variety of approaches to integrating the SDGs into the curriculum may be considered by programme teams, including interdisciplinary introductory modules; discipline-specific modules with an SDG focus, including project-based; or co-curricular credit-bearing activities. Departments are also encouraged to review existing curricula and modules with a view to including SDG-related material at the next point of revision.

To encourage learners to take responsibility for their own learning and personal and professional development, ab-initio degree programmes may include ‘Free Choice’ modules to a maximum of 10 ECTS credits per stage.



In many existing programmes of MTU (Cork), where inclusion of Free Choice has been a long-standing curriculum design principle – see the saved MTU (Cork) [Policy on Curricular Structure and Credit Profile](#) –, most advanced programme stages include both a cognate elective or electives and a Free Choice option. While many learners avail of cognate modules related to their own specialism as their Free Choice, others opt to broaden their educational experience by taking modules from outside their own field, be it in the form of language or entrepreneurship modules or in pursuit of unique interests, such as the choice of certain engineering modules on the part of music students. While logistical or resource constraints tend to put practical limits on the accessibility of modules offered by other disciplines, maintaining the principle of choice as an enabler of competence development is an important element of the pedagogy underpinning MTU’s modular model.

### b. Quality Assurance of Programme Teaching and Learning Strategies

MTU’s [Procedure for the Design and Approval of Programmes Leading to Major Awards](#) and its supplementary procedure for the [Validation of Special Purpose, Minor and Supplementary Awards](#), as well as its process for periodic programme review, require departments to comment on the teaching and learning strategy and mechanisms for each programme in the programme self-evaluation report submitted to the external expert panel. The self-evaluation report and the qualitative feedback obtained from panel meetings with learners, graduates and lecturing staff are complemented by quantitative student performance data which give an indication of the success of the programme teaching and learning strategy in relation to the achievement of the learning outcomes by the different cohorts of learners.

The overall programme document provides a curriculum map showing where the relevant award standards are met and how the intended programme learning outcomes are achieved. Peer reviewers are asked to ascertain that each programme outcome is supported by a sufficient number of modules to ensure it can be achieved by the average learner, irrespective of elective choice. Furthermore, an assessment matrix for each programme is reviewed to ensure that the time and nature of the assessment tasks is appropriate. Reviewers will frequently address issues such as assessment clustering or over-reliance on a particular assessment methodology.

In addition to external peer review, MTU’s QA procedures also require that each MTU programme and module undergoes a detailed internal moderation process carried out by the Registrar’s Office, resp. its Academic Quality Enhancement Unit in the case of MTU (Cork) and Assistant Registrar’s Office in the case of MTU (Kerry), before it is proposed for (re-)validation. Internal moderation amongst others aims to establish that the teaching, learning and assessment strategies, both within modules and cumulatively at stage and overall programme level, are pedagogically sound, coherent and optimally support achievement of the intended learning outcomes within the given programme delivery mode; that the individual teaching, learning and assessment elements within each module are consistent with each other and reflect the module level and credit weighting; and that learners receive appropriate formative feedback allowing them to improve their academic performance.

### c. External Stakeholder Input into Development of Teaching and Learning Strategies

At an earlier stage of programme (re-)development, the appropriateness of the proposed teaching and learning strategies is investigated when academic units seek advice on their programme proposals from employer groups or industry advisory panels.

Teaching, learning and assessment strategies may also be subject to review in professional accreditation or recognition processes. The professional organisation may wish to ascertain if the methodologies employed are suited to helping learners meet the requirements of the workplace in their chosen field, or it may require use of certain – particularly assessment – methodologies to grant exemptions from or admission to professional

examinations. In some cases, professional accreditation processes may reveal a degree of divergence between the overall pedagogical philosophy of MTU and that of a particular professional body. Another reason why the University continues to work closely with its professional partners is therefore to enable the partners to improve their understanding of each other's educational mission and aims, and to advance the development and promulgation of student-centred approaches to teaching, learning and assessment for professionally- oriented higher education, guided by best current pedagogical theory and practice.

#### d. Learning through Extracurricular Engagement and Participation

Learning opportunities at MTU are not restricted to the – real or virtual – classroom. In keeping with its institutional mission and ethos, MTU offers learners numerous opportunities to broaden their horizons and to develop their personal and leadership skills through participation in activities and initiatives beyond their academic programme, with online information available through the [Campus Life at MTU](#) section of the MTU website (accessible [here](#)). Both MTU campus locations host many active and popular student societies whose profiles can be accessed through the [MTU Societies page](#) on the website. Likewise, MTU boasts a wide range of [Sports Clubs](#) with access to excellent [Sporting Facilities](#). Entrepreneurship is a central element of MTU's mission, and the University offers many opportunities to incentivise and support student engagement in entrepreneurial activity outside of the classroom. MTU [Student Enterprise](#) initiatives include [Student Inc.](#), Ireland's longest-running student accelerator programme, the annual [MTU Prize for Innovation](#) and the [MTU Innovation Challenge](#). Community engagement opportunities provided by the MTU Societies Office include its long-standing Volunteer Abroad programme (see the [MTU Societies](#) web page). The main conduit for student participation in institutional governance and programme management is the [MTU Students' Union](#).

### 2.4.2 Assessment and Academic Integrity

Assessment is the means by which learners formally demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the intended learning outcomes of a module or programme, thereby earning academic credit and, eventually, the right to be conferred with a particular award. The quality assurance of assessment – from its design through delivery and operation to the evaluation of its outcomes – is thus critical to establishing and maintaining confidence in the standards of MTU awards.

Equally as important are measures to foster academic integrity, prevent academic misconduct, and address it where it does occur. While academic misconduct is normally understood as dishonesty in completing assessments, academic integrity is far broader than just 'not cheating'. It refers to a set of positive values which inform daily practice in academic endeavour, be it on the part of learners, lecturers or researchers, and which ideally both feed and are nurtured by an institutional culture of 'doing things right'. Recent technological advances, such as the introduction of ChatGPT and comparable AI capable of generating cohesive and seemingly lucid original text which poses particular challenges for technical 'anti-plagiarism' solutions, only strengthen the argument for an approach which strives to create a whole-University culture of academic integrity and pride in one's own academic accomplishments.

#### a. Assessment Standards

MTU's assessment standards and regulations are rooted in the long-standing sectorial framework for determination of assessment grades and of progression and award standards set out in [QQI's Assessment and Standards](#), and should be understood before that backdrop.



Common MTU-wide assessment policy and regulations governing taught programmes are at an advanced stage of development and likely to have been approved by Academic Council prior to publication of this report. However, at the time of writing the legacy assessment regulations of both campus locations remain in place.

MTU-wide regulations specific to the assessment of postgraduate research degree programmes are already in force, however, and are set out in the [MTU Regulations for Postgraduate Research Study](#), published [here](#) on the MTU website. For further details on MTU's quality framework for postgraduate research degree provision, see [PART A Section 4](#) below.

The current standards, regulations and procedures for assessment and the making of awards to students enrolled in programmes offered by MTU (Cork) are set out in the MTU (Cork) [Regulations for Modules and Programmes \(Marks and Standards\)](#).

The assessment standards and regulations currently governing MTU (Kerry) programmes are set out in [Section A5.17, Assessment and Standards Revised 2013](#), of the MTU (Kerry) Quality Assurance Procedures (link [here](#)).

Following adaptation of the delivery and assessment modalities in both MTU campus locations on foot of the Covid-19 restrictions, time-limited supplementary regulations for the assessment of taught programmes were approved by the Cork and Kerry Academic Legacy Committees of Academic Council respectively for the years 2019/20 and 2020/21. In determining these, the guiding principle was to mitigate as far as possible the extra challenges arising for learners while absolutely maintaining academic quality and standards. The supplementary regulations for MTU (Cork) are available in the Academic Regulations and Policies section of the MTU (Cork) website (link [here](#)).

## b. Assessment Design and Review

The format, general design and weighting of continuous assessment tasks and final examinations undergoes rigorous internal and external quality review when modules and programmes are first developed and during each subsequent programme review. This serves to assure assessment quality and the standard of the MTU awards based on these assessments, but also helps ensure that module and programme assessment strategies are student-centred, pedagogically sound and fair. (See [PART A Section 2.1.2](#) and [PART A Section 8](#) below for further details on the quality procedures for new programme approval and programme monitoring and review.) In between cyclical programme reviews, assessment design adaptations are routinely proposed by module lecturers based on the operational experience of delivering and marking assessments or on external examiner feedback. In addition, the review of student progression statistics, which forms an important part of both ongoing programme performance monitoring and programme review, may yield valuable information on the validity and reliability of the assessment instruments as implemented. Assessment design issues identified by the programme boards through programme monitoring activities may thus also lead to assessment design changes between scheduled reviews. (For MTU (Kerry), see [Section A6.2, Course Boards](#), of the [MTU \(Kerry\) Academic Quality Procedures](#)).

In accordance with its saved legacy [Procedure for Module and Programme Changes](#), published [here](#) on the MTU (Cork) website, MTU (Cork) requires moderation by a member of the Academic Quality Enhancement (AQE) Unit in the Registrar's Office where the assessment design of an existing module is altered in a significant way between periodic reviews. Major changes to assessment also entail referral of the relevant modules for review by external experts (see also [PART A, Section 2.4.1.b](#) above). A comparable process of assessment moderation

has been adopted as part of [Section A4.4, Procedure for Module Development Modification and Validation](#) of the [MTU \(Kerry\) Academic Quality Procedures](#).

For the duration of Emergency Remote Teaching ('ERT') during the Covid-19 restrictions, MTU academic departments were furthermore required to submit Departmental Assessment Plans indicating the nature and extent of the changes to assessment from the approved module descriptor in the context of ERT online provision for each upcoming semester. Each plan was reviewed in detail by the AQE Unit and the Assistant Registrar's Office respectively and approved by the Cork and Kerry Academic Legacy Committees of Academic Council before the revised assessments could be delivered.

### c. Assessment and Examination Procedures

Procedures and processes for the organisation of the assessment and examination process, the conduct of examination candidates, formal inquiry into allegations of assessment misconduct, and the appeal of assessment and examination outcomes by learners currently still come under the separate legacy policies and procedures of MTU (Kerry) and (MTU) Cork. However, 'headline' standards of good conduct summarising the University's fundamental expectations on learners in relation to academic integrity are set out in the [MTU Code of Conduct \(Student\)](#) published on the MTU website (accessible [here](#)).

Operationally, the organisation of final examinations and the preparation of stage results, records of achievement and award certificates falls under the remit of the Examinations Offices in each campus location. The web pages of the Examinations Offices provide learners in the respective campus location with extensive information and guidance on the assessment and examination process, assessment regulations, and academic honesty and integrity. The web page for the MTU (Kerry) Examinations Office can be accessed [here](#), while the MTU (Cork) Examinations Office web page may be accessed [here](#).

In MTU (Kerry), the preparation and production of examination and assessment material is subject to [Section A5.3](#) of the [MTU \(Kerry\) Quality Assurance Procedures](#), while [Section A5.4a](#) outlines the procedure for setting projects and dissertations specifically. A range of detailed procedures concerning the implementation of different aspects of the assessment and examination process and the handling of alleged assessment infringements aimed at staff and student-facing procedures regarding the extension and late submission of assignments and gaining access to examination materials are made available as further sub-sections of Section A5, Assessment of Learners, of the MTU (Kerry) QA Procedures (linked [here](#)).

The published policies, procedures and guidelines of MTU (Cork) campuses on the operation and conduct of examinations and continuous assessment are accessible through the web page of the MTU (Cork) Examinations Office and/or the [Academic Regulations and Policies](#) section of the MTU (Cork) website. They include

- Policy on the [conduct of candidates during examinations](#);
- [Policy on academic honesty, plagiarism and infringements](#), with a [policy supplement](#) approved in 2020 following the move to emergency remote teaching (ERT) which focuses on types of academic dishonesty and misconduct specific to the online environment and outlines the follow-up process for potential instances of online misconduct;
- [A process for formal inquiry into allegations of misconduct](#) related to examinations and assessment, and a [supplemental 'ERT' procedure for online hearings of the Assessment Infringements Board](#); and

- A process for submission of [extenuating circumstances](#) related to non-completion of examinations and assessment tasks.

Candidates are furthermore furnished with a published [process for appealing the outcomes of assessment and examinations](#) and notifying correction errors.

With regard to the external moderation of assessment and examinations in taught provision, MTU (Cork) / CIT at the time of writing still retains its legacy policy and procedures for the selection and appointment of [external examiners](#), which also sets out the rights and duties of externs. MTU (Kerry) also retains its legacy policy and procedures for the selection and appointment of external examiners, published as [Section A5.16](#) of the MTU (Kerry) Quality Assurance Procedures (link [here](#)). Common MTU policy on external examiners in taught programmes is currently at an advanced stage of development.

The procedures for selection and duties of external examiners in research degree programmes are incorporated in the [MTU Regulations for Postgraduate Research Study](#).

#### d. External Moderation of Assessment in Taught Programmes

A key piece of the quality assurance of assessment is the external examiner system which ensures external moderation of both the design and the outcomes of assessment and examinations.

Currently, taught MTU programmes whose curriculum is largely anchored in a single discipline or a small number of cognate fields of study are moderated on a per-programme basis, with two ‘externs’ – one academic and one professional examiner – normally appointed for each programme. Assessment in service-in areas such as mathematics, languages or business skills, by contrast, is moderated by ‘subject externs’ who review modules in a particular specialism delivered across a variety of programmes. Selection of external examiners for multi-disciplinary programmes looks to ensure reasonable coverage of the main disciplines represented.

Nominations for external examiner are formally approved by the MTU Academic Council for a three-year term, following vetting by the Office of the Registrar / VP for Academic Affairs which considers the proposed extern’s experience and expertise as well as any potential conflict of interest issues. Re-nomination is possible where a suitable new extern is not available but is not encouraged.

External examiners are responsible for reviewing all draft examination materials, including marking schemes and model solutions, to determine whether the applied procedures for assessment are valid, reliable, fair and consistent. Programme externs also form a view on the overall appropriateness of the programme assessment strategy and the range and type of assessment procedures.

On completion of the assessment processes, external examiners consider the appropriateness of the internal marking in a representative sample of submitted learner work. In some subjects the latter function may also encompass presence during a percentage of oral or performance examinations. Externs are normally expected to conduct at least one visit to the institution to coincide with the meeting of the Progression & Awards Board (Cork) and the Examination Boards (Kerry) for the respective programme. Each external examiner is also required to provide an annual summary report of observations and recommendations to the Registrar which feeds into ongoing programme monitoring and programmatic review.

On the MTU (Cork) campuses, the bespoke MAX<sup>e</sup> digital exam paper management system introduced in 2018/19 has simplified communication and reduced the administrative load for both externs and MTU (Cork) staff in relation to scheduled final exams. Ways of obtaining maximum utility from MAX<sup>e</sup> to support the external review of continuous coursework, now the dominant form of assessment in many programmes and with an increased

adoption post the onset of the pandemic, are being actively explored. Due to the diversity of disciplines and assessment formats, which amongst others include artefacts and recordings, and the sheer volume of assessment, the external moderation of ‘continuous assessment’ remains subject to greater local variation than is the case for final examinations.

For an outline of the role of external reviewers in postgraduate research study, see [PART A Section 4](#).

### e. Academic Integrity

All MTU students are expected to approach their academic work with honesty and integrity. Fostering academic integrity and the prevention of academic misconduct, or its detection and the implementation of appropriate consequences, are the cornerstones of maintaining trust in the assessment system of a higher education institution and the awards that are founded on this.

#### i. Policy and Public Information

Pending approval of common MTU policy, separate legacy policies regarding academic integrity and the prevention and investigation of academic misconduct currently remain in force in MTU (Kerry) and MTU (Cork).

MTU (Cork)’s core policies and procedures governing academic integrity and the investigation of academic misconduct are published in the [Academic Regulations and Policies](#) section of the MTU (Cork) website. For further details, see [PART A Section 2.4.2.c](#), Assessment and Examination Procedures, of this report.

The key academic integrity principles and procedures are widely and repeatedly promulgated to learners and staff via emails from the Registrar’s Office and academic departments, communications from the MTU Students’ Union, and through the [MTU \(Cork\) Academic Honesty and Integrity webpage](#) on the Cork Campuses Student Portal. The student portal also has information on different supports available to students in this area.

In MTU (Kerry), the following policies and procedures concerning academic integrity and the avoidance and investigation of academic misconduct are currently in place:

- [A5.2: Anti-Plagiarism Policy and Procedures](#);
- [A5.13: Processing of Alleged Infringements related to Examinations](#) organised by the Examinations Office;
- [A5.14: Processing of Alleged Infringements of Examination Regulations Relating to Continuous Assessment \(CA\) and Final Examination Other \(FEO\)](#);
- [A5.25a: Guide to Citations, Referencing and Avoiding Plagiarism](#);
- [A5.25b: Request for Approval to Depart from Institute Referencing System](#);
- [A5.26: Examinations and Assessments Review Committee \(EARC\) and Examinations and Assessments Appeals Committee \(EAAC\)](#).

All policy documents are published in Section A.5, Assessment of Learners, of the MTU (Kerry) Quality Assurance Procedures (link [here](#)).

[Section B, Student Rights and Responsibilities](#) of the MTU (Kerry) Student Handbook provides learners with comprehensive information on good academic conduct, forms of plagiarism and other academic misconduct, and appropriate referencing (Sub-Section 2.1, Academic Integrity). It also outlines expectations regarding satisfactory attendance and performance (Sub-Section 2.2, Attendance and Class Participation).

## *ii. Academic Integrity Training and Prevention of Academic Misconduct*

While currently remaining under separate – if comparable – legacy policy, on the operational level, MTU has long taken a multi-faceted, whole-University approach to the creation of an academic integrity culture and the prevention and detection of academic misconduct.

Learners have their attention drawn to the requirement for academic honesty at various points of their academic journey, starting with the common foundational University-wide academic skills module included in standard undergraduate degree programmes. The key academic integrity principles and procedures are furthermore continually and repeatedly promulgated to learners and staff via communications from the Registrar's Office, academic departments and the MTU Students' Union. Students submitting final theses/dissertations or projects, whether at undergraduate or postgraduate level, are required to sign a declaration confirming the originality of their work and the absence of unauthorised collusion, but module lecturers often require similar declarations to accompany other coursework submissions as well. MTU (Cork) introduced a standard declaration of originality for all written submissions after the move to fully remote online assessment during the Covid-19 emergency.

To raise overall awareness of academic integrity and good academic practice, the University has recently made online training courses on academic integrity available to students and staff across MTU, with the support and advice of the [Department of Technology-Enhanced Learning \(TEL\)](#) in MTU (Cork), the [E-Learning Development and Support Unit \(EDSU\)](#) in MTU (Kerry), and the [MTU Students' Union](#).

The courses have been developed by HE online learning provider [Epigeum](#), part of Oxford University Press. The student-facing course consists of five units/modules and is available to all undergraduate and postgraduate students via the Canvas Learning Management System. Students who successfully complete this course receive an MTU digital badge for academic integrity. The staff-facing modules, also available via Canvas, address key issues such as contract cheating, dealing with breaches of academic integrity, assessment design, technology, and the promotion of a culture of academic integrity.

The Epigeum staff training complements the assessment design workshops for staff jointly provided by [the MTU Teaching & Learning Unit \(TLU\)](#) and the [Department of Technology-Enhanced Learning \(TEL\)](#). These workshops aim to support staff in reducing the incidence of academic misconduct from the first by, amongst others, demonstrating ways in which careful assessment design can minimise opportunities for 'cheating'. The TLU also collaborates with the MTU Library in offering 'disseminator' training for lecturers to help their students avoid plagiarism and access useful online referencing resources.

Developed by MTU, the MTU Library [Assignment Toolkit](#) includes a suite of modules that guides undergraduate and postgraduate students through the assignment completion process and provides a grounding in academic integrity by using best practice guidance at every stage. The MTU Library Assignment Toolkit is hosted on Canvas. Click [here](#) to access the toolkit directly, and see [PART B Section 4](#) for a Case Study on the Toolkit.

Practical advice and training for students at all levels on assessment literacy, good academic writing and referencing practice and the avoidance of plagiarism is also offered by several other MTU services, such as the Academic Learning Services provided as part of the University's [Student Services](#), the [Academic Success Coaching](#) service and the [MTU Library](#). The annual ["Just Ask! About Results"](#) campaigns of [AnSEO, the Student Engagement Office](#) also aim to raise awareness of poor assessment practices.

MTU has six nominees on QQI's National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN), and one of these chairs one of its Working Groups. NAIN updates, alerts, and related communications are circulated by Registrar's Office via a dedicated email address set up for this purpose. This ensures a consistent and visible approach.

### *iii. Detection and Investigation of Academic Misconduct*

MTU uses plagiarism detection software (currently, 'Ouriginal') which is fully integrated with the Virtual Learning Environment. Not least given the variety of assessment types and purposes, use of plagiarism detection software is not mandatory in MTU, though department-level usage policies are in place in several academic departments. Many academic staff members use plagiarism detection software not just to support the detection and confirmation of plagiarism in submitted work, but also to prevent plagiarism in written coursework by encouraging students to check drafts for similarity matches and/or requiring submission of assignments through the software. In addition to staff training opportunities, the offerings of the MTU TEL Department include the TEL staff 'knowledge base' (<https://telhelp.eu.helpdocs.com/>) with help articles which provide essential information on how to set up assignments and interpret originality reports.

Minor instances of academic misconduct are dealt with at the level of the individual academic department respectively Module Examination Board (MEB). Suspected infringements of a serious nature or repeat infringements are referred to the [Assessment Infringements Board \(AIB\)](#) on the MTU (Cork) campuses and the [Examinations and Assessments Review Committee \(EARC\)](#) on the MTU (Kerry) campuses.

Each board reviews the evidence in each case, hears from the students and staff members concerned, and determines an appropriate course of action in line with applicable policy. The AIB reports to Academic Council on its activities and also makes recommendations on the further development of academic integrity and misconduct procedures.

Should credible suspicion of serious academic misconduct on the part of an MTU graduate arise post-graduation, to the extent that this casts doubt on the entitlement of the graduate to their award, the award may be revoked under [Section A5.26](#) of the [MTU \(Kerry\) Regulations](#), respectively MTU (Cork)'s saved [Policy on Revocation of \[...\] Awards](#). The latter foresees an investigation of the suspected historic misconduct by a high-level institutional committee with the primary aim of determining if, on balance of the evidence, the award conferred upon the graduate was deserved, or was not deserved and should be revoked. The final decision on revocation lies with the Governing Body of MTU.

(With regard to integrity and ethics in postgraduate research education specifically, see also [PART A Section 4](#) of this report.)



## 3.0 Learner Resources and Support

MTU is committed to creating and maintaining a safe, welcoming and inspiring academic environment which enables and encourages all learners to reach for and achieve their full academic and personal potential. This section describes the policies, structures and services in place to support both the individual learner and the student community as a whole to thrive and succeed.

### 3.1 Policies and Procedures Related to Student Welfare and Community Standards

Key policies regarding student welfare and community standards at MTU are published in the Policies and Publications – Academic – Student Policies of the MTU website (link [here](#)).

#### a. Community Standards and Student Discipline

The [MTU Student Charter](#) sets out the general principles of the partnership between students and the University to enhance and support the learning and teaching experience for all. These principles are built on the premise that all members of MTU should be able to coexist in an environment which allows for freedom of thought and free expression of opinion within a framework of respect for each other.

The Charter sets out the undertakings made by the University to its students and those expected of the students in relation to the teaching and learning environment, equity of participation, dignity and respect, and wellbeing.

The [Code of Conduct \(Student\)](#), published [here](#), is a companion policy to the MTU Student Charter. It details the obligations of students regarding compliance with MTU policies and regulations and specifies the standards of behaviour expected by the University, contrasting standards of good conduct with examples of behaviour that contravenes these standards.

The rules of good conduct and discipline set out in the Code are intended to apply equally to individual students and student organisations. They apply when students are on campus, off campus representing the University, or engaged in a placement or in study abroad.

In line with the precepts of the MTU Student Charter, the standards of good conduct in the Code of Conduct are built on the principles of respect, responsibility and academic integrity. Reported breaches of the Code of Conduct lead to a disciplinary process overseen by the Student Disciplinary Panel. An illustrative table of possible breaches and penalties is provided in an appendix to the Code.

#### b. Dignity and Respect, Wellbeing and Mental Health

Based on previous work done by the founding Institutes, the first common policy approved by Munster Technological University following designation was its [MTU Dignity and Respect Policy](#) and associated [MTU Dignity and Respect Procedure](#). These documents form part of a linked set of policies and procedures which also include the Student Charter and the Code of Conduct (see **Part A Section 3.1 a** just above).

The MTU Dignity and Respect Policy aims to foster a positive culture which values the contribution of each member of the MTU community, be they staff or student, promotes respectful and professional behaviour, fosters inclusion, and addresses bullying and harassment where it does occur.

The Dignity and Respect Procedure gives members of the University recourse to a sequence of informal and formal steps to resolve complaints in relation to dignity and respect issues. The complaints process in relation to these issues does not distinguish between staff and students.

MTU has furthermore published a [Grievance Policy and Procedure \(Student\)](#). This covers general grievances in relation to module or programme delivery, resources or supports; research degree supervision and monitoring; and general student services and facilities. Not included in the policy are matters related to assessment, appeals or exam board decisions (which are covered under the MTU Assessment Appeals Policy and Procedure as applicable); the policy also does not cover academic difficulties experienced by students on an individual basis in specific modules. Grievances under the policy may be raised by individual students or class representatives.

The Grievance Policy and Procedure (Student) foresees one informal and two formal grievance resolution stages. The informal stage allows for the involvement of the MTU Student Ombudsman, whose terms of reference and powers in the context of the grievance resolution procedure are also set out in the policy.

The appointment of a [Student Ombudsman](#) has proven to be a critical element of resolving student grievances particularly at informal stage. The post holder will normally be a retired member of academic staff. The Student Ombudsman now operates on a pan-University basis, having been originally in place in MTU (Cork). The purpose of the post of Student Ombudsman is to advise and assist students with the resolution of difficulties, complaints or grievances involving staff or services of the Institute in an informal manner. The services provided by this post are complementary to a range of existing student services and the Student Ombudsman may refer relevant student issues for resolution by those services as appropriate.

Appeals and grievance procedures for MTU postgraduate students are set out in the MTU Regulations for Postgraduate Research Study. For further details on these, refer to [Part A Section 4](#) below.

Where a member of the University has a concern over the fitness of a student to safely follow their course of studies, or to practice their chosen profession following graduation, the MTU [Fitness to Study Policy](#) and [Fitness to Practice Policy](#) may be invoked (see also [PART A Section A2.2.1 d](#) above).

An MTU-wide Protocol and Procedure for Dealing with the Death of a Student has been approved by Academic Council, but not yet published at the point of writing. In the interim, the saved [MTU \(Kerry\) Bereavement Policy](#), Section A13.1 of the MTU (Kerry) Quality Assurance Procedures (link [here](#)), remains in place. This guides both student and staff members on the MTU (Kerry) campuses in responding appropriately to the death of a student and outlines the supports to be made available by the University in such a case.

A small number of other legacy policies also still remain in force at the different campus locations at the time of writing, to the extent that matters covered therein have not been superseded by published common MTU policy. These include the [Student Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy](#) of MTU (Cork), which aims to direct and inform learners registered on the MTU (Cork) campuses looking for mental health supports, as well as staff members concerned about learners with acknowledged or suspected mental health issues. This is published in the Academic Policies and Regulations section of the MTU (Cork) website (link [here](#)).

MTU (Kerry) still retains its [Substance Abuse Policy \(Drugs and Alcohol\)](#), published as Section A13.2 of the MTU (Kerry) Quality Assurance Procedures (link [here](#)).



Section A13.9 of the MTU (Kerry) Quality Assurance Procedures (link [here](#)) furthermore sets out the [Gender Identity and Gender Expression Policy](#) in force on the MTU (Kerry) campuses pending adoption of a common set of cross-campus EDI policies for the University.

## 3.2 MTU Libraries

### a. Library Policy and Infrastructure

MTU Library significantly contributes to the achievements of MTU's education, research and lifelong learning strategies by offering exceptional expertise, scholarly resources, spaces and technologies to all MTU's community, regardless of location or mode of learning. Ensuring equality of access to, and full use of, all library resources and facilities is a critical aspect in the role of library services, and especially in the context of a new Technological University. Standardizing policies, procedures, and practices across MTU Libraries to ensure parity of user experience has been a key priority since University designation. Key MTU policies since approved include the [Membership and Lending](#), [Collection Development](#), [Library Usage](#), and [Inter-Library Loan](#) policies. A policy regulating [Library Access by Children Under the Age of 16](#) has also been approved. The MTU library policies are published in the Policies and Publications section of the MTU website (link [here](#)).

Physical library facilities are spread across MTU six campuses and are designed to enhance opportunities for study and reflection while efficiently housing over 170,000 print items and several key collections of artefacts held in the [Special Collections](#) category. The library materials cover all subject areas represented in MTU and provide access to titles in Science, Engineering, Business, Social Studies Nursing & Health Care and Humanities. All physical library material is publicly searchable from the [MTU \(Cork\) Campuses Library](#) and [MTU \(Kerry\) Library websites](#) by using the Online Public Catalogue module of *Koha*, the Library Management System.

A variety of over 1,300 well-proportioned, abundantly lit study spaces are available across all the MTU libraries, with WIFI access throughout. Libraries offer flexible and inclusive social learning spaces that provide users with comfortable areas for collaborative and group study. In addition to 'hot desk' study spaces for short-term occupancy, PC workstations and a number of height adjustable motorised desks, students can avail of bookable group study hubs, an Audio-Visual Resource room, and an Assistive Technology room with specialized hardware and software. RFID technology has been implemented throughout, enabling all MTU libraries to provide access to their holdings and services through self-service kiosks.

As outlined in the Library's Collection Development Policy, MTU Library seeks to be a hybrid library, i.e. having the optimum combination of varied and in-depth in-house collections while delivering access to premium online resource content to all of the academic community. Both physical and electronic materials are mapped to a sophisticated discovery layer, a mega-aggregate of disparate content. This surfaces results of all of the library's indexable content into a single search box, retrieving a broad scope of material via a faceted and relevancy-ranked search functionality with ability to drill down instantly to any native database.

The physical library holdings are complemented by a range of digital resources, encompassing 200,000+ e-books accessible through [Ebook Central](#) and a significant collection of both broad-based and specialist [e-journal and standards databases](#), with identical peer-reviewed teaching and research e-content now available across all campuses. The multi-disciplinary databases provided currently include Science Direct, Emerald Insight and EBSCOhost (with subsections - Academic Search Complete, Business Source Complete, MEDLINE Complete, APA PsycArticles, OmniFile Wilson Web, SportDiscus, SOCINDEX, and MathsciNet). Subject-specific databases include ACM, Bloomsbury Applied Visual Arts, IHS, SAI Global (NSAI, ISO, EN Standards) ARTSTOR, ASABE, Digital Theatre+, Drama Online, IEEE, iSurv, CINAHL, Proquest Health Research Premium Collection, Medici TV, Nexis

Uni, Répertoire International de Littérature Musicale (RILM), SAGE Business Cases, Sage Research Methods, Scopus, and Westlaw.

MTU's e-resource portfolio is expected to expand considerably once membership of the [Irish Research eLibrary \(IREL\)](#) is realised in 2023.

## b. Library Services and Supports

As student learning modes expand and diversify, the Library resources continue to adapt and grow in response to developing user expectations. The Library websites, with integrated mobile device compatibility, offer a continually expanding range of [video tutorials](#) and online [subject guides](#) created by library staff in collaboration with academic staff from relevant departments. Library staff have created their own dedicated [YouTube channel](#) which hosts a large selection of instructional videos designed and produced by members of the library team.

The Library also utilises a '24/7' Virtual Assistant Chatbot built on IBM's [Watson Assistant](#) platform. Implementation of this AI support tool has allowed the Library to build, train, and deploy conversational interactions with immediate responses to the most frequently asked library queries, regardless of time and user location. Library staff are able to regularly update conversation starter topics, a feature which proved especially useful during the rapidly evolving pandemic crisis as the chatbot can immediately reflect operational changes and new services, such as ['Click & Collect'](#).

Lib Chat service is also available on the Springshare platform. This allows Library staff to interact online with library users and answer questions in real-time via the Lib Chat interface on the Library website. The service was particularly useful during COVID and is used in conjunction with the regular library support services. A FAQ resource has also been developed on the [Lib Answers Homepage](#).

The highly qualified, experienced and skilled staff of the MTU Libraries – without a doubt the Libraries' greatest resource – continually demonstrate significant capacity to deliver innovative library services combined with a passion for engagement and outreach within MTU and the wider community. There is a clear commitment to enable students to discover and utilize resources for their study and future career, become independent and self-motivated learners and to learn the necessary skills to become independent life-long learners. The MTU Libraries cater for information literacy requirements at all levels, i.e. undergraduate, postgraduate and PhD level, as well as academics and researchers. Presentations and workshops for members of the MTU academic and research community are delivered either face-to-face or online as requested and range from individual support to small group and larger class tutorials and are complemented by 'outreach' offerings, such as workshops for regional DEIS schools or as part of life-long learning community events in the region.

The MTU Library is committed to promoting and supporting scholarly communications via its Institutional Repository, [SWORD](#) (Southwest Online Research Deposit). SWORD repository records, preserves, and disseminates MTU research outputs and also features publishing capabilities and a conference hosting infrastructure. Between September 2021 and August 2022, 108 MTU-affiliated works were added to SWORD, and MTU had 17,343 downloads from 1352 recognised institutions, spanning 161 countries worldwide (verified statistics available [here](#)). The Library is actively developing Open Science infrastructures that support the data management needs and research integrity agenda of the research community and manages MTU's membership of the [Irish ORCID consortium](#).

## 3.3 Digital Environment

### 3.3.1 Information Technology Services and Supports

MTU sets out to provide an engaging, high-quality, flexible and inclusive learning experience for all students, built on an excellent, modern educational IT infrastructure and resources across all campuses which are continually enhanced and which have served the University well during the Covid-19 emergency period.

The IT Services Team works to provide high-quality IT services and solutions to students and staff across all campuses, thus enhancing student experience and supporting academic delivery across MTU, in collaboration with relevant technical staff in the academic units. A strong focus is placed on staff development and empowerment through effective IT governance processes and appropriate IT staff training programmes, accompanied by regular awareness-raising campaigns through various media on critical topics such as cybersecurity.

At the time of writing, students are able to access comprehensive information on IT services and supports available to them through the [IT Support Tab](#) on the [MTU \(Cork\) Campuses Student Portal](#) and the [MTU \(Kerry\) Campus Computer Facilities](#) web page. Staff queries may also be posted through the MTU IT Services Space on the internal Workvivo staff server, which furthermore provides staff members with updates on new developments in the IT space.

IT Service Desks, both physical and virtual, respond to a wide range of computer-related queries across MTU. Issues can be related in person, by email, online or by phone, with services available to both staff and learners.

All new MTU (Cork) campus students receive their, currently, [myCIT.ie](#) and [Web4 Student](#) account details on registration, along with their MTU (Cork) campus SmartCard. MyCIT email accounts are based on Gmail, with online tutorials supporting learners in setting up and fully utilising their myCIT email account. Students use Single Sign On (SSO) authentication to log into all relevant IT services, including email, Virtual Learning Environment (Canvas) and WiFi. A Microsoft Office plan is available free to current MTU students which permits learners to install, at no cost, the latest version of the MS Office suite (including MS Word, Excel and PowerPoint apps) on up to five personal devices, use MS Office online on any device and avail of 1TB Cloud storage on OneDrive. Apart from being the primary form of campus identification, the MTU (Cork) SmartCard provides access to Library facilities and services, restricted-access laboratories and campus car parking facilities. It also acts as a personal electronic 'purse' for use at 'Smart' campus locations including photocopiers, print and reprographic services, food services and campus shops.

All new MTU (Kerry) campus students receive their MTU (Kerry) campus computer network account details and [Web4 Student](#) account details on registration, along with their MTU (Kerry) campus T-Card. Online tutorials supporting learners in utilising the campus IT computer facilities are available via the campus Virtual Learning Environment, Blackboard. Students use Single Sign On (SSO) authentication to log into all relevant IT services, including email, the Virtual Learning Environment (now Canvas) and WiFi. While the T-Card acts as the primary form of on-campus identification, it also provides access to various facilities and laboratories, and is used for reprographic services.

The IT Services Department also provides software, networking and hardware support to the MTU (Cork) [Department of Technology-Enhanced Learning \(TEL\)](#) and MTU (Kerry)'s [E-learning Development and Support Unit \(EDSU\)](#) as well as to academic departments involved in the delivery of online or blended programmes.

On the MTU (Cork) campuses, this ongoing support also informed and accelerated the implementation of the Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) Model in response to Covid-19 from March 2020 onwards. Covid-19 presented particular challenges for the attainment and assessment of learning outcomes related to laboratory work, which features prominently in many programmes. Following extensive work by IT Services, the range and functionality of the Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI), which had previously mainly supported programme delivery in Computer Science and Mathematics, was massively extended in time for the 2020/21 academic year. Several additional areas – including Engineering, Life Sciences, Business and Music – are now enabled to avail of virtual desktops for remote delivery purposes. Furthermore, remote ‘labs’ are integrated with the timetabling system, so that any laboratories scheduled are automatically aligned to the class timetable. The VDI permits lecturers to collaborate with students during remote lab sessions, complementing the use of MS Teams to facilitate screensharing and provision of individual assistance to students during class time.

### 3.3.2 Digital Learning Ecosystem

MTU has long-established expertise in the use of technology for the enhancement of teaching and learning. Building on its digital learning infrastructure and the dedicated pedagogical and technological supports of the [Department of Technology-Enhanced Learning \(TEL\)](#) and the [E-learning Development and Support Unit \(EDSU\)](#), MTU has offered a significant suite of flexible online and blended learning programmes for many years now. The expertise built up by TEL and EDSU served MTU well in its move to predominantly or exclusively online programme delivery following the introduction of Covid-19 restrictions across the higher education sector and allowed it to respond quickly and effectively to the demands of emergency remote teaching (ERT) during the pandemic period.

#### a. Digital Learning Policy

Online and blended delivery at MTU is framed and guided by the new MTU [Digital Learning Policy](#), within the broader policy context of QQI’s [Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes](#) (2018).

The policy outlines that the design, delivery and support of digital learning at MTU must reflect the University’s standards of academic quality and excellence; safeguard the fair and equitable treatment of MTU students and staff; promote an inclusive, high-quality student experience; and harmonise with the egalitarian traditions of distance education and the values associated with open source, open access, open educational resources (OER) and open educational practices (OEP).

MTU’s commitments, requirements and quality assurance arrangements for digital learning and teaching activities are set out under the headings of digital learning technologies and infrastructure; online and blended programmes and other formal digital learning pathways; access to and dissemination of digital learning materials and activities; data protection, retention and management; and intellectual property and copyright.

In relation to proposals for new programmes or modules or for changes to existing programmes or modules which introduce significant use of digital learning, prior formal engagement with the University’s Digital Learning Function is a condition of approval.

#### b. Digital Learning Resources

At the heart of the [rich digital learning infrastructure](#) in place on the MTU (Cork) campuses sits the [Canvas Learning Management System](#) (also called a Virtual Learning Environment, or VLE), managed by the [Department of Technology-Enhanced Learning \(TEL\)](#). Canvas is a cloud-based platform with a range of features to support

important online teaching and learning functions with respect to assessment, content sharing, communication and collaboration, class management and learning analytics. Canvas is integrated with the Banner student record system, so that staff and students are automatically 'enrolled' on the relevant modules based on the most up-to-date information.

Canvas was originally chosen as MTU (Cork)'s VLE because of the quality of its user experience, mobile support, learning analytics capabilities, ease of use, and ease of integration with other platforms and tools. The latter point has been key to allowing TEL to selectively release new tools and functionality and to mainstream new integrations in a systematic and evidence-based way.

Since its introduction, Canvas has been reframed as the central hub and access point for all online components of MTU (Cork) programmes, whether to complement traditional face-to-face delivery or to support blended or fully online delivery of programmes and modules. In the context of Covid-19, such flexibility together with in-house experience in TEL allowed the institution to respond quickly and effectively to the demands of emergency remote teaching (ERT). The Canvas platform was the primary – and often exclusive – way in which staff engaged with learners throughout this period, and the system supported a number of different ERT approaches, both through its out-of-the-box features and its ability to integrate with other ed-tech components and tools. Such integrations include, at present, the Ouriginal plagiarism detection system, e-learning authoring systems (H5P and Screencastomatic) and a digital badging platform (Badgr).

The key integrated platform is the video conference platform Zoom, which was rolled out across MTU (Cork) in its entirety to support ERT. Canvas and Zoom together have also been a source of powerful learning analytics, giving lecturers and programme co-ordinators valid, reliable and actionable insight into online learner engagement and performance which has been particularly important in the ERT context.

Plans are in train to move Cork and Kerry staff and students to a single instance of the Canvas Learning Management System. Ancillary integrated systems, in particular Zoom and MTU's plagiarism detection system Ouriginal, will also be moved to one single instance as part of this merger project.

Information in relation to the development of MTU Virtual Learning Environments during the reporting period is provided in **PART B Section 4** of the report.

### **3.4 Academic, Career and Welfare Services and Student Life**

MTU is a student-centred university, with a strong focus on student support and student engagement. The professionals who provide the University's broad range of student services cater to large and diverse student population and are dedicated to supporting the academic, professional and personal development of all students from pre-entry to graduation and beyond, contributing to the fulfilment of MTU's mission 'to lead change, and through education, empower people for a successful future in a globalised world.'

Information on the range of available learner services and supports and points of contact for each can be obtained from the [Student Services](#) page on the MTU website. This provides access points to the web portals or pages of the University's [Access & Disability](#), [Careers](#), [Counselling](#), [Health & Medical](#) and [Accommodation](#) Services. Information on [Fees and Funding](#) sources and the location of the Academic Learning Services is also made available, as are links to the MTU Students' Unions (see [Part A Section 3.4.d](#) below), the [Arts Office](#) and the [MTU Libraries](#) (see [Part A Section 3.2](#) above). Registered students may also access academic supports through the University's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) (see [Part A Section 3.3.b](#) above).

Prospective and new students wishing to obtain summary information on student supports and contact details for relevant services may do so through the MTU [full-time prospectus](#), Open Days and various induction events, both on campus and in outreach format. More detailed information on the range and location of the services available in each campus location is provided on the legacy websites of [MTU \(Kerry\)](#) and [MTU \(Cork\)](#).

### a. Academic and Career Support Services

Key services and supports related to aspects of programme access and entry, academic study and graduate career development are provided by MTU's [AnSEO, the Student Engagement Office](#), the [Access & Disability Service](#) and the [Careers Service](#), in addition to the core administrative services and supports of the MTU [Admissions](#) and Examinations Offices.

In addition to its work around First Year engagement, the Student Engagement Office delivers or coordinates student success initiatives such as the [Just Ask!](#) campaigns or [Academic Success Coaching](#), which offers one-to-one or group coaching sessions intended to improve the ability of learners at all stages to identify academic goals and to develop strategies and skills to meet these. Another core strand of AnSEO's work revolves around building student partnership in quality through different project strands recently brought together under the banner [Le Chéile](#).

AnSEO also incorporates the [Academic Learning Centre](#) on the MTU (Cork) campuses, which offers individual or group-based advisory sessions and tutorials support in academic writing as well as a range of STEM areas in which learners traditionally experience a level of difficulty, particularly Mathematics.

On the MTU (Kerry) campuses, academic support is provided through the [Academic Success Centre](#), which offers one-to-one study guidance and academic skills workshops, both on general academic success topics and tailored to the needs of specific groups of students. The web page of the centre also pulls together links to academic resources and skills training opportunities offered by other MTU (Kerry) offices and services.

### b. Financial Supports and Funding of Student Services

Information on financial supports available to learners, including [Student Grants](#) (principally SUSI) and [Financial Assistance schemes](#) can be obtained via the [Fees and Funding](#) page of the MTU website. A range of [Scholarships](#) is also available to prospective MTU learners.

Learners facing economic hardship may apply for financial support through the Student Assistance Fund. A critical element of this for the duration of the Covid-19-related remote delivery arrangements was the Government Laptop Loan Scheme and the special HEA Covid-19 funding package aimed at enabling equitable access to necessary digital devices for disadvantaged learners.

MTU offers a number of [Academic and Sports Scholarships](#) linked to specific academic programmes on offer in one of the two campus locations. Individual application links are provided for each relevant programme. Two further scholarships, the [Sanctuary Scholarship](#) and the [1916 Bursary Scholarship](#), aim to support participation in higher education by asylum seekers and refugees and by resident applicants from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds respectively. These scholarships are offered to eligible applicants across all MTU campuses.

Student support services provided on the MTU (Cork) campuses, including the MTU (Cork) [Sports](#) and [Societies](#) Offices, but also services such as the [Medical Centre](#), [Counselling](#) and the [Accommodation Office](#), have long been funded through a devolved budget managed by the Student Finance Committee. Reporting to the Finance Committee of Governing Body, the eleven members of the Student Finance Committee include representatives



of the University Executive and relevant services as well as four representatives of the Students' Union. Devolution of service funding to this committee thus ensures that learners, through their formal representational structures, are enabled to play a critical part in the governance and management of the services provided to them. Any funds remaining once allocation of funding to the regular student services is complete are utilised to support various student-focused special projects. It is intended that a devolved student services funding process involving the MTU Students' Union will be rolled out across all MTU campuses in the near future. Responsibility for the management of the two European Social Fund (ESF) funds, the Student Assistance Fund and the Fund for Students with Disabilities, lies with the Access Funding Committee. ~~Chaired by the Registrar,~~ The Access Funding Committee is tasked with evaluating and revising policies and procedures regarding these funds and preparing for internal and external audit. The Committee includes representatives from the MTU Finance Office and Student Services, relevant MTU senior managers, as well as Students' Union representatives.

### c. Student Life and Welfare Support Services

MTU's [Clubs](#) and [Societies](#) play a vital role in helping students build friendships and support networks, open themselves up to new possibilities and perspectives and develop a sense of belonging, engagement and pride. In turn, positive integration into the MTU community contributes to improved engagement and retention in the students' chosen academic programme.

Supports and services related to students' physical and mental health and welfare needs are provided by the relevant [Medical/Health Centre](#), [Counselling Service](#) and [Accommodation Office](#), while the [Chaplaincies](#) have an open door policy, welcoming learners and staff of all faiths and none.

On MTU (Cork)'s main Bishopstown campus, the principal student services hub is the Nexus Student Centre. This houses most of the services outlined in the sections below, as well as a Student Common Room, meeting rooms and 'high-street' services such as a mini-market, bistro and banking service. The offices of the MTU (Cork) Students' Union are also housed here. A more limited range of comparable services is available in each of MTU (Cork) constituent college campuses. The Nexus also hosts many key events of the MTU (Cork) annual academic calendar, including graduation ceremonies.

In MTU (Kerry), the main Student Services Office is currently located in the Library and Information Centre (U-Block) on the North Campus. Some student services are also available on the MTU (Kerry) South campus. A new dedicated Kerry Campus Learner Centre is currently in planning. The proposed new Learner Centre in the heart of the MTU (Kerry) North Campus will provide a central location for learners, allowing consolidation of existing services and the provision of additional facilities, thus supporting MTU's ambition to achieve a unified approach to the delivery of academic and support services across campuses. For further detail on the development of MTU's physical footprint, see [PART B Section 1.1, Physical Infrastructure](#).

With four separate MTU campuses located at some geographical distance from each other in Cork, a key role in maintaining ongoing links between these continues to be that of the Campus Liaison Officer, who visits each constituent college on a weekly basis and provides information about supports available to all students.

### d. MTU Students' Union

The MTU Students' Unions are the main representative bodies of and for the students of MTU. Currently still operating as separate entities in the two different campus locations, [MTU Students' Union \(Kerry\)](#) and [MTU \(Cork\) Students' Union](#), a unified structure and constitution for a single Students' Union operating across all six

MTU campuses are at an advanced stage of development and may have been adopted by the time this report is published.

In addition to their role in institutional governance (see [Part A Section 1.1.4](#) above), the Students' Unions also offer students many practical supports and services 'at eye level'. On the main MTU (Cork) Bishopstown campus, students can access the permanently resourced SU Office in the Nexus Student Centre for day-to-day necessities, as well as to arrange meetings with the SU sabbatical officers to discuss issues or concerns. The MTU (Kerry) Students' Union Office is located in the Business and IT Building (R-Block) on the North campus.

A University-wide MTU Students' Union publication is currently under discussion, building on the tradition of the monthly [expliCIT Magazine](#) written and produced by MTU (Cork) campus students with student interests and information needs in mind, and available both in print and online format.

### e. Services and Supports for International Learners

The International Offices located on the MTU (Cork) and (Kerry) main campuses provide end-to-end support to incoming and outgoing learners embarking on an international experience. In line with the National Strategy for Higher Education, the University recognises that different groups of students need different and uniquely tailored academic, life and cultural supports to enable successful integration and participation in their new living and learning environment. The International Offices aim to support incoming students of different cultural origins to have the best possible life and learning experience at MTU, as well as preparing outgoing students for a successful period of living and studying abroad.

The offerings of the International Offices can be accessed through local [MTU \(Cork\)](#) and [MTU \(Kerry\)](#) International Office websites or the central [MTU International Office](#) web page.

The International Office websites provide both incoming ERASMUS and other EU students and prospective non-EU applicants with detailed information on topics such as the application process, programme entry requirements, orientation and registration, fees and scholarships, living in Ireland, visas and health insurance. For students interested in programmes of MTU (Cork), this can be accessed through the [Erasmus](#) and [Non-EU](#) sections of the International Office website. For prospective entrants at MTU (Kerry) through the [ERASMUS and Exchange Students](#) and [International Students \(Non-EU\)](#) applicant portals respectively.

Outgoing students of MTU wishing to study or obtain work placement abroad can gain access to relevant information through the [Study and Work Abroad](#) tab on the MTU (Kerry) International Office website and the [Study Abroad](#) tab of the MTU (Cork) website. Post-registration, incoming international students are issued with an [International Student Handbook](#) which is updated annually. Post-arrival, the International Offices also work closely with the local Garda Immigration Offices to ensure that incoming students have a seamless and low-stress engagement with the immigration authorities.

To ensure continuity of support during the Covid-19 emergency, the MTU (Cork) International Office launched a Virtual International Office which allowed learners and staff to 'drop in' virtually via a Zoom link with any queries or requests for advice.

An "International Module" is also accessible to all MTU international students on Canvas, MTU's virtual learning environment. This module provides practical information on living in Ireland specific to the needs of current international learners (on topics such as PPS Numbers, bank accounts and the immigration process). It is also used as an additional channel for the University to communicate with and distribute information to international learners specifically, improving the reach of targeted information provision outside of emails.



Registered international learners at MTU have access to the same broad range of student services and supports as local students. International students may also draw on the supports of the MTU Students' Union, of which they are members for the duration of their registration with the University. The MTU (Kerry) campus also runs a comprehensive orientation programme prior to and around arrival for all new incoming international students, including an onsite orientation event to ease the transition into MTU.

In addition to service provision to students, the International Offices are engaged in advocacy for internationalisation within the University, working closely with other student support services and academic departments to ensure that the additional needs of international learners are understood and supported. MTU is a member of ICOS (Irish Council for Overseas Students) and works actively within that forum to advocate with the Irish Government for international students.

## 4.0 QA of Research Activities and Programmes

### 4.1 Research Environment and Institutional Framework for Research Provision

In contrast to its predecessor institutions, Munster Technological University has full awarding powers for all award types and levels across all academic disciplines.

Development of an MTU-wide framework for research and postgraduate research provision that is commensurate with the new University's extended powers and responsibilities to generate new knowledge, create impact from this to the benefit of the region and beyond, and provide transformative research education continues apace, guided by the mission, vision, and strategic priorities expressed in an [Interim MTU Research and Innovation Statement](#) approved by Academic Council in March 2022.

The strategic development of the MTU research environment is led by the [MTU \(Cork\)](#) and [MTU \(Kerry\)](#) Heads of Research, with important contributions from the Research Integration & Development Committee of Academic Council to the development of academic research policies. While the development process is in train, knowledge transfer activities arising from the research outputs are coordinated and supported by the [Innovation & Enterprise Office in MTU \(Cork\)](#) and Development Office in MTU (Kerry). Working in tandem with these, the Research Offices focus on innovation activities in each campus location.

Overall responsibility for the quality assurance of postgraduate research provision in MTU currently remains within the remit of the School of Graduate Studies on the MTU (Cork) campuses and the Registrar's Office on the MTU (Kerry) campuses.

Most research income is competitively generated, through funding applications to national and international funding agencies for specific research projects under relevant funding calls. Through the RFAM budget, provided as additional funding via the HEA and based on a transparent rubric which takes account of PG graduations, research income and knowledge transfer metrics, the Research Offices are enabled to support research activities targeted at building sustainable capacity in the MTU research and innovation ecosystem.

The Research Offices together with the MTU (Cork) Innovation & Enterprise Office and MTU (Kerry) Development Office provide support for the research community with regard to the dissemination of funding opportunities and the completion of funding applications. The Offices also endorse applications to funding agencies taking due account of eligibility criteria and terms and conditions of the call. Contracts with all external parties are checked by internal specialists for adherence to relevant national and MTU internal policies.

### 4.2 Postgraduate Research Regulations and Postgraduate Student Lifecycle

Research degree provision at MTU is governed by the comprehensive [MTU Regulations for Postgraduate Research Study](#), which cover all quality-relevant aspects of postgraduate education. Complementary policy documents covering, inter alia, ethical research practice, IP issues and conflict of interest (see **PART A Section 4.c** below) establish a secure legal and ethical framework within which postgraduate education can take place.

The provisions of the MTU postgraduate regulations largely reflect the regulations that previously applied at MTU (Cork), respectively Cork Institute of Technology (CIT) before it. All postgraduate research students

registered on the MTU (Cork) campuses were therefore moved under the new common MTU regulations immediately upon their coming into effect in September 2022.

Preceding this, in February 2021 the MTU Academic Council had already approved the legacy [Regulations for Postgraduate Research Study](#) of MTU (Cork) as the interim MTU Regulations for Postgraduate Research Study for the whole of the University (see [Section A11.6a](#) of the [MTU \(Kerry\) QA Procedures](#)). The interim regulations were to apply to research students across all MTU campuses registered on new postgraduate programmes from 1 January, 2021 onwards (including students transferring from a Level 9 to a Level 10 programme).

Any students registered on research programmes of MTU (Kerry) prior to 1 January 2021, however, either continue to be subject to saved MTU (Kerry) regulations or are supported in transitioning to MTU regulations, depending on the stage of their studies. The pertinent MTU (Kerry) regulations remain published in Section A11 of the [MTU \(Kerry\) QA Procedures](#) and encompass the following documents:

- [A11.1 Introduction](#);
- [A11.2: Project Proposal Approval and Student Registration](#);
- [A11.3: Research Degree Programme Supervision and Monitoring](#);
- [A11.4: Thesis Submission and Examination](#).

Applications for registration, progression or transfer between research registers and notices of 'Intention to Submit' a thesis or other examinable work require the approval of the Dean of Graduate Studies in MTU (Cork), respectively Head of Research or Registrar in MTU (Kerry), before proceeding. Support in reviewing such applications may be provided by the MTU Postgraduate Research Studies Board (PRB) and/or relevant external experts in the field.

In addition to supporting the relevant University function in relation to postgraduate research student entry and progression, the PRB also advises the University on matters relating to academic standards in postgraduate academic formation, reviews and makes recommendations to the Academic Council on the Postgraduate Research Regulations, and liaises with the Academic Council and its committees (including the Research Council) on such matters. The functions of the PRB are set out in Appendix C of the [Regulations for Postgraduate Research Study](#). In relation to MTU (Kerry) legacy research students, comparable functions are carried out by the MTU (Kerry) Postgraduate Committee, see Section [A2.10: Role and Function of the Institute Postgraduate Committee \(IPC\)](#) of the [MTU \(Kerry\) QA Procedures](#).

Information about postgraduate study opportunities at MTU is available via the [Postgraduate Research](#) portal on the MTU website. At the time of writing, additional information for prospective postgraduate students, including on the MTU postgraduate environment, entry requirements and application process, structured elements, available supports, and supporting documentation, may be accessed from the web pages of the [MTU \(Cork\) Graduate Studies Office](#) and through the [Research Postgraduate Programmes](#) section on the MTU (Kerry) website while information related to postgraduate study is being migrated to the main MTU website.

Applications for funding for research postgraduates in addition to the general postgraduate study opportunities as published on the Postgraduate Research portal are supported by the Research Offices, including for IRC, SFI, DAFM and Horizon Europe funding.

## 4.3 Research Ethics and Integrity

### a. Research and Knowledge Transfer Policies and Procedures

MTU has approved a range of policies, procedures and guidelines regulating the ethical conduct of research and knowledge transfer activity.

The [MTU Code of Good Practice in Research](#) constitutes the core policy document. This includes a detailed code of practice for the design and implementation of research projects; regulations and guidelines for the ethical treatment of research results; and guidelines for the development of professional competence and research skills in new and experienced researchers and the fostering of a positive research culture.

The Code of Good Practice is complemented by a range of more detailed policy documents regulating specific aspects of research practice, knowledge transfer activity, IP, and the management of research data, as follows:

- [Authorship Policy](#);
- [Human Research Ethics Policy](#), with several supplementary operational documents including a
  - [Human Research Ethics Screening Checklist](#);
- [Intellectual Property Policy](#);
- [Open Access Policy](#);
- [Research Data Management Policy](#);
- [Signing Authority for MTU IP and Innovation Agreements](#).

All research-related policies and procedures are published in the Policies and Publications – Academic section on the MTU website (link [here](#)).

More detailed guidance and access to further resources is available to researchers from the dedicated [Research Ethics](#) and [Research Integrity](#) web pages of the University.

For MTU (Kerry) research students registered before the end of 2020, saved MTU (Kerry) research ethics policy continues in force within its specific scope of application. This is published in Section A12, Research Ethics of the [MTU \(Kerry\) QA Procedures](#), and includes [A12.1, Research Ethics Policy \(A12.1\)](#) and a procedure for the [Ethical Review of Postgraduate Research Programmes and Professional Research \(A12.3\)](#). A procedure for the ethics review of [External Research Requesting Access to Research Participants \(A12.4\)](#) is also in place.

### b. Promotion of a Research Integrity Culture

To promote a positive research culture and support MTU researchers in carrying out research and knowledge transfer activities with integrity, MTU has created and filled the post of designated Research Integrity & Compliance Officer (RICO). The RICO works alongside the Heads of Research and, more generally, the research leadership of MTU to promote the responsible conduct of research, contribute to the development and implementation of MTU's research policies, and collaborate with relevant offices and postholders to ensure MTU's research training includes adequate coverage of research integrity and the ramifications of research misconduct.

All research-active staff and research students in the University are required to undertake research integrity training. Coordinated by the Research Offices, this training is delivered online via [Epigeum](#) and includes a robust certification framework based on the key learner outcomes. MTU researchers also have the option of registering on a credit-bearing module in [Current Issues in Research Integrity](#) (10 ECTS credits, Expert level). This module

counts towards the credit requirements of MTU's Structured PhD programme, which is applicable to PhD students across all disciplines.

Postgraduate students also have access to other research-specific training available within MTU, such as the offerings of the [MTU Libraries](#).

## 5.0 Staff Recruitment, Development and Support

### 5.1 Recruitment and Professional Development of Staff

#### a. Policy and Procedures for Staff Recruitment, Induction and Progression

The MTU Human Resources Office has a detailed plan in place for development of aligned processes for the recruitment, induction, progression and professional development of the University's staff. Pending completion and approval of an aligned MTU Recruitment and Selection Policy, which is under development, the existing legacy recruitment and selection policies of MTU (Cork) and MTU (Kerry) continue to apply in respect of MTU staff on the respective campuses.

On the operational level, as an outcome of the CoreHR system merger project, recruitment processes have been aligned between the campus locations, and a unified online employment application process is in place.

Members of internal interview boards are provided with a guidance manual designed to facilitate the interview process, for instance by outlining appropriate interview questions.

In order to 'gender-proof' recruitment, selection and promotion procedures and practices, MTU (Cork) has provided unconscious bias training to all staff who are routinely called upon to sit on interview boards, including Heads of Department and Heads of School. Originally provided by an external organisation, the unconscious bias training programme is now being rolled out by MTU (Cork) staff following upskilling and the plan is to roll this out to MTU (Kerry) under the Train-the-Trainer initiative.

Further procedural changes in relation to recruitment may arise from the review of the recruitment and selection processes in the technological higher education sector, which is currently underway with a view to rendering the process simpler and more efficient.

#### b. Continuous Professional Development for Academic Staff

MTU makes provision for staff development for all categories of staff, and its staff development programme is addressed at all staff groups. Each academic unit is allocated funding for staff development, which is generally used to fund attendance at conferences and seminars for staff members of that unit.

Staff may apply for funding to pursue further, part-time academic studies in MTU or in other higher education institutions, mainly on Masters or doctoral programmes. All staff development funding applications require the approval of the head of the relevant academic or administrative unit. Academic units and central university functions may also apply for funding for dedicated short courses, workshops and seminars designed to meet specific identified staff development needs. Depending on the nature of the requirements, these may be confined to a particular department or may be interdepartmental.

The MTU Staff Doctorate Scheme is open to staff and staff employed as researchers. Normally, a call is issued once per annum and is subject to an assessment process. The scheme funds tuition fees and a small budget for consumables / conferences.

Finally, the continuous development of the professional and pedagogical competence of academic staff forms an important part of the activities of the [Teaching & Learning Unit \(TLU\)](#) in MTU (Cork) and the Assistant Registrar's Office (Kerry). CPD offerings in this space across the campuses range from full NFQ Level 9 teaching and learning awards, the [Certificate in Effective Teaching in Higher Education \(SPA, 20 ECTS\)](#) and a part-time [MA in Teaching & Learning in Higher Education](#) to [national digital badges](#) and a wide range of short staff

development seminars, workshops and guest speakers. Seed funding for academic department-led teaching & learning initiatives is also available. MTU also facilitates learning communities and networking events, all offered in formats designed to maximise ease of access.

### c. Recruitment and Development of Researchers

MTU is a two-time holder of the EURAXESS HR Excellence in Research Award (in 2017 and 2019 respectively), recognising the institutional commitment to the adoption and realisation of the 40 principles of the European Charter for the Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers ('Charter & Code'), and showcasing MTU internationally as a favourable working environment for researchers. The HR Excellence in Research Award will recognise MTU's progress in supporting researchers at all career stages.

MTU requested the merger situation to be recognised for the purpose of this award. EURAXESS has agreed to extend the deadline to renew the award to April 2024, which will give time to MTU to harmonise its human resources practices and submit the renewal as one University. MTU will be assessed based on the updated action plan where relevant information about how the HRS4R process has been cascaded must be included.

In line with MTU's strategic goals of strengthening and extending research activities and engaging and empowering staff, the university recognises the need for research units to be in a position to recruit talented researchers as expeditiously as possible while adhering to best practice in recruitment, selection and provision of opportunities for professional development.

A significant milestone towards full implementation of the EC 'Charter & Code' was the adoption of an 'OTM-R' (open, transparent and merit-based) Researcher Recruitment Policy for MTU, detailing every step of the recruitment process, from advertising to appointment. Other recently completed actions include appointment of a HR staff member dedicated solely to researcher recruitment, provision of MTU graduate internships for research positions, and provision of paid student work placement opportunities in one of the research centres or groups.

## 5.2 Staff Wellbeing and Support

A number of MTU human resources policies to support staff in different life circumstances who may require leave, as well as an [MTU Annual Leave Policy](#), have been finalised and put in place University-wide at the point of writing. These are available from the Policies and Publications – HR section of the MTU website (link [here](#)).

MTU also has in place a [MTU Dignity and Respect Policy](#) and associated [Dignity and Respect Procedure](#), which have the distinction of being the first common policy documents to be approved upon MTU designation.

The Dignity and Respect Policy establishes the right of staff and students of MTU to be treated with dignity and respect and commits the University to ensuring that staff and students can work and learn in a positive and safe environment free from all forms of bullying, harassment, victimisation and sexual harassment. The linked procedural document sets out the process for making complaints related to issues covered by the policy and the steps towards achieving a resolution.

MTU offers ongoing support for the mental wellbeing of its staff members through its Employee Assistance Service (EAS), now provided by [Spectrum.Life](#). The assistance service is designed to support employees with personal or work-related concerns through telephone support, specialist information and face-to-face counselling. Beyond fully anonymised usage level data, no information on service use is shared with MTU.

Information on the service and the associated wellbeing platform/app is available in the MTU Staff Wellbeing space on the internal Workvivo staff portal.

## 5.3 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

### a. EDI Policies, Procedures and Awareness-Raising Activities

As an employer and higher education provider, MTU not only has the responsibility of adhering to legislative requirements regarding Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, but – as importantly – of doing so in a manner that is visible to all. Relevant pieces of legislation include the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act (2005), the Equal Status Acts (2000-2018), the Employment Equality Acts (1998-2015), and the Gender Recognition Act (2015), which inform all aspects of staff recruitment and management.

Increased training, policy development and communications activities and greater student and staff participation in EDI research support MTU in communicating legislative requirements and acceptable behaviours and in fostering active support for ‘living’ EDI principles among the members of the university. Activities designed to raise awareness for equality, diversity and inclusion issues are organised by a number of MTU services and the MTU Students’ Union.

The [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion](#) team plays a key role in ensuring the promotion and mainstreaming of equality, diversity, and inclusion throughout MTU. It drives key equality, diversity and inclusion initiatives, projects and events while also working with colleagues within and outside of MTU on the implementation of MTU’s strategic goals in relation to EDI. The EDI team collaborates on regular basis with Access Offices, Student Counselling, Teaching & Learning functions, and Students’ Union on these areas of work, including training and awareness activities around sexual consent, gender-based violence and sexual assault, and the [Code Red](#) Period Dignity Pilot Project.

An interlinked suite of cross-campus EDI policies for MTU is currently in development. (See also [PART A, Section 2.2.2, Widening Participation](#), above.)

In the meantime, the [Student Change of Details Regulations](#), published in the Policies and Regulations – Academic section of the MTU Website (link [here](#)), sets out the processes by which transgender and otherwise gender-transitioning students may request a change of their personal details in the University’s records.

Saved [Gender Identity and Gender Expression Policy](#) continues in force on the MTU (Kerry) campuses; see Section A13.9 of the MTU (Kerry) Quality Assurance Procedures (link [here](#)).

### b. Gender Equality

Following successful application, MTU now holds a legacy Athena SWAN Bronze Award. CIT applied successfully for the Institutional Bronze award in 2019, and MTU’s successful application for the legacy award recognizes MTU’s ongoing commitment to addressing gender barriers and advancing the careers of women and trans people. The [Athena Swan Charter](#) was launched in the United Kingdom in 2005 by [AdvanceHE](#), a sector-owned charity that works with higher education institutions globally to improve higher education for staff, students and society, was extended to Ireland in 2015 with funding from the Higher Education Authority (HEA). Adoption of the Charter commits higher education and research institutions to removing barriers that contribute to gender-based underrepresentation and to taking a targeted approach to address issues of both internal and external origin. Initially focused on female academic staff in STEM areas (science, technology, engineering, maths and



medicine), the Charter was transformed and expanded in 2021 to include all staff and students, with specific awareness of intersectional inequalities and the experiences of MTU's trans and non-binary community. Achievement of an Athena SWAN Bronze Award requires a thorough analysis of institutional data, policies and procedures, identification of key issues, and the creation and implementation of a three-year action plan to address the issues identified.

A number of female staff members have been invited to avail of the Advance HE [Aurora Leadership Development Initiative to date](#), with six participants successfully appointed to partake in the most recent (2022/23) cohort. MTU is committed to continue participation in the Advance HE Aurora programme on an annual basis to support female leadership among its staff going forward.

The national Gender Equality Taskforce has noted that engagement with the Athena SWAN process has been transformative for Irish HEIs, and has encouraged institutions to work towards obtaining a Silver- and, eventually, Gold-level award by demonstrating progressive levels of achievement in relation to the embedding and promotion of gender equality and evidence of impact against challenges from actions implemented. While cognisant of the growing momentum around Athena SWAN certification, the taskforce has also recognised that, owing to revised application requirements which have increased the workload involved, the original timelines may not be achievable for institutions.

Now that MTU has successfully completed the legacy process, future work will include the progression of Bronze Award for the TU as a whole, and applications for departmental awards to follow thereafter. Application for an Athena SWAN Silver award application is intended in the medium term.

## 6.0 Information and Data Management

### 6.1 Staff and Student Record Systems

Core learner, graduate and staff data are collated in MTU's Banner Student and CORE HR Staff Records Systems. Relevant Banner and CORE data are made available to authorised users in the faculties, schools and the central administration for purposes of managing and quality assuring the provision and related supports as necessary.

A single, merged CORE HR system is now in place. In November 2021, the Banner Team completed the roll-out of Version 8.5 on the Cork campuses, and all campuses have now completed the upgrade to Banner Version 9.

Heretofore on the Cork campuses, many critical aspects of the student lifecycle have run in stand-alone systems. An intensive and substantial programme of work is underway to replace these separate systems with an integrated set of processes using the Banner system. The implementation of Banner processes relating to online payments and registration is now completed. Work is ongoing on the implementation of Curriculum Advising and Programme Planning (CAPP) Compliance and Banner processes for examination results processing and graduation, to be effective from academic year 2023/24.

Completion of this work will result in a more streamlined and efficient experience for staff and students. It is also essential for progressing the final phase of the Banner Upgrade and Merger Programme, the alignment and merger of the pre-existing Banner systems of the Cork and Kerry campuses into one unified student records system for the University.

### 6.2 Information and Data Management and Freedom of Information

Soon after TU designation, the MTU Governing Body approved a suite of policies in relation to Information and Data Management. All published information and data management policies may be obtained from the Policies and Publications – Data Protection section of the MTU website (link [here](#)).

The [Information Governance Policy](#) provides direction on the classification, ownership, deletion and retention of data and information for the University as well as clarifying accountability for data and information. Data and information as pertaining to this policy includes electronic and non-electronic data. MTU is reliant upon the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of its data and information to successfully conduct its operations, meet student and staff/faculty expectations, and provide services. All staff, students, and external parties of the University have a responsibility to protect University data and information from unauthorized generation, access, modification, disclosure, transmission, or destruction and are expected to be familiar with and comply with this policy. University data and information is an important asset and resource. All data and information is categorised according to appropriate needs for protection, handling and compliance with regulatory requirements. The purpose of classification is to ensure that data and information is managed in a manner appropriate to the risks associated with ensuring that it remains reliable, trustworthy and available for appropriate use. It is also provided to make staff aware of their responsibilities for the protection of sensitive/confidential data and information and that access to such data and information should be restricted to appropriate authorised personal that require this access and that personal information is only disclosed to third parties as it applies.

MTU is committed to complying with all applicable data protection, privacy and security laws and regulations (collectively referred to as requirements) in the locations in which it operates. In Europe, the data protection requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) came into effect on May 25, 2018.

MTU's [Data Protection Policy](#) creates a common core set of values, principles and procedures intended to achieve a standard set of universal compliance parameters based on GDPR.

The [Data Retention Policy](#) ensures that the University applies retention periods appropriately and retains data only for the period for which it is allowed.

The security and protection of MTU assets, facilities and staff are fundamental to the efficient and effective operations of the University. The [Data Handling and Clean Desk Policy](#) is to establish the minimum requirements for handling data and maintaining a "Clean desk", i.e. a work space where sensitive/critical information about University employees, students, University intellectual property, and University vendors is handled correctly, is secure in locked areas and out of sight. The [Data Protection-Breach Response Policy](#), approved in May 2021, applies throughout the Organisation in the event of a personal information/data breach.

The [Data Access Management and Privileged User Policy](#) was approved in June 2021 to ensure processes and tools are in place to manage secure access to critical information, manage the lifecycle of systems and application accounts, and to manage administrative privileges on computers, networks and applications.

Implementation of GDPR across MTU is overseen by a Data Protection Officer both on the MTU (Cork) and Kerry campuses. In addition to the GDPR-related duties, the Data Protection Officer also processes any freedom of information requests made to MTU (Cork) / CIT.

The [FOI section](#) of the MTU website (link [here](#)) sets out key public information on the University under the FoI Publication Scheme, including on its public services, decision-making processes and procurement policy. Contact information for making Freedom of Information requests is also provided.

### 6.3 IT Policy and Systems

A number of policies in relation to the management and protection of the University's IT systems have also been adopted by MTU and are available in the Policies and Publications – IT section of the MTU website (link [here](#)).

The MTU [Information Security Policy](#) sets out the overall approach to information security. It provides a security model aimed at implementing best practices to protect information assets from unauthorized use and at providing the required controls by protecting data confidentiality, where sensitivity warrants this. In addition, the policy is concerned with the integrity of data, to ensure its completeness and accuracy regardless of confidentiality and criticality; with the availability of data, so that it is accessible as and when required; and with protecting the work and study environment of staff and students and the good name and reputation of MTU.

The [Third Party IT Engagement Policy](#) sets out the conditions that must be met to ensure the security of University data and resources are maintained when a third party is engaged to provide a service while the [Staff Machine Replacement Policy](#) ensures that the machines connecting to the University's network are not posing an increased risk to the University's staff and students.

## 7.0 Public Information and Communication

The main repository for public information about MTU is [MTU website](#). Amongst others, this offers a [Study at MTU](#) section allowing prospective students and other stakeholders to obtain comprehensive information about the [University and its six campuses](#), [campus life as an MTU student](#), and the [MTU programme portfolio](#). MTU's programmes can be accessed and searched from anywhere on the MTU website, and all programme listings link through to the full current approved specifications for MTU programmes and modules.

Interested stakeholders may furthermore access information on MTU's [Research](#) and [Innovation](#) ecosystem and on various opportunities for engaging and [partnering with the University](#).

Currently, the MTU website still links to the legacy websites of the two predecessor institutions where this remains relevant, as in the [Policies and Publications – Academic](#) section of the website. These links are being iteratively phased out as new common content is added to the MTU website itself on a phased basis.

Policies, reports and public records related to the governance and quality assurance activities of the University are available through the [Governance](#) section of the MTU website, which provides access to relevant [Governing Body](#) and [Academic Council](#) documentation as well as the current [Policies and Publications](#) of the University.

The online resources are complemented by information provided through variety of printed and/or downloadable programme literature, including the annual [Prospectus for full-time undergraduate entrants](#) and the [Prospectus of part-time and continuing education programmes](#). The printed prospectuses are available from the MTU campuses and are also distributed at the regular MTU information events held both on campus and in an outreach format, such as the Open Days, Postgraduate Fair, Mature Student Evenings or Roadshows.

Finally, information on the University and its programmes of study is also disseminated via different social media outlets, including the [MTU Facebook](#), [MTU Twitter](#) and [MTU Instagram](#) pages and the [MTU Youtube](#) channel. MTU also has a presence on [LinkedIn](#).

## 8.0 Monitoring and Periodic Review

### 8.1 Internal Governance Audit and Review

Immediately upon University designation, the Governing Body of MTU at its first meeting established an Audit & Risk Committee to assist the Governing Body in fulfilling its oversight responsibilities regarding risk management, internal control and internal audit, as set out in the [MTU Code of Governance](#) adopted in January 2021 and the Technological Universities Act 2018.

### 8.2 External Academic Quality Monitoring and Review Cycles

The internal academic quality assurance system of MTU is systematically linked into external quality assurance cycles at the national level through a number of mechanisms.

Chief amongst these are the annual reports – including the present Annual Quality Report – to the two statutory agencies with legal and regulatory responsibilities for Irish further and higher education, Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) (link to QQI's Quality Monitoring web page [here](#)) and the Higher Education Authority (HEA) (link to the HEA Performance Management web page [here](#)). The reports are complemented by cyclical dialogue meetings with each agency and a schedule of external institutional audits (commissioned by the HEA) respectively major cyclical institutional reviews (overseen by QQI; see the [Quality Review](#) page on the QQI website). The engagement of MTU with each agency is governed and bounded by the statutes, national strategies and government policies which determine the remit of each authority vis-à-vis the Irish higher education providers.

The ongoing formal and semi-formal engagement of MTU with the HEA, the statutory planning and development body for further and higher education, encompasses an annual programmes & budgets process and strategic dialogue as well as other HEA-sponsored programmes, initiatives and functional audits.

The effectiveness of MTU quality assurance policies and procedures is due for review as part of the cycle of national 'CINNTE' higher education provider reviews organised and overseen by QQI. The first whole-University CINNTE review following designation is upcoming and is scheduled to occur within the 2023/24 academic year.

With regard to the evaluation of the student experience, the key instrument at a national level is the annual ['StudentSurvey.ie'](#) in which all public higher education providers in Ireland have been participating since its inception in 2013. The outcomes of the student survey are analysed by the University and discussed by the Academic Council and other relevant units. Through funding awarded by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching & Learning, the recently launched [SUCCEED - Standardising the Use, Communication and Capability of StudentSurvey.ie Data](#) project aims to make StudentSurvey.ie data more accessible at academic unit and programme level and therefore provide an evidence-based mechanism to close the feedback loop.

The annual [HEA Graduate Outcomes Survey](#) is also carried out by the University, and the results are made available to the faculties for analysis.

### 8.3 Internal Quality Monitoring and Periodic Review

Pending adoption of common MTU policy on monitoring and periodic review, the saved legacy policies and procedures of MTU (Cork) and MTU (Kerry) remain partially in place in the different campus locations, with local amendment. Current saved policies which remain in force may be accessed from the Quality Assurance

Procedures web page of MTU (Kerry) and the Academic Regulations and Policies web page of MTU (Cork) respectively.

### a. Ongoing Monitoring of Academic Programmes

Ongoing programme monitoring is a core responsibility of the MTU Programme Boards / Course Boards. At MTU (Kerry), the primary policies for ongoing monitoring of programmes are published in Section A6, Procedures for Ongoing Monitoring of Programmes, of the [MTU \(Kerry\) Regulations](#). The procedures for programme monitoring are incorporated into Sub-Section A6.2, Course Boards, which outlines the functions of the Course Boards regarding, inter alia, the academic standards, including the examinations, assessment, delivery, content of the programmes, and the monitoring of learners. Related policies and procedures governing [School Boards \(A6.1\)](#) – to which Course Boards report – , the [Course Programme Handbook \(A6.4\)](#) and the representation and role of [students on Course Boards \(A6.6\)](#) are remain in force.

In MTU (Cork), continuous monitoring of academic programmes is carried out by the individual Programme Boards in accordance with the Annual Programme Status Review process, guided by the [MTU \(Cork\) Policy and Procedure for the Annual Programme Status Review \(APSR\)](#), published on the Academic Regulations and Policies web page of MTU (Cork) (link [here](#)). Programme boards are required to report annually on programme development and enhancement measures. To support and guide the boards, an Enterprise Reporting Portal has been implemented in MTU (Cork) to provide authorised users with a standardised report template for each programme. Each template is pre-populated with key performance data for the relevant programme drawn down automatically from the Banner student record system (see [Policy Appendix B: Sample Template for Programme Review Report \(CAO\)](#)), although the recent stepped transition to Version 9 of Banner has temporarily disrupted data access through the portal. In their analysis of programme performance, the programme boards consider qualitative feedback from different sources – such as external examiner reports – as well as a range of quantitative performance indicators (applications and acceptances, enrolment and retention, student and graduate performance).

### b. Periodic Review of Academic Programmes ('Programmatic Review')

At the time of writing, the periodic review of academic programmes at MTU (Cork) remains under the saved MTU (Cork) [Academic Policy on Programmatic Review](#). Programmatic review encompasses, as a minimum, a thorough self-evaluation of the academic unit hosting the complement of programmes under review, followed by a site visit from a panel of independent external experts with representation from the Registrar's Office. Each review stage generates a detailed report. A positive overall recommendation in the report of the peer review panel forms the basis for revalidation of the programmes by Academic Council.

External members of programme validation and review panels are selected for the experience and expertise they bring to a panel, as well as for their ability to effectively participate in or – in the chair's case, lead – a criteria-based academic peer review.

Reports on programmatic review cycles completed by MTU (Cork)'s predecessor institution, Cork Institute of Technology, prior to University designation can currently still be accessed through the [Programmatic Reviews](#) webpage of the MTU (Cork) website (using the links to the individual Schools and Colleges in the sidebar).

By contrast, MTU (Kerry), on the establishment of MTU, took a decision to retire its erstwhile Procedures and Guidelines for the Regular Evaluation of Programmes, which outlined the policies and procedures in relation to programmatic review based on QQI core statutory Quality Assurance, were retired as part of the process of interpretation of the status of regulations of the amalgamated institutions.

All three MTU (Kerry) schools (School of Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics; School of Health & Social Sciences; and School of Business, Computing & Humanities) had undergone 'programmatic review' in the academic years 2019/20 and 2016/17 respectively, and all programmes encompassed therein were revalidated for a further five-year period at that point. It is anticipated that equivalent MTU regulations for the periodic review of programmes will be developed in time for the next programmatic review of these schools.

MTU (Kerry) currently makes reports on its quality assurance activities both post-MTU designation and of its predecessor institution, Institute of Technology Tralee, available on its website. These include Programme Validation Reports, Programmatic Review Reports, Annual Institutional Quality Assurance Reports and Institutional Review Reports, and Annual Reports, and are published in the Reports section of the [MTU \(Kerry\) Procedures, Plans and Reports](#) web page.

## 8.4 Engagement with Professional and Other External Quality Frameworks

As described earlier in this report, MTU systematically engages with a number of other external quality frameworks.

Some of these are engagements sought by MTU to streamline and certify particular function- or area-specific management processes. These include certification of MTU's energy management system under ISO 50001 and certification of the management and quality system of NMCI under ISO 9001-2015.

MTU also engages with the discipline-specific external QA frameworks for regulated professions under the remit of CORU (Social Care Work, Biomedical Science, Nursing) or the International Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW) overseen by the Marine Survey Office (Nautical Science, Marine Engineering, Marine Electrotechnology). In certain joint postgraduate programmes with University College Cork, the QA procedures of the Teaching Council also apply (Art & Design Education); these procedures are also taken into account in undergraduate programmes leading to single MTU awards which articulate with consecutive teacher training programmes at Masters level, such as the [BA \(Honours\) in Home Economics and Business](#).

Even where professional registration is not mandatory, the desirability of professional accreditation for graduates in fields such as Engineering, Architecture or Accountancy means that MTU regularly engages with many different professional QA frameworks maintained by representative professional bodies or associations, both national and international. The engagement of the University with these professional quality frameworks may take different forms, but more often than not implies regular external review or audit of curricula, arrangements for programme delivery and the overall academic quality framework of MTU by the regulator or relevant professional body.



## 9.0 Details of Arrangements with Third Parties

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

Type of arrangement	Total Number
PRSBs	7
Awarding bodies	
QA bodies	

<b>1.</b> Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body:	Nursing Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI)
Programme titles and links to publications	<p><i>Programme Titles</i></p> <p>BSc (Honours) in General Nursing; BSc (Honours) in Mental Health Nursing</p> <p><i>Links to Publications</i></p> <p><a href="#">BSc (Hons) in General Nursing</a> <a href="#">BSc (Hons) in Mental Health Nursing</a></p>
Date of accreditation or last review	4 November 2019
Date of next review	4 November 2024

<b>2.</b> Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body:	Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland (RIAI)

Programme titles and links to publications	<p><i>Programme Titles</i></p> <p>Bachelor of Science in Architectural Technology; Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Architectural Technology.</p> <p><i>Links to Publications</i></p> <p><a href="https://www.cit.ie/course/MT759">https://www.cit.ie/course/MT759</a> <a href="https://www.cit.ie/course/MT859">https://www.cit.ie/course/MT859</a> <a href="https://www.riai.ie/careers-in-architecture/how-to-become-an-architectural-technologist">https://www.riai.ie/careers-in-architecture/how-to-become-an-architectural-technologist</a> <a href="https://www.riai.ie/careers-in-architecture/education/accredited-programmes">https://www.riai.ie/careers-in-architecture/education/accredited-programmes</a></p>
Date of accreditation or last review	5 June 2019
Date of next review	2023

<b>3. Type of arrangement</b> (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body:	Department of Transport, Tourism & Sport
Programme titles and links to publications	<p><i>Programme Titles</i></p> <p>Higher Certificate in Science in Nautical Studies; Bachelor of Science in Nautical Studies; Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Nautical Science; Bachelor of Engineering in Marine Engineering; Bachelor of Engineering in Marine Electrotechnology.</p> <p><i>Links to Publications</i></p> <p><a href="https://www.nmci.ie/undergraduatecourses">https://www.nmci.ie/undergraduatecourses</a>; <a href="https://www.gov.ie/pdf/232184/?page=null">https://www.gov.ie/pdf/232184/?page=null</a> (Marine Notice No. 52 of 2022 / Schedule of Examinations for Certificate of Competency for Deck Officers, Marine Engineer Officers, Skippers and Second Hands in the year commencing 5<sup>th</sup> September 2022); <a href="https://www.gov.ie/pdf/193878/?page=null">https://www.gov.ie/pdf/193878/?page=null</a></p>

	(Marine Notice No. 47 of 2021 / Schedule of Examinations for Certificate of Competency for Deck Officers, Marine Engineer Officers, Skippers and Second Hands in the year commencing 6 <sup>th</sup> September 2021).
Date of accreditation or last review	n/a
Date of next review	n/a

<b>4. Type of arrangement</b> (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body (/bodies):	CORU
Programme titles and links to publications	<p><i>Programme Titles</i> Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Biomedical Science (<i>joint award with University College Cork</i>); Diploma in Clinical Laboratory Practice (MTU single award).</p> <p><i>Links to Publications</i> <a href="https://www.mtu.ie/courses/mt871/">https://www.mtu.ie/courses/mt871/</a>; <a href="https://www.ucc.ie/en/mt871/">https://www.ucc.ie/en/mt871/</a>; <a href="https://www.coru.ie/health-and-social-care-professionals/education/approved-qualifications/medical-scientists/">https://www.coru.ie/health-and-social-care-professionals/education/approved-qualifications/medical-scientists/</a>; <a href="https://www.coru.ie/files-legislation/msrb-bye-laws/si-305-of-2022-msrb-aqbl-2022.pdf">https://www.coru.ie/files-legislation/msrb-bye-laws/si-305-of-2022-msrb-aqbl-2022.pdf</a>.</p>
Date of last review	28 June 2022 (Medical Scientists Registration Board Approved Qualifications Bye-Law)
Date of next review	2027

<b>5. Type of arrangement</b> (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body:	The Institution of Chemical Engineers (IChemE)
Programme titles and links to publications	<p><i>Programme Titles</i> Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Chemical and Biopharmaceutical Engineering</p>

	<p><i>Links to Publications</i></p> <p><a href="https://www.cit.ie/course/MT838">https://www.cit.ie/course/MT838</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.icheme.org/education/find-a-degree-programme/">https://www.icheme.org/education/find-a-degree-programme/</a></p>
Date of accreditation or last review	IChemE accreditation visit 13-14 May 2020 (virtual visit); IChemE in-person visit 15 March 2022
Date of next review	Intake year 2025 (accreditation extended to full 5 year term in June 2022)

<b>6. Type of arrangement</b> (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body:	Association for Nutrition (UK)
Programme titles and links to publications	<p><i>Programme Titles</i></p> <p>Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Nutrition &amp; Health Science</p> <p><i>Links to Publications</i></p> <p><a href="https://www.cit.ie/course/CR333">https://www.cit.ie/course/CR333</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.associationfornutrition.org/degree-accreditation/accredited-programmes">https://www.associationfornutrition.org/degree-accreditation/accredited-programmes</a></p>
Date of accreditation or last review	2019
Date of next review	2023

<b>7. Type of arrangement</b> (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body:	Engineers Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	Accreditation to the standard of Associate Engineer, Chartered Engineer with Further Learning, and Chartered Engineer of a range of programmes at Bachelor (NFQ L7) (with embedded HC exit awards), Honours Bachelor (NFQ L8) and Masters (NFQ L9) level in Civil, Structural and Environment

Engineering, Electrical and Electronic Engineering, Biomedical and Mechanical Engineering, Chemical and Biopharmaceutical Engineering, and Energy Engineering.

*Programme Titles (Sample Programmes):*

Bachelor of Engineering in Mechanical Engineering;

Bachelor of Engineering in Biomedical Engineering;

Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Mechanical Engineering;

Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Biomedical Engineering;

Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Civil Engineering;

Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Structural Engineering;

Master of Engineering in Structural Engineering (*integrated 5-year Masters*);

Master of Engineering in Civil Engineering (Environment and Energy) (*integrated 5-year Masters*).

*Links to Publications*

<https://www.cit.ie/course/MT739>

<https://www.cit.ie/course/MT839>

<https://www.cit.ie/course/MT736>

<https://www.cit.ie/course/MT836>

<https://www.cit.ie/course/MT731>

<https://www.cit.ie/course/MT831>

<https://www.engineersireland.ie/Professionals/Membership/Become-a-member/Accredited-third-level-courses>

<http://www.engineersireland.ie/services/accredited-courses/charteredengineer.aspx>

Date of accreditation or last review

30 April 2021 (postponed from 2020 due to Covid-19)

Date of next review

March 2023 (postponed due to Covid-19)

## 9.2 Collaborative Provision

### Definitions:

QQI's Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes, and Joint Awards, 2012 defines **collaborative provision** as a process that occurs where two or more providers are involved by formal agreement in the provision of a programme of higher education and training.

The Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 (as amended) defines '**joint award**' as a single award made jointly by two or more awarding bodies

The Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 (as amended) defines '**linked provider**' as a provider that is not a designated awarding body but enters into an arrangement with a designated awarding body under which arrangement the provider provides a programme of education and training that satisfies all or part of the prerequisites for an award of the designated awarding body.

Type of arrangement	Total number
Joint research degrees	23 (of which 10 leading to an MTU award with co-supervision by the external HEI partner)
Joint/double/multiple awards	4 (taught degrees only)
Collaborative programmes	20 (includes programmes leading to MTU awards only)
Franchise programmes	n/a
Linked providers (DABs only)	n/a

1. Collaborative provision (Type of collaborative provision)	Joint Awards
Name of body (/bodies):	University College Cork (Joint Centre: Cork Centre for Architectural Education)
Programme titles and links to publications	<p><i>Programme Titles</i></p> <p>Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Architecture; Master of Architecture.</p> <p><i>Links to Publications</i></p> <p><a href="https://www.mtu.ie/courses/ck606/">https://www.mtu.ie/courses/ck606/</a></p>

	<a href="https://www.ucc.ie/en/architecture/">https://www.ucc.ie/en/architecture/;</a> <a href="https://www.ucc.ie/en/ckr42/">https://www.ucc.ie/en/ckr42/;</a> <a href="https://www.ucc.ie/en/architecture/programmeoverview/">https://www.ucc.ie/en/architecture/programmeoverview/;</a>
Date of last review	March 3 – 11, 2021
Date of next review	2028

<b>2. Collaborative provision</b> (Type of collaborative provision)	Joint Award
Name of body (/bodies):	University College Cork
Programme titles and links to publications	<i>Programme Title</i> Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Biomedical Science  <i>Links to Publications</i> <a href="https://www.mtu.ie/courses/mt871/">https://www.mtu.ie/courses/mt871/;</a> <a href="https://www.ucc.ie/en/mt871/">https://www.ucc.ie/en/mt871/.</a>
Date of last review	29-03-2017
Date of next review	Tbc (programme review schedule dependent on prior completion of the CORU review process, which concluded in July 2022)

<b>3. Collaborative provision</b> (Type of collaborative provision)	Joint Award
Name of body (/bodies):	University College Cork
Programme titles and links to publications	<i>Programme Title</i> Professional Master of Education (Art & Design)  <i>Links to Publications</i> <a href="https://www.ucc.ie/en/ckd25/">https://www.ucc.ie/en/ckd25/</a>
Date of last review	
Date of next review	



4. Collaborative provision (Type of collaborative provision)	Joint Award
Name of body (/bodies):	University College Cork
Programme titles and links to publications	<i>Programme Title</i> Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Industrial Physics [ <i>closed for new intakes</i> ]  <i>Links to Publications</i>
Date of last review	26-05-2017
Date of next review	n/a

5. Collaborative provision (Type of collaborative provision)	Joint Research Degree (Double Degree)
Name of body (/bodies):	Cork Institute of Technology (CIT) / Munster Technological University (MTU); Politecnico di Bari (POLIBA); Università degli Studi di Bari Aldo Moro (UNIBA); Technische Universität Wien (TU Wien); Université de Montpellier (UM).
Programme titles and links to publications	<i>Programme Title</i> OPTAPHI (European Joint Doctorate Programme on Optical Sensing using Advanced Photo-Induced Effects)  <i>Links to Publications</i> <a href="http://www.optaphi.eu">www.optaphi.eu</a>
Date of last review	Overarching Consortium Agreement dated 8 September 2020.
Date of next review	2023

6. Collaborative provision (Type of collaborative provision)	Collaborative Programme
Name of body (/bodies):	Atlantic Flight Training Academy (AFTA)
Programme titles and links to publications	<p><i>Programme Title</i> Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Global Business and Pilot Studies</p> <p><i>Links to Publications</i>  <a href="https://www.cit.ie/course/MT946">https://www.cit.ie/course/MT946</a>  <a href="https://afta.ie/">https://afta.ie/</a></p>
Date of last review	Approved by the Cork Legacy Committee of the MTU Academic Council on 5 March 2021, subject to approval of the Consortium Agreement by the MTU AC and GB. Consortium Agreement approved by MTU AC on 26 March 2021 and by MTU GB on 9 April 2021.
Date of next review	2025/26

7. Collaborative provision (Type of collaborative provision)	Collaborative Programme
Name of body (/bodies):	CPA Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	<p><i>Programme Title</i> Master of Science in Applied Accounting</p> <p><i>Links to Publications</i>  <a href="https://www.mtu.ie/courses/crbaacc9/">https://www.mtu.ie/courses/crbaacc9/</a>;  <a href="https://www.cpaireland.ie/become-a-student/CPA-Qualifications/CPA-Accounting-Masters-Qualification/Cork-Institute-of-Technology">https://www.cpaireland.ie/become-a-student/CPA-Qualifications/CPA-Accounting-Masters-Qualification/Cork-Institute-of-Technology</a></p>
Date of last review	9 May 2019
Date of next review	2024/25

8. Collaborative provision	
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(Type of collaborative provision)	Collaborative Programme
Name of body (/bodies):	University of Bologna, Italy University of Burgundy, Dijon, France AgroSup, Dijon, France Institute of Technology, Tralee
Programme titles and links to publications	<i>Programme Title</i> Bachelor of Science (Honours) in International Agricultural Engineering  <i>Link to Publications</i> See validation reports for Academic Year 2018/2019 at: <a href="#">MTU (Kerry) campus Procedures Plans and Reports</a>
Date of last review	11 September 2019
Date of next review	11 September 2024

<b>9. Collaborative provision</b>	
(Type of collaborative provision)	Collaborative Programme
Name of body (/bodies):	Teagasc
Programme titles and links to publications	<i>Programme Title</i> MTU (Cork): Higher Certificate in Science in Agriculture; MTU (Cork): Bachelor of Science in Agriculture; MTU (Kerry): Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Science; MTU (Kerry): Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Agricultural Science.  <i>Links to Publications</i> <a href="https://www.mtu.ie/courses/mt750/">https://www.mtu.ie/courses/mt750/</a> ; <a href="https://www.mtu.ie/courses/mt777/">https://www.mtu.ie/courses/mt777/</a> ; <a href="https://www.mtu.ie/courses/mt877/">https://www.mtu.ie/courses/mt877/</a> .
	13-04-2016 (HC/BSc in Agriculture)

Date of last review	
Date of next review	2021 (HC/BSc in Agriculture)

<b>10. Collaborative provision</b> (Type of collaborative provision)	Collaborative Programme
Name of body (/bodies):	IoT Consortium in conjunction with BioPharmaChem Ireland (Lead Provider: TU Dublin Tallaght)
Programme titles and links to publications	<p><i>Programme Title</i> Higher Certificate in Science – Laboratory Technician [Apprenticeship Mode]; Bachelor of Science – Laboratory Analyst [Apprenticeship Mode]</p> <p><i>Links to Publications</i> <a href="https://courses.cit.ie/index.cfm/page/course/courseId/2354">https://courses.cit.ie/index.cfm/page/course/courseId/2354</a> <a href="https://apprenticeship.ie/career-seekers/get-started/learn-more/logistics/logistics-associate-l6">https://apprenticeship.ie/career-seekers/get-started/learn-more/logistics/logistics-associate-l6</a></p>
Date of last review	Programme specifications validated by TU Dublin, Tallaght in 2018/19. CIT instance of the HC only first approved by the CIT AC Executive Committee in June 2019. MTU (Cork) instances of the BSc approved / of the HC reapproved by the MTU AC in June 2022.
Date of next review	2023/24

<b>11. Collaborative provision</b> (Type of collaborative provision)	Collaborative Programme
Name of body (/bodies):	IoT Consortium in partnership with the Logistics Associate Apprenticeship Consortium (Lead Provider: TU Dublin)
Programme titles and links to publications	<p><i>Programme Title</i> Higher Certificate in Science in Logistics [Apprentice Mode].</p> <p><i>Links to Publications</i> <a href="https://courses.cit.ie/index.cfm/page/course/courseId/2354;">https://courses.cit.ie/index.cfm/page/course/courseId/2354;</a> <a href="https://apprenticeship.ie/career-seekers/get-started/learn-more/logistics/logistics-associate-l6">https://apprenticeship.ie/career-seekers/get-started/learn-more/logistics/logistics-associate-l6</a></p>

Date of last review	Programme specification validated by TU Dublin in 2018/19. CIT Academic Council approval of CIT instance on 5 Feb 2020, following approval of the Consortium Agreement.
Date of next review	2023/24

<b>12. Collaborative provision</b> (Type of collaborative provision)	Collaborative Programmes
Name of body (/bodies):	IoT Consortium (Lead Provider: Atlantic Technological University Galway)
Programme titles and links to publications	<p><i>Programme Titles</i></p> <p>Higher Certificate in Engineering in Manufacturing Engineering [Apprentice Mode]; Bachelor of Engineering in Manufacturing Engineering [Apprentice Mode].</p> <p><i>Links to Publications</i></p> <p><a href="#">Manufacturing Technician Level 6 programme - IBEC;</a> <a href="#">Manufacturing Engineer Level 7 programme - IBEC.</a></p>
Date of last review	Programme specification validated by Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology in 2016/17. CIT Academic Council approval of CIT instance on 5 Feb 2020, following approval of the Consortium Agreement.
Date of next review	2022

<b>13. Collaborative provision</b> (Type of collaborative provision)	Collaborative Programmes
Name of body (/bodies):	IoT Consortium in collaboration with State Street International and BNY Mellon (Lead Provider: South East Technological University Waterford)
Programme titles and links to publications	<p><i>Programme Titles</i></p> <p>Certificate in Regulated Investment (SPA, NFQ L8, 20 ECTS credits); Certificate in Investment Fund Administration (Minor Award, NFQ L9, 30 ECTS credits); Postgraduate Diploma in Business in Investment Fund Administration (embedded award, 60 ECTS credits);</p>

	<p>Master of Business in Investment Fund Administration (90 ECTS credits).</p> <p><i>Links to Publications</i></p> <p><a href="#">CRBIFAD9   Munster Technological University - MTU;</a></p> <p><a href="#">Certificate in Regulated Investment Funds - MTU Business Academy;</a></p> <p><a href="#">Masters in Investment Fund Administration - MTU Business Academy;</a></p> <p><a href="#">Master of Business in Investment Fund Administration - SETU Waterford Campus   formerly Waterford Institute of Technology (wit.ie);</a></p> <p><a href="#">Certificate in Regulated Investment Funds - SETU Waterford Campus   formerly Waterford Institute of Technology (wit.ie).</a></p>
Date of last review	<p>PGDip/MBus: Programme specifications validated by WIT in July 2021. MTU approval of MTU (Cork) instances in Oct. 2021;</p> <p>SPA: June 2022 (joint review)</p> <p>Minor Award: May 2022 (joint review)</p>
Date of next review	2026 / 2027

<b>14. Collaborative provision</b>	
(Type of collaborative provision)	Collaborative Programmes
Name of body (/bodies):	Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland (RCSI), Castel International
Programme titles and links to publications	<p><i>Programme Titles</i></p> <p>Certificate in Biomedical Sciences – International Medical Commencement Programme – Medical Stream;</p> <p>Foundation Certificate in Medical Commencement with Physiotherapy.</p>
Date of last review	2 December 2021
Date of next review	2022

<b>15. Collaborative provision</b> (Type of collaborative provision)	Collaborative Programmes
Name of body (/bodies):	Children's Therapy Centre, Ballymore, Mullingar
Programme titles and links to publications	<p><i>Programme Title</i></p> <p>Certificate in Principles of Art Therapy</p> <p><i>Links to Publications</i></p> <p><a href="https://www.mtu.ie/courses/craatpy8/">https://www.mtu.ie/courses/craatpy8/;</a></p> <p><a href="http://childrenstherapycentre.ie/principles-of-art-therapy-certificate/">http://childrenstherapycentre.ie/principles-of-art-therapy-certificate/</a></p>
Date of last review	28-04-2016
Date of next review	2021

<b>16. Collaborative provision</b> (Type of collaborative provision)	Collaborative Programmes
Name of body (/bodies):	The Bessborough Centre, Cork, and the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust, UK
Programme titles and links to publications	<p><i>Programme Title</i></p> <p>Certificate in Advanced Clinical Practice with Children and Families (Special Purpose Award, NMQ Level 9, 30 ECTS credits)</p> <p><i>Links to Publications</i></p>
Date of last review	09-06-2016
Date of next review	2021



## 9.3 Articulation Agreements

### Definition:

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

Articulation agreements - Total number	5 (3 of which relating to multiple programmes)
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1. Articulation agreement:	Inward Articulation
Name of body (/bodies):	Sir Sandford Fleming College, Peterborough, Ontario, Canada
Programme titles and links to publications	<p><i>Articulating External Programmes:</i> 12 programmes at Diploma or Advanced Diploma level (4 or 6 semesters respectively)</p> <p><i>Articulates with MTU Programmes:</i> 10 programmes at Bachelor or Honours Bachelor level offered by MTU (Kerry). Articulation into Final Year.</p> <p><i>Links to Publications</i>  <a href="#">Sir Sandford Fleming College Pathways</a>  <a href="#">Munster Technological University-Kerry : Fleming College</a>  <a href="#">Education Pathways : Fleming College</a></p>
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	September 2021
Date of next review	September 2025

Detail of the agreement	To be eligible for consideration for entry to the programme, Sir Sandford Fleming College graduates will have achieved a specified minimum entry grade. This grade requirement is subject to periodic review.
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<b>2. Articulation agreement:</b>	Inward Articulation
Name of body (/bodies):	Wuhan Polytechnic University, Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China
Programme titles and links to publications	<i>Programme:</i> Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Animation, Visual Effects and Motion Design  <i>Links to Publications</i> <a href="#">BA (Hons) in Animation Visual Effects and Motion Design</a>
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	February 2019
Date of next review	July 2028
Detail of the agreement	To be eligible for consideration for entry to the programme, Wuhan Polytechnic University graduates will have achieved a specified minimum entry grade. This grade requirement is subject to periodic review.

<b>3. Articulation agreement:</b>	Inward Articulation
Name of body (/bodies):	Durham College, Oshawa, Ontario, Canada
Programme titles and links to publications	<i>Articulating External Programmes:</i> 11 programmes at Diploma or Advanced Diploma level (4 or 6 semesters respectively)  <i>Articulates with MTU Programmes:</i>

	<p>11 programmes at Bachelor and Honours Bachelor level offered by MTU (Kerry). Articulation into Final Year.</p> <p><i>Links to Publications</i>  <a href="#">Durham College Pathways</a>  <a href="#">Pathways: International   Durham College</a>  <a href="https://durhamcollege.ca/programs-and-courses/pathways-further-your-education/pathways-to-degrees">https://durhamcollege.ca/programs-and-courses/pathways-further-your-education/pathways-to-degrees</a></p>
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	February 2018
Date of next review	February 2023
Detail of the agreement	To be eligible for consideration for entry to the programme, Durham College graduates will have achieved a specified minimum entry grade. This grade requirement is subject to periodic review.

4. Articulation agreement:	Inward Articulation
Name of body (/bodies):	Algonquin College, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
Programme titles and links to publications	<p><i>Articulating External Programmes:</i>  11 programmes at Diploma or Advanced Diploma level (4 or 6 semesters respectively)</p> <p><i>Articulates with MTU Programmes:</i>  11 programmes at Bachelor and Honours Bachelor level offered by MTU (Kerry). Articulation into Final Year.</p> <p><i>Links to Publications</i>  <a href="#">Algonquin College Pathways</a>  <a href="https://www.algonquincollege.com/pathways/">https://www.algonquincollege.com/pathways/</a>  <a href="https://www.algonquincollege.com/pathways/list/">https://www.algonquincollege.com/pathways/list/</a></p>
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	September 2018

Date of next review	March 2022
Detail of the agreement	To be eligible for consideration for entry to the programme, Algonquin graduates will have achieved a specified minimum entry grade. This grade requirement is subject to periodic review.

5. Articulation agreement:	Outward Articulation
Name of body (/bodies):	University College Cork
Programme titles and links to publications	<p><i>Articulating MTU programme:</i> Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Home Economics and Business (3 years, 180 ECTS credits)</p> <p><i>Articulates with External Programme:</i> Professional Master in Education (Home Economics), offered by University College Cork</p> <p><i>Links to Publications</i> <a href="https://www.mtu.ie/courses/mt930/">https://www.mtu.ie/courses/mt930/</a> <a href="https://www.ucc.ie/en/pec01/">https://www.ucc.ie/en/pec01/</a></p>
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	April 2021
Date of next review	April 2026
Detail of the agreement	The MTU BA (Hons) in Home Economics and Business currently constitutes the only initial teacher education programme in Ireland combining Home Economics with Business as a second subject. Achievement of a Second-Class Honours Grade 2 or higher entitles graduates to progress, through a protected pathway, to the UCC Professional Master of Education in order to qualify for entry into the post-primary teaching profession. Certain programme design features of the BA have been determined by Teaching Council requirements and as a consequence deviate from the standard MTU Cork curricular model, including duration and the derogation from elective choice.

**Annual Quality Report (Institution)**  
**PART B: INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE**  
**ENHANCEMENT & IMPACT**  
**Reporting Period 2021-2022**

## PART B: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM

### Guidelines on Completing Part B

As outlined in the general guidelines for this template (p.6), **Part B** of the AQR focuses specifically on the effectiveness and impact of the IQA framework on the QA activities and developments across the institution during the reporting period.

Here, the institution is invited to document the quality enhancements adopted and implemented during the reporting period and describe concisely the impact of these across a selected range of activities. Part B should also be used to demonstrate how plans set out in the previous AQR were progressed during the reporting period. These plans may be linked to strategic objectives, to QQI reengagement advices, or to Cinnte review recommendations.

Part B of the AQR is an opportunity for self-reflection and critical evaluation of the effectiveness of QA activities over the reporting period. The institution is encouraged to reflect on what worked well and what did not, and to consider impact measures, using both quantitative and qualitative evidence (metrics, benchmarks and feedback/judgement) and detail how they led to specific improvements of and enhancement in QA activities.

Part B provides evidence of quality improvement and enhancement and impact<sup>2</sup> of QA activities within the totality of the institution's QA system.

**Section 1** pertains to internal quality assurance implementation and developments since the previous reporting period.

**Section 2** considers the institutional analysis of IQA enhancements and their impact on a range of activities including academic integrity.

**Section 3** relates to IQA developments and plans for the next reporting period.

**Section 4** provides an opportunity for institutions to showcase IQA in action through case studies in relevant thematic areas.

Institutions are invited to use case studies to demonstrate quality in action and to highlight areas of practice for dissemination at any point in this part of the report.

#### Case Studies

QQI recommends that written case studies should:

- Be between half a page and two pages in length;
- Relate to a specific time- and subject-bound issue;
- Include an introduction that sets out a brief overview of contextual matters;
- Include any relevant supporting data and data analysis;
- Include links to any sources cited;
- Include a clear and concise concluding paragraph with an overview of the key outcomes/learning.

Although case studies will generally be in written form, institutions may also provide links to audio-visual/multimedia case studies. QQI does not prescribe a format for case studies.

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<sup>2</sup> The National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education have considered impact and measures leading to development and improvement specifically in terms of teaching and learning. See: <https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/wp-content/uploads/NF-2020-Insights-from-Practice-About-Impact-in-Teaching-and-Learning-web-ready.pdf>. This is a very useful reference, though impact in the context of this report should be considered

## 1.0 Quality Implementation and Developments

### 1.1 Strategic QA Updates

#### a. Governing Body

In the months following designation, three committees of Governing Body were established:

- Audit & Risk Committee
- Nominations Committee
- Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Committee

During that period, the Audit & Risk Committee also had responsibility for Finance.

Following the expansion of the Governing Body in June 2021, work got underway on the determination of the remainder of its Committee structure, approval of Terms of Reference and the development of a workplan for each committee.

Governors discussed this over a number of meetings and agreed on the following Committees of Governing Body:

- Arts, Sport & Culture Committee
- Audit & Risk Committee
- Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Committee
- Finance Committee
- NMCI Committee
- Strategic Development Committee

The Committees are now all populated.

#### b. TU Transformation Programme – Workstreams

In December 2021, following an extensive tender process, MTU appointed KPMG as external advisory support for the Technological University Transformation Programme, across three workstreams: Strategy Development; the Executive Structure and the Professional Services Operating Model.

These workstreams were designed to run in parallel, based on their interdependent nature. The University's Strategic Plan was developed in 2021/22 and has since been approved by Governing Body. The design of the new MTU Executive Structure was also completed and implementation will follow on government approval. A high-level design of the Professional Services Operating Model has been undertaken and more detailed implementation work has commenced. At the time of writing, a fourth separate programme of work has got underway to design the optimum academic structure in a phased approach. This is also supported by KPMG, following a separate tender process. Throughout, there is a substantial degree of 'cross-talking' between the workstreams.

#### c. Development of MTU's Strategic Plan: Our Shared Vision to 2027

MTU commenced the work of developing its first strategic plan in January 2022. Throughout, the approach taken was highly consultative and collaborative, so as to ensure that the views of students, staff and external community were heard as the plan was progressed, to empower our students, staff and region.



A desk-review of other university strategies, nationally and internationally, was undertaken and informed the MTU University Executive's early deliberations. Building upon the extensive work which contributed to the establishment of MTU the MTU Executive team participated in a strategy development session in February 2022, facilitated by KPMG, which focused on developing the key strategic themes to support MTU's mission and vision. The outputs of the day coupled with the learnings to date in the establishment of MTU, will formed the basis of staff, student and external consultation, as the University collectively developed the Strategic Plan.

Five key Strategic Themes emerged, and Executive theme owners were determined as follows:

1. People and Community (Theme Owners: Mr Tim Horgan, Dr Brendan O'Donnell, Prof. Joseph Walsh)
2. Learner Education & Experience (Theme Owners: Prof. Hugh McGlynn, Mr Michael Loftus)
3. Research, Innovation & Entrepreneurship Ecosystem (Theme Owners: Ms Mary Rose Stafford, Mr Paul Gallagher)
4. Leading Regional Development (Theme Owners: Mr Tim Daly, Dr Áine Ní Shé)
5. Global Outlook (Theme Owners: Mr Gerard O'Donovan, Mr Michael Hall, Ms Ciara Looney)

A set of five strategic enablers, running through all themes, also emerged (presented in [PART A, Section 1.1.2.](#))

In what was a 'positive disruption' approach, Theme Owners were generally allocated to lead on a strategic theme outside of their immediate Executive remit. The Theme Owners were supported by KPMG but were respectively accountable for developing the context for their theme and were responsible for finalizing the actions, targets, milestones and action plans for their theme to be realized. Throughout the process, the Theme Leaders also worked together to cross-check for consistency between and across the themes as the plan developed.

Consultation with the University community commenced early in the process which was devised to be as consultative as possible and to afford all the opportunity to contribute. The strategic themes were circulated to the University community for feedback.

Five Working Groups were established to further develop and interrogate these strategic themes. The aim of the working groups was to engage the larger MTU population and further develop the thematic areas into comprehensive, cohesive and measurable plans of action to represent the future direction and focus of MTU. Each was led by the relevant theme owners, and the groups comprised MTU staff, students, and external contributors. To maximise effectiveness, each working group operated within twenty participants. Staff membership of these groups was identified and determined through an expression of interest process. There was a broad membership selection approach, and the Theme Leaders worked to achieve appropriate representation of campuses and grades on each group. The early business of each Working Group included the determination of external members with experience and expertise relevant to the given Strategic Theme.

Over March-April, the Working Groups further developed the themes. A set of strategic objectives was developed for each theme, and through the workshops each Working Group then identified the relevant actions, KPIs and targets into a plan to achieve those strategic objectives. Risks and enablers were also identified. Each Working Group further refined its work and was required to sign off on its work on its completion.

A stakeholder consultation framework was set up to ensure meaningful consultation at multiple levels, internally and externally. Cross-university listening sessions/focus groups/surveys were also valuable feedback mechanisms. These consultative opportunities were communicated widely. Updates on all of the Strategy

Workshops were provided on the Workvivo Transition and Transformation page, which also contained an online form for feedback.

Formal consultation with all staff unions and with the Students' Unions was also a key part of the process, and the Students' Unions also availed of the opportunity to participate in the Working Groups.

A small group of external stakeholders undertook a round-table review of the strategic themes, objectives, key features, enablers, and KPIs as a validation check.

Governing Body was regularly updated and consulted upon during the development period, and there were scheduled presentations to and consultation with its Strategic Development Committee. The University Executive considered the penultimate draft of the Plan at an all-day workshop at which members had the opportunity to review each thematic area, bring the themes together and consider the strategy in its entirety.

The plan was launched internally in June 2022 and was approved by Governing Body in July 2022, for a period of 5 years from 1 September 2022. The plan was published in full and launched by the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science in October 2022.

The implementation plan has since been developed by the Executive and approved by the Governing Body following review by its Strategic Development Committee. The Strategic Plan and the implementation plan are standing items on the agenda of the Strategic Development Committee, with quarterly reviews by Governing Body.

#### d. Academic Council

##### *Establishment Day and Transitional Academic Council*

On Establishment Day (1st January 2021), Governing Body decided to establish a small, time-limited, Academic Council for MTU with immediate effect in accordance with the Technological Universities Act (2018). This ensured business continuity during the Semester 1 examination results processing period and Semester 2 academic delivery, then impacted by a Covid-19 lockdown. Drawing on work and consultation carried out prior to designation, the 'Establishment Day' Academic Council progressed the current 'transitional' Academic Council which had its first meeting on 7 May 2021. Under its regulations, approved by Governing Body on 12 March 2021, its term was to be no longer than 18 months, unless or until otherwise determined by Governing Body. Governing Body has since approved a final extension to 31 August 2022 at the latest.

The two legacy Councils (the Cork Academic Legacy Committee and the Kerry Academic Legacy Committee of Academic Council) remained in place during the reporting period. They dealt only with legacy and operational issues, with the majority of their business focussed on contingency Teaching, Learning & Assessment arrangements, in the context of the ongoing and dynamic COVID-19 situation. The business of these committees wound down over 2021/2022, with meetings only called as necessary. The committees have not met in 2022/23 and are now dormant.

Following elections in June 2021, the six newly established Integration & Development Committees convened early in Academic Year 2021/2022. The first item of business was nominations for Chair. Under Academic Council Standing Orders, each Committee Chair must be a member of Council and, in the event that there is more than one nomination for a given Committee Chair, the matter is decided through a ballot of Academic Council.

Following the election and appointment of the Committee Chairs, each Committee reviewed its draft Terms of Reference in advance of approval by Council. At the request of the Academic Council, the Standing Orders Integration & Development Committee reviewed the I&D Committee Terms of Reference for consistency prior to submission of the remaining finalised drafts to AC.

The draft Terms of Reference for the I&D Committees had provided for a quorum of 50%, as per the Executive Committee. An initial adjustment made was to eliminate the President and Registrars from the calculation where necessary to achieve a quorum. The situation continued to be monitored and Academic Council has since approved a quorum of one-third for all I&D Committees, with the quorum for the Executive Committee remaining at 50%.

Under the Terms of Reference, each Integration & Development Committee meets a minimum of three times per semester. All Committees exceeded this during the reporting period, partly by a considerable margin, as the work on the development of a unitary academic quality assurance framework accelerated (see also [PART B Section 1.3.1](#) below). With exception of the Standing Orders I&D Committee, whose remit focuses on Academic Council itself, the Registrar's Offices worked with the Committee Chairs to agree a prioritisation list for each Committee. Resulting from the work of the I&D Committees, MTU approved a number of common academic policies and procedures during the reporting period. Several further policy documents were brought to Academic Council for discussion with a view to approval in the subsequent academic year (see [PART B Section 2.1](#) for further detail). Towards year end, it became apparent that, given the intensive programme of work underway, an additional Academic Council meeting would be required before the end of the academic year in an effort to more evenly distribute the workload of Academic Council over the remainder of this academic year.

A number of working groups were also established, for example, Digital Learning Policy, Micro-credentials, RPL. They were noted as being very useful for the progression of particular items. Academic Council discussed how these would be managed and whether they would sit under Academic Council as a whole or under a specific I&D Committee. Several committees also worked in subgroup mode to progress their programmes of work.

During Semester 1, the Executive Committee of the Academic Council was established and populated. It consists of 17 members: President (Chair), Registrars, two student representatives (currently the two Students' Union Presidents), the six Integration & Development Committee Chairs, and six members drawn from the membership of the Academic Council, based on the principle of adequate and appropriate representation on the Executive Committee from all of the stakeholders on the Academic Council.

In the lead up to designation, draft terms of reference for the Executive Committee of the MTU 'transitional' Academic Council had been considered by a joint meeting of the Academic Councils of CIT and IT Tralee and subsequently shared with the Joint Governing Bodies Steering Group. Subsequently, Governing Body, when it approved the current regulations for Academic Council in March 2021, had noted updated draft terms of reference for the Executive Committee. As Committee Chairs were not in place before the Summer 2021 holiday period, Council had delegated 'summer powers' to the 'Establishment Day' Academic Council which had been in place from 1 January 2021 to 6 May 2021.

The procedure for the determination of the six members from the Academic Council as a whole was approved by the Academic Council in October 2021. One election was held, with the electorate being the Academic Council. Two seats were reserved for each of the two main campus locations, and the remaining two seats were

allocated in order of merit.

The Committee normally meets once in advance of each meeting of the Academic Council, to order and manage the agenda for each meeting of the MTU Academic Council as set out in its terms of reference.

As delegated by Academic Council from time to time, the Committee may deliberate and decide on critical academic issues on behalf of the Academic Council during time periods when a meeting of the full Council is not scheduled or not feasible. Such issues include, but are not limited to ratification of assessment results; approval of external examiners; adoption of programme approval/review panel reports; and approval of policies and procedures. The exercise of any such delegated functions is time-limited, and the Executive Committee reports to the Academic Council on the exercise of such functions and in particular on any decisions taken on Council's behalf. Academic Council delegated 'summer powers' to the Committee for the Summer 2022 holiday period. One meeting of the Committee was convened in July 2022 to discuss one matter referred by Governing Body and to consider the impact of the delayed timelines for the issue of Leaving Certificate results on Semester 1 Teaching, Learning & Assessment for 1st years.

### *Towards the Steady State AC*

When it reviewed its draft Terms of Reference, the Standing Orders Integration & Development Committee separated out 'maintenance' and 'development' tasks, explicitly linking each set to the pertinent iteration of Academic Council (i.e. the current 'transitional' model vs. the 'steady-state' model whose membership regulations and business procedure will remain in place for the foreseeable future).

In addition, the Committee added creation of a work plan as a special function under development of proposals for the steady-state Academic Council. The Committee's Work Plan for the development of proposals for the membership, procedure, and committees of the 'steady-state' Academic Council was approved by Academic Council on 4th February 2022.

The Work Plan included consultations as a feature of the working process. Academic Council was advised that the plan would likely be updated as the work progressed, and that any substantial deviations from the major steps or consultation opportunities in the original plan would be brought back to Council. The Work Plan was made available to University staff in the MTU Academic Council folder of Workvivo.

To initiate the consultations informing its work on the steady-state Academic Council, the Standing Orders Committee decided to conduct a staff survey on Academic Council participation. This survey aimed to ascertain motivations for, or perceived benefits of, Academic Council participation, on the part of individual staff members. Conversely, staff who have never put their name forward for Academic Council were surveyed on a range of potential reasons for this, including logistical obstacles, ineligibility and a perceived lack of relevance. One given choice allowed currently ineligible staff to indicate their interest in putting themselves forward for Academic Council if they were to become eligible. To ensure the survey was inclusive and scoped general awareness of Academic Council, and to avoid biasing results in favour of existing structures, all University staff were invited to take the survey, regardless of current eligibility. The "Academic Council Participation – Motivations and Obstacles" Staff Survey was launched by the MTU President on 31 January and closed on 7 February, with 321 responses received in total. The findings of the survey were utilised by the Standing Orders I&D Committee to inform ongoing work on the compositional principles and membership regulations for the steady-state Academic Council.

Development of principles for the formation of the steady-state Academic Council commenced in December 2021. This work was broken up into three distinct elements, namely Membership, Procedure and Committees, due to the fact that these elements have different status in legislation and require differing approval levels. Proposals for membership principles require approval from Governing Body as well as from Academic Council, while Academic Council procedure (Standing Orders) and Committee formation are matters for Academic Council alone.

To begin with, the Committee sought legal guidance on the status of Academic Council in the TU Act 2018. It also reviewed comparable bodies in other HEIs and conducted a brief literature review, notably of relevant articles on Canadian university senates. To identify a reasonable interim basis for discipline-area representation, the broad academic domains proposed for the TU submission were reviewed against ISCED Fields. The Committee also sought the views of the University Executive on the status of Academic Council in legislation and obtained advice from the University's EDI Manager on gender issues.

In March 2022, the Committee decided to prioritise work on AC membership. Not only does this need Governing Body approval, it also became clear that a fundamental decision for one of two complementary approaches, constituencies-based or representational, would be required to begin with. Therefore, two variant sets of draft principles and related models for the membership of the steady-state AC were developed and were put for discussion in five general staff consultation sessions held 5 –13 May, with a total of 108 unique participants. The principles and models were also considered by Academic Council at meetings in May and June 2022.

All proposals were made with the constraint that the University's academic management structure was not yet known. In the absence of this, they utilised the five academic domains as defined in the TU application, which were subsequently agreed by the University Executive as the basis for the University's five faculties.

The constituency-based approach emphasised shared governance and academic democracy by providing for a majority of elected seats. The representational approach prioritised full representation of academic departments and academic domains. However, the two models shared many principles such as the continuation of ex-officio and elected seat contingents, representation from a broad range of academic affairs groups and functions, an academic staff majority, the inclusion of a Professional, Management & Support Staff (PMSS) constituency, the introduction of a free seats contingent and the facilitation of observer status at Academic Council meetings. A 3-year term for elected members was proposed in both cases with members serving no more than two consecutive terms.

Academic Council, having deliberated on the matter, favoured a constituency-based model and this recommendation was taken to Governing Body in June 2022.

Early in 2022/23, a review of progress was undertaken. While steady progress had been made, it was clear that the work would not be complete in time to have the new Academic Council in place and ready to commence sitting by 8 November 2022. Therefore, following discussion at both the Standing Orders Committee and the Academic Council Executive Committee, and on the recommendation of the Academic Council, Governing Body approved an application for an extension of the term of the present Council up to 31st August 2023 or the date on which the MTU 'steady-state' Academic Council stands elected, whichever occurs sooner. This was done in the interests of retaining a fully functional Academic Council during the forthcoming academic year so that the programme of work towards the development of a unified academic quality framework for the university could progress without interruption.

An alternative proposal considered was to retain the current Academic Council membership model but to repopulate its elected membership for a limited term through elections, the procedure for which would be

determined by the Academic Council. However, that would have entailed amendments to the current regulations and would therefore also require Governing Body approval. Furthermore, operational experience indicated that the time taken to form a new Academic Council would result in a transitional period of at least 2 months' duration to allow for the time to complete elections to Academic Council and subsequently to the I&D Committees, followed by the election of I&D Committee Chairs and the handover to the newly populated committees. All of this would likely slow progress of the Committees' programmes of work towards the development of a unified academic quality framework for the University, including the planning for the 'steady-state' Academic Council.

The application to Governing Body for an extension of the current Academic Council term was premised on the proviso that no further extension of its term would be sought. If it becomes known or foreseeable during the extension period that the 'steady-state' Academic Council will not be in place by 1 September 2023, an application will need to be made to Governing Body to amend the current regulations to enable the current 'transitional' membership model to be refreshed via elections.

At the time of writing, the development of the Membership Regulations is at an advanced stage, with two drafts having been considered by the Academic Council.

#### e. Physical Infrastructure

Semester 1 2021/2022 saw a substantially increased on-campus delivery following the roll-out of the Covid-19 vaccination programme. The return to campus was managed in line with public health guidelines and specific government guidance for higher education. MTU continued to engage closely with Public Health, and put a comprehensive range of risk controls in place including ventilation, physical distancing, cleaning, face coverings, maintaining good hand and respiratory hygiene, and requesting students/staff to stay at home if feeling unwell.

Notwithstanding the huge effort to achieve a campus experience for all students, there was some variation in the degree to which this was achieved during Semester 1. While it was possible to timetable classes for students of MTU Kerry campuses, CCAD, CSM and NMCI on a regular basis throughout the week, there remained some areas of challenge on the Bishopstown Campus, with ventilation and space constraints being key areas of focus, particularly in the older buildings. These issues were rendered even more complex for certain programmes by additional factors including class size and interdisciplinary work. Thus the increase in onsite activity was managed on a phased basis, with the exact sequencing for individual student cohorts depending on factors such as academic discipline, stage of programme, class size, type of learning activity and space requirements.

During Summer 2021, prior to the commencement of the academic year 2021/22, over €2 million was invested on ventilation alone. A number of technical reviews were undertaken and these formed the basis of the University's risk assessments. The reviews showed that some rooms which had served their purpose pre-Covid were no longer fit for purpose and furthermore, that challenges and constraints which had been previously identified in the 1974 building were now exacerbated by Covid-19 restrictions. Thus certain teaching spaces were repurposed while capacity limitations were placed on others, most of them in the 1974. At the start of Semester 1, the Bishopstown campus was operating at interim capacity of 6093, i.e. 72% of full pre-Covid capacity (8448). The 1974 building accounted for most of this: its pre-Covid capacity was 5242 and this was reduced to 3564 (68% of pre-Covid capacity), although some of this was recovered in the latter half of the semester as air handling units were installed.

While MTU has been awarded funding of €18.75mio to upgrade the fabric of the 1974 building in Bishopstown, more is required to upgrade the internal accommodation.

These issues and the ongoing challenges regarding student accommodation were discussed by Governing Body at various points during the year. MTU also continued to raise the matter of capital funding requirements for the Bishopstown campus with Government and the HEA. A Capital Acquisition Group was established to deal with potential developments for the Bishopstown campus and local area, which is to submit its report to the Governing Body's Strategic Development Committee, with a potential overlap with its Finance Committee also.

In February 2022, the Minister for Further & Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science issued two calls in relation to HEI Capital Funding. MTU identified three projects from its Masterplan and made the following submissions under the Technological Sector Strategic Projects Fund (TSSPF) funding call:

1. Bishopstown Campus Extension Project (DnA Combined Extension Project);
2. Kerry Campus Learner Centre (Kerry North Campus);
3. ADAM Art, Design, and Media (CCAD, Sharman Crawford Street Campus).

In November 2022, the Minister announced the go-ahead for the next phase of the first two listed projects, developing business cases for the Kerry Campus Learner Centre and the Bishopstown Campus Extension Project.

Meanwhile, the construction of the MTU Multi-Purpose Arena on the Bishopstown Campus continued over the academic year 2021/2022, having commenced in Summer 2021. This is the first phase of a 2-phase programme which will ultimately see in excess of €22M (of which ca. €12mio directly from MTU) invested in state-of-the-art sports facilities on the MTU Bishopstown Campus. The 3,600 m<sup>2</sup> Arena will support three main strands of activity: Sports/Fitness, Societies/Social and Academic/Educational. It has been designed to achieve a very low energy usage and NZEB (Nearly Zero Energy Building) standards. The MTU funding (€12mio) can be tracked back to the Student Finance Committee budgetary process; thus, it can be considered to have been funded directly from the contributions of students over many years.

An Operations Coordinator, appointed in July 2022, is responsible for the operation of the Multi-Purpose Arena and of all indoor and outdoor sports facilities on the Bishopstown Campus, including a 400m Athletics Track.

Phase 2 is a collaboration with Athletics Ireland for which government funding of €9.225 million was awarded following joint application to the Large-Scale Sports Infrastructural Fund (LSSIF) of the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media.

The construction of two further new buildings – the Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) Building on the Kerry North Campus and the Learning Resource Centre (LRC) Building on the Bishopstown Campus – has recently commenced. These projects are part of the first bundle of six buildings in the Government's Higher Education PPP programme.

The new STEM Building on the Kerry North Campus will consist of a split-level building of three storeys, comprising of lecture theatres, classrooms, machinery workshops, halls and laboratory space. The 8913 m<sup>2</sup> development will also include an engineering and agri-tech yard to the rear of the building, with a dedicated access road, entrance plaza and office space, as well as student and staff circulation and recreation spaces.

The new 6,660 m<sup>2</sup> LRC Building will provide capacity to expand MTU's portfolio of programmes and services in business and STEM disciplines, as well as providing enhanced options for student support, industry engagement, entrepreneurship, and research and innovation. It will also provide new options for hosting events and conferences, and its central location on the Bishopstown campus will ensure that it will be fully integrated with existing facilities and services.



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

No.	Planned objectives (Previous AQR) Note: Include reference to the relevant section of the preceding AQR, where applicable	Update on Status Provide brief update on status, whether completed or in progress. If an action was planned in the previous AQR, but not completed, provide reasons/short reflections for the delay/non-completion.
1	Strategic Management Framework (see <i>AQR 2019</i> , 2.1.1, p. 4f, on adoption of new CIT Strategic Plan 2018 – 2023)	Superseded by development of MTU Strategic Plan which was developed in 2021/2022. Approved by Governing Body in July 2022.
2	AnSEO – Graduate Attributes Framework / Centre for the Enhancement of Teaching & Learning	<p><u><i>Graduate Attributes Framework</i></u></p> <p>The EDGE Graduate Development Framework and system has been fully developed and branded and is in place at MTU. It is open to all currently registered MTU students, across all campuses.</p> <p><a href="https://edge.mtu.ie/">https://edge.mtu.ie/</a></p> <p><u><i>Centre for the Enhancement of Learning &amp; Teaching</i></u></p> <p>The MTU TLASE Working Group has been re-established, this time within the Academic Council Committee Structure, sitting under its Academic Planning &amp; Review Integration &amp; Development Committee.</p> <p>Any structural change/rebranding is paused, pending implementation of the new University Executive Structure.</p>
3	Preparation of MTU Strategic Plan	MTU Strategic Plan developed in 2021/22 and approved by Governing Body in July 2022.
4	Submission of Self Evaluation Report as part of CINNTE review Cycle	Agreed date for site visit (Q1 2024) and submission of ISER (Q4 2023).
5	Establishment of Terms of Reference for the MTU Academic Council Integration and Development Committees	Terms of Reference for each of the six Integration & Development Committees and the Executive Committee approved Autumn 2021. All committees operational since then.
6	<p>Development of MTU Academic Affairs Policies and Procedures in relation to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regulations for Modules &amp; Programmes (Marks and Standards)</li> <li>• Duties and Responsibilities of External Examiners (Taught Programmes)</li> <li>• Design, Validation and Modification of Programmes and Modules</li> </ul>	<p>Regulations for Modules &amp; Programmes (Marks and Standards) approved by Academic Council June 2022 for implementation from 1 September 2023.</p> <p>Duties and Responsibilities of External Examiners (Taught Programmes) – policy and procedure due to be approved in 2022/23.</p> <p>Policy and Procedure for the Design and Approval of Programmes Leading to Major Awards approved in 2021/22.</p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment (Academic Integrity, Individual Extenuating Circumstances, Assessment Appeals and Reviews, Student Feedback, Late Submission Penalties)</li> </ul>	<p>Policy and Procedure for the Design and Approval of Modules in development – target date 2022/23.</p> <p>Policies related to assessment in development. Target date for approval 2022/23 ahead of implementation in 2023/24.</p>
7	<p>Development of MTU Student Affairs Policies and Procedures in relation to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Admissions</li> <li>Recognition of Prior Learning</li> <li>Equity of Access &amp; Participation</li> <li>Student Complaints (Grievances)</li> <li>Reasonable Accommodations</li> <li>Fitness to Study</li> <li>Fitness to Practice</li> <li>Student Discipline</li> <li>Garda Vetting</li> <li>Substance Abuse</li> <li>Student Wellness &amp; Health</li> <li>Gender Identity and Gender Expression</li> <li>Posthumous and Aegrotat Awards</li> </ul>	<p>Policies for Admissions, RPL, Equity of Access &amp; Participation, Student Grievances, Reasonable Accommodations, Garda Vetting all approved 2021/22.</p> <p>Student Code of Conduct approved 2021/22. Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedure approved by Academic Council end 2021/22; final approval by GB to follow.</p> <p>Of the remaining policies, some have since been approved in 2022/23, and the others are all in development.</p>
8	<p>Development of MTU Corporate Affairs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policies and Procedures in relation to Bereavement</li> </ul>	<p>Protocol and Procedure for a) Death of Student b) Death of Staff in development – target date for approval 2022/23.</p>
9	MTU Examinations Administration Process	Alignment ongoing.
10	<p>Student Affairs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of MTU Student Charter</li> <li>Alignment of MTU Forms and Fees in relation to application, admissions, international, repeat examinations</li> <li>Alignment of MTU processes in relation to management of Student Assistance Fund</li> <li>Alignment of MTU processes in relation to assessment of Mature applicants</li> <li>MTU Code of Practice in relation to admissions</li> </ul>	<p>MTU Student Charter approved 2021/22.</p> <p>International fees aligned 2021/22.</p> <p>Alignment of other academic administration /student affairs processes ongoing.</p>
11	Collaborations:	MOU drafted 2021/22.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• MOU between the MTU and the Cork and Kerry Education and Training Boards</li></ul>	
12	<p>Systems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Banner Upgrade in Cork</li></ul>	<p>Upgrade to Banner 8.5 successfully completed November 2021. Banner processes (e.g. fees, online registration) rolled out since.</p> <p>Upgrade to Banner V9 successfully completed in Kerry and Cork in Spring 2022.</p>

## 1.3 Governance and Management

### 1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule

Body	Meeting dates
<p><b>Governing Body</b> (10 meetings)</p>	<p>16 September 2021; 7 October 2021; 4 November 2021; 2 December 2021; 3 February 2022; 3 March 2022; 7 April 2022; 5 May 2022; 2 June 2022; 7 July 2022</p>
<p><b>Academic Council</b> (8 meetings)</p>	<p>17 September 2021; 29 October 2021; 17 December 2021; 4 February 2022; 25 March 2022; 6 May 2022; 3*/17 June 2022 <span style="float: right;">(*= extra meeting)</span></p>
<p><b>University Executive</b> (22 regular meetings plus 2 offsite strategy workshops)</p>	<p>7/21 September 2021; 5/19 October 2021; 2/16/30 November 2021; 14 December 2021; 18 January 2022; 1/15 February 2022; 2/15/29 March 2022; 12/26 April 2022; 10/19 May 2022; 7/21 June 2022; 5 July 2022; 16 August 2022. Offsite strategy workshops: 10 February 2022; 19 May 2022</p>
<p><b>Academic Council Executive Committee</b></p>	<p>8 December 2021; 26 January 2022; 15 March 2022; 27 April 2022;</p>

	26 May 2022; 13 June 2022; 15 July 2022.
<b>Admissions &amp; Student Affairs</b> <i>Integration &amp; Development Committee of Academic Council</i>	11 meetings over the period 16 September 2021 to 31 May 2022 inclusive
<b>Academic Planning &amp; Review</b> <i>Integration &amp; Development Committee of Academic Council</i>	16 meetings over the period 14 September 2021 to 25 May 2022 inclusive
<b>Learning Resources/Infrastructure &amp; Student Supports</b> <i>Integration &amp; Development Committee of Academic Council</i>	7 meetings over the period 21 October 2021 to 15 June 2022 inclusive
<b>Regulations &amp; Quality Assurance Enhancement</b> <i>Integration &amp; Development Committee of Academic Council</i>	20 meetings over the period 12 October 2021 to 13 June 2022 inclusive
<b>Research Council</b> <i>Integration &amp; Development Committee of Academic Council</i>	10 meetings over the period 14 October 2021 to 2 June 2022 inclusive
<b>Standing Orders</b> <i>Integration &amp; Development Committee of Academic Council</i>	25 meetings over the period 28 September 2021 to 14 June 2022 inclusive
<b>Cork Academic Legacy Committee</b> <i>of Academic Council</i>	8/28 October 2021; 26 November 2021; 9 December 2021; 27 January 2022; 25 April 2022; 16 June 2022.
<b>Kerry Academic Legacy Committee</b> <i>of Academic Council</i>	24 September 2021; 28 March 2022; 16 June 2022.
<b>Cork Academic Legacy Committee Executive</b>	16/30 September 2021; 5 November 2021; 3 December 2021; 25 February 2022; 4 July 2022.
<b>MTU-UCC Joint Board</b>	17 December 2021; 16 March 2022; 28 June 2022.

## 1.3.2 QA Leadership and Management Structural Developments

### a. Executive Structure

Work on the design of a new executive leadership structure commenced in January 2022. The process was informed by best practice, with appropriate consultation. A Design Authority was appointed to support the decision-making process – this consisted of three external experts, two from Higher Education and the third from industry.

During the first stage of this extensive, robust and engaging process, over 30 discovery sessions were held with senior staff including members of the Interim Executive and all Heads of School. These discovery sessions helped to capture findings around the current state of MTU and guided the workstream accordingly. Discovery sessions were also held with representatives of the staff unions.

Through this consultation and national and international benchmarking, and with the advice of the external Design Authority, design principles were developed to guide the development of the optimal MTU Executive Structure.

Prior to the establishment of MTU, the MTU Academic Domains Working Group had undertaken detailed work to develop five proposed academic domains – Creative & Performing Arts & Media; Health & Social Sciences; Business; Science & Informatics; and Engineering – including Maritime. Subsequently, these defined the overarching framework for the current ‘transitional’ Academic Council. Following consultation with the University Executive and with the Academic Council, it was decided that these five domains would form the basis of MTU’s five Faculties.

In June 2022, the President published the outline of her proposed Executive to all staff. This consists of five Vice President roles (Academic Affairs & Registrar; Research & Innovation; Finance & Operations; People & Culture; Engagement & Global), the five Faculty Deans, and Chief Corporate Officer. In accordance with the design principles, these executive level roles are cross-organisational, multi-campus roles with general equivalence in breadth/depth of what is a multi-campus remit. Furthermore, they are intended to be easy to navigate from staff, student and stakeholder perspectives; reduce duplication, promote organisational alignment and enable decision-making at the optimum level. It is envisaged that they will promote increased research, development and innovation, while retaining and building the focus on excellence in teaching and learning and ensuring the strategic alignment and continued development of external engagement and contribution (regionally, nationally and internationally) across all campuses.

At the time of writing, the proposed Executive Structure has been approved by the Department of Further & Higher Education, Research, Innovation & Science. Pending final approval by the Department of Public Expenditure & Reform, MTU has commenced engagement with the executive search firm Perrett Laver following a competitive tendering process.

### b. Professional Services Operating Model

In February 2022, work commenced on the review of MTU’s professional and support services operating model. This workstream is focused on designing the one best way of doing things, removing confusion and potentially conflicting approaches.

The workstream has been split into two phases. Phase 1 – the high-level design of the new Professional, Management & Support Services (PMSS) Operating Model – was completed over the period February 2022 to November 2022.

Initially, the project team undertook a current state evaluation and gap analysis, identified strengths and weaknesses of the current and proposed models, and benchmarked these to best in class within & outside the Higher Education sector.

A working party was established to provide input and expertise to the project team. It included representation from across areas/specialisms and from areas which work with the University's professional support services. It generally operated in sub-group mode on areas of expertise (academic and student affairs; corporate and professional services, and external, research and innovation). The working party helped to formulate the detail of the operating model options; assessed the fit of these options against the design principles; and made recommendations on the most appropriate choice of option.

While the working party operated within 17-18 members, the insights, experience and expertise of a broader range of staff also informed the deliberations. Initial data collection surveys were issued to appropriate department managers to gather additional information around corporate services. Consultation sessions were also held with Executive Committee members, department managers, union representatives, and other identified groups in the University.

The working party's recommendations were then sent to a Design Authority (consisting of the President and external advisors) appointed for this workstream. The Design Authority was charged with challenging the recommendations made by the Working Group, providing context and external objectivity, and agreeing and signing off the preferred option.

Phase 1 was completed mid-November 2022. Phase 2 of the programme is now underway. It includes the detailed design, development and initial implementation of the PMSS Operating Model as defined by the high-level design. The specific deliverables will be the PMSS Organisational Structures (in alignment with the new executive structure); a defined approach for how PMSS areas will work and interact with each other; and Process Optimisation to enable effective implementation of the model. The ongoing plan for the support services workstream will be aligned with work on the development of the Academic Operating Model.

### c. Senior Staff Appointments

The following senior staff appointments were made on a permanent, acting and/or fixed-term basis in the academic year 2021/22:

- Dr Colum Gibson, APO – Clean Technology Manager, MTU (Cork) campuses, September 2021
- Prof Ger Kelly, Vice Head of iEd Hub, MTU (Cork) campuses, fixed term to 1 April 2025, November 2021
- Ms Aiveen Kearney, Student Ombudsman, MTU (Cork) campuses, January 2022
- Ms Valerie Renehan, Head of Department Media Communications, MTU (Cork) campuses, January 2022
- Dr Sean Lacey, Research Integrity & Compliance Officer, MTU (Cork) campuses, fixed term to 31 December 2024, January 2022
- Dr Samuel Vardy, Head of Department of Architecture, MTU (Cork) campuses, January 2022
- Mr Niall Morris, Head of Department (Acting) of Mechanical, Biomedical & Manufacturing Engineering, MTU (Cork) campuses, fixed term to 1 April 2025, February 2022

- Ms Deirdre Collins, Head of Department (Acting) of Pop, Jazz, Trad, Voice and Theatre Studies, MTU (Cork) campuses, fixed term to 31 Aug 2022, February 2022
- Dr Helena McMahon, Director of IKC3 (Ireland's Knowledge Centre for Carbon, Climate and Community Action), MTU (Kerry) campuses, May 2022
- Mr Peter Power, APO – Head of IT Operations, MTU (Cork) campuses, May 2022
- Ms Irene Fenton, APO – Head of IT Applications, MTU (Cork) campuses, fixed term to 3 July 2024, July 2022
- Dr Donagh O Mahony, Head of Department of Physical Sciences, MTU (Cork) campuses, July 2022
- Ms Deirdre Creedon, APO – Academic Administration & Student Affairs Manager (Acting), MTU (Cork) campuses, fixed term up to 31 Aug 2023, July 2022
- Mr Tony Miller, APO – Chief Information Security Officer, MTU (Cork) campuses, July 2022
- Dr Fiona O'Flynn, Head of Department (Acting) of International Medical Commencement Programme, MTU (Kerry) campuses, July 2022
- Ms Katie Power, SLII- Head of Department (Acting) of Marketing and International Business, MTU (Cork) campuses, fixed term up to 31 August 2023, August 2022

## 1.4 Internal Monitoring and Review

### 1.4.1 Overview of Periodic Reviews

Work is underway on the development of the Academic Operating Model for MTU. The identification of the five faculties requires the alignment of the current Faculty and School structure. In order to achieve the proper alignment, a new design is required which will need to consider the recently completed executive redesign to best determine the impacts for existing Faculty, School, and Department organisational structures. This workstream is Executive-led, but with engagement with Academic Council to ensure consultation and input. It is supported by a Working Group which includes academic representation from all academic domains, campuses and management/non-management levels.

The work is being undertaken over two phases. The deliverables of Phase 1 will include the design of the high-level structure within faculties and a list of prioritised departments for more detailed programme review and alignment. Phase 2 has as its objective to review and align programme offerings under a set of pilot areas. Deliverables include a review of programmes and recommendations with regards to programme alignment in one or two pilot areas; a list of prioritised programmes to be taken forward for programmatic review; and a multi-year roadmap to move to fully integrated academic model.

MTU will then mainstream the pilot of Phase 2, so that each academic unit would undergo the following process:

- Review of programmes and recommendations with regards to academic alignment in 1-2 pilot areas;
- Prioritised programmes to be taken forward for programmatic review.

The first cycle of programmatic review in MTU will immediately follow, on a phased basis in accordance with the multi-year roadmap agreed during Phase 2.

Given that the list of areas for the initial pilot remain to be determined, it is not possible to provide a detailed schedule for the initial MTU Programmatic Review Cycle at this point. However, based on the information currently available, it is envisaged that the first cycle will be completed cycle by end AY 2025/26.

For reasons of these developments, no new programmatic reviews were initiated during the reporting period. The Programmatic Review for the Schools of Engineering, commenced in 2018, was closed out with the conclusion of the implementation phase for the Department of Construction. The Quality Review of the joint MTU-UCC Cork Centre for Architectural Education was also completed during the reporting period, under a process agreed by the two institutions and coordinated by the UCC Quality Office in consultation with the Registrar's Office of MTU (Cork).



<b>Unit of review for which report has been published during reporting period</b>	<b>Date of completion/reason for conducting review (if not planned) or non-completion (if planned but not conducted)</b>	<b>Links to relevant publications</b>
Department of Construction	Programmatic Review (Phase 2 - Review of Programmes) June 2022	<a href="#">Phase 2 Programme and Implementation Report – Construction</a>
Cork Centre for Architectural Education (jointly with UCC)	Quality Review, March 2021	<a href="#">Peer Review Panel Report – Cork Centre for Architectural Education (CCAЕ) – March 2021 – Joint Review – UCC and MTU</a>

## 1.4.2 Expert Review Teams/Panels<sup>3</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
Number of review/ evaluation processes	38	1			36	1	
of those:							
On-site processes	0						
Desk reviews	4				4		
Virtual processes					32 <sup>b</sup>		
Average panel size for each process type <sup>a</sup>					4.5 <sup>c</sup>		

a. Excluding secretary if not a full panel member; b. For MTU (Cork), encompasses panels for both new and differential validations; c. Five panel members as per MTU (Kerry) policy, four panel members as per MTU (Cork) policy.

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<sup>3</sup> QQI acknowledges that the terminology used to describe the groups of individuals that conduct peer review/evaluation varies from institution to institution.

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

Type of Expert/ Role on Panel	Total	Gender			Internal	National	International			Institution Type	
		Male	Female	Other, or unspecified			UK, incl. NI	Other European	Outside of Europe	Similar	Different
Chair	34	21	13		16 <sup>a</sup>	16	1		1	16	2
Secretary	5 <sup>b</sup>	3	2			5				5	
Academic/Discipline Specific	43	28	15			39	1		3	33	10
Student Representative	n/a										
QA	30 <sup>c</sup>	17 <sup>d</sup>	9 <sup>d</sup>								
Teaching & Learning	9 <sup>e</sup>										
External Industry /Third Mission	38	32	6			37			1		

a. MTU (Cork) policy specifies internal chairs for non-major award validation review panels; b. Role of Secretary currently foreseen under MTU (Kerry) policy only. Under this, the Secretariat is provided by Registrar's Office staff who also represent QA and Teaching & Learning functions on the panel; c. Includes 9 instances of MTU (Cork) academic senior staff representing the QA function on behalf of the Registrar's Office as per MTU (Cork) policy for non-major awards; e. Figures do not encompass desk reviews; d. Includes panel members who also represent the QA function

## 2.0 IQA System – Enhancement and Impacts

### 2.1 Policy Alignment

#### a. Marks and Standards (Regulations for Modules and Programmes)

The priority item in the MTU programme of alignment of academic regulations and policies post-designation was undoubtedly the creation of a unified Marks and Standards to underpin all awards made by the University.

The work on this fell into the remit of the Regulations, Quality Assurance & Enhancement Integration & Development (I&D) Committee of the Academic Council, which first convened in October 2021 and met on 20 occasions during 2021/22, typically meeting at least twice per month. Its work was supported by two Heads of Implementation – Academic Planning & Policies, additional posts to drive the development of an integrated academic quality assurance framework.

Consultation via the academic departments commenced in October 2021 and most academic departments provided feedback on the options for a unified Marks and Standards for MTU. The “MTU Academic Planning and Policies” Space on Workvivo included relevant documentation.

Two online surveys were issued via that space. Feedback provided by academic departments and by respondents to the survey was collated and shared with the Committee and subsequently informed the draft proposal. The initial draft proposal was discussed by the MTU Academic Council on Friday 25 March.

Consultation sessions (both online and face-to-face) with academic staff, PMS staff, staff unions, Registrar's Office and Students' Union were held in late March/early April.

All feedback received was shared with the Regulations, Quality Assurance & Enhancement I&D Committee to allow for the production of a second draft of Marks and Standards for MTU. This was presented to the 6 May meeting of the MTU Academic Council for discussion.

A third version was circulated to all stakeholders prior to the 17 June meeting of the Academic Council and was approved by the Academic Council for implementation in Academic Year 2023/24. This was done with a view to the academic year 2022/2023 being a preparatory phase for training and support for staff and students, set up of the new Marks and Standards on the Banner system, and the approval of other policies and procedures related to assessment. It was noted that the Marks & Standards, while agreed, would need to be augmented in 2022/23 to include provisions on external examiners. However, it was felt that this would take additional time to address, and so this last item was deferred to academic year 2023/24.

#### d. Other Academic Policies and Procedures

The following common MTU policies and procedures were finalised and approved by Academic Council during the reporting period:

##### Academic (Relating to Taught Provision):

- [Recognition of Prior Learning Policy](#), approved by Academic Council in March 2022;
- [Policy for the Design and Approval of Programmes Leading to Major Awards](#), approved by Academic Council in May 2022;
- [Procedure for the Design and Approval of Programmes Leading to Major Awards](#), approved by Academic Council in May 2022.

Research, Innovation and Postgraduate Study:

- [Interim Research and Innovation Statement](#), approved by Academic Council in March 2022;
- [Code of Good Practice in Research](#), approved by Academic Council in March 2022;
- [Research Data Management Policy](#), approved by Academic Council in March 2022;
- [Open Access Policy](#), approved by Academic Council in May 2022;
- [Human Research Ethics Policy](#), approved by Academic Council in June 2022, with several related operational documents approved between June and November 2022;
- [Regulations for Postgraduate Research Study](#), approved by Academic Council in June 2022.

Student:

- [Student Change of Details Regulations](#), approved by Academic Council in September 2021;
- [Reasonable Accommodation Policy \(Student\)](#), approved by Academic Council in December 2021;
- [Admissions Policy](#), approved by Academic Council in March 2022;
- [Garda Vetting Policy \(Student\)](#), approved by Academic Council in March 2022;
- [Student Charter](#), approved by Academic Council in March 2022;
- [Procedure for Conducting an Oral Examination as a Reasonable Accommodation](#), approved by Academic Council in May 2022;
- [Code of Conduct \(Student\)](#), approved by Academic Council in June 2022;
- [HEAR and DARE Procedure](#), approved by Academic Council in June 2022.

An MTU Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedure was also approved by Academic Council in June 2022, with final approval from Governing Body awaited.

The majority of approvals during the reporting period arose from the policy alignment work of the Integration & Development Committees of Academic Council or Working Parties thereof.

## 2.2 Staff Recruitment, Management and Development

### a. MTU Pathway to Fellowship Programme

MTU is committed to excellence in learning, teaching and research for the benefit of staff, students, industry, and the wider community. In support of this commitment, MTU established a Steering Group (with executive membership) to explore the development of a Fellowship Programme for staff at MTU. Fellowship provides individual staff with recognition of their practice, impact and leadership in the context of teaching and learning. Fellowship reflects a wide range of professional practice carried out by individual staff, from those who teach and/or support learning in higher education to senior staff with strategic impact on teaching and learning within their organisation and/or outside their organisation in a national and/or international context.

MTU contracted [Advance HE](#) for this pilot. The [Advance HE Fellowship Scheme](#) is an internationally recognised professional accreditation system that offers [accreditation through distinct categories](#) from Associate Fellow to Principal Fellow. The fellowship system invites applicants to 'demonstrate a personal and institutional commitment to professionalism in learning and teaching in higher education.' The [fellowship application process](#) is comprehensive and based on a self-evaluative and reflective journey for the applicant.

Two staff (Cork and Kerry campus representatives) were appointed as leads to progress the development of the MTU Advance HE Pilot Fellowship Programme, for launch in AY 2022/23. A call for expressions of interest from staff received a very positive response, with expressions of interest received from across all campuses and discipline areas for all categories of Fellowship. This resulted in 52 staff enrolling on a support programme to gain their fellowship with a planned completion date of April 2023. The breakdown of fellowship application types was as follows:

Fellowship Type	Number of Staff
Associate Fellowship	4
Fellowship	28
Senior Fellowship	16
Principal Fellowship	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>

### b. HEA Performance Funding

In 2021/22, the HEA, as part of its Strategy and Performance Dialogue review process, awarded MTU €1 million in performance funding based on the [MTU Impact Assessment Case Study submitted entitled “MTU TLASE Enhancement through Leadership Development and Partnership Approaches”](#). This case study was based on the work of both TLU and AnSEO in the areas of leadership development and partnership approaches which was clearly evidenced as follows:

- Leadership development: reflected in the new [Leadership in Higher Education Programme at MTU](#) in which 30 Senior Academic Leaders from across MTU engaged. Each senior staff member who participated in the programme received two one-to-one leadership mentoring sessions to assist in identifying priority areas of action to enhance TLASE within individual areas of responsibility.
- Valuing and enabling distributed leadership: reflected in the discipline-based and interdisciplinary [Learning Communities](#) that had received seed-funding and were established over the previous 3 years to create TLASE development clusters and champions who would influence and lead TLASE enhancements from within their discipline. Learning Communities provide a developmental space for members to share and reflect on TLASE practices and provide peer support for innovations and enhancements.
- Developing a multi-level coaching and mentorship culture: reflected in the provision of coaching and mentoring skills development programmes to support positive change, including:
  - [EMCC Foundation Level Course in Coaching in Higher Education](#)
  - Induction Mentoring Training for staff
  - Coaching Skills training for Reach Academic Mentors
- Providing resources, skills development and scaffolding to enable meaningful student-staff partnership approaches to TLASE enhancement: reflected in the Le Chéile – Together programme for MTU, formerly sparq@CIT, which has engaged students and staff in student voice/consultation work, moving towards co-creation and student-led TLASE projects.

## 2.3 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

### a. Covid-19 – Impact on Teaching, Learning & Assessment

The continuing fallout from the Covid-19 pandemic continued to have a profound impact on the teaching, learning and assessment arrangements of MTU during the academic year 2021/22.

Following the successful roll-out of the national vaccination programme over Summer 2021, MTU planned a phased return to on-site campus activity for all students and a significantly increased on-campus experience for students through Semester 1, in line with public health guidelines and specific government guidance for higher education. While an overall consistent approach was sought, there was necessarily some variance in approach across the various campuses and departments, depending on factors such as academic discipline, stage of programme, class size, and space considerations.

MTU Academic Council had already considered the matter of teaching, learning & assessment for Semesters 1 and 2 2021/22 in June 2021 soon after the announcement that the issue of Leaving Certificate 2021 results would be delayed to early September. While agreeing that the approved assessment schema would be restored for all continuing and part-time undergraduate students and for taught postgraduate students, it approved a 100% Continuous Assessment approach for Stage 1 of full-time programmes in Semester 1. For modules shared by 1st years and other cohort(s), the module lecturer(s), in consultation with the Module Coordinator, determined a common Semester 1 assessment scheme to apply to all cohorts.

Academic Council, at its meeting on 17 September 2021, mandated the Registrars to progress the matter of teaching, learning and assessment arrangements for Semester 1 2021/22 through the respective legacy committees. Departments were subsequently required to document modifications to teaching, learning and assessment strategies for modules and programmes in Semester 1 and to submit these for approval.

Since the onset of the pandemic, academic staff had been innovative in devising contingency alternative assessment methods. At that time, it had been decided that these contingency changes would not be captured in the module descriptor. Now, with the passage of time, it had become clear in certain cases that the module assessment strategy introduced for contingency purposes was actually a better gauge of learning and should be incorporated into the approved module descriptor and retained going forward.

While the review and approval process for module changes outside of programmatic review would normally be completed in advance of the commencement of the academic year, it was decided that as an exceptional measure for 2021/22, there would be one additional opportunity to submit proposed changes to assessment schema and reassessment requirement of modules at the start of each semester. Any modifications to the assessment scheme made solely for contingency purposes continued to be recorded in the department plan, but not in the module descriptor.

In November 2021, the Irish Government announced a new range of [measures](#) aimed at interrupting the spread of Covid-19. The updated advice did not change the current arrangements for student attendance and on-site activities in higher education. However, it was becoming evident that the new '5-day rule' for household close contacts who were fully vaccinated and asymptomatic, taken together with the increased infection rate, had the potential to have an adverse effect on student attendance at onsite examinations in December, thus triggering an increase in the number of deferrals to the Autumn 2022 Examination Session. The availability of invigilators and senior invigilators was also affected, with particularly marked impact on the Cork campuses where there were already some constraints on examinations space.

Consultation took place across the campuses. Onsite terminal examinations went ahead on the Kerry campuses as scheduled and with additional public health measures in place. However, exceptional measures were deemed necessary on the Cork Campuses. The Cork Academic Legacy Committee of Academic Council (CALCAC) met on 26 November to consider the prevailing situation regarding Covid-19 (including the recent designation of Omicron as a variant of concern) and its impact on onsite Semester 1 terminal examinations. In consideration of the evolving situation, and in the interest of providing clarity to students and staff at a time of uncertainty, CALCAC mandated that all onsite end-of-semester examinations be reconfigured into online and open book format. CALCAC further agreed that exceptions would apply only where there were evidenced professional, statutory or regulatory body (PSRB) requirements.

Given the circumstances, a second examination opportunity was afforded in January/February 2022 to candidates who, due to valid Individual Extenuating Circumstances (IECs), were unable to present at a December 2021 onsite examination.

MTU actively worked to ensure that all students had a significantly increased on-campus experience through Semester 2. All First Years continued on a 100% CA model. All efforts were made to future-proof arrangements for Semester 2 terminal examinations and to avoid a late change of plan as had occurred in Semester 1 on the Cork campuses.

In the end, the speed of the Government's reversal of many of the Covid-19 restrictions on Saturday, 22 January surprised many. However, the impact on MTU operations was relatively light, as it had anticipated the easing of restrictions to a large extent. MTU again reviewed its Covid19 response measures on 24 February 2022 following the Government announcement on the removal of the majority of Covid-19 measures, including the removal of the mandatory requirement to wear masks. Autumn 2022 reassessment largely ran as per the approved module descriptors, but with departments encouraged to consider the reassessment scheme for First Year modules so as to align with the actual delivery approach for 2021/22.

#### b. TLASE Research Laboratory & TUTF Funding

In September 2021, the Teaching & Learning Unit (TLU) secured funding under MTU's TUTF (Technological University Transformation Fund) call to establish a Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Student Engagement (TLASE) Research Laboratory.

The Laboratory's objective is to undertake large-scale, rigorous, research to generate evidence based TLASE strategies and enhance learning across MTU and beyond. Large-scale, rigorous research in TLASE is important to identify what works, how it works, when it works and where it works. The immediate focus of the TLASE Research Laboratory will be on Assessment and Feedback in areas such industry work placement settings. Work-placement is strategically important to MTU as it is one of the ways MTU prepares graduates to be "work-ready". The argument for focusing on assessment and feedback stems from the Irish Survey of Student Engagement which identifies that 55% of Irish students are dissatisfied with their experience of Assessment and Feedback in Higher Education. In comparison, only 27% of UK students state they are dissatisfied with their Assessment & Feedback experience. This disparity identifies Assessment & Feedback as significant national problem that urgently needs to be researched and addressed. While other jurisdictions (UK and Australia) are performing better than Ireland, student satisfaction with Assessment & Feedback lags other aspects of their higher education experience and it is considered an international problem.



### c. SATLE Assessment and Feedback Literacy Project

MTU progressed the project 'An Institutional Approach to Developing Assessment and Feedback Literacy' through the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning SATLE (Strategic Alignment for Teaching and Learning Enhancement) funding. This project was an investigative approach to staff and students understanding of assessment and feedback literacy. The key impacts for academic staff on their teaching and learning practices were increased opportunities to reflect on their assessment and feedback literacy practices, the sharing and capturing of best practices, and opportunities to debate andragogical approaches. This project provided a focus on the enhancement of our student partnership and engagement approach to understanding students' experiences of assessment and feedback. The students' feedback informed follow-on staff assessment and feedback practices. A case study of the approach taken was published by NStEPS. This led to the creation of a [Teaching and Learning webpage](#) on the MTU (Kerry) website that provides a range of quality enhancing supports for students and staff of the Kerry Campuses ([link here](#)). A Learning Development community of practice was established for staff to continue to take reflective time to discuss practices to enhance students and staff experiences. The [NStEP Case Study Hub](#), repository of examples of good practice in student engagement and student-staff partnerships from across Irish HE, includes many case studies from MTU.

### d. TL&A Seminars and Workshops

In 2021/22, 16 seminars and workshops were organised as part of the annual [Conversations on Teaching & Learning Winter and Summer Seminar Series](#) of the MTU (Cork) Teaching & Learning Unit (TLU) which took place in [January](#) and [May](#) respectively. Presenters included both MTU staff and well-known international experts in the relevant field. Six of these seminars were funded by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching & Learning MTU as part of its [National Seminar Series](#).

The topics varied widely, covering aspects of assessment and feedback, teaching and learning, universal design, intellectual property, and well-being, as well as coaching and mentoring and professional development strategies. After each seminar or workshop, all relevant resources were made available through the [TLU website](#). While there was an overall reduction in the number of seminars and workshops organised previously, this reduction was necessary due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. However, on a more positive note, there has been a significant growth in interest and engagement with these seminars and workshops with 990 registrations, resulting in 642 participants of which 452 were MTU staff and 190 were external participants. This is due in no small part to the fact that most of these seminars and workshops are now hosted online, as opposed to face-to-face, which has enabled more staff to access and engage with them.

In 2021/22, in support of the enhancement of teaching and learning, a wide range of continuous professional development opportunities were also facilitated by the MTU (Kerry) Assistant Registrar's Office with responsibility for teaching and learning. Topics included universal design for learning, [supporting teaching and learning for students with autism](#), designing curriculum and teaching for a diverse student population.

MTU (Kerry) Student Support Services developed and provided staff with a wide range of resources for enhancing inclusive teaching and learning environments.

In response to a call from the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, the Assistant Registrar's Office worked with staff to create video case studies of their teaching, learning and assessment practices. These were shared on MTU social media platforms to acknowledge and promote best practice of staff and were later published on There were later housed on the MTU (Kerry) [Teaching and Learning](#)

[web page](#) where they continue to be used by staff to enhance the design of their curriculum assessment and feedback.

In response to a call from the National Student Engagement Programme's (NStEPs) for case studies of student partnership and engagement actions for sharing of best practice nationally, a number of case studies were developed and accepted for publication on the national [NStEP Case Study Hub](#).

#### e. EMCC International Standards for Mentoring and Coaching Programmes (ISMCP) Bronze Award

On 8th October 2021, MTU became the first university in Europe and one of the first globally to attain the International Standards for Mentoring and Coaching Programmes (ISMCP) Award. This prestigious award which was bestowed by the European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC Global), following a 4-month evaluation process, was in recognition of MTU's Coaching and Mentoring Culture.

#### f. EAT-PD: Enabling Academic Transitions through Professional Development' Programme

[EAT-PD: Enabling Academic Transitions through Professional Development](#) is a CPD programme aimed at new and early career academic staff, i.e., staff that have been teaching full-time for three years or less (or equivalent).

EAT-PD enables staff relatively new to teaching to develop their competencies in the classroom. The focus of this 15-week, semester-long, experiential programme (1 hour per week) is to expose staff, in a supportive, friendly, and constructive environment, to a range of research-based teaching strategies that can be used to enhance lectures and support learning. Learners subsequently deploy these activities in their classrooms and gain useful feedback from other learners and peers through reflective practice. In addition, the content of this programme is aligned with the NFETLHE ["Enhancing Teaching Through Interactive Classes to Engage Students \(EnTICE\)' Digital Badge](#), enabling participants who have completed EAT-PD who wish to do so to apply for the EnTICE badge by demonstrating they have met the badge criteria.

Whereas the programme had been initially funded through MTU's allocation of the Strategic Alignment of Teaching and Learning Enhancement (SATLE) Fund 2019, such was its success that it received mainstream funding within MTU from Semester 2, 2021/22 onwards, with planned offerings every semester going forward. In Semester 2 of 2021/22, 21 staff from across a range of disciplines completed the programme. Feedback from programme participants to date has been positive, not just about course content and processes, but also about the collegiality and community of learning that emerges among the cohorts.

#### g. Reach Academic Mentoring Initiative

The [REACH Initiative](#) was launched in October 2020 in response to the COVID-19 crisis and sought to provide proactive academic staff support to first- and second-year students. Members of academic staff across multiple campuses acted as mentors to groups of students, actively reaching out to them using a coaching and mentoring approach.

Having won the [COVID Crisis Response Award at the 2021 Irish Education Awards](#), the Reach Academic Mentoring initiative programme continued to be resourced for the 2021/22 academic year, supporting over 3000 students and involving 80 academic mentors. A survey of mentees, academic mentors and heads of departments was conducted, and feedback was overwhelmingly positive from all three groups.

With the University's return to normal operations post Covid-19, the programme was discontinued. However, the learnings from the REACH programme, particularly around the areas of academic supports and providing

help to connect in with the various support services within the University, continue to inform the work of both the TLU and the AnSEO Student Engagement Office.

## 2.4 Supports and Resources for Learners

### 2.4.1 Library Enhancements

#### a. Collection Development

Through extensive resource re-negotiation and/or parallel consortium subscriptions the teaching and research peer reviewed e-content across all campuses was made identical. In addition, new subscription included the flagship digital educational platform *Digital Theatre+*. Teaching Kit resources are also provided providing lecturers the option to embed content into lesson plans. An upgrade to the SAGE Business Cases e-package resulted in 600 new titles added to the platform during 2022 with additional courseware such as Teaching Notes and/or Discussion Questions. New content included news driven cases connecting theory to current affairs and business, some enhanced with video and the option of this new content being embedded into the VLE.

The second phase of TUFT e-book perpetual access project resulted in the targeted purchase of key titles on the EBSCO e-book channel to secure permanent perpetual access licenses to these popular titles enabled a seamless transition from the EBSCO e-books platform to the ProQuest e-book channel. This eliminated the annual renewal costs for the EBSCO e-book package from 2023.

During Summer 2022 CSM Library staff offered [Sound Post](#) readers a fascinating insight into the *Fleischmann Library* showcasing the rich collections and archives that lend themselves to a very proud musical heritage.

#### b. Library User Experience Enhancement

Following on from the significant ICT upgrade project in the Bishopstown library during Summer 2021, Summer 2022 saw the installation of AV equipment across all group study hubs which included large LCD screens that enable laptop connection to allow students deliver presentations during group work activities.

RFID-based security and tracking hardware and software system was introduced in the *John Holland Library*, which included RFID tagging approximately 7,000 print holdings at NMCI library. Self-Service Kiosks now feature across all MTU libraries with equipment having a beneficial impact on process quality and the quality of the customer service and user experience for students wishing to avail of self-service technologies. NMCI Library staff can now increase focus and time on information literacy instruction and developing new services, such as the [NMCI Subject Guide](#).

The implementation of Summon at MTU Kerry went live on 1 September 2021, mirroring the user access experience across all campuses whereby a single search box surfaces results of all of the library's print and electronic indexable content.

The Library Management System (Koha) was upgraded to version 21.11 at both MTU Cork and MTU Kerry in August 2022.

#### c. Information Literacy Workshops and Outreach Programme

An [Assignment Toolkit](#) was developed by the Library Learning Community between 2019 and 2021. The Toolkit was launched in October 2021. For further details, see the [Case Study in PART B, Section 4](#) below.

Library workshops were available to students and staff throughout the reporting period and were provided virtually and on-campus. Library workshop themes were varied, providing essential information on topics such as plagiarism, referencing skills, critical thinking skills, awareness of misinformation and fake news, research search strategies, advanced Google search skills and discipline specific database workshops. A new workshop introduced during the reporting period promotes the use of free-to-use *Canva* software to design and produce high quality imagery and infographics for academic posters and general project work. Library staff themselves accumulated over 260 hours of CPD during the academic year 2021/22 attending a broad range of training events to ensure the knowledge and skills transmitted to library users through various workshops, induction sessions and training materials are both in-depth and cutting-edge.

Between September 2021 and August 2022, members of the Library Outreach Team expanded on provision of workshops relating to the use of freely available referencing software packages. These software packages included Endnote Online, Zotero and Mendeley. Corresponding guides & tutorials were embedded on the MTU Cork campus and Kerry campus library websites and to the newly redesigned [MTU Library YouTube channel](#).

In September 2021, in collaboration with the *Access Office*, *Sensus Access* was added to the MTU Library website. *SensusAccess* is a file conversion tool which enables users to convert files into a format which is most accessible and more convenient to their personal requirements. Features include converting lecture notes into mp3 format for use on a personal audio device, scanning book pages into searchable PDFs to be used with *text-to-speech* software, or lecture slides into text to be accessed on an E-Reader.

To further align services within MTU Libraries on all campuses and to extend supports to secondary school students within the local communities, Leaving Certificate study space access was introduced to a number of libraries on Cork campuses after Term 2 exams had finished. This initiative was an extension of MTU (Kerry) Leaving Certificate access initiative which has been running successfully for the past number of years. The initiative was positively received, and the level of interest and uptake proved it a worthwhile and welcomed additional offering.

#### d. Research and Digital Scholarship Supports

Due to evidence of growing internal and external demand for electronic access to MTU's printed and bound theses, which were traditionally restricted to physical reference use only, the Library launched Phase 1 of a Theses Digitisation project. This saw approximately 1,000 theses digitised from across all MTU campuses, with a view to enhancing the use and online access to printed Masters' and doctoral theses of successful graduates of MTU's predecessor institutions. Additionally, the project will create a system to preserve, archive, and showcase the intellectual/research outputs of the University. Phase 1 involved scanning the selected material to preservation standards and creating derivative file formats for use. This was completed during the reporting period. Phase 2 will commence during the 2022/2023 academic year and will involve incorporating the digital version of the theses into MTU's Institutional Repository, *SWORD*, which offers a centralised storage system to collate, archive, preserve and globally disseminate locally generated research.

In October 2021 MTU Library liaised with the Graduate Studies Office to create a dedicated space within the Graduate Studies – Student Information module on MTU's VLE, Canvas, for a Publishing section. This section offers an index on all aspects of publishing as a useful facility to prepare graduate students for publishing their own research. Topics covered include Scholarly Publishing, Journal Selection, Open Access, Predatory Publishing, Copyright and Licensing, Promoting Your Research and Research Integrity in Academic Publishing.

In May 2022, the Library collaborated with Research Integrity & Compliance Officer to run MTU's first Research Integrity Seminar. The seminar was open to public and featured speakers who are experts in Research Integrity and Open Science, namely Prof. George Gaskell, London School of Economics; Dr Esther Plomp, TU Delft; and Niamh Brennan, Trinity College Dublin. The Digital Scholarship Librarian and the Research Data Management Librarian also joined CIRIT (Cross-Institutional Research Integrity Training) which provides Research Integrity training to researchers and postgraduate students in HEIs across the island of Ireland.

Coinciding with the publication of MTU's first Research Data Management Policy, the Library introduced a new subscription to a toolkit to help researchers create, review and share data management plans, [DMPOonline](#). The online platform provides templates from Funder Organisations such as Horizon Europe and SFI, enabling researchers to meet funder and institutional requirements in this area.

The inaugural ORBioM (Open Research Biological Sciences Meeting) took place on 14th June on Bishopstown campus. ORBioM is a postgraduate led seminar jointly hosted by the Library and the Department of Biological Sciences.

MTU's first [Open Access Policy](#) was approved by Academic Council on 6 May 2022 and is published on the Policies and Publications webpage of the MTU website (link [here](#)).

## 2.4.2 Student Entrepreneurship and Career Development

### a. Ready Steady Work

*Ready Steady Work* is a collaborative, innovative career readiness and professional development programme designed and delivered by the Careers Service and Disability Support Service (DSS), in collaboration with Employer Partners Dell Technologies. It is open to all DSS students from 2<sup>nd</sup> year to postgraduate.

The programme is designed to develop students' skills and confidence with the aim of empowering students to successfully transition from college to professional life. It also aims to develop each student's self-efficacy and personal agency, along with a key understanding of holding professional conversations on accommodations that they may need in order to fulfil the requirements of a work role, as well as their own individual potential.

Students who participate in the initiative get access to ringfenced placement positions, summer internships and graduate roles, as well as direct engagement with employers. The initiative covers aspects of career readiness such as creating a professional CV Interview preparation and practice, Disclosure, and Assistive Technology. In completing the programme, the students will emerge 'work ready', having had a professional CV reviewed by Careers Advisors and the Dell Talent Acquisition team, as well as being interview ready with mock interviews provided by Dell, all at the student's pace. In 2021/22, Dell offered a small number of ringfenced work placement positions for students across the disciplines.

The [Ready Steady Work](#) initiative won three awards during 2021/22: '*Operational Excellence in Education*' in the Operational Excellence Awards 2022; *Business and Third Level Institute Collaboration Award 2022* in the Education Awards in April; and the '*Higher Education Award*' in the Cork Lifelong Learning Awards.

### b. Student Inc.

*Student Inc.*, Ireland's longest running student entrepreneur accelerator programme, was selected as one of five finalists for the "Innovation and Entrepreneurship Program of the Year" at the 2022 European Triple E Awards on Entrepreneurship and Engagement in Higher Education in June.

*Student Inc.* is a student accelerator programme that enables higher education students to assess the feasibility of their business ideas as well as take them to the next stage of business development, including launching and growing their businesses. In 2011, *Student Inc.* was delivered on a single campus at Munster Technological University (then CIT) in Cork. Today, *Student Inc.* is now offered across five universities on fifteen campuses spread across the island of Ireland. 44,000 students have the opportunity to apply and compete for a place on the programme.

During the full-time thirteen-week immersive accelerator programme, *Student Inc.* participants work full-time assessing the feasibility of their business idea, building prototypes and learning all aspects of getting a business up and running, including customer discovery, market validation and financial planning. Once accepted onto the programme, the students take up residence in the on-campus incubators in their campus locations, where they are provided with €4,000 in seed funding, expert mentoring and training, access to the MTU research centres, introductions to a network of international entrepreneurs and investors, and complimentary office space.

*Student Inc.* provides potential student entrepreneurs with the opportunity to “learn by doing” in a safe and supportive environment. The Covid-19 pandemic provided the impetus to develop an online delivery platform that enables students to participate in the programme regardless of their geographic location. While all training and mentoring is now delivered online, the students are physically based in the on-campus business incubation centres in the five partner universities. During the programme, students from a wide variety of courses, disciplines and universities work side by side, providing an innovative multidisciplinary approach to support exploration of business ideas and prototype development.

The findings of a recent external review demonstrate that *Student Inc.* is performing extremely well with all aspects of the programme rating very highly in terms of satisfaction and industry benchmarks. The report, which was conducted by a team of external consultants who have reviewed many entrepreneurship programmes internationally, cited the *Student Inc.* programme as having received one of the highest net promoter scores they have seen to date, which is indicative of a very high level of positive feedback from *Student Inc.* past participants. The review examined the impact of the programme in areas such as providing students with the confidence to set up and grow their businesses, develop entrepreneurial ambitions, acquire entrepreneurial skills and tools, and engage in creative thinking. The review concluded that the *Student Inc.* programme has made a significant impact on the entrepreneurial mindset of the student participants, which is demonstrated by the high number of students who went on to start a business following the programme (41%, with a further 36% intending to do so in the future).

The *Student Inc.* programme is strongly supported by Enterprise Ireland (EI) and the Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs). In addition to state agency support, *Student Inc.* participants are provided with the opportunity to build relationships with entrepreneurs in the region who have successfully established their own businesses over the years. In 2021/22, for the first time since the programme’s inception, MTU *Student Inc.* participants were eligible for a scholarship through the O’Regan Scholarship programme funded by MTU alumnus and entrepreneur, Brendan O’Regan, founder and executive chairman of Zenith Technologies (acquired by Cognizant in 2019).

## 2.5 Information and Data Management

### Banner Upgrade and Merger Project

During the reporting period, the Banner teams of the MTU (Kerry) and MTU (Cork) campuses continued to work closely in progressing the Banner Upgrade & Merger Project, resulting in the successful upgrade from Banner Version 8.1 to Banner Version 8.5 on the Cork campuses in November 2021.



Following this, the focus changed to the implementation of additional functionality in several areas of academic administration in MTU (Cork), in particular, online registration, online payments and registration for repeat examinations. Online payments were introduced in MTU (Cork) in March 2022, online registration for Autumn exams in June 2022, and online registration in July 2022.

The project team also examined and tested the suitability of CAPP and its ramifications for Banner Examination Results Processing, developed customizations and performed pilot parallel runs. During this period, the Banner team in MTU (Kerry) continued to ensure the effective operation of the system there.

At the same time, plans for the upgrade of both the Cork and Kerry instances of Banner to Banner 9 were developed. The decision to upgrade both systems in Quarter 1 of 2023 was made, with an MTU (Kerry) go-live date in mid-February 2023 and an MTU (Cork) go-live date of early March 2023. A plan for the migration and redevelopment of reports, customized forms and solutions was developed. With the provision of the UAT environment for the MTU (Kerry) system in August, work began immediately on preparing for Banner 9, with full implementation planned in time for the academic year 2023/24.

## 2.6 Other Parties Involved in Education and Training

### a. REEdI

Launched in May 2021, [REEdI](#) is funded under the Higher Education Authorities (HEA) Human Capital Initiative (HCI) programme and aims to transform delivery of undergraduate engineering education in Ireland. The project is truly innovative, drawing on international best practice in the field of engineering education which will enable a student centred, project centric and technologically innovative approach to course provision, equipping graduates with the skills and knowledge required to ensure they can navigate the future challenges and disruptive technologies faced by the manufacturing sector in Ireland.

The REEdI Project is a collaboration between MTU and the University of Limerick. International collaborating academic partners are Charles Sturt University in NSW, Australia, and Harper Adams University in Newport, UK. Research centre partners are SFI CONFIRM Smart Manufacturing, IMaR Research Centre, AgriTech Centre of Excellence (ACE) and SFI LERO Software Development Centre.

### b. The iEd Hub

The [iEd Hub](#) is a HCI-funded consortium featuring MTU and University College Cork (UCC), enterprise stakeholders and leading industries in the Health & Life Sciences sector. It aims to deliver a suite of new collaborative postgraduate and undergraduate programmes to produce a new generation of graduates for the Health and Life Sciences industry sector, including young indigenous and mature multinational companies. iEd education is holistic, featuring both technical and non-technical skill sets, with students spreading their time between industry sites and academic campuses. The iEd graduates are imbued with the skills and values needed to forge the future in and for the Irish Industry.

## 2.7 Third-mission Activities, Societal and Community Engagement

### Collaboration with The Irish Prison Service – *The Open Door*

The pop-up restaurant event, *The Open Door*, held in Cork Prison on Tuesday, 17 May 2022, was the culmination of an intensive eight-week MTU Culinary Skills programme taken by six prisoners. Over 50 invited guests attended the event, held in the Education Unit of the prison. The meal was prepared by the students as the

capstone assessment of their Special Purpose Award programme and served by MTU Hospitality Management students.

This pilot-programme is co-managed by the Irish Prison Service, MTU (Cork)'s Department of Tourism & Hospitality and the MTU Access Service. It was designed to train and educate prisoners to improve and develop both their culinary skills and workplace learning, thus allowing them to progress towards further training, education, and employment opportunities in the community. Each participant attends the education unit twice a week and is tutored by a Tourism & Hospitality lecturer and a Home Economics teacher from the CETB Prison Education Unit. The programme combines classroom training with hands-on practical skills development in a live kitchen environment. It offers all participants the opportunity to further develop their learning and attain new skills and training, and offers a real pathway to 'open the door' for graduates to continue to engage in the community and reduce recidivism rates by moving away from a life of crime and providing for their family.

The event showcased the unique partnership between the Irish Prison Service, MTU and the Cork Education & Training Board (CETB), which runs the Educational Unit in Cork Prison. All partners are determined to enhance pathways to further Training, Education and Employment for people in custody while at the same time offering a solution to employers in the hospitality and tourism industry by providing new, motivated employees to fill the current shortage in the sector.

The initiative has emerged from a broader educational programme for prisoners and their families which is a collaboration of MTU, Cork Prison and the Dillon's Cross Project. A lecture series is designed annually by the MTU Access Service with delivery from volunteer MTU academic lecturing staff. Prisoners and their families have had lectures delivered on a wide range of subjects such as culinary studies, leadership in sports, early childhood studies, science, mathematics and entrepreneurship.



## 2.8 Initiatives within the Institution related to Academic Integrity

Munster Technological University strives to create a whole-University culture of academic integrity where learners take pride in their own academic accomplishments, encouraged and guided by a set of positive values modelled in and through the daily academic practice of other members of the University community they encounter, be it their lecturers, other learners, or researchers whose work they become aware of.

While learners should 'want to do things right', MTU also acknowledges that various pressures can mean that some learners at some point engage in academic misconduct. In order to maintain trust in its academic standards and awards for the sake of all its members, it is therefore just as important that the University takes measures to prevent and detect academic misconduct and to address it where it is confirmed to have occurred.

A number of initiatives and measures are being taken by MTU to raise overall awareness of academic integrity and good academic practice and to support students and staff in recognising, preventing and where necessary, addressing academic misconduct.

MTU has six nominees on QQI's National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN), and one of these chairs one of its Working Groups. NAIN updates, alerts, and related communications are circulated by Registrar's Office via a dedicated email address set up for this purpose. This ensures a consistent and visible approach.

During the reporting period, the University scoped and piloted online training courses on academic integrity, which have now been rolled out to staff and students across MTU, with the support and advice of the [Department of Technology-Enhanced Learning \(TEL\)](#) in MTU (Cork), the [E-Learning Development and Support Unit \(EDSU\)](#) in MTU (Kerry), and the [MTU Students' Union](#).

The course content has been developed by HE online learning provider [Epigeum](#), part of Oxford University Press, in collaboration with over twenty higher education institutions and with input from worldwide expert researchers, educators and practitioners in the field.

The student-facing course consists of five units/modules which together provide students with a well-rounded but succinct guide to showing integrity in their work and academic and professional practice throughout their studies and post-graduation. The course is available to all undergraduate and postgraduate students via the Canvas Learning Management System. Students who successfully complete this course receive a specially designed MTU digital badge for academic integrity. This badge conforms with digital badge open technical standards, meaning that it can be showcased online in a range of ways and will provide a lasting record of the student's learning and knowledge in this area.

The staff-facing modules, also available via Canvas, demonstrate how to make use of academic integrity tools in a way that has a lasting impact and address key issues such as contract cheating, dealing with breaches of academic integrity, assessment design, technology, and the promotion of a culture of academic integrity.

The Epigeum staff training complements the assessment design workshops for staff jointly provided by [the MTU Teaching & Learning Unit \(TLU\)](#) and the [Department of Technology-Enhanced Learning \(TEL\)](#). These workshops aim to support staff in reducing the incidence of academic misconduct from the first by, amongst others, demonstrating ways in which careful assessment design can minimise opportunities for 'cheating'. The TLU also collaborates with the MTU Library in offering 'disseminator' training for lecturers to help their students avoid plagiarism and access useful online referencing resources.

Developed by MTU, the MTU Library [Assignment Toolkit](#) includes a suite of modules that guides undergraduate and postgraduate students through the assignment completion process and provides a grounding in academic integrity by using best practice guidance at every stage. The MTU Library Assignment Toolkit is hosted on Canvas. Click [here](#) to access the toolkit directly. (See [PART B, Section 4](#) for a Case Study on the Toolkit.)

Practical advice and training for students at all levels on assessment literacy, good academic writing and referencing practice and the avoidance of plagiarism is also offered by several other MTU services, such as the Academic Learning Services provided as part of the University's [Student Services](#), the [Academic Success Coaching](#) service and the [MTU Library](#). The annual "[Just Ask! About Results](#)" campaigns of [AnSEO, the Student Engagement Office](#) also aim to raise awareness of poor assessment practices.

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

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

No.	<b>Relevant objectives</b> Note: Include reference to the relevant section of the preceding AQR, where applicable	<b>Planned actions and indicators</b> Note: Include details of unit responsible, and how planned action will address the relevant strategic priority and/or reengagement advice/CINNTE recommendation. If the institution is preparing for cyclical review, include how the planned actions will address the relevant review objective(s).
1	Implementation of MTU Executive Structure	On final approval by the Department of Public Expenditure & Reform, recruitment process for Vice Presidents, Faculty Deans and Chief Corporate Officer to be completed.
2	Professional Services Operating Model	High level design to be finalised and approved. Implementation to commence following agreement of prioritisation listing of the relevant areas.
3	Academic Operating Model	High level design to be progressed in 2022/23.
4	LEAD@MTU: <i>TLASE* Enhancement Through Distributed and Transformational Leadership Development</i> (*Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Student Engagement)	This initiative is funded through HEA Performance Funding (2021). It will be led by a senior academic leader recruited through an internal recruitment process. It will be designed to support existing individual managers as they seek to implement and support MTU strategy, while also being personally effective within their department and units.
5	Elevate Leadership Development Programme	The project, funded through the Technological Universities Transformation Funding (TUTF) will offer leadership skills training on a cohort basis, with particular emphasis on transformation, communication, planning and change. The project will enable distributed leadership – emphasising collaboration - with a view to supporting the implementation of MTU Strategy and personal/team professional objectives that align with MTU Strategy. Elevate is being developed and implemented in conjunction with the HR Managers and the MTU Transformation Office. There will be three levels to this programme that are dependent on a participant’s previous experience of leadership, their current and previous roles, and their interest in developing leadership skills.

## 3.2 Reviews planned for Upcoming Reporting Periods

Work is underway on the development of the Academic Operating Model for MTU. The identification of the 5 faculties requires the alignment of the current Faculty and School structure. In order to achieve the proper alignment, a new design is required which will need to consider the recently completed executive redesign to best determine the impacts for existing Faculty, School, and Department organisational structures.

This workstream is Executive led, but with engagement with Academic Council to ensure consultation and input. It is supported by a Working Group which includes academic representation from all academic domains, campuses and management/non-management levels.

The work is being undertaken over two phases. The deliverables of Phase 1 will include the design of the high level structure within faculties and a list of prioritised departments for more detailed programme review and alignment. Phase 2 has as its objective to review and align programme offerings under a set of pilot areas. Deliverables include a review of programmes and recommendations with regards to programme alignment in 1-2 pilot areas; a list of prioritised programmes to be taken forward for programmatic review; and a multi-year roadmap to move to fully integrated academic model.

MTU will then mainstream the pilot of Phase 2, so that each academic unit would undergo the following process:

- Review of programmes and recommendations with regards to academic alignment in 1-2 pilot areas;
- Prioritised programmes to be taken forward for programmatic review.

The first cycle of programmatic review in MTU will immediately follow, on a phased basis in accordance with the multi-year roadmap agreed during Phase 2. Given that the list of areas for the initial pilot remain to be determined, it is not possible to provide a detailed schedule for the initial MTU Programmatic Review Cycle at this point. However, based on the information currently available, it is envisaged that the first cycle will be completed cycle by end AY 2025/26.

### 3.2.1 Reviews planned for Next Reporting Period

Unit to be reviewed	Date of planned review	Date of last review

### 3.2.2 Reviews planned beyond Next Reporting Period

## 4.0 Additional Themes and Case Studies

### Case Study: MTU Library Assignment Toolkit

In October 2021, the MTU President launched MTU's new digital Library Assignment Toolkit.

The toolkit consists of eight interactive modules designed to assist students with completing assignments at different stages of their academic journey. The individual modules can be worked through independently or sequentially. Embedding of the Toolkit into specific Final Year academic modules is currently being piloted.

The Library Assignment Toolkit, which has attracted over 28,000 views to date, is the culmination of several years' work by the MTU Library Learning Community in response to a 2019 SATLE funding call entitled *Developing Disciplinary Excellence in Learning, Teaching and Assessment*. It was realised through a co-operative design and development process involving the Learning Community; [Le Chéile](#), a section of the MTU [Teaching & Learning Unit \(TLU\)](#); a number of student collaborators; and the [Department of Technology-Enhanced Learning \(TEL\)](#).

#### a. Background

In 2019 the National Forum released a call for submissions under the Strategic Alignment of Teaching and Learning Enhancement Funding in Higher Education (SATLE) focused on *Developing Disciplinary Excellence in Learning, Teaching and Assessment*.

In parallel, and with the support of the then Cork Institute of Technology's Teaching and Learning Unit (TLU), the Library established a Library Learning Community; a community of practice defined as a group of people who share common academic goals and attitudes, who meet semi-regularly for shared learning, discovery, and the generation of knowledge.

The Library Learning Community set about developing an application for the SATLE funding that would enable the Library to further enhance and extend information literacy delivery and engagement with students across all campuses.

This led the Library Learning Community to explore technological solutions that could help guide and support students through the assignment completion process while simultaneously providing a rich grounding in academic integrity. The concept of an online tool that students could access freely from anywhere, subject to the availability of internet access and a suitable device, soon emerged. The Learning Community embraced the idea of a fully Open Educational Resource (OER). By designing content in OER format, modules within the Toolkit could be made available outside of the confines of the University by means of an open license, which permits no-cost access, re-use, re-purpose, adaptation, and redistribution by other academic institutions.

The submission was warmly supported with funding being approved by the *National Forum*. In January 2020 work began on developing the suite of modules that would become the Assignment Toolkit.

#### b. Walking the Talk

From its inception, the project sought to be as student-centric as possible. While acknowledging the extent of professional library expertise and student engagement experience within the group and members' views on existing gaps in terms of information literacy provision, the Learning Community did not want to create a digital tool based solely on internal views and experience. The Learning Community sought to create a resource that

was evidence-based and responsive to the stated needs of students, lecturing staff, and the experience of library staff. The aim was to be *in* conversation with students and lecturers, not speaking *at* or *for* these stakeholders.

The first step was therefore to conduct separate surveys of both students and staff to establish where needs were most acute, so that these needs could be prioritised in the creation of digital content. The Learning Community collaborated with colleagues in *Le Chéile*, a section of the Teaching and Learning Unit (TLU) specialising in student partnership, to develop the surveys.

There was a total of 617 student and 94 staff survey responses. Three major points emerged from the surveys:

- Contrasting perceptions of the quality of student course work between students and staff;
- Lecturing staff were students' most trusted source of information (above Google, social media etc.);
- Lack of understanding and familiarity among staff and students regarding the library's role and resources/supports available.

The survey data helped clarify the purpose of the Assignment Toolkit and the exact shape would take. Reflecting on the data, library staff audited and re-evaluated their skill sets and undertook supplementary training on information literacy, marketing, communication, and teaching to further enhance these competencies.

The next step was to collaborate with *Le Chéile* in the recruitment of students who would work as partners to develop and create the content of the Assignment Toolkit. Five students were eventually recruited to collaborate on this project. These were a diverse group in terms of race, gender, neurotype, area and year of study, and familiarity with the library. The students were reimbursed for their work on the project.

Library staff were keen to bring students on board as co-creators and co-contributors and sought to put mechanisms in place whereby such partnership could flourish in the project team. Facilitation by *Le Chéile* helped ensure that the relationship between library staff and student partners started on an equal footing from the outset. The terms of the working relationship were established in the first meeting and included appointment of a roving joint chair, consisting of a student and member of staff paired together.

### c. Content Development Process

With 7 library staff and 5 students working on the Toolkit, *Le Chéile* advised that the team would benefit from being divided into subgroups. Content creation and reviewing responsibilities were redistributed accordingly.

A reviewing mechanism was also suggested by *Le Chéile*, which was called the 'Keep, Stop, Start' method – using 'Keep' to identify content to be retained, 'Stop' to remove specified content, and 'Start' to suggest additional content. This method was found to work very well for a team engaging in work that could potentially be sensitive in terms of the creators receiving constructive criticism.

Content was created in Google Docs so that it could be easily shared and commented on by all group members. Clear examples from everyday student life were used to support the points made in the modules. Thus, the Plagiarism module utilises examples from popular music and art to facilitate understanding of plagiarism.

Since the Toolkit was designed co-operatively by a team of students and library staff, the use of clear, concise, student-friendly syntax was a key requisite from the beginning of the project.

An example of a working document can be seen in [Figure 4](#) below:







Figure 6: The Modules in the MTU Library Assignment Toolkit



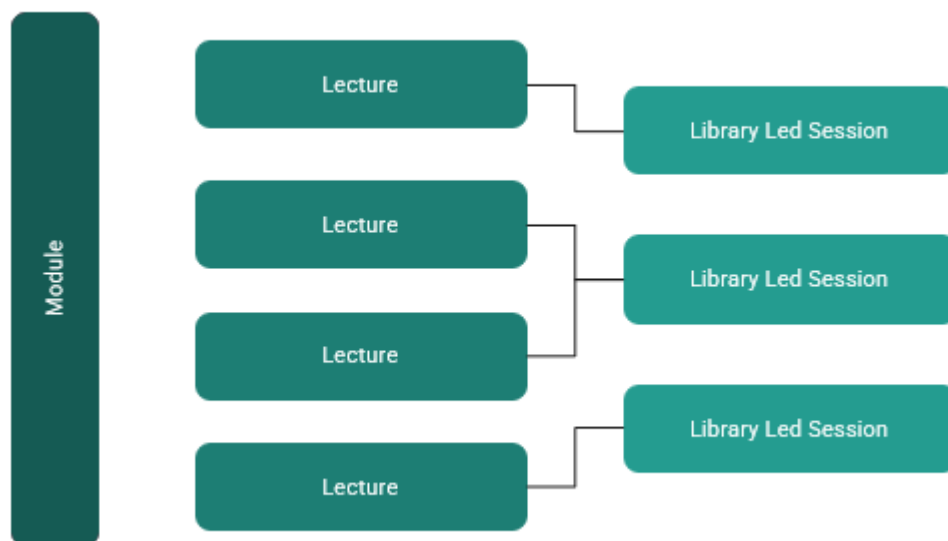
Figure 7: Step-by-step guide to the MTU Library Assignment Toolkit

After some delays due to Covid 19 Pandemic, the Assignment Toolkit was launched in October 2021 on the Bishopstown Campus Library by the MTU Registrar / VP for Academic Affairs (Cork campuses) and Student Union representatives.

### e. Usage and Looking Forward

Since being launched, over 500 students have enrolled in modules of the Assignment Toolkit, with approximately 28,000 views of the Toolkit's content.

Further to this, the Library has partnered with academic colleagues to pilot embedding the Assignment Toolkit into a Fourth Year module delivered in specific programmes. This involves library staff working alongside academic staff to utilise the resources within the Toolkit as a complimentary learning aid to assist with the assignments set for that module (see [Figure 8](#) below).



[Figure 8](#): Embedding of the Assignment Toolkit into academic module delivery – exemplary delivery structure

Work on this initiative continues to be developed with a view to extending the offering to other departments as is feasible.

Finally, the Library is currently working with colleagues in TEL to develop a variety of Digital Badge offerings which can be awarded to those who complete an individual module or those that complete the entire Assignment Toolkit suite of modules. This will allow students to demonstrate to their lecturers that they have completed all modules or specific modules within the Toolkit. These Digital Badges can then be added to CVs or portfolios as proof of training. The Digital Badges are expected to be available from September 2023.